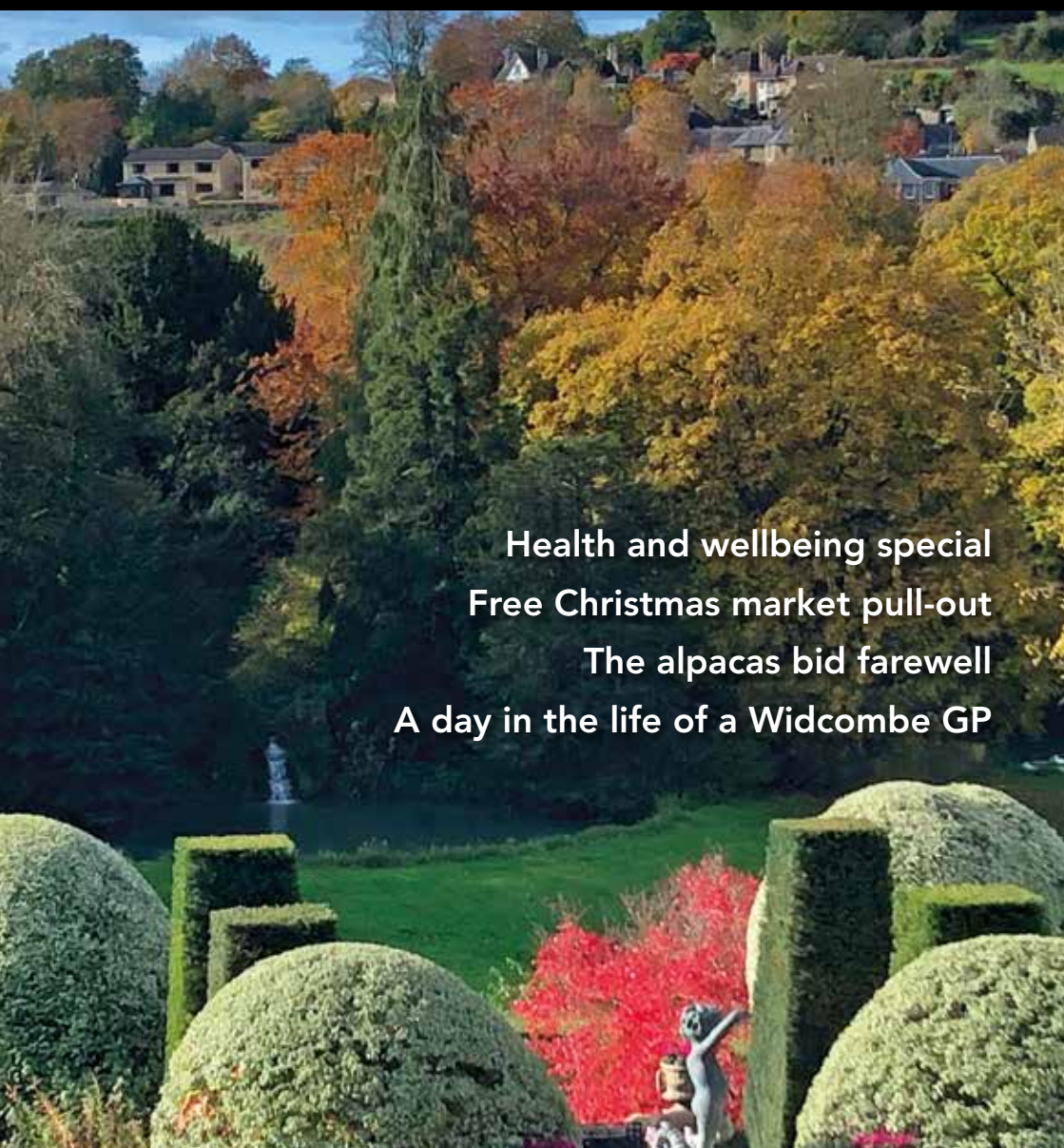


Widcombe magazine

AUTUMN - WINTER 2022

WHAT'S ON
NEWS & VIEWS



Health and wellbeing special

Free Christmas market pull-out

The alpacas bid farewell

A day in the life of a Widcombe GP



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Widcombe magazine

AUTUMN - WINTER 2022

CONTENTS



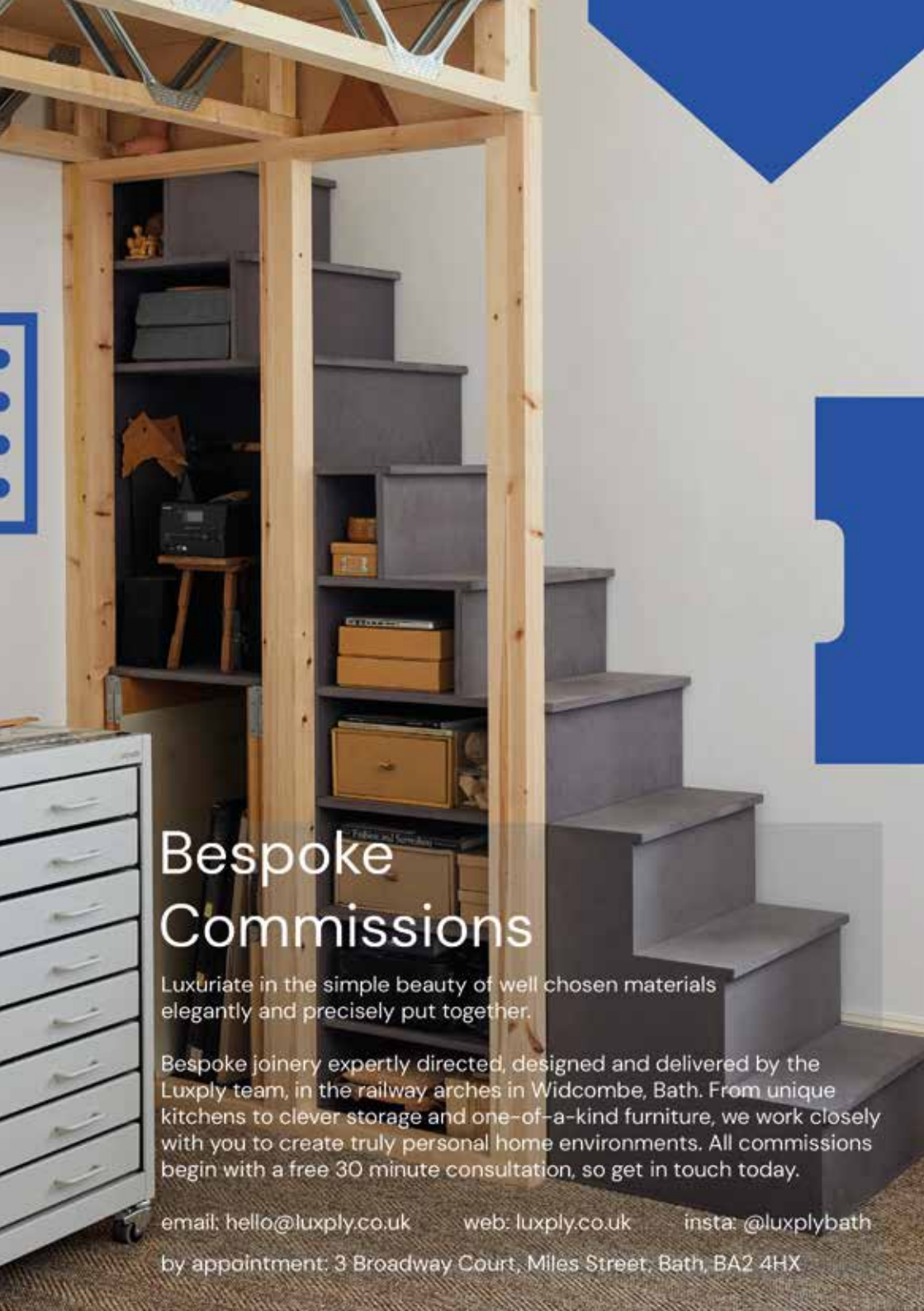
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- 8** Widcombe News
Chair's column
A healthy look at transport
Widcombe Heroes
Solar panel success
Keep well this winter
- 14** Out & About
Wild in Widcombe
Ensuring the health and wellbeing of night revellers
How to start a community garden
A view from the field
- 20** Widcombe Life
Our sociable summer
Jubilation!
- 23-26** CHRISTMAS MARKET Pull-Out
- 28** In the Garden
New beginnings
A gentle workout for the soul
- 32** Widcombe Foodies
Christmas sparkle
- 34** Working Widcombe
A day in the life of a local GP
- 38** Local History
Local history group
A walk down Church Street
- 40** Committee Profile
Mike Wrigley
- 42** Widcombe Jottings
Health warning



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Chair's column

As autumn edges into winter, this issue turns the spotlight on health and wellbeing. We profile local GP Rebecca Hodson, catch up on the advice of pharmacist Emily Ballinger and follow Bath City Pastors into Bath as they provide succour to the needy at night. There are articles about gardening and local history with a wellbeing twist. It could be a difficult winter with both flu and covid - and a cost-of-living crisis - so it is more important than ever that as a community we are there to support our neighbours.

As many of you know this is likely to be my last column as Chair. My term ends at the AGM next April after seven years heading the Widcombe Association (WA). I hope you will indulge me as I reflect on where we stand as a community. The WA's vision is for Widcombe to be a 'vibrant place to live, work and visit'. Have we progressed I ask myself?

My predecessor, Paddy Doyle, handed the WA over in good shape in 2015. In particular, the 31-year fight for traffic to be re-routed away from Widcombe Parade was finally coming to an end and we had a proper local high street.

Since then, our activities have flourished and will be the envy of many a community: art trails and markets, choir and Mumpers, garden talks and visits, music events and operas, and Go Green Widcombe. I am particularly pleased the History Group has re-joined the fold, safeguarding its future. We have also modernised with a new membership system, updated the website, produced a great magazine and have a growing presence on social media.

I forced myself to choose four things we can be particularly proud of:



- **Developing the Parade:** the high street thrives with a great range of independent traders in a pleasing setting, improved by planting in the old telephone box and on the verges.

- **Supporting the community through covid:** communities became more important

than ever when covid hit, so we set up 60 street-based community groups to make sure people knew where to get help and support.

- **Protecting but developing Widcombe:** We helped fight off a plan that could have changed Widcombe forever - the proposed CURO cable car. For a short while Widcombe was the focus of local and national news. Effective and agile campaigning helped head this off at the first stage. We have not been against appropriate development and we can see improvements across Widcombe.

- **Improving our environment:** Helping to set up the Friends of Lyncombe Hill Fields seems particularly important and is a blueprint for how local communities working with the Council can protect and enhance our green spaces.

None of this would have been possible without the great team of volunteers who make our activities happen. I will not name names, you know who they are, except for Beverley Wallis, my partner, who has thrown herself enthusiastically into all things Widcombe since moving here in 2010.

Having a strong and diverse committee and volunteers makes the Chair's role more effective and enjoyable and it's been great to get to know many wonderful Widcombe residents and put something back into my lifetime home. Thank you all.

■ *Jeremy Boss*

A healthy look at transport

A wide range of transport initiatives have been introduced that benefit Widcombe.

The major intervention was, of course, the Rossiter Road scheme. This was a one-off project, the result of many years of campaigning to have most of the through traffic removed from Widcombe Parade. Residents Parking Zones were introduced to control parking within the residential areas of Widcombe and later in Lyncombe (the chief targets were commuters seeking free parking close to the city centre). The third major intervention has been the introduction to Bath of the Clean Air Zone which runs along the northern edge of Widcombe. There has also been the trial of e-scooters which concludes at the end of this month. These initiatives have all had one thing in common: the need to make our local environment healthier and more attractive for residents.

Most people would accept that further improvements are needed. The Council has recognised this in its Liveable Neighbourhoods policy and a number of additional projects are being promoted within or adjacent to Widcombe. One of the first is to stop through traffic in Church Street, and consultations are well underway. Further actions are being considered on Prior Park Road and Widcombe Hill to slow the speed of vehicles and to help pedestrians crossing these roads - the Widcombe Association continues to press for better crossings by the White Hart.

The Council is currently investigating the implementation of Active Travel Routes, a government initiative to promote safe cycling and walking within urban areas. The Council has proposed one such route from the city centre to Bath University via North Road. This came under heavy criticism and is currently being reviewed. Widcombe Hill has been suggested as the preferred route and the outcome from the review is imminent.



All these initiatives should be part of an overall strategy for transport that includes improved public transport and a city-wide system of routes for safe cycling and walking. The widespread use of electric vehicles will also help to provide a better, healthier urban environment.

■ *Michael Wrigley*

Widcombe Heroes

Helen Peter nominates **Iona Everett** in Widcombe Surgery as a bright, helpful, intelligent ray of sunshine in these bleak times.



Beverley Wallis nominates **Derek Walker** for his summer watering campaign to keep the flowers blooming in the Widcombe Hill horse trough.

If you would like to nominate a Widcombe Hero, please email secretary@widcombeassociation.org.uk.

Solar panel success

Go Green Widcombe launched its Solar Panel Bulk Buy scheme late last year. The group paired up with MCS-registered installer IDDEA. The plan was that, if more than six local residents signed up to have solar panels installed by IDDEA, they would each get a discount for the installation of at least 15 per cent.

Since then, over 20 local residents have signed up and six installations have been completed. The scheme has increased the number of solar panel installations in the area by around 15 per cent. Feedback has been very positive:

‘In 10 months, our installation has generated 3,500 kWh of electricity, which is greater than the total consumption for the house over the previous year.’

‘The bulk of generation was over the summer months and we have exported close to 900kWh to the grid, for which we have been paid through the Smart Export Guarantee scheme.’

‘The iBoost immersion controller installed as part of the system has heated our hot water over the last six months, using solar-generated electricity; so, we have consumed almost no gas during the summer.’

‘With increasing energy costs, the payback period for the installation will be less than 12 years.’

‘The software enables me to see how much electricity we are generating on a real time basis.’

Due to the increases in energy costs, there has been an huge rise in the number of households seeking solar panel surveys - and there have also been supply issues. As a result, IDDEA is unable to respond to new enquiries until after the new year.

■ *Steve Cross*

Planning under threat

Planning is an oft-misunderstood field – especially by politicians who, perhaps under pressure from developers or landowners, take ill-informed pot-shots at the system or the profession as the root of all that is wrong in our towns and countryside.

Take the latest outburst from a member of the government, attacking the Planning Inspectorate for turning down too many (in their view) developments (through the formal appeals process) and promising to deal with this, though how is not yet apparent. But since the Planning Inspectorate is a regulatory body whose remit requires that it applies current government planning policies, where they are clear enough, and assess the decisions of local authorities against those policies and formally approved plans, it is hard to imagine how the process might be ‘improved’. Or might it just be sabre-rattling and we will get back to business-as-usual fairly quickly?

Many planners fear that the system will be reformed by cutting communities like ours out of the process or further reducing our influence; it is often the involvement of the public – more extensive in planning than almost any other topic – that takes up the time.

Meanwhile life and day-to-day planning continues unabated and I have every sympathy with the Council’s planners – not only those on the front line dealing with the constant flow of applications and appeals but also those working behind the scenes in the preparation of local plans.

Resources for planning have been cut by 42 per cent (in the country as a whole) in the last ten years. Bath’s planners have a tough job in a special place of heritage with all the additional limitations that imposes. ■ *Jan Shepley*

Keep well this winter

Cooler days and longer nights needn’t go hand in hand with coughs, colds and the winter blues. With these tips you can help keep yourself and your loved ones well this winter and beyond.



Getting some form of movement each day, even a short walk, helps our bodies rejuvenate.

Don’t hesitate to ask for advice if you feel unwell

It’s important to get medical help as soon as you feel unwell. Pharmacists can give treatment advice for a range of minor illnesses and can tell you if you need to see a doctor. See or talk to your doctor for more complex issues. Visit 111.nhs.uk or call 111 if you have an urgent medical problem and you’re not sure what to do.

Get a flu vaccine

Flu will often get better on its own, but it can make some people seriously ill. It is important to get the flu vaccine if you have been advised to. It is a safe and effective vaccine, offered every year on the NHS to help protect people at risk of flu and its complications.

The best time to have the flu vaccine is in the autumn before flu starts spreading but you can get the vaccine later. If you’re 65 or over, you are also eligible for the pneumococcal vaccine, which will help protect you from pneumonia.

Keep warm at home

If you are not very mobile, are older, or have a health condition, such as heart or lung disease, it’s best if you can heat your home to at least 18C and to keep your bedroom at 18C all night. Keep the bedroom window closed to prevent drafts.

If you’re under 65, healthy and active, you can safely have your home cooler than 18C, as long as you’re comfortable. Use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed (but not at the same time!).

Eating regularly helps keep you warm; have at least one hot meal a day and plenty of hot drinks.

■ *Emily Ballinger, Widcombe Pharmacy*

Support your body with nutritious food

A varied and balanced diet plays a key role in providing the vitamins and minerals our immune systems need to stay on fighting form through winter.

Eating nutrient-packed foods like fruit, vegetables, beans and pulses can do wonders for gut health and immunity. Fresh fruit, such as oranges, apples and blueberries provide vitamin C and antioxidants. Vegetables like kale, broccoli and rocket are good sources of vitamins B, C, E and K, iron, calcium and folate.

Proteins in beans and pulses, are packed with gut-friendly fibre which is important for our gut health and supports our immune response. Oily fish is full of omega-3 fats that are key for immune function and can support mental health.

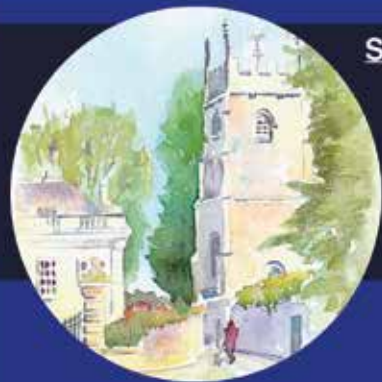
Supplement your diet

Even with a nutrient dense diet, supplements may be able to help you.

Government advice is that everyone should consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement during the autumn and winter. You can get vitamin D in the form of a capsule, chewable tablet or a spray from your local pharmacy.

Get movement into your day

As well as the mental lift that moving our bodies gives us, it plays a key role in supporting our immune health.



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Evening service 4pm
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Friday 2 December
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www.brownpapertickets.com/event/5530857



BILL SMARME'S SEASONAL NUTS

Friday 16 December
Featuring the Bill Smarme Rock'n'Roll Trio plus
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Doors 7.15pm. Show 8pm
Tickets: £12/£10 (WSC members)
www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bill-smarmes-seasonal-nuts-tickets-443410842767



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BATH COMEDY

ART EXHIBITIONS

Out & About

Wild in Widcombe

One of the most dramatic environmental improvements in Widcombe in recent years has been the transformation of Lyncombe Hill Fields. Local residents now manage the fields through a licence with the Council with the aim of improving public access and enhancing the variety of wildlife habitats. Wildflower meadows are being restored. Numerous bird boxes have been installed to cater for a greater variety of birds. Hedges have been re-laid and mini-plantations of native tree species planted. There is even a bug hotel to cater for mini-beasts.

All this goes on alongside improvement of paths, provision of benches and updating of high-quality information boards by residents and volunteers. Regular bulletins on all the activities are sent to Friends and Supporters, telling people what to look out for during the changing seasons, together with a great array of wonderful photographs. Friends of Lyncombe Hill Fields refer to the transformed space as *Our Wild Hilltop Paradise*.

Once a month I am happy to join a small group to record the variety of birds. The number of species varies with the seasons and the weather on the day, but the average is 17 different species, with a maximum daily count of 23. Alongside common garden birds, there are nuthatch, two kinds of woodpecker, warblers such as chiffchaff and blackcap, and birds of prey including buzzard, kestrel and sparrowhawk. We also regularly see ravens overhead. In spring, I lead small parties to enjoy the dawn chorus.



a nuthatch at its nest hole
photo: David Goode

On many days I visit the fields by myself, just to watch and relax in the midst of nature. Sitting quietly for an hour brings a special quality to life. I am rarely disappointed. There are conversations too. Meetings with total strangers, often with dogs, who invariably tell me how much they enjoy their visits. Some say it has completely changed their lives. It certainly strengthens our local community.

So I am not surprised that contact with nature can be beneficial for those who experience mental illness. Realisation that nature can provide a cure has become much more widely accepted, especially since the covid pandemic. Some doctors regularly prescribe courses of treatment based on ecotherapy. We are fortunate in Widcombe to have nature all around us, just part of life.

Many organisations have provided financial support for the project on Lyncombe Hill, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Bathscape, the Widcombe Association, the Council, and many others. If you are interested in getting involved please contact lyncombehillfields@gmail.com.

■ David Goode

Ensuring the health and wellbeing of night revellers

Until he retired in 2015, Widcombe resident David Holden-White was a defence solicitor. His work gave him ample opportunity to consider responses to wrongdoing other than handing out prison terms and a criminal record. These days he applies his practical style of empathy to his Christian-led work with Bath City Pastors, an organisation that sends its volunteers into the centre of the city at night to help, advise, protect and guide anyone who might find themselves in difficulty.

'The idea,' says David, 'is to share God's love with people who are vulnerable, those who live on the street and those who make themselves vulnerable today because of drugs or alcohol or the cold.'

On the night that I accompanied David and his team on their rounds, our first success was to find a large sheet of cardboard for a man settling to sleep on the cold paving in a shop doorway. As we walked around the streets, David and his team were linked by walkie-talkie to the venues and the council-funded security team. They exchanged alerts about a missing girl, a young man slumped on the pavement outside one of the popular venues, and a girl who had



become separated from the friend she was staying with and had her house-key but no idea where the house was.

The team approaches each case with gentleness and offers simple practical help – flip-flops for bare feet at the mercy of broken glass, hats and gloves, blankets for those who came out without a coat, hot drinks and a cereal bar to start conversations with regulars. As they walk their considerably more than 10,000 steps a night they also scoop up the discarded bottles to stave off glass fights.



The team (generally of four) always includes at least one woman whose presence, David explains, quietly diffuses any hostility from those they are trying to help. 'We try to be prayerful and to take a sympathetic interest to people in difficulty. But we have high-vis jackets and walkie-talkies – we can look a bit official. The women volunteers are often older. They could be your aunty or your gran. That is very helpful.'

The team prays for a quiet night and nobody hurt. Generally, their prayers are answered and David believes their presence every Friday and Saturday from 10pm until as late as 3.00 or 4.00am plays its part.

■ Colette Hill



Out & About

How to start a community garden

Dolemeads Community Garden – a small oasis on land going spare – opened at last this summer. The project involved many people and much work. So how did they do it? Rachel Meyrick talks us through the steps.

Find a free space - any unused piece of land and look into who owns it

In Dolemeads, there was a fenced triangle of land next to the railway arches, which had been used as a toddler playground. Its owner, Curo, had removed the play equipment, leaving scrubland and weeds. We asked if we could use it and Curo bequeathed the land for community development.

Come up with a vision for the land through consultation

We leafleted Dolemeads with questions of what we could use the area for. Suggestions included: places to sit, allotments, scooter park, exercise area, recycling park, and many more. We put all the ideas together to see how they could be combined in the space, then shared the results. This was the basis for...

Create a design

Dolemeads resident Phil Allen is a retired horticulturalist. He used the ideas from the consultation to create a design. He recommended trees, shrubs and which planting would suit the soil and the area. But we couldn't do that alone. We had to...



BEFORE



Look for funding

It really helps if you have or can form a residents' association. We became a subgroup of the Widcombe Association and were able to use its bank account to receive funds. We contacted large local big businesses, but without luck. Most of the small businesses in the arches were supportive of the project, sometimes with in-kind donations. Eventually, we applied for and won funding to create the entire garden from the National Lottery Community Fund.

Plan workdays and find people who are willing to put some hours in

We had no contractor or labour-cost funding, so all the work was done by residents and friends. On reflection, it would have been better to apply for more funding to include subcontractor fees! Some of the larger work was pretty challenging. Thankfully, some residents were on hand with tea and cake when they couldn't dig or paint fencing. Others went all-in, working every available workday.

Celebrate!

In late August, we had our opening party to celebrate our new garden. Folk were encouraged to plant bulbs, and take collective ownership of the space. We now have beautiful fruit trees, shrubs, flowers, vegetables in planters and two benches to sit and enjoy it all.

AFTER



Living with your community garden

We do all sorts of things in our garden – exercise, harvest, hold home-worker coffee mornings. It's a very satisfying thing to come together and create something lovely out of an abandoned piece of scrubland. If you are passing through Dolemeads please drop in, have a sit down and enjoy a new era in the vibrant life of this lovely red-bricked community. ■ *Rachel Meyrick, Dolemeads Garden Group*

Thank you to all our volunteers: the Widcombe Association, resident Phil Allen, councillor Alison Born, Helen Peter, Beverley Wallis, Bath Labour, Curo, Goodgym, Prior Park Garden Centre, Newmans Joinery, SN Scaffolding, Sydenhams, Jewsons and Maggie the local sign-writer.

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Widcombe Choir is affiliated to the Widcombe Association
Visit www.widcombeassociation.org.uk or info@the-widcombe-choir.co.uk

Out & About

A view from the field

Hola Widcombe!

Zippy here, reporting to you one last time from our glorious autumnal field. It's warm and sunny here - when it isn't cold and raining - but that's the beauty of where we live. You never know what the weather will bring, so every day is a lovely big surprise!

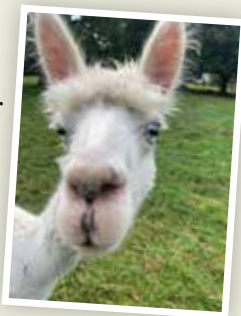
This is the essence of Widcombe for us - a little bit of everything and something for everyone. You can find lovely things, new or pre-loved; food to take away, cook at home or eat out; cafés, pubs, or restaurants; coffee, lunch, breakfast or dinner; hair, nails, massage or smile; apples or carrots; yoga or dancing; real fires or Agas; curtains or... different curtains; plants or pet food. And you can choose to walk or cycle (although we get a bit muddled about which is the cycle lane along the pavement on Widcombe Parade), and now you can even scoot (although we strongly encourage you to wear a helmet and a light).

As Bungle will affirm, the biggest problem is making a choice! Although choice is

a wonderful thing, there is also much to appreciate having fewer choices to make. We are very lucky to be able to enjoy exactly the same breakfast every day - a scoop of delicious alpaca food. And a bag of hay to nibble on. Occasionally we get some chopped carrot or apple, which we love. This leaves the day free for us to make absolutely no choices at all - hurrah!

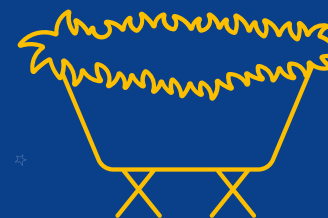
The sheep insist they are required to make loads of choices every day and it is quite hard work deciding whether or not to eat windfalls (that's not a choice - they can't resist apples), or sit in the sun (ditto), or walk slowly to the shed (ditto). It's evident to everyone that the sheep make no choices - although thinking they do keeps them happy so maybe that's OK.

I was going to ask the goats about how choice affects them, but they tried to trip me up, and ran off bleating so I have made one firm decision - I'm not speaking to them. And as 2022 draws to a close, I am signing off for the last time, heading for hibernation and a long lazy retirement. Thank you all for reading! ■ *Zippy*



Christmas at Widcombe Baptist Church!
Come and celebrate

God with us



Sun 18th Dec	10.30 am	Family Carols
Sun 18th Dec	6.00 pm	Carols by Candlelight
Sat 24th Dec	7.30 pm	Christmas Eve Reflections
Sun 25th Dec	10.30 am	Christmas Day Celebration

For more Christmas events,
check out our website or notice board

WIDCOMBE
BAPTIST CHURCH



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Widcombe Life

Our sociable summer

In May, the garden club enjoyed a private tour of Stoberry House garden near Wells. The beauty of the six-acre garden was surpassed only by the magnificent borrowed view of the cathedral and Glastonbury Tor.

June's flagship event, cream tea at Crowe Hall, was a rapid sell-out. The hot sunny afternoon was finished off with indulgent prosecco and scones. June also saw the annual Art Trail with its fabulous collection of artisan traders.

In July, the WA hosted Bath Opera's Tosca. The weather wasn't kind, but we were all wowed by the superb voice of Ghiulnara Raileanu. The garden club also completed the tour of Hartley Farm originally scheduled for summer 2020.

Summer festivities were rounded off with jazz and a picnic in a stunning garden in Prospect Road on a perfect August afternoon. A fitting end to Beverley Wallis' chairmanship of the events committee.

Widcombe had a strong presence in the Bath in Bloom awards. A silver gilt award for horticultural achievement by a group to the Widcombe Association (collected by Beverley), Best Small Garden gold award for Trudy Healey, and a silver-gilt award for Denise Coughlan in the Large Garden category.

In addition, the Widcombe Association was awarded level 5 Outstanding in the RHS 'It's your Neighbourhood' scheme. Commenting on the WA's award, Bath in Bloom honorary president Barry Cruse wrote: 'this is the highest level of achievement, so a huge well done and many congratulations.'

Finally, in September, we supported the Claverton Flower and Produce Show and attended the Friends of Lyncombe Hill Harvest Festival organised as a thank you for volunteers. ■ *Clare Furlonger, Events Committee Chair*



Tea on the terrace at Crowe Hall



Claverton Flower and Produce Show



The Widcombe Wobblers



Lyncombe Hill Fields



Beverley & Tudy, Bath in Bloom winners



Bath Opera performs Tosca



Visit to Hartley Farm



2022 Art Trail



Summertime Jazz



Widcombe Life



Jubilation!

Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee was celebrated with street parties across Widcombe. Here are a few pictures, but many more can be found on the association's website www.widcombeassociation.org.uk/dt_gallery/2022-platinum-jubilee/



WIDCOMBE CHRISTMAS MARKET

Handmade gifts by local artisans

**SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 19**
10.30am-5pm

**SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 20**
10.30am-4pm



**Widcombe Social Club,
The Natural Theatre Co. & St Matthews
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f Widcombe Christmas Market www.widcombechristmasmarket.com

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Christmas Market

Running at the Widcombe Social Club, St Matthews Church and the Natural Theatre Company on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November, the Widcombe Christmas Market is bigger than ever this year and features plenty of old favourites as well as exciting local newcomers. The doors open at 10.30am on both days and refreshments will be available.

Many of the artists and makers have exhibited before including local charities Achieve Together and the RUH crafters, who welcome the chance to talk about their work to visitors. We will be welcoming a number of long standing exhibitors including Bridget Baker who uses her knowledge of vertebrates to capture authentic features in her delicate small wire animals. Vittrific will be there with its collection of colourful enamelled art. The Design Vaults will be exhibiting distinctive and elegant handmade jewellery. Sarah Turrell's attractive and colourful stoneware will be available to be loved, used and enjoyed everyday. Kate and Esther Ceramics will share their passion for Raku ceramics featuring vibrant colours, metallic flushes and textured crackle. Award-winning artist Catherine Beale is back with watercolours featuring her 'gravity painting' technique and Caroline Crossland (Davies) will exhibit her beautiful hand-drawn Christmas cards of familiar Widcombe scenes. For the little ones in your life, Little Acorn Makes offers exclusive children's clothing designed and handmade in Bath.

New names include: Isabell Browell with her exquisite hand stitched lampshades and cushions using handwoven ikat fabrics from Uzbekistan and sari silks from India; Kelly Chan with her handmade fabric bags, keyrings and purses, which transform the everyday into something special; Lee Owen's stunning Christmas cards; and Rachel Cox's charming felt animals.



Caroline Davis



Linda Curtis



Charlotte Farmer



Agnes Pollock



Julie Green



Yvonne Elston



Nicola Hyman



Barry Stanson



Isabell Browell



Isabell Browell



Jo Willis



Luke Holcombe



Kelly Chan



Lee Owen



Tim Perry



Julie Green



Julie Green



Rachel Cox



Sarah Turrell



Catherine Beale



Kate Marshall



Liz Holden-White



Rosemary Le Fevre

In its 16th year, the Widcombe Christmas Market features locally handmade Christmas gifts perfect for all the family. Look forward to an array of carefully curated, affordable gifts on offer. Widcombe Social Club is wheelchair accessible and easy to find. Park at Southgate car park and walk over the footbridge to Widcombe, or on Sunday, parking is unrestricted.

2022 EXHIBITORS

Bath Spa Skincare Organic skincare. Pure, effective and kind

Bridget Baker Small wire animals and mobiles

Catherine Beale New watercolours, arty gifts and workshop gift vouchers

Isabell Browell Hand stitched Ikat and silk Sari Lampshades

Caroline Crossland Beautiful Christmas cards of local scenes

Lucy Day Illustrated cards and prints

Design Vaults Modern, design led jewellery handmade in Bath

Julia Draper Bespoke embroideries of Ordnance Survey maps

Yvonne Elston Sculptural ceramic birds and festive porcelain decorations

Charlotte Farmer Handmade screen printed cards of grumpy animals and classic biscuits

Fioglass Handmade individual glass gifts for all

Sarah Freeman Local wildlife, nature & landscape photographer

Sally Harker Bold colourful designs handprinted in Bath

Luke Holcombe Woodcut prints and cards

Nicola Hyman Contemporary eco/upcycled handmade jewellery

Jet Pictures Eye catching vibrant prints and accessories

Kate and Esther Beautifully unique stoneware & raku ceramics

Bianca Moore Studio Bespoke art, prints and cards for Christmas

Tim Perry Decorative and functional handmade ceramics

Agnes Pollack Contemplative still life in oil. Prints with gilded mounts and bespoke frames

Lynne Roche Painting in oil and pastels inspired by Italy and gardens

Barry Stanson Hand made and thrown ceramics

Hilary Strickland Art & nature in your home

Sarah Targett Hand screen-printed cards and gifts

Tilian Kids Ethical, eco-friendly, sustainable clothing, wooden toys and gifts.

Ruth Thorp Colourful illustrated cards, prints and books

Sarah Turrell Finely thrown stoneware pottery

Vitrific Vibrant, colourful enamelled art and jewellery

Natasha Williams Handmade bespoke and seasonal chocolate!

Jo Willis Handmade millinery for special occasions

Vikki Yeates Paintings of British wildlife

Saturday Only

Achieve Together Seasonal arts and crafts for charity

Emma de Vries Handmade gifts for animal lovers

Niamh Ferguson Hand-made Christmas decorations

Julie Green Seasonal homeware, gifts and decorations

Liz Holden-White Imaginative, affordable paintings, cards and coasters

Kay & Ellie Gifts Real flower resin jewellery from my garden

Rosemary Le Fevre Needlework, quilting and jewellery

Little Acorn Makes Handmade children's clothing, printed and made in the UK.

Lee Owen Bath Christmas cards, prints, collages, books and maps

RUH Charity Crafters A crafting group raising funds for the RUH

Sunday Only

Kelly Chan Cushion covers, keyrings, bags and purses handmade in British fabrics

Rachel Cox Needle felted sculptures and pebble pictures

Nellie and Pickles Hand stitched home decor and accessories

Full details of the artisans will be on our website and, in the run up to the event, we'll share some sneak previews of Christmas gifts on our Facebook page.

Widcombe Christmas Market

@WidcombeXmasMkt

www.widcombechristmasmarket.com

Widcombe Christmas Market is run by the Widcombe Association



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19/20 November

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Christmas Day 9:00am – Sung Eucharist with Carols

or email host@magdalenchapelbath.co.uk to join us on Zoom



In the Garden

New beginnings

How wonderful, buying a new home where there is already a beautiful garden for you to escape to! It must have been an oasis of calm for the new owners two years ago.

At the gate you are greeted with the delicate fragrance of David Austin's climbing *Rosa 'Mermaid'*, with its single canary yellow flowers and long sulphur stamens. Beyond it, cascading terraces take you past interconnected garden beds. The terracing cleverly increases the available space and adds character zones, allowing the owners to play dynamically with levels.

Stone retaining walls are planted with silver-leaved yellow and white daisy *Anthemis punctata* subsp. *cupaniana*, Sicilian chamomile and *Armeria pseudarmeria* 'Ballerina White', a short evergreen mat-forming thrift with beautiful white pom pom flowers. A small antique statue of a boy adds a sophisticated touch. On the other side, hardy geranium *phaeum* 'Alec's Pink' is entwined with *Ipomoea indica* (blue morning glory), an evergreen vine with lush velvety heart-shaped leaves and attractive trumpet-shaped flowers.



A sightline directs your eye to the end of the garden where a mirror is festooned with clusters of camelias for spring colour and vigorous deciduous *Clematis* 'Etoile Violette' with its single-leaved velvety purple flowers. Nestled here is the showy flower-clustered white *Hydrangea arborescens* Invincibelle Wee White - the

first dwarf Annabelle, growing to 60cm at most. The scene is completed with a charming lion's head waterfall which brings tranquillity to this part of the garden.

The honey-coloured stone walls are covered with a variety of climbing roses including David Austin's *Rosa Wollerton Old Hall* ('Ausblanket'), a pale apricot rose with a warm myrrh fragrance, and *Rosa Crème de la Crème* ('Gancré') with its cupped cream



Rosa Wollerton Old Hall



Rosa Crème de la Crème



blooms and attractive foliage. When the west wall's well-established wisteria failed in the new owners' first year, the void was filled with mulberry and apricot.

Springs are a feature of the area and a stream used to run through the garden, which a 1741 Ralph Allen estate map refers to as 'Colethurst's Ox Barton and Barns, a fountain being in ye same'.

Quaker minister Priscilla Hannah Gurney lived here for a year before her death in 1828 and her headstone can be seen at the Quaker burial ground next door.

■ *Beverley Wallis*



Rosa Mermaid



Dates for your 2023 diary

17 May A cottage garden in Radstock

This rural garden has mature trees, wild areas, a kitchen garden, a greenhouse, and open lawns and borders with secluded seating areas – plus outbuildings, a hen house, small ponds and a mini stumpery, which attract year-round wildlife.

19 July A two-acre garden in Batheaston

This south-facing garden boasts spectacular views from its terraced lawns, a box parterre, a small orchard and a meadow. Half of it is devoted to cut flowers and foliage, with a colourful mix of annuals, biennials and perennials. A floral experience for garden lovers, artisan florists, flower arrangers and anyone interested in the revival of beautiful, diverse and locally grown British cut flowers.

■ *Beverley Wallis*



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In the Garden

A gentle workout for the soul

Winter gardening is wonderful, it's just that sometimes you have to force yourself a little. Once the wellies and a warm coat are on, being out in the garden on a sunny winter day really is good for the soul and there is always plenty to get on with.

Daffodils and narcissi, hyacinths scillas and crocus can still be planted now. Tulips can wait a little. Remember the golden rule for planting bulbs is prepare a planting hole three times the size of the bulb, so for a two-inch (5cm) daffodil the planting hole should be six inches (15cm) deep at least.

At this time of the year the soil still holds summer warmth, ideal for planting trees and bushes. Their new roots will establish over the winter, giving a great base for growth in the spring. Ornamental trees give shade from summer heat, food supplies for birds, shelter from wind and above all colourful blooms. Fruit trees give bountiful crops which are full of flavour compared to anything shop bought.



Many trees, shrubs and roses can be pruned now. I like to prune roses at this time as it reduces rocking caused by winter winds. If you are not sure what to do with bush roses, a simple guide is to cut all shoots down by a half then prune out any old looking shoots completely. It sounds crude but it works fine. With climbing roses prune out old shoots and tie up the newer shoots. Apples and pears should be winter pruned to keep them healthy and productive. Aim to reduce the overall size as necessary then keep the canopy open by thinning out overcrowded areas.

Fallen leaves are not good for lawns, so rake them up and add them to your compost heap. A good compost heap should be a priority for every garden, returning the nutrients from your weeding and trimming back to your soil. It makes environmental sense as well as economic sense, but it does deprive your local garden centre of compost sales revenue!

Happy gardening. ■ John Leach, Prior Park Garden Centre



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Widcombe Foodies

Christmas sparkle

- 16 clementines
- 32 cloves
- 2 cinnamon sticks broken into pieces
- 3 tbsp Cinzano
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp Campari
- 3 tbsp gin
- 2 tbsp agave nectar



Stud the clementines with the cloves, cut them in half across the segments so the juice can be squeezed out later. Place them in a roasting tin, scatter them with the cinnamon and pour over the Cinzano. Soak for at least an hour or preferably overnight.

Preheat oven to 200c. Roast the clementines for 20 mins until lightly scorched and caramelised. Leave to cool.

Squeeze all the juice out of the roasted fruit (a bit of a messy business!), then add the rest of the juice from the roasting tin. Sieve, then add lemon juice, Cinzano, Campari, gin and agave nectar. Give it all a good stir.

To serve, half fill the glasses with the clementine mix and top with your favourite fizz. ■ *Janine Okell*

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Working Widcombe

A day in the life of a local GP

Nowhere is the health of the local community more fundamental than at the Widcombe Surgery where GP Dr Rebecca Hodson is a partner. Becky started out as a hospital clerk before training as a nurse and then as a doctor, training at the Royal Free in London. She found she enjoyed community medicine and in 1997 a GP opportunity arose in Widcombe. Becky is now one of six partners at Widcombe Surgery. As well as looking after patients, a GP partner is also joint owner and manager of a medium-sized business with all that entails including, managing and developing staff, buildings and finances - GP practices have to balance the books as well. The day starts at 8am with a review of what lies ahead. Then the phone starts ringing. Widcombe has an open surgery every day and aims to ensure every patient with an urgent need is given an appointment on site or by phone. There are also bookable morning surgeries, after which there will be staff meetings, education and training sessions and perhaps a partners' meeting. Then it's time to grab a sandwich or a coffee, or fit in an interview for the local magazine! Then comes the afternoon clinic with prearranged appointments, each normally scheduled for 10 minutes, split 50/50 between in person or a telephone/video call as the patient prefers. I asked Becky which she prefers. Her first response was whichever the patients chooses, but when pressed she concluded that for many appointments virtual is more time efficient for both doctor and patient, avoiding travel and waiting rooms. Either way ten minutes is not long to greet the patient, understand their concerns, ask questions, check facts in the notes and to conclude a course of action. After



the appointment there are prescriptions, referrals, and letters to be written. The GP's computer helps keep track of all the activities, both patient and admin, that need to be completed. Becky shared her dashboard of outstanding actions: process and review tests - 50, consultant letters - 23, prescriptions - 55, as well as 47 miscellaneous tasks including sick notes and responding to a request from the DVLA. That's before any NHS emails. She will work through these until about 7pm when it is high time to go home. Even then, she will do more in the evening at home, at weekends or on days off. Demand since the pandemic has been relentless. It appears that with covid and its aftermath, there is more illness around; people also feel more isolated and need more support. Managing patients and their conditions while they wait for hospital treatment adds to the demand. Becky, like many GPs, is concerned for her profession. The UK has one of the lowest numbers of physicians per 1000 population at 2.8 (2020) and is placed 33 out of 50. With relentless demand and the shortage of GPs and practice staff, it's not a surprise that younger GPs are hard to find, even in a great place to live like Bath. My 'appointment' time was rapidly coming to an end, but Dr Hodson reflected that she still loved her job and is particularly proud that she is now treating the third generation of the same families. Continuity of care means she can give the holistic health services the practice want to provide to all its patients. ■ *Jeremy Boss*

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Local History

Local history group

The Widcombe History Group has a busy schedule of events for the coming months. There will be at least two walks. The first will be a repeat of the popular Four Mills of Widcombe walk, giving participants a chance to learn about the industrial heritage of the area. The second will involve Beating the Bounds of the old parish with snippets of local history on the way. For those who prefer their history a bit more sedentary, two talks are planned, the first on the fascinating and varied

history of St Thomas a Becket, one of Bath's oldest Churches, the second exploring the largely hidden lives of Widcombe's domestic servants.

Other longer term projects include research on Perrymead and its many mysteries, as well as a military themed walk around Widcombe. The group also hopes to arrange celebrations of the bicentenary in 2023 of Prior Park Buildings and Cottages.



Further suggestions for historical research, talks or walks are always welcome. Email danlyons1966@icloud.com. ■ Dan Lyons

A walk down Church Street

In the 18th century, the landscape of Widcombe was dominated by farmland, orchards and market gardens, as well as the estates of Prior Park, Crowe Hall and Widcombe Manor. Church Street was developed as Bath became less fashionable as a resort and better known as a genteel place for retirement. At the Widcombe Hill end, an estate called Colthurst's House was acquired by apothecary William Tickell, who made his fortune from *aetherial spirit*, a patent remedy. Between 1799 and 1805, Tickell demolished the house to build Widcombe Crescent and Widcombe Terrace. Beyond these, the more modest 3-10 Church Street displaced earlier cottages and were built as three blocks of initially three houses between 1780 and 1797. Somerset House was extended in about 1807 and Yew Cottage was remodelled as Widcombe Lodge between 1854 and 1857.

Many old buildings remain. The present church was completed in 1502 and 11 Church Street dates from 1560. Widcombe Manor was built around 1678, probably on much earlier foundations. Number 5 Widcombe Hill was the Hare and Hounds Tavern until 1787 and there was a New Inn at the entrance to Church Street between 1728 and 1923. Dog Kennel Cottages, now called Yew Cottages, are of similar age.

Widcombe Crescent and Terrace and 3-4 Church Street were popular with the military, clergy and colonial officers. A plaque outside 1 Widcombe Crescent records Sir James Brooke, first white Rajah of Sarawak. His father Thomas Brooke, a retired judge from Bengal, bought the house in 1825 and his more famous son probably convalesced there from wounds sustained in the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-25). A dalliance with a housemaid produced a son who was brought up by Mrs Walker, a laundress in Brighton, and ultimately became his groom.



Henry Prince was born at 5 Widcombe Crescent in 1811. He worked for a short time as an apothecary at Bath Hospital before experiencing a religious conversion. At his first curacy, he declared that he was the Son of God and was defrocked. Nothing daunted, he bought land at Spaxton in the Qauntocks and built an 18-bedroom mansion surrounded by high walls called the *Abode of Love*. His cult attracted a steady stream of rich young women bringing scandal as well as funds.

Church Street has never been a place solely for retirement. The owners of Stothert and Pitt lived at Widcombe Terrace, John Lum Stothert at number 3 and Robert Pitt at number 5. Number 5-10 Church Street were occupied by artisans and tradesmen including Gordon Prangle who owned Tupra watch shop until his death in 1997. Echoing an enlightenment spirit of enquiry, he held 12 patents including for a magnetic railway and a machine that refracted light through gemstones which he believed had healing properties.

In her introduction to Charles Robertson's *Architectural Guide to Bath*, Jan Morris had this to say: 'The best place of all ... where the ordinary meets the superb, the parochial touches the international, is at Widcombe, in the heart of the villa country.....To my mind this is the most Bathonian place in Bath.' ■ John Chambers

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Committee Profile

Mike Wrigley

Town and transport planner Mike Wrigley began his career with consultants in London, working in France, Kenya and Libya as well as the UK. An early project was the building of Irvine, a new town on the west coast of Scotland. Irvine now has a population of almost 50,000 and is the birthplace of Scotland first minister Nicola Sturgeon. From these auspicious beginnings, Mike's career took off and ranged from major urban regeneration work and consulting to university teaching in Bath and Bristol.

Mike and his architect wife, Pippa, moved to Bath in the late 1980s and over the years both have been closely involved with the Widcombe Association. Pippa and then Mike worked on the Rossiter Road project to reduce through traffic in Widcombe Parade. The project took many years of research and preparation work, meetings with councillors and officers, and monthly meetings of the steering group at the Guildhall - all for free for the benefit of the community. From there, the Association evolved from being a single-issue campaigning group to take on a broad range of activities: to protect and enhance the area, to act as a channel for local opinion, and to encourage a community spirit.

Mike has been on the committee for 15 years, overseeing traffic issues in Widcombe – and beyond. These included carrying out a survey for the Council in Perrymead, Greenway Lane and Lyncombe for a resident permit scheme to counter commuter parking in the area. That scheme was successfully implemented in 2022. He was also heavily involved in fighting housing association Curo's scheme for a cable car to connect Mulberry Park to the city centre, though not directly for the WA.



Mike says: 'The great thing about these sorts of campaigns is that they bring people together. There's a common sense of purpose and a determination to protect and enhance the environment in which we all live, for now and for the future.'

The work of the committee also saves the Council money. When the Council was instructed to undertake an appraisal of its conservation area - in effect the whole of Bath, the Association was asked to take on Widcombe, including the canal. Led by committee member Hilary Furlonger, Mike and others undertook Conservation Area appraisals for Widcombe and Alexandra Park on behalf of the Council, providing their expertise for free.

Mike also represents the Association at meetings of FOBRA (the Federation of Bath Residents Associations), the sounding board for residents associations. FOBRA has regular meetings with the Council as well as lobbying about issues that range from Cleveland Bridge and the future of the rugby club to the location and concentration of student accommodation. Most of the issues dealt with by FOBRA are planning and transport, and Mike sits on the two sub-committees for these.

Mike says his voluntary work isn't quite full time: 'It can't be. I am a keen sailor. Pippa and I are serious walkers. And we have grandchildren. We are kept very busy.'

■ Colette Hill



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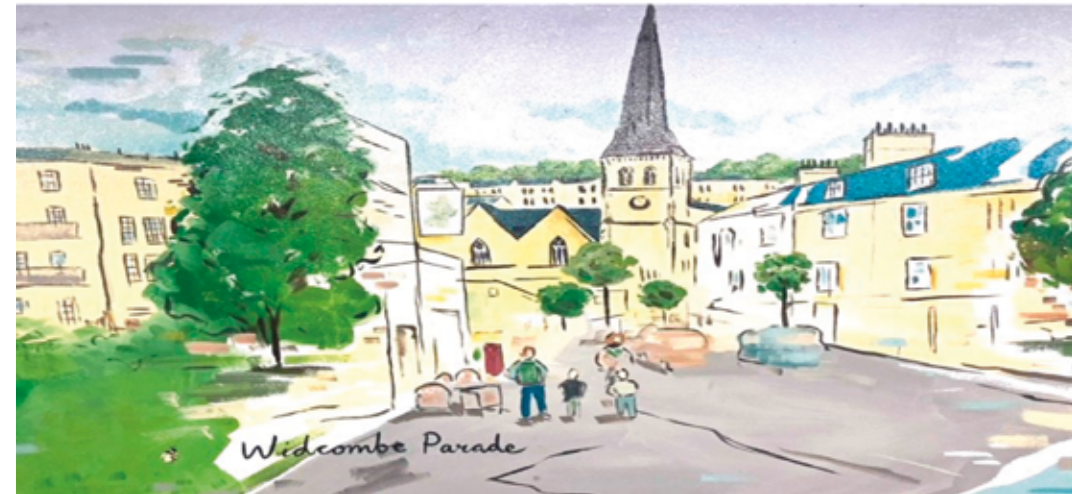
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Widcombe Jottings

Health warning

We've all woken up feeling rubbish. Eaten too much the day before, lifted those refuse bags in the wrong way, stayed at the pub too long, slept badly going over all those worries, haven't been eating enough greens, overdid the caffeine, slumped on the sofa bingeing on Netflix instead of going for a brisk walk?

There have been days when I could tick all the above! Followed by a period of regret and a determination that it will never happen again. Then, by the second cup of coffee, all is forgotten and I'm deciding which pub to go to for lunch. My healthy regime starts tomorrow!

I'm overweight, have had both knees replaced and have a trapped nerve in my back. It's a wonder I'm still here at all. It's all down to my triumphant and glittering forty-five-year career at Widcombe's Natural Theatre Company. Treading the boards nightly, receiving rapturous applause, reading those fabulous reviews, travelling to exotic lands and taking in all that culture on the way you ask?

The truth is, we suffered endless journeys crammed into the back seats of our crew bus (and in the early days in the back of a Morris Minor Post Office van with NO seats!), we did our own get-ins and get-outs (couldn't afford a full roadie team), delivered countless one-night stands, rehearsed in freezing industrial units and got paid very little.

We rarely stayed in the over eighty countries we visited for more than a few days. Unless the bookers organised an outing (Dusseldorf water treatment works anyone?), we saw little apart from our hotel rooms, the airport terminal and the shopping centre or darkened theatre where we were performing. We even did a one-night stand in the Virgin Islands!

Eighty countries means eighty midnight bags of chips, eighty motorway services, eighty dive bars. The show goes well, you have a celebratory drink. It goes badly, commiserations over a pint!

And then there's the stress of the actual performance. Sometimes I'd be so nervous I would rather be dead than step on to that stage. Once I was on there, of course, I was well away, a monumental stage presence according to one national newspaper. But by the end you are a sweating nervous wreck. And no matter how rapturous the applause, you still have to load that van. In a blizzard.

The result is pasty skin, bleary eyes and aching limbs. And in later years, aforesaid replacement knees and dodgy backs. Mind, there were a few compensations. We performed next to the pyramids, we hiked to the Iguazu Falls, we visited a market in Nigeria, stood in both hemispheres in Ecuador, paddled in the surf on Bondi Beach, nearly drowned in Ipanema, got arrested in Vienna, Brighton and Bath, got bitten by a monkey in Islamabad, had an audience with the President of Costa Rica and led the Queen's jubilee procession along The Mall. We once managed to be the only passengers on the Orient Express, were briefly kidnapped in Turkmenistan, were airlifted by helicopter onto a battleship and even exited stage right by naval submarine.

Cor, no wonder my knees ache!

I spotted a team of Natural Theatre trainee flowerpot people making their stately way along Claverton Street the other day. They all looked young, fit and healthy. The time will come! The time will come!

■ *Ralph Oswick*



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