

Glastonbury chosen for potential £25m in Town Deal plan *JN*

Glastonbury is one of the 100 towns in Britain listed in the government’s plan to regenerate town centres, boost business and improve infrastructure. For each town £25 million is on offer; the town must present viable and ambitious schemes.

“But time is not on our side,” said Ian Tucker, the town council’s delegate on the Town Deal board. “We must put together a plan by the end of July. People really need to think about what we could take forward to the Town Deal board.”

A special meeting of the town council on **Tuesday March 3** will work on “new out-of-the-box thinking.”

Ian said: “The reason Glastonbury has got the money is that we have one of the most deprived wards in the country. So whatever we bring forward has to make a difference for us all.

“In Glastonbury we tend to do things differently from other parts of the country. Something green would accord with the new mood in the land. What we need people to come forward with are schemes that are self-sustaining, or— even better—that generate a surplus that could be reinvested in the town.”

The Town Deal board here will have 12 to 15 seats, most of them non-Glastonians. “So it seems to me it’s going to have to be Glastonbury people that come up with ideas,” Ian said.

Statutory bodies each have a seat— district and county councils, Member of Parliament, the Heart of Southwest Local Enterprise Partnership, education (Katie Quinn, principal of Strode College), and Department of Work and Pensions (Lucy Martin). Current advertisements invite business representatives—youth, health, environmental (deadline noon Feb 21).

Glastonians so far are Ian Tucker, Jill Barker (Chamber of Commerce chair) and Jacqueline Cross (NHS).

The chairman is yet to be chosen. James Heappey MP as vice-chairman meanwhile holds the reins. The chairman has to be a businessman. Various people are encouraging Ian Tucker to stand.

Bridgwater is the only other Somerset town on the Nov 1 government list of 100. Like Glastonbury, Bridgwater lost its traditional employment in the 1980s.

Last-minute news: Criminals stole lead from the roof of Meare church at night on February 14–15, leaving rain from Storm Dennis to flood in.



The church floor is now clear throughout and level. The font has a new northeastern spot.



A rare chance to see the innards of the organ: rebuilding it won't finish till March.

St John’s church reopens; Crown soon *Jim Nagel*

St John’s church reopens on Sunday February 23, after 14 months as a building site. It was a once-in-200-years renovation project costing around £500,000, made urgent when areas of the floor collapsed over the past 30 years. Major grants came from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Viridor and £10,000 from the Conservation Society. Church members had also raised a huge amount over the past generation.

Sunday’s Communion is at 10am, incense and all. For Evensong at 5pm, members of Glastonbury Brass will join with the church choir. All welcome.

A “New Beginnings” event in the church on **Friday March 6** will thank all who made the work possible. Come to meet the consultants, contractors and major benefactors and see all the changes. Present a National Lottery ticket bought in February or March to win a glass of wine.

“We are glad to be back and able to offer such a large and beautiful historic venue for concerts, shows and public events,” said Larry Schenck, who devoted years to managing the Securing the Future project for St John’s.

The Crown Hotel, a Grade II listed building, has a new owner: Bruce

Ashmore, who also owns the City Arms pub in Wells. He lives in Ireland but visits fortnightly or so. Second-hand reports say he intends to turn the Crown into a high-class hotel to rival the ancient George & Pilgrim two doors up the High Street (in sore need of tender loving care, in the Conservation Society’s opinion). Watch for the reopening date.

His manager at the City Arms is Sarah Avery, who grew up in Glastonbury and remembers the Crown as a fine hotel— “I’m going back 30 years or so.” The City Arms offers a fine range of brews, including local real ales, a massive range of good wines and gins, and a varied menu, says a regular Consoc patron.

We take a special interest in the Crown, because it sparked the foundation of the Conservation Society in 1971, when the old borough council was bent on demolishing mediaeval buildings. The Crown was next on its hitlist, which the society thwarted.

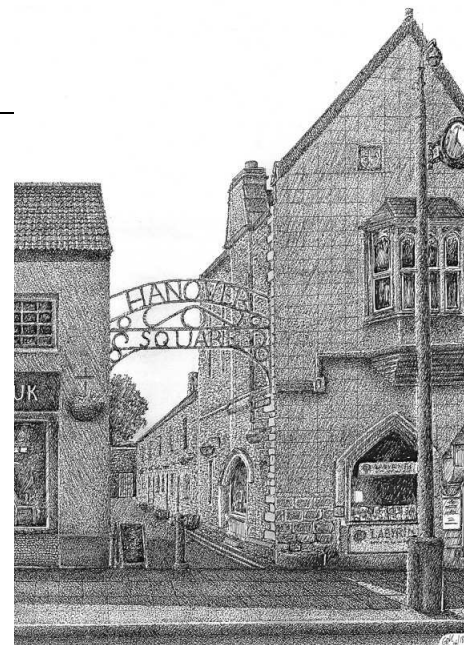
In 1997 under Ben Butterell it became the Glastonbury Backpackers Inn—dorms for young travellers. He sold the business and moved away in 2010. The building has been boarded up since 2015, although the then owner did statutory repairs such as roof.

Archways leading to town’s history *Bill Knight*

The Conservation Society committee is considering a way to identify ancient and historic areas that have had a part in shaping the character of Glastonbury and its legends—not just the Abbey and the Tor. One such site is Hanover Square (compare the 1780 watercolour on page 4, which views this scene from the opposite direction).

The committee has identified two or three other sites which it seeks to enhance, subject to permission from property owners and planners. If you like the scheme and have further ideas, please let the committee know.

The hand-drawn sketch of the proposed archway for Hanover Square is by Glyn Kitkat, of Street, who died this winter.



50,000th tree was planted in 2019, AGM hears *Jim Nagel*

During 2019 the number of trees and hedging planted by Glastonbury Conservation Society in and around the town over the past five decades passed the 50,000 mark.

Alan Fear, retiring after nine years as chairman and many more as a tree-planter, was able to report the milestone at the society's annual general meeting on November 1. Attendance was 16.

Many trees have reached substantial size, and the beneficial effect on the landscape is clear. In gratitude for his efforts, the society had presented Alan with a crabapple tree for his garden.



As a finale to the AGM, Adrian Pearse presented on screen a rare album by Dr John Gutch, who used salted paper prints, a very early form of photography. His camera, made of walnut, was nearly the size of a telephone kiosk.

People in this view of Cheddar Gorge in June 1858 would have had to remain still for several minutes.

Finances – The treasurer, Kevin Mitchell, presented the accounts. Thanks to a recent legacy the society's assets are substantial, enabling the support of various heritage projects in the town, such as a grant toward the current major remodelling inside St John's church to make it an effective community space.

Kevin said he intends to stand down as treasurer at the end of the society's financial year in July 2020, after seeing the accounts through the usual audit.

Footpaths – Ongoing activities include keeping the 32-mile network of public footpaths around Glastonbury in usable condition. The society's recently revised booklet *Glastonbury Footpath Walks* (on sale from bookshops in town) suggests a number of interesting rambles, complete with detailed maps.

Officers – No nominations were forthcoming to replace Alan Fear as chairman. Adrian Pearse, who lives at East Pennard, volunteered to fill the gap temporarily—but only as vice-chairman, believing that a chairman should be a Glastonbury resident.

The post of secretary also remains vacant—a volunteer would be most welcome. The job largely entails taking minutes at committee meetings, which are normally on the first Tuesday of every month, 6:30pm.

Other committee members were all re-elected by the AGM (as listed in the Contacts panel below). Mike Smyth, a new member and a town councillor, volunteered to join the committee.

And of course Glastonbury Conservation Society always welcomes new members. A sign-up form can be downloaded from the website. The annual subscription remains just £7.50.

Website makeover

Following the formal AGM business Jim Nagel demonstrated his recent makeover of the society's website (glastonburyconservation.org.uk). The site provides an index and archive of newsletter content since 1999. It also has contact details for the committee and links to like-minded organizations.

Jim also showed photos taken that very day of the current state of the work inside St John's church.



Consoc contacts

chair	vacancy — want to volunteer?
vice-chair	Adrian Pearse (01749) 89 0216
president	John Brunson • 83 1283
secretary	vacancy — want to volunteer?
treasurer	Kevin Mitchell 079 6887 6440
membership	Jim Nagel • 83 3603
trees	vacancy — want to volunteer?
planning	Bill Knight • 83 5144
liaison	Ian Tucker • 83 4841
website	Jim Nagel • 83 3603
footpaths	Stuart Marsh • 83 4727
footpaths	Mike Smyth 075 3224 0620
emeritus	Ian Rands • 85 0509

To email, use chair@, trees@, etc—for example: website@glastonburyconservation.org.uk

•Telephone area code (01458) for Glastonbury

Museum closed for Tribunal renovation

The Lake Village museum in the Tribunal, Glastonbury High Street, is temporarily closed while the building and its services are being upgraded.

The museum is a project of Glastonbury Antiquarian Society, dating back to the discovery of the Lake Village by Arthur Bulleid 130 years ago.

Glastonbury Conservation Society Year ending 2019-July-31	
Income & expenditure accounts	
Brought forward	
General account	3,060.85
Reserve account	60,009.25
CCLA account	7,720.90
Total	70,791.00
Income	
Subs	725.50
Footpaths	150.00
Books	30.00
Interest received	90.86
Transfers	15,000.00
add excess Exp/Income	13,914.18
total	29,910.54
Expenditure	
Misc expenditure	17.49
Transfers	15,000.00
Newsletters	277.67
AGM	30.00
Grants	14,585.38
total	29,910.54
Balance sheet	
Balance brought forward	70,791.00
less excess Income/Expenditure	13,914.18
	56,876.82
Current account	4,043.32
Reserve account	45,070.78
CCLA account	7,762.72
Balance carried forward	56,876.82

Dates for your diary

- * **February 21, Friday**—*How Stourhead saved the Tor*, a talk by Adam Stout about how Henry Hoare of Stourhead in 1755 rescued our tower from collapse. ... A
- * **March 5, Thursday, 10am**—*The Quest Community in Glastonbury, 1992–2002*, a U3A talk by the Revd John Sumner. (In the hall of the United Reformed Church. Non-members of the U3A welcome to attend.)
- * **March 6, Friday, 7–9pm**—*“New beginnings” open evening at St John's church*, recently reopened after its year-long renovation project.
- * **March 20, Friday**—*Glastonbury almshouses*, a talk by Chris Craig, one of the trustees of the Mary and Margaret Trust (Magdalene Street). A
- * **April 17, Friday**—*The St John's Church excavations*: Cheryl Green A
- * **May 15, Friday**—*Glastonbury remembered*, a talk by Neill Bonham. A

Where and when

A = Glastonbury Antiquarian Society. Meetings are on Fridays at 7:30pm at the library, Archers Way. Website: glastonburyantiquarians.org



Missing footpath markers returning soon

Some “public footpath” waymarkers are missing on the paths between Chapels Field and Ponter’s Ball, especially around the school at Edgarey, reports Mike Smyth, who has stepped into the role of footpaths coordinator on the Conservation Society committee. He intends to replace the markers as soon as he receives more signs to put in place.

“If other members see any other places that are missing signage, please report them to me and I will happily amend and repair,” he said. His phone and email details are in the Contacts panel, page 2.

Don’t lose your way *JN*

The Ramblers, the walking charity, launched a campaign on February 11 to record nearly-forgotten rights of way before the 2026 deadline for adding them to the official register.

Pre-war official maps show an estimated 10,000 miles of ancient paths and trackways that were omitted from revised maps that councils had to draw in the 1950s. Some of these rights of way are mediaeval era or even earlier. After 2026 the public right to access these paths could be permanently lost.

The Ramblers’ campaign, called *Don’t lose your way*, divides the country into 1km squares. Members of the public —“citizen geographers”—are invited to go to Ramblers.org.uk; Conservation Society members might like to help.

“Users simply select a square, do a



quick spot-the-difference, mark any missing paths and click Submit. It takes just a few minutes to check a square.”

Children walking to school *JN*

A generation ago 70% of us walked to school. Today it’s less than half. The Living Streets charity wants to reverse the decline. “We want children to be energized and empowered, to make walking to school their natural choice. We all need to walk more and drive less, to help tackle the crises of public health, traffic congestion, air pollution and climate change.” The transport department on Feb 7 announced funding to support more walking and cycling.

Living Streets is also campaigning to ban parking on footways throughout the country (London has had a ban in place for decades). More at livingstreets.org.uk

Should the Conservation Society try to arrange a public meeting here with a Living Streets speaker?

Seeking sites for trees *Mike Smyth*

The town council hopes to announce an imminent tree-planting project near Pomparles Bridge—still to be confirmed. Mendip council will provide the trees; volunteer planters will be welcome.

Any landowner in the Glastonbury area who would like to engage with woodland projects is invited to contact the Conservation Society. A considerable number of trees have been promised to the Glastonbury tree group, who are looking for locations to plant them.

Thorn book to bloom in the spring *Dr Adam Stout*

500 years ago this year the Glastonbury Thorn appeared in print for the first time. It’s taken half a millennium, but here at last is the Book of the Thorn.

To locals, the Glastonbury Thorn can be a bit of a yawn. Joseph of Arimathea—tale or true—turned up on Wearyall Hill with his improbable flowering walking stick, and the rest is history. Or legend. A bit like King Arthur. Something for the tourists.

Prepare to be surprised. This book, based on much new research, follows the contorted and contested history of the tree over half a millennium. The Thorn is a deeply contradictory shrub, a shape-shifter. It’s been Catholic, Protestant, Pagan, universal. It has succoured royalty, loyalty and subversion. It has been condemned as patriarchal and revered as feminine. It has stood for better times and better days, for Christmas cheer and humanity’s better nature, for all trees and all nature, for peace and for hope. This book is the biography of a symbol.

I have pondered the history of the “Idea of Glastonbury” for 15 years. My first book on the matter was *The Thorn and the Waters* (2007, sold out but online at Glastonburyantiquarians.org). I believe in the importance of local history—it puts ordinary people on stage and corrects the breezy narratives of those who avoid detail to paint bigger pictures.

Glastonbury Holy Thorn: Story of a legend will be published this spring.

Prof. John Money, editor of the John Cannon chronicles *Adrian Pearse*

John Money, professor emeritus of history at the University of Victoria, in British Columbia, Canada, died on July 26 at the age of 80. John was “a historian’s historian” in all the best senses of that overused phrase.

John was born in February 1939 in Coventry and was educated at Uppingham. After national service in the Royal Navy, he went to Cambridge in 1960 to study history; Sir John Plumb, a memorable Cambridge character, supervised his PhD. Equally important in shaping John’s formidable mind, however, was G.R. Elton, John’s undergraduate tutor at Clare College.

He took a post at the University of Victoria in 1967 and remained there till his retirement in 2004. During that time he served as chairman of the history department and dean of arts and science.

John was a voracious reader and researcher. His first book, *Experience and Identity: Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760–1793*, which discussed the cultural history of the Industrial Revolution, is still acknowledged as a

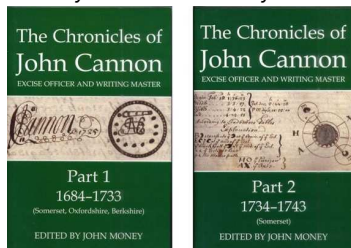
pioneering work in the field.

He had wide-ranging interests and contributed to prestigious journals in the areas of the commercial marketing of knowledge, the evolution and influence of Freemasonry, the emergence of a “middle class” mentality, and the interactions of science, technology and dissent in the English Provinces.

More recently, John devoted 18 years to producing an edition (with commentary) of the memoirs of John Cannon, a self-taught Somerset farmer’s son born in 1684. The book was at last published in 2010 in



John Money (1939–2019), fellow of the Royal Historical Society.



The two-volume edition of Cannon’s chronicles was published in 2010 after 18 years of Prof. Money’s work.

two volumes. This was seen as a work of lasting value: it documented the writer’s growing awareness of himself and his times, again largely in the Provinces outside of London.

Cannon, resident in Glastonbury from 1731 until just before his death in 1743, provides an outstanding account of life in the town, local events, politics and personalities. His antiquarian interests described the Abbey ruins as they stood in his time, which prompted Frederick Bligh Bond in 1907 to excavate at the extreme east end of the ruins, with all the controversy that ensued.

Prof. Money gave a lecture on Cannon to the Antiquarian Society in St John’s church in 2004; a report of it from Newsletter 110 is on the Consoc website, with links to further articles on Cannon and his chronicles.

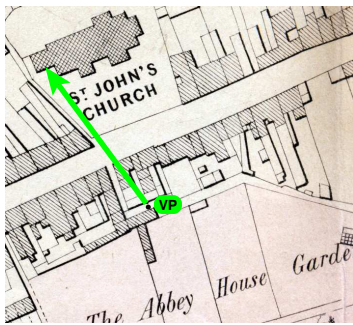
Town scene 240 years ago

Bob Senior

A rare watercolour from about 1780 or 1790 shows the tower of St John's church from a viewpoint in Silver Street. Note the cock on top of the east spire, as is usual.

We see it over the thatched cottages that stood between Silver Street and High Street; the passage (Hanover Square) is between the two on the left.

Neill Bonham identifies the building on the left as the rear of the Church House/Guildhall/Town Hall, which was later



This map of c.1850 shows the viewpoint (VP), though by then the thatch cottages had been replaced.

rebuilt as the Vestry Hall with the Freemasons' hall behind it. Behind the artist to the left was a gate entrance to the Abbey.

Views of basic domestic structures of this period are very uncommon. Most

buildings in the town would have been low thatched structures like these, before 19th-century improvements transformed its appearance. Yet elements of the old fabric survive behind more recent

frontages and tiled roofs.

• Our thanks to Bob Senior for spotting and securing this watercolour (29x22cm) and making it available for reproduction here. A larger version is on the website.

Where was the Swan Inn? Puzzle solved



Letter to the editor

Hello. I'm responding to an article in your newsletter 113 (dated 2004), "A puzzle: Where was the Swan Inn?"

Although I personally have no connection with Glastonbury, I'm researching the family history of one of my friends. He is descended from a family named **Griffin**, who were butchers in Glastonbury for a considerable period in the 19th century.

I was trying to track down a William Griffin, married to Susan and the father of Henry William Griffin in the 1861 census, when I knew Henry William would have been about 6 or 7 years old. Henry William was one of my friend's great-grandfathers. I found William, the butcher.

You might be interested to see the attached page from the 1861 census that shows where he and his family are living. At this point in time, he's not just a butcher but also a "Beerhouse Keeper" —and the name of his beerhouse is Swan

Inn! It's on the High Street, right next door to the Crown Inn.

I hope that helps to settle the mystery. Of course, if you or any of your members can offer me any insight into the Griffin family in Glastonbury, I'd appreciate any comments you might have.

Howard Benbrook
Surrey

We emailed Howard to thank him for his response to our 2004 article. It had been reprinted on the Conservation Society website, where he found it. He responded with some further background information:

"It's good to know I might have helped, Jim! Both my friend, Ian, and I are members of a theatre group in Surrey. I've researched a significant amount of family history, both my own and others. After a hectic rehearsal one evening we got to talking about genealogy, and Ian suggested that the story in his family was that they were



This 1853 token was issued by the Swan Inn in Glastonbury. Because of a shortage of small change in the 17th and 18th centuries, many public houses produced these to boost trade.

The token was the subject of an article by Adrian Pearse in newsletter 113. He had searched directories of the period but could find no mention of a Swan Inn in Glastonbury.

descended from **Sarah Siddons**, the famous actress.

"Fuelled by a glass of wine, I could not resist the challenge and I've been sending Ian updates for several weeks. His maternal grandmother was Ada Griffin, born in Glastonbury and descended from a family of Griffins that seem to stretch back to the 18th century. So I searched online for more information about Glastonbury, which is how I stumbled on the article from the Conservation Society newsletter.

"I'm still searching for a connection to Sarah Siddons, but if any of your members can help Ian with some tales about the Griffin family, I'm sure he'd be delighted to hear them!"

You can contact Howard Benbrook via Jim Nagel by phone or website@glastonburyconservation.org.uk

The unenumerated Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										90	Page 85			
Parish (or Township) of	Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Hamlet or Tything, &c., of	Ecclsiastical District of	Name and Surname of each Person		Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of Person	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, or Deaf, or Lame
St John's	Glastonbury	High Street	Glastonbury	Glastonbury			William Griffin	Head	Married	40	Butcher	Glastonbury		
							Susan Griffin	Wife	Married	37		Glastonbury		
							Henry William Griffin	Son	Single	6		Glastonbury		
							John Griffin	Son	Single	5		Glastonbury		
							John Griffin	Son	Single	4		Glastonbury		
							John Griffin	Son	Single	3		Glastonbury		
							John Griffin	Son	Single	2		Glastonbury		

