



Corsham Spotlight

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

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From the Chair

The weather has certainly improved during this last week of June and Corsham again has many gardens and floral decorations in the town to admire. As a Society, we received the sad news that our president of 16 years, Mrs Anne Lock, had tendered her resignation on May 10th, the day of the annual general meeting. An appreciation of Anne's work of many years has been penned by my colleague Pat Whalley and can be found on page 20 of this issue.

After much discussion by the executive committee, an approach was made to Thomas Brakspear, a long-serving member, who agreed to take on the mantle of Society president. Until his post is confirmed at the 2025 annual general meeting, Thomas Brakspear will be known as president-elect. More about him can be found on page 21 of this edition.

The executive committee invited Edward Barrett, a committee member to become vice chair of the Society which will certainly be a great help to me.

Our programme organiser, Pat Whalley, has been working hard in preparing the 2025 programme of talks. If you have a talk in mind she would be delighted to hear from you. Finally, I look forward to seeing everyone at the Society's Garden Party to be held at the Almshouses on Saturday, August 17th commencing at 2.30pm.

Michael Rumsey

Making History

An oral historian from the Museum of London recently came from London to our house to interview Cath and me about our archaeological experiences and the early days of the Department of Urban Archaeology. Latterly, the historian provided us with a 17-page summary to check! The oral recording and summary are destined for the Museum of London archive.

John Maloney

Right: Cath Maloney digging on the medieval waterfront site at Trig Lane, City of London



D-Day Commemorations

D-Day, 6th June 1944, was the largest amphibious invasion in the history of warfare. The statistics of D-Day, codenamed Operation Overlord, are staggering. The Allies used over 5,000 ships and landing craft to land more than 150,000 troops on five beaches in Normandy. The landings marked the start of a long and costly campaign in north-west Europe, which ultimately convinced the German high command that defeat was inevitable.

The invasion was conducted in two main phases: an airborne assault and amphibious landings. Shortly after midnight on 6th June, over 18,000 Allied paratroopers were dropped into the invasion area to provide tactical support for infantry divisions on the beaches. Allied air forces flew over 14,000 sorties in support of the landings and, having secured air supremacy before the invasion, many of these flights were unchallenged by the Luftwaffe.

Nearly 7,000 naval vessels, including battleships, destroyers, minesweepers, escorts and assault craft took part in Operation Neptune, the naval component of Overlord. Naval forces were responsible for escorting and landing over 132,000 groundtroops on the beaches. They also carried out bombardments on German coastal defences before and during the landings and provided artillery support for the invading troops.

John Maloney



Corsham Ceremony: Committee member Edward Barrett, ex-Army, is holding a wreath (credit: Julian Carosi)



Poppies Blow: The flowers, a symbol of remembrance, growing on Bath Road in Pickwick (credit: John Maloney)

The Lady at Prayer is Relocated to Pound Arts Community Garden

Our readers may recall that in the Spring 2023 Anniversary Year of Spotlight, I wrote an article entitled The Lady at Prayer: A Quest. It was thought that this sculpture had been gifted to the CCS when Robin Eden was chairman of the society after he had approached the Bath Academy of Arts for a tangible memorial of the years during which they were based in Corsham.

It was recalled by members that it had been in the old Corsham Library for many years but after that was demolished its whereabouts had been lost. Even the sculptor did not know where it was, which by a roundabout route I tracked it down to a cupboard in the Lacock Room, Springfield Campus with the help of Callum Nelson who worked at the campus, was able to take photographs of it. I then circulated these to interested parties/individuals, including the sculptor.

It has since been decided without reference to the society that it be placed in the Pound Arts Community Garden and this has been done. It's a good home for it.

John Maloney



Above: John Maloney standing beside The Prayer sculpture

May's Staff in Corsham's 10K Run

Mitchell May, the owner of May's Greengrocery store in the Precinct, with three of his staff, raised £2,055 for the Macmillan Cancer Charity on the Corsham 10K run – an admirable result.

Dressed as vegetables, the four of them, Liam Tomkins, Mitchell May, Aaron Gale, and Tom Swain enjoyed themselves, with Mitchell leading the way as he completed the course in 43 minutes and 43 seconds, one of the fastest vegetables in Corsham.

Enjoy the photos of these four young people raising money for a deserving charity.

Michael Rumsey



He's No. 12 in the World and Works in Corsham

Now you're all wondering who this can be, well it's someone who has been in business in the High Street for the last 39 years and retired last year. Former Right Angle Framing shop owner Steve Hible in the Autumn of 2023 sold the business to Penny & Rod Ellis. Though he still keeps his hand in several mornings a week.

Steve hails from Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire and studied for a fine arts degree at the Gloucester College of Arts & Design and after its completion in 1976 trained at an establishment in Exeter where antique prints were for sale. Steve moved to Marshfield in 1984 and finally opened Right Angle Framing in the High Street at what is now the Corsham Bookshop then moved across the street in 2003. With three assistants the establishment has completed many framing and conservation tasks for customers not only from Corsham but from a large area in the South West.

Steve decided to retire last Autumn and enjoy other pursuits such as running, walking and mountaineering. His wife Judy has now retired as a Pharmacist while the twins John & Simon are busy working in their professions after gaining 1st Class Honours degrees, John at St. Hughs, Oxford in Engineering while Simon graduated from Warwick University in Mathematics.

As to being 12th in the World, that's true, as Steve was the 12th person to become an Advanced Guild Commended Framer in Conservation Framing – a well-deserved accolade. We wish Steve a long and happy retirement and thank him for his expertise on the near 40 years in business in the town. Today Penny & Rod Ellis (who are Commended Framers themselves) will be delighted to help you with your framing requirements, the shop details are as follows:

Open Tuesday to Friday 10am – 5pm, Saturdays 10am – 4pm
Tel: 01249 716051
www.rightanglepictureframing.co.uk

Michael Rumsey



The Story of Pickwick is a Hit!

The co-authors are pleased with its reception and the interest that it has generated. John Maloney as a career archaeologist, sometimes involved with recording historic buildings, believes that not enough people 'look up' as they walk about and take account of the built heritage. As Winston Churchill said, "We shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us".

The famous architect Frank Gehry asserted that "Architecture should speak of time and place, but yearn for timelessness." As well as buildings to properly understand a locality we need to know something of its history, significant events and notable personalities.

The concept of a sense of place has served as an important concept in the study of human geography over the past 30 years and has been adopted by Historic England. Sense of place refers to the emotive bonds and attachments people develop or experience in particular locations and environments. Sense of place is also used to describe the distinctiveness or unique character of particular localities and regions.

John Maloney

Buy Now: Pickwick, A Place in Time has been selling well in the Corsham Bookshop, the Corsham Tourist Information Centre, and at the Middlewick House Open Day.

Pickwick, A Place in Time – Celebration at Pickwick Manor

On Saturday, 18th May, a champagne and cake celebration of the publication of Pickwick, A Place in Time was held at Pickwick Manor, courtesy of Tom and Lucy Brakspear. Tom contributed two sections of the book and is president-elect of Corsham Civic Society. It was a convivial occasion attentively hosted by Tom and Lucy.

Amongst those attending were Michael Rumsey, CCS Chairman; Anthea White, Town Councillor for Corsham Pickwick Ward; and Julian Carosi, author of many books about Corsham. Tom introduced the proceedings and Tony Clark, co-author, and I gave short speeches. Mine was as follows:

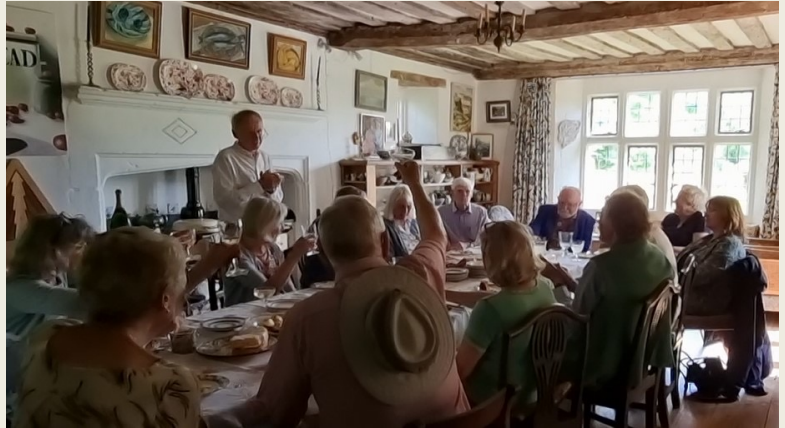
Many thanks to Tom and Lucy Brakspear for hosting this celebration; Cath, Lucy & Tom for the food and, our son, Michael for his help. It seems a long time ago that Cath and I moved to Pickwick [2015] from London and having realised that there didn't seem to be a book specifically dealing in detail with the historic village of Pickwick, in 2017 I started compiling notes and put them together in a text a rather grandiosely entitled 'A history of Pickwick'.



John Maloney: Outside his 18th C. house in Pickwick



Book Signing: Co-author Tony Clark signs a copy of PAPIT



A Toast: Glasses were raised after co-author John Maloney gave a speech celebrating the book's success

Much of that text was incorporated into the Pickwick Conservation Area Appraisal which Tony Clark and I undertook and which, eventually, was approved and adopted by Wiltshire Council as planning guidance. I ought to mention that for the Conservation Area Appraisal that man of mystery, Paul Kefford, and Jill Channer [ex-English heritage] provided useful advice. It seemed obvious to then use that appraisal work as the basis for a book on Pickwick that had a wider appeal and this is the result [an example of 're-use!']. The draft was enhanced by the editing of Cath Maloney.

I want to end by particularly thanking Tony Clark for his help and support whilst I was unwell and for latterly shouldering the burden of taking the book to print. Tim Jollands [Weavern Books, Corsham] made a significant contribution: formatting and re-setting the layout, making helpful suggestions and securing a printer.

Tony recalled the genesis of the publication (the Gladman Inquiry of 2015 which highlighted the need to produce a sound appraisal of our Conservation Area) and the subsequent transformation of that appraisal into a saleable document. He paid particular thanks to John Maloney, as co-author, and Tom Brakespear, who had produced the technical material, for "their splendid contributions."

John Maloney



Wiltshire Building Record Newsletter, No. 175, June 2024
Clive Carter's Book Corner

Pickwick: A Place in Time, The Story of a Wiltshire Village by Tony Clark and John Maloney 2024

PICKWICK
 A PLACE IN TIME



TONY CLARK AND JOHN MALONEY

112 pages. A revised and expanded edition of 'Pickwick - Conservation Area Appraisal' published in 2021 by the Pickwick Association ISBN 978-1-3999-7638

Introduction by Thomas Brakespear, index, numerous colour illustrations and maps, aerial photos by drone.

*"... most of the Pickwick buildings, although having adopted some basic Georgian features, have an unsophisticated, somewhat homely appearance."*¹

It is not often that I get to review local history books in consecutive WBR Newsletters² but just such an opportunity has occurred for this issue. Borrowing an apt quotation from the 'Malmesbury' book reviewed in the March issue: "... conserving the best and improving the rest," may now be a trend but it has taken a long time to become the norm – although all the more welcome!

This book on Pickwick will certainly appeal to people with a good knowledge of vernacular architecture but, it will in addition, interest a wider public who want to learn more about the local area. It includes the history of the place, buildings and people, as well as aspects of conservation.

The first part of the book could be used as a kind of fact-finder, as it is packed with fascinating information. Historic features and architectural details in buildings are highlighted. The book originated from the 2021 Pickwick Conservation Area Appraisal. Conservation management plans and appraisals are within a “planning policy context” and are the first steps in a dynamic process, namely: to provide the basis for making decisions about their future scope and management.³

Thus the 2021 paper aimed to: (i) identify those elements which contribute to the character of the area including historical associations (ii) identify elements which detract from the character (iii) propose measures to maintain or improve the positive character, local distinctiveness and sense of place of the conservation area. The book tackles these three goals very well, primarily within the latter half of the book.⁴ The architectural and planning descriptions are engaging, and the supplementary and supporting facts add to the interest.

The connected information puts the related facts into context. For example, local worthies and significant owners have left their mark architecturally on Pickwick. The Quaker community left their mark in the neighbourhood with the unusual layout of their buildings reflecting their communal living preferences. It is good to see that information found and recorded in reports by the Wiltshire Buildings Record has been useful.⁵

A particularly interesting chapter, especially for WBR members, concentrates on the histories of a selection of the ‘more important’ buildings within the present Conservation Area. It offers a comprehensive look at the history and buildings of the local area, primed by the recent conservation appraisal. A profusion of historic and modern maps are provided. Aerial photography by drone is a new and helpful innovation. This is a book that informs and educates by way of describing the locale of Pickwick with its Wiltshire Cotswolds appeal.

1. 'Pickwick: A Place in Time' - page 64
2. WBR Newsletter, March 2024 No 174 'Malmesbury Reflections'. No. 1 74
3. Accessed on line 31 March 2024
4. Pickwick: A Place in Time - pages 59 to 108
5. *ibid* 2014 pages 25, 93, 2019 pages 92, 96, 98 et al. 6. *ibid* page 92

Reproduced by courtesy of Wiltshire Building Record



Credit: Lydia Booth

The first permanent home of Jamie's Farm, based in Box, was purchased in 2010 and within six weeks they remarkably welcomed their first group of visiting children. The site is now highly developed for, and crucially by, the children. Pupils have left their mark in multiple ways, including the establishment of a colony of bees producing delicious honey. It's home to their biggest regenerative farming operation. This site is also the headquarters, where operations staff are close enough to the programme to hear celebratory cheers when a log is split, or there is raucous singing around the piano.

The initial spark for the charity came when founder Jamie Feilden, in the first cohort of Teach First participants, was teaching in a Croydon comprehensive. Shocked by the battleground the school had become, stemming from poor behaviour and a lack of engagement, he brought lambs from his family farm in Wiltshire and set up pens in the school playground, challenging his pupils to look after them. He observed that it was frequently the children who struggled to focus and maintain positive relationships in school who benefitted most from the responsibility and nurture needed to tend to these animals. In 2006 Jamie brought the first groups of young people from Croydon to his family home just outside Bath.

Using his own farming experience and the 30 years' worth of experience that Tish, Jamie's mother, had built up as a psychotherapist, they developed an approach based on farming, family and therapy, and piloted week-long visits at the family home.

From the very first week, Jamie's Farm witnessed the profound impact that this combination could have on disengaged teenagers. Thirty-five pilot weeks were run at their home before the need for a purposely converted farm became apparent. With the support of local lenders and donors, in 2009 the first Jamie's Farm was purchased in Ditteridge, seven miles outside of Bath and 4 miles from Corsham Town centre.



Credit: Lydia Booth



Credit: Jamie's Farm

Following successful visits, in 2009 Jamie and his mum and co-founder, Tish, registered Jamie's Farm as a charity and the following year Jamie's Farm moved into Hill House Farm, Ditteridge.

From day one Jamie was determined that the farm would not be a 'petting zoo', but that there would be real jobs with a real purpose. When combined with the therapeutic methodology that Tish devised, and the essence of a loving family as a framework of support, a powerful intervention was born.

To this day those founding principles remain at the heart of the work and the charity has built a reputation as an innovative and in-demand intervention that operates across five (soon to be six) rural farms and a city farm in Waterloo, London.

The Need

Social and academic exclusion are serious problems affecting young people in the UK today. When children are not engaging fully with their education it can be difficult for them to see their potential as successful people. The consequences of this are likely to be felt well into adulthood, with the biggest impact on employability, wellbeing, and relationships. At Jamie's Farm, they offer a unique, preventative solution to empower young people to change course.

Jamie's Farm Response

The powerful formula of Farming, Family, Therapy and Legacy, delivered via a five-day residential and rigorous follow-up programme, is designed specifically to improve wellbeing, boost engagement, improve behaviour, and develop essential life skills such as communication and self-awareness. The week also provides valuable professional development for visiting teachers who return to school with renewed relationships with their young people, and tips and skills to sustain the changes back in the classroom.



Credit: Lydia Booth



Credit: Jamie's Farm

"When I went back to school, I had a lot more patience. I was calmer in the classroom; I was able to sit down and focus on my work so it was the best standard I could do." Looking ahead, Amani hopes to be a footballer and hopes that the patience and teamwork she learned at the farm will help her build stronger relationships on and off the pitch.

"I've started coaching the local under 9s team, which is something I wouldn't have said yes to before Jamie's Farm." Young person, aged 14.

- **Five** children in a classroom of 30 are likely to have a mental health problem
- Only **43%** of disadvantaged pupils reach the 'expected standard' in reading, writing and maths
- **1.6 million** pupils were persistently absent during the 2021/22 academic year

Source: NHS 2021 Government data, 2022 DfE, 2023, Pupil absence in schools in England

Vision

Their vision is that vulnerable children nationwide will be better equipped to thrive during their secondary school years and beyond after this experience. At Jamie's Farm, they believe in the innate potential and good in every young person, no matter their background or life experiences.

Part of this vision is about spreading their approach and enabling systemic change, by profoundly influencing the way the education system works, training teachers and other professionals in multiple sectors to engage more effectively with disadvantaged young people, as well as informing and supporting parents and society at large to enable all young people to thrive.

Farming

Young visitors are involved in all elements of running the farm. This gives them practical, purposeful work to do with tangible outcomes. Young people have multiple opportunities to succeed and be recognised for it, which builds their self-esteem and confidence.

Family

Visitors to Jamie's Farm live and work as an extended family on the farms, working together, sharing meals around one table and supporting each other when things are tough. This gives meaningful relationships to young people, both with adults and peers, and models how supportive partnerships can work.

Legacy

The Jamie's Farm experience doesn't stop when young people return home. They will continue to offer support through their legacy programme, providing encouragement from afar and arranging school visits to help bring what has been learnt on the farm back to daily lives.

Living Together

At the farms, staff and children live together, and learn to respect each other and the home in which they live. Everyone contributes to the functions of the family household. Without the distractions of mobile phones and electronic devices, there is time and space to reflect. Stories are shared in the evenings, including playing games together and on the final night there will be a bonfire and they sing songs together.

Cooking

Food forms a major part of the week at Jamie's Farm. It enables groups to share their culture, develop creativity, work as a team and build confidence. Young people are involved in every aspect of it, including the growing of fruit and vegetables, caring for livestock, food preparation and serving.

Adults and children eat together around one large table, and everyone helps clean up afterwards. Looking after others before yourself is central to what Jamie's Farm does. All sugary snacks are handed in on day one; instead, they show children the benefits of eating healthily and allow them to realise the resulting changes in their behaviour and attitudes.



Credit: Jamie's Farm

Daily Walk

A daily walk provides children with exercise and a sense of adventure as they discover the countryside. This is rewarding, as children frequently exceed their physical expectations, but it also allows them to enjoy a sense of freedom as they expand their horizons. Kicking a ball about, rolling down hills, walking the dogs, or even a paddle in the river creates wonderful memories for children to take away.

Therapy

At Jamie's Farm, children come to live, work, play and grow; the therapeutic approach is woven into everything that is on offer. As children only attend for a working week, Jamie's Farm does not engage them in formal therapy but in reflective conversations, individually and in groups. It is a more informal, non-intrusive approach. With the clarity of distance and away from the distraction of modern technology, children commit to making improvements when back at home. Jamie's Farm has a high staff-to-child ratio to create strong relationships and an intimate, trusting culture. One-to-one activities with trained staff allow children to reflect and to vocalise, rather than act out their challenges.



Credit: Jamie's Farm

Group Work

Daily group work encourages children to interact appropriately with one another. Everyone sits down around the table after meals to hear the successes and challenges of all members of the group. Children set goals and give and receive peer feedback to and from each other.

Horse Work

Working with these large, powerful but sensitive animals allows children to confront their parallel issues of fear, trust and attunement.

It also allows them to step into leadership roles and vocalise their difficulties in dealing with power and control.

Art and Music

Children are encouraged to express themselves creatively through art and music. Reflective, and calm spaces are provided for children to engage with creative tasks and informally share their thinking about life, home, and school.

How They Farm

Engaging young people in farming has been at the core of Jamie's Farm since the charity began. The focus at their farms is on pasture-fed livestock, with 1,000 breeding ewes producing over 1,500 lambs, and 200 Aberdeen Angus cattle producing around 200 calves each year.

Lleyn and Texel sheep lamb in January and March meaning as many young people as possible can experience the birth of a lamb. Cows graze all summer with their calves and spend the winters eating home-produced hay and silage. Bulls are sold to local farmers, and cattle and lambs are sold to butchers or in local livestock markets. As with the veg and eggs, as much as possible of the meat cooked and enjoyed by our visiting young people is directly from their farms.

In recent years, there has been a commitment to adopt a regenerative farming approach that focuses on enabling soil and natural habitats to thrive and best support the varied livestock and the wider environment. Thanks to some generous support, Jamie's Farm are greatly encouraged by their results to date across a breadth of initiatives including:

Planting Herbal Leys

- Improves the drought resistance and soil fertility of their land; reduces the need for certain animal treatments thanks to the pasture's natural medicinal properties; and improves livestock growth from the species' high protein content. 250 acres have been planted so far.

Mob Grazing

- This briefer, but more intense, grazing regime sees livestock moved onto new pasture every few days. This ensures soils get gently tilled but then have longer to recover, which benefits their structure and productivity. Jamie's Farm are now mob grazing around two-thirds of their land.

Hedgerow Planting

- Increasing the hedges and fencing on the farms reduces soil erosion, benefits biodiversity and helps the management of grazing. 10k metres of hedging plants have been established so far.

Rearing Livestock

- Interaction with the livestock encourages a sense of nurture, confidence, responsibility, and achievement. Children begin to see the value of hard work and gain a huge amount of satisfaction from tackling challenging jobs in a new environment. Children also contribute to farm life through activities such as hedging, carpentry, and log chopping.

Gardening

- Children help to grow seasonal fruit and vegetables in the extensive vegetable gardens, which is a valuable contribution to meal preparation. This helps young people understand the food cycle and how putting effort into growing and harvesting food can lead to delicious produce.

Farming Community

- Children may visit neighbouring dairy or sheep farms. This helps children to understand the social context of farming and develop trusting relationships with a range of adults.

The Days After They Return: Sharing Successes

The head teacher at each school or lead of each organisation and parents/carers receive personalised letters at the end of every visit, recognising each young person's successes. For the young person, it is extremely powerful to come back to a head teacher and parents/carers who have already heard how well they got on; this can support a profound boost in self-esteem. Visiting teachers are also given slides to share in all staff briefings on their return, detailing how school staff can best support these young people, and key challenges they may face in the first week back.

“After we started working with Jamie’s Farm, we quickly realised that we wanted to have a wider impact on the whole school. We’d seen a huge rise in social anxiety in our young people, along with a rise in poor behaviours and low attendance. We wanted to focus specifically on our staff developing relationships with young people so that we could get the best out of them and so that they would want to attend school.

We worked with the Jamie’s Farm team to put a year-long Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme together focused on building positive relationships. Some staff can understandably be resistant to new ideas because they can see it as ‘another thing to do’, but because we’d already run a trip to Jamie’s Farm, it meant that they’d seen some real positive impact on some of the students who had come back with a buzz about what they’d experienced. We also noticed that giving staff time to talk about young people and to share good practices made a real difference.

Once relationships started to improve, attendance and behaviour all started to improve as well. It also had an unexpected outcome- we received huge positivity from the parents because they felt that as a school we were investing heavily in their children. It’s been a big, big positive change for us as a school.”

Deputy Head Teacher, The Bishop of Hereford’s Bluecoat School

Apprenticeships programme

Jamie’s Farm is proud to have employed four Jamie’s Farm apprentices to date – all young people who have taken part in the residential programme before. By diversifying the staff team in this way, it is ensured that the lived experiences of children – which are evolving so rapidly – are effectively represented in the staff teams. The apprentices are frequently the voices that are turned to within staff teams and internal training to properly understand the cultural contexts that will be influencing the young people who Jamie’s Farm work with. Apprentices are invaluable members of the teams, and everyone is excited to see this programme develop and continue.

Fundraising

Jamie’s Farm relies on grants, donations and fundraising to allow it to continue its work. Without this, they would not have been able to reach their ambitious fundraising targets, and ultimately deliver their transformative programme. Indeed, with the fundraising targets ever-increasing due to the continued expansion and high rates of inflation, Jamie’s Farm depend on the generosity of its supporters more than ever.

If you are a member of a group or company that works with and supports charities, or someone who would like to get more involved then please do get in touch. They value and look to develop local community relationships to spread the word about the work they are doing and provide excellent support. From challenges such as skydives and the Bath Half Marathon to talks and cake sales there is something for everyone to get involved in.

As a member of Kingsdown Golf Club, I am pleased to note that Jamie's Farm has been chosen as this year's Captain's Charity. Club Captain Tim Page sees Jamie's Farm as a very impressive organisation doing great work and commented "My wish was to support a focused and effective children's charity where every donation would be well used. Help early in life can realise the huge potential which exists in every young person and change whole lifetimes for the better. We have certainly found the right organisation!"

It is through the Club Captain's promotion of Jamie's Farm as his chosen charity that I felt the desire to learn more and felt a compelling need to share my findings with a wider audience through publication in the Corsham Civic Society Spotlight Magazine (paper copy and on-line). I am pleased to have had the opportunity to support and contribute towards the needs of the Jamie's Farm charity along with other members of Kingsdown Golf Club.

I also arranged a visit to meet with Jamie's Farm Fundraising Coordinator, Laura Crouch, which I enjoyed immensely observing the facilities and discussing the programmes that are provided for the children. I felt a strong sense of cohesion amongst the staff and the children and was impressed with the dedication provided to ensure the best possible experience for all concerned.

On behalf of all members of the Corsham Civic Society, we wish that the future of Jamie's Farm will continue to be hugely successful towards addressing the needs of young children so that they are better equipped to thrive in their future years.

Jamie's Farm is holding its annual Open Day on 7th September 2024 and invites you to come along. This is a chance to see the farm in action with demonstrations from young people, an opportunity to meet the team, meet the animals and explore the beautiful environment they have created to deliver their programme.

There will be farm tours, activities for children, talks from staff and a chance to hear from their beneficiaries. There will also be delicious food and drink on sale.

For more information or to learn more about Jamie's Farm, please visit www.jamiesfarm.org.uk or contact their Fundraising Coordinator, Laura Crouch, on 01225 743608.

Larry St Croix

Middlewick House Open Day, 8th and 9th June

Many Pickwick residents received a flyer from a company called Origin3 regarding a proposal to build housing on the site 'Land North of Bath Road, Corsham' – the infamous 'Gladman Field' opposite the Catholic Church.

The Annual Open Garden event at the home of Nick and Annette Mason drew 11,000 visitors. The final figure for funds raised for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance and the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust has yet to be confirmed but it was 'beyond our expectations' and certainly more than the £88,000 raised last year!

Jenny Shaw, Director of the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust said:

“The event was the perfect example of charities working in partnership to raise funds that directly benefit the local community.

We are so thankful for the support of the residents of Pickwick and Middlewick Lane because without their understanding this event wouldn't happen.

We remain in awe of the Mason's who generously open their gardens and share their car collection with the public for absolutely no charge.



Nick Mason: Signing autographs as he did for hours on both days!



Is it a bird?: Biplane with a wing walker that flew over Middlewick House



Rock n' roll: A large local rock choir performed next to a big and small classic car

The funds we raise are vital to the two charities that do not receive any significant government funding.

We are especially proud Corsham Town Council and Corsham Civic Society joined us this year. Once again, thank you so much for your support, it may well save a life.”

With thanks to Michael Maloney for erecting and dismantling the gazebo and general ‘heavy lifting’; Tony Clark, Cath Maloney and Anna Maloney for support and help and being a presence at the stall; and Michael for taking photographs. Also, acknowledgements to an article in the Gazette and Herald.

John Maloney



Civic Society Gazebo: The CCS stall with its 60th anniversary banner



PAPIT for Sale: Tony Clark and Cath Maloney watching the stall

Norman Duckworth's Memorial

Cath and I went to Norman Duckworth's Memorial on Saturday 22nd in the Almshouses' garden. Also attending was Anne Lock (past President of the CCS).

I was asked by Ollie Duckworth, Norman & June's son, to accept the award of a bequest of £400 on behalf of the Corsham Civic Society from June and Norman Duckworth.

In response, I said that Norman was a long-term and stalwart member of the society who continued to attend its talks and events even recently.



Bequest: Presented by youngest granddaughter Jasmine Duckworth



Above: Oliver Duckworth addressing those who attended

I noted that he remembered many aspects of the Society's endeavours over the years and would comment on them in his forthright way. I mentioned his particular interest in historic buildings and, especially, his own house. I ended that 'he will be missed'.

I expressed gratitude for the generous bequest and thanked Ollie Duckworth for a special occasion. A highlight of the event was the playing of *Trio Paradis*, Jacquelyn Bevan (piano), Lisa Betteridge (violin) & Linda Stocks (cello), a classical piano trio who perform Café Concerts at community events.

John Maloney

Below: The Trio Paradis performing



A Tribute to our Retiring President – Anne Lock

We were extremely sad to receive news of Anne's intention to retire. Her tireless efforts for the Society have been evident for almost 50 years.

It was Anne who brought to everyone's attention the benefits that Corsham could receive from the re-opening of the railway station. Not just for local shopping, but with the presence of the local MOD staff, there was a need to provide a service further afield than just Chippenham, Swindon, Bath and Bristol.

Between 1994 and 2003 after travelling the countryside far and wide, Anne had helped to push the plans forward so that the District Council did get to the stage of acquiring land, and there was the hope of an opportunity to journey from Corsham to the larger stations via the Bristol to Oxford line. But the Strategic Rail Authority withdrew funding so we were back to the beginning.

In 2016 Corsham Town Council set up a 'Town Team' that remain committed to continuing the campaign together with the Trans Wilts Forum which is also working toward opening other local stations, and so the story continues. One day we might have a railway station!

Anne has many talents, not least the care she has for the community. Her interest in planning matters, and the impact certain developments might have on the community and the environment, have driven changes which may not be easily visible, but that have made a difference to small aspects of our town.

Her hard work and enthusiasm for the promotion of our town through Heritage Open Days can also be counted among her achievements for the Society.

Thank you, Anne, for your invaluable commitment and hard work to promote and achieve the aims of the society over the years. We shall miss you.

Pat Whalley

Profile of CCS President-Elect – Thomas Brakspear

Thomas Harold Brakspear was born in Bath in 1960, the youngest of the four children of local architect Oswald Brakspear (1912-1999) and his wife Clare (1924-2004) who lived at Pickwick Manor, Corsham.

All four of the children have now ended up living in Corsham: Hermione in Priory Street, Jessica on Church Street and Nicholas and Thomas at Pickwick Manor which has been split into two houses.

After attending Heywood School situated then, as now, at The Priory (the Brakspear family's first home in Corsham, incidentally - let to them by the Methuen Estate 1891-1904) Thomas went to a prep day school on the far side of Bath (1968–1974).

This was just at the time when large areas of the city were being flattened under the direction of the (Conservative) city council. The city architect and chief planning officer of the time (Dr Howard Stutchbury) famously stated that “if you want to keep Georgian artisan’s houses, you will have to find Georgian artisans to live in them“ and that he aimed to provide the citizens of Bath with the facilities of a Birmingham. Stutchbury designed the infamous Ballance Street flats on Lansdown which involved the destruction of three streets.

Witnessing this destruction was a formative experience for Thomas and since that time he has never ceased to be amazed at how much unnecessary waste, damage and visual destruction can be wrought by people of goodwill in public bodies who believe they are doing the right and progressive thing for the people – especially in relation to the built environment. In particular local officers and counsellors so often seem to grow blind (through familiarity?) to the assets their area has - and sometimes they end up destroying what anyone with a broader national view would consider worth keeping.

Such was certainly the case in Bath at this time but, following letters to the Times, Adam Fergusson’s brilliant 1973 book “The Sack of Bath” and a national outcry, the destruction in Bath at last stopped dead in 1974 upon the appointment of a new chief planning officer (Roy Worskett).

1974 was also the year Thomas was sent to boarding school over the hill from Bath at Monkton Combe set in a beautiful valley - though the postwar school buildings here are certainly a regrettable intrusion into the landscape. A sympathetic housemaster and art master encouraged Thomas’ interest in things architectural and aesthetic. He scraped enough O and A-levels together (more by good fortune than hard work) to get to architecture school in 1978.



Above: Thomas Brakspear addressing the inaugural meeting of the Corsham High Street Project

This was a time (before our current king stirred things up with his speech to the Royal Institute of British Architects) when architecture schools were focused on following, without question, the post-war modernist orthodoxy. An interest in the historic environment or architecture from previous centuries was not encouraged.

It dawned on Thomas that perhaps this was one reason why so many modern buildings that he had seen in historic contexts looked, to him, so out of place (Sir Frederick Gibbard's 1960s Technical College in Bath, for instance). He became somewhat disenchanted with architecture school and was not a good student – tending to succumb to other distractions (motorbikes, girls...).

However, he had the good fortune to work for William Bertram's practice in Bath for some time in the 1980s where he found the real world much more interesting and encouraging than the academia of architecture school. He felt once again enthused. Robin Eden (a previous patron of the Corsham Civic Society - as was Oswald Brakspear) persuaded him to sit on the plans committee of the society for some time in the early nineties.

Since then he has always admired people who are willing to spend their time on committees – whilst being reluctant to do so himself! Robin and Catherine Eden also employed him to build their new house next to the garden of their old house at Pickwick End in 1989/90. By this time Thomas was living in Deptford, London where he had bought a house in 1987 following a year at architecture school studying for his part two qualification.

Rightly or wrongly he never did complete his part two, preferring to work for real people in the real world doing extensions, alterations and a couple of new houses. He became familiar with the local conservation officers and was normally able to predict what their response would be to any listed building consent application he made – something that was appreciated by his clients.

Thomas was greatly helped by the example of his father, Oswald. They didn't agree on everything but they did both hold the now highly unfashionable view that, so far as possible, today's interventions into historic environments should be subservient and discreet (like for instance the old Corsham library next to the Mansion house) and not loud and in your face (like the new extension to the Mansion house).

After marrying Lucy Edwardes-Evans in 1991, the family (now with one daughter) returned to Corsham in 1992, moving into the attic flat of the then recently vacated (and for sale) Porch House doctors' surgery on the High Street. Three more daughters followed in rather rapid succession. The doctors eventually decided to sell The Porch in two halves and Thomas and Lucy ended up buying the humbler half opposite the Oxfam shop next to the driveway in 1994. It proved a delightful place to be. They moved up to Pickwick Manor in 2008 but may well yet return to the High Street.

Thomas has been asked to note down a few of his works. His biggest job was for the late Bernard Clarke at Ampneyfield above Barnsley, Gloucestershire where a painted brick Edwardian farmhouse was replaced with a substantial Neo Queen Anne 5 x 5 bay stone house under a hipped stone tiled roof.

He has also been pleased to have done various works such as entrance gates, new windows, fireplace alterations, new doors etc., at the Ivy in Chippenham, Bradfield manor at Hullavington and Seend Bridge farm. At Doncombe Mill, Ford, he had the interesting job of converting a police post back into a habitable cottage with a new extension for Lord and Lady King. At the Old Vicarage, Colerne, he was delighted to renovate the 18th century gazebo which would once have looked over the Bybrook valley (new windows, new stone roof, reset stone steps etc.).

In Corsham, he designed the remodelling of Thatch Cottage, Gastard – near where the railway goes over the lane to Lacock. Also the extensions behind Bramble Cottage, Middlewick. At Bramble Cottage, Westwells the Newton-Wades and he had fun revealing the old first-floor joists (intended to be seen) and the skilful Ray Weston was able to repair (rather than replace) the very ropey original winder staircase (new dormers and a small extension too).

At 40 High Street, the Corsham Estate gave him the pleasant challenge of how to plan three lettable units out of one rambling house. At 33 High Street (Thomas's own house) what had been for many years a doctor's surgery was turned back into a house so many partitions were removed, doors replaced and fireplaces and windows uncovered and put back to use.

Thomas Brakspear

Upon the resignation of Anne Lock as President after many years, I was asked by Michael Rumsey to sound out Thomas about becoming President: his reaction was positive. At a recent Executive Committee meeting, I was requested to confirm the offer to him and to obtain a profile and photograph. Thomas will be president-elect until the next AGM at which ratification of his appointment will be sought.

John Maloney

Our Annual Garden Party

We are delighted to once again have the opportunity to hold our annual garden party at the Lady Margaret Hungerford Almshouses on Saturday 17th August 2.30pm-4.30pm. Please come and join us. Refreshments will be provided, but if you are a lover of cake making, we would be most grateful for any contributions you may like to make.

Let us hope you can bring your parasols, but in the face of our current erratic weather, we have to have a backup plan. We are pleased to say that if it is wet, we will be welcome once again at the Methodist Church Hall, Box. Some of you may remember the very pleasant afternoon we spent there last year when the weather refused to be kind.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Pat Whalley

Rest of 2024 Programme

We have already had some very interesting talks this year, and following the garden party at the Almshouses, we have three more yet to come.

Our September meeting will cover the inception and completion of the Batheaston Bypass in 1996, and all that entailed. The project was managed by our speaker Peter Davenport, and included the archaeological excavation, the discovery of and recovery of important remains related to a settlement founded around 250BC, which had continued after the Roman period. Another issue was of those who wished to stop the project altogether, some of our members may remember the protest. The subsequent reduction to the original programme, and the impact it has had on traffic management in Bath.

In October we hear from Rose McNamara, the author of the book on Boxfields as it was known, leading up to and during the Second World War. The prefabs that were built to house workers, and how the newcomers adapted to their new community. A heart-warming story of life in our local area.

November takes us into the art world, where our speaker, John Tucker, a garden consultant, tells us of 'Giverny, a garden seen through the eyes of the painter Claude Monet'. I am sure this promises to open our eyes to Monet's clever interpretation of a garden, and maybe how we can improve our own!

We do hope you will come and join us, and if you have made new friends in the area, perhaps they have recently come to occupy one of the many new houses around the town and would like to learn more about this friendly community, please share your Spotlight magazine and invite them to come along. We would be delighted to meet them.

Pat Whalley



Open Day

Sat 7 September 11am – 3pm

Hill House Farm, Box, Ditteridge, SN13 8QA

Face painting

Trailer rides

Crafts

Hear from our Ambassadors

Marshfield Ice Cream

Apple pressing

Homemade lunch

Log chopping

Garden tour

Scavenger hunt

Come and learn more about the charity and our work with young people. A schedule of talks will be shared nearer the time. Sorry, no dogs.



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CORSHAM CIVIC SOCIETY TALKS 2024

All meetings are at the Pound Arts Centre (T: 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.

- 17th Aug **Garden Party** at the Almshouses (2:30pm-4:30pm)
If wet event will be moved to Box Methodist Church (same time)
- 27th Sept Peter Davenport, The Bathford Society
Batheaston By-pass
- 25th Oct Rosie McNamara, Author
Boxfields
- 29th Nov John Tucker, Garden Consultant
Giverny, A Garden Through the Eyes of Claude Monet

Please note that the Programme may be subject to changes

For more information email: corshamcivicsociety@gmail.com or see the website: 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