



A BARONET'S DIARY

SIR RICHARD FITZHERBERT



Ashbourne's traders working to keep its reputation as an excellent place to shop fresh and current

HIGH STREET NEWS

There is great concern around the town of Ashbourne about its shopping experience. The department store Bennetts closed in early April, causing a great deal of angst not only for its staff but also its loyal customers. Following that, in late August, three further stores have closed, namely the flower shop Absolutely Fabulous, the men's outfitters Graves, and Dig Street's MSR News (from whom I bought my weekly Lottery ticket). As you drive through the town lots of

premises are empty and the remaining storekeepers are deeply worried about the future of their trade and of the town as it becomes populated with cafés, charity shops and the new craze of gin bars. Of course, the rise in internet shopping with the comfort of purchasing goods from the sofa and high business rates are factors in the issue but the traders of Ashbourne are fighting back to rejuvenate the retail offer. I will write further on progress in future issues.

LOCAL SUPPORT FROM A CHARITABLE TRUST

The Ashbourne Partnership Charitable Trust is looking for suitable projects to support. The Trust was formed with full charitable status to support groups and organisations in the town and surrounding villages after a legacy from the Margery Salt Estate. Managed by five Ashburnians the Trustees are seeking Projects from not-for-profit organisations that will contribute to the benefit of the town.

For further details please email info@ashbournecharitabletrust.org. Good luck with your application.



UP ON THE ROOF

It's not often that I visit a home that has more chimneys than Tissington Hall. Yet on a castle-creeping trip to Scotland we visited Hopetoun House next to the Forth Road Bridge at Edinburgh. After a tour of the home of the Marquess of Linlithgow one climbs 92 steps to the roof of this magnificent Adam-designed building for the most amazing view. Whilst up there I counted the chimneys but gave up at 65. Tissington has 48. If you are visiting the Scottish Capital Hopetoun is well worth a visit.

GOODBYE EAST MIDLANDS TRAINS: HELLO EMR!

East Midlands Trains is no more. The franchise for the Sheffield to London line has passed onto the new East Midlands Railways team (EMR) as of 21st August. This company, owned by Dutch national rail operator Abellio, plans to run more fuel-efficient and environmentally friendly trains on its more frequent service. In its hype, EMR has promised an investment of over £600 million on enhancements in the eight years of its franchise. The trains will also have a new purple and white livery to reflect the industrial history of our area. We await these developments but I can report on my first trip back on an EMR train with a positive note - the Wi-Fi worked!

FAIR COMMENT?

Social media is a strange phenomenon. Both the Hall and Herbert's Tearooms have their own pages on the site TripAdvisor where visitors comment on their personal experience. Invariably the reports are complimentary apart from the odd wait for food (on busy days) and I respond appropriately. One visitor enjoyed their guided tour to the Hall and commented that I was 'a jolly chap, casually dressed in shorts'. Another, however, only gave us three stars out of a possible five as they said that they 'walked past the Hall which holds quite a history, now used as a wedding venue and for other social events, but didn't get a chance to look round.' Three stars seems a little unfair I think since he never came in. Strange...