

Widcombe magazine

SPRING - SUMMER 2018

WHAT'S ON
NEWS & VIEWS



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Widcombe magazine

SPRING - SUMMER 2018

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Editor's Letter

July is a time of festivals, street parties and picnics and we make no apologies for having a picture of Widcombe's 2015 Street Party on our front cover because on 1 July, after a gap of three years, Widcombe's Midsummer Party is back. Arrangements are well underway and the organisers are looking for volunteers. There are lots of ways you can get involved. Find out how inside. Make a note too, it is also the date of the popular Alexandra Park Picnic, so plan your day and enjoy both.

Widcombe has always been home to those with an enterprising spirit and for our 'Widcombe at Work' story we look at one of Bath's digital success stories - and Widcombe's largest employer - the software company, Mayden. Based at No 1, Widcombe Crescent, the building was home in the 19th century to James Brooke, who became the First White Rajah of Sarawak. You can read about him and another

one-time Widcombe resident with a South East Asia connection, Sir Gerard Goodman.

Elsewhere, Chris Davies meets local bee enthusiast, Andy Hepburn and manages not to get stung, Plodge Robertson encourages art lovers to take to the Art Trail because there's always something new to be discovered and plenty of places to enjoy a break, and Beverley Wallis visits a garden that was once a builder's rubbish dump.

Our 'Widcombe Life' pages capture some of Widcombe's events of the past six months and, as the weather gets warmer, we highlight others that you can look forward to in the months to come. Just be careful what you put on the barbecue!

Enjoy the magazine. We'll be back in the Autumn. ■ *Liz Jeffreys, Editor*



Widcombe at night photo

Breakfast, brunch, lunch & suppers to dine in or takeaway - Outside catering - Homemade delicious foods

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Building Our Community

As ever, Widcombe remains a busy place with lots going on. Over the winter I hope you have been able to come to some of the Widcombe events and clubs. Standout memories for me were the two sell-out events in the autumn; the first ever 'Made in Widcombe Dinner' and the visit of famous BBC Gardeners' Question Time panellist, Bob Flowerdew. Through events like these we are able to support community activities and local charitable causes. This year's big event is the return of the Widcombe Street Party which will be held on 1 July.

It is clear to all that Bath & North East Somerset Council is short of money. This means that things that are important to the community sometimes struggle to make it to the top of the funding list. We continue to push for some improvements to the 'snagging' of the Rossiter Road scheme that has never really been done. Some limited improvements have been made to the Parade and works are promised imminently at the White Hart junction. Falling well short of all we would want but some marginal improvements planned none the less.

Communities are being asked more and more to 'self-serve'. Widcombe has always been up for this challenge, where it makes sense. We are helping draft the Character Appraisals (guidance for planning matters) for Widcombe and Beechen Cliff. This will hopefully shorten the process and avoid the council paying expensive consultancy fees. Similarly, we will be undertaking a parking survey in Lyncombe Vale, Perrymead and Greenway. Hopefully, we can find a way forward for many frustrated residents,



particularly in Lyncombe Vale. If we don't do this it would have to wait several years for council funding.

One of our roles is to work with our political representatives, share community views and help hold them to account. We are particularly pleased that our neighbours at Foxhill have been successful in getting a re-think from Curo, as we did on the cable car. We have also put forward a strong representation to the Local Government Boundary Commission on the proposed council ward boundaries. The current draft sees Widcombe split across five different council wards and in our view largely ignores real communities. Others across Bath have also called for a rethink. We will have to wait until May to see if we have had any effect.

Finally, our Treasurer Deborah Clements will be resigning as she has moved to the other side of Bath. I would like to thank her for all her diligence and hard work on this important role. Fortunately, Hilary Furlonger has agreed to step in but we will have a committee vacancy and we would welcome expressions of interest. This only all works because of the time volunteers give to help make our Widcombe community a more vibrant place to live and work. ■ *Jeremy Boss, Chair of Widcombe Association*

Council News from Councillor Ian Gilchrist

The big news for Widcombe at this time revolves round minor improvements to Widcombe Parade and the efforts to get residents' parking in the Lyncombe Vale and Perrymead area re-surveyed. Since these are probably being reported at length elsewhere in the magazine I'll not dwell on them. Instead, I'll focus on the changes to the waste collection scheme which were introduced at the beginning of November. The aim in introducing the changes was to get more people recycling more, and to reduce mess on the streets caused by gulls and other vermin attacking rubbish bags. The word from the waste department is that recycling rates are definitely up and that the amount of rubbish going weekly to landfill is down. So, on this score the outcome is positive. However, you will all have seen



that rubbish dumped on the street in some places is distinctly worse, which is a cause of distress to all of us. The Council is trying to tackle this by a combination of education and enforcement, so we have to wait and see how that plays out. In the meantime, specific instances of fly-tipping can be reported via the Council's website 'ReportIt' facility, or by calling Council Connect on 01225-394041.

Michael Robert Barnes

We are saddened to hear of the death of Mike Barnes. A former Professor of Civil Engineering at Bath University and a much loved and respected resident of Southcot Place, Mike continued to work as a consultant up until the time of his death. He was a longstanding member of the team which lobbied for the Rossiter Road Scheme and helped to bring about the largely lorry-free Parade we now all enjoy and provided expert advice in our successful battle against the cable car. He will be missed.



Streetscape

Canal Towpath

This is practically impassable in wet weather but the Canal and River Trust kindly responded to a request to make it less hazardous by putting down rubber matting. This was a quick, if not entirely satisfactory, fix and whilst some of the puddles have now been filled with gravel the campaign for a bonded surface continues.



Subway

The refurbishment of the new subway is in hand with Widcombe's Streetscape Officer now working with BANES engineer, Dale Mynett. Widcombe's input is primarily to do with mirrors and graffiti/vandal-proof surfaces. Helen Peter is working with the World Heritage team at the Baths to choose images for use in publications and artwork in the subway. It is hoped that funding may also be available from the Arts Council.

St Mark's Community Centre

The cycle store will shortly be up and running and the trustees are also hoping to start a Garden Club so that locals wanting to use the gardens for peaceful recreation can get a key in return for some volunteer help. ■ *Helen Peter, Streetscape Officer*



Chapel Trail Volunteer Needed

For several years now the Widcombe Association has taken part in Bath Heritage Open Days in September by organising a Chapel Trail – a self-guided walk around eight or more of Widcombe's churches, chapels and cemeteries – including many hidden gems that are not often open to the public.

For 2018, we are looking for a volunteer coordinator to continue this tradition. The role is not hugely time consuming as we have all the information, maps and publicity material in a pack, ready to go. We need somebody who will take on responsibility for liaising with all the venues and bringing it all together on the day.

If you are interested, please contact Sian Lewis for more information (sianmlewis@aol.com)

Widcombe Opera is taking a rest

Widcombe has enjoyed a run of successful operas at Widcombe Manor over the last few years thanks to the support of the owners. This year the organisers are taking a rest, in part to concentrate on the Midsummer Party. We look forward to resuming Widcombe Opera in 2019.

Widcombe Midsummer Party

SUNDAY 1ST JULY 2018



After a gap of three years, Widcombe's street party is back. Claverton Buildings will be closed to traffic and once again the Parade will be lined with stalls and entertainment.

There will be a music stage at one end of the Parade featuring a range of local musicians and bands and a community stage at the other end hosting local schools and choirs.

Widcombe's restaurants, bars and cafes will be out in force with street stalls and seating to tempt partygoers to eat and soak up the atmosphere.

There will be lots to see and do with big prizes to win in the raffle and competitions to take part in. Get ready now by setting your pens, paints and cameras to work celebrating Widcombe in artistic pictures and forms.

Widcombe Midsummer Party is sponsored by the Widcombe Association and local businesses. If you would like to be involved by:

- Providing sponsorship
- Performing
- Taking a stall
- Or Volunteering on the day

Please contact Hilary Furlonger: email: hfurlonger@gmail.com

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Therapists working from Widcombe Therapy Room are all accredited with and follow the codes of conduct of their professional bodies, including committing to the process of ongoing professional development and supervision. They hold their own insurance.

Widcombe Life

'Made in Widcombe Dinner'

The 'Made in Widcombe Dinner' was a new sell-out event with all ten Widcombe food outlets joining in creating a fabulous feast for everyone to enjoy. The Widcombe Social Club (WSC) was decked out courtesy of Action on Hearing Loss and later Junction 18 helped diners dance away the calories! There were generous raffle prizes and the evening made £2000 for charity, shared between the WSC and Action on Hearing Loss.



Widcombe Welcomes Christmas

Lady Margaret undertook the customary Christmas lights switch-on. Local shops opened late and cafés and pubs did a roaring trade. Bonbon's Christmas Cabaret followed at the WSC.



Lady Margaret and Amanda Brown of 'Flamingo'



Wayfarers

Members of Widcombe's walking group, the Widcombe Wayfarers.

The group meets on the second Wednesday of every month and everyone is welcome.

Bob Flowerdew

Gardeners from across Bath joined WA Garden Club members when Bob Flowerdew visited Widcombe Social Club in December. His humorous and informative advice on 'no work gardening' (mostly vegetables) included what is often overlooked – only grow what you like eating!



Bob Flowerdew

New Year's Day Mummers

It was touch and go on whether the Mummers would play outside on New Year's Day but in the nick of time the sun came out and three performances were held in the sunshine. The mayor attended in the audience for once (rather than take part), although the play also had a mayoral character and skits on the cable car story. Lots of locals came out to start off the New Year in traditional fashion.



2018 mummers



Snowdrop Tour

Garden lovers from across Bath visited Sherborne Garden, Litton, in February.



Widcombe Wobblers

Enjoying a well-earned break before 'wobbling'? (ed) the final couple of miles home.



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27 Mar – 15 Apr
Bath Comedy
Festival

14 April
Frug presents:
Mark E Smith
Tribute

21 April
Keep The Faith:
Northern Soul
Night

Also on 16.6 & 15.9

25 April
Widcombe
Social Quiz
Night

Also on 30.5, 27.6,
25.7 & 25.9

5 May
Electric Dreams:
80s Night

18 May
Party in the City

19–20 May
Widcombe
Art Trail

31 May
James
Hollingsworth's
Pink Floyd
Night

7 June
Fringe Festival:
Scott Walker
Tribute

9 June
Transmission:
Indie Dance
Night

Also on 8.9

Upcoming Event Highlights

Check our website for more details
including our regularly updated Events
Calendar & Daily Timetable. Widcombe
Social Quiz nights are held on the last
Wednesday of each month.

17 June
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Festival

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What's On

Bath Comedy Festival 2018

27 March – 15 April
Venues around Bath

This year is the 10th Anniversary of what is now part of the nation's Comedy Calendar with venues across Bath host to a fantastic array of talent. Widcombe Social Club, the Festival's spiritual home, is set to become a social hub with its unique venue space and newly refurbished Waterside Arts Bar. Shows include five-star cabaret 'Mother's Ruin' (with free gin and tonic included in the ticket) and impressionist Julian Dutton with his show about the life and times of John Le Mesurier. At the Ring O' Bells you can catch, amongst others, Rachel Parris, Arthur Smith and Sally-Anne Hayward. More information at www.bathcomedy.com



Widcombe Midsummer Party

Sunday 1 July - Widcombe Parade

Bath Positive Living

Bath Positive Living Group is holding a series of talks offering strategies to help us see the best in our life. Topics include animal communication, dynamic ageing and sound healing. Widcombe Social Club, second Thursdays of the month at 7.30pm. See bathpositiveliving.co.uk or contact Siân Griffith on 07582 111971 for more details.



The Blues Others entertain at Picnic in the Park



Party in the City

Widcombe Social Club
Friday 18 May

Widcombe Social Club hosts an evening of fabulous music and dance as part of Bath Festivals opening Party in the City. Songways, Orchestra of Everything and Widcombe Choir are among those performing and the evening closes with an opportunity to take to the dance floor with music by Junction 18.

Picnic in the Park

Sunday 1 July - Alexandra Park

Bring your own picnic or buy refreshments there. Live music, fun activities for children, dog show and much more.

More information on
www.alexandraparkbath.org

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WIDCOMBE WOBBLERS CYCLE RIDES 2018

APRIL

29th Sunday 10.00am

Morning cycle to the Cross Guns pub at Avoncliff.

17 miles

MAY

3rd Thursday 6.30pm

Evening cycle to the Fox and Badger at Wellow.

12 miles

JUNE

7th Thursday 6.30pm

Evening cycle round the canal circuit via the Two Tunnels and Monkton Combe.

11 miles

21st Thursday at 6.00pm

Evening cycle for a midsummer picnic Long Barrow at Stoney Littleton.

13.5 miles

JULY

13th Thursday 6.30pm

Evening Cycle to the Electric Bear Brewery

5 miles

29th Sunday 10.00am

Day ride to Quoins Vineyard, Bradford on Avon for a picnic.

23 miles

AUG

2nd Thursday 6.00pm

Evening cycle to Saltford Brassmill which will be open especially for us followed by drink at local pub.

12 miles

SEPT

1st Saturday 10.00am CHALLENGE RIDE!

Day cycle to Chew Valley Lake and Chew Magna

33 miles

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Meeting point: under the tree at the western end of Widcombe Parade.
In the case of bad weather, please see our website for last minute changes.
www.widcombeassociation.org.uk



Widcombe Wayfarers



Join us for a friendly stroll, making the most of the beautiful countryside on our doorstep.

We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, starting at 10am at the west end of Widcombe Parade. Walks last between 1-2 hours and are medium paced. Come dressed for the weather, with suitable footwear and be prepared for a few climbs. All walks are free.

Dates for 2018:

**14 March; 11 April; 9 May; 13 June; 11 July; 8 August;
12 September; 10 October; 14 November; 12 December**



Organised by WA Events

www.widcombeassociation.org.uk/events

Widcombe People

A Conversation with ... Andy Hepburn of Beechen Bees



I am a complete bee nerd”, admits Andy Hepburn of Beechen Bees and quickly proves it with a barrage of fascinating facts about his small hymenopteran friends.

Andy’s enthusiasm is infectious.

“The brain of a bee is about the size of a grain of rice yet it holds a complete 3D map of the entire area within a 3-mile radius of its hive”.

One might assume Andy is a trained ecologist or biologist but he actually did a joint degree in Maths & Drama at Aberystwyth University. Admitting he was not a natural actor, “I was really best suited to third elf from the right”, he went on to do a post-graduate course in computer science followed by a job in the computer department.

Suddenly, Andy’s fascination with the logic and integrated systems of social insects begins to make more sense.

“I remember when I was quite young seeing David Attenborough on TV crawling inside a huge termite mound. The ingenuity with which these tiny creatures had constructed the mound, designed to generate its own natural air flow, I found absolutely fascinating. Insects such as termites, ants, and bees are like mini computers, working together like a natural internet.”

Bees first came into Andy’s life while living in London, where he met his wife, Amelia.

“Amelia works at the Victoria and Albert Museum and one day she brought me a present from the Science Museum next door: a ‘Build-your-own ants nest’ kit. After getting a real high from the ants, I wanted



In The Thick Of It

more – and bees are the ultimate hit!”

He joined the North London Beekeepers’ Association and was taken under the wing of an experienced beekeeper. “Johan was from Denmark and would say things like ‘Always two hives you must have, Andy’. It seemed quite mystical, which rather appealed to me.”

In 2015, fulfilling a long-held ambition, the couple moved to Bath and settled in Widcombe.

Today he has two working hives (as Johan the Dane advised), plus a ‘nucleus colony’ – a sort of beehive starter pack which he sells on to anyone newly-enthused. He’s already supplied Bath’s Mayor (and Widcombe councillor), Ian Gilchrist with his own hive.

So what about the scare stories one reads in the media about bees being under threat globally. “There are problems in the USA & China, in my view mostly down to too much being asked of bee colonies in industrial-scale agriculture,” says Andy, “but in the UK the picture is really not too bad. We have to beware invasive predators and pathogens,

but things are looking up. There is growing interest in bee-keeping and Widcombe is a superb location for bees, almost a bee paradise, with food available throughout the season.”

Andy’s move to Bath has not only stimulated his bees, however, and he admits to having discovered an unexpected passion for Bath Rugby – his hives even sporting Bath RFC colours.

Acting as one, with thousands of other enthusiasts and all of you dressed in stripes: “Were you subconsciously channeling your inner bee?” I venture.

Andy smiles. “You may be right!”

■ *Interview by Chris Davies*

You can keep up with the latest news from Andy and his bees via his blog: beechenbees.blogspot.com

Andy’s honey is available exclusively from Widcombe Deli.



Andy Hepburn Beechen Bees

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Out & About

Wild in Widcombe

We're very lucky living in Widcombe between the city and the countryside. We have the best of both worlds. But I am also acutely aware that the way officialdom views the city and countryside leaves much to be desired. Bath is known as a very special place because of its designation as a World Heritage Site. Indeed it is one of very few cities to be designated in entirety. The designation is based on three features, Roman, Georgian and the setting of the city in its rural surroundings. Clearly Roman and Georgian get most of the attention and their history is known in intricate detail. For most people the landscape and ecology of Bath's surroundings are a totally unknown quantity. Yet they are critically important as part of the World Heritage Site.

I am glad to say there are signs of change. The National Trust, custodian of some of our most important woodlands, meadows and downland, has promoted some important new initiatives that encourage people to become more directly involved. They include the *Walk to the View* from the city centre to the top of Bathwick Meadows, and a new guidebook describing *Bath Skyline Walk*, one of the most popular of the Trust's walks anywhere in Britain. The guidebook describes the sensitive management needed to



encourage spectacular displays of wild flowers, including orchids, in the downland turf. Alongside this we have the Bathscape Partnership which aims to improve public knowledge and understanding of the landscape setting. They will shortly be bidding for Heritage Lottery funding to continue their work, including some important ecological projects. The Bath Natural History Society has also been busy. Over recent years a small group of specialists have carried out a detailed investigation of Smallcombe Cemetery which lies hidden in a tiny valley below Bathwick Meadows. They found over 700 species including 144 different flowering plants, 100 lichens and 44 birds. Some of the plants are national rarities. Many other places need to be tackled in this way, including some really important areas in Widcombe. Compared with the immense depth of our knowledge about the built environment we are only just beginning to scratch the surface of the natural world. Ecology needs to be put on the map.

Bath Skyline Walk guidebook is available at National Trust salespoints
■ *David Goode*



A View from the Field

Hola Widcombe! Zippy here once more with greetings to you all.

Now the weather is warming up and getting a bit more like a Peruvian summer (give or take 30 degrees), and the Prior Park garden centre is displaying its awesome summer stock, the boys and I have taken to discussing our barbecue likes and dislikes.

We dislike them! There is little you can do to an apple, a carrot or a mouthful of grass to make it more appetizing than it already is.

But we understand that some of you Widcomberians like to throw a steak or sausage onto the flames.

We feel strongly that this is not a good idea as steaks and sausages have feelings too, especially alpaca steak and sausages*.

We know how collectively active you Widcomberians are so we would like to propose a new campaign –Widcombe



Photo: George Walcot

Rejects Barbecuing Alpacas Or Any Other Pets– or WRBAOAOPs for short. Jorge has offered to keep the minutes of any meetings and Bungle will make placards. This could go either way as neither Jorge nor Bungle can write but it would be un-Widcomberian of us not to give it a go.

If you would like to join our campaign, please shout Hola! to us on your way past. We very much look forward to your support.

**not available in Widcombe*

Swifts are returning but they need our help

At the beginning of May the skies over Widcombe will see the return of swifts from their wintering quarters in central Africa. They will be with us for three months, leaving again for Africa after nesting in our local buildings.

As you will have read in the Autumn issue of the Widcombe Magazine, however, all is not well with swifts in the UK, which have reduced by 51% since 1994. To clarify the situation in Bath, the RSPB Bath Local Group carried out a survey of swifts in 2017. This will be repeated in 2018 to confirm and enhance the data collected last year.

Any sightings of parties of swifts flying and screaming at rooftop height around buildings, or flying into gaps in roofs or buildings, will be welcomed. Please contact

Stewart Owen (01225 333132; email bathswifts@gmail.com) or David Robertson (01225 834424; email dirobertson43@gmail.com) if you have any sightings in your locality to be confirmed and recorded.

In addition, please contact Stewart or David if you would like to discuss the possibility of installing swift nest boxes at your property. (Stewart is about to install some swift nest boxes in the tower of St Mark's Community Centre).

A couple of swift nest sites have been identified in Widcombe but help is needed in finding out more about the population so that we can help them. ■ *David Robertson, Group Leader, RSPB Bath & District Local Group.*

The Widcombe Art Trail 2018

Saturday 19 May

Sunday 20 May

Perhaps you are thinking, should I really go again this year? Well, yes, you should!

Exciting changes to Widcombe's annual showcase of native talent

Widcombe's prestigious Art Trail - part of the Bath Open Studios series - will take place on the weekend of 19 & 20 May this year. The successful formula of a couple of large central venues plus open studios in the artists' own (lovely!) houses continues, but with a major addition in the shape of the new Widcombe Social Club, where you will find some familiar faces and the



Sarah Turrell - Stoneware bowl

fruits of their year's creative labour, along with several artists new to the Trail. For anyone who happens to be unfamiliar with Widcombe's Art Trail, this is a great place to start: there is a huge variety of art to buy and hanker after – not the amateur paintings you might expect, but hats,



Mary Liddell - Study in Red and Grey: Carnations and Ribbon

pottery, jewellery and lots more! And the Club's Waterside Arts Bar has been revamped. 'We have added a lot more colour: it's now a great place to hang out', says the Manager. WSC is wheelchair friendly and makes a wonderfully light and airy exhibition space.



Adrienne Horswill - BB Summer hat floral

Just along Widcombe Parade, a new venue for last year, the popular coffee shop Mús will again be taking part – it is the perfect spot to fortify yourself with refreshments, being conveniently situated at the midpoint of the Trail, and will have work from Caroline Crossland (cards and linocuts) and Bridget Baker (wire animals) on show. And if you fancy a musical break, drop in to the White Hart where your browsing amongst watercolours and oils may be serenaded by a ukulele band!

There are changes too at Action on Hearing Loss, with a greater focus on the wonderful work produced by people the charity supports.

Add to all this a plethora of new artists, such as Matthew and Aga Cook (illustrator and silversmith respectively) who will be showing their work alongside sculptor



Annabel Menheneott - Mawgan Porth Beach

Caspar Taylor in Hatfield Buildings, and the welcome presence in St Matthew's Church of Mary Liddell, who was sadly unable to show her vibrant paintings last year, and there are plenty of reasons for indulging yourself at the Widcombe Art Trail again this year! More information at widcombearttrail.com



Matthew Cook - Portrait

Working Widcombe

Hidden behind the classical façade of No 1 Widcombe Crescent, Mayden is one of Bath's digital success stories and with 69 employees it is also Widcombe's largest employer. Founded in 2004 by Chris May, the company moved to Widcombe in 2015.

"Mayden develops innovative software systems for the healthcare sector, primarily for NHS Mental Health Trusts," explains Michele Rees-Jones from Mayden's Marketing Team. "We help improve the way healthcare is delivered by staff and therefore experienced by patients. For example, Mayden's patient management system, iaptus, helps to manage patient referrals and waiting lists and helps therapists track patients' progress, adapting treatment as necessary and therefore improving patient health outcome."

Mental wellbeing is clearly an important part of Mayden's own ethos. Michele continues, "In addition we're really passionate about building a 'good company' - the kind that is genuinely great to work for. For us that means an open and very collaborative working culture with a good dose of fun thrown in!"

The offices, which range over five floors, are open plan and you feel a buzz of creative activity as you walk round. The views over the city are spectacular. Staff clearly enjoy working in Widcombe. They value all the



Mike Oram



facilities of the Parade, whether for a treat at lunchtime or a post-work drink and Widcombe Social Club is used regularly as extra space for meetings and seminars. The move to Widcombe from Wiltshire was partly about attracting and retaining specialist IT developers. Bath, along with Bristol, is a tech-hub, possibly the biggest outside London and a magnet for hi-tech businesses and professionals alike. They wanted to be close to the city with good transport links and high-quality offices and No 1 Widcombe Crescent fitted the bill perfectly.

But even with the move to Bath Mayden was still struggling to recruit software developers and in 2015 a spin-off creation, the Mayden Academy, was born. It's a new way to develop and recruit people, says Mike Oram, the Academy Head. Based at the Bath University Innovation Centre, it trains software developers to meet the needs of Mayden and other local, hi-tech employers.

The idea is to offer an alternative to going to university if you want to be a software developer. This is very much in line with the current political message that university is not the only option. It is an intensive 16-week course which focuses on what

employers need from recruits and has a lot of practical elements. In fact, it has almost as many tuition hours as a three-year university course - but at a fraction of the cost.

The course attracts a range of students including school leavers, people who want to convert after completing a non-technical degree and (the majority) career changers. The feedback so far is that those completing the course have skill levels as high as IT university graduates. One hundred percent of students have found jobs within 90 days of finishing, some of those of course being with Mayden itself.

So next time you walk along Widcombe Crescent remember, you never know what's going on behind some of those closed Georgian doors!

Mayden Academy offers taster sessions - open to anyone, whether potential students or those just interested in how software coding works. For more information contact: maydenacademy.co.uk

■ *Interview by Jeremy Boss. Additional words: Liz Jeffreys*



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Gardening

From Rubble to Riches

A garden used as a builder's dumping ground full of old tiles, bricks and glass, was not what the new owners of this small garden were expecting when they moved in 2014. The house, in a row of Victorian villas designed by the architects Hickes and Isaac (who designed the ill-fated Halfpenny Bridge) was perfect though, so the owners were able to turn their attention at once to the garden. They decided they would empty the beds of top soil and pile it all in the centre of the garden – sifting everything before replacing it. All the rubbish and spoil was painstakingly taken upstairs through the house and out of the front door – no mean task.

There was already a terrace outside the back door but a new decking area was designed and laid at the end of the garden to be enjoyed when a shady spot is needed. Reclaimed stone was bought from Frome reclamation.



Michelle has based her colour scheme on pinks and purples and has designed the garden for year-round colour. A few of her chosen plants haven't done well but agapanthus 'Silver Baby', Allium 'Violet Beauty' and Alchemilla mollis, (lady's-mantle) have been winners. As has the dwarf cultivar Verbena bonariensis 'Lollipop' with its with rough stems and leaves and dense clusters of small purple flowers in summer and autumn. For a cool touch the daylily Hemerocallis 'Arctic Snow' has been introduced. Its delicate cream, slightly ruffled petals and contrasting black anthers is one of the finest and largest of near-white daylilies.



Springtime interest is seen in *Helleborus* 'Penny's Pink' which is a relatively new cultivar and a prolific bloomer. It produces massive 7cm flat-faced flowers above silver-marbled foliage from late winter to mid-spring. In late May, *Campanula carpatica* 'Blue Clips' emerges, a lovely ground covering plant with large bell blooms which will produce flowers continually until late September. Ideal for borders, pots and rockery gardens, it is semi-evergreen to evergreen.

An arch entwined with *Clematis macropetela* 'Broughton Bride' was erected near the garden door giving structure to the garden. Its unusual dangling, white, bell-shaped flowers with greenish-white centres and evergreen leaves cover the plant in spring and again in autumn.

Michelle says her garden is small and very pretty - and it's also a great place to grow tomatoes! ■ *Beverley Wallis*



Diary Dates

18 April 2018

WA Garden Club Secret Garden Café,
Prior Park Garden Centre 7.30pm

Talk: John Dickson on Attracting Reptiles
and Amphibians to Your Garden

Tickets £3 members, £4 non-members

June

Summer Garden Tour

Venue and Date TBC but probably in the
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July

Garden Trail around Lyncombe Vale.

More details will be made available on the
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Local History

Widcombe's Hidden South-East Asia Connection

Bath is one of those cities with a host of global connections, both historic and current. But how many local residents are aware of two hidden-in-plain-view connections between our corner of the City and South-East Asia?

First White Rajah of Sarawak

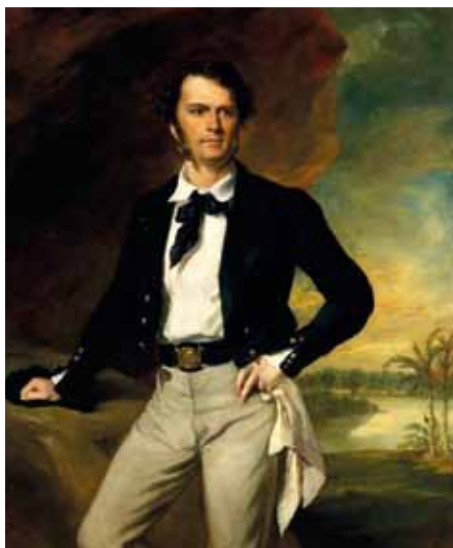
Number 1, Widcombe Crescent was the family home for many years of James Brooke, a 19th century adventurer who was appointed by the Sultan of Brunei as Rajah of the Kingdom of Sarawak, on the north-west coast of Borneo, which he ruled from 1841 until his death there in 1868.

James Brooke's life story is one of high adventure. Born in the Indian Raj in 1803, he first came to England aged 12, boarding at a school in Norfolk – from which he promptly ran away. He was home tutored in Bath until he was 16, when he returned to India, joining the Bengal Army of the East India Company.

Seriously injured fighting in the first Anglo-Burmese war, Brooke came back to Bath and Widcombe in 1825. But he had



Plaque on No 1 Widcombe Crescent



Painting of James Brooke, the Rajah of Sarawak, in 1847, by Francis Grant

been bitten by the Far East bug and five years later his wanderlust took him back to the Far East where he helped the Sultan of Brunei suppress a rebellion. In gratitude, the Sultan gifted Brooke the Kingdom of Sarawak, where he established one of the most remote and far-flung outposts of the Victorian British Empire.

A King's Council of Distinction

Brooke is not the only hidden link Widcombe has to South East Asia, for in the Abbey Cemetery near the Chapel, is an impressive grave, that of Sir Gerard Aubrey Goodman and his wife Gertrude. Sir Gerard, originally from Barbados, had been appointed in 1913 as Attorney General of the Straits Settlements - a group of British territories which included Singapore, Malacca and the island of Penang and which today, most now form part of Malaysia. Sadly, despite being appointed in 1920 as Chief Justice of the Straits Settlements, Sir Gerard was not able to take up the position before his death in Bath in January 1921.

As well as in Abbey Cemetery, Sir Gerard's name can still be seen on the roll-call board in the stunningly restored Old Supreme Court Building in the heart of Singapore, a permanent reminder of a South-East Asian link to Widcombe.

■ Chris Davies



Gravestone of Sir Gerard Aubrey Goodman and his wife. Abbey Cemetery, Bath

Picture coming from Liz

Widcombe & Lyncombe Local History Society

2018 PROGRAMME

7.30pm Lower Room,
Widcombe Baptist Church

Thurs 12 April

'The Road to Nowhere? Bath's Traffic and the Buchanan Plan (and its consequences for Widcombe)'

a talk by Stuart Burroughs, Director of the Museum of Bath at Work

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Observations on Widcombe Life

As co-organiser of the famed Widcombe Rising street festivals, I'm often asked if there's ever going to be another one. Never say never say I, but it's unlikely my compadre Nick and I would want to take on such a major project again.

These days we're both busy with year-round comedy events, Cheese Trails, Wine Trails and other bonkers projects. Organising just one extraordinary day of fun takes an extraordinary amount of time and effort, as those who took on the task of staging the more recent (and highly enjoyable) Widcombe Day will have no doubt discovered!

Our commitment was to quality, which costs money, as does health and safety, publicity, toilet hire, transport and indeed our own wages. I was fortunate in that Natural Theatre covered my wages for the

initial Risings. The kudos of being involved with the city's biggest creative community event was undoubtedly beneficial to the company's profile. Ultimately, the Rising became self-financing, though the Nats carried on supplying storage, admin facilities, technical back-up and occasionally up-front loans. And from our point of view, quoting NTC as a strategic partner nudged many a Heritage Lottery application to successful fruition!

The majority of the income came from programmes sales. Over the years we were blessed with fabulous weather and therefore capacity crowds, but with costs verging on £50k a pop, one rainy Sunday could have ended in a lengthy stint for our good selves in Marshalsea!

The Rising's aim was to help prove a bypass was feasible. With that aim achieved, Widcombe's an entirely different place, and a different vibe calls for a different kind of community celebration.

Over to you. ■ **Ralph Oswick**

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