Guide Lines

The *Occasional* Newsletter

of the

Winchester Area Tourist Guides Association

Issue of Winter 2021

Contents:

Item: 1	Title: **Oh little mighty Force that stood for England!**
Date: Nov 2021	Contributor: **Elizabeth Newport**

On Sunday 31 October I listened to *The Poetry Detectives* on BBC Radio 4. It was a new series about the poems we carry with us through life. Poems that speak to us so strongly that we return to them in times of confusion or fear… loneliness or joy… love or doubt.

Sometimes we have a poem but don't know where it came from. "Can Chris McCabe, Librarian at the National Poetry Library help track down the source?" the presenter asks.

Well, I memorized a poem in the mid-70s, when I was in the sixth form. It was part of an exhibition on display in St Martin's in the Fields, where I was attending a schools workshop. Over time I'd forgotten half of the poem and couldn't find the poem in any anthology or online.

So I wrote to the National Poetry Library through their website, right after the programme. At 5 p.m. And at 6.49 p.m. I got a reply. Amazing! And even more amazingly, there was a local connection, to Southampton.

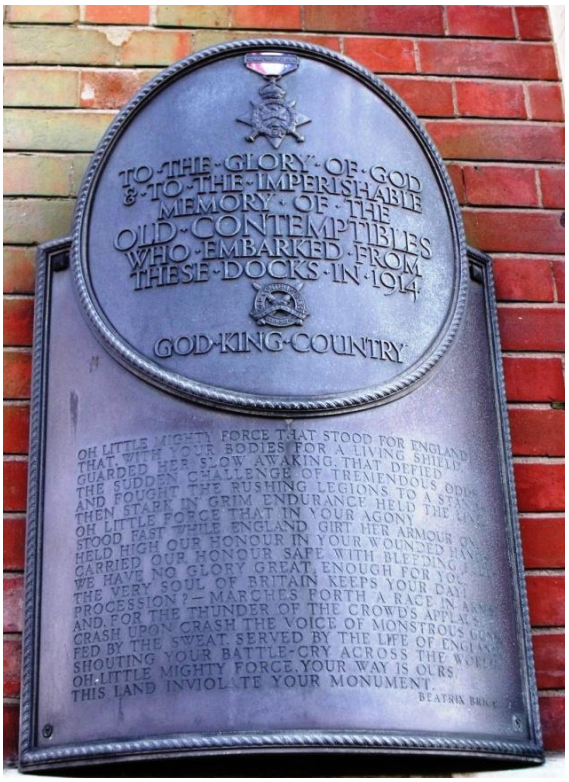
The researcher wrote: The poem you're looking for appears to be "To the Vanguard" by Beatrix Brice Miller. Oddly, this doesn't seem to appear in any of the anthologies of First World War poetry that we hold, and doesn't come up on any of the databases we regularly use for such enquiries.

However, there are two useful websites that seem to have a lot of information about this poem and the poet.

- You can find an image of a plaque depicting this poem, as well as information about its background here: https://comestepbackintime.wordpress.com/2014/04/06/beatrix-brice-miller-the-old-contemptibles-stories-from-the-great-war-part-5/
- And there is some bibliographic information about the poem here - it appears to have been first published in the 2nd November 1916 edition of The Times: http://femalewarpoets.blogspot.com/2014/01/beatrix-brice-miller-1877-1959-british.html

This is the poem:

Oh little mighty Force that stood for England!
That, with your bodies for a living shield,
Guarded her slow awaking, that defied
The sudden challenge of tremendous odds
And fought the rushing legions to a stand
Then stark in grim endurance held the line.
O little Force that in your agony
Stood fast while England girt her armour on,
Held high our honour in your wounded hands,
Carried our honour safe with bleeding feet
We have no glory great enough for you,
The very soul of Britain keeps your day !
Procession ? – Marches forth a Race in Arms ;
And, for the thunder of the crowd's applause,
Crash upon crash the voice of monstrous guns,
Fed by the sweat, served by the life of England,
Shouting your battlecry across the world.
Oh, little mighty Force, your way is ours,
This land inviolate your monument.



Bronze memorial plaque dedicated to "The Old Contemptibles" who sailed from Southampton Docks in 1914. Located at the crossroads of Platform Road and Central Road on the building to the right of Dock Gate 4, Southampton Docks. The plaque was unveiled on 9th April, 1950. Poem inscription is by British war poet Beatrix Brice Miller (1877-1959) and is reprinted in full.

Image courtesy of Come Step Back in Time.

Southern Evening Echo 10 Apr 1950

"The Old Contemptibles" memorial plaque was unveiled on Sunday the 9th April, 1950 on the side of the former Docks' Post Office and Telegraph building, Southampton Docks. It is mounted on the front of the building which stands at the entrance to Dock Gate 4 (the same location where the Titanic sailed from in 1912). It is through this Dock Gate that "The Old Contemptibles" marched in August 1914, en-route to the Western Front.

Image courtesy of Come Step Back in Time.

Editor's note:

I'm indebted to Elizabeth for bringing this poem and the plaque to my attention as I had no idea they existed.

My great grandfather Capt. (Quartermaster) Henry Hickie, MC, MBE and my grandfather WOII (CSM) John Lundy were both "Old Contemptibles" and served in the 1st Battalion Irish Guards for the duration of the war. The 1st Battalion Irish Guards embarked from Southampton to Flanders on 6th August 1914, just eight days after war was declared. They were part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) whose mission was to halt the advancing German Army in Belgium and France.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion Irish Guards preparing for deployment at Wellington Barracks, 6th August 1914.

Image courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

The BEF and its French and Belgium allies were heavily outnumbered 10 to 1 and were forced into a rear-guard action which became known as the Great Retreat. From the outbreak of hostilities at the Battle on Mons the BEF engaged in fierce during the 120 mile retreat before the German advance was finally halted at the Marne valley just outside Paris. Between August and November 1914, the 2nd Division of the BEF, of which the 1st Irish Guards were part, suffered 5,769 officers and men killed, wounded or missing in action. The original battalion of 1st Irish Guards, which had arrived in France barely three months before, had been practically wiped out and had to be reconstructed with new arrivals. Remarkably both my great grandfather and my grandfather survived the war.

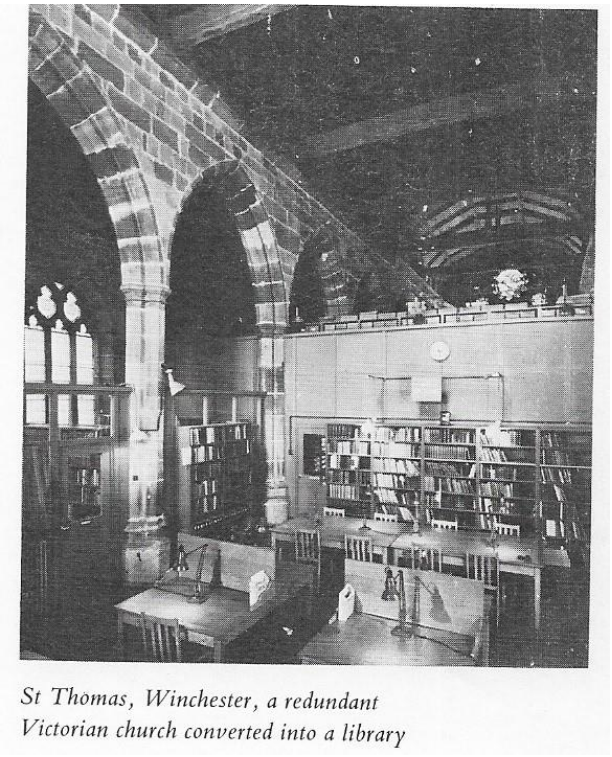
The name “Old Contemptibles”, adopted by members of the BEF veterans association, is thought to have come from and order issued by Kaiser Wilhelm II, on 19th August, 1914 to:
‘..exterminate the treacherous English and walk over General French’s contemptible little army.’

Memorial to the “Old Contemptibles” in Westminster Abbey.

Image courtesy of the Dean and Chapter Westminster.

Item: 2	Title: **St Thomas Church – Winchester**
Date: Nov 2021	Contributor: **Clare Dixon**

I have been reading a fascinating but rather elderly (published 1976) book about preserving historic buildings, and came across this photo of St Thomas church on Southgate Street as a library. When we first came to Winchester I think it was the Record Office, and now of course it is converted to housing. Does anyone remember the library phase? Was it part of the Jewry Street library or something different?



St Thomas, Winchester, a redundant Victorian church converted into a library

Editor's note:

St Thomas church was deconsecrated in 1969 and housed the Hampshire Records Office (HRO) from 1972 until the HRO moved to new premises in Sussex Street in 1993. It could have been a library between 1969 and 1972 but given the book was published in 1976 perhaps the photo caption is referring to the HRO search room which housed the reference library and indexes.

Item: 3	Title: **Lost Shoes**
Date: 10 Dec 2021	Contributor: **Vanessa Silcock**

I have been studying on-line with the V and A for the past few months. I started the course 'Power Dressing : Fashion 1500 – 1800' knowing it would be amazing and sure that it would change how I guided in the London art galleries. I was right! The information I have absorbed has been wonderful and enlightening to say the least.

During the course we have looked at a wide range of topics, including, more recently gloves and shoes. It was the shoes lecture which prompted me to write this piece for the Winchester Guides.

As many of you may be aware, there has been a very long tradition of placing a boot or a shoe in a building to ward off evil spirits and bring good luck. The oldest example of this tradition takes us to Winchester Cathedral, where the shoe was found in the stalls - it dates to c 1308!

Whilst reading about 'hidden shoes' I was also reminded of my husband, who was Bursar at Westminster School, telling me that they found a mediaeval child's shoe whilst undertaking works in the school 'Liddle' building. The shoe is now in the school archives.

Hidden shoes are nearly always worn out and normally there is only one shoe, which often turns out to belong to a child. The shoe or boot was placed where building work was being undertaken, or up a chimney. The chimney is important as it's an open void where evil spirits can easily enter the house!

There is no written understanding of how or why the tradition started. But there were similar more recent traditions which involved throwing shoes at newly-weds – I prefer the tradition of tying the shoes to the back of the honeymoon car! Another newly-wed tradition was to bury a boot in the home of the 'just married' couple. Inside the boot a grain of corn would be hidden with the hope that it would attract mice, which would nest and breed…. linking to the hope the wife might be fertile and bear many children! If you look in the antique shops you might also find Victorian miniature shoes, some which show mice inside the shoe! The Victorians were keen collectors of miniature shoes, made of many different materials.

It appears the tradition of hiding shoes in the home died off about 1900.

Any finds of hidden shoes are very important, bringing the past to life and showing us what people were wearing.

My interest in the history of hidden shoes led me to find the Northampton Museum. They have created an index of 3,000 shoes which have been found hidden in walls of budlings. Of course, Northampton has its own shoe making business going back 900 years and the museum looks to be a place worthy of a visit!

Item: 4	Title: **Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) rifle**
Date: Dec 2021	Contributor: **David Atraghji**

British Service Rifle No1 Mk3*, Short Magazine Lee Enfield **(SMLE)** rifle

Image courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

OK, this is a bit of a 'niche' article, but please hang in there, it's not a long one.

As some of you know, I collect and shoot old British military rifles from WW1, WW2 and the Cold War. I am a member of the National Shooting Centre at Bisley, opened by Queen Victoria in 1890 with its colonial style architecture and traditional old lodges. I am also a member of Winchester's Itchen Valley Shooting Club, based in the old Chesil Railway Tunnel.

Anyway, the SMLE rifle (pictured above), or *'Smellie'* as it was known by old soldiers (and still referred to as such by anyone with an interest in old rifles), is an iconic old British Service Rifle. It developed mechanically, and in appearance, from the earliest Lee Enfield rifles, the first of which was introduced into military service in 1895. This was just in time to see active service in the second Boer War (1899-1902).

An engineer called James Paris **Lee** developed the 'bolt system', which is the mechanism by which a bullet is taken from the magazine and locked into the chamber of the barrel ready to fire. And these rifles were manufactured at the Royal Small Arms Factory in **Enfield**, north London. Hence the name: **'Lee-Enfield'**.

Those early Lee Enfield rifles were much longer than the SMLE. They were longer because they had replaced the even longer Martini-Henry rifles (think of the film 'Zulu'). Martini-Henry rifles had to be long because in those days infantry rifles, together with their really long bayonets, were intended to enable a foot soldier to fight off a mounted cavalry charge. It wasn't until 1904 that British Army chiefs decided that cavalry charges were probably not as big a threat as they had once been. They ordered the rifle length to be shortened. Hence the name: ***S**hort*, **M**agazine, **L**ee **E**nfield rifle (SMLE). But that was just the Mk1. As the title of this article suggests, it was not the end of the story. There were further developments and upgrades through the No1 Mk2, No1 Mk3 and then the No1 Mk3*.

I'll stop there because the nomenclature of British service rifles becomes exponentially more complicated as the decades go by. Amazingly, Lee Enfield rifles were still in use by the British Army as late as 1990!

That said, unless you are a nerd, like me, you might never notice the difference between many of the slightly different variants.

Another reason to stop at the SMLE No1 Mk3* is because you all know it very well already. The SMLE No1 Mk3* (the same rifle which is pictured at the top of this article) saw most service in the trenches of WW1. You have seen it in many war films, in old black and white news footage and in documentaries. <u>You have also seen the SMLE No1 Mk3* rifle a thousand times on our tours.</u>

It is the rifle which is held in the right hand of the soldier represented in John Tweed's 1922 Kings Royal Rifle Corps War Memorial.

Image courtesy of Historic England

Also, the standard bayonet for the SMLE No1 Mk3* rifle is represented in Simon Smith's 2014 Morn Hill Memorial 'A Promise Honoured' (you can see the handle just below the helmet).

Image courtesy of Phillip Halling

The No1 Mk3* SMLE was the most accurate British service rifle at the time it was introduced. It was also sturdy. It remained in front-line service all through the inter-war years and although the next generation of the Lee Enfield rifle began to be introduced halfway through WW2, it remained in service throughout that War. A testament to its robustness is its longevity: It was still being used by tribes and militias in both the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts.

If anyone on a tour comments on the rifle represented in John Tweed's memorial, you don't need to know any of the different names and numbers. All you need to remember is '***Smellie'***.

If, in the unlikely event, you are ever asked anything about old guns, bayonets, associated militaria and ephemera then please just ask me. If I don't know the answer then I have many reference books, original manuals and old army pamphlets to refer to. And if they don't yield an answer then I have a great network of friends nationally and internationally. Some of them are walking encyclopaedias on the subjects.

Item: 5	Title: **Some more literary connections in College Street**
Date: Dec 2021	Contributor: **Erica Wheeler**

We all know the big literary numbers in College Street, Jane Austen, Keats at least walking through and if you're lucky Trollope's *Warden* wandering through to St. Swithun-upon-Kingsgate. Recently though, in researching something else I found a couple more literary references based on College Street.

The first relates to the initials and date you can see on the wall of Winchester College to the left of the entrance. Having done more than the usual number of 'Lower City' walks recently, you might have noticed it. The initials are JH (or IH, the I being interchangeable with J), and it stands for John Harmer. John Harmar was a very accomplished scholar and linguist, Warden of Winchester College (1596 -1613) and played a major role in the translation and editing of the King James Bible, a huge influence on the English language. Indeed, "The power of its language has occasionally led to speculation that Shakespeare must have had a hand in it."

The windows of Harmer's study (right) where the work was done, built for him and completed 1597.

Harmar had been first a scholar, then fellow at New College, then Headmaster at Winchester College and although not Queen Elizabeth's first choice for Warden of Winchester College, he eventually won that position too. He seems to have been an exemplary and virtuoso scholar: he knew not only Latin and Greek, essential for studies at this time but quite probably Hebrew too and possibly even, it is suggested, Syriac or Aramaic. In his early life he studied in Paris and Geneva, the centre of European biblical scholarship and he was held in the highest regard by his peers.

The translators of the Bible were comprised of the finest scholars and the most ruthlessly ambitious clerics. They were organised into six companies, each with its own leader, two each based in Westminster, Cambridge and Oxford. While it's not possible to ascertain who wrote what among the second Oxford company of eleven translators, John Harmar appears to be one of the most significant of that group.

The method of translation was as follows: each of the translators worked on the text at his own home or place of work, each working on the same texts. They then met collectively with the contributions being read out and the others commenting. This reading out loud of the work in progress was a key contributor to the "rolling majestic sonority" of the Bible's language. As each company finished work on a particular book of the Bible it was to be sent to the other companies for independent scrutiny, probably the earliest practice of peer review in academic history. This happened between 1604 and 1608.

The completed books were then considered as a whole at a long series of editorial meetings attended by one or two of each company of translators in London during 1609-10. Harmar was the second Oxford company's man and he is the only translator named in the notes. Finally, the finished text was put in the hands of two scholars to prepare for press during 1611.

John Harmar has a memorial plaque in New College Chapel, Oxford: Præsertim Novi Testamenti editione vernacular. 'He … left many memorials of his learning and work, above all a vernacular edition of the New Testament: he expended faithful and fortunate effort at the royal command on the exegesis of the Greek original.'

You can see the very room where this remarkable work was done by standing and looking at the large windows to the left of Outer gate, Winchester College.

In fact there were also two more Winchester-based contributors to the King James Bible, Dr George Abbott, Dean of Winchester (1600-1609), who apparently had a penchant for scholarship and the execution of heretics. He was also part of the second Oxford company of translators. Also, Bishop Thomas Bilson, one of the two men charged with seeing the final manuscript to press, which included writing all the preliminary matter and the chapter headings. He was also, scholar, headmaster and warden of Winchester College before becoming Bishop. He was not a translator but was given the task of writing the dedication 'To the Most High and Mightie Prince, JAMES by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc."

So perhaps at the same time, Bilson was writing in Wolvesey Palace and Abbott in the Deanery!

A final connection is that of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes who also worked on the translation as part of the Westminster company of translators. However, he was Bishop of Chichester and then Ely at the time, so would not have been translating in Winchester.

Now to something completely different. Let's move on a few doors to no. 8 College Street and a few centuries. Although the plaque above the door of course commemorates the beloved Jane, another female writer was born here in the 1950s and one who also died too young: poet, playwright and novelist Julia Darling.

In 1956 the house was home to the physics master John Darling and Julia was second of the Darling's five children and more than a little rebellious. As a teenager she used to outrage Jane-ites with posters in the windows promoting such radical causes as anti-apartheid or women's lib or enacting a melodrama involving much tomato-ketchup. Once she, with a sibling accomplice, lowered a basket from the top floor, with a message to passers-by imploring sweets as they were held captive in the attic without food.

In her novel Crocodile Soup, the protagonist lives in a house that was once the home of a Victorian poet and the plaque above the front door reads 'In this house Harriet Smiles lived and died 1821 – 1870'. Sound familiar? And this is an extract from her novel *Crocodile Soup*, which might also be recognisable. Heroine Gert writes:

"The theatrical nature of our lives was enhanced by a mysterious line of people that drifted past the front door, looking vaguely confused, watching our house as if it was under glass. I thought they had heard about my beautiful mother, and come to see for themselves, but one day George took me outside and lifted me high on his bony shoulders and showed me the plaque that was fixed above our front door. …

'She wrote poetry books,' he said, turning to nod at a group of Japanese scholars, who stared back at us through photographic lenses.

Our lives were acted out in front of this perpetual audience who peered through the windows holding heavy cameras and binoculars, pressing their faces to the glass with their hands cupping out the light.

Like monkeys in a zoo we became accustomed to being stared at, but their stares did not really see us. We were just shadows flitting behind the thick glass windows. My shadow inhabits photograph albums all over the world. I still worry about that; that bits of me are caught behind cellophane in other people's living rooms."

Julia went to what is now Westgate school, then Falmouth School of Art but moved to Newcastle when she was twenty four, feeling Winchester too stifling an atmosphere. She worked as an adult education tutor, youth worker, community artist, writer-in-residence, publisher, radio dramatist and playwright and also wrote and performed with the Poetry Virgins, an all-female performance group of writers and actors.

Her published works include *Small Beauties* (1988), a collection of poems comically sympathises with the exhausting workload of the working mum, *Bloodlines* (1995) a collection of her short stories, *Crocodile Soup* (1998) her first novel, *The Taxi Driver's Daughter* (2003), her second and two collections of poetry *Sudden Collapses in Public Places* (2003) and *Apology for Absence* (2004), both of which were Poetry Book Society recommendations. She also wrote plays (23 in all) several of which were broadcast on BBC Radio 4 (published as a collection *Eating the Elephant* in 2005).

She died in 2005 aged 49 and an old Winchester friend of hers, musician Robyn Hitchcock, talks about her in his song *Underground Sun*. Also in her memory is a bench placed outside the family's favourite holiday spot, the tide mill at Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight with a plaque that reads: 'We remember Julia Darling 1956-2005, writer who loved this place "All my history is simplified to this: Water, stone, flight"'

Information on these two writers and more is available on the website Literary Winchester https://literarywinchester.org.uk

If you're feeling particularly inspired you could add to these two the fact that this street and Moberly House (the fine flint-faced old headmasters house) was a haunt of Charlotte Yonge's, as she was friends with and a major influence on the Moberly daughters, many of whom went on to achieve things in the female education movement, including Charlotte Anne Moberly who was the first principal of St. Hugh's College Oxford. The Moberly daughters and many other young women from good families both in Winchester and other places started a society for the 'improvement of their minds' – known as Goslings, with Charlotte Yonge as the Mother Goose. In the days before good academic schooling this was an innovative form of self-teaching among intelligent girls, all under the influence of Charlotte, who set fortnightly essay questions. George Moberly, the father, was a friend of Charlotte Yonge's, fellow member of the Oxford Movement and a great influence on her along with John Keble, rector of Hursley.

To take the connection even further we can take a look at two of Charlotte's Goslings: Anna Bramston, daughter of the Dean of Winchester and her lifelong friend Aimee LeRoy. They were founders of what has become St. Swithun's School and was the first girl's High School in Winchester, providing a rounded and academic secondary education for girls intending to get them into University.

Anna Bramston and Aimee LeRoy

Anna Bramston and Aimee Leroy lived at Witham Close, Kingsgate Street (right). When Dean Bramston died in 1883, they both continued to live here.

Aimee LeRoy was also an artist and also a prolific author, writing historical volumes on Winchester under her own name, as well as publishing over 60 novels and stories as Esmé Stuart.

One more (semi) literary connection is that of Amy Audrey Locke. Thanks to Colin Cook's recommendation of the book of her life story The Porter's Daughter: The Life of Amy Audrey Locke by Winifred Dawson. She was indeed the daughter of the porter of Winchester College and lived opposite in a cottage now gone. Her life story is very interesting and definitely worth a read – she was taken on by Amy Bramston, who lived round the corner, went to that school, won a scholarship named after Charlotte Yonge to go to Oxford and ended up writing some of the Hampshire Victoria County History before dying too young.

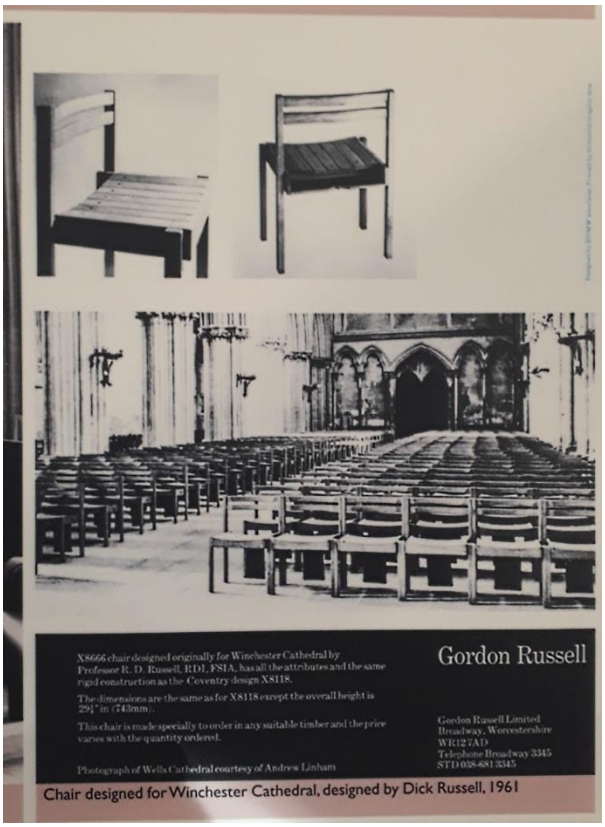
There is lots more detail in the book, so I heartily recommend it.

So a few more to add to the biggies of Austen, Keats and Trollope which could see an entire literary tour on one street.

Item: 6	Title: **What's in a chair?**
Date: 25 Jan 2022	Contributor: **Colin Cook**

On a recent winter break in the Cotswolds I visited a delightful museum in Broadway which I can highly recommend. The Gordon Russell Design Museum tells the story of 20th century furniture design in this country through the life of Gordon Russell (1892-1980) and the company he founded.

Schooled in the rich traditions of Arts and Crafts cabinetmaking, Russell pioneered a new approach, believing that it was through a blend of hand and machine that good design could be made affordable and accessible to all.



Chair designed for Winchester Cathedral, designed by Dick Russell, 1961

It was this ability to embrace new ideas that ensured the company remained at the forefront of British design, working with many of the leading national and international designers of the day. In its heyday the company employed over 250 skilled craftsmen and women in its factory in this picturesque Cotswold village.

The museum displays span Arts and Crafts cabinet making, the 1930's Modernist home, wartime Utility furniture, the Festival of Britain and the 1980's office. It was amongst these that I came across the company's advertisement for a cathedral chair based on that commissioned for the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral. As you will see they also supplied our own cathedral in 1961 with a closely similar design which, as the photograph shows, went on to be made for Wells Cathedral also.

It now seems that these chairs are no longer fit for the cathedral's purposes and thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the Cathedral, the Dean and Chapter have an opportunity to replace at least the nave seating. They say that they do not want to rush this process, which will involve careful consultation with other places of worship and other specialists, but their plan includes seeking the view of potential users, including the congregation who are now being asked to express their preference for one of the designs pictured which are currently on display, for trying out, by the Nave crossing.

They advise that all of the four designs are already in use in other cathedrals, abbeys and greater churches. Their aim is to offer greater comfort to all who visit and worship at the Cathedral, and also to replace the plastic bucket seats, which do not conform to modern safety standards.

I think it best if I refrain from comment about the quality of design of the proposed replacements!

For more information about the Gordon Russell Museum go to www.gordonrussellmuseum.org

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Guide Lines Dates

- Spring Issue
  - submit copy by 20 March 2022
  - publish 30 March 2022
- Summer Issue
  - submit copy by 20 June 2022
  - publish 30 June 2022
- Autumn Issue
  - submit copy by 20 September 2022
  - publish 30 September 2022
- Winter Issue
  - submit copy by 20 December 2022
  - publish 31 December 2022

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