

Alton Sculpture Trail

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Things you may ask yourself about individual sculptures you discover may include - do you like its location; what is it made of; does it have a use; is it there simply to be looked at; can you climb on it; how would you describe it to a friend; how large (or small!) is it; is it old or new; does it depict a famous person or notable event.

What is sculpture?



Sculpture can mean different things to different people and this trail aims to help you discover what could be considered sculptural in your local town.

Location map

1. Railway Arms public house
2. The Telephone Exchange
3. The Mile Plate
4. The Post Box
5. The Hanging Bracket
6. Little Green Dragon
7. The Cairn in Crown Close
8. Travel Bag
9. 12 High Street
10. Westbrook Walk
11. The Boot Scraper
12. Cross & Pillory House
13. Public Gardens
14. Town Hall
15. St Lawrence church
16. The Cemetery
17. The Allen Gallery



Railway Arms public house

The railway engine emerging from the front wall was made by Richard Farrington in 2003, a sculptor originally from London but who now works in Alton. He was fascinated by collecting objects when he was young and this has influenced him in making his larger sculptural objects today. The inspiration for the piece came from a painting called Time Transfixed by Belgian impressionist artist Rene Magritte.



We also see here a small bronze sculpture of two brewers, also by Richard Farrington (2004). It is quite a delicate object but it shows us how a large barrel could be moved. It is based on an eighteenth century woodcut used on a pub sign in Covent Garden. The steps they are climbing refer to the Triple FFF Brewery's beer named after the 1971 Led Zeppelin song, Stairway to Heaven. The contrast between the subject matter and materials used is quite interesting in these two items.



The Telephone Exchange

The carved stone on this building on the opposite side of the road tells us that this is an official building. It was built during the short reign of Edward VIII following the death of his father, George V, in January 1936 and before Edward's abdication in December the same year. There could just be a sign with the royal symbol on but this is more decorative and exciting. We are drawn to it by the way it stands out from the wall.



The Mile Plate

The 19th century mile plate on the entrance pillar to the Alton House Hotel is in similar style to the carved stone we saw earlier. Though it is not as grand, it is still an informative and functional piece of work. Winton is a shortened form of Winchester that takes up less space and so was smaller [and cheaper] to produce.



The Post Box

The Post Box on the footpath to Nether Street - is a free standing sculpture which includes the Queen's symbol - her cipher (initials!) and the Crown. Unlike today, there was no set design for post boxes when they were first introduced in 1852, but they are still colourful and decorative features. Do they need to be so?



The Hanging Bracket

The hanging bracket on the wall of the former Lion Off Licence was made by Nimrod Lock, a local blacksmith who lived in Normandy Street many years ago. It supports the projecting sign and is very decorative.

It is accompanied by the ever watchful red lion over the front door - not surprising when you know the building used to be a pub called the Red Lion.



Little Green Dragon

The sign here is a fun and original decorative sculpture by Richard Farrington. The paint palette is in a fairly two dimensional shape but with the addition of the paint and brushes it turns it into a sculptural sign with a traditional, functional role which tells us what the shop sells.



The Cairn in Crown Close

The granite structure with its bronze memorial was unveiled in September 1920 and is considered a sculpture because of the materials used and how it manipulates the space around it.



Travel Bag

Travel Bag - has a three dimensional sign on the wall showing a clock. It relates to the watch maker and jewellers shop that used to be here - however it still seems appropriate - the idea of travel and time - a holiday!



12 High Street

This was the location of a former Victorian pub called The Castle which closed in 1971 and it has terracotta (baked red clay) tiles on the front wall and over one doorway, whilst another has a pierced iron panel. You wouldn't usually see these on the outside wall of a pub. Why are they there? How much is it meant to be decoration? How much architecture?



Westbrook Walk

The Bear by Mark Coreth was installed in October 2005, a very large bronze sculpture which is interesting to look at. I wonder why it was placed here?



The Boot Scraper

The boot scraper by the front step of 100 High Street is a little gem. It is well worn through use, probably over the past two hundred years, and with its wings looks rather like an Egyptian cat. Cats were an important part of Egyptian religion. Some Egyptian cat art statues are part human which symbolises the goddess Bastet. Ancient Egyptians did not separate the human and animal kingdoms when worshipping their Gods.



Cross & Pillory House

Look here for the terracotta tiles over the Cross & Pillory Lane entrance and brick carving in a medieval style on the pillar in the centre of the building which was put up in 1982. What are the figures on the pillar doing?



Public Gardens

There are many sculptural objects which can be seen here. The children's climbing frame in the playground uses many different kinds of materials and creates a range of surfaces which are fun to play on.

The bandstand-type shelter with circular seat was placed here in 2005. The thatched bandstand nearby was built for the Silver Jubilee of King George V (the grandfather of our Queen) in 1935.



Busts - the two of these (both on plinths to bring them up to a viewable height) were probably placed here when it was a private asylum that closed over one hundred years ago. These sculptures are both made of marble and as you can see, they have suffered from vandalism and the weather over the years.

The circular fountain which is at the far end of the park was originally next to the Curtis Museum (where The Cairn is now) though some of the features are missing.



Town Hall

The weather vane on top of the clock on the roof shows a running fox, copied from the original that was given to the Curtis Museum many years ago.



St Lawrence church

St George

St Lawrence church, like many other churches and cathedrals, is a 'feast' of sculptures.

The Lady Chapel was converted into the Chapel of St Michael and St George so those who fought and died in the First World War would be remembered.



St Lawrence Pulpit

The pulpit is from the seventeenth century and is a very decorative piece of woodwork for its time.



St Lawrence Croziers

The two Croziers were carved into the walls of the Chancel in the 1300s, to remind people of their spiritual overlords. The crozier is a staff (a bit like a shepherd's crook) carried by a Bishop.



Corbels

The Corbels (a support for the roof timbers at the top of the wall) were carved in the fifteenth century. They show heads thought to be the vicar, the King and perhaps some of the Canterbury pilgrims.



Top of pillars

When the Norman tower was built some eight hundred years ago, animals were carved into the top of the pillars of the curved arches supporting it.

What do you think they might be?



The Brass Eagle

The brass Eagle that forms the lectern (the support for the bible when readings are made during a service) is generally thought to be a symbol of rebirth, based upon an early belief that the bird would periodically renew its plumage and youth. This was done by flying near the sun and then plunging into water.

Above the door in the porch you will find a large painted wood sculpture of the Royal Arms - the shield at the centre surrounded by the Lion and Unicorn. The arrangement of the symbols on the shield (what are they?) is rather different from the one we are used to today and dates from 1811 when King George III was on the throne. The idea of putting the Royal Arms in churches seems to date back some 470 years to the time of King Henry VIII when he declared himself head of the Church.



The Cemetery

Headstones can be very sculptural forms - here you can find an angel, a dove and a small child which represent love and peace. These were carved in marble - relatively easy to work but not always a hard wearing material when used outside. The gravestones for soldiers who died in the Two World Wars have a uniform shape and show carved regimental badges. Many other gravestones have interesting styles of lettering.



Allen Gallery

Dancing Girls

As you might expect this is a place well worth visiting to see a range of interesting artistic materials.

Roger Burnett, a Yorkshire-based sculptor, sculpted the bronze cast of the Dancing Girls that you see in the garden, based on two of his daughters. It was made in 2000 for a sculpture exhibition in the [Allen Gallery](#).



Bust of unknown woman

This life size, white marble bust dates from 1837 and was sculpted by Peter Rouw. An easier alternative was developed a few years later with the introduction of Parian Ware - a distinct form of white porcelain. Examples can be seen in the cases opposite the window.



Clytie

This Parian porcelain bust by C Delpech portrays Clytie, who in Greek legend was in love with the sun god Apollo. However, Delpech chose as his model an ancient Roman bust, now in the British Museum, which is believed to represent Antonia, the daughter of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra.'



Walking Stick stand

A design by an unidentified artist dated June 1852, but perhaps made up to a few years later.



Dolores at The Allen Gallery

Sculpted by Jacob Epstein, 1923. When he made many studies of his model Dolores he felt this bronze cast, his third study, was 'tragic and magnificent'.



Shire horse

Figure of a Shire horse: made by the studio potter, Reginald Wells in around 1928. Wells was interested in early English and in ancient Chinese ceramics, the influence of both appearing in his work.

Wells began making earthenware, lightly fired objects, in Kent as this was where slipware was produced in the seventeenth century.



Blue Lion

A souvenir of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924. It was designed by Percy Metcalfe, etc, etc. (Or: inscribed 'Souvenir of the British Empire Exhibition'). This exhibition took place at Wembley in 1924. The lion was the exhibition's logo and was designed by Percy Metcalfe and made by the Ashted Pottery in Surrey.



Angel with shield

Angel with shield made by John Maltby in 1999. This brown stoneware figure with its smiling, heart-shaped face, exemplifies a revival of Maltby's interest in ceramic sculpture after a long period of making pots.



Figure of First World War soldier

A figure known as 'Blighty', after the WWI slang for time spent in England recovering from wounds. It was designed for production by Doulton by a Stoke-on-Trent art master named E W Light. (The glaze includes titanium oxide, but it's known as 'Titanian', a trade name.)



Figure of a girl

Figure of a girl leaning against a fountain: Made of white marble it is signed 'F GULIELMI F ROMA (the F presumably stands for Fecit, i.e. 'made in'). 1790-1820.



Hands of the Potter

Designed by the sculptor Colin Melbourne to be produced in a limited edition by Wedgwood in 1979.



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You may be interested to look out for sculptures, both old and new, when you go to other towns. There is the Lion and Lamb in Farnham carved by Edwin Russell in 1886; In Petersfield look for the Rams Walk sculpture of the Shepherd in the shopping arcade of the same name, made by Andrew Cheese and unveiled in 1998, whilst in The Square is a lead figure of King William III, depicted as a Roman Emperor seated on horse back, erected in 1757 and moved here 200 years ago. A number of fascinating modern and traditional pieces may also be found in Basingstoke, Winchester and Guildford.

Indeed, why not start off by looking in your pocket. The coins that you find bear a sculpted image of The Queen and by comparing different coins you may be surprised to learn that there are four images of her. All were sculpted by notable artists - pre decimal coins up until 1970 bore the work of Mary Gillick, later artists are Arnold Machin used from 1968-1984, Raphael Maklouf used from 1985-1997 and Ian Rank-Broadley from 1998. Look out on your coins for their initials! Can you find them?