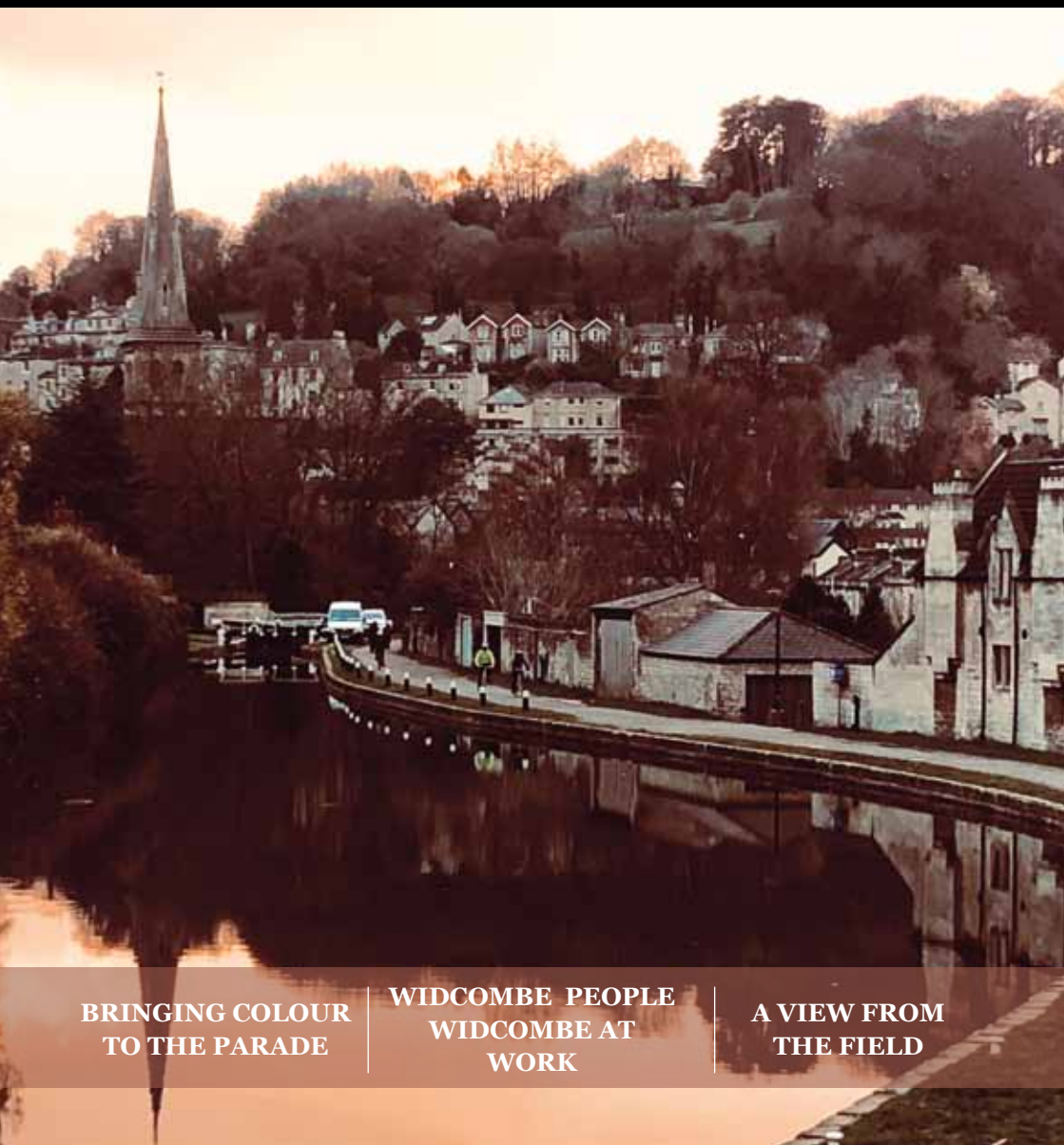


# Widcombe magazine

AUTUMN - WINTER 2019

WHAT'S ON  
NEWS & VIEWS



BRINGING COLOUR  
TO THE PARADE

WIDCOMBE PEOPLE  
WIDCOMBE AT  
WORK

A VIEW FROM  
THE FIELD

<b>25 Oct</b> <b>Frug!</b> DJs Disco, Soul, Ska Funk, R'n'B & Hip Hop	<b>1 Nov</b> <b>Halloween Cabaret</b> Creepy Comedy, Monster Music & Other Freakish Things	<b>8 Nov</b> <b>Fabulous Poodles</b> Highly anticipated return of a John Peel favourite, after 40 years!	<b>16-17 Nov</b> <b>Widcombe Christmas Market</b>
<b>24 Nov</b> <b>Blazin' Fiddles</b> Fiery Traditional Scottish Music	<b>28 Nov</b> <b>Bonbon Xmas Cabaret Special</b> A Splendiferous Bath Comedy Line-up of Star Acts	<b>30 Nov</b> <b>Bath Soul Club</b> Northern Soul Night + more dance nights on 6 Dec. Electric Dreams 14 Dec. Transmission	<b>31 Dec</b> <b>Widcombe Social NYE Party</b>
<b>3-5 Jan</b> <b>Bath Jazz Weekend</b> Back by popular demand	<b>25 Jan</b> <b>Bath Comedy's Bonkers Burns Night</b> Featuring three course supper and surprises!	<b>Upcoming Event Highlights</b>	
Check our website for more details and our calendar of events including regular classes.		<b>7-8 Feb</b> <b>CAMRA Beer Festival</b>	<b>23 March</b> <b>Aly Bain &amp; Phil Cunningham</b> Legendary Scottish Folk Duo
<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <b>FRIDAY NIGHT SOCIAL</b>            Every Friday from 5pm            Everybody welcome!         </div> <div style="flex: 2;">           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 &amp; classes. Open to all, members receive discount at the bar.         </div> </div>			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <b>Widcombe Social Club</b> Widcombe Hill, Bath BA2 6AA            Enquiries: <a href="mailto:info@widcombesocialclub.co.uk">info@widcombesocialclub.co.uk</a>            Tel: 01225 460 456 <a href="http://www.widcombesocialclub.co.uk">www.widcombesocialclub.co.uk</a>            Facebook: <a href="https://facebook.com/widcombesocialclub">facebook.com/widcombesocialclub</a>            Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/widcombesocialc">@widcombesocialc</a> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>			

# Widcombe magazine

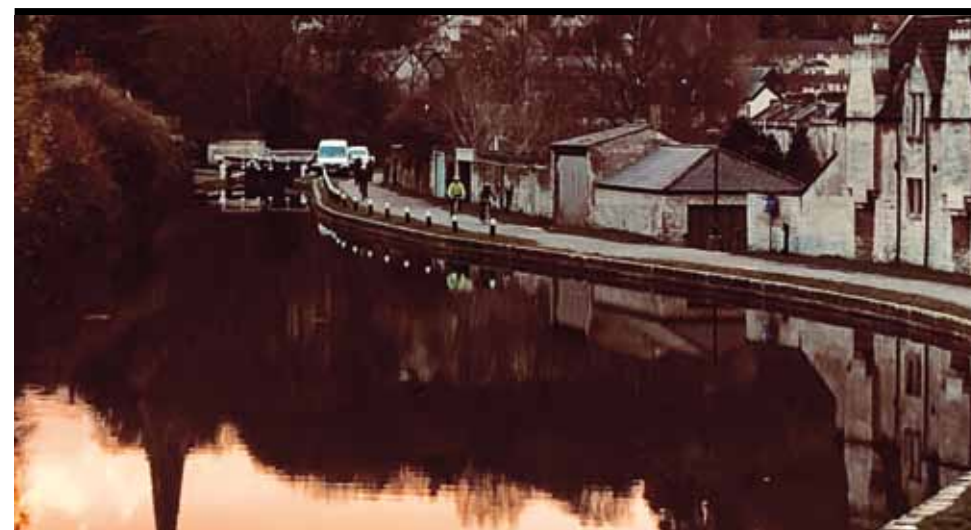
AUTUMN - WINTER 2019

## CONTENTS



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[magazine@widcombeassociation.org.uk](mailto:magazine@widcombeassociation.org.uk)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>8</b> <i>Widcombe News</i><br/>News and updates from across the community</p> <p><b>14</b> <i>Widcombe Life</i><br/>Events in Pictures</p> <p><b>21</b> <i>Widcombe People</i><br/>Martin and Amanda Geake</p> <p><b>23</b> <i>Out and About</i><br/>Wild in Widcombe<br/>Zippy</p> <p><b>26</b> <i>Art</i><br/>Widcombe Christmas Market</p> | <p><b>28</b> <i>Working Widcombe</i><br/>Penny Gardiner: Editor</p> <p><b>32</b> <i>Gardening</i><br/>A Gardener's Retreat<br/>Garden Club Speakers Autumn-Winter</p> <p><b>36</b> <i>Local History</i><br/>Miscellanea Widcombeana</p> <p><b>39</b> <i>Widcombe Jottings</i><br/>Ralph Oswick</p> <p><b>40</b> <i>WA Business</i><br/>Autumn General Meeting</p> |
|---|---|



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## Editor's Letter

Proposals to put planters and troughs along Widcombe Parade are welcome news. Planting always softens the urban landscape and we hope the plans will be approved by the council. The newly adopted BT box is also being filled with greenery and together with the wild flowers being planted at the other end of the parade we hope we can look forward to a burst of colour and life in the spring. We must thank Beverley Wallis, who organises the garden club, for her persistence in bringing this about.

Walking from the city into the country is the theme of Sarah Ovens's winning design for the subway at the bottom of Holloway. Sarah is a young, professional artist who specialises in nature-inspired watercolours, monoprints and calligraphy. Installing this

design would complete the transformation of this once rather grim, at times frightening tunnel, but it needs financial help. If you would like to support this – perhaps by organising a fund-raising event - I'm sure the organising committee would be pleased to hear from you.

Elsewhere, 'Widcombe Life' provides snapshots of some of the things that have been happening in Widcombe this summer, and finally, our interviews this time are with charity founder, Martin Geake, and Penny Gardiner, an editor who has worked for some of the big publishing houses, who tells us about her role in this fast-paced world.

■ Liz Jeffreys, Editor



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## Beautifying Widcombe Parade

The Widcombe Association is in the process of adopting the red telephone kiosk outside the White Hart. It will, hopefully, be repainted and planted up with flowers and herbs very soon which will add beauty and interest at the Widcombe Hill end of the Parade. Provisional plans have also been drawn up to place planters along the Parade, to be run and managed by the local community. All this would improve the environment for both locals and visitors and reflect *Bath Live* and *Bath Chronicle's* campaign to 'Clean Up Bath'. We are now awaiting approval from BANES Highways.



## One Step Back, One Step Forward

It's been an unpredictable summer this year in Widcombe. Rather like the weather, with one hot sunny day followed swiftly by a rainy one. I won't mention Brexit! We have seen some progress on Widcombe issues but also some delays and set-backs. This magazine highlights many of the individual issues which show this trend.

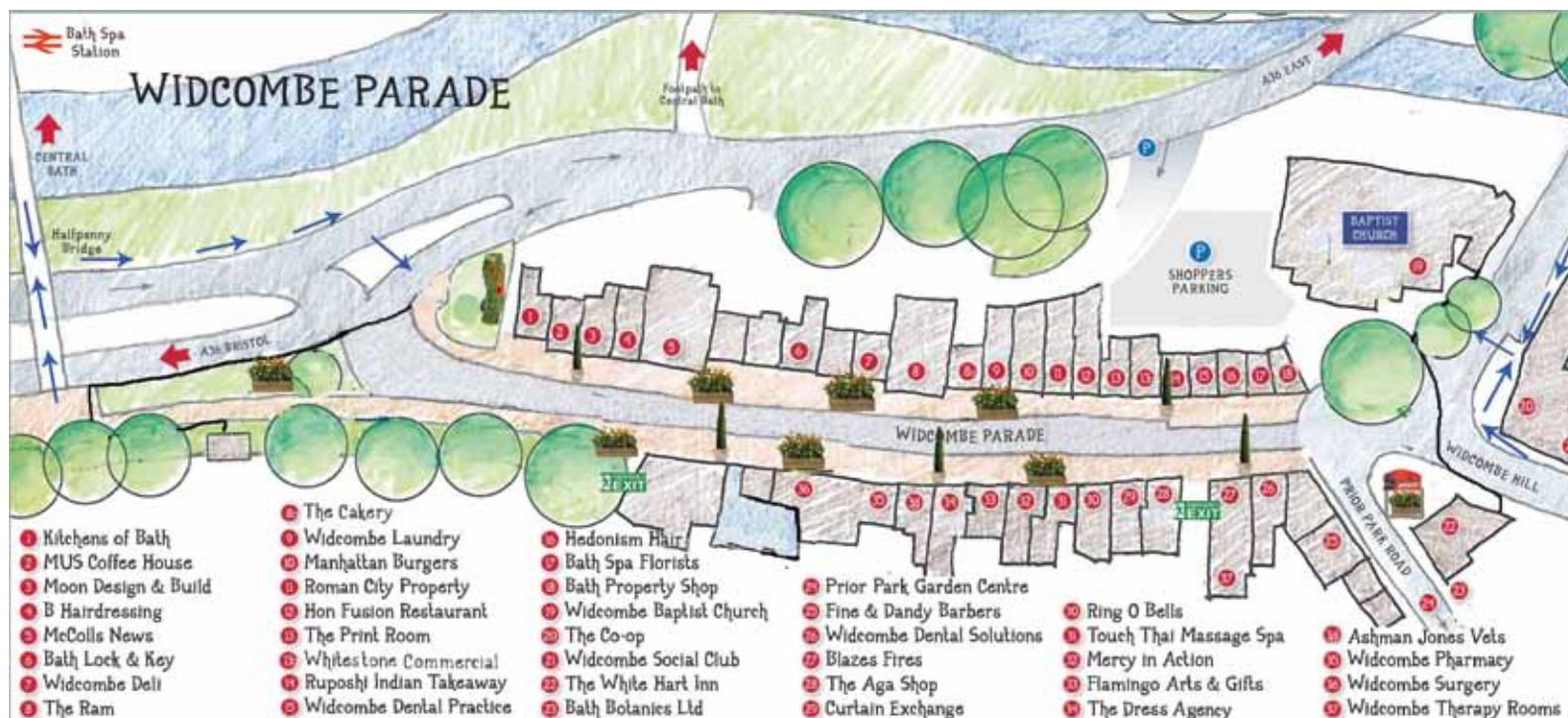
In the spring, the position on the subway looked good. We had indications that a grant would be available via BANES.

Since then we have had wonderful designs put forward for artwork and after a really successful public engagement a fabulous design has been selected. But then the grant fell through. So, we are having to reassess our options. £15-£20,000 is a lot of money to find. Ideas welcome!

Together with other local residents' organisations, we were delighted to be preferred bidders for the lease of Lyncombe Fields, and the fields themselves were a natural haven. Concern over costs of trees and boundary walls, and a change of Council administration, has led to a stall in progress as BANES reviews its options. Meanwhile, we have been unable to do any of the planned voluntary work to help sustain this wonderful spot. We are hopeful that final negotiations will restart soon so our community can do its bit for a sustainable and green Widcombe.

Turning to the pedestrian tunnels under Bath Spa station. After some lobbying, in particular by our traders's representative, Simon Brown, suddenly with no warning or fanfare the tunnel immediately opposite the Halfpenny Bridge was cleaned of dirt, stalactites and cobwebs, and the lights cleaned and repaired. It looks transformed. But, alas several months later the other tunnel, with the bicycles in it, remains dirty and dark with only about half the lights working (see picture). So, thank you Bath Spa/GWR for what's been done but please can you finish the job. It feels like a common refrain.

Let me thank the many people who have given their time so freely and persistently for their community. I am sure that together we can overcome any hurdles to get things moving again. ■ *Jeremy Boss, Chair of the Widcombe Association*





# Widcombe News

## Still frying tonight

**M**anhattan, one of Widcombe's longest standing businesses, reaches its 30th anniversary in October. Tony Jones was fresh out of college when he took over the busy burger joint in 1989.

It was a family affair with Tony's parents and then his sister, Melanie, working with him. Melanie and Tony continue to run the business today, together with a couple of staff. I have often dropped in for a burger and fries on the way home (or one of the many alternatives), always fresh and

delicious and delivered with a big smile.

It's not quite as hectic as those early years when a lot of customers used to come from the old Social Club. Since then the Rossiter Road scheme has been implemented. It's made the Parade a better community space and nicer environment, but there is a little less passing trade and people regularly complain about difficulties in parking.

Traders and students now form most of Tony's customers, and Mick, from the Ring o' Bells, sends people over once his own kitchens are shut. So, business remains good.

Tony loves being in Widcombe. He is proud to be part of this strong and distinctive local community and wants to thank all his local customers for their great support over the years.



He is not planning a big celebration but look out for some special 30th anniversary burgers later in October. ■ *Jeremy Boss*



## Wilding Widcombe

*"To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower ..."*

*(from 'Auguries of Innocence' by William Blake)*

**A**s part of a nationwide initiative to introduce wildflowers and boost dwindling numbers of butterflies, bees, dragonflies and moths, BANES has introduced the 'Get Bath Buzzing' project.

With the support of the Trees and Parks Department, Widcombe is currently creating its very own 'Island of Colour' as you enter Widcombe Parade. A new Himalayan Birch tree has already been planted and the ground is in the process of being prepared for the planting of bulbs and perennial wild flower seeds.

Once planted, chestnut paling fencing will be erected around the area until the



spring flowering. We then hope to replace this with a permanent handrail, similar to that on the corner of Lyncombe Hill and Claverton Street. The Widcombe Association is seeking funding for this from the Bath Neighbourhood CIL fund, which supports community infrastructure, and will, itself, make a contribution.

Planting up of bulbs and wildflowers is scheduled for Sunday, 6 October.

Let's all look forward to having a little bit of heaven in Widcombe in the Spring!

For further details please contact Anita Breeze 077030 62252.

## Sarah Ovens

winner of the competition to find subway artwork

**A**rtwork by young local artist, Sarah Ovens, has been chosen to decorate the walls of the newly refurbished subway linking Holloway and the City.

Speaking to us just after her award, Sarah said,

*My design for the subway is deliberately light, portraying moments of beauty and peace journeying from the city centre to green natural spaces south of Bath. I hope to convey a sense of hope, peace and exuberant life into an underpass that has previously felt very dark and dingy. We plan to have the refined final design digitally printed onto vitreous enamel-coated metal panels, which should last at least thirty years.*



Brought up in Widcombe, Sarah studied at Falmouth University, and now lives with her husband in the countryside just outside Bath. She continues her links with Widcombe, however, with her studio in St Matthew's church. For more information about Sarah, to find out about commissions and to buy cards and prints see: [sarahovensstudio@gmail.com](mailto:sarahovensstudio@gmail.com) and [sarahovens.com](http://sarahovens.com).



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# Widcombe Life

## Lansdown garden tour

Following Judith Lywood's talk about her new book 'Garden Design Made Simple', WA garden club members visited her garden and allotment in Lansdown.

*Judith Lywood's garden from the house*



*Judith Lywood's garden allotment*



*Art Trail*



*Lyncombe Court music festival supporting Bath Welcomes Refugees*



*Alexandra Park picnic*



*Widcombe West Community BBQ*



*Widcombe Association AGM and Hustings 2019*



## Widcombe Life

### Vintage Bus tour to Newton Park

**T**he garden club visited Newton Park in the summer for a private tour of the relatively unknown Capability Brown gardens. Penny Snowden, head gardener, explained the estate history and her vision for planting. Members had made 'Capability cakes' to original Georgian recipes for everyone to enjoy.



*Newton Park glasshouse*



*Newton Park pond and castle*



*Wobblers winetasting at Quoins Vineyard, Bradford on Avon*



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## Widcombe People

### Growing Together Martin & Amanda Geake

**M**artin & Amanda Geake moved to The Tynning in Widcombe in 2014. Coming to Bath they knew they wanted to live in Widcombe and didn't look anywhere else. They loved the fact it has a foot in both the city and the countryside, and they already had links with St Matthew's church.

But their journey together started many years ago. Martin and Amanda met in Malawi, Africa. Martin is a specialist in rural agricultural development and Amanda in village water supplies. The two went together perfectly. For 20 years they worked in Africa, with Martin ending up as Regional Director East Africa, for the Commonwealth Development Corporation. Then, a still unknown, virus struck and Martin was retired with ill health and told to avoid long trips to Africa.

They decided to move to the Bath area, settling first in Priston. As he got stronger Martin started advising local charity, 'Send a Cow', which promotes sustainable farming, helping people make a good living from the land in eight developing countries. Within a short time he became their Chief Executive and over 15 years helped the charity grow to over 250 staff.

When they moved to Widcombe Martin and Amanda were concerned about losing their village community but Widcombe has exceeded their expectations and they love it here. They are involved with the local community including the church, where Martin chairs the parochial church council and leads the St Matthew's planned redevelopment project.

Both are keen gardeners, particularly vegetables, and there is a thriving veg patch in an extended part of their garden. It



comes as no surprise then, that Martin came up with the idea of combining gardening and helping local people with mental health issues, and together with a friend, he has set up a new charity called 'Grow for Life'. The aim is to build self-esteem, encourage personal development and build new skills. The charity is becoming well-established and now supports some 20 people working in gardens across Bath. The gardens belong to people who can no longer cope with them, so there is a double benefit, helping to maintain the gardens whilst giving a real sense of purpose to those working on them.

Further developments are afoot working with other local charities and the council parks department, including working towards a horticultural qualification.

■ **Jeremy Boss**

*The WA recently gave a donation to support the charity's work, appropriately from the Garden Club. It will also discuss opportunities at Lyncombe Fields, should the proposed lease from the council come to fruition.*



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## Out & About

### A view from the field

**H**ola Widcombe, once more, from our field which this summer has reminded us a lot of our homeland Peru – but without the cold high terrain and scorching sun (or the thousands of compadres .....or the conversation round the water holes.....or the star-studded summer dark skies and the freezing nights – or....well, you get the picture). Even the goats stopped whingeing (though not for long).

As ever, we've been busy. Bungle is forging ahead with his new career as a beauty influencer, educator and product ambassador. He has always taken a lot of time and effort over his appearance



- always first in the queue for toenail trimming, shearing, tooth trimming (no, wait – he's always **LAST** in the queue for tooth trimming), citronella fly spritz and for carrot and apple treats which he

reckons you should chomp slowly to soak up the vitamins. He also spends an awful lot of time looking in the shed windows – I think it's at his reflection, not at the bales of hay inside.

Jorge thinks Bungle's biggest challenge is getting over himself (which he should do asap). To me, nothing is worth **NOT** rolling in mud. And I must admit I enjoy the look of horror and disdain on Bungle's face when I turn up for tea **A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT COLOUR**. It's a bit like dyeing your hair – but rolling in the mud is cheaper **AND** completely organic.

I'm going to mention it to Harriet at B's Hairdressing on Widcombe Parade – maybe as a spa pampering day idea? Come and roll with alpacas in the mud (well, it beats walking with llamas – that's just **SO** last year!).



## Wild in Widcombe

We had some very positive responses to the first of my natural history walks, so here is another. Start at the east end of Widcombe Parade where you can join the towpath of the Kennet and Avon Canal. Follow it alongside the impressive flight of locks and holding ponds. They bring some welcome wetland habitats into our suburban environment. Lock gates are covered in water loving plants such as gypsywort, skullcap, angelica and numerous liverworts, whilst the masonry supports wall daisy and pellitory of the wall. The ponds provide ideal conditions for kingfishers, herons and house martins to feed. In summer there are lots of dragonflies along this stretch.



*Lock and holding pond on the Kennet and Avon Canal in Widcombe*



*Cast iron bridge over the K&A Canal*

Cross the attractive iron bridge (built by Stothert of Bath) and follow the path up to Sydney Buildings. Cross the road and take the path up the steps opposite. Go through the kissing gate onto Bathwick Meadows and head for the gate at the far side. This spot provides one of the finest views in Bath. The National Trust manages

the meadows to increase the variety of flowers. At times they are bright yellow with buttercups and yellow rattle. Patches of rough grass on steeper bluffs have never been improved and still support unusual plants, such as the corky fruited water dropwort!

Go through three more kissing

gates where the path takes you through the top of Richens Orchard which has a variety of birds including greenfinch, chiffchaff and blackcap in summer and flocks of redwings and fieldfare in winter. Leaving the orchard strike off to the right downhill into Smallcombe Vale. This forms part of the National Trust Skyline Walk. The path

is steep in places with steps and can be slippery after rain. Listen for the soft call of bullfinch.

Turn left at the bottom and go straight ahead through the gates into Smallcombe Cemetery. This is a remarkable treasure house of natural history, which has recently been investigated in detail by members of the Bath Natural History Society. Nearly 650 species of plants and animals have been recorded including 100 different sorts of lichen. This reflects the great variety of rock types used for headstones and monuments from hard granite to soft limestone. There are nearly 150 species of flowering plants including the uncommon coralroot. Woodland birds include jays, goldcrests, coal tits, nuthatch, tree

creeper and woodpeckers. Watch out for buzzards and ravens overhead and you may also see the odd sparrowhawk.

From here retrace your steps and turn left at the first kissing gate following a path up the slope near the recently established nuttury. In early spring the fields below Macaulay Buildings are full of cowslips. To return you can walk straight down the road to Widcombe, or you might like to continue along the Skyline Walk through Rainbow woods and return along Church Street.

■ David Goode



*Smallcombe Cemetery backed by ancient woodland of oak and hazel*



*Panorama of Bath from Bathwick*



# Art

## Widcombe Christmas Market

Widcombe Social Club

Saturday 16 November 10.30am – 5.00pm

Sunday 17 November 10.30am – 4.00pm

The artisans of Widcombe (and friends) are working hard making their ideas for new work into reality as the next Craft Fair approaches. Some rebranding is going on too, and we are now Widcombe Christmas Market. We are expanding a little as we spread into the Social Club's Meeting Room, so please do not miss out on visiting the artists there. First to book into Room 3 is the daughter of one of our exhibitors, jeweller Tania Harvey. Her daughter, Millie, has just started her own ceramics and illustration business, and we wish her well.

An exhibitor in Room 2 (upstairs) on Sunday is Cathy Biggs, who first wowed us at the Craft Fair in 2017 with her candles - not only were the candles themselves beautiful, they were impeccably packaged and sold like hot cakes. She also had a stall at the Widcombe Street Party. She says, 'some of my first and best customers are from Widcombe.' If you miss seeing her in Widcombe, you can battle the crowds to Bath Christmas Market, but so much easier to catch her here along with 40 or so other talented makers who look forward to welcoming you. ■



Julie Green's Angels



Christmas decorations Tesserae L Hunt



Floral stocking Denise Stirrup



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# Working Widcombe

## Penny Gardiner, Editor

In a career spanning forty years, Penny Gardiner has worked for some of the big names in publishing including Routledge, Weidenfeld & Nicolson and Penguin. She has edited mainly non-fiction titles in history, social sciences, literature and politics. We asked her to tell us something about her work.

‘For me, the best part of being an editor is working with the author to produce the best possible presentation of their work. I love words and language, and putting a book together is immensely rewarding. It’s very much a team effort, with the editor being the project manager. I’m responsible not only for the structure and coherence of the content, but for organising and co-ordinating those involved with every stage of the work. It’s labour intensive, with checks at every stage - but very rewarding when the finished hardback arrives on your desk!

Wikipedia has made life a lot easier for reference, and technology means manuscripts can be sent backwards and forwards to an author quickly and efficiently on screen, with tracked changes showing where alterations and queries have been made and by whom.

Sometimes, though, far more intervention is needed. Not all authors can write well. Not all authors agree with suggested changes. It can be very difficult when a hugely knowledgeable author is asked to make changes by someone who is no expert on the subject of the work, but who knows a great deal more about putting a book together. I’ve had authors who point blank refuse to have changes made to wordy and inconsistent prose, so it’s important I convince them that I’m on their side, and



*Penny spent four years in Crete early in her career. We think there is still something of the Shirley Valentine about her!*

that their work is presented in the best possible manner – that it says what the author means, that it’s clear, readable and ... most of all ... saleable!

I’ve worked on a diverse range of titles – *Sex Tips for Girls*, *The BFG*, *Vanishing Tribes of Burma*, *Living with Buildings*, to name just four of well over a hundred. A particularly demanding project was the twenty-four volume Cassell History of Warfare series, under the general editorship of Sir John Keegan, when the work of twenty-four different military historians had to be brought into a coherent series style. As editor, my role was to co-ordinate a multi-disciplinary team including copy-editors, designers, picture researchers, map makers, sales and, of course, the author, working to a tight budget and demanding schedule. Typesetters and printers are all booked in advance and missing the publishing date is a crime considered second only to arriving a week late for your wedding!

I’ve loved the job and have formed close and trusting relationships with my authors – even some of the tricky ones! On the whole it’s about compromise. And persuasion. Don’t sweat the small stuff but stick (politely) to your guns when it’s really important. Several author acknowledgements use the word “fun” in connection with our working relationship – which delights me.’ ■



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Contemporary service every Sunday

*(Times vary, please see website for details)*

## Christmas services & events in our churches

### December

1st	Christingle Service	5.00 pm	St Matt's
8th	Carols by Candlelight	5.00 pm	St Matt's
15th	Mobile Carol Service	5.00 pm	St Thomas
22nd	Christmas Celebration	10.30 am	St Matt's
	Nine Lessons & Carols	6.30 pm	St Thomas
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# Gardening

## A Gardener's Retreat

Trudy's garden is located in a street of substantial houses leading off Widcombe Hill, south-east of Bath city centre, known as The Tynning. The word "tyning" is Saxon in origin and means an enclosed court or yard; it crops up frequently in Wiltshire and Somerset. Its name may derive from the meaning to "enclose with a hedge or fence; to fence, to hedge in".

The house was constructed in the 1930s and when Trudy and her husband moved in thirty years ago the rear garden appeared small as it was obscured by a huge boundary hedge. She wanted to create space for new borders, a raised central lawn and decking areas, and with the help of a local landscaper she built her new garden to her specifications. Pete, her husband, also designed and constructed a pond and waterfall. The result is a garden full of vibrancy and colour.



Trudys pond



Eye of the Tiger

Trudy admits she's an eclectic gardener – nothing is ever planned, and the garden has evolved in a slightly haphazard manner. Plants are rearranged at a whim – maybe because they look out of place, or perhaps they hadn't thrived in their chosen location.

The planting is very clever. Initially, I didn't notice that part of the garden had been claimed to site a sub-station, as the planting of a climbing hydrangea, with swaying grass at its foot, draws your eye.

Numerous acers are placed strategically around the garden including *acer palmatum* 'Firecracker', its compact, reddish-purple leaves turning bright red in autumn, and 'Orange Dream' which has stunning orange-yellow foliage with a dark orange edge.

Roses are also a favourite. *Iceberg*, a wedding present, is a small, free-flowering bushy shrub with glossy, light green foliage and clusters of slightly fragrant double white flowers in summer and autumn. It was shortlisted for the RHS Chelsea 'Plant of the Centenary' for the decade 1953-1962. Elsewhere, *rosa Constance Spry* scrambles up an archway - a deciduous or semi-evergreen shrub rose with thorny stems

and solitary or clustered, five-petalled flowers, followed by showy red or purple fruits. At the front of the house is an unusual shrub rose, 'Eye of the Tiger'; a modern rose with simple, open flowers and strong central eye. Both its petals and rosehips can be used to make syrups and the petals add flavour to cold drinks! *Nostalgia*, a classic bush rose with large, slightly fragrant, double cream blooms edged with striking cherry-red, makes a statement in any border.

My favourite plant though, is the showy *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Bowl of Beauty', an herbaceous perennial which can reach up to 80 centimetres, with cerise-pink cupped flowers and a central mass of narrow, creamy-white petals.

Trudy, is a talented local gardener who adds something special to her clients's gardens but she has certainly made her own a haven for relaxation.

■ **Beverley Wallis**



Constance Spry



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## Local History

1. Widcombe Baptist Church wasn't always Baptist. It started off as Congregational (1820-1834), then Methodist (1834-1838), then Anglican (1838-1847) and only in 1849 did it become Baptist. In 1910 it took over the Canal Tavern and demolished it to replace it by a hall and school.
2. Widcombe has one of only a few Crimean War Memorials in the country. Located in the Abbey Cemetery, the obelisk lists various battles that occurred in the Baltic and Crimea.
3. Until 1973 The Ram at 20, Claverton Buildings, was half its current size and had two rooms. It expanded into the adjacent furniture shop at No 19 run by TR Hayes. In 1984, the veranda at the back of the former shop was built on. Upstairs, in addition to the kitchen, there was a dining room and a pool room.
4. There was once a Poor House in Claverton Street. It existed from 1825 until the Bath Union Workhouse opened on Odd Down in 1840. The large house, formerly the residence of the von Luders family, was then used by the GWR as an office, before being demolished and replaced by a row of terraced houses called Lyncombe Place.



## Miscellanea Widcombeana

5. At the foot of Widcombe Hill there was once a drinking fountain and a horse trough. The only horse troughs remaining in Widcombe are those on Widcombe Hill and Holloway. Further afield there's one on Entry Hill and one at the top of Ralph Allen Drive on North Road.
6. Until the Wells Road was constructed in about 1770, traffic to and from the south had to navigate Holloway. The new road was a turnpike one. Subsequent tolls were also applied to Holloway.
7. Ralph Allen Drive and Prior Park Road are on land bought by Ralph Allen and on which he built his railway to move stone from his quarries at Combe Down to his wharf at Dolemeads. Prior Park Road was called Carriage Road in the early 19th century.
8. The Bath and West Show used to occur on the land of Holloway Farm, now the site of Poets Corner. The centennial show in 1877 was the occasion of the disastrous collapse of the Ha'penny Bridge, when visitors to the show coming from the station were held up paying a toll and overloaded it.

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## Widcombe Jottings

What with my arthritic knees, slipped disc and trapped lumbar nerve, Widcombe is currently less like my stomping ground and more my limping, nay, crawling ground. The accompanying lack of mobility combined with the sometimes searing agony throws into doubt the possibility of Lady Margaret showing her noble face at the annual Christmas tree switch-on.

This salubrious occasion will take place on Widcombe Parade on the evening of Thursday 28th November and as usual precedes the popular Bonbon's Christmas Bauble cabaret at the Social Club. The appearance of host with the most Monsieur le Bonbon at this event is also thrown into jeopardy, though there are those who will be glad to hear that, his particular approach to hosting having been compared to Marmite by some upstanding local citizens!

They say Doctor Theatre cures all, the

shining example held up to budding thespians being Sarah Bernhardt who, it is said, went ahead with her performance in the title role of Cleopatra despite having recently had her leg amputated. But this year I can't envisage Lady M donning her less-than-sensible shoes and steadfastly going ahead with her ribbon-cutting duties, even, as in the case of the inestimable Sarah, she delivers her key speech while lying prone on a chaise longue.

In fact, my specialist reckons it was those less-than-sensible shoes, combined with all the other unsuitable footwear and silly walks required during my long and illustrious career with the Natural Theatre Company, that have brought on my present problems. Maybe I could sue for industrial injury?

However, ardent fans of her ladyship need not feel totally bereft, for tucked away in the back of Nick Steel's garage I believe there is a life size cardboard cut-out of the dear lady. We'll prop that up outside The Ram on the night while I prop up the bar inside!

As for Monsieur le Bonbon, he can have a well-earned rest and maybe I can haul myself onto the stage and draw the raffle as myself. A rare occasion indeed!

■ *Ralph Oswick*

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will be held on

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 from 7:30 pm**

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School years 3-6

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School years 7-9

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School years 10-13

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