



## 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.

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### **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                |   |

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### **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            |

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

Cover: Holbein Porch, Wilton House

## DIARY OF EVENTS 2017

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### 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

### SATURDAY 25TH MARCH

#### **Longford Castle Visit**

Members £15.00

Non-members £17.00

*Application forms can be found inside this issue*

### THURSDAY 6TH APRIL

#### **Planning Forum**

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

Free to members

Non members £2.50

*See further information inside this issue*

### THURSDAY 1ST JUNE

#### **Norrington Manor Visit**

Members £5.00

Non-members £6.00

*Application forms can be found inside this issue*

### 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**

### SATURDAY 17TH JUNE

#### **Civic Day, Salisbury Guildhall**

*See further information inside this issue*

### WEDNESDAY 19TH JULY

#### **Mystery Visit**

*Application forms with June magazine*

### MONDAY 14TH AUGUST (WALK)

#### **Pugin: A Gothic Architect's**

#### **Early Days In Salisbury**

with David Richards

*Application forms with June magazine*

### 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 June magazine.

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

## Editorial

Stephanie Siddons Deighton has now relinquished her post as magazine editor, and we owe her an enormous debt of gratitude for the excellent work she did since taking on the job in 2015. While, as Peter Dunbar says in his Chairman's report, there have been no responses to the call for someone to take on the editorial role, Salisbury Printing, who are corporate members, very kindly offered to help with some of the work, prior to the December edition. They are handling the assembly of submitted material into a final form, with the necessary graphic touches, and this is much appreciated. Apart from anything, it significantly reduces the amount of work an editor needs to put in, with no requirement to use specialist publishing software, and with any luck will make a new editor that much easier to find.

In the meantime, the magazine is being produced on a collaborative basis, with a co-ordinating role being taken on by myself. The magazine will certainly continue, uninterrupted, but in the long term the editor role is definitely one which we need to fill.

This edition, as ever in March, has a main focus on the outcome of the Society's buildings awards scheme, which in its 2016 version produced a very good crop of varied winners. The photos should give a good indication of the very rewarding time which the judging panel had, as they toured the shortlisted nominations. A question left hanging in the December magazine can, incidentally, now be answered. The piece on the Society's geographical area commented that it would be a shame to lose the Stourhead region by pulling in our boundaries, and consequently preventing any future judging panel from having the sort of walk round the lake which the 2016 one enjoyed. The piece added that whether the walk led to anything in the way of awards would have to wait till 2017 to be revealed. There are no photos of Stourhead in this edition, indicating that alas the three nominated repair projects there, while worthy, didn't quite make it to award standard.

There have been no talks to members to report on since the last magazine, but plenty of forthcoming events. A decision has

recently been made to devote the Planning Forum to the theme of conservation areas, too recently for the identity of speakers to yet be known, but there should be plenty of scope for conveying information, while at the same time showing some attractive illustrations. Further ahead, in June, the innovation of Civic Day is a very interesting undertaking by the Society, and one that should help make it better known within its area. The brief report on it in this issue will be expanded in the June one.

Details of two excellent visits can be found with the magazine, one a repeat of the very popular one to Norrington Manor, a remarkable medieval survival in a super downland setting. It gives little of itself away from public viewpoints, close though it is to Alvediston, or 'Ell of a Distance', as the village's perceived remoteness up the Chalke Valley has traditionally made it known. There is also a chance to see Longford Castle, with its intriguing architecture, excellent collection of paintings, and beautiful grounds by the Avon. Please note the request to send two separate cheques if you want to go on both visits. If a member makes two applications, but only one is successful because of lack of space, composite cheques can cause complications for the visits organiser!

**Richard Deane**  
*Magazine co-ordinator*

## 2016 Conservation Awards Scheme – Judges' Report

### AWARDS

#### 1) Salisbury Market Place

Familiarity on the part of all the judges with the long saga of the campaign to improve Salisbury Market Place meant that there was no need to spend time visiting it. The judgement that had to be made was whether what had been achieved went beyond what ought to be expected, and the conclusion was that it did. The fundamental decision to remove all parking, from both market place and the Guildhall Square, was applauded as one which had taken some courage, but which had enabled the kind of thorough-going upgrade which the space had desperately needed. The repaving work had been well-executed, using materials which looked right, and which ought to prove durable. Other new elements are

relatively low-key, not surprising given the tortuous process undergone after the original Salisbury Vision scheme foundered, but they are well-judged, and play their part in restoring Salisbury's major secular space to its rightful status within the public realm. The judges felt that the stone structures on the northern edge of the space worked well as they were, and they did not support the addition of painted farm animals etc, as has been proposed. The project did not extend to finding extra ways of utilising the market place in its new uncluttered form, but it did perform an absolutely vital role in making such use a possibility, after the years when parked cars marked the limit of Salisbury's ambition once the market traders had left.

#### 2) The Three Crowns, Harnham

The contrast between the neat appearance of this partly C18th building now, and how photos showed it to have looked two or three years ago, was indication in itself that some laudable work had been carried out. A visit inside was however needed to show the full extent of the achievement. What really made this project stand out was that it included the rescue of some remarkable C18th plasterwork within the building's main room, now the guest house dining room. How this elaborate decoration, on both ceiling and walls, came to be there is a mystery, but there was no doubting the chronic condition which the years in which the former pub was empty had left it. The recreation of some areas of collapsed ceiling plasterwork from scratch, coupled with the repair and conservation of surviving plaster



elements, had clearly been carried out with dedication and skill. The result of the project was an attractive guest house whose great feature is a carefully restored and highly unusual dining room, and the commitment put in to retaining the full character of a very prominent building, which in other circumstances might have been permanently degraded, clearly deserved an award.





Market Place – photo credit Adrian Harris



38 Stoke Farthing



The Royal Oak Inn, Swallowcliffe



Triumphal Arch, Wilton House



### 3) The Royal Oak Inn, Swallowcliffe

While the award scheme's prime focus is of course the way buildings have been treated, wider social issues can sometimes be considered relevant, and the rescue of a village pub is a case in point.

Empty for several years, and the subject of a failed application to turn it into a private house, the project to turn the early C18th Royal Oak at Swallowcliffe back into a going concern started on a good footing from the judges' viewpoint, but worthy action needed to be complemented by proper treatment of the building for an award to result. Their visit convinced the judges that the necessary commitment and skill had indeed gone into the work. New additions had

been kept to the rear, where from an internal inspection they clearly added to the facilities very successfully. The interior of the original building had been upgraded to make it an attractive destination, whether short-term or to stay overnight, without in any way compromising the historic character. The rescue of the pub had also had a key outcome in maintaining its open frontage, and keeping it as a fully visible major element within the village scene, where conversion to a house would inevitably have led to it being screened off to a greater or lesser extent. Overall, the success of the project made it easy for the judges to decide that an award was fully merited.

#### Royal Oak at Swallowcliffe

Readers will know that this delightful place received one of this year's coveted Civic Society Awards, for the renovation work which transformed it from a state of near-dereliction, into a charming characterful village pub. But it was not this which first attracted me to visit. I heard a talk about fine furniture-making by Matthew Burt, whose workshops are in Hindon. He said that he had been invited to make all the chairs, tables, and bar-stools for the renovated pub, and showed pictures of them. They are each a work of art, and very comfortable. I urge anyone who has not been there to treat themselves to a visit. The food is excellent too, gourmet, and therefore, at gourmet prices.

*Wendy English*

### 4) Wilton House: Holbein Porch and Triumphal Arch

The judges enjoyed their chance to visit the C16th Holbein Porch (see front cover), removed from the house in the early C19th and rebuilt in a location not accessible to the public. Both it and the much more visible archway had clearly been treated in a very responsible way, with necessary repairs carried out but with no attempt to make the buildings, the porch in particular, look too tidied up. A full range of stone

conservation techniques had been intelligently applied, with new stone only inserted where what was there before had clearly reached the end of its life.

On the arch, the carving of new part capitals and two paterae had been executed to exceptionally high standards.

The commissioning of a comprehensive report on the polychrome elements

surviving on the porch showed a laudable degree of commitment to the project, and the illustration this enabled, showing what the porch would originally have looked like, provides an excellent means of extending knowledge of this important structure more widely.

### 5) 38 Stoke Farthing

In other hands, a project which started from a simple country cottage and ended with a much larger one, with a range of ancillary buildings next to it, might have simply devalued the original building.

It very quickly became apparent, however, that this particular project was something out of the ordinary. It had been conceived and executed over a much longer time span than the average award winner, underpinned by a clear and consistent philosophy, and a commitment to use only materials, and finished elements from elsewhere, which created a coherent historic character.

Externally this was simple and convincing, resulting in a building whose integrity few would question. Internally, the effect was undeniably somewhat extraordinary, with the character clearly extended from that of

The judges felt that giving an award jointly for both buildings was the obvious way to recognise an approach which did not distinguish between what was very visible to the public and what was tucked away out of sight, and applied the same very high standards to both.

the original cottage, but done with such zeal and purpose that it created its own justification. Stone and timber has come from various periods and various sources, with new craftsmanship to match, with the 20th and 21st centuries evident no more than is essential for the house to function as a fully liveable space, not a museum.

The kitchen extension at the west end typifies the commitment and ingenuity which has been put in, with elm cladding rescued from a local barn being demolished, and a superb floor using Purbeck stone slabs rejected by the quarry as not quite perfect.

The ancillary buildings are of similar quality to the work on the house, and the whole project was one which the judges were delighted to visit, and to give an award.

### 6) Park House, West Hatch, Tisbury

The key question which the judges needed to have answered, when they visited the property, was whether the substantial increase in size to a listed building was justified by the outcome. Their inspection quickly convinced them that it was.

The two storey extension at one end fitted in seamlessly, while the single story one, along the back and then wrapping round the corner, worked extremely well. At the

back it has been kept deliberately low-key, and its impact minimised by the fact that the house is set into a bank, so that the extension faces a retaining wall formed of railway sleepers set horizontally, to very good effect.

At the corner the extension becomes more prominent, and develops from simple render to stone with large expanses of glass, and nicely detailed louvres at eaves

level. This works well from outside, and exceptionally well internally, with the original stonework of the house unobscured within the new glazed space, and doorways which were once external stripped of frames, and left as simple penetrations to enable an easy transition, both physical and visual, between house and extension.

The effect was applauded by the judges as a major enhancement of facilities which left the original house fully readable, and in no way compromised by the contemporary form now added to it.

The care taken in combining different styles of extension for different parts of the project was felt to have produced a very successful outcome.

## COMMENDATION

### 51 High Street, Salisbury, refurbishment and new sheep

This joint nomination combined the rescue of the former SPCK bookshop, empty for several years and looking increasingly forlorn, with the slightly earlier creation of a new wooden sheep above the doorway.

The previous version, a relict of the shop's former use by a firm producing woollen goods, had first lost its head, and then, once repairs were undertaken, proved to be rotten throughout. The work to the premises had clearly been thoughtfully carried out, with the necessary respect to the building's history.

The new fittings enabled it to meet its new function as a hair salon, without losing sight of the underlying character and identity. In the basement, care had been taken to leave an archway associated with drainage of the Cathedral Close, which the building abuts, fully exposed and legible.

The new sheep was felt to have been executed with great skill, closer in form than its predecessor to the Wiltshire Horn breed which would have produced wool for the earlier shop, but not losing all the naivety of the previous animal. The combination of a building rescued and adapted for a new function without losing its historic

character, and a guarantee of continued long life for its most distinctive external feature, together made the whole project well worth a commendation.



## Chairman's Report March 2017

**There is Spring in the air and renewal starts to pervade our senses as bulbs, planted back in early winter emerge in bright colours, fresh green strands of grass begin their seasonal challenge to the lawn mowers and the daylight extends its grip on the darkness of winter! And Salisbury, once again, delivers its unique charms, entertainment and historic interest to locals and visitors alike. We are fortunate to live in such an inspiring environment, despite air quality issues, parking problems and traffic congestion, all of which are matters that we challenge with the powers at Wiltshire Council from time to time.**

Your Development Committee continues to scrutinise proposed development projects and Planning Applications and keeps a watchful eye on the process of housing land allocations by Wiltshire Council, still without a firm timetable for decisions on what suggested sites, including Britford Lane riverside, might be adopted. The Society will strongly resist any attempt to build on the Britford Lane site. On another matter, the number of Applications for 'Retirement and Assisted Living' is increasing and yet the products offered are rarely of a standard that meets market purchaser aspirations. Sizes of units are extremely small and social facilities and true 'lifestyle support' are vaguely offered and mostly 'outsourced' to a third party private operator who sells 'support' services. Is this simply a way round the 'affordable housing' requirement?

Turning once again to the future, Salisbury Civic Society will again lay out its stall of Lectures, Visits, Open Meeting and Historic Open Days all of which are detailed in the Magazine and/or web site and the Committee Members are working hard once again to deliver all.

The year has begun as usual with the New Year Party and Conservation Awards Ceremony at Guildhall on 12th January and was very well attended. I am pleased to say that after being told that venue would not be available for 2018, it now appears that

the renovation works to the ceilings are deferred so that is good news and we shall after all return there next January.

The Conservation Awards judging panel was chaired by Adrian Green, Director of the Salisbury Museum (well worth visiting again), and the winning entries are described elsewhere in the magazine. The one to which I would like to draw particular attention is the Commendation awarded to 51 High Street Salisbury, for both work to the building and for the new sheep outside it. The latter was of course created at the instigation of the Society, and paid for by it, and I was honoured to accept the Certificate on behalf of the Civic Society, as one of the two joint clients for that award.

The Certificates were handed to the successful promoters and constructors of the respective buildings by our President, Dame Rosemary Spencer, and each project was introduced and described by Adrian Green with the images projected on to our much enlarged screen this year: clear for all to see!

I was delighted to attend the Plaque unveiling at 14 The Close on 6th January when the Civic Society paid tribute to Charlotte Cradock, the wife of the C18th playwright and novelist, Henry Fielding. The organisation was exemplary by the General Purposes Committee members and we were fortunate to have Professor Donald Thomas and his wife present. Prof Thomas

is the biographer of Henry Fielding and unveiled the Plaque and gave a most interesting insight into the history of Henry's romance with Charlotte Cradock who is immortalised as Sophia Western in Henry Fielding's popular novel, Tom Jones. We are indebted to Mr and Mrs Champion, new owners of 14 The Close, for providing us generously with refreshments and a view of their delightful and historic house.

Other Plaques are planned for later this year including one to commemorate the founder of Trinity Street alms houses, Agnes Bottenham, who by that foundation gave back to the needy homeless in local society after a life 'in service', and former

owner of the premises currently known as The Rai d'Or, Public House.

My one continuing great regret and concern, is that my letter to Members, sent with the December edition of our Magazine, did not draw a single response to my request for volunteers to assist the Society's work; namely filling the post of Secretary, Quarterly Magazine Editor or to Chair the Development Committee. Please think long and hard about this as our success is the product of our efforts together as a voluntary body and we are missing some key team members. Thank you.

**Peter I Dunbar**  
**Chairman**

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## AGM

The Society's 2017 AGM will be held on Wednesday June 14th, at the Methodist Church in St Edmunds Church Street, starting at 6.30 pm. The agenda for it, which will be sent with the June magazine, will include items covering the re-election of officers.

The posts of Secretary and Magazine Editor are currently vacant. The post of Development Committee Chairman is also technically vacant, though it is being filled on an acting basis. The other posts are Chairman, Vice-Chairman, General Purposes Committee Chairman, Membership Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. All the current office-holders are willing to remain in office for the coming year.

Any member of the Society who wishes to propose candidates for any of these posts should send nominations to the Chairman in writing, with the names of the proposer and seconder (who should be members of the Society). Candidates themselves should be members of the Society, and must be willing to stand for election. Nominations must be received by Wednesday May 24th.

### A Warm Welcome to our New Members

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

Sue Allenby, Chrissie McCormick, Pamela Munson, Anne Upson, Rosie Wilkinson.

## Britford Lane Fields – Trowbridge's Paradox?

The previous magazine included an update on the state of play regarding the attempt, by their owners, to get two fields north of Britford Lane adopted by Wiltshire Council as a preferred housing site. The idea is strongly opposed by the Society, and by many others, and was first covered in our magazine for June 2015.

Key to the outcome of the attempt will be the publication of the draft form of a council document known as the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan. This will then lead into a consultation period, followed by a public enquiry.

The update in December stated that 'The timetable for the process has slipped several times – the current version has consultation in January/February 2017'. Correct at the time of writing, this statement was already out of date by the time the magazine came out. Consultation is now due to start after publication of the draft document in June this year.

This is at least the fifth version of an apparently endlessly flexible timetable, with no assurance that the June date won't be put back again. By this point, some followers of the saga may have been put in mind of Zeno's Paradox, one of the more intriguing bequests of antiquity. Zeno of Elea was a C5th BC Greek philosopher, author of several paradoxes, of which the best known is that of Achilles and the Tortoise.

The argument, simply put, is that if Achilles (standing for any fleet-footed creature) is entered into a race with a tortoise, the latter, provided it is given a head start, will invariably win, regardless of the length of the race. Zeno's logic is that once Achilles reaches the point from

which the tortoise started, the tortoise will have moved ahead by a certain amount, to a new point. By the time Achilles reaches that point, the tortoise will have moved ahead again, and this procedure will be repeated ad infinitum, even though the distances involved get shorter and shorter.

As Zeno perfectly well knew, the argument is obviously entirely flawed, but nevertheless refuting it, if one accepts the basic principles behind Zeno's logic, is not as simple as it might seem.

The Trowbridge's Paradox version is not an exact analogy, not least because the amounts by which the consultation period are put back follow no consistently reducing pattern. It may therefore be that at some point the Achilles of practical public consultation does actually catch up with the tortoise of published dates for that consultation, but it would be an act of outstanding bravery to put any money on that being achieved this summer.

So far the plodding tortoise remains well out in front, and Achilles, perhaps better repersonified for these purposes as a slightly less dashing Wiltshire Council cabinet member, brings up the rear, no matter what tenets of logic anyone attempts to bring to bear on the situation.

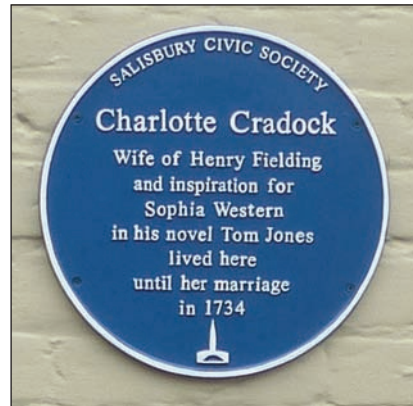
**Richard Deane**



## Unveiling a plaque to Charlotte Cradock

On a cold day in early January, which was mercifully dry at the time of the ceremony, around two dozen people clustered outside 14a The Close to witness the unveiling of a plaque to Charlotte Cradock, the beloved wife of the writer and magistrate, Henry Fielding. A brief photo opportunity later we escaped the cold into the house itself, where we enjoyed the generous hospitality of the new owners, Hugh and Sally Champion, while Professor Donald Thomas, the writer and biographer of Fielding, made the following speech (slightly abridged).

“What we know of Charlotte Cradock comes mostly from Henry Fielding himself. She is the subject of his last novel *Amelia*, outlining the trials and tribulations of their early married life in London between 1734 and 1741. As the epigraph he chose two lines of the Greek poet Simonides: “A man acquires nothing better than a good woman – and nothing more horrifying than a bad one”. A more personal elegy comes in *Tom Jones*. Her husband brings Charlotte to life as his beautiful, virtuous, high-spirited Sophia Western. He talks of their future fame together with serene and tough-minded Christian humanism, with such power that he and she seem to stand as close to us now as anyone here today.



‘Foretell me that some tender maid, whose grand-mother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth, which once existed in my Charlotte, shall from her sympathetic breast send forth the heaving sigh. Do thou teach me not only to foresee but to enjoy, nay, even to feed on future praise. Comfort me by a solemn assurance, that when the little parlour in which I sit at this instant shall be reduced to a worse furnished box, I shall be read with honour by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see.’

He gives us a detailed description of what he calls ‘the real worth which once existed in my Charlotte.’ Such surviving witnesses as his rival novelist Samuel Richardson and his kinswoman Lady Mary Wortley Montagu confirmed the accuracy of his description. He drew Charlotte’s portrait, describing her as tall, exact and delicate. Her hair was black, waist-length before it was cut in adult fashion. Perhaps Mrs Cradock regarded her as too young when Fielding first proposed marriage. Charlotte, he says, outshone the Venus dei Medici, the goddesses of Hampton Court gallery and the pin-ups of the Kit-Kat Club. Her face was oval, animated by a lustre in her eyes which all her softness could not extinguish.’

They were married on 28 February 1734 at St Mary Charlcombe, north of Bath, by their friend, Walter Robbins. They lived in Bath for a while, then in the Manor House of East Stour near Gillingham, then in London, where Charlotte’s £1,500 legacy was never enough to support Fielding’s theatrical career. During his absence in Salisbury he had earned little, while the costs of his theatre in the Haymarket had more than eaten away its earnings.



Charlotte Cradock plaque unveiling – photo credit Adrian Harris

The manor of East Stour was insufficient. The plays were banned. He struggled as a journalist, read for the bar at the Middle Temple, and began to practise. By the end of 1741 he depicts himself as ‘laid up with the gout, with a favourite child dying in one bed and my wife in a condition very little better in another.’

Two of three children died. Charlotte fell ill in the debtors’ refuge of the Verge of Court. The law courts which Fielding frequented were breeding grounds of gaol fever, a form of typhus which may have been brought home to his family.

Their life together in the autumn of 1741 brought despair with the death of their daughter Charlotte, but also hope with the publication of a first novel *Joseph Andrews*. They escaped to Bath. The friendship of Walter Robbins, the hospitality of Ralph Allen, plus the fees which came from riding the Western Circuit enabled Fielding to begin *Tom Jones* and to commemorate the woman he describes simply as ‘my Charlotte’ as one of the most famous and admirable of heroines in the history of the English novel.

In the autumn of 1744, having at first made ‘a perfect recovery’, Charlotte’s health declined. She died in Fielding’s arms and was buried in London at St-Martin-in-the-Fields on 14 November, beside the daughter who had died two-and-a-half years earlier. Between them the couple endured a world where men and women were the playthings of the pagan gods but also, between them, opened a window on the landscape of light and laughter, of humour and of hope. It seems right that we should be remembering them here, almost three hundred years later.”

**James Woods**



## Planning Forum, April 6th

This year's Planning Forum will be on the theme of conservation areas. It is the 50th anniversary of the introduction of such areas, and Civic Voice suggests a focus on them for Civic Days. The Society's own Civic Day (see below) will include an exhibition on conservation areas within our region, probably with a particular focus on the Salisbury one, and devoting the Planning Forum to them links in quite neatly with that intention.

Speakers have not yet been finalised, but the forum is likely to cover both the qualities which make a built area worthy of conservation area status, and the effects of that status, in terms of what particular constraints and controls it imposes. There should therefore be scope for showing some attractive images of high quality buildings, and for conveying useful information as to the practical effect of creating conservation areas. As well as Salisbury itself, which is divided into three such areas, there are a large number of village ones within our region, with the overall total not far short of 70.

The decision to devote the forum to conservation areas is quite a recent one, with an earlier thought that the subject might be the proposed Maltings/central car park redevelopment. However that was based on the expectation of a decision on the bid for £5 million of government money for soil remediation work on the site, a decision whose outcome may well be critical for whether the project goes ahead or not.

While word on this seems likely soon, and indeed may have come by the time this magazine reaches members, it was felt that time was getting too short to have a realistic chance of obtaining the necessary speakers for early April, in the event of the decision being a positive one. If that does turn out to be the case, then serious consideration is likely to be given to whether the Maltings could be the subject for the Open Meeting in November.

### Civic Day, June 17th

Civic Day is an event promoted by Civic Voice, the umbrella organisation for civic societies, and is intended to be a 'national celebration of civic pride'. The day is also aimed at making local societies better known within their areas, and this year for the first time we are organising our own Civic Day.

It will be on Saturday June 17th, the date chosen for such days nationally, and will be based at Salisbury Guildhall. Quite a few other local organisations, with aims sympathetic to those of the Society, will be occupying stalls in the Banqueting Hall, and there will of course also be plenty of information about us, and what we do.

Further information will be in the June magazine.

## The White Hart Hotel

An application for additional accommodation and other work at the White Hart Hotel, originally submitted in March 2014, has been refused by the Southern Area Planning Committee, against the advice of planning officers, whose recommendation was for approval. The proposal focused on the 1970s red brick block on the rear, and did not affect the historic frontages in St John Street and Ivy Street, though it included improvements to the C20th addition at the southern end on St John Street.

The Society is not opposed to the principle of redevelopment of the rear extension, but it did object to the details of the scheme. Efforts had been made to reduce the massing of an earlier scheme submitted in 2013, but this was felt to create an unfortunate watering down of the original design intent. A new but poorly articulated entrance was proposed at the rear, leading into the 1970s block, which would be reclad in a buff-coloured brick plus stone, and have an extra storey added to it. The Society expressed the view that this would not only make the main landmark entrance on St John Street redundant, it would also bring heavy traffic, extensive road markings and increased lighting and light pollution into the centre of the historic Chequer.

We were concerned that this design presented a missed opportunity to do something contemporary, of its time and site specific. The White Hart Hotel is an

unusual and charming historic building; it is a city centre landmark that deserves an architectural response equal to that of the existing building.

Members refused the application for reasons which partly reflected some of the Society's concerns, though without extending into the principle of moving the entrance from St John Street to Brown Street, and what implications that might have. The present lounge just inside would become, under the proposals, a bistro.

What happens next, particularly given that the hotel is on the market, is unclear. If there are further applications the Society will look at them with interest. It would be glad to see improvements made to the existing 1970's extension at the rear; well-designed contemporary city centre hotel facilities would be a great benefit to Salisbury.

**Louise Rendell**

### MYSTERY VISIT: Wednesday, July 19

Having organised several of these, we had completely run out of ideas for suitable destinations, so I asked a friend who lives 25 miles away, if she could come up with a good idea for somewhere in her neck of the woods. After some weeks, she made a brilliant suggestion. So we have made the necessary bookings and are looking forward to a preliminary visit to check out the route and details and to try the suggested hostelry (always a good part of our preliminary planning!)

John and I are quite excited about this visit, so do note the day, and look for further details in the June issue of the quarterly magazine.

**Wendy English**

## Riverside restaurants proposal

The council committee meeting which refused the White Hart application, against the advice of officers, also did exactly the same thing with a proposal to create two restaurants along the River Avon between Crane Street and Fisherton Street. The area used for the scheme currently has on it a building which was formerly part of Woolworths, but which is not used by the New Look store. The Society was generally supportive of the principle of the restaurants, but in one representation expressed detailed concerns about the impact on the riverside path, with suggestions for improvements. It is not clear to what extent these were pursued before the application went to the committee.

The Society also put in another letter, focusing on the contentious question of how the site was accessed. The only way to achieve this is apparently to demolish No 98 Crane Street (below, left), and replace it with a new gateway. The Society found the original design for this gawky and unattractive, and not a worthy replacement for an existing building which, while not of listable quality, fits in pleasantly in the street scene. A claim by the applicants that it 'collides unsympathetically with its listed neighbours' [to the east – the Masonic Hall to the west is not listed] was clearly not to be taken too seriously.

A revised design was submitted, as below right, and the Society, while highly unexcited by it, decided that it was just about acceptable if it was the only way the site could be

unlocked. It would be in painted brickwork, like the existing No 98. The council committee, however, decided that the design was bad enough to merit refusal of the whole scheme. There may have been other factors at work, with remarks by members about the whole access arrangement being impractical. However council highways had not objected to it, and the formal grounds for refusal were just limited to the design issue. What happens next is unclear, though an appeal quite often follows when an application is refused after being recommended for approval. The other possibility is a revised design, in the hope of winning members over. Given the work put into the whole scheme, simple abandonment of it is the least likely option.

**Richard Deane**



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