



DIARY OF EVENTS 2021

For current updates on all events please go to:
www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk/events/

Date to be confirmed

Visit to NORRINGTON MANOR

Details in June magazine

Thursday March 4th

SUPERNATURAL SALISBURY: Talk by Frogg Moody

Frogg Moody's talk will take us from witchcraft and magic, to ghosts, spirits and other mystic sciences, highlighting some of the topics from his forthcoming book 'Supernatural Salisbury'.

The talk will start at 7.00 lasting for about an hour, with a Q&A session to follow.

The event is free although tickets will need to be reserved through Eventbrite.

For details of how to reserve places go to the SCS website events page

<http://www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk/events>

Wednesday July 7th

Visit to MELBURY VALE VINEYARD

An evening visit – details in June magazine

Thursday August 5th (Walk)

ST GEORGE, DRAGONS AND MEDIEVAL SALISBURY

Led by **David Richards**

An evening walk - details in June magazine

In the case of both the visits and the walk, the exact format will be dependent on the guidance current at the time.

The following talks, previously arranged for 2020, will be held in 2021, once the virus situation allows it, and there's a potential new topic. Members will be notified of the details, as soon as they are known.

ALONG THE LINE: A LIFE IN ARCHAEOLOGY Phil Harding AGM

In the light of recent announcements we hope that it will be possible for these two items to be held together, live, later in the year.

STONEHENGE – NEW ROCKS, OLD THEORIES Julian Richards

OUT OF THE RUINS: FONTHILL HOUSES LOST, RECOVERED, REBUILT Professor Caroline Dakers

And possibly a talk on **FROME**, by **Pippa Goldfinger**, former Mayor of the town.

EDITORIAL

My principle aim today is to introduce my ambition to invite respected members (are there any others?) of the Society to write under the heading 'Public Eye' about subjects about which they have a special interest. I will expect these pieces to clarify and expand on subjects which are well known to all of us but fully understood by few, maybe answering questions not properly asked or not yet asked at all. The title may tempt the occasional contributor to indulge in some satire, scathing criticism or even humour but unhappily I cannot really see this occurring.

My second objective is to improve the distribution of colour images - you will see some changes. Thirdly and most important is a wish that present pessimism be replaced by a light to be seen at the end of the viral tunnel by June, and blazing by September.

Charles Villiers.

PUBLIC EYE

I have been asked by the editor, Charles Villiers, to open a new regular page for the magazine, PUBLIC EYE, a personal opinion on the Society and current issues in Salisbury and South Wilts. Where to begin in these extraordinary times? My role with Comms and Outreach (publicity and PR in old currency!) is to broaden our appeal to a wider audience whilst actively engaging with existing members, exploring how we can reach out to and encourage support from new groups and individuals within the community. I'd like to think we all play an important part in how SCS engages with everything that is going on in this city and members are key to that voice both being heard and shared.

Videoconferencing is now part of our daily lives, a new tool that we will be using to help communicate information and entertainment, enabling us to reach out to a wider audience to exchange information and introduce outsiders to our amazing city. The season opens this month with a talk from Frogg Moody on Supernatural Salisbury, other talks include Pippa Goldfinger on the success of the Frome monthly markets, the AGM will be online this year and there are more interesting speakers in the pipeline. I'm aware that we have an untapped wealth of talent amongst our membership and we're planning a collective talk later in the year, offering slots to those who have a specialist subject they would like to share with others. If you would like to contribute please let us know.

The People Friendly Streets initiative was suspended last year but with consideration, careful planning and execution we can hopefully move ahead with similar plans, opening up the city centre to the satisfaction of all. Salisbury is steeped in history, rich in heritage, people, buildings and landscape but it's impossible to live in a bubble. Climate Change, housing development and many other factors will present tough challenges while moving us forward and will have an impact on how the Society continues its important role protecting, influencing and commenting upon the built environment and surrounding landscape and communicating how we achieve that is essential to maintaining existing and encouraging new support.

Events change so rapidly nowadays do please use the SCS website for up to date information. We keep abreast of current plans for the area and will always have updated information on the current status of events at salisburycivicsociety.org.uk/events/

Stephanie Siddons Deighton

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - MARCH 2021

I begin by wishing all a safe and happier year ahead as the Covid vaccination programme gives us the positive mindset we dreamed of in 2020. We still have months ahead of us before anything like 'normal activity' can begin again and I hope members and their families are coping with this new style of living and able to get support when needed.

Your General Purposes Committee is working hard on the technology enabling us to provide lectures 'on line' and we remain constant in planning other talks, visits and plaques for when the restrictions end. Do keep viewing the Society Website on a regular basis to keep up to date with news of our activities. I hope we may be able to have our AGM return later in the year. We also warmly welcome the Downton Society as corporate members joining us this year.

This year your Civic Society is delighted and proud to announce that Dame Rosemary Spencer has agreed to become our Patron and Brigadier Alastair Clark, past Chairman, has taking on the role as President after the position was vacated by Rosemary at the end of 2020. Thank you both for accepting these appointments and we value your contributions greatly.

The Society has been keeping a close involvement with Salisbury City Council to assist them with the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan and news of that process and regular updates can be found on the City Council website:
www.salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk

One issue that will no doubt attract public comment when the NDP gets published for consultation is the balancing of the Wiltshire Council priorities, including housing site allocations, with the recent expansion of existing settlements in and around Salisbury and traffic loads testing the adequacy of the present infrastructure. The 'People Friendly Streets' policy was abandoned largely because it did not have sufficient pre-planning or consultation causing much controversy, but it is our hope and expectation that it will return in modified and enhanced fashion before too long.

The Development Committee is sending feedback comments to Wiltshire Council in response to the public consultation on the Wiltshire Local Plan Review and more details are available on: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planningforsalisbury. All members of the public can submit their views from 13th January until 9th March 2021.

Finally, I would ask all members if they would be willing to spend a few hours a month to assist Judy Howles, Chair of the General Purposes Committee with the organisational planning of future visits, Heritage Open Days and other very interesting events. The committee needs additional volunteers and I hope this appeal will bring a positive result.

Let us look forward to the Spring weather ahead so we can all get out and enjoy all that Salisbury has to offer.

Peter Dunbar, Chairman.

ST THOMAS, SALISBURY — CONSERVATION OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT WALL PAINTING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

In the late summer and early autumn of 2019, the Parish of St Thomas, Salisbury commissioned a programme of conservation which included the Last Judgement (or Doom) painting on the east wall of the nave, the walls of bays one and two of the nave, and the painted timbers in the ceiling of bay two. (*Illustration: see back cover.*)



This work was undertaken by a team of conservators. I was the lead conservator and main contractor. My team included three principal conservators - Joanna Pucci, Jason Battle and Alvar Mailan; with Robert Read, Roger Stephens and Howard Chivers.

The principal item was the Last Judgement (or Doom) painting which we see when we enter St Thomas, Salisbury. In the years leading up to the work in 2019 two extensive preliminary surveys had been commissioned. In March 2012 I carried out a Detailed Condition Survey and documented the findings in an illustrated report. Subsequently in January 2014 I submitted a more detailed report which encompassed imaging, additional surveying and treatment testing. The imaging was carried out by two teams. One from Reading University was led by Dr Gillian Walker, the other led by Professor Adrian Heritage from Cologne University.

Many of you will know that the painting we see is a late C 19th repaint of the medieval original. Some of the medieval original remains under the repainting, but it is difficult to be certain how much.

After the reformation in the C 16th the medieval Last Judgement was overpainted with limewash. It remained hidden until the C 19th when it was uncovered to some degree. In 1819 Elizabeth Wickens, from The Close, drew what was found and made notes on what she saw. Subsequently the painting was overpainted once again with limewash. In 1881 the painting was uncovered again, and overpainted by Clayton and Bell (one of the most prolific firms involved in the decoration of churches at that time). Uncovering, when carried out with proper care and attention, is a time consuming and skilled process. It is unlikely that the uncovering carried out in the C19th would have been executed with the care employed nowadays. As a result, it is almost certain that the painting was damaged.

The programme of conservation in 2019 focused on securing detached painted plaster and cleaning. Approximately equal time was spent on each procedure. Cleaning improved the appearance of the wall painting considerably, but an additional factor which improved the appearance was the removal of an iron tie bar. The iron tie bar was set across the middle of the wall painting. It was possible to remove the tie bar because we discovered that it had rusted through completely at the southern end and so was performing no useful purpose.

At the top of the wall painting traces of the medieval painting can be seen under the C 19th repaint. Analysis of paint samples from the Last Judgement show that there is another paint layer, again medieval, under the medieval Last Judgement.

Unexpected passages of medieval painting were found on the wall immediately below the Last Judgement. There is more than one layer of medieval wall painting here. Some of what we found remains on view, the remainder has been painted out using reversible paint. It is worth taking binoculars when you next visit St Thomas so that you can see these passages. *(See the lower of the illustrations opposite).*

The Last Judgement, despite what happened to it in the C 19th, remains very valuable both nationally and internationally. This depiction, although repainted, provides a very good example of what a complete medieval Last Judgement looked like.

Another aspect of the conservation programme was the uncovering of overpainted roof timbers (structural and ornamental) in bay two of the nave. These timbers were lavishly polychromed in the late C 15th. In 1769 they were repainted, in most areas decoratively but in some plainly. Subsequent to that three layers of oil based paint were applied, the first of these likely to date from the C 19th. Most of the revealed polychromy which we can see dates from 1769, and lies over original medieval polychromy; but some original medieval has been revealed.

Overpaint was removed from two of the carved and polychromed angels in bay two, one of which incorporates a fascinating Tricephalous image. Although eye catching today, originally the polychrome decoration would have been even more striking with glistening gilding.

The third component of the programme of conservation, involved the walls of bays one and two of the nave. This component proved to be more rewarding than anticipated. The result achieved by cleaning the ashlar was much better than originally hoped for and some particularly interesting findings were made.

Of the findings made the most significant is that the shields on the capitals at clerestory level, six on each side of the nave, are painted with Merchants' Marks. A permanent reminder of those who had invested in the building of St Thomas. On the north side four of these marks are identical; looking like a variation on the capital letter 'W'. John Hare has suggested that this may refer to William Webbe. And an example is shown on the next page.

Another discovery was medieval paint on the engaged columns above the capitals. It is possible that the paint, a field of black with a bright border in red and yellow formed the backdrop to sculptures set atop the capitals. Today there are wooden posts in that location.



PETER MARTINDALE



PETER MARTINDALE

In conclusion I thank the Parish of St Thomas for commissioning a challenging and ultimately very rewarding project from me. From the Parish I especially thank Meryl Brown, Nick Beard, Peter Heier, John Bruce-Ball and Rev Kelvin Inglis. The Parish were very welcoming and interested in the work. This my team and I appreciated very much. In particular we did enjoy the wonderful selection of cakes for morning tea/coffee of a Tuesday!

Finally, I could not have undertaken this project without the support of my diligent and hard-working team. My heartfelt thanks go to them all.

Peter Martindale

For those who would like to know more, here is a link to a video in which I speak about the conservation programme. The video was recorded for a meeting organised by the Traditional Paint Forum in the summer of last year.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMe2YXWtdNg&feature=youtu.be>

2020 CONSERVATION AWARDS SCHEME

JUDGES' REPORT

The 2020 awards scheme looked at work to existing buildings – new buildings will be the theme in 2021. The 2020 judging panel was chaired by former chair of Salisbury Museum trustees Susanna Denniston, and also included Lynda King, Elaine Milton and Lynne Pearson.

Awards

(no particular order)

Conservation and Refurbishment of 53 and 53A St Ann Street, Salisbury

Photographic evidence gave the judges a full picture of a listed building which had been through many vicissitudes, reducing it to a state which made it unfit for living in, or for the running of its ground floor shop, which was no longer viable anyway. A visit was not needed to demonstrate that a fully committed project had rescued the building from dereliction, starting from an assessment of its historic

characteristics and the opportunities for appropriate changes, proceeding with due care for the retention of historic features which still survived, and ending with two very habitable houses, with accommodation of a far higher standard than that previously on the site. Externally, the shop-fronts on both street elevations had been left in situ, with no more than essential changes, and two windows on the St Ann Street side which had clearly once existed had been reinstated, with considerable visual benefits. The eastern part of the building had been turned into a separate house, raising its roof to achieve an additional storey, a significant functional benefit without any loss of character. Overall, this was clearly a



project into which a great deal of thought and work had gone, creating a very usable building whose history was still fully legible, and achieving a renewal which provided a boost for this corner of the city, at a time when recent challenging circumstances make this all the more valuable.

Designer: Pamela McConnell, JPMC

Petersfinger Farm – barn conversions

Farm buildings no longer suited to modern agriculture are often encountered, and in the case of single storey ones such as those at Petersfinger Farm, residential conversion may well be an appropriate option. This does not always retain the original character, but the judges were happy, without needing to visit the site, that in this case an exemplary approach to conversion had been taken. Buildings which had clearly seen better days had been stripped of excrescences, and made suitable for residential use, without any unnecessary loss of their original character. Weatherboarding had been reinstated and brickwork rebuilt or repointed, while roofs had been sympathetically repaired, using salvaged tiles.



Glazing had been kept simple, with some larger areas of glass as well as infill to existing openings, making an effective contrast with the original forms. An internal courtyard, with the buildings ranged around it, was particularly successful. Care had clearly also been taken with the new domestic interiors, where the original roof timbers remained fully visible, with one particularly successful double height space. The relationship to the wider riverine landscape south of the buildings had been carefully considered, with a wildflower meadow planted to enhance the setting of the development. A consistent level of commitment had clearly been applied, and the sum total of what had been achieved was sufficient to make an award an easy decision

Architects: Proctor Watts Cole Rutter, Shaftesbury

Restoration of Harewarren Cottage, Wilton

The judges were slightly disappointed that pressures on time prevented a visit to Harewarren Cottage, as the photographic evidence which indicated that it was an obvious award winner also made it clear that a visit would be very enjoyable. Not far from Wilton House, but in a very isolated location in the woods south of the house, the cottage had originally housed gamekeepers, and kept that function till at least the 1930s. Subsequently it fell on hard times, and by the time the current owners leased it from the Wilton estate it was derelict and badly vandalised. The work that had been put in to rescue it from this state was very impressive. Basically of timber frame construction, no attempt had been made to



change its form, or extend it. It therefore retains its original and very attractive appearance, as a building which sits naturally in its woodland clearing. Internally, the cottage had been transformed, from something debris-strewn and uninhabitable to a clearly much loved house. Original features, including

some fittings which predated the cottage's origins in c.1844 and had clearly been recycled from other estate buildings, were kept and upgraded, with only modern building regulations requiring some loss of lath and plaster, to enable the building to be fully insulated. The amount of work which had been put in, mostly by the owners themselves, and the obvious evidence of total commitment to the project, meant that little discussion was needed before an award was conferred.

Restoration of Bridge at Waterside Villa, Mere

The Shreen Water flows quietly through Mere, en route to joining the Stour at Gillingham, and in the process generates urban scenery of remarkable

quality in the area known as Waterside, where a footpath runs along the stream's western side. At intervals it is connected to properties on the eastern side by bridges, no two of them alike. The Victorian wrought iron one at Waterside Villa is probably the most notable of them, but by late 2017, when the bridges were featured in the Civic Society magazine, it was



in a very poor condition. The magazine piece suggested that its state might well be terminal, with no possibility of any official intervention to save it. The judges were therefore delighted to discover that its owners appreciated its worth, and had acted to restore to its original condition. Made by a local craftsman, it was repaired

by one as well, with a combination of refurbished components and new ones, where necessary. Rustproofed and repainted, it once again embellishes this unique corner of one of the region's most distinctive towns. For its rescuing of an asset which in other circumstances might simply have disappeared, the care and commitment which had gone into it, and the example it set for any other similar cases, the project was deemed to be exactly the sort of work which the awards scheme should be recognising.

Mere Methodist Church Conversion

The former Methodist chapel is a distinctive listed building within the Mere conservation area, with a typical high interior with a gallery at the entrance end. At the far end, a schoolroom had been added later. While the principle of converting a now redundant building to residential use seemed reasonable, it was clearly



essential to retain the basic character of the main chapel space, and the judges were impressed by the work put into achieving this. The gallery remained, changed from its original open and stepped character to enable its imaginative re-use. New stairs to give access to it, and connecting to a link across the side of the main space to new 1st floor level at the rear, had been sensitively added. The insertion of a floor at

the rear had been possible due to the more adaptable form of the school room, and this, coupled with use of the roof space above the chapel, had enabled the creation of an impressive amount of accommodation and ancillary features. The judges were impressed by the care taken to retain original glazing, and in some cases, such as the venetian window in the rear elevation, to improve it with some far from obvious double glazing. The conversion coupled respect for original features, such as the pulpit remaining in the chapel space, with imagination in the creation of a range of domestic ones, and the overall result was felt to be very much of award standard.

The Society welcomes new members

Victoria and Jonathan Brunskill, Angus Harley, Peter Crane
and Clare Newsome, Nicholas and April Golden.
The Downton Society (Corporate Membership).

Extension and Alterations to Hillcroft, Lower Chicks Grove

Hillcroft is a simple early C18th stone cottage, with a rendered 1960s extension at one end, described by the listing authorities, rather kindly, as 'not of special interest'. What struck the judges as particularly impressive was the way this extension still remained, but so modified in its impact by the new work as to lose most of the negative effect it previously had on the building's overall character. The further extension, now added to it, covered over almost all of the particularly ugly 1960s end elevation, with only a small portion left visible at the top by the new extension being kept lower than the main cottage. Its vertical cedar cladding is an effective contrast with the earlier stone and render, and should weather nicely. On one side the cladding is extended on the ground floor across the render to the stonework, while on the other side there is an equivalent amount of masking, here partly achieved by a single storey projection outwards from the extension, taking advantage of some excellent views. All the new work, including a replacement single storey extension at the other end of the house, was given a contemporary finish, including zinc roof and aluminium windows and doors, maintaining the quality of the house without trying to imitate its original C18th character. The judges were very impressed by the outcome. *(Illustrated on the cover page.)*

Architects: Favonius Architects, Salisbury

Summerleaze House, East Knoyle

Summerleaze is a C19th stone house of some quality, though not listed. It enjoys splendid views to the south, but these were not being fully taken advantage of. It had been decided to remedy this by moving a



greenhouse at the SW corner of the building elsewhere, and use the space freed up to construct a single storey garden room. This is linked to a former studio at the W end of the house, and the wall between studio and original kitchen has been removed. The result is that space previously taken up by kitchen, studio and conservatory has been unified, enabling a very substantial combined kitchen, dining and sitting area. The latter is within the new garden room building, and has stunning views across the surrounding countryside. The building's eastern and southern walls are fully glazed, utilising very large pieces of glass which can be slid back in good weather, making the garden room truly one with the garden. A pier of traditional stonework at its SW corner anchors the new building to the rest of the house, while the rest of it has a contemporary finish, making a good contrast. The transformation of this part of the building was very impressive, and had clearly created a wonderful asset for those using the house. The judges had no difficulty in deciding that an award was the appropriate response.

Architect: John Comparelli, Tisbury

The Old Rectory, Fonthill Gifford

This is a substantial house, and various changes and additions had led to it at one point being three separate dwellings. The approach taken by recent work to restore the house to a more unified whole was typified by the south elevation. Here the middle part had seen the merits of existing elements brought out, with over-scaled chimneys greatly reduced, while to the west an untidy straggle of elements,



of little aesthetic quality, had been replaced by the end elevation of a carefully designed and executed neo-Georgian kitchen wing, whose main elevation created a much enhanced western view of the house. On the eastern side of the house, the window glass in a new bay was characteristic of the trouble taken over the project, reproducing as it did the uneven effect of original C18th window glass, and thereby lending additional character to the windows. Much of the new stonework had been created using recycled stones originally elsewhere in the building, with a carefully chosen pointing mix obscuring the use of quite small stones which this sometimes entailed. Unable to view the interior due to current circumstances, the judges were very impressed by the quality indicated by photos of it. They felt that the total achievement matched that of the adjacent pool building, a winner of an award in the previous year's new buildings scheme, and gave the house itself a matching award.

Architects: Richmond Bell Architects, Salisbury

Old Fovant House, High Street, Fovant

With its origins in the C17th, Old Fovant House had seen various additions, the more modern ones of which had not done it any great favours. A cart shed had been converted into a garage, with prominent and unattractive up and over doors. The main focus of the work had been on rebuilding this, with a new oak trussed roof, metal framed glazing in the door openings, and stonework repaired or rebuilt, very

successfully.

This enabled the creation of an excellent kitchen, previously located in a cramped and almost windowless space at the back of the house. An unattractive conservatory, also at the rear, had been replaced by an



extension of more linear form, providing a dining room area which linked the new kitchen to utility and other facilities in the northern end of the house. The judges were particularly impressed by the way this had been given a mono pitched roof pointing up towards the sky, giving views of terrace and garden areas formed out of the upwards sloping land behind the building. Beyond the new kitchen a timber frame garage had been created, with the local topography cleverly taken advantage

of to provide access at the rear to a useful space created in the roof. High standards of detailing, material selection and workmanship had clearly gone into creating a much improved house, with splendid kitchen and dining facilities, and better circulation through the building, and with a keen architect's eye visible throughout.

Architect: John Comparelli, Tisbury

Commendation

Extension to Downton Memorial Hall

Downton's hall was originally built around 1840, with its distinctive portico added in 1921, which is when it became the Memorial Hall. Increasing need for community space led to this new extension at the rear, designed to provide meeting rooms and an office, and to house the Downton nursery school. It was also intended to improve facilities at the original hall, including disabled access to its stage. The project was extended to include some work to the original building, such as rebuilding the walls to the stage. The judges were impressed by the care which had clearly been taken to match the quality of the original hall, without attempting to slavishly copy its style. The new bricks had been well chosen, as had the natural slate for the



new roof, and the workmanship was clearly good. New windows and rain-water goods also fitted in well. The judges did not have time for a visit, but they were satisfied from the photos provided that the interiors were also of high quality. Overall, they felt that

this was a project which demonstrated community involvement at its best, with people coming together to consider what their village needed, to work through the details with their architect, and then find the necessary money. The hall now looks good from all angles, rather than being a building with one primary elevation, and the total achievement was certainly felt to merit a commendation.

Architects: Paul Stevens Architecture



MOVING BONES

During the Middle Ages the Catholic Church controlled the burial of the dead. The wealthy were buried or entombed within churches and cathedrals. Generally, ordinary folk and the poor were laid to rest in graveyards. But on occasion the dead were moved from their graves.

Bishop Osmund died in 1099 and was buried (1) in Old Sarum Cathedral. Decades after his death the cathedral was extended by Bishop Roger and it is probable the tomb was then moved (2) to the new space on the ecclesiastically significant north side of the high altar. In 1226 his remains (and two other bishops) were moved (3) to the new Trinity Chapel of Salisbury Cathedral and placed in a Purbeck marble pierced table tomb capped with a Purbeck marble slab bearing his effigy. After the completion of the cathedral's choir Osmund may have been moved (4) to the eastern end of the presbytery behind the high altar. In 1457 Osmund was canonised and a magnificent shrine encrusted with semi-precious stones was created (5) for the new saint in the centre of the Trinity Chapel. In 1539 Osmund's shrine was stripped of its treasures and demolished by Henry VIII's Commissioners. The surviving bench tomb was moved (6) to the southern side of the Trinity Chapel. In the late 18th century Bishop Shute Barrington employed architect James Wyatt to move (7) the tomb into the nave. In 2000 this pierced tomb was moved (8) yet again back to the southern side of Trinity Chapel.

After these repeated translations the exact whereabouts of his bones is unknown. However, it is probable that the bones of St Osmund were seen by Henry's commissioners as iconic relics and destroyed.

In 1225 William Longespée, 3rd Earl of Salisbury, fought with Henry III's army in Gascony defending the king's possessions around Bordeaux. After his return to England, he died on 7 March 1226, at Old Sarum which was his home as Lord High Sheriff of Wiltshire. The next day his body was carried in a solemn procession to Salisbury. He was the first person to be buried (1) in the new cathedral, close to the north wall of the newly completed Trinity Chapel. His elegantly sculpted and painted



Tournai marble image rested on a wooden plinth. In c.1460 the Hungerford Chapel was built onto the northern wall of the Trinity Chapel. To facilitate the opening of a door into the new chapel Longespée was moved (2) westwards towards the adjacent chapel of St Peter and Apostles. In 1789 Wyatt (3) moved the tomb to its present position in the westernmost bay of the nave. A dead rat was found amongst the bones.

The medieval church preserved fragments of the skeletons of saints referring to them as relics. Salisbury Cathedral had dozens, including: an arm of St Thomas Beckett, a tooth of St Anne, a toe of Mary Magdalene, finger of St Agnes as well as bones from St Stephen and St Catherine. Most of these were held in costly bejewelled reliquaries although relics of St George were contained in a 'cross, curiously ornate'. On saint's festivals, relics were carried in procession and displayed on the appropriate altar. During the Reformation reliquaries were

confiscated by the king's commissioners for their precious stones and metals and the bones themselves sent on their final journey to be destroyed.

As an additional privilege the rich were able to endow chantry chapels where priests sang mass for the benefit of the souls of the dead in the afterlife. The successful and powerful merchant and mayor and MP of Salisbury, William Swayne created such a chantry chapel in St Thomas Church in 1468, as well as a two storey building to house the chantry priests (now the vestry) with a cellar. Sadly Swayne's tomb and its contents were destroyed in the 19th century. The priests' house had another function that helped with an ever increasing need for additional space in the cramped urban grave yard. When the graveyard became full, some of the oldest graves were emptied and the bones placed in the cellar of the priests' house. This became known as a skull or charnel house. In 1687 the charnel house itself was finally emptied and the bones buried for a third time elsewhere.



In the early medieval period Wilton was a thriving, prosperous market town with numerous churches. The foundation of Salisbury in 1220 changed everything and Wilton went into decline. Many of its churches fell into disuse and were demolished. In 1841 it was decided to build a new parish church in a flamboyant Italianate style. In digging the foundations numbers of skeletons were uncovered and it was realised that the new church was being built on the site of the demolished medieval church of St Nicholas.

The architects T.H. Wyatt and D.Brandon then designed a stone structure to contain the bones, to be placed on the exterior of the church wall. The Grade 1 listing of the church describes this as an 'aedicule' from the Latin *aedicula* meaning a small temple or shrine. It has the basic elements of a Roman temple: a pediment supported by pillars resting on a plinth. Protected by this structure is a stone chest or ossuary in which the bones were actually placed. Beneath is a plaque bearing a descriptive Latin inscription. Here we see the ossuary facing the graveyard and dramatically repositioning the bones high above their original resting place.

For an actual glimpse of bones moved from their original site look no further than Salisbury Museum. Here are displayed the mortal remains of the Amesbury Archer, buried some 4000 years ago and now in a glass case for all to see.

These examples indicate that the ultimate destination of human bones is never certain. The laws of chance will always play a role in determining their final resting place.

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