



# ARNOLD'S NEWS

News from Corsham Area Heritage & Information Centre

Winter 2010-2011



## FUNDING CADT THROUGH 2011/12 - BELIEF REMAINS

**W**e chose to await the outcome of Wiltshire Council's Cabinet meeting scheduled for 25 January before putting this edition of Arnold's News to bed. We prepared the rest and resolved to write this lead story straight after returning from attending the Cabinet meeting. Anything could happen.

The Council had prepared the ground well. We had been advised of a fundamental change in the way it would be addressing the county's tourism industry. VisitWiltshire (VW) was to be set up as a separate company, dependent upon significant funding from the Council. Its role was to promote Wiltshire as the place to visit. TICs were to be regarded as having a role only when the visitors were here - at which point it was the local economy that benefited, and would be expected to bear the cost of supporting its TIC.

Being one of five TICs in the county that have been supported by Wiltshire Council, we had been told that our 2011/2012 funding from WC would be cut. We set about some serious lobbying. We pointed out that we were different. We had adopted the 'Big Society' 4 years before the term was first heard in the Westminster Village! We made sure our local town and parish councils were aware of our plight. We had already cut our costs to the bone. 25 January was to be our Day of Destiny. We listened. Routes to other Wiltshire Council funding were revealed when other service-provision was being discussed. We were given our opportunity to address the meeting. We took it.

The result? Our situation is the subject of ongoing discussion. We are now in consultation with the Service Director for Economy & Enterprise and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Housing to investigate the feasibility of securing local funding.

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Return of the  
Rudloe Hall

*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

### TEAM NOMINATED FOR QUEEN'S AWARD

The entire CADT team has been entered for the Queen's Award for Excellence in Voluntary Service. We were nominated by Cllr Alan Macrae. Box PC's Cllr Judy Seager supported the nomination.



We received an Assessment Visit by two members of the Lord Lieutenant's review panel towards the end of November. We learned that our application was excellent and that it had survived the first 'cut'. Also that this is something of which we should be very proud. Ours is now one of Wiltshire's 12 under detailed evaluation. We wait to hear if we are in the top three.

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### CREATIVE THINKING

It is now clear that nobody is going to pay us to supply free information to visitors - at least not enough to cover most of our costs. Those days are gone. We must look and behave more like a shop - where both local residents and visitors buy things which bring us a return. We've always done it. Now we must do it more.

This is why you will have seen some new products on sale at Arnold House on the run-up to Christmas. They were carefully selected to suit our 'market' - and seemingly found favour with you as being appropriate. Why were they special? They were all handmade within 15 miles of central Corsham by local independent craftspeople. Jewellery, preserves, soap & other toiletries and candles, sourced from Gastard, Lacock, Cresswells and the like.

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### CORSHAM TOURISM DAY - 14 FEBRUARY 2011

Aimed primarily at our local accommodation-providers, this is our opportunity to bring together friends and colleagues in the hospitality business. Ones we might otherwise meet only over the phone and via emails or the internet. Attendance is by invitation only.

The venue is the Methuen Arms Hotel. The date is Valentine's Day. The event begins with registration at 10.15 am and the formalities will be over by 12.00 noon. Providers are encouraged to meet up for a bite of lunch at one of the several good establishments in Corsham - but not to forget to collect their 2011 VW tourist guides from the Information Office at Arnold House afterwards.

## WHAT'S ON - HOW, WHO & WHERE

**W**hat's On has become a key feature of what we deliver to every sector that we serve. It is as much for local residents as it is for visitors. In the case of the latter, our unashamed intention is to use it to persuade those passing through the Area to stay a few days longer.

Our team at Arnold House are now the recognised people to contact if you want to have your event brought to the attention of a wide circle of potential attendees.



What started small has grown into the What's On for the Corsham Area. If you haven't developed the habit of alerting us to your programme of events, do so now.

Ann (left) and Sandra (above) and Val are our three volunteers who manage the whole thing. They create a new bulletin every week which extends over a 10-day period, starting the next Thursday. This ensures it covers two weekends - and that there is always 'overlap'.

Hardcopy versions are available at Arnold House. Additionally copies are displayed on noticeboards around central Corsham and at Katherine Park - also in local shops and at such places as the Corsham Town Hall and Library. Each new edition is posted to our website [www.corshamheritage.org.uk](http://www.corshamheritage.org.uk)

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## WE TALK THE WALK

**O**ur tour guide Simon leads a flat, level **Guided Tour of Historic Corsham** at least once a month. See things you had not noticed before. Have our town explained to you. Be informed so that you can present Corsham to your own houseguests. Better still, make one of our tours a key ingredient of their visit.

Drop in to the Centre to find out when the next tour is scheduled to take place - or call 01249 714660. Dates and times can be arranged to meet demand. Tours start and finish in the Town Centre and last for approximately one hour. Groups comprise 4 persons, minimum, 15, maximum.



## OUR NUMBERS .... THINGS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW

**W**e monitor our business very closely. We have to. Our present income is just enough to keep the CAH&IC afloat. Here are some activity numbers we feel you should know. They relate to the most recent 12 month period.

- Best ever Mystery Shopper performance 17<sup>th</sup> out of 322 (England), 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 18 (Wiltshire) - as assessed independently by Visit Britain.
  - Celebrated 10 years of service to the area.
  - Welcomed our 100,000<sup>th</sup> visitors to the Centre.
  - Contact with public:
    - Direct Users of our services 17,100, comprising:
      - Visitors through the door 12,750
      - Telephone Calls 1,750
      - Emails 1,700
      - Mail 900 items
  - Website Visitors 14,000
  - Readership of Arnold's News 400+ per edition (estimated) - 4 editions p.a.
  - Value of Volunteers' time contributed £81,000 (estimated).
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## RETURN OF THE RUDLOE (HALL HOTEL)

**H**ow things change! For many years we at the TIC have bemoaned the severe shortage of good-quality rooms in our local hotels. There has been an abrupt change over recent months.

The Methuen Arms Hotel is in an advanced stage of refurbishment, shortly to provide us with 18 rooms to offer, while Guyers House has already been converted from being a conference centre with

accommodation facilities into a house which presents itself as a hotel and restaurant, bringing with it a further 38 rooms available to us to offer.



And now the Rudloe Hall Hotel has emerged from 7 months in administration to provide us with, by the spring, even more hotel rooms - 40, in its case - to entice those attracted to the Welcoming North Wiltshire to spend time with us. Some quite significant work is being undertaken, we understand, but the Rudloe is expected to remain open throughout it all. Under its new owners, completion by Easter is the plan.

With its 15 acres of land, and nine-hole golf course overlooking the Box Hill Valley and its proximity to Bath, the Rudloe Hall Hotel is bound to be a success.

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