

Widcombe magazine

SPRING - SUMMER 2019

WHAT'S ON
NEWS & VIEWS



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Widcombe magazine

SPRING - SUMMER 2019

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Photo Jeremy Boss. Taken from Lyncombe fields, over Lyncombe Hill with rest of Widcombe beyond

EDITORIAL TEAM

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Editor's Letter

There's a lot to look forward to in
Widcombe in the coming months.

An old favourite has been refreshed,
others have been given a different slant and
there's an exciting new event coming up in
September.

In June, as well as a new date, you'll find
there is a more intimate feel to the Art Trail
this year with more artists opening up their
homes as venues. It will be more informal
with more opportunities to talk to the artists
and see how they work. And local artists's
work will also be featuring on the walls
of Widcombe Surgery in a series of new
exhibitions.

If you enjoy walking you will find the
walk by David Goode, an internationally
recognised ecologist and Widcombe
resident who writes our wildlife column,
highly enjoyable. He pauses at different
locations, pointing out what we should look

at rather than just
see. It is the first in a
short series of walks
in and just beyond
Widcombe.

Widcombe has its
roots as a rural
community just
outside Bath city
walls, with grazing
pastures, market gardens and mills.
Something then that should appeal to
everyone is the announcement that this
Autumn Widcombe is to have its first-
ever Village Show. This is traditionally the
time of Harvest, and like the traditional
horticultural and flower shows that still
exist in many villages throughout the
country, it will offer a range of classes from
fruit and vegetables and flowers to baking
and crafts. There will be something for all
ages and prizes for Best in Class, although
we're told the emphasis will definitely be on
fun! ■ *Liz Jeffreys, Editor*




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New Opportunities

As spring breaks it feels like a time of new opportunities and that is definitely the case for Widcombe. Thank you to everyone who sent in ideas about how we can improve Widcombe after my last article; we are working through a good list.

One significant opportunity is for the Association to take on a lease of Lyncombe Fields from Bath & North East Somerset Council. These are the fields above Lyncombe Hill, from Jacob's Ladder up to the allotments and round above Lyncombe Hill and Greenway Lane. Many walkers, with or without dogs, will know of these wonderful fields with extensive views across Widcombe and beyond.

Working in partnership with Greenway Residents's Association and Greenway Social Committee, we have put in a bid to lease the land - a community-based proposal to improve the biodiversity and use as a community space. This area has been under-loved and we have a great opportunity to improve and enhance this important part of the world heritage site skyline.

The Widcombe Association are the preferred bidders and we hope to work with BANES to agree terms. Once that is done a formal notice process will take place asking if there are any objections or comments from local residents and stakeholders before the



agreement is signed. If successful, we plan to set up the Friends of Lyncombe Fields as a sub-group of the Widcombe Association. We will be reaching out for your support as volunteers and for funding.

This is an exciting opportunity for us all as local residents to take an active part in improving and enhancing our own area, so watch out for further news.

The new subway has recently been reopened and we hope to improve this major access point to the City from Widcombe with an inspiring artwork. Further details inside this issue.

Finally, a number of new initiatives are likely to come forward in the next few months. Revised proposals for a clean air zone, planning applications for Bath Rugby and the council elections for the new ward of Widcombe & Lyncombe. We will remain active contributors to the debates, sharing the views of our members and residents where appropriate, recognising that there will often be many different viewpoints on these important area-changing proposals.

■ *Jeremy Boss, Chair of the Widcombe Association*



Art Exhibition brightens waiting rooms at Widcombe Surgery

Patients at Widcombe Surgery now have brighter waiting areas thanks to a collaboration between the surgery and organisers of the Widcombe Art Trail.

The first exhibition is now installed in the downstairs and upstairs waiting areas and features colourful and cheerful work from a dozen artists, including photography and paintings. The exhibition will be changed several times a year. All work is for sale, with 10% of the proceeds going to a good cause nominated by the surgery.

'It's an opportunity to showcase our work and hopefully brighten the surroundings for patients and staff here,' says Caroline Davies, chair of the Art Trail and Dr Rebecca Hodson adds, 'We hope that having art on the walls at the surgery will enhance the waiting environment for our patients and we are happy to support local artists, many of whom are our patients too.'

A new role for St Mark's

St. Mark's Community Centre has recently become host to English language courses for Syrian refugees. The courses are being run by Bath Welcomes Refugees (BWR), the charity set up in 2015 for refugees and asylum seekers. Staffed entirely by volunteers, the charity tries to help families settle in by finding and furnishing accommodation, befriending, advising on financial and legal matters and providing employment training. Over fifty experienced English teachers help with language skills.

Bath Welcomes Refugees regularly arranges social and fundraising events, many run by refugees themselves, and it is

Help save our Bath swifts

Swifts that spend their nesting period in the buildings of Bath between May and August are currently in central Africa updating their sat-navs. However, the breeding swift population in the UK has plummeted by 51% since 1995, partly due to loss of nest sites as building refurbishment has blocked access to traditional sites in eaves and roof spaces. RSPB Bath Swift Group will, for the third year, be carrying out a swift survey throughout the Bath area, so sightings of parties of swifts flying and screaming at rooftop height around buildings, or flying into gaps in roofs or buildings will be welcomed. If you have any sightings in your area please contact Stewart Owen (01225 333132, email bathswifts@gmail.com) or David Robertson (01225 834424, email dirobertson43@gmail.com) so that your observations can be confirmed and recorded.

You can also help by installing a nest box at your property. For details contact Stewart or David.



hoped to hold such an event at St. Mark's later this year.

Many of the families come via refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey and often arrive traumatised. More information about the charity or becoming a volunteer can be found on

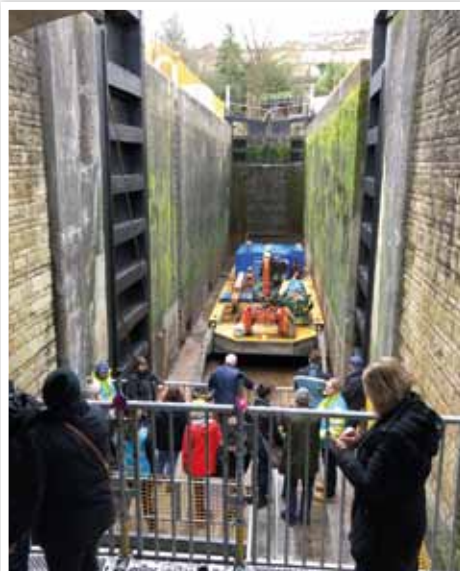
bathwelcomesrefugees.org.uk

Deep Lock drained as Canal and River Trust carry out repairs

An open day in December gave visitors an opportunity to walk on the bottom of the drained canal and inspect the gates up close, as well as see old photographs of the canal, during repairs to Deep Lock in Widcombe.

It was part of the Trust's aim to engage with the wider community and for the public to learn about the history of Britain's inland waterways and enjoy the health benefits, often overlooked, that being involved with the canal and its natural environment can bring.

Thousands of fish were removed and released in another part of the canal for the repairs to be carried out. The fish were stunned with an electric pulse, netted and then released in another part of the canal



Deep lock



Canal open day

before the water could be drained and work begun on repairing the massive lock gates, cill and quoins (the posts which the gates are attached to).

The lock, which lies under the St Matthew's Place road bridge, adjacent to the Baptist Church, was constructed in the 1970s and at nearly six metres deep and the second deepest lock in the country, it is twice as deep as the other locks on the flight. Twice as much water, therefore, leaves the lock once a boat has gone through and urgent repairs were needed to the 12-tonne lock gates and the posts to which they are attached, to prevent leaks and conserve water.

The Canal and River Trust welcomes volunteers at all times of the year but particularly during the busy summer months. Volunteer lock keepers provide a friendly and reassuring face, particularly for those who hire boats, whilst the Towpath task force carries out essential maintenance work such as restoring benches and painting bollards, updating notice boards and looking after flower beds. For more information about how you can get involved and to learn more about the Trust visit canalrivertrust.org.uk

Istvan Kakas

This well-known and much-loved figure who sold The Big Issue on the Halfpenny Bridge for many years died last Autumn after a battle with cancer. 'Istvan was a special man who lit up the trip across the bridge and was so generous despite his own difficult plight,' says Jeremy Boss, Widcombe Association Chair. Known for keeping the area clean and tidy and brightening it up with flowers, and for his ready smile and chats, in 2014 he had saved the life of a young girl and her father who had fallen into the river whilst cycling.

'The community response to Istvan's death was amazing,' says Jeremy. 'Tributes were laid on the bridge and just short of £5000 raised for his funeral and for Dorothy House.' A memorial service celebrating his life was held at St Matthew's Church and was attended by 150 people. A small plaque will be placed on the bridge.



Widcombe Wobblers Gather Speed

Having got off to a rather wobbly start (sorry – ed) four years ago, the Widcombe Wobblers have picked up speed. So much so that the organisers have decided to offer two types of ride. 'This year's programme offers challenge rides for the more seasoned cyclist and some pop-up cycles for those who want to gain confidence by cycling in a small group,' explains founder, Lucy Scott-Ashe.

'Four years on we are a mixed and sociable group who enjoy getting together for a leisurely cycle on off-road routes or along small country lanes. So lycra is definitely not necessary, electric bikes are welcome and we always include a refreshment stop at a pub or cafe. Last year we visited Saltford Brassmill for a talk; this year we are going to Quoins Vineyard, near Bradford on Avon, for a tour of the vineyard and wine tasting as we picnic.'

If you aren't sure if this is for you and would like to talk over what is on offer, or would like to go on a mailing list and find out more information about the rides, you can contact the group at cycling@widcombeassociation.org.uk



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Calling all Artists! Our Subway needs you!

The subway near the bus station, linking Bath city with Widcombe and Bear Flat, is finally being refurbished. It will have better lighting, smooth pale rendered walls, red flooring, CCTV and better mirrors. We need **YOU** to come up with an exciting art design to run along the entire length of one wall and brighten up the subway for everyone who walks through it.

The Challenge

You are invited to submit an art design on the following theme:

“Where the City meets the Countryside”

The final design will be reproduced at a size of around 15m x 1.5m onto durable, vandal proof enamelled metal or ceramic panels.

The design must be suitable in content for display for a period of 30 years or more.

The design must be your own original work with any images used free from copyright restrictions.

At this stage you should submit your design ideas, including coloured sketches/images.

Please submit your initial design by email to hpeterwidcombe@gmail.com by 30 April 2019

Any questions can be submitted to the same email address - we will aim to respond to all Q and A on the WA Website <http://www.widcombeassociation.org.uk>

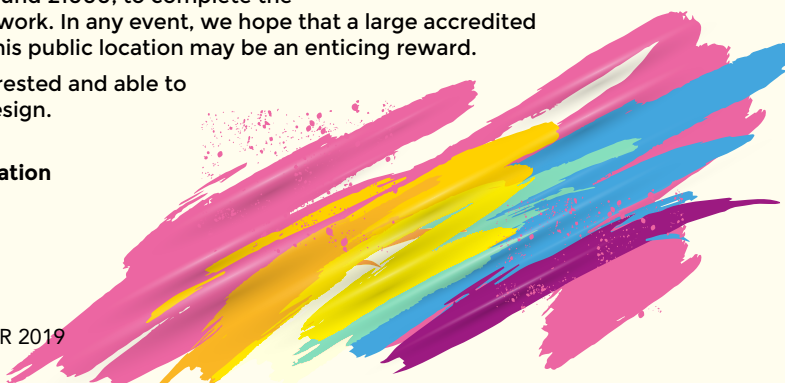
The Outcome

We plan to shortlist either a single design or a combination of design ideas and may need to invite artists to explain their work further before making any selection/s.

This is a community project for which funding is still subject to final sign off. We expect that there should be sufficient to cover installation costs and hope also to be able to award the artist(s) something around £1000, to complete the “installation ready” artwork. In any event, we hope that a large accredited artwork displayed in this public location may be an enticing reward.

We hope you feel interested and able to submit your outline design.

Many thanks
The Widcombe Association
Subway group.



Widcombe News

Calling all Bakers, Makers and Growers!

Venue to be confirmed

Sunday 8 September 2019



This Autumn Widcombe is to hold its first-ever Village Show and as with all good shows there will be classes for everyone, from fruit and vegetables to craft and photography. Judging will be by local experts and there will be prizes. Look out for entry forms which will have a full list of classes and will be available shortly, locally and online, giving you plenty of time to plan your summer growing and creative projects.

For further information contact Caroline Davies at cscillustration@aol.com.

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Widcombe Life

Events in Pictures



New subway

Over 30 people joined Widcombe resident, Ian Gilchrist, in October on a WWI Centenary Walk round Widcombe. Jeremy Boss, dressed in First World War uniform, read from diaries and newspaper accounts, of sweet shop owners, recovered engagement rings, heroism and the unrelenting grind of the trenches. The afternoon ended with a moving and informal wreath laying at the memorial outside St Thomas's Church that records the nearly 100 residents of Widcombe who gave their lives in WWI.

The St Matthews's Church Wednesday mornings are a drop-in for coffee, a biscuit and a chat and are open to everyone, free or with a donation. There is always a good attendance of old and young. Over 30 people enjoyed Christmas lunch last year and were entertained by the choir from Widcombe Junior School.



Mummers 2019



Prior Park Landscape Garden

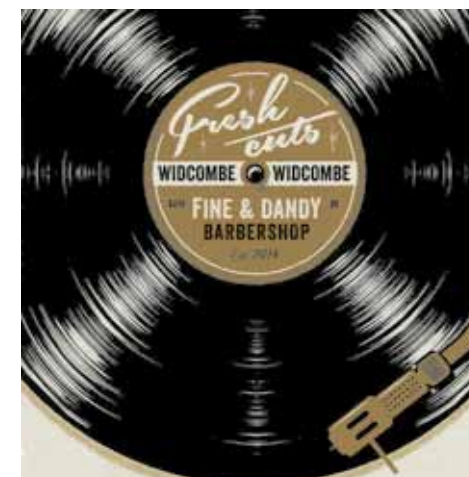
Working to restore the historic landscape

There will be much change this year as the project begins to restore the Georgian dams. See website for up to date information.

Call 01225 833977 for details
nationaltrust.org.uk/priorpark



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What's On



Pass on a Poem

Tuesday 11 June 2019

St Thomas à Becket Church, Widcombe

Doors open 7.30pm reading begins 8.00pm

Wine and refreshments

Donations to church funds and WA

Over the past eight years Pass on a Poem has continued to grow and flourish as twice yearly, in December and May/June, a dedicated group of poetry lovers gathers in St Thomas à Becket Church to read their favourite poems. Whether you want to read or just listen there is always something new to hear and appreciate. The evening is open to anyone who enjoys poetry. Email Deborah Clements mail@radnclements.co.uk for further information.

Magdalen Chapel Concerts

APRIL Saturday 6

7.30 pm 'Smuggled from Europe'

Chandos Singers

JULY Saturday 6

7.30 pm 'Purcell & Inspiration'

Chandos Singers

Sunday 14

St Mary Magdalen Festival



Widcombe Walkers

Garden Events

Perrymead Garden Trail

Sunday 14 July

A gentle stroll around gardens in Perrymead, entrance fee to include a cup or tea and homemade cake.

This event is unfortunately not suitable for wheelchairs or people with difficulty walking because of slopes and steps. More details on the WA website shortly.

Vintage Routemaster

Bus Garden Tour

Thursday 15 August

Afternoon guided tour around local Capability Brown designed gardens. Tea and cake included in price. This event will last about two and a half hours. Tickets limited. Details on the WA website shortly.

Camp Teepee at The Paragon school

Easter Holidays 16-18 April 2019

Summer holidays 22-26 July and 26-30 August.

Cost £35 per day and wraparound care is available for £5 per session.

Our popular day camp, based in the woodland grounds of The Paragon, encourages children to learn new skills, develop confidence and have a great time in a safe outdoor environment. A typical day will involve fire lighting, outdoor cooking, wood crafting, wild drumming, woodland detective games, shelter building, clay creature crafting and much more. We don't go completely back to basics, we have access to the school toilets and fresh drinking water but we operate whatever the weather so be prepared to get muddy!

To book, visit paragonschool.co.uk/holiday-club



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Entry forms and more information in shops

and on the Widcombe Association website

widcombeassociation.org.uk



What's On



WIDCOMBE WOBBLERS CYCLE RIDES 2019

APRIL

13th Saturday 10.00am

Morning cycle to the Angelfish via the tunnel, and back along the towpath.

11 miles

MAY

9th Thursday 6.30pm

Evening cycle to the Crown at Batheaston

8 miles

19th Sunday 10.00am

Day Ride to Quoins Vineyard, Bradford on Avon for wine tasting,

16.5 miles

JUNE

13th Thursday 6.30pm

Evening cycle to the Riverside Inn, Saltford

11 miles

15th Saturday 10.00am CHALLENGE RIDE!

Cycle a circuit to Bristol via Saltford and Whitchurch.

33 miles

21st Friday 6.00pm

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

13.5 miles

JULY

5th Friday 6.30pm

Evening Cycle to the Electric Bear Brewery

5 miles

21st Sunday 10.00am CHALLENGE RIDE!

Day ride to Lavender Farm and Tuckers Grave Pub

18 miles

AUG

15th Thursday 6.00pm

Evening cycle round the canal circuit returning via the Hope and Anchor Pub.

11 miles

SEPT

7th Saturday 10.00am CHALLENGE RIDE!

Day ride to the Glove Factory, Holt via Staverton and Bradford on Avon.

26 miles

Come for a leisurely, sociable cycle!



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Widcombe People

Claire Taylor, Headteacher at Widcombe Church of England Junior School

It is a long time ago since I went to Widcombe School in the 1960s but there remains some trepidation when you go to the Headteachers office! Of course, the place has changed a bit since my time, the old run-down Victorian school-house replaced by a light and modern school. Claire answered the doorbell, all part of the Head's job when the receptionist is unwell. Claire Taylor came to Widcombe five years ago, as Deputy Head, and was appointed Headteacher three and a half years ago. 'Taking over as Head of an outstanding school is not easy,' she explains, 'you can't take anything for granted. The academic results are fantastic but you have to keep working at it. You need to get the right support in place from both staff and governors.'

The number one priority is the safeguarding and well-being of the children and staff. About half the children come from Widcombe (most from the Infants School next door) with the rest from Bear Flat, Oldfield Park and further afield. There are four Year classes, with two classes of 30 in each year, making a total of 240 in the school. Most year groups have a waiting list.

Claire's days vary from day to day. She does some teaching but as Head she is also dealing with matters outside the classroom; meeting demanding parents, making financial decisions, meetings with Governors and managing the school's staff, to name just a few. Even in well-to-do Bath there are challenges. Some pupils have special needs and 14% of the children and their parents don't have English as a first



language. Funding remains a real challenge. One of Claire's first jobs after taking over was to help lead the school in joining the Palladian Academy Trust. Academies have replaced local government control and are made up of like-minded schools, run by a single board of directors, for the benefit of their children's education. She is a firm believer that whilst good academic results are a given, it is just as important that pupils are enriched with wider life experiences. 'They need to have a healthy sense of who they are so they are able to make the right choices in more challenging situations,' she says. 'For example, dealing with the move to senior school, building new friendships and making life choices about social media and avoiding drugs.'

Community links play an important part in school life. There is Wednesday dog walking, links to the local church community, gardening club, and volunteer community class readers. Claire herself is a Trustee of the Bath Rugby Foundation. She also encourages an active interest in bigger issues and pupils have recently written to Sainsbury's about the over-use of palm oil.

It's time for Claire's next appointment and for me to go. The school motto is to 'Be the best you can be' and I reflect that an inspiring Headteacher like Claire can only help these children firmly on that path. And with that thought I exit the Headteacher's office unscathed. ■ *Interview by Jeremy Boss*

*If you are interested in volunteering please contact the school.



CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY, BATH

All are very welcome at our service on Sundays at 10.30am and young people in our Sunday school at the same time.

Please visit christiansciencebath.org.uk for details of Wednesday meetings and information on Christian Science.

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Out & About

Wild in Widcombe

A walk in Widcombe involves lots of hills. So it is with my wildlife walk which starts at the foot of Lyncombe Hill. What you see will depend very much on the time of year. After a few steps a narrow passage leads to the Baptist burial ground where there is a magnificent specimen of the handkerchief tree from China covered in pendulous white bracts in late May. Listen here for the blackcap's song. Further up the hill watch out for swifts from May to July. A house here is one of the few places in Widcombe where they nest. Before the monkey-puzzle tree turn right into Alexandra Road, go to the far end and turn left up the path into Beechen Cliff woods. Watch out for swathes of wild garlic in springtime, and great mounds of excavated earth marking a huge badger sett. Turn sharp left up the steep steps to the top of the woods, listening for woodpeckers, jays, and perhaps a nuthatch as you stop to catch your breath. Roe deer can sometimes be seen in the evening among the ancient beech trees.

Turn left on the path to the magnificent viewpoint in Alexandra Park. Buzzards



A swift returning to its nest with a throat pouch bulging with food (David and Jackie Moreton)



Heron's nest in trees by Church Street (David Goode)

circle overhead on their broad wings and if you are lucky you may see a Peregrine Falcon heading for its nest on St John's church far below. Keep going straight ahead past the allotments and turn right through a kissing gate into a meadow. In summer there are meadow brown and gatekeeper butterflies, and the brambly patches are full of the sound of crickets and grasshoppers. At Greenway Lane turn left and then go down Rosemount Lane. Part way down in early spring there is a good view of herons on their nests in trees by Church Street, and you can watch the ravens that nest in the top of the huge Wellingtonia tree in Abbey Cemetery. In Lyncombe Vale the brook has a rich assemblage of water-loving plants with marsh marigold, figwort and hemlock water-dropwort. At Ralph Allen Drive you might like to visit the old Abbey Cemetery dating from 1844 which has a great variety of wild flowers and butterflies in summer. Go in through the big gates beyond the bus stop.

Photo Credit: David Goode



Ferns unfurl by St. Thomas à Becket Church (David Goode)

Taking great care, cross Ralph Allen Drive into Church Street where there is a great noise of bill clapping from herons in spring. Follow this lane, crossing a gushing spring-fed stream that is full of crayfish, the introduced American variety, which have caused havoc upstream in Prior Park Garden by undermining the banks. Walls of the 13th century church of St. Thomas à Becket are covered in a huge variety of multi-coloured lichens. If



Wood anemones in Abbey Cemetery (David Goode)

you take a summer evening walk here you may well see bats, both large and small, hunting insects. As dusk approaches tawny owls start hooting and you might even meet a fox on his rounds.

It's all downhill from here back to Widcombe.

■ *David Goode*

A view from the field

Zippy here once more! Spring Hola to Widcombonians - one and all.

As I'm sure you all know, we alpacas try hard to stay ahead of the curve (for instance, we've been doing Veganuary for a very long time!), so you'll be thrilled to know that our latest project is to bring Alpaca Yoga* to Widcombe. Of course, alpacas were born to yoga – being so bendy is great for doing Down Dog (or Down Llama, as we prefer to call it).

For those of you slightly behind the curve (or even still in the changing room), Alpaca Yoga is THE hot new craze sweeping Twerton and Bathwick. Forget Zumba (we did as soon as we realised we didn't have the right kit), Alpaca Yoga is finely tuned to your individual spiritual and physical needs. And it's easy to do. It's really all



Photo: George Walcot

about lying down on a mat in a field. What's not to like?

So, if you see us yoga-ing, just shout over the wall. You're welcome to join us.

*Just to be clear, if you're offered Goat Yoga by, well, anyone – but most likely a goat – just say no. They're always trying to jump on the latest bandwagon and Goat Yoga is not (and never will be) a proper thing.

Art

Widcombe's New-Look Art Trail 2019

Saturday 22 June

Sunday 23 June

10.30 am – 5.30 pm

Art lovers across the Bath area and beyond are in for a treat this June at the new-look Widcombe Art Trail weekend. Involving not just a new time of year but a whole re-think about what trail-goers want and expect, the Trail this year will feature lots more artists's homes, along with smaller, more intimate venues. This will allow for more informal interaction with the artists themselves, as well as insights into their working methods - not to mention a peek at some lovely homes!

The revamped Trail has attracted several new artists too: Sarah Ball will be showing her striking watercolours at one of the new venues, Carol Symon's house, on Lyncombe Hill. (Transport will be available to this venue.) Just beyond, Rosemount Farm, also new to the Trail, will host Alison Potter's anthropomorphic pots. Completing the loop is Bewdley House, where painter Janet Coles will be sharing her home and garden with other artists (including Bridget Baker and Alex Nash); a welcome return after a year's absence.



The heart of Widcombe will again be filled with art and artists, with the Ring O'Bells showcasing artisan makers and their work, and St Matthew's Church offering gallery space for half a dozen or so painters, including new artist Sue Wordsworth, who will be showing her ethereal intaglio prints and small watercolours. (The popular White Hart artists are taking a sabbatical, but will be back next year.)

As befits the fresh approach, an improved Trail map will feature this year, with a suggested itinerary covering the several new venues. Signposting will also be upgraded, making sure that no one misses out on Widcombe's biggest art event of the year!

See widcombearttrail.com for further details as they become available



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Working Widcombe

Widcombe Social Club President, Martin Tracy, talks to us about the club's history, its core values and how recent difficulties have been overcome, placing the club on a sound footing with a role to play in the life of the community.

Many readers will be familiar with the recent re-development of the plot of land occupied by Widcombe Social Club. The club had opened as The Lyncombe and Widcombe Liberal Club in 1899, at 25 Claverton Buildings (now occupied by Hon Fusion), later changing its name to Widcombe Workmen's Club, until moving to the bottom of Widcombe Hill in 1970 and becoming the Widcombe Social Club. The re-development of the plot, some 18 months behind schedule, saw the new building opened in April 2016. Widcombe Social Club is a limited liability company run on a non-profit-distribution basis, owned by its members and run by a volunteer management committee elected from its membership.

Even before the club was re-developed it was recognised that there was no longer a need for a traditional workmen's club - indeed the club was under threat of disbandment - and from the outset the core values have been to provide a social meeting place, with bar and catering facilities,



and space to present, host and promote a wide range of entertainment. It is open to all members of the community, whether members of the club or not, although members receive preferential rates on bar sales.

Initial teething problems, such as the attempt to open all day every day and the re-structuring of loan re-payments, have now been overcome and this together with a team of three full-time and dedicated staff have meant the future of the club is now on a very firm footing.

With increased room hire bookings, such as mother and toddler groups, yoga and language classes (to name but a few), the introduction of an outstanding three-day jazz festival earlier this year - almost certainly to be repeated next year - and a brand-new weekly Friday evening of free live music that is open to all, it is clear the club is playing an ever-increasing social role in the community.

Martin Tracy is a former Bath businessman and was chair of Walcot Street Traders Association for some 30 years. He became President of the Widcombe Social Club in May last year, taking over from the outgoing President, Sir Peter Hendy.

The management committee continues to identify development projects to broaden the scope for room hire and social events. Suggestions welcome!

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(<http://groupspaces.com/WidcombeChoir>)

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Gardening

A garden enhanced by sculpture

Elaine's artisan cottage lured her by its air of grandeur. She loved the facades and was mesmerised by the views across the city. She was looking for a project, something she could stamp her identity on, a home that needed a little TLC.

The gardens had been neglected and were overgrown but the structure was there so the garden was cleared and a new lawn laid. Planting has been haphazard. 'I like to take cuttings from local gardens,' explains Elaine, 'things that have grown in the natural area. If they take and survive then they will thrive, if not they aren't compatible with the garden!' The hedge, shrubs and apple tree are kept at a height so that the amazing view of the Abbey can always be seen.



When I visited it was still early spring and ancient snowdrops (*Galanthus*) and hellebores (also known as Christmas or Lenten roses) were bathing in the unusually warm sunlight. The snowdrops are thought to be the rare *Galanthus* 'Kite' (elwesii) with leaves which end in an acute point and stems which bear large twin flowers. The pointed flowers have green tips with a long narrow green 'V' on the inner segments. The hellebore *Helleborus* × *hybridus* 'White Lady Spotted', is a bushy clump-forming perennial which grows 12 to 15 inches high. It is noted for its glossy, leathery dark



evergreen leaves. Its cup-shaped flowers are white, with dark red spotted centres and overlapping petals which bloom at the tips of leafy stems from late winter to mid-spring.

However, the most striking features of the garden are the sculptures, designed and made by Elaine's sculptor son, Caspar. 'Garden art has the power to transform a garden', says Elaine, 'it can enhance and give emphasis to design, adding a point of interest especially in the winter months'.

The iron resin rings sculpture is a



continuum and over time oxidation has given it a reddish hue. The Indian head was a prototype for a client and is made from resin, whilst the pensive figure and classical head are made from a piece of stone left in the garden by the previous owner.

Caspar's recent work has been inspired by many seemingly contradictory ideas. The natural and the engineered, the mathematical and the random, the artistic and the scientific. His work can be viewed during the Widcombe Art Trail Weekend on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 June.

■ *Beverley Wallis*





Widcombe Association Garden Club Spring – Summer 2019

New venue - Widcombe Social Club 7.30pm

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Wednesday 20 March | Andrew Tolman Former Senior Gardener at Highgrove Royal Gardens | 'Off the beaten track, hidden gems' A talk about less well-known great gardens to visit around the country, their owners, their houses and their plants |
| Wednesday 17 April | Christina Stapley Herbs for the kitchen | Christina, a medical herbalist, has been growing, studying and using herbs for 40 years. An RHS speaker, she has written several books |
| Wednesday 15 May | Judith Lywood Garden Designs Made Simple | Judith will be talking about her new book explaining garden design need not be costly, complex or daunting! |
| Wednesday 5 June | Summer garden & allotment tour, Lansdown | Private tour of Judith Lywood's garden & allotment on Sion Hill |
| Sunday 14 July | Perrymead Garden Trail | Details in What's On pages |
| Thursday 15 August | Vintage Routemaster Garden Tour | Details in What's On pages |

WA Members £3.00, non-members £4 (on the door)

For more information contact 01225 484794 www.widcombeassociation.org.uk



St Thomas à Becket, Church Street

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2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

Open for visitors 2.30-5.30pm Sundays May - September

St Matt's, Widcombe Hill

Contemporary service every Sunday

(Times vary, please see website for more information)



www.widcombe.church

Local History

- 1 Lyncombe had a zoo in the period 1905-1910. Headquartered at de Montalt Cottage, Rosemount Lane, it had kangaroos, wallabies and finches. There were heated buildings for the animals. Once a kangaroo escaped and, pursued by the keeper on a bicycle was eventually recaptured in Calton Road.
- 2 Until 1836 when Lyncombe & Widcombe was incorporated in the City of Bath, the Bath police weren't allowed to cross the bridge in pursuit of criminals. Later one of the railway arches at the bottom of Holloway housed the Widcombe police station.
- 3 In the Abbey Cemetery in Ralph Allen Drive are buried four lords, a bishop, numerous generals and admirals, and six mayors of Bath. Other notable people include Thomas de Quincey's mother, the founder of Partis College in Weston and

Miscellanea Widcombeana

- General Paul Anderson who fought in the Pensinsular War and buried his friend Sir Thomas Moore at Corunna.
- 4 Widcombe had mills in Claverton Street, Prior Park Road and the Dell. The Lower Widcombe Mill used to be next to the Ha'penny Bridge and the water to drive it came from the stream that runs in front of Prior Park Buildings, behind Widcombe Parade then into a reservoir where the former toilets are. This leat in Millbrook Place is now covered.
- 5 Widcombe Social Club was originally the Lyncombe & Widcombe Liberal Club and opened in 1899 with its premises at 25 Claverton Buildings currently occupied by Hon Fusion. In those days Liberals were considered 'radicals'. It moved to its site at Widcombe Wharf in 1970.



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

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Dates for 2019: 13 February; 13 March; 10 April; 8 May; 12 June; 10 July; 14 August; 11 September; 9 October; 13 November; 11 December

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



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Observations on Widcombe Life

Widcombe Jottings

Eagle-eyed observers will have noticed me sporting a little smiley badge on my famous tropical shirts. This is the bath plug logo of Bath Comedy Festival and since I have become an active patron of said festival in my glorious retirement it has replaced the enamel Natural Theatre Conehead pin of yore.

Widcombe really is comedy central during April, and occasionally at other times of the year, for as well as the twenty-one hilarious days of the actual festival, the organisers run a year-round programme for our delight and have not been averse to producing Burns suppers (with a twist of course: the last one had a Danish bagpiper) Christmas galas and numerous one-off cabarets and Edinburgh previews at the appropriate junctures.

As well as being city-wide, the festival squeezes Widcombe's pips by marshalling all the delights our 'village' has to offer. The upstairs room at the Ring O' Bells becomes an intimate studio venue. Every space at the wonderful Widcombe Social Club is brought

into use with sell-out shows while the walls are adorned with fascinating photos of the famous and not so famous in the world of comedy.

Artists wine, dine and even grab a little sleep at our local hotels and guest houses, traders are bludgeoned into donating raffle prizes and of course the street theatre skills of our very own Naturals are called upon for that extra touch of eccentricity for which the area is famed.

Thanks to Arts Council England every Christmas tree bracket along the street can sport a flag adorned with the aforesaid plug logo belying the oft repeated 'Nobody knows the festival is on'. Yes, I know the flags get tangled round their broomstick poles, but the grant didn't stretch to fully tailored and toggled burgees, bannerols and gonfalons. Just your plain rectangular tea towels for now!

Bath Comedy Festival has recently had success at the Bath Business Awards and the Bath Life Awards, having won the arts category at both prestigious events. Their nominations stressed the contribution to urban regeneration made by the festival alongside the cultural aspects of a city-wide event of national repute, putting Bath and more specifically Widcombe on the map in a different kind of way. ■ *Ralph Oswick*

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Widcombe Social Club

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Friday

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more info: www.widcombebaptistchurch.org



EDITOR'S NOTE

The next issue of the Widcombe Magazine will be out at the beginning of October. Copy, photographs and advertisements (new and changes to old) must reach us by **1st September 2019**. This date is important because copy must be edited; shortened depending on space and layout checked for consistency.

We always enjoy receiving copy and ideas but please be assured if we cannot use them immediately we do look at them again for future issues.

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