

Post building 'not hideous' shock

REGULAR readers of this column will know we've recently been banging on about the importance of preserving Bristol's older buildings.

To most BT readers this is probably about as controversial as singing the praises of motherhood 'n' apple pie.

But it's not too long now before we start to have a serious talk about some of Bristol's 20th century buildings.

The article about the "Post & Press" building on Temple Way (pages 2 & 3) got me to thinking.

See, there are a lot of people who will tell you it's hideous. You might think it's hideous. Some of the people who work in it probably think it's hideous. (I would have stood at the staff entrance between 8am and 9am of a weekday morning to conduct a straw poll, but I couldn't be bothered to get up that early. Dedication to the job only goes so far.)

But I'm here to tell you it's not hideous. Not at all. Nosireebob with a cherry and sprinkles on.

Number One Temple Way is one of the few really good works of 20th century architecture in Bristol.

Its brown-purple walls and strong lines make it look like some 1930s Futurist sculpture of a fortress, which is just what you need in the middle of the brutal environment of a big, noisy road.

In fact, if it was left to me I'd take a chainsaw to all the trees blocking the view of the building, but this would probably incur the wrath of assorted tree-huggers. And, to be fair, the trees themselves.

We could also go off on one about how the design also speaks of the power and uncompromising integrity of the press (or the hated "mainstream media" as extremists of the left and right call anything that isn't a fake news website from one of Putin's Troll Farms that fuels their prejudices and insane conspiracy theories) but that risks us crashing into Pseud's Corner.

It's not the only good 20th century edifice in Bristol.

The DRG Building (by the same architect) is widely admired, for instance, as is Clifton Cathedral.

Others are less popular, and some are in line for the chop.

Probably the best known example of the latter would be the Norwich Union and Bank of England buildings, though they've been on Death Row for ages.

It would be scandalous to demolish the NU building, a strong design of its time, if all we get in its place are some generic flats and offices.

But how about you? Which 20th century Bristol buildings would you want saved for future generations? The Letters page awaits your views.

IKB in thriller mystery shock

Brunel's Vision - One Single Ticket is the title of a new audio drama which will be launched at the Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre on December 1.

The story mixes fact and fiction, real and invented characters. At the



■ The Post building photographed from a tethered balloon in Broadmead (note the shadow!) in the late 1990s.



■ Robert Wallace in appropriate setting.

centre of things is Brunel, who is preparing to launch a new scheme which will enable passengers to travel from London to New York via Bristol on "one single ticket".

Your hero is Victorian private investigator Harry Brooke, ex- of the 44th Foot and a veteran of the recent Afghan War (they had them in Victorian times, too) who uncovers a plot to interfere with Brunel's plans.

The author is Bristol-born Robert Wallace, whom longstanding readers may remember as the author of a number of ghost stories published in the Post some years ago. These and others were later collected and published as *Clara's Secret and Other Bristol Mysteries*.

Mr Wallace discovered an interesting mystery at the heart of Brunel's Bristol career (we're not going to give any plot spoilers here!) when reading archival documents. He has spent 18 months working with researcher Stuart Amesbury

to build the core elements of the mystery.

Working with Director and Co-Producer Paul Richards, they recruited a cast and crew from the Clifton Amateur Dramatics Society, the Kelvin Players and the St. Alban's Players.

Music Technology students from the University of the West of England captured these performances and created a Victorian soundscape under the tuition of Martyn Harries, Senior Lecturer, Audio and Music Technology.

The adventure comes with the endorsement of Professor Angus Buchanan, one of the world's leading Brunel experts, who says: "It is actually a nice yarn, told at a breathless pace ... It is a sort of detective story, with a Richard Hannay type of hero straight out of a John Buchan thriller, and it goes with a swing."

It will be available on CD and as a digital download from www.brunelsvision.co.uk and shops

throughout the city. Advance copies will be available from the Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre, price £15.99, by the time you read this.

If you'd like to attend the launch event on December 1 at 6.30pm, see <http://tinyurl.com/y7ocudrm> for details and booking. You can find more on Robert Wallace's work at www.rob-wallace.co.uk.

Cary in the Cathedral

Don't know about you but I'm slightly dreading the bit coming in the run-up to Christmas when someone will lecture me on the wonderfulness of *It's A Wonderful Life*.

I defer to no-one in my admiration of James Stewart, by all accounts as great a man in person as he was on the screen, but I've seen the film twice now and don't need to be told how it's a great Christmas movie that, you know, puts you in touch

with the Really Important Things in Life.

If you want to get in touch with your spiritual side on December 24, go to Midnight Mass or spend some quality time with a Mindfulness Colouring Book.

(I mean, do you need any more evidence that the human race is doomed than colouring books for grown-ups? Back in the 1970s comedians could raise an easy laugh by saying so-and-so - insert stupid person of choice here - was devastated by the loss of his/her book ... "because s/he hadn't finished colouring it in!!" Hargh!)

It also turns out that *It's A Wonderful Life* now has competition, in the form of a film with an even greater (with all possible respect to Jimmy Stewart) star.

Step forward please Mr Archie Leach of old Bristol town, who shares the top billing with David Niven in *The Bishop's Wife*, which is screening this Thursday (Nov 23) at Bristol Cathedral.

The 1947 film is being screened as part of the Cary Grant Comes Home for the Weekend Festival and we're being told it's "a Christmas film to rival *It's A Wonderful Life* as it's set at Christmas.

Cary Grant stars as a guardian angel sent down to help freshly-appointed Bishop Henry Brougham (Niven) raise the money for a new cathedral.

But while the bishop is busy he's neglecting some of the important things in life, such as Mrs Brougham (Loretta Young). But never mind; Cary is on hand for some innocent flirtation and a famous ice-skating scene.

The screening will be preceded by live music from Free Range A Capella and the UWE Big Band. And you get hot chocolate and popcorn, as well as an introductory talk from local boy made good, Col Needham, founder of the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com)

Sounds like a brilliant night out, doesn't it? And possibly the only chance you will ever have to eat popcorn in church.

Tickets are £14 (£12 concessions); ffi and booking see www.cary-comeshome.co.uk/events/the-bishop-wife.