



Issue No. 89

Spring 2019

# GUARDIAN ANGEL

NEWS FROM BRADFORD ON AVON PRESERVATION TRUST

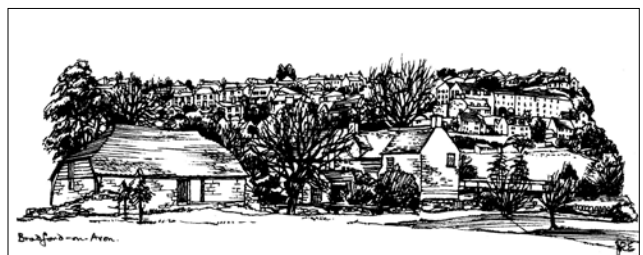
## Notes from the Chair

I'm standing under the horse chestnut tree at one end of my allotment, it's a magnificent thing, a huge tower covered in conical spires of white and yellow flowers; apparently the yellow bit turns pinky red when fertilised. There must be lots of bees as there is a lot of colour here. I actually used to dread the sight of the tree in the field near our old house. The flowers came the same time as we got into top gear for the massive London to Brighton Bike Ride; lots of people, lots of problems, meetings all over the place, charities, sponsors, public relations, councils and lots of visits to various Police Headquarters. It sometimes felt like a regular commute to London, the only relief in the early days was the early breakfast kippers in the restaurant car as we hurtled through Swindon at over 100 mph.

The downside of a chestnut on an allotment is lots of shade and the huge crop of useless conkers which have to be removed as they fall (remember to wear a hard hat) or later when they sprout up. Until recently I had rather hoped that it might fall down in a gale or that it might fall ill to one of those terrible, modern tree diseases and have to be cut down. My little patch of Wiltshire has a lot of little grass paths and I had thought about digging them all up and going for broke with vegetable production on a grand scale but having listened to Dave Green's amazing talk about weeds, wild flowers and the way they support a huge variety of insect life without

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which we will all be the poorer, I shall enjoy the tree and set the mower blades higher. That way there will be lots of colourful dandelions but the seed heads will be easily cut off. I will try it on the lawn too and see how many of the 215 plant species around town I can attract.

A few weeks ago, a chap who reviews bicycles for a major bicycle magazine publisher popped round to ask me to do a review of a bicycle. How exciting, you might think. What he actually said was: "I hope you don't mind me asking, but could you do a review of a bicycle that has been designed for old people?" I don't really think of myself as old but actually, statistically, I am, along with many of the members of the Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust, so it's a jolly good job that we will have help from young people and their parents at

The Garden Party, which we are putting on for everyone, members and non-members, in front of The Tithe Barn, on Sunday 23 June from 2pm to 4.30pm. The Guides are coming to help with teas and cakes, some of which will be made by mum. They are going to organise some games for everybody and generally help in all sorts of ways to make everything go off with a bang. The Guides are going to apply for a grant to help with the repair of their listed building and I hope we will be able to help them. We are also hoping Trust members will help with making cakes and serving. Also, we are looking for volunteers to provide information about the Trust. Chairs and a table will be provided. Please contact Paige at [paigeatwestbarn@gmail.com](mailto:paigeatwestbarn@gmail.com)

In the news, this time, is The Design Guide. It has been finalised and is ready for publication. It's taken a few people some time but it has been time well spent and will be a great help to people moving to Bradford and especially useful if the building is listed.

While we are on buildings, the HBCC (Historic Buildings Conservation Committee) still needs a chair. If you think you could help, please get in touch with Rosie MacGregor at [rosiemacgregor@icloud.com](mailto:rosiemacgregor@icloud.com). It's not a group that meets often, usually only when there are grant applications to consider, but it is an important part of The Trust's work.

Secret Gardens opened their gates for the first time this year on Sunday 26 May and will be doing so again on Sunday 30 June. Tickets will be available from the Tourism Office in Westbury Gardens and Made in Bradford in Lamb Yard.

Our annual Open Forum will be held on Wednesday 24 July at 8pm in Priory Barn. Please come and bring any thoughts, ideas or complaints, or just come for a chat and a drink.

And there will be another Garden Party. This one is for Trust members and their guests. It is going to be held on 22 September from 4.30pm until 7pm. George and Glenys Lunt have kindly offered the garden of Lynchetts.

There is a trip by coach to visit Woodchester Mansion on Tuesday 17 September. If you haven't been to Woodchester, it is quite different in that it is a partially complete Victorian Gothic mansion in a delightful and very quiet Cotswold valley. The building work started around 1858 but stopped when the owner, William Leigh, died, so it is now a unique opportunity to see around a half-finished grade 1 building.

Following the very sad death of our lovely caretaker, Ian Gunning, we now have a new caretaker, David Wagner. He was a chum of Ian and is a jolly useful and, like Ian, a good all-round bloke. Welcome Mr. Wagner.

So, it's back to the allotment for me, things are a little late but they will catch up, it's all a bit relaxed this year, as apart from cauliflowers and sprouting broccoli I have given up adhering to the very strict planting and sowing times which are related to the state of the moon in the rules of biodynamic gardening. I hope my new strawberry bed will be a good one; I am going for The Town Council jam cup in The Flower Show with a pot of classic strawberry jam. As to the bike review, I have so far, no idea, however it has arrived and tomorrow I am off to Shropshire on it for a few days. They say that half the pleasure of a new iPhone is in getting it out of the box, so perhaps I will start there.

*John Potter*

## Planning matters

Let's start with the negative opinions first so that by the end of this article you can read something more positive.

We continue to receive adverse comments about the Bellway housing site on the Holt Road and even a suggestion that we didn't do enough to oppose it. Let's be clear: we objected to the proposals in the strongest possible terms including the impact on trees, wildlife and the overall design of the houses but ultimately the decision rests with the local planning authority who clearly took a different view to our own.

However, we receive far more hostile comments about the massive roundabout at the junction of Holt Road with Springfield. Especially now that more signage has been erected making it appear even more suited to a city centre than an historic town. There have been numerous suggestions about how this unfortunate construction could be improved such as with a tree or foliage in the middle to soften its appearance or something sculptural. The highway authority keeps making changes so we'll just have to wait and see whether any improvements can be made to its appearance, though personally I have my doubts!

We were disappointed to discover that 17 – 18 Market Street, the former Rooth's shop, is back on the market with planning permission and listed building consent for conversion into retail and residential units. Given the derelict state of the building, cost of purchase and conversion, it may not

be a commercially viable project. Perhaps the Trust might like to consider purchase and conversion as its next major project if there are no buyers in the foreseeable future?!!

We supported the proposals for the retention of 30 Church Street, the former Lloyds Bank, subsequently approved for employment use but with the caveat that one design element, an inappropriate new metal staircase, would be entirely out of keeping with a building of this age.

We are pleased to see that work is now progressing at 5 St Margaret's Street, the former Liberal Club, to reinstate historic features previously removed.

We are delighted that a Preservation Trust Design Guide prepared by acclaimed architect Harry Whittaker has been finalised and will be launched later this year. It includes advice on good design and elements to avoid, as well as Harry's beautifully drawn illustrations.

We are also preparing our own register of buildings at risk. Please let us know if you are aware of any neglected or vacant building that you think should be included.

Finally, as you will have read elsewhere, another positive measure is that the Preservation Trust will be making awards for conserving and promoting our heritage. There may be an example of good design and build in Bradford on Avon of which you are aware and if so why not consider submitting it for an award.

*Rosie MacGregor  
Chair, Preservation Trust Planning Committee*

## Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust Award Programme

Regular readers will remember that the Preservation Trust has been developing a scheme under which it will award medals to high-quality conservation and building projects. The criteria for assessment of schemes have now been defined and are:

- A project that has made a significant contribution to maintaining, fostering and encouraging the particular character and scenic, historic and architectural value within the town of Bradford on Avon
- A project that has made a significant contribution to the overall well-being of the Bradford on Avon Community

If you know of a worthwhile project, please send a brief description including an explanation as to why your nomination should be considered. Include the name and contact details of both yourself and the nominee. Please email this information to:

BoATrustmedals@gmail.com

Nominations open on 17 June 2019 and close at midnight on 28 July 2019.

For more details, please go to our website at:  
<https://bradfordheritage.co.uk>

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## Remembering Mike Shearing

As many of you will know already, Mike Shearing died on 8 May from cancer.

He had bravely and cheerfully put up with his cancer since 2016 and carried on with all the even mildly complicated computer tasks the Trust and its members could throw at him by email to his home in France. Most notably he designed *Guardian Angel* and prepared it for printing for years, (and was a member of the Council of Management for several years before leaving for France); he turned it from the heap of articles sent to him into a very professional looking magazine. He and Hilary were looking forward to doing the editing job as well but in the end they could not do so.

So many people in Bradford, in his French home in the Loire Valley and elsewhere will miss Mike's wit, his interest in people, his determination, his kindness and willingness to help, his generosity, his unfailing cheerfulness – and his love of good food and wine. An old friend who often visited Mike and Hilary in France, wrote:

“Mike was a very talented person and had spent much of his life connected in various ways to the arts, especially music. In France he joined several musical groups both singing and playing. For a while he taught ukulele classes. I remember many evenings there when music, both tapes and live instruments including some very ethnic drums, with Mike constantly jumping up saying “You must hear this!”

“He was very precise and exact in all he did: an expert in origami, he enjoyed making and giving little appropriate pieces to friends. Even his coffee pot had a timing device so that the coffee stood for exactly four minutes before the plunger could be pushed down.

“Mostly though we will miss his kindness and dry sense of humour.”

The last words should be with Hilary, who wrote on the day Mike died:

“My darling husband Mike, after a long and

courageous battle with cancer, passed away peacefully, early this morning, at Chinon hospital.

“I loved Mike with all my heart. I also admired him enormously. Mike knew from the outset, December 2016, that the cancer was inoperable. The option of chemotherapy offered a chance. What it actually gave us was another two and a half years together. During this time he and I lived life as fully as we were able to. Mike was willing to do so and we had friends who were willing to help us make that happen.

“Mike's quiet determination and courage never failed him, no matter how difficult the treatment. Always positive and remarkably cheerful, these qualities were recognised not just by me and his friends, but by everyone who knew him as well as the exceptional medical teams at Chinon hospital, who have cared for him for so long.

“Early April, Mike had a fall at our house in Cravant, which resulted in him breaking his hip. He was again admitted to Chinon. The decision was to allow his hip to heal naturally, rather than operate. Mike embarked on an extensive period of bed-rest, supported by a kine and a physio and the two teams, cancer and palliative working closely together. He also began chemotherapy again, in a diluted version, so that all the medications he was having to take worked well together.

“I have been visiting him a couple of times every day since he was admitted, with friends dropping in to see him when he was well enough. Ten days ago I noticed a marked change in him, physically. This moment was profoundly upsetting. I met with the medical teams to discuss Mike's situation and the implications. Mike had fought so hard and for so long, but his body was tired.

“In his usual quiet way, my brave boy had come to terms with the inevitable. At last now he is at peace and free from all the constraints that he has battled with for so long.”

Hilary has all our sympathies.

This edition of *Guardian Angel*, which should have been the first that was entirely Mike's, is inevitably late and may be incomplete. If you sent Mike an article and it is not in this issue, please could you send a copy to [guardianangel@bradfordheritage.co.uk](mailto:guardianangel@bradfordheritage.co.uk) so that it can go in the next edition.

I am immensely grateful to Joceline Bury for taking over the design and layout of this edition at very short notice.

*Angela Moss*

## Book Review

### **Budbury – From hillfort to houses** **By Pamela Slocombe and Roy Canham**

In the context of medieval settlement patterns”, we are told, “a place name such as ‘Budbury’ implies the existence of a village or hamlet. The evidence we have runs from the Winsley road to the scarp top., probably outlining a small hamlet in which Budbury Place or its precursor was the main street”, perhaps on a track running from the north into Bradford on Avon. However, Budbury at times covered a much larger area and was an estate of some importance at different periods. This book covers an area bounded in the south by Newtown and Palmer’s Lane (now Wine Street) and running northwards to the edge of the Great Ashley estate and eastwards to Masons Lane and Bath Road. It starts with the archaeology of Budbury and ends with consideration of twentieth century development in the area, with sections covering all intervening periods.

Excavations in the 1960s revealed evidence of an Iron Age hillfort and Lidar surveying suggests a field system stretching across the plateau. No-one knows why the hillfort has disappeared so comprehensively; was it the cumulative effect of stone robbing over the centuries or was it policy by Cnut after he came to the throne in 1016 to remove possible centres of resistance to his regime? Discovery of the remains of a Roman villa under the St Laurence School playing fields showed that this had been a centre in Roman times and numerous discoveries of pottery fragments from the Roman, Saxon and early medieval periods make clear that the site continued to be occupied.

Another possible source for the name ‘Budbury’ is that it was named after a Saxon thane Budda, combined with ‘burgh’ meaning a fortress or fortified place. Budda would have held his estate in return for providing a knight to support his landlord. Why was a knight’s fee established so close to the villa regalis of Bradford on Avon? The authors suggest that the reason could be that the old hillfort above the river crossing was a place which required permanent guard. By Domesday Book in 1086, the estate was held by Ulf (meaning ‘wolf’) and the estate extended to one hide, or sufficient land to a well-off household and their retainers. The book goes on to consider the local open field system, the hermit, with his cave at Ladywell and his chapel at St Mary Tory, and then goes on to note that in the early 15th century the

Budbury estate was combined with that of Great Ashley, north of Winsley. Budbury manor house (now 4 Budbury Place) has its origins in this period and may have been built for Reynold Buddebury, who held considerable property and public offices and would have wanted a fine new house.

By the early 17th century, Budbury manor house was in a rundown state and this is probably when it was rebuilt in more compact form. During that century parts of the estate were sold off and the part to the north of Newtown went to the Methuens. Development began, with Lower Rank in the 1690s and Middle Rank in the 1700s. Huntingdon Street was developed at about the same time, followed later in the century by Bearfield Buildings and Tory (also known as Upper Rank or Top Rank).

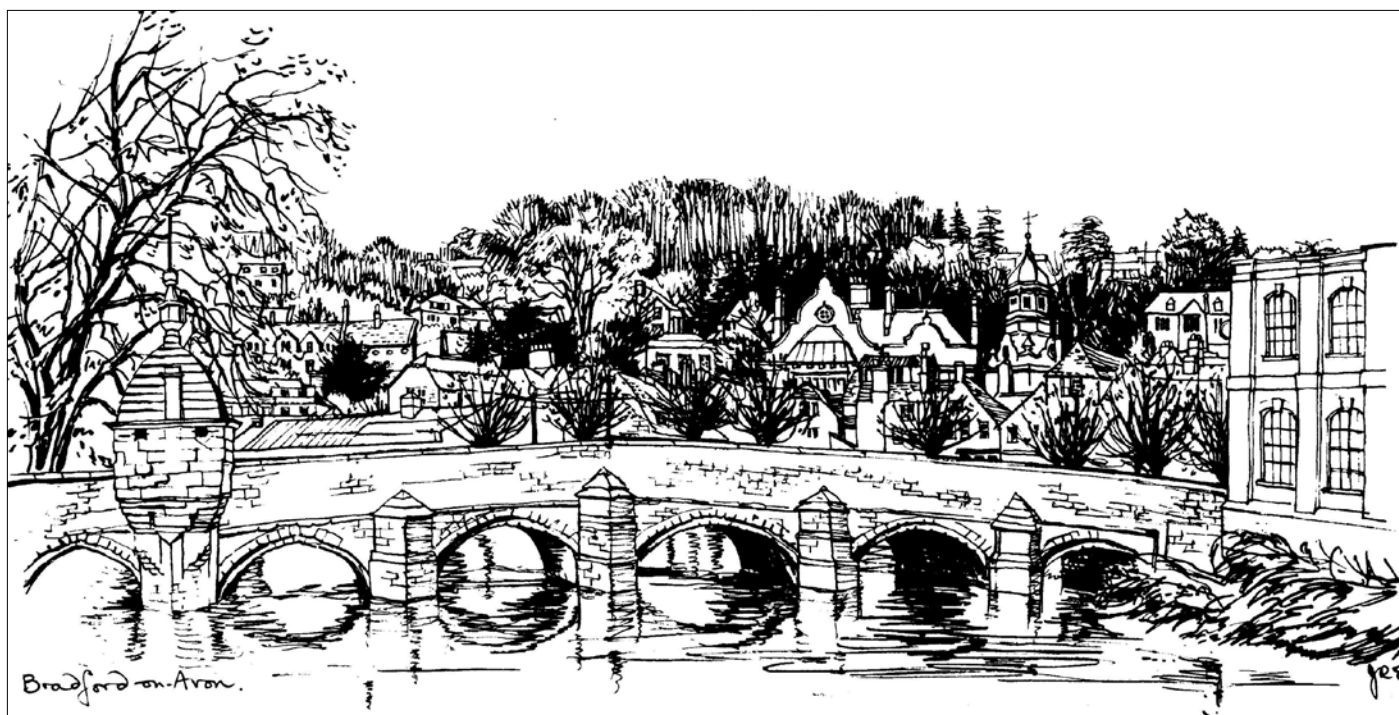
Development of the hillside continued through the 19th century, but by the following century much of the area had become run-down and was considered ‘rough’. Cadby Buildings in Wine Street was demolished in 1858 and run-down houses in Middle Rank and Tory were threatened. Since then, restoration has transformed the area. On top of the hill, there had been some ribbon development in the 1930s along Winsley Road, the Churches estate came in the early 1950s and since the 1960s housing has gradually spread over all of what were once the open areas of the ancient hillfort.

This canter through the history explored in the 75 pages of this book can give only an impression of the riches of carefully researched information which readers will find in it. And they will find it a pleasure to read; clearly and concisely written, it is clearly divided into sections for different periods and lavishly illustrated with photographs and maps, old and new.

*David Moss*

- *Budbury – From hillfort to houses is published by Ex Libris Press in association with Bradford on Avon Museum; ISBN 978-1-912020-74-4; price £7.50, it can be obtained from Bradford on Avon Museum, Ex Libris in The Shambles and other good book shops*

## Crossing the River: Some Places Named Bradford



**B**radford is a fairly common place name in England and is derived from the Saxon *brad* – broad or wide – and *ford* – a river crossing. It is impossible to say which is the oldest settlement named Bradford; absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

There are eleven entries for *Bradeford* in the Domesday Book: five in Devon, two in Dorset; one each in Somerset and Wiltshire and two in Yorkshire.<sup>1</sup> In addition Bradford has given its name to at least two settlements in Cheshire, villages in Cornwall, Derbyshire and a sixth in Devon; an area of Manchester; two places in Northumberland, and a Shropshire hundred<sup>2</sup>.

Some Bradfords have modified their names. One of the Devon *Bradefords* is now known as Bradaford, perhaps to distinguish it from the two other Bradfords south of Holsworthy. Just north of Barnstaple is Bradiford (which is not mentioned in Domesday). In Dorset Bradford Abbas belonged to the monks of Sherborne and Bradford Peverell was granted by the Crown to Robert Peverell in the 12th century. In the early days of the penny post letters got misdirected (including some to our own Canon Jones) hence Bradford on Avon, Bradford-on-Tone and West Bradford. Was Jones thinking of a c.900

■ The Town Bridge, Bradford on Avon, by Joyce Eales, whose charming illustrations have been used throughout this issue of *Guardian Angel*

AD reference to *Bradanford be Afne* when he wrote to the Post Office asking for the name change to Bradford on Avon? For clarity Bradford Wiltshire will be referred to as Bradford on Avon in this article.

Two Bradfords have moved. Bradford west of Holsworthy, Devon is close to the border with Cornwall and is listed in Devonshire in the Domesday Book. At some time the county boundary was moved, and that Bradford went to Cornwall. In 1936 it returned to Devon. West Bradford was originally in the West Riding of Yorkshire, but was moved to Lancashire in 1974.

Bradfords has given their name to other places around the original settlements. In Wiltshire Bradford Leigh is just to the north of Bradford on Avon. Bradford Moor can be found in Cheshire, Devon and Yorkshire. Bradford, Derbyshire has given its name to one of the smaller Derbyshire Dales, and the associated River is now the River Bradford. This is also the case in Devon, Lancashire and Yorkshire where the streams crossed by the original broad ford have been re-named. Bradiford Water in Devon; Bradford Beck (now largely culverted) in the city of Bradford, and West Bradford Brook in West Bradford. The Earls of Bradford take their name from the Shropshire hundred.

<sup>1</sup> See the index in the Penguin edition of the Domesday Book (Penguin Books 2003, p.1318)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/salop/vol11/pp93-104#fnn1> Bradford bridge apparently remained the meeting place of the hundred court until the early 17th century.

## Gazetteer of English Bradfords and their Rivers

\* Referred to as Bradeford in the Domesday Book.

Modern names and counties have been used.

County		Grid reference	River
Cheshire	Bradford	SJ6873, east of Rudheath	River Dane. Now a hamlet in the township of Shurlach
	Cluster of 'Bradfords'; Bradford Mill, Bradford Grange, Bradford Wood	c.SJ647686, north of Winsford	River Weaver. Original settlement now locks in the Weaver Navigation
Cornwall	Bradford	SX 1191 7538, on Bodmin Moor	De Lank River
Derbyshire	Bradford	SK 2032 6386, south east of Youlgreave	River Bradford, formerly known as Rollow Brook, Roller Brook and Bradford Rivulet
Devon	Bradaford*	SX 390 945, south of Holsworthy	River Carey
	Bradford*	SS 282 012, south west of Holsworthy	River Tamar
	Bradford*	SS 421 072, south east of Holsworthy	River Torridge at what is now known as Bradford Mill
	Bradford*	SS 802 151, east of Witheridge	Little Dart River
	Bradford Tracey*	SS 819 167, east of Witheridge	Little Dart River
	Bradiford	SS 345 549, north of Barnstaple	Bradiford Water
Dorset	Bradford Abbas*	ST 587 142, SW of Sherborne	River Ivel
	Bradford Peverell*	SY 657 930, NE of Dorchester	River Frome
Lancashire	West Bradford*	SD 745 445, north of Clitheroe; (originally in Yorkshire)	West Bradford Brook
Manchester	Bradford	SJ 87142 98193	River Medlock
Northumberland	Bradford	NZ 0678 7957, near Bolam	River Blythe Wares [sic] Burn
	Bradford	NU 155 325, near Bamburgh	
Shropshire	Hundred of Bradford	SJ 57665 14867	River Roden where the High Er call to Shrewsbury road crosses the river
Somerset	Bradford-on-Tone*	ST 172 229, SW of Taunton	River Tone
Wiltshire	Bradford on Avon*	ST 824 608, SW of Bath	River Avon
Yorkshire	Bradford*	SE 166 332	Bradford Beck

There are probably many more small settlements called Bradford throughout England. Tony Bostock of the Winslow History Society tells the author that there are other Bradfords in Cheshire, but currently 'they escape him'. The county may rival Devon in the number of Bradfords!



Three of the Bradfords have expanded far beyond their original 'broad ford' settlements. Wikipedia makes Bradford, Manchester, where the 'broad ford' was across the River Medlock, sound quite idyllic<sup>3</sup>.

*The name of the area is ancient and in 1196 the village was recorded as Bradeford. Up to the Industrial Revolution, it was rural with woodland, pastures and brooks. Wolves and eagles once inhabited the woodlands and honey production was part of the local economy.*

But then coal was discovered there and industrialisation left its mark, including the Ashton Canal which opened in 1797. Interestingly the Domesday Book mentions a honey tax for Bradford on Avon and wolves may have lived nearby in Saxon times; Woolley (another very common place name) can mean 'place of the wolves'.

Bradford on Avon and Bradford Yorkshire have rather similar histories. The Yorkshire Bradford referred to a crossing of what is now known as Bradford Beck at Church Bank below the site of Bradford Cathedral, around which a settlement grew in Saxon times. Bradford on Avon was a crossing place on the River Avon on the downstream side of the town bridge.

Both communities were evangelised in the 8th century: Bradford on Avon by St Aldhelm; Bradford by the monks of nearby Dewsbury Abbey. Both are in the Domesday Book, though Bradford<sup>4</sup> has a rather shorter entry than Bradford on Avon<sup>5</sup> reflecting the situation after William the Conqueror's savage vengeance on the north of England in the winter of 1069, 'the harrowing of the north'. *Ilbert hath it – it is a waste*. The area took a good century to recover. In later medieval times both towns acquired markets and the relevant charters, and had fulling mills for finishing cloth.

Both are part of larger textile-producing areas. Bradford was in the West Riding of Yorkshire, in which the worsted trade played an important part. Worsteds are woven from combed long-staple wool, and during the 18th century were also produced in Norfolk.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradford,\\_Manchester](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradford,_Manchester)

<sup>4</sup> <https://opendomesday.org/place/SE1633/bradford/> or the 2003 Penguin edition of the Domesday Book, pp.827;867

<sup>5</sup> <https://opendomesday.org/place/ST8261/bradford-on-avon/> or the 2003 Penguin edition of the Domesday Book, p.171

<sup>6</sup> Chandler, John; *John Leland's Itinerary; Travels in Tudor England*. Alan Sutton, 1993

<sup>7</sup> Chandler p.569; Chandler p.530

The West of England cloth trade was centred in the counties of Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire. Cloth is woven from short staple carded wool which is then felted in a fulling mill and finished by raising and shearing the nap to give a smooth surface. So tight is the weave, and so close the felting, that the elaborate coat lapels favoured in the Regency could be cut and left unhemmed. Between the two extremes were a variety of cloths, including the 'new draperies' that were woven with a worsted warp and a soft carded wool weft.

Henry VIII's spy John Leland visited both Bradford on Avon and Bradford Yorkshire on his travels. In 1539 he commented that Bradford on Avon's *entire economy depended on clothmaking*. Some two or three years later Leland was in the West Riding commenting that Bradford's *mainstay was the cloth industry*<sup>6</sup>. He also mentions that the main industry of Leeds was cloth and that Wakefield *'now depends entirely on the [coarse] cloth trade'*<sup>7</sup>. Leland's notes for the rest of this area have not survived. He did not differentiate between cloth and worsteds.

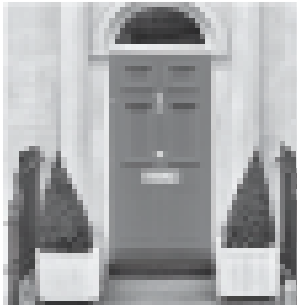
There are three stories concerning two of the Bradfords:

- Bradford, Yorkshire took its name from Bradford on Avon;
- cloth workers from Bradford on Avon moved north to Bradford, Yorkshire.
- the Yorkshire Bradford stole the industry from the West of England.

Where did these stories come from, and is there any truth in them?

Given the number of Bradfords and the Saxon predilection for naming places after topographical features it is highly unlikely that any Bradford was named after any other. The West Riding of Yorkshire was once part of the Saxon kingdom of Northumbria (literally the land north of the Humber), so we should not be surprised at Saxon names in the area. (There are two Bradfords in Northumberland). The story may have originated in the days when the new Penny Post was misdirecting mail. A copy of the *Trowbridge Advertiser* was sent north by mistake, which caused some derision. The paper was apparently subsequently dispatched with 'Bradford, Wilts, STUPID', on it. On 1 May 1858 Bradford Wilts became Bradford on Avon *'according to directions issued from the Post Office at suggestion of the Vicar of this parish'* (the Rev W H Jones). Did the opposite happen, and mail to Bradford, Yorkshire end up in Wiltshire?

The migration of cloth workers from the West of



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England to the West Riding never seems to have been investigated, and could be very interesting. There was certainly movement the other way. Julia Mann mentions that in 1800 a weaver who had used a flying shuttle in the north tried to do so in Freshford and was forced by a mob to give it up<sup>8</sup>.

Like John Leland and Celia Fiennes<sup>9</sup> before him, Daniel Defoe toured Britain and made it his business to *have a perfect knowledge ... especially of the manufactures of England*. He visited Norfolk, the West of England and the West Riding (the latter three times) and left a comprehensive picture of England's cloth and woollen trade in the early 1720s.

Of Birstall, some seven miles south of Bradford, Defoe wrote:

*[Here] they begin to make broad cloth; I call it broad, in distinction from kersies and druggets, and such things, though the cloths in this country are called narrow, when they are spoken of in London, and compared with the broad cloths made in Wilts, Gloucester, Somerset and Devonshire, of which I have spoken in former letters*

*This town is famed for dying, and they make a sort of cloths here in imitation of the Gloucester white cloths, bought for the Dutch and Turkey trades; and though their cloths here may not be as fine, they told us their colours are as good. But that is not my business to dispute, the West Country clothiers deny it; and so I leave it as I find it.*

Cloth was also made in the Shipley area of Bradford where there were three fulling mills in 1559. By the late 18th century between nine and ten thousand pieces of broadcloth were being fullled annually in Shipley. By the 1770s, Saddleworth was developing a reputation for superfine broadcloth which, it was rather optimistically claimed, was beginning to rival those of the West of England<sup>10</sup>.

Was this the origin of Bradford 'stealing' the cloth trade? Did West Country cloth workers migrate to West Yorkshire? Norfolk, the other centre for the worsted trade, also complained about Yorkshire competition in the 1740s.

After the introduction of mechanisation the

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<sup>8</sup> Mann, p141. There was a riot in Trowbridge in 1792 when an attempt was made to introduce the fly shuttle there (Mann, p.140)

<sup>9</sup> Fiennes has a very detailed account of serge production in Exeter but little or nothing about the West of England or West Riding industries.

<sup>10</sup> Chrystal, *Paul Bradford at Work; people and industries through the years*. Amberley, 2018. P.59

<sup>11</sup> *The Good Companions*. 'Bruddersford' is Bradford

Shipley area turned mostly to worsted production. Broadcloth was going out of fashion and it made good business sense to make what was marketable. Defoe noted that the West Riding goods were everywhere made use of, for the clothing of the ordinary people, who cannot go to the price of the fine medley cloths made ... in the western counties of England. It was quality versus quantity and ultimately it was fashionable quantity from the Scottish Borders that eclipsed both Bradford and Bradford on Avon in the late 19th and 20th centuries. As J B Priestly wrote<sup>11</sup>:

*Some of the chimneys show no signs of smoke; they have been quiet for a long time ... and all because trade is still bad. Perhaps some of these chimneys have stopped smoking because fashionable women in Paris and London and New York have cried to one another 'My dear, you can't possibly wear that!' and less fashionable women have repeated it after them, and quite unfashionable women have finally followed their example, and it has all ended in machines lying idle in Bruddersford.*

Fashion was not the only factor contributing to the West Riding's increasing dominance in the textile trade in the 18th century. Among others were transport; the available labour force and immigration.

By 1770 Yorkshire was accounting for about one-third of the value of the British wool textile industry and about one half of the value of wool textile exports. Much of this would have travelled via the Aire & Calder Navigation (opened in 1704 at the behest of local businesses), the journey to Hull taking about three days. Defoe writes that the goods went to Hull and thence to *Holland, Bremen, Hamburg and the Baltic*, or taken to London by sea from Hull. In London cloth was sold *for exportation to the English colonies in America .... [great quantities to] New England, New York, Virginia &c. Russian merchants send an exceeding quantity to Petersburg, Riga [Latvia], Danzig, [now Gdańsk], Narva [Estonia] and to Sweden and Pomerania.*

Cloth from Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge was taken by wagon from Trowbridge to London where it was sold at Blackwell Hall mainly for export, probably to the same destinations as the Yorkshire goods. The journey from Trowbridge to London took five days (the 'express' was three days by packhorse from Devizes) and by the 1750s the Bradford Turnpike Trust had bought up all the local roads and made them as good as they could be. The wagons would have carried wool on the return journey.

The idea of connecting the Thames with the Severn or the Avon had been mooted in the early 17th century, but despite many meetings and much discussion there was no water route from the West Country to London until the opening of the Thames & Severn Canal in 1789. This gave the Gloucestershire clothiers an advantage over those in Wiltshire and Somerset which the opening of the Kennet & Avon canal in 1810 did not regain. Despite this disadvantage in transport the 18th century was, intermittently, a prosperous time for Bradford on Avon as the town's architectural inheritance shows.

Defoe comments on the 'populous state' of the West Riding, and that very few people were to be seen out of doors as most were engaged in the textile industry<sup>12</sup>. Defoe reports that it was the opinion of some in Halifax that the population there had increased by one fourth at least within the past forty years. Charles I invited Dutch artisans to settle in England in 1672, and Charles II the Huguenots in 1682, and some of these could have made their way to the West Riding. There were certainly 'Dutchmen' in Bradford on Avon who had been invited by Paul Methuen and William Brewer. Between 1672 and 1679 there were almost a hundred Dutch immigrants in the town, all engaged in the cloth industry. According to the VCH there was a colony of Dutchmen at Avoncliff and Dutch Barton<sup>13</sup> is said to have housed a group.

The increase in the population of Halifax was as nothing compared to the phenomenal increase in the population of Bradford between 1801 and 1861

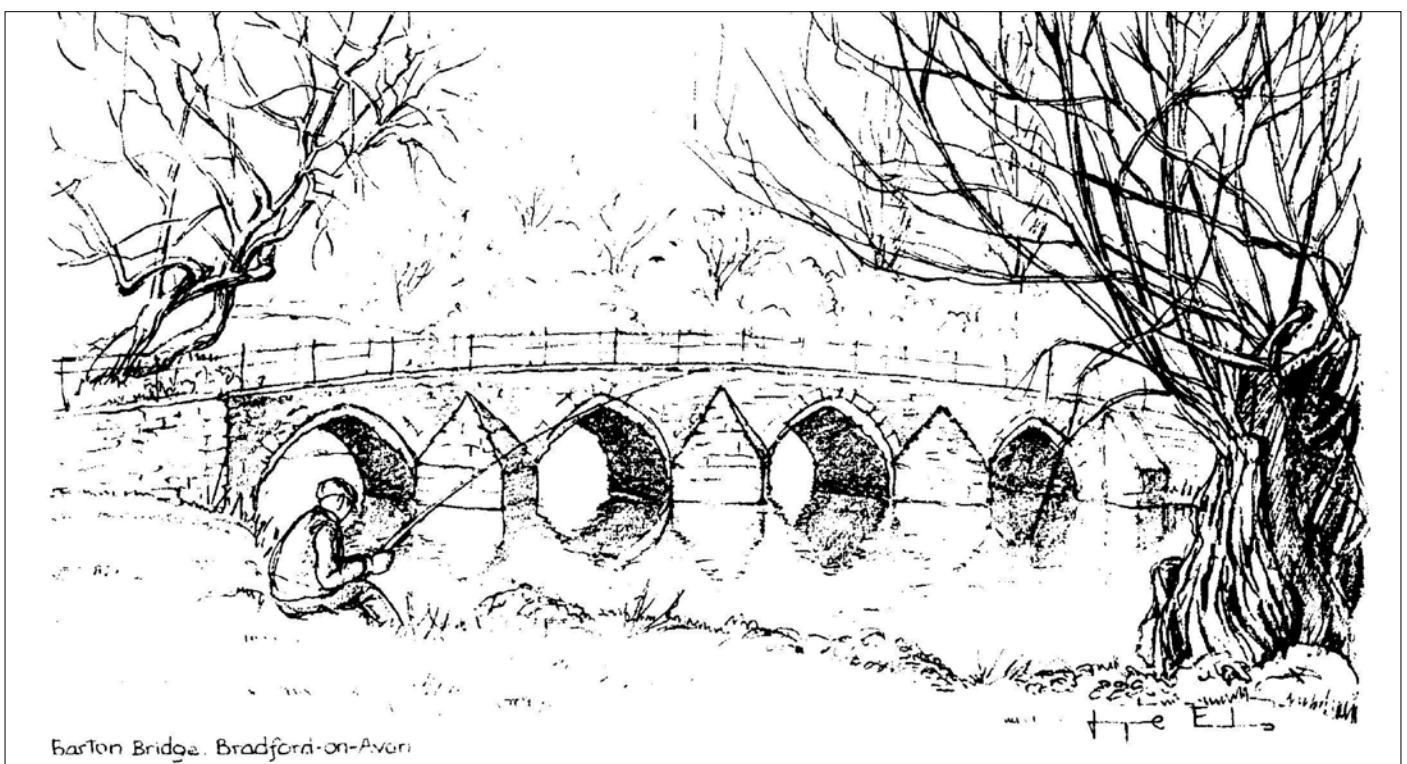
due to immigration from Ireland and continental Europe. Estimates of Bradford's population for 1801 vary from around 4,000 to 13,000, (the latter may include the surrounding area.) In 1821 the population was over 26,000, by 1841 it was over 66,000 and in 1861 it was 106,218. In contrast the population of Bradford on Avon was around 3-4,000 in the first half of the 19th century; rose to 5,000 in the 1870s and dropped to around 4-4,500 in the later 19th century. Wiltshire has never been a densely populated county; in 2011 there were 1.4 people per hectare (excluding Swindon), compared to 4.1 for England as a whole.

The immigrants to Bradford were attracted by the increased exploitation of the local coal seams and the setting up of iron foundries. The woollen mills were quick to take advantage. In 1850 there were 147 mills with a total of 421 power looms and employing 11,095 people in the West of England (Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire) compared to 880 mills in Yorkshire with a total of 3,849 power looms and employing 40,611 people.<sup>14</sup> In 1850 Titus Salt's model mill at Saltaire, just outside Bradford Yorkshire, employed 3,000 people; produced 30,000 yards of cloth a day using 120 power looms, and

<sup>12</sup> This may have been due to the weather which was vile when Defoe visited.

<sup>13</sup> 'Dutch' is derived from 'Deutsch', i.e. German and may not necessarily have meant that these people came from what is now The Netherlands. Cf the 'Pennsylvania Dutch' in the USA.

<sup>14</sup> Mann, Julia de L; *The Cloth Industry in the West of England from 1640 to 1880*. p.220



Barton Bridge. Bradford-on-Avon

there were more than 150 other mills in the area. The power loom was not suitable for fine cloths until the 1840s, which may partly explain the low number in the West of England.

Coal had been mined in Bradford since the 14th century, and in the 1790s iron works were established. The foundries and the use of coal for the mills made Bradford the most polluted town in England. Living conditions were absolutely appalling; children were lucky if they lived beyond their mid-teens.

Pollution was probably no better in Bradford on Avon or Trowbridge; they were just much smaller areas. Records attest to the huge amount of coal transported from the Somerset coal fields along the Somerset Coal Canal and the K&A to Trowbridge, some of which must have been offloaded at Bradford wharf. There were certainly slums, and also a disregard for the Factory Acts, which forbade the employment of children under nine (1834), and limited their working day to ten hours (1847). Bertram Niblett claimed that at the age of eight his mother, born around 1862, worked from 6am to 5.30 pm six days a week in a weaving shed in the Bullpit<sup>15</sup> [probably the factory owned by John Edmonds].

Bradford's pollution encouraged Titus Salt to build his model factory and village of Saltaire in the early 1850s and Henry Ripley to build Ripley Ville in the 1860s, both well outside the polluted town. Bradford on Avon had built cottages for cloth workers on Newtown, Middle Rank and Tory in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. These may be desirable places to live in the 21st century, but for most of their existence they have compared very badly with the well-built basic house in Saltaire with its two bedrooms, living room, cellar pantry and kitchen, piped clean, fresh water, gas lighting and an outside toilet. A public bath and wash house were available in accordance with the 1846 Bath and Washhouses Act.

The mechanisation of the textile trade is very well covered by Julia de L Mann (*The Cloth Industry in the West of England from 1640 to 1880*), and Kenneth Ponting (*The Woollen Industry of South-West England*). Most of the textile machines were

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<sup>15</sup> Bertram Sidney Niblett; *Memories of Bradford on Avon* 1981; p.15

<sup>16</sup> Cotton and linen are simple polymers of cellulose. Wool, (and hair and fur) are protein and have a far more complex structure.

<sup>17</sup> Rogers, Kenneth, 1986. *Warp and Weft; The Somersetshire and Wiltshire Woollen Industry*, Barracuda, limited edition.

<sup>18</sup> see <https://www.bradford-estates.co.uk>

developed in Lancashire for the cotton trade and had to be adapted for use with wool, which is not an easy material to handle<sup>16</sup>. Mechanisation did not happen quickly or all at once. The spinning jenny, which was hand operated, was introduced at Holmfirth, Lancs, and Shepton Mallet Workhouse in 1776 (where it was destroyed by a mob from Frome and Warminster).

Ponting gives accounts of the riots sparked by the introduction of machinery and of particular interest is the joint action taken by Wiltshire and Yorkshire shearmen (who were responsible for finishing the cloths) when hand shears were replaced by machinery around 1803. One of the delights of Ponting are the transcriptions of various papers including Edmund Cartwright's own account of his invention of the power loom in 1784.

*Warp and Weft* by Kenneth Rogers<sup>17</sup> gives a detailed account of the decline of the industry in Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge. Despite the revival of the industry in the 1870s Bradford on Avon's mills gradually closed. Abbey Mill, rebuilt in 1875, closed in 1902 and the last mill, Greenland Upper Mill, in 1905. The industry continued in Trowbridge until 1982 when the last mill, Salters, closed.

Today most of the Bradfords remain small villages or even less. Bradford, Bradford Mill and Bradford Tracey form a small group near Witheridge, Devon. In 2010 Bradford Manchester faced an identity crisis with a move to change the name to Eastlands. 'History will be lost' cried some residents. The Ashton Canal which cuts through the area is part of the Cheshire Ring and South Pennine Ring of canals and is well-used. The Earls of Bradford were responsible for the development of modern Walsall during the 19th century and today the Bradford Estates community in Shropshire and Staffordshire encompasses dozens of businesses, leisure pursuits and charitable activities<sup>18</sup>.

Bradford, Yorkshire, is now a cathedral city with a university, with a population of nearly 535,000. The pollution has gone, as have most of the textile mills. Saltaire is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; there are museums, art galleries and talk of restoring Bradford canal, though the Leeds & Liverpool Canal passes close by. (Is a canal an essential part of 'being an industrial Bradford'?) Like Bradford on Avon, many of Bradford's buildings express the town's past prosperity, only Bradford's are Victorian and perhaps somewhat overpowering to those more used to the modest elegance of the 18th century buildings of Bradford on Avon.

## Letter to the Editor

I little thought when I handed *Guardian Angel* over to Angela and David that they would be committing themselves to the production of it three times a year for the next sixteen years, during which time David has also been Chairman.

I would like to pay tribute to their hard work, each issue bringing us up to date on the latest planning problem or dispute, summarising talks and often including another piece on the history of the town. In its design and presentation they have, of course, been aided by Mike Shearing; who was to have taken over as next editor. His recent death is a great loss and sad news to those who knew him.

We are glad that Angela has agreed to carry on for one more issue. I hope that one of our younger members will now take on this interesting and rewarding job.

Gareth Slater

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# The Bradford Leigh Fair

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Talk by Robert Arkell

Wednesday 23 January 2019

I think this was the first Trust talk I have been to at which the speaker played a recording of a traditional English song, “It’s I have been to Weyhill Fair”, all six verses of it, as a (very effective) way of giving an impression of the atmosphere at a traditional English fair in the 18th, 19th or early 20th centuries.

Not that the Bradford Leigh Fair was an old established fair. Bradford on Avon had an old fair, the Trinity Fair in the town centre, established in the Middle Ages and, like Bradford as a whole at that time, under the control of the Abbess of Shaftesbury. The Bradford Leigh Fair was much newer, first appearing in about 1752 as an ‘annual meeting’ rather than a ‘fair’ because any tolls charged for a fair went to the lord of the manor. It was held on common land north of the town, which stretched from Northleigh to South Wraxall and Little Chalfield. When the common was enclosed, the largest field (known as Fairground) was subject to a condition that it be made available each year for the fair.

The fair, one of the largest in Wiltshire, was for trading in livestock, produce and consumer goods, but also for courtship, entertainment, gambling and drinking. Robert’s examination of records of tolls at the fair showed that livestock had never been a major part of the fair’s business, with cheese initially a major element, cheeses on sale including half cowards, skims, old and new red Somersets and single and double Wiltshires.

Opening of the Chippenham Cheese Market in 1840 had taken away much of the cheese trade and increasingly the fair became predominantly a pleasure fair: booze, cakes, gingerbread, boxing, horse racing and music, such as the song which Robert played for us.

There were attempts to control or discourage the idleness, vice, madness, theft, etc that some saw as characteristic of such fairs. It was illegal to hold a horse race for prizes of less than £50 (so as to restrict horse racing to being a pursuit for the affluent), but someone at Bradford Leigh tried to do so and was prosecuted. There were also attempts to confine fairs to trade in cattle and cheese but to no avail. The fair was a considerable attraction; the new canal

made Bradford easily accessible (a couple of horses could haul a barge at 10 mph from Bath to Bradford, without the jolts then inherent in road travel).

In 1802 William Wilberforce launched the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and later came the Lord’s Day Observance Society. In 1808 publicans were fined for selling alcohol on Sundays, in 1850 an Act said that fairs could not be held on Sundays. Temperance societies organised outings to Bournemouth and other seaside resorts as rival attractions on fair days.

Diocesan Missioners were appointed, tough young men well able to stand up to what they might find at the fair. But oddly enough, Robert told us, prostitution is not mentioned until 1863. And while striptease and glamour girls are found advertised in 1938 the girls, dressed in body stockings, were behind a sheet so that only their silhouette was visible.

The commercial fair, dwindling from the 1840s, ended in the 1900s; but the pleasure fair lasted till 1964, when its death knell was legislation which moved the August bank holiday to the end of the month. Its new date coincided with the Bradford Leigh Fair, the owners of the roundabouts and other attractions had other commitments for the bank holiday and could no longer come to Bradford. With which, Robert ended his lavishly illustrated talk, which had informed and amused a large audience.

*David Moss*

- *Robert Arkell’s book, Bradford Leigh Fair, published by Bradford on Avon Museum, price £4.00, can be obtained from the Museum, Ex Libris Bookshop in The Shambles and other good bookshops.*

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## An Apology

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Our apologies to Oaktree Joinery for the omission of their regular advertisement in the last issue.

We value all our advertisers and will ensure this does not happen again.

## Nominations for the Council of Management

Each year members are invited to make nominations for election to the Council of Management. The Council of Management can have up to a maximum of 14 members. One third of the members (plus any additional members that may have been co-opted during the year) have to retire each year but may stand for re-election. There is therefore scope each year for potential new members to stand for election in place of or in addition to existing members.

If you wish to nominate someone (who must be a paid-up member of the Trust) please fill in the form below. A photocopy of the form is acceptable if you do not want to spoil your copy of *Guardian Angel*. You will need to find another member to second your nomination. The nomination form should then be sent to: The Hon. Secretary, Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust Ltd, Silver Street House, Bradford on Avon, BA15 1JY. It should be sent in time to arrive by Monday 30 September 2019.

NOMINATION FORM

I wish to propose the nomination of

Name.....

Address.....

He/she has agreed to accept the nomination.

Name of proposer.....Signature.....

I wish to second this nomination.

Name of seconder.....Signature.....

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## Hens' Orchard Wassail 2019



■ This year's wassail took place on a cold and snowy Saturday in February

**O**ur third annual Wassail community event took place on Saturday 3rd February. Again, we had a near disastrous brush with the English weather when a heavy snowfall on the Friday threatened to stop our fun. Mercifully, Saturday dawned fine and bright but bitterly cold.

An immediate challenge was to clear the Tithe Barn platform for musicians and an area in front for the performers. Six of our volunteers took two hours in the afternoon to shovel, sweep and salt the areas which were covered in icy impacted snow.

Our efforts were rewarded when Brian Elliott ignited a welcoming blaze on the green, Iford Cider set up their stall offering hot mulled cider, the Coffee Barn lit up to serve hot drinks and, in the West Barn, free spiced apple cake made by our splendid volunteers

was available. Our local musicians 'warmed up' the atmosphere with lively traditional tunes and an enthusiastic crowd gathered as local vocalists, Eagle Alley, started proceedings with our own Wassail Song and Holt Morris danced in their usual sprightly way.

Not surprisingly, crowd numbers were down a little this year, deterred by the icy paths around the town – but, encouragingly, many families with children attended.

This year, for the first time, the excellent Widcombe Mummers from Bath gave us a specially written and humorous play on an apple and cider theme before we all processed, led by the musicians and performers, into magically snow covered Hens' Orchard. Overseen by our young Wassail Queen, the



■ At the Tithe Barn, the 2019 Wassail was attended by families with children, despite the bitterly cold weather

traditional chants and ceremonies took place. Kate Nicholls and family members helped youngsters to ‘water’ the trees with cider and place robin-friendly toast in the branches.

Our imposing musket man, ‘borrowed’ by John Potter from the Civil War Re-enactment Society, fired loud and blazing shots into the night sky to signal the start and finish of the most effective ‘hullabaloo’, to scare off evil spirits and nasty bugs, according to tradition.

Back at the Tithe Barn, proceedings ended with the Gloucester Wassail song and a final dance by Holt Morris before a series of rousing cheers for everyone involved, signalling time for all to hurry off to warm homes!

This year we were fortunate to have Joe Venables produce a fine video of the event and also Trevor Porter of the *Wiltshire Times*, who took many good photographs, one of which appeared in that week’s edition along with a short article describing the event (more could be seen on-line).

Huge thanks to the Preservation Trust for supporting the Wassail, to all the volunteers and performers and the stalwart crowd who braved the elements to make the event a success.

Waes Hael!

*Nick Nicholls*  
*Organiser*

**BRADFORD ON AVON PRESERVATION TRUST GARDEN PARTY**

WHEN: Sunday 22 September 4.30pm – 7.00pm

WHERE: Lynchetts, 15 Woolley Street, Bradford on Avon BA15 1AD

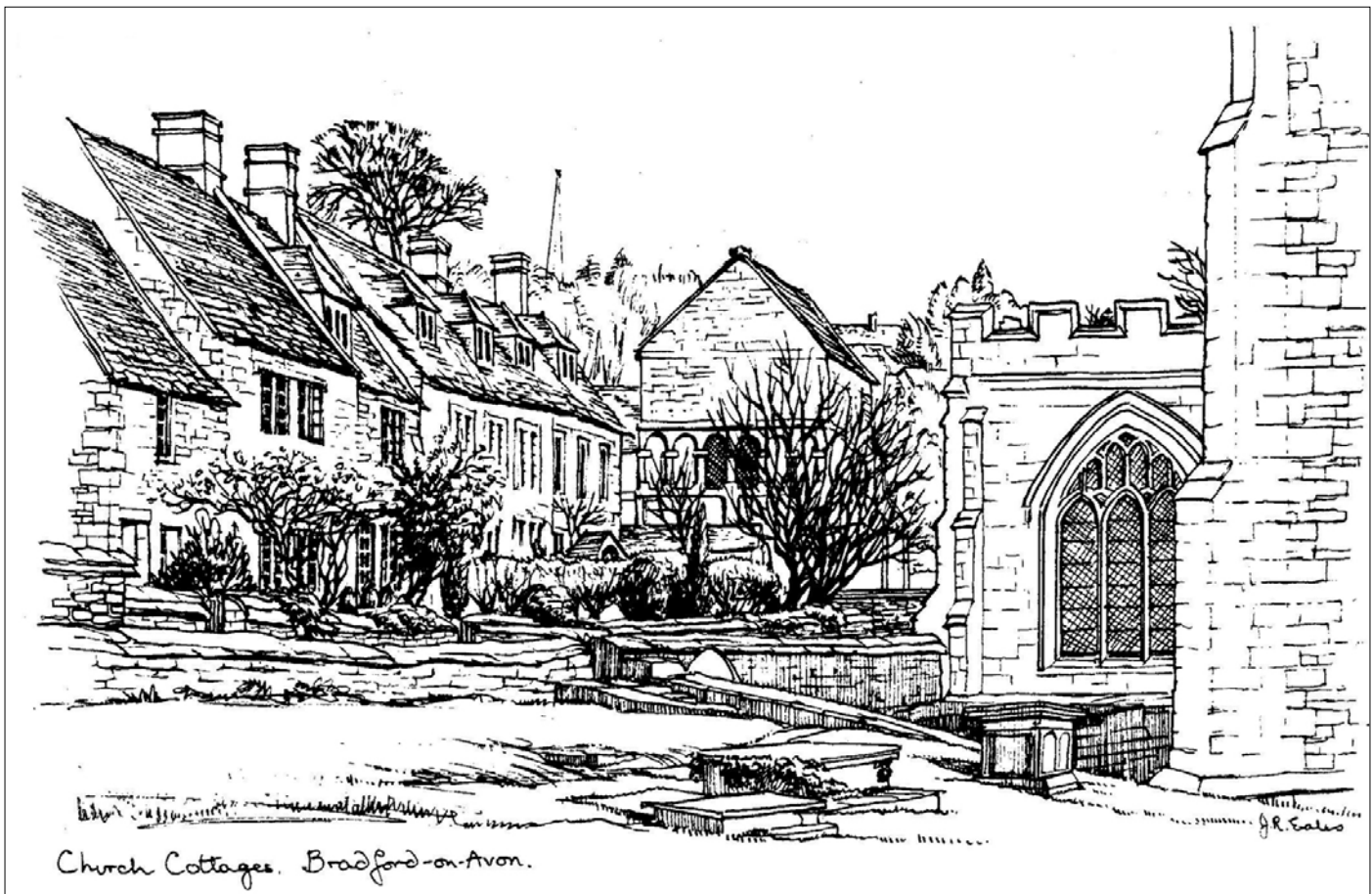
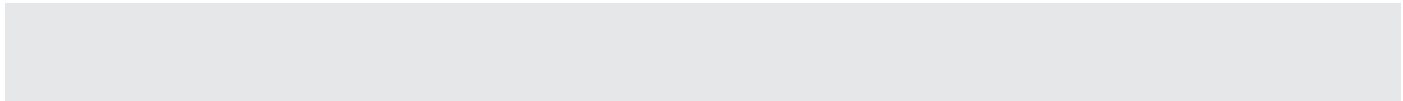
COST: £8.00 includes first drink, nibbles and musical entertainment by This Side of Paris.

Please fill out this form and return it, along with a SAE, to:  
Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust (Events)  
BoA Preservation Trust  
Silver Street House, Silver Street, Bradford on Avon BA15 1DE

Name(s) of attendee(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Primary contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_



# Diary

## Trust Meetings

In the Priory Barn, cost £2

### Wednesday 11 September

Tony Hack : BoA Monastic Barns' Protection

Symbols: From Past to Present

Coffee and biscuits 7.30pm, talk 8.00pm

### Wednesday 2 October

John Salvat: The Wonders of Archaeology

Coffee and biscuits 10.30am, talk 11.00am

### Wednesday 6 November

Coffee Morning with David Green: Autumn and the Secret Flora of Bradford on Avon

Coffee and biscuits at 10.30am; talk at 11.00am

## Other Trust Events

### Sunday 23 June

#### Community Garden Party – fun for all the family

Barton Farmyard 2.00pm – 4.30pm

Tea! Cakes! Games! FREE!

If you are interested in helping with this event, please contact Paige at [paigeatwestbarn@gmail.com](mailto:paigeatwestbarn@gmail.com)

### Wednesday 24 July

#### Open Forum

Priory Barn at 8.00pm

Members only. Refreshments

### Tuesday 17 September

#### Trip: Visit Woodchester Mansion – an unfinished masterpiece

<http://www.woodchestermansion.org.uk/HomePage.aspx>

Cost: £30 – includes coach fare, private tour of the Mansion and coffee and biscuits

We will be stopping in Nailsworth on our return where participants can have a bite to eat (not included in the cost). Specific departure time details to follow, although it will be between 9am and 10am. Please send a cheque – payable to Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust – to BoA Preservation Trust, Events, Silver Street House, Silver Street, Bradford on Avon BA15 1DE

For more information, please contact Paige at [paigeatwestbarn@gmail.com](mailto:paigeatwestbarn@gmail.com)

### Sunday 22 September

#### Trust Members' Garden Party – Members and guests only

4.30pm – 7.00pm in the gardens of Lynchetts, 15 Woolley Street, by kind permission of George and Glenys Lunt. Drinks, nibbles and music by This Side of Paris

Please fill in and return the application form on page 19 – a photocopy of the form is acceptable if you do not want to spoil your copy of *Guardian Angel*.

## Other Events

### Sunday 30 June

**Secret Gardens:** Tickets available from the Tourism Office in Westbury Gardens and Made in Bradford in Lamb Yard.

*Guardian Angel* is published three times a year. It is distributed free to member households, to Wiltshire Council, Bradford on Avon Town Council and to local and national conservation bodies. Copies are also for sale at Ex Libris bookshop, The Shambles, Bradford on Avon. Back copies can be found at [www.bradfordheritage.co.uk/guardianangel.php](http://www.bradfordheritage.co.uk/guardianangel.php)

We are glad to receive contributions from Trust members and from non-members. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policies of the Trust's Council of Management. Please send typed, drawn or photographic contributions, in electronic form, to [guardianangel@bradfordheritage.co.uk](mailto:guardianangel@bradfordheritage.co.uk).

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Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust welcomes new members. Please contact Ann Dix, Membership Secretary, Silver Street House, Silver Street, Bradford on Avon BA15 1JY (01225 865733 – this is an answerphone) or go to the membership page on the Trust's website: [www.bradfordheritage.co.uk](http://www.bradfordheritage.co.uk)

This edition of *Guardian Angel* was edited by Angela and David Moss. We are grateful to David and Jo Parkes who arrange distribution, to all those in Bradford on Avon who deliver copies and, above all, to our contributors, without whom *Guardian Angel* could not exist.

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[www.bradfordheritage.co.uk](http://www.bradfordheritage.co.uk)

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