

INTRIGUING WILTSHIRE

Kenneth Jones

Wiltshire, the most central county in England, is full of glorious countryside, historic buildings and a thriving city, towns and villages. However, lurking not far beneath its surface is a host of oddities and peculiarities that turn the apparently staid and conventional into something much more intriguing.

With inspiration taken from old topographical books on the County of Wiltshire with their splash of monochrome photography, this volume bursts into colour into different themes of discovery, from public works of art to roadside furniture, all showing Wiltshire (and Swindon) in a different light.

The main theme running through the book is an A-Z Gazetteer of places within the county and the appealing – sometimes decidedly quirky – objects and features to be discovered in them. With ordnance survey grid references shown for most of the subjects they can be readily found and it is, almost all, free to see.

If you think you know Wiltshire, read this fascinating and profusely illustrated book and think again...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

From an early age Kenneth Jones has been interested in photography, railways, natural history and topography. With a passion to search out all that intrigues him in town and country, with camera in hand and wife, Elizabeth and trusty dogs at his side he has set his sights on a journey of discovery.

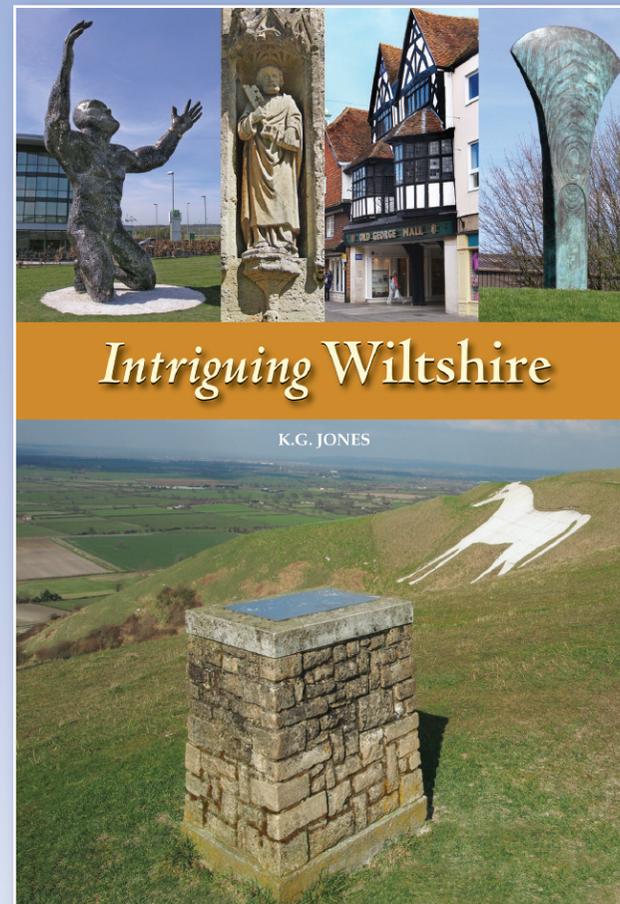


He was educated in Slough Grammar School and worked in plastics production in many processes for all his working life. He, his wife and dogs now enjoy a large garden in a village near Salisbury with a 16mm scale railway, chickens and ducks, together with sojourns into the county seeking out new adventures.

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Left: The Ancestor outside the Holiday Inn, Amesbury.

Right: Cottages in Guilder Lane, Salisbury where some of the walls are constructed with wattle and daub.

Below: Example of a double-page spread.



Stonehenge.

Chippenham Butter Cross.



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stood in Salisbury. The others were the Cheese Cross, the Liten Cross and Heremowl Cross. The low wall which enclosed this cross was removed in 1855."

Hamham Bridge, Salisbury (SU 144 291)
There are two adjacent bridges spanning the Avon, separating the City of Salisbury from Hamham. Between the bridges, which I will call lesser and greater, is an island, in the photograph showing the road towards St Nicholas Hospital over the lesser of the two bridges, the homes in the foreground are built on the island. The commemorative stone is situated on the left parapet of the bridge.

The plaque records that the bridge was built by Bishop Bingham in 1243 and was widened in 1274. There is a Grade I listing for this bridge, which gives a building date of 1244. Perhaps building commenced in 1243 and was completed in 1244. The greater of the two bridges has six arches and the lesser two. The old original bridge is encased with improvements made in the sixteenth - seventeenth centuries and of course by bridge widening in 1774.

The listing refers to the bridge as being decorated with two names: Ayleswade or Old Hamham. I found the name "Ayleswade" puzzling, so with reference to a book entitled *Wiltshire Place Names* (see bibliography) the following came to light. In 1255 the bridge built by Bishop Bingham was called Pontem de Ayleswade, a combination of Latin and Saxon words. I was already aware that pontem is Latin for bridge and woad/woad were Saxon words for woad or ford. Ayles has been interpreted as Aegel's. So we have Bridge of Aegel's ford. This shows that the river was flooded here before the bridge was built.

Hamham Bridge over the main stream of the Avon.



GAZETTEER



Above: The lesser of the two Hamham bridges in which is set the stone. The view is along St Nicholas Road towards St Nicholas Hospital (left).



Robert de Bingham was ordained in 1229 succeeding Bishop Poore. Adjacent to the lesser bridge on the east bank of the river and south of the road is St Nicholas Hospital. Bishop Bingham is credited with founding the hospital and certainly made very substantial improvements to existing buildings, which probably existed since 1215, the date of original founding recorded on a gate plaque. It is probable that the hospital improved facilities and the bridges were constructed at a similar time. On the central island the hospital has a chapel connected by a footbridge. Bishop Bingham died in 1246, only two years after he saw his bridge works completed.

The Pheasant Inn (SU 146 302)
The Pheasant Inn is Grade II listed and was built in the fifteenth century. It is two storey timber framed with brick and plaster filling. Crew's Hall is on the first floor and is accessed via stairs in the courtyard. A plaque reads: "Originally The Crispin Inn. This building incorporates the Shoemakers Guildhall left to the guild in 1638 by Philip Crew in memory of his father." The Crispin Inn was named after the patron saint of Shoemakers. Crew's Hall was part of a complex of buildings left to the Guild of Shoemakers by Philip Crew, the son of a shoemaker in 1638. The building became the Crispin Inn in c. 1741 with a covenant on the Hall for the Guild's use. In c. 1821 the building was leased and it became the Pheasant Inn. It was sold in 1828 and the covenant was dropped.



Below: The plaque on the Queen's Arms in Ivy Street. There is a very attractive plaque which is set on the porch.

Salisbury - Queen's Arms (SU 146 298)
The Queen's Arms in Ivy Street lays claim to holding the longest continuous licence in Salisbury, since 1558. Until recently (2015) the commemorative plaque on the side of the public house was a red oval matching the other signage on the building. It has changed to a large circular blue plaque, but has the same wording, presumably to match the Salisbury Civic Society blue plaque scheme in the city.

The present building dates from the early eighteenth century, but altered in the nineteenth century according to the Grade II listing. Clearly the Queen's Arms as a named public house on this site has held the licence, not the actual building, which must have been rebuilt.

