

Success for
Bury in Bloom
Pages 4 and 5

Abbey 1000
celebrations
Page 6

Ghost tours
in full swing
Page 10



Society Review

Winter 2022

Appeal to fill posts set to become vacated in 2023



St John's Street, 100 years ago, and (inset) now, as it is today. Thanks to the Bury Society it is still with us.

The Bury Society is launching a campaign to attract members to the executive committee which is in dire need of senior officers. Four key members of the group are due to stand down next year prompting chairman Martyn Taylor to issue an appeal.

He said that it is crucial for the four posts to be filled for the society to function and represent the long term wellbeing for the past, present and future of the town. The current committee consists of 15 dedicated trustees and volunteers who meet once a month and

discuss a raft of issues with the aim of ensuring and encouraging the town to grow and prosper while still retaining it as a place to live, work or visit. They help to provide a voice on

Continued on Page 2

Delivering meals for Reducing Isolation with Food project

Rickshaw “joy” rides usually tail off in the winter as the days get colder and shorter, although it’s hard to beat a blanket-wrapped spin round the Abbey Gardens on a crisp, bright afternoon or a twinkly evening tour of the Christmas lights.

This winter we are working closely with the “warm space” providers in the town that offer a friendly cuppa and natter to people struggling to heat their homes, or those at risk of social isolation.

We offer a ride to these places, and support and company for people who might feel daunted by going alone. We continue to work with Abbeycroft Leisure and Edmunds Restaurant at West Suffolk College to deliver the meals students produce for the Reducing Isolation with Food project (RIF).

RIF referrals come from professionals, neighbours, friends and family, and recipients are offered a free two-course heat-at-home meal every other month.

Our volunteers and staff from Abbey-



The Rickshaw team at Edmunds Restaurant with meals for the Reducing Isolation with Food project.

croft Leisure ring everybody who has been referred. We have some lovely conversations, having got to know many people over the past few years – albeit over the phone rather than face-to-face. We ask about peoples’

food likes, dislikes and any dietary requirements. Time and again we hear how much our diners enjoyed the last meal that we delivered to them.

On the delivery day, staff and students in the kitchens at Edmunds work hard to prepare two menus – one with meat and one vegetarian. Both are always delicious and often something quite different to what many people would make for themselves. And there is always pudding!

Over the past few months there has been chicken katsu or vegetable curry, cottage or vegetable pie, Spanish style chicken or bean stew. For dessert there has been treacle tart, cheesecake, and other goodies. Our riders always stop for a chat on the doorstep when delivering the meals, which is a great opportunity to hear how people are doing, and whether we can help with anything. To contact BSE Rickshaw for more information on all of our (free) services, or to ask about volunteering, call 01284 339449 or email admin@bserickshaw.org.uk

Quartet set to relinquish their roles end of March

Continued from Page 1

issues that impact the town, its heritage and environment.

Now secretary Tim Page, treasurer Doug Beardon, interim planning officer Richard Summers along with Bury in Bloom co-ordinator David Irvine are set to relinquish their roles at the end of March, 2023. Tim, a previous chairman of the Bury Society, has been a trustee for 11 years, while Doug has held his position for seven years. Richard took over the planning brief on a temporary basis only this year from Roderick Rees after Roderick, sadly had to give up this role due to ill health. David has

been carrying out his role for Bury in Bloom for nearly three years. Martyn said: “It is crucial that we find people to fill these positions as quickly as possible otherwise we will not be able to function as we have been able to do so successfully since our inception 51 years ago. “Tim, Doug, Richard and David have been wonderful and thoroughly dedicated committee members carrying out their duties with exemplary care and attention. They will be difficult to replace but replace them we must.” If you think you can fulfil any of these roles please contact Martyn on his e-mail chair@burysociety.com

*Rachel Thomas
Trustee BSE Rickshaw*

Reconstructions created of what Abbey would have looked like in about 1440



A graphic image of the Abbey as it would have looked like in 1440 courtesy of English Heritage.

The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership has been working in collaboration with English Heritage during the last couple of years on a new scheme of heritage interpretation panels in and around the Abbey Ruins.

The new panels were installed with support from the town council for the Picnic in the Park, in June, as part of the Abbey 1000 Millennium Celebrations.

The scheme consists of 13 attractively illustrated heritage interpretation panels stretching from the Abbey Gate through the Abbey Gardens to the Abbey Ruins and also around the Norman Tower and the West Front of the old Abbey.

It also includes the refurbishment of the Abbey Model with the addition of four side panels on the bank above the Chapter House.

The new heritage interpretation panels tell the story of the Abbey of St Edmund from various different perspectives and explain the role of the main features including the Abbey Gate, the Norman Tower, the once magnificent Abbey Church, the Chapter House, the Cloisters, the Refectory, the Dormitory, the Queen's Chamber and the Abbot's Palace. The new heritage interpretation scheme has been generally well

received by visitors of all ages and interests, it has added to the value of guided tours and school visits and it has helped to raise the awareness of local people and visitors to the role of the Abbey of St Edmund and its sometimes troubled relationships with the town as part of the Millennium Celebrations.

A particularly exciting feature of the new heritage interpretation scheme is the amazing graphic reconstructions of what the Abbey would have looked like in about 1440 (*see image at top of page*).

Digital reconstructions have been built up from available historic

records by specialists at English Heritage and then translated into the authentic new graphic reconstructions.

English Heritage has now included the new graphic reconstructions in the history section of its website at <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/bury-st-edmunds-abbey/history/>

The new heritage interpretation scheme is a first phase of what the Heritage Partnership and English Heritage hope will be followed by further phases across the rest of the Abbey area.

Richard Summers

Winter Lunch set for February

We are happy to announce that the popular Winter Lunch is set in the calendar and will be the prelude to a series of events for 2023.

The date for your diaries is Saturday, February 18, and as before the venue is the Southgate Community Centre. We are absolutely delighted to also announce that our guest speaker is Charles Garland. Charles's career has been as a television director and producer and was involved with some of the most iconic sitcoms brought to our screens by the BBC in the 1970s and 80s, including, as assistant to

David Croft OBE and Jimmy Perry OBE, "Dad's Army" – much of which was filmed in or around the Thetford area. Charles will be talking about the making of that programme and the characters involved, both in front of the cameras, and behind. A booking form and menu choices is included in this edition of the Review and it is no exaggeration to say that this is a most popular event, with limited spaces, and therefore as the saying goes, book early to avoid disappointment.

Terry O'Donoghue

Bury makes it 11 times gold award winners of Anglia in Bloom



Bury St Edmunds picked up the Gold Award at Anglia in Bloom in the Large Town category and a hatful of other prizes and trophies.

The awards presentations took place at Orsett Hall, near Grays, in Essex, on September 7, and proved to be a big day for the town. The competition, that covers the six counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, and Bedfordshire, is hotly contested, especially in the Large Town category.

2022 AWARDS IN FULL

Gold Award and Trophy Large Town category - Bury St Edmunds.

Gold Award and Trophy Wildlife and Conservation - Bury Water Meadows Group.

Award winner and Trophy Best Community Project - Bury in Plume Peacock in the Park - Crafty Foxes.

Gold Award and Trophy in Cemetery



Pictured at the Anglia in Bloom Awards ceremony are, from left to right, Michelle Freeman, Fiona Till, Lynda Seldis, David Irvine, Robin Burnett and Lynne Wright.

ies and Crematoria - West Suffolk Crematorium.

Silver Gilt Award Parks - Abbey Gardens.

Silver Award Care Homes - Glastonbury Court Care UK.

Silver Award Parks - Nowton Park

David Irvine, co-ordinator of Bury in Bloom, who attended the awards with a small team from the town said: 'We are delighted to have come home with so many awards for our beautiful town that recognise the efforts put in by our supporters and the hundreds of volunteers involved. They should be rightly proud.' He said he was now looking forward to the national RHS Britain in Bloom awards, in London, in which Bury St Edmunds qualified as finalist in the BID Town Centre and City Centre category.

He added: "It would be nice to go out on a high by picking up some Britain in Bloom awards as I end my tenure as Bury in Bloom co-ordinator, however the Anglia in Bloom awards puts a big smile on our face at Bury in Bloom."

David Irvine



The Bury St Edmunds Gold Award certificate and trophy.



Top, Robin Burnett, chairman of Bury in Bloom, with the award for the Water Meadows. Below, Michelle Freeman, of The Crafty Foxes, with the award for the Abbey Gardens art project.



Bury in Bloom collects Gold at the Britain in Bloom finals in London

A Gold Award certificate was presented to Bury in Bloom at the RHS UK Finals Awards ceremony held at RHS Lindley Hall, in Westminster, on October 10.

It won the award for the BID Town Centre and City Centre category, competing with seven other towns and cities around the United Kingdom.

Judges were particularly impressed with being 100 per cent “Peat-Free” since 2021 following two years of trials as well as the installation of a major rainwater harvesting scheme which enables self-sufficiency when it comes to watering the nearly 500 hanging baskets and floral displays.

Despite the incredibly hot weather the judges were treated to a tour of the Abbey Gardens by Bury Rickshaw team as they viewed the Peacock in the Park (Bury in Plume) community art project, the central beds, and the floral labyrinth. David Irvine, Bury in Bloom co-ordinator, said: When I took over in 2019, I set myself two goals. To win the Anglia in Bloom Large Town Gold Award in 2020 and Britain in Bloom Gold in 2021, however I hadn’t reckoned on Covid-19 shutting everything down for the best part of two years. So, 2022 was our first chance and its very satisfying to come home with both awards in the same year.

“As I approach retirement as co-ordinator this is a good place for Bury in Bloom to be and I feel happy I have delivered the goods.” Talking about Britain in Bloom David said, ‘The overall impression we tried to create was one of a floral town tackling challenges in a changing climate while embracing 21st century technology.

“Bury in Bloom enjoys massive goodwill and is supported by the BID Our Bury St Edmunds, local business sponsors, the town and district council as well as hundreds of volunteers.



David Irvine presents awards to West Suffolk Council and volunteers in the Abbey Gardens.

“Nowadays it’s much more than horticultural achievement and floral displays. In fact, the community and environmental projects make up 60 per cent of the judging score and our high level of involvement in these areas was a major contribution to winning the gold.”

The judges particularly mentioned the huge front garden competition called Certificates of Merit that in 2022 involved 80 judges visiting nearly 20,000 front gardens and handing out nearly 1,600 of the sought-after Certificate of Merit. The Greenfingers competition (for schools, nurseries and care homes) and the Britannia in Bloom at Bri-

tannia House (sheltered move-on accommodation house for adults) as well as Bury in Plume community project by The Crafty Foxes all received special comment. The Britain in Bloom Gold Award follows immediately behind success in the six counties Anglia in Bloom awards where Bury St Edmunds received four Gold Awards, one Silver Gilt and two Silver Awards and confirms Bury St Edmunds status as a jewel in the crown of Suffolk.

David added: “We may need a bigger awards cabinet, a lovely problem to deal with. Bury St Edmunds has every right to be proud of itself.”

David Irvine



Rachel De Thame presents Britain in Bloom awards to David Irvine and Mark Cordell, chief executive office of Our Bury St Edmunds.

Son et lumiere show is grand finale to the Abbey 1000 celebrations

The Abbey 1000 celebrations ended on St Edmunds Day in spectacular fashion with a stunning son et lumiere show telling the Abbey's rise to ruins story.

Enjoyed by thousands, the show was a fitting finale to a year of events - talks, exhibitions, activities, art, performances, trails and special ecumenical religious services - designed to fire the imagination and bring the Abbey's remarkable history to life. Benedictines gathered here to worship for the first time in 500 or so years, and modern day pilgrims retraced the journeys from Ely and Norfolk undertaken 1,000 years ago by the monks who came to help form the Abbey.

School children learnt about notable stories from Bury's past and recreated them in drawings, mosaics, sculptures, murals, music and theatre. Medieval manuscripts that were produced in the Abbey scriptorium went on display in the Cathedral Treasury; the colours and designs vivid and thrilling.

Local organisations put on a wide range of heritage-related displays and activities for the Picnic in the Park, in July, and throughout the year residents and visitors alike enjoyed the public art in the Abbey ruins, heritage



Part of the dramatic light show to end the Abbey 1000 celebrations in Bury St Edmunds.

tours and trails and a major exhibition at Moyses Museum. There were too many events to mention here. Although the Abbey's millennium is over, this is only the beginning of the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership's ambitious plans for

conservation of the ruins and promotion of the Abbey's importance to local and national heritage.

The new interpretation boards that were installed around the Abbey precinct in the summer are one indication of the great things to come, based as they are on digital modelling by English Heritage of the Abbey church using an exciting combination of technology and scholarship. The mosaics, wolf and monk from the sculpture exhibition in the crypt will be re-sited in the Abbey precinct and the two magnificent murals on the back of the Apex, unveiled on the final day, will all serve as a visual reminder of our celebrations.

On behalf of the Abbey 1000 steering committee, thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the year: event organisers, sponsors, stewards, performers and participants.

Libby Ranzetta
Chairman

Abbey 1000 Steering Committee

Feast of St Edmund marked at local Catholic church in town

Ending a year of Abbey 1000 included the feast of St Edmund being celebrated at St Edmund's Catholic Church on November 19. The congregation was joined by the Lord Lieutenant Countess of Euston, Lord Bristol, civic dignitaries and members of the Abbey 1000 Committee. Canon David Bagstaff celebrated Mass and his homily touched on how Abbey 1000 had brought the community to recognise the importance of St Edmund and the Abbey. After the service guests were able to enjoy the traditional "ale stew" lunch

in the church crypt. An exhibition of Edmund-related artefacts and the works of two local artisans created interest.

The beautiful paintings of Agnieszka Procajlo included her recent depictions of local Catholic churches. Clint Rose demonstrated how he had carved a welcome sign incorporating the head of St Edmund being guarded by the wolf and presented this as a gift to Fr Dick White on behalf of the Church.

John Saunders

45 members make trip north for delights of Holt and Sheringham

Following hard on the heels of the successful Diss and Earsham Hall excursion, around 45 members gathered at Ram Meadow on a September morning ready to explore the delights that North Norfolk had to offer.

All proceeded well and the attractive Georgian town of Holt did not disappoint, some content to wander around and avail themselves of a coffee, others were tempted by the numerous independent retailers.

However, storm clouds were gathering – and not only the weather.

Upon returning to the coach, our conscientious driver, Paul, had been checking out our next attraction, a journey to Sheringham on the North Norfolk Heritage railway.

He had to break the news that there was a line fault and that services were restricted.

A swift rethink, several phone calls, and the itinerary was turned on its head, the rail trip being postponed till the afternoon.

Back on track (apologies for the pun) so we thought, we departed for Sheringham via a picturesque but challenging route for a rather large coach.

At Sheringham, the unpredictable British weather intervened with a torrential downpour but, happily, most were spared a drenching, having headed straight for lunch.

At 3.15pm everyone was at Sheringham station, the sun had made a reappearance, and all were looking forward to a brief but scenic steam train ride to Weybourne.

Once again fate intervened to ensure I was not going to enjoy an easy time.

Having rebooked and paid for us all to travel, I was told that it was no longer possible until late in the day – suffice to say, a conversation with the general manager and a brief discussion around contractual law, resulted in a carriage magically becoming available to us.

The good natured way in which our



Members gather on the station platform at Sheringham.

members accepted the changes to the published itinerary, and the truncated rail trip, ensured that it was a most enjoyable experience for all involved. This was due in no small part to the proactive contribution made by Paul Cooper, of St Edmunds Travel, who was keen to make us aware of some of the beauty of his former home county.

Sadly, unbeknown to us, whilst enjoying our short rail journey, the 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth, had come to an end.

The MCE committee has now turned its attention to the Spring and Summer of 2023 and hopefully a full programme will be published early in the new year.

Terry O'Donoghue



The train pulling into the station at Sheringham.

New booklet explains 50 years of caring for Bury St Edmunds

A new booklet will help explain to potential new members, and others in our community, the huge contribution the Bury Society has made to our town.

In 1996 the Society produced a monochrome “25 years” booklet; this new one is very different.

The MCE committee has been working on compiling an A4 booklet to present the story of the Society over more than 50 years to a contemporary audience.

The full colour booklet will remind us all how the Society began in 1971 and how it has developed since that time.

Over the years, Bury St Edmunds has greatly increased in size and lots of new building has taken place.

The nature of the town and its people have also changed during that period. As a result, our role has had to subtly change over time and today we are the Bury St Edmunds Society CIO or Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

All of us who are members care about Bury St Edmunds’ heritage, the local environment and the future of our town.

Our fellow residents sometimes misunderstand what the Bury Society is all about, so we hope this account will help to clarify what we have achieved, what we do and how we provide a powerful voice on local



The campaign to save the Manor House Museum in 2002.



A press cutting from 1976 of the development of Moreton Hall.

issues which we make sure is heard by those making the decisions.

This 48-page booklet has two main sections, each in a very different style to suit all kinds of readers.

The first section is the shortest and is a standard magazine style that most people, we hope, will read.

It will be a small number of short articles and images introducing the reader to the work of the Society.

The second and longer section is

more detailed, and many people may just skim through it.

Nevertheless, it provides an important record of our major projects with successes – and several failures – in a very different, succinct “fact file” format.

Text and images have been scrutinised by an editorial team to have the most impact whilst maintaining a balanced narrative.

Most pages in section two are headed by a short summary.

Images and press cuttings have been gathered from the archives and old newsletters.

The “recollections” from past chairs of the society have also been used. Grant funding to cover most of the cost has been successfully applied for, with a £1,000 contribution from the town council approved. A similar amount has been applied for from West Suffolk Council.

The printers are working on the proofs now and we hope it will be ready by the end of the year.



The town centre Master Plan consultation 2017.

Alan Baxter

No fears of ‘stampeding cattle’

With the festive season fast approaching, and the prospect of Christmas shopping at the doorstep, I find myself reading about a very different sort of seasonal shopping experience: the annual Christmas livestock market, here in Bury St Edmunds.

The book I am reading is Adrian Bell’s “Corduoy”.

Bell is best known today as the first compiler of The Times crossword, or as the father of Martin Bell, BBC correspondent and independent MP, and Anthea Bell, translator of (amongst other things) the Asterix comics.

But he was also a gifted writer, detailing his years in and around Bury St Edmunds between 1920 and 1932. Until the dawn of the supermarket, the Christmas livestock market was a highlight of the year in Bury St Edmunds, and in 1920 Adrian Bell had just arrived in Suffolk, and visited the market with his farming mentor, Mr Colville. I think he found the experience quite overwhelming: “The town was full of cars and farmers ... The market place was at one end of the town, a vast space divided up into pens and selling-rings under cover ... Whichever way I turned I seemed to find a herd of bullocks charging down upon me.”

Local farmers brought their best animals, which were judged for quality and size, the best given prizes. Butchers competed to win prize-winning cattle, pigs and turkeys at auction. Prize-winning cattle sold for £85, while the turkeys “were making a good price – two shillings a pound.” Bell describes the market of 1920 in some detail; walking between the pens, comparing animals, haggling prices with traders, and sharing advice with farmers.

After the sale, exhausted and hungry, they enjoyed a warm Christmas lunch of “roast beef and brown beer.”

Today, of course, little remains of the cattle market that Adrian Bell knew in 1920, which ceased trading in 1998, and was demolished to make way for the Arc Shopping Centre. However, the original Settling House that had been at the heart of the mar-



A plaque in Bury St Edmunds marking the entrance to the Cattle Market.

ket since 1864 has been preserved, and is now at the Food Museum (formerly the Museum of East Anglian Life) in Stowmarket.

The “Three Tuns Inn”, where Bell

and Colville supposedly ate their roast dinner, was at 44 Crown Street.

However, since this had closed 17 years before Bell arrived, due to its proximity to St Mary’s Church (and therefore presumably luring the congregation away from Sunday worship), Bell is probably confusing it with the Three Kings, which had been on Cornhill, where The Works is today. However, while our street names – Butter Market, Cornhill, Woolhall – may today be the most obvious traces of our old livestock markets, it is our important regional market that is the most significant legacy. Which brings us back to Christmas shopping: at least we don’t have to worry about stampeding cattle anymore.

Sam Saloway-Cooke

Tree survey uncovers link between estate and Abbey

A recent survey of ancient trees has uncovered an interesting connection between Bury St Edmunds Abbey and the Rougham Estate.

In October, I organised a tree survey with George Agnew, owner of the estate, and chairman of the Rougham Estate Trust. The aim was to measure and photograph ancient Pedunculate (English) Oak pollards in order to update the Woodland Trust’s Ancient Tree Inventory of ancient, veteran and notable trees.

We focused on three sites: the meadow opposite Blackthorpe Barn; the margins of the A14; and a strip of ancient wood pasture near Sow Lane. Some of the trees are well-known: the giants on either side of the A14 near Rougham Hall Nurseries have guarded the eastern approach to Bury St Edmunds for hundreds of years, and are worth a look (if you can do so safely) next time you drive past. On the other hand, many trees had never been recorded, and so we verified 25 additional veteran or ancient oak pollards for the inventory.

The connection with the Bury St Ed-

munds Abbey was very interesting.

Ancient wood pasture was a traditional form of agriculture: large, veteran trees provided shelter for grazing animals, but were also pollarded for wood harvesting.

Rougham Estate had once been owned by Bury St Edmunds Abbey, and it is thought that this land had once been used for grazing pigs.

Presumably this was for selling and not eating, as Benedictine monks had a (mostly) pescatarian diet, though the rules were often bent.

At market time, the pigs would have been led (or herded) down into town along Sow Lane; named, perhaps, after this very wood pasture?

It is amazing to think of these trees witnessing so much of our local history.

There are many more ancient trees in and around our town that need recording and preserving, so please contact the Bury Society if you are interested in conducting a tree survey in your area.

Sam Saloway-Cooke

Ghostly and macabre tours now in full swing with more bookings

Halloween launched the start of the season of ghostly and macabre tours and they are in full swing with more people than ever booking. The tours blend fact, fiction and the thoroughly entertaining and provide a great evening out to lift the doom and gloom that surrounds us. Well, not totally, because the guides do like a bit of doom and gloom as their sombre renditions are delivered by characters dressed as the Witchfinder General, hapless monks, “funereal” gents and the Grey Lady. It is she, the Grey Lady known as Maude Carew, who attracts the imagination amongst the eerie atmosphere of the Great Churchyard. On a trip to France in the 1400s, Maude fell in love with Sir Roger Drury. She sought to find him when she returned to England only to learn that he had become a monk named Brother Bernard. Infatuated, she decided that if she became a nun their romance might rekindle. In 1447 Margaret of Anjou, the



The plaque on the former St Saviour's Hospital which recognises Humphrey Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester.

Queen of England was attending a parliament in Bury, amongst the business being the trial of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, for treason. Maude was summoned by the Queen who told her that her secret romance would be revealed unless she agreed to poison Humphrey. Maude was even more distraught to be told that Brother Bernard was actually her beau, Sir Roger.

Blackmailed, Maude trekked through a tunnel from the Abbey to St Saviour's Hospital, in Fornham Road, where, by candlelight she administered the poison to the sleeping Humphrey.

As she retraced her steps, her candle extinguished and she inadvertently ingested some of the poison. There was light at the end of the tunnel. She found her way into the room of Brother Bernard where she confessed what she had done and that she had poisoned herself. Guided by him through the tunnels back to the Abbey she collapsed and died.

Maude's spirit lingers and she has been seen in the Churchyard, Cupola House and several other locations. But, as with many of the guide's stories, there is a twist in the tale. It would be wrong to tell you here how it ended – why not come along yourself and enjoy one of the tours? All the information you need is at www.burystedmundstourguides.org

John Saunders

27 mini monk sculptures in the Dovecote

There are 27 mini monk sculptures hiding in the 12th century Dovecote in the Abbey Gardens. Created by local ceramic artist Deborah Pipe they have been popular with children and adults alike. Deborah has used the sculptures to describe different aspects of the monks' lives in the Abbey of

St Edmund including farming, singing, brewing and illuminating manuscripts. The free leaflet has a drawing of each monk sculpture with a description of the monastic life it depicts. Stonemason Jonathan Mason carefully positioned the ceramic sculptures into the walls of the

Dovecote. Historic England gave permission for them to be on display until the end of November. Bury St Edmunds town councillors have supported the project with their locality budgets and prizes have been donated by OurBuryStEdmunds and West Suffolk Council.



A monk with leeches situated in the Dovecote, in the Abbey Gardens, left, another reading a religious text, centre, and a third one saying 'quiet please'.

Sculpture plinth has four more displays on show during summer

The sculpture plinth in the ruins in the Abbey Gardens has seen four more artworks displayed during the summer.

August saw St Edmund's Head created by West Suffolk College lecturer Madeleine Roberts' students.

The sculpture was made from coloured electrical wiring and inspired by local artist Sybil Andrews, Giacometti, as well as medieval paintings. Two artworks were featured on the plinth in September, Wolf Crown, by King Edward VI School, and Theme of St Edmund, by County Upper School. The pupils were influenced by royal crests, insignia, visual imagery, and historic artworks.

All the students enjoyed being involved in the Abbey 1000 celebrations.

St Edmund's wolf by chainsaw sculptor Luke Chapman was welcomed into the Abbey ruins by the Bury Wolf pack rugby players in October. The wolf was made from a 170-year-old Douglas Fir and took 30 hours to create the artwork using chain saws and other traditional wood carving tools.

The monk returned for November and was featured in the Light Spectacular, the grand finale of the Abbey



St Edmund's Head, which was created by West Suffolk College students.

1000 celebrations. Abbey 1000 is very grateful to Bury St Edmunds town councillors, the Bury Society and the Abbey Gardens Friends who helped with funding for the sculp-

tures. Special thanks to Bury Developments who have installed and removed all the sculptures.

Melanie Lesser



The Wolf Crown by King Edward VI School and Theme of St Edmund, by County Upper School.



The monk with staff from Bury Developments.



St Edmund's Wolf, with rugby club members and town councillors.

Businesses nervously watching local mood when it comes to spending

Recent political upheaval, the downturn in financial markets that followed, the war in Ukraine and rising energy costs may seem a million miles away from day-to-day life here in Bury, but the trickle-down effect can and will be seen and felt throughout the town.

With the Christmas shopping season in full swing, businesses around the town will be nervously watching and interpreting the local mood when it comes to spending money.

After two extremely difficult years, businesses both large and small will be hoping for a bumper season and their tills ringing throughout the next few weeks.

Bury is fortunate in having a large and diverse retail and food and beverage offer, one that most other towns look upon with envy. The mix of national chains and a very strong independent sector ensures that the town punches well above its size in terms of attracting and more importantly keeping a healthy range of businesses.

With Our Bury St Edmunds and Bury St Edmunds & Beyond we are very fortunate to have local expertise and knowledge which supports these businesses, understands the issues faced, aids communication and gets people to work together to promote the town. The town is not immune to wider issues facing the economy, we face a difficult winter with higher



Starling Toys, just one of the businesses that has expanded its brand into the Arc Shopping Centre as a sign that it is keen to invest in Bury St Edmunds.

energy costs, strikes, staff shortages and instability. An example of this is Costa Coffee on Charter Square, which is now closing two days a week to ensure staff availability on other days and reduce costs.

At the time of writing, we await the autumn budget, this “promises” planned expenditure cuts and may well heighten the public’s mood to be cautious around Christmas spending which could easily have a negative effect on the businesses who rely on a good Christmas season. Some retailers make a fully one-third of their yearly income in the six weeks to Christmas Day and so depend on that income to see them through the rest of the year.

Looking at the general mood around the retail sector nationally, there is a nervousness at present, and the next month will be key to survival for

many businesses. The ever-present threat of internet shopping ensures that local businesses must have the right stock at the right price and offer an experience and customer service that cannot be found on the web - our markets, events such as the Christmas Lights switch on and Christmas market at the Cathedral show that Bury offers a huge range choice that cannot be matched.

The current vacancy rate for premises in Bury is currently just 6.5% compared to 13.9% nationally which shows that the town centre is doing extremely well and we have recently seen the opening of shops and restaurants across the town which is a hugely positive sign that companies want to invest in Bury.

Long standing empty units have been snapped up and money invested ... the openings include Starlings Toys, Accessorize, The Olive Grove, Damsen & Wilde, The Wine Cellar, Brook Taverner & Juice Bros, with openings coming soon for Mr Whey, Claires House and The Cornish Bakery.

Enjoy the coming season - get out and support the businesses that are right on our doorstep offering a smile and a fantastic range of merchandise, fill those bags to the brim with goodies and support friends, neighbours and loved ones who might be struggling. After all, isn't that what the season is all about?



The Olive Grove in St John's Street, one of the long-standing empty units in the town centre which has now been filled.

Stephen Moody

After 25 years of promoting the town it's time to say farewell

Passionate and dedicated to her home town of Bury St Edmunds Melanie Lesser has been at the leading edge of promoting the area. Now she is standing down as chairman of Bury St Edmunds and Beyond and tells how she came to take on the role.

I have always loved Bury St Edmunds. I was born in Springfield Road while my father was stationed at RAF Honington.

My maternal grandparents lived in Whiting Street and as a family we would often visit and stay with them between postings. I attended three schools in the town, two of them just for a term each.

After a 10-year career with Marks and Spencer I moved to Yorkshire, and I took on the role as visitor services manager for the National Trust at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal. It was a very enjoyable job working with a team to open the new visitor centre as well as planning events and activities within the 12th century Cistercian Abbey, the 18th century water gardens and medieval deer park.

I returned to Bury with my daughter Olivia in 1995 and started working for the National Trust at Ickworth as the events and marketing co-ordinator. As part of my role, in 1997 I set up the Bury St Edmunds Tourism Group together with Sharon Fairweather, then St Edmundsbury's tourism officer. I can't believe it is 25 years ago.

The tourism group included many of the attractions and visitor accommodation in and around our town. Sarah Friswell, from St Edmundsbury Cathedral, was a founder member and the town guides always sent a representative to the meetings.

We visited other members' properties so we could be up to date with what the area had to offer.

Visiting the Terracotta Warriors in Colchester Castle, Fullers Mill with Bernard Tickner, Euston Hall with



Melanie Lesser with her husband Guy, daughter Olivia (Williams) and Kandy.

the 11th Duke of Grafton and handling some of the collection in the Suffolk Regimental Museum were highlights. There was a great camaraderie as we all helped each other, for example having training sessions about the newly emerging social media platforms.

The Visit Bury St Edmunds website was set up in 2002, ahead of our time. When we launched none of the members had their own website, but they soon decided to create them, which we then linked from the Visit Bury St Edmunds website. In 2002 we were very proud to get 1,000 hits a week on the site.

It became very obvious that we needed full time staff and in 2017 the Bury St Edmunds Tourism Group became Bury St Edmunds and Beyond. This DMO (Destination Marketing Organisation), a not-for-profit organisation, was set up with funding from St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Bury St Edmunds Town Council, Our Bury St Edmunds BID, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Gough Hotels and Bury in Bloom.

Sue Warren was employed as the brand and marketing manager for Bury St Edmunds and Beyond. I became a volunteer chairman supporting Sue with my knowledge of local tourism.

Representatives from local attractions, hotels and restaurants were also part of the board.

Bury St Edmunds and Beyond has

gone from strength to strength. Its new website is used both by visitors nationally and regionally to plan their visits. It is a great source for residents and now gets 10,000 hits a week. The tourism brand's digital marketing using a marketing mix of engaging content, social media, PR, digital advertising and campaigns, increases awareness of Bury St Edmunds as a visitor destination and drives visitors to the website burystedmundsandbeyond.co.uk

The brand also works with Visit East of England, along with 14 other tourism brands, to input into campaigns and ensure coverage for the town and surrounding area in marketing campaigns developed at regional and international level.

We are now regularly featured in national, and sometimes international, media and work with partners across the region including Screen Suffolk and Greater Anglia to raise awareness of what we have here.

The Bury St Edmunds and Beyond brand is now under Our Bury St Edmunds BID, led by Mark Cordell: a great move as it now links the businesses in the town with the surrounding area.

This is just the right timing for me to step down as chairman and to wish Bury St Edmunds and Beyond continued success in attracting visitors to our lovely town which is "A Jewel in the Crown of Suffolk."

Society supports new hospital plans

There have been numerous planning applications since the last Planning Review. The Bury Society commented on most of the more significant proposals and several schemes have been revised as a result.

It has also commented on plans for several developments along **Tayfen Road** within the previously adopted Master Plan. One of the most significant proposals has been the plans for a **new hospital** on parkland behind the existing hospital and for the replacement of much of the existing hospital with car parking. The Society supported the plans to provide a regional scale hospital facility and gave support to various subsequent refinements to the original proposals.

Another significant proposal has been the revisions to the plans to redevelop **Cornhill Walk** which had been dismissed at appeal. The new scheme reduces the massing and height of the new buildings, provides a more domestic scale to the elevations facing Well Street and Short Brackland and includes a central glazed atrium facing the Buttermarket. The Society objected

to a proposed **Animal Feed Mill, on British Sugar, land between Compiegne Way and the Recycling Centre, on Fornham Road**, because of the potential visual impact but it supported the potential benefit to the local economy. It suggested that the base for the feed mill should be lowered and earth banks should be created along Fornham Road. The Society supported the proposed “light touch” conversion of the **Magistrates Courts** to provide seven apartments within the existing historic structure. The two court rooms would be incorporated. There would be little change to the external appearance of this Listed Building and the existing triangular car park would be tidied up. Detailed plans have been submitted for the proposed **Abbots Vale urban extension between Rougham Hill and Sicklesmere Road** which was given outline permission some years ago. The Society has referred the plans that would affect the River Lark Corridor to the Bury Water Meadows Group and the River Lark Catchment Partnership for comment.

Richard Summers

A caretaker's work is never an easy one

A caretaker's work in public buildings is never easy at the best of times, but in Bury St Edmunds, it was sometimes a downright precarious occupation. At the Guildhall, the caretaker or Beadle as he was titled, had many duties over and above the maintenance of the building. In the summer of 1434, the Beadle at that time had to accompany the Alderman, Johannus (John) Edward, when an attempt was made at midnight on July 21 to arrest the murderers of James Andrew, who were seeking refuge in the Saracens Head, further along Guildhall Street. The Alderman and his company's attempt at arrest was met with a fusillade of arrows and they had to retire, allowing the murderers to escape. In 1582 there is a record of a new Guildhall Beadle being sworn in, one John Annable, and he took an oath to advise the Guildhall Feoffees of the death of a fellow feoffee, or his wife, and ensure that they accompanied the coffin to the funeral. He also, under oath, undertook to keep two bloodhounds for the purpose of apprehending felons or malefactors when instructed to do so by the magistrates. In 1688, during the unrest which accompanied the “Glorious Revolution”, Mr Prettyman, the caretaker of the Jesuit College which occupied part of the old Abbot's Palace in the Abbey grounds, was slain by the mob as he attempted to protect the building. In 1846 J Clarke felt his position, now named “Hall Keeper”, warranted being carved in stone on the underside of a York flagstone at the entrance to the Guildhall, not being re-discovered until 2017 during major renovations to the building. Frustratingly, we know very little more of his life, not that of many others who looked after the buildings which figure so strongly in our local history.

Terry O'Donoghue

Increase in garden contest entrants

Bury in Bloom Certificates of Merit Front Garden Judging 2022 proved to be very successful for Bury in Bloom with the Certificates of Merit particularly impressing judges.

Britain in Bloom adjudicators asked if residents have to enter – the answer is “no” as every garden or front of house within the borough boundary is judged by the team of judges.

Next question – how many gardens does that involve?

After some number crunching it was confirmed over 16,000 in 2021. This number will increase in 2023 as plans to include Marham Park for the first time, plus properties on Moreton Hall that are being reclassified as Moreton Hall (previously Rougham), so almost 20,000 gardens will be judged.

RHS in 2021/22 revised guidelines to encourage more wildlife friendly gardens. This has been reflected in the scoring system.

Before certificates are awarded judges will have walked your subzone to form an impression of how many gardens are loved.

Judges will look at your garden from the pavement, or end of your drive, so it is important all elements of your garden are clearly visible from the pavement. Judges are looking to award certificates to enthusiastic gardeners who have put a huge effort into their garden. We are always looking to expand our team of judges. If you would like more information or interested in becoming a judge email Lynne Wright certificates@buryinbloom.org.uk

Lynne Wright

‘Grinning’ and ‘bearing’ it as work continues

The installation of new services or repairs to existing ones are a necessary evil but to onlookers the roadworks always seem to take an inordinately length of time causing upheaval and inconvenience. The older the cables or pipes, the more likely it will be that they need replacing or repairing, particularly burst water mains and gas mains, these receiving the utmost priority as you would expect.

In January 2002, contractors on Moreton Hall punctured a gas main whilst working on it causing no end of aggravation as people had to be evacuated to the Moreton Hall Community Centre. Only well into the evening was the all-clear given and people returned home after the leak was successfully repaired.

In April 2011, the Gas National Grid began a programme of gas mains replacement across Bury St Edmunds. These works were supposed to last until the spring of 2012 and traffic flow across town was severely disrupted. Finally the work was completed in 2013.

During 2019-2020 work to replace the existing gas pipes with the distinctive new yellow plastic mains in the south west area of the town was carried out by Cadent Gas. They

Bike racks are unveiled in the Abbey Gardens

Master-crafted bike racks have been unveiled in the Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds, for visitors to secure their cycles.

The blacksmith-forged stands shelter under the wooden dovecot, by the tennis courts, and their arrow fletching design pays tribute to St Edmund. They were made by Stowlangtoft-based Designs on Metal, who have also sculpted key pieces around the town.



Roadworks being carried out in Rembrandt Way, Bury St Edmunds.

own, operate and maintain the largest natural gas distribution network in the United Kingdom, transporting gas to 11 million homes and businesses across the West Midlands, North West England, East of England and North London.

The company works with Skanska and Morrison Utilities and it was anticipated the work would be completed by 2021. With the advent of more up-to-date fibre optic cables CityFibre, a British telecommunications company based in London, which owns, operates and maintains fibre-to-the-building infrastructure, was very active in Bury St Edmunds. As of March 21, 2022, 1.5 million premises have been connected to the CityFibre network throughout the country. Here in Bury St Edmunds roads have been closed to safeguard the workforce and footpaths dug up whilst cable laying work has been undertaken. Along with BT they struggle to get the required work carried out in the allocated time, work apparently to be completed by March 2023.

As the town continues to expand further disruptions will occur with new services being laid, the old adage “grinning and bearing” seems to be all that can be done.

Martyn Taylor

YOUR CONTACTS

Society website
www.thebursociety.org.uk

Reg Charity No. 263230

COMMITTEE

Chairman
and Heritage Advisor
Martyn Taylor
chair@bursociety.com

Secretary and
Vice Chairman
Tim Page
secretary@bursociety.com

Treasurer
Doug Beardon
treasurer@bursociety.com

Planning
Richard Summers
richardsummers@spatialstedmunds.co.uk

Membership
Sue Savage
members@bursociety.com

Programme
Terry O'Donoghue
events@bursociety.com

Bury in Bloom
Chairman
Robin Burnett
chairman@buryinbloom.org.uk

Co-ordinator
David Irvine
coordinator@buryinbloom.org.uk

Review editor
Russell Cook
review@bursociety.com

Website
Alan Baxter
media@bursociety.com

OTHER MEMBERS

Patrick Chung
Sam Saloway-Cooke
Sarah Nunn
Stephen Moody
Jess Rose Hughes

Over 80 traders at Makers' Market

The idea of the Bury St Edmunds Makers' Market started in 2019. Although weekly markets were doing well and the Saturday market was full we were getting enquiries from some smaller, craft type stalls about trading on our markets on a casual basis.

We already had several Sunday events which happened during the year such as the regular Farmers' Market, the Whitsun Fayre and the Food and Drink Festival.

I discussed the idea with Mark Cordell, from Our Bury St Edmunds, and we both agreed that another monthly market would be a good idea and an addition to the already popular Sunday trading day and settled on the first Sunday of the month between April and October.

We arranged the promotion and used word of mouth to get around 20 interested stallholders for our first market in April 2020.

The idea was to use a small section of the Buttermarket which would be both large enough and keep the road open. All was going well and then Covid struck. Although we managed to keep most of our regular markets open with essential goods the Makers' Markets were cancelled. It was a difficult time for us all and the Makers' Market idea was very much put to the back of everyone's mind. However, during lockdown many people turned to art, crafts, baking and making as a way of coping and many rediscovered old talents or discovered new ones.

We kept in touch with our contacts who had already booked and managed to organise our first market in September and October 2020.

At this point we were out of a full lockdown and people were encouraged to shop outdoors.

These markets led to lots of enquiries



by Katy Mac, an eco-designer who repairs and upcycles clothing, with a young customer at her Maker's Market stall.

from new makers who were looking to trade and sell some of their crafts which they had made during the year. During the next couple of years we continued to organise Makers' Markets on the first Sunday of the month, Covid permitting, and 2022 has been the first complete year with our final market this year on Sunday, December 4. The markets are now full and we have over 80 stallholders with a waiting list. We keep the concept simple so that stallholders do not have to commit to markets regularly, they can book whichever dates suit them and we are able to hire gazebos to those who do not have them. This enables people to trial market trading and see if it is for them without laying out too much money. We try to encourage stallholders to visit our other towns which have Makers' Markets and also become regular market traders on our

Wednesday and Saturday markets. We have had some great success with this and have around 10 regular makers on our Wednesday market selling in The Traverse and Cornhill areas, giving it a real community feel with the stallholders being able to learn from each other. It has been particularly satisfying to see some of our stallholders who have never done a market before go on and give up other jobs to concentrate on their craft business. Most of these stallholders do not only trade at markets but trade online and at other events. We are now putting together our programme for 2023 and if anyone is interested or would like further information contact economic.development@westsuffolk.gov.uk as we can help with all aspects of setting up your own business.

Sharon Fairweather

Don't miss the opportunity to add your weight to the Bury Society team. Apply for membership now. Either use the website: thebursociety.org.uk 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 are welcomed and used accordingly but they do not necessarily reflect that of the Bury Society.

Copy deadline for next edition of the Review

The deadline for the next edition of the Bury Society Review is Monday, March 27.

You can email copy to the editor at russell.cook461@btinternet.com