



Corsham Spotlight

Magazine of the Corsham Civic Society

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

Autumn 2021

November 2021, Vol. 18, Issue 2

Contents

From the Chair	1
Editorial	2
The Chairman's Passion - Model Railways	3
Preserving a newspaper printing press	5
Trees	10
In memoriam – Prince Philip 1921-2021	12
Remembrance	14
Monks Park	15
Corsham Community Awards 2020 and 2021	19
Film dramas in Box	23
Book Reviews	24
21st century cosmic surgery railway cuttings	30
An Admiral Fitzroy Barometer c. 1860	31
Wiltshire volume of The Buildings of England	33
Pickwick exhibition	37
Moonraker Canoes	38
Archaeological artefact?	41
Planning round-ups	42
Pat Whalley's 80 th Birthday	43

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



Selection of doorhoods and porches in Pickwick ~ collage by John Maloney

Officers and Committee Members:

President

Mrs. Anne Lock,
Tel: 01249 716086

Chair

Michael Rumsey,
Tel: 01249 715741

Secretary

Cath Maloney
Tel: 01249 715159

Treasurer

Elizabeth Addison,
Tel: 07919 352002

Acting Membership Secretary

Michael Rumsey,
Tel: 01249 715741

Social Organiser

John Holmes
01249 712361

Programme Organiser

Pat Whalley
01249 713618

Acting Planning Chair

John Maloney,
Tel: 01249 715159

Spotlight Editor

John Maloney,
Tel: 01249 715159

Assistant Editor

Stuart Boydell

Proof Editor

Cath Maloney
Tel: 01249 715159

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

From the Chair

I write this on Monday, November 1st, 'All Saints' Day', a much quieter day I feel after the weather and possible mayhem of 'Halloween' last night! 2021 has been another year of upheaval and distress for many people not only in our community but in this country, and the world, and I am sure we all look forward to a far healthier and brighter year in 2022.

We were able to commence our programme of talks in July with Colin Maggs giving an illustrated talk about the 'Trams in Bath', which I enjoyed. Colin is an accomplished writer and transport historian and I, and those present, thoroughly enjoyed his talk. For once, we had a meeting in August, when Richards Cripps, formerly of Lackham College, gave a most interesting talk, with a great deal of foliage present, about 'Britain's Woodland Heritage'. In September we held our much-delayed Annual General Meeting followed by a special Cheese & Wine social gathering. Unfortunately, our speaker in October, Dr. Ben Thomas, was unable, at short notice, to travel from Canterbury as his wife had contracted the Covid virus, which I sincerely hope she has fully recovered from now. Because we only had 3 days notice to find a speaker, I dusted off my talk about the 'The ABC of the GWR' and presented that to an audience of 20+.

Next year's programme will be the last to be organised by my colleague, Pat Whalley, as she has now retired from the role as Programme Organiser. We are actively looking for a volunteer, from the membership, to take on this role to now prepare the programme for 2023, with Pat giving help and guidance. '**Your Society needs you**' is my rallying cry, just as Kitchener called for volunteers in the First World War. Without a Programme Organiser we won't have a 2023 programme of talks, so is there anyone out there prepared to take this on please!

We are also looking for a someone to become Deputy Chair of the Society, ready to take on the Chair's role in May 2024, when I shall definitely retire after 15 years service. A Deputy Chair would certainly be most helpful to begin work in the New Year, so any volunteers for that role please.

It only remains for me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and my hopes that 2022 will be a much healthier and happier New Year for us all.

With best wishes.

Michael Rumsey

From the Editor

Shortly after Cath and I moved to Corsham from London in January 2015, Mrs Jean Beech (then Membership Secretary of the CCS) called to our house to collect CCS subscriptions. Jean mentioned that the society was looking for a new editor and enquired as to our background. She charmingly prevailed upon me 'give it a go' as I had had previous experience of producing some in-house newsletters.

At the July 2016 meeting a presentation was made to Jujhar Garcha who had completed a year as our 'Spotlight' Editor. The Executive Committee had decided at its June meeting to make Jujhar an Honorary member of the society as a thank you for his excellent efforts in producing 3 issues of 'Spotlight' between November 2015 and July 2016 and, subsequently, I took over, exactly five years ago.

I have learnt a lot about layout, formatting, design, manipulating text and images and I have enjoyed the challenges of producing copy. I have retained the style and associated format that Jujhar had used but increased the text size after representations were made about the difficulty for some members of comfortably reading the previous font/point size. Another change is that in this issue - for the first time - there will be adverts, principally due to the impact of Covid on the society's finances.

Michael Rumsey gave me a free hand in producing the magazine (a title adopted quite recently in preference to 'Journal') and has been helpful and supportive throughout. Our readers have been appreciative and encouraging. Stuart Boydell has helped with the editing of the previous two issues and by providing articles, and will take over as Editor for the Spring 2022 issue.

I have enjoyed the challenges (mainly getting sufficient articles) and experiences during my time as Editor but I want to focus my attention on completing the application process for a National Heritage Lottery Funding award for the Corsham High Street Project and, then, writing an account of my archaeological experiences. Meanwhile, Tony Clark and I are working to complete our book, *Pickwick, A place in time*.

Wishing you a happy and healthy Christmas and 2021.

With best wishes,

John Maloney



The Chairman's Passion: Model Railways

When I was 5-years-old, I received my first Hornby Dublo train set. It was Christmas Day 1949. I remember my parents sending me to bed early on Christmas Eve. It was full of magic and anticipation for the Big Day. Little did I know that downstairs my parents were busy assembling the track to check if everything worked. Thankfully, it did, which was only to be expected for a Hornby piece. I found out some years later that its cost was £9.10s.0d – equivalent to two and half weeks of my father's salary.

I still have the original engine and coaches, as seen in the picture below, and I treasure them as much now as I did in 1949. Since that time, I've always had model trains but it has taken until now to fulfil a life-long ambition. I am now the proud owner of my very own permanent layout in a purpose-built building.

My Swiss metre gauge layout recreates the stunning views and panoramic landscapes of one of Switzerland's regional railways: the *Rhatische Bahn* or *RhB*. This regional network is located in Graubunden, the largest of Switzerland's cantons and connects towns such as Chur, St. Moritz, Klosters, Davos and the Engadin.

The most famous train that runs along its tracks is the *Glacier Express* which runs between St. Moritz and Zermatt. The iconic snow-bound journey takes 8 hours thankfully making it possibly the slowest express train in the world. The longer you are on the train, the more time you have to soak in the scenery and enjoy the delights of these beautiful modern trains.



Article continues next page...

As you can see from the photographs, which were taken by the talented Larry St.Croix, there are various combinations of trains I can run over the single track with the bridge being the outstanding feature. I can now sit in the comfort of my train room and spend a very pleasant hour any day of the week enjoying my life-long pastime. A lifelong passion!



I am indebted to my friend, Jerry Clifford from Warminster, who built all the scenery during the last year. His artistry and talent have made a model layout to be proud of. I'm always pleased for visitors to view the layout completely free of charge!

My thanks go to my parents for giving me such a wonderful Christmas present which set me on the tracks to a hobby that has lasted all these years.

Michael Rumsey

Press on to Wroughton ~ preserving the 140 tonne Wood newspaper printing press

In 2001, Science Museum curator, [the late] Dr John Griffiths, stated: "The Wood press is the last hot-metal press to survive the break-up of Fleet Street and it represents the end of an era that spanned 500 years. Its preservation, in perpetuity, as part of the National Collections of Science and Technology, ensures its iconic status. We are proud to be involved in such an important acquisition".

At the time of the Northcliffe House project in 1999, I was Managing Director Consultancy at AOC South and won the commission to advise about the archaeological and heritage aspects of a redevelopment project from the Hilstone Corporation. The part played by AOC Archaeology in making possible the preservation and transfer of the Wood printing press to the Science Museum was not widely reported [eg a BBC News report ~ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/1665086.stm>]. This is a story that I have meant to tell for the last 20 years [this year is the 20th anniversary of the event], had not 'the highways and byways of life' got in the way.

Northcliffe House was opened in 1927 and was built to replace the nearby Carmelite House (1897-1899), which was no longer sufficient for Associated Newspaper's requirements: it was designed by Ellis and Clarke, who were to become the leading specialist newspaper building architects in London.

Northcliffe House represented a significant development,

one of the first of a new generation of this building,

not only in its size and scale, but also in the way it was designed to combine the different components of the newspaper production process as efficiently as possible within the building type.



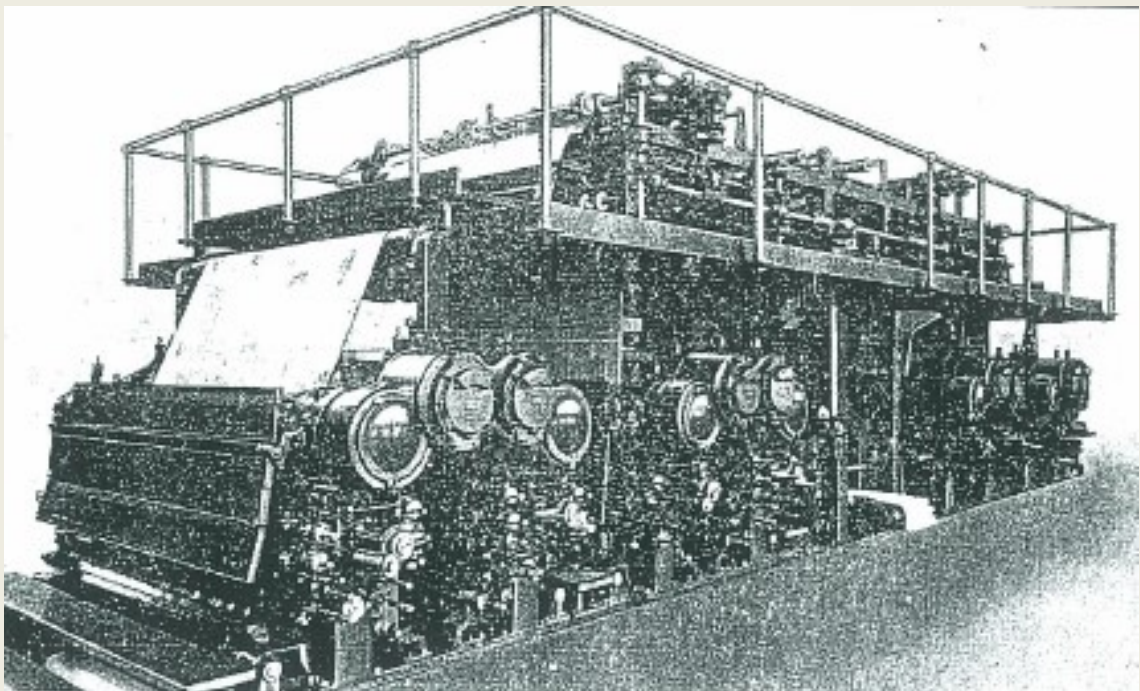
View of Northcliffe House in 1944

This first stage in our project was to undertake a *Desk-based Assessment* of the Henry Wood's newspaper printing press located in a basement of Northcliffe House, Tudor Street, London, EC4. The assessment was carried out as part of a planning application for the conversion of Northcliffe House to offices and a restaurant. Northcliffe House was formerly the printing and publishing building of the *Daily Mail* and *Evening News*, part of the Associated Newspapers group. The building had stood empty, and the press inactive, since printing ceased in the late 1980s.

Article continues next page..

Northcliffe House was listed Grade II in 1988 and was located within the Whitefriars Conservation Area. In 1991, consent was granted for a scheme, involving retention of the street facade only and the demolition of the complete structure within the building. As part of the consent for development, a planning condition was placed upon the surviving Woods printing press, erected in 1934, to ensure its retention.

The majority of the surviving press was almost certainly manufactured by the Wood Newspaper Machinery Corporation. This is indicated by the name 'Wood' cast or rolled onto the north side of the folder frame and the similarity of the surviving printing units to those manufactured by the Wood Corporation which are illustrated in contemporary publications (Isaacs 1931; Associated Newspapers 1924-1926 ~ see below).



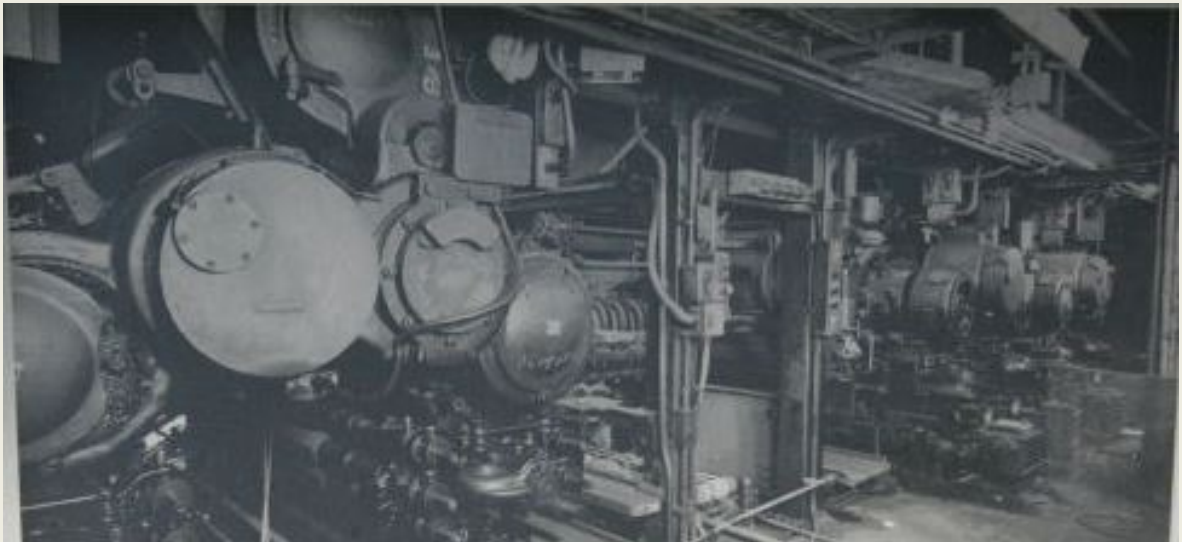
Wood 4 unit printing press installed in the New York Times in 1928

The Wood Corporation were an American firm, based in New York. They took their name from Henry A Wise Wood, who appears to have been both the owner and the person responsible for the designs patented by the firm. The Wood Corporation took out a number of patents relating to newspaper machinery during the 1920s. Their principal patent related to improvements in the inking and paper feed mechanisms of the printing units (United States Patent Specifications no.1327580). Wood's improvements received fulsome praise in contemporary trade journals; his press installed in the new offices of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* between 1925 was described as:

'(the) new wonder of the newspaper world (an) almost human machine, which signalizes (sic) a great revolution in fast and economical newspaper production.'

The press was capable of producing 576,000 copies per hour of a newspaper of up to 12 pages and could be arranged to produce 72,000 copies per hour of a 96 pages paper, with many permutations in between. The press consisted of 12 units, was 160 feet long and driven by four 250 h.p. motors.

An excellent archaeological *Desk-based Assessment* report - https://www.academia.edu/6928960/Printing_Press_Northcliffe_House_Tudor_Street_City_of_London_EC4_Industrial_Archaeology_Report_1999 - was carried out by my colleague Shaun Richardson in difficult circumstances and is the basis for the technical details in this article. The surviving machinery formed approximately one third of the original length of the press line; its overall dimensions were approx. 8.50m in length, approx. 3.6m in width and a towering approx. 8.3m in height and it weighed approx. 140 tonnes. It was divided into three levels; the lower level rested directly on the basement floor, whilst the middle and upper levels were supported by a steel frame incorporating a walkway around them. AOC had to organise the installation of temporary lighting which made photography rather difficult, requiring long exposures. The freelance photographer then working for AOC, Tim Loveless, did a tremendous job.



View of part of the Wood printing press in Northcliffe House

The significance of the press as an industrial archaeological artefact was summarised as follows ~

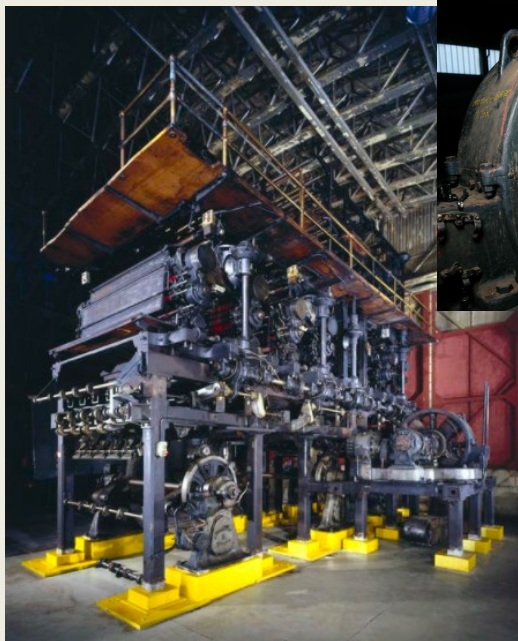
- It was housed within one of the earliest of a new generation of newspaper buildings, the internal design of which influenced those which followed
- the press room at Northcliffe House was the first in Britain to use magazine reel stands. As an example of an early 20th century unit type newspaper printing press, it is an uncommon and possibly rare survival in both the museum and non-museum environment.

Article continues next page..

- Two other newspaper presses were known to exist in the collections of British museums, but were different in both scale and structure and, in reality, did not represent the sweep of development in the newspaper printing industry. In a wider context, in the European museum environment, the survival of such presses appear likely to be rare.

The above points, together with the planning condition placed upon the press, meant that, in the first instance, attention was focused on the best means of its preservation within the new building. However, the developers were adamant that it would not be possible to allow public access to the press in the new commercial building. Their solution was to enclose the press within a 'purpose built structure' thus isolating it from the rest of the new building. I contacted the English Heritage case officer dealing the site and he was not happy about that solution but had to admit that ultimately EH would be powerless to resist it. I then contacted a sympathetic Quantity Surveyor acquaintance of mine who took a pragmatic view and noted that the space occupied by the press would result in a significant loss of rental income. He did a calculation and concluded that such loss of rental income, capitalised over 20 years, would be potentially of the order of some hundreds of thousands of £'s. It occurred to me that an argument might be made that for a lesser sum the press be dismantled by specialist contractors and put into storage pending its reassembly in a suitable new home. The developer was interested in that solution, with its possibilities for attendant good publicity, and EH agreed that such an approach could be considered. Contact was then made with Dr John Griffiths, Science Museum, who was most interested and enthusiastic about the press and the possibility of it being put on display on the Science Museum's new outstation at Wroughton, Wiltshire.

So, after successful negotiations with Hilstone Corporation for a £250,000 'dowry', it was agreed by them and the Science Museum and English Heritage that arrangements be made with specialist contractors for the dismantling, temporary storage, transportation and reassembly of the Wood printing press at Wroughton, the site of a former WWII RAF airfield.



Above: the Wood printing press in process of being reassembled and, **left**, fully reassembled in Wroughton

A considerable achievement and a tribute to lateral thinking and negotiating!

More about the Science Museum complex at Wroughton

The former aircraft hangers at Wroughton are the National Collections Centre for Science Museum Group, housing its library and archive and stores with some 20,000 objects in seven hangars and a modern purpose-built store in progress. The collections span the whole spectrum of scientific and technological interest for all ages, ranging from the giant Lockheed Constellation airliner to early computers, from bicycles to the massive Wood printing press, and from MRI scanners to hovercraft. The press "... is one of Wroughton's star attractions" ~ <http://metatype.co.uk/wpress/wood-press-raf-wroughton/>



Above, The Science Museum complex at the former RAF airfield at Wroughton, near Swindon: it includes a major solar farm [blue panels]. **Below**, a few of the many items on display

A focus on sustainability and biodiversity at the National Collections Centre was also key to developing the site. Some 43,000 native trees have been planted and there is a commitment to planting many more over the next decade and wildflower grasslands have been established, providing spaces for nature to thrive. Building on ambitions for a low carbon future, 183-acres of unused land were committed for a 50 MW solar farm. When it opened in 2016, it was one of the largest in the UK.



PS The Society are planning a group visit, hopefully, in the New Year ~ details to follow.

John Maloney

Trees

Members will have spent much of the last year under some sort of restrictions because of lockdown. Apart from watching David Attenborough on TV, and some occasional news on climate change, we had to find ourselves some method of escape from the indoors, and I think we learnt to appreciate much more the natural environment around us. A reduction in noise, the sound of birdsong, and watching the spring come in gave us the chance to lift our mood. What would we have done without it!

We were already aware of the national campaign to do 'our bit' in the battle with climate change, and one of these was the proposal to grow more trees. Of course, one new tree in a street or field, is not going to make much of a difference, but perhaps taking community action would enable local populations to do more. To that end the Civic Society have joined the local Town Council's Environmental Task group which, as part of its remit, will be to address the possibility of enhancing the local environment by adding more trees to our landscape.

As a first step, approaches are being made to several local landowners, to ask if they would be interested in allowing a tract of their land to be used for a 'Tiny Forest'. A tiny forest can be a plot of land the size of a tennis court, and so several possible small areas have been identified, including space at Coppershell playing field and the Beechfield nature reserve. These are just the beginning of the programme, and if perhaps 10+ trees can be planted on each of these sites then that will be a good start in terms of improving biodiversity in Corsham.

If you have, or have knowledge of, a site which might be used as a 'tiny forest' please contact us via the Civic Society website or inform the Town Council office in the High Street.



Above: Westonbirt Arboretum in autumn

Article continues next page....

POEM - TREES

by Joyce Kilmer

*I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree
A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast
A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts its leafy hands to pray*

*A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in its hair
Upon whose bosom snow has lain
Who intimately lives with rain
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.*

Opposite: Giant poplar trees in the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, North Carolina



Alfred Joyce Kilmer was an American writer and poet mainly remembered for this poem which was published in the collection *Trees and Other Poems* in 1914. The Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest is an approximately 3,800-acre tract of publicly owned virgin forest in Graham County, North Carolina, named in memory of poet.

It is one of North America's most impressive remnants of old-growth forest, containing magnificent examples of more than 100 tree species, many over 400 years old. The forest was set aside in 1936 as a memorial to Kilmer, who was killed in action in France during World War I. This forest, part of the Joyce Kilmer-Slick Rock Wilderness, is maintained in its primitive state and the only way to see it is on foot.

Dominant species are yellow-poplar, oak, basswood, beech and sycamore. The oldest yellow-poplars are more than 20 feet (6.1m) in circumference and stand 100 feet (30m) tall.

Review of August Meeting – Britain's Woodland Heritage

We were very pleased to welcome Richard Cripps, a retired Senior Lecturer for Lackham College, to talk to us about Britain's woodland heritage. He reminded us of the rich landscape of trees we have inherited from as far back as the Romans, and how each invader to these shores, such as the Normans, brought something new to our countryside. With a number of specimens to show and demonstrate the properties of many trees, and how they individually affect our fields, forests and fauna, we were reminded how necessary these species are to our climate and wellbeing, and how we must be more careful in our land management in the future.

Pat Whalley

In Memoriam – Prince Philip 1921 - 2021

It was with great sadness that we heard in April of the death of our Queen's right hand man. Prince Philip had been part of our nation's history for so many years, that it was inevitable that when remembering such a career, local people recall the relatively short period of his life spent in the Corsham area when he served as an Instructor at Royal Arthur (see photo. below), the Petty Officers' Leadership Training Establishment [now the site of Wadswick Green].



Many anecdotes refer to Prince Philip visiting the Methuen Arms with some of his colleagues to play darts and skittles. We know that he became particularly acquainted with one of our local traders Joey Daymond: Joe was an extremely good baker and ran a bakery at 78 High Street (now a private house).

How many children were told the story, "I remember when I played darts/skittles at the Methuen Arms with Prince Philip". My father was one of those, and my uncle, who was also serving at Royal Arthur. Part of his task was the handling of correspondence, and he was instructed that if a letter was received which had an 'E' written at the bottom left-hand corner of the envelope, then that was to be passed immediately to Philip Mountbatten.

Commander Pat Hoare, in his book 'Ceylon To Corsham', relates the anecdote of Philip following the custom of asking his Commanding Officer if he could get engaged. The story goes that the Duke duly reported to his CO and said, "Request permission to get engaged sir and my fiancée said that if you refuse it won't be very good for your career"! Having received the consent, he probably got in his car and tried to break his own speed record for getting from Corsham to the gates of Buckingham Palace in double quick time!

Article continues next page...

For my own part I can claim to have been present in 1947 to see Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten carry out his first public engagement following his engagement to the Princess Elizabeth, when he unveiled the Memorial Wall in the Garden of Remembrance at the bottom of Station Road. In all honesty I only caught a glimpse here and there. I was six years old and standing with my mother on Station Road, and with the many people stood in front of me, my view was somewhat restricted. Nevertheless 'I was there'!

In 2012 the Queen celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, the 60th anniversary of her accession to the throne in 1952. Together with many organisations throughout the country, Corsham's Area Development Trust (now identified as Corsham Tourist Information Centre) held a primary schools' competition for pictures of the Queen. A selection of these were duly sent to the Queen, together with photographs of Corsham (including the Methuen Arms) and reminding them of their association with Corsham. We received a delightful formal letter from the palace,

There are probably many more local stories like these, if you have one, please tell us through our web site. We would love to know if 'You Were There'.



GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE, STATION ROAD

[Second World War memorial given to Parish Council by the Misses Tennant and Rigden]

Remembrance

Anyone visiting the Garden of Remembrance and the memorial to those Corsham men who fell in the Second World War will find an English oak tree at the heart of the site. On 1st November, we were delighted to welcome Mrs Sarah Rose Troughton, Wiltshire's Lord Lieutenant (Her Majesty The Queen's representative in the county) to the garden. Together with Town Council Chairman, Cllr Steve Abbott, the Lord Lieutenant helped plant an English oak in memory of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, who had unveiled the memorial and opened the garden on 1st November 1947. As Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten, it was his first official public engagement, less than three weeks before he married Princess Elizabeth at Westminster Abbey. We were honoured to have been able to mark Corsham's connections with His Royal Highness in such a way, and to have planted our first tree as part of the Queen's Green Canopy (<https://queensgreencanopy.org/>) - a national initiative to mark next year's Platinum Jubilee. (With thanks to Julian Carosi, *Mr Corsham*, for the photographs.)



Above, left: Corsham Remembrance/Armistice Day Commemoration on 1st November at the Memorial Garden and **Below** Remembrance Sunday on 14th November 2021 at the War Memorial.



Monks Park and Lady Alice Goldney

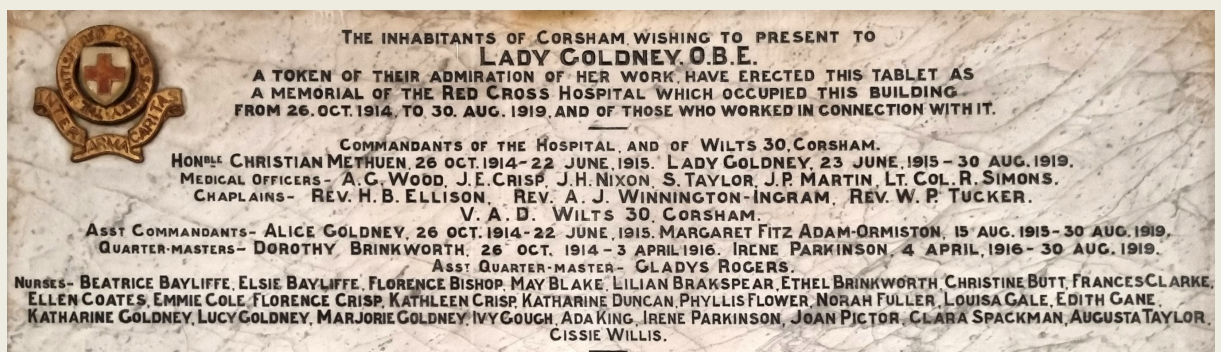
Towards the end of September, I was contacted by Amanda Tyrwhitt-Walker who – during the course of her family research - had come across *Spotlight* online. Amanda was planning to visit Monks Park where her great aunt, Lady Alice Goldney, had lived for a time. Alice married Sir John Tankerville Goldney (1846–1920) who was born at Beechfield House, Pickwick, where the main branch of the Goldney family resided until



Above: Monks Park house, probably built c.1780 at The Ridge, Gastard

The 1940s. Goldney went abroad to forge a career and, eventually, became Attorney General for the Leeward Islands and later Chief Justice of Trinidad in 1893. In 1913, in his later years, he married the then Miss Alice Goldney and bought Monks Park where they resided.

In World War I the house was opened up to the army. Amanda's great aunt, Alice, and grandmother, Marjorie, worked at the Red Cross hospital in Corsham Town Hall during 1914-1918. Female members of the Goldney family played leading roles in running the hospital: a memorial tablet in the Town Hall records Lady Alice Goldney as Commandant; Ethel Goldney was an Assistant Commandant, and Katherine, Lucy and Marjorie Goldney are recorded as nurses. Alice started off there as a nurse volunteer and eventually became Hospital Commandant. She was successful in gathering around her a willing and efficient band of workers. When she was later awarded an O.B.E. for her services, she dedicated it to the commitment of her staff. At the time, there were very few like her who could have combined the power of organisation necessary to make everyone around her work so efficiently during those very difficult times. Alice remained as Commandant until the hospital closed in 1919, supported by her husband, Sir John, and also her sister Marjorie (Amanda's grandmother).



Above: Memorial plaque to the staff of the Red Cross Hospital in Corsham and VAD Wilts 30 Corsham: below the above part of the plaque there are dedications to various VADs (Voluntary Aid Detachments, namely, Biddestone, Box and ambulance)

When Sir John died in 1920, Monks Park was then inherited by his younger brother and Lady Alice sailed back to India; subsequently, she lived in Ascot, Surrey, until she passed away aged 79 in 1957.

Amanda's father, Geoffrey Hugh Goldney Tyrwhitt-Walker, had fond memories of spending his childhood and holidays in the grounds of Monks Park. Geoffrey was the son of Marjorie Goldney and Thomas Tyrwhitt-Walker and had a brother, Gavern. Geoffrey had a successful music career including being the lead saxophonist at the London Palladium and a Musical Director elsewhere which was not typical for his background! He inherited a house or cottage on the Monks Estate but gave it away - apparently because it was rather tumbledown - much to Amanda's regret. He passed away aged 80 in 2006.



Above: portrait of Alice which is in the National Portrait Gallery



Above: Amanda and, **Left:** her father Geoffrey, when he was working at the London Palladium in the mid-1960s

Monks Park Estate is recorded from the 14th century and held by Tropenell and Eyre families in the 15th and 16th centuries and the Danvers family from 1616 to 1711. It was owned by the very wealthy Dickinson family from 1711 to 1865 and the present house was probably built c. 1780 for B. Dickinson.

The background to the Goldney family was one of privilege and wealth, as some of the photos. in then collage on the next page indicate. The *porte cochere* (opposite), a covered entrance large enough for vehicles to pass through, typically opening into a courtyard and serving to shield people from bad weather, is a status symbol probably commissioned by Sir John Tankerville Goldney.





Above: a collage of some of the Tyrwhitt-Walker family photos. that Geoffrey gave his daughter, Amanda (collage by John Maloney)

Article continues next page...

Our visit to Monks Park

Amanda, her husband, Mike, and myself, made their first visit on a day that the Countess of Warwick was not in residence but we were met by some of her staff. Below is a selection of photos. taken to record the memorable day.



Above: East side of the house which has a loggia and glasshouse - note the immaculately kept garden.



Above: Where llamas may safely graze



Above: a large lead water tank dated 1766 at the bottom(see insert)



Above: Amanda beside the large and impressive *porte cochere* main entrance to the house



Above: Amanda admiring a monumental urn

Amanda would like to thank the current owner of the property for kindly agreeing to these photographs being used in this article.

Postscript: My involvement through Amanda has raised a host of interesting further research possibilities about the Monks Park Estate, its history and various owners ~ there will be more to come!

Amanda Tyrwhitt-Walker and John Maloney

Corsham Community Awards 2020 and 2021

(presented by Steve Abbot and Helen Belcher)

A celebration of the Corsham Community Awards took place at the town hall on the 21st October. The awards included those for last year when the event had to be postponed because of Covid. Steve Abbott, chairman of the town council, and Helen Belcher, vice-chairman, introduced the evening, announcing all the nominees and then the winners, and the work they had done to merit nomination.

2020 nominees

RIGG Construction and Suzanne Gough for going 'above and beyond' for the benefit of the staff and children at Corsham Primary Broadwood during the development and building of the school's new building.

Sue Canham, Margaret Cornelius and Lyn Fathers who run the Knitting Club at Corsham Primary Broadwood, and help the children realise their artistic potential.

Ken Bowater from Corsham Bowls Club for his work as volunteer project manager during the major renovation and replacement of the bowls green.

Tony Bromilow from Corsham Bowls Club for his years of coaching and encouraging the community to enjoy and play the game.

Kim Goodridge for her services to wildlife, running the Hedgehog Rescue Centre in Neston, and helping the local community maintain a healthy hedgehog population.

Hilary and Babs Light for the work they do running Corsham Link and helping drive people to their medical appointments across the county and beyond.

Maurice Hancock for his work in the community, with the Twinning Association, as Station Officer at Corsham Fire Station and as a beekeeper.

Malcolm Gilbertson, manager at Oxfam, for supporting his diverse volunteer workforce, particularly during the pandemic when many were shielding and isolated, with phone calls and offers of help.

Nina and Stu at Green Ginger on the High Street for being great supporters of Corsham's efforts to reduce its environmental footprint.

The team at The Flemish Weaver for going the extra mile during lockdown by checking on vulnerable customers and delivering free food to them; offering cut-price takeaways to NHS staff and doing so much to support the local community.

Article continues next page...

2020 winners

Zahid Mahmood, Head Coach at Corsham Amateur Swimming Club

who carried out his voluntary role with incredible commitment both of time and enthusiasm, constantly encouraging everyone to reach their potential. He always had time for members and their carers, making new members of different backgrounds, cultures and abilities very welcome.

Julian Carosi, 'Mr Corsham' himself, whose love of Corsham is reflected in all his actions. No one has a more comprehensive insight into, or knowledge of, Corsham's history – and his several books on the subject have made it accessible to all of us.

Phyllis Fry, Verger at St Barts and one who has been positively involved in the life of Corsham over many decades. As verger she has provided a welcome and positive presence at every wedding and funeral that has taken place at the church, supporting local people at both happy and sad occasions in their lives. She also volunteers regularly in Corsham's Oxfam branch and has helped raise considerable sums of money for the Children's Society.

Barry Cox, for all he's done to get Corsham walking and who has done so much to enhance walking activities for those living in Corsham. He has been involved in the Corsham Walking Festival for a number of years; he leads walks; he's a volunteer Cotswold Warden, looking after a number of footpaths in his designated area, and has been responsible for the Heritage Trails project, fund-raising and working with local historians to produce eight walking maps that celebrate Corsham and the local area's industrial past.

Sharon Shackelford for her tireless work helping people at their most vulnerable, who has worked voluntarily in Corsham for several years helping families in distress and, particularly, the victims and families of domestic abuse to settle into a safe environment. She collects household items and delivers them to those that need them and, at Christmas, packs parcels for families so that they and their children have new gifts to open.

John Bolland for his dedication to sport and young people. He has been involved in football and coaching in Corsham for 30+ years and has supported so many young people, boys and girls, not only to play sport but, by promoting positive ethics, to guide them on their journey in life to become responsible young adults when they leave.

2021 nominees

The Souper Friday Team who have worked very hard each week to ensure that everyone they are supporting has had a phone call and a food parcel or simply a doorstep chat.

Samantha Harris, Beaver Scout Leader at 1st Neston & Box Scout Group, for her work in keeping the Beaver Scouts going through lockdown with weekly meetings and even virtual camps, and helping to provide some normality for the children.

Matt Housley, for his part in providing smiles and lifting children's hearts and minds with his virtual parties and magic shows at virtual Beaver Scout camps.

Caroline Butson, the leader at Neston Beavers but also the Assistant District Commissioner for Beavers in North Wiltshire. Through the pandemic Caroline went out of her way to provide activities for the young children who are part of Beavers, ensuring they were learning and having fun, which was not only a great support to the children, but to their parents as well.

Janice Boswell for all she has done during the pandemic, signing up with the Royal Voluntary Service and the Town Council to help collect shopping and prescriptions and now as a vaccine centre volunteer.

Theodora Van Heijningen for continuing to raise the spirits of Corsham residents during lockdown, whether that was giving away flowers and plants, creating a work of art with costume jewellery to brighten dark days or just joking and laughing and chatting with her customers and passers-by.

2021 Winners

John Maloney for his enthusiasm, commitment and dedication towards fostering community interest and knowledge about local history. His list of achievements ranges from editing and writing for the Civic Society's Spotlight magazine, to researching important local buildings and taking up planning causes, to – most recently – working with the children at Corsham Regis Primary School as part of the StoryTown festival.

Christine Reid for her work as a Trustee of the Almshouses for the past 23 years. She was a key driving force behind the restoration of the building, including helping to raise £1.5m in funding. She now runs a project to restore the gardens, helped by a team of volunteers. Christine also has a long and distinguished record of public and voluntary service dating back to 1981; among many things, she has been a Councillor and a Trustee of The Pound Arts Centre.

Corsham Churches Foodbank which, since 2011, has provided a lifeline for the vulnerable people in our community. This group is supported by our local churches and run entirely by volunteers. During the pandemic they never closed, remaining open for business and supporting those who would struggle to eat if they were not around.

Natalie Sherman for her dedication to the Wiltshire Digital Drive and her goal that everyone in the county has access to a digital device. The Wiltshire Digital Drive was set up in October 2020 to refurbish and recycle donated laptops as a gift back to the community, enabling education and connectivity, two things that became vital during the pandemic. As well as helping schools, the WDD has also provided laptops to groups such as Alzheimer's Support, the Women's Refuge and the Centre for Independent Living.



From left to right: Steve Abbot, John Bolland, Christine Reid, Phyl Fry, Steve Drew (on behalf of Corsham Foodbank), Natalie Sherman, John Maloney, Helen Belcher

All nominees and winners were heartily congratulated. Steve Abbott also thanked the Town Council's Awards Panel – Helen Belcher, Ruth Hopkinson, Anthea White and Jonny Corbett – for the difficult decisions they've had to make in finding such worthy winners. Appreciation was expressed for the efforts and organisation of Sharon Thomas, Head of Community Services, Corsham Town Council.

Apropos of I can't quite remember

Perhaps it's to do with my archaeological background but as I walk down Priory Street my eye invariably lights upon this structure which looks like an upturned boat, although I believe it to be a garden shed rather than a Viking construction.



John Maloney

Filming dramas in Box parish.

The second series of the police drama, *McDonald & Dodds*, was aired on ITV earlier this year and the first instalment of the new 3rd series is likely to be broadcast on ITV in early 2022.

The series, which is based and filmed in and around Bath, features two episodes filmed in Box. The 28th February episode depicted a hot air balloon taking-off and then crash-landing in a field in Wadswick. A week later, in the 7th March episode, Box Tunnel was a key film-location and very much part of the storyline. Luckily, I was in Box on the day and witnessed some of the filming. My curiosity was piqued when I watched the cast circling the village in a helicopter and landing in Tunnel Field.

Other scenes of Box included the actors (in character) walking towards the tunnel on their way to uncover a dead body. As, I am sure you can imagine, the interior tunnel scenes were not shot in Box Tunnel due to safety regulations and the fact trains pass through the tunnel every 15 minutes. The more observant might have noticed that the sleepers along the line in the show were wooden whereas those in Box Tunnel are made of reinforced concrete. Another understandable, but clear anomaly was the brickwork in the "tunnel" which was much too modern compared to Brunel's original 1840s brickwork.

The researchers behind the show must have put in a bit of time exploring Box's local folklore. Consequently, the programme has helped to perpetuate the myth that when the sun rises on 9th April, Brunel's birthday, it shines through the tunnel. In reality, the sun has shone through on 6th April and occasionally on the 7th, but so far in its near 200 years never on the 9th. My friend, Kenneth Leech, the renowned GWR historian, once witnessed the sunrise on 6th April. He took a photograph to prove the story. I was told some time ago by an eminent civil engineer that if Brunel had wanted the sun to shine through his beloved tunnel, he would have had to move the Potley Cutting some distance to the left.

I found the two episodes most enjoyable [*so did Cath and I ~ Editor*]. They were made additionally fascinating because I was able to picture the scenes as they were filmed. It was good to know that people all over the country had a chance to see some of the iconic scenes in Box.



Michael Rumsey

BOOK REVIEWS

Local history gets even worse

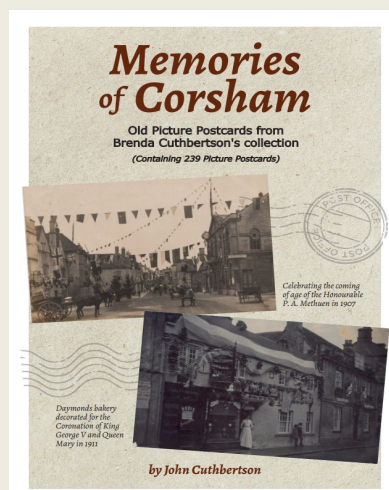
John Cuthbertson ed., *Memories of Corsham: Old Picture Postcards from Brenda Cuthbertson's Collection* (2021), 173pp.

John Kenneth Oatley, *Corsham My Story: Memories and Changes in the Lives of a Corsham Family* (2021), 158pp. Both printed by Corsham Print and published by the authors; £14.99 each.

In the last issue of *Corsham Spotlight* (Spring 2021), the Editor and the Chairman of the Civic Society are surprisingly quoted as praising two recent writers on the local history of Corsham for not being what was called 'overly academic'. This presumably means that their publications were badly written and poorly researched [*No, that's not what we meant ~ the Editor*]. It might be hoped that these characteristics would not be thought worthy of praise. Local history writing about Corsham in recent decades has been of distressingly low quality in terms both of research and writing, and little of it has been found worthy of review anywhere, let alone in *Spotlight*. But I break the rule of an academic lifetime to review two new books that are really very poor, in an effort to correct the balance and make the point that local history should be intelligently and accurately composed.

Memories of Corsham, sadly, does not live up to its title. It is a handsomely produced volume containing reproductions of no less than 239 postcards showing views of Corsham, mainly photographs taken at various dates since 1902 when the Post Office first permitted postcards of a standard size with a picture on one side and both the message and address on the other side. The book is unique – to the best of my knowledge – in that it reproduces both sides of the postcards, that is, both the photographs and the unquote-worthy quotidian messages on the other. It is never explained why these messages are thought to be of any interest. They certainly tell us nothing at all about the history of Corsham.

Most of the postcards have not been reproduced before, and so are potentially of much interest for the changing face of Corsham throughout the twentieth century. A certain amount of attention is paid to the date on the postmarks, but these tell us nothing about the date of the photographs. A little desultory effort has been put into finding out the dates of publication, but there is little or no attempt to explain what the photographs tell us. Such historical information as is given is distressingly inaccurate.



Article continues next page...

The name 'Cosham', for example, began to give way to 'Corsham' in the middle of the 17th century, yet the editor tells us this was 'under Norman influence', whatever that might mean (p. vi). Can he really think that Capability Brown's great gallery at Corsham Court is made of white marble, using Sir Paul Methuen's death mask? And what can he mean by saying that there is a 'carriage drive laid out by Repton [which] leads from the graveyard of St Bartholomew's Church through the park to the woods'? (both dotty howlers on p. 22), where it is also stated that 'Lord Robert Methuen', as he is improperly described, is the present peer, which suggests that the editor has been asleep for the last seven years. When we get to Hartham we are suddenly told a propos of nothing that 'Alexander Malet, who later went on to become Governor of Bombay, was born here in 1800' (p. 60). This confuses Sir Alexander Malet, the 2nd baronet, who was never Governor of Bombay, with his father Sir Charles Malet, the 1st baronet, who had been acting Governor of Bombay before retiring after 1798 to live at Hartham. But what are we to make of this? Even if this non-fact were to be a fact, what would its relevance be to the history of Corsham, or of postcards, or of anything at all? We are offered pictures, and virtually no effort has been made to give them any meaning.

We are told that the so-called Flemish Weavers' Cottages were built by Paul Methuen as Lord of the Manor (p.40), which is simply not true. A quick look at the cottages – not all built at the same time – will show that they antedate Methuen's purchase of the Corsham estate in 1745 or his acquisition of the lordship of the manor in 1770, by which time the once-important cloth industry was in decline. We are also told that around the corner in Church Street are doors on the second floor into which fleeces were raised from carts and woven cloth emerged from the ground floor. This is pure fantasy: one can only wonder where Mr Cuthbertson sources his information about the processes of cloth-making. He also appears to be ignorant about the posting of postcards. He expresses surprise that a message can be sent apologising for not coming 'today' but promising to come 'tomorrow' (p.iv). A glance at any early 20th century edition of Kelly's *Directory* for Wiltshire would have shown him that there were three collections every day from postboxes in Corsham and three deliveries every day to any house. Postcards were the agreeable Edwardian equivalent of the present-day e-mail.

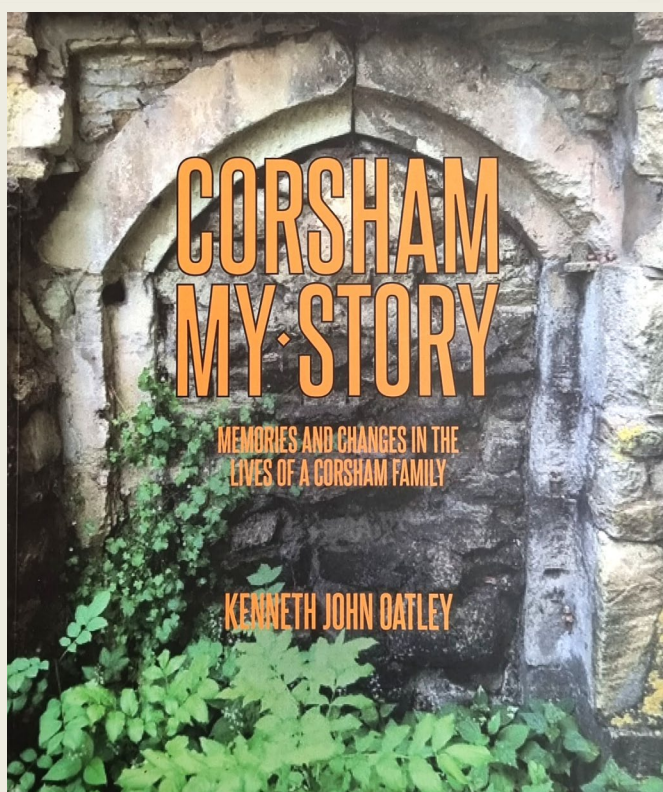
The same disregard for historical accuracy blights the second book to have been published this year claiming to be a contribution to the history of Corsham, but which plumbs new depths of inaccuracy and poor writing even by the low standards set by most recent writings on the subject of Corsham's history. *Corsham My Story* by Kenneth John Oatley is very difficult to read, given the author's continual disregard of grammar (starting with the title), together with his erratic scattering of commas, and his profuse capitalisation. Whatever is one to make of a sentence like this, to take just one example about the author's grand-father born in 1880: 'From early notes it appears amongst other occupations, Percy lived in Box most of his younger days' (p.12)?

Article continues next page...

Mr Oatley's mastery of historical facts is comically weak. He thinks because Corsham is mentioned in Domesday Book it must have been an important place in 1086. He thinks because it was a royal manor in Saxon times that it had a close connection with the royal family through the ages. He says Queen Elizabeth sold Corsham House to Sir Christopher Hatton in 1572, that Richard, Earl of Cornwall granted a market in 1332, that King Ethelred lived in Corsham from 878 to 1017 (sic). All these mistakes are breathlessly stated on p. 6. A few minutes spent looking things up would have revealed to him that there were many royal manors which no king

ever visited, that Corsham House did not exist in 1572, that the market right was first granted in 1285, years after Richard, Earl of Cornwall had died, and a few minutes thought might have made him realise that it was unlikely that Ethelred lived for 139 years, quite apart from the fact that there is no evidence that Ethelred ever set foot in Corsham.

Historical misinformation seeps throughout the book. We are told that weavers took raw wool into their homes to weave into cloth (p.8), that there was a turnpike road to London in 1281 (p.89), and that it improbably carried wool to London, that there was a 'Great Priory' with Benedictine monks in medieval Corsham, about which moreover 'a number of books have been written' (pp. 5,55). To my certain knowledge no books whatsoever have been written about this non-existent 'Priory', the myth about which was conclusively shown by Sir Harold Brakspear in 1924 to have arisen because of misunderstandings about the 'Rectory Manor' being owned by a French religious house. The author asserts that the High Street in Corsham used to be called Market Street (pp.91,124,149), a statement for which I can find no evidence. This chronicle of mistakes could alas continue. Mr Oatley was an architect, and he is off the rails even about architecture. He provides a picture of 'St Margaret's College, Oxford', a college that does not exist, but in the picture it looks very like St Catherine's College: a building much admired by architects and much disliked by almost everyone who has to use it.



Mr Oatley provides several pictures of buildings for which he admits responsibility in the Corsham area, all modernistically firmly out of the vernacular tradition. A major theme of the book is repeatedly stated: that Corsham was a village when he was growing up and was made into a town by the second world war (pp.4,5,14,20,46,57,78,85,90, 99,124,136,146,153). Once he calls it a 'new town' and once a 'borough', neither of which are correct. Being a market from 1285 and the many surviving Victorian shop-fronts of the High Street surely make Corsham a town in any normal usage of the term. It could well be debated at what periods it became a 'failed town' or a 'failed market' and how it revived itself in different ways at different times (unlike, say, Lacock).

But these intelligent themes are beyond Mr Oatley's grasp. He cannot even be bothered to look up the proper spelling of what he calls *Thingly* or the *Naffi*, nor even get right the distinctive spelling of the once-famous local butchers, Beszant's. His proposals for the future of Corsham, which involve building a new shopping centre on the site of the old Boxfields bungalows just outside the parish boundary, as well as opening a museum for the town reveal that he must be as ignorant of the economics of shopping and the financing of a museum as he is of history. The book concludes with a quotation in German from Beethoven; no reader who manages to get so far will be surprised that it is not explained and that it is incorrect.

Neither of these books, which look well-produced by Corsham Print, have been subjected to any editorial control or any attempt at fact-checking. They are vanity publications, with little to be vain about. They are both slapdash, and neither justifies being published, though one at least has nice photographs. Between them, they lower even further the local standard of local history. Corsham's history deserves better. There is nothing to be proud of in not being 'academic'.

Negley Harte

And now for a review of Oatley's book from a rather different viewpoint ...

Review of 'Corsham My Story: memories and changes in the lives of a Corsham family' by Kenneth John Oatley

Published this year by the author, 'Corsham my story' is partly an autobiography of a Corsham man and his family and partly the history of the town, most especially of the second half of the 20th century when the author's father – and later himself – were involved in the development of the town following the impact that the war effort had had on it. His account of life in Corsham during the war is engaging – the men away 'somewhere in Europe', the young mothers coping with shortages of everything, the fear engendered by the sirens and the bombing of Bath, and the influx via Corsham station of hundreds of troops, as well as the barracks, the new roads and the masses of prefab homes thrown up for the workers in the underground 'factory unit' – the old stone quarries.

Article continues next page...

After the war, the author's father, a builder, was employed in the construction of replacement homes for families in the substandard prefabs. He started in Box and then moved on to Corsham with the flats in Post Office Lane - Holton House - opened in 1957, and then on to 'Ivyfields' where, we are told, few garages were built because most people did not have a car. This is when Corsham and its surroundings grew enormously because houses had to be built before the prefabs could be demolished, resulting in the areas we know today, such as Rudloe, Thornypits and Westwells. The author eventually followed his father in the house building trade as an architect, designing replacement homes, eg. Moxhams and Wyvern House in Newlands Road, and utilizing innovative methods. He is enthusiastic about the ways he, and the company he worked for, met the restrictive briefs, limited budgets and density requirements that the local council set, and is proud of the quality of its work. Many more developments which followed in the 1960s, 70s and 80s within and around the town are described, as well as some which never happened: for instance. a scheme to open up land around the Mansion House and the Grove to extend shopping and car parking! The author naturally retains a lively interest in any plans that might affect the town and he makes suggestions for the future.

There are many interesting stories and snippets of information that the author recalls - events, characters, sites, the police, twinning, lost trades etc. The text could have done with a thorough edit but the book is well-presented with clear print and lots of great illustrations: photographs, plans and ephemera.

Cath Maloney

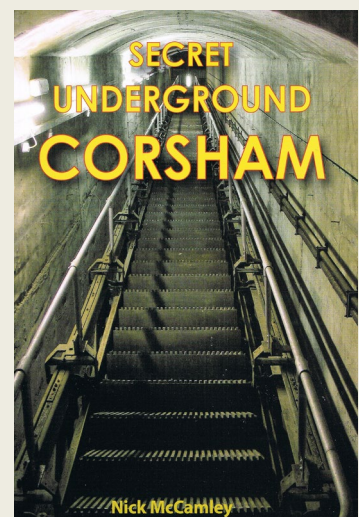


Above: photo from Oatley's book captioned ~ pre-fabs typical of the thousands that were built in Corsham

'Secret Underground Corsham' by Nick McCamley 2021. Published by Folly Books and printed by Corsham Print price £15.

This is the latest of Nick McCamley's books exploring Corsham's underground secrets with up-to-date photographs, so many in colour. This book, in my opinion, compliments the wonderful history of stone mining in the area by the late David Pollard, whose book 'Digging Bath Stone, his magnum opus, will be the book to buy for Christmas and enjoy reading. Nick McCamley talks about all the stone mines in the Corsham area with colour illustrations bringing to life what it was to work underground. It is an excellent work and well worth the £15 cost and is available at the Corsham Bookshop, as too are copies of David Pollard's book.

Michael Rumsey



Pickwick Winter Tales ~ a review by Anna Currey

Strangely enough, it was snowing as I sat down yesterday morning to read *Pickwick Winter Tales*. Okay, the snow didn't last long, or settle, but it felt completely appropriate, for I can think of no better read for a cold winter's day.

I so much enjoyed all the different voices, from Anthea White's subtle fantasies, to Larry St Croix's robust boy preparing to enjoy the snowy day to the absolute full. I mentally accompanied John Maloney on his walk around Pickwick's past – he mentioned a sweet shop in the old Toll House tended by a little old lady – well of course! That must have been the same old lady haunting Stuart Boomer Davis' ghostly tale!

When I go on my own walks I shall think of David Taylor's limping fox, so beautifully described. Was he alright in the end? I don't suppose we shall ever know. I shall be reminded of Martin Cadwgan's blackbird and the strange thing that happened to him at the top of Middlewick Lane. I'm so glad he was alright in the end, in bed with a nice cup of tea.

Yes, I thoroughly enjoyed my winter's morning read. I think the value of these tales lies in the way they each help to enrich our love and experience of Pickwick. Thank you all of you, who pulled *Pickwick Winter Tales* together for the rest of us.

Anna Currey

Editor's note

Anna Currey is the author and illustrator of several children's books, including *The Christmas Unicorn* and *Truffle's Christmas*. She also illustrated *One Ted Falls Out of Bed*, written by Julia Donaldson; *The Macmillan Book of Nursery Rhymes*; and *When the World Is Ready for Bed* and *When the World Was Waiting for You*, both written by Gillian Shields. She has lived in Pickwick for many years.

Corsham Bookshop can supply Anna's books



Copies of the *Pickwick Winter Tales* will be on sale in Corsham bookshop in December at a modest price [yet to be determined!]. It's an obvious stocking filler!

21st Century Cosmic Surgery on a Nineteenth Century Face

On 30th June 2021, we celebrated the 180th anniversary of the first train from London to Bristol passing through Corsham.

Between 1836 and 1841 railway navvies had built 118 miles of track from London Paddington to Bristol Temple Meads under the supervision of the world-famous engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

The cuttings in the Corsham area were created by hand, no machinery being available to do the job better than man-power. Today Network Rail is ensuring the safety of the line, its trains and passengers by reinforcing the bankside structures with much more modern engineering techniques, so nothing will hinder the trains passing through Corsham in the future.

After the horrific derailment in Scotland when a high-speed train hit a large landslip at Carmont near Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire, killing the driver, the conductor and a passenger in 2020, Network Rail has been inspecting and ensuring the stability of all cuttings and embankments across the UK.

In 2018-19, much work was completed on the cutting by the road bridge on the Corsham to Lacock Road near the former Roebuck Inn. Piles were driven into the cutting side to stabilise the soil by compensating for the large deposits of clay which get sodden with the rainwater and have been known to slip. Work on the cutting around the Pound Pill bridge area started just before Christmas 2020. It is being cleared of trees and undergrowth in preparation for the boring machines that will create holes for rods which will stabilise the embankment.



Above: railway cuttings next to the Lacock Road, Corsham

The infrastructure that Brunel engineered using the finest Victorian technology 180 years ago is now being given 21st century technological and engineering treatment to ensure the safety of the lines, train passengers and residents living close to railway lines. The photos were taken on 2nd February this year.

Michael Rumsey

An Admiral Fitzroy barometer c.1860



Above: rare original antique Victorian carved rosewood Admiral Fitzroy barometer c.1860. Photo ~ John Maloney

From time to time I search online for collectables and curios and last year I was fortunate to come across this Admiral Fitzroy barometer on eBay. It seemed clear from the few details the owner supplied that he had inherited it, didn't properly appreciate its significance and just wanted to get what he could for it.

Even though it wasn't working and needed some repairs, I bought it for a reasonable price. Fortunately, I had been put in touch with an expert clock and barometer repairer, Colin Masters, who lived in Calne. Having made the repairs and topped up the system with mercury, Colin got it working and brought it to our house to set it up as the mercury component needs careful handling. Most unfortunately, having done that some weeks ago, more recently, Colin died of pneumonia, RIP.

Robert Fitzroy (1805 -1865) was born into the upper echelons of the British aristocracy; through his father, General Lord Charles Fitzroy he was a fourth great grandson of Charles II. He became an officer in the Royal Navy and scientist. He was Captain of HMS Beagle on the first expedition to Tierra del Fuego in 1830 and had taken some native people 'hostages' and brought them to England where they were shown to King William IV and Queen Adelaide. For the second, most famous, expedition the next year, he took with him a young naturalist, Charles Darwin. For most of the next five years, Fitzroy in HMS Beagle surveyed the coast of South America taking longitude measurements, leaving Darwin free to explore the continent and islands, including the Galápagos. HMS Beagle returned to England in October 1836 to great acclaim. FitzRoy was awarded a gold medal by the Royal Geographical Society in 1837.

Article continues next page...

FitzRoy wrote his account of the voyage and it was published in 1839 as the *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of H.M.S. Adventure and Beagle*, in four volumes, including Darwin's *Journal and Remarks, 1832–1836* as the third volume.

In December 1843 FitzRoy was appointed the second Governor of New Zealand. He returned to Britain in September 1848 and was made superintendent of the Royal Naval Dockyards at Woolwich. In March 1849 he was given his final sea command, the screw frigate HMS Arrogant.

FitzRoy retired from active service in 1850, partly due to ill health. The following year, in 1851, he was elected to the Royal Society with the support of 13 fellows, including Charles Darwin.

In 1854, on the recommendation of the President of the Royal Society, FitzRoy was appointed as chief of a new department to deal with the collection of weather data at sea. His title was *Meteorological Statist to the Board of Trade*, and he had a staff of three. This was the forerunner of the modern Meteorological Office. He arranged for captains of ships to provide information, with tested instruments being loaned for this purpose, and for computation of the data collected.

FitzRoy soon began to work on strategies to make weather information more widely available for the safety of shipping and fishermen. He directed the design and distribution of a type of barometer which, on his recommendation, was fixed at every port to be available to crews for consultation before setting out to sea. Stone housings for such barometers are still visible at many fishing harbours. The invention of several different types of barometers is attributed to him. These became popular and continued in production into the 20th century, characteristically engraved with Admiral FitzRoy's special remarks on interpretation, such as: "When rising: In winter the rise of the barometer presages frost".

FitzRoy had been promoted to Rear-Admiral on the reserved list in 1857 and was advanced to Vice-Admiral in 1863. In later years, troubles at the Meteorological Office, financial concerns as well as failing health and depression took their toll. He died on 30th April 1865. He is honoured today in the name of one of the shipping forecast areas.

I am in touch with Science Museum Group Collection about gifting the barometer to them.



Above: FitzRoy c.1855

Below: FitzRoy fisheries barometer No. 98, Stromness, Orkney.

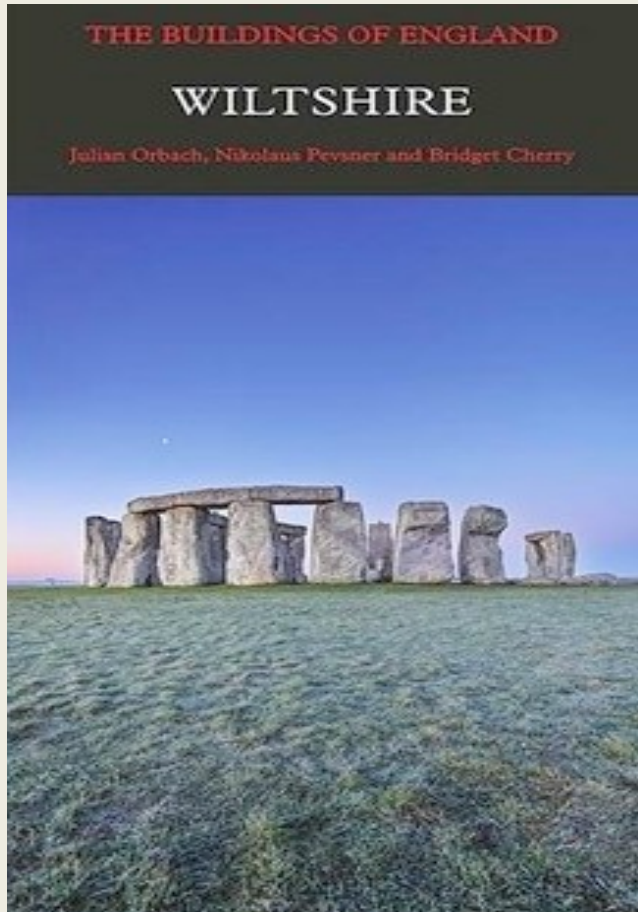


The launch of the Wiltshire volume of *The Buildings of England*, revised by Julian Orbach

On 22nd July there was a celebration of the publication of the *Wiltshire* volume by Julian Orbach, Nikolaus Pevsner and Bridget Cherry. The Wiltshire launch was organised by the Yale University Press (the publishers) and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art [Bedford square, London]. The launch was held at Marlborough College.

The book is in the series *The Buildings of England*, the creator and founding editor being Nikolaus Pevsner who wrote many of the books; the first editions of the county volumes were published by Penguin Books between 1951 and 1974. The continuing programme of revisions and new volumes was supported between 1994 and 2011 by research funded by the Pevsner Books Trust. That responsibility has now been assumed by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

As Julian points out, *The Buildings of England* books differ from all previous place-by-place guides to English counties. There are no misty legends, no dubious traditions, little generalising about landscape, and family history only rarely comes in. *Wiltshire*, The county was special to Pevsner because he and his wife Lola had had a country cottage above Broad Town near Clyffe Pypard, a retreat from London. On Pevsner's dedication page, *Wiltshire* is called 'the county of the cottage'.



The original Wiltshire volume was revised in 1975 by Bridget Cherry, a British [architectural historian](#) who was series editor of the [Pevsner Architectural Guides](#) from 1971 until 2002 and is the co-author of several of the guides. Due to her involvement with the London Topographical Society, I encountered her while working at the Museum of London.

In his introduction to the book, Julian writes that, *This second revision has taken six years, a tribute to the patience of the editors at Yale, Simon Bradley and Charles O'Brien, as well as the quality of the county's buildings. There was an argument for making two volumes of Wiltshire, but the line of division between north and south was not obvious the great increase in length is due to information.*

Article continues next page...

In 1975 the historic buildings lists had not been revised, vernacular architecture was largely unstudied and there was more to be learned about the industrial heritage of the county. Even the entries for churches have needed modification There have not been great losses in the historic buildings of Wiltshire, either between 1963 and 1975 or between 1975 and 2020. The most notable changes between 1975 and 2020 have been the slide of public and commercial buildings such as town halls, chapels, banks and shops into different use, not always to the benefit of the building, and the converse return of country houses from use as offices, schools, hospitals or care homes, to private domestic use, generally to the benefit of the building.

Julian records, Thanks to those who have contributed to this volume Joshua Pollard who has revised all the archaeology entries and written introductory pieces on the prehistoric and Roman periods, navigating with care the stormy waters of Stonehenge and Isobel Geddes, leading geologist in the county, who provided the introduction on the geology and building materials as well as advice on the building stones.

Julian also acknowledged the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre at Chippenham and the Wiltshire Buildings Record, an asset every county should emulate. The help received from the WBR has been enormous Discussion with Dorothy Treasure has elucidated many a problem, [as has] discussion shared with Pam Slocombe Through the record came help from its Presidents and its principal researcher, Louise Purdy. Not to be forgotten are the local societies to whom I lectured and never left a lecture without useful information and contacts Corsham Civic Society (Negley Harte). Owners who showed me their houses and shared their knowledge included Tom Brakspear, James Methuen-Campbell

There were many others whose help was gratefully acknowledged. It is a hardback book, 988 pages long including the index, and contains 76 b&w figures, 118 excellent colour photographs and 12 maps: the page size is 216 x 114mm. It is much enlarged from the Bridget Cherry revision of 661 pages which has a smaller page size 118 x 110mm.

As to process, Julian explained: In every place I started with Pevsner's text, visited the buildings he mentioned, walked the streets with Pevsner's text to see what was obviously missing, looked at my sources to see what was not obvious but was still missing, like older houses disguised by rebuilding and combed the countryside around for interesting things left out, such as Victorian country houses, and also for new things built since Pevsner's day . In revising Pevsner's text I tried to rethink each building, to see where the emphasis could be sharpened. Correcting errors was relatively straightforward, most being simple things pointed out in letters to the publishers, such as the points of the compass wrong in churches and misread dates on buildings and church monuments. Such mistakes are easily made, and missing them in proof-reading easy too.

As for Pevsner's omissions, there are different types. Many good Georgian houses and even more good vernacular houses of the 16th century and the 17th century were left out because Pevsner feared that the book could become a tick-list of buildings of interest rather than a selection of the best. I widened his selection especially in town streets or village groups. Consequentially, there is so much detail in this book – Julian noted that I visited nearly every country house in Wiltshire – that in reviewing it I have focused on Corsham, to give some idea of the additions and changes made.

Corsham is covered on pages 251-260 and includes new additions, for instance, St Patrick's Church [former Pickwick National School, 1857-8], the Baptist Church, St Aldhelm United Church, Springfield Community Campus, Pounds Art Centre, Ethelred House of the 1760s, Arnold House, The Precinct [1972-3], the former Congregational Chapel of 1790 and military Corsham [various sites]. An addition to the Pickwick entry is No. 12 Pickwick [mine and Cath's house] for which Julian has noted that it has *timbers tree ring dated to 1533-40*. Hartham Park is included this time but Monks Lane, Gastard, Neston and Jaggards no longer feature. A notable omission is Pevsner's assertion that *Corsham has no match in Wiltshire for wealth of good houses, and there are a few of really high merit*, presumably because it seemed rather overblown.

*As to Julian's career, he recounts that I worked for the Victorian Society in 1975-7, almost my first job, and Pevsner, right at the end of his career, chaired the monthly 'cases' committee that met in his office in Bloomsbury Square. Before each meeting, we would go through the cases, he making notes in his minuscule handwriting. Years later, after I had worked on three volumes of the Buildings of Wales, I was asked to revise his volume for South & West Somerset. Julian lived in Wiltshire for a dozen years from 1975 and had worked on the listed buildings survey of the 1980s, before moving to Wales for 20 years. In 2014 he returned to Bradford on Avon, where he had lived before and set out to revise the Wiltshire volume in two-and-a-half to three years. It was apparent before he finished Bradford on Avon, his first parish, that the task was going to over-run, though he did not expect it to take seven years! As to 'What took so long?', he commented that *Essentially there are corrections, revisions, and additions, all three based on the layers of information that have been added to what was known in 1963 or at the revision of 1975.**

He noted that *The work of the Wiltshire Buildings Record based at the Chippenham Record Office has concentrated, since 1979, primarily on recording vernacular buildings, farmhouses and cottages, but it has also sponsored the programme of tree-ring dating that gave new accuracy to our knowledge of medieval buildings. Very early dates included 1300-20 at Manor Farm, South Wraxall, and the Old Rectory, Yatton Keynell, and the 1320s at the former vicarage at Bremhill.*

Regarding the launch, from an elevated position [**Right**] Julian gave a witty speech about the challenges and satisfactions of his work [many of the points have been outlined above]. The launch was attended by some 60 people [**Below**], including ~ Mrs Sarah Rose Troughton, HM Lord Lieutenant for Wiltshire; Matthew Saunders, MBE, former Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society; Jill Channer, Independent Historic Building and Architectural Glass Consultant; Dorothy Treasure, Principal Buildings Historian, Wiltshire Buildings Record; Tom Brakspear of Pickwick Manor and Paul Kefford of Gastard.

Right: Julian on an upper level of a building at Marlborough addressing his book launch gathering

Below: the launch gathering listening to Julian.



By any yardstick the revised Wiltshire volume of *The Buildings of England* is an excellent work of scholarship, a very detailed and informative publication and a considerable achievement. Well done, Julian.

John Maloney

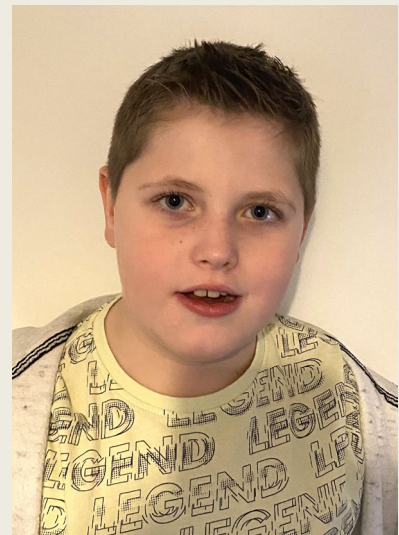
Pickwick, some aspects of life and times ~ an exhibition at Corsham Library



Above: on the yellow background (top left), Marnie's workshops and StoryTown 2021 details and below and right, the Pickwick exhibition panels.

Following the success of involvement with StoryTown 2020 and 2021 (p. 30), Marnie Forbes-Eldridge (theatre and drama coach) contacted me about a 'Pickwick themed' event for 2021. We met with Wendy Barker, Corsham and Box Community Library Manager, and agreed a Pickwick exhibition as a centre piece for workshops run by Marnie in Corsham Library. I wrote and compiled a 17 panel exhibition about Pickwick, including some original material about the Moonraker Canoes company (pps. 39-41) which became famous in the late 1950s-1970s. Marnie reported that the workshops *Went well. We had 19 attending and the feedback regarding the exhibition was really positive. I think it's great that we can keep it up and link it to the StoryTown weekend* (the exhibition remained up throughout much of October and was advertised on various websites etc.).

The winner of the most accurate entry for the Pickwick doorknockers house numbers' competition was Riley West, 10 years old, of Corsham Primary School (Broadwood site). Despite being scrunched up and liberally covered in mud, his was the most accurate entry for which he was awarded the £25 prize!



John Maloney

Above: the best entry of the Pickwick doorknockers house numbers and, **Right,** the winner, Riley West.

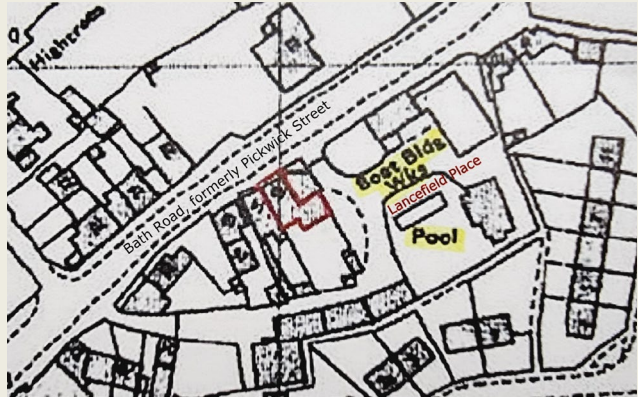
Moonraker Canoes, Lancefield Place, Pickwick ~ a notable centre of boat building

Even though our house is next to Lancefield Place, until quite recently I knew little about its name and former use except that the open area/yard came into being with the creation of Pickwick Brewery in the early 19th century.

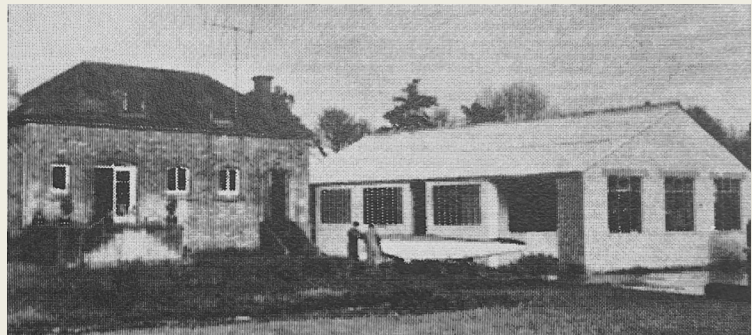
Richard Lancefield with his lifelong friend and RAF Compton Bassett colleague,

John Jenkins started restoring old Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars before switching to boat-building, in particular making canoes and kayaks. In 1958 they purchased a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre site in Pickwick and obtained planning permission for a coach building works.

In his archive (see details on p. 41), Lancefield wrote, *The site had been a brewery at some time and had a dray house and stables which we quickly converted into workshops. But these were unsuitable for coachwork and painting etc. Because of this our work moved towards dray houseboats, including a small number of canoes, while we built a new workshop which we designed ourselves specially for the restoration of cars.*



Above: 1967 OS map of the area, with the *Boat Bldg Wks* and *Pool* marked

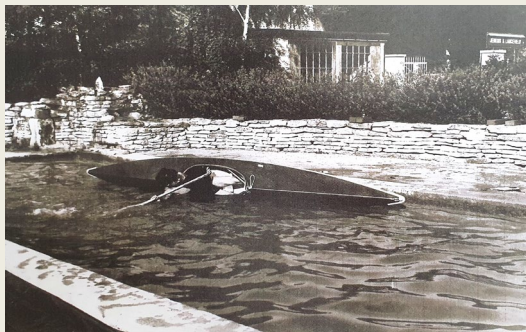


Above: Left, a former Pickwick Brewery building and, **Right,** the new building by Jenkins and Lancefield



Above: The Moonraker Canoes pennant and, **Left,** the inside of the purpose-built workshop (with named workers) by Jenkins and Lancefield

This wonderful workshop built with Bath stone-faced blocks with cavity walls was finished in 1959. Only one car, a 2-seater racing Bentley was restored there as our work then changed direction. We were now producing not only canoes but several special class racing dinghies, outboard runabouts, a cabin cruiser and developing a 20-foot fully decked catamaran and a 20-foot day sailing boat which was self-righting etc. We now had six young workers who had come to us from school. The two eldest were accomplished craftsmen.



Above: the test pond in what is now Lancefield Place ~ 'rolling' a boat to test its stability. Local people were allowed to swim in the pool.

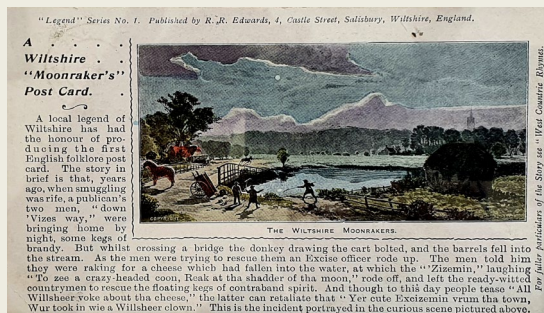


Above: A classy way to deliver boats ~ a Bentley!



Above: my 'Hi-Fi' (so named by the previous owner) Moonraker canoe shown supported by my family ~ daughter, Anna, son-in-law, Dan, and their two sons, Owen and Fred. I bought it on eBay some years ago.

Brown's Woodworking was already established on the site and Ed Brown and his colleagues made the boat frames. The boat business thrived and in 1959 a stand was booked at the International Boat Show: there they displayed boats in kit form. The name Moonraker became known in every school, university, Army, Navy and Air Force and canoe clubs all over Britain and many places abroad. Many races were won.



Above: a postcard outlining the 'local legend' of the Wiltshire Moonrakers. Moonraker Canoes was the name adopted for their company by Jenkins & Lancefield



Above: the metal label attached to my boat giving these details, MOONRAKER, BRITISH RACING CANOE - BUILT FROM A KIT - JENKINS & LANCEFIELD, CORSHAM - WILTS - ENGLAND



Above: caption, John Jenkins and Dick Lancefield outside their workshops at Bremill, Calne



Above: the two archive folders put together and well organised by Richard Lancefield and also the Moonraker Canoes' catalogue

Originally, kayak boats were made from either light driftwood, fallen tree trunks or animal skins stretched over whale bones. The name kayak means 'man boat' or 'hunting boat' and originates from the Inuit Eskimos word 'Quayaq'. It wasn't until the 1800s that kayaks were brought into Europe, when the French and Germans first began to use kayaks for sport.

Whilst researching Moonraker Canoes online I came across an email exchange on the community forum of *The UK Rivers Guidebook* between Steve Best and another member: Steve was answering a query about Moonraker Canoes and mentioned *that Richard J Lancefield ... kindly gave me a load of publicity material for the boats*. I contacted Steve and he generously offered to loan me the archive. Steve is hopeful that eventually the archive will be accepted by a museum, perhaps the *National Waterways Museum Gloucester*.



Above: A Cotswold farmhouse, a watercolour by Jenkins (a print that I've acquired)

John Jenkins died in 1994, aged 83, after a packed life in which he had worked both as an artist (see watercolour above) and an artisan, repairing cars and building boats. Richard Lancefield is still living in Thirsk.

With many thanks to Steve Best for the loan of the Richard J Lancefield Moonraker Canoes archive.

Archaeological artefact ~ button pull?

Philip Huntley found the items below in his mother's garden [Neale Court] behind Selbourne House, No.64 Pickwick Road which is described on its Listed Building description as *Grade II Detached house, set back from street. Circa 1850s*. Turning over the soil in his mother's garden, he found 2 ceramic objects and a coin of 1905.

Both the ceramic objects appear to be pipeclay and have a collar and small hole at one end but the other ends are closed and tapered in a 'star shape', presumably before the pipeclay was fired (see photos **Below** and **Right**).



Below: antique button or boot 'pull'



Right: coin of 1905 found in the vicinity of the pipeclay objects



Both pipeclay objects are straight and generally rounded, although with facets towards the closed ends. Their lengths are 64mm and 74mm: one is 'whitish' [the former] and the other is discoloured. Both have distinct signs of wear, in particular, the smaller whitish one which has two apparently 'holding' marks, probably finger marks. Towards the closed end of the discoloured one there is an 'A' and below – somewhat smaller – an 'NZ'.

As to their function, crochet hooks have been suggested and button [or perhaps boot] pulls which were common in the 18th/19th centuries and used by the military for uniforms.

Please contact me if you think you know what they are.

John Maloney

Planning round-up

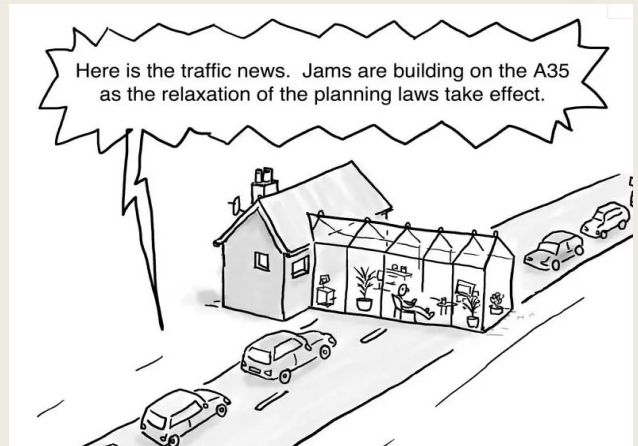
There have been a number of significant developments in the last few months. Firstly, proposed planning reforms were blamed for the Conservatives' shock defeat in the Chesham and Amersham by-election in June. Former prime minister Theresa May claimed that it would create a "developers' charter".

As part of the government's

"Project Speed", new planning laws were announced in the Queen's speech with the aim of modernising and simplifying the system and increasing the number of homes being planned [300,000] by more than a third. The planning reforms met with criticism from countryside campaigners, who said the changes would lead to the "suburbanisation" of green areas without delivering much-needed affordable housing.

The Planning Bill was due to go before parliament later this year but it has been widely reported that the government will "look again" at its controversial elements, according to Conservative Party chairman Oliver Dowden, amid reports that new housing secretary Michael Gove has ordered a "complete rethink". The Bill had been set to relax rules on planning permission, but fierce criticism means plans for a zonal planning system could be scrapped, as could mandatory housebuilding targets for local authorities and stopping homeowners from being able to object to planning applications.

Meanwhile, locally, last week Michelle Donelan (Chippenham MP and Minister for Higher and Further Education) withdrew her support for *Future Chippenham*, the roads and homes scheme promoted by Wiltshire Council. Wiltshire Council has been driving ahead with plans to build a distributor road from the A350 to the A4 without consulting the people who elected them. Once the road was built, Wiltshire Council intended to build up to 4,200 houses over beautiful countryside. In July, the Council ignored the findings of its own consultation (January-March 2021): nearly 80% of those who responded objected to the proposals and virtually all respondents expressed grave concerns about the impact such excessive development would have on the natural environment. The Council's Cabinet then agreed, without any notice to the public, a completely new plan for a re-routed distributor road to be built on farmland, much of which Wiltshire Council itself **owns**. The Council has been re-negotiating with Homes England a grant to fund the Council's completely new proposal, 'conjured out of thin air' in July. Whilst claiming to be committed to a review of its Local Plan on which it must consult by January 2022, the constraints of Homes England's funding conditions and the Local Plan timetable, may result in the Council applying as landowner, developer and planning authority for planning permission with limited, if any, further public scrutiny. The Council's tenant farmers are already being served notice!



Article continues next page...

Local Planning matters

Planning Permission denied – Gladman's Appeal on land opposite the Catholic Church refused.



On 1st November 2013 Gladman Developments Ltd, describing itself as the 'promoter of the scheme' lodged with WC their formal application to build 150 houses and 2 office blocks on 10.01 hectares of Grade 2 agricultural land to the north of the A4 Bath Road farmed by the Stafford family. Meanwhile, in 1998 Wiltshire Council had granted licences valid until expiry in 2042 for the extraction by mining of Bath stone from immediately beneath the entire site.

After more than eight years, two extensive rounds of Public Inquiry and a site visit in late June, the Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State finally and formally rejected Gladman's appeal against Wiltshire Council's continued refusal to allow the proposed development - because two of the stipulated conditions in the original approval had still not been satisfied.

Two days after his site visit on 22nd June this year the Planning Inspector delivered his 25-page decision on the appeals. They were roundly dismissed in clear and robust terms. There then followed an agonising six weeks during which Gladman could have chosen to seek the intervention of the High Court to examine the legitimacy of that decision. Not until 3rd September was it finally confirmed that no such application had been made – and the case, after eight years was finally closed.

The Pickwick Association – with its professional back-up team - supported Wiltshire Council throughout this hugely drawn-out and costly exercise. For the foreseeable future at least, 150 houses and 2 office blocks will not be built directly above the working stone mine; a development that, if allowed could conceivably have led to the sterilisation (closure) of that mine. To compensate for Gladman's 'unreasonable behaviour' both the Council and the Pickwick Association were awarded modest costs by the Inspector, the quantum of which is currently being evaluated.

Article continues next page...

For his part, the landowner has recently put considerable effort into restoring the field to its former agricultural use, with winter wheat being sown for the first time for many years.

We are left however with the unsightly mess in which the boundary walls along the A4 are left – dismantled by the proposed developer in a subsequently adjudged cynical and futile attempt to demonstrate to the planning authority and the Inspector that development had been legitimately commenced on the site before the deadline for expiry of conditional planning consent on 8th September 2018 - 5 years after it was granted. It seems that neither Wiltshire nor Corsham Town Councils have any authority with which to enforce reinstatement as the property belongs to the farmer.

Tony Clark & David Taylor, Pickwick Association

Editor's postscript ~ very well done the Pickwick Association and 'frontliners' for this signal success, a notable David versus Goliath victory!

Ruth strikes back...

For me and a number of others, a highlight of the Public Inquiry proceedings was Ruth Hopkinson's daily blow by blow commentary on *Shout Out Corsham* which contained witty, pithy and funny comments ~ there follows the merest sample from *Episode V: Wiltshire Council Strikes Back (?)* [January 29th, the final day of the current campaign] ~

9.30. Inquiry recommences, back to [emojis for, respectively, bats and men in suits] 🦇👔

In case anyone is wondering why this preoccupation with bats, it's part of Gladman counsel's [GS] attempt to close the mine ~

10.25. I note the 🦇 man has had to go and buy a new posh pair of headphones because I complained yesterday I couldn't hear him properly. Sometimes you regret intervening 🤔

12.30. GS [Gladman's counsel] was muted 🙋 and claimed he hadn't touched anything. Please don't burn me as a witch!

1.05. It's being postponed until the 24/2 🕒 . For goodness sake!!!

Ruth's summary of the overall proceedings ~

I know I've made light of the Inquiry, but it is deadly serious. We have spent the best part of 2 days speculating about what might happen to bats (& as I've said I love bats) but this is the height of hypocrisy from GS. They don't give a fig about flying mammals, it's a means to an end. If they did care about ecology they wouldn't have displaced newts, removed the wall to deprive them of their habitat, felled trees, despoiled a wild flower meadow & turned it into a waste land, covered a tree to prevent birds roosting etc etc etc The reason there's a sudden apparent concern for our furry friends is that that's their last gambit.

They can't provide mitigation against noise & vibration so their only recourse is get the mine shut down. They don't care that a perfectly well run business will have to close, people will be made redundant, we will lose part of our local heritage, we will (have already) lose the aesthetic approach to the town None of that matters in the pursuit of profit.

Article continues next page..

All of that I and others, knew before this week. What has seriously angered me this week (though after x number of years why anything should get to me) are the attacks on the MO [mine operator], a decent bloke going about his lawful business in a totally environmental way. He's been accused of goodness knows what & subjected to some of the worst bullying tactics I've ever seen! He remained calm (I'd have been tempted to dust off some Anglo Saxon).

There have been many appreciative comments of Ruth's summary of which the following is representative ~

Michelle Hewitt Perhaps Ruth would be willing to consider what other areas she is involved in that could provide Corsham with more thrilling blow-by-blow summaries?

And now for something rather different

Q.C. RAP

YO! I'm a QC
But I shoulda been a trucker
Just love my reputation
As a bad muthaf....r

Cause when it comes to human
kindness
I'm clean outta milk
Sold my soul to the devil
When I became a silk

And in a court of law
Or a planning appeal
I hunt down my prey
Till I can hear them squeal

If they're looking for mercy
They don't get no succour
Cause I'm a QC
And I aint a pheasant plucker

Don't fear no planner
Don't fear no inspector
I just turn my dial
To smarmy from hector

But if their answers are vague
Or even just wooly
I switch to my default
Yeh! Schoolyard Bully

Got a client whose rapacious
And some think that sucks
But I don't give a damn
Cause he pays me big bucks



He aint got no scruples
And his morals are s..t
So working with me
Is a really good fit

And we've been rampaging
All over the land
Striking fear into councils
With what we have planned

Resistance is futile
Most soon understand
When we crush their resolve
With a few hundred grand

But our latest campaign
Has lasted eight years
For my client and me
It's the sum of all fears

We've tried everything
Even nuking the newts
And deploying the bats
When our purpose it suits

We've torn down stone walls
And turned up the heat
But it appears that the locals
Don't know when they're beat

And it seems that this blasted condition
Is driving me down the road to perdition
But it always remains my mission
To win in any war of attrition

So I'll posture and scheme
With every ploy I can muster
And hope this inspector
Don't see right through my bluster.

R.A.G.E. ~ Matt Whitelaw

CARE UK – PLANNING APPLICATION FOR 80-UNIT CARE HOME IN PICKWICK - 20/08255/FUL



Public Inquiry to be held at Hartham Park: 7th – 10th December 2021

A four-day Public Inquiry into Care UK's appeal against Wiltshire Council's rejection of its plans to build a care home on land adjacent to Woodlands and next door to 17 and 19 Pickwick will open at Hartham Park on 7th December.

Wiltshire Council initially refused the planning application on three grounds:

- There was no recognized demand for a care home of this sort in this locality and accessibility of site;
- conservation and heritage matters – conservation area, impact on listed buildings; and
- biodiversity

They have since withdrawn the first and third reason leaving the main focus of the Inquiry as conservation and heritage matters, along with such technical planning issues as the Council may feel able to argue. The Council view is that this reduced case remains strong.

The Pickwick Association and many individual residents have submitted letters of objection. These will all be considered by the Planning Inspector (Janet Wilson) and taken into account in arriving at her decision. The Association is currently exploring means by which resources can be assembled in the very short time available to make a serious challenge to this proposal that will focus solely on the (damage to) Heritage amenity and the completely under-respected Traffic/Road Safety concerns.

Wiltshire Council tell us that they will make a strong defence of their decision and will be represented at the Inquiry by an external barrister. The Association, however, will not be legally represented (the potential costs are beyond its resources) but will be in attendance and will make a further statement of its case during the Inquiry.

Article continues next page...

STATION CAMPAIGN

As a local resident (until very recently) I travelled regularly to Bath on the train to go to work in the 1950's, because it was cheaper and faster than the local bus. When the station closed, travelling then became slower and more expensive, and people looked to buy themselves cars, to make life more convenient. Now after some 60 years, we seem to have come full circle, and we are told we must travel more sustainably. Fortunately for those who have long been enthusiastic about getting the Corsham railway station re-instated, work to meet that objective has been going on behind the scenes for many years. It involves negotiations with many stakeholders who have many different ideas and requirements, and consequently progress remains slow. However, Corsham Town Team, with support from WCC, our local MP, Transcoco and many others, continue to work towards achieving an alternative mode of transport for Corsham.

Most people would agree that we do have to get out of the habit of using our cars. Don't let us 'drop the ball' now, let us continue to support the team who are working so hard to make this happen. The difficulties won't be solved overnight, but it will be a great asset to the town whenever it comes.



Pat Whalley

STOP PRESS

Thursday, October 28, 2021

[@wiltsgazette](http://gazetteandherald.co.uk)

MP welcomes £50,000 grant towards station

THE Government has awarded £50,000 towards feasibility studies for a new Corsham railway station.

The cash came from the Government's Restoring your Railway Ideas Fund and was wel-

comed by Chippenham MP Michelle Donelan, who has fought to get the new station built.

"This is amazing news and proves that persistence pays off. The Ministers in the Department

for Transport have assured me that we are on the 'right track' to deliver Corsham station.

"The money will go towards the feasibility studies needed and the detail required to flesh out the business case."

AIN'T GOING NEED THIS HOUSE NO LONGER !!

There will (I hope) be many people who will remember this song – a lament on the inevitable decay of an empty house once its last occupants have gone. Such a building in our midst is Rudloe Manor house, built in 1685, a home to several families until 1941, then used by the RAF until about 1998, when it was bought privately.

Since then it is believed there have been other changes of ownership, and the estate itself has been reduced in size. And now it stands alone, forlorn, and neglected, and listed by English Heritage as a 'Building at Risk'. A building which once served to raise many a family, now sits waiting for a new occupant to save it from a final collapse.

Although the present owner has given it a new roof which can only have helped, but that is a bit like asking your 350 year old grandmother to stand naked in the town square with only a rainhat on for 22 + years!! The deterioration continues all around the building, and to the other outbuildings which are also Listed.

What can be done to save this building? It seems that ownership is not an indication of 'care'. It will certainly require millions of pounds to restore it, but what a loss to our community. Such a once beautiful house in a prime location, overlooking the Box valley toward the city of Bath.

Enquiries to WCC, Historic England, and other associated bodies offer no suggestions for a way to lift this building out of it's sorry spiral of deterioration, so it seems that we must just sit by and watch its downfall. What a terrible waste of an example of our historic past.

Next time you are out walking, take a stroll to the top of Box Hill on the A4, opposite the Rudloe Arms Hotel and turn left down *Weavern Lane*, and admire an excellent example of 17th century architecture. There is a fantastic medieval roof in one area that is well worth seeing.



STOP PRESS

We have just heard from the owners that they want to restore Rudloe Manor and live in it themselves, which they intend to do slowly and properly.

Pat Whalley

Pat Whalley's 80th Birthday

Pat has been a stalwart of the Corsham Civic Society for so many years and a prolific author of books, booklets and articles about Corsham and Wiltshire. She has served the society well in many capacities and latterly has been busy organising speakers for meetings.

Pat has recently moved in with her son at Norrington Common, Broughton Gifford. The common is an impressive size with cattle and a large pond with many ducks and geese. The party coffee, tea, cakes and sandwiches – not to overlook the sausage rolls much looked forward to by Joan Maciver – was a lovely occasion with lots of good natured banter among Pat's friends, many from the civic society. Michael Rumsey wasn't able to be there but had visited Pat the day before and brought her a birthday cake. Michael said that the cake was a present from all on the civic society's executive committee to Pat. Michael's personal gift was Julian Orbach's book on the *Buildings of Wiltshire* which he knew Pat didn't have, and he hoped she will enjoy browsing through it.



John Maloney



Corsham Stationery, 19 Pickwick Road,
Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9BQ

01249 712 122

shop@corshamstationery.co.uk

www.corshamstationery.co.uk

 Find us on Facebook!

Arts & Crafts
Business Services
Printing & Copying
Stationery
and much more...



Christmas in CORSHAM

- Award-winning independent shops and great restaurants
- All your gift ideas in one place
- Arts, antiques, books, toys, fashion, food and more...
- Plus FREE Two-Hour Parking!

Visit
Corsham

www.corsham.gov.uk/visit

mander duffill

— Est 1947 —

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
TAX & FINANCIAL ADVISERS

WHAT WE OFFER:

- Accountancy and Tax Services
- Tax Compliance, Planning and Advice
- International Tax Planning and Advice
- Business Sales and Acquisitions
- Company Restructuring
- Company and Business Start-ups
- Management Accounts, Bookkeeping and VAT Services
- Payroll and Auto Enrolment
- Research and Development
- Financial Services
- Investments
- Protection
- Inheritance Tax Planning
- Pensions and Retirement Planning

GET IN TOUCH:

-  info@manderduffill.com
-  01249 650441
-  The Old Post Office
41-43 Market Place
Chippenham SN15 3HR

Offices also in Devizes,
Malmesbury and London



www.manderduffill.com

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.

2021

Nov 26th Stuart Burrowes, Museum of Bath at Work, '**Harbutts of Bathampton**'

2022

Jan 26th Edward Barrett '**Mayors of Bath**'

Feb 11th No Meeting. New Year Lunch TBA

Mar 25th Ian Caskie, Volunteer for SS Great Britain Trust. '**SS Great Britain**'

Apr 22nd David Dawson, Director of Wiltshire Museum, Devizes '**The Making of the Kingdom of Wessex**'

May 20th AGM/ Wine & Cheese. Details TBC

June 24th Hannah Severn, Senior House Steward , Stourhead, '**Life and Work of Sir Richard Colt Hoare**'

July 22nd Wendy Reynolds, '**Falklands Today**'

August Summer Visit or afternoon Tea ~ TBA

Sept 23rd John Maloney '**Corsham High Street Project**'

Oct 21st TBA

Nov 25th TBA

December No Meeting

- *Please note that the Programme may be subject to changes*
- *NB new attendance fees*

Corsham Civic Society was founded in 1963 to represent the people of Corsham in all aspects of conservation, preservation and the promotion of this delightful Wiltshire town. The Society is a registered charity, a member of ASHTAV (Association of Small and Historic Towns & Villages of the UK). It is our aim to promote high standards of planning and architecture, to create a wider awareness amongst the local population of environmental issues, the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area, and to secure the preservation, protection and improvement of features of public amenity and historical interest, in Corsham and the surrounding countryside.

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