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Society Review

Summer 2023

Tributes to the man who created iconic buildings



The Crystal Palace, in Friars Lane, Bury St Edmunds

One of the most influential men to have an impact on the creation of iconic buildings across Suffolk, including the arc Shopping Centre, in Bury St Edmunds, has died at the age of 88. Sir Michael Hopkins' work, and that

of his close practice, made a really significant impact in the town, and he was also responsible for the Crystal Palace, in Friars Lane, and was in partnership with Norman Foster when the startling Willis Faber building, in Ipswich, was created.

For the full story of Sir Michael's contribution to Bury St Edmunds turn to pages 8 and 9.

The story is written by Madeleine and Martin Lightfoot who lived in the Crystal Palace for 30 years with fond memories.

Changing of the guard at the top

The Bury Society annual general meeting was held in the Guildhall on the evening of June 8 – a fitting venue which has for over 800 years been a meeting place for the townspeople.

The 2023 AGM was also very important in that it heralded a significant change in the make up of the trustees and executive of the society.

The evening commenced with the usual informal drinks reception followed by an informative and entertaining talk by Steve Ruthen, a former Greene King employee and brewery guide, on the Greene family. Steve managed in the time allocated, to lead us through the years from the late 18th century to the 21st century, skilfully navigating the emotive subject of Benjamin Greene and his connections with slavery.

When moving on to the formal part of the evening the members present were provided with verbal activity reports from the chairman, treasurer, interim planning officer, and for the first time this year, Robin Burnett, chair of Bury in Bloom.

During his report, the words “Gold Award” and “Silver Award” were repeated several times when talking about success in the Anglia in Bloom and RHS UK competitions.

In the opening paragraph it was stated that the 2023 AGM brought with it significant change.

Most importantly, after a consider-



Martyn Taylor, chairman of the Bury Society addresses those present at the annual general meeting.

able period of intense and complex work on behalf of the society, Tim Page (secretary and vice chair) and Doug Beardon (treasurer), stepped down from their roles.

We have both Tim and Doug to thank for steering us through the transition to our new CIO charitable status; a task which involved many hours of behind the scenes activity and for those of us stepping into their shoes, a firm base on which to continue the work of the society, hopefully, for some years to come.

We also said goodbye to Richard Summers at the AGM – Richard had stepped in as interim planning officer following the untimely death of Rod Rees and stayed in post with good grace until a new permanent planning officer could be found. To summarise the changes that were formally voted in at the first trustees meeting following the AGM, they are as follows:

- Terry O'Donoghue – secretary and vice chair;
 - Dr Ben Booth – treasurer;
 - Ed Thuell – planning officer;
- supported by Peter Riddington in an advisory role;
- Sam Saloway-Cooke replaces Terry O'Donoghue as events secretary.

All other trustees and advisers

remain unchanged from 2022.

One of the main challenges facing all civic societies, and the Bury Society is no exception, is the retention and expansion of its membership to allow it to remain a strong voice in the town scrutinising the impact of any development, the visual appearance of the town and the preservation of its rich heritage. We would appeal to all our current members to talk with your friends, neighbours or work colleagues who live in the town and the immediate area, to become members, and as a result make us an even louder voice in the town's appearance and development.

Terry O'Donoghue



The drinks reception prior to the Bury Society's annual general meeting.



Steve Ruthen addressing the annual general meeting of the Bury Society.

Members enjoy a day trip to Jordans Mill and Wrest Park

On a sunny, unseasonably warm day in May, Bury Society members enjoyed a day trip into Bedfordshire to visit Jordans Mill and Wrest Park. Jordans Mill – otherwise Holme Mills – has been home to the Jordans cereal empire since 1883.

After welcoming refreshments of coffee, tea, cake and scones, we had a fantastic tour of the immaculately preserved watermill, following the machinery and processes by which sacks of wheat are transformed into finely-milled flour by the power of water alone.

We also wandered round the beautiful garden and enjoyed lunch in the new oak-framed café overlooking the River Ivel.

In the afternoon, we ventured further west to Wrest Park, a magnificent 17th century house built in the style of a French chateau.

Preserved by English Heritage, many of the downstairs rooms have been restored to their former glory, with beautiful wallpapers, striking portraits and elaborately painted ceilings.

However, the extensive gardens are the real attraction: more than 90 acres of formal gardens and woodland walks, designed by Lancelot “Capability” Brown.

Members were free to explore the house and gardens – some making



Bury Society members outside Jordans Mill.

it as far as Thomas Archer’s iconic pavilion, designed and built between 1709 and 1711 – before retreating back to the café for a well-earned cup of tea or coffee, then back home. The trip was made especially comfortable and entertaining by our coach driver Kyle, from St Edmunds Travel, who navigated the winding rural roads and congested village high-streets of Bedfordshire with patience, self-assurance and a cheery disposition. This trip was also significant for another reason, being the last excursion under the direction of

Terry O’Donoghue as events secretary. I am sure the members of the Bury Society will join me in thanking Terry for five years in charge of our events, and wishing him all the best in his new role as secretary and vice chairman.

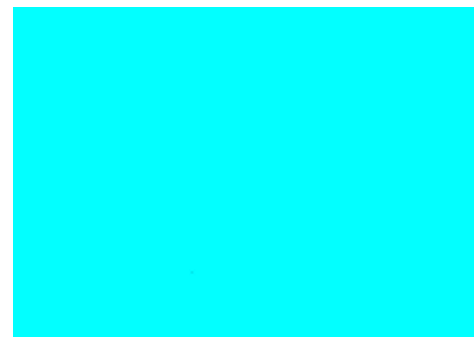
Sam Saloway-Cooke



Members admiring the interior of Wrest Park.



Inside and outside Jordans Mill.



Bury in Bloom team busy with projects around the town



In a month when we filled the town with summer colour and had strict deadlines to meet our Anglia in Bloom entry, we have been busy working on many projects at Bury in Bloom.

With the support of West Suffolk Council and our contract gardeners, we installed 469 hanging baskets and planted up the many planters located around the town.

This also included a handful of newly adopted planters, previously installed and since neglected by Suffolk County Council – with a sponsorship deal from a business based in town to cover costs.

This year's colour theme is very much about brightening up the town,



The Flower Flash on Angel Hill.



The Floral Coronation Crown situated in Crown Street.

with two colour schemes incorporating vibrant pinks, blues, yellows and silvers.

In mid-May, we unveiled our Floral Coronation Crown, celebrating the King's Coronation.

A 2.7 metre high crown, fabricated in rolled steel and powder coated in gold was produced by Duncan Drye, of Vikings Forge, and holds 14 hanging baskets that represent the "jewels of the crown", with a 20 square metre flower bed beneath, close planted with red and white petunias to simulate a trimmed red cushion – all located in, you guessed it, Crown Street!

This all led nicely on to a one-day event hosted by members of the charity Flower From The Farm, where they produced a spectacular display of British Cut Flowers on and around the Pillar of Salt on Angel Hill.

With the kind permission of Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council and funding from Bury Town Council, members of the public were able to interact with the florists and take photos of the display, built sustainably without the use of

Floral Foam or other unsustainable techniques.

The project was all in the aid of promoting British grown flowers, staged in British Flowers Week at the end of June. It attracted the attention of local media, with coverage in the newspapers, TV and radio.

Our work was a great addition to Bury in Bloom's message of promoting sustainability, at the very heart of what we do. The future is looking bright and we will continue to adapt where necessary, maintaining Bury's title of the "Jewel in the Crown of Suffolk".

Chris Wiley



Some of the hanging baskets set up around the town.

Managing the Great Churchyard

The Great Churchyard, the area in Bury St Edmund's town centre bounded by St Mary's Church, Crown Street, the cathedral and the Premier Inn car park, has been deliberately left unmown this year until July.

The mowing regime here greatly impacts the biodiversity of the area and its resilience to drought. Bury Water Meadows Group (BWMG) has begun working with West Suffolk Council to introduce a more wildlife-friendly but labour-intensive approach that should over time see a greater variety of plant species - similar to that around the Charnel House - and a mosaic of different habitats for animals.

Gardeners will be familiar with "No Mow May" and "Let it Bloom June" - where we are encouraged to let our lawns grow for a couple of months.

The wildflower charity Plantlife started these campaigns to "provide a feast for pollinators, tackle pollution and lock away atmospheric carbon below ground". In theory, taller growing flowers such as red campions, purple knapweeds and mauve scabious might appear to brighten the place up. Longer grass is more resilient to drought, acting as a barrier between dry sun and wind and moist soil, thus reducing evaporation.

Also, long grass traps more dew when there are low night time temperatures, giving the lawn a daily drink.

Whilst long grass may not look particularly tidy, it is undoubtedly better for wildlife.

In a well-used area such as the Great Churchyard, we want to find the best balance between public amenity and biodiversity and it may take a while to get that right. In this first year of our partnership with West Suffolk Council the main difference will be that BWMG volunteers are tasked with removing the arisings - the cut grass - left by the council's mowers and strimmers.



Robin Thomas, Gill Evans, Christopher Cross, Chris Power (kneeling), Bill Rampling, Sue Thompson, Sue Feuerhelm, Jillan Macready, Sam Thompson and Andrea Williams in the Great Churchyard before the first scything session.

When arisings are left in place they leave the nutrients in situ and create a layer of thatch which can inhibit germination.

Nutrient-rich soil favours the tall vigorous species that dominate at present - eg cow parsley, barren brome, false oat grass, nettles, white comfrey and green alkanet. These shade out lower growing plants, reducing the overall botanical variety.

We have mown a small area as an experiment to see how our scythes coped amongst the headstones (direct contact being bad for both), and found it easier than expected.

The challenge now is to recruit and train enough scythers for next year so that this much gentler, more nature-friendly and environment friendly mowing method can cover as much as possible, in preference to the mechanical mowers and strimmers used by the council. Offers of help with the raking and scything are welcome.

Contact us online www.burywater-meadowsgroup.org.uk or via info@burywatermeadowsgroup.org.uk

Libby Ranzetta
Chairman
Bury Water Meadows Group

Micro areas of biodiversity encouraged

Micro areas of biodiversity are being encouraged as part of West Suffolk Council's policy on reducing the use of weedkiller and encouraging plant and insect life. The council has left areas that would have previously been sprayed with weedkiller around vertical features in grassed areas such as trees, signs, and lamp columns. Before these would have been treated with glyphosate but

have now been left to grow. Although they will be strimmed later in the growing season, these small areas, (which look a little less tidy than before, with a halo of growth) will support biodiversity such as vital pollinators. This is in addition to the larger areas that are deliberately left uncut or have pathways created through them to support the environment.

Making progress on tackling climate change but more ambition required

An environmental performance report shows that West Suffolk continues to make progress on climate change but also shows the need for more ambitious plans. West Suffolk Council's Environmental Statement for 2022-23 monitors performance against an action plan set in 2019 and against a carbon budget, tracking reduction in carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. It shows that while substantial reductions have been made against base line years, last year some of those reductions were not as marked. The full report was discussed by West Suffolk Council's Cabinet when they met in July.

Cliff Waterman, leader of West Suffolk Council, said, "This new administration has serious ambitions for sustainability and one of our first actions has been to task a working group to review the current action plan and to make recommendations for early implementation. We won't take our eye off our own impacts, but we need to engage and encourage residents, businesses and visitors across the district to make more sustainable and environmentally friendly actions too.

"The past year's environmental statement shows that as a council, we are environmentally aware, we can account for our own impacts and we are investing in positive areas. That is a very good starting place but a step change is needed to release the power our communities have to make real change and I look forward to receiving the working group's report at the end of the summer."

The West Suffolk Environmental Statement 2022-23 reports the trend in emission reductions against base-line years, and performance compared with the last year.

2022-23 saw the return to pre-covid working impact council-wide efforts to reduce emissions.

The total emissions the council is directly responsible for in 2022-23 is down 40 per cent compared with the



The first road sweeper to join West Suffolk Council's electric vehicle fleet.

2010 baseline but was up 1.4 per cent compared with 2021-22. Emissions from council-owned vehicles were down 0.3 per cent compared to 2021-22 and down 9 per cent compared with 2019-20. This includes a 7 per cent increase in business travel compared with the past year which is nonetheless down 66 per cent compared with the 2010 baseline.

Public electric vehicle (EV) chargers installed by the council can now support 84 EVs charging at the same time.

Renewable energy generated was up 135 per cent compared with a 2012 baseline but down 1 per cent last year, accounted for by solar panels at the former council offices in Mildenhall coming off line.

Total water consumption, which includes swimming pools and the leisure centres in five towns, was up 44 per cent compared to 2021-22, but down 18 per cent compared to baseline.

Office printing is down 29 per cent compared with last year and total waste at West Suffolk House is down 1 per cent compared with 2021-22 and 58 per cent compared

with the 2012 baseline.

The council has retained six Green Flag national awards for its country parks and open spaces which recognises good environmental practice. It has also planted 454 trees and 1,419 whips during 2022-23. (318 trees and 560 hedge plants planted during 2021-22).

Gerald Kelly, cabinet member for Governance and Regulatory, said: "We are already feeling the impacts of climate change and we must all do more to reduce this threat.

"We understand that daily life can get in the way of good intentions to do more but even small changes can really help. The benefits can be surprising.

"For example, the health benefits of walking or cycling as alternatives to short car journeys; lower fuel bills with simple energy efficiency measures and less wasted food. These lifestyle decisions are very personal and will need willingness to find ways that suit us but ultimately will improve our environment and health. I look forward to sharing examples of the amazing power of our communities as we work towards net zero."

Spreading stories of the town to the many visitors coming to Bury

The guided tours of the town and Abbey are well underway with visitors again coming from different parts of the world (how many of you knew where Guam is?). We recently also welcomed 40 members of Ukrainian families (*as pictured*) who wanted to know more about their surroundings. Many of them had already found their way around but were delighted to know from Mike Dean and John Saunders more about our buildings and history. They completely engaged and their children were models of good and attentive behaviour, often fluently translating the words of the guides to the adults. Spreading the stories of the town further afield is important to our marketing and the local economy but it is just as important to ensure that local people know the history. The expression “I had never noticed that” is commonplace particularly from those who look straight ahead or are driven by their mobile phone. Look up and around – there are new



sights to be seen. Although still being devised in conjunction with another organisation, it is hoped that a new special tour will be available towards the end of 2023. And a reminder: bookings are now

being taken for our ghostly and macabre tours (last year was a sell-out). So, there's lots already and more to come if you look at www.burystedmundstourguides.org

John Saunders

Six Green Flag awards for areas parks

West Suffolk's parks have retained six prestigious Green Flag Awards including the Abbey Gardens and Nowton Park.

The award is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces. This is the fourth year that West Suffolk Council has celebrated all six of these parks and open spaces winning the award and the council has had at least one Green Flag every year for the last 14 years. The six West Suffolk parks that have been awarded a Green Flag this year are: Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds; Aspal Close, Beck Row; Brandon Country Park, Brandon; East Town Park, Haverhill; Nowton Park, Bury St Edmunds; and West Stow Country Park, West Stow.

This follows the Abbey Gardens in

Bury St Edmunds being rated among the top 10 free attraction visited in the country.

Parks and open spaces play a vital role in supporting the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors as well as protecting the local heritage and environment.

West Suffolk Council's parks and open spaces join green spaces as diverse as the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, Woodhouse Park in Peterlee and Chiswick Old Cemetery in London.

Ian Shipp, West Suffolk Council cabinet member for Leisure, said: “Our fantastic parks and open spaces are places for people to connect to the natural environment and these Green Flag awards show that they are being managed to the highest standard for amenity and biodiversity. Visitors

will have noticed the solar panels on Nowton Park's visitor centre, the updated mowing practices to encourage pollinators and electric equipment replacing end of life petrol items. This all helps balance the health and wellbeing we benefit from with our impact on nature.

I'd like to thank the many visitors, volunteers, partners and staff who support this work and invite everyone to come out and enjoy it.”

Keep Britain Tidy's Green Flag Award scheme manager Paul Todd MBE, said: “I would like to congratulate everyone in West Suffolk involved in achieving these Green Flag Awards.

“They are vital green space for the community, bringing people together and providing opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles.”

Visionary man responsible for the



The arc Shopping Centre, in Bury St Edmunds.

Architect Sir Michael Hopkins, who among his many startling designs created the arc Shopping Centre, has died at the age of 88. Here Madeleine and Martin Lightfoot give a personal appreciation of the man, born May 7, 1935, died June 17, 2023.

Michael's work, and that of his close practice, have made a really significant impact in Bury St Edmunds. His work includes the designs for our arc development, including the Apex, and the former Debenhams building, the Greene King tripartite chimney, the Greene King racking store, and familiar to ourselves, our personal and much loved residence for 30 years, the Crystal Palace, in Friars Lane.

The Crystal Palace was commissioned by Jayne and Peter Tracey, designed by Michael and Patty Hopkins and built in 1974.

We knew Peter and Jayne socially and were impressed by their ideas on how they wanted their new house in Bury to be. Rather than be divided into separate rooms, ie dining, living, kitchen and bedrooms, they wanted

one large space without walls where they could enjoy everything they did together. That was fine until three children miraculously appeared and so they moved to a large rectory. We purchased their home in 1980, it was where we wanted to live and it had a paddock for our sheep. But we had four growing children and we thought some walls within the house might be helpful, particularly bedrooms.

We contacted Michael and Patty and they kindly invited us to visit and lunch with them in their now famous contemporary house in Hampstead, a similar build (exposed steel frame with all glass external walls) but on two stories as opposed to the single storey Crystal Palace. They also had a growing family and showed us how they had now fitted internal walls, demountable, so that the internal spaces could be changed. This looked to be just what was needed.

Michael and Patty sent us a suggested layout and specifications for the laminate and aluminium materials and where they could be purchased. So we had some walls

and this was generously given to us at no cost to ourselves.

We also like to think that we had some part in leading to the construction of the famous caterpillar-like Schlumberger Research Centre, in Cambridge.

One morning, I met a smartly dressed man in Friars Lane who asked me where the Greene King racking store was and I offered to take him there. He told me his interest was in using Hopkins for a building in Cambridge and it had been suggested he look at the store. As he was interested in Hopkins buildings I invited him back for coffee at the Crystal Palace to show him our house.

Living in Bury, we were all aware of the then startling Willis Faber Dumas building, in Ipswich, built when Michael was in partnership with Norman Foster. So the chimney and racking store were not really surprising.

But our big legacy is the arc.

We were very pleased when we learnt that Michael's firm were to

Continued on page 9

design of the Arc Shopping Centre

Continued from Page 8

design this project on the now dis-used Cattle Market site.

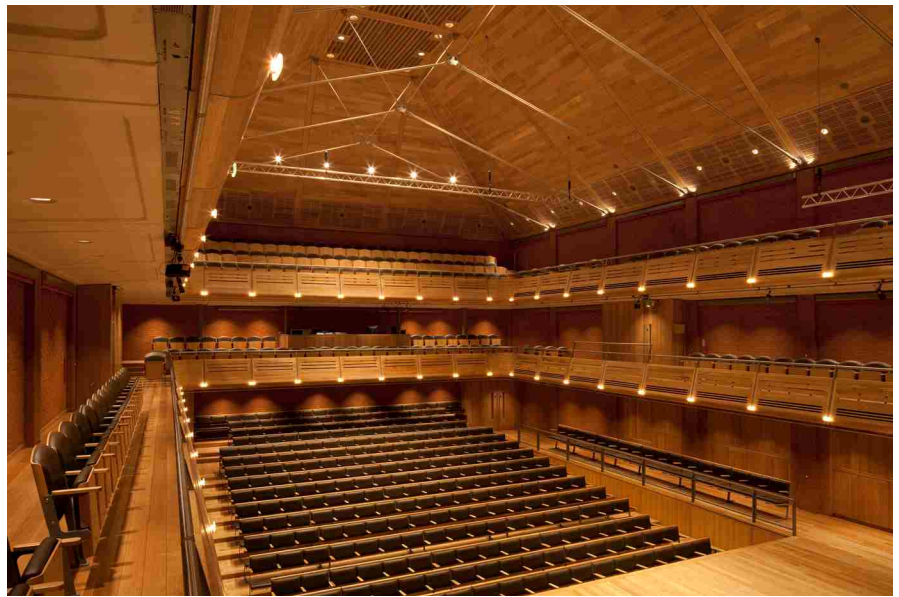
The project was led by one of Michael's partners, Jim Grieves, and at an early presentation we were impressed by how he visualised the development being an extension of our existing market streets extending into the development streets (unfortunately, only partly now realised by the widened thoroughfare at the old Post Office). The arcading was designed to mimic jettied old town building.

There would be attractive residential above the shops as in the existing town and the buildings facings would suggest timber framing. Important always to Michael, was that the detailing should always be dealt with as importantly as the design itself and this has generally been adhered to in the construction. The Apex development is interesting as, if our memories are correct, Hopkins were looking for a really flexible space which could be multipurpose and even opened on to the adjacent square.

Michael told us when visiting us at the time of the opening of the Apex that the then Debenhams building had been very much his part of the project.



The Greene King barrel store.



The Apex, in Bury St Edmunds.

He was also sad not to have been invited to the opening. Living with his family in Suffolk as well as the London house, Michael had a great love and understanding

of the Suffolk vernacular, particularly timber framed buildings and we feel that we are very lucky to have benefitted in Bury St Edmunds from his great abilities.

British Citizen Award for Libby Ranzetta

The name Libby Ranzetta is associated with many local enterprises: the Rickshaw, Abbey 1000, Abbey Gardens and Bury Water Meadows. Her achievements were recently marked by her being the recipient of the British Citizen Award (BCA), with only 25 people receiving this at the awards ceremony at the Palace of Westminster.

Libby was typically self-effacing and paid tribute to all the other people who had helped in such community success but as John Saunders and Elizabeth Clement, who nominated/seconded her observed, "the people of Bury St Edmunds and beyond owe her a debt of gratitude for her unstinting service as a volunteer and her contribution to a range of achievements."

The award is a fitting recognition for someone so generous, dedicated and successful.

John Saunders



Libby Ranzetta (right) with her friend Elizabeth Clement outside the House of Lords where she received her award.

Food and drink festival comes to town towards the end of August

Bury St Edmunds' favourite Bank Holiday beach is back this month alongside a feast of delicious tastes and tipples at the Our Bury St Edmunds Food & Drink Festival. The weekend brings one of the highlights of the summer when the event returns to shine a spotlight on the foodie capital of Suffolk. This free admission two-day event promises a full menu of food and drink treats and displays as well as a host of family fun.

The Stoves Cookery Theatre is at the very heart of the festival with a programme of displays and demonstrations showcasing chefs from some of the area's most popular award-winning dining establish-



The urban beach at the Our Bury St Edmunds Food & Drink Festival.

ments, complemented by tips on how to mix your favourite cocktails. In addition, a farmers' market will be on Angel Hill and dozens of stalls will line the town centre selling a

range of cuisines from around the world and everything those who love cooking could desire.

The festival is organised by the Business Improvement District (BID) organisation for the town.

Its chief executive Mark Cordell said: "This year's festival will be the first since Covid to include an urban beach, which will be returning to Charter Square in the Arc Shopping Centre. And in partnership with the team at Arc we've arranged for it to remain there until the following Sunday (September 3), meaning families can come back into town and build sand castles every day if they wish to.

"And of course, the Our Bury St Edmunds Food & Drink Festival will also offer all the food and drink attractions that have made this an event not to be missed. We know that foodies travel from near and far to visit our town and this event is another good reason to do so."

As well as the urban beach, complete with deckchairs, there will be a range of children's activities in and around the town centre, including fairground rides, Big Games and free street entertainment across both days.

The festival is in aid of St Nicholas Hospice Care, supported by Stoves UK, Shop Safe and Haart.

For more information about the event, which runs from 10am to 5pm on Sunday and Monday, August 27 and 28, visit: www.ourburystedmunds.com/foodanddrinkfestival or follow social media channels.

Rickshaw grows to five

The Bury Rickshaw fleet has grown from one when we started, to five machines with the recent addition of a specialist wheelchair-carrying bike (*pictured*).

This bike means we can now accommodate most wheelchair users in comfort and style and it is proving popular for both young and old from Riverwalk School to the care homes we visit.

The summer is always our busiest time for passenger rides, not surprisingly, and this year is no different despite the weather.

We started in 2018 with the aim of alleviating social isolation by helping people escape their four walls and feel part of the community in Bury with the simple offer of a free, slow, chatty rickshaw ride round the town.

Covid took our efforts in other directions for a while but we are firmly back to our original focus this season, and loving every minute.

With social inclusion in mind, we have been talking to community groups, church organisations, health and social care providers to



spread the word. The most socially isolated people are, almost by definition, hard to reach yet they are the ones who most enjoy their time with us.

If you, a relative, friend or neighbour might appreciate a rickshaw ride, please do get in touch on 01284 339449. And if you have some energy and smiles to spare we're always looking for volunteers to join our team.

Libby Ranzetta
Chairman
BSE Rickshaw

‘He loved every aspect of nature and nature loved him back’

The death has been reported of the man who helped launch Bury in Bloom as well as transforming the Abbey Gardens into the major tourist attraction it has become.

Horticulturalist Peter Tunnah helped to regenerate Nowton Park and was responsible for shaping the town’s floral landscape.

He died on June 21, aged 88, and his funeral was held at West Suffolk Crematorium on July 19.

Mr Tunnah was initially park superintendent for St Edmundsbury Borough Council, and later worked as parks and landscapes manager for the council before retiring in 1994.

During his tenure, he arranged for the planting of more than 100,000 trees, and, in his final year, he was awarded an MBE by the then Prince Charles.

Mr Tunnah was born on October 26, 1934, in Bury, Greater Manchester. Although he trained as a pattern maker, he chose to follow his passion in horticulture, spending almost two decades at Longford Park, in Stretford.

In 1974, he joined St Edmundsbury Borough Council, moving to Suffolk with his wife, Marguerita, and three daughters.

His office was located in the Abbey Gardens, which Mr Tunnah dedicated much of his time to, transforming them into a national attraction.

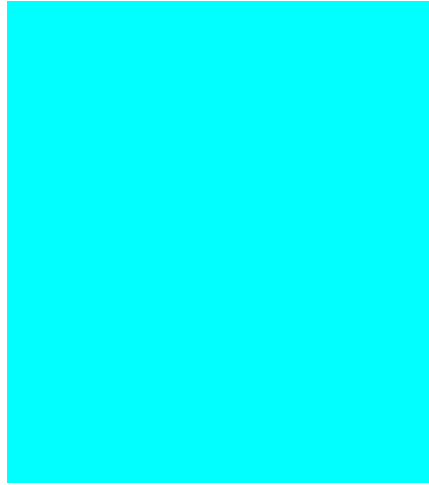
Representatives from Kew Gardens frequently visited the site to take inspiration from the work of Mr Tunnah and his team.

Mr Tunnah helped oversee the founding of the Bury in Bloom project in 1986, and Eastgate Nursery, which he ran, grew around 30,000 plants a year.

Bury won the England in Bloom competition in 1987, the first year it entered.

In 1989, Bury came runner-up in the Entente Florale, Europe’s top horticulture competition.

That same year, the council acquired Nowton Park, which Mr Tunnah helped to regenerate.



Peter Tunnah with his MBE.

As part of this, Mr Tunnah decided the park’s pond should be dredged, believing there were no fish inside. However, upon realising this was not the case, he was forced to take extraordinary measures, calling in the Bury St Edmunds Angling Association to remove the fish exposed in the receding water.

The fish were saved, and Mr Tunnah

was able to reintroduce them to the pond after it had been filled up again. The centrepiece of the regeneration scheme was the planting of the park’s daffodil avenue, for which over 100,000 daffodils were ordered from Holland.

In a statement, his family said: “At this juncture, Peter would insist we acknowledge the tireless work of the gardeners who were tasked with planting all these bulbs.

“It was backbreaking work, and they did ask that he ‘please not have any more good ideas,’ at least for a while.”

His family added: “He was a carpenter, a beekeeper, a photographer, an astronomer, an avid birdwatcher, a music buff, a fisherman, and an entomologist.

“He waxed lyrical about literature, film, plays and operas.

“He loved every aspect of nature and nature loved him back.”

Copy courtesy Bury Free Press



The Abbey Gardens which Peter Tunnah helped to transform and turn it into the major tourist attraction it is today.

Death of former Society chairman

The death has been announced of Joseph Bird, the second chairman of the Bury Society, which he held from 1973 to 1976.

Here his son Andrew Bird pens an obituary to his father.

Joseph Bird (always known as “Jos”) was born in 1933 at 88a Guildhall Street, Bury St Edmunds.

His parents were Dr H Marcus Bird and his wife Marguerita (Tony) nee Hinnell.

Marcus Bird was a doctor, firstly in general practice with his father-in-law Dr Joseph Hinnell, in Garland Street, later moving to be the consultant anaesthetist at West Suffolk Hospital.

Jos’s sister Ann (Tish) was born in 1934 and the family moved to Horndon House, in Garland Street, when Dr Joseph Hinnell retired. This had been the family home of the Hinnells since 1872 and remained so until after Tish’s death in 2012. One of Jos’s early memories was the declaration of war in 1939 when he and Tish were called in from the garden to hear Neville Chamberlain’s address on the radio.

Jos was educated at Winchester House Prep School, in Brackley, where he was captain of cricket, and from where he was awarded a scholarship to Oundle School.

He had a lifelong love of cricket and tennis and other racket sports and was also an accomplished athlete and cross-country runner.

After school he entered National Service, was commissioned into the Royal Artillery, and volunteered for overseas service in Korea, where he served as a Second Lieutenant with 61 Light Regiment, RA, as part of the 1st Commonwealth Division.

At the end of his National Service he transferred to the Territorial Army, and the Suffolk Yeomanry (as it then was) also known as the Duke of York’s Loyal Suffolk Hussars.

He greatly enjoyed his service, and it gave him a love of military history.

He was a great collector of books.

In later years he went on a number of battlefield tours, including a 75th



Joseph Bird, former chairman of the Bury Society, who has died.

anniversary trip to Gallipoli where his uncle Tom Hinnell had been killed in action and where other relatives had fought with the Suffolk Regiment in August 1915.

He was a great supporter of the Royal Artillery Association, being chairman of the Bury Branch from 1998 to 2021.

After finishing National Service Jos went up to Downing College Cambridge in September 1954 where he read law and was in college teams for tennis and badminton.

After obtaining his degree in 1957 he trained as a solicitor and then joined the firm of Bankes Ashton in 1960 and spent the whole of his working life there, practising in criminal, civil and family litigation, until his retirement in 1996.

In his later years he was also a chairman of Mental Health Review Tribunals.

Jos met his future wife Susan at the Bury Tennis Tournament at the Victory Ground, in 1959. They were engaged in 1962 and married in 1963 and had four children and four grandchildren.

As well as his professional and family life, Jos was enthusiastically engaged in very many local organisations.

He was Hon Secretary of Flemp-ton Golf Club and he and Susan remained members for many years,

sometimes playing as a formidable pair. He was a school governor, chairman of the Friends of Compiègne and a non-executive director of West Suffolk Newspapers Ltd and of EMAP plc, who were the publishers of the Bury Free Press. He also greatly enjoyed membership of the Bu.St.Ed investment club, and of Pickwick, meeting old friends and new in the Angel. He also would give a regular and well-received illustrated talk on old pubs of Bury St Edmunds.

Jos was the second chairman of the Bury Society from 1973-76 and he had a passion for preserving the best qualities and character of “Old” Bury and for keeping new development in its proper place, so as not to have too much of an adverse effect on the historic town centre.

During this period the one great issue was the nature and extent of the Moreton Hall development and the need to ensure that the green view eastwards from Abbeygate Street was retained. That battle involved television interviews and an important letter to The Times. As can be still seen today his tenure and achievement as chairman enabling this still holds good.

He greatly enjoyed holidays to Cornwall and France and in retirement there were many longer-haul holidays with Susan, in particular to Costa Rica and to other far-flung places such as Sri Lanka, South Africa and Australia, where they might encounter an England test cricket team.

In later years he was often to be seen in the Abbey Gardens, assisted by his walker (known to the family as “Captain Tom”), and often keen to stop people for a chat.

Jos was able to celebrate his 90th birthday quietly at home, and then in March his and Susan’s 60th wedding anniversary, for which he was very proud to receive a card from the King and Queen.

He died peacefully at home on May 15, 2023, and some 200 people attended a Service of Thanksgiving for his life in St Mary’s Church on June 5.

When the gallows became public entertainment for people in the town

The ongoing attempt by the Bury Society to save the Sarah Lloyd plaque in the Great Churchyard from complete decay brings into focus Bury's long history as a place of execution, particularly with the expansion of capital crimes which numbered over 200 following the Black Act of 1723.

Sarah Lloyd was squarely a victim of this act; society in the 1700s and early 1800s viewing crimes against property as being out of control.

Sadly, Sarah may have been reprieved but for her attempt to set fire to the scene of the crime which endangered life.

Sarah's boyfriend accomplice was acquitted having denied involvement, only to confess on his deathbed.

Whilst Sarah Lloyd and her last words are immortalised on the plaque on the Charnel House, the six other male felons hung in Bury the same year have no such plaque.

Until well into the 1800s, public executions were the norm, the reasoning being that public humiliation would deter others from the path of crime.

This did not prove to be the case and the gallows, instead, drew the crowds in an almost carnival atmosphere.

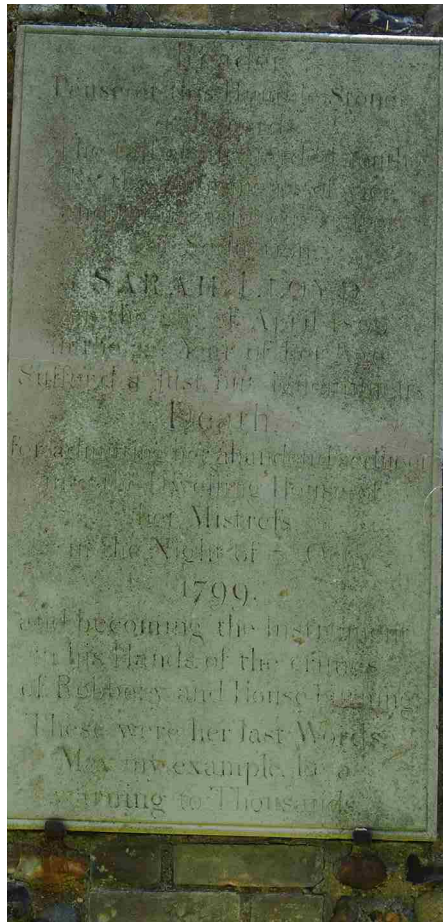
Crossing over on the footbridge from Northgate Avenue and descending towards Tayfen Road, I think of the lives that have been ended on the gallows in this area of the town, witnessed on occasions by thousands.

Those sentenced to death at the Assizes and having failed all attempts at a reprieve, would be placed on the "Dead list" along with their date of execution.

On the day the crowds would gather, food stalls would be set up and pickpockets would mingle among the populace, expecting rich pickings.

Those facing their execution would react in many different ways.

Some, who had access to funds would commission a set of clothes especially for the occasion and even



The plaque on the Charnel House, in Bury St Edmunds, where Sarah Lloyd's last words are immortalised.

interact with the crowd. Others would shout obscenities, whilst most cowered only to be jeered by the masses. On the gallows, it was not unknown for the individual to embark on a lengthy speech in the hope that the King's Messenger would arrive with a last-minute reprieve.

Whatever the circumstances it was an undignified affair. Not only a slow death by strangulation, but the corpse was often fought over.

The victim's family or friends would sometimes attempt to spirit the body away in the hope of resuscitation.

Others would claim the body and receive a financial reward from a physician, keen to dissect the corpse. The hangman himself often benefitted from certain "perks" – the most com-

mon being given the victims clothes as part of their remuneration. At the infamous Tyburn gallows in London, on one occasion, the hangman stripped two men naked to ensure he had possession of their clothes prior to execution.

He then placed the nooses around their necks, at which point the King's Messenger did indeed appear with pardons for both men.

An unseemly argument followed, with the hangman refusing to part with the clothes.

In the end the two men departed on foot, naked (much to the amusement of the mob), refusing in turn to return the hangman's rope and nooses.

Public executions were banned in 1868 and the last person publicly hanged in Bury was George Cant in 1851.

However, the spectacle of a person's downfall always attracts curiosity.

In January 1802 only a year after Sarah Lloyd's execution, three women were tried at the Quarter sessions in the Guildhall for theft from their master, Mr Benjafield.

This time it was not a capital trial, but such was the interest that James Oakes records in his diary, no fewer than 300 persons crammed into the Guildhall courtroom to witness the sentencing of two of the three accused who were found guilty.

Terry O'Donoghue

Car park improved

A nine-month long programme of major repairs and improvements to Parkway multi-storey car park, in Bury St Edmunds, has been completed, allowing it to reopen. Up to 200 spaces were out of action during the work which also led to a series of evening closures. The work included repairs to the concrete structure that were needed to keep the car park in use for years to come. There were also improvements including brightening the structure and colour-coding parking bays and walkways.

Fond memories of baptist minister

On August 14, 1873, most of the shops across Bury St. Edmunds closed as thousands of people attended a funeral at Garland Street Baptist Church.

Many more joined the procession to the cemetery. For the man who had had such an impact on people across the town—as well as throughout East Anglia and beyond—was Rev Cornelius Elven, who for 50 years served as the pastor of the town's Baptist congregation.

Cornelius was born on February 12, 1797, in Bury.

When he completed his education, he began work as a leather tanner. He became a member at Ebenezer Chapel—the predecessor of Garland Street Baptist Church—in May 1821. Two years later he was ordained as the chapel's fifth minister.

At 6ft tall and weighing 20 stone Rev Elven quickly made his rather large presence felt. He preached three times on Sundays at Ebenezer, and crowds gathered to hear him speak when he walked through Bury between worship services. Several times each week he spoke in the town or nearby villages.

One of Rev Elven's first acts as pastor was to open a Sunday school. Children from throughout the town and surrounding villages attended, some walking from as far away as Rougham to take part.

The chapel was enlarged in 1828 but even with this extension the building was too small for the growing congregation.

Rev Elven found a plot of land in Garland Street and the church purchased it for £200. The new church—built at a cost of £1,000—opened in May 1834.

By the mid-1800s, the average attendance for three Sunday services was 2,000. People from the town and surrounding villages often brought food to the church, stayed all day and participated in a range of activities.

Rev Elven introduced several programmes in which church members cared for the town's poor. He also



Rev Cornelius Elven.

organised services for soldiers of the West Suffolk Militia and began a ministry at the local workhouse.

Shortly after Garland Street Baptist Church opened, Rev Elven was approached by 30-year-old Abi Last, from Bradfield, who had become a Christian as a servant girl in Taunton, Somerset. When she returned to Suffolk, she persuaded the minister to preach in the village and soon a house church was opened in Bradfield.

On foot, by horse-drawn carriage, and aboard trains, Rev Elven travelled to dozens of towns and villages across the region.

By the end of his ministry, he was known as the "Apostle of West Suffolk."

Rev Elven was once on his way to preach at Fornham when an intoxicated man furiously drove his cart into the path of the pastor's carriage. Rev Elven was thrown out and seriously injured.

When he preached in Barton one evening, "a company of lewd fellows of the baser sort" loudly harassed him throughout the service. Afterwards, they followed him on the road shouting and cursing like "a company of fiends."

One of the highlights of Rev Elven's ministry was mentoring the well-known Charles Haddon Spurgeon when the teenager became pastor at a small Baptist church in Cambridgeshire.

After Rev Spurgeon moved to London, he occasionally invited Rev Elven to speak at his church.

On one occasion, the Suffolk minister was in the pulpit when a lady arrived for worship.

As the stewards attempted to escort her to an open seat, she exclaimed: "No, no! The man has too much of the flesh about him. I cannot hear him."

Rev Elven often recalled this incident with a hearty laugh. As the minister's health deteriorated, he stopped preaching Sunday afternoons.

In 1872, Rev Elven delivered his last morning and evening sermons. When he could no longer worship at the church, he sat by the window of his house in Well Street and listened to the hymns being sung in the chapel.

In early 1873, as death looked imminent, Christians from around the town gathered at St Mary's Church to pray for the minister and he hung on for another six months. He died on August 10.

When Rev Spurgeon heard of the death of his great friend and mentor, he wrote: "Cornelius Elven completed an honourable ministry of 50 years in his native town and passed away amid the respectful regrets of all the inhabitants. He was a man of large and loving heart with a vivacious mind."

At his funeral, one of the speakers explained: "Mr Elven had ever a word of kindness and a look of sunshine for a child, wise counsel for the weak, cheering promises for the afflicted and soul-stirring doctrines for the congregation. During his tenure leading the town's Baptists, Rev Elven built a tremendous legacy. Church membership rose from 49 to 647 and around 1,500 people were baptised. Thirty church members became ministers across the country and abroad. He and his congregation established 47 village stations, or house churches, in East Anglia. Many years after his death, a plaque was dedicated as a memorial to the great pastor. The inscription recorded: "Not only by his lips but by an eminently consistent life, he faithfully preached the gospel of Christ."

Terry Tyrrell

New St Edmund's bench installed on the Parkway



St Edmund's roundabout bench in place.

In 2021 I noticed that the bench near the St Edmund's sculpture on the Risbygate Street roundabout had fallen into disrepair.



St Edmund on the Risbygate roundabout.

In my capacity as chairman of Bury and Beyond I approached local councillors to see if they would use some of their locality budgets to replace the bench with one that complemented the sculpture of St Edmund that is on the nearby Risbygate roundabout. I was delighted when councillor David Nettleton agreed to support the idea. David had been one of the Bury St Edmunds Town councillors involved in the commissioning of the St Edmund's Sculpture organised by Bury in Bloom in 2011. The stainless-steel bench was designed by Nigel Kaines and made by Kev Baldwin, of Designs on Metal Ltd, at Stowlangtoft, and features arrows in the arms and back support. The bench is a place for weary walkers to rest whilst giving a view across to the Edmund sculpture and the new Liberty Lodge housing complex.

Melanie Lesser

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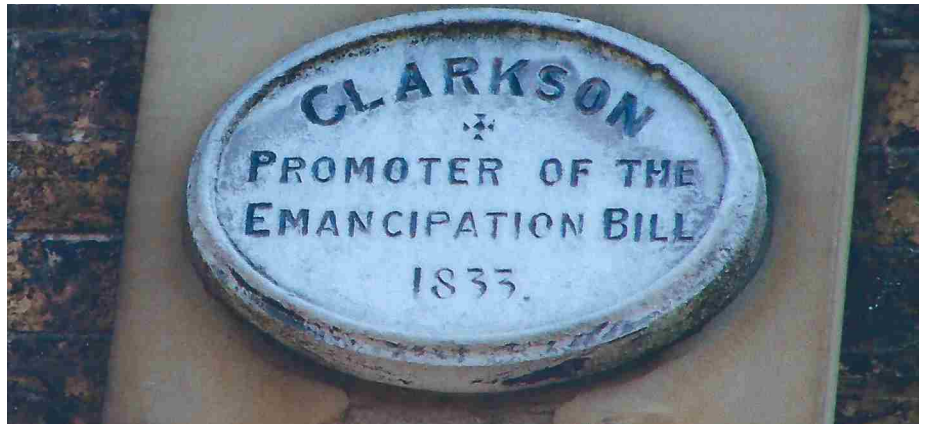
Stone plaque dedicated to the man who fought against slavery

In 1907 a total of 12 stone plaques to notable people were erected in the town to help celebrate the wonderful pageant of that year.

One of these, to Thomas Clarkson, at 6 St Marys Square, (*pictured right*) recorded the fact that he was the Promoter of the Emancipation Bill of 1833, this abolished slavery.

Thomas Clarkson was born in Wisbech in 1760, the son of the Rev John Clarkson, headmaster of the local Grammar School.

Attending St Johns College, Cambridge, Thomas went on to write an essay winning the Members Prize in 1785, which dealt with man's inhumanity to each other in the world on a very controversial topic, slavery. This occupied him for the rest of his



life. Moving in like-minded circles, such as Quakers and non-conformists he decided to commit himself to the abolition of this cruel trade. He married Catherine Buck, the daughter of prominent Bury businessman William Buck also a non-conformist.

The Clarksons lived in St Marys Square from 1806 to 1815. For much of his early life he worked hand in hand with that other great abolitionist, William Wilberforce. It is this evangelist that is given the major credit for a bill in 1807, the Slave Trade Act that ended British trade in slaves.

However, it was certainly the unstinting work of Clarkson that led to it. His outspokenness caused a rift in later life with the Wilber-

force family who felt that their father deserved the lions share of the accolades.

Nevertheless, Thomas Clarkson travelled widely trying to influence governments and despots alike to get rid of slavery, even approaching the Tzar of Russia to abolish serfdom in that country.

Thomas and Catherine were friends with the poet William Wordsworth, their friendship well documented. William even dedicated a sonnet to his friend.

Another honour bestowed upon Thomas was the Freedom of the City of London in 1839.

Thomas died in 1846 at Playford Hall, Ipswich, where he had lived his later years. He was 86.

Martyn Taylor

Programme of events

Saturday, August 12: Special Tour of the Guildhall, followed by prosecco and nibbles in the garden, 2pm-4pm.

Thursday, September 7: Full-Day Trip to St Albans and the de Havilland Aircraft Museum.

Saturday, October 21: Autumn Coffee Morning, at the United Reformed Church on Whiting Street, 10:30am-noon.

Friday, November 10: Local Knowledge Quiz, with fish/veggie burger and chips, hosted by John Saunders and Martyn Taylor, at the Catholic Church Crypt from 7pm. *See accompanying booking forms and keep an eye on the events page of our website for more information.*

Copy deadline for next edition of the Review

The deadline for the next edition of the Bury Society Review is **Monday, November 20.**

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

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

Either use the website: theburysociety.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.