



the town. Of particular note are Long Street, with a wonderful cross-section of building styles, and the Market Place, with its Market Cross, the largest in the west of England. The Shambles, the original butter and poultry market, was built in 1835. It is now home to a popular covered market throughout the week. The former cheese market was built in 1752. It is known as the Old Town Hall because it was used as a town hall premises during the erection of a new building in the 19th century. Designed by Thomas Baldwin, a leading architect of Bath, this stands across the road.

“There are more than 500 listed buildings in the town, ranging from cottages to factory buildings, and town houses to mansions. That’s a greater density than anywhere else in the country,” says David. “Despite its prosperity in the 19th century, Devizes never became a county town. The railway bypassed it, and it wasn’t bombed in the 20th century. It’s therefore a beautifully preserved Georgian town.”

Two of the best-known landmarks in the town are its brewery and its canal. Wadworth Brewery was founded in 1875 by Henry Wadworth, in partnership with John Smith Bartholomew. A family-run business, Wadworth is the only brewery in the country to regularly deliver its beer with Shire horses. “I love hearing them trot past my office every morning,” says David.

At one time, the brewery employed 40 horses. Today, just three are left, Monty, Max and Archie, who deliver to pubs within a 2½-mile radius of the brewery. As well as a visitors’ centre, with brewing memorabilia, Wadworth runs tours through the Victorian Tower Brewery. These include a visit to the sign studio, where pub signs are still painted by hand, and the horses’ stables. ➤



Wiltshire Museum director David Dawson examines artefacts, including a pot, arrowheads and weapons.

STEEPED IN HISTORY

Many objects from the area, including unique gold and amber pieces that date back more than 4,000 years, are housed in the Wiltshire Museum in Devizes. Many of the collections have been granted the status of being nationally important. They include a necklace made from more than 1,000 amber beads, and the largest copper dagger found in Britain.

There are flint arrowheads from a local archer, and the intricately inscribed gold lozenge of the Bush Barrow chieftain. The latter is often described as the “crown jewels of the King of Stonehenge”. Together, they tell the story of the people who built and lived at Avebury and Stonehenge throughout history. Later periods, including the Roman and Saxon periods, are also featured, together with the story of Devizes itself.

“It’s impossible to come here and not experience the area’s history, not only at places such as Avebury, but also in its towns and villages,” says director David Dawson. “It’s extraordinary.”