

THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY
Newsletter



Anniversary Edition

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25 years

**HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR
FIRST QUARTER CENTURY**



***Early Days • The Cathedral Meeting
The Eastgate Sit-in • Pedestrianisation
Fundraising • Then & Now • Noviomagus***



PLUS this year's AGM report, topical news & comment

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1998

The AGM was held in the Vicar's Hall on 5th November in the presence of the Mayor (Cllr. Barry Fletcher) and 48 other members. There were ten apologies for absence including that of our Patron, Dr Christopher Fry.

The meeting was opened with a few remarks by the Mayor during which he informed the Society members that it was proposed to refurbish the Assembly Rooms, a project on which our President, David Goodman, is a consultant. He also said that the Eastgate Hall would not be receiving any attention and may be sold. The Mayor said it was important that the Society should continue as an independent body.

The Chairman, David Tregear, after thanking the Mayor for his remarks, then gave his report. He referred to the fact that the Society is now 25 years old and as a result of this there had been a great deal of activity, particularly on artistic endeavours led by the President, who gave a series of lectures on art. Our outgoing Vice-Chairman, Nigel Purchase, gave an exhibition of portrait painting in front of an audience and the year was rounded off in fine style with an evening of poetry by our Patron, Dr Christopher Fry (who is 91 next month) ably supported by Sarah Badel and Dorothy Tutin, among others. These have all added significantly to the funds, but we were warned not to become complacent, as the key to a sound financial base is regular subscription income combined with healthy events. He mentioned that already arranged are an Autumn Fair on 11th November, a piano and cello recital on 20th December and on 19th February 1999 a party to launch our next twenty-five years will be linked to a limerick competition. He also drew attention to an exhibition of our first twenty-five years which was in the room for the evening, prepared by David Goodman and Anthony Perry.

The Chairman then said that the continuance of the Society would not be possible without the activities of those already mentioned. He also thanked the Secretary, Brian Horsley, the Treasurer, Phil Spooner, and other members of the Executive. A large number of Committee members for personal reasons, were unable to stand again and it was hoped that members would offer themselves to serve. The Chairman was sure we have many who are suitably qualified. It was also hoped to increase our number of Corporate members.

The Society's Constitution has been approved by the Charity Commissioners. The Chairman reiterated that anyone wishing to attend meetings of the Executive Committee, could do so by giving notice to the Hon. Secretary.

The *Newsletter* will continue to record the activities of the Society and a special Twenty-Fifth Anniversary issue would be issued shortly.

During the last year an eightieth birthday party was held for David Goodman, which was hosted by John Rank. Mairead Costelloe has been attending the Police Forum on behalf of the Society but due to an imminent move to Ireland a replacement is required to keep us informed.

In the last year our comments have been sought on various matters relating to Transport. These have been dealt with on our behalf by Graham Bell and Ken Todd. Unfortunately Ken is no longer able to assist and we need a volunteer replacement.

Goodwood Motor Racing Circuit has exercised the collective minds of the Society for three years. On the whole the limit on the number of days

racing and the effort that has gone into banking, trees and good parking has meant that the general public is generally in favour of the endeavour. The biggest bone of contention seems to be the public address system.

The functions of the Monitoring Sub-committee, which for many years has kept the Committee informed about planning proposals, has been replaced by representation on the Chichester City Conservation Area Advisory Committee. This is intended to assist the Committee in any representations they might wish to make. It's not intended as a replacement and the Society will always be happy to take up any matter on which a member has a concern. All that is asked is that the person raising the matter should have carried out as much background research as possible.

We have a copy of the planning brief for Graylingwell which indicates that a substantial amount of open space is being retained although it proved impossible to obtain Millennium Green Funding as the proposals were insufficiently advanced. It seems likely that the District Council will fund the maintenance of the area.

The Society is glad to have been associated with the founding of the Lodge Hill Trust which next spring should be taking over the management of this further education centre which is a unique facility serving the whole county.

The Southern Gateway is an extremely complex problem and much time has been spent on studying the proposals of the various sites involved. The latest plans for the Girls High School site still show over-development and much work remains to be done ahead of the Public Enquiry. The more modest, and in the Society's opinion, better, proposals for cinema provision being considered for the Bus Garage site should also be taken into account when assessing the Girl's High School site. The effect of the change in status of the Canal has yet to be fully assimilated. There is also still concern about the British Gas Depot site.

Reference was then made to The Slurping Toad. The planning issue was basically settled when it was sold by the Church Commissioners to become St Peter's Market. It was felt that the situation needs to be monitored and the Committee would look into any properly researched complaints.

The considerable concern expressed at the closing of the Dolphin and Anchor appears to have achieved at least a partially successful redevelopment into four retail units.

The Chairman said that the thanks of the Society were due to Nigel Purchase for all he had done as Vice Chairman and for allowing his gallery to be used as a depot for distributing the *Newsletter*. He also said that a large thank you was also due to all our distributors and to Bob Escolme who is in charge of *Newsletter* distribution. A request was also made that anyone able to help in *Newsletter* distribution should let any Committee member know.

The Secretary, Brian Horsley, has completed his first full year and hoped that he knows more than he did last year. He said that if anyone had any queries about the activities of the Society to give him a ring on 530822. He apologised to anyone who has written in and not received a reply but asked that they also give him a ring. The Society has had a high level of activity during the year. This has been achieved whilst maintaining a good working relationship with the Local Authorities but not so close that we are inhibited from

criticising them when it is necessary! A meeting was held during the year between members of our Committee and Senior Members and Officers of the Council generally considered to have been both useful and informative. The Secretary then made the point that fund raising is a very important activity of the Society. Firstly, our subscription income does not cover the cost of the preparation of the *Newsletter* and other administrative costs. In this context the use of the Secretary's home as the Society's office is a considerable saving. The second reason is that events present an opportunity for members to meet each other in a social environment.

For the Autumn Fair to be held on the 11th November, 1998 help was asked for in three ways: one to provide items for sale; two to come and buy items on sale and three for some to offer assistance in manning stalls. The Secretary pointed out that success depends on the support of the members and this will help the Society fulfil its function.

The Treasurer, Phil Spooner, told the meeting that during the last year the Society's financial position had shown a substantial change for the better. The main reasons for this change was an increase in the surplus from fund raising, the saving arising from not paying rent for an office and to the response to the appeal by the Chairman which had resulted in an increase in donations for this year of over £1,000.

He also paid tribute to Peggy Haynes, our redoubtable advertisement manager, whose efforts paid up to half the cost of each *Newsletter* issue.

The new Officers and Executive Committee were elected en-bloc with David Tregear as Chairman, Owen Evans as Vice Chairman, Brian Horsley as Secretary and Phil Spooner as Treasurer.

Mr and Mrs Perry were elected as Honorary Members for their services to the Society over many years particularly for looking after the garden at the Cawley Almshouses for many years.

Before passing to the President's Address, Ken Newbury said that he had found the meeting very heartening as it showed him that the Society still had a function which appeared to be capable of fulfilment. Mairead Costelloe asked that an attempt should be made to enrol younger members. Geoff King, who is a Tree Warden, said he would be looking for suitable sites for tree planting in the near future.

The President, David Goodman, opened his remarks by thanking the Mayor for opening the meeting, which he felt to be an admirable tradition. He continued by saying that there were three major buildings in Chichester, the Cathedral, the Dolphin and Anchor and the Assembly Rooms, and he was pleased to hear that the refurbishment of the Assembly Rooms was to be carried out largely along the lines of the report prepared by the President and Professor Freddy Fielden. The President said that in the past the Society had run many fund raising events and he was glad to see that the tradition was being continued. He then mentioned many people with whom he had worked from the early days of the Society. He is now preparing a bumper edition of the *Newsletter* to celebrate our twenty-fifth birthday. He thanked the Press for the way they had treated the Society over the years as without Press support the Society's work would have been nearly impossible. He finished by reiterating a point that had been made earlier, to encourage young people to join.

B.H.H.

The First Quarter Century

Ever since the early post-war years, when town planning assumed a major role in city affairs, Chichester has been the subject of development schemes of one kind or another. Most of the major ones, such as removing the Cross and widening the main streets, thankfully remained theoretical, but others soon began to take their toll of the city's fabric, and worse was to come. 'Areas of Comprehensive Development', inner ring-roads, gyratory systems and multi-storey car-parks – these were among the most significant, and potentially the most damaging. The irony is that they were all introduced in the name of progress, whatever that much misused word might have conveyed to those who constantly uttered it. In fact, they all showed little or no understanding of Chichester's true qualities.

It is worth remembering, too, that those planning ideas simply followed fashionable concepts, which were seldom, if ever, consistent. More often than not they were eventually abandoned in favour of fresh ones, by the very people who had so confidently proposed them, though not before they had contributed their share of damage.

This dismal process was not confined to Chichester. A great many other towns and cities throughout Britain suffered similarly, leading inevitably to their losing that essential individuality which is the pride and joy of our heritage.

What then are the ingredients which give our city its unique quality? Essentially, the clarity and harmony of its principal features, the scale and charm of its domestic buildings. Here was wrought over centuries a small masterpiece, a living expression of the English genius for creating a richly varied environment on a comfortable human scale. Seriously to disrupt any of these ingredients must be regarded as an act of irredeemable folly.

Of course, pressures of modern life had become great. Road usage, parking, commercial and industrial expansion, shopping, leisure activities, tourism, population growth and housing. These were, and are, problems that must be faced and dealt with. There are no easy solutions; yet while the authorities concerned declared their commitment to preserving Chichester's historic character, they succeeded only in doing the precise opposite. Indeed, if all their plans had been implemented we would have been left with little more than a small protected core, surrounded by a far larger complex of urban development, lacking any discerning merit, architectural or civic. Examples of this sad scenario abound throughout Britain, and one only has to walk around the

Foreword by David Goodman



Chichester Observer, Friday 30 November 1973

"The Mayor of Chichester Peter Weston, pictured with members from the Chichester Society. With him is John Storrs, one of the society's founders, and at the back (left) is society member Tim Rooth and society chairman David Goodman."

outskirts of Chichester to realise how close we have already approached that 'doughnut' situation.

By 1973, the bureaucratic machine seemed unstoppable. It was a time of crisis, and there was great public alarm. In response to an anguished 'cri-du-coeur' from a neighbour, I wrote to the Observer calling for support in challenging the process of destruction, then all too evident. There was an immediate response, resulting in a public

meeting, chaired courageously by Peter Weston, the Mayor. Overwhelmingly, the cry was to form a new pro-active group, capable of putting real pressures on the authorities.

At once the Society set about the task of trying to halt, or at least, slow down the most damaging schemes in hand, and abandon others that were imminent. We were soon labelled 'the lunatic fringe' or the 'vociferous minority', for of course those in power were totally unaccustomed to any serious public opposition of any kind, reacting in a way that might be expected of entrenched bureaucracies.

It was a rough, though often exciting time, and we had at last given Cicestrians a much-needed voice, wholly independent of official enclaves. Looking back, we are inclined to wonder who really were the lunatics, and as for being vociferous, what weapons other than publicity could we command?

Within a year we were able to claim more than 2,000 members, roughly ten per cent of the entire population of Chichester at that time, and almost certainly a national record. Some minority! Reviving a medieval custom for the first time in modern British history we convened a great public meeting in the Cathedral, attended by more than 1,500 people, showing unequivocally that the citizens were well and truly aroused. After that we could no longer be ignored or dismissed in such cavalier terms.

Today, after twenty-five years of sustained effort, together with the cumulative effect of similar groups all over Britain, and central government changes of policy, the climate has changed radically. Between ourselves and the three authorities, County, District and City, there is now much mutual respect and productive consultation. This does not imply an absence of any serious differences of opinion. If that were so, we would simply no longer need to exist as a group. Controversial issues are bound to arise, but it is our firm belief that to achieve what is best for Chichester, the city that we all love, we need each other, now perhaps more than ever. Confrontation is over; discussion and argument are not, and we shall continue to need all the support we can get, if there is not to be a drift back to the kind of bewildered helplessness which allowed so much unnecessary damage to be done before we came on the scene.

In the following pages we present a few of the ups and downs of our work during the past quarter century. We hope you enjoy reading about them, and feel that win or lose, the effort has been supremely worth while, and what is equally important, will be so for the next twenty-five years at least. □

On ^{17th} 21st June 1974, for the first time since the Middle Ages,
we held a great town meeting in the Cathedral.
Here is part of what the *Chichester Observer* published.

1,500 pack cathedral: 'suspend Town Map' call

THE GREAT CONCERN OVER CITY'S FUTURE

*'It's reeling from a
series of blows'*

People do care about the future of
Georgian Chichester – 1,500 packed
the cathedral on Monday night to
show their concern. And there was a
strong call for the suspension of the
Town Map and a new look at the way
in which the city is to grow.



Mrs. Margaret Rule
referred to the ruinous
sprawl of the county coun-
cil administration.



Mr. Bernard Price:
the monstrous county
buildings in the west
of the city.



Architect Mr. William
Whitfield: "Architects
acted according to the
wishes of their clients."



Professor Ann Briggs: "If
we could develop this con-
cern nationally, the coun-
try would be a far better
place."



The Very Rev. Walter
Hussey: Chairman of the
meeting.

Christopher
Fry wrote
a sonnet
for the
occasion,
and here is
Dame Irene
Worth
reading it....



What can be said of the spoiler of cities? —
The perpetrator of a thousand pities,
Who, like the drunken surgeon with a knife,
Thinking to cure, cuts out the life —
Who banishes, with gesture brief and graphic,
Whatever charm disturbs the flow of traffic —
Whose lips compress, whose cardiac centre hardens
To see a city's heart alight with hidden gardens?
What can be said of him who sees no stature
In the uniqueness of a city's nature?
'Alas' is easily said; but no sigh pays the cost
Of dignity destroyed and beauty lost.
And nothing then can reinstate
A city that we cared about too late.

Christopher Fry

Artist and poet
lead fight
to preserve a city

Daily Telegraph June 23, 1974

Chichester whose City?

If you care about present and future
developments in Chichester
come to the open

TOWN MEETING

on Monday 17 June 1974
at 7.30 pm
in

THE CATHEDRAL

Distinguished guest speakers
Local personalities
Open discussion

Followed by an informal gathering in the
garden of the Residuary
Further details carried
in the local and national press and on
radio and television

The meeting convened by
THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY
with the consent of the Dean and Chapter

All enquiries to the Meeting Secretary
Telephone Chichester 527383

The original poster announcing the town meeting
in 1974.

Steps towards pedestrianisation

All the factors which in 1973 led to that spontaneous movement of people of all ages and interests which was the Chichester Society came together in the Public Inquiry into the Proposed Pedestrian Precinct in 1976. Those factors were all around us.

When the Inquiry came, the major damage to the organic fabric of Chichester had already been done (all by legal planning process). Nonetheless the Society was determined to make clear the principles on which it had objected, and if at all possible to mitigate some of the damage and to limit what was still to come.

The Society joined forces with another leading objector, the Chamber of Commerce, to form 'Chichester Concern', with a Chairman, Graham Bell, who was himself a member of both organisations. Together they prepared the case for the City in all its complexity, and studied the way such formal Inquiries were conducted (like a court of law). Various subjects were allotted to individual members; considerable sacrifices were made to employ a lawyer to co-ordinate all our 'evidence' and to attend the Inquiry throughout.

W.S.C.C. employed a barrister to cross-examine the 'witnesses'. Other bodies such as the police, bus company, or voluntary groups like the disabled, were represented too, either as objectors or supporters. Tragically, the long-standing Conservation Society, the Civic Society, supported the plan. The 'professional' protestor, John Tyme, appeared with the Chichester Society as an objector.

The Society had always been, and still is, at pains to make clear that its primary aim is NOT to preserve the town in aspic. Certainly it was concerned with Chichester's character, its small communities, but it was precisely these things which made its people's quality and way of life, a

living town happily integrated into its centuries-old pattern. Everybody agreed that the traffic conditions in the four main streets were intolerable. Several sensible Traffic control plans were put forward but were ignored. Our evidence covered:

The Form of the City

Its smallness did not allow for a central precinct without doing it great violence (already evident). Larger towns provided parallel streets to take the traffic from the centre; Chichester's Roman pattern and its small back lanes made this impossible.

The Cost in Human Terms

Should shoppers of an hour or two take precedence over the conditions of 24 hour living? Should the remaining dwellers in the Quadrants be forced to live in the fumes and structural damage of ever bigger and heavier lorries trying to get to the goods service areas?

Pollution

Was it right to transfer all the former problems of the main streets to the small back streets?

A 'Ghost Town'

The banning of all traffic would create a dead City after closing hours.

The epic battle had to be fought but could not be won at that late stage. The destruction, the blight, the carving up were of several years' standing. However, the Inspector's Report from the Department of the Environment made a considerable modification to the W.S.C.C. Plan. The precinct must be open for commercial deliveries during the early morning and late afternoon. He suggested that the hours of opening should be reviewed at a later date, a suggestion that W.S.C.C. has studiously ignored.

Later battles successfully saved Orchard Street and New Park Road from becoming dual-carriageway roads and so kept their houses and street scene, but the Avenue de Chartres had already killed the unique feature of part of a walled town giving directly onto its own fields.

Above all, power resided with the W.S.C.C. Roads and Transport Committee and they followed the national policy for wide ring roads regardless of a town's character. In 1976 ROADS RULED - OK?

DOROTHY HOWELL THOMAS

Editor's note: Dorothy Howell-Thomas is a founder member of the Society. She was co-editor of our first major publication 'A City in Balance' illustrated in this special supplement. At the Public Inquiry into Pedestrianisation, she was one of our most eloquent witnesses, and more than a match for the County Council's QC. She is also the author of several books. Although she is now in retirement in London, she still keeps in close touch with her friends in the Society.

Looking back

by Ken Newbury

Unlike some of the contributors to this special issue of the Newsletter, I cannot claim to have been in at the birth of our Society. Joan and I did not retire to Chichester till January 1974, but within a few days we had enrolled as members, having been told of its objectives (and of the absence of any subscription). This only came into force when we became a registered charity, when the derisory 10p a year was introduced. I always thought this was a mistake, believing that people value a body more if they make a worthwhile contribution to its work.

"CHISOC" was not popular with THEM in those early days. Local government was in a period of change and didn't want outsiders to tell it its business. The already established (and establishment) Civic Society resented this intrusion, viewing us with more than suspicion - animosity would be a better word. I was upbraided by its revered chairman for belonging to "that protestant society". One man became a member so that, as he said, he could stick pins in us. He later saw the light and became a committee member.

One of our assets early on was our office in Theatre Lane. It was open five days a week, mornings and afternoons. Taken on as a helper, I later became office manager, learning of those earliest heady days through indexing and filing the correspondence. The office was the focal point of our activities - a regular stream of callers, with queries, problems, gifts of money and goods, or collecting the bi-monthly Newsletter, I still regret the loss of such a valuable facility.

There were many more social events in those days - mostly to raise funds: concerts, fashion shows, book fairs, garden parties in the Residentiary grounds. Bernard Price, the eminent local historian, gave generously of his time and experience. I started a series of "Chichester entertainments."

But much of our time was spent fighting the County Council. New Park Community Centre, which we had earlier helped to save from demolition by the District Council to make a car park, was the venue for a public meeting to inform residents of the scheme to drive the ring road across St Pancras, destroying houses and barns, across the Wyke Lane twitten and the Roman amphitheatre. County Surveyor staff were there, but declined to comment on recent amendments to the scheme. Another ring road battle: this involved the demolition of half the houses in Orchard Street, in order to create a dual carriageway. We kept lobbying, and manning the public gallery until the scheme was finally abandoned.

One nice touch: the annual carnival parade (there was one in those days). The Society had agreed to include a decorated float, but nothing had been done. Inspiration - an empty lorry bearing the slogan CHICHESTER SOCIETY - TOO BUSY SAVING THE CITY!

Other memories: that unforgettable Cathedral Meeting; the Sit-Ins, Sleep-Ins, in and on top of Combes's barns; the rent-a-mob at the opening of the pedestrianisation inquiry, with "red" John Tyme speaking on our behalf. We were actually searched for weapons before being allowed to enter County Hall! But I will leave them to others more closely involved in those stirring events.

The Society's work is just as important today, but perhaps less exciting. No doubt there will be plenty more for it to do in the next twenty five years!

Pedestrianisation work under way.



THE EASTGATE SIT-IN OF 1976

As WSCC boycotted our historic Cathedral meeting, they were unaware of the rapidly growing opposition to their 1966 Town Map. The first stages were already completed, now they were due to start on the Eastgate link road, strongly opposed by the citizens, as events were to prove. When all legitimate ways to stop the road had failed, the Society embarked on a series of moves to save buildings on its proposed route. This barn was to be demolished and the 18th century Covers building was under threat. Both were saved and, four years later, WSCC awarded a prize for "Best residential conversion" to the barn! Our final move, the sit-in, is graphically described by Penny Knowles.



In the hot spot

My involvement began at the meeting of the Society's Planning Group, when we decided to try and prevent the destruction of several terraced cottages in St. Pancras to make way for the new ring road. To sever the ancient Roman Stane Street, which had withstood assaults over the centuries, was bad enough, but to destroy cottages and old barns which were an integral part of Chichester would be the height of bureaucratic arrogance. We were incensed.

We knew (we had our methods) that the Council intended to destroy by stealth, taking the cottages apart from the inside, then bulldozing the shells when it was too late to prevent it. We considered occupying a cottage in the early hours and repelling all comers, but reluctantly decided that there weren't enough of us to be effective.

THE NEXT DAY I went and sat in Jubilee Park where I could see one of the cottages which I knew was being surreptitiously and systematically demolished from the inside. Something had to be done, and an occupation of the site seemed the best way of making a forceful protest. So, one fine day in late June, some of us marched in and occupied the site of the present Needlemakers, encouraged by the presence of old Charlie, who stayed in his barn to the end. This action prevented the demolition men going about their 'lawful-business'. Not that they tried to stop us, but remained friendly throughout, as did the policemen sent in to keep an eye on things. In fact, one remarked to me that he hadn't expected us to persevere for more than a day in that heat, and there we were five days later, still going strong.

It certainly was hot. We spent every day in the relentless blaze of a heat-wave, guarding the barns on three sides of a square as well as the trees at the back, where I was once interviewed by Southern Radio while sitting on the chain saw of a tree feller, who obligingly left me alone. Many dedicated and highly respected citizens kept us supplied with much appreciated cold drinks and sandwiches. Some of these kindly people ran the risk of severe reprimands, or even the loss of their jobs, but they

never wavered in their support for what the Society was trying to achieve. I remember particularly Canon Keith Walker, who must have upset the church authorities by his wholehearted participation in many of our enterprises.

We worked shifts from 6 am, before the workmen came, until 10 or 11 pm when there was no risk of infiltration by night. We were a mixed band. There were many elderly and deceptively innocent looking ladies, together with young mothers taking a stint after dropping off their children at school. Students joined us, with husbands coming after work. It was a company of like-minded people, appalled at this latest desecration of our much-loved city. The enthusiasm and camaraderie were something I shall never forget and, unlike some protests these days, there was no violence on either side, not at that time at any rate. I'm sure that the strength of our feeling and the size of the occupation startled officialdom. I remember John Green looking down anxiously from an upper window of Covers opposite, perhaps wondering if we were about to storm his citadel too. Not only was he a major property-owner in Chichester, but also Chairman of Planning, and later, of the full W.S.C. Council.

MEANWHILE, back at County Hall, there was consternation. Meetings took place between the more acceptable face of the Chichester Society, represented by David Goodman and Jane Colbourne, our then secretary, and County officials, with no yielding on either side. Alan Perry, of the County Secretary's department was sent to view the situation. After that the council officers applied more pressure and we had to increase the number of sitters and be more vigilant. I was sitting on the roof of a threatened barn one day with a girl who was risking the wrath of her father-in-law by thus dishonouring the family name. We were watching closely the movements of a bulldozer. Suddenly an elegantly-dressed figure with a large sun-hat appeared and seated herself in the bulldozer's bucket. It was Joy Crawshaw, who had been away on holiday, much missed by our beleaguered army of occupation.

THINGS GOT QUITE LIVELY after that and the inevitable end wasn't long in coming. When I arrived at 6 am I found a wire fence had been put round the whole site, imprisoning the few stalwarts who had managed to get in before it was completed. Alan Perry was running agitatedly up and down, trying to stop new arrivals from getting inside. The situation was becoming decidedly unpleasant when, to our horror, dogs were brought in. Over reaction it's called these days, but, for safety's sake, we felt we had to give in. There was much coverage in the newspapers, who were

indignant on our behalf, blaming the officials for using such unnecessary force.

We lost the battle, but not the war as, after that, the Society was, and is, treated with the respect due to a body of intelligent and largely professional people, deeply concerned for the welfare of their unique city. Relations are harmonious these days, but it is essential that we keep our cutting edge as well as our vigilance.

Penny Knowles

A fish offensive

The Eastgate Sit-In produced a curious paradox. On the one side was ranged the full might of the Law, the County Council with its bulldozers and the police with their dogs. On the other side, although this protest was over the construction of a new road, there were no anarchists, no Swampys, no Rent-a-Mob protesters bussed in from elsewhere. These were citizens united in a common cause.

I arrived back from holiday to find this extraordinary confrontation taking place on the site of Combes Garden Centre (now a wine store). Leaving luggage unpacked and work untouched, I volunteered for service at once. I was detailed to patrol the back of the site in case of a flanking attack from the enemy. This beat included the dry bed of the Lavant.

Several senses alerted me to activity there, so I climbed down and discovered that a mega flat-fish had been playing host to every blow-fly and wasp in the area for at least a week. The stench was appalling. We were being threatened with arrest and Court action, but it occurred to me that nobody

in their right senses could claim that a stinking fish was an offensive weapon. It might offend the senses, but getting up the nose of officialdom was the name of the game.

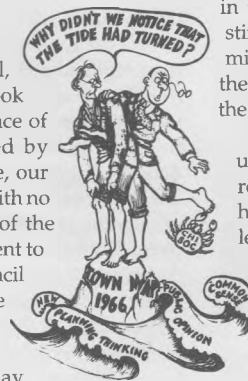
Swishing aside the diners, I picked it up by its tail which fortunately remained attached to backbone and head. With this weapon held at arm's length in front of me, and a crowd of frustrated flies in hot pursuit, I headed towards the front gates, where, as luck would have it, the chief law officer of the WSCC Highways Department, Alan Perry, was just entering with the intention of serving an Eviction Order.

He saw, and smelt, the Great Fish advancing relentlessly towards him, with all its train of flies. He hesitated, but still the fish came on. Then, very slowly, step by step, he retreated backwards. We closed the gates in his face. Oh Death, where is thy sting? That fish had found its finest hour in corruption.

The story didn't end there. A few days after WSCC had finally driven us from the site by police and dogs, there was a knock on my front door. When I opened it, I found a parcel on the doorstep, with a note attached. This read "I am a Christian. You offered me a stinking fish. I offer you this fish. Alan Perry." Inside the parcel was a pound of fresh salmon, a great luxury in the days before farmed salmon.

What was I to do? I, too, am a Christian but to eat that fish would have choked me. Instead, I cooked it and delivered it to the old ladies in the Dears Almshouses.

Joy Crawshaw





Is Chichester still 'a city in balance'?

THEN: '[we] must make hard plans for the conservation of those buildings and areas which we cherish for their quality of character... the buildings... which we value for their mature charm... for the quality of their craftsmanship... the identity of their surroundings'.
From Heritage Year News, European Architectural Heritage Year 1975.

In the late seventies the Chichester Society produced an influential brochure – *A City in Balance?* After drawing attention to the character of the city under the headline 'The Balance Preserved' this set out how the forces of property speculation and dubious planning had led to 'threats of demolition, environmental squalor, neglect, decay and the misuse of resources'.

Here we match some of the original photographs from that brochure with some recently taken. Parts of the original captions are matched with new ones to illustrate change. Clearly the Society's opposition has had a significant impact, for example in the proposed demolition of Orchard Street and the rejection of the ill-judged scheme to build on the Cattle Market. As important, perhaps, is that it helped raise an awareness that even in small projects the grain and character of the City could be enhanced, and this can be seen in the illustrations. However, the City still faces the pressures of commerce, traffic and poor design; organisations who should know better often seem content with mediocre standards of building design.

NOW: The huge, monolithic telephone exchange was built despite strong objections, since its single industrial use offered nothing at street level and was unrelated to the urban grain. The Society correctly predicted that new technology would soon make such a building redundant. What will happen now it is underused?

& NOW





◀ Then Now ▶

**A view to Shippams
and East Walls from
Eastgate Square.**

THEN: 'A prime example of speculation, resulting directly from the Town Map designation of development areas'



NOW: Although of mediocre design, the building now occupying the site has made three contributions to the city: (a) it is mixed use; (b) it has a short colonnade which, like that at the Assembly Rooms, offers sun and rain protection, and (c) a delightful planted stepped access has been created on the East Walls side.



◀ Then Now ▶

**View down Crane Street
to North Street.**

THEN: 'The beginning of the end. The houses on the left, characteristic of Chichester's domestic architecture, are to be demolished, 20 trees cut down and the whole area 'developed' as offices.



NOW. The houses fronting Crane St were restored and added to, now forming a pleasant shopping street. The majority of the trees were lost but sheltered housing was built instead of more shops and offices. The more recent building at right attempted to break down its scale with offices above retail units. Since the TSB moved out some time ago it has seemed difficult to let.



◀ Then Now ▶

**St Martin's Street,
looking Westward.**

THEN: 'the end house shows signs of deterioration. It is 'listed' and could once more become somebody's home, right in the centre of town. But what will happen to it?'



NOW: The house is now the well restored St Martin's Tea Rooms. A bonus is the garden at the rear, enhancing the service area. New mixed use buildings complete the corner, brightened by 'Good News' with their papers, flowers and plants.



◀ **Then**

Now ▶

North Walls looking east to North Street.

THEN: 'Rusting corrugated iron roofs, a decaying house, a block with lines at variance with Chichester's roofscape'



NOW: Housing now replaces Fred Hill's yard, delightful gardens back the wall which itself has been restored. The four storey building now seems to form a natural full stop to the vista.



◀ **Then**

Now ▶

Number 3, Orchard Street (from east)

THEN: 'Houses have rotted here, empty for years under planning blight until demolished. All will go unless the detested dual carriageway proposal is finally dropped'



NOW (from west): A well proportioned and colourful terrace of houses now completes the street. It is now hard to imagine that Orchard Street was even considered for demolition, but the Society vigorously and successfully campaigned against this, with the result we see.



◀ **Then**

Now ▶

Westgate, South side.

THEN: 'Victorian House of great character at the western entrance to the City. The first impression on coming to Westgate and another wasted housing resource'



NOW: The house, regrettably now used as computer storage, has been well restored by WSCC, as part of its fine restoration of the Tannery area. A delightful pedestrian route has been created behind it from Westgate.



◀ **Then**
Now ➤

Northgate Grain Store



NOW: Derelict for years, this has been well converted into flats, showing what can be done with such buildings.

Raising the wind

Browsing through old Newsletters I realise I'm not going to be able to mention *all* the fund-raising events of the 25 years the Society has been in existence! But here are a few (and they came thick and fast, were well attended and seem to have been quite profitable) – *Trash & Treasures*, opened by Bernard Price; a party in the Residential Garden by kind permission of Canon & Mrs Keith Walker; a Silent Auction; a Spring Fashion Show, *Flutes & Fair Ladies* (Midsummer Miscellany of Words & Music); Portrait Painting by Nigel Purchase; Christmas Markets; Spring Markets; Country Markets; the *Chichester entertainments* given by Ken Newbury; the Book Markets organised by Ken and later by Kim and Jenni Leslie. Malcolm Audio put on musical evenings more than once (Malcolm is now at Bastows) and so did John Kirkwood. Pearl Goodman gave her celebrated monologues. 'Music, mulled wine & mince pies' was another popular event.

Much of the fundraising such as the various Coffee Mornings and Book Fairs owed their very considerable financial success to the attic at Theatre Lane where we had permanent storage space and could start collecting books and *bric a brac* months before the actual event. Once the untidy boxes and bags of junk and books had to be stored in someone's house (usually mine!) things became much more difficult. There is no doubt that they are the most profitable (we made £1,700 at the last one I arranged) but they need a lot of organising and *storage space*. And they are also profitable because they bring in a lot of members of the public and don't rely entirely on the membership.

We mustn't forget all the willing helpers over the long years – Jean Todd (chairman of fundraising for a very long time) all the stall helpers of whom Eileen Winder (marvellous plant stall), Agnes & Wilf Reed, Belinda & Chris Hopper, Anne Potter, 'Smithy', John Kirkwood, Kim & Jenni Leslie, Barbara Chaundy, Diana Pailthorpe (Clear), Natalie Ross, Dora Mindham, Mary Templeman, Peter & Mary Parish, are only a few. Mark Hewitt helped us a lot in auctioning valuable things like silver given for a Coffee Morning.

The style of fund-raising has changed since then – someone else will continue the tale!

Jose Denton

Friday 9th April Book this date now for our

Spring Fashion Show

8.00 pm at the Chichester College of Further Education
Presented by Country Casuals for the Chichester Society
Entry at evening of the latest Spring fashions by Country Casuals and children's clothes by Smudge.
Tickets 75p, £1.00, £1.50, £2.00 from Bell House and Country Casuals
Watch out for further details

New place New Price

silent auction

This event planned for January has now been rearranged for
Friday 20th February at 8.00 pm
at the Assembly Rooms, North Street
Entrance now only 10p

A Silent Auction is a sale where bids are written down by each person as you browse through them. At the end of the evening the successful buyers are those who have offered the highest price on the bidder's card. If you have any items such as unwanted Christmas presents, you would like to donate to the Society for this fund-raising event, these would be gratefully received at Bell House. Please if you would like things collected or need any further information.

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Please come and visit...



New Park Centre: a success story

As the Chichester Society's representative back in 1974, and first Chairman of the federation of clubs and societies that wanted to use New Park Road School as a community centre, I salute the Society's 25th Birthday, and am happy to acknowledge its important part in this success story.

The intention of West Sussex County Council at that time was to demolish this redundant Victorian School as it stood in the path of the dual carriageway ring road that was to be bulldozed through the lovely Jubilee Park. With the help of certain public-spirited Councillors, a determined band of local people under the leadership of Roger Gibson succeeded in defeating that plan.

The school buildings were saved, and have been transformed during the course of the intervening years into a thriving community centre, catering for a vast range of local activities.

All those who attended last summer's 7th Film Festival will have been impressed by a programme of over 70 films, 20 on show before their London debut. The Festival made the national listings, some of its patrons journeying from as far away as Yorkshire, and it all took place in a theatre created from two Victorian schoolrooms. Congratulations to the New Park Film Society.

Three other classrooms have been transformed into a Gymnasium/Dojo and are used for a variety of Martial Arts, and, in these days, police training, Yoga classes and Slimnastics.

Then there's the one classroom that reflects its Victorian origin, although it no longer depends on a coke stove to defrost the schoolboys in winter. This is currently used for lacemaking, children's dance and drama classes, subaqua training, mixed-media art, and meetings of the Local History and Archaeological Societies.

The classroom alongside the theatre provides workshop and dressing rooms for the Chichester players, (another founding group. Don't miss their Christmas pantomime!) The bar was added in the eighties. The former dining room houses art

classes, dog training, Tai Chi, Camera Club, Embroiderer's Guild and Tango, Fiesta or Line dancing. Recently, the Council at last handed over the school kitchens under the direction of Centre Manager Peter Bond. This area was stripped out, sound-proofed and re-dedicated as the Jazz studio, already a major Jazz centre for the County.

Some say that a multiplex cinema would be a body blow to the centre. It might, but we will still show more interesting films and someone will come along with a new use for the old space. Last year, sadly, our playgroup closed because of the impact of the voucher scheme, but already children's matinees, Jazz classes, etc. are taking up the slack. The great quality of the N.P.C. is that it responds to its member's changing needs. Since it was saved from demolition nearly 25 years ago, N.P.C. has proved that if enough local people care for a building, it will survive, despite crises and threats. From 1888 to 1998 is a proud record, long may it flourish!

For information about any of the activities listed, ring the Centre manager, Mon-Wed, 9-5, on 536840.

George Appleby



No damp squib!

Remember, remember, the Fifth of November 1973? A significant date in the history of "A Very Special City". The large Hall of the Assembly Rooms was overflowing with citizens responding to the formation of the Chichester Society, described by one of its first members, Mildred Grief-Manson as "a rather surprising explosion of a classless and united front in Chichester." How appropriate for the date!

The Steering Committee had done its work, large notices had been prepared and were now held aloft. Members of the audience were invited to stand under any notice in which they were interested - Information, Action, Finance etc. - and so the Chichester Society was publicly launched.

Names of people past and present flow through our minds - George Appleby, Michael Cassidy, Jane Colbourne, David Goodman, Dorothy Howell-Thomas, Andy Hughes, Penny Knowles, Gwen Macadam, Simon Rivington, Margaret Rule,

John Templeton, Keith Walker and many, many more.

The first Newsletter was published in November 1973 and membership paid or promised soared to two thousand plus in the New Year. Meetings followed in the Elizabethan Room over the Punch House, in David Goodman's office over Bishops the clothiers in East Street and in various private houses.

The fireworks had been lit.

Our particular interest was the Membership and Newsletter distribution and we spent hours poring over and wondering where on earth was Albert Square! Fed with coffee and toast, encouraged by a tail-wagging black Labrador and overseen by an aged Ciceronian father sitting in a corner, we addressed envelopes, folded Newsletters and publicized our new logo, until the Society seemed secure and acknowledged as a power in the Community. Anything but a damp squib.

Jean Todd/Connie Napper

John Templeton writes...

I am glad to hear that you are doing an update of "A City in Balance". There are so many examples 'out of balance', like the Westhampnett Retail Park, the Fishbourne Roundabout, the 'moonscape' at Eastgate Square, the servicing by HGV's through St. Martin's Square, and of course the Avenue de Chartres car park!

I can't think of many developments 'in balance'. I am impressed with the recent infill terrace of housing in East Pallant. I like the Minerva Theatre and the landscaping around the two theatres (and the lettering you designed to identify which theatre is which!), and the landscaping around the Westgate roundabout. There are some reasonably designed shopfronts, like C & H in North Street and the refurbishment of the properties in South Street, but some appalling ones as well.

Other pluses which might be featured could be Centurion Way, the heritage tourist signposts, the upgrading of the Market and the retention of residential use of the lodge to Priory Park (the last two being Chichester Society successes.)

I've also thought of a number of sites and buildings whose future is uncertain and which may end up as being either 'in balance' or 'out of balance': The Dolphin & Anchor, St. Peter-the-Great, the former goods depot at the station, Graylingwell Hospital, the bus garage, Rowes, Shippams, and the Girls' High School and playing fields. It seems to be development pressures rather than the road schemes which we were fighting in the 1970's.

Finally, there are at present a few listed buildings boarded up which should be kept an eye on, in Basin Road, St. Paul's Road and Broyle Road, in each case two-storey flint and brick properties.

I'm very much looking forward to any events or publications celebrating the Society's first quarter century!

Very best wishes,
John Templeton



Priory Park (above) and East Pallant (below).



NOVIOMAGUS



In 1989 the District Council announced a grandiose scheme to get rid of our much-loved market, and it its place put a huge shopping complex. The Society, most of the city representatives on the Council, some from further afield and a large number of local people, were horrified and deeply alarmed. We at once set up an emergency committee under the title *Noviomagus*, the Roman name Newmarket!

The subsequent battle was long and hard, the field of conflict spreading far beyond the city, and also capturing the attention of the national media. The *Noviomagus* team worked indefatigably, enlisting wide support from the farming community, top professionals in every relevant discipline, hundreds of independent residents and, of course, from our own membership.

To challenge the planners on their own ground, our architect on the team, Anthony Perry, designed an excellent, perfectly viable alternative scheme which would not only preserve the essential market activities, but add housing and first-rate community facilities under cover. This was entered into the competitive arena together with the commercial applicants, including Arundel House, the planners' original choice, and it won 70% support from the public.

Alas, our scheme was not adopted, but the others were defeated too, and the market was saved. A great victory for democracy – and common sense!

David Goodman

Local and national papers featured items on the plans for the redevelopment of the Cattle Market site with cuttings seen here from the Chichester Observer and The Times of April 12 1989.

Let's keep this great trading tradition alive



Chichester site

From the Chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission Sir, Sir James Richards's letter (March 28) referred to the Chichester District Council's promotion of the development of the cattle market site. Whilst it is not against the principle of development, the Royal Fine Art Commission has written to the council expressing deep concern about the over-development of the site, which results from its demand for excessive "planning gain".

The "gain" includes a new link road and a car park for nearly 1,000 cars. To raise the money to pay for this the developer will be forced to put excessive accommodation on the site, which can never be in sympathy with the historic scale of Chichester.

The commission has suggested to the council that a smaller scheme be considered which lessens the need for a link road or so much car parking and that an equity be taken in it to make up any short-term losses on the disposal of the site.

*Yours faithfully,
ST. JAMES OF FAWSLEY,*

*The Royal Fine Art Commission,
7 St James's Square, SW1.
March 30.*

Chichester councillors pose for the camera by the Cattle Market railings c1895.

VICTORIOUS BATTLERS EUPHORIC

AN ATMOSPHERE of euphoria swept over the Chichester cattle market as news of the district council's decision filtered through.

Farmers were jubilant, stall holders delighted, and cattle market campaigners were ecstatic.

The biggest battle in the market's history had been fought bitterly and won - and everyone wanted to celebrate.

On Tuesday members of Chichester District Council had decided by 27 votes to 20 to throw out the controversial Arundell House scheme, and to completely re-think the planning brief for the key site in Chichester.

The president of the Chichester Society, Mr. David Goodman, issued the winning vote a triumphant lap of honour on behalf of all his fellow campaigners.

With a huge grin on his face he wandered around the market - which had looked destined to be the site for multi-million pound car parking, supermarket, and shopping development.

If the rejected plans had been accepted the livestock market which has been in Chichester for

By CAROLINE WOOD



John Willis - "victory for common interests" - Photo sales

creatures and moved to its current site in the 19th century would have disappeared.

Livestock Auctioneer Mr. John Willis was triumphant.

"We've saved it. It's a victory for the common interests of the majority of Chichester people. If the livestock market had gone it would have forced farmers to travel to Guildford, Salisbury, or

Haywards Heath. Now we can begin to redevelop within the city walls and improve the market."

Emsworth farmer Mr. Keith Barnard has been buying and selling sheep and cattle at Chichester since 1957.

He said: "We do need more car parking, but no one wants a huge multi-storey development here. We are all absolutely delighted by this week's decision."

Auctioneer Mr. Derek Bowerman declared the news as a triumph for the small person.

"We took on the district council and we won. Our own Chichester councillors were great."

Councillor Dr. Marie Clough, a leading opponent of the Arundell House scheme, said: "We have

been told by the other side that

"This is just not the case, we'd like to start tomorrow by resurfacing the area for car parking while we investigate the whole area, that is what we voted for at the meeting."

Generations of mums have brought their children to the market each and every Wednesday to look at the cows, sheep, chickens, and rabbits on sale side by side with the stall holders.

Peter Hopkins (57), of Hillards Farm, Blandford, came to Chichester trying to bid for his first chicken at the market when he was seven. He has been coming to the market every week since.

He said: "There was a risk that a tradition was to be destroyed, something enjoyed by generations in the past and generations of people to come. Every week you can watch the children standing looking at their first live chicken, or rabbit, it is a tradition - and something we cannot throw away."

As far as Mr. Goodman is concerned Chichester Cattle Market is a bit of a special place. It is the best open air theatre Chichester has got and we've got to preserve it," he said.

It is expected that regular exchanges of visits between the Cities will take place and, to that end, Bath has already extended an invitation for next year.

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Designated Cities Conference

The following Statement was agreed by the delegates from the four Cities at the Conference held in the Chichester City Council Chamber on Saturday 10th June 1989.

"Arising from the Government Designation in 1969 of Bath, Chester, Chichester and York for special studies in conservation, a conference of delegates from their amenity societies was convened in Chichester on Saturday 10th June 1989. The Conference resolved to recommend to their Societies the forging of a new informal link for mutual support and the exchange and dissemination of ideas and problems on a continuing basis.

It is expected that regular exchanges of visits between the Cities will take place and, to that end, Bath has already extended an invitation for next year.

Among the many topics about which the Conference expressed deep concern were: the implementation of planning procedures; traffic management; park and ride; transshipment of goods; pedestrianisation; tourism; problems of the use, misuse or disuse of upper floors; and the impact of major new development on historic cities.

It was strongly felt that at present there is insufficient protection for historic environments of all kinds.

A Report of the Conference will be made available as soon as possible."

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THE TIMES SATURDAY APRIL 1 1989

Joint fight by historic cities

By John Young

The problems and pressures facing four historic British cities - Bath, Chester, Chichester and York - are to be discussed at a meeting of local civic societies in June.

Mr David Goodman, president of the Chichester Society, said this week that links were set up about ten years ago, because it was felt that the four cities, being relatively small, might be most vulnerable to overdevelopment and unchecked tourism.

As reported last week, Chichester City Council is seeking the release of Green Belt land for development, and next Mon-

day in Chichester a district council subcommittee will have to decide whether to approve the redevelopment of the city's historic cattle market.

The Royal Fine Art Commission, English Heritage and the Georgian Society all strongly support an alternative scheme by the Chichester Society without multi-storey car parking and a destructive new road.

Last year the council invited submissions for the site. Some 60 proposals were reduced to a short list of four.

After strong local objections

to all four, the council agreed to include the society's submission. That has since been backed by Lord St John of Fawsley, chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission.

In a letter to *The Times* this week Sir James Richards, former editor of the *Architectural Review* and the *Architect's Journal*, and architectural correspondent of *The Times* for 24 years, said that the developers' proposals for a large shopping centre, with supermarkets and a huge car parking area, would have a destructive effect on the environment.

The Chichester Canal Society

Meet Father Christmas Boat Trips

Sat 28 November to Thurs 24 December

Boat leaves the Canal Basin at

10.20, 11.30, 12.40, 1.50 & 3.00

Fare : Adult or Child £5.00

A present for every child and festive refreshments for everybody!
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Present day: Cicestians are still able to enjoy the diversity of market stalls.



The well-known figure of John Willis, Cattle Market Auctioneer.

A Tribute to our President

In 1973 many Cicestrians were appalled at what was happening all around them, yet felt helpless to act. Then, as so often happens in times of crisis, a leader stepped forward, in the person of David Goodman, a painter already well-known in the city for his work in the wider arts field during the early post-war years, and later for his part in the founding of the Festival Theatre.

In response to the rapidly growing alarm, he put forward organised opposition as the only effective course, and thus the Chichester Society was born. Recognising the essential need for wide publicity, he and his new team at once embarked on a well-orchestrated programme, including numerous interviews on radio, TV and the national press, thus bringing the plight of Chichester to many influential people living far beyond the city limits. During the campaign the Society gained considerable national support, but David's energy and enthusiasm also inspired many local talented people to join in what seemed at the time to be an almost impossible task.

Under his tireless leadership the tide of destruction was radically slowed, until the emphasis shifted from public censure to constructive suggestion. Meanwhile people looked to David and the Society for ideas and inspiration. They have never been disappointed.

Ever since the Society was formed, David has devoted his time and amazing energy to its aims, often in the early days putting his own career in jeopardy. He has never been what one would call

a 'committee man' – for his inspiration comes too fast and is quickly translated into action. This characteristic has often exasperated more conventional people, but it is the very essence of the man. Conviction of opinion combined with verbal ability have sometimes been seen by his critics as arrogance, but this is far from the truth. Friends and colleagues know him as a family man, with many other interests, who is constantly surprised by his own success. He enjoys an argument, frequently disagrees, occasionally quarrels briefly, but has never been known to lose a friend or bear a grudge.

Without David's outspoken criticism of insensitive development, and fearless opposition to bad planning, we would not, at the end of the century, be living in and enjoying a city of which we still have the right to be proud. He would, however, be the first to concede that without the enormous contributions of all those with whom he has worked, much of this historic city might well have been lost forever. He is never complacent and shows no sign of slowing down. We thank him, wish him well, and look forward to having his vision and inspiration for many years to come.

Jane Colbourne

Musical chairs in the high street

It may interest readers to see who was advertising with us in the 'boom' days of September 1986, and what became of them - viz of 21 advertisers:

- only 4 still advertise regularly with us
- 6 small businesses closed down (2 bankrupt)
- 2 proprietors retired (one to grow mushrooms in France)
- 4 curtailed their advertising due to grant cuts etc.
- 1 changed hands; the new owner doesn't believe in advertising
- 1 chose the wrong 'cottage industry'
- 1 did too well and couldn't accept any more work!
- 1 is weighed down with litigation expenses
- 1 doesn't love us any more...

ADSDEAN FARM – BASTOWS CLASSICS
BEANFEAST – BEVIS – DUNNAWAYS
EVANS & GARDNER – HOOPERS FISH
WOOLSCAPE/FLYING COLOURS
WHISTLES – HEATSEAL – NIDA AUTOS
NOBLE ROT – HANNAH GREAVES
CHICHESTER & DISTRICT MUSIC CIRCLE
BERSTED SERVICES – DRAGONFLY STUDIOS
SUMMERSDALE STORES – MARY CORELL
WEALD & DOWNLAND MUSEUM
AMBERLEY CHALK PITS MUSEUM
MILLERS MOTOR SCHOOL – PLUS SUNDRY
'HERE TODAY/GONE TOMORROW'
RESTAURANTS...

Can you guess which is which?

The Newsletter is still a splendid showcase for local events and societies, several of which have 'one-off' special advertisements or like to help us (and themselves) by keeping their name before the public on a more regular basis. To join this perspicacious company, call me on 01243 641361. **Peggy Haynes**, Advertisement Manager
Chichester Society Newsletter

Gone... but not forgotten

Some of the many local businesses which are no longer with us. These illustrations originally appeared in the Festival Theatre programme of 1966.



Geerings, North Street.

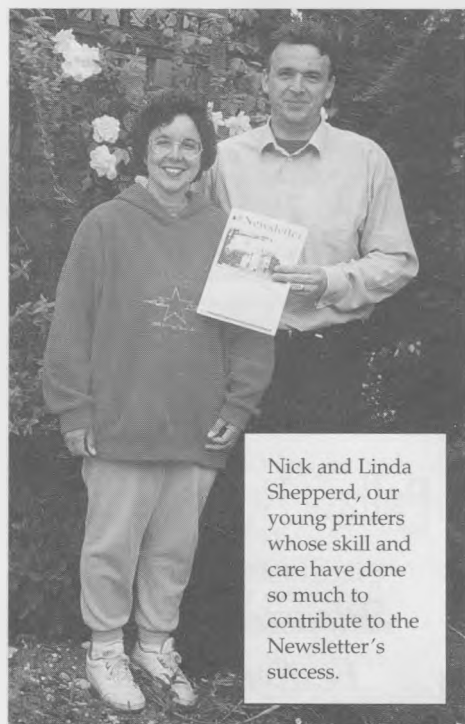


Meakers, North Street.



The Wessex Bookshop, South Street.

Tributes from the President



Nick and Linda Shepperd, our young printers whose skill and care have done so much to contribute to the Newsletter's success.

I would very much like to express my personal thanks to the members of the editorial committee, without whose devoted work over the years the essential voice of the Society would not be heard. Thanks to my Deputy Editor Joy Crawshaw, who does most of the compilation, and Peggy Haynes, who supplies the advertisements not to mention the occasional article and poetic inspiration. I also thank Anthony Perry, Barry Russell and the Chairman for their equally valuable contributions.

David Goodman

Anthony W. Cropley MASSAGE THERAPIST

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Chairman's Column

What of the Future?

'Only connect' advised E.M.Forster and this ought to be heeded when sounding local prospects.

The major administrative headquarters long familiar in the town ought to flourish with government de-centralisation. Expertise at County and District levels can improve with I.T. communication. The regionally significantly wide base of courts should still be well served by well-established lawyers of both branches.

In education there should be a match between Bishop Otter and Westgate Fields campuses as well as the possibly vacating barracks leading to a University of Chichester. This would parallel the modernisation of the local hospital which might even connect with education in a new medical school. Already West Street has those whose talents, including instruction, would fit Harley Street.

The theatre will revive as the seating is replaced: more folk may be expected to sit more often for the delights of a truly local Festival theatre, once more due to prove a starting block for national theatrical runners.

Major sporting and leisure opportunities will get better; Goodwood could find profitable ways to engage those wanting a quiet life perhaps by running racing dairy-float days when milk-runs have ceased.

Fear of flooding that prevents retail development at Barnfield might be overcome with an overflow scheme leading to the canal. In turn the canal, already a feature of the City's Southern Gateway, could provide a way for those who take leisure in pleasure boats to come up from the Marina to the City, promising themselves and guests a cross-Solent voyage, 'next time'.

Time for leisure has been predicted to expand. Sadly, the possibility of an integrated site at Barnfield seems to have been placed out of reach by a District Council who averted their eyes to that profitable possibility. Maybe another flutter in the National Lottery funding queue will get enough money for Westgate to approach the high standards already demanded by international sport.

All these aspects and more not mentioned depend on a well-intentioned active citizenry and a free press. Much will turn on the quality of pupils at the local schools and upon how much those who live here are ready to give to their neighbours in time and watchfulness with courtesy. The personal connections already in place through such bodies as the Chichester Society need nurture and renewal. The Society is open opportunity to all those who share these feelings and who will give some time.

DAVID TREGEAR

We had hoped to arrange a Christmas Recital at John Ede House, performed by Kate Harvey (piano) and Benedict Rogerson (cello). However, Benedict is unable to fulfil this engagement due to unexpected professional demands which are invaluable in furthering his career. The concert will take place in the New Year, date to be announced.

Snippet... we hear that *Snips* (another family-owned business) has gone... Not particularly old, but nevertheless a very useful source of domestic ware. Snipped in the bud, as it were, and we understand that the shop itself is to be snipped in two.

SOCIETY NOTICEBOARD

Goodwood Motor Circuit

As the Society's representative on the recently constituted 'Goodwood Motor Circuit Consultative Committee' I am very keen to inject the views and concerns of Society Members post the Revival Meeting that took place 18th to 20th September 1998. One aspect that everyone appears to agree upon is that the public address system was extremely intrusive in both volume and content of information to local residents. I should be most grateful to receive written or verbal input, my telephone number is 01243 528467. Phil Spooner

Report: Society Autumn Fair

This event was held on 11th November in the Small Hall of the Assembly Rooms which proved to be a very suitable venue for the Society's first venture of this kind for some time.

As those organising it had not been involved in similar endeavours in the past there was a rather slow start to the preparations. Fortunately by the due time this had been remedied and a good turnout both in the way of donations and helpers on the stalls resulted in a very satisfactory result.

A healthy profit of over £275 resulted and the thanks of the Society is due to all who gave, all who supported the event and all who assisted, particularly the latter. Mention must be made of Peter Hunt who dealt with most of the detailed planning. It is to be hoped that, in view of its success, that it will not be too long before a similar event is held.

B.H.H.

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Turpitude or slurpitude?

'A managed retreat', a phrase often heard these days, is a face-saving way of saying 'O.K., you win', and that's nothing new in Selsey. Ten centuries ago the sea forced the church to make a managed retreat in moving the cathedral to Chichester, but, if global warming continues unchecked, it won't be a further ten before they have to move it again – maybe to the Trundle?

The church has been making another sort of managed retreat in the city. In the 18th century, Chichester was noted for the number of pubs and churches within the walls. Today, there are far fewer pubs, but the churches have all disappeared.

True, some have taken honourable retirement, such as St Olaves, North St, St Andrews, Oxmarket, and All Saints, West Pallant. One, St Johns, is 'moth-balled', because of its historical significance, two have left their name behind but the rest are gone without trace.

By the 1970s, only St Peter the Great, West St, remained, but the congregation saw the writing appear on the wall when the newly enthroned bishop refused to appoint a new priest to the living.

The site was central, and, in agent-speak, very prestigious, so Mammon was prepared to make the church an offer that it couldn't resist, provided St Peters was demolished. This, however, is a distinguished building, so planning permission was refused.

Now, after sixteen years of neglect, it has become The Slurping Toad. (Please wait whilst I put on my bullet-proof vest.)

The name has been cunningly chosen to provoke a reaction, and it has succeeded. Now, everybody knows it is there.

As to the use of the building, maybe it is not the purchasers who are to blame. If you sell your house, you surrender your rights to control the décor chosen by the new owners. All over Britain, one sees redundant churches being put to very inappropriate uses, but God hasn't seen fit to destroy them with fire and brimstone, as he once did to Sodom and Gomorrah. Anyway, the target there was men, not buildings.

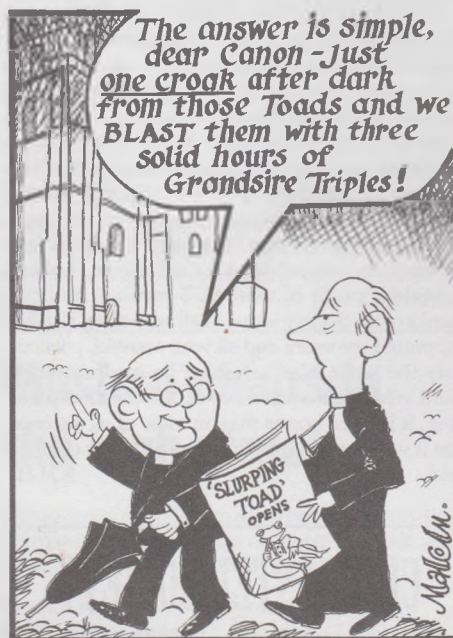
I leave it to my editor to give his reactions to this conversion, whilst agreeing that those toads are the dregs of Disneyland kitsch. However, they could well be an endangered species. The market in Breweries is never a very stable one. If there were to be a take-over, the new brewery would want to install its own logo. There would be no 'managed retreat' for the toads, they'd be broken up for hardcore before one could say the words 'Time, gentlemen, please!'

Joy Crawshaw

Underneath the arches

Last month I looked in at 'The Slurping Toad' (ugh!). Not, I may say, to slurp, nor indeed with toadly hostile intent, but just to look, leaving aside the vexed question of the suitability of such a building for use as a pub, what, I wondered, would it be like inside?

With the exterior treatment I was of course already familiar, watching its progress with some apprehension. Obviously the restoration has been diligently carried out, no expense spared, though for my taste it has a very over-scrubbed appearance – clean, wholesome and decidedly lifeless.



It reminds me of what was done to that other noble relic, the Cross, when it was scraped, sandblasted, and re-furnished with so much new stone infilling that its time-worn dignity was largely lost. Would this great church make Carpenter, its brilliant Victorian architect, turn in his grave?

Inside, under the soaring arches, also gleaming bright, the general effect is not simply one of gross vulgarity, rather that of sheer ineptitude, and what might be described as mixed metaphors. It seems to have been designed with the naive object of bridging the gap between past and present, and at the same time the less easily definable one between the tastes of the young and older generations.

The raised dining platform, for instance, with its heavy wooden balustrade in church style, presumably to give a sense of devotional eating; the little intimate enclosures around the walls, backed by blow-ups from the dictionary of quotations, looking like a cross between side chapels and American dining booths; the ubiquitous toads, two and three dimensional, the painted ones on the north wall with chorus-girl legs; the battery of T.V. screens next to them which apparently serve no purpose at all other than to flicker, since they are too small and distant to watch; the high pulpit-like structure, lined with bottled booze (ready for a lesson on the evils of drink?) and so on.

However, it was good to see that no permanent injury appears to have been inflicted on this fine building, and that the proprietors have evidently done their best to provide a well-controlled environment. There can be no doubt that Chichester seriously lacked a really large, comfortable space with food and drink available, where people, especially the young, can meet informally as and when they like. Let us hope that the good start it has evidently made will continue. Could we also hope that this once hallowed place would be re-christened with a name more in keeping with its situation and less silly. How about St Peter's Inn?

The Dolphin is back

I also awaited the completion of the Dolphin and Anchor refurbishment with some apprehension. Although the Society had been consulted throughout the early stages by the architects, and had successfully influenced the final design, we were not at all sure what the interior would really be like. Outside we feel the result to be pretty good, except for some rather mechanical looking details (my personal comment) but inside?

Well, so far as the main central block is concerned it could hardly be better. The loss of our ancient hostelry remains a matter of deep regret, but the new bookshop is surely a most worthy (and appropriate) replacement. I find the general effect and ambience quite stunning, so congratulations to all concerned, architects, designers, and of course, Waterstones themselves. I trust that the rest of the building will be treated as sympathetically.

David Goodman

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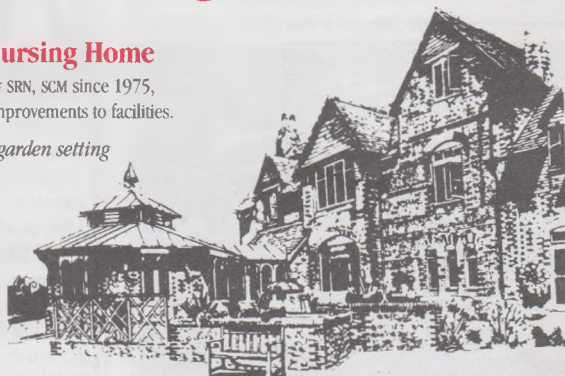
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Neither the editor nor the Society necessarily subscribe to the views expressed by our contributors, but we feel it is right that all shades of opinion should be expressed in this newsletter.

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