



Over the past couple of months the Neighbourhood Plan Heritage working group has been holding its meetings at the John Brunt VC public house where part of their discussions have focused on developing a list of properties within the town which are of historic merit. One of these properties is the John Brunt itself. Sadly, the future of this property is uncertain as the pub closed a few weeks ago. Most people to whom the working group have spoken agree that this building should be preserved and ideally should re-open as a family friendly pub providing meals, something Paddock Wood town centre desperately needs.

The John Brunt VC was originally known as the Kent Arms. The building in which it is housed was originally a private house occupied by Thomas Mitchell in the area then known as Rats Castle. It seems to have been converted into a pub between 1851 and 1861, the first landlord being John Moseley. From around 1870 until at least 1901 the pub was run by the Bowles family. By 1911, the landlord was James Walker, father of the local historian Jack Walker. Legend has it that the building was haunted by a woman with long hair who had come to a sad end.

The Kent Arms was formally renamed the John Brunt VC on 3 September 1947, the only pub in the country named after a VC winner. In 1997 its name was changed by new owners to the Hopping Hooden Horse but this proved to be unpopular with the locals and when the pub changed hands again in 2001 the name reverted to the John Brunt VC. On November 8th 2008 a new pub sign was unveiled by Eric Knight, who knew John Brunt as a schoolboy.

To keep up to date with what is going on with all aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan including the heritage issues you are welcome to join the Steering Group at their meetings which take place in the Wesley Centre on the third Wednesday of every month at 8.30pm.

Meryl Flashman
Secretary to the Paddock Wood Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group