

The Bury Society

Registered Charity Number 263230

NEWSLETTER ~ JULY 2002



Welcome to the unveiling of the society's splendid new logo showing the street scene which prompted the launching of the group in 1971.

The drawing shows the town's attractive St John's Street, threatened in large part with demolition and rebuilding as a particularly unappealing-looking shopping centre over 30 years ago.

People concerned about this plan and about Bury's future in general formed the society to fight the scheme and to campaign for high quality architecture, planning and conservation.

We warmly thank member Martin Lightfoot for this delightful and fitting design which will appear on our stationary and membership forms.

Multi-purpose public building

Consultants are to mount a feasibility study of the way forward for a major multi-purpose public building on the future Cattle Market redevelopment.

They are being commissioned by St Edmundsbury Borough Council to produce findings on the contents and costs of the ambitious project. Ideas include a large conference hall/concert hall, a new art gallery replacing the present Market Cross rooms, and the Tourist Information Centre, now at 6 Angel Hill.

Underlying the proposals is the view that leisure-linked services should ideally be sited in the same place. Probably the most controversial aim is to focus Manor House Museum collections there, and, possibly long-term to relocate the Central Library.

Director of borough leisure services, Steve Palframan, says regional bodies could be located in offices there. He envisages regional museum administrative offices, the Eastern Sports Board and possibly, English Heritage, taking space.

A new library on the site is not part of the picture at the moment. Such a move is opposed by people who fear it would badly affect St John's Street. So if the ventures go ahead, what becomes of the buildings currently housing them? Possible options include leasing our or selling heritage buildings like the Manor House, 6 Angel Hill, the Corn Exchange and the Adam Art Gallery, so releasing revenue or capital receipts.

"You would not be removing the buildings. What you would be doing is creating something new and exciting for a greater number of people," said Mr Palframan.

There will be an options appraisal on the Manor House Museum, a 1738 former Bristol family town house, opened as a museum by the borough in 1992. Mr Palframan said the collections including a famous clock bequest, appealed to a niche market rather than a large cross-section. It was subsidised to the tune of £240,000 a year, a very high figure for the small number visiting it -some 15,000 to 20,000 a year.

This was in spite of every effort to attract more people. He was not opposed to trust management but he could not see how this would make a difference.

A heritage trail would take the public from the 'old town' to the new and vice versa under current proposals. Mr Palframan forecast that vastly more people would visit the Manor House exhibits in new, more accessible surroundings.

Your Newsletter

On an experimental basis, your newsletter will follow the present format for two editions with one 'glossy' version a year. This is due to rising production costs. Please let me know your views. Letters to the editor and contributions are welcome. Please note that the newsletter contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the Bury Society. Many thanks to Anthony Green for his very valuable help with production of this newsletter