

# Exploring the medieval cellars of Westgate with City Archaeologist Andrew Armstrong

Remembering the Queen's 2003 visit to Gloucester **Paul James** 

Where to eat, drink & shop **Gloucester BID** 

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- What's on
- Saving the Folk
  Project updates

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Contact us <u>museum@gloucester.gov.</u> 01452 396131 Visit our website at: www.museumofgloucester.co.uk







## Cathedral Quarter

### Welcome...

...to Cathedral Quarter's Summer 2023 magazine. Inside you'll find updates on our project and deeper dives into some of the fascinating discoveries made as part of our work. We've also got recommendations from Gloucester BID on where to shop and eat in Westgate, as well as a guide to events happening over the Summer months.

With the coronation of Charles III coming up, now seemed like a good time for Paul James to remember the Queen's 2003 visit to Gloucester twenty years on. Finally, join City Archaeologist Andrew Armstrong as he takes a look under the modern street at the history beneath our feet.

The Cathedral Quarter High Street Heritage Action Zone is run by Gloucester City Council and funded by Historic England as part of its 'High Street Heritage Action Zone' scheme. It is supported by the community through the Cathedral Quarter Partnership.

It follows the city council's successful bid for £1.9million to restore some of the architecturally significant buildings in the Westgate area of the City, bringing them back to their former glory along with a programme of activities and events to engage the local community with the heritage of the area.

Find us online to learn more about our work: <u>cathedralquartergloucester.uk</u>

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## CATHEDRAL QUARTER PROJECT UPDATE

A s the Cathedral Quarter Project approaches its final year, we can start to look back on some truly transformative projects up and down Westgate Street.

Our pilot project was a former jeweller's shop at 21 Westgate Street. Part of the Fleece Hotel complex, this building dates back to the fifteenth century. It's now thought that this shop and the next-door unit at number 19 were purpose-built as commercial units by the monks of St Peter's Abbey (now the Cathedral) when they redeveloped the Fleece as a great inn around 1476.

Stripped of modern additions and with its historic fabric exposed, this became the Cathedral Quarter hub which has hosted consultation events, art workshops, and now exhibitions.

The Fleece is one of Gloucester's most important historic buildings after the Cathedral. We also funded the removal of modern additions from the rest of this Grade I-listed complex of buildings, uncovering the historic fabric so that experts could properly assess its importance before future plans for its redevelopment are made.

Further up the street at 14 (the former Meek's Shoes), Cathedral Quarter funding has been used to convert the empty upper floors into flats—which are now occupied, bringing more people to live in the city centre. The seventeenth-century plaster ceiling was restored, and will remain on public display when a new tenant moves into the ground-floor commercial unit which has also benefitted from a new traditional shopfront.

28 Westgate Street received Cathedral Quarter funding to reinstate a traditional shopfront, and already has a new commercial tenant.

29 opposite's new shopfront also makes a fantastic contribution to the appearance of the street. With Critall-



Above: Inside the former Fleece Hotel, where vital recording works have uncovered more of the building's history. Right: 29 Westgate Street, where an art-deco shopfront and windows have transformed this 1930s building.



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style windows above to match, this 1930s building has been transformed by good, period-appropriate design with Cathedral Quarter's help.

The former Theatre Royal at 32-34 Westgate Street poses more of a challenge. This huge site (once occupied by Woolworth's and later Poundstretcher) was in urgent need of roof repairs, which Cathedral Quarter was able to fund - helping preserve the historic fabric below.

We also helped with an options appraisal to try and get this empty space back into use.

39, on the corner of Bull Lane, was also in need of serious repairs but with Cathedral Quarter funding the empty upper floors have been converted into residential units and the Georgian frontage restored. A new shopfront will soon complete the transformation.

Next door, 41 Westgate Street is another challenging project, with structural repairs to the medieval timber frame ongoing as part of Cathedral Quarter-funded works to save this historic gem. Watch this space.

Down at the corner of Three Cocks Lane, Cathedral Quarter funded the filling of a gap in the Westgate streetscape. The single-storey modern building at 88 (formerly Tamarind restaurant) has benefitted from a new upper floor and traditional shopfront,



The Georgian façade of 39 Westgate restored.

The Dick Whittington, which has had its eighteenth-century façade and function rooms restored.

bringing it into line with the rest of the street. It too has a new commercial tenant.

A few doors down, the Dick Whittington at 100 Westgate Street had its Georgian façade repaired and upper floor converted into function rooms as part of Cathedral Quarter's work on this Grade I-listed building.

Finally, and perhaps most spectacularly, Cathedral Quarter funding was used to restore the Tudor frontage of the Folk of Gloucester. Read more about this on page 15.

This year we'll be funding minor shopfront repairs and fascia signage for a few more Westgate businesses before the project wraps up in March 2024.

Go to <u>cathedralquartergloucester.uk</u> for more information or get in touch via <u>cathedralquarter@gloucester.gov.uk</u>.

Works in progress at the Folk–see the finished thing on page 16



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## When the Queen came to Gloucester

Twenty years on, *Paul James* remembers Queen Elizabeth II's 2003 visit to Gloucester uring the 2002-3 Civic Year, Pam Tracey was Mayor of Gloucester and I was Sheriff and Deputy Mayor. I remember being told that there was an exciting announcement due about an event that was to take place in the city. Gloucester Cathedral would be hosting the Royal Maundy Service in the presence of The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Royal Maundy Service takes place each year on the Thursday before Easter Sunday and moves around the country's cathedrals and abbeys. The monarch distributes special Maundy money to local pensioners in a service which commemorates Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles at the Last Supper.

Pam has always been a big Royalist. She has been a member of the County's Royal Society of St George branch for many years and has more recently become its President. So a Royal visit during her year in office seemed welltimed. The Maundy Service came to Gloucester after the Lord Lieutenant, Henry Elwes, contacted the Queen's Private Secretary Sir Robin Janvrin and put forward the case for it to be hosted by our cathedral.

We received a briefing from the City Marshall, the ever-calm former Leisure Officer John Williams, about the various dos and don'ts of Royal protocol – "Ma'am to rhyme with jam" and all of that. The one question I remember asking is "How will I know where to sit?" and John replied, "Don't worry about that, the vergers will show you to your seats". I was reassured.

On the day— which was, thankfully, dry and fairly warm— The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh arrived by helicopter to the King's School playing fields at Archdeacon Meadow and were driven to Westgate Street where they were greeted by a receiving line of the great and the good, including Pam and me. Thereafter it was my job to take Prince Philip on a walkabout of the gathered crowds on one side of Westgate Street and Pam would take The Queen on the other side. Pam was waving enthusiastically and greeting the crowds. The Lord Lieutenant joked to her, "They've come to see The Queen, not you!"

I recall The Duke of Edinburgh was particularly concerned that 66 Westgate Street (now Brimbles Café), which was at the time heavily propped up by scaffolding, might fall on top of us all. I did write and let him know some years later when restoration work had been completed and had a very nice letter back from his Private Secretary, Sir Miles Hunt-Davis, saying how pleased HRH was to hear this news.

Once the walkabout was complete, Pam and I were to enter the Cathedral as part of the Civic Procession, before The Queen and Prince Philip came in with

Opposite: Queen Elizabeth II in College Street. Below: Deputy Mayor Paul James with the Duke of Edinburgh on Westgate Street.



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#### Above: Queen Elizabeth II with Mayor Pam Tracey on College Street. Below: A silver four-pence piece issued by the Queen as 'maundy money.'

the Royal Procession. Pam was shown to the Mayor's special stall in the Quire, while Paul Smith, the Council's Managing Director, and I were shown to our seats by a visiting verger from Westminster Abbey. Paul said to him, "Are you sure these are our seats, as the number on here isn't the same as the number on our tickets?" The verger promised us they were.

As the Royal Procession came in, the Lord Lieutenant Henry Elwes passed and whispered to Paul and me, "You're in our seats!". During the first hymn, Paul spotted an empty seat and made a dash for it, as Henry and his wife Carolyn came forward to take their rightful places. My only choice was to stand at the back, just by the Royal Party – which was fine when everyone was stood up for hymns, but I did feel rather selfconscious when everyone except me was sat down. In my morning suit and with a big golden chain around my neck, I did rather stand out!

A lunch was hosted in the Chapter House, which was made from local produce and cooked by catering students from GlosCAT as it was then known (now Gloucestershire College). Pam sat with The Queen but, in line with protocol, has never disclosed what they talked about over lunch. The Queen was presented with a book of Beatrix Potter's Tailor of Gloucester, which that year was

celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its publication. The Lord Lieutenant's guidance notes for the day said that the Mayor "must not ad-lib to enhance her speech"



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and the Town Crier "must be minimal in his announcements". Both instructions seemed optimistic, but I think both managed to stick to the script, however much their instincts might have tempted them to do otherwise.

After lunch, we retired for coffee in the Cathedral's magnificent Cloisters and I apologised to Her Majesty for taking her Lord Lieutenant's seat. Luckily, she saw the funny side of it and remarked that she'd never been anywhere before where the Lord Lieutenant didn't have a seat!

It was a day I will never forget and an important day in the life of the city. I was pleased last year to discuss with the then Interim Dean of Gloucester, Canon Andrew Braddock, how we could commemorate this occasion. Andrew arranged for some video footage of the day to be added to the interactive visitor information screens inside the Cathedral, alongside the place's other numerous royal connections – like the Coronation of Henry III and the burial of Edward II. Perhaps, in time, there will be a physical commemoration of the event.

It wasn't the first time Oueen Elizabeth II had visited Gloucester, nor the last. Her Late Majesty visited the Guildhall and Gloucester Park in 1955 to mark the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City's charter of liberties from Henry II. In April 1986, she opened Widden School and Great Western Court and attended a service of thanksgiving for the life of the late Duke of Beaufort, who was Lord High Steward of Gloucester, at the Cathedral. Her final visit was in October 2009, when she visited with Prince Philip to see the progress of regeneration at Gloucester Quays, coming up the canal into Gloucester Docks on a Royal Navy boat, and having lunch at the new Gloucestershire College campus at Llanthony.

When Her Majesty was travelling up the canal, she looked over at the derelict



### The quire of Gloucester Cathedral, where the Maundy service took place in 2003.

warehouses at Bakers Quay, some of which have now been redeveloped, and said, "You've still got some work to do then".

The same can be said of Westgate Street today - there's still work to do. But I'm pleased to see the progress of the Cathedral Quarter project – something for which the bid was submitted and the £1.9 million award made during my time as Leader of the City Council. so I feel some ownership of it. I wish everyone involved the very best over the coming months as the project works towards completion. I hope the momentum of improvement continues beyond then and that Westgate Street is restored to what it should be - our most attractive and complete historic city centre street.

**Paul James** was a Gloucester City Councillor for 24 years and Leader of the Council from 2007-19. He now works as Economic Development Lead for Cotswold District Council.

## GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL



## A PLACE for DISCOVERY

No matter how many times you've visited Gloucester Cathedral, there's always something new to discover, and guided tours are a great way to get to know this remarkable building.

Highlights and Crypt Tours take place daily and offer a chance to learn about the stories, hidden spaces and breath-taking architecture that Gloucester Cathedral is so famous for. These tours can be booked on the day via the Cathedral Welcome Desk. On certain dates throughout the year, visitors can climb the 226-ft tall Cathedral Tower as part of a Tower Tour; on the way up you'll see historic bellringing chambers and roof spaces, before being treated to spectacular views from the top.

The 15th century Library is also open for guided tours on certain dates throughout the year, where visitors can see an extensive collection of manuscripts, books and documents. Tower Tours and Library Tours can both be booked online via the Cathedral website in advance.

Go to gloucestercathedral.org.uk to plan your visit and find out more about guided tours:

Image: Im

#### **PROVIDED BY** EAT, DRINK & **GLOUCESTER** SHOP WESTGATE BID



Dough From Dough creates the perfect pizza and is the talk of the City within the Bitcoin community as the first in the county to accept the cryptocurrency alongside traditional payment methods.

Formerly known as 'Hooker & Eight' the restaurant opened in 2019 and was re-named to highlight the core offering of the business - creating amazing pizzas!

Their menu has been tailor-made to suit local taste buds and all their pizzas are made with delicious 36-hour slow fermented dough.

Cooked at 450°C, the pizza has a slightly longer cook than most pizza places, which boasts a blistered crust with a crispier base.

Don't panic—vegan & gluten free options are available.

So, if you want to enjoy some tasty pizza and a great choice of booze to an eclectic mix of music. then look no further.

They are currently offering a 15% discount card to any business working in Gloucester.

For more info and to book a table go to doughfromdough.com or call 01452 690829.



Based in the heart of the Westgate Street community, at no. 54, you'll find a wonderful and vibrant shop called **Bizarre**, who are proudly celebrating seven years in business this April.

Women-owned and women-run, this independent niche retail shop offers an alternative collection of clothing, body

jewellery and gifts with a twist inspired by tattoos. cinema. retro and custom car culture.

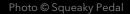
They also have an on-site body piercing and semipermanent make-up studio offering a friendly of Gloucester BID and professional service.



Kate Lankester, owner and founder of Bizarre, is proud to call Gloucester home for her business.

Kate says "We love being part of the community of Gloucester. Everyone is so friendly. There are lots of lovely independent retailers here and we have a large customer base looking for alternatives to larger national chains".

For more information visit bizarregloucester.com



## THE LOST CELLARS OF MEDIEVAL WESTGATE STREET

#### Andrew Armstrong City Archaeologist

he Westgate Street you see today has developed over nearly two thousand years, and whilst the story of each property and building is unique, there is a general trend followed by most that is still visible if you know where to look.

Westgate Street, in its current alignment was formed (archaeologists are fairly sure) at some point between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries – and they are certainly sure that it was a main street and market by the early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

It's probable, back then, that Westgate

Street was wider – with buildings set further back from the modern street frontage.

Those buildings would have been a mix of timber and wattle-and-daub with thatched rooves. It's likely there would have been the occasional reused Roman building or bits of Roman stonework in use as well.

With the Norman conquest (1066 and all that) Gloucester develops as a royal centre and a key transport route across



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**Top left & bottom right:** Andrew Armstrona exploring the medieval cellar at Mark Blake Hair. Below left: The cellar at 76 Westgate Street pictured in 1972. Right: Two antique postcards showing the twelfth-century undercroft at the Fleece Hotel in use as a bar.



of a 12th Century Benedictine Monastery. The Most Curious Bar in England.

fleece Thotel, Gloucester.



and up and down the Severn. The most commercially attractive of all the city's streets was Westgate.

So we see the development of a new street with new buildings. Firstly buildings start to creep forward

encroaching onto Westgate Street itself. Secondly the buildings become taller with sizable timber frames - to make the best use of available space. For the same reason, owners start to dig extensive cellars and undercrofts for the easy storage of goods and to avoid using up valuable ground floor shop space.

It's probable that most properties fronting onto Westgate Street had cellars by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and two of the best examples (at the Fleece and Mark Blake hair salon) are large, beautifully made, impressive structures capable of supporting an entire timber framed building.

Today it's likely that every building along Westgate Street has a cellarsome are in use although many are abandoned.

The whole frontage on both sides is Cathedral Quarter | Summer 2023

essentially hollow and (to paraphrase Terry Pratchett) you could probably walk from one end of Westgate Street to the other underground if you had a pickaxe and a good sense of direction (although a: this would be against the law and b: you risk getting very wet some times of year).





#### one of the medieval undercrofts on Westgate Street are currently open to the public.

If you want to get underground in medieval Gloucester, your best bet is a crypt tour at the Cathedral. Although the Cathedral crypt was built for very different purposes to the undercrofts of merchants' houses on Westgate Street, it can match any of them in age—dating back to the eleventh century.

The crypt was originally used to store



These photos from the Historic England archive show the crypt as it appeared in the early 20th century. During the Second World War, the Great East Window was removed from its frame and stored down here for safekeeping. The large photo (left) shows the 'ambulatory' or walkway that pilgrims would have used to process through the crypt past holy relics that have long since been lost. This detail (below) shows a face on one of the columns, sporting a style of moustache popular with the Anglo-Saxon nobility around the time of the Norman Conquest.



precious relics—often body parts belonging to holy saints.

It was also used to facilitate processions of pilgrims, who would walk or perhaps amble around the semicircular 'ambulatory,'

As building work on the massive

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church above progressed over the course of centuries, the pillars of the crypt had to be strengthened and buttressed to support the cathedral's increasing bulk. Tours can be booked at the Cathedral itself or online at Gloucester Cathedral's website: <u>gloucestercathedral.org.uk</u>

How a future was secured for the Folk and what it looks like

EVIVA

Photo © Historic England Archive

n 2022, after years of talks and negotiations, the City Council and the Civic Trust reached an agreement whereby the former Folk Museum (aka the Life Museum) would get a new lease of life as a cultural centre and community venue.

The Folk Museum began life in 1933, when the Council bought and restored a row of timber-framed buildings dating back to Tudor times to house a museum telling the social history of the city of Gloucester and its people.

In 2018, after almost ninety years, the Folk Museum closed its doors to the public as the Council—under immense budgetary pressure—began preparations to remove around 25,000 objects housed at the Folk to the Museum of Gloucester site on Brunswick Road.

The historic buildings remained accessible for curators, researchers, and school visits, as talks progressed to revitalise the site in partnership with Gloucester Civic Trust.

Plans were finalised in November 2019 but progress was slowed by the outbreak of the pandemic. In the meantime, the Council successfully bid for £1.9m to revitalise Westgate Street through a programme of heritage-led regeneration.

This became the Cathedral Quarter Project, which funded vital accessibility adjustments to these ancient buildings as well as a spectacular restoration of



the timber-framed façade.

With a manager in place and a team of volunteers assembled, the Folk was now ready for its grand re-opening.

Author and TV presenter Dr Janina Ramirez cut the ribbon in September 2022, marking the successful conclusion of a six-year collaboration between the Council and the Civic Trust.

The vision for a new Folk, making better use of the buildings and playing a more active role in the community, had been realised.

The Council continues to work with the Civic Trust behind the scenes, providing training and assistance with collections management as well as loans of museum objects and support delivering events.

The Civic Trust has succeeded in securing an additional £57,890 for the conservation of historic wall paintings recently discovered at the Folk, which will also fund training for volunteers and community engagement work.

A busy programme of events and activities at the Folk has already reenergised lower Westgate Street.

From the rebuilding of medieval Gloucester in Lego last summer to a Winter wassail, as well as guided tours, creative workshops, live music performances, jam sessions, history talks, storytelling evenings, and choir meetings, there is once again always something to do at the Folk.

For details and to book events go to: thefolkofgloucester.co.uk

Opposite: the Folk buildings in the early 1900s. Above: the restored façade. Right: the Folk under scaffolding in 2022.

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This nineteenth century advert for the State Lottery boasts that three winning tickets were sold by Jemmy Wood of the Gloucester Old Bank, which stood at 22 Westgate Street - which is today McDonald's.

Printed in London c. 1810-1820. British Museum inv. no. CIB.52479.

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## WHAT'S ON IN WESTGATE

**21-23 April** 2023 is a bumper year for **Gloucester History Festival**, with events taking place in both the Spring and the Autumn. A weekend of talks with a suitably royal flavour given the upcoming coronation of Charles III. On the Friday, Cathedral Quarter will be premiering a new film, *Secrets of Westgate Street*, unveiling some of the many discoveries made during works to historic buildings over the past three years. Info & tickets:

gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk 27 April Sweeney, Harbron, and **Rutter** bring folk music to the Folk of Gloucester. A unique opportunity to see three wickedly talented musicians play together in stunning surroundings. Info & tickets: thefolkofgloucester.co.uk **29 April** The Folk of Gloucester hosts Cathedral Quarter's Historic Buildings and Traditional Skills Fair. showcasing crafts from stonemasonry to signwriting with hands-on demonstrations and advice for owners of historic buildings. Free event. Info: cathedralquartergloucester.uk **29 April** If traditional building skills aren't your thing try **In My Yard** day festival at Pilgrim's Yard ft. Judge Jules, Marcus Allen, Carter, Jenni Groves, and more. Info & tickets: pigrimsyard.com **2-31 May** The Cathedral Quarter hub at 21 Westgate Street turns art gallery for an exciting exhibition **Odyssey Artists**: **Depth**. Free exhibition. Info: cathedralquartergloucester.uk 11 May The 'Springsteen of sea shanties' Tom Lewis live at the Folk of Gloucester, Info & tickets:

## **Summer 2023**

thefolkofgloucester.co.uk

**10 June** Make the most of the Summer evenings with live music from **Kabel** at Pilgrim's Yard. Info & tickets:

pilgrimsyard.com

**1 July** Carnivalesque street party and procession, **Hi! Street Fest** celebrates the work of Cathedral Quarter and other HSHAZ projects up and down the country. Free event. Info:

cathedralquartergloucester.uk 22-29 July Now in its 295th year, the Three Choirs Festival returns to Gloucester Cathedral for a week of both innovative and traditional festival concerts. Info & tickets: <u>3choirs.org</u> 22-29 July A busy week at the Folk of Gloucester, the Festival of

**Archaeology** returns for 2023 after a sell-out first year featuring historic Gloucester rebuilt in Lego.

thefolkofgloucester.co.uk for info. 22 July-6 August Artist David Finch will be exhibiting paintings of the Gloucestershire countryside and further afield at the Cathedral Quarter hub, 21 Westgate Street. Free exhibition. Info: cathedralquartergloucester.uk **21-30 July** Nine days of great live music in venues throughout the city: it wouldn't be Summer in Gloucester without the Rhythm & Blues Festival. Details TBC. More info: gloucesterbid.uk **26 August** Over 500 classic cars and other vehicles descend on the Gate Streets and the Docks for the everpopular **Gloucester Goes Retro**. This vear promises to be bigger and better than ever. Free event. Info: gloucestergoesretro.com

Have an event to include in the next issue? Email it to cathedralquarter@gloucester.gov.uk

## בסר הסכם בסוותם הטבבות הבהה אסט...

## 24 June - 30 September 2023

Brunswick Road, Gloucester, GL1 1HP

Visit our website for all details museumofgloucester.co.uk

#### MUSEUM OF GLOUCESTER