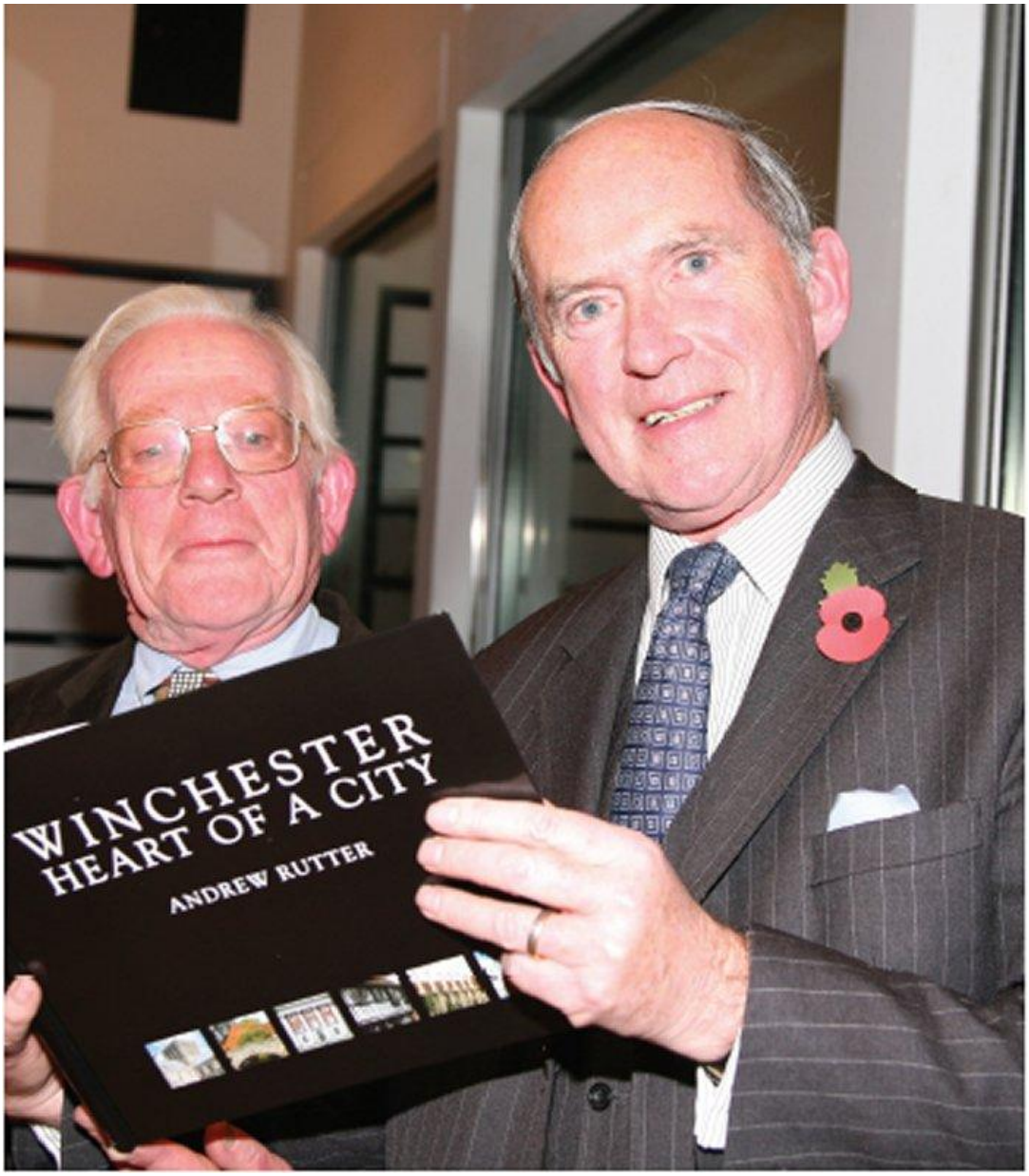
Title Picture - TrustNews December 09



Chairman Iain Patton & President Christopher Clark QC at the Launch of Winchester Heart of a City

Chairman's Miscellany - TrustNews Dec 09

It has been a busy autumn for the Trust and remains so. Major events fell at the beginning and end of the period under review. Our Annual General Meeting on 15th September drew many members who braved very heavy rain and were rewarded by a fascinating address by our Vice President, Donald Insall CBE, based on his book “Living Buildings” aided by contrasting illustrations taken from the book. As part of the business of the meeting, John Beveridge and Peter Rees were elected as Trustees, having been co-opted to the Trust Council during the preceeding year.

On 6th November came the publication by P & G Wells Ltd of Andrew Rutter's book Winchester - Heart of the City, and its launch by our President, His Honour Judge Christopher Clark QC in a lively speech at the Discovery Centre. Publication was the culmination of many months of labour by the editorial team of Keith Leaman, Richard Baker, Gill Collymore, Robin Freeman and Matthew Huntley and supported by Carol Leaman who laboured hard to record the many revisions which were necessary. Warmest thanks to them for their commitment. It is heartening that they all say that they now miss their twice weekly meetings! It gives me great pleasure that Andrew Rutter, the author of the original text, is delighted with the book. It is available from Wells Bookshop in College Street and is excellent value at £35.

In addition to all that, the Trust has been heavily involved in the consultation process set up by Cala Homes on their proposals for Barton Farm and while we remain strongly opposed to any development on that important edge of the City, it is pleasing that the developers have taken time to consult widely. We have also taken part in a landscape Assessment Group set up by Winchester City Council to consider the landscape aspects of its proposal to develop Bushfield Down as a "Knowledge Park". Participation does not lessen our opposition to any development of the site which is so very important to the setting of Winchester. It is only by participating in such consultations that the Trust can strive to ensure that, if the developments do go ahead, they will be designed to the highest standards.

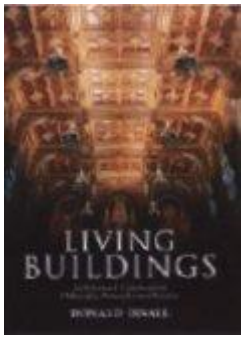
I am delighted to report that we will run Design Awards again in the coming year. This will be organised by Chris Higgins who is well known for his work at King Alfred's College and later the University where he maintained a very high standard of architecture in the developments there.

Finally, I salute all those who work so hard - as members of Council, as members of the Planning Appraisal Group and in many other ways - to push forward our aims for the City of Winchester. Without them, we would be nothing.

Iain Patton

Book Review - TrustNews Dec 09

Living Buildings. Architectural Conservation: Philosophy, Principles and Practice. by Donald Insall CBE, Vice-President of the City of Winchester Trust (published by Images Publishing £39.50)



This is a sumptuous, well produced book with a surprising number of illustrations, which could easily perform the role of a coffee table book. The numerous illustrations of new buildings are seductively photographed to promote a particular design approach. This, however, would be to ignore the seriousness of its purpose to inform practitioners and potential clients of how to rescue and bring endangered buildings back to a useful life.

This is a truly architectural book, starting with end papers showing Somerset House both in elevation and section enclosing a most enjoyable and human space within its townscape setting, close to the Houses of Parliament. Throughout, there are architectural drawings, a wonderful set of illuminating axonometrics as well as brilliant photographs of building defects and repair techniques. These are designed to convince people that old buildings are an important part of our cultural heritage well worth looking after and giving an appropriate new build setting.

Donald Insall is a modest, gentlemanly but essentially an heroic figure, who started practice in the post second world war era when old buildings were not well regarded and even seen as an impediment to economic redevelopment to the detriment of so many towns. He led a dedicated team of architects who with great thoroughness produced consistently good results over an astonishing wide range of projects, including such challenges as the repair of the House of Lords and Windsor Castle.

What professional students need to know is why particular decisions were made on these projects and, because Donald lectured for 30 years at the Specialist Conservation Courses at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, he is very good at giving explanations that are easy to follow.

Because Britain has historic building legislation that does not require the employment of conservation architects for listed building alterations, relying instead on the general planning system (hopefully advised by conservation officers), it leaves the possibility of opinionated people who are not designers by training having considerable power over what can be built. I see this book as providing evidence to challenge such abuses of power. It also has examples that can demonstrate to local authorities a better approach to run-down areas, like the Brooks in Winchester, than brutal slum clearance that destroyed everything.

Most of the Work of Local Authority Conservation Officers deals with far more humdrum proposals where one might wish that many more professionals would take time to analyse and find out historic information about buildings before submitting proposals on behalf of their clients. That would make the job of administering the legislation much easier. Donald Insall’s restoration of Hyde Barn, now sadly empty, is an example though not recorded in the book. This is an inspiring book, well worth the asking price.

Andrew Rutter

It seems there are still staff shortages in the Planning Department. After a great effort to catch up with the backlog of applications needing validation (which resulted in one of our weekly panels having to comment on over 20 applications), things have returned to their previous state, with anything between 3 and 10 applications being listed for the city each week. If the number of presentations we had during October is anything to go by, developer activity seems to be on the move, which will add to their problems.

After a long gap, in October we were asked to have no less than three pre-application presentations, as well as being invited to attend two public exhibitions, of the Cala Homes' latest scheme for **Barton Farm** and the resubmission of a development for student accommodation on the **corner of Sparkford Road & Sparkford Close**.

The first presentation was for **land adjacent to Pitt Manor**, where it is proposed there should be a residential development and Park & Ride for 200 cars. Local residents are very concerned about this and contacted the Trust to enlist our aid. We share their concern, feeling that to build on this Local Reserve Site would be premature at this time, and that the additional traffic generated by the development would greatly exacerbate the already congested state of Romsey Road. We also question whether it is wise to site Park & Ride so close to a residential area, where its security lighting could be intrusive after dark and its open space could be an invitation for high jinks by local youngsters after office hours, both of which could be disturbing to the residents. As well as these general concerns we were also critical of the outline scheme, feeling that a more sensitive approach was needed for the access and layout than was proposed.

It was good to be able to be enthusiastic for the proposals of our next presentation, **alterations to the Guildhall**, where a major refurbishment of the interior is proposed, with improved disabled access from The Broadway, new lifts and improved access to the Walton Room on the top floor. It is also proposed that the present Courtyard Café behind the Tourist Office should be moved to replace the Saxon Suite on the north-east corner of the building, where its more prominent position would catch more passing trade than its present secluded site, and that the present Courtyard Café space should become a multi-use venue. The roof covering over King Alfred Hall also needs replacing and we urged that its material should be photovoltaic rather than the copper being considered, since this would be able to generate electricity and so reduce costs, thereby helping to rectify Winchester's reputation as having one of the worst carbon footprints in the country. It would also be less visually intrusive in the city's roofscape than the large expanse of green a copper roof of this size would have after it had weathered from its original colour. Let's hope that our councillors will be prepared to pick up the gauntlet of making this a sustainable conversion, as has been done by Hampshire County Council at Ashburton Court. An application for this scheme has now been submitted.

Our third presentation was of Linden Home's residential development at **9 Chilblton Avenue** following the demolition of the present house. The general response was supportive, because it was felt that retaining the major trees and planting on the road boundary and siting the block of flats to relate to the present building line of the road was a sensitive response to the character of the area and the restrictions of the

Local Area Design Statement. We also approved of the underground parking proposed for the 4-house terrace at the rear of the site, but urged that a higher level of sustainability than was proposed should be considered.

Sadly, the ugly new garage block we felt would not benefit **Lantern Court, 90 Christchurch Road** has been granted; the replacement block at **Peter Symond's College, Owens Road**, with an amended description as a temporary building, has also been granted for a period of 5 years only. The application for a 56-bed care home in place of the demolished **Stanmore Hotel, 212 Stanmore Lane**, has been withdrawn because it was not possible to resolve concerns about its effect on the neighbouring property at No 210 before its determination date; it seems probable that an amended scheme will soon be put forward for consideration. A resubmission of the scheme for student accommodation at **20 Sparkford Close**, this time for six students rather than eight, has been granted.

Among the many applications for shop fronts and their signs, conservatories and a variety of extensions seen by the panels, two proposed loft conversions in Canon Street caused considerable concern. The proposals for **27 Canon Street** included a greatly enlarged dormer at the front and a 'dormer' at the rear that stretched across the whole width of the roof, and those for **26 Canon Street** wanted the present inappropriately large rear 'dormer' to be replaced by something that would be even bigger and more inappropriate. We objected to these schemes, both of which have been refused.

One of the more interesting new schemes we have seen is the detailed application for the **Chilcomb Centre, Chilcomb Lane**, a business, enterprise and innovation park that already has outline planning permission. We welcomed the thoughtful and innovative design, with its green roofs and gable planting, but queried the sustainability level that was claimed, feeling its energy centre should be fuelled by waste materials rather than wood, which would have to be supplied from elsewhere and could cause pollution because of particulates in the air. We also regretted that the really innovative approach taken by HCC with the Ashburton Court refurbishment did not seem to have been followed for this brand new development.

Although on a much smaller scale than any of the above, it is encouraging to report that our request to the Enforcement Officers seems to have resulted in the removal of the large dentist's sign fixed without permission to the front of 33 Southgate Street, a Listed Building.

Shione Carden

Open Gardens 2010 - TrustNews Dec 09

The Trust Council hopes that it will be possible to repeat the Open Gardens programme which has proved so successful. It will however, depend on the kindness of members willing to open their gardens to other members. Gardens should be fairly close to the city centre so that it is possible to walk from one to another but this does not exclude those which may need a car to reach.

Members willing to take part or seeking more information contact Vicky Feldwick at the Heritage Centre (01962 851664) or by email secretary@cityofwinchestertrust.co.uk and if possible not later than 31 January 2010.

Building a low carbon Winchester... - TrustNews Dec 09

Winchester has been a centre of learning and culture for hundreds of years, and what happens here is important. Will we use our collective curiosity, creativity and courage to face up to the unprecedented opportunity and threat of human-caused climate change? Or will we hide behind our laziness and diffidence – and that of others – and, basking in an exaggerated sense of entitlement, fail to face up to the great challenge of our time?



Make no mistake – the logic of the greenhouse effect is rock solid, and there is an overwhelming consensus among well-informed climate scientists that human activity is cooking the planet. Early in 2009 two academics at the University of Illinois, Peter Doran and Maggie Kendall Zimmerman, published their survey of the attitudes to global warming of 3,146 scientists. They found that 97 per cent of expert climate scientists (those that published peer-reviewed papers on the subject) took the view that human activity has caused, and is causing, climate change.

The choice is between effective action in the next decade or the catastrophes of ‘runaway’ climate change.

So what should we be doing in Winchester? Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC) was deliberately set up as a coalition of organisations and citizens willing to pledge to reduce their carbon footprints. The target of a one-third reduction in the carbon footprint of Winchester by December 2015 is both ambitious and realistic. The immediate aim must be a 10 per cent reduction in emissions – from every household, business and organisation – in 2010. There is no shortage of websites – including http://www.winacc.org.uk - providing advice about the action that needs to be taken.

The next ten years are crucially important. WinACC is more interested in ‘climate change: the opportunity’ than ‘climate change: the threat’. With good leadership and

a compelling vision, Winchester in 2020 could be a model of a beautiful low carbon city. Skilling and re-skilling society for the ‘smart complexity’ and ‘elegant simplicity’ needed in a civilised sustainable society should be a top priority for government at every level. ‘Smart complexity’ will be needed, for example in food production, transport, and the way we organise business life; ‘elegant simplicity’ could help call a halt to the ‘affluenza’ of rampant consumerism.

Well- informed judgements are needed in every area – in urban design and architecture; in technology choice, particularly in investment decisions on renewable energy; in creating a society in which once again it becomes normal to walk, cycle or use public transport; and in tackling the crucial question of food security. How we increase the energy efficiency of old buildings is just as important – in the short term probably more important - as how we design the new ones. WinACC is exploring the feasibility of a project which will aim to insulate the entire housing stock of Winchester district as cost-effectively as possible by 2015.

The decisions that the City Council has to take on new housing developments, and on how best to develop the potentially lucrative renewable energy economy in the area, call for considerable understanding of best practice elsewhere. Do the local authorities have adequate technical and design expertise at their disposal? Are they learning all that they should be learning from other cities in Europe? It would be surprising if most Trust members answered positively to either of these questions.

Human-caused climate change provides us with the opportunity to re-think the values of our society – and to work collaboratively as never before to provide a decent quality of life for all with whom we share the planet. You do not have to be a Christian to believe that the Archbishop of Canterbury is providing the kind of leadership on climate change that is needed from politicians as well as religious leaders. In a recent speech Dr Rowan Williams said: ‘Our response to the crisis needs to be, in the most basic sense, a reality check, a reacquaintance with the facts of our interdependence within the material world and a rediscovery of our responsibility for it...When we believe in transformation at the local and personal level, we are laying the surest foundations for change at the national and international level’.

All members of the City of Winchester Trust are asked to make a pledge to reduce their carbon footprints – and thereby to join WinACC.

Robert Hutchison, Chairman,
Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC)

Trust Website - TrustNews Dec 09

2009 has seen some major enhancements to the Trust website.

Nick Hirst, the Trust Archivist has finished reorganising and cataloguing the contents of the archival boxes. A list of all their contents and locations is available as a searchable index on the ‘Archives’ page of the website. Nick has also started to

digitise old images and research descriptions for the website gallery. As these are completed more will become available in the ‘Gallery’ section of the website, with 350 images already in place. A searchable index of the descriptions is available on the ‘Gallery Introduction’ page, with links to each image. Nick has also described and catalogued over 3000 photographs that have been stored in metal drawers, in addition to those in archival boxes. In 2010 it is hoped that many of these can be put on the website.

Earlier this year a project was completed to put all the text and images from Trust publications on the website. Eleven publications have been uploaded including several that are out of print, such as ‘The High Street’ published in 1976.

The earlier work to include all the text and images from back issues of TrustNews has been extended to include all copies from 1985 to the latest version.

A local search engine has been included on the website. This has trawled 360 pages and searches using any word or phrase across the publications, TrustNews issues and main web pages. Nick has started digitising video held in the Archive and we will include some on the website in the near future.

Book Launch: - TrustNews Dec 09

Andrew Rutter’s Winchester - Heart of a City



Andrew Rutter, as many of you will know, was Conservation Officer for Winchester City Council from 1974-1999. He probably more than anybody knows the City, not only in broad terms but also in detail as a result of having studied so many of its buildings over so many years. Andrew’s love of Winchester is obvious from the book and we hope that it will be a reference for all those who have to make decisions with regard to planning, development and landscaping in and around the City.

The book launch on the evening of 6th November was a great success. It marked the culmination of many months of work for many people and in addition resulted in a pleasing number of book sales.

Judge Christopher Clarke, President of the Trust, gave a witty and lucid summing up of the book's gestation period. Not only that but I am sure he managed to boost the book sales by his persuasive judgement of its importance to Winchester. Mrs Clarke told me afterwards that he had quietly disappeared one evening and read through most of the book so that he could speak knowledgeably about its contents.

Afterwards the author was kept fully occupied for the whole evening in signing - so much so that I know some of us were concerned he might suffer from repetitive strain injury!

Lisbeth Rake did a marvellous job as our publicity advisor together with her husband who organized the drinks for the evening. I was reprimanded for forecasting that many would consume soft drinks when in fact much of the wine was drunk and little of the orange juice - no wonder the evening was a success!

Richard Baker together with the Discovery Centre Manager carried out all the behind the scenes work with great efficiency which is why the proceedings went so smoothly. Many thanks too to James Lunn-Rockliffe who took responsibility for the digital photograph projection which acted as a backcloth to the evening. Last a big thank you to everyone (approximately 130) including many members of the Trust who turned up to support Wells Publishing at the launch.

Keith Leaman

Winchester: Heart of a City is published and distributed by P & G Wells, 11 College Street, Winchester (01962 852016 pgwells@btconnect.com) Price £35 (plus £5 if you would like it mailed to any UK address).

Organisation - TrustNews Dec 2009

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Hon Treasurer: Peter Radcliffe F.C.A.

Secretary: Vicky Feldwick

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New Members - TrustNews Dec 09

A warm welcome to the following members who have recently joined.

Miss Jane Boyles
Mr David Kilmister
Mrs Clare Kilroy
Mr John Pringle (Life member)
Mrs Ros Pugh
Mr Nigel Pugh
Mrs Anne White.