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THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

THE CHISOC NEWSLETTER

PAPER OR ONLINE?

The Newsletter has always been printed on paper and distributed by hand and post. We suspect most ChiSoc members prefer to receive a paper magazine rather than electronically.

How about you?

Tell us by emailing secretary@chichestersociety.org.uk

www.chichestersociety.org.uk

A life-size sculpture of Admirals Horatio Nelson (left) and George Murray (right) now grace North Street in front of the Council House, the work of local artist Vincent Gray. The unveiling ceremony was performed by former First Sea Lord Sir George Zambellas in the presence of Mayor Richard Plowman on 3 April. Sir George Murray, born in Chichester in 1759 and a close friend of Lord Nelson, later retired to the city where he was Mayor in 1815. Biographical information is displayed nearby. Photo: Clive Hand

AREN'T WE LUCKY TO LIVE IN CHICHESTER!

As we emerge from this traumatic pandemic, we should reflect on how lucky we are to live in Chichester and be cared for by the NHS, voluntary bodies, our neighbours and all who have looked after us in whatever way. We must now support our businesses and attractions and help them to recover. At the time of writing, Pallant House Gallery and the Novium Museum plan to re-open from 18 May, while the Festival Theatre's production of *South Pacific* begins on 5 July. These cultural icons are bringing life back to our city.

There's shopping of course! Plus visits to our favourite pubs and restaurants. It's really good to see that during lockdown much within the City has continued to move forward. To illustrate this, we have John Gillespie's stainless steel *Key Worker* outside Marks and Spencer, in honour of so many during the pandemic; while in North Street there now stands Vincent Gray's statue of *Admirals Nelson and Murray* next to the Council House; these new public works of art are brightening our lives.

With summer arriving, together with the easing of restrictions, we can get out and about, meet up with friends and family, breathe the warmer air and enjoy nature's beauty. May I thank you all for your loyalty to the Society over the past year and I look forward to meeting you at one of our future events.

Peter Evans, Chairman

MYTHS AND THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Chichester District Council (CDC) is updating the 2015 Local Plan, a process called Local Plan Review or LPR. This has been criticised by some voluntary groups, but unfortunately these critiques are often myths, and should be challenged. Christopher Mead-Briggs explains.

MYTH 1

CDC hasn't insisted on less new housing

NOT TRUE. Letters have been sent and there have been meetings with the Government; Chichester's representatives included the Leader of the Council and our MP. Before considering any reduction in our housing *allocation*, the Government must see our evidence-base and hear our case at an Examination in Public.

MYTH 2

Chichester's housing *allocation* is linked to planned A27 improvements

NOT TRUE. The A27 improvements proposed by Highways England in 2015 included changes designed to speed traffic for the national need of the A27. The LPR requires smaller junction alterations to mitigate the impact of the additional local housing. Whereas the cost of the upgrading of the A27 could have come from the Exchequer, the A27 LPR mitigation costs will have to be financed in part by developer contributions through charges on a site-by-site basis. Another myth is that at the last Examination of the 2015 Local Plan, the Inspector accepted a lower housing figure because the road infrastructure was insufficient for the housing allocation.

NOT TRUE. The Inspector accepted a reduced figure because the Transport Study was constrained by the limitations of the number of houses considered by the Study. To reach a decision on a higher number would have required a reassessment of all the evidence on transport impacts and mitigation which would have delayed the introduction of the 2015 Plan. It was therefore found sound but would need a review after 5 years.

MYTH 3

With no approved LPR developers can build what they like

PARTLY TRUE. Until the LPR is approved we face 'planning by appeal'. Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that there is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, CDC has agreed an *Interim Position Statement* and housing developers now consult it for policy guidance.

Although *housing* policies in the 2015 Local Plan are out of date, the Local Plan itself is not and other policies in the Plan may be relevant to an application. As the LPR moves forward it will reach a stage known as *Regulation 19* giving the LPR greater influence in planning appeals. This is expected in Spring 2022 according to the LPR timetable published in the *Local Development Scheme*.

MYTH 4

Chichester is taking more than its fair share of new housing

NOT TRUE. Central Government calculates all housing *allocations* and *affordability* plays a major part. This is defined by comparing average pay with average house prices, resulting in a *ratio*. This number is 14 in Chichester District, one of the highest outside London, and explains why Chichester's new housing *allocation* is high.

MYTH 5

CDC isn't working hard to complete this LPR

NOT TRUE. It's important to appreciate the huge challenge to assemble evidence for the Review. To date, this adds up to 41 policy documents, including reports by Statutory Consultees on subjects as diverse as wastewater, flood risk, environmental issues, transport and climate change. CDC has enlisted assistance from the Planning Advisory Service.

MYTH 6

Wastewater entering Chichester Harbour is the main source of nitrate pollution

NOT TRUE. Research shows that wastewater from treatment plants is responsible for only 10 percent of nitrates entering the Harbour. A much larger proportion – 40 percent – runs off surrounding farmland due to agricultural production.

MYTH 7

CDC should ask Government for a moratorium on planning applications

Anyone can submit a planning application. The larger developments usually require comment from Statutory Consultees such as the Environment Agency or Natural England, who act as 'watchdogs.' If those agencies object, as they did in the Solent because of nitrate pollution, work begins on finding a solution by *mitigation*. In the meantime, developers are at liberty to appeal, but usually do not, because of the risk of losing the appeal until a scheme of mitigation can be found.

THE STATE OF PORTFIELD FOOTBALL CLUB GROUND – AN ONGOING SAGA

Richard Childs on why this overgrown land remains undeveloped

The former Portfield Football Club ground pictured in March 2021. Portfield Cemetery Chapel can be seen in the distance.
Photo: Richard Childs

In March 2015 I wrote an article for this magazine decrying the state of the Portfield Football Club ground. Six years on and the site is even more overgrown and seemingly nothing is happening. At a time when we are bemoaning the eating-up of greenfield sites around the city by ravenous developers, this prime brownfield site still lies in abeyance.

Back in 2015 the main glitch to development was poor access to the site from Westhampnett Road. This of course is where the developers of the Barnfield retail park site had a key part to play for they needed planning approval for improvements to the road. This would also improve access from Church Road and thus improve the market value of the former football club site, when owners Chichester District Council (CDC) sell it.

Since early 2020 we have had a brand spanking new roundabout along with a new Lidl supermarket. So why no progress on the sale of the site? There is a one-word answer – Coronavirus - which has curtailed progress on the disposal of the site. I have however received assurances from CDC that progress in the disposal of this site will be made this year. Issues will need resolving but what is not in dispute is that the site is designated for housing. This was stated in the 2015 Local Plan and is included in the new Plan in preparation. It is also recorded in the 2021 *Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment* (HELAA) as a brownfield site suitable for housing development.

As owners of the site CDC say that they need a planning consent before it can be sold, to establish that *value for money* is achieved on the agreed sale price. The original planning permission expired years ago. When a renewal was proposed there was an internal argument and this second permission also expired. A third application was withdrawn in 2014. So, it's back to the drawing board. Access for a new development will be down to the developer in agreement with West Sussex County Council Highways. I would expect proposals for upgrading public footpaths to enable pedestrian and cycle access. There may be a case for making Church Road a cul de sac. In short, there is still a long way to go before planning approval is given and a developer purchases the site, but we might see some progress this year. As the Romans said, *festina lente* – make haste slowly!

CHICHESTER'S PLACE IN WORKS OF FICTION

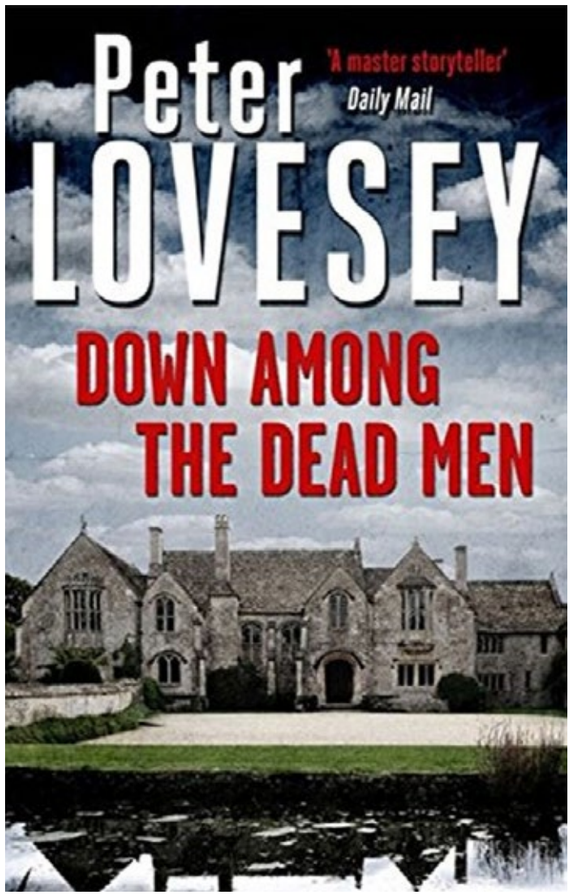
The city features in many novels, usually under a nom de plume! Timothy J McCann tells us more.

Given its antiquity and status as a cathedral city it's a surprise Chichester has never been the subject of a major novel, and there are few that deal with the city in detail. For example, there's nothing to compare with George Moore's *Esther Waters*, 1894, set in Southwick or Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* of 1938. This was first explored by W.H. Bourne in thirteen articles published in the *Chichester Observer* between 1929 and 1930, and later by G. Thurston Hopkins in *Literary Originals of Sussex*, 1936. Nevertheless, Chichester features in a variety of published material which my enquiries have brought to light. Let us explore…

Early references

The earliest known novel featuring Chichester seems to be Mrs. Annie Webb's *Pomponia: or The Gospel in Caesar's Household* published by The Religious Tract Society in 1867, which is about Chichester in Roman times when known as Regnum. As the market town of the district, Chichester features in the character studies of *Manhood End* by Mrs. Henry Dudeney, 1920, *Joanna Godden Married* by Shelia Kaye-Smith, 1926, and *Wanderlight* by Ernest Raymond, 1924, when the city is called Widdering.

Chichester appears in Alfred E. Carey's two novels *Sir Waterloo* and *Times Hour Glass*, 1920; in David Whitelaw's *The Imposter* 1915 and in the farcical comedy *Special Licence*, by Frank Stayton 1929. HG Wells visits Chichester in *The Wheels of Chance*, 1896.



Crime in Chichester

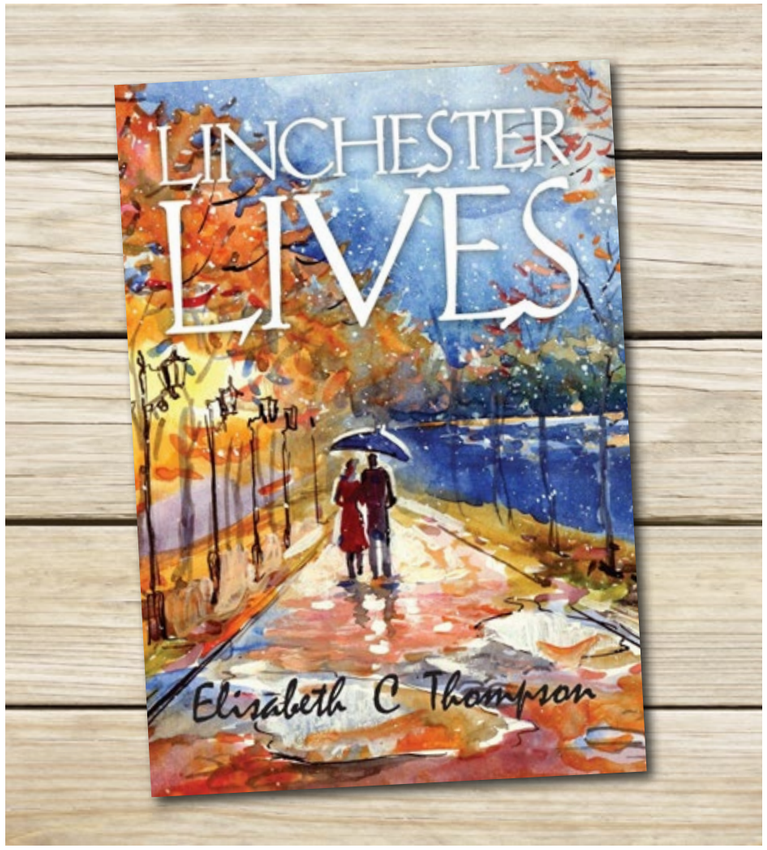
Despite the city not being in any sense mysterious nor having a reputation as a crime spot, Chichester has been used by many writers as the background for detective novels. Pride of place goes to Oscar Wilde who set one of his crimes in the Cathedral Deanery in *Lord Arthur Saville's Crime, and other Stories* published 1891. For Victor Whitechurch, Chichester is known as Frattenbury or Redminster in his serious novels such as *Concerning Himself*,1909, and *Three Summers* 1915; and also diverting comedies *The Canon in Residence*, 1904, and *The Dean and Jacinora*, 1926; *the Canon's Dilemma 1909*, a collection of tales, and *The Templeton Case*, a detective story, 1924.

Chichester has a place in J.S. Fletcher's detective stories although he uses several names: Brycester in *The Annexation Society* 1916 and *Malvery Hold*, 1931; Selcaster in *The Markenmore Mystery* 1922; Selchester for *Lost Mr. Linthwaite*, 1920 and *Murder in the Pallant*, 1927; as Southernstowe in *The Safety Pin* 1924; and Wrenchester in *Who Killed Alfred Snowe* 1933 and *Murder of the Only Witness* 1933. Fletcher uses Wrychester in *Wrychester Paradise*, 1924; and in his book of short stories *Green Ink*, 1937. Finally, it is Wyechester in *The Fifteenth Century Crozier* his book of short stories, *The Secret of the Barbican and Other Stories* 1924. Detective novels set in Chichester have proliferated in recent years. Local writer Peter Lovesey set three of his novels in the city: *The Circle* and *The Headhunters* both published in 2008 and *Down among the Dead Men* in 2015.

Women writers

Marjorie Hessell Tillman set her novel *Mrs. Morel*, 1942, in a manor house outside Chichester, to which she gave the name Camchester. Georgette Heyer wrote some early detective novels and Why *Shoot the Butler*, 1932, includes mention of Chichester described as Carchester. The prolific girls school writer Elsie J. Oxenham set many of her novels in Sussex, and Chichester was always Eldingham in her books. Helen C. Roberts named Chichester Farrowfield in Old *Brent's Daughter*, 1912.

The most prolific author of novels set in Chichester is Elisabeth C. Thompson who has written some ten books with the city called Linchester. Atlantis Publications of Chichester published *Something Gained in* 2006, *Nothing Ventured*, 2007, *Weaving Dreams* 2008, *Painting the Cloud* 2010 and *Precious Child* 2010. Thereafter Spiderware of Peterborough was the publisher resulting in *Linchester Lives* and *Forgiving Thyme* in 2015, *The Emily Way* and *Living Loving and Lies* in 2016, and *Rosscape*, 2017.



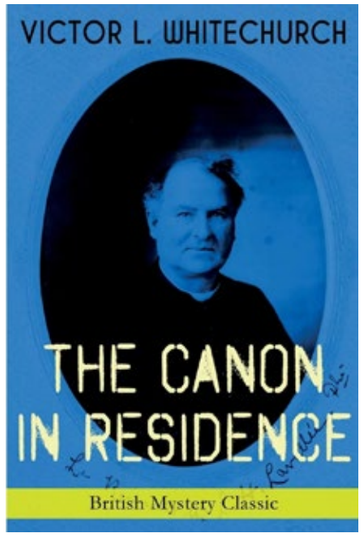
Marshminster, Regnum, Spirethorne, Selchester….

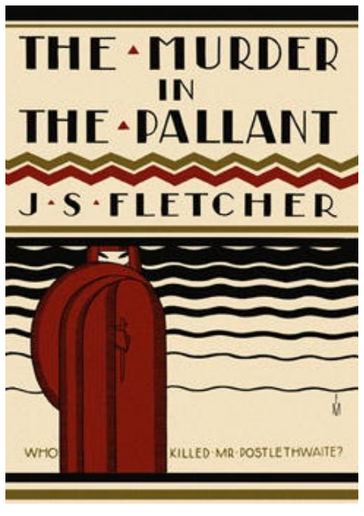
Tickner Edwardes always regarded Chichester as Marshminster. Although his books are centred on Burpham, he mentions Chichester in several of them, including *Tansy*, 1914, *Lore of the Honey Bee*, 1917, *The Sunset Bride*, 1925 and *Eve the Enemy*, 1931. Patrick Garland, when Director of Chichester Festival Theatre, somehow found time to pen a children's story – *Oswald the Owl*, 1990 – in which Chichester is named Regnum. Valentine Fletcher wrote a children's story *Fun* and *More Fun at Fulderton*, 1974, in which Chichester is named Spirethorne.

A.N. Wilson christened his little market town near the sea Selchester in his novel *Unguarded Hours*, 1978, but it is not entirely clear that he based Selchester on Chichester. Wilson wrote: 'apart from the closeness of the sea, it has not much to be said for it. Even sightseers in those parts, hungry for ecclesiastical architecture, would have been better advised to look at Chichester or Rochester'. In his *Wise Virgin*, 1972, he makes Selchester the home of Dean Pottle's hexagonal library in the Deanery. John Cooper Powys in *After my Fashion*, 1980, calls Chichester Selshurst and describes it well.

Enjoy Oscar Wilde's paradoxical wit, immerse yourself in the doings of the Cathedral establishment with Victor Whitechurch or sample some of the detective stories set in Chichester. Unfortunately, there is insufficient space here to quote their descriptions of the city. But should you discover Chichester novels I've not mentioned, please let me know: an email to **timothy.j.mccann67@gmail.com** would be welcome!

Timothy J McCann is a former Assistant County Archivist at West Sussex Record Office.





A YEAR WHEN THE CATHEDRAL BELLS FELL SILENT

Cathy Clark and David Roberts are looking forward to hearing Chichester's bells again

Many members of the Chichester Society will have missed the joyful sound of the Cathedral's bells during lockdown. But all was not lost. Last year, the volunteer bell ringers did not disappear! Each week they held two practices using *Ringing Room*, an amazing piece of software that enables groups of bell ringers to ring peals together using their computer keyboards rather than pulling on a rope.

Our ringers have contributed recordings of previous ringing to mark special occasions online, including the VE Day anniversary in May. They also returned on Sunday 6th September for services but were socially distanced and limited to six rather than the full complement of eight ringers. Later, on 2nd November, the Cathedral's bells were rung in remembrance for All Souls' Day, when the Church remembers all the faithful departed: names are read out in the Cathedral for those who have died during the year and on this occasion, we remembered all those who had died during the pandemic. Coincidentally, our bells were rung for the *Sussex Together Festival of the Arts* that opened the following day in the Cathedral. But their silence continued for much of 2020 in line with changing government regulations, although last Christmas was an exception. By limiting ringing to couples, we satisfied the three-household rule applicable to December 25th, and on Christmas morning Chichester could hear the joyful sound of bells calling citizens to the 9.30am service.

The Cathedral's bells go back centuries; this was made in 1792 and recast in 1961
Photo: Luke Marshall

A unique bell tower

Chichester is the only English Cathedral with a surviving detached medieval Bell Tower, or 'campanile', and it dates from around 1400. At about 600 years old it's in urgent need of restoration and was added to the Heritage at Risk Register in 2016. In normal pre-pandemic times, the tower was in regular use for bell ringing but also hosted a *Drop-in* project for local children after school.

Research shows that ecclesiastical bell towers came about as early as the 5th century as an architectural metaphor for the ascent to heaven, referencing Jacob's Ladder, amongst other things. Their bells were used in liturgy to summon the souls of the deceased to heaven, usually with the intercession of a saint, commonly St Michael, being the angel of death and bearer of souls. These towers were almost always positioned in a cemetery, as in the case at Chichester.

The Cathedral's bellringers on 11th November 2018, taken to mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War armistice when a Quarter Peal of 1280 Yorkshire Surprise Major was rung. Front row, from left: Mike Smith, Colin Spencer, Gill Roberts, Hamish McNaughton. Back row from left: David Roberts, Nick Deadman, Jane Deadman and Peter Wilson.
Photo: courtesy of Chichester Cathedral Bellringers

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Dr Michael Shapland has been researching the history of Chichester's bell tower and he comments:

Towers were used at ecclesiastical sites to guard entrances, not defensively but symbolically, as a metaphor for the gatehouse to the City of God. These detached belltowers commonly stand at the entrances to their church precincts, as is also the case at Chichester. I am very much looking forward to undertaking further research at Chichester when restrictions are eased.

The Chichester tower has eight bells that vary in weight from about a quarter to nearly a ton though the heaviest is a fixed clock bell weighing three and a half tons. The oldest dates to 1587 but there are records of bells rung in the Cathedral during the early 13th century before the bell tower was built.

There are 16 ringers for Sunday services who practice on Wednesday evenings. Visiting ringers are also welcome on these occasions so there are nearly always enough present for all eight bells, and by taking turns everyone who attends is included. Under normal conditions the bells are rung weekly with additional special services such as Midnight Mass at Christmas. The bells are also rung to celebrate weddings when requested.

National events

Opportunities sometimes occur to ring Chichester's bells for a national celebration, or campaign. The most recent of these was the *Ringing Remembers* campaign to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War. They were also rung to commemorate *The Day that Sussex Died*, an anniversary when over thirteen hundred men from the South Downs and Sussex were killed or injured in a single day at Ferme du Bois on 30th June 1916, part of the Somme Battle. For these occasions, the Cathedral Band sometimes do a *peal* which lasts about three hours, involves over 5,000 different changes and is mentally very demanding! Prior to Covid restrictions, the Band rang a *quarter peal* once a month on a Saturday, performances that were often dedicated to someone or an event.

Could You be a Bell Ringer?

The Band is looking forward to the time when its members get back to the Cathedral again for real ringing. There are several experienced ringers and a few learners and when pandemic restrictions end, the Band will be keen to welcome new recruits of all ages from about twelve years old upwards. If interested, would you e-mail ***info@chichestercathedral.org.uk*** for details.

Cathy Clark was formerly Communications Assistant at the Cathedral and David Roberts is Steeple Keeper of the Cathedral's Guild of Bellringers

The bell chamber is situated at the tower's fourth level.
Photo: Luke Marshall

Chichester Cathedral has the only medieval Bell Tower in England. It dates from around 1400, is 107 feet high with 8 feet thick walls.
Photo: Daniel Boss

A MANIFESTO FOR NEW HOUSING

Andrew Bain proposes a re-imagined design for one of Chichester's new estates

Following an article in the June 2020 Newsletter, I've continued to assess the design of new housing in and around our city which I believe could be so much better. To illustrate what is possible, we'll look at an award-winning design for new housing in another cathedral city and apply these principles to one of Chichester's newest estates. Would you like to live there?

What's wrong?

In my view the design of most new housing now built around Chichester fails for several reasons. It doesn't create well balanced communities and places of character; isn't aspirational in meeting the zero carbon targets for new housing; blurs the city's fringes by suburbanising the countryside; and relies on private car use, creating traffic congestion and poor air quality.

Is there a solution?

Yes there is, and to begin with the District Council as our local planning authority should adjust its priorities by insisting new housing providers revise their development practices. Here are some examples:

- Chichester's declining in-town industrial estates should be renewed and businesses relocated out of town and the land re-purposed for housing with increased density.
- Trees and hedgerow should be retained and enhanced around greenfield estates.
- Energy-efficient *Passivhaus* standards should be applied to all new housing construction, and poorly performing detached dwellings replaced by terraced housing orientated to maximise their solar energy contribution.
- Improve bus services to link with the City centre and substantially reduce car parking provision; combined with new cycle pathways.
- A better mix of house types in small groups; flats to have individual ground level access and closely linked outdoor amenity space.
- New facilities for neighbourhood use such as a café-corner shop combined with a community hall, sometimes known as a 'common house'.

This design won the 2019 RIBA Stirling prize – 93 homes at Goldsmith Street in Norwich *Photo: Tim Crocker*

Madgwick Park as conceived and built today: a tarmac wasteland ignoring this location's Sussex heritage *Photo: Andrew Bain*

A Norwich award-winner

To illustrate a solution in the context of greenfield development, I have taken the 2019 RIBA Stirling Prize winning project for 93 homes at Goldsmith Street in Norwich designed by Mikhail Riches Architects. I've applied these ideas to the Madgwick Park site at Westhampnett 1½ miles east of the City centre, an estate of 300 homes approaching completion. A year ago in this magazine I criticised Madgwick Park for not living up to its Design Statement submitted with the planning application. An attractive balanced community was promised, design images hinting at a rural village community in keeping with the South Downs and close to Goodwood. Similar observations could be applied to other new developments around Chichester - at Shopwhyke Lakes and Whitehouse Farm, or Minerva Heights as the developers now call this emerging neighbourhood.

The RIBA-Stirling prize for Goldsmith Street in Norwich recognised its success in providing a model to demonstrate what is possible for developers and councils considering social housing provision. The quality of the detailing and spaces created provide tangible community and home appeal that people could buy into and live with. By contrast, the current developer housing model provided at Madgwick Park offers a fantasy of individual homes tricked-out with traditional Sussex references, pokey rooms, and accommodation for 'his and hers' cars. Flats and 'affordable' dwellings are not successfully integrated. Madgwick Park is an estate of housing jumbled together at close quarters, lost in a wasteland of indefensible turfed frontages and highway engineering. The adjoining photograph, taken very recently, illustrates this 'tarmac wasteland'. While some people may react negatively to the Goldsmith Street model, I feel strongly that we need to be weaned off unsustainable habits to achieve what is required now and in future years.

Re-thinking Madgwick Park

To do this, I've taken a similar accommodation brief used by nationwide developer Barratt David Wilson Homes for a mixed development of 300 homes. These are arranged in groups of 18 dwellings: 3 x one bed flats, 6 x two bed houses, 6 x three bed houses, and 3 x four bed houses with integral garage. There is lay-by parking provision for 15 cars and generally 1 parking space per dwelling. Streets are ranged east-west along contours to give southern aspect and with north-south terraces giving triangular wedges of green breaking up the Madgwick Lane frontage. Access lanes are landscaped for slow moving cars shared with pedestrians. Defensible front gardens encourage neighbour interaction. Rear gardens have an access path with a widened central area for communal safe play. *The Green* is a 1.7-hectare focal feature akin to Litten Park, incorporating a bus stop, café-corner shop and community hall.

A bus service to the city centre enters from Madgwick Lane and exits on to Stane Street. A path runs from The Green to St Peter's churchyard and thence to the existing community of Westhampnett with its school. Two segregated cycle paths link with the established cycle path around the Westhampnett roundabout and along Stane Street.

House plans are up to 10 percent larger than most developer examples and designed to be accessed into the kitchen-diner or stair hall. Flats are included in each group to encourage diversified neighbourliness and each has its own street level access to establish proprietorial pride. Ceiling heights are 30 centimetres higher than developer housing with correspondingly increased window head level as appreciated in Victorian housing. *Passivhaus* energy efficiency standards provide high occupant comfort while using very little energy for heating and cooling, thus achieving a 75% reduction in energy consumption compared to the current UK standard of new-build housing. The construction incorporates very high levels of insulation, high-performance windows, external doors with insulated frames, and a mechanical vent system. Window canopies admit low level winter sun but shade excessive solar gain in the summer.

In Conclusion

As the saying goes 'What's not to like'? Chichester wants to welcome new residents as well as provide for its own in a manner that makes a positive contribution and – importantly - will be popular and valued by future generations. It is surely reasonable to hope the District Council, as local planning authority, will give increased priority to these higher standards in future years?

Andrew Bain is a retired architect who formerly practiced in London.

Imagining Madgwick Park as if designed according to the principles expressed by the RIBA Stirling prize-winner *Illustration: Andrew Bain*

View across the upper harbour to Dell Quay

Goodwood Racecourse is in the distance

Photo: Richard Gatley

CLASSICAL CHICHESTER, OLD AND NEW

Tim Hudson celebrates the city's enduring architectural tradition

Like some other small towns and cities in England, Chichester has many buildings in Classical styles dating from the mid 17th century to the mid 19th, a period when according to the town planner Thomas Sharp 'English architecture seemed to be incapable of dullness or ugliness'. Classicism in England never quite disappeared after that, continuing in Chichester during the 20th century alongside other styles. But the history of recent architecture as generally told has a different perspective. Design in historical modes, whether Classical or otherwise, should have died out in favour of 'Modern' architecture, which according to Sir Nikolaus Pevsner was 'the true style of our century'. Some 20th-century Classical buildings in Chichester were certainly poor. But others deserve better than what E P Thompson in a different context called 'the enormous *condescension* of *posterity*'.

Wrenaissance

Around 1900 the so-called 'Queen Anne' style was in favour, inspired by late 17th-century and early 18th-century architecture in red brick and stone. A better term for some of such work is the punning 'Wrenaissance', since Hampton Court and other buildings by Sir Christopher Wren were major sources. Two local examples were owed to members of the Blomfield architectural dynasty. The former Graylingwell Hospital begun in 1897 is by Arthur Blomfield, better known for his ecclesiastical work in Gothic. The former Oliver Whitby's School (latterly House of Fraser) of 1903-4 is by Arthur's nephew Reginald, and enhances West Street with its double pediment and prominent Latin motto. Nearly contemporary and also in roughly 'Queen Anne' mode is the former Girls' High School in Stockbridge Road of 1909, by the County Architect Haydn Parke Roberts. This has recently been well restored and extended in matching style as Stockbridge Student Village.

Former Post Office on West Street by David Dyke 1937
Photo: Ann Hudson

The Halifax, formerly the National Provincial Bank on East Street by FCR Palmer, 1927. *Photo: Ann Hudson*

Bankers' Georgian/ Post Office Georgian

From the 1920s to the 1960s official buildings in Chichester continued to be broadly Classical. The most prominent are by a later County Architect, C G Stillman, whose career will be treated in a subsequent article. By the 1920s 'Queen Anne' had been succeeded by the more sober 'Neo-Georgian', a style especially favoured (for its connotations of solidity and probity) by banks – hence Osbert Lancaster's nickname 'Bankers' Georgian'. The former National Provincial (now the Halifax) in East Street, of 1927, impressed even Ian Nairn, no fan of the style; in the original edition of 'Pevsner' for Sussex in 1965 he commended its 'panache and expertise'. A local firm, Stanley Roth & Partners, assisted with the much later Barclays Bank, also in East Street, of 1961–3. This warrants a better press than it has usually had.

H M Office of Works also championed Neo-Georgian widely between the wars – 'Post Office Georgian' it might here be called. Chichester's former Post Office in West Street of 1937 by David Dyke makes a fine foil for the Cathedral opposite with its thin red and grey bricks and impressive Doric doorcase in Portland stone. Also Neo-Georgian was the Inland Revenue Office of 1936 at No 8 North Pallant, unfortunately demolished circa 15 years ago. Harry Osborn, its designer, was inspired by the Classical character of the Pallants, and took care not to upstage its next-door neighbour, the early 18th-century Pallant House. Commercial buildings and pubs too demonstrated Classical features, for instance Marks & Spencer's premises in East Street of 1935, again Neo-Georgian, the former Unicorn Inn of circa 1941 in Eastgate Square with its rounded profile, and the Crate and Apple (formerly the Swan) on Westgate, which echoes the plain style of many late 17th-century houses.

Classicism challenged

In the early 1960s architectural Modernism at last arrived in Chichester: first the Festival Theatre of 1961–2, with its unusual hexagonal plan and exciting profile, and next, more aggressively, an addition of 1963–5 to the then Chichester Theological College which is now Marriott Lodge care home. Neither building lay within the city's historic core, however, and so Chichester's predominantly Classical character wasn't yet upset. Things changed in the following decade, with in the city's north-west quadrant first the grotesque Telephone Exchange in Chapel Street of circa 1973 (a sad decline in quality from the 1930s Post Office), and secondly the angular Northleigh Block extension to County Hall in Tower Street. Bizarrely, both buildings were claimed in contemporary publications as responsive to, and in sympathy with, the historical environment.

King George Gardens, off Broyle Road by Valerie Hinde circa 1999 *Photo: Tim Hudson*

Classicism is back

From the 1980s Classicism was once again considered a possible style for new work, and a case for it could have been made at two central Chichester locations. After 1999 a large extension to Pallant House Gallery was put up between North and East Pallants. The job went to arch-Modernist Sir Colin St John Wilson, designer of the British Library, who had offered to leave the gallery his art collection. The damage caused to Chichester's best Georgian enclave by such a large and alien structure is incalculable, whatever the benefit to the city of such a popular cultural institution. One justification for Modernism here was that the extension's contents would be largely 'modern'. But a few years later a new District museum (with contents mostly not 'modern') was built in Tower Street. Once again the chosen style was Modernist, with even more incongruous results.

Could Chichester ever be a Classical city again? Changes in architectural education have meant that knowledge of Classical principles is no longer common among architects. So not all recent buildings in Classical styles have been successful. But others have certainly enhanced the city. At King George Gardens off Broyle Road opposite the Festival Theatre two plain brick and rendered terraces of circa 1999 by Valerie Hinde of Petworth perfectly complement the adjacent former Royal West Sussex Hospital of the early 19th century, itself converted for housing. Further north, the Roussillon Park housing development was begun in 2012 by Ben Pentreath & Associates and William Smalley Architects. Since its site is a former barracks, this has sometimes glibly been called barrack-like. But in scale, proportion and materials Roussillon Park has lasting qualities, and it will surely be admired centuries hence for its contribution to the city's fabric. More light-heartedly Nos 6–9 Tudor Close off Lavant Road, built circa 1988 by local architects Miller Hughes Associates, boasts a wide south-facing portico with a hint of Italy or Spain. Now that architecture has once again become eclectic, so that Modernism isn't seen as the only solution for every question, is it unrealistic to hope for more of the same?

Tim Hudson is a former editor of the Sussex Victoria County History and contributor to the revised West Sussex Pevsner guide. His architectural blog will be found at **classicismonthesouthcoast.wordpress.com**

Nos 6-9 Tudor Close, off Lavant Road, by Miller Hughes Associates circa 1988 *Photo: Ann Hudson*

RESCUING A RARE CEILING IN CHICHESTER

How decorative plasterwork was saved: Ana Logreira and Jenna Burrell explain

Next time you are walking on North Street, stop in front of Hotter Shoes and look up to the first-floor window and you may glimpse a hint of this beautiful ceiling that architectural historians tell us is a rare Sussex survival of British Renaissance plasterwork. It was nearly destroyed by a ground floor fire in April 2019. A later survey showed the ceiling had been extensively smoke damaged. This was a disaster because the ceiling is a valuable sixteenth century survival and is why 86 North Street has a Grade II * listing. Despite this status, it's rarely seen by the public because the first floor is used as a stock room. After the fire, Cliveden Conservation were invited to survey the ceiling and implement a programme of conservation works that were carried out during the second half of 2020. The following paragraphs describe these works and what was learned in the process.

The ceiling

Unfortunately, the ceiling cannot be viewed as a whole because the room was partitioned during the 18th or 19th century, but enough still survives today to give us a good idea of the intended splendour. The design of the ceiling is based on an unusual geometric rib structure within which are reliefs of foliage, animals and stylized hybrid creatures such as mermen and seahorses. Complementing the ceiling is a frieze, also decorated with reliefs. This is stylistically similar to other ceilings from the late Elizabethan or early Jacobean periods in terms of materials, geometry and iconography. Historical information about the building and its owners is limited and we, as conservators, had to collect small clues as we worked: it is a delicate task.

Making the original ceiling

This would have started by creating a flat support with laths nailed to the wooden ceiling joists. Laths were then covered with a thick layer of lime mortar. Analysis by Cliveden Conservation shows the plaster was made of slaked and mature lime putty, animal hair, a fine clay or silt and a small proportion of fine sand. The first layer was scratched or textured to receive reliefs such as mouldings or figures, which were also made with the same lime mortar reinforced with hair. The topcoat, or second layer of mortar, also lime based but much thinner, received the paint finish. Importantly, the addition of hair and clay to the mortar gave the ceiling a degree of flexibility, which allowed it to 'move' with the timber framed building.

Conservator Jenna Burrell uses a steam cleaner to remove layers of paint.

We discovered two different techniques had been used to make the plaster designs. The first was the use of moulds to create the frieze, ribs and pendants. These designs were made in sections and we think they were cast in-situ. The second technique was evident in the animals and mythological figures which had been hand-modelled, meaning each is unique. They have a naive character and bear similarities to home-made textile embroideries of the same period, rather than architectural pattern books.

Earlier ceiling works

In the absence of historical records, we have relied on close observation and found this ceiling has had up to twenty separate layers of paint applied on top of the original finish - which concealed the true condition of the original plaster. Moreover, the reverse of the ceiling had been completely covered with gypsum intended to strengthen but prevented inspection of the laths. This was a repair system common in the 1980s and has altered the flexible nature of the ceiling to a more rigid unit. We also discovered there had been water ingress in one corner which although repaired has caused damage - loss to the original design, disintegration, staining to the plaster and biological growth. Summing up our investigation: we found that this ceiling required conservation treatment to stabilise damaged components, remove the risk of further loss and allow for a continuing appreciation of the ceiling's aesthetic qualities.

How we conserved

Our methodology followed trials and off-site analysis. For removing layers of paint, we combined mechanical and chemical techniques. A non-caustic paint stripper was applied and once softened, the paint and paint stripper were removed using a steam cleaner and small tools to gently ease the paint from the surface without damaging the original plaster. In this way we removed most of the previous paint layers, allowing hidden details of decoration to be recovered.

Paint removal revealed several missing elements and modern repairs; where stable these were retained and reshaped if required to blend into the original. We used a lime plaster mix for new repairs but if the fills were deep, we applied the original recipe of lime, sand and hair. To stabilise the ceiling, treatment included fixings and grouting. Fixings were placed strategically where they would provide the most support to an unstable area; most of the fixings added were suspension fixings which involved marine grade stainless-steel dowels through the plaster. We used a specialist grout applied with syringes which permitted greater control and allowed layers of plaster to reattach and correct deformations, thanks to the flexibility of the original mortar. At the end of our conservation, the ceiling was redecorated with soft distemper, the colour matching the earliest layer found on the ceiling. This finish protects exposed surfaces and also visually integrates the decoration.

Ana Logreira is a freelance conservator with considerable experience conserving wall paintings, stone, and architectural decorated surfaces.
Jenna Burrell is a conservator with Cliveden Conservation.

Special thanks to the team at Hotter Shoes for their support during the works and to Crowther Overton-Hart for the invitation to this project.

All photographs are by Cliveden Conservation Workshop

Mermen in the main room after treatment.

Close up of different details revealed after paint removal.

One of the panels in the main room after treatment.

MANHOOD WILDLIFE WATERWAYS ARE REBORN!

Jane Reeve celebrates a community project that started in 2015

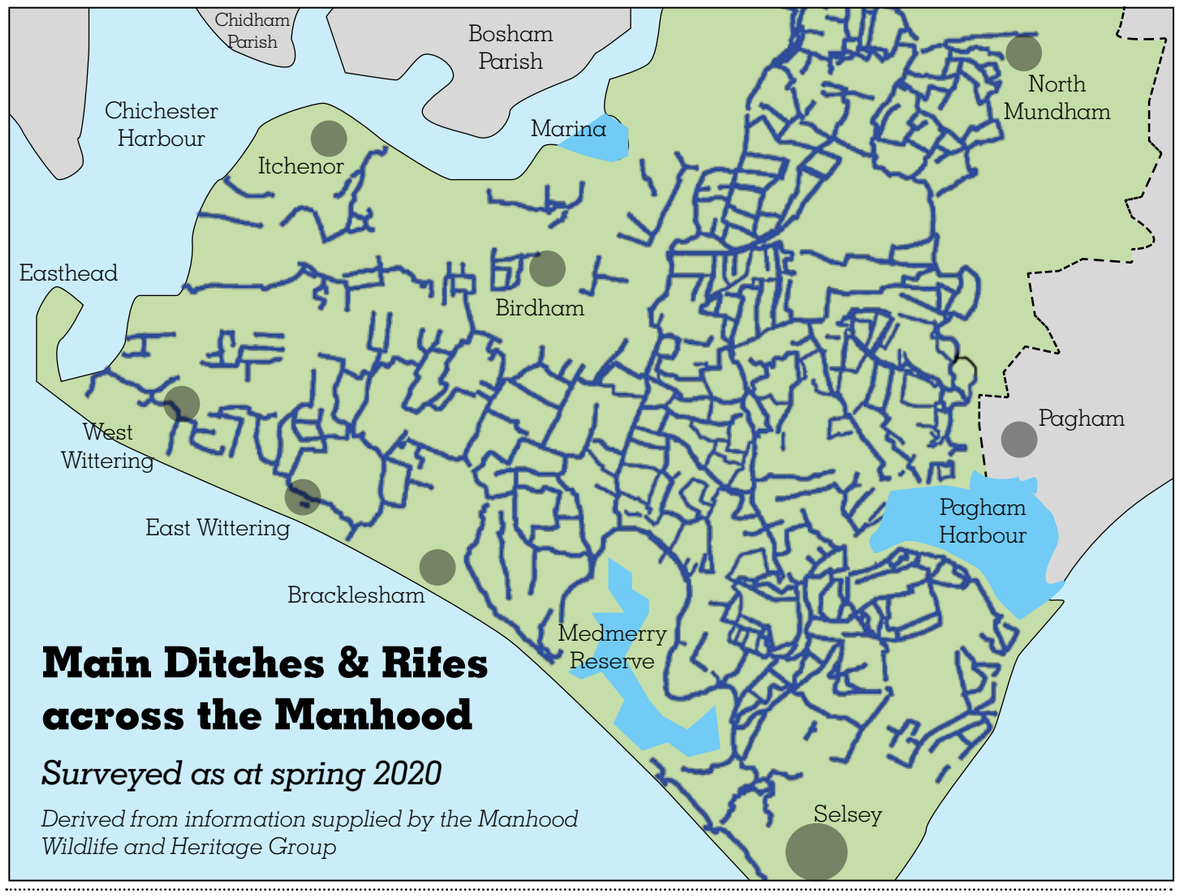
This is a story of how volunteers worked over several years to rejuvenate the waterways and wildlife across the Manhood peninsula, south of Chichester. It helps to be aware this peninsula comprises 11 parishes and is one of the least developed areas of the coastal plain between Worthing and Portsmouth. It is very flat intensively farmed land crisscrossed with drainage ditches linking the protected areas of Pagham Harbour, Medmerry and Chichester Harbour. It is in this area, between the harbours, that volunteers have focussed their work. Who are these volunteers? Officially, they are known as the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group, or MWHG for short, a small wildlife charity dedicated to habitat improvement on the Manhood. One insight into the group's achievement has been turning sites from rubbish dumps into habitat for water voles and many other species.

More about the Manhood

Ditches drain farmland through links to the Chichester Ship Canal, numerous farm and village ponds and the larger waterways, locally called rifes. This dense network of waterways – see the adjacent map - is home to a nationally important population of water voles. They breed and disperse from local colonies and make the most of the connectivity to seek new territories and better conditions. This environment can be challenging with surface water flooding during the winter and dried out ditches and ponds in the summer. An earlier project into water voles on the Manhood highlighted that there was no single map of the waterways and a complete absence of the knowledge about ditches on much of the farmland and how they connected to the wider system.

FLOW

Fixing and Linking Our Wetland, or FLOW, is a £600,000+ project mostly financed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It began in September 2015 and ends in June this year. Our project aims are twofold: to reduce the risk of flooding but also to create and improve wetland habitat for the peninsula's wildlife. FLOW's backbone has been training volunteers to carry out comprehensive ditch surveys to map and identify improvements. Survey information covers the physical attributes of waterways, numbers of culverts and junctions, adjacent land use, vegetation diversity and abundance, flow direction, buffer areas, and the presence of hedges. All these features are assessed to award each waterway a 'condition' grading. These results have been mapped to allow the Manhood's ditch conditions to be assessed and an example can be seen on the project website at **www.mwhg.org.uk**



Human beavers

'Human beavers' really sums up our work as we have identified neglected and forgotten ponds and ditches and targeted them for improvement. This work mimics beavers by digging out ponds and waterways, removing or coppicing willow, spreading wetland plants, and opening up sites to the light…and it works! Our amazing volunteers have gone out in all weather, walked 1,200 plus ditches (over 250 kilometres) with clipboards and wellies, and recorded huge amounts of data to create unique maps. This information is used by parishes as part of their Neighbourhood Plan process, and by Government agencies of all kinds to fill gaps in public knowledge about the local water network. Three quarters of this information is entirely new.

FLOW volunteers and contractors have worked on 48 sites across the Manhood recovering abandoned farm and village ponds, privately owned pieces of wetland, stretches of ditch and sections of relic canal. Additionally, we have surveyed hedges associated with ditches, removed invasive species (American mink and some plants) laid new hedges, and planted thousands of native trees.

Habitat improvement

The water vole, our target species for habitat improvement, has sometimes been too attracted to the FLOW sites and moved in before we have finished, causing practical issues with digging and willow removal! Species surveys have been a key part of our work, not just before we go in to recover a site, but in later years, to monitor the change. Volunteers have surveyed bats, birds, butterflies, great crested newts, plants, reptiles and water voles. Many wetland plant species have been recorded and we've seen our favourites like Water Figwort prosper – a favourite with the Mullein moth caterpillar. We have also carried out moth trapping at properties next to our sites, which has been particularly popular during the 2020 lockdown.

National recognition

Manhood's FLOW project is notable for volunteer and partnership-working: both are at the heart of what we do. The cumulative result is impressive. Volunteer contributions add up to over 1,500 days; we've worked with over 30 landowners and 10 parish councils; attracted £23,000 in grants for habitat improvement work; identified over 90 future sites for attention; and eaten over 1,100 cakes during work parties and events! – the community aspect is an important reason for the FLOW project's success. On completion, we'll leave parish-based teams in place with simple management plans that encourage local people to engage with their environment.

Biological recording has been a central part of our approach because many of the Manhood waterways and related sites had no previous history of such work. This was illustrated during a planning inquiry in 2011 when a consultant ecologist speaking for a developer remarked that the Manhood is a 'wildlife desert' due to the absence of species data. The FLOW project has turned this on its head. Our efforts have been recognised: in 2018 we were shortlisted for the National Biodiversity Network's (NBN) Group Award for our recording input; and in 2020 we achieved runners-up position. For a small wildlife charity working in an area like the Manhood this is a huge tribute to the dedication of our volunteers.

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Jane Reeve MSc heads the MWHG and manages the FLOW project.
Wildlife photos by Brian Henham

Water voles are well established

Mullein moth caterpillar

A rare Cream-spot Tiger Moth at Sidlesham

Volunteers working to improve biodiversity on a recently recovered relic pond in Birdham *Photo: Jane Reeve*

A WALK AROUND EAST CHICHESTER

David Wilson introduces us to more of this city's green spaces

This is a leisurely four mile walk with numbered points of interest. Allow two or three hours for time to read the information boards and notes on the facing page. We begin at St Pancras by the War Memorial at Litten Gardens and admire the carved oak statue of Alfred Smith (1). Cross New Park Road into Priory Road with Priory Park on your right. Go in and walk around the Walls to a small gate on the far side of the park, and into Priory Lane and North Street. Turn right and through the underpass, keeping left to Broyle Road. Continue past Cawley Almshouses (2) to Oaklands Park.

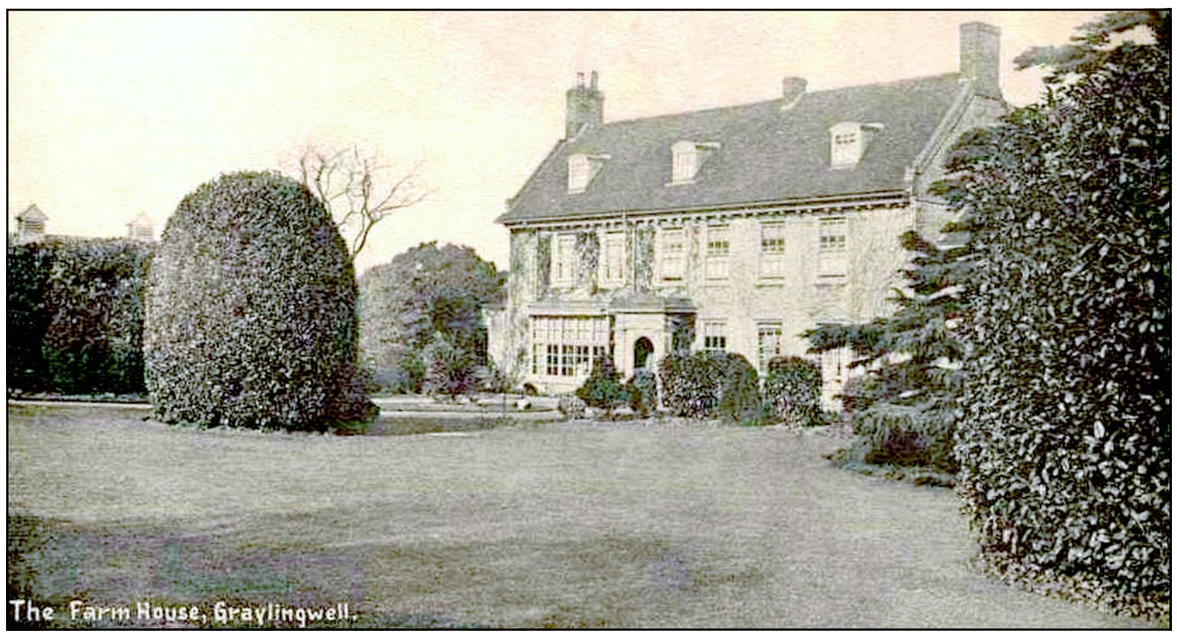
Walk up a tree-shaded footpath alongside the park and cross Wellington Road, stopping to look at the Smugglers' Stone (3) before turning right into Charlotte Avenue. At the far end, cross into Connolly Way with Havenstoke Park on your left. Continue a few hundred yards towards the former Graylingwell Hospital buildings (4) and turn right to a road with rising bollards near Anna Sewell Way (5). Later, glance to your left up Blomfield Drive towards the original Graylingwell Farmhouse which is being restored.

Go down Kingsmead Drive, and once over the River Lavant (which may be dry) turn right onto a footpath. A few yards along there is an eagle on a post, and nearby, on a path to Homebase is a crocodile behind a tree! (6). Return to the previous footpath which takes you to Southdown Close, ignoring a new path on the left which heads south and passes the Lidl supermarket. At the end of the close turn right and cross Swanfield Drive to Badger Walk, a footpath to Swanfield Park, aka The Green. Turn left and walk south along the edge of the Park. At the end, cross Swanfield Drive, glancing right to a thatched cottage in the distance which was once a leper hospital (7). At this point turn left into Story Road, a cul-de-sac, and continue to the end where a small bridge crosses the River Lavant. There is a pedestrian crossing over Westhampnett Road and nearby a footpath to Portfield Cemetery.

On arriving at the Cemetery turn right, passing the Commonwealth War Memorial (see Newsletter 205), and then turn left, south, to the cemetery exit. Just before leaving, note the Zoroastrian graves on your left (8). On leaving the cemetery turn right into St James' Square, then left into St James' Road and continue past a roundabout to

An aggressive crocodile greets walkers on the footpath approaching the Homebase store
Photo: David Wilson

Florence Road. We now cross Florence Park and continue down the west side to turn right into Blackberry Lane, leading to Whyke Road. On the other side is a footpath that passes Liberator Place (9) and a junction at Ormonde Avenue and Velyn Avenue. Follow Velyn Avenue and glance left at what remains of Chichester's Roman Amphitheatre (10) to arrive at The Hornet. Cross to a footpath through St Agnes' Place and over the River Lavant to St Pancras. At this point you are only a few yards from where you began two or three hours earlier!



Graylingwell Farmhouse in the 1890s. This is where Anna Sewell, author of the children's classic Black Beauty, lived for a few years.
Photo: with thanks to Gravelroots.net

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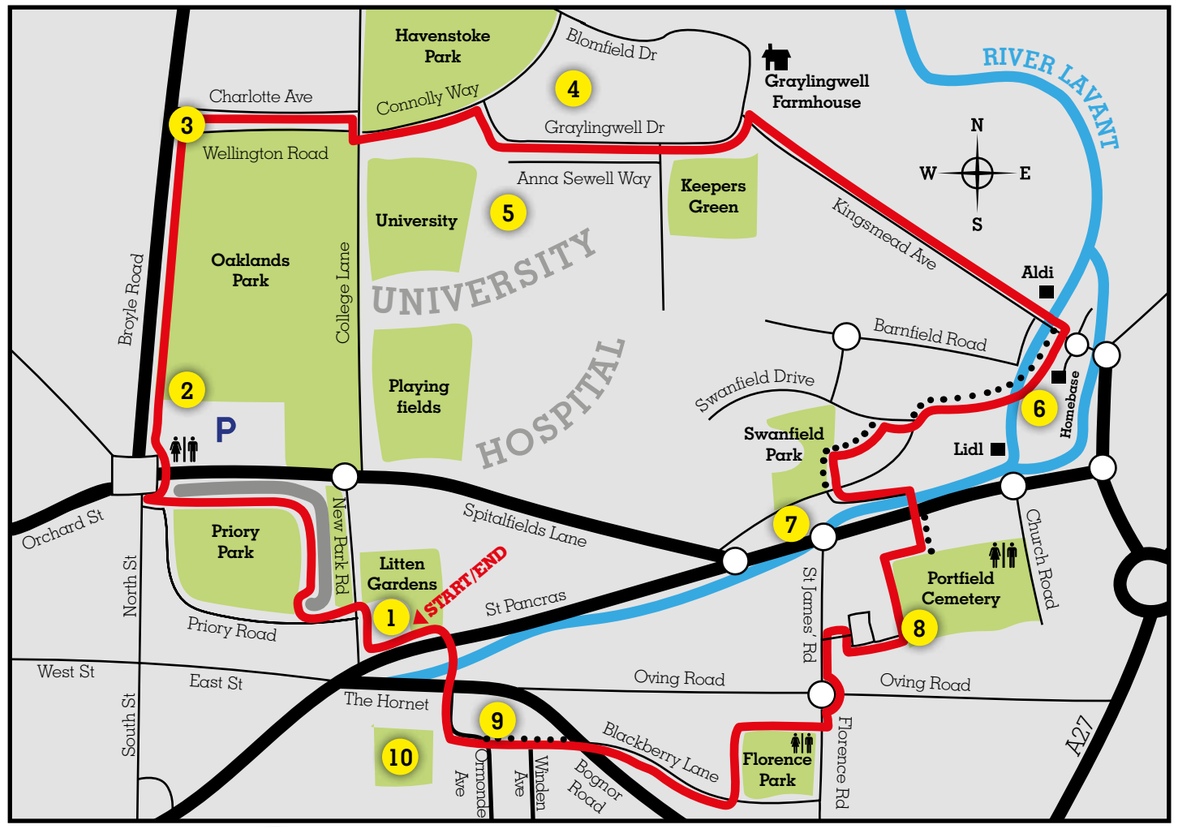
Conversation pieces

Some of the numbered stopping points are marked **IB** to denote an information board.

1. The carved oak statue on the northern edge of the War Memorial Gardens was inspired by the story of Alfred Smith, and shows him both as a WW1 soldier and then in civilian life as a nurseryman (**IB**)
2. These almshouses were founded in 1625 by William Cawley, 'for the maintenance of 12 decayed tradesmen of Chichester'. Later an MP for the city, he was one of those who signed the death warrant for Charles I.
3. The Smugglers Stone records the execution of members of the Hawkhurst Gang from Kent who had committed a particularly brutal murder (**IB**). Charlotte Avenue is named for Charlotte, Duchess of Richmond, who gave the famous ball in Brussels on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo 1815. Her husband commanded the 35th Regiment of Foot, later the Royal Sussex.
4. Graylingwell Hospital was built in 1897 as the County Asylum and was operated on the principles of medical treatment promoted by Dr Conolly (sic) who had practised in Chichester in the 1820s. The 'airing courts', now gardens, were part of his idea of outdoor treatment.
5. Anna Sewell, author of the children's classic Black Beauty, lived in Graylingwell Farmhouse with her parents from 1853 to 1858; her father was manager of the London and Counties Bank, now the Natwest, in East Street. She relied on horses to get about as her ankle never mended after a fall. The book was written some 20 years later.
6. Both crocodile and eagle were made from scrap metal by Sophie Thompson c2000 who was commissioned by retail developers Discover Properties. For more examples of Sophie's work see www.sophiethompson.com.
7. This thatched cottage was a leper hospital, founded 1118, dedicated to St James and St Mary Magdalene, and sited well outside the city. Buried remains found when the Swanfield Estate was built were removed to the Litten. A fire in 1781 destroyed all but the north wall.
8. Zoroastrianism, the original religion of Persia, still survives. The design on the gravestone is the *faravahar*, their sacred symbol, incorporating a winged sun and the god of light, *Ahura Mazda*.
9. Liberator Place refers to a US Liberator bomber which caught fire returning from France and crashed here on 11th May 1944 killing three people after whom the blocks of flats are named.
10. The amphitheatre was the 'Chichester Gate' of the Roman period (**IB**).



HELP THE SOCIETY'S FUTURE!

Remembering the Chichester Society when arranging future bequests will help continue this City's civic traditions. See below for contact information or access the Society's website

www.chichestersociety.org.uk

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Webmaster Bob Wiggins is stepping down and we are looking for an enthusiast to promote the Society through its website– you can assess this at

www.chichestersociety.org.uk

If this interests you, contact Bob at webmaster@chichestersociety.org.uk

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