



ARNOLD'S NEWS

News from Corsham Area Heritage & Information Centre

Autumn 2012



OUR HERITAGE CENTRE - DOES IT HAVE FUTURE?

Yes, it is a clever title. It conveys the concern we have for just how long we will be able to keep the facility open. The Friends of Corsham Area Heritage Centre came into existence less than a year ago, with their objective being "To Develop the Heritage Centre into a Visitor Attraction in its Own Right". We want them to succeed in this ambition.

The Heritage Centre shares space in Arnold House with Corsham Information Centre. Both come under the management of the Corsham Area Development Trust (CADT) - a volunteer-run organisation. Arnold House is owned by the town and managed by the Town Council, which allows the CADT rent-free use of the three rooms. Additionally the Council provides an annual grant towards the CADT's delivery of a tourism service (the TIC), which employs staff and incurs costs (utilities, business rates, etc). It needs this financial assistance. The Heritage Centre does not need regular funding - it relies on volunteers. It does; however, need the rent-free space provided by the Council.

As we go to press, the Town Council is reviewing the arrangements whereby the CADT is afforded use of Arnold House, together with the means that should be employed for the provision of "tourism services" for the town. Time will tell what this will mean for the CADT, its TIC and its Heritage Centre.

The Friends plan to hold an Open Day on Saturday 26 January. Later in 2013 they plan to collaborate with the Corsham Civic Society to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Suffragettes' march from Cornwall to London (through Corsham), together with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Society - with exhibitions at the Heritage Centre in Arnold House. We hope they have the opportunity to do both.

Issue 10

Page 2

Latest News

Page 3

World War I
HM Replies
Corsham Shopping

Page 4

London Olympics
17th Century
Treasure
What 2012 Meant

*Corsham Area
Heritage &
Information
Centre is
operated by the
Corsham Area
Development
Trust (CADT),
formed in 2006 as
a 'meeting of
minds' between
the Corsham Civic
Society and the
Corsham Chamber
of Commerce.*

*The CADT's
primary purpose is
to develop the
tourism economy
of Corsham by
offering
information and
services to
residents and
visitors.*

LATEST NEWS

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

The Cards for Good Causes (CFGC) season is underway. Shoppers at the TIC can buy Christmas cards from more than 25 national and local charities. As Beryl and Cheryl, our Joint Managers, put it, “Charity cards are a great way to buy once and give twice - once to the person who receives your card and once to your favourite charity. CFGC pays the charities at least 75p in every pound for their card sales. It’s all very satisfying.”

Additionally, registered Friends enjoy a 10% discount on all non-CFGC goods throughout November and December. There are locally-produced goods, Corsham area souvenirs and books on local subjects. They make wonderful Christmas presents.



LUNCHTIME TALKS TAKE TO THE ROAD

The first four Talks took place at Arnold House. The 5th and 6th were “venued” away from the Heritage Centre so as not to conflict with sales of Cards for Good Causes. The 5th was a talk on the St Bart’s Spire Restoration Project, given by Richard Thackeray at the Church itself.

The 6th is on Tuesday 27 November. Professor Ron George will speak on the Bath Academy of Art and the Bath Spa University whilst at Corsham. The University’s Corsham Court Centre TV Studio is the venue. Pre-registration at the TIC remains essential. Admission costs £2 - but is free to Friends.

IMPROVING OUR EXHIBITION FACILITIES

The Friends of Corsham Area Heritage Centre have reached agreement with the Directors of the CADT that they be permitted to improve effectiveness of the Heritage Room (the middle of the three rooms giving out on to the High Street) as an exhibition space. The actions to be undertaken include:

- Removal of shelving units/making good of walls revealed
- De-cluttering of windows.

At the time of going to press, this work has been surveyed - but placed on hold, pending the results of key discussions taking place between the CADT and the Town Council regarding the CADT’s ongoing access to Arnold House.

CORSHAM'S PARTICIPATION IN WORLD WAR I

The townspeople of Corsham and from the surrounding area played a major role in World War I. This is clear from the documents that arrive at the Heritage Centre on a regular basis. Some, such as the book entitled "War Records of Corsham, 1914-1919", are personalised versions of a standard. Typically these have "Presented to William A Smith, 20 June 1920" handwritten on the flysheet. Others are personalised copies of "The Comrades of the Great War" - a single card.



The Friends are amassing a collection of these and the stories that go with them and will be mounting an exhibition based upon the material shortly.

HER MAJESTY REPLIES

Readers may recall the article in our Summer 2102 edition when we told you about the submission of a collection of paintings to Her Majesty the Queen to mark her Diamond Jubilee. The project was co-ordinated by the Friends - and the submission was accompanied by a letter written by that organisation's Patron, Tom Brakspear. In his letter Tom highlighted just how much Corsham folk had enjoyed having HRH Prince Philip in their midst in the 1940s when he was serving at HMS Royal Arthur.



Well, the Friends have had a reply - and it's a wonderful one. It came in two parts. One was 'general', in nature (see picture). The other was rather more 'personal'. The Friends will be framing their cherished outcome of this most rewarding project so that visitors to Arnold House may view it whenever they come to see us.

CORSHAM'S SHOPPING CENTRE OF YESTERYEAR

Corsham was once much more self-sufficient, shopping-wise, than it is now. In 1950/60 the following could be found in our High Street: 2 bakers, 4 grocers, 5 butchers, 2 fishmongers, 3 newsagents, 3 ironmongers, 2 shoe shops, 2 furniture stores and 2 hairdressers.

We'll show you where they stood and what they had to offer in future issues.

WHAT DID YOU DO THIS SUMMER?

One of our volunteers, Sandra (right), did something rather special. She was one of 70,000 volunteers supporting the Olympics and Paralympics. She saw neither the venues nor the events. Based at Heathrow, her job was to meet athletes and officials from across the world upon their arrival. Sandra was one of the 250 “Meeters and Greeters”, there to ensure everyone in the Games “family” was made welcome and put on transport bound for their correct destination.



Sandra reports that sign language rescued the occasional situation, while a smile always helped. Most gratifying was the way people thanked the volunteers when they departed.

17th CENTURY TREASURE

Ernest Hird’s excellent book on the Almshouses records that Lady Margaret Hungerford “appointed Giles Hungerford, her brother-in-law and executor of her will, to spend £1000 to purchase land for the use and benefit of Queen’s College, Oxford”. The settlement was to allow four scholars of good character, and in need of help by reason of their poverty, to attend the College, subject to their being born in Wiltshire or Gloucestershire.



Recently the Trustees were given the original indenture recording the bequest, written on vellum. Guy Hungerford is currently exploring college records for details of its application. Our picture shows Tom Bordman, a Hertfordshire resident, presenting it to Guy, a Trustee of the Lady Margaret Hungerford Charity.

WHAT 2012 MEANT TO YOU

Corsham Area Heritage Centre would like to collect your memories of 2012 - big or small, community-associated or personal. The information will be used to build a database of Corsham Area thoughts on the year while still fresh in the memory, creating a snapshot for future historians. We’d like to turn some of this into an exhibition. If you are able to lend us mementoes of the year please let us know. “Memories” can be delivered to the TIC (for attention CAHC) or emailed to sandra@cholerton9266.freeserve.co.uk, indicating whether you are happy to have your name linked to them or wish to remain anonymous.

Arnold’s News is published by the Corsham Area Development Trust.

Printing donated by Corsham Print (www.corshamprint.co.uk)

Corsham Area Heritage & Information Centre | Arnold House, 31 High Street, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 0EZ | Tel: 01249 714660 | www.corshamheritage.org.uk