



WINCHELSEA TOWN

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE MAYOR AND CORPORATION

Issue 5

April 2009

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A special thanks . . .

To the Friends of the Ancient Monuments (FOAMS)

Whose unstinting efforts raised a magnificent sum in excess of £20,000.

To Winchelsea Museum

And, in particular, their loyal helpers without whose generous assistance and stewardship the Museum could not function.

To Winchelsea Artefacts Society

Who give so generously from the proceeds of the Summer Art Exhibition to support the maintenance of the Millennium Artefacts. This year the Town Sign and the Town Beacon will be refurbished.

... and thanks to those other Groups and Societies whose events contribute to the uniqueness of Winchelsea and support of its community.

Mayor of Winchelsea Graham Alexander

The Annual Mayoring - April 2009

At this year's Mayoring ceremony Jurat Graham Alexander was elected Mayor of Winchelsea. The ceremony takes place annually on Easter Monday and since 1665 has been held in the Upper Court Hall. Prior to the Mayor's election, Dr Michael de Smith was appointed a Freeman of the Town. His investiture as a Freeman of Winchelsea recognised his contributions to the Town and its community over several years.

After the outgoing Mayor, Jurat Anthony Moore had giving a report on his year in office, a vote of thanks was proposed by Jurat Donald Cameron-Clark and seconded by Jurat Michael Melvin. Following the robing of the new Mayor he appointed Jurat Michael Melvin to be his Deputy. The new Mayor then nominated his twelve Jurats, who



The Mayor & Mayoress of Winchelsea Graham and Tina Alexander at the Court Hall

were selected from the Freeman of the Town, to help him in the coming year.

As many are aware there has been a mayor of Winchelsea for over 700 years. These mayors are listed on the unique Mayoral Wall Boards which grace West and North Walls in the Upper Court Hall recording past incumbents back to 1295. The Mayoring ceremony celebrates the continuing existence of the last surviving

unreformed Corporation of England and Wales.

A special presentation was made to our Town Clerk, Malcolm Pratt in recognition of his 25 years dedicated service to the Town. The Mayoring was attended by numerous civic dignitaries including the High Sheriff of East Sussex, the Chairman of Rother DC, the Vice-Chair of East Sussex CC, and five Cinque Ports Mayors.

A Message from the Mayor

To all citizens of the Antient Town of Winchelsea.

Tina and I are very honoured to be chosen for the posts of Mayor and Mayoress of Winchelsea by the members of the Corporation and Freeman of the Town.

We shall look forward to working with them, and you, to maintain our

ancient monuments, and listed buildings - also to keep the proud name of Winchelsea foremost in the eyes of the towns of the federation of The Cinque Ports, as well as all our neighbouring towns.

You, as our citizens, are as important to us as our ancient Buildings. Tina and I know many of you, and hope to introduce ourselves

to those we have not yet had the pleasure of meeting.

If we can be of help or assistance, we will do our best - Winchelsea has many well informed residents on call, including our Jurats and freemen.

We are looking forward to the forthcoming year.

Graham and Tina Alexander



The Mayor of Winchelsea

The aim of the Corporation is to sustain and preserve the heritage of the Town.

Malcolm Pratt—Town Clerk of Winchelsea celebrates 25 years of service

The Mayor and Corporation are proud, in this issue of the Newsletter, to recognise the unique service and selfless contribution Malcolm Pratt has given to the Town of Winchelsea as its Clerk over the past 25 years.

We are also indebted to the support that his wife Bridget has given him, without whose assistance Malcolm's unstinting efforts would have been much harder to undertake.



Town Clerk Malcolm Pratt

Malcolm was appointed Town Clerk to the Corporation of the Ancient Town of Winchelsea, on 18th January, 1984.

The post of Town Clerk is performed in an entirely voluntary capacity. In his 25 years of exemplary service Malcolm has served under the grand number of 15 Mayors.

In fact, Malcolm commenced his civic services way back in in 1962, four years after the start of his career as a secondary school teacher of English & Drama, as the part-time Clerk to the Parish Council of Icklesham, of which Winchelsea is one ward. Indeed, all being well, by 2012 he will have served the communities of Winchelsea and Icklesham in civic posts for 50 years!

Malcolm was installed as an Honorary Freeman of Winchelsea in 1994 in recognition of his service to the Town.

As many of you will know, not only is Malcolm our eminent Town Clerk but he is also a distinguished historian and has written two authoritative historical books on Winchelsea. In 1998 he published 'Winchelsea, a Port of Stranded Pride'. His second book about the town 'Winchelsea - The Tale of a Medieval Town' was the sequel and was published in 2005.

These exceptional books have contributed significantly to the history of our Town. This was acknowledged by the eminent historian Lord Asa Briggs who generously prefaced both publications.

Other roles undertaken in Malcolm's busy schedule include a Council Member of the Sussex Record Society and President of the Sussex Badminton Association.

In summary, Malcolm has made a unique contribution to the Town. This was recognised at the Mayoring with the presentation from the outgoing Mayor Anthony Moore of 'A Victorian Trilogy', a scholarly set of three books by Asa Briggs'.



The Town Clerk played a key role in organising the visit of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in July 1988 at the Town's 700th anniversary.

FOAMS— 2008 Report from the Chairman

Our big task for 2008 was the Strand Gate Appeal. We needed to raise an estimated sum in excess of £20,000 to add to a grant of up to £30,000 from English Heritage for the restoration of the Grade 1 listed Strand Gate.

With fantastic support from everyone in the town, and many outside, we achieved our target. For 2009 we will have a quieter year, but as I hope all of you will know, a programme of events has been organised to help us continue fund-raising.

Please make use of the winchelsea.com web site for up-to-date information on the Town and events taking place. And please, if you are not a member, why not join FOAMS? To do so please contact Roger Neaves on 01797 226263.

Other News

With the repairs to the Strand Gate so well completed we now need to turn our attention to our other monuments. The Corporation has thus requested its architect to initiate a survey of the Pipewell Gate and to report back. More later.

The Corporation is pleased to welcome Cinque Ports Cadet Edward Wells who has been appointed for a two year term.

Mayor

Graham Alexander

Deputy Mayor

Michael Melvin

Freemen & Jurats

Robert Beecroft
Donald Cameron-Clarke
Roger Neaves
John Dunk
John Gooders
Alan McKinna
Anthony Moore
Melvyn Pett
Stephen Turner
Peta Cameron-Clarke
John Spencer

Freemen & Past Jurats

Henry Dormer
Peter Stevens
David Bourne
Dominic Leahy
John Freeman

Freemen

Cynthia Feast
Michael de Smith

Officers

Chamberlain Bernard Dibble
Sergeant-at-Mace
Neil Clephane-Cameron
Cinque Ports Cadets
Chris Thake
Edward Wells

Town Clerk & Honorary Freeman

Malcolm Pratt

Chaplain to the Mayor

Rev^d. Canon Howard Cocks



The Mayor's Seal

2009 Events

Saturday 25 April at 7pm

'Winchelsea's Heritage' talk by Richard Crook-New Hall.

Sunday 17 May at 2pm

Farm & Nature walk, Pannel Valley, Elms Farm.

Sunday 5 July at 11am

Winchelsea Patronal Service in St. Thomas's Church.

Saturday 10 October at 7pm

'Edwardian Winchelsea' by Malcolm Pratt - New Hall.