

THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Celebrating our anniversary 1973-2023



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Uncared-for trees on West Street leave little room for buggies and pushchairs

Photo: Brian Henham

WHERE HAS CHICHESTER'S CIVIC PRIDE GONE?

If you get off a bus outside Chichester Cathedral, what do you see? Dilapidated flower beds with a sign proudly displaying the fact that they belong to Chichester City Council. There's also another weed-strewn flower bed nearby beside Phillip Jackson's statue of St Richard. Why isn't this flower bed maintained by the Cathedral's works team?

Let us return to our hapless bus passengers, residents or visitors to Chichester leaving their bus, who will have to squeeze (this is late July), beneath and between untrimmed over-hanging lime trees, negotiate rubbish on the ground. Across the road is another eye-sore, the once proud Army and Navy store (and later House of Fraser) now seemingly abandoned for the past four years waiting for its Guernsey-based owners to decide its future. If our bus passengers get as far as the Cross, they are just as likely to fall over one of the trip hazards on our pavements. When is our highway authority, West Sussex County Council (WSCC), going to do something about the parlous state of the paving?

We live in hope! Chichester District Council (CDC) has commissioned a Regeneration Strategy for Chichester, agreed at Full Council in mid-July - but this city is in dire need of action now! Could our City Council better maintain not only their flower beds but also pay for sweepers to keep pavements in front of the Cathedral clean? Cannot the interminable discussions about paving in the city centre - and who pays for what - be concluded at long last by WSCC? And we must ask CDC to publish their Regeneration Strategy and deliver it as soon as possible. In the meantime, our 'Councils' should do their bit to improve the dilapidated state of our city centre now and not later. If they can't do it perhaps we the residents should form a work party to tidy the place up!

AGM 2023

**The Society's
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

will be held at 7.00 pm on

Wednesday 18 October

at The Assembly Room

North Street, Chichester.

After AGM business we

welcome guest speaker

Simon Wardell

Director of the Weald and
Downland Living Museum.

**See page 18 for details about
this talk and subscription rises.**

As Northgate Car Park will be
closed for the annual Sloe Fair on
Friday 20 October use car parks
like Little London and St Cyriacs.



NOW AND THEN

Richard Childs discovers Lakeland's shop in North Street was once a medieval church

St Peter the Less on the east side of North Street dated back to at least the 13th century, though it may well have had Saxon origins. Its tower is from the 14th century. The church was slightly set back from the street behind a fence and this area provided enough space for a porch. A projected rebuilding of the church in 1852-53 was not carried out, instead, it was restored in 1861-62. Further restoration work was carried out in 1879-80, but in later years the depopulated centre of Chichester was over-provided with churches. By 1938 the number of communicants at *St Peter's* varied from just three to twenty-five. The church eventually closed its doors in 1953 and it was demolished in 1960. The redevelopment of the site provided for shops and an office block (*St Peter's House*). It also allowed for the building of a new road, *St Peter's*, from Priory Road through to North Street.

In the 1990s the site was occupied by Hoopers, one of the small chain of upmarket department stores, originally founded in Torquay in 1982. When Hoopers closed, the shop was occupied by Lakeland in 2006. The Lakeland chain of kitchenware stores (originally Lakeland Plastics) was founded in 1956 in Windermere, Cumbria. It currently has 68 stores across the country and has recently opened shops in Dubai, Bahrain and Qatar.



St Peter the Less on North Street about 1942
Photo: authors collection



The site today is a popular store selling a range of domestic kitchen equipment
Photo: Brian Henham

CHANGES IN SENIOR STAFF AT CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

Christopher Mead-Briggs reports on new appointments

In April 2023 Matt Briers CBE was appointed Chief Executive of Chichester Harbour Conservancy. This followed Richard Craven's retirement who had been in post since the passing of Lt Col John Davis in 2010. Matt had a 37-year career in the Royal Navy, his final post being Director Carrier Strike, as a Rear Admiral. He has a lifelong interest in conservation and the environment.

On his appointment, Matt commented on his delight at joining the Conservancy team at Itchenor and Dell Quay: 'Chichester Harbour is special, being of international importance environmentally and a busy recreational area for boating, walkers and cyclists I very much look forward to working with all stakeholders to preserve and enhance the Harbour for future generations.'



Matt Briers

The new Harbourmaster is Jo Cox who has a strong maritime background, serving in the Merchant Navy and the British Antarctic Survey and combined sea going and scientific research. Jo served on the sub-Antarctic Island of South Georgia and later commanded the research ship *Discovery*, before appointment as Harbour Master in the Falklands. Jo commented that 'the appeal of this role was the opportunity to combine my professional skills and passion for the environment and conservation ... it's also wonderful to be home!'

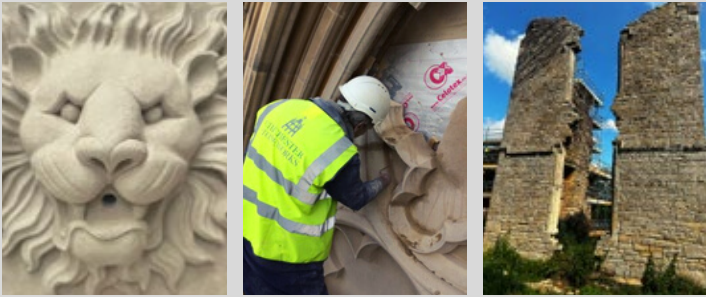


Jo Cox
.....
Photos courtesy of Chichester Harbour Conservancy



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CONTACT US

01243 784 226
INFO@CSWORKS.CO.UK
WWW.CHICHESTERSTONWORKS.CO.UK

DAVID GOODMAN'S ADDRESS RESULTED IN THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY'S FORMATION

It was given on 1 October 1973 at the Council House on North Street. The text below is an edited version of the original.

Chichester is one of the most beautiful and best preserved of England's historic cities. Most of us here lived fairly happily for some years after the War, and we did not protest too bitterly when the little red boxes appeared on the outskirts. We accepted the need for some change and had reasonable faith in the democratic safeguards. Besides, our own City Council had the courage and foresight to commission the leading authority of the day, Dr Thomas Sharp, to study the city in depth and give detailed advice for its future development. Alas, the situation today is vastly different. The winds of change have blown ill indeed and Chichester is reeling. How has this sorry state of affairs come about? Clearly the causes are manifold and by and large are not peculiar to Chichester alone. There comes a point in the life of any town when it can no longer adequately serve contemporary needs. It must then change radically, or be destroyed, or decay by neglect, or be preserved and, if you like, set aside for our enjoyment.

Strangulation around the corner

Chichester was largely re-created in the 18th century. And for nearly 200 years, while Chichester's function as a small market and Cathedral city remained fairly constant, it served us very well indeed. Today the links with traditional functions are fragile and are breaking up rapidly. It is strained to breaking point, and the traffic grows daily worse. It is indeed a living place, but strangulation is just around the corner. This brings me to the fallacy which has conditioned so much informed opinion. It is this. That by civilised planning, rationalisation and logistics, you can keep an historic city agreeably abreast with the times. This is a false concept and there seems little hope that high standards are either likely or possible in the present conditions. This is not to say that they are not available, or that the time may not come again when taste and judgment parallel the 18th century. But the evidence is overwhelming all over Britain and, indeed the world, that imagination and talent are suppressed by expediency and economy acting in a cultural quagmire.

But the central problem is that no old town can cater fully and efficiently for new modes of living without serious, and finally mortal, mutation. If you move into an old house of charm and character, you sensibly install modern comforts - central heating no doubt, mains drainage, electricity, a damp course, bathroom, modern kitchen equipment. So it is with Chichester. Do what is essential for basic comfort, jealously preserving the fabric, leaving the character intact, and start elsewhere with your jet-age amenities. Don't attempt hopeless compromises. If my argument is correct, we are left with a simple proposition. What is done is done, though some restoration might still be possible. Let us, for pity's sake, cease to re-mould Chichester under the shadow of the motor car and the supermarket. If this helps to create a museum, so be it. I have recently visited my favourite Italian city, Siena. It's a lovely, lively city though scarcely a stone within its old boundaries has been destroyed.



What is to be done?

I fully recognise that Chichester's record compares favourably with those of the majority of English towns and cities. Her councillors have not permitted wholesale destruction on a scale comparable with, say, Bath. A devoted minority has worked hard in and outside the Council offices, often against seemingly hopeless odds. There have been notable successes too. The time has come for some pretty drastic action, if living in Chichester is to have any special quality at all. We who live here carry a responsibility to the rest of the country, and equally we must take fully into account the major problems of our society if we are going to be effective locally.

I would like to see

- a pressure group capable of powerful action at any level, and with a positive programme of conservation to which all individual problems can be quickly related. Co-ordination is the key. Now, I believe, is a psychologically good moment for several reasons, not least the present wholesale excavations. Once established the group must work closely at a national level with any similar groups up and down the country.
- The new Ministry has declared its support in principle for pressure groups, and there is, of course, the independent Civic Trust. I would like to see the Group harness every available talent, particularly in the fields of civil and common law, architecture, design, archaeology, letters, journalism and education. Without expertise at the highest level, protest may be still-born. Having thrashed out a constitution and a programme, it must fully publicise these as well as itself, so that the public image is that of a popular movement rather than of a Masonic Lodge.
- I would like to see the Group find ways of attracting substantial funds. You cannot get far with thirty bob in the kitty. Then it should use part of these funds for a programme of education both directed to the citizens of Chichester and to their children. It is likely that the Director of Education would be sympathetic towards any help he can get, especially on the wider aspects of environmental problems. I would like it to become perfectly clear to the average citizen of Chichester who has a serious environmental complaint, or indeed a constructive idea, to whom he or she should turn first for advice or help.

Now I am fully aware that Chichester's own Civic Society is the natural choice for such a group. It carries the city's name; it has prestige; it has a long background of work towards some of the objectives I have outlined. I therefore ask the Civic Society if it truly feels able to broaden its scope, toughen its sinews and generally prepare for battle in a manner which may be alien to its constitution or background. Would it prefer to continue in its present form, while giving maximum support to some central organisation in which it is represented?

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From *Saving Our City: the Chichester Society in the 1970s* by Tim Rooth. Published by Woodfield Publishing 2015. This address can be read in full on the Society's website at chichestersociety.org.uk/publications

With thanks to Julia Goodman for photographs of her father

THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY: SOME HISTORY

David Goodman refers to the *Chichester Civic Society*. This had been set up in 1947 as the Chichester Civic Society Excavations Committee. Its purpose was to study the city's early history arising from buildings damaged by wartime bombing. Discoveries included the Roman baths at what is now the Novium Museum on Tower Street. The Civic Society was legally wound up in 1980 and its papers are deposited with the Record Office.

But long before this occurred, it was superseded by a new *Chichester Society*, following decisions taken at two public meetings held 1 October and 5 November 1973. After formalities had been completed David Goodman became Chairman, Canon Keith Walker Vice Chairman, Tim Rooth Secretary and Gwen MacAdam Treasurer.

A third public meeting on 17 June 1974 was held at the Cathedral with a huge audience estimated between 1,500 and 1,800. These extracts are from Tim Rooth's *Saving Our City*:

- **Evening Argus 18 June 1974:**

Chichester's 900-year-old Cathedral hadn't seen anything like it for years - if ever. People stood five deep in the aisles last night. They jammed the nave. They squashed into the choir stalls.
- **Chichester Observer 21 June 1974:**

An emotion-charged meeting that 'in such surroundings... was a kind of planning appeal to a higher authority'.



NEW STUDENT HOUSING PROPOSED AT GRAYLINGWELL

Andrew Bain offers a critique of the University’s proposals. At the time of writing a planning application is expected.

Chichester University is proposing to increase its student housing provision by redeveloping the existing accommodation at Havenstoke Close, located south of Havenstoke Park. There will be 349 self-catered studio and ensuite student units with associated social amenities. The built form is shown as mainly 4-storey arranged in collegiate streets and a central square. The frontage to Connolly Way appears from the presented material to be 3-storey with a mansard top floor.

This will introduce an urban form into what is at present the rural context of Havenstoke Park to the north with a low NHS facility to the west, the recently refurbished Martins Farmhouse to the east and the University Sports Fields to the south. Mature trees lining Connolly Way will screen the new building with summer views from Havenstoke Park. Moreover, trees on the east boundary will soften the development’s impact. The new building confronts the University Sports Field unscreened which perhaps is appropriate compounding its connection with the University Campus.

For comparison, there is a 4-storey recently completed residential development to the north-east of Graylingwell Chapel which presents a rather harsh prospect but offers a precedent and is in a similar architectural style of flat roofed brick construction with regular punched windows.

The Chichester Society supports the University’s proposals because attractive student accommodation on the campus is at the heart of its ambition for student well-being. A similar project is planned for the Bognor campus. This development offers the opportunity for high energy performance, transport sustainability and justifies replacement of the existing poor 1970’s buildings. A small number of car spaces are allocated solely for student drop-off.

.....

Andrew Bain is a member of the Society’s Executive Committee.



Images above and top right are indicative designs by the project architects



Looking towards the site from the north-east showing mature trees lining Connolly Way. Graylingwell has many trees which will enhance the new student housing.
Photo: Andrew Bain



TO PLAQUE OR NOT TO PLAQUE? Cedric Mitchell on the County Council’s undemocratic decision

This blue plaque is no more because sadly it has fallen victim to the current epidemic of wokery. This is very bad on two separate counts. First, this decision was taken by just four members of West Sussex County Council (WSCC), none of whom are Chichester residents, following a request from a single member of the public. This seems a very autocratic and undemocratic decision. Indeed, should WSCC be taking on the role of moral guardian? The second issue concerns the purpose of the blue plaque. Had Eric Gill been a child abuser and not an artist of renown there would have been no plaque. This symbolic reminder celebrates not the man but the art and creativity of the artist. Very many of our greatest artists led totally reprehensible lives. The Chichester Society, a civic society of nearly fifty years standing, deplores this undemocratic decision which casts our much-loved city in an undeservedly poor light. This blue plaque was erected by the same County Council nearly 25 years ago in a ceremony attended by members of the Gill family. Since then, no complaints are recorded.... till now.

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Cedric Mitchell is a member of the Society’s Executive Committee



Until removed by the County Council this blue plaque was displayed on the wall of a house close to the Orchard Street roundabout.
Image: Richard Childs

CHICHESTER SOCIETY EVENTS IN JUNE

A HARBOUR CRUISE on 16 June was enjoyed by 50 members and their friends: Christopher and Meryl Mead-Briggs recall a memorable social occasion.

Friday 16 June was a sunny and calm day (so unlike July!) and we began by meeting for coffee on Itchenor Sailing Club lawn.

Our sail began at 11.00 with full high water and we were given a commentary by the Conservancy crew as we cruised silently along – for ours was a solar panelled craft.

There was no wind as we journeyed gently down Chichester Channel admiring the Chidham shoreline. We were shown an area near Thorney Channel where small islands have been formed to encourage terns to nest.

Then we headed north almost to Bosham and its well-known church which was a wonderful sight from the Solar Boat.

We returned to Itchenor where a battered fish and chip lunch was beautifully cooked by Danny Foster at the Sailing Club, with lovely views of the harbour. We've received many emails from those who attended and are so glad everyone enjoyed themselves.



Photo: Meryl Mead-Briggs



Photo: John and Caroline Hutchings



Photo: Meryl Mead-Briggs

REMEMBERING DAVID GOODMAN

John Templeton describes a significant occasion with many in the audience present during the Society's earliest days.

On the 22 June we held a very special event at the Novium Museum to mark the Society's 50th anniversary. Before an invited audience of nearly 50 guests, we spoke about David Goodman whose collaborative genius enabled the Chichester Society to be set up. Phil Hewitt, Arts Editor at the Chichester Observer, was in the chair of a panel with Julia Goodman, David's eldest daughter and myself, almost a founder member. Together we shared memories of the Society in early 1970s. Our purpose was for current members of the Executive Committee, as well as other members playing major roles in the life of the city, to hear how and why David Goodman founded the society almost fifty years ago; and also to meet some of the early campaigners and members of their families.

Those present included George Appleby a founder member who within months had led a successful campaign to save New Park School from demolition and with city councillor Tony French set up the New Park Community Association, of which George is still a trustee. Former chairman Anthony Perry spoke about a campaign he led with Andrew Turner-Cross in the early 1990s for an imaginative development on the former cattle market site, which had been intended for a superstore, shopping precinct and a link road. Jenny King described the 'Eastgate sit-in', although this failed to prevent the demolition of Georgian houses for the Eastgate gyratory. But it helped to save houses on the south side of Orchard Street that were to be demolished for a dual carriageway ring road.

After the panel concluded, audience members talked over a glass or two of wine: a jolly evening! Our thanks to Phil Hewitt, Julia Goodman and everyone who contributed to the evening's success.



Waiting for the panel discussion to begin at the Novium Museum on the 22 June. Photo: John Templeton

A DEVELOPMENT DILEMMA FOR HISTORIC TOWNS LIKE CHICHESTER

Research by the Alliance of Cathedral Cities and Historic Towns suggests this is experienced by many wonderful places today. Christopher Mead-Briggs explains

On 29 June over sixty people attended a presentation at the Assembly Room to hear Professor Jan Pahl and John Walker explain conclusions from research on the effects of development to this country's historic places. As Chichester was their first case study, the occasion was of particular interest to this audience. They argued that changes are needed both to the National Planning Policy Framework and to the interaction of Town Planners,

Civic Societies and the public at large. Together we must find answers to better balance the need for new housing with the heritage features of our historic towns.

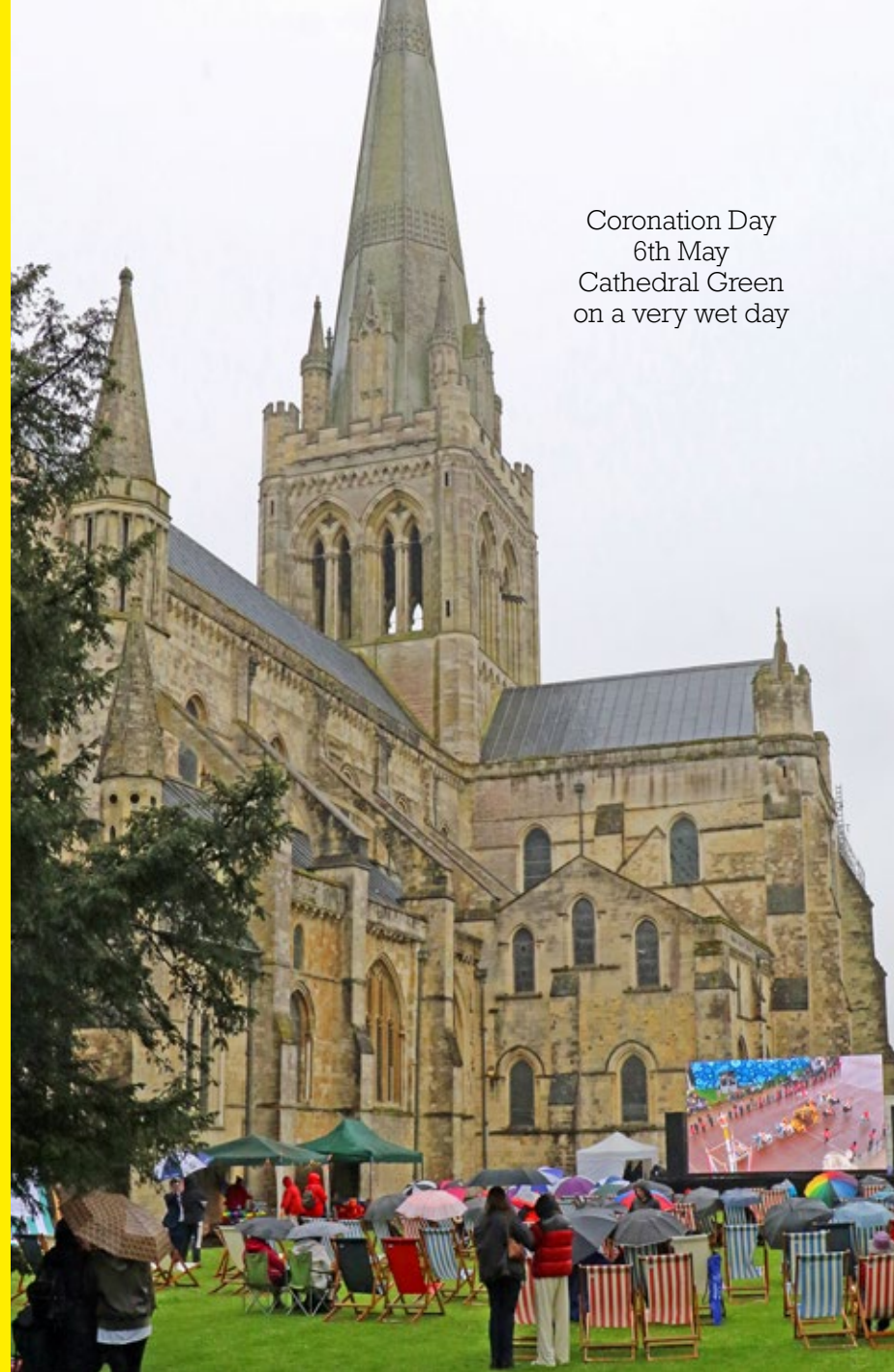
We were pleased to welcome our principal conservation and design officer at the District Council, Owen Broadway and other members of the planning team. Less than half a dozen District and City Councillors attended but we were supported by Goodwood's Estate Managing Director together with members of the Chichester's Conservation Area Advisory Committee. The Douglas Briggs Partnership Architects were represented as were several residents associations. Our own Chichester Society membership were very well represented. Thanks to our speakers who handled many questions from the floor at the end of the presentation and to all who assisted with meeting and greeting our guests, and offering tea to all, which made this event so successful.



At the Assembly Room in North Street on 29 June. Photo Meryl Mead-Briggs



Dragon Boat races on the Canal
2nd July



Coronation Day
6th May
Cathedral Green
on a very wet day



Festival Opening Day
Cathedral Green - 10th June
Phil Hewitt, the Mayor Craig Gershater
and Kate Mosse



Earth Day - Priory Park - 22nd April
13 foot high puppet EKO and the
Autin Dance Theatre

SUMMER EVENTS IN CHICHESTER



Circus Zyair - 19th/25th July
Oaklands Park

Photos by Brian Henham



Gala Day in Priory Park - 1st July
Helen Moore dancers

THE OXMARKET PLAYS A VIBRANT PART IN CHICHESTER'S ART SCENE

Sophie Hull on the gallery's continuing rise after the Covid pandemic

It helps to begin at the beginning and remember that what is now an established part of this city's artistic community was formerly St Andrew's church dating to the 13th century, that had to close after bomb damage during WW2. The church was increasingly derelict until it became an art gallery, opening in 1976 as a registered charity. Two substantial renovations in 1989 and 2021 bring us to the present day, when we have a smart exhibition space with modern facilities – and new branding as 'Oxmarket Contemporary'. Over the decades we have been wonderfully supported by donors and volunteers: Oxmarket's story wouldn't exist without them!

Exhibitions are flourishing

The good news is that for the first time ever we have bookings for two years ahead with major exhibitions proposed in 2024 and 2025. A few of these artists are shown on the facing page.

And this year, in addition to exhibitions by individual artists we've hosted substantial displays by large groups such as:



St Andrew's Church gained new life as an art gallery, pictured here after substantial improvement works had been completed in 2021

- Chichester Open Studios
- Artists of Sussex
- Summer exhibition
- Chichester Art Society



This is the recently renovated John Rank Gallery

In earlier months, the gallery welcomed back *Emsworth Printers*, *ARTEL*, and *Iain White* who all had highly successful exhibitions. A *Piers Ottey* exhibition drew much positive critical comment. Local artists, the *Romps of Bognor*, also led to a widely appreciated and fascinating exhibition.

Taking stock

With the 2021 'Refresh' refurbishment programme completed, 2022 was our first full year of trading after Covid. The pandemic's impact has been and still is felt by almost all charities, so the Oxmarket's experience is shared with many others. Complementing the exhibitions, we've found the shop is popular with visitors who like the range of products on offer. The Board of Trustees has reviewed the charity's governance to ensure it is one-step ahead in this fast-changing world where corporate governance is increasingly important.

We've been building on being part of the community and introducing changes:

- *Schools*: we continue to host school visits and have plans to increase access.
- *Concerts*: the gallery is a fine venue for concerts and those we've hosted demonstrate the potential for more such events to get the best use out of what we can offer.
- *Oxmarket Friends*: we've launched a Friends scheme. The Friends scheme offers invitations to private views, talks at the gallery.

Supporting local artists

Earlier this year we started a campaign *Keeping Art Alive in Chichester*. It's so important that we do. To keep art alive the Oxmarket is looking to secure core financial support for artists who otherwise wouldn't have been able to exhibit. An example is the sponsorship for the Summer Exhibition provided by Chichester firm The Old Grocery; it's something we are keen to develop further. But the most practical support for our artist community is providing an attractive venue to show their work, and in this context the gallery's latest refurbishment continues to receive much praise.

Sophie Hull chairs the Oxmarket board. Readers interested in becoming a gallery Friend should look at its website www.oxmarket.org. All photos from the Oxmarket.



A welcoming reception and shop offering art works and books

SOME OF THE ARTISTS WHO WILL BE EXHIBITING AT THE OXMARKET



Moya Tosh



Sam McGann



Kas Williams

FRIENDS OF THE SOUTH DOWNS ARE CELEBRATING!

2023 is a centenary year marked by significant projects as Laura Libricz explains

It is difficult to imagine a world in which people could build without restriction on a landscape of outstanding beauty, yet that is the threat that our predecessors faced almost 100 years ago. Richard Reed's *A Centenary History of the Friends of the South Downs* sets the scene as the following extract illustrates:

“ One spring day in 1923 on the chalk cliffs overlooking the Channel, two men, brothers-in-law, walking east from Brighton, were dismayed to come upon the new settlement of Peacehaven, developed on what was once downland. There was only rudimentary town planning in the 1920s and Peacehaven had been sold in plots, with no control over the dwellings to be built on them. It was no more than a shanty town.

Their day doubtless spoilt, Robert Thurston Hopkins and Captain Irvine Bately returned to their homes in Brighton resolved to try to prevent any further loss of the precious landscape of the Sussex Downs. Thurston Hopkins made contact with Gordon Volk. A committee was formed comprising Robert Thurston Hopkins, his wife Sybil, Captain Irvine Bately, his wife Lilian, and Gordon Volk. Volk then approached Arthur Beckett, a prominent newspaper owner. Beckett agreed to become President of the new society. Late in 1923, a crowded public meeting in the Royal Pavilion enthusiastically resolved to form “ a society for the preservation of the Downs.

After witnessing the construction of Peacehaven on the chalk cliffs to the west of the River Ouse, our founder members feared what would happen to the rest of the eastern Downs in that time without effective planning controls. To counter that threat they joined together in 1923 to form 'a society for the preservation of the Downs', which soon became the Society of Sussex Downsmen. Later, this name was changed to the South Downs Society and today we're known as the Friends of the South Downs.



Photo: Laura Libricz



The Downs in December at Cissbury Ramparts

Photo: Richard Reed

Threats continue

The threats to the Downs may have changed over the last 100 years but we remain vigilant to protect the natural beauty of the area, promote access and conserve the landscape. Our Centenary in 2023 provides a great opportunity to celebrate the Downs, the role of the Friends and to publicise what we do – because we're the only membership charity dedicated to protecting the Downs. The heart of our work is monitoring all planning applications throughout the South Downs National Park (about 80 miles from east to west) to ensure that they will not damage the landscape. We fund conservation projects such as path improvement and replacement of stiles with kissing gates to improve access. Our Walks & Strolls programme offers over 200 guided walks a year for varied fitness levels. We also fund projects to encourage children to know and use the Park.

Investing

To celebrate this year's Centenary, the Friends of the South Downs has agreed a major programme of spending totalling over £100,000, to benefit the Downs in the short and long term. We can spend this money because we are fortunate to have recently received two substantial legacies. Here are some of the larger schemes:

- **£60,000** to the National Park Authority to refurbish an iconic 18th century pump barn at the Seven Sisters Country Park, to showcase the Downs for visitors and provide space for activities.
- **£20,000** to encourage children to learn about and appreciate the South Downs. We're running projects with the National Park Authority, Youth Hostels Association and similar bodies, and aiming at children who are unlikely to visit the Downs. The plan is to teach about the landscape and history, and most of all encourage young people to appreciate their countryside.
- **£16,000** for attractive wooden benches, converting stiles to gates to improve access, and information boards at significant locations; these will help people enjoy the Downs.



The Downs in springtime, looking towards Lancing Ring from the Chanctonbury-Cissbury path

Photo: Richard Reed

- **£20,000** to help make a path more accessible for people with limited mobility. This is still being planned but it's hoped that the location will be Devil's Dyke.
- **£5,000** as a contribution to stage a dramatic reading based on Hilaire Belloc's famous book *The Four Men* about a walk across the Downs.
- **£1,000** to finance prizes at Brighton University for academic work relevant to the South Downs.

These projects demonstrate the Friends' role to protect the Downs and help people enjoy them. If you'd like to know more about the Friends of the South Downs, visit us online at www.friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk. You'll also find a link to sign up for the Friends' free monthly e-news to stay up to date with all our latest events and news. Our social media links can be found there as well.

Laura Libricz is Events & Social Media Coordinator at the Friends of the South Downs

FRIENDS OF THE SOUTH DOWNS

- Established in 1923 and celebrating its centenary this year.
- There were over 1,500 members in March 2023
- Annual subscriptions are £30 for individuals and £40 joint.
- The Friends is a registered charity.
- A team of district Officers look after the Downs, co-terminus with the National Park and extending Eastbourne to Winchester.
- District Officers monitor all planning applications submitted to the Park Authority.
- The Friends promote the Downs with talks, publicity, guided walks and events for children.
- Practical activities include planting trees, installing new benches, repairing and replacing stiles, repairing footpaths.

Contact:

T 01798 875073

E enquiries@friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk

W friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk

PLANS TO RESTORE THE GATEWAY ARCH ON CENTURION WAY

The Friends of Centurion Way tell the story so far

It will help readers to know the circumstances leading to the current situation. Most people are aware that Centurion Way – a name invented by a student at Bishop Luffa School - was previously a railway line from Chichester to Midhurst. Operations were shut down over several years and finally ended in 1991. Perhaps few of us know that new life as a pathway into the South Downs began in September 1995, nearly 30 years ago, and that users now annually exceed 300,000. This change was managed by cycling charity Sustrans. The opening was celebrated by commissioning several public artworks, one being the *Gateway Arch* located at the southern end next to Bishop Luffa School. Although impressive, see illustration below, the Gateway Arch was removed in 2015 because it partially collapsed and was taken to the County Highways Drayton depot near Oving, where it has rested for eight years, unloved. This is why the Friends of Centurion Way (FOCW) are campaigning to return an impressive public sculpture to its original location.

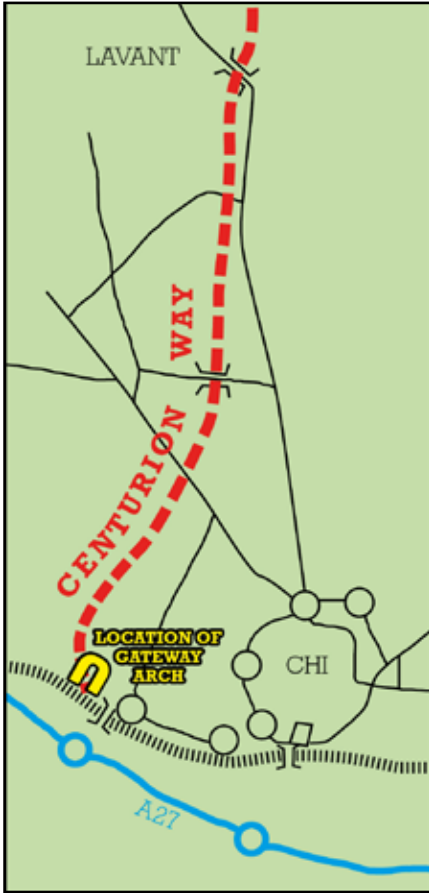
Gateway Arch

The Arch has its own story and we are grateful to its sculptor Richard Farrington who told us:

- The curved timbered archway originally came from the rib of an old minesweeper found in Langstone Harbour. It was being broken up at Pounds Yard in Portsmouth Harbour and when found the timbers were in remarkably good condition, for these laminated pieces were formed over 80 years.
- Figures on top of the archway were made from galvanised steel plate and represent a collection of characters found in Romano-British mosaics at Fishbourne Roman Palace and elsewhere - a gathering of people, gods and creatures, even a magic mushroom!



The Gateway Arch when newly installed in 1995.



The benefits

- Improved signage for Centurion Way.
- Emphasize the entrance to countryside north of Chichester and the South Downs National Park.
- Highlight the links with other cycle and pedestrian routes such as Salterns Way to Chichester Harbour.
- Re-establish the meeting point and landmark for those using Centurion Way.
- Create a permanent addition to Chichester's well-established outdoor artscape.

Refurbishment of the archway will not only give much pleasure to all those who use Centurion Way today but this project is for the generations of tomorrow, as a lasting public statement about heritage, craftsmanship, community, health and well-being - the core objectives creating the original path and gifting it to the community.

How much?

Total estimates are at present around £22,000 but we know that with inflation we will have to add anything between 10-20%. At the moment £16,000 will be needed to restore and reinstate the arch. Approximately £1,500 is for planning and fees while another £4,500 could secure new signage and explanation to enhance and upgrade the route. To date the FOCW have raised £3,000 from a variety of sources. But we have a lot more to raise to reach our goal. Currently we are in discussion with Councils and developers regarding the reinstatement and planning permissions required as the original location may be unavailable due to the planned Southern Access Route to the new Minerva Heights housing development.

The Friends

Friends of Centurion Way (FOCW) are a local group of residents who volunteer their time to preserve and protect this remarkable public way. This year we are leading a fundraising campaign to repair and reinstate the Archway. Applications



A close-up of the many characters made from galvanised steel plate.

are planned to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the South Downs National Park, Vistry Homes (one of the developers of nearby Minerva Heights), and other grant-funding organisations. We're thinking about crowd funding. If reading this article you would like to know more about the campaign we invite you to email us at friends@centurionway.org.uk

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The Friends of Centurion Way has over 1,000 supporters on Facebook and their website can be found at www.centurionway.org.uk

Photos not credited are courtesy of the FOCW.

RIGHT: The Gateway Arch in March 2023 on its side at WSCC Highways Drayton depot. The wood supports have rotted. Photo: Carley Sitwell



Supporters holding cardboard cutouts of characters from the absent Gateway Arch. John Grimshaw, founder of the Sustrans charity who designed Centurion Way, is standing in the middle. Photo: Mark Record

CHISORES ARE A CONTINUING ISSUE IN CHICHESTER

Here are recent photographic examples : what do readers think?



This is the County Council's uncared-for notice board at County Hall. Does it merit a ChiSore badge?



this unusual but comfortable seat will be found at the New Park Centre . Does it merit a ChiLight badge? Photo: John Templeton



On West Street in front of the flower bed below



A large street-art mural near Chapel Street. Is this a 'chisore' or a 'chilight': what do readers think? Photo: John Templeton



This flower bed could do with some TLC. ChiSore? Photos by Brian Henham unless otherwise stated.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY

will be held on Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 7.00 pm

At the Council House, North Street, Chichester in the Assembly Room (access available by lift).

GUEST SPEAKER IS SIMON WARDELL, DIRECTOR OF THE WEALD AND DOWNLAND LIVING MUSEUM

After the formal business is complete a glass or two of wine, soft drinks and refreshments will be served to celebrate the Society's 50th anniversary. At about 8.00 pm Simon Wardell will speak on **Sustaining an independent museum**

A detailed agenda and copies of the annual accounts will be available at the meeting. This will contain the usual items of Officers' reports, Approved Accounts and Nominations for next year's Executive Committee members (see below).

MOTIONS FOR THE AGM AND NOMINATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE 2023-24

The Constitution requires that the members of the Executive Committee (up to 16 places) and the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer are elected at each AGM. Nominations in writing, supported by a seconder and with the consent of the nominee - all being current members - are therefore requested. They must be received by the Secretary, Anthony Quail at his address below **no later than 14 days** before the date of the meeting, by Wednesday 4 October 2023. A nomination form is provided below. A list of nominations and details of any motions received will be sent by post to members as soon as possible after nominations close **unless no positions are contested and no further motions are submitted.** The Constitution limits the Officers' period of service to five consecutive years unless a resolution is passed by two thirds of members present voting to waive this restriction for a specified officer or officers for one year. In the absence of other nominations, this provision will be invoked for the **Vice Chairman and Secretary.**

SUBSCRIPTIONS: the Society's annual subscriptions have remained the same since 2013. Meanwhile, 10 years of inflation has caused our costs to rise. The Executive Committee has agreed the following resolution is presented to the AGM for approval:

'The Executive Committee recommends the Chichester Society's subscriptions be raised for **single members** from £11 to £22 when paid by cheque and from £8 to **£16** paid by bank standing order, with life membership from £120 to **£250**; subscriptions raised for **joint members** from £15 to £30 paid by cheque and £12 to **£25** by bank standing order, with joint life membership from £160 to **£350.**

Life membership applies to those aged 60 years and over.
These increases to take effect from **1st January 2024.**

The Chairman and Treasurer will also present their reports and members are encouraged to put questions and initiate discussion after each of the reports.

By order of the Executive Committee Anthony Quail, Secretary, 44 Westgate, Chichester PO19 3EU

CHICHESTER SOCIETY AGM Wednesday 18 October 2023 NOMINATION FORM	Please cut or photocopy this form if you have a nomination and send it to Anthony Quail, Secretary at 44 Westgate, Chichester PO19 3EU by Wednesday 4 October 2023.
TITLE OF OFFICER	
NOMINEE'S NAME	
NOMINEE'S SIGNATURE	
PROPOSER'S NAME (CAPS)	
PROPOSER'S SIGNATURE	
SECONDER'S NAME (CAPS)	
SECONDER'S SIGNATURE	

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The society's members and their guests are invited to

A star-studded afternoon at
CHICHESTER'S PLANETARIUM
Thursday 23 November 2.00 – 4.30 pm

Presented by Dr John Mason

£10 per person paid at the door.
Tea, coffee and biscuits are included.

*To reserve one or more places email
Margaret Evans at jigsaw@btinternet.com*

*Access to the Planetarium is from Kingsham Road
near Chichester Station*



*Crane Street looking jolly, an initiative by Chichester BID
who were responsible for designing this bunting display.
Photo by Brian Henham*

THE CHICHESTER SOCIETY

Founder: David Goodman
Patron: The Mayor of Chichester
Chairman: Peter Evans
Vice Chairman: Bill Sharp
Secretary: Anthony Quail*
Treasurer: Mark Hoult

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Andrew Bain, Rodney Chambers,
Richard Childs*, Margaret Evans,
John Halliday, Christopher Mead-
Briggs*, Cedric Mitchell, Grace Taylor
and John Templeton*

*Member, Newsletter Editorial Committee
which also includes Brian Henham.

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership:

£8 by standing order or £11 by cheque
payable to the Chichester Society.

Joint membership:

£12 by standing order or £15 by cheque.

Life membership

(60 years and over):

£120 single and £160 joint.

Under 18 years: £4.

Corporate membership: £100 (one-off).

**Applications and/or queries
about membership** and annual
subscriptions to the Vice Chairman, Bill
Sharp at 13 Whyke Lane, Chichester
PO19 7UR. Email: membership@chichestersociety.org.uk

*Neither the editorial committee nor
the Society necessarily subscribes
to our contributors' views. The right
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articles or letters.*

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