



# DIARY of EVENTS 2023

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For booking instructions (where applicable) visit: [www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk/events/](http://www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk/events/)  
Eventbrite bookings will be open early in the New Year

## THURSDAY JANUARY 19th NEW YEAR PARTY AND CONSERVATION AWARDS PRESENTATION

Salisbury Arts Centre, Bedwin Street,  
Salisbury SP1 3UT.

*Booking form with this magazine, and details  
already circulated by email*

## TO BE HELD IN MARCH OR APRIL OPEN MEETING

Climate Change: its impact on  
Architecture and Historic Buildings  
Methodist Church, St Edmund's Church  
Street, Salisbury SP1 1EF

*Speakers: Duncan Baker-Brown RIBA and  
Morwenna Slade of Historic England*

## WEDNESDAY MAY 10th A WALK AROUND THE WOODFORDS

An afternoon walk with Hadrian Cook.  
*Price £6.50, plus tea @ £6.00.*  
*Bookings through Brenda Hunt*

## WEDNESDAY JUNE 7th MAGNA CARTA

An afternoon walk in Salisbury, with  
David Richards.  
*Price £6.50. Bookings through Eventbrite*

## TO BE HELD IN JUNE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*To be followed by a talk*

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

## SATURDAY JUNE 17th NATIONAL CIVIC DAY

*An opportunity to join in a national  
celebration of civic pride*

## TUESDAY JULY 11th AND WEDNESDAY JULY 12th

### BUILDINGS IN DISGUISE

Two evening walks with Richard Deane,  
looking at what lies behind the face of  
historic buildings in Salisbury.

*Price £6.50. Bookings through Eventbrite*

## SATURDAY AUGUST 26th CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

An afternoon walk with David Richards,  
looking at Salisbury Cathedral Close and  
those who have lived there in the past.

*Price £6.50. Bookings through Eventbrite*

## SEPTEMBER 8th - 17th HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

An exploration of **Hidden Salisbury**

# Editorial

Assembling the magazine has now been taken on by former Development Committee chair Melanie Latham, who was one of the three architects who designed our 2009 book *Salisbury in Detail*. One of its 500+ photos is on this edition's front cover, with three more inside. After eventually having 2850 copies of the book printed, we now have fewer than 150, and another print run is very unlikely. So still available now, but it won't be indefinitely. For the magazine, we'll continue with the traditional four publications a year for members, one of them now the awards booklet, successfully pioneered for the 2021 scheme. The magazines will probably come out in December, April, and August. The awards booklet will be made available at the New Year Party, and distributed afterwards to members who couldn't be there. After this year's special circumstances Spring Party, on April 7th, there was some brief thought about perhaps moving permanently to a similar date, but we're sticking to January. It's a nice bright event to bring to that short daylength time of year, and waiting six months before handing out awards decided in October would really be too long.

There have been quite a few walks for members since the last issue, to report on in this one. Four normal walks, and then four organised as part of the Heritage Open Days events in September, plus a related talk. Another walk, covering the River Park project, had to be postponed till November, and will be described next time. As well as of course being grateful to walk leaders and speakers, we're also very grateful to the members who always come forward to record each of our events. The focus on waterways for the HODs worked extremely well, and raised some questions, on Salisbury's historic drainage channels in particular, which would bear pondering on. Why is the Wessex Water cabinet in Scots Lane, shown on page 9, located precisely where it is? And did horse-drawn carts really forsake the road surfaces and instead travel along the water filled drainage channels?

Further on, Frogg Moody has provided a handy account of City Hall, from its cinematic origins in 1936 to the question of what happens with it now. He gives his own views on recent Wiltshire Council options for its future. On the back cover is an image produced by that Council in 2019, showing a radically jazzed-up City Hall, a level of aspiration which is not currently realistic, alas. A current bid to the government's Levelling-Up Fund, covering that part of town, would certainly help, but its chances may not be all that great.

In the next magazine we'll give an update on derelict sites and difficult buildings, where hopeful signs for Steynings, in Crane Street, have not been borne out. But things are moving positively with the long empty Churchfields Road buildings, and for the ones on the old Post Office site in Castle Street, which have been emptier for even longer, guarded optimism seems justified.

**Richard Deane**

## A Warm Welcome to our New Members

We are delighted to welcome the following to the Society:

Michela Ling, Heidi Poole, Judy Salway and Duncan Alabaster, Heather Sebire, Julie Smith, Pamela Walker

# Notes from the Chair

Since the launch of the Future High Streets Fund proposals for improvements to the Station Forecourt and Fisherton Street (see article P.5 July magazine) we have been exploring ways of promoting public art in the area. It now looks as though our idea of a mural on the end wall of No. 69 Fisherton Street is a real possibility. We have met with an enthusiastic and positive response from the key people involved and are completing a brief, inviting muralists and artists to submit their proposals for designs. Although there's still some way to go, it's a worthwhile project which will make a substantial contribution to the ambience of the street and also to public art in the city.

The Salisbury Neighbourhood Plan consultation covering topics including transport, biodiversity, the design of buildings and specific sites for proposed development was extended until October 14th. In this instance the Society agreed not to put in a corporate response. Instead I submitted the Society's congratulations on the work and commitment of the steering group in producing the plan, leaving individual members to submit detailed responses.

Jamie Hobson will be joining the board of Trustees, attending meetings in a non-voting capacity until his election at the 2023 AGM. Jamie's strong background in Arts education and recent involvement with the steering group on the local Neighbourhood Development Plan will make a significant contribution to the development of the Society.

Due to ill health, James Woods has reluctantly come to the decision to stand down as an active member of the Society. This is a huge loss as James's contribution over the years has been constructive, considered and hugely supportive of our work. We wish Lis and James our very best through the next few months.

We have been joined by some new faces taking on a variety of different roles. Sara Crook has joined the Events group and will be taking over responsibility from Janet Patch for the blue plaques. There has been great success putting together a Communications team. Julie Smith has recently joined the Society bringing her extensive knowledge of the IT industry, needless to say she has been welcomed with open arms and will be taking over management of the website and our IT issues. Tara Siddons Deighton has volunteered to look after our social media accounts. Taking images from Salisbury in Detail she has put together an advent calendar on Instagram @salisburycivicsociety, launching in December. We now have a new Facebook page, Salisbury Civic Society, so please search and like us! Richard remains as editor of the magazine working with Melanie Latham on the layout and presentation. All we need now is someone to take on our PR!

Committee members are putting together a programme of events planned for 2023, apart from the activities identified on the diary page, there is in the pipeline a talk on milestones and a drawing class with a difference. Keep an eye on the events page on the SCS website to keep up-to-date. This leaves just enough room to thank you for your active support throughout the year and to wish everyone a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a very HAPPY NEW YEAR.

**Stephanie**  
***stephaniedsd@gmail.com***

# Society posts which are currently vacant

## Events Secretary

We are looking to fill the post of secretary for the GPC, recently vacated by Lis Woods. The group meet six times a year to discuss the arrangements for many of the interesting events undertaken by the Society such as walks, visits, lectures and historic blue plaques. The role involves taking and distributing minutes, liaising with the chair to prepare the agenda for each meeting, and inviting members and others as appropriate to meetings.

*If you are interested in helping please contact Judy Howles, chair of GPC at: [jhowles@icloud.com](mailto:jhowles@icloud.com)*

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## PR person for Comms team

We have recently had great success with putting together a Communications team, Julie has undertaken management of the website and will also be co-ordinating events and Tara is looking after our social media accounts. Richard remains as editor of the magazine, working with Melanie who will be putting together the layout. Now all we need is someone to look after the publicity for and promotion of the Society, which would involve liaising with all the above as well as representatives of each committee, with the aim of promoting the work and aims of the Society.

*Please contact Stephanie at [stephaniedsd@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniedsd@gmail.com) to find out more.*

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\*If you are interested in either of the above you can find detailed descriptions of both roles on the website <http://www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/>

## Post of Trustee

We are looking to include a representative from the membership of the Salisbury Civic Society on the board of Trustees, which is the Executive Committee. The purpose of the Executive is to encourage, manage and monitor the activities of the Society, so that its aims can be achieved, particularly the principal one of maintaining and enhancing the local built environment and landscape.

The number of Trustees currently stands at five, we are keen to develop the Executive base of the Society and would welcome applications in order to further our aims.

*If you feel you have something to contribute and would like to become involved, please contact Stephanie Siddons Deighton, Chair of the Society, at [stephaniedsd@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniedsd@gmail.com)*

## Blue plaques

Two new plaques will be installed in 2023, the first of them to Frances Hale. Frances was born into the building trade, taking over a substantial Salisbury company after her husband's death in 1869. Two of the most striking Victorian buildings in Salisbury were constructed by it, the Literary and Scientific Institute in New Street and Richardson's Wine Stores in the High Street and Bridge Street. The Hale plaque will be on the first of these buildings, and will be unveiled before the end of the current Her Salisbury Story exhibition at Salisbury Museum, which runs until mid-April.

The second plaque in 2023 will be to Anthony Trollope, at St Nicholas Hospital, and will be unveiled during the summer.



# Heritage Open Days

The Society's HODs programme for 2022 was on the theme of the Rivers and Waterways of Salisbury, and originally comprised seven events held between September 8th and 16th. A walk and talk on the River Park project had to be postponed because of the death of the Queen, and was held instead in early November. The other events are described here.

## Salisbury's medieval drainage channels

Chris Daniell gave a talk on the drainage channels, as a precursor to two walks led by him along the line of these medieval features, which fed water through most of the original city's streets from its outset. A fascinating talk during which some memorable facts and hypotheses were presented, among them the fact that the market place originally stretched from Blue Boar Row to the Town Ditch, which ran along New Canal in front of what is now Marks and Spencer. Butcher and Fish Rows were, it seems, medieval 'infill'.

Chris speculated on the inspiration for the water channels and suggested that Hubert Walter, Bishop of Salisbury, who went on a crusade with Richard I, may have been influenced by the water channels in Baghdad. However there was a significant amount of time between this and the building of New Sarum, and there is as yet no definitive evidence to support the theory. The water channels were, according to Chris, much wider and deeper than previously thought and he even suggested that carts may have been driven along them.

We had the benefit at the talk of several very knowledgeable local historians in the audience, including Peter Saunders, curator emeritus of Salisbury Museum and author of 'Channels to the Past', a description of the Salisbury Drainage Collection, and of the channels which provided it, before they were filled in. The talk was valuable in contextualising these unique medieval structures prior to two walks which gave additional information.

There were lively contributions from members of the group throughout the first of the two walks, the day after the talk. Starting at the Guildhall we went to the corner of Catherine Street and New Canal, to pick up on the course of the Town Ditch. Relationships between the various systems of water course, channels, ditches and the millstream were explained and discussed. As well as this, several further pieces of information about this area were added by the group, including the fact that nearby, outside the Red Lion, was the site of the 'ducking stool' where misbehaving women were punished – situated here because there was enough water for it to do an effective job.

We then walked to the bridge that crosses the Millstream at the start of Fisherton Street, a quarter of a mile below where water was taken from it to get the channels going. A spirited discussion took place in the Cheese Market just north of St Thomas's churchyard as to the likely routes of the watercourses and routes at this juncture, lying as it does on the direct route from Old Sarum to today's cathedral. There was some thought that the site of St Thomas's might even, for a time, have been the proposed site for the new cathedral. Recent ground penetrating radar revealed six very large stone post pads within the church's footprint, which might have supported uprights for a timber building, but clearly excavation is never going to prove this.

Chris showed us a map with the pad positions marked, which also showed traces of a paleochannel under the church, where the River Avon would have meandered across the landscape. Discussion also revealed a possible conflict between individual parish boundaries in the city, and the fact that administratively it is all one parish – resolved when you realise the distinction between church parishes and civil ones.

Next we went a little way up Castle Street towards Hussey's Almshouses and down Scots Lane, all the way with fascinating details of the various water courses we were following – and as always with intriguing additional information from the group.

One particularly nice piece concerned a large black box in a corner of Scots Lane, with the name of Wessex Water on it. The present-day fire services use this when they need additional water – which, of course, comes from Salisbury's underground water supplies. It is good to think of the medieval English Venice, with its unique system of water channels, still supplying our modern needs.

So we finished in the Guildhall Square again, having added another very important element to our knowledge of Salisbury's fascinating past. And as we thanked Chris for this most illuminating walk, with clearly more to say on the subject than could be covered even in walk and talk together.

***Jamie Hobson and Judy Weston***



*Millstream by Hussey's Almshouses.  
Somewhere here, 'Hussey's Hatch' fed water in the drainage channels system*



*River Avon at Stratford sub Castle - Photo: Julie Smith*



*Whitebridge Spinney interpretation board*



## The River Avon Walk

Hadrian Cook, a hydrologist and landscape historian, led a two-hour circular walk along the Avon, preceded by a presentation on the value and use of rivers in the Studio Theatre.

Hadrian's presentation took inspiration from Shozo Tanaka (1841-1913), recognised as Japan's first conservationist. "The care of rivers is not a question of rivers but of the human heart". He focused on the importance and use of rivers from prehistoric to modern times, for water; to support crops and animals; and as transport corridors.

Hadrian explained how man has changed the rivers, the subsequent impact on ecology, and present efforts to repair this. He also took us through the three key river landforms, the alluvium or river sediment on the floodplains, the river terraces and the downs, which he later pointed out on the walk. Interestingly he explained that the original name of the river Avon has been lost, Avon merely meaning river in Brittonic or Welsh, with ours being one of five river Avons in the country.

Leaving the theatre in fine weather we crossed the bridge to head east. Although the river looked natural Hadrian explained that the channel had been changed, and pointed out nearby river impairment. We continued alongside the bank, to the site of the old municipal tip, closed in the 1970s, now fortunately unrecognisable. The area has been regenerated by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust who formed the Avon Valley Nature Reserve. A key emphasis is the planting of many berry bearing bushes to support local birdlife.

We continued north along the Avon and then turned off the river past the Stratford Road Allotments, coming to where the former city of Old Sarum stood around and above us.

Hadrian narrated the history of the site, nestled below the castle, from its origins as a hill fort c. 400 BC. With the Roman Conquest of AD 43 it became known as Sorviodunum. After this period there is evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement, when a mint was sited in the old hill fort. The Normans built a substantial castle which was maintained as a royal residence for several centuries. It was here the first Salisbury Cathedral was built. He explained the fields on which we stood had once been part of a substantial city hidden beneath our feet. At this point it began to rain in earnest.

We then turned to Stratford village and passed a fine example of a cob and flint wall. We picked up the Avon again at Mill Lane and saw an example of a water meadow. Hadrian explained the meadows had been introduced into Wiltshire about 1630. Next to a river or stream, precisely engineered channels were dug so that a thin sheet of water flowed steadily across the meadows for set periods of time, depositing nutrients. In winter this had the benefit of reducing the impact of frost, and raising the soil temperature to produce early grass, enabling more animals to be kept alive by reducing the need for winter fodder. In summer the raised moisture levels increased the hay crop. It is estimated that lands which could be flooded in this way were two to three times more profitable.

We then crossed the bridge and fortunately the rain ceased and the sun reappeared. Hadrian showed where the channel of the river had been changed to accommodate a water mill and the impairment of the river, which was far wider at this point. We then started back towards Salisbury, passing picturesque river banks and the familiar view of the spire becoming increasingly visible.

Finally, we reached a raised boardwalk section back into the city, designed to make the area accessible to wheelchairs and boardwalk buggy friendly. From here we were soon back to our starting point.

Many thanks to Hadrian for leading the walk and sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm for the waterways so effectively.

**Julie Smith**

## The River Bourne Walk

Although this walk, led by Chris Daniell, was described as “A Guided Walk Along the River Bourne” it covered somewhat more than this, much of the content being sourced from the Sarum Studies book, Milford, by Richard Durman. Leaving the Guildhall we walked up Milford Street, giving Chris an opportunity to expand on his talk which opened the HODs events, and look at the medieval drainage channels. Thus we stopped briefly outside the former William IV pub (now The Vestry) allowing Chris to explain that the Town Ditch ran along New Canal and into Milford Street, where it abruptly turned right to run through the middle of Trinity Chequer.

Progressing up Milford Hill Chris pointed out that our footpath was raised above the road level and, indeed, Milford Hill was an area of elevated land between the Rivers Bourne and Avon. The road level had presumably dropped due to the weight of traffic since medieval times (horse-drawn carts etc) wearing it down creating a hollow way. Arriving at Godolphin School, Chris explained that its Cornish motto, *‘Franc ha leal eto ge’* translates to ‘Frank and Loyal Thou Art’. Chris pointed out that the crime writer, Dorothy L. Sayers was once a pupil

there. (However, he neglected to point out that Sayers’ book, ‘Whose Body’ (1923) has Lord Peter Wimsey visiting Salisbury and involves Lord Peter lunching at the Cathedral Hotel, renamed the ‘Minster Hotel’ in the novel. Hence Salisbury Civic Society awarded a Blue Plaque to the Cathedral Hotel on Milford Street).

Proceeding through Milford Hollow, part of the Clarendon Way, we paused briefly over the railway line for Chris to explain that when the railway first came to Salisbury (in 1847 - the London & South Western Railway) the station was at Milford.

We then progressed along Milford Mill Road, stopping at Milford medieval bridge, which spans the River Bourne. Here there is an interpretive board and Chris explained that the meadow to the south hides the deserted medieval village of Meleford. In these meadows and under the modern housing to the east was found 13th Century pottery and kilns while to the north (in Greenwood Avenue) had been found a Roman sarcophagus.

Entering the Whitebridge Spinney boardwalk, which runs alongside the River Bourne, Chris explained that this is a mature damp woodland. He paused to describe the ephemeral pond which is designed to dry out and then be rewetted when the water level rises. This keeps fish numbers low, allowing amphibians such as frogs and newts to thrive. An interpretive board explains that fish found in the river include brown trout (the most common), grayling, eels and even Atlantic salmon. The trees on either side of the river in the Spinney are principally alder and willow. This was a most interesting and informative walk.

**Alan Crooks**

## The River Ebble Walk

Eight of us (plus two friendly dogs) set off with guide Hadrian Cook to trace the path alongside the River Ebble from Nunton to Coombe Bissett. The day was enlightened by warm sunshine, good company and the interesting information on the area that Hadrian shared. We learned much of the part the Ebble had played in the development of the water meadows, the (now redundant) watercress beds and of the adjacent river terraces often used for arable agriculture.

There were also once several mills along the Ebble. This river is a small but typical chalk stream and in its upper regions dries out during the summer, making it a true 'winterbourne'. However the walk did not go this far up the valley.

Chalk streams are famous for their in-stream ecology and fish populations as well as providing a fairly even flow throughout the year that has stimulated industrial and agricultural development. On the floodplain itself, straight channels indicate manual intervention through channels cut for watermeadow irrigation, mills or watercress beds. On the other hand, channels with 'wiggles' indicate original river channels. Both may be associated with the former watermeadows.

The maps supplied included ones dated from 1703 to the late 19th century. They served to illustrate how the lie of the land had evolved over this period and to the present day. We left the valley bottom to walk uphill towards Dogdean Farm located on the downs on the north side of the river. The place-name element 'dean' is derived from an Old English word for a small, or shallow valley. Hadrian pointed out such a valley on the north-east side of the farm.

Enclosures and drove roads here show clear evidence of the open field system of Britford Manor that existed in 1703. At one time three large fields were divided into individual strips, each cultivated by a different farmer.

The walk crossed Homington Down, a series of pastures that have never been ploughed, and still retain original chalk grassland species. From here we descended towards Coombe Bissett, past the abandoned watercress bed, past the Fox and Goose pub and towards the bridge where the walk ended.

It was a most enjoyable and informative outing.

***Pam Cogswell***



*Scots Lane black cabinet (see page 5)*

# The Bear on the Odeon

The July magazine had a splendid cover photograph of the Bear on the gable of the Odeon cinema, which uses the C15th hall of Salisbury merchant John Hall as its foyer. This brief comment may help to place it in context.

The story of the bear is complex, involving connections to the Earls of both Warwick and Salisbury.



*St John Montague's  
tomb, Salisbury*

Alice Montague (1407-1462) was born in Salisbury as the daughter and heiress of Thomas Montague (1388-1428), 4th Earl of Salisbury. She married Richard Neville who became the 5th Earl of Salisbury by marriage.

Their eldest son, another Richard Neville (1428-1471) who was the 6th Earl of Salisbury, married Anne Beauchamp (1426-1492), 16th Countess of Warwick, becoming the 16th Earl of Warwick by marriage. His great wealth and power gave him influence with the monarchy and he became known as the King Maker.



*The Earl of  
Warwick's Arms*

The Victorian illustration of the (now unpainted) effigy from the tomb of Sir John Montague in Salisbury Cathedral shows him wearing the Salisbury arms on his tunic.

The same Salisbury arms that consisted of (Monthermer) eagles and (Montague) fusils can also be seen as part of Warwick's arms. The second Victorian print show one of Warwick's ancestors standing on a bear and holding an uprooted sapling, that would later be visually transformed into the ragged staff held by the bear to represent the Earldom of Warwick and used as a badge by his followers.

Put simplistically, the Bear and Ragged Staff on the Odeon is reminding us that the Earldoms of Salisbury and Warwick were once held by the same man, Warwick the King Maker, and that John Hall, the Mayor and MP for Salisbury, had been associated with him.

**David Richards**

In 1470 Warwick asked Salisbury city to provide 40 men to fight in the Wars of the Roses. Shortly afterwards Warwick was killed in the Battle of Barnett in 1471.

*An early ancestor of  
Warwick*





# Salisbury City Hall

With the future of City Hall recently in the news, we asked Frogg Moody to review its history for us. He includes research carried out for the book, 'Projected Passion' by Richard Nash and himself.

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At the start of the 1960s Salisbury retained, as it had for nearly a quarter of a century, three apparently thriving cinemas – The Regal in Endless Street\*, The Odeon in Fisherton Street, and the Gaumont in the New Canal. However, during the decade national cinema attendances continued the trend of the late 1950s, dropping every year. The Golden Age of cinema was passing and there were to be drastic changes in Salisbury. The continuing decline in audiences placed operators the Circuits Management Association in a position whereby it was becoming impracticable for them to keep their Salisbury cinemas running in direct competition. At the Odeon attendances of as few as 50 people had become a regular occurrence and departing staff were often not replaced.



*City Hall, as it first started out*

In 1961 CMA made the decision to axe one of the cinemas. Despite the luxurious facilities of the Odeon in Fisherton Street, it was not particularly surprising that the decision was to retain the Gaumont in the New Canal, with its history and architecture, and a better location in the city centre.

On December 30th 1961, the last Odeon feature was shown for the final time. Just as the cinema had opened with a Disney production (a Mickey Mouse short supporting King Solomon's Mines) so it closed with another – One Hundred and One Dalmatians.

The Odeon Cinema building was originally constructed in 1936 from a design by William Sidney Trent, and was first known as the New Picture House. The site had previously been the old Griffin sawmills and timber yard together with part of the back garden of the Angel Hotel – it proved to be an ideal accessible location, only a short walk from the town centre.

The most notable external feature was an attractive Art Deco frontage framed by twin brick pillars topped with ornate towers. The uninspiring side wall along Summerlock Approach has the look of something not meant to be seen, which is indeed the case – the approach to the central car park was only created in the late 1960s or early 70s, and originally other buildings stood right next door to the cinema. The Odeon officially closed on December 31st 1961 and was purchased by the City of New Sarum for conversion to a multi-purpose civic hall, to be dedicated as a memorial to the local men and women who lost their lives during World War II.

Extensive works were required to convert the cinema into a functional civic hall. The auditorium was remodelled to provide a semi-sprung dance floor, tiered seating, a restaurant and smaller function room, and a new main staircase, pay box, bar and lounge area were installed in the foyer and entrance hall. A new scenery dock was constructed at the stage end of the hall. The cost of purchasing and converting the building was £81,800, met by the city's Victory Fund plus additional funds built up over a number of years.

The hall was opened with an official luncheon on January 30th 1963. A plaque was unveiled in the foyer, which read 'As a lasting tribute to the citizens of Salisbury who served in the Second World War 1939 - 45 the provision of this hall was made possible by the united efforts of our community'. The opening, dedication and luncheon was led by Alderman Francis Moore (the chairman of the Victory Fund Committee), and hosted by the Mayor and Corporation.

Through the 1960s and early 1970s the City Hall hosted concerts by many of the most famous names in British music including The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin. Concerts and comedy shows continued through subsequent decades, during which time many other events and dances, including wrestling and Salisbury Amateur Operatic Society productions were hosted. Further physical changes were made to the building over the years, including removal of the tops of the two towers, and disappearance of the curved entrance canopy. All the Art Deco interior decoration has gone. Reinstating an entrance from Fisherton Street would not now be impossible, but it would be far from straightforward.

The hall was closed during the Covid lockdown in 2020 and is now in use as a regional vaccination centre, until March 2023. After that its future remains undecided. In a paper released on October 11th 2022 under the title of "Remobilisation of City Hall", Wiltshire Council gave three proposals.

Option 1 was to source a third party organisation to operate City Hall as an entertainment venue on behalf of Wiltshire Council. Option 2 was for Wiltshire Council to manage and operate it internally, using the same model as prior to closure in 2020. Option 3 was to sell or asset transfer the building to a suitable external organisation for use as an entertainment venue.

The conclusion of this 13 page document is that "It is recommended that Option 1 be agreed, and Wiltshire Council seek to source an external organisation to operate the venue." In my opinion, this council recommended option might result in the alienation of local acts that, in the past, have used the City Hall as their favoured venue – Salisbury Operatic Society being one such group. Of the other two options, it seems obvious that the council regards the City Hall as a venue that loses money and therefore Option 2, while it might well be the best, is actually a non-starter. On the final option, I think that the idea of selling Salisbury's WWII memorial building is ethically wrong, and that Option 3 should never even have been put forward.

\* In 1969 the Regal Cinema in Endless Street became a bingo hall and remained so until 2020. It is refreshing to see that a conversion is at present being carried out by Everyman Cinemas, to return the establishment to its original use.

***Frogg Moody***

# In the footsteps of Pevsner, a city walk with Richard Deane

We met outside the tourist office on a lovely July evening and Richard explained to us that he was going to use Pevsner as the framework for our walk. Not just the original Pevsner but the revised version of 2021 by Julian Orbach. The latter had made a lot of discoveries about Salisbury, for instance increasing the number of named architects from 19 to 84. Richard pointed out the genuine medieval oriel windows (i.e. projecting windows not supported from the ground) on the house to the right of Pritchetts, the butchers. He described the Moss Bros building with its two overhanging jetties as a typical Salisbury building of the C16th, with equally typical later alterations. The windows were an early C19th addition with railings of the same date by Lewis Cottingham, a Gothic pioneer and one of Julian's new names.

We turned into New Canal and near the corner with Catherine Street stands a tall brick building, put up as Bloom's department store. It was an unusually austere design by Fred Bath who was a notable local architect of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He apparently had no fixed stylistic principles, but was happy to use any style which worked for a particular purpose. Further on, we looked at the frontage of the Odeon which dates back to 1881 and is also a work by Fred Bath, much more flamboyant than Bloom's with Gothic barge boards running up the side of the roof, and a carved timber bear on top. Richard also pointed out the 'White Stuff' building opposite of 1858 which started as a police station, with a pediment to give it the look of a building of some importance. Nearby is an old weighbridge set into the tarmac, no longer functional. Over the road, 'Blacks' looks rather dilapidated. It is apparently owned by M&S. The projecting 'Electric House' clock needs to have its internal illumination got working again, with new glass and a general tidying-up. Further along New Canal we could see the Old George Mall of 1965-71. Its creation did a lot of damage to the buildings on this street, with much behind the brick facades rebuilt, and some lovely staircases going. Julian Orbach describes alterations to the Mall of 1995 as 'feeble pastel Georgian' and the archway from New Canal of the same date as 'bombastic'. At the end of the street, Waterstones was originally Assembly Rooms of soon after 1800, converted for use by WH Smith in 1924 (with their very recognisable clock on top).

Turning north into the High Street, the building on the corner, dating from the 1930s, was the original Boots. It has a lot of Ham Hill stone from Somerset on its frontage, easily recognisable being yellowish in colour. Chilmark stone is rare outside the Close, Richard told us. Barclays Bank opposite was built in 1874, also using Ham Hill, but with red sandstone columns from Devon dividing the windows. From the C19th onwards, stones in the city are not necessarily of local origin.

Turning into Silver Street, Richard pointed out the mock Tudor Boots building of 1934, formerly Marks & Spencer (the initial classical design had been rejected) and the 'Tiger' building, built in 1928, which originally housed 'Burton Tailoring'. In this case a neo-Georgian design had replaced an initial thirties-modern one. Going along Minster Street Richard pointed out the fine moulded beam half way up the building next to the Poultry Cross, itself sadly damaged by vehicle impact and awaiting repairs when we saw it.



*'Wiggle' on the River Ebbles, Odstock (see page 9)*



*Ham Hill stone and Devon sandstone  
(see page 13)*



*Winchester Street firemark  
The Phoenix Assurance Company*





*Peace and Plenty, on top of Lloyds bank (see next page)*



*New Canal former Police Station (see page 13)*

On the corner of Minster Street and the Market Place there is another of Fred Bath's buildings with a double decker oriel window on the corner. Lloyds Bank opposite is another case of the use of Ham Hill stone, though the splendid sculpture of Peace & Plenty on top is of Portland stone, as Ham Hill wouldn't take that sort of detail. The original Pevsner described the first floor pillars as having 'fancy capitals (egyptianising?)', while Julian Orbach omits the Egyptian reference, which Richard thought a shame. He returned to the Egyptian topic later.

Turning to the Cheese Market, we penetrated a rather uninviting gateway on the right of Dingham's, and immediately found a C14th wall beside an alleyway. At the end, out of sight and out of reach to the public, is Eyre House of c.1680, described by Julian Orbach as 'horribly encompassed', which is certainly the case. It retains a fine late C17th staircase, reputedly accessible through 'The Giggling Squid'.

We went on into Castle Street and stopped next on the corner of Chipper Lane, where there's Ham Hill stone to Lloyds on the south and Chilmark to the old post office on the north. Going further along Castle Street there is a listed Georgian house, set back from the road, with two listed red phone boxes, a splendid entrance porch and lovely listed railings in front. Unfortunately, the house has been long empty, hopefully to be rescued by plans for re-use of this whole part of Castle Street.

We turned down Scots Lane to Endless Street, which has some fine Georgian houses, and less wonderful pseudo Georgian ones. Loder House, a Grade II\* listed building, used to have, until the 1960s at least, beautiful interiors but they all disappeared in very murky circumstances. At the eastern end of Chipper Lane is the former Regal Cinema of 1936, lately a bingo hall and now due to become an Everyman Cinema. Julian Orbach describes it as 'thirties-modern without flair', but the new use should improve its appearance.

Next we went to the Methodist Church in St Edmund's Church Street. Richard told us that an engraving of 1811 belonging to the church shows it as then having an Egyptian style. However one of Julian Orbach's most singular discoveries was that the Baptist church in Brown Street also have a copy of the engraving, and claim it to show an earlier version of their own building. He was unable to establish which of the churches it actually shows. On a house next to the Methodist church, the capitals on the doorway certainly show an Egyptian influence. The houses No 6, 4 & 2 show Gothic influence on their door jambs.

The corner house on St Edmund's Church Street and Winchester Street, dating from 1673, is worthy of note, having had a new frontage put on in the late C18th of mathematical tiles, which make it look like brick but betray their identity on the south-east corner. There are about 40 buildings with mathematical tiles in Salisbury, the technique used to bring old buildings up to date, as well as for new ones.

We turned into Winchester Street and Richard drew our attention to one of a dozen or so fire insurance plaques still on buildings in Salisbury. Further on the right is the former Old George, originating from c.1500 and with moulded C18th heads made from Coade Stone above the windows, the only definite use of this material in the city.

In Queen Street next to Guildhall Square Richard mentioned Cross Keys House of 1878 which Pevsner originally called 'pretentious' while Julian Orbach calls it 'flamboyant'. Richard much preferred the latter adjective. It has worrying signs of decay to its nice details. Further south in Queen Street there is a range of rebuilt frontages of the 1970s, quite well done. One of them, now Gallery 21, retains an excellent C18th staircase within its display area, and some splendid plasterwork, all visible to the public.

The last building we looked at was the Guildhall, where Julian Orbach's original draft text had not referred to the two large windows on the front. Richard was one of several people commenting on the draft, and his suggestion that the windows showed an unexpected baroque effect had been taken up by Julian. More mathematical tiles can be seen on the Queen Street side of the Guildhall, this time black ones in two blind windows.

We all marvelled at the deep and detailed knowledge Richard has of the buildings in Salisbury and we were grateful to him for drawing so many of their special features to our attention. We all had a thoroughly enjoyable and informative city walk.

***Edith Colston***

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## **Odstock and Nunton Village Walk**

The villages of Odstock and Nunton feature in the Domesday Book, but the hillfort at Clearbury and numerous surrounding earthworks suggest that the area has been a 'des res' for very much longer.

On the June day when Hazel Docherty led our walk the countryside looked idyllic. The sweeping, wildflower-rich chalk downland may not lend itself to easy mechanical cultivation but is a paradise for sheep, hence the inhabitants have traditionally been mostly shepherds. The landscape bears the imprint of carters and drovers in its deep hollow-ways and every now and then traffic has still to pause to allow the unhurried crossing of cattle from meadow to milking.

But nowadays the shepherd's crook has largely been replaced by the rod of Aesculapius. The original military medical unit grew rapidly in the treatment of burns after World War II and, for easier access,

the city's old infirmary joined it in Odstock, which is now closely identified with the hospital and where some of its staff have settled.

The village may have lost its post office but Longford Castle overlooking the river Avon stamps the area with its authority as chief landlord. The many pretty red-brick cottages were built to house estate staff in the last century and now, in partnership with Nunton Farm, the Earl of Radnor has developed the impressive Longford Dairy. The lack of village shop is somewhat compensated for by a milk-vending kiosk next to the Radnor Arms which gives villagers a wholesome reason for dropping by. This trend is spreading as consumers and farmers yearn to bypass supermarkets and their plastic bottles, although since the monitoring of the vast Nunton dairy herd is highly computerised it's not exactly a nostalgic return to simpler times.

As we started up the steep road to the downs from the Yew Tree pub Hazel pointed out a deep chalk quarry, now overgrown with nettles, which provided past farmers with lime for their fields and gypsies with a sheltered campsite. Then, walking parallel to the Ebble, we looked down on the rosy roofs of ancient Glebe Farm where, legend has it, Oliver Cromwell was briefly housed in an inn during the siege of Longford Castle. While sheep graze the downs, cattle are happier in the lush meadows lining the Ebble which produce the hay we saw being 'cut and dried' in the sun. Here the distant chimneys of the hospital could just be seen.

Fields of rapeseed here are sometimes varied with flax and Hazel recalled one year when a local wit painted and erected a dolphin leaping in the sea of blue. Glebe House, a picturesque early 17th century building, was once the parsonage with its meadow cultivated for the clergyman's living. The small knots of council housing are enviably situated, but now mostly in private hands.

Odstock Manor dates from the late 16th century and, though its original three wings are now reduced to one, it still presents a handsome brick front set back from the road. Its first family were Roman Catholics and had to live under the penal restrictions of the times that even banned them from visiting Salisbury on market days! They had their own chapel in the barn and presumably secret visits from fugitive priests. Nowadays it is home to Lord Marland, and the Boxing Day Hunt, rather than priest-hunters, musters in its drive.

Having reared her boys in the village, Hazel had delightful anecdotes about frog ponds and home-made raft races featured in the annual fete.

These produced many acts of derring-do and one of barefaced cheating as inventive youngsters cut foot-holes in their raft and were seen 'legging it' across the fields. The Jubilee Garden is Odstock's 'swimming pool', functioning only when the icy Ebble stream has been dammed by enthusiasts who are brave enough to try it.

Odstock's St Mary's is a typical village church reconstructed in the 17th century from a 12th century foundation. Its pulpit comes from the aforementioned barn-chapel of the Manor House. As we stood in the churchyard beside the rose-covered headstone of gypsy Joshua Scamp, Hazel told us his moving story. He was hanged for stealing a colt, an offence actually committed by his son-in-law but, to save his daughter from penury, Joshua confessed to the deed. A plaque on his grave pays tribute to his sacrificial love. The legendary gypsy's curse on anyone who tried to lock the church door was seemingly averted when the villagers, fearing for their precious vessels, formed a communal ring to do the deed.

At this point the clock informed us that we should head at once for the Radnor Arms in Nunton and save a visit to its church for another day.

Hazel's love and enthusiasm for her home territory, her funny and fascinating anecdotes, the glorious surrounding downland, wood and water-meadow, the clement weather and finally the scrumptious tea served at the Radnor Arms, all made for a highly enjoyable excursion.

Thank you, Hazel.

***Fiona Donovan***





*Glebe House, Odstock (see page 18)*



*Philipps House, Dinton (see next page)*

## Dinton Village Walk - led by David Richards

On August 20th a group of Civic Society members were lucky enough to enjoy a fascinating tour of Dinton, led by David Richards, drawing on his skills as a Blue Badge guide and comprehensive knowledge as a resident of Dinton for more than 50 years. The theme of the walk was 'Dinton in War and Peace', but David's willingness to answer our questions on the history and architecture of the village turned it into a much wider exploration – and a much longer tour than originally planned!

Situated below a greensand ridge and on the main Saxon road from London to Exeter, the oldest part of the village forms a triangle around a large field gifted by the Philipps family in 1920 to commemorate WWI. We started our tour with a view over the Philipps House estate. The house was rebuilt in the C18th with a 'natural' landscape engineered to match. It seems unchanged since then, but during WWII the US army installed a small town of corrugated iron huts here housing 2000 men and a theatre, all now completely vanished. Some distance away from these, storage sheds were built for artillery ammunition, now usefully repurposed for housing fireworks!

Moving into the village proper, the C12th St Mary's Church had stories of its own, despite substantial Victorian renovation. The square Norman font, with gothic arches carved on two sides, but Romanesque-style arches on the other two, was the subject of much discussion. We speculated as to why the arches differed in design and whether they were carved at different times. The organ was built in memory of Henry Lawes, born in 1595 in Dinton, a member of the King's Musicians (under Charles I), friend of Milton and composer of music for the court. David suggested he would have known Charles I well since his brother William was a drinking companion of the young king.

Hanging on the south wall was the requisite painted panel displaying the royal coat of arms of the current reigning monarch, although by the time of William IV, the requirement was no longer monitored. The arms at Dinton suggest that the last time the parish approved a new painting was for George II in 1740. Outside the church David introduced us to the last relic of the Dominican Friary that stood in Salisbury for 250 years. Following its dissolution, their Preaching Cross was bought and installed in the churchyard. Its remains are the only physical trace of the friary (although the Sainsburys supermarket on the site does have a spire in a nod to the former occupants.) David suggested the purchase of the cross points to Dinton being a hotbed of Catholicism during the Reformation.

The churchyard has some fine examples of chest tombs, for families wanting to display their wealth. Also, a single Commonwealth War Grave and an almost insignificant grave marker for a once renowned resident, Constance Penruddocke. Thousands of Australian soldiers passed through the local army camp in WW1. Constance, a maiden lady of the landed gentry, whose thatched house is visible from the churchyard, took it upon herself to welcome these men. So many were invited to afternoon tea at her home that she became known as the 'Aussie Mother' - a rare friendly contact in a country far from home.

There is a memorial to her in Canberra and, despite her request that no fancy grave be given her, the local history society has placed a metal plaque on her burial plot, the unveiling of which was attended by the Defence Attaché from the Australian High Commission in London.

Other notable residents of the village include Edward Hyde, 1st Lord Clarendon, born in Hyde's House, who was Lord Chancellor to Charles I and father-in-law to James II. Outside the churchyard stands a thatched barn belonging to Hyde's House. At the beginning of the C19th the revival of the picturesque in rural architecture led to the addition of a Cottage Orn  style long porch, which must have seemed an odd feature to the children attending the Free School that was here until the building of the National School.

Walking along the original Saxon village street – Snowhill – we saw examples of buildings from the medieval to the C21st . The older houses reflect the tradition of building with local materials: greensand, Chilmark stone and rubble. The arrival of the railways in the Victorian period saw many thatched roofs replaced with Welsh slate. In what David described as 'The Great Bungalow Massacre' 1960s planners, believing old houses to be unsanitary, approved the replacement of smaller ones with neat bungalows in parts of the village; the stones of the older houses surviving in the garden walls. But then history repeats itself, a 60s house is recently refurbished with smaller windows and render covering bare brickwork, reflecting current preferences for a more Georgian look. While a house name can hint at a hidden history: Mitre Cottage was named in reference to the permission given to Captain Rowbotham to install a Catholic chapel upstairs (now deconsecrated), though only local knowledge could reveal that one small nameless building, nearby, was once used for slaughtering pigs.

David was kind enough to allow us to invade his beautiful garden and admire the delightful garden rooms that surround his C18th home. Originally owned by the Pembroke Estate, it was constructed with stone, brick, and wooden cladding from woods and fields in the local area.

The Rev George Engleheart, owner of Little Clarendon, was best known for his daffodil breeding for which he won awards from the Royal Horticultural Society. More unusually, when his wife converted to Catholicism, he converted an outbuilding to a Catholic chapel with pillars from 4 poster beds inside. Walking back along the old turnpike road (now part of the B3089) the architecture is more modern, although one resident has already adapted his estate house to incorporate a charming half-timbered upper storey. We paused while David told us that plans for a field bordering the B road had been originally submitted for a care home but planners resisted, and three executive homes were subsequently built. Older residents in the pub counselled against this saying the area flooded and sure enough a few years after construction, a small water source rising in the area did just that.

All in all we had a fascinating afternoon strolling about in the sunshine.

***Nicolette Beardsmore***

# Churches in South Wiltshire in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust

## St Nicholas's , Fisherton Delamere

Fisherton Delamere church (BA12 0PZ), a mile NE of Wylve village, can be approached the easy way, or the picturesque one. It's a short drive off the A36, just W of the A303 crossover, and you should be able to park outside the churchyard. A more satisfying route, if you have time to spare, is along a footpath which starts on the B road between Wylve and Stockton, and makes its way through the fields until a footbridge over the river takes you into Fisherton Delamere hamlet, which is tiny.

The church dates from the 13th and 14th centuries, much rebuilt in the C19th. Some Norman fragments survive, built in. At the W end of the nave is a wooden gallery of 1833, while in front of the chancel arch is a roof loft of 1912, based on Welsh models (the one of around 1520 at St Margaret's, actually just over the border in Herefordshire, is worth going many a mile to see). There's some simple but nice Victorian glass, a splendid George III coat of arms, and an imposing Ten Commandments board. In the nave is a poignant reminder of child mortality in olden times – a tablet commemorating two young children of an early C17th vicar, one shown in a shroud, and one in bed.

Probably a church which doesn't get as many visitors as it should, and worth seeking out – almost always open.







*Dinton Church coat of arms (see page 20)*



*Blue Boar Row Wyvern (see page 28)*

## Salisbury's Rubbing House - A Very Rare Survivor

The Buck Brothers' engraving 'The North East Prospect of the City of Salisbury' is dated 1734. On the south-western horizon is a protuberance. The key labels it 'The Rubbing House'. What is or was a Rubbing House – an early type of 'massage parlour'? The receiver of the 'rubbing' was in fact a horse and the building, still standing, is the oldest of its type in England and maybe the oldest racecourse building anywhere in the world (photo on back cover). It has been dated from early maps as being constructed between 1675 (John Ogilby's Britannia Atlas) and 1706 (William Naish's Map of Stratford Tony).

The establishment of Salisbury's racecourse is second only to Chester in England. The first recorded race was in 1584 but there may have been earlier ones. The course at Salisbury was originally three to four miles long, running west of the current one and along the old Shaftesbury Drove. In those early days, horse races (often run alongside hare courses) were operated via heats of between two or three animals.

The racehorse population was small and races run infrequently during this period. Though horses were bred for stamina they did need resting before being walked back to the start of the course for the next heat. Rubbing or Rubbing Down Houses were built at the end of racecourses. The horse entered, with its rider, to be rubbed down with a wooden scraper to remove sweat, dust and dirt. It was thought beneficial for horses to sweat so they trained wearing rugs. The Rubbing House also kept the horses warm and rested between heats. Rubbing Houses were also built at training centres with examples at Middleham (Yorks) and Lambourn (Berks). In 1665 a set of written articles, the earliest national racing rules, were produced for the Town Plate race at Newmarket.

One of the rules states that *'it is allowed for any horse to be relieved at the discretion of the owner at the end of each heat, and every horse shall have half an hour's time to rub between each heat.'*



***'Firetail with his Trainer by the Rubbing-Down House on Newmarket Heath'***  
***a painting by George Stubbs***

(Wikimedia Commons)

The Salisbury Rubbing House was listed Grade II in 2020 and its architectural importance is specified by Historic England as 'a well-detailed building which, although primarily functional, is of good quality and reflects the significance of the role it performed; it incorporates features specific to its use, such as the tall entrance, splayed jambs designed to protect horses from injury and tethering rings; despite the loss of the original roof structure and some rebuilding, it retains a high proportion of early fabric'.

These buildings were simple single storey structures comprising a single space. The Salisbury one is classically proportioned at 30 ft by 20ft. It contains one door tall enough for a horse and rider. Later rubbing houses were longer with up to five entrance doors. The listing describes it as a 'building of three bays, constructed of horizontal bands of cut and squared stone, flint nodules and red brick; the most regular banding is to the east elevation. The entrance front (south) has ashlar quoins and a tall, central doorway, tall enough to allow horse and rider to enter. It has a segmental-arched brick head and a pair of modern timber plank doors; the upper part of the opening has been boarded over. Set in the wall above the doorway is a heavily-weathered stone that may once have been carved. There is a small, low opening with a timber lintel in the east elevation. It has been infilled, but was possibly a drain. The rear wall has been partially rebuilt and has a large crack towards its eastern end. Inside there are two iron tethering rings set into the back (north) wall. The floor has been laid with concrete. The roof timbers are late C20 and the underside of the roof is boarded'.

The stones used have been identified as Hurdcott (the local greensand) and Chilmark.

All the materials were probably recycled from elsewhere, likely to have been from the Pembroke estate, which owned the land and whose family were in charge of the racing. The roof, now covered in bitumen sheeting, was originally hipped and likely to have been tiled, as shown in a photograph dated 1902. The building stands on the north side of the current more easterly racecourse, close to the winning post, not far from the road and amongst other storage buildings. It is adjacent to a small triangular plantation called 'Rubbing House Folly' on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 and still shown as such on the Wiltshire Council's online planning map. 'Folly' in this instance is a local term for a small group of trees.

Rubbing Houses seem to have gone out of fashion in the late C19th. Initially found all over the country, from Doncaster to Goodwood, it seems that only two survive in their original form at Salisbury and Newmarket. At the latter establishment there were several spread out over their many courses there but their only surviving one dates from around 1860. Latterly the Salisbury Rubbing House has been used for storage. The management at Salisbury Racecourse have appointed architects to oversee a restoration programme, listed building consent has been granted and the scheme will go out to tender in due course. The Civic Society looks forward to viewing the finished structure and admiring possibly the oldest racecourse building in the world on our doorstep.

### ***Rosemary Pemberton***

*With thanks to Jim Beavis, author 'The History of Salisbury Racecourse', Steve Hannath, author of 'Chalk and Cheese' on Wiltshire rocks and Jeremy Martin, Executive Director, Salisbury Racecourse.*

# Along the Line: A Life in Archaeology

## Phil Harding.

In the 1950's I remember a BBC quiz programme, Animal, Vegetable and Mineral, in which archaeologists Glyn Daniels and the twirly moustachioed Mortimer Wheeler competed in identifying ancient objects and artefacts. After Rag, Tag and Bobtail it was compelling. It coincided with my interest in the Eagle comic which made me aware of the possibility of archaeology as a career. Each issue carried a half page strip on 'How to become... a nuclear physicist, a pilot etc etc'. It was the issue which offered a future as an archaeologist which fascinated me, but depressingly it stated that to become an archaeologist a boy - always a boy - needed A levels in physics, chemistry, and biology.

When I mentioned the necessity for science qualifications to Phil Harding one day he said, 'rubbish, all you needed was a shovel' and he was correct. Phil's talk, at the AGM in June, charted his love of archaeology as a schoolboy and subsequent career through numerous digs around the country. Fascinatingly he contextualised it with a graphic which, at the bottom of each slide, showed the number of people classed as professional archaeologists during points in Phil's career.

Britain's and maybe the world's best known archaeologist of the 19th century was undoubtedly General Pitt Rivers, but just 40 years or so after his death there were only 24 professional archaeologists working in the country. By the time that Phil was born in 1950 the number had risen to 117.

Phil's first dig was at Overton Down and as a result he was awarded a senior scout badge, under the supervision of the Extra Mural Department at the University of Bristol alongside a glowing report from the lead archaeologist. In 1972 at Grimes Graves Phil started knapping flints, by which time there were estimated to be 200 professional archaeologists. Phil's enthusiasm was evident in his diary entries. It was in the following year that regional units were established and there was a hint from the British Museum that Phil may 'get full time paid employment'. The digs that Phil participated in were some of the most important in the region if not the country and by 1990 he had a significant profile amongst his contemporaries. This developed into the public domain in 1993 when Channel 4 started broadcasting Time Team, arguably one of the most important and influential programmes devoted to archaeology. There were then 2900 professional archaeologists in the UK.

Such was Time Team's success that Phil was immortalised in comics such as Viz and Beano. Meanwhile he continued working with Wessex Archaeology in a broad range of excavations including many in Salisbury. By 2007 there were 6865 professional archaeologists. Following his talk Phil took questions including whether he was supportive of the proposed Stonehenge Tunnel. To this he didn't commit himself but was effusive when asked about his favourite dig. It was one undertaken at Bulford, finds from which indicated a close relationship between this area and the Orcadian site of the Ness of Brodgar.



Another question elicited the information that Phil has a book coming out near Christmas. Published by Wessex Archaeology it's called *Joining the Dots* and pulls together all the information from 40 years of excavations in Salisbury. We look forward to reviewing it in, hopefully, the April issue of this magazine.

A fascinating and informative talk which was as much about the history of archaeology in the UK as it was about the speaker.

The proposed tunnel will increase the number of professional archaeologists by 60.

**Jamie Hobson**



*Phil Harding, for once hatless, in 1978, tidying up after metal detectorists had illegally plundered Britain's largest Roman coin hoard at the former Cunetio, near Marlborough*

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## Wizards, Witches and Wiltshire Folklore

A group of us met with David Richards, a Blue Badge Guide, outside the Information Centre at the back of the Guildhall, where he set the scene for the walk.

With the open sewers in medieval Salisbury, disease and ill health were rife and anyone or anything which might alleviate or cure the people was welcomed. The power of belief of recovery therefore rested either with religion or superstition – church or magic. After the Reformation the Puritans outlawed Catholic practices and people turned more often to local wise men and women for help and support.

Outside the Odeon cinema we looked at some of the mythical animals and the qualities they portray – the Wyvern, the Griffin, the Winged Lion, and the Red Lion. We looked at the Red Lion Hotel, formerly the White Bear, where the Ducking Stool had stood. David included historical facts about some properties in Queen Street. The house of John A'Port where a dead cat was found walled up (cats were thought to listen to people's conversations and then spread gossip). William Russell's House with its hanging mathematical tiles. Cross Keys House, originally a bank with stone images of dragons – trustworthy protectors of one's money perhaps?

In 1227 Henry III granted the Bishop of Salisbury a charter for his town which included the right to hold a weekly market in the Market Place. This also became a central place for punishment with a whipping post, stocks, and a pillory. Lydie Shears, a crotchety old crone, was often to be found begging for snuff and baccy from the farmers. She was called the Witch of Winterslow and it was said that she had magical powers for good and evil and could change herself into a hare. David pointed out the lion statue on the War Memorial, a symbol of strength and courage.

Looking across we saw the Wyvern on the Timpson's building and the Phoenix on the building now housing the Giggling Squid restaurant. We were shown a picture of the coat of arms of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service which has the Wiltshire Wyvern and the Dorset Salamander. The Blue Boar was the symbol of the Earls of Oxford, and the White Boar was the symbol of Richard III who was linked with the execution of the Duke of Buckingham here.

At St Thomas's church with its yew hedge to keep out evil spirits, the north porch, now demolished, was called the Devil's door and it is said that a black dog was buried under the path to keep the building safe. Dr Simon Forman, a national figure who was believed to have rented upper rooms in the north porch, was an astrologer and after the discovery of a set of crucibles, he was thought to be an alchemist and was arrested for working as a doctor with magic spells (see the magazine of March 2020). Inside we saw many examples of animal symbols in the coats of arms, stained glass windows and the Doom painting.

At the site of the Gaol we heard about Agnes Mylles who was convicted at the Assizes of murdering her infant son by magic.

She was hanged just outside the city at Gallows Gate, now St Paul's roundabout. Anne Bodenham, a teacher who lived in Fisherton Street was the typical character of a witch. She had a black dog and black cat and could find lost things using a scrying glass, a crystal ball. She was accused by a young woman of practising magic, was sent for trial and also hanged, during the 17th century witch hunt. Accused wizards were sent to prison or pilloried but survived.

James I became interested in the case of Wizard Cantle, from Devizes. He was investigated by a courtier, tried and was imprisoned. Moving into the Close we heard about Leonard Bilson of the North Canonry, who, although a churchman, was also persecuted, and pilloried. His Latin, Catholic prayers were thought to be incantations, and stories of Catholic miracles linked religion with sorcery to create suspicion.

With a look at the statues of St George and St Margaret of Antioch on the west front of the Cathedral, our walk was finished. Our thanks to David for an interesting, entertaining walk and to Brenda Hunt for arranging it.

### ***Melodie Brookes***



*Anne Bodenham, conjuring up devils*

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stephaniesd@gmail.com

**VICE CHAIR:** Richard Deane  
rdeane@madasafish.com

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Rosemary Pemberton** (Secretary)  
rosemary.pemberton@hotmail.co.uk

**Adrian Harris** (Treasurer)  
scstreasurer@virginmedia.com

**Judy Howles** (GP Committee)  
howles@ntlworld.com

**Richard Deane** (Membership)  
rdeane@madasafish.com

**Communications** – Julie Smith (website)  
julie@juliesmith.plus.com

## DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**Paul Stevens** (Acting Chairman)  
admin@paulstevensarchitecture.co.uk

**Richard Deane** (Secretary)  
rdeane@madasafish.com

**Leslie Lipscombe**  
leslie.lipscombe@btopenworld.com

**Nicola Lipscombe**  
nicola.lipscombe@btinternet.com

**Elaine Milton**  
emilton@emhp.co.uk

**Louise Rendell**  
louise@stannsgate.com

**Melanie Latham**  
melanielatham56@gmail.com

**David Gregory**  
david.gregory.architects@googlemail.com

**James Salman**  
salman3180@gmail.com

**Hans-Dieter Scholz**  
hdieterscholz@msn.com

**John Comparelli**  
comparelli@btinternet.com

**Steve Sims**  
steversims@icloud.com

**Michael Lyons**  
mike@mlarchitecture.co.uk

**Heidi Poole** (CPRE)  
heidi\_poole@yahoo.co.uk

## GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Judy Howles** (Chair)  
howles@ntlworld.com

**Brenda Hunt** (Visits)  
brendahunt@clara.net

**Janet Patch** (Blue Plaques)  
patch.janet@gmail.com

**Sara Crook** (Blue Plaques)  
kettles52@hotmail.com

**Jamie Hobson** (Lectures)  
jamie.hobson@icloud.com

**Janet Draper** (Heritage Open Days 2023)  
janetd888@gmail.com

**Paul Draper** (Heritage Open Days 2023)  
P.R.Draper@ex.ac.uk

**Cathy Chalk**  
familychalk@me.com

**Hadrian Cook**  
hadrian@salisburywatermeadows.org.uk

**Frogg Moody**  
frogg@timezonepublishing.com





*The Rubbing House at Salisbury Racecourse (see page 24)*



*City Hall reimagined in 2019 – conjectural only (see page 11) Image: Wiltshire Council*

