

Widcombe magazine

AUTUMN - WINTER 2018

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Widcombe magazine

AUTUMN - WINTER 2018

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Editor's Letter

Walking along Prior Park Road in early August I was intrigued to see a group of young people with spades and forks and pushing wheelbarrows, heading towards Widcombe Social Club. It turned out they were taking part in the National Citizen Service programme, a scheme for 15 to 17-year olds funded by the government, colleges and other organisations to promote confidence, leadership and independence skills. Life skills, if you like, and certainly those valued by future employers. Residential weeks away from home and team-building activities conclude with a one-week community or social action project, and you can read what one such team did for Widcombe Social Club on page 11

As we mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, the Widcombe Association is organising a walk through Widcombe to see how the war affected this part of Bath. Ian Gilchrist will lead the walk, telling the

stories of people who left to fight and those who chose not to, and of those who were left behind. It'll be a fascinating if poignant walk. Widcombe walks are always oversubscribed so be sure to book a place now.



Our Widcombe Life pages celebrate events in one of the hottest summers we have had. The Midsummer Party on the Parade and Alexandra Picnic in the Park shared the same day in July but there was time to enjoy both, and of course the photos capture other occasions too.

We highlight events to look forward to this autumn but there are others in the pipeline for early spring, and do remember we are always pleased to hear from you with your news and ideas of what you would like to see happening in Widcombe. ■ *Liz Jeffreys, Editor*



Garden club visit to Whitewood Lodge, Whitchurch, on a vintage London Bus

Improving Widcombe

How do you think Widcombe can be improved? We want your ideas on how Widcombe can be a more vibrant place to live and work. This is the Widcombe Association's main purpose.

Amazingly it has been three years since the new road scheme to divert most of the traffic out of the Parade was completed. The council agreed some further changes which finally took place in May this year (see picture of work in progress at the White Hart junction). Some steps in the right direction but it is clear that funding constraints mean that there is minimal budget available for anything else. It is up to our community to do what we can to make those little improvements that make Widcombe a better place.

Widcombe Parade has had most of the attention but we would like thoughts on the whole of the historic parish. Where are those forgotten corners?

These are some ideas we are considering. What do you think? What should our priorities be? What have we missed?

- Making the renovated pedestrian subway more inviting (e.g. with art)
- Public footpaths across the ward



Please contact us with your ideas (email: chairman@widcombeassociation.org.uk or call Bath 484794) or let me know if you would like to be involved.



- Improved signage for the cycle path / shared spaces
- Ideas to reduce traffic going the wrong way up the Parade
- Supporting 'Playing Out' in Alexandra Road and other streets
- Turning the White Hart telephone box into a flower display
- 'Welcome to Widcombe' signs (replacing confusing courtesy signs)
- Summer flowers in the Parade
- Footpaths and planting at the west end of the Parade (by Kitchens of Bath)
- Keeping litter under control
- Improvements to the riverside and canal paths
- Clearer signs to Widcombe from the station / City centre

■ *Jeremy Boss, Chair of the Widcombe Association*

'Playing out' comes to Widcombe



Seeing children playing in the street in front of their homes was once a common sight but these days busy roads and general concerns about safety have made it almost impossible.

Now, however, a Bristol-based not-for-profit organization called 'Playing Out' is working to bring street play back. The idea is that residents can apply to their council to close their road to traffic for a few hours each month. So far over 600 streets across the country are taking part, including two here in Widcombe – Alexandra Road and Pulteney Grove.

Eva Spain, who lives in Alexandra Road with her partner and two young children was keen to get involved when they moved to the area two years ago. 'Children are missing out on vital physical activity, friendship and freedom', she says, 'It's a loss not just for children but for people of all generations and for the neighbourhoods they live in too'.

Eva is happy to help if you'd like more information and support with applying to the council and getting your road closed. Contact spaineva@yahoo.co.uk. Information and ideas are also available on the Playing Out website: playingout.net

A new Carers' Café

The Carers' Centre, the Bath based charity for those looking after someone without pay, has recently started a monthly 'Carers' Café' at The Secret Garden Café at Prior Park Garden Centre.

'It's an opportunity for carers to meet others in a similar situation,' says Sue Bricknell who lives in Widcombe and works at the Centre. 'Many people may be carers without realising it, just thinking they're getting on with looking after a parent or a child with additional needs perhaps, but caring can have a real impact on a person's emotional wellbeing and can feel quite isolating. Just chatting to someone who's going through something similar can feel enormously helpful. And, of course, there are many children who care for a parent.'

Support Officer, Lyndsay Willis, will be there to meet carers on the third Tuesday of the month from 10.00am. Drop in for a cup of tea and an informal chat and learn about other ways in which the Carers' Centre can offer free support, from providing information and counselling to activities and breaks.

For information on joining the Carers' Centre and receiving a newsletter four times a year contact 0800 0388 885 or email info@banescarerscentre.org.uk or visit banescarerscentre.org.uk

Calendar 2020



The next Widcombe Calendar will be published in 2020. Any photographs you would like to submit for this and for cards should be sent to widcombephoto@gmail.com

Parking Survey in Greenway Lane, Lyncombe and Perrymead

Over recent years, Bath and North East Somerset Council has received numerous complaints about parking from residents in Greenway Lane, Lyncombe Vale Road, Lyncombe Vale, Rosemount Lane and Perrymead. In response the Council is suggesting the introduction of a Residents Parking Zone, either by the extension of an established Zone, or by the introduction of a new one. Bath and North East Somerset Council asked the Widcombe Association to conduct a survey of residents to determine the degree of support for the designation of a new or expanded Residents Parking Zone covering these roads.

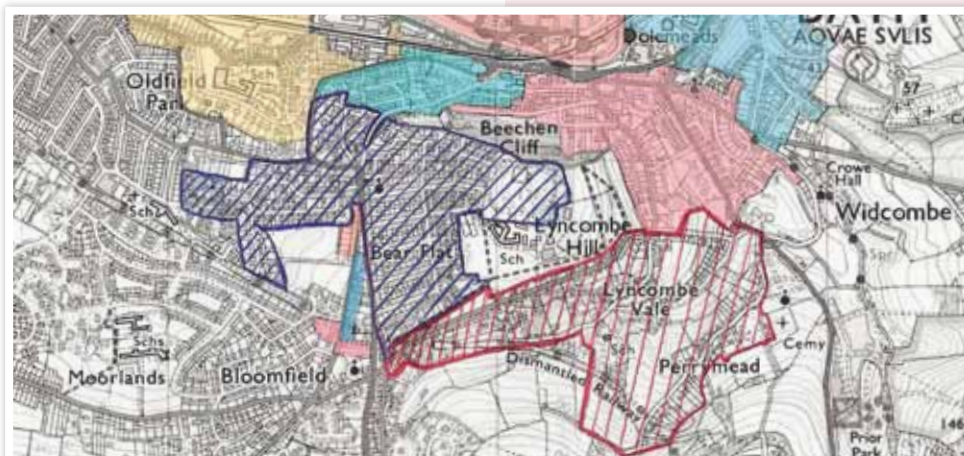
The response to the survey showed that 55% of all households supported greater control over parking, and 52% a Residents Parking Zone. Even on roads that show the least level of support there are pockets of concern about the availability of roadside parking for residents. The likely introduction of a

Residents Parking Zone in Bear Flat and Alexandra Park will increase the need for greater parking control across the survey area.

The full report has been submitted to the Council. If the Council decides to proceed, a draft scheme will be prepared and put to an extensive public consultation process. The report is available on the Widcombe Association's website: widcombeassociation.org.uk/parking-survey-for-lyncombe-vale-perrymead-and-greenway-published/ ■ Michael Wrigley

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE SURVEY AREA AND EXISTING ZONES.

- Red hatch – the survey area
- Blue hatch – the proposed residents parking zone for Bear Flat and Alexandra Park.
- Solid pink – the existing Zone 3 for Widcombe.



Widcombe Social Club Riverside Garden

This summer Widcombe Social Club (WSC) hosted several teams of young people working towards their National Citizen Service award, writes Nella Stokes. For their social action week one team chose a project the WSC had suggested which was to tidy up the very overgrown riverside area to start to make it a useable space for customers.

A group of 12 young people and two team leaders arrived at the end of July and set about the task with enthusiasm. The first day was spent clearing the area. The second day the group bought materials they had raised funds for, laying a weed suppressant membrane the following day and organising a fund-raising bingo session to buy further materials. By Day Four there were dramatic improvements, with gravel paths and bark chip areas plus planters made and installed. Day Five saw the finishing touches - solar powered fairy lights and way-finder lights plus some art work and an improvised seat and table.

'Their approach and carry through truly bowled us over', says Nella. 'Their aim was to establish a wellbeing garden stimulated and influenced by Headlights, which is a charity working on positive mental health. They certainly achieved everything they set out to do and more and WSC has greatly benefited from their efforts'.



Launch of the Community Boat

The picture shows the launch of the Community Boat in Widcombe in September. Supported by the Canal and River Trust, Waterspace Partnership and Bath City Forum, the boat is manned by a volunteer crew and will be used to help clean and maintain the river and canal in the Bath area.

Work Begins on Subway

Work on refurbishing the subway at the bottom of the Wellsway began in September. It will be closed for at least three months. Pedestrians are advised to use the Halfpenny Bridge crossing or the crossing further up the Wellsway. Allow extra time for your journey! Budding local artists should contact Helen Peter of the Sort Our Subway Streetscape team with ideas for suitable artwork to go in the subway.

Station noise for residents

'Earpiercing' screams as trains enter Bath Spa station are causing noise problems in Widcombe. Residents from Holloway to Southcot place have formed a noise group. Network Rail say they are looking into the problem of screeching rails but the announcements are the responsibility of GWR. Anyone wishing to complain should write to Arron Judd at Network Rail on Arron. Judd@networkrail.co.uk. Or Helen Peter, Streetscape, Widcombe Association

Widcombe Bobby wins 'Pride' award.

Widcombe Beat Manager, PC Martyn Bridges, has been presented with a 'Pride' award by Police and Crime Commissioner, Sue Mountstevens, for his work in tackling a particular instance of anti-social behaviour. 'The community was suffering noise nuisance, rubbish being thrown into the street and fires being started, says Helen Peter of the Widcombe Association, who made the nomination. 'PC Bridges strove to engage with everyone and help and support all those involved.' Her nomination describes PC Bridges as 'superb at his job' and 'never stinting of his own time and energy' and she adds, 'Martyn is friendly and approachable - everything you'd want a bobby to be'.

PC Bridges paid tribute to the work of the beat team, the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)



Photo courtesy of Avon and Somerset Police Cllr Ian Gilchrist, PC Martyn Bridges, Helen Peter

team and the cooperation of the community who worked together with other agencies to resolve the problems.

The awards will be back in November and if you know of someone whose work goes above and beyond the call of duty nominations can be made through: avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Take-Part/PCCs-Pride-Awards.aspx

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Photos: by Phil Bendall and Beata Cosgrove



Widcombe Midsummer Party 2018

Widcombe Parade was bursting with sound and colour for the Widcombe Midsummer Party on 1 July. Bells rang-in the day and the crowds were welcomed by the mayor of Bath Patrick Anketell-Jones and his wife, by local MP Wera Hobhouse and Jeremy Boss, the Widcombe Association Chairman.

Local musicians played on four stages. There were mummers, puppets, a ukulele workshop, theatre and children's entertainment.

Widcombe businesses came out onto the streets with colourful stalls piled high with

mouthwatering treats whilst hostellers kept partygoers refreshed throughout the day. Chair massages, hand-made soap, luxury candles and vintage clothes were also available and local charities were out in force to showcase the much-valued work they do within the community. Generous raffle prizes included a balloon ride, a golfing day and a voucher for Vibe Fitness.

Additional donations from over 2,500 visitors on the day meant that as well as breaking even the party raised a further £3,000. This will be shared between the ten charities that supported the event.



Widcombe Life

Widcombe Choir

In May this year, Widcombe Choir were invited to perform at the Mayor's Parlour at the invitation of the then mayor, Widcombe councillor Ian Gilchrist. A tour of the archives followed by refreshments ended a much enjoyed visit.



Lyncombe Vale Garden Trail

On a blisteringly hot Sunday afternoon in July five residents opened their gardens to WA members and their guests. Home baked cakes and tea were served afterwards in a shady spot, much to the relief to all who came along. The money raised, £258, was donated to Dorothy House.



Alexandra Park Picnic

A hot July day saw another successful picnic in Alexandra Park. A novelty dog show, tug of war competition, fitness demonstration and four live bands kept everyone entertained and for children there was also face painting, a fancy-dress parade and traditional games. The day ended with a rip-roaring set from The Blues Others, which had everyone dancing on their feet.



Opera arias in a Widcombe Garden

An evening in August stoic WA members braved the weather to listen to soprano Maria Danishvar Brown. She introduced the audience to some of opera's most famous characters, completing their story by singing one of the arias for which they are best known.

By kind permission of Chris and Catherine May. Proceeds will be shared between the charity Unseen and improving Widcombe.



Ralph Oswick celebrated his 70th Birthday at the Widcombe Social Club.



Garden club visit to Whitewood Lodge, Whitchurch, on a vintage London Bus



In recognition of their work in bringing about the Rossiter Road scheme members of the Widcombe Association were invited to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party. From left to right Richard & Sue Wales, Mike & Pippa Wrigley, Liz & Paddy Doyle and Beverley Wallis & Jeremy Boss.



Gardens come in all shapes and sizes ...



Widcombe Wobblers cycle ride to Saltford Brass Mills

What's On

Widcombe marks the end of the First World War

Sunday 14 October 2018

A walk through Widcombe with Ian Gilchrist to see some of the places and hear some of the stories which are connected to WWI.

Meet at the corner of Pulteney Road and Broadway (Royal Oak pub if wet) at 2.15 pm for 2.30 pm prompt start. Bring an umbrella. The walk will only be cancelled if the weather is very bad. There will be tea and biscuits at St Thomas's Church at the end. Tickets £6 are available through the Widcombe Association. Tickets are limited to 30.



The Magdalen Chapel

Events this Autumn

October

Friday 5 October 6.00pm
Harvest Festival and Supper
(tickets for supper at the chapel)

November

Saturday 24 November 7.30pm
Concert with The Chandos Singers

December

Saturday 1 December 7.30pm
Concert with The Jerrome Recorders

Sunday 16 December 6.30pm
Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Christmas Eve 7.00pm
Early Midnight Mass & Carols for all the family

Christmas Day 9.00am
Said Eucharist with Carols

Widcombe Choir

Here are some of the reasons why local people love to sing in Widcombe Choir:

- The best bit about Mondays!
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Widcombe Hill, Bath BA2 6AA

groupspaces.com/WidcombeChoir

Widcombe Choir is affiliated to the Widcombe Association

Visit and talk at the Combe Down Stone Mines Museum

Thursday 8 November 6.45pm for 7.00pm

Martin Coulson, chairman of the Combe Down Heritage Society, will discuss the history of stone mining in Bath. Discover the stories of Combe Down stone, the material from which the Georgian City of Bath was built and learn about Ralph Allen, the man behind the enterprise. Both are brought to life in the museum, a dedicated and vibrant community hub on the site where it all began. There will be illustrations with lively digital presentations, including tools and other artefacts retrieved from the mines. The lecture will be followed by a glass of wine when you will have the opportunity to look around the museum.

Tickets £8 to include a glass of wine.

groupspaces.com/WidcombeAssociation/item/1185295



Helen Yemm

Thursday 15 November

Widcombe Social Club

7.30pm, doors open at 7pm

Widcombe Garden Club presents Helen Yemm as their guest speaker this Autumn.

Helen, 'a passionate muddy-gloves-and-wellies gardener', is known for her weekly *Thorny Problems* page (an eclectic mix of musings and agony-aunt-style garden advice) for the Saturday Telegraph. She is a garden lecturer and author and has presented two series of *Gardening from Scratch* on BBC2 and another BBC daytime series, *Gardening Week*.

Tickets available via the WA website



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What's On



Saturday 15th December 2018, 7:30 pm

St Matthew's Church, Widcombe, Bath

Conductor Tony Shield

Cappella Nova present a concert of carols, music and readings to reflect on the Christmas message

£12, under 18s free. Tickets from the Widcombe Association
www.widcombeassociation.org.uk/events – on sale from 20th October

Charity concert in aid of St. Matthew's Church Regeneration Project, and the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), a national charity working for equality in education

www.cappellanova.org.uk

20 Oct The Big Cat Fight 2: Harlem Rhythm Cats vs. Boxcats!	25 Oct Bath Comedy Festival: Nick Page & Support	30 Oct Talisk: A New Generation of Scottish Folk Musicians	1 Nov Evening of Mediumship with Nikki Kitt
8 Nov Swearalong with Withnail & I	9 – 10 Nov CAMRA Beer Festival	24 Nov Bath Charities Annual Fair	24 Nov Soul Shakers: It Takes Two! ft. James Lambeth & Emma Hutchinson
28 Nov Tommy Smith's Coltrane Quartet	29 Nov Widcombe Xmas Lights & Bonbon Cabaret	Upcoming Event Highlights	
Check our website for more details including our regularly updated Events Calendar & Daily Timetable.		8 Dec Transmission: Indie Dance Night	22 Dec The Flaming Feathers Cabaret
31 Dec Widcombe Social NYE Party	Why not hold your next party here, or organise a special event that WSC could host? We have flexible spaces to suit weddings, birthdays, dances, performances, meetings & classes. Open to all, members receive 20% discount at the bar.		
<div>Widcombe Social Club Widcombe Hill, Bath BA2 6AA Enquiries: info@widcombesocialclub.co.uk Tel: 01225 460 456 www.widcombesocialclub.co.uk  facebook.com/widcombesocialclub  @widcombesocialc</div> <div></div>			



Widcombe People

A conversation with ...

Simon Wynne, landlord of The Royal Oak public house on Pulteney Road

Rugby fans and regulars will welcome the news that Simon Wynne, together with his fiancé, Tracey and young daughter Alexandra, has returned as landlord of The Royal Oak.

Simon has lived in Widcombe all his life and been a publican for over 25 years. Hospitality is in his blood. His parents ran a guesthouse called Toad Hall for over 30 years in nearby Lime Grove. The area was badly hit in the Bath Blitz, when major raids over two nights in April 1942 killed over 400 people across the city. Houses either side of Toad Hall were hit but the guesthouse was unscathed. His grandparents also ran a guesthouse, now taken over by Simon's brother, Steve. The White Guest House is just across the road in Pulteney Gardens. And Tracey, who was once manager at the Ring 'o Bells, is herself no stranger to the area having being brought up in Broadway, just behind The Royal Oak.

Simon's first job was as a postman but it was not long before he took on the manager role at The RAM public house on Widcombe Parade. When the then landlord, John Harrison left, he didn't hesitate to take over as landlord and for the next 17 years The RAM built a widely regarded reputation as a traditional pub and rugby bar. Being a publican is hard work, however, and in 2007 Simon decided the time had come to take a break. He spent the next six months travelling, visiting Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

On his return Simon became the landlord



at The Royal Oak. It was another long-term tenancy which lasted eight years, only coming to an end because problems with roof dilapidations forced him to give up the license. For three years the pub has had a succession of landlords who have tried different formats from gastro pub to karaoke bar. None really worked out and earlier this year Simon and Tracey were invited to return as landlords.

Simon's plan for The Royal Oak is simple. A traditional pub, with good home cooked food at reasonable prices including traditional Sunday Roasts. A hospitable place for the many visitors staying in local guesthouses, or from boats on the nearby canal. Building back his regulars from Widcombe and, of course, pre- and post-match for rugby fans going to the nearby Rec. Televised sports, a pool table and a skittle alley that doubles as function room, all these will add to the traditional formulae.

As to why Simon wants to be a publican, his answer is immediate. 'I enjoy the social side, welcoming locals and visitors to this wonderful part of Bath. It's part of my life, it's not just a job', he says.

Why not visit and see for yourself.

■ *Jeremy Boss*



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Out & About

Wild in Widcombe

What an extraordinary summer we have had! Widcombe's gardeners will have welcomed recent showers after all that baking hot weather. Local butterfly experts are predicting serious consequences for next year, owing to the lack of food plants for caterpillars during the drought. It seems this is something we will have to get used to. Predictions suggest that as climate change becomes more pronounced southern England will have more hot dry summers and mild wet winters, and extreme weather events will become more frequent.

We can already see the effects by the way that the seasons are changing. Many spring flowers now appear earlier than we

have been accustomed to expect, and the same is true for arrival dates of migratory birds. You can check the facts or become a regular recorder of such events with Nature's Calendar (see naturescalendar.woodlandtrust.com.uk).

Climate change is affecting many different groups of species. Among the birds there have been some dramatic changes. Some, like the blackcap, that used to be only summer visitors now stay with us all winter. This small grey warbler, with a smart cap and fluty song, has become the commonest warbler in Widcombe gardens. Last winter we had a pair of them hogging our feeders, even driving off the resident robin. They stayed resolutely through the worst of the snow. It's a similar story with lesser black-backed gulls which used to go south to Portugal and north Africa for the winter. Many individuals now stay with us for the whole year.

With some birds the whole breeding range

has moved north, and as a result they have become very scarce as breeding species in the south of England. The willow warbler is a good example. The number recorded nesting in the south of England has decreased by nearly 70% since 1995. It used to be abundant locally around Bath, but now we only see them as they move through on migration.

In the same way a number of dragonfly species have spread progressively further north, and other species are moving into southern England from the continent.

On the whole we don't see such dramatic changes with our resident garden birds which have an extensive breeding range. But we do need to provide food and water for the birds throughout the year, to ensure that they survive hot dry summers, as well as prolonged periods of cold weather in winter. You will be surprised at the variety of species that can be attracted.

■ David Goode



The female blackcap is very distinctive with its rusty red cap.



Long-tailed tits depend on regular food from the feeder when we have snow.

Hola Widcombe!

Zippy here once more with warm greetings to you all.

We all hope you've had a grooving summer – we have! Enjoying the sun is something alpacas do really well, and as soon as our winter coats are off (usually at the beginning of June), we are happy to run and play around, or simply lie in the sun. On that note, we'd like to thank all the lovely people who phoned up to report us dead – although we were actually just sunbathing (something Jorge finds very, very funny). But I would like to extend my grateful thanks – it's nice to know you all care.

Bungle has had a (rare) thought and he'd like me to pass it on to you. Knowing how Widcombe appreciates eating and drinking lovely local, seasonal stuff, how about adding our abundance of courgettes this year to the delicious gin made in Widcombe's very own gin distillery (ah,



I see where this is going. Bungle is not a fan of courgettes – to be honest, neither am I, which is a shame as they appear in the afternoon tea bucket quite often at the moment). I guess other stalwarts of the autumn veg patch are used as flavourings – rhubarb, blackberries and so on, so why not? Bungle is now working on other recipe ideas – watch out for Bungle's Onion Cider – he thinks it will go down well at Christmas :o)

Art

Widcombe Craft Fair Weekend

Widcombe Social Club
Saturday 17 November 10.30am – 5.00pm
Sunday 18 November 11.00am – 4.00pm

The Widcombe Craft Fair Weekend is coming around once again. As last year, it will be held at the Widcombe Social Club where we feel very much at home. Their downstairs bar will be providing a café service as well as its usual fare. We will be welcoming the Widcombe Choir again and once more there will be some free distractions for children including peaceful colouring and making a keyring, with the help of our dried flower expert Denise.



Image of a wine glass by Jenny Wood

This year there is a good crop of new, very local talent: Fiona Wiltshire, who works in glass; Jenny Wood, who paints gin and wine glasses and Marieke Hordyk, whose passion is making jewellery. There are some returning friends, such as Charlotte Farmer with her quirky prints and needless to say there will also be many familiar exhibitors. Their details are on our website and on the back of our flyer, which will also tell you which days people are exhibiting. We look forward to seeing you there. Please tell your friends.



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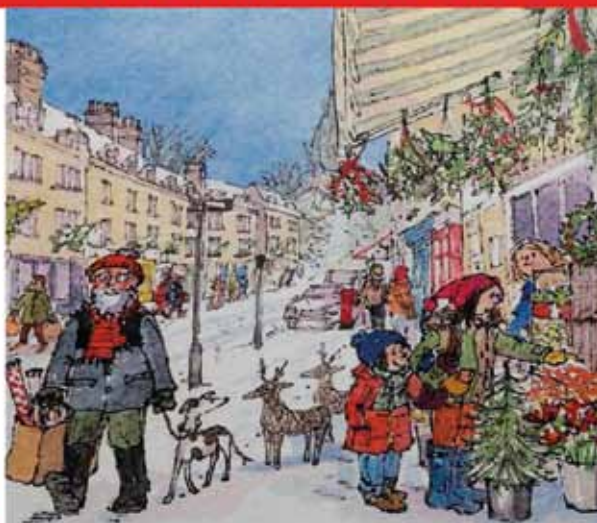
Dates for the Diary!

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Sunday 18th November
11am - 4pm

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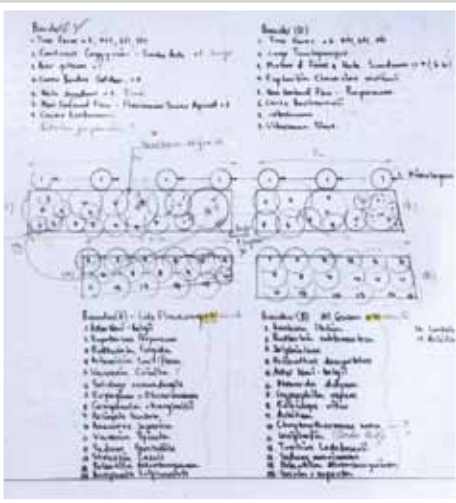
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Gardening

New beginnings

Moving from Widcombe Hill to Perrymead wasn't a hard decision. Four flights of stairs had become tiresome and the new dog walks and the countryside setting would be refreshing. Dusk brought a delightful bonus - the spontaneous calling of resident owls.

Initially the size of the new garden was an issue. A huge lawn and a relatively small patio area prompted plans for a larger terraced area where they could enjoy all year round colour; something they weren't able to do in their small Widcombe Hill garden where tree roots ran like veins through the soil making planting up difficult.



After intense research, some in Holland Park, a carefully chosen local garden designer was tasked with the job of installing their chosen specimens.

The initial few weeks work involved the removal of hundreds of tons of claggy clay soil with a mini digger. The new plant



terraces needed a drainage system to prevent them becoming waterlogged prior to the delivery of new topsoil.

The planting was designed to minimise the impact of the large sloping lawn. Some of the original and ambitious plant varieties had to be scaled down because of the cost of extensive earth removal. However, many of the exotic plants they had seen including architectural slow-growing tree ferns were kept. The colour theme of pinks, mauves and blues with the odd splash of electric yellow is interesting.

A variety of 'switch grass' *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah' forms upright clumps of yellow green leaves which develop red tips by summer and small, red flowers in August. *Leucanthemum*, related to the common daisy, is a familiar border plant. It does best in full-sun conditions, flowering in the early summer with the typical daisy configuration of long white petals surrounding a yellow eye. In contrast the tall and elegant lavender purple flowers of the summer-flowering *Verbena bonariensis* is perfect, bringing height to the border and working well



with the prairie style planting. Another favourite is *Eryngium bourgatii*, one of the blue-est of the beautiful sea hollies. With delicate whorls of spikes around the central egg it's a treat for bees and butterflies. The easy to grow *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Kelvedon Star', Black-eyed Susan, with large daisy type flowers, is a heavy bloomer and flowers for months. It's another great plant for adding height whilst the brown splashes on intensively yellow flowers gives colour and interest to beds. ■ **Beverley Wallis**



Widcombe Association Garden Club 2018-2019

Wednesday 17 October	Kate Collyns Started her own market garden business three years ago and sells to farm shops, cafés, local pubs and restaurants. She has written for magazines including <i>The Independent</i> magazine, <i>Countryfile</i> and <i>Grow Your Own</i> .	Growing salad leaves all year round
Thursday 15 November	Helen Yemm Garden writer and lecturer. She writes a weekly column for the <i>Daily Telegraph</i> , 'Thorny Problems', as well as a monthly column in the <i>English Garden</i> magazine, and appears regularly on the BBC	'Thorny Problems' 'Off the Cuff' Q & A
Wednesday 16 January	John Tucker	New talk
February	Spring garden tour	Hanham Court Gardens Hanham Abbots, Bristol
Wednesday 20 March	Andrew Tolman Former senior gardener at Highgrove Royal Gardens	'Off the beaten track, hidden gems' Talk about less well-known great gardens to visit around the country, their owners, their houses and plants in those gardens.
Wednesday 17 April	Christina Stapley Is a medical herbalist and has been growing, studying and using herbs for 40 years. An RHS speaker, she has written several books	Herbs for the kitchen
June	Summer garden tour	Fernbank in Congresbury

Local History

Spotlight: An occasional series on people, places and buildings -

‘Captain’ William A Evans

Williams Evans, whose tomb is to be found in Perrymead Catholic Cemetery, was a legendary Bath swimming instructor and overseer of the development of swimming at Cleveland Baths (now Cleveland Pools). Born in 1822, the son of a gardener, Evans worked as a bootmaker in the city. However, a tragic boating accident on the Avon in 1854, in which his three companions drowned, is thought to have set him on his future mission to teach swimming and life-saving. He involved schools in the city, organised swimming classes for boys, competitions with prestigious prizes donated by businessmen, fun events and galas. Massive crowds testified to the draw of his eccentric nature – he owned a pet baboon – and spectacular stunts including Houdini-style escapology and high diving that was headlined in the press as ‘Mr Evans’ Great Leap’.

Evans was a master of sensation with a popular touch ... and a serious vision. He lived, unmarried, at the Cleveland Pools until his death in 1884. Whether or not he was a ‘Captain’ in reality, his achievements were exceptional.



Abridged from an article by Dr Linda Watts. Images copyright of Cleveland Pools Trust.



‘Captain’ Evans’ Tomb, Perrymead Catholic Cemetery

November this year will mark the 100th anniversary of the ending of World War I, an event of such magnitude that it does not need me to add any more words. But it is worth knowing something about the effect that it had on Bath, and Widcombe in particular. Local historian and author Andrew Swift has written an excellent book, ‘All Roads Lead to France’, which details how the war affected Bath, and from this it is possible to pick out the many stories large and small of Widcombe life. Most notable of course are the tales of men who went to fight and never came back, or if they did come back were changed forever. Mention can be made of the actor Nicholas Ridley (Private Godfrey in ‘Dad’s Army’) who suffered serious injury, and took up acting on his return to Bath. But other stories can be found, such as the people who objected for various reasons to being asked to fight and what became of them.

■ Ian Gilchrist

For details of Ian’s walk around Widcombe, see What’s On pages.



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Next Spring - Summer Widcombe Magazine will be available the first week in April
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Observations on Widcombe Life

Like the queen, I had an Official Birthday this year. Having commitments on my actual birthday, I decided to mark the occasion, which happened to be my 70th, with a humdinger of a party at a later date whilst bringing in much needed funds for my favourite venue, Widcombe Social Club.

And a humdinger it was, with 250 of my friends invited, including the fifty-strong Handbag of Harmony choir from Chester, with whom Lady Margaret has had frequent cultural intercourse. Did you know that under her auspices Widcombe is twinned with the choir's home territory, namely Chester's Garden Quarter? This is an area of tightly packed Dolemeads-style brick terraces embodying a similar village spirit to our own dear Widders, what with their street parties and thriving independent businesses. Why, they even have a canal! We used the whole building, including installing a harpist in the yard (fondly



known as the Gnome Garden, named not for the kitsch figurines therein but for the stout bearded fellow who originally cleared the brambles)

The idea was that my thirsty chums would spend a deal of money in the club bars, as well as introducing this splendid community facility to the surprising number of Bathonians who are WSC virgins. Hopefully their cries of 'Why, I never knew this place existed' will transform into 'Why don't I have my birthday/wedding reception/wake here?' The planned new catering facilities will attract many such events, and I hope my landmark anniversary helped swell the kitchen project coffers.

And yes, I did pipe a tear when the choir sang Happy Birthday, even though it was nearly three weeks after the real thing!

■ *Ralph Oswick*



Widcombe Wayfarers



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Walks last between 1-2 hours and are medium paced.

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**Dates: 10 October, 14 November,
12 December 2018, 9 January,
13 February, 13 March, 10 April 2019**

Organised by WA Events
www.widcombeassociation.org.uk/events





**The Widcombe Association Autumn Meeting
will be held on
Thursday 18 October 2018 from 7:30 pm
at Widcombe Social Club**

Providing an opportunity to meet committee members, be brought up to date on our finances and current activities and to discuss local issues. All members and potential members (you can join on the night) are invited.

Speaker: Tom Boden, National Trust, General Manager Bath. will talk about the dam restoration project at Prior Park.

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