

# Better Bristol

The Bristol Civic Society Magazine – Issue 26 Spring/Summer 2025

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- Too dense, too high
- Community-led housing
- Ten ways the pandemic changed Bristol
- Motion at a standstill
- Avon Needs Trees
- 100 years of Bristol in music and film



BRISTOL  
CIVIC  
SOCIETY

an independent force for a **better Bristol**







Front Cover: View from Temple Way towards the Shot Tower.

Photo: Mike Manson.

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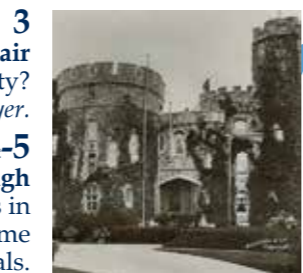
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Smarts Print Services Limited.

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We welcome contributions. If you have an idea for an article for *Better Bristol* contact the editor. Copy date for next edition 1 August 2025. All articles in *Better Bristol* are the opinion of the author and don't necessarily reflect the views of Bristol Civic Society.

## From the Chair

# A vision for our great city?



In the 1990s I led the Bristol Local Plan. I was tasked by the then chair of the Planning Committee to develop a cutting edge, whole city plan that had sustainability at its heart; a European style vision. In leading this work my team held a visioning day, when I asked everyone to write a report for *The Guardian* newspaper on a visit to Bristol imagining it to be 2020. I still have those papers....much of our vision in 1990 was for a leading and successful city, with an excellent transport system, with a vibrant European style city centre reducing inequalities in the city, and strong vibrant neighbourhoods.

I recently represented Bristol Civic Society at the Bristol Local Plan Examination by a team of government inspectors. We made representations about the overall strategy of the plan, the scale and growth in the city centre, the need to protect small businesses in the city, about social inclusion and left behind areas. Along with the Bristol Tree Forum we were the only voices for community input into planning for our great city. This surprised me - had local people not understood the opportunity to contribute to planning

our city, or were they happy with the plan?

It was interesting being on the other side of the table. Cities that have listened and worked with local community groups have achieved great places, innovative developments, and successful external funding.

I know from experience that engaging with our local communities, meeting campaigners can be tough, but we need to do this if we are to plan a great city together. This does not just apply to the Local Plan but also to the master planning, to major planning applications and to detailed projects in our neighbourhoods.

**The Civic Society Management Team is keen to extend our work to engage local communities, to build on successful local projects and use these as way of engaging more people ultimately in conversations about creating great places.**

It feels to me as though the city has lost some of the optimism for being creative, for being innovative, for engaging different communities and learning from successes elsewhere about what works well, how we can achieve new models of urban living, good place making, and catalysts for business growth.

It is great that new leaders are being appointed in key positions in the city and that they bring fresh ideas to

leading the City Council and Bristol Temple Quarter. The Civic Society has begun to engage in conversations about our growing city, the issues it faces and the opportunity to work together on great place making.

The Civic Society Management Team is keen to extend our work to engage local communities, to build on successful local projects and use these as way of engaging more people ultimately in conversations about creating great places. If you are a member of a local group and have ideas to extend our work do, please let me know.

We have also been reviewing the Society's Business Plan and trying to work out how we grow capacity to run more events, extend our reach and keep up the work commenting on projects and initiatives in the city. They say ask a busy person - well, is that you? Could you squeeze in doing a bit of work for the Civic Society? Please contact me if you would like to explore how you can help.

I am optimistic for the future of our great city, but we will do even better if we work together.

**Sandra Fryer**

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

See page 27 for more details...



# Major developments in Bristol - Too dense, too high

## A review of some important proposals

### 4-16 Filwood Broadway, Knowle West, BS4 1JN

The development of this site is to provide 18 residential units and commercial floorspace.

The Society supports this project in principle but objects to the proposed internal layouts of the flats. The applicant has spent a significant amount of time and effort producing the proposals and the documents show what a fantastic job has been done. The consultation with the community and in-depth analysis of the existing buildings and elevational treatments is to be commended.

However, we believe that there is a fundamental design error in the proposals which is negatively affecting the very positive objective to create more residential properties in the area. The living spaces are in the middle of the flats without any windows or clear views out and therefore cannot deliver healthy living standards.

In addition, the flat layouts turn their backs on the street, by providing bedrooms to the front elevation. This could cause ongoing noise issues and additional cost to the building and occupants.

In our view, these issues could readily be designed away, thereby creating an excellent project in all respects.

### Temple Island

This application seeks full planning permission for an office block with flexible commercial floorspace at ground floor level in the northwest corner of the site and outline permission for the development of the remainder of the site with office, residential, hotel and flexible commercial uses including eating and drinking facilities mainly in tall blocks

close to the perimeter of the site.

We are particularly concerned about the impact of this cluster of tall buildings on the approach to Bristol's city centre from Bath Road and Wells Road especially in the context of proposals for further intensive and high rise developments proposed for the adjacent site to the north and the former Peugeot site on the corner of Clarence Road.

It is the height and massing of the proposed buildings which give rise to the harmful impact of the proposal. They are mostly tall, the highest being nineteen stories. We are concerned that the setting of listed buildings at Temple Meads will be compromised. Looking towards the development from the north, the proposed buildings would interrupt and obstruct views of the Totterdown escarpment, an important feature in the topography of the city. The proposed use of dark grey materials will, the Society considers, exacerbate the adverse impacts and be particularly depressing on dull and damp days of which there are many in Bristol.



Temple-Island



4-16 Filwood Broadway.

520 homes would be provided, largely of one and two bed units. 20% are scheduled to be affordable homes for private rental. The Society questions whether this mix is right for meeting housing need in the city.

Provision of space for varied commercial and service uses is positive so long as they prove viable.

The pedestrian and cycle connection to Bath Road is a positive aspect but provision should be made to ensure adequate maintenance of the cycle lift so that it remains usable or an alternative cycle access should be provided.

The proposals include public access to the river bank on the eastern boundary. This would be beneficial although the backdrop of the high rise buildings would detract from its ambience and cast a shade in the afternoon and evening.

### 30-64 Pennywell Road, St. Judes, BS5 0TG

The Bristol Civic Society considers that this proposal crams too much accommodation on the site and constitutes gross overdevelopment. The proposed density is two-and-a-half times the optimum density for sites in an inner city-centre setting, as stated in the Urban Living local planning policy document.

We are disappointed that this proposal fails to accord with the Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework, which offers a sound basis for the development of a good liveable neighbourhood. There is no justification for buildings to exceed height parameters set by the Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework. The 12/14 and 15/18 storey buildings proposed along the western and northern boundaries of the site will severely affect development proposals on adjacent sites.

Other comments are:

- Buildings are shown above an existing live sewer crossing the site. The new street through the site should be moved to be above the sewer.
- The inclusion of eleven flexible commercial units is welcomed, keeping a significant element of employment space on the site and contributing active frontage at street level.
- This site should not be 'car-free'. There should be provision for those residents who must use a car for their work to park within the residential blocks.
- Draft Local Plan policy advocates 25% dwellings with 3+ bedrooms. There is only 8.5% in this proposal; there should be more, including townhouses along Pennywell Road.
- The proposed buildings should be set back further from the existing trees along Pennywell Road to allow the trees to flourish.

### Broadmead Design Code

Bristol Civic Society has commented on a draft Broadmead Design Code. The development of design codes was introduced into government planning policy in 2021. The aim is to make design expectations clearer for developers in a particular location, and hence to make the planning application process more efficient. A good idea in principle.

This document is Bristol's first design code, and so it is the first opportunity to see how Bristol interprets the requirement for design



30-64 Pennywell Road

• As with the proposal for the adjoining Crown Sawmills site, this scheme bears little relation to what is shown for the site in the Frome Gateway Framework document, so we wonder about its validity if these schemes ignore what is included in the document.

### 68-72 Avon Street, BS2 0PS

The proposal is to demolish the existing building and redevelop for purpose-built student accommodation and flexible commercial space.

Bristol Civic Society commented on the information produced for the public consultation exercise carried out in autumn 2024. These were sent to the applicant but since then little has changed in the proposals.

The context elevations and views show that the building proposed is bland, too high and overbearing in some views, which confirms our earlier comments that the scheme is poor aesthetically and does not relate to the history of the

68-72 Avon Street



site which is in the Silverthorne Lane Conservation Area and adjacent to the listed Marble Works.

We consider that there must be a fundamental rethink of the elevational treatment of this building to respond to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There needs to be greater horizontal emphasis with a more clearly defined base, middle and top to the elevations and different architectural treatments applied to distinct parts of the elevations. The dull grey brickwork needs to be replaced by a more contextual material palette reflecting the Bristol red brick and stone vernacular.

Other comments are:

- Winter-gardens have been added to student bedrooms on the north-eastern elevation as an acoustic device to counter the noise from Motion Nightclub. We consider that the glazed wall of the winter-gardens should be expressed externally as a different architectural treatment so enlivening the building's elevations.
- Although a good level of daylight is achieved in most rooms, the future building on the adjacent site to the north will have a significant negative effect on daylight in those rooms facing it, which could be overcome by enlarging the windows, again enlivening the building's elevations.

codes. This design code is one of the detailed policy documents that will elaborate on the City Centre Development and Delivery Plan that was endorsed by the Council in December 2023.

Unfortunately, we have a number of reasons for concluding that the draft design code needs re-writing. We consider that the draft design code:

- is too generic and too long;
- is mostly unrelated to Broadmead;
- duplicates other relevant planning guidance;

- has been subject to insufficient early community engagement;
- seems to assume demolition and re-build, omitting to comment on the potential for re-use of the types of existing buildings to be found in Broadmead.

We also disagree with the proposed tall buildings guidelines within the design code. And we continue to argue for a clearer Council vision of what is wanted for the city centre, especially where tall buildings are envisaged, and to what height.



# Community-led housing

Jim Hudson outlines some responses to the housing crisis from the ground up.

Community-led housing is a growing movement in the UK, and represents a broad range of different models and approaches that includes cohousing, community land trusts and housing co-operatives. It's easy to get bogged down in definitions, but what draws these different things together is essentially people doing it for themselves: locally-led responses to the failure of the housing market (and increasingly, social housing providers) to supply the quality and affordability of housing that people really need and want.

Boiling this down to the key issues, the movement aims to create housing that will: be *affordable*, and remain so in perpetuity; be *well designed*, especially in terms of low energy use and ecology; encourage closer, more *supportive community*; and finally offer its residents *real control* over their housing, whether that's through an ownership or a secure tenancy model.

Community-led housing is yet to make a dent in the overall numbers for house building, but I would argue that its benefits are so great compared to most of the speculative housing currently going up that it should be much better supported and enabled by all levels of government, making it a choice for far more people.

But first let's not get bogged down in those definitions...

Housing at 325 Fishponds Road. Residents reduced costs by putting in 'sweat equity' by doing some of the interior works themselves.

Image courtesy of Lev Kerimol, Community Led Housing London



In truth, there are as many different forms of community-led housing as there are communities; a grass roots approach means that initiatives respond to local possibilities. One unique example for instance is the pioneering scheme by *WeCanMake* in Knowle West, where local people in housing need help build their own homes fitted into the existing low-density housing of the estate. But there are three main models that have emerged as the most widespread: Community land trusts, cohousing, and housing co-operatives.

## Community land trusts

Community land trusts (or CLTs) are not-for-profit organisations that own and develop land 'in trust' on behalf of the community; members (anyone in the community that wishes to join) each have a vote over key issues, equivalent

to shareholders. The aim of CLTs is to respond to local need – not exclusively but usually a lack of affordable housing – by creating *permanently affordable* housing that is protected from the open market for sale or rent.

Essentially, a CLT owns land in perpetuity (or has a long, secure lease), and can sell or rent out the properties it builds on that land. But it can also set rules restricting rent levels, or sale prices (usually by linking them to local incomes or more affordable price indexes). Currently, CLTs are the most successful model within the community-led housing movement, with around 1,200 homes completed so far.

## Cohousing

By contrast with other models, *cohousing* is a social as much as a physical concept, where a group aims to create and maintain a sense of community



The residents of New Ground Cohousing in north London. Image courtesy of New Ground Cohousing.

Three new eco-flats built by Somewhere Housing Cooperative, who have around 20 members. Image: Jim Hudson.



above all else, as a kind of 'intentional community' or neighbourhood. Key to cohousing is that:

- it has individual homes but also shared spaces, saving space overall
- is usually between 10 and 40 homes
- is designed for social interaction, including shared facilities where residents can meet together, including regularly for shared meals
- residents are in charge, with decisions made collectively
- aims to be locally integrated (not a 'gated community')
- schemes often have an ecological orientation

There are around 30 completed cohousing schemes so far in England, although many more are at various development stages. Because of the potential for greater neighbourliness and mutual support, cohousing is also regarded as a good place to grow old, either as an intergenerational community, or in the case of 'senior cohousing' with a lower age limit – where the focus is on growing old together in a supportive, self-managed community.

A note of caution: cohousing shouldn't be confused with the term 'co-living', the latter being a commercially-driven model of homes for rent, whereby smaller flats are offset by shared facilities such as communal kitchens and leisure spaces.

## Housing co-operatives

Housing co-operatives are the longest established model of collective housing (the co-operative movement as a whole did begin in Rochdale, after all). In essence, a housing co-op is a group of people who manage and control the housing they live in; each person

is a member of the co-operative and has an equal say in decision-making. A housing co-op doesn't necessarily own its housing, but the older, more established groups generally do – largely due to wave of housing grant funding from central government from the 1970s to the early 1990s. New housing co-ops tend to be small groups co-renting together, as there's rarely any substantial funding available.

But they remain a highly affordable and adaptable form of housing: for instance in 2019 members of Bristol's *Somewhere* co-op re-allotted their housing according to need, building three additional homes for their older members thus freeing up some of the larger homes.

It's important also to say that the three models I've outlined here aren't *exclusive to each other*: Hazelmead for example – a new scheme in Bridport on the south coast – is both cohousing and a community land trust, in that it is physically and socially designed to encourage community, but its legal constitution and housing allocation is based on the CLT model.

## Final thoughts

At present groups looking to create their own housing project face great challenges, most obviously identifying development sites and obtaining finance. But until recently there has been a government fund for groups getting started, while local authorities (including Bristol) have provided sites for community-led housing – albeit often ones that are small and less attractive to mainstream house builders. It's also surprising, especially in rural areas, how often local landowners have made sites cheaply available to community groups. Many groups have also found

Residents (and the author, left) at Hazelmead Cohousing CLT, Bridport, Dorset. Image: Jim Hudson.



that working with enabler agencies (ie who understand and work in the development industry) has worked well, or even 'piggy-backing', where a group gets their scheme built as part of a larger development then acquires it at completion, also to some extent solving the funding problem of the substantial 'up front' investment that's needed.

In recent years community land trusts in particular have grown quite quickly, especially in the southwest of England. And once housing is created in that way, it's taken out of the speculative housing market (and thus remains affordable) for good. When talking about this, I'm often asked how someone might invest in or 'trade up' from a home that's not increased in value in line with the open market. But for those who will otherwise never be able to buy a home or even to rent privately, CLTs – and the wider community-led housing movement – continue to offer the possibility of good quality, affordable homes in a time of great housing need.

## Some useful links:

Ecomotive, Bristol:

<https://www.ecomotive.org/>

Bristol City Council has a useful page:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/housing/new-build-affordable-homes/community-led-housing>

Bristol Cable:

<https://thebristolcable.org/2023/02/small-developments-big-ideas-how-bridstols-community-led-housing-groups-done-things-differently/>

The national organisation for Community-led Housing:

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



Below left, An alternative vision for the historic zoo gardens was proposed. Photo, Mia-Vines-Booth Bristol24/7. Below right, A hyperdense development at Broadwalk shopping centre, escalated into a scandal. Photo, Helen Evans-Morris.



# Our City: Community Activism in Bristol

An important new book on activism in Bristol. Suzanne Audrey outlines the background to this seminal work.

In 1980, Bristol Civic Society and The Redcliffe Press published an important book entitled *The Fight for Bristol: Planning and the Growth of Public Protest*. I have a copy, and refer to it to this day. The book describes “how a local community fought not only against insensitive planning but against what increasingly was seen as the undemocratic character of the planning system”.

Nearly 45 years later, undemocratic processes and insensitive planning prompted another book. Published by Tangent Books, *Our City: Community Activism in Bristol* focuses on promoting inclusion, community campaigning,



Despite her popularity, Ursa was removed when the Council 'took back control' of the Bearpit. Photo, Bristol24/7.

and city planning. I had originally thought the chapters included under ‘city planning’ might be of particular interest to *Better Bristol* readers, but these topics overlap. Communities feel the impact of poor city planning which undermines inclusion. And so this article provides an overview of the whole book, with contributions from people across Bristol who care about the kind of city we live in.

The first six chapters of *Our City* illustrate the importance of promoting inclusion: overcoming barriers to cycling, creating safe places for Bristol’s queer communities, providing toilets that welcome everyone, resisting cuts to special educational needs provision, reclaiming independent living for disabled people, and championing the reparations movement.

Bristol was awarded the accolade of the UK’s first ‘cycling city’ in 2008, but cycling is not as inclusive as it should be. Zoe Banks Gross describes the progress and setbacks she has experienced while developing projects to get more mums on bikes, make our streets family friendly, and provide cycling lessons for women from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups.

Andy Leake celebrates safe spaces for Bristol’s diverse queer community, including people of colour and the trans community. As well as a thriving nightlife, there are clubs and collectives

for an ever-growing array of LGBT+ interests. While acknowledging there is still work to be done, Andy believes that Bristol’s reputation as an LGBT+ friendly city is undeniable.

In 2018, Bristol City Council closed 18 of its public toilets and asked businesses and organisations to sign up to a community toilet scheme, giving free public access to their facilities. The determination of Watershed, to provide toilets that are safe and welcoming for everyone, met with some criticism. But they stuck to their principles, with heart-warming results.

Also in 2018, three mothers successfully challenged Bristol City Council in the High Court over proposals to cut £5m from Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding. Jen Smith’s chapter is a shocking tale of poor decision-making by Council leaders that undermined relationships with parents and carers, and compounded problems with SEND provision.

Bristol Reclaiming Independent Living (BRIL) also challenged Bristol City Council. A cabinet decision, to consult on a proposed ‘Fair and Affordable Care Policy’, threatened independent living and was vigorously opposed by BRIL. Their detailed submission, including pro bono legal advice, contributed to the policy being withdrawn. But concerns remain about the extent to which disabled people’s voices are heard.

The voices of people of African heritage have been championed by the reparations movement. The chapter on Atonement and Reparations describes the process through which Bristol became the first UK core city to officially back the campaign for reparations, and saw the launch of new initiatives relating to Bristol’s history, racial justice and the future of African heritage communities in our city.

The next six chapters focus on community campaigns. Ursa the Bear, boaters’ rights, allotmenting, public access to green space, street trees, and Bristol’s last working farm, have all come under threat in recent years. But citizens of Bristol have refused to give them up without a fight.

Richard Jones recalls the battle to save Ursa the Bear. While standing on the toilet block in Bristol’s Bearpit roundabout, Ursa welcomed people to our city and was part of a broader movement of creative community activism. Despite her popularity, she was removed when the Council ‘took back control’ of the Bearpit. But her spirit lives on.

Members of Bristol’s boating community also feared being removed from the city when Mayor Rees accused them of abusing the system. After campaigning in vain to be consulted about fees and licences, the Bristol City Docks Fees and Charges Review was imposed upon them. Nevertheless, George Colwey believes Bristol’s boating community has been strengthened by their struggle.

Consultation did take place about allotment rule changes and rent increases, but it raised considerable alarm. Holly Wyatt describes how allotment tenants came together to form Bristol Allotmenters Resist. Protests outside City Hall, and a petition that triggered a Full Council debate, resulted in some proposals being withdrawn and others deferred.

Helen Powell recounts a rollercoaster journey defending open public access to Stoke Lodge Playing Fields, which has involved the Local Government Ombudsman, the Information Commissioner’s Office and the High Court. The campaign for Village Green status was tough, but Helen celebrates the strength derived when a community fights for a cause that is dear to its heart.

Despite Bristol City Council declaring

an ecological emergency, George Cook recounts how the nature-rich land at Yew Tree Farm is under threat from encroaching development, including by the Council itself. Farmer Catherine Withers and nature-loving Bristolians continue their fight to protect the farm, and George acknowledges the importance of Bristol’s wildlife champions.

Vassili Papastavrou, of Bristol Tree Forum, is one of Bristol’s wildlife champions. While applauding previous policy makers who gave our city tree-lined streets and generous green space, he argues that largescale development is leading to a loss of green space and important trees across the city. Vassili argues that policies must be enforced to protect Bristol’s urban trees.

Six further chapters relate to planning issues that do not stand up well to scrutiny.

**Bristol is now adjusting to its new system of governance. Some of the campaigns described in *Our City* will continue, others will be resolved, and new issues will arise.**

George Ferguson, former architect and first elected mayor of Bristol, acknowledges the importance of responding to the housing crisis but argues that a short-sighted political reaction, to build fast and high in an attempt to tick off promised numbers, is not the solution. Other factors must be considered to ensure our city is sociable and sustainable for future generations.

Marvin Rees began his term as Bristol’s elected mayor with a controversial decision to cancel his predecessor’s planned arena at Temple Meads in favour of YTL’s proposed arena on the edge of the city. Joanna Booth documents the convoluted process through which this was accomplished, despite widespread opposition from councillors and the public.

Joe Banks questions how plans for three out-of-scale buildings were approved for the historic site at St Mary le Port. Concerns about democratic accountability and due process led him to question the involvement of the mayoral administration in the planning system, facilitated by a tight network of consultants, developers and corporate architects.

The fight to save Bristol’s historic Zoo Gardens from redevelopment as a housing estate is told in two parts. Tom Jones describes the campaign to save the Zoo at its Clifton site. Fellow campaigners Alistair Sawday and Iain Boyd highlight the broader battle against profiteering developers, and propose an alternative vision for the historic gardens.

Anna Haydock-Wilson considers the ways in which citizens relate to their neighbourhoods. Her chapter focuses on the Hotwells community, and local feelings about rebranding Cumberland Basin as Western Harbour. An initial flawed consultation caused outrage, but Anna hopes a fresh start will bring opportunities to enhance this unique environment.

Laura Chapman recalls how a controversial planning application, for a hyperdense development at Broadwalk shopping centre, escalated into a scandal. When the planning committee’s unanimous decision to reject the proposal was overturned, evidence pointed to interference by the mayor’s office in conjunction with the developer and planning committee chair.

In the final chapter, I consider local democracy under a mayoral administration that increasingly celebrated its ‘strong’ leader. As councillors were side-lined and scrutiny undermined, the demise of the mayoral system appeared inevitable. In 2022, Bristol voted to abolish its elected mayor and implement a new committee system from 2024.

Bristol is now adjusting to its new system of governance. Some of the campaigns described in *Our City* will continue, others will be resolved, and new issues will arise. The book provides a wealth of experience which I hope will inspire, inform and comfort future activists – just as *The Fight for Bristol* inspired myself and others.

*Our City: Community Activism in Bristol* is available at Waterstones, local bookshops, and on-line from Tangent Books. Price: £15.



# Motion at a standstill – Bristol's nightlife under threat

St Philips Marsh, January 2019. It's the Bristol Association of Restaurants, Bars and Independents annual gathering and two Bristol City councillors turned up, so Annie McGann from the Save Bristol's Nightlife campaign took them out onto the terrace of Motion nightclub to look across the water in order to appreciate just how close the new university building was going to be to this, the West Country's most important dance music venue. So why is Motion, a successful business and Bristol's largest nightclub, in jeopardy?

Situated just beyond Temple Meads railway station, beside the River Avon, the building Motion calls home is a Grade II listed industrial warehouse, formerly a gasworks, consisting of five indoor spaces. It was opened in the 1990s as a skatepark called SK8 & Ride

and had a function room with a bar overlooking the river. In 2006 Motion began to transform the space into the club it is today, ranked by *DJ Magazine* as nineteenth in the list of the top 100 nightclubs in the world. But now, after 20 years, the lease is about to expire and longtime promises of selling the building to Motion have been forgotten about. Motion may well find itself homeless in July as the owner's grandiose dream of a glass skyscraper to rise above the old warehouse comes into play.

Motion has its own ideas of how to develop the site while keeping the music venue open: reinstatement of the original floors above the open space of the venue and new soundproofing supplied by the insulation of a new roof above what will be workshop, rehearsal, and spaces for small business and community use which would serve the nightlife infrastructure businesses recently displaced by the huge building project going on in St Philips - St Philip's marsh that is... You know, the area which used to flood every year, hemmed in by Victorian infrastructure of road, railway tunnel and bridges. The existence of a nightclub is not

Left, Motion attracts around 200,000 visitors a year.

indicated in the fabulous blurb that promotes the 'Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone' as an ideal place for redevelopment. It leaves the nightclub unlabelled as if there isn't a noisy neighbour in the middle of the site. There are confusing and contradictory planning guidelines. While Motion falls within the larger Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone it is also located within the Silverthorne Preservation Area. Each time it looks like a plan has been settled upon Motion has to start defending itself all over again.

Understandably, they want as much money as they can get for the place when Motion's lease runs out in July 2025 but this reneges on an understanding that Motion would be given first option to buy in the event of a sale and the owner is asking way over what the site is worth. Although the building is being listed as an Asset of Community Value, which should give Motion some priority in the bidding process, it will remain a challenge to compete financially with developers.

Motion has been a defining part of Bristol's cultural and economic landscape since 2006, contributing significantly to the city's nightlife, tourism, and local economy. With its lease expiring in July 2025, the venue faces an uncertain future – one that could result in its permanent closure. This isn't just a loss for clubgoers or music fans; it's a potential economic and cultural disaster for Bristol.

Each year, Motion attracts around 200,000 visitors, generating between £22.5 million and £37.5 million in revenue for the city. The venue directly and indirectly supports hundreds of jobs, from bar staff, security, and event promoters to local hospitality businesses, transport providers, and suppliers. Its presence helps sustain the



In 2006 Motion began to transform the space into the club it is today.

city's wider nightlife economy, which is vital to Bristol's identity as a creative and cultural hub. The impact of its closure would ripple far beyond its own doors, affecting businesses, livelihoods, and the overall appeal of Bristol as a destination for music and entertainment.

Yet, despite its undeniable contribution, Motion is at risk, with no clear plan from local authorities to ensure its survival. Bristol City Council, like many others, claims to support arts and culture, but the reality is that policies and planning decisions often fail to protect venues like this when they are most vulnerable. The council conducts internal impact assessments and cultural policy reviews, but these mean little if they do not translate into meaningful action. There is an urgent need to identify and enforce existing policies that safeguard significant cultural spaces from being lost to redevelopment or change of use.

The bureaucratic processes that often slow down development projects could, in this case, be used to shield Motion from unnecessary displacement. If the council were to take a proactive stance, it could leverage existing policies to prevent the venue's closure. Instead, there seems to be a disconnect between the stated ambition to preserve cultural assets and the real-world application of these protections. Without intervention, Bristol risks losing one of its most valuable cultural assets to red tape and inaction.

The potential change of use for Motion's site presents a major challenge. Once a venue like this is lost, it is almost impossible to replace, both in terms of infrastructure and cultural significance. While large-scale cultural institutions often receive protection and funding - Bristol Beacon's recent transformation cost a staggering £132 million (See *Better Bristol* Issue 24) - independent venues like Motion are left to fight for survival despite their undeniable economic and social value.

Bristol's reputation as a leading city for nightlife and music is at stake. If Motion is forced to close, it will set a precedent that cultural spaces in Bristol are disposable, regardless of their impact. This is not just about saving a nightclub; it's about ensuring that Bristol remains a city that values and protects the creative spaces that define it. The question now is whether the local authorities will step up and take action – or stand by as one of the city's most important cultural landmarks is lost.



Above, Motion, an important gig tripping destination.

Below, Independent venues like Motion are left to fight for survival despite their undeniable economic and social value. Photo, KolabStudios - AlastairBrookes.



Bristol ranks as the eighth best destination for gig-tripping (ie visiting for a concert but also staying over to explore the city) in the UK.



# Avon Needs Trees

**Alex Turner tells us about this woodland project that aims to fight climate and nature emergencies.**

## Who are Avon Needs Trees?

Avon Needs Trees (ANT) is a charity that creates new, permanent woodland throughout the Bristol-Avon river catchment to fight the climate and nature emergencies.

We're needed because over recent centuries the Bristol-Avon catchment area has lost most of its woodland and is now one of the least forested parts of the UK, at 7.8% in the West of England compared to 13% in the UK.

When you realise that tree cover in our area is down to just 7.8%, that wildlife is in such decline that some species have dropped by 95% in recent decades, and that more and more homes in our area are at flood risk, we feel keenly that action is needed both urgently and on a bigger scale.

We create woodlands that will stand for generations, locking up carbon, boosting local biodiversity and providing natural flood management.

Our woodlands are planted by an incredible community of over 1,500 local volunteers. Once planted, these green spaces can be enjoyed by people long into the future.

We have a number of woodland projects in the Bristol Avon catchment, the biggest of which is the Lower Chew Forest at a vast 422 acres. This planting season we also completed the establishment of Great Avon Wood - a woodland of 31,000 new trees over 100 acres.

## Can you tell us more about the new Lower Chew Forest project? What are the main goals and expected outcomes?

The Lower Chew Forest project is our most ambitious yet and on a scale like nothing we've ever done before! In 2024 we completed the purchase of 422 acre Wick Farm, near Compton Dando between Bristol and Bath. Once complete, the Lower Chew Forest will be the largest new woodland in the South West in a generation.



*We're lucky enough to have a loyal group of volunteers*

When put together with adjoining woodland, it will be bigger than the Downs (Clifton and Durdham) and Leigh Woods in Bristol put together, and twelve times the size of Royal Victoria Park in Bath.

Our goal is to create a mosaic of habitats including wetlands, miles of new hedgerow, and species rich grassland. And of course trees! Complementing the existing habitats, we'll establish a woodland of 100,000 trees and shrubs across the site.

Our vision is to create a regional exemplar hub which will help to tackle the climate emergency, provide natural flood management for vulnerable local areas, support the green economy, and provide an accessible and inclusive place for people to volunteer, learn, and stay.

Local communities are a key part of our plans. Lower Chew Forest will be a woodland for the people, by the people.

## What motivated Avon Needs Trees to pursue the creation of the Lower Chew Forest, and how did you select the location?

The scale of this woodland project is quite frankly immense, and one of major significance for climate action and nature recovery in our region.

The Bristol-Avon catchment area has lost most of its woodland. This leaves us vulnerable to the climate crisis, increased flooding, and a sharp decline in our local biodiversity.

The benefits of this new woodland for climate, nature, and people are enormous. As it grows, the forest will absorb

thousands of tonnes of carbon to help tackle the climate emergency.

This project will help reduce flood risk in the area through natural flood management. Government analysis by the Environment Agency shows this new woodland, along with leaky dams and wetland habitat, would help reduce downstream flooding in local villages, Keynsham, and Bristol.

## How will these new trees reduce flooding?

Climate change has led to more extreme weather just at the time our natural flood defences are low because of deforestation. A forest sized woodland will need a forest sized amount of water. These new, thirsty trees will absorb lots of water in order to survive. The leaves of our trees will intercept some rainfall before it hits the ground, slowing down the water and allowing some to evaporate before it falls any further. The rainwater that hits the ground will sink deeper and faster along tree root systems, reducing surface run-off. Collectively, these actions are known as slowing the flow.

We work with the Environment Agency to identify locations where woodland creation will provide the most effective natural flood defences.

## How do you ensure the sustainability and maintenance of the woodlands you create?

Our model is based on long-term impact; buying land so that we can carefully manage our woodlands and ensure that they will be around for generations to come.

New woodlands can only help tackle the climate and ecological emergencies if they are carefully managed and cared for in the long term. ANT guarantees this by buying the land on which it



*Our woodlands are planted by an incredible community of over 1,500 local volunteers. Photo, Alexander Turner*



*Long-term care of permanent new woodlands is essential.*



*Part of our mission is to create access to green spaces for local communities.*

creates woodlands. Our volunteers and donors can support us with the reassurance and confidence that ANT's woodlands will still be here, improving our planet, in fifty years' time. Long-term care of permanent new woodlands is essential, as significant carbon sequestration takes healthy woodlands many years to achieve.

In terms of volunteers, we're lucky enough to have a loyal group of volunteers, many who have worked with us over several years. Local people who feel ownership over their local woodland and help to take care of it in the long-term is important.

## Community involvement seems to be a cornerstone of your projects. How are you engaging

### local communities in the Lower Chew Forest project?

Our woodland creation plans also offer significant health, skills and wellbeing benefits for people by improving access to this beautiful natural space.

Our sites are already home to many public footpaths and rights of way, and we are exploring plans to increase public access through the creation of new woodland trails. As with most of our woodlands, we will be hosting year-round volunteering and community events enabling people to enjoy, learn about, and connect with nature.

It is part of our mission to create access to green spaces for local communities, including marginalised groups who might not otherwise be able to

experience being out in nature and the benefits that it brings.

## Can you describe the roles and contributions of volunteers in your recent projects, such as Great Avon Wood?

Safe to say we couldn't do it without them! We are lucky enough to have a passionate band of 1,500 volunteers and counting who do the majority of our tree planting in winter and tree care days during the summer.

Our volunteers cover everyone from families, people with disabilities, businesses, local groups. We are consistently blown away by their commitment, hard work and dedication, in all weathers! We can't thank them enough.

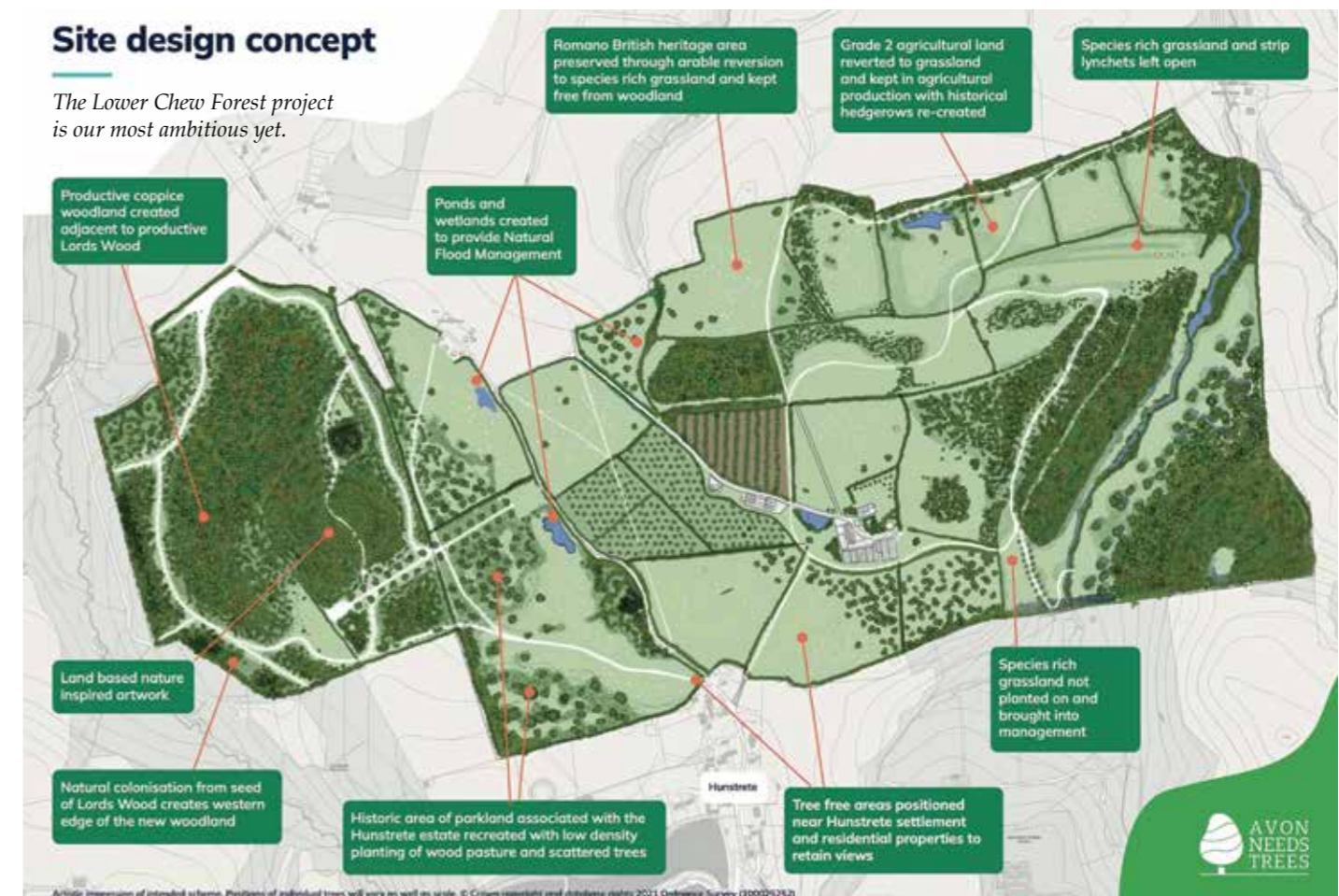
## What specific events and activities does Avon Needs Trees have planned to promote awareness and participation?

We've got a number of events coming up including an early morning birdsong walk, spring tree identification walks and a walk around the freshly planted Great Avon Wood.

Keep an eye on [www.avonneedstrees.org.uk](http://www.avonneedstrees.org.uk) as more community and volunteering events are added all the time.

## Site design concept

*The Lower Chew Forest project is our most ambitious yet.*





**It's now five years since the first Covid lockdown was imposed, and we're still living with the consequences, some good, more bad. Eugene Byrne decided to try and make sense of it.**

**1. WFH**

Lockdown meant that many people were told to leave the office to work from home (WFH). Since then, many people applying for white-collar jobs expect to be able to WFH for at least some of the week.

In the 2021 Census, almost 40% of Bristolians in employment claimed they worked partly or wholly from home, well above the England & Wales average.

Circumstantial evidence about the slow return of commuters to the office after the lockdowns comes from the buses. Despite schemes such as the birthday month bus pass and the capping of fares at £2 for a long time, the number of journeys on First's Bristol buses was not expected to return to its pre-pandemic 10m a year until late 2024 or early 2025.

Everyone has opinions about the good and bad points of WFH, though *Matt Griffith*, Director of Policy, Business West believes that thus far there have been gains for Bristol's economy.

'There's definitely been an increased flexibility in the structures of business and where they're located, and Bristol has benefited from having that umbilical cord up to London.'

A lot of companies, particularly those in sectors like tech or professional services, he says, are recruiting from Bristol's sizeable talent pool, but not necessarily expecting them to travel to London daily. At the same time individuals and companies continue to relocate here, attracted by the quality of life.

'I saw a study mapping home-working, and the inner Bristol suburbs had some of the highest levels of home-working in the country outside of London. Already home-working was happening, but I think it's accelerated quite substantially.'

'The question then is has there been a commensurate migration out of Bristol to rural and semi-rural places and market towns? My sense is that some of that has

happened, with people moving to places like Gloucestershire, Frome, South Wales, up and down the M4 and so on.'

**2. Card only please**

In October 2018 the Small Bar on King Street became one of the first - possibly *the first* - business in Bristol to go cashless, only accepting card payments. Card payments became *de rigueur* in the pandemic because of fears of Covid germs on notes and coins. Many of us have never gone back to cash.

**3. It's only good manners to sneeze into your elbow.**

And many of us get a lot more nervous now if we're in a crowded space and someone is coughing.

**4. Dogs**

Many people acquired pets during the pandemic. By one measure, UK dog ownership rose by as much as 50% in 2020-21 (though this is probably an over-estimate). There are now probably something between 12 and 13 million dogs in the UK, though the number took a slight downturn in the last year or so. Every neighbourhood High Street now boasts a dog grooming parlour.

**5. Schools in crisis**

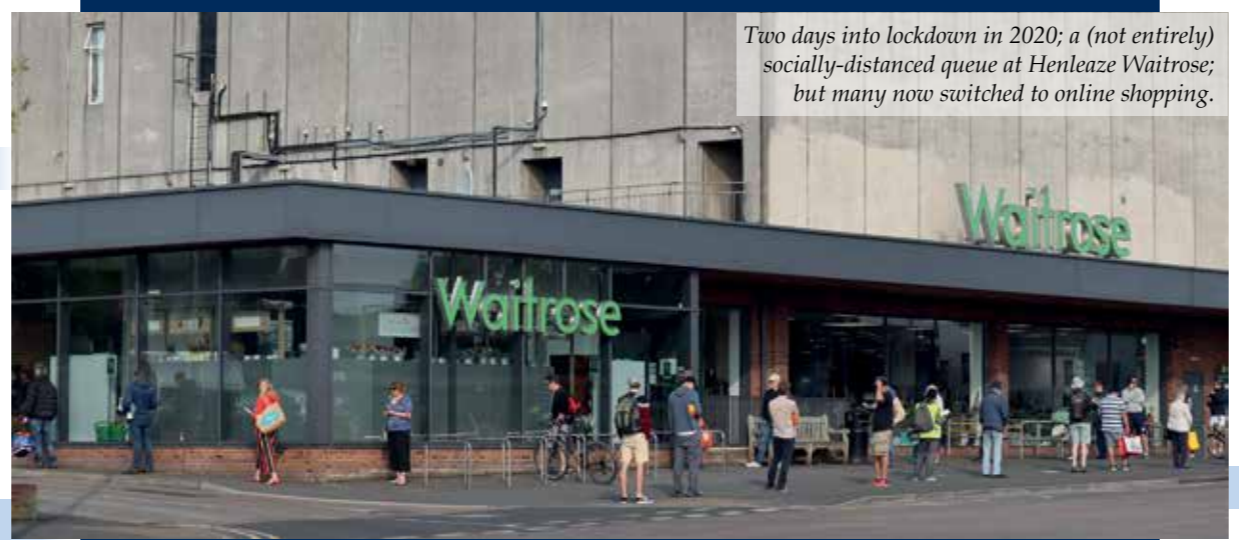
Teachers have to live with the fallout from Covid more than most professionals outside of the NHS. The absence figures are terrifying: In December 2024 23.5% of students in Bristol were missing at least 10% of school hours, up from 11% pre-pandemic. It's a problem for schools now, and a growing one for social services and, increasingly, the criminal justice system.

*Wendy Exton*, regional representative of teaching union NASUWT says: 'A lot of children are missing because they got used to being at home and are now struggling to get back to school.

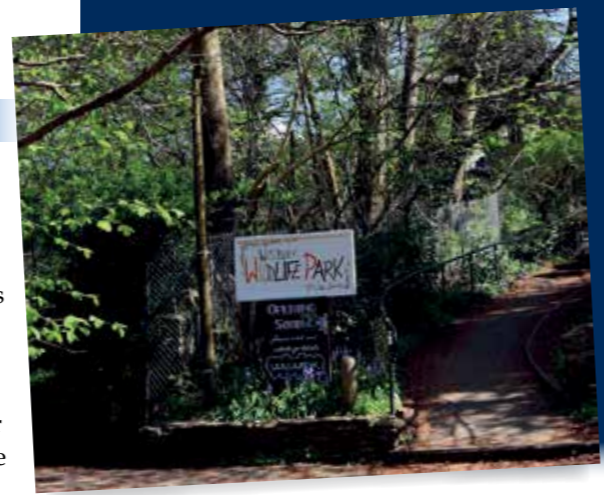
'There's been an increase in mental health issues, particularly among teenagers and a lack of support because those services are overwhelmed.'

'There are also problems with behaviour, violence and misogynistic behaviour, particularly from children who basically spent a couple of years in front of screens.'

'Primary school colleagues are reporting that they have a lot of children that are



# Ten ways the pandemic changed Bristol



Above left, Westbury Wildlife Park; one of the good things that came out of lockdown. Above right, A dog-grooming parlour on every High Street.

not school-ready, not toilet-trained, and lacking basic skills such as being able to sit on a chair, use a knife and fork, and lacking social skills ... the education system at the moment is just swamped with all of this.

'Children thrive on boundaries and routines, and they went out of the window when everyone was stuck at home and when parents were struggling with aspects of behaviour themselves, particularly when the schools re-opened.'

**6. Shopping centres in decline - or are they?**

The rise in online shopping and changing fashions saw the closure of many of the big name stores in Broadmead. It's no longer the shopping destination it once was, a process accelerated by the pandemic. Debenhams closed in 2021, M&S closed in 2022, while BHS was already long gone. That said, the former M&S premises is now Sparks, filled with creative things from local people, and St Nick's Market seems to be still thriving.

**7. Westbury Wildlife Park**

A bunch of volunteers got together during lockdown to clear the grotesquely overgrown Westbury Wildlife Park site to re-open it for the local community.

**8. Potholes - a symptom of the council's woes**

As of last autumn, more than 3,000 potholes had been reported to Bristol City Council. Bristol's pothole problem is bigger than in most other places, and we're told it'll cost £11m to fix them. Meanwhile, Council budgets are being stretched. *Dr Smith*: 'English local government is having a massive meltdown dealing with a lot of wider issues that no-one thought through, social care being one of them.'

**9. Young people today ...**

*Annie McGann*, a campaigner for the local night-time economy, says it's difficult to gauge the impact of the pandemic on pubs, restaurants and

nightclubs - a sector which is the third-biggest employer of Bristolians after the NHS and education.

She points out that Bristol actually has more venues now than before lockdown and that some entrepreneurs are very bullish. But she worries about the difficulty many people - particularly older ones - have in travelling into town.

There's also a possible lost generation of creative and/or enterprising youngsters who in the past would be making things happen.

'There's been a break in the continuum of everything to do with young people and how they are so important in nightlife and contribute new blood.' One noticeable change is that they never learned how to scrum at the bar.

'They queue up for a drink like they're at a bus stop. I was at the Watershed the other day and there was a single-person queue going from the bar right out into the foyer.'

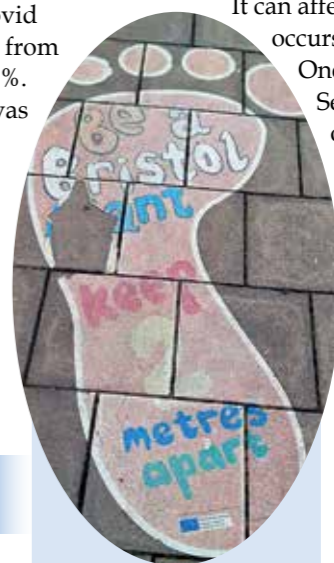
'It's the same at the Beacon ... we now have ropes like you're queueing up at the airport. Young people are just not used to going into a pub and doing that thing of waving your money at a barman and learning how if you're a woman you get served last.'

**10. It never went away**

A paper in *The Lancet* last summer reckoned that around 1.8% of the UK population had Long Covid, with symptoms including weakness, fatigue, shortness of breath, aches and pains and 'brain fog'. For some people, this has gone on for three years or more.

It can affect people of any age, but occurs more in less affluent areas. One Bristol GP surgery last September reported that 14% of its patients had Long Covid symptoms.

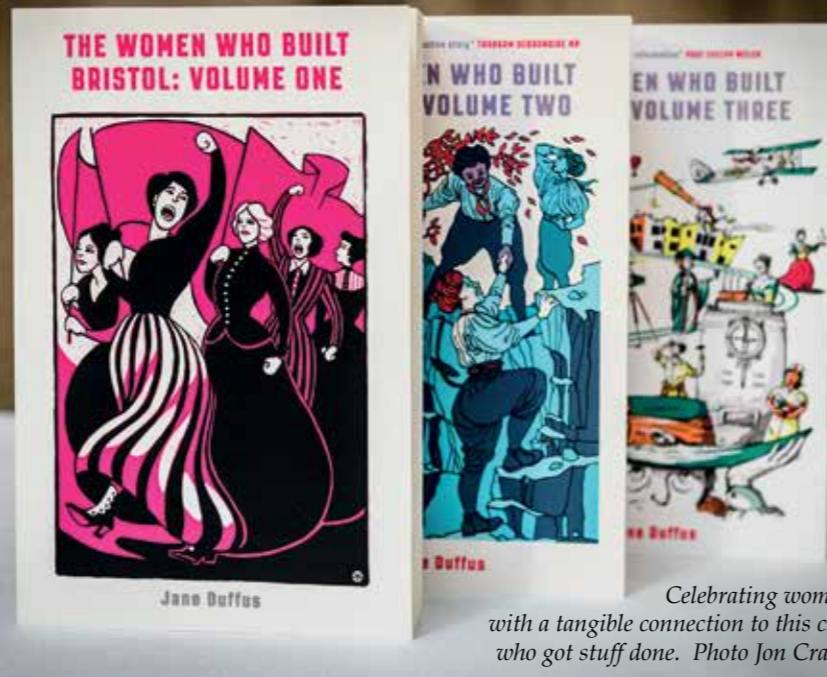
*Ian Smith*: 'There is a general health crisis, and ... a proportion of it can be directly linked to people's health experience during covid, but we were a pretty unhealthy population before that. It did pick up on a longer term trend that tends to be socially concentrated. Your economic inactivity through poor health will, I imagine, be higher in Hartcliffe than it is in Clifton.'



Above, Social distancing might be a fading memory, but we're all still living with the consequences of the pandemic.



# The Women Who Built Bristol



Celebrating women with a tangible connection to this city who got stuff done. Photo Jon Craig.

## Author Jane Duffus shares some of Volume Three's secrets.

**T**he *Women Who Built Bristol* project is a series of three books celebrating women with a tangible connection to this city who got stuff done. Each book has the stories of 250 extraordinary women from the past who have, bafflingly, been largely overlooked... until now!

Since getting the green light for volume one of *The Women Who Built Bristol* in

2017, the project of recording stories about forgotten women has taken over my life in a wonderful way and this March I was excited to publish the third volume, bringing the grand total of women celebrated to 750.

Having always affectionately, and informally, referred to the women I write about as 'my old dead women', I began to wonder if maybe this was too flippant. After all, the women I am writing about are not just names, they are also somebody's relative. These women might be dead, but (hopefully) they once had people who loved them. However, I decided that most of these women seemed like they had a good sense of humour and would probably take 'my old dead women' in the warm spirit with which it is intended.

I've always tried to be respectful when telling the stories of these women. And while not all of the 750 women in the three volumes of *The Women Who Built Bristol* are what we might consider heroes, I firmly believe that each of them has a story that needs to be shared and a name that needs to be heard.

So much has happened with this project since 2017 and it has been humbling to see how the extraordinary women within the pages have been embraced and celebrated by readers. So please keep on searching and sharing the stories of all the wonderful women you hear about.

**A few standout women from Volume Three with a connection to buildings...**

### Isabel Hatherly, 1867-1939

Belmont Road in Brislington started an intriguing line of inquiry because

the builder is named as 'I Hatherly'. Brislington was also where Isabel Hatherly lived and based her business at the end of the Victorian era.

Carpenter John A Hatherly established the firm in 1802. It was later run by his son Edward John, before his eldest son Edward Tom took over. Edward Tom married a young woman called Isabel Ashford in 1892 and she is the 'I' of 'I Hatherly'. It was very unusual for a business in the Victorian era to have a woman's name, albeit her initials, especially a building company. And it seems the reason for the business to be renamed using Isabel's initials was that the men ran into financial troubles in 1895, forcing them to declare bankruptcy and rename the business before they could resume work with a clean slate.

While Isabel wasn't a builder in anything more than name, it seemed too close a connection not to include her small contribution to the world of women building Bristol, given there are at least nine buildings in Bristol that bear her name as the builder. Even if she didn't personally build them.

### Joan Day, 1928-2019

For 49 years, Joan Day was a valued committee member of the Keynsham and Salford Local History Society, which she had helped to found in 1965. Originally from Bath, as a young woman Joan was an impressive cyclist who held the record for cycling from Lands End to Bristol. She achieved this feat in 1954, completing the 195-mile cycle ride in 10 hours and 59 minutes – thereby knocking more than an hour off the previous record.

Alongside husband Roy, Joan began to attend lectures about industrial archaeology at the University of Bristol in the mid-1960s. The lectures were intended to inspire students to make their own local history investigations and Joan duly sought out older residents from Keynsham and Salford to quiz them about their memories of working in the brass mills. In time, Joan became a renowned expert on the history of brass making in the UK and wrote two books on the subject. From the 1980s, Joan was a prominent voice in the campaign to preserve the former Salford Brass Mill, which had closed in 1925, and to prevent the shell of the building being destroyed by developers: this was the last remaining mill in this part of the country. The Salford Brass Museum now occupies the building as a testament to Joan's hard work.

### Sally on the Barn

There's a barn at the 18th century Hanham Court Farm on what is now Court Farm Road, a listed building known as 'Sally On the Barn'. But why? A stone statue of Sally was placed on the barn roof on 5 January 1839 and there are at least four stories about who Sally is and why she is there.

One story is that the statue came from the ruins of Keynsham Abbey and that Sally represents Ceres, the Goddess of Harvest, which would make sense because the barn was initially a 15th century tithe barn used by the monks in Keynsham.

Another story is that Sally worked for the family who ran the farm during the Civil War and that she was killed by the Roundheads. Apparently, Sally tried to escape by squeezing through the trapdoor onto the barn roof and that explains why you sometimes see the ghost of a young woman up there.

A third story is that Sally was the daughter of a farmer at Hanham Court Farm. When Sally realised the barn was on fire, she rushed inside to rescue the horses but met her own fate instead. And so her father erected a stone statue in her memory after rebuilding the barn.

**It has been humbling to see how the extraordinary women within the pages have been embraced and celebrated by readers.**

Yet another story asserts there was a young woman named Sally who lived at the farm and was in the habit of standing on top of the barn and singing to the moon. It is claimed that when the moon is bright, Sally's figure can still sometimes be seen on the roof.

Which, if any, of these stories is true? Nobody knows.

### Mary Wallbridge, 1898-1987

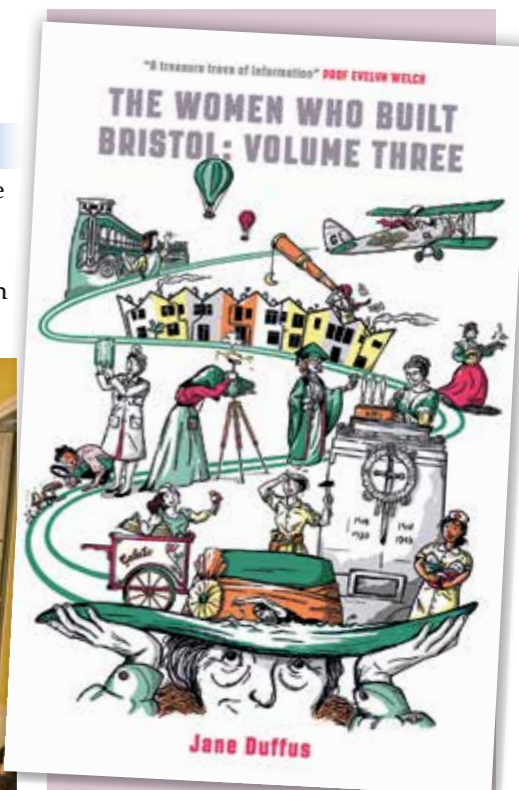
As the daughter of architect Sir George Oatley, Mary Whiddon Oatley lived a privileged life. One of four children, Mary grew up at the enormous Church House in Clifton. It was a massive

property with around 20 rooms, of which 10 were bedrooms.

When she was four in 1902, Mary was sent to Clifton High School where, in 1927, her father was commissioned to design a new wing. Mary's headteacher was the redoubtable Eleanor Addison Phillips (also in Volume Three), but Mary wasn't a fan of her teacher claiming that Miss Phillips preferred the "pious, good girls" of which Mary was not one.

Mary began courting Pat Garnett, a Lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps but there were strict rules to be adhered to. When the couple became engaged aged 18, their parents ordered them not to marry until they were 21 but, at Pat's insistence, they married in January 1917. Pat knew that the chances of survival for a pilot were slim and he was killed just a month later.

Her second marriage was in July 1919 to Arthur Wallbridge, and for a time they lived in South Africa. After returning to England, the family lived in Bridgwater where Arthur worked as a town planning officer and Mary ran the home.



**CALL TO ACTION** - To order a signed copy of any books in 'The Women Who Built Bristol' series, please order directly from Jane at: [janeduffus.com](http://janeduffus.com). All copies of Volume Three ordered from Jane come with a free booklet called 'Volume 3.1', while stocks last.



Book launch at Bristol Old Vic. Photo, Jon Craig.



Jane Duffus. Three books celebrating women.



# Stoke Bishop - Bristol's leafy suburb

Keith Sheather investigates the link between Francis Tagart and Stoke Bishop's Jubilee Fountain.

## Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897

Queen Victoria was the first monarch to celebrate sixty years on the throne and celebrations were held throughout the country. Stoke Bishop's event was a very controlled affair. It was entitled *The Stoke Bishop Diamond Jubilee Celebration* and took place on Wednesday 23 June 1897 'by kind permission of the Executors of the late Mr Thomas Wedmore in the Grounds of Druid's Stoke'. Admission to the ground was by ticket only, although there was no charge, and were available to 'residents and persons permanently employed in the Parish'. Clearly Stoke Bishop was promising an exclusive event that might well have attracted gate-crashers.

The Committee organising the celebration was thirty strong and as would be expected was drawn from a cabal of house owners that included William Edwards George, William Budgett and J.C. Chetwood Aiken. In

the printed list men came first, women (all wives) second. Celebrations were never going to get out of control.

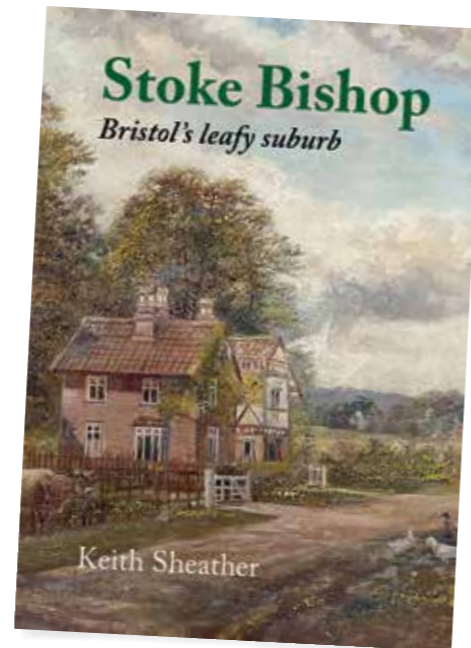
Festivities kicked off at 1pm with a 'Dinner to those who have been specially invited'. A crowded afternoon followed. The Band of the Gloucestershire Artillery Volunteers played throughout with a wide repertoire, much of it popular music of the day, including such titles as 'Sally In Our Alley', 'Home, Sweet Home' and 'Darling Mabel'. At 3pm there was a procession of children. Earlier at 2pm the sports had started and were to go on all afternoon and into the early evening. There were all the usual events but also some novelty ones such as the 'ginger beer and bun race', where a ginger beer and bun were consumed at the halfway point and the 'floral bicycle ride' for 'ladies only' riding their own flower festooned bicycles. The day finished with dancing to the military band.

## Francis Tagart (1817-1911)

The celebration was a memorable occasion, but it was missing one important element, the gift of the Jubilee Fountain, promised by Francis Tagart, the owner of Old Sneed Park. Following the Martin Act, Sneed Park House appeared to be renamed Old Sneed Park. During this period it had several owners, the longest being the first, Francis Tagart, a man of forthright opinion, who was both careful and generous with his money. 'It was his custom when making a contribution to any good work, to tender his cheque by hand, instead of sending it by post' (Bristol Times and Mirror: He chose his projects carefully.

## The Country Gentleman

Like many of his contemporaries, Francis Tagart showed a tireless energy and was soon involved with local projects. He shared a common interest in Bristol's mercantile and maritime future with the newer owners of Stoke



Published by Stoke Bishop Local History Group. £15.00.

Bishop's big houses. Just as Louis Philip Nott, newly arrived in Stoke House, was involved with the development of the city docks, so Francis Tagart became director of the company set up to build the new dock at Avonmouth. He was also a justice of the peace for Gloucestershire. But his great passion was to live the life of a country gentleman. He rode with the Duke of Beaufort's hounds and lavished time and care on his estate and garden. He revived the deer park and stocked it with a fine herd of red and fallow deer. The undulating and sloping nature of Old Sneed Park allowed his gardeners considerable scope in achieving a variety of horticultural delights, a patchwork of terraces, a statuary garden, secret rooms and always a triumphant display of colour. Annually a vast carpet bed exploded into a dramatic tableau, one year the Union Jack, another Tagart and his wife's golden wedding initials and dates. An array of glasshouses were stocked with cooler ferns around an indoor pond, while vines, exotic peaches and pineapples grew under the hotter glass. In her book *Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve* Eileen Stonebridge suggested that the lake in the lower valley was adapted for outdoor bathing. There are steps at the head of the lake and 'the

water would have been considerably cleaner in those days as the lake was fed by streams rather than road run-off'.

## Garden Visits

Tagart did not keep his garden to himself, but was generous in allowing others to see it. On a number of occasions he hosted the annual shows of agricultural and horticultural societies

which he supported. On 1 August 1887, the West Gloucester Farmers Club held its '26<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Stock, Cheese, Butter, Cut Flowers etc' in 'the picturesque grounds' of Old Sneed Park. Among the events staged was 'the jumping of the horses over water, stone wall, gate and gorsed hurdles' competing for Silver Cups. Another regular visit was from the boys of the Bristol Telegraph Messengers, who, as their name suggested, delivered telegraph messages around the city. On Saturday 18 August, the youngsters marched behind a fife and drum band from Blackboy Hill, across the Downs, to Stoke Bishop, where they enjoyed an afternoon in Tagart's garden, exploring the estate and playing cricket on what the newspaper report described as 'a nursery ground for such players as the Graces, C.L. Townsend, Ernest and Noel Tagart etc'. The cricketing days of Ernest, Tagart's grandson, may have been over as he was introduced as having just been wounded in the war against the Boers in South Africa. It must have been a lively occasion as 'very hearty cheers were given by the messengers for the host and hostess'. But this was nothing, perhaps, to the thousands that spilled across the park on open days, which happened twice a year, always on a Wednesday (early closing day) and Saturday, to maximise the numbers who were able to come.

## The Tagart Fountain

Francis Tagart was reported to have said that 'from Shirehampton to Redland there was not one spot where a carter could refresh himself or water his horse'. To rectify this omission, he offered to present a public fountain in honour of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. But its opening missed the due date.

Tagart showed his forthright character by withholding his gift until he was certain that an initiative by Bristol Corporation to absorb Stoke Bishop within its boundaries had gone away.

A year later on 15 August 1898, the fountain was officially opened by the Duchess of Beaufort. In attendance were her husband, the Duke of Beaufort, the High Sherriff of Bristol, the vicar Canon

Alford and most of the Tagart family. A reporter from the *Bristol Mercury* described how the Duchess 'turned on the water and drank some of it from a silver cup. She expressed a hope that

the fountain would be a comfort for man and beast'. The water came from an underground spring. The fountain still stands, although no longer connected to a water supply and the dog troughs have gone.

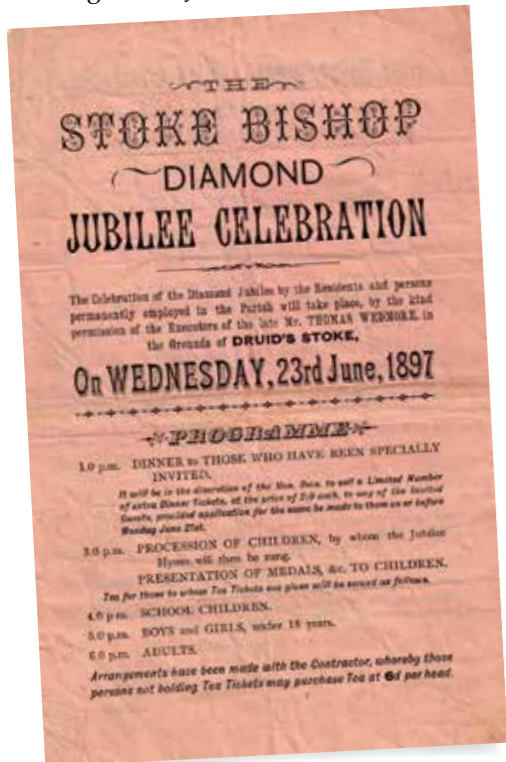
One curious question is exactly how much Francis Tagart contributed to the cost of the memorial. Money for the fountain was raised by public subscription and Tagart was always described as having 'presented' the fountain. Perhaps being the oldest man of importance in the village it was felt an honour that his name should be associated with the fountain. He died on 25 November 1911 aged 92. In his will he gave £300 each to his butler, William Attwell, his coachman, Charles Garrett and his gardener, Edwin Binfield. Although officially called the Jubilee Fountain, it will be forever known affectionately as the Tagart Fountain.



The undulating garden and parkland of Old Sneed Park.



Above, Cook's Folly after Goodeve's Victorian residence was added. The original tower is to the right. Below, Stoke Bishop from Butcher's Hill (Druid Hill) early 1930s.



Diamond Jubilee Programme.



# Three landmark buildings paid for by the profits of tobacco

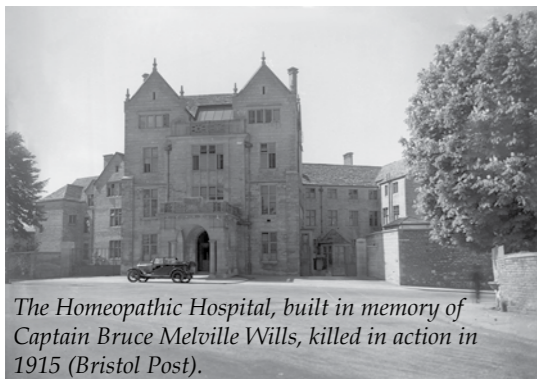
You could argue that the Wills family's dominant position in Bristol peaked 100 years ago when three local landmark buildings were opened – two of them by royalty – and all paid for by the profits of tobacco. And all were designed by the same architect. *Eugene Byrne*, our man plastered in nicotine patches, reports.

**T**uesday June 9 1925 was, everyone agreed afterwards, a glorious day. The weather was hot and sunny (too hot, really) and the visit of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary had gone off without a hitch.

Huge crowds had greeted them as they drove through the city in an open horse-drawn carriage, they endured speeches at the Council House on Corn Street, and over lunch at the Victoria Rooms. They greeted war veterans, and raised cheers from the crowds by speaking with the children of war heroes who had died, and when they met Bristol's oldest resident, Granny Jarrett, aged 104.

The main event of the day, though, was the grand opening of the new University building.

Here the King and Queen were met with more pomp and the architect Sir George Oatley presented the King with a golden key with which he unlocked the door of the Great Hall. After more speeches, the bell in the tower – “Great George” – was rung 21 times. There



The Homeopathic Hospital, built in memory of Captain Bruce Melville Wills, killed in action in 1915 (Bristol Post).

was a garden party in the Royal Fort grounds before the royals departed for Temple Meads.

What's now called the Wills Memorial Building has since become, to use a grotesquely over-used word, “iconic”. A local landmark that for many represents Bristol University and whose tower dominates the skyline.

It had been commissioned in 1912 by George Alfred Wills and Henry Herbert Wills in honour of their father Henry Overton Wills III, who had given large amounts of money to the University.

Building had started in 1915, but war got in the

way, and when construction resumed in 1919 many of those working on it had served in the forces, including, famously, Harry Patch, who would die in 2009, the last surviving British veteran to have seen combat in the First World War.

Following a major restoration and cleaning operation on the building in the early noughties, Harry Patch officially “re-opened” it.

Sir George Oatley's brief was to design a building that would last, and he certainly achieved that. He later said that part of his inspiration came from a dream in which he saw a tower on a hill, with shields on it.

The final cost came to well over



“Iconic”, as the cliché goes ...

half a million pounds, an immense sum for 1925. Aside from the sheer size of the building, made of reinforced concrete faced with Bath stone, a lot of money went into the craftsmanship, such as the fan-vaulted ceiling in the entrance hall. On the outside, of course there are the carvings of muses above the main door, not to mention all the grotesques and faces on the outside ledges.

The scale and all the decorative detail were an ostentatious statement about the importance of the University and the wealth of the Wills family. Perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of it all is that huge tower, which serves no useful purpose whatsoever. It's just a statement, and a very emphatic one at that.

Oatley, who had been knighted shortly before the royal visit, was busy in 1925. A month beforehand, Princess Helena Victoria, one of Queen Victoria's immense brood of grandchildren, came to Bristol to open the new homeopathic hospital on St Michaels Hill. Oatley had designed this, too.

The hospital was intended as a memorial to Captain Bruce Melville Wills, killed while serving with the Royal Engineers on the Western Front in 1915. It was paid for by Walter Melville Wills, whose brothers had funded the University building. He acquired the site – Cotham House and its grounds – and engaged the firm of Oatley & Lawrence to design it.

Homeopathy had been around since it was devised by the German physician Samuel Hahnemann in the late 1700s, and was certainly being practised in Bristol by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Dr Francis Black, who had studied under Hahnemann himself, opened a dispensary in Clifton in 1852.

Some respected medical professionals endorsed homeopathy, while others dabbled in it, curious to know if there was anything to it. Others still denounced it as quackery. What you could concede is that, until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, homeopathic treatments could be as effective as anything else, if only through the placebo effect, and were a lot less drastic.

While he was in Bristol in 1925 King George made Monica Wills, recently-widowed wife of Henry Herbert (“Harry”) Wills, a Dame Commander of the British Empire.

Harry Wills, who had co-funded the new University Building with his brother, did not live to see it opened, dying in 1922. Nor did he live to see the opening of what had been a wedding anniversary present for his wife.

Monica Wills (née Cunliffe-Owen) was deeply religious and had originally wanted to open a small home for retired missionaries, but her husband's considerable fortune stretched for far greater things.

The building had a complicated gestation, but it, too, was designed by Oatley, who produced a grand edifice resonant of some Elizabethan/Jacobean mansion. In all it cost nearly as much as the Wills Building.

The “St Monica Home of Rest”

For most, if not all, of its history, the Homeopathic Hospital administered conventional treatments as well as homeopathic ones. It was incorporated into the NHS in 1948. Most of the site was sold to Bristol University in the 1990s.

In the early 2000s it was renovated and has since become Hampton House, a health and counselling centre for students as well as housing a multi-faith chaplaincy.

Meanwhile, homeopathic services on the NHS were moved to the new South



Bristol Community Hospital. By then, scientific opinion was overwhelmingly opposed to homeopathy. Even so, Bristol (being Bristol!) was one of the last places in the country where the NHS continued to pay for such treatments until 2018-19.

*Below, June 9 1925: the King (light coloured top hat) meeting war veterans. The sitting boy in the foreground is John “Jackie” Legge, who was disabled and whose father had recently died. The boy wore his father's medals, and onlookers were very pleased with the way the King stopped to chat with him. (Bristol Post).*

was to be for “necessitous ladies ... of professional class status, who are handicapped by a chronic or incurable organic ailment.”

Nowadays the St Monica Trust runs several retirement villages and care homes in the area for men and women of all religions and none. But the first residents were all to be baptised Anglican ladies of “gentle” birth.

They were expected to spend a great deal of time in the chapel, and in the 1920s and 30s such frivolities as radio sets were frowned upon.

In every other respect it was the equivalent of a grand country house, with an army of servants and gardeners and beautifully laid-out grounds.

Dame Monica lived close by, and she visited almost daily. According to one

anecdote, she one day found two porters cleaning the chapel and did not consider their attitude suitably reverent. She commanded them to get down on their hands and knees and clean it all over again while she stayed there in silent prayer.

The original site, now the Cote Lane Retirement Village, and substantially added-to in the intervening years, seems an altogether more fun place these days.



St Monica's in the 1920s (Bristol Post).



# 100 years of Bristol in music and film

Clive Burlton from Bristol Books reports.

On 1 December 2024 at Bristol Beacon, more than 1000 people attended a unique evening that celebrated the centenary of Bristol Archives, the first borough archive in the country when it was formed in 1924.

Remarkable film footage from the collection at B Bond Warehouse showing Bristol at work and play, was projected onto a massive screen as 90 young musicians from Bristol Youth Orchestra, conducted by Tim Harrison, performed music from Gustav Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Florence Price.

Local pianist Sandie Middleton also premiered 'Bristol Spirit', a new composition, specially written for the concert, during a section showing bomb-ravaged Bristol in the Second World War.

Film makers David Parker and Bob Pitt, aided by Clive Burlton from Bristol Books, worked with Graham Tratt and his colleagues at Bristol Archives to select around 100 minutes of film across 65 different clips from the extensive cine collection.

Stunning footage of Bristol docks in its pre-war heydays, wonderful film of daily life in the 1930s, Bristol Citizens at War in colour, and evocative film of the rebuilding of the city blitzed and shattered by that war, were just some of the highlights projected onto the screen.

The concert was a sell-out and was a dream come true for the young musicians, many of whom had only recently joined the orchestra. Coordinating live music to film was a huge challenge, but they pulled it off magnificently.

Like many good ideas, it started with a chat over a cup of coffee. This was in December 2023 at Zion Community Café



in BS13. A few months later David, Bob and Clive presented the idea of telling Bristol's story through its own film archive, accompanied by live music. Tim Harrison and the Youth Orchestra greeted the idea with enthusiasm and so the scene was set to fuse music with film.

Rehearsals took place on Saturday mornings at Bristol Cathedral School and the evolution of this unique venture was documented and captured by Filmmaker and Senior Lecturer, John Podpadec and students from UWE. The musicians and production team were interviewed along the way, and the filming culminated with the performance on a quite extraordinary Sunday evening in December.

Those lucky enough to be there won't



St Werburghs Primary School, 1938.

forget it in a hurry. The positive feedback was extraordinary. For those not able to witness the spectacle, a recording of the entire event will be lodged with Bristol Archives, and a mini documentary is being made as I speak.

Watch this space for screening details...



A dream come true for the young musicians.



Admittedly, Modernism is not to everyone's liking.

## Broadmead Baptist Church

Broadmead Baptist Church has been awarded Grade II listed status. Mike Manson takes a peek.

I think it's fair to say that not many people visit Bristol's Broadmead for its architectural delights.

Yet, there is one building that has recently been awarded Grade II listed status: Broadmead Baptist Church.

Broadmead Baptist Church was built in the Modernist style between 1967 and 1969 to the designs of Ronald H Sims (1923-99) of Geens, Cross and Sims. It follows a long history of places of worship for Baptists on this site. The first church here was built in 1695 for a congregation established in Bristol in 1640.

The present church is easy to miss. Yet if you stand back across Union Street and look above Tesco's garish advertisements there is something special, and unique to Bristol, to be seen.

Historic England's listing describes: '(a) striking and distinctive principal

elevation with depth and complexity, the composition of which reflects internal functions and hierarchy, and which incorporates bold, sculptural and symbolic forms.' Quite so.

The building is also praised for 'the inventive treatment of materials, particularly the emphatic use of concrete which exhibits the extremes of its textural qualities, and glazing to create solid and transparent planes.'

The footprint of the building is long and thin; the ground floor comprises retail units – not part of the listing. Currently, the building looks tired. The concrete exterior is stained, there is the inevitable tagging, and a wooden spire has been removed, as has the original entrance porch. But the real treat is inside. You enter an almost otherworldly space. Wooden clad walls, engulfed with light, the church is an unexpected sanctuary from the rigours of Broadmead.

Andrew Foyle in his *Pevsner Architectural Guide to Bristol* is critical of the church's spatial coherence. But it is a difficult site. 'A sublime space in which the slender

structure of the building is expressed and juxtaposed with the robust, angular galleries and the undulating forms of the roof, and where glazing takes varied forms to dramatic effect.'

Historic England praises the 'high quality materials, fixtures and fittings, including the terrazzo baptistery, and most notably, the sculptural screen known as the Cloud of Witnesses'.

Sims, whose architectural practice was based in Bournemouth is known to have designed two other churches in Dorset: Wallisdown Methodist Church, 1954; and Punshon Memorial Methodist Church, 1958. (Demolished 2015.) As well as his practical architectural work, Sims spent a number of years teaching as a Professor of Architecture in a number of universities in North America.

Admittedly, Modernism is not to everyone's liking. But next time you're in Broadmead go and have a look. It's enlightening to be reminded of a time when developers and architects were stretching the boundaries. Thinking outside of the box – literally.



# Meaningful plaques

Gordon Young reports on the latest Blue Plaques.

Two significant blue plaques last November: one commemorating a World War I hero, the other an inspirational church minister of the pre-Beatles, Teddy-boy era. And there is another plaque unveiling which we can report on.

## Honouring a hero

On the Friday preceding Remembrance Sunday, Lance-Corporal Fred Room VC was honoured in St George. We can't even begin to imagine the horrors that he would have seen while carrying out his duties at Passchendaele, commanding the Royal Irish Regiment's 32 stretcher-bearers. Casualties from not only his battalion but other units lay everywhere, needing swift evacuation from the battlefield to prevent them dying from shock, loss of blood and their injuries. Here is his Victoria Cross citation:

*For most conspicuous bravery when in charge of his company stretcher-bearers. During the day the company had many casualties, principally from enemy machine guns and snipers. The company was holding a line of shell-holes and short trenches. L/Cpl Room worked continuously under intense fire, dressing the wounded and helping to evacuate them. Throughout this period, with complete disregard for his own life, he showed unremitting devotion to his duties. By his courage and fearlessness he was the means of saving many of his comrades' lives.*

It was a well-attended, sombre occasion. Neighbours and young pupils from Whitehall Primary School (which Fred had attended) stood respectfully silent; war historians Jeremy Banning and Clive Burlton spoke of the harrowing battle conditions and shared Fred's biographical details.

After the plaque unveiling, we adjourned to St Ambrose church where Fred is cited on a war memorial and then on to Greenbank cemetery to lay flowers at his grave. We tried to get a regimental presence but without success: there are

just so many military commemorative events at that period in November. But the King's representative for Bristol, Lord-Lieutenant Peaches Golding did us proud. She embellished the proceedings with her presence, and her military uniform (she holds the rank of general) could not have been more appropriate.

## A Lockleaze librettist

St James's Church in the parish of Lockleaze. It's 1960 and teenagers at Reverend Ernest Marvin's youth club are performing the world's first rock opera - *A Man Dies*. It plays to full houses for four out of five years at the Colston Hall, for five nights on each occasion. Then in 1964 it makes the capital: not only filling the 5,000-seat Royal Albert Hall but also having a soundtrack album laid down at the world's first recording studios at Abbey Road. And it is shown on national television three times in as many years. A decade later, Sir Tim Rice caught up and wrote *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

It is difficult for us to grasp nowadays just how ground-breaking the Passion play was. Reverend Marvin, as a lyricist retelling the story of Jesus in modern form, didn't hold back. He said, "We wrote the lyrics to express the spirit



Excerpts from the Passion play showed teenagers bopping along to rock 'n' roll music.

and attitude of this age." Here's a couple of verses:

*It came upon a midnight clear*

*That glorious song of old*

*Let's stay at home 'round the telly, dear*

*The church is too damn cold*

And

*Angels from the realms of glory*

*Send their carols sweet*

*Who'd have thought they'd end their days*

*Lit up in Regent Street?*

## From Horfield to Hollywood

While we were celebrating Lockleaze's first plaque, Historic England were honouring a handsome actor with an international reputation.\* The little curtains at each location drew back to reveal the plaques

at exactly the same time - 11:00am (Historic England advised us of their plaque intentions but didn't reveal the date until after we had organised the Lockleaze event). The location was Berkeley Road, Bishopston.

But hang on, there's already a plaque on the actor's birthplace, 15 Hughendon Road, Horfield, half a mile away. And a little one set into Millennium Square's paving beneath a life-size bronze statue of him. He also lived in Montpelier: 132 Cheltenham Road, and in Picton Street. He attended Fairfield Grammar School (a plaque erected by the British Film Institute is no longer there).

The list goes on: 5 Seymour Avenue, Ashley Down; 137 Cotham Brow; 12 Campbell Street, St Paul's. And for good measure, here's some of his American addresses which might benefit from commemorative plaques:

they're a mellifluous bunch - Eighth Avenue, Manhattan; Ocean Front Road,

Santa Monica; and Pacific Palisades, Beverly Hills and Palm Springs.

It is worth reflecting on these three plaque unveilings. The residents of L/Cpl Fred Room VC's house had been unaware of their valiant former resident. They were thrilled to learn that their house was once the home of a brave soldier, a recipient of the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. On the day, intrigued neighbours filled the street when they saw preparations and arrival of the media.

And at Lockleaze, a somewhat isolated suburb with no clear through-route, the close-knit community were deeply engaged as some of them had appeared in the Passion play in the sixties. Many more recalled Rev Ernest Marvin with deep affection. The unveiling day was a culmination of combined efforts - the Panel has been in discussion with the Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust for several years about commemorating the minister. In the church, we were able to screen a rare DVD recording of a 1961 television documentary about *A Man Dies*. Excerpts from the Passion play showed teenagers bopping along to rock 'n' roll music. One number, a calypso 'Gentle Christ', got to the top of the Radio Luxembourg Hit Parade for two weeks.

As for the third plaque, Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement in England is partnering with Historic England to encourage blue plaque schemes in the provinces. Their roundtable discussions will promote best practice and look at challenges and opportunities. We will be directly involved with these meetings: Historic England is well aware that facilitating



Another plaque to the chisel jawed actor.

43 plaques in the last ten years has given Bristol Civic Society invaluable experience which we can share with other civic societies around the country who are eager to launch their own schemes. We will be arguing for plaques to highlight unsung heroes, deserving individuals and their achievements.

We are proud of our diverse mix of plaques - besides soldiers, it embraces chemists and physicists, industrialists and artists, politicians, pioneering feminists and social reformers, suffragists and suffragettes, a Bletchley Park code-breaker and a narrow-gauge railway. At the foot of St Michael's Hill, there's even one commemorating an optical illusion and just up the road from there at the university, one dedicated to moon-rock.

Historic England's foray into the provinces has achieved four plaques to date: at Beate George Harrison's birthplace, and ones for Clarice Cliff and for Daphne Steele, the first black NHS matron. Oh, and our handsome actor.

A plaque endows a building with a biography. If that biography is not generally known, then the plaque serves a noble purpose in proclaiming an uplifting story: it illustrates a strong connection between a building and an individual's outstanding achievements.

John Milton wrote, "a good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life".

I reckon he'd say something similar about our plaques . . .

\* Cary Grant



Neighbours and young pupils from Whitehall Primary School stood respectfully silent.



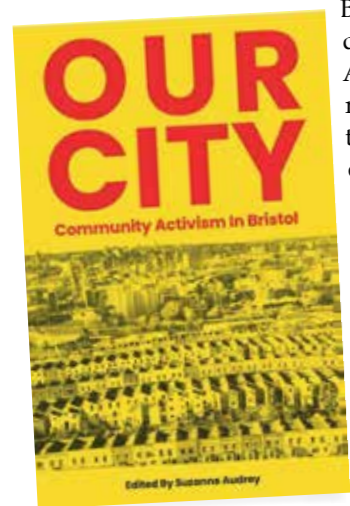
# Book Reviews

## Mike Manson reads some Bristol books.

### Our City, Community Activism in Bristol

Edited by Suzanne Audrey  
Tangent Books, £15.00

Audrey has gathered together an impressive roster of Bristol commentators, campaigners and activists. The range is panoramic – many of these issues have over the years been covered by *Better Bristol*. *George Ferguson* writes about planning; *Joanna Booth* chronicles the Bristol Arena Project; *Richard Jones* considers the much loved and missed Ursa sculpture; *Laura Chapman* reveals troubled behaviour around the



Broadwalk development. And so much more. Bristol truly is a city of resistance. A volume to inspire and inform. Also see *Better Bristol* pages 8-9.

### Streetscapes: Historic Routes through English Towns

Ptolemy Dean  
Lund Humphries, £45.00

Not just Bristol, *Streetscapes* includes 26 historic town centres, illustrated by Ptolemy Dean's distinctive and rather beautiful sketches.

Ptolemy Dean is a British architect, who will be known to some as a historic buildings adviser on the BBC 2 'Restoration' series.

Each of the town studies includes two historical maps – one created by John Speed in the sixteenth century, which explains the general overall layout of a town, its shape, size, defensive walls, and river crossings. The other a first edition OS map from the late nineteenth century which reveals the

### The Bristol Ideas Book of Walks

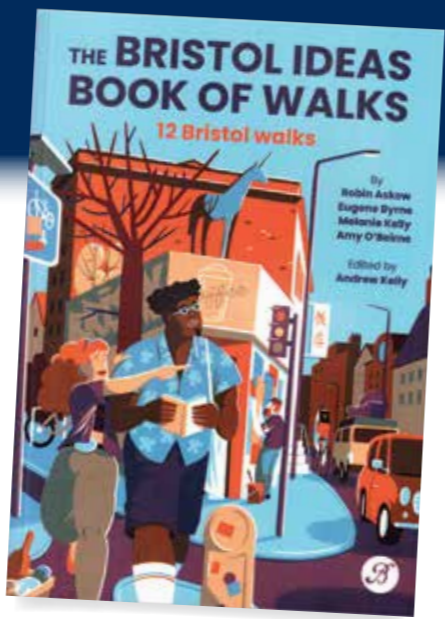
Robin Askew, Eugene Byrne, Melanie Kelly Amy O'Beirne  
Edited by Andrew Kelly  
Bristol Books, £14

Bristol Festival of Ideas lives on! Follow in the footsteps of the Romantic poets and Brunel. Learn about Bristol's council housing, commerce and public life. Discover the myths people tell about the city. Experience arts, music history and nature. And see how different the city might have looked

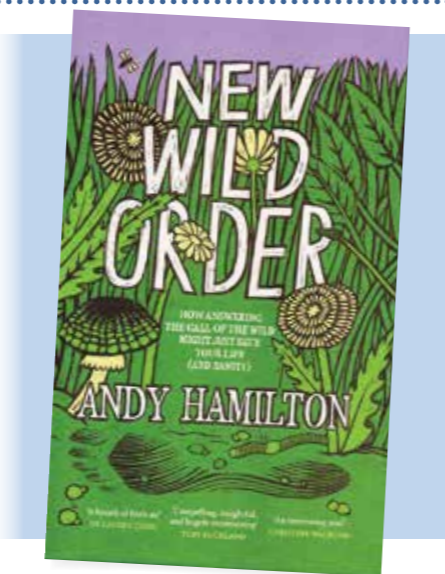
### New Wild Order

Andy Hamilton  
Scribe, £18.99

Bristol-based alternative lifestyle guru Andy Hamilton has been busy. In *Better Bristol* issue 25 we reviewed his *The First Time Forager*. Now he's giving us food for thought on how to survive the second quarter of the twenty first century. This memoir-meets-lifestyle guide offers an unconventional perspective on life. Insightful and entertaining, according to Hamilton the call of the wild might just save your life – or sanity. To be read with an open mind and a sense of adventure.



if some projects had gone ahead. This book brings together a series of walks created and commissioned by Bristol Ideas to help explore our unique city.



### The Herbal Year Book

Herbalists Without Borders Bristol  
Active Distribution, £12.00

A guide through the year to the use of medicinal herbs. Profits from the book go to the Herbalists Without Borders

Bristol project that supports asylum seekers and refugees.



extent that medieval arrangements have survived. Or not. Features among others: Bath, Bristol and Gloucester. Family please note: potential present for my next birthday!

# Bristol Civic Society membership

## Invitation

### 2025 Annual General Meeting and Summer Social

Members and friends are warmly invited to attend our 2025 AGM. It will be held on:

**Tuesday 24 June, from 6.30pm for 7.30pm, in The Mount Without, St Michael's Hill, Bristol BS2 8FN.**

Once again, we are extremely grateful to Norman Routledge, the owner, for inviting us to use this characterful building.

Doors open from **6.30pm** (cash bar; buffet provided); the formal meeting starts at **7.30pm**.

The Agenda will include: Annual Report from the Management Team, Finance Report, election of officers and other Management Team members.

Nominations for officers and Management Team members must be sent to the secretary no later than 17 June, at [secretary@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)

## Your Civic Society needs YOU! Joining is easy

There are three ways to apply. You can do it via the website: [bristolcivicsociety.org.uk/get-involved/join-the-society](http://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.

*Have you considered leaving something to the Bristol Civic Society in your will?*

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

## Membership application to join Bristol Civic Society

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

**Please return to:** Membership Secretary, Bristol Civic Society, 17 Bathurst Parade, Bristol, BS1 6UB.

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

**Enquiries:** Tel: 0117 927 6991.

**Email:** [membership@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)

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

Email .....@.....

Address.....

Phone(s).....

*giftaid it* By completing this Gift Aid Declaration, Bristol Civic Society can increase the value of your subscription at no extra cost to you by claiming a tax refund.

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**Please tick**

YES  NO

### Standing order mandate

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

to Lloyds Bank (sort code 30-94-80) for the account of Bristol Civic Society (account no. 00663177)

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# Events

## Spring / Summer 2025

Our Events programme supports the Society's overall aims by celebrating our city's heritage and history, offering insights into diverse aspects of its life including the economic and industrial, and looking at the challenges it faces in the future.

At the time of going to press, we have the following firm dates- but new events are regularly being added, so check our website and your in-box.

Booking is via emails, sent about a month before to all those who've opted to receive them- you can sign up on our website. Events are not restricted to members but where numbers are limited, we email members first. Zooms are free; there is normally a small charge for others.

**MARCH** Wednesday 26 March, 7.30pm.  
**Bristol 650 - how a series of neighbourhoods became a city over 650 years.** A talk by Pete Insole of Bristol City Council. Apostle Room, Clifton Cathedral, BS8 3BX.

NB free tea/coffee available from 7pm!

**APRIL** Sunday 27 April, 9.30am.  
**The Bristol Blitz.** A guided walk led by Eugene Byrne (held over from 2024).

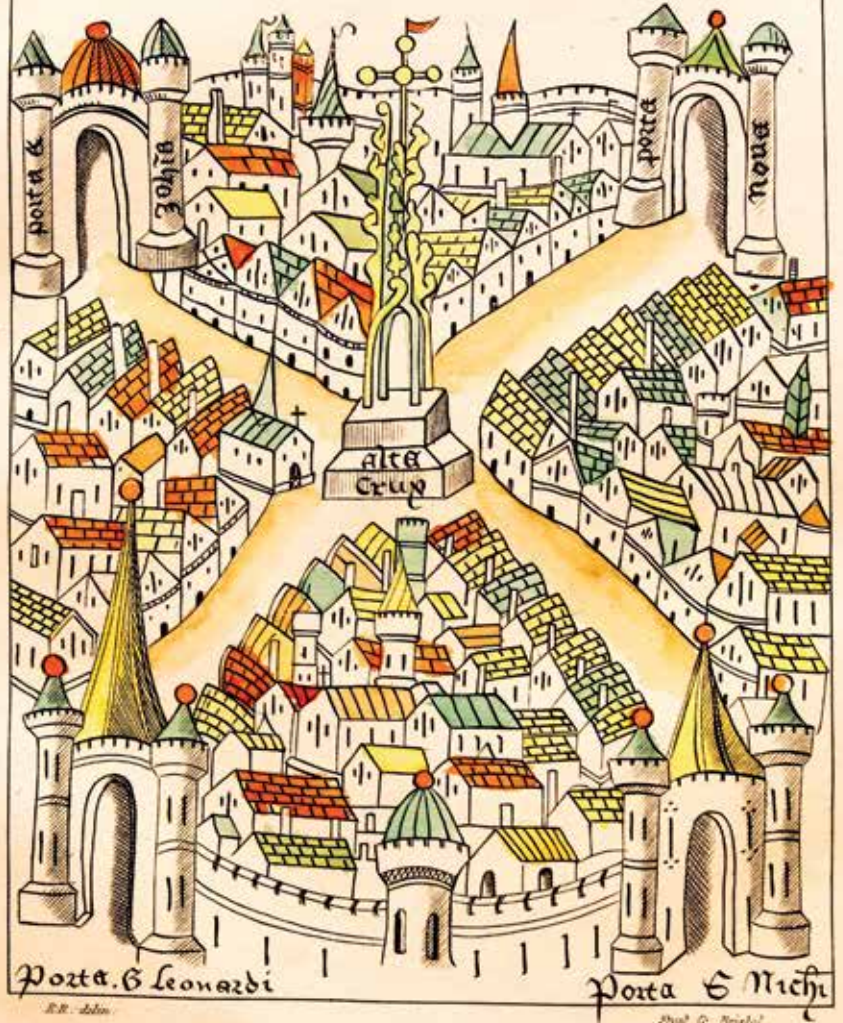
Wednesday 30 April, 7.30pm on Zoom.  
**How do we create a new cultural renaissance in Bristol?** Zoom talk by Andrew Kelly, former director of the Bristol Cultural Development Partnership.



The old shopping area of Castle Street and Wine Street were reduced to rubble. Guided walk by Eugene Byrne on the topic of the Bristol Blitz.

Bristol 650. How a series of neighbourhoods became a city.

Byzifolia



**MAY** Wednesday 21 May, 6.00pm.  
 A guided walk by Pete Insole: **A tour of the Portwall and Marsh Wall area.**

In the steps of antiquarian William Worcestre, taking in past and recent archaeological discoveries, and recalling how Worcestre described places in his 1480 peregrinations.

**JUNE** Tuesday 24 June, 6.30pm for 7.30pm. **Bristol Civic Society AGM**, at the The Mount Without, St Michaels Hill, Bristol BS2 8FN.

Also in planning for the summer. A zoom talk on the impact of Bristol's Clean Air Zone; a repeat visit to the Bristol Beacon and the presentation of our Design Awards. Dates and venues to be confirmed.

**And remember:**

If you book and then find you can't make it, do please let us know.

If you have ideas for future events, we'd love to hear from you.

The Events Team:

[events@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:events@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)

**HELP NEEDED!**

The Events Team is small and needs more volunteer help. We meet every so often to discuss and plan, but equally important is the admin effort of simply making the events happen- not very exciting work, if we are honest, but essential and very

straightforward (emailing mostly); and you can do it at home in your own time. And the more helpers there are, the less there is for any one person to do.

**Contact us on:** [events@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:events@bristolcivicsociety.org.uk)