



WORCESTER CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2017

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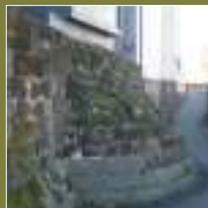
ISSUE 1



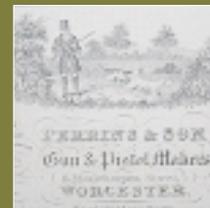
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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

This year we will be concentrating once again on blue plaques. The emphasis will be on plaques for women and places.

Earlier this year I asked for nominations and have so far had requests for Hannah Snell, who lived in Friar Street, Sheila Scott, the aviator who lived in Barbourne, and Mrs Henry Wood who lived for a while at Danesburgh House on the corner of City Walls Road and Sidbury.

For places, I would like a plaque in Cathedral Square to mark where the Lich Gate was before the Council demolished it in the 1960s. Another suggestion is to place a plaque where the last home of Sir Edward Elgar, Marl Court, stood, demolished by the Council to make way for flats at the bottom of Rainbow Hill.

As always, we need funding, so if you know of anyone who might donate towards these plaques, please let me know. Each plaque costs in the region of £250 to £300.

Looking at our programme for this year, we had an excellent turnout for the Val Hibbitt talk, but a very disappointing attendance for the Vaughan Wiltshire talk in March. In June we have the President's Garden Party, which is open to members and their guests only. If you would like to attend you need to let our membership secretary know in advance.

Those of you who attended last year's AGM will remember the talk given by Theo Malzieu on "Cathedral Cities in Peril". As we had insufficient time, we have invited him back again in July. Following on from this month's Mayor's Lecture, this is one you should not miss.

Once again I am asking for all of you to please try and recruit new members. If among ten of you, could find one new member it would mean another 27 new members for our society.

Also, please support our events. It takes a lot of time and effort to put a programme together and our speakers deserve a good turnout.

Phil Douce
Chairman

Membership:

Individual Membership £20

Family Membership £25

Corporate Memberhip £50

Cheques should be made payable to Worcester Civic Society

To Mr Michael McCurdy
56 Camp Hill Road, Worcester WR5 2HG

You can contact Michael on:- 01905 353438
or at:- WRcivicsocietymem@yahoo.com

FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER

This is the fourth of a series of articles about the various people and organisations who have received the Freedom of the City.

So far, the Freedom of the City of Worcester has been presented to five military units. The first such award was given to the Worcestershire Regiment in April 1950, only a month before the award was presented to Sir Winston Churchill (see the Summer 2016 issue of the newsletter).

The regiment was originally formed as the 29th Regiment of Foot in 1694. It served in the Thirty Years' War under Marlborough and in North America during the French and Indian Wars. It was present at the Boston Massacre in 1770 and served throughout the American Revolution. In 1782 the name was changed to the Worcestershire Regiment. Further service included the West Indies, the Peninsular War, and the Indian Mutiny. In 1881 the Worcestershire Regiment was amalgamated with the 36th Regiment and saw service in the Boer War.

During the First World War the regiment raised 22 battalions, won nine Victoria Crosses, and lost almost 10,000 men while giving gallant service at Gallipoli and the Somme, not to mention their renowned action at Gheluvelt. The Second World War saw them serving in Dunkirk, the Middle East and on D Day. In 1970 the regiment was merged with the Sherwood Foresters, and another amalgamation, with the Cheshire and Staffordshire Regiments in 2007, formed the Mercian Regiment.

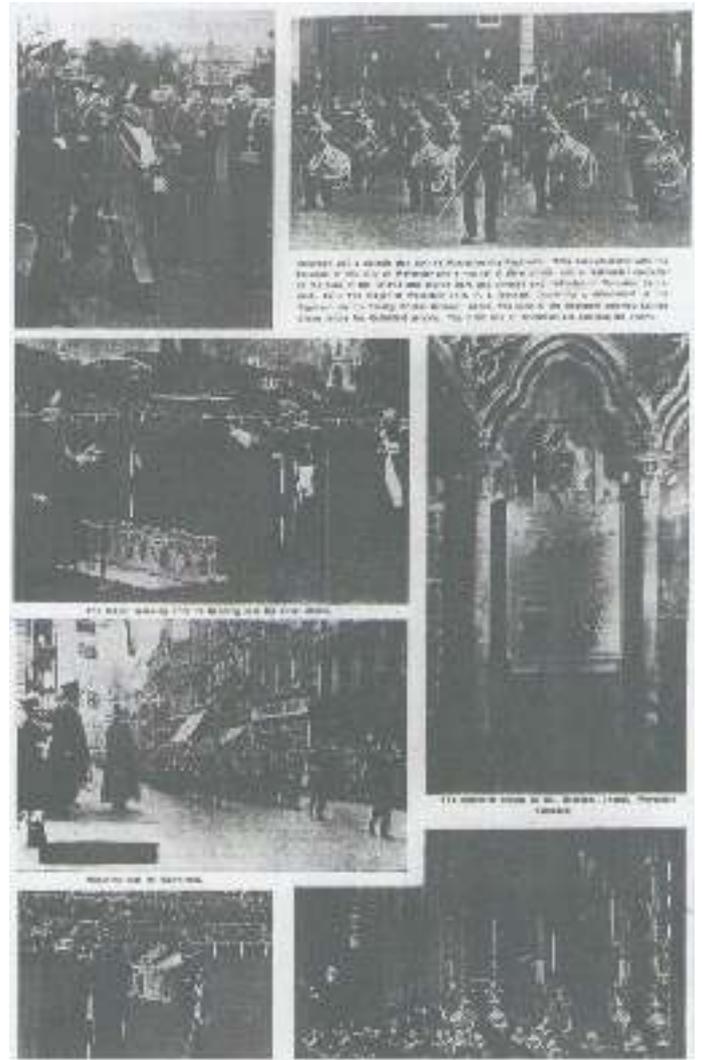
In 1950 the First Battalion had recently returned from service in Germany, so several functions were combined into one day of celebration, 15 April. First there was a parade on the New Road cricket ground at 2.30pm, which, according to a report in Berrow's Worcester Journal of April 21, involved between 1500 and 2000 former members of the regiment. The parade was inspected by the Mayor, who then presented a set of four silver side drums and the Freedom of the City, the citation of which was read out by the Town Clerk. The citation read in part "in

recognition of the great and glorious achievements of the Worcestershire Regiment for upwards of 250 years, do present to them a set of Silver Drums and hereby grant to the Regiment the freedom, privilege, honour and distinction of marching through the City of Worcester on all ceremonial occasions with drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed."

The regimental colonel, Brigadier BCS Clarke, replied, thanking the Mayor for the magnificent presentation. He added that "the drums would serve as a reminder of the warm interest for the comfort and welfare of the men of the Regiment displayed by the city and county throughout long years of war".

The regiment then marched through the city, with the Mayor taking the salute outside the Guildhall, and then marched to the cathedral, where the regimental war memorial in St George's Chapel was unveiled by Brigadier Clarke and dedicated by the Bishop. The parade moved on to Norton Barracks where the brigadier handed over command to Lieutenant General Richard Gale.

Cathy Broad



THOMAS TOMKINS

MUSICIAN, CITIZEN, VICTIM OF WAR

Edward Elgar was not the only great composer whose career was centred on Worcester. Thomas Tomkins spent sixty years of his life here.

Tomkins composed both sacred and secular music and much of his output has survived and has been sung regularly by the Cathedral Choir. He is remembered for his Anthems and Madrigals, perhaps his best known composition being “When David Heard That Absalom Was Slain”. It is less known but he also composed music for keyboard and viol consort, proving himself to be a versatile music maestro. *Musico Deo Sacra*, his collection of music for the Anglican rite, was published posthumously in 1658.

Thomas Tomkins was born at St David's in Wales in 1572. He became a pupil of the most famous of all Elizabethan musicians, William Byrd. In 1596 at the age of 24 years, he was appointed Organist and Master of the Choristers at Worcester Cathedral. He succeeded Nathaniel Patrick who had died the previous year. A year after his appointment to Worcester, Thomas married Nathaniel's widow, Alice. They came back to her former house at 2 College Green. Part of the house, now No. 3, was used as the Cathedral Song School. They lived there from 1596 to 1627.

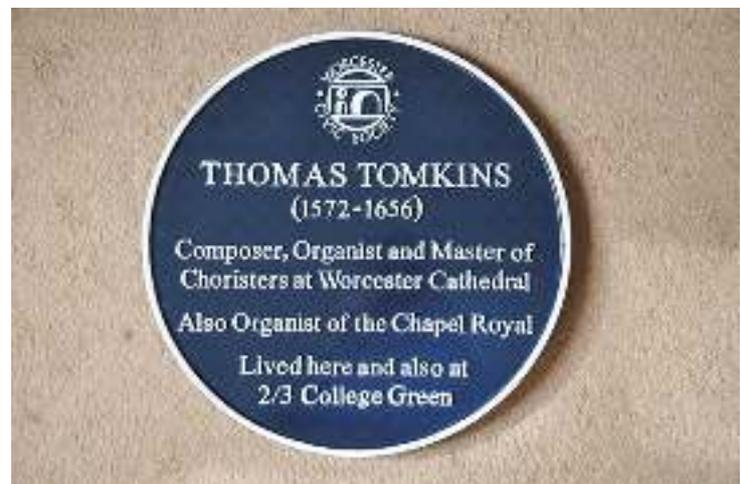
Already Thomas was making a name for himself in the musical world of his day. After the death of Queen Elizabeth I he wrote a seven part anthem for the Coronation of King James I in 1603. In 1621 he was appointed one of the Organists of the Chapel Royal, junior to the famous Orlando Gibbons.

In 1627 life changed for Thomas and Alice. Thomas' father, Thomas senior and his stepmother Anne died at Gloucester. It would seem that Thomas and Alice were financially secure, his Cathedral stipend, money from the Chapel Royal, extra money from the coronation music and patronage from the Earl of Pembroke and money from his parents all added up. Thomas leased land from the Dean and Chapter on College Green, on the south side of the Cathedral, and built a new house. No. 9 College Green is still there today and still owned by the Dean and Chapter, only slightly altered. It is leased to the King's School and occupied by the Headmaster. Thomas Tomkins lived in this house from 1627 until 1654.

Life changed radically for Thomas, in his personal life and also in his professional life, both at Worcester and as a member of the Chapel Royal. On 29 January 1642, Alice died, aged 78 and in the same year the Civil War began. During this time English church music was suppressed, the Chapel Royal was closed and the organ in Worcester Cathedral was destroyed. Thomas died on 9 June 1656 at the age of 84, too soon to see the restoration of 1660.

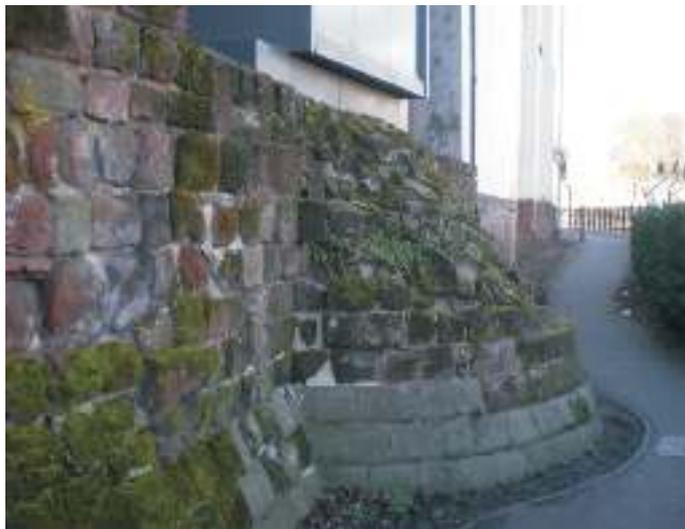
A Blue Plaque is to be erected on 9 College Green in recognition of Thomas Tomkins' work, on Saturday 29 July at 2.00 pm, during the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester this summer. This will be just before the afternoon concert by the choir of King's College, Cambridge, who open their concert with two pieces by Tomkins, including “When David Heard That Absalom Was Slain”. All are welcome to attend this unveiling.

Les West
Steward of Worcester Cathedral



WORCESTER THROUGH THE AGES

CASTLES, WALLS AND HERITAGE



A buttress, originally part of St. Martin's Gate, along the City Walls Road. Much more lies under ground.

This talk was inspired by 'Forgotten Worcester', published in 1930, the work of Hubert A Leicester, Alderman and Mayor of Worcester (1904-5 and 1913-15). He was encouraged to write down some of his considerable knowledge of local history by a life-long friend, Sir Edward Elgar.

From this beginning and following further research, we journey from an original iron-age settlement (pre 50AD) to a small Roman town (with wooden walls). With the exit of the Romans (407AD) the Saxon 'people of the winding river' dwelt in Weogoran ceaster, later to become Worcester.

Worcester Castle was built under the influence of the Normans in the second half of the 11th century. The motte and bailey walls were originally of wood but this was replaced by stone in the 12th century. Likewise, in this Medieval period, the wooden city walls, first extended in the 9th century from the original Roman confines, were extended again and replaced by stone.

Christian ideals held sway from the 5th to 12th century, after which trade and commerce gained greater importance. Gates controlled passage into and out of the city. Old street names give evidence of the trades in specific districts and of local markets. Worcester was a busy port, the quays alive with activity and traffic, particularly the Severn trows.

The three principal Worcester gates were Fore Gate

(north), St Martin's Gate (east) and Sidbury Gate (south). To the west, there was a wooden bridge with a gate at the city end. When this bridge was destroyed by fire in 1299, it was replaced by a stone bridge with a central gatehouse, Bridge Gate – necessary since the river formed the boundary between England and Wales. Smaller gates were St Clement's Gate, by St Clement's Church (at this time on the city side of the river), Trinity Gate, Friar's Gate and Frog Gate (in Severn Street, previously Frog Lane). Plaques for the eight city gates have been renewed in the last two years through the work of the Civic Society.

Worcester's medieval walls and gates suffered considerable damage during the Battle of Worcester (1651). Worcester Castle was finally levelled by 1846. The city gates and walls have been gradually dismantled over the years. However, a walk around the city will still provide significant evidence of the past through actual stone remains and from our street plan, in many areas still clearly following the map produced in 1610 by John Speed, the cartographer.

Val Hibbitt



QUEEN ELIZABETH HOUSE UPDATE

Following the report in the winter edition of the newsletter, I am pleased to report that the building has had a face-lift.

The work, costing £15,000, included fixing loose areas of render and repairs to the timber framing. More importantly, it has been painted in the original Tudor style, with dark brown timbers and off-white panels.

The next stage for the Civic Society is to meet again with other interested parties including the Battle of Worcester Society, the Worcester Industrial Archaeology and Local History Society, the History Society and the Mercian Regimental Museum, to see how progress can be made to having the building open to the public.

The restoration of Queen Elizabeth House has gained cross-party support including Labour councillor Roger Berry, and councillors Lucy Hodgson, Andy Roberts and Marc Bayliss.

The City Council have asked that the working group put forward a business plan as a way of hopefully raising funding to carry out any further work inside the building.

A further update will appear in the winter edition of the newsletter.

Phil Douce



Queen Elizabeth House as seen today.



Queen Elizabeth House before being moved
Changing Face of Worcester



St Helen's Refurbishment

St Helen's is used by and under the stewardship of All Saints Worcester. We have recently secured Development Stage funding for a £250,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant to address stonework repairs and conservation and the development of a range of initiatives to make the church more accessible and bring the lost history of St Helen's to life.

The church, believed to be the oldest site of Christian worship in Worcester, is Grade II listed and in a conservation area. Despite changes and additions over the years, culminating in a major Victorian restoration, St Helen's remains a good example of how city centre churches would have looked in the middle ages.

The church houses many notable artefacts including the monuments of Anne, wife of John Fleet alias Walsgrove (1600), Alderman John Nash (1661) and a 'Dud' Dudley monument to his wife bearing his own epitaph. The large east window of the church is late perpendicular with inserted post-medieval tracery by Frederick Preedy, an architect and stained glass designer born near Evesham.

St Helen's church is a building that has a rich and varied history, although it has always been a consecrated building. During the Second World War it was used as a serviceman's club hosting games and activities and serving refreshments. From 1957 until 2001 it was used to house the council records office.

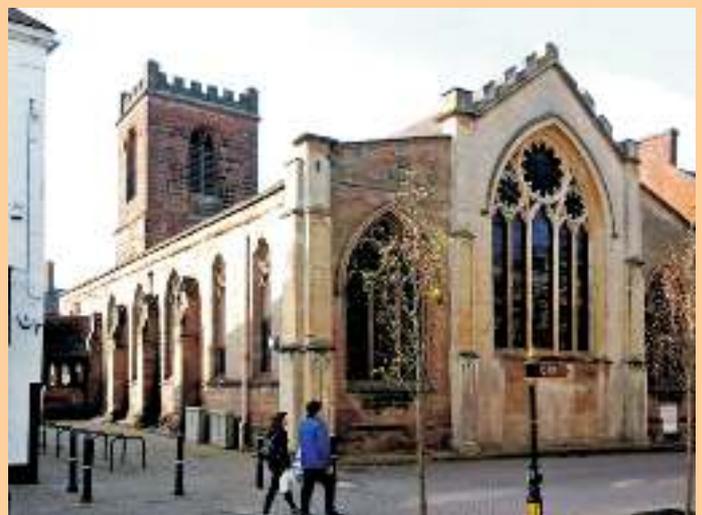
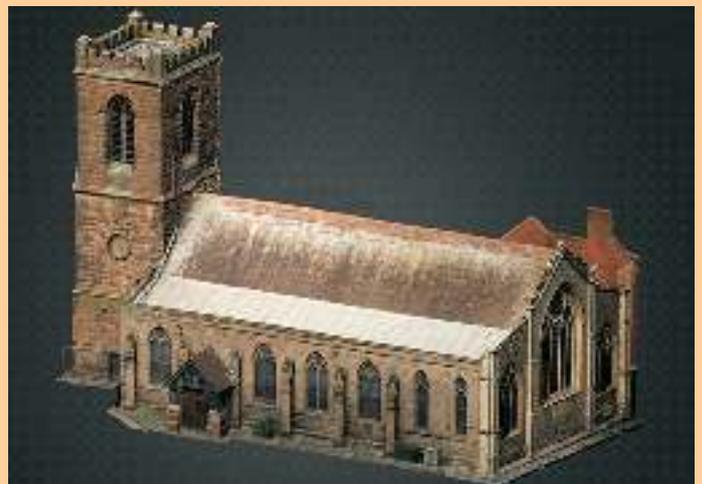
Today St Helen's regularly hosts Sunday worship services, open lectures, toddler groups, a Christians Against Poverty Job Club and a wide range of other activities.

As part of the project we have planned an exciting programme of events and range of initiatives to open up the building and bring the history to life through a timeline, display panels and the training of History Ambassadors to welcome the public into the building.

For further information and to keep updated, take a look at our website:

www.sthelensworcester.org.uk

Stella Power
Project Manager
All Saints Worcester



John Perrins & Son, Master Gunmakers of Worcester

On Tuesday 21st March at The Hive, Worcester, Vaughan Wiltshire and John Clements of the Perrins Gun Owners Club provided a presentation on John Perrins & Son, Master Gunmakers of Worcester. A distant cousin of William Henry Perrins of Lea & Perrins Sauce fame, John Perrins with his sons John and Henry were prestigious provincial gunmakers applying highly skilled precision engineering to gun and pistol making. They created a successful, renowned business in Worcester between 1831 and 1892.

John Perrins was born in Kidderminster in 1796 and at the age of 12 followed his brother Thomas into the gun trade to serve a seven year apprenticeship. We know that by 1820 John Perrins was working as a gunsmith in Faversham, Kent, because in November that year at the age of 24 he married Hannah Wellstead in Hastings. His son John was born in 1823 and Edward in 1829. By 1831 John Perrins was established in College Street, Worcester and Bentley's Directory of that year lists him as Gunsmith. By 1840 Bentley's Directory was describing him as Gunmaker, designing and building guns and pistols in his own name. One of the early examples of his work that survives is a turn-over pocket pistol carried by both ladies and gentlemen for close quarter defence.

His son Henry was born in 1832, son James in 1834 and twins William and Margaret in 1836. With both his business and family growing, John Perrins in 1851 moved to 4 St Swithun's Street, Worcester. In 1855 his son John became a partner and the business John Perrins & Son. By 1859 John Perrins & Son had moved to 6 Mealcheapen Street. In 1862 John Perrins died aged 66 and his son John inherited the business but unfortunately died from TB in 1866 aged 42. Henry Perrins now took control of the business and advanced it into the "golden age" of British gunmaking. By 1879 the business had expanded into 59 Broad Street where some of the very best provincial sporting guns were made. In 2015 an 8 bore rifle made by John Perrins & Son in Broad Street, Worcester around 1890 was sold in an auction in Rock Island, Illinois for \$35,000. In 1892 Henry Perrins sold the business to his son-in-law Herbert Pollard under whose name the business continued until the 1950s. Henry Perrins died in 1908 at 6 St George's Square, Worcester.

For more information please look at <http://info71508.wix.com/perrinsgunmaker>

Vaughan Wiltshire

CONSERVATION AREAS

During 2017 Civic Voice and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation will be organising the Big Conservation Conversation to make the case for the importance of conservation areas. Civic Voice will be meeting with MPs and peers throughout the year to ask them to pledge support for this project.

The value of conservation areas on the impact of this country is clear. Their future is not. The number of conservation areas at risk rose to 505 in 2015 from 497 in 2014 after a survey of some 8,300 (84 per cent). With funding cuts and continued pressure on local authority conservation staff (33 per cent of conservation staff lost since 2007), the problem is likely to get worse.

In Worcester there are 18 (revised from 20) conservation areas and a plan is already in place to review and re-assess these areas. To date three have been completed and are available on the City Council web site. It is planned that all will be completed by 2020.

Civic Voice will be calling for changes to legislation to place a duty on local authorities to review conservation areas to a definite schedule, such as every five years, rather than "from time to time" as is currently required.

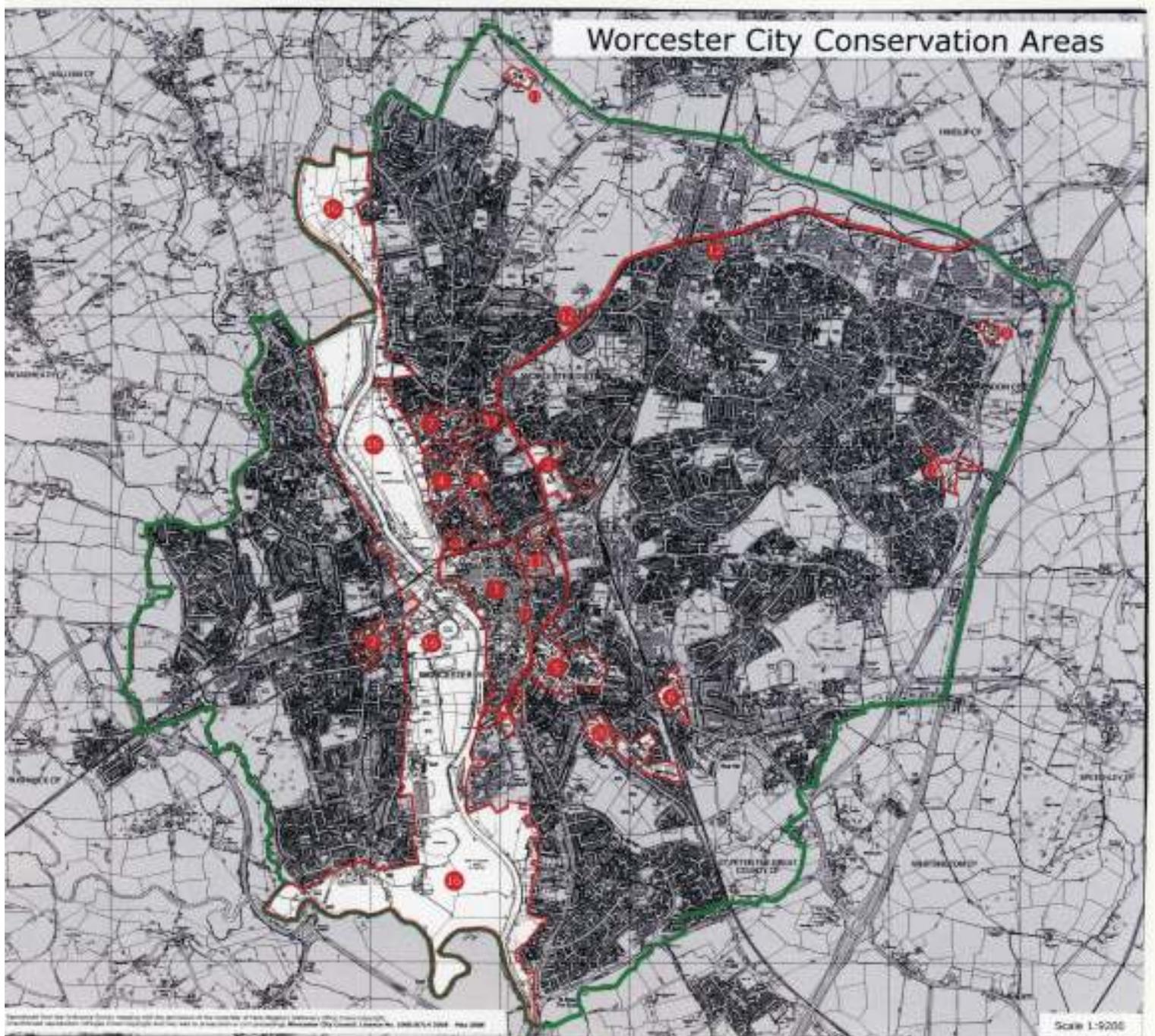
Fifty years after the first conservation area was designated in Stamford we are taking part in the Big Conservation Conversation to ensure that in 50 years time Duncan Sandys' legacy will still live on.

However, the USA can rightly claim the very first conservation area in New Orleans. An amendment to the Louisiana Constitution of 1921 laid the groundwork for the creation of the Vieux Carre Commission of 1925, the aim to preserve the so-called French Quarter. Others soon followed, namely Charleston, Salem and Georgetown.

Thus, New Orleans by 46 years, Charleston by 37 years, Salem by 29 years and Georgetown by 17 years predate the first conservation areas in Britain. If area conservation was so notably pioneered across the Atlantic, why did it take Britain so long to catch up?

Phil Douce

Worcester City Conservation Areas



- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Historic City | 7 St. George's Square | 13 Lowesmoor |
| 2 St John's | 8 Foregate Street & The Tything | 14 Field Terrace |
| 3 Lansdowne Crescent & Rainbow Hill Terrace | 9 Warndon Court | 15 Riverside |
| 4 Britannia Square | 10 Trotshill | 17 Shrubbery Avenue |
| 5 Sidbury & Fort Royal | 11 Claines | 18 Royal Infirmary |
| 6 Lark Hill | 12 The Canal | 20 Battenhall Villas |



Planning Panel Report: Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4

This key document came out for consultation in the New Year, and looks to update LTP3 published in 2011.

LTP4 sets out the issues and our priorities for investment in transport infrastructure, technology and services to support travel in the county from 2017-2030. In our response to the document, we noted that the plan was very roads/private vehicle based (although the plan lacks consideration of a full ring road around Worcester), with a lack of a clear policy relating to bus provision and the development of infrastructure and technologies to support this. However, there are some welcome proposals for new rail station provision (Fernhill Heath, Rushwick) and the upgrading of both Shrub Hill and Foregate Street as key interchanges.

In terms of transport in the city, LTP4 is light on detail and proposes the development of a separate City Centre Transport Strategy. Production of this document is key, and we need more detail on this and how it links to the 'Worcester City Package' as set out in LTP4. There is much about getting into the city but not around it which is a key concern. There needs to be consideration of bridge crossing points for the city, both road and cycle/pedestrian, linked to a comprehensive cycle strategy for the city and infrastructure provision to support this, along with significant further investment in the pedestrian realm to improve the environment for walking in the city.

Overall, a key concern is the lack of detail in relation to the phasing of the plans and how funding will be secured. We remain concerned that much of the delivery may depend on developer contributions and this

can cause problems, in delayed development and infrastructure delivery. Finally, there needs to be much fuller consideration of the links between the transport strategy and the SWDP and land use planning and development within Worcester, linked to the development of key housing and employment sites in order to avoid further congestion in the city.

The LTP4 documents can be accessed via the County Council webpages at:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20055/strategies_plans_and_bids/806/the_local_transport_plan

News from Conservation Areas Advisory Committee:

- **Conservation Area Appraisals –** following from last year's revisions for Claines and Lowesmoor, a new appraisal document for the Lark Hill area is out for consultation, with draft documents for Riverside and St George's Square due out soon for consultation. It is good to see that the City is moving forward in developing these important documents to guide development in these areas.
- **Coppertops, Oldbury Road –** the old pub has been demolished and proposals have been received for a specialist care home facility. The committee was concerned about flooding issues in developing the site (close to Laugherne Brook) and also in the design for the scheme in this edge of city location.

Dr Heather Barrett
Chair of the Planning Panel



National Trust Complimentary Day Passes 2017



National Trust

Members will be aware that the Society's membership of Civic Voice, an umbrella organisation for Civic Societies, enables members to take advantage of a free day pass to National Trust properties, with a few conditions. The pass is transferable to friends or family for their use.

To obtain the pass, write to Civic Voice using the form below, enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Complimentary day pass request

Full Name(s)	
Civic Society/ Civic Trust	
Address	
Region	
County	
Quantity	
Email	

Send with stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

The Coffin Works,
13-15 Fleet Street,
Jewellery Quarter,
Birmingham
B3 1JP





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