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## Exploring the Market Place: past and present

Heritage Open Days  
Organised by Salisbury  
Civic Society

# Dinghams

## 28 Cheesemarket/Market Place

The Dinghams building has had a more chequered history than most. The building stands by the open area once known as the cheesemarket where dairy produce and corn were sold. The building appears to be of late 18th and early 19th century but the site was that of a very large mediaeval courtyard house dating from around 1400, parts of which still exist. The early house had nine ground floor rooms (including a large parlour hung with pictures) and eleven upper chambers before the house declined in status. Its later tenants included a tanner, a clothier and a goldsmith.

By the mid 1600's the house had become the Vine Inn and it stayed an Inn until 1861. Its ownership passed to the Corporation (in 1674) when its contents included a 'new' staircase parts of which are visible. By 1704 it was an Inn and theatre showing plays and circus acts. By the late 18th century it was used as a stagecoach stop and lost status when cockfighting was introduced. The medieval front was converted into Georgian style, with new sash windows. By 1793 ownership passed to the Church when the land on which the Guildhall now stands was exchanged for the Inn. Cockfighting stopped and part of the property was converted into shops.

In 1835 a row of buildings adjoining the Vine was pulled down in order to extend St Thomas' churchyard. Little now remains of the inn with the carriage way leading into the yard from Cheesemarket becoming a shop (number 28) although an 18th century close-stringed staircase remains. The northern part of the frontage has a jettied first floor behind 19th century and later facings and was known as 28a for many years. In the 1860s part of the building beside the river Avon was leased to St Thomas' church for a school to be built with a boys school on the ground floor and a girls school above. In 1861 the lease was transferred to Robert Large a linen draper, who transferred part of the premises for the building of the schools. The remaining premises were then transferred to another linen draper, George Gerrish. (see 41-44 Blue Boar Row).

The schools were demolished in the mid 1970s to enable two houses to be built one of which became St Thomas' Rectory.

The change in use of its early years has not been quite mirrored in the past 150 years but tenants have included plumbers and decorators, basket makers and the Needlework shop at 28a. The Guozi Chinese restaurant occupied part of the site for a number of years as did carpet shops including Carpetwise.

In 2001 Dinghams Cookshop took over the building and carried out considerable refurbishment, converting the layout to its present form while making great efforts to preserve the original character of the building. The main part of the central staircase in current use is of oak and is probably the one mentioned in a survey of 1647. The floor boards on the first floor are from an early date and may be original. Oak roof timbers were found during renovation work above the first floor ceiling.

Dinghams continues as a cookshop and features a busy cafe upstairs.