



by Sir Richard FitzHerbert

*Happy Christmas and a Joyous New Year to all my readers!*

## The campaign trail

The vacancy for a Councillor on the Derbyshire Dales District Council (DDDC), due to the resignation of Phil Chell in the Ashbourne South ward, brought about a by-election in the last week of October. The increasing size of the ward due to new housing resulted in the decision for local Councillors to leaflet constituents to help Conservative candidate and local businessman Dermot Murphy in his efforts to claim the seat. I duly did my stint on the campaign trail and, as ever, found fascinating nooks and crannies in of a part of the town that I usually only drive through on the way to Derby. Some particular constituents seemed unperturbed by proceedings and I am happy to report that Dermot beat off the efforts of his two fellow candidates by a majority of 161. We look forward to seeing Dermot in the Council Chamber in Matlock.



Friendly leafleters

### 'AT RISK' IN DERBYSHIRE

One of my responsibilities at the District Council is as 'Heritage Champion', for which I am entitled to an opinion on the proposed changes to properties in this category at planning committee stage. I am also involved in monitoring the 'Heritage At Risk' register which lists important buildings that are perhaps not as well looked after as they should be. Imagine my surprise when the annual report from Historic England appears and our Church, St Mary's, is listed as one of 16 Places of Worship 'at risk' in Derbyshire. It appears alongside St Peter's at Edensor and St John's at Alkmonkton in this category because it is noted that there is 'localised damp staining including to the tympanum over the south door and the nave roof requires re-slating in the near future', and this despite all our fund-raising efforts during the year. It is a fascinating document, produced by Historic England and full of Derbyshire gems - visit [www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk) - our further fundraising has to start now!

### A farewell tribute

I had never been to a funeral at Norbury's St Mary and St Barlok's Church and such was the size of the congregation that I sat in the chancel for the celebration of the life of Timothy Clowes. Norbury is the ancient ancestral home of the FitzHerbert family with the granting of the Manor to William, son of Herbert in 1125, and it was an honour to be present for this uplifting thanksgiving service, sitting next to the tombs of my 15th century ancestors. In church there was no eulogy to Tim (he did not want one) but rather a selection of his favourite hymns, readings and prayers with the congregation leaving to the Louis Armstrong classic 'What a Wonderful World'. What a show, what a church, what a great man!



St Mary & St Barlock Church, Norbury

Photo: Ashley Franklin



Farm sale

### GOLDEN-AGERS

After 50 happy years my neighbours, Chris Carr and his wife Barbara, are retiring from farming the holding known as Home Farm on the Estate.

The culmination of their tenancy brought with it a Farm Sale hosted by Bagshaws at the end of September.

Despite the last minute hitch of a beech tree blown down across the road (ably cleared by Ben), the sale saw over 400 people scouring the 200 lots for a bargain. Products on sale ranged from tractors and farming apparatus to lots of a 'loose agricultural base' such as bags of kindling and milk churns from the 1960s! These last items attracted as much attention as the others and a healthy total was achieved. The land will be split between other local farmers and the traditional buildings will provide me with another headache for the future. Happy retirement to Chris and Barbara.

### WEDDING FINERY

Returning from some appointments on the Estate one cold November morning I was surprised to find a couple dressed in their wedding finery at the front door of the Hall. On approaching the duo I recognized them as a couple called Franco and Tiffany who had booked the Butler's Retreat apartment in the Hall through the AirBnB portal. Without a hint of embarrassment Franco asked if I could take some photographs of them with the house as a backdrop. Apparently it is the custom of Chinese couples to take snaps of themselves beside or in front of an impressive building to show off their impending nuptials to their friends. I did not hesitate to comply



Franco and Tiffany

with his request and the result can be seen in the adjacent photograph! What did impress me was that they had hauled the wedding dress across the world in their suitcases as well as all their other clothes for a fortnight's trip to Europe. Quite a trek! Franco has already emailed me to say that he will return next year after their marriage to stay with us again!