



Friends of Wiltshire Victoria County History

The Victoria County History of England

Friends of Wiltshire VCH

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The Newsletter of the Friends of the Wiltshire Victoria County History, keeping you in touch with news, events and fund-raising.

Summer Event at Cadenham Manor

Once again the sun shone on our annual summer event. The evening of the 27th June saw 80+ guests gather to enjoy the delights of Cadenham, which include both formal and natural areas.



Evening sunshine through the trees at Cadenham

Wine and canapés were served on the east lawn, where people also listened to introductions; from our host, Martin Nye; our Patron, Sarah Rose Troughton, Lord Lieutenant; and our Chairman, David Moss.

We were also treated to a description of the house, from author and lecturer in architectural history, Julian Orbach, who outlined its history through the families who have lived there.

The original moated manor house on the site is said to have been built with reclaimed stone from Bradenstoke Priory and was owned by the Hungerford Family of Somerset, who owned many properties in the south west. Julian pointed out that, although this original house is long gone, the crest of the Hungerfords, together with that of the Seymours of Trowbridge, can still be seen above the door on the east wall. This present house was built in 1690 and probably re-used windows from the old house, the site of which is now a croquet lawn, surrounded by parts of the moat. Various additions and changes have been made over the years, including the changing of the aspect of the house when the Wilts and Berks Canal was built across the front. The main entrance was moved from the east to the west side of the house.

In 1911, the house was bought by Edgar Ship who made a lot of additions around WW1. But the house and grounds took on a new lease of life when it was bought by Mrs 'Betty' Blackwell in 1945, who moved from London after the death of her husband in the war and carried out her plan over the next 35 years for a grand garden on the Italian Scale, with sunken areas surrounded by stone walls leading to more natural walks and borders.

Following Julian's talk there was plenty of time to explore the amazing gardens.



Guests enjoying the idyllic summer evening in one of the formal areas of Cadenham Manor gardens

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What on Earth is a Bishop of Salisbury for?



Bishop Poore holding Salisbury Cathedral in his hand: detail from St Martin's rood screen

This was the title of the talk given by The Bishop of Salisbury, The Rt Rev Nicholas Holtam, on the 13th June at St Martin's Church, Salisbury, which is the oldest continuously occupied church in the city.

To an audience of around fifty people, the Bishop spoke in a very relaxed and entertaining way about what he feels is his purpose as Salisbury Cathedral approaches its 800th anniversary.

As the overseer of 452 parishes the Bishop has a role as a leader of Worship, obviously, but also has a place in civic life, illustrated by the fact that a copy of Magna Carta is housed in the Cathedral and Bishop Poore was the founder of the exchequer. Linked to this is his role in the state. He is one of 26 Lords Spiritual and maintains that they don't cost very much and are able to take a longer view of issues without political pressures.

Bishops of Salisbury have responsibility for teaching the Christian Faith and also for education, via the Cathedral School, Sarum College and Bishop Wordsworth's School.

Bishops have always had a part in campaigning for the great issues of the day, such as slavery. Through his interest in current issues he has met, and kept in touch with, great names of our time, such as, Bishop Trevor Huddleston and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Bishop Holtam also listed travel as one of his 'jobs', with his responsibility to 'link the Church here with the Church everywhere', and cited Bishop Wordsworth as the first Bishop to become an international figure.

The Bishop finished by naming 3 works of contemporary art, which for him shape our perception of religion:

the Cathedral's infinity font installed in 2008, the 1980 Prisoners of Conscience Window and, also 1981, Elizabeth Frink's Walking Madonna, who is walking towards the city to continue the work of the Church... 'the Bishop goes forth as Mary goes forth'.

Marlborough Walking Tour

After our earlier successful town walks of Trowbridge and Devizes we are delighted that on Monday 30th September David Chandler, local historian and author, will guide us in Marlborough.

Meeting at 11am, on the steps of the Town Hall, with the story of the 'Great Fire of Marlborough', followed by a visit to St Mary's Church, rebuilt after the Fire, as a dissenters' chapel in the time of Cromwell.

The tour will then take in some of the Blue Plaques of Marlborough and the interesting history of the Mayoral Maces of the Town, finishing in the grounds of Marlborough College and followed by lunch at The Green Dragon, for those who wish it.

Our guide, David Chandler, was born in Marlborough and still lives there. Attending Marlborough Grammar School, then St John's College, Cambridge, David returned to Marlborough to join the family's saddlery business and, following a secondary career as a teacher in Swaziland, again returned and became involved in Local Government, serving as Mayor of Marlborough in 1971. Latterly, David has been Master of the Saddlers' Company of the City of London.

To book please contact Vicky Landell Mills on 01225-863668 or Vicky@landellco.com. Payment of £15 is to be made on the day. Lunch at the Green Dragon is paid for separately, but in both cases we need to know numbers.



Marlborough's Victorian Town Hall facing the length of the High Street

Our New Hon Secretary

Following the retirement recently of Keith Strickland, we are now pleased to welcome our new Hon Secretary, Hugh Wright. Married with three sons, Hugh comes to us following a career in teaching, culminating in 7 years as Chief Master at King Edward's School, Birmingham, and, in retirement, has been a volunteer for the National Trust and has undertaken research, particularly into the history of Great Chalfield.

Wiltshire Life

You may have noticed WVCH being mentioned in two recent editions of Wiltshire Life.

Firstly, in June, our Consulting Editor Dr John Chandler was featured for his success in being awarded the Wiltshire Life Lifetime Achievement Award. John's major contribution to the study of Wiltshire's history has brought understanding and enjoyment of the county to many and his history of Salisbury, Endless Street, is on many of Wiltshire's bookshelves. By his lectures and writing, and publishing numerous books on Wiltshire by other authors through his Hobnob Press, John continues to enthuse others in the history of Wiltshire.

The July issue of Wiltshire Life contained a full page feature about the recent launch of a new drive to speed up the completion of the remaining Wiltshire VCH volumes.

Our President, Michael Wade OBE, hosted a gathering at his home, Trafalgar Park, in the south of the county. Lord Chartres, retired Bishop of London, spoke to 50 invited guests, including Patron of the Trust and Lord Lieutenant, Sarah Rose Troughton, and David Moss, our Chairman. The Bishop, in his speech, stressed the importance of history to all of us; the history of national events, international events, the places we live in and the places we visit.

The main aim of the day was to raise much-needed funds for the five outstanding volumes (18 have already been completed), both from individuals and, hopefully, local companies.

To find out more contact Chairman David Moss by email on wiltshirevch@gmail.com

or, alternatively, visit the web site www.mychippenham.org.uk

American Bomber Mystery

Nethermore is one of the less well-known settlements in the Outer Chippenham VCH study and preliminary research suggested that little happened there since the name was first recorded in the 13th century. However, there are intriguing references on several aviation websites to a plane crash at Nethermore Wood in February 1953.

Research in the British Newspaper Archive online found the crash reported in several local papers; the *Portsmouth Evening News* on 7 Feb 1953 and, even further afield, by the *Liverpool Echo* and *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, both on the same day: all with a similar story.

A giant American B-36 bomber had flown crewless for 30 miles before crashing into Nethermore Wood, near Chippenham, on the morning of 7th February. Mr Hollick, solicitor, of nearby Peter's (or Pitter's) Farm described how the plane circled downwards before it crashed and that bits were falling off the plane. Three of its ten engines were reportedly found a mile from the crash site. The plane burst into flames on impact and fire crews rushed from Chippenham, Devizes and Corsham to quench the fire. This was no doubt exciting for local inhabitants, but sightseers were discouraged: the plane allegedly still being on a secret list.

Despite the secrecy, the *Liverpool Echo* reported that the plane was from Carswell air force base in Fort Worth, Texas: one of seventeen B-36s on a routine training mission to RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. The crew of 15 all bailed out safely, landing variously in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. There were no civilian casualties. Some statistics were given about the B-36; its wingspan of 230 feet; its range of 10,000 miles; its capacity to carry 10 tons of bombs.

A brief account of the crash can be found in Dennis R Jenkins', *Magnesium Overcast: The Story of the Convair B-36* (2002), an authoritative history of the B-36 Bomber. Running low on fuel after a flight from Carswell via Goose Bay, Labrador, in severe weather conditions, and being delayed in landing at Fairford due to short staffed and inexperienced air traffic staff, the pilot made the decision to abandon the aircraft.

Rosalind Johnson, Contributing Editor, WVCH, (discovered during research for volume 20).

Our Website

We are constantly striving to improve our website and if any of our readers has specialist skills and would like to help us in this task, please contact David Moss on wiltshirevch@gmail.com

Forthcoming Events

Walking Tour of Marlborough

11am on Monday 30th September 2019, from the Town Hall steps

The cost will be £15, payable on the day. Limited places. Booking essential
Please contact Vicky Landell Mills on 01225-863668 or vicky@landellco.com

(Lunch at the Green Dragon is paid for separately)



Marlborough High Street from the tower
of St Peter's Church

Future Events...

The Friends of Chippenham Museum are hosting a showing of the film
Secret Spitfires on Tuesday 3rd September at 3.30 at the Neeld Hall, Chippenham

The story of 2000 Spitfires built in secret locations all over Wiltshire

Tickets £7 from Chippenham Museum

Medieval Bradford on Avon...Details to be announced

If you are reading this Newsletter but you are not yet a Friend of WVCH please contact our Hon. Treasurer,
James Holden, on 01225-869159 or vjholden@gmail.com

Subscription rates are £20 pa single, £30 couple, £50 club/society, £100 corporate, £500 life

Considering making or updating your will? Please consider leaving a legacy to the WVCH Trust.
A gift in your will is an excellent way to support causes which are important to you and, as charities are exempt
from inheritance tax, it can also be tax-efficient for you.

If you are shopping on-line don't forget that you can raise funds for us through **Easyfundraising**

Simply go to the www.easyfundraising.org.uk website,
select Wiltshire Victoria County History Trust as your cause,
register and start shopping.

This newsletter is distributed electronically to all those members and supporters who have supplied email addresses and given their express permission for us to contact them in this way, so saving on postage costs in the future and also ensuring that more of your contributions go towards the writing of the VCH.