



Corsham Spotlight

Journal of the Corsham Civic Society
<http://www.corshamcivicsociety.co.uk>

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Society welcomes new members. Join us to enjoy talks on local subjects, trips to interesting places and the company of local people interested in both the history and future of this lovely Wiltshire town. For membership contact Jean Beech on 01249 713833

Corsham's Mansion House



Every picture tells a story

Officers and Committee Members:

President

Mrs. Anne Lock,
Tel: 01225 810357

Chairman

Mr. Michael Rumsey,
Tel: 01249 715741

Secretary

Victoria Blake,
Tel: 01249 716286

Treasurer

Elizabeth Addison,
Tel: 07919 352002

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

Margaret Smith,
Tel: 01249 715459

Spotlight Editor

John Maloney,
Tel: 01249 715159

Pat Whalley,
Tel: 01249 713618

From the Chairman

June and July have certainly reminded us all how warm Summers can be, but I'm sure they were hotter when I was a boy!! The Society's Annual General Meeting was well supported and the Wine and Cheese, organised by Joan Maciver, was greatly enjoyed. Thank you Joan, and also to John and friends, for the wine and cheese which rounded off a most interesting and enjoyable evening. Sadly, Joan will be hanging up her 'Social Organiser's apron from next May after organising, dinners, lunches and Wine and Cheese events over a number of years. Joan has been ably supported by her husband John, so our grateful thanks goes to him also.

We've been sorting out the meeting dates for 2018 and Negley Harte is working hard preparing a programme of speakers and it looks as though this will be Negley's last year doing this work so I'm sure the 2018 programme will be the best ever. He is actively looking for a successor for the Programme Organiser's role so don't be surprised if you get a tap on the shoulder one day from Negley wondering if you might be interested.

I am sorry that Mac McHugh was unable to speak at this month's meeting (July) and I do assure you we looked for a replacement speaker on the subject of stained glass. I hope that you found the talk on 'The ABC of the GWR' of interest. I have not presented this talk before to the Society at the Pound Arts Centre, though I did give it 6 years ago at the Town Hall for one of the Heritage Open Day events. Since that time, new photographs have appeared and have been added to the talk.

I'm pleased to report that our Editor, John Maloney, has been recently co-opted as a Town Councillor for the Corsham Town Ward.

As we don't have a meeting in August I look forward to welcoming you to the September meeting which is all about the History of Education in Corsham.

Michael Rumsey

*Contributions to
Spotlight are very
welcome. Please
contact the new editor,
John Maloney, at:
johnmaloney2003
@aol.com*

Membership News

We are saddened to report John Lock, husband of our President, and lifelong member and supporter of the Society, passed away on 17th June. I have written, on behalf of the Society, to Ann and the family. Also, June Duckworth, a long time member (see Obituary, p. 18) and Joy Shadwick, another member who recently died, and we extend our condolences to their families.

Corsham's Mansion House ~ an update

The photograph on the front cover is a clear indication of what was considered most important by Wiltshire Council and their architect's, DKA ~ far more prominence is given to the new extension which predominates rather than to the fine Georgian building! The mock up is typically representative of an architect's 'vanity project'.

On 21st December [only just in time for Christmas!], a Corsham Town Council (Planning) meeting considered the original applications [planning application and Listed Building Consent application, hereafter LBC] by Wiltshire Council, noted a 70-signature petition against aspects of the proposal, listened to objections and then:

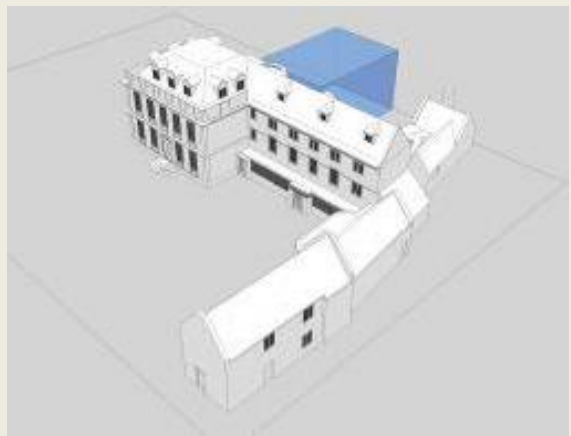
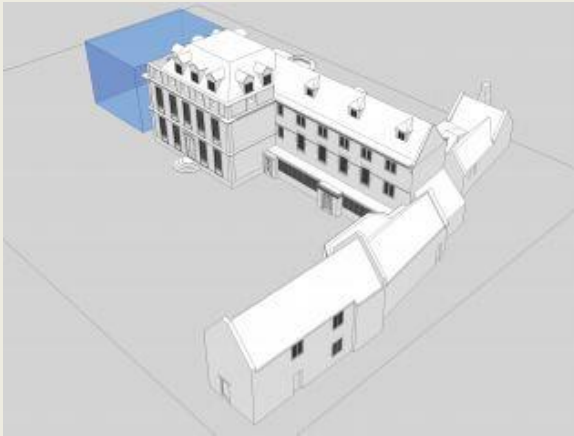
Resolved:

i) That, whilst the Town Council welcomes development of the Mansion House site as it is in a poor state and detracts from the town centre, the applications be refused for the following reasons: the proposal does not deliver the community or educational benefits, uses or needs as previously proposed by Wiltshire Council; it does not enhance the listed Mansion House or its setting [see below]; it has an adverse effect on the setting of important heritage assets, and the proposed extension is of poor design for the area.

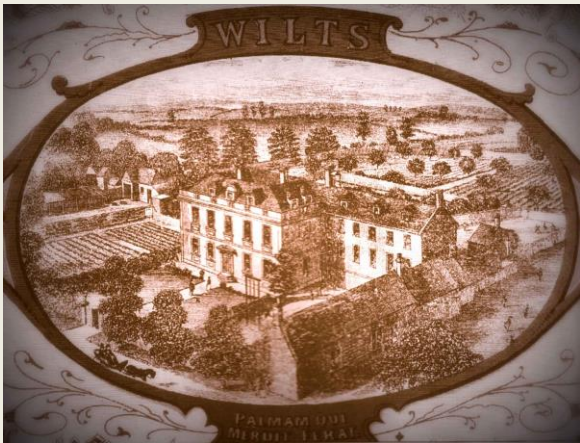
ii) Suggestions which might improve the proposals and overcome many of the concerns include: lowering the front wall of the Mansion House; removing some of the trees at the front of the property; locating the new build at the rear of the property, along the lines of The Holburne Museum, Bath; improving the façade and the addition of toilets on the first floor.

iii) That the applications be called-in.

* *Setting:* The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 makes it clear that the setting of a heritage asset is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Setting in urban areas is intimately linked to considerations of townscape and urban design and of the character and appearance of conservation areas.



Views showing the location of the proposed extension adjoining the side of the Mansion House along the line of its frontage (left) and, alternatively, located behind the listed building, not imposing on its setting and respecting the original frontage (right) ~ compare with illustration below. Views courtesy of CMS Group architects, quantity surveyors & project managers, Corsham



Wiltshire Council then made some minor changes but did not address the key issues (ie of the setting of the listed building and relocation of the extension) that CTC Council (Planning) meeting had referred to in its resolution, and submitted that as a 'revised' application. On 15th March the CTC Council (Planning) meeting met to consider that application, again listened to objectors and ...

Resolved ~ Not to object to this scheme but to ask that the Town Council's previous objections and suggestions continue to be considered as the proposal moves forward. Also that an archaeological watching brief be put in place on any geotechnical/ground investigation test pits.

This resolution was weaker than the original (with the exception of addition of concerns about archaeological potential ~ more details about that in the next issue) since it was felt that Corsham Town Council had already raised key issues but that Wiltshire Council were not prepared to further consider them [it should be noted that the Town Council can only make recommendations to Wiltshire Council which is the planning authority]. Also, it should be noted that the above resolution did not constitute approval by CTC as was erroneously asserted by a councillor. The revised proposal was then considered to the Wiltshire Strategic Planning Committee which met on 24th May: beforehand three Corsham residents who were acquainted with all the objections, the petition etc., and have specialist knowledge of the issues, circulated a detailed report to all the committee members [on the CCS website].

The report actually asked for the Committee to consider (as required by the NPPF) whether there was an alternative scheme which might deliver the economic benefits and therefore delay decision-making on the current scheme until a worked-up feasibility proposal was put to the committee. Also, Neville Farmer, of Corsham addressed the committee, [his paper is in an insert].

Most unfortunately, it was all to no avail: the key points raised, in particular, the listed building setting, the possibility of locating the proposed extension to the back of the Mansion House (something that neither the Georgian Group nor the Ancient Monuments Society would have objected to in principle) and the lack of any archaeological provision, were not discussed at all by the committee. Indeed, with one honourable exception, the 'discussion' was brief and mainly banal and focused very largely on the possibility of losing the funding [no reason given] and needing to get the development under way as soon as possible. By 7 to 3, the planning application was granted as was the LBC which now rests with the SoS for consideration as the Georgian Group and the Ancient Monuments Society maintained their objections.

On a personal note, I have to observe that I have attended many planning meetings in my nearly 40 years' involvement with archaeology, listed buildings and Conservation Areas, and I found the presentation of the proposal and the 'discussion' very disappointing for such an important matter. Indeed, as was remarked to me by a senior and very experienced professional:

There was a rather poor and colourless presentation from a rather flustered Case Officer – though that would be to accord it a dignity it didn't deserve (save for the heroic intervention of one Committee member who obviously had read the paper prepared by the objectors, the outcome was very, very disappointing but, sadly, not unexpected. What particularly struck me is that one of those who spoke to the meeting didn't address the key issues and yet on recent occasions had appeared to be more concerned about the cladding of the frontage of a restaurant in Corsham than that of much more substantive issues concerning one of its most prominent 18th century listed buildings.

In summary, Wiltshire Council's high-handed and underhanded approach to meaningful consultation resulted in the public being presented with a proposal which was from the start a fait-accompli.

Inevitably, that decision has already attracted quite some criticism and, indeed, caused *Piloti* (an eminent architectural historian) in *Private Eye* to deplore it [his column is included in the insert].

Just as we went to press, the Secretary of State announced that Listed Building Consent had been granted, subject to [standard] conditions, which is disappointing but not surprising. That will be reported on fully in the next issue together with other aspects of Mansion House - including the archaeological matters - and the wider issues.

John Maloney

Corsham Civic Society planning group report

The group have reviewed many applications since the last issue and the following are the major ones:

The Mansion House ~ has been dealt with at length pps. 2-4 etc.

La Piccola Italia



After objections raised by the Society and others and a retrospective planning application which was not approved, the wooden cladding blocks on the restaurant, have been painted white which blends in much better with the other commercial premises along that part of Pickwick Road and the Conservation Area as a whole.

The recently 'tipp-exed' trattoria.

The former Gladman site on the Bath Road, Pickwick [opposite St. Patrick Catholic Church] ~ **David Taylor and Tony Clark**

The battle continues!

A huge amount of additional and complex information was submitted by the applicants on 28 June. The Council's case officer refused a request by the Pickwick Association for more time (than the posted 14-day consultation period) to review and comment on the new information, so all objections had to be researched, prepared and formally submitted by 13 July. Had that tight deadline been missed, the case officer's report to the planning committee's meeting on 9 August, where a decision on these applications is scheduled, would have excluded any reference to these objections.

Due to a great team effort by the Association's committee two significant, highly critical reports by professional advisors (legal and geotechnical) together with some twenty updated personal statements of objection by Pickwick residents were lodged with Wiltshire Council before the deadline. Both sets of professional advisers firmly believe that objections are now beginning to gain real traction in demonstrating clearly the Council's continuing difficulties in its management of this case.

Article continues next page...

The two applications had been due to be decided by the planning committee at their meeting on 14 June: a large number of local residents arrived at the Council offices on the day – to be told that Redrow had asked during that morning that their applications be withdrawn from the agenda to allow them further time to respond to criticisms made by the Association – a request that was agreed unanimously by the committee.

The case officer's report to that meeting recommended the committee to approve the applications: he should certainly have cause to reconsider that stance when redrafting his report for 9 August.

Members of the Civic Society are likely to be particularly concerned that the plans due to be considered on 9 August still – despite numerous objections – include the destruction/removal of a WW2 memorial tree. Previous occupiers of Guyers House planted two beech trees within the site as a memorial to a son who was killed in World War II.

Draft Wiltshire Housing Site Allocation Plan

Wiltshire Council began a ten-week public consultation on 14th July on the draft, and the good news is that it concluded:

There is not an indicative residual requirement for the Market Town of Corsham to be delivered during the Plan period. Therefore, the Plan will not need to allocate additional land to help meet an indicative residual requirement.

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planningpolicydocument?directory=Wiltshire%20Housing%20Site%20Allocations%20DPD/Pre-Submission%20Consultation%20July%202017/Community%20Area%20Topic%20Papers&fileref=5>

STOP PRESS: international competition held – organised by The Pound Arts Centre – for a mural for the Martingate Centre to represent our quirky, artistic and historic town. Details in the next issue.

Additional Session for Brunel Shed Members ~ Press release from Humphrey Barncile

The Brunel Shed is open to both men and women and meets in the Potley and Pockeridge Community Centre [Pockeridge Road, Corsham SN13 9SB] which has been converted into a bright, well-equipped community workshop. Members can work on their own projects or in a team on civic/community projects. ~ details on <https://www.facebook.com/brunelshedcorsham/>

The Brunel Shed is delighted to announce receipt of a generous grant from Comic Relief through the Wiltshire Foundation to enable us to offer an additional session. The grant will enable us to buy tools and resources to introduce a range of craft activities to better suit a wider range of physical capabilities and interests.

Article continues next page...



We find these larger Civic projects bring our members together, forming informal teams and increasing the companionship provided by our shed



A member learning about stained glass, one of a range of craft skills to be offered in our new Thursday afternoon sessions.

This new Thursday afternoon session has just been launched and will be quieter without the use of woodworking machinery.

The first activities, based on glass work and mosaics, are proving to be popular with both male and female members. In due course other crafts skills will be introduced alongside some members working on their own projects.

Other News

The popularity of the Brunel shed has surpassed all expectations and it is clearly filling a need in the community. Membership of the Shed continues to grow and the Monday morning session is always busy and sometimes quite noisy. Some work on their own projects, but the main thrust is the stone trolley project and raised beds for the Springfield Centre.

The Stone Trolley

The two side timbers have been bought from Vasterns of Calne using a grant from Corsham Town Council. These are very large and heavy and are in the process of being marked up ready for routing out the slots for the cross beams and fitting the iron end-pieces. Meantime, the iron parts have been cleaned up and de-rusted ready to be used again.

Planters and raised beds

Three Potley planter beds have been cleared of weeds, and one has been fully planted with vegetables by Shed member Alan, and has proved to be very productive and a great success. Six sizeable planters have been constructed for the Springfield Campus and several organisations have taken on the task of planting them up and looking after them. A seventh more substantial bed has been built to at a height to suit those people with disabilities, including wheelchair users.



The 2017 Corsham Walking Festival

Corsham's fourth, and most successful, annual Walking Festival took place over three fine walking days, Friday 9th to Sunday 11th June.

Stephanie Millward MBE opened the Festival at the Community Campus by giving an inspirational speech on achieving your dreams and saying farewell to the group of walkers heading out to Hartham Park.

The weather did not provide any surprises this year, unlike in previous Festivals, enough sunny periods for picturesque photographs, cloudy with a 'stiff' breeze at other times to keep those walkers on the longer challenging walks cool.



Walkers at the top of Solsbury Hill on one of our long distance walks of 20 miles

The walking programme of 18 mostly themed walks attracted 335 walkers to the festival with a group of walkers coming from as far afield as Grantham in Lincolnshire, who made the most of the Festival and Corsham by participating in all three days of walking and enjoying the Saturday Evening Quiz and Supper.

As in previous years, this year's Festival had a variety of walks to suit all ages and abilities and even included a Children's Treasure Hunt to satisfy the little ones, with 37 children eagerly hunting down clues in the shops on the High Street to earn themselves a prize at the end. For the first time we included a Corsham Quest walk to enable families or groups to walk around Corsham and the immediate surrounding countryside to investigate clues given with map details; this is sure to be a favourite in the future.

Article continues next page...



The Saturday evening Quiz and Supper with live music by Corsham based Akkrat proved to be a winning combination with the famous 'Golden Boots' being awarded to the top scoring team. A short documentary film titled 'Up and Under' was shown that had won the first prize in their category at the Kendal Mountain Festival's Film Festival. Friends Jacob Bacon, Josh Stone and Charlotte Nind created their film at Brown's Folly in Bathford where they scaled the towering rock face of the old quarry and squeezed through tiny caves.

Walking group approaching the top of the Box Tunnel with Middlehill Tunnel in the distance

The Festival Committee undertakes to refresh the walking programme each year, recognising that people have different reasons for coming to the festival. This year the programme included walks varying from about 1.5 miles up to 20 miles, some just walking for the pleasure of seeing different parts of our beautiful countryside, whilst others had a theme such as local and industrial history, geology, wild flowers and a Mindfulness walk were walkers walked in silence through Corsham Court.

To provide such a variety of walks and informed talks we are most grateful for the time, effort and enthusiasm given by our walk leaders and experts that makes this Festival something special.

Having such a rich variety of paths to chose from in and around Corsham we do have the opportunity to provide something different each year whilst recognising the 'old favourites' still attract new walkers to our town and countryside.

Publicity for the festival was a key element in attracting walkers from far and wide. A detailed plan of advertising in local and national media was supplemented by focusing on social media outlets such as Facebook and a very informative festival website to get the message out as far as possible.

Looking forward, planning for the 2018 Festival will start again in October and we are always looking for new faces and helping hands so if you would like to get involved in any capacity please contact the chair person at chair@corshamwalkingfestival.org

To further promote the walking opportunities in our area and raise still further the profile of the town an initiative has been started to develop "The Corsham Cloverleaf". A series of four walks centered on Corsham. These walks will be available for people to 'self-lead', anytime of the year, using information provided on way marked rights of way paths and by-ways.

The festival was started in 2014 with the core objectives of getting local people walking and also attracting walkers from outside of the immediate area. We believe that this year's festival has continued to meet these objectives and the focus for the future remains to attract new walkers to this beautiful area, with some fine walking that deserves to be explored.

Photographs by courtesy of Nigel Shires and myself.

Do visit us at www.corshamwalkingfestival.org.uk

Barry Cox, Publicity Coordinator

Latest on banking in Corsham

During the past few months, David Martin (Chief Executive, Corsham Town Council) has organised meetings with Lloyds Bank, Nationwide and Martingate Centre Ltd. about future banking services in the town. Lloyds' representative confirmed that following closure on 3rd October the Corsham branch property would be marketed and sold. He also made it clear that they would not support a mobile branch due to the nearest branch being in Chippenham just a few miles away and because there are two ATM's in the High Street, and a Post Office which offers banking services to personal customers.

Nationwide Building Society attended the Taste of Corsham event and were very pleased with the level of support shown and are interested in making a case for bringing their services (just for personal customers) to Corsham for at least one day per week. To further demonstrate support the town council is to consider that a petition be organised or letters of support be sent to Nationwide.

Grandfather's WW1 experiences.

My grandfather, Charles James Rumsey, was born in Hammersmith on Easter Sunday 1886 and at the age of 20, he was made redundant as a painter due to a recession. Because he was the oldest in the family, his father decided he needed to move out of the family home and find accommodation and work elsewhere. As his grandfather, William Rumsey, who was born in Melksham in 1827, had been a builder and had always spoken about Chippenham, William built the Bacon Factory chimney by the railway station, Charles decided to walk and work his way to the town that William had spoken so fondly of. It took him 3 months to complete his journey and on his arrival he soon found work and lodgings and in 1909 he married my grandmother, Mabel Watson.



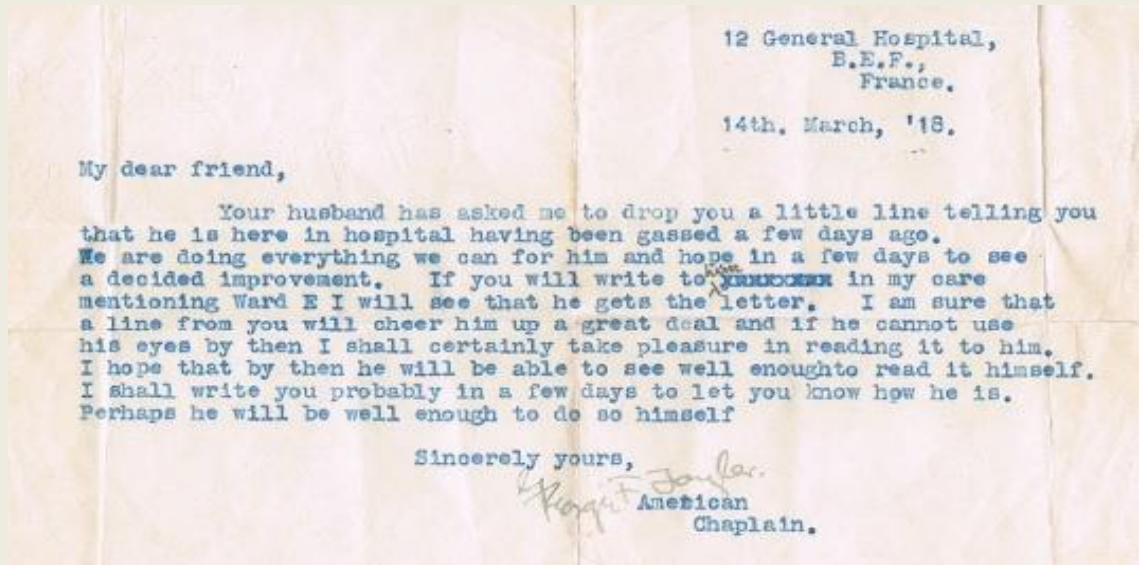
The family in 1917 My aunts, Vera and Doris and my father Stanley together with their parents.



Charles James Rumsey – AB Rumsey, Royal Naval Division

On the 17th April 1917 he reported to the barracks in Devizes and became a soldier and was drafted into the Royal Naval Division as an Able Seaman.

Charles always smiled at the Regiment's title as he never went to sea apart from crossing the English Channel to serve in France.



The next communication that was received at the family home in Park Street, Chippenham, was a post card of the hospital ship, the 'Carisbrook Castle' which brought Charles 'back to blighty' as he puts it. He spent months convalescing at Cotehill, on the outskirts of Carlisle, and my grandmother, together with my father, Stanley, aged 4, made the train journey there and stayed for a week which she spent visiting her husband. My father is reputed to have stood on a chair in the ward, and sang 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus' to the patients in the ward.



On the 4th February 1919 grandfather was demobilized and returned to Chippenham to start again as a painter and decorator which he did until his death in 1955, aged 69. Five members of the family served in the First World War and all returned home safely. The youngest brother, Victor, served on the Western Front for 4 years and was wounded twice and lived to the grand old age of 97. I was only 11 when Charles died, I wished I'd known him longer, he was a wonderful kind man and such a lovely grandfather.

Michael Rumsey

Retirement beckons for one Corsham shopkeeper

Bob Stevens, along with his wife Jan, retired from owning the Corsham Greengrocers on Saturday, July 8th and have now moved to their new home in Cardigan. We wish Bob and Jan, who have ensured we've had a good supply of fresh fruit and vegetables plus delicious cakes for the past 7 years. Bob has now handed the reins of owning the shop to Corsham born, 27 year old Mitchell May, and with his faithful assistant Aaron Gale, Mitchell looks forward to many years in the business keeping up the good work that Bob has done over the years. On behalf of all your customers Bob, and Jan, thank you and we wish you a long and happy retirement in West Wales.



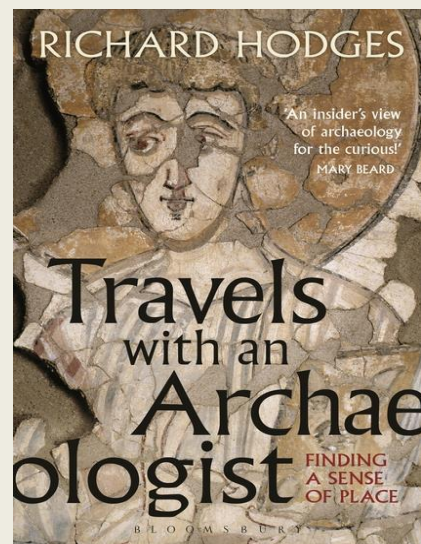
[from right to left] Mitchell May, Bob Stevens & Aaron Gale

'Travels with an Archaeologist' by Richard Hodges

In April of this year the Civic Society was honoured to host President of the American University in Rome, Professor Richard Hodges, to talk about his upcoming book release. President Hodges describes 'Travels with an Archaeologist' as a series of essays "about places and people, and above all their spirit." To him, archaeology is about "hearing, smelling, tasting and touching past textures in our time. With these senses, in the company of friends, new places are created from old ones." His presentation was similar in that it consisted of a collection of postcards revisiting the sites and people he has encountered throughout his distinguished career.



Professor Richard Hodges



In his presentation and book he talks of people who both inspired and accompanied him throughout his career. He began by speaking about his very first experience in the field, an excavation of a Roman Villa in his native Box. The 1967 dig led by Henry Hurst (now Reader Emeritus at Cambridge University) provided the 15-year-old with a firm conviction that archaeology was to be his profession. As a bastion of local knowledge, and through supplying an arc lamp and fruitcakes (made by his mother) he became a recognised member of the team. His experiences drawing sections of trenches and digging on his days off in the cold of December meant, by the second campaign in the following summer, he supervised students many years his elder. Enamoured with these experiences Richard set up 'The Box Archaeological & Natural History Society' (which celebrates its 50th anniversary next year) and returns regularly to give talks and catch up on local news.



Scale model of the Roman Villa in Box that currently resides in Selwyn Hall library

When he was 18 he embarked on another journey, this time as a first-year undergraduate he was to excavate in the "Greco-Roman paradise" that is Knidos, Turkey. He and Hurst were sent there with a task unbeknownst to them at the time, to find the lost limbs of a statue of Demeter unearthed by Charles Newton a century before him. Although they were never found, it did not matter to Hodges who wrote that he was "endlessly enchanted by this extraordinary setting for a dig."

In the second part of his book, he describes finding the senses from his past travels and begins with Butrint where he first arrived at the suggestion of the British ambassador in Rome – Lord Jacob Rothschild. Upon arrival in Albania, it struck Hodges the 50 years of impoverishment made it feel like "visiting a film set on location at the end of World War II." Every encounter became "a shrill lament about the loss of opportunity [...] and profound fear of the future."



Statue of Demeter excavated by Charles Newton in 1857-1858



Butrint

The mere mention of Butrint, however, elicited a visible counter reaction; in the words of Virgil it was 'a Troy in miniature.' The first to present this with tender pride was Prime Minister Aleksänder Meksi, one of Albania's renowned former archaeologists. Hodges describes upon seeing Butrint for the first time as it owning a "Homeric landscape" and finally grasping the meaning of the emotional Prime Ministers' romantic lyricism for the landmark. An archaeological park was soon set up by ambassador Rothschild and his friend John Sainsbury, and can now expect one hundred thousand visitors a year to pass through. The wealth and status the park has brought the small nation has been immense and is a clear example of a world heritage site that works.

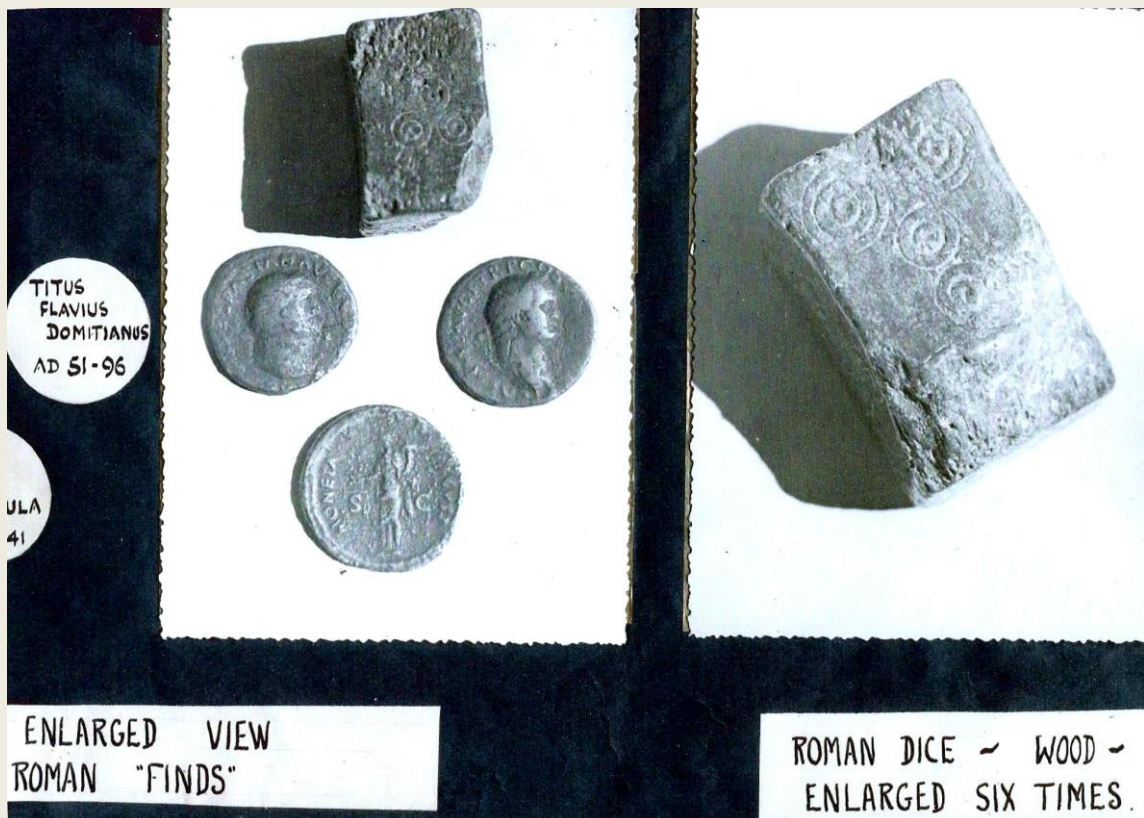
Further notable moments in his presentation that can all be found in his book were his breakfasts with tutor and mentor Colin Renfrew, Rome's Non-Catholic Cemetery which houses the like of John Keats and Percy Shelley, and the disturbing scent of Gold at Roşia Montană, Transylvania. To end his presentation there was a short Q&A and book signing and to learn more of Professor Hodge's travels the book is on sale for the reasonable price of £20 at the Corsham Bookshop.

Jujhar Garcha

Corsham Civic Society artefacts

The Society has had in its care for some time, many small artefacts, reputed to have been found in the area, principally small coins, some dating back to Roman times. There is also a Roman lamp and dice, a clay pipe and a tiny child's shoe. Unfortunately, we do not know the provenance of the majority of these items. Nevertheless, we wanted to find a safe place for them to be stored, and used for exhibitions, teaching, etc at a later date. We are pleased to say that the Chippenham Museum has agreed to house these items for us. They will be known as the 'Corsham Civic Society Collection', and be available for use in the community on a temporary basis in the future. They were transferred in February 2017.

NB Chippenham History Centre is the repository for paperwork and photographs only, so although they house a considerable collection of information and photographs for the CCS, this was not the appropriate home for these items.



Roman dice and 3 coins, as featured in John Logan's book *Corsham's History*. He states they were discovered by Mr A Hobbs, who had a small shop in the High St. Corsham (now The Fox Dental Practice). Mr Hobbs would not reveal the site of this find, but it is locally believed to have been in the Neston area.

CORSHAM HIGH STREET PROJECT

Members will be interested to know that the Wiltshire Building Record [WBR] office based at Chippenham History Centre, is intending to embark on an in depth survey of some of the houses in Corsham High Street. The WBR studies buildings with a view to identifying their origins and usage throughout the ages. Archaeological records and historical documents are reviewed, measurements and site visits are made (of course, with the householder's permission) and a full picture can gradually emerge of this very special street. Backed by the Town Council, these details can be made available for the development of the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan and perhaps even encourage further interest in visitors to the town.

Article continues next page...

A funding application has been to the HLF has received a favourable response and now the WBR are looking to appoint a principal buildings historian (our Editor is currently taking a lead in the search for a suitable person) and to recruit volunteers to undertake various tasks within the project. A small committee has already been formed to get things started – so watch this space for the call to help! If you are interested in the history of your local town, perhaps you can spare some time for this project which we can guarantee will be fascinating.

OBITUARY- June Duckworth

June was born in 1932 in Leyton, East London, and having been evacuated to Hampshire for the period of WW2, then returned home to take up her studies. Music was her forte, playing the piano and the cello and she secured a place at the Guildhall School of Music, but ultimately June decided that this was not for her, and she opted to go into primary and infant teaching. Norman and June were married in 1953, and moved to Corsham in 1960 taking up local teaching posts.

With their working life and 3 sons to raise life must have been quite busy, but they still had time to help organise and run the Corsham Carnival and June was member of the Gastard WI. Two more sons arrived later and the family moved into the Warden's House at the Almshouses to allow them more space!

After leaving the teaching profession, June and Norman ran a dry cleaners and costumiers in Pickwick Road (now the site of Hong Kong House).

From 1987 home was at Chapel Knapp, Gastard, where June was able to indulge in her love of cooking and crafts, and when time permitted, attend concerts, opera and ballet performances. The family also increased, and June could not be more delighted than with the presence of her nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

A life that was always busy and never dull !

A CELEBRATION FOR THE LIFE OF



June Lily Duckworth

22ND JUNE 1932 - 28TH MARCH 2017

The Spackman Family

Many of our readers may have heard of the Spackman family. They lived in the High Street, and their property spanned Nos. 42 & 44 where we now find a hairdresser, sandwich bar, Ultra Warm, and another hair salon, opposite the Tourist/Information office. From early Victorian times this area was in the possession of the Spackman's and for over a century it was used by them as a warehouse, stables and residential which supported their grocery, drysaltery and later drapery business. If you wanted something, you could probably get most of it there.



In 1849, the premises were destroyed by a disastrous fire, which was fuelled by the storage of gunpowder for Brunel's work at the Corsham and Box tunnel, and which claimed the life of one of the family. But No. 44 escaped damage, and there is no doubt that it was 'business as usual' whilst rebuilding took place.

There were nine children in the Spackman family, all of whom had a musical bent and family members were well known for putting on concerts in the town and surrounding area and the young men were also stalwarts of the Cricket club.

At the start of the 19th century Lewin Spackman and his wife lived at No 44. He was the eldest of the five brothers who remained in, and virtually 'ran', the town for a long period. Lewin was organist at the parish church for over 50 years. He was a composer and conductor, and owned a printing works at 77 High Street. For many years he held civic office - town clerk, rates collector, assistant overseer, and coroner.

In 1926 the Spackman's made an interesting discovery beneath the loose plaster on a wall in a downstairs room in Nos. 42-44 where they found an inscription which read "Wm Arnold 1699". The location of this inscription was verified by Mrs. Heather Tanner (the daughter of Herbert, one of the brothers) many years later.

William Arnold was of course, one of the leading clothiers in Corsham at that time. He lived in Arnold House opposite Nos. 42-44 and is said to have owned all the land between the High Street and Pickwick at the time.

This family were the local celebrities of the area for almost 100 years. There is much more to be read about them in references shown below - so much talent and examples of service to the community - their story could take up a whole Spotlight magazine, but space does not permit.

References:

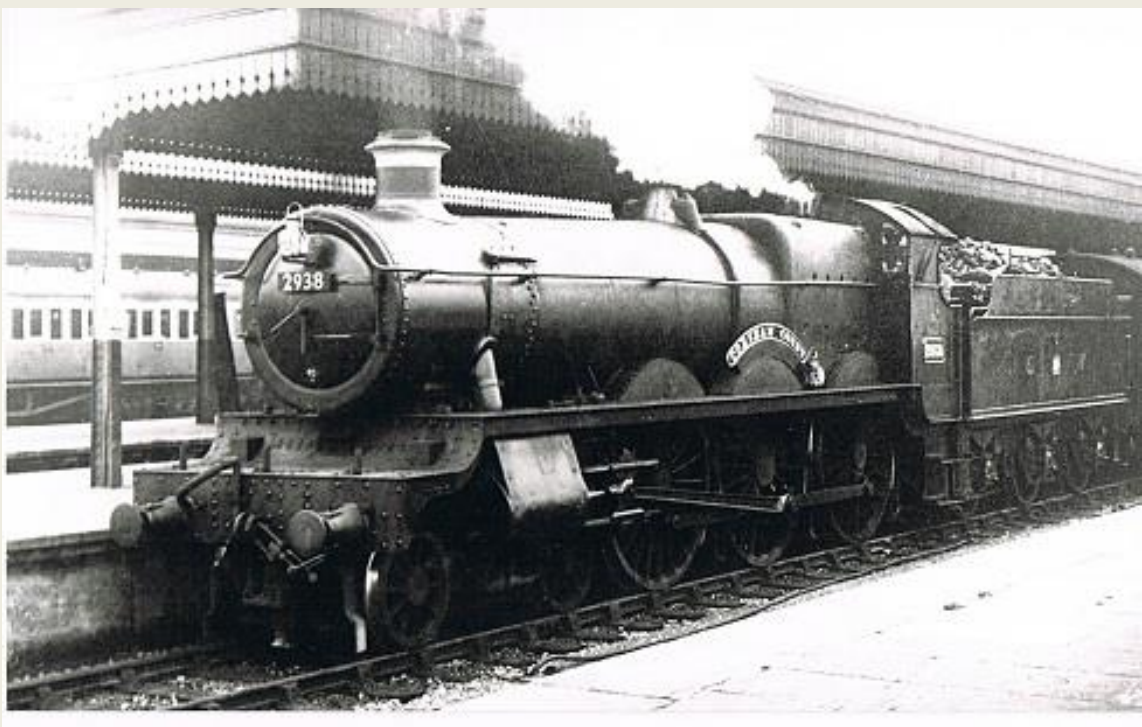
- *Spotlight magazine Nov 2006 - article by Wyndham Thomas*
- *Joe James letter, August 1987*
- *Keenes Bath Journal, 1849*
- *A Corsham Boyhood - the diary of Herbert Spackman 1877-1891*
- *A Life Revealed from the diaries of Herbert Spackman by Ernest Hird.*

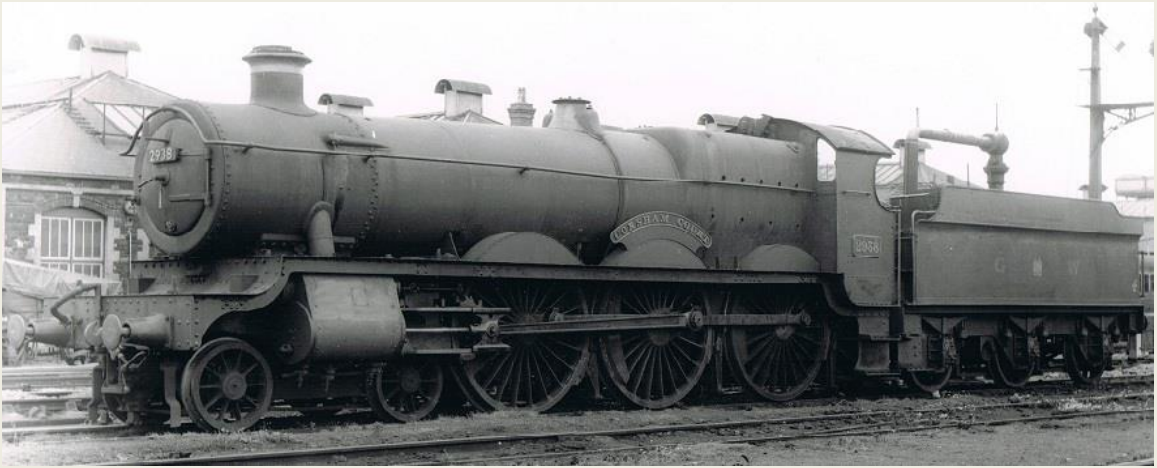
Pat Whalley

'Corsham Court' – a different perspective!

Between 1906 and April 1913 a total of 75 'Saint' class 4-6-0 express engines were built at the Great Western Railway's Swindon works to the design of George Jackson Churchward, the Chief Mechanical Engineer. Though the class was called the 'Saints', only 20 of the engines were named after Saints, the first being Saint Agatha, the last being Saint Vincent. Other engines were named after 'Ladies' – eg. 'Lady of Shalott', 25 were named after 'Courts', the remaining engines took names from Sir Walter Scott's novels and famous personages connected with the GWR eg. Sir Ernest Palmer, of 'Huntley & Palmer' fame who was Chairman of the company at one time.

In amongst the 25 'Courts' we find engine number 2938 'Corsham Court', which was built in December 1911 and was sent to Goodwick in South Wales where it ran for many years. Its final shed, before withdrawal in August 1952, was Gloucester and in its 40 years of service it ran a total of 1,704,165 miles. Photographs of 2938 'Corsham Court' in service are very difficult to find, but one of our members, Maurice Dorney, has managed to unearth an excellent shot of the engine taken sometime after 1948, but we are not quite sure of the station location. Another photograph that Maurice lent to me shows the engine in a slightly dirty state as this was taken in August 1952 by E.W. Fry after the engine was withdrawn from service.





The last of the 'Saint' class to be in service was 2920 'Saint David' which was withdrawn in October 1953 with 2,076,299 miles on the clock. It was hoped that this engine would be preserved, but its main frame was badly cracked, so it was cut up at Swindon Works having given a noble 46 years' service.



The colour photograph shows how the engine would have looked in the 1930's in full lined GWR colour with a copper capped chimney. This is a 7mm model constructed by my friend Ken Payne for my 60th birthday.

I would like to thank Maurice Dorney for bringing his photographs to my attention and it's interesting that engine number 2940 was named 'Dorney Court'.

Michael Rumsey

CORSHAM CIVIC SOCIETY 2017

All meetings are at the Pound arts centre (telephone 01249 701628) at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated. Members £2, Non-Members £5, this includes free tea or coffee or £1 off a glass of wine. Guests are very welcome.

28 Jul. **'The ABC of the GWR'**
Michael Rumsey

29 Jul. **Visit** to the Wadworth Brewery in Devizes (Tickets required)

22 Sep. **'The History of Education in Corsham'**
Michael Rumsey, Dr. Negley Harte and others

27 Oct. **Visit** to Westonbirt Arboretum

24 Nov. **'Corsham in Detail'**
Dr. Negley Harte, retired university teacher, President of the Wiltshire Record Society and former Chairman of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural Society. He hopes that his book on the architectural details of Corsham will be finished.

Corsham Civic Society was founded in 1963 to represent the people of Corsham in all aspects of conservation, reservation and the promotion of this delightful Wiltshire town. The society is a registered charity, a member of ASHTAV (Association of Small Towns and 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 historical interest in Corsham and the surrounding countryside.

Corsham Civic Society, 91 Tellcroft Drive, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9JQ. Registered Charity No: 275321

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