

Stones of Stratford history



● Jon Craig, Stratford Society treasurer, Dr Robert Bearman, John Scampion, chairman of the Historic Spine Group, Terry Jones, Stratford Town Host, Joseph Baconnet, director, Stratford BID, Justin Williams, chief executive, Stratford Town Trust, Bennet Carr, headmaster, King Edward VI

School, Heather Lees, director of finance and planning, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Front, Elizabeth Dixon, Accessible Stratford, and with the plaque is Julie Crawshaw, chairman of the Stratford Society. (N13/10/17/4381)

By SIMON WOODINGS
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FIVE more historic spine plaques have been unveiled in Stratford as part of an ambitious scheme which could eventually see 24 in place across the town.

The latest additions include Shakespeare's daughter's home (Judith Quiney) on the corner of Bridge Street and High Street, The Garrick Inn, Stratford Town Hall, New Place and Mason Croft.

The new plaques join an existing one which was unveiled in front of the Guildhall in Church Street in April.

The scheme draws attention to some of the town's iconic buildings and is inspired by the Stratford Society's 'Historic Spine' concept, which seeks to emphasise the importance to the town's heritage of the route through the town from the Birthplace to Holy Trinity Church. The plaques have been made by the Chepstow ceramic designer, Ned Heywood.

John Scampion, chairman of the Historic Spine Group said: "The plaques act as a guide to the historic buildings in Stratford and show them off in all their splendour. Once completed the Town will have a trail of these colourful and informative tablets along the Historic Spine celebrating and describing many of the buildings forming such an important part of its heritage."

Julie Crawshaw, chairman of the Stratford society said: "Judging by the popularity of the Guildhall plaque, which was a bit like a trial one, we believe the latest plaques will be well received too."

"At the Guildhall I saw a young woman lying on the pavement taking a selfie of her and the plaque. We'd also like to thank Warwickshire County Council who have been really helpful because they waived fees for permits so the work to install the five most recent plaques could take place."

Adding a bit of haunted history to the plaques is the Garrick Inn in High Street.

Just right of the pub's front door a historic spine plaque was installed last week. Within hours of it setting



● The plaques outside Shakespeare's New Place, above, and below, the Garrick Inn on High Street and Stratford Town Hall on Sheep Street.

it had already created quite a bit of interest among the public, says landlord Chris Burton who runs the pub with his wife Lynette.

"It depicts the famous Shakespearean actor David Garrick next to a bust of Shakespeare and is quite appropriate not just because of the Shakespeare connection but also because David Garrick was born 300 years ago this year," Chris said.

The Garrick is an Elizabethan half-timbered building and a Medieval structure was previously on the same site and was also used as an inn. The Garrick is reputedly haunted and Colin confirmed this.

He said: "I've seen bayonet light-bulbs fly out from their sockets on two separate occasions in broad daylight. Myself and a colleague have seen a shadowy figure run from the bar area towards the cellar when the pub has been padlocked and closed so there is no way anyone could have got in," said Chris.

It's hoped that a seventh plaque will be unveiled before the end of the year.

