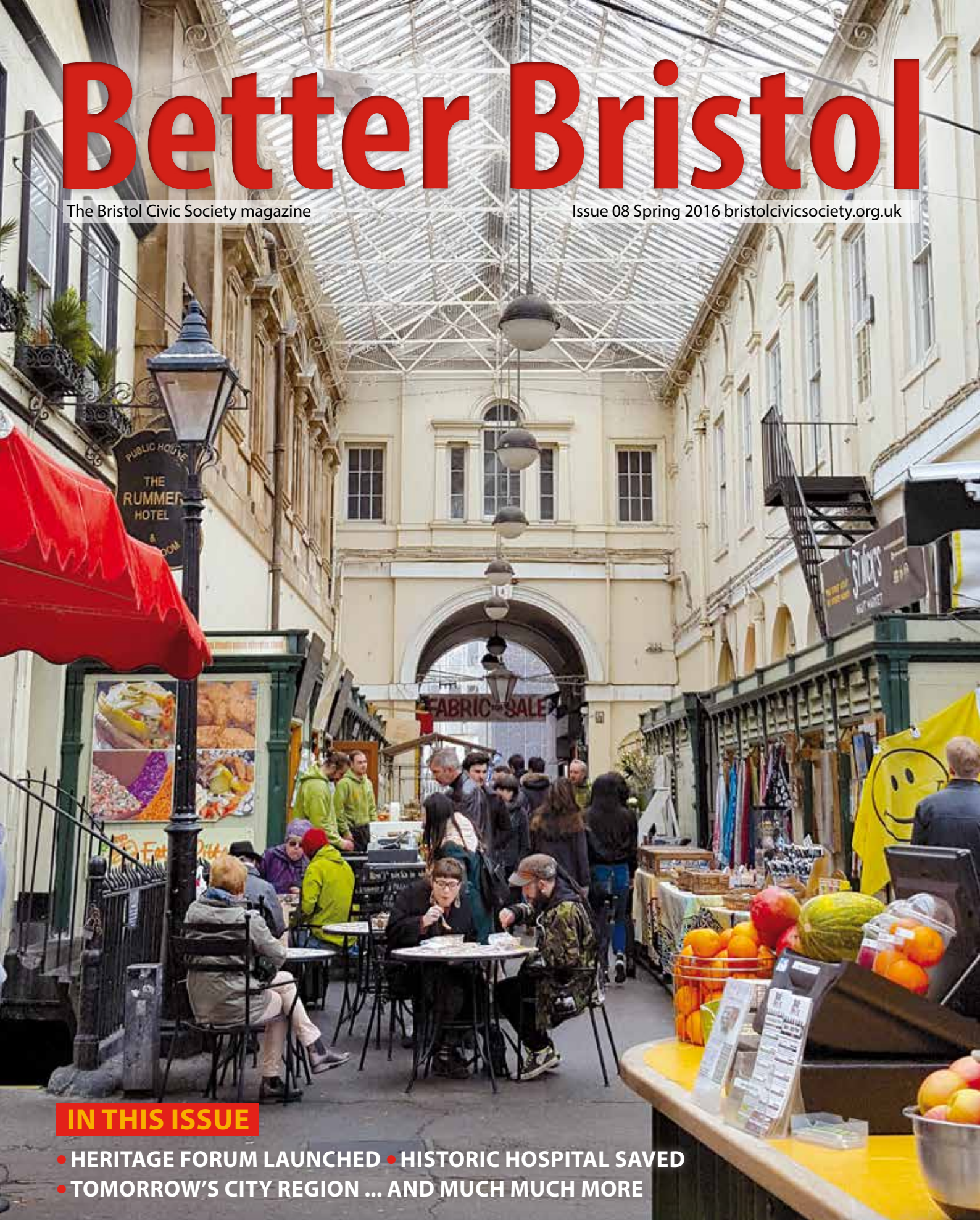


# Better Bristol

The Bristol Civic Society magazine

Issue 08 Spring 2016 [bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](http://bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)



## IN THIS ISSUE

- HERITAGE FORUM LAUNCHED • HISTORIC HOSPITAL SAVED
- TOMORROW'S CITY REGION ... AND MUCH MUCH MORE



an independent force for a **better Bristol**

The Bristol Civic Society, Registered Charity No. 244414





**Front Cover:**  
**The much loved St Nicholas market**  
 A jewel of the city's heritage, wins national award – See page 5  
 Photo credit – Tracey Feltham

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*Articles are the opinions of individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of Bristol Civic Society.*



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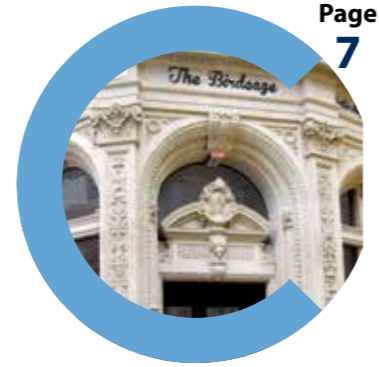
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**CHAIRMAN'S PIECE**

# Civic Society – here to make a difference

In this issue we bring you the launch of the Bristol Heritage Forum, a partnership initiative between everyone with a concern for the City's heritage. The role of the Civic Society on the Forum is to galvanise different interests, to co-ordinate activity and to actually "make a difference".

A number of you have asked what the real point is of the Forum – will it just be a talking shop? Well I sincerely hope not! A good example of its potential value would be the plight of St Michael's on the Mount, now vacant and boarded up for nearly 20 years. In my view this could not possibly have happened if the Forum had been in existence during that time – a vigilant eye would have been cast on all buildings at risk (and especially on such a well loved, prominent and historic building) – and action would have been taken, the building would have been championed, publicised, and a new lease of life found much earlier. Without the Forum we have still travelled hopefully and indeed are now talking positively with the church owners.

At the beginning of the New Year some twenty Civic Society "activists" spent a very useful Saturday morning closeted in the Youth Hostel on Narrow Quay. The purpose was to start the process of developing a strategy for the future of the Civic Society. We looked first at a Bristol without the Society – would anyone notice? Would developers run amok? The conclusion was that we weren't entirely sure, which is worrying in itself! We looked at what other Civic Societies do, aided by the attendance of Freddie Gick, Chairman of Civic Voice. But many examples were of much smaller towns quite unlike the situation in Bristol with so many existing local societies involved in civic activities.



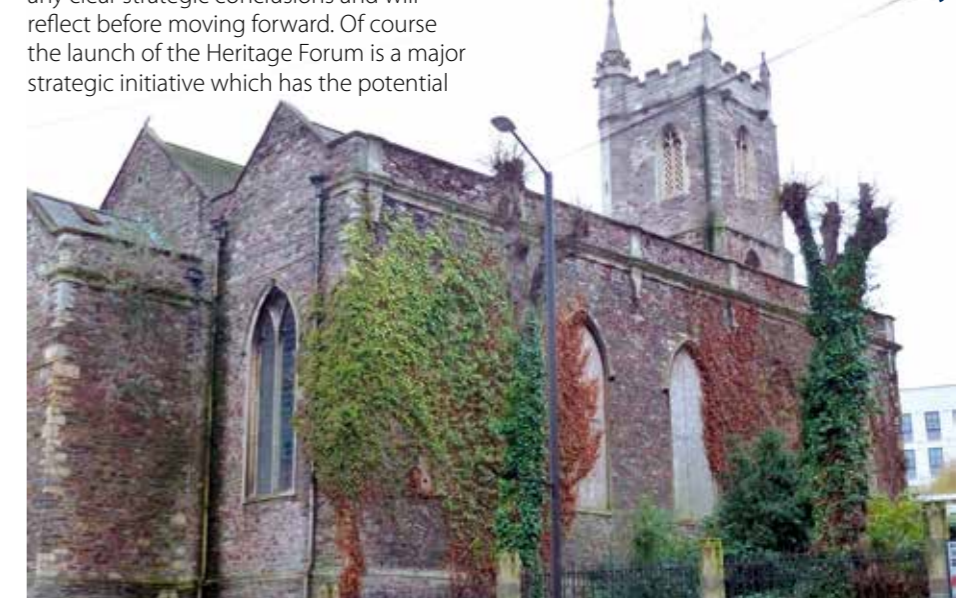
Possibly the most significant obstacle to the future development of the Society is the extremely small number of active members

This initial session was very much the start of an ongoing process – we didn't reach any clear strategic conclusions and will reflect before moving forward. Of course the launch of the Heritage Forum is a major strategic initiative which has the potential

to generate new partnerships, create new projects and generally acknowledge the City wide role of the Society. However, we did conclude that possibly the most significant obstacle to the future development of the Society is the extremely small number of active members. The addition of even two or three members willing to become more involved and lead initiatives would make an appreciable difference. We now have a range of activities which appeal to a wide range of interests and you may well find something to grab your imagination. For example, the current panels for both Blue Plaques and Design Awards are formed of volunteers who are enjoying the challenge of the work as well as contributing to the success of both activities. When reading this edition of Better Bristol I urge you to have a hard look at what you might be able to contribute to the Society – I'm sure you will all find something that you can offer. I look forward to hearing from you.

**Simon Birch**

Chair, Bristol Civic Society



St Michael's on the Mount – vacant and boarded up for nearly 20 years.



**Not already a member?  
 Why not join TODAY!**

*See page 26 for  
 more details...*

## AGM and presentation of design awards

Tuesday 7th June  
St James's Priory,  
Whitsun Street.

This year we are again holding the AGM and the presentation of the Design Awards on the same evening and in the same venue. We are returning to St James's Priory after a very successful Civic Voice Convention held there last October. Members are cordially invited to both events.



Past and current Civic Society Chairs with Freddie Gick at the Civic Voice Convention

### AGM at 6.30pm

The AGM will be restricted to members only before the public Design Awards event, in order to encourage a more open and frank discussion on the how the society has performed in the last year, the raising of any issues and our plans for the future.

### Design Awards at 7.30pm

Eagerly awaited awards presentation to the cream of Bristol's developments completed in 2015. Bristol's Design Oscars are a closely guarded secret ...well except for the winners who will be there to accept their plaques.



At the Civic Voice Convention in St James's. Lighting effects not guaranteed!

## Civic Society – new initiatives

The Society has taken on a number of new initiatives in the last 6 months, as reported by the Chair. Chief among these are leading the Heritage forum, and running the Blue Plaques scheme. It is encouraging that the

Society's good reputation allows us to take on these roles. The bad news is that it is yet more work for a motivated but hard-working core team.

We really DO need more hands at the pump.

## Getting involved with the Civic Society

**There are many ways you can get involved. Come and join our campaigns and working groups.**

**We need writers, photographers, artist for our publications. Organisers of events. Administration.**

No experience needed, come along and learn the ropes, only requirement is enthusiasm, willingness to learn, and being computer savvy.

You'll be working with others, benefitting from their support and friendship.

**There are several VACANCIES that need to be filled:**

### Society Secretary

This is the main administrative role that legally has to be filled. Main task is arranging the executive meetings and AGM and keeping records.

### Members of Executive Committee

#### Vice-Chair (Chair-Elect) Editor for Better Bristol

The current editor is re-locating away from Bristol (yes, really!). So someone is needed urgently to take on the next issue in October. The current editor will assist with the next issue if required.

## Bristol Walking Alliance



The Society is a founding member of the Bristol Walking Alliance, started in 2015. The alliance campaigns to improve Bristol's walking environment, recognising that walking can be a neglected mode of transport (see article by Suzanne Audrey in October 2015's Better Bristol). Alan Morris is the BCS representative in BWA. Other member organisations include Bristol Ramblers,

Greater Bedminster Community Partnership, Living Streets, Sustrans, and SHINE (Supporting Healthy Inclusive Neighbourhood Environments) Team.

There will be a BWA launch event as part of the Bristol Walking Festival on Tuesday 17 May, 6.30-8.30pm at The Watershed, bookable online.

More information at [bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk](http://bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk)

## Petition: Council let the Pavilion be used for Harbourside community events

Crest Nicholson built the Pavilion as part of the planning agreement for the Canon's Marsh scheme. It was intended to serve as the "village hall" for the Harbourside community. However, it appears that the marketing and use of the building has

become that of a corporate events asset for the Council. The petition calls for it to be returned to its intended use by the community.

[http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/epetition\\_core/view/pavillion](http://epetitions.bristol.gov.uk/epetition_core/view/pavillion)

## Discover East Bristol

**There's more to Bristol's scenery than just the Avon Gorge and Clifton Downs**

A new interactive online map funded by Bristol 2015 Neighbourhood Arts Project highlights some of the hidden corners and wide open spaces of east Bristol. From wild and craggy Troopers Hill to the serene Oldbury Court estate and much more in between.

<http://discovereastbristol.co.uk/>

Paper copies may also be found in libraries, tourist centres, Hamilton House and many other venues.



## New energy supplier Bristol Energy is in it for the social good



Bristol Energy, the first municipal energy company in the South West and one of the first in the country, is officially open for business. The energy supply company was created by Bristol City Council in 2015 to be a force for social good. It is leading the way as a new model of energy company that contributes to the wellbeing of local communities.

### Got a point of view?



## A Metro Mayor for Greater Bristol - A Dead Duck or Done Deal?

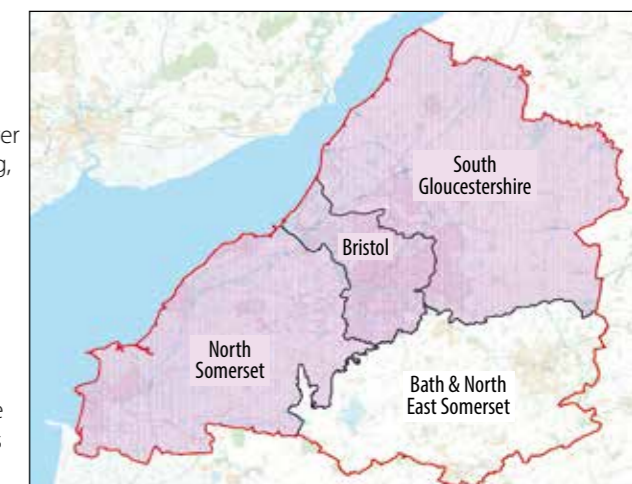
Nobody seems to quite know. In the budget of 2016 the Chancellor announced plans for the West of England Combined Authority devolution.

This will give the West of England – the four unitary authorities including Bristol that make up the existing partnership - new powers over improved transport, planning, skills and employment.

The West of England will also receive control of a £900 million investment fund over 30 years to boost economic growth. A lot of preparatory work has gone into this, as evidenced by the signatures of the four leaders on the agreement.

Response has been predictable: on the one hand there are those who reject anything that smells of the hated Avon and domination by Bristol, on the other hand those who see it as a dastardly plan by the Tories to hide cuts by sham new grants and hand-outs while avoiding troublesome Labour councils. There seems

to be a growing consensus that there is much that will benefit the region, not least in improving transport. This is something that the Society has long advocated. There is already considerable co-operation on the key issues.



The Greater Bristol or West of England area

The elected Metro Mayor will have considerable authority but his/her powers will be subject to veto by an executive. A process for their election will have to be agreed. Will this be a major stumbling block?

## National award for St Nicholas Market

The ever popular St Nicholas Market in the centre of the Old City has beaten off competition from markets from across the country to be named one of Britain's best at an awards

ceremony at The Great British Market Awards, in Birmingham.

The permanent indoor market buildings and outdoor stalls are home to the largest collection of independent retailers in the city offering a variety of quality

crafts, giftware and food. It has a huge variety of stall holders and traders, with something to appeal to everyone, and is committed to offering opportunities to new start-ups and businesses, with support of the Bristol Pound.

Picture – see cover



# The launch of the Bristol Heritage Forum

Initial proposals for a Forum were announced at a launch event in February

*Old city has many hidden surprises*

## Why a Bristol Heritage Forum?

There is a wealth of evidence that heritage is of key importance to visitors, businesses and residents right across the country. Bristol has a tremendous built heritage with over one third of the City covered by Conservation Areas, with more than 4,000 Listed Buildings, and with many historic parks and gardens. Yet there is ongoing pressure on this heritage from development and transport projects at a time when expert conservation resources are diminishing.

Historic England produces an annual state of the heritage report "Heritage Counts 2015". <http://hc.historicengland.org.uk/>

BRISTOL CIVIC SOCIETY

This report provides an invaluable summary of the national and regional context.

In addition, Bristol City Council has recently produced "Our Inherited City – Bristol Heritage Framework 2015 – 2018" which proposes establishing a community-based heritage forum in Bristol. This report can be found at

<http://designbristol.ning.com/profiles/blogs/our-inherited-city>

## Our Initial Proposals

A Heritage Forum is a relatively new idea, although other cities such as Leicester and Nottingham are moving in the same direction. In Bristol the Civic Society considers that a Heritage Forum would prove to be an invaluable addition to

the existing structure and organisations involved in heritage activities. Ideally it would be an independent body but one which worked closely with both Historic England and the City Council.

### Its objectives would be likely to include:

- Raising awareness and promoting the value of heritage.
- Co-ordinating heritage initiatives and facilitating collaboration and partnerships, a veritable "heritage dating agency".
- Sharing knowledge and best practice, building community capacity.

The purpose of the launch event is to gather support for the new Forum and to generate ideas for future activities, events and initiatives.



*Above left, detail*

*Above right, Cabot Circus – Will this become part of our architectural heritage?*



*Café on Corn Street*



*Treasures of Old Market, once almost lost*

### The most likely work streams will include:

- Helping to find sustainable future uses for Buildings At Risk and other historic buildings.
- Influencing developments and transport projects affecting historic buildings and places. This would include pre application and planning application stages.
- Ensuring Bristol's heritage is cared for in plans, policies and appraisals.
- Helping to deliver training, holding events, publicising heritage related best practice, possible heritage awards. Helping to create community capacity.

### What will happen next?

We are establishing a small executive to further define aims and objectives, to

explore methods of working and to co-ordinate activities.

We will be producing a regular e bulletin to provide up-to-date information on activities and initiatives relating to Bristol's heritage.

We will be organising a Heritage event this Autumn. We hope this will become an important annual event. We are looking for ideas, inspiration and sheer organisational abilities in order to deliver a first class event.

We will assess the scope for Heritage Awards in order to celebrate particularly high quality projects and examples of best practice.

*Simon Birch*

*Bristol Civic Society*

*Alison Bromilow*



*On neglected Stokes Croft*

[www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)

# Civic Society in action



## Major Sites Group (MSG), Autumn 2015 to Spring 2016

John Frenkel reports on the Group's work

**T**here has rarely been more redevelopment in the centre of the city. These are the edited highlights of recent activities.

### Corn Street

Bristol's Corn Street banks are a remarkable legacy. It is sad to see their former owners abandon them. Online banking has no use for architectural luxuries that dream of St. Mark's library in Venice.

The Society supports Harbour Hotels' proposal to convert the Grade II\* listed former Lloyds Bank and the next door Grade II listed former HSBC (Midland) Bank to a hotel.

*Above left, former Lloyds Bank 53-55 Corn street. Designed by Gingell, inspired by the library of St Marks.*

*Above, former HSBC (Midland) Bank.*

### Redcliff Wharf

Complex Developments have published a design to redevelop Redcliff Wharf. This area of quay lies underneath Redcliff Parade beside Redcliffe Bridge. There will be a mix of ground floor retail and workshops, office use, and new homes; 1, 2 and 3 bedroom flats for sale. There will be a new pedestrian entrance through the restored Quakers' Garden onto Redcliffe Way. The Society will support the scheme at the forthcoming public consultation.

*Below, Redcliffe Wharf – An impression of what the developers propose*



**Neighbours:**  
A St Catherines Place  
B Regency and Consort Houses  
C Robinsons

**BEDMINSTER GREEN SITE**

Following the successful planning outcome for the St Catherines Place project, a wider regeneration area has been identified on the land surrounding and to the south of Malago Road in Bedminster. When complete, the £100 million regeneration – which developers

Urbis are now calling Bedminster Green – could deliver up to a total of 800 new homes, including 250 affordable. Plans include a new plaza (the new Bedminster Green) to create a transport hub linking East St, Metrobus and a rejuvenated railway station. The culverted Malago river

would be opened up with water features to make a linear park connecting with community gardens. The public realm on the central Dalby Avenue that forms a spine through the site would be improved with widened pavements tree-planting and landscaping to create a boulevard.

### Bristol Arena

The Society strongly supports the 12,000 seat Bristol Arena whose design the Council chose following a public consultation. This very large scheme will redevelop the whole former railway diesel depot 'island'. The site is part of the Enterprise Zone and should seed inward investment. The Arena could lead to the regeneration of the former Post Office Parcel Sorting Office. A new bridge connects the site to Cattle Market Road but the Society remains concerned about the programme to develop pedestrian access from other directions such as the station and Bath Road.

### Castle Street

Bouygues Developments will redevelop the site of the former Central Ambulance Station which lies between Denings Central Health Clinic and Castle Park. The Society supports the scheme to build around 230 flats. An institutional investor will let part of the development. A social landlord will manage a substantial affordable housing component. The developer proposes a point tower of similar height to the Eclipse, above the Harvey Nichols podium. In partnership with the Council, the developer has an opportunity to reduce the tarmac surfait in Castle Street and Tower Hill.

### Temple Meads

The Society supports the construction of a high quality hotel and conference facility on Plot 3 Temple Quay. The site is between

Valentine's Bridge and the station. The scheme is at an early stage. The Society agrees with Historic England and the Council that the height of the hotel must not harm the views of Temple Meads Station.

### Broadmead

The Society will soon be consulted on welcome plans to remodel the difficult to let Pithay Building whose monolithic concrete curve once entranced builders and planners.

### Bedminster

Also at an early stage is Urbis's masterplan to develop "Bedminster Green", which includes Malago Road and Dalby Avenue. The railway embankment borders it to the south. The Society supports this ambitious project to build a large number of new homes, create a new 'town green' and build a transport hub around a redeveloped Bedminster Station.

### BRI car parking

The Society is unable to support a new 820 place multi-storey car park for the BRI. The Hospital has long aspired to replace the Marlborough Street, 120 place car park. The Hospital has not up till now, published figures of the car journeys that the larger car park would generate. The Society's guess is that there would be over new 3,300 new car movements each day. Can the local roads cope? Traffic around the BRI is at a standstill at peak hours and frequently at other times. This will be a difficult application for the

Council to decide. The public will support the Hospital's wish to improve access but the public also want the Council to reduce traffic congestion in the centre of the city.

### St. Mary's (former Nuffield) Hospital Upper Byron Place

The Society has seen a fourth proposal to demolish the former hospital and to redevelop the site. The Society has yet to persuade Pegasus Homes that redevelopment within the main hospital building could create a substantial number of apartments within a building of character. The Council will have to decide whether the proposed replacement building has sufficient quality to justify the total loss of locally listed heritage assets in a conservation area.

**The MSG meets every six weeks. The Group welcomes any member who wishes to join, please contact johnfrenkel5@gmail.com.**

**The Council persuades most major scheme developers to open a public consultation before making a planning application. It is critical for the Society to meet developers of large projects early in the design process. MSG tends to concentrate on city centre developments, which affect the greatest number of residents and where local.**

# Planning Applications Group (PAG)

## Autumn 2015 to Spring 2016

The Group has been particularly busy in the last 6 months. Instead of reporting in detail on individual cases, group convenor John Payne sets out the philosophy behind the group's work

In an expanding, dynamic city like Bristol, there will always be a tension between accommodating growth and protecting or improving the best of our open spaces and built environment.

This is healthy and Bristol City Council, with public input, adopts planning policies to manage the direction of travel arising from development pressure. PAG voices the Society's concerns where it feels proposed developments are heading in the wrong direction. This is important. Although much change in the city is small in scale, bit by bit, it will harm the character and quality of life in Bristol if it is not well steered. Two issues that have been prominent among the applications considered by PAG over the autumn and winter have been the pressure on valued open space and inappropriate residential development. Some examples follow. PAG has also kept up the Society's pressure against LED illuminated advertising screens and other proposals for adverts that would harm their surroundings and, in some cases, longer distance views in the city.

### Pressure on Open Space

Taking two examples, we can see this pressure at work. The former Wesley College in College Park Drive has been vacated by the Methodist Church. Its conversion to a residential care home has been permitted, a use to which it is well suited. The setting of the building is open parkland with an abundance of trees. This open land separates residential development north and south of Henbury Hill and has potential to provide a largely green link between massive residential development at and near Filton Airfield and the Blaise Castle park land. It is a key component contributing to the character of the Conservation Area. Such open land, in a high value area, is susceptible to development pressure, however. Through PAG, the Society has supported local objectors in resisting one proposal which was refused permission by the Council whose decision was upheld at appeal by a planning inspector. PAG is continuing to object to subsequent proposals which we



The former Wesley Theological College closed its doors to students in 2011, and the buildings have been taken over for conversion and use as a care home. The

feel would be harmful to this open area and the character of the Conservation Area. If permitted, development here would undoubtedly increase pressure for development on the remainder of the open space surrounding the College.

PAG has recently considered a proposal to use the open land between Clanage Road and the rail line to Portishead for eight all-weather flood lit football pitches. Although this would not result in built development, apart from a sports pavilion, PAG considers that it would have a harmful impact on the Bower Ashton Conservation Area and upon the adjoining Aston Court estate. This would arise from the high fenced football pitches and the flood lighting which would alter the largely open and rural transition from Ashton Gate to Leigh Woods.

PAG has also asked the City planners to test the impact of the proposal on longer distance views into the site from Clifton and Hotwells.

### Pressure for Residential Development

The Society recognises the need for residential development in Bristol and is supportive of many of the schemes which come forward. Some schemes, however, are inappropriate for various reasons.

These include putting too much housing on particular sites, poor design harming the surrounding area or creating a poor residential environment, and overlooking

college was set in substantial grounds which are, it seems, not required by the current owners, hence the application to build four large villas.

of neighbouring properties. Two examples of poor proposals where PAG lodged objections are located at the junction of Goolden Street and Bathwell Road in Totterdown and at 65 North Road in Bishopston.

### Adverts and LED Screens

PAG consider a steady stream of applications for advertisements and digital LED screens. The latter are particularly harmful in most cases because of their intense far reaching light. It is very encouraging that the Council refused a LED screen west of Castlemead in Lower Castle Street to which the Society objected. An appeal by the applicants has been lodged, however. Another proposed screen at the junction of Trinity Road and West Street, to which PAG objected, has been withdrawn.

### New Members of PAG are always welcome

If you are interested in these sorts of planning issues and you would like to come to PAG meetings, please write to me at:

[johnpayne997@btinternet.com](mailto:johnpayne997@btinternet.com)

The group benefits greatly from contributions from people with different backgrounds. We meet every three weeks, generally on a Monday evening, and our style is informal.

# Tomorrow's City Region

## West of England joint spatial plan

### Spatial plan

Readers with long memories may recall the grandly titled South West Regional Assembly. This unelected body, made up of 119 co-opted councillors and other members, was set up to decide fundamental policies affecting millions of people from Bristol to Cornwall.

Back in 2008 members of this Society spent hundreds of hours grappling with an immense strategic planning document that set out a detailed framework in terms of land use, housing development, infrastructure, transport needs, for the entire region.

However the Coalition government of 2010 decided it did not like the SWRA quango or the approach and ditched the lot.

So much for our efforts.

But the need for planning never goes away. We now have the opportunity for another fix of regional Spatial planning. This time the target area is more modest, and comprises just the four unitary authorities of Bristol, Bath, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire that form the curiously mis-named West of England Partnership. Maybe it works better for a smaller area than the whole SW?

The plan will face important question of how we deal with the region's housing, transport and infrastructure needs up to 2036.

After a series of consultations to establish the public's preferred options the next stage, the draft Plan, is expected in Autumn 2016. The Society believes these issues are fundamental to the nature of tomorrow's city and has contributed to the discussions.



85000 additional homes to be built on Avon's green and pleasant land by 2036  
Photo credit: Katie Stokes



## What the spatial plan seeks to do

Short of a catastrophe, the population of the UK is set to rise. This is due to several factors: economic growth, immigration, and the fact that we are living longer. More people are also living alone or in smaller households, meaning that more homes are needed.

Government has decreed that the West of England area must create another 85000 homes by 2036.

The plan sets out to determine where all this housing and its employment and support infrastructure should be.

### Key objectives

The consultation suggests the following key objectives:

#### Housing & wellbeing

The plan should meet the need for market and affordable housing until 2036 and entail a pattern, location and nature of development which promote healthy lifestyles and creates a sense of community through quality design.

#### Economic growth

The plan should support economic growth of both existing employment centres and in new locations which will most successfully deliver the scale and type of jobs identified in the Strategic Economic Plan for the WoE.

#### Transport & Infrastructure

The plan should ensure that new development does not exacerbate existing pressures on infrastructure. New housing and employment locations should facilitate public transport and sustainable travel patterns.

#### Environment

Maintain or enhance the environmental quality and the attractive character and identity of the WoE's cities, towns, villages, and countryside.

It should respond to the challenges of climate change and minimise flood risk, and have place making at its heart with high quality design that positively responds to local context and heritage assets.

The use of brownfield land should be maximised.

# Tomorrow's City region

## Where will all these new homes and employment spaces be located?

### We have several choices:

- Urban intensification, building to a higher density within our towns.
- Urban extensions, expanding cities into adjacent countryside.
- Town expansion, expanding the smaller towns.
- Other locations, based on small villages or totally new settlements.

One thing is certain. The urban area of Bristol and its suburbs of Filton, Bradley Stoke and Kingswood in South Gloucestershire cannot expand outwards. The city limits are defined, not by council boundaries, but by the restrictions of the Green Belt. More homes can be provided, but only by building on 'brownfield' sites (land previously used for industry), or on precious existing green spaces, or by building upwards in higher density developments.

For over 60 years the Green Belt has worked well, to maintain a clear space between Weston, Bristol and Bath the places in between and prevent their linking into one vast urban sprawl.

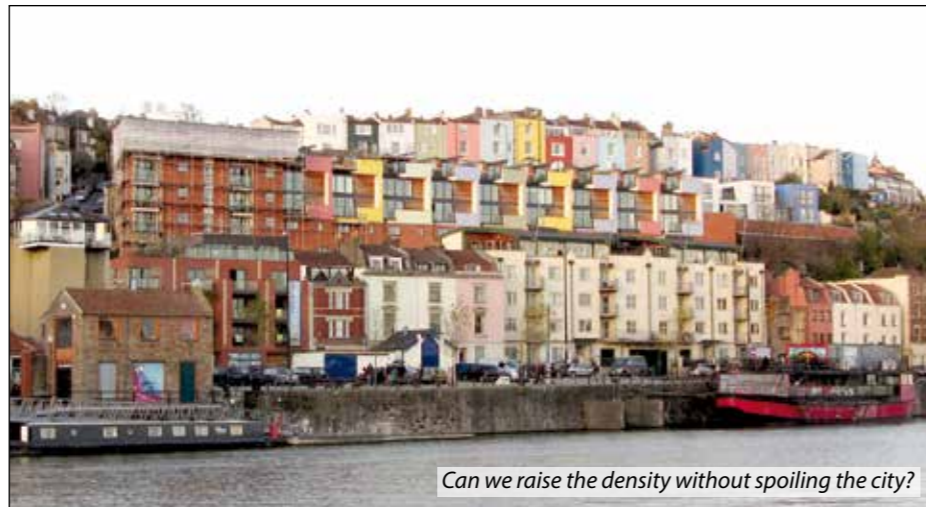
The Green Belt can only be eroded if a case is made to the government to justify it. That is the situation we are now in.

For many, the Green Belt is sacred. They say that Green Belt land in the Bristol region should not be hived off to make way for a projected 85,000 homes, and don't accept that the greenbelt has to be used, instead increasing the density of housing on brownfield sites and building up.\*

As Bristol probably has most of the brownfield land that sounds like dumping most of this burden on the city. "Not in my back yard", the shire residents might say.

Others take the entirely opposite view, that the green belt rules are too restrictive and relaxation is inevitable. Not all Green Belt land is of high quality landscape or agricultural value, and might be better used as housing or urban parks.

\* Councillor Efan Ap Rees, chairman of the West of England Planning, Housing and Communities Board.



Can we raise the density without spoiling the city?

## The Consultation document has put forward a number of scenarios and is asking for comment – summary

### Five spatial scenarios

#### Spatial scenario 1: Protection of Green Belt

The objective of this scenario is to assess the impact of additional growth assuming no change to the existing Green Belt. The extent of the Green Belt within the WoE is shown on the above plan.

The possible strategic locations which could be considered to make up this scenario are simply those locations not located within the Green Belt. They would increase reliance on the car and impact on commuting patterns.

#### Spatial scenario 2: Concentration at Bristol urban area

The objective of this scenario is to test the implications of focusing as much growth as possible within and adjacent to the Bristol urban area to maximise accessibility to jobs

and services whilst minimising development in other parts of the plan area. The scenario specifically excludes strategic locations located elsewhere across the sub-region.

This scenario would have a significant adverse impact on the current extent of the Green Belt.

#### Spatial scenario 3: Transport focussed

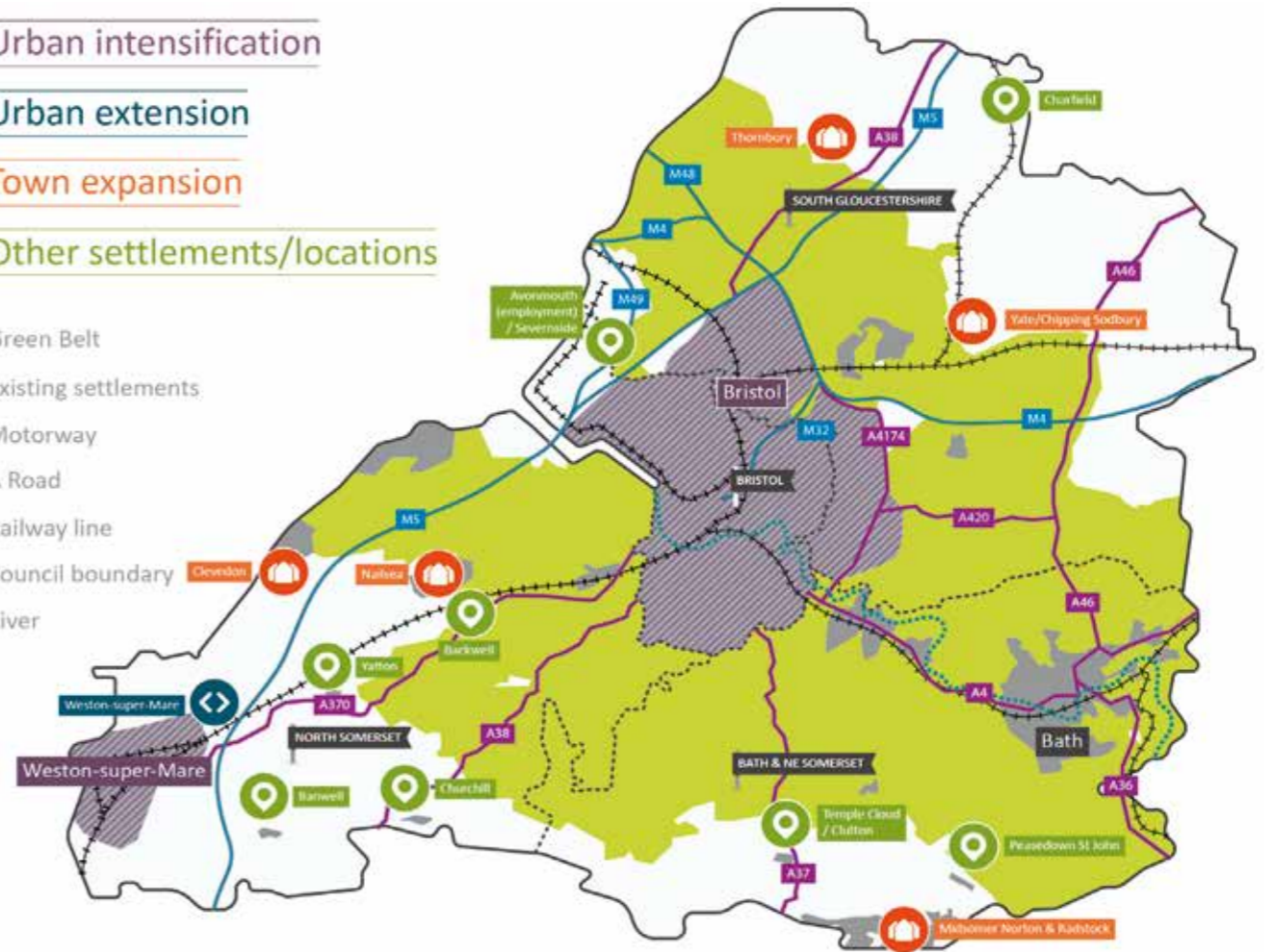
This is based on proximity to central Bristol and orientation towards public transport

Urban areas that already have good travel choices are the priority for development. In these locations distances travelled tend to be shorter, encouraging walking and cycling. In addition, the critical mass of people in urban locations supports more viable public transport.

Priorities would be for development at locations closer to central Bristol or having good rail links into the central areas.

(Continued from page 11)

- Urban intensification
- Urban extension
- Town expansion
- Other settlements/locations
- Green Belt
- Existing settlements
- Motorway
- A Road
- Railway line
- Council boundary
- River



This scenario includes several location options which would have a significant adverse impact on the current extent of the Green Belt and the setting of existing towns.

#### Spatial scenario 4: A more even spread of development across the sub-region

The WoE is a diverse area with cities, towns, villages and rural areas exhibiting a range of qualities and characteristics and experiencing local issues and opportunities. This scenario explores the

benefits of either a more even spread of growth across the plan area and/or more bespoke solutions to address local objectives or infrastructure deficits.

A greater range of sites is also likely to have housing delivery benefits in terms of providing more variety and choice. There is a range of different locational options and scales of growth which could be included.

#### Spatial scenario 5: New settlement (or a limited number of expanded settlements)

This scenario considers opportunities to concentrate development into a single or small number of new strategic locations which would then complement the overall functioning of the plan area. This could include new settlements (not yet planned) which could develop over the plan period and beyond, or the expansion of existing settlements.

## The Society has commented on the Issues and Options consultation for the WoE Partnership's Joint Spatial Plan This is a summary of our comments

### Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)

**Scenarios:** Looking at the five possible 'scenarios' for planning where new housing should go, no single scenario is likely to provide the additional accommodation needed. The Society suggests that scenarios 2 (Bristol-focused), 3 (Transport-focused) and 4 (other towns) should in some combination determine the choice of location of new development.

**Green belt:** We are in favour of a review of the green belt. When an 18% increase in housing is required and the green belt accounts for 48% of the plan area, it is unrealistic to hold unquestioningly to the existing green belt area. The countryside at the outer boundaries of the green belt does not necessarily deserve more protection than land just beyond. We must not rule out possible urban extensions for

Bristol, as long as green 'wedges' are retained to link up with the existing green infrastructure in Bristol.

**Urban intensification:** in principle we are in favour of urban intensification in Bristol as part of the solution, where it can be achieved without damaging essential green infrastructure, because it makes use of existing transport infrastructure and services, and leads to shorter journeys. But it is difficult to do. Bristol Council should develop a strategy for pursuing intensification in certain locations, and follow through with master planning,

funding and new delivery mechanisms, in order to unlock the full potential of the existing urban area.

**Quality of new development:** The West of England local planning authorities should adopt policies to ensure that new developments encourage active travel, and policies to discourage volume housebuilders' large low-density developments, which are wasteful of land, have poor connectivity, and produce low volumes of affordable housing. There are plenty of examples of cities on the continent that demonstrate how higher density can be designed well.

**Sub-regional working:** whilst the four councils have a legal 'duty to co-operate', we are concerned that the final JSP will be influenced by each council's parochial interest, particularly when three of the Local Authorities declare in the introduction to the JSP that the green belt should not be reviewed, and 'Protection of the green belt' is the first in the list of spatial options. It is difficult to see how a coherent sub-regional strategy will emerge when there is such fundamental disagreement between the participants.

# 19th century gems



Architect's view of gatehouse exterior  
Austin-Smith-Lord LLP

## Ashton Court Gatehouse – The decaying eyesore set to become a heritage gem Tamsin Mosse reports

The derelict gatehouse on the edge of The Ashton Court Estate in South Bristol is currently being renovated having been abandoned for 50 years. A temporary roof was erected in 2010 to allow the building to dry out, and the main building work began in January. The gatehouse was built circa 1805 as the main entrance to Ashton Court in the days before the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Commissioned by the Smyth family, it was designed by local architect Henry Wood in the Gothic Revival style. The gatehouse was reputedly used by the family to impress their guests as a place to picnic during inclement weather and was part of a much bigger vision proposed by landscape designer Humphry Repton that never came to fruition.

Ken Biggs Contractors Ltd are expected to be on site for almost a year to fully restore this special and potentially beautiful building. Amongst the pigeon droppings, broken steps and missing floorboards, evidence remains of highly ornate stonework and skilfully molded ceilings.

There have been other more contemporary finds since work on site began. These have included oyster shells discovered whilst digging out an area that will house the lift and a collection of dizzi fizzi pop bottles stashed away in what remained of the loft.

Once restored the building will tell the stories from the two worlds the gatehouse connected – the privileged life of the Smyths built partly with the profits from Bedminster's coal mines and the local people who worked for the family.

The project is also very much about involving local people. Volunteer input

into the various projects associated with the renovation is essential to ensuring the restored building is a useful resource for the South Bristol Community.

To find out more about the project and what opportunities there are to get involved, contact **Tamsin Mosse** at [info@ashtonlodge.org.uk](mailto:info@ashtonlodge.org.uk) or follow us on

[twitter.com/BS3lodge](https://twitter.com/BS3lodge) and [facebook.com/ashtonlodgeBS3](https://facebook.com/ashtonlodgeBS3)

The project is lead by a dynamic partnership between Ashton Park School, The Bristol Buildings Preservation Trust, Bristol City Council and South West Bristol Cooperative Learning Trust. Funding has come from a £550,000 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF grant), with additional capital from the Architectural Heritage Fund, Historic England, The Mercers' Company and Bristol Visual and Environmental Buildings Trust.



Architect's visual of upper vroom Austin-Smith-Lord LLP



Upper room before work began Ashley-Davies

# rescued

## The Floating Harbour's Underfall Yard is very much open for business and visitors after the first stage of a restoration project

Sarah Murray puts on her hard hat to show us round the work in progress

We are thrilled to announce the opening of the Underfall Yard Visitor Centre on Friday 18 March. We look forward to welcoming visitors of all ages who can explore our hands-on learning experience and discover wonderful stories, maps, photographs of Underfall Yard and the Floating Harbour.

- Admission is FREE.
- Open Monday to Sunday:  
10am - 5pm in the summer (Easter to October).
- 10am - 4pm in the winter (October to Easter).

This is another exciting milestone in the ambitious £4 million project to restore and repair Underfall Yard's buildings and to protect them for future generations. Bristol-based John Perkins Construction started the works on 2 June 2015 and the project is due to complete later this year.

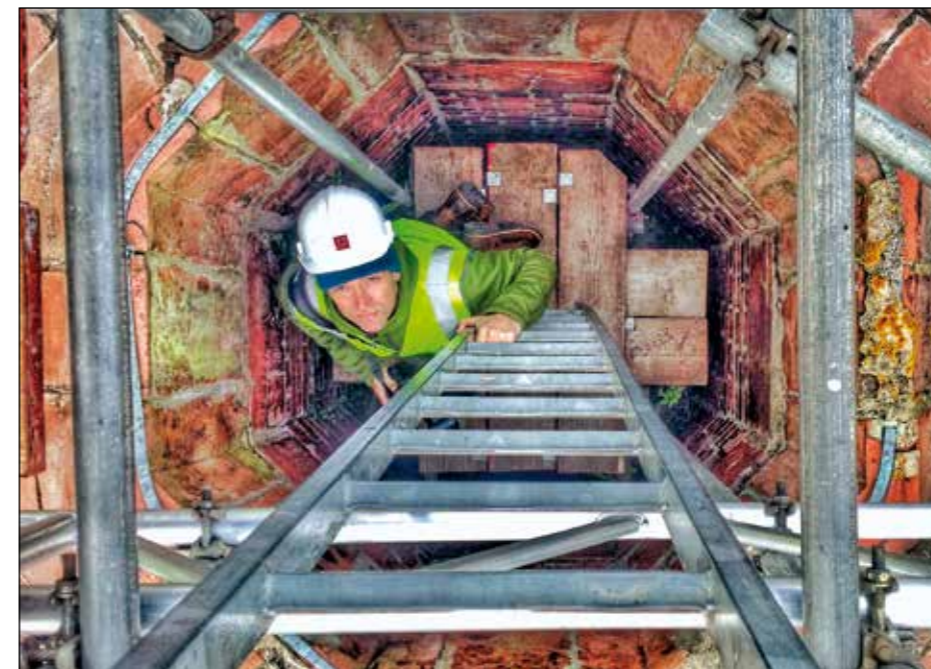


Photo credit: Colin Moody



Underfall yard, historic site, thriving boatyard and business centre

The work has focused on sensitive repairs to the historic industrial buildings ensuring that the material used will work in harmony with the buildings: this has meant creating the correct mix for the lime mortar and ensuring that the slate tiles match the colour and complexion of those already at the yard. As the scaffolding comes down we are regularly hearing that the buildings do not look very different, which shows the success of the works.

The 80-foot chimney required very little intervention as it was structurally sound. Buddleia was removed both externally and

internally and the brickwork repointed.

The project will open up a section of the Harbourside walk that has never before been accessible to the public. The entrance from the end of Nova Scotia Place will bring visitors to the back of the Power House, which has been converted into our Visitor Centre, and around what is known as 'The Knuckle' and into the yard.

The Underfall Yard is already home to a number of thriving businesses and organisations, including nationally-respected boat builders, a blacksmith and a diving club. Additional workshop spaces will be available to maritime businesses to help grow the community of skills and talent at Underfall Yard.

The Heritage Lottery Fund is contributing £3 million, or 74% of the total costs, which also cover displays, signage, an oral history project, a schools education programme and events.

The Visitor Centre has been made possible thanks to support and funding from: Heritage Lottery Fund, Association of Independent Museums Biffa Award, Wolfson Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Headley Trust, Pilgrim Trust, J Paul Getty Foundation, Bristol City Council and many more.

The Visitor Centre will rely on the ongoing support and dedication of our volunteers. If you're interested in being a founding member of the Visitor Centre team then contact Sarah Murray, Community, Learning and Volunteering Officer: [sarah@underfallboatyard.co.uk](mailto:sarah@underfallboatyard.co.uk)



# Charity Universal – saved!



The old BRI on Marlborough Street

The landmark (but unlisted) old BRI building (Charity Universal) gets a new lease of life as a Medical School and UNITE HQ John Frenkel reports

## Hospital transplants - continued

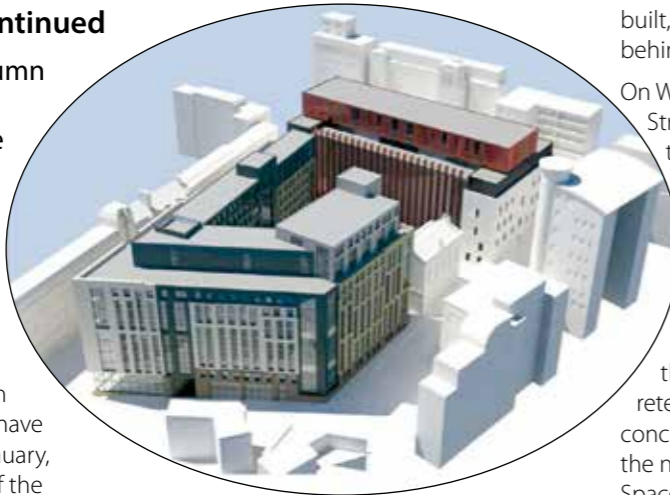
The *Better Bristol* Autumn issue lamented the imminent loss of the BRI Old Hospital Building and Mortuary Chapel to make way for a new 800 student bed-sit, eight-floor, 'anywhere' building.

The Society campaigned to retain the buildings, which the Council have listed as buildings of merit. In January, UNITE Students, the purchasers of the soon to be redundant hospital published a scheme to reuse these landmark buildings.

A small medical school would occupy the lower two floors, UNITE's headquarters would move into the upper floors. This imaginative conversion would give new life to the buildings, it would be a significant contribution to Bristol's redevelopment. The Society supports the scheme.

The removal of the pipe clutter from the Old Hospital's facade and the replacement of the dull cement render would be a major conservation gain. Past alterations spoiled the symmetry of the Marlborough Street windows. The cills were lowered and the unifying, horizontal plat bands severed. The Society would like to see the windows restored to their original design.

The Old Hospital was one of the first four British charity hospitals. It would make a superb headquarters for UNITE. The design retains the Old Hospital's rear wall whose formal apertures would open onto a new triple height atrium extension. A live 'green wall' in the atrium would create a welcoming social environment and to blur the boundary between inside and outside space. The lancet Gothic Chapel would become a student common room. The



Architects model from Whitson St - Rio architects

scheme would allow the Chapel to stand alone; the whole side wall would be visible from the Whitson Street.

The Society supports the demolition of all the other buildings to develop two purpose

built, student accommodation blocks behind the Old Hospital.

On Whitson Street and Lower Maudlin Street 19th century, rubble walls enclose the site. The Society would accept the loss of the walls if the replacement buildings offer a more active street frontage. UNITE asserts that the scheme must deliver 750 student units for it to be financially viable.

Whilst the Society is responsive to the public gain produced by UNITE'S retention of the Old Hospital it is concerned about the height and mass of the new student accommodation blocks. Space limitations restrict the options that could mitigate the impact of the new blocks. In Lower Maudlin Street the proposed new block would be taller than the Eye and Dental Hospitals. To the south-east the new block will overlook the Grade I listed St. James Priory. It is too early in the planning process for Unite's architects to publish the design of the new student blocks.



Architects visual, new office and medical school behind old BRI - Rio architects

# All change at Temple Meads



Bristol City Council has now published its vision for the TEMPLE QUARTER ENTERPRISE ZONE in a series of online publications. These can be viewed at <http://www.bristoltemplequarter.com/spatialframework>

This Spatial Framework is an impressive plan for rejuvenating the run-down or derelict parts of the area. At its heart is the area around Temple Meads Station, already the centre of a booming 'Engine Shed', in Brunel's original station.

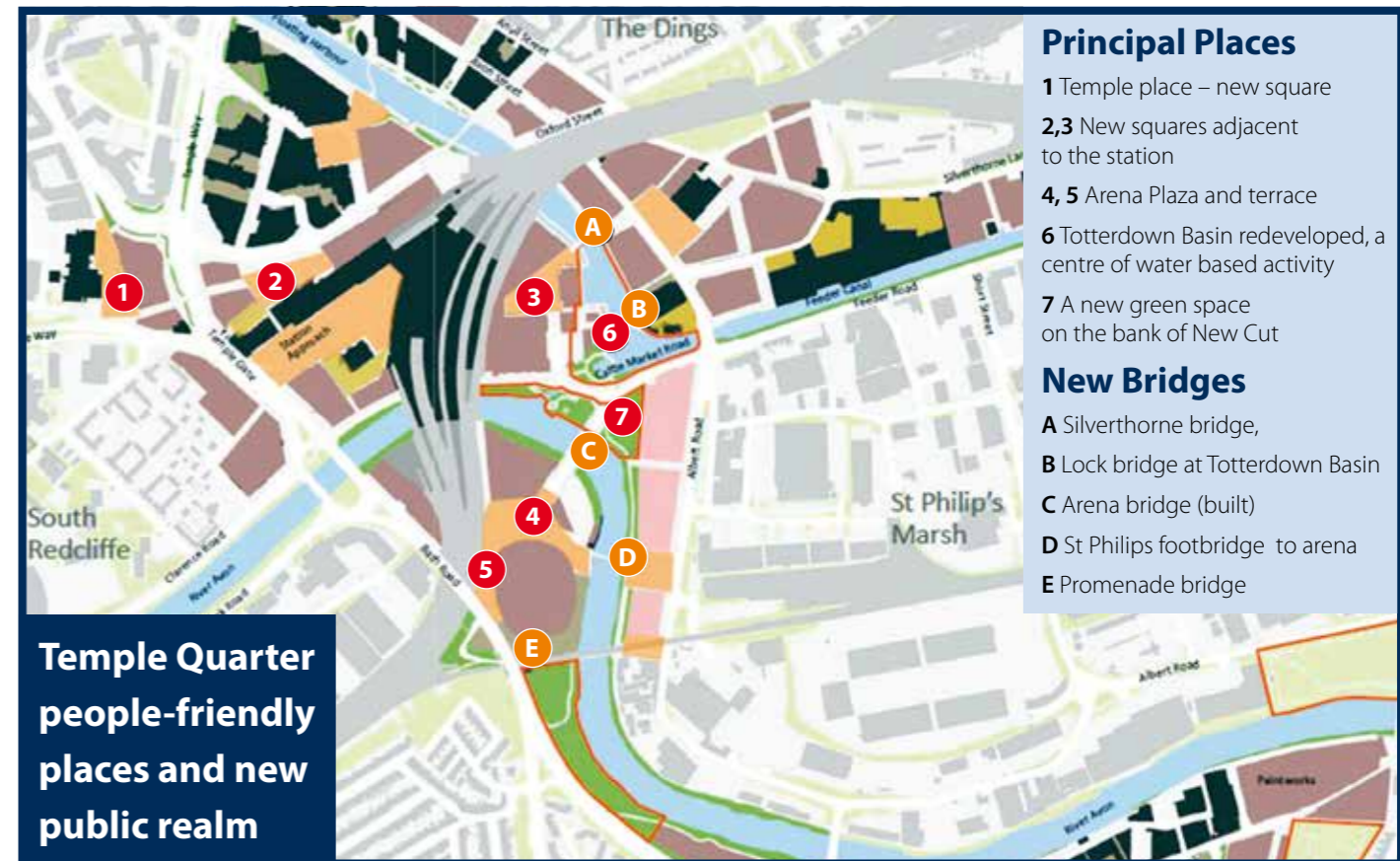
The council has now acquired significant properties in the area, including the Temple Gate complex opposite the station ramp, the George and Railway, the notorious Sorting

Office, and is negotiating for the even more infamous Grosvenor site. These sites and former highway land released by Temple Gate road realignment should get the ball rolling for ongoing redevelopment. The Gateway area is the most attractive area to property investors in the short/medium term.

Much is promised, with the creation of new squares, at the bottom of Victoria St, at the proposed new entrances to the station and at the arena. Better walking and

cycling connections to the station and street crossings. Buses and taxis will serve the station on The Friary. New waterfront walkways and open spaces with a revived Totterdown Basin.

The Society has responded positively to the consultation, suggesting ways in which the process could be helped. We have expressed some concerns about possible high buildings, and the lack of green space in parts of the zone.



## Principal Places

- 1 Temple place – new square
- 2,3 New squares adjacent to the station
- 4, 5 Arena Plaza and terrace
- 6 Totterdown Basin redeveloped, a centre of water based activity
- 7 A new green space on the bank of New Cut

## New Bridges

- A Silverthorne bridge,
- B Lock bridge at Totterdown Basin
- C Arena bridge (built)
- D St Philips footbridge to arena
- E Promenade bridge

Temple Quarter people-friendly places and new public realm

# Unloved landscapes

## The Bristol schemes of Sylvia Crowe, part 1:

Wendy Tippett explores the urban landscape conceived by Dame Sylvia Crowe

### Landscape associated with the Cumberland Basin Bridges and Ashton Gate Junction road scheme.

In the era of sweeping post war changes of the 1950s and 60s - powerful planners and highway engineers were attempting to re-model much of the infrastructure across Britain, including Bristol. By the end of the 1950s the expansion of car ownership and leisure travel was causing long traffic jams along the Portway, as traffic heading south had to negotiate the narrow Junction Lock Swingbridge near the Nova Scotia pub. As part of the expanding national highway infrastructure the Cumberland Basin Bridges and Ashton Gate Junction scheme allowed continuous traffic movement over Bristol Docks and the River Avon, a decade before the Avonmouth Bridge was built as part of the M5.

Stretching nearly a mile from Hotwells to Ashton Gate, the road scheme includes the



Extent of Scheme, 2012 aerial view.

Plimsoll Swingbridge, the fixed Avon Bridge and four large interchanges providing a plethora of slip roads to the north and south of the river. It covers 14.7 ha (36.4 acres) and the landscape setting was designed by one of our country's most significant Landscape Architects, Dame Sylvia Crowe (1901 - 1977).

The dynamic sculpture of the road scheme has the benefit of a dramatic and unique setting within sight of the Clifton



Sylvia Crowe

Suspension Bridge and below the famous Clifton and Clifton Wood terraces. Crowe's response to the highly intrusive engineering project was to look at the impact of the scheme within the wider landscape environment, with respect to views and screening; to segregate pedestrians from the last moving traffic with separate routes; to provide playgrounds for children of different ages and amenities for families - attempting to humanise the road with 'land shaping', structural tree and mass shrub planting, and a restrained palette of modern hard materials. Hotwell's flamboyant Cumberland Piazza accounted for approximately 50% of the landscape budget, and included an exuberant spiral fountain, nautical themed playground, café, seating, and mature trees.

### Decline

Never fully recognised as a landscape design in its own right, this scheme accommodates the functionality of the engineering road scheme, becoming the setting and the blending element to the wider landscape. This is typical of a lot of Crowe's 'working landscape' projects. Despite the early popularity of the Cumberland Piazza amenities, the play equipment and fountain were not adequately maintained and fell into disrepair. The unprecedented growth in traffic and pollution concerns impacted

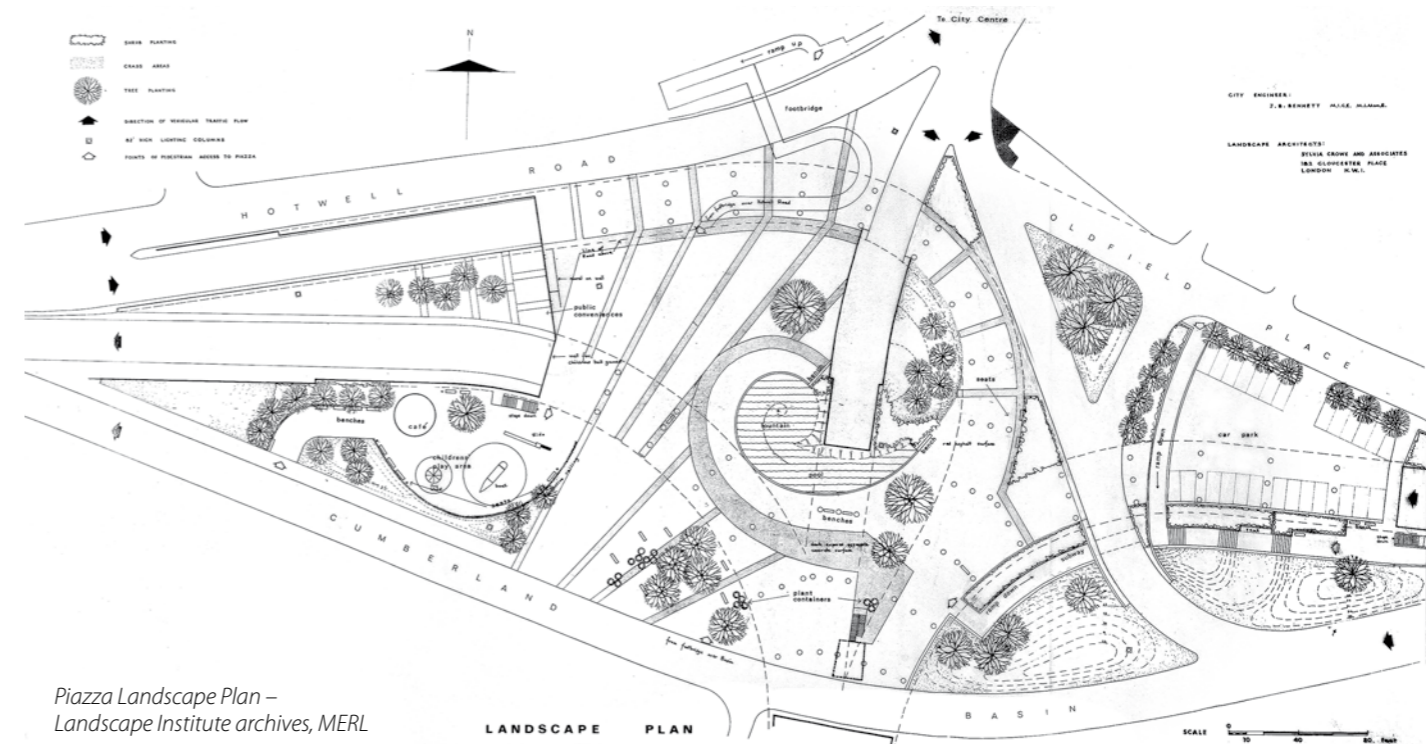
Bennett considered in commissioning Crowe he had the best person to carry out the landscape work. She was in her 60s, at the height of her powers, in a very influential position as a recent Past President of the Landscape Institute, with an established private practice and a trusted reputation. The project occupied her small London office from 1963 - 1967, and was the first of three Bristol City Corporation appointments.

mainstream education was two years at Swanley Horticultural College, before starting her working life as a garden designer in 1927 at the age of 26. She wrote many influential books and articles, and lectured widely. In a career of nearly 70 years her varied landscape work included public housing, new towns, universities, private gardens, power stations and highway schemes.  
Bristol City Corporation Engineer JB

### Dame Sylvia Crowe (1901-1977)

Crowe is best known for her consultancy work with the Forestry Commission; other celebrated schemes include Rutland Water (the largest reservoir in Europe) and the Commonwealth Institute in London. She is regarded as a pioneering influence within the Landscape Institute since its formation in 1928.

Home educated from the age of 10 due to tuberculosis, Crowe's only subsequent



Piazza Landscape Plan - Landscape Institute archives, MERL

on the area. Once the downward spiral of neglect began in the 1970s, it became more run down and was effectively abandoned by BCC and the local community.

### The way forward

Historic England is now taking some interest in post-war schemes such as this one, although too much of the original fabric has been damaged or lost for it to be included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. It does however, feature on the Parks & Gardens UK website ([www.parksandgardens.org](http://www.parksandgardens.org))

and forms the basis to Walk 8 of Tim Mowl's recent book Bristol Explored.

There is currently some local interest to upgrade individual areas: Hotwells and Cliftonwood Community Association, spearheaded by Ray Smith are currently proposing to regenerate the Cumberland Piazza, whilst local resident Stephen Wickham continues to champion the area known as Ashton Meadows. The Friends of Greville Smyth Park (FroGS) are also taking Crowe's scheme into consideration in regard to their ongoing projects.

The landscape scheme is of national significance due to its association with Sylvia Crowe as her most complete built road project. The strong relationship of the scheme to the wider landscape, the flow of spaces under the elevated highway and the use of mass planting and 'land shaping' to create valuable views is still evident.

Wendy Tippett is Landscape Architect at Andrew Kenyon Architects.

Wendy will be conducting an extensive walk through the Crowe landscape in June - see back page



Market Stalls on the Piazza - Bristol Records Office.

Market stalls in the Piazza

# The Gane Pavilion

## The legacy of a Bristol Modernist furniture maker way ahead of his time

Jeff Lucas goes to the Royal West of England show of 1936 and looks at plans to restore this short-lived show-piece pavilion

Bristol does not feature greatly in the history of 20th century early modernist architecture. Perhaps it is apposite that our most famous early 20th century building, the Wills Tower, is faux-gothic. But we do have "The Concrete House" in Westbury-on-Trym, and Berthold Lubetkin and his family lived the last 20 years of his life in Clifton, though did not build in Bristol.

However, there is another little-known reason why Bristol should have at least a footnote in the history of Modernism - the Gane Pavilion, which sadly had a very brief life and no longer exists - at least for the moment.

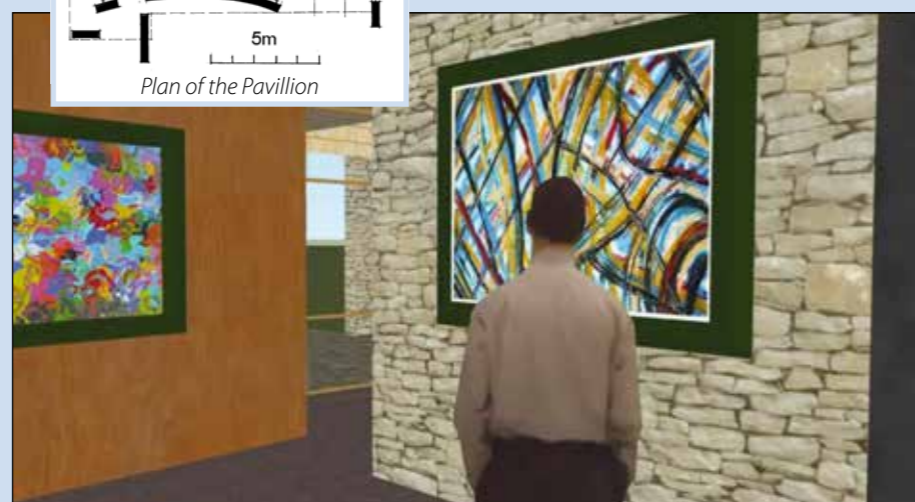
The Gane Pavilion was a small temporary exhibition building designed by architect Marcel Breuer (1902-1981) during his brief stay in the UK in the mid 1930s en route from Germany, where he had taught at the Bauhaus, to a new life in the USA where he joined Walter Gropius in a joint architectural practice. Whilst at the Bauhaus he designed the still iconic "Wassily" tubular steel chair. Between them, Breuer and Gropius designed and built hundreds of buildings, mainly in the USA and were very influential on American architecture. Although not quite on a par with Corbusier and Mies Van der Rohe, Breuer is nevertheless an important figure in the world history of the "Modern Movement". Towards the end of his career Breuer said that his two most favourite



View of the original 1936 pavilion



Plan of the Pavillion



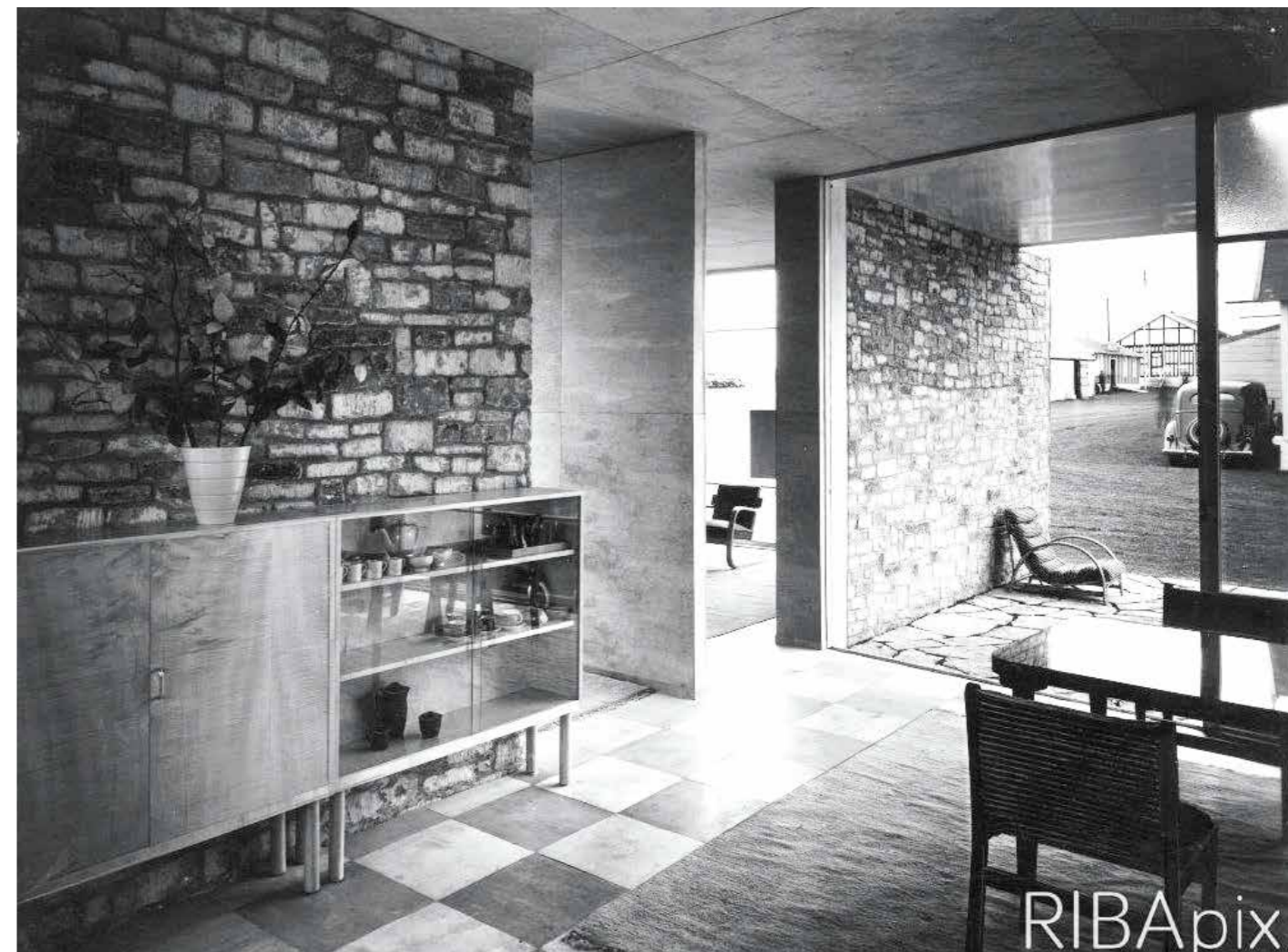
A fly-through created by Jeff Lucas

**If the Pavilion can be rebuilt we feel that it would prove to be a significant cultural asset for the City of Bristol.**

buildings that he had designed were the UNESCO building in Paris and the Gane Pavilion in Bristol.

The pavilion was built for the Bristol furniture company P.E.Gane Ltd as a result of a commission from the far-sighted managing director of the firm, Crofton Gane who was very progressive on the subject of design.

The Pavilion was used to exhibit modernist furniture made by the Gane company at the 1936 Royal West of England Show at Ashton Court in Bristol. It comprised full height planes of glass and rough stone with one gently curving wall. Some of the internal walls were timber clad. With its combination of modern and rustic materials



All B & W pics - Copyright RIBA, with thanks



it was a significant departure from the then prevailing "international style" of the modern movement. Interesting comparisons can be made with near-contemporaneous work by Corbusier and Mies Van der Rohe eg the latter's Barcelona Pavilion of 1929. The Gane pavilion was taken down and disposed of after the show closed. This year sees the 80th anniversary of that show.

Last year the Gane Trust and a small group of architectural enthusiasts (including the author) came together to explore the possibility of rebuilding the Pavilion in some

form or other. We are currently exploring ideas for building a replica, perhaps in timber, for a temporary display of local early 20th century design which can be dismantled, stored and moved to different locations in the UK as a travelling exhibition. We are at an early stage - issues of funding, possible sites and different uses that the rebuilt pavilion could provide are all still a work in progress.

If the Pavilion can be rebuilt we feel that it would prove to be a significant cultural asset for the City of Bristol.

A short "fly-through" video clip showing how a rebuilt Gane pavilion could look as a gallery and cafe can be seen on YouTube (a search for it will initially return results for Game Pavilion and ask if you meant Gane Pavilion - click on that!).

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this project or have any ideas about fulfilling our vision, or maybe even want to help us realise it, please contact us through the Civic Society or through the staff at the Stradling Collection on Park Street, with whom we are working closely.

# Was a Better Bristol the result?

Eugene Byrne detonates some unexploded myths

# 75 years on from the Blitz



St Peters. Copyright Bristol Post, with thanks

**T**his spring it will have been 75 years since the worst of the Bristol Blitz was over.

There hasn't been much in the way of official recognition or commemoration, though several articles in the Bristol Post drew a lot of feedback from Bristolians who were there at the time, or from their descendants for whom the Blitz is a key part of family history.

There were six major raids on the city between November 1940 and April 1941, along with innumerable smaller raids and false alarms before, during and after this period. There were also sizeable and separate raids on other communities nearby, notably Yate, Weston-super-Mare and – always the poor relation in Bristol's historiography – Avonmouth.

One of the most striking aspects of the Bristol Blitz when you examine it nowadays is the way the loss of life – 1,299 souls – was glossed over. A ruthless government propaganda machine desperate to accentuate the positive more or less covered up Bristol's ordeal (while at the same time playing up the barbarity of German attacks elsewhere, notably Coventry). The Ministry of Information, abetted by the press, newsreels and the BBC, left us a myth of cheerful defiance which future generations have been happy to perpetuate.

It was like that a lot of the time. And on other occasions it wasn't. There was grumbling and resentment, people turned

rail tunnels into unofficial shelters, there was looting of bombed buildings, and a "yellow convoy" headed off to the countryside for safety each night, leaving angry neighbours on fire-watching duty wondering why they should risk their lives tackling fire bombs falling on the homes of people who had run away. None of this should detract from the astonishing courage of many people, and the stoic endurance of most, but one should not take the wartime propaganda of keeping calm and carrying on at face value.

The decades following the Blitz are just as much the subject of local mythology, if not more so. The very word "planner" ended up becoming a sort of shorthand in both Bristol and elsewhere for a pantomime villain who was arrogant and often incompetent as well.

There's this shorthand view that "they" saw the Blitz as a golden opportunity to put their insanely megalomaniac visions into action, bulldozing away the bits the bombers had missed, knocking down characterful old streets in favour of awful concrete buildings and massive roads.

In this 75th anniversary it would be nice if we could pay a little more homage to these men (they were all men) and their idealism. The "re-planning" of Bristol, well advanced long before the war had ended, was a perfectly rational response to the problems of the times. Men like City Architect J. Nelson Meredith had served their apprenticeships before the war when slum clearance was one of the great priorities, and would remain so through the 1940s and beyond.

The vision for Bristol was to move people into decent housing away from the slums,

smut and smog of the city centre onto airy estates and homes with gardens and inside bathrooms. Central Bristol would be "zoned" for different activities and would, of course, feature a marvellous new shopping centre.

People and goods would move quickly around the city on wide new roads and – remember we're talking about the 1940s – every family would one day own its own carriage, something which within living memory had previously only the preserve of the aristocracy.

The official plans of the mid-40s were joined by unofficial ones from other bodies. Everyone who had some active part in the life of the city offered their views, but everyone was in broad agreement that Bristol was not just going to be "re-built" as it was before.

One of the most striking aspects to this astonishing outburst of Utopian thinking is how nobody, from Whitehall downwards, seems to have realised at first that it was utterly unaffordable, that the country was technically bankrupt. The war was a high-point of British Big Government, it was a

given that all this was going to be paid for by the taxpayer, and at the war's end Bristol duly applied for huge amounts of money and planning powers.

The whole thing of course was dashed over a couple of cold winters of austerity. Re-planning had to wait, to be implemented piecemeal in the coming decades and leaving several items of unfinished business, the most notable being that area we nowadays call Castle Park.

Of course it's a key element of the Bristol Civic Society's own mythology that by the mid/late 1960s many people were in revolt against the more gargantuan of the planners' ambitions, particularly the road schemes which were spoiling areas like Redcliff and Totterdown and threatened even worse things.

The bigger picture, though, is that much of this re-planning did succeed. Those new council houses around the edge of town were built, and the people moving into them were usually going to vastly better homes. They were also escaping the smells and smog which were corralled into a few places

and which are nowadays almost forgotten.

Some of the awful things that happened in the central area – aspects of Broadmead, cheap and dreadful office blocks – were not the planners' fault, but resulted from political lobbying and legal bullying by big business.

You also have to wonder whether we are really any smarter these days. Just as we pass judgement on the postwar planners, future generations will judge us, too. Perhaps our bland and often privatised, "public" spaces and the stupendous number of sterile apartment blocks, promising "the lifestyle you want in the vibrant heart of the city" or some similar such marketing bullstuff will be condemned, especially at a time when affordable homes are in desperately short supply.

The postwar planners may have been arrogant or delusional, but they were well-meaning public servants who faced a bewildering range of problems and tackled a lot of them with great success. It would be very unwise to claim that the recent and ongoing development of Bristol is being managed any better.



Copyright Bristol Post, with thanks

St Mary-Le-Port, still a bomb site. Copyright Bristol Post, with thanks

# A war of words over Europe?

The Referendum, perhaps the most important decision most voters will ever face, takes place on 23rd June  
What are the implications for Bristol?



## BREXIT YES!

Paul Turner

The first thing we need to understand is the enormous difference between what the Common Market was and what the European Union is.

The concept of working closely with our European neighbours in order to make trade easier between nations is a concept that I and UKIP are 100% in favour of, however this is far from what the European Union has become.

We are now a member of a political union (not a trading union) that the people of this country have never been asked if they wish to be a part of, a union run by unelected bureaucrats that cannot be removed democratically by the people of the European Union.

A corrupt European Union whose annual accounts have never once passed audit, in 2014 the EU's own internal audit department found that €6 billion had been "inappropriately spent" that year alone.

Bristol is a great city especially for small businesses and entrepreneurs to start up and thrive, however many of these businesses are struggling with the vast amount of EU produced legislation imposed on them that in many cases is not relevant to their business. This is preventing these businesses from growing, expanding and creating more jobs.

I have seen no evidence whatsoever that would suggest that the economy of Bristol would be better off if we remained in the EU, many of the area's largest Companies such as Airbus have committed to staying in Bristol irrespective of the outcome of the referendum. All the "EU funding" received in Bristol and the South West is not really money from the EU it is British taxpayers money sent to Brussels, the EU keeps half of it and sends the other half backing the form of "EU grants" and "EU subsidies". So in real terms if we left the European Union not only could the current level of funding be maintained but it could potentially be doubled without costing the British

taxpayers any more than they are already paying. That's what I call real investment!

But we must not forget the Industries and many jobs that have been lost whilst we have been members of the EU in areas such as medical research and development, steel manufacturing, fisheries and farming. Remaining in the EU is no guarantee of jobs and prosperity.

My greatest concern however, not only for Bristol's future but for the future of the United Kingdom, is that far from keeping peace across Europe (this is down to NATO and large numbers of US soldiers having been based across Europe) the EU has created an enormous amount of unrest and conflict, the level of which we have not seen since before the Second World War, in my opinion it is only a matter of time before this escalates to violence and the collapse of the EU project much like the collapse of the old Soviet Union, after all there are many similarities.

*Paul Turner is mayor of Bristol candidate for UKIP*



## BREXIT NO!

Eugene Byrne

Finding statistics about the likely impact of Brexit on Bristol is difficult. Besides which, you know, lies, damned lies and all that ... But let's try one: independent consultancy The Centre for Economics & Business Research said last year that over 360,000 jobs in the South West were linked to trade with the EU in 2011.

If Britain votes itself out, there's no way that the EU will permit it access to the single

market without a load of strings and no influence. It's likely that the EU will attempt to make things as unpleasant as possible for Britain to discourage further exits.

In Bristol the greatest impact will be on the "knowledge economy". Our universities and companies working at the leading edge of technology will find markets closed, research collaborations cut and funding lost. Investment from outside the EU will dry up without access to that market, and the US has made it abundantly clear that Britain – or rather England, as the Scots will probably leave the UK – will get no preferential deals.

If this is all supposed to be about all those evil immigrants taking our jobs, we'll see the loss of many of the educated and highly-skilled workers from Europe that help make our knowledge economy work. That's IT, communications and medical technology, robotics and, above all, aerospace. How long would you give all those skilled jobs at Filton if we're outside the single market?

On the plus side, there might be a few more jobs for native British-born cleaners and agricultural workers on minimum wage or less.

Historically Bristol has always depended on immigration for both skilled and unskilled labour. Make your own personal list of the 50 or 100 Most Important Bristolians of All Time and you'll find that well over half are incomers from elsewhere in the UK or elsewhere in the world. And if they're not, their parents probably were. Brunel was the son of an asylum-seeker, though John Cabot was a mere economic migrant.

The historic and modern character of Bristol has been moulded by immigration. Without its cosmopolitan nature, Bristol ceases to be a "leading European city". We will be poorer culturally as well as economically without the EU. We live in an interdependent world and Bristol is stronger in Europe. It's not rocket science. But then we won't be doing rocket science any more if the Little Englanders have their way.

*Popular journalist Eugene Byrne writes for the Bristol Post*

# Bristol's transport planning is alive and well



Peter Mann, Director of Transport at Bristol City Council, replies to the article in the Autumn 2015 issue, "Bristol's death of transport planning"

In the last issue of this publication Gavin Smith offered his perspective on transport planning in the city, claiming a lack of expertise and progress in this important field.

This view certainly does not align with reality; indeed it is insulting to those hard working staff who do put commitment, energy and enthusiasm into their profession in the public interest.

Like all big cities in the UK, the relentless growth in car traffic continues to be a major challenge in Bristol. In seeking to tackle congestion and its worst effects on air quality and road safety, Bristol rightly looks to a complex mix of solutions, including heavy rail, bus, park & ride, walking and cycling as well as seeking to reduce the negative effects of car travel through appropriate speed, parking and traffic management. All of this is rooted in a Joint Local Transport Plan approved by all four authorities in the West of England.

This huge programme of activity is planned and managed by a dedicated multi-disciplinary team of professionals across Bristol and the sub-region supported by consultants who can provide specialist expertise and capacity when needed. These professionals have over the last few years been highly successful in securing millions of pounds of Government money through robust planning and meticulous business case development work. Supported by a close knit, cross authority committee of political leaders responsible for transport, this work has resulted in investment programmes not seen in the Bristol area for decades.

The Greater Bristol Bus Network, £80m of investment in bus technology, vehicles, infrastructure and priority measures, has cemented bus travel as the public transport workhorse in the sub-region. In the last two years, driven by a combination of this investment, reduced fares and planned restraint on commuter parking in Bristol, bus use has increased by up to 25%. This sort of growth far outstrips other cities and demonstrates that part of the future for transport and travel in Bristol lies in getting the absolute most out of what we already have.

**Like all big cities in the UK, the relentless growth in car traffic continues to be a major challenge in Bristol.**

Bristol was the UK's first designated Cycling City, generating £22m of investment in new cycle routes and tracks, information, promotion and education programmes which has helped to double daily commuter cycling to work – putting Bristol way ahead of all other English core cities, outside London. Despite its hilly terrain, there are visibly more and more people on bikes around the city than any of us can remember. Bike parking is in huge demand and employers are responding by providing more and better facilities for their workers to park up, change and store their gear.

Gavin Smith glibly derides MetroBus as a fiasco, possibly because his "evidence" against it was dismissed at the Public Inquiry in 2012, but fails to acknowledge that the £200m programme of three routes across 50km will deliver huge additional capacity and a significant quality uplift on the public transport network, connecting people to jobs across the sub-region. It will bring faster, more reliable journeys, better information and smart ticketing, as well as secondary benefits of new pedestrian and cycle paths and public

realm enhancements across the network.

Whilst MetroBus is not the panacea for all traffic problems in Bristol it is a long-awaited, massive step forward and will transform how thousands of people travel. Turning to rail, the MetroWest programme currently has two phases at an advanced stage of development (Gavin is completely wrong to say this is on hold). Phase 1 opens up a new passenger line to Portishead, a town of 25,000 and growing fast, as well as more trains on the Severn Beach Line and to Bath by 2020. Phase 2 follows this up with new services to Yate and Henbury and new stations to support development at Filton. Few people realise the true complexity of navigating rail industry procedures, most of which are rooted in safety standards, making the UK rail network amongst the safest in the world. At approaching £100m, MetroWest is currently the single largest third-party promoted rail scheme in the country, so there is no lack of ambition in bringing this forward. The regular Government grant allocation to local authorities for transport investment has declined year on year for the last decade, being increasingly replaced by more, ad hoc funding opportunities that require effective bidding, often with little notice. The authorities most successful in accessing this funding are light on their feet, have projects and programmes worked up and justified, have skilful officers who can present a strong business case, and importantly, have a track record of delivery on the ground.

That's why Bristol has secured around £34m of Government grant through a range of funding programmes for cycling, bus, behavioural change, low emission vehicles and major highway maintenance since 2012. In all of this we need to remember that transport does not operate in a silo and has a major impact on how the city looks and feels. We are committed to ensuring that our projects and schemes improve the urban realm and create a sense of place.

*(Continued on page 27)*

## Not already a member? Why not join TODAY!

The easiest way is to go online through our Website.

Just go to [www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)

Then click on GET INVOLVED and select JOIN THE SOCIETY.

Choose the appropriate form. You can even pay your subscription by Paypal.

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As a member, the Society's magazine **Better Bristol**, will be delivered to you. You will be supporting a charity that endeavours to be 'an independent force for a better Bristol' and you will have reduced rates for attending BCS events.

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## What is the Civic Society?

The name means simply ...pertaining to the city. It's nothing to do with civic regalia or quaint customs. We've been around for over 100 years. Absolutely anybody is welcome to join us and get involved in all our activities.

### Why do we need a 'Civic Society'?

Bristol is about seventh in the league of British cities, and one of the most successful, buoyant and vibrant places in the country. But its success also brings problems. It has been a magnet for property developers and speculators since the 1950s. Population growth puts huge pressure on supply of housing and services. Since the early 20th century its suburbs have expanded into neighbouring parishes that were once part of rural Somerset and Gloucestershire, and whose commuter traffic now competes for space in a medieval street system that was never intended for it.

Many of these old parishes have their own societies to deal with local issues. Only the Bristol Civic Society looks at the big picture, and attempts to deal with the major issues city-wide.

Bristol has distinctive features that make it special to us: its waterways, harbour, green spaces, maritime and industrial history, and its rich heritage of historic buildings and streets. These need a powerful voice to protect them.

### What does the Bristol Civic Society do?

We are a voice for the citizens to have a direct say in how their city develops. The Society responds to public consultations and comments on all significant planning applications through its working groups.

But we are a lot more than just an influential voice. We encourage good design through our annual awards. We help protect our legacy of historic buildings by leading the Heritage Forum, and run the Blue Plaques scheme that commemorates notable citizens. Our Public Spaces Group engages with proposals for improving public spaces. We organise regular walks visits and cycle rides to historic corners, and a varied programme of public meetings and talks. Members receive this magazine.

### What are our aims?

We are not for seeing the city fossilised in time, we recognise that it has to change and adapt to suit modern needs. We are for blending the new with the old: to recognise Bristol's assets and to encourage change through good planning and design.

We wish Bristol to live up to its status as a regional and past European Green capital, reflected in its cityscape, cultural activities and economic life, to be a place its citizens are proud of, and a place that people want to visit.

We want to add to the beauty, character and diversity of the city, and to revitalise areas and improve the quality of life for all across the city. We do what we do because we care about the city we live in.

We are an independent non-party-political body.

## FREE with this magazine for members

A one-day pass to a National Trust property. Appreciation of our heritage means Civic Society members have much in common with the National Trust. The Trust welcomes members to make a visit. There are restrictions – read the small print before travelling!

## Who's who in the society

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## (Transport – continued from page 25)

Recent examples include the regeneration of Champion Square (a Civic Society award winner), Stokes Croft and the Bear Pit, better crossings at Old Market and the uplift of the Centre resulting from MetroBus. Our infrastructure investment programme for the Enterprise Zone will also see the riverside opened up to cyclists and walkers with new routes and the regeneration of Temple Circus creating new public spaces and better crossings.

Looking to the future, the Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study consultation events have been gathering views and information from stakeholders and the public across the sub-region. This work

looks ahead 20 years at how, as a city region, we should meet the need for additional housing and employment growth and support this with appropriate infrastructure investment. It also seeks to identify, through evidence, analysis and transport modelling, where the existing transport network should be improved to tackle current problems more effectively. All this points to a revised Joint Local Transport Plan in the next 12 to 18 months and forms the core of transport planning work in Bristol and the West of England. I would encourage everyone to get involved with this planning process and help shape the future of the Bristol area for the long term.

## Visit on 17 Dec to "The General", Redevelopment of the Old General Hospital, Redcliffe by City and Country

Alan Elkan

Those who were unable to be amongst the 20 members on this visit, guided by Helen Moore, City and Country's Managing Director missed a two-hour treat.

This is a very complicated group of Grade 2 listed buildings which had been altered and added to in random and uncomplimentary fashion since it opened in 1858. It is being fastidiously renovated for conversion to some 205 flats and houses, and augmented by some new buildings. The architects are Fielden Clegg Bradley, and Purcell.

Almost every unit differs from the rest, and all have been sold based on the viewing of the first completed flats and "off plan" such are the very fine level of finishes and the marvellous "location, location, location".

City and Country are also the main contractor so are able to control standards to a very high level, of great benefit as there are 170 site staff, with very good memories for finding their way around the warren of spaces.

### Some special features include:

- The pedestrianising of Lower Guinea St to benefit commercial units in the stone vaulted lower floor area. These include Casamia Restaurant which transferred from Westbury-on-Trym.
- A four storey block of 16 flats, at the corner of Lower Guinea St and Commercial Road; the shape will allow a good view of the restored elevation of the adjacent original building.
- A three storey underground car park off Commercial Road.
- The former chapel with original obscured glass windows; these cannot be altered to clear glazing due to the listed status so the occupier can't be a claustrophobic!

So the second of visits to major conversion schemes, the first being the former Wills Tobacco admin block in Hartcliffe, was another great success, and whetted the appetite for more such events.

# Events

Spring –  
Summer 2016

For the summer season we have a stimulating programme of outdoor visits and walks. A chance to revisit old favourites, or perhaps discover new ones you never knew before!

## WALKING EVENTS

**Wednesday 27th April,**

**6.30pm**

### **Kingsdown – The Vertical Suburb, led by Mary Wright**

An extremely entertaining and informative walk around Kingsdown led by Mary Wright, local resident, historian and author. Full of tales about previous residents, historical incidents and architectural highlights: from the site of an English Civil War Fort to the award-winning High Kingsdown development. Duration about an hour.

Meet at: Montague Green - junction at top of Horfield Road and Kingsdown Parade.

**Maximum numbers 20. Booking required. To book a place, phone Nic Billane 07791 603 322, or email [walks@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:walks@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)**

## TALKS AND MEETINGS

**Tuesday 10th May at 7.30pm**

### **Bristol Arena Design by Nicholas Reynolds from Populous and Mike Keys from Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios**

International arena design team Populous together with Bath-based architects Feilden Clegg Bradley have developed plans for Bristol's long awaited arena.

The world-class, 12,000-capacity venue will spur the creation of a vibrant new quarter in the city, with a design flexible enough to cater for a wide variety of events, inside and outside, throughout the year.

**Unitarian Chapel, Brunswick Square, Bristol, BS2 8PE. Members: £2, Non-members: £5 suggested (minimum £2)**

**Tuesday 17 May,**

**6.30-8.30pm**

### **Launch of Walking Alliance**

See page 5 for more details  
[bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk](http://bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk)

**Tuesday 7th June, 6.30pm**

### **AGM and Presentation of Design Awards, 7.30pm**

St James's Priory, Whitsun Street,  
**See page 4 for more details.**

**Tuesday 21st June, 6.00pm**

### **Guided Walk: The Bristol Schemes of Sylvia Crowe, led by Wendy Tippett**

Landscape associated with the Cumberland Basin Bridges and Ashton Gate Junction road scheme.

Starting from Hotwells and exploring the Cumberland Piazza before crossing over the Cumberland Lock to the Look Out on Spike Island, then up and over the Avon Bridge, down into Ashton Meadows, across Greville Smyth Park and down to Blackmoors Lane neighbourhood park – finishing back at the Rose of Denmark. It will be rush hour, with busy noisy traffic. Be prepared for lots of concrete, spiral staircases and care when walking on the pavement alongside the road.

Meet outside the Rose of Denmark pub in Hotwells.  
Duration: 2 – 2½ hours.

**Booking required. To book a place, phone Nic Billane 07791 603 322, or email [walks@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:walks@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)**

**Thursday 7th July at 8pm**

### **Guided Walk: Clifton & Durdham Downs with Richard Bland**

A summer evening walk and talk covering interesting aspects of the history of the Downs and its role today.

Meet at the Café Retreat, near the Water Tower by 7.45pm.  
Duration about 2 hours.

**Limited to 20 people. To book a place, phone Nic Billane 07791 603 322, or email [walks@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:walks@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)**

**Wednesday 28th September, 11.00am**

### **Visit: Lower Lodge – Ashton Court**

A chance to view the Lodge, currently being refurbished.

**Numbers limited to 20 max. Details to follow**

## THESE ARE PART OF BRISTOL WALKING FESTIVAL

**Thursday 5th May and Thursday 19th May, 11am**

### **Walled City Walk with Ed Hall**

Meet at 10.45am at the Merchant Navy Memorial, Welsh Back-near Glass Boat.

**Limited to 20 people. Booking essential. To book a place text or phone Ed Hall on 0780 500 7304. Costs: £2**

**Wednesday 11th May, 6.30pm and**

**Saturday 15th May, 2pm**

### **History of Tobacco Industry with Simon Birch**

Urban walk along Redcliff Street, East Street and North Street, optional return routes.

Meet at corner of Victoria Street and Redcliff Street.

**Maximum numbers 20. Booking required. To book a place contact Simon Birch at [simon.birch7@gmail.com](mailto:simon.birch7@gmail.com)**

**Thursday 12th and Thursday 26th May, 11am**

### **Floating Harbour with Ed Hall**

A walk around Underfall Yard, Cumberland Basin and the locks to explain why and how the problems of tides were overcome by the creation of the 'Floating Harbour'.

Meet at 10.45am at The Cottage Pub, Baltic Wharf on the docks. Includes some off road walking so not suitable for stilettos, buggies or wheel chairs.

**Limited to 20 people. Booking essential. To book a place text or phone Ed Hall on 0780 500 7304. Costs: £2**