



GLASTONBURY CONSERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 150 – Autumn 2018

Chairman's Report

I would like to start by saying a big thank you to Alan Gloak, for opening his lovely gardens to the society. This year we were invited at the end of July, the evening was well attended by members. I went to thank Alan a few weeks later and handed him a bottle, so he could have a drink on us. He has told me that next year he will invite us to see his gardens at the end of June. This is one month earlier than usual,

because he is going to open his gardens to the public through the National Gardens Scheme. When I get a definite date I will let you know.

The Society have been asked by the Town Council, if they could plant a hedge of 3000 plants in the field the council have purchased. This field is to be the new home for Tor Fair. To get the community involved we have decided to put the plants up for sponsorship.

Meaning that people can buy as many metres of the 600 as they wish. We will then hold an open weekend on site where you can come along and plant your part of the hedge. We are also giving them one year's free membership to the Society, hoping that some will remain members.

This year's A.G.M. is to be held at the Baytree Cafe, St John's Square on Friday 30th November.

Herbies Field

Glastonbury Town Council is increasingly aware that the popularity of events and festivals causes some anxiety with residents, particularly with regards to car parking. More recently, there has been a challenge to accommodate the historic and popular Tor Fair, which is possibly the longest running traditional fair in the country. For the continuance of this and other events such as Carnival, Frost Fayre, Beltane and Road Run and other events that benefit the town, a more professional and responsible approach has to be given to the management of parking and the safety of pedestrians.

A thorough search for a suitable location within reasonable proximity to the town centre has been conducted. The purpose is to identify land that could be used as an overflow car park and a more permanent location for Tor Fair. With this in mind a

field of approximately 10 acres was found. This field is between Northload Bridge and Dyehouse Lane.

The entrance to the field is through a double width gates from Northload Bridge. An approach by the Town Council to the owners of the land was made to purchase this land and there is a willingness to proceed, subject to planning consent being approved.

It is the intention of the Town Council to retain a green and pleasant field, for residents and visitors to be able to enjoy. However, to ensure that vehicular access is not impeded by the wet conditions, roadways will have to be installed. The following will be included in the pending planning application.

Herbies Field will remain a green and open space in perpetuity. An application will be made to protect Herbies Field as either a local green space or a fields in trust from future development.

From the area where the rushes are growing, the area will be slightly lowered and the soil transported across the site to raise the land nearest the road.

Three spine roadways will be constructed. The stone substructure will be covered with the soil removed from another area to cover the roadways to retain a grass covering.

A boundary fence and hedge will be constructed 8 metres from the rhynes to allow for rhyme clearing and allow people to walk around safely.

The roadside boundary nearest Northload Bridge currently has no pavement and is considered an unsafe route for walkers from the town centre to the caravan park and football club.

The intention is to provide a hard surfaced path on the field side of the existing stone wall to provide pedestrian safety.

Glastonbury Town Museum envisaged for the empty Tribunal

A Glastonbury town museum on the ground floor of the Tribunal, letting the 15th-century building itself tell much of the town's story.

That's the vision Liz Leyshon presented to the Conservation Society committee meeting on August 20.

The Tribunal building, in the High Street with a garden backing onto St John's Square, has been leased from English Heritage by Glastonbury Tribunal Ltd (GTL) for the past 25 years. The ground floor housed the town's Tourist Information Centre for most of that time; the tourist-info services recently moved to new premises at St Dunstan's House beside the Town Hall as part of Glastonbury Information Centre. The Tribunal's upper floor houses the Lake Village Museum, run by the Antiquarian Society, which is not affected by the proposal.

Liz has been doing volunteer duty at the Tribunal every Friday and says she has come to appreciate the

building more now that is empty of all the tourist paraphernalia. She tests out the idea of a Glastonbury town museum on people she talks to. "I get encouragement from the visitors who come in. People of Glastonbury are keen; visitors are keen."

Mary Parker, owner of Abbey Tea Rooms, was one of the first to point out that Glastonbury does not have a town museum. Long ago there was one in the Town Hall, but the space was wanted for other purposes.

So 7,500 Glastonbury artefacts owned by the Antiquarian Society are now in storage in Taunton. Many more objects are in private houses. The list includes two swords from the Monmouth Rebellion, the magic-lantern slides by Alice Buckton that were saved from a skip, and Arts and Crafts objects from the renowned potter William Worrall who lived in Stonedown Lane in the 1930s.

The Glastonbury town museum would not

show everything at once, but rather a core display plus themes that change from time to time to attract people repeatedly.

Tim Hopkinson-Ball, the Antiquarian Society chairman, is outlining a way of telling a story, like the British Museum, in around 50 objects.

If the vision for a Glastonbury town museum gets approval, the first phase of work would be to remove the old tourist information desk and stud walls from the Tribunal's ground floor, then to upgrade electrical, lighting and heating services.

English Heritage is offering a five-year lease, with a break point at two years. Running costs for Glastonbury Tribunal Ltd had been less than £10,000 a year, including the lease.

"So we're thinking £50,000 for Phase A," Liz said. "That's not an insignificant amount, but we don't need to be afraid of it. It's nowhere near the project we did

at Strode Theatre." (She was its manager 1994–2017.)

Submissions would be made to grant-making trusts, and a local Friends group would be established to help raise funds, like the Friends of Strode Theatre.

If everything goes smoothly, the new Glastonbury

town museum could be open for Easter 2019.

"Then if we are able to move on to Phase B, we would look to appoint a heritage professional," she said.

Liz Leyshon is one of two county councillors on the board of Glastonbury Tribunal Ltd; the other is Terry

Napper. The board also includes Jon Cousins and John Brunson from the town council, and Mary Parker.

• The Tribunal's present opening hours are Wednesday to Saturday, 11am to 2pm, but volunteers often stay later and do Sundays as well.

200 past newsletter articles online in full

This is Newsletter 150. To celebrate the milestone, around 200 articles (so far) from the past 25 years of newsletters are now online in full on the Conservation Society's website:

glastonburyconservation.org.uk

Here's a sample of what you can read there:

- Hartlake cycle bridge is re-cycled
- Tree total reaches 25,000 (1999, Newsletter 91)
- Coombe House then and now (2000, Newsletter 94)
- Tribute to Sheena Rees, healer of injured birds
- The High Street in the 1940s (by Eric King, four parts)
- Farewell to the Rileys and the vicarage
- Jack Hepworth: artist, architect, beekeeper, founder member
- A nature reserve: new chapter opens for Bushy Coombe
- A tribute to Tom Todd and his trees
- Tercentenary talk: why a mayor for Glastonbury?
- Ultra-green plant to bottle dowsed water
- Glastonbury to become a World Heritage Site?
- High-profile developers take on the Morland site
- Town's oldest business: the Miller dynasty had iron in the blood
- What is Glastonbury made of? (by Susanna van

Rose, geologist)

- Morland buildings are occupied at last ... but not as the RDA intended
- Bridgwater and Glastonbury visit each other
- The chronicles of John Cannon: an abstract by Prof. John Money
- New houses at top of town promise more trees than before
- Young George Tucker is sure to recall his Jubilee "beating" the bounds
- Was a panther also beating the bounds of Glastonbury?
- New fungal diseases threaten more of our trees
- Glastonbury's listed post office marks 75th anniversary
- Lorry crash reveals Abbey stone of Benedict Street houses
- Trevor Adams, 1941–2014: vet, gardener, magistrate, churchwarden
- All four banks abandon Glastonbury: Lloyds' black horse is the last to bolt.

Many of the articles have colour photos instead of the original black-and-white prints. Freed from space restrictions, headlines online are sometimes fuller than they were in print, but otherwise the text of articles is

pretty well unchanged.

Some cross-references have been added to link to related articles in other issues of the newsletter.

Overall, the website has had a behind-the-scenes technical makeover to make it visually clean and consistent and fast to load. The home page does not look all that different (yet), but there is one important new feature:

- A Search box. Enter any word or phrase and press Go; if your phrase appears anywhere in any of the online articles, you can click in the results to go exactly there. For this feature we must thank an excellent service called Freefind.
- A link to the Table of Contents for all newsletters since 1999* now appears beside the Search box. If you have kept the original printed newsletters, you will find the relevant page number for each article. Articles online in full are flagged with a symbol that you can click to go straight there.

More articles will appear online as time permits. If there is one that you would like to see sooner, email Jim Nagel (website@glastonburyconservation.org.uk).

(* Newsletters between 1991 and 1999 are archived on old cartridges. They too will appear online after a bit of cyberarchaeology.)

When and where was the River Brue diverted? - Bruce Garrard, Glastonbury Antiquarian Society, 13th April 2018.

Originally the River Brue flowed north from Glastonbury, joining the Axe at Martinsey; but a series of major works to sections of the Brue's course and to the landscape west of Glastonbury in the mid-mediaeval period was eventually to result in a full diversion to the present route.

Bruce Garrard argued that this outcome, carried out as it was over nearly two centuries, was not the result of a pre-conceived plan, but essentially the product of more limited projects, the combination of which resulted in the complete diversion of the Brue.

The stages involved were implemented by various Abbots of Glastonbury, who were able to mobilise the considerable resources involved in undertaking them.

The first was the cut from Glastonbury to Meare Pool - basically to increase the size of the latter, as a valuable resource in its own right; in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Then came a junction with the Pilrow cut north of Meare - through half a mile of rock substratum - to reach the Axe at Rooksbridge where Glastonbury Abbey established a port by 1316 for transhipment of goods to and from the Bristol Channel.

At about the same period a new bridge and causeway was built at Pomparles, and the Brue straightened south of Glastonbury to create a mill race for Beckery and Northover.

The Brue was then extended west to Highbridge, using the course of the Fishlake River, and tidal doors installed.

By 1326 the river course to Bleadney bridge had been straightened for navigation, and by 1352 the Sheppey and Hartlake rivers had been redirected south to the Brue at Meare Pool, making the original north-flowing course of the Brue to the north redundant.

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