

The Bury St. Edmunds Society
Founded 1st October 1971

NEWS LETTER: 6 JANUARY 1975

Chairman: Mr. J. Bird
30 Crown Street
Bury St. Edmunds.

Joint Hon. Secs. Mr. & Mrs. Mann
23 Westgate Street
Bury St. Edmunds

1. CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

We have had no single issue as big as Moreton Hall to deal with, but the Committee has continued to "vet" a large number of planning applications. Mrs. Backhouse sifts these first, and brings before the Committee all applications of particular importance. We are continuing to press the District Council to follow Babergh and Mid-Suffolk in advertising all applications. They argue that the cost of so doing would be unjustified and so far we have been unable to persuade them.

Hugh Thomas has felt compelled to resign as Vice-Chairman; he feels he must devote more time to his profession. The Society is very grateful to him for all he has done, and I want to add my personal thanks for his support and help since I took office. A Chairman often needs support of an informal kind, and Hugh has been a great help. Richard Stewart has also resigned, and we thank him too for his help. Their resignations should remind us all that many of the Committee are men with full-time and demanding jobs, which, in the present difficult days, must claim priority over part-time activities. We must beware not to allow too much to be attempted by too few, and we must always aim to spread the load of the Society's work as widely as we sensibly can.

The Committee has appointed Mr. Nick Reeve to act as Vice-Chairman until the A.G.M. in May 1975.

2. SOCIAL EVENTS

Following the oversubscription of members for the visit to Hengrave which took place in the spring of 1974, another visit was made during the autumn. A further 36 people were able to see this lovely building.

In November we held a social evening at the Guildhall, a buffet supper and dancing to the music of The Chancery Jazz Band. About 100 members and their friends were there and voted it a great success. Warm thanks have been conveyed to the organisers. 16 new members were recruited, and a profit of £40 was made.

3. MEMBERSHIP

This seems the right moment to report that we now have 240 paid-up members. More are always most welcome, the greater our numbers the greater will be our influence.

4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1974

This took place at Everard's Hotel on 23rd May. The list of Officers has already been circulated with the annual programme. The Committee elected being as follows:-

Mrs. E. Backhouse	Mrs. Bridges	Mr. D. Chrispin	Mr. J. Dalton
Mrs. P. Hancock	Mr. M. Lightfoot	Mr. N. Reeve	Miss M. Place
Mr. R. Stewart	Mr. J. Whitehead		

We welcome the new members, and thank those who retired for the work that they did during their period in office.

BRENTGOVEL STREET

Mr. Derek Lintott, the development surveyor to Rank City Wall Ltd., met the Committee by his request, and showed the plans for the proposed redevelopment. A long discussion took place. The view being expressed that there should be some residential content, that the Service areas should be screened from the houses in Well Street, possibly by the retention of the houses already in Rank's ownership on the edge of the site. The visual importance of McClaren's shop was emphasised. It was also felt traffic problems caused by unloading would be considerable. At a later Committee meeting reservations were expressed as to the closure of Brentgovel Street, and Rank City Wall were urged to retain the entrance arch and yard of The White Lion.

6. TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

The Committee continues to support all efforts to build houses in or near the centre of the town, especially where they would be for sale at a price within the reach of young couples. Applications for Building Permission for small houses or flats have been supported in principle in Cannon Street, Southgate Street and near Southgate Roundabout.

The Committee also supports any refusal by the Planning Committee for change of user in the centre of the town whereby private residences would be changed to offices. They are also against proposals to build large Hyper-Markets on the outskirts of the town, as they feel that these will only remove custom from the shops in the town centre. If the town is not to change beyond recognition, the centre must be a viable community, and not merely a conglomeration of offices.

7. BLUE PRINT FOR BURY

Following Mr. Bird's suggestion at the Annual General Meeting that the Society should produce its own Blue Print a small sub-committee has been formed to consider the problems facing the town. The members are Mrs. Hancock, Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Reeve, Mr. Bird and Mr. Chrispin. They hope to have a worthwhile report to show in due course, and will be studying the County Council's forthcoming consultative document.

8. MORETON HALL

There has been a meeting at Mr. Casson's office, which was attended by Mr. Bird, and Mrs. Backhouse, Mr. Casson and Mr. Albon, when the District Council's landscape expert produced a plan for the landscaping of the site.

The Suffolk Preservation Society have decided to seek the views of Miss Colvin and Mr. Muggerridge. The plans were later shown to your Committee. The Chairman has written to Mr. Casson repeating the Society's objection to development on the disputed 9 acres on the forward slope. He has also pointed out that the question of access to the estate needs careful planning NOW, and that the grouping of trees might well be altered, both to improve screening, and to avoid undue rigidity in their planting.

9. MR. CASSON'S CAUSERIE

There was a very interested audience at Everard's Hotel on 10th December for a question and answer session. Some 21 questions from various members were answered by Mr. Casson, who told us that he was glad to have the opportunity of hearing our views, as evinced by supplementary questions and subsequent discussion.

10. THE CHURCHYARD

The Society was formally represented at the enquiry into the future of the Churchyard. The Committee being unable to agree in toto with the recommendations which had been put forward.

11. VICTORIAN SURVEY

Following a discussion on Victorian architecture at a recent Committee meeting, it was decided to ask the St. Edmundsbury Borough Council for a list of protected buildings of that period within the old Borough boundaries. Mr. Albon (the Borough Planning Officer) in his reply stated that, to date, no such list existed and "owing to staff shortages it is unlikely that we can carry out a survey of Victorian buildings worthy of listing for some months. I feel that such a list would be a useful asset and I am writing to suggest that perhaps your Society would carry out a survey of Victorian buildings that they would like considered for listing. This would be a contribution towards saving some of the less appreciated parts of our town's heritage."

After consideration by the Committee, it was decided to accept Mr. Albon's suggestion and a small sub-Committee was set up to deal with the project. The terms of reference were to 'undertake a survey within the confines of the former Borough of St. Edmunds.....and to suggest to the Local Planning Authority those buildings which are, in the opinion of the Bury Society, worthy of listing. Buildings to be included should basically date within the period 1840-1900 and it may be opportune to include certain buildings within the Edwardian overlap up to 1910'.

For the purpose of the Survey, the Borough was divided into five areas, and one sub-Committee member agreed to be responsible for each area, finding such help as was necessary. The deadline for handing over the finished survey is 31st January and it is hoped that this date can be kept! At the time of writing (mid-January) the various threads are being gathered together but with five groups working quite independently, there will be a lot to do, co-ordinating the separate reports into one comprehensive survey.

This has been a fascinating and worthwhile project and one from which a great deal has been learnt. What had seemed at first a rather dull street of small terraces, turns out to be a treasure house of information, with names and dates which link one with the Victorian and Edwardian eras!

It is in towns like Bury, with a long mediaeval tradition, that later development tends to be discounted, but it is a form of snobbery to assume that anything beyond the Georgian is of no account. That which comes later is no less interesting than what has gone before and these 19th Century houses are solidly if unpretentiously built and perfectly capable of modernisation.

The Victorian qualities of Bury are much underated. They emerge strongly from the Survey.

(It is hoped to report on the result of this Survey in our next newsletter.)

12. COMING EVENTS

A visit to Norwich has been arranged with the Norwich Society on Sunday, April 27th, and the Annual General Meeting has been fixed for Thursday, 22nd May at Everard's Hotel. Details will be circulated later.