

Chairman's notes

John Brunsdon

Some lament what they consider the urbanization of Glastonbury, but development occurred during every period of history, and was no doubt similarly lamented. Today the town has become "developed out": few sites are left that are suitable for new building, by virtue of being of high landscape value or too near the floodplain.

Concern has been expressed about the new estate of 240 or more dwellings under construction to the east of the town near the hospital and the huge land-reclamation exercise involved. Such work has a long history. The Lake Village site was built up about 100BC with clay transported from island Glastonbury. The Wells road and causeway to Polsham was built on stone taken from the ruined Abbey. More stone was laid for the railway in the 19th century, and tons more in 1994 to build the western relief road we have now.

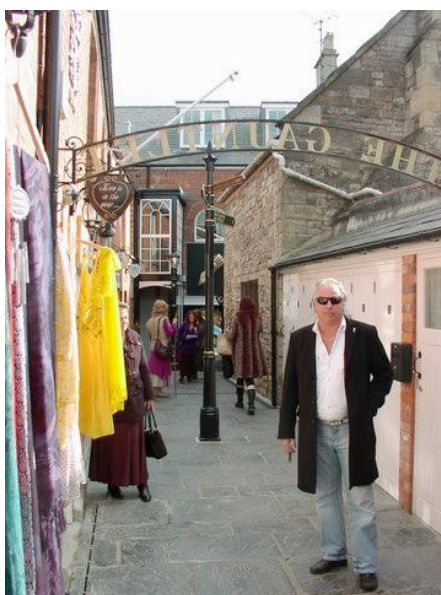
We are starting a new exercise in identifying possible building land through the Local Development Framework, so be ready to comment on future proposals.

Climate change

Climate change has always taken place. Over millions of years this country has been covered in ice, ocean, equatorial forest or desert. Species have prospered for millions of years, like the dinosaurs, only to be eliminated by forces outside their control. If we value the climate we now enjoy, we should certainly mend our ways and live less destructively so as not to accelerate change.

We are, however, not in total command of the situation. One Krakatoa-like eruption could produce more toxic gases than all the world's coal-fired power stations. We will have to learn to live with change and adapt our lifestyles. Somerset was so named because it was the land of the Summer People, who moved to higher ground each winter. Glastonbury was surrounded by tidal marsh until the surrounding land was drained by the monks. In the 19th century cottages in Sharpham regularly flooded in the winter, and their inhabitants used boats to visit Glastonbury market. Old picture-postcards show the railway yard under water and a large lake between the Mead at Street and Wearyall Hill. In the 1950s

>> continued on page 2



Doug Hill in the Gauntlet

Pianos, Boots and fruits join witches in the High Street

Jim Nagel

For most towns, the opening of two new witchcraft shops in the High Street would be remarkable. But in Glastonbury, it's news that a piano showroom and a Boots opened at the top end of town, among nearly a dozen new shops in the High Street so far this year.

Piano Gallery, showing 20 pianos ranging from £895 to £11,000, is an offshoot of Pianoforte Ltd in Faringdon, near Swindon. The same people owned Bristol Piano Company, but found many of its customers came from deeper southwest so decided to relocate it to Glastonbury, in the former Ayles furniture shop, a Georgian building. The directors, Steve and Lesley Dash, had already moved to Benedict Street.

Boots last had a branch here in the

>> continued on page 2



Since neither grands nor uprights use walls, Piano Gallery also displays local art.

Gauntlet wins regional award for quality of building

JN

The Gauntlet has gone on to win the Southwest regional Built in Quality award in April and is in the running (so to speak) for the national award to be announced on October 16.

The developer, Doug Hill, from Weston-super-Mare, was given the prize for "best commercial extension or alteration" at a do in the Grand Hotel, Torquay, on April 18. The national award will be announced on October 16 in London. He had already won the Mendip prize at the end of January.

Only three of the 17 small shops at the Gauntlet remain empty, and all the flats above are occupied. Among the most recent to open are the Coffee Been (slogan: "Have you bean yet?") and a shopfront for Glastonbury Net Radio, whose studio is two doors away, behind Gothic Image (Mr Hill is one of its directors). All the shops are listed at www.gauntletshops.co.uk.

Its full-time caretaker deserves credit for a big role in the Gauntlet's success. He is Ken Mason, who lives within a few minutes' walk.

Stylish fingerboards around the town pointing to the Town Hall, the Abbey, other attractions and finally "The Gauntlet, Glastonbury's premier shopping thoroughfare" are also Mr Hill's work, by arrangement with the district council.

The Built in Quality scheme, now in its second year, promotes "high-quality building projects that deliver partnership, innovation and sustainability". Behind it is LABC, the national body for local-authority building-control departments (www.labc.uk.com).

Michael Eavis presented the certificates at the Town Hall in January. Another award went to The Tanneries, as the new houses at the old gasworks site in Northload Street have been named. Marchant's Buildings, owned by Bill Knight in Northload Street, also received a nomination.

"Well done, all concerned," said John Brunsdon, as mayor (term just ended) and Conservation Society chairman. "We are fortunate that much recent new build in the town is of a good standard."

Our meetings
(details, p2)

☀ **June 25, Wednesday**
"What is Glastonbury made of?"
walk with Susanna van Rose

☀ **July 25, Friday**
Evening at
Coombe House Gardens

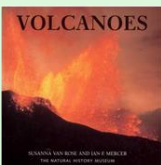
It's a date

Norwood Park visit

☼ The Somerset Building Preservation Trust visits Norwood Park Farm, Wick, on **Thursday June 12** at 2pm and then the Farmstead, East Street, at 3:20pm. Both are medieval buildings, listed Grade II*, and not open to the public.

Anyone wishing to join the parties will have to join the trust by contacting Erica Adams, the secretary (01823 66 9022). A membership form is at somersebuildingpreservationtrust.org.uk. The additional charge of £9 includes tea at the Lion, West Pennard.

What is Glastonbury made of?



☼ For a walk and talk with Susanna van Rose, author of *Volcanoes* and *Earthquakes* and other titles published by the Natural History Museum, meet on **Wednesday June 25** at the carpark behind the Catholic church at 2:30pm. Bring magnifying glasses!

Susanna grew up in Glastonbury at the Copper Beech, Magdalene Street, which her parents (Jones) ran as a hotel. She became a geologist, worked at the Natural History Museum and the Geological Museum, with a special interest in building stones, and again lives at the Old Pump House. She edits a children's magazine called *Rock Watch*.

Coombe House gardens

☼ Conservation Society members are again invited to an evening in the spectacular gardens at Coombe House, Bovetown, with a glass of wine through the kindness of Alan Gloak and Colin Wells-Brown. "As always, there is something new for all to see," Alan said. The date is **Friday 25 July**, 6pm to 8:30.

The garden is open to the public (£3 entrance) on August 3, a Sunday, under the National Gardens Scheme.

Autumn dates for diary

☼ Martyn Webb has booked some autumn dates for Conservation Society meetings; more to come. On **October 17** Damon Bridge and his projector talk about the Greylake bird reserve, and our AGM will be on **November 21**. Both are Fridays at 7:30. Meetings this year will be in the small hall of the Town Hall.

Antiquarians in the future

☼ "A disappearance and an appearance—two unknown Glastonbury relics" is the title of an illustrated talk by Dr Tim Hopkinson-Ball on **October 3** after the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society's AGM. Other dates are October 31, November 28, January 30, February 27 and March 27. All are Fridays at 7:30 in the library.



New shops >>from page 1

1960s. As a result of the merger with Alliance chemists, it is now the only national chain store in Glastonbury other than Woolworths.

A little way up is **Floral Touch**, owned by Katie Phillips of Compton Dundon. The shop previously housed **Back to Back**, hairdressers who moved to larger premises a few doors up.

Across the road, **Fruition** has "fruit and vegetables as fresh, as local and as organic as we can source them". Even the wicker display baskets are locally made. The proprietor is Tim Bates, who organizes literary events for the Bruton Festival of Arts. He loves food and says it's important to reinvent oneself every few years: when Top of the Crops came on the market, he took it as his next challenge.

Local organic food is also the theme of **La Lune**, the café opened by Loretta Garner, from Street. Astrology is another theme: order your chart with your mocha. She had the old Four Seasons second-hand leather shop gutted and rebuilt, after the previous owner, Malcolm Slocombe, had let it decay for decades. In the 1950s it was the Rose and Crown pub.

Lilith, two doors down, opened on May Day in the former Theo T. Ginn



Left: Julian the Jeweller has given the town's smallest shop a thorough makeover.
Right: Jade Philpott (on phone) and Maya Pinder on Lilith's opening day. Theo Ginn it is not!



Fruition commissioned Paul the cycling water-colourist. Here he is at work, and his produce.

menswear shop. It's now "designer clothing, art and exclusive sculpture" on a goddess theme—"You have to go with the local theme," said the businesswoman owner, Maya Pinder. She is South African by birth, and lives at Wick and Colorado. A few years ago she started the Magick Box, almost next door, but became ill and sold it.

Oak-Apple Day, May 29, was **Cat and Cauldron's** grand opening in the former shoe shop in Market Place. It's a "sister shop" to Witchcraft Ltd (Pixie Tailor) in Benedict Street and the Magick Box, all run by Liz Williams and Trevor Jones.

Next door to St John's Church is the new **Glastonbury Pilgrim Reception Centre**, staffed by volunteers to help the many visitors who come here not just as tourists. The coordinator is Morgana West, and the telephone is 83 5572.

And then, though not in the High Street, the former Kwiksave-Somerfield-Kwiksave-Somerfield supermarket is now **Proper Job**, a super-£1-type store (not just do-it-yourself items) that still stocks milk for the convenience of mums collecting kids from nearby schools. It's number 4 in a chain of Proper Jobs, head office Weston-super-Mare.



Chairman's notes >> continued from page 1 and 60s the Godney road often became impassable, and Godney could be reached only via Polsham.

Beware of alternative energy provision which could be environmentally damaging. A Severn barrage could be disastrous, and a lot of people dislike wind-turbine farms that can be seen for miles, upset birds and don't work on a calm day. We are not supposed to burn peat any longer—but we could. Likewise there must be many tons of extractible coal left in Somerset coalfields—but then that is wrong too. I fancy we shall still need Hinkley Point! And the sun.



Bligh Bond rematerializes in Abbey

The Oddest Little Gentleman is the title of a three-month exhibition on the life and work of Frederick Bligh Bond that opened at the Abbey on June 1.

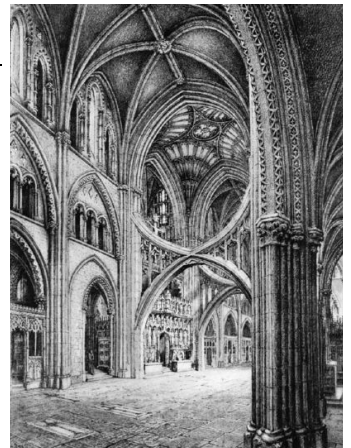
Bond was appointed Abbey archaeologist when the Church of England bought the ruins in 1907. His findings included lost chapels and a fragment of a Saxon cross that inspired the town's war memorial.

But in 1921 after the trustees

discovered that his digs were directed by mediumship—"automatic writing" that he believed conveyed messages from monks of 350 years before—they dismissed him.

Tim Hopkinson-Ball's study of Bond's papers, lost after his death in 1945 until recently, forms the basis of the exhibition.

Left: Bond. Right: the interior of the Abbey before its destruction, as drawn by Bond and his medium.



Radiocarbon test dates charcoal to Abbey fire of 1184 JN

A layer of charcoal found in the Abbey last year by archaeologists is very likely the result of the disastrous fire that destroyed the Norman monastery and its great library in 1184. Radiocarbon tests have confirmed the supposition.

Charles and Nancy Hollinrake, consultant archaeologists based in Glastonbury, found the layer of ash charcoal in the east cloister walk and sent three fragments to the University of Waikato, at Hamilton, New Zealand. All other charcoal in that layer was oak, probably from roof timbers, but oak is too long-lived to give a useful radiocarbon date.

Living plants absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and a certain fraction of that carbon is the radioactive isotope carbon-14. When the plant dies, the absorbed carbon-14 gradually decays into ordinary nitrogen, at a known rate: its "half-life" is 5,730 years (give or take 40), meaning that half of it decays in that time. From that principle, the age of a dead plant sample can be determined.

In the laboratory procedure the sample is washed in hot hydrochloric acid, rinsed and treated with multiple hot washes of sodium hydroxide, and eventually filtered, rinsed and dried.

The result came back from Dr Fiona Petchey of the Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory in New Zealand: "The calibrated information I have for this sample is that the date falls between AD1160 and 1225." The year of the Great Fire, 1184, is known from documents of the time.

It's important to realize that the radiocarbon test can point only to the date the ash tree was cut down, Nancy Hollinrake said. "But we have plenty of other evidence pointing to the Great Fire. There's the sequence of pottery found above and below the layer where the ash charcoal was found; and the burnt layer extends for several yards and includes



One of the carbon-14 samples came from this section of the Abbey's south cloister. Over the charcoal was the later medieval mortar floor. Among the archaeologists at work last summer were Arthur Hollinrake (kneeling), Faith Cairns (drawing a culvert) and Keith Faxon (metal-detecting).

nails, which supports the idea of roof timbers. Above it is broken plaster that would have come off walls in a fire, and above that the floor tiles of the rebuild."

More evidence is sure to be found. "The destruction deposit (the charcoal) has been identified in relatively undisturbed archaeological deposits and should therefore be found elsewhere in the precinct," the Hollinrakes said.

The original intention of last summer's dig was just to open up the trenches that Frederick Bligh Bond made in 1911: "We hoped to find a clay drainpipe laid at Bond's time, which was now leaking. He also recorded the stone culvert that it replaced." The exercise confirmed that Bond's recording is reliable, and that he went down only to the tops of walls and stopped there, leaving deeper layers intact and worth further investigation.

"Special thanks is due to English Heritage for allowing us to excavate these two floors," said Nancy. "Our original brief was just to clear out Bligh Bond's backfill. Then we discovered this

interesting area.

"In the course of the work we reinstated a stream mentioned by Bligh Bond that runs through the cellar of the refectory: medieval refrigeration for beer, wine, butter, cheese—the stream kept it nice and cool.

"The amazing amount of evidence that we were able to get out of one tiny shallow hole just shows the riches we have in the Abbey. If you want to do any kind of research, Glastonbury is the place; it's just inches below the surface."

It also shows how important the Great Fire was in the history of the Abbey, Nancy said. "The relics and library brought in many pilgrims and gave Glastonbury its exalted status. Most of the books and all the relics were lost; Glastonbury was then destitute. So they did the King Arthur invention, which was terrifically successful because the English king was fighting the Welsh at the time. Here was their hero buried in England—it helped undermine the Welsh morale. So the king ploughed wealth into the Abbey."

Prisoner-of-war exchange, 65 years on

An Italian town that had a camp for English prisoners of war in the 1940s is expected to take part in a dinner at Wells Town Hall next February with former Italian prisoners who were held at Wells.

A jamboree is to follow on August 23 in 2009 above Wells at the Romulus and Remus statue built by Italian prisoners. Wells had two PoW camps, at Stoberry Park for Italians and after Normandy for Germans, and at Penleigh (the EMI site).

The Italian town is Fontanellato, in the Po Valley near Parma, with a population like that of Glastonbury. Prisoners there were held in relative comfort, in a four-storey orphanage. The travel writer Eric

Newby wrote a book about his war experience, the Fontanellato prison and the local girl he married—in 2001 it became the film *In Love and War*.



Fontanellato grew up around the 15th-century moated and fortified house of the Sanvitales.

The Romulus and Remus monument on Pen Hill, on the A39 above Wells, is now listed. Up there to celebrate its new status are Ian Rands, vice-chairman of the Conservation Society, which helped to restore it, Ian Gething, conservation officer for Mendip council (centre), and Tony D'Ovidio, chairman of the Romulus and Remus Fund.



(Photo by Jennie Banks of the Western Gazette)

Footpath network gets help from liaison team

Nathan Pritchard

Somerset County Council's rights-of-way team is involving communities in caring for their local footpaths, under an initiative launched for 2008. John Brunsdon and I attended a presentation at Mendip's headquarters, about the rights-of-way improvement plan and the role of local communities through appointed Parish Paths liaison officers.

Somerset is fortunate to have one of the longest rights-of-way networks in the country: 3,805 miles (6,123 km). Of this, 843 miles is within Mendip district. Our public rights of way provide a wonderful opportunity for people to be able to get out and explore our countryside.

Our network of footpaths is a valuable resource that needs to be looked after and kept open for the enjoyment of all, and this is where the parish paths liaison officers come in. They work together with their local community and with the county council's rights-of-way team. The role includes:

- to represent the local community concerning the footpath network
- to be the point of contact for Somerset's rights-of-way team, their eyes and ears
- regularly to survey the local footpaths
- to help keep up-to-date records of land ownership where public rights of way run through
- to carry out light vegetation-clearance work
- to report problems such as broken stiles, obstructed paths and missing signposts.

To help the local footpaths officers, we were each given a comprehensive handbook detailing all that needs to be known about public rights of way, such as examples of common problems and how to tackle them. We were also given a selection of tools and safety gear.

Hopefully the partnership will help keep all of Somerset's footpaths open for locals and tourists to enjoy.

If you find a footpath problem

If you come across a problem while out walking a footpath, you can report it by phoning Mendip's rights-of-way officer, Sheila Petherbridge, on 01749 34 1545. Or you can do it online through Somerset's interactive-mapping website: www.somerset.gov.uk/rightsofway.

Alternatively, of course, you can contact Glastonbury Conservation Society.

• *John Brunsdon adds:* Please take secateurs or shears with you when out walking, to clear the way if you come across any over-eager brambles.

Puzzled by St Ben's gravestones



I have just received Newsletter 124, and of course everything has to stop while I read it. It is very interesting to read of the changes in some of the churches. A good thing or not, only time will tell.

Some years ago I sang in St Benedict's choir, also we sang in St John's and sometimes in St Mary's, Meare. Often when trying to listen to the sermon, I found myself wondering about things I had noticed—such as why had they removed seats, or what St Benedict's was like in Abbot Whiting's time.

Now there is a big question I would like someone to answer, if they possibly can. Outside the vestry door at St Benedict's there are two, I think,



gravestones wedged in between the church wall and the gateway. Obviously when they were put there, there was probably no public house opposite or street of shops, etc. Does anyone know of any records concerning them? Or regarding names on them? Maybe they sank and any writing on them was obliterated. It would be so interesting to know.

I find anything regarding Abbot Whiting very interesting. His summer-house at Sharpham Park I knew very well. My father moved there to work on the estate in 1916, when I was 4½ years old and got to know the house very well during the next ten years or so. There were lots of queer stories attached to it.

Daisie Cecil-Clarke

Flat 20, St Thomas Court
Queens Road
Brentwood, Essex, CM14 4FS

Footnote JB

The two broken gravestones (photo) with Arabic script survive at the east end of the church, near the Mitre Inn; a low box tomb is nearby. They date probably from 1800–1850. At the other end of the church, in the base of the tower, stands Fielding's elaborate memorial stone engraved in Latin.

Society's trees now total 42,800 *Alan Fear*

The winter tree-planting season has just ended, and the Conservation Society has now planted a grand total of 42,800 tree and hedge plants since it was founded in 1971.

Volunteers started the winter at the Wells Road cemetery, generally cleaning up an area over two weeks, in preparation for planting a holly hedge.

Two Saturdays were spent at Bushy Coombe, constructing and erecting tree cages (designed by Adrian Pearse), to protect previously planted trees from damage by cows.

We then moved to Wootton Hill Farm, Butleigh Wootton, to plant a roadside hedge of 660 plants for Mary Acland-Hood. In the final weeks we worked at Draycott on land behind the Strawberry Fields farm shop. In March we completed hedges in two fields, consisting of 3,215 plants. The owner, Mike Pearce, has asked us to plant an orchard of 32 trees at the same site.

Future work includes an orchard of 75 trees at Butleigh for Roland and



Ian Rands, John Brunsdon and Stuart Marsh at work on a new hedge at Butleigh Wootton.

Marilyn Backhurst at (the curiously named) St James Square in the village. A third were planted at the end of this season and the job will finish at the start of next season.

Tor Leisure Centre has requested our help with planting hedges and trees, and an enquiry has been made as to whether we would erect tree cages at St Bride's mound, Beckery.

Address abandoned to e-deluge *Jim Nagel*

The editorial email address for the newsletter is having to change, because of flooding—not the climate-change watery sort, but an electronic deluge of junkmail, the inevitable result of the address being published on a website.

Did you know there are “spambots” that trawl the web? They follow all the links from any site to many others and “harvest” any email addresses they find. Lists are sold to dubious advertisers who send fwillions of emails for free. Too bad, I always say, that when email was first invented messages were not priced at a penny each to deter bulk junk.

So editor08@glastonburyconservation.org.uk is no more; please use editor08@glastonburyconservation.org.uk—and, needless to say, please do not publish this one on any website. People can be pointed to the Conservation Society website, which has contact details: glastonburyconservation.org.uk

The website also has an index of all the articles in newsletters of the past 10 years.

♦ Apologies from your editor for the long gap since the last newsletter. The job kept being derailed by other projects in a busy winter. This is a double issue in an attempt to cover all that happened.

Our new treasurer pleads for Gift Aid and no cash *Janet Morland*

Subscriptions were due on January 1, so if you have not yet paid your annual dues to Glastonbury Conservation Society, please contact the treasurer. The minimum is just £5; you're welcome to contribute more!

More than half our members pay their subscriptions by standing order, and others by cash or cheque. The least safe way is to give me cash when you see me out shopping. I must then go home and record it (I am expert at losing bits of paper) and put the money in a safe place before banking it. Payment by cash and cheques is also time-consuming.

Standing order is the safest way to pay, as the bank statement shows the date, donor's name and amount for every standing order received.

If you are a taxpayer and have not already done so, please fill in a Gift Aid declaration. We can then claim £1.40 for every £5 subscription paid. Gift Aid can be backdated for five years, provided the treasurer has proof of payment including the date. (This is known with standing orders but not always with cash payments in the past.) I have a pile of Gift Aid statements signed a few years ago and they remain in force until cancelled.

Please fill in the standing order and Gift Aid form if you have not done so. You can phone me on 83 5238 or email me (janet.morland@lineone.net) if you need a copy or have any queries. The forms can also be downloaded from the Conservation Society website, glastonburyconservation.org.uk

2007 AGM report: Janet puts on second hat from Dennis *JN, Matthew Bell*

Janet Morland has gamely taken on the jobs of both treasurer and secretary of Glastonbury Conservation Society until someone steps forward to volunteer for one of the roles.

Dennis Allen retired after 19 years as treasurer; he presented his final accounts at the society's annual general meeting on November 30. The bank paid interest of only 90p on the society's deposits in 2006–07. The meeting was told action would be taken, and the account has now been moved.

2007 was a productive year, said John Brunsdon in his chairman's report. “We've maintained the footpaths, been involved in a number of parish-council schemes and our representations have been more authoritative for consultation on planning applications.” But, he said, “We are an ageing society and we need younger people, so we are always on the lookout for fresh talent.”

Ian Rands and John were re-elected unopposed as vice-chairman and chairman respectively.

Linda Hull was welcomed as a new committee member, and all others were reappointed.

After the AGM business, John Coles gave an illustrated talk entitled “A ride from Bath to Bournemouth on the main line of the Somerset and Dorset Railway”, and Dick Green displayed some model trains.

Officers for 2008

chairman

John Brunsdon 83 1283

vice-chairman

Ian Rands 85 0509

treasurer & acting sec'y

Janet Morland 83 5238

janet.morland@lineone.net

committee: Dennis Allen,

Neill Bonham, Alan Fear,

Paul Branson, Roy Coles,

Linda Hull, Bill Knight,

Jim Nagel,

Adrian Pearse, Nathan

Pritchard, Martyn Webb

Accounts for year ending July 31 *Dennis Allen*

<i>Income</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	
Opening balances		Hall hire	64.00
total £ 8,733.00:		Newsletters	475.25
Current account	659.05	Postage	38.64
Reserve account	24.24	Trees	137.16
Building society	8,049.71	Flowers	42.50
			757.55
Subscriptions		Closing balances total £ 10,280.25:	
and donations	2,309.00	Current account	1,470.53
Bank interest	0.90	Reserve account	25.14
	2,309.90	Building society	8,784.58
	£11,037.80		11,037.80

Talks in summary: steam, spa and Regency heritage

Steam around the world Adrian Pearse

Following John Coles' nostalgic films of the last days of the local Somerset and Dorset Railway, Graham Vincent outlined to our meeting on December 14 the state of residual working (as opposed to tourist) steam railways around the world.

Working steam for both passengers and freight was still a feature in a respectable handful of countries in the closing decades of the 20th century, but the pace of change and globalization in these first few years of the 21st century has been so great that most such places have progressed from 19th- to 21st-century technology in just a few years—so that now working steam survives only for freight haulage and shunting in China and Indonesia, and even in those countries it is not expected to survive much beyond another decade.

In Austria steam still featured in the 1970s on narrow-gauge lines, and German-built wartime engines crossed the border from the Eastern bloc.

In Jordan in the 1990s steam still

operated on the Hejaz railway—which originally ran from Amman to Mecca, though the sections blown up by T. E. Lawrence during the First World War remained abandoned.

In China and Mongolia a new line

A journey from



A talk by
Graham Vincent
**Friday 14
December
7:30pm**
Glastonbury Town Hall
council chamber
all welcome; entry £1

**Austria to Zimbabwe via Outer Mongolia
by RAIL**

GLASTONBURY CONSERVATION SOCIETY
contact: Ian Rands, vice-chairman, (01458) 85 0509

was built in 1993, and the last steam-hauled long-distance passenger train in the world operated until recently, but now steam is largely restricted to use in the coal industry.

Cuba in the 1990s had a great variety of steam engines, mostly American. They transported sugar cane to mills and were fuelled by cane stems. But the use of steam finished suddenly.

Paraguay's railway, using a 1911

British engine, became defunct in 1999 after years of neglect.

India had steam locomotives dating to the 19th century, and like Pakistan had many ex-British engines, often oil-fired. Steam lasted to the late 1990s.

Burma in the late 1990s had a motley rollingstock, also with British engines, used for hauling sugar cane, as well as the world's longest section of metre-gauge line. Indonesia still uses steam to transport sugar cane to mills, and here ran the last steam locomotive built in the UK for export, in 1971.

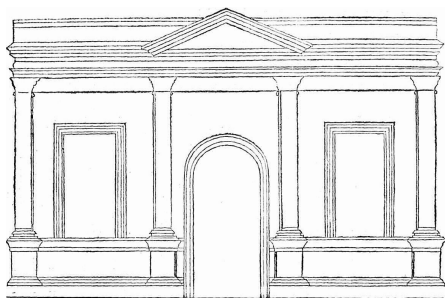
South Africa in the 1980s retained plenty of well maintained large steam locomotives in service, also operating fruit trains, but steam finished in 1992. Similarly Zimbabwe had the distinctive Garrett engines built in Britain from the 1930s to the 1950s. (The photo used on the poster advertising the meeting, reproduced here, shows two of these locos pulling a train in Zimbabwe.)

Exploring common ground

The Street Society invited four neighbouring civic societies—Wells, Frome, Mendip and ourselves—to an evening on May 20 to exchange ideas and share aims. Each gave a five-minute presentation about itself. Links to other societies' websites are updated on our homepage, glastonburyconservation.org.uk

Glastonbury's 18th-century spa Neill Bonham

Spas were big business in the 18th century. All over the country the rich and the poorly flocked to drink and bathe in waters that they felt would help improve their health, and to escape from urban commotion. New spas sprang up



The Pump House was barely completed before the Glastonbury spa was in decline. The original caption on this drawing of it reads: "This room, which is to be 24 feet square, with other accommodations, such as walks, gardens, &c., is preparing for the ensuing season, at the expence of Mrs Anne Galloway, who has purchased the ground for that purpose, assisted by the generosity of subscribers, who may, in return, have annual tickets for the use of the water. Subscriptions are taken in by her, the Mayor of Glastonbury, and E. Cave, at St John's Gate, &c. &c."

everywhere to service this growing demand, and Glastonbury was one such. But, being Glastonbury, this was a spa with a difference.

Its popularity sprang from the cure of Matthew Chancellor of his asthma following a dream that told him to drink the Chalice Well water on seven Sundays. This he swore before a magistrate.

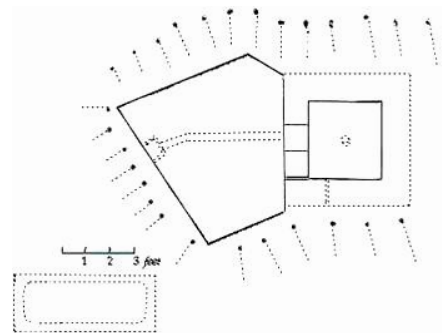
At its peak 20,000 people were said to have descended on the town to drink at Chaingate and at Chalice Well. Glastonbury water was transported to London, the "City of Vice", in a venture masterminded by John and Henry Fielding.

The spa's glory was short-lived. It lasted from 1751 to 1753. Scepticism set in, and spas in general became less popular.

It's a fascinating story that was told at the Glastonbury Antiquarian Society meeting on February 15 by Dr Adam Stout, using contemporary newspaper accounts among other illustrations. The full text of his pamphlet *The thorn and the waters*, on which his talk was based, is on the web: search for Stout at glastonburyantiquarians.org.

♦ Dr Stout, a research fellow in archaeology at the University of Wales, Lampeter, specializes in what he calls "the straight history of Wyrð". His latest

book, *Creating Prehistory: druids, ley hunters and archaeologists in pre-war Britain*, was published by Blackwell this month. It places archaeology alongside druids, ley-hunters and hyper-diffusionists, all as they operated in the mid-20th century. Choice phrases from reviewers: "a wonderfully courageous and fluent questioning of the nature of archaeology"; "illuminating in its exposure of archaeology's dirty war against visionaries".



A drawing of the Chalice Well house, from when the well was in vogue as a spa. In discussion at the Antiquarian Society meeting, it was thought that the odd-shaped addition at the left of the plan dates from the time of the building of the 19th-century reservoir in Wellhouse Lane—and that the ground level around the well was raised with the spoil from the reservoir.

Regency Glastonbury

A large attendance at the Antiquarian Society's meeting on January 18 had the chance to look back at Regency Glastonbury through the contemporary eyes of the artists whose sketches, pictures, engravings and plans form part of that society's archive.

The chairman, Neill Bonham, showed a selection from his own and the society's collection. All of this was recently digitized with the help of the Somerset museum service.

The artists illustrated some of the biggest changes in the town as it evolved from a sleepy Georgian backwater into a thriving Victorian market borough. Many of the views were by John Buckler (1770–1851, the architect of Abbey House) and his son



John Chessell Buckler (1793–1894, architect of Butleigh Court). They were in Glastonbury in 1825 with Richard Warner, at that time writing his history of the town, the Rev Skinner, carrying out some of the earliest archaeology in the Abbey, and John Fry Reeves, the Glastonbury banker who owned much property in the town and had recently bought the Abbey. Their meetings with the bishop and Colt Hoare from Stourhead helped to determine the appearance of the Abbey grounds for the next hundred years.

The sketches reproduced here were done in 1825 by Buckler. They show the George and the Tribunal, but also the adjacent buildings of a much humbler scale.

◆ Some of these pictures are among the scans of material back to 1655 that Neill Bonham put online this winter on the Antiquarian Society's website, glastonburyantiquarians.org. The site also has a section of town directories from 1794 to 1861.



St Louis convent is converted, and school is in cyberspace *Jim Nagel*

Former pupils and teachers of the St Louis Convent school in Magdalene Street have a new location for the website they set up to record the school's history: stlouisconvent.co.uk

Working from memory, they have posted the layout of the convent, priory and grounds back in the 1960s.

The converted Priory building has been converted to just two large residential properties called Naish House at the front and Greenhill House at the back; the builders have finished and for-sale boards are up.

Next door, a separate developer turned the three-storey former classroom building into two more large dwellings, named Magdalene House and Abbey View. They have been on the market



1970s: Sister Pauline in playground with a group of pupils

since early 2008 at around £400,000.

The St Louis nuns came from France in 1903, and lived at The Priory. They eventually expanded to Somerset House next door (which was built as the residence of the chief constable when Somerset Constabulary was formed in Victorian times and had its headquarters in Glastonbury).

The three-storey building was purpose-built in 1924 as a school, and the new St Mary's Church was built next to it in 1939–42. The convent school thrived until 1984, when the nuns, declined in numbers and increased in age, retired to their mother house at Minehead.

The playing field was sold to Safeway (and St Mary's built a new church hall—where the Conservation

Society and many others meet). Millfield used the buildings as a pre-prep school until moving to the Edgarley campus about five years ago, and another tract of land was sold for the Cavendish Lodge retirement homes. Somerset House has been the offices of a software firm for most of the time since the sisters left.

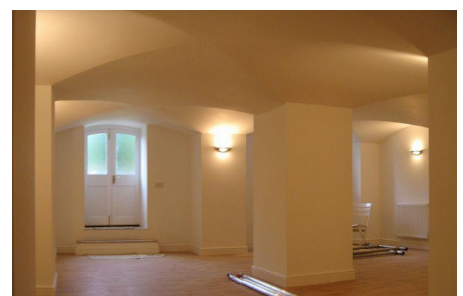
The website has sections about the sisters' other convents, St Mary's church and the Roman Catholic pilgrimages.

Further back *Neill Bonham*

The priory house was built in the first quarter of the 19th century. Sarah and Anna Greenhill Naish owned and lived in it; they also owned the property where St Mary's now stands. William Benjamin Naish was the attorney who lived in the present High Street offices of Gould and Swayne; he owned the Abbey Kitchen, which Sarah and Anna Naish used.



2008: New kitchen has view to rear veranda



Vaulted basement under the former chapel

Ted Hippisley was born in Wick in 1914, on October 7, the third of four children. He attended school in Glastonbury and assisted with the work on the family farm, more so after his father died when he was 11 years old. From early on, he formed a deep and lasting friendship with the three Tucker boys on a nearby farm.

As boys did in those early days, Ted mastered many trades and developed a wide range of practical skills which allowed him to fix or make do with

anything and everything at hand. He and his friends became accomplished in hedging, thatching, and haymaking—all part of making a farm run well and efficiently. In addition, he was an expert marksman with his rifle—a skill which prepared him well for his time in the Home Guard during the war.

In 1944 Ted met his wife, Mildred [also a Tucker, but from a different family at Butleigh Wootton] and they married in 1948. They had two daughters, twins, Janet and Gill.

Ted lived and worked on the family farm until he was 60, never travelling far—sometimes to Weston for shopping and only once as far as London, when Mildred and he went on their honeymoon.

Ted and his friends entertained themselves with a number of projects, including building motorcycles, which Ted loved to drive all around the farm, and working steam engines.

Ted had a natural ear for music, and he had that most desirable ability to hear some tune and then sit and play it on the piano. And not only did he teach himself to play the piano, but he became quite skilled with the mouth-organ and drums.

But all this is statistical and biographical information. It doesn't tell us about Ted as he was known and loved by his family and friends. It is our memories of things he did, the people with whom he did them—this what is important; this is what made Ted who he was. John Brunsdon will share some of his early memories of Ted.

Until just a few months ago, Ted enjoyed good health. Often when he was injured or required medical attention, he repaired himself. Well, why bother the hospital when you can stitch your skin together with a sewing needle and some cotton? Or the dentist when you can remove your own troublesome tooth? (I don't think I want to think about that for too long!)

Unfortunately, shortly before Christmas, Ted fell ill with cancer and only just a few weeks ago, his condition dictated that he go into hospice. He, Janet, and Gill appreciated the care and support he received, and in gratitude they asked for a retiring collection for St Margaret's Hospice, Yeovil.

Ted lived a long and useful life. He was a family man. A craftsman and son of the soil. A helpful, likeable person. A real character, who leaves this world a better place for having lived in it, and leaves us better people for having known him.

Ted had a hard start in life. His father died when he was 11, and at 12 years of age he was out working the land to earn a living. Farming at that time was still in the horse era, with steam traction preceding further advances. Many people were employed on the land, but wages were low. It was, however, an age of farm crafts, which Ted learnt from

skilled and experienced men. You might say he attended the university of life, and his classroom was the countryside. Ted was an intelligent person, and he was good at anything he learnt to do: laying a hedge, thatching, ploughing, milking cows and many other skills were his.

Each of us will have their own memories of Ted, and we will be reminded of key events of his life. I first met Ted in 1952. Aged 22, I had started my first job as assistant veterinary surgeon to Brian Fletcher, and had a list of farms to visit. First call was Higher Wick Farm, where Ted worked and showed me what needed to be done. Next he looked down my list and directed me to the remaining farms. This was a huge help.

Ted lived in the cottage alongside Maidencroft Lane with his wife and family. Built into the garden wall was a splendid medieval Tudor rose sculpture from the Abbey. Ted had recognized the merit of this crafted remain and protected it as part of the wall. When later the local railway closed, Ted rescued iron signs and memorabilia before destruction.

Although from different backgrounds, Ted and I had things in common. Love of the countryside.

Work ethic. Fondness for our dogs and appreciation of local history and bygones.

Ted retired to an estate house in Leg of Mutton Road and was much in demand helping folk with odd jobs, lawns to cut, and did many a good turn. Fortunately his daughter Janet lived close by.

When I stood for the council, Ted signed my forms and supported me by displaying a poster, as he did for our MP. Last May I lost my seat on Mendip District Council, but was persuaded to serve as town mayor again. I invited Ted to the Mayor's Parade service and reception after. Ted told me later it was the best thing that had happened to him this year—and he enjoyed the strawberries.

Three months later I had to stand again for a byelection. Again he supported me, but took me up to his bedroom window to show me things he could see which needed to be put right. During the election the MP had letters of complaint about the reduced bus service on Windmill Hill, and I accompanied him to visit these people. I also took him to see Ted so that he could thank him personally for his support. Ted liked that.

It was with sadness I learnt he was seriously ill. I called and found him just back with Janet from a car ride to Burnham-on-Sea on a sunny day, where he had an icecream. Ted had lain down on his bed exhausted, with baseball hat still on and pet terrier dog by his side. We had a short chat as he was so tired. Yes, the jobs he had asked me about had been attended to. Ted became more tired each day and was admitted to St Margaret's Hospice, where he fell asleep and left us.

Son of the soil: Ted Hippisley, 1914–2008

Ted was a familiar figure in Glastonbury, a shortish quiet man often in Wellington boots and red Mini (later a yellow one), always with a smile and dancing blue eyes. He died this winter in his 94th year. These words were spoken at his funeral on February 29 in St John's.



Ted and his daughter, Janet Brown, in the Town Hall last spring enjoying strawberries at John Brunsdon's mayoral reception. Standing just behind Ted is the MP, David Heathcoat-Amory.