



Corsham Spotlight

Journal of the Corsham Civic Society

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Spotlight are very
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Corsham commemorates Armistice Day Centenary



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From the Vice Chair

Dear Friends,

I write this in the week when we remember the last few days of the fighting in France and Belgium in the First World War. Next Sunday, November 11th, will be a particularly poignant moment at 11am when 100 years ago the guns and the rifles on the Western Front fell silent and people thanked God that the last 4 years of nightmare were over. My own Grandfather, during this week in 1918, was digging potatoes near Perth along with his pals, most of whom had been gassed during that year and they were certainly enjoying the fresh air. When the news came of the Armistice, they jumped for joy and that evening celebrated in the local pub and were late for work the next morning, much to the annoyance of the farmer.

Another year in the Society's life has passed and we've enjoyed many interesting meetings at the Pound Arts Centre. Our friend and colleague, Dr. Negley Harte, has given us 9 years of stimulating speakers and illuminating talks and for that we are indeed very grateful. On your behalf, I presented Negley with a 1st edition copy of 'A Wiltshire Village' by Robin & Heather Tanner, an edition with its original cover, quite a find, and Negley was thrilled to receive it and thanks you all for your support and help over the years.

May I commend to you the 2019 programme, which can be found on the back cover of this edition, and it's thanks to Pat Whalley for a wide ranging programme of talks which start in January with a speaker from the Hawk & Owl Trust. I look forward to seeing you there.

Finally, may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and good health and happiness for the New Year.

Michael Rumsey

With all best wishes for this festive season from the Officers and Executive Committee Members



Vacancies

The following vacancies exist: Chair, Membership Secretary, Social Organiser and Planning chair. Corsham Civic Society would appreciate expressions of interest.

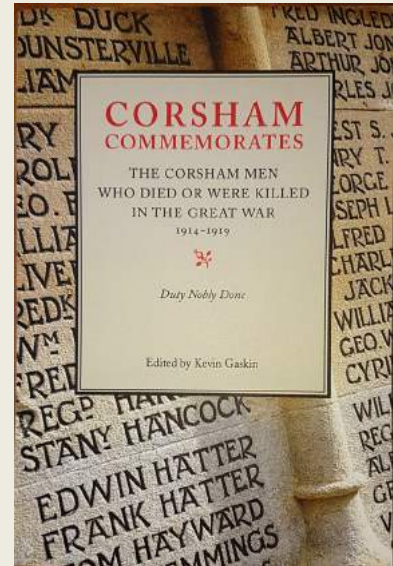
Membership News

Sidney and Itsuko Alford, Pickwick, have applied for Life Membership.

Corsham and the SW region commemorates the Armistice Centenary (see front cover photograph)

In Corsham, the traditional Remembrance Sunday service and parade took place on the 11th November (front cover) and there was an exhibition at the Town Hall honouring Corsham's Women of World War One, as well as looking at the impact the War had on the town and launching the updated Corsham War Records book. There was also a re-creation of the 'spontaneous' thanksgiving service held at St Bart's on 11th November 1918, as news of peace spread, including the re-dedication of the town's original wooden war memorial which was found and repaired (these events were funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, for which the Corsham Commemorates group is very grateful).

At 6pm, the Royal British Legion launched 115 rockets to honour the 115 Corsham men who lost their lives in the War. Corsham is also home to a Royal British Silent Soldier figure of a returning Tommy which was part of the national *There But Not There* art project, featuring perspex figures, each of which represent the Fallen (left, ghostly figures seated on a bench outside the Town Hall). Various shops featured special displays (below).



A recently published book by Kevin Gaskin (Corsham Area Network) available at Corsham Bookshop.





The Armistice of **11th November 1918** ended fighting on land, sea and air in World War I between the Allies and their opponent, Germany. Sadly, J Brooks of Bath died on 27th February 1919, presumably of his injuries. The display features his cap badge of The Kings (Liverpool Regiment); Next of Kin Memorial Plaque; letter from George V and a Commonwealth War Graves Commission citation (all bequeathed to me by a late friend).

Shrouds of the Somme installation artist Rob Heard's Centenary tribute on Bristol Cathedral's College Green (above right). His Shroud tunnel exhibition representing the 72,396 figures of men who died in the Battle of the Somme (right) was on show at the Aerospace Bristol museum on the former Filton Airfield. Rob lives and works in Somerset.

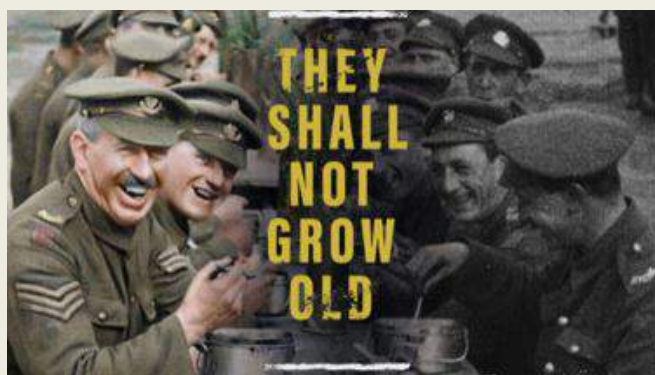
He spent more than two years hand stitching calico shrouds (right) and wrapping every one of the figures, pausing for moments of reflection as he did so on the individual sacrifice of the men who died. The purpose is to 'physicalise the number - to illustrate the enormity of the horror which unfolded and the loss of life.'

Article continues next page...



Over Armistice weekend the west front of Salisbury Cathedral (above) was illuminated by The Royal British Legion Poppies installation, a gigantic colour projection of 'tumbling poppies'.





Viewers were left awestruck by Peter Jackson's new WW1 documentary, *They Shall Not Grow Old*, which was aired on BBC1 on Remembrance Sunday. Particularly impressive was a moment, 20 minutes into the film, which gradually introduced colour and life to the black-and-white footage, emphasising the remarkable work of the special effects team. With the help of his New Zealand-based special effects company, the Lord of the Rings director breathed new life into archive footage from The Imperial War Museum, whittling hundreds of hours of material down into a hugely affecting tribute to the men who fought for their country all those years ago (including his own grandfather).

From a poem (above), 'For the Fallen' by Laurence Binyon (then Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings, British Museum) written on cliffs in Cornwall. Rudyard Kipling praised it as "the most beautiful expression of sorrow in the English language".



Major Michael John O'Leary (1890 – 1961) was an Irish recipient of the Victoria Cross (left), the most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. O'Leary achieved his award for single-handedly charging and destroying two German barricades defended by machine gun positions near the French village of Cuinchy, on the Western Front.

At the time of his action, O'Leary was a nine-year veteran of the British Army - despite having been a fervent Irish Nationalist - and by the time he retired from the British Army in 1921, he had reached the rank of lieutenant. He served in the army again during the Second World War. This year, for the first time, the Irish people are commemorating and honouring their soldiers who fought in the British Army in the two world wars.



(left) A classic photograph of trench warfare which featured in the 'The Trench' exhibition at Aerospace Bristol.

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori ~ Wilfred Owen

John Maloney

Heraldry and the College of Arms, account of an illustrated talk on Friday 29th June 2018 to the Corsham Civic Society.



Thomas Woodcock



College of Arms, Queen Victoria St, London EC4

The English Heralds were originally unincorporated members of the Royal Household and it was not until 1484 that King Richard III incorporated them into a College of Arms. They were given their present site by King Phillip of Spain and Queen Mary in 1555 and although this building was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666 it took a day for the fire to reach the College and the Library was saved and returned to the present building which was rebuilt from the 1670's onwards. It now faces Queen Victoria Street and the dome of St Paul's Cathedral can be seen behind it.

The Sovereign delegates the power to grant new arms to the three senior Heralds or Kings of Arms: Garter signs all new grants, Clarenceux signs with Garter all grants to grantees living South of the River Trent and Norroy and Ulster signs with Garter for those resident North of the River Trent or in Northern Ireland. All three sign grants to corporate bodies and to British citizens resident abroad. Garter makes grants alone to Peers. The fees on new grants provide the corporate income of the College. About 130 grants a year are needed. The aim is not to exceed this number by too many so as not to debase a grant by making too many. The Sovereign has delegated the power to make new grants of arms since the 15th century. At present a grant of arms and a crest costs £6,075. Such grants can be made to eminent British Citizens and the tests for eminence include possession of a University degree, professional qualification, or the holding at some time of a civil or military commission. The fees increase slightly on 1st January every year.

Whilst the Kings of Arms make the grants, the College of Arms is the official registry for English and Welsh Arms. The records are indexed back to 1530, which is the year of the start of the Heralds' Visitation system. The Sovereign issued commissions to the provincial Kings of Arms to make Visitations of the Counties in their provinces to record the arms and pedigrees of the principal families, excluding Peers who were Garter's responsibility.

Article continues next page...

The Heralds visited Wiltshire in 1530, 1565, 1623 and 1677. The system lasted until 1689. Since then it has been for families to approach the College in order to bring their pedigrees up to date. Examples were shown of the narrative pedigree of Eyre from the 1565 Wiltshire Visitation (**Fig. 1**) with the distinctive crest of a human leg shown on a crest wreath above the shield, and those of Thynne (**Fig. 2**) and Hungerford (**Fig. 3**) from the 1623 Visitation. Civic arms and seals were also recorded and examples were shown of the 1623 Visitation to Chippenham (**Fig. 4**) and Marlborough (**Fig. 5**).



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

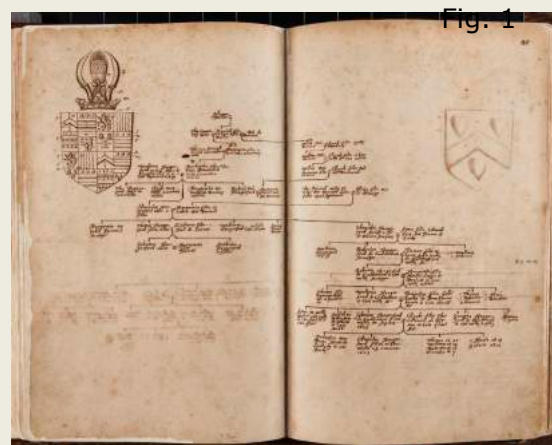


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

In other Counties there were instances of sketches of places visited as in a sketch of Kendal by Sir William Dugdale's clerk Gregory King (himself later a Herald) at the 1664-5 Visitation of Westmorland. At the 1664 Visitation of Berkshire sketches were made of the banners and crests of the Knights of the Garter from St. George's Chapel, Windsor and a page showing the banner (**Fig. 6**) of the Sovereign (Charles II) and of his brother James, Duke of York (subsequently James II) were illustrated.

The mechanics of a Visitation were explained using a rare survival of a note (**Fig. 7**) dated 4th March 1664 summoning Ferdinando Gunter to appear before Elias Ashmole, Windsor Herald, on Thursday 23rd March 1664 by 8.00 in the morning at the sign of the Mermaid in Newbury.

Most Visitation records in the College of Arms are in black and white with the heraldic tinctures indicated but some records such as early 17th century Peers pedigrees are in colour. An example of a Wiltshire peer being Edward, Lord Stourton (**Fig. 8**) with the distinctive sea dog supporters and crest of a demi-monk holding a scourge.

The complete text of every grant by the English Kings of Arms since the year 1673 are kept in a hand-written series of volumes. Grants of Arms are still hand-engrossed and painted on vellum as they have been since the 15th century and the College of Arms employs scribes to write its records by hand.



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

An example of an early 20th century grant of arms is that to Sir Cecil Chubb (**Fig. 9**) who gave Stonehenge to the British Government in 1918. The geometrical design of his arms represents Stonehenge and the red hand of Ulster is the Badge of the Baronetage.

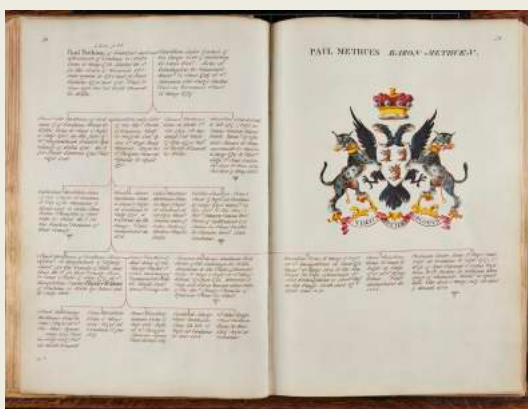


Fig. 11



Fig. 12

Illustrations of a number of records relating to the Methuen family were shown, such as the office copy of the exemplification of arms in 1775 following the Royal Licence to bear his arms on the breast of an Imperial Eagle (**Fig. 10**) and the 19th century grant of Supporters when the Peerage was created. The office copy shows the two Lynx Supporters holding the shield on the breast of the double-headed Eagle and above the Coronet of rank of a Baron.

Article continues next page...

A Coronet of Rank of an Earl can be seen above the arms of the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery (**Fig. 11, p. 7**), another Wiltshire peer, who has the distinctive crest of a Wyvern with a Red Hand in its mouth. It also shows the distinctive dexter supporter of a panther 'incensed', that is, with flames emerging from its mouth and ears. Pedigrees of the Earls of Pembroke and Methuen family (**Fig. 12, p.7**) recorded since the end of the Visitation system are examples of more modern pedigrees.

The individual Heralds and Pursuivants in England, of which there are six Heralds in Ordinary and four Pursuivants in Ordinary so that the College of Arms has 13 Officers of Arms when all the posts are filled (3 Kings, 6 Heralds and 4 Pursuivants of Arms) are self-employed. Each work like Barristers earning their own fees for genealogical and heraldic advice. Although the Kings of Arms make all new grants, Heralds and Pursuivants act as Agents for grants designing new Arms and they can also certify paintings of existing arms. In addition to the Heralds in Ordinary there are one or two Extraordinary Heralds who only participate in ceremonials of which the annual Garter Service at Windsor and the State Opening of Parliament are two of the most frequent. Garter also has to introduce every new peerage creation in to the Chamber of the House of Lords and settle new Peers' titles.

Many aspects of the work life of a Herald have remained unchanged for centuries which is part of the charm of the work. The College of Arms is a rare historic survival from the late middle ages and it is heartening that it continues to flourish in the 21st century.

Corsham Civic Society much appreciates the above being kindly provided by
~ **Thomas Woodcock, Garter Principal King of Arms**

Review of talk given to the society ~ 'Not written in Stone'

At our meeting for October, we were delighted to welcome Dr Alison Hems, Principal Lecturer in Heritage Management at Bath Spa University.

Her talk centred around the premise that the phrase 'not written in stone' is not in fact correct. A great deal can be read from buildings, through consideration not only of the architecture, but of learning about the architect, knowing the time during which the building was constructed, and what would have been construed as the fashion of that period.

It is undoubtedly true that we do not take or, perhaps, have enough time to study the structures around us but it will certainly be relevant when the Corsham High St Project gets fully underway next year and our local buildings start to reveal their stories.

An excellent talk which gave us all pause for thought and a keenness to look further.

Pat Whalley

Wingwalking – Strawberry Flyers **£11,675.84 donation to Dorothy House**

Chris Alford, proprietor of Strawberry Field Hair Design, Corsham High Street, received the sad news from one of her members of staff that they lost a family member in March. Chris was asked if there was something they could do in remembrance of the loss and it was decided to raise funds to support the 'Dorothy House' charity.

In order to raise funds a 'Wingwalk' was organised and the five member team would be known as the 'Strawberry Flyers'. Chris's team included Ali Haynes (wife of Toby Haynes, Family Butchers, in the High Street), a staff member of the Strawberry Field Hair Design (Kirsty Liddiard) and two Strawberry Field customers (Anne Richards and Sarah Crittle) to participate in a wingwalk.

How brave was that!?

Ali Haynes also organised a BBQ and raffle and, in addition, with support from Chris's and Ali's customers, family and friends, the sponsorship forms were soon visibly accumulating.

So it remained for five members of the Strawberry Flyers to brace themselves, take a deep breath and undertake a wingwalk. This took place on Monday 10th September 2018 from a private airfield at Rendcomb, north of Cirencester.

Professional Wingwalkers are seen live by over 6 million spectators each year in the UK alone. They perform a breathtaking sequence of acrobatic manoeuvres and handstands whilst strapped to the top wings of the team's beautiful Boeing Stearman biplanes.



Article continues next page...

Although Chris's team did not exactly perform handstands during their flight they were certainly subjected to an energetic routine of various manoeuvres that were undoubtedly breath-taking. The experience was unique and concluded with a smile of utmost satisfaction from all who participated and helped raise the much-needed funds for the Dorothy House charity.

Chris Alford stated "we all had a brilliant day flying over the countryside and for once seeing birds below us and the clouds above – truly amazing." Verity Clark, Community Fund Raiser for Dorothy house commented: "A huge thank you to Strawberry Field Hair Design and Toby Haynes Family butchers for donating a total of £11,675.84!!! We are overwhelmed and can't thank you all enough, including everyone that took the time to sponsor! Without the support of our communities we simply cannot provide the service we do for so many families and individuals when they need it most."



The hospice is a leading, independent charity whose services are available free of charge. It provides palliative and end of life care across 700 square miles, serving a population of 550,000 people across Bath and North-East Somerset (BaNES), Wiltshire and Somerset. The hospice offers support, advice and care from early diagnosis onwards and patients, their families or carers can be referred by their GP or other Health and Social Care professional. Providing our services requires significant funds and for every £1 from the NHS, we have to raise £4. We do this through our fundraising work, our 28 shops and education programmes. To assist with our fundraising efforts please visit www.dorothyhouse.org.uk or call us on T: 01225 721 480."

Corsham Civic Society and its members congratulate the 'Strawberry Flyers' for the remarkable efforts as well as the credibility and respect the team have all brought to the community and the town of Corsham.

Chris and her team would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone who kindly contributed to a most worthy cause.

Larry St Croix

Moonlight ~ new Indian restaurant in Corsham

This restaurant is the second to be opened by Melksham-based restaurateur Mayna Miah, from Bangladesh. Mr Miah, 60, has run an Indian restaurant just off the Church Street car park in Melksham for the past 35 years. Mr Miah said: "We have been planning this for a long time and look forward to becoming more involved in the Corsham community". The restaurant opened in July and contractors who worked on the project and Corsham town councillors were among VIP guests at the official opening. "It has taken a bit longer than we expected but we are very pleased with the result."



The staff of Moonlight outside the restaurant Ollie Gillard and Mayna Miah

It is a family owned restaurant - <http://moonlightcorsham.co.uk/> - involving directly two of Mayna's four sons, in particular, Sayeed Ibrahim who has a major role in managing it. The 'moonlight' themed graphics are striking and set the restaurant décor apart from those of conventional Indian restaurants. The graphics were conceived and created by a Bristol based artist, Ollie Gillard. Mayna's vision was based on an Indian forest theme featuring the Indian ocean and moonlight which Ollie superbly visualised. For over 12 years Ollie has been painting large commissioned murals and his company Gage Graphics is doing well in the Bristol/Bath region ~ <http://gagegraphics.co.uk/>.

Mayna and Sayeed Ibrahim were drawn to Corsham by perceiving it as affluent, and a fine historic town with other big towns including Bath within a radius of a few miles. Sayeed Ibrahim commented that "For the first 6 weeks it was hard work because we were still finding our feet, logistically, but since then we have had 110 customers in on a Saturday night recently and coped well". The restaurant has a capacity of 75.



Article continues next page...



Turning to a most important aspect – the food - the first thing you notice is the menu is by no means standard fare (although perennially popular dishes are listed) but rather comprise varied and some unusual choices under headings that include *Taste of Tandoor* and *Signature Collection*.

I grew up in Southall, West London, which has one of the largest Indian communities in the UK and I went to university at Birmingham and so it was almost inevitable that I should really like and appreciate good curry! I've eaten at some very good curry restaurants in the UK and I can attest that the standard of many of the dishes in the Moonlight is very good. In particular, I would recommend Chicken Tikka Shally with spicy crispy potatoes but also there is a good variety of fish and vegetarian dishes and, notably, an 'Indian' lamb shank.

I like the atmosphere and I have found the staff to be very pleasant and helpful. All in all, Moonlight provides fine Indian dining and succeeds in striking a balance between being smart and, in the best sense, casual.

John Maloney

Photographs by Larry St Croix

BBC Flog It! television presenter Paul Martin is to open a new gallery in Corsham High Street.

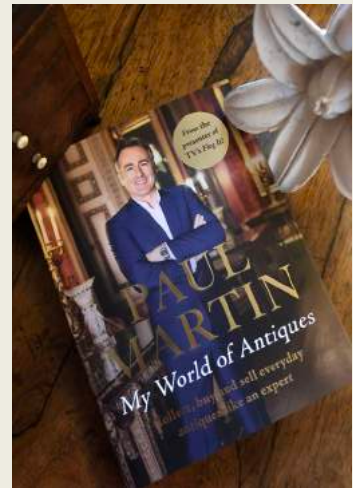
Paul has taken on the triple-fronted premises at 54 High Street previously occupied by *Previous*. The move forms a slight change of tack for the TV presenter, who explained he has "always wanted" to run a family-owned business. He said: "We are going to put in a family business and just enjoy it." Paul, 59, who lives in Seend, plans to sell contemporary art, sculpture, glassware and items of furniture.



Photo. by
Larry St Croix

"I will probably spend two to three days a week at the gallery, depending on my TV filming commitments. My wife, Charlotte, son Dylan and daughter Meredith will probably help me out."

But the new gallery doesn't mean Paul is scaling back on his TV or writing work - far from it. He's just about to launch a new book, Paul Martin's *World of Antiques*, in time for the Christmas gift market. The book, published by John Blake Publishing, will retail at £16. 'I've made some 1400 programmes for Flog It! and the book will cover some of the stories and items, the stately homes we visited, the social history behind some of the antiques, and interviews with some of the antiques experts."



Paul also has a new BBC series called 'Make Me a Dealer', as well as a new quiz show which is due for broadcast in January. He is no stranger to running a retail business, having previously run a business in Marlborough, selling 17th and 18th century oak furniture.

When I spoke with Paul he said "Corsham is a lovely town and full of heritage. I hope to open the gallery - *the table gallery* - in February next year. I've got a lot of work to do before the full opening but I'm hopeful of a 'soft opening' in time for Christmas".



John Maloney

With acknowledgements to content reproduced from the Gazette & Herald



Mr Pastry

Mr Pastry is a newly established 'Baking Academy' based in Station Road, Corsham (next to the cricket ground). The academy is a centre of excellence for bakery and patisserie innovation offering a range of one-day courses and evening demonstrations for amateurs and professionals and also bespoke product development solutions for growing bakery businesses.

The Academy is run by husband and wife team, Steve Piercy (Master Baker and pastry chef) and Lyn Piercy (Hospitality). The workshops are designed for people who have never baked before, so those who want to improve their current skills can benefit from Steve's many years of experience in the industry. Steve is the secret product development guru behind some very successful artisanal bakery brands, and the founder of the Mr Pastry Consultancy, having an extensive experience of bakery and pastry production both in the UK and France.

"As part of our desire to share our love of all things baking with the community, Mr Pastry will be selling speciality bread every Saturday until Christmas and hope to have some more seasonal products too".

Everyone is welcome to call in to see the workshop on a Saturday, or you can find further information about courses that are on offer on ~

<https://www.mrpastry.co.uk/> .



Larry St Croix

Photographs by Larry St Croix

12 Pickwick ~ dendrochronology and apotropaic and other markings

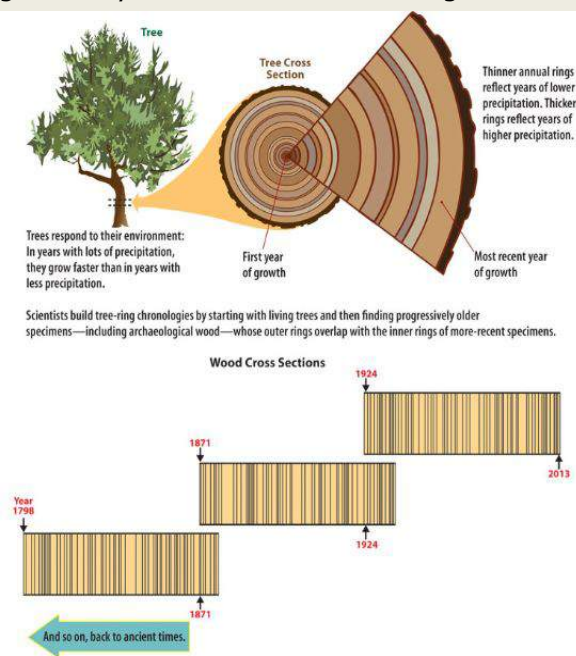
Research into our Georgian house (below left) by Ellen Leslie, *The History of 12 Pickwick*, 2015) has been reported on in previous issues (Summer & Autumn 2016). That research and later work established that the main house was built before 1756, probably during 1720-30. However, the kitchen block is a separate building (below right) and Ellen surmised that it could date to the 17th century. Many timbers in the roof of the kitchen block clearly have been re-used - indicated by joints and peg holes no longer in use - and some in the roof of the main house. We decided to contact a dendrochronological company, the *Nottingham tree-ring dating laboratory* [NTRDL] - recommended by Dorothy Treasure, Wiltshire Building record - to obtain dates for some of the timbers.



No. 12 frontage (left) and back (above) with single storey kitchen block on the right.

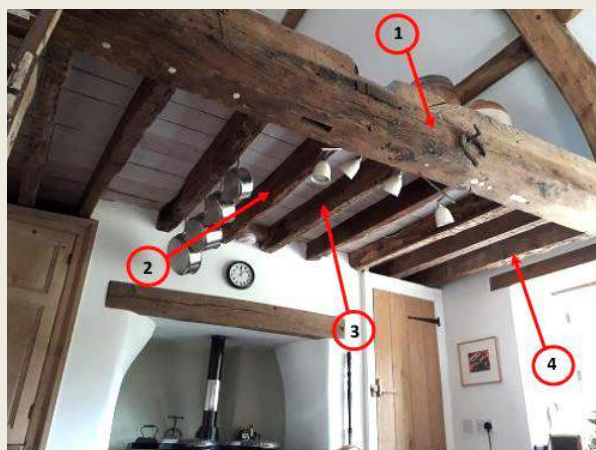
In essence, dendrochronology (tree-ring dating) is the scientific method of dating tree rings (also called growth-rings) sometimes to the exact year they were formed and, also, in order to analyse atmospheric conditions during different periods in history (see details on diagram opposite).

'Dendro' dating samples are taken by using a core borer attached to a drill. The borer is hollow and the core taken out has dimensions like a pencil, usually a diameter of 7 mm. The width of the growth rings are measured to a tolerance of 1/100 of a millimetre.



Article continues next page...

Samples were taken mainly from the kitchen with one in the bathroom and a few from the roof of the main house. The location of the samples in the kitchen are shown in the photograph opposite. All the timbers are oak. The big main beam in the kitchen (numbered 1, right) is termed a *bressummer* (a horizontal load bearing beam in a timber framed building) which produced an exceptional 250 growth annual rings including 25 sapwood rings. The fact that the sapwood was near complete allows a great deal of confidence in its felling date of 1534-40.

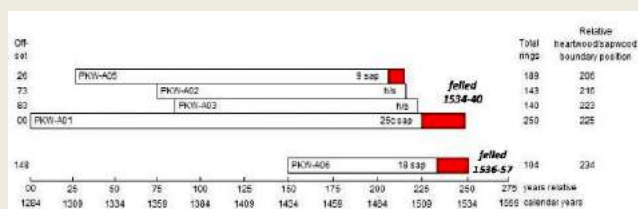


The report¹ states that "..... six samples were measured and ... the site chronology is 252 rings long overall, these rings being reliably dated as spanning the years 1284-1535". The main beam in the kitchen " was planted in 1284 and felled around 1535-40! The cross matching between five of the samples was very close as shown in the bar diagram (below). Notably, the cross matching of two timbers corresponded with a high degree of similarity (below right).

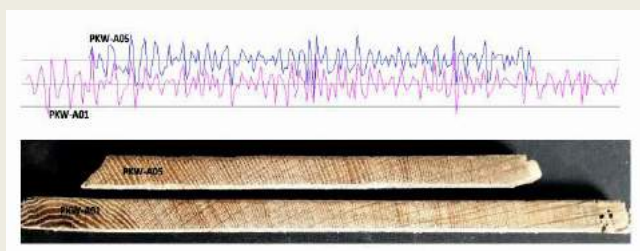
"The site chronology was compared with thousands of chronologies from all over England, there was a clear tendency for it to match best, and indeed particularly well, with those from other buildings in Wiltshire. For example, Great Chalfield Manor, at Atworth, suggesting that the Pickwick timbers were sourced from a similar, relatively local, woodland".

As to the re-use of timbers, most commonly, house, barn, stable and ship timbers were re-used. Recycling of used timbers is a very old tradition.

On one of the beams in the kitchen are two 'egg-timer', 'vv' or 'Marian' marks (right) which according to Dorothy Treasure (Wiltshire Buildings Record) are based on the Virgo Virginum type of apotropaic mark (meaning to turn away) and, supposedly, having the power to avert evil influences or bad luck by invoking the protection of the Virgin Mary.



Bar diagram of the cross matching samples



Graphic representation of two closely cross matching samples



¹ 12 PICKWICK near CORSHAM, WILTSHIRE SN13 0HZ ~ TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS, Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory 2018.

There is also a 'butterfly' mark (below, right) which is apparently a well-known representation of a 'spirit trap' ~ the premise was that any baleful/ malevolent entities entering the house would be drawn to the trap and pinned to the wood and thereby 'neutralised'. These are also known as witches marks.



In the 17th century witchcraft was a real concern: In 1604 King James I wrote, *"...for some they sayeth that being transformed in the likeness of a beast or fowl, they will come and pierce through whatsoever house or church, though all ordinary passages be closed, by whatsoever open air may enter in at."*

Circles were regarded as solar symbols which could dispel darkness². Those are often interconnected as in this case (right) where there are concentric circles within which are two small circles with another circle overlapping.



12 Pickwick: photograph of circles enhanced by CAD ~ Wiltshire Medieval Graffiti Survey

These are termed protection marks. and are usually very and are usually very lightly etched or scored onto surfaces, sometimes so lightly that they are invisible unless a bright light is aimed obliquely along a beam. Another type are 'daisy wheels' can be found throughout the world. They are compass-drawn circles with six petals within and it appears on buildings and on furniture throughout Britain.



In addition, there is at least one 'candle' burn' mark (left, centre) which were believed to guard against fire or, more generally, evil. Finally, there are medieval carpenters assembly marks which often comprise paired Roman numerals (right, in this instance xx) to indicate which joints fit together.



All in all, many forms of protection were sought!

A number of points arise which are salient to the Corsham High Street Project: firstly, 'hard and fast assumptions' about buildings should not be made based just on their external appearance; secondly, how important it is to carefully to examine the fabric of buildings because it is easy to overlook all sorts of in distinct markings which nevertheless may have significance.

John Maloney

² Ronald Hutton (ed), 'Physical evidence for Ritual acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain' 2015 pps. 39-67

Round and about Corsham



The Pickwick Association Summer Cream Tea was held on Saturday 7th July (a now somewhat distant memory) at Lucy and Tom Brakspear's house, Pickwick Manor (left & below).



The cream tea was scrumptious and socially and financially it was a very successful event, providing £450 of profit for the Association. The venue was much appreciated as were the efforts of Lucy Brakspear in hosting the event and Jacquie Johnson with the catering. Lucy kindly allowed her computer to be used for viewing England's thrilling win against

Sweden (Qtr-Finals, World Cup). In every way, a perfect day! Association members expressed their gratitude to both. For those of a foreign persuasion, a diversion sign on the nearly roundabout was helpfully in Welsh, as well as English.



The nearly completed Mansion House extension casts a shadow!

A number of people have remarked to me about their worst fears being realised regarding the appearance of the extension eg the mix of materials ie too many large areas of glass, also metal, brick and rendering; the crude aspect of the large wall rearing up towards the frontage whose main purpose appears to be to support two large lights etc.

THE CORSHAM SINGERS

Corsham has a good history of choirs. Probably the oldest was the Corsham Choral Society which was formed in December 1880. This title continued in various guises until 2015. The Corsham Singers was formed in September 2015. Members join primarily because they love to sing – giving performances merely adds to the pleasure.

The choir has mixed ability and being able to read music is not a requirement for joining. Everyone is welcome and there are no auditions. The choir sings a variety of different songs ranging from classical to more modern songs from musical shows.

The choir provides three concerts a year – the Spring concert is primarily one which includes several sacred numbers. The Summer concert is light in content with traditional music, well known favourites and show music. The Christmas concert is mostly given over to Christmas songs including several well-known carols allowing the audience to join in and enjoy themselves.



The choir also tries to showcase their own talent with members singing solos or performing instrumentals including visiting soloists. Rehearsals take place every Wednesday at the Corsham Pound Centre at 7.30pm.

It is hoped that the Corsham Singers will perform at the planned Corsham Civic Society November 2019 music event.

Please note: The Corsham Singers Christmas Concert this year will be held at the Pound on Wednesday 12th December stating at 7.30 pm. Admission is £5 which goes towards the Pound Restoration Fund.

Larry St Croix

Gastard

When were inhabitants of the Gastard area first recorded? Just to the south west, at Eastlays, is an area known as Flanders and it has been established that some 2000 years ago the Belgae (an ancient Celtic people who emigrated from what is now NW France) were in the area in strength. Also, it was noted that some Roman pieces of jewellery were once discovered at Gastard.

The village comprises three principle streets, Silver Street, Velley Hill and Coppershell, which all converge at the junction beside the Harp & Crown PH.

A family of note at Gastard were the Fowlers. Thomas Fowler was the father of Robert Nicholas Fowler who was a banker, an MP, Sherriff of the City of London and Lord Mayor of London in 1883 and 1885. Needless to say, he became a Baronet in 1885. He married and of his ten children, two were born in Chippenham.

Gastard House, once known as Elm Grove, sits at the top of Velley Hill. Sir Robert Fowler inherited Elm Grove in 1862, subsequently demolishing some and re-building what we now see as Gastard House.

But the most renowned occupant of the house was John Fowler: his father was an engineer and so he was well schooled and enthusiastic about the concept of railway and steam engines. He devoted his career to inventing and patenting a system of drainage and for ploughing which was so important for the development of agriculture in the mid 19th century. His products are known the world over, and are considered to be the finest steam engines ever made in Great Britain.



Gastard Church was dedicated in 1913. A small village which has contributed its own piece of history to our area.

Pat Whalley

Source: John Poulson's 'Ways of Corsham', 'Corsham Born & Bred 1&2' by Stephen Flavin, 'Around Corsham' by Corsham Civic Society

STOP PRESS ~ proposed Burlington Grange development (Land north of Bath Road, Pickwick)

Following on from the report in the last issue, the latest development is that the 'Burlington Berties' of Gladman have lodged yet another appeal with the Planning Inspectorate [PINS] over Wiltshire Council's rejection of their application to discharge conditions set by the Inspectorate when granting outline planning consent for development on the large field next to Academy Drive in 2015.

This second appeal is against the Council's rejection of Gladman's attempts to prove that they actually can design foundations which will cut out noise and vibration from the mining activity below the houses on site. Their first appeal was against the Council's rejection of their application to allow the Council to let them get on with the development in advance of proving that they could actually design suitable foundations.

Gladman's consultant claims that they can meet the required standards. The very highly qualified consultant engaged by the Council says they can't. This view is supported by separate consultants commissioned by the Pickwick Association [the Association].

The Planning Inspectorate position

Because there are now two (highly technical) appeals by Gladman on the same development, PINS has decided to 'conjoin' the two together and determine the outcome at a single public inquiry – which is unlikely to be held until the middle of next year.

In the meantime, PINS has invited comments from 'interested parties' on the second appeal. The Council has sent bare background information on the procedures to 'interested parties' – they seem to be those of us who have previously objected to the scheme. **The Council ask that any comments should be sent to PINS, quoting the appeal reference APP/Y3940/W/18/3210938, NO LATER THAN 5th December.**

What we can do

The Association has been granted 'Rule 6' status that allows our representatives to take a full part in the Inquiry: committee members are currently working with our appointed legal advisers (who we expect to represent us at the Inquiry) to produce our own Statement of Case [SoC]. We have also obtained a copy of the (appellant's) missing SoC which comprises 18 pages of technical mush.

In the meantime, can I encourage each of you to compile any comments you may have and send them directly to PINS – by 5th December - and by email to helen.skinner@pins.gsi.gov.uk, quoting Inspectorate Reference APP/Y3940/W/18/3210938.

Please feel free to draw on anything in The Association's submission or from the following bullet points:

- Professional and highly skilled consultants employed by Wiltshire Council have determined that Gladman's attempts to discharge Planning Condition 22 do not meet the required standards;
- Acoustic experts commissioned by the Pickwick Association confirm the Council consultant's view;
- Planning permission expired on 8th September; no artificial attempt to revive it should be contemplated;
- neither should any new planning permission be granted because Wiltshire Council can now demonstrate that it has an officially-agreed five year housing land supply;
- existing infrastructure (roads, schools, medical services) are already grossly overloaded;
- the very idea of building – houses and offices - immediately over a working mine in terms of noise, vibration and future land stability suggests to most right-minded people that this site is entirely unsuitable for residential development; and
- the threat of 'sterilisation' of mineral resources should the wrong solution actually be accepted outweighs the need for additional housing in a town already over-provided with new and planned residential units.

David Taylor (Acting Chairman) and the members of the Pickwick Association

Postscript 1

For those who have wondered why the Redrow sign has been removed, I suspect that it and its assertive statement 'Coming soon etc.' could be considered invidious were the PINS Inspector to visit the site. The Gazette & Herald (Nov. 1st) reported that not only had the sign been removed but the Burlington Grange listing on Redrow's South West development locations has also been removed from its website.

Postscript 2

Ruth has received two emails from Redrow "We have put measures in place for the net removal.... I will resolve this & provide you with an update " and "We are sourcing a cherry picker". Seems to bode well, at least for the tree!

Postscript 3

And then on Thursday 22nd, just before we went to print, the hairnet was gone!!

John Maloney

CORSHAM CIVIC SOCIETY 2018

All meetings are at the Pound arts centre (telephone 01249 701628) at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated. Members £1, Non-Members £3. Guests are very welcome.

- Jan 25th** Talk by David Knowles TD RN Major Ret'd., Hawk & Owl Trust
- Feb 22nd** **LUNCH** at Methuen Arms.
- Mar 29th** Paul Johnson (Trans Wilts Forum), '**Corsham Station Campaign**'
- April 26th** **Visit** to the Mansion House with Suzanne Gough (WCC Director of Property Services) and Matthew Croston (WCC Management post completion). Meet at the site at 7pm.
- May 17th** **AGM** Corsham Town Hall ~ Wine & cheese afterwards
- June 21st** Andrew Skelton (Chippenham Museum), '**Bath Academy of Art and its Artists**'
- July 26th** Edward Barrett, '**After the Falklands – Post War Logistics**'
- Sept 6th** **VISIT:** Roman Baths, Bath ~ details TBC
- Sept 27th.** John Maloney, '**Update on the Corsham High Street Project**'
- Oct 25th** Michael Rumsey, '**Steam into the Industrial Revolution**'
- Nov 22nd** A Musical Evening
- December** No meeting

*** Please note that the Programme may be subject to changes**

*** NB new attendance fees**

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 and 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 historical interest, in Corsham and the surrounding countryside.

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