

BETTER BRISTOL

The Bristol Civic Society magazine

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An independent force for a better Bristol

Bristol Civic Society, Registered Charity No: 244414





Making Sunday Special, Park Street, May 2014.

This reflects the increasing residential population that will make central Bristol a more crowded place (pages 6-9), Placemaking and public spaces (Big Event page 4), and last issue's Sharing the streets

(photo Jeff Lucas)

Contents



<p>4 NOVEMBER'S BIG EVENT PLACE-MAKING How can we design and manage public space better?</p>	<p>19 LEST WE FORGET 100 years from the start of WWI. Its impact on Bristol</p>
<p>6 THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE CITY CENTRE The change from office Metropolis to Studentopolis</p>	<p>20 EMPTY AND DERELICT SITES Securing new life for vacant sites and buildings</p>
<p>9 HOUSING CRISIS. WHAT CRISIS? Huge demand for housing. Can the city deliver?</p>	<p>21 UNLISTED BUILDINGS OF MERIT What can be done to give these buildings more protection</p>
<p>10 BRAIN TEASER : THE KONIGSBERG PROBLEM The shortest walk across all Bristol's bridges</p>	<p>22 STUDENT AWARD A philosophical approach</p>
<p>12 GEMS AND CURIOSITIES St James Priory: The hidden gem next to the bus station</p>	<p>24 CIVIC SOCIETY & BRISTOL WATER ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS</p>
<p>14 PLANT A TREE - SUSTAINABLY The Tree Forum mean business</p>	<p>25 FROM THE SOCIETY'S WORKING GROUPS: MAJOR SITES GROUP</p>
<p>16 DESTINATION BRISTOL Old Market, The BearPit, Christmas Steps</p>	<p>26 PLANNING APPLICATIONS GROUP</p>
<p>17 PEDALLING INTO THE FUTURE Bold plans for cycling</p>	<p>27 TRANSPORT MATTERS Latest on major schemes and what the Society is doing</p>

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Articles are the opinions of individual contributors and do not necessarily represent those of Bristol Civic Society

Notes from the Chair

“Golden Age” – beware of the hype, what we need is some vision

I was recently surprised (and rather taken aback) to be told with all seriousness that Bristol is at the dawn of a ‘golden age’ in terms of its growth, planning and future development.

It took me some time to reflect on this statement and to address just what might be the components of this golden age. As a starting point, I identified that the change in the local political landscape with the arrival of an elected mayor is already resulting in much quicker and more decisive decision making.

Obvious examples of this are the roll out of residents parking schemes, solid progress with the arena, and even management of the council budget cuts which were decided upon in a calm manner. But this hardly heralds a golden age!

Transport issues are regularly the top concern of residents and businesses, and few can complain that change is not in the air with:

- The rapid and ongoing implementation of residents parking schemes which are having a very visible impact in many parts of the city;
- Approved plans for high-speed bus routes across many areas, their precise future impact much debated and eagerly awaited by commentators;
- The long-awaited electrification of the main lines to London and, less certain, the transformation of Bristol Temple Meads into a first-class transport interchange.

We can add to this list the incremental introduction of improved cycle routes, with dedicated crossings of the New Cut in the planning stage, and the longer-term plans for suburban rail improvements, including the line to Portishead.

Of course it will be largely reliant on personal choices - to move away from reliance on the car – to really make all these initiatives succeed in practice.

I can't help thinking that transport is such a complex subject that there can never be a single magic wand to revolutionise transport, more a series of interventions which will gradually effect significant change.

But what of new development in this golden age? The most significant changes now seem to be in the city centre with a proliferation of student accommodation-led schemes, together with the ongoing growth of Temple Quarter. There is scarcely a glimmer of top-class design – or is that unfair? I do hope the forthcoming plans for the arena will change all this and will yield exciting architecture, possibly even giving the city a future Stirling Prize winner.

Development must also include consideration of public open space and Bristol has some absolutely wonderful open spaces. However, a vision is urgently needed for the city's most neglected open space, Castle Park. There are many views as to what might best be achieved, my personal preference would be to limit new development to the existing footprint of offices and to put some significant investment into the remainder of the area in order to make the most of the remaining open space, Bristol's very own Central Park.



A golden age will surely include making maximum use of vacant sites and buildings, a personal interest, and will bring back into use those neglected listed buildings in Portland Square, Stokes Croft and St Michael's Hill.

Looking after the heritage of the city is sometimes criticised as being weak, with the recent demolition of Ebenezer Chapel sparking a flurry of indignation.

Some of you have said to me that one area for possible work by the Civic Society would be to see if it is possible to limit the steady spread of road signs and street furniture, most recently exacerbated by the introduction of residents parking schemes with their multitude of signage even in conservation areas and adjacent to listed buildings. Should the Society take a closer look at all this street clutter and see if it is all really needed?

Does all this add up to an emerging golden age? I do like to travel hopefully and positively but so far I am not convinced by the facts. What do you think and do you agree that Bristol is entering a golden age? The follow-up question must surely be where does the Society fit in with this scenario, and how can it get involved and contribute?

I enjoyed the challenge provided by this, possibly throwaway, remark but I still think the jury is out on the golden age idea. I do hope to be proved wrong!

Simon Birch

Chair, Bristol Civic Society

The Big Event

Bristol place-making

How can we make Bristol's streetscape special?

Tuesday, November 25th 7.30pm at Arnolfini

Free and open to all: doors open 7pm

The quality and vitality of its city centre is crucial to a big city like Bristol, but are its streetscape and public spaces as good as they could be, and how could we make them better?

Public space is shared by many different users: have we got the balance right?

Is there another way? How could we design and manage public space better? How can we make the city more walkable? How can we make it happen, building on what has already been done?

A panel of experts will try to answer these questions, and there will be an opportunity to air your views.

Programme Speakers:

- Allison Dutoit, Jan Gehl Architects
- Paul Appleby, Chair of Creative Sector Group West of England LEP and director of VID Communications
- Ian Barrett, Regional Director South West for Sustrans and chair of Bristol Green Capital's Transport Action Group
- Barra MacRuairi, Strategic Director for Place, Bristol City Council

The event begins at 7.30pm at the Arnolfini (doors open 7pm). After an hour of individual presentations, the speakers will then form a panel on stage for questions and debate.

Event closes 9-9.30pm.

The event is free and no booking is needed.



VACANCIES

EVENTS ORGANISER

The current events organiser, Jeff Lucas, is relinquishing his post next April. We therefore have a vacancy arising for anyone who would be interested in taking on this role.

You would be organising a wide-ranging programme, mainly talks, with occasional visits, which is a key part of what the Bristol Civic Society does for its members. The subject matter is broadly anything related to the urban environment, to include history, architecture and urban design.

You will have a high degree of autonomy to be creative in putting together a programme of events every six months and ensuring the programme takes place. The current organiser would be happy to work closely with you for an initial period and you would have advice and support from the Marketing Group. If you are interested and would like to find out more, a more detailed job description is available, please get in touch with Jeff at events@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk.

WALKS ORGANISER

The current walks organiser, Alexandra Pickford, is stepping down from the role. We therefore have a vacancy arising for anyone who would be interested in taking on the role of organising walks as part of the events programme. Enquiries to Simon Birch at chair@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk.

John Gillett

In the last issue of Better Bristol, Heather Leeson, Chair of Bristol Civic Society, said that John Gillett had quietly and patiently worked behind the scenes for many years as webmaster, but had to step down from those commitments at the end of 2013 as a result of serious illness.

Sadly, we have to report that John died on April 24 this year, following a long struggle with an inoperable brain tumour.

John leaves behind his wife Sasha (nee Lubetkin) of nearly 50 years, herself a long-time active member of the Society, two sons and two granddaughters. At home "a huge-hearted" father and grandfather, he will also be remembered by many of us in

NEW WEBSITE

The Bristol Civic Society's website has a new look. While the old website worked satisfactorily, it was generally agreed that it could be simpler, more professional, and with a better balance between pictures and text.

It has been designed to appeal to both non-members and members. For non-members, the website may be the first thing that people see of the Society and it is important that it gives a good impression.

It is an important information resource. Non-members can browse to see what we are about. Anyone accessing the site can find out the views on current issues expressed by the Society, and post comments online if they wish. They can check out upcoming events, and sign up for notices of future events and other email communications.

Take a look and see what you think.

www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk
Alan Morris



the Society for his kindly, genial and generous nature.

As a professional mechanical and systems engineer, John brought his IT skills, honed at IBM and John Lewis, to the benefit of the Society around 2008. This was at a time when the power and complexity of the internet was growing rapidly, and we were lucky to have John's expertise in managing our website. He kept it up to date with articles and reports of events, started the process of developing the new website and was always there at meetings, always reliable and good company.

A celebration of his life took place on May 20.



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Past copies of the e-bulletin and the
magazine are also available to download.
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BETTER BRISTOL magazine
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The opinions expressed in this magazine do not
necessarily represent those of Bristol Civic Society

The changing nature of the city centre

The high-rise buildings in the city central area are undergoing some significant changes in their use. No longer at the centre of the office boom, many are seeking new lives as residential and student accommodation. We look at what is happening, and why.



The rise of the office city

The re-building of the bomb-damaged city had been planned long before the war ended. As the war had seen a confrontation of totalitarian regimes, so the peace would be fought in the same draconian way. The 1944 Town and Country planning Act authorised local authorities to compulsorily purchase zones of extensive war damage for replanning and redevelopment. The City Council sought to acquire some 771 acres in the central area. Land would be segregated into zones for industry and commercial use with vast new housing estates on the periphery of the city. The plan spelt the end of the central city as a residential area. New ideologies were imported from America, the age of the skyscraper, the urban motorway, the segregated pedestrian deck, the concrete jungle, was born.

Slow start

In the 1950s, office building initially got off to a slow start, with conversion of houses in Clifton to office use. Space was needed to replace war damage and sub-standard offices, and to house a growing public administration. The first significant ones to be completed were the imposing Gilbert Scott designed Electricity House, started in 1938, followed by the Alec French designed Gaunts House on narrow Denmark St, completed in 1953. The decade saw about a dozen new office buildings, all of medium height and built in relatively conservative or pastiche style in the new office quarter bounded by Wine St., Victoria St., Baldwin St. and Colston Avenue.

The flood

The trickle started to become a flood in the 1960s. In this “never-had-it-so-good” era the economy was growing fast, particularly in the service sector and personal finance. London and the South-east were becoming over-heated, and the 1964 Labour Administration set up a Location of Offices Bureau

forcing both government and businesses to relocate away from the hot-house. Bristol, at the end of God’s Wonderful Railway and the newly completed M4, was a particularly attractive proposition.

Before long, anybody who was anybody was setting up shop in Bristol. It became home for a star-studded cast of insurance and financial services businesses. Pressures inevitably led to demand for high-rise towers: the 15 storey Robinson tower on Victoria Street set the precedent, in 1964, followed shortly after by Clifton Heights.

Sadly these landmark buildings opened the gates to a tidal wave of poor quality, grey, monotonous and undistinguished slab blocks, designed to return maximum yields for developers. In Lewins Mead, swathes of land acquired by the City Council for slum clearance and road schemes, or ravaged by war remained vacant up to the early 1970s. Plans for the area included residential towers on the west side that would be linked to the rest of the city via elevated walkways, following the current ideology. However, the Council was unable to secure funding for housing so the sites were eagerly snapped up by developers to meet the office demand. This became the centre of Bristol’s most unloved office quarter. In the period between 1950 and 2000 some 250 new office buildings transformed the face of post-war, blitzed Bristol.

The decline of the financial centre

There was a time when the UK’s leading finance and insurance houses all had major offices in Bristol. Those office-factories required massive amounts of manual clerical labour, the industrial equivalent of cigarette and chocolate making in previous generations. This was the pre-computer age when

armies of girls pounded typewriters in the typing pool.

Many of those paper-processing factories were household names : RSA, Sun Life, Pearl Assurance, Equity and Law, London Life, National Mutual, Commercial Union, Norwich Union, just to name a few.

Yet we hear very little of those once great names now. Some seem to have packed their bags and left, taking their offices with them such as Clerical Medical and Scottish Life, leaving gaping holes on Temple Way.

Is it all doom and gloom on the business front?

Not at all, say the property agents we spoke to. But the financial business sector has gone through some cataclysmic events in recent years.

Firstly, technology. Those slab tower blocks built only 40 years ago are from the dark ages before the coming of the computer revolution. Now so much more can be done, with far fewer people, in much less space, and the kind of skills needed has advanced. With more hot-desking, out-working and less floor space per user, the amount of office space has declined.

Secondly, the financial services industry has gone through several crises, resulting in a process of amalgamations and mergers. Many of the household names haven't disappeared, but have been absorbed into bigger groups.

Why are they building new office blocks when there are so many unused ones?

There seems to be a significant stock of unused office buildings in central Bristol. Even the casual observer can hardly fail to notice the large signs on many office blocks, enticing new occupants to pitch camp at favourable rates. It appears that many of the towers that went up in the boom years of the 1970s are now idle, empty. It seems that the great office bubble

ventilation systems are inefficient and primitive, and new legislation is making property in EPC bands E-G unlettable.

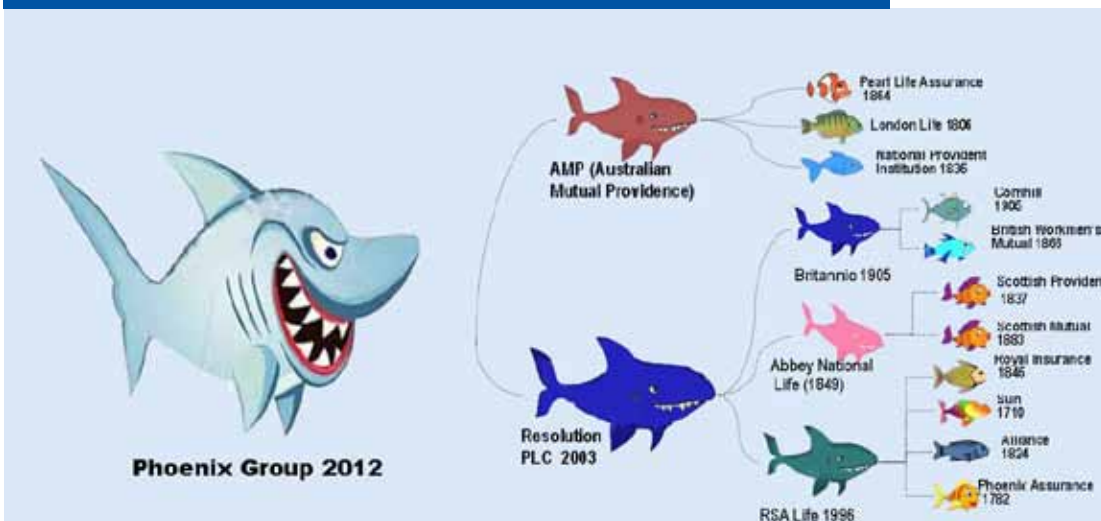
The narrow floor plans or "plates" of high slab blocks are now unpopular with tenants. Large organisations don't like being spread over several floors, conversely small offices using less than a whole floor involve the expense and waste of fitting corridors. Deep floor-plates with a central core are easier to subdivide.

It is something of a buyer's market: tenants demand a better quality of environment, and Grade A accommodation. The convenience of the major transport interchange for local, national and international movements at Temple Meads makes it a powerful attraction, and explains why the office and business quarter has been steadily emigrating to that area. Most of the property in the Temple area has actually been taken up.

New uses for old. The rise of Studentopolis

Is there a disaster in the city? It is well-known that despite strenuous marketing efforts, attempts to attract new tenants of some tower blocks have failed. Some office blocks are now finding new uses as student accommodation, and In fact students may be the saviours of the property market. More than one owner may be thanking heaven for little students, relieving them of the cost of maintaining or demolishing expensive white elephants.

By 2012 most of the UK Life industry had been swallowed up by the Phoenix group. Many of the firms had offices in Bristol.



of the 1960s-1990s has burst. So it is puzzling why developers are building new speculative blocks at Temple Quarter and elsewhere. Our expert tells us that, by today's standards those old towers are of poor quality. In some cases the ceiling heights are low, making them feel oppressive, and unsuitable for installing false floors or suspended ceilings for cable routing. Heating and

The process started with the conversion of Drake and Nelson Houses on Nelson Street and has gathered pace. This area is rapidly changing from office Metropolis to Studentopolis.

Where are all these students coming from?

Higher education is now big business : the two universities attract a student body of some 36,000, an increase of 40% since 2001 and still growing. Almost a quarter of those attending Bristol University are from overseas.

Traditionally students lived in Halls of Residence with very limited capacity, and mainly in bedsitter-land, in



HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation). However, the growing presence of HMOs with a transient population in a neighbourhood has brought many undesirable pressures and conflict with residents. Parents of young students, particularly from abroad also wish to see their offspring safely housed in surroundings conducive to study.

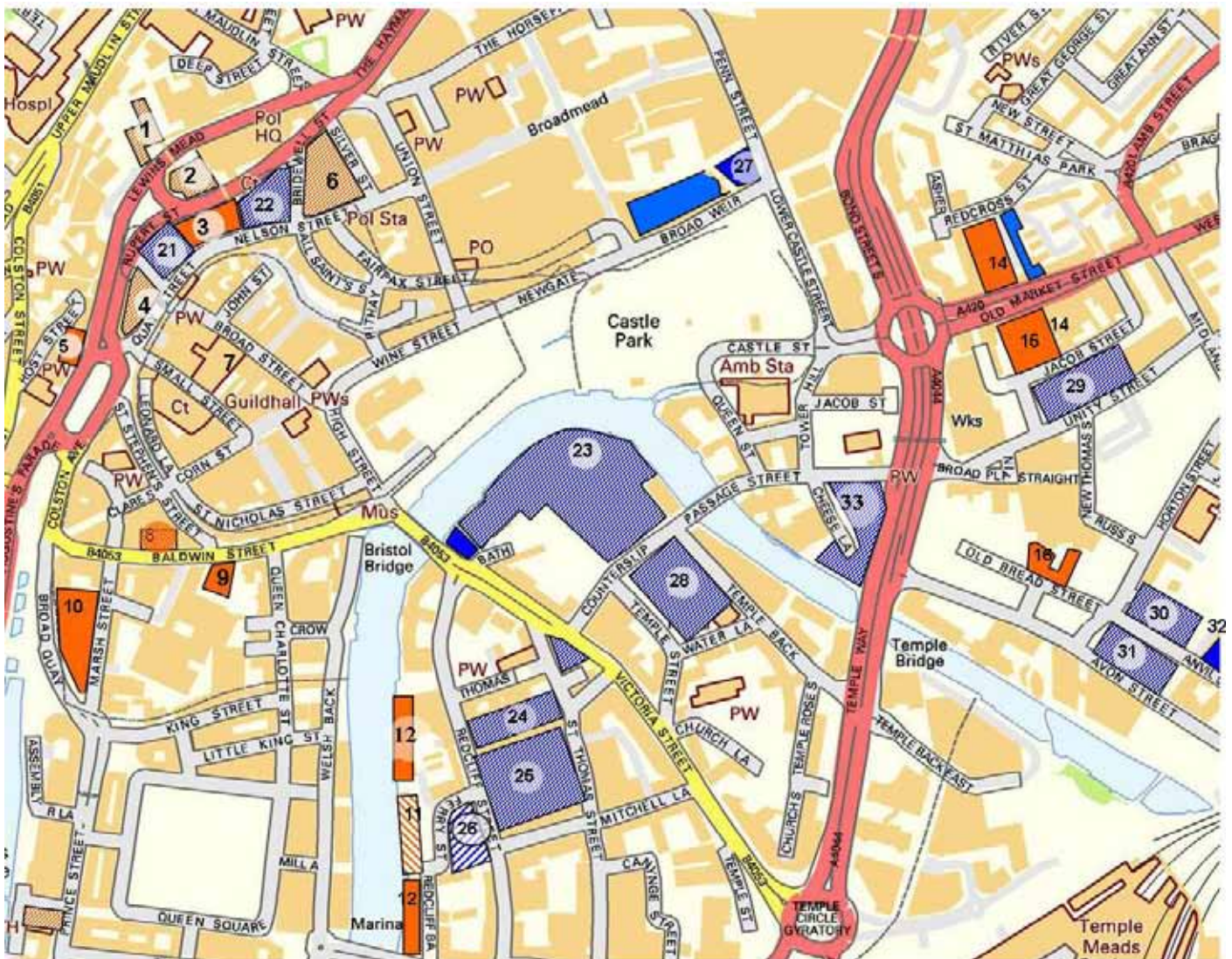
It is not surprising then, that private landlords such as Unite have taken the initiative in providing specialist student accommodation. Most of this new accommodation is around the University, and as shown below, in the central area. Bristol City Council planning policy DM2 approves the city centre location because it relieves pressure to convert family homes to HMOs, and makes a contribution to the vitality of the city centre.

mainly conversions mainly new build

CENTRAL AREA MAJOR RESIDENTIAL SITES 2000-2014

SCHEMES COMPLETED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION		APPROVED	
3	Nelson & Drake Houses-conversion to student accom	1	Greyfriars-Lewins Place-office conversion to residential
5	Stonegate House-- conversion to student accom	2	Froomsgate house-office conversion to student accom
9	Apollo House (AXA) conversion to residential	4	Electricity House - office conversion to residential
10	Bristol & West Tower--conversion to hotel	7	Guildhall - law courts conversion to hotel
12	Co op Wharf & Buchanans Wharf--conversion to residential	13	33 Victoria St --office conversion to residential
14	Central hall- conversion and new residential	22	Former police HQ--new residential and mixed
15	Drill hall -conversion and new residential	25	Redcliff Village (Carlyle) - new residential and mixed
16	Christopher Thomas Court conversion and new residential	26	Gas World show-room--new residential
23	Finzels' Reach new residential	AT PRE-APP STAGE	
27	Eclipse & Horizon -new residential	24	25 Redcliff St (Sampson Court) new residential & mixed
21	Former magistrates court -new students	28	Fire station-Temple Back-- new residential
32	Barratts -The Zone 1 -new residential	31	TQEZ- ND7 Avon St--new residential
30	Barratts -The Zone 2 - new residential	33	Bank Place (Clerical Medical site)--new residential
	Wapping Wharf--new residential (not on map)	SCHEMES CURRENTLY PENDING	
	Frogmore St Ice Rink--new student (not on map)	6	Old Bridewell Police conversion , scheme awaited
		8	Gaumont cinema--student. New application awaited
		NEW SCHEMES "IN THE PIPELINE"	
		11	Cheese warehouse Redcliff Backs
		29	Jacob-Unity St site Old Market
			BEPP Printing Hall Temple Way
			The Pithay

This list is not exhaustive but indicates the trend. The MSG has commented on many of the schemes.



Contains Ordnance Survey data ©Crown copyright and database 2014

Housing crisis – what crisis?

Housing for all

It isn't just students who are moving into the central area either. Many of those coming to Bristol as students end up liking the place so much they stay on and make careers here, boosting the pool of well-qualified professionals and talent in the city.

Besides any general migration into the city, the biggest factor in the huge demand for new households is in the way we are living. There are just more of us living much longer. The average size of household has fallen with many more single-parent families and single people living alone.

Young professionals have been moving back into inner cities, gentrifying areas that were in decline. Car ownership is no longer 'cool', and is actually in decline among the 20-30 age-group, who prefer to cycle or use public transport.

However the supply of completed homes has slumped to an all-time low, with only 878 completions in 2012/13. Demand far outstrips supply, with over 14000 people on Council waiting list.

It is not surprising then that the last decade has seen a trend for large, high-density residential developments in or close to the central area. The huge development at Wapping Wharf is taking shape, with applications for major sites in the pipeline at Temple Quay and Temple Quarter. A massive population increase is taking place in the city central area, coming full circle from the post-war exodus to suburban estates.

Crystal balls – predicting the future.

Bristol City Council has a local housing target of some 26,400 dwellings to be delivered in Bristol between 2006 and 2026.

The SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) report carried out for the West of England group of local authorities in 2009 analysed the region's housing needs and came up with some worrying conclusions.

Despite relative affluence of the city, the difference between average earnings and average house prices is greater here than almost anywhere else outside the London area. There is a huge demand for 'affordable' housing. This is defined as social rented housing, or property sold on a shared equity basis, to eligible households on a less than market rate.

Typically, a planning application will require a developer to make 10-35% of the units on a development affordable. However, a developer will often claim that this makes a development unviable, and the council is obliged to waive it, as has happened on several sites. The SHMA predicts an annual demand of 1526 affordable units out of a supply of

1501 new builds, or 102% of all new builds, which is obviously not viable.

This leaves Bristol with a mighty problem.

Delivering affordable housing

Aware of this problem, in 2013 the Mayor set up a Bristol Homes Commission to report and recommend positive actions. The final report of the Commission was presented and accepted at the Cabinet meeting in August 2014.

One of the issues is that the crisis is not unique to Bristol, but is part of a national issue. Housing supply must be seen in the context of Bristol's place at the centre of the sub-region and one recommendation is the formation of a WoE Homes Agency

A number of key recommendations have been made, including:

1. Measures to increase supply of land by combining small areas of land held by City Council and government agencies in developable packages.
2. Setting up a stalled-sites team to advance sites that have had permission but not completed in reasonable time. This could result in more active use of Compulsory Purchase orders.
3. Transfer of council owned housing stock, by sale to not-for-profit company, allowing the council to raise more capital for social house-building projects (it is only allowed to borrow up to £12m)
4. A change of culture, reducing delays in the process and creation of a results-led system. The Civic Society may well object to a procedure that is biased too much in favour of commercial housebuilders interests at the expensive of well designed communities.

Some commentators have suggested that radical changes in land supply are needed. Speaking at the BCS event on July 9th, Paul Smith suggested that the Green Belt needs to be sacrificed, the prospect of joining up to peripheral towns such as Keynsham must be contemplated.

In conclusion

Those unloved tower blocks may come to be seen as a blessing in disguise, providing a valuable and unexpected source of relief to our housing problems. The unexpected market forces, not part of any carefully constructed Strategies, may well make a positive contribution. The Society has generally been supportive of these changes.

But will the urban infrastructure be able to cope with this new population. Where are the medical facilities, the schools, all the other facilities? Perhaps conversion of City Hall to a primary school might be needed?

One thing is certain, those precious green spaces, those jewels, Brandon Hill, Queen Square, Castle Park must be protected like never before.

Bristol, Königsberg, and the Bridge Problem

How many bridges would you have guessed there were in Bristol? Would you have said 43? And what links Bristol's bridges, the former Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) and Facebook? No idea? Then read on...



Thilo Gross, Reader in Engineering Mathematics, University of Bristol

Thilo Gross is a reader in engineering mathematics at the University of Bristol. He came here from his native Germany about three years ago because Bristol is one of the best places in the world for this particular subject.

He wanted to find an interesting way of introducing his students to network theory, and realised that Bristol and its bridges had a resemblance to Königsberg. The exceptions being that it has three 'islands' - Spike Island, St Phillips and Redcliffe - and 43 bridges, not two and seven respectively.

Nevertheless, he knew that the "Königsberg bridge problem" could be applied to Bristol - walk across all of its bridges without crossing the same one twice. He knew there was a solution, so he set about solving it.

It required about three solid days of work spread over a fortnight. Two thirds of the time was spent finding out where all the bridges were, and what was to count as a bridge and what not. Only bridges that are walkable are included, and a judgement had to be made about some smaller bridges (not comparable in size to Königsberg's bridges) on tributaries of the River Avon that would have led the resulting walk long distances through some dull areas. Some bridges comprise two separate structures of segregated traffic and are counted as two.

Solving the problem is a case of trial and error, using some mathematics and informed guesswork. There is no one solution to the problem, and others may start and end at different points, but Thilo particularly wanted his solution to end at Clifton Suspension Bridge. When he finally cracked it, he then walked the whole route - about 33 miles - and managed to do it all in a single day of more than 12 hours walking.

The "Bristol Bridge Walk" is a fascinating and sometimes spectacular route that will take you into many of Bristol's hidden nooks and crannies. Each bridge is an interesting feat of engineering with its own place in the history of the city. Unlike Thilo, you don't have to do it all in one day, and you could maybe do it by bicycle if you are prepared to carry it up and down steps.

Thilo's route is set out in the map on the right, and we have also provided detailed written instructions that can be downloaded from 'Bristol bridges walk', an article in the News section of the Bristol Civic Society website at www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/news.

Of course, when (or if) the proposed new Finzel's Reach bridge is built, an entirely new solution will have to be found - so don't leave it too long. You may even be inspired to become an expert in network theory!

Detailed instructions for the walk can be downloaded from 'Bristol bridges walk', an article in the News Section of the Bristol Civic Society website (www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/news).

Bristol's Bridges in Full

1. Vauxhall Bridge
2. Gaol Ferry Bridge
3. Bathurst Basin Roadbridge
4. Bedminster Bridge East
5. Bedminster Bridge West
6. Bath Bridge Southwest
7. Bath Bridge Northeast
8. Unnamed railway and footbridge
9. Sparke Evans Park Susp. Bridge
10. St. Phillips Causeway Bridge East
11. St. Phillips Causeway Bridge West

“The Seven Bridges of Königsberg” is a well known problem in mathematics.

The city of Königsberg in Prussia (home of Immanuel Kant), now Kaliningrad, Russia, was set on both sides of the Pregel River, and included two large islands which were connected to each other and the mainland by seven bridges (diagram A).

The problem was to find a walk through the city that would cross each bridge once and only once. If there had been one less bridge the problem would have been easily solvable, but the answer eluded everyone for many years and became known to intellectuals throughout Europe.

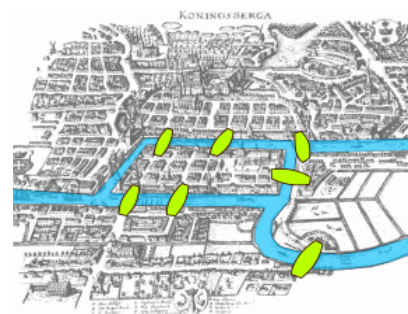
Finally, in 1735, the mathematician Leonard Euler presented proof that, for this particular layout of bridges, there was no solution. Euler’s approach was to regard the areas of land (there are four of them) as points (or nodes) to be visited, and the bridges as paths (or links) between those points. The mathematical essentials of the map of Königsberg can then be reduced to diagram B, which is an example of what is called a ‘graph’ or ‘network’.

Euler’s solution of the Königsberg bridge problem is regarded as the first theorem of graph theory and the first true proof in ‘Network Theory’.

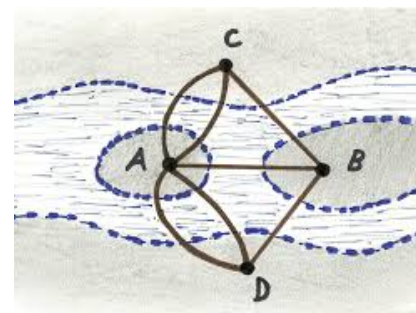
Euler realised that the key information was the network of how the nodes were linked and the number of those links, rather than their exact positions. The science of topology - the study of shapes and spaces, and its subset, Network Theory - developed from this insight. The difference between the map of the bridges, and the network schematic, is a good example of the idea that topology is not concerned with the rigid shape of objects.

Network theory is now used to predict the behaviour of complex systems that have parts that interact with, or are linked in some way, to each other. It was fundamental to the development of the internet and the world wide web.

Another application is the relationships between people - called Social Network Theory. If this sounds familiar, you will not be surprised to learn that that Mark Zuckerberg used it as the basis of how Facebook works. It is remarkable to ponder that had 18th-century Königsberg not had a somewhat esoteric problem to do with its bridges, we wouldn’t now be able to post embarrassing photos on Facebook...



A. The Original Problem at Königsberg



B. The Königsberg bridges translated into a “graph” or “network”



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 12. Marsh Bridge | 23. Temple Bridge | 34. Ashton Road Bridge |
| 13. Netham Lock Bridge East | 24. Unnamed footbridge | 35. Avon Bridge |
| 14. New Brislington Bridge | 25. St Phillips Bridge | 36. Unnamed Footbridge |
| 15. St. Anne's Bridge | 26. Bristol Bridge | 37. Unnamed Footbridge |
| 16. Netham Lock Bridge West | 27. to Redcliffe Bridge | 38. Plimsoll (swing) Bridge |
| 17. Feeder Canal Footbridge | 28. Bathurst Basin Footbridge | 39. Trym Cross Road Bridge |
| 18. Avon St Bridge | 29. Prince Street Bridge | 40. Portway Bridge |
| 19. Totterdown/Albert Road Bridge | 30. to Pero's Bridge | 41. Unnamed footbridge |
| 20. Langdon St/Banana Bridge | 31. Pooles Wharf Bridge | 42. Avonmouth Bridge |
| 21. Meads Reach Bridge | 32. Cumberland Basin Bridge North | 43. Clifton Suspension Bridge |
| 22. Valentine's Bridge | 33. Cumberland Basin Bridge South | |

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK...

BRISTOL'S UNKNOWN GEMS

The oldest church in Bristol, indeed, one of the oldest buildings in Bristol, was in danger of falling down, ignored and unappreciated, until a small group of volunteers – and a large dollop of lottery money – brought it back to life again. Eugene Byrne reports.

St James Priory Church next door to the city's main bus station is, famously, the oldest building in Bristol still in use. The Priory was founded in the 1120s by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, a capable soldier, administrator, bastard son of King Henry I and the Norman thug who ran this town.

Pious Earl Robert (whose tomb is in the Church), supposedly decreed that every tenth stone shipped in from Normandy for Bristol Castle should be donated to the building of the church.

The Benedictine Priory would also become the site of a famous annual fair which lasted until the 1830s.

Following the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries, it became an Anglican parish church, and by the 19th century it was the heart of a densely-populated working class neighbourhood.

The church escaped serious damage in the Blitz, but the postwar plans for the area favoured roads, shops and offices.

The congregation declined and the Church of England declared the church redundant in 1984. And there it stood, one of the very few relics of ancient Bristol in an area almost completely covered in new developments. The fabric of the building started to deteriorate.

Since then, though, St James has had a remarkable turnaround in its fortunes, thanks to a great deal of hard work by a small and devoted team of volunteers.

In the early 1990s, a group of Catholic Monks, the Little Brothers of Nazareth, arrived in Bristol to work with people with drug and alcohol addictions, and after a while they were seeking a permanent home. And so the (Anglican) Diocese of Bristol ended up leasing the building to the (Catholic) monks. Looking after the church building was a condition of the lease.

Sue Jotcham, a former schoolteacher who volunteered to help the Little Brothers out, explains: "It was in a horrendous condition. I was fundraising all the time to try and keep



it watertight.”

The only way forward was to apply for Heritage Lottery money. They were helped out by building surveyor Rob Harding, who arrived as a volunteer project manager and has been with St James ever since.

“English Heritage said that it would be no good just repairing the roof,” he says. “You would have to work out how you would use the building, how to make it sustainable and how to make some income to pay for running repairs and maintenance. Otherwise you’re just going to carry on patching and making do and mending.”

The application was successful, and £4.2 million and a huge amount of work later, the church was secured, and boasted a new café, toilets, disabled facilities, historical interpretation panels and more besides.

The café, run by volunteers, brings in a little revenue, as does

renting out meeting rooms, plus the occasional wedding.

The church is also finding a new role; a lot of people drop in for quiet prayer or contemplation.

“We have a book in the back of the church for people to write in requests, or just to say how they’re feeling. Just from that book you can see how important the building is to the people of Bristol,” says Sue.

“Often people will come in after visiting the hospital. Maybe they’ve just had bad news, or they have someone in there.”

“We ourselves are Catholic, but it’s open to all faiths and none. We get a lot of people say ‘I don’t believe in God, I don’t believe in anything, but I just love this building and find more peace here than any other place on earth.’”

- To find out more, or to become one of St James’s much needed volunteers, see www.stjamesprioryproject.org.uk

Trees of Bristol – a sort of book review by Clive Stevens, Chair of Bristol Tree Forum

It's getting to that time of year again: Christmas decorations will soon be in shop windows, book your turkey now. Harbingers of winter seem to arrive earlier every year, perhaps as a result of climate change? And there are the early bird shoppers who have bought all their presents before harvest festival.

But not me. I am an inveterate December 24 shopper. It is the atmosphere I seek, meeting like-minded people, sometimes friends to chat to in coffee shops and then go, unable to procrastinate in the excitement knowing the shops will shut by 4. It's the fact I am forced to make a decision.

Whether you are an early or a late shopper, one present I can recommend this year is this "twin tub" of a book, a Bogof, entitled *Trees of Bristol*. There are the majestic tree photos by Frank Drake which will bring a sprinkle of Spring, greenery and sunshine to the recipient during the dim days of January. Then there are the poetic prose and some poems by Tony D'Arpino. It's not poetry as I was taught, but better. I recognise his exquisite word selection of words and rhythms.

So two books in one: it cleans during the day and spins you at night. And then you can use it to plan your own tree walk for a weekend in late May or June, most if not all the locations are publicly accessible.

Ideal for those last-minute Christmas shoppers like me. The thought of buying a few copies will relieve my pre-shopping stress levels this year; in fact I might order them right now.



Bristol TreeForum – born from conflict –

The EU and the United Nations were created following war to keep the peace, and so too was the Bristol TreeForum (BTF). The creation of the BTF enabled resolution of the Bristol Stump War of 2007/08. That was fought mainly in Clifton and Redland, the protagonists being the residents versus the Council. The cause was the latter's new tree management policies. The BTF enabled dialogue and mutual understanding between the aggrieved parties rather than the cycle of chainsaw and subsequent retaliation of critical article and photos of sobbing children in the then Bristol Evening Post.

Seven years on and the scene is unrecognisable. Like the EU and UN, we have moved on. Sure there are still skirmishes but communication and trust mean we can advance. And moving forward we are, here are some of the achievements we have contributed towards:

- Tree mitigation and planting standards built into local planning law which probably save some two to three hundred trees annually, and if they are felled, getting more planted.
- An understanding by the Council, Councillors and the



Councillor Anthony Negus seeks support for tree planting

The first new tree sponsored by a business in Bristol is putting down its roots. It was arranged by Anthony Negus, the Liberal Democrat councillor for Cotham ward who is a local tree champion on behalf of the Bristol Tree Forum (BTF). It has replaced the stump outside HSBC in Whiteladies Road, who sponsored it.

The manager was supportive and, with the help of Clive Stevens and Bristol City Council's tree officers, Anthony put together an offer package, which included a sponsorship plaque.

With the mayor's emphasis on schools-based tree planting, we must find new initiatives for replacing street trees. There are 900 stumps today in the city – which should be our first target. Each costs £330 to replace and maintain for three years. Businesses might see this as an opportunity to show their commitment to their area. RCAS and some Neighbourhood Partnerships sponsor trees; other groups and streets could raise funds, too. Anthony is working up further proposals that would enable people to sponsor memorial trees, alternatives to park benches, with a similar dedication plaque.

BTF needs your support to replace more trees, particularly during our European Green Capital year in 2015. New street trees are selected to fit better with all the other demands of urban life. Street and garden trees define our urban spaces, regulate pollution and are vital to maintaining our environmental balance – and our well-being. But replacement is not enough. In the face of climate change, Bristol needs to increase its poor overall tree cover.

Find out more about how you could help at: www.euronova.co.uk/BristolTreeForum.htm

by Clive Stevens, Chair Bristol TreeForum

Mayor about how important trees are in any urban environment, not just their looks but also for public health and flood reduction benefits.

- A discussion forum for people to bring their ideas to like-minded people who can help or provide advice.
- A replanting programme for parks, streets and other public spaces.

The BTF have been able to learn from past Civic Society programs of tree planting, that with 21st century legal, insurance and cost

requirements they weren't, with hindsight, sustainable. So our programme will be slower, use latest root deflection and other technology and continue year after year after year. This planting program is what we will be launching towards the end of Green Capital 2015, with a fund raising charity to bring in money to make Bristol the greenest city and fit for its future inhabitants. If you would like to contribute or get involved even then contact us at bristoltreeforum@gmail.com and see

www.bristoltreeforum.org.uk

Old Quarters

We discuss with Eva Stuetzenberger of Destination Bristol what is going on in the city's older quarters

Old City

The Walled City Map, which the society helped produce was launched in early April. It is accompanied by a set of postcards printed on a vintage Heidelberg printing press, each promoting a business or venue in the Old City. The project aims to re-establish the Old City as Bristol's birthplace and medieval heart, with the Trader's Forum bringing it back to life.



The new gallery Centrespace has staged a number of successful events and exhibitions this summer. Well worth searching for down one of Bristol's narrowest and most historic, but least well-known streets, Leonard's Lane, right along the route of the old city wall.

Christmas Steps Quarter

Christmas Steps and the surrounding area are making a name as havens for the unique independent artisan traders that have been driven out of many High streets. Boasting around 120 arts based businesses, it is a Mecca for the musician alone, with 3 string instruments dealers, a woodwind and brass dealer and Bristol's biggest retail collection of printed sheet music. September 4th saw the Quarter polished and painted as never before for the visit by the assessors of the Prestigious Great Place Award from the Academy of Urbanism, looking at the history, character, community, commercial success and

connectivity. At this final stage Christmas Steps is competing against the likes of St Pancras Station and Bishop Square in London. A bit of a David against Goliath situation. Apparently the judges were impressed; the decision will be made in November.

Park Street

One of Bristol's busiest streets perhaps suffers from being 'on-the-way' between the uphill Clifton and the university quarter and the downhill shopping centres of Broadmead and Cabot Circus and the O2 Academy. This means its many historic features, fine independent shops and cultural attractions are often overlooked.

A recent programme of spectacular and innovative events, organised by the Park Street Traders' & Business Forum, has brought Park Street back as one of Bristol's main destinations. These efforts have been rewarded with Park Street being shortlisted for the Great British High Street Awards 2014.

A major attraction on Park Street is St Georges Hall, which has launched an ambitious programme designed to attract people from all walks of life. No longer just classical music, the programme includes talks, daytime and family events, jazz, folk and popular music that should appeal to all tastes.

Old Market

The area is Bristol's frontrunner to develop an ambitious Neighbourhood Development Plan that is expected to go to referendum in spring 2015.

There has also been a closing order submitted for its little-used subway, to create a less isolating crossing into the area. This will be matched by improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists across the roundabout that will improve the connectivity between Old Market and the city.

The Trinity Arts Centre is attracting new audiences now that its refurbishment, with the upstairs performance space is complete.

Stokes Croft

A year ago Knightstone Housing were made the preferred developer for the Westmoreland House/Carriageworks sites. We had high hopes that this 27 years long eyesore was finally over. Now an outsider, Fifth Capital, has entered the game and the whole business is blown wide open again.

Public Spaces

The Bearpit

The society has been closely involved with the project to make this corner of the city a 'Better Bristol'.

Since April, works have been under way that will change the feel of the space. A new paved surface is being laid. There will be some changes to the layout of the raised areas, new lighting, and there will be steps down into the space from a new walkway/cycleway round the edge at road level. The ramps and subways will be retained. The plan shows the traders' kiosks and stalls. When finished it will be a lively mini-market.

A vintage Bristol Bus has been lowered into place to serve as a cafe. It had been hoped that it would all be complete by the summer, but the programme has slipped badly.



Pedalling into the future

Daniel Kimberley reviews current plans for cycling

Bristol currently has a sporadic and inconsistent cycle network, like most British cities. Saved by the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, it has been heralded as the nations most cycle-friendly city. This thriving cycling culture has allowed people to think that Bristol is safe for cycling, when the reality of locals' experience is somewhat different.

2014 has proven to be significant in the future of the city's cycling infrastructure, if mainly on paper. The council released a draft cycle strategy for public consultation in July. The document outlines a vision for the future of cycling in the city with an emphasis on safety and simplification to make cycling more attractive than driving.

The strategy proposes an on and off road cycle network across the city that would link major suburbs with the city centre, and be suitable for anyone between the ages of 8-80. They identify that a perceived lack of safety is stopping a large demographic from getting on a bicycle. The strategy describes itself as 'bold'. Some of it, the key parts will be delivered by 2015-16.

Cycling strategy aside, a number of large-scale projects are taking shape before our very eyes. A walkway/cycleway round the St James Barton Roundabout will provide a segregated route for inbound cyclists. "The east end of Baldwin Street is being transformed with the installation of a segregated Dutch-style cycle lane following long-standing safety concerns about the Queen Charlotte St junction.

The Bristol Promenades Project is also underway to create a cycleway between Ashton Court and Keynsham along the Avon; part of it is currently under construction on Clarence Road. The project promises a number of new pedestrian/cyclist bridges across the New Cut, one to provide more capacity, one completely new where there was none linking the two halves of the city with schools and key employment areas.

With so much going on, how do all of these projects relate in terms of simplifying cycling and creating a seamless network? Though both incomplete, the Dutch-style cycle lane on Baldwin Street differs in design from that at College Green, whilst the Clarence Road cycle lane ends abruptly at the busy Bedminster Bridge Roundabout. Cyclists are, if anything, looking for a consistent and continuous infrastructure.

Creating a secure environment for cyclists doesn't come without curbing the traffic. The 20mph speed limit imposed across the city has been a positive move towards quieter streets, but it would be more effective if respected by all drivers. The controversial resident parking scheme has put a stop to commuter parking in parts of the city, but has been delayed in some of the most congested areas due to protests from local businesses.

With such a centralised government, it's not easy for a city like Bristol to move forward if not led by Westminster. Cycling has been a success in cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen because cyclists, along with pedestrians, have been given priority over the car. It seems that the bicycle is in the right place at the right time, in Bristol, and slowly it could become Britain's first two-wheeled city.

Bristol City Council Cycling Strategy

Bristol's first comprehensive strategy to encourage more people to cycle was published in July.

The ambition framework sets out how cycling can be made a simpler, safer and more attractive option for anyone whatever their age or cycling experience. Currently, the number of cycling commuter trips has doubled, and cycle journeys now make up eight per cent of journeys to work. The strategy sets out a commitment to increase this to 20 per cent by 2020.

The new strategy addresses the challenges and barriers that keep people off their bikes or not confident enough to try cycle journeys in the first place. Future investment will be targeted to deliver a safe cycle network across the city, with £16 per head of population per year promised to deliver cycling improvements



What the Civic Society thought

Bristol Civic Society welcomes the draft cycling strategy document and agrees with much of the high-level aims, but thinks that significantly more work is needed to make it a robust strategy.

- Whilst the strategy is valuable as a public visionary commitment, we think that the description of how it will be achieved could be more convincing. The network map is useful as a target, but the strategy does not articulate the size of the task of achieving it, nor show a gap analysis versus what already exists. Nor does the strategy estimate the likely extent of 8-80 network that could be delivered in a particular timescale.

- It is not clear whether the 8 to 80 aim includes the aim to provide segregated cycling lanes across all of the target network. If not, what is the extent of the target network of segregated cycle lanes, or how will it be determined whether a segregated cycling lane is needed?

- cycling strategy needs to be integrated with (a) public realm -improvement (b) pedestrian provision.

- the strategy should include an aim of improving the facilities at the start and end of journeys.

- in the 8-to-80 infrastructure proposals there is an emphasis on routes to employment areas, but what about routes to schools, given that one of the strategy's targets is 20% of children cycling to secondary school? Also retail centres, and community, health, cultural, and leisure destinations.

(This is a summary of the full response by Alan Morris which can be seen on the website)



Visions : Green Gateways and the Living City seek ideas to reinterpret Bristol

Jon Watkins of RIBA South West reports

In June 2014, two projects explored ideas to transform the approaches to the city as it moves towards its year as European Green Capital 2015.

Green Gateways is an ideas project from Bristol in Bloom, the Green Capital Partnership, the University of West of England (UWE), and the Royal Institute of British

Architects (RIBA) to improve major entry points to the city. Ten final year students on the UWE BA (Hons) Architecture and Planning course drafted proposals for sites as part of a 'live brief' that formed part of their Agency Project degree work. Some interesting ideas have emerged.

Julian Hong and Emily Danaford came up with a stunning way to transform the drab concrete and iron pedestrian overpass at Old Market.



Dudley Jones and Benjamin Williams focused on the Hotwells Road traffic Island with a sculpture that combines the heritage of the docks and the railway with a planting scheme that was sustainable.

on re-imagining the M32 Corridor and the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone in Bristol with a free and unlimited brief to stimulate creative thinking.

Amy Dias and Anna-Maria Hinis proposed a sculpture leading the viewer's eye to the Grade 2 Listed Three Lamps using timber and steel to create a sweep of posts of different heights, recollecting the suspension bridge. The Living City Challenge – focused teams of architects

David Rhodes and Chris Wilson of Bristol-based Origin3 Studio looked at the M32 Corridor and innovative ideas to create a cycle route over the route of the culvert, greening over the motorway, a rapid transit route, and the Big Blue – a multi-story park and ride, residential, hotel and commercial city in the sky.



Bristol architect Wolfgang Kuchler looked at creating a 'Garden City' starting at the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone and including the Hanging Gardens of Bristol in the disused sorting office adjacent to Temple Meads station.

We do not have space for fuller coverage of these ideas, which can be seen at www.architecture.com/livingcitychallenge Please contact Jon Watkins, Regional Director of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) South West region. RIBA South West covers the South West of England, and is based at Paintworks within the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone.



Eugene Byrne looks at how Bristol is marking the centenary of the First World War

The 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War has generated numerous TV documentaries and dramas, newspaper and magazine articles, books and commemorative events. While World War One Fatigue may eventually set in among the public (“it’ll be over by Christmas”) there’s no sign of interest flagging at the time of writing.

As editor of the Post’s ‘Bristol Times’ local history section (every Tuesday – place a regular order with your newsagent now, folks) I’ve discovered that many readers are very keen to share their family stories of the War.

Perhaps we’re so interested in it because we’re starting to realise how little we know about it, and how clichéd images of mud, trenches and slaughter are a caricature.

At a safer distance from the pain and loss, we can re-discover it, coming to both the big history and to the legends within our own families, as though it’s all completely new. If you have any interest in history, then to explore the part that your family or your home town played in the Great War is to open up a huge cabinet filled with fascinating things.

Bristol and Bristolians have taken up the commemorations with a great deal of enthusiasm (if that’s the right word). The Cathedral, for instance, is remembering one casualty from the diocese every month from now until November 2018. M Shed, meanwhile, is putting on ‘Moved by Conflict’, a special exhibition looking not just at WW1, but also at the ways in which people have been shifted and displaced by the wars of the 20th century. There have been exhibitions at the Royal West of England Academy (including a retrospective of the works of John and Paul Nash), while St George’s ‘The World Changed’ looks at the impact of the war on music.

Many of the events and activities locally are being co-ordinated by Bristol 2014, an initiative led by the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership. It has a huge programme of talks, events, publications as well as a sponsored art programme.

Bristol 2014 will be bringing out a book about Bristol’s part in the war this autumn as Bristol’s great Reading Adventure for 2014.

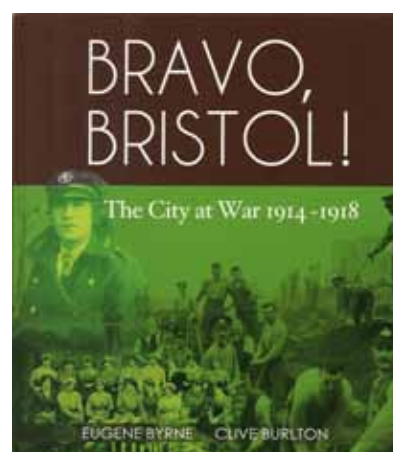
It has already published a free guide to researching Bristolian ancestors in WW1, as well as an interactive map and (free) smartphone app telling over 100 stories from the war at various locations around the city. (These both were researched and compiled by your correspondent, but don’t let that put you off.)

This latter includes some quite startling tales which highlight how little we know about Bristol’s part in WW1. There’s a possible attempt by enemy agents to introduce bubonic plague to Bristol; the legend of the man who hid in the attic to escape conscription, and ended up staying there for the rest of his life and the tragic tale of the U-Boat which became a huge visitor attraction in the city shortly after the war ended, without people knowing it had been responsible for the deaths of 100 Bristolians in one of the worst war crimes of the era.

Andrew Kelly, director of Bristol 2014 told Better Bristol: “We should remember the First World War for its impact internationally, on Bristol and over many decades. We should mark the bravery of those that fought and those that refused to fight. We’re delighted that Bristol has the largest programme in the UK marking the centenary in 2014 and look forward to many debates and discussions, exhibitions, arts projects, our free book and more.”

For more, and free downloads, see: www.bristol2014.com

Eugene Byrne is co-author with Clive Burlton of ‘Bravo, Bristol! The City at War 1914-1918’, published by Redcliffe Press, price £15.





SECURING NEW LIFE FOR KEY VACANT SITES AND BUILDINGS – Simon Birch reports

Even in a relatively prosperous city like Bristol, there are certain sites and buildings which lie empty for years and years. Of course a certain level of vacancy is natural and is part of the natural scheme of things, but usually development does then take place within a reasonable period of time. But some sites do seem to get stuck and give rise to concern by local residents, planners and, if protected, by English Heritage.

Why does this matter? With listed buildings there is legislation designed to ensure that these important sites are maintained and looked after. It does seem amazing that such buildings are not all in use or at least being restored.

In all cases there is the issue of a wasted resource – a site or building which could be put to active use. With increased pressure on greenfield sites there is even more need to make maximum use of brownfield resources. This is particularly relevant in the coming year with Bristol as the European Green Capital, one objective of which must surely be making sustainable use of the city’s resources.

There are three important examples of listed buildings at risk in Bristol:

- In Portland Square, originally laid out over 200 years ago, many of the buildings have already been restored or plans are in place for imminent works. The exception lies in the north west corner where there is a gap, caused initially by war-time bombing and then reinforced by decades of neglect culminating in the collapse of part of the remaining façade (Grade I-listed) in a fierce storm about 10 years ago, fortunately without loss of life. The local community – represented by the Portland & Brunswick Association – is naturally very keen to encourage the sympathetic redevelopment of this site, to bring activity onto the square, and to work with the site owners to achieve a mutually acceptable solution.
- At the bottom of St Michael’s Hill stands the rather wonderfully named St Michael the Archangel on the Mount Without. Rather less wonderfully this church has been boarded up for more than 17 years and is now festooned with ivy and overshadowed by trees. Inadequate levels of maintenance have led to water ingress and damage to the fabric. Rebuilt in 1775-77 in a Gothic style but retaining a mid-15th century tower, St Michaels is Grade II*-listed. The Diocese still owns the church and a number of possible new uses have been considered over the years, including as an addition to the adjacent school and as a running shop. Currently the City Church (based in the Elmgrove Centre) is drawing up ambitious plans which will require Heritage Lottery Funding for implementation. Local groups – the Christmas Steps Arts Quarter and the Kingsdown Conservation Group - are taking a close interest and are keen to see community activities play a part in

the future life of this important building.

- In Stokes Croft the long-running saga of Westmoreland House and the Carriage Works has attracted widespread comment, community consultation and community outrage. Just now there are two possible redevelopment possibilities, both involving the restoration and reuse of the Grade II*-listed Carriage Works. There is no clear timescale for the resolution of the future of this very prominent site.

On Purdown, the World War II anti-aircraft gun sites are Scheduled Ancient Monuments but their condition is gradually deteriorating and there may be a need for much more positive and active management.

Elsewhere good progress has been made with the restoration of Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Road by Trinity Community Arts. Grade II*-listed, Bristol City Council has granted a 35-year lease enabling a significant grant from the lottery together with grant aid from English Heritage.

At Ashton Court the Lower Lodge (Grade II*-listed) is being restored by the Bristol Buildings Trust and in Clifton Down Road the imposing Mortimer House, a mid-18th century Palladian suburban villa, is nearing the end of a lengthy restoration process.

Bristol’s Harbourside has a very central vacant site – in between the Arnolfini and the Architecture Centre – very neatly fenced



PORTLAND SQUARE, "70 years since the bombs fell, yet this bomb site remains!



NARROW QUAY "On what must be one of Bristol's photogenic sites, near the Arnolfini, this wilderness cries out to be used properly"

UNLISTED BUILDINGS OF MERIT

Ebenezer Chapel



Despite concerted efforts to save the building, one stay of execution while new uses were sought, and the involvement of councillors, it finally succumbed to the demolition gang in July.

Gone

This demonstrates the vulnerability of many of Bristol's older and historical buildings. The fact is that -as the mayor points out- any building or structure that is not a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site,



Registered Park or Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area can legally be demolished under a Prior Notification of Proposed Demolition. Under current national legislation demolition is not classed as 'development' – so planning permission is not needed.

The City Archaeologist reported in BB02 that a Local List could help preserve the city's heritage. BCC was "looking to create" a Local List of non-designated buildings worthy of preservation. "Using guidance from English Heritage, criteria will soon be published." Little seems to have happened in effect.

Bristol architect, David Martyn demands that more can and should be done

The truth about conservation in Bristol is that it lags far behind many other cities in terms of heritage protection, and as the economy reheats the pressure is firmly on buildings that do not presently enjoy either state protection, courtesy of English Heritage, or lie within Conservation Areas.

Bristol lacks the additional level of protection for its historic buildings that local listing provides. Bath and North East Somerset has it, Gloucestershire has it, South Gloucestershire has it, dozens of authorities across the South West also have it. The process works well and nationally it has saved many historic buildings from demolition. So why don't we?

When national planning policies changed in 2012 to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), English Heritage recognised the importance and need to protect heritage buildings valued by communities, but which fell outside national criteria for Listed Buildings. They introduced new guidance for local authorities encouraging the establishment of "Local Lists" of significant buildings, and enabled legislation that



PRINCE ST

"What must be an extremely valuable site remains boarded up and abandoned

off and by no stretch of the imagination an eyesore. But surely this site could contribute so much more to the vibrant Harbourside life? And to the owner's bank account? Ownership issues apparently hinder positive progress here.

Nearby the boarded up church on the corner of Royal Oak Avenue and Prince Street is not listed but surely represents a valuable opportunity for much more positive use?

What can the Bristol Civic Society do in these circumstances? It seems to me that we have a number of potential roles:

- We can raise the profile of neglected buildings, working collaboratively with local community groups wherever possible.
- We can highlight opportunities, possibly by drawing up illustrative proposals to demonstrate potential, much as we did for the possible future of Castle Park in the last edition of the possible future of Castle Park in the last edition of Better Bristol.
- We can challenge wherever there is slow (or lack of) progress. We might contact owners directly and see if there are obstacles hindering progress where an independent organisation such as the Society might have a useful and positive role to play.
- We can use our Environmental Awards scheme to celebrate and publicise completed projects.

Better Bristol.

- We can challenge wherever there is slow (or lack of) progress. We might contact owners directly and see if there are obstacles hindering progress where an independent organisation such as the Society might have a useful and positive role to play.
- We can use our Environmental Awards scheme to celebrate and publicise completed projects.

councils could use to protect them. About half of England's local councils have these Local Lists and English Heritage helpfully states that authorities are "also obliged to consider the positive contribution that conserving such heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality".

While local listing provides no additional planning controls, the fact that a building or site is on a Local List means that its conservation as a "heritage asset" becomes an objective of the NPPF, and a "relevant consideration" in the planning processes.

The addition of buildings to the Local List should be straightforward. A council officer adds a building to the list by assessing it against a few simple published criteria and declaring it as an asset if those criteria are sufficiently met. Once recognised in this fashion, existing planning law can be engaged to ensure alterations and demolition are considered and controlled through the usual processes.

It is surprising how many buildings are completely unprotected: many significant structures, dozens of fascinating and ornate pubs and schools, chapels and churches, across the city, many of which have closed in recent years and with owners keen to realise the potential and property value of their sites. But these are just a very few of the forgotten fragments of our past that make Bristol such a rich and beautiful city to live in.

Efforts have been made to begin a Local List but progress has stalled. The council's own [Know Your Place](#) website has been inviting nominations for the Local List from the public since early last year. The list continues to expand, but nominated buildings are already being lost, damaged, and demolished before they have even been considered for inclusion.

Ironically there isn't really any need for a list. Maintaining a Local List is not obligatory, but just one weapon in a small arsenal local authorities now have under NPPF and localism legislation. There is allowance for a simple mechanism whereby a council officer can define and declare a building as a Heritage Asset, allowing it to receive the same protection. This officer-led approach is the case for the majority of local authorities, regardless of whether they maintain a formal list

For whatever reason, different priorities, lack of resources, or just disinterest, Bristol City Council seems unable to protect Bristol's historic buildings in the way that English Heritage and central government intended. There are clearly holes in the legislation, but some creative engagement with building owners and the community could save buildings where the law falls short. Our extended family of historic buildings is threatened and that threat is growing daily. To lose a family member is at best upsetting, but to lose one needlessly and as violently as Bristol lost Ebenezer Chapel is especially painful

This article is a shortened version of one that appeared in Bristol 24/7. We are grateful to the author and to Chris Brown of 24/7 for permission to reproduce it here.

2014 BRISTOL CIVIC SOCIETY STUDENT AWARD – Simon Birch reports

Each year the Bristol Civic Society gives an award to a UWE student whose end-of-year design project stands out in terms of its imagination, technical mastery and sheer imagination. The aim is to encourage students to produce projects which, if implemented, would contribute significantly to their environment.

This year the project brief centred on a real-life development site on the riverside in Bath and called for a "civic-minded proposal focusing on the repair of this piece of the city's fabric through the careful insertion of an appropriate masterplan, buildings and well-considered public space".

Wendy Pollard and I constituted the Society "panel" and enjoyed a wonderful few hours assessing the wide range of projects and meeting many of the students and their tutors.

Tutors highlighted nine projects, all fascinating and all very different in their approach and content. We found it most challenging to compare a "deconstructed pub and brewery" with a "pool tower" (possibly the most beautiful project in terms of its drawings and modelling) and with designs for a "Bath power station", also very powerful and well thought out but not quite what a Bath riverside needs.

One project stood out and bowled us over. "A Place of Being" by Marlon Wessel was absolutely brilliant, packed full of philosophical thought, exquisite detail, technical aspects and sheer imagination. From circular towers, or were they life-sized prayer wheels, on the boundaries of the site to timber-framed halls in the centre, the wealth of invention and intensity was breathtaking.

We were informed that the actual model was created by means of computer machine cutting so this was imagination linked very firmly with technological expertise. What a wonderful addition to the city this design would deliver.

It was no surprise to learn that Marlon – from the UWE Architectural and Environmental Engineering Graduating Studio - was next travelling to Papua New Guinea to learn about bamboo construction techniques. No ordinary apprenticeship for this outstanding student.

Marlon Wessel explains to Better Bristol the thinking behind his project

The brief was simple: design a civic space dedicated to the performance of art, one that would carefully consider the environment and provide an answer to what the city of a Bath really is. This included a large space occupying at least 800 people and a smaller space for 200 people.

The site - an unattractive car park - stretches along the river Avon, opposite the Dyson compound and next to the Bath College of Art. Its location suggested a need for a new bridge that would connect people's homes with their work in the city, diverting them through the site.

The place therefore had the potential to be a new public pathway, a tourist attraction and a social platform - but the task proved to become more difficult as I started to analyse the city itself.

At first glance, Bath seemed to be a perfect oasis of classical architecture. Everything seemed to belong together, everything appeared to be what it was meant to be, and Bath did not seem to lack anything... including performance spaces.

But on reflection Bath appeared to be no more as a façade of a city, a postcard city, a city as if painted in the 17th century and left unchanged, a city unable to adapt.

What was needed was a place of being. The basic shape and appearance of the main buildings on the site had to be universal, indefinable and obvious at the same time. They had to be pitched roof, completely white and without any openings such that it would be impossible to know what was inside. However, it had to be obvious that shelter was provided for something.

A new pedestrian bridge would have to be built, which by its very existence would create the riverbanks, defining the place, however it would be left unfinished.

It would be cast from iron and stretch from both sides of the river, reaching towards one another but leaving a small gap in between. Someone who would use the bridge every day to go to work, instead of being caught up in thoughts about work stepping over the gap in the bridge and maybe therefore noticing its spiritual and intellectual significance.

The landscape of the site became an abstraction of a forest path, a mountain walk, in which the building sat like mountain huts or hunting lodges. Meanwhile, the site would occupy four estates evolving around music. On one end a music school, in the centre a concert hall, while a record store was situated at the other end, and a jazz bar found on

the highest point of the landscape.

Lastly, seven further places were embedded, spread around the space like caves. These places would be workshops, allowing for a place to both work and think.

The end result is hopefully a place that makes us notice our presence in the world around us, a place that celebrates being.





BCS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

This year we have selected just four awards, the lowest number since the scheme started 15 years ago. It reflects the low level of building activity. But there has been no compromise on quality; these are four very worthy winners

Junction 3, next to M32, Easton, Bristol

This project provides 59 homes, all affordable or in shared ownership, seven units for business start-ups, a learning centre and a new library to replace the old Trinity Road site.



A partnership between Bristol City Council, Knightstone Housing Association and the Big Lottery Community Libraries Fund, the £10million project regenerates a problem derelict site. The unusual and striking design, with its light and airy interiors, uses some innovatory building techniques and scores highly on sustainability.
Architects: GCP
Builders: Leadbitter



Student Castle. Pro-Cathedral, Clifton

The Bristol Pro Cathedral project – which was implemented by Student Castle Ltd – comprises the construction of a brand new building and the part-refurbishment of the existing Grade II* Listed cathedral. The new development includes 220 student units – split across the Cathedral and the new Annexe – all boasting a range of modern fixtures and fittings, and accommodation to the highest standards.

The unique transformation of the Cathedral into a landmark development presented designers with a number of challenges: rock anchoring on an unstable hillside, the installation of three new floors into the historic fabric and the creation of new build elements. These are distinctly modern, yet harmonize with the period environment, using a mixture of modern materials and extensive use of green oak.

Architects: Morgan Hayman, Cardiff
Structural Engineers: Mann Williams



Imperial Tobacco H.Q. Winterstoke Road

A striking modern office building and one of the few to be completed in the year. Among the features is a mosaic showing 160+ countries where the company is active, and a grey water recycling system.

Architects: Atkins Walter and Webster



ZION Bedminster Down

A chapel built in 1891 and now converted into a very successful social centre owned and run by Jessica Wright as a 'not for profit' social enterprise providing an attractive range of activities. The cafe is open weekdays 9.30 – 4pm, and the space is available for arts and events.

www.zionbristol.co.uk



These Awards will be presented at ZION, Bedminster Down, on Monday November 3rd at 11am
The ceremony will be attended by representatives of the winners & BCS and will be led by our Chairman with interviews by Keith Warmington - ex BBC Radio Bristol

Members are of course also very welcome - please email, Charles Fox to finalise: cfox868@btinternet.com

PLANNING APPLICATIONS GROUP (PAG)

SPRING & SUMMER 2014 – John Payne reports

Over the course of the Spring and Summer the Bristol Civic Society's Planning Applications Group (PAG) has campaigned against excessive increases in residential density, threats to listed buildings and intrusive advertising. Our comments are submitted every three weeks to Bristol City Council's planning officers who refer to them in their reports recommending permission or refusal of development. PAG also makes representations to planning committee meetings and planning appeal inquiries when it is appropriate. The cases set out below give a flavour of some of the recent campaigns.

BUILT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

47 Wellington Hill West

It has been particularly rewarding to work with local residents and ward Councillors to campaign against the conversion of an inter-war terraced house in this part of Henleaze into a House in Multiple Occupation resulting in what was, in the Society's opinion, a hugely over-intensive use of the site which also would have resulted in over-looking of neighbours' properties and harm to their quality of life. PAG has appeared with other parties twice at Planning Committee with success to persuade councillors to overturn recommendations for permission for the development. Twice the applicant has appealed and PAG has re-iterated its concerns to the subsequent inquiries but the inspector, in both cases, dismissed the appeals.

10 Portland Square

An application for the construction of a residential extension in the rear garden of this property has been made plus converting the offices in the main building to five flats. PAG had no objection in principle to the change of use but did object to this application. The design of the extension, in terms of its appearance and scale, would be harmful to this grade I-listed building and to its setting. If approved, the development would use the site over-intensively resulting in poor provision of amenity space. Both the appearance of the extension and the intensity of use of the overall development would harm the character of the Conservation Area in PAG's view. PAG was also concerned that there could be alterations to the Portland Square façade of this fine building.

2 – 16 Clifton Down Road

Through PAG, the Society has long been making representations on this site bounded by Boyce's Avenue, King's Road and Clifton Down Road. PAG was invited to a pre-application meeting for the latest proposals in June and our comments are summarised below. The scale of the design for a mixed residential and retail development seemed broadly consistent with surrounding buildings. We felt, however, that the design of the building, particularly at first and second floor levels should strongly reflect the character of the Conservation Area. The introduction of active frontages surrounding the building was welcomed but we were concerned that controls on the size of commercial vehicles serving the shops could be ignored. One of the Society's principle concerns relating to this site is that the open space on the Clifton Downs Road frontage should be retained and improved. It is an important part of the street scene providing relief to the built up street frontages. We noted that the existing birch trees were not shown on the initial proposals and requested that they be retained or, if that were not possible, replaced by suitable semi-mature trees. A planning application is awaited.

Repair of Gatehouse at Ashton Park Secondary School

PAG strongly supported the commendable repair and restoration work proposed for this grade II-listed building.

ADVERTISING AND BRANDING PROPOSALS

Hillhouse and Artichoke Pub Site, Lewins Mead

There was a particularly outrageous proposal for internally illuminated hotel and burger café signage and branding for the proposed building on this site. It is a prominent and sensitive site close to the open space between St James Church and Lewins Mead/Haymarket. The array included a 1.7m wide hotel sign extending from 13m to 20m above pavement level, unnecessarily large and high for the purposes of finding a hotel. Perhaps the final straw was an internally illuminated cow facing Lewins Mead. PAG objected strongly to the proposals because of the harmful impact they would have, particularly on the peace and tranquillity of the open space. The latest position is that the application has been withdrawn.

Colston Tower

A proposal for a large LED screen advertisement, 12m by 3.6m was submitted for display on Colston Tower 6.5 m above the pavement. PAG has successfully campaigned against two other screens of this type in central Bristol and was delighted that the council refused this proposal. An appeal has been lodged and we hope that the Inspector will continue to support the council's worthy stand against these highly intrusive, brightly shining monstrosities.

86 Bedminster Parade

PAG has recently objected to proposed large-scale advertising and branding on this fine grade II-listed building. We felt the building was of such quality that it announced itself and that the occupying bank could use much more subtle signage to advertise its presence. The proposal would harm both the appearance of the Listed Building and the character of the Conservation Area. At the time of writing a decision had yet to be made.

Our meetings are informal and relaxed and normally followed by a chat in a nearby hostelry. We are always in need of new members to share this work. If you would like to come along to a meeting please contact John Payne.

Johnpayne997@btinternet.com

Tel: 0117 924 0634



MAJOR SITES GROUP (MSG)

SPRING & SUMMER 2014

John Frenkel reports

The Major Sites Group takes part in the public consultation stage, before the planning application for major schemes. This is one of the Society's most important roles.

The improvement to the economic climate has reignited developers' interest in major residential schemes in the city centre, which the Society welcomes.

Under recent planning legislation changes, developers may now convert office buildings to residential use without planning permission. Large office blocks, empty for years will become blocks of flats. So far there are plans to convert The Pithay, Bristol Bridge House and Lewins Place (Greyfriars). The Society welcomes these buildings' return to economic use and contribution to the city's housing needs and budget. The Society supported the external refurbishment of Lewins Place, which would improve this unloved building.

The Society supports proposals to build 166 flats in Avon Street and 117 flats at 25 Redcliff Street and has suggested improvements to the design of these developments.

The Society has objected to a new block at 13-19 Dean Street in St. Pauls to accommodate students. Although the Society supports the site's redevelopment the Council's planning advice says that St. Pauls needs more homes. The building's height and mass would overbear the street and harm this part of the conservation area. The Society supports the redevelopment of the former St Mary's (Nuffield) hospital but accommodation for 200 students would overdevelop the site. On appeal the first planning application was refused and a planning application for a similar scheme is withdrawn following the Council's advice.

Out of the city centre, a new owner of the long derelict Elizabeth Shaw chocolate factory has revived the redevelopment proposals. The scheme would retain and convert two of the industrial buildings and build new family houses. There has been exemplary community consultation and the Society welcomes the scheme.

Nearby, Barratt Homes have bought the St Matthias campus. Barratts promise to provide 30% affordable housing and to secure the future for the Grade II listed college buildings as a Steiner primary school. The Society has said that the development should not be a volume housebuilder's standard estate design. This scheme falls short of the quality of the layout and design of the chocolate factory scheme.

Two major schemes for the Society to consider are for tall buildings on the cleared sites in Temple Way of the former Clerical Medical Building (Bank Place) and opposite, The Post's former print hall. The Bank Place developer wants to replace an existing planning permission for two 8 floor office blocks with a residential development of 343 flats. The development proposed for the print hall site is accommodation for 230 students in an 11 floor point block.

The year ahead, the lack of capacity in the construction industry will bring problems for developers and property investors. The welcome return of a residential population to the centre of the will increase the Council's difficulties in the providing space for soft infrastructure, schools, health care etc. No one foresaw the shift in city centre property investment to



Top
Architect's impression of refurbished Lewins Place

Middle
Plans for Bank Place (Clerical Medical)

Bottom
Proposed bridge at Finzel's Reach



residential use in the pre-2008 economic climate. It is ironic that the market is informally reversing the formal zoning of earlier planning regimes through the conversion of office space to student accommodation and residential development.

The developer of the former Courage's Brewery site must build a new bridge from Castle Park across the Avon. The Society objects to the design, which would have a major impact on the view from Bristol Bridge and block this reach of the river. Contrast the simple lightweight quality of Meads Reach Bridge. Water users object strongly to the obstruction that the bridge and the barriers to protect its piers would cause to the use of the river. The bridge approach would harm this part of Castle Park. A new flight of steps up to the main path would bisect the retaining wall and require the replacement of the D Day memorial and its plaques and the memorial trees. There exist steps to the west and a ramped path to the east, which could be widened.

The Ashton Vale to Temple Meads section of the West of England MetroBus (rapid transit) network was granted Full Approval by the Department for Transport on 12th September. The Northern Fringe to Hengrove Park scheme has now also been approved by all the local authorities concerned. There seems to be little in the way of their completion, cost escalation and lack of capacity in the construction industry permitting.

The Society has not objected to the NFHP, viewing it as the delivery of a 30 years old plan for a tram link to the north. This does not mean we are uncritical. Some of the routing at the northern end is eccentric. Does it really have to destroy market gardens at Stapleton? We have suggested that in its routing through Bedminster the Promoters “could do better” (see below).

A lost chance to improve Bedminster Parade

John Frenkel – convener – Major Sites Group comments on the plans for the Metrobus in Bedminster.

The Council has planning permission to construct the Northern Fringes to Hengrove MetroBus scheme but the route through East Street and Bedminster Parade is bus led and does not strike the right balance between the needs of buses and motor traffic and cyclist and pedestrians.

This was a once in a lifetime chance to fund a place-making development in East Street/Bedminster Parade as part

of the long term plan to regenerate south Bristol. The scheme needs a more imaginative approach. The Bedminster section would fall short of the standards that the Council will achieve in the Centre. The Council must avoid another Old Market style, ugly, bus led traffic scheme. Bedminster Parade has similar qualities to Old Market. It is the setting of several Grade II listed buildings and unlisted buildings of merit and requires public investment to spark regeneration. It is unacceptable to remove the pavement from outside the Imperial Arcade. This pavement should be a feature in any new East Street road development.

Making pavements more attractive to pedestrians encourages people to choose to walk rather than use motor transport and supports increased footfall for traders. The scheme should be the aim to widen pavements for pedestrians, not narrow them. The Society suggested a design to reduce the road space to two lanes to provide for protected bus stop pull-ins. The Whiteladies Road improvements offer extensive pedestrian havens and are an example of what the Council can achieve

The promoters demand for ‘brand’ bus shelters has overridden all other considerations. The southbound bus shelter would block five continuous shop fronts; two are Grade II listed and would replace nearly new modern Adshel shelters. Modern traffic management is essential to Bristol’s image as a ‘Green Capital’. The Council must improve the city’s heritage, create attractive places, and meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. The Society invites the Council to ask its Urban Design Team, who have redesigned the Centre Promenade, to redesign the route along East Street and Bedminster Parade



Bedminster Parade in 2014. Some “industrial scale” shelters are proposed in front of these buildings

Reader’s letter. From Mr Warren Marsh Temple Meads Transport Interchange

Although Network Rail’s plans for the future of Temple Meads Station have been reproduced in recent issues of Better Bristol further clarification is required. The proposals shown on the plans only refer to land owned by Network Rail, who have been very proactive in publicising their ideas for major improvements. For many years the Council’s development strategy has called for a fully integrated interchange. Sadly there does not appear to be any master plan for a comprehensive interchange serving rail, road and harbour ferry traffic. Repeated enquiries addressed to various members of the City Council and Mayor George Fergusson by both myself and the Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance have not elicited a satisfactory response. There needs to be a lot of joined up thinking about proposals for new land use on both sides of the tracks. Most of the land is owned by Network Rail, the Homes and Communities Agency and, maybe, a private developer. Urgent decisions need to be made on many matters including:

- The siting of the new multi storey car park; should this be on the east side of the station where it can usefully serve the needs of commuters during the day and visitors to the Arena in the evening?
- The planning of taxi and bus movements and relative space requirements for all road traffic accessing the new station entrance from Friary.
- The need to preserve the view of the west elevation of the old train shed?
- The feasibility of constructing a new road tunnel under the station platforms.
- Who will pay for the expensive new infrastructure because the city council will surely plead they have inadequate funds? Can some Enterprise Zone money be used for this purpose? Any plans must allow for the enormous predicted growth for rail use and therefore the increased number of bus routes serving the station. This subject is not just a matter of importance for our citizens. It is a regional issue because Temple Meads will in future serve a much wider populace many of whom will live a long way from Bristol. Even if there are insufficient funds to promote some of the essential infrastructure at present we must avoid permission being given for permanent structures like offices, hotels etc within the areas formerly known as Plots 3 and 6 where land will be needed for expansion of station related public transport facilities in the future.

In the spirit of the late Dorothy Brown I urge the Bristol Civic Society to lead the way where the City Planners have failed. We should press for an early agreement to a comprehensive area plan to act as an ideal against which other less inspirational proposals can be judged.
Warren Marsh

The views expressed in this article are those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by BCS Committee

Editor’s note: The Society and other Bristol bodies have been attempting to persuade the City Council and Network Rail of the need for a fully integrated interchange for many years. Network Rail showed some enthusiasm back in 2013, since when it has all gone quiet again. Attempts to continue dialogue have stalled.

Tuesday, November 25

MAKING BRISTOL'S STREETS SPECIAL

For details, see page 4

7.30pm Main Auditorium, Arnolfini Gallery,
16 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

Free and open to all. No booking required. Doors open 7pm

Wednesday, December 10

ARNOS VALE - THE ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE AND SYMBOLISM OF A VICTORIAN GARDEN CEMETERY : Alan Bambury

Arnos Vale Cemetery was created in 1837. In this well-illustrated talk, Alan looks at the different architectural styles of the buildings, and considers the many different types of monuments and their significance. He then discusses the religious and other meanings

behind the various carvings found. Finally, he will give examples of epitaphs - some sad, some humorous and others informative.

Alan and his wife are friends and volunteers at Arnos Vale Cemetery. Alan volunteers as a heritage tour guide, and clears ivy from some of the major monuments, while Jane, his co-writer, volunteers in reception and carries out burial searches.

7.30pm; Upper Meeting Room, Friends Meeting House,
Hampton Road, BS6 6JE

Members £2 (voluntary); Non-members £5. Booking not required.

Thursday, January 15

THE BRISTOL AVON RIVERS TRUST: Ian Mock

The talk will provide a background to River Trusts and what they do, with examples of the progress made by our own local trust since it was set up in 2012. The talk will cover a range of project types, showing the range of opportunities for involvement for volunteers and the wider contribution the trust is making to help deliver more major environmental contributions at many levels.

Ian Mock is employed to manage the trust and its day-to-day activities which includes all aspects of running a small business, accounts, project management and also getting his feet wet when he can. He retired from a senior management position with Clerical Medical 10 years ago and has since been enjoying the countryside and his family. This interlude is now over as trust activities are fast taking over his every waking hour.

7.30pm; Upper Meeting Room, Friends Meeting House,
Hampton Road, BS6 6JE

Members £2 (voluntary); Non-members £5. Booking not required.

Thursday, February 5

BRISTOL BEYOND THE WALLS – 1,000 YEARS OF A GROWING CITY: Peter Malpass

Bristol was founded at least 1,000 years ago and rapidly grew to be one of the wealthiest towns in England. Its impregnable castle and safe harbour, said to be able to accommodate 1,000 ships, were famous, but for several hundred years the physical extent of the town remained tiny by comparison with the sprawling city we know today. The questions to be addressed in this talk are, how, why and when did the transformation from settlement to big city occur?

Peter Malpass has lived in Bristol for nearly 40 years and until retirement in 2011 he was Professor of Housing and Urban Studies at the University of the West of England and a member of its Regional History Centre. For the last eight years he has been devoting more time to thinking about the urban history of Bristol, and he is currently writing a book about the growth of the city in the Victorian period. With Andy King he co-authored "Bristol's Floating Harbour - the first 200 years" published by Redcliffe Press.

7.30pm; Upper Meeting Room, Friends Meeting House,
Hampton Road, BS6 6JE

Members £2 (voluntary); Non-members £6.50. Booking not required.

Thursday, March 5

TOBACCO CITY - Buildings and Society : Simon Birch

Tobacco indisputably helped to make Bristol the city it is today, making its mark both in the built environment and socially. In this talk, Simon Birch and a colleague will give us a short history of the tobacco industry in Bristol from 1786 to the present day. They will be looking at the surviving buildings and the experiences of people who worked in the industry. They will make suggestions for further celebration and interpretation.

Simon Birch is Chair of Bristol Civic Society and recently completed an MA in Historical Archaeology at Bristol University with a project on the archaeology of the cigarette industry in Bristol. Last Spring he led two popular walks tracing the development of the tobacco industry through south Bristol.

At the time of going to press the second speaker was not confirmed. Check our website for updates.

7.30pm; Upper Meeting Room, Friends Meeting House,
Hampton Road, BS6 6JE

Members £2 (voluntary); Non-members £5. Booking not required.