

# SALISBURY CIVIC SOCIETY

DECEMBER 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 and 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:**

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

**Our aims:**

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

**We welcome new members of all ages and backgrounds**

What an active and interesting year this has been for the Society, opening with the very successful Awards Ceremony in January and rounding off with the well attended Open Meeting in November. Your support at events is much appreciated and we hope you have enjoyed the wide range of talks, forums, visits, walks, exhibitions and meetings for which we owe a huge vote of thanks to members of the committees who have worked hard to present such an interesting programme.

Neil Beagrie reports on the well attended Open Meeting. Judy Howles summarises the talk on Updating the Wiltshire Pevsner and A New Use for a Redundant Church. Richard Deane provides updates on current issues, also reporting on pre-application presentations to the Development Committee. Rounding off with a profile of members of the General Purposes Committee, completing the series of 'Meet the Committees'.

We received a very positive response to Peter Dunbar's letter requesting help to fill the various positions within the Committees, and welcome three new members to the General Purposes team. Janet Patch who will be taking responsibility for the Blue Plaques, Liz Slater who will initially be working with Brenda Hunt on Visits, and Hadrian Cook who will be working with Neil Beagrie on publicity and the Heritage Open Days for 2017, which promise to be something quite special! However, we are still without a Secretary and no-one has offered to take on the editorship of the quarterly magazine, in spite of the generous offer from Salisbury Printing to do the layout work.

This is my last magazine as Editor, it's an interesting and enjoyable role, often leading to some unexpected voyages of discovery! I do hope we find a replacement soon, the magazine is an important publication for the Society, working successfully in conjunction with the website, providing information of interest about what is happening within the Society and Salisbury and South Wiltshire in general. I have tried to broaden the base of content to keep pace with the many events, projects and activities happening around the area. Your contributions are very welcome, and I'm sure there is a wealth of hidden talent and a wide range of opinions on a variety of subjects amongst our members! If you would like to contribute an article or photograph please send it to Richard Deane at [rdeane@madasafish.com](mailto:rdeane@madasafish.com)

The photo on the front cover was taken by Patricia Scholz showing the roofs and buildings of St Nicholas in winter. Unfortunately we have seen more rain than snow in the past weeks but we can always hope! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Stephanie Siddons Deighton**  
**Editor**

**A Warm Welcome to our New Members**

**We are delighted to welcome the following to the Society:**

Thomas Beattie, William Bennett, George Bruton, Angela Ford, Jo Gaunt, June Glover, Caroline Godfrey, Mrs Annie Hardie, Robert Hawes, Edward Jameson, Richard Keller, Mrs Kathleen Lewis, Rosemary Pembleton, Peter Riley, Peter Saunders, Anne Trevett, Roy Woodward.



## Reclaiming the Vision for Salisbury and South Wiltshire:

### *A report on the 2016 SCS annual Public Open Meeting*

Salisbury Civic Society's aims include celebrating the heritage, enhancing the built environment, and shaping the future of our area: the Annual Public Open Meeting run by the Society is one of many activities through which it seeks to achieve these. The Open Meetings, held every year since 1997, are designed to draw attention to a topic which could bring benefits to city and district, and are open to all free of charge.

The 2016 Open Meeting on 9th November once again drew a large attendance. Committee members were busy putting out extra chairs to accommodate a capacity audience of around 90-100 people in the Alamein Suite at City Hall. This year's topic was "Reclaiming the Vision for Salisbury and South Wiltshire" and focussed on new possibilities and approaches to the future of Salisbury and South Wiltshire, following the demise of the formal Salisbury Vision exercise.

We had five exceptional speakers at the meeting and opportunities for questions and debate with:

**John Glen MP**, our keynote speaker, who addressed the work of the South Wiltshire Economic Task Group, and how this relates to the former Salisbury Vision, the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and other relevant bodies which are taking a strategic development role in South Wiltshire.

John described the setting up of the South Wilts Economic Task Group following the closing down of the three Visions in Wiltshire, including the Salisbury one, by Wiltshire County Council. The Task Group has representatives from the Area Board, Wiltshire Council cabinet members, Wiltshire Council officers, and Salisbury Business Improvement District. The Task Group to some extent picked up on the outstanding work from the two largest projects in the Vision namely:

**Maltings/Central Car Park** – John focused on this in particular, with central government being asked, through the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership, to come up with £5 million to resolve land issues due to contaminated materials dumped on the site in past times. The decision on whether the £5 million is given will be known on Nov 23rd, as it will be part of the chancellor's Autumn Statement. The fact that it should enable a lot of other money to be freed up for redevelopment of the site by Stanhope should be a point in favour of providing the £5 million. John is hoping that the money will come, and that it will spark fairly rapid action by Stanhope, including public consultation, and an expected planning application within 18 months or so of the decision. Given the passage of time, past outline versions of a plan for the site may no longer be relevant, and a different mix of uses may be proposed e.g. less retail, more leisure. John said that his role was as a facilitator, not as someone too involved in detailed discussion as to what went onto the site.

**Churchfields** – the Vision project to remove much of the HGV generating traffic, and redevelop mostly with housing, was seen as a future phase of activity. It is very difficult to deal with given the complicated ownership pattern.



The Speakers

Photograph by Neil Beagrie

John mentioned in addition bringing new jobs by developing the science park at Porton, and the importance of helping people to afford housing in our local area. He added some things not in the original Vision including the need for the re-development and further investment in the Wiltshire College Salisbury Campus to address the growing need for skills and higher paid employment locally – together with the Maltings this was one of the most important funding bids from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership to central government.

The A303, where the government commitment to fund a tunnel remains in place. Highways England are currently looking at all aspects of the scheme, including other options put forward. Key improvements to local railway transport infrastructure were also discussed including the proposed Wilton Parkway station and new fast trains to London (with a journey time of 68 minutes).

John was keen also for the city council to take responsibility for improvements to the city, following the assets transfer. John said that the admin structure covering Salisbury was not ideal, but we had to work with it. He hoped that some Wiltshire Council Cabinet members who came from the south of the county might emerge after the next council elections.

John said that he thought Neighbourhood Plans were very important & a key way for communities to influence local policy. The problem here is the complex issues in the Salisbury area given its size.

**Judy Rose** from Devizes Town Council and **Chris Callow** from Roundway Parish Council described how visionary ideas together with the views of the local community were fed into the process of developing Devizes's recently completed Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan area includes Devizes Town with a population of 15-16,000, plus the parishes of Roundway and Bishops Canning. Together, the total population is 30,000. It is a largely rural area and high car use and air quality are major issues.

There is a steering group and it has valued professional planning advice. A Neighbourhood Plan needs to express the clear will of the local community and to be sufficiently robust to stand up to challenges by developers. They can be amended and added to, and they are now looking to address issues such as greenspace. They accept new housing is needed locally. Judy and Chris stressed the importance of neighbourhood plans as a way of making choices locally as to how quantities of new housing, stipulated above, should actually be distributed. The Devizes plan had stood the test of being challenged by one developer. They draw broad smiles from the audience as they described the story behind developing the neighbourhood plan: a failed takeover attempt by the town council of the neighbouring parish council, the antagonisms this caused, and how they eventually resolved to bury their hatchets to make the neighbourhood plan work. Salisbury and area take note!

**Nicola Lipscombe** Chair of Salisbury Area Greenspace Partnership spoke on the partnership's vision for the Salisbury area. Nicola explained that it is a community-led organisation and stressed the importance of well designed, well connected and managed green infrastructure for many aspects of community well-being including the provision of alternative routes for pedestrians and cyclists, corridors for wildlife and safeguarding the unique and special landscape setting of our local communities.

She emphasised the challenges created by the fact that Salisbury and the area around it are the responsibility of four area boards and ten parish councils, but there is currently no mechanism for more joined up thinking, planning and action. The partnership has put a lot of work into mapping the greenspace assets of the area which makes it possible to appreciate the bigger picture across wards and parishes, and, it is hoped, will help to support the development of much needed neighbourhood plans locally.

Finally **Peter Horwood** addressed Salisbury Transition City's vision for the area. Salisbury Transition City seeks to encourage alternative energy sources, reduce our reliance on fossil fuels such as oil, revitalise local business, and maximise the use of neighbourhood resources. This in turn will help sustain our city and make it an even nicer place to live in. Among many other points, Peter highlighted that if Salisbury wanted its selling point to be heritage-based, there was an awful lot of tidying up that needed to be done e.g. by not using dollops of tarmac for repairs in stone-paved areas.

The event concluded with active and informed discussion by the audience and the panel of speakers. Altogether a fascinating evening and there is much arising from it for the Society and others to consider in months to come. We learnt that Salisbury is the second largest parish council in the country and noted perhaps the special consideration that it merits. The value of the Civic Society bringing together different organisations on topics of common interest and critical importance to Salisbury and the surrounding area was readily apparent. Given the very fractured nature of responsibilities locally and the difficulties it causes, this is very much needed and perhaps something that the Society might extend in future years. It also looked likely that the Maltings project, whether or not funding is forthcoming in the Autumn Statement, would be a very good focus for the next annual Open Meeting in 2017!

**Neil Beagrie**  
**Publicity**

## Chairman's Report

**At this time of year we might reflect on how the past year has disappeared quite so quickly and all that we wanted to achieve but didn't, has now been deferred until the next year, with promises that greater care will be taken to maximise our use of time in 2017. Enjoy your reflections and ambitions!**

It is an old "adage" that if you want something doing, ask a busy person and that is certainly true of the Civic Society's Committee members who work to give the Society and its members the wide variety of events and publish topics of interest in pursuit of "Celebrating our Heritage, Enhancing our Environment and Shaping our Future".

So I wish to use this Report to highlight some of the activities of your Committee members so all may be aware and may be encouraged to take part in any measure of time available. You will have seen members' personal profiles published in the Quarterly magazine.

I will begin with the **Development Committee**, Chaired on a temporary basis until a successor is found, by Paul Stevens who is an Architect and with Richard Deane in the role of Secretary. They meet monthly. The Committee scrutinises area Planning Applications in great detail, sifting through to assess which are likely to have a significant impact on the architectural context of the location.

If there is a view that warrants a representation or objection by the Society to an Application, the Committee will discuss the issues and agree collectively on wording to be contained in a letter to the Planning Authority and on occasions, to the promoter of the development.

It is often the case that a particularly prominent development proposal will result in a presentation in person to the

Committee by the developer and the architect and a discussion takes place on relative merits and any aspects of concern which sometimes results in a modified or amended scheme being adopted.

The annual Architecture Awards Scheme is run by the Development Committee and alternates each year with Conservation Awards and New Building Awards which are presented at the New Year Party in January, held at the Guildhall. The Judging Panel is chaired each year by an invited person with strong local connections, but not from within the Society, and the panel of four or five members then reviews a short list of about 10, drawn from total applications of between 15 and 20 development projects. All schemes on the short list are visited by the panel of judges who then go into "session" to decide on who is awarded what. The "Awards" are a slightly higher status or category than "Commendations".

The Committee monitors long term projects such as The Central Car Park and Maltings development, the Salisbury Transport Strategy and Public Realm Task Group which amongst other projects is developing policy for "Shared Space" along Blue Boar Row and alterations to the "Cheesemarket" area. A close scrutiny of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations process is ongoing with concerns especially for the Britford Lane site being expressed and once allocations are published in 2017 the Committee will review and comment as appropriate.

Other matters include the Cathedral Master Plan, the Old Manor redevelopment and interpreting the bodies replacing the Salisbury Vision as well as Art in Public Places, embracing the “Man with Arms Open” promotion.

Lectures are arranged by the Committee for the Planning Forum, The Building Focussed Lecture and the annual Open Meeting. The latter is comprised of several speakers on a topic of general Urban Planning interest and held at the City Hall where members of the Public are invited as well as Society Members. A drinks reception is held before the Open event to enable possible new members of the Society to ask questions about our work.

The editing and modernisation of the Web site has been initiated and coordinated by the Development Committee leading to the new version now launched in 2016.

Finally, the Development Committee maintains links with other bodies as well as Local Authorities. These include Salisbury Area Greenspace Partnership, The Civic Voice, Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Salisbury Conservation Advisory Panel and the Cathedral Close Preservation Society.

Turning now to the **General Purposes Committee**, it meets monthly and is chaired by James Woods and with Lis Woods in the role of Secretary. These Committee members have responsibility for a wide variety of functions including at present, the essential task of drawing up a table of events for the year ahead, booking all our venues for meetings, lectures and events for the year and advising all Committee members, for circulation to the membership. It is a very time consuming task with various venues requiring guaranteed regular dates throughout the

year and involves coordinating the many different events and locations.

Organising lectures during the course of the year requires much planning well ahead with selection of topics, speakers and dates to be found. The Lectures are supplemented with Visits, to a wide variety of venues and carefully managed to be spread throughout the year ahead, planning for the capacity of each venue and then organising the trips and handling the costs and all important income from those participating.

Arranging the Heritage Open Days and other walks/talks also falls to the General Purposes Committee who keep closely in touch with Salisbury City Council and Wiltshire Council for joint promotion of some of these activities.

The Civic Society also has a precedent and policy of erecting Plaques to commemorate famous individuals or events associated with particular buildings in the Salisbury area. This research and planning is in the hands of the General Purposes Committee and, as well as identifying suitable subjects and opportunities, there then follows a process of obtaining agreement of the building owner, planning permission and formulating the exact wording and finally the placing of the Plaque with associated publicity and unveiling by honoured guest attendance; all are planned well in advance as you might expect. We currently have a prospective list of about 20 possible subjects and locations.

The general subject of “publicity” associated with Civic Society events also falls within the remit of the GPC and requires press contact briefings and other publicity information releases, contact with all media including local tv, radio and social media whilst also keeping the ageing display boards and banners in reasonable condition for display at most events.

Finally we have the **Executive Committee** which meets every other month and which comprises the President of the Society, the Chairman and Chairs of the Development and General Purposes Committees together with the Membership Officer, Hon Treasurer, Secretary and Publicity Officer as well as previous holders of office on the Committee. We are sadly still without a replacement Secretary for the Society since Philip Price resigned at the AGM. It is a post with huge importance covering the liaison with outside bodies, keeping the diary of events and planning the future bookings, assisting with membership records as well as minute keeping and organising the Executive Committee meetings. Part of this role is also to maintain communications with the Charities Commission and any other Statutory bodies regulating groups such as ours.

The Executive Committee assists the Treasurer with financial conduct of the Society affairs and decides on what expenditure is approved, sets subscription levels and fees for events and discusses fund raising arrangements as necessary. Accounts are reviewed and adopted.

Matters of general policy and Society priorities and direction are reviewed regularly with plans to encourage new membership discussed and implemented.

The Membership Secretary keeps the data base of members updated and handles the processing of applications, setting up payment mandates and issuing leaflets informing prospective members about the aims and activities of the Civic Society.

The Constitution of the Civic Society is kept under review by the Executive Committee and updated where appropriate. The new re-branded logo has now been approved and adopted in line with the Web Site revamp and is now the emblem for the future publicity material and plaques.

The Quarterly Magazine is edited by a member of the Executive Committee and is a popular and informative medium which also contains many articles written by members of the Society and Committees so if you have a topic of interest that you think might be of interest to the membership, send it in for consideration and hopefully, publication!

**Finally...** I could spend many more pages giving much more detailed accounts of how time is spent but hope that this brief insight is of interest and might lead to your volunteering to join in some capacity. Do let me know!

May I close by wishing all a very happy Christmas and a healthy peaceful New Year.

**Peter Dunbar**  
**Chairman**

**Monday 14th August 2017 at 2pm**

**David Richards** will give a guided walk on the theme of  
**“Pugin: A Gothic Architect’s Early Days in Salisbury”**

Meet at the Tourist Information Centre



# Updating the Wiltshire Pevsner

*Julian Orbach*

On 10 November, Julian Orbach talked about his work on updating the Wiltshire volume of Pevsner's 'Buildings of England'. He started with the history of the Buildings of England series; the original concept being a paperback which you could put in your pocket and take around with you for ready reference. With changes in publishers it morphed into a hardback. It was updated in the 1970's but some of the modern buildings included have now disappeared, such as the Princess Margaret Hospital Swindon.

Pevsner had put the county volumes together through two long summers. Julian had already taken two years on the updating and was only part way through the county; however, there are two main reasons for this. Firstly Pevsner took few photographs and the few there were in the original volumes were poorly reproduced. Standards are much higher now. Secondly Pevsner generalised about villages as a whole –'full of timber framed houses' and much of the text related to the external features of the buildings. In many cases, interior features of interest have subsequently come to light so that considerably more detail is now required.

Julian took us through examples he has found in north and west Wiltshire. He advised that there had been a lack of Victorian buildings included in the original volumes. Despite Pevsner's involvement in the Victorian Society he often considered them to be ugly. References to railway architecture were cursory, Box Tunnel being dismissed as 'an engineering feat of Brunel'. He wondered if some of Brunel's 'Tudor' stations might have been saved if they had been included, Bradford-on-Avon being the only survivor. A lot of handsome 18C clothiers' houses had also been omitted.

He showed slides of buildings where interior features of interest had subsequently come to light, often through the comments of local people. Some of these were distinctly non-period, especially fireplaces. He explained that it was common practice in the past to remove artefacts from one building and install them in another, not always locally. In some cases entire buildings were relocated. Pevsner's short timescale also meant he missed fabric within and at the rear of houses whose origins are older than their facades would suggest.

An interesting aspect is how similar features are found in unrelated buildings either owing to a common architect or social aspiration.



*Photograph by Neil Beagrie*

e.g. Robert Smythson at Corsham and Longleat and Lloyds Bank Trowbridge a former clothier's house which replicated part of the front of Dyrham Park.

Industrial buildings had been underrepresented, there being many of interest in West Wiltshire which is rich in industrial archaeology, as had estate cottages, often built for social reasons e.g. Prospect Square Westbury.

The county volumes are arranged alphabetically and within each town/village the church is listed first. Wyatt's restoration of Wiltshire churches was in many cases based on conjecture of the fabric rather than a true record. Evidence of this has come to light in some cases. Another area worth more detailed attention is mausoleums and cemetery architecture.

In the 1975 update by Bridget Cherry many of the modern buildings included have not stood the test of time and could be excluded from the update. Since then new country houses have been built, but generally in a more traditional style, notwithstanding the technical wizardry within he showed us one with commanding views at Colerne and wondered if this would still be here in 30 years time.

Members can look forward to an update as Julian has promised to return to talk to the society again when he reaches Salisbury.

**Judy Howles**

**Lectures: General Purposes Committee**

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## St Paul's Roundabout Site

The long-vacant former BP garage site by St Paul's roundabout is a notorious eyesore. It had acquired that status well before June 2009, when the Society's concern over it was featured in the Journal. Since then nothing much has changed, apart from variations in the character and tidiness (or otherwise) of the hoarding around it. At least two unexciting schemes for mainly residential use have received permission but never been built, then one for a housing association looked promising but foundered before an application was submitted, apparently on financial grounds. Now some action finally looks on the cards, with the site having been acquired by a local planning consultancy, Charter House Planning, with a view to the construction of

offices for themselves. Designs have been produced for them by a Winchester practice, OB architecture, and representatives from both came to the June meeting of the Development Committee to present the scheme. The illustration shows a depiction of the proposed design, looking across from where Fisherton Street joins the roundabout. It should be stressed that this is an early version, and that talks with the council planners have apparently led to 'some fairly substantial alterations'. However Charter House are happy for this depiction to be used, so presumably the basic approach remains the same.

The main materials would be glass, walling in polished concrete or Portland stone, and cast iron or bronze mesh to screen parking



BP garage site proposed, depiction

*Image courtesy of Charter House Planning*

on the ground floor. After those making the presentation had left, committee members expressed a range of views, with no unanimity as to whether the bulk of the proposed building was excessive. One school of thought was that it was overscaled in relation to domestic buildings adjacent, while another was that the quality of the area around in townscape terms is fairly low, and that a statement building like this could be quite appropriate. In practice screening by trees, even in winter, is likely to make it not that visible from viewpoints other than the one at the end of Fisherton Street used for the depiction. Members were fairly united in feeling a bit sceptical as to whether the highly glazed upper storey would really be 'lost in the clouds' as the depiction rather shows it. It will be interesting to see whether height is one of the issues raised by council planners.

Committee members were also united in feeling that there was no problem in principle with the contemporary approach, as opposed to the tame neo-vernacular feel

of the approved schemes. Making that approach work at a detailed level will be key. A further presentation to the committee is anticipated, once the talks with council planners have led to a more finalised version, and the Society will of course comment on the eventual application if it feels there are points which need to be made. As with the Old Manor site, there will be general relief once something finally starts to happen, and perhaps down at this end of the Wilton road what goes up will be rather more adventurous and interesting than further west, even if it may not necessarily be to everyone's taste.

**Richard Deane**  
**Secretary Development Committee**

## Salisbury and South Wiltshire Area

The area covered by the Society, as depicted in the centre pages of this magazine, is one which increasingly needs some explanation. To someone with no knowledge of this part of the world, who might expect a body whose remit extends beyond Salisbury to go for a '15 mile radius round the city' type approach, it would be entirely baffling. Those more familiar with Wiltshire, but only recently arrived in this part of it, would not be surprised by the limitation to the county boundary to east and south, but in other directions the Society's area might still be hard to explain.

Longer-term residents, on the other hand, may well recognise the area of the former Salisbury District Council, which is what the Society adopted. (Its predecessor body, the Salisbury and District Preservation Trust, had been pretty much limited to Salisbury and Wilton). The fact that when the council started up, in 1974, it incorporated two former Municipal Boroughs and three former Rural Districts no doubt explains that area's exact extent. As a coherent hinterland to Salisbury its logic is hard to detect. It includes in the west, for instance, Kilmington, a far away place of which most Salisbury residents know little, but it excludes Codford, which is much closer at hand. With seven years having passed since the district council was wound up, the retention of its rather higgledy-piggledy area for the Society probably needs some justification.

The starting point is an assumption, which probably few would challenge, that south Wiltshire deserves to be covered by an amenity group like ours just as much as the city does, and that there is little to be said for pulling back and just dealing with Salisbury. As regards the specific geographical remit, the simplest reason for retaining it is that it remains, in the main, the area covered by the local, i.e. Salisbury-based, planning office. The exception is an area covering five parishes in the east, which was formerly in Kennet district but has now been passed to the local planners. The Society ignores this addition, and just considers applications in the original collection of areas. A further anomaly, of a rather different sort, is that since 2006 the south-eastern corner of the Society's area, comprising essentially Redlynch, Landford and Nomansland, has been part of the New Forest National Park. This has its own planning system, and in that respect is beyond the sway of Wiltshire Council. The Society decided at the time that one planning authority was quite enough to be dealing with, and applications in that area are no longer scrutinised. The Society mainly focuses on applications in conservation areas or affecting listed buildings, and as it happens there are no conservation areas in that south-eastern corner, so it is only listed buildings there that are now not being covered.

The fit between the Society and the planning system is therefore not perfect, but in practice the only action needed to make the link work is the ignoring of a few parishes in the weekly application lists emanating from Bourne Hill. Extending the Society's remit anywhere beyond the council's southern planning area would mean accessing a different list, and would be an unnecessary complication. Reducing the remit would just mean ignoring some more parishes, and would be feasible, but other considerations militate against such a move. Chief among these is the impact on the Society's buildings awards scheme. Since this started in its present form in 1996, 66 awards or commendations have been given to projects within Salisbury, and 72 to ones outside the city. In the year 2003 there were six winners outside Salisbury, and none







*"Mere, a town of considerable character and a notable local geology"*



Old Ship Inn, the Town Clock and Mere Church



at all within it. As presently (and very successfully) constituted, the awards scheme would simply not be viable if a substantial part of south Wiltshire was not included in the catchment area.

This might not rule out some minor trimming of the outlying parts of that area, but it is hard to see that much would be gained from this. A look at the map would suggest that one obvious rationalisation might be to cut off the western protrusion, and say put the Society's boundary at the A350 Shaftesbury to Warminster road. This would mean the loss of Mere, a town of considerable character and a notable local geology, and one whose features the Society should really be pointing people towards, rather than cutting it adrift. And it would also mean abandoning Stourhead, something which there seems little merit in advocating. The 2016 awards scheme judging panel were more than happy to end their tour of shortlisted projects with a walk round part of the lake there to look at three structures, and it would be a shame to remove any chance of future panels doing something similar. (Whether the walk led to anything in the way of awards will have to wait till January to be revealed.)

The most constructive approach to the Society's area is to accept that its rather odd shape has its own historic logic, and causes no problems, and to concentrate on how to make the most of it. This is a case of both making sure that the Society is relevant to those living outside the city, and of trying to attract new members from among that group, bearing in mind that the 'civic' in the Society's title does not immediately convey its wider remit. Of the Society's current membership of just under 400, about 25% live outside Salisbury, a proportion which seems if anything to be going down. Looking at members who have joined this year, the equivalent figure is about 10%. The spread beyond the city is actually slightly more diffuse than first appears – of the 25%, ten members don't live in the Society's area, though most of them live close by. The 90 or so members which this leaves as the membership within the area, but outside Salisbury, are inevitably spread quite widely and thinly.

Inevitably, the sort of major issues the Society focuses on will tend to relate, wholly or mostly, to Salisbury. The current search by Wiltshire Council for more housing land, which has given an opportunity to the owners of the Britford Lane fields to have them turned into an adopted site, is based on an identified need for an additional 625 house sites in Salisbury and Wilton. There are some much lower figures quoted for other parts of the Society's area, which will generally be met by using bits of land which are relatively insignificant in terms of size and impact when compared to Britford Lane. The Society scrutinised all the areas put forward in Salisbury and Wilton to meet the local need, but it does not have the resources to attempt any similar exercise in the rest of its area.

When it comes to the vetting of planning applications, however, the Society's system is applied consistently across its whole area, applying the already mentioned principle of focusing on conservation areas and listed buildings. The majority of villages in its area have conservation areas, though by no means all. The largest one in the latter category is Shrewton, while for instance Lower Woodford is covered, but not Middle or Upper Woodford. There are approximately 3000 listed buildings in the area, well over half of them outside Salisbury. The effectiveness of application vetting beyond Salisbury will depend on various factors, not least how well an application actually conveys what is intended, without a visit to the site in question being preferable. When one is really needed, the situation becomes rather hit and miss, given that the number of active vetters is not huge, and most are based in Salisbury. Probably the



Society does as much in this field as can reasonably be expected. Its award scheme is its most conspicuous commitment to its area, and scrutinising planning applications ties in well with this, with several projects which eventually won something having originally come to its notice because they were the subject of an application.

The awards scheme is also of course one of the ways in which the Society can make people outside Salisbury aware of it, and in a few cases the scheme has led to award-recipients joining. For the rest, opportunities for active proselytising beyond Salisbury may not come that often, and recruitment may depend more on word of mouth, and of the interest which many will have in the city which forms the area's natural focus. The two day exhibition outside Waitrose in September is a good example of a Salisbury-targeted publicity exercise which will also have gained the attention of some from further afield. Mounting something like that away from Salisbury would probably not justify the work needed, but other opportunities deserve to be investigated. In the early days of the Society, its very active first secretary Rodney Hoare established a list of 'Eyes and Ears', individuals happy to act as contacts throughout the rural parts of its region. Many of them were not actual members. It is unclear now how much this list achieved, and it seems to have faded away relatively soon, but something similar might be worth consideration again. Quite apart from anything, the work put in to get such a list going would inevitably mean contact with people who have little or no knowledge of the Society, or of the fact that its remit extends much more widely than Salisbury, and might by itself generate one or two new members.

The case for what is in fact a Salisbury and South Wiltshire Civic Society seems well-based, and the somewhat irregular shape of its area is a historical oddity which does no harm, and does not cry out for rationalisation. The priority should be to make the most of this wider coverage, and in particular to try to boost membership outside the city. The need to attract new members is an endlessly recurring theme within the Society's discussions at committee level, and a specific focus on the areas outside Salisbury could add a potentially productive element to this.

**Richard Deane**  
**Vice Chairman**

### **New Society Blue Plaque – Charlotte Cradock**

A new blue plaque is to be unveiled on 6 January 2017 at noon outside 14 The Close – the family home of Charlotte Cradock. The plaque commemorates Charlotte, who was wooed there by Henry Fielding (he had family in Salisbury), and married him in 1734.

Fielding's beloved Charlotte was known for her beauty and her 'accomplished mind'. Sadly, the marriage was short-lived for Charlotte died in 1744, but she is preserved as the lively heroine Sophia Western in his best known novel, Tom Jones.

All members of the Civic Society are welcome to attend the unveiling but entrance to the house is by invitation only.

## **Rollestone Street**

### *Pre-Application Presentations*

After the St Paul's roundabout presentation in June, the July Development Committee meeting looked at proposals for a site in Rollestone Street in Salisbury. The visitors were Nick Ludlow and Melanie Latham, the developer/architect team responsible for exemplary work at the Paragon in the Wilton Road in Salisbury, which won the Lady Radnor Award in 2014. The site, formerly used by Wiltshire Council, runs from Jones the kitchen people to near the junction with Bedwin Street, and backs on to what is now the Coroner's Court in Endless Street. On Rollestone Street it is fronted by an attractive wall with a central doorway, all of which is to be retained.

The scheme is for four houses in a traditional style, and the version seen by the committee had a prominent turret on a projecting bay. The committee was initially somewhat disappointed by the general approach, still hoping that someone might come up with a scheme for the city's central area which found a way of fitting a more

contemporary style into a historic context. It also wondered why the particular style chosen took a lead from Victorian houses in the areas just outside the medieval core of the city, resulting, as the minutes put it, in 'a scheme which did not really look comfortable on the site'. A view that simplifying the design might result in



Rollestone Street site 1 –  
design seen by committee



something rather mundane was countered by another that if the focus became more Georgian, this would be an excellent chance to see the style done really well, counter to the normal experience in the city. This reflected the general perception that given the commitment put into the work on the Paragon, this particular team was much more likely to produce a high quality job than the average developer at work in Salisbury.

Given that this developer was clearly intent on something fairly traditional, a change to a contemporary approach was never considered realistic. With many presentations, very little change of any sort tends to come, whatever the committee says, but in this case the architect took on board comments (not necessarily just from

the Society) which included a suggestion of a slight 'Disneyland' element in what the committee had seen, and the version now going in as a planning application steps back from the original rather Victorian character. The upper part of the projecting bay has been scaled back somewhat, and in particular the turret above it has been omitted, and dormer windows have been made less prominent.

The result is something which is arguably more in context, but perhaps also to some eyes rather blander. It is however certainly more Georgian, which takes us back to the argument that the team involved may give us the best chance yet of seeing that style done really well for once. That would give us a yardstick with which to judge other projects in the same vein, and more



Rollestone Street site 3 – application design street view

Rollestone Street site 2 – aerial view of application design



importantly an exemplar to direct other developers towards before they start anything. Since neo-traditional seems inevitably to be the default approach which designers of schemes for central Salisbury adopt (early indications are that it will re-appear in the very large and prominent scheme for retirement homes in Castle

Street, recently referred to in the Journal), this Rollestone Street site takes on a certain significance, and it will be interesting to see just how it works out.

**Richard Deane**  
**Secretary Development Committee**

*Images courtesy of Affinity Architects*

*The following updates on current issues summarise the present state of projects monitored by the Development Committee.*

### Old Manor Hospital

The Phase 1 application for redevelopment of a major part of the Old Manor site was submitted in October 2015, and was the subject of significant criticism from the Society on design grounds (detailed in the magazine a year ago). In particular a convenience store, which will be the most prominent aspect of this part of the scheme, right on the Wilton Road, was deplored as owing nothing to the history of the site, or to wider parallels within Salisbury's past, and to be in effect a bland corporate effort of a sort which can be found in numerous uninteresting areas across the country. It was however no surprise that in the rush to greet something that would finally start the process of redeeming the long derelict site, detailed concerns about design were not given much weight. The application has now been approved.

Most recently, Quantum, who own the site, have stated in a 'community update' that 'throughout our community engagement we had an overwhelming number of people asking for the site to be renamed to mark its new start and redevelopment'. Suggestions towards this were asked for. The Development Committee considered this, and the following response went in: 'The Civic Society believes that the best option is to retain the Old Manor name (without any reference to the hospital), on the grounds that it is long-established, forms a link to an important part of Salisbury's history, and is part of the name of the local conservation area (the Old Manor Hospital conservation area). If however Quantum feel strongly that the name ought to be changed, we would advocate that it becomes Fisherton Manor (or possibly Old Fisherton Manor) . This combines the original name of the institution (Fisherton House) with the later one, and was also used as the name of a school, Fisherton Manor Middle School, which was in Highbury Avenue nearby from 1972 to 2005.'

The desire for a new name is no doubt driven mainly by the feeling that it would help make selling the new retirement flats easier, and the fear has to be that what Quantum would really like is some bland all-purpose name which sounds nice, but has no connection to the rich history of the site. This is already likely to be devalued by the dense newbuild element of the forthcoming development, which has little relationship to the former hospital's historic character. The two listed buildings, Finch House and Avon House, will remain, but little else that tells of the two hundred years the hospital was there, in one form or another.

## Britford Lane Fields

Whether or not the Britford Lane fields get developed with housing depends principally on the final shape of a Wiltshire Council document known as the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan. The process of producing this started over two years ago, with a call for possible sites to be submitted in order to meet a shortfall in housing land. For Salisbury and Wilton, the number of individual housing sites to be found amounted to 625, though originally enough sites had been identified already. It was the failure of large housebuilders to use existing permissions which created this number, which otherwise would have been zero. Hence the opportunity for the owners of the Britford Lane fields to put their land forward.

The Housing Site Allocations document, covering all of Wiltshire, will go out in draft form for consultation, prior to a public enquiry, with the resultant final version then being adopted as formal policy. There will then be a presumption in favour of any site included in it being suitable for development, subject only to details. The timetable for the process has slipped several times – the current version has consultation in January/February 2017, the public enquiry starting sometime in the summer, and adoption during winter 2017/8. Assuming the timetable does not slip again, the consultation document will presumably be published early next year. At that point we will know whether the Britford Lane fields have been selected from the submitted sites, which in total provided potential land for much more than the 625 houses identified as being needed. The final adopted selection will only be known after the public enquiry, but clearly it will not be particularly easy to have the fields removed from the selection if they are initially in it. And conversely, the landowners will have something of a struggle to get them in if the early decision, by Wiltshire Council planners, is that other sites are preferable.

## Man with arms open sculpture

There has unfortunately been little movement on this since the last report, in the June magazine. The situation remains that a 'shared space' scheme is being worked up for the Minster Street/Castle Street/Blue Boar Row junction, at the Cheesemarket, and the hope is that the statue can be fitted into the new layout. The design of this has apparently reached a stage where the concerns of disabled groups have been allayed, and the next stage is for some wider consultation, but there is so far no news of this. Officers drawing up the scheme are happy that the statue could be placed within the new design, but it will no doubt be councillors who make the decision as to whether to include it, assuming that the scheme as a whole is approved. If the statue is included, the next stage would then, as previously reported, be to seek planning permission, and that would need to be in place before fund-raising could commence.

**Richard Deane**  
**Secretary Development Committee**

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## A New Use for a Redundant Church

*St John's, Bemerton, Community Project, The Rev'd Simon Woodley*

**On 22 September the Rev Woodley spoke with great enthusiasm about the St John's Bemerton Community Project – A New Use For A Redundant Church. He started by showing us examples of churches converted to multi use such as Westbury Leigh where functions are divided by glass screens. He had trained as an architect and was sympathetic to the reuse of redundant churches as once lost, either by dereliction or demolition, the community senses a void.**

He gave us the history of St. John's Bemerton from the days of George Herbert. St Andrews was too small for the housing that was springing up in Bemerton in Victorian times so a new church was provided in 1859-61 by the Earl of Pembroke, with money also provided by American admirers of George Herbert. The architect was TH Wyatt who built around 20 churches in Wiltshire.

The expected further growth in housing development never came. The church remains today in splendid isolation surrounded by green (playing) fields. It has therefore always struggled to be viable, an increasing problem with a steadily dwindling congregation and an expensive and ineffective heating system. Matters came to a head when the boiler expired in a cloud of

smoke which filled the church. With only 20 in the congregation could £45k on a new boiler be justified? The only realistic options were to close the church or reorder its space.

To convert a church building requires a 'faculty', which is an Ecclesiastical exemption from listed building consent. This process involves 4 levels of church hierarchy who can say 'yes' or 'no'. An informed change assessment is required which identifies the significant features of the building and those which cannot be changed. Notable features are the quotations on the interior walls and the mosaic reredos by Nellie Warre. It is a listed building. The audience were delighted when a laser survey of the church as a 'walk through' was shown to illustrate this.



With the church under threat in March 2009 a public meeting was held, attended by 100 people. A working group was formed of 3 teams – a user team, building team and finance team. The objective was to retain a sacred space in the chancel with shared space in the rest divided by a glass screen. The school, which was running out of space, was to be the main user of the latter. The project was registered as a charity and set about fund raising.

Despite over 100 letters of support the proposal met opposition from conservation bodies. Once planning permission was granted in October 2014, grant funding was applied for. In April 2015 there was a shortfall of £246,000 but sufficient funds were raised by September for work to commence. Local residents had useful skills - the children from the school opposite mapped the graveyard and the pews were sold to local people for £100 each.

The build came to an end in April 2016.

Further issues encountered during work were: bats in the roof (protected species) relocation of 3 graves (with the families attending the reburial) and a leak between the church and its tower. With the first wedding already booked, there was anxiety whether work would be finished. The new space was opened by John Glen in June 2016.

A highlight of the lecture was a time lapse video of the transformation from church community space and church. The kitchen is a freestanding 'pod' within the church and we were told that people now notice the writings on the wall which have actually always been there – but there is no glass screen.

The building is now a real asset for Bemerton.

**Judy Howles**

**Lectures: General Purposes Committee**



Interior of the church, St John's Place, Bemerton

## Meet the Members of the General Purposes Committee

Members of the General Purposes Committee are those behind the lectures, blue plaques, Heritage Open Days, the visits and walks arranged for members. There have recently been a number of new faces on the committee, Janet Patch, Liz Slater and Hadrian Cook. A considerable amount of work goes into identifying subjects of interest for talks, contacting speakers and co-ordinating venues and dates, often well into the future! The blue plaques take a great deal of research, identifying suitable sites, obtaining permissions and liaising with families and official bodies. Visits require forward planning, agreeing suitable dates and numbers, notifying members and generally making sure everyone finds the right place at the right time on the correct day!

### JAMES WOODS: Chairman

James retired to Salisbury in 1998 after a career in commercial and market research on the railways and a few years in transport consultancy. In 2007 he joined the Civic Society with his wife, Lis, and after a period of organising lectures for members became chair of the Society's General Purposes Committee in 2012. His main interests are listening to music, helping to run a local film society and surfing the internet.



### LIS WOODS: Secretary

After university, Lis held policy and management roles in four different Government departments, latterly as Director Operations on the Board of Customs and Excise. In retirement, she carried out various consultancy projects in the UK and overseas in the fields of health and social services, and was for some years a member of successive local primary care trusts and a governor at Salisbury Foundation Trust. She and her husband James moved to Salisbury in 1998 and joined the Civic Society about ten years ago. Lis has been a volunteer at the local CAB since 1998.



### NEIL BEAGRIE: Publicity

Neil has lived in Salisbury for some 24 years and first moved to the city when he was working for the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. He now runs his own business in Salisbury specialising in digital preservation and research data management. He has an active interest in the heritage and architecture of Salisbury and is working with members to raise the profile of the Society.



## HADRIAN COOK: Heritage Open Days

Dr Hadrian Cook moved to Salisbury in 2005 to work for the Harnham Water Meadows Trust and is also a founder member of the Friends of St Thomas's Church. As well as his experience in environmental conservation, Hadrian is a university teacher specialising in matters environmental. He has taught in a range of institutions and also in schools, notably within the University of London and most recently at Kingston University, London. Hadrian has an extensive (especially soils and water interactions), catchment management, floodplains, water policy and environmental history.



## JUDY HOWLES: Lectures

Judy moved to Salisbury 29 years ago with her husband and three daughters to take up a career in planning with the then Salisbury District Council. She had obtained a degree in Town Planning over 10 years earlier but had taken the unconventional route of having all her children before embarking upon a career – a risky strategy that succeeded – as she became a team leader within 4 years and was the Area Development Manager for Wiltshire Council before retiring from local government in 2011 to care for her husband who is registered disabled. She promptly joined the Salisbury Civic Society and became the society's lectures secretary. She was also involved in organising the Historic Open Days in 2015 and 2016. Her interests include the natural and built environment, transport, local history and the arts. She encourages her grandchildren to further their knowledge in these areas.



## JANET PATCH: Blue Plaques

Brought up in south west Wiltshire, Janet moved to London, where she worked in a Foreign and Commonwealth research department; in book and magazine publishing; and finally as a freelance writer/producer of scripts for audio tours of stately homes, ancient sites and exhibitions. She moved back to Wiltshire, where her family still lived, at the beginning of this century.



## LIZ SLATER

Although her career has been largely in education policy, Liz has always had a keen interest in buildings, townscapes and gardening (including garden history). Entirely without planning it, she and her husband have lived in progressively older houses and learned from each of them. The most recent is one of the oldest houses in Salisbury. In parallel she has enjoyed membership of the Victorian Society, Georgian Group and – latterly - the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.



## OFFICERS as at 1st December 2016

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# DIARY OF EVENTS 2017

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FRIDAY 6TH JANUARY

## Unveiling of Charlotte Cradock Blue Plaque

12.00 midday • Outside at 14 The Close,  
Salisbury SP1 2EB

*See further information inside this issue*

THURSDAY 12TH JANUARY

## New Year Party and Annual Awards Presentation

6.45pm • Guildhall, Salisbury SP1 1JH

Tickets £10.00

*Application forms can be found  
inside this issue*

THURSDAY 9TH MARCH

## The Radnor Estate

by Steve Hobbs

6.30pm • Methodist Church, St Edmund's  
Church Street, Salisbury SP1 1EF

Free to members. Non members £2.50

THURSDAY 13TH APRIL

## Planning Forum

6.30pm • Methodist Church, St Edmund's  
Church Street, Salisbury SP1 1EF

Free to members. Non members £2.50

WEDNESDAY 14TH JUNE

## AGM

Followed by a talk on the History of the Civic  
Society Awards Scheme by Richard Deane

6.30pm • Methodist Church, St Edmund's  
Church Street, Salisbury SP1 1EF

7TH - 10TH SEPTEMBER

## Heritage Open Days

The Civic Society will be collaborating with  
CAMRA on the theme of Salisbury's historic  
pubs and inns and also with the City  
Council on its properties.

*Further details will follow in the New Year.*

THURSDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER

## The Secret Garden

by Becky Twigg

6.30pm • Methodist Church, St Edmund's  
Church Street, Salisbury SP1 1EF

Free to members. Non members £2.50

TUESDAY 21ST NOVEMBER

## Open Meeting

7.00pm • Alamein Suite, City Hall,  
Malthouse Lane, Salisbury SP2 7TU

*Open to all*

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*There are a number of interesting visits planned for 2017, details of these will be available  
on the website and in future editions of the Society magazine.*

A detailed diary of events is available online at [www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk)

