

Better Bristol

The Bristol Civic Society magazine - Issue 09 Autumn 2016

This beautiful listed building is boarded up and unused - why?

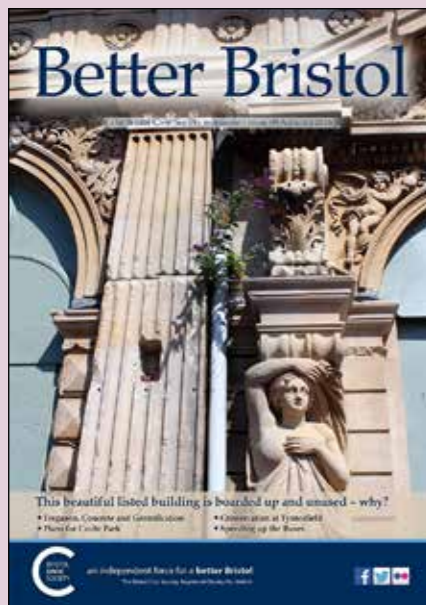
- Ferguson, Concrete and Gentrification
- Conservation at Tyntesfield
- Plans for Castle Park
- Speeding up the Buses



an independent force for a **better Bristol**

The Bristol Civic Society, Registered Charity No. 244414





Front Cover:
The Grand Spa Pump Room,
Clifton – See page 30

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Shouting with a louder voice

At our AGM I was struck by the very strong message from members that the Society has far too low a profile in the City. Our past history has often been one of high profile campaigns against horror developments, yet today many residents probably know little about us.

In strategic terms, we must surely be an independent voice fighting for the future of Bristol as a leading UK and European City, fighting for quality of design across all aspects of the urban fabric. Turning to specifics, we have identified three initiatives where we intend to make a bigger splash.

It's been great to see scaffolding on St Michael-on-the-Mount-Without church, which has been boarded up and seemingly abandoned for nearly twenty years. Working with the Diocese, we are putting together a profile-raising campaign to find and secure a sustainable future for this wonderful building. In my view, practical action of this sort is a tremendous way of publicising the Society's commitment to making positive improvements in the City.

The Society is playing a leading role in establishing the Bristol Heritage Forum, an initiative aimed at championing the heritage of the City. At the launch, earlier this year, I recall a number of the audience identifying the need for the Forum to have a 'loud voice' if it is to be successful. We haven't achieved this yet! However, we have been busy organising our annual Conference – to be held on 27 October – which has the theme 'The Future of Bristol's Historic Estates'. The event will cover parks, gardens, buildings and a range of other

The Society is playing a leading role in establishing the Bristol Heritage Forum, an initiative aimed at championing the heritage of the City.

historic structures. Such estates are complex and potentially very expensive to maintain but are cherished by local communities, and there is scope for significant community involvement in their future. Again, this is a great opportunity for the Society to drive an important new initiative which would have a very positive and wide impact.

Our Design Awards have been in existence for many years and are a well-regarded way of celebrating



particularly well-designed buildings. Learning from experience in other towns and cities, there is an opportunity to use social media in order to involve a much larger number of Bristol's citizens in nominating developments and even in voting for favourites. We will be trialling innovative ways of raising the profile of our Awards, and of the Society, in next year's Award process.

What do you think? Would you like to get involved in the three projects I've described above? If so, please do get in touch. Are there other initiatives that you would like us to consider? We are always keen to welcome fresh ideas and proposals and to welcome additional volunteers. Looking to the next few months our priority will therefore be to gain a higher profile, to shout with a louder voice, and to put the Society firmly in the spotlight in those areas where we feel we can really make a difference in fighting for the future of Bristol.

Simon Birch



John Nash's forlorn Orangery at Blaise Castle House



Another unused garden building at Blaise – the Dairy



Not already a member? Why not join TODAY!

See page 31 for more details...

Peterjohn Smyth of ESHA Architects reports on a Campaign for Better Planning and Design

It has been clear for some time that the quality of the great majority of later twentieth- and twenty-first century buildings and urban environments are of very poor quality, especially when compared with their predecessors. So action to substantially improve this could hardly be more urgent.

The reasons for the decline seem to be as follows:

- The loss of good craftsmanship following the Industrial Revolution
- The use of poor quality materials by developers whose sole motive is profit
- The loss of design quality arising, at least partly, from the introduction of Modernist architectural design
- The introduction of planning control leading to the inappropriate segregation of different uses in housing estates, business parks, leisure parks, etc
- The failure to properly distinguish visually between public and private buildings and elements in a town or a village
- Low-density suburban development, which is fundamentally unsustainable
- Very poor quality urban design

We are therefore trying to pull together a campaign group to arrest the decline and substantially improve design quality all the way from city planning to the design of individual doors and windows. Let us know if you think Bristol Civic Society should be at the forefront of this campaign.

Chatterton's House Restoration Project - Chatterton's Café

Michael Doble, Chairman of the Thomas Chatterton Society, reports on the restoration of the poet's birthplace.



Michael Doble at the opening, with the Lord Mayor

Chatterton's House, a small cottage in the shadow of St Mary Redcliffe Church where the poet was born in 1752, had been allowed to fall into disrepair and consequently a renovation project was undertaken. This included replacement of the chimneys, the repair of the roof structure and wall plate, while retaining the original timbers, the tying together of the front and back walls, and re-rendering with breathable lime render. Bristol

City Council, the cottage owners, employed John Perkins Construction as the primary contractor and the overall project cost £150,000. Sadly, the wonderful foreman Grantley Parker, who worked so passionately on the renovation died during the project and did not see it to completion. However, Chatterton's House is now 'Chatterton's Café' run by a Bristol family with every indication that it will be a great success.

Green Flag News

The University of Bristol has been awarded its first 'Green Flag' for the Royal Fort gardens at the centre of the main campus off Tyndall Avenue. This 6-acre, Humphry Repton-designed landscape surrounds the mid eighteenth-century Royal Fort House, once owned by the Tyndall family. Green Flag Awards are managed by Keep Britain Tidy and presented annually in recognition

of well-managed parks and gardens that are biodiverse, safe, clean places in which to study and to live. Full credit goes to the dedicated Garden and Grounds team of External Estates, led by Alan Stealey. Royal Fort garden, although privately owned, is open to visitors, as well as students and contains significant public artworks.



Clifton village's mini shopping precinct to be redeveloped

For some time now the 1960s concrete former shopping precinct on Clifton Down Road has remained undeveloped, an eyesore in the heart of Georgian Clifton.

In 2015 the Council rightly refused an application to develop the site because the design was not good enough for such a sensitive part of the Conservation Area, bordered, as it is, by many listed buildings. Now THAT CLIFTON COMPANY LTD has come forward with a further proposal to demolish and redevelop the precinct to create mixed

commercial accommodation over three floors, together with a setback attic storey.

The brutish angularity of the building and its towering form would dwarf completely the homely and varied ranges of shops in Boyce's Avenue alongside, and in Kings Road to the rear. The character of this area, unlike the stony uniformity of the great terraces of Clifton, is loose knit and humanly scaled, with mixed buildings dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Its small streets have a particular charm and intimacy, which would be totally shattered by such a loutish block. Why is it that such proposals fail to take any account of the aesthetic environment in which they are to play an important future role? How does such a brash, overweening mass signal its suitability for classical Clifton?

New buildings must respect their neighbours and actively enhance an area rather than muscle in on it like some heavyweight architectural bully. The Council must reject this proposal out of hand and encourage the architects and developer to think more intelligently about the urban streetscape they would wish to infiltrate. To reiterate our Chair's rallying call, and to paraphrase John McEnroe, 'They cannot be serious!'



New homes for South Bristol

Bristol City Council is currently undertaking a feasibility study to see how a number of key sites in South Bristol can provide much needed new homes in the City.

Hengrove Park is the largest and most significant site within the South Bristol Housing Zone. Phase 1 has already delivered the Leisure Centre, Skills Academy and South Bristol Community Hospital and Kier Living is currently working up plans for approximately 250 new homes on the remaining plot. The 50 hectares in Phase 2 have been allocated for at least 1000 new homes, office space and a new park. The Council's vision is to make this a great place for people to live, with good quality housing across a mix of tenure, size and type, which is



linked in to existing communities and with appropriate infrastructure. Public consultation is planned for early 2017.

A typical example of housing built by the Kier Group

Ashton Gatehouse

Ashton Gatehouse on the edge of Ashton Court, which was featured in the last issue, is on track to open at the end of this year. The plastic covers were removed in July to reveal this stunning Regency Gothic lodge. Stonework has been repaired and cleaned, new windows, modelled on the one remaining original, are now in place. Huge glass panels encase the Gatehouse entrance giving the sense of a void while creating a new indoor space. The upper room, with its ornate roses, is plastered ready for decorating. Whether the original green walls and yellow ceiling is reinstated or an alternative colour scheme adopted, is yet to be decided. www.ashtongatehouse.org



Ashton Gatehouse (Nick Church)

'A Unique and transformational building for the City' - the Bristol Arena

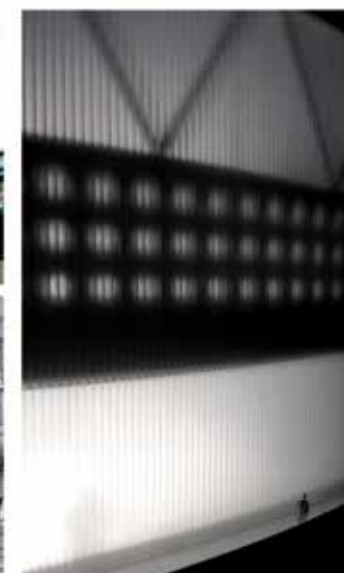
The Populous Team present the design concept for the Arena - a tribute to Bristol's past and the extraordinary setting of Arena Island

Bristol will soon be home to a new, world class, 12,000 capacity entertainment venue - the Bristol Arena. Located a stone's throw from Temple Meads station, the Arena will host over 100 events a year, from music to comedy and from sports exhibitions to conferences.

No longer will Bristolians have to travel to Cardiff, Birmingham, London or further afield to see touring arena shows, they will now be right on their doorstep.

The team behind the Arena project brings together global entertainment and sports design firm Populous, locally-based architects Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, international practice BuroHappold Engineering, sound specialists Vanguardia Consultants, arts consultant Field Art Projects, and renowned artist, Jonas Dahlberg.

The Arena will be operated by the world's largest arena operator SMG, in partnership with the world's largest international live entertainment company, Live Nation. Bouygues UK have also recently been named as the preferred building contractor for the project. Between them, this team have worked on an impressive portfolio of projects: the London Olympic Stadium, O2 Arenas in London, Berlin and Dublin, the First Direct Arena in Leeds, the Singapore Sports Hub and Rio's Maracanã Stadium, to name but a few.



Above, Bristol Arena Inspiration Palette

(Picture credits: Populous Arena Team)

The design for this unique Arena begins with the city. A history of Bristol links successive generations of travel, exploration, industry and engineering, all mapped into the contemporary city fabric. The choice of materials for the façade has a strong reference to the history of the site and the adjacent railway yards. Darkened, perforated steel cladding will create a subtle effect, reflecting the changing weather and the seasons and bringing the Bristol skyline to life. Meanwhile, the elegant form of the lower plinth, with its solid masonry, grounds the building in its setting. The materials of the plinth match the surfaces of the Civic Square to reinforce the connection with the ground. The extraordinary setting of Arena Island is animated through dynamic landscapes and a series of terraces that flow from river to park, and in time through village to the new public square. The public plaza is a vital aspect of plans for the Arena, as it will be key to ensuring that Arena Island is an active and vibrant location right through the year. It will be made up of a range of spaces that can be used for pop-up and temporary events such as outdoor cinema, festivals and markets, and green terraces will create an informal seating area for picnicking or recreation.

The Bristol Arena is designed to cater for a range of different activities, with spaces perfect for public exhibitions, fashion shows, conferences and meetings, as well as flexible modes for 4,500 theatre-goers,



Above, Bristol Arena Public Plaza

The Arena will be the most sustainable in the country, with the ambition to achieve industry standard BREEAM Excellent rating.

comedy shows and 12,000 live music fans. Sporting events have also been carefully considered and the Arena will comfortably host large-scale events for ice hockey, tennis, basketball, boxing, handball and gymnastics.

The Arena will be the most sustainable in the country, with the ambition to achieve industry standard BREEAM Excellent rating. There will be on-site energy generation from photo-voltaic panels on the roof and the building will also be connected to Bristol's local, low carbon heat network. In addition, water consumption will be reduced through efficient fixtures and fittings, rainwater harvesting systems will be in place and all building materials will be responsibly and sustainably sourced.

As part of Bristol City Council's wider transportation plan, access to the site has been a key element of the Council's future citywide strategy. Two new bridges will form the primary access routes to Arena Island: a cycle and pedestrian bridge from Albert Road and the River Avon Footpath, and a cycle, pedestrian and road bridge from Cattle Market Road. The latter has already been completed thanks to £11m of investment from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). It was recently christened Brock's Bridge through a public competition won by the Knowle and Totterdown Local History Society. William Brock (1830-1907) was an entrepreneur and builder in Victorian Bristol who ran a successful business close to where the bridge stands today.

A pedestrian access route from Bath Road will lead to the public plaza in front of the Arena, and a host of other schemes will ensure visitors have a pleasant arrival experience, including a floating pontoon walkway from Temple Meads and improved way-finding facilities. Park and Ride services will be extended to service all Arena events and a 'park and rail' shuttle train will run from Bristol Parkway for large Arena events. The bold and elegant design, with its dramatic location next to the iconic Temple Meads Railway Station and its close proximity to the City Centre, will set it apart as a unique and transformational building for the City and the region.

John Payne, Convenor of the Planning Applications Group, reviews the latest proposals

Seven Ways Service Station, St Pauls

The Society has commented on pre-application ideas, and two subsequent proposals for the residential redevelopment of this filling station site. There is a balance to be struck here between the advantages that would accrue to the character of the Montpelier Conservation Area and the disadvantages that would arise from overdevelopment of the site. Whilst not objecting, in principle, to

residential development at this location, the Society lodged objections to the original application for 15 dwellings. PAG considered that the proposal was indeed over-intensive for the size of the site and that, in view of the limited public transport facilities in the area, there would be an increase in on-street parking. A revised application with three fewer dwellings has been submitted, but again with no parking provision, and so we have maintained our objection.

Somerset House, 18 Canynge Road

There have been many objections to the proposal to demolish Somerset House and replace it with eight dwellings in two blocks. PAG did not object to residential use of the site if its use for providing work were no longer viable. Regarding the proposal itself, PAG considered it to be too high and an over-development of the site, exacerbated by the proposed apartment accommodation. The three town houses and block of flats did not respect the set-back from the road of neighbouring dwellings. The proposal would also cause overlooking problems for the residents of Canynge Square, would involve the loss of a mature plane tree, and be harmful to the character of this Conservation Area and the setting of neighbouring Listed Buildings.

Land adjoining Wesley College, Henbury

I reported in the Spring issue of Better Bristol that the Society had consistently opposed residential development on this important piece of open space in a Conservation Area. The applicants have submitted some revisions to their scheme, but our objections are to the principle of developing this land and so we have re-iterated our opposition and will make a statement when this application goes to Committee, possibly in late August.

Advertising on Bath Road, Brislington

PAG has become increasingly aware of applications to install or increase advertising on land and buildings in trading estates and retail parks adjoining the A4 gateway to Bristol in Brislington. The Society considers that advertising and signage should be minimal and that intensification of it in this area is not only harmful to the appearance of the area and possibly to the safety of road users, but is an unwelcome commercialisation of this approach to Bristol. We will continue to raise objections to proposals that would exacerbate this trend.

www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk

'Fares Please!' - Speeding up the Buses



Managing Director of First Bristol Ltd, James Freeman, charts the journey from Clippies to Smart Ticketing

I started my career on the buses over forty years ago as a bus conductor, not in Bristol, but in Winchester, the ancient capital of Wessex. I was collecting the fares in a way, more or less, that had been done continuously since George Shillibeer introduced the first omnibuses, pulled by horses, in 1829.

The provision of a bus conductor was an efficient way of collecting fares in times when workers were plentiful and wages were relatively low. People boarded quickly and all the issues of fare collection and enquiries were dealt with on the move. On a busy bus this could make for a stressful job as the conductor raced against time to collect all the fares and issue the tickets before the next stop. I can vouch for this - it's the only job I have ever had where I enjoyed a net weight loss!

In the 1960s the economics of running buses grew harder, as people started their love affair with cars, and wage inflation increased costs. This was the cause of the conversion to Pay as you Enter methods, first introduced on route 19 in Bristol and which spread gradually across the City until the last conductor retired in 1980. Pay as you Enter immediately increased the time it took for buses to operate their routes because the cash had to be collected and tickets issued before the bus could set off. On the other hand, the bus company found that revenue increased

immediately because everybody paid. However, the result is that bus travel is very slow, especially at busy times.

In November 2013 there was a bit of a revolution on Bristol's buses. This was when, following an extensive consultation, Fairer Fares were brought in, based on a strict mileage. The effect of this change has been to increase the number of riders on Bristol's buses by 25% over two years. Brilliant news, except that's more and more people getting on and off the vehicles.

So, what's to do? Unlike buses in many other parts of the world, which are very heavily subsidised, in Bristol it's the users who have to pay for their own travel, so a fail-safe way of earning the revenue has to be used. If you go to Birmingham, you drop your cash fare into a 'fare box' beside the driver. It's the exact fare or overpay, no change is given, but people load onto the buses really quickly. It's certainly efficient, but it really isn't very user-friendly, so I don't think this is the answer to Bristol's problems.

Of course we all look to London, with its now ubiquitous Oyster card, where you can't buy a ticket on the bus at all. Great for speed, but the trouble is that the back-office systems for Oyster are huge (and hugely expensive) and beyond the reach of provincial transport providers, whether public or private sector. We do, however have smart cards, and we do have electronic ticketing. 'Touch' cards were introduced in Bristol two years ago. These can be topped up in travel offices and, curiously, on buses, as well as at PayPoint outlets, but you can't as yet

top them up online. Much more popular - and growing more quickly - are mTickets. These are smart tickets using smartphone technology. They are quick and easy and especially popular with students. You can buy a discounted ten-journey ticket while waiting at the bus stop and you can top up online.

But where do we go from here? The launch of Metrobus services in the city next year, which are distinct from the current bus routes and may or may not be operated by us, re-opens the question, as the decision has already been taken that passengers will not be able to buy their tickets from the driver. Indeed, the aim is to reduce dwell times to 20 seconds per stop, which is the time it takes to get about three people boarded onto a conventional bus! This will require new technology and it will also need the customers to be fleet of foot when boarding and alighting.

Technology is on our side. The rapid spread of cashless payment, using debit and credit cards, points the way forward. While it is not wholly straightforward to transfer this technology to the humble bus ticket machine, ways and means are being found to do this. First has committed to a smart revolution in ticketing for Bristolians over the next two years. It's possible that we'll get to a system where you don't buy your ticket from the driver. I never thought it would happen, but now I believe it's inevitable. It won't be too long here in Bristol before the queues and dreary waits at bus stops for passengers will be a thing of the past. What a difference it will make!



Castle Park - The Broken Heart of Bristol

John Frenkel, Convenor of the Major Sites Group (MSG), considers the current state of Castle Park, Bristol's true Centre

Every ten years or so, redevelopment and regeneration of Castle Park comes around, and it's here again. Since it opened as a park in 1978 there have been five improvement master plans, but nothing has happened. The western boundary is controversial because the Council has always intended to develop the land between High Street and St Mary-le-Port Church.

In 2006, the Council planned to replace the dilapidated Lloyds Bank, the Bank of England and the Norwich Union Building and raise funds to improve the remainder of the Park. However, there was such a protest at the time that the Council decided any new development would not take any green land to the east of the decaying buildings. The scheme ended with the property market collapse.

Central Area Plan

Later this year the Council will receive a planning enquiry from Goodman Developments, an Australian international property group for the western boundary. The Major Sites Group decided to send suggestions to the developer and the Council in advance of this pre-application about the opportunities that could accrue from the demolition of the buildings. The Central Area Plan of 2005 sets out the Council's current thinking on the site; its main points are:

- The 'St Mary-le-Port site' is suitable for a mix of uses.
- High Street needs a new pedestrian crossing from St Nicholas's Market to a reinstated St Mary-le-Port Street.
- The development should include a glass arcade to extend St Nicholas's Market and provide for independent small businesses. It should also create a new public space to improve the setting of St Mary-le-Port's tower and ruins.



St Peter's Church from the air

iv. There must be a properly designed transition between the redeveloped area and the Park to include active ground floor uses onto the Park and the quayside walk.

v. The development must provide a high quality new pedestrian setting in High Street and Wine Street. There is an opportunity to reduce the street widths closer to their historic proportions with measures to reduce traffic impact, such as traffic calming or shared space.

The MSG supports these aims, but a policy statement - 'The development must recognise the need to maintain a balance between the needs of development and the retention of the existing and important green infrastructure on and around Wine Street/High Street/Bridge Street' - causes concern:

- The red boundary line of the site runs down to the south to the quayside walk. The MSG wants the development to stop at Bridge Street and conserve the green bank and trees between the Back of Bridge Street and Bridge Street,

thereby creating an attractive entrance to the Park from Bristol Bridge.

ii. The MSG suggests that the development could remove the length of dual carriageway that celebrates the site of the mediaeval High Cross at the High Street and Wine Street junction, where there could be space for a small square.

iii. The MSG supports the re-alignment of the building line towards Wine Street to create a tighter urban grain. Reluctantly, the MSG accepts that gain from more development through a build-out into High Street and Wine Street would outweigh the loss of the plane trees.

However, many Bristol residents are passionate about the retention of the trees and support the landscaping of the unattractive gap between the decaying buildings and High Street and Wine Street to create new rentable market space and a social area under the plane tree canopy.

A major concern for the MSG is the proposed height and mass of the new development. Planning policy supports



Peter Randall-Page's 'Beside the Still Waters', though no water flows



St Mary-le-Port ringed by concrete dereliction



building heights that exceed the height of the existing buildings. The Society would vigorously oppose a tall building on this site. The height of the Prudential Building on Wine Street should be taken as an indicator of acceptable mass. The new development must not overbear the historical church towers in the area, which are heritage assets whose importance to the City cannot be overstated.

The Park - Strengths and Weaknesses

The quayside walk is attractive, heavily used by pedestrians and cyclists. A new bridge across the Floating Harbour will soon connect Finzel's Reach to the Park, but after dark the Park is poorly lit. The Council has removed the under-used children's playground, the Bandstand is silent, while the Vaulted Chambers, important remains of Bristol Castle, are unexploited. The Park desperately needs a gateway from Old Market and lacks an entrance to attract visitors from Cabot Circus, while the steps, walls and terraces beside Lower Castle Street put off pedestrians. The Park is

not a destination for visitors to Bristol's Shopping Quarter. How could its border that faces Newgate and The Galleries be enhanced? Would it be too expensive to lower the walls and breach them?

Under the tree-lined St Peter's Square lie buried the remaining vestiges of the mediaeval street plan - Dolphin Street and Peter Street - as well as St Edith's Well. The Square hosts various events, but appears to have no regular pattern of use. There is a terraced Herb Garden to the south of the church and a Sculpture Garden beyond the ruined choir. While the Herb Garden is well maintained, Peter Randall-Page's 'Beside the Still Waters' is dry, its rill liners visible and decaying.

The Council is about to improve St Peter's Square and restore the Sculpture Garden, but the area must become a visitor destination to justify its maintenance. The preserved ruins of St Peter's Church are designated as a monument to Bristol's civilian war dead. Is now the time to consider whether a community space built within the ruins could promote the

memorial's significance? The complex of spaces around St Peter's would link with St Mary-le-Port Street and connect to the Bristol Shopping Quarter. The principal challenge is to find a function and design for the Park east of St Peter's Church that will give the grassed area an active use. Are the hillocks that cover demolition rubble positive or negative features? Do the existing paths follow present desire lines? What type of lighting would improve the Park?

Beyond the Park to the Future

Bristol's Core Strategy plans 7,000 new homes in the centre of the city by 2026. If these are all achieved the City Centre will have a very different look and feel. Goodman's plans for the western boundary include a residential element. Dwellers in the neighbouring apartments need a green lung in the city centre. Castle Park can provide that important service, but it must be revitalised to complement and integrate with all the surrounding residential developments. We must not wait for another decade. Now is the time for action.

Current major schemes

The MSG welcomes any member who wishes to join

Please contact johnfrenkel5@gmail.com

These edited highlights continue the theme of extensive redevelopment in the City Centre

Assembly

The scheme comprises three high quality energy effective office buildings containing 42,000sqm and significant public realm works on the site of the demolished Clerical and Medical building. The Society supports the long delayed development of this important site but has reservations about the overall mass of the building, which substantially exceeds the existing planning consent. The site creates an opportunity to maximise the historic relationship with the Floating Harbour and the SS Philip & Jacob's churchyard.

Callowhill Court

This is a major retail and leisure development with a potential residential element. It would demolish nearly all of the buildings between Broadmead and Bond Street and to the east of Merchant Street to increase Cabot Circus's capacity by nearly 50%. The developer is exploring with the Council whether bus routes can change to close the Horsefair and Penn Street to traffic to make the area easier and safer for shoppers and visitors. The Society supports the principle of redevelopment and waits to see drawings of possible schemes.

Temple Circus

The scheme comprises 27,870 sqm of office space, a new hotel and a public area on the 'island' between the George and Railway Hotel and the Grosvenor Hotel. The site will include land to be released by the removal of the Temple Gate Gyrotory. The Society supports the redevelopment and the retention of the façades of the listed George and Railway Hotel but is disappointed that the proposal includes large buildings. A close-grain, lower-rise work quarter would create a greater sense of place. The Society would like to retain the façades of the Grosvenor Hotel, which create a local identity.



Above, the Assembly scheme as envisaged from Temple Way and the Floating Harbour
Below, the extent of the site to expand Cabot Circus

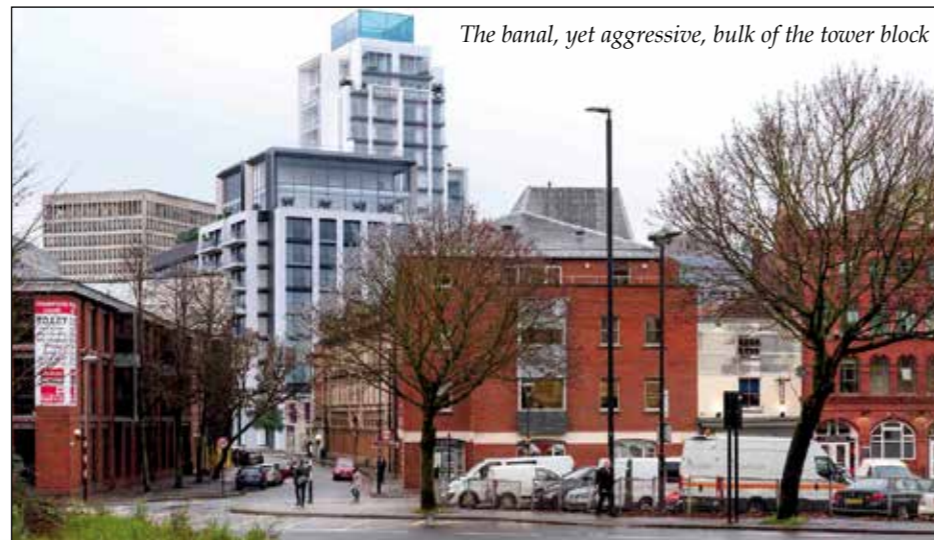


Redcliffe Quarter Scheme

Change Real Estate has applied for planning permission to build 274 flats, a 186-bed hotel, café, restaurants, a food hall, office space on the site formerly occupied in part by Patterson and Miles Druce in Redcliff Street.

While the Society supports a higher density in the city centre, and an increased building height, it is opposed to the construction of extremely tall buildings to support densification. At the heart of Redcliffe Quarter Phase 2 is a whopping

18-storey tower of flats in Redcliff Street that would be taller than the neighbouring Robinson Building, which extends fourteen-storeys above its podium. The City's planning policy specifically identifies the Redcliffe Conservation Area as being inappropriate for tall buildings and Historic England has criticized the plans, which it describes as 'incongruous and overly assertive', concluding that the blue 'feature' on the top will add the equivalent of an additional two storeys. The scheme must be thrown out on heritage grounds and then perhaps meaningful dialogue can begin on more realistic proposals sensitive to the nature of the surrounding historic assets.



The banal, yet aggressive, bulk of the tower block

Reviving the Lost Quarter of the Mediaeval City

Willie Harbison of ESHA Architects offers a radical solution to the St Mary-le-Port Site on Castle Park

The site around St Mary-le-Port Church close to Bristol Bridge is part of the Saxon settlement that grew to become the historic centre of Bristol. The area was blitzed in November 1940 and now contains three unloved office buildings dating from the 1960s, which surround the foundations of the church and its surviving tower.

As we have seen from John Frenkel's earlier article, the whole of the site is Council owned and is in a deplorable state, with the remains of the church languishing forgotten behind two derelict buildings.

The Bristol Central Area Plan states that redevelopment would allow for reinstatement of some of the historic street layout and provide a strong link between Broadmead and St Nicholas Market. My proposal seeks to repair this 'lost quarter' of the mediaeval city, including a new Dutch House on the site of the original, the reinstatement of St Mary-le-Port Street leading to St Peter's Church, a quiet garden square incorporating the footprint of St Mary's, with a covered food market alongside. We might even encourage a new re-interpretation of the Bristol High Cross, the original having gone to the landscape garden at Stourhead. All new buildings around the site would be of varying heights from six storeys fronting Wine Street to three and four storeys overlooking Bridge Street.

The proposed narrowing of High Street and Wine Street would return them to their historic alignments as shared surface streets. Traffic from High Street and Wine Street would be diverted onto Bridge Street and thence onto a new route running through



Castle Park, parallel to the existing avenue of cherry trees, and leading to the Newgate-Union Street junction. Although extending Bridge Street may be considered controversial, it does eliminate any conflict between pedestrians and through traffic on Wine Street and High Street, and accommodates all existing traffic flows, including buses.

The property company that has leased the site from the Council has yet to

come forward with any proposals for this sensitive site. The sale has gone through without any consultation with the citizens of Bristol or, apparently, any definition of what should be built there. So, once again, there is the possibility of stalemate when the developer comes to make a formal planning application. As a result, the site could remain a shameful embarrassment in the heart of our City for many more years.

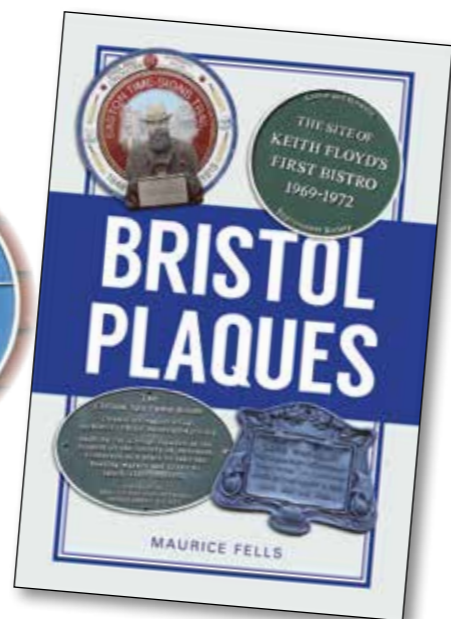


A reinstated St Mary-le-Port Street would provide a link between High Street and Castle Park

The Lavatory Attendant who cared for Prostitutes

Victoria Hughes
1897 - 1978

Who befriended and cared for prostitutes when she worked here as a lavatory attendant from 1929 to 1962



Maurice Fells, who has just brought out a book on plaques commemorating Bristol notables - the Civic Society currently administers the Blue Plaques Scheme - considers famous and not so well known recipients.*

No one knows just how many commemorative plaques there are in Bristol. Besides the traditional blue ones, there are plaques of almost every other colour, installed by various amenity and local history groups. But the blue plaque is the 'grandfather' of them all. This year is the 150th anniversary of its introduction in London.

Befitting a place of learning, Bristol has many blue plaques honouring alumni of its university. One of them is for the 1933 Nobel Prize Laureate, Paul Dirac, who went on to reveal the secrets of quantum physics and anti-matter. A plaque marks his birthplace in Bishopston and another can be found in the city centre on an engineering 'wall of fame' in Anchor Road.

But it's not only the likes of scholars, scientists and inventors who are commemorated by a blue plaque. Victoria Hughes is probably the only toilet attendant in the country to be honoured by one. It is outside the ladies' toilets on Clifton and Durdham Downs, where she worked for more than three decades. The inscription says that she 'befriended and cared for prostitutes'. Victoria offered tea and sympathy at her workplace to the women who plied their trade on the Downs.



Émigré architect, Berthold Lubetkin's house in Princess Victoria Street, Clifton

Robert Taylor was posthumously awarded the George Cross for his selfless heroism as he tried to stop two armed bank robbers in Westbury Park in 1950. Unfortunately, he was shot in the face and died in hospital. More than half a century later friends and bank workers gathered outside his former home in Fishponds where a blue plaque

paying tribute to Robert's bravery was unveiled.

The two words 'author' and 'playwright' on a plaque on Whiteladies Road, Clifton, hardly seem to do justice to the literary career of Frank Norman, who was born at this address in 1930. Thousands of people pass by this plaque each day without realising it is there or even knowing Frank's fascinating story. The plaque is high up in a recessed doorway almost hidden by half a dozen or so name plates of firms now occupying the building. Frank came to public notice in 1960 when he wrote a book entitled *Bang To Rights* after a 3-year stretch in prison for petty crime. His book was turned into a hit West End musical called *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'be*. It ran for more than two years at the Garrick Theatre with a cast that included Barbara Windsor. Another three of Norman's books were also turned into musicals.

Altogether he wrote nearly thirty novels, an impressive literary career when you consider that he was abandoned in childhood by his natural parents and spent some time in children's homes before turning to crime and, later, to writing.

Sadly, many commemorative plaques, like Frank's, are almost hidden from easy public viewing; Bristol isn't renowned for blowing its own trumpet.

**Bristol Plaques*, published by The History Press at £12.99

Post-War Planning for Bristol's Future

Peter Floyd re-assesses the significant achievements of City Engineer, Surveyor and Planning Officer, James B Bennett (1949-72)



After the devastation of the Second World War both main political parties agreed that Bristol had to be rebuilt. James Bennett had proved himself in his earlier work in the City during the war and he returned to Bristol from Swansea to become City Engineer, Surveyor and Planning Officer.

JBB and his team oversaw the survey and analysis in 1952 for the first Development Plan, published eventually in 1956, which comprised the building of new ring roads, the comprehensive redevelopment of the Blitz-ravaged city centre and the projection of vast new housing estates around the edges of the City, together with all the engineering services and roads necessary to keep them going.

As a young architect planner, I joined the new Design Section in 1964 under the direction of Ma Rafeek, a hard driving architect, and with John Totterdill, another architect planner. We were both members of the Civic Society, of which John was Honorary Secretary. Design Section was a very small part of a very big team and, whilst we were officially consulted upon matters of design, we were also, I fancy, a bit of a nuisance, since we questioned engineering projects.

The next decade saw the completion of The Parkway (now the M32); the Cumberland Basin Bridges Scheme; a regional sewage system; the Frome flood prevention scheme; the Northern Stormwater Interceptor; the Sewage Works at Avonmouth and many more



The great gulling swing bridge over the Cumberland Basin flyover complex (1962-5)



Transport Minister Ernest Marples at the opening ceremony of Phase I of the Cumberland Basin Bridges Scheme (Sylvia Crowe Archive, Landscape Institute, held at MERL)

projects, the majority of which are still essential parts of Bristol's infrastructure.

For the first Development Plan Review, a summary of which was published in 1966 entitled *Bristol of the Future*, JBB and his highway engineers demonstrated that with the demands of modern traffic a radical new system was needed. The City Centre Policy Report was a non-statutory part of it - one of the first in the country - and not subject to normal procedure, so it could be produced without pre-consultation. But, following publication, it became clear to the public that the new road system was to include, not only the completion of the Inner Circuit Road, but the addition of an Outer Circuit Road, all to have grade-separated junctions to aid free flow.

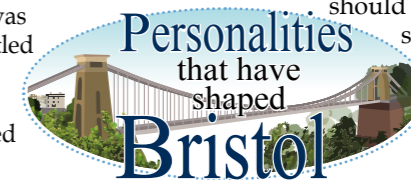
It was a massively ambitious programme that was moving on at amazing speed, but it failed to appreciate that Bristol was a beautiful city with, especially, historic areas that should not be bulldozed. As you may imagine, tensions inside the Council departments began to be reflected outside in the City, as the public realised the implications for these changes upon the historic fabric.

In 1967, the year after the Development Plan Review was published, the City Council decided that the City Docks

should be closed to commercial shipping. The City Engineer was charged with finding new uses for the area covered by water. The City promoted a bill in Parliament

to remove historic navigation rights and Sir Hugh Casson was asked to prepare a scheme which included the Outer Circuit Road with its huge multi-level junction across the Docks. Fortunately, the protests that followed brought about a change in attitude by both public and Council to favour instead the improvement of the City's built environment.

By the time James Bennett retired in 1972, public and political attitudes had changed markedly and with them, Bennett's reputation amongst the opinion formers. The money ran out nationally shortly afterwards, when most large engineering projects in Bristol stopped. Few large infrastructure projects have been achieved since, and so the city has continued to rely heavily upon the post-war facilities that JBB and his team achieved and for which we should be grateful.



The Lost City at River's Mouth

David Martyn, the City Council's Senior Conservation Officer, considers the history and heritage of a neglected area of Bristol's hinterland

Once Bristol's gateway to the Empire, and feted as a future city in its own right, Avonmouth has more recently been the subject of neglect and negative news stories. But the township at River's Mouth, as it was formerly known, has rallied in recent years and a new sense of identity and community has grown from adversity. Increasingly, a key element in that identity is its historic environment – and rightly so.

Although the planned city never materialised, Avonmouth's architectural ambition still betrays its metropolitan aspirations. The architectural



A detail of Bligh Bond's 1915 Bus Depot

development of the 'village' falls into two epochs straddling the negotiation of a Colonial Office subsidy to provide a new fortnightly mail service to the West Indies. Always the favoured recipient of the contract, Elder Dempster Lines had begun investment in the project before the contract was officially signed in 1899. Their basing of eight ships at Avonmouth from 1901 was the vote of confidence the struggling docks needed. It had an immediate catalytic effect on the district.

The Miles family of Kings Weston house began the development of the estuarial flats in 1865. When Philip Skinner Miles died in 1881, his son, Philip Napier Miles, inherited an embryonic settlement scattered around his father's dock, opened just four years previously. Before 1900 Napier Miles's development of Avonmouth was as laboured and ponderous as the architecture it spawned.

The Mannerist-style Park House of 1906



The Avonmouth Bus Depot

completed. On Avonmouth Road, Richmond Buildings, a rank of modern shops of about 1901, was one of Bligh Bond's designs. Consciously located on the main road to the docks, it served as a manifesto for the scale and architectural expression in the new borough. Further down the road, on the junction of

Gloucester Road, another commercial terrace followed, continuing the Edwardian Baroque theme with a wildly exaggerated, Mannerist corner pediment. Opposite it, across the park on the corner of St Brendan's Way, Park House of 1906 reciprocates with alternating quoins and cloche door canopies; its three-storey height no doubt intended to set the precedent for the scale east of the park along St Andrew's Road, which would have led directly to the proposed 1000-acre urban extension.

Piecemeal development continued for the duration of the construction of the new Royal Edward Dock, which opened finally in 1908, but after that the city plan faltered. Businesses were reputedly reluctant to take up development sites so far from Bristol and developers shunned the remote marshy land for residential uses. The swansong of the project, but by no means Avonmouth's last architectural flourish, was the 1915 Bus Depot, one of just two Listed Buildings north of the concrete gash of the M5.

A reappraisal of the relationship between Avonmouth and Bristol is long overdue. For a district of such rich architecture, so distinct, and developed to unifying design principles, there is a surprising lack of statutory protection.

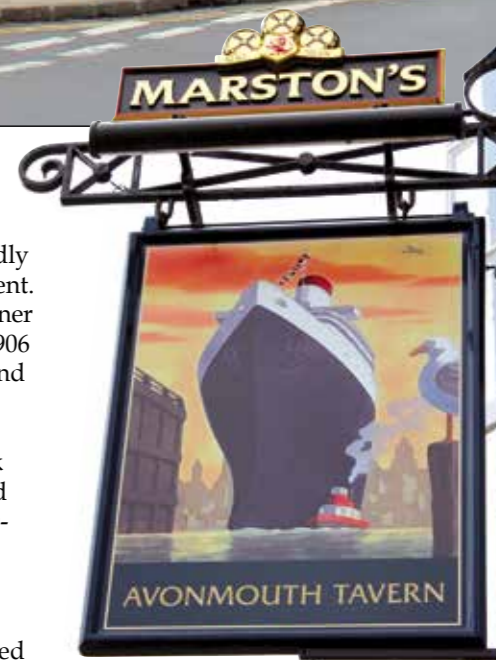
What sort of architectural epiphany occurred in the 35-year-old Napier Miles at the turn of the century we can only guess, but much might be down to the influence of the architect Frederick Bligh Bond. He became the Kings Weston estate architect in about 1898, bringing with him a fresh, new, and occasionally eccentric, architectural approach. Victorian conservatism was cast aside and in its place the 'Sweetness and Light' of the Queen Anne Revival breezed into Avonmouth.

Even before Elder Dempster Lines had completed preparations for their inaugural sailing, the Corporation, in a rare moment of decisiveness, realised the potential of Avonmouth docks and committed to a vast expansion. At the same time local businessmen seized on the opportunity to promote a direct rail link between London and Avonmouth with a terminus beside St Andrew's Church. Into this melange of investment plans Napier Miles conjured up an incredible masterplan for the laying out of a new 1,000-acre extension of Avonmouth, complete with parks, squares, commercial and office districts, new housing and industrial premises. By 1903 this was already being vaunted in the press as a new city.

Elements of the masterplan were actually



Napier Miles's Development Plan for Avonmouth



Many of the best buildings have been nominated for Local Listing, but there have already been fatalities. In an area where house prices have reportedly risen 21% in twelve months, as pressure for development grows, there can be few certainties. An opportunity was missed in 2015 to take advantage of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the village, but the community is eager to share its story with the rest of Bristol. Whatever the opportunities to record, celebrate, and protect such a unique heritage, they should be seized upon wherever they arise.

Architects and developers - come forward!

Matthew Montagu-Pollock gives a personal insight into this year's deliberations

This year there was a real shortage of good submissions for the Design Awards. Are there really so few good new buildings being built in Bristol? Were there ones we didn't know about? Developers and architects put themselves forward. We're a small group, we're not omniscient and it is easy to miss buildings. Many on our long list were better suited to the Carbuncle of the Year Award!

The panel comprised the Society's Chair, Simon Birch, a career planning officer; Professor Timothy Mowl, voluminous architectural writer; Laura Hilton,



Asda filling station, Blackboy Hill

representing the Bristol Junior Chamber of Commerce; architect David Mellor, Chair of Trustees at The Architecture Centre; Hilary Long, Chair of the Westbury-on-Trym Society; Andy Reynolds, UK Chief Engineer for A350 at Airbus; Rebecca Windemer, formerly of Savills; and myself, a journalist relatively new to Bristol, having spent 23 years in Asia.

Interestingly, professionals and non-profs seemed to see things largely the same way. Hilary, it is true, wanted to consider giving an award to the Asda filling station on Blackboy Hill, but was politely squashed on the grounds that it didn't fit the criteria. The most interesting building also didn't match - a Shirehampton house using straw bale insulation panels that achieves virtually zero heating costs through air recirculation and insulation efficiency. But its virtues were its technology rather than the architecture. The new Royal Fort piazza got grumbles, particularly from Tim, about the eighteenth-century garden archway left beached in a De Chirico no-man's land. Redfield Primary School on Avonvale Road was worthy, but not good enough.

Finally we agreed on two. In second place was Colston's Primary School in Elmgrove Road, which won less unanimous approval than the winner largely because the architect, Nick Childs of Childs & Sulzmann, had faced the difficult challenge of using temporary classrooms brought in from



A sociable courtyard at Filwood Green



Garden and building in harmony at Colton's Primary School

another site to save costs. The integration of old and new was not entirely satisfactory. What won us over was suitability to function - how the building encouraged the children to free flow between the two levels and the garden.

However, in the end there was one truly excellent building about which everyone was unanimous - Filwood Green Business Park. It is not, in my view, a very beautiful building, as from the road it looks garish, consciously so, to draw attention to itself, but there really is a lot to admire. James Horner of architects Stride Treglown was required to produce a sustainable building on a complex asbestos-littered site with a large sewer running under it, so that no weight or columns could be placed on the entrance corner. Responding to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Bristol City Council's wish to encourage creative mingling among the tenants, the building has a courtyard plan, which is very secure, with a large atrium and some functions (the tea corners) deliberately separated from the offices and workshops. It also has a roof garden which replaces, like-for-like, the grasses originally on the site.

We wandered around and enthused over details, such as the amazing ventilation-silencer systems (which totally protect rooms from the adjacent dual carriageway's noise, while drawing in fresh air), the wide stairs, the structure's green features, the meeting pods, and the general elegance of the building; an elegance which, I have to say, sold it to us.



Brise soleil at Filwood

UWE Student Award 2016



Wendy Pollard introduces this year's award winner

This is the fourteenth year the Society has awarded an outstanding piece of work by a graduating student of the Architecture and Planning

and Architecture degree courses for the Department of the Built Environment at the University of the West of England. Simon Birch and I were impressed by the work of

James Gray, with all the detailed research, intellectual thought and skill that had gone into his scheme, and congratulate him on being our 2016 Student Award Winner.

Trader's Alchemy by James Gray

Early in October 2015, thirty final year Architecture students set off for the Dutch city of Delft. Having little knowledge of the place, I was delighted to find a city so quintessentially Dutch, quaint and picturesque with narrow streets, canals, bridges, windmills, and 'Delft Blue' pottery. The final year's design studio would be based wholly in Delft, our brief including a master plan design for Delft's northern city edge, an inhabited bridge to connect the master plan with the 'Old City' and a landmark building of our choosing.



James receiving his award from Wendy at his degree ceremony

The trip allowed us to analyse the city and its inhabitants, and to uncover its genius loci - whatever it is, that

makes it quintessentially Delft. The city's rich trade history is ingrained within its narrative. In 1602 the East India Trading Company propelled this modest city to international fame for trade, sciences and the arts. Holland's tolerant and mobile society, combined

with its new wealth, created a diverse and thriving culture where the world's greatest minds could explore and exchange ideas. 400 years have passed and its waterways and Market Square are sedentary, yearning to be bustling again with trade and vibrant culture. As trade was a key driver to the Dutch Golden Age, could this rich period of economic and cultural bloom be replicated in the modern age? The year's work sought to instil, through architecture, the behaviours conducive to the creation of a culturally and economically thriving community.

The master plan was developed with a St Paul's-inspired viewing corridor, which would connect Delft's iconic leaning church spire with a landmark building at the heart of the scheme. Mixed housing would be situated throughout, consciously placed to encourage entrepreneurship and community. A key feature of the master plan is the extension of the canal networks into the site, replicating the narrow streets and canals that help to define Delft's larger identity.

The landmark building would take the form of Trader's Alchemy, a platform for the trading of both commodity and culture. Funded by the Government of the Netherlands, Trader's Alchemy will host partner nations, providing a phenomenologically rich building, atmospherically attuned to the living and breathing of trading, debating and learning. As a phenomenological project the design pays little regard to specific architectural styles or forms, but focuses instead on the experience of the user within the building. Bare concrete juxtaposed with rich walnut furniture evokes a sense of both contemplation and intensity.

This project very quickly became more than merely a means of achieving marks to contribute towards my degree classification. Hours upon hours spent researching, sketching, drawing and modelling, this project was about creating something of beauty. Just as trade will be forever ingrained within Delft's narrative, Delft will now be forever ingrained in my own.



An interior 'attuned to the living and breathing of trading, debating and learning'

A Garden for the Three-Cornered Trade

Alan Stealey, Bristol University's Head of External Estates, describes an emerging garden restoration project at Clifton Hill House

Bristol University owns almost a dozen historic gardens, its most significant being the Grade I listed Goldney Garden in Clifton, with its dazzling spar- and shell-encrusted grotto.

A little known University garden was laid out by Melville and Gertrude Wills in memory of two lost sons behind their homeopathic hospital at the top of St Michael's Hill, and the University has recently added the Centenary Garden to the side of the Wills Memorial Building.*

One University garden that has long been in need of restoration and recreation is that behind Clifton Hill House on Lower Clifton Hill. The house is a rarity for Bristol – a chastely correct Palladian-style design, not by a Bristol man, but by a metropolitan architect, Isaac Ware. Thomas Paty built it for the wealthy merchant Paul Fisher between 1747 and 1750. Fisher's house was sited at the top of an existing garden, which is shown clearly on Jacob de Wilstar's 1746 Survey of the Manor of Clifton.

De Wilstar's Survey records a formal garden of gravel paths laid out within low planting. The design of the paths – given the importance of trade and seafaring in the city – resembles a sextant, used for nautical navigation. The Survey also marks the walls surrounding a lower area of shrubberies, with two rectangular

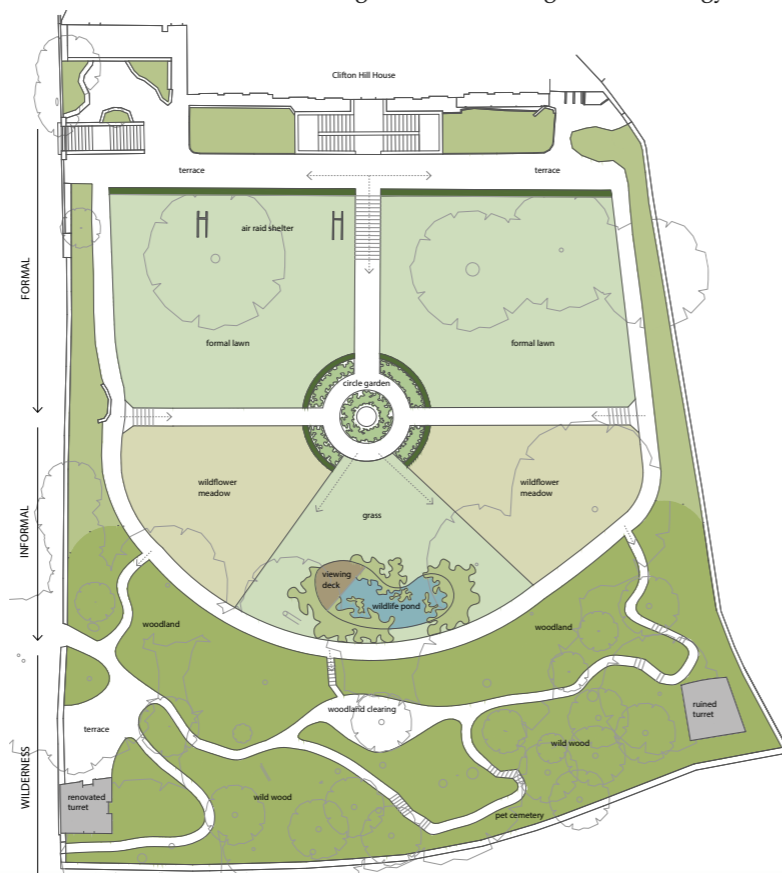
Below, *The de Wilstar Survey*: Courtesy of Bristol Record Office, Ref. SMV/6/5/4/3

Right, *Garden Plan* by Nicola Greaves Design



The surviving Summerhouse will be restored as part of the garden scheme

buildings at the corners. There are several of these 'turrets' in other gardens on the Survey. They were summerhouses aligned on the river below to take in views of the passing ships as they plied the Three-Cornered Trade.



Isaac Ware published his magisterial *Complete Body of Architecture* in 1756 and in it he argued that an architect must also be responsible for the design of the grounds around his buildings. Although he had inherited a formal garden at Clifton Hill House, we do know that he preferred a more naturalistic, wilderness style.

The garden at Clifton Hill House has always been pleasant and attractive, but I believe that if grounds cannot be fully utilised, regularly drawing visitors into every corner, then they fail to achieve their potential. There is also the moral duty to interpret them and to inform staff, students and visitors about the gardens. With over 200 acres of grounds to maintain, recreating a historic garden would be unachievable without our fantastic Heritage Volunteers, led by Louise Hopkins.

Our specification for the new garden needed to reflect the transitional period between de Wilstar and Ware. The design brief required that it should also have a light touch, avoiding the archaeology,

and to make the most of the more recent features, which also have heritage value. We discussed the project carefully with the Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society, Heritage England, the Conservation Officers of the City Council and also with the Heritage Lottery Fund, to whom we are extremely grateful for providing the majority of funds to realise the project.

Working with Nicola Greaves who, as well as volunteering her time to work in the garden, is a gifted landscape architect, the plan developed. Upon entering the garden the visitor will stand on the Rose Terrace – a broad Cotswold gravel path – its backdrop, against the house, of deep beds of David Austin roses, which will provide a warm and colourful welcome, and perfumed scent throughout the spring and summer months.

Looking down the garden, under the *Liriodendron tulipifera* (tulip trees), the formal lawns – subdivided by the grand central steps and path – will focus the attention on a circular bed and path

feature bordered by box hedges. Radiating out from this hub the lower terrace will reveal that the original sextant paths have been replaced by wildflower meadows containing a profusion of plants. This re-imagining of the original historic garden features allows a transition from the formal landscape elements to the informal, which will incorporate a reflective pool.

The wilder section, threaded by a new woodland path, will be our homage to Isaac Ware's preference for the wilderness style. The visitor will be led under and through the mature and augmented woodland, noting a ruined turret, sitting on a seat beneath the spreading limbs of a tree, viewing the engraved memorials to past Hall pets and returning to the surviving summerhouse, newly restored, from which refreshments will be served. As visitors walk back up the garden they will gain unparalleled views of the house crowning the terraces and embankments, while the more intrepid can explore the air raid shelter.

* For more information on the gardens see Marion Mako's *The University of Bristol Historic Gardens*, which can be purchased at: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/external-estate/gardensandgrounds/historicgardens/>



Ferguson, Concrete and Gentrification

Eugene Byrne looks at some of the most (and least) pressing issues currently facing Bristol, gets nostalgic for the Swinging Sixties and has a sure fire formula for preventing gentrification



The M32 under construction in the mid-1960s. (Bristol Post)

The end of the Georgian Era

In all the insanity of national and international politics this year, we can be forgiven for failing to take much notice of the election of Labour's Marvin Rees as Mayor of Bristol. Rees's success also marked the passing of George Ferguson's remarkable tenure of office, something which some members may have regretted, as George's credentials as architect, campaigner, and gentrifier of south Bristol made him the political wing of the Bristol Civic Society.

Love him or hate him, Ferguson certainly shook things up during his four years - in parking, public transport, 20-mph speed limits and so on. Not to mention his importation of vast numbers of hipsters who get by on pop-up beard sculpting

shops and craft breweries, but mostly on their trust funds. Future historians of the City will probably be able to say there was a recognisably 'Georgian' period in which Bristol was different from how it was before and afterwards.

Ferguson's tenure also ended in the year that the Bristol Old Vic celebrated its 250th anniversary. Someone ought to have marked the occasion with an eighteenth-century-style comedy of manners in which the fair Lady Bristolia is wooed by two swains, the wealthy and well-connected Sir George Trousers and the dashing but impecunious Captain Marvin. The former tries to win her affections with the promise of an Arena and a go on his water-slide, but true love wins out when the latter gets down on bended knee to offer her a ring of sparkling Corbynite and 2,000 council houses a year.

Fifty years ago...

In 1966 Bristol was living through a vintage year for concrete. There were offices going up all over the place. Back then they were for people to work in, but many have now been usefully re-purposed for the battery farming of students. Several were completed in the summer of 1966 alone. The eastern side of Berkeley Square was done up and taken over by Bristol University. Embassy House, on the corner of Queen's Road and Queen's Avenue in Clifton, opened and was mostly occupied by IBM (UK), while Alexandra Overalls (as was) was moving into new offices on Dighton Street. Meanwhile, work was forging ahead on the new Bristol & West building overlooking the Centre, which, according to excited newspaper reports, would be 'fully air-conditioned'.

The Pithay photographed in the 1970s. Fond memories of the Studios 1234 cinema, anyone? (Bristol Post)



Gentrification and what to do about it

One of the words that people often use about Stokes Croft is 'gentrification'. Like it's a dirty word. In the view of some, all the street art and alternative shops and cafés that have sprung up around Hamilton House threaten to turn the area into the new Islington, with the soaring property prices and middle class takeover that goes with it.

If you walk down the Croft though, there are precious few signs of this happening anytime soon, and the real clue is not in the rough sleepers or street drinkers, but the tags.

That is, the little spray-painted signatures plastered over every single flat surface, including all of the Great

Works of Art, by feckless youngsters lacking the talent to paint a proper picture. Tagging is the equivalent of an animal marking its territory with urine, only carried out by humans at the lower end of the evolutionary scale. It does, however, serve a socially useful purpose in that it makes an area appear edgy, run-down and dangerous. In this way, property prices and rents are kept down and the much-feared gentrification of Stokes Croft is kept at bay for another year.

So, if you aspire to owning a nice house in a posh part of town, but find it a bit beyond your financial means, all you have to do is hire a few semi-literates to nocturnally adorn the neighbourhood with their signatures. That should deal you a strong hand in price negotiations a couple of weeks later.

(Picture by Jeff Lucas)



Bristol Walking Alliance - a new force for good?



Alan Morris, Chair of BWA, on taking the streets back for walkers

The Bristol Walking Alliance started in 2015 to campaign to improve Bristol's walking environment. It gives voice to a common cause that has not been coherently expressed until now, and seems to have struck an untapped well of energy.

Why is that? Firstly, people recognise the need to balance the strong lobby for cyclists and motorists. Secondly, we are all walkers, even if we go by other modes for part of our journeys. Thirdly, there were already a number of active initiatives and groups for walking, and bringing them together has given them more weight.

What are those groups? Sustrans (no, they don't just do cycling); Ramblers (no, they don't just run walks); Living Streets (the national equivalent of BWA, but not active recently in Bristol); Road Peace (lobbying about safety and justice); the 'SHINE' healthy neighbourhood environment project, part of Bristol Health partners, with University of

Bristol support. And something I didn't expect - Neighbourhood Partnerships - 6 out of 14 have joined so far. The last two groups are particularly strong and active allies. It is exciting to represent the Civic Society in such a wide and energetic alliance.

And it comes at a good time for influencing policy. The government is concocting a cycling and walking investment strategy. There are revisions in progress for both the sub-regional and Bristol transport strategy, not to mention a revised Walking Strategy, and a first policy on 'shared use' routes. BWA is engaging with all of these.

BWA is campaigning at four levels:

- Walking as transport: We want funding and policies to promote and enable walking as an important mode of transport, separately from cycling.
- Space for walking: We want to work with policy makers, transport planners and urban designers to make changes in street design that meet the needs of walkers.
- Walkable neighbourhoods: We

encourage community groups and Neighbourhood Partnerships to look actively at how their neighbourhood could be made more walkable.

- Streets for people: We encourage residents to take the initiative to make their streets more liveable for people of all ages and abilities

BWA is also reaching out, establishing contacts politically, both at cabinet level and with party champions, and with Council officers, and with equalities groups - two have already joined BWA.

So how can you get involved?

- You can become a supporter, and keep up to date with our activities and events. Please contact: supporters@bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk
- You can contribute your views; tell us about the places and routes in Bristol where more space or better signage for walking is needed by contacting: enquiries@bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk
- Watch out for BWA's second event - 'Walkable Neighbourhoods' - on Saturday 15 October 9.30 - 1.00, as part of Healthy City Week.



A Rotunda for Leigh Court from Humphry Repton's Red Book (University of Bristol Library, Special Collections)

The future of historic estates in Bristol

Simon Birch on the forthcoming Heritage Forum Conference

Since the launch of the Heritage Forum earlier this year we've adopted initial Terms of Reference - the full version is available on request. The headline task is to act as an advocate and champion of Bristol's heritage.

In addition, we aim to co-ordinate heritage activity, especially relating to Heritage Lottery Funding, and to build community capacity and public participation in heritage related activities. However, the Forum will not itself become involved in the planning process, which would be the role of individual organisations.

We've set up an initial executive to take the Forum forward in its first year. This comprises representatives from the City Council, the Churches Conservation Trust, the Neighbourhood Planning Network, Jones Lang Lasalle, and the Bristol Civic Society. We are always open to welcoming additional executive members.

Our flagship Conference will be held on Thursday, 27 October at St James's Priory. The theme will be the future of Bristol's historic estates. During the day workshops and site visits will focus on three of these - Kings Weston, Stoke Park

and Castle Park. We've selected this theme because of the sheer number and importance of such estates in and around Bristol, and because of the many challenges that they all face in securing a sustainable future.

The evening plenary session will have just three speakers - Dr Jonathan Foyle, together with speakers from Historic England and from our own Heritage Forum. Jonathan was Chief Executive of World Monuments Fund Britain for eight years during which time he led funded solutions for many historic sites, from great estates with landscapes to cathedrals, churches and houses. He was a Curator of Historic Buildings at Hampton Court for many years.

As well as the Conference, the Society continues to explore initiatives where the Forum might be able to make a difference. A good example is St Michael-on-the-Mount-Without - a Grade II* listed church which has been boarded up for nearly 20 years. We have identified the opportunity for the Forum to provide energy and leadership in order to stimulate and encourage the sustainable re-use of vacant heritage assets, especially those at risk. With scaffolding finally being erected in order to undertake much needed maintenance to the roof and guttering, perhaps the



Kings Weston in 1712, from Sir Robert Atkyns's Gloucestershire

Forum will find a clear role in helping to identify and to secure a permanent future for this wonderful building.

What do you think? Do you have energy and skills to contribute?

We have held discussions with CAMRA about the challenge in preserving historic pubs at risk in Bristol. We are looking with interest at the innovative approach adopted by Wandsworth Council, using Article 4 Directions, to help prevent pubs going out of use. Local Listing may be part of the solution, but this non-statutory designation can only delay and not prevent loss. Should the Forum assist in preserving historic pubs? What do you think? Let us know your views.

Conservation at Tyntesfield

In advance of the Heritage Forum Conference, Susan Hayward explains the conservation challenges on the Tyntesfield estate

Seven miles south-west of Bristol, Tyntesfield stands on an elevated ridge commanding magnificent views over the Vale of Nailsea. Bought in 1843 by Exeter woollen merchant, William Gibbs (1790-1875), Tyntes Place (later Tyntesfield) was home to the Gibbs family for 150 years. In 1840 William's company, Antony Gibbs & Sons, embarked on a seemingly risky new venture, when they secured the sole rights to export guano (sea bird droppings) from the Chincha Islands off Peru.

As a result, huge quantities of nitrate-rich guano were shipped to our shores, giving a much-needed boost to British crops during a period of deep depression. It also fuelled advances in horticulture and, in the process, made a massive fortune for the company. It was guano profits that were largely to fund the remodelling of Tyntesfield by architect John Norton in the 1860s, transforming it from a Georgian country house to a Gothic Revival masterpiece.

But Tyntesfield was much more than a country house. Guano profits were also used to build a flourishing landed estate and parkland, with a model farm, a grand ornamental conservatory or 'winter garden', orangery, orchards and

an ambitious Kitchen Garden complex. William's commercial success had been due to clever marketing of experiments with the application of guano showing dramatic increases in yields. Some of these experiments were on Gibbs' land at Wraxall. So we think it likely that they were also using guano in the gardens and glasshouses at Tyntesfield. Both William, and later his son Antony

Tyntesfield was eventually saved for the Nation when it was acquired by the National Trust in 2002, thanks to a substantial HLF grant and a massive fundraising campaign.

(1841-1907), regularly threw open their impressive estate to visitors and journalists - we still do!

The National Trust's Vision

Tyntesfield was eventually saved for the Nation when it was acquired by the National Trust in 2002, thanks to a substantial HLF grant and a massive fundraising campaign. This was all the more extraordinary due to the scale of support from some 70,000 individual donors, many of them Bristolians. But that was just the beginning. Since then the Trust has continued to raise funds to push forward its conservation programme; initial priorities included the main roof of the mansion and the fine English Renaissance Orangery, commissioned by Antony Gibbs as the centrepiece of his expanded Kitchen Garden.

I took up the post as Curator of Tyntesfield last November and am thrilled to have the opportunity to help shape the vision to restore this glorious Victorian Estate and share it with visitors. Originally a field archaeologist, I've worked in museums and heritage for over 25 years, most recently as Director of the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery, Bournemouth, another spectacular Victorian House and collection.

The Orchard House Project

As Curator I am advising on a series of conservation projects across the estate. These include restoring the lake, replanting the Rose Garden, and re-constructing the Orchard House. Built against the south-facing wall of the Kitchen Garden, this is a large and unusual lean-to structure that combines flat glass pivoting panels within a curved frame. More research is needed, but we think that it was built to the design of the renowned nurseryman, Thomas Rivers the Third (1797-1877) of Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire. In 1851 Rivers had many claims to fame as the developer of the Conference Pear and author of *The Orchard House; Or Culture of Fruit-Trees in Pots under Glass*, which went through at least 16 editions.

Due to its dilapidated, unsafe condition and the risk of further irreversible damage to its structure, it was recorded and dismantled in 2010. At the time the National Trust made a commitment to restore the structure, and hoped to achieve this within the decade. Six years on, plans are already underway



to bring it back to life. The work will involve repairs to the adjoining garden wall and brickwork plinth. We will be re-using the salvaged structure by overhauling the existing timber ribs and metalwork, making new, where necessary, to ensure that the tiers of pivoted window opening mechanisms operate as originally designed. Our challenge will be to make the structure as physically accessible as possible. I can't wait for the day when it is again the focus of the soft fruit ground, and it is filled with the heady scent of peaches, nectarines and apricots.

Opposite page, Susan surveying the Orchard House wall

Above, The restored Orangery in the re-named Dial Garden

Right, Tyntesfield from the air (National Trust)

Below left, Orchard House frames awaiting restoration

Below right, Winding gear retrieved for repair and re-use in the Orchard House





Soaring vaults at St Mary Redcliffe. (Photo: Jeff Lucas)

Roundabouts, Renewal and Redcliffe

Dan Tyndall, Vicar of St Mary Redcliffe, gets excited about the future vision for his church

Every 70 years Redcliffe gets redeveloped. Lyon's plan (1717) shows built form tightly surrounding the north and west of the church.

Even in Wild's plan (1812), which marks Chatterton's monument outside the north porch, the only access to the church was from a gate on the west side. By 1880 Phippen Street had been built, Redcliffe Hill had been widened on the west side to accommodate trams and the main access into the church was via the north steps. A 1949 map shows the church land to the north as we know it now, and the first roundabout. Post-war gave us a roundabout as wide as the church with a flyover that 'dumped' traffic onto a dual carriageway right outside 'the fairest, godliest and most famous parish church in all England'!

Not that we're bitter!!

Now, another 70 years on, Redcliffe is about to be rebuilt again. With work to the west (Wapping Wharf, The General, Redcliffe Wharf) and the north (Redcliffe Village) and the east

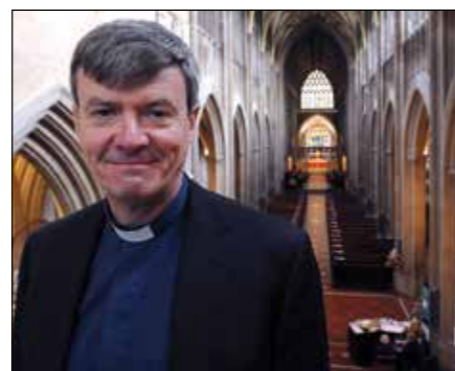
(the Arena, Temple Meads, Temple Gate) there is going to be irresistible pressure on this city centre opportunity.

With one eye on this ongoing narrative, we have done an audit of our facilities. After all, being realistic, if we don't get on the bus whilst Redcliffe is being redeveloped we're going to miss the opportunity to add buildings to 'the fairest, godliest and most famous parish church in all England'.....

we're fully aware that this well-worn mantra can be a double-edged sword.

What did we find? Our disabled toilet is down a flight of steps; we have thirteenth-century corbels sitting on a shelf with no interpretation; our fire engine (I love that we have a fire engine!) is in Taunton; adults who assist in worship robe in the same place the choir is rehearsing; Sunday School has to be held in the undercroft because that's the only space we have; our café is unseen and rather unknown; we're running

out of office space; and our parish (our prime responsibility in all this) is in the top 3% of areas in the country for multiple



Dan Tyndall - Vicar on a mission

deprivation, and the facilities we have to meet some of those socio-economic needs are old, tired and very limited.

So we are getting on the bus. We are actively pursuing a major development of our facilities which will include a new building to the north of the church and another in the south churchyard. We ran an architecture competition with entries from around the world and found our architectural practice around the corner - Purcell on King Street in Bristol. The competition was to find a firm, not to select a design, so if you (or people you know) have negative views about Purcell's winning competition entry, please be assured we are a long way from having a settled view of what we are hoping to build. Everything we are seeking to do is being logged on our development website where you can also sign up to receive our regular development newsletters.

<http://www.stmaryredcliffe.co.uk/development.html>



Open to Ideas



Dr Anna Farthing, Project Co-ordinator, Opening Doors to Heritage, reprises this year's Open Doors event

As the producer of Doors Open Day for the Architecture Centre this year, I was fortunate to be building on a programme that has been established over twenty years and which has built up audiences of over 50,000 people who eagerly await their opportunity to explore Bristol on the second weekend in September.

My role is part of a newly funded project, Opening Doors to Heritage, supported by Historic England and Heritage Lottery Fund. Our intention is not only to open more doors in more parts of the City on more occasions than ever before, but also to open visitors' minds as well as their eyes.

I am not an architect. My expertise is in creative public engagement and festival programming encompassing numerous cultural forms. I began my career as a director of theatre and opera, developing new work in creative laboratories such as the National Theatre Studio and Canada's Banff Centre for the Arts. Much of this was 'site-specific' and strongly related to the history and meaning of place. I have written fact and fiction in various formats, and then about ten years ago I fell almost by accident into the heritage sector.



(Jon Craig)



(Jon Craig)

This led to a PhD and commissions to launch contested sites such as M Shed, the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool and The National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

For me, place making is about capturing human narratives and harnessing them to positive outcomes through carefully designed activity. I do this through events, but I have found that the underlying approach shares much in common with the architects, designers, engineers and planners that I have recently met. I want to introduce new ways of

experiencing the built environment that use all of the senses and that encourage dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

A keystone of the Architecture Centre's 20th Anniversary month-long programme, Bristol Doors Open Day 2016 filled the whole weekend of 11 and 12 September and aligned to the national Heritage

Open Days calendar by opening with an event at the Bristol Record Office. Eighty-one venues opened their doors, with venue clusters in new areas around Old Market and in south Bristol. As well as exploring the City by area, thematic threads could be followed through investigating the changing face of the workplace, places of performance or the history and future of science, technology and medicine.

Our vision is to make Doors Open Day visitor focused, and I hope that my experience will enable people to think about things that they might feel are beyond their scope or sphere of influence and find ways of communicating their thoughts and feelings. This might be through creative writing, photography, film, visual art, movement, music, food or good old-fashioned conversation. I am genuinely interested in developing diverse voices and I look forward to welcoming multiple perspectives to the Doors Open Day programme over the next three years.

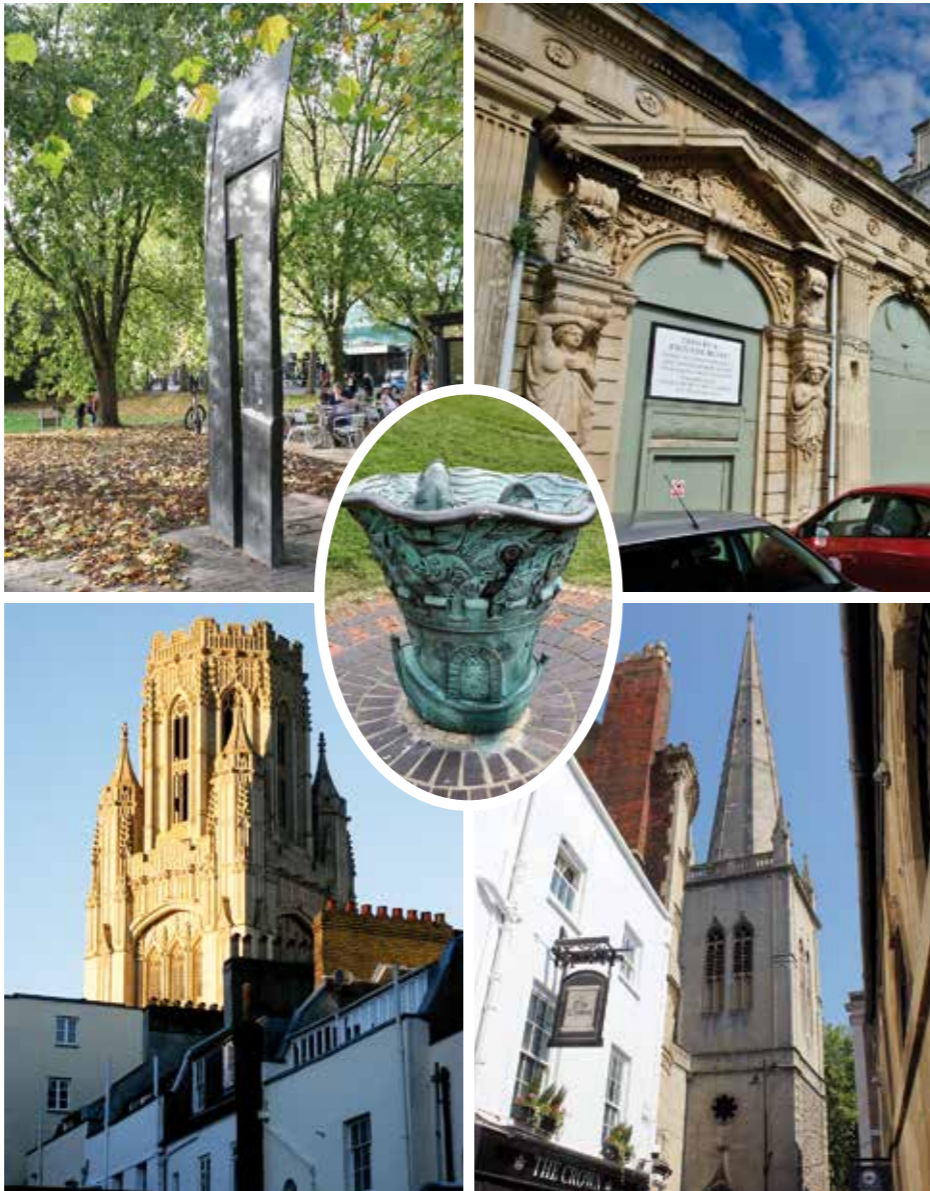
For more information about the event, see www.bristoldoorsopenday.org.uk



In the next issue

As well as our usual planning reports, the Spring publication of *Better Bristol* will have features ranging from good recent architecture in the City to listed buildings in serious danger of collapse and decay – the cover of the present issue highlights the forsaken Grand Spa Pump Room on Princes Lane in Clifton.

We continue our new column about personalities who have shaped the look and feel of the City with a profile by Dr Sarah Whittingham, his biographer, of Bristol University's architect, Sir George Oatley; our Chair, Simon Birch, will assess the current state of redundant churches and discuss their success when converted for other uses; Gavin Bridge of Cubex Land Ltd will tell the story behind the new Finzels Reach Bridge; Rob Gregory of the Architecture Centre will track back over the last 20 years since the Centre's inception and choose the best buildings from that period; local architect Richard Pedlar will chart the rise of the conservation movement in the City and the 'Fight for Bristol'; Jeff Lucas, currently preparing a book on the subject, will look at the City's bridges, vital conduits of communication; the Editor will be writing a nostalgic piece about the lost sculpture trail in Castle Park with a clarion call for its reinstatement, and in his inimitable style, Eugene Byrne will give a frank and opinionated appraisal of the present and future impact on the City of Metrobus.



Bristol Civic Society Membership

Your Civic Society needs YOU!

Bristol Civic Society is more than 100 years old. It is a non-party-political body which campaigns for what is best for our city. Joining the Society is inexpensive and it is open to all. The bigger and more diverse our membership, the stronger we can be.

As a Society member you're also on the invitation list to a range of events and benefits, from serious campaigning through to expert talks and social evenings and outings.

Bristol Civic Society is:

- * Saving the best of Bristol's past
- * A powerful voice in Bristol's future
- * Campaigning on issues that affect us all - and the generations to come
- * A great way to make new friends (and maybe re-connect with old ones!)

Find out more about the Society and its work at www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk



Joining is easy

There are three ways to apply. You can do it via the website: bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/get-involved/join-the-society where you can join using PayPal, or download an application form, or fill out, cut out or photocopy, and return the form below.

Do your bit to shape the kind of city in which we all want to live - enlist today!

Membership application to join Bristol Civic Society

Membership (Annual)	Rate	✓
Individual	£20	
Joint living at the same address	£30	
Student	£10	

Please return to: Alex Dunn, Membership Secretary, BCS, 47 Abbey Road, Bristol BS9 3QN.

Cheques, if not paying by standing order, made payable to Bristol Civic Society.

Enquiries: Tel: 0117 962 2475

Email: membership@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk

Title..... Forename Surname.....

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Phone(s).....

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the sum of £..... (3) (..... (4) pounds)

to CAF Bank Ltd (sort code 40-52-40) for the account of Bristol Civic Society (account no. 00087355)

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Events

Autumn 2016

Saturday 15 October

Bristol Walking Alliance 'Walking Neighbourhoods Event'

A chance for Neighbourhood Partnership groups and local community groups to consider ways to support and improve the pedestrian environment of Bristol. For more information see www.bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk The event is free but booking is through Eventbrite.

Thursday 27 October

starting at 10am and finishing by 8pm

Heritage Forum Conference

An all day and evening event of lectures, workshops and site visits focussing on three historic estates in and around Bristol – Kings Weston, Stoke Park and Castle Park.

Venue - St James's Priory

Thursday 10 November at 7.30pm

'Building a Sound Future' by Suzanne Rolt, Chief Executive of St George's Bristol

Suzanne will talk about the £5.5m extension project which will secure St George's future as a world class performance venue, preserving, extending and enhancing its central Bristol home and transforming the visitor experience.

Venue - Redland Church Halls,
Redland Green Road,
Bristol BS6 7HE

Tuesday 13 December at 7.30pm

'Bristol Old Vic Past and Future' by Emma Stenning, Chief Executive of Bristol Old Vic

Emma will explore the past of this historic treasure, and look towards the imminent redevelopment.

Venue - Backstage Bar, Bristol Old Vic,
King Street, Bristol BS1 4ED
(entry off The Rackhay)



Cabot Circus (Jeff Lucas)