

September 2016



Celebrating our Heritage Enhancing our Environment Shaping our Future

Salisbury is a vibrant cathedral city, surrounded by the beautiful countryside and villages of South Wiltshire. People visit it or decide to live here because it is a welcoming community, working and trading in a marvellous historic setting. The challenges today are to maintain those attractive qualities and yet accommodate ongoing changes in population, lifestyle, and the economy.

The Salisbury Civic Society, founded in 1960, works to promote high standards of contemporary design in all aspects of the built environment within Salisbury and South Wiltshire, whilst safeguarding the historic buildings and landscape setting underpinning the area's special character.

Over the years, the role of the Society has expanded. Today, it is not only the principal local organisation and guardian for the built environment, but also celebrates and promotes the area's rich heritage & cultural life through a stimulating programme of activities.

Salisbury falls under two authorities, created in 2009, Salisbury City Council and Wiltshire Council. We are able to contribute effectively in many areas and are represented on several groups including the Salisbury Conservation Advisory Panel. We also have a good working relationship with Wiltshire Council, Salisbury City Council and Campaign to Protect Rural England. As a non-political organisation, the Society tries to maintain an independent stance on all matters.

Through a series of awards, talks, forums, open meetings, visits and our website we promote and provide information on the architecture, history and geography of the area.

Amongst the many activities of the Society we:

- Monitor and constructively comment on planning applications and development proposals
- Run an active and stimulating programme of events for members and the public
- Publish a Quarterly magazine for members
- Maintain our support for the projects promoted by the former Salisbury Vision
- Protect and celebrate the traditional chequer names
- Run a prestigious new buildings and conservation awards scheme
- Organise the annual Salisbury Historic Open Days and the Salisbury Blue Plaques scheme celebrating our outstanding built environment and heritage
- Promote the economic vitality of the region

Our aims:

- To celebrate & commemorate the area's rich heritage & cultural life
- To enhance & protect the built environment & landscape setting of the area
- To encourage & promote high standards of design, management & maintenance
- To provide a stimulating programme of activities for our members

We welcome new members of all ages and backgrounds.

This has been a busy three months. Beginning with a visit to Norrington Manor early in June, the AGM mid-month included an interesting talk from Alan Wadsworth on The Farm Buildings of Wiltshire (p.8). Quantum the developers of the Old Manor Hospital site hosted a visit for Society members at the end of the month (p.11). The Mystery Visit organised by Wendy English (p.11) took place in July, with the Pitt walk around Stratford-sub-Castle rounding off the summer activities.

Thanks to the efforts of our chairman, Peter Dunbar, the area around Fisherton Bridge has been cleared of rubbish, improving the banks of the river and enhancing the habitat for local wildlife (p.6). Richard Deane provides an interesting article on the Sacred Geometry of the Cathedral Spire (p.16). Barbara Evans and Nancy Tolford write about the innovative Marsh Chequer Competition (p.14) and our series of getting to know the committee members of the Development Committee (p.23).

Sadly, due to other commitments, I will be stepping down as editor of the Society magazine at the end of the year. It has been a rewarding experience and is probably one of the most interesting volunteer roles within the Society. The magazine, published quarterly, reports on Society activities, providing a diary of future events, with articles on topics of interest in and around Salisbury and South Wiltshire. Salisbury Printing have very kindly offered to work with the new editor preparing the layout, making the role far easier. If you know anyone who would be interested please call me on 01722 502575/07710945113 (stephaniedsd@gmail.com) when I would be delighted to discuss the role in more detail. My departure also creates a vacancy for a website and social media manager, the content will be fully entered and up to date by the end of the year simplifying the task of updating news bulletins and events. The website is a vital tool of the Society's social media package in order to attract new members, and to provide existing members with a diary of events, an archive of past material and comments upon current issues. Again if you know of anyone who may be interested do please contact me.

There are some excellent events in the pipeline for the remainder of the year (p.4) The weekend of September 24/25 sees our now annual exhibition outside Waitrose, manned by committee members, please come and say hello! My thanks to the many contributors to this edition of the magazine with both articles and photographs, all of which I'm sure you will agree are most interesting and of an excellent standard.

Stephanie

The photo on the front cover shows Trinity Hospital, Trinity Street, Salisbury courtesy of VisitSalisbury. Salisbury's hidden gems are the focus of a new photographic competition, Salisbury BID wants to showcase some of the city's less well-known beauty spots. Tag #secretsalisbury on instagram for a chance to win £500 to spend in the city.

A New Use for a Redundant Church

Thursday September 22

Seven years ago, in September 2009, St John's Church in Lower Bemerton, Salisbury, had to be closed when its heating system failed and the repair bill proved exorbitant. Local residents decided to try and save the Grade II* listed building for use by the community, which lacked a suitable meeting place. Since January 2014 The Rev Simon Woodley has been chairman of the committee which is responsible for all aspects of the conversion - from getting the necessary consents, fundraising, planning, designing and building, to identifying and satisfying customers for the new facility. He will be speaking about the long, tortuous, occasionally frustrating but ultimately triumphant process of converting a dream to reality.

Open Meeting, with John Glen MP (please note change of date) Reclaiming the Vision

Wednesday November 9th, 7pm, at the Alamein Suite, City Hall

The Society's annual Open Meeting will now be held on Wednesday November 9th, a change from the previously advertised date. The meeting proper will start at 7.30, but as with last year's Open Meeting, there will be an introductory session starting at 7pm, aimed at encouraging attenders who are not Society members to join. Committee members will be present to explain what the Society is about, and light refreshments will be available. There will be displays on the Society's work, particularly the awards scheme, using boards now in preparation for an exhibition outside Waitrose on September 24th and 25th. Those who already belong to the Society will of course be equally welcome to come along to this part of the evening.

The theme of the evening will be an exploration of the possibilities for a visionary approach to the future of Salisbury and South Wiltshire, following the demise of the formal Salisbury Vision exercise. John Glen MP has agreed to come and speak on some aspects of how he sees this subject, and in particular to explain the role of the South Wilts Economic Task Group, which he convened after the Vision folded. Other speakers have yet to be finalised, and those members for whom we have email addresses will be notified of further details in due course.

Updating the Wiltshire Pevsner

Thursday 10th November

Julian Orbach author and lecturer in architectural history will describe the fascinating work involved in updating the Wiltshire Pevsner.

Chairman's address to the Annual General Meeting of the Salisbury Civic Society

I welcome you here this evening to our AGM with thanks for attending this important event in our calendar and in particular, welcome all new Members who have joined the Society over the last twelve months. I hope you have enjoyed the activities and publications offered by our dedicated and hard working Committee Members.

We have been joined, as Corporate Members, by the Salisbury Cathedral Close Preservation Society and look forward to sharing and promoting our common interests with their Members.

It has been another busy year, commencing in January at the Guildhall with our annual New Year Party and the Awards ceremony for New Architecture in the Salisbury district. The evening was well attended and an outstanding success with good coverage in the Salisbury Journal. One of the Award winners so enjoyed the whole occasion that a substantial financial contribution was made towards the cost of staging the event. A trend I wholeheartedly feel should be encouraged!

My Vice Chairman, Richard Deane, is now sifting through the many nominations and selections chosen for the Conservation Awards to be presented in January 2017 ably assisted by the judging panel. It's a great evening so do come along if you're not a regular attendee.

Lectures, talks and visits have again been very well organised by the General Purposes Committee led by Chairman, James Woods and generally well supported, although we were well below usual attendance numbers for the talk about our French "Twin City" of Saintes. The visit to the Bombay Sapphire distillery at Whitchurch was, not surprisingly sold out. It was not only the beautiful restoration of the Victorian buildings that inspired and motivated the tour party!

As most visits are sold out quite quickly, I would ask if any Member who feels too often they are unable to get a place should contact me and we'll see what can be done about possible increased numbers attending. It all



The cleaned up water mill at Fisherton Bridge



Swans appreciating the cleaned up water

depends of course on the venue and our hosts capacity but I am aware of the issue. We have our annual Mystery Visit on 27th July, once again ably organised by Wendy English and always a popular event.

The Development Committee has once more had a busy year reviewing and commenting where appropriate on Planning Applications and engaging in discussion and correspondence concerning wider issues affecting the built environment. They organised the Planning Forum, held this year at the City Hall, and a large audience heard several wide ranging talks about Art in Public Places. The reception was so enthusiastic that many questions and ideas were promoted with clear motivation to get some action in Salisbury. We have of course been following up with promoting the return, on a permanent basis, of the sculpture "Man with Arms Open" although whilst a possible location at the Cheese Market has found favour with Salisbury City Council, the matter has to go before Wiltshire Planning Authority and other interested groups before it can be translated into action. Finding a funding contribution of circa £65,000 will also not be an easy task!

We are seeking a volunteer to take over as Chairman of the Development Committee. It's a very rewarding and interesting role and both Judy Payne and Paul Stevens have taken on the position on an interim basis but are stepping down now. Please let Richard Deane know if you would like to know more. I turn now to the serious matter of the position of Society Secretary. We lose the services of Philip Price as from today and thank him for his past efficient and enthusiastic support over the last few years. Despite advertising and notices in previous editions of the Quarterly Magazine, no offers to take on this key role have come forward and so the Executive Committee are "job sharing" until a successor is found. I do hope one of you will step forward as the Society depends on planning of arrangements of its diary of events and consequent booking of venues, regular notices and contact with Members, liaison with the Charity Commission and other external bodies and preparing the agenda and minutes of the Executive Committee meetings and the AGM. We wish Philip well in his role as a Salisbury Cathedral Guide and as instructor to new Guides, which is fast becoming a full time job.

Finally, I would like to thank Stephanie Siddons-Deighton for the inspiring leadership she has shown in redesigning the Society Website and getting it on line with many new features, links to other bodies and websites and setting up

the Twitter and Facebook exposure which is helping others to become aware of the Civic Society activities and issues we are addressing. There have been so many suggestions during Committee reviews of the web site content that the assimilation of all these and the patient translation into web design by external producers led by Stephanie, that I am amazed we finally settled on a final solution at all!

Please enjoy the remainder of proceedings and official business followed by a talk by Dr. Alan Wadsworth on the subject of “Farm Buildings of Wiltshire”.

Thank you.

Peter Dunbar

Farm Buildings of Wiltshire - Recording the Past for the Future

Dr. Alan Wadsworth advised us he was a farmer's son, from Yorkshire. He joined the Wiltshire Buildings Record (WBR), signing up in the Methodist Church 7 years ago and has led the Wiltshire Farmsteads Project for 4 years. The WBR was created in 1979 and has 17,500 records. It is based in Chippenham. The objective of the project is to record farm buildings before they disappear. Buildings become redundant leading to dereliction and demolition, as mechanisation and development in animal husbandry requires ever larger buildings.

He led us through the history of British agriculture and how farm buildings developed to reflect the needs of the farmstead operations of the times. Before 1550 the main buildings were monastic tithe barns. He emphasised that a farmstead includes the range of buildings, not just the house. In Wiltshire the NW of the county was pastoral with the SE having a greater proportion of arable with sheep and corn on the chalk. There was a dominance of large landowners who enclosed land over time, mainly by agreement. This increased farm sizes and developed into a landlord/tenant system. From 1650-1750 there was a fall in grain prices and an agricultural depression so new crops were tried- including oilseed rape.

As the nation's population grew, there was a need to increase farm output to feed the people. This led not just to parliamentary enclosure to improve

efficiency in the 'open field' areas, but the era of 'high input/output farming' in 1840-1870 with feed and fertiliser bought in. It was at that time that many farmsteads we see today were developed, particularly on large estates.

Looking at agricultural records, the audience was intrigued to learn that 23 persons held agricultural land in The Close in the year 1870 - where 14 pigs and 1 milk cow had been kept, hard to imagine now. From 1880 to WWII cultivation decreased, though in some areas after WW1 smallholdings were set up for returning servicemen; these were generally used for market gardening. Milk grew in importance with the growth of the railways that were able to transport it to London quickly. In 1939 90% of milking was still done by hand. The milking bail – a mobile milking parlour – was invented by a Wiltshire man- Arthur Hosier in the depression of the 1930s. We were shown a number of specialist buildings and their characteristic features, including stabling for horses – a valuable farm asset prior to the widespread use of tractors.

Alan Wadsworth then moved on to describe the farm researching, analysis and recording process through fieldwork and research – all done by volunteers. Estate records, census returns, Inland Revenue Assessments and sale particulars all contain valuable information. The Wiltshire Buildings Record is obviously doing an impressive job in producing these records for posterity. Who knows, some of the audience may have been inspired to become volunteers for the project.

Judy Howles

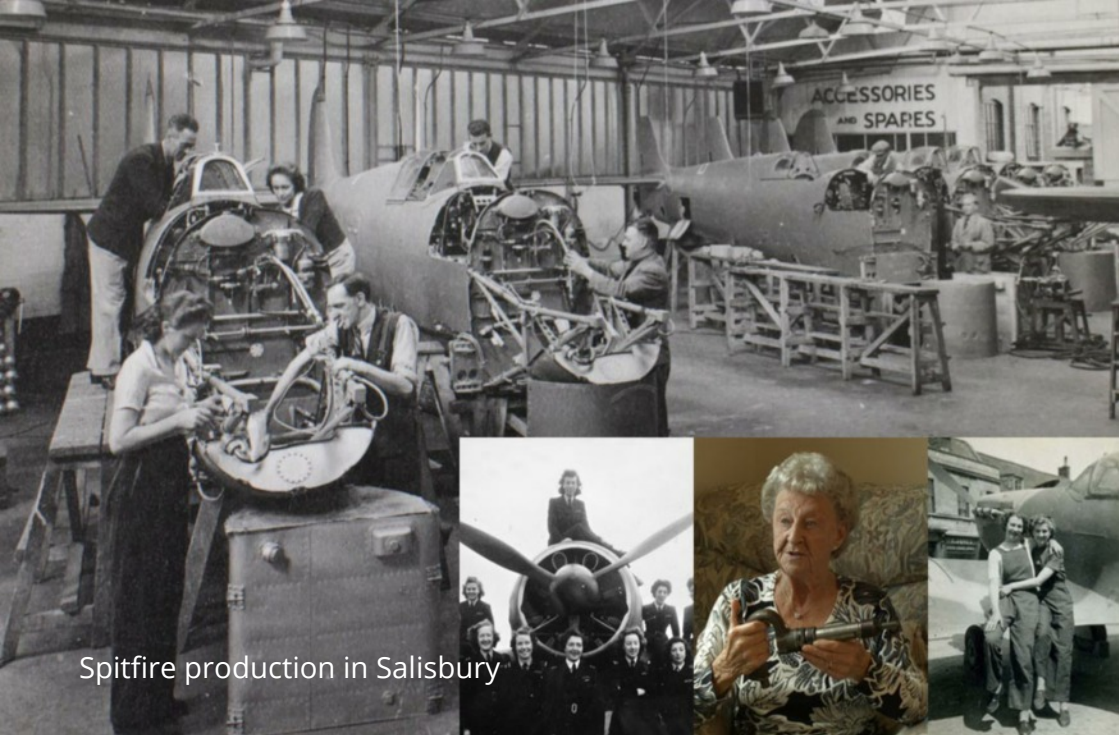
The Secret Spitfires of Salisbury

The Secret Spitfires of Salisbury website is now live (<http://secretspitfires.com>) ahead of the release of the documentary film. It is an excellent educational resource and we hope everyone will take a look and pass on details to interested colleagues.

Many members of the Civic Society will remember Norman Parker and the leading lights behind the film, Ethem Cetintas and Gary Roberts, at the unveiling of the Salisbury Civic Society blue plaque in September last year. They were filming at the event so we will soon see the footage that made the final cut...

The website tells the story of hundreds of women, girls and a handful of men who built Spitfires in secret during WW2 in Salisbury following destruction of the existing Spitfire factories, based in areas such as Southampton.

Neil Beagrie



Spitfire production in Salisbury



Civic Society members on this year's Mystery Tour

The Mystery Visit

On July 27, a group of 25 members went via a staging post at East Stour, several pretty villages, and a deer park, to Mint-erne House.

We were met, very cheerfully, by Hon. Henry Digby, who manages the family estate, and introduced us briefly to the Capability Brown-inspired grounds. Then he and his staff served refreshments, and introduced us to his father, Lord Digby, who, though in his nineties, and a wheelchair, clearly enjoyed telling us of his family's illustrious history, and prominent part in many events of great national importance.

A major domestic drama took place some centuries ago: a huge fire which destroyed much of the house. The family watching from outside realised with horror that the infant heir was trapped on the top floor, with no means of access. Then suddenly they saw their pet chimpanzee emerge from an upstairs window, carrying the baby which it was able to carry down to the ground. As Lord Digby said "Without that chimpanzee, I wouldn't be here!". Not surprisingly, the chimpanzee was added to the family coat of arms.

After His Lordship had shown us round his art gallery, including numerous family treasures, we drove on to the village of Cerne Abbas. It is partly famous now for its prehistoric Giant, carved into the hillside, of which our granddaughter, aged 7, had commented " They've put his willy on upside down!"

During lunch at the New Inn we were offered choices for the afternoon: returning to Minterne to see the gardens and church, following a Heritage Trail walk around Cerne Abbas, or visiting the Martyrs' Museum at Tolpuddle, en route for home.

Many people have told us how much they enjoyed the day. What shall we do next year, I wonder?

John English

Civic Society Tour of THE OLD MANOR HOSPITAL SITE 24th June 2016

By Liz Slater

Passing the Old Manor site has, for years, provoked a mix of curiosity and sadness. Curiosity because of the fascination of partially-visible buildings and grounds and sadness at their state of dereliction.

The Civic Society's tour was led by Sam Hobson (site architect) and James Cheyne (architectural technologist) from Quantum Group. The company has purchased a large part of the Old Manor site south of the Wilton Road, including the two most significant, listed buildings: Finch House and Avon House, together with the fountain in its forecourt (also listed).



Fisherton House Asylum, based on the old manor house (Finch House) was opened in January 1813 by William Finch.

Subsequently, there were further building works and acquisitions. The Finches built a chapel in 1859 and by 1862 there were also recreation, reading and billiard rooms. The ballroom was built in 1868 (It had a rifle range below used for staff training during the First World War.) Avon House was originally built as a private house around 1830. There were extensive grounds, including cricket pitches and gardens. It was run as a private hospital until 1954, when it was taken over by the NHS.

We were able to see the main part of the site, which includes Finch and Avon Houses and hear about plans for restoration and adaptation into flats.

(We were not able to go into the buildings because, as the Pre-Planning Submission for Phase 2 shows, they are in a parlous state.) The pond and fountain in front of Finch House, as well as the glazed walkway, will also be restored. Quantum has carried out surveys of the remaining trees on the site. Plans suggest that many of the trees contributing to the green corridor along the Wilton Road, together with some of the mature trees on the site, will be retained.

The site is to be developed in phases, with income from initial sales funding subsequent work. As a result, the restoration works are scheduled for Phase 2. We look forward to seeing detailed plans for the second key phase of the development and to a return visit to see progress on the restorations.

VISIT TO NORRINGTON MANOR & ALVEDISTON CHURCH

On 3rd June, 24 members valiantly followed instructions to make their way to Norrington Manor and Alvediston Church, both hidden away in the beautiful setting of the Ebble Valley.

Norrington Manor is a Grade I listed medieval house, most recently in the ownership of the Sykes family. Jonathan Sykes focused his tour on the original section built in 1377 by John Gawan on land watered by a spring and situated in the valley between two droves. There is abundant evidence that the site was once occupied by Romans and Anglo-Saxons. The Gawan family is said to be linked to the Green Knight of the Round Table, Sir Gawain, nephew of King Arthur. In the vaulted porch and three-bay hall we saw several stone heads of The Green Man and some 'witching roundels', both believed to ward off evil. The Undercroft is all that remains of a Roman Catholic Chapel, destroyed on the orders of Henry VIII. The Gawans were heavily fined for refusing his reforms and lost land and Norrington Manor, which was given to Sir William Herbert, later 1st Earl of Pembroke. In 1658 it was occupied by the Wyndham family. Over the centuries the Manor has been much sub-let, neglected, added to and subtracted from, and is being lovingly restored by the Sykes family.

After admiring the beautiful gardens, which include an Elizabethan Viewing Mound, we went to nearby Alvediston Church for a talk by Biddy Trahair, who has written a book on the history of Alvediston. The church was founded in the twelfth century, administered by the Abbess of Wilton and then in the fifteenth century by Henry VI's newly-founded King's College, Cambridge (still a patron). The medieval porch and Saxon font are comparatively large. There are vaults and monuments to the Gawans, the Wyndhams and the Kings (from adjacent Samways Manor). Opinion is divided as to whether the ancient effigy of a Knight is the tomb of John Gawan or that of Roger Hussey, grandson of John de Berwick, a warrior of Edward III's time. The bell tower is seventeenth century and one bell is still rung. The building was long neglected, but in 1866 the church was restored by the ubiquitous T.H. Wyatt, and a new Vicarage was built next to it. There is a window dedicated to the 11th Earl of Pembroke, Lord Sidney Herbert, and a recent monument to Sir Anthony Eden, who lived locally.

Following these fascinating, fact-filled visits in spectacular countryside, some members enjoyed lunch in historic Ebble Valley inns.

Jean Lunnon

Recognising the Chequers

'Recognising the Chequers' was the subject of the Society's Planning Forum on Thursday 14th April, dealing with several different aspects of this historic feature of Salisbury's character.

Local historian, Ruth Newman, opened with a description of how the chequers came into being, detailing some of their particular features. Wendy English followed with a light hearted presentation on the Vanner's Chequer plaque project. Barbara Evans, explained the Marsh Chequer competition, displaying the winning competition entry, and Richard Deane described the Society's chequer naming project. The speakers provided us with an informed and fascinating insight into the importance of the chequers system allowing the evening to develop into a spirited discussion as to how this important facet of the city can be put more firmly into public view.

Stephanie Siddons Deighton



Marsh Chequer Competition

When we moved to Salisbury in December 2014 we were intrigued to learn about the chequer system and to discover that we lived in the Marsh Chequer. We began to research the history of the chequer and of our house in order to find out more. One of the things we discovered was that many people in Salisbury, including some of our neighbours, didn't know about the chequer system or the name of the chequer they lived in, as many of the chequers including the Marsh Chequer aren't visibly named.

The house we bought used to be an antiques shop and as such had two wooden sign boards above the shop windows. We looked up at these one day and suddenly had a thought, 'what if we used the sign boards to identify the chequer so that everyone passing would know it was the Marsh Chequer?' From this the idea of an art competition, with the aim of finding a design which would highlight the history of the chequer, was born.

As we wanted this to be a community project, we delivered a letter to everyone living in the Chequer to ask them if they wanted to become involved. Of those that replied the response was 99% positive and two residents volunteered to be on the judging panel

along with myself and representatives from the Salisbury Civic Society, Plain Arts Salisbury and the Salisbury Museum.

The winning entry very much represents the history of the Chequer with references to the different businesses that have flourished here, and includes a mini map of the streets comprising the Chequer.

You can find out more about both the history and the chequer at www.marshchequer.com

Barbara Evans

The illustrations on these two pages show the winning design by Nancy Tolford for the Marsh Chequer Competition. All the necessary consents have now been approved and the boards should be in place by early October, so keep a look out for these exciting designs highlighting another aspect of the rich history of Salisbury.



The Winning Design

The Salisbury Chequers represent for me a very intriguing aspect of this city's history and participating in this competition has been an opportunity to learn more about the place where I live. My starting point was to explore the dual nature of a chequer: the external surrounding four streets, and the internal hidden world of a city within a city.

Having the two signboards to work with allowed me to compose an image for each environment. The two images are distinct, but also share some common elements to link them together.

The dimensions of the signs naturally suggested an historical timeline, so what I have tried to create is a loose narrative, reflecting the change of the area over time and the lives and activities in the neighbourhood.

As the artwork is to be mounted on the existing signboards, I thought it would be appropriate to use a combination of images and letterforms to reflect the history of signage which has evolved from the use of purely images or symbols, to text based signs of modern times. It is my hope that my artwork might help to give a sense of identity to the Marsh Chequer and will spark a sense of curiosity about its long history.

Sacred Geometry?

The shelves in Salisbury reference library devoted to the cathedral contain many works of interest, not least a 2003 publication by John Wilkinson entitled 'Salisbury Cathedral's Secrets'. This is centred on the premise that numerous detailed elements within the cathedral's ground plan are derived from systems of proportions contained within the Temple in Jerusalem, and other places and artefacts sacred to Judaism, generating a building which is, in a far more specific way than most of us would realise, a 'statement about religion'. Adherence to this 'secret formula' is so rigid that 'the cathedral's lengths and rectangles vary by only two ten thousandths from the biblical proportions'.

This is extremely interesting, even if the author is venturing into arcane areas where not all readers may be willing to follow. This system has of course to be calculated from very precise and painstaking study of the building's layout, rather than it being something which can be read from the visible structure. There is however another very simple but varying proportion, outside Mr Wilkinson's remit, which is immediately apparent, and which has a stunning effect on the way we perceive the cathedral.

Simple pythagorean geometry tells us that the diagonal of a square is greater than the side by a factor of the square root of 2, which to three decimal places is 1.414. Lop the corners off the square and form an octagon, and the variation becomes much less. The dimension from corner to opposite corner is greater than that from side to opposite side by a factor of under 1.1. The cathedral's tower and spire ensemble is of course an octagon sitting on a square, with a transition achieved internally and structurally by four squinch arches (at the level known as Eight Doors) and filled in externally with pinnacles. Thus we have a spire whose width, depending which direction we view it from, varies by less than 10%, while that of the tower below can vary by over 40%.

There is far more than just abstruse mathematics to all this. The practical effect is that viewed from northeast, northwest, southeast or southwest the tower appears much wider than the base of the spire, with the difference made up by pinnacles stepping back in from one to the other. Move round to one of the cardinal points and the spire's width is virtually unchanged, while the tower becomes much narrower and the pinnacles virtually disappear as individual elements, merging to form

a simple silhouette shape which melds spire to tower almost without being noticed. At any intermediate point between these two angles, the proportion and visual effect become different again.

Add in the varying perspective effects which derive from the distance of the viewer from the cathedral, or their height in relation to ground level in the Close, and the result is a structure of almost infinite visual subtlety, accentuated even more by differing weather conditions and angles of the sun, and the endlessly shifting shape of the main body of the cathedral below, as the viewpoint changes. Anyone who knows the building well will be aware of all this, even if they do not consciously think about it. A first-time visitor may be more struck by it, by the whole series of differing buildings encountered - the tower and spire almost impossibly tall and slender over the low bulk of the rest of the building west from the A36 at Petersfinger, and around it little more than trees, no city apparent, or the brief glimpse northwards coming in from Harnham by the top of Ayleswade Road, that extraordinary vertical again, and this time the building below stretched eastwards and westwards in a long low horizontal of lead roof, most other features masked by trees or houses - the cathedral's geometry at

its most extreme. Move from there down to the Exeter Street roundabout, and the tower thickens, pinnacles unclench, the elegance remains but supplemented now by a growing strength and power. Further north up Exeter Street, and by the entrance to Bishop Wordsworth's School the cardinal point proportions have returned, but the building is now so close that it begins to loom, the proximity of six thousand tons of stone pressing down on the crossing piers conferring an almost awesome authority that the more distant building only hints at.

Most singular of all, perhaps, is the cathedral from the northwest, coming in from Wilton. Nothing is seen until the approach to Skew Bridge, when the tower and spire alone appear, suddenly, disembodied, framed in a gap to the right of the bridge. On a summer's evening, as the structure catches the western light, it can seem for an instant to float, ethereal and other-worldly, only to become barely visible once more as the road turns to the left and other buildings interpose themselves. In recent years this vision has been somewhat disrupted by a cycle path sign placed after the Skew Bridge rebuild of 2004, and by encroaching tree growth, a commentary on how fragile the city's relationship with its dominant



Spire from the North



Spire from the South West

building can be. The effect is still worth looking out for, though.

The ever-changing relationship between tower and spire cannot necessarily be ascribed to a conscious choice by whatever medieval genius designed them - octagonal spires sitting on square towers are very much the norm. What that person can be credited with, however, is the decision to make the tower so much proportionally taller than we generally expect. Other cathedral spires - Chichester, Norwich, the triple at Lichfield - sit on squat towers which act as little more than plinths for them. At Salisbury, perhaps uniquely, the tower is tall enough to take equal billing with the spire. It is the ensemble that counts, one whose design, both in overall form and in the detail of its decoration, it is difficult not to describe as being as close to perfection as a building gets.

In 1995 the Civic Society tentatively suggested to the government that it might consider putting Cathedral and Close forward for World Heritage Site status. The answer that came back was that there wouldn't be much point, since Unesco felt that it had enough in the way of Sites that were assemblages of historic buildings, and was looking at other types - hence, some years later, the Jurassic

Coast. Fair enough, perhaps, but the rationale behind that suggestion remains intact. How one would rate the cathedral if it had remained with its original stumpy lantern tower is an interesting question, but not an important one. Once tower and spire had been added the cathedral became what it remains today, by any reasonable estimation a masterpiece of world art. It is inevitable that many, perhaps most people living close to it end up taking it for granted, and seldom really look at it. It does no harm to remind ourselves, every now and then, what a stupendous building it actually is.

Richard Deane

Ann Curry, who edited the Quarterly Magazine for several years before Charles Villiers took it over, sadly died on 26 July 2016.

A warm welcome to our newest members

Mrs Mary Mitchell

Stephen (Sam) and Sally Brown

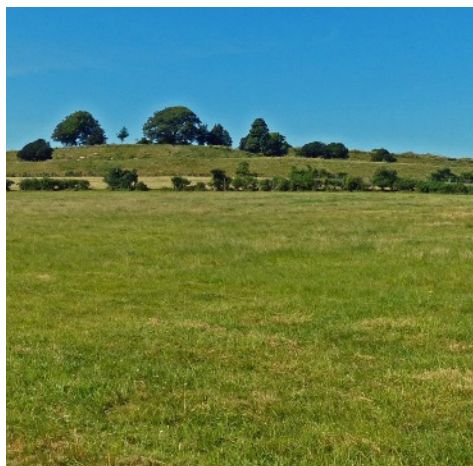
Michael Bullen

Brigadier Francis (Frank) Bevan

Barbara Coulson

Pitt Walk

On a brilliantly sunny afternoon on Monday 15 August David Richards, a most informative Blue Badge Guide, walked and talked Society members round the village of Stratford-sub-Castle. Some 19 members and a well-behaved dog completed the two-hour walk along roads and flower-decked paths and fields over which loomed the ancient site of Old Sarum.



This site had been bought in 1690 by the son of a Dorset rector, Thomas “Diamond” Pitt, the energetic, irascible, arrogant and disagreeable founder of the Pitt political dynasty, which included two Prime Ministers. Pitt gained notoriety for his opposition to the East India Company’s monopoly of trade on the Indian subcontinent. He first set sail for India in 1673, and rapidly established himself as a successful interloper in the Company’s developing business. After returning to England the Company eventually managed to arrest and fine him, but, undaunted, he was elected MP for Old Sarum, before journeying back to India as an interloping

merchant in 1693. His success forced the Company’s directors to reconcile themselves to his commercial presence on the subcontinent. Indeed, he was appointed by them as Governor of Fort St George at Madras, and strove to improve their fortunes as well as his own.

From his base in Madras, Pitt accumulated vast wealth. This enabled him to buy a 410 carat rough diamond for around £20,000 and ship it to England to be cut and sold. The gem initially proved a vexing investment and it wasn’t, indeed, till 1717, many years later, that he finally managed to dispose of it, to the Duke of Orleans. He did, however, make an exceedingly handsome profit on the deal - well over £100,000. The jewel, one of the purest ever made, came to adorn the French crown and later decorated Napoleon’s sword. It ended up in the Louvre in Paris, where you can see it today if you are lucky enough to visit when it isn’t out on loan.



David began the tour at the 13th Century Church of St Lawrence (which had been

restored in 1711, thanks to Thomas Pitt's largesse); paused at Mawarden Court, where William Pitt the Elder spent part of his boyhood; and looked at various attractive and historic houses on the way to a bronze memorial to William Pitt, half hidden in a hedge in a field. On it are written the words "let this place be for ever enshrined in the hearts of our countrymen."

David wound up by telling us that Old Sarum was finally sold in 1805 by another Thomas Pitt, an even more obnoxious man than the first.

We ended the day with a generous cream tea at the Wheatsheaf Inn in Woodford, amiably chatting to each other over fruit scones in little arbours in the garden. David Richards, the weather, the built environment, the friendly company, all conspired to produce an idyllic interlude in our busy lives.

James Woods

The photos on the previous page show Old Sarum and the bronze memorial to William Pitt. The photo below is Mawarden Court. All photos by James Woods



Meet the members of the Development Committee

Welcome to the Salisbury Civic Society Development Committee. The work carried out by members of the team is at the very heart of the Society. Concerned with the maintenance and improvement of our environment, monitoring and constructively commenting upon planning applications and development proposals where appropriate. Supporting architectural projects of quality through its Conservation and New Buildings Awards. It also seeks to encourage informed debate of current issues through the annual Planning Forum and Open Meeting.

PAUL STEVENS: Acting CHAIRMAN



Paul Stevens qualified as an architect in 1987, and since 2000 has had his own architectural practice in Salisbury. He is married to Lindsay Keir, a Scottish artist. He became chairman of the Development Committee in 1997 and held the position for nine years. In 2015 he took on the role again, as acting chair. He is also chair of the Wiltshire RIBA, and of his local film club in Lower Bemerton. His other outside interests are sketching, photography and walking the dog.

RICHARD DEANE: SECRETARY



Entered Oriel College Oxford in 1967 to study Philosophy Politics & Economics, left Leeds University five years later with a degree in Chinese. Joined Salisbury Cathedral works department in 1977 as a glazier's labourer. Became a stonemason by a very ad hoc process, left the cathedral in 1997 and set up own stonemasonry business. Joined Development Committee when it was set up in 1985, secretary from 1991. Organiser of buildings awards scheme from 1996. Represents Society on the

Salisbury Conservation Advisory Panel, and currently chairman of it.

Jeremy Turtle and Duygu Riley are also members of the Development Committee

DAVID GREGORY



David studied architecture at Plymouth and then set up David Gregory Architects in Winchester in 1993 to focus on his passion for creative, sustainable design. His practice is now based in Swallowcliffe, Wiltshire.

MELANIE LATHAM



Melanie moved back to Salisbury in 1997 after architectural studies at Oxford. She went to work for a local architectural practice where she stayed 16 years before setting up her own practice in 2014, in Wilton, continuing to specialise in all manner of works to historic buildings. She joined the Civic Society's Development Committee in 1999 and was Development Committee Chairman between 2006 and 2013.

NICOLA LIPSCOMBE



Brought up in Salisbury Nicola has a longstanding interest in design and the environment. In the 1970's she worked as a planner for Salisbury District Council and was also a member of the Civic Society's Development Committee. Since then she has worked as a landscape architect, mainly in the public sector, and most recently for Hampshire County Council. With Les and others she has helped establish the Salisbury Area Greenspace Partnership, and loves gardening, painting, travelling and supporting the local arts scene.

LOUISE RENDELL



Louise was born and grew up in Salisbury, returning to the city following University study, extensive travel and work overseas. Louise is an Architect with specialist post graduate qualifications in Historic Building Conservation. Working in Practice at St Ann's Gate Architects in The Cathedral Close has given her the opportunity to work on some of the most important historic buildings around the UK. She particularly enjoys

the process of repair and conservation and developing new designs within sensitive historic settings. She has been an active member of the Development Committee since 2007 and was part of the team that designed and published 'Salisbury in Detail' in 2009.

ELAINE MILTON



Obtained degrees in Architecture and Town & Country Planning from Queen's University Belfast. Moved to England in 1993 to work as a planner in local government, first in Exeter and then Weston-Super-Mare. After further postgraduate studies in Architectural Conservation at the University of Bristol, became a conservation officer at Salisbury District Council in 1999. Left local government in 2011 to work as a heritage consultant and in the same year joined the society's Development

Committee.

JUDY PAYNE



Previously Hampshire's Adoption Panel Advisor, I have always been passionate about buildings of all periods, their conservation and enhancement. Formerly a member of Dorchester's Civic Society, I was pleased to be asked to join Salisbury's Development Committee on my move to Wiltshire. For a time I explored and highlighted Salisbury's 'Eyesores' before becoming the Chair of the Development Committee for a stand in period.

LESLIE LIPSCOMBE



Les has known Salisbury since 1990 but only moved here permanently in 2000. He is retired from a career as a landscape designer/manager working for both local government and private practice, specialising in highway projects around the country. His broad interests include the conservation and renewal of the natural and built environment as well as the arts and design generally.

JAMES SALMAN



James moved to Salisbury after a period of travel and working abroad, and works as a qualified architect and a Senior Associate at Design Engine Architects in Winchester. He is passionate about design and the value and contribution good design can have on people and places. James has had responsibility for the design and delivery of a number of innovative architectural projects, with a number of completed schemes receiving Civic Trust and RIBA awards. James was part of the team that produced the Salisbury in Detail book

and became an active member of the Development Committee in 2014.

HANS-DIETER SCHOLZ



Eng. Grad., NATO Graduate Scholarship, MSc Operational Research. Director European Product Planning, NCR Managing Director PA Consultancy Germany. Senior Director/Partner Coopers & Lybrand. Managing Director REL Consultancy. Advisor to numerous multinational corporations as well as government departments on design of business processes and effective use of information technology. Retired.

OFFICERS as at 1st September 2016

PRESIDENT

Dame Rosemary Spencer DCMG

VICE PRESIDENTS

Major General Roy Dixon

Mr Ken Wiltshire

Brigadier Alastair Clark

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Peter Dunbar (Chairman)

p.dunbar212@btinternet.com

01722417847

Richard Deane (Vice-Chairman)

Rd eane@madasafish.com

07974140888

Adrian Harris (Treasurer)

adrian.harris62@ntlworld.com

Charles Villiers (Membership)

crvilliers@aol.com

01722500173

S Siddons Deighton (Magazine/Website)

stephaniedsd@gmail.com

07710945113/01722502575

James Woods (GPC)

lisandjames@gmail.com

Neil Beagrie (Publicity)

neil@beagrie.com

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Paul Stevens (Acting Chairman)

admin@paulstevensarchitecture.co.uk

Richard Deane (Secretary)

rdeane@madasafish.com

Judith Payne

judith.payne@hotmail.co.uk

Leslie Lipscombe

leslie.lipscombe@btopenworld.com

Nicola Lipscombe

nicola.lipscombe@btinternet.com

Elaine Milton

emilton@emhp.co.uk

Louise Rendell

louise@stannsgate.com

Duygu Riley

duyguriley@hotmail.co.uk

Jeremy Turtle

jeremy@j-turtle.co.uk

Melanie Latham

melanielatham56@gmail.com

David Gregory

david.gregory.architects@googlemail.com

James Salman

jamesalman@designengine.co.uk

Hans-Dieter Scholz

hdieterscholz@msn.com

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

James Woods (Chairman)

lisandjames@gmail.com

01722 422169

Lis Woods (Secretary)

lisandjames@gmail.com

Judy Howles (Lectures)

howles@ntlworld.com

Brenda Hunt (Visits)

rogerbren.leach@clara.net

Neil Beagrie (Publicity)

neil@beagrie.com

Charles Villiers (Membership)

crvilliers@aol.com

S Siddons Deighton (Magazine/Website)

stephaniedsd@gmail.com

Editor: Stephanie Siddons Deighton

stephaniedsd@gmail.com

07710945113/01722502575

Printers: Salisbury Printing

DIARY of EVENTS 2016/2017

Thursday September 22nd

A NEW USE FOR A REDUNDANT CHURCH

The conversion of St John's Church, Lower Bemerton to community use.

The Rev'd Simon Woodley

6.30 pm Methodist Hall, St Edmund's

Church Street, Salisbury SP1 1EF

Free to Members. Non members £2.50

Saturday September 24th &

Sunday September 25th

CIVIC SOCIETY EXHIBITION

Outside Waitrose

Wednesday November 9th

OPEN MEETING

with John Glen MP

(please note change of date)

Reclaiming the Vision

7.00 pm The Alamein Suite, City Hall,

Malthouse Lane, Salisbury SP2 7TU

Open to all

Thursday November 10th

UPDATING the WILTSHIRE

PEVSNER

Julian Orbach

6.30 pm Methodist Hall, St Edmund's

Church Street, Salisbury SP1 1EF

Free to Members. Non members £2.50

2017

Thursday January 12th 2017

NEW YEAR PARTY and ANNUAL AWARDS PRESENTATION

Guildhall, Market Walk, Salisbury SP1 1JH

Tickets £10.00

March (date tbc)

THE RADNOR ESTATE

Steve Hobbs

June (date tbc)

Back by popular demand,
another visit to NORRINGTON

MANOR

June (date tbc)

AGM

Followed by a talk on the

History of the Civic Society

Awards Scheme

September (date tbc)

THE SECRET GARDEN

Becky Twigg



A detailed diary of events is available online at
www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk

civic@salisburycivicsociety.org.uk

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