

Friends of the Goods Shed

Community, Creativity, Culture



FoGS Newsletter No 30 – January 2020

Apologies

Apologies to all for the lack of finesse in this month's newsletter; we are still seeking somebody who could add a bit of polish to its presentation. Are there any budding graphic artists out there?

Into the New Year on the Tetbury Trail

A belated Happy New Year to all our readers! Our supporters continued the tradition of a New Year's walk to the Trouble House and back along the old rail bed, followed by coffee and cake at the Goods Shed. Despite the appalling rain throughout most of the previous month the group managed to undertake the walk in a brief dry spell and, thanks to the efforts of Paul Lockley and his team, the path was in good repair, mercifully free of mud and puddles. The Tetbury Trail team has recently spread road planings on the track as it leaves Newton Road and



The team with Sonny the dog reach the Trouble House.



Lise White and Pam Smith on the 'short course'.

joins the rail bed through the Duchy land on its final leg. To provide access to the Duchy's section of bridleway that was opened last year, a ramp has been constructed from the Newton Hill road down to the old railway line. A new entrance has been made into the field opposite the ramp on the other side of the road. Brash (rubble) was used to construct a ramp back down to the rail bed so users can continue along the

Trail to the Trouble House. Luckily, we were given a lorry load of road planings to surface the ramp. The planings were spread on weed suppressing membrane and compacted with a roller. The new ramp replaces the short cut across the field that became very muddy when it was wet. Warning road signs have also been placed on Newton Road and will soon appear on the main road by the Trouble House.



The new ramp under construction

The Trust is very grateful to Michael and Andrew Tucker for donating the brash (rubble), David Wilson for making a new entrance into the field and moving the brash to construct the ramp, Kevin Lunney of Tarmac Ltd for kindly supplying road planings to surface the ramp and delivering them to site for us, Geoff Turbott and Graham Cleaver for moving the road planings and spreading them on the ramp, Joe and Derek of Eagle Plant for lending us a roller and delivering it to site and, finally, Dave Trowell of Allasso Recycling for obtaining the planings and levelling them for us.

Support the Tetbury Trail The Tetbury Trail has been chosen to benefit from the Co-op Local Community Fund. When a Co-op member buys selected products or services from the Co-op they earn a five per cent reward for themselves, with a further one

per cent for local causes like the Tetbury Trail. If you're not a Co-op member and would like to support the Tetbury Trail, you can join at your local store or online at www.coop.co.uk. Co-op members can choose to support the Tetbury Trail by going online to the Tetbury Trail's dedicated webpage at <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/40781>. Please visit the webpage and choose to support the Tetbury Trail.

Future Developments at the Goods Shed

Usually at this time of the year the Newsletter would be exhorting you to give generously to our next major project, however, it is important that we ensure that what we have is working efficiently before we push ahead with grandiose plans aimed at having the very best facilities that an arts centre of our size could have. Despite the tremendous efforts of staff and volunteers, the trading income of the Goods Shed is still not fully covering its many expenses. Chicken and egg come to mind; we know that some minor enhancements will definitely improve the quality of performances and, hopefully, bring in larger audiences that will allow us to cover our costs but we do not at present have the funds to invest in these improvements.

We must also remember that while a major expansion of facilities is beyond our current abilities, we should start planning for it or it will never happen. The Trustees have therefore agreed a two-phase approach to the problem. They have identified several discrete improvements that could be made quickly without any major impact on day to day operations and that would not be affected by or impede any further developments. In the longer term there are major (and expensive) developments that would need to be part of an integrated development plan.

In the **short term** we foresee the following:

Light weight staging: the current staging (given to us gratis) needs four persons to carry a panel. It needs to be no more than a two-person lift and to be more flexible in its configuration. Estimated cost £2,000.

Main sliding doors: the main sliding doors need to have the gaps in the panels filled, the inset doors need to be rehung, given self-closing mechanisms and hold-open latches; the whole to be better sound-proofed. Estimated cost £1,000.

Stage lights and curtain: The stage currently has no overhead down lighting and no black curtain to provide a fitting backdrop to performers. A new gantry will be needed to support these. Estimated cost £5-6,000.

Signage to the Goods Shed: The current signage for visitors to find the Goods Shed is poor to non-existent. Money is needed for both the actual signs and for the costs of processing their installation through the local authorities. Estimated cost £2-3,000.

Bill boards: The advertising boards on the front wall of Goods Shed were meant to be a very temporary measure as they are awkward to use and unattractive. They need replacing and in an ideal world we would like another large notice board somewhere in the centre of Tetbury. Estimated cost £2,000.

Gangway lighting: there have been a few slips and mishaps on the retractable seating; unfortunately hand rails are not an option but the manufacturers provide a simple gangway lighting kit. Estimated cost £2,000.

Acoustics: the acoustics for speech in the Goods Shed is not always good, especially for films. An additional speaker and the repositioning of the current ones would be a simple option to give a better sound. Estimated cost £1,000.

Blinds: The blinds for the north and south triangular windows, which were a DIY solution, have been excellent temporary measures but cannot be opened and closed without major difficulty. It would be wonderful to see sunlight flooding in again during exhibitions. Estimated cost £15,000.

Goods Shed entrance canopy: it was the original intention during its conversion to restore the old GWR type canopy to the front of the Goods Shed but funds ran out. Not only would a reinstated canopy help bring the Goods Shed back to its old glory but would be a positive contribution to its heritage and help future funding applications. Estimated cost £15,000.

In the **longer term** the Trustees would like to see a refurbished and enlarged kitchen, a proper reception/bar area, a purpose built café sitting area, a fully equipped green room for performers, storage and bin areas and a modern office space for up to 6 staff. This might be expected to cost about £525,000. While this is a long term project, in the region of 5 years before construction could begin, we are looking to start with a feasibility study that would cost about £10,000.

Funding. By dividing the initial development programme into bite-size pieces we hope that charitable trusts and private individuals might like to offer funding for one of the improvements, each one of which will be a tangible and visible benefit to the Goods Shed. If you feel that you could be a benefactor, or part of a group of sponsors, for one of these projects, please contact the Chairman of the Trust, any other Trustee or me. If you have not used up your Gift Aid allowance this year (end of tax year, 6 April, is coming up) do please think of the Trust and you might also consider leaving a legacy in your will.

Recent Events

Music. December was quite a busy month and unsurprisingly festive-themed. A good crowd on the 7th December enjoyed Johnny Coppin and friends giving us “All on a Winter’s Night”. An unusual Sunday event on the following day was the return of the Corinium Players Guitar Ensemble. On the 14th the cream of local Terpsichoreans in the form of Tetbury Community Choir (with your present writer lurking in the back row) and some brave, wonderful, young singers from Westonbirt School sang to an overflowing hall; with the choir numbering over 50 and filling one end of the room, a sell-out audience was slightly easier than normal. On the 15th, another Sunday but this time in the evening, the Spitfire Sisters accompanied by Steve Christie



Carols in the Goods Shed

gave us a splendid evening. Finally, on Saturday the 21st, we had our traditional Carols at the Goods Shed. Nicola Clark who recently moved from Tetbury made a welcome return to sing a couple of solos but it was the assembled families and friends of the Goods Shed who were required to do most of the singing. Thanks to our splendid volunteers all were rewarded with mulled wine and mince pies at the end; and thank you to all those who attended and whose generosity added just over £500 to Goods Shed funds.

Talks. The December talk on 18th December was part of the Writers at the Goods Shed series and was given by Rachel Joyce, the prize-winning author (Prix Littéraire des Jeunes Européens, 2014) of *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*. Rachel lives in Gloucestershire so it is not surprising that we find that Harold when “six miles south

of Stroud” (must be somewhere near to Tetbury?) phones the hospice to which he is walking to see his old colleague Queenie, who is dying of cancer, and is told that, miraculously, Queenie is keeping alive to greet him.

Cinema. Films in December were *Transit* on the 12th and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* on the 19th. *Transit* was a German drama based on Anna Seghers's 1944 novel of the same name. It follows a man who impersonates a deceased writer to try to flee a fascist state. Despite being a critical success and being screened at the 68th Berlin International Film Festival it obviously failed to impress discerning Tetbury film-goers and was unfortunately poorly attended. *Butch Cassidy*, being a classic and a firm favourite, had a much larger audience. In an effort to give our audiences more of what they want, a cinema questionnaire will be coming out soon, so do please help us help you by filling one in. And please don't forget our cinema voucher scheme that lets you have 10 tickets for the price of 9.

Tea Concerts. The tea concert season reached a festive end on 18th December when the baritone Chris Hall with his accompanist, Robert Burgess, gave a splendid concert followed by drinks and a delicious Christmas cake made by Carolyn Witcher. The next season will begin on 29th January with Maggie Dyson on piano.

Whistle Stop Café

Everybody was in festive costume for the last Saturday morning park run before Christmas. As usual Sasha and her team were on hand to give suitable sustenance to the runners after the event. The café has recently had a make-over of its signage and hopefully the new signs, designed by Brecon Quaddy, will make the menu easy to see and appreciate. Sasha is keen to promote the fact that all her ingredients are sourced locally and produced ethically. One can certainly tell by the results that



these give a quality product.

Despite the short damp days we hope you will all continue to make regular visits to the café. Usually the café operates in the main hall but if other events make this impossible there is always our very special carriage. Roll on summer!

Left: The new look café



Festive Park Run

Volunteer News

The latest deserving volunteer and lucky prize winner of two cinema vouchers in December was Angela Prosser. Angela regularly helps out in the café and is a long-time supporter.

Reception Desk. We are very pleased with our new-look foyer and reception desk; thanks to Nigel and Christine Berry who put all the pieces together. We would now like to develop the ability of our volunteers to give a first class service including the sale of tickets. To this end we need a lap top computer with which to connect to the Goods Shed website. It can be fairly simple and only needs to have a browser. Does anybody have a used lap top that they would be willing to donate, please?

Comedy at the Shed

In this country there are few subjects which we don't joke about, our unique take on humour is often heavy on self-deprecation, almost undetectable sarcasm and deadpan delivery. There is no room for egos from the acts at our Comedy Nights; stories of awkward encounters, clumsiness and embarrassing moments are regaled and enjoyed but sometimes our acts can be risqué with adult humour.

Thank you to those who have given their time to comedy events, we hope you will continue to support but we also recognise that volunteering at the Comedy Nights is not a favourite event for many of you. We will shortly be launching a new volunteer recruitment drive specifically for Comedy Nights. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please ask them to contact Claire Jefferies at goodshed@btinternet.com.

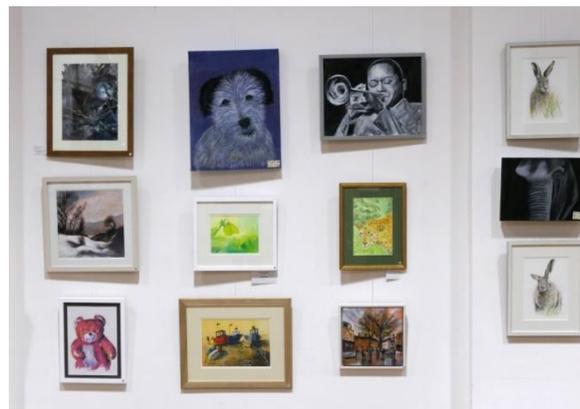
Our aim is to create a Comedy Club which encourages new talent along with well-established acts on the comedy circuit.....who knows, maybe one day we will all be saying " I remember when they appeared at the Shed" when the latest must see comedy act announces their sell out stadium tour.

"A day without laughter is a day wasted" – Charlie Chaplin

Exhibitions

The Christmas Community Art Exhibition attracted over 70 entries from both professionals and gifted amateurs. As well as being an excellent display of talent it also led to several sales; so get out that painting set you were given for Christmas and start creating your entry for next year. From 8 January to 23 February we have a wonderful exhibition from Laurel Smart on display – do ensure you see it.

The following photos show a selection of entries from the Community Art Exhibition:





Quiz

At the Goods Shed we aim to extend horizons and stretch our audience's minds. Here at the Newsletter we thought we would do our part by introducing a regular quiz. Today's questions are to do with Gloucestershire; answers in the next Newsletter.

1. How much does a tod of wool weigh in imperial measure?
2. Where is the only surviving grandstand in Britain built to watch deer coursing?
3. Who designed Cirencester's original railway station?
4. The railway from Swindon reached Gloucester in 1845 but passengers travelling further always had to change trains. Why?
5. In olden days why did superstitious mothers push their small children through a hole in the Tingle Stone near Avening?

From the Archive

GWR Broad Gauge at Tetbury

Those people who came to the Track Tales heritage evening on 2 December may have seen a curious item, a length of rail of unusual design that had been found along the line of the Tetbury branch. It was in fact a section of rail from the Great Western Railway's original broad gauge. The method of construction of Brunel's broad gauge railway lines is described by Lionel A. Smith:

"It was not only in the gauge of the line that Brunel differed in practice to those being adopted elsewhere but also in the actual method of construction of the track-work. The lines in other parts of the country had been laid on individual closely spaced stone blocks, as the Stephensons were doing, or, latterly on closely spaced cross-timbers (sleepers). With these methods the rail formed a load-bearing beam which, with the relatively weak materials of the day, necessitated a rather heavy cross-section. Brunel considered that laying down a broader gauge on closer spaced cross sleepers would be expensive in timber. He therefore developed his own design to get around this.

Firstly he designed a special rail section;  which became known as bridge-rail. Brunel had this rail supported along its entire length on longitudinal timbers which were joined at intervals by transverse members (transoms), the up and down roads also being joined together by cross timbers. Using this system only a comparatively light rail section (at first) of 43lbs. per yard was necessary. The method was basically sound except for one error of judgement. This was Brunel's use of piles between 8ft. and 18ft in length driven into the ground and then fixed to the transoms and the ballast then rammed home under the timbers as packing. The problem, which soon became apparent on the opening of the London to Maidenhead section was



*Reconstructed broad gauge track at
Didcot Railway Centre*

that the ballast settled, leaving the track supported only by the piles, leading to most uncomfortable switch-back rides!"

Despite its much more powerful engines, smoother ride and greater roominess the broad gauge railway was doomed, sacrificed on the altar of standardisation. The final new broad-gauge route, the St Ives branch in Cornwall, was opened on 1 June 1877 even though by that date much of the old broad gauge system had already started to be converted. The Swindon to Gloucester and South Wales line, passing through Kemble, was converted in May 1872. On 20 May 1892 the last GWR broad gauge journeys were made, the whole remaining system being converted over the following weekend. We all know that the Tetbury branch was built in the late 1880s as standard gauge or, in Brunel's disparaging terminology, narrow gauge. So what is a piece of broad gauge rail doing in Tetbury?

The answer can be seen in many places along the Tetbury Trail. Look at all the fence posts as you walk along it. Many are wooden but occasionally there is a



Another example of broad gauge rail this time used with side bracing struts.

metal one, sometimes buttressed by other iron struts. Look closely and you will see that they are made out of old broad gauge rails. With the dismantling of the old broad gauge track there were many miles of redundant iron rails that could not be reused so they were made into

fence posts and found their way along much of the GWR system, including Tetbury.



Example of broad gauge rail post to be found near stiles at Little Larkhill

While talking about structures on the Tetbury Trail, does anybody know what the large stone-wall structures on the eastern side of the cutting about 175 yards north of the anti-tank bollards are? They seem to be too wide and too low (and too near to the edge) to be the walls of a building. Were they something to do with the railway or not? Answers on a postcard, please.



Mystery structure by the side of the line.

Contact us if you have any questions or wish to contribute to the newsletter: Kathryn Limoi, office@shed-arts.co.uk, 01666 505496 (9am – 5pm, Thurs-Saturday), or David Walker, opheliatheboat@gmail.com. 01666 500137 or visit the Goods Shed itself by the long stay car park - for satnav use GL8 EY.