



# AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER

For those of us who were unable to attend on 14<sup>th</sup> May the Association were delighted to accept an offer by Anne Scicluna to lead a walk around the city walls of

**NOVIOMAGVS REGINORVM**

as Chichester was known in Roman times.



We assembled in the lovely garden of 10 West Pallant, courtesy of Celia and Tony Earl where Anne gave us an introduction to the walk. We set off at a steady pace down South Pallant and Theatre lane where our first stop was the old theatre (now Zizzi's restaurant). We saw the missing row of dentils on the Fountain Inn which we think marks the course of the city walls. Further up South Street we looked at the splendid flint work on the Regnum Club building before turning off into Canon row and making our way to the Bishop's Palace gardens.



Skirting the gardens along the Southern city walls Anne explained to us the function of the Roman bastions, which were built into the wall, although only some of these remain. The original Roman wall was faced in white stone but in medieval times the walls were re-built in flint and restored again in



Victorian times. The garden is a sea of tranquility in the busy city and contains many wonderful plants including a giant Sequoia which is the tallest tree in Chichester. There is also a vegetable garden where fresh vegetables are available to those without means. On the West wall we heard that after the 1987 gales several trees came down and destroyed the top of the wall and also uncovered the remains of a Roman house.

Crossing the roundabout at the end of West Street we come across a blue plaque marking the spot where Eric Gill once lived. His work lives on in the typeface, which adorns London Underground. Moving on we saw the protected view of the South Downs where a new housing development was forced to take into account this view.



From the wall overlooking the delightful Franklin Place we were also able to admire the remains of what had once been a Norman motte and bailey castle within the walls as well as the guildhall, which is the chancel of the earlier Greyfriars monastery, destroyed after the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 16<sup>th</sup> century.



The walk continued across Priory Road and up the stone steps on to the walls again. Underneath the stone stairs there is a small lockable chamber which formed part of the Drill Hall and was used as an explosives store! Onwards past the Shiphams development and into St Johns Street where we looked at St Johns Chapel, which although no longer a church was one of a very few churches built by public subscription to serve the local



residents. And so to Friary Lane where a small cottage will doubtless one day have a blue plaque for it is the birthplace of our own local historian, Alan Green. At the end of Friary lane lies the imposing Georgian house known as Friary Close.

And finally we complete the circle by looking at the small gazebo on the Southern wall, built on an earlier bastion. Moving on we returned to the garden of 10 West Pallant where Rowena Daniels presented Anne with a bouquet of flowers in appreciation of a fascinating afternoon. The day ended with a picnic in the garden.



Photos courtesy Bob Wiggins

