

SocietyReview

Spring 2021

Milestone is reached as 50th anniversary marked

This year is a significant milestone for the Bury Society for it marks its 50th anniversary.

There has been a host of changes in and around the town, some for the better, some for the worse, along that journey.

But the Society has been there to ensure that the heritage and environment of the town remains intact and able to grow and prosper while remaining a beautiful place in which to live, work or visit.

It was hoped to plan a series of events throughout the year to mark the occasion but that has been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, trips to West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and Country Park and the potential of an afternoon tea party at the Guildhall in July, along with a visit to the historic town of Clare and a possible steam excursion in August are all hopefully being arranged. (*See full details on Page 7*). And over its 50 years there has been a total of 20 chairmen who have helped to guide it through some turbulent times.

In this edition four of them - Gerald Travers, Peter Plumridge, Alan Jary and Martin Lightfoot give their views, memories and thoughts of what has happened in the past half century on *pages 10 to 13*.

Those who have held the leading role in the Society are:

David Dymond 1971-73,

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News
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Protecting town's heritage for 40 years

A campaign 40 years ago to save Bury St Edmunds' led to the formation of a new society. **John Henderson** reports.

FORTY years ago, Bury St Edmunds could have lost one of its most charismatic shopping streets, instead it gained the Bury Society which has helped to protect its heritage and appearance ever since. The society is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year with a series of special events including a photographic competition, lectures and a celebratory lunch and dinner. While looking to the future, it will also look back to the campaign that led to its birth. Chairman Sarah Green explained: "Just over 40 years ago a group of people were



NOSTALGIA: St John's Street as it looked when The Bury Society started, above, and an artist's impression of how the area would have looked, right



A copy of an article in the Bury Free Press which marked the 40th anniversary of the Bury Society.

Jos Bird 1973-76
David Chrispin 1976-77
Martin Lightfoot 1977-79
Gerald Travers 1979-82
John Clibbon 1982-84
Susan Tamlyn 1984-87
Mike Ames 1987-90
Susan Tamlyn 1990-91
Peter Plumridge 1991-93
Sir Reginald Harland 1993-94

Barbara Hill 1994-97
Reg Sharpe 1997-99
Meg Clibbon 1999-01
David Rees 2001-05
Simon Pott 2005-08
Sarah Green 2008-11
Alan Jary 2011-14
Karen Hurden 2014-15
Tim Page 2015-16, and
Martyn Taylor 2016-

Lighting up the iconic Wolf sculpture



The two-metre high Wolf sculpture on the Southgate Street/Rougham Road roundabout, near Bury St Edmunds Rugby Club, has now had the new lighting installed and can be seen, eerily illuminated from sunset each night. Suffolk Highways engineers made the final connections after months of frustration and delay. We are really happy to have finally achieved our goal of lighting the iconic Wolf sculpture that is an important part of the history of Bury St Edmunds. We wanted the wolf to be seen at this entrance to the town,

especially with the Abbey 1000 celebrations coming soon. Created by Halesworth based chain-saw sculptor Ben Loughrill, the two-metre high Wolf is a central figure in the legend surrounding the death of King Edmund who ruled East Anglia from AD 855 to 869 and was made a saint after refusing to denounce his Christian faith during the Danish invasion. The legend goes that after being killed with arrows and decapitated in Suffolk, the king's body was found but his head was missing. Supporters heard the wolf call them and they found him guarding the king's head, which was then reunited with his body. The Wolf sculpture is part of a series erected by Bury in Bloom that tell the history of the town. Others include St Edmund (Parkway/Risbygate Street), The Crown

(Cullum Road/Rougham Road), as well as more recent historically significant features, "With the Grain" (Parkway/Kings Road), the James Moore Cycle (Mount Road/Ortewell Road) and the Flight of Peace (Mount Road/Lady Miriam Way). We have plans for the ghostly monk's sculpture for Northgate Street/Tayfen Road that will reflect the history of the Abbey and we hope to see the first of the three pieces on display this year. And what of the rumour that the Wolf howls at midnight on the nights of a full moon for the lost king Edmund? I can't confirm or deny, although I did notice the highways engineers fitting the new lighting, working a bit feverishly to get finished before sunset.

David Irvine, Bury in Bloom co-ordinator

New Green Fingers co-ordinator

Fiona Till has joined the Bury in Bloom team as the new co-ordinator for the Green Fingers groups previously known as Busy Green Fingers, Young Green Fingers and Senior Green Fingers.

Fiona joins the team with teaching experience, a passion for gardening and a joy of working with children. She already has plans in place for 2021 and intends to re-introduce the Green Fingers awards which will be renamed the Greene King Green Fingers Awards.

Using the Bury in Bloom 2021 theme "Rainwater", Fiona is introducing two competitions for the three groups. Bury in Bloom plans to be working with nurseries, schools and residential/care homes. They are:

- 1 The Hanging Basket Garden. A group which grows unconventional plants such as fruit or vegetables as well as the traditional flowers and uses harvested rainwater and peat free compost.
- 2 Innovative Flower Container. Anything grown well in an un-

conventional container, possibly a wheelbarrow or pile of old tyres using harvested rainwater and peat-free compost if possible. The judging will take place in July to suit school term and the winners announced in early September.

David Irvine, Bury in Bloom co-ordinator



Workmen installing the lighting on the Wolf sculpture.



Fiona Till, who has been appointed the new co-ordinator for the Green Fingers.

Thankfully, the ‘best’ have prevailed

Life is full of surprises as amazing sponsors continue to support Bury in Bloom.

Bury in Bloom is highly dependent on the support it receives from its sponsors and when 2020 created such extreme trading conditions, we were worried about the impact it would have on our sponsors and how that, in turn, would affect us. We started preparing for the worst and hoping for the best. Thankfully, the best is what prevailed.

During the summer of 2020 we contacted and visited every sponsor to gauge their support. Our philosophy was that it's better to know how bad things are than guess and, in the doom and gloom we expected some short answers. However, life is full of surprises. We never cease to be amazed at the support Bury in Bloom receives. Even during the biggest pandemic for 100 years our sponsors have stayed with us. We had expected an understandable bail-out, however we seriously underestimated the astonishing level of goodwill that Bury in Bloom enjoys, which has seen nearly every one of our sponsors stay with us as we move into 2021. So, we are delighted to report, that following some gloomy forecasts and some near-miss sponsor discussions, our dedicated and generous supporters are all staying with us and critically one or two have asked what else they can do to help!

We had overlooked the “every cloud has a silver lining” effect even though it was only for some. While some of the biggest sponsors in hospitality, brewing and retailing were really suffering, others were unaffected or even flourishing.

One case in point was Welham Surfacing Limited.

Managing director Martin Welham said: ‘With everything closed we started receiving orders for car parks which are normally in constant use and this business only

came about because of the lockdown. Due to homeowners spending more time at home, we had a massive increase in domestic works from drives to garden improvements.’

Treatt was another business that showed amazing resilience during the pandemic.

Chloe Ludkin, for Treatt, said:

“Covid-19 created extraordinary challenges and made a lasting impact as consumers altered how they spend money. Increasingly, health-conscious consumers were seeking products that boost immunity with perceived health benefits. We benefitted from growth in our customers’ supermarket and retail sales. The new strict cleaning protocols that became an essential part of combating the virus across the globe created a seismic change in demand for fragrances used in hand soaps and cleaning products.”

For Bury in Bloom, it was like a roller-coaster ride as we moved

from “looking down the barrel” to making new plans in a relatively short period.

Some of those decisions were taken at our March 9 Bury in Bloom meeting.

Working with Fiona Till, the new Green Fingers co-ordinator, and Michelle Freeman, from Crafty Foxes, we have set the ball rolling on a variety of projects for 2021 around the theme of rainwater harvesting with craft activities in the Abbey Gardens and the “rain-catcher” project. Schools and care homes will be encouraged to take part in the hanging basket garden growing fruit and vegetable in peat-free baskets. And we have an offer from Maria, owner of Casa Del Mar to do cooking demonstrations to school children. We plan to re-introduce the Green Fingers Awards in September - after school’s return from their summer break and we can catch our judging breath.

David Irvine

Awards for young litter pickers

The latest award for Outstanding Achievement within a Community goes to a group organised by Victoria Baxter, whose children, Harrison, eight, and Greyson, six, were shocked to see so much litter. They asked her a simple question: “Why don’t we just pick up the litter?”

Victoria was inspired by the 1973 children’s programme “The Wombles” about secret creatures who live beneath Wimbledon Common, collecting and recycling litter so she named the group Southgate Ward Wombles. Now she has a group of eight, six to eight-year-olds, all from Hardwick Primary School. The Greene King and Bury in Bloom Outstanding Achievement Within the Community Award aims to recognise the many individuals and groups that carry out activities that help to improve the community or environment and has been presented to six individuals and



groups. The first was presented to seven-year-old Otis Bligh (*above*) for his work clearing up litter at the Skate Park, in Olding Road, and raising money for two litter bins. Other winners include the Green Hearts from the Howard Estate and Simon Dedman for a garden at the West Suffolk Crematorium.

David Irvine, Bury in Bloom co-ordinator

New collection box and Tudor Rose motif unveiled in the Abbey Gardens

Bury St Edmunds is recognised nationally as rather special, there being few towns which have as much history as Bury.

I learn something new about the town with every book I read.

Its history was established with the burial of St Edmund and has influenced the past 1,000 years with one of Europe's great abbeys.

Although all that is left of the abbey is ruins, the site and gardens are the jewel of the town.

With thousands of tourist visitors to the town, the gardens are an important part of their visit.

For the residents they are the social point for many people, children on the swings, general exercise, meeting for coffee and picnics or just to admire the overall beauty of the gardens.

The gardens are funded by West Suffolk District Council and are free to enter. So why a collection box? Aside from the fact that local authority budgets are constantly being tightened, the real reason for a box is an opportunity for all visitors to show their appreciation and to ensure that the gardens remain of the highest quality. Sadly, the previous box was vandalised beyond repair and we needed a replacement.



The new collection box in the Abbey Gardens.

Step forward Steve Jones, a member of Abbey Garden Friends. Steve is a metallurgist, whose career in metal was teaching and as a consultant, now retired, he enjoys getting his hands dirty and working with metal. Steve offered to design and make a new box, which the friends gratefully accepted.

The finished result is something

special, made in stainless steel, with decorative design detail from our cathedral and incorporating roundels of the St Edmund Crown.

We invite everyone who has enjoyed a visit to put a donation in the box; 100 per cent of the money goes to the Abbey Gardens.

The friends group spend all their income on the gardens and a lot of time assisting the gardeners to keep the flower beds looking beautiful.

A second project of the friends has also come to fruition.

The bridge in the gardens over the River Lark which used to lead to King Edward VI Grammar School has a Tudor Rose motif, the emblem of the school. At some stage the rose had been painted over a dull bronze.

I am pleased to report that the Abbey Garden Friends managed to have the rose removed and once again, our friend Steve used his talents to prepare it for decorating.

Local resident David Bradley supplied the colour work and it once again is returned to the top of the bridge, proudly reminding us that the bridge was built by the school to give access for pupils and visitors to King Edward VI Grammar School.

Alan Jary

Additions to thriving website

There have been several new additions to the Bury Society website (www.burysociety.com).

One of the "behind the scenes" activities carried out by your committee is the monitoring of planning applications by Rod Rees and commenting on these. We now put up a short monthly summary on the website about these planning applications. In the Review part of the website you can see back copies of the Review from recent years. We have added a page called "Review Extras" for those articles which did not quite make it into the published ver-

sion. We need your help with a new addition. The Bury Society Scrapbook is one of the ways we plan to celebrate our 50th anniversary. The Bury Free Press were kind enough to dig out some 1971 articles from their archive. Some of our own members have press cuttings which will help us put together a simple history of the Society over the last 50 years. Can you send me copies of any Bury Society press cuttings or photos from the past? I plan to put up a series of posts on the website and social media based upon this 'Scrapbook' idea.

Alan Baxter
media@burysociety.com



Members of the Abbey Garden Friends along with staff from the gardens at the gate containing the Tudor Rose.

Cornhill Walk appeal dismissal reflected the voice of local people

The Society was pleased to hear that the **Cornhill Walk** appeal had been dismissed - only a month after the public hearing. The two main reasons for dismissal were overlooking neighbours and the impact upon local heritage - which gives encouragement to community groups such as our own and the Well Street Association. The Society believes the appeal decision shows why the planning process needs to more fully take into account the voice of the local community and we now look forward to working with the developer to bring forward new plans which might address our concerns. The hearing had been held virtually in February, when we were represented by a specialist planning QC. The very large number of observers was a clear indication of the strength of local concern.

Our case was helped by an updated retail analysis which had taken into account the recent closure of Debenhams and Topshop.

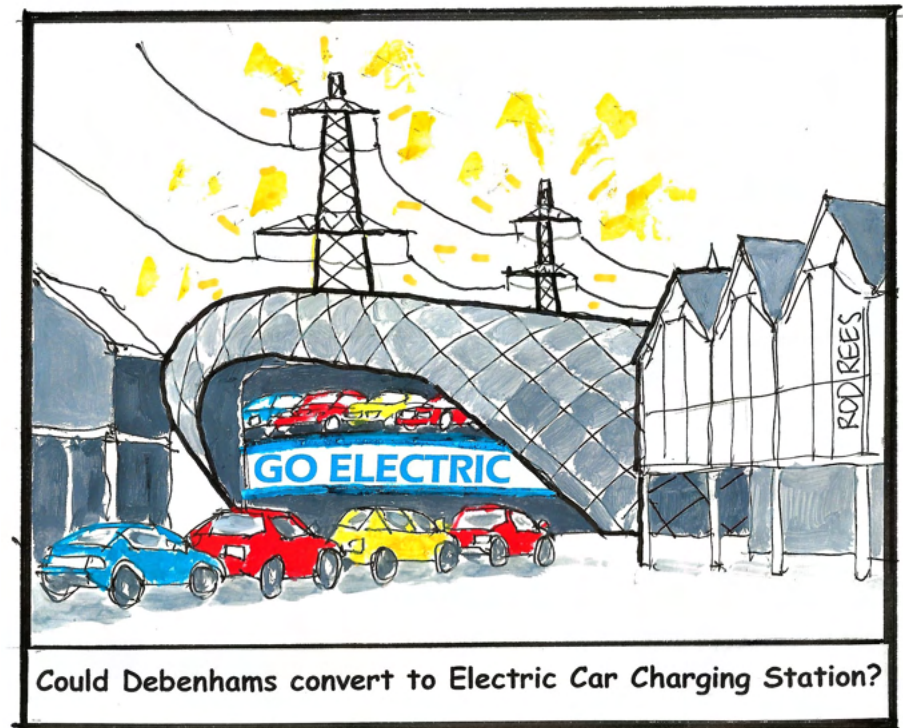
The Society also wrote in support of plans to bring the old **Suffolk Hotel** back to life by converting the upper floors of 36 Buttermarket into a hotel with a new entrance onto High Baxter Street.

The ground floor will be retained as two shop units (currently vacant Edinburgh Wool premises and Waterstones) whilst the upper floors will be converted into a hotel.

The bedrooms are grouped around a central glazed atrium at first floor level and include a restaurant and library.

We supported the plans because it will bring empty upper floors back into use and offers an imaginative alternative to the usual apartments. We also believe that this end of High Baxter Street would benefit from a bit of an uplift, as it currently presents a somewhat utilitarian appearance.

We do recognise however, that locating the hotel foyer at the rear



may raise concerns and so we suggested one of the shops is converted into a "market bar" as an alternative second entrance.

We believe this would better relate the hotel to the town centre and add greater diversity to the Buttermarket street scene.

Elsewhere in the town, we commented upon plans to build 64 flats on a vacant brownfield site, wedged between the A14 and the railway line at **Thingoe Hill** (off Fornham Road). We supported the principle of residential development but commented upon the issues of CO2 emissions and noise control and challenged whether the design fully reflects the town's distinctive character. The Society also commented upon a resubmission of earlier plans to redevelop a vacant site with nine flats and three office suites at a former used car sales site on **Tayfen Road**. We said that the site was being overdeveloped and that surely nowadays work/home apartments might be a better option than new offices. The Society also expressed general support for the council's ambitions as set out in the West Suffolk

Local Plan Review.

We asked that the review ensures the town retains its status as a "go to" location for shopping, entertainment, employment and education.

We also sought assurances to protect the town's historic environment. Meanwhile, members will have spotted that building works have now commenced at the **Palmers and Argos stores on the Buttermarket, Ashton's offices on Guildhall Street, Lloyds Bank on Parkway, the Health Centre on Looms Lane and the former Post Office site.**

Looking to the future, hopefully, we should hear something soon about the **Magistrates' Court** but the empty **Debenham's** store remains a problem.

Roderick Rees

Town tours to restart

The Bury Tour Guides are set to return on Monday, April 12, with six new tours explaining the importance of the town's Abbey over the past millennium. For more information, go to: www.burystedmunds-tourguides.org

Enhancing the town with trees

This lovely photograph (*right*) of a once tree-lined St Andrews Street North reminds us of how many streets were enhanced by trees making a distinctive and softening green aspect to the views and spaces in our town. Avenues of trees and their planting often welcome those arriving to a town or city.

Sadly, over the years, and with the different and increasing amount of traffic, we have lost so many trees to the street scene together with the pressure of competing spaces for parking and development where often new builds demand spaces closer to the highway. The opportunities for tree planting can be limited but not insurmountable. New ideas are coming forward.

Over this past year, everyone has appreciated our natural environment even more, and that protecting our green spaces and improving biodiversity is so important for our health and quality of life and tackling climate change.

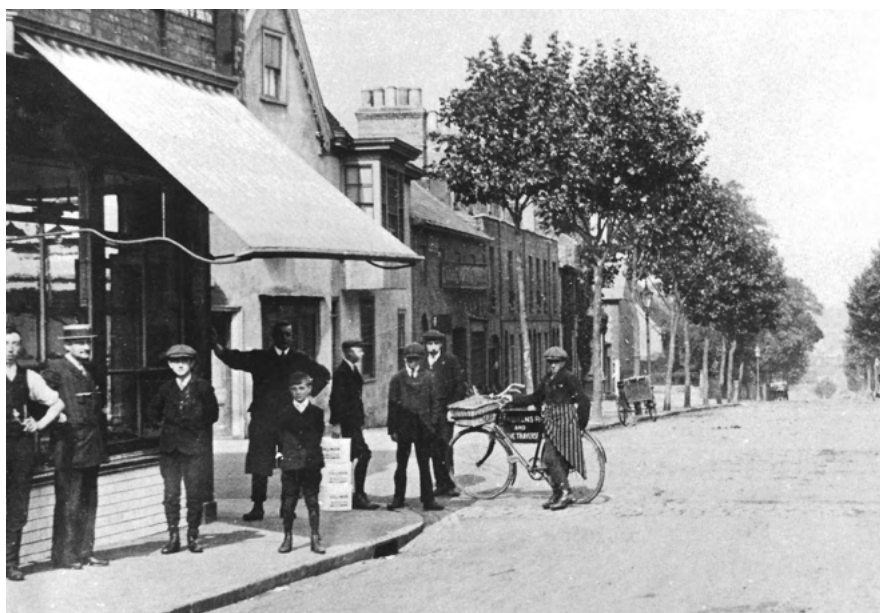
Reducing CO2 emissions is a key major objective of government and very many organisations are coming forward with policies and proposals announced about nearly every day including the Climate Change Committee and recently the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, RSPB, the Woodland Trust to name but a few.

The benefits of trees are widely known and the government has set out policies for planting 11 million trees by 2030 creating more woodland and re-forestation.

There are concerns, however, that planting trees in the wrong soil can be counter-productive to the aims of carbon reduction.

Those who plant trees in the right place for the most benefit advocate the importance of using native species which are sourced in the UK. In the urban landscape, the value of tree planting can not only make areas more beautiful but also make a most important contribution to biodiversity.

Providing shelter from wind and giving shade is often provided by the large and mature trees but there are



more constraints to consider, especially in towns with narrow streets and negotiating all the services.

The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, set up by Suffolk County Council, is working together with other local authorities and the Environment Agency on projects to plant 10,000 trees and thus increase biodiversity by also planting 15 kilometres of hedgerow in the next 12 months. This will create new habitat and wildlife.

Partners include landowners, tenants, local communities, contractors, tree wardens and the Woodland Trust working together towards the aspiration of making the county of Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.

The initiatives being put forward by the forum are ambitious especially in the time frame.

Here, in Bury St Edmunds, we have the wonderful oasis of the Abbey Gardens and glorious trees together with the precious green spaces nearby that have provided such a focus for our health and daily exercise over these many “lockdown” days and which so many have appreciated.

In the areas of the Crankles, along the Lark river bank, and in parts of No Mans Meadow, 40 European white elms (*Ulmus Laevis*) were planted by a work party from the

Bury Waters Meadow Group in conjunction with a council project. These trees, more resistant to Dutch Elm disease, are establishing well and will tolerate flooding phases. Cricket bat willows on the Crankles were replaced with native alder trees a few years ago, together with fruit trees to attract pollinators, increase biodiversity and improve habitat.

In 2009, the Bury Society, through the Alison Rae bequest which has funded so many other projects in the town, provided a further 24 hornbeam trees to the original scheme of only 14 on the Cattle Market (Arc) car park which certainly improved what would have been a very barren and bleak area.

There can be opportunities to make public realm improvements to street environments with trees and soft landscaping and it is ever more important. Groups, communities, organisations working together are making a difference.

Trees can be planted for so many reasons, marking occasions, anniversaries, and memorials.

It has now been put forward recently by the National Trust that there will be circles of flowering cherries established over the next five years throughout our cities to celebrate

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Social events programme resumes

Following on what has obviously been a difficult 12 months for any charity organising a programme of social events, we can finally look to the future with a degree of confidence.

Whilst lockdown restrictions remain in place we will continue with a short season of talks via Zoom, and certainly our AGM on May 27 will be a Zoom webinar event - the same format as the previously delayed AGM held in January.

We are fortunate enough to have the principal planning officer of West Suffolk Council to talk at the meeting on long term planning for the town, which is certainly of great interest for our members.

A degree of uncertainty remains as to the extent of the easing of Covid restrictions and therefore the events committee has taken the view that we should be less ambitious than in previous years with regards to travelling too far afield. It was also felt that our more local attractions should receive our support.

This does not diminish at all the depth and quality of the excursions this year which include a visit to the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and Country Park on the afternoon of July 8.

Our members will be treated to a talk and guided walks as well as free



West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village which is planned to be visited by the Society in July.

access to all public areas.

The other-out-of town event will be a visit to Clare on August 19.

The town of Clare with a rich history has, in the last two years, carried out a lot of work to help visitors appreciate and enjoy the history and the stories behind a large cluster of listed buildings. All of this is in addition to the established Country Park.

We will be treated to coffee and cakes on arrival as well as a short talk and tour of the recently restored goods shed.

Guided walks will then be offered around the Country Park and along the Town Trail.

Both the West Stow and Clare visits will require independent travel as we are so uncertain of the restrictions remaining on coach travel, the safety of our members being paramount.

We will be encouraging car sharing to minimise vehicle use as well as trying to assist those who need some form of transport. West Stow will also provide free parking on the day. On Sunday, July 25, we hope to host an afternoon tea party in the gardens of the Guildhall to mark 50 years of the Bury Society. Arrangements and numbers allowed, will again, depend upon how far we are down the road to more normal life.

We have another one or two events in the pipeline, and as the country wakes up from the nightmare of the last 12 months we hope to have these

in place very shortly. Included in these plans are ongoing discussions with the organisers of the 175th anniversary of the railway coming to Bury. This event, which takes place over the weekend of August 14 and 15, will hopefully allow our members a trip on a steam train with refreshments, organised by "Steam Dreams". This excursion is very much dependent upon us satisfactorily reaching a commercial agreement with the organisers.

Please keep looking out for further details on all these events.

As chair of the MCE committee and events secretary, I would firstly like to thank all of our members who have stayed loyal to the Bury Society in a year when we have not been able to see each other face to face.

Secondly, I would like to thank all of my colleagues on the Membership, Communications and Events Committee who have been so creative with ideas to help us remain so visible to our members; whether it be via the Society Review, social media or the new and vibrant website.

I would encourage all the members to view the website on a regular basis as it contains up to date information of the societies activities as well as short articles on the town and its people, past and present.

‘Space for hope and reflection’

Continued from previous page.

the beauty of spring year after year and giving communities more access to nature, giving "space for hope and reflection" after the pandemic.

What better way to leave a lasting legacy for future generations than to protect and create more beautiful and sustainable green spaces and take opportunities to enhance our streets with trees whenever possible to the benefit of us all.

Sarah Green

Terry O'Donoghue

Minutes from the Society's

The meeting was held on Thursday, January 21, at 7pm, online via Zoom webinar.

1 Welcome and introduction by the Chairman

Those present on the webinar were welcomed by the Society chairman, Martyn Taylor, to the 49th AGM of the Society, in its 50th year, before he introduced the speaker, Stephen Moody, a member of the Society Committee and a retail analyst.

2 Talk by Stephen Moody: "The Changing Face of Business in Bury St Edmunds Town Centre."

Stephen Moody presented an illustrated talk on "The Changing Face of Business in Bury St Edmunds Town Centre." At the conclusion of the talk, questions were invited from the participants using the Q&A facility.

3 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

a Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Joseph Boyle, Elaine Adams, Kerr Clement and Richard Summers.

b Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held on Thursday, May 23, 2019.

These had been circulated previously in the Review and were subsequently approved, by means of a virtual poll, with no matters arising.

c Chairman's Report

Martyn Taylor presented his report. "Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the 49th Annual General Meeting of the Bury Society. "It all seems a little surreal that we are holding this AGM by Zoom-Webinar instead of our normal hospitable meeting, this is because we do not want to be hospitalised because of the dreadful Covid-19 virus. "I really do appreciate your support in continuing to be members of the society, these are strange times indeed but hopefully we can see a light at the end of the tunnel with the announcement that vaccines will soon be available. "These will hopefully allow the society

to once again hold our enjoyable events which I know many of you like to participate in.

"As we look to the future, the scene can be described as worrying. The combination of Covid-19 and the resultant financial and economic difficulties that face all countries in the world, leave us with little to look forward to in 2021 and possibly far beyond. As we know only too well businesses are under continuing pressure.

"2020 was going to be the year in which we celebrated the millennium of the founding of the Abbey of St Edmund by King Cnut.

"The Bury Society had arranged to support the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership by supporting a number of events including the Picnic in the Abbey grounds.

"Unfortunately, these had to be cancelled and this year's anniversary events, now we hear are being re-scheduled to 2022.

"In the scheme of things, Bury St Edmunds is a small town in a small country, but great things have been done here in the last thousand years and by working together constructively and for the good of all, they will be again.

"Our view is that it is important for the Bury Society to get firmly behind the town and the more members we have to do this, the stronger our support can be in the future.

"Meanwhile, the Society Review still will be the lifeline of what is happening within the town.

"But who would have thought it, your best friends are your computers with e-mails and Zoom, smart phones, with Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, et al. the salvation of many, lockdown a means of survival.

"However not all is doom and gloom. Our membership is still holding its own though we have sadly lost some members for whatever reason.

"We have a re-vitalised website and your committee is still meeting regularly by video conferencing looking after the interests of the town.

"We are still monitoring planning applications commenting on them as necessary.

"Bury in Bloom has done exceptionally well in the face of the current financial climate and the support Bury in Bloom receives from its sponsors and the hard work of its volunteers again shows how much the town is rightly looked upon as

a Floral Town.

"With a fair wind the certificate judging this year will again take place.

"Though not really in the compass of this year's AGM I only think it is right and proper to acknowledge the incredible work carried out by the NHS, a floral tribute called "A Fountain of Flowers" by Bury in Bloom partly funded by Bury Society members a wonderful thank you to the West Suffolk Hospital.

"To finish I would like to thank all of the Bury Society committees and that of the Bury in Bloom committee in their continued dedication to the Bury Society. Don't forget this year 2021, the Bury Society will have been in existence 50 years, a notable achievement.

d Planning Officer's Report

Roderick Rees presented his report. "The biggest event of the year was teaming up with the Well Street Association to put together a very strong objection to the appeal by the developers of the vacant Cornhill Walk premises on Brentgovel Street.

"We have just heard that the public hearing is to take place on February 8, when the Society will be represented by a specialist planning QC – so fingers crossed.

"The past 18 months have also seen a big increase in the number of applications to convert commercial premises into residential use.

"These have included the upstairs at the Palmers and Argos stores on the Buttermarket, Ashton's offices on Guildhall Street, Lloyds Bank on Parkway, the Health Centre on Looms Lane, Bowers Motorcycle showrooms on Risbygate Street and Whitworths offices on Hatter Street.

"Plans were also approved to change the Bank of Scotland premises on Guildhall Street into a restaurant.

"The Society recognises the inevitability of these applications, but this did not prevent us from commenting on matters of design, social homes ratios, green credentials and ensuring that room sizes are adequate.

"Elsewhere, the Society expressed general support for the council's plans to build a new public sector business hub on Western Way which includes relocating the Leisure Centre. We also commented upon the council's

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49th Annual General Meeting

Continued from previous page.

potential changes to the approved design for the Post Office. The Society criticised the house designs for both the former gas holder site on Tayfen Road as well as the new homes planned for the former St Louis Middle School site on St Andrews Street South.

“At the railway station, we were very supportive of the new car park on the north side together with proposals for the new arched access to a refurbished booking hall.

“The Society was generally supportive of the council’s ambitions as set out in the West Suffolk Local Plan Review. We asked that the review ensures the town retains its status as a ‘go to’ location for shopping, entertainment, employment and education. We also sought assurances to protect the town’s historic environment.

“Looking to the future, the Society responded to two government white papers which seek to increase the number of new homes nationwide and also to make it easier to convert town centre shops and cafes into residential use. We stressed the importance of involving amenity groups such as our own and strongly criticised the alarming suggestion that normal planning rules could be waived in the conservation area.”

e Treasurer’s Report

Doug Beardon presented his report. The Treasurer’s Report (previously published in the most recent edition of the Review) and the Financial Statement for the year ended 31 March 2020 had been circulated with the AGM of the meeting. Doug Beardon reported that the current year had been difficult and was grateful that the membership had held up well. He thanked the major Bury In Bloom sponsors, Greene King, for their continued support and to all those who had supported the Society, both financially and with their time. He invited questions directly to him via email treasurer@burysociety.com

f Appointment of Trustees and Officers

Tim Page announced the appointment of Trustees and Officers. He invited anyone interested in standing for election to the Society committee in the future, to contact a member of the current committee. The elections were held using the virtual

poll. Terry O’Donoghue would be unable to vote as he was administering the poll.

The following Trustees were all re-elected: Martyn Taylor (Chair), Tim Page (Vice Chair and Secretary), Doug Beardon (Treasurer), Roderick Rees (Planning Officer), Sue Savage (Membership Secretary), Terry O’Donoghue (Events Secretary), Russell Cook (Review Editor), Robin Burnett (BIB Chair), Sarah Nunn, Patrick Chung and Kerr Clement.

4 Questions from the floor / open forum

Martyn Taylor invited questions from the participants, using the Q&A function. He closed the meeting by thanking all those who had attended this webinar AGM, the first in the history of the Bury Society, and thanked all members of the committee and the members of the Bury Society for their unstinting support. There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Annual General Meeting

The 50th Annual General Meeting of the Bury St Edmunds Society will be held on Thursday, May 27, 2021, To be held online via Zoom, at 7pm

All members are welcome, and encouraged to attend, see joining instructions below.

AGENDA

- 1 Welcome and introduction by the Chairman.
- 2 Talk – “A new long-term plan for our town” by Ann-Marie Howell, West Suffolk Council.
- 3 Annual General Meeting.
 - a Apologies for absence.
 - b Approval of the Minutes of the previous AGM. (January 2021) and any matters arising.
 - c Chairman’s report.
 - d Planning Officer’s report.
 - e Treasurer’s report.
 - f Appointment of trustees and officers.
- 4 Questions from the floor / open forum.

Joining instructions: This is a meeting for members only. To register your interest please e-mail: events@burysociety.com Log on details will be sent out to all those who have registered interest, one week before the event date.

The minutes of the previous AGM are printed in this issue of the Society Review.

A summary of the accounts will be published on the burysociety.com website by May 20, 2021.

Surprise of an £80,000 donation

Over the next four pages previous chairmen of the Bury Society give their views of the ever-changing development, good and bad, in the town. Gerry Travers, Peter Plumridge, Alan Jary and Martin Lightfoot outline their opinions.

Gerry Travers 1979-1982

Some 40 years ago I finished my three-year tenure as chairman celebrating the Bury Society's 10th anniversary; now here we are looking forward to its 50th year existence; a quite remarkable achievement. So much has happened in this time: here are a few recaps. There was a turbulent planning development decision affecting the town centre, namely the battle of Brentgovel Street as to whether the street should be two-way and the demolition of the former iconic Odeon cinema the "Dorchester" of Bury as well as the White Lion area. Cornhill Walk was subsequently built and rapidly fell out of favour architecturally and business wise and now the ensuing new plans by developers have been thrown out, perhaps good design and common sense will prevail.

Government design code is supported

The Bury Society responded positively to an ambitious Government consultation document National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code which seeks to promote healthy and safe communities, achieve well-designed places, conserve our historic environment and introduce the concept of "beautiful" buildings. It also promotes neighbourhood planning groups such as our own so that communities have a greater say in the planning process. Councils will be asked to prepare design guides and codes to improve the look and quality of housing which respects the character of an area and "create streets and homes as places where we can lead happy, healthy and connected lives".

Roderick Rees



Gerry Travers.

One of the last requests I received as chairman was to visit Dr Alison Rae at the behest of her lawyer Ted Ashton. The question she put to me was did I consider the Society a worthy institution to include in her will? Of course, but it would have to wait a few years to become reality then a surprise of over £80,000 was forthcoming. I still have a relevant part copy of her will, so I know the Society has strictly adhered to it.

A list of places was drawn up to include the Unitarian Meeting House, St Johns School, Quaker House and the Tin tabernacle (former Railway Mission). Trees and seating areas followed all in all wisely administered by a small committee.

Forty years ago saw the beginning of a birth of a village: the Moreton Hall development. Although an area divorced from the town it progressively had an impact on it. It is interesting to note that the owner of Moreton Hall, Lady Miriam Hubbard objected to the use of her house name for the future housing estate, a plea the council ignored. Its growth at present expands exponentially. The Unitarian Meeting House had in 1988 a generous grant from English Heritage for the outside fabric and in 1990 the internal fabric was altered; the Society making a generous grant. This year-long work I photographed and have deposited with the Records Office.

The Cattle Market redevelopment was under discussion and the Royal Fine Arts Commission stated that it should be the subject for an archi-

tectural competition. Even at the talking stage the construction of a six-storey car park fronting Parkway, a massive building so close to the town centre seemed to indicate the Cattle Market area would follow suit.

Whether the Arc complex should have materialised will be a talking point for many years to come. Has it endangered the historic core shops and what of the future of Debenhams and the loss making Apex (£700,000 per year)?

With so few jealously guarded green central areas was it right to use concrete and tarmac destroying hydrology and ecology?

I consider it necessary to make every effort to have a town of a true mixed community who can maintain what's left of a unique and historic fabric and keep a town centre with a full range of life. We have seen some of the biggest changes in recent years, the Arc, Tayfen area and Boby sites. Construction of flats galore now threaten many parts of the town without thought to parking or servicing. There is, however, hope that the Leg of Mutton field will stay just that and the Great Sextons Meadow (Butts) thanks to generous new owners, will remain a nature preserve and flood plain.

A town centre market area which gives a distinct flavour and bustle is so important to keep the town alive. What better place to meet chat and socialise?

The Abbey Gardens throughout has always proved to be a paradise on our doorstep. Well cared for and enjoyed by countless generations, it now has a "Friends Group".

On the 10th anniversary I said there is great civic pride in Bury and now 40 years on I stand firmly by this comment and I hope you agree.

Visitors enjoy the town's history and what it has to offer, those who live here must consider it a privilege which must not to be thrown away. Of course some changes are good others not so, but thankfully it is still a charming town of which I am proud. Long live the Bury Society.

Future of town centre in ‘jeopardy’

Peter Plumridge 1991 – 1993

I cast myself in the role of one visiting the town after an absence of 30 years or so, what has changed? I know that the Cattle Market has gone and been replaced by a shopping centre, but what else?

At the railway station there has been some enhancement in the arrivals area but in anticipation of improved services and increased passenger numbers there is a need for improved facilities.

Down to Tayfen Road with its incessant traffic a swathe of new housing is extending along the road replacing a motley collection of buildings and the town’s gasholder, I am not impressed, generous green space as a buffer from the traffic would have helped; a missed opportunity.

On into St. John’s Street, its feel remains; through Sergeants Walk to the controversially sited new bus station a rather negative affair, hardly user friendly.

Back into St John’s Street and up to Cornhill and the market. Woolworths has gone, then comes a glitzy Barclays. Adjacent the Post Office building frontage is shored up to allow the building behind to be converted to shops and flats, the frontage will be retained with an opening ingeniously inserted to enable the passage to St Andrew’s Street South and the new shopping centre to be widened; postal services are now on the first floor of W H Smith’s; most difficult for the disabled.

The buzz of market activities continues in Cornhill and the Buttermarket, sadly an old friend Palmers has gone and it is proposed to convert to a mix of retail and residential.

Down Abbeygate Street which in common with much of the town has seen an influx of restaurants (the former Barclays building now houses two); the street benefits from having, after much argument, been pedestrianised but regrettably still only for part of the day. Into Angel Hill where a modest area has been paved but parking still predominates.

Going now into Abbey Gardens, more beautiful than ever, a credit to



Peter Plumridge.

all involved. From the centre of the gardens a fine view of the impressive millennium tower which added to the Cathedral “stump” provides a true beacon for the town.

Out now by the south side of the Cathedral and into Churchgate Street, once a quiet quarter of the town. “The Grid” now suffers from traffic, Churchgate Street having become a rat-run.

Back to the town centre through Central Walk and across St Andrew’s Street South to the new shopping development the Arc: the scheme evolved following much to and fro between planners, developers and the Society after the demise of the Cattle Market and with it the

dead stock market and the best tea and bun hut in town.

I am happy that we did not end up with an enclosed mall and like the inclusion of arcades and the concept of shops surrounding a public square which gives access to the Apex, an acoustically excellent concert venue; the design of the anchor store Debenhams raised, and still does, much controversy. The great fault associated with the development is that what was designated a pedestrian priority zone, St Andrew’s Street South, remains a through route for buses and taxis making access to the Arc hazardous; a major rethink of traffic routing is essential and enhancement with some planting, but please not silver trees again.

Overall I think the quality of the town core has been kept and although the Arc does come across as an add-on by not integrating well at least it does not impinge.

Inevitably changing market conditions, company failures, coupled with Covid place the future of many outlets in the town in jeopardy so the Society must continue to be ever watchful for possible developments. Additionally an issue which has so often been debated since my term of office but never resolved, traffic, this does need to be addressed and mindful of increasing growth from developments in the environs a management scheme evolved.

Backing for planning reform document

The Society responded to a Government consultation document “Planning Reform - supporting housing delivery and public services infrastructure”.

The document seeks to make it easier to change commercial premises, including shops, restaurants and public houses into homes without requiring full planning permission. It also seeks to fast-track major projects such as the conversion of public sector buildings including schools and hospitals into residential use.

The Society’s main concern is that

the document suggests Conservation Areas should be included in these proposals.

We said such a move would have a major detrimental impact on a market town such as our own where the conservation area and cathedral dominate the busy central shopping area.

We also asked that social housing ratios be met in full and for all new flats must meet National Space Standards. The document proposes these changes come into effect on August 1, 2021.

Roderick Rees

Town will change as time moves on

Alan Jary 2011-2014

My term of office was highlighted with the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Society and to mark this milestone a Ginkgo Biloba tree was planted in Cannon Square.

The square was chosen as this area was very close to the Brackland, the saving of this area by local people from 1960s redevelopment was the seed that grew into the Bury Society. I mention this celebration tree because it has now begun to transform this area where there was a drought of greenery, which can enhance an area.

So what other changes have developed since 2014, my last year of office?

Much of my time as chairman was being involved in the preparation of St Edmundbury Council's forward plan: Vision 2031.

Five major development areas were agreed, to date only two have been started.

The first is the extension of Moreton Hall with a further 900 plus houses either side of Mount Road and edging into the village of Rougham. The other development is on the northern side of town at Marham Park, which extends Bury to the boundary with Fornham All Saints. This area has three developers, which gives a contrast in style, there is also the addition of a new care home, much needed by the town. The other change in residential accommodation is the proliferation of apartments.

Station Hill, Tayfen, St Andrews Street North, Looms Lane are now



Alan Jary.

areas of apartment living. Whereas people came into town to work in the offices, now they reside in town and leave for the outskirts to the offices on the industrial areas or the converted barns which now serve as offices to solicitors, accountants, estate agents and medical facilities.

Moreton Hall continues to grow, it awaits a new centre with a re-opened public house, will it be called The Flying Fortress again?

Suffolk Park is the employment area of Moreton Hall and will soon house the global headquarters of R G Treatt, currently based in Northern Way, and recently two of Bury's largest warehouses have opened.

M H Star is a Chinese warehousing organisation and Unipart/ NHS is the regional distribution warehouse for the NHS.

Work has just started on an 870,000 sq ft warehouse for Weerts, a Belgian logistics group, it will dwarf the nearby new warehouses, which look very large when driving on the A14.

So what are the changes in the town centre?

Several very well known stores have closed, some due to changes in shopping habits, some due to Covid-19 and other closures are natural evolution.

Palmers was Bury's largest private retailer, previously called Plumpton's which had traded on the corner of Abbeygate Street and Buttermarket for 100 years.

My mother started work there in 1927 and had to live in staff accom-

modation in Guildhall Street, no salary, and her father had to pay for her living expenses.

The biggest area to close was Cornhill Walk, the shopping centre built on the site of Bury's art deco building: the Odeon Cinema. The current owners wish to demolish the building and build three shops with flats above, but the scale of the new building has been refused planning permission at appeal.

Visitors used to say Bury was all shoes and jewellery shops, then estate agents and building societies, now it's coffee shops.

The long established town centre has a lot of small units which helps it retain individual traders scattered among the major retailers.

Every town used to have a Post Office, seen as an absolutely essential service. Now, they have a counter upstairs in W H Smith.

The old Post Office building has been demolished, except for the very attractive front wall, which stands propped up with steel buttresses while West Suffolk Council redevelops the site with shops and flats. This will allow the Market Thoroughfare to be widened to improve the much needed link between Cornhill and the Arc Shopping Centre.

Town centres are becoming meeting places, no longer just for shopping. The resident population is growing rapidly. Organisations like Our Bury St Edmunds work hard to keep town centres prosperous.

So what does the future hold?

We must find ways to support the market and the retailers.

An equalisation of business rates is long overdue. All retailers no matter their position in the town and whether they operate by mail order, out of town or high street, should pay equal amounts per square foot.

The town continues to grow, as it has since Victorian times and the arrival of the railway. It escaped the brutal architecture of the 1960's, absorbed a major increase in its retail and entertainment offering with the Arc Shopping Centre and will continue to change as time moves on.



An artist's impression of the frontage of the former Post Office.

Pleasure of saving Eastgate Bridge

Martin Lightfoot 1977-1979

My family and I came to Bury St Edmunds in 1964 after three years in the Royal Air Force.

We came here because the town was attractive and the old established dental practice, which I joined, was in a fine Georgian house (and the partners were alright as well).

My interest in buildings had been sparked by close friendship with a fellow officer, an architect completing his National Service.

Being at heart a conservationist, whether that be of my patients' teeth, old cars, furniture and old ruinous houses, once I moved to Bury, I was horrified at the ease with which fine houses were demolished to make way for new, so called better, developments. The listing then was rudimentary, we had no conservation officers, and the planning officers, now with the district authority rather than the county council since 1974, did their best, but with very limited powers. Progress, particularly new roads, was an unstoppable steamroller. The achievement which still brings me pleasure is the saving of Eastgate Bridge.

The severe flooding which the town had experienced in 1968 was partly blamed on this bridge, and by 1977 the ugly concrete sluice to the west of the bridge had been constructed. The road planners had been desperate to achieve an arterial-type road driven east-west through the town and the flooding gave the excuse for a new brick motorway-type three lane flyover bridge (Looms Lane had been widened as part of this scheme). The Society objected and it went to appeal. Sitting in the hearing, which seemed to go on for days, with Dr Marcus Bird (responsible for the country view still seen from Abbeygate Street) sitting on my left, we were constantly shown a projected image of how the bridge would look. In my opinion horrible, and completely out of keeping with the fine square in front of the Fox Inn and the terraced cottages to the east. But I noticed this image was just an



Martin Lightfoot.

artist's impression showing grassed banks sloping down to the Lark, so plucking up courage I asked whether the image shown was exactly what was proposed to be built. The inspector put this question to the council officer who agreed that it was. I then pointed out that it would not be very satisfactory as it had no foundations or supporting piers on each side. The inquiry stopped and was then adjourned indefinitely. Later this bridge did rear its ugly head, but when the local residents were told that the build would require six months continuous pile driving, following their protests, it was quietly dropped, along with the enthusiasm from the council for the new east-west road. It had also come out at the inquiry that the concrete sluicing was planned to continue through the Abbey Gardens. Again, on this false worship of roads, the Traverse Scheme was an early example of recapturing roads for people. The idea of the previous Society chairman David Chrispin, working

with the architect Hugh Thomas, proposed paving the absurdly wide road in front of the Nutshell and providing a welcome seating area with a shading tree. Unbelievably now, we were told then, unlike the Continent, no one would ever want to sit outside at a café, and the seats would be occupied with drunks from the Nutshell. However monies were raised and it all came to pass, completed in my time as chairman, and opened to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

I have been pleased, and quietly smile to myself, to see that during lockdown this area has been neatly set aside with attractive seating. The placing of the Elizabeth Frink statue of St Edmund was first proposed to be placed alongside the nave of the cathedral, but the Society considered that it should be in a more prominent position.

So one evening a tea chest was procured and in front of an invited quorum of experts (the Bury Society committee), Max Milburn was invited to stand upon said chest, in various sites, in front of the west front which is where St Edmund now stands. From my time as chairman, I was very aware of criticism directed at the Society, in that we were perceived to be critical, and not prepared to actually try to make improvements ourselves, and this gave me the prompt to join with others of similar mind to form the Bury St Edmunds Town Trust as a charitable buildings preservation trust, whose work continues today in High Baxter Street.



Eastgate Bridge looking towards Eastgate Street and the Abbey Gardens, from The Broadway.

Joy as Cornhill Walk appeal rejected

It was with equal amounts of jubilation and relief that Well Street greeted the news on March 9 that the Cornhill Walk appeal had been dismissed.

The prospect of this massive development had loomed over the street for nearly four years, during which time a great deal of work was done by committee members of the Well Street Association (WSA) and others towards this result.

When first shown in 2017 the excessive size and monolithic nature of the plans was immediately obvious, with the northern elevation set to dominate listed properties in Well Street and pose serious overlooking issues.

The inclusion of large retail units



Cornhill Walk, the subject of a planning appeal which was rejected to the delight of campaigners against the scheme.

Events 2021

Thursday, May 27 - The Bury Society AGM - Via Zoom Webinar. Start time 7pm. Guest speaker Ann-Marie Howell, Principal Planning Policy Officer at the West Suffolk Council. Talk "Long term planning for the town and current work on the local plan".

Thursday, July 8 - Visit to West Stow Anglo-Saxon village and country Park. Afternoon event. Talk, guided walks and free access to site and visitor centre. Free parking for members on the day.

Sunday, July 25 - Guildhall gardens - Celebrating 50 years of the Bury Society. Afternoon event.

A gathering of members with refreshments to celebrate our 50th year as a society.

Weekend August 14/15 - celebrating 175 years of the coming of the railway to Bury St Edmunds

Event subject to confirmation by organisers. Exact date and time TBA. Excursion on a steam train with afternoon tea, organised by Steam Dreams.

Thursday, August 19 - Visit to historical Clare.

Morning event. Meet and greet in Clare Country Park. Coffee/tea and pastries on arrival. Talk on heritage work undertaken followed by various guided walks around the Town Trail and Country Park. Additions to the days programme are being reviewed.

The above are events so far planned for summer of 2021 and these may be added to depending upon prevailing Covid-19 restrictions. All events are subject to ruling Covid-19 social restrictions based on the current HMG roadmap of easing lockdown. In the event of a tightening of restrictions, some or all events may be subject to cancellation.

was dubious at the time, given the history of retail failure on the site, but by 2021, given continued decline of physical retail, particularly post Covid, it looked inappropriate. We suspected at the start that the original number of flats (64) and worst detail aspects of the proposals had been included as "aunt sallies" which could be negotiated away to make objectors feel they had won something. Indeed, over the ensuing 18 months, there were several rounds of objections and negotiations with the number of units coming down to 48 and cosmetic improvements to the elevations.

These improvements had to be pursued as a backstop while maintaining our overall objection, in case the Development Control Committee (DCC) approved the scheme, given that planning officers were recommending it.

None of this, however, addressed the fundamental issue that the whole structure was simply too massive for its context.

Objections were made by many residents of the Brackland area and elsewhere in town, together with organisations including the Bury Society, WSA and Suffolk Preservation Society.

Curiously, English Heritage found the proposals unobjectionable and an improvement to the Conservation Area.

When the proposals first came before the Development Control Committee in March 2019, recommended for approval by planning officers, the chairman commented that it was the biggest attendance they had ever had, with over 100 people, reflecting the level of concern in the community.

The committee deferred a decision to allow for further "substantive discussions" between the developer and planning officers for significant improvements to be made.

On the run up to the return to the committee in September 2019, members of the WSA committee knocked on a lot of doors in the Brackland area and beyond, organised a poster campaign and a petition which gathered 700 signatures.

The room was again packed and as only minor cosmetic changes had been made to the plans, the result was a refusal.

We fully expected the applicant to go to appeal, the process formally getting underway on May 7, 2020. For these purposes, the Bury Society and WSA joined forces and a substantial joint submission of objection went to the Planning Inspectorate in June.

The hearing took place virtually on February 8, 2021, when we were jointly represented by a specialist planning barrister, the cost being shared equally between the two organisations.

The Inspector's Decision Notice made reference to the impact on living conditions and privacy of nearby properties and the context of listed buildings including Moyses Hall and Well Street, with the clear implication that any alternative proposals should be significantly less dominant and more sympathetic to the existing context. It remains to be seen how soon the developer will come forward with new proposals and whether they will be more acceptable to the community.

Bill Goodsall

Memories of 1921 census

The census of a century ago in Bury St Edmunds confirmed the tragic depletion of the population through the consequences of the First World War and the Spanish flu pandemic as numbers fell from 16,785 recorded in 1911 to 15,937.

Bury and its environs were still reliant on agriculture, but this year saw a terrible drought, so bad that the River Lark by Eastgate Bridge dried up.

The influx of cheaper foodstuffs from the USA affected the prices farmers could get for their products and this situation continued until the outbreak of the Second World War. 1921 saw the inevitable slowing down of production of flax for linen for aeroplane wings at the Bury flax factory, shutting down permanently a couple of years later. Perhaps the major connection to the First World War was the unveiling of the war memorial on Angel Hill by General the Lord Horn, in the form of a Celtic Cross, the names of the fallen in a book of remembrance held in the Cathedral.

There were deaths of notable people this year. February 28, Dr Henry Bernard Hodgson died. He was the first bishop of the newly-created Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich in 1914. Also passing away was George Gery Milner Gibson Cullum, of Hardwick. This



The War Memorial on Angel Hill.

cultured man, mayor in 1913, had the foresight to ensure his wonderful collection of art and books were bequeathed to Bury St Edmunds Council, though his home Hardwick House was demolished in 1925 through an entailment clause of his step-grandmother's will. Not all was doom and gloom. Bury, saw the election of its first woman councillor, Eva Wollaston Greene, wife of solicitor John Wollaston Greene, she would later become the town's first woman mayor in 1927. Another town asset was the swimming pool built at the Playfields, it would remain there until 1975.

Humour the theme of noticeboard

Bringing a bit of light and sparkle into people's lives during the Covid-19 pandemic is the theme of messages on a noticeboard outside the home of Simon Harding and Valerie Legg, in Church Walks, Bury St Edmunds.

They have replaced their usual community events notices with jokes and fun remarks donated to them from children, neighbours and friends.

Simon said: "People have got so gloomy and isolated and there's nothing like a bit of humour to help make it go away and it's been incredibly popular."



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Restoring the collapsed lamppost

On May 11, 2020, one of the three historic lampposts in the town centre collapsed though luckily no one was injured. The beautiful lantern with four separate lamps crashed to the ground.

A small fault was found to have caused the problem but fortunately the two other historic lampposts in Buttermarket did not have the same fault and passed the safety test. The Cornhill lamppost was erected in 1882 and had been made by Glasgow based firm Walter Macfarlane and Co. The company was well known for the beauty of their designs and the excellence of the workmanship. When I heard about the lamppost collapse, I was keen to have it restored as I felt a modern lamppost in such a prominent part of our historic town would look out of place.

Richard Webster, from Street Lighting at Suffolk County Council, agreed with me and he promised funds from his budget. He sourced a company to repair and remake the lamppost but I then had to raise the



The lamppost being restored at CIWS.

rest of the money. I was really delighted when further funds and grants were provided by the Bury Society,

OurBuryStEdmunds, the Bury Town Trust and Suffolk County councillors Robert Everitt and David Nettleton. The lamppost holds a superb display of flower baskets and troughs, Christmas lights and a spotlight which illuminates the wonderful Robert Adam designed Market Cross.

The lamppost is now with Cast Iron Welding Services (CIWS) in Coalville, Leicestershire. They specialise in historic restoration and have worked on many National Trust projects as well as repairing antique lampposts in Bond Street.

Peter Palmer, from CIWS, has been keeping me up to date on the restoration and provided the photograph of work in progress.

It is hoped the lamppost will be installed in Cornhill by late spring, in time for the summer floral display to be put on display. The project is a great example of groups working together in Bury St Edmunds.

*Melanie Lesser
Chairman*

Bury St Edmunds and Beyond

Athenaeum's major role in the Second World War

When visiting the Athenaeum, there is nothing to tell you of its major role in the last war.

Within weeks of hostilities being declared in 1939, Major E L D Lake called a meeting on October 18, attended by around 20 significant townspeople, with the sole aim to make the Athenaeum a place of comfort and entertainment for the troops. Committees were set up immediately, and amazingly the following day the club opened. Greene King provided tables and chairs as well as a fully functioning bar.

Food was available in the canteen, papers and magazines provided as

part of a fully stocked library, and writing materials were freely provided. There were even willing helpers on hand to mend uniforms.

Unlike the USAAF forces club in Southgate Street, the Athenaeum forces rest house was open to all

nationalities ... except the enemy.

Over the six years of war it recorded over 1,248 visits, 144 by servicemen and women.

Its end, as peace finally returned in 1945, was nearly as swift as its foundation in 1939.

Don't miss the opportunity to add your weight to the Bury Society team. Apply for membership now.

Either use the website: burysociety.com to download a membership form from the Home Page by clicking the "Join Us" panel or telephone the membership secretary Sue Savage on 01284 719243.

Contributions to the Review do not necessarily reflect the views of the Bury Society.

Copy deadline for next edition of the Review

The copy deadline for the next edition of the Bury Society Review is Monday, July 19. Email copy to the editor Russell Cook at russellcook@sky.com