



Corsham Spotlight

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

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Contents

From the Chair	1
Editorial	2
Snow photographs	3
Pat Whalley retires	4
Review of <i>Logomotive</i>	5
Ian Logan, designer	6
Steam trains	8
From America ~ Maine	10
Brenda Forbes	13
George McDonic	14
Fore-edge painted books	16
Dr Sydney Alford RIP	19
Pickwick knockers	21
Pickwick Winter Tales	22
Wiltshire Life	23
Planning matters	24
Books	26

*Contributions to
Spotlight are very
welcome. Please
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Middlewick Lane, Pickwick ~ photo. by Larry St Croix

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From the Chair.

It's more than 4 months ago since I wrote my last 'From the Chair' piece, doesn't time fly these days. For the last 3 months we have all been through another 'lockdown' period which has seen the numbers of Covid sufferers in hospital drop down considerably while to date (March 25th) 31,186,362 people have received the 1st or 2nd vaccine injections. For that we must say a huge 'thank you' to the NHS and all the volunteers who have helped to co-ordinate this effort to ensure the UK population are safe and sound.

In May we say farewell and thank you to two of our local Wiltshire Councillors, Philip Whalley, member for Corsham Town and Ben Anderson, Councillor for Corsham Without and Box Hill. It's not easy being a Councillor for any type of council, whether local and or county wide but we are indebted to Philip and Ben for all their hard work, on our behalf, and for the advice they have given over the years.

If you have walked along Corsham High Street recently you will have noticed the replacement paving slabs that have been fitted to replace quite a number of broken or lost stones. Wiltshire Council, along with Corsham Town Council, have done a fine job in ensuring we have safer pavements to walk upon, thank you.

Thank you also to a number of this Society's Life Members who have kindly made donations to help with day to day expenses of this organisation, their help is much appreciated by the Executive Committee. You will also notice in this edition that we are saying goodbye to our long serving committee member Pat Whalley. I visited Pat in her new home, in Broughton Gifford, this week and I'm pleased to report she has settled in very well and looks forward to seeing members and friends at meetings, once they start again.

I look forward to welcoming members and visitors to our programme of meetings once the Pound Arts Centre is able to open. We hope that our meeting in June, with Richard Cripps, from Lackham College, speaking on the subject of 'Britain's Woodland Heritage' will take place, the first meeting for nearly 18 months. Until then, take care, enjoy the prospect of Summer on the horizon and keep fit and well.

Michael Rumsey

Editorial

This issue includes another article in a series from our American member, Larry Porges, about the USA: his previous articles attracted favourable comments from members who had travelled in America. The CCS 'mission statement' is *to represent the people of Corsham in all aspects of conservation, preservation and the promotion of the town*. But for some time articles offered about Corsham and even Wiltshire have become more infrequent, with a few notable exceptions eg our Chair and Pat Whalley, and so sometimes the 'net' has had to be cast wider. Let's have those writers amongst you sending contributions about Corsham and its environs. A recent welcome addition has been articles from Stuart Boydell.

Well done Pat Whalley on her many years of service to the CCS, and to her and Julian Carosi for their books about Corsham ~ our Chair recently mentioned to me that members and others appreciated Pat's books for their interest and range and because they were not overly 'academic' and the same applies to Julian Carosi [see p. 28].

Talking about contributions, the CCS Facebook page has been in operation continuously from at least 17th December 2013 where it drew attention to an article in *Spotlight* called 'Step back into Corsham's cinematic past'. The page has 116 followers and is the only CCS social media outlet and, therefore, the main means of anyone who is not a member engaging with the society. In effect, it facilitates potentially worldwide connections, and interaction with the society which is not a function of the CCS website. The most recent example of its 'outreach' is in connecting Jill Avis [who lives in Essex but formerly of Pickwick] with the society, resulting in an article in the last issue [pps. 25-7]. In my article *The Hell that was Corsham* [Spring 2020, pps. 7-9] I referred to an article in The Irish Post I had not been able to date but 'out of the ether' of Facebook a man who had worked for The Post in the 1980s posted a response usefully dating it to the mid-1980s.

Also, on the Facebook page mention is regularly made of *Spotlight* ie *Our latest magazine is now available online, along with back issues* and of significant Corsham events not necessarily covered by the magazine ie if they occur in between issues.

Bit of a wintry theme in this issue, what with Larry St Croix's evocative photos. of Pickwick and Middlewick in the January snow [next page, 3] and the publication of *Pickwick Winter Tales* [p. 20]. Also, this issue is notable for the number of deaths being commemorated.

From 12th April, we can look forward to commencing a welcome return to normality.

John Maloney

Pickwick and Middlewick in the January snow



Photos. by Larry St Croix, collage by John Maloney

50+ years of service to the Society

This Spring sees the departure from Corsham of one of the Civic Society's longest serving Committee members, Pat Whalley. Corsham born Pat is taking the opportunity of downsizing and moving to Broughton Gifford to stay with her son David and family. For Pat this has been a difficult decision to make, but she now feels that perhaps after this last year of national health and welfare issues, it's time to move.

Pat has been a member of the CCS for 54 years and during that time she has been the Society's Secretary, twice, 1970/71 and 1994 to 2006, the editor of Spotlight from its inception in 2003 until 2011, Programme Organiser from 2019

until 2021 plus serving on a range of committees, the Mayo project, possible demolition of Osborne House, the Corsham Station Campaign, (still on-going), Heritage Open Days, the Corsham High Street Project, and celebrating the 100th anniversary of the First World War.

Pat has also written and published 5 paperbacks with Corsham connections, those being: *History of RNSD Copenacre*, *Corsham Facts and Folklore*, *Corsham Memories from 1910*, *Corsham Memories – the Prefab Years* and *The Shadow of Mary Deane [The diaries of a Victorian gentlewoman]*.

As you can see Pat has kept herself busy over the years and we shall certainly miss her contributions at the Committee meetings and her thoughts on future programme of talks. It was a great pleasure for me, on behalf of the Society, to make Pat an Honorary Vice President and I know she will continue to support the Society in the years to come and attend meetings and events as they occur. Thank you Pat for your 54 years of help, advice and general knowledge of Corsham which we have all appreciated.

'The Society needs you – we are looking for a new Programme Organiser, can you help?'

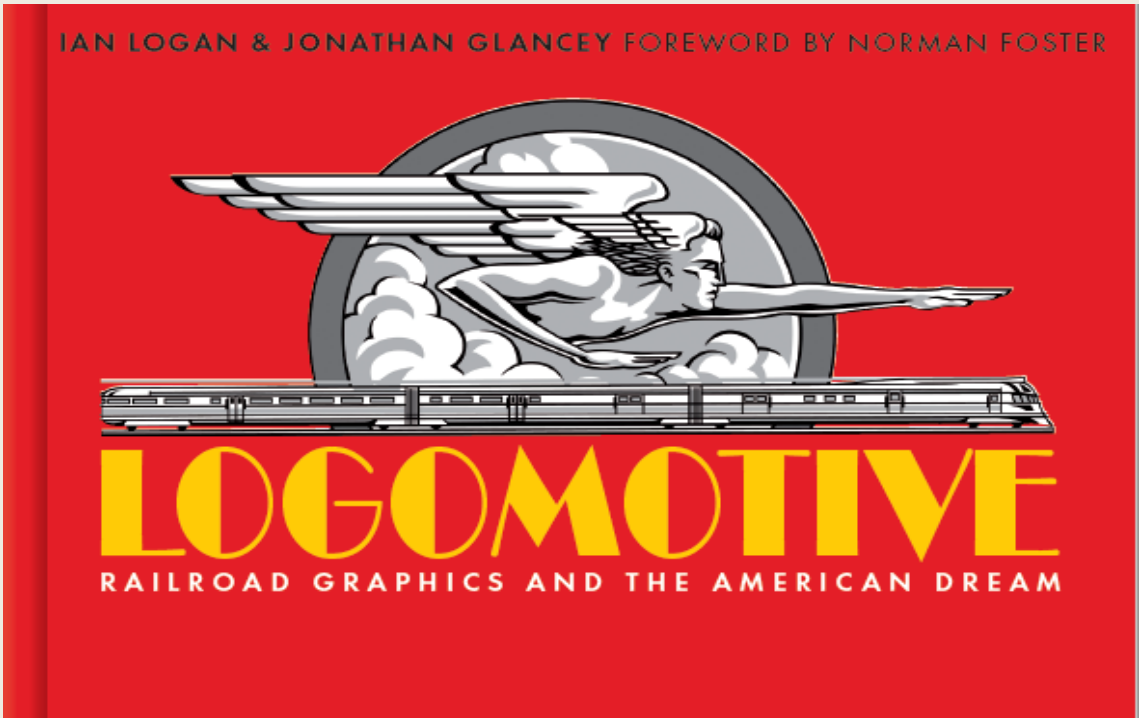
As you can see from the above article the Executive Committee are looking for a volunteer to become the new Programme Organiser for talks etc. Pat believes that the speakers and talks planned for 2020 - which were all cancelled but one - would hopefully be prepared to visit us in 2022 to present their subject. Pat would be delighted to advise and assist the new Programme Organiser for the first 12 months. If you are interested in undertaking this work, please contact me on either 01249 715741 or 07767 371485 and email to michael.rumsey@btinternet.com. Thank you in anticipation.



Michael Rumsey

Review of *Logomotive*

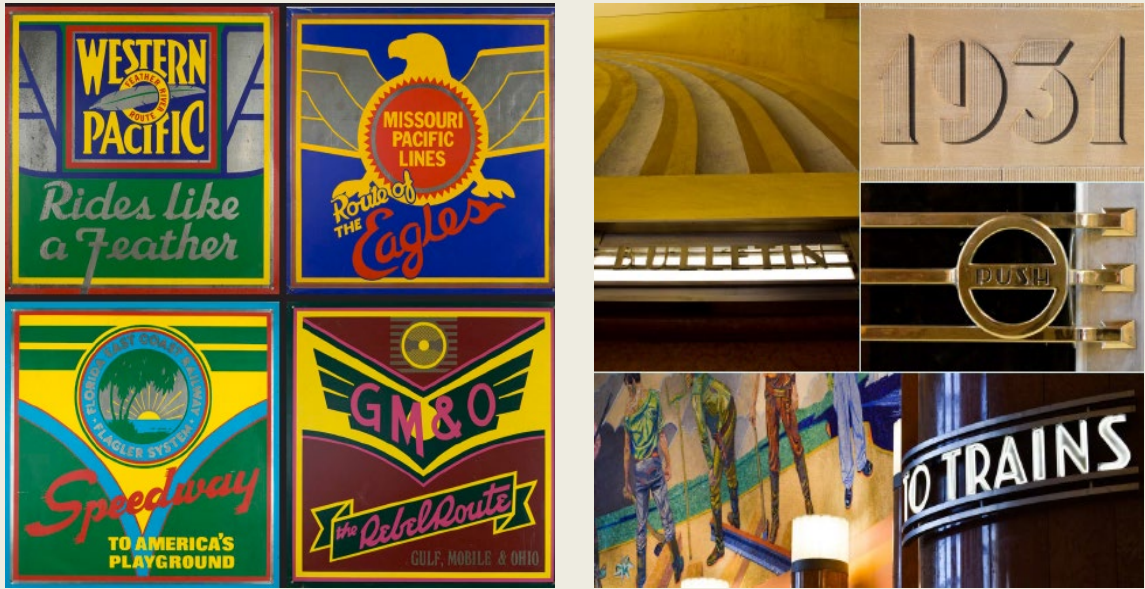
*This book is the perfect read for lovers of trains, railway architecture and advertising and would be a valuable addition to the library of any art and design enthusiast. The book belongs in the same genre as Phil Baines's excellent book: *Penguin by Design* and stands comparison with the current Bodleian Library's exhibition, *The Art of Advertising*.*



This superb book is expertly written by Jonathan Glancey of the *Guardian* with a forward by the architect, Norman Foster. Glancey's text couples analysis of the evolution of the design of trains, adverts and architecture with Logan's keen eye for design. The book, which is the third produced by Ian Logan, is the result of a long-term labour of love dating back to the 1970s. His passion and first-hand experience of the subject matter is interwoven within the body of the book making it feel immediate and personal.



Article continues next page...



Overall, it is a distinctive and visually rewarding catalogue of the power and beauty of advertising art, which moves elegantly between themes and eras as seamlessly as the iconic American trains with their decorated box cars it depicts.

Stuart Boydell

Corsham to Carnaby Street: Ian Logan, a life in design

Ian Logan FRSA is a rare commodity in the arts world: a successful artist who is also urbane and affable. I was fortunate to interview Ian in February 2021 to learn more about his Corsham roots and his latest artistic enterprise.

His originality and achievements in textile and homeware designs during the 1960s and 70s were a familiar sight in homes all around the country and echoes of his recognisable patterns are seen in retro-inspired clothes and homeware today. Half a century on from his heyday at the cutting edge of British design, he is back with a visually stunning book which combines his passion for trains and his love for design.

Ian was born near Pilning on the outskirts of Bristol in 1939. His father was employed as an engineer for the nearby Bristol Aeroplane Company. In 1941, having lost their home in a German Luftwaffe raid, 2-year-old Ian and his family beat a speedy retreat to the relative safety of Corsham. From their new home, Ian's father resumed his work for the BAC, although this time in the underground works lying below the streets of Corsham. I asked Ian if he had ever had the chance to go down and see the mysterious 'town' under our feet, but unfortunately, like so many of us, he had never had the chance, though he did recall playing on the steps by the side of Box Tunnel.

Article continues next page...

As a boy, Ian lived in various locations around Corsham including Arnolds Mead and 92, High Street, a pre-fab bungalow on Brakspear Road in the Boxfields estate. He attended Corsham Regis school until the age of 12, when, fortunately for him, having failed to get into a grammar school, he enrolled at the Bath Arts School in Sydney Place. During this time, Ian's father had established himself locally, having abandoned engineering for teaching. He went on to become a school deputy head in Chippenham and then in Bradford on Avon before eventually becoming headmaster of Biddestone School.

From art school in Bath, Ian was hired as a trainee draughtsman in the drawing office at Westinghouse Brake & Signalling Company in Chippenham. He trained under two of the biggest names in railway journalism at that time: Oswald (Ossie) Stevens Nock and Kenneth Leech. Ian spoke fondly of his memories of Ossie Nock, who he claims was "the only civilian to be allowed to drive a Great Western Railway engine." With Ian's latest book in mind, I asked him if it was while working with Nock and Leech that he first became fascinated with steam trains and trains more generally. It wasn't. He took me back in time to the early 1950s, when, as a 14-year-old paperboy in Corsham, he used to stand on the bridge over Corsham train station watching the steam trains passing through. He also remembered his once-a-month, 4:30am trudge down to the station to collect the newspapers for the local newsagents. By his mid-teens, his two passions - art and trains - were an established part of his life.

In 1958, he was called up for National Service. A friend, who had just completed his service, headed Ian off with warning stories of pointless occupations such as cutting grass with scissors, which seem to have been characteristic of the dying days of the National Service programme. Unsurprisingly, Ian heeded his friend's advice and quickly enrolled at the West of England College of Art in Bristol. He didn't go into too much detail about this period, but it was clear from the smile on his face that he had an absolute ball while he was there - so much so that he failed his exams and was left with some serious thinking to do.

With the threat of National Service lifted and having not achieved very much in Bristol, he decided to follow his then-girlfriend to London. At this point, Ian recalls how he literally walked straight into a college place in the Central School of Arts & Crafts in London. As he explained, being a male applicant for textile design in those days was a rare commodity so, even without the obligatory portfolio of work from his time in Bristol, Ian landed himself a much-coveted place in one of the country's best known art schools. He was in the right place at the right time: a design student in London just as the 1960s began to 'swing'.

After graduating from the Central School, Ian spent a year in Sweden before returning to London, where he and a group of his former art student colleagues established a small design company in Banner Street in the East End. From their small studio, Ian and his three colleagues began designing textile prints for high-end fashion designers including Mary Quant. However, it wasn't fashion that is most closely associated with Ian's work. It was yet another quirk of fate and another failure that led to him to another impressive success. The company was approached by an acrylics firm to commission designs for acrylic trays. Ian beavered away on the designs, proudly took them to what he thought would be his next client only to be sharply rebuffed. The tray company hated the designs damning them as designs fit only for metal tea-trays. That is what they became. Ian and his colleagues took the designs to a tin tray company near Croydon which began a trend for modern-designed metal tea trays spanning almost two decades. One of the first shops to stock the new designer kitchenware was the Iconic Gear on Carnaby Street. From there, Ian's brightly-coloured swirling, floral and paisley patterns went on to become one of the quintessential design motifs in kitchens up and down the country up until the mid-1970s.

Ian now lives with his partner in Kensington. He visits Corsham regularly to see friends and to tend to his mother's stone in St Bart's churchyard. Ian no longer relies on an Austin 7 to get him from London to Corsham and back. Instead, when he arrives, it is in somewhat more speed and comfort than most of us could manage. He now flies his own Piper J-3 Cub light aeroplane, which he lands at Wadwick. Even when he is a pilot, he is still being an artist. He spoke passionately of the beauty of seeing the countryside around Corsham and Bath from the perspective of the "third dimension."

You can search examples of Ian's iconic homeware designs on his website [Ian Logan Design \(ian-logan.co.uk\)](http://ian-logan.co.uk).

Stuart Boydell

We share the same interests – steam trains!

I've read, with great interest, Stuart Boydell's article on our fellow member, Ian Logan, and the book he recently published on American Railroads and their graphic designs. Since reading Stuart's piece I made contact with Ian and seeing we were both interested in railways of all ages he sent me a photo of himself standing in front of Union Pacific's 'Big Boy' no. 4014 [see next page]. The photo was taken before lockdown on a visit to the States and Ian kindly sent me further photos of his time with this famous engine plus a photo of the whole locomotive, engine and tender which weighs in at a massive 604 tons. Like many things made in America the Union Pacific 'Big Boy' loco is the world's largest conventional steam engine.

Article continues next page...

Twenty-five such engines were built for the UP between 1941-1944 and not only weighing 604 tons, they are 131 feet long and the world's largest turntables were built to accommodate them in the roundhouses where they spent their off duty hours. The 4-8-8-4 'Big Boys' were built by ALCO (American Locomotive Company) to work on huge freight trains on the Sherman Hill section of the Union Pacific and they could also manage speeds up to 80 mph.



Above, Big Boy 5 ~ Below, Big boy 4 with Ian Logan

Out of the 25 built, 8 have been preserved and engine no. 4014 was recently overhauled by UP and is ready to run again when such things are allowed again in the USA. I am indebted to Ian Logan for the photos he sent me and making me look at my railway library to get my facts correct on this truly wonderful machine.

M.D.Rumsey



And the American related theme continues with an article
From our American correspondent and CCS member, Larry Porges ~

Maine

Greetings again from the USA! I hope all my friends in Corsham are faring well during these unprecedented days. Time for another travelogue from my journeys around America with National Geographic.

This drive takes us up through Maine, in the far northeast corner of the country. The state is full of dramatic coastal scenery and thousands upon thousands of square miles of forest—in fact, 90 percent of Maine is covered in native trees. Bounded on three sides by Canada, it's also surprisingly large—Maine is about 2/3 the size of all of England.

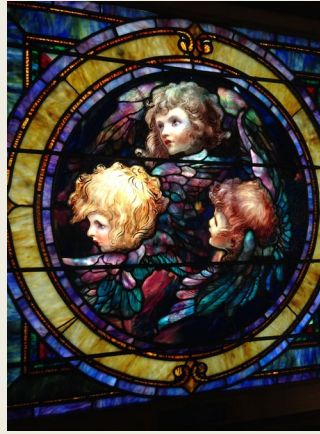
We'll begin our adventures in the south at *Acadia National Park*, on the rocky Atlantic coastline. The ruggedly scenic park is deservedly well trodden—spectacular views to the east from atop *Cadillac Mountain* offer early risers a glimpse of one of the first places where the rising sun illuminates the USA.



Article continues next page...

From Acadia, cross Frenchman Bay to the Schoodic Peninsula, home to several pristine seaside communities. Boats bob in the quiet, photogenic harbor of *Winter Harbor* .

In town the church of *St. Christopher's By the Sea* contains three beautiful original Tiffany stained-glass windows. The drive around



Schoodic affords splendid views out to the ocean and opportunities to park and amble along the rocky inlets.

Machias

From Winter Harbor, head northeast 45 miles to Machias and the 1770 Burnham Tavern, which played an early role in the American Revolution. In June 1775, only six weeks after the first shots of the Revolutionary War, the British ordered the town of Machias to surrender its plentiful lumber supplies to support the Royalist war effort, stationing their warship *Margaretta* in the harbor to help persuade the town folk to comply. After a debate at Burnham Tavern, the men of Machias instead decided to fight. The first naval battle of the war followed, and the *Margaretta* was captured and her captain killed. The Burnham Tavern then became an infirmary, tending to the injured from both sides. The old tavern features original artifacts from the eighteenth century.

Time for a snack. Head to Helen's Restaurant, a Machias institution for 70 years. Helen's is famous for its homemade pies—particularly blueberry pies overflowing with the tart and tiny wild berries that grow in this part of Maine and that are sold in summer from stands along the coastal roads.

Houlton

From Machias, head north on Route 1, hugging the Canadian border just to the east. In 120 miles you'll arrive in Houlton, home of the colorful "*Boy and the Boot*" statue. As the name implies, it's a statue of a boy...and his boot. The boot in question is held aloft by the boy as water trickles out through some holes in the sole, making this a fountain as much as anything else. The sculpture is shrouded in mystery: the



sign at the base claims it was bought in 1916 and is one of 29 similar statues in the world ... but that the sculptor and his or her country of origin are unknown. The Internet mostly backs up this story.

Article continues next page...

Presque isle

On a 40-mile stretch of Route 1 from Houlton north to Presque Isle, some kind soul has set up scale models of our solar system's planets at astronomically correct distances from each other, where one road mile = 93,000,000 space miles (by "some kind soul" I mean a variety of local citizens, from Boy and Girl Scouts to high school students.) I wholeheartedly applaud this effort.

The ex-planet Pluto resides in the Houlton Information Center (but bring your reading glasses; it's only an inch in diameter) while the 50-foot Sun blazes within Presque Isle's Northern Maine Museum of Science. The planets are visible on the side of the road as you head north—but they come without much advance notice, so stay alert.



In Presque Isle stands a monument [above] commemorating the spot where *Double Eagle II*, an 11-storey-tall helium balloon, took off with three pilots in August 1978 on the first ever nonstop transatlantic balloon crossing. The six-day crossing was no small undertaking: there had been unsuccessful similar attempts going back more than a century, costing the lives of five balloonists. So, when *Double Eagle II* landed near Paris on August 17, it was worldwide news.

Madawaska

Continue 50 more miles north along the Canadian border on Route 1 to Madawaska. Motorcyclists know that Madawaska is one of the four "corners" of this country, along with San Ysidro (California), Blaine (Washington), and Key West (Florida). Visiting all four is a veritable holy grail for bikers. *Madawaska Four Corners Park* celebrates the town's geographic honor of being the farthest northeast town in the USA. The park is a good place to stretch your legs next to the bikers who've driven possibly thousands of miles to get here. You can pick up souvenir patches for your leather jacket and rest by the park fountain and memorial marker.



Article continues next page...

Fort Kent

Work your way 20 miles west to Fort Kent, a town perhaps best known as the starting point (or end point, if you come from our direction) of Route 1, which winds its way 2,446 miles down to Key West, Florida. A stone memorial, next to the bridge to Canada, marks the sacred spot.

Like other towns in the region, if you put yourself in the middle of the community, you'll hear the locals switch back and forth from English to their unique brand of Acadian French. For a great way to meet some friendly folks and hear their language, join an evening bingo game at the Senior Center.



Larry Porges

Death of Past President, Brenda Forbes

Those of the Civic Society whose membership dates back to the Eighties will have fond memories of Brenda Forbes, our Honorary Secretary at that time, and President of the Society from 1992 - 1994. Her son, Rod, telephoned on Tuesday, 22nd December to impart the sad news that she had collapsed suddenly and died the previous day. It was a real shock as two days' earlier, throughout a long conversation, she was as full of vitality as in the days of yore. Despite mobility problems and failing sight, Brenda in recent weeks had made a large batch of jam and only the previous day had set out to deliver Christmas gifts to friends and neighbours - in particular for the children and all the dogs. Indeed, on the Saturday

she had told me of her pleasure (since she no longer had dogs of her own) of offering a treat to each one as they passed her gate on their daily constitutional - some refusing to walk past until she appeared!



Brenda was born on 6th March 1926 in Stirchley in the West Midlands, the only child of Percy and Edith Smith, with grandparents and extended family living nearby. Her father worked for Cadbury in nearby Bournville as a developer of new chocolate bars. She grew to be a bright, studious and sociable pupil at the local Grammar School; an accomplished pianist who sang soprano at many Birmingham concerts. Aged 22 she married John Forbes, whom she met whilst working in the offices at Cadbury, in 1950 becoming proud parents to their son, Rod.

Article continues next page...

In the late Fifties John's work brought them south to Bath where Brenda worked firstly at Oldfield Park Nursery, as cook in a nearby Convent and finally as PA to the artist and tutor, John Eaves, at the Bath Academy of Art. She was an active member of Bath Choral Society and its Hon. Secretary at the time they moved to Corsham. Here her role changed to that of carer to both husband John and her mother, Edith, not to mention three lively chihuahuas! With an interest in the environment and local history they joined the Civic Society as Life Members and despite caring responsibilities, Brenda offered to become our Honorary Secretary. It was a role she fulfilled with aplomb, even when in 1983 it extended to note-taking during the three public meetings with which the Society launched their 30 year+ Station Campaign!

She became President in 1992 when John's health was in decline and he died in July 1994. Following her husband's death Brenda continued their interest in showing the chihuahuas at local dog shows, gradually forming a firm friendship with her eventual partner Roger Gilmour (two years her senior) who had suffered a similar loss to her own. They eventually decided to 'pool their resources' and moved to Great Somerford where they joined the local Church and Brenda, a talented musician who loved opera, nurtured the choir and organised activities for the 'Over Sixty Club'. Their garden, plus the variety of farm animals which grazed the field it overlooked, brought them great pleasure. They enjoyed twenty-five happy years together, their continued joy in life secured by Rod's daily visits to ensure all was well. Those who knew her will recall a down to earth, warm, kind, sensitive person, with a ready smile that did not fade despite increasing infirmity. Brenda's was indeed a life lived well and I am grateful to her son Rod, and Gillian Bond the Civil Celebrant who led the service on 19th January, for sharing Brenda's Eulogy with me.

Anne Locke, President CCS

In Memoriam ~ George McDonic

George, who sadly died on the 15th February 2021, in Chippenham Hospital, may not be someone whose name you instantly recognize. However, if a member of CPRE Wiltshire, it will be very familiar to you. After a long and distinguished career, he had for the past few decades been a tireless defender of the landscapes of Wiltshire. He was a Chartered Town Planner, a Fellow and Past President of the Royal Town Planning Institute and a member since 1945; a County Planning Officer & Director of Environmental Services for Wiltshire County Council from 1967 - 1987; a member of the Department of Environment Working Party on Stonehenge (the Sheaf Committee) which met in the late 1970's and also a member of the English Heritage Working Group on Stonehenge (the Golding Group) which reported in 1985; a Planning Inspector, Chairman of the Stonehenge Alliance; and Vice President of Community First, whilst I recall he also chaired the Wiltshire Buildings at Risk Committee. George was awarded an MBE in the 2005 New Year Honours List for services to Conservation.

Article continues next page...

George supported the creation of the White Horse Alliance and with CPRE colleagues persuaded the West Wiltshire and County Branch to contribute approximately one third of the small fortune required to mount a professional Objection to the A350 Eastern Bypass at the six week planning inquiry in 2008. This threatened Westbury's Wellhead Valley, the western escarpment of Salisbury Plain, the wind-blown silence of the White Horse and peace of English Heritage's Bratton Camp. When that destructive plan was rejected by Government in 2009, no-one could have been more delighted than George, Wiltshire's former county planning officer, who knew a bad plan when he saw one. The A303 tunnels at Stonehenge



occupied his time over many years and Kate Fielden, Secretary of the Stonehenge Alliance said "his knowledge, experience and quiet humour as Chairman have been of such value to us for many years. He took a keen interest in the Campaign, even in recent months giving advice by phone when unable to answer emails."

I originally met George McDonic as the Corsham Station Campaign gained momentum and we had lodged an Objection to the Local Plan. Councillors were supportive of the 'safeguarding' clause we proposed and were confident that their intention had been acted upon by the then Chief Planning Officer. I was assured that it was to be found in an appendix to the draft Plan; at which point someone suggested I should invite George to tea. An experienced Planning Inspector, he advised me to use the address "Mr. Inspector" at the Inquiry and having explained our situation the meeting ended with an insistence that "I must visit NWDC offices and search for that Appendix." It did not exist, as he well knew, so with a meeting scheduled for the very next day I rushed home to type a letter, replicated 60+ times (each 'Dear Cllr. ??' hand-written then posted in the appropriate pigeon-hole) informing them of the omission. Under attack the Chief Planning Officer attempted to defend himself, "the clause had been placed within a draft plan", just not the upcoming Plan under discussion that evening, thus making it far more difficult for us to defend car parking sites from unwanted development.

We should all stand and salute the passing of a highly-principled, genuine, gentleman - George McDonic - for whom no-one and no project was too small or insignificant to gain his attention and benefit from his kindly, knowledgeable, advice. Would that our world were more full of such men and women of quiet and self-effacing integrity.

Anne Locke, President CCS

Fore-edge painted books

A 'vanishing' fore-edge painting is where the leaves of a book are fanned and an image applied to the stepped surface. If the page edges are then gilded or marbled, the painting unaccountably disappears when the book is closed. When the book is fanned again it magically re-appears! I have in my possession such a book, a 1902 edition of *Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life* by Stopford A. Brooke.

The fore-edge painting is by Martin Frost [see next page] and depicts a scene from Tennyson's *The passing of Arthur in the Idylls of the King* which features in the book.



The book closed: due to the gilding the fore-edge painting is not revealed.



The fore-edge of the book fanned, revealing a painting of *The passing of Arthur, Idylls of the king*

There are a number of variations as well as the single fore-edge paintings: a double fore-edge painting has paintings on both sides of the page margin so that one painting is visible when the leaves are fanned one way, and the other is visible when the leaves are fanned the other way.

An all edge painting has paintings on all three edges, Such edge paintings that are continuous scenes wrapped around more than one edge are called panoramic fore-edge painting or a 'triple edge painting' ~ example opposite.

A split double painting has two different illustrations, one on either side of the centre of the book. When the book is laid open in the centre, one illustration is seen on the edges of the first half of the book, and another illustration is on the edge of the second half of the book ~ example opposite.



Martin Frost has practiced the rare art form for the last 40 years, and as far as he knows, is the last commercial fore-edge painter in the world ~ <https://www.foredefrost.co.uk/the-artist>



Martin Frost at work in his studio in Worthing.

Article continues next page...

The earliest fore-edge paintings date possibly as far back as the 10th century; these earliest paintings were symbolic designs. Early English fore-edge paintings, believed to date to the 14th century, presented heraldic designs in gold and other colours. The first known example of a *disappearing* fore-edge painting (where the painting is not visible when the book is closed) dates from 1649. The earliest signed and dated fore-edge painting dates to 1653: a family coat of arms painted on a 1651 Bible.

There is an interesting legend of how hidden fore-edge painting on books supposedly first began: Charles II of England had a lady friend, a duchess, who often borrowed his books, sometimes forgetting to return them. As the story goes, the king commissioned the court painter, Sir Peter Lely, and the court bookbinder, Samuel Mearne, to devise a secret method in which his books could be identified. Between the two they worked out a unique plan. Some weeks later, when the king was visiting the duchess he spotted a familiar looking book on a shelf. Taking it down he said, "I'll just take my book along with me." "But sire," the lady protested, "that book is mine." "Oh?" The king raised his brows. Then, with a sly smile, he fanned out the book and revealed what had been painted on the inner edges--the royal coat of arms. The gilding on the outer edges had completely hidden the identification. Acknowledging that Charles had outwitted her, the duchess sank in a deep curtsy before her king.

Around 1750, the subject matter of fore-edge paintings changed from simply decorative or heraldic designs to landscapes, portraits and religious scenes, usually painted in full colour. Modern fore-edge painted scenes have a lot more variation as they can depict numerous subjects not found on earlier specimens. These include scenes that are erotic, or they might involve scenes from novels (like Jules Verne, Sherlock Holmes or Dickens, etc.). In many cases, the chosen scene will depict a subject related to the book, but in other cases it did not. In one instance, the same New Brunswick landscape was applied to both a Bible and to a collection of poetry and plays. The choice of scenes is made by either the artist, bookseller or owner, thus the variety is wide.

The technique was popularized in the 18th century by John Brindley (1732 - 1756), publisher and bookbinder to the Prince of Wales, and Edwards of Halifax, a distinguished family of bookbinders and booksellers.

The majority of extant examples of fore-edge painting date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries on reproductions of books originally published in the early 19th century.

John Maloney

In Memoriam ~ Dr Sydney Alford OBE

Sidney Alford was a long-time member of the Pickwick community having moved to the village in 1979. After trying his hand at 'working for the man' at Leafield Engineering, Sidney quickly realised that his dislike of authority meant he had no choice other than to start his own company and work for himself, in his unbelievably cluttered office, next to my bedroom, across the road from the Two Pigs, in the heart of Pickwick. Sidney replaced the door knocker with a hand grenade [see p. 21] and settled at 41A with his wife Itsuko, for the rest of his life.



Although Sidney was most definitely not a gifted businessman, he excelled in having good ideas. Since witnessing, up close, bombing raids as a child, I think Sidney must have thought about defeating bombs literally every day of his life. And that's why ultimately my Dad's life came to be so celebrated. As a family we have been overwhelmed by countless letters, cards, emails, phone calls... even obituaries in The Times and Telegraph! We never imagined that Sidney had touched so many people and had earned the respect of so many.

However, rather than go over his life as a child in Essex and in London, or as a student in Paris and Tokyo, or as a maverick explosive expert, I wanted to recall some memories of Sidney as a member of the Pickwick community.

I was a schoolboy when Sidney was developing his ideas and weekends and long summer-holiday afternoons were often spent on a bit of land rented from Guy Stafford, near Guyers lane, helping my dad conduct his many and varied experiments. We'd be, 'at the farm' all day in the rain, wind or sun trying out his explosive charges on bigger and bigger bits of steel (that I had to haul into position) with ever increasing precision, or attacking fake terrorist bombs with new inventions, then scrambling in the undergrowth looking for all the bits, still smoking and hot. I remember once assisting him while he tried to see if he could get all the dents out of beer barrels for a brewery, by putting a small explosive charge inside them. For me these days could eventually become boring and long, but Sidney was meticulous and thorough in his experiments and never seemed to tire from the process of placing the charges, setting them off, then examining the results. He told me that the secret to his eternal fascination was that he turned his hobby into his job.

Film crews would come by the field on Stafford's farm occasionally to get Sidney's take on an explosive related news story or to film for a documentary. His enthusiasm was extraordinary, as was his willingness to go the extra mile to make an impact on screen

Article continues next page...

He made one news team a model of the channel tunnel out of plaster... then blew it up. He laced some shoes with explosive cord... then blew them up. He put a suitcase in the boot of a car... then blew it up. He helped erect a huge sign for a TV show... and he blew that up as well. If you ever ask me to sum up my dad in a word it would be... BANG! And his favourite thing to do in the world was to blow things up.

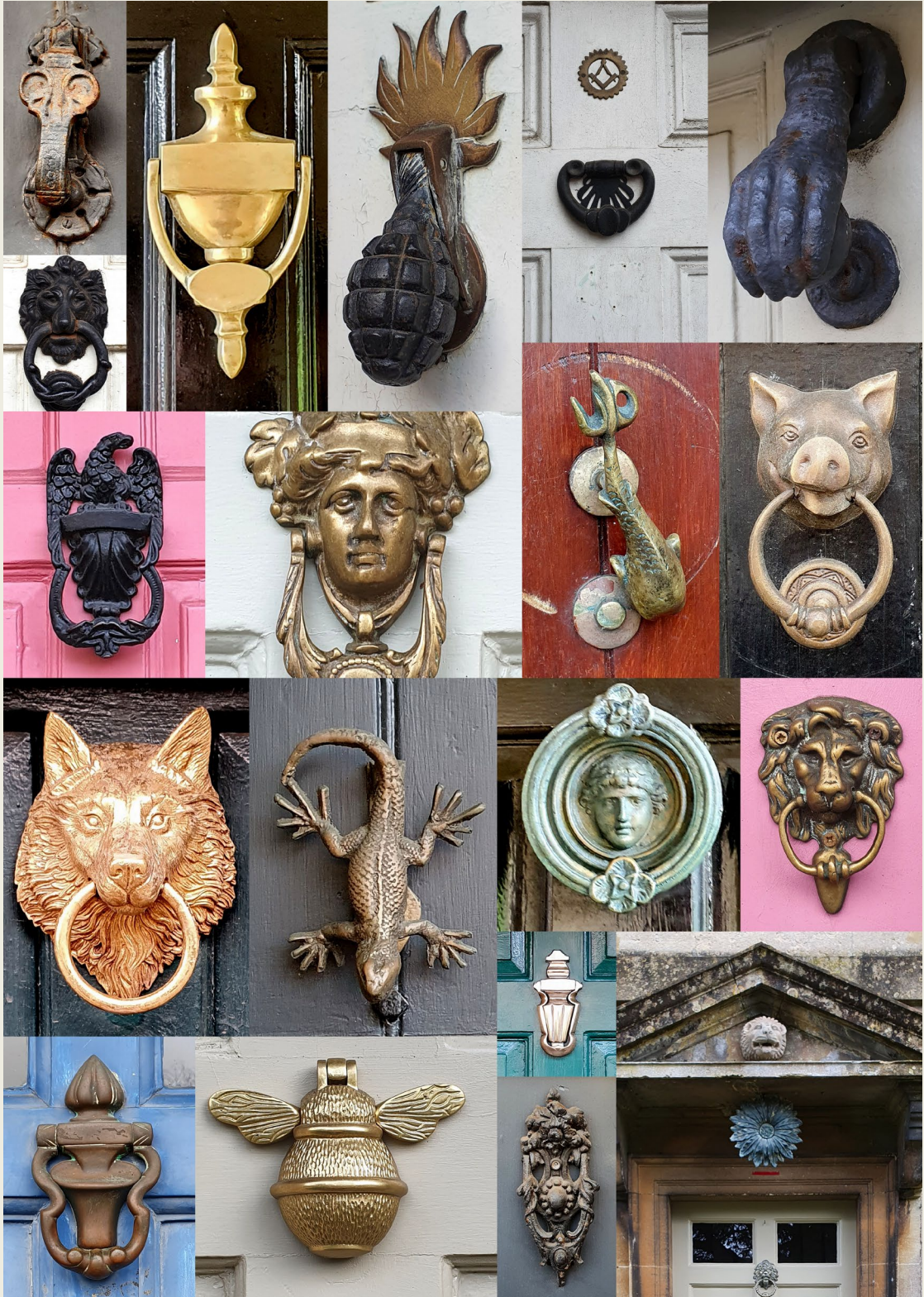
Sidney had a prolific reputation to those that knew him, for never shying away from taking a stand for what he believed was right. And if necessary rubbing a few people up the wrong way. I remember when he suspected the local council wanted to phase out the name Pickwick and incorporate the village into the town of Corsham. The council even came one day and removed their 'PICKWICK' sign! But little did they know that along with writing letters to the relevant department in the council, Sidney had also made his own, home-made 'PICKWICK' sign to replace the council's. After dark my Dad and I went out and (with the permission of the owner) nailed the sign to a large, horse chestnut tree, by the A4, out of the reach of the council, where it remained for years. Who knows what would have happened to the village of Pickwick if the council had its way!

Another area of village life that Sidney had a passion for were the allotments down Middlewick Lane, or rather more specifically, he was passionate about catching people in the act of stealing vegetables from the allotments. After the fruits of my Mum's labour started to go missing, with vegetables carelessly wrenched out of the ground and trampled patches where thieves had scrambled for lettuces in the dark, my dad decided to take matters into his own hands. Sidney set himself up a sniper-style, hide behind the old art college wall, over-looking the allotment. There he waited, hidden, with binoculars and armed with a sawn-off broomstick late into the night. No one came the first night, or probably the second or third. But eventually the thief arrived. As they started to fill their bags with vegetables, Sidney jumped from his hide and stormed the thief with his broomstick, chasing him across the field behind the allotment before apprehending him with some assertive use of his stick on the thief's legs. Sidney made a citizen's arrest.

It was deemed that Sidney's use of the broomstick may have been a little excessive and the judge was not entirely comfortable his unconventional approach to dealing with the stolen vegetables. But the fine he was given by the court was minimal and the thief's father personally thanked Sidney for teaching his son a lesson. Vegetable theft at Middlewick Lane allotments stopped and I'm pleased to report, has never since returned.

Sidney's approach to life may have sometimes been a strain for my mum, (who could probably have done with a bit of a quieter life at times) but he was driven by always wanting to be true to his values and that if anything is worth doing it's worth doing well, whether it's inventing devices that deal with bombs in Afghanistan or dealing with stolen cabbages from the allotments. He never let unnecessary rules or conventions get in the way. I miss him and his life spirit terribly. But I take comfort in the marks he has left in Pickwick, that his chapter in the life of this old and modest village was a good one - rich, fun, and worth rubbing a few people up the wrong way for!

Xavier Alford



Pickwick knockers ~ photos. and collage by John Maloney [the hand grenade - top, centre - is on the door of Sydney Alford's house ~ no surprise there!]

Some doorknockers in Pickwick [along the Bath Road and adjoining length of Middlewick] ~ a bottle of champagne to the first person to correctly identify all the house numbers. Entries to be sent to the Editor.

Pickwick Winter Tales

In 2019, once again, Corsham celebrated the art of creative storytelling and writing with the Corsham StoryTown festival. Thanks to the success of the festival, Corsham was designated one of three towns in the South West to spearhead the national 'Paper Nations' campaign promoting creative writing for all. One of the main organisers, Cllr Neville Farmer urged that the Pickwick Association [PA] and Corsham Regis Primary Academy [CRPA] school get together and came up with a title for the event, *Pickwick Capers* [*Spotlight*, Autumn 2019, pps. 7-9]. He proposed collaboration with Marnie Forbes Eldridge [who ran workshops and training in theatre and drama for over 20 years] and who coached the CRPA children. *Pickwick Capers* was conceived as a 'music hall' type performance by Marnie and myself and was based on the Dickens' connection with the area, as featured in his book *The Pickwick Papers*.

As a result of that success, another collaboration was agreed in 2020 which is how *Pickwick Winter Tales* was conceived, once more involving CRPA [Year 5 class] and Marnie. The *Pickwick Caperers* group and other interested local residents re-formed and entered into the Zoom sessions wholeheartedly, with great enthusiasm and no little imagination. Following rehearsals by Zoom, our presentations to the CRPA took place by Zoom on December 17th, set up and quite brilliantly managed by Marnie. All the group put in fine performances telling their tales and, if the reaction of the children was a measure, it was a most successful 'event': clearly, by their responses and questions they found the presentations interesting and stimulating. Marnie is to be particularly congratulated for her leadership, inspiration, technical skills, unwavering enthusiasm and rapport with *the Caperers* group and the CRPA children and teachers. Inevitably, there was eagerness for the *Tales* to be published and so I undertook to organise that and sought sponsorship. There was enthusiasm for further involvement with Marnie and the CRPA and, Covid-19 allowing, it is hoped that a summer BBQ may be possible.

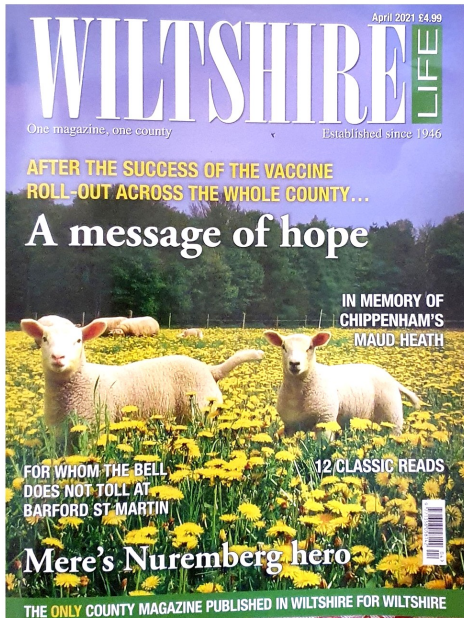
Reactions to the booklet included '*a beautiful ... 22 page booklet*' and *Hello John, The children loved the booklet! Thank you very much for delivering them something special to keep as a reminder of the project together. Kind regards, Abby [Symons], Acting Headteacher, CRPA.*

Acknowledgements

Pickwick Winter Tales was compiled and designed by me and edited by Cath Maloney. Many thanks to all the contributors for their tales and keen involvement. Grateful thanks are due to Corsham Print and the Pickwick Association for their sponsorship. If you would like a copy email johnmaloney2003@aol.com.



Wiltshire Life



Wiltshire Life in their current April issue [above] were pleased to largely reproduce my article about the Thomas Bullock, Corsham, longcase clock that featured in the last issue of Spotlight [Autumn 2020, pps. 28-31]. Also, in their March issue, they featured a letter from me about the controversial Stonehenge tunnel [below].



Letters relating to editor Georgie Green's news story ("STONEHENGE: Is the future set in stone?", *Wiltshire Life*, January 2021) on the Stonehenge tunnel keep flooding in. Peter Pickup wins the £25 book token for the star letter...

Holland's views are myopic and alarmist

Dear editor
I was deputy director, Stonehenge new visitor centre project team (2000-2005), that finally succeeded getting planning permission for the project after some 30 years of failed schemes. I could not disagree more with the myopic, alarmist views of James Holland and the Stonehenge Alliance about the road tunnel. I have been an archaeologist all my career; for instance, I was the principal excavations officer the department of urban archaeology, Museum of London during its heyday in the 1980s and I have guided innumerable parties of students, adults, foreign visitors and dignitaries for more than 30 years around the site. The reaction of the majority has been that the world heritage site is seriously blighted by the sight, sound and pollution from the A303 traffic and that it is a shame that the wider prehistoric

landscape and monuments of Stonehenge are divided by the A303 and cannot be easily and pleasantly experienced. I know that many archaeologists who have actually worked at/on the Stonehenge site feel the same way. Far from 'short termism', the tunnel will benefit Stonehenge and visitors for the long-term! When James Holland asserts that 'untold numbers of archaeological artefacts will be removed from the site and when they're gone, they're gone', he ignores the fact that they will be professionally excavated and recovered by Wessex Archaeology and conserved, catalogued and reported. Doubtless, many will be on public display in the Stonehenge visitor centre to the benefit of all those with an interest in the archaeology of Stonehenge.

John Maloney
Corsham
By email

Planning matters

A note about Wiltshire matters

This month the Wiltshire Local Plan has been under attack from various quarters. Bradford on Avon joined with Chippenham in rejecting the Wiltshire Local Plan proposals. Bradford town councillors voted unanimously to condemn the plan: Deputy Mayor, Alex Kay, said it lacked vision and was less of a plan and more of a housing allocation document. Meanwhile, the Council for the Protection of Rural England [CPRE] delivered a bombshell by stating that according to analysis of the Housing Delivery Test [2020] by the Wiltshire branch of the charity, the county has delivered 140 percent of its target. Its report stated that between 2017/18 and 2019/20 Wiltshire was required to build 5506 new homes but, in fact, 7720 were built. CPRE Wiltshire Chairwoman, Anne Henshaw, said, "The latest government figures vindicate what we have been saying for years - we have been building too many new homes here in Wiltshire, the majority of them on greenfield land and there is no evidence that this number of homes is needed on the strength of this study there is compelling evidence for the overall reduction of housing allocations across Wiltshire". That assertion appeared to be confirmed by Cllr Toby Sturgis, Wiltshire Council Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property who said "Performance varies from year to year, but over the last three years we have exceeded the average [government required] required.

Furthermore, Wiltshire Council declined to meet with town and parish councils to create a plan to protect their neighbourhood plans from developers claiming that the county does not have a demonstrable five year housing allocation plan. As Spotlight reported in its last Autumn 2020 issue [pps.35-6] quoting North Wiltshire MP, James Gray, " the rule that if a Neighbourhood Plan is more than two years old, then it can be trumped by [claiming] a shortfall in the five-year housing land supply effectively negates the value in the Neighbourhood Planning system" and he also stated, " there is a fundamental flaw in the method of calculating the five-year housing supply figures".

Material courtesy of the Gazette & Herald.

Major local matters

Proposed developments north of Bath Road

Gladman [field opposite the Catholic Church]– the latest round of planning and legal exchanges in this Public Inquiry took place via Zoom across two more gruelling days (on top of four consecutive days spent in January) before the Planning Inspector on 24/25th February. The Association was expertly represented by our professional team (barrister, lawyer, engineering geologist and noise and vibration consultant).

Article continues next page...

The next and hopefully concluding day is scheduled for 6th April when the Inspector will hear final submissions from the three parties (Gladman Developments Ltd., Wiltshire Council and Pickwick Association) *and* – if allowed by then – visit the site before considering and issuing his decision in writing, usually several weeks later. And thus will conclude an end to a process ongoing since Gladman's initial application for planning consent in November 2013 – seven and a half years ago.

Pickwick Association

Care Home [field opposite Priory Street] - PA produced and submitted a carefully researched and robust set of objections to the proposal for the 80-unit development proposed for very close to the junctions of Priory Street, Woodlands and the A4. The breadth of local feeling was evidenced by no fewer than 66 individual objections from local residents. Corsham Town Council recently resolved to strongly oppose the proposal, scheduled for decision by Wilts Council planners before 30th April.

Pickwick Association

The Pickwick Conservation Area Appraisal [PCAA] has been circulated for public consultation which closed on the 28th February, but the document it can still be viewed at <https://www.pickwickassociation.org.uk/conservation-area-appraisal/>.

Consideration of the PCAA by Corsham Area Board on 18th March went very well: there was excellent feedback and it was *Resolved* that the Board write to Wiltshire Council recommending that the PCAA be adopted.

Many of the people who commented in the public consultation noted that they would like to be able to buy a copy and so Tony Clark and myself are now in the process of repurposing the PCAA as a 'popular' book *Pickwick - A place in time*.

Corsham Railway Station campaign

We understand that an application for funding by Wiltshire Council is to be made in order to further Corsham's need for a new rail station.

Corsham Civic Society has long been an advocate of this proposal, and we cannot stress enough the benefits this would bring to the town. Corsham has become somewhat a 'commuter' town for residents who work in Bath, Bristol, Swindon and London, and together with the continued presence of the MOD Joint Services, there is a regular need for people to be able to travel in an environmentally friendly manner, avoiding the creation of traffic congestion and pollution. These major towns also provide our population with opportunities for leisure and retail which are not always available on our doorstep, and for the same reasons, a convenient train ride would enhance their experience.

We strongly support this application for funding as do the Corsham Railway Station Town Team.

Pat Whalley

Books

I have been in contact with Julian Orbach who told me that his revision of the Wiltshire volume of *The Buildings of England* has been sent to the printers and is due out on 8th June ~ <https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300251203/wiltshire>. Corsham Bookshop has been notified and will order copies ~ the hardback is surely a snip at £45!

In its blurb for the book, the Yale University Press writes ~

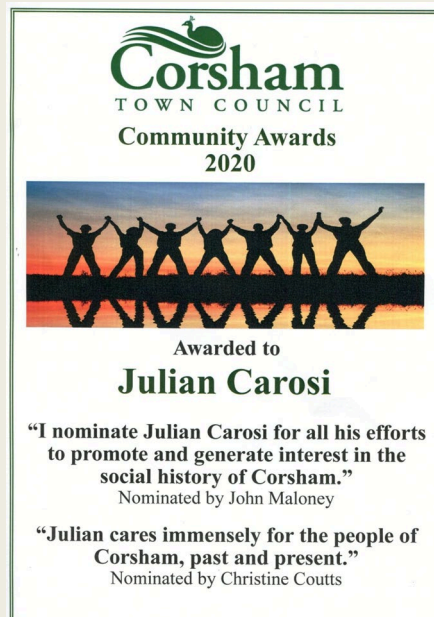
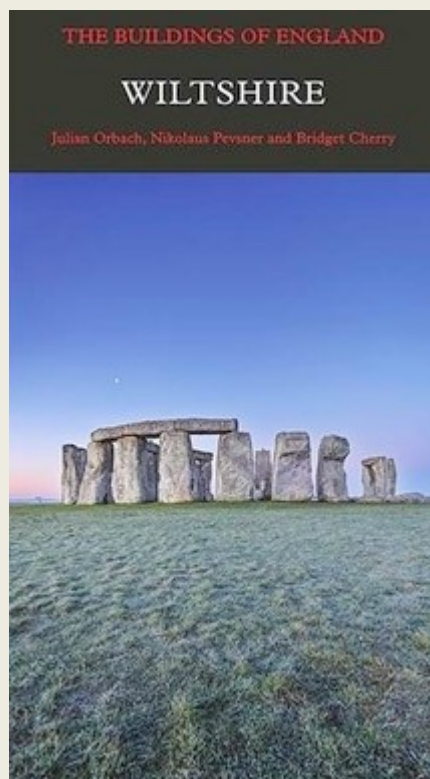
With hundreds of buildings added to the new gazetteer, this volume offers a fully revised and updated guide to Wiltshire. From prehistoric Stonehenge and thirteenth-century Salisbury Cathedral, to Elizabethan Longleat, Palladian Wilton and landscaped gardens of Stourhead, the buildings of Wiltshire represent the best of every period of English architecture. Towns range from Marlborough with its sweeping High Street to Bradford-on-Avon, rich in the architectural legacy of clothiers' houses. Villages include the exceptional Lacock in the shadow of its abbey's remains as well as Avebury, where the houses sit within the famous stone circle. This volume, covering structures as diverse as garden follies and railway workers' housing is an essential reference for visitors and residents alike.

I should add that there are a number of pages dedicated to Corsham.

Congratulations to Julian Carosi on having his books and *Mr Corsham* website recognised with a Corsham *Community Award 2020* [see opposite].

Yet more books about Corsham have appeared recently: *Memories of Corsham* by John Cuthbertson, subtitled *Old Picture Postcards from Brenda Cuthbertson's Collection* [£14.99], and *Corsham – My Story* by Kenneth John Oatley [£14.99]. Both are on sale in Corsham Bookshop and we hope to review them in the next issue of Spotlight.

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.

- June 25th** Richard Cripps, Senior Lecturer, Lackham College, **'Britain's woodland heritage'**
- July 23rd** Colin Maggs MBE, MA, Ret'd teacher and railway historian, **'Bath tramways'**
- August** **No meeting** ~ Summer visit or tea TBA
- Sept 24th** John Maloney, **'Update on the Corsham High Street Project'**
- Oct 22nd** Ben Thomas, Reader in History of Art, University of Kent, **'How art should be displayed'**
- Nov 26th** Stuart Burrowes, Museum of Bath at Work, **'Harbutts of Bathampton'**
- December** **No meeting**

- ***Please note that the Programme may be subject to changes, depending on Government C-19 regulations and The Pound having reopened: **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