Queen Elizabeth I is said to have called St Mary Redcliffe with its 292 ft spire "The fairest, goodliest, and most famous parish church in England."

HISTORIC CITIES

BRISTOL

PART ONE

BRIAN ROBERTS    FRANK FERRIS
Cabot Tower on Brandon Hill. Building of 106 ft Tower 1897-1898.
Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge, begun in 1846 and used chains recovered from Brunel's Hungerford Bridge over London's River Thames
The bridge was completed five years after his death in 1864

HERITAGE VISITS
SS Great Britain, Brabazon Hangar, E.S. & A. Robinson Offices, W.D. & H.O Wills Hartcliffe Factory & Offices, St. Mary Redcliffe, Corn Exchange, Theatre Royal, Council House now City Hall.

BRUNEL'S BRISTOL
I.K. Brunel, Clifton Suspension Bridge, Black Rock Pumping Station, Old Temple Meads Railway Sheds & Station, SS Great Western, SS Great Britain.

BRISTOL AS IT WAS
In page order:
St. Mary Redcliffe, Cabot Tower, Clifton Suspension Bridge, CWS Depot, Great Western Cotton Factory, CWS Flour Mill, Fry Manufactory, Roger Brewery, Victoria Rooms, University Tower, Colston Almshouses, Steep Street, Fourteen Stars Tavern, St. Michaels Church, Cotham Tower, Charles Wills Factory, Floating Harbour, Welsh-Redcliffe Backs, Royal York Crescent, Christmas Steps, Old Market, Zetland Road Junction, Bristol Bridge, Horse Fair, View over City of Bristol.
SS GREAT BRITAIN, BRISTOL

The SS Great Britain, passenger steam ship of 1845 and now a museum, in dock in Bristol.

Designed by Kingdom Isambard Brunel for the transatlantic service between Bristol and New York City, she was initially the longest passenger ship in the world and the first to combine an iron hull and a screw propeller in one vessel. The ship is 322 ft in length with a displacement of 3400 tons. She provided four decks of accommodation for a crew of 120 and for some 360 passengers who had cabins and dining and promenade saloons. She was powered by two huge inclined, direct-acting, 2-cylinder engines with twin high pressure cylinders (diameter uncertain) and twin low pressure cylinders (88 inches bore) by 6 ft stroke. She was also provided with secondary masts for sail power.

When launched, Great Britain was by far the largest vessel afloat. The high construction cost, and the cost of refloating the ship after it ran aground in what is now Northern Ireland, forced the owners out of business. In 1852, she was salvaged and repaired and carried thousands of immigrants to Australia, was converted to all-sail in 1881, and retired in 1884 to the Falkland Islands. Here she was used as a warehouse, a quarantine ship and coal hulk until being scuttled and sunk in 1937. In 1970, she was raised and repaired enough to be towed back to dry dock in Bristol where originally built. Restored, the SS Great Britain is now a visitor attraction and museum ship in Bristol Harbour.
BRABAZON HANGAR, FILTON

Constructing the huge assembly building at Bristol’s Filton Aerodrome began in 1946. The heating system for the three bays required 80 steam unit heaters.

Steam was generated by 4 Economic type boilers in an adjacent boilerhouse.
E S & A Robinson, Bristol, 1962
The original office building of the packaging and printing firm of Robinson appears in old Bristol photographs of the 1880s. The building was seriously damaged by fire in 1903 and partially destroyed in the blitz of 1940. The new 15-storey headquarters of the E S & A Robinson Group was designed by John Collins of their architects department. It was one of the first major UK office blocks to be air conditioned, the design and installation being carried out by G N Haden & Sons Ltd. The system was of the perimeter induction type, using 810 units. The refrigeration plant comprised of two centrifugal water chillers, each of 300 TR capacity. The heating plant was three packaged HPHW economic shell type boilers, each rated at 3.25 million Btu/h, operating at 6 bar and 300 degF. Research by the Heritage Group has unearthed original construction photographs, installation drawings and the commissioning plan.
In 1975, the building of a new manufacturing facility and administrative headquarters for the Wills Tobacco Company was completed at Hartcliffe, then on the outskirts of Bristol. At the time it was the largest tobacco processing factory in Europe, initially employing 3500 people. Being away from the City, the facilities provided included banks, shops, a post office and restaurants. A large car-park was provided, hidden beneath the factory. There was a bus shelter with link tunnels to both the factory and office block. The offices were designed in the modern "American Style" of the time, which included the damming of a stream to create the lake from which the building rises. Another feature was the structure, which used "Cor-ten steel" a complex alloy designed to oxidise naturally into a maintenance-free, rust-brown finish.

The factory and offices were fully air conditioned, the factory having numerous local air handling units. There was a central boilerhouse, while the refrigeration plant employed four 1000 TR absorption chillers (4000 TR total).

However, with a sharp decline in smoking the factory was closed in 1990 and demolished, the site regenerated over the years, is now is the Imperial Retail Park, a mixture of supermarkets, shops, restaurants and leisure facilities. In 2007, the offices were converted into the Lakeside luxury flats.
THE CITY OF BRISTOL

Church of St Mary, Redcliffe, Redcliffe Way, Grade I, late C12

Famously described by Queen Elizabeth I as "the fairest, goodliest, and most famous parish church in England" it is the tallest building in Bristol. The spire damaged by lightning in 1446 was rebuilt in 1872 and stands at a height of 89 m.

The Exchange, Corn Street, Grade I, 1743

The Exchange was built in 1741–43 by John Wood the Elder and is the only surviving 18th-century exchange building in England. Outside the building are four bronze tables dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, known as "nails," at which merchants carried out their business, possibly the origin of the saying "paid on the nail." At the front of the building is a clock showing both Greenwich Mean Time and "local time."
THE CITY OF BRISTOL

The Theatre Royal, King Street, Grade I, from 1764-66

The Theatre Royal, the oldest continually-operating theatre in the English-speaking world, was built between 1764 and 1766 and has been called "the most beautiful theatre in England." Today it is the home of the Bristol Old Vic.

City Hall, College Green, Grade II*, 1935-52

City Hall (formerly the Council House) has been the seat of local government in Bristol since 1956. It was designed and partially built in the 1930's and completed after World War II. The architect was Vincent Harris.

Mechanical Services: Arthur Scull & Son
Consultant J Roger Preston & Partners

Sulzer 6.6 kV off-peak electrode boilers serving the LPHW thermal storage heating system

The Council Chamber air handling unit

Boiler Room control panel
ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL 1806-1859

Young Brunel at the beginning of his career. Before him is spread his survey for the Great Western Railway. Portrait by John Horsley. Photo Public Record Office.
Brunel’s first great professional success was to win the second Suspension Bridge competition in March, 1831. He managed by brilliant discourse and skillful demonstration with drawings to have his ‘Egyptian thing quite extravagantly admired by all and unanimously adopted’. Lithograph in the Bristol Reference Library from an original drawing in the Swindon Railway Museum. Photo John Cornwell.
The bridge nearing completion. Work resumed in June 1863 and by May of the following year, the chains from Brunel’s Hungerford Bridge were in position.

*Postcard: Lionel Reeves.*

*Clifton Suspension Bridge nearing Completion*
Clifton Suspension Bridge, December 8th, 1864. The Opening Ceremony involved three processions: first, the military, followed by the friendly and benefit societies and trade organisations and finally the gentry. The Lords Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and Somerset declared the bridge open and their counties united.
BRIDGE STATISTICS

Finished on a simplified modification of Brunel’s design by John Hawkshaw and W. H. Barlow, the bridge still gives pleasure and utility to thousands of people every year.

Photo: John Trelawny-Ross.

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<td>1332 ft.</td>
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<td>Span between piers</td>
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<td>Width</td>
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<td>Height of piers</td>
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<td>Number of suspension rods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total weight</td>
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Black Rock Pumping Station, Avon Gorge, 1845. Brunel designed this fantastic engine house to pump water from a large spring to supply water for Clifton. The Society of Merchant Venturers, patrons of the scheme, were bought out by the newly formed Bristol Water Company.

Photo Bristol City Museum.
The original Temple Meads goods shed. Bourne lithograph.
This lithograph by J. C. Bourne (1842) captures the beautiful spatial grandeur of this earliest surviving railway terminus. The mock hammerbeam roof, the arcades of Tudor arches and the broad gauge lines, engines and carriages evoke the glamour and excitement of rail travel in the early days.
TEMPLE MEADS RAILWAY STATION c.1852

Temple Meads Station. The northern end of Brunel’s engine shed is on the right. In the top left is the grand Jacobean-style Bristol and Exeter Railway office of 1852.

Photo John Cornwell.
Brunel’s first ship. *The launching of the Great Western*, 1837, an impression by the marine painter Arthur Wilde Parsons. The ship was launched from a dock near the Prince Street swing bridge and the Bristol Industrial Museum. A plaque records the event.

City Art Gallery: the painting hangs in the Old Council House, Corn Street.
The launch of the SS Great Britain on July 19th, 1843. Here we see her floating out of the dock specially constructed for her and the place to which she returned 127 years later. In the illustration she floats high in the water because her engines had not been fitted. She was the first ocean-going ship to be built of iron and driven by screw propeller.

Bristol City Museum.

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<td>Breadth</td>
<td>51 ft.</td>
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<td>Capacity</td>
<td>360 passengers</td>
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**LAUNCH OF THE GREAT BRITAIN**

**GRAND STAND.**

**BEST SIGHT**

Ballast-Wharf, Hotwell-road, immediately opposite the head of the ship, where the best accommodation may be had.

For tickets of admission apply to Mr. SLOCOMBE, Builder, at the Wharf, or at his Yard, Cave-Street, Portland-Square.

Poster advertising seats to witness the historic event.

*Photo Bristol City Museum.*
The Great Britain in 1981, in her final home in the city of Bristol.
Photo SWPA.
CWS WESTERN DEPOT opened 1906

GREAT WESTERN COTTON FACTORY c.1830
ROGERS JACOB STREET BREWERY built 1865
Designed in 1832, begun in 1839 Opened 1842
THE GRANARY built 1869
UNIVERSITY REFECTORY, MUSEUM & ART GALLERY, WILLS TOWER

Former Bristol Library and Philosophical Institution, City Museum and Art Gallery 1899 – 1904, Wills Memorial Tower 1904

COLSTON ALMSHOUSES
ST. MICHAELS HILL
CORNER, STEEP & TRENCHARD STREETS
1866
FOURTEEN STARS TAVERN
demolished 1857
ST. MICHAELS CHURCH on the Mount Without rebuilt 1777, now closed
CHAS. WILLS FACTORY
RUPERT STREET built 1890
WELSH BACK FLOATING HARBOUR
opened 1809

REDCLIFFE BACK FLOATING HARBOUR
opened 1809
ROYAL YORK CRESCENT & SION HILL
CHRISTMAS STEPS

Viewed from Colston Street
BRISTOL BRIDGE

HORSEFAIR c.1955

BEFORE THE JOHN LEWIS STORE IS BUILT
Aerial view of floating harbour, Queen Square, Bristol Bridge and Old City - Bristol.

BRISTOL

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

1982 Brunel's Bristol, R.A. Buchanan & M. Williams, Redcliffe Press, Bristol.
2013 Textile Mills of South West England, Mike Williams, English Heritage, Swindon.

For further research refer to
THE REECE WINSTONE COLLECTION: BRISTOL AS IT WAS
Reece published 37 volumes of photographs from the collection. His son, John has published a further seven volumes, including an index of photographs.

BRIAN ROBERTS, Budleigh Salterton, 2022