



ARNOLD'S NEWS

The Newsletter of Corsham Area Heritage

Summer 2014



CORSHAM'S WALKING FESTIVAL, 2014

The timing of this edition of Arnold's News couldn't be better. It should be with you just days before Corsham holds its first-ever Walking Festival, an event which could feature annually in the Corsham calendar. CAH is playing a special role in it.

This year's festival takes place on Saturday, 28th June and comprises 8 different walks, ranging from the town-centre stroll to a more-challenging 10 mile cross-country 'yomp'. The festival clearly meets a need. Pre-registration is essential (at the Corsham TIC). Bookings are already running ahead of expectations.

Frankly a Corsham Walking Festival is long-overdue. It will bring the community together. It is already doing so. The whole affair has been extremely well organised, with many previously quite separate groups playing a part. CAH is proud to be one of them.

Walk No. 5 is a round-trip walk to Lacock, starting, as all the walks do, at Arnold House. Each walk has a leader and a backmarker. Within its team, this walk additionally has a 'heritage advisor' - someone who can impart some of the history of the Corsham area to those who are not familiar with it. The advisor will be a member of CAH.

The route joins the Ladbroke at Byde Mill. At New Farm walkers will meet the owner whose family has farmed the area for three generations. The farm was a film set for *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Film companies still occasionally borrow from his collection of old farm equipment. At Lacock, the half way stage, the local History Group will give a guided talk about the village for an hour.

Make no mistake, this will really put Corsham on the map!

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Corsham Area Heritage's primary purpose is to research, celebrate & present the heritage of the Corsham Area to the people who reside there and those who visit the Area, whether they are here visiting friends or exploring what the Area has to offer.

Corsham Area, as defined by Wiltshire Council, comprises Corsham, Box, Colerne & Lacock.

Corsham Families: THE GOLDNEYS - by Pat Whalley

From as far back as the 16th century, when Henry Goldney set up as a clothier in Chippenham, Goldney family members were 'people of substance'. Henry became an MP for Chippenham and was later appointed as its first Bailiff.

Gabriel Goldney (1813-1900), a landowner and financier, acquired Beechfield House (pictured) in Corsham around the mid 1800s. He purchased Sheldon Manor in 1854 and Bradenstoke Abbey in 1863. He owned land at Monks Park which was leased out for quarrying, and was responsible for the building of Pickwick School (now St Patrick's Church). He was created the 1st Baronet of Beechfield and Bradenstoke in 1880. Gabriel's sons - Gabriel (2) and Frederick - inherited the title, and in their turn upheld the lofty positions maintained by their father. The title finally passed to Frederick's son Henry, who died without issue, and so the baronetcy ended.



The ladies of Sir Frederick's family took a significant part in the running of the Corsham WWI Hospital at the Town Hall. On its Memorial tablet, the following are listed: Lady Goldney (Commandant), Alice Goldney (Assistant Commandant) and Nurses (Katherine, Lucy & Marjorie Goldney).

The Wiltshire Times of January 2000 tells us that "one of the daughters was a district nurse, visiting the houses of the poorer residents in the vicinity, taking presents at Christmas time. Miss Goldney rode a sit-up-and-beg bicycle, and could often be seen riding one handed while holding an umbrella aloft".

In 1948 Frederick's daughter Katherine Long Goldney and her brother Henry undertook to sell at auction a great deal of the Pickwick Village Estate as it stood at that time. Mostly tenanted, some were able to buy their properties, but others may have been transferred to a new landlord. This included 26 houses or cottages, the Old Malthouse, Village Stores, the Old Brewery, and Manor House Barn. Believed to have been owned by the family since 1857, the auction realised a value of £17,460. Quite a portfolio!

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS - Thursday, 11th to Saturday, 13th Sept.

The planned article on Corsham Civic Society will have to await a future edition of Arnold's News. HODs will soon be upon us, and space in this edition is running short. CCS has been quick off the mark. The programme is already set.



All-bar-one of the events are 'ticket only', with tickets being available from the TIC from Saturday, 16th August. The ticketed items include two visits to the Bath Stone Quarry Museum in Mason's Wharf on the Thursday and a tour of the Gardiner Houlgate Auction House, Leafield Way on the Friday. Also on Friday, and repeated on Saturday, Dr. Negley Harte will be leading walks around the town centre. There will be an illustrated talk ('Corsham in the 20th Century') at the Town Hall on Friday evening. An un-ticketed event - actually a collection of them - is also planned. An excellent job!

COURTLANDS - by Pat Whalley

When driving from Corsham to Lacock, or to the Lacock Garden Centre, have you ever noticed a fine looking house on the RH side, just past the turning to Bye Mill? This is Courtlands, designed by Harold Brakspear and built in the mid 1920's. It stands upon a 45 acre site, once part of New Farm, Thingley, owned by the Pocock family since 1882. It was sold to Harold Walter Seymour Howard when he married a distant cousin of the Pocock family - Edith Turner - in about 1922-23.



During the Second World War, Seymour Howard worked at the Ministry of Aircraft Production. He served as Sheriff of the City of London in 1944 and Lord Mayor of London in 1954. He was also an Alderman of the City of London from 1945 to 1960. Seymour Howard was created the 1st Baron of Great Rissington in the County of Gloucester, in December 1955. His eldest son, the second Baronet, became Lord Mayor of London in 1971. As of 2010, the title was held by the latter's eldest son, the third Baronet, who succeeded in 2001. He was Lord Mayor of London in 2000.

The two daughters of the Pocock family at New Farm - Marjorie and Joan - became ladies in waiting to Lady Seymour Howard. Marjorie later married Dr Eagles. Joan became Mrs Weaver, and now lives in Lacock. Her family still run New Farm.

The next occupant of Courtlands was one David Brill. He was a Pathfinder in WWII and was killed over Berlin in 1943. His name is on the War Memorial. (David J Brill. Flight Lt. 97 Squadron, Pathfinder Force, RAF.)

The house has changed hands many times since and continues to grace our landscape.

CORSHAM GROUNDED - by Pat Whalley

On behalf of Corsham, CAH is pleased to welcome a new entrepreneur to the town - Mr Tobie Holbrook, the proprietor of the café / restaurant now operating at the building until recently occupied by 'The Century'. The new venture is called, quite simply, '**Grounded**'. It is the 5th in a small independent chain of Bristol-based cafés. Intended to be a hub for the community, families are always welcome.



The building has seen many changes since 1790 when it was built as a Congregational Church. In 1971 it was amalgamated with St Aldhelm's United Reform Church in Pickwick Road, and after a short period the building was taken over by Adkey Print. It moved out in 1995. There was then a pause whilst a new purpose could be found for the shell that it had become.

Eventually the building was restored in a gothic style, no doubt influenced by the history of the building as a church, and opened as the 'Chapel Etc.', café. This in turn became 'The Century'. Long may such properties find a use in Corsham.

COMMEMORATION OF WORLD WAR ONE - by Pat Whalley

As many organisations turn their thoughts to WW1 Commemoration events, and the date of the commencement of the “War to end all Wars” draws near, CAH has been preparing a small exhibition to be erected in Arnold House in August. It tells the stories of some of the local folk who served and lived to tell the tale.

There will also be a representation of a 1914-18 living room. Some homes were candle-lit, or had oil lamps. Some had gaslight. Please come along and be reminded. If you have a small piece from the period, which could sit on a table, be placed in a cabinet, or on the mantelshelf, please let us know. We would love to use it.

CORSHAM STALWARTS - KJO - by Peter Tapscott

This is the first in a new series we plan for Arnold’s News. Each “stalwart” will be someone to whom Corsham owes a great deal. Space-limitations will mean that we cannot cover more than a little of what they have contributed. The bits we do cover will be intended to stimulate a wider interest amongst our readership.

KJO reminds us of the days when Corsham schools were bursting at the seams, during and after the war years, due to the massive influx of people coming to the town to work underground on aircraft engines and armaments - bringing families and children.

He spotted this Corsham Council School photo which was included in the Corsham Community Centre display that we mounted at Arnold House earlier this year. KJO is in the photo. He puts it as being taken in 1948, when he was 11 years old. He recalls that all the school went to the Festival of Britain on London’s South Bank in 1950 - also that Corsham’s schools couldn’t cope with the sudden increase in numbers.



Amongst other locations, KJO remembers attending the original wooden British Legion Hut, the Baptist Chapel, the Parish Rooms and the Methodist Church schoolroom.

KJO is proving to be a useful source of information and story-lines with which to enrich future editions of Arnold’s News.

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