

Corsham Spotlight

Journal of the Corsham Civic Society

March 2013
Volume 10 Issue 1

Contents

From our Patron	1
Editorial	2
Review	2
Corsham Cinema	3-5
Snippets of the last 50 years	6-7
The first motor vehicle registrations in Corsham	8
Joan Poynder 1897-1987	9
Looking at old photographs and documents	10
1797 - when times were hard	11
Vacancies	11
2013 programme	12

Contributions to Spotlight are welcome.
Please contact Jane Browning (Editor) on 01249 716013 or at janebrowning6@hotmail.co.uk

www.Corsham-Civic-Society.co.uk

1963-2013

Message from our Patron

As Patron of the Corsham Civic Society, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Society on achieving its Golden Jubilee in 2013.

As a former resident of Corsham, I have seen enormous changes in the Town during my lifetime, encompassing large population growth and the associated increase of residential property and business interests.

The Civic Society plays an essential role in preserving the history and traditions of the Town, and in helping to shape Corsham's future.

I always read the Corsham Spotlight with interest to keep abreast of what the Society is doing and what is happening in Corsham.

I hope to be able to attend some of the events being held during this Jubilee year.

I wish the Society well in this celebratory year.

Lord Methuen

New members

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Maureen Ainsley	Ann and Tony Hall
Richard and Jane Gater	Fran and Mike Ralli
David and Hannah Gibbons	Peter Roberts

Patron
Lord Methuen

Officers:

President

Mrs. Anne Lock.
Tel: 01225 810357

Chairman

Mr. Michael Rumsey,
Tel: 01249 715741

Hon Sec

Vacant

Treasurer

Mr. Roger Truelove,
Tel: 01249 712709

Membership Secretary

Mrs. Jean Beech,
Tel: 01249 713833

Social Organiser

Mrs. Joan Maciver,
Tel: 01225 812225

Programme Organiser

Dr. Negley Harte,
Tel: 01249 713529

Plans Chairman

Vacant

Editorial

Those eagle-eyed amongst you may have noticed this publication has now been re-named from "newsletter" to "Journal". The Committee agreed that a change was needed due to the progression from a basic one-page news-sheet announcing forthcoming events to what it is today. The quality of the publication depends upon the copy I receive, but also on the quality of the paper and printing; to which many thanks to Corsham Print who do such a splendid job.

So here we are in our 50th anniversary year and the 10th anniversary of Spotlight. Negley has put on a varied and very appropriate programme of events to mark our anniversary, the highlight of which will surely be the celebration of Corsham in Music on June 22nd. It will be a unique day. Put the date in your diary and keep an eye open for times and entrance costs on our web-site and on posters around town.

I have included on pages 6 and 7 snippets of information about the Society over the last 50 years which I hope will be of interest.

Ben Doman has researched the Corsham Cinema in depth and has kindly allowed us to print his article, which you will find on pages 3-5.

Following on from the visits to Hartham Park and Hilmarton in the last couple of years and continuing the Dickson Poynder connection, I include on page 9 some brief notes on Joan Dickson-Poynder, who was born at Hartham Park.

Our thanks go to Pat Mosdall who has helped us considerably over the last couple of years as secretary to both the planning group and to the main committee. She feels that she does not now have sufficient time to carry out her duties as she would wish, so has reluctantly stood down. Page 11 includes details of the vacancies we have.

Jane Browning

Review

Michael Rumsey gave another well-received talk in his series of presentations on Wiltshire churches at our November meeting.

The day of our annual dinner in January coincided with a very heavy fall of snow which lasted all day. Public transport and taxis were not running and as a result there were many cancellations. Those hardy souls who managed to get to the venue very much enjoyed the company of fellow members, but the consensus was that those who had stayed at home had probably been fortunate.

Peter Lord Hennessey, a very successful journalist, an historian of government and now in the House of Lords as Baron Hennessey of Nympsfield, gave us a magnificent start to our anniversary year. He opened our eyes to some of the thought processes at play in the British government during the Cold War. Although history can be a dry subject, he brought it to life in some of the detail; in the event of a third world war the plans included Royal Warrants to be signed by the Queen to establish Regional Commissioners, with a cabinet minister in charge. But they did not know, even the Queen did not know, which bunker they were destined for. In fact, the Queen was due to be onboard the Royal Yacht, in the Kyle of Lochalsh, off the west coast of Scotland. The unimaginable had to be imagined; a 1955 study looked at the effects of detonation of ten 10 tonne hydrogen bombs. The findings were most chilling and beyond imagination. In 1962, long before the age of the mobile phone, he told that the AA provided radios which alerted ministers of the need to phone back to base in an emergency. There followed a debate as to whether ministers would have the four pennies needed to use the public phone!

Jane Browning

Cinema Comes To A Wiltshire Town

In 1929 a fairground operator named H. Andrews had plans drawn up for a cinema in Pickwick Road, at the junction of what is now Newlands Road, by a Trowbridge architect.

Plans for the Picture House show a hall of a basic design, with open roof trusses. A central entrance, with steps up from the street, opened into a small foyer. Doors opposite led directly into the stalls where there was a shallow dress stage, 20 feet wide, with an exit door either side. The Gents toilet was outside, behind the right hand side of the building, next to a small boiler house. On the right of the foyer was the Ladies toilet and a tiny pay box and to the left a staircase led up to a shallow balcony, with room for just two or three rows of seats. Access to the projection room was up a further four stairs. The fire escape from the projection room was via a window and vertical iron ladder.

The Picture House opened on Monday 13th October 1930 to a capacity audience of around 350 people. The films shown are not recorded, but former projectionist Joe James recalls it being "King Of Jazz", a 1930 musical review starring, among others, Bebe Daniels and Bing Crosby. The cinema was described as having 'tip-up plush covered chairs throughout'. The building measured 60 x 25 feet and cost approximately £1,500 to build. The frontage of the cinema was of Bath stone, with the rest of the building being brick. Local firm Osborne and Sons was chosen to build the cinema. Projection equipment consisted of Leeds-made Kalee 7 projectors, a British Acoustic sound system and a mercury arc rectifier. The rectifier consisted of a large glass bulb with tubes (nicknamed 'the octopus') filled with mercury. This would glow an eerie blue green colour when an electrical charge was introduced. Mr Andrews' sons helped with the day-to-day running of the cinema.

Films were advertised locally on bill boards and in flyers; the first press adverts for the cinema didn't appear until 1963.

In 1935 Mr A. J. Stratford took over the cinema and changed the name to Regal. Seating capacity is given in the 1935 Kine Year book as 270, with a Morrison sound system fitted. This lasted ten years before a BTH system was installed.

The Regal had a rival in the Hawthorn Cinema between 1946 and 1960. This was located to the West of Corsham in Westwells Road, Hawthorn, where there was an Army camp. The Hawthorn Cinema seated 525, was fitted with RCA sound, a 40 foot proscenium and had a café attached. Shows were once nightly and changed weekly.

Business was outgrowing the Regal and Mr Stratford was looking to expand. In 1942, he had plans drawn up for a grand Art Deco cinema at the end of the road opposite the Regal by local architect Walter Currie. The cinema was to seat 588 on a sloped floor, with a stepped raised 'balcony' section at the rear over the foyer and was to be situated at the end of a new development of houses in The Tynings. Planning permission was not forthcoming though, the council stating lack of access to the cinema. A few years later, the site became the entrance to The Corsham School.

In 1951 further plans for a replacement cinema for the Regal Cinema Co. were put forward on a site at the end of the Golden Path, behind the houses at the southern end of the recreation field. Again, this was turned down. The site itself was deemed large enough for a cinema and car park, but access to the site,



The Regal Cinema in 1964. The central and right hand first floor windows were the projection room. The iron ladder under the top right window was the fire escape from the projection room. The stairs to the balcony were behind the left hand windows and there was a small box office behind the window to the right of the doors. (Corsham Civic Society)

<p>Please call for List. Fully Licensed.</p> <p>THE WINE LODGE HIGH STREET, CORSHAM. Phone: CORSHAM 77</p> <p>Complete range of Wines, Spirits and Beer actually in Stock.</p>		<p>Proprietor: A. J. Sturford</p> <p>REGAL CORSHAM</p> <p>Monthly Blotter Programme of June Attractions</p> <p>Continues Nightly from 8.30 Sat. from 8 p.m. Prices: Ground Floor, 6d, 9d, 1/-; Balcony, 1/3 (inc. Tax)</p> <p>MORRISON ELECTRIC SOUND SYSTEM</p>	
<p>L. G. Carter Cabinet Maker and French Polisher</p> <p>Just Counted in I LOVE MY LIFE</p> <p>Antique Reproduction Speciality</p> <p>Funniest Reproduction of Every Description</p> <p>"Winfield" The Cleverest, Corsham, Wilts.</p>	<p>R. V. Davis Boot and Shoe Repairer</p> <p>Handsome or Riveted</p> <p>Send a Card and I will call</p> <p>4, South View, South St. Corsham</p>	<p>A. C. JOHNSON BAKER & CONFECTIONER</p> <p>Diploma awarded for "TURBO" and "DAREN" BREAD.</p> <p>HIGH STREET, CORSHAM</p>	<p>E. S. Davis & Son CORSHAM</p> <p>For... Best Quality LAMP OIL, BOMBONET, MATTING, and BUGS AT LOWEST PRICES</p>
<p>KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING</p> <p>For COALS of every description write for prices to HERBERT H. BLAKE Coal and Coke Merchant and Contractor STATION COAL DEPOT, CORSHAM</p>	<p>W. H. Pritchard, F.R.H.S. NURSERYMAN AND FLORIST</p> <p>The Nursery, Station Rd., Corsham</p> <p>We make all Floral Designs from Fresh Cut Flowers on the Premises at Market Notice Tel: 122</p>	<p>N. G. MACMILLAN</p> <p>For the Best Values in COATS, SUITS, HATS, LINEN, History, Tailoring, and Country at REDUCED PRICES</p> <p>PICKWICK ROAD</p>	<p>Attractions for June</p> <p>Monday, JUNE 10, for three days WILLIAM HAZELL, ROBERT & ALICE FAIR, JAMES DUNN, and FRANKLIN & ALBERT POWELL in "THE LITTLE COCKADEE" Also George Gifford in "The Crying Shrike" Also Horrie Hughes and Tommy Burns in "The Crying Shrike"</p>
<p>LENDING LIBRARY 2d. per volume per week F. LORD Wholesale and Retail Tobacconist Stationer and Fancy Goods Dealer LARGE ASSORTMENT OF TOYS. HIGH STREET, CORSHAM, WILTS.</p>	<p>Phone 122</p> <p>A. SANDERS COMMISSION AGENT</p> <p>Daily or Weekly Credit Accounts. Terms on Application</p> <p>PICKWICK ROAD, CORSHAM</p>	<p>B. C. SHILLAKER 3, SOUTH VIEW, SOUTH STREET, CORSHAM (Workshop: PICKWICK ROAD)</p> <p>PAINTER, PAPERHANGER, DECORATOR, General House Repairs. Estimates Free.</p>	<p>Mr. A. W. ROBERTS F.A.M.C. (Hons.), F.I.O. QUALIFIED OPTICIAN</p> <p>P. E. G. Norman (Jeweller), High Street</p> <p>Every TUESDAY from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. for NIGHT TESTING. NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE SERVICES. H.S.A. WORK.</p>
		<p>W. J. WOODFORD WEST WELLS STORES ALL PHOTOGRAPHY, SLIDERS, and DRAPERY</p> <p>Visible Glimpse for every Customer. Tel. 122</p>	<p>K. G. Honeychurch, "Bicycle Repair, Cycle & Motor Repairs" ALSO, REPAIR, LUBRICATE, REPAIR, and REPAIRS OF ALL TYPES OF MOTOR CYCLES, MOTOR CARS, and MOTOR BIKES. Also, REPAIRS OF ALL TYPES OF MOTOR VEHICLES. CORSHAM, WILTS. Stationer, Cycle & Motor Repairs. Motor Cycle and Cycle Repairs.</p>

June 1935 programme

via Post Office Lane, was limited and considered totally inadequate. The site is roughly where the current Royal British Legion Club is on Newlands Road.

By 1956 Mrs D. E. Tilley, Director and daughter of Mr Stratford, had taken over the day-to-day running of the cinema. The cinema was starting to show its age and the licensing authority insisted that some upgrades were made to bring the building up to the current regulations. These included making a lobby between the balcony staircase and the projection room, making the stage drapes flame retardant, no smoking signage in the projection room and the fitting of a telephone line so that the fire brigade could be called in the event of an fire. Previously, the cinema had to use Mrs Tilley's home phone line, which was in The Tynings opposite the cinema.

On the 3rd August 1958 Mr Norman Jefferies, who had been the cinema's projectionist at the time, took over the cinema's licence with his partner, June. He also ran the Regal Electric Co. and used his skills to improve the building. The stage was altered to accommodate a CinemaScope screen in 1960, a new false ceiling to retain heat in the auditorium in 1962 and proposals to build new modern toilets under the balcony in the rear stalls in 1965. Norman and June were married in Bristol on 13th February 1960, rushing off after the service to open the cinema for the evening performance.

In 1965, the fire officer had cause to write to Mr Jefferies concerning the lights in the exit way at the rear of the building, which had been found not working on several occasions. Despite a new heating system in



Corsham Film Theatre opening 1969



Projection room 1969

1965 and the other improvements that had been made since taking over the licence, Norman Jefferies closed the Regal in 1966, saying the cinema was outdated and inadequate. The closing film, "Von Ryans Express" starring Frank Sinatra and Trevor Howard, played on Thursday, Friday and Saturday the 7/8/9th April at 8:30pm supported by "Days Of Thrills And Laughter" at 7pm.



Mr Jefferies set about drawing up plans for a twin cinema, utilising the original building and an extension to house the second screen at the rear and new foyer to the left of the building, to bring a National Theatre class of programming to Corsham. Work was held up whilst terms were agreed for the purchase of some of the land to the right of the building by the local council for a new junction and road (Newlands Road). Norman and June did much of the building work themselves, with specialised jobs being contracted out to local firms.

The re-born Corsham Film Theatre opened on 19th June 1969 with a week of films shown as a fringe venue of the Bath Festival. Films included "Le Bonheur", "The Nutcracker" and "The Sound Of Music". Initially, just the 180-seat main screen was used. A new entrance and foyer extended down the left hand side of the building, patrons now entering the auditorium at the stage end. The stalls' floor rake was increased to take it up to the balcony level, making the cinema a single level stadium type. A bigger screen was put in with red tabs and matching red curtaining surrounding. The original Regal seats were recovered and set out in alternating rows of green and red. An extension was built to the rear of the building to house a new projection room and second screen, but this remained undeveloped.

Norman and June purchased an old church hall in the centre of Bath in 1971 and set about turning this into a twin cinema. The Corsham Film Theatre was closed on Thursday 8th June 1976, showing "Mr Superinvisible" supported by "War Of The Planets", whilst work was finished on the Bath Cinema. It was the intention to reopen later in July after the Gemini in Bath was up and running. As the new cinema took off, Norman Jefferies stated that the Corsham cinema was no longer viable and had little local support. The cinema remained closed and never reopened. Plans for the site were reported in the local press from time to time, including sale to the local council and reopening with three screens in 1979. None of these came to fruition and in 1985 Norman drew up plans to replace the cinema with four shops. Plans were approved and demolition work started on the shops in May 1985. One of the shop units opened up as a video rental store, carrying on the cinema tradition in a small way.



The interior of the Corsham Film Theatre showing the alternating rows of green and red seating.

Ben Doman

15th July 2013

Keep on eye open for the events celebrating 100 years since The Great 1913 Suffrage Pilgrimage. The pilgrimage route from Land's End to London is being followed by a group of women who will be arriving in Corsham on 15th July. Events in Corsham are being planned. The web-site is <http://dreadnoughtsouthwest.org.uk/>

1963-2013 Corsham Civic Society snippets

Presidents

1970 - 1974	Lord Methuen
1974 - 1980	Oswald Brakspear
1980 - 1992	Robin Eden
1992 - 1994	Brenda Forbes
1994 - 2007	Anne Greenly
2008 - present	Anne Lock

Chairmen

1962 - 1965	Miss L Stanfield
1965 - 1971	Mrs Alison Currey
1971 - 1975	Robin Eden
1975 - 1977	Martin Newman
1977 - 1979	Paul Smith
1979 - 1980	A Lock
1980 - 1983	Paul Smith
1984 - 1985	H Shaw
1986 - 2003	Mrs Anne Lock
2003 - 2006	Peter Tapscott
2006 - 2008	Wyndham Thomas
2008 - 2009	Les Davis
2009 - present	Michael Rumsey

The first newsletter in the files is dated 1980, a one-page affair, half of which was taken up by the "West Wiltshire Structure Plan"

from the earliest Constitution dated 17th May 1963

The objects of the society shall be:

- To promote the study of civic design
- To stimulate public consciousness and appreciation of the beauty, history and character of the Parish of Corsham
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of the features which go to make pleasing and convenient conditions in which to live and work.
- To pursue these ends by such means or meetings, lectures, study groups, exhibitions and publications.
- To make informed representation where necessary to the appropriate authority and mobilise public opinion in support of these aims.

Lady at Prayer

It was Robin Eden's idea to ask the Bath Academy of Art for a tangible memorial to the years during which they were based in Corsham. The sculpture "Lady at Prayer" by Ian Cotton was presented by him and she now resides in the Library.

from the Minutes of the 2nd Executive Committee meeting at the Community Centre.

Miss L Stanfield in the Chair

Apologies from Mr Harris & Mr Holman

Members present: Mr R Cooper, Col Handford, Mr Tyte, Mrs Donaldson, Mr Romer, Mr K Oakley, Mrs A Methuen, Mr Bateman, Mr S Shonfeld, Mr Hoole

Study groups:

Trees and open spaces	Convenor Mr Harford	Recorder Mr Tyte
Older buildings	Mr Manson	Mrs W Nash
New development	Mr C Shonfeld	Mrs K Hoole
Environs	Mr Harris	Mr Romer
Young people	Mrs Donaldson	Mrs M Oakly

The old poor house - not one of our successes!

An early 18th century building, which, due to a fire in the summer, became a shell with no roof. Mr Robin Eden “gather(ed) that the owner was insufficiently insured and may be wanting to sell out –(a very little firm with a big name The NorthWest London Meat Co!)”.

Oswald Brakespear A.R.I. B.A (President of the Civic Society) and Michael Burton A.R.I.B.A. (a member of the planning committee) stated they “are strongly of the opinion that this building can, and must, be saved....”. It “is an unique example of a pre-Georgian decorated gable”.

Letter from John Betjeman

“29 Radnor Walk
London SW3 4BP

9th December, 1975.

This is urgent and vital. My wife and I were in the town of Corsham this Sunday. The High Street there is one of the best left in England. The Council there is clearly one of the worst. I dare say it is jealous of Bristol and wants a nice glass and plastic shopping precinct. I have told Robin Eden (the best antique dealer in the West Country) I am writing to you but I have not divulged your name beyond saying that yours is the most efficient and learned and farsighted department in Government.”

On 27th January 1976 demolition started. ES Electrical is now situated on the site.

..... but we were successful in:

- halting the proposed by-pass road link from the south of Potley Bridge to The Linleys to take road transport from the A4 to Melksham.
- halting the erection of a new building in the grounds of the Almshouses.
- stopping the unnecessary 6 sets of new traffic lights between the Cross Keys and the top of Box Hill .

..... and we're still working on:

- The campaign to re-open Corsham station which started in 1986, when it was admitted that it would be a long haul and require a great deal of time and effort.
- The development at Showell.

1977

“Last Saturday about 100 members of the Corsham Civic Society were entertained by Mr & Mrs Knapp of Great Lypiatt farm. Three hay wagons pulled by tractors took the visitors on an extensive conducted tour of the 250 acre farm part of which is threatened with compulsory purchase for housing development. Mr Knapp pointed out the proposed line of extension to Valley Road and to Leafeld Trading Estate. Members were able to see for themselves the high quality of this farm land and visualise the disastrous effect of fifty more acres of development in this direction. After the tour we were warmed by a good bonfire, sausages, cider and apple pie in the barn.”

The First Motor Vehicle Registrations in Corsham

The first vehicle registered in Wiltshire, AM-1, was a 10hp Benz Parsifal, to Wiltshire County Council's County Surveyor, Charles Septimus Adye on 12th Dec 1903.

Listed below are those registered to Corsham people, up to registration number AM-1000:

AM-26 Motor cycle Quadrant 2¼ hp, about 120 lbs, issued on 2nd Sept 1905 to Arthur Henry Fry, High Street.

AM-48 14th Dec 1903-27 Jun 1904 to James Ellis Crisp [surgeon] Alexander House. Humber 2¾hp; about 170 lbs, trade. Reregistered 27th June 1904, Quadrant 3 hp, about 135 lbs; trade. Reregistered 28th May 1909, 3/3½ Quadrant motor cycle ; 160 lbs; trade.

AM-185 Rex motor cycle, about 120 lbs, issued on 18th May 1909 to Arthur Stuart Hiscocks, Richmond Villa. A new owner was registered 1st Oct 1915.

AM-187 1st Jan 1904-Walter E Merrett, [cycle maker and dealer and furniture dealer] Cycle Depot. New Quadrant motor cycle; 60lbs, trade. On 19th Aug 1907 reissued to George Turlieu, Belle Vue, Clevedale Road.

AM-225 6th Jan 1904 to Fred Carter [builder & contractor] [Roseleigh], South Street. Swift 5½ hp; dogcart body; painted black, white lined, 7cwt, trade. Re issued 18th Mar 1910, Edward Sidney Ogburn [hotel proprietor] Methuen Arms Hotel.

AM-590 23th Feb 1910 issued Walter Edwin Merrett [cycle agent and furniture dealer], High Street; 7½ hp Humberette; four seated car, red; 11 cwt, private. Re-registered on 13th May 1920 to Walter Edwin Merrett [motor engineer, cycle agent and furniture dealer and fruiterer] Motor Garage. 20 hp Ford; van body, slate; 12 cwt trade.

AM-610 28th Mar 1905 to Charles George Cawte [plumber, glazier, decorator and gas and hot water fitter], High Street. 3 hp Quadrant motor cycle; 145 lbs; private and trade.

AM-629 19th Apr 1905 to Frank William Sawyer, Westwells Farm. Minerva motor bicycle, 1½hp; 110 lbs; private.

AM-722 issued on 7th Sept 1907 to Henry John Lucas, Station Road; motor cycle with fore carriage, Humber 3¾hp; 'Olympia Tandem'; about 3 cwt; private.

AM-864 23th June 1906 registered to Frank Vyvian Radcliffe, Priory Cottage; a 2hp De Dion engine motor tricycle; 1½ cwt; private.

AM-909 issued to Messrs Neale & Gough [brush makers], Pickwick Road, a 10-12hp Humber van; 14 cwt; private.

AM-963 6th Feb 1907 to Alfred William Butt [tailor], High Street. Triumph motor cycle; about 150lbs; private and trade. Reissued 13 May 1908.

Jane Browning

Source: Early Motor Vehicle Registration in Wiltshire 1903– 1914. Edited by Ian Hicks. Wiltshire Record Society Volume 58



1910 Humberette
Photo: Basic Transporter, Creative Commons.org.



Quadrant classic motorcycle
Photo: Classic-motorbikes.net

Reminiscences of Joan Poynder 1897 - 1987

Sir John Dickson-Poynder and his wife Anne Beauclerk Dundas of Hartham House had just one child. Joan was born at Hartham Park on 11 September 1897.

Joan had a lonely childhood as an only child, spending much of her time with her nanny and French and German governesses. Her nanny taught her to read and write; Joan said she had the greatest influence on her life. Books were read over and over again; she loved Alice in Wonderland and books by Mrs Molesworth. Governesses were then a relatively new innovation and as such their positions of neither being family nor servants meant that they lived in limbo, the servants thinking governesses were a cut above them, but neither being accepted as one of their own by the master's family. Joan had to speak French one week, German the next. No arithmetic was taught – Joan later said she could just manage her bridge scores. Although her parents' friends' children often came to play, she also played with the village children. Her meals were taken in the nursery with her nursery maid and nanny, plus any children who came to stay. Food was very plain, a lot of bread and butter, few eggs, and very few sweets. It was not until she was 8 or 9 years old that she was allowed to eat with her parents downstairs. Although she longed to go away to school, she was not allowed to do so. Until she was 15 she went to bed at 6.30 to 7pm. She rode a lot, even joining the Beaufortshire Hunt when only about 7 or 8 years old. She was taught to ride by the stud groom, Mr Faircloth, who went to New Zealand with the family when her father became Governor General in June 1910.



Joan Poynder as a bridesmaid

Joan remembered before the war there was a servants' ball. It was opened by the master dancing with the housekeeper and his wife dancing a waltz or quadrille with the butler. These balls did not happen after the war. The servants had a reading room and a billiard table outside, were able to play cricket matches in the grounds.

Her father, Sir John, served as High Sheriff of Wiltshire in 1890 and as Conservative MP for Chippenham 1892-1910. He was in the Wiltshire Yeomanry and served in the Boer War as ADC to Lord Methuen. He then became a Liberal at the time of Free Trade under Mr Asquith, who was Prime Minister from 1908 to 1916. Joan remembers a toy shop in Corsham where the shopkeeper was a liberal and she loved buying toys, "like the wooden painted dolls which cost about sixpence". He was a Liberal and Joan thought it was wrong. He had a long beard, which rather frightened her. As he was a Liberal he had been an enemy of her father, but overnight,

when her father joined the Liberals, he suddenly became a friend.

Her mother was a great influence. She was not content with fashionable society, but had a wide range of friends, intellectuals, writers and musicians, especially politicians, including Winston Churchill.

Despite her young age, Joan joined the Red Cross during the 1st World War and after working in English hospitals she managed to get to France and nursed in No 2 Red Cross Hospital in Rouen and No 8 Paris Plage. This combined her need for independence and to have something to do. She was married in 1923, to Edward Grigg, and had 3 children. Edward was MP for Oldham and Altrincham and then Governor of Kenya. Joan's great interest was always hospitals and whilst in Kenya with her husband in 1928 Joan founded three hospitals, two for Africans and one for Asians, all with training schools for nurses. She also started a nursing association of trained nurses from England for the English settlers and officials.

Edward Grigg was raised to the peerage as Baron Altrincham in 1945, and died 1 December 1955 aged 76 at Tormarton. Joan died at Tormarton Court on 10 August 1987.

Jane Browning

Source: Edwardian Childhoods by Thea Thompson

Looking at old photographs and documents.

I recently discovered the photograph shown below, together with the document recording the start of my grandfather's apprenticeship at W. H. Humphries' Wagon Works, London Road, Chippenham. My grandfather, Reginald Townsend, born and educated in Derry Hill, was just 15 when he began learning the trade of a wheelwright, which was to last for 5 years. The Indenture is signed by Francis Humphries and his brother Albert Edward and countersigned by W. H. Wood, the Accountant. My grandfather and his father, Eli Townsend, a senior worker at the Cloth Factory, also signed the document. The wages per week for the first year amounted to 3/- rising by an increment of 1/- per year.

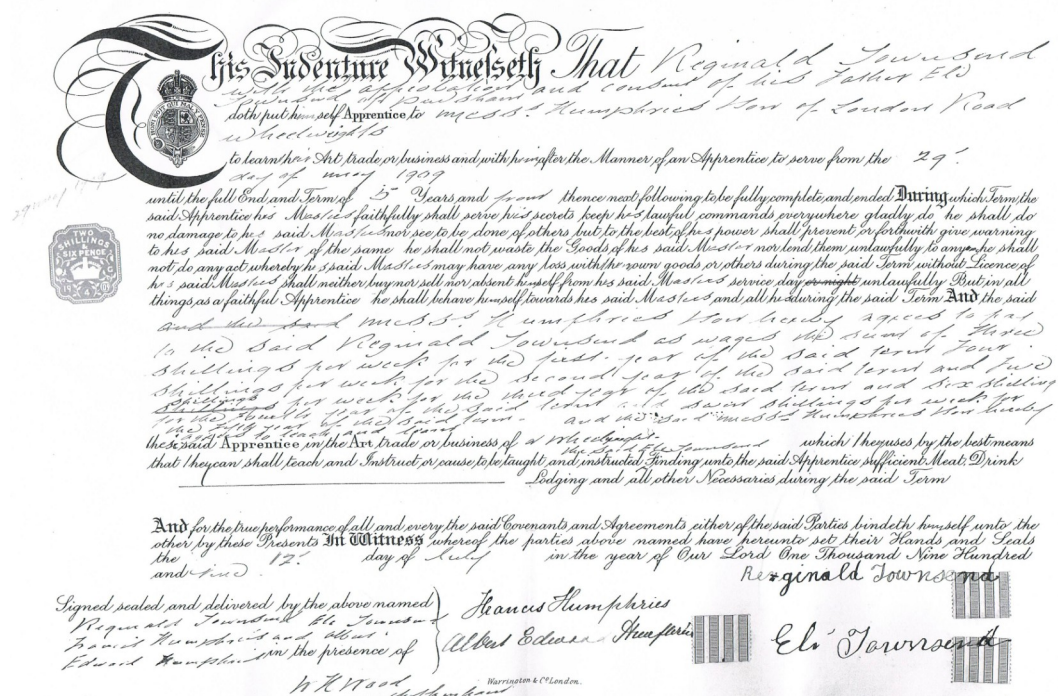
Grandfather stayed at the Wagon Works until made redundant, through lack of trade, in the late 1920's and when my Mother started work at Messrs Isaacs, near to the Angel Hotel, in August 1932, his unemployment pay was reduced by 4/6 as my Mother was then earning 5/- per week. On Fridays, Market Day in Chippenham, the latest finished wagon would be taken to the Market Place and displayed by the company, hoping for a sale. One of the workers would accompany a salesman to demonstrate the various specialities of that particular wagon.



The photograph shows the various men working at Humphries' in about 1912, I would suggest. Grandfather, with his customary white apron, is to be seen on the right of the front row. The Foreman of the works is standing on the left. Elm logs are stacked behind the group waiting to be sawn for the next new wagon.

Grandfather was born in 1894 and died in 1967, having retired at the age of 70 from full time working as a fine joiner in Poole, Dorset. When I moved house in 2007 from Box Hill to Corsham, I presented Chippenham Museum with a large number of Grandfather's tools including 36 rebate planes and a wonderful wheelwright's auger. I did retain a number of things that he made with such great care over the years and I treasure these greatly. It's amazing how one photograph and a 104 year old document can bring out so much history.

Michael Rumsey



When times were hard

“Att A vestry Held in the parish Church of Corsham in the County of Wilts on Sunday the 21st of December 1794 Due Notice thereof Haveing been Given Previous thereto It was resolved as follows.

- 1 That Rob^t Showerings Son Job Do have A p^r of Shoes
 - 2 That James Joneses Family Do have 16 p Month In future (To Mr Pierce
 - 3 That Tho^s Davis Do have A Shirt and Blankett
 - 4 That the parish do Aggree To pay Four Guineas Towards Apprenticing Grace Hoods Son to the Trade of A Breeches Maker
 - 5 That Rob^t Briants Son George Do have A p^r of shoes And Himself A Shirt to W^m Hibbard
 - 6 That Rob^t Showerings Wife Do have a Peticoat
 - 7 That Betty Poarch Do have A p^r Of shoes to W^m Hibard
 - 8 That W^m Austes 3 Sons Do have A Wastcoat Each And 4 girls a peticoat Each
 - 9 That John Macey Do have A Fowlweather Wastcoat
 - 10 That Ann Showering Do have a Shift Jacket & Peticoat
 - 11 That Ann Plaster Do have 4 p Month In Future
 - 12 That Ann Hooper Do have 2 p Month In Future
 - 13 That Charles Harries 4 Children James Hannah Susanah and Betty Do have A Garment Each
 - 14 That George Tinsons son W^m Do have A p^r of Shoes (W^m Hibbard Ordered to
 - 15 That the Widow Sheppard of Pickwick Do have A Shift
 - 16 That Betty Smiths Daughter Jane Do have A p^r of shoes (To W^m Hib
 - 17 That Ann Cole Do have 4 p Month In future
 - 18 That Ann Sadler Do have A Garment
- And Mr John Earle Do Aggree to Serve the Poor house With Good Household Bread 8½ for the Shilling for three Months from the Above Time

	s d		£ s d
And Rich ^d Gumbs Wife	1 -	Bro ^t Up	11
W ^m Austes family	5 -	Rich ^d Butter	5
Abaram Pierce	5 -	John Smith	10 6
Carried Up	11 -	Carried Up	1. 6. 6”

Submitted by Anne Lock

VACANCIES

We have three positions which need filling. Are you looking for something to fill those few hours of inactivity? Here is a brief overview of the tasks associated with our vacant posts.

Chairman of planning group: This group meets every three weeks, usually on a Monday at 2pm, to co-incident with the discussions of the planning applications by the Town Council. They meet in the back room at the Town Hall where the plans are displayed to review and comment on them. The meetings last approximately an hour.

Secretary of the planning group: As above, the secretary collects the list of planning applications from the council office, collates the comments of the group and ensures they are passed to the council in time for their meeting on the following Wednesday.

Secretary of the executive committee: Meetings are held every 2 months. The secretary will be responsible for issuing the agenda, taking the minutes and issuing them to members of the executive committee.

Please do speak to one of the committee (see Page 2) if you are interested in joining us. It is not arduous and we do enjoy ourselves.

2013 (JUBILEE YEAR) PROGRAMME

Jan 18th	7.30 pm	Annual Dinner at Rudloe Hall Hotel
Feb 22nd	7.30 pm	“The Secret State: how Corsham would have Governed in the Country in World War III”
Mar 23rd	7.30 pm	“To Have and To Hold - History of Collecting and Collectors, with special emphasis on Chippenham and Corsham” Talk by Melissa Barnett, Curator of the Chippenham Museum.
Apr 26th	7.30 pm	“George Gay (1771-1833), Corsham Quarryman, Composer of Chapel Music and Organ Builder” Talk by Dr. Christopher Kent, formerly Head of Musicology at the University of Reading, a great expert on organ and organ music.
May 10th	7.00 for 7.15 pm	AGM at the Town Hall : followed by “Corsham in Words”
Jun 22nd	tba	“Corsham in Music” Concert in St. Bartholomew’s Church, Corsham.
Jul 19th	6.00 pm	Visit to the Victorian School at Sevington and Leigh Delamere church. Meet at Sevington at 6pm.
Sep 27th	7.30 pm	“The History of Stone Quarrying” Talk by David Pollard, the owner of the last working quarry in Corsham. He has spent many years studying the history of stone quarrying in the area.
Oct 25th	7.30 pm	“A S.E.X.Y. Talk - Submarine Engineering Across the Years Talk by Rear Adm. Thomas CB (Retd), a former naval officer of distinction now Chairman of the Rail Safety and Standards Board. He lives in Box.
Nov 29th	7.30 pm	“Some more Wiltshire Churches” Talk by Michael Rumsey, Chairman of the Corsham Civic Society and a retired primary school head-teacher.

All meetings to be held at the Pound Arts Centre, 01249 701628, unless otherwise stated.
Guests are very welcome. Members £2, Non-members £5, includes free tea or coffee or £1 off a glass of wine.

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
Arnold House
31 High Street
CORSHAM
Wiltshire SN13 0EZ
Registered Charity No: 275321**