

# SALISBURY CATHEDRAL CLOSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

"*Rus In Urbe*"

## BULLETIN 9 - SEPTEMBER 1994

This Bulletin brings you up to date with the Society's recent news and plans for the future. The Chairman, shortly to retire, gives an account of the work undertaken during his period of office. Annual subscriptions are now due. These may be paid by standing order and details are given on a separate sheet.

### 4th Annual General Meeting

This was held in the Salisbury Library on July 4th 1994. Twenty-seven members of the Society attended.

The Honorary Secretary read the minutes of the 3rd Annual General Meeting, which were confirmed.

The Chairman reported the activities which the Committee had undertaken on behalf of the Society over the past year. The three main matters had been the enhancement of the Close, traffic management in the Close, and planning considerations in and around the Close. Enhancement had led both to immediate action - subsidising the replacement of some trees (£658) - and the consideration of a long-term project - in outline a millennial planting of small-leaved limes (*Tilia cordata*) to restore the grandeur that was lost to the Close when the so-called Waterloo elms were felled in the early seventies. Essentially this would be a fund-raising exercise. The Cathedral authorities had welcomed the Society's initiative in the matter.

A simple, but certainly hypothetical, solution to the traffic problems of the Close would be to remove the Schools and the public parking. More practical possible solutions had been outlined in Bulletins 7 and 8. The various planning matters with which the Committee had been concerned had been discussed in Bulletins 6 and 7.

There had again been a successful garden party in July, at Braybrooke House by kind permission of Mrs Kate Christopherson. We had again been lucky with the weather. Charles McKechnie-Jarvis and his Sub-Committee and other supporters had worked hard to make a success of the day; it had realised £840.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Sybil Shean and Mrs Pam Cusack, who had both resigned from the Committee on which they had served since the Society was formed as Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary respectively. Their contribution to the work of the Society had been vital.

The Honorary Treasurer presented his report and accounts for 1993. He had proposed to the Committee that subscriptions should be paid by standing order where possible and members would be encouraged to make such an arrangement.

The Membership Secretary reported that the current number of members of the Society stood at 152. Whilst this number was well below the number of those who had been recruited when the Society was formed, it seemed that some of the decline in numbers had been as a result of subscriptions being forgotten rather than unwillingness to continue membership. The next Bulletin would be circulated to most of the original membership.

### New Houses in the Close

The Chairman then raised the matter of the Dean and Chapter's tentative plan to build two houses in the garden of No 20, The Close. He discussed the numerous planning restrictions which would have to be satisfied before such building could take place. Many members expressed their concern for the consequences were planning permission to be given for such a development. The Chairman said that the issue had already been discussed at a Committee meeting of the Society the previous month and that the Chapter Clerk had offered to discuss the proposals at a meeting of the Committee to be held later in the month.

### Election of Officer and Committee Members

The following members were confirmed:

Chairman	Ronald Briggs
Vice-Chairman	John Hardiman
Hon Secretary	Alison Pinkerton
Hon Treasurer	Christopher Dragonetti
Membership Secretary	Brenda MacKechnie-Jarvis
	Denise Little
	Priscilla McKay
	Charles MacKechnie-Jarvis
	Ruth Sammons

## **2. Meeting With the Chapter Clerk to Discuss Plans for the Garden of 20, The Close**

Brigadier C C Owen and Mr Quarley, the Chapter's Quantity Surveyor attended a meeting of the Committee on 29th July 1994. The Committee were shown drawings of the suggested buildings and the Chapter Clerk explained the background to the need for further accommodation for residentiary Canons. The Cathedral's 19th century endowment fund could only be drawn on for major new building or for the purchase of buildings, not for maintenance. The cost of upkeeping ancient buildings was very heavy, and the Church Commissioners had withdrawn a refurbishment grant. Thoughts had thus naturally turned to the possibility of replacing the existing accommodation for residentiary canons by new, four-bedroomed houses in accordance with the Church Commissioners' "Green Guide for Parsonage Houses", which would be much more economical to maintain. Plans for this had been in existence for many years; periodically they were brought out, dusted and reconsidered. Three architects had been asked to produce drawings, one set of which seemed to fit reasonably well with the Chapter's views; but no firm decisions had been taken. Consultation was taking place with a large number of interested bodies. The Chapter Clerk emphasised that the option of building was only one of a number that were being considered by the Dean and Chapter.

Following this meeting, the Chairman wrote to the Chapter Clerk expressing the Society's reservations regarding any proposed building and emphasising how important the Society considered the need to explore other options thoroughly.

### **3. Enhancement of The Close**

As mentioned in Bulletin No 7, a contribution of £658 has been made to the Chapter Office by the Society. This paid for the felling of three small trees and the removal of their stumps, together with the removal of two old stumps of large lime trees. In addition, three small-leaved limes and two cedars were planted. A plan for further planting is being prepared in the Chapter Office and is to be presented for consideration by the Cathedral Close Environment Committee. When this has been accepted the Society's Committee will consider how the Society might help to raise funds for the programme in time for the celebration of the millennium.

### **4. Chairman of the Society**

Ronald Briggs took on the job of Chairman of the Salisbury Cathedral Close Preservation Society at a crucial time. His expertise on planning and environmental issues have been ably exercised to persuade the Dean and Chapter not to implement the Rothermel Thomas report. He has worked tirelessly to that end and to explain and to illustrate to the public the consequences for The Close of a new road through the exhibition which toured Salisbury and local libraries and in supporting the production of the Society's video.

Sir Robin Ibbs, a resident of The Close, has agreed to become Chairman of the Society with effect from 1 January 1995.

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### **A Word from the Chairman**

Three and a half years ago, having almost by chance been drafted onto the Committee, I was abruptly propelled into the position of Chairman of the Society. I did have the presence of mind to stipulate that my term of office should be no more than three years and time has now been up for several months.

The first year of my chairmanship was quite demanding owing to the industry of Messrs Rothermel Thomas, whose report on the Close may fairly be said to have fanned the Society into existence. A strong Committee provided much support but we all recognise that the pace was set by Rachel and David Blissett who gave unremitting attention to its affairs and whose energy and concentration on essentials contributed so substantially to the Society's early development. The culmination of their efforts was, fittingly, the videotape explaining the Society's case against the contemplated southern access, which was created with the technical assistance of Peter Phillips of Southampton University, and which was shown for the first time at the function at Braybrooke House in July 1992.

After the first year, Rachel was succeeded as Secretary by Alison Pinkerton, whose husband, Robert, sadly died when he was Chairman. All the time that she has been Secretary Alison has held down a demanding job with the Regional Health Authority. She

has despatched the business, kept to deadlines and maintained an even temper in a way that commands the admiration of everyone in the know. An additional contribution from Alison has been the use of her house for many of the Committee meetings.

Cyril Monk was my predecessor as Chairman. I was sorry that he resigned from the Committee and missed his dry interventions; but he has kept in touch with us and has always been ready to lend support when it was needed.

Others who have contributed much to the Society during my chairmanship are Robert Hawkings, Charles McKechnie-Jarvis and Priscilla McKay, whose knowledge of, and long interest in, the Close brought from the outset great strength to the Committee. Robert is no longer a member of it, but his interest in the Society is undiminished. More recently Sybil Shean and Pam Cusack have relinquished their onerous, but essential, offices of respectively Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Both were founder members of the Committee and both worked hard and effectively in the Society's interest. John Hardiman has been Vice-Chairman since the early days. His knowledge of the ways of local government and interest in traffic management have contributed much of value to the Society.

John Kerruish, who died at Christmas 1992, was a member of the Committee from the beginning. His common sense, positive thinking, knowledge of Cathedral affairs and good humour gave much to the Committee, and we remember him with affection.

Ruth Sammons, Denise Little, Christopher Dragonetti and Brenda McKechnie-Jarvis, who joined the Committee more recently, have each added to the strength.

It will be seen that, as Chairman, I have been most fortunate in a team it has been a pleasure to lead and I take this opportunity of warmly thanking all of them for their support.

In the latter part of my chairmanship, as the threat of the more extravagant of the Rothermel Thomas proposals receded, it has been of particular satisfaction to me to consider with the Committee how the Society might contribute something to the permanent enhancement of the Close.

I conclude by saying a word or two about my successor. As everyone knows, Sir Robin Ibbes is the Chairman of Lloyds Bank. Most of his working life has been spent with ICI from which company he was seconded as Head of the Central Policy Review Staff of the Cabinet Office. After his return to ICI, he became Adviser part-time to the Prime Minister on Efficiency and Effectiveness in Government in 1983. He was at the University of Toronto and at Trinity College, Cambridge, served in the Royal Navy 1947-49 and was called to the Bar. He and Lady Ibbes came to live in the Close some two years ago, having previously had a country place near Shaftesbury. Sir Robin has agreed to take over as from 1 January 1995. It will be evident that when he does the chairmanship will be in expert hands.

I have enjoyed serving in the office to which I was so unexpectedly promoted. I believe, however, that it is a mistake to remain too long in a position that demands ideas and energy and that the Society will now benefit from a new source of both.

19.9.1994