



# Corsham Spotlight

July, 2006

Volume 4, Issue 2



Editorial	1
Review	2
AGM	2
Welcome	3
HODS	3
Hods Prog	4
Planning	4
Obituary	4
Rudloe Stone	5
TIC	6
Brunel	6
TIC	6
Notice Board	6
Peep at the Past	7
Pocket Images	7
Mayo Memorial	8
Photo Archive	9
Fire Badges	9
Website	9
Skateboard	10
Art Award	10
LSP	10
Summer Walk	11
Adopt a Grave	11
Waste	11

Newsletter of the Corsham Civic Society

## Editorial

You will have by now heard the very good news that Corsham is to retain its Tourist Information Centre & Heritage Centre. The locally produced petition of almost 800 signatures voiced the Town's opposition to the proposal to re-site the Tourist Information Point to the Town Hall, and the possible closure of the Heritage Centre. In addition, a great deal of time and effort was spent by Ian Storey of the Corsham Chamber of Commerce, and our own Society Chairman, Peter Tapscott, to produce a viable alternative which was acceptable to the NWDC. This took the form of a Business Plan to run the activity under the responsibility and direction of a Development Trust Company - a new body to be established with membership drawn from a wide spectrum of local individuals and organisations. Confirmation that this had been accepted as NWDC's preferred way forward emerged from a meeting of its Executive held 15 June 2006. The following day Ian and Peter were called in for a meeting with the NWDC's responsible officer who requested that the work required to make all this happen be put in hand with immediate effect. We understand that the transition to operation under the new management is planned to be completed by September.

Our thanks go to everyone in the Town who has been involved in bringing about this most welcome of changes. *(Please see item Page 6) within for more details.)*

Have you seen the Brunel Exhibition currently running in the Heritage Centre, together with an effigy of Mr Brunel himself? All provided by the courtesy and hard work of Martin Yallop, who gathered most of the

**Complimentary Copy**



information together, and has produced a very informative display. Our members were able to supply some fine pictures of both Isambard and Marc Brunel and other pieces of information relevant to the great man's time in Corsham. Thank you to those who contributed.

We have learned that the Royal Arthur Development proposals for a Retirement Village on the site at Neston, are once again to go to appeal. This will take place later in the year, and we will report the outcome when it is available. Our planning committee have always expressed the view that this would be a useful development, both for the nationally ageing community and the economy of the area. With so many new homes being built in Corsham and its surrounds, one would think there was some merit in the provision of homes for those who may wish members of their elderly family to live closer to them.

**Pat Whalley**



## Review

We were disappointed that our speaker for March, David Harries was unable to attend our meeting due to ill health. But we are so fortunate to have our programme organiser and researcher, Les Davis, to step into the breach on these occasions, to regale us with more information about Corsham; its buildings and its people from the past. In view of our current interest in the restoration of the Mayo Memorial, Les gave us some of the facts and figures he has discovered about the family and in particular the influence Mr Charles Mayo had on the town. (We shall be divulging much of that later this year). We were told of the inaugural meeting of the Parish Council, at which Mr Mayo was a member; and we heard many more anecdotes about the other men who served on the Council with him and whose descendants are still in the locality. Fortunately for us, Les's interest in the town and its people past and present means he is a fount of knowledge, and can always be relied on to produce a talk on demand! Thank you Les.

April gave us an interesting view of the Bath Museum. Curator Stuart Burroughes enthralled us with a glimpse of the social and industrial history of this fine city, and we are looking forward to visiting the Museum in August.

Our May meeting was the AGM, and we were pleased to welcome some new members to the Executive committee. With our business concluded we enjoyed an extremely interesting talk on 'Bits of This and That' given by Michael Horseman, who amused us with stories of his many and varied interests, from bell ringing, to trains, bus travel, and the Kennet & Avon Canal. He also shared with us a little of his 'courting' days, and the long bicycle rides to meet the lady who was to become his wife. It's really a wonder he had time!! Michael ended with some pictures of his many journeys, and we hope very much that he will return to lighten our 'AGM's in the future.

At our meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> June we were pleased to finally welcome David Harries. This was a visual presentation, and it was the members who were called upon to identify items from the past three centuries- a task which certainly showed up those of us who had long memories!! David then gave us a potted history of the items, some which were quite obscure, and some the precursor of things we use today. A very enlightening and entertaining evening. *Ed.*

## Annual General Meeting, 2006

Our AGM was held on 26th May in Church House. Changes to our committee were afoot, with Peter Tapscott stepping down as Chairman, and Pat Whalley wishing to retire from the Secretary post, and no one eagerly waiting to take their places, difficulties were expected to arise! Both Peter and Pat were re-elected on to the executive committee and have committed themselves to many projects. Anne Greenly has very kindly promised to continue as our President, as had John Harwood, our Treasurer.

However you cannot keep an organisation such as ours running smoothly without some leadership and continuity.

It was proposed that this year the Chairman should only be asked to serve for one year, and that a roster of future nominees for the post should be raised for the future. It was further suggested that members should be asked to help out by taking on perhaps a 'one off' task to effectively 'spread the load'.

At the subsequent Executive Committee meeting in June we were extremely relieved and delighted when Wyndham Thomas agreed to take the Chair for this year. Aply assisted by his wife Kathy, they have also agreed to

take on the Executive meeting minute taking, which will much relieve the secretary. So Pat has agreed to remain as Hon Sec for another year, having now got the opportunity to meet many more of the other requirements of the post.



## Change at the Top – Welcome Wyndham

The Corsham Civic Society has a new Chairman, and he has all the right attributes for the role too. (A significant improvement on the last one!)

Followers of our internal affairs will know that we found ourselves without a Chairman when the AGM held on 26 May drew to a close. Having served in the post for 3 years – and with the Society facing several exciting new challenges, many of which I am intimately involved in – I felt that I should stand aside and encourage a 'new person' to occupy the position. Indeed, I feel that a society like ours needs a change-out at the top from time-to-time, otherwise it becomes stagnant and generally lacking in vitality and vibrancy.

Perhaps he had not been expecting me to be so obdurate in my determination not to offer myself for the Chair this time around. However, Wyndham, went home that evening and gave the matter careful attention. As a new member of the Executive, along with Kathy, his wife, Wyndham knew that the AGM had charged the Committee with coming up with a new Chairman when it held its first meeting on 13 June. The result was a communication from Wyndham to me, declaring that he was prepared to take the role. I have to say I was overjoyed. No doubt I could scarcely conceal my pleasure that such a worthy candidate as Wyndham had put himself forward I felt duty-bound to check-out Wyndham's credentials (!), so we arranged to meet – ahead of the Executive meeting. It soon became crystal clear to me that Wyndham and Kathy are extremely pleased with their choice of 'retirement location' and have already put down some deep roots in their newly adopted community. (Wyndham has even got himself an allotment!) They certainly intend to

be here for many years to come.

Wyndham comes from the classical music side of academia. He has been Head of Department at the University of Bristol. In 'retirement', he retains the position of Honorary Research Fellow. He composes, he writes, he edits, he speaks with all the eloquence of a person from his native South Wales. He has an interest in the Past. Also the Present and the Future – especially where Corsham is concerned.

I commend Wyndham to my fellow members of the Corsham Civic Society as an entirely appropriate candidate for the role of Leader – a true 'breath of fresh air'. Mr. Chairman, you are assured of my whole-hearted support.

*Peter Tapscott, (Outgoing Chairman, and now) Vice Chairman*



**Chairman Wyndham and Kathy**

## Heritage Open Days (HODS) – September 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>

Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are normally closed to the public or charge for admission.

It is co-ordinated nationally by the Civic Trust with funding and support from English Heritage, and organised locally by thousands of volunteers from all walks of life. For more information on local and national events, visit [www.heritageopendays.org](http://www.heritageopendays.org)

Our thanks are due to all those contributing so much to make this event a success. *Ed.*



### **CORSHAM CIVIC SOCIETY BARBEQUE**

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2006.**

**At Heywood School, Priory St, Corsham**

**12 –3pm.**

Please bring your own chair.



## Corsham's Programme of HODS Events

*Thursday 7th Sept. 10am - 4pm. St Bartholomew's Church - Open to the public, and, at 2.30pm, a talk by Celia James entitled "Church and Windows"*

*Friday 8th Sept. 10am – 4pm. St Bartholomew's Church - Open to the public, and, at 2.30pm, a talk by Celia James entitled "Church Windows"*

*Friday 8th Sept. 2pm. \* Rudloe Stoneworks, a 45min Tour demonstrating the production of stone Fireplaces from local materials. Tickets and location details from the Corsham TIC.*

*Saturday 9th Sept 10am – 1pm. St Bartholomew's Church - Open to the public, and, at 11.30am, a talk by Ron Smith entitled "Church Silver & Brass"*

*Saturday 9th Sept 10.30am – 12.00. Heywood School. For Children of Primary School age - a Treasure Hunt – with prizes. Limited number of places.*

*Saturday 9th Sept. 11am. Guided Tour of Corsham Town Centre, led by Martin Yallop of the Corsham Tourist Information and Heritage Centre. Tickets available from the Corsham TIC. 15 places available.*

*Saturday 9th Sept. 12.30pm \*Rudloe Stoneworks, a 45min Tour demonstrating the production of stone Fireplaces from local materials. Tickets and location details from the Corsham TIC.*

*Sunday 10th Sept. 11am – 4pm. St Bartholomew's Church - Open to the public, and, at 2.30pm, a talk by Celia James entitled "Church & Windows"*

*Sunday 10th Sept. 11am. Guided Tour of Corsham Town Centre, led by Martin Yallop of the Corsham Tourist Information and Heritage Centre. Tickets available from Corsham TIC. 15 places available.*

***Tickets for all the HODS events will be available from the TIC from August 14<sup>th</sup> onwards***

*NB. The Corsham Tourist Information Centre (TIC) is located at Arnold House, High St., Corsham. It is open from 10am to 4.30pm, Monday to Saturday.*

Our thanks are due to all those contributing so much to make this event a success. *Ed.*

## Planning Matters

In the middle of June, the Planning committee was able to give its views on an application for a development at the site known as Rudloe Manor. (atop Box Hill). The application covers the demolition of existing 20th century MOD buildings (ex RAF quarters), the conversion and restoration of the existing Manor House, tithe barn and outbuildings into 2 dwellings, and the erection of 11 new single storied residential units (within the curtilage of the Listed Building), together with associated landscaping works and infrastructure.

Readers may remember that a few months ago there had been an application for the development of a Retirement Complex on another part of this site, but this was rejected by the NWDC.

Rudloe Manor House, it is believed, had been officer's quarters during the occupation of the RAF, but since they had 'decamped', this beautiful house had been left to its own devices. Our planning committee took the view that this application made good use of a brown field site, in an area of outstanding natural beauty, and was an opportunity to bring the house and grounds back to life, far preferable to it lying neglected and unattended. The only reservation was of course, the possible traffic difficulties, there is only a small lane leading to this part of the site, and that would certainly have to be addressed before approval was given. We await the NWDC decision.

*Peter Tapscott*

## Obituary

It is with much sadness that we have to report the death of Gale Curry, after a long battle with cancer. Gale had lived with the disease for some 15 years, and with an enormously positive attitude, strived to live as normal a life as possible. A long term member of the Society, Gale had contributed greatly to its work; more recently she had given her time and expertise as an English teacher, to judge our annual English competition run in conjunction with the Corsham School.

Gale has worked for the greater good for this her local community for many years, and she will be sorely missed. Our sympathy goes to David, her husband, and other members of her family at such a sad time. *Ed.*





## Rudloe Stone works

Whenever we have co-ordinated Corsham's participation in Heritage Open Days (England's foremost annual festival celebrating the country's architectural and cultural heritage), we have included at least one item which answered the call of locals to be allowed access to the business premises of specialist companies operating in, or near to, the town centre. We find that local folk are fascinated by the discovery of such things which are not immediately obvious to them. Affording them the opportunity to visit these production units – which are normally very small in scale – goes down very well indeed. The fact that they can do so without incurring a charge is the icing on the cake!

We were determined that HODs 2006 should be no exception. One of the members of our Organising Team had the answer at their fingertips – guided tours of Rudloe Stoneworks, a small company (28 employees, £1.2m turnover) specialising in the design, manufacture and installation of fireplaces made from local materials, located near the entrance to the Leafield Industrial Estate, just up the road from Potley.

Ever since our registration documents containing this information were received and processed at the Civic Trust the 'phone lines have been hot with enquiries about how we came to hit on the inclusion of tours of Rudloe Stoneworks in our list of 'attractions' for HODs 2006, and staff from the magazine 'BBC Homes and Antiques' wanting to feature the business, Corsham, and us (the Civic Society) in its September edition. They have even sent one of their own photographers to the factory to get a suitably 'hi-res' picture to grace the article. As you might well imagine, this is work of the HODs team at the Civic Trust, who view it a wonderful opportunity to promote the whole festival. Realising that this could give rise to an increased national interest in booking places on the tours (we had only arranged two!), they have asked us to try to persuade the company to offer more – and they (the Civic Trust) have actually undertaken to provide 'Box Office' facilities at their London office address to cope with the demand for these extra tours. Wow!

We have worked closely with the directors and staff of Rudloe Stoneworks on this one. We asked them to provide us with a few words for this edition of Spotlight, by way of introduction. Here is what they told us:

**“Rudloe Stoneworks Ltd “**

**Bringing Classical Elegance into your home.**

Based near the village of Box, Rudloe Stoneworks is a small and innovative market leader in the design, manufacture and installing of high quality stone fireplaces.

The locally crushed stone used has been quarried and worked in the Bath area since Roman times and allows us to produce cast stone fireplaces in two distinct colours. Bath Stone is a warm, honey tone, while Portland stone is creamy white.

When designing our fireplaces we concentrate on purity of line and proportion, to give a classical elegance to both traditional and contemporary surrounds. Our understanding of the physical properties of the stone with which we work allows us to design fireplaces that make the most of its unique beauty. To complement and enhance this, our in house designer has created a range of decorative panels and spandrels featuring finely detailed relief modelling of extreme high quality. These unique designs of a type so prohibitively expensive in quarried stone are

### **exclusive to Rudloe Stoneworks.**

Our reputation has been built on the manufacture of individually crafted cast stone fireplaces offering a high quality product that is strong, durable and cost effective. All Rudloe Stoneworks fireplaces are made to order in the UK and expertly finished by our experienced stonemasons.

While we believe that there is a fireplace in our collection to suit most situations, we understand that there will always be a need for bespoke commissions. You may wish to copy a fireplace or put up on another design feature in your home, have a specific need for a mantle to fit a particular space or simply desire a certain type or colour of natural stone.

All of our fireplaces can be viewed in a variety of room settings in our showroom at Rudloe Stoneworks. Alternatively visit our website [www.rudloe-stoneworks.com](http://www.rudloe-stoneworks.com) or telephone us on 01225 816400 to receive a current brochure.

Rudloe Stoneworks Limited, Leafield Stoneyard, Potley Lane, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9RS



*A final word on all this. We had already planned for the two original tours to be 'ticket-only' and had arranged for tickets to be available (only) from the Corsham TIC, in person and from no earlier than Monday 14 August. We feel bound to emphasise that the earliest possible booking for these two tours is strictly recommended.*

*Peter Tapscott, HODs 2006 Co-ordinator*



**Bob Lauder, Works Manager  
Rudloe Stone Works**

## The Future of Corsham TIC - Latest

The decision has now been made by NWDC to 'outsource' the running of the Corsham Visitor Information and Heritage Centre to a new body to be known as the Corsham Area Development Trust Company (CADT). The decision was made at a meeting of the Council's Executive on 15 June 2006 and takes effect from September. It follows a prolonged search by NWDC to find an alternative working arrangement, followed more recently by a period of intense collaboration between its responsible-officer, ourselves – through the particular efforts of Peter Tapscott – and Ian Storey of the Corsham Chamber of Commerce.

Ian and Peter are presently establishing the CADT. It will be a 'company limited by guarantee', with membership open to all. It will be the entity that has the contractual relationship with NWDC, the employees, the suppliers of goods and services and with customers.

The Civic Society has played a major role in bringing this about, and stands to gain a great deal from the arrangement as the years unfold – as will Corsham, as a whole. Amongst other things, it will fall to us to develop the 'Heritage Centre' side of the business. This, of course, fits nicely with our long-standing need to centralise and display the increasing volume of artefacts that a society like ours attracts.

There have been times over the recent past when it has looked like we would lose our TIC. It now appears that we can put those fears behind us. Our thanks go to everyone in the Town who has been involved in bringing about this most welcome of changes – none more so than Nina and Stewart at Green Ginger who gave their all with the petition.

Now matters are directly in our own hands. We are proud to have played our part in bringing this about, and ask all our members to 'do their bit' to make it a success.

*Peter Tapscott*

## The Elusive Notice Board

We are delighted to announce that we have now achieved the necessary monies to proceed with our Notice board Re-location Planning Application to erect our notice board on the side of 'The Chapel etc' building.

You may remember the sorry tale. We needed £280 to make the application, and we were fortunate to obtain from the NWDC - £140, from the CTC - £50, and from our own membership - donations of a further £25. This left a shortfall of £65. Then, in stepped another benefactor - Mr Bill Hall, MD of Martingate Centre. Bill read of our plight and generously offered to meet the remaining sum in order that we could go ahead. Very many thanks to you, Bill. Let us hope it will not be too long before everyone is able to check on what we are doing!

*Ed*



## Peep at the Past – “..Why Kinneir Close?”

Simply because Septimus Kinneir was the first of two Corsham born and trained cricketers who eventually played for England; the other being ‘Big Jim’ Smith.

David Smith the author and archivist (who lives in Corsham), in his book “Corsham’s Two Test Cricketers” offers fascinating and detailed biographies of these local sons who achieved stellar heights.

S.P. Kinneir (“Sep”) was born in Pickwick in 1871. A left-handed batsman, he played for Corsham during the ‘golden’ Spackman years, scoring 4919 runs and hitting five centuries. From 1890 he made a steady contribution to Wiltshire’s fortunes, and in 1896 was engaged by Warwickshire as a professional at a salary of £80 per annum.

Early in 1911 he made his highest score – 268 v Hants. In the same year he was selected to join the Ashes tour of Australia 1911-1912. During the tour he played in five matches, including the first Test.

“Sep” warranted the adjective ‘close’. Sensitive about his baldness he was rarely seen without headgear. His natural reticence engendered some mystery about his marriage. A close friend, Frank Foster claimed “he never married” but the Spackman Diaries of July 1923 announced his forthcoming marriage, which took place in the August of that year at a Birmingham Registry office.

Riding his faithful motorcycle in 1928 Sep suffered a stroke, which proved fatal.

In complete contrast was the idolised son of Eli Smith, a builder who lived in Priory Street. Cedric Ivan James Smith was born into a family of six in 1906. Jim, and his brother William, both played for Corsham in their teens, and Jim first turned out for Wiltshire against Kent in 1926. Col RW Awdry of Chippenham spotted a developing fast bowler, and recommended Jim to the MCC, whence he joined the ground staff. He qualified for Middlesex in 1934 and burst upon the County scene.

In this his first full season ‘Big Jim’ took 172 wickets, a feat not surpassed by any fast bowler, before or since. The Australians were touring Britain at the time, but inexplicably Jim was not called up for Test duty. Amends were made however, when he sailed with the MCC for the subsequent tour of the West Indies. Ironically, he missed his first Christmas at home with his new wife!

Jim was 6’4”, and wore specially made size 14 boots. He was immensely popular and backed up fast bowling with furious hitting. 66 runs in 18 minutes against Gloucester in 1938 for example.

In later years Jim took over a public house in Blackburn. Ever a countryman at heart, Corsham remained in his affections, and he paid many a visit to his sister at his birthplace in Priory Street.

Footnote: My thanks to David Smith for allowing me to quote extensively from his absorbing book.

*Joe James*

## Pocket Images of Corsham

In 1997, due to the good offices of our then Chairman, Anne Lock, the Society published a book called “Around Corsham”, which put to good use many of the photographs held in the Society’s collection. It has now been re-printed in a pocket book format and I am sure there are many people new to the area that will be interested in obtaining a copy. At the time of writing, the book is available at the Corsham Bookshop, but has not yet arrived at the Tourist Information Office. I am sure by the time of issue of this publication it will be available in many outlets in the town.

*Ed*

### **FRENCH MARKET DAY**

***Please note – This event normally takes place annually at end of June. But was deferred to September this year. Now unfortunately this event has had to be cancelled.***



## The Mayo Memorial Restoration Project - Update

We have achieved much since our last issue of 'Spotlight'. (end March 06)

*Peter Tapscott, our Vice Chairman, has been confirmed as the overall 'Project Manager', and his first task was to review the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) offer that had been received mid-May. This was accepted, on behalf of the Corsham Civic Society on 2 June, and immediately we made our claim for the 1st Stage Payment – this being for 50% of the 'Total Grant', 'up front', i.e. without the need for support by means of 'proof of expenditure'. Clearly this is a good way of acquiring some working capital – nearly £11,000 of it, in fact.*

*Since then Peter has analysed the figures and can advise as follows:*

The Grant amounts to a total of £21,721, inclusive of VAT and a (mandatory) 10% contingency (for 'emergencies and unexpected costs') – which must not be spent without approval first having granted.

In accordance with the standard ethos of the LHI, the build-up of this total includes for the sum of £7,390 (inclusive of VAT, but exclusive of contingency) for the actual physical restoration work – ONLY.

The remainder is required to be spent on, what one might call the, 'Building Community Awareness' aspects of the Project – involving schools, youth groups, making presentations to local groups, demonstrations, reporting, publicising, recording, archiving, etc.

So, there are really 2 separate aspects to this Project – the 'Structural Bit' and the 'Building Community Awareness Bit'.

We are fortunate in having secured the services of CMS Bath in the High Street to take charge of the former – and all for free. It falls to us, the Corsham Civic Society, to take care of the latter. It is where the greater complexity lies and, indeed, where the greater expenditure will be involved. It is also where the greater reliance on volunteer effort lies. More of this next time.

*Since accepting the Grant 'Offer', Peter has met with representatives of CMS Bath – to launch a comparison between what can be afforded out of the Grant and what we might wish to have done to the Memorial in total.*

*It is already clear that the £7,390 from the LHI will not accommodate everything that we would like to have done.*

*With 'top up' in mind, Corsham Town Council (CTC) has already indicated that it may be able to help the present funding shortfall situation by adding some £2,500 retained from its 2005/2006 budget and by allocating new monies from its 2006/2007 budget. Additionally, it might be able to access non-CTC funds to further add to the sum available for physical restoration work.*

### Next Steps:

**Now.** A Meeting is to be convened by CMS Bath with CTC's staff, to explore the 'expressions of interest' or perhaps actual bids, that the latter has attracted through its longer-term involvement in the Project - the objective being to assemble a list of priced elements where the 'prices' are as near firm as they can be at this pre-Consent stage, then to use this, and the knowledge of likely total funding availability, to define the Scope of Work to be covered in the Planning Application, and for CMS Bath to issue formal Invitations to Bid. Intended completion date for this phase = end June 2006.

**End July 2006.** Peter will convene a meeting of CMS Bath and the CTC to review bids and match (as best as it can be achieved) these with the total available funding. The Scope of Work to be covered in the final Planning Application will be agreed at the meeting. CMS Bath will then submit the Planning Application to NWDC immediately after this meeting. Intended completion date for this phase = end July 2006.

**End August 2006.** Anticipated date for receipt of Planning Consent for agreed works.

**Early September 2006.** CMS Bath to place orders for physical restoration work.

*In parallel with all above. The Project Manager will be re-engaging with the various community organisations who gave us positive expressions of interest at the time of the writing of the Application for Funding by the LHI, in becoming involved in the 'non-physical restoration work' aspects of the Project.*

*Also, an initial announcement will be issued to the media to raise the profile of the Project.*

*Peter Tapscott*





## Photographic Archive

The NWDC Conservation officer, David Faulkner, has recently examined our Archive. He was much impressed, and thought that we were probably the only town in the area who held such a record. He suggested that his office may be able to help us with the scanning process, and asked if the Council could have a copy for use with their Conservation work. He also suggested that we might send a copy of our record to the Wilts Record Office. We are already well advanced with putting these photographs on to CD's for future ease of use, and the Executive Committee have gratefully accepted David's offer of help. When the recording is complete, we shall be pleased to give a copy to the NWDC and to the WCC Record Office.

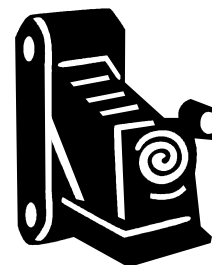
We have to express our grateful thanks to Geoff Knapp, (member of our Executive Committee) who has very kindly donated to us a book of photographs giving us a snapshot of the life at Corsham Primary School (now the Pound Arts Centre) in 1978. It was produced by the students of the Bath

Academy of Art, and is another great addition to the photographs and memorabilia we already hold.

Thank you Geoff.

*If you have any items which record Corsham's past, and would like to have them kept in safe hands for others to enjoy in the future, please let us know. We would take very good care of them.*

Ed.



## Property Insurance – Fire Badges

Some of you may have noticed above the door of what is now the Halifax Building Society, a Listed 17th Century building; there is a round metal plate carrying the face of the sun. This denoted that the owners of the building were covered by a property insurance, which would ensure that the fire brigade would be paid in the event that they were required to put out a fire on the premises. The formation of a crude form of mutual or friendly societies was devised following the Great Fire of London, 1666, which by the 19th century had grown into large corporations. If there was no plaque, then the fire brigade went away!

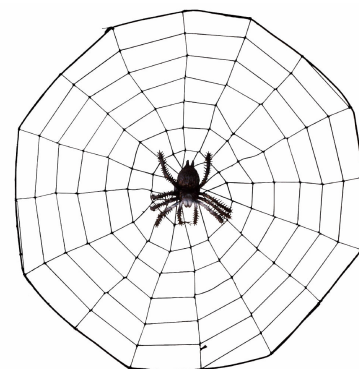
Unfortunately there is no policy number underneath this fire mark, if there had been we might have been able to trace its origins through the Guildhall Library in London. Nonetheless, we may yet be able set our researcher to finding who were the various owners of the house, and may discover who bought that first policy. We will keep you informed.

When the private fire brigades were taken under local authority control, there was no further use for these plates, and many were lost and destroyed. It is understood that there are 3 in existence in Chippenham, (see the Buttercross Bulletin, Summer 2006) and we consider ourselves extremely fortunate that Corsham has one such example which, if nothing else, reminds us of the importance of House Insurance!

*Thanks are due to John Vince author of the booklet "Fire-marks", and Tony White Editor of the 'Buttercross Bulletin' for giving us the opportunity to share this information with our readers.*

## Our Website

Due to the hard work of Brian Gibbs we now have a greatly improved web site, with plenty of space for copies of 'Spotlight', and all the important updates on our current activities. We are getting ever more 'hits', including ones from local people who are discovering that the Corsham Civic Society exists and can be of value to them. The 'Contact Us' facility is proving to be a constantly challenging source of enquiries!



## Skateboard Project

By the beginning of the School Holidays - if not, before – the purpose of the impressive structure presently taking shape on Corsham's Springfield Recreation Field will be clear to all. It is, of course, the town's Skateboard Facility. The site has seen steady progress ever since the 'first sod' was disturbed during early April. It is scheduled for a 'Grand Opening' on Tuesday, 11 July (at 6:30 pm).

The project has been skilfully managed by our own Brian Eatock, who has also brought about the formation of the two groups that must oversee the work of the Project Implementation Team. These are the Management & Maintenance Group and a User Forum. The latter comprises a combination of young persons and 'responsible adults'. It held its first meeting on 30 May when the design workshops (12 and 19 June) for the paint murals were discussed and agreed, and, also, the details of the opening event.

This really has been an example of how a community-led project should be run.

*Peter Tapscott*

## 2006 Corsham Primary Special Art Award

Once again we have sponsored this highly valued award – and, as ever, it has been a delight to be involved in a scheme so clearly associated with excellence in the field of the visual arts. The standard that exists in our local schools is truly outstanding.

The format was unchanged from previous years. A topic had been chosen ("Red") and the whole School had been invited to enter the competition. As before, Geoffrey Williams-Glover assisted the School's Head of Art, Clare Moore, in the selection of the winning entry. The Presentation took place as part of a special School Assembly on Wednesday, 21 June. Geoffrey made the actual presentation. He made this especially-interesting for his audience by speaking at length about techniques that had been employed by the winner and in the other entries he had reviewed. On this occasion, Ron Smith made the now-customary address on behalf of the Corsham Civic Society. (Thank you, Ron. It was with great regret that I was not able to be present on this occasion. Your willingness to represent the Society was much appreciated.)

Taking centre-stage in our picture is 2006's worthy winner, proudly displaying the fruits of his labours – which, again, in keeping with the growing tradition, had been framed by Steve Hible of Right Angle Picture Framing as his contribution to the competition. Thank you, once again, Geoffrey and Steve for assisting us with this Award.

*Peter Tapscott*



**The Winning Entry  
surrounded by the  
2006 runners-up**

## Local Strategic Partnership

This is the District-level Partnership upon which we are represented through our membership of the Corsham Area Community Partnership. At present I am the CACP's representative – being one of 15 voting members of the NWP's Board. Things are now moving ahead (at last, I hear you cry!). The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference that took place in Chippenham's Neeld Hall in November brought the actions expected of the Partnership sharply into focus. Since then, Champions for each group of actions have been appointed and their action plans are required to be presented at the next meeting in February. I managed to dodge being appointed to the role of Champion of anything really major. Rather, I have accepted the role of assistant to the Chairman, Dave Ashmore, the Chief Executive of Westlea Housing, on matters concerning 'Communication'.

Meanwhile, good 'ole John Prescott's department has been hard at it. The ODPM has brought out a 70-page document entitled 'Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future – A consultation paper. It contains 35 key questions. The NWP will be formulating its response at that February meeting.



## Our Annual Summer Walk and Supper

The weather kept fine and a 'Good Time' was certainly had by all. It is often surprising the things you observe on a walk, things you never have time to notice when just driving about our small town. There were quite a few comments of the "I didn't realise that was there" variety.

Well ahead of the evening we had over 30 'signed up' for both aspects of the combined event (the walk and the meal, participants are not bound to take part in both). The choice of Main Courses on the menu prepared by Jerry at the 'Flemish Weaver' was especially appealing so we arranged for the whole event to be announced on the Corsham page of the preceding week's Gazette & Herald. As always the food was excellent, and was a very suitable way to end this particular event. Against a background of one of the busiest periods in our recent history, the organisation of this annual favourite was no mean feat. We are particularly grateful to Geoff Knapp and Peter Tapscott for masterminding it. Ed

### ***Whose Britain is it anyway?***

Did anyone see the programme broadcast on BBC2 in January last, in which Jon and Dan Snow attempted to answer the question of land ownership in the UK? Thought you might be interested to see the estimated conclusion.

Aristocracy/Landed Gentry	35%
Small Farms	20%
Non Aristocracy (The people)	15%
Infrastructure	10%
Commerce	4%
Heritage Organisations	4%
Forestry Commission	4%
Church	1%
Crown	1%
MOD	1%

### **“Adopt-a-Grave”**

You may remember that in our November 2004 issue we reported on a scheme started by St Bartholomew's Church, in order to find volunteers who may be willing to take over the care of just one grave in the churchyard that no longer has anyone to care for it. We have now received a proposal from one of our members that the Society should adopt the grave of Lt. Daniel Clutterbuck, 8th Hussars, who was wounded in the "Charge of the Light Brigade" on 25th October 1854, and was subsequently buried in Corsham in 1906. This idea was received with great enthusiasm, and we have obtained the approval of Clare Raybould, who so ably cares for the churchyard, to start work. We hope to erect a small plaque at the graveside to identify the site, since it has long been neglected.

It has since come to our notice there are 2 other graves in the immediate vicinity – for Charles Mayo and for Joan Pictor (who bequeathed 'Arnold House' to the then Parish Council to be used to the benefit of the people of Corsham.) Since the society has a keen interest in the restoration of the Mayo Memorial and the setting up of the Development Trust at Arnold House, it would seem fitting that we should take care of these too. A small working group has been formed to take this work forward.

## Waste Matters

### **(Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy)**

By now the media and your local councils have bombarded you all with information on recycling, and reducing the amount of household rubbish we send to landfill. The idea being considered to introduce an additional environmental tax based on the quantity of rubbish we put out for collection and some councils e.g.; West Wilts and Kennet only emptying Wheelie bins on alternate weeks prompted our Executive to respond to the latest public consultation on Waste Site allocation. We wish to discourage anti-social behaviour such as fly tipping, so have requested that Corsham has its own Local Household Recycling site (HRC). At present Thingley Junction and the Leafield Industrial Estate are favoured by the Council but as we would prefer an accessible site nearer to hand to reduce journeys by road and not cause any additional road congestion we would like them to reconsider sites they had deferred for later consideration.

The Wiltshire & Swindon Waste Development and Minerals Forum meet again on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July.

Pat Britton



# Corsham Civic Society

## Civic Society Officers

### President

Mrs Anne Greenly

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### Hon Sec

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Mr Les Davis, 16 Methuen Way,  
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### Plans Chairman

Mr Geoff Knapp, 2 South Street  
Corsham, Wilts SN13 9HE

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.Corsham-Civic-Society.co.uk](http://www.Corsham-Civic-Society.co.uk)

## 2006 Programme

16 August	Visit to the Bath Museum
19 August	BBQ.
7- 10 September	HODS. (Heritage Open Days)
22 September	A look at 'Shoes through the Ages'. Mr C Nixon. <b>Venue: St Aldhelms, Pickwick Rd.</b>
27 October	A Musical Evening (1850-1950) A Tribute to the Spackman Family – directed by Wyndham Thomas. <b>Venue: St Aldhelms, Pickwick Rd</b>
24 November	'Beliefs in Stone' – Churches. <b>Venue; St Aldhelms, Pickwick Rd</b>
December	No meeting.

## 2007

**26 January** Celebration of the New Year – a Social Gathering. Venue to be advised.

All meetings to be held at 8pm. Watch for change of **venue**.  
Guests are welcome. Members - £1, Non members - £2

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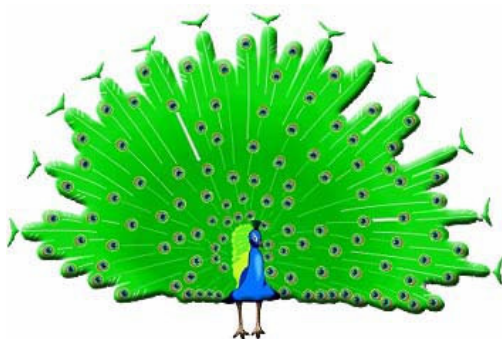
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## Corsham Civic Society

*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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