Abstract of Thesis

Heriot-Watt University: POSTGRADUATE EXAMINATIONS

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2. QUALIFICATION SOUGHT
(PhD/MSc/MLitt/MArch) DOCTOR of PHILOSOPHY

3. TITLE OF THESIS HISTORY and CONSERVATION of SHOPPING ARCADES

Date 22.9.1983 Signature

Abstract

Shopping arcades, corridors lined on one or both sides by shops and covered by a glass roof have been neglected as a subject for research. There is little information and no catalogue of British arcades. Their importance as covered thoroughfares, housing small units for specialist traders, has been underestimated, and their contribution to the architecture and townscape of cities requires recognition. The thesis records all extant examples in Britain with an architectural description, history, use, plan, section and photographic account of each. Their evolution is established, showing the influence of arcaded streets and exchanges, and of social and economic forces. The first two arcades were built in Paris and those, together with other major foreign examples are assessed, revealing the inter-relationship of development and architectural style between nations. The British arcades are analysed with regard to plan, location and architectural style. The financial position, management and role in the modern retail centre is assessed. Current trends in retailing are interpreted, from the shopping centre derived from the arcades, to the Speciality Centre. Arcades, like many older buildings have been demolished or neglected, having outlived their usefulness, but during the past decade an appreciation of the architectural heritage has grown. As the research has progressed, it has become evident that the requirements for shopping have almost come full circle from the date of the first arcade in 1800. And the shopping arcade is not only worthy of serious consideration architecturally, but it could re-emerge as an important form of modern retailing. Recommendations are made for the practical conservation and re-use of arcades, particularly emphasizing their architectural qualities, utilizing the favourable attitudes towards conservation and taking advantage of the desire to return to small specialist shops along a pedestrian route, preferably undercover.

2/80 See reverse side for Notes
HISTORY AND CONSERVATION

of

SHOPPING ARCADES

Five Volumes

VOLUME I


Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY

Department of Architecture

September 1983
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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Colin McWilliam for his advice and guidance which have been so invaluable. I am also grateful to the countless planning officers, librarians, archivists, owners and managers, who have given their time and expertise; and to Joan Bamford and Sue Nicholson who typed the manuscript. Finally I would like to thank my family for their encouragement and help in the preparation of this thesis.
INTRODUCTION
pl.1 Royal Opera Arcade, Westminster
As far as possible convenience is concerned most assuredly nothing could be devised more suitable to such a climate as ours - that is, supposing it deserves one title of the ill-natured, splanetic grumbling it provokes, than a covered street which bids defiance to the humours of the atmosphere, and where one may lounge and look at shop-windows, though the rain should come down in torrents, or though an August sun should broil people as they walk along in the open streets. Here there is no disagreeable, perhaps I should say, delightful variety of mud, ankle-deep at one time, and hovering, but alas not golden clouds of dust at another. On the contrary there is a monotonous constancy of uniform dry, and level pavement, where a lady might walk without soiling a white satin slipper.

So wrote the architectural critic Ralph Redivivus in the Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal of March 1839 on the values of shopping arcades and the subject of such praise, was indeed an elegant solution to a frightful problem. Streets were eventually metalled, town centres became more sophisticated and white satin slippers went out of fashion for day wear, but arcades remained an accepted means of providing high density small shops. After initial delight at such novelty however, they were inevitably taken for granted and, as new and supposedly better shops appeared, they became neglected and ignored, particularly as the twentieth century progressed. By the early 1970's some fine examples had been demolished¹ and the majority of those remaining buildings languished on the fringes of new and more dynamic shopping centres.

The shopping arcade as a separate building type was developed in the early years of the nineteenth century. It took the now accepted form of a covered passageway with shops on one or both sides, whilst above were either skylights or a fully glazed roof. It was developed as an independent unit, becoming an inward looking street with external facades both to its entrance buildings and to its shop fronts. It was a private street of shops for pedestrians with its central space covered over for protection from the weather. It owed its origins to the Exchanges of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries² and the arcaded streets of classical Rome and Greece³ and it in turn has influenced
builders of the large, modern, twentieth century multi-use shopping centres which have pedestrian corridors running through them.

The use of the term 'shopping arcade' requires explanation. Shopping was an obvious choice but arcade appears to have been adopted to describe the architectural style of the Royal Opera Arcade, (pl.1) the first British Arcade, which was a series of arches carried on pilasters. Through its very success and fashionableness it lent its name to all subsequent ventures, whether they were a 'walk arched over', to use Johnson's 1755 Dictionary definition or glazed pedestrian streets of any style. However, before the design of the Royal Opera Arcade had been finally agreed, it had been referred to in correspondence as a piazza, a term applied not only to a public open space surrounded by buildings, but also to an arced open space. Nevertheless, Arcade was preferred to describe the arches and vaulted roof and the designation was immediately copied, although a note of criticism was voiced in the Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal of 1844, during a discussion on new classes of building.

Arcades seem to have been introduced here in imitation of what the French with more propriety designate 'Passages' and 'Galeries'; since the applicability of the other term depends upon the particular architectural design - whether the building be really Arcaded or not.

A 'Passage' is a way through or thoroughfare and the term was already in use in Britain to describe certain town streets, whose characteristics were narrowness. It was also a perfectly apt description for the first Parisian arcades and is now noted in modern French dictionaries as an arcade with shops on either side. 'Galerie' is a long room and again an arcade, a covered walk. In a similar manner other countries have used all three titles.

Despite the criticism, the use of the word Arcade was an obvious choice at a time when classical architecture was the contemporary style and there was a
great similarity between the early Parisian and London examples and the Greek Stoa the Roman colonnaded Forum or Renaissance arcaded street. The development merely attached a second side of shops and a roof creating an enclosure, which contained formal, repetitive sides with standard bays divided by the order. Individuality for retailers was obtained only by window displays and signboards in sharp contrast to the traditional shopping street.

The term 'Arcade' was so well established by the middle of the nineteenth century that it was deemed appropriate for all covered shopping developments whether they were passages, several corridors linked together, internal courts or galleried spaces. The Arcade as a 'passage arched over, any covered walk, especially with shops along one or both sides' now being the definition of the Oxford Dictionary.

The development of the building type set against contemporary background of population statistics, society, wealth and fashion and the influences on development from other countries is traced in chapter 1. Without a stable society, a relatively large population and some wealth, shops struggled to develop and survive. The market stall and craftsman's workshop were all that were required for many centuries in Britain. Elsewhere there were some important developments taking place such as the vaulted streets of Crusader Jerusalem, but they were unappreciated in Europe. The later Bourse in Antwerp was far more influential and it was imitated in the Royal Exchange in London and in other capital cities. Arcaded streets and piazzas introduced the idea of residential development above recessed shops and covered pavements. But it was not until the late eighteenth century that the French, with the need to modernise and improve the city of Paris created the first arcade. From that city the idea was carried throughout Europe and America and indeed later it was taken round the world as prefabricated cast-iron versions became available for use in the far flung cities of the European Empires.
There are nineteenth and early twentieth century shopping arcades in many countries from Peru to Russia to Australia and it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to visit all of them. However during the past four years 33 foreign arcades of great historical and architectural significance have been studied. They were not visited at random but were chosen in order to gain a greater understanding of the development of the building type. Paris still retains its early arcades, Brussels has the first large arcade and Milan contains the splendid focal point for city life. Cleveland has the most technologically advanced building and an answer to reuse and conservation, whilst Moscow retains a triple arcade which is possibly the busiest in the world.

It is important, therefore, to see the British Arcade as only part of the building type's development and an appreciation has been included of some of the great foreign examples extant in the late 1970's.

As for the men who built shopping arcades in Britain there have been three distinct groups, first the Georgian aristocratic entrepreneurs, followed several decades later by the builders of new city centres and finally the provincial investors who attempted to emulate the latter, although on a more modest scale. The majority of the arcades were built after 1860, during a period of city expansion and modernisation when architects were actively engaged in leaving their monuments in the form of town halls, law courts and other important civic buildings. But arcades were not included and there are few which can claim designers of eminence. The Royal Opera Arcade by Nash and Repton and the Burlington Arcade by Samuel Ware were built when the idea was new and nationally known architects designed the buildings for aristocratic patrons. All later British examples, with the sole exceptions of the County and Cross Arcades in Leeds designed in 1900 by the Edwardian theatre designer, Frank Matcham, were produced for local merchants by local and occasionally, regional architects.
The architecture and construction techniques reveal that British designers were content to follow fashion whilst invention and engineering expertise were, for the most part, avoided. Some arcades consist of purely functional retail units with little or no architectural merit but conversely there are many which are very fine buildings and in the middle are those which are interesting or delightfully eccentric. There are sophisticated stucco arcades of the Georgian period and there is the rich terracotta of the later Victorian years. Elaborate decoration in tiles enlives several notable Edwardian buildings and dazzling cast-iron domes and vaults were used to cover a few remarkable arcades. There were the constraints of land availability, finance and the very slow development of the waterproof and low maintenance glass roof. Indeed the problems of the latter were not solved until late in the nineteenth century, thus explaining why so few arcades have anything more than a purely functional glazed roof.

The first arcades were small, being perhaps experiments in shopping development, but as the nineteenth century progressed demand for goods increased, technology advanced and larger buildings with varied plan forms were erected. There is no comparison in size between the Royal Opera Arcade and the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, the latter being a new type of indoor-outdoor urban space. But even that is smaller and quite different from the enclosed light court of the Arcade in Cleveland, Ohio.

The first plan form was linear and it continued to be imitated but new types came into existence through the exigencies of such factors as land ownership or geography.

There is the shopping arcade which is a covered street, either deliberately planned as a new street or built over an existing alley, but nevertheless a street linking two other streets and forming an essential part of the
communications network of a town. The first arcades were built in this manner and their success led to a search for more sites. If none was available, land was chosen at the rear of existing premises, giving the second plan type which increased the utilization of the site without necessarily providing a through route for pedestrians. Later in the century larger scale development produced the third distinct plan type, that is the central court, illuminated from above and often with upper galleries in the mode of an Exchange or Bourse. It was not a linear arcade but an indoor 'place' which may or may not lead directly between two streets. It was a method of providing several floors for different uses on large or awkwardly shaped sites and was made possible by changes in construction technology, which provided the means of covering wide spaces with iron or steel and glass.

There were, of course, variations on the three plan forms which allowed the developer to use more fully an irregularly shaped site. Such a piece of land was perhaps too impractical to form large shops, too large for one store or indeed there may have been an adequate supply of department stores in the town. The site could therefore be most profitably used by subdividing into small units with access from, for example, L or H shaped glass covered corridors.

From the earliest days of shopping arcade development there were dwellings and workshops above the shops; the developers of the large arcades of the late nineteenth century introduced greater profitability by offering commercial premises to rent on the upper floors. In addition arcades at that time were sometimes built as part of a much larger development, allied to such land uses as markets or theatres. But in practical terms, neither the undoubted popularity of the shopping arcades amongst developers, nor beauty, nor an excellent plan form could automatically ensure economic success. If an arcade, built to any plan form, was the major source of shops in a town, it was
obviously successful because it had little competition but if that situation ever existed it would have been for a very short time indeed. More often the desire to build arcades led developers to choose sites which were far away from other shops and did not lead anywhere. Consequently some arcades were always financially disastrous and others became so as the centre of gravity of the retail area moved away.

As the twentieth century has progressed communication routes and retail areas have changed around the arcades. Fashions in shopping and competition from new and improved buildings have made a significant impact in traditional central areas and the overwhelming fact, regardless of fine architecture, is that no single shop (or group of shops) is indispensible to the fickle public. Many owners of arcades are therefore confronted with the problems of maintaining old and probably architecturally important buildings without an adequate rental income. In addition to studying archive material and examining each building from an architectural aspect, the study has attempted to determine its current financial situation, its role in its respective retail centre and the commitment towards it in terms of regard and investment, by its owners. Of these some 50% responded to a questionnaire\(^2\) regarding these factors and much valuable information was gained.

A building type which is only one element amongst many in a retail area cannot be studied in isolation and it has been necessary to look at twentieth century innovation in shopping. Developments in retailing have always been made in answer to demand, spending power, fashion and the expansion of cities. The ascent and decline of the shopping arcade occurred within the period 1800 to 1939, with its development reaching a peak in the last few decades of the nineteenth century. Many arcades have been demolished either having outlived their usefulness or because they were seen as standing in the way of progress. Others have maintained a steady income whilst some have
reached a point at which a re-evaluation of their role needs to be made. A few have retained their importance, most notably Burlington Arcade, where a fine building and rigid adherance to high quality and expensive goods have been continuously brought to the notice of visitors to the capital, by means of aggressive marketing. This however is very untypical.

As shopping arcades have declined in importance their premier place in the high street has been taken by large stores and latterly by covered shopping centres. In vast covered complexes there are many centralized uses, shops, restaurants, office space, recreation, car parks, bus stations which are capable of moving the towns centre of gravity by their sheer size. The captive shoppers will seldom stray once inside, having been brought undercover by some form of public or private transport.

However the property market, first in America and more recently in Britain is now becoming saturated by super stores and shopping centres and in addition, methods of retailing are changing. Analogous with this are demands for the conservation of old buildings. Attempts are being made to accomplish urban regeneration and there is a search for new forms of leisure activity. What has emerged in response to all of these factors is most interestingly the 'speciality centre' which contain some form of shopping arcade within its boundaries.

The importance of changing social and economic influences cannot be underestimated as they are the background to achieving a new role for the nineteenth century arcade. Its conservation and use in the real world would be now almost non existent if the pattern of shopping adopted in the 1960's and early 1970's had prevailed for much longer, but new opportunities for conservation have emerged even since this study was first undertaken.

In discussion with conservationists and shoppers there appears to be a universal understanding of what nineteenth century shopping arcades are and a
knowledge of at least one example, but why so many charming buildings have remained unknown and unrecorded is a mystery. Brief references to shopping arcades appear in several books, most notably in Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's 'History of Building Types'\(^3\) but only one comprehensive study has been undertaken. This is 'Passagen'\(^4\) by Dr. Geist which is an admirable guide to existing, altered and demolished examples, on a world wide basis but it neither records all British arcades nor examines those mentioned, in great detail. It is hoped, therefore, that the following will not only be a comprehensive record of those British arcades existing in 1983, but it will reveal their history, foreign influences, style, economics, management and future use.

This is the first record, using photographs, drawings and documentary evidence of all 117 extant shopping arcades\(^5\) in Britain built between 1817 when the first was opened and 1939. The period from 1875 to 1910\(^6\) was the most prolific for arcade building, but as there were several major arcades built between 1918 and 1939, the latter date was chosen as a point at which to terminate the investigation. After 1945 only simple modern corridors and the now ubiquitous shopping centres were built.

Whilst the study is not primarily a backward look to a golden age of elegance and luxury, a little nostalgia is inevitable. It is not intended to isolate some splendid buildings of the nineteenth century and claim their automatic, unquestioned right to conservation. But rather to record and examine the design, geography and economics of each structure and attempt to place it in the context of the modern city and in doing so, suggest valid future uses. It seeks to deduce some general principles governing the success or failure of shopping arcades in order to assist the designers and developers of tomorrow's pedestrianised covered spaces.
Finally it is hoped that this record of all Britain's arcades may stimulate interest in some of the lesser known examples for their own enjoyment, while viewing the grander or more famous specimens with increased understanding.
pl.3a The Stoa of Attalos c150 B.C.
pl.3b The Forum Colonnade c79 A.D.
Pompei
pl.4 Passage des Panoramas - earliest section from 1800
pl. 5 Galeries St. Hubert - Brussels
pl. 6 Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II - Milan
pl. 7 The Arcade - Cleveland, Ohio
pl.8 Burlington Arcade - Westminster
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2. Appendices. I: Questionnaires and Methods of Research
3. History of Building Types
   Chapter 16: Shops, Stores
   and Department Stores
   Sir Nikolaus Pevsner
4. Passagen
   J.F. Geist
   Prestel-Verlag Munchen
   1969
5. Chapter 8 Table A: British Arcades Extant 1983
6. Chapter 8 Table B: British Arcades in Chronological order.
CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY OF SHOPPING ARCADES
Why did arcades come to be built? What social, economic or architectural reasons led the developers to think that they had found the answer to their quest for a fortune in Britain? The climate might be deemed an excellent reason for putting shops under cover, and the fastidious have a claim to a commonsense approach in taking the pedestrian out of the mud and filth that littered the highway. From the viewpoint of the twentieth century both assumptions are reasonable but for centuries the weather and the dirt, were regarded as man's lot upon this earth, and in an age where bear baiting, cockfighting or public execution were regarded as entertainment, the sensibilities of the shopper were not developed to any recognisable degree. When the shopping arcade made its appearance in the late eighteenth century it did so in Paris, rather than London, and signalled no immediate change in attitude but came about through a desire for luxury goods and a taste for personal ostentation. The need to display the one and accommodate the other could be brilliantly combined in such a building. It was not however a sudden inspiration or invention, but was rather the gradual combination of several architectural and retail developments which gave the appearance of often being quite unconnected. The history of the building type leaps from financial institutions to classical architecture, to developer's profit; and to the idiosyncracies of individuals, for necessarily, it is individuals by their sophistication or fickleness, who have determined where and how arcades should be built and whether they should be allowed to become a commercial lasting success.

Population growth and town expansion in Britain

The basic pattern of shopping and the development of the retail trade was established in the middle ages and it did not change significantly until the middle of the nineteenth century.
In the eleventh century the population of England and Wales was only one and a quarter million and although it rose to four millions by the middle of the thirteenth century, it was dramatically reduced by between a third and a half by the Black Death; and it did not reach four millions again until the middle of the seventeenth century. Throughout the often violent mediaeval period the inhabitants were, for the most part, thinly scattered in agricultural communities. There were few settlements of more than three or four thousand people. York had a population of 8,000 but only London was a great city with 50,000 inhabitants. The shopping demands of so few could easily be met by the local market and the craftsmen in each town. Grain, livestock and food were sold, which together with the production of craft workshop's, provided everything for a self sufficient community, such a factor being extremely important in times of siege or civil disorder. Imported products from other regions and countries were sold and news was carried from the late twelfth century by travelling fairs which flourished and which continued to provide such services until the early nineteenth century. Unlike the market, which retains its importance in the trade of many towns, the fair has merely become a brief interlude in the life of the community, providing mechanical novelties and lively entertainment.

By 1700 the population of England and Wales was five millions, three quarters of whom still lived in the countryside. Urban communities remained thinly scattered, although London had grown to half a million; Norwich the great wool centre to 30,000 and the major port of Bristol with 20,000 had overtaken York. Throughout the eighteenth century the economy improved, people were better fed, and housed, and the population rose to six millions by 1750. New coastal towns and inland manufacturing centres also began to emerge.

This urban expansion was made possible by economic prosperity and an improvement in transport. The main roads with their improved permanent surface allowed for a regular network of mail and stage coach routes and
goods were moved economically and efficiently by canal barge. There were also changes in the supply and demand for goods and in particular there was the rise of international trade. Tea, coffee, wine, sugar and tobacco were much in demand, stimulating wholesale and retail services. An improved agricultural industry and higher wages coincided with falling prices in industrially manufactured products such as cotton goods, metal wares and pottery, the consumption of which increased even in rural areas. There was also the development of banks and of shops selling silk and millinery to fashion conscious clientele and even country towns became accustomed to such novelties. The prosperous 1780's saw an increase in the average retail spending per head and though this declined during the battles with France it re-established itself firmly in the early nineteenth century. General merchants, tailors, shoemakers, stationers and apothecaries became well established in provincial towns; but the greatest wealth remained in the hands of the upper and middle classes who demanded luxury goods which could only be found in London or exceptionally in the shops of the newly emerging manufacturing districts.

The relatively high living standards of the working classes ended after two or three decades of the nineteenth century however as the population increased. From nine millions in 1801 the figure rose to twelve millions in 1821 and by the end of the century it was thirty seven millions.

**Development of the shop**

From the eleventh century to the end of the eighteenth century the design of the shop remained remarkably constant in its less pretentious form at least. The word itself took a long time to settle on its present single meaning. In earlier usage it embraced anything from a hawkers tray to a market stall or warehouse. The term 'standing shop' might be used to single out a retail unit within the walls of a house, that is, what we would understand by a shop today,
as opposed to an 'open shop' which was a shed or lean-to built in front of the house. Shop embraced every location where selling took place. As for the 'standing shop' its design changed in few essentials from the commercial streets of Roman cities to the typical seventeenth century market place.

Wooden shutters in place of windows were divided horizontally with the lower half hinging downwards to form a counter and the upper half fastening above to give a display and selling space. Where a larger shop was required a counter was added inside and by the end of the seventeenth century the most common retail shop was the ground floor of a house furnished with counter and shelves. Glazing with small panes of glass was a seventeenth century improvement which probably originated in Holland and formalized, in the larger or more specialist shops, the division between items on sale and the street outside. Glass was very expensive and generally of poor quality in all but the most superior buildings. However as there was a puritanical aversion to advertisement (the shopkeepers emblem sufficing) and to the pretentious display of goods, the material was required not for effect but simply to keep out the elements. Retailers dealing in non perishable goods such as haberdashery and linens or seasonal products for home baking bought in large quantities and therefore required considerable space for storage. It was common practice to haggle over the price of goods, surprisingly so in the realms of drapery and haberdashery; and credit was expected and generally received for most purchases. However London retailers were ahead of the provincial towns in that believing competition to attract the fashionable was preferable to the acceptance of a very poor livelihood gained from the slow turnover of the wares. The presentation of goods in windows unobscured by faulty glass became a prime requirement and the shopkeeper sought for ever larger display areas.

Most window glass from the middle of the seventeenth century was crown, spun into circular discs of 3 feet 4 inches to 4 feet 6 inches or even 5 feet in
diameter. The process relied on strength and skill and there were variations in quality and thickness. There was also considerable waste in cutting. It had, however, a brilliant surface and was more in demand than the glass produced by the cylinder process.

Scientific experiment was restricted and new methods of manufacture were prohibitively expensive as a result of the high taxes on glass. A Window Tax was introduced in 1696 and not repealed until 1851, but more formidable were the Excise Duties, first imposed in 1746. These not only demanded an annual payment for a licence to manufacture glass but also a tax on weight, by requiring a payment per pound on all glass melted ready for use, and a payment per pound on the excess in weight of manufactured glass over 40% (and later 50%) of the calculated weight of molten glass.

Cast plate was introduced into England from France in 1773 but it was extraordinarily expensive, and crown glass did not lose its pre-eminence until the 1830's when broad or sheet glass was introduced in 1832 and patent plate in 1839. The latter made possible the manufacture of 7 to 8 feet by 3 to 4 feet sheets, which were eagerly purchased when the Excise Duties were removed in 1845.

As a result of the cost and problems in the manufacture of glass, the builders of the eighteenth century reduced the thickness of glazing bars in order to give the appearance of large sheets of glass. The 2 inch wooden astragals of Queen Anne windows had been reduced to \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch by 1820. By using metals \( 3/8'' \) was achieved in brass by 1800 and the bars were ultimately reduced to knife blade thickness in iron.

Improvements in shop design and retailing could take place only where there was a high percentage of wealthy shoppers to pay for such novelties. In general however through nine centuries the organisation of trading was based
on an agricultural economy. Although the industrial revolution created large towns, the immigrants to them remained for several generations very poor, living on a monotonous and inadequate diet, wearing home made clothes, using home made furniture and unable to buy or use luxury goods. It was the 1850's before demand increased and the pattern of selling changed. The continuously increasing urban populations became housed in high density dwellings far removed from the rural economy. The trading role of fairs declined, and the families became less self sufficient. Fixed shop retailing was the norm, and advertising became very important in an expanding and competitive market. The final transformation from a pre-industrial to an industrial economy to place between 1875 and 1914 and in those years new techniques in selling, new methods of wholesale and retail distribution, new trades, new goods, branded goods and retail price maintenance were introduced. The 'small master' economy passed as wages improved, bringing from the lower middle class and the working class a great demand for goods. There was at this time a delayed industrial revolution in consumer goods, notably in the change from craft to factory production in the boot and shoe trade and the clothing industry. There was also a rapid increase in real income per head of population up to the turn of the twentieth century. The display of products became extravagant and flamboyant in order to attract custom. Advertisements and for the first time clearly priced goods appeared. There was the emergence of large scale distributive organisations such as cooperative societies, department stores and multiple shops and there was great investment in town centre commercial development.

Origins of the shopping arcade

The practical and down to earth requirements of those who made use of shops in the Middle Ages would scarcely have been met by the shopping arcade. Its very specialization, lack of storage space and its appeal to a privileged clientele of a later age, would have been drawbacks then.
There were certainly early forms of shopping arcades in the Middle East, developed in response to fierce climatic conditions. In fact the Europeans built a series of stone vaulted arcades or 'Souks' in Jerusalem during the Crusader period of 1099-1187 which remain thriving bazaars. An account of the twelfth century describes

a covered street vaulted over, called the Street of Herbs, where they sell all the herbs and all the fruits of the city and spices. At the top of the street is a place where they sell fish. And behind the market where they sell the fish is a very large place on the left hand where cheese, chicken and eggs are sold. On the right hand of this market are the shops of the Syrian gold workers.

The importance of Jerusalem as a meeting place for east and west perhaps explains the great and continuing success of the venture but whereas ideas and goods moved slowly westwards to change and sometimes improve the quality of life in the emerging European kingdoms, the eastern 'arcade', 'bazaar' or 'souk' remained firmly in the Middle East.

Styles in architecture and a rediscovery of classical ideals provided a rather stronger claim as an inspiration for the development of arcades. At Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital of 1419 in Florence the ground floor colonnade created a sense of spaciousness and beauty. It was an element which was eventually used throughout Italy, becoming an accepted manner of street enclosure; and in turn such impressive arcades as the Piazza San Marco, Venice or the Palladian arcades of Vicenza were noted and adapted by northern Europeans from the sixteenth century onwards. The first commercial advantage was seized by the Duke of Little Lombardy in Vigevano who built the first residential piazza in the world. Shops on the ground floor set back behind an arcaded thoroughfare preceded such development as the Place des Voges in Paris by 120 years and the Covent Garden Piazza in London by 140 years. The latter was fashionable for a time but the unplanned, noisy
commercial use of the central space and the competition from new housing to
the west gave it a very short life as a residential area for the wealthy.
Whether from noise, smell, inconvenience or the lack of privacy the wealthy
English turned away from the discomforts of living over the shop towards the
privacy of the quiet select street or square. The combination of apartments
above arcaded shops remained successful however in Italy and in
France,\(^{(pl.12)}\) inspiring the builders of the Galeries du Palais Royal in
Paris\(^{(pl.13)}\) in 1781, in which ten years later was the setting for the first
Parisian arcade.

Nevertheless, an arcaded ground floor was adopted in England from the
sixteenth century for a commercial use. Public and municipal buildings were
required and in the richer towns, the Guild or Town Hall was frequently built
above an open arcaded area which was used by market traders. Thus giving an
intensive use of the site and establishing the idea of shopping under cover.
Notable examples are the Elizabethan Hall at Shrewsbury of 1596 and Chipping
Campden,\(^{(pl.14)}\) opened later in 1624.

A further strand in the history of the shopping arcade was the 'exchange', a
meeting place for merchants and traders. The establishment of European
banking began in the rich Italian city states and from there it was copied by
Hanseatic traders. In 1531 the first exchange of Northern Europe was built in
Antwerp 'for the use of traders of all nations and all languages' as an open
space surrounded by Gothic cloisters. It was joined in 1564-68 by a Bourse
including lodgings and warehousing for the Hanseatic merchants.

The design and the success of these inspired the English financier Sir Thomas
Gresham to attempt to turn London into an international centre for trade. He
built the first Royal Exchange in 1568\(^{(pl.15)}\) with the purpose of attracting
foreign merchants to the city and out of the rain and mud of Lombard Street
into a covered trading area. The result was a galleried building (pl.16) containing 100 booths or shops on two floors around an open courtyard. The rent from the shops was intended to pay for the upkeep of the whole site but tradesmen were very suspicious of Lock up shops and the extraordinary amount of competition under one roof. Almost all the shops remained empty for three years and in desperation Gresham offered them rent free for a year in order to present a picture of success to Elizabeth I who had consented to visit it. Once the building was fully occupied Gresham's belief in the venture was vindicated and it became a great social and commercial triumph, not without, however, minor problems such as those arising from the dependence on artificial light which encouraged the sale of shoddy goods. It was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666, rebuilt shortly afterwards (pl.17) and burnt down again in 1838, after which it was replaced by the present Royal Exchange. The success of the initial project of Gresham's, however delayed, had its effect on other landowners. For example in the early years of the seventeenth century Sir Robert Cecil acquired the site next to his London residence in The Strand in order to build a rival concern.

The announcement of the project inevitably led to protests from shopkeepers in the Royal Exchange and from the Lord Mayor of the City of London, who feared a general drift of business towards Westminster. These were ignored and the building attributed to Inigo Jones opened in 1609. The New Exchange (pl.18) was erected with great speed between July 1608 and August 1609 in order to beat any possible competitors and King James, on opening it, chose to give it the name of 'Britain's Burse'. There was an arcaded walk some 21 feet deep around the outside of the building in the Italian manner for a general assembly of merchants. Inside were two rows of shops each 5½ feet deep with a central corridor 10 feet wide. On the upper floor there were two corridors and three rows of shops which extended out over the ground floor arcade. Cellars at basement level were also provided.
The leases required traders to conduct business only in books, fancy goods, perfumes, clothes and other personal articles while traders in Gresham's Exchange sold a wide variety of goods from mouse-traps and bird cages to millinery, books, gold, armour and glass but there were no food-stuffs in either building. The content of the shops was fairly simple to control but there were other factors which were more than a passing nuisance. Holidays and opening hours were regulated in order to prevent disputes and brawling and corporal punishment was introduced for:

the shoppe assistants (who) created disorders by hunting doggs with great noise and howling, playing of foyles and cudgels, striking ye ball (which breaketh ye windows) buffitting and fighting one with another. 5

sanitation and smell in such an enclosed space, however much relieved by perfume was a great problem and remained so until proper sewers were provided. In the New Exchange one single privy was installed and linked by a sewer to the river but this was so inadequate that tradesmen were frequently fined the then discouraging sum of one shilling for pouring 'noysome things' into the corridors or arcade below.

By the autumn of 1609 only 27 of the 100 shops were rented. There was no residential accommodation for shopkeepers, there were only a few local inhabitants, and there was inadequate storage space. Today's economic problems affecting arcades and other retailing establishments were obviously in evidence in that century, particularly with regard to the lack of a captive population around the building. Since members of the upper classes were failing to pass along the Strand between the city and the Royal Palace of Westminster in sufficient numbers to make the venture profitable, Wilson the agent suggested to Lord Salisbury that he should build one hundred houses on the site immediately behind the 'Burse'. But finance was a great problem particularly as they would each cost £200 when the total for the Exchange was only £10,760 plus £1,200 for the lease.
By 1623 with the upper floor still empty Lady Hatton proposed, but did not implement, a plan to turn that level into a town house. In 1627 the shops on the upper level were removed and 16 small apartments were created with their wash houses on the ground floor, which only increased the sanitation problems. Tenants were bound in their leases not to let filth seep through onto the heads of those below and there was a fine of ten shillings for emptying slops out of the windows. Despite these drawbacks the apartments were let very quickly because by that time there was tremendous pressure for housing in the area. The creation of new residential districts brought yet more people and a demand for more shops. Thus the upper floor was once again required for trading. The owners readily agreed because the apartments had been constructed without a Royal licence and it was found that with such insanitary conditions, overcrowding and a predisposition to fires none would be given even if applied for. Alterations again took place and a central balcony was created on the first floor, large windows were added and the roof entirely rebuilt. The Exchange was then rapidly occupied and reached its peak of popularity by 1658.8

On the basis of this success other exchanges opened in the 1670's. The Earl of Exeter built the Exeter 'Change(p1.19.20.21) in 1676 on a site opposite the 'Burse', and in retaliation the Cecil's converted the first floor gallery of Salisbury House into the Middle Exchange. Exeter 'Change survived until 1829 when it was removed during the Metropolitan Improvements. It acquired a special notoriety during its last few years when the whole of the upper floor was devoted to a menagerie run by a Mr. Cross, who actually kept within its walls the then only elephant in England.

But by the 1680's the rich residents were moving westwards and the businesses began to go into a slow decline. Advertising of a dubious nature and even open prostitution kept the Middle Exchange alive for a few years, becoming known
locally as the 'Whore's Nest.' After a relatively short life it was closed in 1694.

These were the prototype of the British covered shopping street, cramped, dark and underventilated and with many other drawbacks. The early ventures declined because they were tied to fashion and the movement of population. They were modelled on Elizabethan shops that were out of date by the Restoration and there were the practical but unsolved problems of sanitation and lighting. But a precedent had been set.

One remarkable development, isolated and seemingly unprecedented had already taken place in the provinces. It was the building or perhaps rebuilding, in 1591, of the 'The Rows' in Chester. This extraordinary two level parade of shops had existed in some form in the middle ages and the reasons for the design are numerous but unproven. They were certainly built over Roman cellars and Anglo-Saxon rubbish; it had been suggested by local historians that they were influenced by Roman buildings or that they were carefully designed to provide height and vantage points from which to fight the unruly Welsh. But the practical effect was to ease communication, taking people from narrow, dirty roads into a dry, uncongested environment. Whatever the reasons for their development they remain an essential feature of the townscape of Chester, yet, remarkably, they do not appear to have been copied elsewhere.

Arcaded pavements and covered walks did emerge however from time to time and many still exist as important streets in relatively quiet market towns. The Butterwalks at Totnes are colonnaded pavements lining each side of the steep main street with the houses above carried forward. Although erected in the early eighteenth century there is evidence to suggest that they are a replacement of a similar scheme dating from the sixteenth century. Among
other eighteenth century examples are the Town Hall Buildings, Farnham (pl.24) with an arcaded walk on one elevation, the colonnaded Bath Street, Bath, (pl.25) and the Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, (pl.26) all providing protected walks for the bon ton.

The first shopping arcades

By the end of the eighteenth century there were exchanges and colonnaded shopping pavements, a growing population with enough wealth and a desire for luxury goods, unconsidered trifles and personal adornment. It was an age when people loved to promenade, to keep in fashion, to be seen, and when window shopping was as attractive a diversion as visiting pleasure gardens and assembly rooms. The French were the first to sense the commercial possibilities of bringing all these aspirations together, and the result was the shopping arcade. Covered top lit passages for the rich, the idle, the fashionable and the growing middle class, provided spectacle and display, free from the vagaries of weather, the dangers of traffic and the dirt of the unmade and fouled streets. They were made possible when substantial areas of urban land became available for development following the dissolution of the monasteries after the Revolution and created the opportunities to redevelop, to widen, realign or build new roads and buildings. Large profits and an assured income were realised by producing in single development modern shops, residential accommodation and safe pedestrian routes.

The pre-Revolutionary prototype of all Parisian arcades was built between 1781 and 1786 in the Jardins du Palais Royal, (pl.27) to the north of Richelieu’s seventeenth century palace itself and arcaded open house to the fashionable of Paris. The architect Victor Louis designed apartments, shops, cafes and restaurants to provide extra finance for the royal family. The development was built around the three sides of a quadrangle with an arcaded ground floor in the Italian manner. It became a meeting place for society and indeed after
the revolution for all classes of Parisians. A double row of wooden stalls or shops with sky-lights, was then built to form the fourth side of the quadrangle, which had the added advantage of separating the public space from the palace.

These Galeries du Bois were the first attempt to form a shopping arcade. Their example was followed elsewhere in Paris by the more permanently constructed Passage Feydeau (no longer in existence) in 1791 and the Passage du Caire in 1797-99. Arcade building then became a passion and probably between 28 and 40 seem to have been erected although firm records can only be established for 28. 19 now remain in the city. The Galeries du Bois gradually acquired a dubious reputation and they were replaced in 1828 by the architecturally important Galerie d'Orleans. (p.28) The note to the engraving by Auguste Charles Pugin in the publication 'Paris and its Environs' of 1831 states that:

It consists of the usual ornaments and attractions of a Parisian arcade; except, perhaps, that it possesses the most elegant shops in all light and fancy articles, is splendidly lighted at night, and has at all times ample air and accommodation for its well dressed crowd of visitors.

Though the glazed, barrel vaulted gallery was demolished in 1935 the urbane galleries of the Palais Royal and the gardens remain.

A network of narrow passages lit by sky-lights soon provided links across the centre of Paris and in the early decades of the nineteenth century they were the epitome of style and elegance. They were not streets but covered, secure areas allowing the free flow of pedestrians. They offered the delights of shops, cafes and salons which gave them character and contained the spaces. They were extraordinarily successful, taking over the role of the market place as a cultural, social and retail centre under glass, contributing an air of novelty and unreality.
The long war with France kept the new development hidden from the British but from 1814 soldiers and then travellers, visited Paris, and the buildings became popular venues for tourists. As well as along all the boulevards, France Trollope\(^9\) noted on her visit in 1835 that there were flower sellers installed:

> in every brilliant Passage, with which latter ornamental invention Paris is now threaded in all directions.

By the end of the eighteenth century London too, like Paris was expanding rapidly. As earlier in Bath property speculations resulted in splendid urban development with squares and crescents, gracious town houses and parks which gave the city an air of sophistication and attracted wealthy residents. Art, architecture and civic design were combined by the Prince Regent and his architect John Nash in one of Europe's finest neo-classical civic design schemes.\(^{(p1.29)}\) Houses, shops and theatres were built to the north and west of St. Martins-in-the-field and England's first shopping arcade in the Parisian manner emerged as if by accident as a tiny element in the grand design. But the significance of the Royal Opera Arcade\(^{(p1.30)}\) as an inspiration for other arcades far exceeded its economic contribution. Its architecture has the elegant gravity that one expects from the designer of Regent Street. Built between 1815 and 1817, it was the first covered passage with sky-lights in Britain and was financed by the Crown Estates. The complicated history of the site\(^{10}\) extends over several decades and is documented in the Survey of London Volume XXIX. Many changes in plans and uses were discussed before the building was complete. A Royal Opera House had been built in the Haymarket in 1790 by Novosielisk but it was the architects Thomas Leverton and John Fordyce who suggested, prior to 1800, an improvement to the roads in the area, to erect imposing colonnaded facades to the theatre and to provide a covered arcade on the west side of the theatre. In 1811 further plans were prepared and conditions imposed in the subsequent Crown Lease
including the requirement to provide a covered way in Market Lane to replace the existing 'sordid and unsavoury' sedan chair entrance to the theatre. The lease was specific about the design and lighting of the 'piazza' to be built around the theatre. Rooms were to be erected above the piazza and the shops on the eastern side were to rise no 'higher than the springing of the arches' to allow natural light. The final design however did not contain rooms over the piazza but John Nash and Genge Repton the architects of the new Royal Opera House of 1813 (pl.31) which replaced that by Novosielski and of its surrounding colonnade, created an enclosed arcade with a partly glazed ceiling to allow in natural light. It remains an elegant Georgian walk running parallel to the Haymarket, linking Pall Mall to Charles II Street. Its economic viability was tied firmly to the theatre and its position in the West End was not suitable for profitable retailing away from the fashionable shops of Piccadilly. But its novelty, however short lived, led immediately to designs for an arcade parallel to Bond Street, on land belonging to and adjoining Burlington House. This was, from the start proposed with profitability in mind. Burlington Arcade at once became and has remained with its genteel purveyors of luxury items, the most famous arcade (pl.32) in Britain.

Shopping Arcades after 1820

Once the success of such a venture had been established others quickly followed. These were sited where a growing population coincided with a shortage of shops, availability of land, finance and an entrepreneur. The absence of anyone of these factors could prejudice commercial success. The pattern of the development of the arcade in Britain shows a move from the South to the North. First the capital, then the major port and the fashionable holiday resorts were overtaken by the expanding industrial cities. Only two arcades were built in London between 1818 and 1879, and perhaps this was due in part to a parallel and equally diverting means of shopping which went under
the name of 'Bazaar'. This despite some contemporary Parisian examples is essentially an English development. The term was chosen not to suggest an exotic environment but to alert the shopper to the extraordinary variety of goods for sale. The segregation of crafts into individual premises and thence into whole streets such as Butcher's Row (pl. 33) or Mercer's Street, was a mediaeval method of trade protection which had no relevance by the mid nineteenth century. Even so, when the concept of the Bazaar was introduced dresses, accessories, millinery and dress materials appear to have been the principal items for sale. An exception was the Pantechnicon (pl. 34) in Motcombe Street, Belgravia which opened in 1830 and sold amongst other things, furniture and carriages. There were fifteen or more such emporia in London, the most famous being the Pantheon, in Oxford Street, (pl. 35) transformed by Sydney Smirke in 1834, from James Wyatt's 1772 Assembly Rooms. Thus observed the 'Gentlemans Magazine'.

The spot on which our grandfathers spent some of their idlest hours, and indulged in revelries which have never been found thoroughly to assimilate with English manners, has now become the scene of patient industry, and busy though elegant traffic.

The great 'salon' was 116 feet by 90 feet and in this, as in other bazaars, there were many small stands belonging to different owners. Inspiration for these bazaars and emporia may have come from earlier exchanges and from recent arcades, but they looked forward to the development of the department store and diverged from the covered street.

Whilst Sydney Smirke was working on the transformation of the 'swagger place' into a respectable grouping of shops, Witherden Young in 1830 produced the Lowther Arcade (pl. 36 & 37) in The Strand for William Herbert. It was a highly regarded design.
It far surpasses the Burlington Arcade in its architectural appearance. 14

Many of the ideas were adapted from Sir Robert Smirke's scheme of 1830 for opening up the western end of The Strand by providing a 250 feet long pedestrian link between West Strand and St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Greek revival in style, it was in the form of a high corridor, divided into bays by pilasters with transverse arches and domed skylights. Mercury the god of merchants and craftsmen appeared in the 'unostentatious' decoration. It was imitated by Dobson15 in Newcastle upon Tyne(p.l.38) and it was the only arcade noted in a table of 'Public Buildings most worthy of notice for their Architecture' produced by the Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal of May 1839.

The fourth arcade in London was the New Exeter 'Change by Sydney Smirke which opened in 1844. Less ambitious than the earlier examples but nevertheless it had an ingenious plan form(pl.39) of three spaces conditioned by the shape of the site and its access points. There was a heptagon at the Wellington Street end and a hexagon at Catherine Street joined by a central avenue 60 feet long 12 feet wide and 20 feet high.

a thorough view of the building is not seen on merely passing by it in the street, when the eye only catches a glimpse as it were of the interior, which accordingly reveals itself more picturesquely and invitingly.16

Over each polygon there was a solid ceiling and continuous arched skylights of clear glass springing from the cove of the central corridor. The clear glazing attracted criticism and it was felt that 'ground or waved' would have hidden the 'backs and naked brick walls' of the houses around, an interesting and valid point still applicable to many arcades. The internal walls were frescoed with, amongst other things, 'arabesque borderings in the Pompeian style' then
enjoying a revival among architectural decorators. Despite all its interesting features its inability to reveal itself doubtless contributed to its failure. It was the shortest lived of all the London arcades, being demolished in 1863.

Contemporary writers extolled the virtues of arcades and architectural critics who remained anonymous gave free advice on design and layout. It was asserted that there was great scope for novelty and variety:

styles that would be too outré and fanciful for ordinary street architecture - decoration that can hardly be applied in exposed situations might be employed here. 17

Gothic from Norman to Tudor, Byzantine, Lombardie, Moorish, Italian Pompeian and pure Greek were all suggested as suitable styles, and indeed most appeared to a greater or lesser degree in provincial Britain. A variety of plans, changing roof heights and central rotundas in the manner of the Galerie Colbert in Paris, (pl.40) together with perhaps an upper aisle of shops and decorative patterned asphalt for the floors. A propos cost, it was observed that shopkeepers squandered money on tasteless buildings and should direct their money towards more elegant premises within arcades. The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal published a critique of the New Exeter 'Change adding arcades to the new building types of the nineteenth century such as Club Houses, Railway Termini, Stations and Bazaars. Noting their derivation from the Passages and Galeries of Paris the article welcomed the Arcades to England:

The convenience of such covered in or indoor street and their particular suitableness in a climate like ours, are almost self evident; and equally so is the readiness with which they adapt themselves to architectural character. Financially considered they have besides this advantage that although in proportion to the space afforded, the rentals of the shops may be higher than elsewhere, the occupiers have not to pay for any more room than they themselves require, consequently have
not to speculate also upon sub-letting the upper part of their houses. Notwithstanding, however, that there is apparently so much in favour of such enclosed avenues of shops, they have not taken much in this country. 18

It went on to suggest that some of the numerous alleys in the City of London which joined Lombard Street, Cornhill Street and Threadneedle Street might be covered to form arcades.

**Utopian Projects**

Despite the continued rise in the population of London throughout the nineteenth century, the arcade did not find universal favour. Two remarkable projects were proposed however and although they were far too ambitious to have any chance of success they were instrumental in encouraging designers of arcades elsewhere to plan on a much larger scale. In 1855 the Select Committee on Metropolitan Communications solicited plans from many architects and surveyors on the best ways to achieve quick and easy movement of goods and people in the capital. William Moseley submitted designs for a 'Crystal Way' whilst Joseph Paxton, encouraged perhaps by the enormous success of his own Great Exhibition Building of 1851 designed the 'Great Victorian Way'.

Moseley's scheme was to form a two miles long\(^{(pl.41)}\) two level building which would alleviate the traffic problems of Holborn and the Strand. It would run from Cheapside with a fork at the western end, one line terminating at Oxford Circus and the other at the Quadrant, Piccadilly. The lower level to carry a loop line for trains whilst the upper one was for pedestrians and was to be covered by a pitched glass roof on transverse arches. There were to be shops on either side of the route and a sufficient depth of plot in places to accommodate for example, an hotel, model lodging houses or public buildings.\(^{(pl.42)}\) There would be 9,685 feet of shop frontage and 17,600 feet for
other buildings. The railway would be 12 feet below the street and the Crystal Way some 25 feet above it. Both routes would be 30 feet wide and the height of the Crystal Way would be 47 feet. There would be a toll of one penny per pedestrian for access to the 'superway' reached via a staircase and vehicles would be banned. Atmospheric power was to be used for the railway, which was expected to carry 50,000 people per day (25,000 each way) with 139 passengers per train. The total cost was expected to be approximately two million pounds.

Paxton proposed a ten miles long boulevard around central London which would also link to a new communications route between the City and the West End. The boulevard would be an enclosed glass covered arcade 108 feet high and as wide as the original transept of the Crystal Palace (72 feet) with traffic serving the shops only between nine p.m. and nine a.m. thus leaving the route free for pedestrians, omnibuses and passenger carriages. People would be free to visit the 'costly shops' without having to negotiate heavy traffic. A separate tunnel with local and express lines in two tiers 20 feet high was to be built on either side of the arcade. The trains would be 'perfectly noiseless' atmospheric pressure running on narrow gauge lines. The times of journeys would be remarkably quick with an estimated 8 minutes from Belgravia to the Bank and 5 to 6 minutes between the latter and Charing Cross or Regent Circus. The arcade would be on the level for the majority of its length although through Southwark the route would be elevated. It would be clean, with an 'equable temperature independent of the external weather, it would be brightly illuminated and the 'top of the shops and the cross bars' would be painted white to reflect the light. The largest thoroughfare in the world was to cost £11,300,000 with rents and revenues estimated to be £938,000 (giving 8% - 9% per annum). Its eventual extension to complete the circle around central London would bring the total cost to £34 millions. There would be shops on either side of the arcade and Paxton considered the covered way to be desirable because:
The streets of London, particularly in the City, are full of filth arising from the dirt and smoke emitted from the chimneys. 19

The arcade was to be lined with coloured Staffordshire tiles to eliminate the need for painting and the maintenance of the glass roof would be cheap because it would be self cleaning, although the designer did not expand on this. The roads would be washed occasionally to remove manure. Paxton stated:

I am satisfied, from having gone into the question minutely, it would be cheaper to keep a covered way in order.... than to keep in repair an ordinary street alone.

The designer was convinced it would be:

a magnificent promenade, which would give to the whole of London a new source of comfort and enjoyment.

It was also claimed that it would save:

many infirm persons being obliged to go into foreign countries in the winter.

There was great criticism of the scheme because the air would not be good and wholesome and the boulevards of Paris with their trees and fresh air, were held to be a much better model. In the event the Select Committee turned from the Utopian schemes to ones of practicability. The Committee finally chose the scheme of Charles Pearson, which was a system of railway and street improvements.

Late nineteenth century Arcades

Arcades could only get bigger after the publication of such ideas and in the provinces there was money, land, the means of speculating, advances in
building technology and civic pride which encouraged the building of bigger and better buildings. Barton Arcade of 1871, in Manchester\(^{(p.144)}\) followed the widening of Deansgate, the Great Western Arcade, Birmingham\(^{(p.145)}\) followed in 1875 while Digbeth Arcade, Walsall\(^{(p.146)}\) open in 1895 was a large scheme from the last years of the century. London did not acquire further sites until the relatively small, elegant Royal Arcade\(^{(p.147)}\) was built, to connect Old Bond Street with Albemarle Street, in 1879. There were several reasons for this lack of interest. Retail trade was busily expanding along established streets such Regent Street and in and around Piccadilly and Knightsbridge. The many bazaars catered for the emerging middle classes, and those buildings were later converted into department stores. Haggling over goods and prices ceased and a fixed price became the accepted manner of trading. The larger stores had first appeared in Paris once the Revolution freed trade. 'Pygmalion' opened as early as 1793 in the rue St. Denis and the development of such shops ran parallel to the building of the passages. In England it was the 1830's before comparable shops were opened and as late as the 1850's before the true department store became established, literally selling everything as the advertisements for Whiteleys of Bayswater claimed, from 'pins to elephants'. Their potential for making money for an individual shop owner encouraged high investment, exuberant architecture and novelty.

Despite that form of retailing however a writer to the 'Builder' in 1885 complained of the lack of:

> sheltered resorts... the Great Exhibition buildings had shown what could be done with light iron pillars and glass....so that the shops might be better lighted by day and no objectionable obscurity created at night.

Alternative shops, perhaps difficulties in acquiring land in the best location, the examples of the Lowther Arcade, reduced by the third quarter of the century to housing toy shops\(^{(p.148)}\) and of the ill-fated New Exeter 'Change which had opened and closed within 20 years, would scarcely encourage the
necessary investment in such schemes. Also the greater proportion of the shopping public was low paid. They wanted cheap, mass produced goods and the small select shops of the arcades were entirely unsuited to that form of retailing. Arcades were regarded as the meeting place of the rich and the privileged and indeed such segregation had been enforced in some arcades such as The Corridor in Bath and whilst rules may have changed throughout the century the psychological restraints were still in evidence. The development of the arcade to satisfy the demands for novelty and trinkets for sale in sophisticated surroundings and for residential use on upper floors no longer met the needs of London's urban society. The one practicable scheme for a London arcade between 1844 and 1879 had been a proposal in 1864 to erect an arcade linking Bond Street to Regent Street following a line a little to the south of Conduit Street; and although the Street Committee of the Metropolitan Board of Works approved of the scheme as a 'desirable public improvement', it was eventually abandoned. There was great opposition from tradesmen concerned over their potential loss of trade and local worthies complained that it would attract persons of immoral character. It was left to the enthusiasm of the new city builders to create the shoppers 'paradise' with seven arcades in Birmingham, five in Manchester, seven in Leeds and nine in Cardiff.

**European and American Arcades**

As international travel and trade increased the arcade appeared throughout Europe, in the outposts of the Empire and in North and South America. The simple passage with circular skylights or a pitched glass roof was improved, widened, enlarged and generally made more exciting until in its ultimate form it became the very heart of the city. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Milan. The great dream to rebuild the mediaeval city became also the means of expressing both national unity and the pride of the city's triumph after
years of conflict and subservience. That it included an arcade resulted from an appreciation of thriving examples in other European cities and also, perhaps, to the publication of the London projects of the 1850’s. Begun in 1865 it was certainly a joint operation with English finance, a French engineer, consultant architects from England, the ambitions of the city’s enterprising Mayor and his Italian architect. The largest arcade in the world in the shape of a Latin cross and the architecture of fifteenth century Lombardy, rose next to the mediaeval cathedral and was enclosed by a glass and iron barrel vault and dome whose construction owed much to the great glazed train sheds of England.

The third major arcade type appeared in America almost at the end of the arcade era in 1889. There were already many fine arcades in the United States of America commencing with the superb Greek Revival Weybosset Arcade (p.150.51.) in Providence, Rhode Island, built in 1827, and the iron and glass arcades in Philadelphia and New York. But the largest and most daring was the The Arcade in Cleveland, Ohio. It was planned in the manner of the early department stores in Paris and seems to show some knowledge of Barton Arcade Manchester along with such novel iron framed structures of the 1840’s and 1850’s such as the Sailors Home, Liverpool (p.152) and Bunning’s Coal Exchange. (p.153) Five floors of shops and offices surround a centre light-well crowned by a magnificent and innovative steel and glass roof the whole containing private spaces and vertical and horizontal public thoroughfares.

Those impressive European and American arcades were the inspiration for other, albeit smaller arcades and although they were quite dazzling and highly acclaimed they were not followed by larger developments until almost a century later. The fashion for arcade building almost disappeared in the twentieth century. In Leeds Frank Matcham the talented theatre architect built the Cross and County Arcades in 1901 as part of a great central area development scheme with the Empire Theatre alongside for night time
entertainment. Exuberant, theatrical and large, the scheme is a monument to the wealth of the city, the skill of Matcham and not a little to the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan.

The end of the era

There were other notable shopping arcades built during the first decade of the twentieth century but after 1910, apart from the monumental Council House Arcade in Nottingham of 1928, the arcades that were built were insignificant and usually of simple corridor plan.

Those, usually without skylights, were part of many expansion plans for the High Streets of Britain. They were a means of using 'back land' in the cheapest possible manner and architecturally they were critically unworthy of notice.

From 1945 city planners and developers have concentrated their efforts on the segregation of pedestrians and vehicular traffic on a much larger scale and on the creation of large enclosed shopping centres. The nineteenth century shopping arcade had become by 1970 an historic building type doomed to extinction. Over the past five years however, the covered passage containing shops and covered by glass can record that it has re-emerged\(^{22}\) as an aesthetically and financially successful means of building shops, thus continuing the tradition established in Paris in 1791.
pl.9 Arcades of Jerusalem
pl.10  Foundling Hospital - Florence

pl.11  Piazza Ducale e Duomo - Vigevano
pl.12 Place Vendome - Paris

pl.13 Galeries du Palais Royal - Paris
pl. 15 Royal Exchange - London
pl.16 Plan of Royal Exchange - London
pl.17 Royal Exchange - London
pl.19 Exeter Change - London, South Front
The Rows
Chester
pl.23 The Butterwalks - Totnes
pl.24 Town Hall Arcade - Farnham

pl.25 Bath Street - Bath
pl.26  The Pantiles
Tunbridge Wells
Jardins du Palais Royal - Paris
pl.28 Galerie du Palais Royal - Paris
pl.30 Royal Opera Arcade - Westminster
pl.31 Royal Opera House (Kings Theatre) - Westminster
pl. 35 Pantheon, Oxford Street, transformed to a Bazaar
pl.36 Lowther Arcade - Westminster
pl. 38  Royal Arcade - Newcastle upon Tyne
Catherine Street.

Wellington Street, North.

pl.39 New Exeter Change - Westminster
pl.40 Galerie Colbert - Paris
p1.44  Barton Arcade
       Manchester

p1.45  Great Western
       Arcade - Birmingham
pl.46 Digbeth Arcade - Walsall

pl.47 Royal Arcade - Westminster
Sailors Home - Liverpool
The Coal Exchange - London
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   J.B. Jefferys
2. The Provincial Towns of Georgian England
   C.W. Chalkin
3. Glass in Architecture and Decoration
   R. McGrath, A.C. Frost & H.E. Beckett
4. Planning Jerusalem
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7. see Chapter 6
8. Inigo Jones and the New Exchange
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11. see Chapter 6
12. Passagen
13. The Pantheon converted to Bazaar
    J.F. Geist
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14. Lowther Arcade
    Civil Engineer and Architects Journal
    March 1839
15. see Chapter 5
16. New Exeter Exchange
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    August 1844
17. Lowther Arcade
    Civil Engineer and Architects Journal
    March 1839
18. New Exeter Exchange
    Civil Engineer and Architects Journal
    August 1844
19. Minutes of Evidence taken before Select Committee on Metropolitan Communications
    House of Commons 1835
20. see Chapter 2
21. ibid
22. see Chapter 7
CHAPTER TWO

SIDELIGHTS ON HISTORY
Before considering in detail the architecture and the economics of arcades it is perhaps pertinent to learn something of the people who built and used them. The shopping arcade is a rich source of amusement and anecdote when viewed from the late twentieth century and indeed, changing attitudes have a habit of making an accepted way of life look quaint or old fashioned in a very short space of time.

Georgian England was violent and dirty, but there was a desire from some sections of society to adopt more gracious ways and live in some style. There was immense wealth and amongst the upper classes there was great boredom and little for ladies to do apart from improving culinary skills. The novels of the period did give some relief, although in themselves they stressed the long hours of embroidery, watercolour practice and harpsichord lessons. Men could hunt, watch cockfights and run estates but the more fastidious were not too enamoured of such sport. Pleasure gardens were available in fine weather but only for a short season and the arcade appeared as the great salvation for those in search of novelty, as long as one encountered only like minded people. Even the names chosen for the early arcades suggest privilege. Many have had several titles as ownership changed but 'Royal' or some other reference such as 'King's' or 'Prince's' still account for seventeen arcades. The Royal Opera Arcade referred, of course, to its neighbour and its reason for existence, which was to provide a clean covered walk and a sedan chair entrance for the gentler members of society.

The new arcades required rules and control, however, if they were not to become as sordid as the Exchanges of the seventeenth century, with their totally inadequate hygiene regulations and the tendency to empty slops on those below, regardless of whether it was indoors or outside.

More than a hundred years passed between those unseemly and vulgar days and the world of the late Georgians. If Beau Nash could control the lives of those
who visited Bath then there was no reason why that should not be continued in
the nineteenth century or that Lord George Cavendish could not exert his
standards and maintain a tranquil, exclusive atmosphere, for the benefit of
those who would be attracted into his magnificent Burlington Arcade. (p. 59) It
was built to make money, to stop Mayfair hooligans throwing oyster shells into
the gardens of Burlington House and also it was erected for the 'gratification
of the publick'. Those entering through its gates even today must not whistle,
sing, play a musical instrument, carry a parcel, open an umbrella or run.
Perambulators were forbidden until quite late this century, because it was
known that soldiers would follow nursemaids and they would stand and gossip,
thus obstructing the entrances to the shops. Christmas carols and chamber
music, played by students from the Royal College of Music, have been allowed
recently by the Tenants Association but otherwise the rules are still enforced
by the Beadles. This private security force used to patrol day and night, they
had armchairs at each entrance and there were round topped sentry box
shelters for night watchmen. The present Beadles now use an upstairs room
for their periods of rest and after ringing the brass hand bell at 5.30 p.m., the
gates are closed and security is left to electronic devices.

When The Corridor opened in Bath in 1825 it was noted:

Every exertion has been used to make this promenade
attractive and select and the necessary arrangements
have been made to secure its permanent respectability.

2

It was estimated that 5,000 people walked through on its opening day but
afterwards, entry was restricted. (p. 60) A band played daily from twelve p.m.
to four p.m. and a uniformed Beadle patrolled the Corridor. The last Beadle
retired in 1965 and the present Corridor Committee notes that 'it cannot get
anyone to take on the job'.

3
The original Beadles were particularly devoted to their work and Keene's Bath Journal of 1825 printed a letter from an aggrieved would be shopper, who signed himself 'An enemy to upstart insolence'. The writer was apprehended by the Beadles because he was wearing an apron and had his sleeves rolled up. He wished to purchase a pair of gloves at a cost of two shillings and sixpence but he was not allowed to do so and was asked to leave because he was not 'a proper person'. He was very angry about the whole episode and described it as 'a sample of dirty dunghill aristocracy' and went on to say that there were no such insults to would be shoppers in Burlington Arcade or Bristol. He noted that a farmer friend had been asked to leave and even worse, three ladies, who were the daughters of a Reverend, were not allowed to make any purchases. He ended his letter with 'something is rotten in the State of Denmark'. As the city was declining in popularity perhaps it was a last desperate attempt to appeal to the beau monde and it was reinforced by a covenant banning:

butchers, publicans, poulterers greengrocers, tallow chandlers, soap makers, blacksmiths, whitesmiths, beer-shopkeepers or distillers, pawnbrokers, licensed hawkers, itinerent auctioneers, marine store dealers and any other noisy, noxious or offensive trade, business or occupation or calling whatsoever....and goods are not to be displayed on the paved way through the arcade. 4

Early rules in the Royal Arcade, Westminster restricted travellers carrying samples to entry before 11.00 a.m. and after 6.00 p.m. and butchers and bakers could only enter to supply premises in the the arcade. 5

Cheltenham's Montpellier Arcade(p1.61) was a 'nice' place for gentlefolk who might be tempted inside from their promenade. It was noted in The Illustrated Guide of 1845 that by the entrance is :

the shop of Mrs Elliott, Corset and Stay Maker; a branch of ladies business so important to give a graceful and elegant figure in accordance with strict fashionable standards. Within is Mr Brown's snug and retired Coffee and Cigar Divan, where 'the fragrance of
the Indian Weed’ may be enjoyed with a cup of the finest coffee. 6

As arcades competed for trade in the later years of the century the exclusive label could really no longer be applied and Leicester's Silver Arcade, when opened in 1899 contained amongst the shops, a matrimonial agency, offices of the local football club and an Egyptian Cafe.

Burlington Arcade had been built for the reasons noted above but it was also to 'give employment to industrious females' and six for the original forty seven leaseholders were women. Despite strict rules the arcade also acquired a reputation for attracting young men in search of amusement. There were several milliners and the Survey of London records that the upper rooms of one such establishment were used for prostitution:

men of position who wished to avoid publicity in their amours dreaded being seen in the vicinity of the Arcade at certain hours. 8

and girls from Kate Hamilton's 'night house' near the Haymarket used to haunt the arcade. This caused much opposition to be made to a proposal to erect another arcade in 1864 in Westminster. In defence of the scheme it was stated:

...in reference to the objection that it would be frequented by persons of immoral character, they all knew what the streets of London were, and particularly Regent Street. He did not believe that any improper characters would be admitted, as it would be the duty of the proprietors to keep them out. He had frequently been in the Burlington Arcade, and had never seen anything dreadful there. 10

Although it was eventually approved by the Streets Committee of the Metropolitan Board of Works it was never built. Whether these problems were in the minds of the developers of the Silver Arcade in Leicester (p.64) is mere
speculation but for some extraordinary reason no women were employed (at least in the early years) above the ground floor.

Arcades as public rights of way caused problems for the police, particularly in Llanelli. It was proposed to close the arcade on Sundays, and Superintendent Picton Phillips reported:

The principal disadvantage if opened which suggests itself to me, is that it would become a congested place of resort particularly in wet weather, and would require the services of at least two constables to maintain order and prevent larking, fooling about and general horse play often attended with accidental damage to windows etc., which in the Arcade are so large and low as to be unusually liable to such a cogency. The two extra constables who would be required I could ill afford to spare at that particular time from other beats. Another not unimportant consideration is the desirability of not creating greater facilities or giving more frequent opportunity during the quieter hours on Sunday to those who use the doorways in the Arcade as urinals which is not altogether an uncommon practice when the premises are closed. There are some people with a tendency to regard window sills as comfortable seats which particular species of lounging genus usually have a partiality for smoking and spitting. The Arcade on a quiet Sunday afternoon is a nicely sheltered and secluded place quite tempting for the purpose. For children to play about in too has some charms, and in the evenings, women of doubtful morality occasionally look upon it with favour. 11

At the opening of the arcades however, there appears to have been delight and a tempting prospect of shopping undercover. In Bristol:

people generally looked upon this scheme as almost the last word in public enterprise.

Through the arcades stroll the elite of Bristol, taking pride in their surroundings and swinging the tassels of their malacca canes. 12

Dogberry in the Newcastle Journal remarked on the opening of the Royal Arade: (p.1.65)

It is acknowledged to be superior to the Lowther Arcade, the finest in London.... We do not believe that,
as an Arcade, this of Newcastle has its equal in Europe, or in the universe. 13

and before the problems of Llanelli (pl.66) became so acute the local paper announced:

Llanelli has got an arcade at last. It had been talked of for years - like the new dock and the new reservoir.

The building is a handsome one to a degree. The graceful facade, the spacious entrance and the ornamental arches combine to form an exterior which, for picturesqueness of contour, is not surpassed by any other building in town .... The windows are fitted with the most modern improvements and the sanitary arrangements appear to be perfect. 14

The effusive comment and advertising of arcades was not confined to the nineteenth century and in 1925 the Doncaster Chronicle waxed eloquent over the King's Arcade (pl.67) in particular and arcades in general.

Few towns with any pretentions to shopping fame are without one .... Yes a modern arcade is a great place. Doncaster is now proud in the assurance that she has an arcade comparable with the best of them 15

Similarly in Worthing (pl.68) several full pages were devoted to the completion of the new arcade.

An arcade is a modern covered in street, where people may shop without a moment's waste of time and without paying any regard to the irresponsibilities of the English Climate .... Next to the Burlington Arcade, London and the Royal Arcade, Newcastle, I like the new arcade, Worthing. 16

There was one note of caution however amongst the praises. The (Rotherham) Advertiser of the first of February 1908 reported on the arrangements for the opening of the new Imperial Buildings. (pl.69) The editor obviously felt that the Town Council was developing the centre too lavishly and without due regard to its more humble status.
But we must not go too rapidly. There is such a thing as ambition overleaping itself.

Elsewhere however, there was great zeal directed at building arcades and quite extraordinary sites were chosen for some buildings. Jervis - now Old - Arcade and known originally as Joy's Folly, was built in 1864 on the site of the twenty feet deep Church Glen in Bournemouth. Crossed by a rustic bridge (pl.70) of fir poles and covered in ivy and roses it was an attractive rural area in the middle of the growing town. Why the site was chosen is a complete mystery and not unsurprisingly, the project almost ruined the builder, who only raised finance to add the roof some nine years later.

The Great Western Arcade in Birmingham was built over a railway tunnel, and the Strand in Derby (pl.71) was part of a central area modernisation scheme which involved filling in and building over a brook. The result is a fine piece of townscape, with a building line curving in a classical manner, but which is not the product of a civic design scheme, but rather the building of shops and offices up to the edge of the brook, the latter then providing the line of the road. The old Brook-Course,

for many years, on account of the flow into it of sewage matter, has been nothing short of an existing nuisance and injurious to the health of those who lived in its immediate locality .... Large, handsome and commodious business premises will also be added to those already existing, and for those much needed improvements the thanks of the town are largely due to the enterprise of Mr. Councillor Woodiwiss. 17

Sixty one years later a seven ton steam roller working on road renovation fell down an eight feet deep hole. The culvert containing the brook had collapsed leaving a 25 feet by 18 feet gap in the Strand, but fortunately neither the driver, nor the buildings suffered any injury or damage.

There was a river flowing behind the post office at Accrington and the developer of the latter attempted to build a theatre over the water course, but
the building suffered the same fate as the steam roller. A more substantial culvert was then constructed, the arcade was built over it, and fortunately this lighter single storey construction has survived.

The remainder of the arcades were built on normal building land and novelty was provided by decoration rather than the fear that the building might disappear at any moment. During the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a wider public looking for bargains. There was intense competition amongst retailers, which led some to spare no expense in providing a form of amusement or impressive attraction.

The Great Western Arcade in Birmingham(pl.72) had a magnificent chandelier, and article normally found only in the palaces of the rich, whilst the Royal Arcade, Boscombe(pl.73) (originally called the Grand Continental), had on its balcony a 1,000 guinea organ upon which recitals were given twice daily.

William Potts and Sons of Leeds were the Roland Emetts of the nineteenth century, providing magnificent clocks in three northern arcades. A Robin Hood clock was installed in the Thornton Arcade, Leeds(pl.74) in 1878. 5.6" high, 2' wide and one and a half tons in weight it has four large figures modelled on characters from Ivanhoe striking the hours and the quarters. Still in working order, Richard the Lionheart and Friar Tuck alternately strike the hours and the quarters are struck by Robin Hood and Gurth the Swineherd. In 1897 the firm installed a clock in the nearby Grand Arcade(pl.75) which is even more of a mediaeval pageant. Armoured Knights strike the quarters, various figures parade around the clock saluting as they go and when all have disappeared, a cockerel above the dial flaps its wings and crows. A similar clock to the one in Thornton Arcade was installed in the Hilton Arcade in Oldham in 1894 but this had not survived. For some reason it was dismantled in 1926 and the figures were used as garden ornaments at the home of the owner. Somewhere in Lancashire Friar Tuck, Richard I, The Swineherd and
Robin Hood enact Sir Walter Scott's drama amongst the flower beds, depriving the good citizens of Oldham of the uplifting experience.

Reports of the opening of arcades suggest that most were rather staid affairs, used to extol the virtues and the magnanimity of the owners, with thanks given for the provision of such a magnificent service for the town. One occasion however the shoppers became quite hysterical:

Strong-armed men struggled to clear a space... the seething mass of humanity, packed as tightly as possible in the wide avenues of the arcade, cheered and cheered. 18

This was not the result of viewing Granville Arcade in Brixton, but the attendance of Carl Brisson. 19

In 1964 a far more spectacular event occurred in London when a gang of thieves drove through the Burlington Arcade. Six masked men stole £50,000's worth of jewellery from the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Association, using a Jaguar Mark X to enter and leave the building. Members of staff hurled objects at the raiders and as the car sped away, it was chased by a policeman in a commandeered Daimler Dart.

The latest national press reports regarding arcades have once again featured the Burlington Arcade and they emphasize the good sense of the tenants in continuing to realise the value of free advertising. There was a letter of complaint from the head Beadle to The Times in September 1982 lamenting the high cost of a new gold braided top hat and the unwillingness of the Association to pay £380, when a £170 bowler would suffice. Immediate reaction was the offer from a nearby hatter of new top hats at the cost of a bowler and a discussion on the merits and importance of each in a wider press and on television.
There must be countless other reports hidden in old newspapers but what is clearly revealed from those that have been discovered, is that builders of arcades have continuously strived to provide the very best services for their towns. More significant however is that whilst the reports and the happenings appear to be very odd, it must be noted that the one building to retain its Georgian rules and its Beadles, has also remained the most popular and valuable shopping arcade in the country.
pl.54 Cross and County Arcades - Leeds
pl. 55 Night - First State. William Hogarth 1738
pl. 56  

a  The Mall in St. James's Park.  

b  Vauxhall Gardens.  

Thomas Gainsborough  
Thomas Rowlandson 1784
pl. 57 New Exchange, London. Gravelot
pl. 58 Courtyard of the Royal Exchange. Thomas Rowlandson 1800
pl.59 Burlington Arcade, Westminster. 1819
The Corridor, Bath.
pl.61 Montpellier Arcade, Cheltenham. Barry Charles
pl.62 Burlington Arcade, Westminster.
pl. 64 Silver Arcade, Leicester.
pl. 67 King's Arcade, Doncaster.
pl.68 South Street Arcade, Worthing.
pl. 71 The Strand, Derby
pl. 72 Great Western Arcade, Birmingham 1876
pl.73 Royal Arcade, Boscombe, Bournemouth c.1910
pl.74  Ivanhoe Clock, Thornton Arcade, Leeds.

pl.75  Mediaeval Pageant Clock, Grand Arcade, Leeds.
Notes to Chapter Two

1. Gentleman's Magazine 1817
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3. The Bath Chronicle 5th February 1968
4. The Bath Chronicle 21 August 1974
5. Westminster Review 1970
6. The Illustrated Cheltenham Guide-1845 George Rowe
7. Gentleman's Magazine 1817
8. Survey of London Vol. XXXII
9. see Chapter 1
10. The Builder 1864
11. Llanelly and County Guardian 11th August 1904
12. The Builder 1916
13. Newcastle Journal 1832
14. Llanelly Mercury 8th August 1895
15. Doncaster Chronicle 17th July 1925
16. Worthing Herald 4th July 1925
17. Derby Mercury 5th November 1878
18. Lambeth Gazette 1937
19. A leading British film star of the 1930's