



# All Change on the High Street

**Heritage Open Days**  
Organised by Salisbury  
Civic Society

## Shop 13 **Boston Tea Party** 13 High Street, New Street Chequer

This 13th century building of timber and tile has three storeys plus attics. The original ground floor access to a yard and garden was enlarged when the shopping mall was developed. There are two bay windows on the first floor with different shaped roofing. Just inside the shopping mall entrance, to the left, through the window of a narrow shop can be seen one of the original 13th century walls of the building. On the ground floor is a modern front and counter area and a fine 17th century staircase with plasterwork that leads up to a first floor room with 16th and 17th century wooden panelling and a carved fireplace. A second flight of stairs leads up to an extensive area with 14th century rough hewn beams (split with axe and wedge), trusses and partitions. Notice the carved heads. Look on the wall round to the right for names of owners and lessees through the centuries since 1361.

### **History**

The 13th century building is thought to have housed workers building the Cathedral. By the 14th century it was an important coaching inn named 'Georgesin', established on the High Street and incorporating the original structures. In the 15th century it was refronted and in the 16th century it is thought the Inn Yard was used for staging plays. In 1645 Cromwell is said to have stayed here and Samuel Pepys in 1668. Pepys complained he had been overcharged! From 1760 to 1858 the building was used as dwellings rather than an Inn and in 1858, when it belonged to the City Corporation, much of it was dismantled and then re-built and extended using the old timbers. Charles Dickens is known to have stayed here. In 1961 it again became the George Inn. The ground floor shops have, like many of the buildings in Salisbury, had numerous uses. Confectioners, beer retailers and restaurants have all come and gone. From the late 19th century till the 1960s, downstairs in 11 and 13 Suttons sold baked goods prepared at their premises in Crane Bridge Road and upstairs they served customers in their restaurant. The restaurant also provided services to the adjacent Assembly rooms (which were located on the upper floor of what is now Waterstones). In 1967 the lower floor of the north range was demolished to create the entranceway into the George Shopping Mall. Two large upright timbers, one original one of later construction, support the floor above. Upper rooms were subsequently used as restaurant/ banqueting rooms.

The Boston Tea party acquired the buildings in 2010 and have undertaken extensive renovation, making great efforts to retain the fascinating character of the building. There is an account of the building's history on the counter on the ground floor.

