



ARNOLD'S NEWS

News from Corsham Area Heritage & Information Centre

Spring 2012



ARNOLD'S NEWS EVOLVES

Nothing is forever - *Arnold's News* must evolve. Now it must be adjusted to reflect the increasing emphasis that the CADT must place on the Heritage Centre aspect of the dual operation we run at Arnold House.

We are not just a TIC and the funding required to enable us to operate a Tourism Information Service is no longer assured. We have never received funding to run a Heritage Centre.

Starting from nothing means that any funding we secure to run one is a positive step. We will need outside funding - but not immediately. It is effort and focus that is required right now. There is much to do.

We operate from three rooms at Arnold House which overlook the High Street. Two of them are used as heritage display rooms. We recognise that we must use this valuable space better than we do at present.

Corsham has a rich heritage. We must ensure that we do it justice, on an ongoing basis. The Heritage Centre must become a visitor attraction in its own right. This is the objective of the recently-formed Friends of Corsham Area Heritage Centre - see the article on Page 2.

Achieving this result will demand big changes to how we presently do things. Altering the balance of the articles which go into *Arnold's News* is one.

In future, you can expect the newsletter to have a greater emphasis on what we are doing to develop the Heritage Centre - and what can be seen there.

Issue 8

Page 2

Latest News

Page 3

Tourism Week
Arnold House

Page 4

Guided Walks
Finances
Website

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

FRIENDS GROUP UP AND RUNNING

The group known as the Friends of Corsham Area Heritage Centre has arrived - and it was pleasing to hear the Town Council declare its enthusiastic support for the new organisation at the Annual Town Meeting held on 5th April.



The Friends group has a Constitution, Aims and Objectives. It has an executive committee of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, plus five others. All are drawn from an enthusiastic initial membership of 67. Its purpose is to develop the Corsham Area Heritage Centre into something that presents the history of the Corsham Area in the fullest, most informative way. There is plenty to show.



The Friends committee held its first meeting in February 2012, at which the necessary defining documentation was agreed. A further meeting took place in April - its agenda addressed the actual tasks to be put in hand, and who would take responsibility for each of them. *Arnold's News* urges you to sign-up to be a member of the Friends. The annual fee is £10 for Individual Membership and £20 for Corporate Membership. Forms are widely available.

SUPPORT GROWS FROM THE HISTORY CENTRE

The Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre has changed its approach to how it supports the county's museums and heritage centres. Previously these were required to be *accredited* before they were assisted. We were not. The Corsham Area Heritage Centre became a member of the Wiltshire Conservation and Museums Advisory Service, on 1st April. This brought entitlement to support. We are already benefitting.



WILTSHIRE COUNCIL JUBILEE CELEBRATION - SALISBURY, 1st MAY

With the decision already made that the Corsham Area participation in this event should be heritage-led, the Heritage Centre was asked to play the central role in it. Stone, underground workings and Brunel were featured.

ENGLISH TOURISM WEEK 2012

The Arnold House team pulled out all the stops to make Corsham's participation top notch this year. Ten events over the eight days Saturday 10th to Saturday 17th March were arranged. All showcased what is good about the Corsham Area - with an emphasis on its heritage and on those things which interest local folk most.

There were talks, demonstrations and signings - all taking place at Arnold House. A 10% discount was offered on certain goods on the two Saturdays. Tourists were welcome - and locals were especially so!



ARNOLD HOUSE (1703-2012) - Part One, the first 220 years

It was William Arnold who, in 1703, re-modelled the house now at 31 High Street; naming it 'Arnold House'. William was from a Lacock family, where his father ran a clothing mill, appropriately named 'Arnold's Mill'. William married Jane Gibbons, the daughter of a Corsham mercer. The clothing industry was in their blood.



William was a very successful clothier. At varying times he owned land at Woodlands, Pickwick Leaze, Moxhams, the Tying, North Leaze, New Close, Lower Stowell, Southerwicks, Broadmead and Sheppards.

On William's death, Robert Neale, husband of William's daughter Sarah, initially managed the Arnold land holdings, on behalf of his wife. Land owned by William's siblings was gradually dispersed. It seems the Arnold dynasty drew to a close after some 100 years.

William Newman owned the house between 1834 and 1855. Thomas Washbourne then occupied it for a time.

By 1875, a Mrs Southey and her daughters Elizabeth (an artist) and Sophia lived there. One of Elizabeth's paintings, dated 1868, is displayed in St Bartholomew's Church. It shows the church without its steeple. It was removed circa 1816.

A member of the Southey family may have remained living in Arnold House until 1923. Sometime between 1923 and 1937, it became owned by a Mr Arthur Smith.

OUR GUIDED WALKS

Our season is now well underway. We aim to have at least one Saturday afternoon walk per month, led by our Tour Guide, Simon. The Walks start and finish in the Town Centre, are flat and last for about an hour. They provide an excellent way of learning about Corsham's buildings and families.



They are open to all, but prior booking is required. Drop in at Arnold House to book - or call 01249 714660. Groups comprise 15 persons maximum, 8 minimum.

Dates of upcoming Walks are posted on our website. The next Walk is on 26th May. We also arrange Walks for local groups. We have four of these arranged for June.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

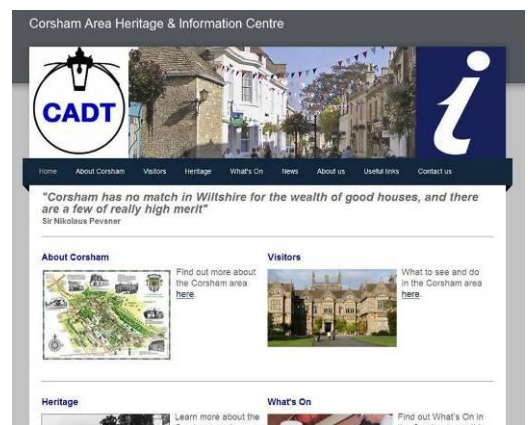
The end of March marked the end of the Financial Year for our local council funders. We decided to bring our own FY into line with theirs - it had been 31st July, previously. End-March was therefore the end of an 8-month "year" for the CADT. It had not been a good period for us. The high spots had been the continuing support of Corsham Town Council (CTC) and a small grant from Box Parish Council. However, with the severe downturn in the funding from Wiltshire Council, it had needed an extremely generous donation from a private benefactor to bring us to breakeven.

CTC support comes in two forms. We have a Tenancy-at-Will agreement which gives us rent-free use of our Arnold House space and a Service Level Agreement which obligates us to provide a service, in exchange for the funding we receive.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CADT WEBSITE

Webmaster Andrew has been hard at work improving the CADT website (www.corshamheritage.org.uk).

You really should take a look at it. Its content has increased significantly. Navigation is much improved. Heritage aspects have been boosted. This will continue.



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