

# Westbury Heritage Society NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018

[www.westburyheritagesociety.org.uk](http://www.westburyheritagesociety.org.uk)

**Welcome...** This is our first newsletter of 2018 and we have a wide variety of heritage events to look forward to in this coming year including talks, walks and exhibitions. There will also be heritage events as part of the Westbury Festival later in the year.

**Shopping in Westbury...** Can you recall when Westbury streets were lined with shops, when



you could buy a suit and hat in Maristow Street, antiques in the Market Place, a newspaper at W H Smith on the Warminster Road or a quarter of your favourite sweets from glass jars at the local sweetshop? Well, for our next heritage society talk, Liz Argent will be taking us back in time to recall

when our town had a wide variety of shops and a busy centre. Liz's talk is titled "Westbury Shops 1960-1973 - A personal memoir" and will take place on Tuesday 27 March. Everyone is welcome to what promises to be a fascinating talk and a chance to share your memories.

**Work starts on restoring Quaker burial ground...** an exciting heritage project is underway at a long abandoned Quaker graveyard in Westbury. The small strip of land,



which lies between the Pinnegar Finch car park and Laverton Court, is believed to contain around 17 graves but the stones have long been buried under rubble, bricks and rubbish. Now a restoration project is underway involving the Lions, the Leos, the heritage society and other members of the community. Research shows all but three of the people buried here were members of the Matravers family and one of the graves is of John Matravers who left funds to

start the first free school for Westbury. Archaeologist Julian Richards has visited the site and given advice on how it should be restored and members of the Quakers have also attended.



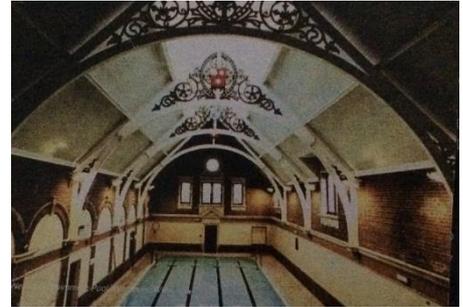
*The gravestone of  
John and Susanna  
Matravers*

**Exploring Westbury heritage on the hoof...** We will be taking to the streets and hidden corners of Westbury to explore its heritage and we would love you to join us. The guided walking tour, led by Liz Argent and Sally Hendry, will start at the heritage centre at 7.30 pm on 29th May. Everyone is welcome. The walk will last about one hour and will end with refreshments at the heritage centre.

**Rail restoration...** Our last event of 2017 took us back to the glory days of pre-Beeching railways with a fascinating talk about the restoration of Midsomer Norton station complete with pictures of engines and completed projects including the rebuilding of a signal box. The site now also includes an extensive collection of railway memorabilia in the museum and a restored WW2 pillbox. Find out more at [www.msnsdmuseum.co.uk](http://www.msnsdmuseum.co.uk)

**Grant good news....**The heritage society have been awarded a grant from the Westbury area board to purchase our own projector and screen for use in presentations and talks.

**Anniversary celebrations for Westbury pool ...**Our historic town swimming pool is marking a special anniversary – it is 130 years old! The baths in Church Street are believed to be the oldest swimming pool still open to the public in the country. We are planning a special window exhibition – the centre has a wide range of artefacts from the pool including a curious looking safety pole used to help swimmers, old admission tickets and certificates and even the original till. Pop in to the heritage centre and find out more.



**Get involved with your town heritage...** would you like to become a volunteer at the heritage centre or find out more about the society? Our AGM is on 31st July. Come along and join us or pop into the centre for more information.

**Researching your family history....**The heritage centre has a range of reference books on local history such as town directories, historic photographs and maps. We are also working together with the Westbury branch of the Wiltshire Family History Society to organise a special family history day with experts on hand to help you unravel your ancestry. Watch this space for more information!

**How to contact us...** The centre (01373 825784) is open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10-4pm and Wednesday and Saturday 10-1pm. [www.westburyheritagesociety.org.uk](http://www.westburyheritagesociety.org.uk)

### WHAT'S ON

Tuesday 27 March at 7.30pm at the Methodist church in Station Road: **Westbury Shops 1960-1973 - A personal memoir.**

Tuesday 29th May at 7.30pm: **Walking tour round historic Westbury.** NOTE: this starts and finishes at the heritage centre in the High Street.

Tuesday 31 July at 7.30pm at the Methodist church in Station Road: **AGM**