

Better Bristol

The Bristol Civic Society Magazine - Issue 13 Autumn/Winter 2018



Inside

- Tall buildings
- Bristol Arena
- The impact of the arts
- Abolition Shed
- The Women Who Built Bristol



an independent force for a **better Bristol**





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BRISTOL CIVIC SOCIETY

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reflect the views
of the Bristol
Civic Society.*

Bristol Civic Society – What's it for?



Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was an ideal time for reflection. Is the Society delivering the desired outcomes? As a starter it's instructive to remind ourselves of our objectives as set out in the Society's Constitution, summarised below:

- i) To stimulate public interest in, and care for, the beauty, history, character and future of the City of Bristol and its surroundings.
- ii) To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning.
- iii) To pursue these ends by means of meetings, exhibitions, lectures, publications, other forms of instruction and schemes of a charitable nature.

This year the AGM was held in June at Redland Parish Halls, always an enjoyable occasion with good company, and excellent wine and food. The current format for the meeting provides a good opportunity to learn about the Society's activities over the past year and, following the formal business (always very brief), we listened to presentations from all aspects of our work.

Starting with reports on our refreshed website and communications generally we moved on to reports about membership (increasing steadily), and from the Planning Applications Group (PAG) and the Major Sites Group (MSG). There is so much development activity in Bristol at the moment that MSG had over 20 items on its agenda in July – these are major development projects subject to pre-application consultations, always an interesting area of our activity.

The award for the most entertaining presentation was surely won by Gordon Young who chairs the very successful group vetting and encouraging Blue Plaque applications. Design Awards is also a burgeoning activity (reported separately in Better Bristol), together with the Student Award. We also heard about our wide

ranging events programme.

We discussed our initiatives on St. Michael's and Ashton Court Mansion, both reported elsewhere.

The AGM found the Civic Society in good shape, financially sound, membership steadily increasing and with a good range of relevant activities. In summary we felt that we are delivering on our objectives.

Our groups always welcome new members and encourage new ideas and initiatives. If an appropriate group doesn't exist then we set one up, as we have done successfully with St Michaels and with the emerging initiative on Ashton Court Mansion.

We work in partnership – the length and variety of this list surprised me and I'm sure it's not fully up to date!

We are active partners of Doors Open Day (contributing £1,000); Civic Voice (£500 pa); Friends of Suburban Bristol

Railways FOSBR (£25 pa); Bristol Heritage Forum; Walking Alliance; Sustainable Transport Network; Bearpit Community Trust; Neighbourhood Planning Network; Bristol Green Capital Partnership; and Downs for People.

We work closely with the Tree Forum, Parks Forum, Architecture Centre and Friends of the Downs and Gorge (FODAG).

It's a feature of Bristol that there are so many groups covering such a wide range of subjects and places. It makes partnership working both essential and very worthwhile.

I look forward to hearing from you all with your ideas and with your enthusiasm for activities in the coming year – do please get in touch.

Simon Birch

Email: chair@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk



*The Design Awards go from strength to strength.
Una Breathnach-Hifearnain and colleagues from Purcell accept the award from Jonathan Foyle.*



Not already a member? Why not join TODAY!

See page 27 for more details...

Reaching for the sky?

Is the city set to become a miniature Tokyo or New York with lots of high-rise towers scraping the sky? Eugene Byrne looks at one of the biggest controversies in the battle for Bristol's future.

The city is under desperate pressure to provide housing for a growing population, as well as offices to fuel commercial growth. Land within the city boundaries is in short supply (or too expensive) and so an obvious solution is to build upwards.

Earlier this year Mayor Marvin Rees said that he was in favour of building higher, saying "I want Bristol's skyline to grow tall."

The Council's Urban Living Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation document, published in February 2018 said: "The City is seeking to encourage tall buildings, built in the right locations and to a high quality of design ... the SPD provides a revised definition of tall buildings (30m or taller - approximately 10 residential storeys), and provides guidance on siting a tall building and achieving design excellence."

It is likely that planning policy will site tall buildings in clusters around the city. Areas already identified include Lawrence Hill, Old Market, Newfoundland Way, Bedminster Green, the area near Castle Park and of course Temple Quarter.

The Council says it will demand high standards; sufficient space between buildings, attractive public spaces, sufficient sunlight at street level and a decent range of sizes and prices, from affordable units to high-end apartments.

Bristol Against Tall Buildings

Kingsdown resident Matthew Montagu-Pollock feels so strongly that he started a campaign, Bristol Against High Rises, which has gathered a lot of support.

Amid all the talk of Bristol looking like a miniature Tokyo or Singapore, he's more concerned it'll end up looking like Leeds.

"When I got out of the station there I was impressed by what a fearful mess it seemed to be - old and new just jumbled together without any thought whatsoever," he tells Better Bristol.



Site being prepared for the Redcliff Quarter

Yet the Mayor's ambition for a city of gleaming high-rises which communicate "ambition and energy", however well-built, is not universally shared.

Responses to the SPD consultation were published in June, with over 600 responses, the majority of them hostile to high-rises.

Bristol Civic Society is sceptical about the value of high rises as a solution to the housing problem, but also fearing for Bristol's historic character. If you make Bristol less attractive to look at, you make it less attractive for

investment, business and tourism.

The best alternative to tower blocks when it comes to housing is, say almost all opponents of high-rises, medium-rise building. This is more cost effective (building skyscrapers is expensive), creates happier communities and is usually more energy-efficient.

We already have a number of existing high-rises, mostly dating from the 1960s and 70s. The tallest, Castlemead (opened in 1981) by Castle Park is 19 storeys high. The only taller man-made structure in Bristol is the spire of St Mary Redcliffe.

new part of the city and they were all bunched together. That was quite a good formula that brought a lot of vibrancy to the area.

"But where you have a beautiful area where people want to be, that's where developers want to stick a high-rise.

"It would be far better to take something like St Philips Marsh, which has good transport links and is next to the station and river, and develop that, preferably with medium-rise buildings."



Redcliff Quarter Proposals

This will not last. Castle Park View, on the site of the former ambulance station, will be 26 storeys, while the proposed Redcliffe Tower will be 22 storeys, and a Bristol University building at Temple Quarter will be 25.

Castle Park View has attracted a lot of headlines and controversy and was only granted planning permission when the number of affordable homes in the development was significantly increased.

Other proposals are potentially even more problematic. There will be many struggles to come over the future shape of Bedminster, with developers looking to build anything up to 1,500 new homes in the Bedminster Green area (see page 12).

There are currently proposals for five sites, including Little Paradise, the former Pring & St Hill site off Malago Road, St Catherine's Place, Hereford Street car park and land off Dalby Avenue. The tallest building, at St Catherine's Place, could be 21 storeys high.

The regeneration plans

for Bedminster Green are confusing because different developers own different sites. No-one disputes the need for affordable housing in the area, but local councillors and existing residents are concerned about heights and the pressure on local services and amenities. This is an area comparable in size to London's King's Cross.

Speaking in June, Southville Councillor Charlie Bolton said: "I supported the original development at St Catherine's Place, and I have to say I increasingly regret having done so.

"While I believe the intentions of the original developer were honourable, the fact that we now have multiple developers has meant a substantial increase in scale ... What we have now is a plan which is just enormous."

The Council says it is committed to coming up with a sustainable plan for the area and that more detailed studies are needed.

Because of its complexity, the number of different parties involved, and its sheer size, Bedminster Green likely to be making a lot of local headlines for some time to come.

One Redcliffe Street. Sixty metres high (excluding new top floor).



Links

Bristol Against High Rises
bristolagainsthighrises.com

Urban Living SPD
Consultation Draft (June 2018)
<https://tinyurl.com/yak6vsok>

Urban Living SPD
Responses to Consultation (June 2018)
<https://tinyurl.com/y86st9ut>

Bristol Civic Society view on tall buildings and densification (April 2018)
www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/tall-buildings-and-densification/

Tall buildings. Is there



Joel Baillie-Lane adds to the debate

Bristol is currently having a serious discussion about how to provide enough homes to meet the growing needs of the city. One aspect of that debate is whether to build taller. Mayor Marvin Rees has advocated that building 'high-rise towers' can be an effective way of solving the 'housing crisis'. But does building taller actually work for Bristolians and solve the problems?

For many years Bristol has had an adopted planning policy (Supplementary Planning Document 1 (SPD1)) that established criteria within which tall buildings might be considered. In 2017 the council convened an 'Urban Living' forum to discuss amending this policy. Planners, architects, developers and others involved in the industry have met to discuss the problem of the necessary increase in housing density to accommodate the population

increase. The Bristol Civic Society has been involved from the start, and has concerns about the potential impact upon the historic city.

Two developments have recently been granted planning consent that include tall buildings – a 22-storey block in Redcliff Quarter, and a 26-storey tower overlooking Castle Park.

Another tall tower in Bedminster (see page 12) is also being discussed, but unlike the first two consents this will sit within an existing long standing and 'organically evolved' community, and the residents are extremely concerned about the potential impact. The six investors involved have, we understand, agreed to liaise with each other to ensure the development is coordinated, but the Civic Society feels that the council-led 'Master Plan' for the whole of Bristol is desperately needed.

The Civic Society support the council and the 'Urban Living' SPD, and agree that higher densities are necessary. It also supports the council in developing its 'Spatial Framework' policy, but feels that the issue of tall buildings within this framework needs more consideration.

However, tall buildings will not assist with the requirement for affordable/ social housing, and they are likely to have a huge negative impact upon the existing historic city. Social landlords will be less interested in tall buildings due to increased construction costs, and long-term maintenance costs are also higher.

And tall buildings are, by their very nature, imposing, and have to be carefully designed so that the imposition does not detract from the public realm around a development. And here the Civic Society argues strongly that the architecture and design has to be of the very highest quality, and that any development should be 'mixed' in use, that there should be adequate play areas for children and social interaction, and the necessary transport, doctors, shops, and education (etc) needs are met. I would advocate a policy of 'people first, then spaces, and then buildings' when designing for an increased density. This is probably the best way to building a successful community ... putting the building first often leads to a fractured community.

The alternative to building tall towers to increase densification is to accept that



Far left, Paintworks: high density mixed use development.

Left, Old Ambulance Station Site (Castle Park) Proposals

an alternative solution?

Wapping Wharf. An example of low rise, high density development.
Photo Simon Dolling



larger areas have a *slightly* increased height. High density residential areas of Bristol usually have 3 to 4 storeys above street level, and this would need to be increased to 5 or possibly 6 storeys to accommodate the necessary additional housing stock. This is certainly possible in areas such as Redcliffe and Bedminster, and around the harbourside, but Clifton may be more problematic. This is why the Civic Society believes that every development must be looked at in terms of the relevant local issues, with historic views and impact on the area being determined by the vernacular and context.

Recent examples of higher density 'low-rise' residential developments are Wapping Wharf and Finzels Reach, both adjacent to the water, and which appear to be successful developments in terms of quality of architecture and the positive contribution to the public realm.

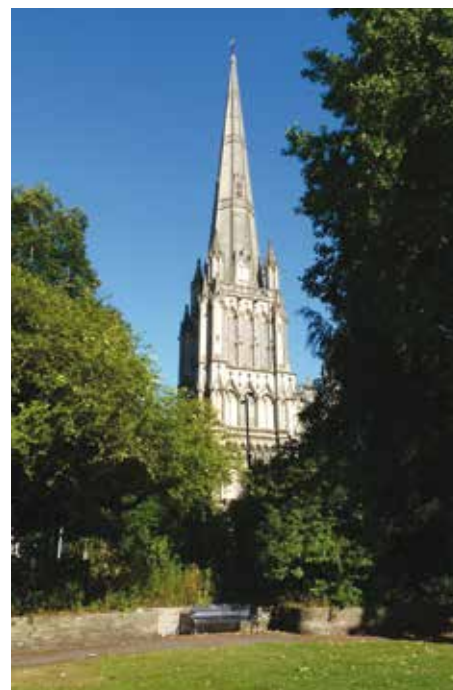
Bristol is a historic city with a unique character – that is why we all love it. It has some diverse neighbourhoods

with their own very special character, and a wealth of heritage assets. People come to live in or visit Bristol because of these unique character traits

The Civic Society recognises that the planning process is driven by statute and demand. Developers are focussing on Bristol because they see the demand, but we must ensure that the planning framework that we are involved in drafting is robust, and considerate to the needs of Bristolians. If this isn't thought through very carefully there is a very real danger that by making a significant change to the character of the city this uniqueness will vanish.

Unless tall buildings are of the highest architectural quality, in the right place, and there has been a proper assessment of the context and needs of the local community, there should be a presumption against tall buildings.

Joel Baillie-Lane runs *ProjectWorks*, a small architectural practice which specialises in sensitive sites and conservation areas.



Bristol's tallest structures:

Cabot Tower, Brandon Hill - 107 ft (32.5m).

Colston Tower, Bristol Centre - 164 ft (50m).

Radison Blu Hotel (former Bristol and West Tower), Colston Avenue - 184 ft (56m).

BRI Chimney, Kingsdown - 196 ft (60m).

Castlemead (on edge of Cabot Circus) - 196 ft (60m).

Travel Inn – former Avon House - 196 ft (60m).

One Redcliffe Street (former DRG Building) - 196 ft (60m).

Telecommunications Tower, Purdown - 200 ft (61m).

Wills Memorial Building Tower, Park Street - 215 ft (65.5m).

Tollgate House, Newfoundland Road - 252 ft (77m). (Demolished 2006.)

St Mary Redcliffe Church - 292 ft (87m).

Tallest building in the UK - The Shard, London, 1016 ft (310m).

Of course, some buildings, like the Wills Tower, placed on hill, look disproportionately tall. Cabot tower is, in fact, only a stumpy 107ft (33m) high.

And the miracle is that Bristol's tallest structure is a building that was constructed in the fifteenth century (though rebuilt in 1872) - the spire of St Mary Redcliffe.

Planning Applications

John Payne, from Bristol Civic Society's Planning Application Group, highlights recent applications.

The Society's Planning Applications Group (PAG) meets every three weeks to consider 12 – 15 applications. We submit comments to the Council on about two thirds of these. Those comments are publicly available on the file for each application held on the planning section of the Council's website. PAG also considers a

small number of pre-application consultations. In this article, I'm going to highlight responses made to some proposals in the Brunswick Square and Portland Square area. I will also report on the growing movement in Bristol pushing back against intrusive advertising and some of the successes achieved.

the residential redevelopment of the Sandhu's cash and carry site. We felt the houses on Portland Square needed to honour more closely the historic floorplans and elevations. We agreed with the Portland and Brunswick Squares Association that the new development facing Surrey Street needed to contribute more toward preserving and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area particularly in terms of framing the view towards Portland Square and St Pauls Church. 93 flats seemed excessive for the site especially with the presence of a number of single aspect flats. Some retail or café space on Surrey Street would also add to the vitality of the area. The Council has yet to decide the outcome of this application.

15-16 Brunswick Square (18/02305/F).

This application sought to change the use from a community use to office use. There were a lot of objections to this proposal. The Society's view was that the area was characterised by a diversity of commercial, cultural and community uses. Retaining the community use would help to maintain the variety of uses as well as providing a useful resource for residents. It has been refused.

Pre-application proposals for extending the Hampton by Hilton Hotel.

These comprised mainly a two storey vertical addition to the wing extending from Bond Street northwards into Brunswick Square plus infilling the remaining gap between this wing and the Grade II Listed Building to its north. PAG considered that the proposals should be welcomed but made a number of suggestions which we hoped would enable the proposed development to contribute more to the enhancement of Brunswick Square.

Two additional stories, we felt, did not respect the prevailing height of neighbouring buildings. Brick cladding for the extension into Brunswick Square would also be more appropriate for the Square. The infill of the gap was particularly welcome but it should better respect the scale of its neighbours to contribute most to Brunswick Square. We suggested that the proposed outdoor café should, therefore, front the Square rather than Bond Street as proposed.



Retail or cafe space on Surrey Street would add vitality to the area.

Brunswick Square and Portland Square.

These two squares and the adjoining streets are the focus for a Conservation Area. They are rich in history containing many Listed Buildings and streetscapes of heritage value but are in need of considerable regeneration. Centrally located and full of potential, this area is attracting development. The Society welcomes appropriate development in this area. However, there is a tension between the pressures driving the revitalisation of the area

and the need to conserve its character. It is important to retain a mix of residential, employment, retail and community uses. PAG has considered the following cases.

29-32 Portland Square (17/05290/F).

Albeit with some suggestions for improvement, the Society has broadly welcomed the proposals which involve the re-instatement of the Georgian terrace Portland Square and



The continuing campaign against digital advertising.

There is a broadening movement developing in Bristol against advertising, particularly the intensive and intrusive form on digital screens. This is being co-ordinated by a group called Adblock Bristol whose initiatives the Society broadly supports. We continue to make our own comments

on proposals, however, but it is gratifying to see the wider campaign getting a political response.

Members of the Development Control Committee in July overturned officer recommendations to approve two giant digital screens in Bond Street on the Council owned highway – one adjacent to the House of Fraser facing south, the other in the central reservation just

south of the Floating Harbour facing north (18/01892/A and 18/01897/A). These signs would have measured 8 x 5 metres and reached 11 metres in height. Members considered that they would have a harmful impact on the townscape and be distracting to drivers.

Earlier, officers had refused permission for large, double sided screens with phones and internet connections in 25 locations many in central Bristol (eg 18/01305/A). These were huge replacements for phone kiosks that would have had an individual and cumulative impact on the surrounding environment, particularly in conservation areas, and been distracting to traffic.

A second attempt to install a large screen facing traffic leaving Bristol Temple Meads (18/01751/A) has also been refused.



29-32 Portland Square
- plans need to honour
historic elevations.

Membership of PAG

It has been very pleasing to welcome one or two new members to the group over the summer. If you are interested in joining us, please contact me – johnpayne997@btinternet.com

Major developments

John Frenkel, convener of the Bristol Civic Society's Major Sites Group gives an update.

The Edward Everard Building and NatWest Court, Broad Street.

A pleasure to report a project to enthuse you all. Alec French Architects have a brief to renovate and reuse the empty offices to deliver a scheme to include a 250 room, four star, hotel, serviced apartments, a residential block and retail units. The hotel entry will be through the Edward Everard façade. The scheme will repair the buildings. Let's hope the replacement windows enliven the elevations of grey brickwork and ribbed concrete panels. What we like is the replacement of the staircase that blocks the Nelson Street pavement by a new wide staircase up to John Street. New retail and office frontages will break the blank Nelson Street façade. The cluttered space outside the Bank Tavern will be improved and there will be better lighting. A gym off Tower Lane and a restaurant in John Street will create activity and evening surveillance.

The former St Marys Hospital, Upper Byron Place, Clifton.

The Spring edition of *Better Bristol* described the latest (fifth) scheme which now has planning permission. The Society campaigned strongly for a scheme that would renovate and reuse this fine Italianate building. The permitted scheme is for student accommodation; the Society would have preferred a residential development without a new 'pavilion' behind the Byron Place houses.

Bristol University, new Cattle Market campus

This proposal should have outline planning permission when you receive this edition. The Society supported Historic England objection to the height of the 'Arena Island' student



Above, Edward Everard Building - a project that enthused us all!



Left, Cluttered space outside the Bank Tavern needs improving.



accommodation towers. The University have subsequently spread the buildings and reduced their height. We wait to see the detailed design of the first stage. The University has yet to set up a public engagement process.

South Bristol housing developments.

The Society welcomed and supported the plans for four large housing schemes. The Hartcliffe Campus, William Jessop Way, will build up to 480 new homes. Additionally, up to 1,000 new homes on the old Whitchurch Airfield Hengrove will be built in a phased development; 126 new homes will be constructed on former allotments at Silbury Road and 106 new

houses and flats will be built on the Motor Zone site at the Parsons Street end of Hartcliffe Way.

Former Central Ambulance Station, Castle Street.

The Spring *Better Bristol* described this scheme. The Group were disappointed that the Council granted planning permission. This was a site appropriate for a dense flatted development that stepped down from the Lower Castle Street blocks towards the river. This scheme will dominate the south-east corner of the Park - see page 6. There is no developer's contribution to improve the east end of Castle Park. Lower Castle Street retains its on-street parking.

Land at Temple Circus.

When the major roadworks at Temple Gate finish they will release an extensive area of land for development for which Skanska has applied for outline planning permission. Officers recommended that the Grosvenor Hotel's original elevations should be retained and integrated within the development scheme. Historic England objected, they said that the relationship with the Temple Meads group of listed buildings would be unsatisfactory, and views of St. Mary Redcliffe compromised. The Society opposed the scale of the proposed buildings and the loss of the locally listed Grosvenor Hotel. The Planning Committee granted planning permission unconditionally. They rejected a recommendation to refuse the proposal because the footprint and scale of the scheme failed to respond to Victoria Street. The application is referred to the Secretary of State because of Historic England's objection. This prominent city centre site needs a sensitive design to contain the scale of

Former St Mary's Hospital site - now has planning permission.



the buildings. The aspiration to deliver a high quality public space associated with the development is not yet met.

Bedminster Green.

Bedminster Green is a convenient name for a development area that lies on both sides of the Malago Road between East Street and the railway (also see page 5). The project would transform Bedminster. The developable land is discontinuous with retail uses on East Street, pockets of residential land, industrial units and car parks. Five developers, the Council is one, own the development rights. There is no area planning framework to coordinate development to blend this new residential quarter into the existing urban fabric. So far, two developers have

made uncoordinated planning approaches to develop separate plots with buildings that range between six and fifteen floors to build about 500 flats. Interventions on this scale would have a huge impact on the physical, social and economic life of Bedminster town centre. The Society supports the Windmill Hill and Malago Community Planning Group who, with the Council, are encouraging the developers to commission a comprehensive planning framework which the community and the Council can support. The aggregate sites are too large and important for the development to be entirely developer led. There must be a public/private partnership to produce a clear urban design to connect all five developments with each other to the town centre. *(continued on page 12) ▶*

Temple Gate. This prominent city centre site needs a sensitive design.





(continued from page 11).

Norwich Union site - under discussion again.

High St / Wine St (St Mary Le Port).

The redevelopment of the area occupied by the former Norwich Union, Bank of England and Lloyds Bank buildings, which occupy the whole of the east side of High Street and south of Wine Street, is under discussion again. The buildings are vacant. For nearly 30 years redevelopment schemes have come and gone. There are few more sensitive sites; the land formed one quarter of the original city. The site's importance is enhanced by the gradual change of use of the area from commercial to leisure and recreation. This is a part of the city that visitors come to see. Recently, a market rental developer, a subsidiary of the Berkeley Group presented a scheme to Councillors, Officers and interested

parties that included the Society. We expected a high density flatted scheme above ground-floor commercial space. The developer presented a scheme of the three blocks on Wine Street which would step up from eight to twelve to seventeen storeys. The tallest block, on the highest land would dominate St. Peter's Church, historic views of City Centre churches and other historic buildings. This scale of development would be contrary to the Local Plan and to emerging policies in the Review. The nearby existing buildings in High Street are 3 to 6 storeys and in Wine Street: 6 to 8 storeys. The Society supports the Council's policy to increase the resident population of the centre of the city and is conscious of political support for high rise development. However, this is such an important and sensitive site that the Society must mount firm and

professional opposition to the proposed high-rise development. So far, the developer has not made any plans available.

The Major Sites Group meets every six weeks. The Group needs new members. Please contact johnfrenkel5@gmail.com. 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 representation is weakest. The Society supports development and modern architecture. These are the edited highlights of some of the city's development activity. Items on the Society's website have links to the Society's full responses.

Campaign news

Simon Birch has the latest news on St Michael's on the Mount Without and Ashton Court Mansion.

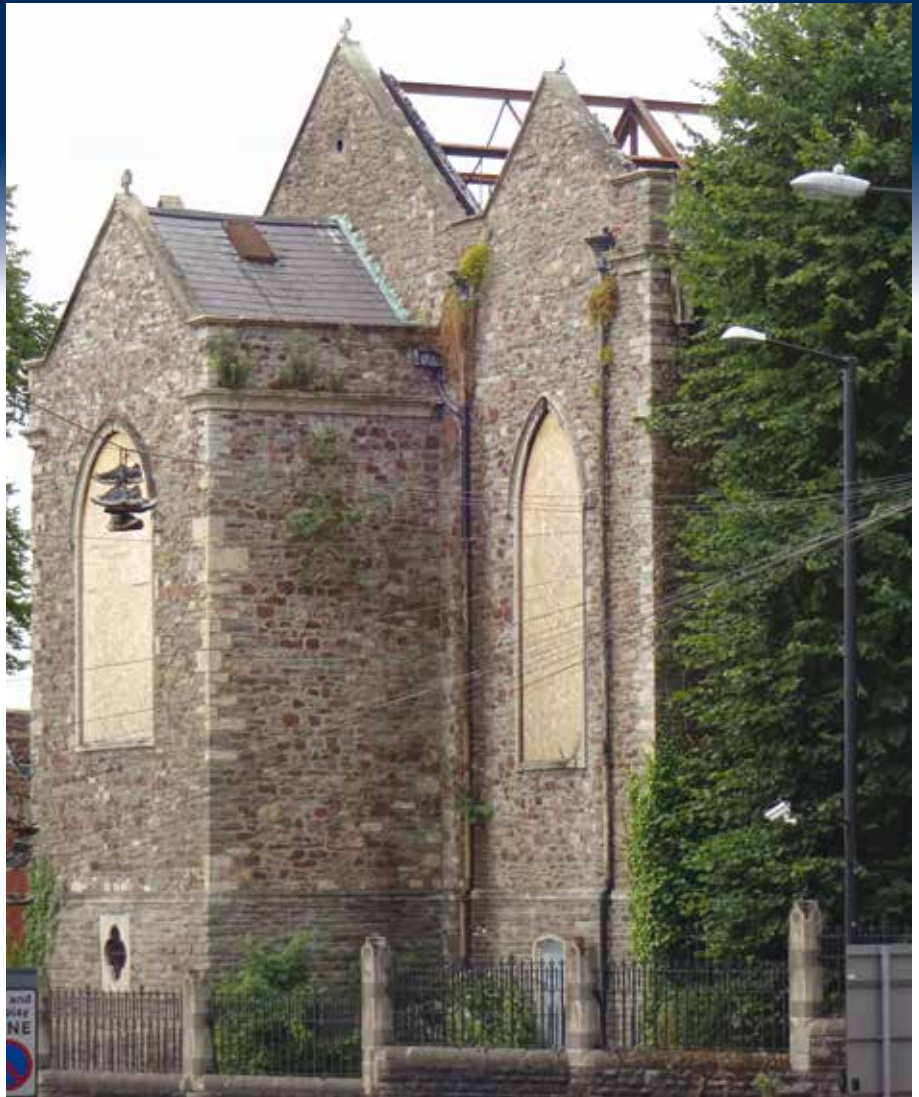
St Michael's on the Mount Without.

In the Spring 2018 edition of *Better Bristol* I reported on progress with our campaign to persuade the Diocese to resolve the longstanding challenge of finding a new use for St Michael's church, boarded up for nearly twenty years.

At the end of 2017 we put in a bid to purchase the church and my report in *Better Bristol* ended by saying:

We are promised a decision in late March / early April so the new owners will probably be known by the time Better Bristol is published. Our fingers are crossed!

The decision was made on time – we were ultimately unsuccessful and the selected purchaser was Ian Johnson, a Clifton resident with the excellent track record of sensitively restoring the Observatory on Clifton Down. His plans involve restoring the church as an events venue with a local history museum in the crypt. Details are



St Michael's. Plans for an events venue and a museum.

sketchy so far but in a recent email (July 20th) Ian reported that he was:

Nearly there! Then we can go into details - church taking ages with things!

We look forward to hearing more shortly and to supporting the restoration of this wonderful building and to seeing it brought into its new life.

Ashton Court Mansion.

We made a full report on the background to our campaign in the last issue of *Better Bristol*. In recent months the consultants (Purcell) have been commissioned to complete the major "options" study which was placed in abeyance in late 2013. This is expected by the end of September but it's unclear when the study report will be publicly available.

In the meantime, we have assembled a very strong Action Group with representatives from Business West, University of the West of England and



Ashton Court Mansion. 'Options' study to be completed.

the local community in Bedminster supported by legal advice from VWV, with accountants Saffery Champness and consultation specialist Cadence PR.

We continue to liaise closely with Bristol City Council and Historic England.

We are exploring the opportunity to create a "not for profit" organisation in order to take over responsibility for the Mansion from the City Council. This may be the only realistic way forward in the event that a suitable private sector operator does not come forward. It's early days so watch our website for updates or subscribe to the Ashton Court Mansion regular newsletter.

To join the Mansion newsletter distribution list please email simon.birch7@gmail.com.

Bristol Civic Society Design Awards 2018

Katharine Hegarty RIBA ARB, judging panellist and associate at NOMA Architects, describes the winning buildings.



The prestigious Bristol Civic Society Design Awards, generously sponsored by Savills, go from strength to strength. This year's winners were announced by architectural historian Jonathan Foyle.

The Print Hall, Temple Way

*Print Hall, 1 Temple Way,
Bristol BS2 0BU*

The Print Hall in Old Market sits on the site of the former Bristol Evening Post press hall, which was demolished in 2011 after the paper's printing operations were moved to Didcot. Brighton-based Architects Russ Drage designed a 12-storey building which provides around 270 student beds in shared and studio flats. The complex also houses a range of amenities for its residents.

The Old Market Conservation area contains some of Bristol's most ancient buildings, but had been in decline since the middle of the twentieth century. The area is now being regenerated, and the removal of the former press hall, the brutalist dark brown tiled façade which was at odds with its historic surroundings, made possible the construction of a more sympathetic building which respects local historic landmarks and has also allowed historic pedestrian routes through this rapidly changing urban environment. The building confidently brings new life to the urban realm at this important and ancient city intersection.

Russ Drage (Russ Drage Architects) accepted the award.

Castle Bridge

*Finzels Reach, East Tucker St,
Bristol BS1 6EU*

Castle Bridge is a proud new landmark addition to Bristol's public realm. It respects its historic context but is nonetheless modern and exciting.

Delivered by Cubex, Castle Bridge connects the Finzels Reach development of the former Courage Brewery to Castle Park and the wider city centre.

The stylish design had to overcome numerous physical constraints, including a significant difference in level between the two river banks and the requirement to maintain navigation along the busy river Avon.

The engineer and architect worked closely with the Harbour Master and the bridge fabricator to confirm the final design, including bridge supports with piled foundations and a fender system to withstand any potential impact from river traffic. The bridge also had to be sited away from the front of adjacent residential properties. The height of the bridge could be not less than that of the nearby Bristol Bridge.

Castle Bridge is a deserving winner of a Civic Society Award this year, having directly contributed to the success of the Finzels Reach scheme as well as being a useful addition to Bristol's



There are three fundamental criteria: nominations must be made for projects completed during the preceding two years; located within the City of Bristol; and visible from a public place.

pedestrian and cycle routes.

Gavin Bridge (Cubex), Martin Kendall (Bush Consultancy), Tim King (WSP) accepted the award.

The Bristol Wing, YMCA

*The Bristol Wing, YMCA
9 Bridewell Street, Bristol BS1 2AG*

Opened in January 2018, The Bristol Wing was built in the refurbished Grade II Listed twentieth century police headquarters in the very heart of Bristol. The refurbishment has been carried out to the highest ethical and environmental standards, with high levels of insulation, double glazed windows and solar panels. The terrazzo lobby floors surround the refurbished central period lift which is encased by a staircase leading to a mix of hostel rooms. There are also communal areas and a café which uses locally sourced produce and offers opportunities for young people to gain valuable work skills and experience.

Above left, The Print Hall, Temple Way.

Above right, The Bristol Wing, 9 Bridewell Street.

Far left, Castle Bridge, Finzels Reach.

Middle left, The General, Lower Guinea Street.

Left, Aerospace Bristol, Hayes Way, Patchway.

The building is owned and managed by YMCA Bristol as a social enterprise. Any profits made are reinvested in supporting young people who are homeless in the city.

This formerly disused building in the centre of the city has been re-invigorated architecturally and can be used and enjoyed by both locals and travellers alike.

David Caird (Fergusson Mann), Ben Silvey (YMCA) accepted the award.

The General

Lower Guinea St, Bristol BS1 6SX

Bristol General Hospital was opened in 1858 to provide much-needed healthcare for the inhabitants of the parishes of Redcliffe and Bedminster. New buildings were added in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, designed by well-known local architects W.B. Gingell, Henry Crisp and G.H. Oatley

The hospital closed in 2012, since when it has been undergoing extensive

restoration and conversion to provide over 200 apartments close to the harbourside and within easy walking distance of Bristol's shopping centre.

At the lower street level, overlooking Bathurst Basin, basement accommodation has been converted into a collection of commercial properties which have been deliberately included within the masterplan to aid investment, economic growth and vitality within the immediate area.

A huge amount of technical innovation and design skill was required to breathe new life into the building. Many significant original features have been reinstated and more modern additions removed in order to restore the Grade II* Listed buildings to the proportions, scale and appearance of the original design. Attention was paid to ensure that the creative reuse and redesign of the former hospital has delivered an exemplary city centre regeneration scheme.

Simon Vernon-Harcourt (City & Country) accepted the award.

Aerospace Bristol

Hayes Way, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5BZ

Bristol's links with aviation history date back to 1910, when Sir George White established the British and Colonial Aeroplane Company. The first commercially successful aircraft designed and manufactured at the Filton Aerodrome site was the Bristol Box Kite. During World War One over 5,300 Bristol F.2 Fighter planes were produced here.

Aerospace Bristol opened in October 2017 and now houses the Bristol Aero Collection Trust's extensive display of artefacts, an education centre and workshops. The exhibition covers over 100 years of aviation history through two world wars, exploring the role of aircraft in these conflicts, through the drama and technological advances of the space race and on to the modern day.

Bristol Architects Purcell worked on the project from 2011, overseeing both the architecture and Conservation Management Plan for the Grade 2 Listed World War 1 hangars, which provide over 5,000 m2 of public exhibition space. A purpose-built hanger houses Concorde 216, call sign Alpha Foxtrot, the final aircraft in the series to be constructed and the last to fly, along with related exhibits. The 3,200m2 floor space houses conference facilities, a lecture room, three meeting rooms and a studio space. The ensemble forms a fitting backdrop to the collection.

Una Breathnach-Hifearnain (Purcell) accepted the award.

Active Art in Creative Bristol

Nic Billane highlights the importance of the arts.



Spike Island. Photograph Max McClure.

The Arts and Culture industry contributes enormously to the nation's economy and quality of life. The latest report from Arts Council England, published in November 2017, calculates that this industry generated £15.8 billion in turn over (2015), an increase of 9.5% since 2013.

The Arts and Culture industry is important for the South West of England and is particularly relevant to Bristol, which is a hub of artistic activity. Whilst the definition of the sector is wide, and includes everything from television and film production, book publishing, stage production and theatre school, through to individual skilled practitioners, such as painters and sculptors, Bristol is well represented and in many sectors plays a significant national role.

Famously, Bristol hosts such notable large concerns as the BBC and its Natural



Spike Island - formerly Brooke Bond Tea Factory (photo courtesy of Spike Island).

History Unit. Creative businesses and individuals with a world-wide reputation such as Aardman Animation, the Old Vic theatre and its drama school, the Arncliffe, RWA and of course Banksy have their creative roots firmly buried in the city. Bristol also draws creative people from other parts of the UK, especially from London and the South East, because of the lower cost of living, and the attractive and stimulating environment on offer. The lively art scene with its festivals and galleries makes our city a true competitor to London, Liverpool, Glasgow and

Manchester, with the wealth and influence that the status brings.

Much of the active creative scene is typically composed of single person enterprises or businesses which employ small numbers of people. Given the right environment it is no surprise that from little acorns great oaks grow. Individuals and small companies often struggle to find affordable rental space of the right size to practise and develop their activities. Because suitable working space is in short supply and is often expensive, in future it is perhaps more likely that new locations for the creative industries will locate further out in Bristol suburbs. A couple of decades ago the problem of finding suitable places to establish studios in central Bristol was perhaps less acute. Often older, formerly industrial commercial property, provided a logical place for collectives of artists' collectives to establish and develop redundant buildings, giving those buildings a sustainable new purpose. Art studios such as BV Studios in Bedminster, Spike Island, Hamilton House (*where some studios are currently under threat. Ed.*) in Stokes Croft, or The Island in

Bridewell have breathed new life into moribund buildings and have kick-started the regeneration of surrounding communities. As in other parts of the country where art prospers, money and thriving urban communities follow.

Jane Faram, communications manager at Spike Island, explains that the impressive studio complex and galleries on Cumberland Road were formerly the factory of the Brooke Bond Tea Company. Jane points out that 25 years ago the burgeoning art community had the desire to acquire more and better workspace in Bristol, and the environment for funding of a creative industry was very different. Today, after a couple of phases of major capital investment, a well-appointed 80,000 sq ft studio building is a vibrant hub for various creative industry productions. Spike Island is large and flexible enough to successfully stage contemporary art and design exhibitions of international quality within its galleries. On the production side, Spike Island is home to a group of over 70 artists occupying affordable art space in individual or shared studios, alongside many emerging small creative businesses. A wide range of artistic creativity is to be seen from art installations, film production, sculpture, painting, model-making and illustration. Students from the University of the West of England studying for arts degrees also use the building. Spike Island's public funding is roughly just a quarter of its turnover (chiefly Arts Council England and Bristol City Council), and this levers the surprisingly high proportion of its earned and fundraised income. Today, Spike Island has an established reputation as a creative hub, as well as for the contemporary art and design exhibition programmes it promotes. A place well worth a visit.

Over at BV Studios in Bedminster, Penny



BV Studios, Philip Street, Bedminster.

Jones studio manager describes how 20 years ago, a group of independent artists were struggling to find commercial space in the city clubbed together to create their first 1,200 sq. ft. studios at the old Robinson factory in East Street. The building was sold in 2004, leaving the artists displaced and looking for new property. A timely

Bristol has a large, active and varied commercial creative industry which is the envy of other large cities.

intervention by a benefactor led to the purchase of the present 30,000 sq. ft. building on St Philips Street, home of the former Wiltshire Printing Works, to facilitate and nurture a vibrant new creative community. Since 2007 steady development and investment has enabled BV studios to offer 39 well equipped studio units at affordable rents, and is home to over 140 artists and makers at any one time. Aside from artists working in all media, many of whom show work both here and internationally,

studio holders include film-makers, animators, graphic artists and illustrators, photographers, framers and print makers. Hundreds of artists have passed through the building over the last decade. BV Studio also host Bristol Hackspace, which welcomes people with an interest in all kinds of making and creating, from woodworking to jewellery design. Once again well worth a visit.

Since 2008 Hamilton House in Stokes Croft has offered space to a creative industry community comprised of practitioners of fine art, photographers, illustrators, fashion and costume designers to name but a few. Jamaica Street Studios is another of the artist-led studios in the city. Established for over 20 years, with over 30 artists working across three floors, it is a place for painting, printing, illustration, film-making and more. The old Bridewell Police Station, now called The Island, hosts a studio complex and art facility with a capacity for 120 artists. My apologies to the other art spaces omitted.

Bristol thus has a large, active and varied commercial creative industry which is the envy of other large cities; an industry which is developing and nurturing art and new ideas - which sometimes go on to be big ideas - replacing industries which have declined, creating new employment. In many ways art can assist in the regeneration of city centres, bringing in new people, and new ideas, and creating opportunities and jobs for existing residents. Bilbao in Spain, Tate St Ives, Tate Liverpool, and at a local level the redevelopment of Paintworks in Brislington are good example of art reviving communities. Art has inspired the upgrading and new use of older redundant buildings in Bristol; more space may be needed but are there suitable buildings out there? The sector in Bristol is creating sustainable wealth and acts as a catalyst for improvements in the quality of everyday local life. Bristol would do well to look for and encourage, further growth in this sector.



Jamaica Street Studios.

The Architecture Centre signals transformation in its 21st year

Katie Darling looks at the Architecture Centre's upcoming programme.

To mark its 21st birthday, the Architecture Centre

looks forward to transformation with the appointment of new Director Dr Anna Rutherford. Passionate about Bristol, Anna Rutherford joins the Architecture Centre to further develop its strategic role in urban design and creative placemaking.

Originally a bioscientist, Anna left medical research in 2010 to set up one of the UK's leading Pride festivals in Bristol, before being recruited as Executive Director of international arts organisation In Between Time. Known for driving step-changes in organisations, Anna has already made her mark on the city and now sets her sights on raising the cultural profile of architecture in the West of England. Speaking of her appointment Dr Rutherford says;

"The design of the city around us has a profound effect on our daily lives, happiness and well-being. As Bristol and the West of England experience an unprecedented period of growth, we have a key role to play in ensuring good growth, international leadership and strong design, so that the city we deliver is one future generations can be proud of. I'm delighted to be part of this future change."

Since her appointment in June, Anna has already made significant developments to the programme. The Architecture Centre has announced a new partnership with The Royal West of England Academy (RWA) for their 166th Annual Open Exhibition. Together the Architecture Centre and

Dr Anna Rutherford, the Architecture Centre's new director.



the RWA will host a room dedicated to architecture during the Annual Open Exhibition (7 October - 25 November). Speaking of this refocus, and the new partnership with the Architecture Centre, RWA Director Alison Bevan said;

"The RWA has always had architecture, as well as fine art, at its heart, and yet for many years the Annual Open Exhibition has not reflected this. We'd love to dedicate a space to architecture this year and very much hope that we see some great examples of architects' work in all media."

The Architecture Centre's annual festival Bristol Open Doors (14-16 September 2018) also sees an exciting period of change under Rutherford's leadership. Launching a new look, new website (bristolopendoors.org.uk) and new programme of 100+ building tours, talks and family events. Giving the citizens the keys to the city, everyone is invited to discover of heritage spaces, forgotten places and innovative design. Supported in recent years by the Bristol Civic Society, the festival receives over 25,000 attendees in one

weekend and continues to be a powerful public platform for engaging everyone in a better appreciation of Bristol's buildings and places. Speaking of a renewed commitment to the Bristol Open Doors programme Anna comments;

"Bristol Open Doors is a huge civic event. Together, we celebrate the past, present and future of our city. As citizens it's our opportunity to engage with the very fabric and stories of Bristol. At a time when it feels as though some doors are closing on people, we're excited to be throwing them open."

The appointment is part of a wave of success for the Architecture Centre. Arts Council England recently announced a significant investment in the Centre, the

organisation is experiencing record demand for its Design Review service (budf.org.uk), and Anna has just confirmed a new two-year partnership agreement with UWE's Architecture and Built Environment Department. Going from strength to strength, a new vision for the Architecture Centre is being developed. Of this progress Anna says "partnerships will be at the heart of our future and we welcome everyone with an interest in architecture, place and the wider built environment to get in touch to explore creative opportunities".

An upcoming event with the Bristol Civic Society is one such partnership. Together with the family of the late Dorothy Brown (see page 22), we are planning to hold a memorial lecture this winter to celebrate the indomitable woman known as a saviour of historic Bristol.

For further event information check the website for details: architecturecentre.org.uk.

Abolition Shed. Could this be Bristol's next heritage attraction?



'Reconcile, remember and reflect.'

Bristol's ongoing debate about how Edward Colston should be remembered is as lively and acrimonious as ever, and now there are calls for a dedicated museum of slave-trading and abolition campaigning. *Eugene Byrne reports.*

The next heritage attraction to open in Bristol might be a museum looking at the city's role in the slave trade, and in its abolition.

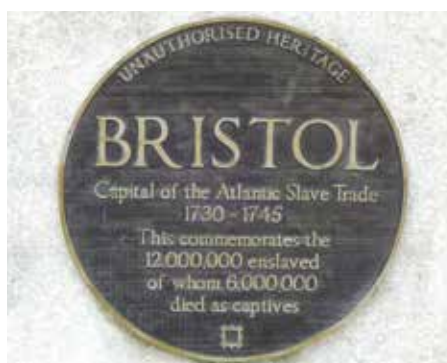
It's not likely to happen anytime soon, but calls for what's being called 'Abolition Shed' are gaining support in a number of quarters.

Campaigners had identified a suitable site in the form of long-derelict former transit sheds on Welsh Back, and had the support of the Welsh Back Association and the Bristol Radical history Group, but the site's owners have planning approval for restaurants.

Whether built on this site or another, the campaigners say that the need for such a museum is pressing.

Local historian Mark Steeds of the Bristol Radical History Group (and the Long John Silver Trust) told Better Bristol: 'Other cities with a history linked to slavery are light years ahead of Bristol in terms of recognising this important part of their past.'

'Nantes in France has turned an ancient quayside into a slave trade memorial and park and Liverpool, Bristol's great mercantile rival, has created an immensely successful International



There are calls for a second plaque on the Colston Statue. This unofficial plaque briefly appeared on the plinth in May 2018.

Slavery Museum. Bristol is behind the curve.'

Bristol, he says, also has too much reverence for too few of its historic figures. While the lion's share of attention goes to the likes of Colston, Cabot and Brunel, there are others who should not be overlooked.

'Especially some of Bristol's great women campaigners such as Mary Carpenter, Elizabeth Blackwell and Hannah More who were all robustly anti-slavery.'

The calls for a museum are against a backdrop of continuing debate over how Edward Colston should be remembered; either as a slave trading scumbag, or as a generous benefactor who made his money doing something

that no-one thought wrong at the time.

This, of course, has been one of the most contentious issues in Bristol in recent decades, but in the last two years Colston apologists have been on the back foot.

The Bristol Music Trust, which runs the Colston Hall (currently closed for major renovations) announced that the name will have changed when it re-opens. Colston's Primary School has been renamed Cotham Gardens Primary, the Colston Yard pub is now the Bristol Yard. The annual Colston's Girls School commemoration service last November had no mention of the man himself, while Bristol's current Lord Mayor, Cllr Cleo Lake, pointedly removed Colston's portrait from her office in June.

A proposed second plaque to go on the Colston statue in the city centre would point out his slaving links and that his endowments were only to support those who subscribed to his political and religious beliefs. In a curious intervention in July, Conservative Councillor, Richard Eddy, suggested that vandalising such a plaque (were it to be erected) 'might be justified'. (Bristol Post 23 July 2018)

'A slave trade memorial in Bristol,' says Mark Steeds, 'would be a massive statement that Bristol is no longer willing to obscure its past or sweep it under the carpet. It would be a place to reconcile, remember and reflect.'

Where to build houses? Near existing transport links, or where it helps justify new roads?



Where should the housing should go?

Alan Morris takes a view of the latest planning policy for the region.

As we know, there is a strong need for more housing, and that affects our area just as much as other parts of Britain. A plan (a 'Joint Spatial Plan') for the West of England area has been evolving over the last three years, and its Public Examination will take place in late 2019. The plan allocates where new housing should go over the next 20 years.

So how should it choose where the housing should go? In the draft plan, decisions have been made on the basis of two preferred principles: 'avoid

the green belt' and 'build where the transport links are'.

Take the first principle. Everyone accepts that some building in the green belt is needed, because the wide expanse of green belt does not leave enough space to build outside it.

The plan includes some housing in locations outside the green belt, eg Churchill and Banwell. And some in the green belt, eg at Nailsea, Backwell and Whitchurch.

Then what about transport links? It is generally agreed that building in existing cities is the most 'sustainable' approach, but that is not enough to meet all the projected demand. Bristol has rightly accepted its share, based on a careful analysis of where and how densification ('urban living') can be achieved, and where land could be freed up for housing.

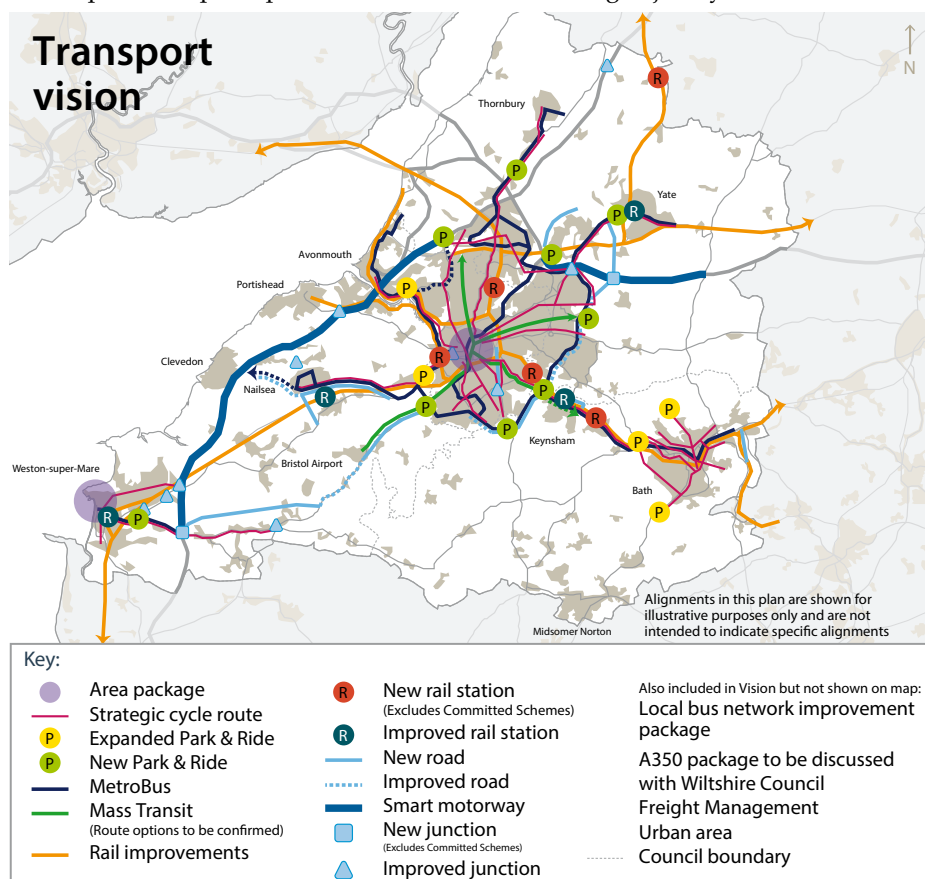
You now look at the regional plan and ask yourself – did they decide where they wanted to build roads and then put the housing to justify the new roads?



The analysis supporting the plan proposes £3.1bn expenditure on roads – marked light blue on the map. (This is alongside high expenditure on public transport, including rapid transit routes). £1.4bn of this is for improving parts of the route from the M4 north-east of Bristol to the M5 at Weston-super Mare – via a new section of ring road to Whitchurch, the A38 south to Churchill, and Banwell. Another road improvement is between the A370 south-west of Bristol and the M5 at Clevedon – Nailsea and Backwell are on this route.

But are there other locations for new housing that work better for transport links? Urban extensions might be close to transport networks but are in the Green Belt – should the Green Belt be pushed back? Ashton Vale perhaps, which is close to Bristol? Why was that not chosen? Such challenges have been made in responses to the draft plan, and will be pored over at the Examination.

At the same time a transport plan is being developed (a Joint Local Transport Plan), which will adapt the spatial plan's transport analysis and add to it, leading to consultation on a draft plan in December or January. A draft Bristol Transport Strategy will be published from late September. Hopefully the plan will critically review the high planned expenditure on roads. However, feasibility studies on some of the road (and rapid transit) proposals have already started, not waiting for the transport plan. So there is some commitment behind them. Bristol, the Society and others want to see priority given to road measures that maximise people flows in the road space available, not vehicle flows. This not only makes sense for transport policy, but also improves the street environment.



Tackling air pollution in Bristol

Alan Morris delves behind the headlines on air pollution and proposes actions to improve it.

Air pollution is a “public health crisis”.

The health impacts of air pollution are well known, including increased deaths from heart disease, breathing problems, and lung cancer. Around 300 deaths a year in Bristol are linked to air pollution. Like cigarette smoking, its harmful effects have been known for a long time before enough action is taken. Parallels to secondary smoking are not far-fetched.

Some people are more vulnerable to air pollution. Air pollution particularly affects the old and the young, and those with heart and lung conditions. It can lead to children growing up with smaller lungs, and exacerbates asthma. Air pollution has even been associated with changes in the brain linked to dementia.

Bristol is about to tackle NO₂ pollution.

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution impacts on health. Pollution from NO₂ comes primarily from diesel vehicles. High levels of it can inflame the airways in our lungs and, over a long period of time, affect how well our lungs work. Diesel vehicles still emit too much polluting gas – independent real-world road tests show that many diesel cars continue to pollute heavily.

We already know where the NO₂ pollution hot-spots are – the council’s network of sensors shows that hot-spots occur where traffic is congested – mostly

In some areas pollution is more than 50% higher than the prescribed limit.

in the city centre and on the arterial roads leading into the city centre. There are schools close to polluted roads.

Bristol has to agree a Clean Air Plan by December 2018. Bristol exceeds the prescribed limits for (NO₂) pollution – in the worst cases, the pollution is more than 50% higher than the limit. So the government has required the Council to come up with a plan which can be shown to get pollution within the limits in the shortest possible time. Other cities, such as Leeds, Birmingham and Bath, are also developing a Clean Air Plan.

Support a Clean Air Zone!

Other than a ban on diesel cars, a “charging” Clean Air Zone (a zone in which certain vehicles are charged when used in the zone) is the only measure that we can be confident will deliver cleaner air. Bristol has over the years implemented other measures to encourage a shift to alternative modes of transport, like cycle lanes, rail enhancements and Metrobus. But these measures are not enough on their own.

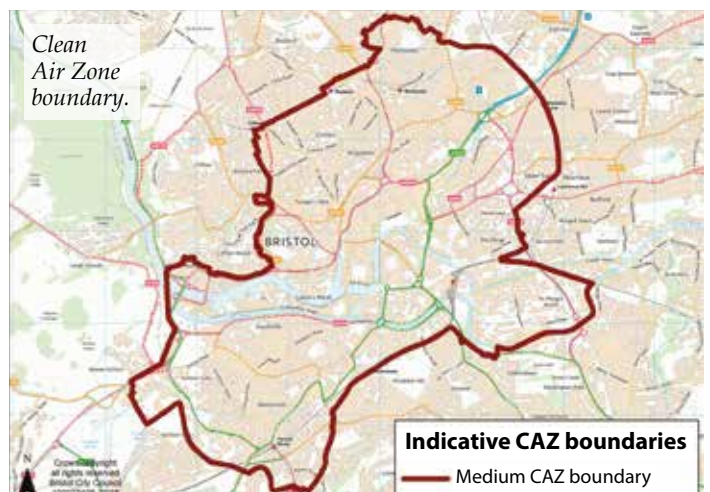
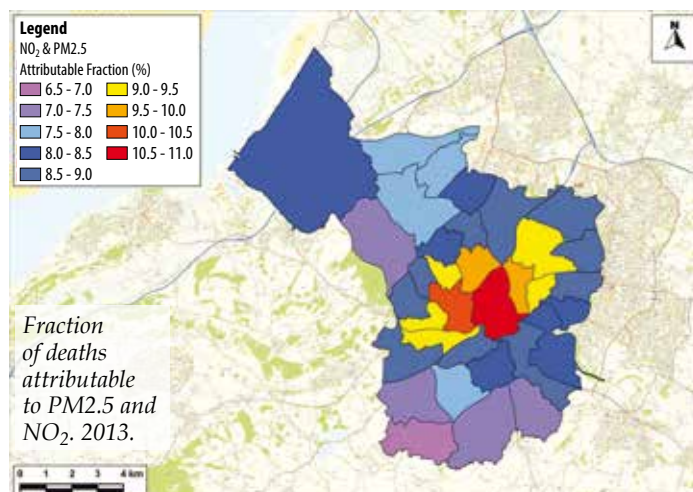


The council wants to know people’s views, especially their views on a Clean Air Zone (CAZ). People will no doubt tell the council if they are against it. They need to hear from people who support it. You can support a CAZ by going to the council’s website at cleanairforbristol.org/get-involved/ and completing the feedback form.

More is needed.

But a CAZ is not enough. A CAZ should get us below current NO₂ pollution limits, but the research evidence is that no level is safe. The CAZ charges will not affect the newest diesel vehicles even though many are still not clean. A CAZ will help, and is a prize worth having. But other measures are needed to reduce air pollution – measures that enable a shift to active travel and shared transport.

It’s not just about NO₂ emissions: particulates impact on health too. A ban on wood-burning stoves is needed as part of a Clean Air Act. Action is awaited from government, which is consulting on possible measures.



Book review

The Women Who Built Bristol 1184 -2018

The (s)heroic Jane Duffus has written an accessible and wide-ranging book about the women who have helped shape our city. Some you will already be aware of. The majority, however, have been rescued from the shadows of history. Jane's choice is eclectic and empowering. She features artists, politicians, suffragettes, merchants, egyptologists, pin-makers – all female life is here.

This is an inspiring book for everyone. It contains tales of women fighting inequality, being true to themselves when the odds are invariably stacked against them, and rousing others to do likewise.

The book was produced to raise funds for the charity Bristol Women's Voice

Excerpt from The Women Who Built Bristol 1184 -2018

Dorothy Brown 1927-2013, Architectural Campaigner.

The indignities that many Bristol buildings have suffered at the hands of the town planners are widely lamented. But it could have been a heck of a lot worse if it wasn't for Dorothy Brown who became a passionate campaigner to save historic buildings in the city. She was so committed to preserving the grand architecture in Bristol that at the time of her death in October 2013 she was working in Redland Library on yet another campaign.

Born in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Dorothy moved to Bristol in 1954

Jane Duffus
Tangent
Books ISBN
9781910089712
£12.99



after marrying her husband Tom. They settled in the city and brought up five children. When she heard about plans in 1970 to build a "monstrous" hotel complex in the Avon Gorge, Dorothy stepped in and launched a campaign to protect the Gorge from the damaging development, and the following year she established the Bristol Visual and Environmental Group with a view to tackling Bristol City Council's destructive plans to bulldoze the city's historic buildings and harbour area and replace them with concrete, steel and motorways: a damning proposal that ignored everything except the flow

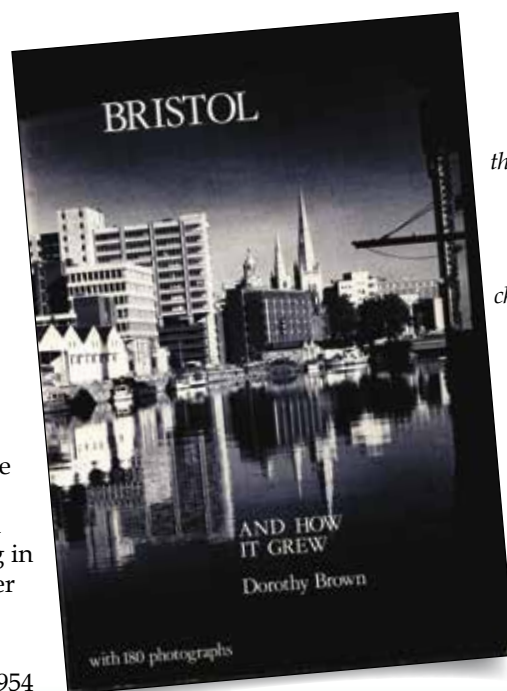
of traffic. Some 400 buildings were scheduled for demolition but because of Dorothy's hard work almost all of them were saved (including Brunswick Square in St Paul's, where the Bristol Women's Voice offices are now situated).⁴²

In a letter to the town planners, Dorothy fumed: "I write to you in disgust and indignation, having just seen the shells of the elegant sandstone houses which are being demolished in Clifton Park. I understood that Clifton is some kind of special area and would have thought that demolitions of this type would have required planning permission."

In addition to letters, Dorothy wrote numerous books about the development of Bristol as a city and in 1979 she set up the Conservation Advisory Panel to inform Bristol City Council about future planning decisions. In 1988, she was awarded an MBE for her decades of dedication.

In a piece celebrating Dorothy's achievements, Johanna Darque wrote: "During a time when the residual momentum of Modernism and a prevailing post-war ethic of accelerated redevelopment were driving town planners towards fast, concrete-based development within city centres, Dorothy Brown stood as a bastion of common sense conservation."

Without Dorothy's tireless campaigning, Bristol would look very different to the city we currently know and enjoy.



Dorothy Brown's book opened the eyes of many to Bristol's beauty and character.

The ups and downs of Clifton Rocks Railway and the Clifton Spa – The Definitive History

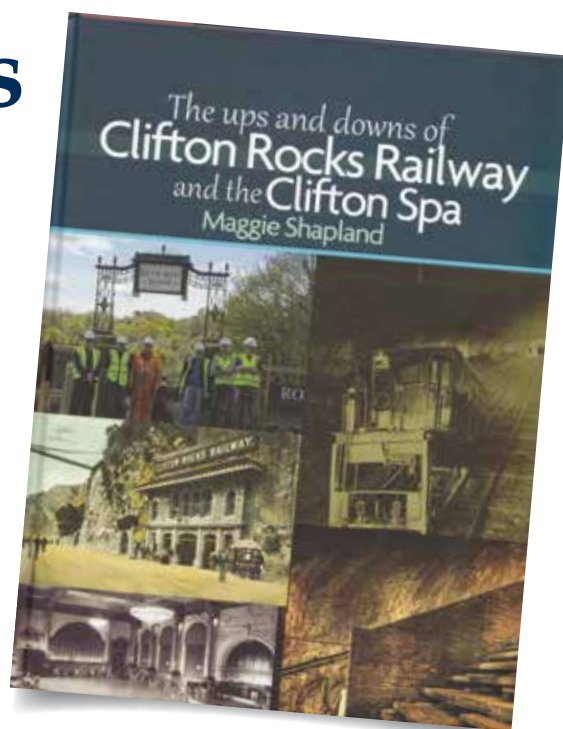
Simon Birch reviews Maggie Shapland's new book.

What a comprehensive and exhaustive volume! Beautifully produced and illustrated, a labour of love and academic rigour. In A4 format there are over 300 pages of dense factual information with 16 detailed chapters, my favourite being the mysteriously titled 'Conservation vs Restoration, the Marie Celeste experience'.

Not a book to read from start to finish, but to dip into and to discover fascinating insights into the planning behind the Rocks Railway, the challenges

faced by its construction, the railway in operation and the subsequent uses of the tunnel especially in wartime.

This story deserves to be told and Maggie Shapland has spent twelve years researching and another year in the production of this volume. If you are interested in industrial archaeology, in the development of Clifton and in the detail of such an unusual feature then I would encourage you to buy a copy.



Published by Bristol Industrial Archaeological Society on behalf of the Clifton Rocks Railway Trust, December 2017

Available at the modest cost of £15 – send email to Maggie.Shapland@gmail.com to arrange purchase.

Oxford Blues

Mike Manson enjoys the classical and vernacular architecture of Oxford.

Right, Zaha Hadid's ephemeral, stainless steel, 'tunnel'.



Left, Blavatnik School of Government. More than just a passing nod to Frank Lloyd Wright's New York Guggenheim.



What do Oxford and Bristol, two seemingly very different cities, have in common? Skyscrapers under threat; insurmountable transport challenges; ugly in-your-face developments; an expanding student population and a shortage of affordable housing. Quite a lot, it turns out.

This is what members of the Bristol Civic Society found in June when they were led on walking tours of the city by their Civic Society counterparts in Oxford.

Alongside the sublime classical

buildings, we were privileged to be shown several of the more recent prestige college developments.

This included the Blavatnik School of Government housed in a building developed by Herzog & de Meuron. A sumptuous, clean cut, whirl of a building, giving more than just a passing nod to Frank Lloyd Wright's New York Guggenheim. We also visited the Rafael Viñoly Architects designed Mathematical Institute, a homage to subdued cubism on the outside, Escheresque on the inside.

But most outstanding of all, was Zaha Hadid's ephemeral, stainless steel, Stirling Prize winning 'tunnel' for the Middle East Centre at St Antony's

College. A Marmite building that jumps out as you walk along the suburban Woodstock Road. Linking two Victorian brick houses – it both shocks and awes.

Not all the developments were so arresting. We were shown a block of student houses that 'slipped through the net' challenging the world famous vista from the bucolic Port Meadows to the eponymous dreaming spires.

We also viewed some interesting vernacular architecture – mostly pub interiors.

Thank you Sir Clive Booth and colleagues of the Oxford Civic Society for an informative, educational and entertaining day.

Bristol Arena

Mike Manson ponders the future of Bristol's stately pleasure-dome.

The Bristol Arena was proposed as a world-class 12,000 capacity entertainment venue that would host over 100 events a year: a mix of music, comedy, family entertainment shows and sports exhibition events.

The creation of the arena would mean that residents living in and around Bristol would have a major performance venue on their doorstep and would no longer have to travel to other cities to see touring arena shows.

The initial projected budget for the arena was £123.5m, for which funding is available from the Economic Development Fund (£53m), operator contribution and income (£42.5m) and infrastructure funding associated with the wider Temple Meads East project (£28m).

Current estimates suggest that the cost of building Temple Quarter arena will be significantly higher than original projections. The most recent figure stands at £173m.

It was envisaged that the arena development would regenerate a derelict site to the east of Temple Meads Station and be a catalyst for further development, creating jobs and stimulating growth. Visitors would stay overnight in nearby hotels, or even for the weekend, and visit other nearby attractions and spend their money in Cabot Circus.

That was the plan. But currently the project has come to a temporary halt. In November 2017 Mayor Rees announced a pause in the pre-construction work while KPMG conducted an independent value for money review.

Shortly after this, Mayor Rees, en route to China, stopped off in Malaysia to speak to YTL -an 'infrastructure conglomerate' - who are the owners of the Brabazon Hangar at Filton Airfield.

In January 2018 YTL offered to house the arena in Filton, just metres within the city boundary.

The KPMG Value for money report was published in June 2018. This was accompanied by another two reports: 'An assessment for alternative plans for an arena in Bristol' and 'An Assessment of alternative development plans for the Temple Island site.'



Bristol Arena, bottom left, showing its location to the new Bristol University Campus.

Pros and cons of the Arena and Brabazon Hangar:

	'Arena Island', Temple Meads	Brabazon Hangar, Filton Airfield
Cost	£188 million: £156.3 for the arena; £16.2 for car facilities; £16.1 million for land and interest.	Malaysian company YTL has pledged to cover cost of building an arena. Actual cost not disclosed. £100 million road improvements will be required – funded by both Bristol and South Gloucestershire.
Capacity	12,000	16,000
What's been done already	£9 million spent on clearing site. Planning, funding and contractor all in place.	Brabazon Hangar is mothballed and ready for change of use.
Location	Arena Island, Central Bristol. Part of the Temple Quarter regeneration Area.	On the Bristol/South Gloucestershire boundary. Part of a wider development. Cribbs Causeway and Mall nearby.
Transport links	Good rail and bus links. Ferry opportunity. Roads liable to congestion. Minimal car parking available.	M4/5 nearby. On proposed MetroBus route. Possibility of new rail links. A38 liable to congestion.
Benefit to the community	'Fill an existing gap in Bristol's cultural offering.' Jobs for the local community. Any profits from arena go to the council. (KPMG notes that arenas in the UK typically require public subsidy and are not independently profitable at commercial rates of return.)	Excellent news for the newly built Village Hotel, Filton. There are likely to be long queues at the Costa Coffee drive thru. Any profits go to a private company.
Alternative use of site	Conference centre; housing. KPMG say this opinion will generate three times as many jobs as an arena.	Housing; conference centre. Warehousing. An arena?!

KPMG concluded that the 'Filton Arena presents better value for money relative to the Temple Island Arena project'. They noted that: 'There is considerable difference in the stage of development of the plans for the propositions and the details on which the assessments are based.'

However, KPMG conceded that: 'In comparison to the Filton Arena development, the Temple Island Arena is a well-developed project and as a result could be considered, at this point in time, to be more deliverable.' Mayor Marvin Rees says he's committed



to building an arena for Bristol. 'But only at the right price.' He has said he will announce his decision at the September (2018) cabinet meeting. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the decision will have been announced.



Bristol Civic Society Student Award

Each year Bristol Civic Society presents an award for an outstanding piece of work by a graduating student from the Faculty of Environment and Technology at the University of the West of England. This year Lewis Hill is a worthy winner with his plan, and skillfully evocative illustrations, for a Town Hall for Frome.

The Winning Project

The Independents for Frome Town Hall - A Forum for Collaboration, Debate and Trade
by Lewis Hill

In September 2017 myself and 40 Architecture and Planning students were tasked to undertake a study of Frome (available at www.FutureFrome.com). Frome is a town in eastern Somerset and the site of the final year Design Studio project.

Early research depicts a town with a charming historic centre, independent retail and market identity and a growing creative arts scene.

Below the surface Frome is a town that is intrinsically linked to the economic development of Somerset. The Industrial Revolution in the Midlands and Northern England spelt the end for many thriving industries in Frome and across Somerset. Subsequently with huge economic crashes in Frome throughout the 1800s, social democracy and faith in the community offered local people hope of a positive future. Many of the independent retailers and markets that were established in the late 1800s and early 1900s can still be seen in Frome today. In the last half-century inappropriate planning and development has started to dilute this independent identity. The town's historic footprint has been fractured and economic decline is visible through widespread dereliction. To inspire change, in the 2015 Parish elections the people of Frome elected all 17 seats to the Independents for Frome (IFF) Party who work without the 'whip' of formal leadership. As students, we were challenged to produce a masterplan for Frome's town centre,



Market Interior.

along with a landmark building that would be delivered as part of the Frome Neighbourhood Plan by 2028.

The masterplan is informed by the 'Frome Independent' market, to enable the vitality of these monthly market-days to be commonplace in the town and allow an independent community to thrive. By sensitively utilising the existing architecture and using the derelict zones to provide an array of new town centre developments, the dynamic of the town centre is transformed. Pedestrian urban spines linked by a series of public spaces provide new lateral connections to ensure that the town centre is a hive of social activity.

The Independents for Frome Town Hall is situated both functionally and symbolically at the centre of the development. By raising administrative



Chamber Interior.

quarters, sheltered space for markets and social activities is made available, as well as opening links between the surrounding public spaces and the town hall chamber. This encourages active community engagement in local politics and town hall events. Tiered seating and viewing galleries above ground level facilitate an immersive and intense atmosphere, with debate occurring at all levels. A gently inclining ramp unifies the surrounding public spaces with each building level; removing the social and political hierarchy that so often both symbolically and physically divides political buildings.

'Independence' and 'democracy' rely on a wide structure of cultural, social and political relationships beyond simply the design of our Town Halls. The manifestation of 'bottom-up' ideas is encouraged by enabling local people to freely interact with members of all involved organisations in the governmental hierarchy. This historic independent spirit of the population of Frome will not only encourage the development of Frome alone, it also has the potential to transform the structure of local decision-making throughout the UK in the future.

All illustrations by Lewis Hill.



At the unveiling a 22-piece silver band played lively renditions.

Trumpeting our worthy citizens

Gordon Young looks through a glass darkly.

Two recent unveilings vividly demonstrate the manifold forms which these auspicious occasions can take. One, at 87 Kingsdown Parade, honoured the poet Robert Southey. Professor Robin Bailey of UWE addressed a small gathering and spoke about Southey's life and his time at the family home. *Points West* filmed it, on a day of a significant football match. The programme was rescheduled to 11pm and just half its normal length. Southey was a no-show: clearly, not match-fit . . .

The other plaque, for John Henry Iles, at 91 Sommerville Road and unveiled in St Andrews Park, had a 22-piece silver band playing lively renditions including *Don't Cry for Me Argentina* and a selection from *West Side Story*. It certainly drew a crowd from around the park.

The Lord Mayor, The Rt Hon Lesley Alexander, in one of the last public engagements of her tenure entertained us with a story of history repeating itself. She had arrived in the mayoral limousine, reg. no. AE 1. That plate had originally adorned the first private car in Bristol, owned by John Iles!



J H Iles was a major player in the British brass band movement, founding the National Brass Band Championships, the world's most prestigious brass band competition. And he promoted amusement parks across England and Europe. His entrepreneurial talent made him rich but he then invested heavily in a film production company and the venture was unsuccessful. He lost his personal fortune and was declared bankrupt in 1937.

But, if the tidal wave of achievement for individuals ebbs somewhat in later life, that in no way diminishes what they attained. The Arnolfini plaque for Daniel Wade Acraman celebrates his achievements as an iron founder and patron of local artists yet makes no mention of his eventual bankruptcy through risky investment in the tea trade.

And affixed to 1 Windsor Terrace, that towering monumental rank which contradicts the contours of the Avon

Gorge and thrusts out precipitously above the Portway, is a handsome, Clifton & Hotwells Improvement Society plaque commemorating Edward St John Daniel, VC. At 17 he braved heavy Crimea War fire, charged enemy lines and saved his commander's life. But he went AWOL, was drunk on watch, and then absconded before he could face a court martial. He was expelled from the service and stripped of his Victoria Cross. Courage can sometimes be defined as recklessness – this is probably the case with young Edward, but his plaque is there to tell his valiant story and is not censorious. And that is how it should be.

Plaques honour and celebrate virtue, excellence and attainment of a person or organisation, then, not now.

We should tread very carefully when we try to rewrite history. The virtuous view through a present-day moral prism can be out of focus. As an example, many admire the sculpture, typefaces and prints of that leading figure of the Arts and Crafts movement, Eric Gill. I urge them to stay well clear of his biography by Fiona McCarthy. It describes some of Eric's extremely deranged behavioural traits which, gentle reader, discretion dictates I do not elaborate on here . . .

(I fear that through any lens some of Gill's behaviour would be seen as exploitative. Ed)

Bristol Civic Society membership

Your Civic Society needs YOU!

JOIN

27

Membership

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

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

Bristol Civic Society is:

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

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



Joining is easy

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

Membership application to join Bristol Civic Society

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

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

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

Enquiries: Tel: 0117 962 2475

Email: membership@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk

Title..... Forename Surname

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Events

Autumn and Winter 2018/19

We are again organising a mixture of talks, walks and site visits. Some will have limited numbers and we usually make a small charge to cover any costs. **Please check the Civic Society website for updates on the following and other so far unannounced events.**



Explore historic and modern Redcliffe.



SEPT Thursday 20th September 2018, from 2pm
Study Visit to the Redcliffe Area

Visit led by David Martyn, Senior Conservation Architect, Bristol City Council.

Walking tour of the Redcliffe area which will cover its history and architecture. Is it time to re evaluate our relationship with an area of the city centre that's often overlooked? The walk will focus on the development of Redcliffe in the Twentieth Century and how planners sought to respond to the historic context. We will pass through some of the area's historic parts, before taking in some of the Redcliffe estate and, hopefully, reappraising its architectural and social contribution to the city.

Meeting point St Mary Redcliffe Church, detail to be determined.

SOLD OUT, numbers limited. Small charge. Joining details will be communicated to Members. Walk duration approx 2 - 2 1/2 hours.



OCT Tuesday 9th October 2018
Visit to Finzels Reach

A walking tour of this new City quarter taking in Castle Bridge, the conversion of the former Brewery buildings and the construction of new buildings on this densely developed site. Hosted by developer Cubex. Details to be circulated to Members shortly.



NOV November 2018 - date and venue t.b.a.

CINEMATIC BRISTOL

Four films, capturing the evocative, changing streetscape of our city:

- **It could have been so different**
Bristol's 1966 Development Plan proposed major new highways through the Floating Harbour. It didn't happen.
- **Bristol Revisited**
1956 footage: banana-boat unloading and blitzed areas of central Bristol in grainy black and white contrasting with current industries and street scenes. Commentary by Alvar Lidell.
- **Bristol, from A to Z**
Twenty-six little films describing Bristol's history.
- **Shipshape and Bristol Fashion**
An explanation of this nautical phrase. Presented by the filmmaker Gordon Young.



2019 In the planning for 2019:
Annual Social Evening.

Last year we held a very successful evening event in the King's Arms. We aim to repeat this: thoughts for a suitable venue welcomed!
Annual Transport Event - following well attended event in Watershed earlier this year we plan to make it an annual event.

Lost Rivers - a follow up to the extremely popular talk by Melvin Wood of the Environment Agency

Ashton Court Mansion

We will be continuing with our campaign to save and to restore Ashton Court Mansion. We plan further public events and consultation - following on from the very well attended public meeting held in the Mansion last November.

To join the Mansion newsletter distribution list please email simon.birch7@gmail.com.

If you have ideas for future events do please let us know!

We always welcome fresh thoughts.

We are a small team and need reinforcements.

If you can spare a little time to assist in organising our Events Programme please get in touch.

Please email events@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk with bookings, queries, ideas and offers of assistance!