

Corsham Spotlight

March 2008

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Newsletter of the Corsham Civic Society



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Editorial

Local planning issues are very much to the fore these days, with the Planning Reform Bill under discussion, and in our own area, three potentially large developments in the Westwells Road area of Neston which will impact considerably on the neighbourhood, if they all go through the planning process successfully.

First, there is the **Basil Hill Development at Park Lane**, "Redevelopment of military establishment, demolish buildings erect new buildings, creation of vehicle/pedestrian access off Westwells Rd, new car parks, cycle parking" and much more. This proposal has already been approved, and most work will take place on the existing MOD site. At the stakeholders meeting 29th March 2007, it was stated that there would be provision for living accommodation for 180 personnel, and car parking spaces would increase from around 800 to 1,200. There are expected to be 2100 people employed on site.

Next we have the Outline planning request for **Development of a New Business and Technology Park, Comprising of Offices, Research and Development Facilities at Spring Park**, (Previously known as 'Spring Quarry'). This has the potential to bring a further 1000 jobs to the area.

Third, is for Full Planning Consent for **"Continuing Care Retirement Community,"** Comprising a 75 Bed Care Home, 221 Extra Care Apartments, Health treatment Complex, Recreation facilities, Doctor's Surgery etc., 283 Car Parking spaces.

The impact of these large schemes is going to have great significance to local people. Travel to work arrangements are of paramount importance. The potential for increased car movements is of major concern. Car sharing, cycling, walking, must be encouraged wherever possible. How much better it would be if we had a railway station. (See next page).



There is also the additional burden on local facilities such as Doctors, dentists, schools, and hospitals.

As a Society we do not have any objections to these proposals in principle, but we are extremely concerned, at the likely outcome of the increase in traffic to the area, and we believe that the proposed traffic schemes to meet these developments are going to cause considerable problems for road users in the vicinity.

It is important that we express our views on these proposals, please visit the NWDC web site – www.northwiltsgov.uk - go into [planning applications](#) for details, and if you haven't already done so, pass your comments to the local Council. Details of the new Planning Bill will be found online at:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills>

Pat Whalley



Corsham Station Campaign

Many of you will have seen the Update circulated in early January in response to the threat of our £250,000 Section 106 monies (contributed by the developers of Katherine Park) being reallocated to provide a village hall. Those concerned were asked to write to the Town Council, prior to this being debated by the Leisure Committee the next Wednesday. We hoped the Council might receive ten letters. In fact 69 letters and emails arrived at the Town Hall! Our letter of thanks appeared in the local paper the next week. Our station reopening forms part of a Transport Innovation Fund bid to Government by the West of England Partnership = "CUBA" = Counties that Used to Be Avon. The Committee decided to recommend to Full Council that the monies remained secure for the Station reopening until 2018 as per the original 106 Agreement. Phew!

The Spring Park proposal, on the West Wells Road, is due to go before NWDC on 4th March. Traffic generation due to this and MoD Basil Hill developments have been considered at meetings between Kenmore and WCC. As a result "transport improvements" are proposed, which include improved cycle links. However, whilst the developers would welcome the reopening of Corsham Station, the Business Park is seen by them only to add to the business case. Given the present stance of Network Rail, WCC have agreed the main public transport to be "bus links to stations in Bath and Chippenham", choosing to ignore present levels of congestion as one approaches the outskirts at both destinations. Spring Park is to provide 908 parking spaces, so the increase in vehicle movements per day will be in excess of 2,000/ 2,500, being journeys to and from work, plus trips for meetings and lunch/leisure during the working day. Their plans may be examined at the Town Hall. The highway measures to be imposed by WCC are: - **Roundabout at West Wells/Park Lane junction: Signalisation of A4/Leafy Lane junction: Signalisation - A4/Park Lane: Ditto - A4/Pickwick Road. The last two proposals are also to include signalled pedestrian facilities.** In our view these works requested by Wiltshire will ensure severe tailbacks at all junctions to the west of the town. We intend to press the District Council to consider further 106 monies - to increase the total already in hand. It is hoped that NWDC will receive many letters in similar vein. The Station Committee has decided to arrange for a Public Meeting to take place in mid-April in order to provide an opportunity for people to hear from a variety of speakers as to the present position.

Anne Lock

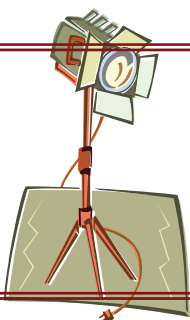
Please look out for the announcement of this meeting and make an effort to attend - mid April. It is important that the people of Corsham show their commitment to this campaign, and how much they would value the reinstatement of our railway station. Ed.

See also a website – <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/corshamstation/>

This website was not initiated by the Society Corsham Station Campaign, but why not use it?

Obituary

It was with very great sadness we learned of the death of Thelma Pearce late last year. Thelma had served on the Executive Committee for some time, and was a committed and most helpful participant in all our work and associated events, until various health issues prevented her continued involvement. We shall miss her dedication, and extend our sympathies to Tam and his family.



'Spotlight on Mayo'

Don't forget to buy your commemorative copy, published to mark the Restoration of the Mayo Memorial.

Available at Open Meetings and at the Tourist Information Centre.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - Civic Society Officers:

As I hope you all know, this year's AGM will be held on May 16th in the Town Hall. The reason for this change of venue is two-fold: (1) to enable us to have a more informal seating arrangement than is possible in the (excellent) lecture-style Pound Studio; and (2) to follow the business part of the meeting with a social gathering, at which members can discuss society policy, as well as current environmental and conservation issues. Please support this most important meeting.

Corsham is about to enter a period of considerable change and it is important that the Civic Society is at the heart of decision-making about the proposed Spring [Business] Park (for example) and associated transport issues, including the campaign to restore rail services to the town.

We will also be electing our new **Executive Committee and Officers**. I will be stepping down as Chairman after two very rewarding years, and Peter Tapscott, too, will be giving up his dual role as Vice-Chairman and Publicity Officer. Both of us are ready and willing to continue serving the society as committee members, if elected, but now is the time for others to step up to lead the society into the next stage of its development. With membership rising, there should be no shortage of suitably experienced nominations. Both Peter and I are prepared to offer advice and encouragement to our potential successors.

Wyndham Thomas

Review

In November we were treated to a most excellent talk by Dr John Wroughton entitled "Life and Strife in Tudor Bath". This gave us a whole new view of the city, which we mostly think of as either Roman or Georgian, and showed that the townspeople then experienced many of the problems from which we still suffer. 'Nothing changes'. These people had dirty streets, drunkenness, football hooliganism, (yes, large numbers kicked a ball about, no rules or teams!) and later, parking problems when they started developing the tourism trade, they could only park their horse and cart for quarter of an hour in some spots. We think we have problems!!

Our January New Year Meal, took place at the Methuen Arms, reported later.

At our Open Meeting and New Year Social Gathering at the Town Hall we welcomed Chippenham Civic Society members for a social evening, and a chat about how our Societies work. Roger Backway, Secretary, Chippenham CS, gave a short presentation on their achievements, their aims and objectives, and it was heartening to hear that we had so much in common. Our Chairman Wyndham Thomas, replied with an overview of the Mayo Memorial Restoration 2007, and a presentation of Honorary membership to the Civic Society to Rob Fleming (stone mason on the project) and his wife. The CCS Building Award 2007 went to the Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust and was presented to Colin Johns for their excellent restoration of the Ostlers House in Pickwick. The Society was also pleased to present to Les Davis, one of our long standing members, researcher, speaker, and stalwart of the Society - the post of Honorary Vice President. An extremely busy but enjoyable evening.

Obituary

In February we suffered another great loss to the Society – when our President, Anne Greenly passed away suddenly. Anne had been our President for about 10 years, and with the Society for many more. She had helped our Plans Committee enormously with her knowledge of health requirements particularly in relation to the disabled, and she also continually expressed her growing concern that local medical centres would soon be unable to cope with the considerable rise and occupation of new housing in the area, something which is even now being recognised. As an Executive member she gave a great deal of her time and commitment to the Society, in particular helping at Heritage Open Days, and opening her home to us for Executive Committee meetings. .

Anne stepped through our lives with a smile and a helping hand wherever it was needed. We shall miss her friendship and her contribution to the Society for many years to come.



Guyers' House, Pickwick

This Cotswold stone house is set in 12 acres of exceptional gardens and grounds, with a tennis court, croquet lawn and arboretum, surrounded by farmland. The land once formed part of the Hartham Park estate, whose estates it is believed, once stretched as far as Rudloe.

Built originally as a two-storey farm house, it can be established that in the 16th century it formed part of a holding belonging to the Snelling family.

In a paper written by Harold Brakspear for the Wilts Archaeological Magazine the following information concerning Mr Snelling comes to light -

"Before William Snelling, coroner of our Lady the Queen within the liberty of her town of Cossam, on view of the body of Henry Long, Esq., there lying dead and on the oath of twelve men, presented that a certain Henry Danvers, late of Cirencester, Kt., and others, not having the fear of God before their eyes, did on the 4th October, between the hours of 11 and 12 of the same day, at Cossam, with force of arms, viz., swords, &c., did assault the aforesaid Henry Long, and the aforesaid. Danvers, voluntarily, feloniously, and of malice prepense, did discharge in and upon the said Long a certain engine called a dagge, worth 6/8, charged with powder and bullet of lead, which Danvers had in his right hand, and inflict a mortal wound upon the upper part of the body of Long, under the left breast, of which he instantly died, and that immediately after the felony they all fled. [Wilts. Arch. Mag. i. 320]" - and later

"The bailiff and tenants sometimes had trouble in maintaining their rights. In 1665 the exemption of tenants from sitting on juries outside the manor came before the high courts. One William Snelling, of Pickwick, had been summoned to attend on the jury of the assizes held at Warminster in that year, he refused to appear and was fined accordingly. It was shown that he held his lands, and none other in the county, of the manor of Corsham, and according to the custom of that manor should not have been summoned to the assizes, whereupon that being proved he was dismissed from the court and his fine returned. [Lett. pat. 28. xi. 20 C. II]."

By 1678, it appears that the Snellings had lost money, and were forced to sell the house to one E Bayley, who it is thought may have rebuilt it. (Grade II listings show it to be a late 17th century dwelling.

The house has undergone many structural changes in its lifetime. It is believed that the third storey, and the bay windowed extension, was added in the 19th century. The Georgian frontage was provided by a relation of Capability Brown – Captain Lancelot Brown. The 'lean-to extension on the far right of the bay, probably came next, and served to connect the main house to a single storey outbuilding, previously known as 'the Cottage'. The Dunsterville family bought Guyers sometime before the First War. Having married Evelyn Margaret Hungerford Goldney, Graham Dunsterville went off to France with his regiment and was killed very early. There is a memorial to him in St Bartholomew's Church. His wife was a member of the Goldney family of Beechfield House, a family who had been important in the area for centuries. We are not sure if there is a connection with the Hungerford family but her name suggests it. Their son Hugh Dunsterville is still alive and lives near Warminster. The whole story of the young couple settling into Guyers, starting a family, and then the young father being cut down, is such a sad tale and so typical of the time.

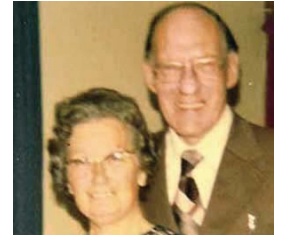
The property was also held by the Bennets, and later the Dickinsons and remained part of the Hartham estate until purchased a few years later by an Army Officer Captain Handford. During the 1920's the then owner, now 'Colonel Hanford', added a ballroom. Lord Methuen was the architect. The Handford son was killed in the Second WW and there is plate to him on the wall behind the choir stalls at St. Bart's. So war has claimed young men of the house in two generations

A local solicitor, John Lowton, bought the property in 1979, and the present owner, Mr Guy Hungerford purchased the property in 1989, and has done much to maintain the integrity of the building whilst adapting it for use as a Conference and Wedding venue. In 1994 the courtyard was added to furnish more accommodation, and there are proposals to increase the accommodation and conference facilities in the future.

Guyers House, Pickwick



Local Lives, George Lockyer, Manager of Royal Wilts.



The 'Royal Wilts' sold cooked meats, and other grocery items, and was located where 'Artingstalls' now stands. Aileen – George's daughter, tells us the story.

On 8th June 1947, my father and mother, George and Daisy Lockyer brought me, aged nine, and Marlene my sister, aged 3, to Corsham, where my father had secured a position as Branch Manager at the Royal Wilts at 32, High Street. The shop was owned by the Wiltshire Bacon Company, and had 2 other members of staff, Joyce Swanborough and Doris Hall. At different times, there were other members of staff, which included Lily and Winnie Mower, and Muriel Smith, Leonard Hitchings, Mrs Morse and Mrs Elms. (Some people may remember them).

We had moved from Midsomer Norton, and I immediately started at Corsham Council School (now the Pound Arts Centre).

Although the War was over, some foods were still very scarce, and one of my very first memories was of customers gathering and chatting on the doorstep of the shop at 7 o'clock in the morning, in order to secure a pound of sausages. Had I been somewhat older I might have appreciated some of the local gossip that was being reported beneath my bedroom window!! When the window of the bedroom was open during the summer months we were also treated to the sound of crying babies, from over the road at the Maternity Hospital. (Alexander House).

It was something of a novelty, living in a shop, and it was not long before I had a little evening job. In those days, biscuits did not come pre-packed, but in large tins. These had to be weighed out and bagged up into 8oz bags. I did this for about half an hour every evening for the grand wage of 6d a week. But as you might expect, this money soon found its way to Mrs Watts sweet shop, where I bought my weekly ration of 4oz of boiled sweets – not in a packet, but weighed up in a small paper bag.

Although we only had a very small yard at the back of the shop, and therefore little playing space, we were very lucky to have what we called 'the back alley'. This was a covered rear entrance shared with the International Stores (now 'Green Ginger') and the Fisher family on the other side. We were able to play here in all winds and weathers. We were also fortunate to have a flat roof available, which was accessed by a staircase from the bedroom over the shop. This was a reading and sunbathing area only, as it was walled on three sides and had a sheer drop at the back of the house. It was also a good viewing platform for watching the High street traffic jams – two double-decker buses passing each other in the bottleneck which existed outside Ive's butchers and Farthings. (Now Cinnamon, and Nationwide Building Society). This flat roof can be clearly seen on the town plan recently published bearing the logo of the Chamber of Commerce.

One of the first customers to befriend my parents was Nellie Thomas and her family; they remain very good family friends to this day.

Marlene started at the Regis School at the age of 5, and my father soon became involved with the Parent Teacher Association. He spent many of his summer evenings teaching the children to play tennis after school.

In the mid 1950's my father introduced the sale of fruit and vegetables in the shop. This proved very successful, and as a result more storage space was needed. It was also at this time that the Wiltshire Bacon Co bought No 2, Meriton Avenue for our family use, and this was to be our home for the next 16 years. It also provided room at the shop for the fruit and vegetables!

In the autumn of 1971 my father was given notice that the shop was to close on Christmas Eve. This was a double blow for my parents, as father was approaching 60, and expected it to be difficult to obtain other employment, there was also the problem of living in a tied house. However, he managed to get a job at RNSD Copenacre, and my parents were offered council accommodation in Charles Street (they had been on the council housing list almost since coming to Corsham).

They remained there until the week of their Golden Wedding Anniversary in April 1986, when due to my father's ill health they found it necessary to move to a bungalow in Oliver Avenue. Here they stayed until my father died in 1993, and my mother in 2002.

Aileen Lawes



DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY

1. We must thank National Westminster Bank for their kind donation of a document found in the attic of their premises in Pickwick Rd, which represents the legal transfer of land from one Tenant to another. In this case the recipients were Richard Balch (local Butcher and an active participant in town affairs, see below) and Henry Bird. It is transcribed below, with a couple of gaps where it was indecipherable. There was no punctuation.

2.

***"The Manor of Corsham
in the County of Wilts***

*Be it remembered that on the twenty eighth
day of March 1883 Richard Balch of*

*Corsham in the County of Wilts Butcher and Henry Bird of the same place Grocer _____ surviving
Devizes in trust of the hereditaments hereunder mentioned and described under and by virtue of the
last Will & Testament of James Thorngate (?Thorngate), late of Corsham aforesaid
Gentleman deceased bearing date the ninth day of November 1877 late tenant of this Manor by sign
Of Court Roll bearing date sixth day of April 1865 came before Arthur John Keary Gentleman Deputy
Steward of the said manor and out of Court under the powers and provisions of an Act of Parliament
Made and passed in the fourth and fifth years of the reign of Her present Majesty intituled "An Act for
the Commutation of certain Manorial rights in respect of land of copyhold and customary tenure and
in respect of other lands subject to such rights and for facilitating the enfranchisement of such lands
and for the improvement of such tenure" and prayed to be admitted Tenant to **All** _____ two
messuages or Tenements with the outbuildings gardens and appurtenances thereto belonging in the
Town Tything formerly in the occupation of John Sargent and Elizabeth Gale widow then of the said
Richard Balch and the Misses Fry and now of Mrs Amooore and Miss Fry and numbered respectively
113 & 114 on the said Tithe Commutation Map apportionment and therein stated to contain eleven perches.
To hold the same unto the said Richard Balch and Henry Bird their heirs and assigns in fee for ever according to the custom of the
Manor aforesaid.*

*Upon which came the said Richard Balch and Henry Bird and according to the custom of the said Manor gave to the lord for a fine
it were admitted Tenants of the said premises out of court and the provision of the Act herein before referred to but their fealty was
respected and until and so forth.*

*Taken and accepted the day
and year above first written*

***Richard Balch
Henry Bird***

By me

A. I. Pearce"

2. We were also given a framed advertisement for the sale of these properties. We shall be hoping to display these in the near future.

3. Many thanks to **Gough's Solicitors**, who have donated a large aerial photograph of Corsham from about 30 years ago. The picture is displayed at the Tourist information Office. We are most grateful to both organisations.

4. Donation from Canada

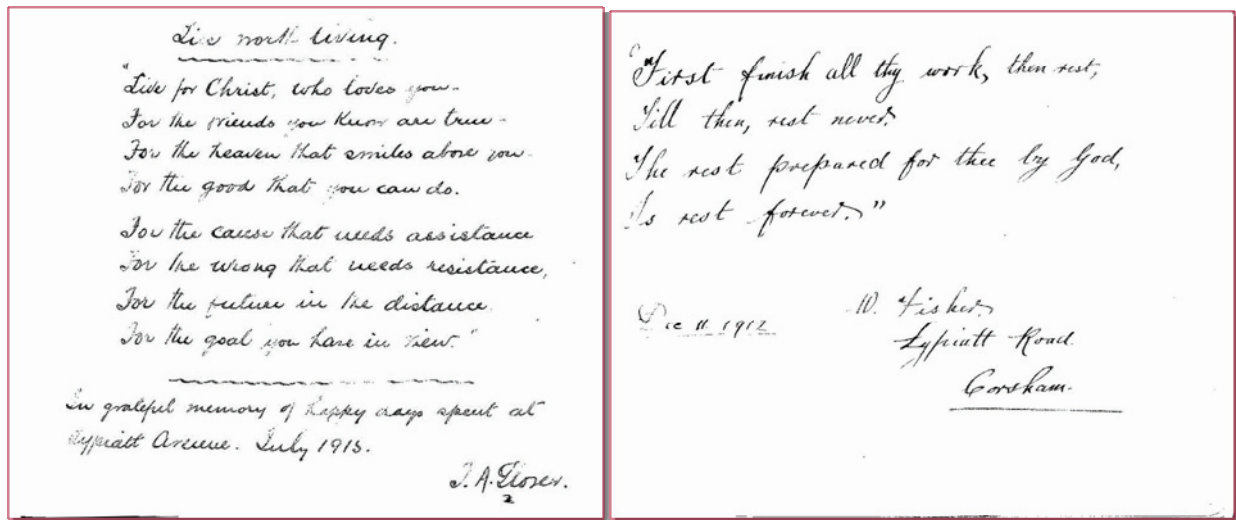
A telephone call from a lady whose parents knew the Poulson family has brought forth copies of 2 autographs written by Poulson members, and many others – examples below.

Sylvia tells us the story.

"My Mum (Stella Kathleen) was the youngest daughter of Samuel Davis, and lived in Lypiatt (Rough Street) Corsham. During her early years, friends and family would write in her autograph book, litanies or quotations from the bible etc. As the family were devout Plymouth Brethren and attended the Gospel Hall, Neston, many of the subscribers were foreign missionaries, who were guests at the Davis family home. My parents moved to the Midlands from Corsham in



the 1920s. Mum would often allow me to look through her book and tell me about some of the people who contributed. I am now the proud owner of this autograph book.



She, on many occasions talked about the Poulsons family, whom also would have been members of the Gospel Hall. One entry by F.L. Poulson is dated: Xmas 1911.

The earliest entry is written by her eldest brother Howard, dated January 9th, 1890. My Mum was born in c. 1987; therefore, the book was purchased before her birth, and is now more than 100 years old.

Sylvia Davis Pugh (Mrs.)"

Many thanks for this Sylvia. Does anyone recollect these family members - the Davis and the Poulsons? Please get in touch if you do.

5. **Mr Peter Johnson of Timberleaze, Lanes End Gastard** also got in touch with us. Peter has lived in Corsham for 40+ years, and had come upon a ledger and an order book which he had found in the old Co-op Shop, many years ago, (next door to the Pizza Restaurant), when he was working there on an attic conversion. The 'Ration Register' is dated 1941, and lists customers names and their Co-op share Number, in relation to the purchase of coal. The other appears to be a book of orders dated 1938.

Future CCS Policy on Acceptance of Donations

Over the last 45 years it has been the Civic Society's custom, to accept gifts/ donations from all comers, of historic artefacts and items of local interest, documents and photographs, with the intention of introducing a museum to the town, or using these items when holding exhibitions.

Committee members have housed these many and varied items in their own homes, and the time has come to re - allocate the storage facilities.

It has become evident that there is no way in which the Society could finance and run a museum in the town. There are extremely strict rules under which items are held, and the Society would be unable to meet the necessary criteria.

Therefore, arrangements will be made for the items currently held to be re-located to another site, where they can be cared for and displayed, with suitable acknowledgement to the CCS.

New Arrangements for the acceptance of such gifts.

The Corsham Civic Society will be pleased to accept documents and photographs pertaining to people, places and life in the town. (These items can be catalogued, and used in exhibitions, they will be copied to CD or similar, and ultimately can be stored at the Wiltshire Record Office (WRO) Chippenham), from where we can retrieve them at any time.

Since the Society has no storage space, it will not be able to accept gifts of bulky items, which may pertain to agriculture, stone quarrying, or any other domestic/retail occupation within the town.

The Society very much regrets the need to take this action, but space is at a premium and whilst we want to ensure that items that are of particular interest to Corsham, are preserved, and displayed, we do not have the facilities available. We shall be very happy to advise anyone about finding new homes for such items, if required.



RICHARD BALCH (Butcher)

Those who might dip into the Victorian history of Corsham would soon encounter the name of 'Richard Balch', butcher, farmer and benefactor.

Born in 1827, we find him married at the age of 24 and running the family business at no 11 High Street (present day site before the arrival of the Precinct – Beszants Butchers shop). Note the pillar head carvings.



He was an elected trustee of local charities, and a director of the Gas and Water Companies of the day.

In 1839 the firm became Beszant and Balch, and Richard Balch moved to Lypiatt Farm. He had much to do with the opening up of building land in the area, including Hastings Rd, South Street, The Cleeve, and the Golden Path.

During the widening of Stokes Road his farm wagons conveyed the spoil to Broadstone (just beyond Prospect). Panic hit Corsham when it was learned that only FIVE grave sites remained in the whole parish. Richard offered land for 'instant internment', had his offer been accepted future funerals would have terminated in the Lypiatt Road area!

The burgeoning stone industry was producing many workers searching for building plots, Richard obliged. Many quarrymen and masons then received their pay, half of which came in ashlar stone, helping one another to build their houses. This led to the establishment of South Street and the Cleeve.

The final accolade for Richard Balch was his election as "Coroner for the Liberties of Corsham". The appointment of a coroner was granted in the Royal Charter of about 1230. Corsham was then exempted from the jurisdiction of the Sheriff of Wiltshire, and held its own Courts. This privilege survived until the First World War.

In celebration of his Golden Wedding Richard presented the town with a footpath. The 'Golden Path' connected the High St with Alexander Terrace. (Part is still in use, from Newlands Rd to Alexander Terrace, alongside the Royal British Legion).

Richard Balch died in 1915. His "genial presence" was recorded as being especially missed at the meetings of the Court Leet. (Another legacy from the Royal Charter).

The Mayo Pike

Readers of our last **Spotlight** and its splendid Supplement on the Mayo Family will remember that the Civic Society was presented with a large pike (complete with display case), said to have been caught by Charles (Memorial) Mayo and his brother Robert in c.1870. I have no need to repeat the anecdote here, but members may like to know that the **Mayo Pike** (or, more precisely, its case) has now been renovated by Geoff Knapp, and a suitably engraved plaque fixed to it. We already have a volunteer who is willing to house the pike and, hopefully, members may be able to view it from time to time. Watch this space!

Wyndham Thomas



ASPIRE Project Makes Progress

Looking back, I see that we first alerted our readers to this Project in the March 2007 edition of Corsham Spotlight – and then gave you an update in last November's edition. At that time we were able to advise you that ASPIRE – North Wiltshire had been selected to be one of the six 'Pathfinders' around which an application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund would be constructed. The passage of time has proven us wrong. The selection process still had some way to go. We became one of five! (The other four are Northumberland, Liverpool, Hereford/Shropshire and Central Bristol.)

We have continued to work closely with the ASPIRE Project Advisory Group that is managing ASPIRE on a national basis. This included playing a part in a presentation made at the AGM of the Churches Tourism Association in Birmingham on 24 November 2007. Each of the five Pathfinders took a turn at the lectern, yours truly included. For those wishing to see what was said, the Project's website www.aspireproject.info provides a wealth of information. I would particularly direct your attention to the 'Project Documentation' section of the website.

The purpose of the ASPIRE Project is to increase the number of people visiting Places of Worship (of all religions) and to better integrate this form of 'tourism' with other, more readily-recognised, forms of tourism – to the benefit of all. Also, where possible, to increase the usage of Places of Worship by the community-at-large. All this fits very well with the objectives of the Heritage Lottery Fund. For this reason, a £50k Project Planning Grant had been awarded by the HLF at an early stage in the process. The money was intended to permit the Project's sponsors to define a project in sufficient detail so as to maximise its prospects of success and to enable them to assemble and submit an appropriate application for the funding required to fully implement the Project.

The Project was duly defined. The role of the Pathfinders was to provide a wide spectrum of situations in which activities thought to have the potential to make significant contributions toward the overall purposes of the Project might be trialled. It was acknowledged that some might fail – but it was hoped that others would succeed. The more successful ones could then be applied in other areas of the country – beyond the 'territories' addressed by the five Pathfinders – at some later date and under the direction of some post-ASPIRE Project impetus. This provides the clue as to how the five Pathfinders came to be selected. They are all very different, ensuring that the widest-possible spectrum of opportunity is available.

That completes the background statement!

The Corsham Area Development Trust responded to the challenge presented to us as a consequence of securing selection as one of the Pathfinders. We have been an extremely active participant in the definition of the national project and in the writing of the application to the HLF for the financial support that would be required to make it all happen.

The application was hand-delivered into the London offices of the HLF on its due date, the last working day before Christmas. We are now in the 'wait and see period'. We understand that there will be much examination, review and discussion before a decision is forthcoming – and that the latter is unlikely before June 2008. However, the ground has been well-prepared and we are very hopeful.

In the event, the application for funding was not one simply made to the HLF. It was accompanied by one to English Heritage for what it calls 'Building Local Capacity'. The total amount requested of the HLF (to cover the entire 5-Pathfinder Project) is £860k. The corresponding – and additional – amount requested of EH is £195K.

Part of our work to date has been finding our way around 'ecclesiastical circles' and forming a Steering Group, in preparation for the project implementation phase of the ASPIRE – North Wiltshire Pathfinder, should the funding application be successful. The Project is scheduled to have a life of three and a half years, start to finish. It would be no good waiting until June before getting the ball rolling. The Steering Group presently comprises 15 separate bodies, each having a named representative. We held the first meeting of the Group on 14 January.

There is far more that I could tell you – but that's enough for this edition, I think!

Peter Tapscott (Vice Chairman)



Society Celebrates Christmas at the Methuen

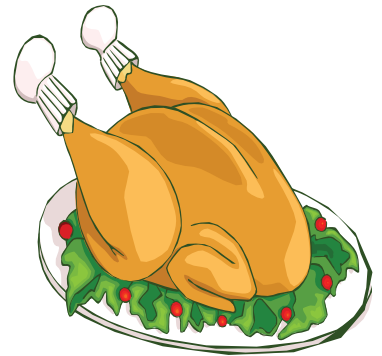
The Christmas evening meal for members this year took place on Wednesday, 9th January 2008, in the new Carvery Restaurant at the Methuen Arms. The atmosphere was very festive with crackers on the tables.

Around thirty five members enjoyed a very sociable evening, and after some slight confusion regarding the need to queue for food, it seemed that everyone was happy with their choices and all agreed that a good time was had by all.

It was lovely to see some older members there, and having an enjoyable time, but we were sorry that some regular faces were not in attendance due to the bug which seemed to afflict most households around the Christmas and New Year period.

Many thanks to Joan MacIver for organising such a successful event.

Jan Tapscott



“Who’s got the Ding-Dong...”

Margaret Shewring, one of our members, had asked us what had happened to the Corsham Primary School Bell (now the Pound Arts Centre). Enquiries to Nicholas Keyworth had revealed that it was not in situ at ‘The Pound’ when he and his team had taken over the building.

Margaret then contacted David Faulkner at NWDC. David had taken over the job of being the NWDC's Project Co-ordinator for the Pound Arts Centre Refurbishment. He was extremely helpful and was able to tell her that the bell was 'saved' and now rests in the new school (County Primary).

Margaret is now ‘on the case’; there is certainly a Spotlight story here. We shall very much look forward to hearing the outcome.

‘Duke of Cumberland’

Another story is ‘brewing’. You will have noticed that the Duke of Cumberland, Priory Street, has long been empty and apparently deserted, but plans are now afoot to turn it into a private dwelling. E - mails to the owner has revealed that historical documents are lodged at the WRO. Chippenham, and one of our members – Victoria Houghton, has very kindly agreed to do the research for us. Another interesting story yet to come.

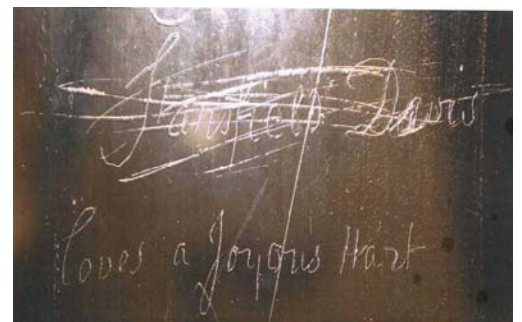
Church Street

John Yeo is a glazier from Bowlish in Somerset, who often does work for the Corsham Estate. . Recently working at a house in Church St, he came upon a windowpane which had a message scratched on it. It said,

“Stansfield Davis loves a joyous hart”.

There is no date but the writing is copperplate style. The glass is probably Regency or early Victorian, mouth blown. John’s further investigations revealed that Stansfield Davis had lived in Pickwick, he married Mary Fowell on 3.6.1780. She was the daughter of the Vicar of Corsham – Richard Fowell, b. 1695, d. 1750. They had a daughter Mary Anne Davis. Stansfield died on 23 May 1831.

John is now going to lead a pane of glass into a small panel, onto which he will reproduce the original message



Thank you to everyone who brings us new information about Corsham, we certainly never know what is going to turn up next! Ed.



Onwards and Upwards.....At The Corsham TIC

It's never a dull moment where Corsham's Tourist Information & Heritage Centre is concerned! No sooner had the TIC Team restored the office area to good order after a highly successful Christmas selling season, than it was time to prepare for the unavoidable disruption to operations arising from the need to facilitate the work required in order to provide access for the disabled members of our community, consistent with current law.

The need for the work has always been recognised. Indeed, it was part of the agreement between us, i.e. the CADT, and NWDC when the running of the CTI&HC was officially transferred to us in October 2006. The agreement acknowledged that the full cost would be borne by NWDC – and that the timing of the work would be chosen to correspond to a lower-activity part of the year (which is now). The work will include the interchange of the office/stone room area.

The builders arrived on Monday 4 February. The work should be completed by the end of March.

To give readers a flavour of what is involved with running the CTI&HC, here are some randomly selected extracts from my diary over recent weeks:

- o 1 Oct 2007. Kicked-off 2007 'Cards for Good Causes' charity Christmas card season.
- o 16 Oct 2007. Quarterly Review of Service Level Agreement (SLA) held with NWDC.
- o 9 Nov 2007. Word came through that the Corsham TIC had achieved the accolade "Highest in the South West for "Visitor Experience", as assessed by Visit Britain in its annual 'Mystery Shopper' examination of our performance through visits to the TIC, calls made to the TIC, and e-mails sent to the TIC during the period July/August 2007. (Well done, TIC Team!)
- o 22 Dec 2007. CFGC Christmas card season closes. Sales in excess of £12,500 are recorded, resulting in a record-breaking £10,000 going to the charities themselves. (Extremely well done, TIC Team!)
- o 2 Jan 2008. Expression of Interest submitted for funding from SWRDA's "Regional Development Programme for England (RDPE)" – EU monies. (We are constantly on the lookout for new lines of funding, being now over one-third of the way through our 3-year agreement with NWDC.)
- o 4 Jan 2008. Stocktaking.
- o 21 Jan 2008. (Whole staff) Team Meeting held.
- o 22 Jan 2008. Annual inspection of fire extinguishing equipment.
- o 30 Jan 2008. SLA Quarterly Review with NWDC.
- o 20 Feb 2008. Inaugural General Meeting of the Members of the CADT. Keynote Speaker – Steve Lawton, Chief Executive, Tidworth Development Trust. One of the items on the agenda for this meeting – consideration of the proposal that we join the Development Trust Association.

And here are other memory-joggers of happenings over the last few months:

- o We became an Enjoy England (part of Visit Britain) "Official Partner" in June 2007 (a new standard that puts us a notch above an ordinary "TIC").
- o The exterior of Arnold House was painted last autumn.
- o We began populating the "Destination Management System (DMS)" with details of our local restaurants, accommodation providers and events – in readiness for subsequent uploading to the Visit Wiltshire website.
- o We continued our search for new selling lines – including bringing back into print those old favourites which are otherwise not available.
- o We had several meetings with NWDC's Project Engineer responsible for the Disabled Access Project – resulting (eventually!) in agreement about exactly how the present Stone Room and Office would be interchanged to maximum advantage. (Disabled access will be via the French doors which occupy the wall of the former that is remote from the High Street.)

Just what did I get myself into?!

Peter Tapscott (Vice Chairman) & Director, Corsham Area Development Trust



Corsham Civic Society

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.Corsham-Civic-Society.co.uk

PROGRAMME FOR 2008

Date	Event
March 28th	Corsham Photographs with Paul Connell
April 25th	Karin Meek on Genealogy
May 16th	AGM at 7pm. Followed by Discussion & Social - at the Town Hall.
June	Summer Walk around Corsham ending at a local eatery.
June 20th	Glass Engraving with Sir Maurice Johnston
June?	Our annual 'Evening walk around Corsham'. (Date to be confirmed).
July 25th	The Story of Imber Village with Rex Sawyer
August 9th or 16th	BBQ
August	Outing
September	Heritage Open Days
September 26th	Wiltshire Readings and local stories by members
October 24th	Family Military History with Paul Riches
November 28th	Tramways in Corsham – Les Davis
December	No meeting
2009	
January 23rd	Celebration of the New Year – Social Gathering. Venue to be advised.

All meetings to be held at 8pm.

Venues may change. Please check our notice board at Chapel Etc.

Guests are welcome. Members - £1, Non members - £2

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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.

Corsham Civic Society

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Registered Charity No: 275321

Contributions to Spotlight are welcome. Please contact Pat Whalley (Editor) on

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