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Exploring the Market Place: past and present

Heritage Open Days
Organised by Salisbury
Civic Society

White Stuff

13 Butcher Row

Butcher Row is one of the rows of buildings which encroached upon the market place as temporary structures gave way to shop houses and merchants houses around and within the original Market square. Situated between the current Market Place and New Canal, (earlier called Canal and before that the Ditch), most of the buildings in the south side of the Row run through to New Canal, with entrances on both sides. The North side of Butcher row similarly has entrances to the north on Ox Row and to the south on Butcher Row. Fish Row to the east of Butcher Row also has entrances on both sides for most, but not all, of the shops. In early times this area of the market was where fish and meat were sold with animal slaughtering behind. Out-of-town meat suppliers were more often found on Ox Row.

Number 13 is of two storeys and has entrances on both sides of the building. In the later years of the 19th century through to 1927 it was a series of coffee taverns, offering a central meeting place in the market area. Around the turn of the century and for some years after it was the Victoria Temperance hotel and Coffee tavern.

In 1927 it became a branch of David Greig, one of a chain of grocery stores that had grown from a single provisions shop in Hornsey, north London which opened in 1870 and was run by Mary Greig whose husband David was a cabinet maker and shopfitter from Scotland. Their son David joined her in the business and by 1881 was ready to open his first shop in Brixton above which he and his wife lived. The businesses thrived and by 1912 the family had settled in a mansion in Kent. Their Scottish heritage was reflected in their stores with thistle tiling and ironwork, as can be seen in 13 Butcher Row where the thistle tiling remains on the east wall and a thistle is set into the floor under a glazed cover. The thistle was also the sign and name of their own brand goods.

David's son David Ross Greig followed his father into the business, a key competitor to Sainsburys for some years. Greig opened the first self service grocery shop in the UK in 1923. David Greig died in 1958, leaving his son running the business. In the 1960s there were over 220 David Greig shops spread around the south. The business remained in Salisbury until the mid 1970s.

By 1979 number 13 had become Millwards footwear before being occupied in 1990 by Clarks footwear and Tondeuse hair (possibly with Clarks on Butcher row and Tondeuse hair on New Canal, probably upstairs). In 1995 it was a single shop again, selling cards, then a bookshop. By 1999 it was a household goods shop, with a separate entrance from New Canal which led to JAShair (now in New Street) probably upstairs. White Stuff took over the complete shop in 2005 and remains there to this day.