

**WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM****PUBLIC MEETING ON HERITAGE SERVICES****11 April 2005****1. Chairman's Introduction**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting approximately eighty members of the public and Councillors.

He explained that the purpose of the evening was to discuss the work of the City Council's Heritage Department through presentations from its staff.

**2. Views of a Medieval Neighbourhood**

Graham Scobie, the City Council's Heritage Information Officer, gave the Forum a presentation based on the results of excavation and research of the Brooks area of Winchester.

Using this information, it was possible to create an understanding of what life was like for three of Winchester's residents in 1299; John de Tytyng, Juliana de la Floude and Stephen de Mont Acuto. At that time, approximately 11,000 people would have lived in Winchester, with 9,500 living in the town's core. The communities were based around parish churches of which Winchester had 54, in addition to four friaries, two abbeys and the cathedral.

Mr Scobie illustrated three views of Middle Brook Street, below, taken in 2004, 1905 and 1813:



**Middle Brook Street 2004 (© Winchester Museum Service)**



**Middle Brook Street in 1903 (© Winchester Museum Service)**



**Water-colour of Middle Brook Street, attributed to S. Prout R.A. 1813 (© Winchester Museum Service)**

### **John de Tytyng**

Using his will, his shipping records and other research sources, it was possible to determine that John de Tytyng was one of Brooks' richest residents. John was an alderman of Winchester (the contemporary of a City Councillor) and was twice Mayor and twice the city's MP. He was also twice married and had children, one of whom later fell foul of the law by attacking Hyde Abbey's tithe barn in Abbots Barton.

Working as a wool merchant, John had accumulated a considerable amount of wealth which enabled him to purchase a manor-like townhouse within the city's walls. His home measured over 30 metres (112ft) on the street frontage and incorporated a large gateway through the property to a number of animal pens within a central courtyard.

Amongst other finds, the excavations of under the Brooks Shopping Centre during the 1980s had uncovered a stained glass window, imported pottery and a walnut toilet seat. A large crucifix had also been found which had suggested that John had at some stage undertaken the journey to the great a pilgrimage centre of St. James in de Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain.

### **Stephen de Mont Acuto**

Stephen de Mont Acuto lived in an adjoining property to John's, although Stephen's more modest income of 5 shillings a year from cleaning a public toilet meant that his entire house could easily fit into just one room of John's property. Mr Scobie added that whilst Stephen had been given his title "de Mont Acuto" from the Bishop of Winchester and that this meant "of great intelligence", the City Records refer to him as Stephen the Idiot. This underlined the point that surnames were a more recent invention, before which people were known by their first name whilst the last name tended to be descriptive of their job, birthplace or other defining characteristic. These last names were recorded in French or Latin as they were the common language of legal documents.

From comparing the deposits found in John de Tytyng's and Stephen de Mont's Acuto toilets, it was possible to reconstruct details of both men's diets and health.

### **Juliana de la Floude**

The third person in the neighbourhood described by Mr Scobie was probably the most important. Juliana de la Floude had sued John de Tytyng after he had blocked off the water supply to Juliana's medieval launderette. To investigate the complaint, King Edward I (who resided at the Great Hall, Winchester) appointed a Commission drawn from the residents of Upper and Lower Brook Street. On receiving the results of the Commission, the King Edward concluded that "water has always been common" which meant that all residents had a right to access clean water supplies. As the King attached the Commission's recommendations, the announcement was elevated into statute law. Locally, it meant that dyes, tanners (sheep skins), butchers' blood and human blood from barber shops and surgeons, along with raw sewage, should not be allowed to contaminate the water supply. Ironically, Juliana de la Floude (which translates to Juliana of the Water) would have fallen foul of the new law as her washing business would have used stale human urine to clean clothes.

However, the ruling, internationally recognised as the Concorde de Juliana, and its statement that 'water has always been common' has been enshrined in the United Nations Convention of Human Rights and provides a basis for the idea that access to clean drinking water is not a luxury but a human right.

### 3. **HERITAGE AND THE BROADWAY/FRIARSGATE DEVELOPMENT**

Tracy Matthews addressed the Forum as the City Council's Sites and Monuments Officer on the heritage of the Broadway/Friarsgate site. She explained that part of the redevelopment site, opposite the Guildhall, Winchester had been an island in the River Itchen flood plain. The island had been formed by a spring in the valley floor which had forced up bedrock.

Although there was evidence that the island had been largely continuously occupied from the Iron Age onwards, it was during the late Roman period that the river was first sufficiently diverted to allow the occupation of the area of floodplain. During the Anglo-Saxon period, the Roman drainage system fell into disrepair and the population moved out of the floodplain until the system was renovated during the reign of King Alfred. The floodplain was then occupied until the drainage system again fell into disrepair after the sixteenth century Reformation after which it was un-occupied until the water course was diverted again in the Victorian era. Ms Matthews highlighted that these periods also mirrored periods of Winchester's growth and decline.

Using this research, Ms Matthews explained that it was possible to predict the probable archaeology of the site. She anticipated that the continued occupation and re-use of the island would have impacted on the remains of the site's earlier uses. However, it was probable that the less intensely used floodplain could yield well preserved organic matter which would help historical environmental research.

Ms Matthews explained that the historic research of the site would go through a number of refinements including desk-top modelling (in consultation with the developers) with the ultimate aim of minimising the damage from the new development on the remains of the site's previous uses. It was unlikely that this would result in any large scale excavations, similar to those undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s, where most the archaeological remains were destroyed during the construction process.

In response to a comment from a member of the public, Ms Matthews explained that whilst most of the Heritage Team's work would be completed before construction on the site began, the amount of on-site time granted to the Team would be determined by legal agreements between the Council and the developer. The negotiations towards this legal agreement were at a very early stage. Furthermore it was anticipated that the Team's preliminary research and procedures that took account of the Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and Planning, see [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)), would minimise the disruption that could be caused by unexpected finds.



#### 4. **THE ORGANISATION OF WINCHESTER'S HERITAGE SERVICE**

Dick Whinney addressed the Forum as the City Council's Principal Heritage Services Manager and he explained each of the services within the Heritage Service.

##### a) Sites and Monuments Record:

The Sites and Monuments Record was essentially a computer database of the District's historical sites and monuments. Mr Whinney explained that there were 4000 entries in the town area and a further 7500 across the District as a whole. The Record incorporated Winchester's excellent collection of documents dating back to the eleventh century and its photographic records from the nineteenth century. Mr Whinney added that the Record was based on a GIS system which was publicly available through the Hyde Resources Centre (01962 848269) with an anticipation that the system could be soon available on the City Council's website.

##### b) Historic Enforcement and Planning

Mr Whinney explained that the Heritage Services Team monitored all new planning applications against the Sites and Monuments Record to ensure the best possible preservation of the District's heritage. It was noted that their advice on planning applications was taken as a material consideration.

##### c) Heritage Information

Part of the Service's duties included providing information relating to the District's heritage to a wider audience through (amongst other things) leaflets, information panels on site hoardings and on monuments, press releases, the internet and museum displays.

##### d) Community Heritage Projects

Mr Whinney explained that the City Council organised projects that encouraged local people to discover more about their history.

##### e) Education

The Heritage Service's Education Officer provided a well established service that interacted with young people, organising school visits to museums, loan packs to schools, workshops and employing work experience students.

##### f) Heritage and Metal Detectors

Mr Whinney explained that, as part of a national project, every county authority employed a Finds Liaison Officer to foster better links between amateur metal detector enthusiasts and Heritage professionals. The Hampshire Officer was based at Hyde Historic Resource Centre.

## 5. **OTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

During the public question and answer session a number of comments were raised, including:

A member of the public questioned the reference to Piepowder Courts in Carpenter-Turner's book "A History of Winchester" and it was explained that these were low-level Courts under the jurisdiction of the King that resolved minor legal issues and regulated travelling fairs etc.

Several members of the public were concerned over the City Council's recent decision to externalise the Archaeological Team. In response, Ms Matthews explained that the archaeological field work was now conducted by private archaeological contractors appointed by developers with the quality of their work monitored by the City Council (the Sites and Monuments Officer) to ensure the highest standards, and that this had been practised during the recent excavation of the Staple Gardens Development.

Several members of the public commented on the need for increased public involvement in Winchester's past and increased access and information regarding any heritage works at the Broadway/gate Site. In response to comments about public accessibility of archaeological digs, Ms Matthews explained that modern dig sites were often undertaken at the same time as site demolition. In comparison to the 1970s and 1980s digs, where the site was left to archaeologists for a given period, the health and safety and insurance implications of allowing public access to what is effectively a demolition site were often prohibitive. However, Ms Matthews stated that it was policy to negotiate to enable public access where appropriate.

With regard to the excavation of Staple Gardens, Ms Matthews reported that unexpected finds had prolonged the excavation but that viewing holes and information was provided for the public on the hoarding boards around the site.

In response to other comments, Ms Matthews confirmed that a number of publications would be published from the Heritage Service in the near future regarding excavations undertaken in the 1970s and 1980 and she agreed to the potential of publishing leaflets in advance of projects

The Forum discussed the impact of the new Cultural Centre, Jewry Street and it was explained the new Centre would include an exhibition space as this would be more accessible to the public than at the current location at Hyde. During debate, Mr Whinney confirmed that the City Council was in discussion with Hampshire County Museums Service about the possibility of sharing facilities at their site at Chilcomb Lane, if and when these could be redesigned and enlarged.

A comment was raised regarding the continuing need to commemorate sites of historical importance.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution to debate and advised that the next meeting would discuss "The Evening Economy" and would be held on Thursday 11 May 2005 at 7.00pm at the Guildhall, Winchester.

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and concluded at 9.00pm.

Chairman