Bristol: A Poetic City

An Anthology of New Poetry to Mark the 250th Anniversary of the Death of Thomas Chatterton

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Published by Bristol Cultural Development Partnership

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2020 marks 250 years since the death of Bristol-born poet Thomas Chatterton.

A Poetic City is a multi-partner, city-wide programme led by Bristol Cultural Development Partnership that explores the legacy of this iconic literary figure. It aims to build on existing knowledge of Chatterton's life and times; celebrate Bristol's current vibrant and diverse poetry scene; and inspire poets of the future.

Chatterton's story also provides an opportunity to examine a range of contemporary themes such as: artistic credulity and credibility; fake news and fake art; young artists; arts and mental health; ongoing barriers to accessing culture in the city; the nature of celebrity; and the nurturing of creativity.

The programme has needed to adjust to the unexpected impact of Covid-19 but still includes new publications in addition to exhibitions, writing residencies, talks and walks (some of which may still take place in person rather than online).

For the latest news and for links to archival material, check our Facebook page: **www.facebook.com/bristolpoeticcity #bristolpoeticcity**

We hope you enjoy this anthology which comprises 12 poems specially commissioned through Lyra – Bristol Poetry Festival; a new poem by Bristol City Poet Vanessa Kisuule; and an updated version of BCDP's Bristol and Romanticism walk.

Lyra – Bristol Poetry Festival/

'The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,' wrote Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; / And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown.'

For this project we invited 12 poets – six from Bristol and six from around the UK – to respond to Henry Wallis' iconic painting 'Chatterton' on the 250th anniversary of the poet's death. Wallis shows the teenager moments after allegedly taking his own life, presenting a lurid glamorisation of the age-old (and, to some, pernicious) motif of the 'doomed artist'. (It is now widely acknowledged that the death was accidental.) The range of responses to this painting and to Chatterton's legacy illustrates a phenomenal breadth of powerful poetic devices, images, forms and unique angles, in the incomparably visionary medium of poetry. These poets often employ anachronisms to deliberately contrast with Chatterton's own Romantic sensibilities and grasping at the sublime, and instead humanise him in modern, real-world scenarios.

Keith Jarrett's two-part poem queries the quasi-historical accounts which, 'love to ventriloquise the dead,' before proceeding to critique the painter Wallis himself for his depiction of Chatterton's final moments: 'I'm not sure suicide is sexy.' The poet, who has also 'known shadows', acknowledges that he at least has agency over his outlook, and is, perhaps, guilty of the same things as the painter: 'You chose the oils to portray the room. I choose mine.' Caleb Parkin's poem situates Chatterton himself in this modern society, depicting how the tortured artist still exists in 'every man I've known / who's shredded his real voice'. Parkin's poem playfully satirizes the conflicting views of Chatterton's life, death and works, blending the modern world with the one Chatterton left behind: 'Inevitably, he memes: grows whiskers, a marmalade tail.'

Tom Sastry also interrogates the character of Chatterton from different historical perspectives, imagining him at an open mic night in 1770, as he 'Fought with the mic stand' and 'went on about his blog.' The painting's onlooker in 2020 sees how 'any one of us, in that moment / could have been enough,' a haunting final image, suggesting a message of human connectivity superseding that of academic disagreement. Chris McCabe's modern-day cultural commentator is a therapist unable to access the true nuanced emotional depth of Chatterton's character. Its form, a homage to Edwin Morgan's 'First Men on Mercury,' plays with the linguistic discrepancies of the interlocutors and the emotional disconnect of the therapist, as Chatterton responds to his so-called 'role in cultural life' by claiming 'Cultural lyvelyhode payde no enheedynge when I starved.'

Anthony Anaxagorou homes in on the window in the painting, more specifically 'The Only Window Alive,' positing it as 'a metaphor for those who find it / difficult to believe in the direction / they drag their bodies.' The question of 'how long it takes / to kill a toxic word' is followed by the only full stop used in the poem apart from the one at the end, before the rest of the piece is left searching for an endless answer, the endlessness of a window, an 'end of fire,' which is unknowable to the poet, yet 'seems to sing / to whatever it destroys.' Theresa Lola's poem instead investigates all possible reasons why the window in the painting might have been left open. Windows are mentioned seven times in the poem, each time with a new emphasis or description, and the parting message asks us all to devote this level of attention and detail to the memory of those we have lost: 'may the windows of our ears remain open / to hear the parts of your voice we missed.' Emily Berry also focuses on the window, with beautiful descriptions and images including one detailing how paintings of windows 'hold the light back. / How it never stops wanting to come in.' Playful in its quick-fire changes and blending of narrative perspectives, this small window of 14 lines shines a significant light on Chatterton's legacy.

The deductions that Josie Alford painstakingly draws from numerous objects in the painting piece together the unspoken complexities of a boy wearing 'a once-white shirt, dirtied / from the business of living.' The painting may exist only as an estimation, 'a body wear[ing] clothes,' but Alford invites her fellow onlookers to translate these images into 'a boy who was unafraid of colour' and eventually attribute meaning to 'The body that was a boy.' Contrastingly, Malaika Kegode instead details that which the painter neglected to illustrate: 'Perhaps he still had soil / under his fingernails.' The painting becomes a 'Colour-enriched tragedy' and a beauty that is 'wasted', as well as a heavy weight of uncertainty, forever burdening the poet in the painting; 'And perhaps death / feels like falling / but never hitting the ground.'

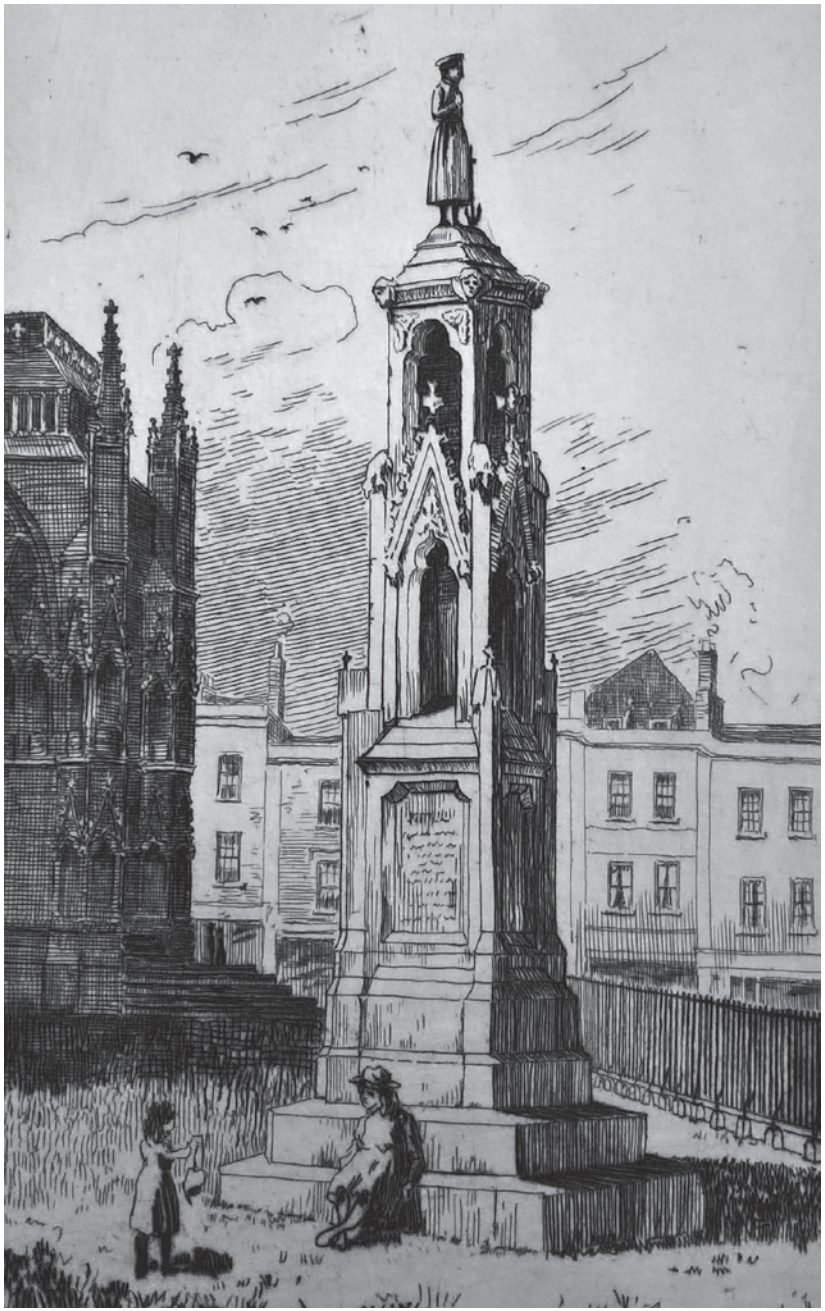
Rebecca Tantony's experimental poem consists entirely of words she found in Chatterton's letters and poetry, thereby imaginatively describing Chatterton in the third person, but in his own words. The result is a flurry of unique depictions, offered up in tribute to Chatterton's rich lexicon, hyperbolising and aggrandising him, in stark contrast to how Wallis' painting portrays him. Rachael Boast's poem also recalls the linguistic patterns and lexicon of the boy wonder. This time the character of Chatterton himself critiques the painting, as well as rebuking its sitter, George Meredith. The Chattertonian persistence of exclamation marks evokes a sense of energy and aliveness at odds with the mood of the painting. Chatterton re-writes his own legacy and paints a new image: 'I am the plume of violet smoke, the one rose, / I am all colours and I am not, Wallis, there at all!'

Fran Lock's poem poses questions surrounding the tension between mental health and creativity, legacy and humanity, preservation of art and self-preservation. The speaker mirrors the figure of Wallis' Chatterton in both subject and posture, 'those nights spent sat on the edge of the bed in sad face- / palming pareidolia,' yet it is unclear whether the presence of modern-day medication, which Chatterton could not access, has remedial effects. Beneath an impressive density of language and otherworldliness of thought, there is an

underlying sense that neither the artist's own work, nor its mimesis, will wholly illustrate the dark realities a person wrestles with: 'poem, this poem, an outline left of / me in chalk.'

The tragedy of Chatterton is the loss of such a unique young man and all of his potential creative future. The 12 poets here verbalise the knowledge that young lives are still being lost, and that other potentials and futures are still failing to be realised. These poets skilfully weave narratives around delicate issues of suicide, mental health and trauma, and the lens of Chatterton's legacy also becomes a vehicle for exploring the beauty, pain and struggles faced by those alive today.

Danny Pandolfi & Lucy English
Lyra Festival Co-Directors



Samuel Loxton's etching of the Chatterton Monument, 1901 (Bristol Reference Library B19670).

Caleb Parkin/

Image Search: The Death of Chatterton
after Henry Wallis, 'Chatterton' (1856)

In a café, I exhume Bristol's prodigal poet
imposter. A teenage star fallen, re-enacted
on canvas, and finally scattered online.

Dead Chattertons appear in a grid, like a
crowded hospital ward, in varying sizes,
resolutions, saturations. In some, over-

sized pixels seem to show his skull beneath
a translucent face; in others, you can almost
see his red hair grow. Watermarks tattoo him.

There are cover versions, homages: hyperreal
renderings with extra scars; dressed in African batik;
a collapse, staged on a New York subway train.

Inevitably, he memes: grows whiskers, a marmalade tail
which flops alongside what are now his kitten claws,
next to that wooden trunk, full of shredded drafts.

*

At college, my brother called us theatre kids
Twirlies: constantly aware we were performing.
Now, my image search shifts to every man I've

known who's shredded his real voice, hidden
it in a shadow of shouts beneath his bed,
among a silent grid of deleted men.

Now, I howl: *Chattertons, look! Your window is open.
Call to us.* The clouds will scatter in fragments
of draft, flurries of undesirable versions, voices –

and we'll dance in them. All Chattertons un-pose
from profile pictures, recompose to twirl, here
in technicolour streets – where scraps quiver

like cherry blossom, melt in our flaming hair.

Caleb Parkin is a day-glo queero techno eco poet and facilitator, based in Bristol. He's won or placed in various competitions and published widely in journals. His tutoring and facilitating work – in schools, museums, universities, festivals and beyond – is extensive. He was appointed Bristol's third City Poet in 2020, a role he will hold for two years.
www.couldbethemoon.co.uk

Emily Berry/

Pale Light

It was a strange time, and I loved to go to sleep,
I loved to go to the top of the hill in the pale light
of dawn and think back to the world I knew.
Just a reminder! That you are in a museum!
Girls, you should be listening. You have done
really well this morning. When someone dies
it is important to explain. But *why* couldn't the
doctors save him? the little girl wanted to know.
It was too hard, said her mother. He was too sick.
Once in a room full of dead men ornately framed,
children were invited to yell for joy, and they did.
A study of a crack like a sunburst on a windowpane.
I keep looking at paintings of windows. How they hold
the light back. How it never stops wanting to come in.

Emily Berry is the author of *Stranger, Baby* (Faber & Faber, 2017) and *Dear Boy* (Faber & Faber, 2013). She edits *The Poetry Review*.

Anthony Anaxagorou/

The Only Window Alive

I've always been charmed by corners,
the parts light struggles to accept,
who here knows how long it takes
to kill a toxic word. Who has ever
said a hateful thing to what will
never speak; a white wall where
visitors come with hand sanitiser
or Instagram accounts to marvel
at such a perfect composition,
the only window alive meaning
a metaphor for those who find it
difficult to believe in the direction
they drag their bodies – the worst
way to go is with knowing, I have
struggled to understand the end
of fire my whole life, not the thing
itself, more the way it seems to sing
to whatever it destroys.

Anthony Anaxagorou is a British-born Cypriot poet, fiction writer, essayist, publisher and poetry educator. His latest collection of poems *After the Formalities* was shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize.

Fran Lock/

From anatomies of melancholy
In which I am not Thomas Chatterton, Ian Curtis or Sylvia Plath

if birds have split the sky in two. if clouds as thin as shirts. if shirts as thin as the eyelids of the blind. if tongues break rank like weeds and leave the mouth, its fuehrer-bunker overrun. the suicide of saying. towns, if towns are blank expressions worn by motorways. my blue tattoo, the singing line made blatant skin. the libraries at night, illegal yellow light like gambling dens. or millionaires' aquariums. if my body is a poem, both hieroglyph and enzyme, a stain against striped mattresses. my body, lovely meat prescription, glowing like a gilded steak. phantom atlas, map of phantom pains. laid out beneath the open window in my squat just so. all those nights spent sat on the edge of the bed in sad face-palming pareidolia, trying to shut out the dead. but here they come, it's getting bad. at the clinic venlafaxine. how it sounds like science-fiction. *risperdal*, its patent name a second camelot. give me forms and the fitness to work, dear god. when the morning is a steel comb dragged across my face. get undressed, pitch nakedness like a fit. for a pair of purple britches, the glammy swoon of dying. to be beautiful and counterfeit; to whip my proley hopes into pentameter. i am a plain girl, genderless as a stab vest, thin girl lavishly schizophrene, androgynous as g.m corn, and my eyes can look *literal* daggers. in the mirror i watch my madness taking shape like a youtube tutorial for perfect hair. i can see *everything* in tiny microdot detail. i see the poem: a dirty word, spelled out backwards on a pocket calculator. i see publishers, binding our legends in human skin. if i refuse to eat. become a hair-serpent and find myself stubbornly purified. i am a dargerheart suspended like an olive in brine. most immaculate shipwreck, rudest north. if pain, like a toothpick stuck in a cherry. a poet is an octopus, her brain is in her eye. the eye is both a tyrant and a pervert. if tired of seeing. skin is a blanket statement. if chatterton, glowing, stoned. if chatterton, proto-cobain, stretched out in the grim luetic flux of his *genius*. medication makes me stupid as a shaken baby, half a brain paid for in instalments. poems elude me, and so i chant *richer, stranger* into the two quid chocolate cake mix. there is a chill and delicate agony, like a rip in a fingerprint. in a contest with the moon i am not even best at drowning. if i live. should i live? if i take my medication. if my benefits come through. poem, this poem, an outline left of me in chalk. if walls have ears. if woods can talk.

Fran Lock is a sometimes-itinerant dog whisperer and the author of seven poetry collections and numerous chapbooks, most recently *Contains Mild Peril* (Out-Spoken Press, 2019). She has recently gained her practice-based PhD at Birkbeck College, University of London, titled 'Impossible Telling and the Epistolary Form: Contemporary Poetry, Mourning and Trauma'.

Tom Sastry/

Three hot takes on the famous death of Thomas Chatterton

1. Genius (Royal Academy, 1856) (First exhibition of Henny Wallis' painting *Chatterton*, Royal Academy, 1856)

The painter makes you
the miracle the poet despaired of:
you are there
witnessing.

You must have heard the name
travelled, perhaps, to Bristol
on the new railway
seen the schoolhouse near the church

read the poems
felt in them the start of brilliance
vindicated the forger
damned his lofty enemies

sped back, eighty-six years to London
passed the locked door
told the world what was missed
in the *marvellous boy*.

2. Upstart (Open mic, Holborn, 1770)

He was tiny. Blue hair, unwashed.
Fought with the mic stand. No-one helped.
Weak voice, strong accent. A room full of lawyers.
He called them complacent, then went on about his blog.

Poems were crap: lots of *O Lord! O Muses!*
A few seconds in they were treating him as sport.
People laughed, threw coins. He didn't dodge them,
he stopped to pick them up. They threw more.

3. Child (Bristol, 2020) (Wallis' painting scheduled to be exhibited at the Royal West of England Academy, Bristol, 2020)

If you make it back in time
two hundred and fifty years now
bring more than admiration.
He needs money and friends.

About suffering, they were often wrong
the pre-Raphaelites
and not just them.
We tell our children *dying is not art*

no-one does it well
not on that *starry, starry night*. We're right
but living, not dying, is the puzzle
and honesty denies

a neat solution
so Wallis still haunts us with his. He says
any one of us, in that moment
could have been enough.

Tom Sastry is a Bristol-based poet. His first full collection *A Man's House Catches Fire* is published by Nine Arches Press.

Theresa Lola/

Possible Reasons the Window Was Left Open on That Day

Perhaps you spent each day by the window
adjusting your voice — until the sun fell
like a loose store sign. You concluded
that no matter how many times
you throw your voice
out of the window
it would never be a radiant or long enough bedsheet
to signal the attention of people with.

Perhaps you wanted your poems to fly
out of the window
and transform into a chorus of purple rain
bystanders will have no choice but to take notice of,
to let it soak their skin,
to let it sit inside them the way it sat inside you.

Perhaps there is someone who came into your life
through the rich sand coloured window
not through the bolted carnelian door
You left the window open in case of spontaneity
You feared they loved the act of sneaking in
more than they loved the act of loving you.

Perhaps you left the window open
so God could find your dead body.
Dear child of sorrow,
may we remember the majestic shade of your voice,
may the windows of our ears remain open
to hear the parts of your voice we missed.

Theresa Lola is a British Nigerian poet, writer and tutor. Her debut poetry collection *In Search of Equilibrium* is published by Nine Arches Press. She was appointed 2019/2020 Young People's Laureate for London.

Josie Alford/

Components of the Death of a Poet

'and this is what it is like or what it is like in words' – Carol Ann Duffy

It is early morning. It is dusk.
Either way, candles are useless.
Beyond a window barely holding itself
together, a city fades into indifference.
Torn and fallen writing
mediocrity or brilliance manifest,
lies patiently for a someone
to assign them significance.
Emptied of death, a bottle
does not disclose its intent or accident.
Made for one, a bed holds
the weight of the death of a body that was
a poet.

The body wears clothes that belonged
to a boy who was unafraid
of colour: sapphire trousers,
crash into folds;
a discarded coat, not quite blood red
deflates, exposes its gold lining;
and a once-white shirt, dirtied
from the business of living,
collapsing open.

The body is draped artistically;
hair abundant with bright violence,
arm tumbles to the floor,
fist clenches
some thing.

The body that was a boy
has no meaning

or at least that is how it is painted.

Josie Alford fuses the techniques of spoken and written poetry. Having completed an MA in Creative Writing at Bath Spa, she is working on publishing a poetry collection about the death of her father.

Rebecca Tantony/

The Poverty of Hours –
A found poem using only words in Chatterton's poetry and letters

His life a distant sun, revolving another home,
or whirlwinds keen and there
rolling foamy surges to the shore.

His muse the clouded moon, wrinkled
and defaced, a midnight whose sorrow
knows itself still.

His poetry – strange emotions, rumbling,
loud trembles, an extraordinary whisper
from the faded light of days.

His name has swelled with time –
Chatterton – the priest of sorrow
and of hope.

Living in a ghost of seasons,
writing letters from the mystic within.
Genius did or genius did not.

He spoke from a love of sound, the light
revolving of song. A spacious God
rising from the tongue.

Rebecca Tantony is the author of three collections of poetry and flash fiction. She has read her work globally and taught Creative Writing in a variety of institutions including Wits University, Johannesburg and Bath Spa University.

Keith Jarrett/

i. I have been at war with the grave for some time now...

is another thing he's said not to have said,
three days before he couldn't not say any more.
How we love to ventriloquise the dead!

But what do I know? It's all so easy to pile on
someone's memory, have them make grave
pronouncements foretelling their grief.

These quick quips keep coming. Centuries on,
there's nothing like the wit of unrecognised genius,
too dead to backchat, to pastel-ise their demise.

But let the painter paint and the poet eulogise.
If we can't make misery sing, it will still
make its own music, anyhow. Make a muse of itself.

ii. It's still cruel in these ends when your ends don't meet

But, Wallis, if I may, I trust you see no malice if I say
you've rendered him angelic, martyr to the artist's cause,
the picture of our perpetual un-moneyed struggles.

It's just... it's just the *poise*, if that's the word?
A self-poisoned youth made so postcard-perfect,
it's unsettling. I'm not sure *suicide* is sexy.

For some time, I've battled with the slick of his slackness,
the suggestion of chest, the scatter of paper, the delicate
allure of death – instead of a grimace, an almost-grin.

But what do I know? My outlook isn't so grim these days.
Brooke Street's a spit from here, but my windows face
a couple centuries away from him. You opened yours
to the faded light of his remembered pain. You chose the oils
to portray the room. I choose mine. Ambivalence is my home,
though the plants on my sill also crane towards a dim sky.

And I've known shadows. This city has a way of drawing
them out. They trail behind until we're long gone,
before forging a new shape, crawling into a new form.

Keith Jarrett is a writer, performer and academic based in London and was selected for the International Literary Showcase as one of ten most outstanding LGBT writers in the UK. His play, *Safest Spot in Town*, was aired on BBC Four, and his book of poetry, *Selah*, was published in 2017.

Malaika Kegode/

Perhaps he still had soil
under his fingernails.
One of those details time
mislays – mud-crudded shoes
at the door, like a child
returned home.

And when earth is soft,
the dullness of burgundy
becomes a placid chamber
where life breathes silent
for a moment, as though
waiting

for the slow plunge of
forms fitting into place.
Inevitably beautiful –
like a body becoming
poetry through inaction.

In paint, his body is a yawn.
Half moon draped in pale.
Colour-enriched tragedy,
how his chest dips –
The Marvellous Boy, all emptied out –

beauty is wasted
on those who cannot
mourn themselves.

Maybe he tasted it
three days before.
When the burden of words
fell silent in that sunken moment –
– before the haul of rough hands
dragged upwards. Bruised hipped,
hair an embarrassment of mud,
ego stained and sore.

Perhaps he still had soil
under his fingernails,
bruise blush on his palm.
And perhaps death
feels like falling
but never hitting the ground.

A story about Chatterton tells of him falling into an open grave three days before his death. On being helped out by his companion, Chatterton said 'I have been at war with the grave for some time, and find it not so easy to vanquish as I imagined'. This has been challenged as just another attempt to mythologise Chatterton and make his death seem poetic. But maybe that is something he would've relished.

Malaika Kegode is a poet, performer and producer based in Bristol. She has performed across the UK at a number of celebrated venues and festivals including WOMAD, Boomtown and Edinburgh Book Festival. Her poetry collections *Requite* and *Thalassic* are published by Burning Eye Books.

Rachael Boast/

Art[2]

For the sake of Art
I praised the metals that purged me.
Thank fuck for Zarnikh!
Etcetera. Etcetera.

O parapets! My porches of deed and word.
The walls I was up against!
Art as a verb. My beingness! Not this!

A tinsel-haired fetch pretending to be me
when, like Christ, I was in two places at once,
admiring the trove of buried languages
only to pull out my posthumous assessment
of your appalling depiction of my death.

O Meredith!
Tyme nowe you mov'd alonge
for Mary Ellen has gon!

Ill-treated in life, and in Art, here I am, backlit,
posed as pietà, a stage-managed non-being. Not I.
I haunt this room in the form of a pulled back
curtain. I am the window and the view!
I am the plume of violet smoke, the one rose,
I am all colours and I am not, Wallis, there at all!

O gargoyles! My porches of lust and word.
And look what befalls those
who assume they know my pain,
passing it off with a pissy flourish.

O Meredith!
Tyme nowe you mov'd alonge
for Mary Ellen has gon!

How should the gaze meet this awkward figure
devoid of revival, this counterfeit
and horror show? Blake would know.

I invented realities. I tore off
the constraints of perception
by a Gothic cleansing and expect you
to do the same, else look away!
O my gargoyles! My parapets!
My porches of vision and word!

O Meredith!
Tyme nowe you mov'd alonge
for Mary Ellen has gon!

2. a:rt/ archaic or dialect second person singular present of be:
I am a Gentleman as thou art not.

Rachael Boast is the author of three collections, *Sidereal*, *Pilgrim's Flower* and, most recently, *Void Studies*, all which are available from Picador. She is co-editor of *The Echoing Gallery: Bristol Poets and Art in the City* (Redcliffe Press, 2013) and *The Caught Habits of Language: An Entertainment for W S Graham for Him Having Reached One Hundred* (Donut Press, 2018).

Chris McCabe/

Thomas Chatterton Speaks With a Therapist
After Edwin Morgan's 'First Men on Mercury'

– Can you describe those last hours?

– All eventes of the mynde are dernie incidents.

– You are no longer a private citizen, you have a role in cultural life.

– Cultural lyvelyhode payde no enheedynge when I starved.

– Thomas, I note that you perceive 'life' as an aggressor.

– I activayte, aggregayte, accelerayte.

– Let us try this: close your eyne & visualise your first memory.

– It is a woman knitting an alphabette before a fyre.

– And this language you forge, perhaps you could relinquish and speake plainly to mee?

– Playne speaking is for poetasters & philibusterers.

– There is something infectious in this exchaynge.

– Over tyme my reputation will solidify with clarity.

– Over tyme Albion's leege-folcke will converge in consensus on your majestie.

– I do not understand you, my words are crystal clear with poetic clarity. This session has ended. Please pay me.

_____

'dernie' = sad
'lyvelyhode' = life
'enheedynge' = taking heed
'eyne' = eyes
'leege-folcke' = subjects

Chris McCabe is the author of 12 books and many more collaborative and limited edition works. His work has been shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award and the Republic of Consciousness Prize. He works as the National Poetry Librarian at Southbank Centre's National Poetry Library.

Vanessa Kisuule/

Tommy 2020

Tommy sits.
Chews a pen.
Tongue stained
black, mouth a
private abyss.
He wonders what
rhymes with
loneliness.

Tommy watches.
His mum is
folding flyers.
Four-fifty an hour
to slide them
through each
letterbox within
a mile radius.

Tommy squints.
When the leccy's
paid, she plays
the radio: 80s hits.
But not tonight.
Cash-strapped,
the house is dark,
robbed of song.

Tommy writes.
Not on his phone
that's never
topped up.
He favours
ink and paper.
Biro sturdy,
thumb snug.

Tommy wanders.
Kills time in
the local library.
It's warm and safe,
costs him nothing.
In shards of
shy light he
reads old poems.

Tommy finds
Chatterton.
Ginger, poor
and pissed off,
just like him.
A mother broke
and struggling,
just like his.

Tommy reads.
Chatterton
hated school,
called a dullard,
chucked out.
He knows the
feeling, teachers
say he's thick so
he believes it.

Tommy cried
when writing
club got cut.
The only place
he felt safe,
could trace the
rhythm of his
racing thoughts.

Tommy's lost.
No good at sports
or video games.
A recipe for
friendlessness.
All he's got
is books and their
patient margins.

Tommy zones out.
Let's the future
leave him behind,
his whole spine
a sigh, dreams
he's alive in a
different time
and thriving.

Tommy thinks:
he'll run away
like Chatterton.
Make money for
his mum, enough for
her to sit in sturdy
light, soft-eyed
and humming.

Tommy hopes
people read his
poems one day
look past his youth,
and skinny frame.
An old soul in
cheap trainers,
his words as
ancient and true
as wind through
grass.

Tommy knows kids
choke on their own
silence every day.
Chatterton's due
finally came
through the grave,
only safe and sacred
as romantic tragedy.

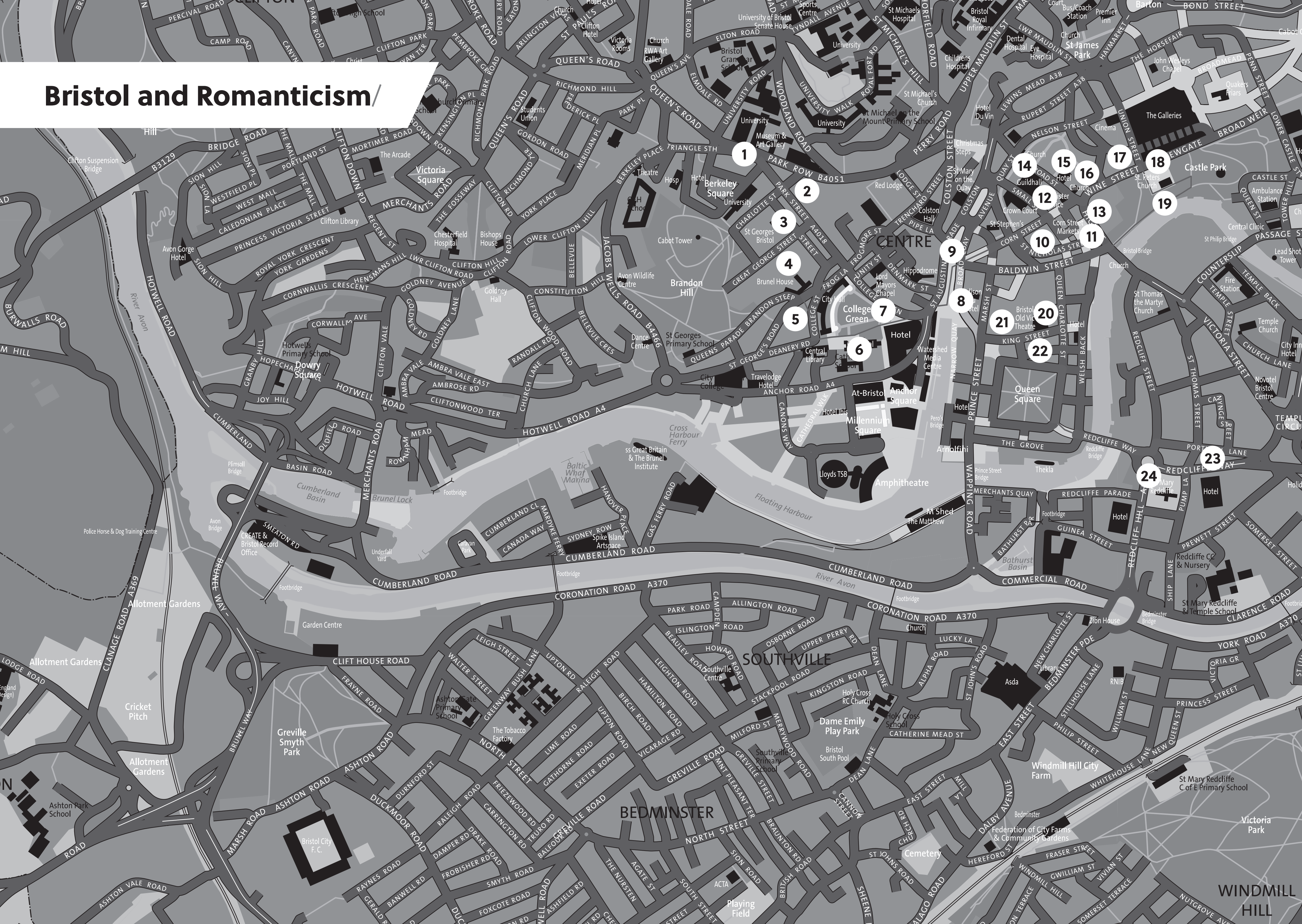
Tommy is more
than a sad story.
A biro propels him,
his mum humming
to Annie Lennox,
The librarian's nod
as he shuffles in
from the cold.

One word is not much,
but in a chain they're a
sentence,
sentiment,
declaration
of presence.
Tommy writes.

Tommy lives,
Tommy lives,
Tommy lives.

Vanessa Kisuule was appointed Bristol City Poet in 2018. She is a writer and performer who has won several slam titles. Her collections *Joyriding the Storm* and *A Recipe for Sorcery* are published by Burning Eye.

Bristol and Romanticism/



Bristol and Romanticism/

Romanticism – a period roughly bookended by the years 1780 and 1830 – marked a time of revolution; medical and scientific progress; the beginning of democratic politics; and the wide discussion of ideas.

Bristol was central to this movement. It was a city of political and religious dissent and unconventional views; it was home to newspapers, publishing houses, coffee houses, meeting rooms and lending libraries providing fertile ground for debate; and it produced and attracted a series of uniquely talented writers and thinkers.

This route from Park Street to St Mary Redcliffe enables you to walk in the footsteps of some of the key figures of Romanticism; to learn where they lived, worked, visited, lectured and wrote poetry; and to find out more about the ideas they argued and debated. These include: the Bristol-born boy poet Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), an icon of neglected genius and the inspiration of the Romantics who followed him; the Devon-born Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who fostered critical debate with his celebrated series of lectures; and Bristol-born Robert Southey (1774-1843), the radical poet and playwright who became a pillar of the establishment. Coleridge and William Wordsworth (1770-1850), from Cumberland, collaborated on the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, which was produced by local publisher Joseph Cottle (1770–1853) and is now considered a landmark of English Romanticism.

This walk is mainly level with fairly steep declines down Park Street, Hill Street and St George's Road and a short climb up College Street. Allow around an hour to complete the route and longer if you wish to include time for the many attractions and opportunities for refreshments along the way. Other points of interest, unrelated to the Romanticism theme, are also included.

The Walk

The walk begins at the top of Park Street (1) on the right-hand side facing downhill. Over half of the buildings on this street were damaged or destroyed by bombing in the Second World War but, unlike other areas of the city centre, when they were rebuilt in the 1950s their character remained much the same as before. This was thanks to the efforts of the city architect, Nelson Meredith.

In 1798 Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy came to Bristol to see *Lyrical Ballads* through the press. They stayed with Cottle in Wine Street (which you will see later in this walk). While they were here, they took a trip to Tintern in the Wye valley. By the late 1700s the abbey there had become a popular destination for tourists travelling in search of the picturesque. On 13 July, as they walked down Park Street on their way to Cottle's house, Wordsworth composed the last passage of 'Tintern Abbey', a poem which encapsulates his philosophy of nature.

Wordsworth later wrote:

> I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it was written down till I reached Bristol.

'Tintern Abbey' was the last poem to be written for the original *Lyrical Ballads* and it was probably at Cottle's home that it reached the page.

Walk down the hill until you are opposite 60 Park Street (2) (formerly number 43), on the other side of the road.

Hannah More presenting Ann Yearsley to Mrs Montague (Special Collections, University of Bristol Library Restricted HAe).

Born in Fishponds, Hannah More (1745-1833) was one of the most influential women living in England in this period. She was a playwright and poet, but is now better known for her religious and political writing, her philanthropy, her educational campaigns on behalf of the poor and her passionate support of the abolitionist movement. In 1762 she and her sisters established an Academy for Young Ladies in specially-built premises on this site, following the success of their previous school in Trinity Street. The school concentrated on 'French, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needlework', with each sister taking responsibility for a particular part of the curriculum. Cottle's sisters were educated here and it is likely that Sarah, Edith and Mary Fricker, the women who married, respectively, Coleridge, Southey and the Bristol poet Robert Lovell (1771-1796), were too. The Mores retired from the school in 1790. More was a patron of the poet Ann Yearsley ('the Bristol Milkwoman'), who also wrote against enslavement, but Yearsley eventually found her attentions too demanding.

Continue down Park Street, pausing opposite number 52 (formerly number 47). This was the home of Mary Estlin who was secretary of the Bristol & Clifton Anti-Slavery Society. Ellen Craft, an escaped enslaved person from America, stayed here during her tour of England when she and her husband spoke at public meetings about their experiences. Turn right into Great George Street, noting the building on the opposite corner, the former home of New-York-born Henry Cruger, a Bristol MP, a US Senator and a Merchant Venturer. Cross Hill Street and continue to St George's Bristol (3).

St George's Church was completed in 1823 and was the city's first building in the Greek Revival style. Its architect, Robert Smirke, designed the opera house at Covent Garden and the British Museum. With the congregation dwindling, the building was rescued from redundancy in 1976 by a group of local music enthusiasts, founders of the St George's Music Trust. It is now one of the country's leading concert halls noted for its superb acoustics (www.stgeorgesbristol.co.uk 0845 40 24 001).

Cross the road to The Georgian House Museum (4).

John Pretor Pinney was a wealthy sugar merchant who owned plantations on the Caribbean island of Nevis. He moved into the newly-completed six-storey townhouse at 7 Great George Street in 1791. Wordsworth and Dorothy stayed here between 21 August and 26 September 1795. It was during this time that Wordsworth was introduced to Cottle, Southey and Coleridge, and it is likely that some early meetings between Coleridge and Wordsworth took place at Pinney's house, though probably not the first. 'Coleridge was at Bristol part of the time I was there,' Wordsworth wrote in October 1795. 'I saw but little of him. I wished indeed to have seen more – his talent appears to me very great.'

The house's last private owner, Canon R T Cole, presented it to Bristol Corporation in 1938 to be used for the display of Georgian furniture. It has been restored and is open to visitors, showing what life was like above and below stairs in the city in the eighteenth century. Pinney's plantations were worked by enslaved people, but Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth all wrote against the slave trade.

The Georgian House Museum: Normal opening times: 11am-4pm. Closed Wed, Thu and Fri. No toilet or café on site. Admission is free. www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/georgian-house-museum 0117 921 1362

Return to Hill Street. Turn right and go down to St George's Road. Turn right. Continue past the mini-roundabout to the pedestrian crossing outside Brunel House. This building was originally a hotel that was intended to form part of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's integrated passenger service between London and New York. Cross the road here, keep straight ahead and continue across the second pedestrian crossing to College Street (5).

Today College Street is mainly occupied by the rear of City Hall and a car park. However, in 1795, 25 College Street was the home of Coleridge, Southey and George Burnett, the three originators of a movement they called Pantisocracy. Coleridge and Southey met in Oxford, and this scheme, to emigrate to America and found a utopian commune-like society in the wilderness, developed during their long discussions. The name for the proposed community came from the Greek *pan-socratia*, meaning an all-governing society. The community was to consist of 12 men and 12 women who would support themselves by farming the land. Coleridge and Southey thought that no more than three hours of labour would be required each day and so planned for the remaining time to be devoted to study, liberal discussions and educating their children. Members of the community were to be allowed their own opinions in matters of politics and religion, but land would be held in common, belonging to everyone.

At the end of College Street cross over Deanery Road to the Central Library, considered one of the city's finest buildings. It opened in 1906. Go through the old abbey archway on the left-hand side for a view of the rear of the building. Its architect, Charles Holden, appears to have picked up some of the new aesthetics coming from mainland Europe that had influenced Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Glasgow. Come back through the archway to see the statue of Raja Rammohun Roy, the Indian philosopher who died during a visit to the city in 1833. He was staying at the home of Lant Carpenter and his daughter Mary, a campaigner for educational reform. Continue to Bristol Cathedral (6).

Founded as an Augustinian abbey in 1140, the cathedral boasts some of the most important medieval architecture in the UK. Look out for the Norman stone carving in the Chapter House, the medieval stained glass preserved in the cloister, the brightly coloured Eastern Lady Chapel and the lofty arches and vaults, which distinguish Bristol Cathedral as being of a medieval hall church design.

In the 1840s Cottle decided that Bristol should inaugurate a project to honour Southey who had been Poet Laureatre from 1813 until his death. He initially wanted a monument to be built, but the money raised fell short; the committee that took over the management of the campaign downgraded the project to a bust. This was created by E H Baily in 1845 and is installed in the north choir aisle of the cathedral.

Bristol Cathedral: Visitors welcome. Normal hours, excluding services special services and events: Mon-Fri 8am-5pm; Sat-Sun 8am-3.15pm. Admission is free. www.bristol-cathedral.co.uk 0117 926 4879

From the cathedral, turn right and walk along the side of College Green (7).

When Coleridge arrived in Bristol in early August 1794, he came to Lovell's house on College Green in search of Southey. Lovell had been disowned by this rich Quaker family for marrying Mary Fricker earlier that year. When Coleridge reached the house, he found himself in the midst of a lively family party; Southey, Lovell, Mary and Sarah Fricker were all there.

Another of the houses on the Green was home to Elizabeth Tyler, Southey's aunt and Edith Fricker's employer. Southey spent a large part of his childhood here and often stayed with his aunt when he was not at university in Oxford, so he frequently saw Edith. Southey proposed to Edith in 1794 and the two intended to emigrate to America along with the other members of the Pantisocracy scheme. However, on 17 October 1794 all thoughts about moving to America were cast into doubt when Southey's aunt found out about the plan to emigrate, as well as Southey's secret engagement to Edith, whom she referred to as 'a mere seamstress'. She threw Southey out of her house without his coat, though it was cold and raining heavily, and told him that she wished to have nothing more to do with him or his family.

Pause outside the Bristol Marriott Royal Hotel. This is built in limestone in the Italianate style and was designed by W H Hawtin in 1864. The extension to the east of the site was built during renovations in the early 1990s. The statue of Queen Victoria in the turning circle outside is by Joseph Boehm and commemorates the queen's Golden Jubilee. While you stand here, note the pretty Art Nouveau upper storeys on number 38 College Green, across the street. This is the former Cabot Café, which was designed by the Bristol architects LaTrobe and Weston (1904). The ground floor originally had grand Mackintosh-style doors and windows, which have been lost.

Broad Quay, Bristol, attributed to Philip Van Dyke, c 1760 (Bristol Culture K514).

Continue down the hill. Cross Canon's Road and then St Augustine's Parade to the fountains on the Centre Parade (8).

At the time of the Romantics, where you are standing now was the northern section of St Augustine's Reach, a man-made water channel dug in the thirteenth century during the diversion of the River Frome. It was built to increase the capacity of the docks but was covered over in the 1890s when there was a need to provide more space for road traffic. The water is still there beneath your feet.

Bristol's centre was originally near Bristol Bridge, at the crossroads you will see later on this walk. When people refer to the centre today they usually mean here, the former site of the Tramways Centre, the hub for the city's old tram routes. The area was redeveloped in the 1990s in an effort to overcome congestion problems and to provide a more clearly defined public space. Critical reaction to the scheme by some was less than enthusiastic, but there had been little affection for how it looked before.

Keeping the fountains to your right, walk towards the stand of trees ahead of you and the statue of Edmund Burke (9).

Edmund Burke, the Irish philosopher and politician, was the MP for Bristol between 1774 and 1780. In his speech to the electors of Bristol on 3 November 1774, Burke said:

> Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament.

Burke is widely remembered for his opposition to the French Revolution. Wordsworth read Burke's 1790 book *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in spring 1791, and attacked Burke in *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* (1793).

Turn back towards the fountains, and cross Broad Quay using the first convenient pedestrian crossing. Proceed to pedestrianised Clare Street. Continue into Corn Street, an area once noted for its eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commercial and legal offices. These were lavish buildings designed as visual statements of confidence to reassure customers. Those that survive have mostly been converted into shops and restaurants. Much of their grandeur has been lost at street level, but look up to the upper storeys to get a sense of their former opulence. On your left, you will pass The Commercial Rooms, built in 1810 to provide convivial spaces where the local bankers, lawyers and merchants could meet over coffee. Its designer was the 24-year-old Charles Busby. Its first president was John Loudon McAdam, Surveyor of the Bristol Turnpike and inventor of the road construction method known as macadam. Where Corn Street is pedestrianised, continue to* ***The Exchange *(10) on your right.***

This was originally a meeting place for merchants, designed by John Wood the Elder and built between 1741 and 1743. To make room, the old hall of the Coopers' Company was demolished. The Coopers were paid £900 and provided with a new site on King Street, which you will see later. Wood had transformed nearby Bath with his designs for Prior Park, Queen Square, North and South Parade and the Royal Mineral Hospital. He would later design The Circus. The brass 'nails' outside the building are historic relics of the tables on which the merchants once conducted their business (there is an information board by the door giving details). The decorative façade depicts products from the four corners of the world, illustrating the global trade in which the merchants were engaged. Look at the clock above the entrance. This was first installed in 1822 and later given two minute-hands, which can still be seen. One hand shows the old Bristol time, which, with the coming of the railway and the need to synchronise train schedules across the country, was adjusted to London time, indicated by the other hand, just over ten minutes ahead. The building was converted into a corn exchange in 1872 and now provides an entrance to St Nicholas Market. A street market is held outside most Wednesdays.

If The Exchange is open, enter the market and walk straight through, taking note of the courtyard roof over head, an addition from 1870 when it was finally conceded that it might be better to conduct business undercover. Exit the building and turn left to* ***The Rummer Hotel *(11) on the corner of All Saints Lane. If The Exchange is closed, walk past the entrance and turn right down the lane. Note this is quite narrow, which may make it awkward for wheelchair users and those with pushchairs.***

In late 1795 or early 1796 a group of friends met with Coleridge at The Rummer Tavern to persuade him to start a new radical periodical. Entitled *The Watchman*, it would contain news, parliamentary reports, original essays, poetry and reviews, and Coleridge would be its editor, publisher and chief contributor. Its motto was 'That All may know the Truth; and that the Truth may make us free'.

Having attracted 250 subscribers in Bristol alone, the first issue of *The Watchman* went out on 1 March 1796. Coleridge and Cottle spent four hours arranging, counting, packing and invoicing the copies for the 150-or-so London and provincial customers. The journal was issued every eighth day (to avoid tax) and survived until 13 May, when the tenth and final issue appeared.

Return to Corn Street via All Saints Lane. The church that gives the lane its name dates back to the eleventh century. Opposite the entrance to the lane is the former* ***West of England Bank and South Wales District Bank *(12).***

This building was designed by W B Gingell and T R Lysaght and built between 1854 and 1857 in an extravagant Venetian style using Bath and Portland stone. The sculptured frieze on its façade is by John Evan Thomas who also worked on the Houses of Parliament. On the ground floor the sculptures depict the five main towns where the bank did business: Newport, Bath, Bristol, Exeter and Cardiff. On the first floor are female figures representing Peace, Plenty, Justice, Integrity and other elements considered conducive to making money in this period. The bank collapsed in 1878.

On this site once stood The Bush Tavern, Bristol's leading coaching inn. It was used by Burke for his political campaign headquarters. Before Coleridge found Southey at Lovell's house on College Green on that day in August 1794, he came here. Coleridge had just arrived in the city having been on a walking tour to Wales. Southey had come to Bristol shortly before him and was busy recruiting friends to their Pantisocracy scheme, including Lovell.

Turn right to the end of Corn Street. You are now at the crossroads that once marked the medieval city centre, where the four principal streets – Corn Street, Broad Street, Wine Street and High Street – met. On your right, at High Street Corner, is 49 High Street (13).

In the days that followed Coleridge's arrival in Bristol, Lovell and Southey introduced him to a city strong in political radicalism. Coleridge met Cottle, whose shop stood on this site. Cottle considered Pantisocracy an 'epidemic delusion' but acted as a patron for the poets and offered Coleridge a guinea and a half for every 100 lines of poetry he produced. In April 1795 he published *Poems on Various Subjects*, Coleridge's first major collection. Cottle also commissioned and printed *Lyrical Ballads*, although he disliked the idea of a joint volume and the plan of anonymous publication.

A red plaque on the building reads:

> On this corner site from 1791-1798 Joseph Cottle (1770-1853) bookseller, publisher and poet. The first effective publisher of the poems of Coleridge, Southey, Lamb and Wordsworth (some of whose works were written here).

Turn left down Broad Street, noting on the corner the Old Council House – the city's third, according to records, and now the Bristol Registry Office – and continue to The Guildhall (14).

This building was completed in 1846 and designed by local architect Richard Shackleton Pope, who is closely associated with Brunel's work in the city. The sculptures of leading Bristolians on the front are by John Evan Thomas. It replaced an earlier Guildhall dating from the medieval period. Until the mid-sixteenth century and before the coming of Council Houses, a Guildhall served as the central meeting place for a city's most important guildsmen as well as its civic leaders (often one and the same).

Crop failure in 1794 and the effects of the war with France resulted in national scarcity, which, by the end of 1795, led to popular protests. In London George III's coach was attacked by crowds throwing stones and crying 'Bread! Peace! No Pitt!'

A meeting was held in Bristol at the Guildhall on 17 November 1795 to congratulate the king on his escape from the attack, but attracted also a large number of people who were against the war. One voice repeatedly called out 'Mr Mayor! Mr Mayor!' in an attempt to be heard. That voice was Coleridge's, arguing that although the war had been costly to the rich, they still had a great deal, 'but a PENNY taken from the pocket of a poor man might deprive him of a dinner'. *The Star*, a London newspaper, published an account of the Bristol Guildhall meeting and reported Coleridge's speech as 'the most elegant, the most pathetic, and the most sublime Address that was ever heard, perhaps, within the walls of the building.'

Cross the road for a clearer view of the building then turn back up Broad Street to The Grand Hotel (15).

The White Lion Inn once occupied this site. Between 28 October and 24 November 1813 Coleridge gave a series of twice-weekly lectures on Shakespeare in the inn's Great Room. The first lecture had to be cancelled when, in the coach at Bath, Coleridge changed his mind about coming to Bristol and decided to escort a lady to North Wales instead. He turned up a couple of days later, agreed on another time and was then 'only' an hour late for his audience. Cottle wrote that 'the lectures gave great satisfaction'.

The present-day hotel was designed by Foster & Wood and completed in 1869. It has an Italian Renaissance design reminiscent of the buildings of Venice. The ground floor, which projects out to the street, was originally occupied by shops.

Continue up Broad Street to Christ Church (16).

This church, designed by local architect William Paty, was built in 1786, replacing the medieval church that once occupied this site. Southey later wrote, 'I was christened in that old church, & at this moment vividly remember our pew under the organ'. Southey also wrote that when he was young he enjoyed the Quarter Jacks – two figures over the entrance that strike the quarter hours: 'I have many a time stopt for a few minutes with my satchel on my back to see them strike. My father had a great love for these poor Quarter Boys who had regulated all his motions for about 20 years.' The Jacks had been carved by Paty's grandfather and were retained for the new building. The organ, reworked, was also reinstalled.

Turn left into Wine Street. This area suffered considerable bomb damage during the first Bristol Blitz on 24 November 1940, which led to the loss of around a quarter of the medieval city, the Dutch House (a landmark five-storey timber-framed building dating from 1676 on the corner of the High Street) and St Peter's Hospital (the site of which you will visit later in this walk). Where the side wall of Christ Church abuts the end of the Prudential Buildings you will see a plaque commemorating Southey's house (17).

In August 1774 Southey was born above his father's shop at 9 Wine Street, a linen draper's identified by the sign of a golden key. Southey called his place of birth 'Wine Street below-the-Pump', referencing the pump which divided the street.

In a letter in March 1804, he wrote:

> when I first went to school I never thought of Wine Street & of that Pump without tears, & such a sorrow at heart – as by heaven no child of mine shall ever suffer while I am living to prevent it! & so deeply are the feelings connected with that place rooted in me, that perhaps in the hour of death they will be the last that survive.

The pump on Wine Street by Charles Bird from *Picturesque Old Bristol*, 1886 (Bristol Reference Library BL10F).

Cottle moved into a house on Wine Street on 7 March 1798 and moved his shop to 5 Wine Street later that month. The shop (since destroyed) was larger than his previous premises but was in a less prominent position; 35 years later Wordsworth recalled that the move had been financially disastrous.

Among the many other buildings lost on Wine Street during the war was the former Corn Market. By late February 1795 Coleridge had organised a series of public lectures here. Entrance to the lectures was charged at one shilling per head, and the money collected was intended to help fund Coleridge and Southey's emigration to America.

The lectures attacked Pitt's government and condemned the war against France. Coleridge dealt well with hecklers. On one occasion, some men who disliked what they heard began to hiss. Coleridge responded instantly: 'I am not at all surprised, when the red hot prejudices of aristocrats are suddenly plunged into the cool water of reason, that they should go off with a hiss!' After the second lecture it was felt necessary to move the third to a private address.

Continue along Wine Street to the pedestrian crossing and cross to Castle Park (18).

This area is also sometimes referred to as Castle Green, and Coleridge gave the third lecture of his 1795 series at a house somewhere near here. Further lectures by both Southey and Coleridge were to follow; Coleridge delivered one notable speech attacking the slave trade, and at the end of June he was to begin a series of six lectures at the Assembly Coffee House, on the quayside, comparing the English Civil War and the French Revolution. A prospectus for these lectures has survived, but it is not known for certain whether he actually delivered them.

Behind the bomb-damaged ruins of St Peter's Church is* The Castle Park Physic Garden *(19), supported by Jo Malone London and St Mungo's, the national homeless charity. It opened in 2015.

The garden is close to the site of St Peter's Hospital, which was destroyed in the war. Sometime in 1798 Wordsworth wrote 'The Mad Mother'. It is possible that the subject of this poem is Louisa, the Maid of the Haystack, who lived for a time at the hospital. In 1776 a young, well-mannered girl entered a house at Flax Bourton asking for milk. After leaving, she wandered through the nearby fields and slept under a haystack for four nights. Local women fed her and offered her a bed in their houses, but she refused them. The women then clubbed together to purchase the haystack for her. The girl was eventually taken to St Peter's Hospital, but she returned to the haystack, where she lived for four more years. The locals continued to feed her and gave her the names 'Louisa' and 'The Maid of the Haystack'. Hannah More became involved in her care in 1781 and had her taken to the Henderson Asylum at Hanham; she continued to pay for her keep there until Louisa's death in 1800.

The back of St Peter's Hospital from the Floating Harbour, 1820, Hugh O'Neill (Bristol Culture M2702).

If you can manage steps, walk through the garden, along the side of the church, turn left and then right, passing the linear ponds of Beside the Still Waters by Peter Randall-Page (1993). Continue down the steps then turn right to go down to the waterfront and right towards Bristol Bridge (look out for Seeds of Change, a floating ballast seed garden which may be visible on your left). If you are unable to manage steps, return to the entrance of the church and take the sloping path to your left down to the waterfront and towards the bridge. Cross the road ahead of you via the pedestrian crossing into Baldwin Street. Continue to Queen Charlotte Street to your left. Turn down here, cross Crow Lane and continue to King Street where you turn right to the Bristol Old Vic (20). (Note that road surfaces in this area are cobbled and can be uneven underfoot.)

This is the oldest continuously working theatre in the English-speaking world and celebrated its 250th birthday in 2016. It has been home to the Bristol Old Vic company since 1946. In 2012 a major refurbishment of the historic Georgian auditorium was completed. The redevelopment of the front-of-house was completed in 2018. (www.bristololdvic.org.uk 0117 987 7877).

The Coopers' Hall – which had replaced the demolished premises on Corn Street – became part of the theatre complex in the early 1970s, providing a new, two-tiered foyer space. The Coopers Company, which included many local wine merchants, had long since gone into decline, and its hall had been used for exhibitions, Baptist missions, warehousing and auctions since the late eighteenth century.

By 1784 the craze for balloon flights had reached England, and ascents, with or without people on board, were taking place in almost every large city, including Bristol. High balloon ascents prompted advances in meteorology and drew people's attention to the formation and beauty of clouds. Poets and writers, including Coleridge and Wordsworth, saw ballooning as a symbol of hope and liberation. In January 1784 Michael Biaggini exhibited an air balloon at the Coopers' Hall for three days. He charged a 2s 6d (12.5p) entrance fee, and the balloon, around 30ft/9.14m in circumference, attracted much public interest. For an extra 2s 6d, Biaggini allowed those who were interested 'to see the method and process of filling the balloon with inflammable air'.

Continue along King Street to the building on your right, set back from the road behind a paved courtyard. Currently occupied by a restaurant, this was once Bristol Library (21).

King Street, 1825, Thomas L Rowbotham (Bristol Culture M2509).

The Bristol Library Society, founded in 1773, charged an entrance fee and an annual subscription of one guinea per member until 1798, when the fee increased to four guineas. In 1798 the library had around 200 members and held 5,000 books, as well as providing custody of 2,000 books belonging to the city. You were not allowed to become a member if you owned a lodging-house, inn, tavern, coffee house, place of public entertainment or circulating library. The library was made free to the public from 1856. Coleridge, Southey, Lovell and Cottle all valued the library and used it frequently. Southey was library member number 278 and Coleridge number 295.

Furnishings from the library, including the ornately carved over-mantle from the reading room's fireplace, can be seen in the Bristol Room in the Central Library. The building was taken over by the War Pensions Office during the First World War.

Go back to King William Avenue, on your right. Turn here, cross Little King Street and enter Queen Square. Turn left to* 2 Queen Square *(22).

This was once the home of Josiah Wade, a radical Bristol tradesman who became a principal supporter of *The Watchman*, Coleridge's political journal. Coleridge stayed with Wade from late October to late November in 1813 while he was presenting a series of lectures on Shakespeare and Milton in the city. Coleridge intended to begin a further series on 7 December, but on 2 December a physical and mental crisis, induced by opium and alcohol, overcame him.

Continue clockwise around the square, exiting at Bell Avenue to your left, the pedestrian path between numbers 24 and 26. There is an information board marking the Brunel Mile to your right. Continue straight ahead, crossing Welsh Back to the left-hand side of Redcliffe Bridge. As you cross the bridge, look to your left to the brick-faced former Western Counties Agricultural Co-operative warehouse (1909-12), a Grade-II listed building which was converted by the Bristol Churches Housing Association for social housing in 1997. Continue straight ahead when you leave the bridge. Cross Redcliff Street by the pedestrian crossing and continue along Portwall Lane, which marks the old city boundary, keeping the car park to your right. Cross Phippen Street and turn right to the* Chatterton House *(23).

This was constructed in 1749 as the master's house for the adjoining Pile Street School, which was founded around 1739. Chatterton was born here in 1752 and briefly attended the school, where his late father had been a writing master. In the 1930s, when the surrounding buildings were demolished to make room for Redcliffe Way, part of the façade of the school was attached to the house. The building currently houses a café.

Chatterton left Bristol for London in April 1770, allegedly disappointed with his lack of recognition at home, and died shortly afterwards of arsenic poisoning. His early tragic end – now thought to have been an accident – has led to the romantic legend of the boy genius destroyed by a philistine world, a legend enhanced by Henry Wallis' famous portrait of the penniless young man lying dead in his London garret.

Re-cross Phippen Street and continue down to Redcliffe Way. Turn right and head to the pedestrian crossing which will take you to* St Mary Redcliffe *(24).

Queen Elizabeth, on a visit to Bristol in 1574, is said to have declared this to be the 'fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in England'. Parts of the structure date back to the twelfth century. The Canynges, a Bristol mercantile family, were among the most high-profile of the church's early patrons, paying for major building projects in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Canynges Society, founded in 1848 to raise funds for essential restoration work, is still active on the church's behalf having been revived in 1927. The imposing spire, which was truncated after being struck by lightning in 1446, was rebuilt to its full height of 292ft/89m in 1872.

It was on 4 October 1795 that Reverend Benjamin Spry married Coleridge and Sarah Fricker in a quiet ceremony at St Mary Redcliffe. Their marriage was witnessed by Mrs Fricker and Josiah Wade. On 14 November 1795 Southey married Edith Fricker, with Cottle and his sister, Sarah, acting as their witnesses. Cottle also paid for the ring and marriage licence. The marriages of Coleridge to Sarah and Southey to Edith were intended as a prelude to emigration. Southey's friend George Burnett also intended to join the Pantisocracy scheme and proposed to Martha Fricker, one of the younger Fricker siblings. Martha turned him down.

St Mary Redcliffe was where Chatterton claimed to have discovered poems written by a fifteenth-century monk named Thomas Rowley. The poems were hailed as a magnificent find, and experts were unstinting in their praise. However, the Rowley poems were found to have been the work of Chatterton himself. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth wrote about Chatterton: Wordsworth in *Resolution and Independence* and Coleridge in 'Monody on the Death of Chatterton'.

St Mary Redcliffe: Normal opening hours for visitors: Mon-Sat: 8:30am-5pm. Sun: services are held at 8am, 9:30am, 11:15am and 6:30pm; visitors wishing to view the church but not attend the service are not admitted at these times. The Arc Café is located in the undercroft. www.stmaryredcliffe.co.uk 03301 594 919

Chatterton in Art/

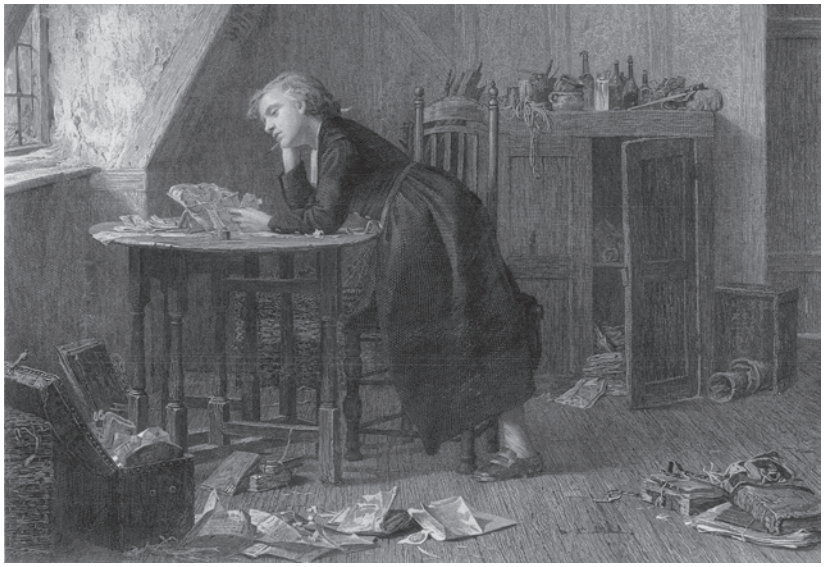
There is no known picture of Thomas Chatterton that was taken from life, but over the years several artists have imagined what he may have looked like. We provide some examples here.

Unknown boy as Thomas Chatterton with copy of signature, undated (Bristol Reference Library L98.3 CHA 4418).

'Chatterton 1765' by Henrietta Maria Ada Ward, c1873 (© Bristol Culture, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, K172).

'Chatterton Composing the Rowleian Manuscripts' by Richard Jeffreys Lewis (© Bristol Culture, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, K277).

Thomas Chatterton, based on a portrait of the artist's son, by J Morris, undated (Bristol Reference Library 327).



'Chatterton's Holiday Afternoon', engraved after a picture by William Benjamin Morris, c1875 (Bristol Reference Library B28436 SR50).

'Death of Chatterton', etching after Raphael Lamar West, c1840 (Bristol Reference Library L98.3 CHA 4438).

Further information/

References for the Walk

The Bristol and Romanticism Walk was originally devised and written by Amy O'Beirne in 2015 with some additional contributions from Robin Jarvis and Melanie Kelly. We would like to thank Lucy Prior for her advice and comments on early drafts. When following the directions, always find the safest place to cross. Road layouts and opening times for visitor attractions may have changed since publication.

The main sources of information were:

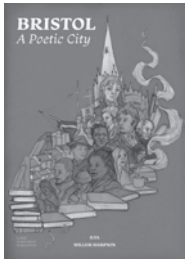
Cottle, Basil (2008) *Joseph Cottle and the Romantics: The Life of a Bristol Publisher* Redcliffe Press Ltd: Bristol
Mayberry, Tom (1992) *Coleridge and Wordsworth in the West Country* Alan Sutton: Stroud
Sisman, Adam (2006) *The Friendship: Wordsworth and Coleridge* HarperPress: London

We hope you enjoy reading this publication. To help us plan future projects and to provide data requested by our funders, please complete the short online feedback survey:

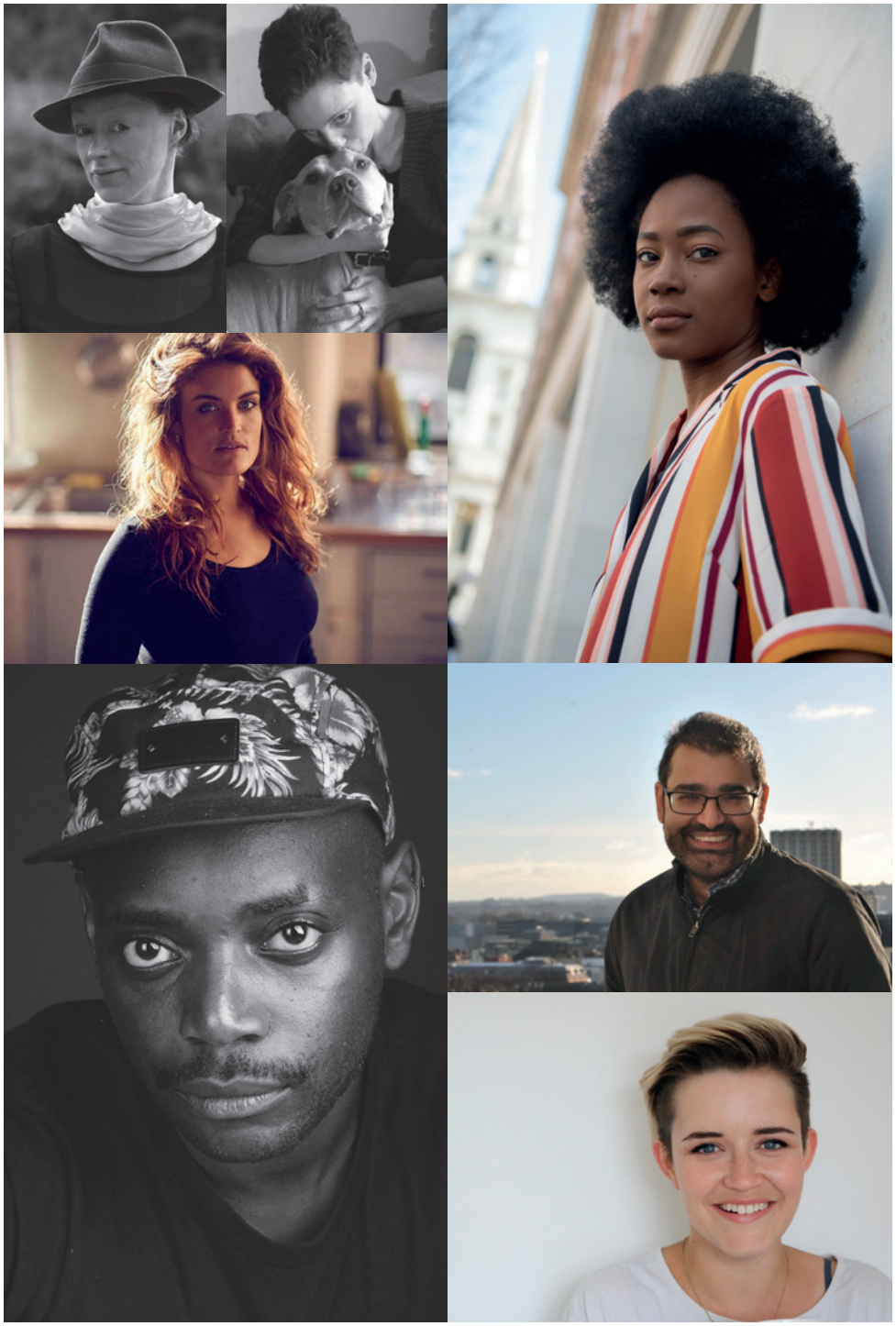
www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/apoeticcity

You can also post comments on our Facebook page: @bristolpoeticcity #bristolpoeticcity

We look forward to hearing from you.



Look out for copies of our other *Poetic City* publication: the life and legacy of Thomas Chatterton told in comic-book style.



This new anthology comprises 12 poems commissioned through Lyra – Bristol Poetry Festival and a contribution by Bristol City Poet Vanessa Kisuule. The poems have been written in response to the life, work and death of Bristol-born poet Thomas Chatterton. The book also contains a revised edition of a walk in the footsteps of the Romantics in Bristol, originally published in 2015.

Thanks to the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, using money raised by National Lottery players, this book is being given away free of charge as part of the *Poetic City* programme.

HERITAGE FUND

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