



# Corsham Spotlight

Magazine of the Corsham Civic Society

<http://www.corshamcivicsociety.co.uk>

Autumn 2020

November 2020, Vol. 17, Issue 2

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*Contributions to Spotlight are very welcome. Please contact the editor, John Maloney, at: [johnmaloney2003@aol.com](mailto:johnmaloney2003@aol.com)*



It's come home! Thos. Bullock clock face showing the moon from a longcase clock made in Corsham and now back in Corsham ~ see details on pps. 28-30 [photo. by John Maloney].

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Dear Members,

Of all the years that I have contributed this column to *Spotlight*, this has been one of the most difficult to write. What can I say about 2020? The year of 'Covid 19', 'Coronavirus' and 'lockdown' - 3 new words that have entered our everyday parlance and changed our lives. As I write, the pandemic continues unabated and there's still no end in sight.

Paul Martin's talk in January at the Pound Arts Centre proved to be the only meeting of the Society for 2020. And, although we are hoping for better news in 2021, it is still unclear whether we will be able to hold any meetings.

2020 has also seen some heart-warming examples of our local community spirit for which we shall all remember and be grateful. The businesses and shops which stayed open during lockdown ensured that none of us had to go without essential provisions and there were many cases of people going out of their way to help neighbours which greatly eased the difficulties that undoubtedly some in our community experienced.

2020 will go down in history as an odd and, perhaps, difficult year to remember. Certainly, we will all have personal anecdotes to tell others in the future about living through this pandemic. Personally, since January 1<sup>st</sup>, I've lost 10 friends. My aunt, who lived in Brazil, was the only one of them who had been diagnosed with Covid 19. Perhaps, in that respect, I've been lucky. It has not been all difficult though. I've spent more time sitting or working outside than I've ever done before and the glorious spring weather and lockdown lent itself to a mammoth spring clean. During the initial lockdown, and while I was recovering from my eye operation, I've never washed so much china or ornaments or tidied so many bookcases before. I found items I thought I'd lost and I threw out things that I didn't need.

Good things to report. I've got an excellent team of distributors for the magazine and letters. I thank you for your help - it's much appreciated. I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this bumper issue. John Maloney, Spotlight's Editor, now has an assistant, a new member in the form of Stuart Boydell, who has contributed one of the many articles in this issue - thank you, Stuart. Stuart is a senior teacher at King Edward's Pre-Preparatory School in Bath and specialises in History & Geography. He has many letters after his name and is passionate about History, particularly the history of Corsham and District. We can look forward to more articles from him in the years to come!

Finally, after 20 years of running 'Green Ginger', Nina & Stuart, are calling it a day and retiring from the end of this month. On behalf of us and the people of Corsham, we wish them a long and happy retirement and thank them for all their efforts in ensuring the people of Corsham and district eat well and healthily.

It only remains for me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and my hopes that 2021 will be a much healthier and happier New Year for us all.

With best wishes,

**Michael Rumsey**

## From the Editor

You may have noticed from the size of this issue that it is a bumper one ~ double the normal number of pages. This is because what with COVID-19 and me undergoing radiotherapy treatment during the critical month of June, the committee decided to forego the Summer issue and 'make up for it' with the Autumn one.

Another change is to the title: the committee decided that *Journal* wasn't appropriate and neither was *Newsletter* and settled on *Magazine*.

This year's programme of talks had to be abandoned again due to the dreaded C-word and so it has been moved to next year, all being well!!

The news of a number of successfully tested COVID-19 vaccines, some of which may be available before Christmas, allows us to hope for a better 2021 and eventual freedom from lockdowns.

Wishing you a happy and healthy Christmas and 2021.

With all best wishes,

**John Maloney**



## Corsham Civic Society Annual New Year Lunch 2020

Guyers House is a local Listed Building of historical significance, so it was a very appropriate choice for the Civic Society for their Annual New Year Lunch in February 2020. The building had commenced modestly, as a farmhouse in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but sections were added to it progressively through the centuries. It was Edward Bayley, who transformed it into a very substantial residence.



Edward was a member of the Quakers who were very prominent in Pickwick at this time. Now it is a hotel and restaurant and also caters for special events. Twenty-eight members and their guests gathered in the private bar beforehand and then moved to large circular tables in the 'Ballroom,' with its impressive stone fireplace, to enjoy a three course meal featuring everything from a torched mackerel starter and a Wiltshire pork main course to a baked ginger dessert, also there were plenty of other choices including, of course, dietary preferences.

After the socialising everyone enjoyed a stroll or ride back home on a fine day and after a fine meal.

**John Holmes**



## Log Book entries from the Regis School and Corsham Secondary Modern School ~ Part 2

### 1947

**Sept 8** School re-assembled after Summer holiday. There are 11 children of 14+ years continuing following the raising of the school leaving age. Had to create extra Infant Class 1B - taken by Mrs Hull. Standard 1A moved to large room adjoining wartime nursery, now vacated.

Mr P.J. Laurence of Clevedale Road joined the staff as a trainee. He will assist Head with the 14+ group using the 2nd room of the nursery area as a workshop classroom. (Jack Laurence was educated at the Council School and won a place at Chippenham Secondary School, later known as the Grammar School. On leaving school he entered the Merchant Navy and sailed with Harrison Lines of Liverpool. He rose to become 1st Officer on many of their ships and served all through the 2nd World War and was not sunk once!!)

**Sept 30** 14+ group visited the Corsham Fire Station with Mr Laurence and the Head for the purpose of seeing the firefighting equipment and gaining information on how the station works. The fire station lies opposite to the Methuen School in South Place.

**Oct ?** Accident to Robin Doyle. Climbed on to the roof to get a ball, broke a window and badly cut his knee. Boy taken to Dr. Wheeler for stitches and then taken home – he broke the school rules.

**Nov 20** School closed on the occasion of the wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Lieut. Philip Mountbatten.

### 1948

**Jan 16** Corsham Cooking Depot opened at the end of Paul Street. 144 children taking lunch. Extra staff needed for serving and washing up. (The Central Kitchen, as it became known, was in operation until the late 1950s)

**Feb 25** Managers interviewed Miss M. Farmer of Abingdon and was appointed. (Miss Mary Farmer, passed away in December 2018 at the age of 95)

**Mar 11** Lady Helen Asquith HMI for Wiltshire, visited the school and saw the work of 2 students. (Lady Helen Asquith was still HMI for Wiltshire in the mid 1960's and she had a penchant of nodding off during the teacher's lessons then waking up and asking a series of questions of what had been taught!!)

**Dec 11** 33 senior children visited the Theatre Royal, Bath, to see Hans Anderson's 'The Snow Queen'. Grant aid of £3 provided by the LEA.

### 1949

**Jan 7** 30 5yr old children admitted now chairs have arrived – they were in a dirty condition, the chairs, not the children.

**Jan 13** Mr P.J. Laurence left Regis School today to proceed to Coopers Hill Emergency Training College. Mr Laurence has been here since September 1947 and has achieved excellent results. Presented with books from the staff and senior boys. (Jack Laurence returned to Regis School as a member of staff and stayed until transferring to the Secondary Modern School in 1955 where at first he taught Geography then he taught Mathematics until his retirement.)

*Article continues next page...*



**Mar 30** 29 senior pupils with Miss White, Mr Collins and the Head visited London. Conducted over the Houses of Parliament by David Eccles, the Chippenham MP, also visited Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's and the Tower of London.

## 1950

**June 26** Mr Dennis R. Jones, from Burderop Park Training College was appointed as Qualified Assistant Master. (I knew Dennis Jones very well. He was Miss Farmer's brother-in-law and was for many years the organist at Claremont Methodist Church in Bath. He was a fine musician.)

**July 18** Annual Prizegiving. Head reported increasing problems of accommodation causing duplication of all classes. Number on roll exceeded 500 would reach 530 in September and 600 within a year. Of the 31 leaving at the end of term, 25 were continuing education at Grammar and Technical Colleges.

**July 19** Patricia Cottle, a pupil from the Rudloe Estate, collapsed on the path at 1.40pm and was unconscious. Dr. Wheeler was called and the child was taken to Chippenham Hospital where she died. Post mortem revealed a blood clot on the brain.

## 1951

**May 28** 96 juniors commenced a scheme of attendance at Beechfield House, Bath Academy of Art in conjunction with 1<sup>st</sup> year teaching practice. Attending every Monday for 8 weeks. (This activity continued for many years and was greatly enjoyed by those pupils attending.)

**June 4** 26 senior boys with Mr Laurence spent an afternoon visiting Avonmouth Docks.

**June 28** 32 Senior pupils visited the Festival of Britain South Bank Festival.

## 1952

**Jan 8** Mr Brooks, present caretaker becomes grounds man for 8hrs per week and he's given up work with the School Meals Service. The Senior Girls Class moved to the Community Centre where they are to be housed because of the continual growth of the school and the appointment of additional staff.

**Feb 15** A special service was observed in the school hall on the occasion of the funeral of King George VI.

**July 3** Senior school outing – 88 children and 21 staff travelled to Bristol by motor coach and enjoyed a sea trip on the 'Bristol Queen'. (Bristol Queen along with Cardiff Queen were paddle steamers owned by P & A Campbell and were only built 2 years previously.)

**Sept 8** School re-opened. HMI report received. (MDR started in this school today and was placed in Miss Munnery's class. Mr Hull, the Head, and my father spent some time discussing the recent Farnborough Air Disaster in which 31 people died. Mr Hull had attended the show had saw the accident happen.)

*Article continues next page...*

### 1953

**Jan 6** School re-opened. 3 classes now at the Community Centre. All the furniture removed from the Baptist Chapel schoolroom.

**Oct 26** School re-opened after half term. Form 2A using Baptist Chapel schoolroom were withdrawn from that building. Reports from parents concerned about mental worries of the girls having to pass through the graveyard each day plus the toilets were condemned too. (2A was MDR's class and he remembers the move back to school, we lost the slide and swings in Arnolds Avenue playing field.)

### 1954

**July 23** H.E. Hull appointed 1<sup>st</sup> Head of the new Secondary Modern School starting in January 1955. Miss Munnery left – getting married.

**Sept 6** Mrs E.I. Hancock took up supply teacher duties during Miss White's continuing absence. With the reorganisation of Secondary education taking place next January, all senior classes are now mixed. Because of increased senior numbers, the Town Hall is now used for an odd class.

**Oct 15** H.E.H. caned 3 boys from the British Legion class who broke down a fence of a private garden, stole fruit and did damage to a young tree – 2 strokes for Hunt, Jenkins & Reilly.

**Nov 1** From this date H.E. Hull relieved of duties as Head of Regis School. P.J. Laurence will be acting Head. Miss Sheila Riley, new teacher for the Secondary Modern school, at Regis now until January.

### 1955

**Feb 14** Miss Ann Hale, school clerk 1<sup>st</sup> mentioned. (She later became Secretary at the Secondary Modern School.)

**Feb 16** Mr Shepard asked by the Managers to become Deputy Head.

**Feb 18** Mr George Pearce, the new Headmaster, visited the school – takes up duties after Easter.

**Mar 9** Presentation to H.E. Hull on leaving as Head for the last 12 years. School closed for the rest of the week to facilitate moving of furniture with the reorganisation of Corsham Schools. Mr Laurence, Mr Williams, Mr Bollen, Miss Oatley, Mrs Hancock, Mrs Weller and Miss Hale all transferred to the Secondary Modern school.

**July 8** 252 children taken to Bristol Zoo by coach – outing much enjoyed.

**July 22** 81 children left the school. 15 to Grammar School, 62 to Secondary Modern, 1 to private school, 2 emigrating to Canada and 1 leaving the district. Mrs Tustin retired – 11.5 years at the school.

**Sept 5** School re-opened. Head + 15 teachers and 352 children in the Juniors. MDR in Class 1 with Mr Shepard, 21 boys and 23 girls. All classes have over 40 on roll. Infants 176 + 352 Juniors, NOR = 528.

**Oct 3** 3.50pm. Victor Kaljushko, goalkeeper, the crossbar fell on his head which was later stitched.

**Nov 19** Choir of 44 children were entered in the Devizes Eisteddfod and gained 1<sup>st</sup> class certificate – choir taught by Mr Kilminster.

**Nov 23** 108 children and 74 staff travel by coach to Bath to see *Let's make an opera*.

*Article continues next page...*

**Dec 14** Punch & Judy show for the Juniors' Christmas party.

### **1956**

**July 13** 209 children & 16 staff visited Blenheim Palace, travelled by train from Corsham station. Weather dull and cold – children's behaviour was excellent.

**July 27** School closed for the Summer holidays. 88 pupils left the school, 17 went to Grammar & Technical schools, 71 to the Secondary Modern. MDR left for the latter school.

**September 1956** 503 on roll.

### **From the Corsham Secondary Modern Log Book.**

### **1955**

**March 14** New school opened today with 395 children on roll and a staff of Headmaster and 18 masters and mistresses. Harold E Hull, former Head of Corsham Regis School was the new head of this school. Most of the staff were drawn from contributing schools and are shown as follows:

Former staff from Regis School: P.J. Laurence, D.R. Jones, J. Williams.

Former staff from Corsham County School: Mrs E. Mara, Mrs E. Heyes (nee Fortune), Mr. F. Wellman and Mr E. Turner.

Former staff from Box Highlands School: Mr R. Stansfeld, Mr G. Powell

Former staff from Westwells School: Mr M. Kinch

New appointments: Miss Sheila Riley, Mr A. Speck, Miss J. Griffith and Mrs J.P. Evans.

Miss Margaret Oatley and Mr B. Bollen, former Domestic Science and Handicrafts teachers at Regis were also transferred.

Mrs E. I. Hancock and Mrs L. Weller came as supply teachers.

Along with the new school building, now H Block at Corsham School, the former Handicraft Centre at Regis School was used, so too the Methuen School building.

### **Contributory Schools:**

Corsham County, Corsham Regis, Lypiatt Camp School, Biddestone, Colerne and Box Highlands. (Children from Box School attended Melksham Secondary Modern, later called George Ward school)

George Dunnings was appointed as gardener/grounds man and Miss Ann Hale as School Secretary, a transfer from Regis School.

**May 20** School officially opened and the guest of honour was Lord Methuen. Speeches were made by the Chairman of the Education Committee, Councillor W.E. Stevens, Lord Methuen and Walter J. Light, Chairman of Governors. A buffet tea was served in the Library and Music Room.

**May 25** School closed for Whitsun holidays and the General Election.

**June 6** School re-opened. P.J. Laurence and a group of boys were absent on a visit to Portsmouth as guests of the Royal Navy. (P.J. Laurence served as a First Officer on the Harrison Lines ships all through the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War).



**Sept 5** School re-opened for the Autumn Term. Mrs S.E. Fladee and Miss A.S.M. Ord-Smith were appointed to teach English & Art respectively. ASMOS were the initials of Adrineme Susannah Mary Ord-Smith)

**Nov: 16** Mrs S Tustin began work as a supply teacher. She originally taught at the Regis School.

### 1956

**Sept 10** School re-opened with 534 on roll. Mrs Donavan, Mrs Court, Miss Lawton and Mr H.E. Allen (Harry) commenced their duties. (MDR plus Paul Smith and Edwin Brown, his longtime friends, started school that day)

### 1957

**April 30** Miss Kathleen Elloway commenced duties as Music Teacher (she played the *Dam Busters March* on the piano in our first lesson with her). Mrs R. Ost started as the English teacher with Class 1A.

**June 18** Miss Ord Smith had been absent due to the death of her father and returned to duties one day late due to misreading the bus timetable.

**June 24** Mrs Heyes absent: reason to visit Bath to collect spectacles – reason considered unnecessary. Chief Education Officer, Mr John Bradley, notified.

### 1958

**Jan 6** Mrs R. Philips, daughter of Mr Evans, (Fishy Evans of the famous Bath Fish & Chip shop) commenced as teacher of Handicrafts (needlework)

**Sept 8** Considerable rise in pupil numbers. First form will consist of 6 classes, 1A, 1B, 1C1, 1C2, 1R, 1R2. Additional accommodation was secured by using the main hall at the Community Centre and arts and craft lessons were moved back to the main school from the Methuen School building. Roll now 622. New staff, Miss Hawker (Rural Studies), Miss P.J. Lewis, Miss Thomas, Mr Ivor Jones (Science) and Mr M.J. Macey.

**Dec 19** Mr. J. Wellman, Deputy Head, left to become Head Teacher of Neston Primary School.

### 1959

**June 30** Mr Harry Allen, Woodwork teacher, sustained a serious accident in the Handicrafts room when struck on the head by a block of wood, which broke away from a wooden bowl being made on the lathe by a pupil, Richard Toogood. Dr. Henderson attended and Mr Allen was taken to Bath Hospital by ambulance.

**July 21** 2<sup>nd</sup> Speech Day with prize giving in the hall with Major Awdry as the guest of honour. He was Chairman of the Calne & Chippenham Rural District Council.

**Sept 7** School re-opened for the Autumn Term and the new staff appointed were Mrs Howarth PE, Dennis Jones (Geography) and Mr Wyatt, Handicrafts. 2 new classrooms were opened at the east end of the main building. Existing scullery, with new extension, opened as a kitchen with Mrs Gardner as cook supervisor. School meals, up to then, had been prepared by the Central Kitchen, opposite the school at the end of Paul Street. Additional rooms were used at the Community Centre because of rising numbers.

**Dec 10 -12** School play production. The plot and play produced by Roger Stansfeld, English teacher.

### **1960**

**Oct 3** Norman Duckworth, Rural Studies teacher commenced duties.

**Dec 15-17** School play performed *12 Dancing Princesses*. Script by Roger Stansfeld and music by John Ramwell. (MDR took part in both productions, quite a sell out too!)

### **1961**

**July 29** Corsham Secondary Modern School closed for the Summer holidays. From September 1<sup>st</sup> there will be 2 Secondary Schools in Corsham: one for girls with Miss Simpson as Head, Miss Oatley as Deputy and one for boys with Harold Hull as Head and Mr Gee as Deputy.

**The Log Book was transferred from the combined School to the Boys School and Harold Hull commenced entries as the new Head.**

**Sept 13** The County Secondary School for Boys opened 2 days late due to the late delivery of furniture.

### **Staffing was as follows:**

Head – H.E. Hull

D. Head – A.E. Gee

Head of Mathematics – P.J. Laurence

Head of English – R. Stansfeld

Head of Dept for Retarded Children Mr. F. St. John Davies

Science – I. Jones

Engineering Drawing – E.H. Weller

Handicrafts – H. Allen

Rural Studies – N. Duckworth

Geography - D. R. Jones

P.E. – J. Dix

Mrs P. Macey – Retarded Children

M.J. Macey – Science & Games

Mrs Ost – English & Library.

**Michael Rumsey**

## The Serendipity of the Seven – from Corsham to Tokyo via Moscow

Christopher Blakey, a retired school teacher, enjoys a full life as a house husband and father in Corsham. Chris will admit, however, that he is an inveterate handyman and always needs to have a project to focus on. This, his most recent project, came about partly through a chance encounter with a visitor to Corsham outside St Bartholomew's Church. This is his story about the chain of events that took him from Corsham to Tokyo via Russia.



Chris Blakey outside his Corsham home with *Babushka*, the Austin 7

As a dutiful house-husband and dad, it is one my tasks to prepare supper for my wife and son when they return home at the end of a day.

We hadn't long moved to our new Corsham home and I had already heard that Haynes the butchers in the High Street was a superb place to shop. At that time, I wasn't aware of the then parking costs needed in the town centre, so I tripped off in my Austin 7 merrily unaware of the impending issue of not having any change to pay for parking! Once I was there and fully aware of my predicament, I was left with little option other than to drive round to try find a vacant free space somewhere close to the High Street. I eventually found a spot close to St Bartholomew's Church.

It is probably at this point that I should introduce my car, the heroine of both my story and the subsequent epic adventure. Her name, following her global trip is Babushka but, prior to the trip, she was simply known as BBM 57. She had already had an interesting past by the time I was lucky enough to buy her. She was originally built as a standard 1937 Austin Seven. Over the many years, like all good old things, though, she has had to undergo a few modifications and adaptations, but at core she is still an original Austin 7. During her time, she has helped to promote ownership and use of Austin Sevens to newer and, hopefully, younger audiences and she had, for the two years before our road trip, played a role in the "Celebrate the Seven" project which saw her in car shows, various museums and rugby clubs.

*Article continues next page....*



On my return to the car, after shopping and having a very pleasant look around St Bart's, I found a gentleman in a black leather jacket standing by my car. He was particularly interested in finding out why it had a Russian flag on the side of it. I explained to him about my project to drive to the World Rugby Cup in Tokyo via Russia. After a long chat about the car and the project, I discovered that the visitor was called Ilya and was originally from Russia. At that point, he noticed the time and was concerned that he would miss his bus back to Bath. The car and I leapt into action and we managed to get him on his bus in time. It was a small friendly act, that paid huge dividends.

Over the next year, Ilya, who now lives in the US, took it upon himself to get in touch with a number of his friends and contacts across Russia, who in-turn, got in contact with me: all with offers of support. How lucky!

One highlight of meeting up again with Ilya, this time in Moscow, was a chance to enter the classic car rally from Red Square where, the newly named, Babushka, was awarded with 007 as the car's start number.



Chris with his wife, Helen, and Arthur, their son, receive a Corsham *bon voyage*



So, to cut a long story (not to mention a long journey) short, that one chance meeting: a small piece of incredible serendipity outside St Bart's Church ensured that Corsham played an integral part in the success of an amazing journey and for helping me to forge some lasting friendships around the world. And all because I needed some sausages from Haynes the butchers and I didn't have any change for the carpark! We never know what might come from a chance encounter!

## Two photos of local interest

My friend Kenneth Leech, formerly Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Westinghouse Brake & Signal Company, spent many years after WWII taking photographs of all the named Great Western Engines built at Swindon. In total his collection included 12,500 prints.

The Great Western Railway took pride in naming its passenger class engines and with 171 'Castle' class, 330 'Hall' class, though I understand he did miss a few, plus those from the 'King', 'County', 'Grange', 'Manor' and the surviving engines from the 'Saint' and 'Star' classes, the total of named engines comes to nearly 700. Some engines were photographed more than once, others, probably just a single print or two, but the whole collection resides still in Chippenham in the careful hands of Barry Hayward who was a good friend to Kenneth.



Kenneth was born in 1892 and died in his 103<sup>rd</sup> year in January 1995. One of his hobbies was rock climbing which he finally retired from at the age of 86. Kenneth spent many hours roving around the yard outside Swindon Works where on Thursday, August 21<sup>st</sup> 1952, he took the photograph of 'Saint' class 4-6-0 no.2938 'Corsham Court'. After 41 years and 1,704,165 miles in service, the engine had been withdrawn and was waiting to be scrapped. On the footplate you can see Paul, 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Methuen who had heard of the engine's demise and had cycled to Swindon to see the engine that carried the name of his home. Rather a sad day for both Kenneth and Lord Methuen. The nameplate and numberplate came up for sale a few years ago and sold for several thousands of pounds.

*Article continues next page...*





British Railways Western Region gave Kenneth a permanent footplate and lineside pass which he used a great deal before the end of steam in the West Country in 1965. The second photograph (above) shows the fine edifice of Middlehill tunnel in Box from the footplate of a 'Castle' class engine on the 'Bristolian' in the 1950's.

The last photograph(right) shows Kenneth driving a 'County' class engine on Dauntsey Bank.



It was a pleasure to know Kenneth Leech. One of his many remarkable qualities was his fantastic memory. I recall him telling me about seeing Queen Victoria arrive at the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1897 to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee as well as stories from his days during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War running railways in France to his time at Westinghouse. Right up until the end, he always had time to speak with us trainspotters who were gathered on Chippenham station once he had descended from the footplate of an engine.

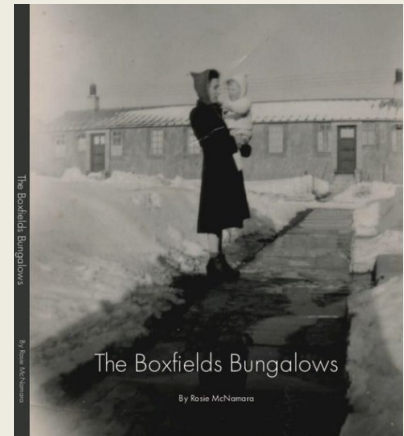
Barry Hayward is currently gathering material for a book on the railway triangle of Chippenham to Bath to Westbury and back to Chippenham (with all stations in between) and would be pleased to see any photographic material relating to that part of the GWR.

**Michael Rumsey**



***The Boxfields Bungalows, Rosie McNamara, 116pp., £14.99, 2020***

Most books on the history of Corsham that have appeared in the last fifty years have been dreadfully poor. Usually badly produced, generally badly written, very poorly researched, they mainly repeat earlier mistakes, while introducing inaccuracies of their own. This book is a welcome surprise: it is elegantly produced, nicely composed, and not riddled with mistakes. It is a delight to look at and interesting to read.



It deals with some of the hundreds of pre-fabs that were built in the Corsham area during the second world war to house the thousands of workers who were drawn in to work in the various storage and production facilities that speedily grew up hidden in the extensive underground former 'quarries', as the stone-quarrymen called their mines. More than 10,000 workers were recruited from Ireland. Nine sites provided hostel accommodation, each for about 1000 single men in 1941, and in 1942 seven further sites provided 'bungalows' – the author prefers this term to 'pre-fabs' – for a further 1000 or so families.

Rosie McNamara was brought up in one of them, the Boxfields site on Box Hill just outside the Corsham parish boundary on the Bradford Road. Here, the 260 temporary bungalows lasted until they were all destroyed in 1964, having been handed over to the local authority after the war and occupied until the previous fields were re-instated, leaving virtually no sign now of the community that had existed.

This twenty-two year 'moment in time' is carefully and lovingly recreated by the author, using her own memories of growing up plus what appears to have been very dextrous use of the internet to track down the memories and memorabilia of quite a few others who lived in this vanished community. She has assembled plans of the buildings (including a community centre, a school, and shop and a fish and chip shop), family snapshots, school photographs, a Labour Party Baby Show Diploma (her own 1950 triumph), Ministry of Aircraft Production and Ministry of Works rent books, as well as some modern photographs to set off the fine selection of period pieces.

It is a fascinating piece of work, elegantly written, wonderfully evocative, nostalgic in the best sense, without being at all sentimental or self-pitying. We are told very little about the author after she passed the 11-plus and went to Bath Girls' Grammar School, and then lived in different parts of the country. She does not provide the name of the excellent designer of the book, and even more oddly, the name of the publisher is not revealed. Would that all books on Corsham were as good and worthwhile as this. It can be bought at the bookshop in the High Street.

**Dr. Negley Harte, Hon. Vice-President of the Corsham Civic Society**

## War Memorials: Memorial Wars



*Photo "Bath Weekly Chronicle."*

Corsham War Memorial in Lacock Road, Jan 30<sup>th</sup> 1921

Inevitably 2020 will enter the history books as a significant year. It has seen Britain struggling to find a new role in the world, an increasingly isolationist America embroiled in a bitter presidential election with the incumbent president falling victim to a global pandemic and authoritarian Russia and China exerting their growing political muscle over their neighbours. The parallels between 1920 and now are remarkable.

2020 has also called History and the act of remembering the past into a courtroom dock. History is currently under investigation.

How should we remember the past? What role do statues and monuments have in our towns and villages now?

As a newcomer to Corsham and a keen local historian I was struck by the unusual feature of having two very striking war memorials commemorating the First World War in close proximity to one another. Although it didn't take me long to discover why, I wasn't prepared for the story that has historical significance for Corsham and a relevance that resonates with the world today. Corsham in 2020 has more in common with 1920 than we would think. After a century, their story needs to be dusted off.

### Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 1920

Tempers and emotions were running high during a 2-hour-long crisis Parish Council meeting with the War Memorial Committee in the town hall. The reason: a proposed memorial design depicting a crucifix in the centre of a triptych had ignited fierce opposition from the Parish Council and put them on a collision course with the Committee, which although chaired by Field-Marshal Lord Methuen, was very much controlled by the parish vicar, Rev. Arthur Winnington-Ingram. Those, who had taken offence at the symbolism within the memorial, argued bitterly that a crucifix was an inappropriate symbol for a war memorial and a violation of their "Protestant principles."

*Article continues next page...*

Rev. John Smith, the Baptist Minister in Priory Street, was one of the leading opponents to the design. He told those present that evening that the proposed memorial would "plant a root of bitterness in Corsham which might injure them in family life...in church life and...in social life." He demanded that the crucifix be substituted for depictions of St Michael and St George.

Previously, the Committee and the Council had agreed on a design created by Harold Brakspear which included an image of a saint. It was this design that had been approved by the Parish Council and had already started to receive subscriptions from people in the town.

The vicar, unbeknownst to the Council, had canvassed the bereaved families in Corsham with three designs: Harold Brakspear's saint, another of his depicting a plain cross and, a third one, by a different architect depicting the crucifix. The vicar told the meeting that of all the families consulted only William Field, the Chairman of Parish Council and senior deacon at Priory Street Baptist Church, had objected to the crucifix. It is safe to assume that Field was responsible for calling the crisis meeting.

Inflamed outcries of *popery* and *popish* symbolism at the meeting shocked some including the vicar who was alarmed to see "old prejudices" being stirred up. He called for the Council to support his proposed design and "to carry out the wishes of those most intimately concerned in the matter." Opposition remained strong, and several members, including William Field, declared that their sons' names would not appear on the memorial.

Another opponent was Harry Carter, a masonry sub-contractor who lived on Paul Street. He not only declared that he would not allow his son's name to appear on a "popish thing" but he also felt that many men would not have died had they not been forced to fight. This raised an outcry amongst others in the meeting who were quick to point out that not all men were conscripts. Carter's son, Cecil, died two months before the Armistice. Cecil Carter's name is one of the few on the town's memorial but not on the Church's memorial.

The vicar, who was a nephew of the anti-German and jingoistic Bishop of London, admitted during the quarrel, that as a young man who had not worked long in the town he could be forgiven for not agreeing with everyone in the meeting. The newspapers reported that at that point some members in the hall laughed. He clearly didn't enjoy everyone's respect that evening. His sharp riposte, however, was to remind those there that they were discussing "a young man's memorial."

The matter was finally settled on a legal technicality which meant that the design could not be changed without returning the money donated because it had been paid on the understanding that they were paying for a different memorial. Pastor Smith's motion was passed, 81 in favour to 75 against, to abandon all the designs and return the money.

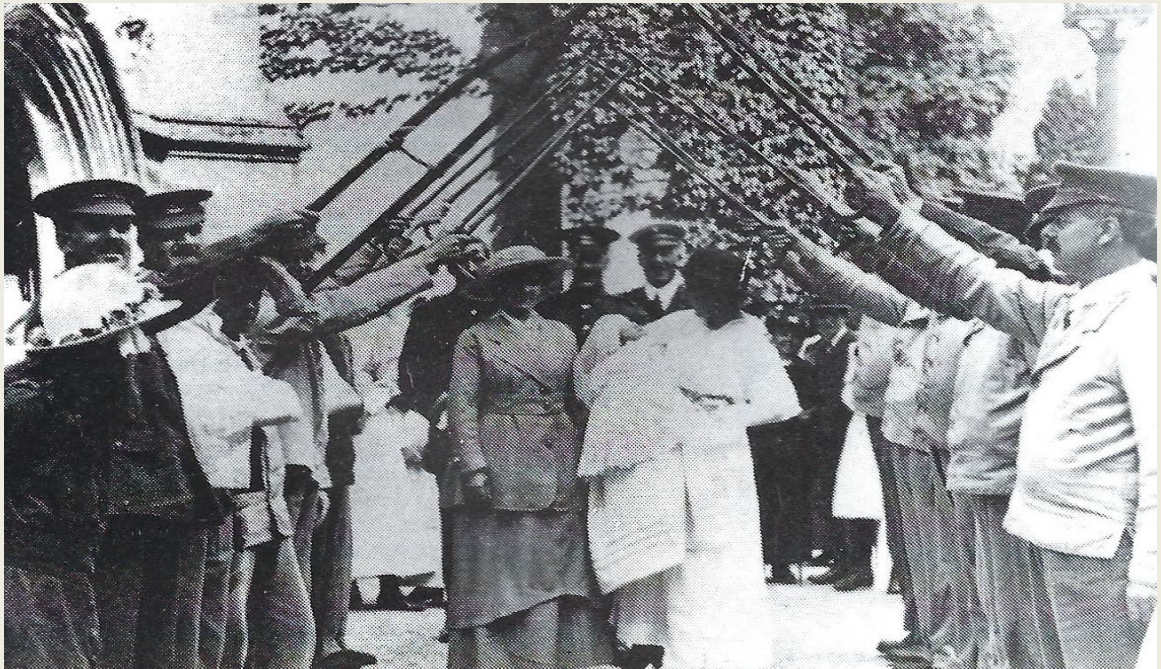
The meeting ended with the resignation of the War Memorial Committee members. The future of Corsham's war memorial hung in the balance.

*Article continues next page...*



**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1920**

The vicar announced in view of the unfortunate disagreement over the proposed war memorial, the Parochial Church Council had decided to have its own war memorial in connection with the church. The council wanted it to be understood that its memorial was not in opposition to the town's memorial. Instead, it had decided that any religious symbol or religious memorial was better undertaken by the church rather than risk further disagreement within the town. Hence, we have the two memorials today.



The buttress of St. Bartholomew's Church is just visible behind the christening party. This photo would have been taken not long before the war memorial was installed near the main door. Photo from C. J Hall, *Corsham: An Illustrated History*, 1983.

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1920**

H.B. Coates of Atworth, who was a member of the Parish Council, challenged the church's version of how the designs ended up being changed in a letter to the *Bath Chronicle*. The June 30<sup>th</sup> Parish Magazine stated the change was in response to popular consent. Coates's letter, however, claimed the the War Memorial Committee had in fact adopted the crucifix design before the vicar had consulted the bereaved families. The second correction Coates made contradicted the Committee's assertion that it did not have time to consult the parish about the changes before the crisis meeting had been called. Coates's letter states that the Committee had already called for tenders on the new design before the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup>. It also states that Pastor Smith met with the vicar to discuss the brewing crisis and was told that "things had gone too far and could not be altered."

*Article continues next page...*

## Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1920

The Parish Council met with a second and newly elected War Memorial Committee to consider how they could resume plans for a local war memorial. The meeting was well attended. Lord Methuen, who had been re-elected as the Committee's chairman was not in attendance as he was scheduled to be with Prince Arthur. His suggestion of a "handsome cross" at the end of South Avenue was read out in the meeting. William Field of the Parish Council invited suggestions from those in attendance. Mr McLaughlin, Hon. Secretary, who was credited as having brokered a smoother and less fractious second committee, thought it preferable to avoid references to the past as much as possible. He was convinced that a memorial to the dead might "excite bitterness from those who survived the war." He was also keen to not reignite the bitterness that had flared up the month before. McLaughlin rejected Lord Methuen's idea and called for a civic and secular memorial. He was adamant that religion had no place on a civic memorial. Rev. Smith, the Baptist pastor, who had played a major part in quashing the crucifix design, was quick to note that in his role as a townsman he could heartily agree with McLaughlin's proposal. Lord Methuen's offer of placing the memorial at the end of South Avenue was accepted and the call for a new set of designs was greeted enthusiastically.



The photos are taken from C.J. Hall, *Corsham: An Illustrated History Part II*. Many of the people in top left and bottom right would have taken part in the procession from the Town Hall to the War Memorial on 30th Jan 1921.

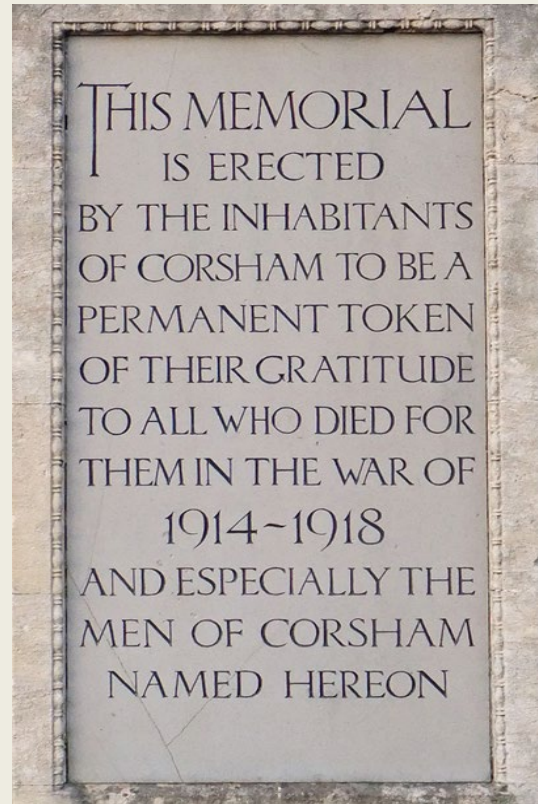


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## July to September 1920

In total the second War Memorial Committee received thirty-six designs. These were whittled down to six which were displayed in F. Baines's shop window in the High Street along with a "clock" indicating how much money had been raised to purchase the final memorial. A limit of £250 had been agreed. Donations included £20 each from Lord Methuen, Lord Islington and Miss Chappell, £15 from Lady Goldney, £28 from the Prisoners of War Fund and Mr G P Fuller donated the Atworth stone which was used for the base.



## Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October 1920

The final six designs, which had all been submitted with a *nom de plume*, included *Arms* £200, *Ex-Saper* £200, *Remembrance* £200, *Gunner* £400-£500, *Armageddon* £150 and *Artillery* £250. The designs were moved to the town hall for a final vote. Attached to each design was a sealed envelope containing the real name of the designer. There would be no local prejudice this time.

On the evening *Ex-Saper*, which bears a close resemblance to the National Cenotaph in Whitehall, was decided on by a unanimous vote. The name inside the envelope was Mr E Wolley of Frome. After finally settling on a design that pacified all and offended none, Rev Tucker, the Committee Treasurer, then informed the members that they had only received £68 in subscriptions. Lord Methuen called for radical and decisive action to secure the money needed to complete the project. He said, "it would be a sad reflection on the parish if they were not able to raise sufficient to erect the memorial." The final sum raised came to £206.



Part of the carved dedication to E Wolley has been hidden by a later slab.

## Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> January 1921

It was marked by a sea of black umbrellas and a downpour but, despite the weather, the civic Corsham War Memorial was opened with sombre ceremony. The procession began at the town hall and was led by Mr Churchill as acting marshal. It was headed by Herbert Spackman leading the Corsham Town Band playing the *Dead March*. The bearers included a veteran from the Crimean War. They were followed by buglers and drummers from the Wiltshire Regiment. Next came the religious representatives led by Rev. Winnington-Ingram, Rev. Tucker (Congregational) and Rev. Watson (Methodist). The Baptist Rev. John Smith was not present. Then came the military top brass including Lieut. Cols Symons and Parkinson and Col. Armour. The Parish Council led by William Field followed next. Field laid the wreath on behalf of the townspeople. The ribbon read: "With deepest sympathy and in appreciation of the inestimable services rendered to King and Country in the Great War."

Lady Methuen released the Union flag unveiling the cenotaph with the words: "To the Glory of God and in memory of our beloved soldiers." The silence was ended by the buglers playing the *Last Post*. Lord Methuen, who had not long returned from a similar ceremony with King George V at the National Cenotaph in Whitehall, gave a short speech reminding those present that the "Time of high ideals was as necessary now as ever."



Field-Marshal Lord Methuen at the unveiling of the Corsham War Memorial on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1921. Photo from C. J Hall, *Corsham: An Illustrated History*, 1983.





### Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June 1921

The church memorial was unveiled in a much smaller ceremony. The procession included the choir, clergy and congregation as well as members of the Methuen family and Lady Goldney. J Spackman played Beethoven's *Dead March* and a single muffled bell rang out for those who had lost their lives in the conflict. The resemblance to the triptych design which had caused so much controversy and disquiet is easily seen in the memorial on St Bart's Church today.

Photos. by Stuart Boydell



In February 1921, Field-Marshal Lord Methuen stated at the opening of the United Services Club in Frome that "we live in a time of great turmoil in England throughout the world... We can never expect to find the England we had before the war. Great changes are before us. The men who can see the farthest cannot tell us for certain what those changes may be."

Again, we find ourselves in uncertain times and none of us know what 2021 will bring. The battle lines that divided Corsham in the summer of 1920 also have their equivalents in 2020: the division between modernity and tradition; between religious and secular life; and the issues with patriotism and how to remember the past. Other battle lines are thankfully more relevant to the Corsham of 1920 than today: interdenominational rivalry and the sense of otherness that divided conscripts and enlisted men.

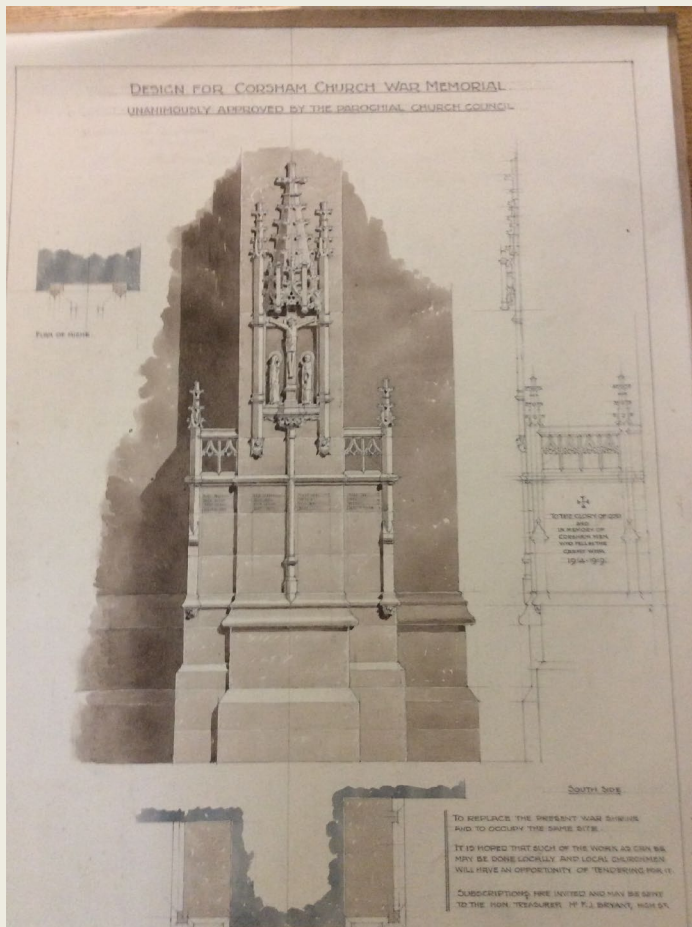
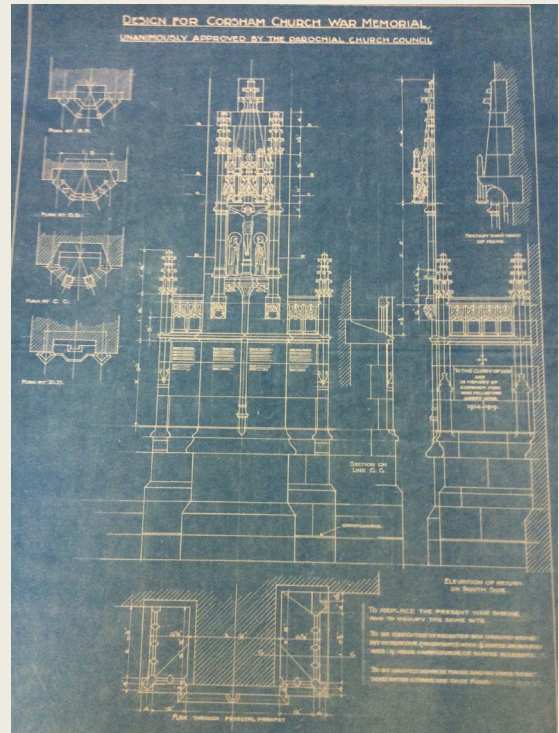
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For a brief period in the summer and autumn of 1920, it looked as though Corsham would be one of the only towns in the country without a memorial to the 1914-18 war. Instead, Corsham is one of the few small towns which has two war memorials honouring the First World War.

Whatever similarities and differences may exist between 1920 and 2020, and following this year's muted Remembrance Day services, it is hard to imagine the grief, loss, pride and anger that briefly split Corsham.

Remembering the past was, as it is now, both divisive and emotive.

Photos. by Stuart Boydell



Photographs of Sir Harold Brakspear's original blue-prints and a coloured plate of his design.

References: all of the information for this article came from the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Wiltshire Times & Trowbridge Advertiser* (1920-21).

I would like to thank Janet Brakspear, Tom Brakspear and the staff at the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre for helping me to locate and publish Sir Harold's original war memorial designs.

**Stuart Boydell**



## Remembrance Sunday, 8 November 2020



It was a smaller ceremony in Corsham than in previous years which, nevertheless, retained all of the poignancy and significance required of our annual act of remembrance.

Left: Steve Abbott, Corsham Town Council Chairman after laying the wreath on behalf of the council

Below, the procession to the memorial



**Stuart Boydell**, (photos. by Niall Palmer)

## In Memoriam John Parker 1942-2020

John Parker of John Parker Gallery & Shop, Corsham High Street, died peacefully on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November following a short illness. His daughters Rebecca, Merrilees and Hannah and his beloved Labrador, George, were by his side. Latterly, he had been cared for by Dorothy House Hospice Care, Southbroom surgery and the NHS Nurse Community Team who supported John and his daughters to be with him at Rebecca's home until the end.

John was a bon viveur with a wonderful circle of friends. He had sailed the Atlantic, was a fantastic rackets player, a motoring enthusiast in his younger days and, of course, a gifted antiques dealer. He was a loving father and grandfather. He had served as a town councillor in Devizes where he previously had an antiques shop.

John owned and ran the John Parker Gallery & Shop (see *Spotlight*, Summer 2019, pps. 9-11) and he was an enthusiastic and active supporter of local business in Corsham.

The above details about John are from the link <https://www.muchloved.com/TributeSearch>, and then search ~  
[john-richardjacques.parker.muchloved.com](https://john-richardjacques.parker.muchloved.com)



John with his assistant Jackie (right) and local MP Michelle Donelan (left)

**John Maloney**

## Chairman Antiques

Yet another antiques shop has opened in Corsham, and its owner hopes it can be a welcome addition to the High Street. *Chairman Antiques* - <https://chairmanantiques.co.uk/> and <http://antiquesecrets.co.uk/> - is next door to Paul Martin's *The Table Gallery* and is run by Andrew Blackall, a close friend of Paul.

Mr Blackall, whose interest in the trade was sparked by the wonders in stately homes he visited as a child, previously sold his wares online. It was when he was helping a friend clear out homes that he was inspired to begin his journey into the world of antiques, after he saw how many pieces of furniture was simply thrown into skips.

Now his customers are scattered across the UK and wider world. Mr Blackall said: "I have sold to people from all walks of lives, from politicians to actors. I get my stock from a myriad of places and it is always fascinating to delve into the story behind a piece of furniture. "I specialise in 17th, 18th and 19th century furniture. I'd looked into having a physical space in Corsham site earlier this year and things were gathering momentum until coronavirus disrupted plans slightly and everything got put on hold. But I had a great landlord, and we were able to revisit the idea later in the year, and now we are open for business. We are lucky to be based in an absolutely beautiful high street. The town has been very welcoming and friendly so far."

Mr Blackall added says he has items for all pockets and is trying to dispel the stereotype that enjoying antiques is only possible for those of a certain income. With over 40 years experience in the antiques' sector, Chairman Antiques are experts in sourcing a myriad of antiques for the discerning collector.

He said that while his neighbouring shop is also an antique shop, the two will work in tandem rather than in competition. He added: "I'm trying to do something eclectic and I hope it complements the High Street here in Corsham. Chairman Antiques dovetails the Table Gallery nicely, Paul and I each have very different material".



Opposite, Chairman Antiques shop. Above, part of the interior of the shop.

*Article continues next page..*





Inside the front door of Chairman Antiques with Andrew Blackall seated

Andrew won Best Television Pilot 2020 in the sixth Global Independent Film Awards with his pilot *Antique Secrets*. The pilot was created back in 2012 and released on DVD rather than on TV screens. Written and directed by Andrew, the short film followed *Flog It*'s Paul Martin on a journey round stately homes, show homes and antique shops across the country to meet interesting people with fascinating furniture.

Now that the short pilot has been recognised eight years after its release, there could be a chance of the pilot becoming more. He said: "It is strange to have something that I worked on so long ago to be credited. It's a test of the great team and work of my close friend Paul on making it such an enjoyable piece of film. The fact it beat newer, more contemporary pilots is quite something. "Maybe we will revisit *Antiques Secrets* and see what else can be done. "It was amazing to be able to work with such a brilliant team from across Wiltshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire."

Mr Martin, who owns the Table Gallery in Corsham, added that *Antiques Secrets* had been a "real joy" to work on. He said: "It was a long, long time ago now but it was really great to work on such a great project. Andrew deserves all the credit and recognition for this award."

Andrew noted that "Corsham's High Street is incredibly strong and I'm proud to be a small part of it. I love this part of the world and our couriers and upholsterers are based in Wiltshire, it's all very local." He has plans in place for exhibitions and events next year.

Corsham is becoming something of a centre for antiques with *John Parker Gallery & Shop*, *No19 Interior Design Studio* (which has some antiques, art and other gifts), *The Table Gallery* and now *Chairman Antiques*.

*With acknowledgements to the Gazette and Herald.*

**John Maloney**

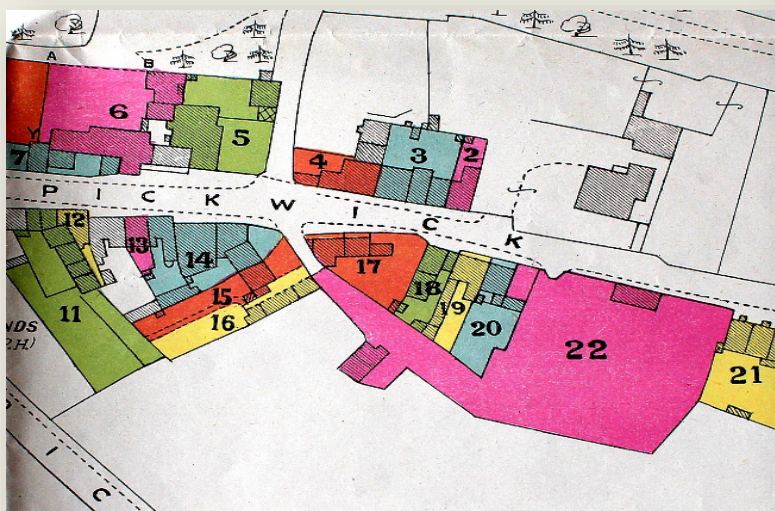
## Jill Avis, formerly of this parish, renews contact

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March this year, I was contacted by letter by Jill [nee Smith] who lives in Upminster, Essex. She wrote, "I was on the computer and came across the alterations that had been made to 12 Pickwick. To say that I was astounded is putting it mildly. I was born at 10 Pickwick and moved to No. 12 at the age of 3. I lived there for 17 years and it was a very happy time for me even though it was during WWII. The whole village was owned by Sir Frederick Goldney until his death and was known as the 'Golden Village' as all the houses were painted with a geld coloured wash [shade of cream/yellow] and all the doors were dark green. I would like to thank you for all the improvements. I felt I had to write this letter. I hope you don't mind".



Jill and Fred Smith in the garden of No. 12 Pickwick

That was the beginning of a fascinating correspondence with Jill and her son, Mark, who lives in Manchester. On 18<sup>th</sup> March, Jill wrote in reply to my response, "I feel that I know you already having received your kind letter. The gentleman who lived in the house [for more than 50 years] was my dear brother, Frederick John Smith. He bought it in 1948 when he came out of the army after demob: when Sir Frederick Goldney died sitting tenants were offered the chance to buy and he took it. Both my parents [Joseph and Emily] and us four children [Edna, Frederick, Gordon and myself] resided at No.12.



LOT 20. Coloured Blue on Plan.

THE PLEASING SEMI-DETACHED DWELLINGHOUSE known as  
**12, Pickwick**  
O.S. No. Pr. 187, Parish of Corsham.

Tenant: Mr. J. G. Smith.  
Tenancy: Monthly.  
Rent £18 4s. 0d. per annum (Landlord paying Rates).

Rateable Value £8. General and Water Rates for current year £7 6s. 0d.

The House adjoins the Old Brewery and faces on to the village street, the accommodation being:

Entrance Hall Passage.

Sitting Room (14ft. 6in. x 10ft. 9in.) with tiled grate and two built-in cupboards. Dining Room (11ft. 6in. x 11ft.) with tiled grate and built-in cupboard. Kitchenette with gas points for cooker and boiler. Larder partitioned off. Wash house with boiler, glazed sink, cold water only. Back kitchen with tiled floor, fitted dresser, fireplace.

Two Double Bedrooms (with fireplace and built-in wardrobe). Two good Attic Bedrooms, cupboard on stairs.

Outside W.C. Small Garden.

Main Gas, Water and Drainage connected.

Above, the 1947 map of Pickwick for the Goldney Sale. The 12 Pickwick lot is numbered 20. The small structures at the back of No.12 are shown here. Jill recalls these were removed in 2011. Right, the description of No.12 from the sale, listing Mr. J.G Smith (Jill's father) as a sitting tenant.

Article continues next page..



Mark, Jill's son, recalls "I seem to remember that the cost was about £450 and it took Fred 25 years to pay for it (he was a painter and decorator at Copenacre camp) – with the assistance of various other great aunts and uncles of mine who I never knew, but who chipped in so that my grandparents (Joseph and Emily, who were not in the best of health) would not be turned out. Joseph and Emily had both 'passed on' in the mid-50s and after that Fred married Oonagh, who was from Co. Cork". Mark also recalled Jill telling him that army officers were billeted in the house during WWII, sometimes Americans.

Back to Jill's recollections ~ "One of my lasting experiences which I still smile about was during the war when Queen Mary would visit army officers and stayed in the large house opposite the Hare and Hounds (I think it was owned by Oswald Brakspear). As children we would wait for ages sitting on the opposite pavement for her to leave. She would always wave to us and smile. Weren't we easily pleased?

I have several books on Corsham including Spackman's Diary. I still remember the shop in the High Street. There was great excitement at the Royal wedding as many of the bowling team were invited. Prince Philip had made friends with them as he was at 'Royal Arthur' at Neston. Most of the team was made up of local shopkeepers, Mr Ives, the butcher, Mr Daymond, the baker.

Have you found out about the farm we had in Pickwick? It was down the road from you, towards Chippenham? We always used The Drung [to go into Corsham: formerly as the Thrung, a pathway, a stretch of which in Corsham is recorded in 1570], is it still at the side of No. 8? [Yes, it is ~ Ed.] The farm was owned by the Batley's and my cousin married David, their son.



Above, Prince Philip teaching at HMS Royal Arthur, a Royal Navy establishment

Above, members of the skittles teams (including Prince Philip, back row, fourth in from the left), Kingsmoor (Royal Arthur) and Moonrakers (Corsham locals) who played at the Methuen Arms [*Spotlight*, Autumn 2017, pps. 18-19.]

*Did you know that we had a large pump at No. 12? I remember at one stage that something had gone wrong with the water supply for the whole of Pickwick and people were queuing up outside for my dad to provide full buckets of water from our pump.*

*Another bit of history is the Pickwick Trust. Sir Frederick Goldney put money in this trust fund so that any of the village children who passed the eleven plus could go to Chippenham Grammar School. Edna, Gordon and I went in turn thanks to Sir Frederick's generosity. There was one snag, you had to take your report to the rent office each time to show it. Anyway, we all survived. There was also money given for fuel for the elderly but I can't remember the details but I think it was paid at Christmas". Jill is 87 years old but writes of her memories evocatively and as though they were yesterday.*

*Another interesting aspect of correspondence with Jill was that she had come across Pat Whalley's article [*Spotlight*, Autumn 2016, pps. 13-14] and remembered Pat's parents Bill and Rose Say: "I ran errands for Rose Say as a youngster during the war". Pat responded to Jill as follows ~ My grandparents, Alfred and Rose Say, married in 1900 and by 1911 they were living in Bradford Road with a family of 6 children. Some time later they were found to be living at 14 Pickwick, presumably they needed larger accommodation and as Bill (the name Alfred was known by) was a quarry foreman at the Copenacre site, just up the road, the property would have been very convenient for his work. By 1944, when I was born, they were well established at No.14. The family had grown up and married from there and were bringing their own children to the house for family gatherings. In 1947 when part of the Goldney estate was sold off, Austin, one of the sons, bought the house for his parents for £300, giving Bill and Rose security in their later years.*

*I can remember visiting and going to play out in 'the [Pickwick] Brewery'. By this time it was little more than a scrapyard, old lorries and buses and numerous pieces of metal. It would be a Health and Safety Inspector's dream nowadays, but I don't recall ever coming to harm.*

*The house seemed very large to me, a huge kitchen (a 'living room' in which everyone congregated). An extension had been built to the side and rear to hold the 'kitchen' furniture ~ cooker, washer, etc., so there was plenty of room for family gatherings of 14+!*

*I remember that the children weren't allowed in the 'front room' or upstairs. I did once have a peek at the front room ~ it held dark and heavy Victorian furniture, but I did not venture upstairs. As a young child it all felt quite forbidding. The grandparents died in the late 50s and 60s and the house was sold on".*

With thanks to Jill, Mark and Pat Whalley [nee Say]

**John Maloney**



## Thos. Bullock, Corsham, longcase clock



With thanks to Larry St Croix for this photograph and one on the next page.

*Article continues next page...*

Recently, I was much cheered by negotiating a part-exchange of our old, failing grandfather clock for a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century one by Mr Thos. Bullock, made in Corsham [it's on the clock face!] whose shop in Pickwick Road I have worked out is now Corsham Hardware, No. 27 [see photos on next page]. The part-exchange was with a reputable antique longcase clock, barometer etc. dealer who has a shop in Swindon - <http://www.allansmithantiqueclocks.co.uk/> - and sells them all over the world: he remarked that he liked the thought of our Thos. Bullock one 'coming home' to Corsham!



Top, a wherry at sea  
Below, a pastoral scene  
[Photos.by John Maloney]



The *Bullock* is really beautifully painted as is shown by the photos. on the previous page and front cover. Either side of the 'Moon' face there is a lovely pastoral scene featuring two figures in the foreground, a church and settlement in the distance. There is also a sea scene which comes into view as the clock movement goes through the course of a month. The sea scene features a wherry, a type of sailing barge with large sails which was developed to replace earlier cargo boats. The term wherry is also associated with a particular type of lighter used on rivers. The clock on the outside wall of the Masonic Hall (see below) was also made by the same Thos. Bullock!



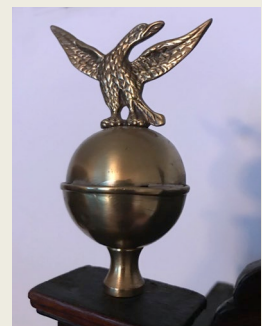
Above, is a photograph in Corsham Civic Society's book *Around Corsham* of the Bullock's shop in Pickwick Road. Above the doorway is a clock set into the wall. The picture is presumed to date from c.1890.



Above, Corsham Hardware, No. 27, which has been identified as the building in the photo. above left, on the basis of the arrangement of the dormer windows and chimney stack and the hood of what is now the Hong Kong House Chinese restaurant [far left].



Above, the Thos. Bullock clock in the frontage wall of the Masonic Hall, Pickwick



A finial on the Thos. Bullock longcase clock in No.12 Pickwick [photo. by Larry St Croix].

The clock is a typical, short door, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century 'West Country, boxwood strung, 8-day longcase clock with a 13" breakarch well-painted dial by Thomas Bullock of Corsham (1842-75). The handsome case – 88"/213.5cm tall - to top of finials - is made from good quality figured mahogany and topped by three brass ball spire finials with stylised eagles. The 8-day, 4 pillar movement has an hourly rack striking movement with a single bell. The painted dial has painted Arabic numerals, flower painted spandrels, moonphases to arch, subsidiary seconds dial, 'sad mouth' date aperture, matching blued cut steel hands and, in the lower dial centre, is signed *Thos. Bullock Corsham*.

There are two globes: the one on the left features the Americas and New Zealand and to the left are marked the Eastern Ocean, South Sea and Pacific; whilst to the right are marked New Foundland and the Bahamas and the Atlantic Ocean. The globe on the right features Eurasia and Africa and to the right are marked the Canaries, Sirbeia and the Etheopian Sea. On the landmass are marked France, Norway, Europe, Sebiria, Russian Empire, Persia, Tartary, Asia, India, Bombay Barbary, Negroland, Egypt, Guinea and the Cape of Good Hope. To the right are marked Japan, Philippine Islands, Indian Sea, Madagascar and New [? South] Wales.

The history of the Bullock family has been researched by Pat Whalley.\* They were clockmakers in Box, Corsham and the local area for some 200 years, although it is possible that they date back even earlier. It seems that one Zephaniah Bullock, born about 1725, is first identified in Box in the early 1750s, when his children were baptised in the local church. His occupation is shown as a *watch & clockmaker*. After marriage to Elizabeth Shell at Box, they produced seven children, all boys. Zephaniah (2), the eldest, also described himself as a *watch and clockmaker*. Five of the sons can later be proved on various censuses to be married and set up in business as watchmakers.

Now the family spread out a little – the children of Zephaniah (2) were born in Bradford, Trowbridge, Corsham and Box. His brother Thomas (1) had a son born in Melksham. Further down the line they branched out towards Corsham and Chippenham. The Bullocks were now well established and must have been well-known in this local area as watch and clock makers of repute. Thomas (2) Bullock of Box 1795, fifth son of Zephaniah (2), married Elizabeth and had seven children – two boys, who naturally became watchmakers, and five girls.

\* *Two Hundred Years of Box Clockmakers*, Pat Whalley, (December 2014), Box People and Places, Issue 28 Summer 2020.

## Bullocks in Corsham

In 1839 Thomas (2) had a business in Lacock Road, Corsham, and in 1848 he was located at Pickwick Road. Following the death of Thomas (2) about 1851 the family remained in Pickwick Road and Thomas (3) (born 1821) moved from Priory Lane [now 'Street'], where he had settled with his wife Mary and six children, to help to run the business. Thomas (3) is shown in local trades' directories between 1861 and 1881 as conducting the business from Pickwick Road. His son, Stephen Merrett duly took over the responsibility from about 1885.

It is known that there was a further clock from this period placed above the main door of Clock House, Box (since demolished to make room for the Co-op store) - see picture below right. Stephen is also known to have produced a turret clock for Neston Park stables in 1859.

Apparently, that is where the information dried up in respect of the Corsham Bullocks but Pat had some further historical details about Bullocks in Box and Chippenham into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, Pat noted that there were many Bullocks recorded in WW1 but that was something to be pursued perhaps later.

Pat also produced a detailed and useful family tree and I commend Pat's research.



Only-known picture of Clock House, Box, now Co-op (courtesy Jane Browning)

**John Maloney**



## The effects of 'lockdown' in Corsham in 2020.

In November, this year, a second period of 'lockdown' was enforced by the Government on England. This follows on from the previous national 'lockdown' which started on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. For both these periods the community of Corsham and the surrounding area has worked together to ensure that the coronavirus stayed at bay. Back in March, the shops that could stay open, under the Government restrictions, worked hard to ensure the safety of all their customers and for that we are all tremendously grateful. It would not be fair to name individual establishments, and their efforts, to ensure customers received the goods and products, but in total, nobody in our community went short of food or other necessary items. The second 'lockdown' is running smoothly with several extra shops trading safely within regulations and we trust everyone in the area will support them. The Corsham Town Council, giving all those people who wish to park their cars in the Wiltshire Council's 3 car parks, free parking for 2 hours has also been a boon and a great boost to the town's economy. Car parks are full most of the time meaning people are shopping in town, which is excellent for all our shopkeepers.

One establishment even managed to move premises back in March. Dan Rich, owner of Corsham Hardware, who has traded in Corsham for the last 13 years, moved from the Martingate Centre to Pickwick Road, next door to Hong Kong House. Dan, with son Toby, and their part and fulltime staff, worked hard for several weeks moving stock from one building to the other. Today, in Corsham, we have a hardware shop to be proud of and Dan tells me that people come from Chippenham, Melksham and other areas, to purchase goods and seek advice. Well done, Dan & Toby, you have given us another shop in town to be proud of, good luck for the future.

**NB** The shop has a second – very handy – entrance from Corsham High Street Car Park, off Newlands Road.



**Above**, Corsham Hardware frontage, 27 Pickwick Road

**Right**, Dan Brown and his son Toby



**Michael Rumsey**

## **OUR WORLD IN CRISIS AGAIN: CORSHAM'S RESPONSE, THEN AND NOW**

Lately there has been time to reflect on the way ordinary people react to situations which are forced upon them through no fault of their own. Our world, our nation and our town are in such a position now that a disease has come into our midst and we must do all we can to suppress it, which results in cities, towns and workplaces closing for the duration. But the human race is not quite like that. If something occurs which is a threat to our families, friends and neighbours, then we want to go out and DO something to help in whatever way we can.

Such is the response today and has often been the response in the past. Two world wars in the last century are prime examples. We are well informed today about the how people are going out of their way to help in the present crisis. There are so many volunteers: Community Response teams for delivery of shopping, prescriptions etc; Patient Transport volunteers to get people into or out of hospital and NHS Transport volunteers to transport equipment and supplies and assist pharmacies. There are people who will give telephone support to the lonely and isolated. Also, those who give of their time and expertise to raise money for the NHS and numerous other charities. Others are running food banks or sewing masks and protective equipment for use wherever it might be needed. Volunteers are also making use of technology to organise and keep in contact with all these ongoing enterprises.

But what of Corsham and our surrounding area during WWI and WWII? We recently commemorated Corsham in WWI and obtained many stories of how people contributed then and more recently we are remembering VE & VJ Day at the end of WWII.

The people of Corsham, and the surrounding villages came together in 1914-18, as now, to do whatever they could to help the war effort, the families who were left at home and the soldiers who came to Corsham Town Hall Hospital from the battlefields. It is known that there were at least 346 volunteers at our hospital, a third of which comprised clothes washing, potato peeling, cooking and kitchen work, collecting eggs, sewing, mending and any other sundry menial tasks which may have arisen. Then there were the nurses, doctors, orderlies and ambulance drivers and attendants. There were also people in the town who gave lodgings to nurses as and when they needed it.

We also know that there were sewing and knitting groups out in the villages, led by local ladies of some authority and locals were issued with shirts or socks to repair, patterns to make garments, as well as knitted hats for soldiers, which were in great demand.

*Article continues next page..*



Towards the end of October, a parcel containing 118 knitted belts and 138 pairs of socks was sent as a contribution from the women of Corsham towards the gift from the Queen and women of the Empire to the troops at the front. *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Newspaper published on 20th November 1914.*

As for 1939-45, similar acts of kindness were re-enacted in the town. We did not have the hospital of course, but the ladies who were left at home were knitting those dreadful, scratchy khaki socks on 4 needles. I can remember being taught to 'turn a heel' in those days. Balaclavas and jumpers were also required. People were endeavouring to feed and clothe those who did not have as much as others. School children were issued with milk and orange juice to boost their lack of food. Rationing was the order of the day, and things like 1 oz of cheese a week and 2 eggs per person were not very much on which to feed a family. Gardens were essential during both these periods, planting potatoes, cabbages, onions, and other staples which must have helped families considerably.

I am sure that there have been - and will be - other similar occasions when people come forward for the good of their neighbours, but these three events in particular seem to resonate as a demonstration of the kindness, generosity and resolution that is shown when 'the chips are down'.

Thank you everyone, particularly in Corsham and the surrounding area, for all the help you have given and are still giving. You are much appreciated.

## Pat Whalley

### Corsham's new food delivery service

And in keeping with the spirit of supporting local businesses [see p. 32] including those that transport local supplies to your door, the leaflet opposite is for a new business that will provide fine food to your house, literally, 'Without fuss'!

It comes highly recommended by Negley Harte, Hon. Vice-President of the Corsham Civic Society!

**Without Fuss**  
EAT WITH US!

Corsham's new food delivery service  
Beautiful food cooked in our home, delivered to yours!

1. View our changing weekly menu online
2. Message, Whatsapp, Email, or call us by 11am on day of delivery to order
3. Enjoy your meal cooked fresh to order

[www.withoutfuss.co.uk](http://www.withoutfuss.co.uk)  
T: 07719 572482



## Planning matters

### ***A note on recent national planning issues***

When the government launched the *Planning for the Future* consultation on 6<sup>th</sup> August, proposing radical changes to the planning system, two main aims received much attention ~

- Government sets out plans to overhaul outdated planning system and reform the way the country builds
- Plans to streamline process, cut red tape and harness technology to deliver homes faster

One measure that caught the attention and concern of many local people and organisations was to remove the statutory requirement for councils to publicise planning notices in local newspapers.

A national survey found that two thirds of all local councillors believe the majority of consultation with the public should happen on a proposal-by-proposal basis rather than when proposed broad local plans are devised. The planning reforms unveiled by the housing secretary, Robert Jenrick, immediately drew sharp criticism. Under the proposals, planning applications based on pre-approved "design codes" would get an automatic green light – eliminating a whole stage of local oversight within designated zones. Land across England would be divided into three categories – for growth, renewal or protection – under what Jenrick described as "once in a generation changes to sweep away an outdated planning system and boost building". The government's parallel proposal to use an algorithm to set new housing targets for local areas in order to meet a national annual housebuilding target of 333,000 new homes has also caused widespread concern. Conservative Leaders of councils became increasingly vocal in their opposition to the plans which they feared could result in the countryside being concreted over for housing.

North Wiltshire MP, James Gray, wrote to the secretary of state, Robert Jenrick to raise his two main concerns ~

*"First, the rule that if a Neighbourhood Plan is more than two-years-old, then it can be trumped by a shortfall in the five-year housing land supply. That effectively negates the value in the Neighbourhood Planning system. What's the point in going to all the trouble and expense of creating a Neighbourhood Plan if it is overruled two years later?"*

*"And Secondly," he said "there is a fundamental flaw in the method of calculating the five-year housing land supply figures. Land on which planning permission has been granted, but on which developers have not yet started building does not count. Developers are thereby incentivised to delay the start of building until the very last minute since by doing so they stand a better chance of getting permission on land which would otherwise not be available to them. That drives a coach and horses through the Neighbourhood Planning process."*

*Article continues next page...*

Many Conservative MPs criticised the government's proposed reforms during a Commons debate in October, including Theresa May. In the latest development, it has been reported that the Housing Secretary has confirmed a rethink over the controversial planning system reforms.

### **Local matters**

The saga of the DJ Bewley Funeral Directors' 'funeral parlour' in Corsham High Street continues. Despite being recommended for refusal by Corsham Town Council, the application had then been approved by Wiltshire Council despite objections to the change of use application. Latterly, Wiltshire Council Ward member for the Corsham area, Ruth Hopkinson, submitted a *Called-in* notification and at the resulting Northern Area Planning Committee the Wiltshire Council approval was overturned. Ruth observed, "Apart from this being an inappropriate spot for a funeral parlour because of [lack of] access, I think the planners got this wrong. There is only a temporary parking bay outside which means if they need to make a delivery, they will have to cone off the area or park up the road elsewhere and wheel the trolleys down". Most recently, the overturned decision was appealed and will now be considered by the Planning Inspectorate at a date to be announced.

Ruth stated that "These premises have been used as a funeral parlour for a number of months, even before the application was submitted". A resident who lives a few doors away from the site said, "We have seen bodies wheeled down the pavement and in through the front door as these premises has no rear entrance".

### **Gigaclear comes to town**

Gigaclear is an internet service provider (ISP) like BT or TalkTalk, which offers high-speed broadband of up to 1Gbps in rural UK areas. It provides its high-speed internet service to both private homes as well as businesses. They have what are referred to as 'code-powers to work where we need' as this is regarded by government as an essential piece of infrastructure.

Early in October, it leafletted Pickwick residents about its intention to start work laying cables and it was noted that the work was part of the Wiltshire Online project. Following a town council briefing on 12<sup>th</sup> October, representatives of the company and its contractors met residents on site at both Woodlands and Beechfield. They appeared to take on board residents' concerns, particularly regarding the need to make use, wherever possible, of BT ducting so as to avoid trenching through, for example, block paving. Given this is not part of a strategic network in Pickwick but a private speculation, it can probably be assumed that an attractive Gigaclear connection offer is likely to follow given the government's target to connect everyone by 2033.



Gigaclear working outside 12-16 Pickwick, A4 Bath Road: generally, residents found the contractors to be considerate and helpful.

### **Care UK care home planning proposal**

Over the last three months the matter of a proposal by Care UK for a care home - on one of the last two open sites with fields coming down to the road north of the A4 in Pickwick - has 'exercised' the emotions of local people. The other site - well known to *Spotlight* readers is that opposite St. Patrick's Church on the A4 Bath Road which has been the subject of many reports [*Spotlight* issues *passim*]: that application is still awaiting a new Public Enquiry date.

Regarding the Care UK application, below is an objection that I registered with Wiltshire Council on their planning website.

#### **CORSHAM PICKWICK WARD 20/08255/FUL**

Land to the North of Bath Road: Construction of an 80-bedroom Care Home (Use Class C2), with associated access, parking, landscaping and site infrastructure [see planning application diagram on next page].

On behalf of the Pickwick Association, I [John Maloney] organised a meeting on 4 September 2020 in Pickwick with Andrew Ryley, [Director of Planning DLBP Ltd.], with David Gannon [Head of Acquisitions, Care UK] in attendance and just twelve local residents [more wanted to attend but that was the limit due to social distancing]. DLBP insisted on calling it a pre-planning submission public consultation 'through feedback in lieu of a public consultation event' - eg an exhibition - 'due to coronavirus'. Originally, their proposed consultation consisted of filling in an online comments form based on very scant details, mainly, a glossy 3-D visual slide show: that was regarded as a "fishing expedition" to try to find out what the likely objections were and take steps to try to 'head them off' and so they were pressed for a meeting. In preparation for the meeting, DLBP were strongly urged to forward technical details of their proposals but in the event the same very limited details that had previously appeared on the website were all that was made available. The Localism Act places the onus on developers to pay more than lip service to community consultation during the pre-application planning stage and makes the degree of consultation a material consideration at the determination stage.



Open field opposite Priory Street, on the north side of the A4 Bath Road. Sheep are often in it and it is a reminder of how rural Pickwick formerly was ~ photo. courtesy of Tony Clark. and the Pickwick Association

*Article continues next page...*



The key to that requirement is the extent to which the developer provides sufficient detail for the public to be able to fully understand the proposal ~ that obligation was a long way short of being fulfilled. Therefore, as far as Pickwick Association and local residents who attended the meeting are concerned, the meeting and 'glossy brochure' about the proposal certainly didn't qualify as a pre-planning submission consultation and, on that basis alone, the planning application should be rejected.

Also, we were disappointed that at the meeting, despite an undertaking to reconsider the location of the kitchen block etc. close to neighbouring residential properties, the proposal was not amended in the planning application. The kitchen block/maintenance stores/plant room with laundry and staff rooms above on the second floor are shown next to Woodlands and, in particular, opposite No.30. Deliveries to the kitchen, the use of extractor fans, staff breaks etc. etc., are likely to result in notable noise levels. The recommendation was that this block should be located well away from existing residents, preferably at the NE corner of the site. That has further reinforced the feeling that the consultation was not a serious effort to engage with local residents and consider amendments to the proposed scheme.



Planning application plan showing the proposed 80 units etc., on the Wiltshire Council planning website ~

<https://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MjAvMDgyNTUvRlVMLDE0MzU5NzE=> :

*Article continues next page...*

The arguments against this planning application have been set out by Corsham Town Council which Resolved: to recommend refusal of the application in the strongest terms on the grounds that:

- i) *The proposed site is inappropriate as it is outside the settlement boundary and the proposal would have a negative impact on both neighbouring properties and the Conservation Area.*
- ii) *The mass of the proposed built form would represent overdevelopment of the site.*
- iii) *The needs assessment is flawed as it does not take account of the extant permissions at Copenacre and Wadswick Green, or that there is capacity in the existing local care homes or the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- iv) *The design was felt to be inappropriate for the location.* v) *Drainage issues at the rear of the site.*
- v) *Drainage issues at the rear of the site.*
- vi) *Highways considerations including capacity on the A4 especially at peak times; the fact there is nowhere to wait to turn right into the site would cause issues on the A4 and the number of junctions in a very small section of the A4.*
- vii) *The parking provision was inadequate – only 32 spaces when there would be 65 staff on site daily at shift change times.*
- viii) *Increased pressure on existing infrastructure especially doctors and dentists.*
- ix) *Concern regarding the carbon footprint of the proposal.*
- x) *It was also felt that more could be achieved in terms of net gain for biodiversity.*



The site (in blue); the Conservation Area boundary (red line) and listed buildings (dark green). No. 19 Pickwick is right on the boundary and No.17 adjoins it, both are LBs. Also, properties in Woodlands [just above the red line to the N] are close.

Drawing courtesy of Tony Clark and the Pickwick Association.

*Article continues next page..*

*The proposal was also felt to be contrary to the Corsham Neighbourhood Plan policies ED1 and HE1 and Housing Objective HK06. The application had not taken into account the Corsham Design Guide in respect of P83 'known flooding issue on the A4 next to Woodlands'; the development and road pattern should follow the 'more open, suburban structure in the housing estates to the north and south'; the concerns of P86 that the 'A4 takes a high volume of traffic and becomes congested at times' which would be exacerbated by this proposal; P87 which deals with views and states 'ensure views to the countryside are retained from the A4, through future development areas' and with regard to parking 'the A4 should be kept free of parked cars' and that 'parking courts are not appropriate in this area'.*

*The Town Council requested that the Wiltshire Councillor for the site [Ruth Hopkinson] call-in the application.*

The proposal is contrary to many principles set out in the *draft Pickwick Conservation Area Appraisal* [see below] shortly to be circulated for public consultation. My wife and I absolutely agree with and support the above points and on that basis recommend that the planning application be refused by Wiltshire Council.

John & Cath Maloney

There have been **42** objections - including that of the Pickwick Association - which is quite a notable number. It is encouraging that Ruth Hopkinson (Corsham Town councillor and the Wiltshire Councillor for the area has submitted a *Call-in* notice which means that if the planning case officer is minded to approve the application it will be forwarded to the [Wiltshire] Northern Area Planning Committee to consider and determine, the planning application which falls outside the remit of the usual Wiltshire Strategic Planning Committee.

## KEY DATES

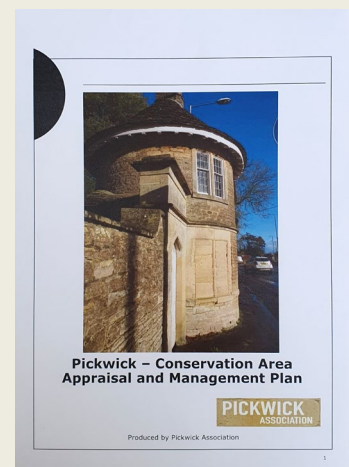
**Consultation expiry:** Thursday 5 November, 2020

**Target date for decision** Thursday 24 December, 2020

## ***Pickwick Conservation Area Appraisal***

Tony Clark and John Maloney have completed the 70-page draft of the final text and it should shortly be possible to initiate the public consultation process. A recent principal addition had been a fine introduction written by Tom Brakspear on 'what makes Pickwick special'.

*Article continues next page..*





## Welcome to SID in Pickwick but where has he gone?

A SID (Speed Indicator Device) appeared in Pickwick in September. Since then it has only been there sporadically. I contacted Anthea White (a town councillor, Corsham Pickwick Ward) and she explained 'We only have one in Corsham at the present time, which is used on a rota in other areas. Apparently, the reason given is that the A4 one is "used" more than in other areas of Corsham, and so the element/battery runs out more quickly. I have requested that we have another SID in Corsham, which will allow the A4 one to be reinstated soon'.

James Whittleton (Head of Technical Services, Corsham Town Council) provided the speed data information as follows :

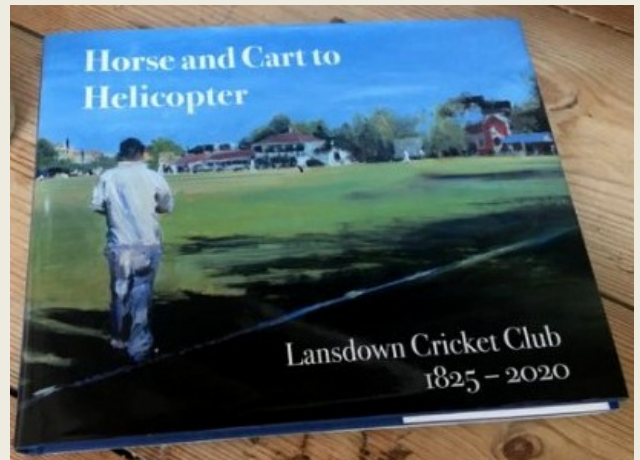
Our average speed between August 24 and 2 Sept was: In ...24.45 mph and but the max. speed recorded was 71 mph!! Out.... 27.21 mph and the max speed was 72 mpg!! We look forward to the return of the SID!



The SID in Pickwick

## And now for some cricket news ....

David Taylor, Chairman of the Pickwick Association has found time to contribute to '*Horse and Cart to Helicopter, The History of Lansdown Cricket Club*' edited by Stephen Chalke. The book starts with its foundation in 1825, but it moves through the years to 1970 with some speed, highlighting the most interesting stories, before settling to a fuller portrait of the club during its past fifty years. These are years in which



Lansdown Cricket Club has had to face fresh challenges. It has enjoyed moments of great glory, winning the Western League three times in the 1980s and 1990s. You can read of the great Viv Richards playing for Lansdown as a stepping stone towards international greatness, just as WG Grace had done many years before.

Copies are now available from Lansdown Cricket Club -

<https://www.lansdowncricketclub.co.uk/news/horse-and-cart-to-helicopter--preorder-your-copy-now-2548177.html>

**John Maloney**

## Notes on some trade tokens from Corsham and Wiltshire in the 17<sup>th</sup> century

### Introduction

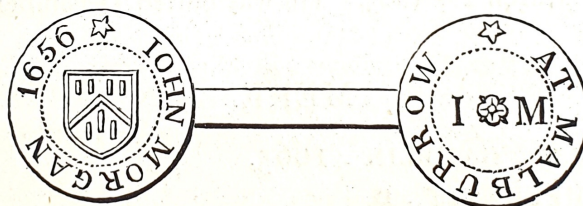
From the 17th to the early 19th century in the British Isles and North America, tokens were commonly issued by merchants in times of acute shortage of coins of the state. These tokens were in effect a pledge redeemable in goods, but not necessarily for currency. They tokens never received official sanction from government but were accepted and circulated quite widely. In England, the production of copper farthings was permitted by royal licence in the first few decades of the 17th century, but production ceased during the English Civil War and a great shortage of small change resulted. This shortage was felt more keenly because of the rapid growth of trade in the towns and cities, and this in turn prompted both local authorities and merchants to issue tokens.

These tokens were most commonly made of copper or brass, but pewter, lead and occasionally leather tokens are also found. Most were not given a specific denomination and were intended to be a substitute for farthings, but there are also a large number of halfpenny and sometimes penny tokens. Halfpenny and penny tokens usually, but not always, bear the denomination on their face.

Most such tokens show the issuer's full name or initials. Where initials were shown, it was common practice to show three initials: the first names of husband and wife and their surname. Tokens would also normally indicate the merchant establishment, either by name or by picture. Most were round, but they are also found in square, heart or octagonal shapes.

I37. O. IOHN . MORGAN . 1656 = The Grocers' Arms.  
R. AT . MALBVRROW = I . M.

$\frac{1}{4}$



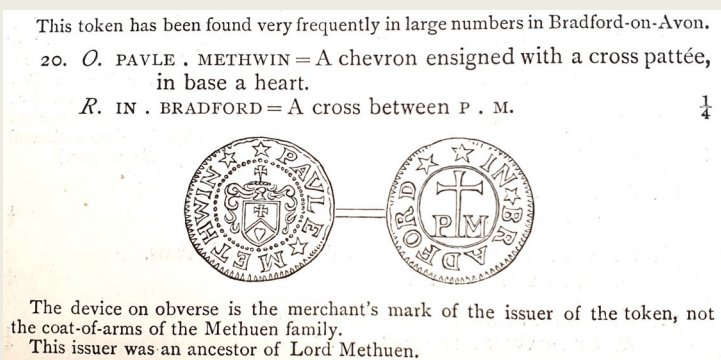
A 1656 Marlborough token featuring the name 'John Morgan' and the Grocers' arms

Tokens were issued by merchants in payment for goods with the agreement that they would be redeemed in goods to an equivalent value at the merchants' own outlets. The transaction is therefore one of barter, with the tokens playing a role of convenience, allowing the seller to receive his goods at a rate and time convenient to himself, and the merchant to tie the holder of the token coin to his shop. Trade tokens often gradually changed into barter tokens, as evidenced by the continued circulation of former trade tokens when the need for their use had passed.

*Article continues next page...*

There were again coin shortages in the late 18th century, when the British Royal Mint almost ceased production. Merchants once again produced tokens, but they were now machine made and typically larger than their 17th century predecessors, with values of a halfpenny or more. While many were used in trade, they were also produced for advertising and political purposes, and some series were produced for the primary purpose of sale to collectors. These tokens are usually known as Conder tokens, after the writer of the first reference book on them.

In Wiltshire tokens were mainly of ordinary character. They were all halfpence and farthings, there being no pennies amongst the series. They commence early, one of them, issued by John Gage of Bradford on Avon, bearing the date of 1649 and continue until 1671 (almost the last year in which tokens were permitted to circulate).



A 17<sup>th</sup> century Salisbury farthing token marked 'Sarum' (the historic name of Salisbury)

Above, a token frequently found in Bradford-on-Avon issued by an ancestor of Lord Methuen

The number of tokens issued in Salisbury is unusually large for one place and reflect the commercial importance of the city in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. One particularly notable example is that of a copper alloy farthing trade token dating to 1659 of George Godfrey, a rat catcher featuring what is meant to be a depiction of a rat that looks more like a rabbit!

<https://salisburymuseum.wordpress.com/2020/10/20/volunteers-process-salisbury-trade-tokens/>.

More usually, in Wiltshire many trades were represented on tokens, for instance, mercers (many), grocers (in Devizes, of the fourteen issuers known from the town, eight were grocers), salters, clothworkers, weavers, pinner, haberdashers, skinner, cordwainer, tallowchandler, candlemaker, butcher, baker, brewer, inn, ironmonger, apothecary etc. Cities and towns were represented by their coats of arms. There are also quite a variety of animals depicted: horses, doves, bulls, apes, bears, goats, cocks, foxes, geese, stags, nags, greyhounds, lions, camels etc., More unusual are spectacles, sugar loaves, a true lover's knot, dragons, mermaids, skulls, angels, the Virgin Mary, a Paschal lamb, books, ships, anchors, etc.

Opposite, a 1665 token for Marlborough, Oliver Shropshire proprietor of the Angel Inn



*Article continues next page...*



These notes were prompted by a Corsham token coin owned by James Methuen-Campbell who kindly sent me photographs below.



From a quarter to the hour is  
A<sup>D</sup>. DA<sup>D</sup>. WOODMAN



From twenty to the hour is IN. CORSHAM

CORSHAM.	
59. O. WILLIAM . GIBBONS = W . G. and a true lovers' knot. R. CORSHAM = (detrited).	
60. O. EDW . SALWAY . CLOTHES = A pair of shears. R. IN . CORSHAM . WILTS = E . K . S.	$\frac{1}{4}$
61. O. EDITH . A <sup>D</sup> . DA <sup>D</sup> . WOODMAN = A still. R. MERSER . IN . CORSHAM = D . M . W.	$\frac{1}{4}$

The three tokens are known from Corsham are described above : from the C. Williamson pamphlet ~ see bottom of next page

Obverse (O) refers to the 'front/head' side of a coin or medal bearing the head or principal design and sometimes the year it was minted and reverse (R)) to the 'back/tails' side which often has initials or a more symbolic representation.

Number 61 is James Methuen-Campbell's farthing which is of unknown date:

**Obverse:** in centre, a [distillation] still; around edge, EDITH AD DAD WOODMAN

**Reverse:** in centre D . M . W , around the edge MERSER [cloth merchant] IN CORSHAM

Edith was also known as Edith Edwards and was born in 1577 and died in July 1654. She was the wife of Edward Woodman and had six children. There are a number of Woodman graves in St Bartholomew's but I've not been able to locate one for Edith.

*Article continues next page...*

Of the other two Corsham tokens, that of William Gibbons with a true lover's knot represents a more personal use: these tiny objects were used as markers of people's lives. Love tokens – sometimes in the shape of hearts – marked expected events such as birth and betrothal, apprenticeship and trades. They also marked unexpected events such as imprisonment. On an initial reading, love tokens convey expressions of love and affection. Yet when viewed from the perspective of popular literature they were inscribed in the knowledge that not all hoped-for promises of love, fidelity, loyalty and remembrance would be fulfilled.

By contrast, that of Edward Salway, clothier, indicated by a pair of shears, is an example to be expected from such a town as Corsham, given Wiltshire's well-established cloth trade. Indeed, in Wiltshire and neighbouring counties the wool trade is well represented with depictions of shears, woolcards, woolcombs, woolpacks, woolsacks etc.



17<sup>th</sup> tokens from Taunton representing (left) a woolcard surrounded by 'Henry Dunscombe' and dated 1654 on the reverse and (right) a woolsack surrounded by 'Hugh Gaye' and dated 1666 on the reverse

Trade tokens are an interesting aspect of economic and social history and whereas 17<sup>th</sup> century examples are, generally, advertisements for tradespersons and corporations, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century they sometimes included slogans for political and social change. A particularly famous issue was a half-penny token produced for the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, with the image of the enslaved African kneeling in chains, inscribed *Am I not a man and a brother* (opposite).



\* Much of the information above derives from *Trade tokens issued in the Seventeenth Century in the County of Wiltshire by Corporations, Merchants, tradesmen etc.* by George C. Williamson [1889]

**John Maloney**

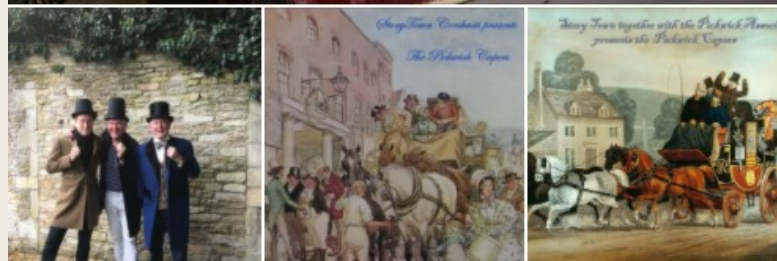
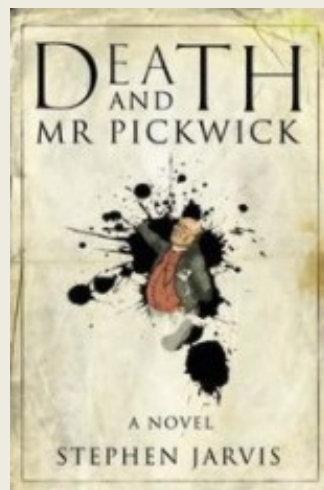
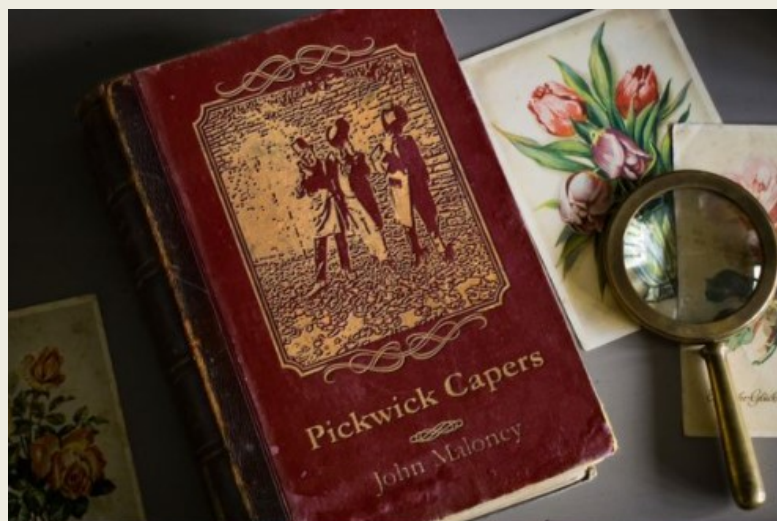


## Stephen Jarvis, author of *Death and Mr Pickwick* extols *Pickwick Capers*!

On his Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/deathandmrpickwick> - Stephen Jarvis uploaded the following post ~

*As you know, I am taking a temporary break from daily posts while working on my next novel. Well, the other day my research required contacting some archaeologists - and my query was referred to a gentleman called John Maloney. To my amazement, John has read *Death and Mr Pickwick*, which he describes as a "remarkable first novel"! But that's not all - John was involved in writing and producing a show called *Pickwick Capers*! This is what he said: "In 2019, when an organisation called StoryTown was inviting communities in the South-West to write stories, plays etc, I on behalf of the Pickwick Association [we live in Pickwick on the edge of Corsham which Dickens took for his title], conceived 'an entertainment involving recitation, singing, drama etc.' entitled *Pickwick Capers*, together with the talented Marnie Eldridge Forbes (a vivacious drama teacher and playwright). It involved PA members, the local community and a local school Corsham Regis School and was a great success!"*

*The show included readings from *The Pickwick Papers*, a rousing performance of "What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor" and even a scene recreating the discovery of the foundling Moses Pickwick in 1694. I wish I had seen the show - but I can at least give a taste of the entertainment with these four pictures [below] which John has just emailed me.*



Above, Stephen's book cover. For *Pickwick Capers* review, see *Spotlight*, Autumn 2019 issue, pps. 7-9.

**John Maloney**



# CORSHAM CIVIC SOCIETY 2021

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.

<b>Jan 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	Dr. Burroughs BEM, <b>'The Wonderful World of Glass'</b>
<b>Feb</b>	<b>New Year Lunch</b>
<b>March 26<sup>th</sup></b>	Tim Beale, Bath Museum Manager for Bath Preservation Trust, <b>'History of Architectural Photography'</b>
<b>April 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	David Dawson, Director, Wiltshire Museum, <b>'Wiltshire horses and downland man'</b>
<b>May 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>AGM at Corsham Town Hall</b> followed by a social gathering
<b>June 25<sup>th</sup></b>	Richard Cripps, Senior Lecturer, Lackham College, <b>'Britain's woodland heritage'</b>
<b>July 23<sup>rd</sup></b>	Colin Maggs MBE, MA, Ret'd teacher and railway historian, <b>'Bath tramways'</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>No meeting</b> ~ Summer visit or tea TBA
<b>Sept 24<sup>th</sup></b>	John Maloney, <b>'Update on the Corsham High Street Project'</b>
<b>Oct 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	Ben Thomas, Reader in History of Art, University of Kent, <b>'How art should be displayed'</b>
<b>Nov 26<sup>th</sup></b>	Stuart Burrowes, Museum of Bath at Work, <b>'Harbutts of Bathampton'</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>No meeting</b>

- **Please note that the Programme may be subject to changes: *beforehand, please check our website - <https://www.corshamcivicsociety.co.uk/> - or the CCS noticeboard on the wall of Grounded or contact a committee member.***
- **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 Close, Corsham, SN13 9JQ, Wiltshire. Registered Charity No: 275321