

# Trowbridge Civic Society NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2019

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**Wiltshire and the**  
**Wyatts**  
**Residents of Woolston**  
**Villa**  
**Walk round Frome**

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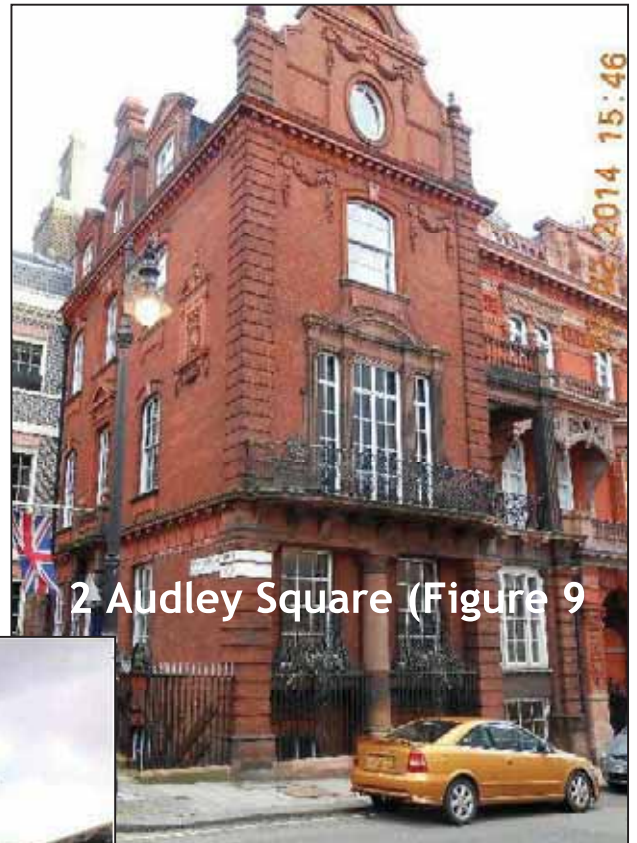
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Assize Court at Devizes (Figure 2)



Rectory at Broughton Gifford  
Figure 5



2 Audley Square (Figure 9)



Roundway Hospital Figure 6

Cover Picture:  
Gloucester Cathedral

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

## TROWBRIDGE CIVIC SOCIETY INFORMATION

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Subscription Rates:	Single £6, Joint £10, Corporate £30 New members welcome - please contact Membership Secretary

## From the Chairman

It is encouraging to see some movement on the Bowyer site with the public exhibition of plans for its development. We can only hope that the various permissions can be obtained and that the proposed building work will begin within the next year or so.

Work at St George's Works and Courts Mill is almost completed and they both demonstrate how old industrial buildings can be put to good use for housing in the twenty first century.

Another encouraging thing occurred when judging Business in Bloom with the Mayor. I noticed the door of Parade House was open so I encouraged the Mayor to come to have a look at the staircase and the superb plasterwork on the landing ceiling. I asked the young man we met if we might have a look and he was happy for us to do so. He happened to be the owner and in conversation I mentioned the trees at the front, how I thought they spoiled the view of the house and would possibly damage the foundations. He agreed and has applied for permission to have them taken down.

I always thought that it seemed very odd to build a road through the centre of a town without a pavement and now, after forty years, the County Council has at last begun work on a cycle and foot path on County Way. Hooray!

## Glyn Bridges

**Welcome to New Member - New member Graham Andrew**

### Houses and Public Buildings

Having been reminded by a reader of The Newsletter from Ilminster that my projected final article on the Wyatt family had yet to appear, I will try to put this right by looking at some of the buildings by Thomas Henry Wyatt which range beyond the scope of his church architecture, covered in a previous issue.

Thomas Henry Wyatt was born in 1807 in County Roscommon, moving to London with his father in 1825. He was born into a significant dynasty of architects who in their different ways contributed to the architectural heritage of Wiltshire and beyond - for example, James Wyatt, who, with Robert Adam, was the 'starchitect' of the later C18th, and whose renovation of Salisbury Cathedral, not without controversy but carried out under the instructions of Bishop Shute Barrington, has given us, to a great extent, the building and the perspectives we know today. James Wyatt also contributed a number of country houses to Wiltshire such as Bowden Park or Hartham Park. Sir Jeffry Wyattville, who transformed Windsor Castle and worked at Longleat as well as at Rood Ashton Hall, was another relative of architectural significance, as was Thomas Henry's brother, Matthew Digby, the first Slade Professor of Art, and trusted associate of Brunel, who gave him responsibility for the Railway Village in Swindon, as well as for aspects of Paddington Station. Thomas Henry himself, although initially embarking on a

mercantile career sailing to the Mediterranean, seemed unable to resist the family tradition, and he trained as an architect with Philip Hardwick, the designer of the Euston Arch (Figure 1).

Wyatt's subsequent career, from 1832 to his death in 1880, was long and successful. He was elected President of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1870-73, and was awarded its Royal Gold Medal for Architecture.

Much of Wyatt's success as an architect, apart from his mastery of whatever styles were currently fashionable, was down to the aristocratic patronage he could draw on, in

addition to his appointments as honorary architect to a range of eminent bodies. He was consulting or honorary architect to the Atheneum Club and the Institute of Civil Engineers, as well as to the Governesses Benevolent Association, Middlesex Hospital, and the Lunacy Commissioners. His prolific buildings or renovations of churches in Wiltshire are suggested by his association with the Incorporated Church Building Society and his work as Diocesan Architect for the Diocese of Salisbury, so it's not a surprise that he worked on or designed at least forty-seven churches in Wiltshire alone.

The contacts he built up through these appointments were certainly not hindered by his marriage and family-related contacts. He married his cousin, Arabella Montagu Wyatt, whose father was agent to the Duke of Beaufort, and the Duke became a patron, facilitating Thomas Henry's contacts with members of the aristocracy such as the Duke of Denbigh (patron of THW's extensive work in Wales) and Sidney Herbert, second son of the Earl of Pembroke, who, in the absence of his older brother, had taken on the responsibility of the family estate centred on Wilton. It was Sidney Herbert, in fact, who commissioned from Wyatt and Brandon the magnificent Italianate church of St Mary and St Nicholas in that town.

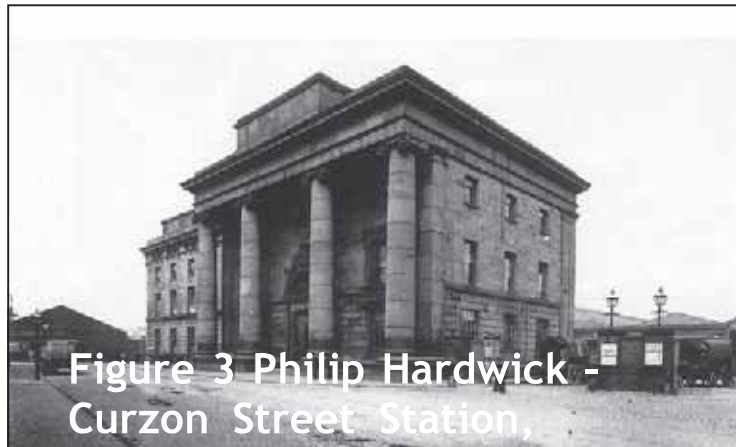
Thomas Henry Wyatt's non-ecclesiastical buildings are not numerous, but his first-ever



Figure 1 Philip Hardwick - the Euston Arch (Photo: internet)

## Public Buildings- continued

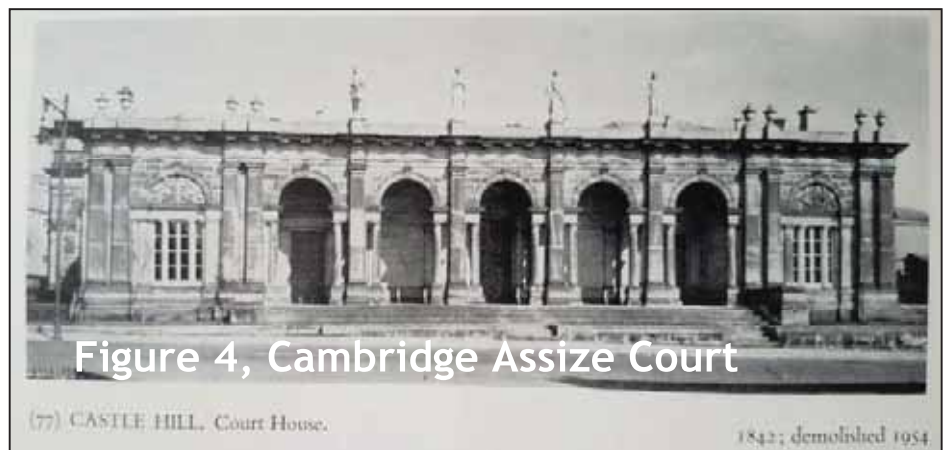
building was one that is probably known to most readers of the Newsletter - the Assize Court at Devizes (Figure 2) See inside front cover. Built in 1835 and at present unused and in a poor state of repair, the main feature of the building is the 'pure Greek portico' mentioned by Julian Orbach.



The influence of Philip Hardwick, in whose office Wyatt trained, is probably detectable (see Fig 1), with Hardwick's 1838 Curzon Street Station, Birmingham (Figure 3) adding another suggestion of popular stylistic influences at this time.

Wyatt's building must have been considered as a success, as another assize court

building, in Cambridge, was commissioned from the Wyatt and Brandon practice not long after its formation once more drawing inspiration from classical sources.



In Wiltshire, and probably with influence from his contacts in the Diocese of Salisbury, Wyatt's next building was the Rectory at Broughton Gifford (1848), 'in the C17th style' (Pevsner), with gables (Figure 5). (Photo: D. Feather) See inside front cover.

A few years afterwards, in 1851, Roundway Hospital was opened as the Wiltshire Lunatic Asylum, with Wyatt's appointment as architect to the Lunacy Commissioners presumably coming in handy in achieving the commission. The building is now private residences, and is described by Pevsner as 'plain Latest Georgian' in style (apart from two Italianate towers at the back) ... Three-bay centre with loggia and pediment; end bays with Venetian windows' (Figure 6). (Photo: internet) See inside front cover.

Just over the border into Somerset and a little later in the 1850s, Wyatt designed Orchardleigh (1856), in a style, fashionable at the time, which Orbach describes as 'Elizabethan ... with tall, rather French, slate roofs.' Pevsner comments: 'It is picturesque, irregular and in a mixed Elizabethan style.' (See Figure 7).



## Public Buildings- continued



Wyatt also worked in London, where he maintained offices throughout his career. Possibly his largest building, a winning entry in an architectural competition, was Knightsbridge Barracks (1878 - dem. 1965), described in the Survey of London Vol 45 (London County Council 2000) as being of 'palatial appearance and magnitude', in a mixed classical style, 'chiefly Renaissance Italian but with a strong French influence evident, particularly in the roofs of the main barrack blocks ... They were faced in red brick with Portland-stone dressings and sculptured decoration.' (See Figure 8.)

Knightsbridge Barracks (Photo: internet)

His final building, 2 Audley Square (Figure 9 Photo: K. Eames See inside front cover.) , is in Mayfair, dates from 1880, and is characteristic of his work. It was built for Lord Arthur Russell in what Bradley and Pevsner describe as 'eclectic Queen Anne as rich and powerful as anything on the Grosvenor lands (in London).' The house is in red brick and pink sandstone, with, as the Historic England listing points out, 'free Queen Anne and Flemish detailing.' This typical attention to detail extends to the bas-relief of the Russell arms which breaks up what would otherwise have been a large expanse of blank wall.

To sum up, Thomas Henry Wyatt was not just the most prolific individual contributor to church building and renovation that Wiltshire has ever had. His non-ecclesiastical buildings, though fewer in number, also show his characteristic attributes of stylistic mastery (in whatever style was fashionable at the time) and his acceptability to patrons and employers. He was never a 'starchitect' like James Wyatt, nor an innovator like Matthew Digby Wyatt, but he was a conservative 'safe pair of hands' - and his legacy lives on in this county and beyond.

### Bibliography

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Greenacombe, J. ed. (2000) Survey of London Vol 45, London County Council  
Orbach, J. (1987) Victorian Architecture in Britain, A&C Black  
Pevsner, N. and Cherry, B. (1975) The Buildings of England: Wiltshire, Penguin

## Planning report

## Sue and Kevin Eames

Not a lot has been happening over the summer as regards planning decisions. I chose following two because one related to a listed building and would be seen by many members of the public and the other because the application was refused. It is always interesting and informative to examine the reasons given for refusals.

The United Church Community Centre Church Street Trowbridge has been granted permission to erect two security fences ([Planning application 19/05074/LBC](#)).

Permission has been refused for a new dwelling at 2, Palmer Road, Trowbridge ([Planning application 19/05977/FUL](#)). The final decision document states the following reasons for refusal.

*1 The proposed dwelling by reason of its building layout, built form and elevational design, would appear constrained and cramped and fail to relate positively to the existing street scene*

*and pattern of development and fail to effectively integrate into its immediate setting. The proposal fails to comply with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy namely parts i, iii and vi.*

*2 The proposed dwelling would result in the loss of the only window serving the kitchen of Number 2 Palmer Road resulting in an unacceptable loss of light which would be to the detriment of the occupier's amenity. The proposal fails to comply with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy namely part vii*

There have been some recent **applications** (below) which may be of interest.

The Society submitted the following comments on application 19/05956/ADV - for the old Boots building in Fore Street.

*We welcome the return to use of this building.*

*The signage is acceptable, although over-assertive.*

*The building, however, has always been of incongruous design in this location. The colour is also at odds with its surroundings and draws the eye away from the Town Hall, which should be the focus of the view down Fore Street. We would suggest that the new owners should be asked to apply a stone-coloured finish to (at least) the upper storey in order to help the building fit in less obtrusively and to keep the focus of attention on the Town Hall.*

Another application which seemed significant was 19/07400/FUL, for The Ship on Frome Road, proposing to convert it from a pub into accommodation. Our comments:

*Overall, Trowbridge Civic Society feels that this application would bring back into use a building which contributes a significant heritage frontage to an area of Trowbridge which is sensitive because of its proximity to a conservation area. However, more information is needed about what the final development would be like. We note that there seems to be no provision for electric car charging points, although there are plenty of parking spaces provided. Also, there is no mention of secure cycle storage. The frontage to Frome Road needs to be 'visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping', and 'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting' (NPPF 2019). We feel that the appearance would be made more attractive by tidying-up the cables that festoon the frontage, as well as supplying a pub sign to indicate the building's 'local character and history'.*

Finally, there is some long-awaited movement on the old Bowyers site. We received the following communication, from Cadence, inviting representatives from the Civic Society to the Innox Mills public exhibition on the 17th September, to view and discuss the draft proposals. The vision is to create

*a vibrant new residential-led, mixed-use quarter with around 300 new homes, a mix of food, leisure and employment; a convenience store, gym and potentially street markets and pop up stalls; places for families and friends to meet and enjoy, workspace, quality public realm and improved links connecting Trowbridge.*

The draft proposals are not definitive, there is still a lot to do but they hope to be in a position to submit a planning application later this year, early next and subject to planning, be able to start work in 2021. The event is on Tuesday 17th September from 3pm to 7:30 at Trowbridge Civic Centre. In addition, they are presenting to Trowbridge Area Board at County Hall on the 19th September at 7pm.

## **The Residents of Woolston Villa      Petra Birkett**

**The Tarrs - Mother and two sons. 1878 - 1891**

The first tenant of our house is recorded on an abstract of John Thomas will, her name was **Jane Tarr**, she moved into Woolston Villa from her previous home in Polebarn Road following a period of hardship.

Jane was born in Batheaston growing up in Vale View off the high street in Batheaston, her father was a linen dealer. Jane married Richard Barrow Tarr April 1860 in St Swithian's church in Walcot. Richard is listed as a Wool Broker, they began their life together in Trowbridge living in the Halve firstly with Jane's mother then moving into their first home together in Polebarn road.

They had three sons and two daughters between 1861 and 1870. Sadly this family suffered a period of loss while living in Polebarn Road, the two daughters and their father, Jane's husband died.

In April 1873 little Ethel Ellen their youngest child died age just 3 years old, Richard died in December 1873 closely followed by Katie in 1874 age 8 years, all three are buried together in the cemetery on The Down. The sadness Jane must have felt during this time despite the death of young children being fairly commonplace in this era must have been very hard for her. Jane had moved from Polebarn Road and was living in our house by 1881.

It is possible and I speculate on this that due to the location of the New Inn, Silver St close to Polebarn Road and Richards higher status as a Wool broker and auctioneer that he knew John Thomas, when Jane suffered the loss maybe John Thomas and his wife Emma offered Jane Woolston Villa to let to become her home, a new start for her and her sons.

Jane lived in our house with her two sons who were aged 12 and 17 in 1881 their older brother had left home, they lived here for some 10 years and then Jane moved to the Bournemouth area before dying in 1900. The Tarr's were the first residents and were of a wealthy status, Jane living 'by her own means' probably from the death of her husband who at the time of his probate had effects under £3000, her mother owned property and her sons went on to be Wool merchants following in their father's footsteps. The other resident with The Tarr's was their house hold servant Sarah Townsend from Cornwall who was age 21. The house as mentioned previously was built with three floors and the servant's quarters were at the top of the house, now this is a warm (not so much in winter) and comfortable room with an ensuite! A world away from the galleried bedroom that had no fireplace that Sarah Townsend would have accessed, by going up the dark narrow staircase still there but now opened up and part of the rest of the house.

### **The Greens - Father, son and daughter 1891-1903**

The Green family lived in Woolston Villa for 20 years or thereabouts - In 1891 census James Green was the head of the household, a Widow, listed as a retired accountant born in Malmesbury, Wiltshire. James had his son and daughter living with him in 1891 William his son aged 28 listed as working as a solicitor's clerk and Annie age 30 no occupation listed.

Whether James and his son William shared a room and Annie had her own room I am not certain but they also had a general domestic servant Sophia Merret age 18 who resided with the family throughout their years at Woolston and continuing in service with them when they moved on. If you believe in ghosts I often think I feel Sophia when walking up the stairs to our bedroom (her room) and when in the kitchen the 'old' scullery preparing dinner!

James Green and his wife Emily lived in Castle St, while in Castle St their daughter Emily Annie is born in 1861 and their son William in 1863. In the census entry next door but one in is the Town Bailiff a Samuel Hurd, his other neighbours are a general Draper and a Coppersmith employing men - professions that are not as common place in today's society.

In 1871 James and his family had moved to the Union St Almshouses, it was here that Emily passed away. Leaving James and his two children, they have a servant residing with them which leads me to think that James must have lived in either what is now number 18 or 19 as the other Alms houses were for poor widows and I do not think there would have been room for a servant also. There are also entry's on the census that reference the smaller Alms houses listing 8 'houses' and then James Greens property. This would be number 19. Funnily I have also lived in this house in my younger years!

In May 1890 William, James son was initiated into the Freemasons the Lodge of Concorde. Kelly's directory has James living in Woolston then, William is on notice boards in the Freemasons Lodge in Yerbury St and the information given out by the Masonic Lodge lists William along with several other well known local residents as making a conveyance to turn what was a Music hall that was part of Polebarn House into the Masonic Lodge. Listed with William are Herbert Mundy Auctioneer, George Snailum Auctioneer, Arthur Stancomb woollen manufacturer and John Aplin, chemist.

The Greens lived in Woolston Villa for over 10 years, sadly James Green passed away while living in Woolston. James died in 1900 there is a death index for him dated 1900 and also a



probate record that lists him dying in Trowbridge 30th October 1900 leaving £20.00 to his son William Herbert Green.

James only resided in Woolston Villa until 1900 (some 9 years after first moving in) leaving his daughter Emily now referring to herself on documents as Annie and son William; Despite what was considered a fairly good profession of 'law clerk' he only left his son and daughter £20.00 seeming to indicate that they were not a well off family despite his wife's family owning property and "living by their own means" and both he and his son training in law.

By 1901 census William and Emily would have been living alone just over a year since the death of their father and some 20 years since losing their mother. They continued to live in Woolston after the death of their father - as the property was still tenanted and owned by The Thomas family they must have continued to rent it - Sophia Merret also continued as their General Domestic Servant. This census lists William as age 38 working as a Solicitors Clerk, his sister Annie E (Emily) age 40 living by own means and their General Domestic servant Sophia age now 28. William and his sister continued living in Woolston for a couple more years but by 1903 they had moved from Woolston to 'Birchcroft' later referred to as 10 Westbourne gardens - Kelly's directory 1903 has them listed as living in Westbourne gardens.

Westbourne gardens is fairly unchanged today, a small quiet street with 10-15 large Victorian properties, William and his sister Annie are listed on the 1911 census as living at 'Birchcroft' Westbourne Gardens William is listed by his middle name, 'Herbert' on this census. They continued to live here for many years until Annie passed away in December 1937, leaving £8534 to her brother *ref-probate record* dated 1938 - the following year William married Josephine Annie Linzey the daughter of a local builder who was twenty three years his junior, she inherited his fortune which is listed in probate as over £60,000 when William died in 1955 age 92, his younger wife went on to live until 1963 when she died aged age 89 leaving over £50,000 *ref-probate record* dated 1963.

## Walk Round Frome

Diana Ingram

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When a friend and I heard that there was no one to fill a slot on the Trowbridge Civic Society programme of events for June 11th we decided a short "tour" of Frome's better known buildings and streets ending with a visit to the newly refurbished Frome Museum gave us an opportunity to show how far the museum has come in the past couple of years. Delia and I were both brought up and attended schools in Frome so we had lots of stories to tell about our home town.

Frome was founded in 685 by St Aldhelm who was sent over from Bradford on Avon to "quell and convert the lawless in the Forest of Selwood." To that end he set up a monastery in Frome probably the basis of the present St Johns Church. He also had previous connections with Malmesbury. The woollen industry in Frome began to decline by 1825 and the last mill to fail was at Wallbridge and was bought by W H Tucker a Trowbridge cloth dealer. It continued working until 1965 manufacturing the famous West of England cloth but sadly closed in that year. The population of Frome remained stable through the growth of new industries until the 20thC. It had two MP's until "rotten boroughs" were abolished by the Reform Act 1832. This caused some riots in Frome at the time.

Meeting at the Cheese & Grain building (formerly the Market Hall) we made our way past the site of the J W Singer brass foundry but sadly no longer in existence to The Bridge the main entrance to the Market Place taking in Willow Vale on the way where several Dye Houses were situated in the era of woollen mills in Frome. Then to the ad-

joining Blue House, where there has been a building on the site since about 1485 built firstly by the Leversedge family of Vallis as an Almshouse. The present building was erected in 1720-1728, was probably the third building on this site and was used partly as a school for boys from 1728 until 1921 when the Grammar School was built on Bath Road. Two statues on the front of the building are of Nancy Guy and Billy Ball possibly a representation of the women of the almshouse and the boys of the school. The Market Place itself used to flood regularly. Floods in the Market Place and the shops were an annual occurrence. A bonus was the sale of water-damaged goods afterwards! Eventually the Blue House became flats for elderly people. Another building alongside the Blue house is the Blue Boar Inn one of the oldest pubs in Frome and the subject of many reports by Isaac Gregory, Town Constable in 1813 and 1817, as he regularly rounded up "lounging or idling youths" of the town and marched them off to church on a Sunday. Then to Cheap Street with the well known stream running through the middle past Apple Alley an ancient original thoroughfare of the town. We passed the home of the Constable in Cheap Street to the Via Crucis steps leading to St Johns the main church of Frome much altered between the 12th to 14th centuries with various alterations by Rev Bennett during his tenure as vicar in the 19C. Sadly the steps are much neglected these days so we quickly moved on the tomb of Bishop Ken, buried there as he had been living at Longleat under the protection of the Thynne family during the disagreements of the Oath of Indulgence in 1689. Back to the bottom of Gentle Street, a steep cobbled thoroughfare leading up to Christchurch Street. This was the main street through the town until Bath Street was built in 1810, but we had promised no steep hills to climb so instead showed where the filming of Poldark had taken place recently and the site of the Waggon & Horses where horses were stabled on Market Day to avoid going down the steep hill to the Market.

We then crossed Bath Street, passing the house of J W Singer whose foundry, no longer in existence, was famous for many well known statues all over the world, to Palmer Street named after Henry Palmer and his wife Susan, being tenants of the Vicarage Manor in St Katharine Street in 1641. A John Palmer possessed considerable property in the town in 1766 and there is a copy of a sale in the Museum which took place in 1744 of several houses in Naishes Street owned by the Palmer family. We are not quite sure of the origins of this family so an ongoing project for someone. From Palmer Street along Paul Street a high narrow pavement avoiding the steep Catherine Hill, to the original site of St Katharine's chapel now inscribed "Zion Church" a recently closed Chapel. Then down Catherine Hill to The George Hotel where in 1844 Tsar Nicholas 1 stopped outside on his journey to Bath after a stay at Longleat. When the landlord realised what a famous person was outside he presented the Tsar with a glass of sherry. Queen Victoria had described the Tsar as "a very striking man, still very handsome" so the crowd thought they had seen the handsomest man in Europe! A smaller hotel, The Crown, once adjoined the George where a young Edward VII, aged only 12, and accompanied by his tutor, was accommodated as it was considered quieter than the George. At lunch the waiter gave the Prince's tutor a napkin but did not think it worth wasting one on "the boy". Edward was on a tour of his future realm at the time. They were truly incognito!

Then to Cork Street named after the Earl of Cork & Orerry. A mechanical model of the solar system made for the 4th Earl in 1707 is the source of the name of this system. The Boyle family lived in Marston House near Marston Bigot on the southern outskirts of Frome and sold their estate circa 1905 we think. Monmouth House in Cork Street is reputed to be the place where the Duke of Monmouth stayed during the Monmouth Rebellion, or his supporters gathered. He is also supposed to have stayed in Beckington.

Then finally to the Museum. The building, The Literary Institute, was erected in 1897/1898, architect Thomas Ackland, and has housed the Museum since 1988. Various booklets, maps and information were laid out for our guests to see more details of the places we had seen on our "tour" plus light refreshments and a tour of the Museum itself.

## A walk around Frome

On the 11 June 2019 there was a walk led by Diana Ingram and Delia Horsefall. This was followed by tea and cakes in Frome Museum.



# Visit to Gloucester Docks and Cathedral 21 August 2019

A perfect summer's day for exploring the many attractions of the docks and the



## Calendar of Events 2019 -2020

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**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November** - Public Lecture - Crossing the Brick Threshold - the story of brick and tile in the Medieval and post Medieval period in Wiltshire by Mike Stone (former curator of Chippenham Museum and Heritage Centre), The Supper Room, Trowbridge Town Hall at 7.30pm

2020

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January** - New Year Social with Quiz The Supper Room, Trowbridge Town Hall at 7.30pm

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March** - AGM and Talk The Supper Room, Trowbridge town Hall at 7.15pm

Corporate Member: **The Trowbridge Museum**