



GUARDIAN ANGEL

NEWS FROM BRADFORD ON AVON PRESERVATION TRUST

Notes from the Chair

Riding into a 40mph headwind in torrential rain over Meldon Viaduct – 151 feet high and something that could have inspired Frank Hornby, the Meccano inventor – I had two thoughts: one that I had come on a cycling holiday by mistake and the other, I must be due an urgent call from our editor.

Luckily I bumped into Joc the following Wednesday as we were waiting on Bradford station. “I suppose my stuff’s due for the next *Guardian Angel*,” I said. “It certainly is,” she said. “When?” “Friday.” “Oh dear.”

Minutes later, 34046 Braunton – at 135 tons a very large and very green steam engine – came screaming through, the loco crew all waving at their colleague Harriet Feilding, enthusiastically waving back from the opposite platform. Inspiring.

Walking home across Poulton playing field with Dora I watched skateboarders whizzing about: the skatepark is so well used by so many people and I am very pleased that the Preservation Trust was able to help with a decent donation to help complete the fundraising. Well done Bradford on Avon.

And well done too with Apple Day, a community event

to complement the annual Wassail. There were apples everywhere: apples juiced by the Men’s Shed, cider served up by Gillian Livingstone and her husband Richard, a longest apple peel competition organised by Kate Nottage, lots and lots of apple cakes, and an afternoon of musical entertainment and morris dancing arranged by Nick Nicholls. A huge thank you to Gillian for bringing the whole thing together.

The next consultation about the Local Plan is now with us. It’s available to look at in the library and can be accessed online via the Wiltshire Council website.

In another consultation, it seems that the wishes of Bradford have been ignored. Wiltshire Council invited comment on housing plans for the county, and received only just over 3,000 responses in total to all the plans countywide. Of those responses, more than 720 were sent by Bradfordians, all asking that the old golf course should not be developed but left as a green space. As you will see from the draft Local Plan, the area has been placed on the reserve list of land suitable for housing.

The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world – so poor that one in seven species face extinction and more than 40 per cent are in decline. We

Contents

Notes from the Chair	1	Roll up for the mystery tour	14
Apple Day fun	3	A new look at an age-old problem	16
Bradford’s Sisters of Mercy	5	Round houses, windmills and wool stoves	17
A good read	7	Obituary	18
Planning matters	8	Ralph Oswick: Life in Barton Orchard	19
Rediscovering Christ Church	9	Looking after the landscape	20
A town unfit for purpose?	12		

are at the bottom of the G7 biodiversity league and in the bottom 10 per cent of 240 nations. More than half has been lost since the 1970s.

The golf course, at 44 acres, represents a big chunk of Bradford's green space. It's full of life: foxes, badgers, owls and bats, with the river home to otters and beavers. Given its previous life as a golf course, the huge variety of flora is pretty amazing, and it is part of the officially recognised blue/green corridor along the Avon.

Do please sign the petition organised by the town council: you can find it online, or sign a paper version if you'd prefer.

We can all do a little bit to help nature in our own gardens, especially at this time of year. I asked gardeners Sally Heselton and Rodney Smith for tips, and here's what they suggest:

- Keep lawns cut on highest setting so as to leave space for small wild things to move around.
- In more hidden areas just chop and drop – which means leaving removed vegetation where it came from albeit chopped up. This will help promote hidden soil-enriching wildlife enhancing spaces.
- Don't dig. This is one I am trying: the principle is that digging breaks up the systems that develop unseen below the surface. There are worm tunnels, fungal mycelium spreading for yards, whose tiny filaments collect feed from plants and help provide nitrogen, phosphorus and other elements. Give it a try: cover an area with a couple of layers of cardboard then cover this with a decent layer of compost and then just plant into it. Sounds simple? It is. Charles Dowding has tons of info on the technique – Google him.
- The last advice is to, once they are cleared, mulch beds with compost.

Which brings me nicely to the compost competition in the Flower Show. Our own Kate Nottage very narrowly missed the top spot and the new Compost Cup, sponsored by the Trust. Well done to her. If you are unsure how to make compost, then Kate's film *Little Rotters*, directed by Melissa Wishart, is on YouTube and will show you how.

Now it's time for a seasonal double recipe, for quince jelly and membrillo – the delicious quince paste that is perfect with Manchego and other salty cheeses.

To make the jelly:

4 lb quince peeled, cored, cut into chunks

1 lemon – juice and zest

Sugar

Put peelings and cores in a muslin bag and place in large pan, add quince chunks, lemon juice and zest, and barely cover with water. Bring to the boil, then simmer until the fruit is soft.

Remove the muslin bag and chuck the contents into the compost bin with the pieces of lemon. Wash the bag and use it to strain the contents of the pan.

Reserve the solids for membrillo.

Measure the liquid into a large pan, and for each 500ml add 500g of sugar.

Slowly bring the mixture to boil again, stirring with a wooden spoon until all sugar is dissolved.

The setting point of jam/jelly is 105 deg C. To check setting remove the spoon, turn it on its side and look for drips beginning to coagulate (forming longer drips). The jelly is now ready to pour into washed and sterilised jam jars (dry them out in the oven at 120 deg C). Then screw the lids down tight or use jam covers and elastic bands.

To make the membrillo

You should now have a muslin bag full of squidgy pink stuff. Purée it, weigh it, then put it in a big saucepan, with an equal weight of sugar. Turn the heat down low to medium and stir well until all the sugar is dissolved. Keep cooking and stirring on low for at least an hour. The pink will turn a deep orange/pink and it will continuously bubble and spit like a small volcano. Beware – it is now very hot!

It's ready when you can draw the wooden spoon through the now dangerous mixture and leave a gap that doesn't immediately close (you'll know it when it happens).

You need a baking pan about 8in x 12in lined with greased parchment. Pour the contents of the pan into this, smooth it over and put it in the oven at 125 deg C for about an hour.

Take it out and let it cool. It should be set when cold, but if not, cook it a bit more at a slightly lower temperature.

When set and cold, cut it into squares and enjoy it. Give some to chums: they will all like it, promise.

I hope to see many of you at this year's AGM – at the Priory Barn on Thursday 7 December at 8pm – when we can all wish one another a lovely Christmas and a very jolly New Year.

John Potter

Chair, Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust

**Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust AGM
8pm, Thursday 7 December 2023
Priory Barn, Newtown
There will be mulled wine and mince pies!**

Apple Day – a new town tradition in the making

Crowds turned up at Barton Farmyard for Bradford on Avon’s first Apple Day. Gillian Livingstone explains the thinking behind this ‘fun event with a serious purpose’

Greensleeves, the Red Devil, Charles Ross, Limelight. No, these are not part of a Morris Dancer’s repertoire but just some of the apples available to taste and buy at Bradford on Avon’s first Apple Day. The event took place in the West Barn on Saturday 16 September, following on from the very popular Fruit and Produce Show at the beginning of the month.

Unlike wassailing, our other apple-themed event, the tradition of Apple Day is quite recent. The first Apple Day was in 1990, and took place in Covent Garden and with over 40 stalls attracted thousands of visitors. Our Apple Day was busy – but not quite on that scale.

The thinking behind the event was to showcase the extensive range of apple varieties, and to demonstrate how their distinctive taste and appearance are determined by the soil and climate where they grow, their ‘terroir’ if you like.

Apple Day is also a celebration of abundance and how we can make best use of the bounty. We were delighted to have local apples from Hens’ Orchard in Barton Farm Country Park, and Avonleigh Orchard who donated less than perfect specimens to be tasted and juiced.

The apple press constructed by the Men’s Shed and beautifully maintained was the main attraction. During the afternoon, it converted apples destined for the compost heap, into around 130 litres of juice. Local residents who brought a load of fruit came away delighted with their booty, several bottles of freshly pressed juice. At the end of the day, the mash from the apples (known as pomace) was delivered to the compost heap in the Hens’ Orchard, a perfect example of zero waste.

The diversity of apples was well illustrated by the range of tasty bakes on offer in the West Barn, so much so that people were asking for the recipes to experiment at home.

Morris dancing and music from Rag Morris, the Rapper Sword Dancers and Bath City Waits



Bradford on Avon Men’s Shed brought along their apple press - and never stopped juicing all day

Apples are lovely, not just to taste but also to smell and touch. In the apple-themed activities in the courtyard, children and adults attempted to produce the longest peel, a demanding task that required excellent knife skills. The remainder of the apple was used to carve gruesome granny heads which should decompose nicely, just in time for Halloween.

Bradford in Avon is a few miles away from not one, but three cider orchards. The cider on sale on Apple



Day came from Dick Willows Orchard near the village of Claverton. Freshly pressed the day before and unpasteurised, it needed to be drunk quickly, although at 6.5%, not too quickly.

Throughout the afternoon, we were richly entertained by traditional musicians from Bath City Waits, and the colourful and athletic dancing from two Bristol-based groups, Rag Morris and the Rapper Sword Dancers. The audience gasped when the lead dancer in the Rappers somersaulted into the centre of group, with their swords held carefully aloft, and came out unscathed.

Apple Day was a fun event, with a serious purpose that aimed to engage all the community. The stallholders from Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon, the Swift Group and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, as well as local horticultural experts, made the link between sustainable food production and biodiversity.

Their contribution was a reminder that our heritage of apple growing is both precious and precarious. Since the 1950s, 95 per cent of traditional orchards have been lost and it has been suggested that by 2030, it will be almost impossible buy an English apple in supermarkets. Apple Day stands as an example of how we can both honour a tradition and make it contemporary and relevant.

Rest assured we are already planning Apple Day 2024.

Peter Eveleigh and the Men's Shed pressed about 130 litres of apple juice – the perfect accompaniment to the array of apple cake on offer in the West Barn



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The Cartwright-Hignett family welcomes you to Iford's Grade-I Italian-style gardens, famous for their tranquil beauty. Home of the Edwardian designer Harold Peto from 1899-1933, the unique and romantic hillside landscape is characterised by terraces, ponds, sculptures & spectacular views.

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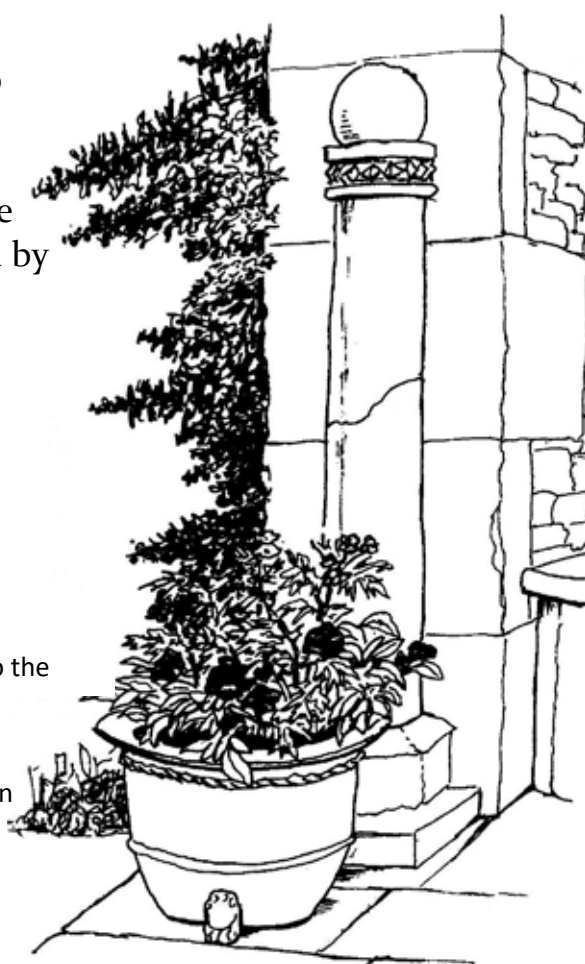
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The nuns at the Priory

Ivor Slocombe reassesses the history of the Priory, and the community of Anglican nuns who lived there in the mid-19th century

When I have led tours of Bradford on Avon, I have usually left out the Priory. I explain that, since the old house was pulled down, there is not much of interest to see. Also it is called the Priory simply because some nuns lived there for a few years in the mid-19th century.

I now realise how wrong I have been.

The Priory was an important house in Bradford from the Middle Ages. It was originally called Besills and then Methwins after the owners. The Methuens were followed by the Tugwells and then by John Saunders. In about 1850 John Saunders discovered some ornamental stonework which looked medieval and ecclesiastic so he decided to call his house The Old Priory which, in any case, sounded somewhat grander.

Very little has been written about the nuns at the Priory but they do, in fact, represent an important episode in the history of Bradford.

We need to start with Priscilla Lydia Sellon. She was a wealthy lady who came from a

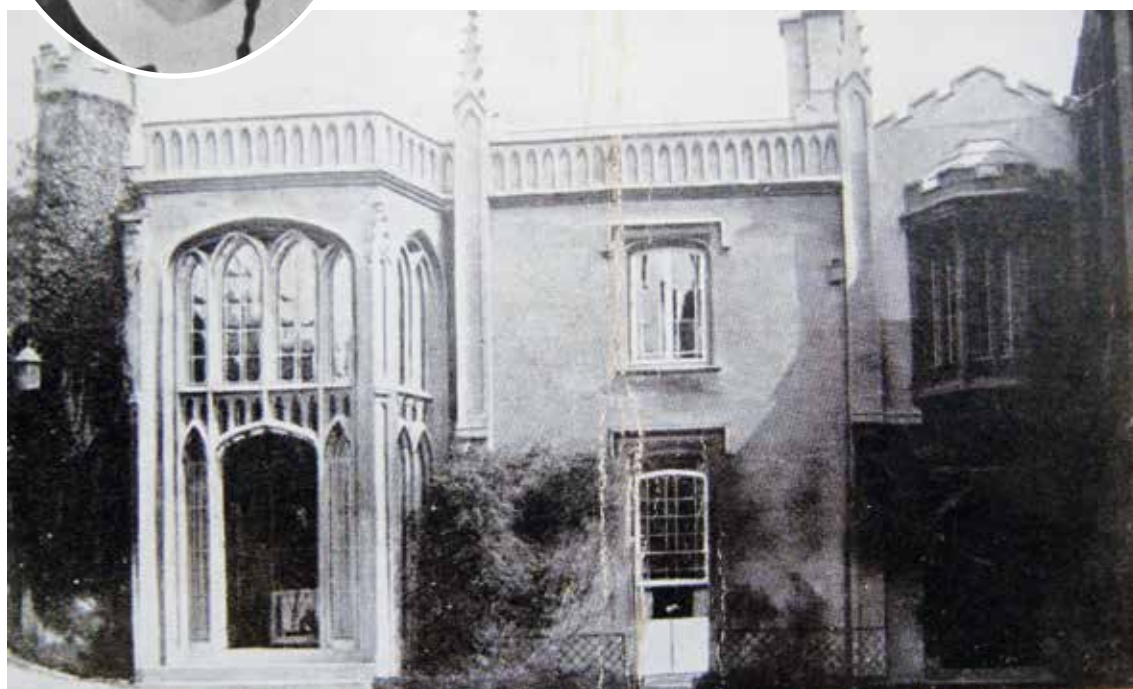
naval family. When she visited Plymouth and Devonport in 1847 she was appalled by the conditions there in the poorer quarters. There was extreme poverty, mass unemployment and no facilities for the children, many of whom were orphans. She was determined to do

something about this, so got together a group of similar minded ladies.

There was always a strong religious element in the group, so Priscilla formed an Anglican community called the Sisters of Mercy. They did a huge amount of good work. They founded an orphanage for girls, set up night schools for boys and an industrial school for girls. In 1849, the area saw a very serious outbreak of cholera and Priscilla and her nuns were the mainstay in providing nursing facilities and help for the affected families.

But, despite all this good work, the nuns were controversial and were the subject of some quite vicious criticism. The main body of the Anglican church at that time was what we might call 'low church'. Then a group in Oxford, the tractarians, led by Dr Pusey, moved towards the 'high church' with more elaborate rituals and services which many saw as the start of a move back to Roman Catholicism. Priscilla and the nuns were very closely linked to Pusey and followed his ideas. Their 'nunnery' was the first such institution founded in the country since the Reformation and their religious observances were distinctly like those of a medieval monastery.

Priscilla and Pusey then planned the development of similar priories across the country. The first was in Bristol which they established in 1851. Then, in 1856, they came to Bradford taking a lease on the Priory. It is not clear exactly why they came here. We know the lease was paid for by Rev Edward Stuart, the very wealthy vicar of St Mary Magdalene's, Munster Square, London, who was also closely linked to Pusey. They had moved in by July 1856. The dining room was turned into a chapel with



The Priory from the courtyard; inset, Priscilla Sellon, founder of the Anglican community at the Priory

an organ and other rooms were partitioned to make cells. They were particularly welcomed by the vicar who caused the church bells to be rung to greet their arrival. In the mid 1850s Bradford was going through a deep economic depression with a great deal of unemployment and subsequent poverty. It seems likely that the vicar saw them repeating in Bradford the sort of work they had done in Plymouth. He was disappointed. By this time the Sisters had moved much more to a life of contemplation. They cut themselves off in the Priory which was ideal for such isolation and only went out to go to church. No one from the town, including the vicar, was welcomed there.

The 1861 census lists five nuns at the Priory: Priscilla Sellon, Catherine Chambers, Emma Taylor, Clara Powell and Lucy Watkins (Child Hombeline). Sister Catherine was Priscilla's main assistant with responsibility for much of the administrative work. Sister Clara came from a wealthy Hampshire family and was a semi-recluse. Lucy had entered the Order in London and was particularly known for her austere asceticism. Finally Emma, who was known as Phoebe.

Two of the nuns died when they were at Bradford: Sister Harriet (the Hon Harriet Erskine, eldest daughter of Lord Erskine, Baron of Cambo) and Sister Anna. Both were buried in the new cemetery on the Holt Road, their graves being marked by a plain black cross.

There was also a seven-year-old girl, Aileen Murphy, who was born in Ireland. She was the daughter of two Irish

beggars who died of cholera in Plymouth. So the Sisters adopted her as a ward. Later she went back to Ireland to live with an uncle.

Most surprising, also living at the Priory was Alice Henshaw, described as a printer's compositor, and 11 girls aged between 12 and 19, all of whom had been born in the London area. They were all described as printers' compositors or printers' scholars. These were girls who came from the London orphanage established by the Sisters of Mercy, a similar order of nuns.

Most orphanages taught the girls laundry work. But this was poorly paid and Priscilla realised that when the girls left the orphanage they would not earn enough to be able to live independently. She had always been interested in printing and thought that the girls would make good compositors. She set up a printing press at Bristol and this moved with the nuns to Bradford. Dr Pusey was a prolific writer of sermons and some of these were either printed in Bradford or were set up for printing in London. Pusey was a frequent visitor to the Priory.

The religious controversy which surrounded the Sisters in Plymouth followed them to Bradford. A Protestant Association had been formed to oppose the High Church practices and any move towards Roman Catholicism. In February 1857 they held a meeting in Bradford hoping to form a branch there. The two main speakers were Paul Fosketh and James Verner who made quite vitriolic attacks on the Sisters. Fosketh described the 'fallacies of Rome' and how they were being followed by the Tractarians. The Sisters had bound themselves by ungodly vows not to God but to a 'fellow worm'. In their establishment, wrong principles were taught, a perverted gospel and mummeries were maintained and many abominations done to the disgrace of religion and ultimately to the dishonour of God and his Holy Word. Verner also attacked the Tractarians and the Sisters who were 'helpers in this black business'.

The Sisters' stay in Bradford was relatively short for in 1862 they combined with the London priory and built a new house at Ascot to which they all moved.

There is a postscript. The nuns were responsible for perhaps the most famous lady of the age, Florence Nightingale, visiting Bradford. In 1909 the *Wiltshire Times* published a long interview with Tom May of Ashley. He had fought in the Crimean War, was wounded and then treated by the Florence Nightingale nurses. Having been invalided out of the army he came to live at Ashley. He recalled that one day in 1859 he was walking up Mason's Lane and met a lady he immediately recognised as Florence Nightingale. She was dressed in a sort of modified crinoline surmounted by the white banded headgear of a nurse. He spoke to her and they talked about the Crimea. He then asked her what she was doing in Bradford. She said she had come to visit the nuns at the Priory. This makes sense for some of the Sisters had gone to the Crimea to work with her.

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A good read for the long, dark evenings

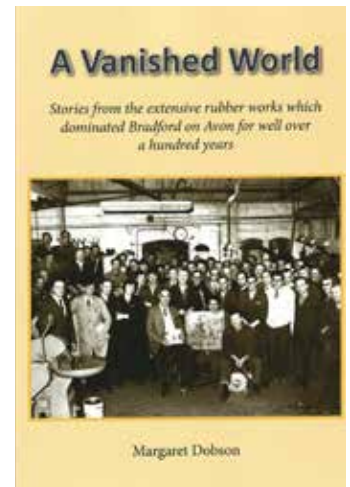
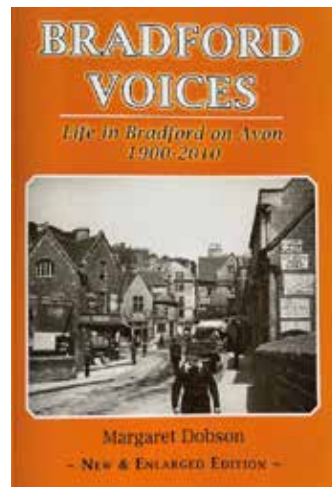
Kate Nottage reappraises a pair of books by Margaret Dobson that capture life in Bradford on Avon over the past century and a half

Readers of *Guardian Angel* are, of course, interested in the history of this special town and there are two books describing life in its industrial heyday (from the mid-1800s to the end of the 20th century) that really are essential reading. *A Vanished World*, which was published recently, and *Bradford Voices*, now in its second edition, are the work of Margaret Dobson, who was a dynamic chair of the Preservation Trust in the early 2000s and is also a meticulous social historian. We are very fortunate that Margaret and her team caught Bradford on Avon life and recorded it before it faded from memory.

These books are based on many conversations and audio recordings of people who lived and worked here and therefore they bring the town to vivid life. They tell the story of Bradford on Avon in people's own words. Lives were centred within the town in a way that is now hard to imagine and can seem somewhat remote and extraordinary. For example, young women bought the materials in Goodall's haberdashers' shop on Silver Street on their way home from work, made a dress in a day, and happily set off together to a Saturday night show at the Spencer Moulton Sports and Social Club on the Trowbridge Road.

Over the last few months I have been assisting Margaret in transferring research documents and audio files over from her house to the archives at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre. Last week we discovered a folder containing the typed, handwritten or emailed and printed responses to the publication of *Bradford Voices*.

Frustratingly, and inevitably, the letters contain reminiscences that were triggered by reading the book but escaped being included in it. For example, Pamela Moore, who was born here in 1927, wrote: "I remember being able to skate from Bradford to Trowbridge when the canal froze, [also] seeing the fish flapping about when a bomb blew out the side of the canal and the water cascaded down into the river".



Geoff Andrews, after complimenting Margaret on the book, included this reminiscence: "And what about the Rowing Club, the sportsmen who never won anything? They have improved considerably since then, but when I was one of their coxes in 1952 we even managed to get beaten by the Blind School." He continued: "I also provoked/led the halfpenny strike of newspaper boys in about 1955, my only foray into industrial action, which made all of us newspaper boys in the town significantly richer."

Despite these absences, the book is full to the brim with compelling stories, as historian John Chandler said in his review:

"There are images of compassion, robustness and quiet humanity: there are carefully crafted phrases which might grace a poem; and there are moments of wonderfully unexpected trivia which, looking back, were perhaps significant after all – the midnight milkman, footprints in the mud settled on the swimming pool floor, hymn-singing in the mushroom quarries during an air raid, mice in the sweet shop after dark."



Lamb Yard, then and now

Bradford Voices draws not only on living memory, Margaret Dobson also researched archival sources including local newspapers and council minutes. “All this material is skilfully set into the context of local and national events and illustrated by a splendid array of photographs, maps and drawings,” said the *Wiltshire Times*.

Every time I open *Bradford Voices* I learn more about this town from this accurate, authentic and highly readable history. It gives me a greater understanding of streets and buildings I walk past every day, and the people who lived there.

Margaret’s latest book, *A Vanished World*, focuses on the social life in and around the extensive works that dominated the town from the mid-1800s until the mid-1990s. In the mid-19th century, Stephen Moulton returned from his encounter with Charles Goodyear

in America, looking for premises in which to build his business making an innovative material: rubber. It is hard to imagine now the filth and noise created by the industrial activity, but also the close family ties and bonds of friendship engendered by this challenging environment.

The numerous photographs in Margaret’s book illustrate the evolution of the factory over 150 years until its close at the end of the 20th century, and the town’s subsequent evolution into a comfortable destination in which to shop and enjoy a coffee.

What a pleasure to take one or both of these books and curl up by the fireside for a good read, then take a stroll in the winter sunshine and reflect on Bradford on Avon in times gone by.

● Both books are available from Ex Libris, in The Shambles; 01225 863595/jim_exlibris@btinternet.com

Planning matters

Rosie MacGregor, chair of the Trust’s Planning Committee, reports on recent planning issues

Win some. Lose some!

We were pleased that Wiltshire Council refused Listed Building consent for the installation of an entirely inappropriate roller shutter door at The Swan Hotel, consistent with our own comments. Permission and Listed Building consent have been granted for the extension and refurbishment of Woolley Grange Hotel. The Preservation Trust had opposed these proposals.

Several people contacted us to say they do not like the yellow door on the Georgian Lodge. It’s a matter of opinion. Some do, some don’t like it. There have been two similar cases – one, also a bright yellow door, at the Royal Crescent in Bath many years ago which proved highly contentious. The owner of that property was so annoyed when the then Bath City Council took enforcement action that she installed bright yellow blinds at every window – for which no consent is required. Eventually the council allowed her to retain the yellow door, conditional on it being repainted white or black when she moved from the property.

The second case was in July in Edinburgh when the council asked an owner to repaint a brightly coloured

door that was similarly unauthorised in a traditional colour; she painted it a pale shade of pink. The council has allowed the pale pink colour to be retained.

Regarding the door in Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire Council stated that “there was nothing particularly historic or significant about the previous paint colour and it is in an area of mixed architectural types and paint colours. Therefore, the key issue is whether the current paint is so bright that it attracts undue attention to the door and distracts from the intended harmony of the elevation, such that it affects the special architectural interest of the building. In that respect, the LPA considers it is borderline but we are inclined to err on the side of it not quite reaching that level of ‘eccentricity’ (as Historic England calls it) and therefore no consent is required.”

We have responded to consultation by Wiltshire Council on its Draft Design Guide. Our primary question is whether it will inspire and influence architects and designers? The document is well produced, but lacks fine detail about the wide variety of built forms and traditional features that define the different areas within the county of Wiltshire.



Crowning glory

Christ Church clock is back in place, restored and regilded, as part of the ambitious programme of works and events at the church at the top of town. Gillian Ellis-King tells the story so far

The National Lottery Heritage Funded Discover Christ Church! project is now in full swing, with conservation and repair work to the tower and spire under way, alongside a programme of inclusive and intergenerational community events. A Preservation Trust grant towards the restoration of the spire clock and the nave wall paintings was crucial in making this exciting project possible.

The Discover Christ Church! project has two interrelated strands of activity: the conservation and repair of key features of this fine grade 2* listed building, along with a 'golden thread' of heritage-inspired activities to discover, explore and celebrate Christ Church and its environs.

Conservation and repairs at Christ Church

The inside of the tower has suffered water damage over the years due to leaking joints and broken panes of glass – rotting the floor and tripping the electrics. All works are subject to the approval of our inspecting architect, George Chedburn of Chedburn Codd, *pictured below*.

Conservation standard repairs to rotted sections of the bell and clock chamber floors have used reclaimed Victorian boards, and added missing batons – to make it a safe working space for the electricians and clock restorers Smith of Derby.

The tower has been rewired, with weatherproof wiring and sockets to both the bell and clock chambers. This has solved the previous tripping problem and future proofed



Dizzy heights: Dan Noble and Richard Cox from Smith of Derby fixing the regilded clock faces in place, and (inset) Paul Silk of Wiltshire Steeplejacks at the top of the spire



against further damage.

Scaffolding went up in September to enable access to the spire for stonework repairs and for removal of the rusting clock faces.

Wiltshire Steeplejacks have put their ladders up on the spire to enable repairs to the stonework joints wherever needed. Looking from the inside of the spire, daylight is visible between some of the stones, along with algal growth as the water has run over the years and rotted the floor and electrics.

Steeplejack Paul Silk took the opportunity to film from the top of the spire, and you can view the footage on Wiltshire Steeplejacks' Facebook page – well worth a look.

A problem discovered....

As a result of gaining access to the spire, it has been found that the very prominent ornamental south-west pinnacle at the top of the tower and base of the spire has been badly damaged by corrosion of its supporting metal rod and the ravages of the weather. Strapping is currently in place to support it.

Conservation and repair of this intricately carved feature is going to cost up to £11,000. This is outside the scope



Dan Noble and Richard Cox with the renovated and regilded clock faces



numeral was gilded by a long-standing member of the Preservation Trust Planning Committee!

On 10 October a crowd of all ages, including Dan Prater of BBC Radio Wiltshire and *Wiltshire Times* photographer Trevor Porter, gathered to witness and cheer the raising of the newly gilded dials to the top of the tower.



Telling the time for all to see

The damaged pinnacle is being supported by strapping until repairs can be carried out

of our grants to date, so we are seeking funding to enable conservation and repair of this important feature of this landmark building. We are very grateful to the Preservation Trust for approving a further grant of £4,000 towards the cost of this work.

Our crowning glory

We are thrilled that, thanks to all our local supporters and donors, the Smith of Derby engineers Richard, Joe and Dan, and National Lottery Heritage Fund and Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust grants, the landmark spire clock at Christ Church is now restored to its golden, gleaming glory and once more tells the correct time for all who pass by. It is amazing how the gilded dials and hands now stand out against the Bath stone of the spire – even on the dullest of days.

Work to restore the clock began on 5 September, when Smith of Derby engineers Richard and Joe removed the rusting clock faces from the spire – along with the mechanism and connecting rods – and took them to their Derby workshop for restoration.

A month later, on 5 October, eight Discover Christ Church! volunteers visited Smith of Derby's workshop for a fascinating tour. The icing on the cake was the opportunity to apply 23.5 carat gold leaf to the numerals on the west facing clock dial. When you next look up, you may be interested to know that the west facing VIII

The following day, the dials and hands were reinstalled on the spire, and the restored clock face workings and connecting rod, along with a replacement electronic mechanism, were installed. (The original mechanical clock workings were removed and replaced with an electronic drive in the 1960s, leaving only the remains of the original but very rusty ‘Westminster’ chiming mechanism.)

Finally, at noon on Thursday 12 October 2023, the Christ Church spire clock restarted for all to enjoy, and to once again take its place as a key feature of the townscape at the top of the hill.

Looking forward

Spring 2024 will see the installation of a new energy-efficient adjustable lighting system, and in autumn next year work will start on the conservation and cleaning of the nave walls and magnificent archangel wall paintings.

Meanwhile, the Discover Christ Church! project continues to engage people of all ages in community activities and events.

Enhancing biodiversity

We are working with Year 5 pupils to come up with plans to enhance the biodiversity of the churchyard. A survey has been undertaken with members of Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon, and the children have held a workshop to assess what the grant money can buy and also to identify priorities. Interestingly, experts have told us that the diversity of grassland species may well reflect the pasture that existed before the church was built.

Community Open Day

We kicked off a two-year programme of activities with our Community Open Day. Despite a howling gale and squally rain, about 260 people came to explore a range of historic artefacts and to find out more about the Discover Christ Church! project. People were thrilled to find photos of family members among the historic records held by the school and others reconnected with old friends not seen for decades.

Visitors also enjoyed seeing the fragments of stained glass windows found in the basement, finding out about what’s under the paint on the nave walls and admiring Dorna Daw’s original kneeler drawings.

It has been suggested that as we have names of choir boys scratched on the wall behind the organ, plus old school records dating back to the 19th century – and of course the records of burials and gravestones – we should set up a group to piece together their histories and connections.



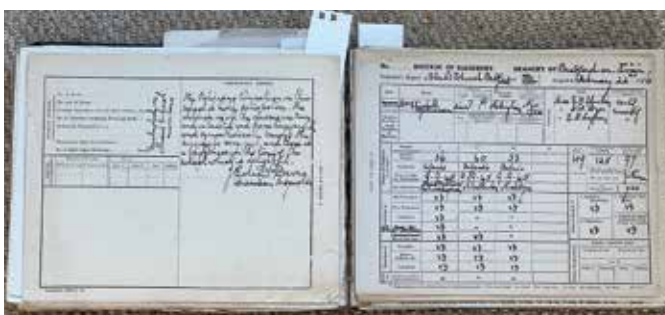
The Community Open Day attracted over 250 visitors

Please do get in touch at admin@discoverchristchurch.org.uk if you would like to join us in researching these local names, their histories and connections. Coffee and cake will of course be provided.

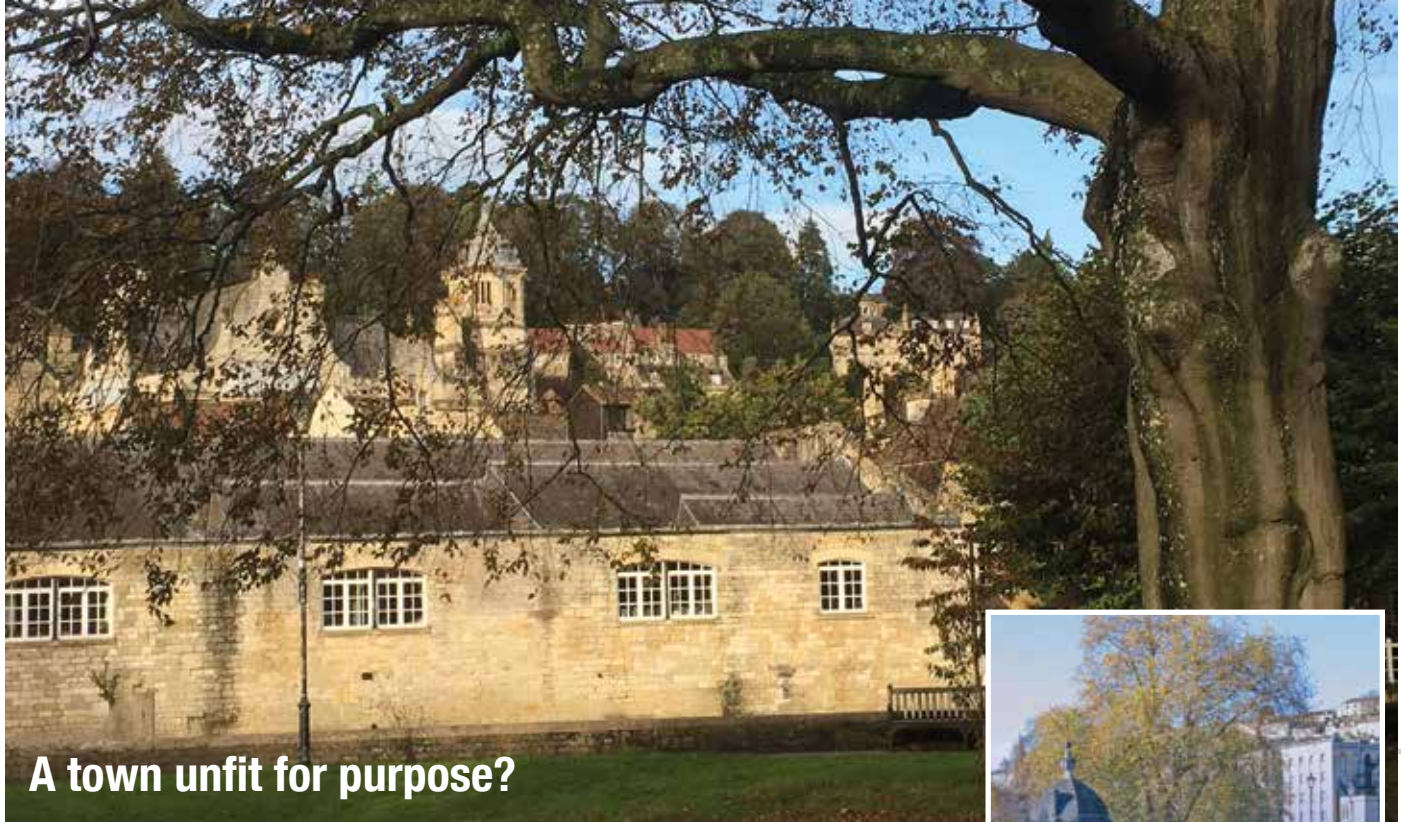
Planning further activities

Discover Christ Church! community outreach officer Becky Strike is working with local residents, including young people, to design and deliver a range of heritage-inspired community activities to discover, explore and restore Christ Church. For example, graphics students from St Laurence School are working on ideas for a project logo, photography and film students are contributing their perspective, and we are engaging with Dementia Action Alliance, BoA Youth and other local groups to see how they can become involved. Workshops, events and talks are being planned linking to the clock restoration and the range of traditional crafts and skills that make Christ Church so special, as well as exploring our social history.

Do let us know if you have any ideas for heritage inspired workshops and activities: contact us at admin@discoverchristchurch.org.uk



Choirboy graffiti and school records will provide rich research material



A town unfit for purpose?

John Seekings considers the latest version of the Wiltshire Local Plan and finds some interesting parallels with the Bradford of the 1820s

Wiltshire Council has just released the latest version of its Local Plan. Almost hidden in the middle of the report on Bradford on Avon is an alarming section – reproduced below – devoted to the town’s Infrastructure. After a bland introductory paragraph – “measures required to be put in place” – this section lists the town’s deficiencies in education, sustainable transport, health and social care, and utilities. This list is reproduced in full below: it describes a town that is unfit for purpose.

By a curious coincidence it is almost exactly 200 years ago that Bradford experienced a similar crisis. In the early 1820s a massive reduction in farm employment led to an unplanned escalation in the population of most of Britain’s towns, including Bradford on Avon. The then vestigial local authority, the parish council, was ill equipped to deal with the acute social and economic problems that resulted. A small group of local residents petitioned parliament to allow for the formation and funding of an Improvement Commission. This was duly established, with a membership of several score local residents, virtually the entire community of the great and the good.

Until it was replaced at the turn of the century by the urban town council, the Commission transformed the town’s infrastructure. During this period the number of commissioners was steadily reduced to the more manageable level of 12. (The story of the this period is summarised in the Preservation Trust booklet *Bradford: A New History* but alas remains untold in detail).

Today’s Town Council, although well intentioned, resembles the parish council of the 1830s in that it lacks the power to resolve strategic issues. Two hundred years

ago the way forward was for the local community to set up an effective action group, working in partnership with local authorities. This surely is what is needed today? In this case a leading role could be played by the Preservation Trust.



EXTRACT FROM THE LOCAL PLAN

Local Infrastructure

75. The growth of Bradford on Avon needs to be supported by the correct infrastructure, services and facilities. When planning for growth, it is important to consider the characteristics of the town in terms of key services and infrastructure (e.g., community facilities, green infrastructure, health, education, transport and utilities), as well as housing need and the local economy. The following summarises the measures required to be put in place to address growth proposals for Bradford on Avon, as well as known infrastructure issues, what additional provision is necessary to support growth and what other opportunities there may be.

Education

76. There are currently only a small number of surplus places in the Bradford on Avon primary schools, with limited scope for expansion. St Laurence Academy is at capacity but there is some scope for small scale expansion to meet the demand for up to 300 new homes. There are currently only a small number of available early years places and options are being investigated for new provision.

Neighbourhood area requirements for the rural parishes are calculated separately, as set out within the Rural Housing Requirements 2023, Wiltshire Council paper.

Sustainable transport

77. The A363 runs through Bradford on Avon and provides a link to Bath (and the M4) to the north via the A4, and to Trowbridge to the south, and thence to the A350 at Yarnbrook. Bradford on Avon is also served by a number of radial B roads: the B3107 connects the town to Melksham and the A350 to the east, the B3109 links the town to Corsham in the north and Frome to the south, and the B3108 links Bradford on Avon to the village of Winsley and the A36 to the west.

78. The town is relatively well served by bus routes. The D1 service runs frequently between Bath and Warminster via Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge and Westbury with an extension to Salisbury every 2 hours.

79. Bradford on Avon rail station is well served by the Cardiff to Portsmouth and Bristol to Weymouth services. These provide direct links to Bath, Bristol, Trowbridge and Salisbury.

80. Current constraints and/or local concerns are:

- The A363 crosses the River Avon on Town Bridge, the only road crossing of the river in the town. The roads in the historic town centre are very narrow and, with a daily traffic flow of 20,000 vehicles, this leads to congestion at peak periods. Three out of five vehicles originate outside the town.
- The high volume of traffic, together with the narrow streets and footways, has resulted in the town centre being dominated by vehicles and having a poor pedestrian environment.
- Due to the high traffic flows, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared in the town centre.
- Peak hour delays on the A363 also affect bus services.
- Rail services do not connect directly to Chippenham or Swindon.
- The historic fabric of Bradford on Avon, its hilly topography, and numerous environmental constraints (River Avon, Kennet and Avon Canal and railway line) restricts pedestrian and cycling connectivity.
- Facilitating future development growth would increase pressure on the A363 through Bradford on Avon, causing more congestion and potentially exacerbating the existing air quality issues.

81. Current opportunities are:

The A363 through Bradford on Avon is identified in the Department for Transport's Major Road Network (MRN) consultation. The MRN status provides the potential opportunity to secure funding to improve the function of this section of MRN.

82. There are capacity issues within Bradford on Avon. There is one General Practitioner surgery in Bradford on Avon. The buildings are considered to not be fit for purpose. A new building is required.

Utilities

83. Electricity infrastructure is constrained across much of Wiltshire. The Grid Supply Points in Wiltshire, located in Minety, Melksham and Mannington are all constrained. The Bulk Supply Points across Wiltshire are also constrained.

84. With the uptake of low carbon technology and the move towards net zero, there are estimates that energy demand could almost treble by 2050. This increased pressure on the system is something Scottish and Southern Electricity Network (SSEN), as Distribution Systems Operator, is working on to manage new capacity. Solutions may include flexible connections, renewable energy and further investment to reinforce the current infrastructure.

85. With regard to the foul water network capacity, development at Bradford on Avon may lead to the need for an investment scheme in AMP8. Capacity is likely to be available for a moderate proportion of the residual requirement for Bradford on Avon, beyond which improvements are highly likely to be required. Significant foul water infrastructure may cross sites.

86. The approach to securing infrastructure provision from new development is set out within Local Plan Policy 5 (Securing Infrastructure Provision from New Development), with site specific requirements that are applicable to Bradford on Avon set out within Policy 57 (Bradford on Avon Market Town).

Longcase Clocks For Sale

Two longcase clocks for sale: one thirty-hour brass dial clock by Joshua Rudd (c1704-1780) of Bradford on Avon, in good working order, £475, and one eight-day brass dial clock in good working order by Stump (c1781-1869) and Bubb (c1787-1791) of Bradford on Avon, both of whom were apprenticed to the Bradford on Avon clockmaker Edward Hopkins (c1765-1803), £775.

Both clocks can be viewed in Bradford on Avon and delivered locally free of charge.

Call Tim on 07713324034.

Charabancs to the rescue

Flooding is nothing new for Bradford on Avon, and in the 1920s the town's three garages provided local people with safe and dry passage through the floodwaters. Geoff Andrews celebrates the mighty charabanc

At new year 1928, Bradford was awash. Just like the previous three winters, and many afterwards, the town centre was seriously flooded, this time by the rapid thaw of snow which had fallen in December.

It was an age-old problem, the Avon cutting off the two halves of the town, but in the 1920s the town had a consolation in the rivalry of three local companies, which quickly came to the rescue.

Stamper, Keates and Stone were the three garages in the town, and as well as competing to entice anyone to stump up for the latest cars, they had another profitable string in providing charabancs for day outings.

And, when needed, those same charabancs, with much more clearance than the coaches that they evolved into, doubled up as ferries, carrying people through the floodwater and over the town bridge. They provided a lifeline for the public, and allowing shops and businesses to continue.

Stamper and Stone immediately did so in the first days of 1928, until the floods receded. Keates garage didn't offer a ferry service, but provided a refuge for Wards newsagents, whose premises at the entrance to the Bullpit were flooded two feet deep.

Just why three garages should provide similar services in

a town as small as Bradford is a mystery, but they offered their charabanc services throughout the year very widely, advertising in Warminster and Chippenham frequently, and apparently had little competition apart from one garage in Trowbridge and much later, the National Bus Company.

Our photo shows a toast-rack charabanc at Cheddar, probably in the early 1920s, and almost certainly from Stamper's garage. It carried 20 (plus two children) on hard benches, accessed via a door for every bench, hence the toast rack nickname. Some weather protection was provided by a folding roof (which some people are sitting on in the picture). The driver always wore a floor-length white (originally) coat.

Apart from the condition of the roads the tyres were solid at this stage, the suspension firm, and the engine not completely reliable.

Cheddar, Wells, and Weston super Mare were favourite destinations for a day trip, and there were 'mystery tours' in the evenings, where the destination was a secret – but usually turned out to be Castle Combe. Mystery tours were popular for many years, and in the 1950s a Bradford couple holidaying in Bournemouth booked a day-long mystery tour – only to find themselves transported back to their home town.



All roads lead to the Bradford on Avon bridge

Architect Raymond Winrow joins the debate about a safe river crossing in the town centre

The presence of a way to cross a river in prehistoric times was important and resulted in paths, and later a road, using the crossing at Bradford on Avon. The 'broad ford' and its traffic resulted in a neolithic settlement and then a Roman presence.

It is recorded that there was a wooden bridge in 1200. In 1350, Edward II allowed tolls for livestock crossing the bridge to pay for repairs. In 1400, Pope Boniface IX appealed for funds for repairs. This must have been the early stone bridge with gothic arches. It appears to have been more than a pack horse bridge as it could be used by carts.

Complaints in 1562 record that the bridge had no parapets – it was 11 feet wide. The present parapets are different heights – the higher one on the upstream side, presumably to deal with flood water.

There is a record of the 'chapel' being on the bridge in 1660. In 1769, the bridge was widened to its present size with round arches replacing the pointed gothic style, except for two arches to the south of the chapel on the upstream side.

The chapel was recorded as a lock-up in 1740 and in the early 18th century, was re-built using the existing stone.

The ford continued to be used alongside the bridge until the late 19th century.

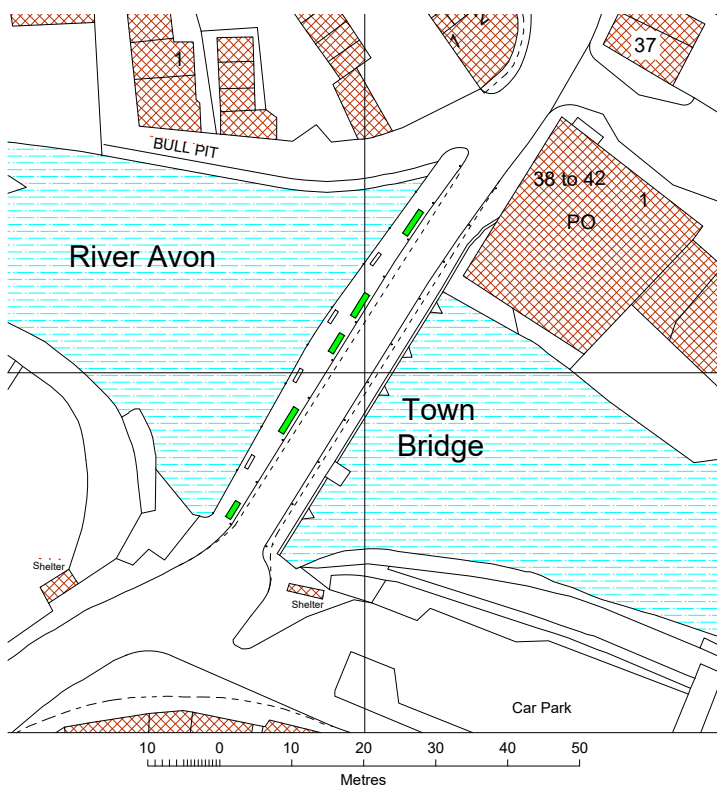
If a footbridge was built over the river in any other position in the town, it would only serve a limited number

of people. The existing bridge would still be in use and still present dangers to pedestrians using the narrow footpaths.

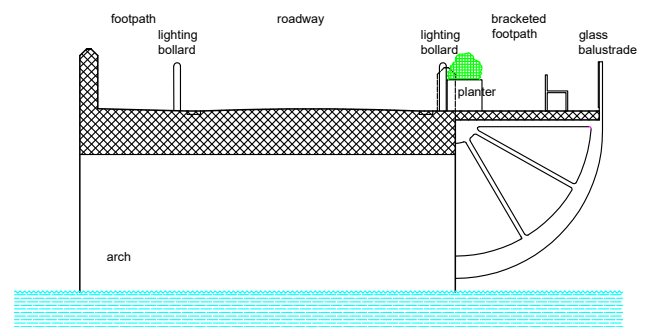
The solution is to improve the existing bridge. Changes to the river crossing from a ford to a wooden bridge, to a narrow gothic arched structure, to adding parapets, to a wider round arched bridge, have all occurred as a result of the way society has developed and the way the crossing is used. The high volumes of vehicular traffic can lead to dangerous situations when the footpaths have many people using them. It is now time to carry out a further modification to cater for present day modern use.

There are a number of solutions:

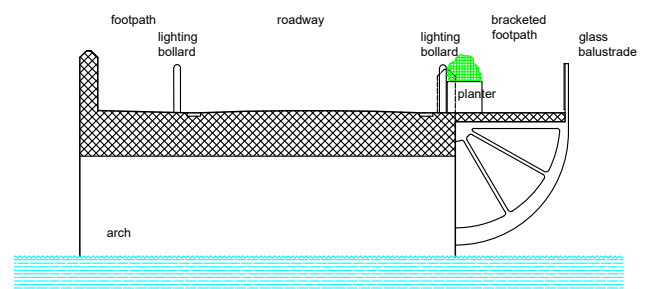
1. A traffic light system allowing alternating traffic flows, the foot paths widened and the carriageway reduced to one width. This will probably result in long queues of traffic standing with resultant pollution from exhausts. There would be a problem of traffic flows with the bus stops on the south side of the bridge.
2. The lockup, east side, footpath widened and the carriageway moved over so that there was no footpath on the west downstream side of the bridge. Pedestrians would be deprived of views of river downstream. Many people stop on the bridge to admire the view and swan's nest on that side.
3. The bridge could be widened with a bracketed walkway on the west downstream side of the bridge. This is the favoured solution. The extra width would solve the safety



Proposals to widen the town bridge at Bradford on Avon
Raymond Winrow Dip Arch (Leeds) DipT (Leeds) RIBA AABC Scale 1:500



Section through Bridge at Centre



Section through Bridge at the Ends

Proposals to widen the town bridge at Bradford on Avon
Raymond Winrow Dip Arch (Leeds) DipT (Leeds) RIBA AABC Scale 1:100

problem and could result in an attractive environment for pedestrians. The bracketed walkway could take the form shown on the drawings, below.

In plan, the extension would widen from 2 metres to 4 metres at the centre. Seats and plant boxes could be provided. The existing stone parapet wall must be removed so that the bridge design is an holistic composition and not just having an 'add on'. The footpath on the east lock-up side will be widened to 2 metres and the road moved over. This will be a permanent solution and should not be seen as a temporary alteration which could be removed in future. The harm that would result in the removal of the parapet wall will be outweighed by the public benefit to safety and the enhancement of the town centre.

In section, the bracketed support would be a quarter circle structure with the steel continued up above this pavement as support to a fully glazed parapet. These bracket structures would be fixed between the arches and vary in size to suit the projection.

Lighting bollards would be positioned along the footpath's edges in line with the structural brackets.

This proposal should be carried out with changed traffic flows on the north side to provide a one-way system. The town needs to consider again the adoption of the Historic Core Zone. The previous attempt was not well explained and there were many misconceptions.

If a one-way system is adopted, planting boxes could be provided on the mini roundabout on the north side of the bridge and at the junction of Church Street and Market Street, providing a 'greening' of the town centre.

Historic Core Zone planning has been carried out in Bury St Edmunds, Halifax, Lincoln, Shrewsbury and York central area. Many other historic towns have adopted the Historic Core Zone principles in their central areas. Bradford on Avon needs to reconsider its position and get rid of the engineered tarmac and concrete kerbed roads which distract from the fine historic architecture.

Historic Core Zone planning provides for narrow entries to the town and a 20mph speed limit. The narrow entries should deter any large vehicles which tend to find their way to the bridge and the lower speed limit will result in some through traffic seeking other routes.



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Round houses, windmills and wool stoves

Rosie MacGregor looks into the mystery of Bradford on Avon's round houses

I've been intrigued since first moving into a cottage in Bearfield Buildings back in the 1970s by what is now known as The Little Roundhouse. It was owned then by Jack and Molly Mizen, who lived next door. Molly, a town councillor, used it to hold poetry readings for the local Labour Party and Jack, a local builder, kept bees in a small group of hives at the bottom of the garden. The building was used for storing apples, jars of honey and bee-keeping equipment. There was something delightfully quaint and utterly charming about this building which always smelt of ripe apples. Prior to that it was occupied by a then elderly couple, the Damsels, who had lived there with no running water, just an outside tap, all their married lives since the early part of the 20th century before moving to a property in Huntingdon Street.

I loved this 'fairy tale' house which formed the view from the first floor sitting room window in our cottage on the opposite side of the lane.

However, to describe it as a round is not strictly correct because the footprint is oval rather than circular. Built on two storeys from natural Bath stone ashlar with a band course at first floor level under a conical slate roof with a finial on top, it is believed to date from the late 18th or early 19th century. The first floor 'gothic' windows have pointed arches with intersecting glazing bars and the doorways, a pattern copied at the front and rear. There is a chimney stack to one side and internally a small fireplace and on the opposite side a staircase leading to the first floor. The domestic fixtures and fittings inside appear to be contemporary with the age of the building. There is now a 20th century extension to the rear.

Jack and Molly were thinking of moving to Wales to be close to their daughter and in the early 1980s decided it might be appropriate to gain planning permission for an extension to the Roundhouse prior to selling it. They contacted Bath University School of Architecture to set it as a first-year student project. Some weird, rather wonderful and what would today be contenders for *Grand*

Designs were produced. This caused consternation in the locality and in 1981 a successful move was made to get it Listed Grade II. Rumours abounded that it had originally been a windmill (surely not!), a wool drying stove or to dry teasels. A local architect subsequently produced something more mundane but generally acceptable. Jack contended that it had always been a dwelling, that there had never been any previous alterations, and from copies of the deeds that appears to be correct.

There is another much larger and taller round house in Bradford on Avon, just off Masons Lane. An early photograph implies that there had once been sails suggesting it had been a windmill but the picture is very faint. Why would anyone build a windmill on the side of a hill? Jack Mizen many years previously converted it into residential use. He said there was no evidence that it had been a windmill but rather connected in some way with the wool industry. I'm inclined to agree.

The plot thickened when in spring 2023 I was invited to visit a ruined building in a private garden just off Coppice Hill. It is also built from natural stone up to head height and has an oval footprint of similar dimensions to the one in Bearfield, though little remains of the original building.

I have doubts that either of these buildings were wool drying stoves – firstly due to their height and interior dimensions and secondly because of their size, given the width of broadcloth. I also suspect that Jack Mizen was correct in thinking the round house on Masons Lane was never a windmill. Could this have been a large wool drying stove? Most wool stoves, of which there were once many throughout the West Country, no longer exist. Others have been converted into dwellings or other uses like the Round House in Melksham.

I doubt if any of these was used for drying teasels. Handle houses, as they were known, were usually rectangular because the teasels were fixed to handles that were then pulled across the fabric to raise the nap.

Wool stoves were circular towers about 5 metres in diameter, usually on three storeys, heated by a cast iron stove on the solid ground floor with a central stovepipe rising through the building and out through a conical roof. The upper floors were slatted and there were perforations in the roof to allow steam to evaporate. Cloth was dried after fulling and dyeing on metal drying racks – like large-scale clothes horses.

What do you think? What is the truth behind these three intriguing buildings? Let the Preservation Trust know on hello@bradfordheritage.co.uk if you have any ideas.

Photo of The Little Roundhouse taken in 1983 from Rosie MacGregor's cottage window just after the extension was built to the rear



Obituary: Gill Bowden



Gill Bowden, (née Andrews), who died in August at the age of 90, was devoted to Bradford on Avon – although she had lived in Trowbridge for the last almost 70 years.

At least once a week for about 20 years she volunteered in the town's Tourist Information Centre, both giving out information and acting as a source of local history—

helped by the fact that her family had lived in the town for at least 350 years.

One wet autumn Saturday she was asked by a dripping visitor about the ropeyard in Newtown – not the Ropewalk residential development built on the site of the old secondary modern school, but the actual business of ropemaking – “because my ancestors owned it.”

Gill's ancestor was the last owner of that ropeyard too, until it was eventually closed down in the 19th century by the effects of the Industrial Revolution.

It turned out that Gill and the rain-soaked tourist were related third cousins – and lots of personal historical reminiscences and ancient photos were subsequently exchanged.

Gill Andrews was born in a tiny cottage in Trowbridge Road during the Great Depression of the 1930s. She went to the Fitzmaurice Grammar School and worked at County Hall until her marriage to John Bowden, in 1955. They moved to Trowbridge because they couldn't afford to live in Bradford, even then.

After raising three children she had various jobs until she qualified as registrar of births, deaths and marriages for Chippenham and Malmesbury, echoing her husband's position as registrar for Bradford on Avon and Melksham. Over the years they probably married some members of the Trust.

After retirement Gill told more than 400 audiences of WI members some of the secrets of the registration system.

The funeral took place in September in Holy Trinity Church, the church where she was christened, and married too. Come to that, her parents completed the same triple and so, probably, did both sets of grandparents.

Geoff Andrews

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Shattering the peace – and the furniture

Regular columnist Ralph Oswick recalls some of the ups and downs of life in a five-storey terraced cottage in Barton Orchard

After my near disaster concerning my iron (see *Guardian Angel* No 100 issue), the prospect of a conflagration of biblical proportions taking in the entire street preyed on my mind. I decided to fit my whole cottage in Barton Orchard with smoke detectors. I got a bargain box from Bath's Guildhall Market but seeing me fitting bottom of the range stick-on versions, my brother, thinking the top floor was the one place that would need a quick getaway if smoke came billowing up my open staircase, gave me an all-bells all-whistles number for my birthday. He reckoned the optimum place for it would be directly above said staircase, and it was duly screwed to a high-up beam.

I thought nothing of it for about a year. There were no burning toast incidents and all guests requiring a cigarette were directed politely to the batch out the back.

One day I was doing some deskwork in the top floor study when the most god-awful banshee wail struck up. The fire alarm was going like the clappers. After quickly assessing there was no smoke involved, I found I couldn't reach high enough to turn the blinking thing off. A poke with a broom had no effect, so there was nothing for it but to stand on a chair, dangerously near that yawning staircase. On tiptoe with one chair leg teetering on the brink, I could just about operate the 'off' button. To no avail. The screeching continued. I pressed again. Nothing.

From my perch on high I glimpsed my near neighbours, one rank back, assembling on their front doorstep, obviously discussing whether to phone the emergency services, so I made a grab for the cover and then stretching to my full height, I managed to rip the batteries out, nearly plunging into oblivion as I did so.

But still the ghastly debilitating racket inexplicably continued and the Doppler effect was making me feel sick and dizzy: not a good thing when one is standing on a wobbly chair above a precipice. I couldn't believe such a small object could be so loud. My brother had certainly got his money's worth!

I made one last mad grab, and ripped the whole caboodle off the roof beam, screws and all. Jumping off the chair, I did what a man has to do in such a circumstance. I stamped on the thing and smashed it to smithereens. Sorry Dave, I thought, as myriad pieces of shattered plastic and bits of wiring shot across the floor and tumbled down the stairs.

To my horror, the racket continued! This was madness! An impossibility!

Only then did I realise it was actually one of the cheaper detectors further down the house that was going off. And what's more, a mere flick of the switch silenced it immediately.

Wobbly chairs featured in another incident a little further



along the terrace when an elegant retired ballerina, long since moved away to a more sophisticated milieu, invited me to supper. The cottages are all similarly laid out, with the same twisting open staircases, but she had her kitchen-diner on the upper floor. My host had some lovely antique furnishings, compared to my own collection of Habitat Basics. She was particularly proud of two delicate cane seat dining chairs, for which she had paid a tidy price in Portobello market, and on one of which I had placed my not insubstantial frame.

She served me a delicious meal, which ended with her asking if I could manage a second slice of Black Forest gateau. How could I refuse? But the moment the delicious dessert touched my lips there was what I can only describe as an explosion as the delicate chair disintegrated beneath me. I was deposited on the carpet on what was now a pile of kindling wood, covered in pudding, with the lady, who had leapt to her feet, frozen in horror, looking down at me.

At this juncture, another neighbour who had been invited to join us for coffee popped her head up through the hole in the floor that gave access to the staircase.

"I let myself in, I hope that's OK," she chirped. "Is everything alright?"

It certainly wasn't and as one could hear everything that was spoken in the narrow batch out the back, I was left in no uncertainty that I would never be invited to supper again.

Ralph Oswick

● A long-term member of Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust, Ralph was Artistic Director of Bath's Natural Theatre for 45 years and is now an active patron of Bath Comedy Festival

Landscape news

Kate Nicholls reports on the latest projects undertaken by the Trust's Landscape group



Hens' Orchard

The trees continue to grow and this year produced a good crop of fruit. It's good to see visitors to the Orchard picking the fruit and enjoying staying a while or picnicking there. Along with the tree growth, so too did the greenery. Under the towpath wall a vigorous growth of bramble and nettles sprang up. In September, the local Canal and River Trust volunteers offered to clear that area. I joined their work party and we pulled out nettles and strimmed the brambles. We discovered a young field maple and a tiny hawthorn as well as giving breathing space to the young medlar and two purple hazels planted in recent years. Now, as our pictures show, the handsome wall repaired by the Canal & River Trust a few years ago can be seen properly again. I hope we are able to improve that area in the coming months.

We were able to take some of the orchard apples along to

the very successful Apple Day, held on 16 September – and reported in full, with pictures, on page 3.

We were delighted to be offered a gift from Secret Gardens 2023. I had been thinking of an additional bench under the large willow tree. Seeing people picnicking there, I thought it would be a good place for an additional seat. So I'm really happy that we can install the bench there. Many thanks to the Secret Gardens.

Wildflower Meadow, opposite the Tithe Barn

A small work party has been tidying up this small area. Unfortunately, groundwork had to be carried out there to update the electric cables. This work was at the end of the flowering season but severely upset the soil. We're working to reinstate this area and hopefully it will look happier next spring.

● If you would like to join the Landscape Group volunteers, please get in touch at kateboa38@gmail.com

Guardian Angel is published twice a year. It is distributed free to member households, to Wiltshire Council, Bradford on Avon Town Council and to local and national conservation bodies.

We welcome contributions from Trust members and non-members. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policies of the Trust's Council of Management. **Please send typed, drawn or photographic contributions, in electronic form, to the editor, Joceline Bury, at guardianangel@bradfordheritage.co.uk, by Tuesday 16 April** for inclusion in the spring/summer 2024 issue of *Guardian Angel*.

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We are grateful to David Parkes, who organises distribution, to all those in Bradford on Avon who deliver copies and, above all, to our contributors, without whom *Guardian Angel* could not exist.

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Registered at Companies House, Cardiff, under the Companies Act 1985. Registered company No. 787389. Registered Charity No. 245611.

Printed by TPM Ltd, Farrington Gurney, Somerset