

# Corsham Spotlight

November, 2007

Newsletter of the Corsham Civic Society

60p

## Special Edition – Spotlight on ‘Mayo’

### The Life and Times of Charles Mayo

**“Who was Charles Mayo?**

**Why did he have a memorial raised in his memory?**

*Having been instrumental in achieving the successful restoration of the Mayo Memorial, and to answer these questions, Corsham Civic Society felt that the event should be marked with a record of his life and times.*

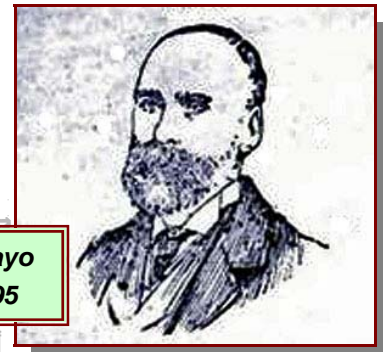
*We hope you will enjoy this glimpse into the past, and admire the commitment of this man who did so much to benefit our small town.*

Charles Thomas was born the son of Thomas Mayo in Tunbridge Wells in 1834. His father was an eminent surgeon and one time President of the Royal College of Surgeons. Educated at Cheam, Charles was to become a Solicitor, although it is believed he never practised. He married Mary Hayward, nee Perrin, who bore him 7 children: Charles (Carl); Thomas his twin (who died in infancy); Edmund; Herbert Edward; John Pym; and daughters Florence - (the daughter who died aged 16 months and is buried with her parents at Corsham churchyard); and Edith Mary (Queenie).

Charles arrived in Corsham with his family in 1868 following his retirement from ‘law’ at aged 39. He thereafter lived the life of a ‘Gentleman’, and concerned himself with many things which were of a benefit to Corsham and its people, and was very well regarded.

They lived at Ivy House, Priory Street with his brother the Rev Robert Mayo.

There are several references to Mr Mayo in the Spackman Diaries “A Corsham Boyhood”, by Herbert Spackman. It is evident that Charles took an active interest in local events - he skated on the pond (The Lake) on many occasions, - falling in twice - one imagines these Victorian gentlemen to be rather portly; was he perhaps a little heavy, or just ‘skating on thin ice’!! The Mayo family also had a cricket eleven, and there are 2 matches recorded in the diaries between the Spackman and Mayo families. There were also purely social ‘get togethers’ between members of the two families, usually taking place at Ivy House.



**Charles Mayo**  
1834 - 1895

In 1882 Herbert Spackman was learning shorthand and is recorded as taking dictation from Mr Mayo several times, he was paid handsomely for it! (4/- and 5/- per letter.) Herbert later became a newspaper reporter, and there is more information available through some of the articles he wrote.

Charles was also a political animal, he supported the Liberal Party - in 1881 he was secretary of the NW Liberal Association, and in 1882 was elected as President of that august body. He travelled widely in the locality, speaking on such issues as the “The state of Ireland”; India; agricultural policy and the education system; and later became Vice President of Corsham Liberal Club.

He was elected as a Trustee (1882) when it was decided to alter the Old Market House into a Town Hall.

In 1887 he was a member of the committee responsible for the organisation of the large town celebration to mark:

### The Celebration of the Queen’s Jubilee.

*In Corsham - an extract from a report taken from the ‘Bath Herald & North Wilts Guardian dated June 25th 1887. (CT Mayo was a member of the ‘general committee’)*

*“On Sunday 13th June, a jubilee sermon was preached by the Rev. FJ Steward at the Baptist Chapel. He took for his text Proverbs xiv, 34, ‘Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people’. It would be out of place (he said) to indulge in adulation of our reigning Sovereign. It would be rather his duty to describe the principles that should characterise a nation among whom God is known*



## The Children's Jubilee Festivities.

On Monday the youthful population of Corsham had a very enjoyable day at the Court at the kind invitation of Lord Methuen. The place of meeting was in Mr Dinham's field, near Bences Lane, where they mustered 900 strong. Before starting the procession the National Jubilee Hymn was sung, and every child was presented with a medal.

Then, headed by the Chippenham Brass Band, the procession made its way through the town and down the Avenue, presenting an imposing sight, and reaching nearly the whole length of the High St. The following schools were represented, each having its banner carried at the head: - The parish church schools, including Pickwick and Chapel Knapp; the Baptist Sunday schools, the Independants, the Wesleyans, Mrs Milnes Ladies College, and also the pupils of Mr FW Joyner (Corsham School). On reaching the front of the Court, the procession divided, boys going one side and girls the other, and Lord Methuen accompanied by Lady Methuen, Colonel and Mrs Cotton, Canon Awdry, and the Rev R Mayo appeared on the steps and briefly addressed them. The Rev G Linton (Vicar) thanked his lordship for his kindness, cheers for the Queen and Lord & Lady Methuen were given. Various amusements were provided, and tea was laid in the Riding School. Lord Methuen entertained the teachers in a tent after the children had been attended to. Hearty cheers were given for the Queen and Lord & Lady Methuen as the children were leaving.

## General Festivities

The town presented a very gay appearance on Tuesday morning; flags and banners being displayed room nearly every house. Shortly after 11 a procession composed of members of the Hearts Oak, Patriots, Oddfellows and Wilts Friendly Societies, carrying their respective banners, and the members of the Corsham 'Gleaner' Lodge of Good Templars, headed by the Stratton St Margaret Brass Band, marched through the town to the parish church, where a special thanksgiving service was held, the members of the Choral society and Chapel Knapp Choir assisting the church choir in the singing. Canon Awdry assisting the vicar in the service. A short address was given by the vicar (Rev. G Linton).

After service a procession was formed at the Town Hall, and proceeded to the cricket field, where the dinner was laid in a large marquee (220ft long and 40 wide).

There were 72 joints of meat, 42 of beef, 5 hams, 8 veal, 8 quarters of lamb, 9 mutton, everything in all 1,319 lbs.; 123 plum puddings were provided weighing 500lbs.

The following gentlemen acted on the 'dinner committee':- Messrs Cannon, T White, WH Bezant, S Aust, R Balch, J Ayliffe, and Dr Crisp, while the Rev G Linton and Messrs

CT Mayo & WH Bromley were useful members of the 'general committee'.

Mr Bezant supplied the meat, Messrs Dinham and Flint the puddings, and Lord Methuen kindly gave a variety of salads. Beer etc was sent by Messrs Kingsford (Lacock), Stevens (Pickwick), Little and Dawkins (Slaughterford), Cannon (Shaw) and Wadsworth (Devizes). Messrs WH Bromley and Wakely superintended the fitting up and covering of the tables respectively, the sum of £175 was collected, including that subscribed to the children's tea. Nearly 1,400 partook of dinner, at which Mr DH Clutterbuck presided, and in appropriate terms proposed the toast of the day, the health of the Queen, which was responded to with cheers and the National Anthem was sung.

Sporting events took place in the afternoon and dancing to the strains of the band brought a very pleasant day to termination.

The following gentlemen deserve mention for their efforts in connection with the sports: - Mr John Brown, starter; Messrs J Grosse and Kinnier, judges; Mr C Osborne, referee; Mr Lewin Spackman (clerk of the course)."

## Charles' Community Involvement

Charles Mayo was also a Trustee of Lady Margaret Hungerford's Trust, he served on the Asylum Committee, and was Chairman of the Parochial Sanitary Committee.

In 1888 Charles was elected as a Liberal County Councillor.

In a newspaper report of the County Council Elections it was stated

*"When the electors of the Corsham Division of the County Council were called upon to select a person to represent them, the choice fell at once upon Mr Mayo, one of the most useful and highly esteemed inhabitants of the district of which the thriving little town of Corsham is the centre. Some show of opposition was presented at the eleventh hour, by a gentleman who was put forward on party grounds, but the majority was overwhelmingly in favour of the popular candidate, who polled 507 votes against 51 recorded in favour of his opponent. ....Mr Mayo devotes a great deal of time to the study of politics, and firmly and consistently adheres to Liberal principles and advocates the liberal cause. Not infrequently Mr Mayo lends assistance to the public understanding of political and social questions by writing, in the form of correspondence to the press, and his letters are invariably marked by originality, precision, and soundness of argument. Mr Mayo is very popular in Corsham, where he resides"*

As a businessman, he was Chairman of the Corsham Waterworks Company, and conducted the formal opening bringing water to Corsham in 1889.





In a report telling of the formal opening of the Corsham Waterworks, dated 14 December 1889, it states:-

“.....On reaching Corsham from Reybridge, a hydrant was fixed to the Methuen Arms, and as the water was turned on by Mr C Mayo (Chairman of the Company), evidence was given of the force of the water, which was thrown over the hotel. The operation was repeated opposite the Vicarage (High St), at the Town Hall and at the terminus in Bences Lane, and everything was found in a most satisfactory condition.....”

According to John Poulson's book "The Ways of Corsham" - he tells us – “the Water Company provided a piped supply, they brought it from springs at Loxwell, near the top of Naish Hill, Lacock”

Charles supported many aspects of life in Corsham, attending 'Spelling Bees' at the Methuen School, the Annual Fire Brigade Supper, the Wesleyan Chapel Prizegiving, the Cricket Club, and as a member of the local Temperance Movement.

Holdings of Stocks and shares were to be invested or sold, as Executors may deem fit.

Wife Mary and brother Robert were to be guardians of the children.

The will was witnessed by - WJ Deverill, Secretary to City Liberal Club London & Albert Walton, Secretary's Clerk, City Liberal Club, London.

There was a codicil dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 1891, An executor James Wilson, had died - he was replaced by Randle Fynes Wilson Holme. (Taken from Probate of Charles Mayo held at Wilts Record Office. Ref: 1777/2 dated 1895-1896).

In 1895 when Corsham held it's first Parish Council Meeting, Mr Mayo was elected as Vice Chairman.

### The Death of Charles Mayo

In October 1895, Charles died aged 61, whilst taking a holiday in Lucerne, Switzerland with his wife. According to a newspaper report - Cause of death was “Gout of the stomach”. However another version tells us that Charles cut his foot on a basin and died of blood poisoning.

### Family and Subsequent Local Events

4<sup>th</sup> April 1896 – an Indenture was raised between: Robert Mayo; Mary Mayo; children, Charles Joseph, Edmund Godfrey, Herbert Edward, and one John Pym; also daughter, Edith Mary Mayo for the “Estates of Thomas Mayo and Charles T Mayo”

To the son of Doctor Thomas Mayo - William Reginald, Charles's brother) and daughter Lydia – life annuity of £250 per year from the Stocks and Securities. Doctor Thomas Mayo died 13.1.1871. Son William died 22.3.1894. Lydia died 26.1.1905.

Finally all assets would go to Brother Robert.

Investment value at that time was £67,439, and was split between Mary and Robert –

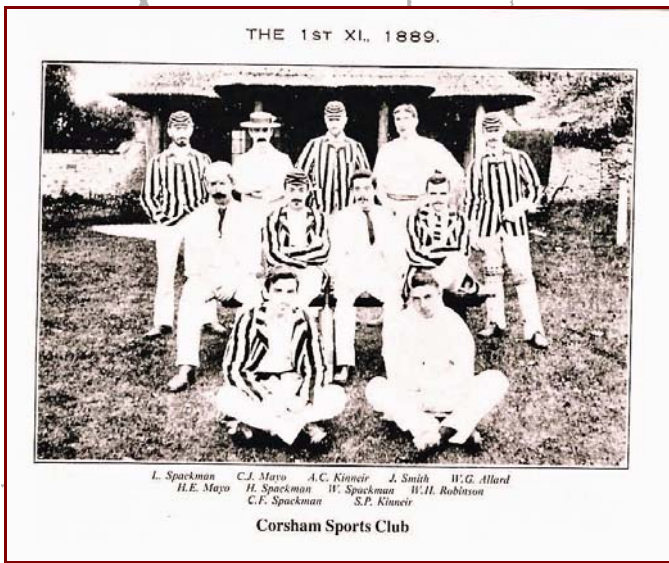
Robert holding £33,710, & Mary - £33,728. (Ref: W. Record Office 1777/2)

At a Special Parish Meeting of June 1896 it was proposed and agreed that a memorial should be erected to the memory of Charles Mayo in recognition of all his many and varied works in the town.

### Proposed Public Memorial to the Late Mr CT Mayo

A synopsis of a Newspaper report July 29 1896.

The deep interest the late Mr CT Mayo took in everything concerning the welfare of Corsham and the people amongst whom he lived, was evidenced by the general



**24<sup>th</sup> May 1891** – Charles wrote his Will. He named as his Executors, Mary, his wife, James Wilson Holme, a friend from London, and his son Edmund Godfrey, and a Charles Bill of Cheadle, Stafford.

His beneficiaries were –

Wife, Mary, to whom he left £2,000 plus all household effects, wines, horses, carriages etc. She was also to receive an annual income from the residue of the estate.

To James Wilson and Charles Bill - £200 each.

To Edmund Mervyn Booth Storey- Maskelyne of Hatt House Box – £100.

All servants – one year's pay each.

Brother Robert - £60 per year.



desire manifested shortly after his death that some public memorial of him should be erected in the town.

In June last a Parish Meeting was held, and a committee was appointed to suggest what form the memorial might take. A public meeting was held in the Town Hall for the purpose of deciding on the erection of a memorial. The chair was taken by Mr GP Fuller and among those present were the Vicar Rev Dunlap-Dunlap, Dr Wood, Messrs J Brown, A Lapham, HJ Lucas, I James, A Hatch, WH Beszant, N Fido, E Jones, L Spackman, J Boscombe, AC Kinnier, H Cook, Smith, R Balch, Bamford, C.W Churchill, F Curry, J Hunn, J Hudd, W Field, J Sheppard, HJ Hulbert, F Evans, F Aust, J Ball, WJ Carey, Arthur Aust, C Davis, W Freeth.

The Chairman in his opening remarks said it was a matter of deep regret that they had been called together to show their sympathy and regret to a lost friend.

They were met that evening for the purpose of deciding upon the best means of erecting a memorial to Mr Chas. Mayo. Mr Mayo was so long known to them, and was so much attached to the interest of Corsham that he need not remind them of the services rendered to them as a friend and a neighbour. What they had to do that evening was really a practical work. A large number of letters had been received from gentlemen unable to attend the meeting, but who were in sympathy with the movement.

The Rev Mayo wrote stating that he and Mrs Mayo and were much impressed by the kindness of those who wished to show respect to the memory of his late dear brother. "No one could have a more sincere desire than he had, to benefit his fellows, or make more earnest effort to benefit the town of Corsham, however much he might differ in his opinions from many of his neighbours as to the best means of doing so. At the same time they could not but feel this was not the right time to impose further burden on a town so heavily taxed as Corsham was at the present time. He could only say that they should be only too pleased with such a memorial, provided that it would not be a tax upon the pockets of those who contributed."

Lord Methuen wrote: - "I agree in thinking a fountain for foot passengers and cattle would be a suitable public monument to the late Mr Chas Mayo". Lord Fitzmaurice wrote- We shall be very pleased to co-operate with others in the object." Sir John Dickson-Poynder M.P. states - "I should like to be particularly associated with the undertaking as one who always held for Mr Chas Mayo a great respect and full appreciation of the valuable services he consistently rendered to Corsham during his lifetime. I should think

the suggestion of a drinking fountain would be a very good one, and if by any chance I can be at home I will make a point of being present at the meeting" Similar letters were also received from Messrs John Fuller, CB Hobhouse, WA Yockney, HR Pictor, and G Bateman.

The Vicar moved "That this meeting favours the erection of a memorial to the late CJ Mayo Esq., and that the same shall take the form of a drinking fountain" He had the greatest respect for Mr Mayo, for everything he did was inspired by conscientious motives, and with no ulterior idea in view. It was an open secret that on many points he and Mr Mayo differed. He never heard Mr Mayo say an unkind word or attempt to interfere with another man's conscience. Mr Mayo was upright and liberal, and he therefore hoped that the memorial would be of a substantial nature as well as an ornament to their own parish.

The chairman remarked that it was the wish that contributions should not be confined to Corsham alone. Mr Mayo was a public man, and took a great interest in county affairs.

Mr E Story-Maskelyne said he knew the late Mr Mayo long before he ever came to Corsham, and ever since he had been there. In the whole course of his friendship he had never heard fall from his lips an expression that might not have been uttered in the presence of anyone, and tho' subject to excitement, he had never heard an oath from his lips. He was an intelligent man, a very fair French and Latin scholar, and he had always kept up his accomplishments, otherwise he would not have been the use they in Corsham had found him. Besides being an excellent private friend he had been a friend to Corsham. His house was always open to receive everybody according to his degree. Mr Mayo recognised the great changes that were inevitable with the rapidly advancing wave of civilisation, and instead of being alarmed he rejoiced, because he trusted his fellow men. He believed in the great heart of humanity, and in the common sense of mankind. Though he looked to the future with the highest possible expectations he did not forget the great past, and he had even a reverence for old institutions. When it came to a question of help he was always ready to assist. Who more ready than he to help with the restoration of the parish church when it was in a lamentable state of decay? And they did not look to him in vain when a curate was wanted to assist the vicar. There was no good work in Corsham in which he had not assisted and the proposal to erect a memorial did honour to those who thought of it, and he trusted they would perfect it by carrying it out.

Mr N Fido said the suggestion emanated from himself and Mr Bull at the Parish Council meeting, and he hoped to see it brought to a successful conclusion.





Mr Lucas said the proposal was the unanimous opinion of the committee. Mr Brakspear, the Chairman of the committee, had received a letter from Mr Medicott stating that he would endeavour to get all the members of the Asylum Committee to subscribe. Mr Talbot of Lacock, would also do all he could to assist, and there were others willing to come forward as soon as something definite was agreed upon.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

The Chairman said that Mr Brakspear had advised that a drinking fountain would cost at least £100. So they must get that sum, and as much more if they possibly could.

In an undated and unidentified newspaper report

At around this time the following is recorded

*“On Thursday evening, instead of its ordinary session the Corsham Gleaner Lodge held what is known as a ‘Pound Night’, in aid of the Mayo Memorial Fund. On these occasions each member is supposed to bring a pound of something, and these pounds are afterwards sold by auction, no one, of course, knowing what they are buying. Mr AR Bolwell, PDCT. of East Somerset attended with other friends from Bath and made a most efficient and successful auctioneer, his descriptions causing considerable amusement. Mr S Saunders of the Wiltshire Fruit Farm, Market Lavington, sent two dozen pots of his jams and jellies and these sold at a very good price. Altogether over £2 .5s 0d. was taken which will be entirely handed to the committee of the fund. A vote of thanks having been accorded the visitors, Mr Saunders and Mr Bolwell in reply said it gave Miss Barter, and Brothers Hext, Voice and himself much pleasure in being with them, and helping in a cause, as they all knew what a good friend Mr Mayo had been to all temperance and other efforts put forth fertile help of his fellow man”*

*To providing all necessary drawings, Specifications and Contract required for the due execution and completion of a Drinking Fountain including all professional superintendence. The accepted builder being Mr Osborne*

*£105. , @10% = £10 10s”*

The Accounts book dates this at June 1898. Settlement, by cheque, is also shown as being June 1898.

So the full cost would have been £105 plus £10 10s, i.e. Total Cost £115 10s.



### St Bartholomew’s Mayo Memorial

A lesser-known Mayo Memorial is to be found on the outer wall of St Bart’s Church porch (to the left of the outer doors). It commemorates the three major figures in Corsham’s branch of the Mayo family: Charles, his wife Mary and Robert his brother. The carved stone plaque was erected, presumably, by Charles and Mary’s surviving children who probably financed the placing of the three stone figures in the niches on the walls of the porch. The Statuettes represent St Bartholomew (on the left), and Saints Peter and Paul (on the front [south] face of the porch).

The full text of the memorial tablet reads: -

**IN MEMORY OF CHARLES AND MARY MAYO & THE REV ROBT MAYO**

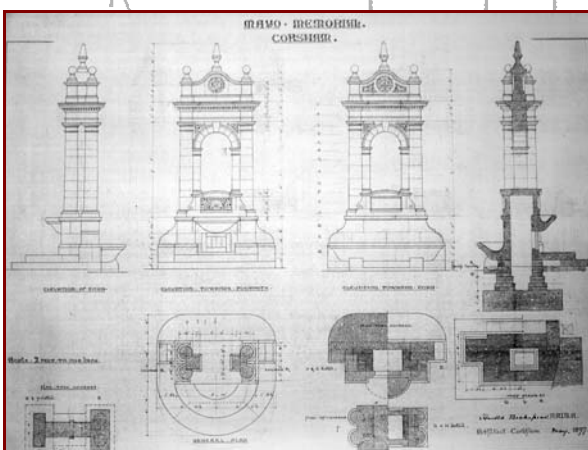
**THE THREE FIGURES WERE PLACED ON THIS PORCH 1919**

**ST BARTHOLOMEWS DAY**

The Feast of St Bartholomew is celebrated on 24th August, close enough to the anniversaries of the deaths of Charles and Mary Mayo, for the dedication of the memorial to be doubly significant for the family and the church. Although Robert Mayo was a clerk in holy orders, he seems not to have served officially in this capacity in the Corsham area. Like his brother

### Final Bill

“The Mayo Memorial Committee.



Charles, he played a significant role in local projects and good works.

There is no doubt that Charles made a considerable impact on Victorian Corsham during his 25 years as a resident.

A man of high ideals, and a wish to improve the lives of people both nationally and locally, he certainly entered into the spirit of the times, and thoroughly deserved the accolades bestowed upon him at his passing.

### Marriage of Mr CJ Mayo to Miss Carlton Smith.

1896 – Copy of a Newspaper Report – *“A most interesting wedding took place at the parish church on Saturday last, when Mr Carl Joseph, eldest son of Mr CT Mayo, of Ivy House, Corsham was joined in Holy Matrimony to Constance Mary, youngest daughter of Col. and Mrs Carlton Smith of The Grove, Corsham.*

*The families of the contracting parties are well known and highly respected in the neighbourhood, and the ceremony was witnessed by a large number of friends. The sacred edifice was tastefully decorated, particularly the chancel, the altar vases being filled with white flowers. The ceremony was fixed to take place at 1.30pm, and punctually at that hour, the bride, who was accompanied by her brother Mr HW Carlton Smith, entered the church, and as the bridal procession proceeded up the aisle the hymn “How welcome was the call” was sung.*

*The bride was attired in a dress of white satin trimmed with chiffon and real orange blossom, and wore an embroidered veil and carried a shower bouquet of tuberose, stephanotis and orange blossom. She also wore a diamond brooch, the gift of her mother. The bride was given away by her brother, Mr HW Carlton Smith. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Robert Mayo, assisted by the Rev JD Dunlap (Vicar). The bridesmaid, Miss Stoney, wore a gown of white alpaca and carried a bouquet of blue cornflowers. Two little pages, master Dudley Launcelot Carlton Smith and Bobbie Wood, were dressed in suits of dark blue velvet, trimmed with Irish point lace and with waist belts showing the colours of Trinity College, Oxford, carried the brides train. Mr Geoffrey Mayo, brother acted as best man. The hymn “O perfect Love” was sung at the conclusion of the service, and as the bridal party left the church, Mr Lewin Spackman played Mendelssohns “Wedding March”. The guests afterwards returned to The Grove, where a reception was held. The newly wedded pair left for London in the afternoon, and on Thursday are to depart for India. They are expected to return to England in November,*

*and take up their residence at Plymouth.”* (There followed a comprehensive list of the wedding presents received).

### The Tale of the ‘Stuffed Pike’

The Civic Society has in its possession a ‘stuffed pike in a glass case’. It was donated to the Society as a result of a copy of John Poulson’s book “The Ways of Corsham” being sent to Margaret Mayo in Sussex as a birthday gift. She contacted John Poulson and told him of this pike, caught more than one hundred years ago on the day of her uncle’s birth. It was collected from Margaret’s sister, Veronica. When Anne Lock, our then Chairman, rang to thank her for such an interesting item, Veronica was full of reminiscences of life in the Mayo household.

‘On the 31st January, 1872, Charles T. Mayo and his brother, the Rev. Robert Mayo, left Ivy House to go fishing in the River Avon, as they were bidden to “keep out of the way” by the midwife who had come to attend Charles’ wife Mary (nee Hayward) who was soon to give birth to their first born child.

The brothers later returned with the pike, to find Mary with baby Charles - known as Carl Joseph.

Veronica Mayo, then in her Eighties, remembered her Great Uncle Robert as a charming gentleman with lots of white hair and brilliant blue eyes.

Veronica recalled her grandfather as a passionate man. He would stand and stoutly declare that “he would walk barefoot to London to have the National Gallery free to the public”

Charles and his brother Robert would argue vehemently - one a staunch Liberal - the other Conservative! Arguments would rage over the dining table and Mary, Charles’ wife, became desperate and forbade discussion of any contentious issue at mealtimes. This edict was obeyed, as according to Veronica Mayo’s mother, a New Zealander, the dinner table conversation became “tame and boring”!

Both Margaret and Veronica had happy memories of holidays spent in Corsham with their grandmother, Mary Mayo. These ended in the year of her death, in 1917, when Margaret was twelve.’

### Mary Hayward Mayo – Her Will

On 7th September 1907 –

To son, Charles Joseph – she left The Grove, Tavistock, Devon.

To daughter Edith – all watches, jewellery and personal adornment.

To nephew, Arthur Perrin, & nieces, Ada and Eleanor





Perrin - £100 each.

To brother-in-law, Robert, - all wines and consumable stores, furniture and effects in trust for his lifetime. A child or grandchild may buy any furniture or effects when estate is sold. Money to be held in Trust for children.

Servants, Ada and Emily Wicks – to receive £50 each.

All outdoor servants to receive - £10 each. (Ref: W. Record Office 1777/3 dated 1917)

Mary died 1 September 1917, and is buried with her husband at Corsham churchyard.

### 67 Years Later -

1963 – The Mayo memorial was considered by some to be a traffic hazard, because it obscured the view of drivers turning right into Priory St. It was suggested it should be moved to Church Square, but the idea was rejected because it was thought that the stone would not survive the move. Repositioning the white line on the road was tried.

### 110 Years On -

#### **THE STORY OF THE MAYO RESTORATION PROJECT – SO FAR** by Peter Tapscott, Project Manager for the Restoration

This is an account of how an average sized Civic Society came to take on a £22k Heritage Lottery Funded community project, and made a reasonable success of it.

When the application was first made, it was to the Local Heritage Initiative (LHI), a scheme run by the Countryside Agency, and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It was a small grants programme (£3,000 to £25,000) launched in 2000 to help communities bring their local heritage to life. From renovations to re-enactment's, oral histories to heritage trails, many aspects of local heritage are now in a better state of repair, better understood and better cared for as a result of the LHI and the energy of local communities.

The LHI programme is now closed. Administration of the programme is now undertaken directly by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The HLF has a wider remit than projects previously undertaken under the LHI. It has supported more than 18,000 projects, allocating over £3.3 billion across the UK. This includes over £411m to projects in the South West.

#### **Just How Did the Corsham Civic Society Get Involved?**

So we have the Lottery to thank for our Mayo Project. But how did it actually come about? The story goes

back to August 2004, when the Corsham Town Council began looking into how “some minor restoration/repair” might be made to the Mayo Memorial that stands immediately outside the Town Hall. It was known that pieces had gone missing over its 100 year life. The Council approached the Corsham Civic Society to see if there were any photographs showing the memorial in its early years in the Society's considerable collection. There were, and we gladly shared them with the Council. The Council went in search of prices to get the work done. It was in for a shock. It soon became clear that reserves would not stretch to these sorts of lengths. A grant of some description would have to be considered.

However, these days, bodies like town councils don't find it easy to obtain such grants. It was decided that a representative of the Society should join the Town Clerk and his deputy on a visit to a seminar on funding available through the LHI, given by ‘case officers’ of the Countryside Agency in Bristol. We described our need. The ‘case officers’ were encouraging. There was the basis of a successful application here.

However, the applicant would need to be a ‘community organisation’ – such as a civic society – and the project would have to extend well beyond the simple restoration of a piece of crumbling masonry. There would have to be a considerable amount of ‘community involvement’ and a ‘high degree of increased community awareness’ of how and why the edifice came to be erected in the first place. From that moment, the outcome was clear.

The Corsham Town Council asked the Civic Society to take responsibility for the submitting of an application for funding from the LHI and the ‘project management’ of the considerable project that would result if the application were successful. In turn, the Council undertook to maintain the monument after restoration for a minimum of 10 years. (This proved to be a significant factor in the evaluation of our application.) The Society reviewed the prospect very carefully, recognising the significance of the task that we would be taking on. At a meeting of the full Executive it was decided to ‘go for it’. Word was passed to the Council in August 2005. A 4-person team was assembled to write the application – Vida Flower, Pat Whalley, John Harwood and Peter Tapscott.

#### **A Winning Submission**

It was evident from the outset that, while a member of the Society might take the role of ‘overall project manager’, there was a definite need for project management expertise in structural restoration work on such monuments. In search of a suitable, willing specialist, we stepped CMS (Bath) Ltd., a leading Architectural Services company operating in the



Corsham High Street. The main shareholder and MD, Mr Paul Coleman MCIQB MBM FFB, agreed to perform the role of 'Executive Project Manager' and to make the skills of his staff freely available to assist with the project. As Paul said at the time, "It will be good to put something back into the community."

CMS were invaluable in identifying the extent of the structural restoration work that would be required – and be permitted by a conservatively minded Conservation Officer at the local Planning Authority. (The monument is a Listed Building.) They were also able to provide some good estimates of likely costs.

In the meanwhile, the Society's team got to work on the 'increasing community awareness' aspect of the potential project and what the community might do in the implementation of the total project through 'volunteer' contribution. These would be essential features of a 'winning submission'.

While 'match funding' was not an actual requirement of the application, the ability to offer a significant amount of volunteer effort clearly was. Costed at the HLF's notional rate of £50 per person-day, our assessment of ours came out at £21,126. Our latest quarterly report showed that we had applied person-days to the value of £11,800 to the end of August 2007. (Half-way there!)

We submitted our draft application to the Countryside Agency in December 2005. It was generally well received. However, we were advised that it could be improved – and an advisor was on hand to help us. The result was a final, formal application, submitted in March 2006 and running to 19 pages. We waited. We answered some questions.

In early May we received the 'Offer of Grant' for the project. We carefully examined the weighty tome, and, two weeks later, formally accepted it, declaring yours truly as the Society's 'Project Manager' for the Mayo Memorial Restoration Project. We had secured funding to the total value of £21,721. The Project Start Date was to be 1 June 2006; the Project Completion Date was set at 30 November 2008. In accordance with the terms of the grant, we submitted our first invoice. Its value is allowed to be a whopping 50% of the total grant offered. We launched the project with a very healthy positive cashflow!

### Structuring the Project

The first thing to do was to focus efforts. CMS forged ahead with the lodging of the essential Listed Building Consent (LBC) application to North Wilts District Council. They also commenced the task of finding suitable craftsmen with capacity to take on the structural restoration work.

In parallel, I set about partitioning the 'community volunteer' sub-projects (21, in all) so that named

individuals could take responsibility for them. I then set about 'nailing' volunteers to take on those individual responsibilities. In no time at all, all were covered – such is the capability and enthusiasm for such activity amongst the members of the Corsham Civic Society. Many thanks to all of you.

For some of these "increasing community awareness" aspects of the project, there were major purchases to be made. These totalled over £10,000. (As has already been said, this project was never going to be one that concerned itself only with the physical restoration of a monument.) It was imperative that one person retained financial responsibility – and I was to be that person.

Progress monitoring was an important part of the role. There was the need to ensure that the momentum, once developed, was maintained. There was also the need to assemble the information for the quarterly Project Progress Report and its attendant 'In-kind Report'.

Special emphasis was required to be given to keeping the general public fully aware of the Project and its progress. The HLF people were very particular about this. The terms of the Grant Offer lay down some very strict guidelines about what is to be included in any 'Press Release' on article written for publication, whether it be in the local press or the wider press.

We have maintained a regular flow of articles in our own newsletter, 'Corsham Spotlight', and in such community magazines as Corsham & Box Matters. Wherever possible we have secured 'column inches' in our local newspapers. Our website ([www.corsham-civic-society.co.uk](http://www.corsham-civic-society.co.uk)) has been upgraded and has been used to inform those who access it the precise state-of-play on the Project. In this respect, the HLF's quarterly report comes in very handy! Brian Gibbs has provided sterling service, by enhancing website and then introducing new content at the speed of light. Many, thanks, Brian.

Research into the life and times of CT Mayo, his origins, his family, his descendents and his contribution to improving the well-being of Corsham residents in the late 1800s has been a major element of the Project. Pat Whalley has undertaken most of this. Many 'new' facts have been unearthed – and now assembled such that they can be used by other aspects of the Project and will be available to those that come after us.

Another key element has been our work with local schools. This, perhaps, was the most significant contributor towards the quest to "increase community awareness" regarding Mayo – and, indeed, the whole Victorian era, as far as Corsham was concerned. "Victorian Studies" appears prominently on the modern-day school curriculum. We found ourselves with a ready-made relevance to what teachers are





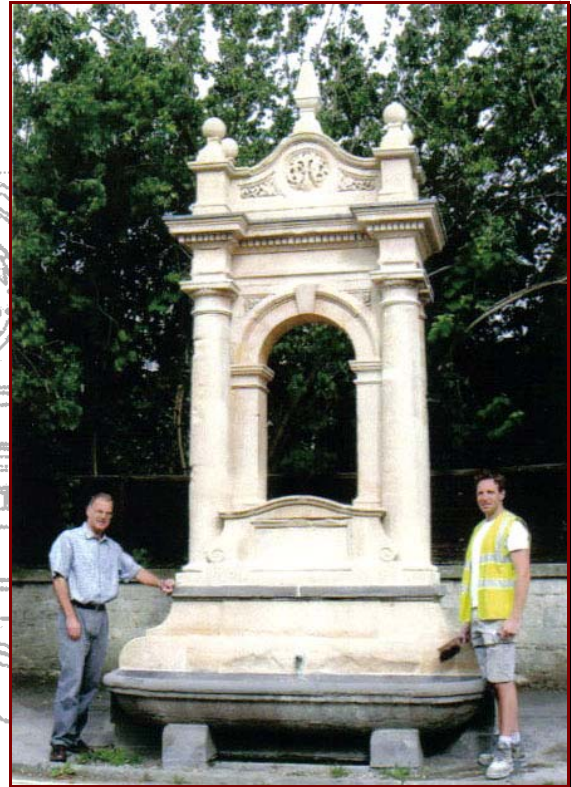
bound to embrace in the classroom. In Wyndham and Kathy Thomas, we had two senior members of the Society who have recent experience of academia. They have thrown themselves into this element of our Project with admirable vigour. Their artistic, presentational and commercial skills have also served us well in other areas.

**The Structural Restoration Work**

Clearly the focus of the Project had to be the restoration of the monument to something approaching its former glory. The 100 year-old stone edifice had deteriorated badly. It was discoloured. Bits were missing. The re-emergence of a pristine monument was never going to be permitted – but some re-instatement, some cleaning and the reconstruction of the two high-level features were declared acceptable in the LBC, when it finally came through in March 2007.

At this stage we needed much more information about the edifice before its gradual decline and here we experienced a tremendous piece of good fortune. We needed to know as much as we could about those two missing features. Old photographs were helpful – but were not really adequate. Up stepped Mr Thomas Brakspear, architect of this parish. It had been his grandfather, Harold Brakspear, who had designed and supervised the construction of the Memorial in 1896/7 and Tom had pleasure in furnishing us with a complete set of his grandfather's working drawings. They told us everything we needed to know. Under CMS's guidance, we were now able to place the orders with our three selected specialist-service suppliers.

provided by Frontline. Rob co-ordinated the work – while fashioning what remained of the original stone and replacing small parts where this was appropriate.



He has also provided his services for the two "Stonemasonry Craftsmanship Demonstrations"



These were Rob Fleming, of Robert Fleming Masonry and Conservation Ltd. (who is a local man, with a young family), Galena (Dave and Jess Bevan) for the leadwork and JKH Ltd. (John Harrod of Swindon) for the stone cleaning – using the same processes as had been used on Osborne House. Scaffolding was



which we had undertaken to stage to the general public, as part of our 'contract' with the funding authority. He has done a splendid job. Not only is the result excellent in appearance, it was also achieved precisely in accordance with the schedule we agreed with him. The job is now complete – at least that part of the overall project is now complete. It will be another year before all the other 'sub-projects' reach that stage.





### Applying the Finishing Touches to the Restored Memorial

The first of these is the reinstatement of the 'garden' which has occupied the larger of the two water troughs which form part of the Memorial (there is a smaller one around the back)



For many years this has been attractively tended by the ladies of the Pickwick WI. Unfortunately this display had to be rudely uprooted to permit the restoration work to proceed, also to allow investigation of whatever drainage facilities there existed (found to be good) and to allow an impermeable liner to be installed. All this has been done.

The garden has now been replanted. We are indebted to the members of the Pickwick WI for their forbearance and look forward to hearing the complementary remarks of visitors to our town who will, once again, be able to admire the members' work.

The second is a commemorative plaque, marking the restoration, in 2007, of a monument that was erected by public subscription in 1896/7. We hope that this plaque will be in place by Christmas. It is to be located immediately above the small trough at the rear of the Memorial.



### Researching the Man – and presenting our findings

We have discovered many things about Charles T Mayo and what he did for Corsham. Indeed, the story continues to grow. Hardly a week goes by without somebody contacting us from across the other side of the world, telling us that they have learned of our project through our website and that they are descended from the Mayo line.

One organisation, which deserves special mention, is Wessex Water. It was discovered that Mayo had been the Chairman of the Corsham Waterworks company and had officiated at the initial opening of the hydrant, outside the Methuen Arms Hotel, on the 6-mile long pipeline that brought drinking water to the town centre in 1889 from springs at Loxwell, just south of the road that links the Lansdowne Arms, Derry Hill, to the village of Sandy Lane. We were curious to know the routing of that pipeline, and whether any part of it remained in service. We got on to Wessex Water's 'Asset Data Manager' at Claverton Down, Bath. He had all the answers and was happy to share them with us.

Such was the completeness of our application for funding that we created a whole array of 'presentation opportunities' for ourselves. How to fit them all in became the issue. The answer has again come from the sheer enthusiasm of the Society's members who have lent their time to this project. Undoubtedly, however, it is Wyndham and Kathy Thomas who have played the greatest role here. They have made the most presentations, by far – and have several more to come.



A 'Mayo Display Cabinet' has been established at the Corsham Tourist Information & Heritage Centre. It is in the Wool Room, immediately inside the window that looks out to the High Street. Its existence is declared





in the glass-fronted Noticeboard to the right of the entrance to Arnold House, i.e. it is visible even when the TIC is closed. Again, it is the work of Wyndham and Kathy. It is well worth a visit.



Wyndham and Kathy followed this up with their 'Mayo Memorial Restoration Project Exhibition', which was one of the items on our Heritage Open Days 2007 Programme in September. It contained a lot of material, and was extremely well presented. The Exhibition had two venues – the Corsham Town Hall for the first day and St. Bartholomew's Church for the remaining three days. It drew some highly favourable comments.



Their next presentation has been the one they prepared for the Society's October Open Meeting at The Pound on Friday, 26 October 2007. It was the most comprehensive yet. The scope gets bigger with

each rendition. The style and format of the presentation just gets better. The new, purchased-on-the-Project, Overhead Projector

(OHP) was much in evidence. These two really do have a flair for this sort of thing.

All the above is in preparation for the rollout of a 'travelling exhibition' which Wyndham and Kathy will be taking to various venues over the next few months. Local organisations are beating a path to their door!

And finally, as Wyndham and Kathy are concerned, there is their Mayo Restoration Project extension to the Society's already established 'Greetings Card' series. The design shows 'before' and 'after' images. It is now available and is a "collector's item", for sure.

**So, what remains to be done?**

The making of a video record of the structural restoration aspects of the Project has been undertaken by the pupils of Heywood Preparatory School, in Priory Street. Being located a short walking distance from the Memorial, the School has been ideally situated to monitor the restoration work as it has progressed. We loaned the School our state-of-the-art camcorder, purchased on the Project, to enable one particular class to 'capture' the work and the classroom studies that accompanied it. With the restoration work now complete – and half-term upon us – the camcorder has been repossessed; to enable other aspects of the Project to have its 'footage' gathered. The children have thoroughly enjoyed their exposure to this medium and to the trials and tribulations of editing on a laptop that they have experienced!

The erection of an 'Information Board' is another of the obligations under our 'contract' with the LHI/HLF. We have yet to find a suitable site for this board. We will, however, continue the search.

Another requirement of the Project is the design, production and distribution of leaflet to summarise the contribution made by C T Mayo to Corsham and the efforts implemented under this Project to recognise that contribution and to increase community awareness of it. Initial work on the leaflet is underway.

**Bringing the Project to a Close**

As stated earlier, the 'Completion Date' for the whole Project was agreed at the outset to be end- November 2008, presently one year away. To some this might prompt the question, "Why stretch it out; the visible work is now clearly complete?" My only answer to this is that, my experience of this Project tells me that the activities which remain to be completed will actually take that time.

One of the requirements of the Project is to hold a



'Project Completion Party'. No firm date has been set for this. Clearly, it could take place at any time over the next 12 months. It will, of course, not 'just happen' – these things take some organising, if they are to be successful. We have always envisaged that this event would provide Corsham with the opportunity to come together, to celebrate an achievement as a community. We would like to set up an organising group, which incorporates members of other clubs and societies in Corsham and the surrounding area. We will set this in train.

The very last action on the Project will be to write the 'Project Completion Report' and to submit it, complete with details of the total spend, to the HLF, so as to claim the remaining 5%. We expect to do this in October 2008.

### The Added Bonus

We have been blessed with a surprise windfall. The Corsham Town Council has awarded the Society an additional sum of £2,500 to enhance the Project. We are using this to undertake activities that had not previously been included in the project definition. Certain enhancements are already underway. Others are being contemplated. The one to which we have definitely committed is the creation of this very publication – 'Spotlight on Mayo'. We have set out to make this a high quality, extremely informative, full account of the Project. Other documents and website reports have recorded progress on the Project. 'Spotlight on Mayo' tells the whole story, alpha to omega.

We are also considering making contributions to a) the clean-up of Corsham's 'other Mayo Memorial', being the one which appears on the porch of St Bartholomew's Church, Corsham, and, b) a 'Mayo website' dedicated to C T Mayo, i.e. not simply an element of the Corsham Civic Society's website.

There would, of course, be links between the two – and to other Corsham-associated websites, for that matter. We would also like to use this 'windfall' to further the awareness of the local community as to the general debt that it owes to C T Mayo and the people of his generation. It is all too easy to take it for granted.

### In Conclusion

This Project has been extremely rewarding. We have all learned a great deal about how an edifice which is set in our midst came to be there. One is tempted to ask the question, "Who in this day and age would command the respect and desire amongst the community to commemorate his/her passing with such a striking memorial?"

'Signature' of Lead Workers David and Jess Bevan



*Thanks are due to the many members of the Civic Society who contributed to this publication – Peter Tapscott, Wyndham & Kathy Thomas, Joe James, Joyce Taylor, Les Davis, Eric Mahy and Pat Whalley – Editor.*

### Corsham Civic Society

*Corsham Civic Society was founded in 1963 to represent the people of Corsham in all aspects of conservation, preservation and the promotion of this delightful Wiltshire town.*

*The Society is a registered Charity, a member of the Civic Trust and ASHTAV (Association of Small Historic Towns & Villages of the UK).*

*It is our aim to promote high standards of planning and architecture, to create a wider awareness amongst the local population of environmental issues, the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area, and to secure the preservation, protection and improvement of features of public amenity and/or historical interest, both in Corsham and in the surrounding countryside.*

