



BANBURY CIVIC SOCIETY

Wishing all our members and supporters,
old and new

*A Very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year*



2015 has been an interesting year. Cherwell Council has finally managed to adopt a Local Plan. This didn't give us everything we wanted (most notably a South-to-East link road), but hopefully it will mean an end to speculative, unplanned development.

A major highlight for our Society was the unveiling of a blue plaque at 84 High Street, commemorating Banbury as the 'Birthplace of the World Railway Heritage Movement'. Another was our coach trip to historic Bridgnorth and the



Severn Valley Railway, including a ride behind the now world-famous 'Tornado' in carriages built in the 1930s.

The year has also seen the long-anticipated opening of Banbury's answer to Bicester Village, the Gateway retail park, with the attendant news-column inches about road-rage, lack of parking space and gridlock at the eastern end of Hennef Way. With Waitrose now consented at the western end of Hennef Way, bringing with it a 220-space car park accessed from Southam Road and a planned footfall to rival Staples, Topps Tiles, Homebase and B&Q combined, it

looks like getting around Banbury isn't going to get any easier for a while... But, at least we now have six new places to buy clothes and we can soon look forward to being able to buy three different varieties of hand-tufted quinoa and a range of organic Mongolian equine dairy products... If we can negotiate the local traffic.

With 7,500 new homes springing up, we look forward to welcoming plenty of new members to the Society, as the new residents seek to make their new home-town a better place to live and

relax in, and then find that they can't easily get to the shops, to work or to the station... With an announcement hoped for on Castle Quay 2 in 2016, we'll continue to work to promote our historic Old Town to residents old and new, and to the wider world. With the creation of both Banbury Presents and Visit Banbury, we have fresh new allies in this mission.

Campaigns for the protection of old Banbury have continued in 2015, with campaigns to save the old Cherwell Iron Works steam traction-engine factory (a.k.a. Burgess, Lower Cherwell Street), the old Grand cinema on Broad Street (a.k.a. 'Wonder Lounge') and Banbury North Signal Box. Tragically, the demolition of J&M Alcock & Sons 'Alcock's Yard' on Castle Street was consented at the end of November, spelling the likely demise of Banbury's last 'Canal Age' factory. Watch this space for (hopefully) some good news on some of these campaigns in the coming year.

2015 hasn't been a great year for newsletters (sorry)! Hopefully you've managed to keep in touch with what we've been doing or saying via the local media. I can report that the Society is in good heart, with membership up again on previous years. We have had an increased public profile, taking the stand to the Banbury & District Show and the Town Mayor's Hobby Horse Day, in addition to Canal Day. As ever, we could use more active members, so we can



both do more, and report it back to our membership..!

I extend my deepest thanks to you, our members, for your ongoing support, and to the members of our Exec and Admin committees for all their hard work over the last year.

Happy Christmas to you all.

If anyone is looking for a new year's resolution, please do consider taking a more active role in what we do.

Do feel free to contact myself (details below) if you are able to help, or if there are issues you'd like us to address.

Yours faithfully

Rob

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