Officers and Committee - Trust Annual Report 1965

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Hon. Secretary	Miss C. DE C. Hamilton	26 Clausentum, Winchester
Committee Members	Mr J. A. Broughall	13 Christchurch Road, Winchester
	Mrs W.J. Carpenter-Turner, J.P.	10 The Close, Winchester
	Mr W.J. Carpenter-Turner, A.R.I.B.A.	10 The Close, Winchester
	Mr G. Crompton	60 Canon Street, Winchester
	Mr M.C. Gardener	Kingsland House, Chesil Street, Winchester
	Mr G. Gore-Langton	60 Hyde Street, Winchester
	Mr R.L.P. Jowitt	Gore Grange, New Milton, Hants
	Miss C.A. Kingsmill, J.P.	2 Ranelagh Road, Winchester
	Sir John McNee, M.D., D.S.C., F.R.C.P.	Barton Edge, Worthy Road, Winchester
	Mr W.H. Rendell	Sunnyside, Twyford
	Miss J.Roach	6 St Cross Road, Winchester
	Mrs Nowell Salmon	Hyde Cottage, Winchester
	Mr R. Sawyer, F.R.I.C.S.	44 St Cross Road, Winchester
	Mr D.J. Smith, F.R.I.C.S.	78 Parchment Street, Winchester
	Mr R.D. Utting, A.R.I.B.A.	Chalk Hills, Crawley, Nr Winchester
	Mr W.D.R. Weller	25 St Thomas Street, Winchester

Traffic Policy - Trust Annual Report 1965

The name Preservation Trust may give the impression that the Society is concerned only with the preservation of Winchester as it was, and that we are a Canute-like body, trying to stop the tide of progress. The Chairman has frequently stated that he interprets the word 'preservation' as extended to mean preservation of Winchester as a good place to live in. This implies that when new buildings are erected, as inevitably they must be, then they will maintain the character of the city by being well designed, so that the present age, which is one of tremendous building activity, will have left its mark in no less an attractive way than in earlier periods.

The last Annual Report gave much space to the traffic problem, and no apology is needed for devoting a large part of the present report to the same subject. The underlying issue is this; whether we are going to allow the personal luxury of the individual motorist to create public squalor for the community, or not.

The Trust was very pleased to receive an invitation to meet the members of the Highways Committee of the City Council earlier this year. The statement read out at the Town meeting in July, 1964, and reproduced in our last Annual Report, was used as a basis for discussion. The Trust would like to place on record how grateful they were to have the opportunity of bringing their views to the attention of the Committee. The Trust is convinced that co-operation in this way is most valuable, in bringing the views of a large number of local electors before the Committee, charged with the difficult task of easing traffic conditions in Winchester.

It may be remembered that the Trust's policy with regard to the traffic plan was fully discussed at a members' meeting held in the Friary Hall, held shortly before the Town meeting.

The City Council's plan for traffic in Winchester has now been approved by a large majority. The debate was remarkable for the luke-warm support given by the Councillors who voted in favour. It was even condemned as a bad plan, and one was left wondering why it was felt it should receive Government support when the members themselves found so little to commend. The majority clearly wanted something different in spite of the vote in favour. The issue that secured the vote was not the merit of the plan itself, but the monetary support it was hoped to secure by having a plan before September 30th, so that Winchester could be there cap in hand as soon as funds were released for road improvements.

The Preservation Trust considers that the first priority is to let as much traffic as possible go past Winchester instead of through it. Anyone who has seen the change brought about in towns due to the construction of new motorways will know how essential this is in the preservation of ancient cities. If instead the conditions within the towns are improved, then the incentive to bypass them is delayed. The completion of the existing bypass and the construction of a new Western route is therefore the first priority.

On this subject it is worth quoting Buchanan. He states that "most traffic surveys are nearly always favourable to the ring road, for the simple reason that practically any new road, cut through a densely populated area will, as a drain cut across a sodden field fills with water, attract enough vehicles to justify its existence in terms of flow. But if a wider view is taken the actual contribution to relieving the centre is very uncertain".

Elsewhere he states that "it is asking for trouble, especially in the case of small towns, to attempt to deal with through traffic by widening the internal streets. This will merely speed the through traffic, accentuate the severance, and by virtue of the slight improvement in through traffic, delay the undertaking of more constructive measures."

While quoting from Buchanan some further relevant passages can be added. They are particularly applicable to Winchester.

"The idea that any urban area as its stands has a definable maximum traffic capacity if the environment is to be secured, is very important. There is really nothing strange about it. A factory is designed for so much plant and so many operatives, a school is designed for so many children, a house will hold so many occupants, and if more are crammed into it, it becomes a slum. There is some elasticity in capacity, but not much. Exactly the same rule applies to buildings and the amount of traffic a town can decently contain."

From this it follows that the decision to allow further development of business and office premises profoundly affects the traffic problem, and that both are inseparable. Buchanan adds on this aspect of the problem, "The power of town centres as generators and attracters of traffic seems not to have been fully understood, and mistaken reliance has been placed on ring roads for the relief of central congestion, when in fact much of the traffic has business in the central area and is not divertible to places outside that district."

On historic towns in general Buchanan states "The retention of old historic areas and areas of special architectural interest is dependant upon the maintenance of satisfactory environmental standards. There would be no point in seeking to retain such areas except in conditions in which they could be savoured and enjoyed. These areas can be retained in the age of the motor vehicle provided a reduced standard of accessibility is accepted, including a strict discipline of vehicular movement."

"It is often said that streets are for the passage of traffic only, and though this may be a sound legal view, it has obscured the fact that streets perform other functions, some of them vital. They give access to buildings, they provide an outlook from buildings, they give light and air, they are the setting for architecture, and they are the backbone of the everyday surroundings for many people. It is impossible to maintain that these functions are subordinate to the passage of the vehicles. As traffic increases it seems inevitable that the assessment of environmental capacity will become of more and more significance."

The Future - Trust Annual Report 1965

There is no doubt that cuts in Government expenditure on roads will put off the city plan for some time to come. At the same time, a broad pattern of thinking about traffic problems is becoming discernible. This is seldom aired as official policy, it would be too unpopular, but must obviously become more and more widespread. It is simply a matter of charging more for the luxury of motoring in congested areas. Parking meters, increasing charges for car parks, traffic wardens, "No Waiting" signs, and loading restrictions are all evidence of this. Methods of metering distances in towns are also under consideration, together with excess licence fees for entry into certain areas.

The plain fact is that most cities planned on walking distances cannot be adapted fast enough to meet the ever-rising tide of motor cars, consequently the motor car will have to be restricted by increasing the cost. This is the implication of the Buchanan report, to preserve the environment for the majority at the expense of the personal convenience of the individual.

On the other hand, it is vital that improved roads should be provided between centres, and that all available resources for expenditure on traffic should be devoted to this purpose. The South of England has some of the most inadequate road services in the country. It is scandalous that all traffic from the Midlands to Southampton should have to pass through Winchester, and that apart from the incomplete by-pass the only solution offered is to drive wider roads through the centre. This will only invite more of the through traffic to come into the city. The by-pass, already inadequate, will be made even more intolerable by heavy goods traffic when the Kings-worthy link is provided, and the private motorist will therefore prefer to travel through the city unless a western by-pass is also provided. The proposed enlargement of the port of Southampton, can only intensify the problem.

In the meantime planning blight has been placed on a large number of properties.

Two things should now be done. The inevitable delay gives time to correct the City Plan and moreover time to get a consultant to achieve a better plan. One of the chief deficiences of the present scheme is that it does not point out areas of growth of the central area, which would need servicing, and of the suburbs which would generate traffic. The Trust considers that the traffic plan must always be subservient to a general plan which controls growth and amenity. At present the plan is a piece out of a textbook: Winchester requires a very particular solution.

St. Cross - Trust Annual Report 1965

The village of St. Cross lies outside the City plan, and there seems to be little concern about what will happen to it. The Trust regards St. Cross as an essential part of Winchester, and its preservation is one of the main reasons why the traffic plan for the south of the city is unacceptable to the Trust.

An alternative route must somehow be found for this area and of course a by-pass completed on the West as well as the East will be most important. Members of the Trust should be under no illusion that the adoption of the City plan as it stands will destroy the narrow approach through the village, because road widening will become inevitable.

When the question is raised officially, it is stated that St. Cross is outside the area of the plan, and this as, far as the Trust is concerned, is very unsatisfactory.

Charm - Trust Annual Report 1965

In the Council debate on the traffic plan, one member is reported to have put forward the view that if the plan entailed the destruction of some houses possessing charm, then it would be necessary to see that the houses built to replace them also had charm. The Corporation Housing at Wharf Hill was given as an example. The Preservation Trust regards this view with some caution. There have been many well-intentioned attempts in the past to add charm to Winchester, and these cannot all be regarded as successful, as a walk down the High Street will show.

The new terrace houses at Wharf Hill certainly provide very much better accommodation than the houses they replace and are a credit to the Council, but a multiplication of this kind of building merely produces another housing estate. It has to be realised that most of their charm derives from the site. An excellent exhibition of modern housing was shown at the City Library during August, and it is to be hoped that the imaginative examples shown, will be an inspiration for future developments.

One would like to see Winchester becoming known not only as a historic city of great importance, but one possessing outstanding examples of modern development and housing.

An excellent start has been made in several places. If the whole of the area between the Casson block in St. George's Street and the new School of Art is developed to the same high standard we shall have visitors coming to see the new Winchester just as much as the old.

From this it must not be deduced that destruction can be indiscriminate. The charm of a Georgian or any other good period house, is derived from the culture and ideals of the period in which it was produced. This is worth keeping as long as possible. Skilful restoration and adaptation can preserve this elusive quality, but once destroyed it is gone for ever.

A Winchester Museum - Trust Annual Report 1965

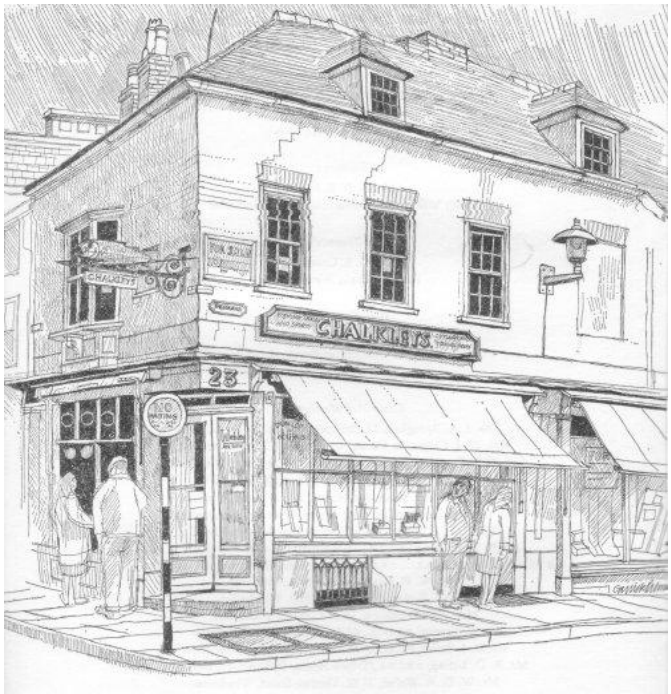
A proposal has been put forward in the City Council for building a new Museum in St. Thomas Street, on a site owned by the City. The proposal to add to this by demolishing nearby properties has fortunately been abandoned.

While supporting the proposal to have a larger museum in Winchester, the Trust would like to see the proposed museum in the Guildhall area. It might well occupy what used to be the Art School and is now the City Treasurer's Office. It is proposed to build new City offices on the South side of the Guildhall area, and this would enable the old Art School to be used as a museum. It has large suitable rooms and is ideally situated close to a Car Park, the Cathedral, the Wessex Hotel, Bus Station and main shopping centre. The site in St. Thomas Street has none of these advantages. It would be far less costly than a new building, and would be a great help in providing better accommodation for the City offices.

The old Art School is a building which has not been much noticed of late, but it is a good example of its period, and in the view of some authorities, is very much better than the Guildhall. As a museum it would be preserved in acceptable form, maintaining the present character of the High Street.

Alternatively if a site could be found in the area of re-development for the new law courts, this would seem to be well sited near the Westgate and Great Hall.

Changes - Trust Annual Report 1965

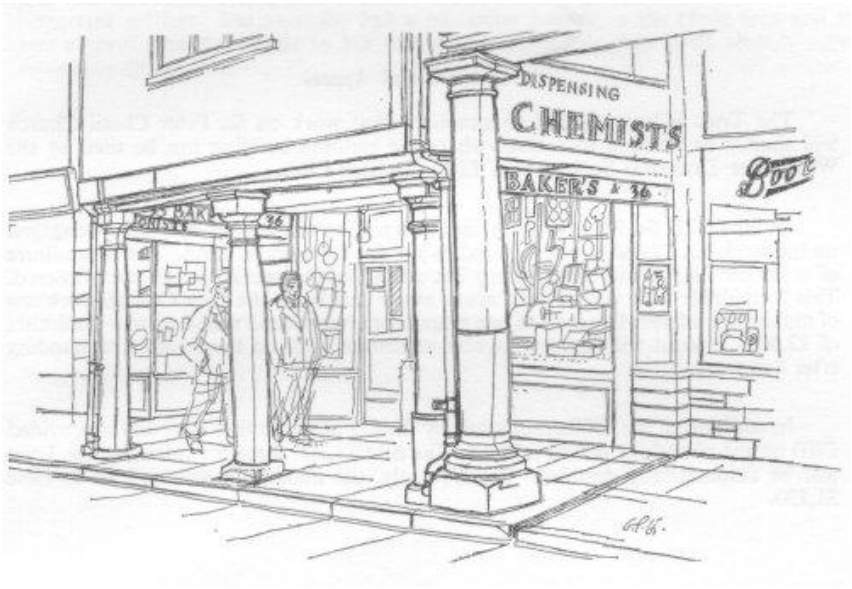


Chalkeys, The Square

The Square is one of the most important areas in the centre of the city. It is one of the places which makes Winchester attractive to the visitor, and is the main approach to the Cathedral from the High Street.

One of the most important properties in this area is up for sale, and the Trust is naturally most concerned that the character of this important area should be retained.

Messrs. Chalkley's has been there as long as anyone can remember, and the sign of the fish is the best of its kind in Winchester and indeed for miles around. It is good news that it has been offered to, and accepted by, a new business which has opened recently in Winchester.



Bakers, High Street

Another old family business, that of Messrs. Baker's in the High Street, is also closing down and it is understood that Boots the Chemists may acquire this property for extension.

The City Council has very wisely stipulated that a very thorough examination should be made of this property, and that the frontage should not deviate from the present gable. There is no doubt that a very attractive addition could be made to Boots if the changes are made sympathetically, and there is no need for the character of this area to be lost.

The drawings by Garrick Palmer record these two important sites, which the Trust maintains should undergo the necessary restorations to prolong their life for many years to come.

Archaeology - Trust Annual Report 1965

Members of the Trust have been keenly interested in the archaeological digs which have taken place in Winchester during recent years.

They were very glad therefore to have an opportunity of hearing three lectures during the summer given by Mr. Martin Biddle, in which he explained the results of recent work. These were arranged by Dr. E. Course, of the Department of Adult Education of the University of Southampton in collaboration with the Preservation Trust, Excavation Committee and the W.E.A. The three lectures dealt with the Late Iron Age and Roman Winchester, Saxon Winchester and Winchester in the Middle Ages.

Earlier in the year another series of lectures was given about Winchester by Mrs. Carpenter-Turner, and these were also in conjunction with Southampton University. During the summer the popular series of guided tours was also continued.

St. Peter Chesil Appeal - Trust Annual Report 1965

The Trust is very pleased to announce that work on St. Peter Chesil Church will shortly be brought to a stage where the restored building can be used by the Winchester Dramatic Society as a Little Theatre Club.

So far £6,721 9s. 2d. has been raised and paid to the various contractors engaged on the work but £2,460 is still required to pay for the work in hand. The expenditure of a further £1,500 will be necessary but not all of this work has yet been ordered. This formidable task will be very much easier thanks to the City Council's scheme of making an interest-free loan of one pound for every pound raised up to a maximum of £2,500. Interest will become payable at current rates on the amount outstanding after five years.

In addition to the £500 grant made by the Corporation they have so far provided £800 on the pound for pound scheme. The next £1,700 therefore raised by the Trust will be automatically doubled. Consequently, the immediate task will be to raise £1,230.

The High Street - Trust Annual Report 1965

We are glad to see once more the restored facade of the National Provincial Bank, obscured by scaffolding for many months. This is a really superb restoration and all members of the Trust will be delighted that this has been carried out.

Across the Street, it is the turn of No. 41 to be hidden behind scaffolding. We shall be glad to see the restored building re-appear behind the Butter Cross in due course, when it will become the office of the Northampton Building Society.

St. George's Street - Trust Annual Report 1965

There can be no doubt that the Casson block is the most attractive new development in the centre of Winchester. Why then was so little care taken about the planning of the opposite side of the road? It seems that here an opportunity has been lost, and that the job has only been half done. The back of the old Gifford's warehouse had a certain rugged strength which is entirely lacking in the characterless building which replaces it. The south side of St. George's Street is now typical of any rebuilt urban centre. It is not Winchester.

Obituary Mrs. Nowell Salmon - Trust Annual Report 1965

It is with great regret that we have to report the death of Mrs. Nowell Salmon. She was a staunch supporter of the Trust and had been a member of the Committee for several years. In addition to her keen interest in the Trust's main activities she also had an eye for detail, and on several occasions brought to our notice small but important matters. She naturally had a particular interest in the Hyde area and it was a great disappointment to her that the cottages opposite Hyde church were eventually demolished.