

**Independent women in public life in Salisbury  
in the second half of the nineteenth century**

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## Declaration

The candidate hereby confirms that the work presented in this thesis is her own.

Signed .....

## Abstract

This thesis examines the presence of independent women in the public life of a provincial cathedral city during the second half of the nineteenth century. In Victorian Salisbury women were running enterprises, promoting education for girls, applying publicly for employment, voting in municipal elections, and were participants in philanthropic and social organisations. They were members of the commercial and professional classes, and were a visible part of the life of the city.

After an introduction, the 1852 local exhibition provides a framework for the economic, social, political and cultural characteristics of Salisbury. Spinsters, wives and widows were engaged in retail and other businesses. Most, though not all, were occupied in traditional 'female trades' but even so they established a public presence in the economy. Caring professions became an employment option, and women's roles within institutions such as schools and the Infirmary are investigated. Women who did not need to earn became involved in philanthropy, and also enjoyed pastimes that took them out of their homes. Some women expressed their independence in the political arena. In Salisbury this was done slowly and cautiously, but by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century women were elected poor law guardians, and were actively debating the issues surrounding women's suffrage.

Census enumerators' books, the local newspaper, trade directories, and municipal and institutional records, with occasional personal and business material, are the sources used. Similar ones are available and accessible for other places; this work provides an exemplar from which to build a picture of English provincial society. The wives, widows, sisters and daughters of Victorian Salisbury were ordinary women; displaying the rich tapestry of their lives makes a significant contribution to local history scholarship.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: independent women in the public life of Salisbury during the second half of the nineteenth century

*'complete appreciation of the usual'*<sup>1</sup>

### Salisbury women

Mrs Jenkins, ostrich feather cleaner, dyer and curler, lived at 12 St Mark's Road, Salisbury at the end of the nineteenth century. A neighbour was Mrs Hands, costumier. Opposite Mrs Jenkins lived Mrs Anset, her husband (a clerk at the County Court) and their son Walter. Next door to the Anset family was Mr Langmead the City Librarian, and publisher of the directory which carried his name.<sup>2</sup> The district was a newly-built suburb to the north of the medieval city of varied housing and a diverse population; the majority were lower middle-class – clerical and skilled workers. Nearer the city centre were the enterprises that used the output of Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Hands to supply the needs of their customers in Salisbury and from the surrounding area.

From her upper windows Charlotte Anset could look out across the treetops in the remains of the park surrounding The College; the balance had been sold in the 1870s and 'the speculative builder appeared thereon with remarkable results for the expansion of the city'.<sup>3</sup> Over the trees and the roofs her view was dominated by the cathedral spire, its mass diminishing the clustered commercial streets at its foot. This is the prospect I enjoy today. Sight of the original conveyances of my house led me to identify its early residents and their neighbours. Memories of reading *Family Fortunes* many years ago, and the subsequent discussions about separate spheres for the lives of men and women in Victorian England, came to the fore. The research reported in this

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<sup>1</sup> Trollope A, *Autobiography*, first published 1883, 1999 edn p xi. Quotations used as chapter headings are from the works of Anthony Trollope. The specific reference is given in each case. See p 37 for the use of literary sources for local history.

<sup>2</sup> Langmead and Evans, *Directory of Salisbury and District*, Salisbury 1897

<sup>3</sup> *Salisbury Times and South Wilts Gazette* 28 January 1921 p 2

thesis began with the hypothesis that there *were* women actively involved in the public life of Salisbury during the second half of the nineteenth century. I set out to find them.

Women were important contributors to the local economy and continued to play significant roles as it developed and diversified. In the mid-nineteenth century the three Misses Hooper had a dozen assistants and apprentices in their millinery and dressmaking business, Mrs Dawkins employed eight women in hers. Mary Judd, Sarah Smith and Eliza Chinn were butchers. Elizabeth Hill (whip making), Sarah Bedford (horticulture), Eliza Howell (innkeeper) and Eleanor Bryant (bricklayer) were all widows with families to support and businesses to maintain. A girl who had been born in Teneriffe was a pupil at the Miss Saunders' school. Amongst the lodging-house keepers were Mary Ann Hibberd and Mary Coffee. Leah Clifton ran an eating-house with its own special recipe for sausages. Mrs Woodcock supplied bone dust from the mill at Quidhampton.<sup>4</sup> Ann Eales was employed as a pew opener at the cathedral.

Mrs Jenkins and Mrs Hands in the 1890s with their ostrich feathers and costumes respectively, like Dionysia Hooper and Eleanor Bryant a half-century earlier, were representative of the women who were involved in Salisbury's economy. Other women participated in educational, philanthropic and social activities that brought them out of their homes and into the public arena. This thesis examines who they were and what they were doing. It aims to challenge the idea that Victorian women inevitably conformed to the idealised image of a dependent wife and mother at the fireside or in the nursery. For many, either from necessity or choice, there *were* alternatives. It was possible to follow a route into the outside world, to be an independent person, earning an income, pursuing interests, or supporting causes.

This study examines the economic activities of women in Salisbury in three main areas: they were involved in a range of traditional, craft-based manufacturing trades, they were responsible for many of the retail businesses in the city, and they worked in education and other caring professions. Inevitably, all these women were visible, to a greater or lesser extent, in the public life of the city: a shop window or an advertisement brought their name to the attention of other citizens who were the consumers of these goods and services. Economic independence was not the only way women gained a public

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<sup>4</sup> For location of neighbouring villages see p 264



position. Other opportunities such as involvement in philanthropy and politics were accessible to those whose situation released them from financial need. As will be shown, women in Salisbury were not in the vanguard of movements to take on new functions in public life nor were they pioneers in adopting new careers. Their progress was limited and cautious, but they were determined and persistent in continuing, adapting and exploiting more traditional and orthodox roles.

### **Salisbury's evolving character**

Salisbury in the mid-nineteenth century was in the process of establishing a new identity as a service centre. The city had spread gradually beyond its medieval boundaries from the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Although the later years of the eighteenth century saw a brief resurgence of the textile industry that had generated so much prosperity for the city in former times, by 1840 this had largely disappeared. Situated in a large rural hinterland, Salisbury's long-established market and shopping streets attracted buyers and sellers from surrounding villages and small towns as well as from amongst its own population, and supported a complex transport network. Professions such as surveying, medicine and the law served the needs of landowners and farmers, and each other, and their families also availed themselves of delightful sources of entertainment at concerts, the theatre, or the races.

Although a provincial cathedral city, Salisbury revealed an unexpectedly diverse economy and surprisingly varied social structure. High stone walls appeared to isolate those who lived in the Close, the enclosed area surrounding the cathedral. Many, but by no means all, who lived there were associated directly or indirectly with the cathedral and the diocese. While most of the more substantial properties were in the Close, everywhere within the city there was a mixture of better-off and less-well-off households – large houses on corner plots stood beside small terraces, so neighbours had contrasting experiences of life. Adjacent households in Gigant Street, for example, were headed in 1851 by the following people: a master tailor, a grocer, a porter, a 'wine merchant and magistrate', a stone mason, a former nurse, and a labourer. And in Endless Street, between a tea dealer and a 'brewer employing 30 men', were a house

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<sup>5</sup> See maps in Chandler J, *Endless Street*, Salisbury 1983 p 60 reproduced p 275

agent, a coachman, a former shopkeeper, an ironmonger's shopman, and a surgeon's dispenser.<sup>6</sup>

### **Women's work in a time of economic and urban change**

In the transition from a pre-capitalist to an industrial capitalist economy production was reorganised, it is argued, resulting in the separation of home and workplace.<sup>7</sup>

Consequently women ceased to be part of a 'family economy' combining productive with reproductive work, and became the providers of unpaid domestic labour dependent on the money incomes of husbands or fathers. Thus it has been assumed there was a reduced presence of women, especially married women, in the public economy by the middle of the nineteenth century. At this time different pressures were said to combine to push women into the private sphere of the home, despite the powerful positions of their predecessors and often despite their own wishes. Within this generalised picture, of course, there were variations according to locality, economic structure, social and cultural traditions, and class. In fact the transition to industrialism was uneven and patchy, and the economic position of a woman in her local economy at all stages depended on trade and life-cycle.

On one hand this was a trend looked upon with approval by contemporaries who favoured the image of domestic wife and mother, while others argued strongly for different training and employment opportunities for women. Bessie Rayner Parkes, an advocate of 'more meaningful lives for middle class women, and more tolerable and varied working conditions for working women', writing in 1859 explained why these alternative patterns were hard to attempt:

All good fathers wish to provide for their daughters; all good husbands think it their bounden duty to keep their wives. All our laws are framed strictly in accordance with this hypothesis: and all our social customs adhere to it more strictly still. We make no room in our social framework for any other idea...<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For location of streets in the city, see p 263

<sup>7</sup> Berg M, 'Women's work, mechanization and the early phases of industrialization in England', in Joyce P (ed), *The Historical Meanings of Work*, Cambridge 1987

<sup>8</sup> Parkes B R, 'The Market for Educated Female Labour', originally published *The English Woman's Journal* 1859 reprinted in Lacey C (ed), *Barbara Leigh Smith and the Langham Place Group*, 1987 p142. Quoted description of Parkes' position from ODNB online.

However, even in the 1850s this was the subject of much debate, and increasingly arguments were put forward giving moral support to women who favoured a less dependent life-style. The confusion was illustrated by this quotation of 1856 from Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon:

Cries are heard on every hand that women are conspiring, that women are discontented, that women are idle, that women are overworked, and that women are out of their sphere ...

Oh young girls! waiting listlessly for some one to come and marry you ... Do not be contented to be charming and fascinating; be noble, be useful, be wise.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, there was a public concern about women without financial support. Publication of the 1851 census reports revealed a small surplus of women over men aged 20 – 40 years, but a much larger discrepancy in the proportion of that age group remaining unmarried. The ‘failure’ of over a million women to marry was considered a social problem, put into forceful terms by William Rathbone Greg’s 1862 article ‘Why are Women Redundant?’:

There is an enormous and increasing number of single women in the nation, a number quite disproportionate and quite abnormal ... There are hundreds of thousands of women - ... proportionally most numerous in the middle and upper classes – who have to earn their own living, instead of spending and husbanding the earnings of men; who, not having the natural duties and labours of wives and mothers, have to carve out artificial and painfully-sought occupations for themselves ...<sup>10</sup>

Sources of earning an income for respectable women, whether single, widowed (or indeed in some circumstances, married) were limited: ‘... by the mid-nineteenth century, the range of opportunities for these women was tragically restricted’.<sup>11</sup> Evidence from Birmingham, and from Essex and Suffolk, suggests that the range of economic activities undertaken by women had narrowed and become increasingly marginalized.<sup>12</sup> But there were also cases of women continuing to work in small workshops or at home in some trades, both in London, and in provincial towns such as

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<sup>9</sup> Bodichon B L S, *Women and Work*, 1856 reprinted in Murray J H, *Strong-minded women*, Harmondsworth 1982 p 267 - 9

<sup>10</sup> Originally published in *National Review* April 1862 reprinted in Murray 1982 p 50 - 54

<sup>11</sup> Richards E, ‘Women in the British Economy since about 1700: An Interpretation’, *History* 1974 p 347-8

<sup>12</sup> Davidoff L and Hall C, *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English middle class 1780 – 1850*, 1987

Leicester and Peterborough.<sup>13</sup> Needlework and governessing were considered the only appropriate occupations open to educated or respectable women who were compelled to earn a living. But even these could be exploited by innovative and ambitious individuals such as the Misses Hooper and Misses Saunders in Salisbury.

The notion of 'separate spheres' in the lives of men and women has informed historical discussion about nineteenth century women for many years.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the modern interpretations and debates, and indeed whatever the ideal promoted by contemporary commentators, women *did* remain in the public sphere of the economy, and *were* accepted in what were seen as other appropriate public roles such as caring for the disadvantaged in the community. My work on Salisbury will demonstrate this. Women continued to earn incomes, to support themselves and their families and to hold positions of authority in business. Women were economically independent for many different reasons. Mrs Howell at 'The Bull' public house was representative of many widows, often with young children, who had little choice in the matter; though wives such as Mrs Dawkins also contributed to the family income. Unmarried women like the Misses Saunders and the Misses Hooper supported themselves, their siblings or members of an older generation. Some women, Sophia Meatyard was one example, were part of a business that had been associated with their family over a period of time, their involvement contributed to a sense of both kinship and continuity. That this was done out of the limelight in low-profile, traditional trades, using pre-capitalist modes of production, in small scale units, in old established urban centres may account for its failure to challenge a dominant impression of women's disappearance.

Most of the working women in this study could be described as lower middle class.<sup>15</sup> It has been pointed out that this classification is not easy to either define or identify, and its members have been '...neglected by historians ... because they failed to do anything striking ... were not active on the historical stage'.<sup>16</sup> And their neglect continues.<sup>17</sup> My

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<sup>13</sup> Alexander S, 'Women's Work in Nineteenth Century London: A study of the years 1820 – 1860s', in *Becoming a Woman and other essays* 1976; Jones P, 'Studying the middle class in nineteenth century urban Britain: Perspective, sources and methodology in a comparative study of the middle class in nineteenth century Leicester and Peterborough', *Urban History Yearbook* 1987

<sup>14</sup> See introduction to Gleadle K, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, Basingstoke 2001 for a concise summary of the debate.

<sup>15</sup> Domestic service employed significant numbers of women but their lives deserve a study to themselves, and they could be considered the least 'independent' participants in the economy.

<sup>16</sup> Crossick G, *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914*, 1977 p 11

research makes a contribution towards rectifying this omission. These women were skilled in their crafts, but they were also multi-skilled across the administrative, financial, human resources and marketing aspects of their business. They held both blue-collar and white-collar roles. The Misses Hooper were working needlewomen, dressmakers and milliners. For many this was a lowly occupation, pursued for a miserable wage under harsh conditions. But these women were also entrepreneurs, joint owners of their business, obtaining stock, ideas and employees from as far as London. They promoted their trade, they trained the next generation of craftswomen, the capital in their business expanded.<sup>18</sup> Women of their generation in the early decades of the second half of the nineteenth century, were, perhaps, fortunate to be active at a time when demand was buoyant, and before there was factory-produced competition in supply of their products. But their successors continued in subsequent decades, and operated in variable market conditions.

### **Women's businesses**

In setting out the case for greater recognition of these women, the work breaks new ground in the detailed view it takes of women's lives in a small provincial urban society in southern England at this time. Larger cities, including London and Edinburgh, and the fast-growing, industrialising urban areas of the Midlands and the North of England have received attention because the developments there were dramatic, and they were the centres of pioneering work by strong-minded women who broke through the traditional barriers limiting their activities. The enterprises of many women, of service sector industries and of provincial towns made contributions to the nineteenth century economy that have been given scant attention by historians. This has been due to the focus on industries which experienced the application of mechanisation, inanimate power and large-scale methods to their productive processes; the concentration on the regions where these types of changes took place; and the use of aggregate, quantitative data in the analysis.<sup>19</sup> By looking at other industries (services), other areas of the

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<sup>17</sup> Gleadle 2001 is divided into sections separating 'Working-class Women' and 'Middle-class and Upper-class Women'.

<sup>18</sup> See p 106

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Berg M and Hudson P, 'Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution', *Economic History Review* XLV 1992 where aspects of economic change are considered which are directly relevant to Salisbury. These include the interdependence of sectors of the economy, thus raising the profile of service industries; the continuance of traditional methods and structures in many industries; and the underestimation of women and children in the workforce due to overemphasis on quantitative sources.

country (the south), other people (ordinary women) and other, *local*, qualitative, sources, another picture can be projected.

One element in this process of economic change resulting in the separation of workplace and home that affected women directly, and that can be demonstrated by the experience of Salisbury, was the growth in the business sector created by the movement of many domestic activities out of the home and into the market economy: ‘...washing, child-minding, clothes-making and nursing had mainly departed from the upper middle-class family home’.<sup>20</sup> Women still carried out these tasks; it was the location rather than the personnel that changed. For a considerable time, and in most places, the demand for the services of independent, commercial laundries, schools, milliners and dressmakers increased. Here were more economic opportunities for women; entrepreneurial openings plus employment for wives and daughters of poorer families.

A skilled craftswoman with her own enterprise had the opportunity for social mobility. For some, commercial activity would mean a fall in status, for others there was a chance to *improve* their income and value in the community. This could be dependent on the nature of the trade, and the extent to which the enterprise prospered. It was part of the importance attached to keeping a business going on the death or departure of a key person, husband, father or brother, to avoid the risk of decline or closure. Dressmaking and millinery ‘did represent one area where it was possible to become a successful businesswoman ...In less appropriate trades, by the late nineteenth century it would appear to have been very difficult for women to run a successful business...’.<sup>21</sup>

Clothing was certainly not the only sector in which women’s businesses did well in Salisbury at this time, as will be demonstrated below. But people were aware of the

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All these factors could reveal a more significant role for women in the labour force, and all are important for Salisbury where tertiary industries formed a key part of the economy and small-scale enterprise was the predominant economic structure, though it was still possible to incorporate within them new ideas and techniques. Traditional manufacturing and processing activities could be made increasingly efficient with better quality and more sophisticated tools, with division of labour and specialisation within the workshop, and with improved marketing and distribution systems. In Salisbury Elizabeth Hill made whips ‘manufactured under their own immediate superintendence, by means of the most improved machinery’. *Salisbury Journal* [SJ hereafter] 11 January 1851 p 2

<sup>20</sup> Richards, 1974 p 352

<sup>21</sup> Rendall J, *Women in an Industrializing Society: England 1750-1880*, Oxford 1990 p 65. The quotation continues ‘...though little research exists on this subject’.

indignity of some roles: ‘poor little Liz to have to undertake such a hard life as keeping lodgers, it has always seemed to me to be the very last resource of the destitute...’.<sup>22</sup>

The status of all positions was relative: a shop in the High Street was preferable to one in Pennyfarthing Street, just as a domestic position in the Dean’s household was preferable to working for a shopkeeper. There were few grand aristocratic establishments in the area, but plenty of substantial houses in the city, particularly in the Close. An apprenticeship in one of the large dressmaking concerns brought prospects of becoming an assistant, and then establishing a separate enterprise, or perhaps succession on the retirement of the mistress. Salisbury businesses had reputations, and commercial relationships, well beyond the immediate neighbourhood. Apprentices came from as far as London, and a group of trainee milliners and dressmakers could make valuable contacts.<sup>23</sup> Marriage could provide a route to a position of responsibility and prosperity, as the discussion of working wives will demonstrate in chapter 3. Subsequent widowhood could bring power or penury. Within provincial urban society there were many possibilities for women to move out of the private sphere.

### **Urban and rural**

Economic change here in Salisbury thus took place within the framework of an agricultural region, far from the resources and forces that typified the more far-reaching industrial development of other parts of England. E A Wrigley in *Continuity, chance and change* has identified ‘two very different modes of economic growth each contributing to the transformation of England...’.<sup>24</sup> Growth in the ‘advanced organic economy’ was firmly based on land as its dominant factor of production but was still able to achieve significant improvements in productivity. Linkages to growth elsewhere in the economy then led to structural change. Demand for manufactured goods could grow when food necessities were reliably available at reasonable prices. Craft-based manufacturing was able to take steps towards increased productivity by specialisation and extension of markets. And there was parallel urban growth – towns had a more

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<sup>22</sup> Arthur Boyle to Liz (?) writing to Salisbury from Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 1891, amongst correspondence of Blackmore family (doctors and antiquarians). WSRO 776/585

<sup>23</sup> Is it anachronistic to imply that the modern concept of ‘networking’ operated amongst these girls and women? Close contact between apprentices and assistants over several years generated friendships, and communication, that continued beyond their time together with a Salisbury business.

<sup>24</sup> Wrigley E A, *Continuity, chance and change*, Cambridge 1988 p 130

varied range of economic activities and felt the impact of increasing real incomes. Southern England, including Salisbury, remained an 'advanced organic economy'. The multiplier effects of improvements in agriculture were recognised by contemporaries locally, and associated developments in communications aided their exploitation. Of course, the reverse could happen too as the dependent relationship between the urban and rural economies was not just one-way. As will be shown later, a depressed agricultural sector towards the end of the nineteenth century had detrimental consequences for the businesses of Salisbury.<sup>25</sup>

## **Independence**

To what extent and in what ways can these women be considered 'independent'? Single women with a reliable source of income were in a position to make their own decisions about what to do with their lives, so they were of independent means. If they were also educated, thoughtful and insightful, they could demonstrate independence of mind. These two qualities together presented opportunities for an independent lifestyle, but individuals might still feel constrained by social conventions, and not prepared to take risks. It would take great strength of character to go beyond the boundaries of acceptable, respectable behaviour, and there is no evidence of anyone in Victorian Salisbury venturing there. However there were women who were 'independent' in both these senses without isolating themselves from their community. Sarah Maria Fawcett, for example, was offered the means to establish her own household under her father's will, but she decided against this move and stayed to care for her mother for the remaining few years of her life. After Mrs Fawcett's death Maria led a very independent life, set firmly within the context of her family and Salisbury society.<sup>26</sup> When Charlotte Tinney became a widow she gained the means to make her own decisions about the philanthropic uses for her money, while continuing to live a comfortable life in a large house. The Misses Hooper put their inherited assets into a millinery and dressmaking business. The Miss Saunders ran their own school, and demonstrated their independence of mind by supporting the national campaign for girls to sit public examinations.

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<sup>25</sup> See p 123-5 for a discussion of the external factors influencing the success of local enterprises.

<sup>26</sup> See chapter 5



For women such as Miss Fawcett and Mrs Tinney, it was a turning point in their lifecycle that altered their circumstances. Maria Fawcett had been, in many ways, a traditionally dependent daughter earlier in her life, and she chose to continue so longer than she need. Some of the nurses who trained in Salisbury had to give up their employment when required to return home. One of the Miss Hoopers relinquished her share of the partnership on marriage. So independence, of means if not of mind, could be but a temporary state.

Can women who bore family responsibilities be considered independent? Maria Fawcett had first her brother and then her parents dependent on her until she was in her sixties. It is not unreasonable to posit that the reading and writing she did for Henry when he was building his political career contributed to her own education and independence of mind. Many of the married women with occupations who are discussed in chapter 3 below worked because they had to contribute to the family income. If independence is equated with freedom, then this was not their lot in life. But they had, in some sense, a position of authority and influence, as *without* their earnings their children or other relatives would have suffered. Other married women, such as Mrs Dawkins or Mrs Wood, who were businesswomen either alongside or parallel to their husbands, maintained a much clearer independent position. They made their own entrepreneurial decisions – independence of mind, and the commercial result gave them independence of means. Although she had responsibility for her young children, Emma Wood had the benefit of freedom that came from her independence. Mrs Hall and Mrs Bothams, who were active in pressure groups towards the end of the century, both had husbands who were similarly committed. Would they, as married women, have been free to become involved *without* their husbands' support?

One of the consequences of independence, in whatever form, was the continuing appearance of women in the public life of the city, be it in commercial, philanthropic or social roles. I cannot answer the question whether these women would have considered *themselves* to be independent, my sources do not offer such personal introspection.

## The structure of the thesis

This initial chapter has a number of purposes. Before setting out the reasons for exploring the roles of Victorian women in a provincial city, and arguing that their comparative neglect requires rectifying, it explains the inspiration for the study, and introduces some of the characters who people the rest of the thesis. The sources I have used in my research are examined in detail, and the chapter concludes by locating my work firmly in the vibrant modern discipline of local history.

Chapter two explores Salisbury and its environs in the middle years of the nineteenth century. The Local Exhibition held in October 1852 offers a focus for an examination of the economic, social and political structure of the city, and the roles of women therein. The debates over the exhibition itself and its organisation revealed characteristics of the place at a time of transition when it was facing tensions between the forces of modernisation and the continuing influences of traditional social structures and conventions. Although there was no explicit discussion locally about the position of women in relation to this event, or other similar occasions, the published contemporary reports demonstrate the nature of their contributions, and provide a basis for assessment and discussion.

Chapter three argues that women played an important part in the local commercial economy of Salisbury and examines the evidence that exists to support this suggestion. The power of a micro-study such as this is shown in the level of detail which is possible, the intimate portraits which can be drawn and the impact of the combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The initial section introduces the women's roles both as producers and as consumers, looks at the distinctions between what men and women were doing in Salisbury, and places them within the geography of the city. Women were involved in the economy as lone businesswomen and as wives, sisters, daughters and widows. Detailed examples of each are explored; they have been selected (dependent on available information) to demonstrate the variety of trades and the variety of familial relationships to be found in this community. Within particular trades, women were found at different levels of skill and income. A quantitative approach has been taken to look at the patterns of working *married* women in two areas of the city in 1851, testing a simple model of conditions under which married women

were more likely to be part of the labour market. The results raise a number of issues about family structure and working women. The penultimate section in chapter three focuses on the growth and contraction of women's businesses. In prosperous times they promoted new products, or moved to a better location; under adverse commercial conditions they might be forced into bankruptcy. Success and failure depended on many factors, both internal and external, and on the responses with which they were met. Continuity and change in patterns of women's employment through the second half of the nineteenth century are discussed in the final section, using an examination of the census enumerators' books for 1891.

Chapter four follows working women into the professional fields available to women at this time, in education and in nursing and other caring roles. Salisbury had many schools providing employment for teachers, and several institutions where women were required as matron, or nurse. Of particular interest in the context of the concepts of 'public' and 'private' was the way in which applicants for the post of matron at Salisbury Infirmary published their candidacy in the local newspaper for all to read. Reports also appeared of the meetings at which the appointment was made, so these ambitious women were prepared for public discussion of their qualities and experience, and the successful new matron had to take up her post with this knowledge out in the community.

Chapter five explores the activities of women in non-economic spheres in Salisbury. Areas which were traditionally considered acceptable for women's public involvement included music and drama, membership of religious organisations and societies, and philanthropy. The city had many active organisations in which women worked hard and were deeply committed. Memberships overlapped and had individuals in common; networks in some cases crossed class boundaries. Leisure time was available to women in the privileged position of having a source of unearned income or support from someone else. So many pastimes were only accessible to middle class women. However all citizens could enjoy entertainments such as the annual fair. Religious groups and philanthropic organisations were frequently managed by the middle classes for the benefit of others.

Women in Salisbury were relatively slow to become involved in political issues, as women, but chapter six investigates their involvement when opportunities were created. This was for the relief of poverty, and especially the campaign for women's suffrage. Although the issue of 'votes for women' hardly arose locally until after the death of Queen Victoria, women registered for a municipal vote in 1869 in significant numbers. The campaign for the parliamentary suffrage strictly lies outside the time boundary of my study, but its relevance for the women of Salisbury who were involved in other public roles, the continuity of gradual change from earlier decades, and the importance of the topic itself, justifies its inclusion.

Finally, the conclusion offers a review of the project in terms of the public presence of women and their independence which has been explored in its pages. It re-emphasises the nature of society in Victorian Salisbury, its ability to look outwards as well as inwards, and the diversity of women in public life. And the conclusion also draws out the value of this work as an exemplar for others to replicate, an element that I consider of special importance. In the Appendix there is a brief postscript that looks further forward into the twentieth century and builds on the discussion already presented on women's involvement in a diverse range of activities within a city continuing to evolve. Salisbury was a small provincial city with a distinctive identity, whose conservative culture impressed the values of caution and rectitude on its female citizens. This did not prevent them demonstrating their abilities and interests in the public life of the community.

### **Sources: Census enumerators' books**

The three main sources used for this research were census enumerators' books (CEBs), directories, and a local newspaper, the *Salisbury Journal*. The CEBs provide a comprehensive list of individuals residing in an area on a particular date; name, age, sex, relationship to head of household, marital condition, birthplace and occupation were recorded.<sup>27</sup> As a local explanation put it 'persons are bound to furnish all the necessary particulars'.<sup>28</sup> No other source is so wide in its potential scope or, due to its official nature, so well preserved and widely available. Indeed '[t]he census places

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<sup>27</sup> Sample page of CEB p 265

<sup>28</sup> *SJ* 1 April 1871 p 8

named individuals both socially, spatially and temporally'.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the internal details, CEBs can play a crucial part in nominal record linkage with, for example, rate books, poll books and directories. This enables an occupation to be connected with a business, and with a particular property, for example. The listing of people by street, parish and borough allows links to be made with records such as parish registers, which could fill in intercensal life events for an individual, and council minutes which could throw light on the development of a residential area.<sup>30</sup> As CEBs are a national source, comparisons can be made between places and between decades in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The enumerator delivered a form to every household in his district in the days preceding census night; every householder was obliged to complete this schedule with the required information for everyone present on that date. Any gaps were filled in by the enumerator when he collected the forms. Enumerators were appointed by local registrars and had to have certain qualities:

He must be a person of intelligence and activity; he must read and write well, and have some knowledge of arithmetic ...he must be temperate, orderly and respectable, and be such a person as is likely to conduct himself with strict propriety, and to deserve the goodwill of the inhabitants of his district.<sup>31</sup>

The information was copied by the enumerator from the form into a book, which was delivered to the local registrar, and subsequently sent to the census office in London. At each stage the information was checked, and at the national office the data was collated into tables for publication. The original household schedules were then destroyed.<sup>32</sup>

The published report on the 1851 Census was torn between acknowledging two roles for women. Firstly, they confirmed the importance to society of women functioning as

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<sup>29</sup> Higgs E, *Census Returns in England and Wales*, 1993 p 3

<sup>30</sup> As mentioned above, parish registers have not been used as a significant source for this study. They would certainly add a great deal of information about the individuals who appear in these pages, and do need a systematic analysis in their own right. Availability of parish register transcripts is expanding rapidly owing to their attraction for family historians (see for example the publications of the Wiltshire Family History Society). Their value for local historians deserves exploiting further.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Higgs, 1996 p 13. Enumerators in Salisbury in 1851 included a 'pastry cook, baker and pork factor', two cabinet makers, a solicitor's clerk, postmaster, tobacco manufacturer, and the clerk to the Board of Guardians. It would seem that the registrar William Sutton appointed two of his relatives, probably his sons, as enumerators.

<sup>32</sup> Summary of process from Lumas S, *Making use of the census*, 4th edn 2002. See also Nissel M, *People Count, A history of the General Register Office*, 1987, and especially Higgs E A, *Clearer Sense of the Census*, 1996 p 11 – 16 for a more detailed description.

wives and mothers – ‘[t]he most important production of a country is its population’.<sup>33</sup> But also it had to be recognised that their evidence revealed a substantial proportion of the female adult population with a measurable economic function. A great many women, of course, combined these roles; they were wives and mothers *and* workers.

Enumerators were instructed that the ‘occupations of women who were regularly employed from home, or at home, in any but domestic duties, [are] to be distinctly recorded’.<sup>34</sup> In 1891 this was altered to ‘the occupations of women and children, if any, are to be stated as well as those of men’. Therefore, it should be possible to discover the jobs of working women, but a count of women’s listed occupations will generate only a very partial picture. There are several different reasons why this was the case. Firstly, it is important to remember the economic context and the prevailing economic orthodoxy at the time of the early censuses. Emphasis on market value as the measure of worth meant that the only activities seen as productive work were those which generated a money income.<sup>35</sup> Work which had only a use-value was not considered significant, and was excluded from the recorded occupations. This was most likely to be performed by women and could make a contribution to a family trade or business as well as domestic tasks could to the running of the household. The 1891 report commented on this dilemma:

‘assisting a husband in his occupation’ is capable of a very wide interpretation and may be understood to cover keeping his petty accounts, taking orders or receiving payments for him.

The most important, however, of all female occupations and that which employs the largest number is altogether omitted from the reckoning, namely the rearing of children and the management of domestic life.<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, designation as someone’s wife or daughter in the occupation column of the census return raises the question of the nature of this role – in some cases it probably was a simple kin relationship (Bishop’s daughter) in others an economic function, and yet others both.<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth and Sarah Shepperd in Silver Street in Salisbury were both helpfully described as ‘grocer’s assistant and daughter’. Living at the Lodge of the Bishop’s Palace in 1881 were John and Ann Sweet. He was described as a general

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<sup>33</sup> 1851 Census Report lxxxviii

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Higgs, 1996 p 98

<sup>35</sup> Hill B, ‘Women, Work and the Census: a Problem for Historians of Women’, *History Workshop Journal* 35 Spring 1993 p 81

<sup>36</sup> 1891 Census general report C7222 p 58

<sup>37</sup> Higgs, 1996 p 98

labourer, and she simply as ‘labourer’s wife’ but it is unlikely that she did not perform the duties associated with keeping the lodge in her husband’s place when necessary.<sup>38</sup>

Thirdly, employed women earning a wage were also likely to be inadequately covered in the census listings. It is impossible to know how consistent the enumerators were in recording the work of women *in* the home, such as dressmaking, which was flexible and easily combined with being wives and mothers. Some women’s activities can be confirmed by comparison with other sources, though small-scale spasmodic enterprises would not necessarily have been included in, for example, directories. In 1861 Emma Wood was recorded with no occupation, even though within the past year she had been advertising in the *Salisbury Journal* for outdoor apprentices and improvers in her Millinery and Dressmaking Establishment, and announcing to ‘the ladies of Salisbury and its neighbourhood that her Showroom is now complete. An early inspection is solicited’.<sup>39</sup> Sarah White was also given no occupation in 1861, but was publishing her own printed trade cards as an ‘Umbrella, Parasol and Sunshade Manufacturer’.

Fourthly, many women’s occupations were part-time and casual or seasonal. This could result in complete omission, for example in the case of harvesting not being needed in March or April, or fewer hands at dressmaking being required out of ‘Season’. Multiple occupations were common and often integrated into home life in complex patterns, so even if one activity was recorded, others might be missed.<sup>40</sup> This difficulty was aggravated when the casual work, even if done regularly, was part of a family enterprise and the wife’s contribution not considered worth mentioning. It is rare to find such a comprehensive entry as that of Mr and Mrs Dawkins living in Salisbury High Street in 1851: she was described as a milliner and mantua maker, mistress employing 3 adult assistants and 5 apprentices, and he was a law stationer, accountant and general commission agent. Some sources of income which were socially unacceptable to the recipient, or to the local community, might also go unrecorded. In Winchester Street in 1851 Emma Hopkins, Winifred Goodfellow, Harriet Judd, Mary Amer and Marcia Curtis were all given ‘Common Prostitute’ as their occupation, though such explicitness

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<sup>38</sup> See Rushton P, ‘Anomalies as evidence in nineteenth-century censuses’, *The Local Historian* Vol 13 No 8 1979 on this issue and other ‘anomalies’ which he argues are fruitful sources of evidence.

<sup>39</sup> *SJ* 17 March 1860 p 5, 6 June 1860 p 5

<sup>40</sup> Joyce P, ‘Work’, in Thompson F M L (ed), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750 – 1950*, Vol 2 Cambridge 1990

was unusual. Elsewhere it has been suggested that the label 'dressmaker' could cover alternative activities such as this.<sup>41</sup>

The vocabulary used by householders (and enumerators) to complete census returns was subject to individual and local variation, knowledge and convention. Was a distinction made consistently between 'laundress' and 'washerwoman'? If so, what was it? The words used to describe an occupation could also fail to indicate the scale and location of the operation. A 'laundress' might have been taking in washing occasionally to help when her husband's income failed, or as a regular job at home, or going out to work at a large house, or for another woman such as Sarah Harris, who employed five others, or for the Salisbury Steam Laundry.<sup>42</sup> If the instructions to enumerators were followed, the size of an enterprise should have been made clear, but entries were again vulnerable to the idiosyncrasies of individuals.

One Salisbury enumerator in 1851 was particularly conscientious when it came to writing in the occupation column for women. From William Thomas Gould, a woollen draper, we hear that Janey Way, wife of a blacksmith, was involved in 'household work', as was Ann Maxwell and her two eldest daughters. Mary Bush, wife of a porter, was 'employed at home', Harriett Neate and her daughter Emma were engaged in the 'home department', while Eliza Shorto's responsibility was 'home management'.

Gratuitous additions to the returns reveal how much additional information could have been provided. Elizabeth Stockman was designated as head of the household, but in the occupations column was added 'husband, road waggoner, will return tomorrow'. Mary Ann Harding was not simply a schoolmistress, but mistress of the Buttermaking School. This depended on local knowledge on the part of enumerators and their preparedness both to carry out the instructions of the General Register Office and to go beyond the minimum required of them. And it also varied with the degree of cooperation from householders, and their willingness to volunteer further details of their situation and activities. Officially, women could be enumerators from 1891. Over thirty women enumerators have been identified nationally, though 'until recently relatively little

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<sup>41</sup> See Emerson J, 'The Lodging Market in a Victorian City: Exeter', *Southern History* Vol 9 1987 p 108

<sup>42</sup> Malcolmson P E, *English Laundresses*, Chicago 1986



attention was paid to them [enumerators]'.<sup>43</sup> As more enumerators are identified, the number of women is likely to increase, and it is probable that others will be found working at earlier censuses, even though they could not be formally employed. A father taken ill, or a brother called away, and why should their daughter or sister not step in to deliver and collect census schedules? I have found no women enumerators in Salisbury, yet. It was also possible that where this situation did occur, the quality of the returns was affected. Would female householders supply more detailed information to female enumerators?

In attempting to identify women's sources of income another difficulty arises with the use of terms such as 'annuitant', 'independent', or 'living on own means'. While all these imply unearned funds, 'independent' sometimes implied little more than independence from poor relief, and 'annuitants' often existed on very meagre annuities'.<sup>44</sup> The clergymen's widows resident in the Matrons' College in Salisbury Close, for example, in the 1891 census were recorded as 'living on own means' though they were subject to a qualifying limit for personal income of £50, and could be in receipt of a maximum allowance from the charity of £60.<sup>45</sup> Alternatively they could be people with substantial investment or inherited incomes. Two examples are Charlotte Tinney and Sara Maria Fawcett, each of whom have already been introduced and will feature again below. Mrs Tinney, a wealthy widow, last appeared in the census of 1871, two years before her death. In the occupation column was written 'Household Property'. Her will, valued at £40,000, included four freehold and several leasehold properties.<sup>46</sup> Miss Fawcett, spinster and sister of Henry Fawcett, 'living on own means' in 1901, was less well off than Mrs Tinney but had been provided with a home and an income by her father's will. Indeed as discussed above he had given her the opportunity of living independently:

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<sup>43</sup> Mills D and Schurer K (eds), *Local Communities in the Victorian Census Enumerators' Books*, Oxford 1996 p 22 fn 13

<sup>44</sup> Harriet Martineau stated that housekeepers 'may easily afford to purchase a small annuity'. 'Female Industry', *The Edinburgh Review* CCXXII April 1859 p 308. See also Mills D Edgar M and Hinde A, 'Southern Historians and their Exploitation of Victorian Censuses', *Southern History* Vol 18 1996 p 70

<sup>45</sup> Crittall E A, *History of Wiltshire*, Vol 4 (hereafter VCH 4) 1959 p 170. These limits had been set in 1869, and were not raised until 1955.

<sup>46</sup> WSRO 776/395

In the event of my said wife and my daughter Sarah Maria not desiring to live together then I desire that my Trustees shall pay my daughter £100 pa so long as they reside permanently apart.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to the occupation column, there are other difficulties with using CEBs which influence the study of women's work. Changes over time and inadequacies in distinguishing residential units are problematic when family and household structure are required. Lack of detailed addresses make it hard to relate the information to maps, and to street directories, and thus to the location of homes and places of work.<sup>48</sup>

Although the instructions to householders and enumerators about noting age were clear by 1851, it is likely that accuracy was lacking in practice, either through ignorance or deception. It is not unusual to find discrepancies across decades, probably because ages were simply not known precisely. Sophia Meatyard, for example, was recorded in 1851, 1861, and 1871 as aged 32, 44 and then 56. The 1851 Census Report admonished women who deliberately lowered their age 'at the scandalous risk of bringing the statements of the whole of their countrywomen into discredit'.<sup>49</sup> At least if a comment was added by the enumerator caution can be exercised: 'exact age refused' was noted for Mrs Playey of Salisbury's Cheesemarket. There were still difficulties forty years later. In 1891 'another cause of inaccuracy' was noted, that women made 'wilful mis-statement of their age owing to their desire for various reasons to be thought to be between 20 – 25 years of age'; though 'the amount of mis-statement appears to be gradually, but unmistakably, diminishing'.<sup>50</sup>

Further problems are encountered when data from the CEBs are used to study class structure. Given the difficulties with occupations discussed above, additional complications are met if those are then used as proxy indicators of status and class. Classification schemes have been debated widely; different systems have been developed in varied contexts, some based on contemporary and some on modern

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<sup>47</sup> Will of William Fawcett. Salisbury Probate Register 1887, f.219. These are two individual examples rather than representative cases; detailed information is not available for a more systematic analysis.

<sup>48</sup> In 1871 the Salisbury Local Board of Health appointed a committee 'to ascertain what streets, alleys and courts within the borough were un-named and un-numbered'. 'They urged this lack to be remedied 'not only on account of the approaching census, but also because most of the occupiers of houses were now entitled to the franchise, and their names must appear on the rate-book'. *SJ* 18 March 1871 p 6

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Higgs, 1996 p 81

<sup>50</sup> 1891 Census general report C7222 p 28

systems of categorisation.<sup>51</sup> This is an important issue for analysis of women's occupations in relation to their families' and husbands' class, and for the study of social mobility.

This discussion of the CEBs as a source for the local historian investigating women in the nineteenth century has necessarily concentrated on the difficulties to be met in using them.<sup>52</sup> But in the absence of the original household schedules, the enumerators' books are the closest way of reaching individuals in their resident family groups. This is a universal source containing details of almost the whole population during the Victorian period. It reveals who lived with whom, whereabouts in the community, and who their neighbours were. Using data for more than one decennial census opens even greater riches as it is possible to trace people who altered their household formation, moved house or changed occupation, or indeed stayed put working at the same tasks. So despite the drawbacks, CEBs are among the most illuminating and comprehensive sources available for the study of many aspects of nineteenth century society.

### **Sources: local newspapers**

Salisbury is fortunate to have one of the longest running local newspapers. The *Salisbury Journal* first appeared in 1729-30 and has a continuous existence since 1736.<sup>53</sup> An earlier attempt at a similar publication in the second decade of the eighteenth century, *Salisbury Postman*, was short-lived. The other newspapers in the area were the *Salisbury and Wiltshire Herald* started in 1833 and the *Salisbury Times* which lasted for over a century from 1868. The *Herald* took a clearly Conservative viewpoint, its birth in 1833 has been described as 'a daring Tory effort, launched in an overpoweringly Whig city',<sup>54</sup> announcing that it 'advocates the interest of agriculture, is a literary journal and attached to the Church of England'. Its local impact declined after 1846; its name was changed to *Wiltshire County Mirror* in 1852 and continued until 1911 when it was absorbed, with others, into the *Wiltshire News*. *Salisbury Times* was

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<sup>51</sup> EG see Mills and Mills, 'Occupation and social stratification revisited: the census enumerators' books of Victorian Britain', *Urban History Yearbook* 1989 pp 63-77, and Drake M and Finnegan R (eds), *Sources and Methods for Family and Community Historians: A Handbook*, Cambridge 1994 p 47

<sup>52</sup> Another practical aspect is that CEBs are labour-intensive and time-consuming source to use. But the rewards of reading micro-filmed pages from original books, rather than transcribed machine-readable versions are enormous.

<sup>53</sup> A sample front page is shown p 266

<sup>54</sup> Richardson H, 'Wiltshire Newspapers Past and Present', *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine* Vol LXI 1920-22 p 500

established to fill a gap locally for a cheap Liberal paper on progressive lines. It bought out the short-lived rival *Salisbury Examiner*, the city's pioneer Liberal paper, and continued under several individual owners, for example Charles Moody in the 1880s who was a leading Liberal and non-conformist, a former mayor with considerable municipal interests. In 1891 that paper was taken over by a company with local activists among the directors and shareholders.<sup>55</sup>

For this study the *Salisbury Journal* has been used almost exclusively. During the period under discussion its availability, accessibility, and consistency of coverage is invaluable. As it is not one of the relatively few local newspapers which have been indexed, familiarity with content and layout greatly enhances the efficiency of use of this type of source.<sup>56</sup> Anyone who has tried to use publications such as this quickly learns that there are physical constraints due to size or quality of micro-film, and time constraints due to the sheer volume of material and high distraction factor of much of the content.<sup>57</sup> So it can be argued that concentrating on one main organ is a sensible use of scarce resources. Occasional references will be found here to the other Salisbury papers where it proved necessary to confirm information or check details.

The *Journal* (as it is known) in the early nineteenth century had been 'a paper with a policy of its own, and a moulder of public opinion'.<sup>58</sup> The proprietor in the 1830s, William Bird Brodie, was an enthusiastic reformer who won one of the city's seats in the general election of December 1832. Bankruptcy of his other business interests led to the sale of the *Journal* in 1848 to James Bennett whose widow carried on the paper after his death in 1859, and was succeeded by her son Edmund Grove Bennett who died in 1895. Under the Bennetts the *Journal* 'abandoned the fierce Whiggism of 1832 and returned to the dignified ideal of its eighteenth-century days, "open to all parties, influenced by none" which it has consistently maintained since 1848.'<sup>59</sup> It was

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<sup>55</sup> See *Wiltshire Newspapers: A Guide*, Wiltshire Local History Forum 2003

<sup>56</sup> Indexing local newspapers is an exercise often undertaken by volunteers, sometimes as a local history society or class, some as a result of lottery funding, or as a millennium project. The numbers have increased recently. Murphy M, *Newspapers and Local History*, Chichester 1991, reports 650 available or started by 1986, and gives a number of examples. A personal account of an early example of such an exercise, with problems and solutions, can be found in Elliott B J, 'The problems of indexing a local newspaper', in *The Local Historian* Vol 14 No 3 1980.

<sup>57</sup> Winterbotham D and Crosby A, *The Local Studies Library: A Handbook for Local Historians*, Salisbury 1998 p 37

<sup>58</sup> Richardson, 1920 p 65

<sup>59</sup> op cit p 67

described in 1857 as a neutral provincial newspaper that ‘advocates the agricultural interest, and the Protestant principles of the Church of England. – The news of the week is given under different heads, admirably arranged; and the literary articles are well written’.<sup>60</sup> As well as the newspaper and printing business, the Bennetts were a well-known family of jewellers and silversmiths. Mrs Mary Bennett was described in the 1861 census as ‘a silversmith and jeweller employing four men and one boy, and printer employing fourteen men and seven boys.’ Unfortunately no business records appear to have survived to throw light on Mary’s management of the newspaper after her husband’s death, though she was in charge for some ten years.<sup>61</sup>

It is this latter *Journal* of the second half of the nineteenth century that has been widely exploited as a source for this project, used especially for announcements, advertisements and reports of local events. Over this period the paper became larger in size and lower in price, and there was a consequent increase in circulation.<sup>62</sup> Leaders continued to reflect national and international news more than local developments. However, the verbatim accounts of meetings of the city council, courts of law, and other institutions and organisations provided detailed information about what was happening in the city, who was involved and what was important to them, reinforcing the comment that ‘[t]here is no source of local history so evocative of the atmosphere of any 19<sup>th</sup>-century town as its local newspaper. There is certainly no contemporary document more redolent of local identity and local pride’.<sup>63</sup>

Salisbury may have been unusual in having local newspapermen who were clearly associated with the public life of the city. Elsewhere ‘...[reporters] were not permitted to enter the local council chamber... they had to combat petty censorship... proprietors themselves were not permitted to become local justices or councillors...’<sup>64</sup>. Here James Bennett had been mayor, then an alderman and was senior magistrate at the time of his death. The distinctive voices of these papers came to the surface not in the weekly

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<sup>60</sup> Quoted from *The Newspaper Press Directory* p 60 in Ferdinand C Y, *Benjamin Collins and the Provincial Newspaper Trade in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford 1997 p 157. An almost identical phrase was used to indicate the *Conservatism* of the *Herald*, see above.

<sup>61</sup> Moody R, ‘James Bennett of Salisbury (1797-1859): Jeweller and Newspaper Proprietor’, in *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine*, Vol 94 2001 and personal correspondence with Robert Moody.

<sup>62</sup> Richardson 1920 p 67

<sup>63</sup> West J, *Town Records*, Chichester 1983 p 224

<sup>64</sup> Westmancoat J, *Newspapers*, 1985 p 27

presentation of information, but when an issue arose on which their parties diverged, especially at election time, or when a military or diplomatic crisis occurred.

Although the *Journal* claimed an apolitical view, it still had influence over local events by the degree of enthusiasm with which they were welcomed, criticism offered, or the failure to comment at all.<sup>65</sup> The absence of an opinion on, or even an article about, many of the social/gender issues central to this work is frustrating; but was in itself an indication that they were perhaps not questions that mattered to the proprietor and editor of the day, at least relative to other news at the time. This does not reduce their significance to the study, nor detract from the value of the paper as a source. Elsewhere in its columns the evidence of women's involvement in the city was clear to see. As will be shown, an advertisement, for example, for a dressmaker who proclaimed an increase in range of products or a change of address revealed an alteration in the circumstances of the business, and is, of course, subject to interpretation in the light of evidence from other sources.

### **Sources: trade directories**

This chapter began by referring to *Langmead and Evans Directory*, and at first sight, trade directories such as this are a rich source for studies of urban communities.<sup>66</sup> Lists of people were published from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, but became widely available by the 1830s, declined to the 1860s, then increased again. This was partly due to a tendency for each volume to cover a wider geographical area, so fewer were needed.<sup>67</sup> The purpose of a trade directory (as opposed to a specialised one listing members of a profession) was blatantly financial, so its contents and organisation had to be functional for their prospective purchasers, the customers for the listed businesses, local people and travelling salesmen. An alphabetical list of the principal inhabitants was the common feature, together with a 'commercial' section listing tradespeople, and later street lists, and classified trades sections. The inclusion of information on posts, transport, markets, local institutions, administrative structure, and religious and

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<sup>65</sup> See, for example, in chapter 2 on Salisbury's exhibition. Little, 1981 ch 2 (no page numbers) remarks how a change of editor in 1880 diluted the paper's support for a public library.

<sup>66</sup> Sample page from a directory p 267

<sup>67</sup> Shaw G, 'British Directories as sources in Historical Geography', *Historical Geography Research Series* No 8 1982 p 25

educational organisations confirmed this functionality. Advertisements increased in quantity after the duty charged on them was abolished in Gladstone's 1853 budget.

With wider circulation, greater professionalism and experience of production it might be expected that later directories were more comprehensive, accurate and reliable than earlier ones. Larger firms employed full-time agents, had greater continuity of issues and more systematic revisions, but it is also possible to find examples of cost-cutting measures such as reprinting introductory sections without up-dating.<sup>68</sup> Directories must have been seen as potentially profitable, as local volumes continued to appear after the concentration of most areas in the hands of Kelly. In Salisbury there was but one issue of *Langmead and Evans Directory*, quoted above, though the Preface states 'It is intended to publish this work in future on the First of January in each year'. Oliver Langmead was the City Librarian. He thanked 'the Clergy and Gentlemen who have helped them to obtain the names etc of residents in the villages', and acknowledged the problems of such an undertaking: 'The greatest possible care has been taken to ensure this edition being correct, but owing to the difficulty there is in a work of this kind the Publishers do not hold themselves responsible for any error that may occur'. And errors were bound to occur, some, such as spellings, are obvious to the modern reader but it is the unknown ones which are hazardous.

Certain places and people were more likely to be included in directory listings than others, and in this they are potentially profitable sources for the social structure of a community. Poorer people would not be good customers for directory users, and inhabitants of the over-crowded, multi-occupancy courts inside Salisbury's chequers, or agricultural workers in scattered rural communities were seldom listed.<sup>69</sup> However, *Langmead and Evans* did record a surprising number of labourers in the city. The key division between 'private' and 'commercial' residents was used by different compilers, but how consistently it was interpreted is difficult to determine.<sup>70</sup> Professional people could be found in both lists; in Salisbury's society the urban gentry and professional families were closely interconnected and this was demonstrated by the placing of

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<sup>68</sup> Shaw, 1982 p 30 and Pryce W T R, 'Directories', in Drake and Finnegan, 1994 p 61

<sup>69</sup> The grid pattern of Salisbury's streets created blocks of buildings, the outer of which had a street frontage; inside these blocks or chequers smaller domestic and workshop units faced inwards to courts; see p 66-7

<sup>70</sup> Page D, 'Sources for Urban History 8: Commercial Directories and Market Towns', *The Local Historian* Vol 11 No 2 1974 comments on the completeness of professional and clergy listings in Ashby de la Zouch

individuals in directories. Slater's *Directory* of 1852 headed its first list for Salisbury 'Nobility, Gentry and Clergy', and included James Bennett, jeweller and proprietor of the *Salisbury Journal*, Stephen Hill, solicitor, and Charlotte Tinney in that category (along with the Bishop, the Dean and Lord Radnor). Bennett and Hill also appeared in the relevant classified section, as did medical men under Physician or Surgeon as appropriate. In Kelly's *Directory of Wiltshire* published in 1855, surgeon John Winzar was listed twice, as was architect John Peniston, but John Roberts MD was only in the first category. William Fawcett, maltster and brewer, was also in both lists in the 1867 edition of Kelly's. It would appear that some characteristics of social status were objectively determined, while others were more dependent on local recognition and designation, and therefore subject to variation. Anyone with a title was clearly 'nobility, gentry and clergy', as was an individual or family living at a 'good' address on an unearned income, and also spinsters and dowagers of prominent families, even if the origin of their position was professional or commercial.

Directories have to be used with care to identify women. They were present among listings of 'private' citizens in generous numbers, the widows and daughters of sufficient wealth and social standing to be classified as independent people, though dependent on previous assets of their families. Other wives and daughters of all classes were omitted almost completely. Working women with part-time and casual employment were not likely to be included, but those with multiple occupations can be found. Family businesses were normally listed under the name of the men. Apparently numerous women were listed in trade sections, probably a fair representation of those who were well-established, known to the compilers, willing to be included, and/or conscious of the benefit it might bring to their enterprise. But that is not to say the list was complete.<sup>71</sup>

Extracting women with identifiable occupations from the directories for Salisbury around the middle years of the nineteenth century produced a list of over 300 individuals. Other sources reveal that this is an inadequate measure of the total. One simple example is 'Smith and Son' of Butcher Row, among the butchers in the classified trades section of Slater's 1852 *Directory*. The census confirms that these two

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<sup>71</sup> It was, however, likely to be *more* complete than, say rate books which were dependent on property ownership.



people were Sarah Smith and James Smith, butcher and ‘butcher’s son and assistant’, so Sarah would have been omitted from an assessment based solely on the directory.

This process of testing the coverage of directories by comparing them with other sources, for example the payment of poor rates, or fees paid to inspectors of weights and measures, as well as censuses, also reveals omissions and the difficulty of making positive identifications.<sup>72</sup> To take just one example, from Fisherton Anger, an adjoining parish to the west that was effectively part of the city of Salisbury by the mid 19th century. A baker and shopkeeper of Fisherton paid numerous fees for weights, but there was no Mrs Shillard or Shellerd listed in Kelly’s, though Mrs Sarah *Shilling* was a trader in Fisherton Anger, and Sarah Shillard was clearly listed in Slater’s. It is likely that this was the same person, and demonstrates the value of reading a name aloud and not simply relying on written spellings. Similarly, Mrs Kingham paid 2s 11d for six iron weights and over 20 brass ones, but she did not appear in a directory, and Priscilla Dennis occupied a house and shop on which rates were paid, but she also had no entry in a directory.

In his recent overview of the use made by local historians of directories, which is generally supportive of their value as a source, Gareth Shaw comments that gender has been a relatively neglected variable in such studies.<sup>73</sup> Taking into account the other advantages of directories, such as their descriptive introduction to a place and the reliable lists of office holders in local government and other organisations, it can be argued that the drawbacks are outweighed by the rewards.<sup>74</sup> As the examples have demonstrated, the experience of using directories for this study confirms their value. No other source approaches a directory in terms of accessibility, continuity or comprehensiveness. The ‘long and profitable link between local history and directories’ continues; they can still be seen as the ‘perfect epitome of local history’.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> It is not always possible to know the timing of compilation of different sources of evidence.

<sup>73</sup> Shaw G, *Directing the Past: Directories and the Local Historian*, Ashbourne 2003 p 26 . However, a large-scale survey of Birmingham analysing the business activities of women concluded ‘directories are most useful in recording the business activities of women, something not always available in other sources’. Jenns K R P, *Female business enterprise in and around Birmingham*, unpublished PhD thesis University of Birmingham 1997, quoted in Shaw 2003.

<sup>74</sup> Atkins P J, ‘London Directories: a reassessment’, *The Local Historian* Vol 18 No 4 1988 p 189

<sup>75</sup> Shaw, 2003 p 1, second quotation is from Goss C W F, *The London Directories 1677 – 1855*, 1932

## Sources: other publications, official and institutional records

Other regular publications, such as parish magazines, and the *Diocesan Gazette* have been used to provide information in appropriate sections. The former in the nineteenth century contained a high proportion of standard material – uplifting moral narratives, biographies of worthy individuals, retelling of Bible stories, and tales of missionary achievements. The local content of parish magazines listed births, marriages and deaths, reported events, and published obituaries of prominent parishioners, and homilies from the clergy. Amongst the material in the *Diocesan Gazette* the most useful has been the accounts of organisations such as the Girls Friendly Society and the Diocesan Itinerant Mission.

Institutions, especially those run as voluntary bodies, kept detailed records because of their accountability to trustees or other forms of governors. Salisbury Infirmary published an annual report and accounts. There is one surviving Minute Book for the Diocesan Institute for Trained Nurses. The Poor Law Guardian's Minute Books only too often recorded simply decisions without the preceding discussion, as did the Minutes of the Soup Kitchen Committee.

Log books survive for Salisbury elementary schools from the 1860s and supply a wealth of detail about the daily life of teachers and pupils.

Salisbury gained a local board of health as part of the campaign to improve public health following the cholera outbreak in 1849. The board had power to raise a local rate, so property valuation and payments were recorded in rate books. Arranged by parish, the entries also give both occupiers and owners. In the 1869-70 volume, for example, Charlotte Tinney owned five tenements, each valued at £3 9s 8d, in St Edmunds parish, she lived in the parish of St Martins, where her house and grounds were given a value of £71.8s 0d, and the garden £9.10s 0d.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> WSRO G23/510/15 950,1002,1006. See also Drake and Finnegan (eds), 1994 p 112-3

## Sources: ephemera, legal documents and personal papers

Many sources of evidence about women's lives were ephemeral, so their survival and availability for study has been a matter of chance. Salisbury Museum has a collection of 'ephemera' which contains trade cards and billheads of local businesses.<sup>77</sup> Some of these were eloquent in describing the nature of the enterprise: Miss Mullins did not simply sell coloured wools and canvas for Berlin work, she offered private classes in the skills required. Unfortunately, the original collector of these elaborately illustrated invoices and receipts was only interested in the printed heading of the document, not in its use, so in most cases the hand written lists of items bought or services rendered, their prices and the customer's name have been cut off and discarded. Alison Kay has discussed the value of these materials, commenting how they demonstrated 'not only differences in the taste of the proprietors but also the messages they chose to convey to the marketplace'.<sup>78</sup>

Chance has also played a part in the life of more formal documents. The deposition by solicitors' firms of their clients' papers after a suitable interval can result in something coming to light which sheds exciting light on an aspect of research. An example is the Misses Hooper's partnership deed discussed below.<sup>79</sup> Ann Helen Marrian kept up a copious correspondence with her landlords over shortcomings of her house: '...I cannot spend another winter here unless there is a good heating apparatus ...', 'I ask that the repairs to my house etc may be done soon as I am afraid of the workmen spoiling the garden for the summer'.<sup>80</sup> But this probably only survived because she leased a property in the Close from the Dean and Chapter whose record keeping was exemplary owing to the longevity and extent of their assets.

Wills should be a more reliable source, in terms of survival, but not all women wrote one, and their business activities were not always mentioned by those who did. For some women their enterprise was only one part of their lives, perhaps before marriage,

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<sup>77</sup> This is an example of how it is important to explore the possible value of *any* source of evidence, however unlikely it may appear at first sight, and however off-putting the catalogue entry. See Winterbotham and Crosby, 1998 p 102 for a brief discussion of ephemera as source material

<sup>78</sup> Kay A C, 'Retailing, Respectability and the Independent Woman in Nineteenth century London', in Beachy R et al (eds), *Women Business and Finance in Nineteenth -century Europe: rethinking separate spheres*, Oxford 2006 p 157

<sup>79</sup> See p 105 - 6

<sup>80</sup> WSRO 776/982

so it was no longer relevant when they came to make a will. Eleanor Bryant, for example, in both the 1851 census and Slater's directory was described as a bricklayer, but her will, written only a few years later makes no mention of the business. In contrast, Sophia Meatyard writing in 1866 empowered her trustees 'to carry on my trade or business of a Butcher'. Firmin Potto of the Haunch of Venison bequeathed all the stock in trade, fixtures and fittings and other 'things belonging to my business together with the goodwill of such business' to his wife Louisa, urging her to use 'her best ability to keep on foot the license for keeping open the said premises as a Licensed Victualling House', as well as requiring that she keep up the £500 fire insurance.<sup>81</sup>

Personal letters and diaries are potentially a wonderful source for local historians, but faced an even more erratic survival rate.<sup>82</sup> Very recently the memorandum book of a Salisbury tradesman, William Small, has been acquired by the Record Office, and will be made the subject of a future volume by the Wiltshire Record Society.<sup>83</sup> The incidence for more literate higher classes, with time and interest for such activity, should surely be much higher, though this does not mean they necessarily still exist.<sup>84</sup> So the fact remains that for a particular place at a particular time, it is a very fortunate historian who has access to this type of personal source.

Only one year survives – 1895 – of the diary written by Sarah Maria Fawcett (1830 – 1923).<sup>85</sup> She wrote in French and Italian, so it has required translating. The entries were generally very brief, recording her health, the weather and her daily commitments. Almost never did she express an opinion. But it is possible to reconstruct her circle of acquaintance, both locally and further afield. Her duties as Secretary for the Local

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<sup>81</sup> A widow inheriting the business from her innkeeper husband was widespread. As Davidoff and Hall, 1987 p 299 have found 'Every male innkeeper who made a will in Witham left his business unconditionally to his wife, as did most of those in Birmingham'. However they conclude 'there were limits to what they [the widows] could make of their position'. Fifty years later, Louisa Potto in Salisbury continued to run a successful business, see below p 111.

<sup>82</sup> Perhaps that is being too pessimistic, as J D Marshall, writing over thirty years ago, suggested that the productions of diarists 'in the form of memorandum books, commonplace books, journals, sets of notes or even scriblings upon other documents, are often to be found in local libraries, record offices and private collections'. Marshall J D, 'The Analysis of Diaries', *The Local Historian* Vol 9 No 6 1971. Burnett et al have identified some 1,800 autobiographies written by working men and women between 1790 and 1945.

<sup>83</sup> Hobbs S, 'William Small's memoir', *Sarum Chronicle* 3 2003

<sup>84</sup> It is heart-breaking to receive a letter which states 'according to reports he found two large packing cases full of papers, thought they were of no interest and put them on the bonfire'. These are believed to have been a large collection of Henry Fawcett's private papers including personal letters from two Prime Ministers and from Queen Victoria. (Personal correspondence from Peter Fawcett)

<sup>85</sup> The bursar at The Godolphin School discovered the volume, and gave me permission to use it. It has since been deposited as WSRO acc 2954. Many thanks to Keith Bain for the translation.

Examinations, and as a Governor of The Godolphin School come through clearly. Although not a young woman she attended many social and charitable events during the year. It was a delight to be able to link newspaper reports of a concert with someone who was in the audience listening to ‘Miss Edmee de Dreux, a very promising young singer, who possesses a well-trained voice of great power and range’.<sup>86</sup> Other diarists have written about more significant events or better-known people, or comment on historically more important issues.<sup>87</sup> However, the tantalising details of an intimate local account of life in Salisbury are worth a great deal.<sup>88</sup>

### Sources: others

Any local study is likely to encounter anecdotes and tales from family memory, especially in an area of many active local history societies and classes.<sup>89</sup> Lecturing to such groups often generates contributions from the audience, but most are unverifiable by more conventional historical evidence. This is not to say they have no value, but must only be used with great caution, and in addition to more orthodox sources. They can add colour, or contrast, and can support hunches or guesses when other sources are too general or insufficiently local.

A similar case can be made for the value of contemporary literature. Novelists’ skills with language evoke the atmosphere of the times and the places they describe with feeling and richness often absent from the historian’s approach. Many novelists were also concerned about contemporary issues and their works were a means of dispersing ideas.<sup>90</sup> Business was a particular facet of the period relevant to my research and

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<sup>86</sup> *SJ* 12 October 1895 p 8

<sup>87</sup> Two examples are those of Mary Nichols, analysed by Julian Pooley and Mary Haslam, the subject of Steven King’s work in Bolton. Pooley J, ‘The Diary of Mary Nichols: its value as a source for Local Historians’, *The Local Historian* Vol 25 No 3 1995. King S, “‘We might be Trusted’’: Female Poor Law Guardians and the Development of the New Poor Law: The Case of Bolton, England 1880-1906’, *International Review of Social History* Vol 49 part 1 2004.

<sup>88</sup> The personal diary written by young Jane Townsend who lived at Mompesson House in Salisbury Close has also been used in chapter 5, see below p 204.

<sup>89</sup> Oral history is a source of evidence and a methodology that has developed enormously in recent years. For example see Howarth K, *Oral History A Handbook*, Stroud 1998, and the National Sound Archive at the British Library, as well as many local publications resulting from millennium projects. Even when I first started thinking about this project there would have been few old enough to provide reminiscences so a formal oral history approach is not relevant.

<sup>90</sup> See for example, the discussion of the works of George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell by Williams A R, *The Local Historian*, Vol 8 No 7 and Vol 9 No 2. See also Kathryn Gleadle’s review (2007 No 578) of Nicola Phillips *Women in Business 1700 -1850* and Phillips’ response. [www.history.ac.uk/review/paper/gleadle2.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/review/paper/gleadle2.html)

featured in many novels of the time: ‘the realities of a world of buying and selling, for goods against cash, are part of the world these Victorians seek to recreate within their fiction’.<sup>91</sup> Nineteenth century fiction has been used here sparingly and selectively, in particular exploiting the well-known association with Salisbury of writers like Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope. Such authors made use of their personal experience, or that of members of their family, of a place and its people. For example, Sue Brideshead’s life as a student teacher is based on Hardy’s knowledge of his sisters’ time at Salisbury Diocesan Training College.<sup>92</sup> The popular Victorian novelist Charlotte M Yonge also had links with the city, though somewhat less direct. She was ‘friend, godmother, teacher, and playmate’ of the family of Bishop Moberly, who lived in the Palace in the Close from 1869 to 1885.<sup>93</sup> She had first known them in Winchester, so had two cathedral cities to draw upon for the people in her books. The family in *The Daisy Chain* ‘move in a little world whose confines are more or less those within which live the characters of Trollope’s novels’.<sup>94</sup> It is not a simple matter to apply fictional references with confidence in an historical work. Interpretation is even more problematic than with apparently factual material. The value is to exploit someone else’s view to add another layer or a different angle. This applies especially to the case with local authors who believed ‘that it is better to know a small area of countryside intimately than to know a large area superficially’.<sup>95</sup>

Louise Rayner (1829-1924) painted watercolour views of Salisbury streets, capturing the landscape and the population in fine detail.<sup>96</sup> Although she tended to paint the people and vehicles smaller than they would be which made the buildings appear larger, the accuracy of her imagery permits her paintings to become ‘valuable documents of social history’.<sup>97</sup> In very different style, Walter Tiffin produced precise engravings of the Salisbury Exhibition in 1852 that are just as valuable as historical sources. The level of detail allows us to read the names of exhibitors to see where their displays were laid

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<sup>91</sup> Easson A, ‘The High Victorian Period -1850-1900: ‘The Worship of Mamon’, in Pollard A (ed), *The Representation of Business in English Literature*, 2000

<sup>92</sup> See below p 145

<sup>93</sup> Olivier E, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 1945 p 24

<sup>94</sup> Mare M and Percival A C, *Victorian Best-seller, the World of Charlotte M Yonge*, 1947 p 146.

Charlotte M Yonge was also a friend of Elizabeth Wordsworth, first Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, and sister of John Wordsworth, Bishop of Salisbury 1885 - 1911. Annie Moberly took charge of St Hugh’s at the invitation of Miss Wordsworth (where Edith Olivier was a student).

<sup>95</sup> Watts K, *Figures in a Wiltshire Scene*, East Knoyle 2002

<sup>96</sup> One of her watercolours can be seen p 268

<sup>97</sup> Chandler J, *Great-Grandmother’s Footsteps*, Salisbury 1999 p 2

out in the Guildhall, as well as to examine the objects themselves.<sup>98</sup> The popularity of publishing reproductions of old photographs and postcards has brought into public hands the selections from large collections of material hoarded both privately and in institutional archives.<sup>99</sup> The earliest photographs of Salisbury date from the 1850s, and many survive that allow us to savour the atmosphere of the streets through the second half of the nineteenth century. Local photographers recorded the market and shops with ordinary people going about their daily business, as well as taking pictures of special occasions and important buildings.<sup>100</sup> These images, whatever their medium, give a visual life to the words of printed and manuscript sources. Only the more wealthy citizens, or those holding special office, or performing particular roles, had personal portraits taken. So it is unlikely that we will ever know what most of the people of Victorian Salisbury looked like. But the street scenes depicted by artists and photographers help us to imagine the background against which daily life was played.

Maps illustrate the physical layout of a place, and permit the link to be made between people and the buildings in which they lived and worked. Particularly valuable for a study such as this are the large-scale Ordnance Survey maps produced in the second half of the nineteenth century. England was surveyed at the 25-inch scale between 1863 and 1888, the Salisbury sheets were first published in 1881, two years after the survey and then revised in 1900. This map provided street names, plot boundaries, outbuildings and similar detail including in the first one individual trees. Towns of over 4,000 population were also mapped at a scale of 1:500 which gave wonderful detail, including interior layout of institutional buildings<sup>101</sup>. Salisbury's was published in 1880. Although matching local maps and, for instance, the route taken by the census enumerators is not always a simple task, key points such as inns or road junctions can be used to fit the two sources together and thus identify a specific house or workshop and those who resided there. Similarly the size of properties on the ground can be compared with the value assessed for rating purposes.

An important aspect of this project is that it can serve as an example. The sources described above are widely available in local studies libraries and record offices. With

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<sup>98</sup> See chapter 2 for discussion of the Exhibition.

<sup>99</sup> For example Saunders P, *Salisbury in Old Photographs*, Gloucester 1987.

<sup>100</sup> Norgate M, *Photographers in Wiltshire*, Trowbridge 1982 for a list of photographers in the county.

<sup>101</sup> See p 274 for an example. Hindle P, *Maps for Historians*, Chichester 1998 p 122 - 136

few exceptions they do not require palaeographic skills. And in recent years some – such as directories – have been digitised and published on the internet, so are accessible from the comfort of one’s home. This is likely to expand swiftly and bring increasing amounts of nineteenth century material within reach.<sup>102</sup>

### **Women and local history**

The level of detail achieved, the intimate portraits painted, the degree of familiarity with the characters and location all sustain the assertion that this research fits closely the idea of local history as ‘micro-history’. The limitations of macro-level approaches have been indicated above. ‘Micro analysis suggests that localities experiencing and relating to economic change can best be understood if examined in and of themselves...’.<sup>103</sup>

Micro-studies remove barriers ‘between public and private lives, between economic and non-economic behaviour, between production and consumption’.<sup>104</sup> My work supports the argument that, in many ways, women’s lives did not break down into separate pieces; their public and private worlds, and their economic and non-economic functions merged and blurred. Production and consumption behaviour was interdependent, and also integrated with social and cultural concerns. Studying a locality in detail can reveal both the totality and the interconnectedness of the parts of a community. ‘Each individual’s social space’ was one piece in the multi-coloured patchwork that was the whole picture.<sup>105</sup>

Local history as a subject has changed enormously in the last century: from the elitist preserve of gentlemen antiquarians to an activity engaged in by absolutely anyone – professional academic in a prestigious institution or lone individual amateur researching from home. Over the years there has been much debate over the relationship between professional and amateur participants, the former criticising the latter as parochial, insufficiently rigorous, excessively descriptive, and the latter responding by demonstrating the quality, breadth and depth of their work. That work has been

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<sup>102</sup> A few examples are [www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org), [www.visionofbritain.org.uk](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk), [www.english-heritage.org.uk/viewfinder](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/viewfinder)

<sup>103</sup> Hudson P, ‘Industrialization in Britain: The Challenge of Micro-history’, *Family and Community History* Vol2/1 1999 p 8. I particularly like the sentence in Pat Hudson’s final paragraph: ‘micro-history represents a return to a more accessible, less specialised and less technical history’ p 14

<sup>104</sup> Hudson 1999 p 12

<sup>105</sup> *ibid*



stimulated by attendance at adult education classes, membership of local history societies, a dramatic expansion in interest in family history, and the vast increase in accessibility of primary and secondary sources.<sup>106</sup> All these have provided opportunities for interested individuals or groups to explore and analyse their locality, and to share the results with others.

Little has been written about women as local historians, but experience suggests that a majority of amateur participants are female.<sup>107</sup> In her unique essay on the topic, Joan Thirsk has written

Their different lives make for different viewpoints and yield different insights; hence, in practice, they frequently choose distinctive themes for investigation, have their own styles of research and presentation and rank their objectives and priorities differently. In the fields of local and family history especially, their insights are likely to be original and influential...<sup>108</sup>

In the academic world, too, women historians have recognised the value of local material in the fields of economic and social history, women's history, and in studies of philanthropy, local government, class and education<sup>109</sup>. Four of the eight Phillimore lecturers to date have been women.<sup>110</sup> I am not intending to suggest that this present research could not have been done by a man, but it is an interesting idea that needs further exploration, that women bring something special to the intimate study of a locality. I believe that its particular strength is to draw together many elements that have been examined elsewhere, creating a full picture with rich local detail of how the community worked, where the opportunities lay for women to take part in the public economy and society, where they could make their own choices and decisions about their lives.

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<sup>106</sup> The debate is summarized succinctly by Alan Crosby, *The amateur, the professional and the internet: the development of local history 1850 – 2000*, 2003, and in his introduction to *Unlocking the Past: Index to The Local Historian*, Salisbury 2001. See also Munby L, Owen H, and Scannell J, *Local History since 1945: England Wales and Ireland*. Socialist History Society 2005.

<sup>107</sup> I suggest three reasons for this. The first is demographic – women live longer and retire earlier, so have more time for involvement in this type of activity. Secondly despite universal secondary education, women of the generation now retired were subject to social and familial pressures that prevented them reaching their full potential academically in full-time education when they were younger. And thirdly the subject matter is particularly relevant. The quotation from Joan Thirsk below continues 'since much of women's energy is devoted to creating and maintaining families and sustaining local communities' 'their stronger sympathy for animate creatures ... and their keen observation of social relationships'.

<sup>108</sup> Thirsk J, 'Women local and family historians', in Hey D (ed), *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*, Oxford 1996 p 498

<sup>109</sup> See for example, in the Bibliography here, the work of Alexander, Berg, Davidoff, Gleadle, Holcombe, Hollis, Jalland, and many others.

<sup>110</sup> See *Local History News* 1997-2004.

## **Conclusion**

This work aims to explore, understand and celebrate the roles of women in Victorian Salisbury. By utilising a variety of apparently ordinary and widely available sources to study women's lives it is possible to recreate personal portraits, to reach the individual within the crowd, and to uncover women's presence rather than their absence.

## Chapter 2

### Salisbury in 1852 – its environs, society and economy

*'I have always liked a cathedral town'<sup>1</sup>*

It was an Exhibition rare,  
A kind of busy Fancy Fair,  
    That charmed both eye and mind.  
Science and art there hand-in-hand,  
Presided still, a graceful band,  
    With taste the most refined.

The Mayor spoke well in Sarum's praise,  
And strove its character to raise,  
    In phrase both terse and keen.  
While all applauded what he said,  
And in each face might well be read  
    Approval of the scene.<sup>2</sup>

In 1852 the Salisbury Exhibition was held in the Council House in the Market Square, the commercial centre of the city.<sup>3</sup> It involved almost every aspect of life in Salisbury, and therefore provides a framework for this chapter to introduce its economy, culture and people at a particular moment in time. In addition it sets the scene for uncovering the roles and activities of women which will be examined more closely in the subsequent chapters. Salisbury held the first exhibition to mirror the Crystal Palace extravaganza of the previous year, anticipating the Royal Society of Arts' proposal that *local* exhibitions be held as 'hardly any one county or district was at all fully represented'.<sup>4</sup> Frances Child's voluminous poem ranged over all aspects of the event, but the first of the two verses quoted above encapsulated its essence – the combination of science and art, mixed with the notion familiar to the Victorian middle-class of a

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<sup>1</sup> Trollope A, *Framley Parsonage*, first published 1861, 1914 edn p 221

<sup>2</sup> *The Salisbury Exhibition*. A poem by Miss Child. 1852, two of the sixty-nine verses. Frances Child lived in the Close and wrote poetry on a number of local events and issues. See below p 57 - 8 and fn 61, 62

<sup>3</sup> See illustrations 8 and 9, p 270 - 274

<sup>4</sup> *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* (hereafter *SJ*) 25 September 1852 p 2

‘fancy fair’ or bazaar, and the controversial concepts of good taste and refinement. It was *rare* in that it was the first in the provinces.<sup>5</sup>

The women of Salisbury participated in the exhibition as exhibitors, as subscribers, and as visitors. It would have been most unusual for any female to appear on the organizing committee of such an event at this time, anywhere, and as will be seen, Salisbury was not in the vanguard of such radical innovations. The established male elite would long remain too powerful and there were no women prepared to challenge this hegemony. However, prominent contributions to the trade section reflected most of the economically active women in the city. Objects exhibited by women in the museum and artistic sections demonstrated their skills in the feminine arts such as embroidery and watercolours, and their interests as collectors. These roles were publicly acknowledged both in the exhibition catalogue and the local newspaper reports, and the donations made by the exhibition’s financial supporters were similarly publicised. Craftswomen, businesswomen, professionals, and those of the leisured classes all took part.

The items displayed at the Salisbury exhibition represented the range of trades practised by the citizens, including the women.<sup>6</sup> Some 25% of the exhibitors in the trades section were women, predominantly representing traditional female occupations. Most were established members of the commercial life of the city, many from families with varied business interests. Mrs Griffin had in her exhibit a ‘White Beaver Bonnet, trimmed with plaid ribbons and ornamented inside with a bouquet of rose buds’, her daughter was also a milliner, and her husband was a timber merchant. Miss Bail, who exhibited ‘needlework’ was a Berlin wool worker, like her mother; her father was a cabinetmaker. Miss Mullins provided the needlework for a ‘carved zebra wood cheval fire screen’ submitted by Mr Tucker.<sup>7</sup> Amongst the other craft specialisms of Salisbury, Dixons put in specimens of their brushes, and Mr Morgan some of his pipes. Mr Windsor showed a large number of tools – such as a Lady’s Gardening Prong, a Butcher’s Cleaver and a Woodman’s Fagotting Hook. ‘A case of Gentlemen’s Boots and Shoes of an improved style and workmanship’ was displayed by George Sydenham; and alongside his

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<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, Miss Child could have meant the more colloquial use of *rare* as ‘splendid, excellent or fine’ (OED).

<sup>6</sup> Its full title was ‘...of Local Industry, Amateur Productions, Works of Art, Antiquities, Objects of Taste, Articles of Vertu, etc’ as set out on the front cover of the catalogue.

<sup>7</sup> See enlargement of Mr Tiffin’s engraving p 282, and also p 108 for more details on Miss Mullins’ business.

utilitarian corks for bottle stopping, Mr Lake showed off his skill with models of both Salisbury cathedral and Stonehenge made from cork. Not all women's businesses had products suitable for display, the food and hospitality trades, and schools for example, and some of the larger dressmaking and millinery establishments were absent, perhaps they already had sufficient customers or full order books at the time.<sup>8</sup>

The plan to hold an exhibition evolved over several weeks in the summer of 1852. A letter was published in the *Salisbury Journal* in May drawing attention to the flourishing Literary and Scientific Institution, but, fearing its decline into a 'literary lounge', suggested an exhibition be held 'to stimulate the youthful talent of the city to do something with the knowledge they attained by the facilities offered by the Institution'.<sup>9</sup> Then there was a suggestion that it could also be used to raise funds for the Institution, and then taken further 'why confine it to *amateur* productions ... let us also have the best productions of our manufacturers and artificers, articles made by way of business ...'.<sup>10</sup> With the addition of commercial products more objectives of the event were spelt out – the 'imposing show would attract many visitors to Salisbury and would give an impulse to the trade of our city'.<sup>11</sup> As will be discussed below, this was an important time in the rethinking of Salisbury's economic identity as it recovered from being a declining textile town and moved towards exploiting its service functions. The realization that an exhibition would contribute to this was consistent with the notion, quoted by Asa Briggs from the 1851 catalogue, of 'incalculable benefits to all classes of humanity' resulting from such an event.<sup>12</sup> A further local/national parallel can be found in the description of the Great Exhibition expressed by Jeffrey Auerbach as representing 'an industrial divide, when people were attempting to choose which path to take'.<sup>13</sup> The inclusive view of the economy taken by the organizers in 1851 brought in 'small-scale, artisan- or workshop-based specialized production' typical of an economy such as 'Salisbury's.

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<sup>8</sup> A more detailed examination of the economic activities of women in Salisbury at this time is contained in chapter 3.

<sup>9</sup> *SJ* 16 October 1852 p 3 reprinted after the writer's brother who had initiated the idea was felt to be getting insufficient recognition for its success.

<sup>10</sup> *SJ* 12 June 1852 p 3

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> Briggs A, *Victorian Things*, Harmondsworth 1988 p 32

<sup>13</sup> Auerbach J, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, New Haven 1999 p 125

The following week another idea was added

‘a not unattractive addition to our show might be made by the contribution for the occasion of a number of the choicest curiosities, objects of taste, local archaeological specimens, paintings, statuary, coins, autographs etc in the possession of various of our gentry to whom it would doubtless be a source of gratification to embrace so suitable an opportunity of favouring with a sight of these the wider circle of a pleased and admiring public’.<sup>14</sup>

These dual purposes of giving pleasure to the exhibitor by permitting others to admire their collections, and of educating and extending the taste of the viewers further lengthened the list of objectives for the exhibition. The end result was an occasion that informed the local public, and stimulated demand for local products. It both generated a sense of achievement for the people of Salisbury and brought the city to the attention of the national press.

### **Organisation of the exhibition**

The Bishop, the Dean, the Mayor, several MPs and local gentry were listed as the patrons of the exhibition, but to bring all the diverse, and often valuable, objects together from across the community demanded a high degree of organisation. As with most events a committee was set up, not without some difficulty apparently, headed by the Mayor and stalwart citizens. The administration seems to have been largely carried out by the two honorary secretaries, James Smith and Walter Tiffin.<sup>15</sup> The committee members were from the municipal elite, and had names in common with, for example, the officers of the Literary and Scientific Institute, and particularly the museum committee in the following decade. They were the usual mix of professional and businessmen found also on other bodies in Salisbury like the city council, or the building committee for a new Baptist chapel, coming from law, medicine, architecture, masonry, drapery, pharmaceuticals and others.<sup>16</sup> Although it was a cathedral city, Salisbury was largely run by its commercial and professional citizens. Diocesan leaders served as figureheads for many occasions, and other clergymen were active within their parishes, and in other appropriate roles such a relief of the poor.

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<sup>14</sup> *SJ* 19 June 1852 p 2

<sup>15</sup> Smith and Tiffin were a writer and painter respectively. Smith was described in the 1851 census as ‘newspaper editor’, and Tiffin as ‘painter of figures and portraits, and teacher of drawing’.

<sup>16</sup> See below p 61 for further mention of the city council.

Finance for the exhibition was a matter of concern, but it was thought likely that expenses would be ‘trifling’, the preliminary outlay easily secured by subscriptions and other expenses met by a moderate admission fee.<sup>17</sup> That was fixed at 2/6 on the first day, 1/- thereafter until the final day when entrance would cost 6d. The level of ticket prices was much discussed at events like this, as the structure would go some way towards determining the social mix of the participants. It was felt important to keep out the very poorest, potentially undesirable elements, but also to encourage working people who would gain from the educational and improving effects of the displays. Different rates on different days were not unusual, to allow those who did not wish to mix with the shilling visitors to avoid doing so.<sup>18</sup> The published statement that ‘the Public will *not* be admitted *gratuitously*’ indicates that possibly the discussions in Salisbury went as far as suggesting some days of free admission, as proposed by Joseph Paxton for the Crystal Palace exhibition. Paxton’s letter to *The Times* in January 1851 sparked off a debate ‘between two very different visions of the exhibition, the nation, and the nature and purpose of government’.<sup>19</sup> In Salisbury the exhibition was expected to be both educationally and commercially advantageous; the population was considered to have the potential to benefit; and local government, in the form of the mayor, was there to provide ‘active and efficient presidency’.<sup>20</sup>

The *Prospectus* was issued at the end of July, and three weeks later the *Salisbury Journal* published the first list of subscribers, donations at that date totaling just over £100. Below a handful of more substantial sums (including two of 10 guineas from Members of Parliament) the going rate was one guinea (enough to entitle the donor to a season ticket for admission), coming from both professional citizens and the more substantial tradesmen.<sup>21</sup> Additional contributions continued to come in, reaching £150 by mid-September. There were no women in the original subscription list, but several made contributions subsequently, including Miss Mullins, who was a trade exhibitor, Mrs Fisher, the wife of a committee member, Miss Wickens and Mrs Powell who entered items in the museum section, Mrs Benett the wife of the printer of the catalogue,

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<sup>17</sup> Asking for subscriptions was the way funds were raised for ‘public’ projects, such as rebuilding the Poultry Cross in 1853 or the wreath sent by the women of Salisbury to Queen Victoria’s funeral.

<sup>18</sup> Greenhalgh P, *Ephemeral Vistas*, Manchester 1988 p 30

<sup>19</sup> *SJ* 7 August 1852 p 2 and Auerbach, 1999 p 144 -145. *The Times* and some members of the Royal Commission organizing the Crystal Palace exhibition held ‘fears of the mob’ resulting from memories of Peterloo and Kennington Common. It would not have been surprising if the authorities in Salisbury had mentioned similar recollections of the Swing disturbances in the autumn of 1830.

<sup>20</sup> *SJ* 21 August 1852 p 2

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

and Mrs Tinney, a wealthy widow who gave money to all manner of good causes, from local schools, to missionary societies, famine in India, distress in Lancashire and individuals such as ‘a poor man with bronchitis’.<sup>22</sup> It is significant that almost all the women on the contributors’ list for the Salisbury Exhibition were also involved, directly or indirectly, in some other way. Their commitment went further than the merely financial. Publication of their names amongst the subscribers demonstrated their wealth, their philanthropy, and their sense of obligation to good causes. Citizens could be relied upon to raise funds for many projects when required, and it was of course a way of expressing interest without personal effort. But many of these women were indeed *active* participants, who made a public statement of their skills or interests. Although they did not organize or administer such events, they nevertheless had a public presence.

Salisbury had already demonstrated support for the notion of exhibitions by forming a committee to raise funds in support of the Crystal Palace exhibition, £70 19s had been sent to the General Fund.<sup>23</sup> Provincial enthusiasm had been a central platform in the marketing of the 1851 event, though the results had not been universally successful.<sup>24</sup> The Salisbury Literary and Scientific Institution had organised a trip by rail for its members to the Crystal Palace, and other citizens had travelled independently. The London and South Western Railway advertised a ‘Special Train to the Exhibition’ with fares of 10s first class, 7s second, and 3s 6d in an ‘open carriage’. Even the lowest rate was beyond the reach of the poor (especially as it required accommodation in London from Wednesday to Friday), despite the *Journal’s* comment that the railway company ‘liberally determined to give [this opportunity] to all classes, not excepting the very poor’.<sup>25</sup> So people here in Salisbury did have a first hand knowledge of the national exhibition they were proposing to reflect.<sup>26</sup>

Reports in the *Salisbury Journal* indicate the issues that arose as the scheme progressed. It was announced that ‘there is no intention of awarding prizes or otherwise publicly adjudicating on the merits of the goods exhibited’.<sup>27</sup> It is not hard to imagine the

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<sup>22</sup> Charlotte Tinney’s account book WSRO 776/409, 410

<sup>23</sup> *SJ* 15 March 1851 p 2

<sup>24</sup> Auerbach, 1999 ch 3

<sup>25</sup> *SJ* 6 September 1851 p 2

<sup>26</sup> Elliott J, *Salisbury and the Great Exhibition*, unpublished paper 2001 p 4 also *SJ* 30 August 1851 p 2

<sup>27</sup> *SJ* 7 August 1852 p 2



hazards, in such a relatively small community, of judging one's fellow citizen's efforts! Local comments recognized how important it would be to have 'no jealousies or wranglings about juries'.<sup>28</sup>

Fear for the security of the items displayed was related to concern about who would come. Exhibitors were reassured that 'in addition to the engagement of a detective from London, the police arrangements are such as to make ample provision for the safety of the many curious and valuable articles which will be exhibited'.<sup>29</sup> Thomas Webb, Henry Birch, William Kilford and Edward Self were appointed to guard the exhibits following an application for constables to the Watch Committee by James Smith, one of the exhibition secretaries. They each received a gratuity of ten shillings.<sup>30</sup>

When the proposal for an Exhibition was under discussion, detractors of the scheme suggested that many items would be bought in from London and elsewhere, as shop goods indeed were, so would not represent local skills. Everything 'made in Salisbury' was specially marked in the catalogue to refute this accusation. It was not suggested that a place like Salisbury should aim for self-sufficiency, but that the local economy would benefit from providing the population with as wide a variety of goods as possible, to avoid the need to spend money elsewhere. The display put on by drapers Style & Large was an inventory of specialized textiles from different places, whose labels still told of their source – Spitalfields Brocaded Robes, Witney Blankets, Barnsley Sheeting, Derby Ribbed Socks. Here was the retail end of a national market, to the benefit of both producers and consumers, which had been growing slowly in the first half of the nineteenth century, and would expand remarkably with the extension of the railway network and mass production methods.<sup>31</sup> Salisbury's women customers could select from an increasing variety of goods, some bought in from across the country, and others made by their neighbours.

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<sup>28</sup> *SJ* 12 June 1852 p 3. This is in contrast to the significance of prizes to the work of the Royal Society of Arts and other exhibitions. 'Without prizes to offer the Society believed it would be unable to secure public opinion in support of the exhibition' Auerbach, 1999 p 26

<sup>29</sup> *SJ* 9 October 1852 p 2. Salisbury's police force dates formally from powers given to the Watch Committee under the Municipal Corporations Act 1835, though the name 'Salisbury City Police' and continuous organization began in 1839. It remained entirely separate from the Wiltshire Constabulary until the second world war. See Sample P, *The Oldest and the Best*, 2nd edn Salisbury 2003

<sup>30</sup> Watch Committee Minutes 8 October 1852 and 24 November 1852 WSRO G23/111/1

<sup>31</sup> Auerbach, 1999 p 19

This opportunity to express pride in local achievement was taken whole-heartedly. The items that had represented Salisbury at the Crystal Palace exhibition were prominently displayed –two cases of cutlery and specimens of twine and cordage had been prizewinners in London in 1851. As a demonstration of local enterprise, Septimus Roe created *Esprit de Bouquet*, marketed as ‘Salisbury Exhibition Perfume’.<sup>32</sup> In October it was displayed in a perfume fountain, (as in the Great Exhibition), and at Christmas time was promoted again as an ‘elegant and agreeable present for the approaching season’; the ‘richness and permanence of its fragrance’ was a selling point, together with the practical attribute of being ‘certain destruction to moth’.<sup>33</sup> Holding the first provincial exhibition was considered a good reason for blowing the local trumpet, particularly as Salisbury had made the decision before receiving the Royal Society of Arts’ recommendation, and others could only follow, benefiting from the experience of those who had gone before. As the *Salisbury Journal* reported

In its pecuniary results, in the quantity and quality of its daily visitors, in the singularly unanimous expressions of praise and admiration which it has called forth from the thousands who have visited it, in the perfectly orderly and decorous conduct of all classes of visitors, in the entire absence of all willful damage to any article exhibited, in the general courtesy and good feeling displayed by the visitors towards each other and the appreciation of articles of elegance and beauty manifested where it might be least expected, and in the regret with which the announcement of its closing was received by visitors from far and near, the Exhibition has more than answered the expectations of its projectors.<sup>34</sup>

### **Collection, display and tastefulness**

It was not only the products of commercial enterprise in the district that met with approval in the exhibition rooms. The ‘works of art, antiquities, objects of taste, articles of vertu etc’ on display were the results of a popular pastime for Salisbury’s Victorian citizens who had time, money and education to devote to collecting and artistic appreciation, and resources to devote to leisure and travelling. Women as well as men were owners of art and curiosities which delighted and informed the audience. Miss Frizell submitted items that suggested imperial connections or travels on the Grand Tour:

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<sup>32</sup> Roe was described as a Dispensing Chemist and Druggist in the 1851 census

<sup>33</sup> *SJ* 11 December 1852 p 2. The fountain is visible in Mr Tiffin’s engraving of the exhibition gallery p 272

<sup>34</sup> *SJ* 30 October 1852 p 3

‘The cap of a little Indian Princess, given by her mother to a British officer. A Shell from the shores of the Red Sea, engraved in Bethlehem. And a Stool cut from a solid block of wood by the Natives of New Zealand.’

Descriptions in the catalogue evoke romantic and exotic origins for these possessions.<sup>35</sup> Their owner resided in the Close, suggesting some wealth and status, but she was also earning an income, being described in the 1851 census as a teacher of languages. Mrs Salisbury exhibited ‘[a] dagger found in taking down an old wall in the Close, and Cameo brooch with the head of Charles I, a lamp from a tomb at Nola and specimens of old Venetian glass’. Mrs Squarey contributed her late husband’s collection of spongites and flints from the chalk and gravel of Salisbury.

The appropriateness of leisure pursuits followed by women was as important for maintaining respectability as any other activity, especially if it took them into the public sphere.<sup>36</sup> Collecting could be carried out in the safety of the private home, and producing the results for public display was acceptable within the confines of an event such as the exhibition. Acquiring works of art, and antiquities, demanded a certain level of wealth. For those without the requisite resources the ubiquitous hoarding and arranging of stamps, postcards, cigarette cards and other ephemera provided an alternative in the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond, though they did not feature in the Salisbury exhibition.<sup>37</sup> However, autographs were submitted for exhibition, and collections were of sufficient worth – not necessarily financial - to be bequeathed in wills. Sarah Maria Fawcett, who was introduced above, left hers to her niece Phillippa Garrett Fawcett, together with ‘my Encyclopedia, [and] the chalk portrait of my late brother Henry Fawcett [Phillippa’s father]’.

Although most of the exhibits came from the city itself, Salisbury’s links with the district outside its boundaries were also reflected in the contributors to the Exhibition. Fisherton and Milford, though discrete addresses, were effectively part of the city by the middle of the nineteenth century; trade exhibitors also came from Wilton, Porton, Downton and Redlynch. Blackmore Brothers, carpet manufacturers of Wilton supplied

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, the comments by Raphael Samuel in *Island Stories Unravelling Britain. Theatres of Memory III*, ed A Light, 1998 p 77 on ‘excited accounts of the Indian exhibits at the Great Exhibition’ revealing how India was ‘associated with the marvellous’.

<sup>36</sup> See also chapter 5 p 203 - 213 on women’s pastimes in Salisbury

<sup>37</sup> Briggs, 1988 p 350-351 on lady stamp collectors, p 367 for postcards. It was not until 1895 that a meeting was held to form a Philatelic Society in Salisbury & District, and those present agreed ‘to admit to the society ladies who collected stamps’. *SJ* 30 November 1895 p 5

their floor-coverings to a wide market, while Downton lace was hand-made on a small scale.<sup>38</sup> But it was to the museum and art sections of the display that donations came from the aristocracy, gentry and clergy from all around. The lengthy list in the catalogue from Rev E Duke at Lake House includes a flint arrow-head and a silver thimble, both 'found at Lake'. His father, also Rev Edward Duke, was a well known antiquary and amateur archaeologist who had excavated on his estates with Sir Richard Colt Hoare.<sup>39</sup> Earl Nelson at Trafalgar House exhibited several animals, killed and stuffed locally, and his wife the Countess contributed a gold tazza. J E Nightingale of Wilton showed a collection of porcelain and pottery, and Miss Webber of Tisbury, a Persian reticule and a Turkish smoking cap. From New House, George Matcham produced a diamond hilted sword, given by the Corporation of the City of London to Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson on his return from the Battle of the Nile, and bequeathed to his sister Catherine, Mrs Matcham. The diverse items considered appropriate to offer for this exhibition represent several issues of the time that arose in discussion of the event itself: the interests and assets of their owners, the paternalistic relationship between classes and districts, and ideas of taste and education. People in the country houses around the city had collections of both local and global artefacts. They were prepared to make these available on public display, to demonstrate both the status of their possessions and their philanthropic desire to benefit other citizens.

References to local finds were anticipated in the request for exhibits to be brought out of cupboards and cabinets.

The local archaeological department alone could not but prove to be especially interesting if their fortunate owners should but kindly allow these scattered treasures to be thus brought together. Indeed we may almost ask with surprise, why has not Sarum a permanent Antiquarian Museum?<sup>40</sup>

Given the extensive, and already well-known, archaeological sites in the vicinity that was not an unreasonable question.<sup>41</sup> Salisbury Museum was founded some years later after the water channels, which had run along the principal streets, were drained. Large numbers of artefacts – keys, knives, coins, pilgrims' badges and much else – were retrieved and sold to a group of gentlemen for £32 10s. This Drainage Collection still

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<sup>38</sup> See map p 264

<sup>39</sup> ODNB online. The finds are mostly now in the British Museum.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*

<sup>41</sup> At the second Annual General Meeting of the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society held in the city in 1854, Sidney Herbert from the chair commented on 'those objects of antiquity ... in which the Southern part of the County of Wilts is especially rich. *The Wiltshire Magazine* Vol II No IV p 3.

features as the kernel of Salisbury Museum. Private ownership of such items, and of archaeological finds, was not questioned though the organisers of the exhibition, and the committee of the Museum made explicit the benefit to be gained from placing them on public view.<sup>42</sup>

Public education on matters of taste was seen as an important aspect of exhibitions by which those fortunate enough to possess art and antiquarian collections could contribute towards the improvement of their social inferiors. The organising committee in Salisbury appealed ‘to the Clergy and Gentry to help the art-education of the Workman by forwarding for exhibition examples of pure taste in art and manufacture so as to afford opportunities of comparison and improvement’.<sup>43</sup> The question of what was or was not *good taste* exercised the attention of many commentators and authors in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the aftermath of the Crystal Palace exhibition; it was only in later exhibitions that the separation of fine art from other categories became important for the status of the event.<sup>44</sup> In 1851 one hundred guineas was awarded to a prize-winning essay ‘The Exhibition as a Lesson in Taste’ by R N Wornum, which managed, amongst much criticism, to admire ‘the carpets in an Oriental taste manufactured by Blackmore Brothers’ of Wilton.<sup>45</sup> This issue certainly held significance locally:

the Committee respectfully suggest that preference should be given to such articles as in form, colour, design, proportion or other peculiar merit may be best fitted to educate and refine the public taste’.<sup>46</sup>

At the time there was, no doubt, a clear idea of what constituted refined taste by which to make a judgement on any particular item.

The *Illustrated London News* published a neat drawing of one of the rooms of the exhibition alongside a matter-of-fact, indeed complimentary, description of selected items on show.<sup>47</sup> However this was not appreciated in Salisbury, the committee was so

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<sup>42</sup> As an example, the annual report of 1866-7 mentions a successful canvas around the city to increase subscriptions whilst ‘at the same time the existence and the advantages of the Museum have been brought under the notice of many of the inhabitants of the city and neighbourhood, which in itself is a furtherance of the great objective in establishing the Museum’. Amongst the subscribers, alongside the gentry and professionals were trades people, Mrs Meatyard, Mr Foley, Mr Gerrish, Mr Keynes and Mr Potto.

<sup>43</sup> *SJ* 12 June 1852 p 3

<sup>44</sup> Greenhalgh, 1988 ch 8

<sup>45</sup> *The Crystal Palace Exhibition Illustrated Catalogue*, Dover Publications reprint 1970 pXX\*\*\* [sic]

<sup>46</sup> *SJ* 11 September 1852 p 2

<sup>47</sup> *Illustrated London News* 23 October 1852

‘disgusted at the wretched caricature which appeared purporting to be a sketch of the Council Chamber during the exhibition’ that they commissioned the local artist (and Secretary to the committee) Mr Tiffin to do some sketches. Amongst the exhibits there were exotic items from around the world that might to modern taste have attracted ridicule, such as a teapot ornamented with a very large pearl shaped like a torso, but these were not mentioned in the *ILN* review. I have found no explanation for the committee’s adverse reaction, and can only express gratitude as without it the Tiffin engravings would not have been executed to give us such detailed images of the displays and visitors.

The amateur products of ladies were described locally in language of approval using the same terms: their accomplishments were so various, demonstrated in many elaborate and tasteful specimens of needlework.<sup>48</sup> Mrs C W Squarey had made a patchwork silk and satin quilt in cubes; Mrs Blake a knitted cloth rug; Miss Stokes, specimens of crochet work (Mr Tiffin wondered if ‘crocheteuse’ was the correct word to describe her) and the Miss Rangers had each made anti-macassars. Berlin wool-work appeared in both the trade section, exhibited by retailers who sold the raw materials, and in the amateur section as finished products. This was an extremely popular form of canvaswork stitched from charted designs in brightly coloured wools. The results did not come into the category of *good taste*, giving no opportunity for individual artistic expression and ‘requiring no thought and almost no skill’. The Countess of Wilton who wrote *The Art of Needlework* in 1840 stated ‘Of the fourteen thousand Berlin patterns which have been published, scarcely one half are moderately good’.<sup>49</sup> She was particularly critical of the way pattern-makers added ‘some adventitious frippery’ when adapting popular paintings for wool-work.<sup>50</sup>

Amongst the amateur art work which perhaps might also have been viewed from the heights of the metropolis with disdain, it is not always clear from the catalogue whether the exhibitor was also the artist; Miss Eliza Blackmore, for example, put in ‘four portraits, a study of birds from nature, a sketch near Lewes’ and so on, with no further comment. Against Mrs Powell’s entry, however, is specified ‘a Garden Scene by the

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<sup>48</sup> *SJ* 25 September 1852 p 2

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Rhodes M, *The Batsford Book of Canvaswork*, 1983 p 110 from whom the earlier quotation in this sentence p 113

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Morris B, *Victorian Embroidery*, 1962 p 21

exhibitor, three Water-colour Drawings also by the exhibitor'. Miss Wickens entered a collection that included 'Two Drawings of the Fair anciently held in the Close at Whitsuntide' and a 'Drawing of the Nave of Sarum Cathedral'. Her interests and skills were confirmed two years later when Mary Nichols recorded in her diary: 'I amused myself by looking over the book of drawings of various Antiquities in Salisbury by Miss Wickens, a lady of antiquarian taste long resident in the city'.<sup>51</sup> Arts and crafts, antiquities and scientific specimens, as well as commercial products provided a wealth of displays for the visitors' edification, amazement and satisfaction. Women's contributions conformed to orthodox expectations of female activities and possessions. Only in publishing the names of women exhibitors did this event pose a very gentle challenge to male dominance in life of the city.

### Visitors

It is estimated that perhaps 7,000 people attended the exhibition over nearly a fortnight. Some visitors may have arrived at Salisbury station and walked into the city centre from Milford or taken a cab down St Ann's Street. Others would have come in their private coaches, or walked in from the surrounding areas, or for some 'on Tuesday notwithstanding an incessant down-pour of rain, most of the carriers' carts travelling into this city were freighted with Exhibition visitors'.<sup>52</sup>

The local press praised those who came to see the exhibition; commenting on the 'quantity and quality of its daily visitors' and 'the perfectly orderly and decorous conduct of all classes of visitors'.<sup>53</sup> Four hundred tickets were given to scholars at National and Sunday Schools, reinforcing the educational objectives of the event. Messrs Blackmore of Wilton arranged for five hundred young women employees from their carpet factory to attend, and it was announced that 'several of the tradesmen of the city have also treated their workmen to a visit'.<sup>54</sup> On one day it was noted that 'a numerous and fashionable assemblage graced the rooms by their presence'.<sup>55</sup> The original intention had been to open the exhibition for twelve days but it proved so

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<sup>51</sup> Mary Nichols' travel journal volume X, p 32 Friday 15 September 1854. See also chapter 5 for women's pastimes.

<sup>52</sup> *SJ* 30 October 1852 p 3

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*

<sup>54</sup> *SJ* 23 October 1852 p 2

<sup>55</sup> *SJ* 30 October 1852 p 3

popular that an extra day was added, when the proceeds of the entrance fees were given to the Infirmary.

Salisbury was used to receiving visitors, as there was already a significant tourist trade in the city.<sup>56</sup> Stonehenge was a well-established attraction. Pilgrims had been coming to St Osmond's shrine in the cathedral since his canonisation in 1457; further waves appeared following the publicity given to the radical restoration work of Wyatt in the 1790s and of Gilbert Scott in the 1860s. The earliest existing guidebook to the city, published in 1769, described the sights that were considered worthy of attention, 'interspersed with many curious and useful particulars very necessary to be known by everyone frequenting the city'. At 2s 6d Easton's Guide published in 1806 was expensive, but only the well-off would be interested in travelling around the country and making use of such information as 'An Account of the Antiquities of Old Sarum and the Ancient and Present State of New Sarum or Salisbury'. In 1877 *The Stranger's Handbook to Salisbury and its Neighbourhood containing a Sketch of its History and Antiquities, and a Descriptive Walk through the Streets ...* cost only 1 shilling. By the end of the 1850s, once the railway had arrived in Salisbury, tourism as a leisure activity was accessible to more people. Sources of rest and refreshment for travellers were to be found in abundance, providing services appropriate to varying pockets. The main hotels met trains with their own cabs, others advertised special features such as the 'Railway Temperance Hotel and Coffee House' which had 'good commercial and cyclist accommodation, well-aired beds and moderate charges'.<sup>57</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century the recommendations made to visitors were in much the same tone as the discussions surrounding the promotion of tasteful exhibits in 1852. Guiding the visitor around the city, emphasis was placed on the historic traditions and modern developments, the mechanical and the aesthetic, as well as the practicalities of food and accommodation. It was hard to avoid the instructional voice:

On the first view of this noble pile [the cathedral], the eye of taste cannot fail to be struck with its prevailing characteristics – lightness, elegance and grandeur, justly-proportioned parts, and a harmonious whole.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Samuel Pepys had admired the city in 1668 and was very impressed with Stonehenge and with Old Sarum where he walked alone among the ramparts at dusk. Pepys complained bitterly at the size of his bill at *The George*, in the High Street.

<sup>57</sup> Langmead and Evans *Directory of Salisbury and District*, Salisbury 1897 p xxvii

<sup>58</sup> Brown's *Strangers' Handbook and Illustrated Guide to the City of Salisbury and its Neighbourhood*, Salisbury 1857 p 6



## The Close

Salisbury's public face was represented by the cathedral spire which dominated the view approaching the city from all directions, and it still reaches up above the tiled rooftops of the town, providing a potent symbol of power and glory of the medieval church. At ground level the cathedral was set in the Close of some 83 acres, a district distinct, both physically and administratively, from the city. A stone wall was built in the 1330s to contain the area where Bishop Poore had allocated plots to the key office holders of his new church. He urged them to demonstrate their support for the venture by building appropriate residences. Relationships between the interests in the town and in the Close went through many difficult periods when power struggles over commercial rights and cultural control rose to the surface.<sup>59</sup>

Over the centuries the Close was the scene of a skirmish between Royalist and Parliamentary troops in December 1644, a Whitsun Fair held regularly from the 15th century to 1831, use of the grassed area as cow pasture, and frequent flooding, as well as continuous function as a graveyard. Not until the end of the 18th century did it take on its modern image of green serenity. When Bishop Shute Barrington invited architect James Wyatt to restore the cathedral between 1789- 1792 the opportunity was taken to landscape its surroundings. Tombstones were removed, the graveyard raised and levelled, the medieval drainage system repaired, and the belfry demolished. 'Spacious gravel walks were made to the principal entrances' of the cathedral, and the building was left in an uncluttered Close.<sup>60</sup>

Frances Child, whose poem about the exhibition opened this chapter, is best known for an even longer work *The Spinster at Home in the Close of Salisbury* first published in 1844. Despite being the repository of myths and legends of doubtful provenance, the real value of this book lies, as Edith Olivier proposed, in 'its unconsciously drawn picture of the writer's world'.<sup>61</sup> Within the 300 pages, beneath the excruciating

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<sup>59</sup> Newman R and Howells J, *Salisbury Past*, Chichester 2001 pp 8 – 9, 30 – 31, 71

<sup>60</sup> Dodsworth W, *An Historical Account of the Episcopal See and Cathedral Church of Sarum or Salisbury*, Salisbury 1814 quoted in RCHM, *Salisbury: the Houses of the Close*, 1983 p 34. See illustration 12 p 277

<sup>61</sup> Olivier E, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 1945 p 15. In 1852 Miss Child produced *An Historical Appendix* in 1852 'supporting the veracity of events and individuals mentioned in the poem'. Modern

doggerel, are clues to the life of those living within the Close walls that evoke the feelings of reverence and tranquility of the place, together with the increasing variety of people:

Salisbury's Close they have seen, or of it have read,  
Where there's space for the living, and peace for the dead:  
A most beautiful spot, with magnificent trees,  
Under shadow of which you may wander at ease ...

And here dwell the Lord Bishop, the Canons and Dean,  
In as handsome old mansions as often are seen:  
Also Vergers and Vicars both rev'rend and lay,  
Who chant the Church-service twice every day.  
And residents many, of talents and worth,  
With young beaux and belles full of music and mirth ...

For ten Widows of Clergy here's also a College  
Endow'd by a Prelate of virtue and knowledge ...

There's also a School, on a useful foundation,  
Where daughters of Gentry receive education  
In the Protestant Faith – and, with fortunes not large,  
They are taught all the duties of home to discharge ...

Mine's a tiny abode, well befitting a spinster,  
In a nook in the Close, which belongs to its Minster.  
I can look from my window and see the west end  
Of that glorious pile which we all must commend ...<sup>62</sup>

Miss Child's entry in the 1851 census gave her age as 60, her place of birth as Romsey, Hampshire, and her occupation as 'Fundholder and Author on Subjects of Topography'. Her house was situated on the outer corner of the north side of Choristers' Green, giving her a good view of those who came and went through the High Street gate.

The residential buildings had been modernised by successive tenants from time to time, though '[i]t is to the first thirty years of the 18th century that many of the Close houses owe their present air of gentility and elegance'.<sup>63</sup> Their occupants were also changing. This area had initially been dependent on an entirely male institution – the church. However, by the nineteenth century the Close had become a predominantly female

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commentators have doubts about the authenticity of the tales owing to lack of references – how much was myth? Hobbs S and Johnson S, 'The Spinster and the Plague', *Sarum Chronicle* 4 2004 p 31 - 36

<sup>62</sup> Child F, *The Spinster at Home in the Close of Salisbury*, Salisbury 1844 p 2, 12 see also fn 2. See p 269 for an advertisement listing Miss Child's publications

<sup>63</sup> RCHM, 1983 p 29

community; the ratio of women to men being over 2 to 1 through the second half of the century.<sup>64</sup> Cathedral officials were of course still in residence, but now with their wives, families of daughters, sisters, aunts and cousins, and numerous domestic staff (the majority of whom were female). The Close was also the location of several institutions – the largest being the diocesan training college for women teachers.<sup>65</sup> It had also become a socially desirable address, so many of their neighbours were unconnected with the cathedral itself. Land owners, lawyers and other professional men from the city had taken up leases and moved in with their substantial households; it was attractive to retired people with an appropriate income; and it was a quiet and safe location for spinsters and widows.

Thus the residents ‘of talents and worth’ were diverse in origin and purpose. Edith Olivier opined that

a community consisting of clergymen and old ladies does not sound a promising forcing ground for unusual personalities, yet Salisbury Close has always abounded in these.<sup>66</sup>

It was a community that appreciated learning and fostered musical and artistic talent. And it was a community in which the abilities of female members of families were recognized and their ambitions supported. G M Young described it as

that walled close where all the pride and piety, the peace and beauty of a vanished world seem to have made their last home under the spire of St Mary of Salisbury.<sup>67</sup>

Although that statement evoked its unique atmosphere it underestimated the innovative and forward looking nature of many residents. One example was Annie Moberley, daughter of a bishop, who became head of St Hugh’s, Oxford, (at the invitation of

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Population of The Close, Salisbury				
Year	Total	Female	Male	Ratio f:m
1851	525	375	150	2.5 : 1
1861	602	415	187	2.2 : 1
1871	536	386	150	2.6 : 1
1881	630	450	180	2.5 : 1
1891	684	487	197	2.5 : 1
1901	691	441	250	1.8 : 1

<sup>65</sup> See pp 144 - 6

<sup>66</sup> Olivier 1945 p 74

<sup>67</sup> Young G M, *Portrait of an Age Victorian England*, first published 1936, Oxford 1989 p 87. The cathedral is dedicated to St Mary.

Elizabeth Wordsworth, whose brother succeeded Annie's father as bishop). Another was Barbara Townsend, an artist who lived all her 97 years at Mompesson House in the Close; and a third was Sarah Maria Fawcett.<sup>68</sup> Maria Fawcett lived alone in a small house on the North Walk opposite the cathedral from the death of her parents in the 1880s to her own death in 1923. She had a numerous acquaintance amongst the Close residents, in the city, and beyond. She was a school governor and secretary to the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations for girls. As well as regular attendance at cathedral services, her interests took her to lectures, concerts, receptions, fund-raising events, sports competitions and bazaars.

High stone walls visually and physically separated the Close from the town, but the two communities were interdependent. Traffic through the gates, at least in daytime, was two-way bringing the Close residents to the city streets for shopping, and allowing workers, students, worshippers, and visitors across the hallowed turf. While many individuals and organizations lived there for a particular purpose – the clergy and the student teachers for example – others had leisure that enabled them to exploit the tranquil context and the intellectual stimulation. This mixture of elements in the population of the Close generated varied interests and activities. In 1852 it was home to enthusiastic supporters of Salisbury's local exhibition. Financial contributions came from its wealthy residents, and submissions for the displays were made by the owners of works of art and other artefacts which would benefit their viewers.

### **Salisbury's social structure and institutions**

The social character of the city and surrounding area can be seen reflected in the officers, contributors and visitors to the 1852 exhibition. Dividing the exhibits into 'Trade' and 'Museum' distinguished broadly but not exclusively between different classes of society, and represented the multi-faceted purpose of the event. Occupations listed for the city of Salisbury in the 1851 Census Report revealed the extensive range of activities; there were women in 106 different categories and men in 219.<sup>69</sup> Many of

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<sup>68</sup> Olivier, 1945 pp 31, 74. For Maria Fawcett see above p 36 and below p 205 - 7, and p 295.

<sup>69</sup> It is possible to make a broad allocation of these to social classes using Armstrong's schema developed for York (+ criticisms of same). See also chapter 3 for further discussion of women's occupations in Salisbury, and in particular on classification chapter 3 fn 30 p 95. [Table on next page]

these were represented in the ‘Trade’ section of the displays. Slater’s *Directory* published in 1852 named 128 people classified as ‘Nobility, Gentry and Clergy’, though the catchment area extended well beyond the city boundary, including the Earl of Radnor at Longford Castle and the Earl of Pembroke at Wilton House – the major aristocratic landowners in the district. Within the city were the Bishop, the Dean, and those with unearned incomes – ‘living on own means’, ‘fundholders’ and ‘annuitants’ like Miss Ann Noyce in Endless Street, Mrs Charlotte Tinney in St Ann’s Street, and Miss Emma Pinckney in the Close. It was these people who provided most of the contributions to the ‘Museum’ category of the exhibition.

The ‘middling sorts’ in Salisbury’s society represented both the professions and commerce. They intermarried (see William and Mary Fawcett, below), socialised, and served together on the Council and on numerous committees. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 updated the organisation of local government for the city, establishing a council consisting of a mayor, six aldermen and 18 councillors, equally representing the three wards. Councillors were elected by the ratepayers, and the mayor and aldermen were chosen by the council. The numbers increased as new wards were added with boundary extensions during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and after.

Edward Edmund Peach Kelsey was mayor in 1852; he would hold the office for the third time the following year. Kelsey was a lawyer, a common profession for the mayor; others were doctors, brewers, drapers, a nurseryman, a chemist and rarely a ‘gentleman’. Being a member of the Church of England was not a necessary qualification for the office. Another lawyer, John Lambert, was the city’s first Roman Catholic mayor since the Reformation, noted by Mary Nichols when he took the chair at the opening of the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society meetings in

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Salisbury’s population in 1851, % by social class of men and women recorded with an occupation		
Class	Women	Men
I	-	3
II	4	4
III	47	63
IV	46	16
V	3	13

1851 Census Report Volume 1 p 398 Occupations in Principal Towns

1854 and ‘acquitted himself extremely well’.<sup>70</sup> Samuel Atkins, John Keynes and Edward Pye Smith were amongst non-conformist mayors.<sup>71</sup> Just as economic categories overlapped within many different groups in the city, so too did religious affiliation. But there were no exceptions to the rule that all local office holders were men.

In 1851 there were in Salisbury five Anglican churches, one Catholic, three Methodist, two Congregational, a Baptist and a Swedenborgian church.<sup>72</sup> On census day, there were nearly five and a half thousand attendances at an Anglican service and three and a half thousand at non-conformist services. When the published figures were adjusted to allow for people who went to more than one service in the day, the attendance rate in Salisbury was 103.7%. With a city population of nearly ten thousand at this time, few would have been excluded should they have wished to go to church and many clearly did. As John Elliott has commented, ‘the level of church attendance in Salisbury was exceptional’.<sup>73</sup> Church attendance was significantly above the national average. Elliott does not, yet, offer any explanation for this situation. There was not a significantly high proportion of free seats which might attract additional worshippers.<sup>74</sup> Other possible factors that influenced the behaviour of the population in this regard were the power of tradition, the presence of the cathedral, and perhaps the attraction of individual clergymen at the time of the census. Regrettably, the numbers of men and women attending churches was not recorded separately. It has to be assumed, though no definite evidence has come to light, that women of Salisbury took their places in the pews of the

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<sup>70</sup> Mary Nicols Travel Journal Vol X Wednesday September 13 1854. Her comment is perhaps a little surprising, as why should he not ‘acquit himself well’? Lambert (1815 – 1892) became well known as a public servant, from the 1860s to 1880s. Amongst many posts, he was permanent secretary of the Local Government Board from 1871 to 1882. Lambert was also a gifted musician, especially interested in medieval church music – perhaps stemming from his life in Salisbury. ODNB online

<sup>71</sup> Moore G A, *Brown Street Baptist Church Salisbury*, 1955 p 37

<sup>72</sup> Chandler J, *Endless Street*, Salisbury 1983 p 204 – 9, 311 note 40. An additional enquiry took place at the same time as the 1851 census. On 30 March church officials were asked to complete a return stating the capacity of places used for worship, and the number of services and attendances. Cathedrals were not included in the Religious Census.

<sup>73</sup> Elliott J, ‘It’s all a question of numbers: Salisbury and the Religious Census of 1851’, 2006 *Sarum Chronicle* 6. The comparable figure for England and Wales was 59.25%, for Wiltshire as a whole 85.6%, for Exeter 84.5%, Wells 54.8% and Winchester 52.1%. Salisbury was ranked 16<sup>th</sup> using unadjusted figures. The detailed returns must be used with caution – most of the Salisbury counts ended with zero, often two zeros, and there were contemporary and modern concerns over the process of adjustment to deal with multiple attendance, and to account for some part of the population being *unable* (by age or ill-health for example) to attend.

<sup>74</sup> The parish churches range from 77% at St Martins to 30 % at St Thomas’s, and the non-conformists averaged only 28% (my calculations on data given op cit p 4 – 5).

city's churches and chapels, and were significant members of the local congregations.<sup>75</sup> They were publicly committed to many philanthropic organizations associated with Salisbury's churches, as we shall see in chapter 5.

Attendance at services was one of the main ways that people came into contact with the work of the churches. The nature, frequency and timing of services varied with denomination, and with prevailing ideas often depending on the personalities in authority at the time. Bishop Denison, for example, who moved to Salisbury from Oxford in 1837 'shared much of the outlook' of the early tractarians.<sup>76</sup> He urged the clergy of the diocese to hold more services; he himself always preached in a Salisbury church whenever he was in the city on a Sunday. St Thomas's was the only church in the city to hold an evening service in 1851. W K Hamilton succeeded Denison as bishop in 1854, also in sympathy with the Oxford Movement, and in 1861 he preached the first sermon to the nave of the cathedral in more than 80 years.<sup>77</sup> George Moberly took over in 1869 and 'maintained the high church continuity'.<sup>78</sup>

There seemed to be adequate accommodation for worshippers in 1851, but church buildings in the diocese, and particularly in the city had earlier been in a parlous state. A Church Building Association had been established in the 1830s, and provided over 700 grants for building and restoration in the diocese in the course of the century.

Archdeacon Lear, reminiscing back over eighty years from 1910 wrote that all the parish churches were 'miserably fitted', and he commended the restoration and refitting that was carried out in the middle decades.<sup>79</sup>

Although it was a period of increasingly diverse religious affiliations, in Salisbury there was some evidence of both discord and harmony. In the 1820s there had been serious anti-Catholic riots at the time the Catholic Emancipation Bill was going through Parliament, but by the middle of the century the new St Osmund's church, designed by

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<sup>75</sup> As, for example, Rosemary O'Day found in London at the end of the century: 'Without women, some churches would have had no congregation to speak and all would have had even sparser congregations than they in fact had'. Englander D and O'Day R, (eds) *Retrieved riches: social investigation in Britain 1840-1914*, p 340

<sup>76</sup> VCH 3 p 59. See also RCHM, 1993 page 35 for a succinct summary of developments at the cathedral in the nineteenth century.

<sup>77</sup> There was no evening service in the cathedral until 1915.

<sup>78</sup> VCH 3 p 71

<sup>79</sup> Lear F, 'Reminiscences of Eighty Years', *Salisbury Diocesan Gazette* July, August and September 1910

Pugin, was open for worship and Catholics were generally accepted in the city. However, there was a brief outburst of intolerance in November 1850, when the bonfire night celebrations were accompanied by a procession led by masked torchbearers carrying effigies of the Pope, Cardinal Wiseman and twelve catholic bishops, pictured by the *Illustrated London News*. Despite unease over the new catholic dioceses and Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, this reaction was untypical of local feeling. One correspondent to the *Salisbury Journal* expressed 'painful regret at last night's demonstration'.<sup>80</sup> Less than ten years later, in January 1860 the mood was very different. A Meeting for United Prayer was 'so numerously attended' that additional rooms had to be opened; 'the greatest order prevailed' and further meetings were planned.<sup>81</sup> At the same time it was announced that the committee of the Salisbury YMCA had given the use of their rooms everyday from 12 to two o'clock 'to the Christian public of all denominations for prayer meetings'.<sup>82</sup>

Members of the clergy were prominent in society both because of their local parish responsibilities and because of the presence of the cathedral as the centre of the diocese. As an institution the cathedral was an important source of employment in the nineteenth century, and thus of spending power for the local economy, as was the official community which surrounded it. High standards of education and cultural provision, of philanthropy and moral behaviour were demanded and demonstrated. There were interconnections between the established church, the landed families in the region, and those actively engaged in politics. Either the Bishop or the Dean or both were in practice, if not formally, *ex officio* members of most organisations in the area, and their wives were similarly involved with equivalent women's and ladies' groups. There was some correspondence in the local paper requesting a religious element to the opening ceremony for the 1852 exhibition, drawing comparisons with the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Crystal Palace event, but this did not happen in Salisbury where the Mayor did the honours. The Bishop and Mrs Denison were among the crowds who attended on the final day for the closing entertainment.

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<sup>80</sup> Newman R, 'Anti-papal demonstration at Salisbury', Wiltshire Local History Forum *Newsletter* No 57 January 2004 p 11 - 12

<sup>81</sup> *SJ* 21 January 1860 p 5

<sup>82</sup> *SJ* 14 January 1860 p 5



Political as well as economic and religious interests were interwoven in Salisbury. The city was fortunate in having amongst its 19<sup>th</sup> century representatives at Westminster men who were associated in some way with the locality, if not the city itself, and who took an interest in the life of the city. The constituency had two MPs until 1884; for most of this time they were either both Whig/ Liberal or one Liberal and one Conservative.<sup>83</sup> From the mid 1880s there has been a continuous period of Conservative representation except for the Liberal heyday of 1906-10. These MPs were elected by a growing proportion of the citizens. Instead of the 58 council members who had made the decision up to that time, following the Reform Act of 1832, the electorate was 575 (from a population of 9,876, just under 6%).<sup>84</sup> Both the pro-reform candidates were returned at the subsequent general election, one being William Bird Brodie, the owner and editor of the *Salisbury Journal*. William Chaplin was MP for ten years from 1847; local opinion held that he owed his seat to his position as Chairman of the South-Western Railway – expectations that were fulfilled when a contract for new trucks and wagons went to Salisbury iron-founder Thomas Wolferson.<sup>85</sup> Connection to local landowning families or to the diocese could also be the source of a parliamentary seat - Wyndham, Bouverie, Hussey and Hamilton came into this category, as did Buckley though he had other interests too. Edward Buckley was Liberal MP from 1853 to 1865, a Guards officer and son-in-law to the 3rd Earl of Radnor. He was also the founder, President and ‘driving force’ of the Literary and Scientific Institute in Salisbury and he sat on the committee of the Exhibition, the Infirmary and the Museum.<sup>86</sup>

At the other end of the social scale the city’s paupers were supported by charities, the oldest established as long ago as the late 14<sup>th</sup> century by Agnes Bottenham, reputed by local legend to have been an inn and brothel keeper who founded Trinity Hospital as an act of penance. New bequests for the poor were still being made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Thomas Brown, a currier by trade, established an almshouse trust in 1857, consisting of seven cottages and an endowment of £3,400. William Botley, from the family of master

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<sup>83</sup> An interesting mathematical exercise has been performed to demonstrate how the votes were distributed in 1874, revealing the power of local association over party loyalty. Ivor Slocombe in *Wiltshire Local History Forum Newsletter*, May 2001

<sup>84</sup> The borough electorate approximately doubled after the 1867 Reform Act. In 1884 the Reform Act reduced Salisbury’s representation to one member but made no change to the franchise. VCH 6 p 123

<sup>85</sup> *ibid*

<sup>86</sup> Little M, *A History of Libraries in Salisbury 1850-1922*, 1981 appendix of biographies [no page numbers]

cutlers, gave £1,500 in 1897 to provide weekly pensions for six widows.<sup>87</sup> Thus the tradition of benevolence was maintained. Early charities continued to provide support for the deserving citizenry through the centuries, and were joined by others as time passed.<sup>88</sup>

An alternative, less desirable, source of help was the workhouse; in 1851 63 female and 81 male paupers were enumerated in the City Poor House in Crane Street. Only 130 people were classified as paupers, or receiving alms, or otherwise supported by the community in the 1851 census, but another 115 had no stated occupation or condition so may also have been in need, perhaps dependent upon members of their family. It is also possible that among the people labelled 'annuitant' were recipients of very small sums of money; some indeed were resident in less wholesome parts of the city.

'[T]o a casual observer ... the City of Salisbury presents a satisfactory ... an enviable appearance of cleanliness and salubrity'.<sup>89</sup> However, the city was more densely populated than some large industrial towns, and its high average death rate of 28 per thousand was causing property owners to worry about declining values.<sup>90</sup> Visitors complained about the state of Salisbury's open water channels which ran through every street and gave the city the dubious title of the 'Venice of England'. By the 1840s these had become little more than open sewers. Responsibility for drainage of the city's streets lay with the directors of highways, the council in another guise, but they had few resources and little technical knowledge. Also, their powers did not go beyond the street frontages where owners paid highway rates. In other areas, especially the enclosed courts inside the chequers, people were living in dismal conditions. One example was Perman's Yard off Catherine Street:

a narrow court containing 10 houses with upwards of 50 inhabitants; with a blacksmith's forge at the end. One pump adjoining the blacksmith's forge and within a thatched outhouse is a double open privy, the only accommodation of the kind in the place and which it was

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<sup>87</sup> *Caring*, p 71 and 75

<sup>88</sup> A recent detailed study of a charity in Aylesbury throws light on the response of similar organizations to changing conditions. Hanley H, *Apprenticing in a Market Town, The story of William Harding's Charity, Aylesbury 1719-2000*, Chichester 2005 especially chapter 9. Although Aylesbury was a smaller town than Salisbury in the mid-nineteenth century, the range of trades to which the charity sent children as apprentices suggests a similar economy.

<sup>89</sup> Summary of report on drainage by Mr Makinson, *SJ* 5 June 1852 p 2

<sup>90</sup> Rammell T W, *Report to the General Board of Health on a Preliminary Inquiry into the Sewerage, Drainage and Supply of Water and the Sanitary Conditions of the Inhabitants of the City and Borough of Salisbury in the County of Wilts*, 1851

stated frequently overflows after rain into the open drain running down the midst of the court.<sup>91</sup>

In 1849 Salisbury suffered a cholera epidemic during which 192 people died in just under two months. Although there was not yet any scientific understanding of the causes of cholera, the city's Dr Andrew Middleton argued forcefully for improvements to water supply, drainage and sewerage. He faced a wall of property-owning rate-paying vested interests of councillors.<sup>92</sup> But conditions were so bad that in 1851 Dr Thomas Rammell, a Board of Health inspector, was sent to Salisbury and his report endorsed Middleton's ideas. As a result of Rammell's report by 1860 the water channels were filled in, deep sewers dug, cemeteries established away from the city centre, and a new waterworks constructed. The death rate fell dramatically, and on this front too Salisbury could acknowledge progress and improvement. Achievements such as this were used to promote the interests of the city: in 1857 a guidebook commented that, 'when the house drainage is completed' 'Salisbury will be one of the best drained towns in the kingdom'.<sup>93</sup>

Concern for the welfare of poorer citizens varied as economic fluctuations and the consequences of adverse weather conditions limited the opportunities for casual employment; from time to time new initiatives were taken to ameliorate their living conditions. For example, in 1855 a public meeting was held which resolved that 'a Soup Kitchen be established on a permanent basis in this city for the alleviation of the sufferings of the poor during the severity of the present and succeeding winters'.<sup>94</sup> Mr and Mrs Sawkins were appointed to do the cooking and live in the upper part of the house, rent free while the kitchen was open, and pay one shilling per week rent for the rest of the year.

Formal institutions, mainly concerned with education and welfare, provided support for various groups within the general population of Salisbury. They also created opportunities for women to work, either as a voluntary contribution to society or in a professional capacity.<sup>95</sup> Their nineteenth century forms were part of Salisbury's long tradition of both educational provision and protection of the needy that can be traced

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<sup>91</sup> *ibid*

<sup>92</sup> Chandler, 1983 p 227 - 231

<sup>93</sup> Brown's *Stranger's Handbook*, 1857 p 46

<sup>94</sup> Minutes of the Soup Kitchen Committee WSRO G23/119/8

<sup>95</sup> See chapters 4 and 5

back to the very beginnings of the city itself. The foundation of the Hospital of St Nicholas is associated with Bishop Poore who was responsible for the creation of New Sarum in the early thirteenth century, and De Vaux College was founded by Bishop Giles de Bridport in 1261-2 for twenty 'poor, needy, honourable and teachable scholars'.<sup>96</sup> The former supported both men and women, but there is no evidence that the students at De Vaux College were other than young men. It is unlikely that the extraordinary presence of a female scholar in the city would have gone unrecorded.

The City Workhouse mentioned above catered for the needy, but attracted increasing criticism. Rammell's 1851 report described it as 'unsuitable'. A particular scandal was the death of nine year old Louisa Garrett in 1856 when she was left in a sulphur bath 'to cure the itch' without supervision<sup>97</sup>. In 1867 the city Poor Law Union amalgamated with the Alderbury Union which covered the Close and 21 neighbouring parishes, and a larger building was constructed on the Alderbury Union workhouse site on the outskirts of the city. Conditions and facilities for both inmates and staff were much improved, in terms of food, clothing, regimes, space, and activities, but the stigma of the workhouse continued into the twentieth century.

The Infirmary admitted its first patients in 1767. The building still proudly proclaims 'supported by voluntary contributions'. Its records follow developments in health care, especially advances in surgery once antiseptics and anaesthesia were understood. The nursing staff dealt with epidemics and with floods, fleas and rats. From its earliest days the Infirmary provided training for nurses, and for pupils and apprentices of the physicians and surgeons on the staff. Doctors who attended patients there also worked as general practitioners in the city, and fulfilled other roles such as physician to the workhouse, surgeon to the Salisbury Provident Dispensary, or Medical Visitor to the Asylum. In the course of the nineteenth century, as will be considered in Chapter 4, the job of Matron at the Infirmary was transformed from that of housekeeper into a professional medical position.

In 1831 the Wilts Female Penitentiary Association acquired De Vaux Lodge, just outside the Harnham Gate to the Close as 'an asylum to that unhappy class of our fellow

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<sup>96</sup> Newman and Howells, 2001 p 16

<sup>97</sup> op cit p 78

creatures whose melancholy situation necessarily renders them outcasts of society'.<sup>98</sup> Twenty years later they moved to a larger building in St Martin's Church Street, renamed St Martin's Home, and in 1871 it became the Salisbury Diocesan House of Mercy for Reclaiming the Fallen. Here young women from all over the country who had been gaining a living from prostitution were removed from society and 'rescued'.<sup>99</sup>

Later in the century, women who chose to live in a community could join the Salisbury Diocesan Deaconesses Institution which combined a religious life with practical work. The deaconesses were responsible for St Michael's Home for Friendless Girls, a 'shelter and training' home for girls at risk of sinking to the level of the inmates in the House of Mercy. In the 1860s there was a Roman Catholic industrial school where poor girls could be taught a trade. Emily Beckingsale established a House of Industry for orphan girls in 1857, with similar objectives.<sup>100</sup>

Slater's *Directory* of 1852 listed twenty-nine 'Academies and public schools'. Those named included long-established organizations like the Free Grammar School, voluntary schools such as the National School in St Martin's Church Street, and many others run by private individuals like the Miss Saunders. Educational provision in the nineteenth century varied from place to place and depended both on wealth and on religious affiliation. Classes for the poor often began as Sunday schools, and each of the three city parishes established a Church of England Sunday School in the early decades of the century. The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church opened the first voluntary day school in Salisbury in 1812, and others followed so that by 1851 there were eight public day schools catering for over 900 children.<sup>101</sup> Teachers for these voluntary schools were trained in the Training College in the Close. Established by the diocese in 1841 to supply young women for church elementary schools, the college taught all the subjects they would be required to teach and sent them on teaching practice into local schools.

The Literary and Scientific Institution in Salisbury provided educational opportunities for adults, but was not catering for a working class audience. The attempt to run a

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<sup>98</sup> *SJ* 26 December 1831 p 4

<sup>99</sup> Elliott J, "Saved to Serve" Fallen Women in Salisbury', *Sarum Chronicle* No 3 2003 p 45

<sup>100</sup> These institutions are discussed in the context of women's activities in more detail in chapters 4 and 5

<sup>101</sup> Chandler, 1983 p 187

Mechanics Institute here failed through lack of support, together with ineffective management which contributed to the eventual closure of the Institution itself.<sup>102</sup> But the original promoters had an optimistic, inclusive, view of the Institution's potential membership – manual workers, shopkeepers and their assistants, business and professional people, exactly the spectrum who *did* contribute to the 1852 Exhibition.

Many of these institutions had an impressive physical presence in the city. Buildings that housed the Infirmary, the workhouse, the two asylums, the gaol, the penitentiary, and the colleges, together with the Assembly Rooms, the police station, 'fire engine station' and the Council House all symbolised the importance of the organizations within their walls. The new Poultry Cross (1854), the Market House (1859), Wilts and Dorset Banking Company's headquarters (1869), the Literary & Scientific Institution (1871), Richardson's Wine Vaults (1874) extended into the County Hotel (1893), and clock tower erected by Dr John Roberts as a memorial to his wife (1892) all joined the streetscape in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century. Salisbury's medieval road layout provided prominent corner locations, sweeping frontages, and straight vistas that were exploited by builders. As a guidebook commented:

A disposition to modernize the houses is of late years generally observable. This is more especially the case with regard to the shops, in the improvement of which the citizens display a spirit of commendable rivalry.<sup>103</sup>

Citizens who walked the streets in the later nineteenth century could admire the newly developed public buildings as well as attractive shop fronts and imposing business facades indicative of a successful community. They represented the secular and commercial character of the city in visual competition with the Close.

### **Salisbury's changing economy**

Local satisfaction in the success of the exhibition was expressed warmly and at length, and spilled over into explicit confidence that Salisbury was finding a new identity for itself, which had been felt to be lacking in recent times. Cutlery and other metal work, tobacco pipes, brushes, leather products, furniture, rope and twine, printing and

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<sup>102</sup> Little, 1981

<sup>103</sup> Brown's *Stranger's Handbook*, 1857 p 73

bookbinding, and many types of clothing were amongst the products admired by the visitors who crowded into the Council House in October 1852.

This variety was in contrast to the dominance of woollen cloth manufacture in which Salisbury achieved pre-eminence in earlier times. In the fifteenth century, the city was ranked perhaps fifth in the country, with over 60% of its population engaged in the production of textiles. Livery for Winchester College servants and the hoods of London prostitutes were made of the striped rays in which Salisbury specialized. The largest part of the inland trade from Southampton came to Salisbury at that time. Woad was the chief commodity, with madder and alum, all important for dyeing cloth, while deliveries of wine and spices indicate the wealth of the recipients.<sup>104</sup>

Changes in the early modern period in the national textile industry affected Salisbury's position as a major player. Some manufacturers here did change their product to try to enter the market for undyed broadcloth, but this aggravated the vulnerability of the local economy to fluctuations in global trade. Salisbury continued to produce woollen cloth, beginning to make flannel around 1680, with some success during the eighteenth century. Henry Hatcher, teacher and historian of Salisbury, recounted an anecdote of George III demanding to be sent some fabric after seeing the Wiltshire MP Henry Wyndham wearing a striking dark striped coat of 'a cloth made at Salisbury'.

'This was done: the article became fashionable; orders poured in, till every place in the city which could be rented to hold a loom was furnished with one of those useful machines'.<sup>105</sup>

But cloth production here eventually failed to compete with the western districts of Wiltshire, with East Anglia and with Yorkshire where the industry was modernizing towards powered factory production.<sup>106</sup> Mechanisation did take place in Salisbury, but most of the evidence comes from factory sales in the early nineteenth century when the producers were giving up the struggle to challenge more efficient and large scale enterprises elsewhere. Three carding engines and nine spinning jennies were auctioned in June 1808, and a bargain steam engine offered for sale in 1812.<sup>107</sup> A combination of inflexible, old fashioned organization in a pre-industrial urban setting and a blinkered

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<sup>104</sup> Newman and Howells, 2001 p 24

<sup>105</sup> Hatcher H, *Old and New Sarum or Salisbury*, 1843 p 649

<sup>106</sup> Rogers K, *Warp and Weft: the story of the Somerset and Wilts woollen industry*, Buckingham 1986 p 39

<sup>107</sup> Chandler, 1983 p 92

concentration on a few specialized products forced the city to accept that its economic future lay elsewhere; hence the concern which underlay the debate about the exhibition.

Diversification permitted the continuance of some traditional trades, on a small scale, for which Salisbury had an established reputation, alongside the exploitation of new opportunities. One of the former was the manufacture of cutlery. Henry Hatcher quoted an eighteenth century *Bath Guide*:

Let Bristol for commerce and dirt be renowned  
At Sal'sbury let pen-knives and scissors be ground

and he continued '[t]he city may still justly boast of its superiority in the fabric of pen-knives, scissors and razors' though by the time he was writing it was a small, high quality, specialist trade.<sup>108</sup> Slater's 1852 *Directory* listed seven cutlers, two of them women. Jane Botley, aged 71 in 1851, was 'cutler, jeweller and silversmith, employing 2 men' who had a significant reputation, recognised by her taking apprentices from a distance. Her daughter, also Jane, followed in her footsteps.

Retail trade, centred on the market, was important throughout Salisbury's history. By the nineteenth century the main streets of the city were lined with shops making available both daily necessities and luxury goods to their customers, some made locally and others imported. Slater's *Directory* of 1852 described the city as 'supplying the neighbouring country and small towns with shop commodities'. Proof provided by the exhibition that quality and choice were to hand was reinforced by the frequently heard sales-pitch that 'Mrs Wood's Show Room will be open ... with the most elegant designs for the season, having carefully selected them from the finest Parisian and London houses'.<sup>109</sup> Access to the latest fashions from the metropolis and further afield attracted customers. In the High Street, a central axis in the city linking St Thomas's Square and the Close, in 1851 were to be found a grocer and tea dealer, a linen and woollen draper, a cabinet maker and a dealer in Berlin fancy goods. Further along, adjoining each other, were a boot and shoe maker, an upholsterer, a brushmaker, a hairdresser, a bookseller and a cheese and bacon factor. Mr Pinch, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, was mesmerized by the jewellers 'with all the treasures of the earth displayed therein' and the bookshops

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<sup>108</sup> Hatcher, 1843 p 580

<sup>109</sup> *SJ* 7 April 1860 p 5



‘...all those rows on rows of volumes, neatly ranged within – what happiness did they suggest!’<sup>110</sup>

Many of these shops were family businesses, which combined production and retail sales; some also employed other staff, especially as trainees. The grocer mentioned above, for example, had his brother as ‘grocer’s shopman’ together with a 16 year old apprentice. Mary Ann Forder was both assistant and wife to the boot and shoe maker. Mrs Dawkins, a milliner and mantua maker, employed three adult assistants and five apprentices in her business, none of whom was a member of her family. ‘Shopwoman’ was a not uncommon designation.<sup>111</sup>

The expansion of the service sector created opportunities for women to be active in the commercial life of Salisbury. As entrepreneurs and employees, as apprentices and assistants, at different stages in their lives, women were visible in many parts of the local economy.

### **Salisbury and its region**

Customers for Salisbury shops came from the town population and from the surrounding villages. The city was establishing itself as a regional service centre for an extensive agricultural hinterland with a population whose spending power could benefit the city businesses: ‘In Wiltshire the south-east was chiefly in large farms of 800 to 5,000 acres, with farmers generally of a “superior class” ... progressive methods were moderately represented in Dorset and Wiltshire during the period of high farming (1840-1880) ...’.<sup>112</sup> W H Hudson, writing in 1910, described it as ‘the great market and emporium and place of all delights for all the great Plain’.<sup>113</sup> It was the largest town for an area of at least twenty miles around. Outside that boundary were Marlborough, Devizes, Warminster, Shaftesbury, and Blandford to the north and west, and Christchurch, Southampton, Winchester and Andover to the south and east. Within

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<sup>110</sup> Dickens C, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, first published 1843-4, 1994 edn ch 5 p 78-9

<sup>111</sup> The importance of this role does not come over clearly in the summary tables of the 1851 Census Report. The classification system used there allocates individuals to the raw materials they are employed using, rather than their function (‘other workers and dealers in silk’ for example).

<sup>112</sup> Stephens W B, *Education, Literacy and Society 1830-1870: the geography of diversity in provincial England*, Manchester 1987 p 209, 210

<sup>113</sup> Hudson W H, *A Shepherd’s Life*, first published 1910, 1979 edn p 23. The following pages describe beautifully the importance of the market to the surrounding villages.

twenty miles were smaller towns and large villages, which met short-term and local needs but none was able to supply the specialist services of a substantial urban centre.<sup>114</sup> Communities of different sizes functioned as

...centres at which men, women and children can assemble weekly (villages). An arrangement of villages around other centres at which men (*sic*) can meet weekly and return home in a day (market towns) ... these centres again separated by wide intervals round other centres where the heads of the chief families can readily congregate periodically (county towns) ...

according to the Census Report in 1851.<sup>115</sup> Salisbury performed as both a market and county town in this schema, being a focus for forming and sustaining civic and personal relationships as well as a market for exchange of goods and services. 815 towns 'of various magnitudes' were identified in Great Britain, grouped around 87 county towns. Though not technically the county town in the modern sense Salisbury was a Wiltshire assize town (the other was Devizes) and so received the legal, commercial and social attention associated with those periodical visitations.<sup>116</sup> The population of 11,657 for the borough in 1851 placed Salisbury 77<sup>th</sup> out of nearly 200 places designated by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. Kendal, Stafford, Bedford, Barnstaple, Newark and Tiverton were of comparable size.<sup>117</sup>

One of the striking features of the data revealed in 1851 was the rate of growth of some urban areas. The Census Report contained some calculations analysing the links between economic function, starting size and expansion. Salisbury was considered a 'county town without any considerable extraneous employment' ie no additional specialized economic characteristic – mining or a seaport for example. Along with Winchester, Stafford, Hereford, Aylesbury, Bodmin and a dozen others, their average population increased by 72% in the previous 50 years, whereas larger towns had grown by 189%.<sup>118</sup> Fifty years earlier there had been 7,600 people living in Salisbury; by 1901 the total was over 17,000 and would nearly double again in the next half-century. This was indeed a relatively gentle rate of growth for the nineteenth century, but not too different from the experience of similar types of town. The Census Report looked

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<sup>114</sup> See p 276

<sup>115</sup> 1851 Census Report Vol 1 p xiv

<sup>116</sup> Trowbridge officially became the county town of Wiltshire after much debate and some time of itinerancy for the new county council formed in 1888.

<sup>117</sup> 1851 Census Report Vol 1 p lxviii

<sup>118</sup> op cit p xlvi-xlviii

backwards for its comparisons. Another view can be taken from the beginning of the century, comparing towns with populations between 7,000 and 8,000 in 1801. Southampton, Brighton, Maidstone, and Gloucester were among those that expanded much faster, for their own economic and administrative reasons. Others such as Hereford, Bury St Edmunds and Durham – cathedral cities and county towns – showed much the same pattern of growth as Salisbury.<sup>119</sup>

Salisbury's economy and that of the region were interdependent. Agricultural raw materials were used by the leather, brewing and butchery trades. Mrs Woodcock, for example, at Quidhampton Mill supplied bone dust to farmers, recycling the meat processors' waste products as calcium phosphate slow-release fertilizer. Many of the villages had their own blacksmiths, but more specialist metalworkers such as toolmakers, who evolved into agricultural engineers later in the century, were based in the city. So too were the professional services needed by landowners and farmers banks, surveyors and lawyers looked after the interests of both rural and urban clients, and within the city were concerned with corporation and diocesan affairs as well as commercial and private property.

The Census Report's comment that:

town and country are bound together, not only by the intercourse of commerce and the interchange of intelligence but by a thousand ties of blood and affection

could have been written especially for Salisbury. 52% of the population in 1851 had been born in the city. Of the 48% born elsewhere, 76% came from other parts of Wiltshire or the neighbouring counties of Hampshire and Dorset.<sup>120</sup> This pattern can be seen amongst the domestic servants in the large establishments in the Close where it was not uncommon for teenage girls to come from the same or nearby villages. In James Hussey's household in 1851, for example, a nurse, a housemaid and a footboy all came from the same area of Dorset, and the Cathedral School employed sisters Elizabeth and Caroline Watts from Rockbourne just over the border in Hampshire.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Chandler, 1983 p 44 - 45

<sup>120</sup> 1851 Census Report p 409

<sup>121</sup> The remaining 12% of the total population originally from further afield include those who apparently came together. An example, which also demonstrated a strong bond between employer and employees, was the household at the Deanery. The Dean's wife and daughter were both born in Yorkshire, as were their housekeeper, a housemaid and a male house servant.

Discussing the apparent conclusion of the 1851 census that the mid-century saw the majority of the country's population changing from rural to urban, F M L Thompson warns against the 'imperfect means for classifying areas as either rural or urban' used by the census authorities.<sup>122</sup> Salisbury can be used in two ways to confirm his assertion that 'no such sharp line existed in reality' between town and country. Within the city enumerators' districts people recorded distinctly 'rural' occupations, as well as marginal ones such as wagoner, horsekeeper, and gardener. In Milford Street, for example, there were five people designated 'farm labourer', and one married couple both working as a 'chaff hay trusser'. Four more agricultural labourers lived in Culver Street nearby. Lewis Weeks a farmer of 303 acres employing 12 labourers lived in Brown Street, not at all near the edge of the built-up area. In Exeter Street, on the outskirts, was to be found the family of James Porton, shepherd. His wife and four daughters were all recorded as 'agricultural labourers' and his son 'shepherd's boy'.

Secondly, '[i]n the mid-nineteenth century the administratively urban areas ... understated the size of urban populations because suburbs and satellites lay beyond the city limits'.<sup>123</sup> As Salisbury's population grew and the city's built-up area expanded places such as Fisherton, Bemerton, Harnham and Milford which had previously been independent communities became absorbed, though no formal extension of the city's boundaries was made between 1835 and 1904.<sup>124</sup> Originally these were agricultural villages. Then particularly Fisherton and Harnham supplied services to travellers using main roads into the city, and by the nineteenth century they became increasingly residential dormitory suburbs. Fisherton also acquired the gasworks, the railway station and the prison – key elements of the 'urban' identity of Salisbury. The pattern of growth was determined by the availability and suitability of building land and by the demand for different types of housing. Elegant, spacious houses with large grounds were constructed on the roads approaching the city from the west and north in the first half of the nineteenth century; suburban villas followed in the middle decades, together with railway workers' cottages in Milford and Fisherton. In the last quarter of the century

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<sup>122</sup> Thompson F ML, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750 – 1950*, Vol 1 Cambridge 1990 p 3

<sup>123</sup> op cit p 6. I have omitted 'particularly of the largest and most rapidly growing towns'. Local experience suggested that such features applied to smaller and less rapidly growing towns too.

<sup>124</sup> Although now the original village foci are surrounded by continuous building their names have not been lost and all retain a strong local identity in terms of their parish church, WI group or local history society.

lower-middle class terraces appeared between the medieval city centre and the outer suburbs.<sup>125</sup>

## Communications

One of the novelties at the 1852 Salisbury exhibition was the demonstration of the electric telegraph, conveying messages from room to room. In the previous couple of years this development had expanded dramatically, in the UK as well as across the Atlantic, so perhaps Salisbury was a little though not too far behind the times.<sup>126</sup> It was well understood that communications were vital to the relationship between Salisbury and its surrounding area. The importance of transport routes had always been appreciated. Old Sarum, one and a half miles to the north of and predecessor to the modern city, was on a junction of Roman roads.<sup>127</sup> New bridges were built with the planned medieval city of New Sarum as a deliberate strategy to concentrate trade in the market there, diverting it from Wilton to the west.

Most of the feeder communities in the nineteenth century were within walking distance and were served by local carriers, including Mrs Ridout and her donkeys who formed the 'Coombe Express' between Salisbury and the village of Coombe Bissett some four miles to the south west.<sup>128</sup> In 1839 at the peak of stage coach services, there were 59 scheduled coaches weekly to London, 40 to Southampton and 31 to Bath. Newer forms of transport that were having a dramatic effect on other towns and cities were not ignored. Earlier tentative plans for a canal to provide a navigable link to the sea were revived in 1792. Initially support for a Southampton and Salisbury Canal was lukewarm here, as alternative proposals were preferred (the Basingstoke Canal via Andover for example). However enthusiasm grew and generated dissention amongst the organizing committee over the relative influence of interest groups from the two towns, apparently based on resentment to the leading role taken by Thomas Ridding, a Southampton town clerk. Eventually, although almost all the canal was built, financial and technical problems prevented its successful operation.<sup>129</sup> Another scheme, which never left the drawing board, was for an iron railway running north along the Avon

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<sup>125</sup> See map p 275

<sup>126</sup> Standage T, *The Victorian Internet*, 1999 ch 4

<sup>127</sup> Newman and Howells, 2001 ch 1

<sup>128</sup> See p 278

<sup>129</sup> Welch E, *The Bankrupt Canal*, Southampton 1966

valley to join the prosperous Kennet and Avon Canal at Pewsey Wharf. There were Salisbury people who appreciated the importance of participating in transport developments even though these particular projects failed to come to fruition.<sup>130</sup>

Caution again prevailed, delaying the arrival of the first railway to Salisbury, from Southampton, until 1847. Intense competition between companies in the midst of 'railway mania' had not eased the negotiations. However, the decision made, the line was greeted with enthusiasm and its benefits exhaustively trumpeted:

'the facilities of railway communications would be found of singular advantage to all classes of society – equally to the commercial and agricultural interests, to the industrious classes and to the poor'.<sup>131</sup>

This benefit was made tangible when 50 tons of coal off the first freight train to arrive were distributed among the poor following the opening ceremony performed by Mr W J Chaplin, chairman of the London and South Western Railway who had been elected one of the city's MPs only two days before. Although much more speedy than the coach journey, travelling from London was still not straightforward. Mary Nichols came to Salisbury with her father in 1854 to attend the annual meeting of the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society:

My father and I left London by the South Western Railway at 1 o'clock for Salisbury. We had a safe and pleasant journey, except that the weather was unusually hot for the time of year and the sun rather annoyed us during the latter part of the way...At Bishopstoke we had to change carriages and we reached Salisbury at 4.55.<sup>132</sup>

A second station had to be constructed when the line to Warminster arrived as it was an offshoot of the Great Western Railway and therefore broad gauge. The railway to London, via Andover, was opened in 1857 and two years later Yeovil and then Exeter were connected. The arrival of the railway was seen as especially beneficial to agriculture. Exchanging goods and services between the local rural and urban economies was important to both, as has already been demonstrated. Replying to the toast 'Success to agriculture' at the dinner celebrating the opening of the railway in March 1857, Mr Fawcett said 'The agriculturalists of Wiltshire would thus find a

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<sup>130</sup> Due to a combination of caution, inadequate finance, lack of entrepreneurial spirit, competing interests, and bad luck. Chandler, 1983 p 131-2 and fns.

<sup>131</sup> *SJ* 6 March 1847 p 2

<sup>132</sup> Mary Nichols Travel Journal vol X Tuesday September 12 1854.

market for their produce and would receive in return those articles of which they stood most in need'.<sup>133</sup>

Amongst the numerous speakers on this auspicious occasion, William Fawcett was appropriate to represent the interests of the city to later generations. A northerner, he had come to Salisbury as a young man to work in the drapery trade. William married Mary Cooper, the daughter of a solicitor with firm Liberal opinions. He became involved with city politics and his mayoral year included the passing of the great Reform Act in 1832. A personal link between commerce and agriculture came when he took on the tenancy of the Home Farm on the Longford estate of the Earls of Radnor to the south of Salisbury. The family also demonstrated the interconnectedness of local and national interests. William's daughter, Sarah Maria (of whom more below) lived in Salisbury all her life, but travelled widely, and performed the duties of local secretary to the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations boards. One of his sons, also William, married a cousin of John Maynard Keynes' father and established the family brewery business in Salisbury. William junior's daughter-in-law Charlotte Lovibond came from another local brewery family, and became a director of The Tintometer on her father's death in 1918. Another son of William and Mary was Henry Fawcett, Postmaster General in Gladstone's government of 1880 and husband of Millicent Garrett Fawcett who became president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.<sup>134</sup>

By the middle of the nineteenth century improvements in agricultural production were already noticeable and contemporaries appreciated the multiplier effects of such developments. The railway would contribute by reducing the price of salt, 'so extensively used by agriculturalists' by 5s per ton. Like salt, coal was a heavy bulky commodity which was expensive to transport by road; people appreciated the advantages of a cheaper method. This would assist increases in productivity in industries such as baking and brewing, though the use of coal other than for heat energy was limited. The gasworks in Salisbury opened in 1832, and the city's first electricity was generated by water-power in the late 1890s, converted to steam turbines in 1912.

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<sup>133</sup> *SJ* 2 May 1857 p 3

<sup>134</sup> See pages 36 and 205 - 7 for Sarah Maria Fawcett, and Keynes F A, *Gathering Up the Threads*, Cambridge 1950 p 48. To complete the family, the youngest child was Thomas Cooper Fawcett, a schoolmaster who died in the Fisherton asylum in 1891.

Railways spelled the demise of the coaching trades, but amongst the displays in the 1852 exhibition were ladies carriage shoes and a carriage shawl, a coach wheeler's axe and shave, and a set of phaeton wheels, alongside a working model of a railway locomotive engine. The older skills continued to be required as local carrier services were essential lifelines to village communities. However, by the late 1850s Salisbury was the focus of a busy railway network. The market and the business centre of the city were felt to be too far from the stations (at Milford and Fisherton) so in 1859 a short branch line was opened to a splendid new covered market house at the western end of the Market Place so that corn, cattle and cheese, but never passengers, could be brought in to the heart of the city.<sup>135</sup>

Without these communication links, both old and new, Salisbury could neither have served its agricultural hinterland nor have provided its citizens with the commodities their gradually increasing affluence demanded.

### **Salisbury's identity**

The achievement of the committee in organising the 1852 exhibition, and of manufacturers in preparing exhibits, in so short a time, was used to demonstrate that Salisbury was not backward and isolated. In regretting the lack of time available, 'the energy they have displayed ...will remove the more speedily the erroneous idea, which has been rather prevalent, that Salisbury is *slow*. We are convinced that Salisbury only requires opportunities to show itself on the alert in all matters of business and progress'.<sup>136</sup> The exhibition enabled the city to demonstrate that it was neither *slow* in getting things done nor *slow* in attitude and character. It might be geographically distant from areas of rapid industrialization, but it was not an isolated backwater, and its businesses were well aware of what was happening elsewhere in the country and beyond.

Public awareness of the danger that a southern provincial city might be seen as behind the times, and in need of bestirring itself to modern ideas was part of the discussion surrounding the exhibition; it would help 'to prove that there is a growing spirit of

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<sup>135</sup> Newman and Howells, 2001 p 94, also see p 263

<sup>136</sup> *SJ* 25 September 1852 p 3



enterprise in this locality'.<sup>137</sup> Readers of provincial newspapers such as the *Salisbury Journal* were aware of economic and industrial developments in other parts of the country as well as military and diplomatic events in Europe and around the Empire because it was common for such organs to carry a large proportion of national, and international, news. An editorial examined at length the relationship between the metropolis and the rest of the nation and declared that the time had come to 'commence the work of de-centralisation, to restore to the old provincial centres [such as Salisbury] something like their former importance in relation to the kingdom at large'.<sup>138</sup> Jose Harris has argued that 'the culture and philosophy of localism had enjoyed a tremendous resurgence in the 1840s and 1850s' which was maintained to the eve of the First World War.<sup>139</sup> The exhibition provided an opportunity for local consciousness in Salisbury to come to the fore. It was possible to have pride in a local identity at the same time as recognizing where that locality fitted in the broader national scheme.

Salisbury also demonstrated its knowledge of and interest in the outside world when there was something to commemorate. Salisbury was good at celebrations; in the nineteenth century these frequently took the form of a public dinner in the Market Square, often preceded by a procession through the streets, with decorated floats, music and fireworks. The city marked its enthusiastic support for the 1832 Reform Act that put an end to that rottenest of all rotten boroughs, Old Sarum. There was a vast bonfire in the city centre in 1855 after the fall of Sebastopol, and another dinner at the end of the Crimean War, and two more for Queen Victoria's jubilees.<sup>140</sup> For the meals men and women were catered separately; in 1897 women and children had a splendid tea in Victoria Park. The numbers of people who took part on these occasions suggest a common purpose which generated cohesion among the citizens, even though it was stimulated by a patriotic event.

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<sup>137</sup> op cit p 2

<sup>138</sup> *SJ* 9 October 1852 p 2

<sup>139</sup> Harris J, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870 – 1914*, Harmondsworth 1994 p 18. She wrote 'This intense and variegated local and provincial culture was still a major strand in British social life between 1870 and 1914'.

<sup>140</sup> Images of the Peace Festival held on 19 May 1856 survive as a lithograph by Walter Tiffin and as one of the earliest photographs. In both women can be seen enjoying the spectacle. Purvis B, *Salisbury the changing city*, Derby 2003 p 109

It has been said that nineteenth century Salisbury ‘grew sober, industrious and self-righteous’.<sup>141</sup> There were times when piety and solemnity came to the fore, appropriately so, and this impression was reinforced by the continuing tradition of philanthropy, respect for Christian values, and cautious approach to change. Paragons there may have been amongst the population, but not everyone was scrupulously law-abiding. The courts were busy and the gaol cells occupied. Indeed Charles Dickens, tongue in cheek, wrote in *Martin Chuzzlewit*

Mr Pinch had a shrewd notion that Salisbury was a very desperate sort of place; an exceedingly wild and dissipated city [where the streets] teemed with all kinds of mystery and bedevilment.<sup>142</sup>

That was an exaggeration, but there were common lodging houses ‘kept open for the reception and entertainment of vagrants and persons of the lowest description, of both sexes, where conduct the most demoralizing and indecent is exhibited to the evil example of all classes’.<sup>143</sup> The citizens were neither wicked, nor always as strait-laced as might be expected from outward appearances. They did know how to enjoy themselves, they supported theatres, concerts, libraries, Turkish baths, brothels, fairs and the races, as well as the grand special occasions.

Much of the discussion in this chapter presents Salisbury as a rather formal patchwork, each piece in its place, fitting neatly together in a predictable pattern. But it was becoming a more complex society as it sought a new identity in the transition from traditional to modern. This applied to the people, to the institutions, to thoughts and to processes. Although the city in the mid-nineteenth century was in most things still conservative and cautious, things were changing. As time passed, new ideas could be found there, from the latest millinery to support for women’s education and the franchise; from pioneer lady cyclists to the first Salvation Army Band; from the architecture of Pugin to new strains of dahlias. Women were in the midst of this increasingly complex society, from successful shopkeepers and teachers, to the woman whose working life was spent removing daisies from the grass in the Close. Constrained by the conventions that restricted what was possible, they did not challenge men’s

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<sup>141</sup> Burnett D, *Salisbury: the History of an English Cathedral City*, Tisbury 1978 p 84

<sup>142</sup> Dickens C, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, first published 1843-4, 1994 edn ch 5 p 65

<sup>143</sup> Copy of a memorial sent to the council by neighbours of a lodging house included in Rammell, 1851

hegemony in any radical way. But individuals were stimulated by the opportunities and made sure they were exploited.

## **Conclusion**

Salisbury's exhibition in 1852 brought together a large proportion of the population, as exhibitors or as visitors. This chapter has used that event as the framework for examining the city and its neighbourhood in the middle of the nineteenth century. And it has allowed an indication of some of the ways in which the local urban environment 'shaped, or contained, a distinctive social experience'.<sup>144</sup> Salisbury's economy and society have been outlined in order to provide a basis for the more detailed discussion of the roles of women which follows.

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<sup>144</sup> Thompson, 1990 p 2

## Chapter 3

### Salisbury's working women

*'buying and selling is good and necessary'*<sup>1</sup>

Women were central to the character and success of the economy of Victorian Salisbury. Retail trades, hospitality and other service industries typical of the increasingly diversified economic structure of the city, were exactly the location of women's contribution as producers and suppliers.<sup>2</sup> The opportunities for using their skills to earn a living presented by the changing commercial character of Salisbury were exploited by single women, by widows and by married women, working on their own and in family enterprises. One third of the women in the city in 1851 were recorded with an occupation, so it is likely that many more were, in practice, active in the local economy. Men continued to dominate some parts of that economy – manufacturing, transport and construction, but there were exceptions to this general picture, and both men and women were involved in shopkeeping and in the food and drink trades. Within each sector of the economy there were enterprises of varying size, from single individuals, to family groups, and employers with a dozen or more workers, though none was large by national standards.

The fortunes of these businesses changed over time as they were subject to both internal and external forces. Different trades were sensitive to seasonal fluctuations in the agricultural calendar, the legal and clerical year, and tourism. Over a longer period the impact of trade cycles was modified by the building of the railway in the 1840s and 1850s, an epidemic such as the serious visitation of cholera in 1849, or changes of government policy. Changes of ownership, relocation of premises, or adaptation of products could influence the prosperity of a particular enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup> Trollope A, *Doctor Thorne*, first published 1858, 1961 edn p 18

<sup>2</sup> Salisbury's economy in the nineteenth century diversified in response to the decline in the manufacture of woollen cloth that had been so dominant since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. See chapter 2 p 70 - 3

This chapter begins by examining the occupational structure of the city and its gender division of labour in the mid-nineteenth century. Secondly, it will look at the main categories of commercial activity for the wives, widows and single women who worked, both in aggregate terms, and by identifying some individuals and their circumstances. The penultimate section discusses some of the forces that had an impact on the success or failure of a woman's business, considering both factors within the enterprise and also those affecting it from outside. Continuity and change in patterns of women's employment through the second half of the nineteenth century are discussed in the final section, using an examination of the census enumerators' books for 1891. It will be argued that proprietorship of a small business provided a source of income for women at different stages in their lives, and in different family relationships. The rare surviving records in addition to the census, trade directories, and local newspapers provide opportunities to meet individuals in more personal detail.<sup>3</sup> This is only possible for a few women in nineteenth century Salisbury, but their experiences reveal the complexities that underlay the apparently humdrum and routine nature of provincial commerce. Such women were part of the pattern of daily life in the city. Occasional chances to link work and home throw light on their diverse experiences both in the domestic sphere and in the public economy.

### **Occupations in Salisbury**

In the middle of the nineteenth century both men and women were engaged in a wide variety of occupations. Salisbury was no longer a 'single industry' town as it had been in earlier centuries. 205 different named jobs for men were listed in the census report of 1851 and 84 for women.<sup>4</sup> Continuity was evident in the numbers involved in 'textile' trades, which included silk, hemp, flax, lace, net, straw and hair, as well as wool, and many people were now turning fabric into clothing, as specialised tailors, hatters, dressmakers, milliners, glovers, hosiers, staymakers, and mantua makers.

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<sup>3</sup> Benefits and hazards of the main sources – CEBs, directories and local newspapers - are discussed above (see p 20 - 33). Examples of their use for revealing the existence and experience of women in trade are examined in this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> Part of this higher number for men was a real greater diversity of jobs available to men. But other contributing factors were the ability of enumerators to recognise more degrees of specialisation within men's jobs, and the well known under recording of women's occupations in census returns. The total population of Salisbury was just over eleven and a half thousand.

Workers in leather, wood and metals, basket and rope makers, the diverse activities involved in building construction, and those providing transportation were predominantly men, though not exclusively so. The masculine character of these trades had been established through custom, family continuity, skills learned in formal apprenticeships and the associated regulation of a trade, and the requirements for physical strength. Women challenged this situation only in exceptional circumstances.

Metal working had a long history in Salisbury, represented by craft guilds from the fifteenth century, and over 160 men were classified in that category of work in 1851. Blacksmiths, whitesmiths, braziers, bellfounders, tin workers, and gold and silversmiths produced goods for personal consumption such as jewellery and cutlery, for the surrounding agricultural economy – horseshoes, plough shares and cartwheel rims, and for other industries, nails, needles, pots, fasteners, chains amongst many other objects. Another 30 plus men worked *with* metals, as watchmakers, gunsmiths, machine and toolmakers. These craftsmen operated in small workshops, either alone or with a small number of employees.

One exception to the male dominance in these trades was the Botley family, long-established as workers in precious metals. Two Jane Botleys, mother and daughter, were ‘cutlers, jewellers and silversmiths’, and in 1851 employed two men in their business. Mrs Botley retired from Botley’s Cutlery Manufactory in 1855, describing the stock as ‘a very large assortment of excellent cutlery, silver and plated goods, and jewellery etc etc’.<sup>5</sup> Their name long continued to have influence in the local economy: in 1879 ‘J Macklin (late Botley’s)’ advertised himself as the ‘only maker of Botley’s celebrated sheep foot knives’ – so they made practical, agricultural implements as well as jewellery.<sup>6</sup>

Numbers in trades related to building were larger: 113 carpenters and joiners, 145 bricklayers, 75 painters, plumbers and glaziers, worked with masons, plasterers, lathmakers and other workers in wood. More than 50 cabinetmakers and upholsterers provided the furnishings. These enterprises varied in size, many being individual

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<sup>5</sup> *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* [hereafter *SJ*] 17 February 1855 p 2. The suggestion in this sale advertisement was that the business was closing down. Mrs Botley died early in the following year. Her will, written in 1854 when the firm was certainly still functioning, does not mention the business.

<sup>6</sup> *SJ* 8 February 1879 p 5

workmen, others more substantial. For example, neighbours in Crane Street and the High Street were a master builder employing 6 men, and master bricklayer employing 7 men, and a master cabinet maker/ upholsterer employing 4 men. Building firms headed by women were very unusual but there were two examples in Salisbury in the second half of the nineteenth century, those of Mrs Bryant and Mrs Hale.<sup>7</sup>

In 1851 28 men worked on the railways in the city, 15 were 'postboys', 34 carriers, carters and draymen, and 10 others in 'road conveyance'. Almost 150 men, mostly boys aged under 20 years, were employed as porters and messengers. Most transport and communication, both old and new, required workers with physical strength to control horses, lift and carry goods, or drive early steam-powered locomotives, and people who could work away from home, for long hours, sometimes alone, and sometimes in potentially dangerous conditions. It was not, therefore, surprising to find few women in this industry. One exception was the local carrying trade, though there were still only small numbers of women involved. The middle decades of the nineteenth century were a prosperous time for local carriers, so there were increased opportunities in this business. They provided a service to link small settlements to larger ones. Country people needed to get to the shops and to the market for both buying and selling, and they needed to get to the railway station to go further afield. Several women carriers were listed in the directories of the 1840s and 1850s, serving both nearby and more lengthy routes. Rachel Rose carried to Southampton, Portsmouth and Godport, and Sarah Hutin to Bath and Bristol, while Jane Cove went to Amesbury and Eliza Ingram to Chilmark. When Sarah Hutin retired in January 1851 her competitor, Ford & Co, advertised 'we have increased our strength' on the Bristol route 'in order to afford additional facilities to the Trade of SALISBURY and Neighbourhood'.<sup>8</sup>

By 1865 the number of carriers serving Salisbury had trebled in forty years.<sup>9</sup> Mrs Ridout (or sometimes Rideout) and her donkey-drawn 'Coombe Express' were sufficiently unusual to merit an oil painting.<sup>10</sup> According to the 1867 *Directory* she left from the Shoulder of Mutton, and in the 1880s from the Haunch of Venison beside the Poultry Cross, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for the villages of Coombe

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<sup>7</sup> See p 118

<sup>8</sup> *SJ* 4 January 1851 p 2

<sup>9</sup> Chandler J, *Endless Street*, Salisbury 1983 p 144

<sup>10</sup> Painting by Frank Brooks c 1870 in Salisbury Museum. See p 278

Bissett and Homington, where she kept the village shop. At around the same time Mrs Williams ran a carrier service from the Woolpack to Farley, and Mrs Roberts from the White Horse to Durrington.<sup>11</sup> Mrs Ridout's motive power was unusual too, though perhaps a donkey was lighter to work for a woman. More typical was the horse and van operated by Mrs Dollery in Thomas Hardy's novel *The Woodlanders*. She had to adopt some unfeminine aspects of dress in pursuing her calling:

Mrs Dollery, having to hop up and down many times in the service of her passengers, wore, especially in windy weather, short leggings under her gown for modesty's sake; and instead of a bonnet a felt hat tied down with a handkerchief, to guard against an ear-ache to which she was frequently subject.<sup>12</sup>

Mrs Ridout, according to the painting, had a close bonnet and heavy outer cloak to protect her from the elements, but that is not to say there were no leggings beneath her skirt. They might, however, have been less necessary with a smaller donkey-scale van. All carriers worked 'in the service of their passengers', and an element of the feminine caring role can be identified in their 'running errands and delivering messages, offering lifts to those too young or old or ill to walk' as well as transporting luggage and produce.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from domestic service, women worked mainly in the production, sale and care of clothing, provision of food and drink, and other types of shopkeeping, and in caring roles such as nursing and education.<sup>14</sup> Milliners and dressmakers formed the largest single category, 347 in total (all ages) in 1851, 313 in 1861, and 249 (+ some under 20) in 1871. In addition there were staymakers, seamstresses, shirtmakers, tailors, and straw

<sup>11</sup> Mullins S, "And old Mrs Ridout and All': a study of Salisbury's county carriers', *Wiltshire Life* 2(1) 1978

<sup>12</sup> Hardy T, *The Woodlanders*, originally published 1887, 1971edn p 9

<sup>13</sup> Chandler, 1983 p 146

<sup>14</sup> **Females (aged over 20) with occupations: table of main categories**

(summarised from tables in relevant census reports)

	1851	1861	1871
Clothing	467	450	413
Laundry work	218	259	220
Food and drink	97	88	55
Education	85	114	69
Nursing	60	58	50
Textiles	66	37	11
Shops	26	25	33
Building, furniture	16	12	25
Metals, hardware	9	13	7



bonnet makers. Women worked in the leather trades making boots and shoes, sometimes identified with their own skill such as shoebinder, but more often as ‘shoemaker’s wife’ – 108 in 1851 and 100 in 1861. Nearly as many women worked at washing as sewing – 239 in 1851, 278 and 220 at the two subsequent censuses.

Given that an urban community by its very nature needed to purchase food to eat, it is to be expected that a town will contain a number of food processors and retailers.<sup>15</sup> In Salisbury foodstuffs were supplied by milksellers, butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers, bakers, confectioners and grocers. There were not more than 9 of any of these in 1851, with the exception of 10 confectioners. 14 other shopkeepers ran small general corner shops, staffed by different members of a family as available, and selling a range of day-to-day goods including basic foodstuffs. Michael Winstanley has commented on the increase in numbers of such shops, and the role they played in retail life, providing ‘a complementary service supplying the irregular, unstable but expanding working-class market’, often run by ‘widows and wives of labourers trying to eke out a living’.<sup>16</sup> In Salisbury the number of women ‘shopkeepers’ fell to five in 1861, and rose again to 11 in 1871, a not surprising variation given the flexible nature of this activity. In 1851 11 women were listed as innkeepers and 5 as lodging-house keepers. Both these categories provided an occupation where a woman could earn a living and have a home, so were appropriate for wives or widows with children. The demand for their services was important in a city with shops to be visited by commercial travellers and attractions to be visited by tourists.

Each of these areas of work also raises the use of the designation ‘wife of ...’ which applied to significant numbers of women: 42 ‘innkeeper’s wife, 15 ‘butcher’s wife’ and 7 ‘licensed victualler’s, beershop keeper’s wife’ in 1851. The enumerators’ instructions in the use of this phrase applied only to farmers, while from 1851 to 1881 other women ‘regularly employed from home, or at home, in any but domestic duties’ were to have their occupations specifically recorded.<sup>17</sup> Clearly ‘wife of’ was used much more widely than was originally officially intended, but it is not easy to interpret. As Edward Higgs

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<sup>15</sup> ‘perhaps the only economic characteristic which all towns had in common was that a majority of their economically active population was not engaged in tilling the fields’ Thompson FML, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750 – 1950*, Vol 1 Cambridge 1990 p 6

<sup>16</sup> Winstanley MJ, *The Shopkeeper’s World 1830-1914*, Manchester 1983 p 12 – 15. Note also p 13 on the difficulties of using directories as a source for these businesses.

<sup>17</sup> Higgs E A, *Clearer Sense of the Census*, 1996 p 98. See also chapter 1 p 21-2

has written '[t]he question arises as to whether these designations represent economically remunerative work, kin relationships, or multiple occupations ...'.<sup>18</sup>

Assumptions have to be made about the nature of the tasks in a particular occupation, the family structure, and the likelihood of a wife's active involvement. The wife of a butcher or innkeeper, tailor or tobacconist, without dependent children, was more likely to have been part of the trade than a surgeon's, or a horse dealer's wife, but any of these women could have performed administrative or clerical tasks for their husband.

There are similar difficulties where adult daughters were recorded in the same way: in 1851 widowed Ann Vivian, pastry cook, had five grown-up daughters all designated 'pastry cook's daughter'. It is unlikely that the household earnings from Ann's work alone could have maintained six women; on the other hand an enterprise generating sufficient trade to employ six cooks was a substantial business. More helpful to the historian was the way Mr and Mrs Sheppard's household was enumerated. Mr Sheppard was a grocer in Silver Street in 1851; there were eight children in the family and the two eldest daughters, Elizabeth, aged 21, and Sarah, aged 19, were designated 'grocer's assistant and daughter'. Here again the variation in detail provided by individual enumerators, based perhaps on their diligence and local knowledge, can help or hinder the interpretation of family working relationships.<sup>19</sup>

The two occupations of upholsterer and cabinet maker were listed jointly but there were probably more women upholsterers than cabinet makers because of the needle skills required. Together females following these trades numbered 11, 12 and 21 respectively in the three census years of 1851, 61 and 71. Women in Salisbury also made artificial flowers, pins, pipes, umbrellas and brushes, requiring various skills of manual dexterity, patience, consistency, artistic ability, strength in their hands and arms, and knowledge with experience.

Other occupations in which women were to be seen in significant numbers were education and nursing. Both these categories contained a variety of different types of employment, in terms of training, status and remuneration. In the census returns of

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> In this case I think the enumerator was Thomas Mott who lived in the High Street, so just around a corner from Silver Street. He was a cabinet maker and upholsterer employing four men, aged 32, with a wife and two young sons.

1851, 61 and 71 the numbers of women in education were 85, 114, 69 and in nursing 60, 58 and 50 respectively. Their experiences will be discussed in Chapter 4.

This pattern of women's occupations concentrated in particular areas of economic activity conformed to the accepted positions of women within society as 'serving' others. A large proportion of them were involved in commerce, and a general rule was that the taint of trade was not conducive to social respectability. For a woman it had a double penalty, not only was she undertaking paid work, but doing so in an openly visible way, as the grandfather of Mary Nichols, who visited Salisbury in 1854 (see chapter 2) wrote to his daughter in 1822 [t]here can be no reasonable objection to your collecting the Autographs of Persons ... provided it be made as a matter of amusement and not of business which would be incompatible with the duties of a Female'.<sup>20</sup> Despite such expressions of disapproval, this ideal of a woman's role was inaccessible to many. And the distinction was an over-simplification. In the real world of the nineteenth century, even among those with middle-class connections, aspirations and education, circumstances could conspire such that women needed to be actively involved in the public economy, either to earn a living for themselves or to contribute to their family's income. Death of a provider, small inherited assets, or other low income, led to many being in need of employment. This did not necessarily prevent them also being part of other public spheres in the city. As will be considered in later chapters, women from both trade and professional families were involved in social and philanthropic activities in Salisbury.

### **Working women and their families**

Firstly, a girl will make a better wife for having had such serious training. Secondly your daughter may not marry. It is your duty to provide for that possibility ... Thirdly, it may be years before your daughter finds a husband ... Fourthly, suppose the man she may love is poor, by her labour she can help to form their mutual home ... Fifthly, your daughter may be left to act as both father and mother to children dependent on her for daily bread.<sup>21</sup>

Thus Barbara Bodichon, painter, suffragist, and one of the Langham Place Group, writing in 1857, set out the stages in a woman's life when work would benefit her and

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Pooley J, 'The Papers of the Nichols Family and Business: New Discoveries and the Work of the Nichols Archive Project', *The Library* Vol 2 No 1 March 2001 p 21

<sup>21</sup> Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, 'Women and Work', 1857 in Lacey C A (ed), *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and the Langham Place Group*, 1987 p 40

her family. Wives, widows, sisters and daughters of all but the wealthiest families might indeed have to work to support themselves and other members of the household.

Examples of women in these different positions relative to other members of their kinship group provide an opportunity to open up some of ‘the hidden ... ways that families have always crossed the boundaries between work and home in their daily lives’.<sup>22</sup> Although some 30% of the women of Salisbury in 1851 had an occupation, this proportion rose to nearly 70% in some districts of the city. This can be compared with 43% in London at the same time, which is generally agreed to be a serious underestimate.<sup>23</sup> In Salisbury, of the women listed with an occupation in the mid-century census enumerators’ books, nearly three quarters were single, 15% were married, and 12% were widowed.<sup>24</sup>

These figures mask some wide variations between different areas of the city; selecting two contrasting areas permits more detailed examination of the context in which women were working.<sup>25</sup> The Close (district 1) was home to the Bishop, the Dean and other clergy associated with the cathedral, together with other relatively wealthy citizens, and a number of educational establishments. Almost 90% of the working women there were single.<sup>26</sup> The institutions – schools and colleges - and substantial households of diocesan officials and other residents required large numbers of domestic staff. A Justice of the Peace employed nine female servants; there were six in Prudence Eyre’s house, and five

<sup>22</sup> Davidoff L Doolittle M Fink J and Holden K, *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy 1830 – 1960*, Harlow 1999 p 28

<sup>23</sup> Alexander S, ‘Women’s Work in Nineteenth-Century London: A Study of the Years 1820-1860s’, in Mitchell J, and Oakley A (eds) *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, Harmondsworth 1976

<sup>24</sup> **Working women by marital status. Salisbury 1851**

Single		Married		Widowed	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1253	72.1	271	15.6	214	12.3

This compared with a distribution by marital status of all women in the city (aged 20 and over) of 34.6% single, 49.2% married and 16.2% widowed.

<sup>25</sup> **Working women by marital status. Salisbury 1851**

**Range of numbers of women and % between enumerator’s districts (numbered in brackets)**

	Single		Married		Widowed	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Highest</i>	137	89(1)	23	30.7(10)	12	21.8(16)
<i>Lowest</i>	39	52(10)	7	4.5(1)	1	1.4(8)
<i>Total</i>	1253	72.1	271	15.6	214	12.3

<sup>26</sup> See chapter 2 p 56 - 59 for more detail on the Close.

at the Deanery. In contrast, only 4.5% of working women were married. Two factors contributed to this. Firstly, there was a lower incidence of married women in the population of the Close, 10% compared to 15% for the city as a whole. Unmarried or widowed clergymen in their own households (attended by domestic servants), together with schools and other institutions such as the Training College and the Theological College, and the almshouses at Matron's College all meant that more people living in the Close than in the general population were male and/or single. Secondly, in a higher status community like this, the economic need for married women to work was less powerful while the social constraints against them doing so were stronger.

Not, of course, that the married women, or the adult daughters, in the Close were idle, but what they did was not considered 'work'. They were not in paid employment, so their activities were not counted in any official statistics. Wives of bishops, deans and archdeacons ordered their households, paid visits, organised charity events, and sat on committees. Each was expected to perform duties associated with her husband's position in the Church and the city, appearing at his side on numerous public occasions. Mrs Moberly, whose husband was bishop from 1869 to 1885, did all this, in addition to having fifteen children, and also gave

a great many parties, all carefully planned and thought out. Enormous parties for diocesan conferences when clergy from remote villages met ... Learned parties for translators of the Bible; musical parties for friends of the brothers; friendly parties for a few intimates from the close; and family parties for all ages.<sup>27</sup>

Socially and geographically distant from the Close was Griffin Chequer, enumerator's district 10, on the outer north-east side of the city, bounded by Greencroft Street, St Edmund's Church Street, Winchester Street and Salt Lane, with a population of 458 people. Apart from three inns, the Methodist church, and Church Street Barracks which housed paupers, this area consisted almost entirely of small terraced houses on the street frontages and lower quality dwellings in courts and yards inside the chequer itself. Rammell's Report following the 1849 cholera epidemic described Everett's Buildings, Winchester Street:

Six cottages facing the back of Green Croft-street; four or five privies belonging to the latter, immediately in front of these cottages. There is one privy belonging to three cottages, and a

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<sup>27</sup> Olivier E, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 1945 pp 29-30

well which is located between two of the privies belonging to Green Croft-street. The water was complained of as being very bad.<sup>28</sup>

This was an area of the city where everyone needed to earn, including the children. In contrast to the Close, just over 50% of working women were single. Most of these were working daughters still living at home, such as in the Squire household of Ann (56) dressmaker, and her daughters Jane (27) staymaker, Ann (19) schoolmistress, and Charlotte (16) dressmaker. Very few households employed domestic servants, the exceptions were headed by a painter, glazier and plumber, and a Post Office clerk. The small number of servants listed as resident in the area were likely to be working for other houses in the city, perhaps on a daily basis or they happened to be visiting at home on census night. Sarah Stride's 14 year old daughter was a nursemaid, the Sangers' 13 year old was a household servant, as was Elizabeth Adlam, aged 28. More than 30% of working women in Griffin Chequer were married, and over a quarter of married women worked. The earnings of husbands as gardeners, carpenters, porters and labourers needed supplementing to maintain the household. Their wives earned money as washerwomen, dressmakers, shoe binders, and charwomen.

The Close and Griffin Chequer discussed here demonstrated two extremes in relation to working women, but variations were to be found in the other areas of the city. By the nature of the street and plot layout, in much of Salisbury there was a mixture of better-off and less-well-off households. This meant that near-neighbours could be facing contrasting social and economic conditions. And different social and economic characteristics provided both different opportunities for women – wives, widows and spinsters - to work, and different pressures on them to do so.

### **Working wives: numbers and examples**

The Victorian ideal required that men of all social classes should support their wives (and children). Marriage was considered the only acceptable objective in life for women, and their education and training, such as it was, prepared them for little else. Married women would then care for their husbands (and children) in the confines of the home, taking responsibility for the organisation of the household and the maintenance of high standards of physical and moral health.

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas Rammell, *Report on Cholera 1851* Board of Health

But for many this was an impossible ideal, as Harriet Martineau confirmed in 1859: the supposition ‘that every women is supported ...by her father, her brother or her husband’... ‘has now become false, and ought to be practically admitted to be false’.<sup>29</sup> Many married women worked for an income, as well as working inside the home. For most it was financial need that put them in this situation. Women who were married to men whose job or business generated low or erratic remuneration contributed to the family by earning money themselves. This was only feasible when there were appropriate local employment openings for women. An alternative strategy for them was to set up a small independent business, a route often taken by women from families with traditions in commerce.

Evidence that financial need was one factor pushing married women into work (given there were employment opportunities available to them), can be found by comparing the socio-economic group of a section of Salisbury’s working married women to that of their husbands.<sup>30</sup> The results indicate that wives were earning to contribute to the family income where their husbands had lower status and presumably less remunerative jobs. Between a quarter and two-thirds of working wives were in this situation.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Martineau H, ‘Female Industry’, *The Edinburgh Review* CCXXII April 1859 p 297

<sup>30</sup> Classification schemes have been widely debated, different systems being developed in varied contexts, some based on contemporary and some on modern categorisations, see for example, Rogers, 1977 p 99-102, Mills and Mills, 1989, Drake and Finnegan, 1994. Armstrong’s method was selected as York had similarities at this time as another provincial cathedral city, and the few individual occupations that do not appear in Armstrong’s list can be allocated by making sensible guesses. Its major disadvantage is the size of Class 3 which captures some diverse occupations. This happens partly because the defining boundaries are vague, partly because the occupational labels given to individuals do not always specify the necessary variables (existence of employees indicating scale of business, for example), and thirdly because the level of skill in women’s occupations is less clearly identified than for men. The inevitable consequence is the clustering of both men and women in Class 3:

**Social classification of occupations in Salisbury 1851**

**% of men and women in each class, according to Armstrong’s system**

Class	Women	Men
1	-	3
2	4	4
3	47	63
4	46	17
5	3	13

<sup>31</sup> **Social classification of occupations of married couples\* with working wives, Salisbury 1851**

Wife’s social classification	Husband’s social classification				
	1	2	3	4	5

Economic need can also be examined by considering the *types* of occupations of the husbands of working wives. These were preponderantly low paid, low status jobs, some of which would also be liable to irregular, perhaps seasonal, employment – such as casual work as labourers and porters. Shoemaking also stands out; in many cases both husband and wife were employed in the same industry (as were those in horsehair manufacturing), therefore *both* breadwinners would be vulnerable to its market fluctuations.

However the picture was more complex than simple financial need, because there were men in these same occupations whose wives were apparently *not* working. Firstly, as is well-established, some of this difference can be explained by under recording in CEBs of married women’s occupations; more wives probably *were* earning from casual, part-time work that was not considered sufficiently significant for inclusion, or was not happening on the date of the census. Mrs White provided an example of this that also demonstrates the value of corroboration between different sources. Sarah White was given no occupation in the 1861 census returns, but published her personal trade cards as an ‘Umbrella, Parasol and Sunshade Manufacturer’. Her husband was a hatter and furrier, in both the census and contemporary directories, and in 1867 Sarah too was thus described. At one time they ran separate establishments at different addresses, but the overlap of their activities was shown on their cards: Sarah’s had in small print ‘furs remade and cleaned’ beneath ‘walking sticks, portmanteaus, trunks and travelling bags in great variety’. William Thomas White added ‘umbrellas, sunshades and parasols covered or repaired’ to his. It can be imagined that they catered for the varied needs of their customers to combat the weather. Widowed Sarah and her daughter Catherine were both umbrella makers in 1871, demonstrating a continuity to which we return below.

Secondly, *within* these male occupations there was a hierarchy of levels of earnings and regularity of employment that could result in a range of prosperity for those engaged in

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2	2	2	6	2	
3		1	97	18	16
4			18	18	21
5			3	1	8

\* couple omitted if husband’s occupation *not known*, *pauper* or *pensioner*

The evidence suggests that overall wives were more likely to have husbands in lower status jobs than themselves, than husbands were to have lower status working wives.



them. Some wives might therefore *need* to work, and others not. Taking ‘shoemaker’ as an example, at one end of a possible continuum was Mr Sydenham, ‘ladies shoemaker employing 6 men and 6 women’, living in the High Street with his wife, four sons, one daughter and a servant girl. Not far away were Mr and Mrs Forder ‘boot and shoe maker’ and ‘boot and shoe maker’s assistant’, Mr and Mrs Wapshare, shoemaker and shoebinder; Mr and Mrs Rambridge, bootmaker and laundress, and the Fricker and Salisbury families, both headed by shoemakers whose wives were not recorded with any occupation.

A third factor to be considered was family size and structure; who else in the household was earning, and how many dependents made demands on the family income.

Employed older children could free their mother from the need to work outside the home. Small children could prevent her so doing, and indeed restrict her opportunities for working at home. On the other hand, many mouths to feed would increase the need for an additional income, especially if older children could mind younger ones while their mother worked for cash. For example in White’s Buildings, New Street, Mr Fricker and Mr Salisbury were both shoemakers, mentioned above. The Salisburys had three young children, and the Frickers two young sons, plus a 14 year old daughter employed as a nursemaid. Mrs Rambridge (laundress) probably did the washing at home to care for their two sons at the same time. The Forders had two daughters, one apprenticed to a milliner (so costing her parents for her training), and the younger engaged in ‘netting’, so not likely to be earning very much. Another neighbour was Mr Andress, a whitesmith who worked with his eldest son; two other sons, aged 13 and 11, were also employed. His wife had no listed occupation, presumably she looked after the three younger children at home as well as being housekeeper to the four workers in the family. The Forwards were another example; with six children (the eldest aged 10) the income earned by James in his white-collar job as ‘clerk to wine merchants’ needed supplementing. Ellen Forward became a ‘dealer in fishing tackle’, equipment in great demand for the trout-filled chalk streams around Salisbury.

The combinations of specific jobs followed by married couples can be examined by looking at just two enumeration districts in more detail. These areas had almost identical rates of married women working – 23.9% and 23.8% in 1851, but were otherwise different. The High Street is a central artery of the city, running from St

Thomas's church to the main gate into the Cathedral Close. It contained an important hostelry and major retail sites, and a resident population of 757, including 443 females. St Ann's and Exeter Streets are on the southern outskirts of the city and had more mixed sizes of properties, elegant eighteenth century town houses, and cottages on Bugmore. Taking the latter area first (Table A), with few exceptions the couples demonstrate the need of two incomes for a household.<sup>32</sup> Washerwoman/bricklayer's labourer, dressmaker/rope maker, laundress/gardener, charwoman/postboy all suggest workers in relatively low status and low income jobs. Their better-off neighbours were likely to provide the employment by requiring personal services such as laundry or gardening. The wives' occupations in particular had the additional characteristic of flexibility – extra washing or sewing would supplement erratic earnings by their husbands and fit in with domestic responsibilities. The main exception to this pattern is the Baptist Minister and his wife, who was 'principal of an establishment for ladies.' Mrs Todd's school will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter; in this context it is notable that she was part of a professional couple, both in the public economy, and both in respectable occupations. A non-conformist minister's wife might well need to supplement the family income to maintain a suitable household, and she might be able to provide the combination of commercial, educational and social skills necessary for running a school.

Examining the High Street in the same way (Table B) reveals working married couples of higher levels of skill and social status, and a larger proportion of people who could be described as small business proprietors rather than employees. These included schoolmistress/accountant, fancy goods dealer/master cabinet maker, shopkeeper/railway fitter. There was one clear example of a husband and wife working together – Mr and Mrs Forder the boot and shoemaker and boot and shoemaker's assistant - though this may also have been the case with some others, particularly the shoebinder and bootmaker.

The family which merited the \* in Table B because of the particularly full description supplied by the enumerator can serve to develop the more personal examination of working married women. It also provides another example that reinforces the importance of seeking additional information. Trade directories were compiled to alert

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<sup>32</sup> Tables A and B p 279

potential customers and suppliers to businesses in a specific locality. Newspapers carried advertisements for new products, special offers, changes of address, and vacancies for employees. As both these means of communication were of particular value to enterprises such as retail businesses they can be used to explore further the activities of 'independent' women in commerce.

Mr and Mrs Dawkins had two 'assistants in wife's business' and three apprentices resident at the time of the 1851 census, an assistant and two apprentices either regularly lived out or happened to be away on census night.<sup>33</sup> Mrs Dawkins was evidently a woman of initiative and ambition; she exhibited at Salisbury's Exhibition in 1852 (see above chapter 2), and in 1860 she made the most of an opportunity when she took over and sold on the stock-in-trade of a failing fellow milliner (see below). She advertised specific products from time to time, placing the emphasis on different parts of her stock range, for example children's clothing and baby linen in 1860.<sup>34</sup> The principals were away from home at the time of the 1861 census, but Mr Dawkins' sister Arabella was there as 'housekeeper', thus underlining Mrs Dawkins' superior position in the establishment, she was a businesswoman rather than a housewife.

Mr and Mrs Wood, or James Wood and Company, occupied Norman House, on a substantial corner plot in a central location. In the 1861 census, Emma was recorded with no occupation, even though within the past year she had been advertising for outdoor apprentices and improvers, and announcing to 'the ladies of Salisbury and its neighbourhood that her Show Room is now complete. An early inspection is solicited'.<sup>35</sup> The Woods had one son in 1851 who was no longer in the household in 1861 when they had a boy of six and girls of 2 years, and 4 months. Also resident were a female assistant and two female apprentices, plus two female domestic servants. Emma Wood was in an economic position to employ staff in both her business and her home, to either free her from domestic responsibilities, or permit her time with her young children, or perhaps divide her time between these two areas.

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<sup>33</sup> Mrs Dawkins' description in the 'Occupation' column states 'milliner and mantua maker, mistress employing 3 adult assistants and 5 apprentices'.

<sup>34</sup> *SJ* 14 April 1860 p 5

<sup>35</sup> *SJ* 2 June 1860 p 5

Mr and Mrs Stodart (silk mercer and dressmaker), whose business was located in the New Canal, announced in April 1860 that they were 'in Paris selecting silks, muslins and other French goods together with the fashions in millinery, dressmaking, etc'.<sup>36</sup>

Louisa Stodart was seven years older than her husband, aged 40 in 1861. They had a six year old son, and employed four resident assistants and an apprentice at that time. The establishment probably had a larger staff than that, as in March 1860 Mrs Stodart advertised vacancies in her Millinery and Dressmaking Establishment for two out-door apprentices and improvers.<sup>37</sup> It was common for Salisbury fashion businesses to seek seasonal supplies and ideas in London; going abroad was less usual and indicated a determination and awareness of competitive pressures.

Not everyone could afford the services of a dressmaker, or to patronise an establishment that bought its stock from Paris. Manufactured, ready-made clothing, did not dominate the trade until the early twentieth century.<sup>38</sup> An alternative strategy therefore for the less well-off was to buy second-hand clothing, from specialised dealers. Mr and Mrs Dennis 'Purchasers of Ladies' and Gentlemen's Left-Off Wearing Apparel' advertised in 1897 that their business had been established for 40 years. Discretion was an important, indeed essential, quality in this business: 'Ladies and Gentlemen punctually and privately waited on at their own residence'.<sup>39</sup>

Women's responsibility for food and clothing in the household transferred almost without question to their public roles. The enterprises concerned with the production, sale, and care of clothing amongst the examples discussed so far were typical of women's businesses in the nineteenth century. Dressmakers, milliners, bonnet makers, mantua makers, stay makers and others provided a personal service to other women; they selected, advised, and fitted; they had intimate knowledge of their customers' physical characteristics and financial constraints. Mrs Williams offered 'bonnets cleaned and altered in the newest style', and 'ladies own materials made up' to customers who were unable to buy new.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *SJ* 7 April 1860 p 5. See p 281 for another of their advertisements

<sup>37</sup> *SJ* 17 March 1860 p 5

<sup>38</sup> Nenadic S, 'The social shaping of business behaviour in the nineteenth-century women's garment trades', *Journal of Social History* Spring 1998 p 625 - 645

<sup>39</sup> Langmead and Evans, *Directory*, 1897 p xxv

<sup>40</sup> *SJ* 7 April 1860 p 5

A similar degree of intimacy held between a laundress and her customers. Taking in other people's dirty washing and returning it clean, starched and ironed was a significant source of income for individual wives and mothers at home, requiring little equipment they did not have anyway, and therefore no capital outlay, and being very flexible in terms of hours worked which could vary with need and with other commitments. Patricia Malcolmson has argued that laundresses' work was '*unusual* in that it could be carried on over a lifetime, was dominated by married or widowed women, and could be adapted to domestic responsibilities more readily than most other occupations'.<sup>41</sup> In Salisbury in 1851 the marital status of women working in this industry was almost equally divided between unmarried, married and widowed. A much clearer characteristic was the dominance of older women: over 60% were aged 40 and over, nearly 40% were 50 and over, and the latter group included 7 individuals over 70.<sup>42</sup> Almost all the unmarried laundresses were working with other members of their family. Many of the married women were working alone, but other laundresses ran substantial businesses: a mother with several adult daughters, or a woman with two sisters and a niece could have a considerable turnover. Residential institutions such as the workhouse and the infirmary had large laundries to meet the needs of their inmates. Industrial schools, 'homes for friendless girls' and similar establishments had training laundries which were both a source of income and of practical lessons. The Salisbury Diocesan House of Mercy for Reclaiming the Fallen met a third of its costs by laundrywork in 1871.<sup>43</sup> They would thus also be a source of competition for individual women providing laundry services.

Apart from those employed in the institutions, there were 218 women aged 20 or over classified as 'washerwoman, mangle, laundry-keeper' in 1851, 259 were 'laundresses' in 1861, and 220 'laundry-keeper' in 1871. The privilege of possessing a relatively expensive, for a poor washerwoman, piece of equipment such as a mangle set

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<sup>41</sup> Malcolmson P, *English Laundresses A Social History 1850-1930*, Chicago 1989 p xiii (my italics).

<sup>42</sup> **Laundresses and washerwomen in Salisbury city 1851** (by age and marital status)

	<20	20<30	30<40	40<50	50+	Total
Unmarried	13	17	5	5	11	51
Married	1	9	9	17	16	52
Widowed			5	12	32	49
Totals	14	26	19	34	59	

<sup>43</sup> Elliott J, *Sarum Chronicle* 3 2003 p 50

‘manglers’ apart, and in some places ironing was also a specialised activity.<sup>44</sup> Women working at these tasks were, in Salisbury censuses, referred to sometimes as ‘laundress’ and sometimes as ‘washerwoman’; the same enumerator used both terms.<sup>45</sup> There was no clear pattern of laundress being used for higher status women (judged by their husband’s occupation), though lower status couples generally included ‘washerwoman’ rather than laundress. In the Barnard’s and Rolf’s Chequer area, for example, the following married couples were to be found in 1851: washerwoman/general labourer, washerwoman/scavenger, washerwoman/coal porter, washerwoman/carrier’s porter, laundress/farm labourer, laundress/cordwainer, laundress/tailor, laundress/confectioner, laundress/policeman. ‘Laundress’ was always used when there were several women working together.

In Culver Street, the Noah family was headed by John, a confectioner. His wife Sarah (aged 46) was described in the 1851 census as a laundress, as were their three eldest daughters, Emily (25), Mary (20) and Ellen (18). John and Sarah also had two younger daughters and three young sons. Further along the same street lived a pauper couple, William and Sophia Offer aged 83 and 80; their daughter Ann (55) lived with them and worked as a laundress. Although very different, these two households both demonstrated the value of washing as a means of earning an income for women. Two more neighbouring examples illustrate other characteristics of women in this trade – the wide age range and the involvement of spinsters and widows as well as married women. Ann Debeans was an 87 year old widow who lived with her granddaughter aged 21, both were described as laundress.<sup>46</sup> A household nearby held three laundresses: Ann Alexander, a widow aged 51, Ann’s mother Sarah, also a widow, aged 76, and Ann’s niece, Elizabeth, unmarried and aged 16. In Crane Street, Ann Pearce headed a household of four laundresses – herself, her two sisters and a niece, all spinsters, aged

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<sup>44</sup> Malcolmson, 1986 p 24. Malcolmson uses the terms ‘washerwoman’ and ‘laundress’ interchangeably, though the latter more frequently. Armstrong placed both in Class IV. It has been suggested that washerwomen took the clothes to a public baths, and laundresses to a designated workplace. However, that excludes those taking *in* washing to their own homes. And in Salisbury there were women described as ‘washerwoman’ before the first public baths were opened in 1875 (Purvis B, *Salisbury The Changing City*, Derby 2003 p 83). In Waters C, *A Dictionary of Old Trades, Titles, and Occupations*, Newbury 1999, washerwoman was a person who ‘took in’ other people’s washing into her own home, laundry woman was someone who worked in a commercial laundry, and laundress was simply a woman who washes other people’s dirty washing. However he adds ‘the terms are sometimes interchangeable’.

<sup>45</sup> In very few households (the Bishop’s Palace was one exception) was there a domestic servant called a laundry maid. This could have meant the washing was done by other servants not specifically labelled, but also suggests the dominance of sending out laundry to the women who *were* described as laundress or washerwoman, or having them come in to do the work.

<sup>46</sup> The handwriting of their surname is hard to read.

66, 62, 52 and 28 respectively. They were located next door to the Workhouse, so may have been responsible for the laundry there, though more likely that was done by the inmates. Mary Barnes was another of the elderly laundresses in Salisbury in 1851. She was 70, and lived with her daughter, also a laundress, son-in-law (a butler), two grandchildren and two servants described as 'laundry maid'. The adjacent building was recorded as 'uninhabited, used as a laundry only'. Washing being done at home inevitably 'caused a major dislocation of domestic life'.<sup>47</sup> The sheer labour involved, the quantities of water to be heated and carried, the wet and the steam, meant it was not a job to be taken if a better alternative was available.<sup>48</sup> Ideally separate premises were used, as in the case of Mary Barnes, and ideally they would be located on the outskirts of an urban area where washing could be hung out to dry. Mrs Pope's advertisement at the end of the century indicated the preferred conditions when she declared she provided a 'Well Ventilated Laundry' with a 'Good Drying Ground', in addition to giving 'Special Attention to Flannels'.<sup>49</sup>

Many of these businesses run by married women gave indications of being successful. They operated for a number of years, trained apprentices and employed assistants, their premises were centrally located in the most expensive part of the city, and they advertised high quality products. Significantly, the women's husbands were either part of the same business with their wives, or were successfully involved in some other enterprise. Mr and Mrs Wood, and Mr and Mrs Dawkins were prime examples. This runs counter to the argument discussed above that married women worked due to financial need. There was no apparent necessity for Mrs Wood or Mrs Dawkins to work, their husbands could have provided for them and their families. Profits from the women's businesses of course generated additional income, but they could also be a source of satisfaction, of self-fulfilment, of achievement. Personal testimony might support this speculation, but the voices of the women themselves are silent.

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<sup>47</sup> Malcolmson, 1986 p 23

<sup>48</sup> A different view was expressed by Millicent Wadham, who was sent to the House of Industry in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to a memoir written by her daughter, Nina Bishop, 'the laundry work was hard, full of steam and scrubbing soap, but for some reason my mother loved it and would have liked to have gone into one of the big houses as a laundry maid but she was considered too delicate.' Unpublished, courtesy of the author.

<sup>49</sup> Langmead and Evans, *Directory* p xxxi

## Working single women

‘Surplus’ single women who had, in the eyes of society, *failed* to find a husband were seen as a problem by contemporary commentators in mid-nineteenth century England.

The fact revealed in the census of 1851, and brought into notice by the article on female employment in *The Edinburgh Review* for April 1862, that two millions of our countrywomen are unmarried and have to maintain themselves, startled every thinking mind in the kingdom ...<sup>50</sup>

If for some reason they no longer had the option of remaining in the parental home, the prospect of having to be self-supporting led many to seek employment. Appeals for work emphasised the desperation felt by young women placed in this situation:

A YOUNG PERSON (21), the daughter of a respectable Tradesman (deceased) is anxious to get into a DRAPERS, CONFECTIONERS or any GENERAL SHOP; is of active habits and would apply herself thoroughly to business.<sup>51</sup>

Wanted by a RESPECTABLE Young Person, a situation in any business. Salary no object provided she could have the comfort of a home.<sup>52</sup>

Much of the discussion amongst writers in these decades focused on the difficulties faced by middle class women whose options were distinctly limited; there were relatively few possibilities open to those who needed to support themselves and to preserve some degree of respectability. A residential job as governess or companion was an option taken by many; as Bessie Rayner Parkes wrote in 1858 ‘... for the highest to the lowest rank in which a liberal education is bestowed, we shall find some cousin or friend who is a governess’.<sup>53</sup> Many who went down that route found it a distressing experience, as the foundation of the Governesses’ Benevolent Society testified. Others joined one of the increasing number of communities, such as the Deaconesses Institution discussed in chapter 4 which filled a very special need for many women; Martha Vicinus pointed out that ‘[s]ingle women were often simply redundant in middle-class homes. ... A community was a refuge, a foothold from which to launch into the wider world, but most of all, it was a home’.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Boucherett J, ‘On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women’, first published in *The English Woman’s Journal* February 1860 reprinted in Lacey C A (ed), 1987 p 225

<sup>51</sup> *SJ* 14 July 1860 p 5

<sup>52</sup> *SJ* 28 July 1860 p 5

<sup>53</sup> *English Woman’s Journal* March 1858 quoted in Hughes, 1993 p 27

<sup>54</sup> Vicinus M, *Independent Women*, Chicago 1985 p 31



For those with no social or religious calling, no inclination to teach, and particularly no desire to live in someone else's house, a business with sisters (or cousins, or friends) provided the answer. Sisters working together in an enterprise, usually with shared housekeeping too, created a way of earning a living and retaining a home, while avoiding the risks of seeking employment elsewhere. A degree of independence, and of flexibility could be achieved; the formality of the arrangement varied, but the context was both familiar to the women concerned and acceptable in the eyes of the outside world. Single women had the advantage over their married sisters that they could legally make independent financial commitments.<sup>55</sup> This had the benefit for historians that the documents relating to a partnership might survive, though in general business records for these types of enterprise are rare.

A surviving partnership deed of 1848 provides some revelations about financial arrangements relating to another dressmaking and millinery business in Salisbury, run by the Miss Hoopers.<sup>56</sup> The five Miss Hoopers – Mary, Dionysia, Ellen, Elizabeth and Louisa - were entitled under their mother's marriage settlement to 'certain sums of money' on reaching the age of 21. George Glass 'Man Milliner' and Susannah his wife, 'hav[ing] for several years past carried on the trade or business of Milliners and Mantuamakers in or upon a certain messuage and premises situate on the High Street in Salisbury ... being desirous of giving up and retiring from the said trades', sold their millinery and dressmaking business to the Miss Hoopers as partners. The deed required their joint names to be used until 31 December 1849, though 'Mrs Glass and the Misses Hooper' or 'Hooper and Glass' appeared in trade directories and newspaper advertisements later than this date.<sup>57</sup> The business was valued for purchase at £1,345 13s. Included in the sale, in addition to the household furniture and stock-in-trade, were 'shapes' and 'patterns' (vital assets for a dressmaking enterprise), and the 'goodwill of the said business' – essential for any trade. Continuing the use of Mrs Glass' name beyond the minimum time required by the deed may have been a strategy for exploiting the goodwill of the former business.

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<sup>55</sup> Davidoff et al, 1999 p 62

<sup>56</sup> WSRO 906/SAL127

<sup>57</sup> This might be further evidence that directories were not updated regularly?

Each partner put in £400, the three eldest Miss Hoopers on their own behalf and the two younger via a trustee, giving the business the substantial capital of £2000.<sup>58</sup> The partnership itself was not long lived. Codicils indicated that Dionysia got married and left, Ellen died, and although Elizabeth and Louisa attained the age of 21 and took over their own shares, the partnership was dissolved in 1853, with a value of £3,181 9.10d, a substantial increase in value over four years. While they were together, the deed stated that each partner ‘shall diligently and faithfully employ herself in and about the affairs of the business ... for the greatest benefit and advantage of the said business’. Profits would pay for the board of all five sisters, and each was permitted to draw £4 quarterly for clothing and incidental expenses. The scale of the enterprise could also be judged from the 1851 census entry that listed four assistants and eight apprentices, and its reputation was reinforced by the places of birth of these employees. They came from Hampshire, Somerset, Dorset, and two from as far as London. When provincial businesswomen went to London to purchase stock and assess the latest fashion trends, they also let it be known when there were openings for apprentices in reputable establishments. Hoopers were sufficiently well-known locally for Mrs Farnell, when setting up on her own as a milliner and dressmaker, to advertise that she had previously worked for them. Likewise the Misses Clement, promoting their Dress and Mantle Establishment in 1862, mentioned that they were nieces of Mrs Glass, late of the High Street. This was relying on the strength of a reputation and the length of local memories, as it was over twelve years since Mrs Glass had retired.<sup>59</sup>

The Miss Hoopers were only one of the businesses in the ‘needle trades’ sector in Salisbury run by single women, individually or with sisters, cousins, or friends. Mrs Stodart, discussed above, had been Louisa Earle before her marriage in 1854 and part of a millinery and dressmaking business with her sister Eliza, living with their widower father. Ann, Sarah and Susan Rhoades were similarly occupied, with Ann establishing her seniority in both age and status by describing both her younger sisters as ‘assistant to milliner’. Sisters Agnes and Margaret Richards were lace manufacturers. Harriett and Martha Foot were milliners. Three young single women, apparently unrelated, worked as dressmaker and milliner for widowed Harriett Lloyd. There were also

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<sup>58</sup> The trustee for Elizabeth and Louisa was John Patient - perhaps a relative as he was appointed in Mrs Hooper’s marriage settlement, and Patient was Ellen’s middle name. Mary had her mother’s maiden name, Barnes, as her middle name.

<sup>59</sup> *SJ* 26 April 1862 p 5

examples of unmarried daughters, and other relations, employed in a range of occupations as part of complex households. In the High Street was a staymaking establishment headed by John Holbrook. His aunt, his niece and a 'shopwoman' all worked there. Mary Davis, single aged 38, shopwoman in a china warehouse, lived with her widowed sister-in-law and young niece and nephew. Mary Lane lived with her sister and brother-in-law, and worked as a governess. Mary Bracher was an unmarried daughter at home with her widowed mother, aged 38, an upholstress. Jane Redman had two unmarried daughters; Mary followed her mother as a church cleaner, and Ellen became a dressmaker. Solutions to the problem of a home and support for single adult women were found in different ways.

Fancy work was an area of activity where the private interests of the higher classes coincided with the public interests of commercially astute women and provided openings for single women to support themselves. As the growth in popularity of embroidery for decorating the home and the person using an astonishing variety of materials increased, so did economic opportunities for selling the necessary supplies. And this, like dressmaking and millinery, was a situation with women on both sides of the shop counter. In Salisbury, if not everywhere, the repositories and warehouses were run by women and patronised by their fellow citizens. One part of this enthusiasm was for embroidery on canvas with coloured wools, following a printed chart, known as Berlin wool work. This 'was the century's most successful commercial embroidery venture'.<sup>60</sup> Three specialist suppliers were listed in Salisbury in a directory of 1852, under their own separate classification of 'Berlin Wool Warehouses', and in 1861 the census report also had a specific category for this activity, indicating its importance. As mentioned above, Berlin wool work was not considered to represent 'good taste', and it was subjected to mockery and ridicule by contemporary commentators, but this did not detract from its popularity.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Parker R, *The Subversive Stitch*, 1984 p170

<sup>61</sup> A lengthy two-part poem *The Husband's Complaint* and *The Wife's Answer* begins

I hate the name of German wool, with all its colours bright  
Of chairs and stools in fancy work, I hate the very sight;  
The shawls and slippers that I've seen, the ottomans and bags  
Sooner than wear a stitch on me, I'd walk the streets in rags.

And later

And if to walk I am inclined ('tis seldom I go out)  
At every worsted shop she sees Oh how she stares about  
And there 'tis 'Oh! I must go in that pattern is so rare,  
That group of flowers is just the thing I wanted for my chair.

The wife's reply tells her husband all the things she does in the house before sitting down to stitch,

Two single women involved in this trade in the mid-nineteenth century in Salisbury were Miss Bail and Miss Mullins. Eliza Jane Bail (aged 25 in 1851) lived with her parents; both Eliza and her mother were described as ‘dealer in Berlin fancy goods’, though in a directory published the year after the census Eliza was listed, and not her mother. Mary Jane Mullins (aged 53 in 1851) was head of her own household – ‘dealer in Berlin Wool and fancy articles’. She employed an unmarried female assistant, Charlotte Tamsian, aged 26. Miss Mullins’ billhead described her establishment as ‘German wool and fancy work repository’, and shows how helpful such ephemeral documents can be for understanding the operation of this type of business.<sup>62</sup> In October 1849 a Miss Richardson made some purchases which included two patterns, some wool, canvas and needles. The printed sheet stated ‘work commenced, completed and made up’, and Miss Mullins charged Miss Richardson one shilling for ‘framing and commencing work’. Imagine the relief at having somewhere to send canvaswork to be ‘completed and made up’! Further help was on offer: ‘Instructions given either in High Street or at ladies own residence’. The option of being seen in public receiving assistance with such a project or doing it in the privacy of one’s own home was an important consideration. The activity itself, of course, was entirely respectable, manifesting femininity as it did, but embroidery came with the assumption that women had learnt as a child (or could perform the stitches by some ‘natural’ skill by virtue of being female). At 11 shillings and 9s 6d, the patterns were expensive.<sup>63</sup> It was not surprising that a second-hand market arose, and Miss Mullins offered ‘half-price allowed for Berlin patterns if returned in good condition’. Thus this activity would have become accessible to more women, without allowing it to reach too far down the social ladder to lower the attraction for the main segment of customers. A final comment from the billhead was particularly significant for a business somewhere like Salisbury with a wide rural catchment area: ‘country orders punctually and carefully attended to’. Women in neighbouring villages and small towns looked to the city for goods and

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and she concludes

The loving wife, right cheerfully, obeys her husband still  
And will ever lay aside her frame to meet his lordly will.

Originally from *A History of Needle-making*, M T Morrall, 1852, quoted in M G Proctor, *Victorian Canvas Work*, 1986 Appendix D

<sup>62</sup> See p 280

<sup>63</sup> Parker, 1984 describes the hand-coloured early designs selling for as much as £30 or £40 each p 171

services not available in their immediate vicinity.<sup>64</sup> It would be in a businesswoman's interest to give an equally good service to all their customers.

Opportunities were not missed to supply Salisbury customers with the latest 'fancy work' necessities. In 1855, for example, two Berlin Repositories, announced the availability of 'designs and all requisites' for the 'elegant and fashionable art' of Potichomanie.<sup>65</sup> This was the 'craft' of sticking scraps or other paper pictures on the *inside* of glass jars or vases to imitate porcelain. Berlin work itself was superseded by 'Art Needlework', following the ideas of William Morris, replacing the importance of design as well as skill in embroidery. Salisbury gained a School of Art Needlework in 1879 where four women, including Miss Hodding and Miss Blackmore, from two leading professional families of the city,

desire to cultivate aesthetic tastes, especially in regard to needlework, and they accordingly give lessons in the work, trace designs, commence patterns, and supply materials.<sup>66</sup>

Single women may have been considered a problem by some contemporary commentators, and 'indicative of an unwholesome social state', but they did not abandon hope of independent survival. Indeed they contributed to a distinctly 'wholesome' and expanding economy. The growing service sector and 'less-necessary goods' market were indicative of prosperity, showing that there were sufficient citizens in Salisbury with disposable income available for such things. Individual women took the opportunities that were available to them, and although most of these openings tended to be in predictably 'feminine' trades, it is not surprising that they looked in those particular directions. They faced sufficient commercial and social discrimination without trying to break into new, hostile, industries. *Within* the 'feminine' trades there is some evidence that they exploited new products and processes. And there is no reason to suppose that they did not 'know enough arithmetic to keep accounts correctly'.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> As the 1851 census report commented '[population of town and country] are now connected together by innumerable relationships as well as by the associations of trade'. Vol 1 p lxxxiv

<sup>65</sup> *SJ* 10 March 1855 p 2. The first reference in *Oxford English Dictionary* is to *Household Words* 1855, suggesting that Salisbury business women had seized their opportunity at an early stage. See also Van Leer Carrick A, 'Potichomanie', *Antiques* August 1927. There was a later revival of enthusiasm in the third quarter of the century. Hodges F, *Period Pastimes*, London 1989 p 81. I would like to acknowledge the help of Mr Hilary Young, Curator Ceramics and Glass, at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

<sup>66</sup> *SJ* 10 May 1879 p 8. See also p 214.

<sup>67</sup> Bodichon, 1857 p 43

## Working widows

Widows often had no choice but to become independent on the death of their husband. They were a special case of ‘the unsupported woman’ because they had experienced the life that was the supposed aim of all women. This potentially gave them status, expertise and a degree of freedom not available to spinsters.<sup>68</sup> In the Close in Salisbury there were relatively affluent widows, described as ‘annuitant’ or ‘fundholder’ who participated in the social and religious life of that enclave, as did the residents of Matrons’ College. This row of beautiful almshouses was founded by Bishop Seth Ward in 1682 for the widows of twelve clergymen from the dioceses of Salisbury and Exeter, and continues to the present day. These were fortunate women. Most women were not in a position to benefit from their widowhood as practical concerns had to take priority.

Keeping a business going was vital to its survival. A hiatus would make it vulnerable to competition just when the bereaved family needed income. Judging by the number of advertisements thanking past customers and calling in debtors and creditors, many women clearly stepped in and took over an existing family firm immediately on the death of their husbands. This suggested that they were already actively involved, and were familiar with the processes and organisation, confirmed by the number of wives working with their husbands noted above. Widowhood thus brought an existing state of affairs to public notice. For many their position in charge of the business was temporary, lasting only until a son became old enough to inherit the responsibility, or perhaps until another suitable male replacement could be found. Two reasons, therefore, show why the census is an inadequate source for tracing the experience of widows: the assumption that wives did not work in a ‘family’ business, and their temporary position in charge – particularly if it fell between census years. In one census year a woman could be recorded as a wife with no occupation, and ten years later as a mother (or mother-in-law) similarly labelled.

Fortunately for historians, for some widows their independence coincided with the beginnings of decades. An example where this happened three times was the Meatyards, a family of Salisbury butchers. In 1841 Lydia Meatyard, butcher, was the

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<sup>68</sup> Hahn goes as far as to write of the ‘social and sexual uncontrollability of widows’, and ‘widows are a symbol of disorder’, though, as we shall see, for many of these women conformity was necessary to survival. *The History of the Family*, 2002 Vol 7 No 1 p 33-58

first person named in the household, with her son John, also butcher. Twenty years later, Sophia Meatyard, widow, butcher, was head of the family. John died in 1854, and Sophia announced her intention to carry on the business 'for the benefit of herself and infant family'.<sup>69</sup> Sophia wrote in her will in 1866 'I empower my said trustees to carry on my trade or business of a butcher ... on my said son attaining the age of 21 the said trustees shall be at liberty if they think fit to transfer the said business to him ...'.<sup>70</sup> She was still active in 1871. Sophia employed two resident men butchers in 1861, and one of them, John Randell was working for her ten years later alongside her son William, also a butcher. In 1885 Mrs Meatyard thanked the 'Nobility, Gentry and Inhabitants of Salisbury and Neighbourhood for the generous support accorded to her late husband' and informed them that 'the business will in future be carried on by herself'.<sup>71</sup> By 1891 William's widow Amelia, butcher, was in charge of a prosperous business.<sup>72</sup>

Mary Ann Judd's was another considerable butchery business. She was 60 in 1851, with three sons and three daughters, aged between 33 and 19. All three men were described as butcher, and in addition two young men were employed as 'butcher's servant'. Two daughters had 'home' in the occupation column, but the eldest was described as 'shopwoman'. Sarah and Charlotte could be imagined running the domestic side of the household, assisted by Emma (house servant), while Anne worked in the shop with her mother, and the men did the slaughtering and butchering.<sup>73</sup>

Sarah Smith and Eliza Chinn were next-door neighbours in Butcher Row in 1851. Both were widows, and both were butchers. Eliza had young children, and employed a journeyman butcher to help with the business. Sarah was over 60, and still head of the household. Her son (aged 42) was described as 'butcher's son and assistant'. Two grandsons also lived in the same house, one following in the family trade, and one a pastrycook. John Randell was employed by the Smith's butchery business at this time, but by the next census was working for the Meatyards. On the available evidence these two women were in somewhat different circumstances of age and number of

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<sup>69</sup> *SJ* 13 January 1855 p 2

<sup>70</sup> WSRO Will: 1873/78

<sup>71</sup> *SJ* 17 January 1885 p 5

<sup>72</sup> The estimated rental (for rating purposes) of the Meatyard premises was double that of the Haunch of Venison inn or Fawcett's brewery. WSRO G223/870/2 April 1861.

<sup>73</sup> William Judd died in December 1848 leaving all his 'personal estate of every description' to Mary Ann who was the sole executrix. The estate (total value was less than £600), included the premises in Catherine Street where the family lived and worked, and another property at Petersfinger on the outskirts of the city. WSRO P4/1849/8

dependents, and, perhaps in consequence, had rather different sized enterprises. But both, like Sophia and Amelia Meatyard, were keeping the business going.<sup>74</sup>

Food, drink, and accommodation were trades where many widows were to be found. These particular service industries were important, and increasing in number during the nineteenth century. The city had a growing tourist trade, and regular visitors involved with the Cathedral, the courts and other professions, and well as commercial travellers, all required sustenance and lodging. There were openings in this sector for businesses of different sizes, types, and quality, which demanded different amounts of capital, staff, experience, and confidence.<sup>75</sup> For women the skills and qualities required were based on their domestic experiences, and for widows it could provide both a place of residence and an income.

Leah Clifton, widow of James Clifton, ran a 'Chop, Steak and General Eating House' at 'The Round of Beef' on the corner of Milford Street. She promoted her business by declaring that 'LC's mode of curing hams has gained for them a decided preference' and by advertising 'sausages fresh made every day', to be washed down with 'Good Home Brewed Strong Beer and Ales'.<sup>76</sup> Eliza Howell, innkeeper at The Bull in Fisherton Street, was only 25 with a three-year-old daughter in 1851; she employed a barmaid, and cook, and a brewer. At the Swan Inn, Harnham, just beyond the bridge outside the southern Close Gate, Ann Bown published thanks to 'her friends and the public for the favours conferred upon her late husband during the last 23 years' and expressed her determination 'to carry on the Business in all its branches as heretofore'.<sup>77</sup>

At the age of 57 in 1851, widowed Mary Soney was the Superintendent at the White Hart, the grandest establishment in the city. She was working under an unmarried 37-year-old Hotel Keeper, Mr Jones. Mary's responsibilities were to run the domestic side of the hotel with a staff of six young women – a barmaid, two chambermaids, a 'waiters maid' and two kitchen maids, and two men – the cook and a waiter. Six guests were staying on census night in 1851. Sarah Rogers took over at the Red Lion when her

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<sup>74</sup> Winstanley, 1983 has a chapter on butchers; the testimony of Charlie Marks, referring to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, illustrates the need for male employees 'You pole-axed your bullock...' p 146

<sup>75</sup> A discussion of drink retailers in Bradford reveals both the hierarchical nature of the trade, and the inconsistencies of sources for analysing this industry, though it does not consider the role of women specifically. Jennings P, *Local Population Studies*, No 64 Spring 2000 p 23-37

<sup>76</sup> *SJ* 2 and 9 October 1852 p 2

<sup>77</sup> *SJ* 15 March 1851 p 2



husband died in 1860. The census in the following year described her as ‘employing six persons’ though eight servants were listed. Four commercial travellers were staying at the time.

Louisa Potto, at the Haunch of Venison, was a particular success story. Firmin Potto, wine merchant, was the licensee there when the census was taken in 1851, 1861 and 1871. In the latter year he was aged 66, and the only other person resident on census night was Louisa Bradbeer, aged 30, unmarried, described as ‘housekeeper’. Ten years later the head of the household was Louisa Potto, 40 year-old widow, ‘inn keeper’. Also at the Haunch were her sister Sarah, niece Emma, and nephew Francis, all Bradbeers, all unmarried and with jobs at the inn. In 1891 Louisa had become ‘wine and spirit merchant’ and another sister Emma Bradbeer (probably sister-in-law, and mother of Emma and Francis) was also in residence. Firmin Potto died in January 1875 and in his will bequeathed to Louisa ‘...all stock in trade with the fixtures and fittings and other articles utensils and things belonging to my business together with the goodwill of such business as now carried on by me at the Haunch of Venison ...’. She received the premises and was urged to keep them ‘...insured against fire ...and in a state of thoroughly good and tenantable repair’ and to use ‘...her best ability to keep on foot the licence for keeping open the said premises as a licensed victualling house’.<sup>78</sup> The licence was transferred to Louisa on 1 February 1875.<sup>79</sup> She had her own cards printed detailing the products of her business, drawing attention to her independent status.

Taking in lodgers was another way for women to make a living, to earn an income *inside* their own home. Inviting in strangers was close to operating in the public sphere, and of course the receipt of rent in return for the use of space in the house, let alone payment for other services, brought the process into the public economy. Advertising for lodgers, if only with a card in the window, also made the activity obvious to neighbours. But at the same time it was a role entirely consistent with the ‘female’ function of providing ‘surrogate family’ services.<sup>80</sup> And it was an appropriate way for widows to maintain both a home for their family and a respectable image. Demand for accommodation came from people requiring different services, for varying lengths of

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<sup>78</sup> WSRO Will 1875/63

<sup>79</sup> Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum ephemera collection, Mrs R Lemon papers.

<sup>80</sup> Davidoff L, ‘The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century England’ in Burnham S, (ed) *Fit Work for Women*, London 1979

time, at greater or lesser cost. So supplying those needs provided opportunities to women in different circumstances.

From the early nineteenth century, Leonore Davidoff argues, ‘lodging and boarding began to carry moral opprobrium’.<sup>81</sup> This opinion was reflected locally, and at the end of the century, in a letter from America which commented ‘...poor little Liz to have to undertake such a hard life as keeping lodgers, it has always seemed to me to be the very last resource of the destitute’.<sup>82</sup> But this was countered by the variety of lodgings; it was by no means only an inferior source of livelihood. Derek Constable, in his study of Salisbury, Swindon and Horsham, found ‘[t]he lodgers are of all social classes, many different occupations, and the society presumably accepted lodging as a normal method of providing accommodation with no social stigma attached to it’.<sup>83</sup> And as Jane Emerson found in Exeter ‘the range of immigrants in rented accommodation ... was as diverse as the types of lodgings’.<sup>84</sup> Salisbury had much in common with Exeter, and a similar diversity was to be found here. Landladies (and landlords) were providing somewhere to live for employees, itinerant workers, commercial travellers, temporary visitors, and others.

Five women were classified as ‘lodging house keeper’ in 1851, none in 1861, and five again in 1871. The Common Lodgings Houses Act of 1851 was described by Davidoff as ‘one of the first and most punitive interventionist pieces of Victorian legislation’.<sup>85</sup> In Salisbury the Committee on Common Lodging Houses fixed the numbers to be received in three establishments in their report of May 1852. For example, Hannah Hayter’s house in Trinity Street had five bedrooms, and permission to take 28 lodgers.<sup>86</sup> In 1851 there appear to have been 12 people staying on census night, hawkers and labourers, several with their wives, with birthplaces as far distant as Scotland, Ireland,

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<sup>81</sup> *ibid* p 155

<sup>82</sup> Arthur Boyle 7 January 1891. Blackmore family papers. WSRO 776/585

<sup>83</sup> Constable D, ‘Household Structure in Three English Market Towns 1851-1871’, University of Reading, Department of Geography *Geographical Papers* No 55 1977 p 18

<sup>84</sup> Emerson J, ‘The Lodging Market in a Victorian City: Exeter’, *Southern History* Vol 9 1987 p 105

<sup>85</sup> Davidoff, 1995 p 157

<sup>86</sup> WSRO G23/100/2 6 May 1852. The accommodation was arranged as follows:

Bedroom	No of Beds	No of Lodgers
1	3	5
2	2	4
3	4	8
4	2	4
5	4	7

and Constantinople. Nearby Mary Ann Hibberd was accommodating 14 lodgers, and the Mitchells (registered for 21 people) had 12 ‘travellers to lodging houses in different towns’. Charlotte Walker in Love Lane had nine hawkers and an engineer (including birthplaces Ceylon and St Helena – both noted as British subjects). Mary Coffee, out at Bugmore, had seven male lodgers, including a Pensioner of the Queen of Spain, plus Harriett Dash (unmarried, aged 23 ‘a beggar’) and her 7 month old daughter. A number of the inns in the city provided accommodation, and the people staying there were enumerated as lodgers – five at the Ring of Bells, three at The Goat.

More discreetly, landladies provided accommodation for individuals and couples. This retained greater privacy, and respectability. Mary Ann Simmonds, a widowed bonnet maker in the New Canal in 1851, took in a married couple. Mrs Courtney in St Ann’s Street offered ‘Apartments consisting of five comfortable rooms, to let’.<sup>87</sup> In 1897 Miss Beave advertised ‘Furnished Apartments, (two minutes walk from the cathedral), Good Attendance, Moderate terms’.<sup>88</sup> Five years earlier the Misses Harding offered ‘Apartments or Board at Radnor House, Fisherton, Salisbury (within three minutes walk of the SWR and GWR stations)’.<sup>89</sup> In 1851 the lodgers at the Close Gate were a professor of music and a law student. Thomas Hardy’s Melchester was based on the city of Salisbury. When Jude Fawley arrived there

The lodgings he took near the Close Gate would not have disgraced a curate ... His combined bed and sitting room was furnished with framed photographs of the rectories and deaneries at which his landlady had lived as a trusted servant in her time ...<sup>90</sup>

Providing accommodation and meals fitted well within the traditional nurturing role expected of females, and receiving payment in return for these services produced an income. However, the need to survive could lead widows into some distinctly unfeminine trades. Although under different circumstances they might not have chosen those occupations, this did not mean they were any less likely to succeed. If as wives they had kept away from the public face of the family business, as widows they had little choice. Mrs Jay carried on printing ‘having a large family dependent on her’.<sup>91</sup> Sarah Bedford maintained the family nursery, apparently specialising in asparagus, but

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<sup>87</sup> *SJ* 25 February 1860 p 4

<sup>88</sup> Langmead and Evans, *Directory* p xxxi

<sup>89</sup> Railway timetable advertisement. Salisbury Museum ephemera collection

<sup>90</sup> Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, first published 1895, 1998 edn p 140

<sup>91</sup> *SJ* 7 March 1885 p 5

acknowledged in her advertisement that this would be ‘with the aid of experienced workmen’.<sup>92</sup> Continuity was also achieved by Anne Keynes who purposed ‘carrying on the trade [Wholesale and Retail Brush Manufactory] in all its branches ... with the assistance of Mr John Keynes’.<sup>93</sup> Patience Simmonds, after thanking her customers for ‘the kind support she has received since the decease of her husband’ solicited

an early inspection of a large Assortment of Paper Hangings, just received for the present season which she is enabled to offer at exceedingly low prices.

NB Perambulators, Iron Bedsteads, Carpetings, Rugs, Floor Cloths, and Well-Manufactured Furniture of every description always in stock.<sup>94</sup>

A year later at the time of the census, Mrs Simmonds was aged 52 and described as a cabinet maker, a term suggesting she was a member of a skilled craft, probably unlikely given the earlier description of her activities though she could have been supervising journeymen. Maria Small was in a related trade. Her advertisement on the death of her husband stated clearly two factors that probably applied to many of these widows. She *had* previously been involved in the business, and her sons would superintend the male employees. It was also a very long-lived business, as she thanks patrons for their support for 41 years.<sup>95</sup>

The Gillinghams’ business was divided for the succession. On the ‘demise of her late lamented husband’, Mrs Gillingham continued to sell groceries and ‘an Assortment of Fareham and Other Hops’. Her son, S F Gillingham informed readers of the *Salisbury Journal* that he had succeeded to the Post Horse and Livery Stables business ‘so many years carried on by his late father’.<sup>96</sup> This can be seen as a gender division, playing to the strengths of each member of the family.

Michael Snell’s survey of Salisbury gunsmiths identified several widows who continued that skilled and distinctly unfeminine craft.<sup>97</sup> Elizabeth Rhoades carried on the business for several years after her husband’s death in 1865. By the 1871 census the premises were occupied by John Ilsley, who advertised as ‘late Rhoades’. James Webb died in 1872, and Mrs Webb announced her intention to keep the business going ‘with the

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<sup>92</sup> *SJ* 7 January 1860 p 4

<sup>93</sup> *SJ* 4 February 1860 p 5

<sup>94</sup> *SJ* 25 February 1860 p 4

<sup>95</sup> *SJ* 20 March 1869 p 5

<sup>96</sup> *SJ* 11 November 1854 p 2

<sup>97</sup> Snell M, *Salisbury Gunsmiths*, Salisbury 1999 p 66, 90, 99, 109,

assistance of the Foreman who has been with them a number of years'. She 'solicits an early inspection of the large stock of Breech and Muzzle-loading Guns, Revolvers etc she has on hand'.<sup>98</sup>

Whips were made by the Hill family in Winchester Street, and when William died at the end of 1850, Elizabeth took over the business with their son Frederic, announcing that it would be 'carried on in all its branches, as heretofore, by E. Hill and F. Hill, under the Firm of Hill & Son'. Although Frederic had previously worked with his father, he remained the subordinate partner to his widowed mother. Their advertisement reveals an awareness of their trade beyond the city boundaries '...at all times having on sale the best Articles, as prices as low as any Wholesale House in the Kingdom, manufactured under their own immediate superintendence, by means of the most improved machinery'.<sup>99</sup>

Although not a large industry, horsehair manufacturing employed both women and men around the city in the various skills required. This produced a hard-wearing versatile fabric using the hair from horses' tails woven on a cotton (or other fibre) warp.<sup>100</sup> Butlers was one of the leading local families in this trade, and in 1851 Margaret Butler, a widow aged 66, was described as 'horse hair manufacturer'. The same title was also given to her next door neighbour, with the same name so presumably her son. Martha Bevan, widowed and aged 71, was living in the almshouse just along the road from the Butlers, she was described as 'formerly weaver of horse hair'.

Mrs Woodcock ran the mill at Quidhampton just to the west of Salisbury. She advertised *Genuine Bone Dust* for sale (demonstrating that recycling is not a modern notion) and stated 'Mrs W will thank her Friends to give her a few days notice previous to sending their waggons'.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *SJ* 26 October 1872 p 5

<sup>99</sup> *SJ* 11 January 1851 p 2. Frederic was not particularly young, he was aged 39 in 1851. The census return said he employed 6 men. Elizabeth was not at home on census night 30 March 1851.

<sup>100</sup> Both men and women were weavers; other tasks were 'drawer' which involved sorting the tail hair into matching lengths, 'picker' – sorting into colours, 'server' – feeding the individual hairs to the weaver (often done by a child, such as Priscilla Roomes, aged 13), and 'curler' or 'tipper' – twisting the waste hair to make stuffing for furniture etc. One firm continues this trade, John Boyd of Castle Cary, Somerset, who kindly supplied this information and samples of hair and fabric.

<sup>101</sup> *SJ* 12 April 1851 p 2

Eleanor Bryant lived at Bryant's Yard, off the High Street. She was a widow, aged 42 in 1851, with three young daughters, and described as a Bricklayer employing 4 men. Her address indicates a family building yard between the street frontage and the river. Three other households were also living in Bryant's Yard. Eleanor wrote her will in 1854, making no specific mention of the business, only 'all freehold and leasehold property wheresoever situated', though one of her executors was John Andrew Sutton of Fisherton Anger, brickmaker. She lived until 1877. Without further evidence, it is not unreasonable to assume, as with other widows discussed here, that Mrs Bryant acted as principal in the firm, while the work was carried out by the men she employed.<sup>102</sup>

When the Salisbury Literary and Scientific Institution purchased a property to convert into a public lecture hall 'so that the youth of the city may have a place of resort for their leisure hours free from any temptation to dissipation or excess' they raised the money by public subscription, employed Mr Harding as architect and surveyor, and gave the building contract to Mrs Hale. In July 1871 a dinner was held for 'the workmen who have been employed in the erection of the new Literary and Scientific Institute in New Street'. Mrs Hale did not appear to have been present, though she shared the cost of the celebration with the Building Committee. Several quotations from the speeches given at the dinner revealed the anomalous situation her role created. Mr Harding 'in the course of his remarks alluded to the very creditable manner in which the erection has been carried out by Mrs Hale, the contractor, under the superintendence of Mr Abley, her foreman ...'. The proposer of a toast to 'the health of Mrs Hale' observed that 'the Society had been fortunate in placing the building contract in her hands'. Mr Henry Hale was called upon to respond by the Chairman who 'trusted that he [Henry Hale] would walk in the footsteps of his worthy father and be as good a business man as he was'.<sup>103</sup> Note that Henry was commended to resemble his father, not *mother*, despite their earlier praise for her work.

Despite their best endeavours, and earnest intentions, not everyone managed to preserve the family business for long. Sarah Morgan tried to continue the Salisbury Pipe Manufactory after her husband died, but had 'to relinquish the business in favour of Mr

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<sup>102</sup> There is evidence of women working on construction sites, and well as running the firm, in Bristol . C Powell, "Widows and others' on Bristol building sites: some women in nineteenth century construction', *The Local Historian* Vol 20 No 2 May 1990, pp 84 - 87

<sup>103</sup> *SJ* 1 July 1871 p 8

James Skeines whom she has much confidence in recommending ...'. Skeines acknowledged Sarah's intermediate position when advertising that he 'respectfully solicits a continuance of the favours so liberally bestowed on his predecessor and her late husband'.<sup>104</sup> Commercial forces probably played an important part, but another significant factor in determining whether widows were successful would be how closely they had been involved with the business while their husbands were alive, and this would vary with the nature of the business. The financial security of the firm, the state of the particular industry and the condition of the local economy at the time would all have played a part. But widowhood did not necessarily have to be an economic disaster for a woman.<sup>105</sup>

### Factors affecting success

Assessing success or failure for the enterprises of these Salisbury women is not straightforward. The objectives against which to judge were seldom clearly defined, they varied from person to person, and also changed over any one woman's lifetime.<sup>106</sup> The girl whose advertisement was quoted above who said 'salary no object provided she could have the comfort of a home' had a particular criterion that met her needs at the time. Alison Parkinson (Kay) has identified benefits such as independence, flexibility, comfort, and respectability achieved by small business proprietors which 'skewed women's opportunities and choices' away from the most rational commercial decisions.<sup>107</sup> Stana Nenadic found 'the absence of an aggressive entrepreneurial stance' replaced by 'securing a stable and safe income' amongst women in the garment trades in Edinburgh.<sup>108</sup> From the point of view of the individual women it was often survival, or continuity, or satisfaction, rather than profit maximisation that provided the criteria

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<sup>104</sup> *SJ* 21 July 1860 p 5

<sup>105</sup> Ron Mackelworth, studying a Surrey village found '[m]ost of the key family businesses survived the death of the head of the household'. Mackelworth R, 'Trades Crafts and Credit in a Victorian Village: A Trading Family in Milford Surrey 1851 – 1881, *Family and Community History* Vol 2/1 May 1999 p 39

<sup>106</sup> It is also problematic when key sources provide a static snapshot view, and when preservation of additional evidence is erratic. Changes in size, location, structure or emphasis of the business can be ways of identifying changing circumstances. In most cases, though not invariably, it is possible to identify the direction of change, and thus to distinguish the beneficial from the detrimental. However, measuring the extent of such growth or decline is impossible without systematic formal records. Longevity could also be a way of judging a successful business, and some local enterprises were surprisingly long-lived. But for a particular individual lasting involvement may not have been an important objective. As has been discussed above, widows 'care-taking' the family shop wanted to keep going between the death of their husband and the adulthood of their son.

<sup>107</sup> Parkinson A, 'Marry – Stitch – Die or Do Worse'? *Female self-employment and small business proprietorship in London 1740 – 1880*, unpublished DPhil thesis Nuffield College Oxford 2003

<sup>108</sup> Nenadic S, 1998 p 625 - 645

for their actions. Both *internal* and *external* factors influenced the extent to which women could achieve the objectives that they set themselves. This section continues by highlighting some possible indicators of varying fortunes from within the firms, and then considers aspects of the relationship between these local businesses and the wider economy.

The insertion of an advertisement in the local newspaper was then, as now, a widely used method of communication between businesses and their customers, and indeed their competitors. The regular combination of thanks for past custom with the announcement of the arrival of new stock in the showroom became a seasonal ritual in which it was necessary to participate or risk loss of market share.<sup>109</sup> An advertisement proclaiming an expansion in lines of stock is harder to interpret. For women in the dressmaking and millinery trades it was important that they responded to the demands of fashion. But did diversification represent a growth in the business or difficulty in identifying or maintaining a market segment? A similar problem was presented here in reverse: ‘Mrs Butler ... will in future devote her whole time to one branch of her business – widow’s millinery ...’.<sup>110</sup> Did this mean she was unsuccessful in other skills, so was cutting her losses, or had she seen an opportunity to specialise and exploit the market for mourning dress required by contemporary social conventions?<sup>111</sup> At the same time there was some suggestion of contraction, as the change of emphasis was accompanied by a move from the High Street to a location some distance from the city centre, though still a highly respectable address. Perhaps this was a step towards retirement, or a sensible commercial decision when attracting passing trade was less important. However, being out of the public eye was not necessarily a good idea. Nearly two years later Mrs Butler placed another advertisement:

Mrs Butler finding the impression has become general that she has Declined Business wishes to correct the error and to state that she continues to make widows’ caps in every variety of pattern and material.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> There are many, many examples of this. Eg ‘Mrs Dawkins begs to announce her return from London with new Spring Fashions’ *SJ* 3 March 1860 p 5

<sup>110</sup> *SJ* 23 June 1860 p 5

<sup>111</sup> It seems likely that this was a time, especially in the provinces, when rigorous obligations were still felt, and complied with as far as practically possible. Jalland P, *Death in the Victorian Family*, Oxford 1996 pp 304–305 finds ‘a transitional period in relation to death, grief and mourning’ in the 1870s and 188s when more rigid conventions were relaxed.

<sup>112</sup> *SJ* 1 March 1862 p 5



The closure of a business was a more definite event, but advertisements often failed to throw any light on the reasons why this happened. ‘Mrs Dawkins, having purchased the stock-in-trade of Miss Watkins, milliner ...’.<sup>113</sup> ‘Mrs Foot, Laundress, having given up the business, begs most respectfully to return her sincere thanks ...’.<sup>114</sup> The difference in tone of these two implies rather different situations; the latter sounds like a positive decision on Mrs Foot’s part to cease trading, whereas the suggestion in the former is of Miss Watkins’ failure in business, though she could, of course, simply have been getting married.

Sophia Masters had certainly got into commercial difficulties. A sale notice stated ‘... will sell by auction without reserve (under an assignment for the benefit of creditors) .. the household furniture and stock-in-trade of Miss Masters ...’.<sup>115</sup> A year earlier she was recorded in the census as a milliner and dressmaker employing three apprentices, located in St Thomas’s Square in the centre of town. In this case the chance survival of a deed among a solicitor’s papers reveals a little, though not much, more. Under the heading ‘Bankruptcy Act 1861’, Sophia Masters, milliner and dressmaker, conveyed all her estate and effects to be applied and administered for the benefit of her creditors ‘in like manner as if the said Sophia Masters had been at the date hereof duly adjudged bankrupt’. The creditors were a substantial drapery business in the city, from whom presumably she had purchased her supplies on trade credit. Unfortunately the column headed ‘Amount of Debt’ is blank, though the deed is duly signed by all parties.<sup>116</sup>

‘Mrs Churcher begs sincerely to thank her friends for the kind support she has received for the last 18 years and regrets from ill-health she is obliged to relinquish the business ...’.<sup>117</sup> This advertisement provides a clear statement explaining the departure of Mrs Churcher. The longevity of the business should not go unnoticed. It is not easy to test how unusual this was, but it was sufficiently special to be a matter of comment in the notice disposing of the property: ‘*old established* dress and mantle making business’, and in the announcement from Miss Davis who ‘succeeded to the business *so long*

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<sup>113</sup> *SJ* 23 June 1860 p 5

<sup>114</sup> *SJ* 22 April 1860 p 5

<sup>115</sup> *SJ* 26 April 1862 p 5

<sup>116</sup> WSRO 776/904

<sup>117</sup> *SJ* 26 April 1862 p 5

carried on by Mrs Churcher ...'.<sup>118</sup> Mrs Churcher's reputation can also be judged from the use of her name by a former employee setting up independently.<sup>119</sup>

Without detailed business records judging the quality of financial management of these enterprises and explaining their experiences can only be guessed. Sophia Masters' failure could have been a cash-flow problem or more fundamental lack of capital, a shortage – perhaps temporary – of customers, or an increase in rent. Mary Clark 'having occasion for the sum of £600' entered into a mortgage with George Weetman in 1862 to borrow that sum on the security of property in the city built by her late husband. Five years later 'being desirous of paying off the sum of £600 so remaining due' she borrowed £600 at the same 5% from John Lambert to pay Weetman.<sup>120</sup> She was still trading as an innkeeper at the same address aged 71 at the time of the next census. Had she got into debt, or was she improving the buildings or developing the brewery? Perhaps she too had problems running the business: in 1861 she had appeared before magistrates and been fined £1 with 8/6 costs for using 'unjust cups' which had been seized by Weights and Measures inspectors.<sup>121</sup>

Equally frustrating in trying to understand the operation of these businesses is an advertisement such as

To Drapers and Others

Wanted by a respectable female – a small ready-money business in this line. There would be no objection to a general shop, if not too extensive, and where drapery was the principal. The advertiser would pay cash for stock and fixtures if approved of.

Or

To Milliners and Dressmakers

Shop and Business Required in a respectable situation in Salisbury. Any parties wishing to Dispose of their Business in the above line may hear of a purchaser with money at command by addressing full particulars to ABCD Journal Office Salisbury.

Where would the means to make these purchases come from? Possibilities include inheritance, savings, family assistance, or capital from a former business. If the latter, was this to be an improvement or deterioration in status? The advertiser could have been previously employed in a drapery establishment and now wanted to strike out on

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<sup>118</sup> *SJ* 3 May 1862 pp 4 and 5 (my italics in both)

<sup>119</sup> *SJ* 19 May 1862 p 5

<sup>120</sup> WSRO 776/834

<sup>121</sup> WSRO G23/870/2 April 1861

her own. The experience of the Misses Hooper has already been discussed above.<sup>122</sup> Another anonymous advertiser was offering an opportunity for someone to make progress in a career, and again it was necessary for the woman to have some assets to hand:

Wanted

A Respectable Female who has a good knowledge of Stay Making to take the Management of a Retail Business in Salisbury. Security Required.<sup>123</sup>

Short-term debts between small traders and their customers and their suppliers were common.<sup>124</sup> Trade credit was a normal method of financing a business, and payment within the specified time-period would usually be made as routine. Mackelworth has suggested

long-established family firms enjoyed an easy familiarity with their local customers and trading partners, making it possible to assess business risks and retain a good reputation. Once trust was established, credit could play an essential part ...<sup>125</sup>

Although he was researching a village community, a similar degree of local knowledge would have existed in the commercial community in Salisbury. It was when something disrupted this stability, either a decision on the part of the proprietor or an outside factor, that a business could find itself in difficulties.

Forces from outside the business influenced the context within which all these commercial enterprises operated, and could affect their degree of success. Anything that altered the ability or willingness of customers to buy was significant. Disruption to supplies, changes in the cost of resources, and the behaviour of competitors were all important at different times and to varying degrees. A severe outbreak of cholera in Salisbury in the summer of 1849 had a serious impact on trade, as those who had somewhere to go left the city for a safer place, and the remaining population had other worries. The London *Times* reported that the 'visitation has completely prostrated the trade of the place'; there is 'virtually nothing doing and the complaints of the

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<sup>122</sup> See p 105 - 6

<sup>123</sup> *SJ* 3 March 1860 p 5

<sup>124</sup> Johnson P, 'Small debts and economic distress in England and Wales 1857-1913', *Economic History Review* XLVI 1 (1993). The statistical tables available from this analysis provide only total numbers of people so do not permit counting of women who were taken to court for debt, though it should be possible to identify individuals from the original court records. Southall HR and Gildbert DR, *Great Britain Historical Database: Economic Distress and Labour Market Data: Small Debt Statistics 1847, 1851-1857, 1866, 1868-1913 and 1938*, [computer file] Colchester Essex, UK Data Archive [distributor] August 2004 SN: 4568

<sup>125</sup> Mackelworth, 1999 p 39

tradespeople are heard on every hand'.<sup>126</sup> No doubt the national publicity given to the epidemic deterred tourists that year, but the immediate effect seems to have been shortlived. Schools announced their reopening that summer as usual. However, longer term consequences could undermine the prosperity of the very people who were significant as customers of specialised shops. Board of Health Inspector Thomas Rammell's report commented that the rateable value of Salisbury houses fell by between 25 and 35%.<sup>127</sup>

The opening of the railway was greeted with great enthusiasm at each stage of the process, and the potential benefits to the city were spelt out in detail – to the extent of claiming, somewhat optimistically, that it would become 'the Manchester of the South'.<sup>128</sup> This was unlikely - Salisbury's days as a major textile centre were far in the past – but the varied commercial interests of the time were keen to exploit its potential. More customers and more tourists able to travel easily, cheaper necessities such as coal and salt leaving more income for bonnets and furniture, and the opportunities for relatively well-paid and secure employment with the railway companies, all contributed to potentially increased demand for local firms.

In contrast, the agricultural depression of the 1870s undermined the incomes of landowners, farmers and farmworkers in the district around Salisbury. Mr Rawlence, local farmer and land surveyor and valuer, identified 'free trade' as one of the causes of the agricultural depression. Imports of foodstuffs produced in other countries on a large scale and at lower cost, competed with home produced goods. Agricultural prices, especially for the arable crops that dominated the region, fell and the incidence of rent arrears rose. Problems for this industry continued to the end of the century. The report of Mr Henry Few to the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1895 contained comments such as '...if allowance were made for fair interest on buildings, roads, etc the landlord gets no rent at all for the land ...' '[t]here can be no doubt at all that tenant farmers have lost heavily during the past 10 or 15 years ...' '...a salient effect of the depression is the diminution of the demand for labour ...'<sup>129</sup> All these people would be customers of Salisbury firms, particularly the shops, and the inns, but also professional services such

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<sup>126</sup> *The Times* August 1849

<sup>127</sup> Rammell, 1851 p 25

<sup>128</sup> *SJ* 6 March 1847 p 2. See also p 78 above.

<sup>129</sup> C.7624 p 12, 13, 17

as solicitors, surveyors and banks, and other specialists such as agricultural engineers. So if farmers' wives could no longer afford to buy a new bonnet, Salisbury milliners suffered the consequences.

In the 1860s advertisements trumpeted the benefits for Salisbury customers of changes in trade relations, including, sadly, benefits resulting from the suffering of others. Under the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of January 1860 customs dues on all imports (except wines and spirits) from France to Britain were abolished, and France ended import prohibitions and agreed a progressive reduction in tariffs.<sup>130</sup> In Salisbury '... silks, ribbons, flowers, gloves, lace and every description of dress material' were on sale at lower prices owing to 'duty off all French goods'.<sup>131</sup> Two years later the impact of this on home industry was noted: the 'positive and almost total annihilation of the English silk trades caused by open French competition', though overall the value of British manufactured goods exported to France doubled in ten years after 1860.<sup>132</sup> Additionally 'neglected cultivation of the cotton plant caused by the civil war in America' resulted in 'compulsory working of short time by many mills of importance throughout Manchester, Bolton and other manufacturing districts'. This adverse situation in the north enabled the stock of 'eminent merchants who have unavoidably succumbed to the tide of events' to be available to the customers of Salisbury.<sup>133</sup> Britain's position in international markets provided opportunities for local retailers, demonstrating how influences well beyond their familiar vicinity could have an impact on the local economy and the businesses therein.

### **Continuity and change**

In the later years of the nineteenth century women continued to have a significant place in the commercial life of Salisbury. It was said that 'the city is steadily growing in size and importance' and it presented 'a beautifully calm and peaceful aspect, suggestive of quiet contentment and prosperity'.<sup>134</sup> The city's total population had grown from 11,600 in 1851 to 15,500 in 1891 and, although there was no formal extension of the boundaries between 1835 and 1904, the built-up area expanded, and urban impact was

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<sup>130</sup> Cobban A, *A History of Modern France*, Vol 2 1965 p 178

<sup>131</sup> *SJ* 17 March 1860 p 5

<sup>132</sup> Evans EJ, *The Forging of the Modern State*, 1983 p 277

<sup>133</sup> *SJ* 1 February 1862 p 5

<sup>134</sup> Langmead and Evans *Directory* p 17

increasingly felt in the neighbouring parishes of Fisherton, Harnham, Milford and Laverstock.<sup>135</sup>

This growth in population is one of the factors that make direct comparisons of the numbers of economically active women difficult. For the outline that follows, based on the 1891 census enumerators' books, the three city parishes of St Thomas, St Martin and St Edmund, plus The Close have been used – the same area covered by the 1851 census material discussed earlier in this chapter. No attempt has been made to include the wider geographical spread which would by this time have been identified by the citizens as 'Salisbury'.

The second major problem in considering changes in women's employment over this period is that the tables of occupations in the published census reports in the later nineteenth century no longer give separate data for towns as small as Salisbury. The city's workers are included in the statistics for the county of Wiltshire and are thus unavailable for the purposes of this study. It is therefore not possible to include a table comparable to that in footnote 14 page 88. Instead, an examination has been made of the census enumerators' books (CEBs), together with the two trade directories issued closest in date to 1891, to consider the patterns of women's occupations at that time.

There is inevitably a degree of subjectiveness in allocating women to groups, in addition to the comments about inadequacies in the coverage of women's occupations in both these types of sources made earlier.<sup>136</sup> Despite these methodological limitations, this section of Chapter 3 nevertheless examines some key features of women's work in the last decade of the nineteenth century revealing both continuities with the middle decades of the century, and changes reflecting wider economic and social developments.

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<sup>135</sup> See maps p 275

<sup>136</sup> See chapter 1 pages 21- 2 and 32

The predominant categories of women's occupations remained very similar at the end of the century to what they had been in the 1850s.<sup>137</sup> Production of clothing by dressmakers, milliners, tailors, shirt makers, corset makers and other specialists was again the largest single area of work. The need for someone to care for that clothing can be seen in the continuing substantial numbers of women involved in laundry work.

There were still women working in 'textiles' but the numbers had fallen, and the fibres concerned had largely changed. One horsehair manufacturer continued in business, but other products were now canvas for corn and coal sacks, and carpets. Most of the workers in Mr Evan's carpet factory in Castle Street do not appear in the table in footnote 137, as fourteen of the nineteen employed there in 1891 were girls aged under 20 years.

Commercial provision of food and drink, and of accommodation, retained its importance for generating women's economic opportunities. In 1891 Mrs Barnes was manageress at the largest hotel in the city, The White Hart. Other women were 'innkeeper' at the Queens Arms, 'hotel keeper' at The Chough, and 'bar manageress' at the Old George. Lodgings and boarding houses, and apartments, supplied the needs of an increasingly mobile population. There was a continuing presence of significant numbers of women in education, nursing and other caring roles such as 'attendant at asylum' and matrons of almshouses. A new feature in the CEBs at this time was the clear designation '*certificated* midwife' and '*certificated* nurse' confirming an increased professionalism in these careers.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> **Females in Salisbury in occupational categories**

	1891 CEB (women over 20 yrs)	Kelly Post Office <i>Directory</i> 1889	Langmead & Evans <i>Directory</i> 1897
Clothing	217	25	23
Laundry work	117	2	2
Food, drink & Accommodation	67	25	25
Education	110*	20	20
Nursing	53	-	-
Textiles	13	2	2
Shops	75	14	19
Building, furniture	7	1	3
Metals, hardware	1	1	2

\*includes 73 students at Diocesan Training College

<sup>138</sup> See also chapter 4 for nursing

Salisbury's position as a service centre, which was already established in the middle of the nineteenth century and continued to develop throughout this time, is reflected in the increased number of women working in shops. The city itself grew, and transport links with the surrounding hinterland improved making access to the market and shops easier. There was also a trend to separate the roles of producer and retailer which would have contributed to this increase. Designations unseen in the 1851 CEBs demonstrate specialist outlets now available to customers in 1891 – 'sweet shop' (Eliza Rugg), 'newsagent' (Mathilda Best), 'tobacconist' (Elizabeth Dorrell and Alice Jeffrey), and 'dealer in antiquities' (Agnes Davies).

Another feature was the arrival of 'large' shops providing employment openings for women as shop assistants. While Salisbury had nothing to rival the department stores of major cities, there was visible expansion particularly in drapery.<sup>139</sup> In 1891 'draper and silk mercer' Thomas Bloom was located on an important central site on the corner of The Canal and Catherine Street. He employed six shopwomen as 'draper's assistant', another six as 'dressmaker's assistant', and four as 'dressmaker's apprentice', plus a milliner, a mantle maker, and a machinist (also a new job following the advent of sewing machines). These women, aged between 17 and 31, came from London, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Devon, Gloucestershire and Cambridge, as well as places nearer to Salisbury, indicating a widespread network of information about such work. John W Clark, 'draper and milliner' on the Wood Market had seven employees boarding in.<sup>140</sup> Nothing is known of conditions under which they worked locally, but the living-in system was subject to criticism elsewhere. Barbara Harrison has pointed out the paradox between the image of respectability retained by shop assistants, and the working conditions 'no better than either domestic service or factory work'.<sup>141</sup> Louise Cooper was the only female head of a similar establishment, and she too had a prominent location, on Blue Boar Row. As a lady's outfitter, Mrs Cooper employed assistant outfitters, milliners and assistant milliners, of whom four were her daughters.

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<sup>139</sup> This trend is confirmed and developed in Benson G and Shaw G, *The Evolution of Retail Systems 1800-1914*, Leicester 1992, p 138

<sup>140</sup> Another building nearby housed 14 'boarders' designated 'draper's assistant' so it is likely these women were also employed by Clark.

<sup>141</sup> Harrison B, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades' Women's work and health in Britain 1880 – 1914*, 1996 p 111-112



The Cooper business was long established.<sup>142</sup> Advertisements revealed the variety of merchandise promoted to attract customers:

L Cooper is showing an Excellent Stock of Goods for the Season comprising the latest and choicest productions of English and Foreign Manufacturers. Special attention is called to the following departments: MILLINERY, FLOWERS & FEATHERS, JACKETS & CAPES, MANTLES & CLOAKS, SKIRTS & HOSIERY, GLOVES & SUNSHADES, LADIES' & CHILDREN'S UNDERCLOTHING, BABY LINEN.

CORSETS: an immense stock always kept. Corsets made to order from patterns or to measure.

DRESS MATERIALS of the newest designs and colouring. DRESSES MADE TO ORDER AT VERY MODERATE CHARGES. Soliciting an early call. L Cooper.<sup>143</sup>

'White-collar' jobs for women were another new characteristic of employment openings in Salisbury towards the end of the century; indicative also of a growing commercialisation and bureaucratisation of urban life at this time. Lee Holcombe has set out the conditions under which these developments took place – larger individual enterprises, increased amounts of clerical work to be done, and the rationalisation and mechanisation of office work.<sup>144</sup> Five women were designated 'clerk' in 1891 in Salisbury, and others had related occupations with financial responsibilities – as cashier, bookkeeper and accountant. The latter was a significant development from earlier decades when finance was considered an entirely male preserve. These roles were appearing in smaller establishments too, as Salisbury still had relatively few that could be considered 'large'. Sarah Judd, for example, was 'butcher's book keeper' for her brother Edward who was running the family butchery.<sup>145</sup> A similar advance was represented by Sarah Horner's position as postmistress (and grocer). Clerical work was a significant part of another service. Registry Offices for Servants, of which there were five in Langmead and Evans' *Directory*, were intermediaries between employers and employees, and formalised the employment of the many ranks of domestic servants. Printers, such as Elizabeth Taylor, and stationers, such as Mrs Anna Mabbett, were also necessary aspects of this changing local economy.

A third area of change can be seen in the way occupations reflected developments in leisure activities and pastimes, which will themselves be considered further in Chapter 5. Facilities and materials for embroidery and music continued to be widely available.

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<sup>142</sup> William Small in his *Memorandum* commented that the Cooper family had been woollen drapers and silk mercers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and were still in the same premises when he was writing in 1881. WSRO 2713/1

<sup>143</sup> *SJ* 21 March 1981 p 4

<sup>144</sup> Holcome L, *Victorian Ladies at Work*, 1973 p 142

<sup>145</sup> See page 111 for an earlier generation of this family

Photography was an increasingly popular pastime and business. Mrs Owen was listed amongst the seven photographers in 1897 and Mrs Mary Ann Rogers operated a photographic service for the last two decades of the century.<sup>146</sup> In 1891 Ada Chivers, aged 16, was a 'photographic artist's apprentice', and May Preston aged 17 was a 'photographing assistant', though to whom is not known. Picture framing and other decorative touches were ancillary trades associated with domestic adornment. Women could relax in the Turkish Baths under the care of manageress Mrs Mary Ponder, while her husband supervised the male customers. Those requiring more cultural pursuits could visit the Museum where they would find Mrs Hill, the museum attendant.<sup>147</sup> Employment opportunities for women can thus be seen to reflect both established traditions and new developments.

## Conclusion

A wide variety of commercial occupations were followed by women in Victorian Salisbury. Individuals took advantage of opportunities available to them to earn a living in both conventional female trades and less predictable parts of the local economy. Apart from the 'needle trades' and hospitality, there were small numbers in any one activity, but the women concerned provide valuable examples of those who exploited small business proprietorship as a role in the public sphere. This was done at different stages in their lives, and as a result of different pressures. For many, particularly in the 'needle trades', there were women on both sides of the deal. A complex relationship developed between the producer and the customer set out in terms of class, money, taste, discretion, time, place, and even politics, going beyond the economic clarity of supply and demand.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Northgate M, *Photographers in Wiltshire* Trowbridge 1985 no page numbers

<sup>147</sup> See page 52 for establishment of the Salisbury Museum.

<sup>148</sup> '...there were, as in most country towns, rigidly defined political barriers between shops in the city – Liberal drapers, fishmongers, and so on, and Tory drapers, fishmongers and so on.' Fawcett M, *What I Remember*, 1924 p 59

## Chapter 4

### Salisbury women in caring professions

*'a woman possessed of sterling sense and great activity'*<sup>1</sup>

Women, even in a small provincial market town like Salisbury, were deeply involved in a wide range of professional and philanthropic activities. From different social groups, educational backgrounds, and family positions, women exploited opportunities to support themselves. They demonstrated a determination and commitment to caring roles as teachers and nurses, and were prepared to state this publicly.

The 1851 Census Report commented: 'The most important production of a country is its population'.<sup>2</sup> This notion of 'woman's mission to woman' as it was known at the time, (or 'social motherhood' the more modern expression used by Katherine Holden and others) described this use made of women's labour, especially single women, in a way that was beneficial to society.<sup>3</sup> Women exercised this maternal function outside their own domestic walls within institutions which functioned in most urban centres at this time.

In the nineteenth century there were certain fields of activity where respectable women could appear in the public sphere, and be personally involved without censure.

Involvement could take the form of day-to-day functions, occasional visits, and even in some cases organisational decision-making. The nature of these acceptable roles was based on the assumed capacity of women to be good at caring for others, particularly those of lesser status whether through age, health or social failure of some kind.

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<sup>1</sup> Trollope A, *Doctor Wortle's School*, first published 1881, 1960 edn p 14

<sup>2</sup> 1851 Census Report lxxxviii

<sup>3</sup> Katherine Holden speaking on *Women's Hour*, BBC Radio 4, 4 March 2002

Women with another source of financial support could commit themselves to philanthropic work in a voluntary capacity, as workhouse visitors or poor law guardians for example, and their activities in Salisbury will be discussed in the next chapter. However, for women who had to earn an income on which to live, the range of options could be limited. This was not a problem for working-class women, for whom there was not usually any doubt that they would contribute to the family economy, and for whom there was often little choice of wage-earning jobs. In the absence of factory-based industry, there was domestic service for the unmarried, and taking in laundry, casual plain needlework, running a general shop, or going out charring for married women.

For the middle-classes, however, more serious challenges arose when it became necessary for a woman to earn her living, but at the same time to retain the approval and acceptance of her family and friends. Women in this position represented a wide spectrum of financial, material and social gradation, and members of this group were thus placed in different economic circumstances. Alterations in conditions of life caused by, for example, the death of the provider, be it father, brother, or husband, could present women with the need to support themselves. There could be particular challenges faced by those on the borderlines both at the top and bottom of the group. For the former, women accustomed to secure prosperity and an acknowledged social position were less likely to have an education or skills that could be turned to practical use. Their upbringing and family were likely to place restrictions on what was possible. In the latter case, many women were familiar with the constraints imposed by a limited unearned income, but its loss, perhaps due to a bankruptcy, could place them in dire want and present the prospect of desperate measures. For others the requirement for regular earnings was a recognised part of their adult life, yet still presented a challenge, particularly as they grew older.

In the mid-nineteenth century professional occupations demanded a clear-cut gender division of labour. There was no question that women could gain qualifications and practise in the professions of medicine, law, architecture, accountancy, the church or the military. As time passed, tiny chinks of light were forced in this solid wall. By the end of the century, as Ellen Jordan has written,

a quite dramatic change had taken place. Middle-class women were now working as doctors, nurses, pharmacists and hospital dispensers, as teachers in publicly funded primary and secondary schools, as well as librarians, civil servants, clerks and shorthand typists, and as hairdressers and shop assistants.<sup>4</sup>

These developments came about partly as forceful individual pioneers pressured the authorities for change, to permit women's entry to medical schools for example; partly through more flexible social constraints; and partly with changes in the labour market, as women found openings revealed for bookkeepers, law writers, and technical drawing.

For many more women, education was a context within which financial security could be achieved without too much risk, though for some it did involve considerable hardship. When the Town and County Bank stopped payment in Mrs Gaskell's novel *Cranford*, and Miss Matty (a daughter of the late Rector) had to find an alternative source of income 'Teaching was, of course, the first thing that suggested itself'.<sup>5</sup> In practice being a governess, for example, placed many young women in an uncomfortable position between the family who were employing her and the domestic staff 'below stairs', they belonged to neither one nor the other. As M Jeanne Peterson has put it '[t]he result was a situation of conflict and incongruity for both the governess and the family'.<sup>6</sup> But it did mean that they were working in a relatively protected situation amidst familiar social practices. Chapter headings in Kathryn Hughes' *The Victorian Governess* typify the issues for such women: 'A Matter of Necessity', 'A Perfect Treadmill of Learning', 'They Dwell Alone', 'A Tabooed Woman'.<sup>7</sup> The need for an organisation such as the Governesses' Benevolent Institution indicated their vulnerability; but also held out hope when it was 'recognized that the real key to helping these women was to give them both education and pedagogical training'.<sup>8</sup> Governesses worked in the privacy of their employer's home, but the role could be used as a stepping stone to employment as a teacher in a school, or to the establishment of their own school as a commercial enterprise. By this move, a woman would transfer into the public economy.

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<sup>4</sup> Jordan E, *The Women's Movement and Women's Employment in Nineteenth century Britain*, 1999 p 5

<sup>5</sup> Gaskell E, *Cranford*, first published 1851, Blackie edition nd p 189-190

<sup>6</sup> Peterson, M Jeanne, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society' in Vicinus M, (ed) *Suffer and Be Still*, Bloomington 1973, p 5

<sup>7</sup> Hughes K, *The Victorian Governess*, 1993 p v

<sup>8</sup> Hunt F (ed), *Lessons for Life*, Oxford 1987 p 4

The Miss Saunders and Mrs Todd were proprietors of private schools in Salisbury, and will be introduced in more detail later in this chapter as case studies of these types of enterprise.<sup>9</sup> Schools such as theirs provided an opportunity to earn a living by operating a business supplying a service to those of ones own, or proximate, class. The result could be financial independence, and status within the community, but in this case the dangerous anomaly was between trade and profession rather than family and servant. On the other hand, there were relatively few barriers to entry, as use could be made of the family home, and of family members as co-workers. Standards of professional competence required could be minimal: Kathryn Hughes quotes Emily Davies giving evidence to the 1867-8 Schools Inquiry Commission ‘they are obliged to profess French and music, and I do not think they do much besides’.<sup>10</sup> This was probably common, but there were, of course, women running establishments that offered a stimulating academic curriculum to numbers of girls.

Girls’ schools based on charitable foundations were less common than those for boys, but they did provide employment for teachers within a secure environment. The conditions on which the funding was available often set down the membership of the governing body, source of pupils, characteristics of staff, and the nature of the curriculum. The Godolphin School in Salisbury was founded in 1726, and is still thriving today. A memorial tablet in Westminster Abbey to Charles and Elizabeth Godolphin explained

... £160 a year are to be for ever applied from 24 June 1726 to the education of eight young orphan gentlewomen who are so born and whose parents are of the Church of England whose fortunes do not exceed £300, and whose parents or friends will undertake to provide them with decent apparell ... to be brought up at the City of New Sarum or some other town in the County of Wilts under ye care of some prudent Governess or Schoole Mistress a Communicant of ye Church of England ...

Elizabeth Godolphin’s will went into more detail

... such young Gentlewomen shall be tabled or boarded with such Governess or schoolmistress and be taught to Dance work read write cast account and the business of Housewifry in the best manner as it can be afforded at the price above mentioned and shall be constantly obliged to attend the Service of the Church of England at all proper seasons

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<sup>9</sup> See p 153

<sup>10</sup> Hughes K, 1993 p 18

and that they shall not be admitted till after they have attained the age of twelve years nor be continued after they have accomplished the age of nineteen years.<sup>11</sup>

By the later 1800s, especially after Miss Douglas became headmistress in 1890, The Godolphin School was providing a thorough academic and social education for the girls and employment for staff in many specialisms.

A post as a teacher in a voluntary elementary school required different skills, and such a position could provide an opening for upward mobility, especially as the training system developed to support girls who were educated in those very schools.<sup>12</sup> Two societies, the non-conformist British and Foreign School Society (founded 1814), and the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (1811), ran such schools providing a very basic curriculum for working class children. They were generally organised on the 'monitorial' system of single large schoolrooms under the control of a teacher with the classes divided into groups each in charge of a 'monitor' or assistant, often only ten or eleven years old. Women were employed in the infants' and girls' departments. From 1846 the monitors were replaced by apprentices under the pupil-teacher scheme; pupil-teachers could compete for Queen's scholarships to training colleges.<sup>13</sup> When the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the state of popular education in England reported in 1861 they noted limited progress:

Whilst it appears to be proved that the character of the teachers is greatly raised by their training, and that they are altogether a superior class to those who preceded them, it is equally clear that they fail, to a considerable extent, in some of the most important duties of elementary teachers, and that a large proportion of the children are not satisfactorily taught that which they come to school to learn ...<sup>14</sup>

Salisbury's Diocesan Training College opened in 1841 with the purpose of 'remedying the greatest acknowledged deficiency in Education, viz by a supply of well instructed teachers'.<sup>15</sup> Many young women were trained there to work in the elementary schools of the diocese.

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<sup>11</sup> Douglas MA and Ash CR (eds), *The Godolphin School 1726-1926*, 1928 p 4, 10

<sup>12</sup> Elementary schools were 'day schools charging low fees and providing very basic education for poor children up to 13 years'. Widdowson F, *Going up into the Next Class*, 1983 p 94

<sup>13</sup> Lawson J and Silver H A, *Social History of Education in England*, 1973 p 269-70

<sup>14</sup> Newcastle Commission Report 1861 printed in Maclure J S, *Educational Documents England and Wales 1816-1967*, 1965 p 78

<sup>15</sup> WSRO 1585/1 8 April 1840

Welfare provision in Salisbury, alluded to in chapter 2, was largely supplied by voluntary institutions. These bodies were dependent on subscriptions and donations for their revenue, and were *managed* by voluntary committees composed of local dignitaries, who were men. Decision-making for infirmaries, workhouses, gaols, asylums and penitentiaries was concentrated in the hands of the male authorities who held responsibility for the masculine burden of financial probity.<sup>16</sup> Male dominance of the medical profession, and physical dominance considered necessary in secure penal institutions, reinforced this pattern. Matrons headed hierarchies of women who were employed to care for the female inmates.

Nursing in the mid-nineteenth century was ‘considered a particularly repugnant form of domestic service for which little or no education and special training were necessary’.<sup>17</sup> This state of affairs was typified by Sairey Gamp in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 1843. Thirty years later, when Trollope began to write *The Way We Live Now*, he could include the threat (when denied permission to marry the man of her choice) by Hetta Carbury that if she had to try and earn her own bread she ‘could go out as a nurse’.<sup>18</sup> And the changes came surprisingly quickly. Florence Nightingale’s work in the Crimea is well known, and her influence over nursing training, following her return to England in 1856 and the establishment of the Nightingale School at St Thomas’s Hospital in 1860, spread far and fast. For women’s employment, two significant points of emphasis in her approach were that candidates for the profession should be women of good character and ability, and that the nursing hierarchy should be under the control of the hospital matron, as a distinctly separate structure from the medical men of the institution. As will be shown in relation to the situation in Salisbury Infirmary, another change which altered the nature of the job for women was a reassessment of the relationship between the domestic and the nursing departments of a hospital, and in that there was progress prior to Miss Nightingale’s influence, not often noticed in general histories of the profession.

Churches and other faith-based organisations provided a variety of contexts within which women had a public role. Fanny Lucas, aged 51 and a native of the city, was employed as the SPCK librarian in Salisbury in the 1850s, and Mary Ann Bishop, a

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<sup>16</sup> There were some striking exceptions to this rule. For example, the Bristol Nurses Training Institution and Home, founded in 1862, had a majority of women (13 out of 25) in its committee. Evans, 2000

<sup>17</sup> Holcombe L, *Victorian Ladies at Work*, Hamden Conn 1973 p 68

<sup>18</sup> Trollope A, *The Way We Live Now*, first published 1863, 1994 edn p 646



bookseller in the High Street, was the Religious Tract Depot's agent at the same time. There were openings for paid jobs where a religious conviction of responsibility and dedication to others was the central qualification. Belief also provided inspiration and strength for women to stand against a society that disapproved of their determination and ambition to work outside their home. Eileen Yeo, for example, has discussed the way in which 'religious legitimation' provided both 'a positive sense of self' and justified the women's 'social action in the world'.<sup>19</sup> The churches provided a range of institutional frameworks for women's work that were secure, organised, responsible, directed, and socially acceptable. Following 'the idea that churches should save bodies as well as souls', Jose Harris has written

By the 1870s all groups and denominations were diversifying their labours into social welfare schemes: orphanages, industrial schools, ragged schools, rescue homes, shelters and soup kitchens for the very poor; mothers meetings, men's clubs, youth clubs, and a host of self-help and savings clubs for the more regular and respectable working class.<sup>20</sup>

Here were the roots of a considerable, and growing, demand for women in the labour force. Everywhere there was need for domestic workers, cooks, nurses, and teachers. But in addition positions of responsibility were available in those schemes that catered for women and girls.

Having outlined in general terms the developments in professional opportunities for women, particularly in education and nursing, the rest of this chapter will examine the extent and nature of these paid public roles held by women in Salisbury between the middle of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, in schools and at the infirmary and other institutions. Detailed information is unevenly spread, and in some cases frustratingly inadequate. Thus single individual examples have to stand for a category of people; or a brief period of time has to illustrate a long-standing operation, and in both cases their degree of representation has to be assumed unless there is evidence to the contrary. Also the formality of official records generated by institutions and organisations restricts the possibilities for exploring the day-to-day work of the people concerned, particularly the women. However, this research shows that, even within the constraints of provincial society, members of Salisbury's female population

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<sup>19</sup> Yeo E J, 'Protestant feminists and Catholic saints in Victorian Britain', in Yeo E J (ed), *Radical Femininity*, Manchester 1998 p 128

<sup>20</sup> Harris J, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870 – 1914*, Harmondsworth 1994 p 157

exploited the opportunities on offer and took on roles in the public economy that gave them both income and a degree of independence.

### **Schools in Salisbury**

In 1851 there were 25 private schools in Salisbury, catering for 408 pupils, 60% female. The city also had eight voluntary public day schools attended by over 900 boys and girls. With a population of 941 aged 5 – 10, and 855 aged 11 - 15, there was likely to have been adequate provision.<sup>21</sup> But the quality was not consistently high, either between schools or over time. *An Account of the Day Schools for the Children of the Labouring Classes in the County of Wilts* included comments on the buildings, equipment, curriculum and staff.<sup>22</sup> The infants (between 140 and 150 in number) in St Martin's parish, for example, were taught by 'a mistress of the old school, who thoroughly understands her own system, and contemns new lights'.<sup>23</sup> The girls' school there was 'pervaded with an excellent moral tone but is not on a par with the boys' school in respect of organization, *materiel*, discipline or instruction'. In St Edmund's parish 'an uncertificated mistress, a worthy person of humble attainments' taught 70 girls.

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 permitted the establishment of school boards with powers to raise funds via rates, and to build schools where there was insufficient provision to meet demand. Salisbury School Board was the first in Wiltshire and one of the first in the country, and became notorious as one of the few which never built a school.<sup>24</sup> When the newly-established Board calculated the available school places in 1871, seven public elementary schools (5 Church of England and 2 British) provided accommodation for 2,276 children. At the same time they estimated that there were 2,294 children for whom public elementary education had to be provided. Other elementary schools had 204 children in their classes, and a further 404 attended 'other

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Chandler J, *Endless Street*, Salisbury 1983 p 187 and note 12 p 308

<sup>22</sup> February 1859. WSRO. *Return to an Order of the House of Commons* by Rev William Warburton MA, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools

<sup>23</sup> Op cit p 40

<sup>24</sup> It was set up under a short-cut procedure in the Act that allowed a local council to 'requisition' a board without following the extensive route through public meetings, petitions and a demonstrable need for school places. Slocombe I, 'The Salisbury School Board 1871-1903: a reappraisal', in *Sarum Chronicle* 1 2001 p 11 -12.

schools'.<sup>25</sup> Because there was considered to be adequate provision of school places, the Board concentrated on trying to enforce attendance which they made compulsory between the ages of 5 and 13 from 1872.

However, a shortage of school places caused by the closure of one of the British schools in 1888 led to a crisis in which the nonconformist interests pressed for the establishment of a board school to relieve the deficiency, countered by the quickly-formed Salisbury Church Day School Association. Financial arguments over costs and subsidies were joined by debate over the quality of religious instruction in different types of schools and the meaning of the conscience clause in the 1870 Act permitting nonconformist parents to withdraw their children from RE sessions in Anglican schools. Then an acrimonious exchange of letters in *The Times* between Salisbury's Bishop John Wordsworth, and Liberal politician A J Mundella, and a debate on the conduct of Salisbury School Board in the House of Commons brought the issue of education provision here to national political attention.<sup>26</sup> The Bishop and his supporters won the day, resulting in the opening in April 1890 of three new *church* schools, - St Mark's, St Paul's Road and the George Herbert School.<sup>27</sup>

At the end of the century T J Northy, writing in 1897, remarked complacently that Salisbury 'is exceptionally well provided for in the matter of education for the youth of the city'.<sup>28</sup> Women were in charge of the girls' and infants' departments in his thumbnail sketches of the church and voluntary schools. A directory published in the same year includes seven elementary schools, the Bishop's School, the Choristers' School and seven private schools in its list. Under the 1902 Education Act, the city of Salisbury

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<sup>25</sup> Salisbury School Board Minute Book 5 June 1871 Report of Statistical Committee. WSRO F8/830/1. VCH 6 p 161 and Slocombe 2001 give slightly different figures, but the conclusion is the same: at the time of the establishment of the board there was no shortage of elementary school places in Salisbury.

<sup>26</sup> A J Mundella (1825-97) entered Gladstone's second ministry in 1880 as vice-president of the council, *de facto* head of the education department. Oxford DNB online 2004

<sup>27</sup> Chandler, 1983 p 188-190. See also Slocombe 2001 for a reconsideration of the work of the School Board. Also in 1890 John Wordsworth's own project – to establish a boys' secondary school – came to fruition. It was only in relatively recent times that women were appointed to the teaching staff there.

<sup>28</sup> Northy TJ, *The popular history of Old and New Sarum*, Salisbury 1897 Appendix i. This is confirmed by W B Stephens: 'Market towns, ports and administrative centres (especially London), and cathedral cities tended to have well-established school facilities ...' Stephens W B, *Education in Britain 1750-1914*, Basingstoke 1998 p 33 as he had earlier identified more specifically: 'In south-east Wiltshire the three districts centred on the cathedral city of Salisbury ... formed another area of superior literacy'. Stephens W B, *Education, Literacy and Society 1830-1870: the geography of diversity in provincial England*, Manchester 1987 p 242

became a Part III Authority responsible for its own elementary education, for around 3,000 children in six schools each with boys, girls and infants departments.

In general, in all types of schools, female teachers taught girls, or very young mixed classes. The curriculum that was expected was limited. For working class girls it concentrated on the rudiments of literacy and numeracy, with religious instruction in church schools, and increasingly with additional domestic elements for older girls. An extract from the Managers' Report was inserted in a correspondence file for Salisbury National School (St Martin's) for 1854. As well as details of the ages of the children, the length of time they had attended, the dimensions of the schoolroom, and the numbers of books, there was a summary of the curriculum, headed 'Number of children learning...'. Of 100 girls enrolled, the only subject all were taking was sewing; 89 were learning their Catechism, 27 were studying history, and 55 geography. Basic skills were divided by level, and presumably the children were roughly segregated by age; for example, 12 were learning to read 'Letters and Monosyllables', 34 'Easy Narratives' and 55 'Books of General Information'. The same pattern applied to arithmetic.<sup>29</sup>

Officially a restricted range of subjects continued. The Revised Code of 1862, under which government funding went to elementary schools via 'payment by results', made grants dependent on achievements in reading, writing and arithmetic. Five years later grammar, history and geography were included, and then plain needlework for girls.<sup>30</sup> In practice their experience might have been more varied and interesting. Taking two years in the log book of one Salisbury elementary school, St Paul's Girls', in 1868 the following subjects were mentioned: arithmetic, bible class, catechism, composition, geography, needlework, reading, scripture, and singing. Ten years later the list was arithmetic, dictation, domestic economy, drawing, geography, grammar, history, reading, scripture, and writing.<sup>31</sup> This was not necessarily a complete picture of the curriculum. The headmistress did not record the regular timetable, and mentioned these classes only when something of note occurred, such as a test, a visitor, or the class having to be changed for some reason. For the later decades of the nineteenth century, Annmarie Turnbull has examined how the elementary school curriculum became increasingly differentiated after 1870, with the result that '[s]chooling secured women's

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<sup>29</sup> WSRO F8/600/233/9/26/1

<sup>30</sup> Maclure J S 1965 p 79 - 81

<sup>31</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/15/1

imprisonment in domesticity'.<sup>32</sup> Girls, and their teachers, spent more time on practical domestic subjects and less on more academic study as it was assumed that the female pupils in elementary schools were destined for future lives where these would be essential skills. Occasionally the outside world intervened: 'a lesson on the 'Census Schedule' will be given this afternoon in place of the last lesson on the timetable' wrote St Paul's headmistress in the spring of 1901.<sup>33</sup>

Information about the education provided in private schools is even harder to discover. In the mid 1870s the Salisbury School Board, replying to a circular from the Education Department on the subject of 'Private Adventure Schools' commented that they [the Board] 'are satisfied that many of them [the schools] supply efficient instruction to such children in the District as do not require elementary education'. However they also quoted an HMI as follows:

Out of the large number of Adventure Schools returned as providing elementary education in Salisbury none of them can be reckoned as efficient either as to the qualifications of the Teacher, the acquirements of the children or the condition of the premises.<sup>34</sup>

This suggested that the private schools did not compare favourably with public elementary schools when a direct comparison was made, but they provided their own, different, service successfully.<sup>35</sup> Local day schools for girls provided an education for middle class girls, who came from the professional and commercial families of the city. As Carol Dyhouse has explained, those girls often attended school for but a few years, in between being taught at home, helping their mothers with domestic responsibilities, or perhaps attending a boarding school.<sup>36</sup> In Salisbury in 1871 there were 1,847 girls under the age of 13, of whom 833 attended public elementary schools, 103 'other

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<sup>32</sup> Turnbull A, 'Learning Her Womanly Work: the Elementary School Curriculum 1870–1914', in Hunt F, 1987 p 99

<sup>33</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/15/2 28 March 1901

<sup>34</sup> Salisbury School Board Minute Book 4 October 1875 WSRO F8/830/1. It was the opinion of the Board, consistent with their concern over attendance, that the success of such schools was not due to the education they provided but 'is mainly attributable to the fact that their pupils can successfully evade the operation of the bye-laws. Many children are attracted to these schools because they may be employed several hours in the day away from school, whilst those attending Public Elementary Schools are deprived of the opportunity of adding in any way to the family earnings'.

<sup>35</sup> The quality of education provided in private elementary schools has been the subject of debate amongst historians, see Stephens, 1993 p 81

<sup>36</sup> Dyhouse C, *Girls Growing up in late Victorian and Edwardian England*, 1981 ch 2

elementary schools', and 192 'other schools'.<sup>37</sup> These 'other schools' included those run by Miss Edmunds, Miss Toovey and Miss Snow, of whom more below.

Using the fragmentary evidence about individual schools, a statement such as that in Mrs Todd's advertisement

The system of tuition pursued in this Seminary combines all the higher branches of a liberal education with the culture of domestic habits... No efforts are spared to discipline the moral feelings and develop the intellectual powers

did not reveal very much about what went on inside the schoolroom, though it suggested that parents were paying their 25 or 30 guineas for more than minimum reading and writing skills.<sup>38</sup> In advertisements emphasis would clearly be placed on the aspects of the school likely to attract the parents of potential pupils, and in this case the combination of academic and domestic training parallels that in the elementary schools. There was a different stress thirty years later in an 1880 advertisement for Miss Jarman's Ladies' Collegiate School which stated that 'Pupils have been successfully prepared for the University Local, College of Preceptors and Trinity College Examinations'.<sup>39</sup> And at the end of the century the Misses Addenbrooke, advertising the High School for Girls, London Road, Salisbury, declared

Pupils prepared for London Matriculation, Cambridge Local, College of Preceptors, Royal Academy of Music (local), Trinity College (Music), and South Kensington. Over One Hundred Certificates gained by Pupils at Public Examinations.<sup>40</sup>

Reminiscences of their schooldays by former Godolphin School pupils contained vast amounts of learning by rote – but about a wider variety of topics: 'I rolled off answers and names such as quartz, feltspar (sic), with no idea whatever as to what they were like or their uses'.<sup>41</sup> When girls started to take external examinations from 1863, as those at The Godolphin did, the constraints of an exam syllabus began to dominate the curriculum; but also provided the possibility of further achievements for more ambitious girls. Kathryn Gleadle has described how '[d]uring the 1860s the issue of girl's education moved swiftly up the public agenda', but it was only the privileged few who

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<sup>37</sup> WSRO F8/830/1. Of the 719 girls 'not attending school' the Board knew of 58 being 'educated at home', 8 who were infirm and 4 at work, leaving 649 unaccounted for.

<sup>38</sup> *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* (hereafter *SJ*) 4 January 1851 p 2

<sup>39</sup> Advertisement reproduced in Howe T and Percy G (eds), *The Old Manor, Salisbury: A Glimpse into the Past*, Salisbury 2000 p 28

<sup>40</sup> Langmead and Evans, *Directory* 1897-8 p 55

<sup>41</sup> Kate Leigh entered the school in 1861. Douglas MA and Ash CR, 1928 p 27

benefited from opportunities provided by this ‘new generation of girls’ schools’.<sup>42</sup> The variety of schools on offer to girls in Salisbury, and those who boarded here, altered little until Bishop Wordsworth’s School started accepting girls in 1902.

Approximately eighty women were working in Salisbury as teachers in the 1850s – 1870s, divided between those described as teachers or schoolmistresses and those employed in households as governesses.<sup>43</sup> The distinction was not entirely clear cut, as a check in the census enumerators’ books reveals. For example, Catherine Kaines was described in Slater’s *Directory* as having a ‘ladies boarding school’, whereas her occupational entry in the census said ‘governess’. In some cases the assistant teachers in private schools were referred to as ‘governess’.

There was then an apparent decrease in the number of women in Salisbury engaged in this occupation, which went against the general trend. Jessie Boucherett, commenting in the *Englishwoman’s Review* of 1874 on the newly published Census Report notes a more than proportionate rise in the number of teachers, to which she added the comment: ‘It may be doubted whether this is a matter for congratulation or not’.<sup>44</sup>

Teaching was still considered by some to be an inferior, undesirable option, low paid and insecure, compared with the positive light in which Boucherett noted the increase in

<sup>42</sup> Gleadle K, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century*, Basingstoke 2001 p 140

<sup>43</sup> TEACHERS IN SALISBURY

**1851 Census Report: Population Tables II Volume 1**

Table 19 Occupations of Females aged 20 years and upwards in the principal towns

[total females aged 20+ in Salisbury 3782]

school mistresses	54
governesses	25
other teachers	5
music teachers	1

**1852 Slater’s Directory – women’s names listed**

voluntary schools	7
private schools	16
other	3

**1867 Post Office Directory –women’s names listed**

voluntary schools	8
‘commercial’ schools	14
other teachers	2

**1871 Census Report: Volume III Population Abstracts**

Table 19 Occupations of Females aged 20 Years and upwards in the principal towns

[total females 20+ in Salisbury 3950]

school mistress	40
teacher, governess	29

<sup>44</sup> Boucherett J, ‘Occupations of Women’, *The Englishwoman’s Review* No XVIII April 1874 p 86

women in the 'Commercial Class'. Nevertheless, it continued to be a significant opening, and a beneficial opportunity for many, training improved, and the status even of elementary school teachers gradually rose. It is to an examination of their careers that this chapter now turns.

### **Teachers in elementary schools**

Women described as 'schoolmistress' in the 1851 census returns came from trade families in the city: the wife of a turner, a hackneyman and a tailor, the daughter of a watchmaker, and of a shoemaker, the sister of a porter.<sup>45</sup> It is unlikely, at that date, that all these women were qualified teachers, and it has not been possible to trace where they worked. Indeed some may have been little more than childminders running dame schools, of which more below.

During the second half of the C19th the job gradually achieved a higher status, though it was to be some time before teaching, at least in elementary schools, was seen as a profession. Women who were teachers in elementary schools had mostly been educated in those very same schools themselves. Regulations in 1846 had created a national framework for young people to receive a wage as a pupil-teacher between the ages of 13 and 18, and then become eligible to hold a Queen's Scholarship at a college, resulting in certification as a trained teacher.<sup>46</sup>

The Diocesan Training College, located in the Close, opened in 1841 to supply female teachers to church schools in the Salisbury and neighbouring dioceses.<sup>47</sup> Life at the college involved a strict regime under an extensive list of rules, an intensive programme of study, household tasks and teaching practice, daily attendance at cathedral services, visits only from near relatives, no more than one letter a week, and dress to be 'plain and economical'.<sup>48</sup> For admission, girls were to be at least 17 years old, and had to be examined in the main facets of the elementary school curriculum which they would be required to teach:

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<sup>45</sup> This picture confirms the assertion by Davidoff and Hall that 'female school teaching undoubtedly reached deeper into the working class [than its masculine counterpart]', 'The hidden investment: women and the enterprise' in P Sharpe (ed), *Women's Work: the English Experience 1650-1914*, 1998 p 265

<sup>46</sup> Lawson J and Silver H, 1973 p 287- 8. See below for the experience of this process for some Salisbury women.

<sup>47</sup> There was a parallel men's college in Winchester.

<sup>48</sup> Taylor LS, *College in the Close: Sarum St Michael 1841-1978*, Salisbury 1988 p 20, 27



Reading, Writing, Spelling, in the first four Rules of Arithmetic (simple and compound), in the History of the Old and New Testaments and in the Church Catechism, without a competent knowledge of all which they will not be admissible. An elementary knowledge of Grammar and Geography will be expected and they will be required to be well skilled in plain needlework and knitting.<sup>49</sup>

The backgrounds of the students (defined by fathers' occupations), who came from across the diocese and beyond, were recorded, and largely confirmed the lower-middle class and skilled working class tendency noted above as the social origins of female teachers in elementary schools.<sup>50</sup> Mary Hardy, the daughter of a builder, came to the college in 1860, and her sister Katherine followed in 1877. Mary had been educated 'at a private school' in Dorchester before coming to Salisbury. Her initial standard of achievement, described as 'backward', was raised to 'moderate' during the course. Katherine had been a pupil teacher and was placed in the Second Division on entry and in subsequent examinations. Their brother, Thomas, used his sisters' experiences in Salisbury when writing about Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*, first published in 1895. For the purposes of the novel Thomas Hardy emphasised the strict regime under which the community of students lived, describing Sue as 'a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline' amidst her fellow trainee teachers.

The seventy young women, of varying ages in the main from nineteen to one-and-twenty, though several were older, who at this date filled the species of nunnery known as the Training-School at Melchester, formed a very mixed community which included the daughters of mechanics, curates, surgeons, shopkeepers, farmers, dairymen, soldiers, sailors, and villagers.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the restrictions on their movements – 'not to go out without the Governess if possible, on no account without her express permission' - the students were a visible presence in the city and the college played an important part in the life of local schools. When a new school for 500 children was proposed in the parish of St Edmund's in 1860 approval was given on condition that the girls' school was to be a Practising Department for the college. On the architect's plans for the building, as well as a

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<sup>49</sup> WSRO 1585/1 8 July 1840

<sup>50</sup> In the early years of the college this information is not in the admissions registers, but in records of individual students. By the later decades of the century both the widespread geographical catchment area, and the varied, though largely still lower middle class and skilled working class, social origins of the students were clear. WSRO 1585/102. For comparison, see similar social origins of students at St Matthias College, Fishponds, Bristol. Horn P, 'Mid-Victorian Elementary School Teachers', *The Local Historian* Vol 12 1976 p 165

<sup>51</sup> Hardy Thomas, *Jude the Obscure*, first published 1895, 1998 edn p 145

‘bonnet room’ for the girls, the students on teaching practice were provided with a retiring room where they could ‘recover their nerves’!<sup>52</sup> As will be shown below, teaching was often stressful and placed both physical and mental demands on its practitioners, so this was a valuable facility. The model school attached to the college was further supplemented as numbers grew: classes went there from St Martin’s School; and second year students looked after St Paul’s Girls’ School during the absence of the headmistress through illness in 1875.<sup>53</sup>

Teaching was indeed hard, and the daily routine was perhaps not far removed from the requirements of more manual forms of labour.<sup>54</sup> Bald, matter-of-fact, statements in school logbooks revealed the conditions and constraints under which teachers worked. For example, the first few months of 1865 at St Paul’s Infants School included ‘a wet day, children very noisy and unruly’, ‘children very tiresome’, children inattentive and rather noisy’, ‘myself a bad headache’.<sup>55</sup> Taking up her duties as mistress there in January 1873, Mary Ann Hollins wrote ‘found the children noisy and tiresome’. Large classes, but subject to erratic attendance, and limited resources were often the norm. The demands of education had to counter pressures from outside: ‘Annie Lodge left the school to go to work’ (St Paul’s Girls’ School 16 May 1870); ‘a very thin school on account of the Races’ (14 May 1868).

The system of funding for elementary schools subjected the teachers and their classes to regular inspections. Inspectors’ reports showed how teaching could also be a rewarding occupation. ‘Mrs Lloyd deserves high praise for the success she has obtained in the improved condition of her school as to order and as to soundness and accuracy in the elementary subjects’.<sup>56</sup> ‘The present mistress has her school in good order and teaches the children with very satisfactory results.’<sup>57</sup> These comments were written by national inspectors for central government, and then sent to the local managers of the school concerned where they were copied into the log book as a permanent record. Such

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<sup>52</sup> WSRO 782/88

<sup>53</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/15/1 22 February 1875

<sup>54</sup> The physical demands of teaching was one reason given by Frances Widdowson for the unattractiveness of the job to middle class girls, despite ‘free training, guaranteed salaries and pensions’ ... ‘the strain of teaching large classes at 13 or 14 for girls from a middle-class background would have been considered crippling’. Widdowson, 1983 p 15-16

<sup>55</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/17/1. The St Paul’s elementary schools were in the Salisbury suburb of Fisherton; there were three schools – boys, girls and infants. See also p 285

<sup>56</sup> St Paul’s Girls’ School, May 1871, HM Inspectors’ Report copied into logbook

<sup>57</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/17/1 18 December 1875

remarks not only formed public recognition of achievements of these women, they must also have given the women a great sense of pride in their achievements.

Another indicator of satisfaction with and commitment to their lot was the length of service in the same school of some women teachers. Other schools in the city and the surrounding area could have provided alternative posts, and other types of employment were not impossible to find had they wished to leave. At the end of 1882 Elizabeth Lloyd resigned as mistress of St Paul's Girls' School after 29 years teaching, 'on account of the ill health of my husband'.<sup>58</sup> In the adjoining Infants' School, Lucy King commenced duties in January 1875 and was still in charge of 240 infants when Mr Northy wrote his book about Salisbury 22 years later.<sup>59</sup> Neither Mrs Lloyd nor her successor left her job of her own choice, neither was independent of the obligations that being a married woman placed on her.<sup>60</sup> George Lloyd had been the long-serving master of St Paul's Boys' School until his illness. Eleanor Rose Pride had started work as a monitor, but stayed in her post in charge for less than one year, resigning, as Eleanor Rose Deans 'in consequence of my leaving England'.<sup>61</sup> She had recently been married to Lewis Richard Deans, of Lislevane, Ireland, to where, presumably, they were returning.<sup>62</sup>

School principals were not only in charge of the children in their classes, but were also responsible for the continuing education and early practical training of monitors and pupil teachers in their schools. It must have provided a great deal of satisfaction to see a young girl progress from being an apprentice, no older than some of her pupils and still with much to learn herself, to a student teacher and then to become a qualified member of the profession. Tracing a few individuals through the pages of one logbook illustrates the process of qualification.

At St Paul's, Elizabeth Lloyd 'took charge of the Girls' School on my own account' in May 1868. Later that year she spent four days at the Training College, and then

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<sup>58</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/15/1 22 December 1882

<sup>59</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/17/1 January 1875

<sup>60</sup> Marriage was not a bar to continuing a teaching career until the early twentieth century. Intermittently remarks were added to the Diocesan Training College Admissions Registers against individual's names, such as 'still teaching' at a later date, or 'married'. Of 264 students who entered during the 1850s, 62 were later recorded as married, of whom 15 were 'married to a schoolmaster'. WSRO 1585/93

<sup>61</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/15/1 16 January, 21 December 1883

<sup>62</sup> Marriage announcement in *SJ* October 1883 p 8

recorded in March 1869 that she had passed the examination to become a certificated teacher. She was thus qualified to take an ‘apprentice’ under her wing, as only then could the Inspectors approve the admission of Elizabeth Leaver as a pupil teacher. Two years later, Elizabeth Leaver ‘went to the Boys’ School to be examined by the Inspector’. In February 1872 she was included in the staff list as 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Pupil Teacher, together with two paid monitors – one of whom was Mrs Lloyd’s daughter Kate. Elizabeth Leaver and Kate Ann Lloyd went to the Training College in December 1873 to be examined for scholarships. Queen’s Scholarships paid a grant to the student (and to the college) and opened the possibility of a teaching career to girls without the resources to support themselves through the relatively lengthy training period. At the time of the *Account*... mentioned above, half the students in the Training College were Queen’s Scholars.<sup>63</sup> A month later Elizabeth Leaver had left the school having completed her apprenticeship, and Kate Berry was appointed teacher on probation. In February ‘Eleanor Pride commenced her duties as Monitor this week’; she was described as a Paid Monitor, while Kate Berry was ‘Hon Monitor’. These periods of ‘work experience’ seem to have had their value as not everyone survived; in July we learn ‘Kate Berry has not returned to school on account of the work not agreeing with her health’. Eleanor Pride took charge of the school briefly herself in 1883, nine years after beginning there as a pupil teacher.

In the Infants’ School at St Paul’s, the principal mistress wrote in more detail about the progress of her pupil teachers. ‘Ellen Heather came to school this morning to assist in the work and to prepare herself as a candidate for a pupil teacher’. ‘Ellen Heather very well up in some subjects’. ‘Examined the teachers in Dictation this evening. Ellen Heather did hers very fairly, Ellen Dovey not so well’. ‘Gave the teachers their lessons to do at home’. At the beginning of 1870 there was a new pupil teacher, Mathilda McLoughlin. ‘Mathilda McLoughlin took the gallery in a lesson this morning and kept up the attention fairly’. In mid-July she was absent ‘owing to serious illness’, and her death was recorded in September. Two days later she was replaced by Barbara Clissold ‘a rather noisy teacher, but very energetic, keeps her class in order’. Her own studies had to continue: ‘Find that Barbara Clissold is making but slow progress in Geography. She has never learnt any before’.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> February 1859. Some students held Diocesan exhibitions, others were self-financing.

<sup>64</sup> WSRO F8/500/233/17/1 selected entries April 1865 – October 1870

Salisbury later had a Pupil Teacher Centre to take the burden of the students' own education from the schools where they were practicing.<sup>65</sup> It had been functioning on a voluntary basis for some time before coming under the auspices of the Salisbury Education Committee and gaining formal recognition from the Board of Education in 1905. The Centre was located in the School of Science and Art, and catered for 110 students and 6 staff. Local scholarships were available 'as a means of drawing candidates for the Teaching profession from amongst the most intelligent boys and girls attending elementary and secondary schools in the area'. Students came from both the city and from surrounding districts. Some stayed in Salisbury when they attended the classes and the Managers, regretting that they had to live away from home, stressed the need to ensure that 'lodgings were enquired into as to character'. A full inspection in 1908 found that the 'Pupil Teachers are receiving a suitable preparation, and the tone and discipline of the Centre appear quite satisfactory'.<sup>66</sup> By that time entrants direct from elementary schools were few; most aspiring teachers continued their own full-time education at secondary level. Local authorities could provide scholarships to fund this.<sup>67</sup>

Familiarity with the work and the people were factors which might have encouraged other members of a family to follow in the footsteps of someone who had successfully taken the route into teaching. There was not yet a national, or even regional, job market for elementary teachers so the institution and the locality could also be influential in determining a choice of career. As well as married couples both in teaching, such as the Lloyds above, there is evidence that the women of a family followed their elders into the profession. Two of Elizabeth Lloyd's daughters became pupil teachers under their mother's tutelage. Alice Clissold was a paid monitor when Barbara was in the fifth year as a pupil teacher, and Jane Heather went to St Paul's Infants ten years after Ellen. In the middle of the century, May Lucas was the mistress of Gigant Street Infants' School with her niece Emma Gilbert as assistant. As will be shown below, running a private school could support sisters, mothers and daughters, and husbands and wives. In

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<sup>65</sup> The London School Board opened its first day centres for pupil teachers in 1885 'and such classes – day or evening – were taken up in many towns'. Lawson and Silver, 1973 p 334

<sup>66</sup> PRO Ed109 6615 01540 p 11

<sup>67</sup> Lawson and Silver, 1973 p 381

Salisbury kin networks were important in education, as in most other occupations and trades; women were included.

### **Teachers in private schools**

The employment to which successfully qualified training college students progressed was usually in government inspected and grant-funded voluntary elementary schools such as those in the Salisbury parish of St Pauls that have been used as examples in the previous section. Many other women were working in education in very different, and varied, institutions. Charitable foundations, such as The Godolphin School in Salisbury, and private enterprise continued to generate a significant part of the school places available even after the 1870 Education Act.

Schools run as personal businesses – ‘adventure schools’ - by the women who managed and taught in them provided a living for those meeting a certain set of minimum criteria, not unlikely to be found in a city such as Salisbury. Some education themselves was required, though not necessarily a great deal. Premises had to be found, but this for many was their own home; others put considerable capital into their operation. Social pretensions helped to differentiate their curriculum and tone from the provision made for the ‘masses’ in elementary schools, so these women needed knowledge of their market of potential parents. For the women themselves, teaching or running a school provided an income and a degree of flexibility. There were choices to be made between boarding and day provision, numbers of pupils of different ages, the catchment area, curriculum, fees, rules, and so on. It was an enterprise that could be carried on alone or with others – sister, spouse or friend. Variations in scale began with those who were offering scarcely more than a child-minding service, and those whose small enterprises, such as Miss Snow and her two pupils, were ‘simply extensions of a normal household’.<sup>68</sup> Others were substantial enterprises with twenty or more pupils and a specialised staff. Miss Jarman advertised in 1879 that she was ‘assisted by seven governesses and five masters’.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Davidoff and Hall, 1998 p 269

<sup>69</sup> *SJ* 1 February 1879 p 4

A starting point for a career in education might be employment as a governess. This work provided a home, but was hardly to be considered independence. Some advertisements even made explicit that the former was the main objective of the role:

A Young Person of respectability is anxious to obtain a Situation as NURSERY GOVERNESS to two or three young children, is competent to teach Music, French, and the general routine of an English Education. A comfortable home more appreciated than a high salary.<sup>70</sup>

Advertisements from prospective employers such as this implied that their previous experiences had been less than satisfactory:

WANTED. A YOUNG LADY to instruct a Child, aged thirteen, in English, Music and Dancing. Applicants are requested to state age and moderate salary required. It is hoped that no incompetent or very young person will apply.<sup>71</sup>

The probability that this was to be the entire educational provision for this girl cannot be confirmed without knowing more about the context, although it is perhaps unlikely that she had reached the age of 13 without a somewhat broader curriculum. Examples from the contemporary census enumerators' books showed governesses in substantial households both in the Close and elsewhere in the city. In 1851 a governess was employed by a 'landed proprietor' with seven children, and ten domestic servants; Henrietta Liberty was governess to Dr Moore's six children in Endless Street. In 1861 Archdeacon MacDonald was employing a French governess, Amelie Weber, as well as a nursery governess.<sup>72</sup>

The following proposal demonstrated an ambitious intention, and also provides evidence that such a transition was feasible.

Miss Snow, having had several years tuition as a Resident Governess is DESIROUS OF ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL FOR DAILY PUPILS IN SALISBURY. Most satisfactory references can be given...<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *SJ* 21 January 1871 p 5

<sup>71</sup> *SJ* 11 January 1851 p 5

<sup>72</sup> An unresolved question is an explanation for the absence of anyone designated 'governess' in The Close in the 1881 census. Does this suggest a move to educating more children in school rather than at home, or perhaps using non-residential governesses? It was not an absence of children as there were girls of 'school age' in some households, for example the Weigalls and the Bennetts.

<sup>73</sup> *SJ* January 1871 p 4 It is possible, of course, that here was an example of the use of the term 'governess' to mean assistant teacher in a school rather than in a private household; in either case this was a woman seeking to improve her position in life

Miss Snow was listed under 'other schools' in the Salisbury School Board report of 1871 that assessed the number of children and school places in the city. She had but 2 pupils, though can only have been established a short time as her advertisement appeared in January and the Board received the report in June.<sup>74</sup>

Dame schools had provided generally low quality education, often little more than child-minding, for centuries.<sup>75</sup> A caricature image of an elderly woman in her dilapidated cottage, scarcely capable of controlling a group of children let alone fit to teach them anything, arose from nineteenth century commentators, and no doubt was founded on reality. Schools kept by people 'whose only qualification for this employment seems to be their unfitness for every other' were to be seen in most towns, and in rural areas where there might well be no alternatives.<sup>76</sup> The *Account of Salisbury schools in 1859*, referred to above, mentioned 70 children 'under instruction' in five dames' schools in the parish of St Edmund's, 50 children in four such schools in St Martin's, but no dames' schools in St Thomas's. It is tempting to try to identify some of these schools in the census returns, but in most cases it is the powerful stereotype that leads to assumptions that cannot be verified. Dinah Attwood, in Salt Lane, aged 86, with the occupation 'schoolmistress' might be considered conforming to this image.<sup>77</sup>

'There are numerous small "ladies schools" in the town of Salisbury...' reported the *Account of 1859* and other sources confirm this.<sup>78</sup> Variations in size, style and objectives could be found amongst the establishments available for the education of middle class girls here, (almost all the schools run by women were for female pupils, though there were exceptions to this rule). In 1851 Miss Rooke, aged 30 and the unmarried daughter of an outfitter and his wife, had the occupation 'schoolmistress'. The family appear to have been people of substance, as the adjoining property to their residence was known as 'Rooke's Yard', and accommodated ten other families. Around the corner, in New Street, there was an empty building on census night, but, although no one slept there, it was known to be 'occupied as a Day School, Maria Rooke'.

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<sup>74</sup> WSRO F8/830/1 5 June 1871. It is worth noting, because of its unknown, but potentially significant, impact on such statistics, that the report stated 'boarders whose parents are not living in Salisbury are not included in this return'.

<sup>75</sup> Lawson and Silver, 1973 p 138 - 9

<sup>76</sup> Manchester Statistical Society 1835 - 5 quoted in Lawson and Silver 1973, p 280

<sup>77</sup> 1851 census

<sup>78</sup> For example advertisements announcing the commencement of terms or the existence of vacancies.



Boarding permits us to know a little more about the students of these schools because they were more likely to be in residence when a census was taken. In many cases a combination of day and boarding pupils was usual, and probably necessary to the commercial viability of schools. This was a critical factor in examining these establishments as sources of income for women. Martha R Todd, aged 29 in 1851, was the wife of the Baptist Minister of Brown Street Chapel. As the 'Principal of an Establishment for Ladies' she was responsible for three living-in pupils; either her husband's income permitted subsidising the school's finances or there were additional girls who attended daily from their own homes. The three boarders were aged 19, 17 and 10, daughters of a draper, born in Scotland, an annuitant from Ireland and a baker from London, respectively. Places of birth, of course, were not places of current residence, but the distances of origin indicate that there could be a more than local catchment for Mrs Todd's school. The references listed in her advertisement support this suggestion, and it is interesting to note the inclusion of both a Baptist connection and Anglican clergymen, as well as Members of Parliament. Mrs Todd was drawing to the attention of parents the respectable backgrounds of her pupils, an important factor for the continuing success of the school. Non-conformist networks were strong, and supportive of education for girls.<sup>79</sup> The advertisement also set out the character and objectives of the school which Mrs Todd wanted to attract potential clients, as seen above.<sup>80</sup>

The Misses Saunders' advertisement was much less informative.<sup>81</sup> On census night in 1851 there were three Miss Saunders at home in Endless Street, with seven female pupils, plus a housemaid and a cook. Frances (aged 40), Emma (aged 38) and Louisa (aged 35) were unmarried sisters, all native to Salisbury. Only two of the pupils were born locally, the others coming from Hampshire, London, two from Dorset and one from Santa Cruz, Teneriff.

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<sup>79</sup> An example from an earlier generation was Maria Grace Saffery, also wife of the Brown Street Baptist Minister, who 'became an important lady, running a well-known boarding school for girls and publishing her own poems'. See Reeves M, *Pursuing the Muses: Female Education and Nonconformist Culture 1700-1900*, 1997 p 157

<sup>80</sup> See p 283

<sup>81</sup> *ibid*

In the 1860s the claim for girls to be able to sit for Oxford and Cambridge Locals – the public examinations available to boys from 1858 – was ‘being voiced more loudly’.<sup>82</sup> Over 1,000 signatures were gathered in October 1864 to a memorial sent to Cambridge asking that girls be admitted. One of the national supporters was Henry Fawcett MP, from Salisbury, who argued that girls’ schools needed the stimulus and the candidates would suffer no harmful effects from the excitement of the examination.<sup>83</sup> Later his sister Maria became the long-serving girls’ secretary for the Locals in Salisbury (see chapter 5). Amongst the signatures on the memorial were two of the Miss Saunders. This suggested that they were in favour of extending the academic achievements of their pupils, and that they were aware of broader movements in this field and in contact with colleagues elsewhere. Twenty years later two Miss Saunders were living, presumably in retirement, at Britford just outside the city. As mentioned above, towards the end of the century this significant development in girls’ education was used as a recommendation for their schools by both Miss Jarman and the Misses Addenbrookes.

Endless Street appears to have continued to be a good location for schools. There were no fewer than three there in 1881. Ann Edmunds, at No 54, described herself as ‘Certificated Paris, London, Cambridge’.<sup>84</sup> Three resident staff (‘Governess’) included one French and one German. The sixteen pupils ranged in age from 9 to 16; only one was born locally, one was the sister of the German teacher, three others were related, two born in New Zealand and one in Fiji, four came from the north of England, and the others from elsewhere around the country. Frances Toovey, at No 10, also had pupils from the other side of the globe. One of her three staff, and two scholars (though not obviously related) came from New Zealand. Another governess was from Belgium. None of the 14 pupils was born in Salisbury, but there were two from other parts of Wiltshire. The pupils at Mary Haskins’ school at No 15 Endless Street were younger, and they were boys. Again there were three staff, including the Principal, in this case they were all English, perhaps there was less need for native speakers to teach European languages to smaller children. Four pairs of brothers were amongst the 18 students, and they were born in less far flung places, with the exception of one, presumably a colonial service or perhaps a missionary, family, from Calcutta. Several of the places of birth

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<sup>82</sup> Roach J, *Public Examinations in England 1850-1900*, Cambridge 1971 p 107

<sup>83</sup> op cit p 111

<sup>84</sup> It is possible that the Edmunds succeeded the Saunders in their school. In her will dated 1887, Emma Saunders left ‘the house in Endless Street in the occupation of the Misses Edmunds’ to her surviving sister Louisa Maria. WSRO 1887/f113

again suggest a navy connection – Woolwich and Woolston for example. The web of the empire connected Salisbury to distant parts, a global market in both pupils and teachers.<sup>85</sup>

Schools run by more than one member of the same family were not uncommon, relatives could provide mutual support, academic and financial, and the establishment provided a home for them all. The Misses Saunders have been introduced above. It seems from their advertisement that the Misses Sopp were providing a similar service to Miss Haskins, with the additional advantage of country air. Mr and Mrs Zillwood, in Bedwin Street, received 82 pupils in 1871! The Ladies Collegiate School was run by three Miss Jarmans, with, as their advertisement told prospective parents, resident German and English Governesses, there was also a ‘musical governess’ living there at the time of the 1881 census, and 21 scholars.<sup>86</sup>

Schools required women to take responsibility for the well-being of the pupils, and this role often fell to female members of the master’s family<sup>87</sup>. On occasions this relationship was promoted as a benefit of the school for future pupils. At the Proprietary School in St Ann Street, conducted by R Lloyd MCP, ‘the domestic comfort of a limited number of Boarders is under the care of Mrs Lloyd’.<sup>88</sup> The need for women in boys’ schools was widespread; the reverse less common but not unknown.<sup>89</sup> There were indeed masters in girls’ schools in Salisbury in the second half of the century. Absence of financial information prevents assessment of ‘prestigious and expensive’ schools, but at the Misses Jarman’s school ‘Masters attend for French, Latin, Mathematics, Music and Dancing’.

One of the masters who provided peripatetic classes was Mons C le Clair, Professor of the French Language and Literature (as he described himself). In 1871 he was exploiting a new opening in the market:

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<sup>85</sup> A similar pattern can be discerned amongst the teaching staff at The Godolphin School, where there were particular links with South Africa.

<sup>86</sup> See p 284

<sup>87</sup> Schools were also sources of employment for domestic servants. The pupils were alternative forces of labour, putting into effect the results of their domestic lessons. Ethel Jones described how, in the 1890s at Godolphin, ‘one day a week all the School House domestic premises were invaded by keen, inefficient, blundering, excited, messy, budding housekeepers’. Douglas and Ash, 1929 p 51

<sup>88</sup> *SJ* 3 January 1863 p 4. At the next census in 1871 she had the care of 28 boys aged between 9 and 17.

<sup>89</sup> ‘there was no role for a man in most girls’ schools since only the most prestigious and expensive schools provided masters in specialist subjects’, Davidoff and Hall, 1998 p 265

...having received several applications from Ladies engaged in tuition in Salisbury and its vicinity, he has made arrangements to begin a special class for those Ladies...

and in order to do this he announced 'that he is now assisted by a French lady, highly qualified, who has had many years experience in tuition.'<sup>90</sup>

Taking individual pupils for specialist instruction was another way for women to earn by teaching. It was not always visible as this was usually done in the privacy of her own, or the pupil's, home. However, in order to acquire clients, and to become known and accepted by parents, it was often necessary to advertise, or at least to be listed in directories, word of mouth might not raise sufficient custom for success. As far as it is possible to tell, the acquisition by these women of the label 'Professor' was a matter of self-promotion, perhaps to make the distinction from 'schoolmistress', to indicate that private work and subject specialism was of a higher status. Mary Paine was described in the 1851 census as 'Professor of dancing and music'; the three Misses Vandenhoff were all 'Professor of the French language'.

A different type of expert instruction was provided by people like Mary Ann Harding who was a Buttermaker School mistress. She was aged 54 in 1851, and probably supporting her 89 year old husband, designated a carpenter though maybe no longer working at his trade. A half-century later there was a County Itinerant Butter School which had taught over 2,000 pupils in the course of the previous fifteen years.<sup>91</sup> By then there was concern that traditional rural skills were being lost, but this seems unlikely to have been the case in the 1850s.<sup>92</sup> It would be interesting to know who Mrs Harding's pupils were and why they were not having buttermaking passed on from an older member of their family.

If Mary Harding was unusual, the other women who have featured here were typical of the many thousands around the country who found a source of income to support themselves, and sometimes also other members of their family, in teaching. For some

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<sup>90</sup> *SJ* 4 Feb 1871 p 4

<sup>91</sup> WSRO F8/225/1 WCC Education Committee 1907- 8

<sup>92</sup> 'Working in the dairy... was traditionally a woman's duty' wrote Una Robertson, *Coming Out of the Kitchen*, Stroud 2000 p 30 but the prospectus of Dauntsey's Agricultural School in Wiltshire when it opened in 1895 included Dairy work amongst the subjects of instruction for the boys. Hodges J A, *Conflict of Interests*, West Lavington 1995 p 69. The report of a government Departmental Commission on Agricultural and Dairy Schools 1888 might throw some light on this issue.

this was as a certificated teacher in an elementary school, for others as a governess in a private household, as a subject specialist for older pupils in a school like The Godolphin, or as the proprietor of her own private school. Most of these women had no choice but to operate in the public life of the community where they lived. Much of the surviving evidence of their activities was generated in the public domain, so it is hard to know how far this was resented, and whether any of these women went out of their way to avoid such exposure. Victorian Salisbury gives the impression of an environment sympathetic to learning, and to the aspirations of women to be part of educated society. As both teachers and learners, the female population of the city was visible to observers.

### **Women's work and religion**

Women's religious convictions opened opportunities for worthwhile work.<sup>93</sup> Churches provided recognised, respectable, and safe social networks in a community like Salisbury, and a girl's upbringing taught her the duty of Christians to care for their fellow citizens. So it was 'natural' to turn to religious institutions when circumstances forced a single, middle-class woman to seek work. This section examines some examples of such religious organisations in Salisbury. Public, philanthropic, volunteering connected with the churches in the city will be considered further in the next chapter. Martha Vicinus' pioneering research into the communities which became the homes and in some ways a substitute family for many single women demonstrated how these became a source of 'the development of leadership skills, friendship networks and a power base for public work'.<sup>94</sup> As she has shown, these sisterhoods brought together three important strands in Victorian life - the need to respond to poverty and distress, the widespread religious renaissance, and the problem of surplus women.<sup>95</sup> For some women this was a way of reacting to a calling, a way to follow in the footsteps of a role model provided by their beliefs – 'mid-century Protestant women spotlighted virgin mothers, women saints and a feminised Jesus, all refashioned to fit their needs'.<sup>96</sup> Others entered these commitments on a simpler more practical level.

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<sup>93</sup> See chapter 2 p 62 for the churches in Salisbury in the mid nineteenth century.

<sup>94</sup> Vicinus M, *Independent Women*, Chicago 1985 p 7

<sup>95</sup> op cit p 47

<sup>96</sup> Yeo, 1998 p 142

## Deaconesses

Professional staff for several philanthropic institutions in the city came from the Salisbury Diocesan Deaconesses' Institution. This was one of many groups of women around the country who were living an independent, religious life and doing practical work in their communities. The Institution was established in Salisbury in 1875 and was located in a large house in Crane Street, near the Cathedral where the residents attended services. Candidates for the office of deaconess had to live there on three months trial before being accepted for a period of probation and training, lasting at least one year.<sup>97</sup>

Penniless women could not join these institutions, as a 'dowry' was expected, and in some cases a regular contribution to living costs.<sup>98</sup> So strictly speaking, this system provided a home and a purpose rather than an income for women with the necessary strength of character. But it also demanded the full-time commitment of the professional. The deaconesses (and their clients) in Salisbury were a mixture of local women and those from further afield. As 'virtually all the sisterhoods were in London or the South...' it should not be surprising to find women from other areas of the country joining the community here.<sup>99</sup>

Sarah Aldred, from Rotherham, had been Head Deaconess from the beginning of the Salisbury community. In 1881 she was aged 56, and had three other deaconesses resident with her, including another Yorkshirewoman and a Scot. There were also ten girls in the attached training school for domestic servants. Between 1878 and 1887 30 girls had passed through the Home, 23 of whom were known to be doing well in service; one was in Salisbury Infirmary training as a nurse for Workhouse Infirmary work.<sup>100</sup>

Deaconess Ellen Anderson was responsible for St Michael's Home for Friendless Girls in Salisbury. This was described as a 'Shelter and Training Home' and was supported by the Ladies Association for the Care of Friendless Girls.<sup>101</sup> The Ladies Association was an example of the voluntary philanthropy underpinning much charity work in the

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<sup>97</sup> *Sarum Almanack and Diocesan Kalendar*, 1884 p 136

<sup>98</sup> Vicinus, 1985 p 55

<sup>99</sup> *ibid*

<sup>100</sup> *Salisbury Diocesan Gazette* (hereafter *SDG*) March 1888 p 17

<sup>101</sup> Supplement to *SDG* June 1888 p 76

nineteenth century, and will be examined again in the next chapter. Its great value was the social network that generated the finance necessary to pay the professional workers in the field, demonstrating the interdependence of the paid and unpaid roles of women. Without such fundraising, the workers could not have been trained and employed.

In 1891 deaconesses had responsibility for fifteen girls in the Home, aged between 8 and 21. Only three were born in Wiltshire, others having birth-places as far distant as Edinburgh, Hull, London and Jersey. The regime provided practical training in laundry and household work, and needlework, as well as a morally secure home. The Home was in a substantial building where they had moved in 1887, located between a public house and the police station. It was large enough to have had a commercial training laundry.<sup>102</sup> In addition there was a 'cottage home' where temporary, instant shelter was provided to rescue the fallen and to save young girls from bad surroundings.

Finance was always a worry despite the efforts of their patrons in the Ladies Association. In 1887 it was feared that Deaconess Margaret Briscoe would have to cease her work in Calne for lack of money 'but the inhabitants of Calne, Nonconformists as well as Church people, have shown their value of her services in a very gratifying way by volunteering to raise the necessary funds'. Subscriptions, donations and funds from Trustees formed a large part of the income, plus £3 3s 9d from selling eggs.<sup>103</sup> Overall, the Deaconesses' Institution appears to have been successful, sending deaconesses to work elsewhere both in and beyond the diocese and continuing to provide various services within the community (for example by being active in parish groups such as the Women's Union and acting as District Lady-Registrar for the Girls' Friendly Society).

### **House of Mercy**

A list of 'Women's Diocesan Work' published in *The Sarum Almanack and Diocesan Kalendar* of 1884 begins with the Salisbury Diocesan House of Mercy. This was not as beneficent an institution as its name might suggest. On contemporary maps The House of Mercy is labelled 'Female Penitentiary' and in the census enumerators returns the

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<sup>102</sup> Malcolmson P, *English Laundresses*, Chicago 1986

<sup>103</sup> *SDG* June 1888

residents are described as penitents. Founded in 1831, this was one of the earliest such establishments, and its original identity was in the Close as the Wilts and Dorset Female Penitentiary. For much of its life, however, it was located in a former Roman Catholic convent building near St Martin's church. Houses of Mercy were intended to remove prostitutes from society, 'cleansing the streets' and 'making public spaces safe' as Alison Enever has expressed their function.<sup>104</sup> Although in theory she entered voluntarily, a prostitute could never be forgiven or allowed to forget her past life.<sup>105</sup> Many inmates were young, and received a training which enabled them to leave the institution for employment as a domestic servant. Perhaps for some older women the continuing 'imprisonment' did provide a better existence than on the streets.

The Church Penitentiary Association, founded in 1852, favoured institutions which were part of a religious community run by sisterhoods. However in Salisbury the affiliation of the staff fluctuated between lay women and sisters. In 1851, the institution was in De Vaux Lodge, just outside the Harnham Gate to the cathedral Close. The matron was 59 year old Elizabeth Lewis, a widow who had been born in Shaftesbury. Her assistant was Miss Agnes Henderson aged 40, and born in 'Upper Canada'. They had in their charge nine 'penitents', aged between 15 and 27, and with two exceptions, from Wiltshire. The move was made to St Martin's Church Street in the 1850s, and towards the end of the 1860s it appears that a decision was made to place the penitentiary in the control of sisters. In 1867 it was still the penitentiary, and Miss Mary Dixon was the superintendent in charge.<sup>106</sup> The name changed in 1871 to the Salisbury Diocesan House of Mercy for Reclaiming the Fallen, and between 1870 and 1878, sisters from Bussage were in charge of day-to-day running of the home. Lay control returned until 1889. Mrs Macnamara, a widow from Scotland was in charge in 1881, together with Miss Cooper from Gloucestershire. The 9 penitents were aged between 15 and 24; only one was local, the others having been born in Newcastle, Norwich and several from the London area.

Then the care of the House of Mercy was handed over to the Sisters of St John the Baptist from Clewer. The convent there had become a national centre for such work,

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<sup>104</sup> Enever A, 'The Bristol Female Penitentiary: Public Women and Female Reformers', paper presented at West of England and South Wales Women's History Network Study Day 12 February 2005

<sup>105</sup> Vicinus, 1985 p 78

<sup>106</sup> *Post Office Directory of Wiltshire* 1867 p 328



and its sisters acknowledged experts. The agreement reached in October 1888 was that the Salisbury committee would provide funds to support two sisters, two matrons and twelve girls. The institution was renamed St Mary's Home.<sup>107</sup> By the 1891 census Theresa Grundall, from Canada, was the Sister in Charge supported by two Sisters of Mercy. The residents were described as inmates, 15 of them of similar ages to the previous decade, and equally from far and wide.

Although the authorities responsible for this home changed through the second half of the century, and the reasons for this are unclear, this was an institution that provided both support for the 'fallen' and opportunities for those who cared for them. There is no evidence that prostitution was considered a serious problem in Salisbury, and local girls appeared less and less frequently among the 'penitents' and 'inmates'. Organisations such as this were meeting a national demand, both for those considered in need of rescue, and the women for whom their care became a life's work. A concise history of the Salisbury Home was included in the report of a fund-raising Exhibition and Sale of Amateur Works of Art and implied a vote of confidence in what had been achieved. It concluded 'the work has gone on so quietly that it has been unnoticed. Over 1,000 cases have been received and by far the greater part reclaimed'.<sup>108</sup>

### **St Elizabeth's Industrial School**

Wilton House, some three miles west of Salisbury, was the home of the Herberts, later Earls of Pembroke. Lady Elizabeth Herbert of Lea, the widow of Sidney Herbert (Secretary at War during the Crimean campaign, and political ally of Florence Nightingale), converted to Roman Catholicism in 1865. The family was appalled, made her children wards of court, and limited her influence over them. 'Whether or not as a result of this, for the rest of her life Lady Herbert threw herself into the activities of her new faith with the utmost vigour'.<sup>109</sup> One of her projects was an industrial school in Salisbury, styled for her name saint. She purchased, fitted out and maintained a large house in Exeter Street where poor girls were boarded and taught a domestic trade at which they could earn a living.

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<sup>107</sup> The home continued to be run by Clewer sisters until 1947. Elliot J, "Saved to Serve": fallen women in Salisbury', *Sarum Chronicle* 3 2003 p 45 -54

<sup>108</sup> *SJ* 25 August 1906 p 5

<sup>109</sup> St Lawrence R, 'Lady Elizabeth Herbert of Lea 1822-1911', *Sarum Chronicle* 1 2001 p 40

By the Youthful Offenders Act of 1854 children aged under 16 who had served at least 14 days in prison could be sent to a reformatory school. Children considered to be vagrants could be committed to industrial schools which from 1861 were inspected by the Home Office.<sup>110</sup> Both these types of institution were linked to particular religious groups, and allocating children to the appropriate denomination was part of their committal, so they could be sent far from home. Thus the House of Commons received notice of children sent ‘to any REFORMATORY or INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL not conducted in accordance with the Religious Persuasion to which the Child appeared to the Authority so sending him to belong...’. In 1872 these children included Mary A Wylie (Roman Catholic) who was sent to Farm House Home Industrial School from Chertsey on 26 July 1871 because she ‘appeared to be a Protestant; since transferred to a Roman Catholic Girls’ Industrial School, Salisbury’.<sup>111</sup> Mary Wylie was just one of many hundreds of children who passed through St Elizabeth’s industrial School.

Nuns from the order Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul had been invited to Salisbury to staff a re-established elementary school for catholic children.<sup>112</sup> More came subsequently to work in the Industrial School. These were ‘trained and educated single women dedicated to nursing, teaching and good works.’<sup>113</sup> Their faith, their residential community, and the local society being served, were the focus of their lives; geography was less important. In 1871 the Superior, Gabrielle Chatelain, came from Paris, and the other nuns from Dublin, Limerick and London. The five girls, referred to as ‘boarder’, were born in London and Kent. Ten years later the numbers had expanded (to 77 ‘scholars’) but with a similarly wide distribution across the country and beyond. In 1901 the nuns in Salisbury came from Ireland, Scotland, France and Germany. The domestic staff at the School were also born in many different places. And only 5 of the 107 ‘scholars’ were from Wiltshire; girls from Liverpool, London, Birmingham, Cardiff and other cities had been sent to Salisbury to be trained – a truly national scheme functioning through the church framework.

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<sup>110</sup> Lawson and Silver, 1973 p 285

<sup>111</sup> PP 232 HMSO 1872

<sup>112</sup> Precise dates for these developments are unclear. Sidney Herbert died in 1861 and Elizabeth became a Roman Catholic in 1865 (St Lawrence R 2001 p 40). Sisters of Charity were already living in Exeter St in 1867 (Kelly’s *Directory of Wilts*). The Industrial School followed the elementary school.

<sup>113</sup> Vicinus, 1985 p 46

## Nursing

More than 100 women in Salisbury were working as nurses in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>114</sup> Their successors in the next fifty years would experience substantial changes in the nature of their work. The caring role of a nurse could be carried out in an institution or in the patient's home. In the latter case, which applied throughout the century for the middle and upper classes, the duties were to implement the instructions of the physician; or in a poorer household to do little more than bathe and feed the sick person. This role frequently fell to the daughters of the family and was considered a 'natural' obligation. If someone outside the family was employed, they were categorised with other domestic staff, and this job did provide another flexible source of income for women. A specialised version was the 'monthly nurse' who attended a newly-delivered mother. Outside the home, nurses were employed by public, voluntary, institutions. The Infirmary in Salisbury, as elsewhere, was paid for by subscriptions and donations, and managed by committees of men. This masculine financial responsibility, together with the male dominance of the medical profession, took precedence over the feminine caring functions of the majority of the staff. Over time it gradually became accepted that nurses themselves could bear professional responsibility for the welfare of their patients.

### Nurse training and working conditions

An important part of the process of establishing nursing as a profession was the creation of a structured training programme that would be recognised as providing the necessary

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<sup>114</sup> NURSES IN SALISBURY

**1851 Census Report:** Population Tables II Volume 1

Table 19 Occupations of Females aged 20 years and upwards in the principal towns  
[total females aged 20+ in Salisbury 3782]

Nurse (not domestic servant)	69
Nurse (domestic servant)	29 (+ 46 under 20)

**1871 Census Report:** Volume III Population Abstracts

Table 19 Occupations of Females aged 20 Years and upwards in the principal towns  
[total females 20+ in Salisbury 3950]

Nurse (not DS)	34
Nurse (domestic servant)	27

In addition, in 1851 there were seven women described as 'Officer of Charitable Institution', and in 1871 23 were in 'Institution Service'.

skills and experience for a qualification. As long as *caring* for the sick was seen as one of the *natural* traits of being female, a specialised education was not considered necessary.<sup>115</sup> This assumption that good nurses could only come from the ranks of ministering angels limited the numbers and perpetuated the myth of amateurism. It took someone with the strength of character, intellectual ability, political astuteness, social connections, and class background of Florence Nightingale to move things on. At the age of 25, in 1845, she planned to leave her home at Embley Park in Hampshire, and come to Salisbury Infirmary for three months to train as a nurse, lodging with the leading physician of the city Dr Fowler. Her mother vetoed this idea, accusing Florence of having a secret love affair with some ‘low vulgar surgeon’, and the plan collapsed. Despite local legend, there is no evidence of her ever coming to Salisbury, but her close friend Sidney Herbert, Secretary at War during the Crimea, and President of Salisbury Infirmary, used her experience and ideas to the benefit of developments in hospital care in the city.

An important change in practice was the raising of standards required for entrants to the job. The *Annual Report* of 1849, commenting on complaints about the nurses’ sleeping accommodation, revealed the distinction between ‘permanent day nurses’, paid £8 annual salary, £3 gratuity (food and laundry), plus £20 worth of keep, and night nurses ‘who live in the town, coming in every other night, many of whom have toiled all day at home for their families’. Amongst recommendations that all nursing staff should be boarded and lodged at the hospital, and should eat all their meals on the wards, was the proposal that ‘no day nurse be hired who cannot read and write’ thus requiring someone with at least minimal education, and implying that patients’ notes and written instructions were becoming part of the job.<sup>116</sup>

Another key development was the separation of domestic from nursing tasks. In the mid-1850s reports were made to the Infirmary of shortages of nurses: ‘The difficulty of securing nurses arises partly from the practice of requiring your nurses to perform

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<sup>115</sup> In the 1830s and 1840s initial steps were taken to change this. Elizabeth Fry visited the deaconesses’ institution in Germany, and set up what became the Institution of Nursing Sisters in London where women lived together under a stringent regime, spent several months at London hospitals ‘picking up what knowledge they could from the doctors and nurses’. They then went to work as private nurses or volunteers with the poor. As this system proved its worth, the combination of a religious life and nursing work spread to other groups and other areas. Holcombe, 1973 p 72. See above p 158 - 9 for the deaconesses in Salisbury

<sup>116</sup> Haskins C, *The History of Salisbury Infirmary*, 1922 p 18

menial duties, which deters a higher class of nurses from becoming applicants ...'. It was recommended '...that in future the wards be cleaned and scoured by persons engaged for that purpose, and your nurses kept in every particular distinct and separate from the servants of the establishment'. Sister Williams (trained at Guy's Hospital) was appointed from the Nurses Institution in Devonshire Square, London, in 1857 as Superintendent, ranking next to the matron, to 'regulate the nursing'.<sup>117</sup>

Sidney Herbert, President of the Infirmary's governing body, corresponded with Florence Nightingale and received letters containing 'valuable and helpful advice and suggestions in connection with the nursing question...'. Although the committee agreed to follow these recommendations, the problem does not seem to have been solved, as in 1877 a report was published of 'The Sub-Committee appointed to consider the State of the Nursing and Domestic Departments of the Infirmary'.<sup>118</sup> This was entirely concerned with the cost of the staff and implications for expenditure of changes demanded in the two departments, and by the impending opening of the new Children's Ward.

The Matron (at a salary of £70 pa) was still responsible for the staff in the kitchen, house, laundry and garden, at a total bill of £237 2s; the Superintendent of Nurses (paid £60 pa) headed the ward staff, each with a Head Nurse and Assistant, totalling £321 13s 4d.<sup>119</sup> Recommendations that two charwomen be replaced by an additional indoor servant for the Matron's area and a second Scrubber for nursing, plus the two new Nurses and a Nurse Girl for the Children's Ward, were calculated to add over £200 to these areas of expenditure (and the Sub-Committee 'ventured to call attention to' the existing deficit of £1411 8s. 2d). A solution for work in the garden could be found in Rule 105, 'by which Patients are required to do any work for which the House Surgeon shall certify them to be fit'!

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<sup>117</sup> Haskins 1922 p 20

<sup>118</sup> Attached to the 1877 Annual Report

<sup>119</sup> The wages of the staff in the Matron's department are given individually, so we know that the Cook was paid £22 10s, and the First Laundress £20, but in the Nursing Department everyone but the Superintendent and the Charwoman is put together at £240 pa – for three Head Nurses, six Assistant Nurses, two Night Nurses, a Maid in the Nurses' Dining Room and a Scrubber. This is clearly an insufficient total, when the costs of new appointments are given at £50 for one Assistant Nurse, £35 for a Nurse Girl, and £35 for a Scrubber. The £50 specifically mentions 'Board and Wages' so perhaps the composite figure does not include board, but it would be an inconsistent comparison. I do not have a solution to this problem, but the individual figures do show the hierarchy of nursing staff in terms of their pay at this time.

The code of practice established at the Nightingale School of Nursing at St Thomas's seems to have been adopted in Salisbury in the 1860s. By the 1870s the *Annual Reports* contained many references to nurse training. In 1871 there was concern that 'few eligible applications have been made' for the scheme of admitting 'young persons' to the hospital as Probationers to train as nurses. The following year a Special Court of the Governors of the Infirmary agreed to a proposal that young persons in a newly-established Home for Training Nurses be given permission 'to attend at the Infirmary for the purpose of training', an arrangement subsequently found to work satisfactorily.<sup>120</sup>

The terminology changed significantly in 1874, when a Special Meeting discussed 'the subject of admitting *ladies* (my italics) to the Infirmary to learn nursing' and decided to do so 'subject to certain rules...'. Five ladies paid a fee of £5 5s each and were admitted as Nursing Students. The scheme was extended in 1890:

In addition to Nursing Students, who are admitted for 12 months on payment of a fee of five guineas, Probationers, who are willing to pay ten guineas, and to engage for two years instead of one, are now appointed, thus securing to the Infirmary the benefit of the experience they acquire and the training they receive during the first half of that period.

From the *Annual Reports* there are only occasional hints about the life of the individuals employed at the Infirmary. The *Certificate Book* for entry into nursing recorded arrivals and departures, and labelled the women according to their category of role.<sup>121</sup> Caroline Lancaster 'a very good nurse' worked in the Infirmary from 1868 until she left to be married in 1876; lady probationer, Miss H Mitchell was there for six months from 1877-1878 and was described as 'kind, intelligent and anxious to learn'. Two pupil nurses, Jane Morris and Jane Denby departed, having completed their year's training, with complementary remarks on their certificates: 'good conscientious nurse' and 'particularly good with special cases'. Ann Taylor, 'particularly good tempered' went in 1881 'to accept a better appointment'. She seemed to be able to make her own decisions about her career. However, not everyone was free from the traditional obligations of young women. Mary Louisa Wood, an under nurse who was 'exceedingly active', left in 1880 'required by her aunt in town'. Similarly, Probationer Hibberd left

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<sup>120</sup> See p 174

<sup>121</sup> WSRO J8/141/1

the Institution 'owing to her presence being required at home after the death of her mother'.<sup>122</sup>

Although several nurses left to be married, there were a few married women included among the nursing staff listed in the censuses. It was certainly not usual, but apparently there was no absolute marriage bar, though the requirement to live in must have been inconvenient. It is possible that Emma Morrell in 1861 and Harriet Ives in 1871 were separated from their husbands, or their husbands were working elsewhere, and without children, so able and wanting to take a residential post.

A further step towards establishing nursing as a professional career was assisted by giving gratuities on retirement, allowing women some means of support when they left employment. In 1863 Mrs Anne Fowler, Dr Fowler's wife, 'who for some years had been in the habit of sending monthly gifts of clothing, bed linen, etc for both nurses and patients, conveyed to the Governors a sum of £200 to be invested for establishing a Nurses Superannuation Fund'.<sup>123</sup> Payments to departing members of the nursing staff thereafter were noted, and revealed examples of long tenure. The Head Nurse, Caroline Smith, 'rendered good and faithful service' for 27 years and was awarded the largest allowance permissible, 10s a week, when she retired through ill health in 1893.<sup>124</sup> Even within this formal document she was referred to by the diminutive 'Nurse Carrie'.

Mrs Fowler's gifts to the benefit of the nursing staff continued after her death when a bequest was received in 1884 of £7,193 17s 5d. This was shared between the Infirmary and the Nurses Superannuation Fund, and the nurses' salaries were raised 'making them more in harmony with the salaries paid by similar institutions'.<sup>125</sup> Unfortunately the amounts were not recorded.

Other improvements in the quality of life for working nurses came from grateful patients and philanthropic citizens. Donations of game, fruit, vegetables and flowers were regularly acknowledged, and seem to have benefited both staff and patients. Mrs Wordsworth, the Bishop's wife, 'very frequently placed her carriage at the disposal of

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<sup>122</sup> WSRO J8/109/1 February 1877

<sup>123</sup> Haskins, 1922 p 24

<sup>124</sup> Salisbury Infirmary Annual Report 1893 p 3

<sup>125</sup> Haskins, 1922 p 26

the Nurses of the Infirmary, who have very greatly appreciated her generous thought of them, and from which they have derived not only pleasure but healthful exercise'.<sup>126</sup> Later there was also a nurses' tennis lawn provided on site.<sup>127</sup>

The Infirmary almost always operated with an excess of expenditure over income, and depended on regular subscriptions and donations, and continuous additional fund-raising activities. One particular crisis arose in 1893 when an appeal was launched, to include a Nurses Home:

The accommodation for the Nursing Staff is unsuitable, inadequate and defective in every way, and it is of the most absolute importance that, without delay, a new Building should be erected for this purpose in the Infirmary grounds. Amongst other reasons, the health of the Nurses, and consequently their efficiency, would be promoted by their being removed, while off duty, from the hospital air ... The present system of engaging, for two years probation, persons of good position and education is working beneficially and to the advantage of the Infirmary in all respects; but it is feared that it will be difficult in the future to secure Probationers of such a high class, unless there is an improvement in the accommodation provided for them.<sup>128</sup>

It was also to the Infirmary's advantage that Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee provided an impetus to fund-raising for good causes at this time. The Victoria Nurses Home, facing Crane Street behind the Infirmary, was opened in 1901, providing a purpose-built, adjacent but separate residence for the nursing staff.<sup>129</sup> To the city, this was a visible symbol of their existence, but it also continued the idea that nurses belonged in an enclosed, protected environment.<sup>130</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century there was clearly a trend towards a national labour market for nursing staff, not only at the highest level. This was no longer a job taken casually and locally. The staff of the Infirmary in 1851, including the Matron, were all born within the region of Salisbury. In 1881 the Matron was a native of Kent, and the Night Supervisor came from South Africa, there were eight local nurses and two local probationers, one nurse and five probationers from further afield. At the Nurses Home, the Lady Superintendent also came from Kent, and was in charge of four resident

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<sup>126</sup> Salisbury Infirmary Annual Report 1898 p 4

<sup>127</sup> Haskins, 1922 p 25

<sup>128</sup> Salisbury Infirmary Annual Report 1893 p 37

<sup>129</sup> Stride, 1999 p 11

<sup>130</sup> National registration for qualification following examinations on an agreed syllabus did not come until after the First World War. The first male nurse students started training in Salisbury in 1952. Not until 1958 were student nurses allowed to wear mufti *inside* study blocks.



trainee nurses, one from Wiltshire and three elsewhere, plus three probationers – two from Wilts and one from Hereford. Around the turn of the century, Matron Miss Carvosso left Salisbury to go to Derby; Miss MacMaster was appointed to Salisbury from St Thomas's. Two nurses who retired in 1901 (after 21 and 16 years service) were replaced by 'capable nurses trained in the large Metropolitan Hospitals'.<sup>131</sup> In the same year Miss Bingham, a fully trained masseuse joined the staff; 'the advantages derived from this treatment' were already appreciated when the *Annual Report* was written.<sup>132</sup>

### **Nursing: appointment of a new matron**

Appointment as a hospital matron became an achievable ambition for career nurses by the end of the nineteenth century. Mrs Causeway was the first matron appointed to Salisbury Infirmary when it opened in 1766; her letter of application set out her claims to the job: '...there is nothing from the kitchen to the garrett but I understands both to give directions and to do.... I would not doubt of saving the House many pounds a year...'.<sup>133</sup> Two nurses joined Mrs Causeway when the first patients were admitted in the spring of 1767. Domestic efficiency and economy were the qualities required, and continued to be important into the second half of the nineteenth century. These priorities were confirmed by advertisements such as that for a new House Porter required in 1851: 'He will be required to brew, bake and attend to the garden...All *applications to be made to the Matron* (my italics) at the Infirmary'.<sup>134</sup>

Changes of matron were important events, and the complex selection process indicated how seriously this was taken. The requirements on the post were stated explicitly, allowing an assessment of changes in the nature of the role. Of particular significance was the extent to which the decision was made in the full view of the citizens the Infirmary served. Not only did the applicants publicly state their desire for the job, but the results of the selection meeting were published for all to read. Features of some examples will serve to demonstrate these characteristics.

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<sup>131</sup> Salisbury Infirmary Annual Report 1901 p 5

<sup>132</sup> *ibid*

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in *Salisbury 200*, 1992 p 7

<sup>134</sup> *SJ* January 1851 p 5

Owing to the death in service of Miss Wills in the mid-1850s, advertisements were placed in the local paper for her successor. In response came the following:

To the Governors of the Salisbury Infirmary  
My Lords and Gentlemen: The Death of my late Sister having caused a Vacancy in the Office of Matron of your Institution, I take the opportunity of offering myself to your notice as a Candidate for that Situation. The Testimonials of character and ability which I shall have the honour of laying before you on the Day of Election will, I trust, obtain for me your confidence and support. I beg to add that the long connection of my late Sister with your Institution having afforded me numerous opportunities of making myself acquainted with the details of its management, I feel fully equal to the duties that would be required of me. I have the honour to be, My Lords and Gentlemen, Your faithful and obedient Servant, Anna Wills.<sup>135</sup>

Her supporters had anticipated this application, and the previous week's issue had contained a notice from them:

A Vacancy having occurred in an Office of the Infirmary by the Death of Miss Wills the late Matron, the Friends of Miss Anna Wills, Sister of the Deceased, feel it incumbent on them, from the knowledge that other Candidates are soliciting Votes, respectfully to announce to the Governors of the Infirmary that it is her intention to Offer Herself as a Candidate for the Office at an early opportunity, and from her experience, business habits, knowledge of accounts, and general fitness, they confidently hope that she will receive their support.<sup>136</sup>

Other candidates came forward and the day appointed for decision arrived. '[T]he interest excited on the occasion was shewn by the attendance of an unusual number of Governors'.<sup>137</sup> The excitement arose because it had been discovered that one of the applicants for the post, a Miss Warren, was a member of 'Miss Sellon's religious establishment in Plymouth'.<sup>138</sup> Lengthy speeches by Archdeacon Hony and the Hon and Rev S Waldegrave explained to the assembled Governors why this was a good reason for not selecting Miss Warren as the new matron:

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<sup>135</sup> *SJ* 10 February 1855 p 2

<sup>136</sup> *SJ* 3 February 1855 p 2

<sup>137</sup> *SJ* 17 March 1855 p 3. Same reference for subsequent comments from this meeting.

<sup>138</sup> Lydia Sellon (1821-1876) known as 'Mother Lydia' founded the Society of the Most Holy Trinity, a Church of England sisterhood at Devonport which moved to St Dunstan's Abbey, Plymouth in 1852. It was probably her close association with Edward Bouverie Pusey, a leader of the Oxford Movement, and his regular practice of hearing confessions of many of the sisters which led to the accusations of 'Romish tendencies'. Miss Sellon also faced hostility because of her alleged authoritarianism, and was the subject of a pamphlet war in 1852. This was publicised sufficiently widely to be noticed by the leading citizens of Salisbury. The sisters were, however, also known for their nursing, particularly in adverse circumstances such as cholera and smallpox epidemics. ODNB online

this institution of Miss Sellon's is not merely conventual, it is essentially Romish in character. Will Miss Warren, when she comes to Salisbury, lay aside the principles and practices she has learnt within its walls? If she does not she is greatly to be feared.

It was particularly noted that Miss Warren had entirely failed to mention her connection with the Plymouth institution in either her address or her testimonials. Furthermore, she offered her services gratuitously, 'a new and important principle contrary to the uniform practice of the Infirmary from the time of its foundation'. Miss Warren's election would result in 'the withdrawal of many subscribers to the Infirmary, and the refusal of a great portion of the clergy to send their parishioners to the institution'. And, despite three testimonials from medical men in Plymouth saying she is an excellent nurse,

'what are her capabilities as an accountant? What her fitness as the governor of large establishment of servants?' '[P]ersonal and zealous attendance on the sick did not form the principle part of the duties of the Matron, who ought rather to display qualifications for the minute details of housekeeping, and the superintendence of those who acted under her'.

This combination of arguments was sufficiently powerful to cause her supporters to withdraw Miss Warren's name. Fear of a detrimental financial impact on the Infirmary was set alongside the accepted, domestic management responsibilities of the post, in addition to the concerns about the 'Romish' tendencies Miss Warren would bring. This all made it impossible that she would receive any votes. Miss A Wills (sister of the late matron) was the successful candidate by a large majority.

In 1869 Miss Wills resigned through ill health, and notices were again published in the *Salisbury Journal* that a Special Court of Governors of the Infirmary would be held to elect a successor.<sup>139</sup> The job specification still emphasised the domestic side of the role: 'She must be a good Housekeeper and conversant with accounts'.<sup>140</sup>

Over successive weeks leading up to that meeting, candidates for the post published their applications: the first came from Mary Haywood in Downton

My Lords and Gentlemen. A vacancy having occurred in the situation of matron to the Salisbury Infirmary by the resignation of Miss Wills, I beg to offer myself as a candidate for the appointment. My being known to many of the Governors from the long residence of myself and late husband in Salisbury and the neighbourhood, I am encouraged to hope will be considered as a recommendation. Should I succeed in obtaining the appointment, I will

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<sup>139</sup> *SJ* 13 Feb 1869 p 5

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*

exert myself to the utmost to merit the confidence reposed in me, and do all in my power for the comfort and well being of the inmates of the Institution.<sup>141</sup>

Then Harriet Ward, from Milford Street in the city, wrote ‘I hope soon to have the honour of placing before you Testimonials of my competency for the situation, and which I trust will induce you to give my application your earnest consideration’.<sup>142</sup>

The same week there was an application from Marianne Grant from Andover in Hampshire:

Should you see fit to appoint me to the situation, I would use every endeavour to fulfil its duties and strive to merit your confidence. My family being well-known in the neighbourhood, I trust I may be enabled to produce satisfactory references as to my ability to undertake the same.

Mary Haywood appeared not to have pursued her candidature; another application was received from Miss Shaw but she herself was not present at the meeting (as required) so she was not considered. Mrs Grant and Miss Ward appeared before the Governors and answered questions ‘as to their previous experience, which in both cases it seemed had been confined solely to private establishments’. When they had withdrawn, someone opined ‘neither of the candidates appeared to be quite equal to the varied and onerous duties of the matron of the institution, which, as they all knew, required a person of peculiar qualifications’; another ‘they ought to have a more elderly person than either of the candidates who had appeared’. Someone wanted to call in Miss Shaw ‘who had for nine years been a sister in the Westminster Hospital and had during that period had considerable experience of both surgical and medical cases as well as the management of both nurses and patients.’ This would have been an innovative appointment, anticipating the break in tradition of having a matron in charge of the housekeeping rather than the nursing.

It became obvious that the 50 or 60 Governors had no intention of rescheduling the meeting: Dr Lush did not see what would be gained from the delay unless they employed some person to search out candidates for them. So the decision was put to a vote, 38 for Mrs Grant and 17 for Miss Ward.<sup>143</sup> Marianne Grant then had to take up

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<sup>141</sup> *SJ* 23 January 1869 p 5. Downton is a large village south of Salisbury, see p 264

<sup>142</sup> *SJ* 6 Feb 1869 p 5

<sup>143</sup> *SJ* 13 March 1869 p 7

the post knowing that her employers considered her too young, and unequal to the 'various and onerous duties' required of her. Probably worse than that, the population she was to serve were also aware of these shortcomings.

Mrs Grant was matron for four years, resigning in 1873. Her replacement was still required to be 'a good housekeeper and conversant with accounts'.<sup>144</sup> Seven candidates were considered, and Miss Nixon was chosen by 70 votes to 36 for Miss Kilvert who came second. Miss Nixon's advertisement emphasised the local connections stressed by Mrs Grant and Mrs Hayward in 1869, and was more explicit on the subject of her experience:

My Father-in-law's sisters are the Matrons of three large Unions, in each of which I have discharged the duties either as Deputy or Assistant Matron, and have consequently obtained the required knowledge of keeping accounts.<sup>145</sup>

When Miss Nixon resigned in 1879 the system which 'owing to the division of authority, frequently caused friction' was changed, to start the clearer separation of medical and household responsibilities. From 65 candidates – a significant increase in the number of applicants – Miss Morris, with experience at St Thomas's and later Addenbrooke hospitals, was appointed as 'a matron skilled in nursing as well as domestic affairs, with a housekeeper under her'.<sup>146</sup> This established a more recognisable sphere of influence for a hospital matron.

At the end of the century when Miss Johnstone departed in 1898, the Governors delegated two Committees to choose her successor, and then met at a Special Court to formally elect Miss Jane MacMaster from a large field of 96 applicants.<sup>147</sup> The Infirmary Treasurer, Mr William Pinckney, had spent 'many hours of indefatigable labour' making enquiries in London and elsewhere to obtain information 'more trustworthy than that afforded by private testimonials' about the candidates.<sup>148</sup> By that

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<sup>144</sup> *SJ* 15 February 1873 p 5

<sup>145</sup> See p 286 for other applicants

<sup>146</sup> Haskins, 1922 p 25

<sup>147</sup> Salisbury Infirmary Annual Report 1898 p 3. The Management Committee found it 'impossible to express in a few words the firmness of decision without harshness of any kind with which for nearly five and a half years she [Miss Johnstone] has most conscientiously discharged the onerous and increasing duties of her office'.

<sup>148</sup> *op cit* p 4

time both the nature of the post and the method of appointment had a more modern style.

### **Nursing: the Diocesan Institution for Trained Nurses**

The formal name of the Nurses Training Home mentioned above was the Diocesan Institution for Trained Nurses. It was established in 1871, initially in Lavington Cottage, and subsequently in Harcourt House. The women trained at the Infirmary, but when qualified, would work in the homes of the sick throughout the diocese. The promoters of the scheme explained their plan thus:

to be able in time to send Nurses to the poor, on the application of their clergyman or others, at a small charge; the expenses of this, when the Institution is in working order, will partly be defrayed by the usual payments for Nursing those who can afford it.

A 'special subscription list' was opened to begin the process of raising money to support the project.<sup>149</sup> Miss Mitchell, the first Lady Superintendent, 'offered her services without salary', but subsequent holders of the post were paid. The nurses, who had to be aged between 23 and 40, were taken on three months trial. If that period went well, they then became a probationary nurse for 12 months training, and were required to serve for a further two years after qualification. They could then leave if they wished, giving three months notice. In their third year they earned a salary £18, plus clothes valued £5, and board lodging and medical attendance. If they stayed to five years, the wage rose to £22.

In the original proposal, it was stated that 'the Nurses shall be encouraged to take a religious motive as their spring of work, but should keep entirely free from extremes of dress, phraseology, or thought'. It is hard to know how far this objective was met, and it is not easy to compare the working life of women in the Institution with those at the Infirmary. The former had more variety in their placements. Some had additional qualification as a monthly nurse; others could be placed permanently in a parish, presumably the equivalent of a District Nurse in the twentieth century, where board and lodging was provided and a fee paid to the Institution. A nurse was supplied, and not charged for, to the Penitentiary.

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<sup>149</sup> Printed flyer pasted in first minute book of the Institution WSRO J8/109/1

The initial strict regime caused some difficulties for the Infirmary, and a revised daily programme seems to have been negotiated amicably. The requirement that Institution nurses return to the Home for meals was altered so that they stayed all day. Less amicable was the departure of the second Lady Superintendent. Miss Noyes resigned in 1876 following complaints (unspecified in the minute book) by the nurses. The Management Committee accepted the resignation but felt that it might have been averted

by a determination on Miss Noyes part to administer the home with more careful attention to the comforts of the nurses, more elastic sympathy with the lessor (sic) as well as the greater trials of their calling, or more willingness to make from, time to time, those concessions in matters of smaller moment which in the judgement of the Committee are essential conditions of good-will and concord.<sup>150</sup>

The rod of iron with which Miss Noyes ran the Home strictly according to the rulebook can be imagined. In the spring of 1874 she had visited the Institution in Exeter 'to gather information' but even this did not lead to a more flexible and sympathetic approach. The day-to-day trials of fleas, rats, irascible patients, and poor food; the rarer but regular epidemics and floods were all part of a nurse's life. Most were saved from the ultimate penalty paid by Nurse Daybourne, who died in 1877 'from fever while nursing a patient'.

The value of a service of properly trained nurses was praised by Lord Lansdowne, opening the Victoria Home:

It is no exaggeration to say that the employment of such nurses had been the means of robbing the sickbed, both of the poor and the rich man (sic), of half the terrors which used to surround it in former days.<sup>151</sup>

In fifty years the nature of the work and approach of those employed in it had changed dramatically.

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<sup>150</sup> WSRO J8/109/1 February 1876

<sup>151</sup> *SJ* 2 November 1901 p 8

## Matrons in other institutions

The label 'Matron' was given to the woman employed to take responsibility for the domestic side of other institutions, as well as the Infirmary. Each of the almshouses, established under the provision of charitable foundations dating from earlier centuries, had such a person looking after the welfare of the paupers. In 1851, for example, Martha Fox, a widow aged 66 was matron at Frowds, in Bedwin Street, with five elderly women in her charge, plus the granddaughter of one of them. Edward Frowd's bequest, when eventually his will emerged from the clutches of the Court of Chancery in 1773, built accommodation for six men and six women, and supplied them with clothing, including a pair of shoes and stockings each year 'that they may appear neat and clean'.<sup>152</sup>

Ann Crabb, a widow of 60, was described as 'matron' (in lieu of Head) and 'nurse of the hospital' under occupation at Trinity Hospital. This was another almshouse, not a hospital in the medical sense despite her label, and that of her daughter as 'assistant nurse'. Trinity was founded about 1370; legend has it by Agnes Bottenham, keeper of an inn and a brothel, as a penance to redeem her soul.<sup>153</sup> It continues today to provide a home for aged citizens in need.

Despite considerable help from the almshouses, the three city parishes provided most of the relief for the poor in their own homes and in the City Workhouse in Crane Street. The 1834 Poor Law Report described the latter as 'a scene of filth and misrule'; it continued to attract a bad press and was eventually closed when the City and Alderbury Unions (the latter catering for the Close and 21 surrounding parishes) merged in 1867, and a new building was constructed on the outskirts of the city.<sup>154</sup> The appointment of a new matron for the City Workhouse in 1851 provided an interesting example of family connections in institutional management, and of the problems for historians of identifying individual women at this time.

*The Salisbury Journal* carried an advertisement in March 1851 stating that the Board of Churchwardens and Overseers were to hold a meeting 'the 19<sup>th</sup> instant' to elect a

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<sup>152</sup> Salisbury Local History Group, *Caring: a history of Salisbury City Charities*, Salisbury 2000 p 51

<sup>153</sup> op cit p 4

<sup>154</sup> Newman R and Howells J, *Salisbury Past*, Chichester 2001 p 78



Matron of the Workhouse, in the room of Mrs Jeans, deceased: 'The person to be appointed must be unmarried, and perfectly competent to perform the duties prescribed by the Poor Law Board. Salary 30£ per annum with board and lodging'. In Slater's *Directory* of 1852, the matron of the workhouse was listed as 'Mrs Jeans', at first sight suggesting that the directory was using out-dated information, simply reprinting from an earlier edition. However, census night in 1851 was 30 March, not two weeks after the appointment of the new matron. The census enumerators' book recorded: Thomas Jeans, widower, aged 37 as workhouse master, Richard Jeans, his four year old son, and Grace Jeans, his unmarried sister, aged 35 with the occupation of workhouse matron. Grace had previously been a teacher in neighbouring Wilton Workhouse, where her mother was matron. It seems that Grace was subsequently given a courtesy title of 'Mrs' due to her position of some authority as matron. Thomas Jeans subsequently remarried.<sup>155</sup> It would appear that his new wife became matron. Mr and Mrs Jeans' long service to the workhouse generated some difficulties when they came to retirement as they 'continued in office' over the amalgamation of the Unions.<sup>156</sup>

In a workhouse the matron was responsible for the welfare of female inmates, but there were other jobs for women within the institution. The Poor Law authorities were responsible for the vulnerable citizens within their area. Such was the variety of people who were at risk of finding themselves in the workhouse that comprehensive facilities were provided. Workhouses, therefore, had schools for the children where teachers were employed, such as Grace Jeans mentioned above, and Mrs Shergold from Stockbridge who was appointed in 1864 at a salary of £30 pa plus rations to the amount of 7s 6d weekly.<sup>157</sup> Many inmates were not in the best of health; workhouses had infirmaries for their care, which needed – in aggregate - significant numbers of nurses. The demand was such that a Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association was founded to assist with their appointments.<sup>158</sup> When Emily Hibbert was appointed Head Nurse in Salisbury in 1897 she came recommended by the Association. Her duties were specifically to include the training of probationers, thus revealing another route for women to become

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<sup>155</sup> Miss Nixon's application for the post of matron at the Infirmary included 'I am the step-daughter of Mr T M Jeans, who has been the master of the City Workhouse for the past 30 years, and by whom I have been brought up since childhood'. *SJ* 15 February 1873 p 5

<sup>156</sup> WSRO H1/110/19 May 1878. Correspondence with the Local Government Board over their superannuation.

<sup>157</sup> WSRO H1/115/1 2 May 1864. There were three applicants for the post; one from Liverpool 'was deemed ineligible on account of her youth', Miss Clarke from Poole, and Mrs Shergold, who was unanimously elected.

<sup>158</sup> Founded by Louisa Twining in 1870

nurses. Miss Hibbert's salary was also £30 pa, the same figure that Mrs Shergold was paid over thirty years earlier as the schoolmistress; presumably she also had board and lodging.<sup>159</sup>

The gaol was another institution with a family partnership in its employ in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. William Dowding had been appointed Deputy Governor of Fisherton Gaol in 1827 and became Governor ten years later, taking over from his uncle who had held the post since 1813. William's wife, Emma, was Matron. In 1851 they had three children living with them in the prison, Emma 11, Emily 9, and Edward 2, with a governess and two domestic servants. *The Rules for Wiltshire Prisons*, 1842, stated that the Matron

shall keep a journal for recording occurrences of importance within her department, reports made by her to the Governor and punishments of female prisoners ordered by him and lay the Journal before the visiting Justices at their ordinary meetings  
and

she shall make a daily written report to the Governor, at some stated time fixed by him, of the general condition and conduct of her department; of the names of female officers and prisoners absent from chapel and the cause thereof; of the names of female prisoners in the Infirmary, or under medical treatment in their own cells or wards, or wanting to see the Surgeon, and the names of such as are under punishment.<sup>160</sup>

One surviving journal was that written by Emma Dowding for the years 1849 –1853. On some days the only comment was 'All orderly' or 'No observation' – presumably the ideal. Otherwise, Mrs Dowding diligently recorded health and behaviour, arrivals and departures, the achievements and complaints of her charges, providing the reader with a detailed impression of life in the gaol where the regime was hard but not inhumane.

1849

10 September

11 October

Some of the female prisoners complain of their dislike to Cocoa  
Sarah Gauntlett and Sarah Frampton were discovered in the act of talking to the Prisoners in the House of Correction through the key-hole of the yard door; for which they were put into separate cells.

1850

6 April

Ordered by the Governor to put Randal into solitary confinement and Smith into the dark cell, having reported them both for misconduct and making use of bad language

10 October

Sarah Coleman removed to the Millbank Prison for transportation

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<sup>159</sup> WSRO H1/110/25 15 January 1897.

<sup>160</sup> Hurley B (ed), *Fisherton Anger Gaol Matron's Journal 1849 – 53*, Devizes 1997 p 1. In 1850 the Governor's annual salary was £300 and the Matron was paid £20.

1852

19 February Put Ann Jones into the dark cell for telling great falsehoods and for injuring a pair of County shoes

19 June The women have finished making 2 dozen shirts

29 September The Surgeon passed Ann Shergold and ordered her to be kept in bed as she has a very bad leg. She is also much afflicted and subjected to fits. The Surgeon ordered a rush light to be given her at night and 2 women to be put with her.

## Conclusion

Emma Dowding, Anna Wills, Martha Todd and Mary Douglas were but four women for whom the caring professions provided an opportunity to earn their own living in nineteenth century Salisbury. Their experiences would have been similar to many thousands of others around the country. Women sought employment in teaching and nursing, as matrons or as headmistresses, for a variety of reasons. Some saw it as a calling to serve, inspired by their religious faith. For others it was a material means to an end – enough income to live on, and thus a means of escape from ‘redundancy’ or ‘dependence’.

They worked in large communities, on staffs of substantial institutions, or in small units – often with a sister, husband, or friend. As the century progressed, these women were increasingly likely to have some formal training for their work. And they were increasingly likely to have moved away from their home town or village, though kin links remained significant. All had achieved a degree of independence. Entry into this public life required courage, determination and ambition, and it is to be hoped led to a fulfilled life.

As a cathedral city, Salisbury might be expected to have a high educational profile, benefiting both the girls requiring schooling and women seeking teaching posts. Its other institutions also were full of opportunities, and indeed were attracting women from around the country and beyond its shores. As communications improved, and as professionalism for women progressed, Salisbury was part of developing social and vocational networks.

## Chapter 5

### Salisbury women in public: philanthropy and pastimes

*'good as gold and kind as charity'*<sup>1</sup>

'Prove that you understand the worth of time by employing it well' was the message demonstrated to the March girls in *Little Women* and well understood by Louisa M Alcott's numerous readers.<sup>2</sup> Many Victorian women had very little spare time away from the commitments of employment or domestic tasks. But even brief pauses between the manifold duties of a maid-of-all-work were not to be wasted:

A bustling and active girl will always find time to do a little needlework for herself... In the summer evenings she should manage to sit down for two or three hours and for a short time in the afternoon in leisure days.<sup>3</sup>

Women who were privileged to have free time *and* a source of financial support had access to many opportunities for filling their lives both to meet the constraints of society and their own desires and ambitions as well as doing something constructive and purposeful. According to Edith Olivier, for Victorian ladies '[l]eisure was the substance of their lives, and upon this firm and unchanging foundation they embroidered their own peculiar pattern'.<sup>4</sup> This did not imply idleness. They might start with a blank canvas, but the pattern of activities they selected could be varied and complex. Alongside domestic responsibilities, that could include pastimes such as sketching, stitching, singing and strolling arm-in-arm with sisters, cousins and friends. These activities were low-key, understated, modest and essentially private, and much relaxation for the middle and upper classes did take place within the confines of the home. But it was necessary to purchase sheet music, and embroidery threads, and to learn about new trends. The results of amateur creativity were displayed at the 1852

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<sup>1</sup> Trollope A, *Last Chronicle of Barsest*, first published 1867, 1914 edn Vol 1 p 24

<sup>2</sup> Alcott L M, *Little Women*, first published 1867, nd this edn p 133-4

<sup>3</sup> Beeton I (ed), *Beeton's Book of Household Management*, first published 1861 1968 facsimile p 1005

<sup>4</sup> Olivier E, *Four Victorian Ladies of Wiltshire*, 1945 p 7

Exhibition, such as Mrs Squarey's patchwork silk and satin quilt.<sup>5</sup> Attendance at entertainments such as the theatre and concerts, sports clubs and flower shows brought leisured women into the communal arena as it was also considered important for them to appreciate professional and amateur production and performance, and perhaps surprisingly, an element of genteel competition was perfectly acceptable.

Voluntary philanthropic work was another undertaking where women functioned in the public sphere. Acceptability of such tasks as workhouse visiting and Sunday school teaching arose from the same considerations of the female capacity to nurture others as discussed in the previous chapter. Another widely held assumption was that certain roles within society 'naturally' fell to the wives and daughters of prominent families who had an unavoidable obligation to their local communities: Miss Matty, the Rector's daughter, explained 'when I was a girl I was half my leisure time nursing in the neighbouring cottages' of *Cranford*.<sup>6</sup> Edith Olivier commented on the cryptic *Dis* which appeared in the diary of the Townsends who lived in Salisbury at Mompesson House in The Close. This stood for 'district visiting', to less fortunate neighbours or further afield.<sup>7</sup>

Individuals in smaller places were following in the footsteps, probably unconsciously, of the pioneers such as Mary Carpenter and Louisa Twining whose efforts eventually opened up opportunities for professional women. The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, in which women participated from its beginning in 1857, brought together people already active in the field.<sup>8</sup> It was also part of a process that saw a transition between amateur, voluntary, work and paid professional careers. Even if those in Salisbury had no specific experience of these large organisations they were clearly aware of the roles open to them and the opportunities these provided for meeting social obligations. Here too was the blurred dividing line between charity work and politics. At a personal level this was important for the individuals concerned, and was exploited when someone wanted to move from one side of that line to the other: Miss

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<sup>5</sup> See p 54 above

<sup>6</sup> Gaskell E, *Cranford*, first published 1851, 1994 edn p 155

<sup>7</sup> Olivier, 1945 p 13

<sup>8</sup> Hollis P, *Women in Public 1850 – 1900*, 1979 p 223 - 4

Palgrave stood for election as a Guardian in Salisbury in 1901 and told her prospective supporters 'I have had 20 years experience in voluntary work of various kinds...'.<sup>9</sup>

The local gentry and aristocracy came into their own as committee members for fund-raising events for The Ladies Association for the Care of Friendless Girls or The Girls Friendly Society. A strong sense of duty came with their position in local society, and these types of organisations provided the chance to be involved with the management of projects for institutions designed for an entirely female clientele. Individuals also used their resources for charitable work. Small, personal, donations were important to local charities; and women without surplus money but with time and devotion to spare made significant contributions to schools and church groups for the disadvantaged.

Philanthropic work merged with traditional 'feminine' pastimes when, for example, items were stitched, painted or baked for sale at charity bazaars.<sup>10</sup>

Even though they were not receiving money in return for services, it was still necessary for these women to consider the importance of the respectability and acceptability of these public appearances, especially as only middle and upper class women had the freedom and independence to take up these opportunities. The wives and widows, daughters and sisters of the city's professional men, of successful commercial families, and of the local gentry, took the stage in varied but socially approved roles. Both young and old, the individuals concerned performed with commitment and diligence, from providing teas for the workhouse children to organising lectures from national figures in support of women's suffrage. Although women in Salisbury came relatively late on the scene, for example as Poor Law Guardians compared with London or Bristol, they did so with no less enthusiasm.

This chapter and the next will examine unpaid public activities of women in Salisbury. Their involvement in politics and pressure groups, especially for the extension of the parliamentary franchise to women, is the subject of chapter 6. Chapter 5 considers their work in philanthropy, and at the ways in which women enjoyed themselves.

Opportunities for voluntary work in education included teaching, visiting and administration. Religious organisations provided a framework within which women

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<sup>9</sup> *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* (henceforth *SJ*) 2 March 1901 p 1

<sup>10</sup> See also the work of a Dorcas Society p 192

could donate their money, time and energy for the benefit of others.<sup>11</sup> This provided a context for what Eileen Yeo has called ‘authorised entry into public activity’.<sup>12</sup> Evidence permits us to identify the involvement of individual women at different times, and to acknowledge the valuable contributions they made. Between women, linkages can be made across kinship, social and economic networks, and in some cases there are also connections between different institutions and organisations. However, the information is somewhat fragmentary and disjointed, and it has proved difficult to identify consistent trends over time. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and into the first decade of the twentieth, there were Salisbury women supporting a variety of philanthropic causes. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, women in the city were taking up roles not attempted earlier, but it has not been possible to confirm whether this was due to more openings being available, or the particular individuals concerned, or an easing of social constraints, or increased awareness of developments elsewhere. It was most likely a combination of all these forces.

Pastimes and social events for the women in Victorian Salisbury were many and varied. In this part of chapter 5 selected activities are used to demonstrate the opportunities available, and especially to place emphasis on the links between the worlds of home and society. It uses the 1895 diary of Maria Fawcett to explore the life of an elderly spinster in the Close, and to examine further the importance of correspondence, libraries, walking and visiting. An important facet of the culture of Salisbury had always been music, and the nineteenth century was no exception. Women participated both as performers and audience. Outdoor pursuits too - archaeology, geology and sports such as archery - provided intellectual stimulation and beneficial exercise, and were available

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<sup>11</sup> For example, the *Sarum Almanack and Diocesan Kalendar* for 1884 listed the following in Salisbury under the heading ‘Women’s Diocesan Work’:

Salisbury Diocesan House of Mercy  
St Denys’ House of Charity  
Diocesan Deaconesses Institution  
Institution for the Training of Young Girls for Domestic Service  
The Girls’ Friendly Society  
Diocesan Ladies’ Association for the Care of Friendless Girls  
Cottage Home for Friendless Girls  
Diocesan Institution for Trained Nurses  
The House of Industry

and in addition contained reports on

Saint Martin’s Church Guild for young Women  
Society of St Martha and St Mary for Young Shopwomen.

<sup>12</sup> Yeo E J, ‘Protestant feminists and Catholic saints in Victorian Britain’, in Yeo E J (ed), *Radical Femininity*, Manchester 1998 p 144

in profusion. All these activities demanded commercial underpinnings for materials, equipment or training, and many required social organisations for exhibition, performance, regulation or competition.

A closing section on Bazaars draws the two topics of this chapter together. At these ubiquitous events the products of women's leisured labour were sold for charitable fundraising, something that 'suited nineteenth-century women ideally'.<sup>13</sup>

### **'Amateur' teaching**

As Archdeacon Grantly replied when asked about 'Sabbath-day schools' in *Barchester Towers*, 'it depends mainly on the parson's wife and daughter'. Trollope then described Mrs Grantly's 'very nice school':

...that exemplary lady always attends there an hour before church, and hears the children say their catechism, and sees they are clean and tidy for church, with their hands washed, and their shoes tied; and Grisel and Florinda, her daughters, carry thither a basket of large buns, baked on the Saturday afternoon, and distribute them to all the children not especially under disgrace...<sup>14</sup>

For many women their first (and for the majority of those, their only) experience of teaching was in Sunday schools. It was most frequently a clergyman's female relatives who took on this responsibility but other members of the congregation contributed too. The passage quoted here brought out features common to the many 'doing-good' roles of nineteenth century women that linked these activities with their familial responsibilities for food and cleanliness. The involvement of daughters also demonstrated the way in which these duties were passed on from one generation to the next. A middle-class mother was expected to teach her daughters, as they became old enough, society's expectations of their roles.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Prochaska F K, *Women and Philanthropy in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England*, Oxford 1980 p 71

<sup>14</sup> Trollope A, *Barchester Towers*, first published 1857, 1938 edn p 34

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Dyhouse C, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*, 1981 p 28. In tracing the origins of Victorian domestic ideology, Catherine Hall has written 'A mother was the best person to train her daughter. The purpose of that training was not to enable women to compete with men, but to prepare them in the best possible way for their relative sphere'. Hall C, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology' in Burnam, S (ed) *Fit Work for Women*, London 1979.



Sunday schools provided a focus for ‘the struggle of serious Christians to save England from impiety and ungodliness’.<sup>16</sup> They represented a long-standing association between education and religion, and were a feature common to different denominations. Reaching out to the local children, who were presented with the message of faith alongside more down-to-earth benefits, was a widespread method of demonstrating practical piety on the part of members of all congregations. ‘[I]t was probably Sunday schools that made the greatest contribution to improving literacy among girls in the early and middle nineteenth century’.<sup>17</sup> And it was women who were both in a position to contribute their time and energy, and also moved to respond to words such as those of Frances Ridley Havergal’s poem

Take my life and let it be  
 Consecrated, Lord, to Thee  
 ...  
 Take my hands and let them move  
 At the impulse of Thy love  
 ...  
 Take my intellect and use  
 Every power as Thou shalt choose<sup>18</sup>

In Salisbury in 1851 there were just over 1,000 Sunday scholars at Anglican services, and 750 Non-conformist, and numbers continued to increase. Bishop Hamilton’s general diocesan inspection of 1860 counted 15,808 Sunday school pupils in the Wiltshire parts of the diocese.<sup>19</sup> Brown Street Baptist Church in the city recorded 176 boys, 160 girls, and 36 teachers and officers in 1888. When they celebrated the centenary of their Sunday school in 1892 the events lasted nearly a week. The schoolroom was redecorated, a hymn was specially written, and new screen and lens bought for the Lantern. Widowed Mrs Keynes contributed one of two new memorial windows in recognition of the quarter-century as Sunday School Superintendent of her late husband John Keynes, a local nurseryman and grandfather of John Maynard Keynes.<sup>20</sup> By that time there were elementary day school places for all children, but Sunday schools continued to play an important role in the life of the community.

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<sup>16</sup> Davidoff L and Hall C, *Family Fortunes*, 1987 p 95

<sup>17</sup> Lawson J and Silver H, *A Social History of Education in England*, 1973 p 286.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Consecration Hymn’ written 1874, quoted in Jay E, *Faith and Doubt in Victorian Britain*, Basingstoke 1986 pp 18 - 19 It is described by Jay as ‘a piece of Christian poetry which transcends sectarian boundaries’.

<sup>19</sup> VCH 3 p 66

<sup>20</sup> On Sunday School Treat days he gave each child a rose he had grown. Moore G A, *Brown Street Baptist Church, Salisbury*, Salisbury 1955 p 33, 35

Adults also benefited from Sunday classes, as one of a number of routes to literacy for those who had not been able to avail themselves of the limited facilities in their youth. 'By 1850 the availability of part-time elementary instruction for adults had become common ... through a variety of religious and secular evening and Sunday schools and classes'.<sup>21</sup> A Bible Class not only provided teaching, but also companionship and a social network.

Mrs Bothams entertained the members of her Bible Class to tea in the Fisherton Bridge room. Between eighty and ninety sat down to a very comfortable meal. The majority of the class are married men, and every Sunday afternoon this good lady has between fifty and sixty matured [sic] pupils receiving the benefits of her teachings.<sup>22</sup>

Although 'adults other than teachers' is a modern phrase in the classroom, other women were involved with the children in the Victorian church schools discussed in Chapter 4, as well as those employed to teach. Part of the role of being a dutiful daughter in a clergyman's household was school visiting. At St Paul's Girls School, Miss Handley came frequently, to 'take the Fourth Class in Scripture', or 'to assist with Needlework', or to give 'the First Class a reading lesson this morning'.<sup>23</sup> Sometimes she brought her friends: 'Miss Handley and a young lady visited the school in the afternoon' of 19 May 1868; 'Miss Handley and a friend called and heard the children repeat poetry and texts' at the Infants' School in January 1868. Her mother also put in appearances, but generally for more formal purposes as befitted her senior position in the parish as well as the household: 'Mrs Handley came to school and gave six prizes to the girls for good needlework' at the Girls' School.<sup>24</sup>

Supplementing Sunday schools, ragged schools provided the very poorest children with a basic education. Supporting, both financially and practically, such institutions was another way of demonstrating Christian charity. Two women in St Martin's parish, for example, were particularly commended for their work in this context. Rev J F Falwasser was curate there until he moved to Dorset in the summer of 1870 and on his departure the parish magazine praised the part he and his wife played in the parish, for example the provision of a playground for the schools which 'has contributed to the

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<sup>21</sup> Stephens W B, *Education in Britain 1750 – 1914*, Basingstoke 1998 p 5

<sup>22</sup> *Salisbury Times* 4 March 1882 p 5. See also chapter 6 for Mrs Bothams.

<sup>23</sup> 8 Oct 1868, 13 Oct 1868, 20 May 1870

<sup>24</sup> 17 Feb 1871

peace and quiet of St Martin's Church-street'. His wife would 'be missed from her several spheres of work amongst us...but above all from the ragged school...For more than two years Mrs Falwasser has taken the principal charge of it, and it is to her unwearied care, that much of its efficiency is owing...'.<sup>25</sup> Her predecessor in this work was Charlotte Hedger who 'for many years *devoted* herself to the poor of St Martin's' and continued this interest despite being bed-ridden for the final two and a half years of her life.

It was especially a great desire on her part to render assistance to those poor children who seemed not to be cared for as they ought to be by their parents, and in whom no one else appeared interested...In due time she was enabled to open a School for these children in the poorest part of our Parish, and for several months she carried on the work personally and single-handed, thereby providing instruction for those who were growing up in perfect ignorance, teaching them their duty to God and man, and leading them to render reverent obedience to those placed over them.<sup>26</sup>

A site for a new Ragged School in Culver Street was determined in 1871, to cater for 200 children, and subscriptions were invited from the citizens to start the building fund.<sup>27</sup>

The tribute quoted above demonstrated the responsibilities assumed by prominent parishioners to place themselves *in loco parentis* to disadvantaged youngsters of the parish. For men this meant discipline and control; for women it applied their 'caring' capacities. As Sue Morgan has written, 'institutional forms of Christianity arguably offered unprecedented opportunities for the public profile of women in the burgeoning of voluntary associations and charitable campaigning'.<sup>28</sup>

### **Education: administration and governance**

Women's voluntary work in education was not confined to helping in the schoolroom or taking a Sunday school class. An interest in young people, and in particular support for developments in education for girls, could be expressed in other ways, and allowed for the exercise of different skills and abilities in a public context. Sarah Maria Fawcett

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<sup>25</sup> St Martin's Parish Magazine July 1870 (no page number)

<sup>26</sup> op cit May 1870

<sup>27</sup> This was built 'in union with the National Society' in Milford Street in 1872. In 1889 the Kilburn Sisterhood established an infants' department for the Ragged School, named after George Herbert, in Gigant Street. The two were merged in 1900. VCH 6 p 165 - 6

<sup>28</sup> Morgan S (ed), *Women, Religion and Feminism in Britain 1750 – 1900*, Basingstoke 2002 p 10 discussing the work of Amanda Vickery.

held two roles in Salisbury which gave her a close involvement in girls' schooling: she was a governor of The Godolphin School for thirty years, and also worked as honorary secretary to the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations, organising the entries, the examinations, and the distribution of results for girls who came from many schools in the area. Little is known of her own education, but the one surviving volume of her diary, for 1895, was written in Italian on weekdays and French on Saturdays and Sundays. As has been shown above, there were plenty of schools in Salisbury when Maria, as she was known, was growing up (she was born in 1830). Her brother Henry, three years her junior, began his education at a Dame's school so possibly Maria did the same, and then might have continued her education herself, encouraged by her mother, a not unusual situation for intelligent, independent-minded women of her time.<sup>29</sup> She certainly spent much time reading and writing for her brother before and after he lost his sight, and she travelled as a companion both with Henry, and with Millicent Garrett Fawcett after their marriage. It is possible that Maria's later interest in education was stimulated by what she felt were the inadequacies of her own experience.

Of the twenty-two governors of The Godolphin School who served between 1882 and 1923 and received brief biographies in the school history written in 1928, five were women.<sup>30</sup> The descriptions of their work for the school written by the headmistress Mary Douglas used terms such as wisdom, affection, kindness, sympathy, emphasising their contributions in terms of their female characteristics. Governors, then as now, attended regular meetings to take policy decisions about the running of the school, and the spending of its income; they were powerful figures. But there was another side to their work; in the one year for which we know details of her engagements, Maria Fawcett attended concerts, presented certificates, judged the Doll and Toy exhibition, and took her great-niece to the Kindergarten Christmas party. She also had social contacts with students, inviting them to tea at her house in the Close, and with Miss Douglas, with Fraulein Bechler who taught German and music, and with other governors – Mrs Style and Miss Hussey. So there were informal networks between people concerned with the school for communicating ideas and perhaps influencing

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<sup>29</sup> Mary Douglas, headmistress of The Godolphin School from 1890 to 1914, wrote 'I was born just too soon for its being a natural thing for my parents to send me to school and college... Till I was twenty-two home was the training ground'. She persuaded Alice Ottley to employ her at the new High School for Girls in Worcester where she began by marking the school dusters. When the first children arrived she 'taught a little writing and ... turned down strips of calico and taught them to hem'. Douglas M A and Ash C R, *The Godolphin School 1726 – 1926*, 1928 p 46

<sup>30</sup> Douglas and Ash, 1928 p 55 - 64

decisions. It is likely that other schools had similar mechanisms in place to benefit from the time, energy, and interest of their voluntary workers; whether women also served is unknown.

Maria Fawcett carried out her responsibilities as local secretary for the university examinations very seriously. The system relied upon the voluntary services of such people, some 300 at the end of the nineteenth century. At larger centres, such as Salisbury, there were separate officers for boys and girls. The universities published detailed regulations to be followed for the conduct of the examinations, such as ‘The rooms for boys and girls should be near each other; if under the same roof there should be separate entrances’; ‘In the case of girls, a lady should sit with the Examiner while he is engaged in hearing them read’; as well as the usual instructions about issue of paper, and the placing of a clock in a conspicuous position.<sup>31</sup>

Of particular interest is the comment ‘It is advisable arrangements be made to assist the Candidates in procuring suitable board and lodging’. Maria took this personally; in July 1895 ‘Mabel and Lilian Cox had dinner with me and Ruth Wordsworth had tea here’, and in October ‘Carrie, Edith and May had dinner and spent the night with me’ for three days. And she went further. Ruth Wordsworth recorded her own memories of

worrying over the Oxford Local sums, and then find[ing] them somehow getting easier because Henry Fawcett’s gentle old sister was charging the air with a gracious friendliness, more refreshing even than the pyramid of biscuits she set beside your paper!<sup>32</sup>

The paperwork involved with the examinations followed Maria to the Isle of Wight in August where she was on holiday, and she attended all the presentations of certificates to successful candidates. She was a conscientious and a sympathetic administrator.

Although these opportunities did exist, and were taken up with enthusiasm elsewhere, in Salisbury The Godolphin School appeared as a local exception in being an educational institution with women on the governing body. Otherwise there was evidence of extreme caution, and reluctance to change the *status quo* of male dominance on all decision-making authorities. No women featured in the history of Salisbury School

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<sup>31</sup> Cambridge University Local Examinations Regulations December 1895, and correspondence with UCLES archivist

<sup>32</sup> Douglas and Ash, 1928 p 81

Board, but from 1902 the Salisbury Education Committee was required to have at least three. Its membership included two representatives each from the Voluntary Schools Association, the Free Church Council and certificated teachers, and at least one of each of these had to be a woman.<sup>33</sup>

It was not until 1913 that the Diocesan Training College – for female students and with many women on the lecturing staff – co-opted two ladies onto their managing committee. And that only came about after an HMI had drawn their attention to Article 7(a) of the Regulations for the Training of Teachers where this requirement was to be found, and four months passed before it was implemented. Such was the lack of enthusiasm for female members that it took six months to check the constitution to discover that the Principal should be there *ex officio*. Within her profession the principal of an institution such as the diocesan training college would have been a woman of considerable status. This did not necessarily give her a claim to recognition on the decision making body of her college. In this respect Salisbury was a conservative backwater.

### **Church women's groups**

‘“Usefulness” was one strong and prevailing ideology’ as Suzanne Rickard has expressed the impetus for Victorian women to become involved with social action.<sup>34</sup> Religion provided both an ethical framework for their commitment to service, and a structure to harness their energies. Reluctance certainly did not typify the reaction of individual women who undertook a wide variety of voluntary practical tasks, as well as making monetary contributions to the benefit of their church, as for other organisations and projects. These undertakings normally reflected appropriate feminine skills, such as sewing, teaching, or writing, and in some cases were performed in the privacy of the home, only appearing in public on completion.

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<sup>33</sup> Salisbury Education Committee Minute Book first meeting 30 April 1903 WSRO F8/870/1 sets out the constitution of the committee. See also Slocombe 2001 p 18. There were no female candidates for the Board (most elections were not contested), but in the north of the county Ada Hack topped the poll at the Swindon School Board election in 1883. In Salisbury, one woman applied for the post of School Attendance Officer in October 1872. She was not short-listed. This contrasts with the view expressed by the London School Board that local attendance officers should be women (because they were more likely to influence mothers, less likely to excite parental resistance, and cheaper to employ). Martin J, *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England*, 1999

<sup>34</sup> Rickard S, ‘Victorian Women with Causes: Writing, Religion and Action’, in Morgan, 2002 p 143

For example, when Jane Weigall died in 1906 the obituary in the *Salisbury Journal* failed to report her workhouse visiting over many years, and other activities in support of her husband, a professional artist and long-serving Poor Law Guardian, but said:

She devoted a great deal of her time to Church needlework, and with the assistance of her daughter Mrs Aldworth, had worked two handsome altar frontals for the Cathedral, one of which is used in the Choir and the other in the Lady Chapel. At the time of her death she was working a third and was employed upon it until a few days before her death.<sup>35</sup>

Two of these pieces of work, the ‘Te Deum’ and the ‘Evangelists’ frontals (both designed by Sidney Gambier Parry), can still be seen in the Cathedral. The former was not completed until 1910, so is presumably the ‘third’ mentioned in the obituary. Another frontal ‘Annunciation’, described as early 20<sup>th</sup> century, ‘provenance unknown but quality similar to “Te Deum”’ may possibly be the other one worked by Mrs Weigall.<sup>36</sup> The brass memorial tablet marking her life mentions neither her social work nor her embroidery, saying simply ‘For nearly forty years a daily worshipper in this cathedral’.

A new parish was created in Salisbury in the 1890s, the first since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, ‘necessitated by the remarkably rapid growth of the district’.<sup>37</sup> When the population began to expand and existing provision become crowded, the Rector of St Martin’s parish wrote ‘it became evident that something must be done for the spiritual welfare of the people’.<sup>38</sup> In 1881 the lower floor of a house in one of the newly built streets became a church and infants school’ looked after by Mrs Ellison and her daughter. A temporary iron church followed, then a purpose built school in 1888, before the permanent church was completed in 1894. The parish quickly established a community identity, with the same groups formed, and functions being carried out, as in older parts of the city. A General Club Card for savings was instituted in 1901 when ‘leisured ladies’, as Miss Shuttleworth put it in her parish history, worked as District Visitors, collecting both the pennies and news of sickness or particular poverty which was

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<sup>35</sup> *SJ* 28 July 1906 p 8

<sup>36</sup> Information from Cathedral Guides notes. Although her middle name was Morris (and she was born in Italy), I have been able to find no evidence of a connection with the more famous Morris designers and embroiderers.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Newman R and Howells J, *Salisbury Past*, Chichester 2001 p 74 . Shuttleworth W, *The People of God at St Marks*, [Salisbury] 1992 p 3 gives the local population as 3,500 in 1890, about a fifth of the city as a whole at that time.

<sup>38</sup> Shuttleworth, 1992 p 2

reported to the clergy at the next vestry meeting. The parish magazine, for example, in 1912 requested

A lady with talent and leisure to undertake the Altar flowers, a task that needs constant and loving care. Also responsibility for Altar linen and hangings for the glory of God's house.<sup>39</sup>

Tasks such as these were often held by the same people for many years, seen as part of their religious obligations, so it is possible that the previous holders had recently died or moved away from the area.

Organised groups for women appear amongst the Nonconformist churches relatively late in the nineteenth century, but that may be due to the availability of records or the way in which the brief histories have been written. At Brown Street Baptist Church a list of the activities in a typical year, 1888, when there were 253 members, includes a Mother's Working Meeting, Lady Visitors Society and a Dorcas Society (a sewing group making garments for the poor).<sup>40</sup> There were two lady organists at Brown Street Baptist Church during Mr Short's ministry. The Wesleyan Church Street Chapel had a Dorcas Society where 'the ladies gave a tea to a number of the deserving poor, afterwards the Rev Charles Roberts addressed a few cheering words to them'.<sup>41</sup> At the Congregational Church another Dorcas Society was formed in the late 1860s, its records continued until 1902. That church formed a Ladies Working Party in 1914, presumably to make contributions to the war effort, and in 1920 a Woman's Social Hour. In 1919 'the emancipation of women was recognised by changing the number of Deacons from 7 men to 7 men and 3 women'.<sup>42</sup> It is unclear whether there had been pressure amongst the congregation for this change at an earlier date. Support for women's suffrage certainly crossed denominational boundaries, both nationally and at a local level.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Shuttleworth, 1992 p 13

<sup>40</sup> Moore, 1955 p 35

<sup>41</sup> *Salisbury Times* 7 January 1882 p 4. The distinction between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor underlies much relief at this time, and would have had significance to women thinking about their philanthropic work. Rev Roberts words, no doubt, were aimed at making the recipients grateful for their tea.

<sup>42</sup> Abel G, *A History of the Presbyterian Congregational United Reformed Church in Salisbury 1662 – 1978*, Salisbury 1979 p 4

<sup>43</sup> For example, two supporters of Salisbury Women's Suffrage Society were Mrs Bothams and Miss Forth. The Home Mission Society of Brown Street Baptist Church met in Mrs Botham's garden in August 1908 *Salisbury & District Free Church Magazine* 1908. Miss Forth, employed at the Diocesan Training College would have had to be a committed Anglican. See p 243 below.



The Women's Union was a major organisation in the Anglican Church in the later years of the nineteenth century. Reports of its activities contained a curious mixture of egalitarian and patronising sentiments. The Hon Gertrude Hamersley, Hon Sec for the Salisbury Diocese wrote a two-part essay on the Union for the *Diocesan Gazette* in 1888, describing its organisation and objectives:

A new light would be shed on the difficulties and troubles of the mothers of the labouring classes by providing simple rules for the training of their children, but this would come from the help and sympathy of their sister women in all classes, bound in one Union for mutual prayer, strengthening and comfort.

Eligibility for membership was extended to

all women now living as respectable married women, all employers, matrons of workhouses or other institutions, schoolmistresses, upper servants or any who have influence over the young and who are of good character, of all classes and all denominations.

The administration, though minimal, had to be in competent, experienced hands:

One word of warning I should like to give. We invite women of all classes and all shades of opinion to join this Union, and this very breadth makes it all important to keep the practical working of it in good hands.<sup>44</sup>

It was not surprising, therefore, to find the list of local secretaries consisted of 'ladies of the manor' and clergymen's wives. An interesting observation was made that

elder women have very much influence, especially in smaller communities, of which they may almost be said to form the public opinion ... They have more experience, more time for thought, more time for prayer, and would make an immense reserve of strength for us.<sup>45</sup>

The implication was that this value should be exploited to the benefit of other, younger, members of the community, in this case via membership of the Women's Union. Pat Thane, in her study of old age, quotes Francis Kilvert to illustrate 'a sense of widely shared respect for the great majority of poor older people in his parish': 'Hannah is a very wise woman, wise with mother wit, matured and broadened by the wisdom of age'.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Salisbury Diocesan Gazette* June 1888 p 61 (both quotes above)

<sup>45</sup> *op cit* July 1888 p 74

<sup>46</sup> Thane P, *Old Age in English History*, Oxford 2000 p 271. Francis Kilvert was a native of Wiltshire. His father had been ordained in Salisbury Cathedral, and held livings at Hardenhuish and Langley Burrell near Chippenham; the diarist worked with him in the latter parish both before and after going to Clyro.

In the parish of St Thomas the Women's Union held its first meeting in December 1895. 'No poor women were invited to come' on that occasion. Initially, membership was dominated by the ladies of the parish but probably spread with increased activities and efforts on the part of the organisers. A frequent speaker at meetings was Mrs Williams, who lived in a substantial house 'Llangarran' on the Wilton Road.<sup>47</sup> One address from her was based on the only words of the Blessed Virgin recorded in the Bible,

though we must not like our RC sisters worship the BVM we might think of her more than we do and try to follow the beauty of her life ... she (Mrs Williams) warned us against reading newspaper Reports and books that had not a high tone.

At another event Mrs Williams took a passage from the book of Daniel as her text and said

how Mothers that trained their children for God would shine as the stars. She also spoke about the importance of taking care of our girls and not letting them out alone late in the evening she said that the more a girl was looked after the more she was respected.<sup>48</sup>

By this late in the century it is hard to know how far Mrs Williams was simply reinforcing ideas already held by her listeners, because those present at such meetings were part of the church community just by being there. And there is no surviving evidence of the numbers involved; it could have been a small, self-selected audience who were there to have their own views confirmed by someone in authority. However this mixture of the spiritual, and rather whimsical, with the down-to-earth practical issues of bringing up children reflected the importance given to the role of motherhood, which, as Sue Morgan has put it, 'reached cultic proportions in the nineteenth century as the most exulted symbol of femaleness'.<sup>49</sup> As Marianne Farningham, who spoke in Salisbury in 1881 under the auspices of the Brown Street Chapel Mutual Improvement Society, later wrote 'The world wants mothers almost more than anything else'.<sup>50</sup>

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Rev Morres at Britford, near Salisbury, was a friend. Wiltshire society and countryside was described in the diary, including comments on the position of women. Grice F, *Francis Kilvert and his World*, Horsham no date

<sup>47</sup> Maria Fawcett recorded receiving a visit from 'Mrs Williams of Llangarran' on 31 October 1895, presumably meaning the house, but possibly also that was her place of origin which gave the house its name (there is some inconsistency about the final vowel – a, e or o).

<sup>48</sup> WSRO 1900/254

<sup>49</sup> Morgan, 2002 p 13 - 14

<sup>50</sup> Wilson L, 'Afraid to be Singular': Marianne Farningham and the role of women 1857-1909', in Morgan, 2002 p 116. Farningham's subject in Salisbury was 'The Rush and Hush of Life'; it was said she was heard by a 'numerous audience'. *SJ* 19 February 1881 p 8

The Girls' Friendly Society, founded in 1875, was a more distinctly hierarchical and good-doing organisation, although motivated by '[t]he notion of friendship between classes' amidst the optimistic belief that 'women would be able to talk to women irrespective of social class'.<sup>51</sup> Its objective was to provide *mutual* help (religious and secular), sympathy and prayer, but the impression given was that this would be mainly in one direction, particularly as another aim was 'to encourage purity of life, dutifulness to parents, faithfulness to employers and thrift'. Ladies could join as Associates and girls and young women as Members, with differential rates of subscriptions. The rules included 'No girl who has not borne a virtuous character to be admitted as a Member, such character being lost, the Member to forfeit her Card'. Membership recorded in the Salisbury diocese in 1887 the diocese revealed nearly equal numbers of Working and Honorary Associates (354 and 372), 2834 Members and 415 Candidates (presumably potential Members).<sup>52</sup> The GFS had a Registry Department for the employment of servants which demonstrated the concern with structure; the diocese was divided into six districts, each district having a Lady-Registrar. Branch Lady-Registrars were to communicate with their respective District Lady-Registrar to whom applications would be made from ladies requiring servants, sending a stamped envelope and paying a small fee when a servant was engaged.<sup>53</sup>

The Ladies Association for the Care of Friendless Girls had an even longer list of titles amongst its officers, and its working sub-committee included the wives of the Bishop, the Dean and the Precentor and well as of other clergymen. It had been formed at the request of the Diocesan Synod in 1882 with three objectives:

1. Preventive Work: to save young girls from the danger of bad homes and bad surroundings.
2. Rescue Work: to induce those who have already fallen to give up their bad lives, and to afford them the means of doing so.
3. To use all possible influence for promoting a purer and higher tone in society.<sup>54</sup>

While many of the efforts were directed to raising funds, and to earnest prayer, there was practical work done too. As well as helping young women considered 'at risk' to find gainful, safe, employment, Salisbury was following a common practice of the time

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<sup>51</sup> Lewis J, *Women in England 1870 – 1950*, Hemel Hempstead 1984 p 37

<sup>52</sup> *Salisbury Diocesan Gazette* June 1888 p 63

<sup>53</sup> *op cit* July 1888 p 75

<sup>54</sup> It is tempting to match these objectives to the three archetypes of motherhood identified by Eileen Yeo – protecting, punishing and empowering. Yeo E, 'Social Motherhood and the Sexual Communion of Labour in British Social Science 1850-1950', *Women's History Review* 1992 Vol 1 No 1 p 77

in believing that the Empire was a good place to send ‘surplus’ young people, on the perhaps erroneous assumption that society there was more wholesome. The Emigration Committee sent seven girls to Canada in 1887.

These women’s organisations provided openings for ‘the expression of motherly and home-based instincts in the world for the good of the world’.<sup>55</sup> They allowed women with ‘spare’ time to make use of it in a constructive way, within the framework of familiar local institutions.

### **The House of Industry**

Eileen Yeo has written

The mid-century period saw the proliferation of a new type of residential institution often called a ‘home’ where social mothers who rapidly became professionals, named ‘matrons’, could care for poor children and young women at risk.<sup>56</sup>

In Salisbury, Emily Beckingsale founded and ran the House of Industry in St Ann Street. It was a personal project because Emily herself was associated directly with the home throughout her adult life, and it was known locally by her name.<sup>57</sup> She was never referred to as ‘matron’ so there is scant evidence that Emily attempted to follow the route to professionalism mentioned by Yeo. However, she had applied for the vacant post of matron at the Infirmary in 1855 ‘feeling confident that I could undertake the duties of the Situation, should you favour me with the appointment’, so at that time she saw her immediate future as an employee. As mentioned in chapter 4, the matron’s role was as administrator of the domestic side of the institution, so if Emily already had plans to open a ‘home’ this would have been valuable experience.

Established in 1857, the objectives of the institution, which was described in the city Rate Book as an ‘Orphan Asylum’, were: To receive and prepare for service poor girls; to receive them when ill or out of situation; to receive little children’.<sup>58</sup> Miss Beckingsale’s income came from ‘interest on money’, and she owned property

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<sup>55</sup> Wilson, 2002 p 116

<sup>56</sup> Yeo, 1992 p 76

<sup>57</sup> And continued so at least until the Second World War; fund raising was reported for example in the *SJ* 23 September 1938 p 8

<sup>58</sup> *Sarum Almanack and Diocesan Kalendar* 1884 p 140

elsewhere in the city.<sup>59</sup> It is not known how far she funded the home from her own resources; friends and supporters provided subscriptions, and the children's families, or well-wishers, or their home parishes made payments towards their support. In the 1880s city girls were received gratuitously, the number depending on subscriptions; others were received at £12 pa (£10 for little children). Emily was 58 in 1881 and had 31 girls boarding with her as 'industrial scholars'. The eldest was 18 and youngest 7, and they came from many different areas of the country. The status of the children is not entirely clear. A decade later the census described them as inmates rather than boarders (18 'training for servants' and 10 'scholars'), suggesting an absence of choice in their residence there.<sup>60</sup>

The only surviving Annual Report (of 1919, by which time the Home had been 'purchased by subscription in 1900 and placed in the hands of Trustees') revealed income from subscriptions, payments for girls, and from the commercial laundrywork.

<sup>61</sup> Millicent Wadham (1897-1956) was a pupil there, and her memories have been written down by her daughter. She was sent to the House of Industry by the gentry of the Dorset village where she lived after her mother died; her brothers went into the military services, and the older girls were distributed among homes in the village. The life was a combination of a basic education (Miss Hall and Miss Pearce the two teachers 'taught the 3 Rs plus a great deal of R.I.'), and learning and practising useful skills:

Small children did run and fell seams, bigger children did smocking and fine needlework, all either worn by the children or made for members of The Close who demanded, and got, very fine stitching indeed. ... The laundry work was hard, full of steam and scrubbing soap but for some reason my mother loved it and would have liked to go into one of the big houses as a laundry maid, but was considered too delicate.<sup>62</sup>

Needlework and laundrywork were considered certain to provide employment for working girls and women, so were promoted as valuable opportunities for avoiding poverty and destitution. 'CHILDREN'S MAID WANTED. Must be good Needlewoman. Apply to Mrs Gowing, Avon House, Salisbury' appeared in the *Salisbury Journal* in 1885.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> WSRO G23/510/15 Salisbury Local Board of Health Rate Book 1869/70 St Thomas's parish, 296, 297 and St Martin's parish 983, 984.

<sup>60</sup> I can find no mention of a change in instructions to census enumerators that might account for this alteration in designation

<sup>61</sup> WSRO D412/1

<sup>62</sup> Bishop N, *Millicent Mary Wadham, pupil at the House of Industry*, unpublished paper no date [2001?]

p 1, 2

<sup>63</sup> *SJ* 10 January 1885 p 5

Malcolmson described the second half of the nineteenth century as ‘the heyday of the laundry trade’ in terms of the numbers of women involved. It was a skill that could be applied flexibly at home as need required providing a money income in hard times, or to take a job in a large commercial laundry. In either case it was a source of support for both unmarried and married women.<sup>64</sup>

Organisations such as the GFS and the House of Industry in which middle-class women aimed to provide support for vulnerable girls offered training in the necessary skills, a route into employment through their networks of members, and acceptable social activities for their meagre off-duty hours.<sup>65</sup> They also provided opportunities for leisured women to donate their time and efforts in service to their community, ideals based on ‘the religious heterodoxy: philanthropy and self-actualization’.<sup>66</sup>

### **Charitable giving**

For some women, with adequate financial resources, commitment to an ideal or an objective was demonstrated in monetary terms. This did not necessarily require a public revelation of the personal sacrifice to a greater good, though in many instances the names and amounts given were indeed published locally for fellow citizens to read (and, presumably, to judge). Subscription lists were opened, as they still are, to raise money for specific projects, and for the support of on-going organisations. The Infirmary, the Museum, the 1852 Exhibition and rebuilding the Poultry Cross were amongst many demands on the pockets of the citizens of Salisbury. A sense of personal responsibility for projects or institutions of benefit to them all was clearly emphasised; here was another way of contributing to the benefit of the community in which they lived.

The Museum, founded in 1860, formed an interesting example. Frank Stevens, long-serving curator writing in the late 1940s, looked back on its early years: ‘as the first enthusiasm died down, questions of finance began to arise, and an adverse balance

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<sup>64</sup> Malcolmson P E, *English Laundresses*, Chicago 1986 p 7, 11. See also Horn P, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant*, Stroud 1990 p 81 where the role of the laundry-maid is described, including ‘[she] would begin each week by carefully entering in her washing-book the articles committed to her care’ clearly illustrating the need for training for such responsibility.

<sup>65</sup> Horn, 1990 p 122

<sup>66</sup> ‘[S]ervice to the community’ was a stated aim of girls’ schools. Jordan E, *The Women’s Movement and Women’s Employment in Nineteenth Century Britain*, 1999 p 215

began to appear in the Treasurer's Report'.<sup>67</sup> The Committee in 1866-7 commented on the debt incurred for a new room to be opened, they 'look with confidence to the public to release them from this debt, in as much as the increased space ...adding greatly to the value of the Museum in an educational point of view'. A scheme was announced to divide the city into districts where the residents would be canvassed for support.

The result has been a large addition to the number of subscribers, whilst at the same time the existence and the advantage of the Museum has been brought under the notice of many of the inhabitants of the city and neighbourhood, which in itself is a furtherance of the great object in establishing the Museum.<sup>68</sup>

The names in the subscription list for that year consisted of the blend seen elsewhere (the Exhibition in Chapter 2, for example), the Bishop and the Dean, lawyers, doctors and architects, brewers, drapers and other trades. Amongst them were the Misses Saunders (school proprietors), Mrs Meatyard (butcher), Mrs Simmonds (upholsterer and cabinet maker), and Miss Rooke (music seller). These were independent women who were part of the city's commercial community; the success of their business efforts meant that they were sufficiently wealthy to spend some of their income on public projects. Many women made such financial contributions, some of substantial sums, but no woman held a position of authority or responsibility in any of the organising institutions or committees.

One of the donors, Mrs Tinney, who died in 1873 aged 85, kept a detailed set of household and personal accounts which survive. Although this is only evidence of the spending habits of one individual, it can serve as a theme on which there were many variations. Charlotte Tinney was first married to Rev Arthur May, rector of Odstock, and then in 1822 she became the wife of John Pern Tinney, a Salisbury solicitor and author. They had one child, Charlotte, who died in 1829, aged 1 year and 8 months. J P Tinney lived only three more years, and then Charlotte inhabited the same house in St Ann's Street as a widow for over 40 years. For each census she was described as a person of independent means: 'Gentlewoman and proprietor of houses' in 1851. Twenty years later she owned three houses and a workshop, valued for rating purposes at a total of £43 7s, in addition to the house and garden she occupied (assessed value £93 18s).<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Stevens F, *The Salisbury Museums 1861 – 1947*, [Salisbury] second edn 1954 p 5

<sup>68</sup> Salisbury and South Wilts Museum *Report for the Year 1866-7*.

<sup>69</sup> WSRO G23/510/15 Salisbury Local Board of Health Rate Book 1869/79 St Martin's Parish, 99 – 1003, 1006-7.

Her early personal accounts recorded expenditure typical of a young woman, and in keeping with her husband's social position; she would have been expected to maintain a suitable standard of appearance for the wife of someone who was for 'many years an alderman and magistrate of this city'.<sup>70</sup> In 1822 she 'received from John' £50 in January and £100 in July, and noted spending on clothes - usually fabric and a dressmaker, 'feather for my head', paper, ribbons, having her hair cut, and annual payments to Clark's shoemakers, and a local draper.<sup>71</sup>

The later books had an entirely different emphasis. Almost all the entries referred to charitable donations which were either periodic subscriptions or discretionary payments. The explanation may simply be that she ceased to keep such a detailed record of the mundane purchases of daily life, or personal books did not survive, or perhaps she did spend less on herself as she got older; there were a few personal items listed in the separate household account books – 'lace for 2 nightcaps' and 'chair to church' alongside 'beer for gardener', 'a clothes line', 'straw for rabbits' and 'cabbage seeds'.<sup>72</sup> The final personal volume, 1866 –1872, showed contributions to Lying-in charity, Religious Tract Society, Dispensary, idiot asylum, missionary meeting, as regular payments. Then there were exceptional sums to 'colliery explosion', and 'West Indies hurricane', as we would give to relieve the victims of a flood or an earthquake today. Charlotte also made gifts to individuals – 'coals for widow Bracher' and 2/6 to 'poor lame boy'.<sup>73</sup>

At the end of her life, Charlotte wrote letters to her niece, Maria Beresford, her main beneficiary, giving instructions for the upkeep of a house left to her long-standing servant Ann (Sarah) House, and sending some money for a specific purpose – another charitable objective about which she apparently felt strongly:

I wish a Scripture Reader to be found for Salisbury, and this to pay him as long as it lasts, I suppose his salary would be about £80 per annum, this Place is in a very sad popish state. I think a Scripture Reader is much needed I have long wish for one he can go and speak in any Parish which a Curate cannot.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *SJ* 3 January 1832 p 4

<sup>71</sup> WSRO 776/408 Charlotte Tinney's personal account book for 1822-32, for example

<sup>72</sup> WSRO 776/411

<sup>73</sup> WSRO 776/410

<sup>74</sup> WSRO 776/395 copy of letter to Mr and Mrs Beresford



Charlotte's will continued this interest and enabled her to pursue her obligations beyond her lifetime. She left £100 each to six individual clergymen, £500 to the Church Missionary Society and to the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and £50 to the British and Foreign Bible Society and to Salisbury Infirmary. In each of the last four, the bequests went to the local treasurers 'to be applied to the charitable uses of their respective societies'.<sup>75</sup> The subsequent annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society recorded 'their regret at the removal by death during the past year of some of our oldest friends and supporters. There are three especially whom they would notice who have been taken to their rest in a good old age, full of years and honours'.<sup>76</sup>

The surviving evidence of Mrs Tinney's interests is exceptional, and the resources at her disposal allowed her an unusual degree of independence. She was in the fortunate position of being able to be a generous and consistent contributor to a wide variety of philanthropic objectives over a long period of time. Her expenditure choices suggest a detailed interest in and knowledge of the needy at home and abroad. The apparent deepening in religious faith through her life may have been real and powerful, but it may also be an illusion stemming from partial survival of records, or a changing pattern in her method of keeping accounts. Charlotte's first, short, experience of married life was as the wife of a clergyman, and the mother of a child who died very young, and this could well have laid the foundation of her altruism as well as of her personal beliefs.

Charitable contributions were also made in kind. In 1854 the local newspaper printed 'An Earnest Appeal to the Women of England' asking for 'warm articles' to send to 'our brave troops' in the Crimea:

No doubt it will be a grateful task to every Englishwoman to contribute some Article, which may at once promote the comfort of our Brave Defenders and be an evidence of her Gratitude for their Heroic Services.<sup>77</sup>

A week later the Crimean Army Fund, Ladies Committee, Salisbury, expressed thanks for the 'liberal supply of useful articles' and announced that the donations would be on display at Mrs Windsor's in St Ann Street before being packed. The first package, weighing 1.5 cwt, was despatched on 22 December (carried to London free of charge by

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<sup>75</sup> WSRO 776/395 will dated 19 April 1873, proved 31 October 1873

<sup>76</sup> Meeting reported in *SJ* 18 October 1873 Supplement p 2

<sup>77</sup> *SJ* 9 December 1854 p 2

the generosity of the South Western Railway Company). It contained 40 wadded and knitted waistcoats, 142 comforters, 213 pairs of mittens, 54 pairs of stockings, socks and gloves, 55 caps, 40 jerseys, 24 flannel waistcoats, rugs etc and 6 New Testaments.<sup>78</sup> It is not known whether the donors' names were with their contributions, but here again the generosity of the people in the city was made public.

Edith Olivier writing in 1938 about her childhood spent in the small town of Wilton, some three miles west of Salisbury (she was born in 1879) recalled

My early memories of the Wilton streets about the hour of noon show them peopled with women running into each other's houses, carrying steaming basins covered with cloths ...Nobody sat down to a hot joint for dinner without making sure that at least one of their poorer neighbours was doing the same.<sup>79</sup>

In this case the image of communal support was functioning on a one-to-one basis. Wealthier households operated the same process on a larger scale; the Poor Law Guardians were notified in 1897 that

Presents of cake and mince pies were received from Miss Townsend and Mrs Pepper for the Infirmary, and cards, apples, oranges and toys from Mrs Parham, Miss Clayton, Miss Williams, Mr Griffin and Mr Hayter for the children.<sup>80</sup>

Provision of food to whole sections of a community in times of particular hardship was done institutionally. Individual contributions normally reverted to financial subscriptions, as purchasing, cooking and distribution was organised centrally. Nearly thirty women are named in the subscription list for the establishment of a soup kitchen 'for the alleviation of the sufferings of the poor during the severity of the present and succeeding winters'. This decision to supply meals also created employment: Mr and Mrs Sawkins gained both an income and a home in Salisbury in 1856 when they were appointed to cook at 18s per week, living rent-free for three months. Soup was made to a carefully prescribed recipe determined, and tested, by the Soup Kitchen Committee.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *SJ* 23 December 1854 p 2. Such donations in kind were not welcomed in the Crimea: Florence Nightingale wrote in 1855 'There is not a small town, not a parish in England from which we have not received contributions ... not one of these is worth its freight ... If you knew the trouble of landing, of unpacking, of acknowledging! The good that has been done here has been done by money, money purchasing articles in Constantinople'. Quoted in Woodham Smith C, *Florence Nightingale*, 1972 p 216-7

<sup>79</sup> Olivier E, *Without Knowing Mr Walkley* 1938 p 130

<sup>80</sup> WSRO H1/110/25 Poor Law Guardians Minute Book 1 January 1897

<sup>81</sup> WSRO G23/119/8 Soup Kitchen Committee Minutes. The Sawkins remained in the house as tenants at 1s per week rent while the soup kitchen was closed during the summer.

Despite its responsibility for food – a female concern – it should be noted that members of this committee were all men. The need for efficient financial management took precedence.

Philanthropy provided an outlet for Victorian women to exercise voluntarily their training and experience in ‘female’ domestic pursuits. For some it also allowed them to demonstrate their social conscience, or for others to generate such a sense of duty. For many, probably most, this involvement had a foundation in religious belief. Martha Vicinus has gone further to say ‘underpinning all women’s work was a sense of religious commitment’.<sup>82</sup> This was explicit for those who became involved in church-based organisations such as the Women’s Union or the Girls’ Friendly Society, or who made donations to their local parish appeals. For them all ‘broad Christian values, ...their own scriptural interpretation, biblical injunctions *and* the desire to ameliorate distressing social conditions’ inspired them to action across a broad field.<sup>83</sup> Women who left no personal records and who appear only incidentally in the reports of organised philanthropy were no less influenced by their desire to move out from their personal, relatively comfortable worlds into the public arena. In nineteenth century Salisbury few names are known, but the fund-raising, the stitching and cooking, the visiting and praying was no less effective in pursuit of improving the lives of others.

### **Pastimes and social events**

Social activities for the women, and men, of the city of Salisbury were many and diverse. Slater’s *Directory* of 1852 recorded:

There are concert and ball-rooms and a neat theatre here, which are open during the winter; in the summer are the races – a respectably attended meeting, which generally continues for three days ... there are two well-attended reading rooms, one of which is connected with a permanent library.<sup>84</sup>

Some of these entertainments have a long history; the races dated from 1583, and Salisbury’s Autumn fair has been a feature of city life since the first charter of 1227. Thomas Hardy evoked the atmosphere of the Victorian fair in dramatic terms:

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<sup>82</sup> Vicinus M, *Independent Women*, Chicago 1985 p 37

<sup>83</sup> Rickard in Morgan, 2002 p 143

<sup>84</sup> Slater, *Directory*, Salisbury 1852 p 37

The spectacle was that of the eighth chasm of the Inferno as to colour and flame, and, as to mirth, a development of the Homeric heaven. A smoky glare, of the complexion of brass-filings, ascended from the fiery tongues of innumerable naphtha-lamps affixed to booths, stalls and other temporary erections which crowded the spacious market-square. ... the patrons of swings, see-saws, flying-leaps, above all of the three steam roundabouts ... [included] the two plainer girls, the old woman and child, the two youngsters, the newly-married couple, the old man with a clay pipe the sparkish youth with a ring, the young ladies in the chariot, the pair of journeymen-carpenters, and others ...<sup>85</sup>

Late nineteenth-century directories reinforced the continuity of the traditions, and also celebrated new attractions. Kelly's 1889 edition reported the newly built County Hall as 'well fitted up for theatrical performances, concerts, lectures, public meetings, balls, assemblies, bazaars and exhibitions', to which Langmead and Evans added that '[s]pecial exits opening outwards render it an extremely safe building in case of fire'.<sup>86</sup> The 'permanent local memorial of the jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria' – Victoria Park – had gardens (with many thousands of plants, shrubs and trees), cricket field, tennis courts, football ground and a cycle track.<sup>87</sup>

T J Northy in his *Popular History* (1897) of the city commented

there are few places of the size of Salisbury that are better provided for in the matter of recreation and healthy amusement. In the summer time boating and cricket are in vogue, whilst garden parties and fetes are numerous. In winter great interest is taken in the game of football.<sup>88</sup>

To reinforce this sense of variety, Jane Townsend's diary illustrated entertainments in the life of a girl in a prosperous middle class family in a provincial city. Not surprisingly, she seems to have recorded particularly the occasions when something happened which took her and her sisters and their friends out of their home, Mompesson House in the Close. Many mornings start 'Went out for a walk in the town'. On 21st August 1860 she 'sketched in the Close this morning', on the 29<sup>th</sup> 'saw the circus come in', and on the 31<sup>st</sup> 'went to the Market Place to see the Rifles – followed them up to the Cricket Ground, saw them drill and skirmish'. They 'went to the Flower Show' on 6th September, and the following month 'went to the coursing meeting in the afternoon at

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<sup>85</sup> Hardy T, 'On the Western Circuit', first published 1894, in *The Distracted Preacher and other Tales*, Harmondsworth 1979 p 244,5,6

<sup>86</sup> Langmead and Evans, *Directory of Salisbury & District*, 1897 p 21

<sup>87</sup> Kelly F, *Post Office Directory of Wiltshire*, 1889 p 985

<sup>88</sup> Northy T J, *The Popular History of Old & New Sarum*, Salisbury 1897 Appendix p ix

Stonehenge'.<sup>89</sup> For those such as the Misses Townsend, privileged to have spare time, there was plenty to do or to see. Social events took place associated with the races, with the assizes, and with the church and educational calendars, all of which provided an annual cycle for such activities. If a member of one of the local aristocratic families was required to be in attendance, if only to grace the occasion with their presence rather than be directly involved, then the London Season would, indirectly, also be influential.

Some events were accessible to higher social classes only; many others, such as the fair described above by Thomas Hardy, could be enjoyed by all. Hardy's story, however, demonstrated the potential risks for unprotected young women associated with such occasions, so recreational facilities for young working class women were provided to allow them some worthy entertainment in a protected environment. In Salisbury there was a Reading Room for Young Shopwomen in the Close; the YWCA met in Fisherton Street; and Audley House in Crane Street made similar provision 'for girls working in local shops'; and an evening institute for women and a Girls' Reading Room and Recreation Room in the High Street in the 1880s. At the latter, for example, in April 1887, 40 or 50 members were present to see a play and an exhibition of Mrs Jarley's Waxworks. The Supper Committee of ladies and friends of the Club provided refreshments, and Deaconess Scott 'who acts as manager' was presented with a gold pencil in a case with her name and the date engraved on it.<sup>90</sup> From the point of view of the organisers, as seen above, these were further opportunities for philanthropy.

### **A glimpse at Maria Fawcett's social life**

Sarah Maria Fawcett, born in 1830, was no longer young when she wrote her diary for 1895 and she was a spinster living in the Close, so the social life reflected in that volume reflected her age, gender, and social and geographical position; it was not typical of either a family or a young woman. However it does illustrate the types of occasions that were available to the citizens of Salisbury at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> WSRO 2843/1. Jane (or Jenny as she was named in Edith Olivier's portrait of her sister Barbara) Townsend was born in 1844. Her father was 'a solicitor who played an influential part in transactions concerned with the acquisition of land for railways'. Olivier, 1945 p 75

<sup>90</sup> *SJ* 16 April 1887 p 5. And see also chapter 4 p 158 - 9 for the Deaconesses Institution.

<sup>91</sup> A sample page from the diary p 289

'I read for a long time' or 'in the evening I read' were also frequent entries, though sadly she did not record what was being read, and this was of course a very private activity. Books were available from booksellers and libraries, but the cost of both confined their clientele to the wealthier classes. The Salisbury and South Wiltshire Library and Reading Society had been founded in the 1810s as a subscription library. The Salisbury Literary and Scientific Institute provided a library, as well as a programme of lectures and demonstrations, from 1855 to 1871 at moderate fee, and introduced successful 'Salisbury Readings' giving 'pleasure, instruction and amusement to a large proportion of the humbler classes'. Initially these were 'penny readings' but proved so popular they became '1d, 6d, and 1s readings'.

Initial attempts to implement the Public Libraries Act of 1855 (which gave local councils the power to raise a rate to pay for a library) in Salisbury came to nought, despite John Passmore Edwards being a Liberal MP here in the 1880s. It was not until 1890 that a public meeting required by the Act passed a resolution in favour. The new Salisbury Public Library was located in Endless Street, over Webbs' furniture store; difficult access, limited opening hours, and lack of space generated pressure for change. The inconvenience of closing between 2 and 5 each afternoon was felt 'especially for ladies', who presumably walked in the city to change their library books amongst other errands at that time. A new purpose-built library was opened in 1905 with help from a Carnegie Trust grant.<sup>92</sup>

Women, young and old, walked. It could be done in a decorous fashion, alone or in company, for exercise, to visit someone, to seek a particular objective such as Old Sarum castle mounds, or spring flowers on Harnham Hill. Whenever Maria Fawcett had been unwell, a not infrequent condition given her age, the first outing she made was walking 'in the Close for a short while in the afternoon'. She also made excursions further afield: 'Emily and Florence [Lush] and Emily Flower and I went to the New Forest. The weather was fine; we had a delightful time' (Friday 7 June 1895); 'Mary, Lily and I went by coach to Britford and Longford in the morning' (Friday 5 July 1895). The benefits of fresh air were widely acknowledged at the time, and for younger women (as will be seen below) an increasing number of sporting activities were encouraged.

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<sup>92</sup> Little M, *A History of Libraries in Salisbury 1850-1922*, unpublished MPhil thesis Polytechnic of North London 1981[no page numbers]

A large proportion of Maria's interaction with others was through letter writing, and clearly this was important for her, she replied very promptly to letters received. Her correspondents were local as well as those relatives and friends who lived at a distance, including her sister-in-law Millicent Garrett Fawcett. As important as writing, paying and receiving visits also took much time, and was the way of making local communication that today would be done by telephone, email or text. Here were a few days in May 1895:

*Thursday 2* I had afternoon tea at Mrs Fisher's. Miss Annie Welch was there. The weather was delightful.

*Friday 3* It was fine weather. Mrs Middleton and Laetitia Stockwell, Hilda Fellowes, Lucy and Ronald visited me. I went out after tea and called on Mrs Turnbull and Miss Elling.

*Saturday 4* The three Misses Pranglely visited me in the morning. I went to the Cathedral during the afternoon. Mrs Buchanan and Mrs Roberts, Miss Jones and Miss Edwards called on me. I visited Mrs Cox.

*Sunday 5* I went to the Cathedral in the morning and in the afternoon. Elise visited me and we had a short walk together. I visited Mrs Bennett in the evening.

*Monday 6* It was fine, warm weather but it was windy. Mrs Hodding came to see me. I called on Mrs Fisher after tea. Emily Flower came to see me in the evening.

Conversation on local and family topics of the day can be imagined, and Maria played games such as whist and halma with adult companions, and 'Golden Egg' when Nellie and Osmond Carpenter went to tea. Maria attended concerts at the Choristers' School, at The Godolphin School where she was a governor, and at the Assembly Rooms; and sports day at Mr Alcock's school. She took some young relations to the Godolphin Kindergarten Christmas party. More serious events she attended included the opening of the Technical School, a Church Defence meeting, and lectures by the Dean. Maria went to the wedding of a neighbour's daughter, Edith Weigall, but she was not present at the funeral of her brother William who died in February. This one woman's life revolved round her family, friends and neighbours; her voluntary public duties discussed above; and her private reading and writing. She also attended a selection of public occasions in the social calendar of the city, chosen according to her interests and obligations.

## Music

Communal music making was well to the fore in Salisbury, as T J Northy wrote in 1897:

For very many years – certainly during the whole of the present century – Salisbury has enjoyed the well-earned reputation of being essentially a “musical city”, and evidence of this fact is found to-day in the existence of several societies having for their object the promotion of the divine art.<sup>93</sup>

These included the Sarum Choral Society, the Salisbury Vocal Union, the Philharmonic, and the Orpheus Glee Society. Much music, of course, was made in the cathedral and parish churches of the city, membership of church and other choirs overlapped, and individuals held both religious and secular roles. William Price Aylward, for example, was organist at St Martin’s church as well as ‘professor of music, pianoforte and music seller’, and his son Augustus Albert Aylward was organist at St Thomas’s. Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1887 was commemorated in Salisbury in great style, ending with ‘a capital concert as an appropriate wind-up to the day’s proceedings’.<sup>94</sup> An orchestra of 34 players under Mr Hayden as conductor included two women, Miss Calkin and Miss Nellie Harding, both first violins. Alfred Foley’s earliest public appearances were as organist to the Salisbury Vocal Union, founded by John Hayden in 1879. He subsequently promoted increasingly ambitious concerts for particular occasions, with numerous performers and extensive programmes. In April 1893, for example, a concert was held in the County Hall for the Early Closing Movement and received the following report in the *Salisbury Journal*

Notwithstanding the counter-attraction of a circus in the town, there was a good attendance. The platform was largely occupied by those who are *ordinarily engaged in business*, but who, on this occasion, composed a choir of about 80 voices, supplemented by a well-balanced orchestra. Mr Foley conducted throughout with his usual ability ...<sup>95</sup>

Less than a year later, Foley was arranging the inaugural concert of the Salisbury Philharmonic Society. A composite photograph of the Society in 1896 centred on its

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<sup>93</sup> Northy T, 1897 Appendices p vi [356]. Music always had a place in the life of Salisbury, perhaps reaching a zenith in national terms in the late eighteenth century when James Harris lived in the Close. A great admirer of Handel, he ensured Handel’s works featured prominently in the growing number of concerts in the city. Harris developed what has been described as ‘the finest society outside London’ and attracted J C Bach amongst the long list of contributors. After Harris’ death others continued the tradition.

<sup>94</sup> *op cit* p 286

<sup>95</sup> *SJ* 8 April 1893 p 8 (my italics)



founder and conductor, included 60 women amongst the 127 performers whose individual 'cartes de visite' images were put together for this illustration.<sup>96</sup> 87% of the women were unmarried. Judging by surnames, a number of these were pairs of sisters, and others were accompanied by male family members. Of the eight married women one was Mrs Foley, and Mrs Davis appeared to be with her husband and daughter. In taking part in rehearsals and concerts, as well as appearing in the publicity photograph, these women were making a public contribution to the cultural life of the city. For the Aylwards and Foleys it was a family commitment that crossed generations, and for others it was a means of enjoyment with siblings, parents and friends.

Music was indeed considered a thoroughly respectable interest for women, and was also an activity which was accessible to many. Those who could afford it purchased instruments, and paid teachers; others used penny whistles or sang for enjoyment. '...[T]he piano afforded young women of the lower and upper middle classes a form of recreation which was as welcome as it was rare' This opportunity developed until '[t]he late-Victorian passion for pianos became nothing less than a mania..'.<sup>97</sup> Musicians in Salisbury patronised the Aylward family business where, at the Piano and Harmonium Warehouse, they could take advantage of 'The Three Year System of HIRE AND PURCHASE applied to Pianos and Harmoniums by all the Best Makers'.<sup>98</sup> Hire purchase schemes like this and a growing market in second-hand instruments allowed ownership to spread to less-affluent families. One of Aylward's enterprises in the 1860s was a subscription library of performing scores, allowing members to take home sheet music worth a guinea, for an annual subscription of £2 2s.<sup>99</sup> Girls and women patronised Miss Leila Aylward ARAM, and Miss Amy Aylward, both described as 'Professor of Music', to acquire the necessary skills. They selected tunes from the increasingly voluminous amount of sheet music coming from music publishers at the time, retailed by the Aylwards and other shops in the city. Amelia Rooke, in Catherine Street, was a successful 'Pianoforte and Music Seller' for two decades. Foley's Music Warehouse in Fisherton was able to promote its products with the additional feature of

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<sup>96</sup> Purvis B, 'The Salisbury Philharmonic Society and Music in late Victorian Salisbury', *Sarum Chronicle* 2005 p 26 – 33. The list of names in the photograph comes from Purvis B, 'What contribution did the Salisbury Vocal Union and the Salisbury Philharmonic Society make to the social and musical life of late-Victorian Salisbury?', unpublished assignment for Oxford Advanced Diploma in Local History 2005. See illustration 22 p 287

<sup>97</sup> Walvin J, *Leisure and Society 1830 – 1950*, 1978 p 107

<sup>98</sup> *SJ* 6 February 1869 p 5

<sup>99</sup> *SJ* 10 March 1860 p 5

home-produced songs: 'Just Published' in January 1869, words and music by Miss E R Foley, were 'Tis the Mind not the Money that Makes the Man' and 'Orphans Lament', both available post-free on receipt of 16 stamps.

Musical abilities were demonstrated in public for entertainments in their own right, and in aid of good causes. Professional performers came to Salisbury and attracted large audiences of men and women in venues such as the Assembly Rooms and the County Hall. Amateurs contributed their skills, and were suitably appreciated by the local newspaper critic. In 1895 a Chamber Concert was given in aid of St Mark's Church Building Fund:

Mrs Regan's abilities were shown to considerable advantage in Mendelsshon's solo for the pianoforte "Andante e rondo capriccioso" ... A very fine rendering of Rubenstein's sonata for piano and cello (Op 18) was given by Mrs Regan and Miss Fussell, the latter lady again showing a command of her instrument really remarkable in an amateur.<sup>100</sup>

This fund-raising concert was one of several attended by Maria Fawcett during 1895. Audiences provided a vital service both to the performers and to the good cause which benefited from the ticket sales and collections.

### **Archaeology and geology**

The Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society, founded in 1853, was mentioned in chapter 2.<sup>101</sup> Its members represented the aristocracy and professional elite of the county, for whom antiquarianism was a well-established pursuit. The rules drawn up in 1854 included 'Ladies shall be eligible as members of the Society without ballot, being proposed by two members, and approved by the majority of the meeting'. The initial membership of 201 included four women, and by 1891 15 out of 327 ordinary members were women. The formal position of women was perhaps illustrated by the account of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting in 1872 which was held at Zeals House, home of Miss Chafyn Grove: 'After a hearty vote of thanks to Miss Chafyn Grove ...Canon Jackson, acting as that lady's mouthpiece, responded in that lady's name and assured the archaeologists of her pleasure in entertaining them'.<sup>102</sup> However, their

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<sup>100</sup> *SJ* 23 February 1895 p 5

<sup>101</sup> See chapter 2 p 52 fn 41 and p 78

<sup>102</sup> Implications in Hawkins D (ed), *The Grove Diaries*, Wimbourne 1995 suggest that 'Aunt Chafin' was more than capable of speaking for herself. It was presumably the particular social context which prevented her doing so.

financial contributions to appeals were not insignificant, and photographs of meetings reveal their presence; there were 23 at the visit to Devizes Castle in 1880 in association with the British Archaeological Association.<sup>103</sup> Archaeology exercised feminine traits of a careful, systematic approach, meticulous attention to detail, drawing skills, supervision of manual labourers, and collecting interesting (but not live or messy) items.

Geology was a closely associated discipline, and some 'early lady fossilists' were to be found in this area too. Dorothea Fisher, whose husband was Bishop of Salisbury from 1807 to 1825 was described as 'a great collector' and donated a choice collection of fossils to the new museum of the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Literary and Reading Society. Etheldred Benett (1776 - 1845) of Pythouse was both a collector and a field geologist, and her specimens were sufficiently important to send a selection to the Czar of Russia.<sup>104</sup> Although there were no particularly noted individuals active later in the century, the pioneering work by these women, and their contribution to scholarship and education via the museum and societies, was firmly established in the memory of the locality.<sup>105</sup>

## Sport

Archaeology and geology, together with botany, were not only enjoyed intellectually by women, but they also required activity in the open air, which was considered a 'good thing'. Women indeed participated in a surprisingly wide variety of sports by the end of the nineteenth century. Victoria Park was created to mark the 1887 Jubilee, and provided an 'extensive pleasure ground' for the citizens, including a cycling track, cricket and football field, tennis courts, flower gardens and a band stand. Bicycles,

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<sup>103</sup> Rundle P, 'The Role of Women and the Cunnington Dynasty in the Society', in Thomas J (ed), *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society: the First 150 Years*, Devizes 2003. There were few contributions from women to the Magazine until Maud Cunnington arrived on the scene in 1908, and 'for the next forty years she was to be a mainstay of the Society' *ibid* p 29.

<sup>104</sup> In return she was made an honorary general in the Russian army, Etheldred being taken for a masculine name. Delair, 1994. One of her unique specimens has been the subject of recent research papers at the Academy of Natural Science in Philadelphia. Moody R, *John Benett of Pythouse*, Bristol 2003 p 150

<sup>105</sup> There was a Salisbury Field Club from 1890 (for 'the investigation of all that is interesting either of an archaeological, botanical or geological nature in the neighbourhood of Salisbury'), and a Salisbury Microscopical Society from 1895, but female membership is unknown, although when the latter was first formed it was announced that the secretaries would be pleased to received the names of *ladies* and gentlemen willing to join'. *S J* 30 November 1895 p 5 (my italics)

especially by the 1890s women's models of safety machines, allowed women to experience, as Ray Strachey affirmed 'the exquisite pleasure of rapid motion' and the freedom to go as far as six or seven miles from home quite unaccompanied.<sup>106</sup> Despite earlier objections to the activity as unladylike, unhealthy and indecorous, the argument was won in favour of cycling as a suitable pursuit for ladies, and as manufacturers increased production bringing prices down (and the growth of a second hand market) for women too. In Salisbury many female cyclists came under the care of Mrs Edwards, an enthusiastic proponent, who provided lessons to introduce the new machines. Salisbury's Cycling and Athletic Club was formed in 1885, and although only men held office, both men and women enjoyed 'a ride in the country once a week'.<sup>107</sup>

There were clubs or societies in Salisbury for women to participate in cricket, hockey, tennis, swimming, rifle shooting and archery. No doubt people in Salisbury had always swum in the rivers on a hot day. It was not until 1892 that there was a purpose-built indoor pool constructed. This was in Rolleston Street, and the water was heated to 80 degrees F by steam from the laundry next door. Facilities included curtained dressing boxes, private baths, a sprung diving board and a gallery for spectators. Men's and women's sessions were strictly segregated; schoolchildren had swimming lessons; there were galas and water polo matches.

Archery is a sport with a long history, and became an important social and physical event for women in the nineteenth century. The required upper body strength could be cultivated without loss of decorum; normal all-enveloping dress was worn; and it was not necessary to 'hurry about' in an unladylike way. South Wilts Archers were founded in 1859 and joined with other societies in the area in 1860 to hold a Grand Western Archery Meeting, which became a Society in 1873; both ladies and gentlemen shot at their meetings from the start. In 1862 the annual regional meeting was held in Salisbury, and photographed.<sup>108</sup> Their records suggest that skill and enthusiasm at this sport ran in families: Mrs P Pinckney won the Ladies Great Silver Quiver in 1872 and 1873, her daughter Miss E Pinckney in 1876 and 1877, and Miss A M Pinckney achieved it twenty years later.<sup>109</sup> Rev Francis Kilvert stayed at Britford in 1875 to attend

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<sup>106</sup> Quoted in Lewis, 1984 p 119

<sup>107</sup> Langmead and Evans *Directory* 1897 p 42

<sup>108</sup> See p 288

<sup>109</sup> Graham L G, *A Short History of the Grand Western Archery Society*, 1973 (no page numbers)

the South Wilts Archery Meeting there which ‘began at 1 o’clock in a large field near the Vicarage. ... The prettiest archer there was Miss Edith Pinckney, a slight delicate girl of 16, but the first archer in South Wilts’.<sup>110</sup> Jane Townsend recorded in her diary the scores she and her sisters and friends achieved at frequent archery sessions which appear to be sometimes casual and at other times organised competitions:

1860 August 28	shot in the morning
30	Archery meeting, me 15 hits scored 78
September 18	we shot in the morning, we got out the targets ourselves. We none of us did very much.

Jane Townsend’s final remark quoted here meant that they did not score very highly, not that they were lazy. Time was considered a valuable commodity, not to be wasted. The organisations and materials available in the second half of the nineteenth century in Salisbury to prevent idleness were many and varied. They occupied women within their own homes and also brought them out into the local community

### **Amateur, professional, and commercial**

Reports in local newspapers of musical occasions make clear the involvement not only of those who played or sang for their own pleasure, but also of those who earned their living by it, or by teaching the required skills to others. Art was another activity, like music, that was undertaken as both a pastime and a profession. It was possible for a woman to move from one status to another, and for both to work together.

One artistic family in nineteenth century Salisbury included several important women artists, particularly Margaret Geddes Carpenter and Catherine Geddes Gray. Margaret Carpenter ‘was considered the finest women portrait painter of nineteenth century England’.<sup>111</sup> Her younger sister Catherine was much less prolific, and had more domestic commitments. But later in life, with her children grown and her husband living in Switzerland, ‘she probably supported herself by doing watercolour portraits, both in miniature and in large’.<sup>112</sup> This flexibility was of critical importance for women who might need to earn an income at particular points in their life. Skilled amateur artists

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<sup>110</sup> Kilvert F, *Diaries*, ed Plomer, 1950 Vol III p 222

<sup>111</sup> Whitton D C, *The Grays of Salisbury*, San Francisco 1976 p 27. See also Smith R J, ‘Margaret Carpenter 1793 – 1872: a Salisbury artist restored’, *Hatcher Review* Vol 4 No 39 Autumn 1993 p 5 - 32

<sup>112</sup> Whitton, 1976 p 43

took opportunities to exhibit, such as the 1852 Exhibition as seen in chapter 2.<sup>113</sup> They were appreciated by audiences who could become clients or patrons if necessity struck.

Painting, embroidery, music, sport and other activities all required quantities of equipment and materials. Supplies were sold in local shops, many of them run by women proprietors for female customers. The business of Berlin woolwork emporia was examined in chapter 3. Each successive edition of commercial directories in the second half of the nineteenth century listed a choice of such establishments. Local entrepreneurs sold music and instruments, paints and easels, ink and notebooks, bows, tennis racquets, fishing tackle, and much more besides. An increasing variety of leisure activities demanded a growing commercial network of suppliers, thus creating yet another interdependent relationship between the private, domestic lives of women and the outside, public economy.

## Bazaars

In 1887 the Salisbury Art Needlework Depot in the High Street advertised as follows:

M Anstey respectfully solicits the inspection by the Ladies of Salisbury and Visitors to the City of her Novelties in Art Needlework for the Spring and Summer Season. A large stock, *particularly suited for Bazaar Work*. Specimens of work always on view. Ladies' orders for work tastefully and promptly commenced and full instructions given. Needlework of every description mounted at strictly moderate prices.<sup>114</sup>

'Art Needlework', promoted by the Royal School of Art Needlework (1872), gave a practical application for ordinary women to the design ideas of William Morris that were so influential across decorative arts at this time. One of the School's founders, Lady Marion Alford, writing in 1886, 'stressed the domestic, feminine nature of the school's work and workers, particularly to offset the school's commercial character'.<sup>115</sup>

The Salisbury School of Art Needlework had been opened in 1879 at 2 Endless Street

to cultivate aesthetic tastes, especially in regard to needlework, and they [Mrs Stevens, Mrs Boothby, Miss Hodding and Miss Blackmore] accordingly give lessons in the work, trace designs, commence patters and supply materials. One glance round the room in which the

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<sup>113</sup> See p 54 - 5

<sup>114</sup> *SJ* 2 April 1887 p 5 (my italics).

<sup>115</sup> Parker R, *Subversive Stitch*, 1984 p 183. The School provided employment for 'impoverished gentlewomen who, ideally destined only for marriage, had to support themselves'.

specimens of needlework are arranged is sufficient to show the value of art precepts as supplied to the making of things of everyday use.<sup>116</sup>

There is no evidence that the school in Salisbury directly provided employment, but this was another possible sales outlet for the products of women's skills. And it met demands, since widely ridiculed, for decorative fabric covers for everything in the public rooms of the home.<sup>117</sup> One source of such items was the bazaar.

Bazaars provided a link between the two topics of this chapter, and another bridge between the private domestic world and public society. Such events were outlets for the products of many 'female' creative pastimes, and their purpose was to raise funds for a philanthropic cause. Contributions to the many stalls were made at home, and sometimes bought in, and then sold to others in a market place, albeit a temporary one. In addition there was often music and refreshments, making 'the exercise of charity entertaining in itself'.<sup>118</sup> F K Prochaska's unique and detailed study of bazaars demonstrates both the myriad ways in which these events were associated with other aspects of women's lives in the nineteenth century, and the difficulties of analysing them.

An attempt to sample the local newspaper for reports of bazaars and sales of work revealed but few. Following the dates used by Prochaska, in the *Salisbury Journal* there were no references to such events in 1850, only one in 1875, but seven in 1895.<sup>119</sup> Without a much more systematic search year by year it is not possible to know when this increase began, though clues were provided by comments such as 'the first sale was held in 1877' or 'On Tuesday the sixth annual sale of work was held ...'. And without other sources of information it is not possible to know how many bazaars and sales took place without being mentioned in the paper. 'It is clear from the reports of charitable societies that thousands of small sales did not reach the newspapers'.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *SJ* 10 May 1879 p 8

<sup>117</sup> Briggs A, *Victorian Things*, Harmondsworth 1988 p 205 - 6, Field J, *Collecting Georgian and Victorian Crafts*, 1973 p 136-7, Flanders, 2003 ch 5

<sup>118</sup> Stevenson R L, quoted in Prochaska F K, *Women and Philanthropy in 19<sup>th</sup> century England*, Oxford 1980 p 48

<sup>119</sup> *SJ* 22 May 1875 p 8, 2 February 1895 p 5, 30 March 1895 p 8, 11 May 1895 p 8, 15 June 1895 p 5, 6 July 1895 p 5, 5 October 1895 p 8, 14 December 1895 p 5

<sup>120</sup> Prochaska, 1980 p 53

The known sales in Salisbury in 1895 were all in aid of religious objectives. Some were very specific and local, such as the United Methodist Free Church new chapel building fund, or with a particular though not necessarily local purpose, for example the Ladies Home Mission Association of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Additional Curates. Fisherton Home Mission and the Young Women's Christian Association, and St Thomas Mission Fund raised money for more general evangelising purposes. Proceeds of the other two events went to the 'Women of India' via the Baptist Zenana Mission and the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society.<sup>121</sup>

Where organising committees were mentioned some were male and some female, although Prochaska claimed that 'no evidence has been found that men ever took the management and operation of a nineteenth century bazaar into their own hands'.<sup>122</sup> St Thomas' Sale of Work which will be examined in more detail below, had a Committee 'who carried out the arrangements' consisting of the curate and churchwardens, 'the Rev H A Caryl, Mr Woodroffe, and Mr Haskins. Stallholders were almost invariably women, and equally consistently they were named in the newspaper reports, often with the particular table for which they were responsible. On most occasions a suitably august person opened the event; and the Mayor and Mayoress appeared at most even if not performing the ceremony themselves. Even the most concise reports mentioned the 'great variety of fancy and useful articles' for sale, together with refreshments and other entertainment such as the 'selections of vocal and instrumental music given by Mrs Beckingsale and others while the sale was in progress'.<sup>123</sup>

These were small-scale events in terms of the sums raised. Almost all the reports imply pride in their achievements: 'The proceeds, which amounted to £60 exceeded those of any former sale' (Baptist Zenana Mission).<sup>124</sup> However for their Anglican equivalent three months later: 'the attendance was smaller than usual and the takings, which amounted to about £30, were below the average'.<sup>125</sup> Weather conditions were clearly

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<sup>121</sup> 'The Baptist Zenana Mission came into being to fulfil *one* purpose – to convert the women of India to Christianity', Lauer L, 'Opportunities for Baptist Women and the 'Problem' of the Baptist Zenana Mission 1867 – 1913', in Morgan, 2002 p 217. Lauer argues that 'zenana missionaries were able to carve out a space for themselves and their work in India and to achieve a measure of independence largely denied to Baptist women in their home churches and could hence be considered a significant force for women's authority within the denomination', p 214.

<sup>122</sup> Prochaska, 1980 p 57

<sup>123</sup> *SJ* 11 May 1895 p 8

<sup>124</sup> *SJ* 30 March 1895 p 8

<sup>125</sup> *SJ* 15 June 1895 p 5



felt to be influential on the willingness of people to attend and spend, particularly if the event was outdoors, or in a marquee. ‘Despite heavy showers’ or ‘although the weather was fine’ qualify the comments about attendance and sums raised. ‘An atmosphere of friendly female rivalry pervaded fancy fairs’, as Prochaska explained. This competitive element was reinforced in some instances by *publishing* the receipts of individual stalls, down to the nearest penny.<sup>126</sup> Not only did fellow citizens read the names of women who gave their time and enthusiasm to a particular good cause, but their relative success was also made public.

Before examining one of these sales in more detail, mention must be made of two other events in 1895. On 17 April ‘the annual rubbish sale’ in aid of the Girls’ Club and Recreation Rooms, Audley House, Crane Street, took place in St Edmund’s schoolroom. The organisers were particularly honoured when ‘Mrs Hulse showed her interest in the club by kindly coming in and presiding at one of the stalls during the early afternoon’.<sup>127</sup> In a footnote to his chapter on Bazaars, Prochaska comments that ‘Jumble sales and rummage sales begin to appear late in the nineteenth century’.<sup>128</sup> Assuming that a ‘rubbish sale’ was indeed what would be recognised today as a jumble sale, perhaps this was one innovation that Salisbury took up at an early stage in its history?

‘An American Fair’ held at the end of September remains more of a mystery. Held in aid of St Marks Church Building Fund it was deemed a great success. The schoolroom was crowded, despite the 2d admission charge. ‘The numerous contributions included articles of many descriptions’; and everything was quickly sold off, adding £30 to the fund.<sup>129</sup>

On Wednesday 2 October 1895 Maria Fawcett went to the St Thomas’ sale of work. As always, the brief entry in her diary told nothing more, but this was a significant event in the local calendar and was reported at length in the *Salisbury Journal*.<sup>130</sup> The two day sale was in aid of St Thomas’ Mission Fund ‘and other parochial objects’ and raised a

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<sup>126</sup> See for example ‘The Additional Curates’ Society’ sale *SJ* 6 July 1895 p 5

<sup>127</sup> *SJ* 20 April 1895 p 8. Mrs Hulse was the ‘lady of the manor’ from Breamore House (see also Postscript)

<sup>128</sup> Prochaska, 1980 p 47 fn 2

<sup>129</sup> *SJ* 5 October 1895 p 5. I have failed to find any further reference to ‘An American Fair’ that might throw light on its special characteristics.

<sup>130</sup> *SJ* 5 October 1895 p 8. All the details that follow come from this report

total of £176 18s 9d. Mrs Pyesmith, the Mayoress, opened the sale, in the absence of the Dean's wife, Mrs Boyle, due to 'an accident which delayed her return home', though Mrs Boyle had arrived in time to do the duty on the second day. The newspaper report guided the reader around the Council Chamber, in effect introducing each stall and its proprietors in turn. It began as follows:

Immediately inside the room the fruit and flower stall, kept by Miss Bloom, was the first to attract attention. This was laden with various kinds of fruit and many flowers, while the awning was prettily covered with foliage and bunches of grapes hung from the eaves. Next came a plain needlework stall, under the care of Mrs F Simmonds, Mrs W Snook and Miss Courtenay, who also had a very nice display of china, basket-work, cushions, and painted plaques, together with a quantity of children's clothing.

Then there were stalls selling dolls, fancy and useful articles, paintings (several individually described), nick-nacks, and much more besides, including the refreshment stall 'plentifully supplied'. Mrs Gardiner 'as usual' had charge of the bran pie; there was a shooting gallery in one of the courts, and a fortune telling saloon, in which the presiding gypsy was Miss Ethel Simmonds. A parcels delivery stall and cloak room were kept by Miss Wilton and Miss Young, so customers did not have to carry their purchases home themselves. There was a musical programme to add to the entertainment, and members of St Thomas' Lads' Brigade gave a humorous debate. In the light of comments above about jumble sales and similar occasions for disposing of unwanted and second-hand items, it is interesting to note that in the vestibule of the Council Chamber was a rummage sale under the management of Miss Hunt, as part of this elaborate event. All three principals, Mrs Pyesmith, Mrs Boyle and Rev Birkbeck the Vicar, referred to the importance of such means of fund raising for worthy causes, particularly in this case to maintain the good work in their parish. Of course, they encouraged the customers to part with their money liberally. Commenting on the particular strengths of Salisbury, Mrs Boyle said 'it was amazing with what rapidity they could get money together when necessary'.

This was in many ways typical of the thousands of bazaars and sales of work being held up and down the country. For women

it offered an escape from lives of refined idleness or domestic drudgery; indeed for middle-class women it legitimised trade and manual work from which they were customarily excluded. It also provided an opportunity for public service compatible with household

routine. And, not least, it was a reflection of the compassion that was thought to be at the heart of the female character.<sup>131</sup>

## Conclusion

Many of Salisbury's women had little time to do anything apart from work or domestic duties. But those in the privileged position of having time to spare would have been brought up to fill it with constructive activity. Ideally this should preferably be for the benefit of those less fortunate than themselves, but if not then something 'improving' for their own character or body. Perhaps it is not surprising that worthy and high-minded purpose should appear dominant in a cathedral city.

But the organisations and materials available in the second half of the nineteenth century in Salisbury to prevent idleness were many and varied, and were adopted eagerly whenever occasion arose – and sometimes for simple pleasure. Women were occupied within their own homes: embroidery, reading, practising an instrument, painting a still life, or writing to distant acquaintances were all essentially personal and private activities. However the outside world impinged in many ways. Walking or painting could be pursued in company purely for companionship. Materials and equipment had to be purchased. The results of one's efforts often appeared in exhibitions or concerts or bazaars. Whether the objective was educational or charitable, such events provided an incentive to action, and also gave experience at organisation. Special talents could be exploited professionally. Activities with a competitive element, such as archery, needed other people against whom to judge one's skill. Pastimes were enmeshed with family, religion, education, philanthropy and business.

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<sup>131</sup> Prochaska, 1980 p 71. See p 290 for a slightly later sale at St Thomas's with typical characteristics.

## Chapter 6

### Salisbury women in public: pressure groups and politics

*'the tact and talent of women'*<sup>1</sup>

Provincial, peaceful, and socially conservative Salisbury may have been, but seldom was no issue being discussed, and the city was not so isolated as to be unaffected by the 'modernising' forces at work in the country. People there were well aware of the developments which characterised nineteenth century England, even though they were not personally at the forefront of radical change. Although some adjustments were made by agreement, and others swept all before them, in most cases it was necessary to persuade and convince public opinion. So for any individual objective, proponents mounted a campaign to influence those with power in the political system. Meetings were well attended, debates thrived, publications circulated, and the pageantry of an active political culture was enjoyed in Salisbury throughout the century and into the next.

Local evidence for the active involvement of women in these campaigns is thin, and in many instances only circumstantial. However, it is not unreasonable to assume that women here did share in these experiences of politics, if only at second hand. It would have been hard to be unaware of what was happening, and they would have become increasingly conscious of the possibility of playing an active part. Opening the political system to a larger proportion of the population, making it more democratic, was one of the issues that ran throughout the century, at both local and national level. Even without a personal vote there were different ways in which people could participate, from reading pamphlets and listening to speeches, to marching in demonstrations and arguing with those of opposing views. At a public meeting, a 'Great Liberal Demonstration' in the Market House in 1869, for example, '[a]ccommodation was provided in the upper floor for ladies, of whom a good number were present'.<sup>2</sup> Chapter six will examine some

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<sup>1</sup> Trollope A, *The Warden*, first published 1855, 1923 edn p 99

<sup>2</sup> *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* (hereafter *SJ*) 22 May 1869 p 6

of the ways in which women in Salisbury eventually came down from the balcony, and went up onto the platform or out into the streets.

Progress in this direction, however, was both slow and uneven. The chapter begins by confirming the dominance of men in the political and institutional life of the city – the situation that had to be questioned before women could play a more visible and more influential public role. Two examples of failed attempts in this direction demonstrated how overcoming this long-established tradition was a formidable achievement deserving recognition.

The second section of this chapter looks briefly at how some major issues of the nineteenth century were seen by the political classes in Salisbury. Parliamentary reform, changes in the status of Roman Catholics, the abolition of slavery, agitation against the Corn Laws, the Chartist movement, temperance, and changes in the structure of cathedral administration were all national matters of local concern, to a greater or lesser degree.<sup>3</sup> Although the focus in some of these examples was confined to the first half of the century (the 1830s was a particularly contentious decade), they indicated the way Salisbury citizens responded to controversial topics of the time, and thus were precursors to events in the main period under discussion. In most cases the presence of women was shadowy if not invisible, reinforcing the scale of the challenge faced by those who wanted a more prominent role.

Four sections then follow that examine in more detail the election of the first women poor law guardians in Salisbury, and the local campaign for a parliamentary vote for women. Both these developments take this chapter beyond the turn of the twentieth century. However, they are significant for the movement of women into the public sphere in the city, both for individual, independently-minded women who had the economic and social freedom to perform a public role, and for the female population as a whole. And they can be seen as a culmination of the gradual, cautious and erratic progress made earlier. Women in Salisbury, in time, did arrive where others had been decades before.

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<sup>3</sup> For other controversial issues, see chapter 4 on the school board and chapter 5 for the public library.

## Absence of women

The Salisbury Women's Suffrage Society was run by women. Many of the organisations already discussed, in chapter five for example, had women clients, women employees, and women fundraisers, but no women in positions of authority. The dominance of men on the council and on the committees of all the public institutions in the city such as the Infirmary, and the Museum, as well as specific projects like the 1852 Exhibition, was complete. Although women could stand the council from 1907, none did until after the First World War, although they voted diligently in municipal elections, and candidates were careful always to address their local electorate as 'Ladies and Gentlemen'.

Male members of the leading professional and substantial commercial families of the city, often heading long-established firms, duplicated their roles across many administrative bodies, putting the experience gained in one area to the advantage of another, and then being replaced on retirement by another similar individual, sometimes kin-related. For long periods of time it was the same core group of prominent men in Salisbury who were involved in different organisations, and who maintained a stand against women's involvement. This 'closed-shop' made the introduction of women into authoritative roles even less likely and longer delayed, and presented a high barrier to those, both men and women, who wanted to change the system. The ruling groups crossed boundaries of class, politics and religion – but not gender.

A parallel belief in maintaining the *status quo* of established ways of doing things can be seen in the local determination to retain control of institutions and services in the private/voluntary sector, and away from 'public' influence. Board of Health intervention after the cholera epidemic caused great dissention; the refusal to have board schools in the city was adamant; and conflagrations were tackled by the Salisbury *Volunteer* Fire Brigade. Salisbury was very dilatory in taking up the opportunity to raise a rate for a public library, and the Infirmary and the city police force remained independent until after the Second World War. All these examples demonstrated the conviction that the exercise of citizens' power was the only effective way to organise, on the assumption that 'citizen' meant prosperous and well-known male.

On a very few occasions this stance was challenged, unsuccessfully. One example was the Infirmary, which always depended on large numbers of women subscribers to their funds. As early as 1841 Colonel Buckley gave notice that at the next Annual Court he proposed changing one of the statutes to allow ladies to vote for the election of Officers of the Infirmary – certainly not that they should be allowed to stand themselves. Not surprisingly at the meeting ‘The motion was negatived on a shew of hands by a large majority’.<sup>4</sup> The management committee of the Infirmary had no female members until 1921, and only then because their appointment was a condition of obtaining a grant from the British Red Cross Society.<sup>5</sup>

A second example occurred many years after Colonel Buckley’s attempt, and concerned the library. In 1906 a the proposal was made for women to become members of the Public Library Committee. Mr Foley pointed out that as ladies paid rates he thought they should be represented on the committee. Mr Hall seconded, saying ‘it was only fair that they should have ladies on the Committee to select books for the fair sex’. Opposing the suggestion, Mr Wilks said ‘he could not see they would be of the slightest use on the Free Library Committee, and in all probability they would be a nuisance’. Alderman Harris supported this by saying he had been told by many of the most influential members of the Committee that they would resign if such a motion were carried. It was lost, only five members voting in favour.<sup>6</sup>

### **Political issues in Salisbury**

National political issues of the nineteenth century were vigorously debated in Salisbury. Members of Parliament for the city did not become predictably Conservative until after 1910. The 1832 Reform Act, owing to the neighbouring ‘rotten borough’ of Old Sarum, and the Corn Laws, because of the surrounding agricultural interests, saw extensive local campaigns. Salisbury was not on the list of regular venues visited by leading politicians, but Gladstone spoke at a packed meeting in the city on Reform in 1866, and Asquith visited during the January 1910 election when Salisbury was a marginal seat.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> WSRO J8/100/16

<sup>5</sup> Haskins C, *The History of Salisbury Infirmary*, Salisbury 1922 p 35

<sup>6</sup> *SJ* 6 October 1906 p 6

<sup>7</sup> VCH 4 p 123

In 1832 the success of the first Reform Act was welcomed here enthusiastically, and recalled long after the event. In 1869, for example, at the 'Great Liberal Demonstration' mentioned above Mr Alderman Fawcett, who had been mayor of Salisbury in 1832, spoke of being 'almost the only one present left of that number who some 37 years ago joined in the great agitation for the first reform bill'.<sup>8</sup> When news reached the city that the Bill was carried, the editorial in the *Salisbury Journal* showed its support: 'the joy of our townsmen knew no bounds ...Salisbury has never in our time known a happier day'.<sup>9</sup> Post-1832 575 men were enfranchised instead of only around 60 council members, and this change allowed respectable, middle class, professional and commercial interests a say in who represented the city at Westminster.<sup>10</sup>

Subsequent legislation for parliamentary reform appears to have generated much less excitement in the city, perhaps due to the paler coloured personalities involved, though specific issues at election time were hotly debated. The extension to the borough franchise in 1867 increased the electorate from 661 in 1865 to 1,461 at the 1868 election. When the revision of the voters' list was announced, and reported in the local newspaper, readers were told that the names of 24 women had been removed from the list.<sup>11</sup> By the 1880 election there were 1,969 registered electors. Following the 1884 reforms Salisbury returned one MP instead of two, but qualifications for the borough franchise remained the same.<sup>12</sup> At the subsequent general election there were 2,508 voters on the register in Salisbury.<sup>13</sup> By 1893 this had increased to 2,847. At the January 1910 election there were 3,386 on the electoral roll (and a 97% turnout).<sup>14</sup>

As the Catholic Emancipation Bill went through Parliament in 1829, letters to the *Journal* were 95% anti-catholic, and in the 1850s there were demonstrations against the

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<sup>8</sup> *SJ* 22 May 1869 p 6

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Newman R and Howells J, *Salisbury Past*, Chichester 2001 p 83

<sup>10</sup> The 1832 Act also, as is well known, removed the seat of Cobbett's 'accursed hill', the most rotten of all rotten boroughs Old Sarum. Its attraction to tourists gradually refocused onto its historic interest rather than its political notoriety, and customers to the local refreshment providers continued to visit.

<sup>11</sup> *SJ* 26 September 1868 p 6. From the *very* unclear copy available, it seemed that this was justified on the grounds of the Act meaning only men to be included, despite not explicitly excluding women. See Pugh M, *The March of the Women*, Oxford 2000 p 21. No objections were reported, and I have found no further debate on this point locally.

<sup>12</sup> The separate borough representation disappeared in 1918 when Salisbury and south Wiltshire were merged into one constituency.

<sup>13</sup> *SJ* 28 November 1885 p 6

<sup>14</sup> Figures from VCH 5 and VCH 6, (though there is some inconsistency in the VCH figures), and an unpublished research paper by Ruth Newman who suggests that the increase between 1880 and 1893 was due to better party organisation.



establishment of the Catholic hierarchy, but individually Catholics were tolerated and held office in the city. Two John Penistons (1778 – 1848 and 1807 – 1858) were architects, County Surveyor, and officers in the Yeomanry Cavalry.<sup>15</sup> The older Peniston had joined the Salisbury Troop of the Wiltshire Yeomanry at or shortly after its formation in 1794, long before any formal alteration in the status of Roman Catholics in English society. Michael Cowan provides an explanation:

John Peniston was a successful businessman, prominent also in public life where his evident vigour and personality seem likely to have countered any intolerance that may have existed in Salisbury.<sup>16</sup>

John Lambert became mayor of Salisbury in 1853, the first Roman Catholic to be mayor of a cathedral city since the Reformation. At the Council meeting confirming his appointment the new mayor

gave the strongest assurance that his religious opinions would never in anyway interfere with the discharge of his civil duties ... [he had] lived amongst them for 28 years without a word of controversy, numbering as he did many of his dearest friends among the members of the Established Church.<sup>17</sup>

He subsequently held national posts working for public health, poor relief and other causes. Lambert was a strong advocate of free trade, supported the idea of universal suffrage, and worked on both the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884.<sup>18</sup> The work of convert Lady Elizabeth Herbert of Lea supporting the welfare of Roman Catholic children has been discussed above.<sup>19</sup>

It is entirely possible that there were women amongst the crowds in the Assembly Room in 1833 listening to John Peniston when he took part in a ‘very animated discussion’ on doctrine; they are not specifically mentioned.<sup>20</sup> However, in 1850 they were recorded standing in the rain by the Poultry Cross watching as an anti-papal procession wound its way through the streets to a bonfire on the Greencroft . An artist

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<sup>15</sup> See Cowan M, ‘The Penistons: a Salisbury Family of Catholic Architects and Yeomen 1770-1911’, *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine* Vol 80 1986 p 184 – 19, and Cowan M (ed), *Letters of John Peniston*, Trowbridge 1996

<sup>16</sup> Cowan, 1986 p 191. A further indicator of the ecumenism evident in the city is the memorial to the younger John Peniston in the north transept of the cathedral itself.

<sup>17</sup> *SJ* 13 November 1853 p 3

<sup>18</sup> R St Lawrence, ‘A Life Worth Living’, *Hatcher Review* Vol 4 No 32 1991 and ODNB 2004 online

<sup>19</sup> See chapter 4

<sup>20</sup> *SJ* 2 December 1833 p 4

sketched the event and the drawing was published in the *Illustrated London News*.<sup>21</sup> Caricature effigies on poles of the Pope, Cardinal Wiseman, and the twelve Catholic bishops (newly established in restored Roman Catholic dioceses in England) followed masked torchbearers, and a 'vast assemblage of spectators', though 'no mischief was done'. Other citizens regretted this event, and it was not considered typical of feeling at the time.<sup>22</sup>

Although the trade in slaves had been ended in 1807, and slavery abolished in the British Empire by legislation in 1833, concern continued about the conditions of workers 'employed' by former slave owners. For example, a 'numerous and highly-respectable' meeting was held in Salisbury in March 1838 'to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning the legislature for the *total abolition* of the Negro Apprenticeship System in the British Colonies'.<sup>23</sup> One of Salisbury's MPs, Mr Brodie, presented a petition from the city to the House of Commons with nearly 800 signatures.<sup>24</sup> Would there have been as many as 800 without women participating?

A Salisbury Association was formed in 1839 in support of the Chartist movement, and meetings were held at the Charter Coffee House. In 1841 'a large room' had been taken for lectures. It has been said 'the response from the [c]ity was at first extremely poor'.<sup>25</sup> Groups were larger, more active, and more violent, in the towns of west Wiltshire, partly due to their more radical traditions, partly to their declining cloth-making economies, and partly to the proximity of Bath, whence the leadership came. Trowbridge and Bradford-on-Avon both had separate associations for women, but there is no evidence of this being organised in Salisbury.

The citizens of Salisbury held enthusiastic celebrations when Peel repealed the Corn Laws in 1846. John Bright and Richard Cobden visited the city in August 1843 and commented on their experience at a meeting in London later in the year (at which John Lambert was also present).<sup>26</sup> Hospitality for the visit was provided by the Fawcetts.

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<sup>21</sup> See p 288 ephemera collection in Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum PD813.

<sup>22</sup> Newman R, 'Anti-papal demonstration at Salisbury', *Wiltshire Local History Forum Newsletter* January 2004 p 11 - 12

<sup>23</sup> *SJ* 12 March 1838 p 4

<sup>24</sup> *SJ* 2 April 1838 p 3. Brodie also presented petitions from six towns and villages in the area.

<sup>25</sup> Pugh R P, 'Chartism in Wiltshire', *Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Magazine* Vol 54 1951-2 p 170

<sup>26</sup> *The Times* 1 December 1843 p 5

Their daughter-in-law Millicent Garrett Fawcett later wrote of her husband's mother '[s]he was a keen politician, and delighted to dwell on her friendship, during the anti-corn law campaign, with Bright and Cobden'.<sup>27</sup> There was some opposition at the city meetings, coming from small farmers and labourers from the surrounding agricultural areas who feared the consequences of ending protection.<sup>28</sup>

It was inevitable that Salisbury would look with interest at the pronouncements from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on cathedral reform from 1836 onwards.<sup>29</sup> One of the initiators of this was W K Hamilton who became Bishop in 1854. He published a pamphlet *Cathedral Reform* setting out his ideas which included, in addition to internal administrative changes, developments which would influence the relationship between the cathedral and the local population: the furtherance of education, the proper care of parishes, the payment of proper stipends to cathedral employees, as well as more frequent and more varied popular services.<sup>30</sup> Reaching out to men and women in the country parishes of the diocese brought them in to the city, as, for example on occasions such as the 'Diocesan meeting of parish choirs' pictured in the *Illustrated London News* in 1861.<sup>31</sup> The rows of bonneted heads in the nave indicated a good turnout of women.

Early in 1871 a petition in favour of a Bill to Legalise Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister was held at the office of Mr Grist in St Thomas's Churchyard which had 'been very numerously signed in this city'.<sup>32</sup> One letter in opposition was published in the local paper, from a clergyman, pointing out that the proposal was 'undermining the foundations of Christian Society', and if the Bill was passed it would be impossible for a woman to remain with her deceased sister's family as an aunt.<sup>33</sup> And aunts were significant people in many families; being an aunt was an important role for many unmarried, no longer young, women – another unpaid caring position.

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<sup>27</sup> Fawcett M G, *What I Remember*, 1924 p 58

<sup>28</sup> VCH 5 p 306

<sup>29</sup> See Best G F A, *Temporal Pillars*, Cambridge 1964

<sup>30</sup> Barrett P, *Barchester: English Cathedral Life in the Nineteenth Century*, 1993 p 288

<sup>31</sup> *Illustrated London News* 15 June 1861. Salisbury and South Wilts Museum ephemera collection. See page 285

<sup>32</sup> *SJ* 25 February 1871 p 5. The Act was not passed until 1907, and 'raised a storm of religious protest'.

Harris J, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1917*, Harmondsworth 1993 p 165

<sup>33</sup> *SJ* 4 March 1871 p 7

The temperance movement had been active in Salisbury for some fifty years when Northy wrote that it was 'very strong numerically and doing good work'.<sup>34</sup> Many, though not all, of the groups extolling the virtues of abstinence at the time he was describing life in Salisbury at the end of the century were attached to other, principally religious, organisations. For example there was St Mark's Band of Hope, Fisherton Branch of the C.E.T.S., Primitive Methodist Temperance Association (Park), Wesleyan Band of Hope (Church-street) amongst many others; each of these had a woman as secretary. The Established Church had also been a consistent supporter, as for example, in 1868 when the annual Temperance Fete was held in the Palace Grounds, by kind permission of the bishop. Intertwined messages of the Gospel and temperance were sent out to audiences such as those who attended the three meetings addressed by Isabella Reaney in Salisbury in 1881. One of these was for women only 'and the audience, which numbered about 400, were very attentive and appreciative'. The 'women only' meeting was held in the afternoon, so presumably working women were not expected. Although the full text of that meeting was not reported, the event the previous evening revealed the strength of Mrs Reaney's belief in the power of women:

She wishes people to use their influence, and desired girls to make a condition of engagement an answer in the affirmative to the question 'Are you a teetotaller?' which should be put after the one 'Are you a Christian?' She appealed to mothers to remove temptation from their children, and mistresses not to put stumbling blocks in the way of their servants.<sup>35</sup>

In 1897 Mrs Frances Hall was honorary secretary of the Salisbury Temperance Association, and her husband was president, an office he had held for four years. A solicitor by profession, Robert Hall had also been secretary to the Liberal and Radical Association; he was a parish councillor, rural district councillor and poor law guardian. The third key official of STA was Mrs Laura Bothams, the treasurer. Her husband was an architect and civil engineer, and her father was Charles F Woodrow, a prosperous corn merchant in the city. Laura's sister-in-law, the wife of her brother Charles John Woodrow, was secretary to the Salisbury branch of the British Women's Temperance Association. Both the Halls and the Bothams were prominent members of the Salisbury

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<sup>34</sup> Northy, 1897 Appendices p xx [ 370]

<sup>35</sup> *SJ* 12 March 1881 p 8. Mrs Reaney, as well as being 'a prominent temperance activist', promoted higher education for women and commended new careers opportunities for them, amongst many other campaigns that received her support. 'She herself carved out a career that transcended the conventions of her position and gained widespread respect for so doing'. ODNB 2004-5 online. See also article by Jane Garnett, 'Women and Religion in the Oxford DNB' ODNB online.

Suffrage Society in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Laura Bothams became a poor law guardian. These three families linked prosperous commercial with professional interests in the city. Wives had time, and money, that enabled them to hold voluntary positions such as those listed above, as we have seen in chapter five. Citizens with a sense of public duty could turn it to practical effect through these types of organisations. Family involvement might have been seen as nepotism, but it could also have made possible the involvement of women in public positions that would have otherwise been unacceptable if their colleagues had been strangers. It may be significant that these particular women held office in secular rather than religious temperance organisations. However, it did not prevent them working alongside people involved in the drinks trade in pursuit of *another* common objective: fellow members of the local suffrage campaign came from brewery families.

There appear to be no surviving records of any of these groups themselves, so evidence of their activities comes from outside the organisation and is inevitably limited and peripheral. But the cause was sufficiently significant in the city for their events and personnel to be recorded in the newspaper and in directories. Meetings of the Salisbury Temperance Association (founded in 1840 and re-organised in 1893) were reported almost weekly; visiting speakers stressed the benefits of life without the demon drink, and sometimes personal appearances were made by individuals such as ‘a reformed pugilist’.<sup>36</sup> It is therefore possible to examine interconnections that are of pivotal interest when considering the public life of women. This brief survey focuses on the decades around the turn of the twentieth century because it is possible to trace links in Salisbury at that time between the campaigns for temperance, poor relief and women’s suffrage.<sup>37</sup> Multiple roles played across organisations and causes by individuals, and the recurrence of family members, suggest a network of involvement and commitment like those found by Moira Martin in Bristol.<sup>38</sup>

Every week the *Salisbury Journal* throughout this time reported debates in both Houses of Parliament, as well as presenting a summary of national and international news. Two consecutive issues in April 1869, for example, noted discussion of firstly the Married

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<sup>36</sup> *SJ* 20 February 1869 p 8

<sup>37</sup> It is willingly acknowledged that the local temperance movement, and particularly the roles of women therein, deserves a study in its own right.

<sup>38</sup> Martin M, ‘Guardians of the Poor: a philanthropic female elite in Bristol’, *The Regional Historian* Summer 2002 p 6

Women's Property Bill, and secondly that concerned with Marriage with Deceased Wife's Sister.<sup>39</sup> So anyone with the inclination to do so could remain abreast of the current issues of national politics, alongside those of the city council, as well as court reports, advertisements for domestic servants, military manoeuvres on the Plain, subscriptions to the Infirmary and much else. In households and institutions where the paper was taken, or, from 1868, its rival the *Salisbury Times*, no one had an excuse for lack of information. It is not hard to imagine the resulting discussions on such topical issues between the women introduced above, their social and familial links providing many opportunities for lively exchanges.

Salisbury's political classes demonstrated enthusiasm for parliamentary reform, antipathy to Catholics (though not towards individuals), they were pro Corn Law repeal, but lukewarm on Chartism, gave support for constitutional causes for women – education, property, and indeed municipal politics. Despite the lack of direct evidence, it is argued that many women citizens of Salisbury were part of this community that was involved in political issues of the day. They were, until late in the nineteenth century, kept firmly outside the central administrative bodies of the city. But they had opportunities to observe events, and their daily lives were, from time to time, disrupted by more dramatic political scenes. The remainder of this chapter will examine the two contexts in which this passive position of women changed. At the turn of the new century, the first women entered the political arena standing for election as poor law guardians. Less than a decade later the Salisbury Women's Suffrage Society was established.

### **Poor relief**

Salisbury was well-provided with local charities and almshouses, but the workhouse was the main focus of support for indigent people, some of whom were also aged and/or ill. Following the 1834 Act the Alderbury Union was created to cover the Close and twenty-one neighbouring parishes, while the three city parishes in Salisbury continued to function as a 'Union', which had dated from 1770. The two Unions amalgamated in 1867, and a new workhouse was built on the Alderbury Union site just to the south of

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<sup>39</sup> *SJ* 17 and 24 April 1869 p 2 in both cases.

the city.<sup>40</sup> Administrative responsibility lay with elected Boards of Guardians, and in Salisbury these continued to be entirely male in composition throughout the early years of pioneering women guardians in other cities and boroughs.<sup>41</sup> The predominant acceptance of men and women's traditional roles held sway here. Men who held positions of power in the city were unwilling to relinquish their authority, and vacancies on the poor law board were usually filled unopposed. There were as yet no women able or willing to challenge this state of affairs. But they did exploit other ways of becoming involved which reflected the individualistic philanthropy discussed above. This was another clear context where the conventional female caring and maternal characteristics were put into effect in a public, though not combative, arena.

Ladies contributed treats and comforts to the inmates, in the same way Mrs Fowler looked after the patients and nurses in the Infirmary. Every Christmas there were tea parties and entertainments, and workhouse children were invited out in the summer. It has not proved possible to date the first steps in this direction, but it is likely to have originated in the early days of the workhouse in Salisbury.<sup>42</sup> By the end of the century there was a mixture of individual visitors, and those who went under the auspices of an organised, usually religious, group. However, the arrangements did not always run smoothly.<sup>43</sup> In 1899 the House Committee of the Salisbury Union was asked by the Guardians to discuss and report on 'The question of allowing Visitors to the Workhouse who have hitherto attended without the approval of the Board'.<sup>44</sup> The result was a list of approved visitors and a set of rules covering days and time of visits. It was 'considered advisable to have two Church of England and two Nonconformist Visitors'; Mrs Pepper and Miss Williams were permitted to continue to go each Monday at 2.30 pm, and the Chaplain was asked to submit the names of two other ladies to the Guardians to visit on

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<sup>40</sup> Newman and Howells, 2001 p 78

<sup>41</sup> Hollis P, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914*, Oxford 1989 p 205 - 231. The obstacles faced by women interested in becoming poor law guardians discussed here emphasise the great achievement of those who were successful. Only exceptional women in unusual circumstances could set an example to be followed by others.

<sup>42</sup> There is no evidence that visitors in Salisbury worked under the auspices of the Workhouse Visiting Society, but that organisation was likely to have been known. As Patricia Hollis has written '[b]y 1865 the WVS had disbanded, successful in its immediate aims. Ladies were now visiting scores of workhouses ...' op cit p 200.

<sup>43</sup> For example, the Clerk read a letter to the Board which drew attention 'to the way in which we Nurses were insulted by one of the members of the Christian Endeavour on Sunday afternoon'. WSRO H1/110/27 11 August 1899. Earlier that year, 'after what has occurred' [unspecified] Mrs Weigall was asked to cease visiting, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that her husband was a Guardian. 12 April 1899. She had some years previously donated a pall to the workhouse for use at funerals. H1/110/27 10 May 1895. See above p 191 for her skill at embroidery.

<sup>44</sup> WSRO H1/110/27 21 April 1899

Fridays. It seemed that the Christian Endeavour Society had been overstepping the mark, bringing too many people, staying too long, and giving both an address and a Scripture reading. Nurse Moore asked the Committee for some limitations 'so as to interfere as little as possible with the duties of the Nurses and the comfort of the Patients.' At the interface between professional and 'amateur' women in caring roles, it was the former that necessarily took precedence.

Elsewhere '[w]omen and working men flowed on to poor law boards' after the alterations to property qualifications in 1894, but still not in Salisbury.<sup>45</sup> Unions nearby in south Wiltshire at Tisbury and Warminster took advantage of the opportunity and their experience was quoted in support of having women guardians in Salisbury early in the new century.<sup>46</sup> In February 1901 the Salisbury Board was told by one of its members that 'there had been a meeting of ladies at which representatives had been chosen to come forward at the proper time' and he proposed that the guardians should make it known 'that they would welcome lady members'.<sup>47</sup> Not all his colleagues agreed and the matter was dropped after a brief discussion on points of order. Nevertheless it was a situation they had to face because indeed, at last, two women were elected to the office of poor law guardian.

These elections in themselves were significant. As mentioned above, 'the retiring Guardians have been returned unopposed' was a frequent refrain. Competition for office was unusual, and created a major barrier to getting women on the board here in Salisbury. However, it was now a reality and correspondents to the *Journal* were enthusiastic: 'I greatly hope that those ladies who stand for this important office may meet with hearty support from my fellow citizens'.<sup>48</sup> One letter-writer was Robert Hall – an eminent citizen involved in many aspects of city life. He commented '[t]he electors generally are to be congratulated upon having the opportunity of returning such excellent representatives as Mrs Roberts and Miss Palgrave'.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Hollis 1989 p 208

<sup>46</sup> *SJ* 16 March 1901 p 8. There is no explanation in recent histories of either of these towns to throw any light on their relatively early acceptance of women guardians. Lane C and White P, *Warminster in the Twentieth Century*, Warminster 1999, Sawyer R (ed), *Tisbury Jubilee Book*, Tisbury 2002.

<sup>47</sup> *SJ* 23 February 1901 p 5

<sup>48</sup> *SJ* 9 March 1901 p 8. The writer was James Erasmus Phillips

<sup>49</sup> *SJ* 16 March 1901 p 8. See above p 228 for Mr Hall's involvement with the temperance movement in Salisbury.



Mary Elizabeth Palgrave was the first to publish her statement to the electors in the parish of St Edmund:

I have had 20 years experience in voluntary work of various kinds, especially among young women and children. If you honour me with election I shall try in all ways to cooperate in the excellent work hitherto done by the Guardians of the Salisbury Union, and to assist them to the best of my power in those departments which especially engage the attention of women.<sup>50</sup>

Miss Palgrave was the daughter of Sir Reginald Palgrave who retired to Salisbury from his job as Clerk to the House of Commons. It is likely that Miss Palgrave's social work experience was acquired in London as there is no evidence of her in Salisbury's organisations. She resigned from the board in 1903 on her marriage, and the vacancy was filled by Mrs Sarah Hunt, a widow who was resident in Milford Street, aged 56 at the time of the 1901 census, and 'living on own means'. Mrs Hunt was elected unopposed as Mrs Laura Bothams who was also nominated withdrew (though was subsequently elected to another vacancy herself).<sup>51</sup>

The second pioneering woman guardian in Salisbury was Fanny Roberts. She was the second wife of a doctor, and was aged 60 at the time. Dr Roberts was described by Millicent Fawcett as '[a]nother very warm Salisbury friend'.<sup>52</sup> When she visited her sister-in-law in 1895, Maria wrote in her diary 'Millicent and I had lunch with Mrs Roberts'. Fanny Roberts also set out her case in an advertisement in the local paper:

For many years I have had considerable experience in work amongst the sick and needy, and it would be my keenest endeavour to look after the welfare of the poor, consistently with the interest of the Ratepayers. Should you think me worthy of your confidence, I should try to do my duty by assisting in every way in my power the excellent work now being done by the Board.

Both Miss Palgrave and Mrs Roberts appreciated that it would be in their interests to complement the past and continuing guardians – they would have to work with many of them. How far they were aware of the 'rancorous hostility' faced by other women elsewhere is not known, but as Patricia Hollis has pointed out '[c]ountless women

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<sup>50</sup> *SJ* 2 March 1901 p 5. See illustration 27 p 286

<sup>51</sup> See above p 228 for Laura Bothams

<sup>52</sup> Fawcett, 1924 p 60

guardians wrote to the Women Guardians Society and the women's press' describing the unfriendly, even aggressive, reception they were given.<sup>53</sup>

Mrs Roberts' comment about 'the interest of the Ratepayers' was an important argument. As Hollis pointed out, 'The best-run poor law boards prided themselves on ... cutting the poor rate'.<sup>54</sup> Much hostility to women guardians was based on their reputation 'of being generous with other people's money'.<sup>55</sup>

The *Salisbury Journal* was cautiously welcoming to Miss Palgrave and Mrs Roberts:

The movement for placing lady members on Boards of Guardians has at length extended to Salisbury, and two ladies have had the public spirit to come forward as candidates for election ... It ought really to be obvious to everyone that a Board of Guardians is all the better for having one or two women among the members. The ratepayers would be lacking both in chivalry and common-sense if they neglected this opportunity of electing two exceptionally well-qualified candidates for the office of Guardian because they are ladies, and hitherto this city has elected only men. We are confident that the poor and the ratepayers will both gain by such additions to the Board.<sup>56</sup>

After the elections, the newspaper's editorial commented complacently

Salisbury has moved with the times ... We trust they [the two lady guardians] will be cordially welcomed by their colleagues, and that the future history of the Salisbury Union will be similar to that of the many other Unions where experience has shown that, when ladies who are sensible and practical come forward, it is a great gain to have a few such members on a Board of Guardians.<sup>57</sup>

This last point had been made earlier by the chairman of nearby Warminster Guardians in a letter to the *Salisbury Journal* greeting the nomination of Miss Palgrave and Mrs Roberts. But he added: 'There are, of course, ladies and ladies, but taking it for granted as I do that both these are women of sound commonsense and not of the fussy talkative type...' and ended describing the impact of his lady members: '... the good their influence has quietly and unostentatiously effected has been incalculable'.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Hollis, 1989 p 211

<sup>54</sup> op cit p 210

<sup>55</sup> op cit p 212. Expenditure on poor relief for the county of Wiltshire did decline over the period 1840 – 1899, a fall that was particularly noticeable in the last twenty years of the century. There was a corresponding decline in the pauper population, especially able-bodied adults receiving outdoor relief, suggesting success of the system as a deterrent. VCH 5 p 256-7

<sup>56</sup> *SJ* 9 March 1901 p 5

<sup>57</sup> *SJ* 30 March 1901 p 5

<sup>58</sup> *SJ* 16 March 1901 p 8

In the early years it was important for women to maintain a ladylike presence, and to concentrate on dealing with 'cases of women and children'. Both Miss Palgrave (emphasising her interest in 'those departments which especially engage the attention of women') and Mrs Roberts (referring to her experience 'amongst the sick and needy') reminded the electorate and their colleagues on the board that they understood the limits within which they would be expected to work. Patricia Hollis has described the experience of women in other parts of the country who tried to cross these boundaries; it took time and experience and the selection of suitable individuals to make progress.<sup>59</sup>

For several years in Salisbury the women guardians served only on the Boarding Out Committee that was responsible for placing workhouse children with foster parents, a typically 'female' role. They made visits to the homes, moved children from one foster family to another, dealt with complaints from both sides of the arrangements, and found employment for older children. For example, it was difficult when people were asking for girls when only boys were available.<sup>60</sup> At that same meeting Mrs Roberts was asked to find a situation for a girl who had been returned by a foster parent 'because it does not pay her to keep her'. One boy 'was getting troublesome so she cannot keep him any longer'. Mrs Roberts visited a girl who was on a month's trial with a dressmaker in the city, and reported that 'though it is a good home for the girl, she does not appear to be happy', and she was subsequently returned to the workhouse. Satisfaction could come from the success stories: the committee heard about a girl who ceased to need to be boarded out because she became a monitress at Downton school.<sup>61</sup>

Stereotypical female responsibilities continued. Both lady guardians were on the Brabazon Committee when that system of occupational therapy was introduced to the workhouse.<sup>62</sup> Mrs Roberts was on the guardians' list of visitors to lunatics in the Wiltshire county asylum, where both men and women who could not be safely accommodated in the workhouse were sent at the local board's expense. In 1906 a third lady guardian joined the board when Clara Manning became the representative of the

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<sup>59</sup> Hollis, 1989 p 210 - 214

<sup>60</sup> WSRO H1/124/1 9 June 1903

<sup>61</sup> op cit 25 February 1904

<sup>62</sup> Mr Hall described the scheme to the Board: '...it was requisite that a Committee of Ladies should be formed and that they should have permission to attend at the workhouse for the purpose of teaching the inmates ... to do some practical work which would give them an interest in life ...the Ladies Committee would arrange for the finishing off and sale of the articles which were made and the proceeds would go towards carrying on the scheme ...'. *SJ* 23 February 1901 p 5

parish of Redlynch. This was an even more significant change because the role of guardian outside the city was held jointly with that of rural district councillor, so Miss Manning was breaking new ground in being elected to wider local council responsibilities. By 1910 there were six lady guardians, including Mrs Bothams and Mrs Hall.<sup>63</sup>

Women guardians in Salisbury gained experience in the workings of the poor relief system gradually and cautiously. Although there was no evidence of active hostility towards them, their presence was not welcomed with a great deal of enthusiasm. This contrasted with the powerful and accepted position of women in the field of voluntary philanthropy in the city. Several of the first elected women came from families who were accustomed to providing the *male* members of the city's dominant institutions, and so they were familiar with the way those organisations thought and functioned. They conformed to the expectations both of the male guardians and the citizens who had voted for them. Should any of them have wished to make radical changes in the way local poor relief was administered (and there was no evidence that they did) it would have proved difficult.<sup>64</sup>

### **Women's suffrage: local government**

Poor law guardianship was the field in which Salisbury women first ventured into formal political action. But some individuals had been interested, and involved in other ways, much earlier. In 1869 Jacob Bright 'quietly and deftly' succeeded in altering the borough electoral qualifications so that women ratepayers gained a local vote on the same terms as men. Bright, and Sir Charles Dilke, argued that their proposed amendments to the Municipal Franchise Bill 'simply restored to women a right of which they had been deprived by the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act'. It was acceptable, even to the House of Lords, as 'the traditional distinction between the functions of national and local government gave institutional expression to the separate spheres of

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<sup>63</sup> *SJ* 10 September 1910 p 7

<sup>64</sup> The value of a personal source on the work of an early female guardian is discussed by Steven King. Mary Haslam's diary is a unique document which revealed the influence that was possible, and the strategies that could be effective. Board minutes recorded nothing of the subtleties used by such a person. King S, ' "We Might Be Trusted": Female Poor Law Guardians and the Development of the New Poor Law: The Case of Bolton, England 1880 - 1906', *International Review of Social History* April 2004 Vol 49 Pt 1 p 27 – 46

men and women'.<sup>65</sup> This distinction was heard again later in the century when the involvement of women in local politics was acceptable to those who were vociferously opposed to a female national franchise.<sup>66</sup>

In Salisbury the effect of this change could be seen dramatically. The New Sarum Burgess Roll for 1868 contained only the names of men. The following year there were 162 women on the list, almost 11% of the total.<sup>67</sup> Many of the names were of women already encountered elsewhere in this study, women who were running their own business or otherwise playing a role in the life of the city. In St Thomas's ward Eleanor Bryant (bricklayer), Sophia Meatyard (butcher) and Patience Simmonds (cabinet maker) had a vote. Amongst those in St Edmund's were Sarah Rogers at 'The Red Lion' and retired school proprietor Emma Saunders; while in St Martin's the list included Maria Small (painter, glazier and plumber), Emily Beckingsale (House of Industry) and Charlotte Tinney (philanthropist).<sup>68</sup> Henceforth the candidates for election to the city council addressed the electors 'Ladies and Gentlemen', and the women were said to present a good turnout at election time.

### **Salisbury women and national politics: first steps**

If for most of this time women were conspicuously absent from the public political scene that did not mean they were not otherwise involved, and firmly committed to particular interests. This section of chapter six will unearth some of the early steps taken towards a public political presence for women, and the final part will examine who was involved and what actions they took towards securing the parliamentary franchise.

Henry and Maria Fawcett's mother was the daughter of the Liberal party agent in Salisbury and was described as 'an ardent and very orthodox liberal' who supported local shopkeepers with the 'correct' allegiance, and provided hospitality when Bright

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<sup>65</sup> Pugh, 2000 p 72

<sup>66</sup> A view held by Mrs Humphrey Ward, for example, as expressed in 'An appeal against female suffrage', in the *Nineteenth Century* June 1889, reprinted in Lewis J (ed), *Before the vote was won: arguments for and against women's suffrage*, 1987 p 410

<sup>67</sup> This can be compared with an average figure of 17% of the electorate overall. Hollis, 1989 p 31

<sup>68</sup> See chapter 3 for the business women, chapter 4 for Miss Saunders, and chapter 5 for Miss Beckingsale and Mrs Tinney

and Cobden came to the city in the 1840s.<sup>69</sup> However she held conventional views on women in politics. Millicent Fawcett spoke at a by-election in Southwark in 1870 and reported her mother-in-law's disapproval 'I couldn't promise I would never do it again, but I did promise never to speak in Salisbury unless she invited me to do so, and this promise, of course, I kept....'<sup>70</sup> Local conventions required decorum but allowed interest and enthusiasm; commitment was demonstrated by signing petitions and attendance at meetings, and other forms of practical support for men in politics. But there was a clear line which it was not acceptable to cross.

One of the first significant events in the campaign for women's suffrage was the organisation of a petition to Parliament at the time of the 1867 Reform Bill. Some 1500 signatures were collected around the country, for presentation by John Stuart Mill in the House of Commons. Four women from Wiltshire signed the petition, Anne Cunnington from Devizes, Miss Lanham and Miss Turner from Corsham, and Mrs Fawcett from Longford, Bodenham.<sup>71</sup>

Although women had no parliamentary vote, elections for Salisbury's representatives at Westminster could still generate interest and emotion. On Wednesday 4 August 1869 Jane Townsend of Mompesson House wrote in her diary

To the nominations at 11 o'clock. We stood outside the Hustings ...and could hear all the speeches. ... Mr Ryder then made a capital speech. It was delightful to hear so many nice things said; just what I think myself. He looked so nice too. Bar [her sister Barbara] and I went and tried to do a little canvassing.<sup>72</sup>

There were three candidates, one of whom withdrew during election day when it became obvious he was getting little support. Jane continued

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<sup>69</sup> Strachey R, *Millicent Garrett Fawcett*, 1931 p 91

<sup>70</sup> Fawcett 1924 p 59

<sup>71</sup> Was this Henry Fawcett's mother, as his father held the tenancy of Home Farm from Lord Radnor, or his sister-in-law, as Stephen says the farm was actually run by William Fawcett junior (Stephen L, *The Life of Henry Fawcett*, 1885 p 4)? The comments by Mrs Mary Fawcett quoted above in relation to Millicent Fawcett's activities suggest that it was not her, but equally there is no further evidence of Mrs Fawcett junior ever being involved in political issues, though her daughter-in-law was. Anne (or Anna) Cunnington was aunt-in-law to Maud Cunnington, see chapter 5 fn 103.

<sup>72</sup> WSRO 2843/17. Granville R Ryder was one of the Conservative candidates (referred to as a 'Liberal-Conservative'). Unusually for nineteenth century Salisbury MPs he had no apparent local connections with the constituency. However, he was a lawyer so may have been known to Jane Townsend's father. FWS Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results 1832 – 1885*, 1977. See also chapter 5 p 198 fn 89 for Jane Townsend.

We went to church. When we came out we found things very bad. Mr Ryder was about 20 behind. We were so disappointed. He ended only 12 behind. It did seem so sad. We were all so dreadfully downcast. Heard 'Ryder' a good deal shouted. He was so popular. We were so disgusted, it was such an opportunity lost and so nearly won.<sup>73</sup>

She had to vent her frustration at the result in her diary, but she did not express any resentment that she herself was unable to make up one of the 12 votes. 'Doing a little canvassing' presumably meant talking in Mr Ryder's favour to people she knew; it is unlikely the two young ladies would have knocked on strangers' doors to solicit support. They would have been aware of the limits of acceptable behaviour in this context.

Jane Townsend made no mention of women's suffrage as an election issue in her diary, but a few streets away from her home others were actively and publicly supporting the idea:

A petition for granting the suffrage to women 'fulfilling the conditions of property or occupancy required of men' has been numerously signed in this city by persons of both sexes. The petition is now lying at the house of Mr Lapham in Bedwyn Street and will be presented by one of the city members.<sup>74</sup>

Caroline Lapham, a tailoress (aged 38 at the time of the 1871 census) lived with her father William, a tailor. Perhaps she persuaded him to give a temporary home to the petition in Salisbury? If only the list of names had survived! Of interest was the initiative taken in Salisbury, it was the first petition to be presented in the county, though other towns in Wiltshire were better known for taking a radical political stance.<sup>75</sup>

Petitions in support of various causes have already been mentioned in this chapter. The House of Commons received petitions in favour of women's suffrage on numerous occasions. Martin Pugh doubts that 'these petitions tell us much about popular opinion'

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<sup>73</sup> The seat was won by Alfred Seymour with a majority of 13 (though there was a petition against the result on the grounds that the other winning candidate, Hamilton, gained votes from people who had not paid the poor rate in the parish where they were resident – the problem of 'compounding rates with landlords'). G R Ryder pushed Seymour to the bottom of the poll at the next opportunity, in 1874, and continued as MP until his retirement in 1880. See also Slocombe I, 'The mathematics of the Salisbury Parliamentary Election 1874', *Wiltshire Local History Forum Newsletter* May 2001 on the effects of 'plumping' in a two-member constituency, and Newman R, 'The importance of the local man: Dr Alfred Lush and the Salisbury Parliamentary Election 1874', *Wiltshire Local History Forum Newsletter* September 2001.

<sup>74</sup> *SJ* 10 July 1869 p 8

<sup>75</sup> See p 226 on the higher incidence of Chartism in west Wiltshire towns.

because they depended not on real support but on the resources available to collect signatures.<sup>76</sup> But they *were* one way in which women could demonstrate support for a campaign. Women who were interested in political issues had to take what opportunities were open to them. Many tactics were debarred to all but the few with time, money, connections, influence and courage. Signing a petition permitted an expression of opinion by women of any social group. It was a brief action that, if the paper was brought to their house by a like-minded friend, did not even require them to venture into the public street. More usually the petition was held in a house, or shop, and the location advertised to citizens who were encouraged to visit and sign. Another strategy widely seen was to call for signatures to a petition at the conclusion of a public meeting, providing tangible, permanent evidence of the support demonstrated by those in attendance.

In 1871 the first women's suffrage meeting was held in the city.<sup>77</sup> Mrs Ronniger, a deputation from the London National Society for Women's Suffrage, delivered an address on the 'Desirability and Importance of Conferring the Parliamentary Suffrage upon Women'.<sup>78</sup> 'The audience was very numerous and respectable, and included a considerable number of women'.<sup>79</sup> The newspaper report listed some of the prominent citizens present, but only men were named. Dr Roberts was in the Chair, and Dr Lush MP gave an extended vote of thanks.<sup>80</sup> After the speeches, the Chairman 'took the sense of the meeting on the question of the suffrage being granted to women householders. Only a few hands were held up against, and he, therefore, declared a very large majority of the meeting in favour of the passing of the bill mentioned. ... A considerable number of both sexes signed the petition before leaving the hall.'

Increasingly there were opportunities for women to widen their experience of politics. The Corrupt Practices Act of 1883 had forbidden the payment of canvassers at elections,

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<sup>76</sup> Pugh, 2000 p 18

<sup>77</sup> The claim for this to be the first is made hesitantly. 1871 was a notable year in the history of the movement as a whole, but whether this significance was appreciated in Salisbury is unknown. Smith H L, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign 1866-1928*, 1998 p 8. Elizabeth Crawford's recent study of the provincial suffrage movement confirms for Salisbury that 'the only suffrage meeting in the early years was one held by Mrs Ronniger in March 1871'. Crawford E, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey*, Abingdon 2006 p 161.

<sup>78</sup> She travelled the country 1871-4 giving this lecture, and was the subject of correspondence between J S Mill and G Croom Robertson on the value of 'a pretty face' to the campaign. Crawford, 2001 p 606

<sup>79</sup> *SJ* 18 March 1871 p 8

<sup>80</sup> See above p 233 for Dr Roberts' wife Fanny. Dr Lush was Liberal MP for Salisbury 1868-1880.



forcing the national parties to reconsider their strategies. One result was organisations ‘tapping women’s potential in the form of a wide range of electioneering skills, and securing the politicians their voluntary co-ordinated labour in the constituencies, labour which needed no rewards other than a hearty vote of thanks’.<sup>81</sup> The Primrose League was probably the best known and most widely distributed of these societies, and there were two branches in the south of Wiltshire, but also on the Conservative side were the South Wilts Constitutional Association and the South Wilts Imperial League. Similar objectives for their own party interests were promoted by the Salisbury Liberal Social Council and the Salisbury Women’s Liberal Association. Local ladies from aristocratic families addressed meetings and encouraged women to take an interest in politics, and to use their influence with men who *did* have the vote. Lady Pender addressed a Conservative meeting in Downton some years later:

She wondered if it ever struck any of them [the electorate] in the heat of an election to think for a minute of what politics consisted. Of course they knew the Radicals were red and the Conservatives were blue and she honestly thought that a great many men went to the poll and simply voted red or blue according to the colour of the ribbon which their wives happened to pin on them ...<sup>82</sup>

The message of her speech was clearly that the ribbons should be blue. Jennie Churchill described the League as ‘the first political association to recognise the influence which ladies can exercise over all classes of voters’.<sup>83</sup> They were using their *local* positions as recognised and established public figures to draw other women into a political arena, though neither the speakers nor their audience had a vote themselves.

Campaigning in Salisbury in the general election that followed the 1884 Reform Act, the sitting member Coleridge Kennard addressed a meeting at St Ann Street Conservative Club on the subject of women’s suffrage.<sup>84</sup> He was known to be in favour of the ‘extension of the suffrage to duly-qualified female householders’.<sup>85</sup> In his speech he suggested that the women of Salisbury hold a meeting ‘irrespective of party connections ... to appeal to electors to unite ... in doing justice to this splendid body of capable citizens’. The same issue of the *Salisbury Journal* that reported Kennard’s

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<sup>81</sup> Walker L, ‘Party Political Women: a Comparative Study of Liberal Women and the Primrose League’, in Rendall J (ed), *Equal or Different: Women’s Politics 1800-1914*, Oxford 1987 p 165

<sup>82</sup> *SJ* 10 November 1906 p 7

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Campbell B, *The Iron Ladies*, 1987 p 14

<sup>84</sup> *SJ* 3 October 1885 p 6

<sup>85</sup> *The Times* 3 June 1884 p 6

meeting contained a letter from Helen Blackburn.<sup>86</sup> ‘Knowing how diligently Mr Kennard has laboured in the cause’, Miss Blackburn offered to help the women of Salisbury carry out the proposal of holding a meeting. Despite this offer of assistance and advice, there is no evidence that any such meeting took place. However, the issue had been raised locally, and the attention of a regional and national figure in the movement had been focused on the city, albeit very briefly. Some twenty years would pass before women’s suffrage was again called to the attention of Salisbury’s citizens.<sup>87</sup>

### **Women’s suffrage movement in Salisbury**

The Salisbury Women’s Suffrage Society began life in the summer of 1909 as

[a] *private* meeting of women in favour of women’s suffrage [held] at 123 Exeter Street, Salisbury, through the kindness of Mrs Bright who had invited all whom she knew as sympathisers in the cause to an initial meeting at her house to see whether they could work together for the extension of the franchise to women. About 20 were present, all of whom were in favour of the object of the meeting though their opinions differed widely as to the best methods to pursue ... Twenty others expressed their regret that they were unable to attend the meeting.<sup>88</sup>

At that time a ‘temporary executive’ was nominated, their names and addresses published, and ‘all interested in the question or desirous of information on the subject [were] invited to communicate’ with them. Mrs Bright, Miss Hardy, Miss Isaacson and Miss Street were named. This was late in the development of the campaign as by then there were many local societies established around the country, but numbers continued to grow. In 1909 there were 130 groups affiliated to the National Union of Womens’ Suffrage societies, and 207 the following year.<sup>89</sup> And the Salisbury group was very definitely of an anti-militant persuasion.

Despite the typically cautious start of a meeting in a private house with invited attendees already known to one another, as soon as a formal organisation was

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<sup>86</sup> Helen Blackburn (1842-1903) was secretary of the Bristol and West of England Society for Women’s Suffrage 1880 – 95, and secretary under Millicent Fawcett of the Central Committee from 1888-1895. Crawford, 2001 p 60

<sup>87</sup> A letter was published in the *Salisbury Journal* during the 1906 election campaign asking ‘to call the attention of the women of Salisbury to the question of Women’s Suffrage’. This was an isolated incident, and I have not been able to identify the writer F A Davies. *SJ* 6 Jan 1906 p 2

<sup>88</sup> *SJ* 3 July 1909 p 5 (my italics). Mrs Bright may have been connected to the well-known radical family of that name.

<sup>89</sup> Crawford, 2001 p 439

established it was inevitable that these women had to move out into public view. This permits the identification of some of the leading women, and men, who supported the local campaign to give women a parliamentary vote. The remaining section of this chapter will concentrate on *who* was involved, and *what* they did that brought them into this arena of public life in the city.

At the SWSS first Annual General Meeting the following autumn (November 1910) twelve women were elected, three officers and nine members of the committee.<sup>90</sup> Mrs Hall and Mrs Bothams have been introduced earlier in this chapter. Wives of professional men (a solicitor and architect respectively), they were already actively involved in other organisations in the city, both of them as officers in the temperance movement, and Laura Bothams as a poor law guardian. Mrs Fawcett was Charlotte, widow of Sidney Fawcett - owner of the family brewery and nephew of Maria and Henry - who had died in 1904 leaving Charlotte a widow with seven young children. When her father Joseph Lovibond also died in 1918 she and her sister became directors of The Tintometer business in Salisbury.<sup>91</sup> Miss Barbara Forth was the vice-principal of the Training College., and would serve as Principal from 1913 to 1928. Fanny Street lectured at the Training College and chaired the suffrage group until she moved away in 1911 to become Staff Lecturer in History, Royal Holloway College, University of London. She is perhaps best known as principal of Hillcroft College a post she held from 1920 to 1933, where her devotion to promoting the interests of women reached fruition.

These women were likely all to be confident, efficient, and apart from Charlotte Fawcett (as far as is known), all had experience at speaking in public. They were soon joined by two more, also charismatic, women. Mary Douglas, headmistress of The Godolphin School, chaired several of the large suffrage meetings in the city, and always presented clear, balanced and lengthy statements, at one time describing herself as 'until quite lately seated in that uncomfortable position so often described as *on the fence*'.<sup>92</sup> Helen Bagnall started as Senior English Mistress at The Godolphin School in the Autumn

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<sup>90</sup> See illustration 28 p 293

<sup>91</sup> Joseph Lovibond came to Salisbury from Greenwich in 1869 to open a branch of his father's brewery. To maintain quality he developed a way of measuring the properties of beer using coloured glass discs, a system now known as colorimetry. The firm continues today, Charlotte's grandson has recently retired as managing director. Newman and Howells, 2001 p 76

<sup>92</sup> *SJ* 8 July 1911 p 6

Term of 1909, after five years teaching in Auckland.<sup>93</sup> She quickly became involved with the movement in Salisbury, and spoke at a meeting saying ‘she stood there as an awful example of a woman voter’ as women had been enfranchised in New Zealand for 16 years.<sup>94</sup> Three years later she was chairing the SWSS, and was still there in 1918, in a position to introduce Alys Russell with the words ‘this ha[s] been a very wonderful year’.<sup>95</sup> Professional women in education and the wives of professional and businessmen in the city had the interest, aptitude and inclination to take the initiative in the early stages of the local campaign. Expertise at addressing meetings, the ability of frame an argument, and experience of relatively large organisations were valuable attributes found among these pioneers.

The only prominent member of the aristocracy in the vicinity to support the suffrage movement was Lady Grove. Educated at Oxford High School, Agnes Fox-Pitt (as she was then) spent school holidays with her mother’s family, the Stanleys.

The London residence ... of her grandmother the dowager Lady Stanley was a typical salon of the Whig aristocracy where the young Agnes met lively ideas, impassioned argument and a formidable moral code.<sup>96</sup>

Women’s suffrage would have been one of the ‘lively ideas’ discussed, as two of her mother’s sisters were Lady Amberley and Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle, both of whom played an active part in the movement. In adulthood, Agnes believed passionately in the cause of women’s franchise, and was involved both in London and in the country. By the mid 1890s four of her five children were born, and she was in a position to devote increasing amounts of time to campaigning. In May 1896 her father-in-law recorded in his diary

Attended woman’s meeting in Easton barn at Berwick. Geraldine in the chair. Lady Queensbury & our party present. Mrs Philips & I spoke.<sup>97</sup>

And later in May Agnes herself wrote ‘I went to London by the 11.50 train. Took Edith Douglas to Suffrage party’ and in June: ‘Went to Suffrage annual meeting, was elected

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<sup>93</sup> *The Godolphin School Magazine* No 44 Autumn Term 1909 p 29

<sup>94</sup> *SJ* 13 November 1909 p 5

<sup>95</sup> *SJ* 2 December 1918 p 5. See p 293

<sup>96</sup> Hawkins D (ed), *The Grove Diaries*, Wimborne 1995 p 267

<sup>97</sup> *op cit* p 263 Lady Grove’s first names were Agnes Geraldine

on the Committee'.<sup>98</sup> In September 1900 she attended the Congrès International de la Condition et des Droits des Femmes.<sup>99</sup> Well-informed, well-connected, very energetic, Agnes had a delightful sense of humour which she used to good effect to make political points whenever the opportunity arose. When judging a baby show, for example, she said:

Although women such as herself were supposed to be good judges of babies they were not supposed to be able to exercise the vote. ...[the men] had votes but she dared say they were just as fond of their babies as they were before they had them ...<sup>100</sup>

So with Lady Grove as their President, the Salisbury group could benefit from her name, experience, advice, and links to both the national and international campaigns. Sadly there are no surviving diaries between 1907 and 1915, the years of her direct association with the local suffrage movement.

In contrast, most of the aristocracy from landed families around Salisbury appeared on platforms for the anti-suffrage movement. A branch of the Anti-Suffrage League had been formed in December 1909 and was later converted into the Salisbury and South Wiltshire Branch of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage. Groups were subsequently established in neighbouring villages of Wilton, Alderbury, Downton and the Chalke valley.<sup>101</sup> Regular speakers at their meetings included the Earl and Countess of Pembroke and Lady Muriel Herbert from Wilton House, the Countess of Radnor from Longford Castle, and Lady Hulse from Breamore who would become Salisbury's first lady mayor in the 1920s.

Another, perhaps surprising, opponent to the cause was Edith Olivier. A novelist whose social circle between the wars included Cecil Beaton, Siegfried Sassoon, William Walton and Rex Whistler, she held public office with the Women's Land Army and the Women's Institute, and subsequently became the first woman town councillor in Wilton and mayor there from 1938 to 1941.<sup>102</sup> Edith's diaries demonstrated the variety of

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<sup>98</sup> op cit p 313, 314

<sup>99</sup> op cit p 323

<sup>100</sup> *SJ* 23 July 1919 p 6

<sup>101</sup> *SJ* 25 December 1909 p 6, 11 November 1911 p 8, 19 February 1912 p 8. This was before the dramatic increase in number of branches tabled in Harrison B, *Separate Spheres*, New York 1978 p 122.

<sup>102</sup> The editor of Miss Olivier's diaries has suggested that she remained very much under the influence of her father, Canon Olivier, until his death in 1919 when she was free to follow her own ideas. Conversation with Beryl Hurley.

public activities in which she was involved even before the First World War, including attending anti-suffrage committee meetings. A member of the Conservative party, she worked hard at election time:

Thursday 1 December 1910 backwards and forwards once more to Committee Rooms  
Saturday 3 December busy at carriages all day

And she counted local MPs amongst her acquaintance, mixing political and social interests:

Tuesday 21 June 1910 tea at the House with Mr Bathurst  
Weds 22 June 1910 gave luncheon at my club [list of attendees includes Mr Locker Lampson]<sup>103</sup>

The campaigns in favour of and against a parliamentary vote for women brought together supporters who already had experience of working in the public sphere, and provided a new opportunity for others. Some activities could continue to be carried out in private, such as letter writing, but for greater impact it was necessary that even if the original was directed to an individual Member of Parliament, a copy was also sent to the local paper. While some campaigning activities were no doubt spontaneous on the part of individuals, there was some evidence of concerted organisation. In the neighbouring constituency of Wilton, Edith Olivier set about rousing the opposition:

Monday 4 July 1910 to see lots of ratepaying women asking them to write to Mr Bathurst and tell him they are not in favour of women's suffrage.  
Thursday 6 July 1910 Mr Bathurst begs to be delivered from the deluge of anti-suffrage letters which he is getting.<sup>104</sup>

Tasks involved in the campaigns on both sides of this issue exercised their members' skills to the full. Not surprisingly the most widely reported activity was holding meetings. These were addressed by speakers, often two or three on each occasion, and they were both local people and representatives from the national societies. Resolutions, usually in support of the current suffrage bill before Parliament, were proposed and seconded; this was significant because it created a definite outcome for the meeting. Chairman's introductions and concluding votes of thanks were often lengthy, setting out

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<sup>103</sup> WSRO 982/44. Bathurst was MP for Wilton division Jan 1910 – 1918; Locker Lampson for Salisbury at the same time. Edith could be a thorough snob: 'Mrs Locker Lampson is the daughter of a de Rhodes and his French cook!' 29 July 1910.

<sup>104</sup> WSRO 982/44 [she gives the date of 4<sup>th</sup> to both Monday and Tuesday of that week]

the present situation of the campaign, and rounding up the arguments. The assiduousness with which the local newspapers reported meetings large and small, listing speakers, naming members of organising committees, describing the programmes of events, made it hard for anyone with an active involvement in a campaign like this to remain anonymous.

Large meetings were held in public halls around the city, and in village halls, and smaller ones in people's homes. Although it is not possible to know *how many* women went to these meetings, reports of 'a successful meeting', 'a well-attended meeting', or 'a large audience', plus the choice of the more capacious venues in the city suggest substantial support. It was estimated that 1200 were addressed in a series of eight outdoor meetings in villages and neighbouring towns in the summer of 1911, 'the meetings at Tisbury and Mere were especially enthusiastic'.<sup>105</sup> Invitations to speak in Salisbury were accepted by as prominent proponents as Lady Frances Balfour, Lady Betty Balfour, Ethel Snowden and, of course, Millicent Fawcett, and by Mrs Humphrey Ward in opposition. These occasions provided Salisbury women with first hand experience of the style and methods of presentation, and the content of the arguments of key contributors to the debate.

Beyond the committee members, and a few other named supporters, it is also not possible to know *who* attended the meetings. Most of the public meetings were held in the evening, so it was possible for women, and men, with daytime commitments to go. This would include teachers, as well as working class women, and professional and business men. An anecdote related the fate of a servant girl who walked into Salisbury from a rural vicarage to attend a suffrage meeting, only to be dismissed on her return for associating with such a campaign. To a historian it was helpful of one husband to clarify whose wife had attended a meeting (though she was someone already known!):

We are asked to state that the Mrs Bothams who was present at the Women's Suffrage meeting at the Church House last week was Mrs Alfred C Bothams and not Mrs Bothams wife of Mr Walter Bothams.<sup>106</sup>

Laura Bothams hosted an afternoon 'garden meeting' at her home in the summer of 1910, and although the proceedings were reported in detail it is likely, because of the

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<sup>105</sup> *SJ* 26 August 1911 p 5

<sup>106</sup> *SJ* 9 March 1912 p 5

timing and the nature of the event, that this was attended by her own social circle of middle class women, wives of professional men in the city. Lady Grove was the principal speaker, tea was taken in a marquee, and the entertainment was a one-act play 'A Woman's Influence'.<sup>107</sup> In the following year Lady Frances Balfour spoke at the garden meeting 'in the beautiful grounds of Clayton Croft, Harnham, by kind permission of Mrs Bothams ... when a large number of supporters of the movement for women's enfranchisement attended ...',<sup>108</sup>

Elections provided the opportunity for increased and diversified activities on the part of both sides of the argument to press their case on the candidates and their supporters. The SWSS created a public presence in the city by opening premises, variously referred to as a shop, office or depot, in Catherine Street for the first election in 1910 where they distributed literature and collected signatures. They also went canvassing amongst electors and questioned the candidates in writing and in person at meetings. Given the behaviour of militants elsewhere in the country, there was some caution at allowing women's attendance. For example, announcements for meetings to be addressed by Sir Edward Tennant had at the bottom, in tiny print, 'A limited number of ladies will be admitted to this meeting by non-transferable tickets to be obtained on personal application ... on the day of the meeting'.<sup>109</sup> There were no reports of any destructive or aggressive actions by women in this area, though they were on the receiving end at times. In 1912 in Tisbury Miss Baretti and Miss Walford were due to speak, but the chairman's opening remarks were interrupted by cat-calls, whistles, toy trumpets etc. the disruption continued such that the meeting was eventually abandoned.<sup>110</sup>

As the campaign gathered momentum, the commitment necessary from those in the forefront of the local organisation grew. A regular, published, correspondence with the local MPs was time consuming. There was canvassing, and arranging meetings, and both sides generally attended each other's meetings as well as their own. The variety of arguments to be countered needed a range of expert speakers, and well-briefed questioners. Enthusiasm for the cause amongst the local leaders stimulated others to join them; there were certainly women in Salisbury who were receptive to both the ideas and

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<sup>107</sup> *SJ* 9 July 1910 p 7

<sup>108</sup> *SJ* 8 July 1911 p 6

<sup>109</sup> *SJ* 8 January 1910 p 4

<sup>110</sup> *SJ* 23 March 1912 p 8. Two Miss Barettis were involved with the movement in Bristol. Crawford, 2006 p 132, 157



the activities of suffrage politics, perhaps they felt frustrated at limitations imposed on their lives and were looking for an outlet for their energies. There was a clear sense of the correctness of constitutional methods; the necessity of acting within the law was held to be of the greatest importance – and they made the most of what was possible within that constraint.

## **Conclusion**

Women who wanted an active public role in determining local, or national, political issues took such opportunities as they found. Through the nineteenth century they had to face almost complete opposition from established networks of authority in the city who were against their presence. Until the early decades of the twentieth century successful individuals in the local economy and society were not powerful enough to convince the male elite that space should be found for them in positions of influence. Even though Salisbury women had experience in business, in caring professions or in education, and could see other visible examples at one or two removes – Bishops' daughters, and the relatives and friends of residents – they were restricted in how far they could transfer this influence to the political arena.

Once the parliamentary franchise was achieved, other barriers were breached. But although new roles were taken on, such as standing for and membership of the city council, there were still only small numbers prepared to move in this direction. Traditional domestic, commercial and philanthropic concerns prevailed for the majority of the women of Salisbury.

Support from sympathetic men was important. Married women would not have been so prominent in the local campaigns if their husbands had disapproved; fortunately they were not all like Mr Walter Bothams. Both moral support, and practical help could be crucial. A number of Salisbury's 'activists' were the wives of members of the council, so 'likely to be well versed in local politics'.<sup>111</sup> For both married and single women, as has been seen, their varied life experiences contributed to their determination to be active public citizens.

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<sup>111</sup> Crawford, 2006 p 277

Those who took the first steps were in many ways ordinary women. They worked quietly *within* the prevailing system, progressing unobtrusively from voluntary, background, activity to elected office when an opening appeared. They were certainly not militant or rabble rousing, they would not have made tabloid headlines as pioneering feminists.

## Conclusion

*'why should she not be independent and respectable ...'*<sup>1</sup>

What I have shown in the course of this thesis is a clear confirmation of the hypothesis that women were openly and actively involved in the public life of Victorian Salisbury. Many took a route, either from choice or necessity, away from the idealised conformity of a life spent in domestic dependency. They bore responsibility, and made entrepreneurial decisions. They became independent people, in business, trade, professions, philanthropy and, eventually, politics.

Retail trades, hospitality, and other service industries, alongside long-established craft manufacturing, provided opportunities for women to earn a living as producers and suppliers. Single women, married women, and widows were to be seen, working on their own or in family enterprises of varying scale. They all contributed to the increasingly diversified economic structure of the city at this time. It was to be expected that men dominated parts of the local economy – transport, construction and most manufacturing – but there were exceptions to this general picture; women were active in the predictable ‘needle trades’ but also in family firms of horticulture, painting and glazing, chimney sweeping, whip making and others. Assessing success or failure of such women’s economic fortunes has not been simple; their objectives were seldom explicit, and varied over time. All these enterprises responded to local and seasonal demand, family fortunes, technological change, and trade cycles.

Schools, hospitals and other institutions were further sources of employment for women who needed to earn their living. They demonstrated a commitment to caring roles as teachers and nurses, and took advantage of the developments available as these occupations became increasingly professionalised as the nineteenth century progressed. Salisbury had many schools all of which needed teachers; some were run as personal commercial businesses, and others were voluntary elementary schools located in each parish of the city. At the Diocesan Training College students gained the necessary skills which were developed during their working lives which might lead to posts where they

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<sup>1</sup> Trollope A, ‘The Telegraph Girl’, originally published 1877, in Thompson J (ed), *The Collected Shorter Fiction*, 1992 p 763

would have responsibility for supporting and encouraging the succeeding generation of young teachers. Considerable length of service demonstrated the satisfaction such work gave these women. Salisbury Infirmary was the centre of care for the sick in the city. With separation of domestic and nursing tasks, and more formalised training, the functions of the nursing staff, and of the matron, and their relationships with the medical hierarchy, changed over time. The women's community of the Deaconesses Institution provided a home, training, and work for those who were called by their religious convictions to care for people less fortunate. Members came not just from the city itself, and this was one of several institutions in Salisbury which showed how there was a spreading network – almost to be seen as a national market – linking women working in this field.

Women privileged to have a source of support and free time had access to opportunities for both purposeful and enjoyable activities. Voluntary philanthropic 'work', often within a context provided by the parish or other religious foundation, used the energy, skill, and ideas of women for the benefit of others. Their abilities at fundraising, Sunday school teaching, visiting, and organising were put to good use. Causes provided both a purpose and incentive to action, and experience of administration. Philanthropy could be a route into professional employment or into a political role.

While many pastimes for respectable women were confined to their homes, the purchase of materials or equipment necessitated a visit to an appropriate specialised supplier, probably run by a woman. Attendance at the theatre, concerts, sports, lectures, the races, flower shows, bazaars, and many more such events demanded a public appearance, as audience or participant. Both pastimes and philanthropy were interlinked with family, education, religion, and business.

Throughout the nineteenth century there were women in Salisbury well aware of the politics of their families, of the city and of the county. The culture of male dominance of the political and institutional life of the city was strong, so while women were *conscious* of the issues being debated, progress towards their *participation* was slow and erratic. Even the most informed and concerned were reluctant to challenge the status quo. The first two women poor law guardians in Salisbury were elected at the beginning of the twentieth century. They stressed their experience in voluntary work, and confined their

involvement to 'women and children' issues, being careful not to challenge the accepted distinction between male and female areas of responsibility. A few years later the local campaigns for and against women's suffrage were started, providing administrative responsibilities as well as platforms for those who wanted to be part of the movements. Neither *election* as a guardian, nor participation in high-profile campaigns could be done without a visible public presence. These women made progress within prevailing social constraints but they used their experience in other fields and took such opportunities that were presented to them.

Salisbury was but one, small, provincial city. It shared characteristics with other such communities, but also had a special identity of its own created by its unique combination of history, location, and culture. The operation of the many-faceted daily life of the city was recorded through local and national institutions and organisations, both commercial and voluntary. Both official requirements and continuity of existence have resulted in many of these archives being preserved to the present day. The types of material I have used to explore the lives of the women who lived there in the Victorian period are available to others, there has been little that could be described as 'windfall' evidence. So a strength of this work has been to demonstrate the wealth of information that can be unearthed, and the way it can be used. It can thus be replicated by other historians. An accumulation of similar studies elsewhere would contribute to a broader and deeper understanding of the lives of ordinary women.<sup>2</sup>

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When Queen Victoria died in January 1901 the Mayoress of Salisbury invited subscriptions of not more than 6d each from the women of the city to send a wreath to the royal funeral. Made by Miss Matthews at Mr Britton's shop in Fisherton Street, this was 4' 6" in diameter 'with a groundwork of maidenhair and asparagus fern then a circle of orchids, three different varieties, intermingled with lilies (half a dozen different types)'; there was a large bow of white satin and a card, with a purple border, bearing the arms of the city of Salisbury and an inscription in purple letters:

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<sup>2</sup> A Day School organised by Northern Women's History Network on 3 March 2007 will 'consider why the local study is so popular in women's history and question whether it offers something specific to women's historians ...'

a tribute of loyal devotion to the memory of their most illustrious and beloved Queen Victoria from the women of Salisbury who deeply mourn her loss. E M Gregory, Mayoress.<sup>3</sup>

Following a report of the proclamation of the new King Edward VII around the city, the *Salisbury Journal* expressed the hope that

the new reign will be bright and that King Edward VII will endeavour to approach as closely as possible to the example which his august mother has left him for his guidance.<sup>4</sup>

This comment reflected the caution and conservatism with which the city approached many issues. The way things had been done in the past was familiar and comforting, and they were confident that the best way forward was more of the same. However, the desire for ‘brightness’ implied at least some people thought there was room for change.<sup>5</sup> Victorian Salisbury used the energy and enterprise of its women, but there was unexploited talent and enthusiasm. It was against this backdrop of a tension between tradition and modernity that my study of these women has been set.

‘...nothing ever seems to have happened at Salisbury...Not a single great man seems ever to have been born or even died here...’<sup>6</sup> Richard le Gallienne, writing at the turn of the century, was mistaken in his latter comment and seriously wrong in the former. Greatness might be debatable, but there were plenty of people for whom Salisbury was their place of birth, of death, of work and play, and their home. To them it did not appear that ‘nothing ever happened’. Amongst the population were women who were sisters and daughters, wives and mothers, aunts and nieces. *At the same time* they were milliners and dressmakers, innkeepers, schoolteachers, nurses, laundresses – scarcely unusual occupations for women at that time, though female butchers, bricklayers, millers, upholsterers, and dealers in fishing tackle were less common. They worked hard in support of charitable causes; they campaigned for change; and they enjoyed themselves. To achieve all this, they were visibly part of the city’s public face. Revealing their presence there has permitted both understanding and celebration of these women.

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<sup>3</sup> *Salisbury Journal* 2 Feb 1901 p 5. The total amount collected was £20 13s 1½d which gives a minimum number of contributors of over 800.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> The ‘slowness’ of Salisbury was a charge refuted fifty years earlier by the 1852 exhibition, see p 80.

<sup>6</sup> Le Gallienne R, *Travels in England*, 1900 p 16

**Appendix:**

*Postscript*

*Maps and Illustrations*

## Postscript

*'not too anxious to make a noise in the world'*<sup>7</sup>

In the summer of 1952, Salisbury Chamber of Commerce organised a Centenary Exhibition, to commemorate the city one hundred years after the exhibition held in October 1852. Again Salisbury was 'the first Provincial City to emulate the example set by the Festival Exhibition held last year in London'.<sup>8</sup> Echoes abounded of the sentiments expressed in the mid-nineteenth century: the significance of Salisbury in its region, local self-sufficiency, and the mix of tradition and modernity, looking backwards and forwards. Emphasis on history and continuity pervaded the descriptions of each stand, presumably written by the exhibitors concerned. 'The name of Pinder has been synonymous with bee-keeping since the latter days of Queen Victoria'. 'Baskets were being made in the same workshop used to-day in Griffin Court at the time of the 1852 Exhibition ...'; '...this old business (established 1776) ...coffee in 1798 retailed at approximately 6/- per lb, this dropped until 1938 when the finest coffees were retailed at 2/10 per lb ...coffee was first roasted with a coke furnace, but since 1836 it has been roasted by gas'. The Mayor's Message included the following:

there is no need for the people of this district to travel to other places in search of commodities (including arts and crafts) which may be procured with equal benefit to themselves and the tradesmen concerned in our own immediate neighbourhood.

Here still was an echo of the quiet complacency, comfort and conservatism that pervaded the life of the city in the nineteenth century, a trend only occasionally punctuated by political spectacle, religious dissention or economic distress.

Four themes representing the locality guided the 1952 exhibition and were illustrated on the cover of the brochure – History, Agriculture, Manufactures, and Commerce.<sup>9</sup> Salisbury's well-known historical character, based on the cathedral, Stonehenge, and other nearby antiquities maintained its attraction as a tourist centre. Hotels, inns and restaurants provided accommodation and sustenance for visitors, who came increasingly by road. Traffic congestion and parking became an issue that continues to plague the

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<sup>7</sup> Trollope A, *Framley Parsonage*, first published 1861, 1914 edn p 16

<sup>8</sup> 1952 Exhibition brochure

<sup>9</sup> See illustration 29 p 294



citizens and local authorities. The city preserved its close relationship with the surrounding agricultural hinterland, though the nature of that industry itself diversified under modern global economic pressures. In the mid-twentieth century cattle and other livestock were still driven through the streets to be sold in the Market Place. While Salisbury was never again to be known for manufacturing, a surprisingly varied range of products continued to be produced. Its motor industry did not long survive the First World War, but pyrotechnics, printed silks, and customised audio equipment are still made here. The dominance of the service sector, clearly visible in the nineteenth century was reinforced by twentieth century changes: increasingly varied shopping outlets, the arrival of branches of national retail chains, and large stores for food and DIY on the outskirts of the city. Tertiary industry in the form of financial services is a major employer of the early twenty-first century.

These developments illustrate the thinking behind the exhibition Chairman's comments:

It will be found that as regards some of the finer handicrafts there has been little change in production during the past century, whilst on the other hand modern science and techniques have enabled other exhibits to be produced in a manner which would have been considered impossible by our forebears over a hundred years ago.

It is significant that there were still no women on the organising committee in 1952, though three were named in the Acknowledgments. Fewer separate businesses took stands at the twentieth century exhibition and many were known by more formal names, so it is harder to identify any female participants. One exception was 'Needlework' by Mrs Bond, which display included a 'cushion worked in wools over 200 years old, supplied by the famous authoress Gertrude Jekyll'. Women were well represented in the section devoted to 'local authors', and they took turns to be on duty at the stand and sign copies of their books. In contrast to 1852, there was only a small number of paintings exhibited, and only one woman artist amongst them. Several of the advertisements and descriptions of stands implied a female audience. Southons offered 'beautiful merchandise for the home'; Gullick and Sons provided 'demonstrations of modern flower arrangement [which] will give you new ideas'; Woodrow's stand included 'a Slide Film Show featuring Philip Harben the Television Chef'; and Thursby's stand 'is devoted entirely to cosmetics and toilet goods ...with a young lady of experience in beauty treatment in attendance to advise you on correct make-up'. This commercial emphasis on the domestic and the trivial was not unusual for the 1950s, and

should not be taken to indicate a particular characteristic of Salisbury. However it confirms the continuing trend of conformity.

During the two world wars of the twentieth century, women in Salisbury played their part in the national effort as they did elsewhere. Between 1914 and 1918 they worked as clerks, drivers, and factory hands; others trained as emergency nurses or signed on with the Women's Land Army. Voluntary work was organised by the Red Cross and Queen Mary's Needlework Guild. Girls at The Godolphin School gave up their free time to sew linen drawstring 'treasure bags' (personal effects bags for wounded soldiers). They produced nearly 1500, and when someone queried their use a housemistress described seeing men on stretchers on an ambulance train at Salisbury station: 'There were the little bags, discoloured now and faded – precious possessions held fast, which carried just those few things that meant to each man home and remembrance'.<sup>10</sup> A women's patrol was established to protect the virtue of Salisbury's women from the influx of troops; while the Women's Emergency Corps dealt with women of 'bad character who are infesting the various military camps'.<sup>11</sup>

Employment opportunities expanded in the Second World War too. Women were drafted into many diverse occupations, and subject to conscription which had not been the case earlier in the century. Women teachers were considered to be in a reserved occupation. As more and more male teachers were released for military service, women were increasingly needed. This was frustrating for those who felt they could be more valuable closer to the front. Qualified nurses were allowed to leave, and a teacher from Highbury Avenue School was permitted to join the ATS as she had been a member before war broke out. Miss Owen, at South Wilts Secondary School, worked at a local munitions factory after school hours to make what she saw as her contribution having been refused permission to leave teaching.<sup>12</sup> Otherwise it was more voluntary work at the hospital, with Southern Command, or fire watching.

Lady Hulse, from Breamore House, was the first female councillor in Salisbury. The by-election at which she was elected in February 1919 was declared by the *Salisbury*

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<sup>10</sup> Douglas and Ash, 1928 p 127

<sup>11</sup> Crawford T S, *Wiltshire and the Great War, 1999*, quoted in Newman R, 'The First World War and its impact on Salisbury', in *Sarum Chronicle* 2 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Howells J, *Some Aspects of the Impact of the Second World War on Schools in Salisbury ...*, unpublished MA(Ed) dissertation University of Southampton 1986

*Journal* to 'mark an epoch in local history. For the first time the electors are faced with the prospect of voting for a woman candidate'.<sup>13</sup> Amongst those who signed her nomination papers were women whose names have been recorded earlier in this thesis: Sarah M Fawcett, Gertrude Pye-Smith, Sarah Barbara Forth, Mary Wordsworth, Margaret Hussey. Edith Hulse herself assured the citizens

I stand as an 'Independent' owing loyalty only to my country, to the city of Salisbury and the electors whose votes I solicit. .. I shall do my best to further those things which I believe to be vital to the moral and physical health of the city – better housing for the working classes; every care given to the health of Mothers and Infants and all Children before and after school age; reasonable drink control and good refreshment houses for the people ...'<sup>14</sup>

Once elected she expressed the hope that 'the Town Council would not find the first City Mother a very great worry to them'.<sup>15</sup> At the same time Katherine Stephenson, representing the Salisbury St Edmunds division, became the first elected female member of Wiltshire County Council.<sup>16</sup> She stressed 'I have for many years taken a great interest in Public Health and Education' and as a co-opted member had sat on committees for Education, the Care of the Mentally Defective, and Maternity and Child Welfare.<sup>17</sup>

Although their elections marked a new era for Salisbury, the sentiments expressed continued to be of traditional female, maternal, and domestic concerns. They were pioneers in taking on new public roles, and in that sense their independence is noteworthy. However, they did not challenge the accepted male dominance in other areas such as finance, transport or planning. Whether or not they wished to do this is unknown.

Edith Hulse became mayor of Salisbury in 1927.<sup>18</sup> Since then notable mayors have been Lady Benson, Beryl Jay, Bobbie Chettleburgh and the present incumbent, Sheila Warrender. These women have maintained a tradition of demonstrating civic pride, and a commitment to the community. They have been privileged both by the position they have held, and by the freedom to take on such responsibilities.

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<sup>13</sup> *Salisbury Journal* (hereafter *SJ*) 8 Feb 1919 p 8

<sup>14</sup> *SJ* 15 Feb 1919 p 5

<sup>15</sup> *SJ* 22 Feb 1919 p 2

<sup>16</sup> *SJ* 15 March 1919 p 6. Miss Stephenson was one of the first two women members of WCC, but the other, Mrs Rogers, was returned unopposed in Potterne so did not have to participate in an election.

<sup>17</sup> *SJ* 22 Feb 1919 p 5

<sup>18</sup> See illustration 30 p 295. She was still the only female member of the council.

Salisbury has never had a woman Member of Parliament though at several elections there have been female candidates for the unsuccessful parties. Lucy Masterman, for example, stood for the Liberals in both 1929 and 1931. The first of these elections was, of course, significant in using electoral registers of both men and women on an equal footing. In the Salisbury constituency (the southern part of Wiltshire – a much larger area than the city itself) women were in a majority of some 4,000.<sup>19</sup> Such a situation passed without comment in 1929, whereas it was faced with great concern twenty years earlier. Mrs Masterman came a creditable second to the sitting member, Hugh Morrison.<sup>20</sup>

As I was only three years old at the time, I have no recollection of the 1952 Exhibition. Growing up in Salisbury in the 1950s and 1960s was a peaceful and fruitful experience. There were local role models for girls – a female doctor, women working in the Library, in banks, and in education. Specialist women shopkeepers, such as Wanda, and Mace & Nairn, plus the W I market stall, maintained the continuity of female retail trades. Unusually, my mother returned to work (part-time) as a teacher when my brother was still young. My secondary school was selective and all girls. This placed artificial attraction on the few joint activities with the boys' grammar school, but the encouragement to aspire to professional careers was strong. Many fewer options were presented to us at 18, but it was assumed that a large proportion of my contemporaries would go to university. The wide catchment area brought girls from town and country together. With greater freedom to travel alone (and better public transport services) those of us living in the city were much more familiar with life in agricultural villages.

The acquisition of a car, a telephone, an automatic washing-machine, and a television set were landmarks in the development of a consumer society which impinge on the memory. My first visit to the cinema was to see the film of the Coronation; no-one in our street had television at that time, though later in the 1950s being invited to watch at a neighbour's house was a great treat. Two ways in which we were aware of events beyond our local boundaries were a car pool taking fathers to work to save fuel during the Suez crisis, and a concert by the Beatles (before they were *very* famous).

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<sup>19</sup> *SJ* 3 May 1929 p 2

<sup>20</sup> Morrison 15,672, Masterman 13,022, Hancock (Labour) 4,435. *SJ* 7 June 1929 p 10

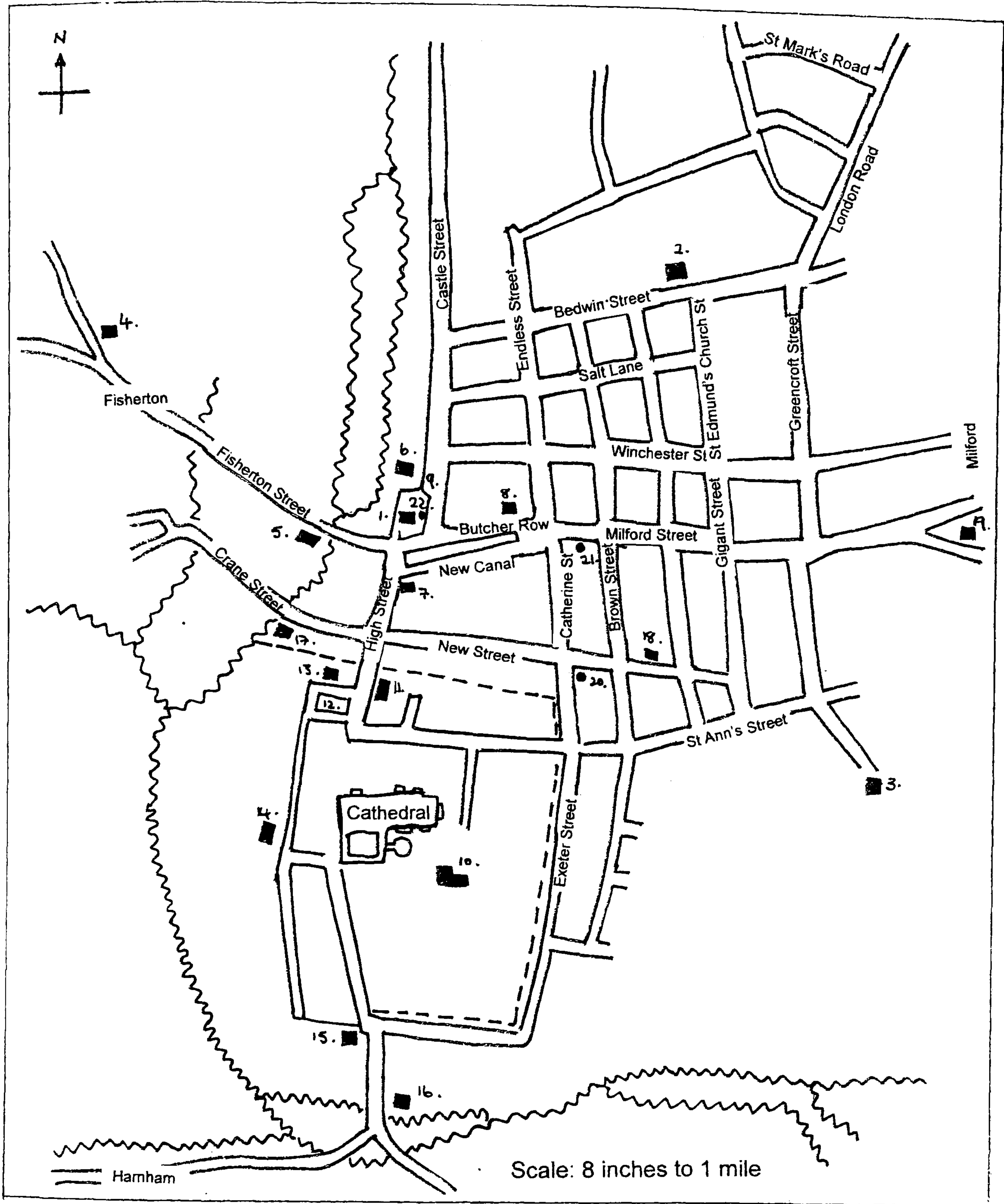
Salisbury continues to be a prosperous commercial and cultural centre. The *Salisbury Journal* runs a regular 'Women in Business' advertising feature. We have a world champion woman powerlifter, and an international rugby player. The Playhouse attracts audiences from considerable distances, for drama performed and directed by both women and men. Leaders in the arts come to the city for the annual Festival; there has been a female Festival director. June Osborne is Dean of the Cathedral. Elizabeth Frink's *Walking Madonna* strides purposefully from that magnificent building, out into the world.

Memories are inevitably selective, and this has been a very brief look at twentieth century Salisbury, but the impression is of continuing themes. Women have a public presence in the city. For those with the determination and courage, they are accepted and encouraged. Public pride is expressed at their achievements, and no one would be prevented from pursuing their ambitions. But at the same time it is still a very traditional society; credit is still given to traditional gender characteristics, and stress placed on conservative values.

My interest in independent women in Victorian Salisbury began with the discovery of Mrs Jenkins, ostrich feather cleaner, dyer and curler, living in 1897 across the road from my house. Opposite today is Fiona, establishing her own business as a specialist in alternative therapies.

## **Maps and Illustrations**

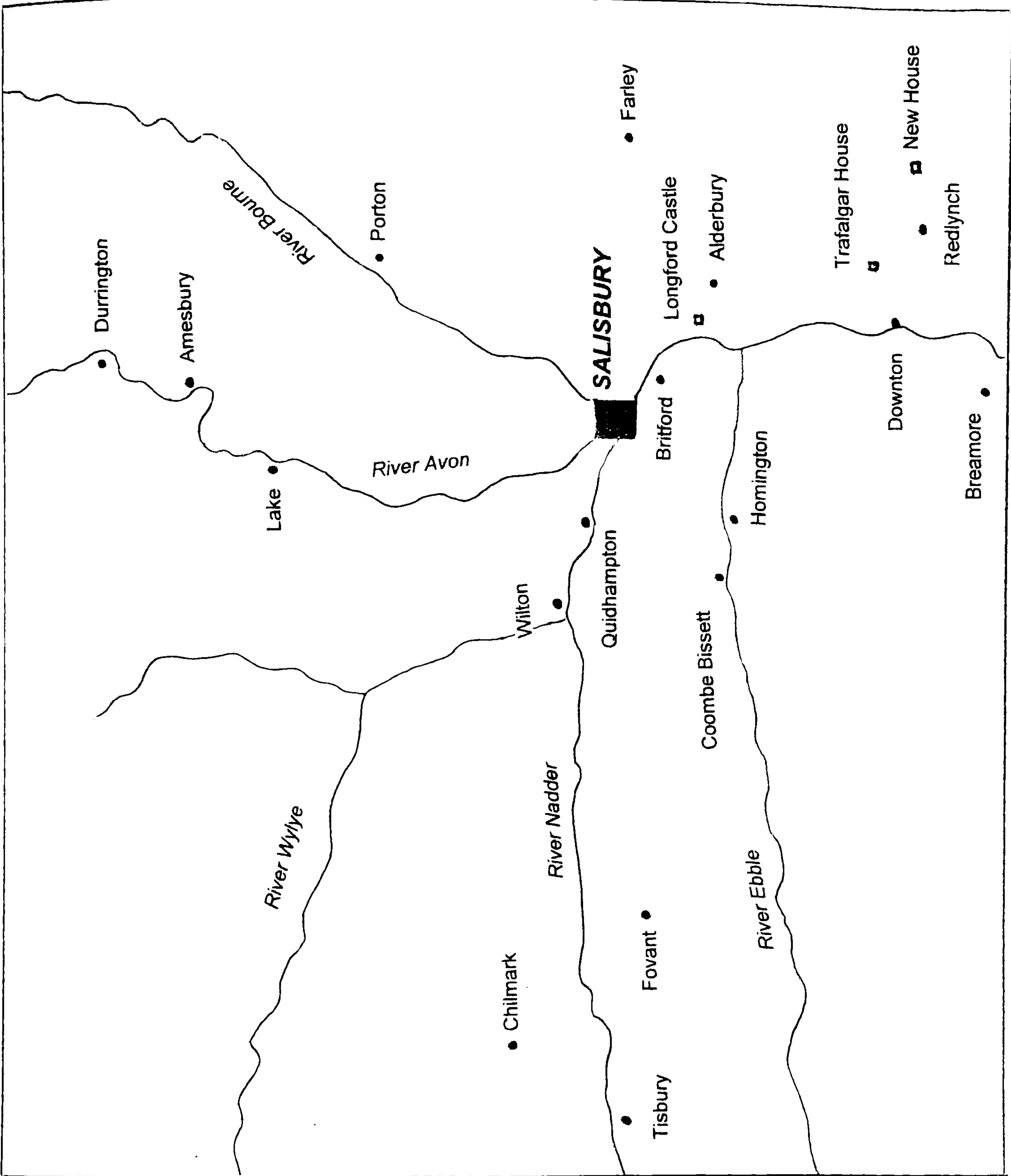
# 1. Street plan of Salisbury



## KEY

- |    |                    |    |                           |
|----|--------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 1  | St Thomas's Church | 14 | Diocesan Training College |
| 2  | St Edmund's Church | 15 | De Vaux Lodge             |
| 3  | St Martin's Church | 16 | St Nicholas' Hospital     |
| 4  | St Paul's Church   | 17 | City Workhouse            |
| 5  | Infirmery          | 18 | Trinity Hospital          |
| 6  | Market House       | 19 | Godolphin School          |
| 7  | Assembly Rooms     | 20 | White Hart Hotel          |
| 8  | Council House      | 21 | Red Lion Hotel            |
| 9  | Cheese Market      | 22 | Haunch of Venison Inn     |
| 10 | Bishop's Palace    |    |                           |
| 11 | Matrons' College   |    |                           |
| 12 | Choristers' Green  |    |                           |
| 13 | Mompesson House    |    |                           |
- Close wall — — — —  
River w w w w

## 2. Villages around Salisbury mentioned in the text





3. Sample page of 1851 Census Enumerator's Book

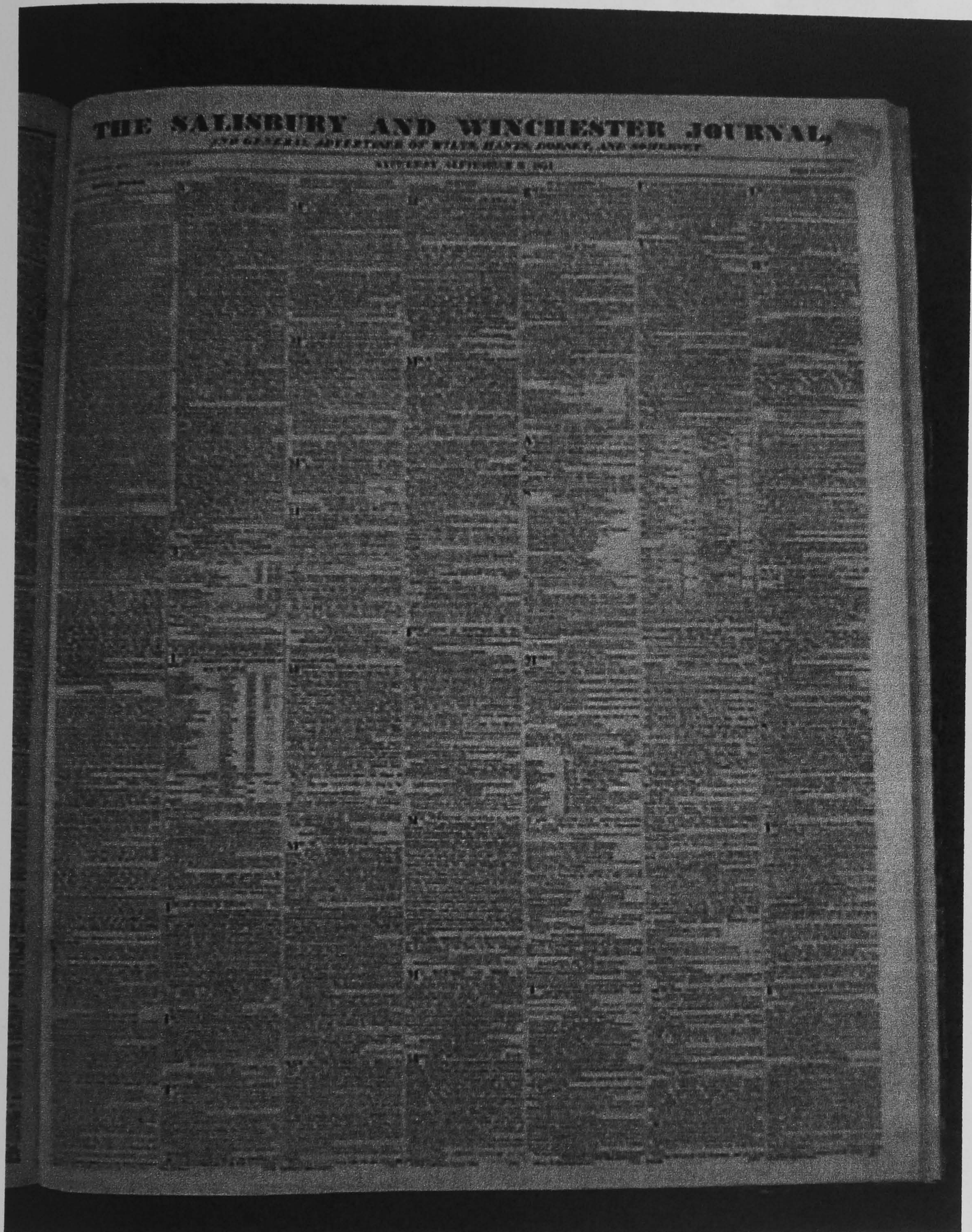
No. of House	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born
					Males	Females		
22	High Street	Robert Ald	Head	u	20		Shen and Bacon Slaughter	London
		Ann Ald	Wife	u	20		Family Duties	do
		John Chinick	Son	u	20		Musician	do
		Ann Ald	Son	u	20		Musician	St. George's Church
		James Ald	Son	u	20		Shen & Bacon Slaughter	St. Mary's
		William Ald	Son	u	20		Employer - employing 2 Men	Middlesex London
		John Ald	Son	u	20		School	Wiltshire
		Ann Ald	Son	u	20		School	do
		Emily Ald	Son	u	20		School	do
		Gray Jane Ald	Son	u	20		General servant	St. Michael's
		John Ald	Son	u	20		School	St. Michael's
		Henry Ald	Son	u	20		Whitcomb's Apprentice	St. Michael's
		Ann Ald	Son	u	20		Prayer - servant	St. Michael's
		John Ald	Son	u	20		do	St. Michael's
		John Ald	Son	u	20		do	St. Michael's
		Thomas Ald	Son	u	20		do	St. Michael's
		Ann Ald	Son	u	20		do	St. Michael's
		Ann Ald	Son	u	20		do	St. Michael's
		Francis Ald	Son	u	20		do	St. Michael's
		Mary Ann Ald	Son	u	20		General servant	Wiltshire
Total of Persons					5	14		

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE  
 BE REPRODUCED PHOTOGRAPHICALLY WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference: H.O. 107/1847

1	2	3	4	5	6

4. Front page of *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* 6 September 1851



Hart Miss, milliner & fancy bonnet shop, Bridge st  
Haskell James, clock & watch maker, silversmith &  
Blue Boar row  
Hatch Thomas, grocer &c. Poultry market  
Hattatt Charles, shopkeeper, New street  
Hayter Louisa & Fanny (Misses), milliners &c. Bed  
Hayter Edward, shopkeeper, Bedmin street  
Hayter Hannah (Mrs.), general dealer, Brown street  
Henstridge Sidney, *New inn*, New street  
Herring Alfred & James, horse breakers, horse cl  
livery stables, Hog lane  
Hibberd Mary (Mrs.) & Son, chimney sweepers  
Hibberd Alfred, baker, Castle street  
Hibberd Joseph, clerk to the board of guardians  
Salisbury union, Castle street  
Higgins Charles, *London hotel*, Bridge street  
Higgins Charles, brewer, King's Head brewery, Bri  
Higgins William, '*Albion*,' & maltster & brewer, St.  
Higgins William, shopkeeper, Bedmin street  
Hill Frederick & Son, wholesale whip manufacturer  
chester street  
Hill Stephen, solicitor, master extra & perpetual c  
sioner, Endless street  
Hillier Ann (Mrs.), milliner, Endless street  
Hillier James, greengrocer, St. Ann's street  
Hillier Mary Ann (Mrs.), milliner &c. Bedmin street  
Hinder & Son, auctioneers & appraisers, Endless stre  
Hinder Samuel, sheriff's officer & appraiser, Endless  
Hinxman Stephen, gardener, seedsman & fruiterer, ~~St~~  
Hoddings Townsend & Lee, solicitors, Chipper lane  
Holloway Richard & Herbert, corn & hay dealers  
Boar row  
Holloway Richard, '*Old Castle*,' Old Sarum hill /  
Holloway Robert, livery stables, Endless street  
Holly Mary (Mrs.) & Co. stay makers, High street  
Hooper Joseph, '*Woolpack*,' & farmer, Endless street  
Hooper Misses, milliners, High street  
Hopkins George, grocer, Castle street

6. Salisbury High Street looking north in the early 1870s  
watercolour by Louise Rayner, © Salisbury & South Wilts Museum



7. List of Miss Child's publications:

advertisement in *Illustrated Handbook to Salisbury Cathedral*, Blake

THE SPINSTER AT HOME IN THE  
CLOSE OF SALISBURY ;

A POEM, IN QUARTO, CLOTH. PRICE TEN SHILLINGS.



HISTORICAL APPENDIX TO DITTO.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE.



Annette's Birthday, Banquet, Fancy ball, & Amateur Concert.

PRICE SIXPENCE.



THE SALISBURY EXHIBITION.

PRICE SIXPENCE.



THE SALISBURY JUBILEE OF 1856,

AND

SONGS OF WAR AND PEACE.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

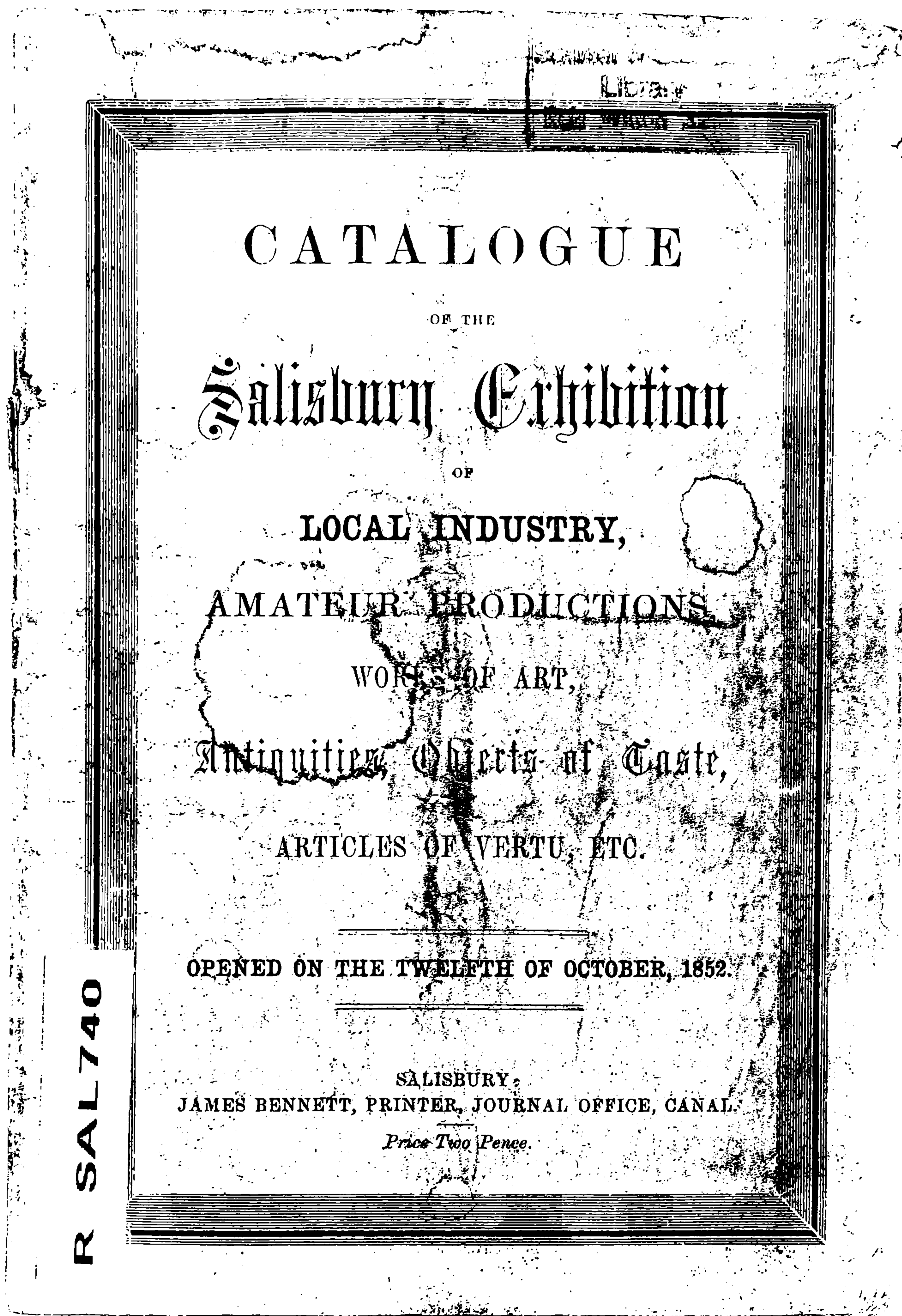
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BY MISS CHILD, OF THE CLOSE OF SALISBURY.

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SALISBURY :-- FREDERICK A. BLAKE, PRINTER, MARKET PLACE

8. Salisbury Local Exhibition 1852 catalogue



## 9. Council House and the 1852 exhibition

*Interior:* two drawings by W F Tiffin, local artist and one of the secretaries to the Exhibition.

9a. Banqueting Room, from J Chandler and A Goodhall *Salisbury Guildhall* Salisbury 1994

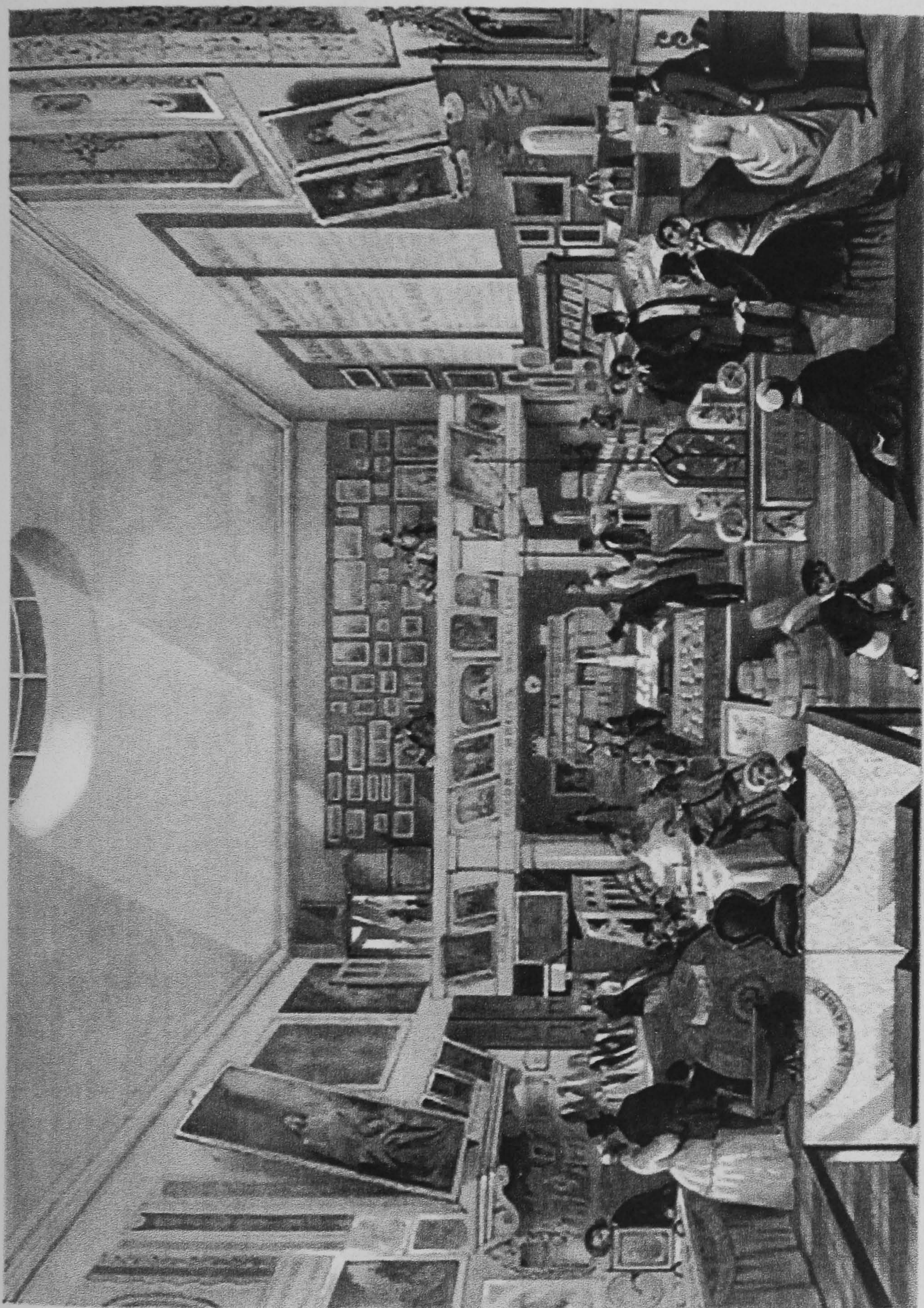
9b. Law Court © Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum [there were two law courts in the Council House, see 9e; this was probably the Crown Court as Chandler and Goodhall describe it as 'lit from above by a lantern' and mention 'magnificently daunting panelling' in the Nisi Pruis Court which is not obvious from this drawing].

*Exterior:* 9c. Lithograph by J Buckler, from Chandler and Goodall, before 1829 alterations when the north front was changed to look like the photograph 9d. The west portico remained until 1889. Note also the market women at work, and their customers strolling in the Market Place.

9d. Guildhall N front. RCHM *Salisbury* Vol 1 1980 plate 18 top

9e. detail from OS map 1880 1:500, the building is on the edge of two sheets LXVI.11.24 and LVI.15.4

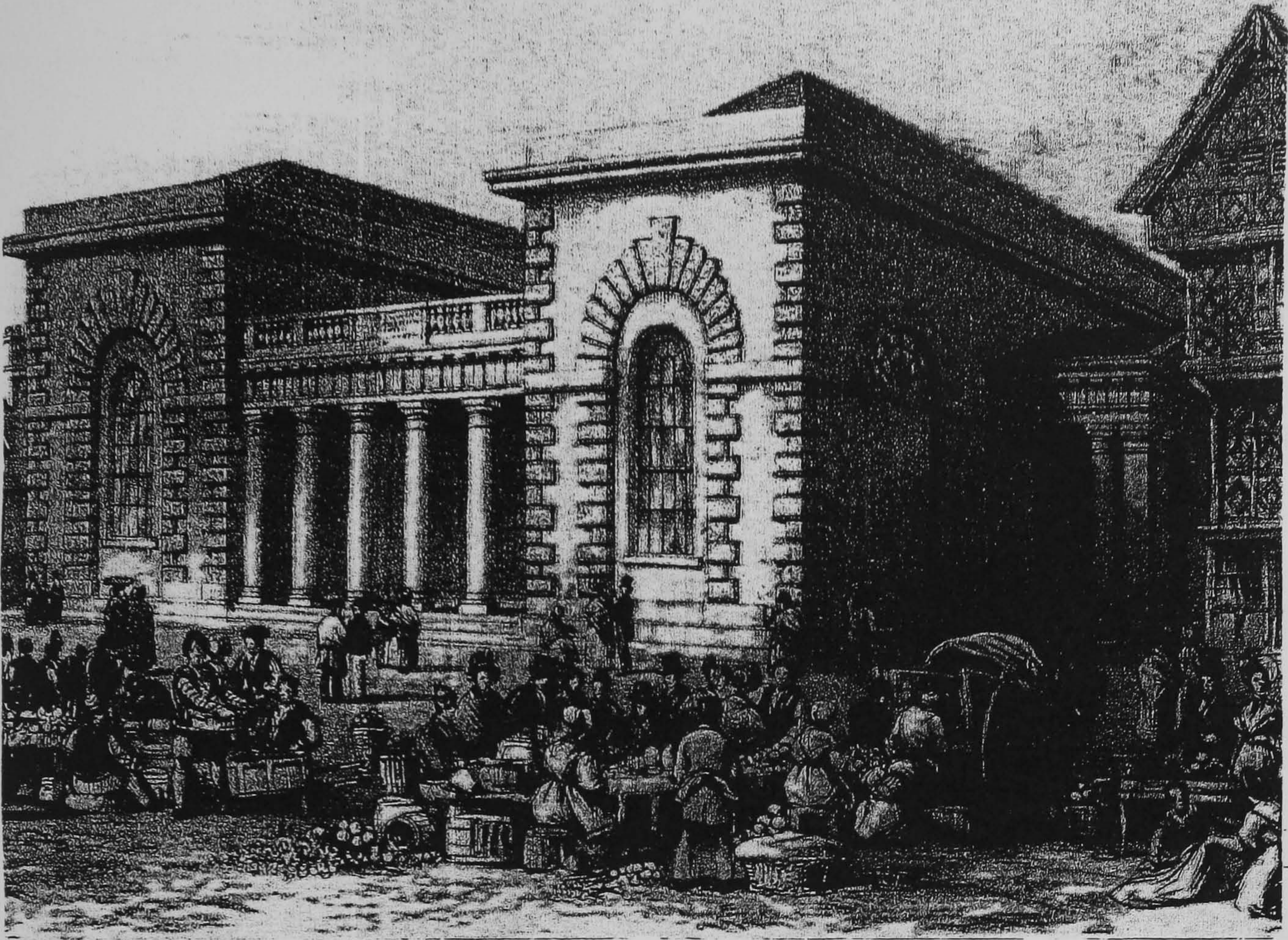




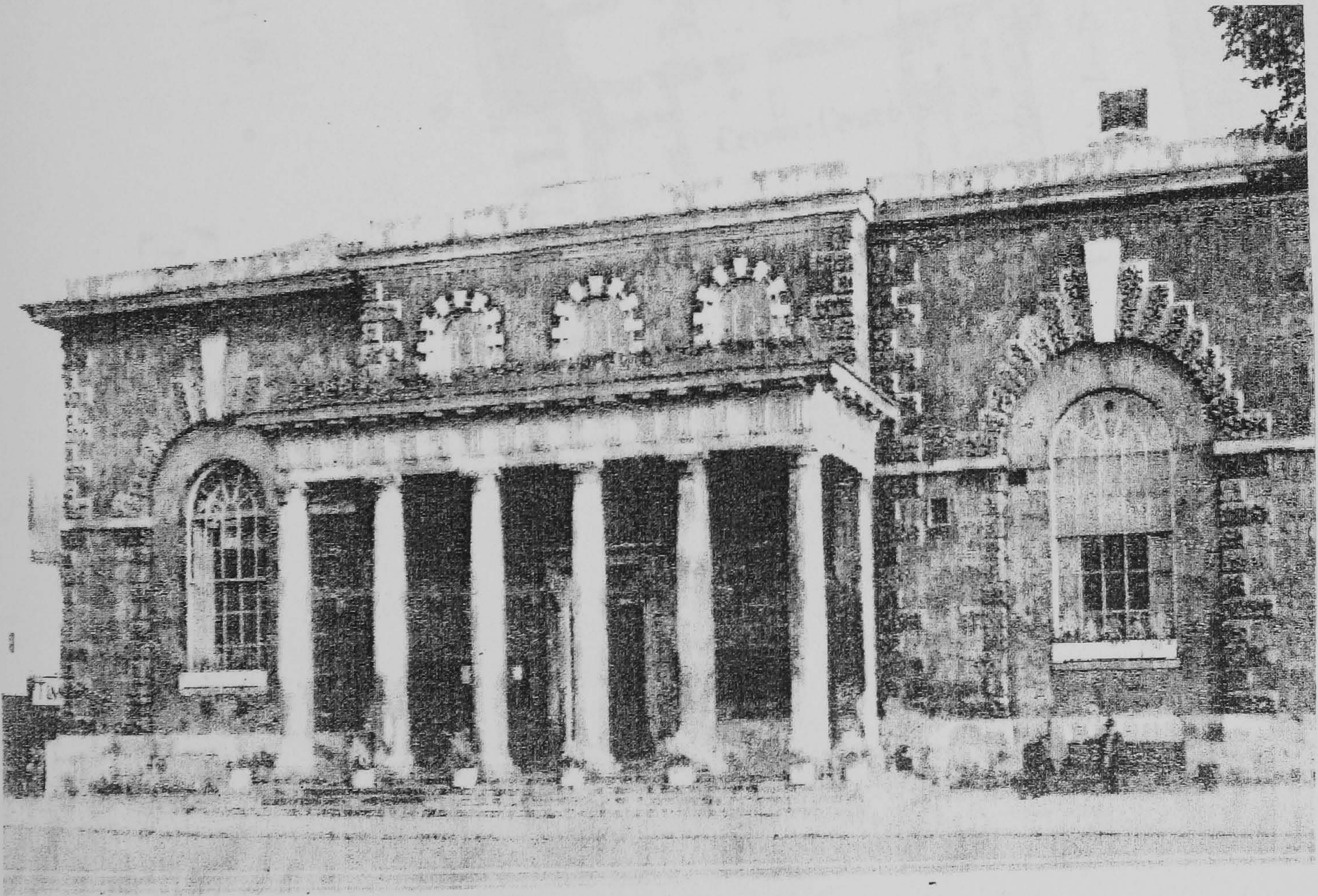
THE  
LIBRARY



9.c

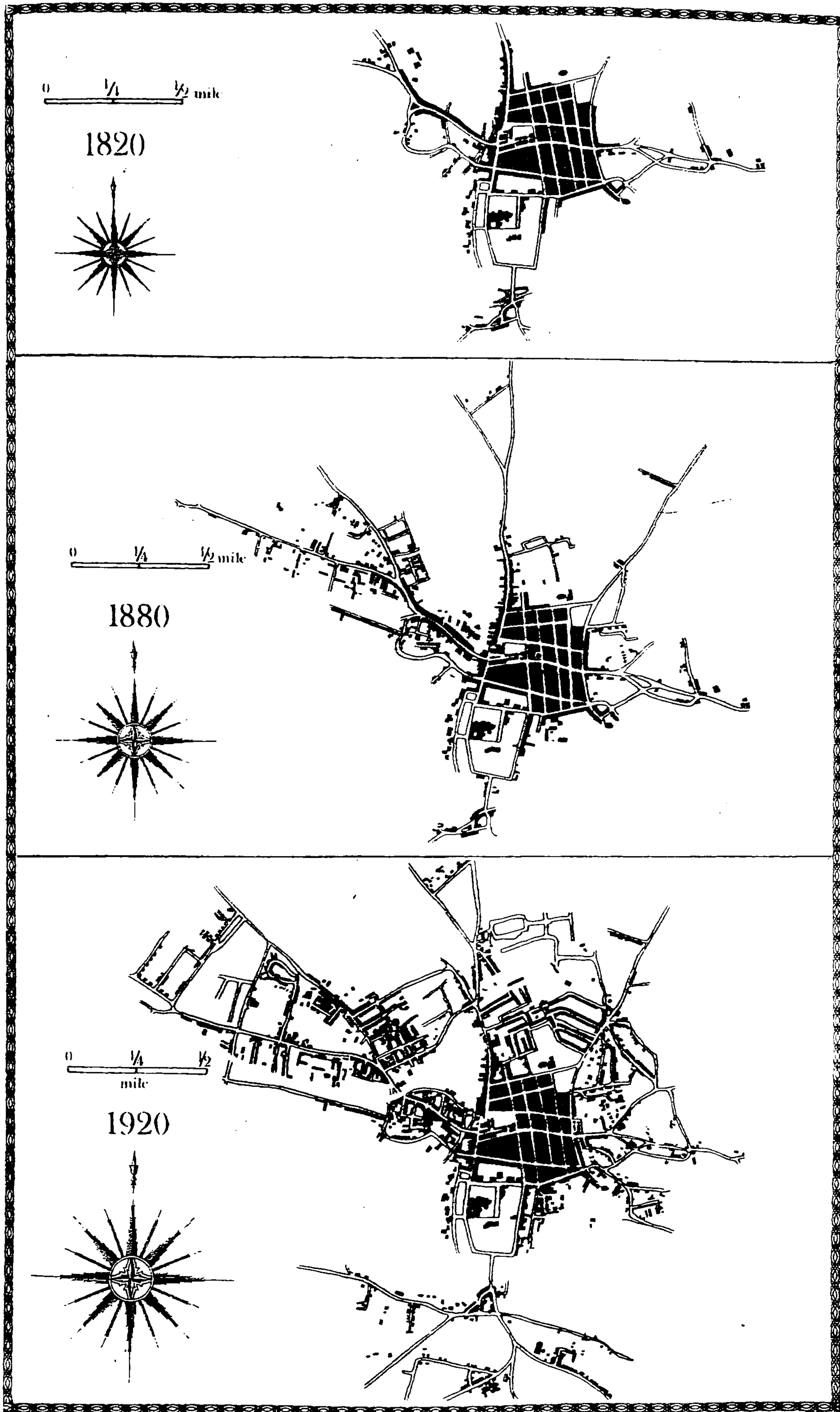


9.d





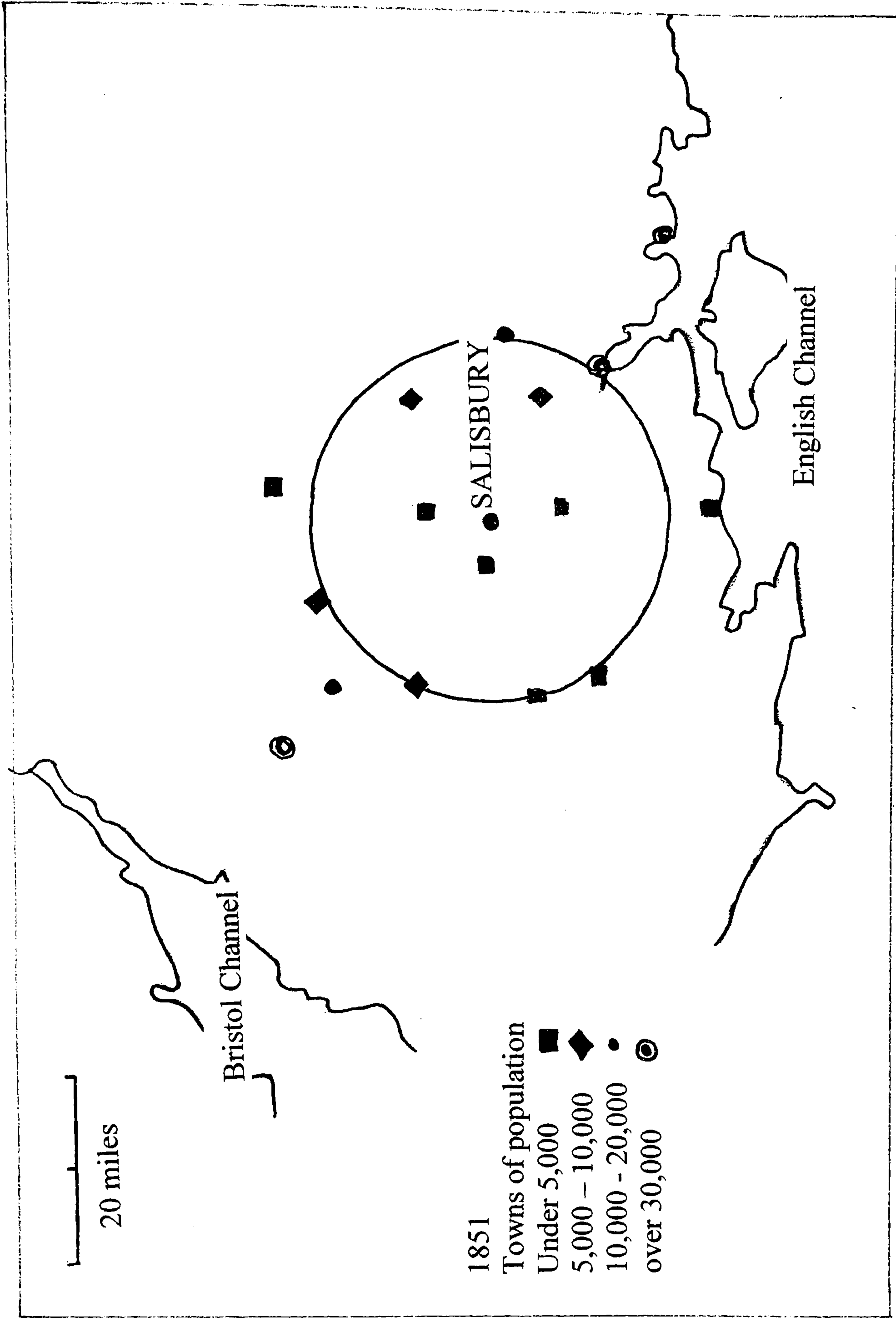
10. Growth of Salisbury, from J Chandler *Endless Street* Salisbury 1983



## 11. Towns in Salisbury's hinterland

### 1851 Population of towns in Salisbury's hinterland

Amesbury	1,172
Blandford	3,948
Christchurch	4,379
Downton	3,898
Marlborough	3,908
Shaftesbury	3,992
Wilton	1,804
Andover	5,187
Devizes	6,554
Romsey	5,654
Warminster	6,285
Salisbury	11,657
Trowbridge	11,148
Winchester	13,330
Bath	54,000
Portsmouth	72,000
Southampton	35,000



12. Cathedral Close: NE view of Salisbury Cathedral in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

E H Buckler. © Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum



13. 'The Coombe Express', Mrs Ridout and her donkeys, oil painting c 1879,  
Frank Brooks © Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum



14. Tables A and B: occupations of married women in two districts of Salisbury  
1851

Table A Occupations of married women, St Ann's and Exeter Street, 1851

Occupation	Age: <i>of women</i>	Husbands' occupations		
		under 25	25-45	over 45
washerwoman 3			not given	bricklayer's labourer not given
tailoress 2		cabinet maker	bootbinder	
dressmaker 3			rope maker journeyman blacksmith linen draper	
Principal of an establishment for ladies			Baptist Minister	
general servant 1			not given	
governess 1				schoolmaster
schoolmistress 1			hackneyman	
shoebinder 1				not given
charwoman 2			ropemaker	postboy
plain needlewoman 1			not given	
laundress 3				gardener bricklayer's labourer Chelsea pensioner
seamstress 1			bricklayer's labourer	
agricultural labourer 1				shepherd

Table B Occupations of married women, High Street, 1851

Occupation	Age: <i>of women</i>	Husbands' occupations		
		under 25	25-45	over 45
schoolmistress 3		ivory and wood turner	schoolmaster	accountant
dealer in Berlin fancy goods 1				master cabinet maker
dressmaker 3			hairdresser and perfumer tailor not given	
shopkeeper 1			railway fitter	
milliner 2			Cabinet maker *	
boot and shoemaker's assistant 1				boot and shoemaker
milliner's apprentice 1		not given		
shoebinder 1			bootmaker	
staymaker 1				not given
tailoress 2		bricklayer	cabinet maker	
office keeper 1			carpenter	
milliner and dressmaker 1			not given	

\* wife: "milliner and mantua maker, mistress employing 3 adult assistants and 5 apprentices"  
husband: "law stationer and writer, accountant and general commission agent"

15. Trade cards and billheads from Salisbury Museum ephemera collection

GERMAN WOOL AND FANCY WOOD REFINERY,  
HIGH STREET, SALISBURY.

*My Dear Sir* Dec 22 1844

Receipt of M. J. MULLINS,

HALF PRICE ALLOWED FOR GERMAN PATTERNS IF RETURNED IN GOOD CONDITION.

Country Orders punctually and carefully attended to.

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN EITHER IN HIGH STREET, OR AT ANY OF OUR BRANCHES, FOR  
WORK COMMENCED, COMPLETED, AND MADE UP.

1/2 Pint of pattern	1/2	1/2
1 Do. 6/0	17	9.6
10 1/2 of White	10	10.10
1 1/2 of Canvas	3	4.10
6 Quills		3
Washing & mending work		1.0
		<u>71. 19. 5</u>

HAUNCH OF VENISON WINE VAULTS,  
SALISBURY.

**LOUSIA POTTO,**  
Dealer in Foreign Wines and Spirits, Irish and Scotch Whiskey, Devonshire Cider, London and Dublin Porter, Atoa Ale, Foreign and British Cigars, &c.—Wholesale and Retail.

**SARAH WHITE,**  
19, QUEEN STREET,  
MARKET PLACE,  
SALISBURY.

UMBRELLA PARASOL & SUNSHADE  
Manufacturer.

WALKING STICKS, PORTMANTEAUS, TRUNKS  
A TRAVELLING BAGS IN GREAT VARIETY.  
FURS RE-MADE AND CLEANED.  
REPAIRS PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO

MISSES SHEPPARD & FOX THANK THEIR CUSTOMERS FOR PAST FAVOURS, AND ON ACCOUNT OF MISS FOX RETIRING FROM BUSINESS, THEY WOULD BE GLAD TO RECEIVE THESE ACCOUNTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

N.B.—THE BUSINESS WILL BE CARRIED ON IN FUTURE BY MISS F. L. SHEPPARD.



**Mrs. W. G. STODART,**

( LATE MISS EARLE )

**DRESS MAKER, &c.,**

NEW CANAL, SALISBURY.

---

**W. G. STODART,**

**SILK MERCER, &c.,**

**CANAL, SALISBURY.**

---

Fancy Dresses, Ribbons, Laces, and Embroideries.

*Family Mourning and Black Glacé Silks.*

17. Miss Mullins' stand at the exhibition 1852, detail from illustration 9b.



18. Mrs Todd's and the Miss Saunders' advertisements,  
*Salisbury Journal* 4 Jan 1851 and Brown's *Stranger Handbook* 1857 respectively.

SALISBURY.

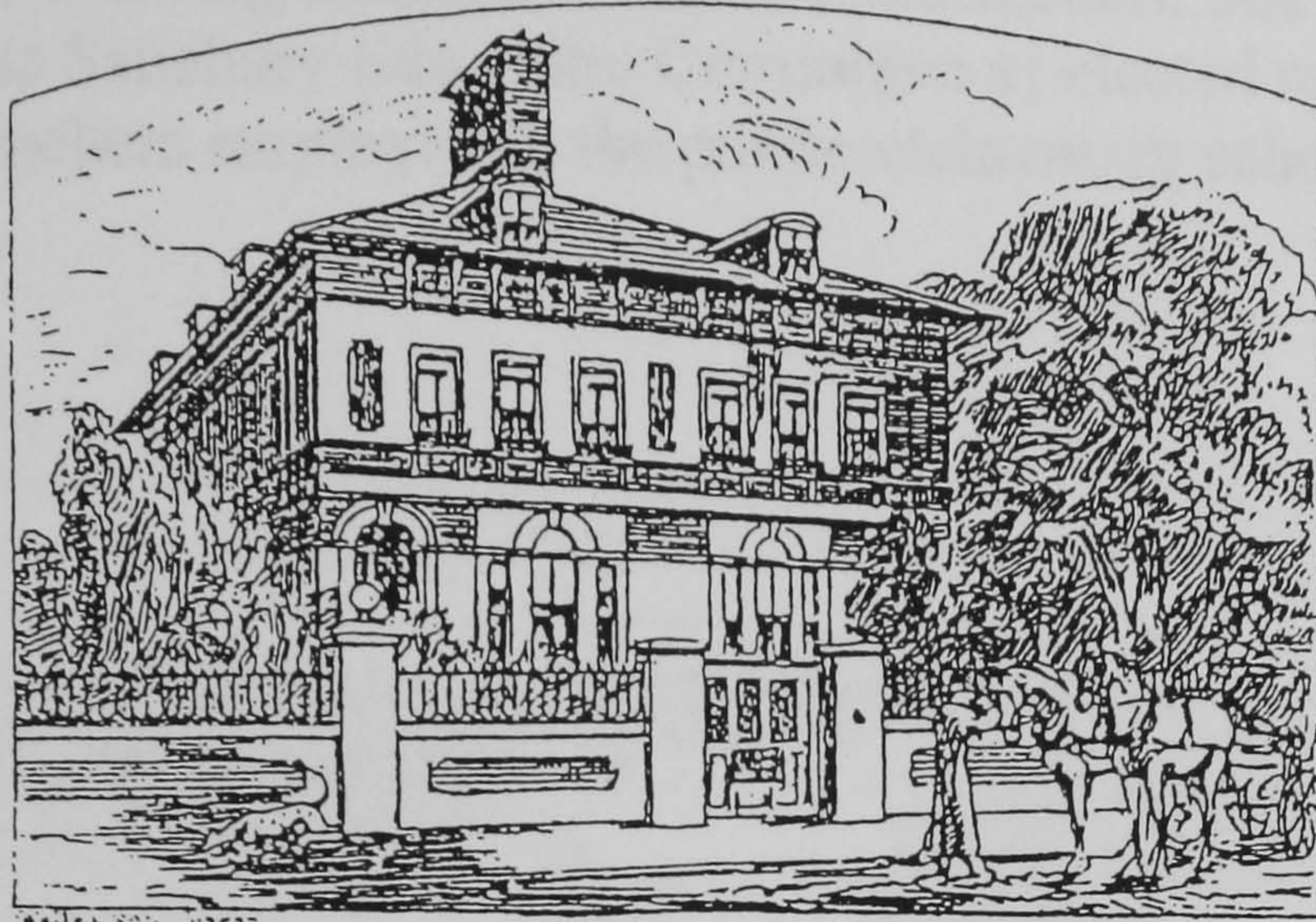
**M**RS. J. W. TODD'S ESTABLISHMENT  
for YOUNG LADIES will re-open on Monday,  
January 27th. The system of Tuition pursued in this  
Seminary combines all the higher branches of a liberal  
education, with the culture of domestic habits; and,  
by blending pleasure with the pursuit of knowledge,  
renders the toil of the Schoolroom a delight rather  
than a task. No efforts are spared to discipline the  
moral feelings and develop the intellectual powers.  
Terms, including Pensions, 25 and 30 guineas per annum.  
References, R. Harris, Esq., M.P., Leicester; H.  
Brown, Esq., M.P., Tewkesbury; Apsley Pellat, Esq.,  
Staines; Mrs C. L. Ralfour, London; J. Toone, Esq.,  
Salisbury; the Revds. Dr. Redford, Worcester; Dr.  
Andrews, (late of Salisbury,) Northampton; R. Keynes,  
Blandford; J. P. Marshall, Leicester; F. Trestrall,  
Sec. to Baptist Mission, T. Winter and G. H. Davis,  
Bristol; Mr J. Davis, London. (7143)  
St. ANN'S-STREET, Dec. 27, 1850.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

45

**The Misses SAUNDERS'**  
**ESTABLISHMENT**  
FOR  
**FAMILY EDUCATION,**  
ENDLESS STREET,  
SALISBURY.

19. Misses Jarman's school. From *The Old Manor, Salisbury: a glimpse of the past*,  
T Howe and G Percey (eds) Salisbury 2000.



LADIES' COLLEGIATE SCHOOL,  
MONTAGUE VILLAS, SALISBURY.

PRINCIPAL: MISS JARMAN.

The Method of Education adopted aims at securing thoroughness, exactness and system in study.  
Pupils have been successfully prepared for the University Local, College of Preceptors, and  
Trinity College Examinations.

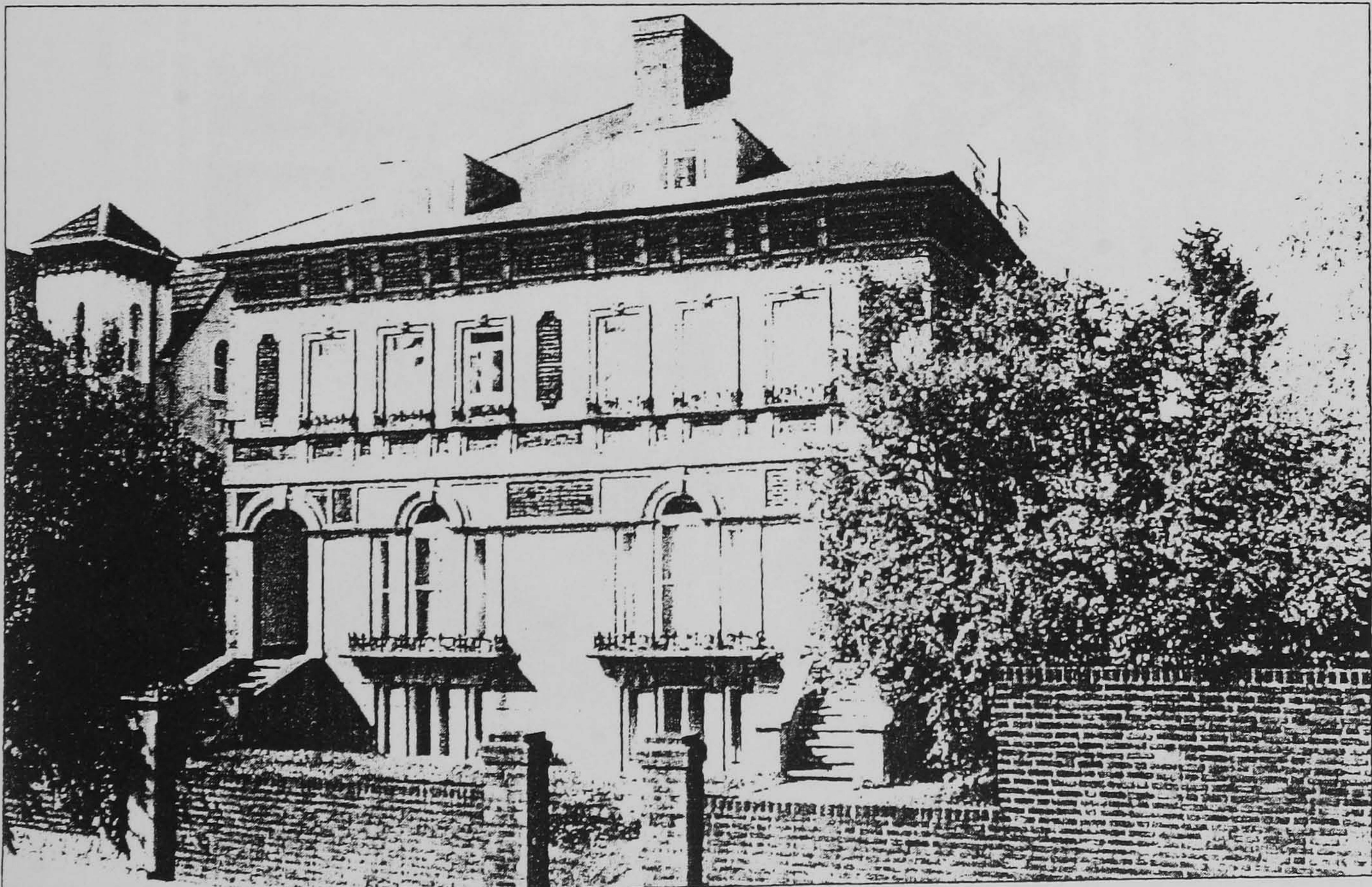
RESIDENT GERMAN AND ENGLISH GOVERNESSES.

MASTERS ATTEND FOR FRENCH, LATIN, MATHEMATICS, MUSIC AND DANCING.

THE SCHOLASTIC YEAR IS DIVIDED INTO THREE EQUAL TERMS OF THIRTEEN WEEKS.

TERMS MODERATE. PROSPECTUS ON APPLICATION.

Montague Villas, 1880.



**20. This photograph is catalogued as Miss Meatyard and her class at Fisherton Anger Girls' School c 1905. WSRO F8/600/233/6/23/1**

Rose Meatyard started at the school in May 1898 as a qualified assistant teacher, and was absent from time to time over the next two years taking 'science and art exam', physiography exam, Drawing exam, Certificate Examination. She worked under Fanny Evans who sat on the Salisbury Education Committee as elected representative of the 'fully certificated teachers employed in the public elementary schools of the borough'.



**TO THE GOVERNORS OF THE SALISBURY  
INFIRMARY.**

**MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,**

**T**HE Death of my late Sister having caused a Vacancy in the Office of MATRON to your Institution, I take the opportunity of offering myself to your notice as a CANDIDATE for that Situation.

The Testimonials of character and ability which I shall have the honour of laying before you on the Day of Election will, I trust, obtain for me your confidence and support.

I beg to add that the long connection of my late Sister with your Institution having afforded me numerous opportunities of making myself acquainted with the details of its management, I feel myself fully equal to the duties that would be required of me.

I have the honour to be,

**My Lords and Gentlemen,**

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

**ANNA WILLIS.**

Salisbury, Feb. 7, 1855.

[4672]

**TO THE GOVERNORS OF THE SALISBURY  
INFIRMARY.**

**MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,**

**A** VACANCY having occurred in your valuable Institution in consequence of the death of Miss WILLIS, the Matron, I beg respectfully to offer myself as a CANDIDATE for the SITUATION.

From my long experience in many large Establishments, I feel fully competent to discharge the duties that would devolve on me.

Earnestly soliciting the favour of your support, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

**MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,**

Yours very respectfully,

**CHARLOTTE ROBERTS.**

Three Swans Hotel, Salisbury, Feb. 3, 1855. [4614]

**TO THE GOVERNORS OF THE SALISBURY  
INFIRMARY.**

**MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,**

**I** beg most respectfully to offer myself as a Candidate for the Office of MATRON to your valuable Institution, feeling confident I could undertake the duties of that Situation, should you favour me with the appointment.

I am,

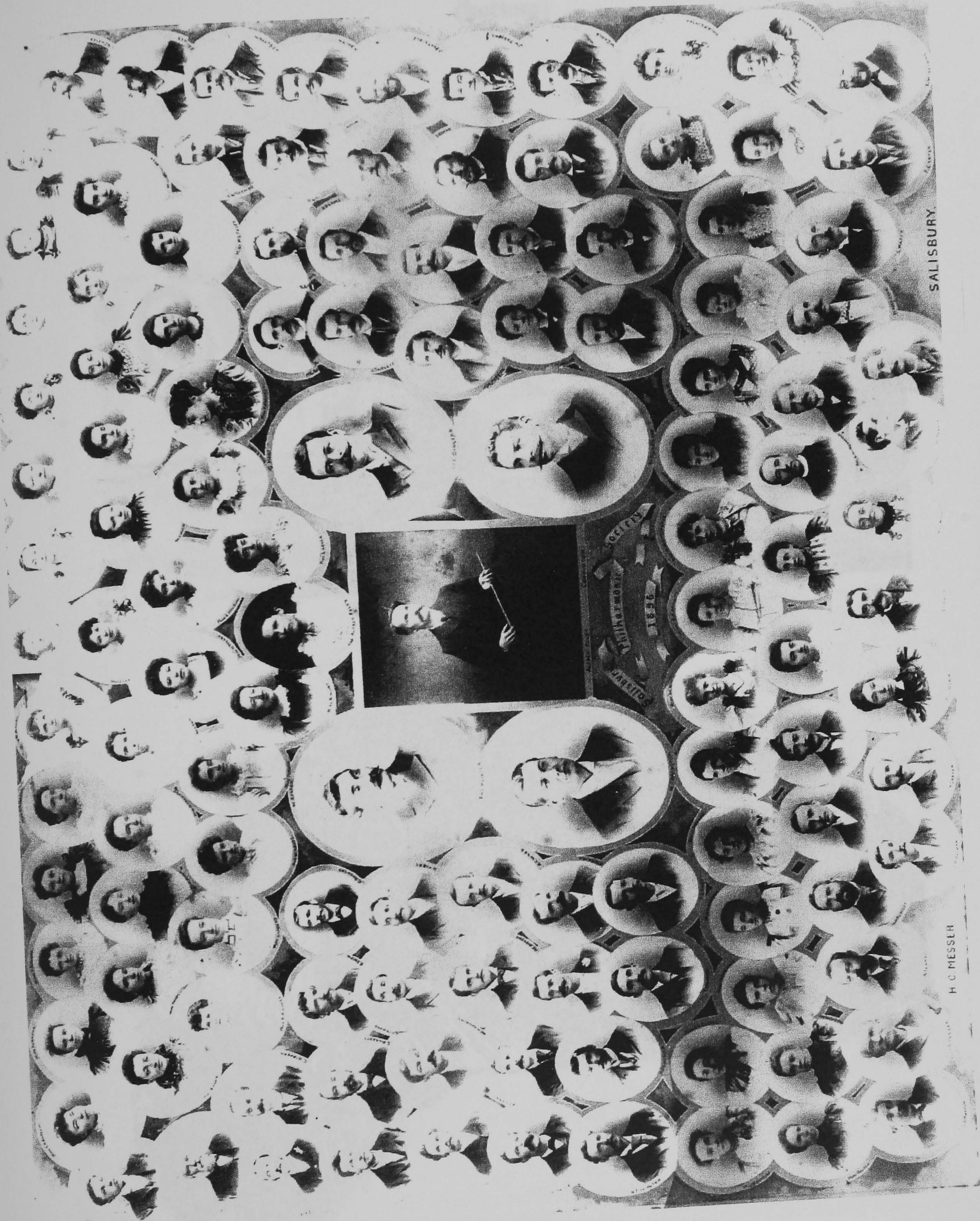
**MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,**

Yours very respectfully,

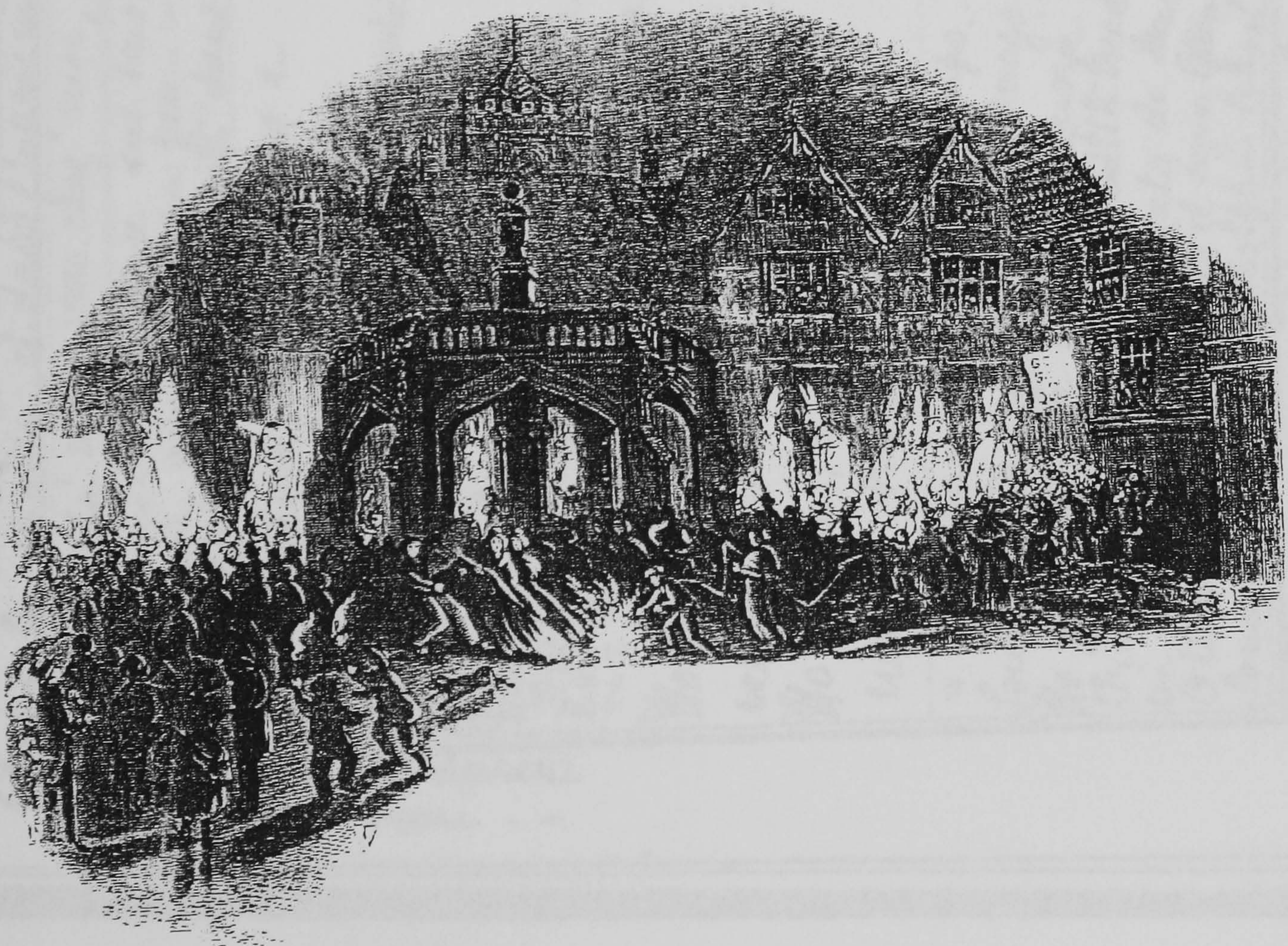
**EMILY BECKINGSALE.**

4705]

22. Salisbury Philharmonic Society 1896



23a. Grand Western Archery Championship meeting, Salisbury 1862 (top)  
and 23b. Anti-papal demonstration passing the Poultry Cross, November 1850  
(bottom)





Je suis allée à la Cattedrale  
dans le matin et dans l'après-midi.

Elle a fait MAY, 1895. chez moi,

Su. 5. 3rd Sunday after Easter. Et je suis  
promis aux apes et à un peu.  
J'ai fait chez Mrs Bennett dans

M. 6. Faceva bel tempo e  
caldo, ma ventoso. -  
La signora Hodding è venuta  
di vedermi.

Ho passato dalla signora  
Fisher dopo il tè nella  
sua stanza e venuta nella

Tu. 7. Ho passato dalla signora  
Hodding, e sono andata di  
vedere la signora Sheppard.  
Ho letto, e ho scritto  
nella sera.

W. 8. Faceva molto bel tempo.  
Sono sortita con me il Prouty.  
Ho preso il tè dalla signora  
Fisher, la signorina Edith Reed  
vi era. - Ho passato da Stand  
Ottaway e ho parlato il signor Ottaway  
Sono andata al Godolphin School.

Nella sera di vedere la  
Lettera del Decano, Emily Flower  
vi è andata anche.

sera di darmi  
dei fiori.

MAY, 1895.

Tu. 9. Half Quarter Day. Emily ed Alice,  
Edith Reed ed io, siamo andate  
ad una conferenza dal Decano  
Faceva bel tempo.

Gerby Waters ha parlato da  
me nella sera.

F. 10. Era raffreddata alla  
cola. Sono sortita nella  
mattina.

Il signor Wortley, ed Alice  
Flower, hanno preso il  
tè da me. La signorina  
Kersey ha parlato da me.  
Sa. 11. Non sono sortita a  
causa della mia gola.

La signora Roberts ha parlato  
da me, e la signora Edith  
chi ha portato dei belli  
fiori. - Faceva bel tempo.

25. Advertisement for St Thomas' Sale of Work,

Salisbury Diocesan Gazette October 1903

Repair Fund of S. Thomas' Church,  
SALISBURY.

**A SALE OF WORK**

In aid of the above, will be held at the

COUNTY HALL, SALISBURY,

ON

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, & THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6th, 7th, & 8th.

**Stallholders.**

MRS. WORDSWORTH (*Diocesan Stall*).  
MAYORESS OF SALISBURY (*City Stall*).  
MRS. WEBB (*The Close Stall*).  
MRS. ORD (*Dairy and Game*).  
MRS. SANCTUARY (*Baskets and Wickerwork*).  
MRS. HERBERT YOUNG (*Fancy*).  
MRS. GEORGE GRIFFITHS (*Pictures and Photograph  
Frames*).

MR. FRED SUTTON (*Provisions*).  
MISS LLOYD AND MISS SMITH (*Refreshments*).  
MRS. H. S. HILL (*Sweets*).  
MISSES WATERS (*Box Stall*).  
MISSES TIFFIN (*Pincushions*).  
MISS BOTT (*Doll Stall*).  
PARCEL STALL under the direction of  
REV. F. E. TROTMAN.

The Sale will be Opened on the First Day by

THE MARCHIONESS OF LANSDOWNE,

And on the Second Day by

MRS. WALTER PALMER,

At 12 o'clock, and on the Third Day by

THE MAYOR OF SALISBURY,

At 2 o'clock.

Music will be supplied by the splendid

**BLUE HUNGARIAN BAND**

AND

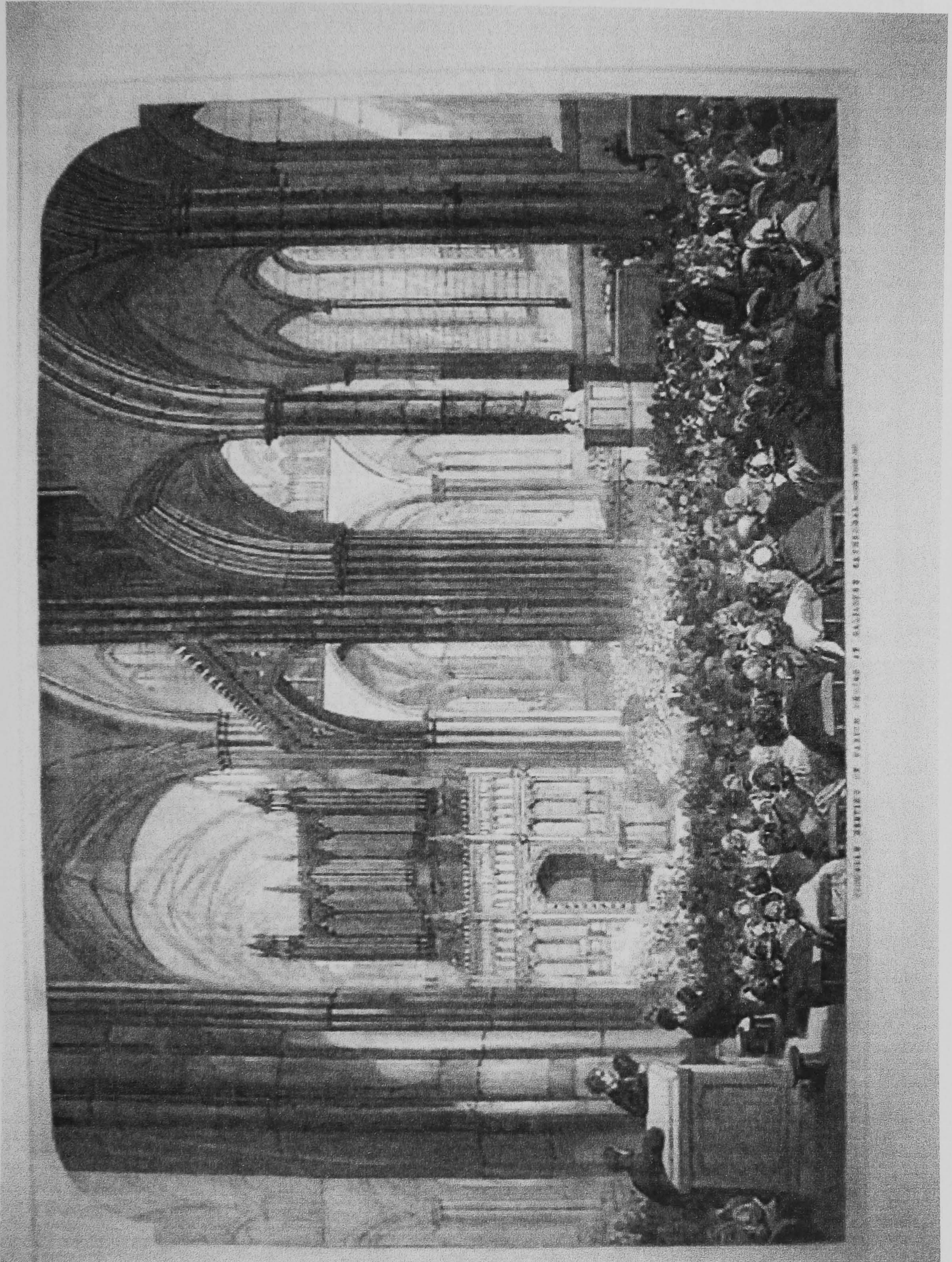
**MR. ALFRED FOLEY'S STRING BAND.**

The total cost of the whole work will probably be not less than £6000. An earnest appeal is made for support in preserving for future generations a historic monument of unusual beauty.

ADMISSION:—FIRST DAY, 12 to 2, 2/6; after 2, 1/-.  
SECOND DAY, 12 to 3, 1/-; after 3, 6d.  
THIRD DAY, 2 to 3, 1/-; after 3, 6d.  
SEASON TICKETS, 4/-.

26. Diocesan parish choirs at the cathedral

© Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum



(top) and 9 March 1901(bottom)

**PARISH OF ST. EDMUND,  
ELECTION OF GUARDIANS  
TO THE ELECTORS OF ST. EDMUND'S PARISH,  
SALISBURY.**

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**—I beg to offer myself as a candidate for your representation on the Board of Guardians.

Out of 649 Unions in England and Wales, 361 now have women on their Boards, making a total of 900 women Guardians now helping in this important work. At the present time you have no Women Guardians in Salisbury.

I have had 20 years' experience in voluntary work of various kinds, especially among young women and children. If you honour me with election I shall try in all ways to co-operate in the excellent work hitherto done by the Guardians of the Salisbury Union, and to assist them to the best of my power in those departments which especially engage the attention of women.

I am, yours faithfully,

**MARY ELIZABETH PALGRAVE**

Park Villa, London-road, Salisbury.

[5160]

**SALISBURY BOARD OF GUARDIANS,  
TO THE ELECTORS OF THE PARISH OF  
ST. THOMAS.**

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**—At the request of a large number of the Ratepayers of St. Thomas, I venture to offer myself as a Candidate for your representation on the Board of Guardians.

It is considered desirable by many that a few women should be elected on the Board, who would devote themselves more especially to the welfare of the women and children of the Union, and to those matters with which a woman is best fitted to deal. Of the 17 Unions in Wiltshire only four are without Women Guardians.

For many years I have had considerable experience in work amongst the sick and needy, and it would be my keenest endeavour to look after the welfare of the poor, consistently with the interest of the Ratepayers.

Should you think me worthy of your confidence, I should try to do my duty in assisting in every way in my power the excellent work now being done by the Board.

I am, yours faithfully,

**FANNY ROBERTS**

Close Gate, March 4th, 1901.

[5173]


28a. Salisbury Women's Suffrage Society AGM *Salisbury Journal* 12 November 1910 (top) and 28b. Women's meeting December 1918 *Salisbury Journal* 30 November 1918 (bottom)

**SALISBURY SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.**—The first annual general meeting of the Salisbury Suffrage Society was held at the Assembly Rooms on Monday, Miss Street presiding. The officers for the ensuing year were elected as follows:—Chairman, Miss Street; treasurer, Miss Ralph; secretary, Miss Hardy; committee, Mrs. Bothams, Mrs. J. Brocher, Mrs. Bright, Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Fawcett, Miss Forth, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Rudston-Read, and Mrs. Shepherd. During the past year the Society held four well-attended and successful public meetings. A petition has been presented to Parliament, and resolutions and letters have been sent to the Prime Minister and to the Members of Parliament in the district. The members of the Society have collected names for the petition, have distributed handbills, have made two house-to-house distributions of circulars, have opened a shop for the sale of literature for one week, and have also in other ways endeavoured to forward the movement in this city.—The treasurer reported an income from subscriptions, sale of tickets, &c., of 56l., and has in hand a small balance.—Mrs. Rudston-Read proposed a vote of thanks to the Press for the very fair and kind treatment they had given to the Society in the reports of the meetings.—The motion was seconded by Mrs. R. Hall, and carried unanimously.

SALISBURY AND SOUTH WILTS  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETY.  
NON-PARTY.

A PUBLIC MEETING  
WILL BE HELD AT THE  
CHURCH HOUSE, SALISBURY,  
ON MONDAY, 1st DECEMBER, 1918, AT 8.30 P.M.

SUBJECT—  
"Women and the General Election."  
Speaker, MRS. ALYS RUSSELL, B.A.  
CHAIRMAN, MISS BAGNALL. [3383]



The poster is a vertical rectangular design with a central focus on the year 1952. At the top, the year '1852' is prominently displayed. Below it, the text 'SALISBURY CENTENARY EXHIBITION' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. The year '1952' is repeated below the exhibition title. The design is framed by a stylized architectural structure with vertical lines and a central archway. In the center of the archway is a circular emblem containing a Gothic-style building, with the text 'SALISBURY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE' around it. Below this emblem, the text 'PRICE ONE SHILLING' is printed. At the bottom, the dates 'JUNE 9-14 1952' are displayed. The four corners of the poster feature thematic illustrations: top-left shows a historical figure in a robe with a banner 'HISTORY'; top-right shows a cow and a pig with a banner 'AGRICULTURE'; bottom-left shows a hand holding tools and a gear with a banner 'MANUFACTURES'; bottom-right shows a factory with a banner 'COMMERCE'. The background of the poster is filled with a dense, textured pattern of vertical lines.

1852

SALISBURY  
CENTENARY  
EXHIBITION

1952

SALISBURY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PRICE  
ONE SHILLING

JUNE  
9-14  
1952

HISTORY

AGRICULTURE

MANUFACTURES

COMMERCE

**30a. Sarah Maria Fawcett (top) and 30b. Lady Edith Hulse (bottom)**



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St Edmund's School building WSRO 782/88

St Mark's Boys School WSRO F8/500/233/9/1

St Paul's Girls School WSRO F8/500/233/15/1,2

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