



THE BUTTERCROSS BULLETIN



**Chippenham celebrates Commonwealth Day
(Image by Mike Ormondroyd)**

Issue No 172



May 2019

In this issue

From the Editor

Planning Roundup	Jennifer Rudd
Olympiad Carpark	Jennifer Rudd
AGM Chairman's Report & Review	Mike Stone
AGM Treasurer's Report	Colin Lynes
Social Programme & Membership	Mike & Marilyn Stone
Membership Matters	Marilyn Stone
The Vauxhall Railings	Geoff Barrett
Exhibition Programme at Chippenham Museum	Melissa Barnett
Starlettes Reunited	Elaine Davis
Celebrating Commonwealth Day	Mary Norton
St Nicholas School Update	Mary Norton

Committee 2019/1920

The following were elected to the committee at AGM on February 25 2019

Chair

Mike Stone
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Sally Lynes
Geoff Barrett
Jennifer Rudd
Melissa Barnett
Mary Norton

Elaine Davis
Ryan Peare
Dory Scott
Steve Lile
Richard Fowke

From the Editor

After a somewhat kinder winter than last year, Spring flirted in and out, but finally arrived in time for Easter and the Spring School Holidays. As I write, the sun shines, the sky is blue and the many flowers and shrubs in our beautiful town blossom. Who knows though, often 'Mother Nature has a final fling with winds and showers before we can really hope for Spring and Summer.

In this edition the planning matters are extended by Jennifer Rudd's detailed report of the application submitted by Wiltshire Council for the development of the Olympiad car-park. This has been treated as a separate issue in view of its importance. Many people think the outcome was 'done and dusted' before the hearing. We shall keep a close watch on how it develops.

The Vauxhall Railings have been saved as can be seen from the article by Geoff Barrett later in this Bulletin.

Happy reading

Bulletin Editor : contact details

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Anyone having suggestions or contributions on matters of interest relating to Chippenham for our next edition, please contact me – details as above

Letters Page

I would like to revive the letters page, so please let me have your comments on 'The Buttercross' e.g. any subjects you would like to see included, comments on current issues etc.

Deadline for contributions to the August edition is 30th June

CHIPPENHAM CIVIC SOCIETY WEBSITE

www.chippenhamcivicsociety.co.uk

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Disclaimer

Chippenham Civic Society cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to unsolicited photographs or manuscripts or any errors of fact. The views expressed by contributors to the Buttercross Bulletin are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Civic Society.

The Bulletin can be sent via email as an electronic PDF version - please let us know via the website at www.chippenhamcivicsociety.co.uk

Planning Roundup

Jennifer Rudd

1 18/01202FUL

The Causeway Vauxhall garage site

There has been some confusion over this application, a lot of planning recommendations from the Planning Officer were ignored. However this was re-submitted as 18/0820/FU in reply. Mainly this was about changes to materials and the front design which we felt were much more sympathetic to the Conservation area. This has now been approved with conditions and demolition of the garage is well under way. We hope this will be an improvement to this historic road.

2 18/11596/FUL

Land adjoining Westmead Lane and Wessex Water

This is the application by the Chippenham Borough Lands to develop a recreation area to include a skate park and climbing wall. We feel this is an exiting opportunity to get these much needed facilities in the town. There is some opposition from local residents but mostly it is welcomed by the town. There is still some ongoing discussion and clarification on details has been asked for, but we look forward to this.

3 18/10267/FUL

Monkton Park Carpark off Sadlers Mead

This is the plan to build a 5 storey carpark and office block in Sadlers mead carpark. We are very much against this development as were the Town council and many other people in the town but at a recent meeting in Trowbridge it was approved. (See article)

4 19/01653/FUL

24/25 High Street

This covers Emery Gate and Poundland where a new shopfront is proposed.

5 19/01653/TCA

British Telecom, applicant Wiltshire Council

Permission has been granted for 'Crown reduction and pruning to allow for construction on adjacent Sadlers Mead carpark site (subject to planning)

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6 19/03423/FUL

19 Gladstone Road (Sweet Briar Cottage)

I was very disappointed to see the application to build a terrace of 7 houses in the garden of this house. Many of you will have looked round this garden, that was open for charity for many years. Paul and Joy Gough had developed the large area to the side of their house and planted a beautiful extension to their garden. They were expert plantsmen and I received lots of advice from them, always generously given. I believe this area was allotments at one time.

7 17/09217/FUL

Union Road

Permission has been given for 16 apartments on the garage and carpark site. The original warehouse is to be reinstated. There will be an additional 4 new blocks incorporating a retail unit.

8 19/00215/FUL

Land off Cornfields

This is land between Bristol Road and Allington Way where permission has been given for a new Residential Care Home.

9 94 London Road

An application to replace the 5 windows on the front of this listed building has been approved.

Olympiad Multi-Storey Carpark, A Bad Decision

On March 20th Wiltshire Council approved its own application to construct a 5 storey carpark on the Monkton Park end of the Olympiad carpark in Chippenham. The carpark was included in an application by "Good Energy" to build new headquarters at the other end of the carpark by Cocklebury Road. Wiltshire Council put these 2 very different applications together in what looked like an attempt to get their carpark, which may well have failed if considered separately, approved.

The application was heard at a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee in Trowbridge, rather than the Northern Area Planning Committee in Chippenham, who would normally deal with local applications. This meant it was difficult for local people to get to the meeting and there were no Chippenham councillors on the committee.

Three people were allowed to speak for 3 minutes against the proposal. I spoke on behalf of the Chippenham Civic Society, Chris Caswill spoke for the Friends of Monkton Park and David Roberts who is a Monkton Park neighbour of the development also spoke. Nick Murry, a Wiltshire councillor and Town Councillor for Monkton Ward then spoke at length. This was in addition to numerous letters opposing the plan and strong opposition from the Chippenham Town Council. Nick noted that it also failed to meet the requirements of numerous Wiltshire Council core policies and most of Wiltshire Council's Transport Plan's Strategic Objectives. It is also against any guidelines for Conservation Areas.

These objections were not followed by any debate, a vote was taken and the result went along party lines with only the Lib. Dem. and Independent councillors voting against the proposal. It seemed obvious to everyone present that the decision was made before the meeting and plans were already drawn up in some details with other applications, such as surgery on trees which will be affected, already in the system.

The Committee Chairman would not show the before and after photographs as requested by the Independent member on the committee though they had been sent the images by the local ward member the previous day. When asked to illustrate the view from the park the Planning officer showed an image taken from the corner of the Olympiad, with photo-shopped trees added, giving a misleading impression of what park users would see. See below.



Below the two pictures that were requested, the park as it is now and as it would be with the multi-storey carpark. Note St Paul's spire has disappeared.





Photomontage of the proposed carpark from Wiltshire Council website, as prepared by Wiltshire Councils own consultants and available in the planning documents alongside the image that the Planning Officer chose to show instead. This is as envisaged in 10 years time when the trees have grown, in the Summer of course

I spoke about the impact of this proposal on a residential estate and a Conservation area. We have considered the effects of this proposal and believe it will have a seriously adverse effect on the visual amenity as it is completely out of character here. It is on the highest point in the area and will dominate Monkton Park with its bulk and massing.

There is a clear consensus among Chippenham councillors and the general public that expanded town centre parking should be on the Bath Road/Bridge Centre site, i.e. near the shops, and commuter parking should be next to the station, adjacent to the railway line. It is our understanding that the money for this carpark is provided by the government and was intended for parking along the railway and not near the park. From what we are told approving this will also mean there are insufficient funds for constructing a multi-storey carpark on the North side of the station where at least half of the rail commuters arrive. They would then not have had to travel through the already congested town centre and up Station Hill.

Our main asset in Chippenham is the lovely River Avon running through the town centre. Over the years we have not made the most of this. We have built shops and businesses with their backs to it, ugly carparks and offices near it, an ugly weir on it and roads along it. We have canalized the river to discourage wildlife and demolished nearly every building of interest by it. The exception

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being the old Nestles building (Avonbridge House) which we campaigned long and hard to save.

Some efforts are now being made to reverse this trend and this is not the time to stop. Fortunately Monkton Park remains. It has been eroded by offices and the Olympiad but still includes the best views of the river, and the best riverside walks in town. It is an extremely valuable asset and used and enjoyed by all residents of Chippenham, as well as visitors to the town.

The Chippenham Civic Society are horrified by the decision to build a 5 storey carpark in a residential area and a Conservation Area, overlooking our much loved and historic park. Many employees are from outside Chippenham and carparks should be provided where they are actually needed. Yes, jobs and parking are important but not by spoiling the amenity value which has attracted people to the town in the first place.

Both the decision to approve the application and the process that took no account of legitimate objections seem to be deeply flawed. It appears that no amount of contravened planning policies, objections from the Chippenham Town Council or local councillors, letter writing or the expressed views of local residents, have made any difference. I am wondering if we are all wasting our time?

I can see why people think this might be so, but we must not allow ourselves to believe we have no voice or we would stop fighting for things that matter. By continuing to stand up to political collusion we hope others may join us and the next application might result in a very different outcome, good for the town and its people.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AT THE AGM ON 25 FEBRUARY 2019 ANND A REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR - MIKE STONE

Committee meetings

Membership of the committee has remained stable throughout the year. The committee met five times in the Chippenham Borough Lands building. On behalf of the membership I would like to thank the committee for all their time and commitment to further the aims and objectives of the Chippenham Civic Society.

Membership

The new membership rate of £15 commenced this year. I would remind all members to ensure that they have altered their payments through the bank to the new rate. Membership now stands at around 150, however this figure may increase with late payments. Membership overall is still declining through age, deaths and relocations.

Website

The website www.chippenhamcivicsociety.co.uk and Facebook page is managed on behalf of the Society by Geoff Barrett, who gave a brief report on the amount of hits. The website is also useful to members for keeping up to date with changes to the social programme and events.

Social Programme

The season of talks commenced in March with the AGM. After the business meeting Mike Stone gave a presentation on aspects of Chippenham History. In April Stuart Burroughs - Curator of the Bath at Work Museum, gave a stimulating talk on 'Trouble at the Mill - Problems and Solutions of the Cloth Trade in North Wiltshire'. In April John Scragg gave an illustrated talk on the Golden Valley line. The Annual Heritage Lecture in June was given by Dr John Chandler, his talk was entitled 'Rewriting Chippenham's History' in association with the new research for the planned Chippenham volume. In July there was an additional special lecture in conjunction with Chippenham Museum given by Mike Stone on 'Building Georgian Chippenham', this was held in the Neeld and attracted in excess of 100 people. In September Ray Barnett, Curator for Bristol city museums, gave a fascinating talk on 'The History of Bristol Museums'. In October Sandy Webb returned to give part two of 'A Social History of Football in Chippenham'. In November Bernard Purrier gave a presentation on the work of the Whale and Dolphin Society in Chippenham. We ended the year at The Cause with a presentation by Bill King on 'Yesterday's Childhood'.

Publicity

The Society endeavours to inform the public through posters and occasionally in the Gazette & Herald of events. It is pleasing to note that we regularly attract over 60 people to the social events at the Rotary Hall.

Buttercross Bulletin

The outgoing editor, Elaine Davis, has nearly covered three years in the post and has managed to put together a wide range of articles and topics that relate to Chippenham and the surrounding area. At the AGM she outlined what she had achieved. On behalf of the Civic Society the Chairman presented her with a book token and thanked her for her efforts. The editorship was then taken up by committee member Mary Norton, who also gave a short address to the AGM on what she hoped to achieve.

Museum

It is a pleasure to again report on the long term partnership with Chippenham museum and its staff. The committee decided to assist with the Chippenham museum study series over the publication of 'An Appreciation of the life of Robin Tanner'. The curator, Mel Barnett, regularly attends committee meetings and at the AGM gave an illustrated presentation on the work of Chippenham museum over the past year.

Planning

Committee member Jennifer Rudd monitors the many applications in Chippenham, these are referred to in the Buttercross Bulletin. Major proposed developments at the old Chippenham College, St Nicholas School and the multi-storey car park near the Olympiad have taken up much of Jennifer's time. On behalf of the Civic Society I would like to thank her for her ongoing efforts over the year.

Treasurer

Our able Treasurer Colin Lynes outlined the accounts (see summary in this issue of the Buttercross Bulletin). The new subscription rate has now come into force and we have sufficient funds to carry out the aims and objectives of the Society. Colin also indicated that this would be his last year in post and we will need to find a Treasurer to replace him.

Minute Secretary

Sally Lynes gave up her post as Minute Secretary at the AGM, on behalf of the Civic Society the Chair presented her with an orchid. The Chair thanked her for completing minutes of committee meetings and the AGM.

Election of Committee

The following committee members were nominated and elected - Ryan Peare, Mary Norton, Elaine Davis, Melissa Barnett, Dory Scott, Steve Lile, Jennifer Rudd, Marilyn Stone, Mike Stone, Sally Lynes, Colin Lynes, John Scragg, Geoff Barrett. A further nomination for Richard Fowke was made and he was elected to the committee.

Any Other Business

Both the Chair and Geoff Barrett outlined the current position of the Chippenham Civic Society and asked the question 'Should the Society continue in its present format or should changes be actively considered?'. After discussions from the members it was agreed that the committee would put together a questionnaire asking members to comment on what our future role in Chippenham should be. This will be issued in the August Buttercross Bulletin.

CHIPPENHAM CIVIC SOCIETY
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2018

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>Payments</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Membership subscriptions	2,021	1,876	Newsletter &		
Donations received	280	380	photocopying	926	928
Bank interest received	3	3	Room hire & speakers	609	703
Gift aid on donations	-	454	Stationery/stamps	170	261
Book sales	84	39	Website costs	114	64
Ticket sales	306	144	Miscellaneous	-	46
Refreshments	-	-	Christmas social	200	80
Sundry Income	192	5	Awards Evening	-	84
			Donation - Ivy Wildlife Garden	-	250
			Donation - Kellaways Clock Tower	-	50
			Donations to Chippenham Museum	700	-
			Subscriptions	(10)	50
			Accountancy	348	336
	<u>2,886</u>	<u>2,901</u>		<u>3,057</u>	<u>2,852</u>
Cash funds last year end	6,916	6,867			
Net of receipts/ (payments)	<u>(171)</u>	<u>49</u>			
Cash funds this year end	<u>6,745</u>	<u>6,916</u>			

STATEMENT OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES AT 30 NOVEMBER 2018

<u>Assets</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Scottish Widows Bank	3,125	3,122
Cash at Bank	<u>3,620</u>	<u>3,794</u>
Cash funds	<u>6,745</u>	<u>6,916</u>
<u>Other Assets</u>		
Stocks	1,500	1,600
Calf sculpture	4,538	4,641
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Accruals	366	348

CIVIC SOCIETY SOCIAL PROGRAMME FOR 2019

Mike Stone

Tuesday 21 May	‘Fry Family History’ by John Scragg
Tuesday 18 June	By-annual Civic Society Environment and Conservation Awards at St Andrew’s Church Presented by Jack Konynenburg
Tuesday 17 September	‘Operation Wansdyke’ by Jeremy Dix
Tuesday 15 October	‘Saving Britain’s Art Treasurers’ in WW11 by Nick Mc Camley
Tuesday 19 November	‘Meadow in my Garden’ by Paul Jupp
Tuesday 17 December	‘Wiltshire Follies’ by Jonathan Holt Christmas Event at The Cause.

Membership Matters

Welcome to our new member – Miss Joanna Claridge

Outstanding Subscriptions

There are still a number of outstanding subscriptions due from members. Please make every effort to continue your valued membership. Payment can be made at a meeting or by post to the Membership Secretary.

For your subscription you receive a quarterly copy of the Buttercross Bulletin and also a very lively and interesting social programme on the third Tuesday of every month (excluding July and August). Plans are also underway to put up four further blue plaques in Chippenham commemorating people and events from the past.

We look forward to your continuing support.

Marilyn

Paul (Wolodimir) Magdocz and the Vauxhall Railings

Many residents will remember the Vauxhall Garage in the Causeway. Built in the late 1960s, it was for many years the premises of Cyril H Thomas and then Platinum Vauxhall. Now closed, the garage is being demolished to make way for new retirement apartments.

What is perhaps not well known, is that the railings which have been part of the frontage since it was built, were hand-made by one of Chippenham's last blacksmiths – Paul Magdocz who lived opposite the Garage at 30 The Causeway.



This remarkable man was a well-known resident of the town for over 50 years. His skills were appreciated by many, and his work still lives on.

His personal history and how he came from Poland to live in Chippenham mark him out as a man of his time and an inspiration in this Brexit era.

Paul Magdocz in the door of his forge at 30 Causeway



The Vauxhall Railings in the Causeway

Early Life

Paul was born Wolodimir Magdocz in 1920, in the town of Brody, Tarnopol, Poland (near to Kiev).



Wolodimir with his Mother, Father and sisters Emilie and Olga

His father moved the family to Lille in France where he found work on a farm. At that time all the children were of school age (about 8 to 11) and Wolodimir did most of his schooling in France.

During his school years he was sent to a monastery as a punishment for burning down a neighbour's haystack and embarked on a period of training as a Benedictine Monk. During his time in the monastery he devised a way of avoiding the rigours of a monastic life by having a hidden stash of clothing into which he would change, before climbing the walls to spend an evening in town. He was also known to help himself to the communion wine and it was soon realised that he was not suitable Monk material.

The family later returned to Poland after his father had died and by the outbreak of WWII they were living in a small village.

During the German occupation of Poland, the young men of the village were ordered by the Nazis to undertake forced labour at factories in Gelsenkirchen and Essen, Germany. The industrial sites were heavily bombed and he was living in buildings with no roofs, with little food or clothing. Once a month he was ordered to clear bombed houses searching for bodies.

At the end of the war, as the Allies sorted out the chaos left by the retreating Germans, Wolodimir was offered a life in Canada, America or England. He chose England thinking it the nearest and easiest way of getting back to Poland.

Wolodimir worked as an interpreter for the Allies as he spoke Polish, English, French, German, Ukrainian and Russian.

As a consequence of the invasion of Poland, Wolodimir had lost touch with all his family members, but after the war he eventually traced his younger sister, Emilie. She was living in Bavaria, Germany, but his older sister, Olga, had died during his internment.



A New Life in Chippenham

His first job in England was at the Glanville Engineering Company in Burlands Road.

Sometime after his arrival in England he had come to be known by the name of Paul. It is believed this was because people, if they had a job that needed doing, would say, 'Take it to the Pole' and 'Pole' soon become 'Paul'.

To make the foreigners more at home the locals put on dances. It was at a dance that he was introduced to his future wife, Ethel Muriel Morse from Wood Lane. They were married in 1954 at St Andrews Church, Chippenham.



It is not known how Wolodimir learned his trade as a blacksmith, but being a skilled metal worker, he joined the Westinghouse Foundry in Chippenham as a fitter and was with the company for 30 years. He eventually took British Naturalisation in 1957.

After they set up home in the Causeway, Paul would work in the evenings and

weekends at the forge at the back of the house. The house was a former bakery and he converted the oven into a forge.

Paul and Muriel eventually had a daughter, Jane and in 1966 they were given permission to visit Paul's mother in the land which was previously Poland, but which by then was part of Russia. Paul had not seen his mother since the war and this was the only time they ever met again as visas were rarely granted during the 60s – 70s. This same area is now part of the Ukraine.



The Forge in the Causeway

From his house in the Causeway, Paul went on to set up a business which became well known throughout Chippenham and Wiltshire. Paul's skill as a blacksmith and welder kept him in work for the rest of his life.



Among Paul's many jobs was a commission by the Marchioness of Lansdowne to produce copies of a jardinière for Bowood.

He also made a staircase in Laura Fashions at The Bridge, Chippenham (see photo below) and restored the gates at Hartham Park (see photo).

It was said that he had also been a skilled farrier in his early days, but it was his ability to weld alloys that kept him busy in later years. Much of this work was for Westinghouse and Dymag of Chippenham who manufactured magnesium racing wheels.

A Metalwork Magician

Many of his local customers would bring him all sorts of metal objects to repair. He could work his magic on anything from children's bikes, assorted metal toys through to aluminium motorcycle engines and garden equipment. He is even credited with making a golf trolley for one of the Westinghouse directors.

In 1969 he was commissioned to make the railings for the new Vauxhall Garage in the Causeway. Jane, his

daughter, remembers her father making the outer shell and all the letters. He spent the evening welding the pieces together and then filing down all the joints. The next morning, taking him a coffee, her mother pointed out that the railings read 'VUAXHALL'. He was not pleased and at first would not believe her. Her father reluctantly spent that evening cutting it apart, welding and filing again.



Although Paul was the blacksmith it was definitely a team effort with Muriel doing all the painting (undercoat and top coat) dealing with customers and the records.

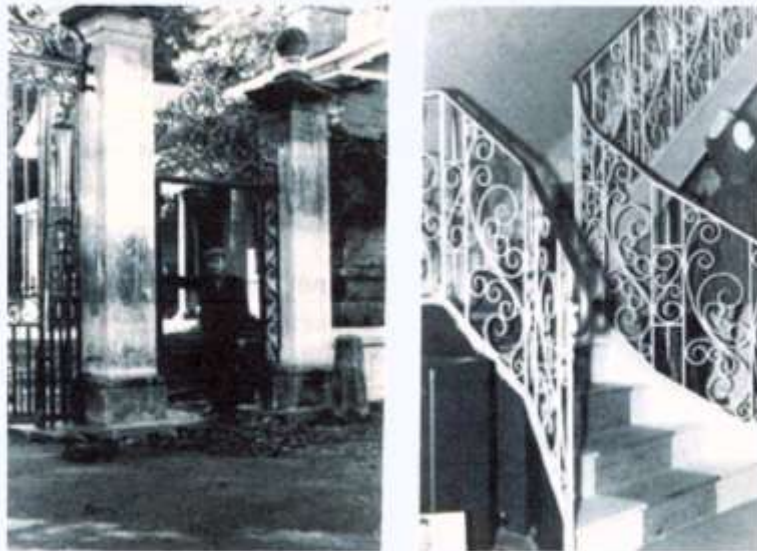
As a couple they lived a frugal life, probably because they undercharged their customers. Paul would hardly ever eat English style food, but loved Polish Vodka. In their later years they would both spend a sociable evening at the Three Crowns pub in the Causeway or with friends. Muriel died in 2000 and Paul in 2002.

With the demolition of the Vauxhall Garage, the railings have been saved for Chippenham Museum thereby rescuing an example of Paul's work which has gone unrecognised for fifty years.

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We are indebted to their daughter Jane and good friends Rosemary and Alan Higgs for the information and pictures provided in this article.

Geoff Barrett. Chippenham. 2019



Restored gates at Hartham Park and staircase at Laura Fashions, The Bridge, Chippenham



EXHIBITION PROGRAMME - ARTSPACE@ChippenhamMuseum

A new annual season dedicated to showcasing the best of new and local art. From May to July the gallery at Chippenham Museum will host a programme of specially curated displays changing every two weeks.

The 2019 season includes:

A Decade On – Drawing and Sculpture by Sarah Purvey



Sat 4 May – Fri 17 May

Spanning ten years of creativity, new works and loans showcase Sarah Purvey's continual development and evolution as an artist.

Photo :
Sarah Purvey surrounded by her artwork & vessels.

Enchanted – The Magic of Nature

Sat 18 May – Fri 31 May

From dark and decadent to earthy and ethereal this exhibition presents nature at its most magical.

Doreen Heaton Potworowska 1930-2014

Sat 1 June – Fri 14 June

Doreen Heaton's abstract paintings draw on her experiences at the Bath Academy of Art, Corsham in the 1950s and her later life in Poland.

Perception – Viewing the world differently

Sat 15 June – Fri 28 June

Through print, paint and sculpture, this exhibition invites the viewer to think again about the world around them.

Kington Langley Art Group & Rag and Bone Arts

Sat 29 June – Fri 12 July

This exhibition brings together the work of two local community art groups.

Chippenham and District Artists

Sat 13 July – Fri 26 July

Annual summer exhibition of works by the Chippenham and District Artists



**Chippenham
Museum**

Chippenham Town Council

Starlettes Reunited at Chippenham Museum

Elaine Davis

Former members of the Chippenham Starlettes were reunited with its founder, Betty Hooper when they came to hear her talk at Chippenham Museum on Friday 29 March

As part of Chippenham Museum's Objects in Focus series of free talks, Betty spoke about a portrait of herself and her husband Bill, on show in the museum, and told of its presentation to her on the night of the last Starlettes show in November 1979. Betty went on to share tales of her time running the Starlettes and spoke with affection of the group's very successful 25 years.



The Chippenham Starlettes were formed in 1953 by Betty and Bill Hooper as a dancing school for children. The group held their first performance, 'Dick Whittington', at the Neeld in 1954 and continued to stage popular performances both in Chippenham and at the Theatre Royal in Bath.

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This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 'Starlettes' last performance so it was wonderful to have Betty take part in the museums series of talks and bring together former members.

The museum would like to celebrate the anniversary further and want to hear from anyone who has memories of the group, or memorabilia which we could use in a display.



This is a photograph of a scene in the popular pantomime 'Cinderella', one of the many productions organised by Betty and Bill Hooper for the enjoyment of not only the people of Chippenham but by the actors taking part.

Celebrating Commonwealth Day

Mary Norton

Chippenham is noted for enthusiastically supporting Local, National and International events and this was evident on Commonwealth Day on 11 March this year.

Distinguished guests including Dr David Hemery CBE Deputy Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Nicky Alberry High Sheriff of Wiltshire and other Dignitaries were greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress of Chippenham Councillors Andy and Nina Phillips. Town Councillors, Officers and staff from the Town Hall, all congregated on the steps of the Town Hall and many members of the public watched the ceremony from the High Street together with 150 pupils representing Chippenham schools.

Chippenham has close links with 9 Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps and we were delighted that they had returned from their latest overseas posting and were able to parade down the High Street. Lt Col Andrew Geary took the salute from the Town Hall steps where the flag folding ceremony also took place.

Dr Hemery read the message from the Queen, together with the Commonwealth Affirmation, and the Commonwealth flag was raised.

Following these events, the participants including the pupils then moved into the Neeld Community and Arts Centre where members of '9 Regiment' gave a number of very entertaining presentations on the cultures of the Commonwealth member states. Very popular, and much enjoyed were the singing of a Fijian choir, and a Haka dance. The 'Haka' being quite awesome in person as opposed to seeing it on the TV at the start of a rugby match



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Following the presentations in the Neeld Arts and Community Centre it was back upstairs to the Town Hall where refreshments were served. Here were a number of stalls arranged by the members of '9 Regiment' from the various Commonwealth countries represented, and their citizens were delighted to answer the many questions put to them, especially by the pupils from the schools. Sporting activities, culture, music and especially food and drink were among the many subjects raised.



Following the return of the pupils to their schools the general public were invited to join in with the celebrations in the Town Hall and many took the opportunity to do so.

The Town Council was delighted by the number of people attending and expressed its thanks to Lt Col Geary and all of '9 Regiment' for a very entertaining morning.

The Editor expresses her grateful thanks to Mike Ormondroyd, the Deputy Macebearer, for volunteering to send me all the images shown in this article, (his were so much better than mine!).

St Nicholas School Keep Special Schools Local – Update Mary Norton

Our February Bulletin briefly reported on the Wiltshire Council Plan to close our school together with three others, and to replace it with one large school at Rowde. There were many protests, representations, a petition etc., and a fund was set up to enable the school to take the matter further by legal action, and an application for a Judicial Review was made.

The Judicial Review permission hearing was held in Cardiff on 15th March and the judge ruled in favour of the school. The implication being that the Council had not carried out a consultation properly.

On 25th March an out of court settlement was reached with the Council meaning that the proposal for the 'Super School' was withdrawn as was the statutory notice to close the three schools. As a result the position then became the pre-publication stage of consultation.

Closure of the three schools has not been stopped but the process has been halted and the Council will stop and listen.

Do not think it is now settled, the children attending their local special schools are entitled to be treated just like their peers at other local schools, such as:

Being educated locally

To participate in their local communities

Travel times similar to other children

To be able to walk to school

Flexible education for individual needs

Provision for over 16 year old students

You can help in a practical way by writing to your MP, your Wiltshire and Town Councillors and the local press. There have been consultation meetings already watch for notice of any more or any further fund raising activities, we need to keep up the pressure on Wiltshire Council.

This may be our last chance to save our school.

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Betty and Bill Hooper, the founder members of Chippenham Starlettes.

