

Corsham Spotlight

July 2010

Volume 8, Issue 2

Newsletter of the Corsham Civic Society

Editorial

As I write this the temperature is soaring and the gardens are dry, in stark contrast from the conditions which prompted inclusion in the last issue of the photo of the Mayo fountain covered in snow to record the heavy falls of snow we had experienced.

The Society was represented at the granting of the Freedom of Corsham to the Armed Forces on June 26th, followed by a successful fete at Springfield. To reflect the association of the Armed Forces with Corsham I have included a couple of articles on the Red Cross Hospital which operated at the Town Hall during the First World War which I hope will be of interest.

All the efforts of the Society this year have been thrown into how best to object to the planning application by the Almshouses Trustees to erect a new building in the garden of the Almshouses. Both to inform our members of our objections and to place on record for posterity, I have included on pages 10 and 11 the Society's letter to the Planning Authority stating our objections. The date of the meeting of the Council's Planning Committee when the application will be discussed is not currently known, but it is likely to be in July – it may have been held by the time you read this.

Jane Browning

Membership and Admission Charges

When introducing the 2009 accounts at the AGM in May, our Treasurer explained to members the reasons why, after keeping charges unchanged for seven years, the Executive had decided it was essential to make changes. The Society's running costs have increased, and are no longer being covered by a combination of subscriptions and admission charges. Until last year high interest rates on balances boosted by project funding had helped to cover costs. A high proportion of Life Members has also made for lower receipts.

As a result, the 2008 surplus of over £1,000 had turned into a £500 deficit in 2009. To restore the financial health of the Society, the Executive has agreed the changes shown below. They include the suggestion made during discussion at the AGM of introducing an option of a 5 year membership.

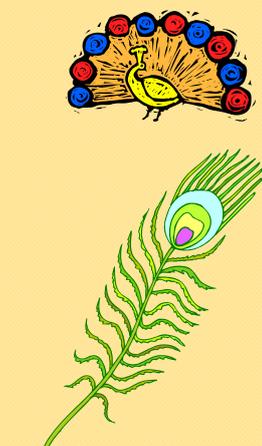
Subscription Levels for 2011

Annual Membership	£15 per annum (£12 each for two members at the same address).
Life Membership	£100
5 year Membership	£60

Admission to Open Meetings from September 2010

Members	£2.00 to include free tea/coffee or £1 off wine, as before)
Visitors	£5.00 (now including free tea/coffee or £1 off wine)

Sally Fletcher



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Review

At our March meeting, Tom Brakspear gave a very interesting insight into his grandfather, **Sir Harold William Brakspear 1870 – 1934**. Harold's family, headed by his father William (1820-1898), lived at The Knole, Manchester. In 1836 William was articulated to Charles Barry, the same year that, following the fire in 1834, Barry won the commission to design a new Palace of Westminster. In 1891 the family came to Corsham, to The Priory, now Heywood School. This they rented from the Methuen estate until 1904. Tom discussed why the family moved to Corsham: a fresh start; good communications; near Bath with its good health care and especially, excellent buildings.

Harold was not qualified as an architect at this stage, he was taught by his father. He helped Charles Henry Talbot at Lacock Abbey, with whom he became great friends, uncovering old doorways and restoring 4 old arched windows. It is interesting to note that Harold's work at Greenways, Chippenham, featured an octagonal tower, perhaps influenced by the tower at Lacock Abbey. He worked on a large number of projects including: Jaggards – owned by Fullers; Neston Church; Hullavington lychgate 1897; Cleve House, Seend where a 2-storey medieval-style hall was added; Hazelbury manor; Box church, which was his first large restoration, stripping away the plaster and opening out the roof; the restoration of the half-derelict Great Chalfield Manor and last, but not least, the Mayo memorial, the screen in Corsham church and the church war memorial.

Harold did not restrict his work to local projects. Some were further afield, such as the tomb of William Hayward in Manchester, a heavy, Victorian edifice in red sandstone; a new church at Exeter, Emmanuel church, but whose tower was not built due to lack of money; St Georges Chapel Windsor where the vaulting was collapsing and the Kings beasts on the roof were added and the restoration of Worksop Priory.

During a clear out of family possessions, numerous drawings, wrapped in an 1891 Daily Telegraph, were found, in very good condition. A number of them were by Sir Charles Barry. These are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, having been accepted in lieu of Inheritance Tax.

Harold is remembered today not for his architecture but as an archaeologist. He devised the system of coloured plans using different colours for different periods. He drew the first coloured plans for Lacock Abbey and those for Waverley were considered very important.

In 1904 the family moved to the top of Priory Street. He married in 1908 and moved the family to Pickwick Manor in 1920.



Our April talk saw Mr. Ken Rogers present a very detailed account of **how cloth was made in Wiltshire**. He took us through the different processes which are required to change wool into cloth. Our local woollen industry was based on cloth from carded wool. The finishing process was carried out in people's homes. Ken described the industrialisation of the woollen industry which resulted in the finishing process generally moving to industrial premises, although this was not the case in Corsham where, unlike say Trowbridge, there was not the availability of large amounts of running water.

The **AGM** in May was not well attended, many missing a competition whereby Michael Rumsey, our chairman, provided 28 excellent photographs showing details on buildings around the town. The aim was to guess where each was located. No-one was successful in knowing them all. The winner was Negley Harte, scoring 18 out of 20.

The association **between geology and the landscape** was well covered in the June lecture by Dr. Eric Robinson. He talked about William Smith, a land surveyor from Limpley Stoke, considered to be the father of geology, who was the instigator of coloured geological maps (two lectures 3 months apart, two (relatively) local men responsible for initiating coloured maps in their sphere of work); Brunel, a good observer of land who surveyed more than any other engineer; the subsequent railways which enabled stone to be moved long distances; the limestone and ragstone beneath Corsham; the pennant sandstone from South Wales used in the lower part of the Mayo fountain; and the need to reopen quarries to provide stone needed for the repair and restoration of existing buildings.

Jane Browning



This is a familiar Corsham story, which when poked with a sharp stick, reveals a four hundred year old tale with very modern resonances, such as: dissembling, rushed judgments by law enforcement agencies, breaches of security, trouble in Ireland, and an overweening sense of self importance. Possibly standing in the wings is the Bard.

Surely the tale has the making of a good novel!!

The Horrid Murder of Henry Long

In the 1590s a long standing feud between the Long and Danvers families culminated in a murder. It has been suggested that this feud may have dated back to the Wars of the Roses. Various Shakespearian authorities have even conjectured that it may have been the inspiration for Romeo and Juliet. Aubrey says "my great grandfather was in some trouble about it, his horses and men being in that action. His servants were hanged and so Long of Linets.!"

A group of magistrates with Sir Henry Long and some of his friends and family were meeting in the house of a Mr Chambyrs, on the night of Friday 5th October 1594, when the Danvers brothers "*broke in with seventeen or eighteen of their followers*", and in the resulting mêlée Henry Long was killed. The Danvers brothers escaped, but some of the followers, from both sides, were subsequently hanged for causing an affray.

Quoted by Harold Brakspear: " 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."

Aubrey records "R. Wisdome was then lecturer and preacht that day and Henry Long expired in his arms; and that Lady Barbara Long (Henry's mother) informed Queen Elizabeth "of a verie strange outrage". But no indictment was ever preferred against either family!

The Danvers brothers took flight and were given refuge by the 3rd Earl of Southampton at his seat Whitley Lodge, near Tichfield. After three days they went to Calshot Castle, near Cowes, before leaving for France. They joined the French army of Henry IV and served with distinction.

In 1597 Henry Danvers appears to have acted as a captain of a man-of-war under the Earl of Nottingham off the coast of Spain. Charles went on the join Earl of Essex, and his associates in Ireland, the family having a long record of service in that country and to the Devereux family. Henry served various posts in Ireland becoming Govenor of Armagh in 1601.



Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, 1603, in the Tower, attributed to John de Critz.

On the 30th June 1598 the brothers were pardoned following the intercession of the French King with Queen Elizabeth; and they returned to England in the following August; but it was not until 1604 that the coroner's indictment was found bad and the outlawry reversed.



One of the Earl of Essex' band was Captain Thomas Lee, a singularly unsavoury character who was already on the run having jumped bail on a charge of highway robbery. He then appeared to have rampaged around Ireland between spells of imprisonment for cattle rustling and murder. Lee returned to England in 1599. By now Essex was under house arrest at York House. On 12th February 1601, four days after the Earl's eventual arrest for treason, Lee conceived "a cunning plan"(sic). With Sir Henry Neville and Sir Robert Crosse ("with four other gentlemen") they conspired to gain a warrant for the release of Essex by apprehending the Queen in her chambers and "pin her up" until she signed the warrant. The conspirators were betrayed and Lee was apprehended as he watched the door to the Queen's chamber. A kangaroo court was immediately convened the next morning, and later that day they were all executed at Tyburn.

Twelve days later, after a show trial, Essex was beheaded.

Henry Danvers later became Earl of Danby. The Southampton family were patrons of William Shakespeare and the association has given rise to the speculation that this feud between the two families may have suggested the plot of Romeo and Juliet to the Bard.

Could it be that Charles Danvers, contrary to received knowledge, was not executed with Essex, but died along with the other conspirators for this separate treasonable act? The two treason trails appear to have been confused; the Tudors would have wished to cover up the breach of security by Lee (it all sounds very familiar) and few would have been aware of the circumstances.

Incidentally, beheading was already a rare event; in fact Essex was the last person to be dealt with at the Tower, and Danvers would most likely not have been elevated enough to warrant the "honour" of such treatment. Also Aubrey commented that he could find no record in the Tower Chapel of Danver's burial.



Henry Danvers, first Earl of Danby
by 'Anthony van Dyck' c. 1635

Circumstantially, Lee and Danvers appear to have been kindred spirits and could easily have embarked upon this final adventure together.

There is some confusion over the actual site of the murder. Usually it is suggested that it was in a house in Church Street; but also a public house has been mentioned. Could this have been the Golden Ball which appears to have been situated in Church Square? This is more likely, as the initial gathering included Henry Smyth of Corsham House (Corsham Court) and a number of magistrates. The dying man could have been taken to the house of Mr. Chamberlyn!

There are so many contradictions in this saga, it would be nice to have them resolved, but at least, I hope, I have helped to stir the pot.

Just to confuse matters even more, the late John Poulson always considered that "Ridge Farm" at Neston (once the home of the Stainers) and which had belonged to the Long's, could have been the site of the crime.

Norman Duckworth

Honorary Vice President - Geoffrey Knapp

At the executive meeting on 8 June 2010 a unanimous decision was made to grant honorary vice presidency to Geoff Knapp, which he has graciously accepted. Geoff has been a stalwart member from virtually the start of the Civic Society. Geoff has recently stood down from the executive committee of the Society, although he retains chairmanship of the planning sub committee. A presentation will be made in the autumn.



WW1 Hospital, Corsham Town Hall 1914-1918

As early as August 1914, the people of Corsham were making plans to establish a hospital in the town. According to local newspaper items recorded in CJ Hall's book 'Corsham a Illustrated History' - "in September 1914, a number of Belgian refugees – women and children were housed there on a temporary basis, and later that month the rooms had been transformed into the Headquarters of a Voluntary Aid Detachment of the Red Cross, with 30 beds provided. Officers were billeted in a house across the road (identity unknown)". With the outbreak of WW1 our local Town Hall was equipped and ready to use as a hospital. The Parish Council immediately offered the use of a Fire hydrant, hose, and a duty fireman.

It opened 26th October 1914, with Commandants the Hon. Christian Methuen and Lady Goldney at the helm. There were 6 Medical Officers and three Chaplains. The VADs were led by an Assistant Commandant, two Quartermasters and 27 nurses. Their names are recorded on a large memorial to be found in the large room on the first floor of the Town Hall, and include such stalwart families as the Fullers, Goldneys, Coates, Gale, Gough, Pictor and Spackman. But there were others too, one Miss Gidden for instance, who married one of the wounded soldiers – a William Alford.

There was also a daughter of the Parkinson family, Irene, who lived at 'Dunsford', 9 Prospect, Corsham. (later the home of Tom Burnard, who gave the CCS many photographs of the town), who was featured in the February 2010 issue of Spotlight.



Memorial to the V.A.D. in Corsham Town Hall

Other townspeople were obviously keen to contribute to the war effort, with ladies knitting, and sewing, and events and entertainment held for the soldiers.

There was a Nurses Home provided in Pickwick Rd, and numerous photos can be found in Steven Flavin's 'Corsham Born and Bred, Books 1 & 2' (many taken by Herbert Spackman) which record the events during the length of the war.

By 1915 the Parish Council found it necessary to remove the fixed seating around the council Chamber, and to have another 'stove installed in the large ward'. In 1916 the Parish Minutes recall the concern being expressed at the importation of troops from Chippenham to Corsham hospital, when they had contracted measles.



Town Hall Hospital 1914

Whilst following this trail, I also came across a letter left to me by Joe James, which indicated that he was corresponding with a man in Berkshire, about an 'electrotherapy room' which was active in Church St, and formed part of the hospital. The picture overleaf shows treatment being applied and on the back of the actual photo it states "July 1918, Church St. Hospital". Unfortunately the correspondent had passed away, and the family were unable to explain further. Research on the internet produced the following information:-



Electromagnetic therapy:-

In 1855 Guillaume Duchenne, the father of electrotherapy, announced that alternating was superior to direct current for electrotherapeutic triggering of muscle contractions. Since that time almost all rehabilitation involving muscle contraction has been done with a symmetrical rectangular biphasic waveform. In the 1940s, however, the US War Department, investigating the application of electrical stimulation not just to retard and prevent atrophy but to restore muscle mass and strength, employed what was termed *galvanic exercise* on the atrophied hands of patients who had an ulnar nerve lesion from surgery upon a wound. These Galvanic exercises employed a monophasic wave form, direct current - electrochemistry."

So it seems that innovative techniques for treating muscle wastage had come to Corsham.



Church Street Hospital, July 1918

By 1918 the hospital had 90 beds. Eight hundred and seventy five soldiers had been treated at an annual cost of £2,500. The ladies and all volunteer staff were highly praised by the Parish Council for their excellent work over the previous four years.

The hospital finally closed in August 1919.

Other sources: Peter Hendersons "100 Years in Corsham Parish", and Wikipedia.

Pat Whalley

Casualties at the Town Hall

The Civic Society has been privileged to see the album of Kathleen Crisp which lists the first casualties accepted at the Town Hall in the early stages of World War One. Kathleen, who married Dr Wood of Corsham, was the mother of Peter Wood, a friend of Civic Society member Jim Ball. Many of the men appear to have written their names themselves and they include their service number, regiment, and sometimes where they were wounded and details of their actual wounds. Below are extracts, as written, of some of the entries and samples of a couple of the pages.

The heading is:

30
V.A.D.
WILTS.
OCTOBER 1914

The first casualty is "Pte William Taylor 7288 Lancashire Fusiliers 1st in Hospital", the second is "Corporal S F Garner 1st Batt. The Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regt. (2nd in Hospital)" and the last "10239 Pte Baswick H.O.R.L. frostbites Feb 2nd 1915" although the latest date mentioned is "673 Pte J Ball 2nd Gordon High^{rs} March 4th 1915 Wounded Nov 7th Head and Hip In hospital with Appendicitis". Private Ball drew a shield in which is written 'By DAND', the motto of the Highlanders, and attached a piece of tartan to his entry.

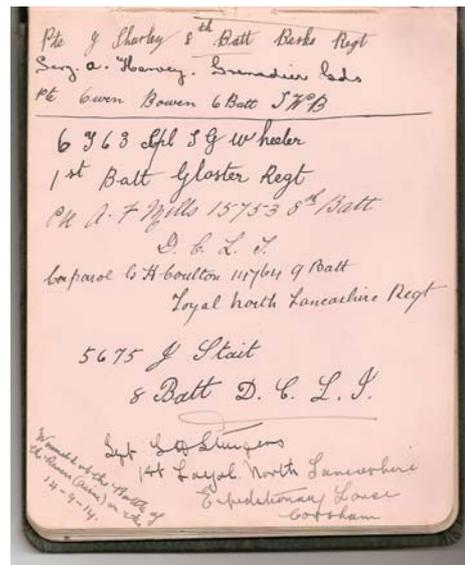
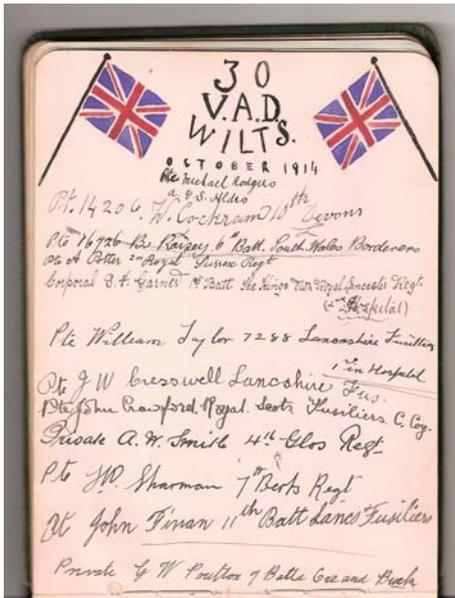
Others include:

Pte H Deeley 7873 2nd Worc. Regt Wounded at Aines;

883 J. Higgins Coldstream Guards wounded Ypres Nov. 3rd 1914;



- 1759 Pte A Mitchell London Scottish Wounded Ypres Oct 30th 1914;
- 3486 Private Thomas Dolan 1st Black Watch Wounded at Labassee;
- No 4942 Rfn E. Gifford 1st Batt Rifle Brigade sharpnell Wound Left Knee, Wounded at Armentiers 17/1/15;
- 9534 Pte G Stoney 1st Connaught Rangers Admitted to Hospital with Abscesses on Liver Left India 9th December 1915 and
- 12618 D^r W. McCabe 3rd Batt Roy Fusiliers Influenza 25/2/1915.



Pages from the album of Kathleen Crisp, courtesy of Peter Wood

In all there are some 89 men listed on 12 pages. The men came from battlegrounds such as Aisne, Ypres, Lille, Bathune, Labassee, Armentiers, Plugsteers and India. And their regiments were English, Welsh, Scots and Irish. There are many instances of frostbite as well as rheumatism, influenza and gun shot wounds.

These must have been some of the first men to be wounded in the war. And perhaps some of the lucky ones? One wonders what became of them. Did they survive their wounds? Were they invalided out of the Army? Did they rejoin their regiments and get sent back overseas to see more service?

These entries are a fascinating and poignant reminder of the fate that could await servicemen and also of the need for those back home to care for them.

Jane Browning

New Committee members

Our Chairman previously doubled up as our Treasurer. However, we are delighted to co-opt David Mosdall onto the committee – to take on the job of Treasurer. This he has done with great diligence and fortitude, despite the time and energy he has also had to give to overcoming the recurrence of his illness. Special thanks and best wishes are due to him.

David's wife, Pat, has agreed to take on the secretaryship of the planning sub-committee, taking over from Pat Whalley who has given many years of sterling service. Our thanks go to both Pat (Whalley) and Michael for carrying out their responsibilities so diligently.



Corsham Gardeners' Society

No one is quite sure when the Society first started. The general view is that it was either late 1940's or 1950's, probably as a merger between two other local societies one of which was the Priory Allotments Association.

We have a monthly meeting with a Speaker. The talk is generally on gardening although this varies, last year we had a talk on Jaguar conservation in South America! The June talk was "Growing Sweet Peas for show" by Mrs Hazell of Clutton who has won many National prizes. The July meeting will be "An evening with John Tucker". John is a well known local gardening character with a wealth of gardening experience. The August meeting takes on a more serious note "Preparing vegetables for show" by Dave Tucker, in readiness for the Annual Show on 30th August. At the Christmas meeting there will be a talk on "Local Villages" by John and Pauline Helsdon. These meetings are held in The Corsham Club on the 1st Tuesday of the month and are free to members and guests. If you are interested in joining (membership £5.00 p.a.) or just wish to get the flavour of the society you will be very welcome.

We have a skittles evening with buffet supper at the Cricket Club in April and a Plant Sale in May at the Royal British Legion. This is an opportunity for members and the public to purchase quality plants at reasonable prices. Then we have an Annual Dinner in October.

An annual full day coach trip to a major garden (at very reasonable prices) is made. Last year we went to Kew Gardens and in June this year we went to the Welsh National Botanic Gardens (cost £11.50), a gem of a garden not on the same scale as Kew, but with interesting plants, sculptures and beautiful wildflower meadows. We also run an evening or half day car trip to a local garden and in July we have a walk (drive) round some of our own gardens and allotments. It's always interesting to see other people's gardens.



Annual flower show and vegetable exhibit

Then there is the annual flower and vegetable show. This is recognised as one of the best of the local shows. Last year there were 190 different classes. These include Flowers (multiple, single and arrangements), Vegetables (large, mixed and comical), Cookery, Wines, Handicrafts, Photography and a series of classes for children. Over the years this has been one of the major events of the Corsham year, although, unfortunately support both in the number of entries and attendance is declining. So if you are in Corsham on Monday 30th August please come along to the Community Centre, Beechfield Road. It's well worth a visit.

We also run three other competitions for members through the summer; best Flower Garden, best Allotment and Vegetable Garden and best Container Garden.

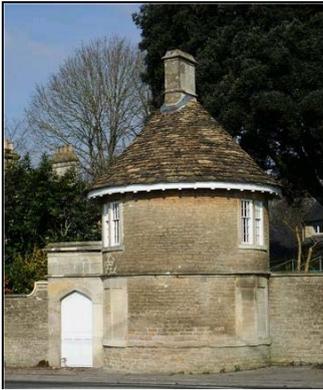
Please contact the Secretary Maureen Cundict on 01249 713027 for further information.

Jim Leech

Treasurer, Corsham Gardeners' Society



Buildings Award



This scheme was introduced in 2007 with the aim of encouraging the visual enhancement of the area, promoting excellence in the treatment of historic buildings and in the construction of new building and encouraging sympathetic treatment of the setting of a building, including innovative use of a site and sympathetic use of landscaping and planting. The eligibility criteria is simple: buildings need to be located in the Corsham area and be deemed to make a worthwhile contribution to the visual enhancement of the street scene or landscape.

Nominations from members for the 2010 Buildings Award would be welcome by the end of September 2010.

Winner 2009: The Round House *Photo: M. Rumsey*

Lady Margaret Hungerford Almshouse Bell

Many visitors to the Almshouse may be unaware that within the wooden framed cupola is the original bell. The bell weighs approximately 75 kg and is 510 mm in diameter. There is a two lined inscription

THIS BELL BELONGS TO THE ALMES HOVSE OF CORSHAM

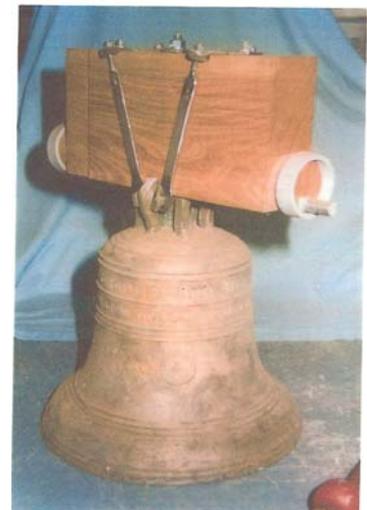
THE HONORABLE DAME MARGARET HVNGERFORD JVNE 16 FOUNDER 1668

The founder is inscribed as Thomas Bartlett. Interestingly, Thomas Bartlett (TB) died in 1632 and was succeeded by his son Anthony (AB) whose initials were not used until 1640, possibly because he was juvenile and had to serve his apprenticeship. But why after 28 years was his father's mark still being used?

The most likely reason being that with the turmoil of the Civil War (1642) followed by the Commonwealth the firm would have been in recession and continued to use many of the original moulds! Maybe they had to wait for the Fire of London 1666 before business had a chance of recovery!

Within living memory the bell has only been rung on two occasions; to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee on the 6th June 1977 when, because of the precarious state of the bell mechanism the clapper was rung against the bell (and not the other way about), and then again after the refurbishment on 18th April 2002 to accompany the Reopening Ceremony.

Interestingly the Whitechapel Foundry passed into the hands of Richard Phelps who originated from Avebury. As Lady Margaret was the daughter of Sir Edward Halliday, a former Lord Mayor, we have a further London connection.



Norman Duckworth



Almshouses Planning Application: Letter of Objection from the Civic Society to Wiltshire Council

Dear Mr. Taylor,

9 June 2010

Revised Planning Application No: 09/01999/FUL
Lady Margaret Hungerford Almshouses, Corsham

Further to our letter dated 26 January 2010 objecting to the original application for development within the grounds of the Corsham Almshouses (ref 09/01999/FUL), this letter is the formal response of the Corsham Civic Society to the amended application for a single block of nine units of accommodation. We continue to have the strongest reservations and objections in principle and because it does not accord with locally adopted policies or statutory requirements nor of centrally-promulgated guidance.

The Society's Executive Committee believe the matter to be of such overwhelming importance to the people of Corsham and beyond that it formed a major part of our discussions at a recent meeting. All members of the Committee were of the view that in submitting the application, the Trustees have failed in their key duty of care for this magnificent building. In our view, the effect of the proposed new build on the setting of the nationally important Grade 1 listed building and separately Grade II listed Parish Room will be monstrously intrusive.

Before turning to the pertinent planning matters, we must express serious concern in respect of procedural issues in as much as the fundamental revision of the original application – from two blocks to a single block, with attendant consequential changes – should have been allowed to be considered against the original faulty application for 12 units. Further, Cllr Tonge, who should represent the views of the majority of people of Corsham, is fettered in his ability to do so because of his vested interest as Clerk to the Almshouses. Notwithstanding this recent consultation on a revised scheme, we believe a new full application should have been submitted, with the old being withdrawn for the sake of transparency. We believe too that Cllr Tonge has fallen foul of pre-determination rules without due reference to local and national planning guidance. This is most serious in the context of considering an application impacting on one of Corsham's four Grade I listed structures, which are within the top 2.5 per cent of heritage assets in England, putting them alongside buildings such as Salisbury Cathedral.

The publication of Planning Policy Statement 5: Heritage, in March of this year, places even greater emphasis on the presumption in favour of preservation of an historic setting. Any scheme which causes harm or loss to a Grade 1 listed heritage asset and its setting "should be wholly exceptional" – the more important the asset, the presumption is the greater the protection – and the Almshouses are without doubt a remarkable and rare example of their type which remain intact in their original form and use. In the Design and Access Statement prepared by Hopkins, the architect, no justification is offered for changing the form and scale of the gardens to a courtyard formation. Whilst such a proposal might be acceptable for other UK almshouses, it is alien to those in Corsham where the setting was edge of town, open, with views to the countryside to the south and beyond. The visitor to the almshouses in their present situation is aware of this and it adds enormously to their pleasure and appreciation of the buildings.

Both HE1 (impact of development on conservation areas) and HE 4 (impact of development on the setting of a listed building) of the adopted Local Plan set strict limits on new development, to ensure that such development should preserve and enhance the listed building and its setting, hence the specific statement for the Conservation Area for Corsham (Area 1), in which the Almshouses form a pivotal part, to "resist all but small scale development". That which is proposed cannot possibly be described as "small scale" and would therefore dominate the scene – the cuckoo in the nest - except this cuckoo, if given permission, would remain an overbearing and brooding presence in perpetuity.

The overshadowing will result in loss of amenity and diminish both privacy and enjoyment of their homes for adjoining neighbours – both within the existing Almshouses, as well as the surrounding properties



Local Policy HE 3 (Historic Parks) could also be considered relevant to the Almshouses as they are visually connected to the park and form an important boundary – an introduction to the urban form of Corsham – and the adopted policy requires the Committee to have regard to the policy for any development within, and adjacent to such parks, to consider its special interest. The loss of open space that this development would entail, plus its impact on the trees, is also a key consideration (policy NE14 on trees and the natural environment refers).

The trees which will be compromised also make a very positive contribution to the Conservation Area and any disturbance or loss will be detrimental. This runs counter to the Applicants' answer to Question 16 of their Planning Application where they deny that there are any trees or hedges on land adjacent to the proposed development site that could influence the development or might be important as part of the local landscape character and therefore is contrary to adopted policy. This ignores the contribution of the walnut tree and other native trees within the boundary hedge – and the safeguarding of trees which give public amenity is one of the Council's adopted objectives. Although a Tree Survey has been provided, we observe this has been majorly challenged by arborist, Mr Richard Cook.

We believe undue reliance has been placed by the Applicants on Policy H7 (Affordable Housing on rural exceptions sites). This is erroneous for this application as the proposed development is outside the development boundary and falls outside the scope of H7 and PPS 3 (Housing): Corsham as a country town is on the rural edge and cannot be claimed to be an exception site within the adopted policy. Therefore, the application should be considered against adopted Local Policy NE 15 (Landscape Character of the Countryside) and PPS 7 (Sustainable development in rural areas) which restricts development outside framework boundaries.

We also note the design accords to the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) Level 3, that being the minimum requirement for new build by Registered Social Landlords – scarcely the level of sustainability that one might expect of "heritage of the future".

The Applicants make much of their choice of an eminent architect. Perhaps he considered himself more eminent than the Grade 1 Listed Hungerford Almshouses as we believe the heritage buildings deserved an original scheme and not an amalgam of two previously unconnected designs from London and Sherborne. This surely undermines the claim of one of the Trustees that "it was designed with respect for the original", having already admitted it "did not enhance", as it is required to do by PPS 5.

A comprehensive Heritage Assessment has not been undertaken with the new submission (as required by PPS 5) and we question, given the importance of the site, whether this should have been requested, or commissioned by the Council, as not to have done so does not appear to be within the spirit of National Policy Guidance.

Notwithstanding all of the above considerations, the Trustees have been offered another site by James Methuen Campbell, far more practical, with ample space for parking and a far safer route via a pedestrian crossing to the centre of town for those who are disabled. This generous offer has been refused, though any sequential test must therefore surely be considered in the context of assessing this faulty and ill-thought application, given the sensitivity of the project and its massive impact on what is at present a unique and historic site.

We object to Application 09/01999, both the original and its revision, for all the reasons listed above and trust that Members of the Planning Committee will act in accordance with the provisions of their own planning guidance and refuse permission for this intrusive development.

Yours truly,

Michael D. Rumsey,

Chairman, Corsham civic Society



Corsham Civic Society

President

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.Corsham-Civic-Society.co.uk

FUTURE PROGRAMME

26 th March 2010	Sir Harold Brakspear 1870 – 1934: Local Architect and Antiquary by his grandson Tom Brakspear
23 rd April 2010	How Cloth was made in Wiltshire by Ken Rogers
14 th May 2010	AGM (Town Hall- 7 for 7.15pm)
18 th June 2010	Corsham and Geology by Dr. Eric Robinson
	CCS Walk (Date to be confirmed)
23 rd July 2010	Buttercup and Weeds garden party
August 2010	No Open Meeting - CCS Outing and/or BBQ (Dates to be confirmed)
24 th September 2010	Family History and English Surnames by Professor David Hey
22 nd October 2010	The Work of Corsham School by Martin Williams
26 th November 2010	An Evening of Carols and Christmas Songs: Secular Song and Dance or Devotional Anthems by Wyndham and Kathy Thomas
December 2010	No Open Meeting

All meetings to be held at 8pm at the Pound Arts Centre (unless otherwise stated).

Venues may change. Please check our notice board at "The Century".

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

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 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.
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