



# ARNOLD'S NEWS

News from Corsham Area Heritage & Information Centre

Winter 2011-2012



## OUR FUTURE IS IN THE BALANCE

**O**ur business is at a very critical point. We have received all the funding we are going to receive during the present financial year. Local authority councils are now deciding how much they will support us through their next financial year. Things do not look encouraging. Our future looks bleak. Closure is a possibility.

We will make a small loss this financial year. Funding from our main local authority source had been cut significantly. Donations and severe cost-cutting were our salvation. Funding from that main local authority source will shrink further this coming year. While Corsham Town Council will continue to allow us rent-free use of Arnold House and maintain its funding as in recent years, it cannot be expected to do more.

We are not alone. All of Wiltshire's TICs are in a similar position. Some of the 16 have already gone under.

Corsham Area Development Trust Ltd (CADT) runs the Corsham Area Heritage & Information Centre. It has since October 2006. The CADT started with 2 directors - Ian Storey and Peter Tapscott. Last summer Peter decided to concentrate on the Heritage Centre part - and to make room for somebody else to assist Ian in fighting Corsham TIC's corner. It had become clear that establishing the Friends of the Corsham Area Heritage Centre as a standalone organisation was in Corsham's best interests.

With his considerable knowledge of Wiltshire Council, Ian set out to get the best deal he could for Corsham's TIC. Then, in late November, Ian sadly passed away.

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*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.*

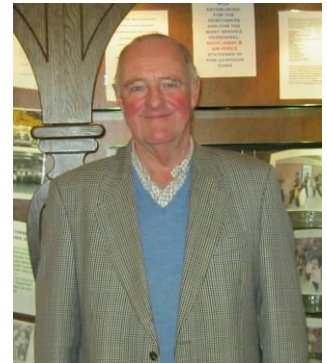
*The CADT's  
primary purpose is  
to develop the  
tourism economy  
of Corsham by  
offering  
information and  
services to  
residents and  
visitors.*

## LATEST NEWS

### BILL & JOHN TO THE RESCUE

The CADT had been due to hold its AGM on the Wednesday following the weekend in which Ian died. It was cancelled. With neither Peter nor Ian 'in-post' as directors, the CADT found itself in contravention of its own constitution. It needed to have at least one director.

As is often experienced, unexpected happenings give rise to unplanned developments. The CADT held a delayed AGM in late December. Bill Hall (top) and John Lock (bottom) offered themselves as 'Caretaker Directors'. Both were hard-working Members of the CADT. Both already sat on the CADT's Operations Committee. They were 'known entities'. Members gratefully accepted their offers.



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### CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES - A Record Year

You Corsham folk are wonderful! Despite the recession, your efforts brought a record year for our charity Christmas Goods Season, Cards For Good Causes. Across both CFGC cards and associated goods, we sold over £12,600-worth. The profit we earn is quite modest - but to exceed our 2007 sales this year was beyond our wildest dreams. Thank you.

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### BATH SPA UNIVERSITY

We had been looking for an opportunity to collaborate with the University's Corsham Court Centre. The Civic Society's evening there in December provided it. Prof Ron George introduced his visitors to Dr Jo Dahn.

Amongst other things, Jo organises a Master of Arts (MA) course in Curatorial Practice. Perhaps, we thought, we might provide Jo with a venue - our Heritage Centre - at which one of her students could develop / display their skills?



We arranged for Jo (right) and one of her students, Chloe (left), to visit Arnold House. Chloe's 'project' is now underway. She was introduced to our Operations Committee at its January meeting. A 'win-win' situation is in prospect.

## IAN STOREY - a Tribute by Peter Tapscott

Ian died on November 20. I had known him for seven years - from four years into my retirement after 40 years in industry. I found him to be a kindred spirit where working for the community good was concerned. He was thorough and tenacious, and immensely more knowledgeable than I about how local community groups, businesses, retailers and the world of public servants and their council organisations operated. He was widely respected in these circles. I was unknown.

We worked as a team, combining our skills and motivations. We established the Corsham Area Community Partnership - the forerunner of the present CCAN. We established the Corsham Area Development Trust, when, in 2006, NWDC wanted to opt out of running Corsham's Tourist Information & Heritage Centre.



Ian worked tirelessly for Corsham. He is already missed. Corsham is a lesser place without him.

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## HISTORY CENTRE - relationships development

We've had a long and productive relationship with Terry Bracher of the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre in Cocklebury Road, Chippenham. He is their Archives & Local Studies Manager. It pre-dates the Mayo Project. We are also on good terms with Claire Skinner, Principal Archivist, largely due to her work on the Lacock Archives.

Recently we met with Victoria Barlow, the Centre's Heritage Manager. We look forward to working with this new contact.

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## OUR TEAM GROWS

We continue to add to our team of volunteers at Arnold House. With increasing customer footfall, we need them. The development of our Heritage Centre brings additional demands. Our frontline team presently stands at 22. A significant backroom team - again all volunteers - support them. Pictured here are two of our three newcomers, Sally & Angela. Training in the specialist skills required to provide TIC facilities is already well in-hand.



## STAGECOACH MOTEL

**T**hat call for assistance certainly came up trumps. We now know a great deal about this feature of Corsham's heritage. We've even been able to discuss it, face to face, with its owner, Ossie Shanks, when he made one of his occasional visits to England - he now lives in the South of France as a very young 92 year-old!



Arriving from Sunderland, Ossie worked at Westinghouse and bought a bungalow with 3 acres on Park Lane.

After developing it into the Park Lane Motor Hotel, with 22 bedrooms, he sold out to a residential developer in 1990. The site was soon bulldozed flat and Chestnut Grange now stands there.

We now have promotional leaflets showing the motel in detail - and a portrait of Ossie standing in the main dining room of the then Stagecoach Motel.

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## TWO GREEN (BAINES) BOTTLES

**R**eaders will recall an article in our Autumn 2011 edition in which mention was made of a Francis Baines who operated as a chemist and stationer at 36 High Street in the late 1800s.

Just before Christmas, a gentleman appeared at Arnold House, carrying two heavy green bottles, each bearing raised lettering declaring them to be the means whereby F Baines 'dispensed' his liquid sales. He'd read our articles in previous editions of Arnold's News, and the one which appeared in the July 2011 edition of *Spring Spirit*, and thought we might like to have them. We accepted them gratefully. They don't photograph well, but they do add to a developing story.

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## FRIENDS UPDATE

**S**igned-up membership of the Friends of the Corsham Area Heritage Centre has been steadily growing. It has been gratifying to those of us who have been Members of the CADT since its inception that new names have come forward, wanting to focus energy on preserving and presenting the heritage of the Corsham Area. They are a considerable resource.

The time has now come when the Friends must become properly constituted. A meeting has been convened for 15 February to do just that.

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