THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

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Member of Civic Voice, the charity for the civic movement in England

STABILITY, DISRUPTION AND PROGRESS?
But that's life in and around Chichester

This issue reflects in some way the dichotomy that currently exists between stability and change in and around our City. On the one hand we have the enduring assuredness of the Cathedral bell ringers, the quiet waters of the ancient canal and the naval history and heritage upon which we can draw. In contrast we are faced with major and divisive events encapsulated in the proposals to address congestion on the A27 – finding and implementing solutions to the problems which have bedevilled us for half a century.

Nevertheless people are still drawn to Chichester as an attractive place to live and bring up a family. Those that arrive now may not be aware of the trials and tribulations endured by long-standing inhabitants in trying (sometimes failing) to preserve the fabric of the City. The New Park Centre area might now be a dual carriageway but for protestations at the time; and thank goodness for the various residents associations around and about!

On a personal front – the disruptive excavations in South Street brought back memories of my most exciting and challenging time working with those at the forefront of engineering research in the 60s and 70s.

It's all here, and I thank those who have had the interest to contribute.

Gas pipes hover over South Street

The Society is seeking a Treasurer – see page 20

Our Website and Twitter

I would like to draw your attention to our 'digital' initiatives. Thus the website has undergone a major review both to bring information up-to-date (e.g. the 'events' and 'publications' pages) and to add more features, the major one being 'planning matters'. This now includes the letters sent by our planning adviser Andrew Bain to the Council in relation to planning applications about which the Society wishes to comment. We have also added a list of categories and tags by which our information is indexed to help you find relevant information – details of this search aid is to be found at http://chichestersociety.org.uk/finding-information/.

Twitter has also been added to the website, and, for those in the know, we now have over 400 followers. Twitter is proving very useful for getting information out quickly, such as our need for volunteers for the Heritage Trails Project. Connect to our Twitter account at http://www.twitter.com/@chi_soc or via the logo to the right if you have pdf copies of the Newsletter.

Bob Wiggins (Editor)

THE NORTHERN BY-PASS IN 1949
A 'Back to the Future' view by member David Wilson

The town planner Thomas Sharp's plan for Chichester, published in 1949, contained proposals for a northern by-pass – but what a difference 65 years makes! The route of the by-pass is much closer to the city, and Thomas Sharp makes it very clear that he regarded this as the clear northern limit for Chichester. He would have been horrified at the sprawl that has already happened, let alone what is now proposed.

Sharp's Proposed Northern Route

His proposed route, shown on the map below, makes an awkward turn to get started at Clay Lane, but he also envisaged a direct route from that corner to Portsmouth by 'developing the existing lanes'.

The route then makes a beeline for Westhampnett across what is now the East Broyle estate and Wellington Road, south of the Barracks and cutting across the gravel diggings in the Lavant valley, well to the south of what is now proposed adjacent to the South Downs National Park.

Key:

Black: existing roads (only principal ones shown);
Red: new roads proposed by Sharp;
Brown: railway;
Grey: built-up areas as in 1949;
Blue: gravel and other workings (some have now been filled in and built on)

(Adapted from the proposed outline plan page 33 in *Georgian City – A plan for Chichester* by Thomas Sharp, Southern Publishing Co. 1949)

A Ring Road and Railway Crossing

Other features of his plan include a dual carriageway ring road all the way around the Walls (perhaps not the happiest idea) of which only the Oaklands Way and Via Ravenna sections were built.

He also wanted a bridge at the railway station to replace the level crossing; very welcome, except that it would have affected the Canal Basin, and an internal bypass to the Bognor Road.

But let him speak for himself:

... like most similar places the city is an important crossing point of communications, and some not inconsiderable part of the traffic in its streets is there not because it has business but because it has to pass this way in travelling between places outside. This passing traffic, in days when it was slow-moving, brought, no doubt, a useful amount of casual trade to the city. But now that it is swift-moving there is little profit to be had from it. There is everything to gain by making provision for it to pass by the city freely ...

... This road [the current bypass] *was intended to serve several lots of traffic – from the east towards the southern coastal villages as well as from the west. But, for the London-Portsmouth traffic* [sic] *at least, it involves a long circuitous deflection from the direct route; and it is now clear that a new byepass* [sic] *to the north of the city must be provided ...*

... The new link would establish a complete circuit of outer byepasses. It must be obvious that if the circuit is to serve its full purpose, it must be outer. For the city to sprawl beyond it would stultify it. But that, in any case, is quite unnecessary; for the areas that have already been suggested as suitable for new housing are of sufficient size to accommodate both the necessary houses and the necessary open spaces. ...

... With through-city traffic following the outer byepasses, it will remain to provide alternative routes for cross-city traffic, such as that bringing people in from the country, and for traffic delivering and collecting goods for shopkeepers. The first of these two types of traffic can be deflected on to a system of inner byepasses, a system of distributory roads just outside the city centre. The place for these is just outside the walls. A ring road should be developed there.'

IT'S A GAS!

Seeing South Street being dug up, Editor Bob Wiggins recalls his time in the Gas Industry

The 'gas industry' does not seem to be the most engaging subject, but the late 60s and 70s were truly a time of ground-breaking engineering developments in the UK in what was then a nationalised industry. I want to laud these largely unknown or forgotten achievements.

The Coming of Natural Gas

Interest in using natural gas can be traced back to 20 January 1958 when the British Methane Company was established (registered in the Bahamas for tax reasons - so nothing new then) to convert a ship for the transport of methane gas from the United States.

Subsequently supplies came from elsewhere, but such sources were soon overcome by developments in the North Sea with major finds confirmed in 1966.

Engineering Research Station, Killingworth, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Need for Engineering Research

At the time the gas industry consisted of twelve autonomous Area Gas Boards and the Gas Council, responsible for the industry's research. The existing three research centres tended to concentrate on chemistry and reactions, when the emphasis needed to change to metallurgy and physics with the increasing interest in gas transmission and distribution. Thus the Engineering Research Station (ERS) came about. Designed by northern architects Ryder and Yates in 1965 it was constructed between 1966-67. The building was, and still is, of striking design and was listed Grade II in 1997.

Recruitment

ERS was headed by John van der Post (son of Laurens) and starting from scratch he had to recruit a range of talented engineers and scientists tasked with tackling many unknowns, relating principally to the transmission of high pressure gas and finding replacements for cast iron gas mains. I joined to head an Information Group developing a variety of technical and administrative services for the Station and getting the results of its research out to the Area Gas Boards (later Regions). My time there spanned just over the decade from 1967.

Major Challenges

The challenges were great. In the United States, for example, the fracture of some higher pressure pipeline had caused cracks to propagate for miles and ways were clearly needed to prevent this happening.

Also there were questions round the use of plastic to replace the cast iron mains, how to detect buried pipe work and what can be done to inspect the interior of pipelines once in operation.

These questions had to be tackled at a time when computing facilities were limited.

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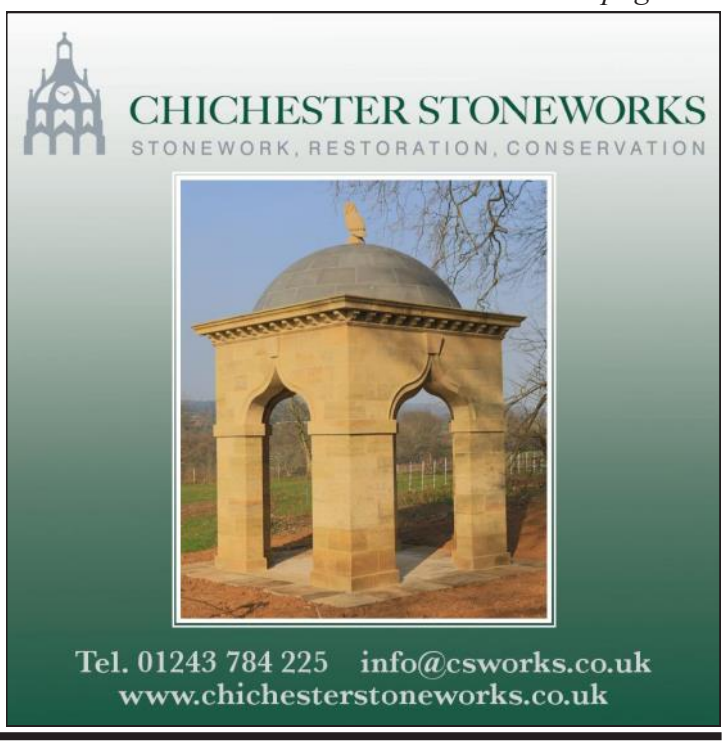

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Pipeline Fracture Research

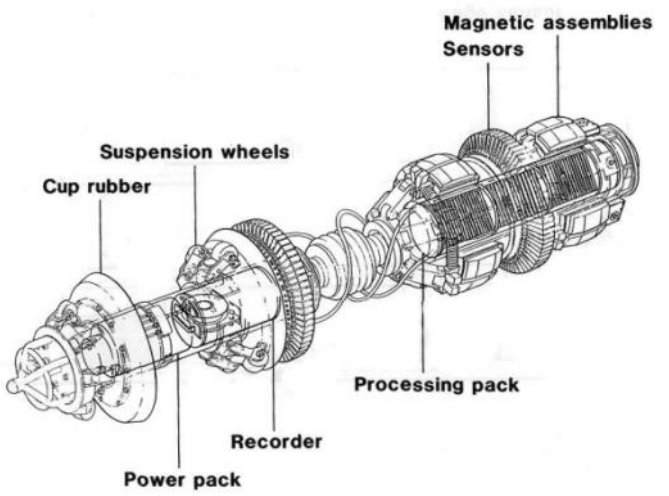
Pipeline fatigue is gradual weakening of the pipeline structure as cycles of stress are applied and accumulate in service; the stress being typically concentrated at discontinuities of some kind. Pressure testing pipelines using water (hydrostatic testing) can either eliminate any defect that might threaten its ability to sustain its maximum operating pressure or to show that none exists. ERS built on work undertaken at Battelle in the USA and used probabilistic methods to determine the risk factors for pipe failure due to different types of defect in the structure. These findings were then used to develop pragmatic industry-wide standards laying down maximum stress limits to obtain the desired life for the pipeline.

Steel pipeline explosion at Spadeadam

Theoretical work was backed up by full-scale tests at the Spadeadam site near Carlisle where the fracture process could be followed and filmed. The facility was set up by ERS and continues to this day, situated in 50 hectares of Ministry of Defence land. It is now run by a Norwegian company.

Online Inspection

Periodic hydrostatic testing to ensure ongoing pipeline integrity is impractical and a means for regular internal inspection was required. A variety of commercial so-called 'pigging' tools were tested by ERS, but found to be inadequate. So in 1974 they decided to design and build their own 'intelligent pigs' to travel independently inside the pipes driven by the gas flow. Major advances in defect and corrosion detection were made using digital technology, ultrasonics and other techniques to look for defects, measure wall thickness and assess corrosion. By 1980 the pig 'farm' had its own premises and around 250 staff on the project.



'Intelligent pig' configuration

Adoption of Plastic Pipe

The main problem with any metal pipe is it susceptibility to corrosion, so plastic material offered a solution. Research initially focused on both PVC and polyethylene with tests undertaken that were similar to those for steel piping. Polyethylene won out, and is now the standard for lower pressure gas piping being available in roll form for easy laying and readily joined by fusion welding. Alongside this work means of detecting buried plastic pipe were developed based on ground penetrating radar as electromagnetic techniques cannot normally detect non-metallic pipes.

South Street: Polyethylene pipe ready to be laid (picture taken 8 February 2016)

So what happened later?

Most of the work at ERS was research and development and was due at some time to come to an end as the results of its work were transformed into day-to-day operations. With all the expertise that existed, and the teamwork that had developed over the years, there was interest in preserving this – and ideally in the locality. Thus four senior engineers from ERS formed Macaw Engineering in 1996. Today it has over 80 engineers, operations overseas and is expanding further – so thankfully the DNA of ERS lives on.

The building itself was bought by North Tyneside Council on 29 April 1997.

NEW PARK CINEMA – A 30 YEAR SUCCESS STORY
Member John Wichers in discussion with Walter Francisco, the Cinema's General Manager

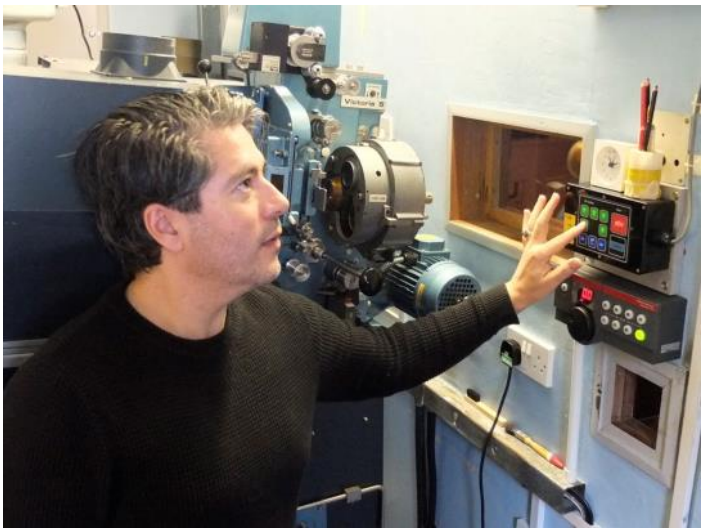
Many of you readers will have visited this jewel of Chichester more than once; but how many, I wonder, know its story: formerly a Victorian school and so very nearly demolished in the early 70s to make way for a 'road improvement scheme'?

New Park Cinema - a welcoming sight

How Walter became Manager

Which is why one December morning, I was sitting in the New Park Centre's café, chatting to Walter Francisco, the cinema's General Manager. How is it that an Australian with such a colourful name comes to be running this locally unique mecca of the English entertainment industry?

Walter is of Portuguese stock but, when he was two years old, his parents emigrated to Sydney where he grew up, finally going to university in Sydney before returning to the Algarve in 1995. A significant move, as it transpired; as here, at the age of 24, he met the love of his life! You could be forgiven for jumping to the same conclusion as I, when hearing this: 'Oh! Portuguese, then...' 'No, actually,' Walter replies with a grin, 'Heather is from Emsworth and just chanced to be there on holiday!'



Walter Francisco 'at the helm'

Australia beckoned anew three years into their union and the young Francisco family settled in Sydney to raise their two boys. After five years 'down under' it seems that Heather's home ties won the day and the émigrés removed to the UK, settling in Southbourne, where they live to this day.

Walter's frantic search for work was swiftly rewarded with the help of the Chichester News and Observer's small classified ads, where he spotted the post of Box Office Manager at New Park Cinema.

A successful interview with Ellen Cheshire (General Manager at the time) followed and Walter became Box Office Manager for a couple of years before taking over her role when Ellen retired.

Programming and Organisation

Being a regular cinema-goer, I am keen to hear from Walter how he puts together his film programmes and the general 'nuts and bolts' of management in this industry. And the staff; how many people does he have in the organisation? Walter gives me a quick run through the structure: 'There are twelve of us altogether in three major functions: – Administrative (4) – Front-of-House (4) – Projectionists (2 + 2 part-time) plus of course, a small army of volunteers!

Talking through the people individually it rapidly becomes clear to me that these are individuals with very long track records; evidently in jobs they love. The two main projectionists, Mark and James, have between them, over 60 years' experience and the 'front-of-house' Manager, Henry Beltran and his 3 assistants, a similar stretch. One of them, Ninian McGuffie, is considered a film buff's 'vade mecum.' Walter jokingly suggests he is for hire on any movie-oriented quiz night! Incidentally, Ninian trawls the internet for critiques and selects the most appropriate ones for the synopses given out to our audiences.

Choosing the Films to Show

The key figure not yet revealed is Roger Gibson, the Artistic Consultant - without whom there would be no Chichester independent cinema! His creation it was in the first place and for many years, his was the sole input in selecting the films to be shown.

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Nowadays, he and Walter choose and plan together the film programmes to be seen throughout the year; though Roger still exclusively selects the viewings for and masterminds the annual Film Festival – of which, more anon!

'But how does the film selection procedure work?' I ask Walter, 'Clearly, an awful lot of research goes into this.' I quickly learn that Roger is quite

Cinema goers settling in for a show

remarkably single-minded and absolutely devoted to the search for the 'right' movies. He attends all the film festivals here and abroad – the ones that you and I have heard of as well as the ones we haven't! 'How else could we find and show such gems as the Russian film 'Two Women' starring Ralph Fiennes?' Walter declares. 'That film was never for general release in the UK – and to cap it all, Roger got Ralph Fiennes to come to Chichester for the screening! A trip to London would have been the only other way to catch such a treasure!

Securing these exceptional and singular films that make Chichester's New Park Cinema the outstanding success that it is all costs money. Whilst a staff of 12 is not huge, neither is the cinema; there are only 114 seats after all and the charge for a ticket is just £8. I ask Walter if he would share with me some very basic costings. 'Usually, a cinema pays the film distributor up to 65% of net takings during the first week, reducing to 35% at the 3rd week of showings' he replies…

At this point, Royal Mail arrives with a small package which Walter signs for. 'There...' Walter says patting the parcel, tomorrow's viewing all in a little hard drive! In a few years from now,' he adds, 'even these deliveries will be history – all film will be delivered over the internet!'

Making it Pay

'Ok...' I query, 'Getting back to the costings, how many of your 114 seats must you sell in order to break even?' 'That all depends on the deal we get from the distributor. As I said, we pay a percentage of the box-office receipts. Generally, we don't show new films on initial release date - there's a reason for that: the distributors would insist you show it 'non-stop' for two weeks – that's part of the deal and we couldn't do that. We're a single screen cinema so if we did, we wouldn't be able to show any of the other lesser known works; and that's not what we're about – we're not here simply to rake in the bucks! We need to show the 'niche' films that may only appeal to a small audience and don't make a profit. These have to be supported by the widely-acclaimed releases like 'The Lady in The Van' which we will bring in a week or so after initial release, thereby avoiding the continuous showing clause. This gives us the chance to mix the big box office draws with the less popular but nonetheless important works discovered by Roger at some film festival.'

A Second Screen?

'But,' muses Walter, 'you can see, we lack flexibility with only one screen. With a second screen, we could afford to go along with the distributor's rule of continuously showing the new release and at the same time presenting the little-known gems that deserve to be seen.' 'Is that a real possibility?' I query. The question is left hanging in the air!

Refreshments on hand for patrons

Before we part, Walter does let one little pearl drop concerning the annual Film Festival, this year being its 25th anniversary. 'We plan something really special this year – we hope to add a 'Drive-in' movie to our traditional two open-air screenings! More than that he will not divulge; but it bodes well for the future of our New Park Cinema that such creative flair is in the driving-seat!

(***See the following article on the New Park Centre itself)***

THE NEW PARK CENTRE – SAVED FOR THE COMMUNITY
Member John Wichers explains the history of this complex

This charitable organisation on the corner of Priory and New Park Road is run by the New Park Community & Arts Association; an umbrella organisation that runs the complex of rooms that make up the Centre. The Centre itself and the surrounding grounds are owned by Chichester District Council.

Their purpose-built rooms are let out to a number of health and sports clubs, the largest of which, the auditorium, is used almost exclusively by the New Park Cinema. Apart from its main use as a public movie theatre, this organization also hosts film education courses, run by Rosemary Coxon and open to the public. Bishop Luffa College and Southbourne Juniors regularly use the cinema's Film Education facilities.

Its History

The New Park Community Centre was originally Chichester Central School, built in 1887 to meet the requirements of a new government bill on compulsory education. The building was used as a school until 1968, when the faculty was relocated to larger premises.

Thereafter, one or two small groups used the deserted buildings courtesy of the Council until the threat of its demolition in 1974. The various clubs and playgroups that had been using the buildings joined together with the Chichester Society in persuading Chichester District Council not to demolish the Victorian structure to make room for a dual carriageway and a public open space!

Saved from destruction

This victory for common sense led to the formation of the New Park Community & Arts Association which raised enough money to repair the neglected fabric, renew the wiring, much of the roof and all of the toilets. This association continues to administer the buildings under its Board of volunteer Trustees and its Operations Manager, Alison McDonald-Hughes.

In 1990 and again in 2000 further development plans were discussed which could have resulted in the demise of the Victorian building. Happily, these plans were dropped following yet another public outcry protesting against the loss of this valuable community centre. Not only did the Council back down, but also agreed to preserve the original fabric of the unique Victorian building; and importantly, lent its full support to an imaginative new development which has included complete refurbishment of the centre.

A 2nd screen for the Cinema?

There is also the distinct possibility that the New Park Cinema will soon be getting a second screen! This would enable cinema manager Walter Francisco and his team to show not only the popular 'bread and butter' screenings but, true to the arthouse tradition, to show concurrently, additional 'niche' films appealing to more esoteric audiences.

ADMIRAL MURRAY – FRIEND OF NELSON AND CHICHESTER RESIDENT

Chairman of the Murray Club, Richard Plowman explains the importance of this seaman

December 15, 2015 saw two launches, Major Tim Peake to the International Space Station and, a little closer to home, the launch of the 'Murray or None Exhibition' at the Novium Museum funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund Award.

Admiral Sir George Murray

The exhibition is part of a whole series of events organised by the Murray Club set up to celebrate Admiral Sir George Murray's 200th anniversary as Mayor of Chichester in 1815. He was Captain of the Fleet and Nelson's close friend . The Murray Club is also working with the Murray family to ensure the letters, documents and artefacts which represent a complete collection of national Importance are retained here in Chichester where Admiral Sir George Murray was born and died and, indeed, is buried in Paradise at the Cathedral with his wife Ann. George Murray had a fine Georgian House built for himself at 57 North Street in 1804, now the Ship Hotel.

But why Admiral Murray? Why do some very significant people in their time seem to just fade into history whilst their contemporaries become household names? I doubt there is anyone in the UK who cannot recall Nelson, Hardy , the Battle of Trafalgar and HMS Victory. A year ago, before the Murray Club activities and now the exhibition, if you asked anyone, except a very small group of local Chichester or naval historians, who Admiral Sir George Murray was, you would probably just get a blank expression, shrug of the shoulders and an utterance of never heard of him. Without a chance conversation with Barry Aldridge about his little book' My dear Murray', all the family papers, Nelson letters and artefacts would have probably been split up and lost forever.

The Murray Club

The Club consists of myself and Barry Aldridge as co-founders, local historian Alan Green, Philip Robinson, Emeritus Professor of the University of Chichester, Anne Scicluna, three times Mayor of Chichester and a local guide, David Shannon, a former guide on HMS Victory, Clive Hand, the film maker and Vincent Gray the sculptor and, of course Ian Murray the direct descendant of Admiral Sir George Murray. The Murray Club's research laid the foundation for the latest Museum exhibition skilfully put together by the specially appointed project officer, Alex Bogard, working with the Novium team.

Some members of the Murray Club at Lloyds From left: Philip Robinson, Barry Aldridge, Alan Brown (Assistant Curator and Plate Butler of The Lloyd's Collection), Richard Plowman, Alan Green and Anne Scicluna

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Sometimes, when researching into an individual, the early sheen of their achievements dulls as you find out more about their character. Not so with Murray. Sometimes it is like detective work when reported information seems to be contradictory.

A Forged Signature?

A good example is when local historian Alan Green bought the conveyance for Admiral Sir George Murray's house, now the Ship Hotel. We find that George Murray's signature is there and yet HMS Victory records show Murray at sea at the time. The services of a local graphologist were employed who suggested the signature was a forgery and maybe a female hand. Did Mrs Murray sign it? Recent documents acquired by Alan Green are now indicating that perhaps it was the elder brother John Murray that signed. We will never know but one starts to question the actions of the lawyers who witnessed the signature. There is no denying the fascination of studying the original document and where it leads.

Relationship with Nelson

The last letter written by Nelson before leaving Portsmouth for Trafalgar was to Murray thanking him for a side of venison he had sent. Nelson would have no other First Captain or Captain of the Fleet and hence the title of the Exhibition and the Naval expression 'Murray or None' when no substitute will do. If Murray had been free to go and be at Nelson's side, history may have been different. Murray was obliged to stay in England as his father-in-law had died and left a complex will with Murray as executor.

Neither Nelson nor Murray knew when the French and Spanish Fleet would be coming out to sea at Trafalgar. Murray and Nelson had spent the last two years on HMS Victory waiting for the opportunity for that decisive battle to settle who really did rule the waves.

Earlier letters show how Murray was very reluctant to be Captain of the Fleet as he was concerned that his friendship with Nelson would suffer. Nelson reassured him that he would not pull rank and would always treat him like a friend. This friendship had been built when Murray saved the day at the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801. Nelson wrote later 'I can assure you that at all times I am ever glad to see you for I shall never forget your gallant support of me at the Battle of Copenhagen (Baltic)' and again at the birth of Murray's son 'I congratulate you on the birth of your son, if one of his names is not Baltic I shall be very angry indeed.' The son was eventually christened George St Vincent Thomas Nelson Murray.

It is not surprising Nelson and Murray were friends as their careers were similar, both joining the navy at the tender age of 12 years old, Nelson was a captain at 20, Murray just behind him at 23. They both possessed impressive skills in every aspect of the Navy. Murray was reported as 'Like Nelson he knew no fear'. Murray having lost his friend and mentor at Trafalgar was never really happy at sea again. He retired from active service back to Chichester but still carried on duties for the Admiralty. He also played an important role both in civic life as Mayor of Chichester in 1815 but also in the development of Georgian Chichester including St John's Chapel. Admiral Murray was knighted with the Order of Bath rising to the rank of Vice Admiral of the Red, a position higher than Nelson had held. Ships were named after Murray and we have ensigns from the First and Second World War ships named HMS Murray.

The Museum Collection

It may have taken 200 years but from the artefacts, letters and documents of the time we now have a far better understanding of Admiral Sir George Murray, a Chichester hero and a wonderful role model for both young and old.

The Admiral Murray Exhibition at The Novium Museum

The exhibition on the mezzanine of the First Floor of the Novium museum will run until December 2016. It is free to enter, and you will discover through the time line and exhibits that Admiral Sir George Murray played a significant role in one of the most important periods of history for both Britain and Chichester.

A VISIT TO THE BELL TOWER AT CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL

Member Danielle Charbonneau on an elevating experience

Hamish McNaughton, the Captain of the Bell Ringers, met me outside the Tower just before 9am on 17 January at the south door facing the Cathedral.

The Bell Tower adjacent toWest Street

The Tower has a basement which is entered from the west side and was used before as the Cathedral Shop, a ticket office and a Christmas charity card shop. It is now a drop-in centre for young people after school. We reached our group of bell-ringers from a circular staircase (80 gruelling steps for me) in the south-west angle with the only help being a large rope snaking along the wall for support.

The ringing chamber on the third stage of the tower has a ceiling carried on two great oak beams running north to south and supported by curved braces on plain corbels. There is an impressive collection of framed engravings of cathedrals, churches and clergy.

The bells are rung every Sunday from 9 - 10am and every Wednesday between 7.30pm and 9pm, and also to mark events related to the Cathedral and the Diocese and those of local and national importance.

The present tower was begun in the latter years of the 14th century and continued during the early years of the next century. It is 107 feet high, 43 feet square at the base and the walls are just over 8 feet thick. It is surmounted by an octagonal lantern; at each of the four corners is an octagonal pinnacle from which spring two flying buttresses to support the lantern, in which the bells are housed. It is built of Ventnor stone (from the Isle of Wight) which is not particularly hard and the ravages of the salt-laden, prevailing westerly winds have left their mark.

There are eight bells in the lantern which include two by R. Phelps (treble and second) of 1729, the third is of 1583 by I. W. (probably John Wallis of Salisbury), the fourth 1674 by William Eldridge, the fifth is dated 1665, the sixth, also 1665, by W. P. (probably William Purdue), the seventh 1587, by I. W., and the tenor of 1706, by Richard Phelps of London. In 2004, a major overhaul was carried out involving some repair and re-modelling of some clappers.

A last point of interest: in 1873, when the Chichester Water Company was promoted, it was suggested that the bell tower be converted into a high-service water tank to save the Company from erecting such an expensive structure. Can you imagine the outcry in the City? People preferred to keep the Bell Tower for its main purpose of ringing bells, all to our great pleasure.

Thanks for the booklet (written by K.G. Game Steeple Keeper, Chichester Cathedral Guild of Bellringers) from which I took much of my information.

Members of the Chichester Cathedral Guild of Bellringers. There are around 16 active members.

If anyone is interested in joining the Bellringers Group, please contact Hamish McNaughten at email: hamish@wandleys.demon.co.uk

WHAT MIGHT THIS CITY BE LIKE WHEN OUR BOYS HAVE GROWN UP?
Chichester resident Emma Owen-Smith wants a city with buzz for her sons to live in

Members of the Chichester Society may have heard that the District Council is pondering our future - all our futures - in a process which began early in 2015. This resulted in an understanding that if the City of Chichester is not to stagnate it must move forward, and that the driver for this process must be a dynamic 'vision' which anticipates the future 20 years from now.

Last autumn the Council set the ball rolling with a mix of research and discussion and it's expected this review will be complete after a year. Prompted by this, your Newsletter team has set in train an occasional mini-review in these pages.

We begin with a personal view from one Chichester family - Emma Owen-Smith, Trent O'Connor and their two sons Leo and Jasper.

A Chichester family with its eyes on the future: Emma Owen-Smith and Trent O'Connor with Leo (right) and Jasper

Emma was brought up in the city and she takes up the story below:

'I grew up in Chichester in the eighties when there was no Cineworld, Westgate Leisure Centre or a skate park. It was very quiet and for a teenager, pretty dull really. Now it's much better for younger people and families, but we feel there are many improvements that could be made to make Chichester more vibrant, inclusive and interesting.

For a family such as us, with young children and lucky enough to live close enough to town to walk most places, Chichester is pretty good. Lots to do for small kids, good playgrounds, safe and clean, historical and charming, it has much going for it.

More 'buzz' please!

However, while the city is a University town, and with the excellent Chichester College, walking around the streets you wouldn't know it. There is not much targeted at students, bar a few pubs. And with the closure of Thursdays, the controversial venue just east of Chichester, there is absolutely nothing in the way of nightlife.A few decent music venues would not go amiss, funky cafes, theatre aimed at a younger crowd and perhaps the odd summer mini festival/ gathering.

Environment and Community

More of a focus on the environment, and community projects, such as those currently organised by Transition Chichester, along with building better cycle paths, having more educational 'green' events open to all ages - all these would definitely be part of our vision for a future Chichester.

Diverse?

Welcoming people of other nationalities and backgrounds would also make Chichester a more diverse city and a more interesting one. It would also do much to assuage the snotty reputation Chichester seems to have!

The traffic!

Chichester is growing but infrastructure needs to be improved to accommodate all the new housing. Traffic has got much worse in recent years and residents are getting increasingly frustrated by more and more developments without the necessary transport considerations.

Our boys at 25

In terms of the boys at 25, I would hope that they have had enough support and encouragement through the local schools (which at present seem to do a great job) and if they decide to stay local, job opportunities would have improved drastically by then. More money spent on funding apprenticeships or relevant free workshops, or work experience may be helpful in aiding less academic, but no less bright kids, to find fantastic jobs in the locality.'

Continued on page 12

Continued from page 11

OUR FAMILY'S WISH-LIST FOR CHICHESTER

1. **Plenty of career opportunities** - with better and faster transport links to larger cities and towns to help commuters from Chichester. Expanding successful industry already in the area, as well as the University, to create more jobs. A new music venue/arts centre would also help employment.
2. **A strong environmentally and open-minded community** that welcomes and initiates natural ways of looking after our environment and ourselves; funding given to groups already established like Transition Chichester to educate and inspire others.
3. **A more vibrant, creative city centre**, with more independently-run cafes, shops and restaurants.
4. **Preservation** of the city's historical building and Roman heritage.
5. **More for students** such as a music venue (see above), theatre that appeals to a younger crowd, arts/vegetarian cafes and restaurants. Nightclub or more pubs with DJ's and live music.
6. **Improved infrastructure** to cope with expansion; the roundabout system on the A27 currently causes a lot of delays, therefore a better under/over pass would need to be developed for those wishing to by -pass Chichester completely. Cycling encouraged within Chichester by developing better cycle ways like Centurion Way.
7. **A community that cares** for its elderly and those in need.

A 'KINGFISHER' IS LAUNCHED

Judy Saxon, Chairman of the Chichester Canal Trading Company, on this momentous project

There was great excitement on January 11 at the canal basin, as volunteers gathered to watch the arrival of the Canal Trust's new trip boat, 'Kingfisher'. The project to purchase 'Kingfisher 'started nearly two years ago, when the biennial inspection of our trip boat 'Egremont', revealed that the hull was in a bad state of repair. 'Egremont' is around 50 years old, and, sadly, the conclusion was that she had reached the end of her commercial life.

'Kingfisher' with all the volunteers (picture courtesy of Kate Shemilt)

Time for Renewal

'Egremont' has served the Trust well for 23 years, running around 1000 boat trips per year, and in 2014 she carried over 7000 passengers. These daily boat trips are a very important source of income to the Trust and the profits are vital for preservation of the canal. Consequently it was decided that, in order to continue to maintain the canal as an attractive amenity, it was necessary to invest in a new trip boat.

Fund-raising was started and the Trust was pleased to receive significant grants from a variety of sources. However, over 50 percent of the money needed was raised by members and volunteers – either by donations or by our regular, intensive, fund-raising activities. So, late 2014, design and construction of a new boat commenced.

The boat was built by Colecraft Widebeam Boats of Warwickshire, a company with 40 years experience in building canal boats. It was decided to build a slightly bigger boat with seating for 22 passengers, toilet facilities and access for customers in wheelchairs.

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

'Kingfisher' will be the sixth boat to join the fleet. In addition to 'Egremont', the Trust operates another trip boat, Richmond, which accommodates up to 38 passengers, and is used for our popular Fish & Chip trips, Father Christmas trips and charters. Most passengers are only aware of the trip boats, but, in fact, there are several other boats in service on essential maintenance.

The Work Horses

Two very useful workboats are the tugs, 'Jupiter' and 'Frisky'. These are two of the 90 Bantam tugs, which were produced in the 1950s and 60s, for use in canals and gravel pits. Bantam tugs are very unusual in that they are designed to push not to tow, which is the more energy efficient way of moving barges.

'Jupiter' (see picture below) was acquired by the Trust in 1987 from Portsmouth Harbour. She is still running on her original engine, now 60 years old. 'Frisky' came to the Trust in 1990. Frisky's engine has been re-built and she now sounds a little like a Formula 1 racing car. For sensible safety reasons we have not tested whether she also has the speed of a racing car! These two small, but sturdy, tugs are indispensable – manoeuvring pontoons, assisting trip boats in trouble, breaking ice in the winter and pushing the Trust's two barges. The barges are used to transport weeds, brambles and fallen trees to the waste site on the non-towpath side of the canal, where the greenery is lifted out by digger and then decomposed.

The final member of the Trust fleet is 'Boxer'; a very useful, reliable workboat; a favourite with the Tuesday morning work party. 'Boxer' is of simple design – a hull, a deck, and a railing - so she can be piled high with tools and people, which she takes to where the work needs to be done. A lovely start to the day is going down the canal on 'Boxer', chatting to other volunteers and noticing the changes in the wildlife and foliage.

We always welcome new helpers and supporters and there is a role for everyone!
If you wish to become a member or a volunteer for The Chichester Canal Trust contact Alison Slaney on 01243 536933

Jupiter at work with a barge
Together with an atmospheric view of the Cathedral as painted by Turner in 1828

REBIRTH OF THE PRIEST'S HOUSE, WHYKE ROAD

New owner Tom Hayes outlines its history and plans

In 2009, a devastating arson attack almost destroyed one of the oldest vernacular buildings in Chichester. After the fire to its thatched roof, The Old Priest's House near St. Mary's church, Whyke, was left with only a tarpaulin for cover. The building became increasingly dilapidated and almost dangerous. In November 2014 we bought this modest yet prominent building and began the extensive process of restoring it back to life.

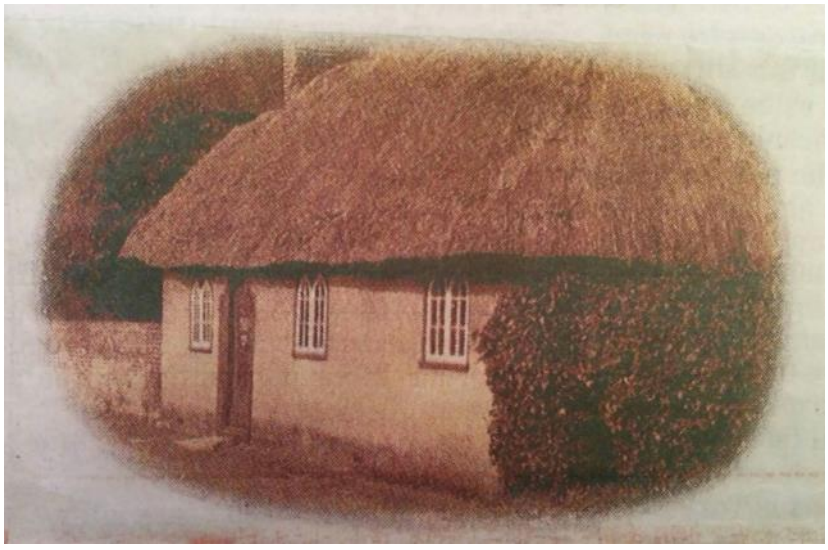
The house as it was in 2012 when acquired

Over 300 years of History

Despite its name, the exact origins and purpose of the building are as yet unknown. Archaeological investigations suggest that the building is of mid-17th century date and would originally have been even smaller in size with only two 12ft square rooms divided by a wattle and daub partition. Built on church land the building may well have been used as a detached vestry serving the adjacent church.

At that time, the priest of Whyke resided in the parish of St. Pancras (E. Chichester) and commuted half a mile for services. This has led some to speculate that the building may have been used to rest a horse or change into robes. In 1848 the building was identified as a 'cottage and garden' and in the late Victorian period the building was extended and renovated in the Neo-Gothic style.

In 1909 it became home to the 5th Chichester Scouts before finally becoming redundant in the mid 1990's. Last used as an office, it will now to be restored to use as a dwelling.



The Scout's HQ in 1936

From thatched roof to clay tiles

So far, the project has been hands-on with a considerable amount of time and effort taken to get the details right and ensure the repairs are sensitive to the building. One of the biggest dilemmas has been that of the replacement roof. Following discussions with a number of expert bodies, an overriding consensus was established that reinstating the thatch to the building would make it vulnerable to the risk of fire in the future. Traditional handmade clay tiles were therefore chosen as an alternative roof covering and can be seen on many other historic properties in the area. Seeking to retain some of the character of the thatch, the eaves overhang and, once complete, will cast a familiar shadow on the walls.

Local sourcing of labour and materials

Many local specialists and tradesmen have been employed and where possible materials have been sourced locally. English oak from Lillywhite's sawmill in Charlton near Goodwood has been used for timber repairs and the bricks used were traditionally made in Midhurst. Repointing and partial rebuilding of the brickwork along with other structural repairs were undertaken in 2015 and culminated in the construction of the new roof structure. This has allowed the retention of fragile historic timbers which will be displayed as a vaulted ceiling in the living room.

With the roof currently being tiled, the project is now at an exciting stage and will soon be completely watertight for the first time in 7 years!

NEWTOWN - A GEORGIAN 'GEM' WITHIN CHICHESTER'S CITY WALLS

Keith Mitchelson, Chairman, Newtown Residents Association explains the challenges

Newtown is a small area adjoining the Pallants. Formally designated as a 'Conservation Area' it consists of predominantly residential property bounded by East Street , Baffins Lane (including the Corn Exchange), Friary Lane and St John's Street. The street named New Town is in the middle of the area.

Buildings of Note

Many of the houses are of the Georgian period and are Grade 2 listed. The most prominent building is St John's Chapel completed in 1813. It is one of Chichester's several Grade 1 listed buildings, which include Chichester Cathedral and Pallant House. Both the Chapel and a number of the domestic residences were developed on the site of the former Dominican Friary (the Black Friars). The objective was to establish a New Town of grand houses for the professional classes. It represents a classical example of a Georgian development.

The Association's Role

The Newtown Residents Association was established in 2006 due to concerns with planning, parking and traffic management matters. Like any residents association you must be reasonable and logical with your objections. Do not expect 100% success. The successes that have been achieved so far are

- residents-only parking in part of the area,
- double yellow lines on one side of St John's Street to address parking chaos on Sunday and
- the withdrawal of a planning application to convert the former Thomas Eggar building in Baffins Lane into restaurants and bars with over two hundred covers and open from 9am until midnight.

View from New Town to St John's Street

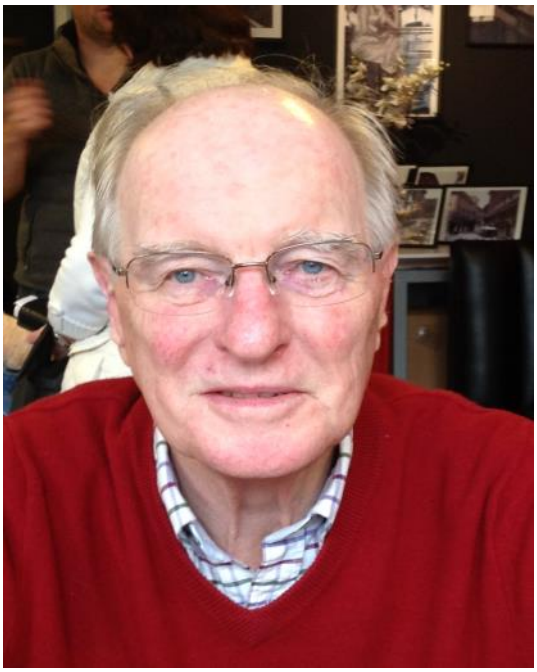
St. John's Chapel, one of our grade I listed buildings

The major disappointment has been the new town houses in St John's Street next to St John's Chapel. The design and the exterior materials used are totally inappropriate in the opinion of the residents.

The current 'challenge' concerns heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) - their length and weight (see ChiSores on page 19). The streets were simply not designed to cater for such enormous vehicles. The result is constant road surface damage, traffic flow obstacles and road accidents. There used to be a weight restriction for commercial vehicles, but this was withdrawn by WSCC some years ago.

The residents of Newtown are passionate to retain this conservation 'gem'. We are grateful to our WSCC Councillor -Margaret Evans - and CDC Councillors - Pam Dignum, Nigel Galloway and Len Macey, who fully share our objectives.

WHO'S WHO IN THE SOCIETY– TIM ROOTH, OUR PRESIDENT
An early defender of Historic Chichester



Following an early career which involved a diverse range of jobs (including banking, gold mining and brewing) in London, Toronto and northern Canada, I studied Economics and Economic History at the University of Hull. Subsequently most of my working life has been spent at the University of Portsmouth (and in its earlier incarnation, as Portsmouth Polytechnic), and where I am now Emeritus Professor of Modern Economic History.

I relished my time in Portsmouth where in addition to the pleasures of teaching I had welcome opportunities for travel when lecturing and working in archives both elsewhere in Britain and overseas.

Iris and I moved to Chichester at the end of 1967. Here it was the blight problems in Orchard Street - threatened by a dual carriage-way - and the increasingly apparent deterioration in the fabric of the City that encouraged us to respond to David Goodman's call for action in 1973. I was a founder member and first secretary of the Chichester Society and remained closely involved in its turbulent early years. The challenges to Chichester, of course, remain.

'CHILIGHTS'
Highlights that get our applause

A STATUE ACHIEVES LISTED STATUS

In January Historic England announced that 41 sculptures across England, which had been designed to bring our public spaces back to life after World War II, had been listed. Amongst those listed is a Chichester sculpture which has been granted Grade II listed status.

The Symbol of Discovery statue stands outside the former Chichester District Museum building in Little London. It is by the sculptor John Skelton (1923-1999) and was unveiled in 1963 by Sir Charles Wheeler. It depicts two hands cradling a man-made jewel of gold leaf set in Perspex. There is a blue slate plaque set into the surrounding cobbles that says 'Museums present to the world the precious offerings of the earth'.

The sculpture was commissioned by Stanley Roth, the architect who designed the museum and echoes the idea of discovered fragments and relics of the past that find their way into museum collections.

Like many of the 41 listed sculptures, the Symbol of Discovery was not met with universal acclaim at the time, being seen as too avant-garde. Only now are such sculptures starting to get the appreciation they deserve. These sculptures form part of an irreplaceable national collection of public art which has now been recognised and protected by Historic England.

Unfortunately, and not without a little irony, listed status has been granted when the Symbol of Discovery is (as of early February) under wraps during building conversion work on the former museum.

RESTORED MARKET CROSS WEATHERVANE

The weathervane was removed in 2014 as it was at risk because of the poor state of the supporting structure. It has been restored to its former glory by the local craftsman – Ian Harris – who painted it in the past. It will be stored in the City Council's offices awaiting renovation to the Market Cross before it can be reinstalled.

MINERVA IN CRANE STREET

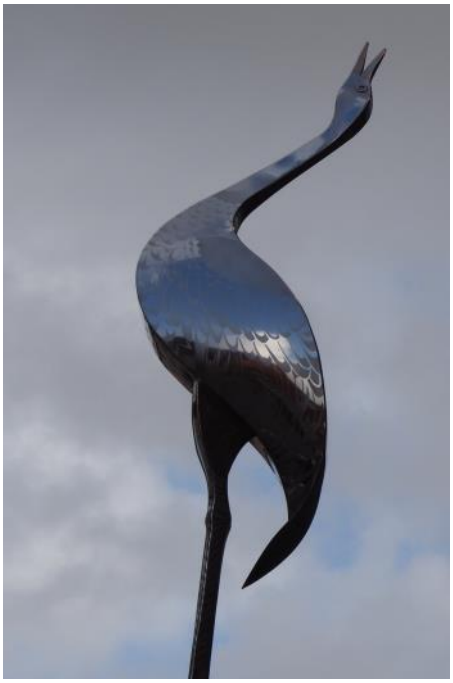
Often missed, this ceramic tile erected in the 1970s on the wall in Crane Street (corner of North Street) depicts Minerva with an owl on her shoulder and watching the flight of a swift. Other birds are shown, but not a crane.

It is by sculptor Yvonne Hudson Rusbridge whose output across Sussex includes the St Richard embroideries with Rosalie Williams, depicting episodes in the life of St Richard in Chichester Cathedral.

NEW CRANE SCULPTURES ADORN LOCAL STREET

These fine sculptures were designed by Jo Calcutt of Eastleigh Borough Council following a competition run through local newspapers, websites and the Architects magazines in 2012/13 by Chichester BID.

Getting such projects off the ground and through to completion is always a challenge. Obtaining planning permission is never a rapid process, and once achieved there are various parties to get involved.



The sculptures were manufactured by Camm Designs, the foundations were completed by Landbuild and the final installation was undertaken by Southern Fabrications in November 2015.

The whole project was funded by BID members and their levy fund.

A plaque unveiling takes place on 1 April during a relaunch of Crane Street. BID manager, Charlotte Wickins expressed the hope that visitors will be drawn to see these high quality sculptures in Crane Street.

BID are seeking volunteers – see back page.

HERITAGE TRAILS PROJECT LAUNCHED WITH PROJECT MANAGER APPOINTED

Chairman Richard Childs outlines this exciting development

At the AGM in November I announced The Society's success in obtaining a grant of £53,200 from the HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) enhanced by the Chichester Society and Chichester City Council each contributing £1,000.

Over the next two years the project will recruit volunteers who will undertake research among the various historical archives kept in the city and conduct oral history interviews with Chichester's older residents. This research will then form the basis of 12 Chichester Heritage Trail leaflets which will take people on short, self-guided walks around the city. They will be published from the autumn onwards and will also be available online.

To manage the project we are delighted to welcome Chris Hare as Project Manager of the Society's Chichester Heritage Trails Project. Chris comes with a wealth of experience in managing local history and heritage related projects.

Since 2009, Chris in partnership with his wife, Ann, has run his own heritage consultancy, History People UK, specialising in the writing of Lottery funding applications and the managing of heritage projects. During this time he has successfully managed a number of Heritage Lottery funded projects including, the All Our Yesterdays project for West Sussex Record Office, the Worthing Village Heritage Project for the Sidney Walter Centre, and the Songs of the South Downs project for the South Downs Society.

If you are interested in volunteering you can register your interest now by emailing Chris at info@chichesterheritagetrails.org.uk or calling him on 07794 600639

Supported by The National Lottery® through the Heritage Lottery Fund | heritage lottery fund

EVENTS FOR CHISOC MEMBERS

NATURES WAY, SELSEY – 25 May

Date: Wednesday 25 May 10am –12noon
Numbers: Up to 12 people
Content: A 2 hour tour of this manufacturer of freshly prepared food, plus, if available visit to the kitchen.
Note: those with nut allergies cannot attend
Location: Chichester Food Park, Bognor Road, Chichester, PO20 1NW
Travel: Independently by car; car sharing advisable as visitor parking limited
Cost: Free
To apply: Contact Bob Wiggins, 1 Theatre Lane, Chichester, PO19 1SR or email editor@wiggins.me.uk Applications **to be received by Friday 6 May** and will be managed in date order.

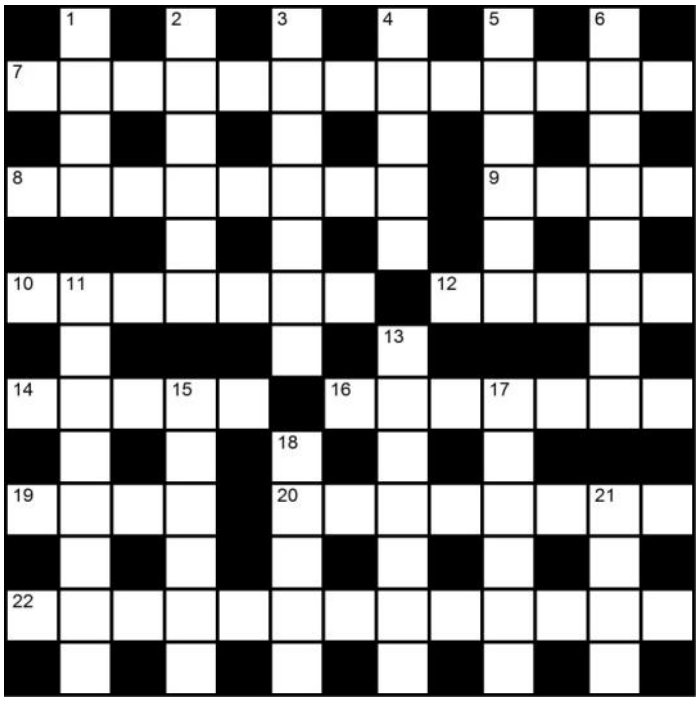
TOUR OF HMS WARRIOR 1860 PORTSMOUTH HISTORIC DOCKYARD – 15 June

Date: Wednesday 15 June tour 2pm (arrive no later than 1.40pm)
Numbers: Minimum 15
Content: A 60-90min tour with specialist talk covering engineering, navigation and social history of HMS Warrior 1860, Britain's first iron-hulled, armoured warship and the pride of Queen Victoria's Fleet covering the engineering, navigation and social history. Tickets include complimentary Harbour Tour (subject to availability) which can be taken any time the same day
Location: Portsmouth Historic Dockyard (off Queens Road
Travel: Independently by train (recommended – Portsmouth Harbour) or car
Cost: £23.50 (Concession) or £24.20 (adult)
To apply: Send a stamped addressed envelope with your cheque **to be received by Wednesday 25 May** payable to The Chichester Society – to The Editor, Chichester Society, 1 Theatre Lane, Chichester PO19 1SR. Applications will be managed in date order. Monies will be refunded if minimum party number not achieved.

CHISOC CROSSWORD

An underlying theme of this crossword is the environment, so several of the answers relate to this topic.

The solution will appear in the June 2016 issue of the Newsletter, but will be on our website before then for those who can't wait!



CLUES

Across

7 Divest of trees (13)
8 Immediately after this (8)
9 Nope it's not closed (4)
10 This open framework may be tactile (7)
12 Open these gates and you may get wet (5)
14 They make a beeline for these (5)
16 Belonging to the same group (7)
19 Not a monetary pound (4)
20 A farm dawn may address climate change (4,4)
22 Capable of decaying (13)

Down

1 Past subjective of be (4)
2 Set for is collection of trees (6)
3 Positive feeling of admiration (7)
4 Not sit (5)
5 Trolls walk this way (6)
6 Immediately after this (8)
11 Arian CID leads to dangerous precipitation (4,4)
13 A seat of seeds (7)
15 Include or contain (6)
17 Group fighting in public (6)
18 Tool for bending cold metal (5)
21 A principle of behaviour (4)

'CHISORES'
Eyesores that require attention

VEHICLES IN NEWTOWN

Nisa and Toolstation lorries are over 40ft long; the latter delivers to Cotswold and is habitually parked on double yellow lines in front of the Chapel. They wobble lampposts as they pass, so goodness knows what is happening to our old buildings!

SOLUTION
DECEMBER CROSSWORD

1 T	A	2 S	E	3 R	■	4 L	O	5 T	U	6 S	E	7 S
R	■	E	■	A	■	I	■	R	■	H	■	O
8 A	R	G	U	M	E	N	T	A	T	I	O	N
N	■	M	■	■	■	T	■	N	■	P	■	N
9 S	L	E	E	10 P	L	E	S	S	■	11 S	L	Y
O	■	N	■	R	■	L	■	F	■	C	■	■
12 M	E	T	R	I	C	■	13 G	O	T	H	I	14 C
■	■	E	■	V	■	15 S	■	R	■	A	■	A
16 D	A	D	■	17 A	D	H	O	M	I	N	E	M
E	■	A	■	T	■	A	■	■	■	D	■	B
18 P	E	R	P	E	N	D	I	19 C	U	L	A	R
O	■	C	■	E	■	E	■	O	■	E	■	I
20 T	S	H	I	R	T	S	■	21 D	O	R	I	C

TREASURER – THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY

The Chichester Society must appoint a new Treasurer during 2016. The Treasurer plays a crucial role in the successful running of the Society. Accountancy skills are not essential – but an interest in money and accurate recording is! If you are interested in becoming our next Treasurer please contact

Richard Childs, Chairman Chichester Society, Bayswell Cottage, 14 Leatherbottle Lane, Chichester PO19 7DB. Email : infantis56@gmail.com

THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY
Registered Charity No 268055 www.chichestersociety.org.uk

Founder : David Goodman **Patron:** The Mayor of Chichester
President: Tim Rooth **Vice-President:** Joy Crawshaw
Chairman: Richard Childs **Vice-Chairman:** Bill Sharp
Secretary: Anthony Quail **Treasurer:** David Wilson

Executive Committee: Andrew Bain, Danielle Charbonneau, Rodney Chambers, Charles Gillmore, Roger Hobbs, Cedric Mitchell, Trevor Redman, Grace Taylor, John Templeton, John Wichers and Bob Wiggins

Editor: Bob Wiggins. **Submissions:** to the Editor: 1 Theatre Lane, Chichester, PO19 1SR or Email: editor@wiggins.me.uk
Tel: 01243 789896 Twitter: @Chi_Soc
Neither the Editor nor the Society necessarily subscribes to our contributors' views. The Editor reserves the right to edit if necessary any submitted articles or letters.

MEMBERSHIP

Single Membership: £8 by Standing Order; £11 by cheque.
Joint Membership (double): £12 by Standing Order; £15 by cheque
Life Membership (60 and over): £120 single; £160 joint
Under-18s: £4 **Corporate membership:** £100 (one-off)
Applications for membership and annual subscriptions to the Membership Secretary, John Wichers, 1 St Martin's Square, Chichester PO19 1NW. Tel: 01243 778976 Email: john@wichers.plus.com

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