



Corsham Spotlight

Journal of the Corsham Civic Society

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*Contributions to
Spotlight are very
welcome. Please
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Pickwick District School 1858 - 1922



South window of St. Andrew's Church, Chippenham, a memorial to Sir Gabriel Goldney dating to 1903 and featuring a representation of Pickwick District School (top right). Photo ~ John Maloney

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From the Chair

Dear Friends,

Well two and half months of 2019 have already come and disappeared and now we look forward to the month of April in anticipation. At our January meeting we had a most informative talk by an owl expert and in February 31 of us enjoyed a most delicious lunch at the Methuen Arms.

Today we see a new edition of 'Spotlight', full of interesting articles by a variety of writers - including for the first time, 'an American correspondent' - to whom the Editor, John Maloney, is most grateful.

Since January 1st I have been receiving cheques for the 2019 membership fees and these have all been safely banked, though I would ask everyone, when sending a cheque to the Society, that they check what they've written before posting it to me. Our bank, Lloyds Plc, are getting rather fussy about missing or wrong dates, incorrect titles for the account to be credited, so writing 'CCS' won't do I'm afraid, it has to be the full title of 'Corsham Civic Society', sorry about that. If you've still to pay your membership fees for 2019, I look forward to receiving them as soon as possible and thank you in anticipation.

We now look forward to the rest of this year's programme and I trust there will be a good number to look around the revamped Mansion House on April 26th (more details on back cover). The visit to the Roman Museum and Baths on Friday 6th September (p. 20) promises to be an informative, interesting and enjoyable occasion so don't delay in booking a place!

I wish you all a Happy Easter and a pleasant Summer.

Michael Rumsey

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Caricature of Sir Gabriel Goldney in *Vanity Fair* magazine, 1872



Above, oil painting of the former Pickwick School building and, below, 1858 datestone

Pickwick District School 1858- 1922

The Grade II Listed St Patrick's Catholic Church building which stands alongside the A4 Bath Road on the west side of Corsham, has not always been a church – it was originally built in 1858 (datestone, right) as the



'Pickwick District School' for up to 165 children on land gifted in 1846 by Lord Methuen and his tenants, Sir Gabriel Goldney and Arthur Knapp.

The south window of St Andrew's Church, Chippenham (front cover), dates from 1903 and is a memorial to Sir Gabriel Goldney, Baronet, who was the Member of Parliament for Chippenham from 1865-85. The window depicts episodes from the life of Joseph and his brothers from the later chapters of the Old Testament book of Genesis, with the church of Bradenstoke between Chippenham and Swindon and the District School of Pickwick shown below. Both these places were important to Sir Gabriel. Also shown are the Borough coat of arms and that of Sir Gabriel.

The 'Deed of Covenant' defined Lord Methuen's gift as "all that piece of land now marked out, containing one acre, part and parcel of a certain close called Curtis' lying at Pickwick in the County of Wilts." The purpose was "for the education of children and adults of the poorer classes of the labouring and manufacturing people in the district of Pickwick." It was to be conducted in accordance with the principles and practice of the Established Church in England.

The local architect Henry Edmund Goodridge of Bath was asked to produce a design which would provide schooling facilities for 48 boys, 48 girls, 50 infants; and for 200 adults to use the school on Sundays and Good Friday.

The design was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1857. The school was opened in 1858, designed in the Victorian Gothic style with gables and a bell tower, and had therefore an ecclesiastical aspect from the outset. The two porches opened respectively onto the (A4) London and Park Lane roads and were equipped with primitive washing facilities and pews. The exterior of the building survives virtually unaltered. The 'Boys' and 'Girls' each had a separate entrance to the school. The 'Girls' entrance is now the rear entrance to the church, the name 'GIRLS SCHOOL' is carved into the stone above the door. The 'BOYS SCHOOL' entrance was to the right and can only be seen these days from inside the building.

Teaching was conducted in a large room partitioned by a curtain, while the infants were taught in a gallery also surrounded by a curtain. Windows were placed well above the pupils' heads to avoid distractions. Heating was by Tortoise stove and lighting, first by oil lamps, and later by gas. The original managers of the school were Sir Gabriel and Mrs Goldney of Beechfield House, Pickwick.

In the 19th century head teachers were required to keep a logbook in which significant items affecting the school were recorded. Some wrote at great length and others only the minimum but all the logbooks have very interesting and sometimes surprising entries. What follows is taken from an article written by Ivor Slocombe for *Spotlight* in January 2015.



View of the main body of the former school and the gallery above.



Former large schoolroom which would have been partitioned by a curtain



'Girls School' entrance sign



Pickwick School teacher and schoolchildren, 1907



Roundhouse, Pickwick

When Ivor first looked at the logbooks for Pickwick National School, he was intrigued to find a section of the book covering the years 1863 to 1865 sealed up. The pages had been pierced and a tape threaded through and then sealed with sealing wax. On the next page was the entry: 'The Managers have sealed up the foregoing pages lest the remarks made by the late master might prejudice his successor against some of the children'.

He consulted the archivist and he agreed that, as it was over a hundred years ago and in the interests of historical research, we would be justified in breaking the seal. He got out his scissors, cut the tape and revealed a story which was reminiscent of what Ivor referred to as Dickens' Dotheboys Hall. The school was run by Thomas Vincent and his wife Elizabeth. It was clear they hated the school, disliked the children and were disillusioned with teaching in general. They used corporal punishment at the slightest excuse and, quite unusually for logbooks, recorded comments about individual children.

The school was not achieving very well and, as the time of the school inspection approached, the Head became quite nervous. '*Mind very uneasy fearing that when the day of trial comes the majority of the children will fail, as they appear to heartily love anything but their lessons*'. As expected, the inspectors' report was somewhat critical, on which the Head made the sardonic comment 'What a blessed thing it is to have these little deficiencies pointed out!' The Vincents' left the school at the end of December 1865. Their last entry in the logbook was 'Breaking up day. T.B.V. and Mrs V. have seen a good many and fervently trust this may be the LAST'.

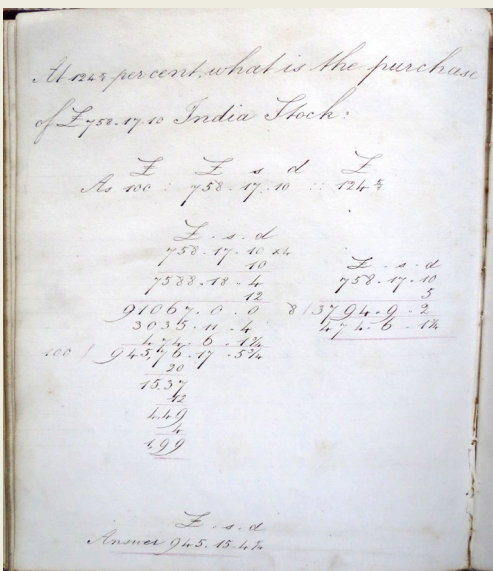
The school was still going in 1907 when contemporary photographs were taken. In Pat Whalley's book '*Corsham: Facts and Folklore*', she records that the Roundhouse nearby is said to have been a sweet shop which was visited by children from the school and known to them as the 'Pepper Pot', but I have yet to come across a specific reference to that. Eventually, financial problems led to deterioration in the building which was criticised by His Majesty's Inspectors for poor ventilation, bad lighting and damp. A fall in the local population after the Great War prompted the closure of the school in 1922 and the sale of the building in 1928 and there were other established schools in Corsham to provide for Pickwick children. The old schoolhouse was used for a while as a glove factory during the 1930s, and later became a gas mask factory for a short while during WWII. It was purchased and converted into St. Patrick's Church and opened in 1945.

John Maloney

Corsham School exercise books from 1860 and 1861

Two school exercise books nearly 160 years old were recently sent to Rod Bell, the Headteacher of Corsham School, by Barry Preston, the grandson of the schoolboy who wrote in them and who lives in Uckfield, East Sussex.

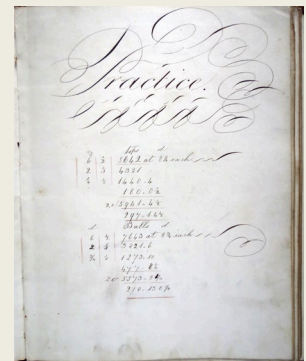
The decorative frontispiece of the 1860 book is inscribed *Mast^r. Preston Corsham School 1860*. This book is full of numbers' exercises – some are quite lengthy calculations – under various headings: *Practice, Simple Interest, Comp^d Interest, Discount and Barter*, all inscribed within individually designed cartouches. The various questions – eg *If I allow my factor 3 ¾ per'cent for commission, what may he demand on the laying out of £876..5..10?* - are written in a good cursive 'hand'. All the pages have been used. In both textbooks there are occasional corrections in a quite thick blue chinagraph wax pencil. Also, there are some stains and smudgy finger prints!



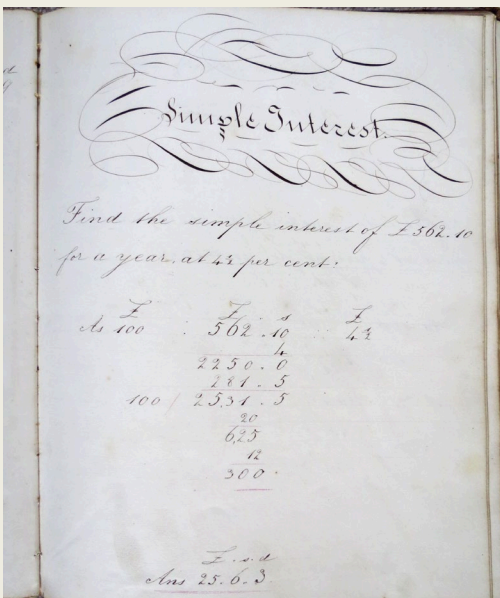
Calculation about the purchase of 'Indian stock'



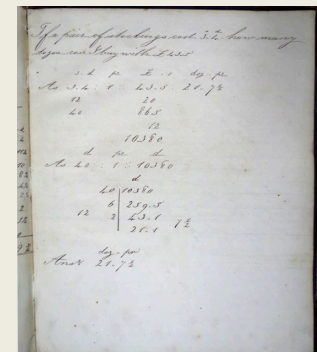
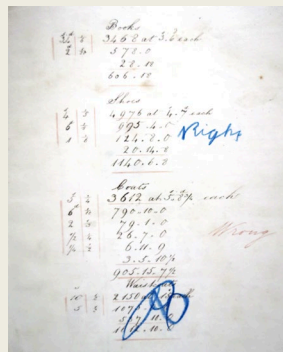
The front covers of the 1860 (right) and 1861 (left) exercise books



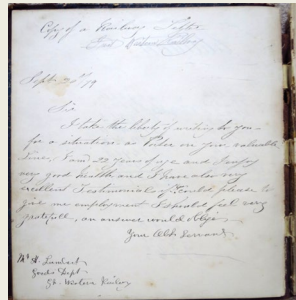
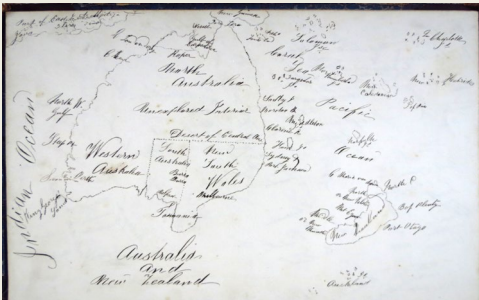
Above, frontispiece of the 1861 exercise book and (right) 'Practice' page heading



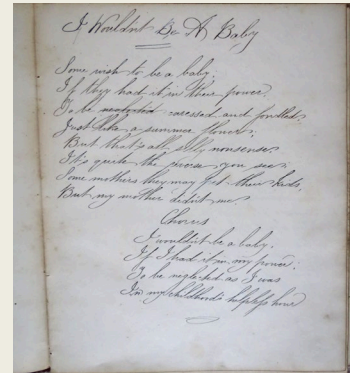
Above, 'Simple Interest' headed page: (right) 'Reduce to a common denominator' and (far right) 'Pair of stockings' calculation



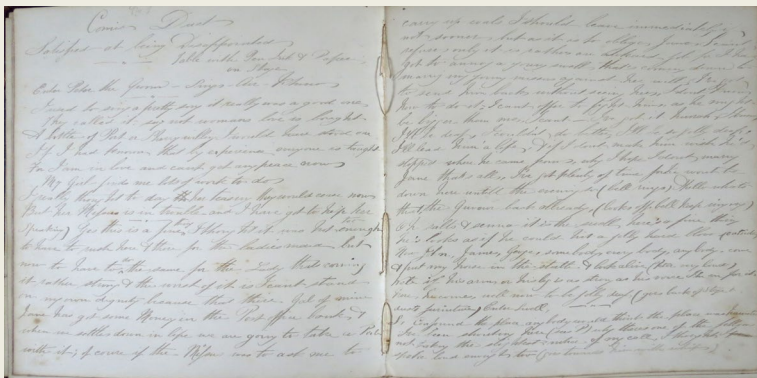
The 1861 book is particularly interesting: the first 5 leafs (ie 10 pages) contain more calculations but then there are hand drawn maps of Africa, and Australia and New Zealand; practice letters applying for various jobs; an amusingly entitled rhyme with a rather poignant last line, 'I Wouldn't Be A Baby' (!); a Comic Duet, 'Satisfied at being disappointed'; and last - but by no means least - a song, 'Her bright smile haunts me still'. I found out that the latter song was written in Georgia in 1847, was popular with the Confederate Army during the American Civil War (1861-1865) and became popular in Britain. Unfortunately, more than half the pages of this 1861 exercise book weren't used. This is just the start of research into this fascinating and rare survival of mid-Victorian school exercise books.



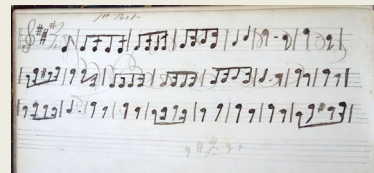
Above, Map of Africa and (right) job application to GWR



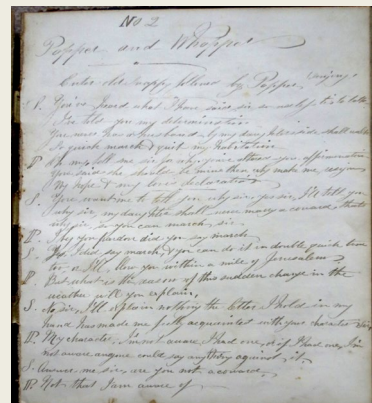
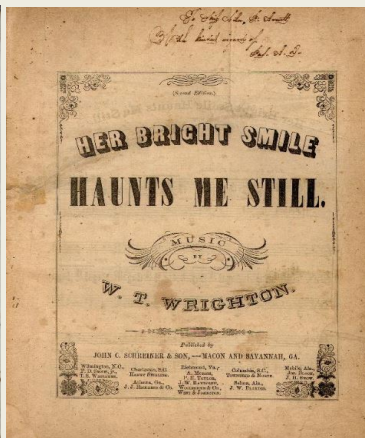
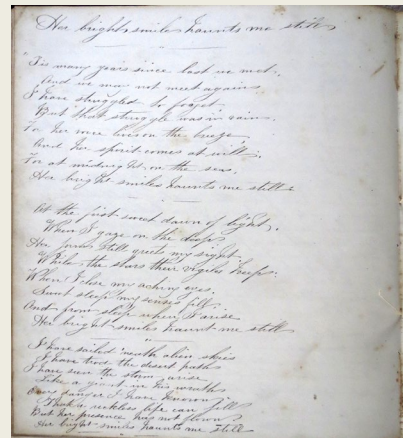
First page of a ditty, 'I'd rather be a baby'



Above, part of a 'Comic Duet'; below (left) song 'Her bright smiles haunt me still' and below (right) the 1864 sheet music; right, 'Poppet and Moppet', an anecdote.



Unknown piece of music



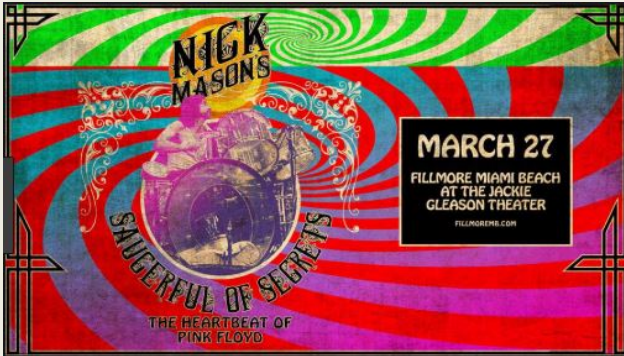
A new sixth form is currently being built and it is intended that the exercise books will be on display.

Many thanks to Rod Bell, Headteacher, Corsham School, and Mary Macey-Brown, PA and HR/Office Manager, for their assistance. Also to Larry St Croix for the fine photographs and skilful use of picture enhancing software.

John Maloney

Pickwick's Nick Mason honoured

Nick Mason, the only Pink Floyd member to appear on every one of the band's studio albums, was named a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for his services to music. Nick is the only constant member of the band since its formation in 1965. It is estimated that as of 2010, the group have sold over 250 million records worldwide. Nick co-wrote some of Pink Floyd's most popular compositions such as *Echoes* and *Time* and in 2012 he was presented with The British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA) Gold Badge Award in recognition of his unique contribution to music.



Ticket for Nick Mason's Saucerful of Secrets at Fillmore Miami Beach in the Jackie Gleason Theater on March 27, 2019



Nick Mason and some Gold Record Awards

Nick is currently on a tour of North America with *Saucerful of Secrets*, a psychedelic rock band formed in 2018 by him and guitarist Lee Harris to perform the pre-1973 music of Pink Floyd. They will play at 25 different venues throughout March and April and then from late April the band will be touring the UK starting on the 29th at St. David's Hall, Cardiff, and then Aylesbury, London and Cambridge.

An updated limited edition of Nick Mason's book, *Inside Out: A Personal History of Pink Floyd* was published in the UK in 2017. It is also available as an audio CD book, read by Nick. A reviewer wrote that it is, 'A comprehensive history of one of the most brilliant and imaginative bands the world has known and a masterly memoir of rock and roll'.

Nick performed in the Closing Ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games: the evening gave a whirlwind tour through some of the highlights of British music and Nick Mason brought what was described as a 'Floydian touch' to proceedings, drumming on a performance of *Wish You Were Here* sung by Ed Sheeran. Also in the line-up were Mike Rutherford (Genesis) and Richard Jones (The Feeling). In 2015, he produced and played on the charity single *Save the Children (Look Into Your Heart)*, which also featured Mick Jagger and Ronnie Wood in aid of *Save the Children Nepal Earthquake Appeal*

Nick has long pursued his favourite hobby of motor racing and owns and races several classic cars. He competed successfully five times at the *24 Hours of Le Mans*. This interest was documented in the 1986 short film *Life Could Be a Dream*.

Article continues next page...

His car collection was the subject of his book, *Into the Red*, updated in 2004, in which he documented his experience with his cars, along with some histories. It is an attempt to tell the history, performance and specification of each car featured, as well as make a comparison of racing cars over 100 years of development. It even includes a CD of the sound of each car! For some years, at the behest of self-confessed 'petrolhead' Chris Evans, the radio presenter, Nick was involved in the BBC *Children in Need* appeal and generously has let tours in his cars be auctioned live on the radio. Nick has also taken his cars to *Carfest for Children in Need* which since it started has raised £13.5 million.



Nick with Pudsey Bear, BBC Children in Need's mascot

Since 1995, Nick and his second wife Annette Lynton, an actress (who appeared in TV programmes including *Casualty*, *Minder* and *Crossroads*), have lived in Middlewick House, Pickwick, the Grade II listed building and former home of Camilla Parker Bowles.

In what is becoming a regular, annual event, last year Nick and Annette opened their gardens to the public to help raise money for the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust and Wiltshire Air Ambulance's Airbase Appeal. During the events, many of Nick's cars, and his helicopter, are put on display. In total, there are six different garden areas and a woodland area.



From the left, Camilla Parker Bowles, Nick and Annette

On August 3rd and 4th this year, there will once again be a charity garden opening. This year the principal charity being supported is the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust. For those aged over 60 - or 18+ with a registered disability - one of the trained *Stay Safe Online Volunteers* can visit people in the comfort of their own homes and provide advice. Director, Jennie Shaw explains, "Computer crime is one of the fastest growing crimes targeting the over 60s. The aim of the volunteers will be to visit the client's home to offer a tailored service to improve their awareness of on line security and help them to identify potential risks." They also advise about home security and fire prevention.

Bobby Van Stay Safe Online Volunteers have been interviewed and trained by Wiltshire Police to deliver the new initiative across Swindon and Wiltshire. They are working together with the police to maintain an awareness of current computer crimes and to ensure advice is up-to-date with the ever changing scams.



Did you know?

On Tuesday, May 4th 1926 the Great Western Railway's Superintendent in the Bristol Division reported to the HQ at Paddington that the station master at Corsham had withdrawn his labour meaning he had joined the General Strike. An office clerk from Bristol was sent to Corsham to take his place. At the conclusion of the General Strike the former station master was given the post of booking clerk at Bristol, with no reduction of pay. A small number of striking station masters on the GWR also suffered the same fate as their Corsham colleague.

Listed structures in the Parish of Box.

The parish of Box, like Corsham, has a number of listed buildings, for example, the parish church, the cemetery chapel, the blind house etc, but it also has 4 listed structures all of which lie on the London to Bristol railway line and they are ~

The west front of Box Tunnel – Grade 2* listed
 The A4 road bridge, by the tunnel entrance
 The east and west frontages of the Middle Hill tunnel
 The road bridge just past the Northey Arms hotel



West end of Box tunnel c. late 1980s



Photograph taken Feb. 18th 2019 showing the state of the west front of the Box tunnel



The parish of Box has two railway bridges carrying the main A4 London to Bath road. The first bridge is by the tunnel and the second bridge is near the site of the original 1841 Box station and was built on a skew. Both bridges have young trees bushes, ivy and wild clematis growing from the stone joints.

Michael Rumsey

Revolutionary steam engine valve gear first seen in Corsham.

For me, as a steam engine enthusiast, it is a great pleasure to be able to report a new valve gear invention suitable for preserved standard gauge engines in the UK. The first illustration of this valve gear (situated below the chimney and boiler by the front driving wheels) was unveiled in Corsham in the wonderful murals to be seen on the walls of the Martingate shopping centre.

Since the 1830's various engineers have produced new valve gears which allows the steam to be passed to the cylinders which in turn drive the coupled wheels along the track. George & Robert Stephenson and Timothy Hackworth were the first inventors of valve gear and Stephenson straight link motion was used by the Great Western Railway for many years on their 2 cylinder engines. Other valve gears have also seen use in the UK. Walschaerts gear was used by the GWR on their 4 cylinder engines and this was invented by a Belgian engineer while from Italy we have the Caprotti valve gear which was used on many LMS engines. Other valve gears, such as Lentz Rotary Cam and Lentz Oscillating Cam were used on the LNER while Oliver Bulleid, on the Southern Railway, designed his own valve gear which used large chains in an oil bath to drive the 3rd cylinder and the 2 outside cylinders. Unfortunately, Bullied's engine sometimes caught fire from leaks in the oil bath, which caused most of the engines to be rebuilt with Walschaerts gear in the 1950's.

But back to our new valve gear, first seen in the mural of the shopping centre's walls. There's been great interest in the railway preservation world and several engines, currently under overhaul, could well be destined to try out this new valve gear which is reckoned to save 20% fuel over a long period. With the current shortage of good steam coal, for our preserved railway societies, this new valve gear may well be a saviour.

I have included 2 illustrations, the first being the engine from the mural, the second being our own 2938 'Corsham Court' which shows the usual GWR 2 cylinder outside motion. Once patents have been approved I look forward to seeing how many engines will be equipped with the so called 'Corsham' valve gear.



Michael Rumsey, April 1st 2019!

SAVE LIVES!



I recently attended a hands-on workshop on Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) at the Springfield Community Campus, run by Suzanne Smith representing The Royal Life Saving Society UK. The workshop is designed to encourage anyone within the community to be able to potentially help save a life. Attendees will be taught the basic practice of CPR which is an emergency procedure that combines chest compressions to manually preserve intact brain function until further measures are taken to restore spontaneous blood circulation and breathing in a person who is in cardiac arrest. They will also receive an introduction on how to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), which is a lightweight, portable device that delivers an electric shock through the chest to the heart in order to reset the rhythm of the heart. It is crucial that defibrillation is provided within the first few minutes after a patient's collapse. CPR can delay the damage to the heart after cardiac arrest.

A lack of lifesaving techniques, first aid knowledge and the confidence to use these skills is putting people's lives at risk. Recently the British Heart Foundation announced that currently fewer than 1 in 10 people who have a cardiac arrest outside hospital in the UK survive, yet in countries that teach CPR in schools, cardiac arrest survival rates are more than double those of the UK. According to the British Red Cross, 95 per cent of adults wouldn't be able, confident or willing to help in three examples of life-threatening first aid emergencies: 'a person is bleeding heavily', 'a person is unresponsive and breathing' and 'a person is unresponsive and not breathing'. The government has therefore agreed to support a programme on Teaching Young People to Save Lives. It is planning to make health education compulsory in all state-funded schools from next year, including how to administer CPR, the purpose of defibrillators and basic treatments for common injuries.

But this education needn't be just for schools and this is why the RLSS is highlighting their FREE Save A Life series. Comprising four separate workshops – Baby, Child, Adult and AED – the Save A Life series teaches basic emergency first aid skills to participants, giving them the knowledge and the confidence to help save lives. The training is both comprehensive and robust and expects participants to get 'hands-on' with the training equipment. It is this combination of practice and training that ensures that the learning sinks in and helps attendees to build conviction in their own skills and capabilities. After the training I personally felt confident about being able to help save a life by applying CPR and/or defibrillation when there is a need.

Typically two hours long, the courses can complement school timetables, community group meetings, play dates, sporting fixtures – in fact, any group of people who want to upskill their first aid knowledge. RLSS UK has a nationwide network of trainers, branch members and volunteers who are available to deliver and support the training, wherever you are. Best of all, most courses are free; the RLSS only ask for an optional donation to support their lifesaving work.

Article continues next page...



If anyone is interested in the workshops they can email Suzanne Smith at springfieldcommunitycampus@wiltshire.gov.uk or call 01249468460) for more information. Suzanne will look to booking more courses throughout the year and has provided a two links below if you would like further information about the workshops.

Apps like GoodSAM * and initiatives such as the National Defibrillator Network are useful: these are modern, cohesive solutions designed to improve access to, and limit waiting times for emergency treatment, anytime, anywhere. However, their success largely relies on the knowledge, confidence and actions of the person dealing with the emergency.

** GoodSAM is a community of Good Samaritans, happy to assist if they are the closest person to an emergency. Many are off duty doctors, nurses, paramedics and other members of the emergency services. They are trained in first aid and may have additional skills. They can maintain an airway, help stop bleeding and if necessary help perform lifesaving cardiopulmonary resuscitation.*

<https://www.rlss.org.uk/save-a-life-series>

<https://www.rlss.org.uk/news/teach-young-people-to-save-lives>

Larry St Croix

From our American correspondent ~ Larry Porges

Greetings from Washington, DC! I'm a new and proud member of the Corsham Civic Society, and I look forward to being your American "Correspondent from the Colonies."

But first: Who am I? My link to England began in 1970 when my father, then a news producer for the ABC network in New York, was transferred to London. My family lived in London for three years, kicking off for me, then an eight-year-old boy, a lifelong love of English history and culture. In 1981-82, I returned to London for a year of university; one of my tutors was a dashing young archaeologist from the Museum of London called John Maloney (the self-same John Maloney who deftly edits this publication). I'm very happy to say that I reconnected with John about a decade ago and today consider him one of my dearest friends. I have visited John and Cath in Corsham several times and, frankly, have fallen for your community. I thought you might be interested in an insider's look at Washington, DC, my hometown for the past 34 years.

Washington is a planned and compact city of 68 square miles, selected as the new nation's capital and laid out at the end of the 18th century. One of the city's most instantly recognizable symbols is the Washington Monument, a 555-foot tall memorial to our country's first president. One interesting note about this famous obelisk the color of the bricks changes about 1/3 of the way up. This is because initial construction of the monument began in 1848, but was interrupted for many years because of both a lack of funding and our Civil War (1861-1865). After the war ended, the marble quarry from which the original stone had been gathered had been depleted, and new stone of a slightly different hue was used to complete the obelisk, which opened in 1888.



The Washington Monument, designed by Robert Mills and eventually completed by Thomas Casey and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The structure was completed in two phases of construction in 1848-1854 and 1876-1884. When completed, the Washington Monument was the tallest building in the world at 555 feet, 5-1/8 inches.

Article continues next page...

Washington is also well known for its thousands of blossoming cherry trees, many of which are clustered around a handsome downtown reservoir called the Tidal Basin. The trees, given as gifts by the mayor of Tokyo in 1912, blossom every spring in a colorful riot of pinks, whites, and reds, drawing tourists by the thousands. While we hardened locals tend to grumble about the crowds and the increased traffic, we secretly relish this harbinger of springtime. Insider's tip: the best time to see the cherry blossoms is at dawn, when crowds are small and the early light makes the trees look magical.



It's easy to look at Washington's many monuments, museums, and the trappings of the huge mechanisms of the Federal Government and forget that this is a living, breathing city full of diverse and eclectic neighbourhoods. The city proper is home to 700,000 residents, though the larger metropolitan region contains more than 6,000,000 people. About 47% of D.C.'s population is African-American, many of whom are descendants of slaves who won their freedom in the 19th century. And while an uncomfortable truth is that black neighbourhoods in many U.S. cities suffer from urban blight, Washington D.C. has always had an affluent and culturally rich black middle class. The U Street corridor has always been a major centre of African-American art, music, and culture, especially in the 20th century when it was home to many jazz clubs and theatres.

One of the more famous black-owned businesses is a small restaurant called Ben's Chili Bowl, on U Street, which has been serving up hamburgers, hot dogs, and home-made beef chili to tens of thousands of hungry locals since 1958.

Article continues next page...

CORSHAM WALKING FESTIVAL
7th to 9th JUNE 2019
NOW BOOKING.



Well it is that time of year again...
where did that year go to!

As you read this article we will have already gone 'live' with the booking for places on this year's Corsham Walking Festival. So please do not hesitate or you will miss an excellent opportunity to walk paths in our area that you may never have seen before.

This our 6th Walking Festival has again 27 sensational walks that includes a free walking programme plus a social evening function with quiz and buffet. Walks cover distances from 1.5 to 19 miles, with easy, moderate and challenging levels so something for everyone to enjoy. Our Walking Group have created some new walks and have fine-tuned some of your favourites. Our walk leaders and experts will ensure you have an unforgettable day out in the fresh air. For the first time this year, the Bradford on Avon Walkers are Welcome Group are providing a walk so something different further afield.

Our walking themes this year will cover: Manor Houses, Quarrying, Wild flowers, Natural and Local History and of course views into our picturesque rolling countryside with hidden valleys, babbling brooks and far reaching horizons. This year's free programme features the ever popular Children Treasure Hunt, a new Murder Mystery Walk, two TRANSCOCO lead walks looking at 'Living on the Sun' and 'Hidden in Plain Sight', our regular well-liked Mindfulness Walk, a dog walk and two Nordic Walking Tasters sessions.

The Walking Festival would not be complete without the Saturday excellent evening's buffet and quiz. So why not make the most of a full weekend of walking related fun and join us for an evening of mind teasing enjoyment and the opportunity to collect the 'Golden Boots'. Festival brochures are available however, our website has more details of each walk plus plenty more. So please have a look at: www.corshamwalkingfestival.org.uk

Engage with the Walking Festival through Instagram '@corshamwalkfest' or via our very active Corsham Walking Festival Facebook Group that covers more walking related topics throughout the year. So please give both a look and join – go on you know it makes sense!

The Walking Festival is a significant part of the Corsham Festival Fortnight and can only occur if you want it to happen! Did you know that Corsham is also accredited as a 'Walkers are Welcome town'? If you would like to find out more or get involved in any way then please contact our Chairman, Kevin Wilson, at chair@corshamwalkingfestival.org.uk

Booking for walks opened on the 1st April – so don't delay the tickets do sell fast

Barry Cox CWF2019 Publicity

Current planning matters

Corsham Neighbourhood Plan ~ latest update

Councillor Steve Abbott, Chairman of the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group confirmed recently that "The formal Examination of the Plan is now being carried out by an independent examiner. Once that process is complete and subject to the Plan receiving approval from the examiner, the remaining stages in the process are:

- *A community referendum later this year - all voters on the electoral register in the Plan area are able to vote on the adoption of the Plan*
- *If more than 50% of voters support the Plan, Wiltshire Council will formally adopt it*
- *Once adopted, developers will be required to take account of the objectives and policies set out in our Plan.'*

Proposed Burlington Grange development (land north of Bath Road, Pickwick

Three appeals have now been lodged by Gladman following Wiltshire Council's refusal to vary or endorse their submissions on the noise and vibration conditions (Autumn 2018, pps 21-22) and failure to respond to their application for certification that work had started on site. The Planning Inspectorate's plan had been to consider the first two appeals at a public inquiry in July but the lodging of the third has put this timetable in doubt.

As regards funding to meet the estimated 'up to £50,000' required for professional advice and representation at the Public Inquiry, David Taylor (Chairman of the Pickwick Residents Association) noted that the 'frontliners' (those whose properties front onto the proposed development site), having already invested substantially in defending their case, will need both moral and financial support for this key stage. Anyone interested in contributing or with ideas about fundraising, please contact the editor.

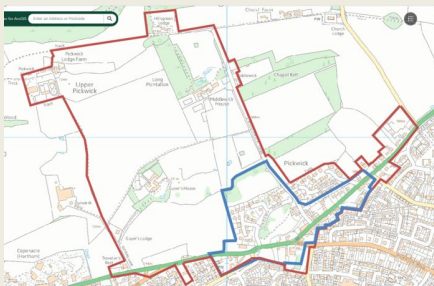
Boundary Commission for England

The Commission is carrying out an electoral review of Wiltshire Council. The aim of the electoral review is to recommend divisions' boundaries that mean each councillor represents approximately the same number of voters. They also aim to ensure that the division boundaries reflect the interests and identities of local communities, as well as promoting effective local government. To achieve those aims, they state the need to re-draw division boundaries across Wiltshire.

In common with other civil parishes, Corsham Town Council carefully considered the options and made their submission to Wiltshire Council who had a similar view. The Boundary Commission appeared to ignore those submissions and proposed a new boundary along Valley Road and Bath Road thereby dividing existing communities and, in the case of Pickwick, a settlement going back many hundreds of years.

Cllr Neville Farmer commented, 'Although I don't see sense in having two County Councillors in one division, splitting a community down the middle to create separate turfs still means that, for example, two Councillors will be fighting for the causes of Pickwick from either side of the same road. That is farcical. The more I think about what the Boundary Commission has done, the more it smacks of lazy thinking that will harm our community'.

It is reported that Wiltshire Council are no longer prepared to contest the Boundary Commissions proposals. The Pickwick Association has made a representation against the proposal as shown below (left) which has a more irregular outline (right) to ensure that the ancient settlement boundary is retained and reflects the unity and distinctiveness of Pickwick.



Pickwick showing village boundary (edged brown) and former Conservation Area (hatched blue)



Also, the Pickwick Association is drafting a revised Pickwick Conservation Area description (written in 2005 and not reviewed since!) including a plan (left) which the original one page description did not have!

A similarly artificial and disruptive division along Valley Road (shown in part on plan, top left) separating the Katherine Park estate in two, is being contested.

John Maloney

Corsham reports

Corsham High Street Project update

The registering of the CHSP application last year occurred at the time when major changes were taking place, ie the Heritage Lottery Fund has been re-named as the National Lottery Heritage Fund and headlines announced 'New-look National Heritage Fund unveils plans for the next five years: A major devolution of decision-making across the whole UK is at the heart of new plans to distribute more than £1 billion of National Lottery money to the UK's heritage over the next five years'.

Article continues next page...

Having had the CHSP application independently assessed and having made some changes, the new system now involves a preliminary "expression of interest" stage and so the application will not be decided within the previously notified timescale. The main challenge is filling the newly emphasised diversity criteria as the demographic of our membership is very largely one of white, retired people. However, the distribution of more than £1 billion to the UK's heritage over the next five years is a very positive result. It should be borne in mind that the launch of the project occurred less than a year ago and so good progress has been made to get to this stage.



Corsham celebrated in The Sunday Times magazine, March 3rd

What follows is an extract: **Why it's hot** *There are no Costas in Corsham, nor Starbucks, but plenty of cosy, quirky independent cafes tucked inside the ancient stone buildings of the high street. This small Wiltshire town has achieved sole-trader nirvana, with more one-off shops and cafes than chains. In fact you're hard pushed to spot anything as ordinary as a high-street staple.*

Less than 10 miles from Bath, many of its buildings reflect the same pale stone and Georgian finery, but you can find a period delight here for two-thirds of what you'd spend there. Local estate agents report that buyers are moving from Bath and Bristol, not only to get more house for their money, but also to find a friendly community where they can walk everywhere.

(Thanks to Larry St. Croix for the photograph)

Congratulations to **The Methuen Arms** on being awarded three rosettes by the AA given to 'Outstanding restaurants that achieve standards that demand national recognition well beyond their local area'

The Corsham Singers

This small choir, which will be the main contributor to the Society's Musical Evening on 22nd November, is in urgent need of a pianist to accompany us and a musical director to guide us from the start of our next term at the beginning of May.

We meet every Wednesday at 7.30 pm in the Pound and hold two or three concerts a year. If you, or anyone you know of, would be willing to take up either of these roles - even in the short term, please contact Edward Barrett on 07565 612408.



Mystery photograph

This photograph was anonymously handed in at the Town Hall in the belief that it might have been taken in Corsham and Sharon Thomas (Head of Community Services) passed it to me. I and others have looked at the possibility of it being the Corsham Maternity Home c. 1913-50 in Alexandra House but the windows shown above don't match those of that building.

We don't know for sure if it was in Corsham and it has been suggested that it might be Berryfield House, Bradford on Avon which was requisitioned by Wiltshire County Council in 1939 to be used as a maternity hospital and continued to be used as such until 1979 when it became Bradford on Avon Hospital. That possibility has yet to be checked. Do you know of any other possibilities? If so, please contact the editor.

Corsham Civic Society visit to Bath Roman Museum and Baths, Friday 6 September

10.30am ~ coffee in the Pump Room

11.00am ~ self-directed (handheld audio guides available) tour of the Museum (<https://www.romanbaths.co.uk/roman-baths-shop>)

12.40pm ~ lunch in the Pump Room (menus can be viewed online so that selection of dishes takes less time ~ <https://www.romanbaths.co.uk/pump-room-restaurant>)

2.00pm ~ tour and handling session with Susan Fox, Collections Manager (Kingston Room- there is level access to this room from Abbey Church Yard)

3.15pm ~ Finish

There is a 'beneficial' charge of £13.50 per person. **First come, first served! Please let the editor know if you wish to be included.**

John Maloney

Talk by Julian Orbach given to the Box Natural History & Archaeology Society, November 19th 2018.

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner began his lifetime's work on producing county by county handbooks detailing notable and interesting buildings in the cities, towns and villages of England in 1950. Later, this work was expanded to cover Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the speaker, for this talk, Julian Orbach, who is Chairman of the Corsham High Street Project, spent a number of years exploring and writing about buildings along the west coast of Wales. The counties he explored were Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Caernarvon. He later undertook to revise the edition covering South & West Somerset, which was published in 2014 and he's currently revising the Wiltshire edition which was first published in 1963 and revised by Bridget Cherry in 1975.

For the last four and half years, Julian has been working on the 3rd edition of the Wiltshire book and he truly hopes it will be published now by 2020. He wanted to expand it to a 2 volume publication but the Yale University Press, the publishers, have insisted that it should be a single volume. Visiting people's homes can sometimes be either fascinating or difficult. Even though Julian will have communicated with the owners in advance of a visit, problems still arise and he has many amusing stories of visits made during the last 4 years. In some houses it's obvious that a fireplace, say, isn't original, it's been acquired from another house. For instance, in Easton House there's a wonderful fireplace that probably came from Corsham Court while at Corsham Court there's an stone arch and pediment which came from Bradenstoke Priory. Re-cycling seems to have been happening during the last 250-300 years and is not a recent activity!

With the 3rd edition of the book, some entries have been expanded, such as the one sentence on Box Tunnel by Pevsner has been lengthened by Julian. On the other hand the 10,000 word entry on Salisbury Cathedral by Pevsner must stay in its entirety and cannot be reduced to allow more space for newer items of interest.

Revising a book originally written by such an authority as Sir Nikolaus Pevsner cannot be easy, it's certainly a challenge and I await with eager anticipation the publication of the new volume when it finally appears.

Michael Rumsey

Unusual phrases ~ *To cock a snook*

In trying to explain the origin of 'Cock a snook' it would be helpful to know what a snook is. Unfortunately, in this context, its not known for sure. There is a species of fish called snook, but it isn't that. A snook is also a promontory of jutting out land. That could have something to do with the gesture as it does involve sticking fingers out. It is sometimes reported to be derived from snout, as in thumbing one's nose. What is certain is that its a form of derisive, defiant or rude gesture!



Corsham Civic Society Review

November

We ended our 2018 programme with a presentation from three of our stalwart members, on 'Education in Corsham'. Dr Negley Harte gave us a good grounding on the general development of education, and how it impacted in Corsham, first with the Lady Margaret Hungerford School, then the 'Board School' (at what is now the Pound Arts Centre), followed by a private school at the Mansion House, the Methuen School, and very much later the Corsham School at the Tynings.

John Maloney then gave a particular insight into the schools at Pickwick: the Pickwick District School (article on pps. 2-4 this issue) was established in the building that much later became St. Patrick's Catholic Church. He also referred to the 18th century Quaker School in Pickwick village. He drew on a series of interesting links: from the building of the Pickwick District School in 1858 to its purchase and conversion to St Patrick's Catholic Church in 1944 – via connections to Chippenham in respect of earlier provisions for a Catholic church and school - to St Patrick's finding funds from its parishioners to build the first Catholic school in Corsham in 1966.

Michael Rumsey then read from some Corsham Regis School log books, which were listed day to day events and showed how children were sometimes taken out of school, not just because they were sick, but perhaps they were needed at harvest time. The log books are a great social comment on the times, sometimes sad, sometimes amusing, and a perfect demonstration of how far our educational system has come since the 19th century.

January.

We started the year with a visit from a representative of the Hawk & Owl Trust. David Knowles is a true enthusiast of all things 'bird like', and supported by his wife Lynne, has his own small aviary and educational business – 'Owl Occasions' - from which he lectures to schools, universities, and smaller groups. He brought us two beautiful owls: 'Locki' a barn owl, and 'Billy', a Boobook owl, whose species originates in Australia. He explained much about the life cycle, habitat and the conservation of these wonderful birds. An extremely interesting evening.

February

Lunch at the Methuen Arms. A group of 31 souls attended the annual gathering at the Methuen Arms, and an excellent lunch was enjoyed by all. This was an opportunity to meet together and socialize, and everyone made the most of it.

Pat Whalley

CORSHAM CIVIC SOCIETY 2019

All meetings are at the Pound arts centre (telephone 01249 701628) at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated. Members £1, Non-Members £3. Guests are very welcome.

- April 26th** **Visit** to the Mansion House with Suzanne Gough (WCC Director of Property Services) and Matthew Croston (WCC Management post completion). Meet at the site at 7pm.
- May 17th** **AGM** Corsham Town Hall ~ Wine & cheese afterwards
- June 21st** Andrew Skelton (Chippenham Museum), '**Bath Academy of Art and its Artists**'
- July 26th** Edward Barrett, '**After the Falklands – Post War Logistics**'
- Sept 6th** **VISIT:** Roman Baths, Bath ~ details TBC
- Sept 27th.** John Maloney, '**Update on the Corsham High Street Project**'
- Oct 25th** Michael Rumsey, '**Steam into the Industrial Revolution**'
- Nov 22nd** A Musical Evening
- December** No meeting

- *Please note that the Programme may be subject to changes*
- *NB new attendance fees*

Corsham Civic Society was founded in 1963 to represent the people of Corsham in all aspects of conservation, preservation and the promotion of this delightful Wiltshire town. The Society is a registered charity, a member of ASHTAV (Association of Small and Historic Towns & Villages of the UK). It is our aim to promote high standards of planning and architecture, to create a wider awareness amongst the local population of environmental issues, the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area, and to secure the preservation, protection and improvement of features of public amenity and historical interest, in Corsham and the surrounding countryside.

Corsham Civic Society, 91 Tellcroft Close, Corsham, SN13 9JQ, Wiltshire. Registered Charity No: 275321