



GUARDIAN ANGEL

NEWS FROM BRADFORD ON AVON PRESERVATION TRUST

Notes from the Chair

I wasn't sure that I should mention the current situation but now that even Ambridge is in lockdown, I couldn't really avoid it, especially after the sad news that our previous Chair of Planning, Jocelyn Feilding, was admitted to hospital with ongoing problems but contracted Covid-19 there and passed away just days before his 80th birthday. An obituary and many fond reminiscences appear on page 13 of this issue of *Guardian Angel*.

The disease is a terrible thing. Kevin Elliot, champion vegetable grower and very popular plumber, had it earlier this year and had an absolutely awful time. Even though infection rates remain quite low in Wiltshire, Covid-19 has had a huge effect on normal daily life in Bradford on Avon. Everything has been closed – the library, museum, churches, many shops, the pubs and cafés; I wasn't able to have an argument with Gilou for weeks. The great doors of the Tithe Barn remain firmly closed until further notice.

Four months in, however, there are signs of life, with some of the town's pubs back in business following the easing of restrictions on 4 July. The Coffee Barn near the Tithe Barn is open for takeaways and Sparky and his

magic ice-creams are often in place nearby. Ex Libris and the two newsagents are open – and Dean at Brown's Hardware never closed, thank goodness.

But there will be many problems for some time to come: it is hard to see how the Wiltshire Music Centre will be able to operate 'normally' – whatever that is – any time soon. At The Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust everything is on hold; both the Priors Barn and the West Barn are closed so there are no monthly talks, there were no Secret Gardens no Open Forum, and worst of all, for me, the Tithe Barn's first barn dance in over 20 years was cancelled. It was to have been the grand finale to the Green Man Festival, so it's now a 'wait and see' for 2021.

And there have been some positives. The Stay at Home message, nice and simple to understand, combined with the sunniest spring on record has had many of us, lucky enough to have a garden or allotment, digging, tidying, sowing, planting and generally worrying about our favourites. I have great hopes for my runner beans this year, weak and feeble with poor crops last year, they are very sturdy and looking better than I can ever remember. I just hope that the badger who visits regularly keeps his

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digging in between the plants.

The slower pace has certainly given me a chance to ponder on some of the crop. Why are some radishes called French Breakfast? Surely the French don't eat radishes that early. Does a Burpless Cucumber really make people burp less? Todd C Whener, a professor in horticultural science from North Carolina State University, tested various cultivars to find out – but with not much success.

What did Princess Diana think when she had a runner bean named after her? “Lady Di, an attractive and first class quality as indeed the name would suggest. It produces long, slender stringless pods on vigorous plants.”

If you have seen the island of Ailsa Craig you will understand why there is an onion of that name. But why the most popular leek is named after Musselburgh is anyone's guess.

Bradford on Avon is good at innovation and Secret Gardens have come up with an excellent one. Visiting all those lovely gardens was not on the cards for 2020 but we can all enjoy them virtually, on line at http://www.facebook.com/BradfordonAvonSecretGardens/videos/1132740410439820/?modal=admin_todotour – you don't have to be a Facebook punter to access the tour, thank goodness.

The Flower Show committee has decided to cancel this year's event, due to have been held on Sunday 6 September, rather than attempt to arrange a virtual show. After all, the joy of the event is seeing so many people crammed into St Margaret's Hall, eyeing up the veg displays and the Victoria sandwiches, never mind the fiercely contested jam, marmalade and lemon curds. But hopefully people will still have a chance to show what they've achieved in their gardens and homes over this extraordinary spring and summer. Keep an eye on the Town Council website for more information.

And let's not forget that there have been many good things happening as a result of the world shutting down for a bit. BBC Radio 4's man in Nepal, for instance, was heard standing on the roof of his office in Kathmandu looking to see if he could see Mount Everest 160km away after the traffic smog had cleared during the past weeks. More locally it has been possible to hear birds singing in Market Street. Last week I was walking Alfie, our really old dog (he is actually slower than me), and we met a man also out walking. “Lovely day to do absolutely nothing,” I greeted him. “Yes,” he replied. “Some people think we are all going to hell in a handcart, but I have just walked to Lidl and back and I have seen three cars. It's wonderful.”

And one fine morning a few weeks ago I wandered slowly with the dogs through a field in Winsley. It was like walking through an Impressionist painting. In the distance, a thin white haze of tall daisies, before them streaks of different shades of green, splashes of light

brown seed heads and, dotted among it all, dabs of yellow from tall buttercups and hawkweed. Here and there was a puff of dandelion, little specks of dark brown seeds of tall grasses and, at the gate, a froth of cow parsley. I mention this as there is a chance to have something like this in Bradford. The old golf course is closed and wild growth is taking over. As those of you who get our email Community News will already know, a small group of people is hoping to become a very large group, which will attempt to buy the land and turn it into permanent meadow and woodland, keeping it as part of a great green corridor from Bristol and Bath to Malmesbury, rather than yet another building site.

Long term, commuter transport is going to have to change: hundreds of people crammed into trains is not a good idea and more people getting into cars is not the answer either. Work practices are also changing: many more meetings will be held online: Zoom has more than 300 million meeting participants daily – even I have had a go. My third attempt worked eventually but I was the one with the dog barking.

The government has also promised 2 billion quid to improve walking and cycling to work. The Mayor and I are having discussions about cycling provision here. We are hoping to talk to a cycling organisation about the possibilities of working with them, BANES and Wiltshire Council to improve the cycle route from Trowbridge and Bradford to Bath.

Another Covid benefit to Bradford is West Wilts Radio, broadcasting on 87.7FM, and one of only four to get a 'Covid licence'. There is regular local news and programmes, three members of the Trust's council of management are playing music: Paige is on Mondays 7-8pm with Musical Connections; Andrew Eberlin is live on Thursdays 3-5pm and I, being rather old, have to wait to get back into the studio to do my Monday afternoon show.

In other news you might have seen the rather vivid yellow lines painted in Church Street. Historic and heritage areas can be spared these, and narrower and less vivid ones are applied. The Preservation Trust reported this pretty quickly, the contractor returned to redo the job and you can see the result outside The Swan. Since then we have arranged that in future Wiltshire will contact Ian Brown at the Town Council, who will get in touch with us. If there is anything they should be reminded about, we will be able to deal with it straight away.

Derrick Hunt has been in touch to say that CLUB was hoping to start again at the beginning of July. If you would like to join the gang on a Monday morning, contact Derrick at derrickjohnhunt@gmail.com Hopefully the small team of bus shelter cleaners will be able to begin then too.

It will all be over soon; until then, stay safe.

John Potter, Chairman

The singular charm of the church at the top of the town

There is much to admire and enjoy in Bradford on Avon's Victorian Christ Church, says Rosie MacGregor, chair of the Trust's planning committee

It is all too easy to write off Christ Church as not sharing the historic significance or beauty of other churches in the town such as Holy Trinity, the Saxon Church or St Mary Tory but anyone thinking that would be mistaken.

The importance of Christ Church, which is located in a prominent position at the junction of Masons Lane with Bath Road and Mount Pleasant, on the hillside above the town should not be underestimated. It is an imposing Grade II* Listed building, constructed from Bath stone under a Welsh slate roof, which makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Many generations of local residents have worshipped in this impressive Anglican Church and there remains strong local support for this much-loved building. The importance of the clock, no longer in working order, as a timekeeper for those in the locality should also not be underestimated.

The original church, its nave and west tower in the perpendicular style, was designed by Bath City Architect George P Manners, who was well known for his civic and ecclesiastical work.

The foundation stone was laid on 12 September 1839 and the building was consecrated on 17 November 1841. Local builders Jones Brothers, who were based in Tory, carried out the work using locally quarried stone from their quarries on Jones Hill – the hill off Frome Road named after the family. The famous, if occasionally controversial, Gothic Revival architect Sir George Gilbert Scott designed the east end, which was added in 1877, and in 1878 the fine oak eagle lectern. His son, John Oldrid Scott, subsequently worked on the design of other parts of the interior.

The Lady Chapel by Charles Edward Ponting, noted for his work on many of Wiltshire's churches, was added in

The 1881 wall decorations are by stained glass specialists Burlison and Grylls. The angels depicted on the west wall of the nave remain in need of conservation



The church's decorative interior provides a surprising contrast with the somewhat austere exterior

1919 and contains a memorial to Charles Eric Moulton of The Hall who was killed in World War I.

The interior of Christ Church comes as a delightful surprise compared with the church's somewhat austere external appearance. The excellent wall decorations of 1881 by Burlison and Grylls, better known for their stained glass, are magnificent, as is the brilliance and vivid colour of the stained glass windows by James Powell and Sons.

The majority of the wall paintings were cleaned and conserved as a millennium project by expert conservator Peter Martindale in 2004. The exception is the west wall of the nave where the wall decoration including two large figures of angels – the word 'angel' means messenger from God – on each side of the west door and a third angel above the door, remains in much need of conservation. The west wall paintings depict three archangels. The left (south side) shows Gabriel holding a lily, symbol of the annunciation to Mary that she would give birth to Jesus; on the right (north side) is Raphael, the angel of healing, holding a fish, as described in the Apocrypha story of Tobias and the Angel. The central angel, above the door, is Michael killing the dragon – a scene from the story in Revelation about war breaking out in heaven.

Those areas of the nave north and south walls that were not restored as part of the millennium project are painted in an unfortunate drab mushroom colour, unlike the bright original surface beneath, and the unrestored paintwork has suffered from efflorescence.



Like so many churches, Christ Church suffers from a dwindling congregation and initiatives for a viable future are currently being proposed and funding being sought.

The two carved stone angels at the Saxon Church are used as our own emblem, feature on our headed notepaper and give their name to this publication.

Trust member Neil Andrews wrote to the editor earlier this year with the following observations about Christ Church, and its clock in particular:

To my knowledge, *he writes*, it has not worked for two decades and, like any mechanism, looks very sad when not in operation – particularly when in such a prominent position in the town. The gilding has fallen off the skeletal faces so they are all but invisible. I know nothing of the mechanism but I assume it to be clockwork still and driven by a weight –but I would gladly contribute in any way to its restoration. So I was very happy to see that interest is being taken in the church by the trust and hope you will consider the clock in this.

The Pevsner entry for the church refers to the progress of the Gothic Revival in its two distinct phases. The second phase began in 1841 with the publication of *The True Principles of Gothic Architecture*, by AWN Pugin, who was a fierce critic of what he considered the use of incorrect detail founded on historical precedent. So if we were to look at the tower of Christ Church through Pugin's eyes, he would have said that the buttresses were too thin to

I propose that the Preservation Trust provides grant aid towards remedial initiatives to conserve these exceptional west wall paintings with their own angels; to improve the lighting so that these wall decorations can be seen in all their splendour; and towards the repair and restoration of the clock.

support the tower and the pinnacles too flimsy to add weight for giving the buttresses extra strength – that in fact the flying buttresses were purely ornamental.

To see what he was getting at, and for a completely unfair comparison, consider the tower of Louth in Lincolnshire which has the same motifs. The Pevsner entry for this building reads: "It has good claims to be the most perfect of Perpendicular steeples." There are some good photos of it on the web.

For my own part, I can appreciate both the decorative use of Gothic in Manners' design and the functional use in Scott's addition.

Clocks on church towers are always interesting from the point of view of where to put them. The Christ Church clock looks designed for its position and if it were regilded we could read it easily. The clock at St James, Trowbridge, is fitted in between the battlements, and the clocks of Wellow and Castle Combe have no face at all. Here, all that was considered necessary was that people working in the town and fields could hear the strike every quarter hour.



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West Wilts Radio: overcoming the (social) distance

Bradford on Avon's community radio station is keeping people in touch during lockdown and beyond - and providing great entertainment for its ever-growing audience

West Wilts Radio (WWR), a new community radio station serving Bradford on Avon and the surrounding areas, was launched in November 2019 by Simon McNeill-Ritchie and Dave Garwood. Ofcom, the regulatory body that controls access to the UK's airwaves, immediately awarded WWR a 28-day licence to transmit on the FM waveband in the run up to Christmas, but since then the radio station has been limited to broadcasting online.

That was until the outbreak of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic, when Bradford on Avon Town Council and the Community Emergency Volunteers recognised the role WWR could play in providing timely local information to residents, particularly the elderly, the vulnerable and those in more remote parts of the area. WWR applied to Ofcom for permission to resume broadcasting on FM as an emergency measure, supported by the leader of the Town Council Dom Newton, and MP Michelle Donelan. Subsequently, Ofcom announced in April the creation of a special Covid-19 licence for the duration of the emergency. WWR is currently one of only four community radio stations in the UK to have been licensed in this way.

WWR has adapted its programming considerably in response, providing frequent updates throughout the day on government guidance and public health announcements, as well as extensive coverage of developments within the local area. Taking centre stage is long-term Bradford resident and national radio professional, Steve Fountain, who presents a daily weekday show – Lock-Ups & Downs – between noon and 3pm. WWR has also done its bit to support the town's businesses by advertising the opening times and services of those that have continued to operate.

The team at WWR has grown enormously in spite of – or because of – the emergency. While some of the previous presenters have been unable to deliver their programmes during the lockdown, a small core has stepped up with extra shows. And more and more people are using the spare time unexpectedly available to them to create new programmes of their own at home, with a little help from WWR. From just two presenters on air for two



Broadcasting to the town: Dave Garwood, Simon McNeill-Ritchie and Steve Fountain

hours a day in December, WWR now has 25 presenters broadcasting an average of nine hours of original material seven days a week.

The new service has come at a cost, however. While Ofcom waived its usual fees, WWR has still had to pay government broadcast fees: together with the hire of transmission equipment, the costs work out at £50 per day. Advertising revenue from local businesses had dried up completely, but the management team at WWR felt the need and opportunity for the radio station was such that they decided to stump up the funds themselves – over £3,000. The special Covid-19 licence was extended until 15 July, but no further, so we are continuing to pursue the goal of a permanent FM licence. In the meantime, you can tune into West Wilts Radio online at www.westwiltsradio.com

If you have an idea for a programme, want to get involved, or would like to advertise on WWR simply send an email to studio@westwiltsradio.com

WWR
WEST WILTS RADIO

Lockdown diaries

Preservation Trust members share their experiences of the early weeks of lockdown; we would welcome more accounts of life in Bradford during this extraordinary year

I have spent quite a bit of time over the last 10 weeks getting to know my father. No, I have not been locked down with him, though I guess it would be just technically possible – he would have been 107. In fact he was shot and killed by bandits in Hong Kong in 1947 and I have no memory of him at all – but I do have the letters he wrote my mother in 1942 when he was in Sierra Leone and she had to return to England for my birth. Finally, I have had the time to read these properly as in late March Bill, my husband, was sent a letter saying he was regarded as ‘extremely vulnerable’ so should not leave the house for at least 12 weeks – and here we still are.

Our garden is precipitous, but a haven. It is becoming wilder and wilder but if I can’t go to wild places the wild must come to me and it has wild flowers, bees, butterflies, moths and birds, but also gooseberries, rhubarb, potatoes, wild strawberries, roses to pick and apples and tomatoes to come.

We can stand and gaze down on the town, feeling more and more remote from life there, though news filters through: the swans are not nesting in their usual spot, Karen is not coming back (a huge blow), the market is gradually reopening. Friends and family keep in touch, our son and the wonderfully organised Christine and cheerful Max keep us fed and we are OK and at last with the time to transcribe those letters.

We all fret about not seeing our families but my goodness, compared to those separated in 1942 how well off we are. My mother departed by sea for England in September 1942, I was born in December and, apart from a cable telling him I had arrived and was Rowena, not the expected Peter Charles, it was a month before he had a letter giving him any details of my arrival and over two months before the longed-for photos arrived.

When they did: “Among the letters which arrived this morning was the one which contained the two negatives ... by holding them up to the light I could see the pictures of Rowena quite well. With a box camera darling, it is almost impossible to get a good photo indoors without taking a time exposure. Can’t you manage to take one out of doors one fine morning?” Oh, the gentle anguish.

How they would have appreciated Zoom and Skype – but

how I appreciate the opportunity in this strange time to have these letters, the leisure to transcribe them and to feel I now know my father a little better.

Rowena Quantrill

Generally we have found lockdown quite relaxing, although we are very careful with hygiene and social distancing, involving gloves, anti-bac wipes, hand sanitiser, lots of hand-washing – and masks on our only venture to a local garden centre. Neighbours do our shopping and recently we have achieved a click and collect slot with a supermarket. We buy a lot of things online. Thanks for technology!

As a widow, the best is sharing a house with someone else. The worst is missing our families. We can have video calls but it is not the same as being together, particularly where grandchildren are concerned.

We decided straight away to walk every day, early, when everywhere is quiet. That is the highlight of the day. I walk across the fields to Westwood or Lye Green and sometimes along the canal or river. Anne usually walks along the canal. We follow the daily press conference on TV and the news broadcasts; we work in our small garden, which enables us to chat to neighbours sometimes and the glorious weather has enabled us to sit outside. I have an online dance class once a week and a Zoom ‘coffee morning’ with other dancers. We both have Zoom meetings with golfing friends. I miss art class, but we chat and show pictures on our WhatsApp group.

We are nervous about going out – to shops and the town centre, when we are eventually ‘unlocked’. Although we are fit, healthy and active elderly women, we feel very vulnerable because of our ages – there seems to be no sure way of protecting ourselves other than isolating and there are so many necessary life actions that cannot be accomplished without contact – visits to the dentist, hairdresser, chiropodist, chiropractor, cinema, theatre, library, almost any form of sport, fitness or cultural activity. At least we don’t have to think about returning to work!

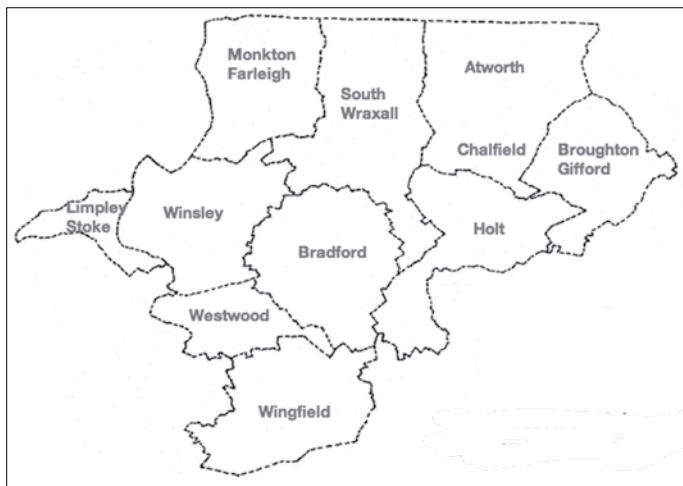
Ruth Black and Anne Hallows



A walking tour of the Bradford Hundred, April/May 2020

Confined by lockdown to Bradford on Avon and its immediate surroundings, Roger Jones set out to explore on foot the villages of the Bradford Hundred

Lockdown began towards the end of March. Fine weather persisted throughout April and May – ideal walking conditions. Unable to go anywhere in the car, at least daily exercise was possible by walking out and back from town. Following several outings to nearby villages it occurred to me that I could complete a project to walk to all nine villages within the Bradford Hundred, those being Holt, Broughton Gifford, Atworth, Limpley Stoke, Monkton Farleigh, South Wraxall, Westwood, Winsley and Wingfield.



According to the Bradford on Avon Museum website: “A Hundred was the administrative division below that of the Shire, or County. The name was probably originally related to the area of land nominally required to support a hundred eligible families. Hundreds and Shires came into being in the Saxon period, perhaps as early as the 7th century. Bradford’s Hundred Court was nominally held by the Abbess of Shaftesbury, presided over by her Reeve or Steward and may have been held in Bradford.

“The next level of administration down was the Tithing, which began as the area of land that supported 10 families.

“After the Dissolution of the abbeys in 1539 the Hundred continued to exist until quite recent times, being gradually eroded by local government and legal changes.”

In the Spring 2020 edition of *Guardian Angel* I looked back at Bradford on Avon as described in a *West Wilts Directory* dating from 1940. Details of the town are followed by those for the villages within the Bradford Hundred so that, even 400 years after the Dissolution, the Bradford Hundred remained a unit of significance.

WALK 1: Limpley Stoke

Many Bradfordians will be familiar with the canal towpath and the riverside path which lead to Avoncliff

with its weir, former mill buildings, Cross Guns pub and impressive Ancliff Square. The path continues below Avoncliff Wood.

This was acquired recently by the Woodland Trust, which has planted some 10,000 trees in the field before the hanging wood which slopes down to the river.

The bridge across the River Frome takes us from Wiltshire into Somerset via the attractive village of Freshford. Once past its Victorian school buildings, the road rises and enters Wiltshire once more. Church Street ascends to the ancient St Mary’s parish church, which stands proudly at the top of the village, like a cherry on top of a sandwich cake. This could fairly be termed ‘Upper Stoke’. Now follow the lane indicated Middle Stoke. A guide to Bath and neighbourhood published in the 1880s describes the Limpley Stoke as “one of the most picturesque villages. The houses are built with charming irregularity on the side of a hill”.

On your ramble through Middle Stoke you may spot a former Baptist Chapel, dated 1815, a modest war memorial and the Village Hall. There is a scroll over an old entrance door here which reads ‘GET WISDOM, GET UNDERSTANDING’. This is a clue to its former incarnation as the village school (closed 1932).

Climbing up to meet the A36, the former Rose and Crown pub has been converted to residential accommodation. It’s possible to cut the walk short here by descending Woods Lane to Lower Stoke. However, in order to perambulate Limpley Stoke in its entirety, cross over to reach a dilapidated kissing gate, then take the delightful path through a wild wood. A high point at a clearing is reached before descending to Waterhouse.

Follow the path beside Wellow Brook, a stream that begins in the foothills of the Mendips and here marks



Station Garage in Limpley Stoke with the recently closed village shop and post office next door. The telephone kiosk, now reincarnated as the Book Box, is away to the left, towards the disused railway station

the county boundary. On the opposite bank is Monkton Combe and the course of the old Somerset and Dorset railway. At the lane ascend back towards Upper Stoke, then down again, across the A36 to the top of Woods Lane. At the foot of this vertiginous way is the Hop Pole Inn, whose future is in doubt. Bear right here, head beneath the railway and follow the Avon back to town.

WALK 2: Monkton Farleigh

Begin at Ashley Road and set sail across a number of wide fields towards Inwoods, where a huge number of trees have been recently planted courtesy of Brian May, the rock guitarist and astrophysicist. These will substantially increase the existing area of woodland. Walk past the Arts and Crafts style Inwoods House to reach the Bath Road at Farleigh Wick and its abandoned pub.

More spacious fields lead to Monkton Farleigh, a village with a school, community-owned pub – the famously haunted King’s Arms – but without a shop or Post Office (it closed in 2014). At the crossroads in the centre of the village, a raised stone platform must indicate the original location of the village pump – a sign attached to a step below is surely evidence of this.

Heading out of the village at a north-easterly point the county boundary is reached, marked by a low stone wall. Now follow the Pepperpot Trail (the Pepperpot refers to nearby Brown’s Folly). This is a gradually descending path through a wooded slope always in sight of the stone wall



Arts and Crafts style Inwoods House; below, advisory sign at the village pump



that marks the county boundary.

From the road the Dry Arch is soon reached and, once again, a well marked path through woodland leads across the county boundary near Conkwell and thence across fields back to Bradford.

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WALK 3: Winsley, Turleigh and Conkwell

Leave Bradford by Belcombe Road which soon forks; take the right fork, which rises towards Turleigh, where an inspiring view across the Avon valley soon opens up. Turleigh sits in a valley within a valley. The names of several properties hint at their former use. These include The Old Prince of Wales (village pub, closed 1952), The Forge, The Old Bakery, The Old Post Office and The Old Tannery, all pointing to the village being so much more active and self-sufficient in times past.

Impressive Turleigh Manor occupies the point where the village street turns back on itself along Green Lane and past many more attractive dwellings.



Turleigh Manor

Once past Turleigh Croft, an ascending footpath leads to the much more expansive village of Winsley. The thoroughfare that winds through the old village centre was relieved of through traffic with the opening of a bypass in the late 20th century. Much new housing has been erected in the village plus shops, a health centre and new school; it also retains its pub, the Seven Stars.

The village's elevated position made it an ideal spot for a sanatorium – later Winsley Chest Hospital – which opened in 1903 and which now forms the heart of Dorothy House Hospice. The sprawling Avon Park Residential Home is also to be found at the edge of the village.

Opposite is Blackberry Lane. A footpath through woodland below the lane offers an even pleasanter route to the diminutive but delightful hamlet of Conkwell. The community notice board reminds us that Winsley, Turleigh and Conkwell are united in the moniker of the local Women's Institute: Winturwell. From Conkwell, field paths lead back to Bradford.

WALK 4: Westwood and Wingfield

As in the first walk, leave Bradford by heading towards Avoncliff. Once past Ancliff Square, bear left, uphill, towards Upper Westwood. Beyond the newly planted trees is a community orchard with a wonderful variety of apple and pear trees – read their names on the notice here, they are pure poetry.

Once Westwood and its interesting streetscape has been reached, walk through its park where a wide path winds its way along an avenue of cherry trees. Westwood is surely the only village in the Bradford Hundred which boasts its own park.

Like Winsley, Westwood has expanded greatly since it was described in the 1940 Directory. The village shop is a single storey annex at the side of a house in a more recent neighbourhood in which Westwood School is also located. Further on we pass a house signed 'Old Baptist Chapel', near Westwood Social Club. Opposite is the old school, dated 1841. Steps close by lead to a footpath which, if followed, arrive quite suddenly at the splendidly sculpted tower of Westwood Church and, beyond, the National Trust's Westwood Manor.



An outstanding cluster of buildings: St Mary's Church with Westwood Manor

Now cross fields to reach the Wingfield crossroads. Many of us have driven past the corner enclosure here which displays a crucifix, a pair of commemorative panels and a bench. Arriving on foot allows a closer look. One of the notices lists local men who fell in two world wars and another commemorates Wingfield House and its use as a nursing home in the Great War (there is a French connection; hence, one assumes, the crucifix).

The Poplars pub should, according to its sign, perhaps be known as The Cricketers – it stands adjacent to a cricket pitch surrounded by poplar trees.

Heading into the village we pass the Mead Primary School dating back to 1849; 'a year of peculiar mercies', according to the tablet above the gable. Further on is the

former Rectory and finally St Mary's Church, with peace to be found in its churchyard.

Pleasant field paths lead back to Wingfield Road and from there via Rowden Lane – actually a green way – to Bradford, where it emerges at Sainsbury's.

WALK 5: Holt, Great Chalfield and Broughton Gifford

Without risking being mown down on the main road, Holt is difficult to reach on foot. The necessarily circuitous route is via Bradford Leigh and the road to Chalfield. The pavement terminates at the former Plough Inn. On the right is The Old Chapel which was new to me. It is, in fact, an example of a 'tin church', many of which were hastily erected in otherwise unchurched neighbourhoods. This one has been converted to serve as a residence.

Field paths lead to Holt and the old heart of the village around Ham Green, with its two pubs. The open green houses the village war memorial and a monumental bench at its centre.



The Old Chapel, a former Tin Church

Progressing along The Street we pass Holt Playing Field which, according to the tablet at its entrance, serves also as a memorial to villagers who gave their lives in World War II. The United Church is to the right, comprising two buildings in contrasting architectural styles. Beyond are The Courts, whose gardens are open to the public, courtesy of the National Trust.

Now head along The Midlands, past the Glove Factory Studios where former industrial premises have been repurposed, with great flair, into 'a workspace hub made up of thriving start-ups, creative entrepreneurs and independent professionals'. Work continues to convert further disused structures as well as building anew. In former times Holt possessed considerable industry in the shape of Beaven Leather and Glove Works and Sawtell Bedding, which must have required a sizable work force.

The Midlands contain a fascinating mixed bag of buildings: industrial, domestic, old and very recent.

An attractive house set back to the left was purchased by



Christopher Beaven's house in The Midlands

Christopher Beaven in 1758; presumably the letter B on the front gate is a sort of signature.

From the end of The Midlands field paths lead to Great Chalfield with its stunning and ancient manor, yet another National Trust property and much featured on film and television, most recently in *Wolf Hall* and *Poldark*.

Yet more field paths lead to the village of Broughton Gifford and, specifically, the south-eastern corner of its wide, grassy Common. The view across can be enjoyed from a bench here which bears an inscription in memory of a local couple who lived overlooking the Common for their 66 years of marriage. Walking around and across the Common takes us past the cricket pitch, Gifford Hall and a Baptist Chapel to the far corner and The Bell on the Green.

Walking along The Street we pass a former Methodist Chapel, the Old Shop (no longer a shop), the pub latterly known as the Rusty Stag (likewise extinct) until, after more than a mile, we reach the far edge of the village at St Mary's Church (St Mary clearly being the most popular dedication among villages in the Bradford Hundred).

From the church a fresh succession of field paths leads back to Great Chalfield, to Merkins Farm and, finally returns us to Bradford.

WALK 6: Atworth and South Wraxall

Being least acquainted with Atworth and it being the most distant of the villages within the Bradford Hundred, this was my final outing.

As in Walk 5, I set out from Bradford towards The

Plough and the road to Chalfield but branched off in a northerly direction via a long and lonely road to Atworth. For much of its course, the way is lined with high hedges so that the walker cannot avoid feeling somewhat hemmed in with only occasional glimpses across fields to either side. It was thus something of a relief eventually to forsake the tarmac and head across fields and emerge at a point somewhere near the centre of Atworth's main thoroughfare. The village bestrides the old Bath Road, once the main route from London. The impressive 18th century White Hart pub must have served many a traveller down the centuries.

There is a conspicuous absence of shops hereabouts although, at the eastern extremity of the village, there is a Texaco service station which also serves as the village shop and Post Office.

Just before the junction with Bradford Road, at a slightly elevated spot, stands Atworth's landmark building, a clock tower erected to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897. The tower also serves as the village's war memorial. At the junction itself sits The Old Toll House. Now, heading along Bradford Road, a number of properties are encountered, including the school (1828), which grow older as the church is approached. This is a building of two rather mismatched halves: an ancient tower and a Victorian nave.

From the church, first a track passes beside Stonar School, then a succession of field paths lead across the main road towards South Wraxall Manor. This spectacular building is described by Pevsner as "an outstandingly successful mixture of the 15th century and the later Elizabethan and Jacobean ... what features of both periods remain are outstanding". The house belongs to a founder of the pop band Duran Duran and is not open to the public.

South Wraxall is a village of parts: first the manor and its adjacent farm, then south to what might be called the village centre, with the church, pub and village hall (formerly the school). Finally, across a field to reach Lower Wraxall, perhaps the most populous section.

A choice of field paths, both enjoyable, leads back to Bradford: one route heads south from Home Farm towards Fairfield and another peels off the lane to Cumberwell along field edges that flank the landfill site.

* * *

Thus ended my walking tour of the Bradford Hundred and the villages that lie at the heart of each of its nine tithings. I set out to compare the facilities on offer today with those described in a 1940 *West Wilts Directory*. It was no surprise to find that many of the schools, shops and pubs were no longer. Post offices too have vanished, though a handful have transferred to the village shop, where one still exists. Telephone kiosks are all defunct, though retained as local landmarks and frequently converted into 'village libraries'. Post boxes remain in situ and enjoy daily collections. In times past, the local Post Office had at least twice daily deliveries and collections. The community-owned and staffed shop and pub is a



Atworth's 18C White Hart, a former coaching inn on the old Bath Road

recent development.

Villages which have fared better in terms of facilities are those that have experienced a substantial increase in population, such as Holt and Westwood. Holt, the most populous village in the Bradford Hundred, is creating new opportunities by redeveloping its old industrial hinterland. This means the village will act less as a dormitory for people who commute to work elsewhere.

All Bradford Hundred villages support a village hall where local groups, such as the WI, hold regular meetings. Some also host sports teams, notably cricket and bowls, though it's probably fair to say that those are not as well supported as once they were.

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Looking after the landscape

Photo: Andrew Rolph



Kate Nicholls, Nick Nicholls and Priscilla Roberts at work in Hens' Orchard earlier this summer

This winter we planted three more sponsored trees at Hens' Orchard – adding to our thriving collection of fruit trees. We carried out some pruning and just recently we were able to tidy and mulch around the trees. We've had to water the new trees during the very dry spell, but they all seem to be surviving and there are good signs of the harvest to come. Our groundsman Nobby keeps the paths clear and during lockdown local people have been spending some quiet time there among the trees.

Our long-term project to improve the wildflowers in North Meadow is slowly but surely making progress. This spring we had some cowslips and ragged robin, and by the beginning of June we were seeing a lot of yellow rattle, ox-eye daisies and meadow cranesbill. It's looking quite lovely in this sunny weather.

Good news from the Town Council is that a resolution

has been passed to “encourage biodiversity across the town in areas which the Town Council manage, in recognition of the threat posed by loss of habitat, the use of chemicals and climate change”.

This resolution was supported by the Preservation Trust Council of Management and Climate Friendly Bradford (full details can be seen on the Town Council website).

With the council's acquisition of Barton Farm Country Park and other green spaces around the town, this news is really encouraging.

I was also particularly delighted that the Town Council, along with Friends of Becky Addy Wood, the Preservation Trust, Climate Friendly Bradford and many individuals, have bought this important ancient woodland. I believe the wood is now in safe hands.

It's encouraging to have some positive news to report.

Kate Nicholls

Photo: Andrew Rolph



Trust volunteers tend the swimming pool borders



Becky Addy Wood

Jocelyn Feilding: 12 May 1940 – 9 May 2020

Jocelyn Feilding, former Bradford on Avon town councillor and long-time chair of the Preservation Trust planning committee, died in May, from complications arising from the Covid-19 virus, just three days shy of his 80th birthday.

Jocelyn went to school at Downside, and then studied at the Courtauld Institute of Fine Art, joining the Old Masters department at Sotheby's in 1960. He left to set up on his own in the mid-1960s, subsequently having his own Old Masters gallery in St James's, London.

He married Rowena Combes in 1963 and they had two daughters, Emma and Lucy. They divorced in 1983.

Jocelyn and Harriet moved to Bradford on Avon in the summer of 1997 and were married in February 1998.

As well as Harriet, and his daughters, Jocelyn leaves three grandchildren – Leon, Junay and Eva – and many friends, some of whom share their memories here.

I had come across Jocelyn several times at various town and district council meetings but didn't meet him properly until I was elected as a town councillor myself. As a new councillor elected to the planning committee, I found it quite daunting: after all there is nothing more likely to get an impassioned debate going in Bradford on Avon than a contentious planning application.

Jocelyn was then a dedicated chair of the Town Council planning committee. He made all the new councillors welcome and was keen to ensure that we all got an opportunity to participate in the discussion, gathering as many views as possible. He was keen to share his passion for the buildings of Bradford on Avon and encouraged everyone to be a part of preserving and enhancing the development of the town where we lived. He took it upon himself to visit the site of each planning application to ensure he understood the applications – and in most cases canvassed the opinions of the neighbours by knocking on their doors.

We first clashed on the subject of Velux windows. Those that know Jocelyn will know he considered Velux windows abhorrent and a blight on the skyline of Bradford on Avon as they twinkle in the sunshine, and he was not a man to shy away from expressing his opinion – a trait that I came to admire when I got to know him better. We did, however, find a common link in our joint passion for fenestration and spent the next six years with various other committee members considering the finer points of planning applications. Generally, though, the Town Council's refusals were overruled by West Wilts District Council planning department! When working through an application, regardless of its size, Jocelyn was keen to not lose sight of the detail – and definitely don't ask him for an opinion on an 'outline planning application'.

Even after losing a point over planning, Jocelyn still



engaged with many of the developers, and in many cases achieved small but significant changes. It is as I walk through Bradford now that I see these little details and will think of Jocelyn. Little details that enhance the beauty of Bradford and have contributed to the quality of the environment in which we all live.

Jocelyn to me was one of those great people that when you took the trouble to spend time with him you always came away far richer from the experience.

Peter Leach

I'm frequently reminded of Jocelyn when I drive northwards through Bradford and enjoy the green backdrop of trees growing on the hill that so enhances the setting of the town. It was Jocelyn, as a town councillor, who suggested the Town Council should do something to ensure that this key visual feature of the town was protected. The trees were duly listed and the Town Council took over their maintenance. This may be a small thing perhaps, but illustrates the keen eye and the attention to effective action that Jocelyn showed as a councillor.

Jocelyn came to talk to me before the 1999 election expressing his wish to become a town councillor: I pointed out that at that particular time, it helped to be a Lib Dem. He joined, canvassed and was duly elected. As with the hillside, he brought an acute eye for detail to the buildings and visual aspects of the town. He really cared what happened and was keen on the new, as well as preserving the old. He was an effective chairman of the planning committee and, among many other things, was involved with the Mount Pleasant Centre, chairing

the committee that worked to see that the centre was organisationally in good shape. He was effective as a councillor: he made the best of the longeurs of council meetings, and was fun to have as a colleague.

Vicky Landell Mills

During the 12 years that I led the community side of negotiations over the future of the Kingston Mill site at the start of this new century, Jocelyn was an enthusiastic and robust advocate for retaining and creating fresh opportunities for commercial activity in the town – particularly those in the new areas of technology and creativity. Quite rightly, he hated hypocrisy and empty talk and was sometimes impatient with fools. But he was also generous with his support and believed passionately in the future of Bradford on Avon. Jocelyn was a big man in all senses of the word and he will be missed.

Gerald Milward-Oliver

I first got to know Jocelyn as a well-known dealer in Old Masters, when he exhibited opposite our stand at the Grosvenor House Antiques Fair in London. Our chats were about anything except business – more about his bachelor life travelling the canal network in what he called his ‘love boat’. He even crossed the treacherous Severn Estuary in it!

Our paths met again when Jocelyn and Harriet bought the Old Manor House – former home of the late John Teed, antique dealer – which Jocelyn had known since his Downside days, when he used to visit with his father.

The house has wonderful sweeping views from the patio, an ideal place on a hot summer’s evening for planning committee meetings – always enhanced by a glass of wine.

After one ‘good’ meeting I remember Jocelyn’s often-quoted observation: “We dealers must stick together!”

Jocelyn had a good life where business and pleasure were combined – a true *bon viveur*.

Andrew Jenkins

The Preservation Trust was lucky to be able to persuade Jocelyn to become chairman of its planning committee just as he was retiring from that position on the Town Council. The Trust benefited from his knowledge and experience (and I do remember his particular dislike of Velux windows). He could sometimes express himself in trenchant terms, but underlying this was a broad tolerance and kindness, combined with a robust dismissal of nonsense and a dependable levelheadedness, which made him very valuable as a member of the Council of Management.

David Moss

Jocelyn was a town councillor and chairman of our planning committee. After he was no longer a town councillor, we used to meet up for lunch occasionally.

He was always interested in my family members, how they were all doing, and he would never let me pay for the lunch.

He was a true gent – and quite dapper on the dance floor too!

Sandra Bartlett

Jocelyn brought his own distinctive style to our Preservation Trust planning committee, which he chaired for many years until May 2015. His knowledge of historic buildings and love of fine art ensured that he had an implicit understanding of good design and the importance of conservation. My fondest memories are of meeting him to discuss the committee handover – either with a glass of wine or a gin and tonic, and always with a discussion of art and politics.

Rosie MacGregor

Editor’s note: I was intrigued to see that Jocelyn and I shared a birthday, as well as a name. He was exactly 10 years older than me. I wish I’d known him better.

Joceline Bury

Jocelyn manning the Trust’s bookstall at the St Laurence School street fair in 2013



Design for living

Conservation architect and Bradford resident Harry Whittaker has produced a guide aimed at encouraging home-owners and builders to maintain the town's unique character and style

Much of Bradford on Avon town centre is situated within the Conservation Area and it contains many fine listed buildings. It is important that the town retains its historic character. Good design is essential in order to create sustainable development that enhances the quality of the existing buildings and creates local distinctiveness.

While there are some good examples of high quality design and workmanship, there have been many less than sensitive alterations carried out in recent years, some imperfect attempts at pastiche, and other works that have been poorly conceived and badly executed. Many historic details that make our town unique continue to be lost as time goes by.

The Preservation Trust undertook a project to publish a Design Guide several years ago and our planning committee formed a small working group to carry this forward. We are delighted that award-winning conservation architect Harry Whittaker has produced on our behalf a comprehensive guide that includes many of his beautiful drawings. We hope it will encourage owners, designers, builders and developers to carry out development that will preserve our beautiful town.

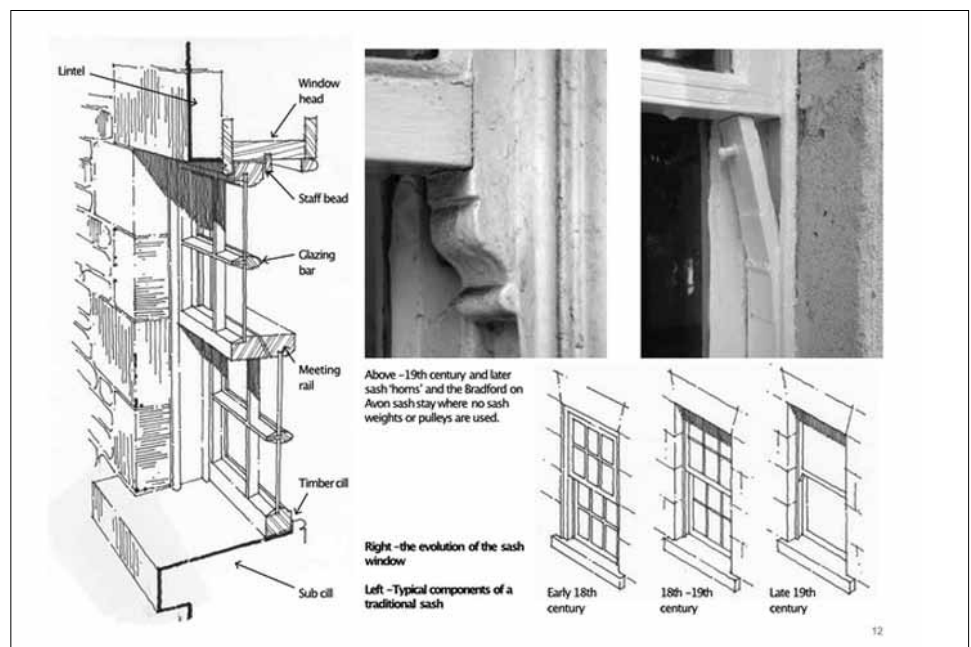
The intention is not to impose style or personal taste that would suppress innovation but rather

suggest those designs that would best respond to the established character of the town. This does not exclude high quality contemporary development.

Our Design Guide was launched just as the coronavirus pandemic took hold and the resulting lockdown meant that distribution of the guide had to be halted.

Paper copies of the Design Guide will be distributed in due course, but in the meantime PDF versions can be downloaded from our website or obtained by email on request to hello@bradfordheritage.co.uk

Rosie MacGregor



Planning matters

The outbreak of Coronavirus has had an impact on the number of planning applications to comment on during the spring months. There were two major applications over which we had concerns.

The first of these, Manvers House, a Grade II* Listed Building on Kingston Road located entirely within the Conservation Area. We objected to the proposals for change of use of the historic portion of the building to residential use on the grounds that it would result in a net loss of employment floor space, critical to the continued vibrancy of Bradford on Avon as a commercially successful town.

We doubted that a large mansion on a busy street frontage, adjoining an employment site, with no views

and overlooked by surrounding properties, would have any great appeal as a single residential dwelling.

The second application was a proposal at Fairfield Piggeries for change of use from agricultural to mixed use light industrial and storage. The proposals would result in a significant intensification of use of the site and represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would be harmful to the rural amenity and result in a substantial increase in traffic in an unsustainable location, remote from public transport, prejudicial to highway safety and harmful to the environment.

Rosie MacGregor

Chair, Preservation Trust Planning Committee

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Vernon Gibbs

The funeral of architect Vernon Gibbs, who died on 12 February 2020 aged 86, took place at Holy Trinity Church, Bradford on Avon, on Monday 9 March.

He was a visionary architect who, as well as working on schemes for the restoration and conservation of historic buildings, was not afraid to create impressive contemporary buildings that epitomised good design.

Vernon made a significant contribution to the work of Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust. His greatest achievement for the Trust was the restoration and rebuilding of the derelict Pippet Buildings in Market Street. He was the Architect for this successful scheme, which won a Civic Trust Award. He was also a long-standing member of the Preservation Trust planning committee until ill health forced his retirement from the committee in 2016.

His expertise was not just in refurbishment of historic buildings, he was equally skilled in designing new build projects. The three houses he designed for himself and his family at Budbury, Woolley Street and Sladesbrook are exemplars of high quality 20th century architecture.

Vernon's architectural studies began at The Royal West of England Academy School of Architecture, later to become the Architectural Department at Bristol University, and he went on to qualify in landscape architecture at Edinburgh. In his early days, Vernon worked in the office of Basil Spence when the new Coventry Cathedral was nearing completion.

A hallmark of Vernon's work was his appreciation of and attention to detail, which must have been influenced by his early career. The use of skilled draughtsmanship to convey this is also very much part of the architectural tradition that Vernon was adept at carrying on. Similarly, his admiration for the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and the way that his buildings became part of the landscape was a direct link with his wider landscape interests.

The bonus for any client of Vernon's was that he would bring more to the design than simply the architecture. Enhancing the setting of a building and the creation of attractive outside space was one of his many skills.

In the late 1960s Vernon was appointed head of the design group in the planning department at Wiltshire County Council. This was at an important time in the emergence of historic building conservation as a key planning objective, when the reaction to the increasing unattractive and poor quality buildings of the 1960s was becoming evident.

As is well known, demolition in Bradford on Avon was driven by the understandable desire to replace the old slum dwellings and any conservation potential was very much a secondary consideration. The scope for local authority planning to take on a more creative role in shaping development was a challenge and it is due to



Vernon Gibbs, and his Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired house in Sladesbrook

people such as Vernon that it was seen as possible to work towards a vision of a better built future.

In 1987 Vernon was commissioned by the Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust (WHBT) to undertake a major project for the restoration of a group of former Harris-owned buildings in Church Street, Calne, as part of the Calne Project.

Following the closure of the Harris factories Calne was economically depressed, with many out of work. The WHBT took on the challenge at a time when the private sector was unwilling to take the risk. Completion of the Church Street town centre regeneration project brought new life to the area by creating eight shops, a café, five flats and a doctor's surgery, thus putting the heart back into Church Street and enhancing the setting of St Mary's Church.

The retention of the redundant Fitzmaurice Grammar School building here in Bradford on Avon was at one



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time in doubt. Not being listed, and spot listing being refused at the time, there was a view that the building was not worth saving. Indeed the imposition of VAT on alterations and the zero rating on new build could easily have tipped the balance in favor of demolition but demolition was avoided largely by the extension of the conservation area. This allowed Vernon to convert the historic building and incorporate it into a housing scheme for the over-55s.

Sadly, retirement from practice was brought about by increasing ill health, but this did not diminish his lifelong interest in architecture and planning.

Vernon is survived by his wife Shirley, daughter Sara, son Simon and grandchildren Tom, Harriet and Edmund.

Words: Colin Johns, Rosie MacGregor, David Moss and Gareth Slater



The former Harris Butchers shop in Calne, left; and right, the shopfront retained to provide the historic connection with the former Harris presence in the town



The Church Street buildings following the demolition of the Harris factory in Calne and, right, looking towards the newly created St Mary's Courtyard

Muriel Stephens

Muriel Stephens died peacefully at home on 12 June. She had been an active member of the Trust for many years, and will be best known as a long-standing member of the team of coffee ladies who provided teas and coffee and delicious things to eat at coffee mornings and garden parties and various special events.

Muriel's creative flair came to the fore in the festive decorations she helped create in Priory Barn for the AGM and also for the Preservation Trust Christmas tree at the Holy Trinity Christmas Tree Festival. Muriel had also been a volunteer steward at the West Barn Open Days. Our sympathies go to her husband Dick and their family.



One of Joyce Eales' delightful line drawings of Bradford shows Bridge Street looking very much as it does today

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