

Salisbury Cathedral Close Preservation Society

"Rus In Urbe"

Patron: Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Heath K.G. M.B.E. M.P.

Chairman: Sir Robin Ibbs K.B.E.

Secretary: Mrs Alison Pinkerton O.B.E.

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This Bulletin brings you up to date with the activities of the Society during the past 6 months.

Annual General Meeting April 25th 1997

As many members will recollect this meeting was very well attended. The Chairman in his report spoke of the steady progress that had been made during the year on both the traffic control problems and the replanting of trees in the churchyard.

The major progress on the traffic front had been the introduction of the car entry permits. These were to be reviewed and renewed each year. The Close Constable was enabled, as a result, to monitor the parking of cars and traffic generally with tighter control. So that Close residents can alert the attendant on duty about visitors wishing to enter the Close a telephone line had been installed in the entry kiosk. The Society had contributed towards its installation. The closing of the Harnham Gate each day at 5.30pm for an hour had eliminated the "rat run" of traffic coming through at that time and had greatly enhanced the tranquillity of the Close. The Chairman believed that the Society had been instrumental in initiating all these changes and thanked in particular the Society Traffic Working party, headed by John Hardiman, for their determination in addressing these issues.

For the future, the Section 106 agreement between the Dean and Chapter and the District Council, once negotiated, would allow the former tennis courts to be used as a car park on a temporary basis, and will change the current pattern of parking in the Close. There was an urgent need to enforce the "No Entry" signs into the Close through the Harnham Gate which were frequently and dangerously ignored. The Society was minded to contribute to the expense of preventing improper entry.

The Society had contributed to the cost of the new small-leaved lime trees which had been planted round the perimeter of the churchyard. The Dean and Chapter's Working party on the Landscape of the Close had appointed Lt Col Christopher Ross as chairman and a meeting was shortly to consider planning the replanting programme in the Lower Marsh areas.

The Chairman thanked the Chapter Clerk for his help and co-operation during the past year and was pleased to report that the relationship between the Dean and Chapter and the Society remained cordial.

The Treasurer reported on the statement of accounts, which had been circulated to all those attending the meeting and showed a healthy balance of over £8000. The Membership Secretary said that the membership continued to grow. Currently there were 205 members of the Society.

The meeting concluded with a social gathering hosted by the Chairman.

Annual Society Lecture - 26th May 1997

This lecture given by Dr John Chandler on "Salisbury, a Victorian Artist's Perspective" was a fascinating subject and much enjoyed. The one regret was the relatively smaller attendance than at the 1996 lecture. The Committee were disappointed with the lack of publicity which had been afforded to the Festival fringe events this year. They consider that in the coming year rescheduling the lecture to take place outside the Festival, perhaps in the Autumn, would allow more people to have the opportunity to enjoy what has become a most popular event.

Society Garden Party at Braybrooke House, 57, The Close on 7th June 1997

Once again this was a most successful occasion and the weather was kind. The Society is indeed fortunate to have been allowed the enjoyment of being able to use Mrs Kate Christopherson's lovely garden. The total profit collected during the afternoon was over £900. The delightful musical entertainment given by pupils of Leadenhall school added greatly to the occasion.

Exhibition and Display of the Environment in the Close

Members attending the Lecture and Garden Party will have had an opportunity to see the Society's recently acquired display panels. Ronald Briggs has used these very effectively to outline the history of the Close and also to show the recent tree planting. It is hoped to mount this exhibition elsewhere in Salisbury and, if possible, at venues around the county.

Latest developments in Traffic Management in the Close

As reported at the Annual General Meeting the continued entry by cars through the Harnham Gate is unsafe. The Chairman, at a meeting with the Chapter Clerk following the AGM, confirmed the Society's willingness to contribute up to half of the cost of installing a means of preventing traffic entering this way. The Vice-Chairman of the Society, Major John Hardiman has been involved in considering the most effective method of stopping cars while allowing pedestrians, push chairs, invalid carriages and bicycles to enter. Residents and other members using this route will have noticed the new rail recently installed inside the Gate to route pedestrians so as to avoid the "dragons teeth" which are to be installed during the schools half term on the 20th October 1997. In a letter to Close residents informing them of the forthcoming changes to the parking arrangements consequent on the use of the tennis courts the Chapter Clerk acknowledged the Society's contribution to the installation of the "dragon's teeth". These however will temporarily cease to be used early in the New Year, when it is understood that the changes to the High Street outside the North Gate into the Close will necessitate both entry and exit through the Harnham Gate for some weeks. As on previous occasions this will require the traffic normally to be controlled by a Close constable.

Trees in the Close

Since the AGM there have been two meetings of the Working Party on the Landscape of the Close under the new Chairman. The Society's views have been ably represented by Priscilla Mackay. The Working Party have recently sent to the Cathedral Fabric Committee their recommendations on the future plans for planting in the Marsh and Rack Closes. These include the planting of trees and also of the hedges in these areas.

Early in the summer when there were drought conditions, on Priscilla's advice, the Society funded the mulching and watering of the small-leaved limes planted at the Society's expense last year, which were failing to thrive. This emergency action, which was subsequently followed by rainfall, has allowed the saplings to recover. The cedar trees were also suffering from inadequate staking and mulching but this has also been corrected at the Society's initiative and they seem to now be thriving.

Meeting on Traffic Management held at the Chapter Office with the District Councillors, Council and County Council Officials and other interested parties.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Society attended this meeting held on September 12th 1997. The setting up of such a meeting was proposed by the Dean and Chapter in their planning application for the temporary use of the tennis courts as a car park. It was confirmed at this meeting that agreement had been reached between the District Council and the Dean and Chapter on the Section 106 conditions. Once final engrossment had taken place the tennis courts would be put into use.

The meeting decided that, in order to develop long term plans for the City and the Close, there was a need for 2 working groups to consider separately i) the demands on the Close in the form of traffic and parking; ii) the management within the Close of such traffic and parking. The Society is represented on the first group by the Chairman and on the second by the Vice-Chairman. Meetings of both groups are to take place shortly.

Members participation in the Society business

As has been evident at Annual General Meetings your Chairman and Committee members wish to consider and respond to issues and suggestions raised by members. Should you have relevant points to raise or a suggestion which you think it would be appropriate for the Society to consider, do contact the Secretary or another member of the Committee. The Secretary's address is : 1, De Vaux Place, Salisbury. SP1 2SJ