



## Exploring the Market Place: past and present

Heritage Open Days  
Organised by Salisbury  
Civic Society

# Hall of John Hall/Odeon

## 15 New Canal

John Halle was a very successful 15th Century Salisbury merchant. The current building is the hall of a larger house he built between 1455 and 1479. The site ran from the present building east along the Canal, then called the Ditch, to Catherine street, previously Carterne street, and south to the garden of 26-28 Catherine street. It is worth walking round to 26-28 to gauge the size of this desirable plot so close to the market.

The Hall itself has a large transomed 4 light window and a 'splendid roof with cusped wind braces' (Ohrbach and Pevsner) and walls of ashlar and flint with roof tiles. The stained glass installed early in the reign of Henry V 11th, is decorated with heraldic roses and with the arms of Halle and of the Hungerfords. (Hungerford was married to Halle's sister). The hall has a roof of 6 bays with 4 archbraced collar trusses. The fireplace, with its original stone chimney piece may have been moved. It is decorated with Halle's arms and merchant mark.

John Halle was MP 3 for Salisbury 3 times and mayor of Salisbury in 1450, 1456 and 1464-5. During his final tenure as mayor he was central to a dispute between Salisbury residents (the 'commonalty') and Bishop Beauchamp. This eventually led to Halle being put in prison. Halle and another rich merchant, Swayne, were at odds. Swayne, who contributed much to the development of St Thomas' church, wanted to build a house on land which he claimed was in the Bishop's gift. Hall disputed this and claimed the land belonged to the city. The conflict reflected a dispute over the rights of the bishop relative to the rights of city residents. When Halle was imprisoned he was Mayor; the City fathers refused to appoint a replacement. The dispute dragged on until 1474 when it was finally resolved in the Bishop's favour. However the dispute rekindled in the 16th century and in 1594 the elected Mayor refused to take the oath of office which included obeisance to the Bishop. Following the reformation, the powers of the Mayor and Council increased while those of the Bishop declined.

Major restoration in 1834 by Fisher, assisted by Pugin, introduced the stone arch at the north end of the hall, when Samuel Payne, a merchant in china and glass, owned the building. By 1889 it housed Watson's China and Glass who remained there until the early 1930s until Watson's moved to 8 and 9 Queen Street. A theatre/cinema, the Gaumont, was then added to the rear of the hall. As a theatre it played host to, amongst others, Buddy Holly (1958) and the Rolling Stones. The grade 1 listed building remains a cinema today, the Odeon. Its main screen has been retained in its original decorative style and several smaller screens have been added.

You can visit 15 New Canal throughout the Heritage Open Days to view the magnificent hall.

Two guided tours, which will also include the main screen at 15 New Canal will run on Friday Sept 6th at 10am and 11am. Numbers are limited for each tour and entry is by ticket only. Tickets (maximum of 4) may be collected from the Salisbury Information centre in Fish Row.