



From left: the Devises Market Cross, around which sacks of wheat and barley were traded in the early 1800s; a busy, narrow shopping street today; and the red brick Wadworth Brewery dominating the town centre.



project. The locals have now taken it on to continue the work.

“We only plough to 4in (10cm) deep to avoid disrupting any archaeology, and we leave some areas of our land to grow wild,” says Judy. “As a result, we frequently see hares, barn owls, tree sparrows and corn bunting. Katie always says: ‘What a wonderful office’.

“May is particularly lovely. Our herd are out grazing again, all around the stones. We’re cutting grass, making hay and rearing calves. There’s a sense of calm and peace to the land here that’s incredibly special.”

### Strategic site

Eight miles to the south, lies the charming market town of Devises. With its alleyways and narrow streets, it dates back to the 11th century. The name comes from the Latin *ad divisas*, meaning at the boundaries, indicating its site at the meeting of three boundaries, the parishes of Rowde, Potterne and Bishops Canning. The Normans built a wooden motte and bailey castle here in 1080, replaced by 1121 with a stone structure.

“The castle was demolished following the Battle of Roundway in 1643,” says David Dawson, director of the Wiltshire Museum in the town. This was one of the only major Royalist successes of the Civil War. “Devises lay in a strategic position. On 13 July, William Waller tried to stop Royalist forces from the West Country, led by Sir Ralph Hopton, from joining the King in Oxford. They clashed on the Roundway Down, just outside the city. When Oliver Cromwell later captured the castle, he ordered it to be destroyed.” Today’s castle is a multi-turreted Victorian offering, built as a private residence, and now turned into flats.

In the 1800s, the development of the wool, brewing and

snuff trades brought prosperity to Devises. At the peak of the wool trade in the 16th century, there were 300 looms operating in the town. Two brothers were Devises’ key entrepreneurs: John Anstie with textiles and Benjamin with snuff. The latter’s factory operated until the 1960s. In 1965, New Street, on the corner of which the factory was built, was renamed Snuff Street in its honour.

The continuing success of these trades remains visible in the fine brick, stone and stucco Georgian architecture throughout

Delivering beer the old-fashioned way, with Shire horses Max and Monty pulling a dray, a low, flat-bed sideless wagon.

