



Banbury Civic Society



CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2016

Wishing all our members and supporters, old and new

A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



Adrienne taking photos at the Black Country Museum



A Fresh Face- Peter Monk, Chairman

Those members who attended the AGM in June will be aware that our then Chairman, Rob Kinchin-Smith, indicated during the meeting his desire to step down from that post because of personal and professional work-load pressures.

As a result I was elected Chair in his place and he took the Vice-chairmanship and will deal with planning, historic and listed building issues.

I am a relative new-comer to Banbury, having moved here to be near our daughters and grandchildren in 2009. I now live in Banbury close to the Salt Way and am very aware of the impact that the Cherwell Local Plan, both good and bad, will have.

I am a retired Chartered Civil Engineer and my career was spent with British Railways and then various London Boroughs, being engaged on various infrastructure works across the spectrum of civil

engineering. After voluntary early retirement I joined the City Engineer's Dept of the City of London on contract, primarily, but not exclusively to oversee the Docklands Light Railway (City Extension) works and after that managed a Community Transport scheme in Godalming and also operated as an independent consultant to London Underground arranging traffic management matters for various station improvement works.

The Banbury scene is posing some challenges -, adapting Banbury's infrastructure to accommodate the huge increase in population predicated by the Adopted Local Plan, seeking to protect and enhance those valuable and historic features and structures that we all love and appreciate, ensuring that the views and desires of the Society are listened to, and improving communication and involvement of the membership to highlight but a few.

The last of these will, as a matter of urgency, require the re-activation of the Society's website which appears to have become moribund over the past few years and if any member has skills and the energy to help in this task, please get in touch.

Your committee can do much, provided we are supported and aided by those with specialist or 'niche' interests and skills. We have some vacancies on the Executive so, if you fit the bill, please step forward.

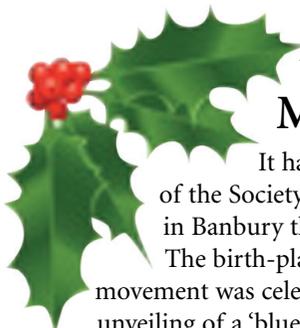
Peter

Future Event - Visit to Ardley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF)



Members will already have been notified of our plans to arrange a visit to the ERF in the New Year and the Committee have been surprised at the response. It was such that, rather than going as a small group and joining up with another party for the visit, there is enough interest to seek a date for the Civic Society to have a 'whole party' visit for ourselves, hopefully during an afternoon in February. I await a reply from Viridor, the operator, and will let members have more details as soon as they are available. It is not envisaged that travel to Ardley would be by coach as it is to be hoped that members will 'team up' and travel by private car.

PM



Mediaeval Arches

It has for some time been an ambition of the Society to draw attention to those features in Banbury that are of historic or notable value. The birth-place of the railway preservation movement was celebrated during last year by the unveiling of a 'blue' plaque in the High Str., and we are now investigating the possibility of a joint project with the Town Council and Banbury & Bicester College to high-light the remaining mediaeval arches of the 13th century bridge across the Cherwell river between Banbury and Grimsbury, formerly in Northamptonshire. The bridge has been substantially altered over the years with the coming of the canal and railway, but the two arches over the former Mill Stream (now the 'dry' channel) remain, although they are barely discernible under the Bridge Street structure at the junction with Station Approach.

PM

Town Centre Paving

The Civic Society is very concerned regarding the unsightly asphalt 'patches' that have appeared in the town centre brick and slab paved areas. This paving was laid some ten, or more, years ago at some expense to achieve a quality scheme, not without some controversy, and whilst the Health and Safety issues are understood, we would like to be assured that (a) the bricks have been retained for re-use, and not sent to tip, and (b) that these areas will be restored as soon as possible - if necessary to different levels to avoid the tree roots, which are alleged to be the cause of the unevenness.

If it really is beyond reach to relay the damaged surfaces in brick paving, then red asphalt (redgra or similar) should be used, as is used for tennis courts etc

PM

Black Country Museum Visit

On 22nd October, 27 Members and I went to visit the Black Country Living Museum near Dudley. We were very lucky with the weather. The Museum, as many of you may know, is a re-construction of a 19th Century industrial village with many of its features fully active.

I spent quite a time at the nail-maker's workshop and cottage where I learned more not only about the shenanigans of loose-living (!) but the details of how Lord Dudley diddled the nail-maker and vice versa. He was tasked to make 3000 nails a day with very simple tools. He, his wife and 11 children lived next door in a one-up and one-down cottage with an outdoor privy.

We then went on to see the Newcomen mine drainage steam pumping Engine – fully working and BIG. After this, and after queuing, we formed a party to go "down the mine" which was very theatrical. The guide issued us with torches (bloomin' awful bulbs) and we descended into a reconstructed mine in the pitch black with roofs only about 4'6" so we had to bend double and be grateful for our hard hats. There were plaster replicas of kiddie-winkies aged about 7, pit ponies, coal-face miners, pregnant women and a ghastly display of what it was really like to be down the mine. The ceiling was low, and the floor was wet and from time to time simulated muffled booms went off with the occasional "aaaargh". All very realistic.

Two children had hysterics and one lady got claustrophobia and had to be led out. I came out fine but couldn't stand up straight for half an hour.

Elsewhere in the village we learned about leeches from the travelling medicine doctor, saw historic shop window displays and had the Proper Way of making fish and chips demonstrated. Extremely yummy – all cooked in old-fashioned beef dripping. The queue was enormous but well worth the wait. We also saw waifs and strays, drunken oafs and ladies of the night (who



sat on benches outside the pub with their price chalked on the shoe sole.)

A brief glimpse into the 20th Century was given by a trolley bus ride. One observation though, which I feel I must mention, was a cobbled street where toys of the age were left around i.e. spinning top, hoop spinning, skipping ropes, etc.

Loads of little kidlets around were fascinated and picked these things up and do you know, very, very few knew how to skip or bowl a hoop. I started chanting "salt, mustard, vinegar, pepper..." as you do. Not one child knew what I was talking about although a few older people started laughing, and joining in.

This all brought us close to "going home time" so with relief we boarded the coach for sunny Banbury – like tired little teddy bears.

Adrienne

For more information please write to:

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