



Corsham Spotlight

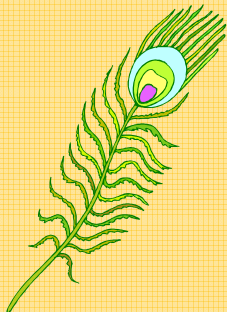
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Volume 1, Issue 2



Special Interest Articles:

- Report on our AGM.
- Progress on HODS
- Corsham Festival report



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Newsletter of the Corsham Civic Society



Editorial

In May we held our Annual General Meeting at the 17th century Schoolroom on Pound Pill. Many significant decisions were made at this meeting, not least of which was that Anne Lock expressed her intention to stand down as Chairman of the Society after a period of some 20 years, during which time she has worked tirelessly on our behalf on the Station Campaign, Transport and Waste issues, planning applications and planning appeals too numerous to contemplate, and conducting the day to day business which is part of running a Society such as ours. We shall miss her greatly, but fortunately she will not be far away. Anne remains an Executive Committee member, and will continue to work on our behalf in many of her areas of expertise.

We are pleased to welcome Peter Tapscott as our new Chairman, and we are sure that as a newly trained Civic Trust Pathfinder he will lead us along many new avenues. (See the article following on Heritage Open Days)

Pat Whalley agreed to stand as Hon Secretary, but we still have a vacancy for a Vice Chairman, would anyone who may be willing to take on this role – please come forward!

We also welcome Vida Flower as a new member of the Executive Committee.

At the AGM we also adopted a new

Constitution. The main changes were related to an increase in subscription rates, which will be effective from 1 January 2004. Details are given on page 4 of this newsletter.

It was also proposed and agreed at this meeting that the entrance fee at the monthly meetings should be increased - £1 each for members, and £2 for non-members. Effective immediately.

So to our Main Event – Heritage Open Days, 12 –15 September, we do hope you will join us, there is a great deal to be done and we shall very much appreciate your support either by taking an active role or attending some of the events. This is a great opportunity to show that Corsham has much to recommend it, and so much of it worth preserving.

I am sure you already have a note in your diaries for our meeting on 26 September, when we shall have the opportunity to take a conducted tour of the splendid Hartham House. Arrive at Hartham House at 7.15pm please, for start at 7.30pm.

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HODS – September 12th to 15th

Much has been achieved on the project to bring about Corsham's first ever participation in Heritage Open Days (HODS) since we last reported in the April edition.

The list of "attractions" is now finalised and comprises 11 items. It includes – readily recognisable "Heritage" items, Revelations, Special Interest items, and Guided Walks.

The Special Interest items include those properties for which Corsham is famous – Corsham Court, St Bartholomews Church, The Almshouses, The Town Hall and The Grove. The twin cornerstones of access a) free of charge and b) behind the scenes are truly reflected in our approach to these favourites.

"Revelations" marks our endeavour to show visitors and locals something of what goes on in (and under!) our town, which for one reason or another goes largely unannounced. We include the exquisite lead working of Dave Bevan, the fantastic stone carving of Barry Baldwin, and the chronicle of underground activities by Nick McCamley, through his book "Secret Underground Cities", in this category

Two items are included in our "Special Interest" segment. The first is guaranteed to stir the interest of Corsham residents who are curious to know what is going on behind the now re-located Hong Kong House. The opportunity of a guided tour around Mansion Mews is not to be missed. The second is aimed at the younger members of our community, in the re-creation of education as it was 'administered' to the children of the Victorian era in 1898 – with full participation in costume and in role.

Finally we have included a series of Guided Walks around our historic town centre.

Each event will be stewarded, and additional car parking in the South Avenue will be provided through the generosity of Mr James Methuen Campbell of Corsham Court.

We are receiving excellent support from the Corsham Town Council, NWDC, the Corsham TIC and the Corsham Chamber of Commerce.

A "Fringe Festival" is being organised by the Royal Oak. It comprises a Jazz Night, a Folk Evening, and a meeting of the 6X Mini

Owners Club in the pub Car Park on the Sunday.

An application for financial assistance towards the cost of promotional activities and signage, has been lodged with NWDC. Anything we get from NWDC will require us to demonstrate matched funding from other sources. We have also made direct approaches to local businesses for assistance. Promotional activities are well in hand, posters prepared, and a series of articles is planned for the local newspapers. As of 4 July our HODS festival appears on the NWDC website. Bunting and banners are planned to indicate that something special is happening in Corsham

The Corsham Chamber of Commerce has been especially helpful. It is distributing a letter, penned by us, to all its members in the Town Centre, asking them to remain open to the maximum amount possible over the HODS weekend.

'Stewards' will convey visitors from the TIC to each event, with the exception of 'The Stone yard' Hartham Park' and the 'Victorian School'. We are therefore creating a map showing all 11 sites- those within walking distance and further afield. Copies of the map will be available at the TIC – which is the sole registration point for the HODS tours/events.

Please note that access to the attractions will only be granted to those holding a valid registration ticket. Registration will be available from Friday 29 August at the TIC. Registration will have to be made in person.

Registration cannot be made by telephone, but our good friends at the TIC will provide an information service on 01249 714660.

We are also arranging for each visitor to receive an 'information sheet describing what they are seeing/experiencing.

We have been particularly pleased about how well this has brought our community together. Time and facilities have been freely given, often from those for which a charge is normally expected. Businesses have been generous and public bodies supportive.

It is not too late to "get involved". Come to the HODS weekend - and should you be willing to put your name on a list of "persons who can be turned to in a crisis" please make contact with Peter Tapscott on 01249 714453, or e mail him at - peter@charlwoodroad.freeserve.co.uk.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

IT'S MINE



HODS Event Programme

13 th & 14 th	Corsham Court	Guided tours
13 th & 14 th	St. Bartholomew's Church	Guided tours
12 th , 13 th & 14 th	Almshouses, 17 th Century Schoolroom & Master's House	Guided tours
13 th & 14 th	Corsham Town Hall and its artefacts	Guided tours
12 th , 13 th & 15 th	Mansion Mews	Guided tours
14 th & 15 th	Grove Gardens	Guided tours
12 th to 15 th incl.	Historic Corsham	Guided walks
13 th & 14 th	Galena Leadworks	Presentation of work
13 th , 14 th & 15 th	The Stoneyard	Presentation of work
13 th	Victorian School Experience (at Corsham's old "County Primary School")	Chance for 6-13 year olds to experience education under "Miss Squire" in 1898
15 th	"Secret Underground Cities"	Presentation of Book, by its author, at Hartham Park

'Press Clippings'



*Recent Press photographs
and articles*

Our Chairman - Peter Tapscott, with his newly
awarded 'Pathfinder' certificate



Did you know?

The Royal Arthur site at Westwells was previously known as 'Kingsmoor'.

'Hawthorn' was a code-name given by the government to the construction of the dedicated telephone exchange built at Westwells.

'Secret Underground Cities' by Nick McCamley



Subscriptions must rise – but not until January next year!

Corsham Festival

The events initiated by the Society were very well attended and much enjoyed by all.

The talk and demonstration of 'Real Tennis' at Hartham Park was particularly relevant during Wimbledon Week, and how different the game is today. We are extremely grateful to Jeffrey Thomas for allowing us the opportunity to visit this unique tennis court, in such beautiful surroundings. You will have the

opportunity to see the house again, during our programmed visit on 26 September. Please put a note in your diaries.

The talk by Nick McCamley, based on his book 'Secret **Underground Cities**' was most interesting and gave us much more information about the ground beneath our feet. We are delighted that he is able to return for our HODS weekend and repeat the talk for the many who may have missed it.

New Subscription Charges

Effective from 1 January 2004

Life Members	£40.00
2 or more life members in the same household, EACH	£30.00
Full members per annum	£10.00
2 or more full members in the same household, EACH	£ 8.00
Junior members per annum	£ 1.00
Corporate members per annum – bronze / silver / gold	£75 / £250 / £500

HODS Nods

The main HODS web site is now open. Our programme of events can be seen by visiting www.heritageopendays.org where you will find that our first ever venture into the HODS initiative has resulted in Corsham hosting the largest number of events in the whole of Wiltshire.

We also have Fringe events to our main HODS programme, á la Edinburgh Festival (!). Fringe events at the Royal Oak include a jazz duo for the Friday evening. This nicely complements the Folk Evening on the Saturday and the 6X Mini Owners Club Meeting on the Sunday.



Corsham Station Campaign

The campaign rolls on unabated! In July Anne attended a meeting of BANES Council at the Guildhall to request that they continued to include the clause in their City Plan, which confirmed their support for the re-opening of Corsham Station. That support remains strong.

Although Wiltshire CC was invited to attend the inaugural meeting, they did not do so, although a Rail Partnership for the Bristol/Bath travel to work area would benefit those living in West and North Wiltshire who commute daily into and across that conurbation. Councillors need know that WCC should join that partnership, the County need to be in there arguing for improvements to the E/W services; arguing for a local service to replace the Bristol/Oxford; arguing for

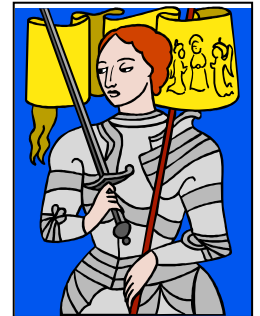
improvements in frequency and capacity of services through Trowbridge and Bradford on Avon. A recent study highlighted the fact that 11% of Trowbridge passengers had been unable to board trains, due to overcrowding. If Wiltshire do not join, how will they represent the voice of travellers from this area? Investment will go elsewhere.

Please therefore e-mail any comments to Anne on – anne.lock@virgin.net. With colleagues of Transport 2000 there is hope for an early merger of three franchises, which may focus on the Gloucester – Bristol – Taunton axis initially, and may not be involved with lines east of Bath which does not look particularly suitable as a vehicle for Wiltshire.

However, you may rest assured that WCC has not abandoned its rail aspirations and will continue to pursue them in any way and at any time which is likely to

produce practical results.

Hampshire County Council have set up a Rail Partnership across the Southampton. /Bournemouth area and at the time Corsham Station was due to come on line, the station at Chandlers Ford re-opened at a cost of £2M – funded by the County Council – with the SRA committed to a budget of £3.5M over 3 years for a manned station and supported rail service. If Wiltshire is serious about its rail aspirations, then it has lessons to learn from Hampshire. You could do your bit by writing to George Batten at County Hall to acquaint him with your views. Equally, if you know of people who regularly commute across the Severnside or West Wiltshire area, may we also suggest that they too write to George Batten to suggest that Wiltshire get involved with their local Severnside Rail Partnership!



*Anne Lock
continues her battle
for the restoration
of Corsham Station*

Social Events

We spent an extremely interesting evening – 25th July, when Martin Yallop from the Corsham Tourist Information and Heritage Centre (TIC) gave us an insight into the features of buildings around us in the town. This proved to many of us that we go around with our eyes shut, and our minds closed to the many delightful architectural aspects of Corsham!

Martin has kindly offered to take us for a walk around the town on Wednesday, 27th August, so that we may see for ourselves many of the features which he showed us.

We shall meet in Church Square at 7 pm promptly – If, by chance (!) it is pouring with rain, then we will meet in the TIC. Please join us and spend an interesting evening looking upward instead of at the road, or at the shopping list. It is surprising what there is to see!

ASHTAV SUMMER PARTY

The Market Room, Town Hall Malmesbury

Saturday, 2nd September 2003-07-30

11 am for 11.30 start

Jo Rose – the Pewsey Vale Quiet Project

&

Page Mitchell of Transport 2000 on the National SSI
(Slower Speed Initiative)

Civic Society Members - £12.50 includes lunch with wine

To book – please contact Ann Lock



HODS Events in Focus



View of the 'sham castle'

One of the events in the forthcoming Heritage Open Days programme is the tour of the less well-known features of Corsham Court. The tour will be hosted by James Methuen-Campbell, the current owner of the Court, and will focus upon some of the interesting features of the estate that are not normally available to the public.

The tour will start with the 'sham castle', originally erected in the early 1800's to conceal Ethelred House from the view from the Main House. The structure was added to in the 1870's and is thought to include pieces from Bradenstoke Abbey in Lyneham.

Part of the Court was removed and re-erected at Lee Abbey in North Devon, where it forms an octagonal extension to the main part of the Abbey itself

Next on the tour is the 'Dairy'. This is a delightful, round chapel-like building with magnificent stained glass windows and doors, which was used as a 'play house' by the daughters of the house.

The restored remains of the Medieval House, pulled down in the 1500's, are next on the tour, followed by the Dovecote which, although difficult to date accurately, is thought to predate the Tudor House.

Passing the Granary, sitting several feet off the ground upon magnificent stone 'mushrooms' to foil the voracious rats, and noting that in the 1840's, the main part of the Court was gutted of the earlier 'Nash' bits, the tour will pass into the orchard where there is a very old horse-draws cider press to be seen.



View of the stable block

Passing through to the back of the Court, the tour will then return to the Stable Block via the Capability Brown gardens.

The Heritage Open Days programme for Corsham consists of eleven events organised by the Corsham Civic Society, covering attractions which include grade I and II listed buildings, churches, local craftsmen working in lead and stone, as well as the opportunity to attend a Victorian School day. The programme runs from September 12th to 15th and further information on the whole programme is available from the Corsham Tourist Information Centre.

Information Access

The **Data Protection Act**, 1998 came into force on the first of March 2000, and requires a 'right of access' by individuals to personal data held on computers. Corsham Civic Society does not hold 'sensitive personal data' as defined by the Act, and are therefore only concerned with Schedule 2 of the Act.

The only personal data held on computers is that which was freely provided when application forms were completed, and as such is freely available to all members who express a wish to see it, by contacting a member of the Executive Committee who will arrange it

The **Freedom of Information Act** received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. It is due to be implemented in stages and will be fully in force by January 2005. Some public authorities have already had to submit their publication schemes for approval and by June 2004, this obligation will have extended to all public authorities. The right of public access to all information will come into force for all public authorities in January 2005 – just thought you might like to know.....



Where do you Live?

We received some interesting response to this article following publication in April. And some amendment is required. :

Alexander Terrace – most probably named after a surgeon, Richard H. Alexander who lived in Alexander House (the old maternity home) in the High Street. He is known to have owned several properties in the immediate area in 1839.

The Golden Path – Donated by Richard Balch, who lived at 11 High Street. He first traded as a butcher, the firm becoming Beszant & Balch in 1839, when Richard moved to Lypiatt Farm. He had much to do with the opening up of building land – Hastings Rd, South St and The Cleeve, and of course the opening up of a path between High St and Alexander Terrace, known as the 'Golden Path'

Churchill Way – not named after 'Winston Churchill', but a Mr CW Churchill, who was head of Corsham Primary School at one time.

We mentioned Charles Dickens last time – on that estate are also 'Oliver Avenue, Tupman Rd and Weller Rd – all characters from 'Pickwick Papers' I think we had it right !

Purleigh Rd- stands by an ancient barn – Purleigh Barn.

Burn Road & Sheffield Lane – Both were Commanding Officers at The Hudswell Army Depot.

Coulston Rd – An error was made in the official order to name this road. It should have been 'Coulsden', which

is the original name of the cross-roads at Cross Keys.

Danvers Close – Sir Henry Danvers was believed to have lived at Ridge Farm. He is reputed to have murdered Sir Henry Long at the Ridge in 1594

Glebe Way – Church land, and Penleigh Close – Celtic origin, meaning "high clearing"

Hulbert Close – Mr Hulbert was a well known local cricketer.

Eldridge Place – Mr Eldridge was a farmer who lived at Pockeridge House in about 1830.

Poynder Road – Sir William Dickson Poynder, who lived at Hartham Park

Arney Close – The Arneys were farmers at Pockeridge Farm.

Tasker Close – Mr Tasker was a railwayman, and ran the 'Railway Inn' at the bottom of Station Rd, adjacent to the old entrance to the Railway Station.

Hardhams Rise, Charlwood Road, Furze Hill, The Knowle, Oathills, Hitherspring, Cottlemead, Cresswells, Southerwicks - were all Field names.

Wastfields - Mr Wastfield was a surgeon.

Hatton Way – Sir Shristopher Hatton was a favourite of Elizabeth I, he owned the site of Corsham Court and later sold it to Thomas Smythe.

Light Close – Mr William Light was Parish Clerk, and chairman of the NWDC.

Manor Road – perhaps part of Pickwick Manor.

Edinburgh Way – Connected to Prince Philip's tour of duty at Royal Arthur.

Erneston Crescent – The Name of the developer, Mr Ernest Merrett.

Ludmead & Ladbrook Lane – Possibly get their names from the Ladbrook or Ludbrook and comes from 'the brook of Our Lady'.

Sources: Our thanks to Joe James; "History of Corsham" – Chris Hall; "The ways of Corsham" – John Poulson; "Placenames of Wiltshire" – Allen Mawer & FM Stenton.



Corsham Civic Society

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

Under Construction!

Obituaries

Bob Allen

It is with great regret that we have learned of the death of Bob Allen. Anne Lock reports as follows:-

"In early July Bob Allen called to hand me a copy of a video which he had produced with his son, detailing his family members' lives and involvement in the village of Neston during the past 100 years. He exuded his usual enthusiasm and spoke of the holiday he and Margaret were soon to enjoy. You may imagine the shock, therefore to receive a call from Margaret, just over a week later, to say that Bob had been admitted to the RUH suffering from leukaemia. The prognosis was grim – just a few months at most, but his condition deteriorated and he had died the previous day. Whilst for Bob his suffering had been short, for Margaret and his family and

friends – a sudden and unexpected separation. I feel sure you will join with the Committee in extending our most sincere condolences to Margaret and the family.

When Bob retired from the RAF he lived on the Valley estate, leaving there to live in Bradford on Avon on his marriage to Margaret, a kindred spirit with a shared love of music, travel and walking. In earlier years Bob worked as a Cotswold Warden and led many a ramble for the Society and other groups. Whilst at home he would regularly visit his elderly Aunt, a lady who in her youth would trip down Spring Lane in Neston to fetch water from the spring. Bob's father proposed to his mother beneath a beech tree in the same vicinity. Bob campaigned vigorously with the Society against closure of

Spring Lane and welcomed the proposal from Brig. John Neeve that an alternative route should be found. He worked with enthusiasm amongst the 10 – 12 Neston residents who gathered on a Saturday morning to plant and subsequently care for the hundreds of yards of mainly hawthorn hedgerow – plus native tree saplings – along Pucketts Way which now links Spring Lane with both Pockeridge Drive and Hudswell. In later years he would appear with bundles of willow, alders and hazel which he had purchased as gifts to the Rural action Grant Scheme – a scheme which was for him intrinsically linked with his family history and now for us, with memories of Bob himself." He will be greatly missed.

Maud Davis

We were also extremely saddened to learn of the death of Les Davis' wife Maud.

Maud had suffered ill health

for many years, and Les and his son Peter had tirelessly cared for her at their home.

Les and Peter have asked us to convey their thanks to

members of the Society who have sent cards and written letters to express their condolences and sympathy on the occasion of their sad loss.

Corsham Civic Society

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 the Civic Trust and ASHTAV (Association of Small 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/or historical interest, both in Corsham and in the surrounding countryside.

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