Title Picture - TrustNews May 1990



'The View in Gibb's Hill Wood' by Walter Crane which was published
in John R. Wise's **The New Forest: its History and Scenery**, 3rd Edition 1853

Officers - TrustNews May 1990

As foreshadowed in the February Newsletter, Sir Peter Ramsbotham was elected President of the Trust on 3rd April. Sir Peter has had a distinguished career in the Foreign Service and was British Ambassador successively to Iran and the U.S.A. He has been a Vice President of the Trust since 1982 and has taken a keen interest in our affairs. We count ourselves very fortunate to have his help and support. As will be seen from the Programme of Events printed at the end of this Newsletter, Sir Peter and Lady Ramsbotham have invited members of the Trust to visit their very beautiful garden at Ovington on the evening of Friday, 31st August.

Barbara Carpenter Turner has now stood down as President and we have made her an Honorary Life Member of the Trust. No-one could have deserved it more. Regrettably we had to cancel the party in her honour which was to have been held on 19th March because of the serious illness of her daughter, Clarissa. I am relieved to be able to report that Clarissa is now very much better and well on the way to recovery. It is hoped that we shall be able to reinstate the party in honour of her mother and for the presentation later on in the year and we shall keep members informed about this.

Sadly Clarissa has decided that she must reduce her commitments and has resigned as Secretary. She has done a wonderful job since succeeding Gill Graham in 1988 and we shall miss her sorely. I am very glad to be able to tell members that Mrs. C. Devas has stepped into the breach.

M3 Motorway Bar End to Compton - TrustNews May 1990

As most members will be well aware, the Minister has decided in favour of the route to the east of St Catherine's Hill, favoured by the Department of Transport: this will involve a very large cutting through Twyford Down and a high level embankment across the meadows to Compton. The Trust has consistently supported a Tunnel and we continue to believe that the Department's route will be very much more damaging than most people realise. The Tunnel solution, evidently was very carefully considered by the Inspector at the last inquiry who, whilst supporting the Department's route mainly on the grounds of cost, stated in his Report that the Tunnel is the most acceptable solution environmentally.

It is not certain at the time of writing what will be the situation when members receive this Newsletter, i.e. whether the long debate is now over and the Minister's decision is accepted as final or whether there will be continuing attempts to reverse it. If the latter, it is important that members who have not made up their minds on this important and difficult issue should have every opportunity to do so.

We therefore print two articles written independently, the first by Dr Gillham explaining the reasons why the Trust has opposed the "cutting" solution and the second, a personal view by Gillian Bauer, a member who supports the "cutting".

We have also arranged for Mr Merrick Denton Thompson, a landscape architect and a prominent opponent of the "cutting" to give a talk to members on 4th June at the

Milner Hall at 7.30 pm. This will enable members of all views or opinions to consider the position.

David Middleditch

The Arguments against the 'Cutting' Solution - TrustNews May 1990

The principal features of the Government's scheme are as follows:

The new motorway leaves its current line about 150 yards north of Chilcomb Lane and climbs on embankment towards the Morestead Road. This brings it some 30 ft higher than the foothills of St Catherine's Hill, creating a new horizon for Chilcomb Valley. The carriageway crosses the Morestead Road slightly below the existing road level, Morestead Road itself being diverted down the embankment to the new Bar End junction. The crossing of Morestead Road is centred on a point about 50 yards east (uphill) of the entrance to the sewage works. The Cutting here takes out the western end of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Dongas and cutsthrough the Site of Special Scientific Interest that covers St Catherine's Hill and Plague Pits Valley.

The Cutting skirts the edge of Plague Pits Valley then takes a line out on to the spine of Twyford Down, on the steepest permitted gradient for a motorway, at the high point of the Down being more than 400 feet wide and nearly 100 feet deep. Descending towards Hockley, it avoids the Arethusa Clump but cuts a wide swathe out of the original Iron Age Settlement of Winchester (a Scheduled Ancient Monument). The Cutting widens as it comes out of the Down to accommodate the slip roads. The road now crosses the lichen Valley, just south of the GWR viaduct, on a very high embankment formed from the spoil from the Cutting. This embankment crosses over the present Hockley junction at a height of 57 feet, descends to a little below the parapet of the viaduct and then rises again to vault over the main London-Southampton railway. When the embankment reaches the earthworks which resculpt the area of the old by-pass, near the railway, it is again at a height of 57 feet above the valley floor and rises another 10 feet as it crosses the railway.

The road now crosses the current by-pass, an embankment, at the end of Place Lane, and cuts through a corner of Shawford Down to join the Compton-Bassett section at the present junction with the A31. This junction and the current Hockley junction are combined in a complex of slip roads to the west of the railway, rising to the Bushfield Roundabout and involving another road across the Itchen Valley between the viaduct and the embankment.

Landscape Damage - Twyford Down

The reason why all the national environmental protection agencies and the national newspapers have shown such concern about the Department of Transport's decision arises from the sheer contempt that has been shown for the statutory process of designation of protected sites. On Twyford Down alone, the Department plans to

destroy more protected sites than are threatened for the whole length of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

The great ridge of downland to the east of the Itchen Valley is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The western extremity of this is all that really survives of the ridges and downland setting to Winchester that Cobbett admired, when he described the area as 'the finest spot in England'. Any Trust Member who has not already done so should view the route from Compton Down (Yew Hill). St Catherine's Hill and Twyford Down are intimately related in landscape terms, the head and tail of a splendid comma of hills etched out by the mysteriously wonderful Plague Pits Valley.

Some idea of the landscape damage of the Cutting can be got from the Department's photomontage (it is still surprising how many people believe this photomontage to be the work of opponents of the scheme). There are good grounds for believing the cutting width to have been played down in this montage and it also, undoubtedly, underplays the perception of the embankment. And, of course, the camera is more forgiving for a landscape like this, than the human eye. The camera perception is that of a broad panorama of which the Cutting is only a geometrical part, whilst the human eye sees only narrow vistas and its focus of attention will be forced on to the most startling aspect of the scene. What was a harmonious gentle scene becomes a narrow vista of contrast and discord. Some people may like the excitement of that, but not the people who admired the landscape as it was.

The Cutting may destroy only 20% (say) of the surface of the downs, but the landscape as it was, is gone for ever. Photographic evidence was presented at the Inquiry relating to an M40 cutting in the Chilterns and Cecil Parkinson referred to it as an example of how such a cutting can fit into a landscape. Apart from the fact that this cutting is of quite a different scale, is in an excarpment, rather than a salient ridge, is not viewable from opposing high ground, and is a good deal less visible by virtue of feeding into a naturally re-entrant fold of the hill, it remains a highly unattractive feature and merely another example of the Department's insensitivity.

But Twyford Down is a much, much worse case. Anyone who walks on Yew Hill and cares for the beauty he sees, must surely agree that, even in terms of landscape alone, and even from this viewpoint alone, the Department's proposal is so grotesque as to be intolerable.

But of course, there are many other places from which this Cutting would be seen, including, for those who like to pretend this is not Winchester's problem, from many points on the high western ground within the City itself.

Landscape Damage - The Embankment

Those wishing to gain some impression of the embankment should go to Hockley lights and look up at the tall television mast there. The carriageway of the Department's route is only very slightly lower than the top of this mast.

As a landscape feature seen from Twyford Meadows, the embankment would be an unremitting, unvaried and immense barrage. Seen from the Winchester side, the

middle section (but not all of it!) is screened by the viaduct (although traffic would be visible along most of its length). The viaduct itself is threatened again with demolition and the Department of Transport says this is no concern of theirs. Deprived of the viaduct, Winchester's meadows south of St Cross would have the same bleak prospect as Twyford Meadows. The Cutting, as it crosses Morestead Road, destroys the most significant and best preserved part of the mediaeval tracks, called the Dongas, where they can converge on the Roman Road. Quite apart from the archaeological significance of the site this is an area of mysterious beauty, with a feeling of great ancientness. It is here also that the most important colony of Chalk Hill Blue butterflies in Southern England will be destroyed.

The Department's route involves other archaeological losses, but by far the most important damage to our heritage comes from the destruction of the Iron Age village. Anyone who has read Mr Denton Thompson's appreciation of this site, published in the Hampshire Chronicle in February will know that the village and the hill fort of St Catherine's are intimately bound up, complementary parts of a single complex settlement. Here is the 'first major metropolis, mother to Venta Belgarum, the Roman Town at Winchester'.

There are very few aspects of the heritage of Winchester which should demand more attention from the Preservation Trust than this astonishing survival.

The Low Level Alternative

The JAG low level (tunnel) route does not dam Chilcomb Valley: it does not destroy the Dongas or the butterflies, or the Iron Age Village of ancient Winchester: it does not ruin the western promontory of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or dam the Itchen Valley. With cut-and-cover it does not sever Shawford and Compton. And, of course, it has all the same benefits of the removal of the by-pass.

The noise impact from the high-level (Cutting) route will inevitably be greater almost everywhere (including St Cross) than from the low-level route. There has, incidentally been a lot of nonsense talked about noise from the Tunnel - a tunnel is an ideal structure for baffling noise if special precautions are taken with materials. It would be better than any other equivalent length of motorway and much better than the high cutting, with its high gradients forcing engines into much noisier states.

What are the disadvantages? Much was made, by the Department, of the portals of the Tunnel, based on the absurd exaggeration of the Department's drawings. Continental tunnel portals are much less intrusive. It must also be remembered that the carriageway is so much lower and so much more easily screened by landscaping. Remember the top of the television mast at Hockley defines the Cutting road level. The top of a double-decker bus coming out the the Tunnel would be level with the bottom of this mast!

The slip roads at Bar End are more prominent than with the Cutting, but it is obviously better for the minor road to be higher than the motorway itself. The slip roads at Compton are also more prominent, but again must be preferable to the motorway itself being high. And remember this arrangement removes the appalling slip roads at Hockley, leaving only a simple crossing of the Twyford Road.

The 'lighting problem' is a mischievous canard. Because the Cutting is a sub-standard motorway (gradients and curvatures) it is certain that it will be lit. The Department of Transport has been looking at the lighting of all motorways and has recently been installing lighting on several sections of the M3. The small, but admittedly intrusive, lighting visible at the mouths of the Tunnel will be as nothing to the lighting of the Cutting. Imagine also the likelihood that the valley crossing will be illuminated far above the level of the viaduct.

Another piece of nonsense that has been propagated by the Department, is that the low-level route generates more traffic in St Cross Road (incidentally ignoring the corollary that their route puts more traffic on Chesil Street). The traffic on Winchester's radial routes is almost entirely determined by the City Council's traffic policy - the Department's 'traffic expert' was in the ludicrous position at the 1987 Inquiry of believing that the majority of the cars coming into Winchester would return by the same route, without ever stopping to park!

The Department of Transport scheme is an environmental disaster. It is probably the most damaging road scheme currently being planned in Western Europe.

It is recognised as a scandal by the main national environmental bodies, by the Times as 'motorway madness' even by the popular motoring magazine *Auto and Express*, as 'Parky's Folly'.

How many people in Winchester are aware how lucky they are to have a landscape setting as lovely as the Itchen Valley and the downland promontories? How many Winchester people are aware just how terrible this scheme would be? Is it possible that they will only learn to value it when they have lost it?

Chris Gillham

The M3 Motorway - TrustNews May 1990

A personal view by Gillian Bauer

The recently announced decision to construct the Motorway in the Cutting to the East of St Catherine's Hill will be seen by some people that sense has prevailed but to others as a devastating mistake.

Nevertheless it is worthwhile considering some points which to my mind show advantages for the Cutting over the alternative routes.

There is no doubt that Winchester is in a beautiful area and it is a pity that it is confronted with a Motorway at all, but as there was no going back once the North and South sections of the M3 had been approved, and now partly built, the missing section had to be decided within a very limited area. The protracted discussions over this section for so long, with vast increase in traffic during that period, has left the most contentious section pincered between already fixed points, the sections in use or under construction, and therefore presents a greater problem for any decision.

With hindsight, the abandonment of any suggested route going from Popham to the West of Winchester appears to have been a mistake.

The debate over Twyford Down

The debate over Twyford Down should not only concern the preservation of that landscape and its designated sites but how best to accommodate this road, taking into account the countryside as well as people and the visual and aural factors.

The designation of these sites does not make them immutable. It is analogous to the listing of buildings - consent for alteration to which is given all the time. Take the centre of Winchester, at present undergoing extensive building works and associated archaeological digs, some with very limited time and with the cooperation of the developers, revealing much interesting history including walls and entrances to buildings, fascinating mosaic floors, pots and household items. The M3 cutting route allows for an archaeological dig to take place and the section through part of the Iron Age village can perhaps finally be revealed and documented. In fact it was announced in April that the Trust for Wessex Archaeology has been appointed to carry out a survey as a basis for the dig, for which a specific grant of £60,000 has been allocated.

The area East of St Catherine's Hill is an open stretch of countryside, part of which is in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which extends 17 miles from the Petersfield end to the Winchester By-Pass. The M3 will pass through only a small section of this area, on a curve '/2 mile, at the maximum distance, from the Western end of the A.O.N.B.

Until I walked the route for the cutting I thought, as I find many others still do, the line was at the foot of St Catherine's Hill in the downland. But the line is, from the North, through scrubland known as the Dongas, (a strange Matabele name considering Matabeleland was not known to white man until the last century) and it is uncertain if the banks and ditches are all of ancient origin. Then going South, it is arable fields of which some sections will be restored to downland after the cutting is completed. It is wrong to think the route through Twyford Down will be destroying mainly downland habitats.

The Existing By-Pass

To widen the present By-Pass was an option that looked feasible until one realizes it would need to be double the existing width. A point that is not appreciated as a motorist is how near the road is to the steep bank dropping down to the canal. To construct the motorway on the By-Pass would entail not only removal of the existing trees, but any not on the direct road line would be unlikely to survive ancillary and construction works. It needs two retaining walls - one up to the canal and footpath and at one point into the canal thus opening up the Motorway to the watermeadows. The second one on St Catherine's Hill side of the Motorway, would be a concrete retaining wall the height of a 6 storey building. Both are totally out of keeping and an urban element to the beautiful view across the water meadows and St Catherine's Hill and would be seen from much of Winchester. In addition the noise would permeate a far greater area.

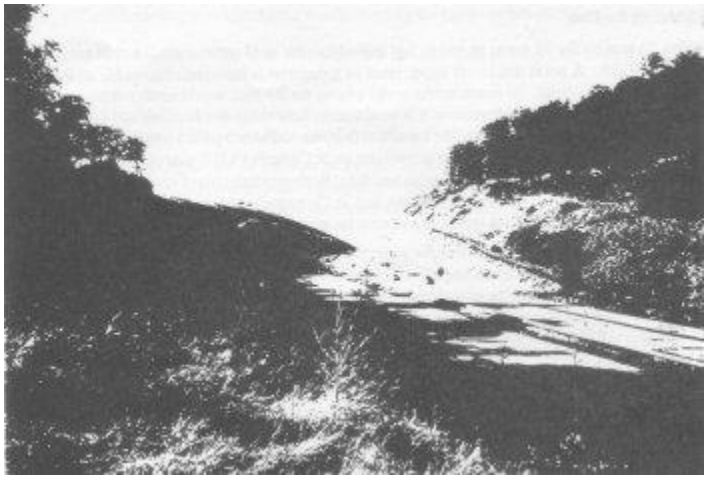
The benefit of grassing the By-Pass to link the water meadows and St Catherine's Hill with improved footpath and bridleways is of great and much needed recreational value as well as visual and aural benefit for a great many people. It would enlarge an area already much used for a variety of recreational pursuits but spoilt at present by the road and noise. This area can be enjoyed by all age groups and not only the more agile who go up and over the Hill. It will also relieve the pressure on nearby areas and footpaths which are becoming over used.

In addition it would improve the environment West of the Hill especially as seen from Winchester. The combination of the view across the River Itchen, water meadows, St Catherine's Hill and features that go with this scene, is unique and needs to be enjoyed for quiet recreation without being interfered with by any road.

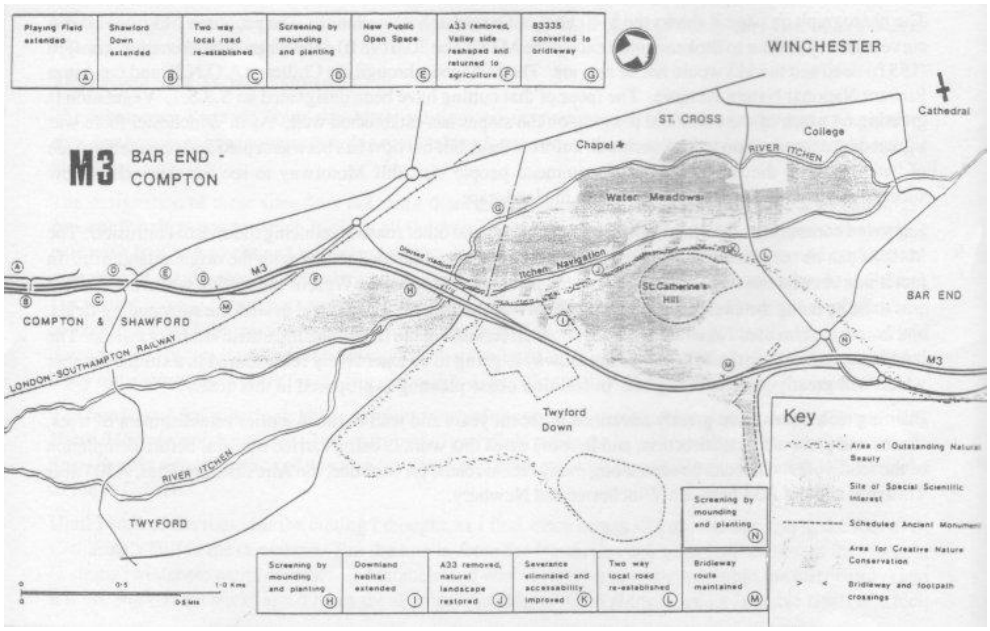
The Cutting to East of St Catherine's Hill

The much publicised photomontage of the cutting is a viewpoint from a farm field and not from any residential property and shows the Motorway immediately after completion and before the proposed planting has taken effect.

The photograph shows the M40 East of Oxford at Stokenchurch. The proposed M3 route is on a curve and very similar to Stokenchurch except the M3 will be 30m (98 ft) deep whereas Stokenchurch is 48m (155 ft) deep and the M3 would not be as wide. The M40 goes through the Chilterns A.O.N.B. and the Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve. The faces of that cutting have been designated an S.S.S.1. Vegetation is growing on much of the faces and planting on the slopes has established well. As in Winchester there was a great deal of opposition to Stokenchurch before it was built but now has been accepted and comments made of "what was all the fuss about". I recommend people visit this Motorway to see for themselves how successfully the road and planting fits into the landscape.



M40 at Stokenchurch. East of Oxford



M3 Bar End to Compton

Improved contouring of the land adjoining motorways and other roads is reducing their visual intrusion. The M40, as can be seen from the photograph, has the ground re-moulded to link with the original landform. In fact it was very interesting to discover how the present land formation West of the cutting was created. This was done by using the excavated material, which was then contoured to blend in with the surrounding fields, and is now in farm use. No unnatural line is now discernible in the fields, and the traffic is hardly visible. The land in the area where the M3 crosses the railway is going to be extensively recontoured in a similar manner which will greatly lessen the impact. In addition dense planting is proposed in this area.

Planting techniques have greatly advanced in recent years and lead to much earlier establishment of trees, shrubs and grass after construction, and in some cases this work is being carried out well before completion of the roadworks. This can be seen along many recent roads, for instance, the Alresford By-Pass, A303 near Thruxton and the A34 between Winchester and Newbury.

The Tunnel

The idea that a tunnel will hide and get rid of all the evils connected with motor vehicles does not stand up to more detailed investigation in this instance. One needs to look at other items than just the underground part of the road. At each end are twin very large portals (each 19m wide) as gaping holes, the tops and sides retained by concrete, an alien material in the countryside. (Continental tunnels are invariably in rock which is self supporting and only accommodate 2 lane roads). Lights are needed along the stretches of road leaving and entering the tunnel as it is considered dAingerous to go from a lit tunnel into an unlit road. Lighting standards are hideous by day, and even worse by night, introducing a town feature into the countryside, and the lights can be seen from miles away.

As slip roads to get on and off the Motorway and roads from Twyford and More stead to and from the City cannot be accommodated in, or just outside, the tunnel, there have to be bridges over the Motorway, creating a hotch potch of portals, bridges, both with lights, road signs and other paraphanalia linked to our roads and most intrusive into the landscape. The AIM at Hatfield is an example of this conglomeration, fortunately not in an area of attractive countryside.

In many instances lighting of roads is a desecration of our countryside and often ruins an otherwise well landscaped route. The unlit, uncluttered M40 Stokenchurch cutting shows my point.

There would be a need to dispose of the surplus excavated material from the tunnel scheme amounting to 1.6 million cubic metres (over 5 times the quantity for the cutting). This would cover 47 hectares at a depth of 3 metres - where would this go?

Should 4 lanes be necessary the cutting, without further widening, could accommodate this, unlike the tunnel.

Conclusion

Natural chalk in the cutting is far preferable in this Hampshire scenery than the damaging accessories that go with the other routes. After all, the white cliffs of Dover are considered a scenic landmark.

Taking all points into consideration the price of preserving Twyford Down is too high to pay against what would be inflicted elsewhere in environmental terms, quite apart from the £92 million extra cost (at 1987 prices) for the construction of the tunnel element (excluding under the railway) and nearly £1 million for yearly maintenance.

After the findings of two independent Inspectors, and such a vast expense of the inquiries (about £5 million) plus the years of delay occasioned by the re-opening in 1987 so that the Countryside Commission and English Heritage could give evidence, as they failed to appear in 1985, it is now time to accept that everyone who wanted to voice their opinion has had a good opportunity to do so, and the work should start.

Gillian Bauer

The Story of the Royal Hotel - TrustNews May 1990

"My Lady West's"

Dr John Henry King, then Parish Priest of St Peter's, Winchester, later to become Archibishop King, wrote an account of the history of the Royal Hotel in the 1930's. This is his introduction.

"In a quiet backwater of the sleepy old City of Winchester stands the Royal Hotel. The roar of modern traffic fills the main streets by day and by night. But St Peter Street is calm and unperturbed though not one block removed from the thoroughfare

which sees, feels and smells the endless stream of humans and goods bound for London or the seaside. Practically the only motors which enter our peaceful street are those of clients coming to lunch or to stay at the "Royal". Though the latter is out of the way and far from pretentious externally, yet the knowing visitor is well aware that it has a history, for the present host and his family are never tired of telling their guests that it was once a convent and of showing them the erstwhile chapel of the Community. But none of them are probably aware that this history begins long before the coming of the nuns".

Dr King was referring to the story of Lady West, whose house, in the days of Queen Elizabeth I, stood where the hotel stands today. This he established from an extract from a legal document relating to the sale of the property in 1810 which he found in the Archives of St Peter's.

"All that capital messuage or tenement and gardens thereunto belonging and near adjoining, situate, lying and being on the south part of an ancient capital messuage or great tenement formrly pulled in order to the new building and re-edifying thereof known by the name of "Lady West's House".

Refuge for Recusants

Lady Mary West was the daughter of Sir George Guildford and widow of Sir Owen West. He was half-brother to the 9th Baron De la Warr, of Wherwell Priory. Their nephew, William, son of Sir Owen's brother George, was created Earl De la Warr by Queen Elizabeth in 1569 when he came into his uncle the 9th Baron's estates. It is thought that Sir Owen died before 1569.

The first mention of Lady West in contemporary records is in 1579, when the Privy Council was informed that "Masses are being said at the Winchester house of My Lady West". In 1580, Sir Francis Walsingham was told in a letter that, "A priest named Ballard had his abode chiefly in Hampshire at the house of an old lady called Lady West". In 1583 her name appears on the list of Recusants for the Parish of St Thomas. Recusants were those who refused to attend Service in the Established Church. Failure to obey the law resulted in crippling and cumulative fines or imprisonment or both.

For those who adhered to the Old Faith these were perilous days. To be a priest was in itself a capital offence. To be a recusant was dangerous enough. To provide a meeting place for Recusants and to give shelter to priests were acts of the utmost heroism, particularly if your house was in the middle of the City.

Fleshmonger Street

The exact location of the original Fleshmonger Street, now St Peter Street, is still a matter for discussion. It is thought to have been around the High Street end of the present street, where the butchers once clustered their booths around the little church of St Peter Marcellis, an area known as the Shambles. Certainly this was the case from the time of the Black Death. Most of the area covered by the present St Peter Street and Parchment Street was taken up by gardens or closes. At what is now the North Walls end was the great garden belonging to Hyde Abbey.

New buildings evidently appeared in the middle of the 16th century and the Subsidy Rolls for 1586 record the payment of a tax of five shillings by Lady West in the "Thaldermanry of Jewry Street". This was a considerable sum and, as the tax was based on the value of possessions, Lady West must have been a lady of some substance. None of her neighbours paid taxes of more than a few pence.

Our last record of Lady West is the most dramatic. In December, 1583, a search was made in her house by priesthunters acting on orders from the Privy Council. They found "a secret place" enclosed with bordes in which were hidden divers old and new papistical books, printed and written, and, in a place more secret, underground, a chest bound with iron, containing all manner of massing apparell, a chalice of lynne (?), a box full of singing cakes (Communion breads) a pyx of ivore sett in woode, a green Agnus Dei sett in satten, besides divers new Mass books and catechisms".

In the "Ladies Chamber" was found a "supra altara" (This would have been a portable altar stone similar to those preserved in Peterhouse today).

One "ffraunces", Lady West's servant, confessed that the chest had been in the Ladies Chamber that morning but had been moved when news reached them of the search in the City. It is probable that "ffraunces" was amongst the number of young women recusants who were imprisoned in the Castle at this time but what became of her Mistress we do not know. Possibly her age and rank saved her from prison. It is also worth noting that while the Mayor was obliged to carry out instructions for the Privy Council and the Bishop, the Citizens of Winchester and the Cathedral Clergy were generally tolerant and reluctant to proceed against their fellow citizens.

It is also interesting to note that there is a 16th century chest of uncertain provenance preserved in Winchester Cathedral which is "bound with iron". In the February following the search the arch spy, Thomas Dodwell, named five priests who had been given refuge by Lady West. All were eventually apprehended. Two died in prison, three on the gallows. One of these, Roger Dicconson, was hanged, drawn and quartered in the Bar Ditch, now the site of the Station Yard in Andover Road, on July 7th, 1591. With him was also executed the old husbandman, Ralph Milner, born in the reign of Henry VIII, who had been guide and helper to the priests in Hampshire.

17th and 18th centuries, Corham, Smiths and the Sheldons

Towards the end of the 17th century the property was owned by Roger Corham the Cavalier, who had fought at the Siege of Basing House as an Ensign. His family had large estates in Hampshire which included, at one time, Cranbury Park, Abbotts Barton House, property in Hyde Street and, it seems, for some years, In Fleshmonger Street.

According to a note in David Keene's Medieval Winchester, (Page 687), "From 1665 a strip of ground to the North of this property (two plots towards the Southern end of Fleshmongers Street) was leased separately and included in the new brick buildings (now part of the Royal Hotel) built on the North By Roger Corham".

Corham, at this time, was living at Silkstead Manor where he had started the famous school which later moved to Twyford. Richard Cromwell was his close neighbour. In or around 1680 Corham built the first Peterhouse on the site of the present No's 7, 8 and 9 St Peter Street. Here he installed a resident priest to serve the people of Winchester. It is doubtful if he lived in the house on the site of Lady West's. Sometime later he sold the property to Bartholomew Smith from the Soke. The earliest date on the deeds of the Royal appears to be 1693, when Mr Smith was the owner.

The Smiths were an old Recusant family. Bartholomew's second son became a priest, President of Douai College and then one of the four Bishops appointed in the reign of James II. Consecrated in the Palace of Whitehall, he became Vicar Apostolic of the North. The crozier presented to him by James is to be seen in the Treasury of York Minster. It was taken from Bishop Smith in 1688, following the accession of William of Orange. He chanced to meet the Lord Lieutenant of Yorkshire on the road and the Lord Lieutenant, refusing to acknowledge his right to such a symbol of authority, promptly confiscated it.

One of the Bishop's sisters became a nun. A second sister, Anastasia, married William Sheldon, son of Ralph Sheldon, Equerry in Exile to King James. His younger brother inherited the property but all four of his sons died within a short time of each other from smallpox and so William Sheldon became the new owner. Dr Milner tells us that the Sheldons continued to inhabit the great house until "the grandfather of the present Francis Sheldon of Burton Constable built the elegant house in Southgate Street which is now in the possession of the Government". This is the present Searle House. Francis' brother, Edward, a profligate gambler, who changed his name to Constable upon inheriting the Constable Estates, sold the house in St Peter Street in 1759 to the Vicar Apostolic of the London District, Bishop Talbot. Winchester was then part of this District. It became known as "The Bishop's House".

The Benedictine Convent 1795-1857

Dr Milner had ambitious plans to turn The Bishop's House into a Junior Seminary to prepare boys to go on to the Seminary then establishing itself at Old Hall, Ware, following the expulsion of the Colleges from France. In 1795, however, his plans were changed by the arrival in Winchester of a Congregation of English Benedictine nuns driven from Brussels by the French Revolutionary Armies. Theirs had been the first Convent founded abroad by English ladies after the Dissolution of the Religious Houses by Henry VIII. Its co-foundress and first Abbess was Lady Mary Percy, daughter of the Duke of Northumberland who was beheaded for his allegiance to Mary, Queen of Scots.

Dr Milner installed the nuns in the "Bishop's House". He saw to the construction of a chapel at the top of the house and had the names of their patron saints painted over their stalls. This chapel now forms two of the hotel bedrooms but its shape is still easily discernible although the bell rope which, until comparatively recent times hung through the ceiling, is no more.

At Milner's suggestion the Sisters started a school for girls on the lines of the one they had run for many years in Brussels, in which many English girls of good families

had been educated. Besides the boarders or "Pensioners", they also taught without payment, the poor girls of the parish.

They kept the strict Benedictine Rule as fully as possible but only wore their habits in the mornings when no one could see them. In the afternoons they changed into secular dress.

In 1810 the Congregation bought the house from the London District and renamed it "The Convent of the Glorious Assumption".

In the sixty three years they were to stay in Winchester thirty two nuns were professed. Many who died were buried in St James' Cemetery. Amongst these was Lady Abbess Margaret Tancred who had led her nuns to safety from Brussels. She died in 1797 and was succeeded by Dame Phillipa Eccles, the 15th Abbess. She made history by being the first Abbess to be installed in England since Tudor days. When she died in 1811 her successor was Dame Mary Benedict McDonald, who had been the first nun to be professed in Winchester.

After the Consecration of Dr Milner as Vicar Apostolic of the Midlands in 1803 he and all his fellow Bishops met in Synod in the Convent. Bishop Milner never severed his connection with the Congregation. He acted as their Visitor and came to see them every year until his death in 1826. In his will he left them £100 and his episcopal ring.

The Sisters left Winchester in 1857, moving to East Bergholt in Suffolk. It was said at the time that their,16, privacy had been disturbed by young soldiers who would sit on their garden wall and watch them. More probably the move was occasioned by the cost of upkeep of the house and the new buildings in the neighbourhood which overlooked them. Their departure was a great blow to the Parish. They had been a major influence and were much loved. An article in the Hampshire Chronicle of 17th September, 1898, said, "Many remember the good Sisters and their Abbess, their kindness and earnest religion. The scholars of Mr R. Short's School close by occasionaly saw them at their windows and, in summer, received most enjoyable Windsor pears from their fine tree".

The house and grounds were purchased by the well known entrepreneur, C. W. Benny. He had formerly owned the White Hart in the High Street, an inn which, with its predecessor, had existed since the reign of Henry V, when it was known as the "Harte". Benny converted the 17th century house into an hotel and he called it "The Royal".

The Royal Hotel 1857-1990

By 1898 the *Hampshire Chronicle* writer quoted above could describe the hotel in glowing terms.

"It is famous everywhere for its perfect comfort and pleasant position and its associations and surroundings, which carry us back to the Dissolution in a manner....

....for its comforts, its convenience and its quiet, home like surroundings, due to the able management and tact of Mrs Spriggs and her family.

Many a disciple of Isaac Walton has enjoyed his evenings amongst his brethren of the gentle craft in talking of flies, tackle, great fishes lost (these are always large), the moroseness of millers, the abundance of weeds and other Waltonian items. Francis Francis, whose memorial tablet adorns the walls of our cathedral, and his "May Fly Mess" will ever be associated with the halcyon days of Itchen fly fishing from the Royal.

The Hotel was, for many years, the headquarters of the Hants Carabiniers Yeomanry Cavalry when it assembled in Winchester and the gardens were visited by hundreds of Wintonians when the excellent band played there at Mess.

The barristers of the Western Circuit have also, for a considerable time, held their annual banquets at the Royal, after the St John's Rooms ceased to be used for that purpose.

The Hotel will always be at home to those who fish the troutful Itchen and also to the enormous number of visitors or pilgrims to "Olde Winchester" who, in cosy rooms and on pleasant lawns can talk over their enjoyment and await the inevitable bill with the calm comfort that it will be reasonable and that the rest and refreshment and other things desired at an inn are worth the outlay". Nearly a hundred years on the hotel still retains much of this same peaceful character even although it has taken in surrounding buildings and a new block now flanks the still "pleasant lawns". It continues to flourish and is about to expand once again.

For the parishioners of St Peter's it must always be a very special place as they remember with gratitude the devoted courage of that redoubtable old widow, "My Lady West", who risked so much, and also the dedication of the Benedictine Sisters. It is fitting that this still quiet street should, today, be the centre of Roman Catholic life in Winchester.

Peter Bogan

Planning Developments - TrustNews May 1990

With the depression in the property market, the number of planning applications inspected by the Trust's panels recently has fallen, and major developments in the city have taken a welcome breather. One continuing trend however is the decline of gardens in the central area, which are rapidly being lost to car parking. One such garden is that attached to Mulberry House in St Thomas Street, where outstanding trees have been threatened, including a Mulberry tree believed to have been planted by Charles II. Fortunately it now seems that a compromise has been reached, which retains the most important part of this outstanding garden.

Following the unhappy incident of the demolition of a listed building in Staple Gardens which had been allowed to fall into disrepair over the years, the Trust has carried out its own survey of the older buildings in the centre of Winchester. One worrying factor which has emerged is that our ancient monuments appear to be most at risk. The Buttercross is in very poor condition indeed, and pieces of stonework fall

off periodically. The Trust has however been given an assurance that major repairs are to be carried out in the near future. The Westgate is in little better condition, and here the blame appears to rest with English Heritage, who seem unable to decide what should be done. We must hope that their decision will not be delayed until it is too late. Also the relaying of the paving on the lower side of the Gate to continue the "way through" appearance promised some time ago by the city, has not yet been done. Another matter reported to us by a number of Trust members as a result of this survey, is the decapitated Black Swan on the corner of High Street and Southgate Street. Surely the city could afford a new head for this important reminder of an ancient Inn needlessly demolished in the '30s.

The Trust continues to be successful in its policy of effecting the listing of threatened buildings in Winchester, and the latest addition to the list is the terrace of Regency houses in North Walls recently damaged by fire.

Jeffrey Smith

Letter from Major K.M. Egleston - TrustNews May 1990

The Editor is very pleased with the response to Colin Stansfield Smith's article (February 1990) and one of the ,letters received is published below:

From Major K. M. Egleston
Sir,

I admired Colin Stansfield Smith's masterly view on Winchester.

The problem is how to get his views across. The difficulty with Winchester is that for a very long time the majority of the City Council has had little environmental pride in the city. No city with such pride could possibly have imposed on its citizens the Brooks Development - short term monetary gain - long term lost opportunity. In this respect Winchester is unlike, say Chester, Durham, Norwich, where there is an inborn ethos of Civic Pride.

How then does one instil a City Council with pride in its inheritance? One of the solutions I see is that the Winchester Preservation Trust, with its influential and knowledgeable membership stretching far beyond the bounds of Winchester should take a much more positive and active role in helping Councillors, who are always changing, to understand their city.

My first suggestion would be to initiate a visit to York. There it will be remembered twenty years ago the city had very little pride in the urban, historical and architectural qualities of the city. The fact that this has now completely changed, and it shows, is almost entirely due to the influential York Civic Society.

There is a lesson here both for the Winchester Preservation Trust and for the city.

Yours faithfully,

KEITH EGLESTON
Weston Patrick
Basingstoke.

Letter from Nick McPherson - TrustNews May 1990

The Editor is very pleased with the response to Colin Stansfield Smith's article (February 1990) and one of the letters received is published below:

From Nick McPherson
Sir,

I am writing in response to Colin Stansfield Smith's excellent and thought provoking article "A Personal View on Winchester". As an architect who was trained in the mid sixties, I can fully appreciate his analysis of where we stand in Winchester in 1990.

I have known the city most of my life and can remember those days in the fifties when the High Street was traffic choked and when the Westgate was straddling the main A3090 west out of town and was being dreadfully eroded.

Since that time some things have improved. The High Street has been pedestrianized and the prospect of a circular urban motorway within the town itself has been avoided. But despite these improvements, most of the city's planning achievements have been negative in the sense of stopping the worst effects of fifties' and sixties' development.

However, the circulatory traffic system is still there, and I agree with Mr Stansfield Smith that worse is bound to come unless drastic alternatives are proposed. I am afraid that I cannot share his optimism about the long¬term environmental future of Winchester. When I recently revisited my home town, Newbury, I was appalled by the destruction and physical violations which have been inflicted on a small market town. Such aggressive exploitation is only too easy when there is no long-term urban regeneration philosophy as advocated by Mr Stansfield Smith.

I would strongly support such a strategy, but feel that enlightened patronage under a more sympathetic government is required before this policy can be implemented. I remember a series of articles in the *Architect's Journal* of the sixties which proposed an urban planning policy of "Counterdrift" aimed to restrict and control the sprawling growth of London's suburbia. Part of this strategy involved the construction of new towns such' as Milton Keynes and Hook, and the revitalization of others like Andover and Basingstoke. A further element in the counterdrift proposals concerned the construction of "Solent City" - a linear megapolis of Japanese inspiration. This was to run from Portsmouth to Bournemouth along the line of the present M27 and was to pivot on Southampton with Winchester at its northern edge. Despite the controls of Regional and Local Planning Authorities in the form of various structure and local plans, this phenomenon does seem to have occurred, but in a peculiarly English and unco-ordinated suburban way. As such it does give cause for concern, especially

when the simplistic economic determination of the present government is taken into account.

There is a need to channel the very positive growth requirements of the past few years into an urban regeneration strategy as described by Mr Stansfied Smith, but as I write I note that mortgage interest rates are set to rise and that we seem to be heading for another economic recession which will make such long-term proposals rather academic.

Yours faithfully,

NICK McPHERSON
Winchester.

Letter from Mr. A.R.Bryant - TrustNews May 1990

The Editor is very pleased with the response to Colin Stansfield Smith's article (February 1990) and one of the letters received is published below:

From Mr. A.R. Bryant
Sir,

Mr Stansfield Smith is right to condemn the one-sided, specialist approach in the sixties to Winchester's problems. That kind of approach landed us with such brutal buildings as the multi-storey car-parks in Sussex Street and Friarsgate. Having said that, I was disappointed that Mr Stansfield Smith did not develop his ideas on traffic management - surely our biggest problem, and a prime example of the specialist approach. Solve that problem and much else would fall into place. Admittedly, he does make a tentative reference to the "environmental improvements" that might follow more restrictions on traffic entry. But what restrictions, and how long do we wait for the detailed studies? And what bearing have these restrictions on the new Durngate Bridge? For the last forty years we have confused the functions of the streets in a town with roads in the country. This confusion has led traffic planners to treat city streets as mere routes - mere continuations of roads. They are not and the difference is important. The traffic uses of a city street are subsidiary to and opposed to other uses - shopping, meeting people, strolling about, chatting and so on. Have your readers ever seen anyone stop for a chat in, say, North Walls or St George's Street? Every-one of our streets is different and that subtlety of balance is one of the delights of Winchester. In their anxiety to "get the traffic through", our road planners have ignored that balance. Any building, village or town is nothing more than an obstacle to be removed, or mocked by being by-passed. As an example of the latter, think of the insensitive treatment of Winchester's Westgate.

This difference - this special quality of our streets-needs to be emphasised and re-emphasised. As a general rule - and I repeat the "general" - no street should ever be widened, straightened or have its corners rounded. That little propostion will do for a beginning of the argument, which might be more productive if the responsibility for city streets was handed over to the City Council, because the County Council has

served us ill. Having local interests at heart the City Councillors might be more sensitive, though I would not care to bet on it. The love-affair with underground car-parks is no cause for optimism.

Yours faithfully,

A.R. BRYANT
Winchester.

Coffee Mornings - TrustNews May 1990

Coffee mornings have been arranged for the coming 1990 season at the Winchester Heritage Centre, 52-54 Upper Brook St, Winchester. For details see Programme. All Trust members are cordially invited to attend giving an opportunity to meet some of the persons actively involved in furthering the aims of the Trust, to meet socially, and to view the successful educational aspects of the Trust and the Heritage Centre.

Rosemary Smith

Programme - TrustNews May 1990

Saturday 2 June
Saturday 9 June
From 10.30 a.m. in the Heritage Centre, Upper Brook Street, Coffee mornings, with delicious refreshments to be provided by Mrs Denise Loveday. Come and meet other Trust members, see the audio-visual programme on Winchester, and the permanent exhibition.

4 June 7.30 p.m.
Merrick Denton Thompson will speak on the M3 Bar End to Compton question at Milner Hall, St. Peter Street.

Friday 31st August 6.00 p.m.
Members are invited to visit the garden of the Trust's President, Sir Peter Ramsbotham, at East Lane, Ovington - for directions see below.

Wednesday 31 October 7.30p.m.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. King Charles Suite, Winchester Guildhall. The guest speaker will be Professor Martin Biddle.

To find East Lane, take the A31 towards Alresford. At the roundabout at the end of the dual carriageway (where the Alresford bypass starts) leave roundabout as though going into Alresford but turn left almost immediately towards Ovington. East Lane is the first house on the left in about 300 yards.

Membership - TrustNews May 1990

Application for Membership

Life Member
Single £60 Double £75

Ordinary Member
Single £3 Family or Household £4 (2 adults + children under 21)

Corporate Member
£8 (for firms, societies, olleges etc)

Note: Higher rate subscriptions are always welcome

Name(s).....

Address.....

Signature..... Date.....

Please send cheque or banker's order to the Secretary, Winchester Preservation Trust, c/o The Heritage Centre, 52/54 Upper Brook Street, Winchester S023 8DG.