



# Corsham Spotlight

Magazine of the Corsham Civic Society

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

Summer 2023

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*Contributions to Spotlight are very welcome. Please contact the editor, [editor.corshamspotlight@gmail.com](mailto:editor.corshamspotlight@gmail.com)*



**Corsham  
Civic  
Society**

**60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY 1963 - 2023**

For news and events, see:

[www.corshamcivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.corshamcivicsociety.co.uk)

60 YEARS



**Above:** Coronation coaster ~ for special offer, see p. 1

## Officers and Committee Members:

### President

Anne Lock

Tel: 01249 716086

### Chair

John Maloney

Tel: 01249 715159

### Secretary

Cath Maloney,

Tel: 01249 715159

### Acting Treasurer

Chris Johnson

07817 880287

### Membership Secretary

Michael Rumsey

Tel: 01249 715741

### Social Organiser

Vacant

### Programme Organiser

Pat Whalley

Tel: 07570 946725

### Planning Chair

John Maloney

Tel: 01249 715159

### Spotlight Editor

John Maloney

Tel: 01249 715159

### Proof Editor

Cath Maloney

Tel: 01249 715159

*Contributions to  
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welcome. Please  
contact the editor,  
editor.corshamspotlight  
@gmail.com*

## From the Chair

I'm pleased that once more it has been possible to produce a Summer issue after difficulties during Covid and the illness of the Editor [respectively, 2020 and 2021].

We have coverage of some aspects of the Coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla and the Pickwick Association had a fine response to their congratulations [pps. 5-8].

The society has commissioned some commemorative Coronation coasters [see front cover] for sale at a bargain price: at £10 each that is a big discount of 33% on the normal retail price. They were bought through *Made in Bradford on Avon*. To purchase please register your interest by phone or email with the Chair/Editor ~ details opposite.

Michael Rumsey reported that he'd received an application for membership from a lady living in Kent who grew up in Corsham and attended Chippenham Grammar School. She's been reading Spotlight, lent to her by a friend, and as a result has now become a member of the society.

For this issue, there has been a dearth of historical articles hence some archaeological ones from me: previous ones have been well-received and there have been requests for more. Those featuring in this issue concern some aspects of my career in archaeology and its highlights [pps. 20-24, 36-39], the latter concerning a lecture tour in Japan.

The society's successful annual summer tea party was in the Methodist Church Box [pps. 46-47].

David Martin [CTC Chief Executive] Corsham Town has invited the CCS to co-operate in providing one of their historic plaques for the house in the High Street formerly lived in by the famous composer Michael Tippett.

The society's AGM went well – as did the social wine and cheese party afterwards - and is reported on herein [pps. 2-3] but the society is not in 'good health': there are a number of problems, not least the EC Committee is inquorate and will lack most of its key officers by the end of the year [ie Chairman, Spotlight Editor, Social Organiser and Membership Secretary\*] and there has been 'discord and upset' between one member and the rest of the committee. At a recent meeting the Executive Committee concluded that an extraordinary meeting of the society's trustees would be needed to try and resolve the issues.

\* We are grateful for Pat Whalley returning as Programme Organiser

**John Maloney**

### **Chairman's AGM report 2020-3**

Good evening and welcome.

It was at the last AGM that I was elected Chair, in my absence, having agreed with Michael Rumsey that I would take over from him as a 'stand-in' for a year initially. Whilst conscious of the honour, I was only too aware that my health had not been good for some time and, also, that I had other commitments which I was intent on trying to complete eg the book *Pickwick, A place in time* which I reported on in the last issue of *Spotlight* is well advanced and now has 'a royal seal of approval' and another book which I began some years ago about my archaeological experiences. There is also the matter of the Corsham High Street Project which has been dogged by delays, in particular, the effects of Covid and the lockdown on the National Heritage Lottery Fund [NHLF] and also their reorganisation: I reported for the last AGM that I hoped for progress in the next 18 months.

Whereas I'm prepared to continue as editor of *Spotlight* until after the Winter issue in November is circulated, I feel that I must resign as Chairman by Christmas which hopefully will allow sufficient time to find or 'persuade' someone else to take up the reins by the next AGM.

This year the society was fortunate in having three new members of the Executive Committee all prepared to undertake activities: Alison Warren as both Social and Programme Organiser who has organised an excellent programme of talks and organised the Annual Lunch etc.; Chris Johnson kindly agreed to become Acting Treasurer after the resignation, due to workload, of Elizabeth Addison [to whom we are grateful for many years of service] and also he reports to the EC on the Corsham Station Campaign; and Jane Cox who has quite recently moved to Corsham from Box and already is involved in projects such as The Corsham Tapestry for which she has organised a trip to Tewkesbury on 24<sup>th</sup> June and after that a public meeting recently

The website has been updated and improved which was one of the aims for the anniversary year. Recently, Chris, Michael and I had a good meeting with Chris Perry [MD of Corsham Print] and agreed a beneficial financial arrangement for 2023/4. We have received some interesting and useful emails in the society's new dedicated email boxes on the website. *Spotlight* continues to be well received, in particular, the last issue, which featured a note from Queen Camilla about a book on *Pickwick* that I and another *Pickwickian* have drafted. For the first time *Spotlight* has included adverts from local companies which have made a welcome contribution to the society's finances and there are more adverts with additional income in the pipeline.

Another aim of this anniversary year has been to have closer links with other organisations and so Corsham Town Council and the society have agreed to include links in their respective publications and websites. As well as the Town Council we have worked more closely with the Corsham Almshouses ie supporting their fundraising efforts in *Spotlight*. Through Jane Cox and Alison Warren we have been engaging with Box NATS and we were hoping to establish a good relationship with them and, perhaps, with Boxlea WI and other such organisations.

In this the society's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we had an excellent celebratory lunch at The Methuen Arms for which a new banner was commissioned. A historic building plaque scheme was inaugurated with the first award being made to Stonewood Design for their refurbishment of 67 High Street.

On the downside, during the last two years the society's finances have suffered due to Covid and the lockdown and during the last few months alone nine members have died and, currently, the society is in deficit. Another worrying aspect is that there have been key resignations from the EC: Michael Rumsey for some years the Membership secretary; Alison Warren our active Social and Programme Organiser recently resigned in unfortunate circumstances; Stuart Boydell who briefly edited *Spotlight* has recently resigned from the EC due to pressure of other commitments [our thanks to them all]; and I will be retiring as Chair and Editor of *Spotlight* by the end of this year. In the society's constitution it states that the Executive Committee shall consist of the officers [ie Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer] and not less than four and more than eight other members ie between a minimum of eight [including officers] and a maximum of twelve: the society is currently lacking successors for key offices and is significantly short of the maximum number of EC members.

To attract new members has been a key issue this year and to that end we had an article in last year's Autumn issue of *Spotlight*; on the display boards of the society's stand at the Corsham Street Fair and in a special feature in the Corsham & Box Matters magazine [with others intended]: but few new members have been forthcoming and the society could do with having a more balanced demographic.

Thank you all for attending: in particular, the officers for their hard work in this anniversary year and all who have helped with the wine and cheese party, notably, Larry St Croix for his help in getting the wine and cheese [the latter from Wood's Deli].

I commend to you all the work of the society and its Executive Committee and I hope that both thrive in the next few years.

**Chairman**

## Membership news

I've received an application for membership from a lady living in Kent who grew up in Corsham and attended Chippenham Grammar School. She's been reading Spotlight, lent to her by a friend, and now thinks she should become a member and has sent a cheque for £60 for a 5-year membership. We've also welcomed Mr & Mrs Bob Cowper from Chestnut Grange and they've paid their £24 direct to the bank. Good to know we can still attract new members.

**Michael Rumsey**

## Model Railway Open Days

Michael Rumsey issued an invitation to members who were likely to be interested to attend his house [in particular, his outbuilding where the model railway is 'housed'] on the weekend of 1<sup>st</sup>- 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The model railway and its scenic landscape are most impressive [*Spotlight*, Autumn issue 2021, pps. 3-4] and Michael was an admirable guide and host.

The open days raised a much needed £200 for the society's funds: well done Michael and many thanks.



**Above:** Michael Rumsey's model railway and beautifully created landscape setting: from right to left, Jane Cox, Anne Lock, Cath Maloney, and Michael.

**John Maloney**

## **More than 100 people enjoyed a Corsham Coronation celebration to remember at a special tea party event on Friday 5th May.**

Published 11th May 2023 by Corsham Town Council.

Corsham's Area Board's Health and Wellbeing Group hosted the event in partnership with Corsham Town Council and *Celebrating Age Wiltshire*. More than 100 senior residents attended the party, which was held at Springfield Community Campus, and they were treated to a feast for the eyes, ears and tastebuds - with music from the North Swindon Big Band, a raffle, poetry and an afternoon tea fit for a king.

Corsham Community Club, with support from local supermarkets, helped provide the tea and pupils from Corsham Primary School offered a helping hand, creating a real community feel with everyone pulling together to mark the historic Coronation. Cllr Ashley O'Neill, Cabinet Member for Communities and Area Boards, said: this event epitomises the role of our area boards in bringing communities and partners together for such a positive cause. My thanks to everyone for their hard work and I'm delighted it was such a success.

Cllr Brian Mathew, Chair of the Corsham Area Board Health and Wellbeing Group, said: *This was truly a fantastic celebration to mark an historic occasion, showcasing the community spirit of people of all ages in the Corsham area. As an area board we are committed to improving people's wellbeing and combatting social isolation and loneliness, so it was wonderful to be able to host an event so full of laughter, cheer and joy.*

*I'd like to thank all our partners for their support in putting this event on and I was delighted that so many people wanted to do their bit. We'll certainly look to host events like this again in the future as it was clear how much fun and worthwhile it was for everyone involved.*

Rebecca Seymour, Creative Producer at Celebrating Age Wiltshire, said, *Celebrating Age Wiltshire was very pleased to be involved. This was a great example of partnership working, where everyone comes together to produce an excellent, well organised event utilising each individuals and organisation's skills. Everyone had such a lovely time!*

*Article continues next page...*



**Above:** People at a Coronation tea in the Springfield Community Campus: Cllr. Helen Belcher [Corsham Pickwick] is in the background

**Below:** Locals taking part in a Coronation celebration tea at the Box Methodist Church



*Article continues next page...*

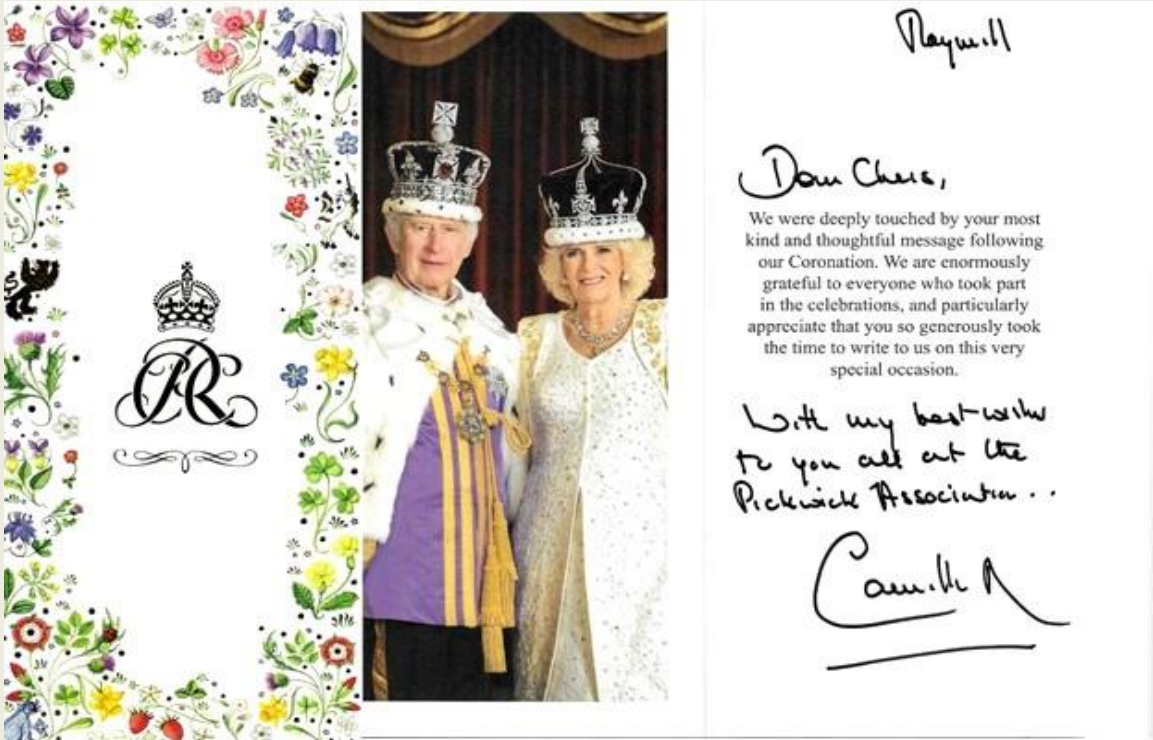
**Above:** The Corsham Town Council flyer outlining local Coronation events

**Above, Right:** The front cover of a 1953 Coronation Celebration Souvenir programme by Corsham Ward [passed to me by Michael Rumsey]

**Below:** A Coronation coaster specially commissioned by the society and available at a big discount on the normal retail price ~ for order details please see *From the Chair*, p.1.







**Above:** an acknowledgement from Queen Camilla of congratulations for their coronation from Chris Johnson on behalf of the Pickwick Association. Pickwick is becoming 'a royal favourite': the Spring issue [p. 34] featured a letter from Queen Camilla in appreciation of receiving a draft copy of *Pickwick, A place in time*.

### **The Pickwick Association was nominated for a Community Award 2023**

There were a lot of contenders this year, so unfortunately the Pickwick Association was not among 2023's winners, but we are very proud to have received a nomination. Councillor Hopkins wrote:

*"The Pickwick Association has worked tirelessly fighting significant planning applications (Gladman and Care UK) and has produced the Pickwick - Conservation Area Appraisal.*

*It would be invidious to single out any individuals, as so many people have been involved in fighting predatory planning applications. The Association managed to build up a level of planning expertise which was frankly stunning, and I learnt a lot from it. In fact, when fighting both appeals, it would have been impossible to succeed without it. The Association not only fired the bullets (in a structured, persuasive, eloquent fashion), but loaded them for others to do the same. Corsham, and especially Pickwick, has been saved as a result.*

*The creation of the Pickwick - Conservation Area Appraisal took many hours of painstaking research and writing, and even longer to get it adopted by the powers that needed to. The end result is an impressive document which should not only provide future planning safeguards, but also be an exemplar to the rest of the county of what can - and should - be done. However, the Pickwick Association's influence doesn't end there: from 'Greening Pickwick' to work on traffic calming, its positive influence stretches beyond just Pickwick."*

**Chris Johnson**

## Looking back to 1963

Looking back to 1963, the year the Corsham Civic Society was founded, for me has been quite an experience, many memories come flooding back, but the one which is still the most vivid to me is the Winter. Though my parents lived through the terrible Winter of 1947 when on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1947, the temperature on a farm at Nettleton, where my Father was visiting, registered 2 degrees Fahrenheit or -17C, but the Winter of '63 actually commenced when snow started falling on Boxing Day 1962. By the beginning of January between 17 and 20 inches of snow had fallen in the North Wilts area. This was made worse by days of north easterly winds which gave us huge snow drifts in most areas. The A46 between Stroud and Bath was closed for weeks because of the huge drifts across the carriageway. It took many snow ploughs to clear that road and the snow was so deep at Cold Ashton crossroads that the tall signpost which indicated the route on the A420 from Chippenham to Bristol and Stroud to Bath was virtually entombed by the drifts. Teams of workers, with snow ploughs, cleared a single carriageway from Ford to the bottom of Tog Hill and on an early January Tuesday morning my Father took the photo of our car 812 AMR sitting on the road at the east end of Marshfield.



Road and rail services were badly disrupted and a number of local buses were stuck in snow drifts until rescued by council workers, the passengers having escaped by walking to safety. The conditions were so severe, it's recorded that Wiltshire had 27 consecutive days when the daytime temperature barely rose above freezing. At that time I was living on Box Hill and it wasn't until the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in March that the snow finally disappeared from the garden leaving the tulips growing steadily ready to flower some weeks later the snow having kept them safe, from the savage frosts. Since 1963 I've seen many Winters with snow falling, roads blocked, but nothing surpasses in my memory, the Winter of 1963.

**Michael Rumsey**

# WILLOW @ N°70

Art, Antiques & Things of Beauty for House & Garden

## Gallery 56

The gallery is part of No. 70 but numbered as No. 56 as historically they were two separate buildings - enter through No 70 (or via the side gate and door for private views only). The aim is to showcase work by local artists, including arts & crafts, as well as provide talks and demonstrations.



William Bicknell (more commonly known as Willow) started his love of antiques and indeed all things of quality and beauty at the tender age of 6 when his family moved to Oxfordshire. One of his nearest neighbours, and still one of his closest friends, had an antique shop that he spent a lot of time in from then till he opened his own antiques business in that very same shop some 20 years later. The business was there for 15 years when he met his wife Kate Armor, a paper conservator, and they decided to move to Wiltshire. Although they had a showroom on their farm most of his time was spent on various interior design projects, in the Home Counties, London, and a variety of small jobs in Europe.

*Article continues next page...*

## About

Willow's time is split between the shop/gallery and his interior design business providing a bespoke service for every client, from simply sourcing a specific item of furniture to designing and project managing the total renovation, decoration and furnishing of an entire property, inside and out.



*Article continues next page...*

### Design (Interior & Exterior)

Projects have included a range of interior and exterior work inclusive of bathrooms, dining rooms, living rooms, and kitchens. In addition, design work has also included requirements for the hospitality sector such as pubs and restaurants. Exterior work includes gardens, buildings, and decorative features such as sculptures, etc.



**WILLOW @ N<sup>o</sup>7<sup>o</sup>**  
Art, Antiques & Things of Beauty for House & Garden

*Article continues next page...*



**Above:** paintings were created by Rachel Heard.

**Larry St Croix**

### **My Visit to Rudloe Manor**

As a follow up to the article about Rudloe Manor [Spotlight, Spring 2023 issue, pps. 35-41], I was fortunate to be invited for an initial tour of the site on 3rd July by the new owners who are very much locals, born and bred in the area.

The excellent standard of refurbishment works that are being undertaken is certainly very impressive. Also impressive is their knowledge and attention to detail. They gained planning permission for the conversion of the former stables to serve as their home while the works are ongoing. As well as directly supervising the works, their presence has the additional benefit of providing security for the site as a whole, which seems to have put an end to the 'urban explorers' and resultant damage to the buildings over the last two decades.

Another revelation which particularly impressed me was their focus on discovering and documenting the 1000 year old timeline and social history of the Manor and the historic settlement. Last year, along with their historian, data was collected from the various National Archive Centres around the country to correlate a timeline in which the names and details of those who once lived there have been revealed.

*Article continues next page...*

The research also revealed many old plans and documents some of which date back to the 17th century and are written in old English. This has helped them make sure that the rebuild is as authentic as possible, reflecting the true origins of the Manor prior to the RAF occupation. Recent historic details have been added to website [rudloemanor.com](http://rudloemanor.com)

Two years from the start of works, the site is a hive of activity with their own specialist building team who are presently working on the two main buildings, one of which features the wonderful solar chamber ~ possibly commissioned by Thomas Tropnell (c.1405-1488) of Great Chalfield Manor. Some of the original structural beams in the Manor have now been repaired under the supervision of Wiltshire Council Listed Buildings and Historic England. The solar roof timbers are due to be dendrochronologically dated later in the year to provide more accurate dating evidence.

In the spring of 2022 native hedging was planted by the Cotswold Warden programme working closely with Box Parish Council, as part of a Queen's Green Canopy project which celebrated the HM Queen Platinum Jubilee. This formed the boundaries of the paddocks and included hawthorn, spindle, dog rose, hazel and broadleaf trees such as oak, hornbeam and beech. The scheme is already getting established, enhancing the wildlife corridors and the woodland.

Their son, daughter and their friends, have been helping to clear the greatly overgrown gardens which are full of scrub and rubble piles from the former RAF occupation. The result is that already the barn gardens and the historic orchard have reappeared - the latter yielding 80 litres of apple juice last September. The kitchen garden is currently under reconstruction and due to be completed by the spring next year.

In further recent visits, the Cotswold Wardens identified some 27 types of wildflowers on site which include rare helleborines and wild orchids. There is also a new program with us working with The Hawk and Owl Trust which will see the installation of owl boxes for barn, tawney and little owls later in the year. It is interesting to note that an informative Wikipedia page on Rudloe Manor has also recently emerged.

I certainly hope that in the future we may see the gardens appear under the National Garden Scheme and it is fantastic to see such a notable, neglected building finally being restored and brought back to life as a family home.

We very much look forward to a society group visit in the near future.

*Thanks to Jeremy and Sam Sanders for the invitation to visit and their assistance with information for this article*

**John Maloney**

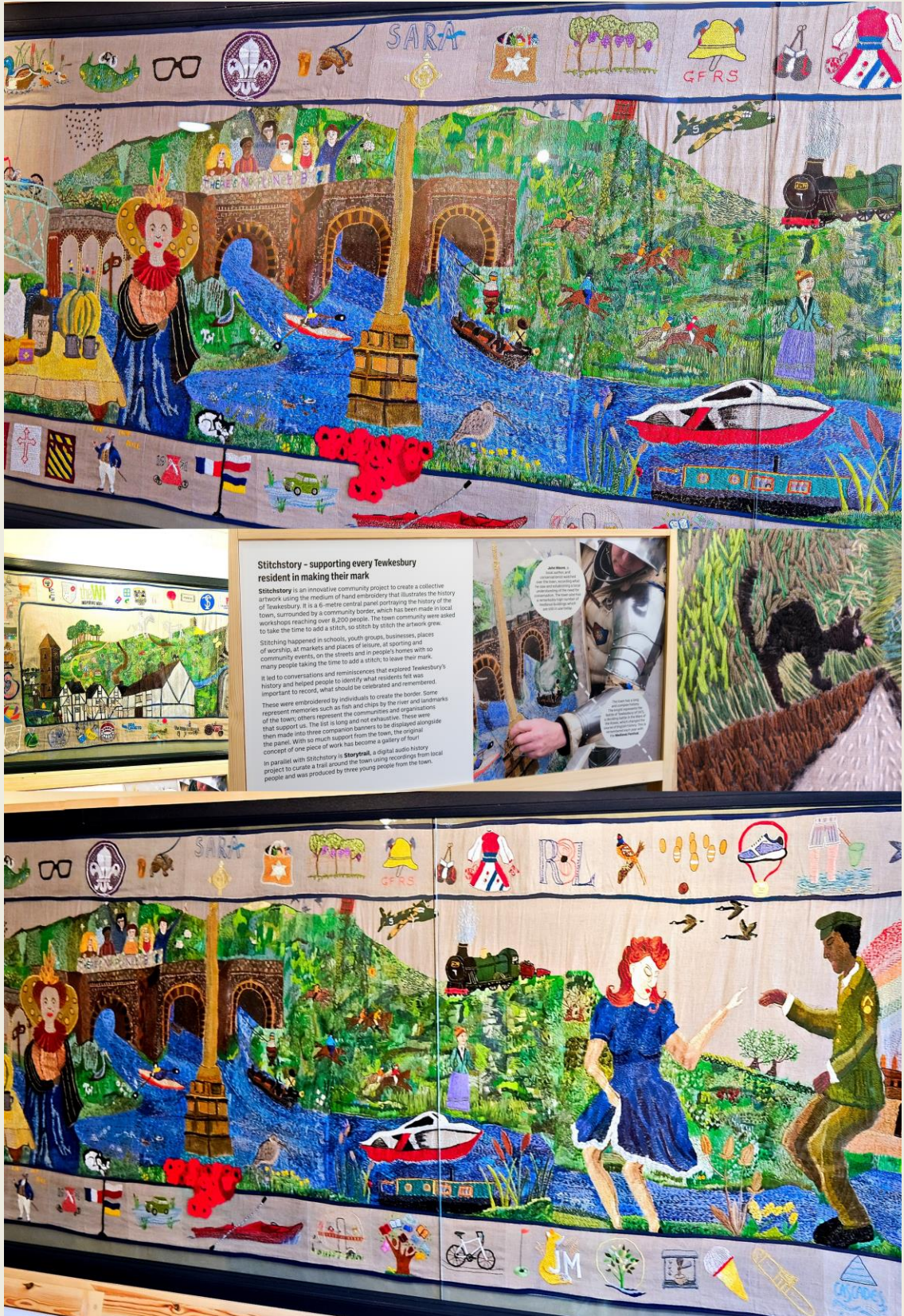
## **Project Corsham Tapestry visit to Tewkesbury, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

Having decided to further celebrate Corsham's heritage by exploring the possibility of making our own Tapestry, a bus load of about 35 Corsham residents left Springfield Campus at 9am on the above date. We then picked up a contingent from Box and Sorigny Twinning Association who were hosting French guests that weekend. Others drove to meet us there. Knowing that Tewkesbury's 'Stitch Story' had been finished last year, we wanted to get any advice about what to do. Help!

Because of our large number, we divided into two groups in the Heritage Centre to see the Tapestry in its permanent display. From what people have said, our collective first reaction was one of awe at its beauty as we gazed along its length. We were taken through its story with a full explanation by Joanna Teague, Community artist and school teacher. Jo was a lively and amusing speaker, an expert in textiles. She was backed by Megan Dunford, Community Liaison officer and Project Manager. The third member of this gifted triumvirate was artist, Sam Morris, whose works often contain a small picture of a cow. Jo told us that 2021 was a significant anniversary for two major events in Tewkesbury's history. The earlier date was 1471, when one of the most decisive battles in the Wars of the Roses was fought on Tewkesbury soil, bringing victory to the House of York against the House of Lancaster. The second was the 950<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of Tewkesbury Abbey. A further continuity is Tewkesbury being situated where the Avon and Severn rivers converge which leads to periodic flooding, especially in 2007. Their tapestry, 'Stitchstory', is based on a timeline of 1000 years of Tewkesbury's history and our French guests, naturally struggling with translation, could at least bask in the fame of their own Bayeux Tapestry [approx. 70m long] which was a story of the three-month Norman Conquest.

We were asked, 'When you hear the name 'Tewkesbury', what comes to your mind? 'Floods', 'motorway signs', 'The Abbey' were the usual responses and the longer we spent in Tewkesbury, the more we realised quite what an historic and interesting place it is! It's only about an hour's drive from Corsham and people were saying they couldn't wait to go back to do further exploration. Back to their Tapestry, Tewkesbury chose to do a 6m length. It is important to note at this point: they had a place they could put it. It's as simple as that and we've come to see that before we can continue in any way, we have to find a definite place in Corsham to display a tapestry. There are some options but so far they are not ideal. It needs to have public access and be 'owned' by the town. If this is not possible, we may need to look at other options, e.g. portable screens. Back to Tewkesbury: with a settled space for display, 10 panels were agreed on and 10 experimental designs were painted on 10 pieces of joined heavy paper.





**Above:** photographs of parts of the Twekesbury Tapestry by Julian Carosi, collage by John Maloney

*Article continues next page...*

The paintings were then scaled up to fit the actual size of the panels and, this time, painted on to a canvas of Latvian Baltic linen, supplied by a Devon company. The next stage was stretching the panels on to big frames, their size dictated by what Jo and her colleagues could get into their cars! Funding of materials was quite modest, especially when a large collection of silk threads and embroidery items were donated by a gentleman whose late wife had been an embroiderer. Frames were donated and joiners helped voluntarily. Then it all began. The aim was to get every person in Tewkesbury to do at least one stitch and to achieve this, for six months or so, Jo and either of her volunteers would sit in doctors' surgeries, supermarkets, cafes, schools, pavements and sports facilities advertising it and encouraging participation. You name it, they were there! In the end, some 8,500 people stitched and no stitch was rejected, removed or changed - because this was Tewkesbury's community ownership. The background and 'filling in' bits were mainly done by Jo and Sam, the lead artists. The finished tapestry is behind UV glass frames. In addition, small medallions of stitched pictures placed around the walls of the room means that so many more works could be included.

The scenes in the main tapestry are based on local landmarks, such as the nearby river and the beautiful abbey. The tapestry consists of panels on large frames, but when you look at it, it appears to be one big long canvas.

What an act to follow! A bit intimidating! We may copy some of Tewkesbury's ideas or do it quite differently, but Tewkesbury's 'Stitchstory' is an excellent model to discuss when looking at our own options. Let's hope that Corsham will be energised to have a go and in the process learn more about the past and present, at the same time adding to the already rich heritage of the town we love. We're pleased that Corsham Town Council is supporting us and Arts Officer Sarah Leigh has been working with us from the start. Other funding will be sought and interest is looking promising.

Thank you to Tewkesbury Culture and our intrepid guides for their generous support at the very beginning of 'The Corsham Tapestry'. Our first step will be a brainstorm meeting in Corsham Town hall, the details of which will be sent when decided.

**Jane Cox**

*Corsham Civic Society Executive Committee*

## **Heritage Open Days [HODS] 9<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Corsham - anyone who walks down the High Street can see evidence of fabulous and fascinating heritage, but we do have the capacity sometimes to take our surroundings for granted.

The National Trust, who oversee HODS, are giving us a great opportunity to get to know our town better and in this anniversary year of the town's Civic Society it couldn't be more appropriate. Over the ten days you will have the opportunity to walk through a few doors, one or two of which you perhaps had never considered interesting!

The whole thing will be launched at the Corsham Street Fair on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September so come and find us at our stall on the High Street, where you'll be able to find out all about the other events and also give your children the opportunity to get their quiz sheets for the High Street Heritage Competition which will be running for the whole of the Heritage Open Days period. Prizes for all those who complete it!

As for the other events, we have several walks on offer over the week. The Three Chapel Rambles on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September link the important non-conformist Monks Chapel, and Chapel Plaister with the Schoolroom at the Almshouses - which was also used as a chapel [see collage on next page]. Those for whom 7.5 miles is too much may like to join the Two Chapel Ramble on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>. All will remain open for other visitors to marvel at their unique qualities for a short while once the ramblers have left.

If you are interested in architecture you might want to combine visits to Delicious House, a beautiful 21<sup>st</sup> century conversion of a house into a modern working space right next to the Town Hall, Monks Chapel and the glorious Corsham Almshouses which will be reopened after recent essential conservation work. These buildings will be open for limited hours on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September, but careful planning should allow you to see all three in one afternoon.

Please note that there are also limited numbers for the Delicious House visit and early booking is recommended.

The overall theme of this year's event is CREATVITY UNLEASHED and Corsham's contribution is the development of our own Community Tapestry in the style of ones previously created in communities as far afield as Tooting in London and East Lothian in Scotland. For more information on this and how to get involved, come and see us at the stall at the Street Fair or at our table in the Pound Arts Centre through the week. We are looking for all members of the community and you don't have to know how to sew!

If any of this excites you then head to <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/> for further information or get in touch with the Pound Arts Centre to book your space on the walks or on the Delicious House visits.

We look forward to meeting you all over the week!

**Ali Warren**

## Heritage Open Days Corsham, Wiltshire



**Top:** Views of Corsham Almshouses. **Middle:** Monks Chapel and Chapel Plaister

**Above:** photographs and collage by Larry St. Croix

### 35 Vine Street, City of London ~ major Roman defences discoveries revisited and redisplayed and now including a 'mini-museum'



Pl 1. Crosswall 1979. Brick-lined pit constructed against the Roman city wall

**Above:** 8-10 Crosswall: the outer face of the Roman wall and the 18<sup>th</sup> century brick cess pits at either end



**Above:** Part of the Crosswall archaeological team: from right to left, Cath Maloney, the late Geoff Egan and Ian Blair



**Above:** Sir Ronald Gardner-Thorpe, Lord Mayor of the City of London and me opening the Dukes Place subway Roman wall tile mural in 1980.

No. 35 comprises two former sites, 8-10 Crosswall and 1 Crutched Friars. In 1979-80, I supervised archaeological excavations at 8-10 Crosswall in the City of London. The team uncovered a fine stretch of the Roman defensive landward wall [approx. 10m long and 3m high] and the foundation of an associated tower (Bastion 4A). The Roman wall had been incorporated within the basement wall of a 19<sup>th</sup> century warehouse, concealed by a whitewashed mortar render surface. The tower base was rectangular and of mixed material, though mainly of packed chalk. On top of the foundation were the sparse surviving remains of its superstructure which consisted of part of a Roman tombstone and imprints of other such large stones [see next page]. The discovery of this previously unknown B4A was important in determining that the spacing of the Roman bastions on the east side of the city wall was at intervals of approx. 186 Roman feet.

At either end of the wall were two similar 18<sup>th</sup> century brick cess pits full of discarded materials which indicated the likely location of property boundaries.

I was intent on negotiating the retention of the wall and tower base in the new building as such opportunities were rare in the City [see opposite: some years earlier, in the case of the Dukes Place Roman wall only a representation had been possible]. In the event, the developers [European Ferries] agreed to the proposal and display in the new building (named Emperor House). The architects, Joseph & Partners, designed a viewing gallery which could be viewed from the service yard. They regarded the scheme as an aspect of 'placemaking'.

*Article continues next page...*



### 8-10 Crosswall, City of London

- (top) Roman city wall and foundation of Bastion 4A
- (right) Tombstone of Marciana who died aged 10
- (middle) section through building showing retention of Roman city wall and Bastion 4A foundation
- (left) glazed viewing gallery in service yard

*Photographs on this page and the previous page, courtesy of the Department of Urban Archaeology, Museum of London*

*Article continues next page...*

The Contents of a Late 18th-Century Pit at Crosswall, City of London

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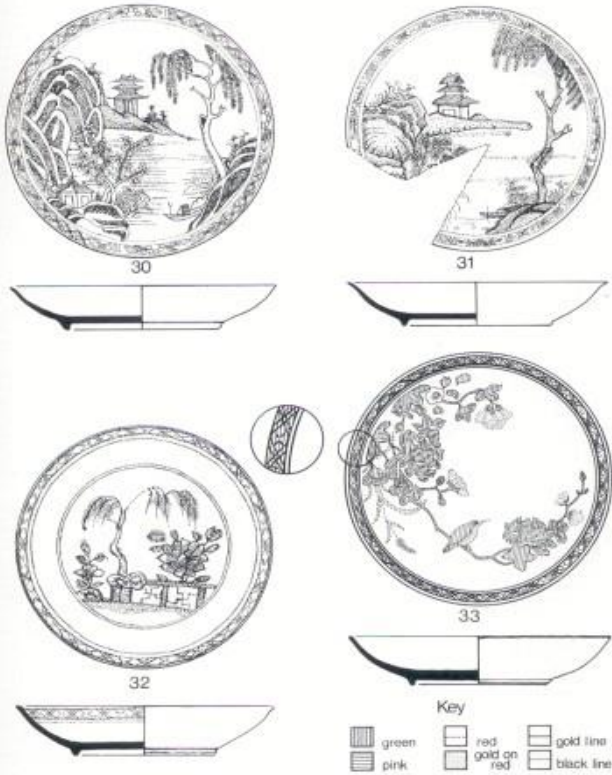


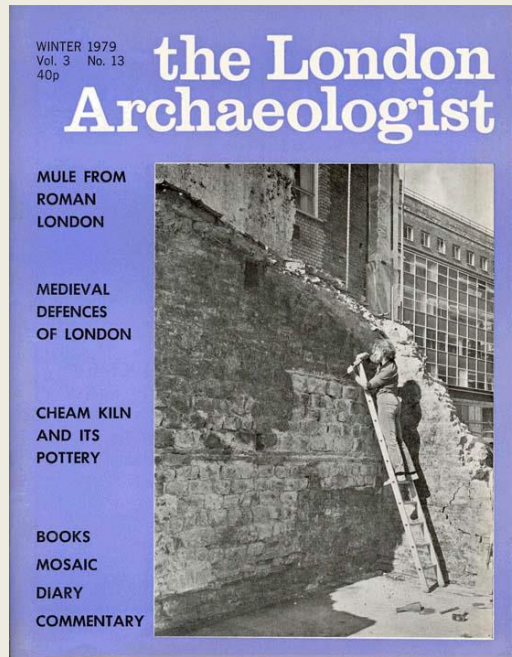
Fig. 7. Crosswall 1979: Chinese Porcelain Nos. 30-33 (1/2).



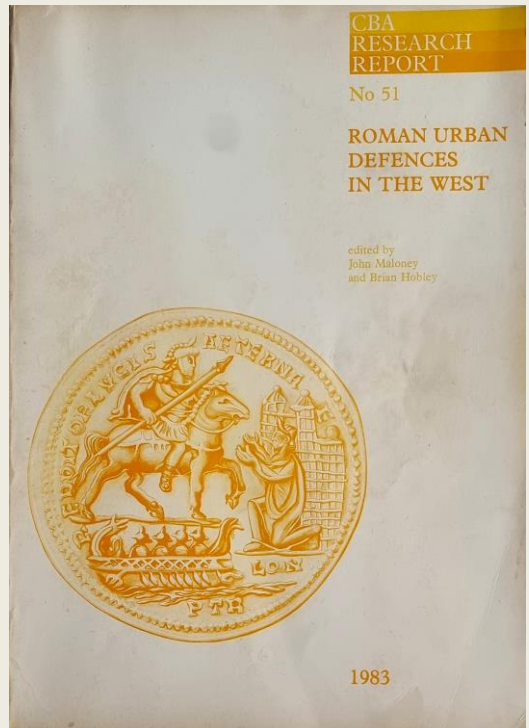
Notable amongst the remains from the cess pits were two sets of high quality Chinese porcelain [examples **above, top**] dating to c. 1700-25; two fineware drinking glasses and pharmaceutical glassware [one dated 1754]; the skeleton of an angora rabbit and a bone from a linnet song-bird [both high status 'pets']; and the top of an unusual glass bird feeder [a man in a tricorn hat] for use in a bird cage [see **above**].

All the items appear to be part of a contemporaneous group deposited c.1770, possibly representing a household clearance.

For details of the Roman wall and Bastion 4A and cess pits see various Crosswall reports at <https://independent.academia.edu/JohnMaloney26>



**Above:** The front cover of *the London Archaeologist* magazine featuring the uncovering of the Roman wall at 8-10 Crosswall



**Above:** The front cover of *Roman urban defences in the West* [eds. Maloney & Hobley], the papers from an international conference held at the Museum of London in 1980 and featuring a major article on London's Roman defences.

*Article continues next page...*

As has been the case in the City in recent times, the approx. 20 year cycle of redevelopment led to Emperor House and Roman Wall House backing onto it [1-2 Crutched Friars] and sharing a party wall, being demolished together. The developer is Urbanest UK Ltd., and the development consists of 11 floors of mixed use, including swish student accommodation which have 'fantastic views across London'. The development provided a great opportunity to improve the appearance of the Crosswall Roman remains and the interface of that stretch of wall on the neighbouring Roman wall site.



**Above:** The Urbanest building is in the foreground with the distinctive curved roof

And thanks to an innovative collaboration between Urbanest, the City of London Corporation, Historic England and the Museum of London, the preservation and display of the remains were enhanced, not least by the inclusion of a 'mini-museum'.



**Above:** The external face of the Roman wall and Bastion 4A [see page 23] and - to the right - the mini-museum of artefacts from the site and elsewhere in the City. In the foreground is a seating area and beyond it to the right [out of view] a Senzo café.

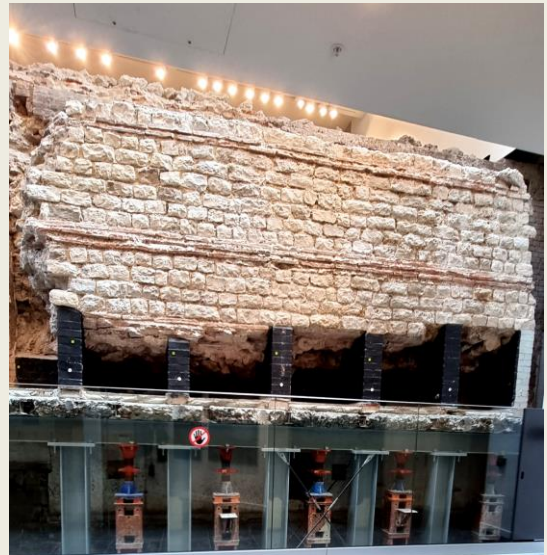
Early this August the display aspect of the scheme attracted considerable coverage in newspapers, magazines, a variety of blogs and on BBC TV and its website. For *History Today*, Mark Bridge wrote 'New mini-museum showcases London's massive Roman wall .... As a result of the redevelopment, it is freely accessible for the first time, enclosed by an exhibition space that houses hundreds of artefacts excavated nearby. It is also clearly visible to passers-by on the street.'

*Article continues next page...*





**Above:** The Times article about the Roman remains at 35 Vine Street.



**Above:** interior face of the Roman city wall supported by underpinning jacks.

The discoveries were described as an 'epic find nearly 2000 years in production'!



**Above:** Me standing recently by the bastion base with [behind] some of the 'mini-museum' display cases.

The display also consists of a video about Roman London's defences; a Roman sculpture in a display case, and is a large and impressive artwork, 'Wall of Antiquities', by East End artist Olivia Whitworth.

Credit to all those involved including, originally, an antiquarian in 1906 and, in 1979, the Department of Urban Archaeology, Museum of London, and the archaeological team that excavated the site at Emperor House and discovered the highly significant site of Bastion 4A, of which there is scant mention in the displays.

In a paraphrase of Winston Churchill it is said 'the winners write history' but to my mind it would often be more apt to state that 'history is written by the latest comers'!

If you would like to visit the Roman remains and 'mini-museum' it is **FREE** but booking beforehand is advised at [bookings@citywallvinestreet.org](mailto:bookings@citywallvinestreet.org)

## Bristol International Balloon Fiesta, 10-13<sup>th</sup> August

The Bristol International Balloon Fiesta was founded on the weekend of the 7th-9th September 1979. A small gathering of like-minded balloonists came together to celebrate the first ever Bristol International Balloon Fiesta, at the popular ballooning location, Ashton Court.



Spectators witnessed a mass ascent of 27 balloons attending the Fiesta and marvelled at the many other flights made throughout the weekend. Most balloons came from the West Country, while others came from Ireland, Luxembourg and West Germany. From this small beginning, the Fiesta has grown year on year, flourishing into what has become Europe's largest free annual hot air balloon festival.



Today, the Bristol International Balloon Fiesta attracts over 100 hot air balloons and is witnessed by 500,000 followers over the four days of the event. The Fiesta has become as much of an icon for Bristol as Brunel, Wallace and Gromit or Concorde. The fiesta is a charity, run by a committee and remains free of charge to the public, in line with the ethos of how it was founded.



For more details go to ~ <https://www.bristolballoonfiesta.co.uk/about/bristol-balloon-fiesta>

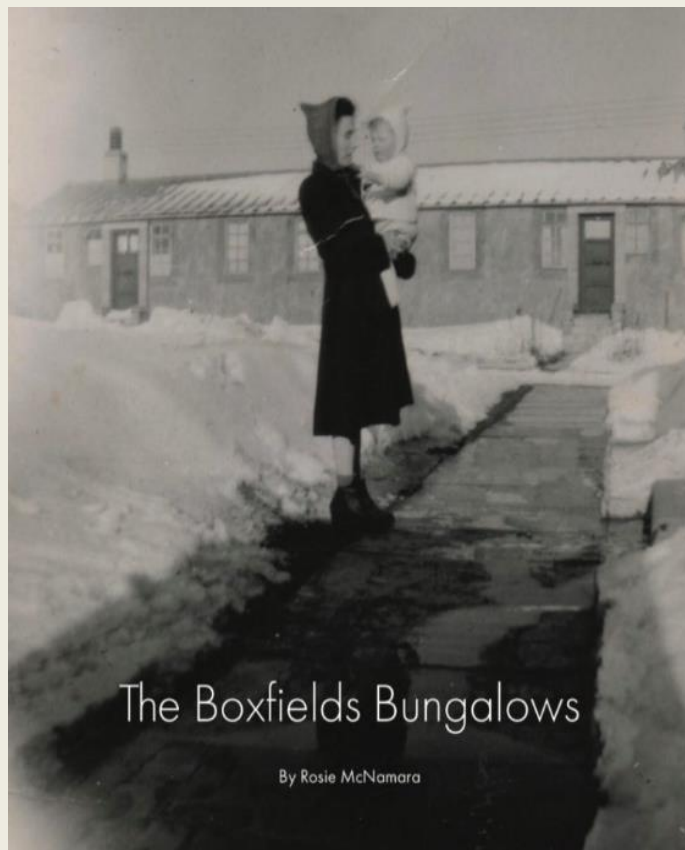
## Rosie McNamara talk at Corsham Library, Springfield Centre

Cath and I went to hear Rosie McNamara [nee Feeney] speak at Corsham Library on 16<sup>th</sup> May about where she grew up: not surprisingly, given the success of her book *Boxfield Bungalows*, the talk was 'well oversubscribed' with many people waiting to see if there were any cancelled bookings. Rosie is an engaging, fluent speaker and she used a good variety of slides. She told me that she had looked at *Spotlight* online and liked *The hell that was Corsham* [Spring 2020, pps. 7-9] that I wrote. She said that she had been 'stalking me' to make contact about that and the potential for more extensive articles about the Irish in Corsham and their contribution to the war effort.

She mentioned all sorts of interesting facts, for example, the bungalows were built over a stretch of the Box tunnel which the builders hadn't realised at the time, despite the line of airshafts! Most of the men worked for the contracting company McAlpines which advertised and recruited all over Ireland for men to come to England. [My father came over in 1941 and worked for George Wimpey ('Wimpey' became an acronym for We employ [an obsolete spelling of employ] more Paddies every Year) and there was great rivalry between McAlpine and Wimpey: if ever anything went wrong my father would ascribe it to 'one of McAlpine's men'.

Rosie also mentioned the novelty of having a self-service supermarket at Boxfields [in a redundant RAF pavilion] and noted that although people weren't well off everyone seemed happy and people in the community looked out for each other.

She mentioned that there was what passed for a 'Catholic church' in Neston in another RAF building. Notably, she said that there is a stained glass window in Fairfield Church, Gloucs., to the wartime Irish workers.



## Old shop sign reappears

If you should happen to have wandered down Pickwick Road in the first few weeks of July, you might have noticed some work being done on the shop next to the Londis store. Above the window was a beautiful piece of signwriting –



If you got close enough to look, the detail on this piece of street art was amazing with an elegant three-dimensional effect, that was also well preserved.

A little investigation led me to my neighbour, Rob Shillaker, who was working on the new signage but had a very personal connection to this particular sign. Rob was able to tell me that he believed that his grandfather had painted the sign somewhere around 1937. The history of the sign is straightforward. From 1921 the little shop was a chemist belonging to a man called Fricker. He sold it to Mr Cameron who had the sign set up, where it remained until Boots took over the pharmacy (and extended the shop further back) in 1947. Boots stayed there until they moved into the current premises in the Precinct somewhere in 1974/75. It seems likely that the sign was simply covered up when Boots took over, as there is evidence of the screws that secured the new sign on the Cameron sign.

How could Rob be so sure of the connection to his grandfather? He's hoping that when he takes the sign down, he'll find some kind of signature on the back, a habit of his grandfather's, but as well as that Rob's roots go deep into Corsham, and he is lucky enough to have inherited his grandfather's diary from 1941. It's the kind of piece of family history that many of us would love to have.

The diary details the whole of his grandfather's life. One half of each page is given over to a description of his day's work. Mr Shillaker had a stiff leg so was unfit for military service and seems to have turned his hand to most things domestic. Mostly he was a painter and decorator, but the diary reveals that he would do everything from helping repair a van to helping with water pipes and plumbing. A typical entry would be something like this –

"Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May. Mrs Gough, 22 Pickwick Road whitewash ceiling and fringe, strip in walls and paint 1<sup>st</sup> coat flat green undercoat"

But the other half of the diary lists the events of his life. He talks about walks with his family after chapel (he was a regular Methodist, attending, we think, what is now St Aldhelm's Church, Pickwick Road), his regular snooker games and dances at the Town Hall. He was very involved in the St John's ambulance, which was his contribution to war work, and the diary is full of those details.

"Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September. Mrs Merritt called at about 11.30 am to go to Winfrays (sic). Went we got there I took over. Man had bad epileptic fit and took him to Bath Hospital but they would not keep him in, bought him back... also gave a lift to a soldier from hospital to Corsham..."

Interestingly, there is very little direct mention of the war. The same entry ends like this –

"Middle of the night plane crashed at Westrop 1 man killed and I baled out and broke leg".

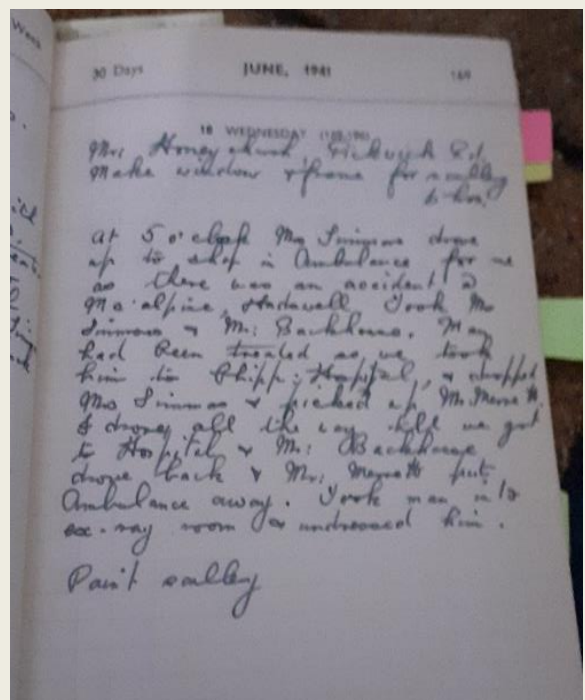
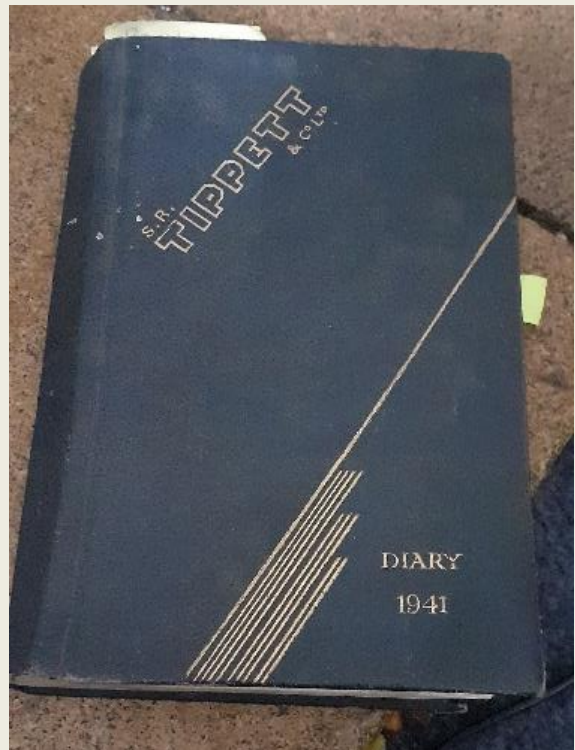
But this is a rare reference.

There is a mystery that needs solving. Mr Shillaker often refers to the siren going off, but he often misses it. Where was the siren placed that he missed it?

And for the sign? Rob is planning to try and remove the sign in one piece with the hope that he can find a suitable home for it, so hopefully we will find a place where we can admire its beauty and the skill that went into creating it for years to come.

## Ali Warren

*Thanks to Larry St Croix for the photograph and to Rob Shillaker for the loan of the diary.*



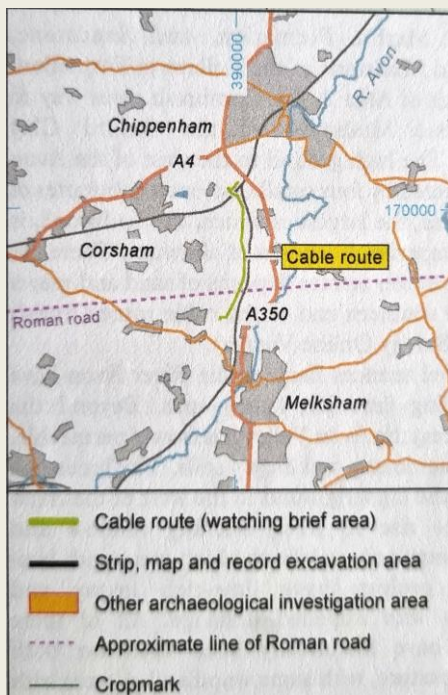
## Beanacre Roman site

Archaeological investigations during 2015 and this year for the construction of a new supply line for the electrification of the Great Western Railway Main Line, uncovered part of a large, previously unknown, Romano-British settlement along the main road between the Roman towns of Aquae Sulis [Bath] and Cunetio [Mildenhall, near Marlborough]. The full extent of the settlement is unknown but evidence from metal detector finds and field names suggests that it may have extended for at least 0.9 km along the Roman road.

The Romano-British settlement appears to have been established in the mid-late 1st century AD and was continually occupied until the end of the 4th century. The settlement contained roads, buildings of stone and timber construction, a crop drier, wells, pits, human and animal burials, agricultural enclosures and evidence for metalworking, but was most notable for its large number of cooking ovens.

The ceramic and metal finds are indicative of a highly Romanized settlement, whilst the animal bone assemblage and plant remains suggest that the provision of food – particularly roast pork and bread – was an important part of the settlement's economy. The discovery of a pair of small stone altars provide evidence for a roadside shrine.

For a fuller report ~ <https://www.wessexarch.co.uk/our-work/beanacre-wiltshire> [with acknowledgement to Wessex Archaeology for the images]



**Above:** map showing the cable route at Beanacre and a stretch of the Roman road between the towns of Aquae Sulis [Bath] and Cunetio [Mildenhall, near Marlborough]. **Right:** the two uninscribed Roman altars found at Beanacre.

A Romano-British settlement along the main road [Via Julia] between Mildenhall where in 1978 a hoard of nearly 55,000 Roman coins – the largest in Britain – was discovered and Bath. Other Roman sites to the north of the Roman road between Marlborough and Bath are known at Chippenham, Hudswell in Pickwick, Colerne and Box.



**Above:** Beanacre: the skeleton of a neonatal [newborn] child

In Chippenham in 2017, a Roman grave was found beneath the floor of a medieval building in the back garden of the Antiques Roadshow presenter Marc Allum's near the River Avon. A sarcophagus containing the body of a young woman was discovered in the Hudswell area of Pickwick in 1942 and other Roman items were previously discovered in the area including a rubbish pit, a bronze coin of Julian II [AD 355-363], stone building tiles and 2nd-3rd century pottery sherds. In Colerne, the remains of a villa were uncovered in 1838, including numerous rooms, hypocausts [heating systems] and a plain mosaic. Other Roman sites are reported in the Colerne area [*Colerne, Yesterday and Today*, copied by Julian Carosi from an old, c.1974, Colerne brochure, p. 3].

And, of course, there is Box villa: located north of Box Church the site has been excavated on a number of occasions since its discovery in the early 19th century, including by Sir Harold Brakspear in 1902 [**Right**]. It is a courtyard villa, including a bath suite, and so far over 40 rooms have been investigated. It is dated to c. AD 200–370. Unlike Beanacre, despite the Hudswell sarcophagus there is as yet no clear evidence of a Roman settlement in the Corsham/



**Above:** Sir Harold Brakspear on the Box villa site

Pickwick area, but Wiltshire is a county rich in the remains of Roman settlements. There is clearly the possibility of more discoveries: the limited redevelopment due to the existing listed buildings of the Corsham/ Pickwick area is a limitation on archaeological investigations.

### **Engineer – Potter - TV celebrity**

Since watching the Channel 4 programme 'Great Pottery Throwdown' in which Jon Roynon participated as a contestant, it has been a pleasure to have met and spoken with Jon who is a Corsham based potter. After encouragement from his wife he took up pottery approximately five years ago after taking evening classes at the Pound Arts Centre. He works full time as a structural engineer in Bath during which he has worked on a number of local projects including the Welcome Building and Treetop Walkway at Westonbirt Arboretum.

His engineering background is evident in his pottery work with symmetry and precision being evident within the forms and he enjoys experimenting with finishing techniques to generate more organic and unpredictable results.

His work broadly falls into two categories – hand thrown and slip-cast forms.

His thrown work is primarily functional ware – bowls, vases etc but with additional texture added through embossing. These are finished in a range of homemade glazes which have been chosen for their high flow characteristics to generate dynamic and unpredictable finishes to the pieces so that no two are quite the same!

His slip-cast forms start off as digitally designed pieces which he then 3D prints in resin from which a mother plaster mould is cast. This is then used to make the slip-cast pieces using liquid clay. The resulting regular forms are then each finished in as many different ways as possible so that he can create variety and contrast.

The finishing techniques include coloured clay slip within the moulds, introduced at the time of casting to create marbled and splatter designs, coloured underglaze patterns and texture by adding post-casting or glaze using the same wide variety of homemade glazes used on his thrown pieces.

Jon was lucky enough to be a contestant on Series 6 of the Great Pottery Throwdown. He mentioned that when walking onto the TV set it was almost like walking into the TV, very familiar but very weird. He was excited initially but as soon as the first challenge started the pressure became evident and he didn't stop shaking for most of the initial make.

Despite the ongoing pressures Jon became one of the three finalists all of whom faced two of the toughest challenges: to create a stacking pyramid vase centrepiece and a daring sgraffito globe. Although Jon did not win the overall prize, he was no doubt a winner in other respects and the experience will undoubtedly pave the way forward for a future of enjoyment and success.

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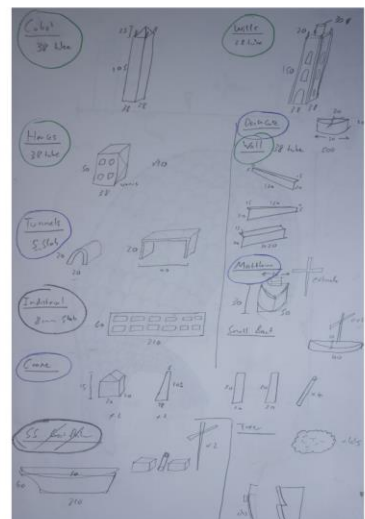
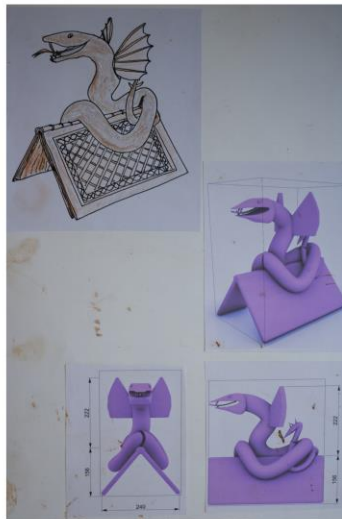
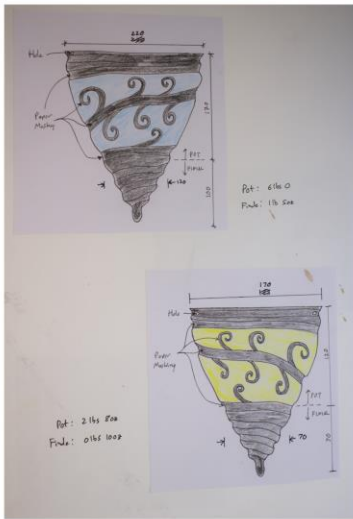
The TV experience has provided Jon with an opportunity to try all sorts of techniques which he would never have done whilst working on his own. It has made him go from throwing 4lbs of clay to 30lbs of clay and being able to develop much larger pots than he did before. In addition, Jon has made many friends whilst he was on TV and keeps in touch with other participants of the TV show to share the latest gossip and keep track of everyone's progress.

Jon now wants to make time in his life to practice pottery and develop lots of his ideas and experimentation as well as accept commissions for his work and participate in various pottery events. He feels most honoured to have been invited to participate in an exhibition as a guest artist and he feels as, an engineer, somewhat shocked at having the professional title.

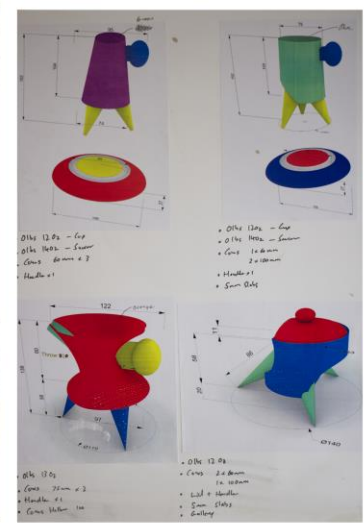
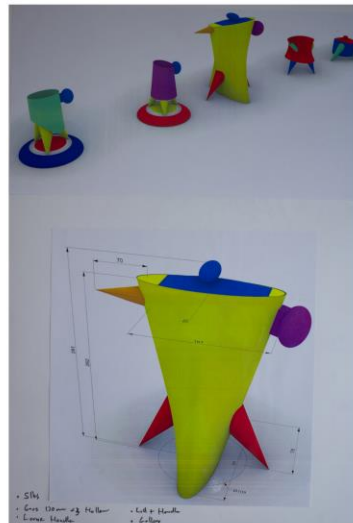


**Above:** Photographs and collage by Larry St Croix

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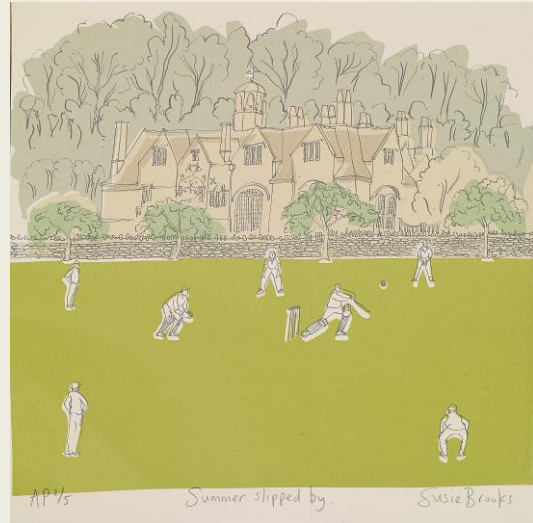


### Sketch Book



Jon can be contacted via his website: [www.roynon.co.uk](http://www.roynon.co.uk) or email: [jon@roynon.co.uk](mailto:jon@roynon.co.uk)

## Almshouses's prints for sale



These hand made silk screen prints are by prominent local artist, Susie Brooks. They are limited editions of 50 prints per design and are on sale for £45 each, at Willow Antiques and the Corsham Gallery, both in the High Street. The theme of the set is "Life going by", with the Almshouses as a constant backdrop to local activities. All profits from the sales go to the restoration of this beautiful Grade 1-star listed building at the heart of our community. Further details of the current works taking place will be in the Winter issue of the magazine. Enquiries to [info@corshamalmshouses.org](mailto:info@corshamalmshouses.org).



**Janet Battersby, Corsham Almshouses Trustee**

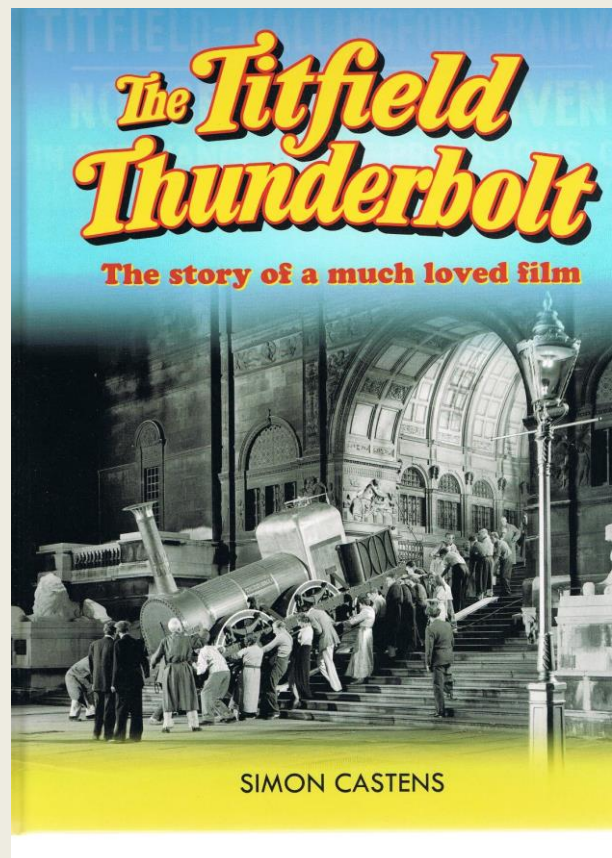
## Book Review

### 'The Titfield Thunderbolt' ~ the story of a much-loved film.

Written by Simon Castens and published by 'Thunderbolt Books' an imprint of 'Wild Swan' books, the publisher is based in Batheaston.

The film 'The Titfield Thunderbolt' arrived in cinemas 70 years ago in 1953 having been shot on location in the Monkton Combe valley on the disused line between Limpley Stoke and Camerton. The author, Simon Castens, in 186 pages, has put together a wonderful collection of photographs plus details of the cast members and the various locations used, which did include Bristol Temple Meads station. Simon was fortunate in contacting Sid James' daughter who provided him with many photographs that illustrated the making of the film. The engines that were used were 1401, an 0-4-2 tank built at Swindon in the 1930's and 'Lion' an historic engine built by Todd, Kitson and Laird of Leeds in 1838 for the Liverpool and Manchester railway.

At the end of its service on the L&MR it was used as a pumping engine of the docks until rescued by the LMS, the London Midland & Scottish Railway in 1927, taken to Crewe Works and restored to working condition in readiness for the centenary of the L&MR in 1930. It was used in 2 other films, 'Queen Victoria' and 'The Lady with a lamp', the story of Florence Nightingale and her work during the Crimean War. After filming ending in 1952 'Lion' returned to its base in Crewe but again was 'steamed up' and used during the re-enactment of the Rainhill Trails in 1980, which I attended. 'Lion' now resides on a special plinth in the Liverpool Museum. This book is a treasure for both railway enthusiasts and film buffs and is well worth reading. It is available from the Corsham Bookshop at £28.95.



**Michael Rumsey**

## “Big in Japan” [日本でビッグ]\*

Jane Cox has recently been in Japan and mention of it promoted me to reminisce about my connection with that country. In 1992, through the ‘good offices’ of Dr. Akira Matsu, a leading Japanese archaeologist, I was invited by the Japanese Ministry of Culture to go on an all expenses paid three week lecture tour of major museums and archaeological units in Japan [generously, Cath’s costs for a one week stay were also covered]. Akira and a number of colleagues had visited London on fact finding missions about the approaches to excavation techniques, raising developer funding and public archaeology of the Dept. of Urban Archaeology, Museum of London [for which I was the Principal Archaeological Excavations Officer, City of London]. At that time the DUA (which covered the City of London, the historic core of London) was the largest and leading urban archaeology unit in the world ~

[https://www.academia.edu/42252935/The\\_DUA\\_Department\\_of\\_Urban\\_Archaeology\\_managing\\_archaeological\\_investigations\\_in\\_the\\_City\\_of\\_London\\_1973\\_1991\\_London\\_Archaeologist\\_50th\\_anniversary\\_proceedings](https://www.academia.edu/42252935/The_DUA_Department_of_Urban_Archaeology_managing_archaeological_investigations_in_the_City_of_London_1973_1991_London_Archaeologist_50th_anniversary_proceedings)

Dr. Matsui (Director of the Center for Archaeological Operations at the Nara Cultural Properties Research Center, Nara, Japan), started his archaeological career at Tohoku University, where he took a year’s leave of absence and went to the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska, U.S.A. He became interested in the Native American movement in the U.S. and spent some time visiting activist American Indian Movement (AIM) locations. He got his M.A. in 1980 and entered a Ph.D. program that year too. His principal interest was in wetland archaeology and applying and improving archaeological excavation techniques and he was very interested in the waterlogged London sites on its waterfront.

When in London Akira and his wife [Miyuki, meaning ‘beautiful happiness’] would stay with Cath and I and our two children in Herne Hill, London, and were very appreciative of the hospitality and the family interactions!

**From left to right:** Akira, me and his colleague, Mr. Yushimura outside a temple complex.



\* Title courtesy of an *Alphaville* track in their 1984 debut album *Forever Young*

*Article continues next page...*



**Above:** one of the many beautiful temple gardens in Kyoto

**Above:** Me enjoying a matcha tea

On our travels, as well as spending time in Tokyo, we visited other main cities for example, Kyoto, Osaka, Nagoya with its famous castle, Nagasaki, Fukuoka and Kobe. The latter [one of the first ports to trade with the West] was very memorable: located on a narrow strip of coastal land and hemmed in by the foothills of a mountain range, it had been 'expanded' through a major scheme of reclamation around former islands in the adjoining bay which included the construction of an airport.

We visited many beautiful places and landscapes complete with memorable temples and shrines and some very advanced museums in terms of their displays and facilities.

The reputation of the DUA had spread far and wide and there were numerous opportunities to speak at international conferences and to undertake lecture tours but the most memorable was the tour of Japan visiting the main archaeological units and some of the foremost museums. Akira considered that the DUA approach to urban archaeology was the best that he had encountered on his tours in Europe and the Americas and he was keen that his colleagues learn first hand about it. I was surprised to be asked to give interviews to the press and TV and treated like a celebrity! Akira organised the publication of one of my talks in Japanese ~

Quarterly of Archaeological Studies, Issue no. 39 (3) (155), Offprint December 1992, TENBO; *Continuity in development and cultural heritage in historical cities: London*  
John Maloney (Translations by Matsui Akira and Sasaki Kenichi).

He subsequently wrote me a letter of which the following is an extract: *Your lecture has been in press in the most representative journal of archaeology in this country. Your name has become very famous now. Your lecture has been criticised friendly in the annual review of archaeology for 1992.* He went on to explain that 'criticised friendly' meant that it had gained positive reviews! [see next page].

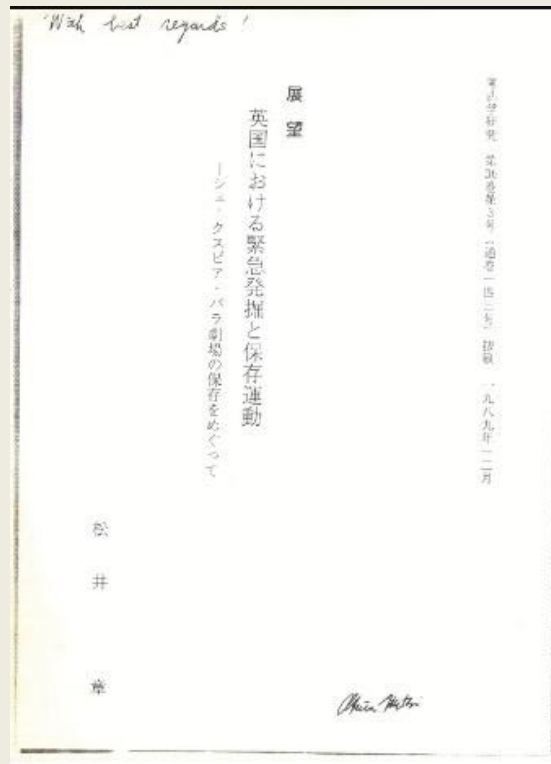
Before leaving GB I had had business cards printed with my details on both sides in English and Japanese as I was aware that an important part of meeting officials was the quite formal exchange of cards. However, once the formalities had been duly undertaken and although some of the museum curators were quite reserved, the welcome to a fellow colleague was no less warm for all that.



**Above, top right:** The front cover [in Japanese] of a published paper from one of the lectures that I gave in Japan.

**Above:** A piece of an inscribed Japanese bell of the 14th/15th century discovered during archaeological excavations on a waterfront site in the City of London dating to some centuries before there was official trade between Europe and Japan.

**Right:** A letter from Akira Matsui to me about my 'fame' in Japan, the inscribed bell and his visit to London to see us



CENTRE for ARCHAEOLOGICAL OPERATIONS  
SARA NATIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
1-1-1, Higashi-Naruki 5-10, SARASU, JAPAN TEL: 0470-26-5321

29 May 1993

Dear John;

I hear you are well and keep busy from Mr. Yoshimura who visited London last summer. Your lecture had been in Press one of the most representative journal of Archaeology in this country. Your name has become very famous now. Your lecture has been criticized friendly in the annual review of archaeology for 1992.

Now, my colleagues and I have been studying the bronze bell recovered from Kumagaigumi's excavation. The character style, my colleague says, should be older than the date of the site. It should be broken into pieces at that time. But it should be older than 10 AD, from the comparative analysis of inscription style. We are very pleased if we could report it in Japanese archaeological Journal. Of course, we will send our report to the museum of London.

Are there any publications on the excavation except you gave me the annual report of DUA. I want to see the archives record concerning to that finds.

As we are going to visit England from 18 June until 29 June. If possible, I want to see you on 28 June somewhere in London. My wife and I are looking forward to seeing you and your family. Please tell our best regards to your family.

Sincerely yours:

*Akira Matsui*  
Akira Matsui

81-742 35-1558(Fax.)

What I found reassuring was that the archaeologists I met were quick to invite me and Akira and his colleagues to stay for drinks and some were as impressive 'consumers' as their English counterparts! They were keen to talk about many aspects including techniques, legislation, approaches to preservation, public interest and support [including TV and media], outreach, qualifications, and interaction with developers and construction companies. They were proud of the Japanese Archaeological Association, a nation-wide organization founded in 1948 with the purpose of promoting the progress of archaeology and fulfilling archaeologists' societal responsibilities. Then it had a membership of approximately 4,200. It set up special committees in response to the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, problems which thankfully don't afflict British archaeology although they recognised the issues of coastal erosion.



**Above:** A reception organized for developers and their professional teams at the Museum of London

**Right:** Me receiving the Freedom of the City of London *for services to – and promotion of – the archaeology and heritage of the City of London.*



Sadly, I recently learnt that Akira had died of cancer and so this is in large part a paean to him who was so much appreciated ~

*Akira was always so generous with his time and knowledge, in many different areas, and a kind man.*

Bryony and John Coles, Retired Wetland Archaeologist and former heads of the international Wetland Archaeological Research Project (WARP), England

*For many of us, he was also a warm and friendly welcoming presence on visits to Japan. He was a great 'tour guide' and always made us feel at home and showed us a Japan that regular tourists would never have seen. I spent many happy hours on the road and was very appreciative of the hospitality both in Japan [I can wholeheartedly attest to that].*

Glen Doran, Professor Emeritus, Florida State University, Florida, U.S.A

***RIP Professor Akira Matsui, a lovely person, a gentleman and a fine and revered archaeologist.***

**John Maloney**



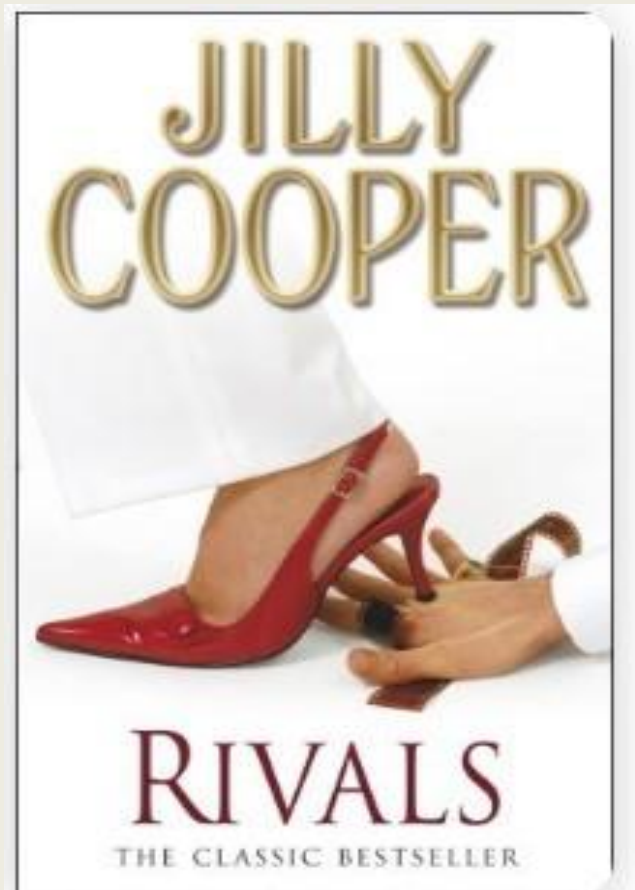
## Rivals come to town ~ filming in Corsham on 10th July

On Monday 10th July, filming for a new Disney+ series based on Jilly Cooper's 'Rivals' took place on the pedestrian area of the High Street, with some minor disruption to traffic on the surrounding roads and on-street parking. The filming, which is due to take place involved some scene-setting shots around some shops in the pedestrian area, but there weren't any major scenes with significant numbers of actors/extras, nor any special effects/stunts or music playback. As the series is set in the 1980s, there were some temporary transformations (with permission) of the exteriors of some of the properties involved.

The Town Council, and Wiltshire Council, have been working with Happy Prince, the ITV Company producing the series, to help make the filming go as well as possible, with minimal disruption, and are looking forward to seeing Corsham on screen again.

*Rivals* is set in the fictional 'county' of 'Rutshire' [a thin disguise for somewhere in the Cotswolds] and is a 'Sexy, salacious and utterly compelling book: Jilly Cooper's iconic 'bonkbuster'. The plot is passionate fight for control of a Cotswolds television company, rejoicing in intrigue, backstabbing and bed-hopping at every turn' [from Waterstones review].

**Below:** shooting outside No. 15 High Street



*Article continues next page...*

There was a hilarious episode after quiet had been called for a shot of people walking, when a male peacock wandered through the midst of the extras and crew and emitted a loud squawk before being ushered away!



Various shops had makeovers including Green Ginger and Toby Haynes Family Butchers to give them a 1986 (feel when the book was set).



## In memoriam

Jill Avis [née Smith] wrote to me from her Essex home in 2020 to say that ~

*We [her and her son Mark] scrolling through on the computer and came across the alterations to 12 Pickwick [where she had previously lived]. To say that I was astounded is putting it mildly. I was born at 10 Pickwick and moved to No.12 at the age of 3. I lived there for 17 years. It was a very happy time for me even though it was during the second World War.*

*I would like to give a big THANK YOU to the people responsible for all the lovely improvements.*

*I felt I had to write this letter and hope that you don't mind.*

Far from minding we were charmed! I would send her copies of *Spotlight* which she loved to receive. I also made her a present of copies of *Pickwick Winter Tales* and *Corsham Revealed* by Julian Carosi, both of which she said she had spent many happy hours reading and remembering aspects of her life in Pickwick/Corsham.

Subsequently, Mark wrote: *Thanks again for all the interest you have shown in Mum's stories, and the efforts you have gone to show her what has become of the house and to share stories of Corsham from the past, and the present. It's really been exciting for her, and now the rest of the family have all passed on it's nice to have a link with Wiltshire which otherwise we might have lost.*

In June, I received a card from Mark and Amanda Avis about the death of Jill Avis [Mark is her son and Amanda her daughter-in-law]. Mark wrote ~

*Your letters and magazines, and the people you were able to help Mum reconnect with [in particular, Pat Whalley], brought such joy to her life, at such a surprising time so long after she left Corsham; and after Fred [her brother] had died it appeared that her last contemporary connections to the village had been cut. And then an idle moment for me on Rightmove gave her such a nice surprise with such riches underneath!*

*Thank you so much for being such an interesting and patient correspondent with Mum. She loved writing (as I'm sure you came to know) and we count ourselves very lucky that she was so sharp and interested in the world, right to the end.*

*If you were to spread this news, perhaps via the magazine to those who remember her in the village, I would be grateful.*

She leaves behind her husband Bob, Mark (her son) and Amanda (his wife) and their family, and an extended family. She is fondly remembered by all who knew her including myself and Pat Whalley.



**Above:** Jill Avis with her brother Fred in the back garden of No. 12 Pickwick

## A Pickwick garden



**Above:** photographs and collage by John Maloney

John and Louise Potter live at Bramble Cottage, Pickwick, and are notable for the beautiful appearance of their garden. When they moved to Pickwick some 30 years ago, John said that 'the garden area was a 'tip' full of rubble and rubbish. John set about creating paths and rockeries and Louise did the planting: what a transformation they have achieved. It gladdens the heart and is a credit to them!

## Planning matters

### Stonehenge

After much delay, on 14th July 2023, Transport Secretary Mark Harper gave the go-ahead for the A303 dualling with a short tunnel and deep cuttings to alleviate acute traffic jams, in particular, during the summer months which blight the Stonehenge area. Ways of improving the situation have been under consideration since the 1960s. I recommend reading ~ <https://www.apollo-magazine.com/stonehenge-road-tunnel-archaeology-a303/>



**Above:** Stonehenge as it is now blighted by noise and the visual impact of the A303  
**Below:** the Stonehenge landscape as it could be with the A303 tunnelled



### RIP

Recently, The Stonehenge Alliance announced that on 21st July, Dr Kate Fielden, the representative who led the campaign against the A303 tunnel scheme for more than 30 years, died after a short illness.

*Article continues next page...*

## Local

A bill is currently going through Parliament to realign parliamentary constituency boundaries which is likely to be passed. What it will mean for Corsham is the old Chippenham constituency being divided into two with Bradford-on-Avon and Melksham being moved to a new constituency. Corsham will remain in the Chippenham part to which will be added Royal Wootton Bassett and Calne. Box and Colerne will become part of the new 'Melksham and Devizes' constituency.

Following on from recent reports that a Geoffrey Thomas company has gone into administration, Hartham Park is now up for sale for a mere £8 million ~

[https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/138434852?fbclid=IwAR0Hujaa3TLLVdbaRPgL4BFEMbGVB7BinU4YtEUDPy9tl6seF7sOdetaYE#/&channel=RES\\_BUY](https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/138434852?fbclid=IwAR0Hujaa3TLLVdbaRPgL4BFEMbGVB7BinU4YtEUDPy9tl6seF7sOdetaYE#/&channel=RES_BUY)

There were many applications during June and, in particular, July although the majority were mainly for minor Listed Building works, demolitions and extensions, tree pruning, replacement structures etc. More major ones were:

- CHIPPENHAM PARISH. PL/2023/04417 Land East of Showell Farm, Showell, Chippenham - Outline Planning Application for up to 450 dwellings, a Local Centre, accommodating uses within classes E (commercial, business and service), C3 (dwellings) and F2 (local community uses), public open space, including natural green space, amenity green space, parks, play space, allotments and community orchard, creation of new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access (B4528) including emergency access, internal vehicular, cycle and pedestrian routes
- PL/2023/04816 Land North of Park Lane, Pickwick - Outline planning application for up to 25,000 sqm of employment floorspace (Use Class E) comprising research and development and light industrial units with ancillary offices, with new site access, internal roads and footpaths, car parking, landscaping, drainage features and other associated works and infrastructure.
- PL/2022/06908 Phase 6, Land at Hunters Moon, Chippenham - Full Planning Application for 61 Dwellings, associated parking, public open space, landscaping, access, drainage works and associated infrastructure.

Consultation documents: *The Draft Wiltshire Design Guide and information* will be published for comment on 3 July 2023 via the Wiltshire Council website at:

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/6110/Wiltshire-Design-Guide](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/6110/Wiltshire-Design-Guide)

## Corsham Civic Society annual summer tea party

Originally, as it was last year, the annual summer tea party was due to be held in Corsham Almshouses garden but as the refurbishment works there overran, an alternative venue had to be found and Michael Rumsey was able to secure the Box Methodist Church. Michael is a member of its committee and the organist at the church. The church facilities are excellent: the main body of the church is spacious as is the adjoining kitchen [complete with a fridge and extensive range of cutlery and crockery] and there is a modern disabled toilet. While some of us were travelling to Box from Corsham, the skies opened and there was a dramatic downpour which our car's windscreen wipers could hardly deal with. So we entered the welcoming interior of the church with relief and gratitude. The 30+ people attending were commodiously accommodated [see below].



**Left:** Cath at work in the kitchen: she made nearly 70 scones [!] Thanks for the donators of cakes. As well as Cath and Michael, other members of the society helped with the preparations and served tea to the tables and, most notably, did the washing-up afterwards ~ thanks to Gerald!



**Above:** the CCS annual summer tea party well underway: Michael invited those attending into the choir loft and explained about the impressive organ



**Above:** the chancel end of the church    **Above:** the choir loft with organ  
**Below:** Some of those attending gathered round the banner at the entrance



The summer tea party was considered to be a great success by those attending and although no charge was made, some £200 was raised through voluntary donations!



## New Chair of Corsham Town Council

Helen Belcher has succeeded Steve Abbott who served as Chair for the last five years giving unstinting service.

Helen was awarded an OBE in the New Year's honours list for services to the transgender community. Helen is trans herself and in 2010, she formed the trans-awareness charity Trans Media Watch, for which she is a trustee. She is also a director of TransActual, a CIC [a form of social enterprise Media Watch, for which she



is a trustee. She is also a director of TransActual, a CIC [a form of social enterprise and not-for-profit organisation that exist for the good of their community and reinvest any surpluses into their services] that aims to improve trans people's experiences of healthcare, boost legal recognition and media representation.

As well as a Corsham Town Councillor, Helen is also a Liberal Democrat Wiltshire Councillor for Corsham Pickwick. She was selected as a Lib. Dem. parliamentary candidate for Chippenham in 2017 and 2019, losing to a Conservative candidate. Helen was a great support to the Pickwick Association at the Public Enquiry about the Gladman site proposed development on the Bath Road.



**Above:** Just because it's a nice photo. of ... one of our members, Yvonne Le Gris [Larry St. Croix]



**Above:** Middlewick Lane allotment [John Maloney]



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# CORSHAM CIVIC SOCIETY TALKS 2023

All meetings are at the Pound arts centre (telephone 01249 701628) at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated. Members £2, Non-Members £5. Guests are very welcome. Please be aware that these events are subject to last minute changes beyond the control of the CCS.

<b>Aug</b>	<b>No event</b>
<b>29th Sep</b>	David Dawson <b>The Making of the Kingdom Wessex</b>
<b>27th Oct</b>	Richard Ricket <b>Introducing the Amazing Honey Bee</b>
<b>24th Nov</b>	John Chandler <b>To Bath via Corsham - roads and travellers</b>

- ***Please note that the Programme may be subject to changes***
- ***For more information email [corshamcivicsociety@gmail.com](mailto:corshamcivicsociety@gmail.com) or see the website [www.corshamcivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.corshamcivicsociety.co.uk)***

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

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