




IT'S A TOSS-UP!

Age UK Wiltshire, with help from the Rotary Club of Devizes is once again organising the annual Devizes Pancake races on Shrove Tuesday 8th March 2011 in Devizes Market Place. Previous years' races have been a great success, with a great assortment of teams - some on mobility scooters, others in fancy dress - with the very young and old in attendance. Onlookers have had great fun cheering on the teams, eating hot pancakes on the side lines, and watching the very competitive grand finale.

The races will run between 12.30 and 1.30. The Black Swan Hotel is kindly once again donating the pancakes. An engraved Salver will be awarded to the winning adult team and there will be prizes for the best fancy dress and team that raises the most sponsorship. Competitors can obtain entry and sponsorship forms from Age UK Wiltshire, 13 Market Place, Devizes, the library or the Devizes Visitor Centre. You can also download a copy from the News and Events section of www.ageukwiltshire.org.uk. For further details please ring 01380 710411.



DEVIZES TOWN COUNCIL
CIVIC AWARDS 2011

NOMINATION FORM please tick

SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE []

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD []

COMMUNITY/GROUP AWARD []

Name of person / group / organisation or voluntary group to be nominated.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Please give details of the individual / group for the following sections:

LENGTH OF TIME IN ROLE / POSITION: _____

DUTIES / TASKS / RESPONSIBILITIES UNDERTAKEN: _____

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY / PEOPLE OF DEVIZES: _____

IS THIS A PAID OR VOLUNTARY POSITION? IF IT IS A PAID POSITION DOES THIS PERSON UNDERTAKE ADDITIONAL DUTIES / ACTIONS ABOVE AND BEYOND THEIR JOB? _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Please continue on an additional sheet if necessary): _____

NAME OF PERSON NOMINATING: _____

ORGANISATION (IF APPLICABLE): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NO.: _____ EMAIL: _____

SIGNED: _____

Please return completed forms to the Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes, SN10 1BN. By 25 March 2011

DEVIZES TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL CIVIC AWARDS 2011

The Town Council believes that there are many people in Devizes who deserve recognition for the efforts they make to improve our community - The unsung heroes.

We are therefore asking if there is anyone you know who would qualify for nomination in any of the following categories:

There are four types of Awards:

- 1. Environmental Award**
To be awarded to any individual, voluntary group, business/organisation who have made a recent improvement to the natural or built environment in Devizes (within the parish boundaries) e.g. Improvement of open spaces, re-use of derelict land or refurbishment of buildings.
- 2. Service to People**
To be awarded to any individual who has helped to improve the quality of life for people in Devizes.
- 3. Community/Group**
To be awarded to a group who help their community or individuals in Devizes.
- 4. Long Service Award (40 years service)**
To be awarded to individuals who have worked for the same Devizes Company for 40 years or more.

The Civic Awards presentation takes place after the Annual Town's meeting on Thursday 7 April 2011. If you would like to nominate someone for one of the categories, please contact:

Elanor Oddy, Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes, SN10 1BN. Tel: 01380 722160 Email: elanoroddy@devizes-tc.gov.uk

The Tradition Behind Mayor Making

At the time of the Norman Conquest, the Sovereign appointed the Chief Magistrates of cities. That of London was called the Port Reeve, but Henry II changed the word to the Norman "Maire" (our term Mayor). King John made the office an annual one. The earliest recorded Mayor of Devizes is John Cray in 1305.



Thomas Chandler - Mayor 1874, 1876, 1879 and 1886

The Mayoralty provides a vital link with our heritage, and the privileges and duties of the Mayor have reflected the changes in our society throughout history. While no longer having absolute powers, the Mayor is the Chairman of the Town Council and acts in a ceremonial role at local, state and other functions. As the town's ambassador at large, the Mayor has a full and varied engagement list during the year of office, ranging from support for local charities and their fund raising events, civic parades and school visits, receptions for visitors to Devizes, promoting the town and defending its interests locally and nationally, and involvement with all local organisations and all sections of the community.

A male Mayor appoints his "Mayoress" or "Escort". By custom, if the Mayor is a woman she will normally appoint her "Consort" or "Escort".

Since Devizes Town Council was formed in 1974, the appointment of the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor has been made by the Town Councillors from among their number.

The Statutory Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May each year is used for the Mayor Making ceremony, when the new Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are elected and make their declarations of acceptance of office. It is used as a social occasion in the town, and many local individuals and organisations are invited to attend the ceremony and the subsequent reception. The Statutory Annual Meeting is, however, a normal Town Council meeting in law and members of the public therefore have the right to attend.

Mayor Making is traditionally held in Devizes Town Hall. The Mayor Making ceremony is held in the Assembly Room. The building also contains the Mayor's Parlour, Council Chamber and other rooms.

In addition to the out-going and in-coming Mayors and those Town Councillors able to be present, the following people will also normally participate in the Mayor Making ceremony:
Honorary Chaplain: Appointed at each Mayor Making by the new Mayor, the office holder will carry out civic services and similar duties during the year;

Town Clerk: The paid "Proper Officer" of the Town Council, equivalent to the Chief Executive; also a very ancient office with the earliest recorded reference in the Holy Bible (Acts of the Apostles 19 verse 35); the Devizes Town Clerk traditionally wears the wig and gown when the Mayor is robed;
Mayor's Officers: In Devizes these include: Mayor's Officer, Two Mace Bearers and Mayoress' Macebearer.
Town Mayor: The Mayor of a Town Council is officially known as Town Mayor (although in popular parlance, the word "town" is often dropped). Women mayors are also known as "Mayor"; the wife of a mayor is known as the "Lady Mayoress".

Mayors are not appointed to District Councils which have not adopted the title of borough. Their place is taken by the Chairman of Council, who undertakes exactly the same functions and is, like a Mayor, the civic head of the district concerned.



QUALITY
TOWN
COUNCIL

Devizes Town Council Messenger



SPRING 2011

Devizes & Roundway In Bloom - Spring Focus Day



The 2011 "In Bloom" project was launched on 25 January at Drews Pond Wood together with many people who are working together to make this year another successful one. More neighbourhood projects have already been identified which will be participating in the South West in Bloom "It's Your Neighbourhood" awards; local primary schools are sowing seeds for both the summer competition

(Sunflowers) and vegetables for their allotments, residents' associations at Waiblingen Way and Brickley Lane are working hard on tidying and "greening up" their areas. Devizes School is working with the Wildlife Trust on clearing a conservation area, while residential homes such as Elizabeth House and Stanford Court, Braeside, Sarsen Housing, the Rotary Club and PHAB are all interested in making Devizes even more beautiful.

The IYN scheme is non-competitive, welcoming groups taking their first steps towards community improvements. The "In Bloom" committee will give you all the help and advice you need to get you started.

Businesses and individuals are also encouraged to do something to brighten up the town - whether it's a shop window, a hanging basket, a fabulous front garden or a simple pot of flowers. And if you ARE keen to compete, the Town in Bloom Spring and Summer Competitions offer you the chance to show everyone what you can do.

Everyone can get involved. To learn more about what you can do, a Focus Day is planned for 8 March (Pancake Day) in The Brittox from 11 am to 1pm.

HILLWORTH PARK UPDATE

After what seems to be an eternity of waiting, things at last are starting to happen in the park. At the end of January tree surgeons moved in and removed many of the soft wood trees and the central hedge to provide views across the park and to make the space open up.

Whilst this work was being carried out we had no alternative other than to close the park, as there was a significant safety risk. We hope this did not cause too many difficulties for local residents; however, the park has now reopened and will now stay open until the main landscaping work commences.

In March, conservation works to the Garden Pavilion will commence, which will be followed by the construction of the Park Centre and landscaping work later in the summer. We are on the edge of an exciting development for the park, which will ensure that it can continue to meet the needs of the community for generations to come, so although we are sorry for any inconvenience these works may cause, the Council is confident it will be worth the disruption in the longer term.



It's a lovely town, so why do we spoil it?

As a long standing Devizes resident I was immensely proud when my fellow councillors, elected me as Mayor of the Town.

Along with many other people, I believe that Devizes is a beautiful town with its wealth of historic buildings, its vibrant and active community and diverse range of shops and businesses.

However, sometimes the things we value the most, we look after the least and when you walk around the town and see the amount of litter about this is abundantly clear. At times I feel quite depressed at the way we leave our town and can only imagine the impression it gives our visitors. I am also disappointed that some dog owners feel that they do not need to clean up after their dog and there are others that go to the effort of cleaning it up only to leave the bag hanging on the railing for somebody else to deal with. I am afraid there are no magic litter fairies in Devizes, litter stays where it is until somebody else picks it up.

In an effort to combat the problem, I have asked Town Council staff to work with Wiltshire Council to review all cleaning schedules to ensure that we do not overlap in certain areas, which will enable resources to be diverted to other areas.

I know that each year thousands of pounds is spent on cleaning our streets and yet the problem persists, therefore we all need to take responsibility for our own litter by either using a bin or taking it home. I also feel that persistent offenders need to be challenged therefore I will be asking the police to help with this.

We will soon be heading into summer and the problem will only get worse, so I would ask that you join my campaign to reduce the amount of litter dropped in the town and I would like to hear what different communities are doing in their areas to combat this problem.

Pete Smith
Mayor of Devizes



Hillworth House

CONTACT DETAILS

Sarah Todhunter, Town Clerk, Devizes Town Council, Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes. SN10 1BN. Telephone 01380 722160, Fax 01380 722415, www.devizes-tc.gov.uk

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Devizes Town Council meetings are open to the public and at the beginning of each meeting there is an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions. If you would like to know when we are holding our meetings visit our web site at www.devizes-tc.gov.uk. Failing that you can always telephone us on 01380 722160. Dates of Council meetings can also be found on the notice board outside the Town Hall.

Council Surgeries – 2011/2012

Council Surgeries are held in the Town Hall on the dates below between 6.00pm and 6.45pm. Councillors are nominated to attend the monthly Council Surgeries as follows:

- 1 March 2011:** Councillor Parsons & Councillor A R Taylor
- 29 March 2011:** Councillor Hopkins & Councillor Mrs Evans
- 26 April 2011:** Councillor Evans & Councillor Callow

Wiltshire New Business
Competition



www.devizeschamber.org.uk

The 2011 Wiltshire New Business Competition is now open for entries.

Businesses that started after 25th September 2009 are eligible to enter. All entrants receive a great package of benefits and the Devizes winners receive £1000 in prize money and are entered into the County finals, where they can win a further £2000 plus other benefits. Entries close on 25th March 2011, to enter please contact the Devizes Chamber of Commerce by emailing caroline.dunford@devizeschamber.org.uk.

The Devizes Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1904 and exists to support & promote business in Devizes, please visit www.devizeschamber.org.uk for more information.

WILTSHIRE CADETS RETURN FROM EVEREST EXPEDITION

Six Wiltshire Army Cadets and four of their instructors have completed a Mount Everest challenge - successfully trekking to the Base Camp of the world's highest mountain at the end of October. At the latest count, the intrepid adventurers had raised over £23,000 for charities including Help for Heroes.

The trip was organised to coincide with and celebrate Cadet 150 – the 150th anniversary of the cadet movement in the South West.

The four boys and two girls, accompanied by their adult instructors, spent a tiring nine days hiking amidst some of the most testing terrain on Earth before reaching the base camp which stands at 5,500 metres above sea level – over four times as high as Ben Nevis, Britain's highest peak.

The cadets, who come from units in Chippenham, Trowbridge, Swindon, Devizes and Bulford, were all selected for the trip because they are proven long distance walkers – four have completed the Ten Tors trek on Devon's inhospitable Dartmoor.

Before facing Everest, the walkers had the additional challenge of raising over £20,000 for their nominated charities and ensuring they were in top shape for the physical demands of the trek. In the months leading up to the trip, the cadets undertook bag-packing in local supermarkets, organised gigs, discos, quizzes and auctions, baked and sold cakes, and secured sponsorship from local businesses to help them raise the sum required. Alongside the fundraising, the team embarked on a tough training regime which included trips to the Brecon Beacons, Snowdonia, and Dartmoor.

To find out more about the Wiltshire Cadets' adventure you can visit their blog <http://facinguptoeverest.com>. For more information about the Army Cadet Force in Wiltshire visit www.wiltshirearmycadets.org/news/index.html or www.wessxfca.co.uk for information about all three cadet forces across the South West.



Pictured (L-R): Cadet Sergeant Daniel Hannan (Swindon), Staff Sergeant Instructor Andy Emery (Swindon), Staff Sergeant Instructor Beverley Cubbon (Swindon), Captain Mark Calaz (Devizes), Cadet Company Sergeant Major Ellis Capon (Trowbridge), Staff Sergeant Instructor Kevin Mortimer (Salisbury), Cadet Lance Corporal Jake Langton (Melksham), Cadet Company Sergeant Major Heather Brickell (Old Sarum), Lieutenant Amanda Rowley (Devizes), Cadet Sergeant Chris Beckett (Chippenham).

Fading First Aid Skills Risk Loss of Life in Wiltshire

St John Ambulance is urging Wiltshire first aiders to remember to take an annual course to refresh their skills or risk struggling to remember what they need to do in an emergency.

The Health & Safety Executive strongly recommends that first aiders attend an annual refresher course every 12 months to ensure they remember their vital first aid skills. Laws and best practice can also change, leaving people out of date with current methods.

John Cavanagh, Regional Director for St John Ambulance in the South West, said: 'It is important that first aiders brush up on their first aid knowledge every year to avoid what we call 'skills fade'.

To be faced with an emergency situation and then struggle to remember your first aid training as it was so long ago can be a traumatic experience, and the difference between a life lost and a life saved'.

Anyone who takes the three-day first aid at work course gets the three-hour skills refresher free a year later. For those who do the one-day emergency first aid at work course, the refresher course is half price.

St John Ambulance delivers training through its 33 training centres in the South West, including Chippenham, Devizes, Salisbury, and Swindon.

For more details on training courses contact St John Ambulance on 0844 770 4800 or book online at www.sja.org.uk/training.

Devizes Festival - June 2011



Every June Devizes comes alive with three weeks of first class arts events - and 2011 sees the Festival celebrating its 30th anniversary with a lively programme to inspire and engage audiences of all ages.



From 1 - 19 June the town can look forward to an exciting mix of mid-summer entertainment that spans the arts, including music of every type, drama, poetry, comedy, film and talks - not to mention the ever popular free Fringe!

This year's line-up of professional performance includes veteran actor and broadcaster Nicholas Parsons, author and columnist Will Self, poet Roger McGough, legendary rock band The Yardbirds, classical music from the acclaimed Heath Quartet and Iranian female stand-up comic Shappi Khorsandi and much, much more.

To mark this special anniversary year the Festival is hosting a new venture - a weekend devoted to literature with author talks, poetry, children's storytelling and a Festival Book Group discussion - serendipitously, the chosen title is John Steinbeck's moving novel 'The Pearl', a jewel traditionally associated with 30th anniversaries.

Events take place at many different venues around the town, including Devizes Town Hall, Corn Exchange, The Bear Hotel, a number of public houses and churches.

Watch out for the Festival brochure, giving full details of events, out in April and the Festival Box Office opens on Wednesday, 18 May, at Devizes Books.

Do something rather than nothing for cardiac arrest victims

Untrained members of the public can increase the chances of survival for cardiac arrest victims by carrying out chest compressions, to pump oxygen around the body, without doing mouth to mouth resuscitation. This is according to the UK body that sets the guidance, Resuscitation Council (UK).

All members of the public should also be encouraged to use an AED (automated external defibrillator) – a machine that may restart the heart – on cardiac arrest patients when, previously, training was needed. St John Ambulance has developed an online guide for those who would like more information on how to do chest compressions and use an AED.

The problem

Resuscitation Council (UK) says that an estimated 30,000 people each year have cardiac arrests outside of hospital in the UK yet currently only one-third receive CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) from a bystander. Research shows that a patient's chance of surviving is doubled if bystanders perform CPR.

Off-putting

It is believed that having to give rescue breaths can put bystanders off giving CPR to cardiac arrest victims. The good news is that if you are unwilling, unable – or, now, untrained – then Resuscitation Council says that chest compressions are better than nothing. The compressions pump already oxygenated blood around the body to the vital organs. The emergency services should also be called.

The new resuscitation guidelines go on to state that those members of the public who are trained in delivering rescue breaths should continue to do so. This is the method of choice for those who know what to do, as chest compressions are only effective for a limited time. St John Ambulance encourages as many people as possible to receive training.

For more information on chest compressions and how to use an AED, please visit the St John Ambulance website www.sja.org.uk.

For information about St John Ambulance please call 08700 10 49 50 or visit sja.org.uk.



REPORTING HIGHWAY DEFECTS

If you have spotted a defect on a Wiltshire road, right of way or cycle way such as a pothole, broken street light or blocked route then Wiltshire Council want to hear from you.

Clarence, which is the name Wiltshire Council has given to its defect reporting services, is a simple way for anyone to report highway issues. Faults, which are reported using this service, can be tracked to see what priority the repair has received.

Clarence can be contacted on

Phone free 0800 23 23 23 or from a mobile 01722 413 834 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
Email clarence@wiltshire.gov.uk

FOUR QUESTIONS TO HELP WILTSHIRE BUSINESSES SAVE LIVES – AND AVOID FINES

St John Ambulance has launched a new campaign to help businesses in Wiltshire become more first aid compliant using a quick and simple survey.

Failing to have a minimum number of trained first aiders in the workplace is against the law yet some businesses in the region will fail to meet this basic need.

The repercussions for non-compliance can be immense. In 2010, there were over 1,100 cases of businesses being taken to court because of health and safety failings, resulting in fines as large as £140,000 for not having first aiders present.

St John Ambulance is inviting businesses to answer four simple questions at www.sja.org.uk/survey to help determine whether or not they are meeting statutory first aid requirements.

If results indicate companies risk fines or legal action, St John Ambulance can provide advice and, if necessary, professional workplace first aid training.



Twinning - Time To Get Involved

It is not too late to get involved with this years twinning weekend which is due to be held between 20 & 23 May.

Plans are being finalised for a full programme of events including street entertainment on the Saturday, tours of the town including locations which are not normally open, social gatherings and musical entertainment.

If you want a chance to improve your French or German or simply enjoy meeting people then contact Simon Fisher to learn more about becoming a host.

01380 722160

SimonFisher@devizes-tc.gov.uk

TWINNING – MY EXPERIENCE

Twinning was unknown to me until 1975 when a team of Judo players from Mayenne, France arrived at our Dojo (Hall) in Devizes for a training session.

It is a strange contradiction that as a Judo player you meet new friends and normally end up fighting them.

Mayenne featured a guy called Vincent who was my age and of course we ended up fighting each other over many years either in Devizes, Mayenne or Waiblingen.

By our late twenties both of us now pushing forward the twinning in our respective clubs had settled on an agenda with much less judo and a bigger variety of activities. Theme Parks, Water Parks and Go Ape became as much of our Twinning as the full on judo did in the early years.

We both got to know hundreds of members of our respective clubs, attended numerous competitions together in the UK and France and went to two Olympic games together. We have met up many times outside of the twinning weekends, his holiday home on the island of Noirmoutier in France is available for me to visit during the summer.

35 years after meeting we have shared seeing his three children grow up, helped each other with the deaths of our parents and enjoyed supporting our club members in hundreds of competitions all over Europe and beyond.

Why not open up your home to someone? It could be your first step to a very long friendship.

Richard Hopkins
Devizes Budo Club

DEVIZES TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS 2007/13

WARD	DETAILS	POLITICAL PARTY	TEL NO & E MAIL ADDRESS
E	Julian Herbert BEINHORN 45 Nursteed Road, Devizes, SN10 3AJ	Conservative	Home: 01380 722652 Work: 01380 721695 julian.beinhorn@devizes-tc.gov.uk
N	Sarah Jane BRIDEWELL 32 Queens Road, Devizes, SN10 5HW	Guardian	Home: 01380 722321 Sarah.Bridewell@devizes-tc.gov.uk
E	Jane Mary BURTON 17 Longcroft Road, Devizes, SN10 3AT	Guardian	Home: 01380 724575 jane.burton@devizes-tc.gov.uk
S	Chris CALLOW 46 The Fairway, Devizes, SN10 5DX	Liberal	Home: 01380 726378 Chris.callow@devizes-tc.gov.uk
S	Ted EAST Fairfield House, Potterne Road, Devizes SN10 5DE	Guardian	Home: 01380 729945 Ted.east@devizes-tc.gov.uk
E	Peter EVANS 27 Nursteed Road, Devizes, SN10 3AF	Conservative	Home: 01380 722499 Peter.evans@devizes-tc.gov.uk
N	Sue EVANS 27 Nursteed Road, Devizes, SN10 3AF	Conservative	Home: 01380 722499 sue.evans@devizes-tc.gov.uk
E	Alistair GAGEN 13 St John's Street, Devizes, SN10 1BD	Conservative	Home: 01380722569 Mobile: 07816 415141 alistair.gagen@devizes-tc.gov.uk
E	Jim GUDGEON 64 Longcroft Road, Devizes, SN10 3AU	Conservative	Home: 01380 722916 jim.gudgeon@devizes-tc.gov.uk
N	Ian HOPKINS 103 Southbroom Road, Devizes, SN10 1LY	Independent	Home: 01380 725614 ian.hopkins@devizes-tc.gov.uk
E	Kelvin NASH 2 Meadow Drive, Devizes, SN10 3BJ	Liberal	Home: 01380 726764 kelvin.nash@devizes-tc.gov.uk
S	Raymond Thomas PARSONS Roosters Rest, 88a Hillworth Road Devizes, SN10 5HD	Conservative	Home: 01380 739332 Mobile: 0790 2761579 ray.parsons@devizes-tc.gov.uk
N	Peter Barry John SMITH 142 Waiblingen Way, Devizes, SN10 2BP	Guardian	Home: 01380 720084 Mobile: 07958 918695 peter.smith@devizes-tc.gov.uk
E	Mrs Margaret Sheila Nancy TAYLOR 57 Roundway Park, Devizes, SN10 2EE	Labour	Home: 01380 723537 Raymartaylor963@btinternet.com
S	Angus Raymond TAYLOR 57 Roundway Park, Devizes, SN10 2EE	Labour	Home: 01380 723537 Raymartaylor963@btinternet.com
N	Mrs Paula Mary WINCHCOMBE Marbury, 6 Kirby Close, Devizes SN10 2EL	Conservative	Work: 01380 722500 Mobile: 07540 822800 paula.winchcombe@devizes-tc.gov.uk
S	Charles Stuart WINCHCOMBE Marbury, 6 Kirby Close, Devizes SN10 2EL	Conservative	Work: 01380 722500 Mobile: 07548 953792 charles.winchcombe@devizes-tc.gov.uk

Unitary Members

Devizes East – Councillor Jane Burton
Devizes North – Councillor Nigel Carter, 01380 726847 or 07850 193494
Devizes & Roundway South – Councillor Jeff Ody, 01380 720761
Roundway – Councillor Laura Mayes, 01380 739177 or 07855 819343

Twinning Weekend Finale Concert

The Twinning Association are organising a free open-air concert on the Green for Sunday 22 May for every one in the Town to attend.

Amongst groups performing will be Devizes Town Band, Waiblingen's town band, and joint choirs from Mayenne and Devizes. The evening will end with a firework display.

Food will be available along with a selection of fine British ales or if you prefer bring your own picnic. The concert will start at 7pm and keep going until it's dark.

BEATING THE BOUNDS – the story behind the tradition

In former times when maps were rare it was usual to make a formal perambulation of the parish boundaries on Ascension Day or during Rogation week. Knowledge of the limits of each parish needed to be handed down so that such matters as liability to contribute to the repair of the church, and the right to be buried within the churchyard were not disputed. The relevant jurisdiction was that of the ecclesiastical courts.

The priest of the parish with the churchwardens and the parochial officials headed a crowd of boys who, armed with green boughs or "wands", usually birch or willow, beat the parish boundary markers with them. The use of willow wands may also be significant as the willow was a sacred tree of the Druids.

Although modern surveying techniques make the ceremony obsolete, at least for its secular purpose, many English parishes, including Devizes, carry out a regular beating of the bounds, as a way of strengthening the community and giving it a sense of place.

The custom was also known as 'riding the marches', 'riding the fringes' or 'common riding'.

Curiously, certain stones, trees or other marker points around the boundary would also be beaten by literally bumping a boy (often a choirboy) against the mark. The boy would be suspended upside down and his head gently tapped against the stone or he would be taken by the feet and hands and swung against a tree! Nobody knows why or how the tradition originated. One explanation advanced is that it was intended to teach the young their parish's limits and that the bumping of choir boys - at one time all the local children would have been involved - was 'to help them remember'.

The ceremony had an important practical purpose. Checking the boundaries was a way of preventing encroachment by neighbours; sometimes boundary markers would be moved, or lines obscured, and a folk memory of the true extent of the parish was necessary to maintain integrity of borders by embedding knowledge in oral traditions.

Today in Devizes, this quaint tradition is continued, and this year will be held on 17 April, commencing from Devizes Sports Club at 10.30am.

If you would like to take part, entry forms and sponsorship forms can be collected from the Town Hall or entry forms on the day can be obtained from Councillor Ray Taylor who will be leading the walk.

A MAYORAL YEAR – 60 YEARS AGO

May 1950 and the new Town Mayor of Devizes Mr Reginald George Maslen takes office.

A member of the building firm L. Maslen & Sons, he served in the Great War in the Wiltshire Regiment and the Royal Engineers in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia. During the Second World War he was active head ARP warden for the Borough and then assistant county organiser of the ARP.

His work on Devizes Town Council began in 1945 and after contesting elections in 1946 and 1950 became Town mayor. The album recording his mayoral year presented by the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald records an extremely busy year.

Although the war was over memories of the event were still fresh in the memory. A ceremony honouring the Wiltshire Regiment, barracked in Devizes at this time and a service of commemoration in St. James' Church of the ten-year anniversary of the Battle of Britain both took place during 1950. Civil Defence was also high on the agenda with the Gazette reporting the mayors' dismay at the lack of volunteers in the Town.

Among the numerous invitations during the mayoral year one to the Royal Garden Party of King George the Sixth and Queen Mary at this time surely must have been a highlight. Local invites included one to the second annual dinner of the Devizes & District Lancashire & Yorkshire Society. A service of dedication at St. Paul's Cathedral in May 1951 and tickets to the first visit of their majesties to the Festival of Britain at the South Bank, London would suggest the mayor also attended. The Town also had it's own events to mark this milestone in history, see attached programme.

Just like Mayors 60 years on Councillor Maslens' commitments as Town mayor were many and varied. Late May 1951 saw his mayoral year come to an end and Devizes elected Mrs Minnie Gertrude Reed as the first woman mayor in 650 years.



Reginald George Maslen

