



Corsham Spotlight

Journal of the Corsham Civic Society

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1963-2013

Corsham in Music

Saturday evening, November 16th, in St. Bartholomew's Church was rather a special occasion for the Society in its Golden Jubilee year. An audience of 100 enjoyed the 'Corsham in Music' concert which began with the singing of 'Deep River', one of Michael Tippett's Negro spirituals from his 1944 work entitled 'A Child of our Time'. This was the first of five of Tippett's spirituals sung by the Jubilee Singers conducted by Nicholas Keyworth and accompanied by the Jubilee string quartet. St. Bartholomew's Church Choir, ably led by their choirmaster, Robin Jackson, and accompanied on the organ by Maureen McAllister, sang three hymns by



Nicholas Keyworth and the Jubilee Singers and Quartet during rehearsal.



Nicholas Keyworth, Michael Wilkinson and the Jubilee Singers and Quartet

the local 18th century composer and quarryman, George Gay.

We also heard his anthem 'Gospel Trumpet'. Harry Spackman's 'My love is like a red, red rose', arranged by Wyndham Thomas was sung as a solo by Simon Caldwell. We also enjoyed Wyndham Thomas' tune 'Gastard', written for the 100th anniversary of

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Gastard Parish Church in 2012, to the words of *'Palms of Glory'*. This was followed by Wyndham's anthem *'Nova, Nova, Ave Fit Ex Eva'* (Good News).



Jim Chorley

In the second part of the evening, which was ably compered by Nicholas Keyworth, two pieces of music received their World Premieres. Jim Chorley performed *'Corsham Town'*, a folk song he was commissioned to write by the Society for this concert.

This was followed by *'Leap of Faith'* from the musical *'Revolution'*, lyrics by Michael Wilkinson and music by Nicholas Keyworth. This exceptional piece of music describes the diving competition held each year in the Croatian city of Mostar from the Stari Most bridge over the river Neretva. Jacob, only 18 years old, is making his

first dive and describes how he feels for the 3 seconds he's in the air before reaching the water. This wonderful piece was received very enthusiastically by the audience and many positive comments were received from various members of the audience on how much they had enjoyed the whole evening of music composed by people associated with Corsham.

Michael Rumsey



Robin Jackson, Maureen McAllister and the choir of St Bartholmew's Church

Christmas message from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

Twelve months ago I wrote that I, together with the rest of the membership, was looking forward to 2013, our Golden Jubilee Year, and now we are virtually at the end of it and what a year it has been. Apart from the terrible wintry weather that very much spoiled our Annual Dinner in January, we have enjoyed six excellent talks, one most enjoyable visit and a well organised concert entitled *'Corsham in Music'*.

The talks have ranged from how Corsham would have featured nationally during World War III to submarine engineering across the years. From a musical quarryman to stone quarrying itself in the Corsham area. We've thought about the history of collecting and collectors and looked again

at the wonderful set of buildings in the county all bearing the title of Parish Churches. The Society's visit to the Victorian School at Sevington and the redundant parish church at Leigh Delamere was most successful and we look forward, with interest, to next year's visit to another place of interest suggested by the Executive Committee.

2014 sees the anniversary of the start of the First World War and Richard Broadhead is returning to give another of his fascinating talks on the subject of WWI. We look forward to that and to six other talks that Dr. Negley Harte has so ably organised. We are extremely grateful to Negley for his hard work in organising for the Society such a wealth of subjects and speakers. I, too, am grateful to my colleagues on the Committee for their hard work during the last twelve months.

Next September will see the Society taking part again in the Heritage Open Days (HODs) scheme organised nationally by English Heritage and the National Trust. If any member has any suggestions of places people could visit, do please let me know. Our HODs in 2012 were most successful. We hope we can build on that success and make the HODs of 2014 even better.

Finally, all that it remains for me to say, is to wish you the compliments of the season and a very Happy New Year.

Michael Rumsey

Editorial

I have changed the colour scheme for this issue to reflect our new logo. Did you all spot it at the top left of the front cover? It was designed by Michael Wilkinson, a former resident of Corsham, for our *Corsham in Music* concert. We thought it very appropriate to have a new logo at this moment in time and Michael has agreed that we can use it. It is very striking.

We are very pleased to welcome Victoria Blake to the committee. Victoria is the daughter of Margaret Smith, the chairman of the Planning Group. She has agreed to become our secretary, taking over from Pat Whalley who undertook the role temporarily whilst we were looking for a full-time secretary. Thank you for helping out, Pat.

Next year we will be staging the Heritage Open Days, in which we participate on a biennial basis. We are always keen to hear suggestions for places to visit. Please do let us know if there are any buildings which you have longed to see the inside of. We cannot guarantee all requests can be met, but we can try. We would also welcome help from anyone who would like to become involved in making the arrangements.

I would very much welcome help from anyone who could contribute to Spotlight: be it an old photograph, an old school certificate, an old postcard, or any stories about the exploits of family members during the First World War. With a few words of your memories, these make interesting reading and also help to preserve the area's heritage. Please don't be slow in coming forward.

Jane Browning

New members

Welcome to the following new members:

Susan Snook
Eirly Chandler
Victoria Blake

Finding Interesting Churches in Wiltshire.

I always promised myself that when I retired I would undertake several projects. One was to visit all the Anglican cathedrals in England and Wales and the second was to explore and photograph churches in my home county of Wiltshire. For four years I was unable to do either of these tasks as I was looking after my mother. Since 2005, my friend Mollie Mitford and I have driven around much of Wiltshire exploring country lanes and finding many church buildings hidden away from the motorist's eyes. We have found the second smallest parish church in regular use in England, that's at Fifield Bavant in South Wilts, and two of the three parish churches in England that have both a west tower and a crossing tower with a spire, those being at Purton and Wanborough, the third such church is situated in Ormskirk, Lancashire. I visited there last April, thus completing a clean sweep of those three unusual church buildings.

This Summer we set out to find and photograph more churches in preparation for my talk to the Society in November and in addition to those we found last year, which numbered 20 in total, we added a further 36 to the list. On one day alone we visited 8 churches, starting with Maiden Bradley, then moving on to Mere and enjoying lunch beside Kingston Deverell Parish Church. After lunch we drove to Longbridge Deverell, Sutton Veny, which has a very fine Victorian church plus the original church, now a ruin, followed by the Norman building at Tytherington, the collegiate church at Heytesbury and finishing the day at Bishopstrow, on the outskirts of Warminster.



Westwood: a fine church and tower in the perpendicular style

Of course, not all churches are open, some remain firmly locked. Others, you can find the key resting beneath the front porch of the neighbouring house, such as at Old Dilton, near Westbury. The church at Old Dilton is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, an organisation that looks after over 300 places of worship in the country. Old Dilton retains its box pews and gallery plus a 2 decker pulpit and is well worth visiting. Leigh Delamere is another Wiltshire church looked after by the CCT, and it was that building which we visited, as a Society, last July. Out of 56 churches visited during the last 2 years, we have found only 10 locked, which is quite understandable in these days.



Hardenhuish: one of the few classical churches to be found in the country built in 1779 by John Wood

I have found that there always something of interest in each church visited. It may be the stained glass or an interesting tombstone in the churchyard or a particular architectural feature. I can honestly say there are few churches in this county I would consider to be 'boring'. The Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust have published an excellent book entitled '*Parish Churches of Wiltshire: A Guide*'. This is an excellent publication giving a great deal of information and interesting details about all the parish churches to be found in the county

and this book plus Nicholas Pevsner's '*The Buildings of England – Wiltshire*' have enabled me to enjoy driving around the county finding interesting towns and villages and their places of worship.

Michael Rumsey



Sutton Veny: designed by the respected Victorian architect John L. Pearson, who designed five parish churches in the county. This is a Grade 1 listed church with more than 60 gravestones for mainly Australian soldiers who died in WW1



Mildenhall, near Marlborough: fine box pews and 2 pulpits, one each side of the aisle



Old Dilton



Aldbourn: 17th century memorial



Rushall : stained glass window showing nature throughout the seasons

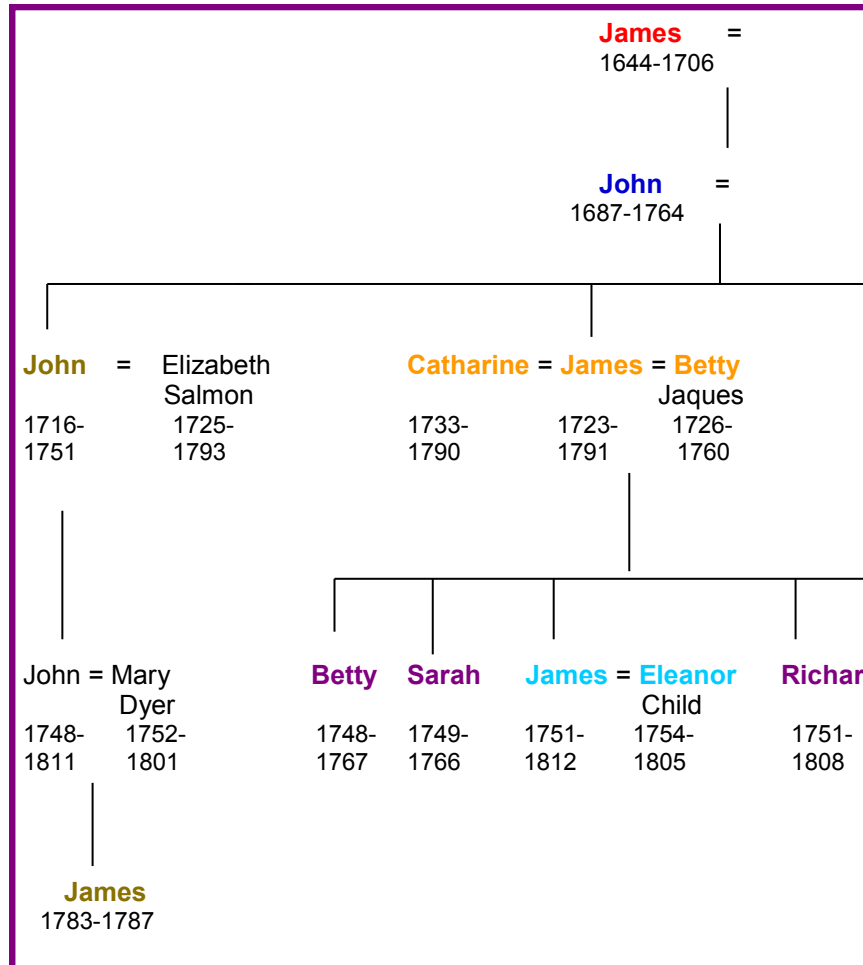
The Brownings of Leigh Delamere

Our summer outing to see the Victorian schoolroom at Sevington and the Church of St Margaret of Antioch at Leigh Delamere, was in itself a wonderful experience, with Dinah Starkey, one of the Trustees, acting as schoolmistress, bringing to life the days of Victorian schoolchildren. The church, however, added a family connection to the Civic Society as a bonus. The nave and south aisle contained many memorials of the Browning family, my descendents. The Brownings were yeoman farmers at Leigh Delamere. An entry in the parish register notes that during the time the church was without a vicar the register was kept by the "farmers Browning at the Manor Farm House".

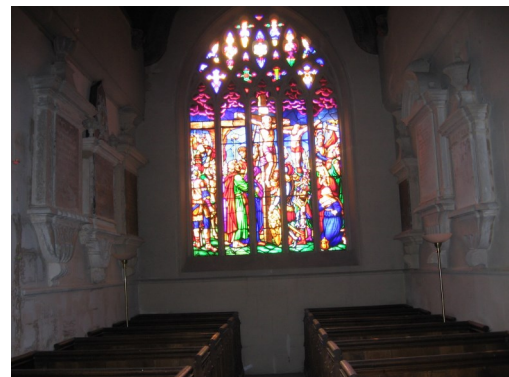
The family tree shown here is not a complete tree, but it shows those family members (in colour) who have a memorial in the church. It covers an astonishing five generations of the family. I have colour-linked those who appear on the same memorial. Other members of the family are also buried at Leigh Delamere, but do not have such grand memorials.

The oldest generation is James and Elizabeth, my 7th great grandparents. They married at Nettleton in 1671. Prior to this it appears from parish registers the Brownings lived in the Castle Combe area.

James and Elizabeth's son John married Alice, daughter of Chippenham clothier Walter Scott, in 1711 at Heddington. In 1742 John, together with Francis Child leased Weavern Mill, an "ancient fulling mill, a corn or grist mill" from the Duke of Somerset, a continuation of an indenture of lease of 1728 which mentioned John Browning and John Scott.



Leigh Delamere church



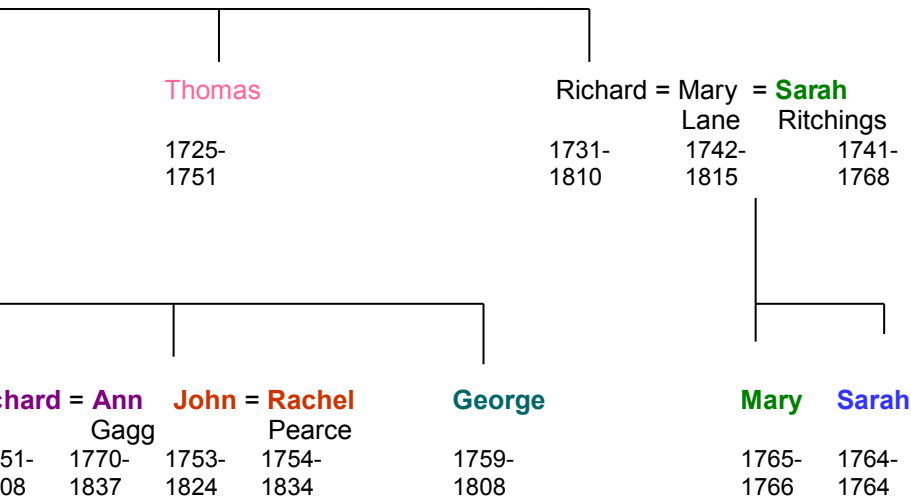
The Nave containing six wall memorials to the Browning family

It is touching to note that these monuments were saved and re-erected when the current church was rebuilt in 1854, some 40 years after the last date that occur on these memorials.

Canon J.E. Jackson (1805 - 1891) was rector of Leigh Delamere with Sevington from 1845 until 1891. He was a leading antiquary and the first secretary of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society. His very wide interests included local history, heraldry and genealogy; he had a life-long interest in the Hungerford family. Perhaps it is due to these interests that we are indebted to him for an insight into his parishioners: he kept notes about almost all the parishioners whose funeral services he conducted.

Elizabeth Barnes
1651-1734

Alice Scott
1689-1765



On 22nd August 1851 he buried Elizabeth Browning, aged 76, "the only surviving sister of Richard Browning" "Last of the Brownings at Sevington, a respectable old person of rather higher tone of feeling and education than her brother" He tells us that she sold her house at Sevington to Mr. Neeld about a year before her death.

The last Browning the Rev. Jackson buried was Mary, aged 62 from Cricklade, on 15 October 1872, whose parents had lived at Leigh Delamere. She was the sixth generation to be buried there, 166 years after James, her 3rd great grandfather, was buried in 1706.

Jane Browning

Source: Leigh Delamere and Sevington People. Wiltshire Parish Records No 4 published by the Wiltshire Family History Society.



Memorial to siblings Sarah, Betty and Richard, and Richard's wife Ann.



Casket near the font to John Browning of North Wraxall and his wife Rachel

Review

The talk on the History of Stone Quarrying in the Corsham area by David Pollard in September opened our eyes to the large number of quarries that existed in the area. David has a wealth of knowledge of all aspects of stone quarrying and very ably led us on a tour of the area by way of the stone quarries, dipping into methods of working as well as personalities. Quarrying in the area started on the site of the Quarryman's Arms, Box Hill in the 3rd or 4th century. It was the 1820s before stone was dug underground when the economy was picking up after the Napoleonic wars. The stone does not outcrop on the surface in Corsham: vertical shafts were needed to reach it. The first underground quarry was Hartham Park Quarry, one of the cluster to be found along the line of the A4. From a quarry at the junction of Bradford Road and the A4, to one by Skynet Drive, to Hudswell, to Stone Nob at The Ridge and Sands Quarry, we visited them all. Apparently most quarries have more than one name.

The names of quarrymen were legion, including Thomas Workman in the early 1800s and William Jones Brewer who was the contractor for the eastern end of Box tunnel, who died aged 28 in 1844. His brother Robert ran the quarry until 1864. There was rivalry between the Brewer and Pictor families. Both had three sons who worked in the industry and over time the Pictors eclipsed the Woodmans.

Horses were used to pull the huge blocks of stone, but the state of the roads suffered. The local people did not like this as they were the ones who had to pay for the repair of roads, consequently the Pictors built a tramway. Until 1887 most quarries were independently owned. Bath Stone Firms Limited was formed, later to become Bath and Portland Stone Firms Ltd

Quarries, once worked out, then found a new lease of life, from storing foreign currency reserves (Clubhouse), growing mushrooms, as a secure storage facility (Wansdyke) and by the military for factories and storing equipment ;(Ridge, Monks Park).

Rear Admiral (Retd.) Paul Thomas provided an informative but light hearted look at submarine development at our October meeting, from the first ideas of Leonardo da Vinci to the latest Astute Class submarines. Englishman William Bourne designed a proto-type submarine in 1578, but it did not get off the drawing board. Cornelius Jacobszoon Drebbel, a Dutchman, built a submarine in 1670 whilst in the employ of James 1, possibly based on Bourne's design. It was propelled by 3 sets of oars and was moored at Richmond-on-Thames. The American David Bushnell designed what was to become the first military submarine, the hand-powered *Turtle*, in 1776 - it was used to attempt to blockade New York harbour against *HMS Eagle* during the American Revolutionary War.

In 1851, a Bavarian, Wilhelm Bauer, took a submarine designed by himself called the *Brandtaucher* (Fire-diver) to sea in Kiel Harbour. It was propelled by 2 people on a treadmill. It was the first escape from a submarine - it sank in 60 feet of water and the crew managed to escape. The *Huntley* was the first submarine to sink another war ship, in 1863, but it too sank!

Irishman John P. Holland emigrated to America in about 1880 and designed submarines, his Holland Type IV being the first to use internal combustion engine power while on the surface and electric battery power whilst submerged.

Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, USN, an émigrée from Poland, is considered to be the "father of the nuclear navy", recognising the need for nuclear propulsion. *USN Nautilus* was the first nuclear-powered submarine in 1955. Improvements are such that the nuclear core can now last the lifetime of the submarine, requiring no need for the costly refits that were previously required when the core lasted only a few years. The limitation on any deployment now is dependent on the food, not the fuel, required for the crew.

Jane Browning

Suffragist commemoration

Here are a few photographs taken on 15th July 2013 when we celebrated the centenary of the Suffragist march reaching Corsham.. A book of photographs is planned and we would welcome any photos, particularly of anything from a slightly different perspective. Photos by M.Rumsey, A. Mackie and K.Gaskin.



Jim Chorley, a native of Southampton, came to Corsham in October 2012 as a student in Bath Spa University's 'Song Writing' Masters course. Currently Jim is working as a Art Technician in a Southampton Secondary school. He has now completed his Masters Course and awaits his degree. Jim accepted a commission to write a song about Corsham for *Corsham in Music*. It is reproduced below.

In Corsham Town



**1, There's a place in Wiltshire
That is oh so fine and fair
There's no other place in all the land
That can compare...**

**Chorus, So wherever I may wander
Wherever I am bound
There will always be a part of me
In Corsham Town**

**2, Some say Dickens met Moses Pickwick
In the Hare and Hounds
As the Peacocks walked across the court with
Capability Brown...**

**Chorus, So wherever I may wander
Wherever I am found
There will always be a part of me
In Corsham Town...In Corsham Town**

**(Middle section): From the quarries of limestone
To the fields where John Fowler ploughed
I hear Michael Tippett's symphonies
On the cobbled streets of Town**

**3, In the winter they would skate
Across Old Corsham Lake
In St Bart's church I have heard
The Sweetest songs of praise**

**Chorus, Now wherever I may wander
wherever I am bound
There will always be a part of me
In Corsham Town...In Corsham Town
In Corsham Town...In Corsham Town**

**Coda...Wherever I'm bound, wherever I'm found
A part of me now...
is in Corsham Town**

**Written by Jim Chorley
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WWI Commemorations in Corsham

Nationally and locally there are plans in the making to commemorate this 'war to end all wars'. In Corsham many local groups are getting together to think of ways to show how this war impacted on everyone from the largest city to the smallest village.

The schools will be researching the names on the war memorial, there will be exhibitions, musical events, performances, and there is an intention to re-create the soldiers training in digging trenches at the Batters, and of the Hospital which was located at the Town Hall.

Plans are in their infancy at the moment, so if you have any ideas, or would like to help please contact Sharon Thomas at the Town Hall, or speak to Pat Whalley.

In addition, if you have any memorabilia from your grandfather's/great - grandfather's experiences of the war, medals, letters, postcards or stories, please let Sharon know. It would be good to hear about them.

Pat Whalley

Corsham Area Development Trust. - VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

The CADT (also known as the Tourist Information Centre) in the High Street, has a need to make considerable changes to the way it operates, due to the withdrawal of funding from WCC – as is happening nationwide.

Support continues to come from the Town Council, who allow use of part of the ground floor rent free, and provide a small grant.

The organisation is now run entirely by volunteers, but there are still bills to pay and stock to buy. There is a need for an additional 2 new Volunteer Directors, with Business, Marketing, and Financial experience, who can use their knowledge to bring new opportunities and funding to the organisation, in order that the current level of service can be maintained for local people and visitors alike.

There is also a requirement for more volunteers to help with the daily running of the office- and if you could give some time to the organisation it would be very much appreciated.

If you are perhaps retired, want to learn more about the area, or to make new friends if you are new to the area, or would just like to put something back into the community, this is an interesting and fun way to achieve it.

The office is currently open from 10am – 2pm Tuesday to Saturday.

Please visit the office to find out more. Contact details:

**Arnold House, 31 High Street, Corsham, Wiltshire. Tel No: 01249 714660
e.mail : info@visitcorshamarea.co.uk**

2014 PROGRAMME

Jan 17th	12.30 for 1.00	Lunch at The Methuen Arms
Feb 28th	7.30 pm	“Rocks and Landscapes of the Corsham Area” Talk by Elizabeth Devon. Elizabeth is at the Earth Science Education Centre at Keele University.
Mar 28th	7.30 pm	“The Industrial Archaeology of the By Brook” Talk by Mike Stone, the former Curator of the Chippenham Museum.
Apr 25th	7.30 pm	“Birds to be seen in the Corsham Area” Talk by Stewart Dobson, the Deputy Chairman of the Wiltshire Ornithological Society.
May 16th	7 00 for 7.15 pm	AGM Town Hall
Jun 27th	tba	Summer Excursion to Trowbridge Museum
Jul 25th	6.00 pm	“Corsham and the First World War” Talk by Richard Broadhead, author of several books on the Wiltshire soldiers of the First World War, the centenary of which is conspicuously approaching.
Aug 22nd	tba	Garden Party
Sep 26th	7.30 pm	“Running a Great Estate in the Twenty-First Century” Talk by the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne who live at Bowood, near Calne. Their estate engages in many activities.
Oct 24th	7.30 pm	“The Ministry of Defence in Corsham” Talk by Col. Rafferty, Chief of Staff, MOD Corsham
Nov 28th	7.30 pm	“The State of the World’s Forests” Talk by Jim Ball. Jim Ball divides his time between Corsham and Rome, where he has long worked for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation in connection with forests in Africa and Asia.

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
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275321