



Early Summer Bulletin July 2024



Programme

Full details of our programme for the second half of 2024 are set out on a full page at the end of the newsletter, for you to print out and pin up somewhere for ease of reference. We hope that you find this to be a useful way of ensuring that you have all of the details to hand.

Social media

We are trying to improve/extend our presence on social media. At the moment Facebook is the only one that we have engaged with. We post information and photographs whenever we have anything to put out to a wider audience. To improve our standing on Facebook, we need you – our members – if you use Facebook, to follow us.



1. From your Feed, tap Search at the top of Facebook.
2. Enter Vale of Evesham Civic Society and choose from the results.
3. Go to the profile.
4. Tap Follow.

Evesham's listed buildings booklets

In the last news bulletin, we announced the creation of a 2-volume set of printed booklets. These contain maps and photographs and full details of the reasons for listing each and every building, many including the photograph from the society's 1992 survey and an up-to-date photograph. It is being taken out and about to events for anyone to browse eg May's Medieval Market. At the AGM and subsequently, a few members have asked for their own printed copy. Vale Press have offered an excellent price for printing 10 sets for a cost of £20 each set. If you would like your own set, please email vecs1972@gmail.com. We are taking advance bookings so that we can be sure that there is sufficient demand to make the outlay worthwhile. We will have booking forms at the garden party on Saturday 18th July and other future events; so, if you are expecting to see us soon, you could fill in a form at one of these events.

Battle Festival weekend, 3rd and 4th August

We will be putting up our gazebo to house our new display banners, which we do hope you will find time to call in to see. We will also have our booklets and listed buildings information to look at. We will need some help please on the Saturday and Sunday for people to look after the display and talk to visitors – there will be a couple of chairs in the gazebo, and toilets are nearby. Brian Chilver will

be putting together the rota; **please let us know if you can help**. Even one hour would be most welcome, to relieve the pressure on the hard-working committee members.

The Almonry Restoration Project: fundraising

The Vale of Evesham Civic Society is supporting the restoration of the Almonry Museum and Heritage Centre, which is a Grade 1 Listed building. The local community needs to raise funds to support the work, as required by the organisations giving grants.

In recent years, Brian Chilver has been the judge for the Vale of Evesham Arts Society annual exhibitions and in 2022 he bought a watercolour painting by Lesley Brockbank of the front of the Almonry. In 2024 Lesley entered a watercolour of the Almonry Garden, which Brian also bought. Lesley has kindly waived her right to the copyright, so that we can have a limited-edition print run of both pictures. These will be the best quality Giclée prints, made by IRIS Print of Hanley Swan. The prints will be available framed (using Roman Moor of Evesham) or unframed but mounted for the purchaser's own choice of frame. Gill, Brian and Paula recently took possession of the first few unmounted limited-edition prints.

We will be displaying the prints at various events during the year, especially at our upcoming Garden Party and at the Battle of Evesham Festival weekend, where we are looking forward to meeting as many people as possible. We will be taking orders for the copies to be made. Display copies will also be available in the Almonry shop in due course. If the initiative is well supported, we hope to raise approximately £5,000. If anyone is interested in purchasing one of the limited-edition prints, or in finding out more about them, please contact Gill by email vecs1972@gmail.com or on 07801 846049.

Heritage Walks

Gill led two walks in June, one for the Walking Festival and one for the Festival of Words. The main message is “look up when you are walking around town and appreciate the historic architecture that still remains”. The route was loosely based on the Evesham Town Trail booklet that was updated and reprinted by VECS in 2022. It is available to purchase at the Almonry and costs £1.50, or copies are available from any committee member on request. We were very lucky to be allowed access to the ringing platform in the Bell Tower, where we were given a short demonstration on bell ringing by Chris Povey – Tower Master on Thursday, and Claire Penny – bell ringer on Sunday. These turned out to be the highlight of the walks. More info on the Bell Tower is available here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evesham_Bell_Tower



If members would like to avail themselves of this guided walk (minus the ringing chamber), Gill would be happy to take a group around, at a time to be arranged. If you would like a tour, please contact us and a date will be suggested.

Evesham Place Board

At the most recent meeting, we received positive feedback from the launch of the Ambassador scheme. An Ambassador's role is to

- Do what you can to champion the town
- Use words and images that promote Evesham positively
- Share positive stories about Evesham on Facebook and Love Evesham

More ambassadors are needed, so please encourage people to sign up.

New bollards for Bridge Street and Market Square are still meant to be being installed, but the County Council is having problems finding a supplier; thus, the delay.

Riverside shopping centre

Gill raised the following:

On Facebook, the Riverside Shopping Centre is getting very bad reviews; the Council should issue a press release to explain the current position.

A couple of years ago Julian Meredith of Chase Commercial (managing agents for the owner) said that work was underway in preparing the planning application that will be needed, but nothing has been heard since. Not only does the landlord need to be able to remove all of the tenants (which he is doing at the moment), he needs planning permission to start to make any progress. The Board is urged to request a progress report. Then, if there is anything positive to say about a new scheme, it could and should be put into the public arena to counter all of the negative publicity that is going on at the moment. A public meeting/consultation to discuss draft proposals would also help residents to understand what is going on.

A response was received from Caroline Treadwell, Evesham Place Project Officer:

Since the update on the Riverside Shopping Centre of a couple of years ago there have been many changes to how we (Wychavon District Council) are hopefully getting towards the final result of being able to redevelop the Riverside Shopping Centre. I forwarded your email with the Facebook comments and your suggestion of a press release to Ian our Director of Economy and Environment who is most involved in the ongoing top-level discussions concerning the Riverside Shopping Centre, I will wait to hear back from him.

If we hear anything further, this will be reported in the next Bulletin.

Tewkesbury's High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme

This scheme is having great success and some of its lessons have been passed on to the Evesham Place Board to influence the Business Front Improvement Scheme. It was the subject of a presentation and discussion at the recent meeting of the West Midlands Amenity Societies Association, in Tewkesbury. The main reason for the very obvious improvements in the town is that

the Action Zone Programme had £2.1m to work with, from 2020 to 2024! The Place Board has about £200,000 to spend over three years, ending in March 2025.

The Tewkesbury Alleys walk for members, in June, included more of the town's famous alleys, where our very well-informed guide gave us a potted history of the activities and former residents of the alleys. He also took us along a stretch of the much-improved riverside walkway, where we were able to see some of the work done under the auspices of the Heritage Action Zone Programme. If you have not been to Tewkesbury recently, it is well worth a visit, to see some of the improvements.

The Tewkesbury project officer has agreed to give a presentation to the Society, so it is hoped to include this in the programme for the first part of 2025.

VECS Member survey: our findings

Many thanks to those that took the time to complete the survey included in the previous Bulletin and send them back by email, post and WhatsApp. It has allowed us to review what is important to you and make some recommendations. From our current membership of 130, the following findings and recommendations are based on responses from 24 members:

Key Findings

- A. Most people are VECS members because they want to support the important work it does in shaping the future of Evesham
- B. More people value the programme of events than the trips
- C. More people would accept a reduced programme of events and spreading them across evenings and daytime
- D. The newsletters are appreciated and members value what VECS does for the town

VECS Committee Recommendations

1. We retain the Autumn/Winter programme of talks but may hold one or 2 less for 2024/2025/2026
2. We continue to hold ad hoc short talks/social events in the day and evening
3. We retain Spring/Summer outings for 2025 but reduce the number e.g. none in July and August, and see if we can join other groups' trips e.g. Simon De Montfort Society, VEHS

We hope that these reflect your thoughts, but if they do not, please let us know as we are keen to try to what our members are expecting us to do for them.



VECS Programme of Events, July-December 2024

- **Saturday July 20th, 2.30pm**; a garden party social at 14 Owletts End, Evesham. Strawberries and cream, scones and jam and nibbles, with the usual glass of wine or soft drink. £5 on the gate. Please let Pat know if you are coming, if you have not already done so. The event will be indoors if the weather is wet.
- August 13th Hartlebury Castle trip; if there is a party of 10 or more the ticket price is reduced from £12.50 to £11.25, assuming we are all OAPs. Own transport but lifts can be arranged. To meet at 11.00 for a self-guided tour. There is a café for lunch and if it's fine weather, there are extensive grounds to walk around afterwards.

Programme of events take place at Ecgwins Club, 117 High Street, Evesham WR11 4EQ at 7.30pm unless advertised differently below. Cost to attend: members £4, visitors £5

- September 10th - Film of the 7 towns of Worcestershire in 1960's, with Graham Gooderham, Conservation Architect, who produced the film.
- September 18th (at Wallace House, ground floor) Short talk at 7pm by Marino of Empty Jars followed by social get together till 9pm
- October 8th - Talk by Michael Hodges of Pershore Civic Society on 'conservation, restoration, preservation'
- November 12th - Talk by Oliver Wilson of Act on Energy, on Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings.
- December 10th - Lunchtime social at the Red Lion, Market Square – exact timing and speaker to be arranged.