



MARCH 2022

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## EDITORIAL

In the last edition of this magazine we read of the farewell of our previous chairman, Peter Dunbar. So I now have the pleasure of introducing his successor, Stephanie Siddons Deighton. She is already well known to the Society and has filled several roles in its administration, some of considerable technical complexity.

This edition distinguishes itself in carrying two articles which promise to determine how the Society progresses, hopefully with improvement in the future. Also there are some articles of welcome novelty. However the major purpose of the Society is reflected by Richard Deane's first half of his analysis as to why there are some derelict buildings in Salisbury that can only be described as eyesores, which have been present too long. He provides useful history and comments about the future. More in July.

The Society's book *Salisbury in Detail*, published in 2009, has been a great success. Copies are still available, for now. From this issue on we will be featuring one full-page image from it every time, starting with the extremely early example on the back cover of a date on a piece of leadwork. The front cover shows a case of something we missed when the book was put together.

By the next edition, judging by various graphics in the press, and by the wise predictions of several of our ever increasing number of Professors of Epidemiology, we shall be largely rid of the attention of the wretched virus. So, till then, best wishes for the Spring.

*Charles Villiers*

***Photographs: Unless otherwise attributed - Richard Deane***

## COVER ILLUSTRATIONS

Front: Wyndham Arms, Estcourt Road, Salisbury - Bacchus

Back: New Street - Rainwater Head

## EVENTS - PLEASE NOTE !

For booking instructions and current updates on all events please go to the 'Salisbury Civic Society' website and go straight to Events, which is kept up to date and gives all booking instructions

**[www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk/events/](http://www.salisburycivicsociety.org.uk/events/)**

## **NEWS FROM THE CHAIR - MARCH 2022**

The good news is that we are going ahead with the SPRING PARTY & AWARDS EVENING on Thursday 7th April (details are available online and application forms are included with this edition of the Magazine) we have two years of awards to present so it will be a good evening.

I'd like to welcome Cathy Chalk, our latest active member who has recently joined the GP team, working with Janet Patch on the historic blue plaques programme. Cathy's membership follows a family tradition, her father Stan Sleeman was a member of the Development group from its start in 1985 until his death in 1993. A very regular attender, he is remembered as 'keeping us on our toes when it came to historical considerations'. Cathy may well follow in his footsteps, and we are delighted to have her on board.

These winter months have been full of activity putting together the programme of events for the forthcoming year. Co-working with other groups with similar interests has been a great success. The Sarum Arts Society invited Civic Society members to their talk on Mayhem in the Cathedral and Paul Hooley in conjunction with the Association of Jewish Refugees invited members to join Paul's talk on Wolfe Frank, following the unveiling of the plaque in Mere in October. Members have also been invited to join The Society of Landscape Studies weekend in April, exploring 'A Tale of Two Cities: Old & New Sarum'.

Jamie Hobson and others will be reviving our involvement with the national Heritage Open Days initiative in September and are putting together a week of activity exploring the Rivers and Water Courses of Salisbury. We have been in discussion with Civic Voice, as part of their five-year annual review, apparently the Salisbury Civic Society is one of the larger groups in the country! Following this we are now in touch with Wakefield and Chester CS's to look at ways of developing our corporate membership.

Members of the Development group were invited by Wiltshire Council to comment on proposals for the Future High Street Fund outlining plans for the Fisherton Gateway and Station Forecourt, which they will be putting out for public consultation in March. The Development team has a wealth of experience in architecture, planning, landscaping, environmental and heritage issues contributing a considerable amount of expertise to Council proposals for the city. We also attended a presentation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan proposals for their Churchfields Masterplan; John Comparelli, on behalf of the Society, has submitted a thorough and detailed analysis of the proposals to the relevant bodies.

We could still do with additional support dealing with various aspects of the Society, volunteering can be as little or as much as anyone wishes to make of it. It's always worth a try!

The next magazine is due out around July, a quick visit to the website [salisburycivicsociety.org.uk](http://salisburycivicsociety.org.uk) will update you on events, commentaries and activities. I look forward to seeing you at the Spring Party, if not before!

*Stephanie*

## **DIARY OF SOCIETY EVENTS**

***Details for booking by Eventbrite, where applicable, will be found on the website  
Events | Salisbury Civic Society | Enhancing our Environment***

**Talk by Julian Richards – Stonehenge: Old Rocks, New Theories** Thursday 17 March, Methodist Church.

A talk from the well-known television and radio presenter, writer and archaeologist, Julian Richards on Stonehenge: Old Rocks, New Theories will take place at The Salisbury Methodist Church, St Edmund's Church Street, SP1 1EF. Doors open at 6.00pm meeting will start at 6.30pm. Guests £2.50

**Spring Party & Awards Evening.** Thursday 7 April, Arts Centre.

The Society's traditional New Year Party, for award winners, members and their guests, will this year become a Spring Party, for one year only. It will as usual incorporate the presentations for the Society's Buildings Awards Scheme, including both those for the 2021 scheme, and those for 2020. Booking details will be circulated by email or via the application form accompanying this magazine.

**A Tale of Two Cities: Old and New Sarum.** 23-24 April

Members of the Society have been invited to join The Society for Landscape Studies at their annual Conference and Field meeting. The weekend will focus on A Tale of Two Cities: Old and New Sarum a weekend devoted to the development of the urban landscape of Salisbury. Speakers will include Kris Strutt, Lorraine Mephram, Alex Langlands and Chris Daniell. Further details, including how to book online will follow shortly.

**Planning Forum - Impact of Climate Change on Architecture and Planning.**

Wednesday 27 April (Provisional date).

Our regular Planning Forum for members and their guests arranged by the Development team in conjunction this year with the RIBA, will focus on Climate Change and how this is impacting on Architecture and Planning. Venue: The Salisbury Methodist Church, St Edmund's Church Street, SP1 1EF. Doors open at 6.00pm meeting will start at 6.30pm. Guests free.

**Walk: The impact of development on the rivers & landscapes of Salisbury.:**

Saturday 21 May

Hadrian Cook of the Harnham Water Meadows Trust will lead a walk describing the development of Salisbury since the nineteenth century and how this has impacted on the rivers and older landscapes including water meadows, the floodplain and former agricultural land. Distance: about 6km Duration: 2 - 2.5 hours. Tickets: £5.50 via Eventbrite

**AGM To be followed by a talk from Phil Harding.**

Wednesday 15 June

The Society's Annual General Meeting will take place in June, followed by a talk from the celebrated archaeologist Phil Harding. Venue: The Salisbury Methodist Church, St Edmund's Church Street, SP1 1EF. Doors open at 6.00pm meeting will start at 6.30pm. Guests free.

**Walk: In the Footsteps of Pevsner. Tuesday 12 July**

Richard Deane will lead an evening walk around the city 'In the Footsteps of Pevsner' – a walk looking at insights and revelations from the new Pevsner volume. Tickets £5.50 via Eventbrite

**Heritage Open Days – The Rivers and Water Courses of Salisbury**

9th - 18 September

Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture, celebrating heritage, community and history. Salisbury Civic Society will be exploring the Rivers and Water Courses of Salisbury, providing an exceptional opportunity to see hidden places, discover our wonderful rivers and try out new experiences. There will be walks, talks and other activities, celebrating the exceptional rivers unique to Salisbury. Details of events will be available as times and dates are agreed.

**Julian Richards will talk 'Stonehenge: Old Rocks, New Theories' on  
Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March in the Methodist Church**





Heritage Open Days at Winchester Museum

*photo Nicky Gottlieb*

### **RECHARGING THE SOCIETY'S HERITAGE OPEN DAYS CAMPAIGN — THE WINCHESTER EXPERIENCE**

Heritage Open Days (HOD) is a national initiative, which focuses in particular on enabling public access to places which are normally off-limits, or charge for entry or on walks and visits which enable fresh stories to be told. The Society has been engaged with HODs for twenty years now, at differing levels of involvement across the period. This year it has a general aim of focusing on local rivers, in a way which embraces some aspects of HODs, but it is aware that for the future it needs to put a structure in place which does full justice to the HOD concept.

The Society currently has no dedicated HODs organiser in post, and it could really do with at least two of them. It is difficult not to cast envious eyes at our neighbouring cathedral city of Winchester, which has an enormously admirable record of organising HODs in recent years. Though many are involved in this, the primary organisers are Becky Brown and Nicky Gottlieb, and we asked them if they might like to describe what they do, hopefully as an inducement to Society members to consider getting involved in local HODs. This is what Becky has written:

## **Winchester invites Salisbury to also get involved with Heritage Open Days!**

*For 10 days every September local residents and visitors from further afield are encouraged to explore for FREE England's incredible history, architecture, gardens and heritage, and often are able to visit places not usually open to the general public.*

The national scheme - [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk) - has been going for nearly 30 years, and the Hampshire town of Gosport was one of the founding towns. Winchester has been running HODs events for around 25 years, but it is only in the past six years that it has really taken off. This is entirely due to two Winchester residents - Nicky Gottlieb & Becky Brown - who have volunteered their time and given their heart and soul to encouraging local organisations to open their doors and run events, and to running their own events including podcasts, films and talks.

The [www.winchesterheritageopendays.org](http://www.winchesterheritageopendays.org) festival, now one of the biggest HODs hubs in England, plays a key role in promoting Hampshire's amazing history and heritage locally, nationally and internationally. Nicky and Becky have also developed strong partnerships with many local businesses, charities and other organisations including long term sponsors Winchester College and Winchester BID.

As the festival has grown in Winchester Becky has built up a team of fantastic volunteers to support her and Nicky, mostly other local residents but also students from the University of Winchester. Some volunteers help them 2 to 3 days a week, others help for just a few hours and a few only volunteer during the festival itself. Some roles require the ability to work under pressure and/or previous experience in a festival or administrative environment, but other roles just need a willingness to learn and to "pitch in" as required.

If you have a passion for heritage and history then you will love being a HODs volunteer!

Nicky and Becky don't underestimate the work involved and understand that encouraging others to open their doors for free or to put on a special event can be challenging, but there are so many benefits that will make taking part in HODs a worthwhile experience. These benefits include:

**Getting extra publicity for your Society and Salisbury** through the national online directory, strong social media presence and great press campaigns.

**Becoming part of a national celebration** with millions of people nationally eagerly searching for events. In 2020 when most of Winchester's events were

online there were 12,000 views of Winchester's films, podcasts and live streamed events, and in 2019 when all events were in person Winchester had over 22,000 visits with 62% of attendees specifically visiting because of the festival.

**Engaging and forging stronger local connections:** over 80% of HODs visitors say that the experience made them feel more part of the local community.

**Opportunities to try out new ideas, concepts and experiences** without the pressure of a paying audience. And remember - taking part doesn't mean that you or others necessarily have to open all day, every day - events can be a single pre-bookable tour or a one-off online event.

**A great volunteering opportunity for people of all ages** - you will make new friends, gain new skills and experiences and you might even get a sneak preview of HODs events and get to go behind the scenes.

So Nicky and Becky's advice is get involved and just see where it takes you. You won't regret it, and Salisbury residents and visitors will love it!

*The 2022 Winchester HODs festival will be taking place Friday 9th to Sunday 18th September. The Society is likely to be looking at producing a strong programme of events for local HODs in 2023, at a similar time of year. We don't anticipate being able to emulate the scale of events that Winchester achieves, but we hope that the experience of the organisers there can be a guide, and a stimulus, to work in and around Salisbury.*

Winchester Heritage Open Day - medieval tile making

*photo: Nicky Gottlieb*



## **DERELICT SITES, EYESORES, AND OTHER UPDATES ON MELANCHOLY CASES IN SALISBURY**

### **1) The Post Office site, Castle Street**

The former main Salisbury post office in Castle Street closed in March six years ago, but that was only one marker along a lengthy and so far unproductive trail. It started when an application was submitted in 2007, to convert most of the site into a boutique hotel. The site comprises four buildings – the listed former post office building on Chipper Lane and Castle Street, which was the only part in active use in 2007, a listed house set back from the road to its north, and two unlisted buildings between here and the former White Horse inn further north again, which is now Qudos. In the 2007 scheme, the post office facilities would have been moved to the northernmost building, which would have been rebuilt behind a retained façade. The building to its immediate south is the least interesting of the group, and would have been rebuilt completely.

The Society had detailed comments, but liked the general idea. The application was approved, but nothing happened. It continued to not happen up till 2012, by when planning permission had expired. Another application was submitted, and the permission was renewed. Still nothing happened, and attempts to enquire about the boutique hotel idea got nowhere. The closure of the post office in 2016 at least gave the site an overall consistency – every building on it was now empty and unused. At some point around this time the hotel concept vanished, and the buildings were put up for sale.

For a while, things actually seemed to move forward. A company from Ringwood started to take an interest, and worked up a scheme for mainly residential conversion of the whole site, with a small commercial element left on the Castle Street/Chipper Lane corner. The idea of a complete rebuild for the least interesting building was retained, and a presentation to the Society's Development Committee was made in March 2018. We discussed with the company how a successful new

façade in Castle Street might be created, but contact dwindled, and the anticipated planning application never arrived. Silence descended on the site again.

Then in late summer last year there was a revival of activity, with signs going up announcing the involvement of property developers Osman Homes, of Southampton (we don't



Former Post Office site, Castle Street

know if they've bought the site yet). Initial contact with them indicates a similar approach to the Landmark one, with a main focus on residential conversion. No details have yet emerged, and it remains to be seen whether they too will be looking at demolishing one of the buildings. Their website has a page on the site, as a 'current project', but it's pretty minimal in terms of information provided.

15 years after talk started about doing something here, it's still possible that this new venture will also fizzle out. But given that this prime site, with its five separately listed structures (two K6 phone boxes and some forecourt railings plus gate are listed, as well as the two buildings) has been empty and mouldering for far too long, any new proposal is worth treating with optimism. The Society will keep a close eye on how this one develops.

## **2) Proposed library site, Fisherton Street/Malthouse Lane**

Another convoluted story, which may simply never have any kind of satisfactory ending. The Society saw the logic in a brand new library building provided it was big enough, given the inflexibility of the asbestos-riddled present one. But the case was weakened once the prospect of a comprehensive Maltings redevelopment receded, and not helped by uninspiring design seen in the first planning application for a new library. An improved one followed, and was approved in September 2019. This logically would have been followed by Wiltshire Council agreeing a lease with the developers on a major part of the building, whose other main user was to have been Travelodge. The two parties were never able to agree terms, and Wiltshire Council are no longer pursuing a library on that site, though the principle of a new library in that part of town, at some unspecified future point, has not been abandoned.

Travelodge, we are told, are still interested in the approved building, but construction is unlikely unless a different user can be found for the part originally earmarked for the library. Without one, the site could continue in its present state for years, surrounded by hoarding, and with an optimistic depiction of what was meant to go up on it. Turning it into a public space, as has been suggested, would be severely hampered by the continuing presence of the concrete slab from the previous building. The idea was to re-use this, for a building now with a higher floor level because of flooding considerations. This of course limits the possibilities for archaeology, and the prospects of more coming to light about the Dominican friars who occupied this part of Salisbury up to the Reformation.

There was previously a suggestion by Wiltshire Council that the new library there would only be a temporary one, prior to a further move to an unknown location somewhere in the much-heralded but somewhat undefined 'cultural quarter' in



**Upper image:** The current state of the proposed Library site.

**Lower image:** The building, designed by Haskoll Architects, approved for the site by planners but with no guarantee of it ever being constructed.

this part of town, which rather confused matters. But at least something appeared to be afoot, and the opportunity to create a brand new library might, if handled with due commitment and sufficient money, have had real benefits. In practice all that's happened, so far and for the foreseeable future, is that a mournfully empty site has appeared in the middle of town.

*Image: Haskoll Architects*



### 3) The Maltings

Not an eyesore or case of dereliction, but certainly one where hopes of significant improvement to the built-up area have been raised over the years, and then been dashed. It seems new owners of the long leasehold for the shopping centre are in discussions with Wiltshire Council, with possibly some development proposed, but no imminent action expected. Two recent documents, the Maltings Master Plan, and the Salisbury Central Area Framework, have set out worthy aspirations for a reformulation of uses on the whole Maltings/central car park site, and work has already started on the related Salisbury River Park plan. This will reconfigure the main River Avon channel through the Maltings, with associated landscape improvements, by the end of summer 2023 if not before. More details in the next magazine.

The whole project, at around £23 million overall, and co-managed by Wiltshire Council and the Environment Agency, also includes work further north, around Ashley Green. One major aim is to alleviate flood risks in central Salisbury, which will make more land in the Maltings area available for development. It's hoped this will include housing, thereby helping to reduce the pressures on greenfield sites. The Maltings Master Plan and the Central Area Framework are good starting points, identifying the potential for improvements, but they're there to guide hoped-for active proposals, rather than themselves directly generating them. In a year or two's time, perhaps, the often spoken about, but never actually seen, Maltings redevelopment will become more than just words.

Further cases in the problematic sites category will be covered in the next magazine. At the time of going to press, they are likely to be Steynings in Crane Street, the Old Manor Hospital site, and Grosvenor House and Riverside House in Churchfields Road.

#### **SALISBURY AND THE FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND**

Page 17 of this magazine contains a reference to projects in Salisbury to be carried out following a grant from the government's Future High Streets Fund, and brief details of them. This grant is important enough to be flagged up here. The FHSF is an initiative designed to counter the impact on shopping streets from the internet, and other recent changes. Salisbury is being given just over £9,355,000, with the spending of it in the hands of Wiltshire Council.

A six week public consultation period is intended to start on March 7<sup>th</sup>. The Society will be responding, and we will make members aware of the proposals via the website and by email once the details, which are not yet available, have been published. Sensible spending of this money ought to give the city a major boost, and we would encourage members to examine what's intended and comment, when the time comes.

## THE UNVEILING OF A PLAQUE TO WOLFE FRANK, IN MERE

1 October 2021 was the date chosen by the Society for the unveiling of the first blue plaque to be erected outside Salisbury and its environs. The plaque in Mere commemorates Hugh Wolfe Frank, who lived there during the 1980s. Exactly 75 years earlier, as an interpreter at the Nuremburg trials of Nazi war criminals, he had translated the court's verdicts of 'guilty' to the Nazi officers in the dock. Some were to die, others faced a long imprisonment. Born in Germany in 1913, Wolfe Frank fled to Britain in 1937 after learning he was in danger of arrest by the Nazis. At the outbreak of war he was interned on the Isle of Man but campaigned successfully to join the British Army and rose to the rank of Captain. Following the Nuremburg trials Frank had a succession of careers, ranging from businessman, restaurateur, theatrical impresario to racing car driver, all with fluctuating fortunes. He married five times.

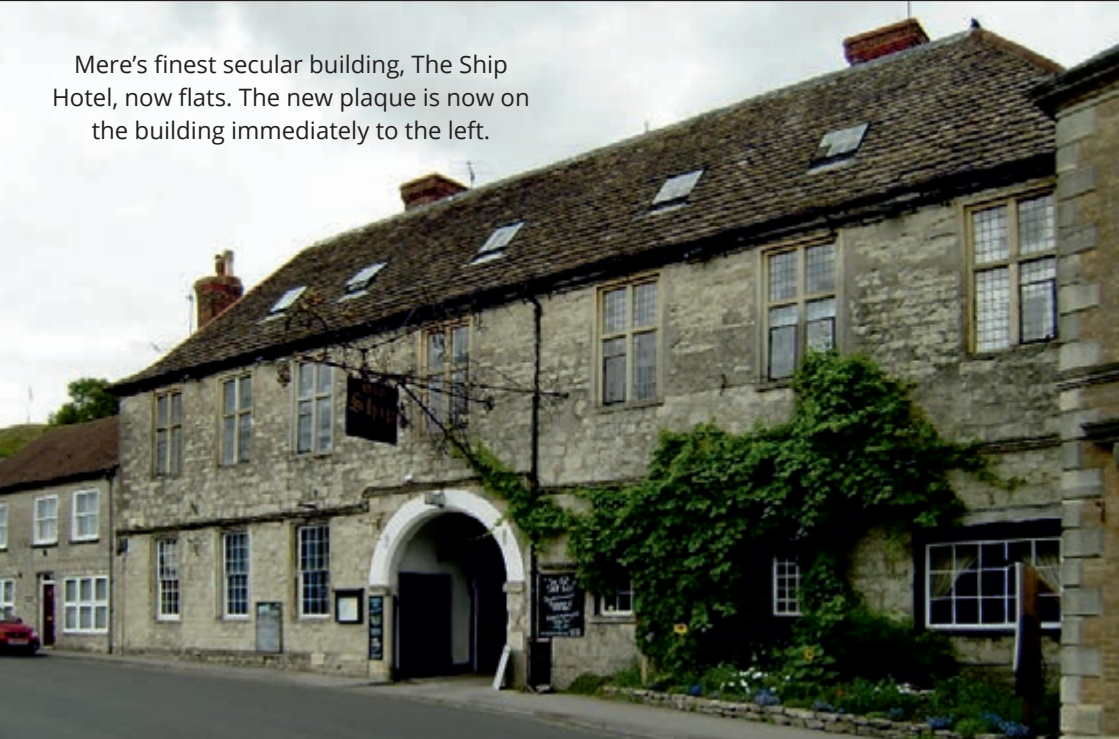
Frank would have disappeared into oblivion but for a friend to whom he had given his papers before his death in 1988. These had been stored in Mike Dillaway's attic for 15 years. Mike had been having a clear-out when he came across Wolfe Frank's papers and showed them to Paul Hooley, an acquaintance who was interested in military matters. Realising how important the papers were, Paul set to and edited them, arranging their publication. Paul then approached the Civic Society, suggesting that Wolfe Frank was a fitting recipient of a blue plaque. He was instrumental in arranging the guest list and getting the approval of Jonathan and Cathy Chalk, who currently own the Malt House where Wolfe Frank once lived. Among the guests who attended the unveiling were his former wife, children and grandchildren; several local residents who had known him; two Captains representing the army; representatives of the Anglo-Jewish Association and Councillor George Jeans. A sprinkling of Civic Society members also attended, among them Dame Rosemary Spencer, Brigadier Alastair Clark and Mrs Clark, Stephanie Siddons Deighton (our current Chair), and Richard Deane, who cycled to Mere and back.

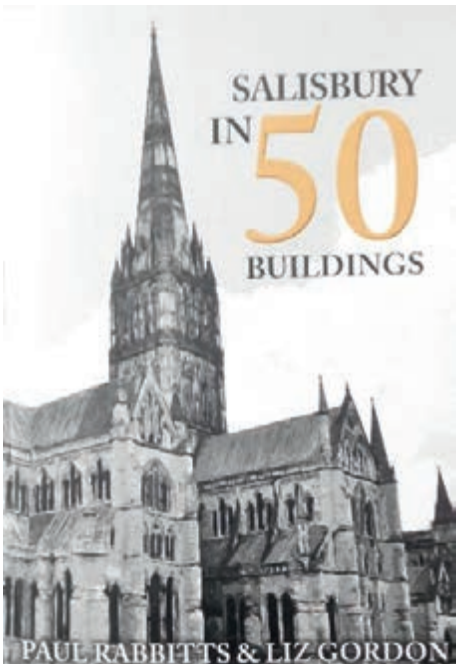
After the unveiling, which was performed by Mike Dillaway and Paul Hooley, refreshments were served in the George Inn, which faces Malt House. Rain had been predicted but the bright and sunny weather held, contributing to a most enjoyable afternoon.

*Janet Patch*



Mere's finest secular building, The Ship Hotel, now flats. The new plaque is now on the building immediately to the left.





**SALISBURY IN 50 BUILDINGS**  
**by Paul Rabbitts & Liz Gordon**  
**Amberley Publishing, softcover £15-99**  
**ISBN: 978 1 4456 9932 5**

I came across this book in Waterstones in Salisbury while looking for some Christmas presents. As is the way when I'm looking for gifts for others, I find books that I would like to read. I bought the book thinking I might find someone to give it to. But shortly afterwards, I was asked if I would write a review of it for this magazine.

The book didn't get off to a good start, the introduction painted a picture of Salisbury as a market town whose principal occupations are cattle and poultry marketing, engineering, brewing, leatherwork, and printing. It's a long time since these all generated significant

employment in the city, suggesting that a rather elderly source was being drawn on. Another one seemed to be involved in the section on the Old George Inn, now the access to the old George Mall. It stated that you get, with special permission, to what remains of the George via a door in the High Street through offices and fire doors. For years of course the public have had access via the staircase in Boston Tea Party. Putting these points aside I really enjoyed the book, I discovered plenty of new facts about the buildings of my city. I hadn't for instance realised that the modest Georgian house with the bow fronted bay near the bridge on St Nicholas Road is a much older building and originally known as the Chapel of St John, and apparently one of the 'few remaining bridge chapels to survive in Britain'.

The title of the book, Salisbury in 50 Buildings is a clue to the way the book is laid out. The narrative starts with an introduction to early beginnings at Old Sarum, and then goes into a description of 50 buildings starting with a brief account of the cathedral. Each entry is accompanied by a photo of the building in question. The buildings are described in roughly chronological order, with many of the early ones having a link to the cathedral in some way. I discovered the Red Lion was originally called the White Bear Inn, and is said to have been built to accommodate those working on the cathedral. It is thought to be the oldest hotel in the country.

The book is more about stories behind the buildings it covers than it is about their architecture, and I picked up lots of useful information like the fact that the Salisbury Museum building, King's House, was copied by architects employed by an American couple who wanted an exact copy in Des Moines, Iowa, ironically now

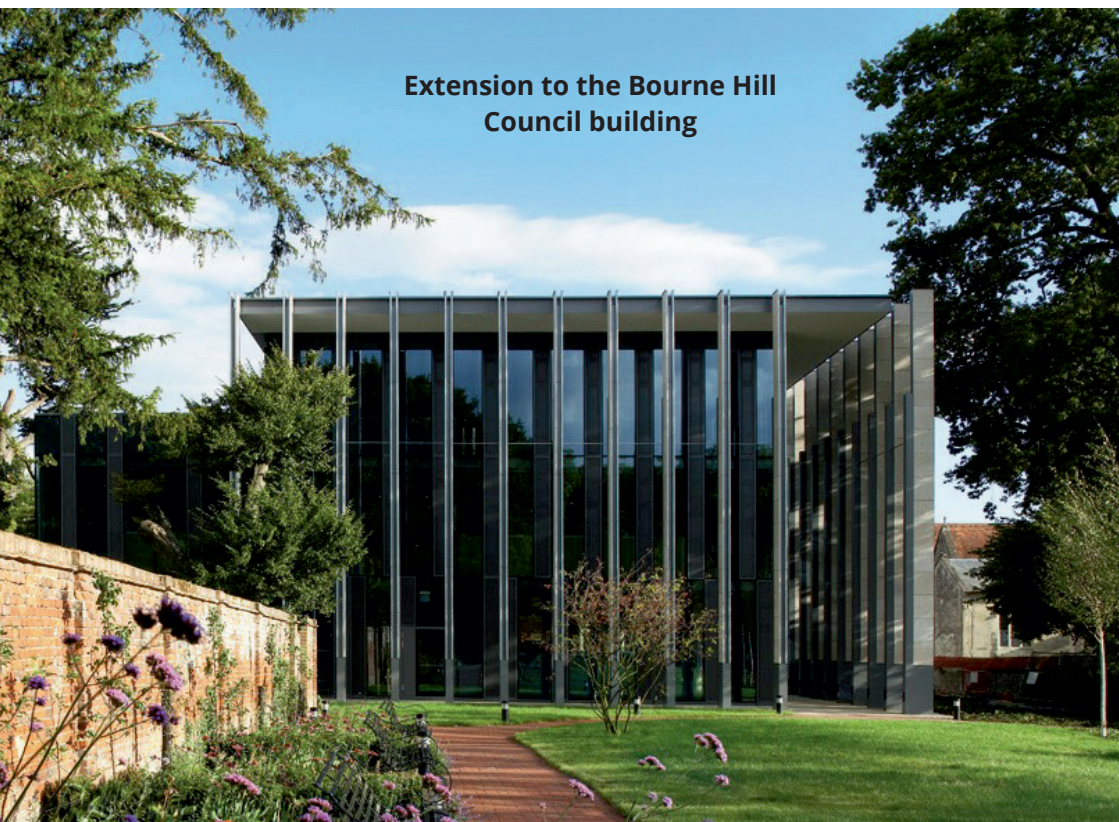
also a museum. Or that the Trinity Almshouses were built on the site of a brothel. I was curious as to why the some buildings like Godolphin School were chosen for this book, but discovered that the school was established in the Close in 1726 as a result of a bequest from Elizabeth Godolphin for the better education and maintenance of eight young gentlewomen, to be brought up in Sarum.

The choice of Zizzi's restaurant next to the library is a more obvious one as it gives the authors the opportunity to tell the story of the Salisbury poisoning. The 48<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> buildings featured are Salisbury Civic Society award winners, the Law Courts on the Wilton Road and the extension to the council offices at Bourne Hill.

This is a good book giving an overview of Salisbury's history through its buildings and I would recommend it, indeed I showed it to a young acquaintance of mine who was delighted to discover that there used to be a 'cage and ducking stool' 'outside the Red Lion, which ducked 'scalds, nagging women and short-changing shopkeepers' in the open channel (in practice a sewer) that ran down the centre of the street. He tells me he is going to buy a copy as a birthday present for his dad.

*Paul Stevens*

### **Extension to the Bourne Hill Council building**



## THE BORBACH CHANTRY

The back cover of the last magazine showed the remarkable Pierrepont Monument at the Borbach Chantry, at West Dean. This is a C14th building, which originated as the south aisle of the former St Mary's church. The remainder of the church was demolished in 1868 and a new church built, down Rectory Hill nearer the railway station. The chantry was retained because of its monuments, two others of which are also very large and fine. The Pierrepont one has the highly unusual feature of doors within it, which open to reveal the central sculpted image.

The chantry is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, formerly the Redundant Churches Fund, and is open every day, free of charge. It is accessed from a not very prominently signposted footpath, on the left-hand side of the road which runs north through the village, towards West Tytherley. The postcode is SP5 1JJ, and further access information can be found on the Churches Conservation Trust website. A visit is highly recommended.

Wiltshire has 21 churches in the care of the CCT, a number exceeded only by Lincolnshire. Of the 21, nine are in the Society's area, some of them reasonably prominent, in particular the half-ruined St Mary's in the middle of Wilton. Others however are, like the Borbach Chantry, off the beaten track, while still being quite easy to access if one is aware of them. The other eight CCT churches in the Society's area will be covered in subsequent magazines.



The Borbach Chantry

## SALISBURY RECOVERY

On 28 September 2021 a joint meeting of the Royal Society for Arts, Manufacturers and Industry (RSA) and Salisbury Civic Society was held entitled Salisbury Recovery. The meeting was hosted by Wiltshire College at their Salisbury campus and provided an excellent opportunity to see the new building and facilities at first-hand.

All the speakers had been asked to focus on the question of what does recovery look like, what are our objectives to help achieve it, and what can other organisations contribute

The speakers were Alex Clancy of Wiltshire College Salisbury, Carli van Niekerk of Wiltshire Council, Steven Oxley from the Salisbury Business Improvement District, Helen Birchenough of Wiltshire Creative, and John Glen MP. After all the presentations, there was a lengthy and very productive questions session, with the speakers forming a panel to provide response.

**Alex Clancy** is Head of Business Development at the college, responsible for apprenticeship provision and employer engagement. He spoke about the college refurbishment, with funding from the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership. Employer representative bodies are being asked to come forward to spearhead trials of recent White Paper proposals to create college business centres, and make colleges align the courses they offer to local employers' needs.

Starting with local labour market information, the key focus is that the provision evolves around the job skills needed by local employers by building on the college's current strengths, collaborative offers with local providers and developing opportunities in emerging sectors. This will link to the new technical qualification of T levels, equivalent to three A levels. Other pathways for employers/employees include apprenticeships, with the government meeting 95% of the cost, the 'Skills Support for the Workforce' service for small and medium sized businesses to improve the skills of their existing workforce, and free distance learning courses.

**Carli Van Niekerk** is a major highways projects engineer for Wiltshire Council, managing the major part of the Future High Streets Fund work in the city, utilising £9.3 million granted by the government. The three projects involved are the improvement of the railway station forecourt (£5.3m) the Fisherton Gateway (£3.2m) and Heritage Living (£0.8m).

The strategic objectives of the Future High Streets fund are to increase vibrancy within the city centre, supporting 'experience' visits, encouraging return visits, increased footfall and expenditure. It aims to enable existing and new businesses to thrive in the city, and to draw in young people and encourage them to stay. There is a need to redress the reputational damage from the nerve agent attack of 2018, the growth in online shopping with its impact on city centre retail, and the further effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.



The three projects chosen have been shaped by public consultation. Visitors arriving by train can find it difficult to find the best way on foot to the city centre, and the station forecourt and Fisherton Gateway schemes are linked together to improve this situation, with the first making the station a more welcoming arrival space, and the second encouraging visitors to make the journey into the central area. Aided

by liaison with the Fisherton Street Traders Association, the proposal is to improve the public realm, to make it easier, safer and more convenient to travel into the city centre. Public consultation on these schemes are due in March, and the Society will be providing members with details of them.

The aims of 'Heritage Living' are to create apartments in underused spaces above shops, with the initial aim being to encourage investor confidence in such conversions, especially ones affecting listed buildings which are frequently involved. 47 Blue Boar Row, which is owned by the City Council, will be used as a test case.

**Stephen Oxley** is a partner in Wilsons Solicitors in Salisbury and a director of the Salisbury BID, which he described as representing the business community within the ring road. Its purpose is to fund services over and above what's provided by the local authorities and it's in its second five-year term, utilising what is, in view of the city's size, a fairly small budget. It is trying to make its board more diverse.

It aims to promote Salisbury as one of best locations to live work and visit. The BID has paid for analysis of why the city has been in need of recovery for some time, not just post Novichok. It has looked at footfall, vacancy rates, economic spend, employment, business retention and what's happening to consumer spend. In the short term there is declining retail footfall owing to changes in consumer shopping habits, with more going online. This is accelerated by people wanting to work from home which especially affects hospitality. Business rates and rents are also an issue.

A way to bring about recovery is to work in collaboration across society: enhanced cultural offerings through Wiltshire Creative, working with the local authorities on rebranding to attract business and residents. How do you know if it's worked? The measures to look at are footfall and resident figures. How many people want to live here?

**Next page. Above:** Looking forward to better things in Fisherton Street, terracotta head from a former Temperance Hotel in the street.

**Below:** Salisbury Festival event in the Market Place. *Photo: Adrian Harris Photography*



**Helen Birchenough** is a trustee of Wiltshire Creative, involved with cultural activities in Salisbury for twenty years and chair of the Arts Council South West. She gave a presentation about recovery for culture and creativity, towards which the government had produced a £2 billion fund. Live performance has been hampered by Covid but is a powerful medicine, bringing people back together to engage with creativity and to participate.

There are currently exhibitions in the Cathedral, the Museum and galleries. The Playhouse has reopened. There has been a growth in live streaming events. There will be a shift towards supporting young people and harnessing local talent and responding to big issues such as climate change and inclusion.

We have to proceed cautiously while the pandemic is still a reality. This means shorter runs and cancellation issues. Stringent financial control is required to manage this. It's not just a question of 'bums on seats' but taking work out into the community and using digital technology. Does the college have strengths in this department? In Plymouth a unified political will on culture has produced results. Collaboration is everything, let's not lose momentum.

**John Glen, MP for Salisbury**, summed up and drew the threads together from the previous speakers.

The Wiltshire College new building is an asset to Salisbury. There has been significant investment across the city with lots of different projects on the go. However, there is no coherent single vision for Salisbury. To revitalise the high street we need to come to terms with changes in behaviour, and draw out the distinctiveness from the city's historic character to find its own pathway. A key issue is reconciling resistance to change. Partnership working and collaboration need emphasising. Salisbury has the asset of full fibre broadband to attract business and remote working.

He mentioned three areas of outstanding concern:

Firstly, the unfulfilled ambition for an arts and cultural quarter. He asked that this goes back on the agenda as he has seen initiatives in other places from which we can learn.

Secondly, provision for young people. There are significant inequalities and a need for levelling up within Salisbury especially for youngsters in poorer areas. He mentioned Rise:61 as an exemplar, a charity providing positive opportunities for young people living on Bemerton Heath estate in Salisbury.

Thirdly, the need to reconcile the future distribution of housing with greenspace and transport infrastructure. There is local frustration about how development happens. He advised that being in government he can make calls and get things done.

**Questions** The question and answer session covered many issues, reported in brief below with the relevant speakers responding .

Which city does Salisbury benchmark itself against? We have a distinct history so should play to our strengths. This is not poverty of ambition but realism. People feel change is thrust upon them and are therefore resistant to change: dissatisfaction was expressed that the station forecourt getting more money than Fisherton Gateway.

The effects of COVID on the emotional well-being of South Wiltshire were raised, such as the scuppering of the Salisbury 2020 celebrations. While the money for the Arts can help on the emotional side, an increase in working from home could also help economically, with more activity in the area. Concern was expressed about the lack of diversity at board level of the city's largest employers, not reflecting their staff.

Salisbury has an older population in comparison with the rest of England; it is an attractive place to retire, but its youngsters leave owing to a lack of well-paid employment, career opportunities and affordable housing.

Inflexible housing number targets are not helpful, and a lack of supporting infrastructure for development around the city makes things worse. There is a need to respond better to what people actually want. Traditional ways to engage with the younger population need a rethink. How closely are the Chamber of Commerce involved with educational establishments?

The Salisbury Neighbourhood Plan is potentially of great importance. A big problem is the centre of the city being dead after 5pm, according to one audience member. Empty offices are unlikely to be reused. There are a high proportion of people who are elderly who need support. Who will provide this? The city has low wages and high property prices. Where do carers live? Where do key workers live? Young doctors move on as there is no supply of affordable city housing. More emphasis is needed on the use of brownfield sites.

A key issue to emerge from the discussion was the difficulty in knowing how to consult and engage with young people, particularly on the projects discussed.

Next steps - Our hope is that the meeting will be a catalyst for further collaboration and activity. We understand that John Glen will re-convene the Salisbury Place Board and they will be discussing the outcome of the presentations and audience feedback from the evening.

*Judy Howles*

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Next page: Enhanced cultural activity - Wiltshire Creative in the Market Place.

*Photo: Adrian Harris Photography.*



## **MEMBERS VISIT TO NORRINGTON MANOR, ALVEDISTON**

On a rare sunny morning in August, a group of members enjoyed a guided visit of Norrington Manor. Described in the new Wiltshire Pevsner as a 'lucky survival of a late C14th manor house', the house is tucked away in the hills above Alvediston in the Ebbel Valley. As the house is not large, the group was split in two taking turns to be guided by the owner, Jonathan Sykes, around the house while the other group wandered freely round the charming gardens that surround it.

Built of Chilmark stone, probably by John Gawen in the 1370s, the house has been much adapted and enlarged over the centuries. Weathering various political and royal storms for over 200 years, it was their Catholic beliefs that led to the Gawen family losing Norrington as fines for recusancy forced them to sell the house in the C17th. The Manor was then bought by Sir Wadham Wyndham in 1658; it was during his family's ownership that the west wing was built where the Sykes family now live, and the east wing of service buildings was extended. By the time the Sykes acquired the manor in the 1950s, however, it had been rented out for many years and had fallen into a state of dereliction. This has meant that much of the house's history has only been determined via an ongoing programme of renovation and conservation.

We started our tour in the square 15th century porch, where the vaulted ceiling has a central boss picturing an animalistic face with gaping mouth leering down at us, in striking contrast to the refined corbel heads of the king (Henry IV - a visitor to Norrington), the bishop and gentry which support the ribs of the vault. From the porch, we passed through a Tudor doorway via a cross passage into the double height great hall of the original medieval manor house, lit by tall windows with only one remaining trace of the original coloured glass. It is testament to the wealth of the Gawen family that they could afford to install decorative windows on both sides of the hall - normally such ostentatiousness would have been reserved for the front of a house only. Carved into the walls around the surviving Tudor fireplace are various roundels and marks intended to protect the residents from witches.

From the great hall, we passed through a small antechamber where the original steps to the first floor of the east wing would have been. Now there are just a few steps to a small undercroft, probably used as a strongroom as the windows are small, high up and barred. There are also some fine bosses and corbels supporting the vaulted ceiling with an exquisitely carved green man in the centre. There was originally a chapel above, but Jonathan told us that the undercroft may have been used as a covert chapel by the Gawens when

practising Catholicism was illegal. When his family took over the manor, the undercroft was being used as a goat shed. It provides the only current internal entrance from the great hall to the east wing. A two storey building, probably Tudor in origin, this has a solar taking up the whole of the upper floor with large mulioned windows at each end, although those facing north have been largely bricked up. The lower room is thought to have started life as the main kitchen with a large fireplace, but has been altered more than once since. Both floors were being used for farm storage when the Sykes family acquired the Manor in the mid-20th century, and remain unrestored with an extremely old and rickety staircase to the upper floor, which the braver members of our group climbed to view the impressive Jacobean fireplace. Even in 2021, it was possible to appreciate what a wonderful room it would have been in its heyday with sunlight flooding in through the grand south facing windows.

Exiting this wing of the building we went outside to view the back of the house. Jonathan pointed out the remains of an opening in the west wing, probably from a former first floor passage, and some diamond-paned windows thought to be part of the original chapel. As funds, time and planning officers allow, Jonathan plans to continue a programme of works to secure the various features of the house. Although 2021 was a challenging year for gardeners, the green-fingered members of the family have created a series of delightful garden rooms around the house. The garden has its own secrets with a possible Elizabethan viewing mound in the middle of one lawn. Originally it would have overlooked the former formal Tudor gardens, which themselves covered part of an ancient medieval village of which only a few lumps and bumps in the field beyond remain. Along the banks of the River Ebbles are a line of willows grown for cricket bats.

Following our visit to the Manor, many members then took advantage of the offer to visit the nearby church of St Mary's at Alvediston, opened specially by the church warden Pen Milburn. A fount of knowledge, Pen answered queries about its history, construction and association with Norrington Manor, and showed us memorials to members of the Gawen and Wyndham families, a nice postscript to the visit to a fascinating house. Our sincere thanks to Jonathan and his family who all made us so welcome and answered innumerable questions.

*Nicolette Beardsmore*

### ***The Society welcomes new members***

Neil Burton and Caroline Dakers,  
Kirsten and Owen Deverill-Jenkins, Hilary and Roz Fildes,  
Spencer Hall, Kate Hobson, Suzanne Keene, Jeremy Martin,  
Florence Piwowarski, Ann Underwood.

## **FONTHILL HOUSES: LOST, RECOVERED, REBUILT**

### **A TALK BY CAROLINE DAKERS**

This was our first 'live' lecture since Covid 19 introduced us to lockdowns, and it was a delight to have Caroline Dakers, whose book *Fonthill Recovered* formed the basis of her introduction to the colourful history of Fonthill and its various owners, some of whom surpassed the eccentricities and excesses of the better known William Beckford in terms of 'their wealth, their collections, their political power and, in one case, their sexual misdemeanours'.

Caroline showed a map which indicated the positions of the various iterations of the Fonthill houses, commencing with Sir James Mervyn who built the first house in the last years of Elizabeth I's reign. The estate passed on to Lord Castlehaven who was connected with many of the local aristocracy and via his sister - who thought she was the Bishop of Lichfield - to Bedlam. Castlehaven was so depraved that he had the dubious distinction of being one of the few aristocrats to be executed for sexual misbehaviour.

After Castlehaven's death the estate was forfeited to the crown and in 1632 it was purchased by Charles I's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Francis Cottington. He enlarged the estate, creating a three mile long wall to enclose his deer park as well as improving the house, and adding a classical style stable block designed by Isaac De Caus which was described as the third finest in England. Cottington died a



The Fonthill Gateway

Catholic in Spain and the estate was acquired by John Bradshaw, under whose ownership it expanded. As a regicide, on the return of monarchy, Bradshaw's dead body was hung and beheaded.

The estate was acquired again by Cottingtons during which period a contemporaneous map indicates a mysterious sporting area with a viewing platform, the purpose of which is unknown.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Cottington sold the estate to Alderman William Beckford, an advocate of free speech, but also a plantation and slave owner and father of 30 illegitimate children. Beckford added a wing, created a broader stretch of river and replaced the parish church with a classical building, subsequently replaced again by the present Victorian Gothic one. He announced his wealth and position by building the gateway which still sits alongside the Salisbury and Hindon road.

Alderman Beckford's house was destroyed by fire but was replaced, nearer Tisbury, by a vast building of breathtaking grandeur called Fonthill Splendens. It was decorated by Andrea Casali. Visitors were attended by numerous African servants. The alderman's son, another William, inherited Splendens and employed architects such as John Soane and James Wyatt to continue works on the house.



**Fonthill and bridge in 1753 - early days of Alderman Beckford from a painting attributed to Antonio Joli**

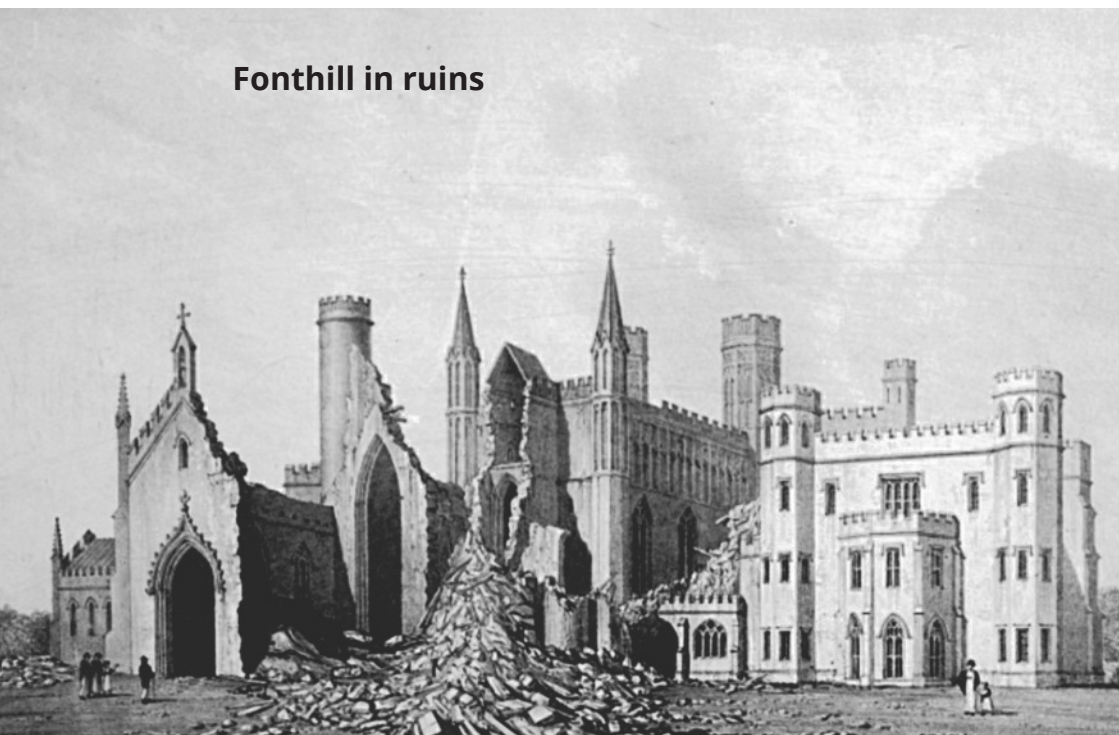
After Beckford was caught in bed with a young boy he and his wife fled for a while to Switzerland, but not before commissioning the building of Fonthill Abbey. Splendens was demolished and by 1819 Fonthill Abbey was completed. An iconic building as long as Westminster Abbey with a fabulous and important collection as well as a 276 feet high tower.

Beckford sold the abbey and moved to Bath, where the tower he built at the top of Lansdown Hill is now the Beckford Tower and Museum. It has an original architect's model of Fonthill Abbey and is well worth a visit. At Fonthill the new owner, John Farquhar, sold much of the collection and the tower collapsed in 1825. There followed a period of demolition and renewal with the estate passing between a number of owners including the Marquess of Westminster, with various new buildings scattered across six sites. They included the manor house brought by Detmar Blow from Berwick St Leonard, to form part of a new house on the east side of Fonthill Lake. This was renamed Fonthill House and subsequently owned by John Granville Morrison, who became MP for Salisbury. He demolished it in 1971 but yet another house was built on its site.

A fascinating tale told by Caroline Dakers resulting from her research and scholarship.

*Jamie Hobson*

## **Fonthill in ruins**



## ANDY ALTMANN

It was a great pleasure to host Andy Altmann, via Zoom, in September.

Andy formed Why Not Associates with fellow graduates Howard Greenhalgh and David Ellis in 1987 just after they left the Royal College of Art. Why Not Associates quickly established themselves as multi disciplinary designers with clients as varied as the BBC, Malcolm McLaren, Channel 4 and Tate Modern, and projects ranging from television titles to postage stamps.

Andy's own interest in typography led him to start realising ideas in three dimensions in what he refers to as environmental design. Often these projects were undertaken in collaboration with the artist Gordon Young whose expertise working in a range of materials helped Andy realise typographic ideas and solutions.

Andy spoke about a number of these projects including the Walk of Art 2, undertaken for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, in which 10,000 supporters' names were cast into iron panels laid out as a walkway, and the Cursing Stone. This sculptural piece comprised a 7.5 granite boulder situated near an underpass in Carlisle inscribed with a curse issued against a number of riverain families by the Archbishop of Glasgow in 1535. This beautiful piece was contentious and was blamed for the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2005, and for a devastating flood, factory closures and even Carlisle United dropping a league. However, the original Archbishop's curse didn't affect its 16th century recipients as history attests, with them including Armstrongs, Bells, Bunyans, Charltons, Jamiesons and McDonalds.

Andy's lifelong interest in popular culture made him a natural choice to undertake work on the Comedy Carpet in Blackpool. The town, which is as recognised nowadays for social deprivation as it is as a seaside resort, wanted to celebrate its past by creating a 'monument' which could become a tourist attraction, and encourage investment and increase tourism. In talks undertaken between Andy, Gordon and the town council it was decided to celebrate Blackpool's role as the home of British comedy by creating a 70 x 70 metre typographic pavement containing quotes from every comedian who performed in the town. This was a physically vast enterprise which required considerable and lengthy research. The type was cast in metal and set in granite. The end result is an award winning piece of public art which attracts visitors from all over the world, while contributing significantly to social history. (See image opposite).

Andy answered questions from the Zoom audience, who asked about the process of ideas generation, and stated that all his clients found ways of capitalising on their history and uniqueness whether it be Blackpool's comedy associations, Carlisle's border history or, say, Salisbury's literary connections. These were to be explored by Andy and Gordon Young when they were approached by Stanton Williams, the architects of the Bourne Hill extension, in 2008. Sadly the project was shelved when only half the proposal was developed. A significant loss for the city.

Andy Altmann gave a fascinating talk, however for those unable to join us I forgot to press record...

*Jamie Hobson*

RE A CAB! ... I thought my mother was a rotten cook, but at least her group used to move about a bit. ... MAGNA CARTA ... Hello possums ... A is for Australia ... WI' JAM IN! ... Bakti Towers ... BLACKPOOL ... READY, FIRE, AIM! ... ME HORSE ... DROWNED ... 20 CIGGIES ... I LOVE KIDS, WANT TO SCHOOL WITH IT ... I HAD A MEAT LAST NIGHT ... SPOON, JAR, SPOON ... JUST ...

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