

THE BUTTERCROSS BULLETIN



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New Look for Museum (page 16)

Issue No 168



May 2018

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Committee 2018/19

The following were re-elected to the committee at the March AGM

Chair

Mike Stone
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Vice Chair

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Sally Lynes
Geoff Barrett
Jennifer Rudd
Melissa Barnett

Elaine Davis
Ryan Peare
Dory Scott
Steve Lile

From the Editor

Welcome to the May edition of the Buttercross Bulletin.

After a long cold winter, summer seems to be putting in an appearance. This is a time when everything seems to look so much better and brighter. Certainly the museum, after weeks hidden behind scaffolding, has emerged looking better than ever with a new entrance and shop. Read more about new and upcoming exhibitions and events at the museum on page 16. Also included in this edition, as Mark Smith moves into his second year as Chippenham's Chief Executive, we find out more about him and his role in the Town Council on page 20

The Chairman's report delivered at the recent AGM and the Treasure's report can be found on pages 8 and 12.

Happy reading!

Bulletin Editor... contact details

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Please contact me if you have any suggestions for items of interest relating to Chippenham, past or present, contributions of articles or photos or have any comments that you wish to make.

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

Letters to the Editor

I really enjoying reading your letters and emails please keep them coming either by email to elaine2archive@hotmail.com, post or via Chippenham Museum.

Chippenham Coronation Celebrations

In a period after WWII with austerity, shortages, and, rationing the then Borough of Chippenham produced a Coronation Souvenir Programme of events taking place from May 21st to June 24th; a very ambitious programme involving many organisations, groups, clubs, societies and individuals, with seven committees overseeing the events.

This programme contained a letter from the Mayor and Mayoress, the Loyal Address, details of the Coronation Service, a history of Chippenham with a map and old photographs and mentioning that Coronation Mugs were to be given to all school children in the town whilst parents of babies born on Coronation Day would be presented with a specially minted Crown Piece .

Readers may be recalling where they were on 2nd June 1953 and how their day was spent.

I was a National Service man in "The Glorious Glosters" so named after their warfare in Korea and our Regiment at first would be marching in the Coronation Procession. However due to the huge number taking part and crowds thronging the streets we instead were lined up along part of the route delegated to be "Crowd Control " by facing inwards. At the last minute our Officers gave the order to "About face "which we did and in the rain saw the whole procession pass by. Children were not so fortunate and parents shouted out their concerns so we lifted as many as we could over the barriers and allowed these youngsters to stand between us. We were not charged with this "Offence" and went on to enjoy celebrations in London until the early morning.

Bryant Vincent.



Editors Note:

Two coronation mugs, as mentioned above, can be seen in the museum in the new timeline display on the second floor.



Dear Editor

Readers may be aware that some of us were extremely upset to hear the outcome of the Planning Application to demolish the old college building in Cocklebury Road and replace it with 140 retirement flats.

I wonder if there really is any way we can stop further destruction of Chippenham's heritage and social history?

We were aware from the start of our campaign that there was very little chance of affecting the outcome. Why? Because if the planners do not insist from the start that developers consider schemes to include historic buildings in their modern developments, something a good architect could well do, plans are drawn up accordingly and the building is summarily discarded.

This is then the scheme that we become aware of at the planning application stage. It goes to consultation and the planning committee and apart from tinkering round the edges, there is no real public participation at all. It does not matter how much historic evidence or public opinion we produce at this stage, it makes no difference.

Chippenham people know what makes our town special, but Planners, County Councillors and Developers have their own priorities and agendas, some of which is influenced by central government policy.

We are aware of other important buildings under threat in the future and it is likely they too will be swept away in short sighted schemes to replace older buildings with new structures which may in themselves only have a limited lifespan.

Many people still talk about the loss of the Greenways maternity home, a lovely house with much social history, which was replaced with offices, some of which have never been let. Was that a good exchange? Probably not. The Westinghouse building is another example of a lost architectural landmark.

Even listed buildings are now not safe from demolition in the face of economic arguments and it is almost impossible to get local buildings on the national listing. What is surely needed when any building of cultural significance is to be demolished is a statutory obligation to examine possible reuse before assuming the building should be condemned to dust. That and the vision to see beauty in buildings which others seek to condemn as redundant.

Jennifer Rudd

1 18/01460/FUL Queens Crescent Primary School

Permission has been given to build a wooden stage with amphitheatre seating in the school grounds, sounds fun!

2 18/03032/LBC 19, New Road

This is the building on the corner of New Road and Union Street where there are proposals to convert the existing shop front and building into 3 dwellings which includes a house to the rear of the property. We are concerned about this; it is an important location, and a listed building in a conservation area. Although improvements would be welcome these must be done sympathetically.

3 15/12351/OUT Land at Rawlings Farm, Cocklebury Lane

Outline permission sought for up to 650 dwellings, etc. etc. Access would be from Parsonage Way and over a new railway bridge.

4 18/01985/LBC Parklands, Malmesbury Road.

It is good to see this interesting and important building being renovated and used again. An example of what can be done with old buildings.

5 18/00815/FUL Common Slip, St Mary Street

A new house has been approved and work already started on the empty land down this historic lane. We hope the old walls will be reinstated and minimum impact made on the Conservation area.

6 18/01202/FUL Land at Former Vauxhall Garage in the Causeway.

As this is in the Conservation area this is an important site and one we are monitoring. We commented on the original plans for a block of retirement flats, cautiously approving but as always feel more could be done. It is important to establish a strong building frontage along the street which will enhance the current appearance of this section of The Causeway by providing a strong sense of enclosure. Materials, finishes and scale all need to reflect and enhance the rest of the street scene. We would like to see the railings outside the garage incorporated into the new build and have talked to the developers about this. These were made by a local blacksmith and would mark the previous use of the site.

7 17/05828/FUL Chippenham College Old Building

As expected, despite our best efforts, Wiltshire County Planning Committee gave permission to demolish the college building at their last meeting. This will be replaced with 140 new retirement flats. This was a depressing meeting, local councillors were absent and apart from a lively intervention suggesting it would make an excellent venue for a much needed art centre, the result was a foregone conclusion from the start. At no point were the developers asked to consider including the college buildings in any scheme or the many letters of objection taken into account. There are many towns where this loss of heritage would not have been allowed. A good architect with the right remit could have included the building in a new scheme easily. What is not so easy is persuading the developers and the Council to make the effort rather than seek short term gains. In addition there is no VAT on new build as there is on renovations, a ridiculous situation.

Recent Developments at Chippenham Station John Scragg

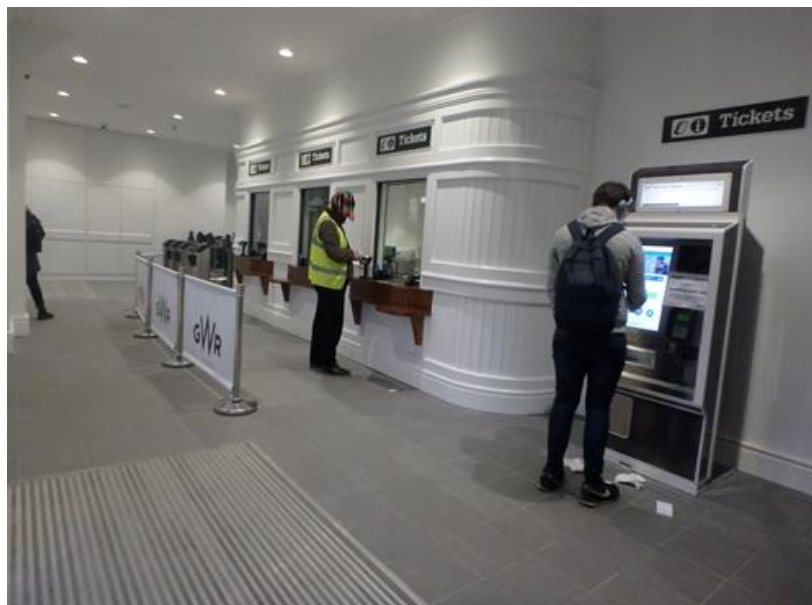
There have been two principal recent developments to Chippenham Station, related to the issue of tickets and, in official parlance, 'revenue protection'. Both have resulted in significant modifications to the fabric of the station. These modifications were approved by the planning authority and take account the station's Grade II listing.



The remodelled ticket hall was fully opened in January 2018. It has been re-aligned and enlarged to provide more circulating room and greater separation of ticket purchase from those proceeding direct to the platforms. The automatic ticket gates, introduced to prevent or reduce ticketless travel, came into operation on 31st December 2017. A 'one-way' passenger flow system is operated, with the gates in the ticket hall intended for those entering the platforms and another set of barriers on the 'platform without tracks' for

those leaving the station (via the side gates), so there should be much less congestion than before. Other ticket gates are installed on the 'new' footbridge and on the north side of the station. These ticket gates have to be supervised and have to be left open when staff are not thus assigned, which seems to happen a lot at off-peak times.

The new ticket desk area is notable and arose from a visit by those responsible for the design of the new ticket hall to the Swindon and Wiltshire History Centre. They were inspired by drawings they uncovered showing the detailed design of the booking hall dating from its reconstruction in around 1900.



Chairman's Report at the AGM on 20 March 2018 and a Review of the Past Year

Mike Stone

Committee meetings

As Chair I have now completed my second year and it is a pleasure to report on the very able assistance and knowledge given by the committee. Over the year we have met five times and each of the committee members has performed their role for the Society.

Membership

Membership now stands at 232 and we have attracted over the year 25 new members. The membership secretary would like to remind you that renewal subscriptions were due by 31 December 2017. We send out reminders and if we do not hear from you, you will be removed from the list and the Buttercross Bulletin will not be sent.

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 ideal for keeping up to date with changes to the programme and events so keep looking!

Buttercross Bulletin

The editor, Elaine Davis, has now completed her second year and has again put together the Bulletin with a very wide range of articles and topics that relate to Chippenham and the surrounding area. She is always looking for articles of any length covering aspects of Chippenham and the surrounding parishes. At the meeting Elaine gave a summary of her editorial work and outlined some ideas for the oncoming year.

Social Programme

The season of talks started in April and the first presentation was by Mike Stone, who outlined the change in Chippenham from the use of wagons, carts and coaches and the move into the motor car.

In May our annual Conservation & Environment Awards evening took place at The Cause, Chippenham and our judge, Jack Konyneburg, divided the awards up into groups and placed them in the context of the town's growth. A full account of these awards are in the Buttercross Bulletin Issue No 165, August 2017. In future the awards evening will take place on a bi-annual basis and the next one will be in May 2019.

In June the Heritage lecture at St Andrew's Church was given by Marc Allum and he concentrated on the Anatomy of Collecting. Over 100 members and friends attended and many brought in interesting objects for Marc to identify and discuss.

In September a packed house heard Ian Caskie give a presentation on the SS Great Britain: from launch to 're-launch'. This was followed in October by a change to the advertised speaker and the Civic Society was grateful that Ray Alder could keep us up to date on his ongoing research on the medical history of Chippenham in World War I. We all look forward to Ray's next publication in 2018.

In November Dr Robert Owen, who was the official historian of 617 Squadron Aircrew Association, gave a presentation on the life and times of Group Captain Cheshire, who was born 100 years ago.

In December we again visited The Cause in association with the Chippenham Movie and Video Club and a selection of historic films were shown. We were also treated to Christmas songs.

In January 2018 Dan Miles presented current research and ideas on the English Civic War. In February Geoff Hobbs presented a fascinating presentation on bus services in North Wiltshire and surrounding areas from 1955-1985.

I am always looking for ideas for speakers, if you have heard a good presentation then send me the details!

Publicity

Occasionally we manage to get accounts of our meeting into the Gazette & Herald, posters are placed around the town and you can keep up by looking at the webpage and Facebook.

Museum

The Civic Society continues to work in partnership with Chippenham Museum and has given small grants to help with the purchase of Chippenham objects and has supported the ongoing publication of the Chippenham Studies series. The curator, Mel Barnett, is a member of the committee and keeps the Society regularly up to date with events at the museum.

Planning

I would again like to thank Jennifer Rudd for continuing to monitor and make comments on the many planning applications in Chippenham. I refer you to the planning lists and articles in the Buttercross Bulletin. We have also attended relevant meetings on Chippenham College, and both Geoff Barrett and Jennifer Rudd have attended meetings and have been heard on the radio. We continue to monitor and hopefully remove eyesores in the town and as a Society we must be ever vigilant in reporting changes to the built environment and eyesores.

Treasurer

Our able Treasurer, Colin Lynes, has managed the Society's accounts which have been audited. As I reported at the AGM in 2017 we have to contend with rising costs in hiring, speaker's expenses and the printing and distribution of the Bulletin. At the AGM the proposal to increase the subscriptions from £12 to £15 for Family membership and to increase corporate membership from £15 to £18 was unanimously agreed by members present. **Please note that this increase will come into force on 1 January 2019.**

Grants: The committee were approached by two groups for assistance with ongoing projects. The committee decided to give £50 to assist the PCC of St Giles Church, Tytherton Kellways towards their fundraising to replace the Cupola. A further grant of £250 was given to the Ivy Wildlife Garden to assist in the purchase of a new shed. See the article in Buttercross Bulletin Issue No 161, August 2016 for details of the group.

My final comments in reviewing the year is to thank all the members who support us and attend meetings, deliver the Buttercross and keep us informed of developments in Chippenham. I am quite sure that our next year will be just as exciting and rewarding as we continue the aims and objectives of the Chippenham Civic Society.

The Golden Valley Line

John Scragg

I had insufficient time after the AGM to provide a full presentation on the railway line that runs from Cheltenham and Gloucester to Swindon, through the Stroud Valley. The Society has decided not to present any awards this year, and, for its meeting on 22nd May, I will instead be providing a full length presentation on the Golden Valley Line. Following my short presentation, I will describe in greater detail, not only the railway and its branches but the canals located parallel to the railway, the industry that they served, and the impressive progress being made to conserve and restore them to their former glory. While spectacular, the geography, of this part of the South Cotswolds presented particular challenges for the engineers who built and ran the canals and railways that connected the basins of the Rivers Severn and Thames.



The photograph shows just one of the striking features of the Golden Valley: the Capel Viaduct, built by Brunel to carry the railway into Stroud over the Thames and Severn Canal.

Please note the following changes to the Social Programme for 2018

Conservation & Environment Awards

There have been very few nominations for the Conservation & Environment Awards evening planned for 22 May. The committee have therefore decided that in future this will be run on a bi-annual basis. The next Awards evening will be in May 2019 and the committee would be pleased to hear from any members on nominations for the Awards.

To fill the gap I am very pleased that John Scragg, our Vice-Chair, will give a presentation on the 'Golden Valley Line' and will look at both the railway, canals and mills as they are interwoven in the economy of the area.

Annual Heritage lecture

The Annual Heritage lecture on 19 June at St Andrew's Church has had a change of speaker as Professor Richard Hoyle has relocated. At short notice I am pleased to announce that Dr John Chandler will take up the Heritage lecture. He is well known as a Wiltshire historian but will be wearing his hat as a consultant for the volume on the History of Chippenham, which is currently being researched and will be published by the Wiltshire Victoria County History trust. His talk is entitled 'Re-writing the History of Chippenham'.

The Victoria County History has been very active in researching and writing definitive local histories of English towns and villages for over a century, and has now turned its attention to Chippenham, the town and its surroundings. Our speaker, John, who is acting as a consultant editor to the project (and one of the contributors) will describe its methods and progress, its excitements and frustrations; and he will try to convey something of his lifelong fascination with the history of places and the people who have shaped them.

The Annual Heritage lecture is in association with the Wiltshire Victoria County History trust.

Georgian Chippenham special lecture

The special lecture, in conjunction with Chippenham Museum, will now take place on the 19 July in a venue to be advised. The speaker is Mike Stone and his presentation is entitled 'Building Georgian Chippenham'. He will look at the buildings, their materials and construction and will relate it to buildings elsewhere in North Wiltshire and in Bath. This lecture is part of the Georgian Chippenham events, which is being put on by Chippenham Museum.

Membership Matters

A warm welcome to our new members:

Mr R MacDonald and Miss J Lloyd - Chippenham

Mr & Mrs Stoker and Mrs J Billet from Calne

Membership fees were reviewed and agreed at the recent AGM and that as from 1 January 2019 they will increase to the following:

Family membership - £15. Corporate membership - £18.

Due by 31 December annually.

If you pay by standing order would you ensure that it is changed as appropriate.

If any members would like to set up a standing order for membership renewal please let me know.

Treasurer's Report

Colin Lynes

The accounts, which are reproduced below, were presented at the AGM on 21 March 2018

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 30 November 2017

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>Payments</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Membership subscriptions	1,876	1,748	Newsletter & photocopying	928	1,024
Donations received	380	209	Room hire & speakers	703	683
Bank interest received	3	12	Stationery/stamps	261	253
Gift aid on donations	454	437	Website costs	64	-
Book sales	39	80	Miscellaneous	46	30
Ticket sales	144	138	Christmas social	80	290
Refreshments	-	10	Awards Evening	84	-
Sundry Income	5	43	Donation - Ivy Wildlife Garden	250	-
			Donation - Kellaways Clock		
			Tower	50	-
			Donation to VCH	-	200
			Donations to museum	-	550
			Subscriptions	50	-
			Accountancy	336	324
				<u>2,852</u>	<u>3,354</u>
	<u>2,901</u>	<u>2,677</u>			
Cash funds last year end	6,867	7,544			
Net of receipts/ (payments)	49	(677)			
Cash funds this year end	<u>6,916</u>	<u>6,867</u>			

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 30 November 2017

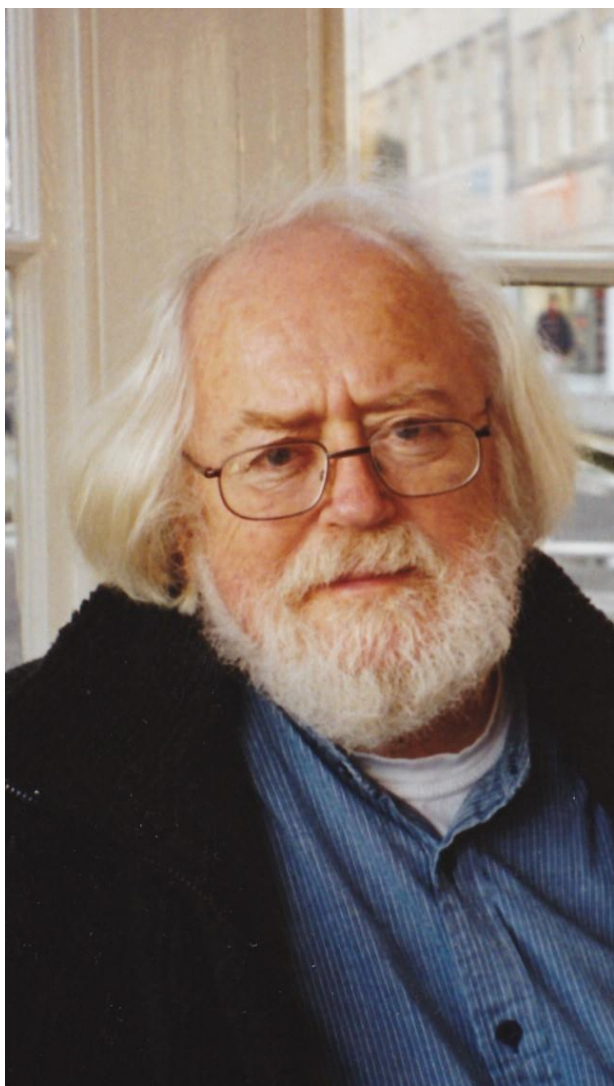
<u>Assets</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Scottish Widows Bank	3,122	3,119
Cash at Bank	3,794	3,748
Cash funds	<u>6,916</u>	<u>6,867</u>
<u>Other Assets</u>		
Stocks	1,600	2,440
Calf sculpture	4,641	4,744
Prepayment	-	113
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Deferred income	-	(366)

Hans Christian Jensen and the ‘Save the Neeld Hall Campaign’ Steve Lile & Margaret Jensen

Today one of Chippenham’s most valuable community assets, as it has been for well over a century, is the Neeld Hall.

Many local people will remember how in the late 1980s North Wiltshire District Council attempted to hand over the Neeld to a development company; it was to become a shopping arcade. Numerous local organisations were appalled; drama groups and music groups, the Carnival Committee, the Garden and Allotment Society, the Folk Festival Committee all used the Neeld Hall and Town Hall for events and performances. Dozens of smaller groups and local charities would lose the accessible and affordable hall they used for fundraising events. Individually, as they protested, they discovered their opinions weren’t of much interest to N.W.D.C.

And then Hans Christian Jensen, a Dane and Secretary of the Garden and Allotment Society offered a typically British solution to any disaster – “We’ll form a committee.”



Hans Christian Jensen moved to Chippenham in 1967. As a child he’d lived through the Nazi occupation of his homeland, Denmark. Though his school reopened in 1945 he had to leave soon afterwards when his father was killed in a road accident. A printing apprenticeship was followed by the offer of a university scholarship which he postponed “to see some of the world.” He walked and hitch-hiked from Denmark and through the length of Norway working for a time in Hammerfest. Through Sweden and part of Finland as far as the Russian border where, for no reason he could explain, he decided to fly to Dublin for a theatre festival and, incidentally, five years working on the Irish times and the Irish Independent. Deciding the U.K. would be worth a visit he moved to St Albans, later to Salisbury and finally to Chippenham where, for the next thirty seven years he was involved in community organisations and projects.

Believing originally that “if God had meant grass to be short he’d have made it that way” the self-sufficiency movement of the 1970’s saw him acquire two allotments, a 200 square foot greenhouse, a beloved Merry Tiller rotavator, ten bee hives and, above all, the

secretaryship of the Garden and Allotment Society for the next 27 years.

By the mid 70's Chippenham Folk Festival was thriving: when in 1974 Hans gave a friend a lift home from a concert and was invited in for coffee he picked up a melodeon from the kitchen table and gave an impromptu concert playing for the first time in two decades. Soon he was playing in various pubs and clubs which, in some mysterious way led, via a discussion with friends John Coleman and Edwin Taylor, to the formation of Chippenham Morris, still thriving 40 years later.

And then there was the Neeld Hall. Hans was a lifelong socialist and an active trade unionist throughout fifty years in the printing industry. As a member of Chippenham Labour Party he was at various times both Chairman and Secretary. His belief in the power of Community Politics helped produce the "Save the Neeld Hall" campaign.

Letters to the press were interspersed with a series of elegantly designed and entertaining posters.

"The Neeld Hall: We use it. Why lose it?"

"Careless voting can cost you your heritage."

"We'll vote for them if they vote for us. Neeld Hall belongs to the people of Chippenham."

We'll vote for them – if they vote for us.

Neeld Hall belongs to the people of Chippenham

*Published and printed by local organisations working
together to retain Neeld Hall as a community amenity.*

*More information from Hans Jensen,
31 East Yewstock Crescent. Telephone: 653051*

This last on the eve of local elections in May 1991 helped to produce a radically different set of councillors or as the local press reported "The Liberal Democrats swept to power!"

The election campaign had clearly noted the remarkable public meeting organised by Hans Jensen and held six weeks previously, on March 27th. The Neeld Hall was packed, every seat taken and every inch of standing room filled. A novel feature was the newly written campaign song "Hey, Joseph Neeld" performed by Chippenham Light Opera group with the audience able to join in; every seat had a song sheet. Speaker after speaker explained why the Neeld mattered to them and their organisation.

People's petition saves the Neeld Hall

Ex-mayor Robbie Hughes earned the loudest cheers when he declared "The Council says it costs money. So what if it costs money? It gives people pleasure." By July 1991 the campaign had collected over 15,000 signatures on a petition which read:

"The Neeld Hall belongs to the people of Chippenham. We call upon North Wiltshire District Council to grant our wish to keep it as a community hall."

This echoed the words on every poster, "Published by local organisations working together to retain Neeld Hall as a community amenity."

And as Hans Jensen pointed out as the campaign came to a successful end,

"The campaign has taught ordinary people that if they work together they have a voice. Democracy is about people, their needs, lives and concerns."

In 1994 Hans retired. His daughter Isobel had died the previous October and so he became involved in a whole new enterprise, fundraising for Naomi House Children's Hospice. He volunteered to be Santa Claus in Emery Gate Shopping Centre, his earnings matched pound for pound by the manager, Bud Wainwright and donated to Naomi House. So Hans became Santa Claus every year for the next four years, housed in a succession of glamorous grottoes. He never asked children what they wanted "because I'm not going to make promises that parents can't keep". Instead he urged a generation of children to value the gifts of family, friendship, peace and kindness. The Buddhism he had practised for 20 years affected the conversations he had with children: his gift for languages certainly impressed the Norwegian family and later the German family who were chatted to in their own languages.

Hans was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2000 and metastatic liver cancer four years later yet lived a full and totally engaged life until his last few weeks. Any enquiry about his health was met with "I'm fine, how are you?" Eventually he wasn't fine anymore and died, as he had wished, at home on May 19th, 2005.

So who was Hans Christian Jensen? Proudly Danish yet devoted to his adopted Wiltshire town, printer, calligrapher, craftsman, peace campaigner, community activist, father, grandfather and great grandfather, Buddhist, beer maker, musician, gardener, humanist and humanitarian. The best epitaph came from the card which described him as "the kindest man I ever met" and in the quotation from his favourite poet, Dylan Thomas, which is on his gravestone.

"And death shall have no dominion..."

News from the Museum

Melissa Barnett

Cover image: Chippenham Museum's new front entrance Chippenham Leader of the Council, Cllr Sandie Webb, Town Council Chief Executive Mark Smith, Mayor's consort, Cedric Norton, Mayor Cllr Mary Norton, Museum Curator Melissa Barnett, Cllr Desna Allen, Chair of the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee and Craig Hicks, Wilkins Builders Ltd.

After a very busy few months we are delighted that the museum's new front entrance and shop is now open. This develops our presence in the Market Place providing a more visible and welcoming space for visitors.

This is a part of a number of significant changes to the museum beginning with the opening of the new temporary exhibition gallery and work to refresh the majority of the museum's displays with more items on display than ever before,

This work would not have been possible without our superb team of over 40 volunteers and the continued support from the community.

Within the new larger shop space we can offer a greater selection of gifts and souvenirs reflecting Chippenham and the wider local area. The museum is pleased to be supporting local artists and craftspeople, including Barking Hen Jewellery based in Chippenham, Peter Berry stained glass based near Calne and Jane Scott ceramics based in Holt.



Current Exhibition - F.L. Griggs: Visions of England

Organised by the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

Chippenham is the final venue for the Ashmolean Museum's touring exhibition celebrating the work of F.L. Griggs (1876 -1938).

While Griggs trained initially as an architect in the Arts & Crafts tradition under C. E. Mallows, it is as a draughtsman and printer-maker that he is best known. From 1912 he produced the technically brilliant etchings which resulted in his election to the Royal Academy in 1931. These combined meticulous accuracy with a poetic sensibility, informed by his love of medieval architecture and his affinity for the work of Samuel Palmer and J. M. W. Turner



© The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

The Ashmolean's collection of Griggs's work is unrivalled and the exhibition displays over 30 examples spanning his career, including etchings, fascinating preparatory drawings, and superb watercolours

Griggs influenced later generations of print-makers, including local artist Robin Tanner (1904–1988). Tanner cited Griggs's work, with its 'marvellous realization of stone and water, foliage and sky, and intense feeling for Cotswold England' as fundamental to his own development as an artist.

"...it was the work of Griggs at the spring exhibition of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers that damaged me permanently, so to speak. I cannot now remember which haunting Gothic plate it was that so affected me Now I only recollect knowing that here was my man".

Three uncanceled etching plates by Tanner, from the Ashmolean, are also included in the exhibition.

The exhibition runs until Saturday 16 June.

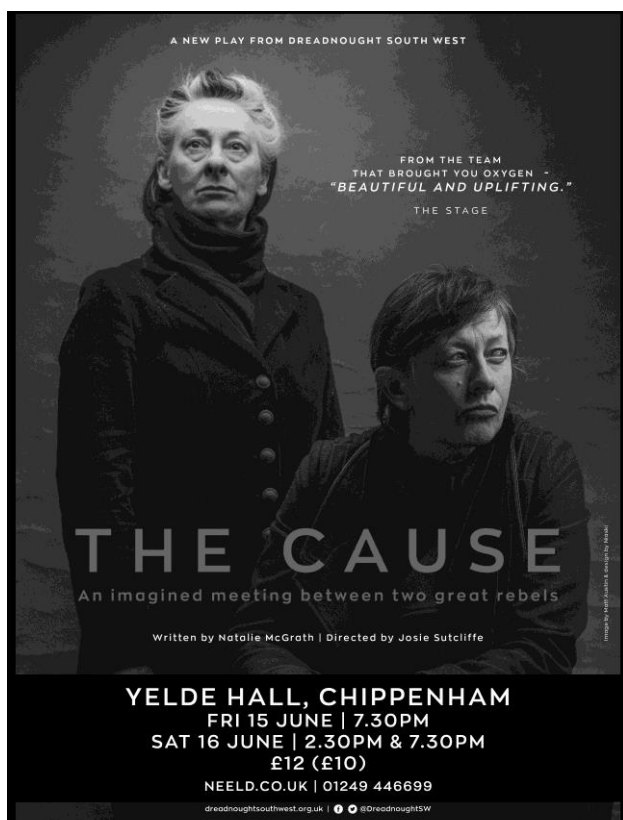
Georgian Chippenham

For the summer season, join the Museum as it celebrates all things Georgian, with a programme of exhibitions and events bringing to life some of the glamour and scandal that made the 18th century so exciting. Highlights include:

- Georgian Day – to start the season in style join the Mannered Mob for a day of Georgian delights at the museum
Saturday 14 July, free entry
- Exhibition: *Little Bath – Gossip and Scandal in Georgian Chippenham*,
14 July-29 September
With original 18th century objects on loan from across the country, this exhibition will share some of the scandalous stories from Chippenham's history.

The Cause – An Overture of Rebellion and Revolt

The Yelde Hall will be the venue for a new play from Dreadnought South West.



The Cause marks the centenary year of the first votes for some women in 1918. This dynamic production has an original musical score and film animation projected for thrilling visual effect.

Performances:

Friday 15 to June (Evening)

Saturday 16 June (Matinee)

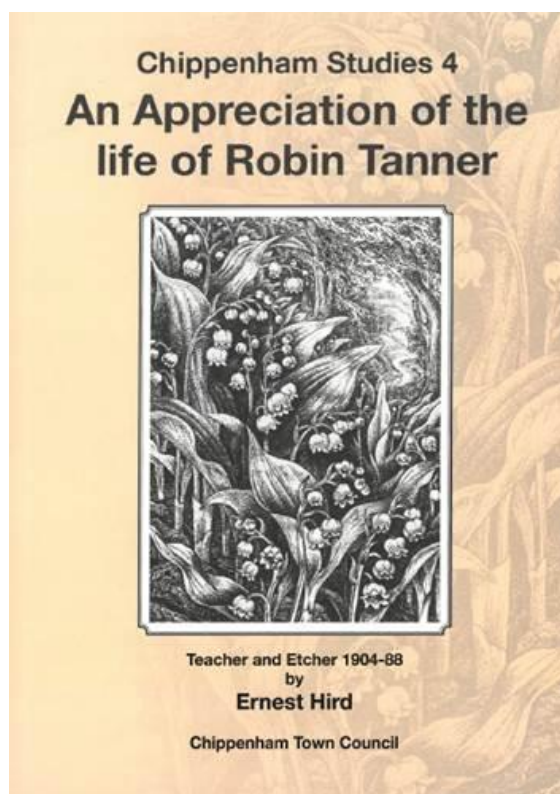
Saturday 16 June (Evening)

Supported by Arts Council England's Strategic Touring programme Exeter City Council, Foyle Foundation, Fawcett Devon

Tickets available from the Neeld box office.

New Publication

An Appreciation of the life of Robin Tanner, Teacher and Etcher 1904-1988 by Ernest Hird

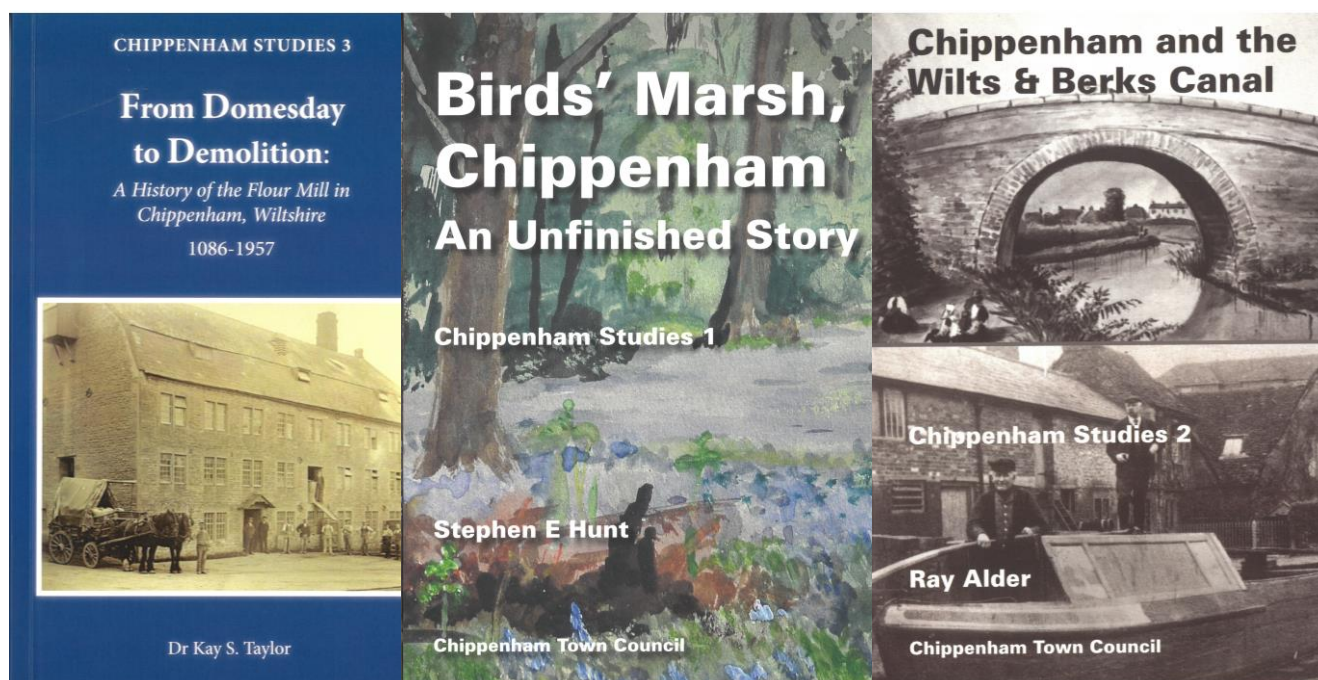


A detailed and scholarly account of the life of Robin Tanner (1904-1988), thought to be one of Wiltshire's most distinguished sons, with careers in education, writing and etching. This volume, the fourth of the *Chippenham Studies* series, was published jointly by Chippenham Town Council with assistance from the Civic Society. Written by Ernest Hird, a friend of Robin's, it charts his life, his character, personality and beliefs from his early days in education, his marriage to Heather Tanner and his work as a very prominent Inspector of Schools.

But it is in his field as an etcher that Robin Tanner takes his place in the story of art and crafts in Wiltshire.

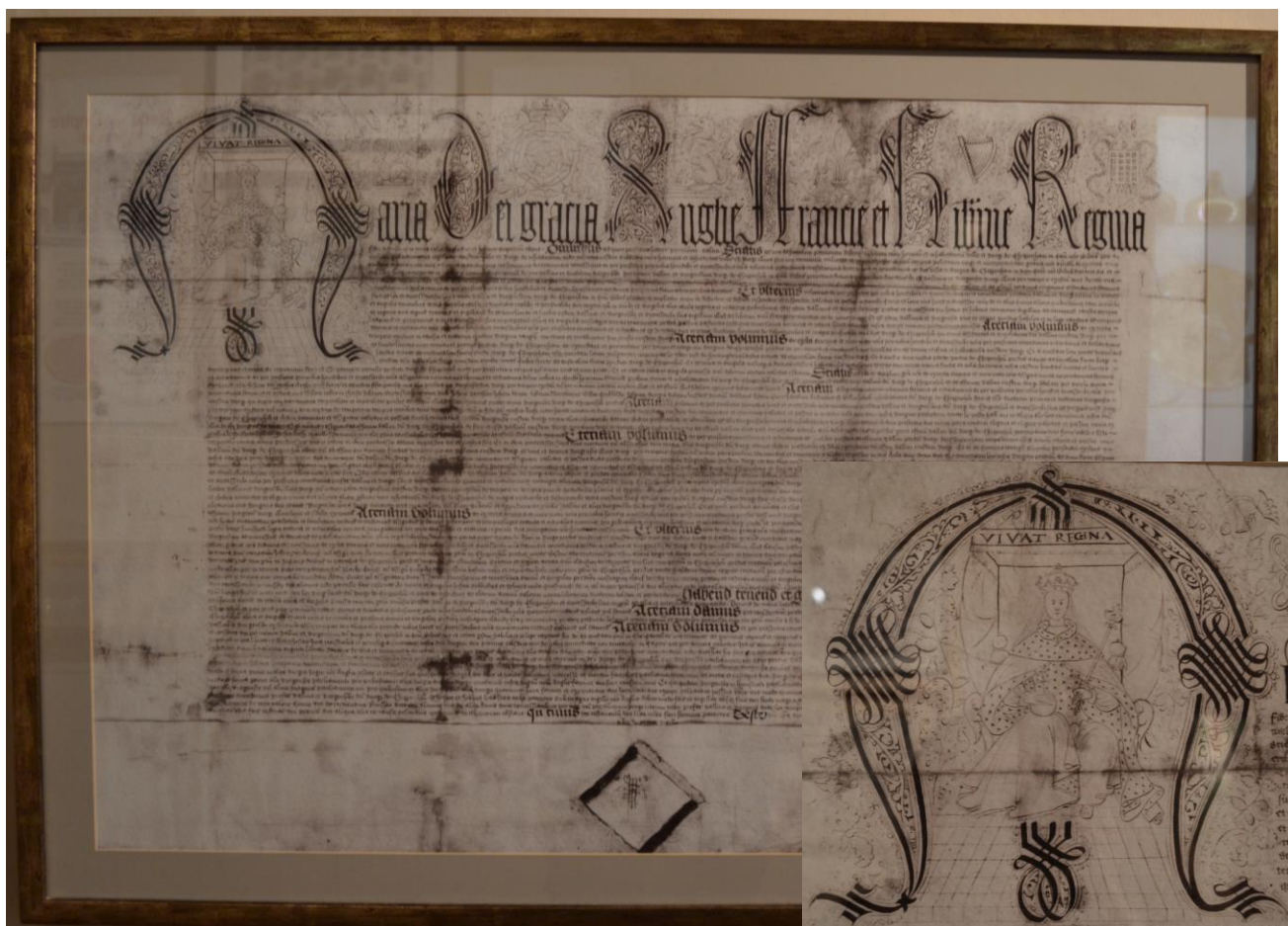
On sale in the Museum Shop priced £11.99

Earlier books in the Chippenham Studies series are available from the Museum shop. The story of Chippenham's First World War Hospital, Unity and Loyalty, is planned for the future.



One year on: the work of Chippenham Town Council Chief Executive Mark Smith

On May 2nd 1554, the charter granted by Queen Mary I, established Chippenham as a town. As a result Chippenham was allowed to form a public body consisting of one bailiff and 12 burgesses to run the borough.



Copy of Queen Mary I Charter on display in the museum
Courtesy of Chippenham Museum

Burgesses were merchants who owned property in the town and every year on Michaelmas day, the 29th September, a new bailiff was chosen from amongst their number. Meetings were held in the council chamber upstairs in the Yelde Hall

Not every borough or town was run in this way resulting in a large variation in local government administration. As well as bailiffs and burgesses, boroughs could be run by a mix of mayors, jurats, alderman and freeman. In 1835 the Municipal Corporations Act established a more uniform system of town councils that were elected by ratepayers, moving towards the roles and systems of town governance that we see today.

Councils were made up of two types of membership, Councillors and Alderman. Councillors replaced the role of the burgesses, and became an elected position voted for by rate payers, whereas Aldermen were appointed by the councillors. Aldermen or ealdormen dates back to Anglo-Saxon times when high-ranking officials of the crown exercised judicial, administrative, or military functions. The post was eventually abolished

in 1974 due to the undemocratic way in which the position was appointed. Today members of the council are all elected representatives of the community serving a four year term of office.

The post of Town Clerk has existed in Chippenham since the 16th century. The clerk was responsible for attending all meetings and recording the proceedings. The post holder received a salary and was annually appointed by the bailiff and burgesses, from within their own number.

The post became more defined under the 1835 Reform Act that required all councils to publish their financial accounts, which could be audited. The Town clerk assumed the role of treasurer, previously held by the Bailiff they had to remain impartial and non-political and were appointed from outside the council members. The Town minute books of 1835 records that William Wilmot was elected at this point to take on this newly defined role of town clerk.

By the 1970's the responsibilities of the clerk had increased with the growth of the councils and many felt the title no longer reflected the managerial role. Many larger councils, such as Chippenham, replaced the title of clerk with that of Chief Executive showing the positions role as the council's most senior officer and the legal Proper Officer of the council, responsible for advising the council and signing documents on their behalf.

The history and development of the position is something that the present Chief Executive is very aware.

Mark Smith is reaching the end of his first year in the office. He took over as Chief Executive of the Town Council at the beginning of May 2017, a matter of days before the local elections. With over 30 years' experience of working in district, unitary, and county councils he was undaunted by the challenge. An occasional visitor to the Town Hall to meet officers, he had made many connections and living locally was familiar with the town allowing him to quickly settle to work with the new council.

With a Master of Business Administration (MBA), a Bachelor of Law degree, Mark has worked as Director at the former Kennet District Council, Director of Neighbourhood Services at Wiltshire Council and as Chief Officer responsible for Transportation, Highways & Street care, for Reading Borough Council, with an annual budget of over £30M.

While his move to Chippenham has brought him to a smaller council Mark's remit is broader. He is responsible for the council's 60 staff who are delivering a range of services including the Town Hall, Neeld Hall, Museum, Stanley Park, John Coles Park and London Road Cemetery. He works closely with the council members providing impartial professional advice both individually and collectively and is responsible for the delivery of the council's new Corporate Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and making recommendations to the council. He also liaises with stake holders and town partners such as the Chippenham Business Improvement District (BID), Chamber of Commerce, Wiltshire Council, the Police, Borough Lands Charity, along with a wide range of regional and national partners. All this makes, in his words, "every day different".

Mark has recently completed a Certificate in Local Council Administration (CilCA). This is an important formal qualification for the local council sector, allowing the town council to take up the General Power of Competence, something that larger councils are given as a right.

When asked what brought Mark to Chippenham a year ago he replies “the ability to develop, shape and deliver local services for local people”. But his interest in history means that the tradition of Chippenham Council and the history of the town has also played a part and Mark is keen to celebrate this heritage.

Working with Melissa Barnett at the museum and with the help of museum volunteer Doris Roddham, Mark has established a list of people who have taken on the position of Town Clerk/ Chief Executive since the 1835 Reform Act. The council intends to add these names to the Honours Board in the Town Hall, which displays the names of the Town Mayors going back to 1835. The Honours Board is displayed in the Town Hall along with the Mayoral photographs going back to 1854.

It has been a busy first year as Chief Executive for Mark with many highlights and as he moves into the second year he is looking forward to the challenges ahead.



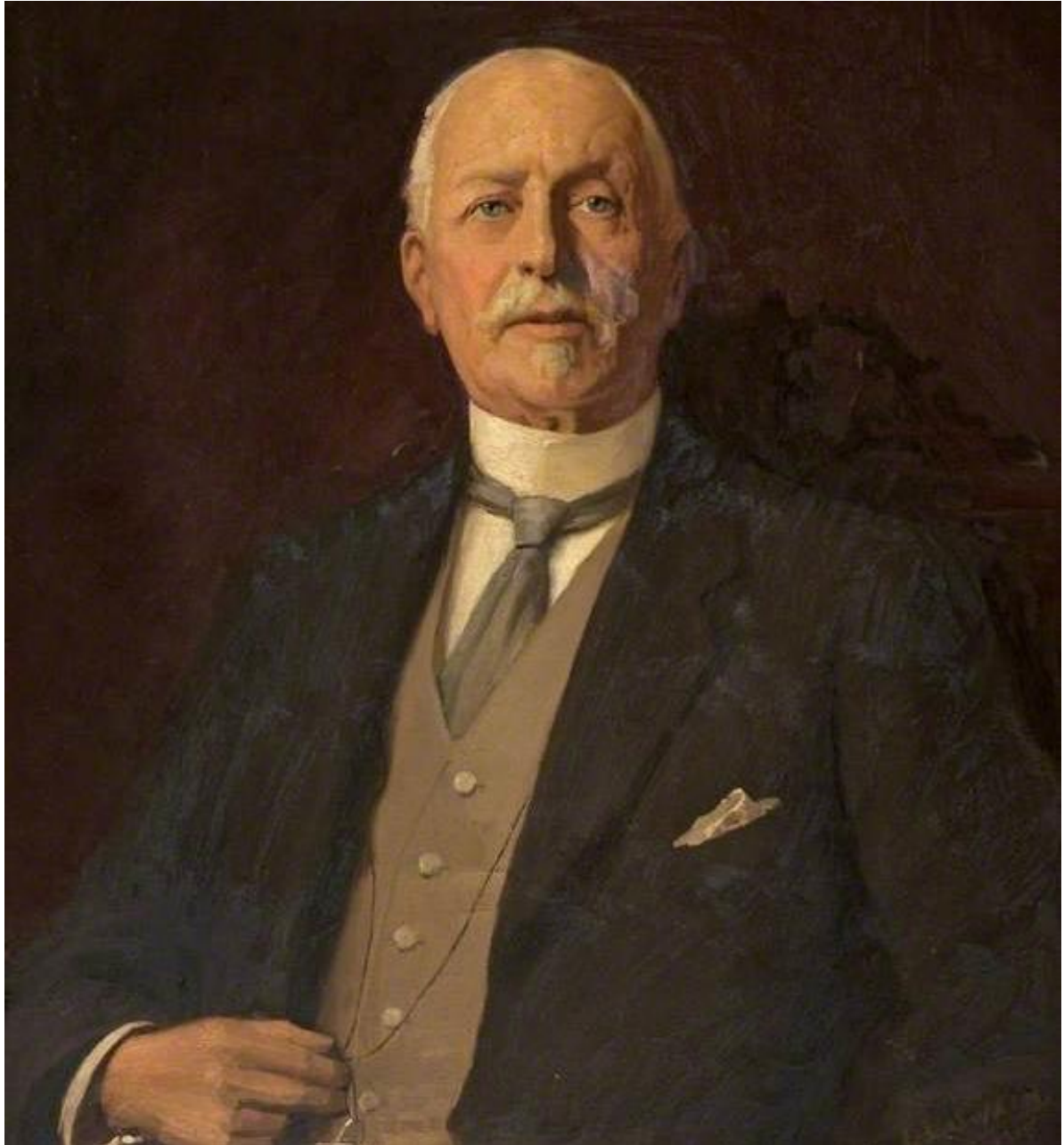
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Chippenham Town Council Chief Executive Mark Smith with Mayor
Councillor Mary Norton, Deputy Mayor Councillor Andy Phillips and Mace
bearer Brian Pratt

In his office Mark is surrounded by reminders of his notable predecessors, in particular a half-length portrait of Frank Philips, Town Clerk of the borough from 1868 to 1924 The Town Council Minute books entry for November 1918 records that the painting was

presented to The Town Clerk (Mr F.H. Phillips) on his completing 50 years' service as town clerk of the Borough. A newspaper report of the proceedings states

The Town Council decided to mark the happy event of the town clerks jubilee by making him a presentation and this took the form of a present to him of his portrait in oils The gentleman engaged to execute the portrait was Mr Swain, of Elwell, Surrey, a raising artist of great ability, whose works have been exhibited at the Royal Academy. He is not only a painter with a fine technique but seems in the painting of the Town Clerk to have caught the spirit and the personality of the subject.



Courtesy of Chippenham Museum



©Chippenham Town Council

Ceremonially the town clerk has worn robes that highlight the scholarly origin of the post, including a mortar board and academic robes. More recent post holders wear a wig, reminiscent of that worn in the judicial system, possibly suggesting the impartiality of the post.