

Poundbury: an experiment in New Urbanism

LUCY MELFORD



The Whistling Witch

The latest in the series of winter talks organised by the Trust for members took place in December in the Henrietta Barnett School Hall. The Trust Chairman, Richard Wiseman, introduced the speaker for the evening, Simon Conibear, former Estate Director for the Duchy of Cornwall in Dorset, and now Poundbury Development Consultant.

He started by commenting that while the Garden City movement and the Suburb can be seen as an escape from urbanism, Poundbury is its antithesis, an escape to urbanism. He felt Poundbury has relevance for the future but is also relevant for development now.

Dorsetshire allowed for the creation of Poundbury to go ahead as part of its development

strategy in 1987, with an allocation of 400 acres of land owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. It has been an urban rather than suburban development with a hierarchy of buildings in a townscape, with green spaces integrated within the built environment.

It has come in for much criticism from many; being called "a cottagey slum", and "fake, heartless, authoritarian and grimly cute"; loathed by many modernists for its retrospective and traditional style. A consultancy on development for the Prince of Wales told him it would not work.

Mr Conibear reminded us that the Prince made few friends in the world of architecture with his 1984 RIBA speech denouncing the proposed extension to the National Gallery as being "like a monstrous carbuncle", and his 1989 BBC documentary 'A Vision of Britain'.

Nevertheless for many Poundbury is seen as a worthy success, creating a sense of space and relating to its locality using materials and styles of Dorsetshire. It consists of separate developments, not suburbs, with the concept of walkability built in. So shops, pubs and separate green spaces exist within each area. Planning is around people not cars. The buildings dominate the highway rather than vice versa with the idea of the roads being

a shared space for pedestrians and vehicles, resulting in very few accidents.

The job of designing the overall plan for Poundbury was given by Prince Charles to Leon Krier, the neo-traditional architect and urban planner from Luxembourg, who is known as a representative of New Urbanism, and whose ideas are epitomised in his 2009 book, *The Architecture of Community*.

It consists of 35% social housing, both housing association rentals and shared ownership properties, and shared into the whole with a planned population of 6,000 in 2,500 homes when it is completed in 2025. Social housing, private housing, business and retail property are freely mixed.

At present there are 185 businesses in Poundbury of varying sizes from small artisan or boutique enterprises to the biggest firm, Dorset Cereals,

which employs 100 people and, according to some, has created too much HGV traffic. In fact 30% of the population work in Poundbury itself.

It is not surprising given the Prince's interest in all things green that the concept of sustainable development is built in. Anaerobic digestion is used to make gas, with ecohomes and sustainable transport both encouraged. Residents run many of the facilities through management companies, and three house builders negotiate for the available plots of building land.

Poundbury seeks to facilitate rather than create community and the mixture of development in its different parts helps to foster this. In fact it is neither a village nor a town but is actually a part of Dorchester itself, being effectively an urban extension. It does have a community centre in its market hall, Brownsword Hall, designed by John Simpson

and based on early designs, in particular the one at Tetbury.

For this Trust member it was a very interesting and informative talk, which gave the lie to the preconceptions and prejudices he held on the subject of Poundbury. The Trust is to be congratulated on the quality and the variety of the talks it has arranged for its members over the past few years.

TERRY BROOKS



The Octagon Café

LUCY MELFORD



Brownsword Hall

Proms at St Jude's 2018

There is competition for the top billing at this year's Proms at St Jude's Festival in June. The Aurora Orchestra on the first night, Nevill Holt Opera performing *The Marriage of Figaro*, and the amazingly talented Kanneh-Mason Piano Trio are all expected to sell out.

"We have an embarrassment of riches," said Proms spokesman, Ron Finlay, "but so much the better for those who are able to get tickets."

One of Europe's leading chamber orchestras, Aurora Orchestra is committed to challenging expectations, and its Mozart evening can be counted on to inspire, whatever your background.

Nevill Holt has become a regular favourite at Proms with its semi-staged productions and

celebrated soloists: American bass-baritone Lawson Anderson plays the title role this year, with British baritone James Newby as Count Almaviva and soprano Aoife Miskelly as Susanna.

The remarkable young cellist, Sheku Kanneh-Mason, has seen his star soar since becoming BBC Young Musician of the Year in 2016, and leads his talented brother and sister on violin and piano respectively. Their Proms programme will include trios by Beethoven and Brahms.

The renowned Academy of Ancient Music, with a programme including Vivaldi and Handel, and the Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra, with award-winning, local mezzo-soprano, Grace Durham, complete the complement of superb classical musicians at the Festival.

BUT THERE'S MORE!

The fantastic Charles Court Opera is bringing Gilbert & Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore*. Jacqui Dankworth and Counterpoise present a jazz-infused evening of Great American Songbook hits.

The Septura Brass Septet – representing a new generation of top British brass musicians – will give refreshing interpretations of music by Prokofiev, Handel and Stravinsky. And there's a celebration of Nobel laureate Bob Dylan for the baby boomers among us.

Not only is Proms at St Jude's a wonderful community event

providing first-class entertainment, but it is nice to know too that it is run almost entirely by volunteers, with all the surplus going to charity.

In addition, there are free lunchtime concerts and some special events for children and families. The festival also offers Heritage Walks, a two-day Literary Festival and, for the first time this year, a stand-up comedy night.

Proms runs from June 23 to July 1, at St Jude's church. Tickets go on sale from April, but you can get priority booking earlier by becoming a Friend. More details at www.promsatstjudes.org.uk.

WORDSEARCH

In the first Wordsearch of 2018 we have included 20 stage and film musicals. One of them is highlighted to start you off but please don't count it in your total! Names may be read in all directions, straight or diagonally. Please send your entries by email to cristina.lago@gmail.com with your name and contact details. The closing date is March 17. All correct entries go into a draw to win a £20 voucher from our independent local shop Joseph's Bookstore. Good luck!

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SN132 WORDSEARCH ANSWERS, FACTS & WINNER

The answers to the last issue's motorcycle manufacturers Wordsearch were as follows: Aprilia, Benelli, BMW, Buell, Cobra, Dodge, Ducati, Honda, Hyosung, Indian, Kawasaki, KTM, Kymco, Norton, Piaggio, Royal Enfield, Suzuki, Triumph, Victory and Yamaha.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- In 2003, Lois Pryce left her job at the BBC and went on a 10 months solo motorcycle journey from Alaska to Ushuaia in Argentina. She wrote about her adventures in her witty book *Lois on the Loose*.
- According to the UK Department for Transport, in 2016 only 1,248 motorcycles were registered in the UK compared to 30,850 cars.
- The first motorbike was built in Germany in 1885 by Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach. It was called a *Reitwagen* (riding car) and it was the first gas powered vehicle, a precursor to the current day automobile.

Mrs Chris Salter from Temple Fortune is the winner of the Joseph's Bookstore £20 voucher: congratulations! Thank you also to all of you who also sent your answers, keep participating!

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Kanneh-Mason Piano Trio

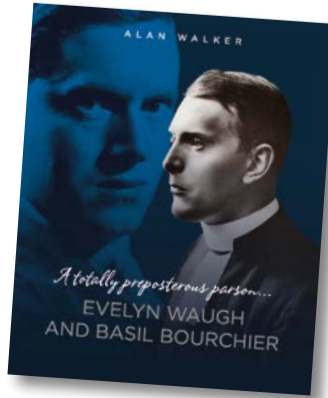
A Totally Preposterous Parson at Burgh House

Some readers will remember that Alan Walker's book, *A Totally Preposterous Parson: Evelyn Waugh and Basil Borchier*, was reviewed by Stephen James in *Suburb News* Autumn 2016 No 128. There is now to be an exhibition on the subject of the book at Burgh House in Hampstead from Wednesday, March 14 to Sunday, June 27.

Evelyn Waugh, the eminent twentieth century writer, grew up in North End Road, on the boundary between Golders Green and Hampstead. With his father, the publisher Arthur Waugh, he attended the newly opened church of St Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb, and came under the influence of its flamboyant and outspoken young vicar, Basil Borchier. In later life, and after he had become a

Roman Catholic, Waugh ridiculed Borchier, calling him a "totally preposterous parson."

This small exhibition curated by Reverend Alan Walker, seeks to reconsider their relationship and rediscover a local clergyman who performed on the national stage. There is full information at <https://tinyurl.com/lydxtsrac>.



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