

Update 2004

The SHF group has been meeting almost fortnightly for over a year now. The group was established to counter the University's proposals to close the Seale-Hayne Faculty and transfer all courses, staff and students to the Plymouth Campus. The update, in brief - is that we have not succeeded yet!

Since its formation, SHF has attracted many concerned and notable individuals all of whom are questioning the decision to relocate Seale-Hayne's activities to Plymouth. There has been a great deal of pressure on the chancellery of the University, mostly generated by SHF. The media (local media especially) have taken a keen interest throughout the year, as have Newton Abbot, Teignbridge and Devon County Councils. The group has provided a vehicle for questioning many of the reasons for relocation that have been given by the University, questions which have in the most part been met with a wall of silence. There appears to be very little information available about the relocation plans. This is enormously frustrating for everybody concerned; staff, students and planners, as well as the members of SHF.

At the time of writing (March 04) the plans for closure are still being implemented. Many staff have already left Seale-Hayne and have not been replaced, putting huge pressures on the remaining staff. This fact alone suggests that SHF may not now be able to prevent the closure; the train is too far down the track to turn back. And there is also unease amongst students about the effect of the poor change management upon their higher education and course results. Facilities at the site are already being wound down. The refectory is due to close at the end of this academic year and the bar will be scaled down for the final year but I am assured that there *will be* bar facilities for the few remaining students in 2004-05. The departments are already divided up amongst the faculties of the University, (some go into "Shipping and Logistics"!). There is no agriculture faculty and some of Seale-Hayne's courses already cease to exist.

Some good news though! The University's planning application for development of the site into a small town has received a cold response from the planners. When asked for a business plan to justify up to 1000 houses in support of a "Centre of Excellence" at Seale-Hayne, the University failed to produce one. And recently a major housing plan has been submitted to Devon County Council utilising a local (to Newton Abbot) 'brown-field' site rather than the green fields of the Seale-Hayne farm. A plan that we all feel would be a better alternative to the University's.

Also good news is that, thanks to substantial financial support from Newton Abbot and Teignbridge Councils, the SHF group has been able to consult Leading Counsel in London about the takeover of the Seale-Hayne Charity by the University. Counsel expressed deep concern about some aspects of the takeover over the last 12 years and has referred SHF (through its solicitors) back to the Charity Commissioners to clarify the legal position regarding the freehold of the Seale-Hayne estate. If we achieve nothing else, SHF believes that there is a duty to Charles Seale-Hayne to ensure that the charity that was set up in response to his will is retained, the assets

maximised and the original objects of that charity fulfilled as far as is possible.

As a group we continue to meet regularly. I personally doubt now that we can save the college from closure. With its apparent 'head-in-the sand' approach, the University has progressed the closure too far to turn back. The future of the site and the future of the charity that was Seale-Hayne must now become our main concern.

We are not an anarchic or destructive group. We believe that the University has made a big mistake in closing a superb teaching facility and we would like to help prevent any more mistakes being made in deciding on the future of the Seale-Hayne buildings and lands.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2005

By the time you read this, there will probably be only a month to go until teaching activities cease, after almost 100 years at Seale-Hayne. Many people have put a lot of effort into trying to persuade the University that this is wrong, but to no avail. The University made the decision, for whatever reason, to close Seale-Hayne and that is now happening. We can argue for years about the rights and wrongs of that decision. About the reasons, the ulterior motives, the poor change-management, the public relations and so on. But it has happened and we need to move forward.

The University's plans for the use of the Seale-Hayne site have been (and are also still) under severe scrutiny - not only by the Seale-Hayne Future Group, but also by the local Town, District and County Councils. It has been made very obvious that large-scale development is not an option for S-H as was first suggested back in 2003 when closure was announced. I believe that this rather 'put the spanner in the works' for the plans for Seale-Hayne. There have been review groups and consultants' reports over the last 2 years, and much gathering of information from interested parties. Many people had hoped for a sort of 'Centre of Rural Excellence' at Seale-Hayne. The Future Group, after much advice and research, submitted a very positive proposal for such a scheme, which we felt, with the University's backing, could have worked. But eventually the final consultant's report to the University in February 05, found that actually there was nothing that the University could use Seale-Hayne for, and that the best advice was to sell it.

Surprise, surprise.

Further consultants will now be engaged to advise the University on how best to sell. At a meeting in which these developments were explained to Jim Hosking, Reg Wills (Mayor of Newton Abbot) and myself, we were given personal word from the Vice-Chancellor that the sale, (and here I quote), "**will not be based on purely economic grounds**". Also, ".....that the University will take into consideration the history of the site and the effect that any purchase of the site will have on the local community and Newton Abbot". This is good news for the area and we will follow progress keenly with Professor Levinsky's words in our ears. At the time of writing these latest consultants have yet to be appointed.

So what now? The last students leave the campus in June this year. There are various pieces of research which are obliged to run into 2006 and that's about it. Daracombe hall has apparently already been sold to a developer, supposedly for nearly twice the amount that the University paid for the whole estate. And if I sound a little bitter in this report then that is really the crunch.

As I said, we can argue until the cows come home about the rights and wrongs of closure, but if closure is what the University feels is best, for its own progress, then we have really been wasting our breath. They must now get on with it - and apart from not approving, I wish them every success - the region *will* benefit from the presence of another strong University. But what I find unacceptable is the callous disregard for the Seale-Hayne Charity and all that went with it. On 19th October 1999, **the charity** owned most of the freehold of the Seale-Hayne Estate, which

consisted of some 450 acres of land, the farm, the buildings, many houses, Daracombe Hall and the Grade 2 listed college itself. What was all that worth?

Just one day later, the charity consisted of an investment account of £750,000 (plus other Seale-Hayne monies all bundled into the same trust fund) and **the University** owned the estate. And I was one of those who *believed* the tales about how necessary it was for them to own it - to enable proper investment to secure the future of Seale-Hayne. Also, how it was 'illegal' for them to invest in the site because they had no 'beneficial interest' in Seale-Hayne. At every turn in the history of Seale-Hayne, those in control (the Governing Body, the Faculty Council) have been fed propaganda about how the next takeover is the **ONLY** way for Seale-Hayne to survive. And at every turn, those in control have taken the route required of them simply because they believed that it *was* best for the college. In 1999, the Faculty Council, of which I was a member, believed the last batch of propaganda and now Seale-Hayne is gone.

The Future Group, with generous support from Newton Abbot Town Council, have tried very hard through the highest legal channels to correct the wrong that has been forced upon the charity. The land and buildings are one thing - if they have to go, then they have to go. But to virtually wipe out the Seale-Hayne Charity that had been built up over the last 100 years is inexcusable and, I believe, should be challenged. But for some reason, neither the Charity Commission nor the Attorney General can be persuaded to investigate. I do not see why.

The V.C. and his advisers do not seem to understand; probably because they stand to gain a lot of money for a developing University which is cash-hungry. Even the suggestion of a library building or something similar in the name of "Seale-Hayne" seemed to fall on deaf ears. At the very least, the present trustees of the Seale-Hayne Educational Trust should be demanding a large proportion of the proceeds of the sale of Seale-Hayne to be put back into the trust fund. This would make the trust worth something. It could make proper awards rather than the odd £1000 here and £2000 there and people might then sometimes wonder where the money came from originally, and say, "Thanks, Charles; your bequest in 1904 really made (and is still making) a real difference to peoples lives".

As it did to all who went to Seale-Hayne College.

Ian Goodwin – March 05

Update 2006

Well, after last year's diatribe nobody wanted to air their own views badly enough to take over as editor, so I'm afraid I'm back again!

Following on from last year, it seems as though the idea of a 'Seale-Hayne Library' did not fall on "deaf ears" as I suggested in the 2005 report – so I apologise. There is a new / refurbished library at the University in Plymouth, and it is to be named after Charles Seale-Hayne. This will go some way to preserving the memory of Seale-Hayne and all that it stood for, and we should applaud the University Board of Governors for agreeing to this.

It has taken since my report last year (March 05) for consultants to be appointed to advise the Board on what to do with Seale-Hayne. A company called "GVA Grimley" (Bristol) have been asked to advise on the disposal of several parcels of real estate for the Board, including Rolle College, Seale-Hayne and Exeter College. And if you weren't expecting Rolle to be in that list then that's how fast things can happen if there's a move afoot from the powers that be. Rolle College became part of Polytechnic South-West at the same time as Seale-Hayne, and is the Education Faculty of the University. It is considered very highly in academic circles as a first class teacher-training unit - as highly as Seale-Hayne was regarded in Agriculture. Closure of Rolle was suggested in Autumn 05 and the decision was made (after 'consultation' of course), in November. The closure reasons are similar, except that they couldn't argue a shortage of demand for teaching places as they could for agriculture!

Seale-Hayne Future Group was asked to advise a group at Rolle about strategy for opposing the closure. Eirene Williams and I attended a meeting and were astonished at the strength of the argument for keeping Rolle open and in Exmouth. As with S-H, it seemed madness to close down a successful and revered faculty for the sake of building the Plymouth empire. Our only advice (apart from "you're wasting your breath") was to concentrate on the change management. The University have learnt from their mistakes at S-H, and have imposed a far quicker closure at Rolle than happened at S-H, less time for argument and bad publicity. And a quicker pay-off when the estate is sold for sea-side houses and flats! Rolle is arguably a more valuable site than Seale-Hayne being so close to the sea.

As Bruce Forsyth would have said, "Didn't they do well"

But that's enough of the cynical view. What is happening now I hear you cry!

Devon and Cornwall Police have moved into most of Seale-Hayne on a temporary lease, which has recently been extended to the end of 2007. They were refurbishing the Police training unit at Middlemoor (Exeter) so needed temporary facilities. I'm not sure why the lease has been extended – perhaps the refurb. is running behind schedule, or perhaps they like S-H so much they'd rather stay there! And the farm is still running with Richard Newington as farm manager. The dairy herd is to be sold in May this year but the farm will remain operational with increased sheep numbers.

GVA Grimley is presumably now working on its advice about how to dispose of Seale-Hayne in the best way for the University. We have not been told the brief that they are working to, but I assume that maximum money is probably quite high up the list!

Many people would like to see factors such as the 'use of the site' and the 'effect of a sale on the surrounding area' higher on the brief than 'financial return'. Which, as I reported last year, the Vice-Chancellor indicated verbally to Jim Hosking and myself that this would indeed be the case. But at a recent meeting the V.C. seemed to be under enormous pressure, (from the Government no less), to maximise the financial return to the University. He seemed to be worried about having to appear in front of the House of Commons if he did not sell to the highest bidder! That *would* make good television! (I suspect it would actually be the Chair of Governors and I also suspect that it wouldn't be the House of Commons).

But you get the drift no doubt.

The recent meeting referred to was to talk about a proposal from a Charity called "The Bidwell Brook Foundation" who would like to buy Seale-Hayne lock-stock and barrel. Bidwell Brook is a school for people with special-needs, based at Totnes. At the moment they can only cater for children up to the age of sixteen, after which, any pupils that are capable of further education have to move out of Devon. There is, apparently, enormous demand for Further Education places in this area – a fact confirmed by Government backed research last year. Bidwell Brook will expand and were looking at 'green-field sites before S-H became available. They would like to occupy everything, including the farm (for work experience), and are confident that they could obtain the necessary funding for such an ambitious bid but they need the good wishes of the major players (local and county councils / RDA / University etc.) to get the ball rolling in finding the funding. It has to be said that, although not completely dismissive, the response from the University was not at all constructive or in the least bit proactive. "It's nothing to do with us, talk to GVA Grimley".

Perhaps it's GVA Grimley that will appear in front of Blair.

But what happens to the money from any eventual sale is still a bone of contention with many. I still feel that most, if not all the proceeds should be put back into the Seale-Hayne Charity, which is where it came from originally. I don't see how a wealthy charity can be allowed to lose almost everything within fifteen years of a change of trustees, which is effectively what has happened. I write regularly to the Chair of Governors about this but to no avail. The Seale-Hayne charity is now considered to be a third party, and the University "can't possibly give any of its assets to a third party". Seale-Hayne Future Group is hopefully in proactive discussion with the consultants and the University over the future of the site, and has backed away from the costly legal and financial challenges in the hope of maintaining good relations. There are a few people though, (who shall remain nameless, and with tongue-in-cheek I like to think of them as "*The Real* Seale-Hayne Future Group"), who are happy to carry on challenging the downfall of Seale-Hayne wherever possible! Good luck to them.

Ian Goodwin – April 06

Update 2007

Sadly, the year has started with two notable deaths. On Boxing Day, Roland Levinski (University of Plymouth Vice Chancellor) was killed by a fallen power line, whilst out walking with his dog. Although we did not see eye-to-eye with all that he did with Seale-Hayne, there can be no doubt that Roland was a huge (figuratively and literally) force for the University, for Plymouth and for the region. His passing leaves a huge void in the drive to regenerate the city and in keeping the momentum going with the restructuring of the University of Plymouth.

And immediately before going to press, we heard of the passing of Geoffrey Dowrick, Principal of Seale-Hayne for 17 years. Professor Dowrick was at the forefront of much of the development and growth of the college physically and academically through the 70's and 80's. He presided over the start of degree courses, the hugely beneficial links with Plymouth Polytechnic and some massive building projects such as the Refectory and the Science Blocks. He attended the funeral of John Halley last year, and was very keen to get involved again in Seale-Haynian activity.

So what news from Seale-Hayne? As mentioned last year, the police are still using college as a training centre, and they appear to love it. But they plan to move back to Middlemoor in the autumn, and we're not really sure what happens then. There will no doubt be some conferences and general hiring of facilities, operated by a skeleton staff. There are rumours of various organisations / businesses / people who are interested in the site, but as far as we are aware, only one has made their intentions clear, and that is the Bidwell Brook Foundation who I mentioned in these pages last year.

Bidwell Brook now have a team of three people working on their plans for Seale-Hayne, and also the possibility of some serious financial backing from a Plymouth based business consortium. The University (through GVA Grimley of Bristol) seem to be saying that S-H is not for sale yet, and that BB must wait and compete in the open market when the sale is announced. It is suspected that they are hoping that development will eventually be possible and that the longer they wait, the more likely that will be. BB hopes to move things along more quickly than that, and we wish them well.

The dairy herd was sold in May last year and made good prices, netting the University around £100,000. In late September there was a further sale of 'surplus' farm machinery, which again achieved around £100,000. The farm is now predominantly grazing sheep and again, we're not sure what happens to the land and farm staff at the end of the year.

The Seale-Hayne Future group now meets twice a year, mainly to keep people aware of developments and to monitor news about the future of the site. The University needs to be aware that there is still a great deal of concern about what has happened and what will happen to Seale-Hayne, and the Future Group exists to maintain that awareness. The group is also still concerned about the demise of the assets of the Seale-Hayne Charity and we await with interest the eventual price tag attached to those assets, now in the name of the University.

But if the story of the demise of Seale-Hayne including the plans for large-scale development, the lack of information, the involvement of planners, consultants and councils, the secrecy, the refusal of Government Departments to get involved and the skulduggery of it all interests you, take a look at <http://www.save-wye.org>. Imperial College London managed to wind Wye Agricultural College down enough to justify closing it, for reasons it appears, which were not purely academic! It would be easy to insert "Seale-Hayne" instead of "Wye", and the story would remain the same. 'Save-Wye' lost the college but it seems they have maintained the countryside. Who can tell what the SHF Group has also managed to prevent so far?

Ian Goodwin – April 07

Update 2008

There's not a great deal to report since 2007. We welcome a new Vice Chancellor at University of Plymouth, Professor Wendy Purcell. She took post in January 2008 after the untimely death of Roland Levinsky early last year. We wish Wendy every success in the ongoing expansion and development of the University. Her new position will be challenging at first, as she has been landed with the imminent sale of Rolle College in Exmouth as well as Seale-Hayne, both sales generating quite a lot of negative publicity for the university. Hardly surprising really when one considers the quite fantastic sums of money that the university will pocket from so little outlay - along with the closure of two respected and successful educational institutions. The communities of both Exmouth and Newton Abbot are very anxious about what happens at these campuses, and the university and their agents are being far from transparent and open about the sale processes.

But is there any news from Seale-Hayne? Well the police have all but gone, moving back to their refurbished headquarters at Middlemoor, near Exeter. The farm boasts boats and caravans and a lot of sheep, with Richard Newington running the place pretty well single-handedly. And at the time of writing, the tendering process for outright purchase of the site is in full swing with Stage 3 just finishing.

Stage 1 was to register an interest and give background financial and business information. We understand that there were between 15 and 20 initial bids at this stage, from which the agents (GVA Grimley of Bristol) sifted out 10 or 12 to be invited to proceed to Stage 2. At Stage 2 the tender became more formal and some detail of the intentions for Seale-Hayne were required along with general business plans and an indication of a financial offer.

We do not have any confirmed detail of the result of any stage! It is understood that the plans for Seale-Hayne from the Bidwell Brook School in Totnes (the Lifeworks Project), a group called Egregoria, (a Bristol based group who wish to establish a "University of Sustainability" at Seale-Hayne), and the Climate Change Group from Bovey Tracey (who wanted to establish a centre for research into Climate Change) have all failed to make it to the final stage of bidding. Information about these groups can be found at www.seale-hayne.com. This implies that education is low on the requirements list for the potential purchaser. At the time of writing (April 08) stage 3 is just closing.

Hopefully, by this time next year, things will have been sorted out and we will know more about the future of this historic site.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2009

It is always a shame to start the magazine with news of a death, especially when it is that of Jim Hosking who died in November last year. The Hosking family have a long association with Seale-Hayne. Jim followed his father and was a Governor of the college in the glory days and then as a Governor he battled against the initial merger plans with Plymouth Polytechnic. Having been proved right, he subsequently found himself heading the Seale-Hayne Future Group, after the University of Plymouth announced the closure. He was a stalwart of Agricultural Education and Agriculture in general, especially in Cornwall.

As for news from S-H this year, I'm tempted to reprint last year's update. Although a lot has happened in the past year, we are at the moment back to "square one", with Seale-Hayne once again for sale on the open market.

The formal tendering process in 2008 ended with what the university termed a "preferred buyer" in the shape of Buccleuch Properties, a Scottish based development company. Through persistent questioning and meetings, we discovered that although they had been accepted as the new owners, they had very sketchy plans about what they would do at Seale-Hayne. There was talk of a retirement village based around the quadrangle, with new freehold "serviced apartments" to the East and West (goodbye 'Frank Park'!), and a further housing development of up to 1200 houses around the old farm buildings and the flatter lands. No mention of education anywhere, although when pressed, a primary school was mentioned - but ONLY IF the 1200 houses were achieved!

As 2008 drew to a close and with the rapid decline in the stability of the global financial situation, it seems that the backers for the retirement village got cold feet, which in turn forced Buccleuch into reducing its offer for Seale-Hayne; we have no idea what the offer was in the first place. The university seem to be unhappy with the current offer, and the latest news (April 09) is that Seale-Hayne is now open to informal tender in several lots. We (SHF) suspect that the land is aimed at a local farmer(s), and the buildings at prospective developers. The tender process closes at the end of May and we will endeavour to keep the website updated, although news is extremely difficult to extract from the University! Look at: www.seale-hayne.com

Seale-Hayne Future is still striving to maintain education at the site. We are still meeting with the group from Bristol, (no longer known as Egregoria), who are still very keen to establish a Centre for Sustainability. Many plans and proposals have been written and many meetings of people have been held, all of who agree that such an establishment is desperately needed and would flourish at Seale.

And that is where the frustration surrounding this issue originates. It does not matter who we speak to - industry leaders / politicians / residents of Newton Abbot / planners / councillors etc, they all without exception agree that such a centre is a great idea and would be hugely important for the region and the country, and that keeping the campus in educational use is of paramount importance to the area. But, if we mention it to the University, they turn the other cheek! We have not been told why.

The University of Plymouth has high sustainability ideals. They are ranking near the top of the league of U.K. universities in the “green” agenda, so why don’t they jump at the chance of having a Centre of Sustainability on their own property? Maybe they have other sustainability education plans. Maybe it would hurt if education flourished again at Seale-Hayne after they closed it down. Maybe they hope that they will raise far more money selling to developers than educationalists, and they have ambitious plans to use that money for their own green agenda. We ask often, but are never told why they won’t even discuss a Centre of Sustainability at Seale-Hayne. I will have to leave you guessing at their reason.

I conclude by saying goodbye and a huge thank you to Martin Hall, who has decided to seek his fortune away from these shores. Martin has led the Seale-Haynian Club and the Seale-Hayne Future Group for many years. We will miss his chairmanship skills, commitment and tact at our meetings and his generosity at the bar. Good luck Martin. (And a warning to our Australian contingent; reinforce your wickets!)

Ian Goodwin

Update 2010

At last everything has settled down after the last 7 or 8 turbulent years since Plymouth University announced the closure of Seale-Hayne College. A sale was agreed late in 2009 and the principle buyer was The Dame Hannah Rogers Trust, a charity that provides education and care for young people with severe disabilities.

Generally there is approval. Given what could have happened, the 'Future Group' and The Seale-Haynians Committee are relieved that the new owners are an educational based business and, from what we've seen so far, the DHRT are enthralled with Seale-Hayne and very respectful of the history and the uniqueness of the place. There are exciting plans to turn Seale-Hayne into an inspirational interactive centre involving education, research, arts and crafts, conference, music and relaxation amongst many other things. The plans are still forming with input from many sources including us, the Seale-Haynians. We have a good working relationship with Hannahs; one that I know, will be mutually beneficial to both parties.

Unsurprisingly the DHRT needed support to enable the purchase of Seale-Hayne. A local farmer – Andrew Hayllor, has bought most of the farmland and is intending to produce food for Riverford amongst others. Many of the houses with the old farm buildings / agri-lab / farm manager's house and some other land has been bought by another partner, and we fully expect some development plans here. Rest assured at SHF we will keep an eye on the planning applications!

But all in all we feel an inkling of success at SHF, in that by keeping up the pressure on the University and in raising the profile of the history and importance of Seale-Hayne within the media, the local councils and indeed in parliament, our efforts have helped in preventing the large scale housing developments that have been proposed.

Of course the University can now sit back and enjoy the tidy profit they have pocketed out of manipulating the charity that was Seale-Hayne, although we are still not sure how big the profit is. The Seale-Hayne Educational Trust (which replaced Seale-Hayne College Trust) remains as an investment fund that offers bursaries and grants for research, but now that money has actually changed hands for the rest of S-H's assets, wouldn't it be nice if the University were to boost the charity's investment with just some of its original value?

I'm sure that we all wish Hannahs the greatest of good luck at Seale-Hayne. It is lovely to see the place alive and buzzing again and to know that many more people will benefit from those buildings and the general ambience of the place in the same way that we all did. We are generously assured that Seale-Haynians will always be welcomed by Hannahs should they ever wish to rekindle the memories.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2011

Delightfully, these updates are now getting a bit dull, with only good news to report!

It feels as though Hannahs has been at Seale-Hayne for centuries. The place is alive with enthusiasm and activity, and having spent the last 10 years turning like the wheels of a "Lely Acrobat" (that dates me!), Charles can now again rest peacefully in his grave and watch Hannahs at Seale-Hayne grow.

If you haven't called in yet, and you find yourself back in Devon at any time, do make the effort to see what is going on up at your old college. Admittedly, it is not full of young agricultural students starting out on their glittering careers and causing mayhem in the process, but it is still pretty good. You will be made to feel very welcome.

The Seale-Haynian Committee has been quite closely involved in the changes thanks mainly to the enthusiasm of Ray Bartlett. He keeps us informed, rallies the troops to help with many tasks at S-H and pecks away at the management until he gets the information that we need to know! I would like to thank Ray for the incredible time and effort that he puts in for our club, for Hannahs and for Seale-Hayne. It is very much appreciated.

The Seale-Hayne Future Group has only met once in the year. There seems little point in meeting when there is little we can do or influence at the moment. The business of the S-H trust should be on our minds, but in the current economic climate and with the financial pressures that are on UK universities, I would not rate our chances highly of getting any significant further investment into the trust from Plymouth at the present time.

The trust is itself performing quite well and, although I believe that an injustice has been done to the Seale-Hayne Charity - which we will follow up in due course, I find that as time passes, the wounds start to heal. There is now a splendid Charles Seale-Hayne Library at the heart of the University with plenty of reference to the man and to the college. And Ray, Simon Daligan, others and myself are also involved in showing the history of S-H in various ways at Hannahs - with huge encouragement from Bronwen Hewitt, CEO of the Dame Hannah Rogers Trust. So we should at least be content that, amongst all the changes that have happened and will happen in the years to come, the Seale-Hayne that we experienced will not be forgotten.

Just by reading the "news" section at the end of every magazine, you get a sense of the effect that Seale-Hayne College had on the students who passed through it. It is evident that the place is now having a similar effect on the staff of Hannahs and also on the young adults there, who are experiencing Seale-Hayne for themselves today. And we wish the best of luck to them all!

Ian Goodwin

Update 2012

I spoke too soon last year about the updates “getting a bit dull”.

The good news is still going on at Hannahs, and in huge quantities. Every time I go to Seale-Hayne it seems busier, more interesting and more innovative. Hannahs’ clients are indeed lucky people to have such a facility available to them to help them through the special challenges with which they have been presented in their lives.

And with Hannahs safely in place, we were actually debating whether we still needed “The Seale-Hayne Future Group”, but Teignbridge District Council came to our rescue with their proposal for a 20-year ‘Strategic Plan’ for the area, earmarking a **massive chunk** of the Seale-Hayne Estate for future building development. Jaws dropped open - not only amongst our group, but also within Hannahs and also the farmer who now owns the farm. Plymouth University’s original 2002 plans suddenly looked like chicken feed! More letters, more media coverage and more outrage, just when we thought we had a secure future for Seale-Hayne.

Luckily, TDC have had hundreds of submissions from the public about the plans, especially as there are other tracts of fine farming land included in the proposals as well as the S-H area (for some reason called “Houghton Barton”). But then on the last afternoon allowed for submissions, yet another proposal was offered up to the council, this time drawn up by Savills of Exeter in conjunction with “Clarence Estates”, a “consortium of local landowners” apparently, but NOT Hannahs nor the owner of the farm. And in a glossy brochure full of *developer-speak*, it proposes that the **entire** Seale-Hayne Farm be developed into a “vibrant and sustainable community” of many thousands of houses, work units, green spaces etc. with all the biodiversity and social inclusiveness stuff that planners dream about.

We have been in close consultation with Hannahs and the farm owner about the best way to prevent this new risk of development over Seale-Hayne and, lo and behold, once again in S-H’s history we smell skullduggery. It would seem that the original developer, (the third party in the purchase when Hannahs bought S-H from the University), had agreed to build between 120 to 200 houses, giving ‘uplift’ to the University and to Hannahs to enable essential refurbishment of the grade-2 listed buildings. This developer appears to have taken on responsibility for the whole S-H estate and more, and we suspect that the more houses he can persuade TDC to accept into their 20-year plan, then the more cash he stands to pocket! And apparently by some quirky legal interpretation of the sale contract, we believe that Hannahs and the owner of the farm are legally prevented from objecting to this further development of the estate.

Needless to say, we have written to the planners and highlighted the issues directly to them and also via the press. We liaise closely with a local group of property owners and also with the ‘Transition Towns’ Group who do a great job locally and nationally in talking with councils about sustainable and ecological planning. With Hannahs, we have proposed alternative development possibilities to TDC, re-drawn the maps and also urged brown-field development instead of ruining Seale-Hayne’s green-field food-producing land.

We have also highlighted the Government’s very recently issued National Planning Framework, which directs all planning committees to consult with their community about development and also insists that for urban expansion, planners use green fields only as a last resort.

At the time of writing, Teignbridge planners are “in consultation”, timetabled to submit a revised plan in May for further consultation over the summer. They promise a public hearing with an independent planning inspector before the plan is finalised in early 2013. We will be there! In the mean time, we will endeavour to keep updating this news on the website at www.seale-hayne.com.

But as I said earlier, Hannahs goes from strength to strength at Seale-Hayne. There are always new and challenging things going on up there and, rather ironically, they may soon be welcoming agricultural students again! Hannahs have formed a partnership with Bicton College in South Devon to initially run courses in garden design and floristry, but with a view

to move into agriculture and other land-based courses. Now *there's* a novel idea at Seale-Hayne! Let's hope it takes off.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2013

You will recall from the last update (May 2012) that the 'Future Group' had remained in place to liaise with Hannahs about the TDC 20-year strategic plan that proposes development over a large part of the Seale-Hayne Farm. This is moving very slowly and is now subject to further delay. SHF responded to the original document from TDC who then produced 'Plan Teignbridge' in November 2012, the plan that they are going to submit to the Secretary of State for approval, which if approved will then become the guide for Teignbridge planning for the ensuing 20 years.

We were invited to submit further comments about the document (which we did), which will be included with the submission of the plan to the Secretary of State, a submission that was timetabled for February 2013. This has now been delayed until June 2013 as the Government have asked that it be combined with the Council's proposals for the Community Infrastructure Levy (C.I.L.), a levy that will be imposed on developers and/or landowners (alongside 'Section 106' agreements) and is intended to help pay for infrastructure projects such as roads, education, recreation and public transport. TDC (and many other councils) needed more time to get these C.I.L. proposals worked up, hence the delay.

TDC are hoping that 'Plan Teignbridge' and the 'C.I.L.' will be examined in late Summer 2013 and, if found sound, will be adopted in early 2014. *"Once adopted this will provide a comprehensive planning blueprint for Teignbridge between 2013 - 2033, directing where new things can go and offering much better protection for places the Council does not earmark for development."* (TDC website). And conversely, one assumes, LITTLE protection for places that the Council HAS earmarked for development. We wait with fingers crossed . . . For more information look at; <http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=16268>

As Chairman of SHF, I lead the representations to TDC, taking advice and correspondence from the rest of the group, so the Seale-Hayne Future Group has not needed to physically meet in the last year. Most of SHF are involved as the Seale-Haynians Committee anyway where meetings always include a lively discussion about Seale-Hayne, the Estate and the Charity.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2014

In last year's update, we were amid discussions around Teignbridge Council's 20-year strategic plan and the delayed submission of the plan to the Secretary of State. A developer had offered a large part of the Seale-Hayne farm to TDC for development and SHF had made submissions to try and protect the farm and the college buildings.

The plan was submitted (including part of the S-H farm) and the date of inspection was announced, and those who had an interest were asked if they would like to be present and speak at the enquiry in September. It was made clear that unless **new information** was forthcoming, there was no requirement to speak - the enquiry would have lasted for years otherwise. But on closer inspection of the thousands of pages submitted *post-submission* to the inspector by many people, it was discovered that a consortium of landowners had engaged Savills land agents to submit a 500-page glossy detailed proposal to massively increase the Seale-Hayne development (known as the Houghton Barton proposal for some reason). It offered far more of the S-H farm, along with land East towards Forches Cross, to build thousands of houses.

And because of a legal quirk in the sale contract with the University, neither Hannahs nor the land-owning farmer were allowed to object to these proposals.

So at short notice, SHF gained a place at the enquiry and along with Ray Bartlett (representing a "concerned alumnus"), we presented the case for Seale-Hayne and Hannahs to the inspector. And to cut a long story short, the revised Savills plan for the whole farm development was dismissed, although the original proposal for development up to and just beyond Howton Lane was accepted into the 20-year strategic plan for TDC. For the details, search for "plan" on the TDC website.

Not a complete victory for common sense, but certainly a victory for the protection of most of Seale-Hayne's green fields and the historic building now housing a very worthwhile charity.

Maybe that is the end that episode for now, although just because the 20-year plan has been accepted (as of April 2014), it doesn't mean that the farmland allocated **will** become housing. Any application will still be open to objection or support in the normal manner. And neither does it mean that the farmland *not allocated* will not be subject to further planning applications. The plan is just a framework for the council to work with, but it does give them extra credence to approve or refuse subsequent planning applications.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2015

Well it's nice to be able to report a fairly quiet year since the last update, especially with reference to the Seale-Hayne Future Group and the various planning proposals and schemes surrounding Seale-Hayne.

The houses are creeping ever nearer, with the Hele Park development nearly finished. The land just West of Highweek will now be unrecognisable to most who studied at S-H, as it is disappearing fast under tarmac and concrete. It is hard to believe that buyers will be found for this many houses, but according to the statisticians, even more are needed. As yet, they haven't encroached onto the land at Seale-Hayne, but it won't be long.

'The Dartmoor Halfway' is still closed, completely boarded up with no real signs of action despite the hoardings suggesting a "total refurbishment". Heavitree brewery will miss a trick if the new residents arrive and the local pub is still closed. Maybe it's deliberate and following 'The Toby Jug' route of being supposedly unviable, and therefore needing to be converted for residential use, like some others also in the Heavitree portfolio.

A surely predictable consequence of all the housing is that the traffic along the Ashburton Road (and indeed through Newton Abbot in general), currently spends most of its time sitting still. I'm sure that if the developers had spent some time at S-H themselves, someone in the buildings department (the late John Carpenter) would have suggested that it would be a good idea to sort all the support systems out *before* they shipped the animals in!

Ian Goodwin

Update 2016

Another quiet year with reference to the Seale-Hayne Future Group and the various planning proposals and schemes surrounding Seale-Hayne. Not much changed in 2015, the Hele Park development is nearly finished and the Dartmoor Halfway Inn is still “Awaiting Substantial Refurbishment”!

Hannahs at Seale-Hayne has had an interesting year and we are pleased to report that they are going from strength to strength. For those of us lucky enough to live in Devon and therefore able to visit regularly, it has become (as play-write Nick Stimpson penned), “A Place of Constant Surprises”. Forever changing its offering to visitors, there is always something different to welcome you into the quadrangle and a varied programme of inventive and enjoyable public events on offer. And always, the atmospheric bistro in our old dining hall for coffee or snacks and lunches or dinners. And for every member of the public that partakes of this hospitality, the reward of knowing that a little bit of the money spent is going some way to help a very disadvantaged person in Hannahs’ care.

Now this ‘Update’ is usually about our battles with the University, the planners or the developers (or all three!), and I try to keep it factual and slightly ‘detached’. But whilst that front is quiet, we turn to a battle to *keep* Hannahs at Seale-Hayne. Because as with any charity, funding is the key, and Hannahs will struggle to survive at our college without proper funding. Their work is very labour intensive and the equipment needed is generally expensive but above all, Seale-Hayne has expensive buildings to occupy and maintain.

And it is for this reason that the committee of The Seale-Haynians has agreed to ask our members to help, if they possibly can. We see it as important ‘club business’ that Hannahs stays at Seale-Hayne. We fought a very long battle to avoid the alternatives and we now find that Hannahs are excellent custodians of the place. As well as doing unbelievable work for the most disadvantaged in our society, they are always exceedingly generous to, and full of respect for, our alumni club in many ways. So maybe we can help in return.

In the magazine, you will find plenty of references to Hannahs’ website and donating. PLEASE, if you can, consider getting involved as it is in all of our interests for the Hannahs charity to blossom. Regular giving is by far the most useful income for them, but of course anything will be welcomed! Our own website carries a link to their donating pages.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2017

Well it was *nearly* another 'quiet' year for the Seale-Hayne Future Group (SHF) . . .

You may recall in 2012 the "30-year Strategic Plan" released by Teignbridge District Council and the following consultation period, ending with a planning enquiry in September 2013 under a government appointed inspector. TDC have now released what they call the "Development Framework Plan", which outlines a process for the development around Highweek and Seale-Hayne.

The inspector seemed to have changed the plan very little. He added some employment land at Forches Cross, added some provisos and recommendations and also (after our submissions) dismissed the proposal to build even more houses over the entire Seale-Hayne Farm.

During the 2012 consultation period for the original Strategic Plan, SHF commented about the vagueness of the mapping, but received no response. I suppose we shouldn't be surprised then that the map in the latest plan is completely different to the original! Housing is proposed to replace 'green infrastructure' areas around Seale-Hayne, and also an area of 'employment land' around the old farm buildings including the buildings themselves. Housing is also planned for the car parks around the sports hall.

Another large area of 'green infrastructure' also disappears under housing below Fieldbank and Stanmore houses (either side of the corner below the sports hall). Both owners bought their properties after the original plan was released, assuming that they would at least be close to 'green infrastructure' in the long term. They are understandably very concerned and both contacted SHF via the website for help and advice.

The Development Framework Plan is currently in 'consultation' and the time for public submissions is over. SHF has asked for the maps to be re-aligned with the original, as vague as it was. We have also asked that any development around the college be sympathetic with the setting of the buildings, a point we raised at the 2013 enquiry and which was emphasised by the inspector in his report but is not emphasised in the new plan. Additionally, we have asked that the hyphen be inserted each time the name Seale-Hayne is written in the plan! Watch this space. (Or see the TDC planning portal website).

The November newsletter mailing to our 2,800 strong database achieved a magnificent response on behalf of Hannahs, thank you. It also renewed contact with many of our members whose subscriptions had lapsed, welcome back!

Ian Goodwin

Update 2018

In the 2017 Update, the “Development Framework Plan” for the NA1 area was in ‘consultation phase’ and Seale-Hayne Future (SHF) had made a few submissions to Teignbridge Council planners about the vagueness of the mapping and the spelling of “Seale-Hayne”. After consultation, the final DFP was presented to the Planning Committee on 21st November 2017 for adoption and recommendation to the Executive.

Although the mapping is still vague and the detail of most of the proposed development is still to be determined, it is always good to realise that the ‘authorities’ have at least noticed comments from interested parties in this type of consultation process. The revised DFP presented to the Executive has all the amendments highlighted in red and much of the redness is from “Seale Hayne” being altered to read “Seale-Hayne”! A small but cherished victory.

All planning applications will still have to be submitted and approved in the usual way and should align within the DFP and the “30-year Strategic Plan”, but both these documents include the following wording: to *“protect the long-term use and setting of the listed buildings at Seale-Hayne and enable the campus and uses on site to form part of the new community”*.

The 650 house development at Hele Park and Mile End is now nearing completion and there are a further 1,100 houses to build over the 30-years, as well as a new ‘main road’ from Forches Cross to where the Seale-Hayne drive (Howton Lane) meets the A383. A new road is planned to link the college to this new road.

All this information can be viewed in detail on the planning portal of Teignbridge District Council.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2019

With Hannahs well and truly settled at Seale-Hayne, these updates may have seemed a little bit dull over the last few years, but that has now all changed.

Unfortunately, Hannahs just couldn't make S-H a financially sensible operation within their business. They had to borrow initially to purchase the college and that, coupled with some unfortunate events at their Ivybridge site left them at the mercy of the banks. Understandably, they must protect and concentrate on their core business of caring for the most profoundly disadvantaged young adults in our society, and to be able to do that they sadly needed to let Seale-Hayne go.

The news broke just before Christmas 2018 and Bristol based agents CBRE were appointed to handle the sale. Naturally, we quickly made enquiries and at first could easily access the on-line sale portal. But it soon became a secured site for some reason, with only those seriously bidding able to log in to it.

Luckily, the 'sale brochure' had already been seen and it became clear why the site was rapidly made secure. The brochure proposed that the Teignbridge "30-year Strategic Plan" could be extended to include housing development on a further 20+ acres of land immediately adjacent to the college buildings. In fact there was an 'illustrative plan' showing how 200 more houses could be squeezed around the Grade 2 listed Quadrangle on land below Frank Parkinson Hall and also in the Botany Gardens. No wonder they weren't keen for the likes of the Seale-Hayne Future Group to be able to see the proposal!

The current TDC 30-year plan however still includes wording to protect the setting of Seale-Hayne and when the CBRE brochure was highlighted to TDC's planning department, the reply considered the proposal to be "somewhat presumptuous and misleading at this stage". Good news, but we are well aware that developers have various ways and means of getting permission for new housing, so we will be keeping an eye open for new proposals.

At the time of going to press we still don't know who has bought Seale-Hayne, but any news will be made available on our website as and when we get it.

Ian Goodwin

Update 2020

The Seale-Hayne site has been bought by “European Land Ltd”. Our chairman, **Ray Bartlett** has been in touch with the new owner and keeps our club well represented; thank you Ray. European Land are very cooperative and are happy for us to use and maintain the S-H archive in the Old Library which is a huge relief and we are very grateful to them.

European Land are creating a ‘Business Campus’ at College and have made most of the assets at Seale-Hayne available for rent via agents “Noon Roberts”, who are based in Newton Abbot and Exeter. It will be interesting to see the take-up and the subsequent range of businesses that arrive to use the many diverse facilities that are on offer at College. We wish them every success and hope that the site becomes once more the busy and industrious place that we remember and that it deserves to be.

A welcome bonus is that there is some well needed maintenance happening at last. The years of neglect from the University and the subsequent lack of investment from Hannahs (who simply couldn’t afford it) have left Seale-Hayne looking weary and in some areas, almost derelict.

The “Houghton Barton” planning process is still ongoing for development around College and along the Ashburton Road. Moves to build outside of the Local Plan were reported in last year’s “Update” and there are now planning applications in at TDC from Bloor and Redrow. They claim to not be able to deliver the planned number of houses unless they’re allowed to carve up a further 24-acres of the Seale-Hayne Farm. This is outside of the agreed and approved Teignbridge Strategic Plan and, as Seale-Hayne Future Group Chairman, I have highlighted this to the Council’s planners. Consultation and decisions are delayed by the coronavirus shenanigans, so we are waiting to see how this progresses.

The A382 from the A38 at Drumbridges to Newton Abbot is currently undergoing major work to connect with the new road that will pass below Seale-Hayne and connect Forches Cross to the Ashburton Road, bypassing Newton Abbot.

Ian Goodwin