

# The Creswell Chronicles

*Keeping You In Touch With Creswell Parish Council*

January - April 2017

Issue No: 50

## Tom Doubtfire – A tribute

Tom served Creswell Parish Council with great distinction... from 1976-79 as a Councillor and in later years as Clerk from 2001 to 2012.

Finding the most appropriate words to describe Tom almost certainly depends which side of the conversation you were on ... because if Tom wanted some action undertaken or was searching out information then my goodness he could be a --- 'tour-de-force'.

Confronted by the meek and mild "YES-man" (or woman) who would simply say 'Yes' to anything you asked but then did nothing - or by the 'Blocker' ... for whom the answer is always "No ... it can't be done ... or, NO, we don't have that information..." Tom would take them all on with vigour and determination

... and with his experience of frontline commerce and a detailed and often insightful knowledge of Social and Political History and Public Administration, combined with his dogged determination and persistence, very few proved any real obstacle.

I often imagine some poor office clerk holding on to the phone, hand over the receiver, desperately looking for help, mouthing the words "It's that Tom Doubtfire on the phone again ..." and everyone else diving for cover.

One thing you quickly learnt about Tom was that he rarely acted on impulse. When he came up with an idea or a proposed plan of action you could be sure that he had already thought it through - in some considerable detail - and done his research, working out what was possible, practical and affordable.

Having been stonewalled in his quest to reduce the existing 40 mph Speed Limit through Creswell Grove, "Detective Tom" established that the real problem was that the authorities simply did not have sufficient, reliable data to make the judgement – and what they had was, at best, incomplete.

And so, with Angela by his side, notebook, pen and camera in hand, and with the neighbours on full alert, Tom patiently, persistently and with dogged determination produced an irrefutable Dossier ... in the face of which the 40 mph limit through Creswell Grove became 30.

But these campaigns were never about Tom himself, this was Tom the resident and the fellow council-tax payer, looking out for his friends and neighbours;

This was Tom the "Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer" – working for the good of the Parish and doing his best for the Parish Council, protecting and enhancing the Council's standing and reputation.

*Continued overleaf.....*



**Creswell Parish – 'The Gateway to Stafford'**

## Tom Doubtfire, a tribute (continued)

One of Tom's greatest local achievements – and this will be a lasting memorial since it takes the form of 6½ tonnes of Derbyshire Gritstone – is, of course, the Perrin Memorial.

Having become aware of, and intrigued by, the largely forgotten story of the death in 1944 of a young American Pilot here on the northern edge of Stafford, Tom first tapped into local childhood memories and then researched the events of that day far and wide until the full story and the true facts began to emerge and, with the support of the Parish Council, the idea of a Memorial was born. Then Tom had a **brainwave** – which turned out to be a **stroke of genius**: - 'To involve the Americans'.

Spotting that an American company had just acquired a major interest in developing the land around the crash site, Tom correctly surmised that they might take a real interest in the remarkable story of this highly decorated young American pilot in what was now their own backyard. But even Tom never foresaw just how far-reaching this simple idea would spread.

After the most amazing final 6 months of detailed planning and negotiation, the Perrin Memorial was unveiled on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007 with magnificent splendour and full cross-Atlantic involvement, with this tiny Parish of Creswell gaining international media coverage ... and Tom himself taking part, on the day, in a live, on-air radio interview with a Radio Station in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

In terms of service to the Parish, Tom holds the unique distinction of having being Councillor, Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Parish Council and later, for 11 years, being employed as its Clerk.

To mark that fact, in 2013, Tom became the first ever recipient of the highest award any Parish Council can bestow - **Honorary Freedom of the Parish**.

**This year's amenity visits are 8th April & 7th October.  
The refuse lorry will be parked in Wilkes Wood From 10am-12pm**

### **Creswell Parish Council Annual Public Meeting**

**Monday 3rd April 2017 at 7.00pm**

**To be held in the main school hall, Tillington Manor Primary School, Young Avenue, Holmcroft.**

**All residents are welcome, refreshments provided.  
This meeting includes a presentation about Speedwatch.**

The Parish Clerk and Chairman walked the whole of Creswell Grove last week and reported all the potholes and blocked grids, as we regularly do throughout the Parish. However, any residents that find problems can also do this at any time via the phone line or website:

<https://apps2.staffordshire.gov.uk/web/reportfault/#top>

0300 111 8000

**To find out more, go to:  
[www.creswellparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.creswellparishcouncil.co.uk)**

# Creswell Parish Council

*Please contact us about any  
issues of concern*

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