



Exploring the Market Place: past and present

Heritage Open Days
Organised by Salisbury
Civic Society

Bradbeers

41 to 44 Blue Boar Row

The Blue Boar Inn, set back a little from Blue Boar Row itself on the north side of the Market Place, was probably developed from an earlier merchant's courtyard house. A small part of the original inn remains in the restaurant in Bradbeers Department store. The dimensions of the current restaurant match those in the 1444 contract for the original building. The contract is preserved in the Salisbury Museum. The Ludlow family owned the building in 1448 and it was called the Blue Boar Inn by 1451. By 1595 the building belonged to Anthony Parry and the Innkeeper was George Story. The inn comprised a hall, 2 parlours, kitchen, buttery and cellar. In addition there were 17 chambers, and 8 shops/warehouses, further small rooms and a garden. A courtyard ran north to Chipper Lane, where Bradbeers now has a covered loading area. An aerial map of the block (or chequer) shows the rear area and a small adjacent garden. In the courtyard area 3 round stones set in a triangle with two iron studs are thought to mark the place of execution of Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham in 1483.

The last Landlord of the Blue Boar Inn was Robert Read who ran it from 1721. The Inn closed on his death and part of the Inn was pulled down. In 1825 the building that remained housed a library and reading room upstairs with shops below. Some of the upper rooms may remain as offices in the current store.

Style and Large, established in the early years of the 19th century, was based in Blue Boar row as wholesale and retail linen drapers, silk mercers and hosiers. Large was a linen draper and had leased part of the Vine Inn (now the home of Dinghams in the cheesemarket area between St Thomas' church and the Market house). Large subsequently transferred the lease in the 1860s to George Gerrish, another linen draper. By 1889, Style and Gerrish had combined and became a well established department store, initially described as an undertakers, linen and woollen drapers, carpet warehouse and tailors. By 1907 Style and Gerrish was described as a Draper, Silk Mercer, Hosier and Glover, milliner and dressmakers, carpet warehouse, and mourning and funeral furnisher. It continued as Style and Gerrish till the early 1970s.

By 1972 Debenhams had taken over the building and remained there till it closed in 2020. Bradbeers had already bought the building in 2009 and post Covid launched the new Bradbeers store in late 2023, a welcome addition to Blue Boar Row and continuing the history which began in 1803 when Style and Large set up their shop. Bradbeers has a restaurant in the oldest part of the building upstairs where the timbers are impressive and where some older photographs are on display.