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Society Review

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Winter 2024

Charity set to be created to save Record Office

Efforts are being made to form a charity in order to seek the registration of the former Record Office, in Raingate Street, as a Community Asset.

It comes following a meeting of a working group, founded by The Bury Society and the Bury St Edmunds Town Trust, members unanimously decided to seek the registration of the building.

The Record Office has been closed as part of budget cuts by Suffolk County Council which is centralising the archives to the purpose-built Hold building in Ipswich.

The council said that closing the Raingate Street branch, along with the archives office in Lowestoft, would save the council around £140,000 a year.

It also says the move brings Suffolk in line with the majority of archive services across the country and will enable it to deliver a service that is "better value for taxpayers" money. The latest developments have come following a meeting held on August 29 when a Working Committee was formed to investigate the setting up of a new Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk Archive Office at West Suffolk Council's Offices.

The committee representing over 20 organisations met again on



The Record Office, in Raingate Street, Bury St Edmunds.

October 30 under the chairmanship of Bury Society chairman Martyn Taylor.

While it was felt that the capital cost of the proposal could be raised concerns were expressed at the annual running cost of the proposal which would require three archivists to ensure that national archive standards were met.

As a consequence it was decided to put this proposal on hold.

The reason why the decision was delayed was because Martin Lightfoot was forming a charity in order to seek the registration of the former Record Office as a Community Asset.

If his application is approved, and the county council decides to sell the property, the community has to be given the opportunity to acquire the building.

After discussion by the meeting it was unanimously resolved to support this proposal.

In taking the Community Asset decision the meeting noted that in February 2023 the council had reported to its cabinet that it had "... made a commitment in 2018 to continue to operate from the main Bury St Edmunds Record Office building including providing storage for and access to original archives and printed local studies materials as well as running events and activities for the public.

Events and activities will also continue to run from Bury Record Office."

The meeting noted that in taking the decision to close the Record Office in February 2024 the council had broken its firm commitment to the people of Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk.

It was felt that the least the county could now do was to assist the residents of West Suffolk in the acquisition of the existing Record Office.

Martyn Taylor

Consultants unveiled for the Abbey of St Edmund project

The Bury Society is, and has been, an active supporter of a major heritage project around the Abbey of St Edmund.

Our members or their friends are involved at every level and were very pleased that James Mellish, with his local experience, was appointed in the key role of project manager. We have all been anxious to find out which consultants have been awarded the key roles.

Now that information can be shared, having been approved by the National Heritage Lottery Fund.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, together with its partners West Suffolk Council and English Heritage, are leading “The Abbey of St Edmund: A Millennium of English History in West Suffolk” project. It is supported with a development grant of £729,553 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Purcell Architecture will be the architect, lead consultant and heritage consultant. Their heritage portfolio ranges across the country. Locally, it includes Ely Cathedral, Norwich Castle and Cambridge University. Purcell’s design partner, Alasdair Travers, said, “We are delighted to be

Black poplar tree planted in the town

To celebrate National Tree Planting Week 2024, West Suffolk Council and local community groups have planted a black poplar tree at No Man’s Meadow, in Bury St Edmunds. The tree is one of Britain’s most endangered native trees and is vital to the health of wetland ecosystems. It was grown as part of a species stock at Nowton Park, which is the established Suffolk clone bank for the Black Poplar Project. Representatives from the Suffolk Tree Wardens, Bury Water Meadows Group and West Suffolk Park Ranger team joined councillors to plant the tree.



The site of the new proposed visitor centre in the grounds of St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

working on this ambitious project. The Abbey and Cathedral are important to the town and county on many levels.

“We have assembled a top design team to develop the new designs for the visitor centre and expansion of the Cathedral cloister, whilst conserving the heritage of the ruins to deliver a sustainable project for the enjoyment of generations to come.” RFA Design have been appointed interpretation plan and design consultant.

Their significant projects include Fountains Mill; Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal; Torre Abbey, Torquay; The Monastic Way; Buckfast Abbey; as well as having one team member working in our town.

Additional appointments include:

- Activity plan consultant - Robin James Sullivan.
- Business plan consultant - Bowles

Green.

- Visitor marketing consultant - The Audience Agency.
- Evaluation consultant - Tricolor Associates.
- QS consultant - Castons (Artelia Group).
- Archaeological consultant - Cotswold Archaeology.
- Fundraising and communications – Funding Matters.

Mr Mellish, who was appointed project manager in September, is looking forward to working with the experienced consultant team.

He said: “This project will transform the way that residents and visitors from further afield engage with the Cathedral and Abbey site and we know that the consultant team appointments are key to ensuring we can deliver this goal and strengthen Bury St Edmunds’ place on the national and international heritage map.”

Alan Baxter

Heritage Partnership set to air their views on future of Abbey

The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership will be appearing at the Examination in Public of the draft West Suffolk Local Plan in December together with the Bury Water Meadows Group and the River Lark Catchment Partnership.

They want to promote a comprehensive and integrated approach to the improvement of the Abbey of St Edmund across the whole 60 acre area and the inclusion of a specific planning policy for the Abbey of St Edmund.

The Heritage Partnership submitted comments at each stage of public consultation in recent years and it is disappointed that only a few passing references to the Abbey have appeared in the latest draft of the Local Plan. The “Heritage Assessment” and the “Conservation Plan” for the Abbey are mentioned but the “Overarching Plan” has been overlooked.

The various planning policies that might be considered in assessing planning applications and other initiatives to improve the Abbey area are scattered amongst different parts of the Local Plan.

The Heritage Partnership aims to encourage co-ordination and is concerned that these policies might not all be considered together when decisions are made. The Heritage Partnership is proposing a new specific policy for the Abbey of St Edmund which could be included in the historic environment section of the Local Plan.

This would aim to promote the improvement of the whole Abbey area through all the relevant policies.

It would also promote improvements through West Suffolk Council’s Heritage and Green Space Services and its roles in the Heritage Partnership and the NLHF Abbey Project Board.

The new policy would also seek to balance the many complementary aspects of the historic environment and the natural environment including the River Lark and the Water Meadows. Planning applications affecting the Abbey area would be based on a

balanced assessment of the various Local Plan Policies and the “Overarching Plan” for the Abbey. The Local Plan Examination in public could be finished by late 2024 and the Inspectors’ Report and consequent decisions by West Suffolk

Council could be concluded by mid-2025. The general public can attend the Examination in Public at West Suffolk House as observers.

Richard Summers

Wolf carving gets a facelift

Visitors to the Abbey Gardens will see that the wolf carving is looking magnificent again thanks to Abbey Gardens Friends (AGF) member Brian Jenkyn and his varnishing skills.

St Edmund’s Wolf was commissioned from Luke Chapman for the Abbey 1000 celebrations and displayed in the abbey crypt throughout October 2020 before finding its place next to the wooden Legend of St Edmund Wolf book.

For a second year, the AGF volunteer gardeners worked with staff to sell ex-gardens plants to the public on Wednesdays this Autumn, making well over £2,000 for funds, which is wonderful.

Meanwhile, some of the banana plants from the central beds were retained to be dried on site (*pictured below*) and stored over the winter for re-use in the gardens next year.

In September, a guided walk round the gardens for AGF members by park manager Simon Hobson and AGF’s Paul Marsh proved very popu-



The wolf carving in the Abbey Gardens.

lar, with another planned for January 2025, themed on the gardens and historical events related to winter. Email abbeygardens.bse@outlook.com for details - new members always welcome, a snip at £5.

Libby Ranzetta



Awards galore for Bury in Bloom



It's been quite the summer for Bury in Bloom. We were awarded a Gold for Bury St Edmunds in the Large Town category, with a Gold for the Abbey Gardens, Silver Gilt for Nowton Park, Silver Gilt for the Angel Hotel, Bronze for the Bury Water Meadows Group's Water Vole Habitat Creation and Overall Winner of Best Inclusivity Garden at Wedgwood House – quite an achievement. Plus, we were also nominated and won a handful of Community Awards – Winner of Eco Friendly for the Seed Swap event, Winner of Best Community Group for Bury in Bloom and Highly Commended in Best Event by a Community Group for Certificates of Merit.



The Bury in Bloom team holding the Gold Award (from left to right): Lynda Seldis, Simon Hobson, Tom Hagger, Libby Ranzetta and Chris Wiley.

We have also just found out that Bury St Edmunds has been nominated for Britain in Bloom in 2025. This was totally unexpected, but

incredibly exciting and planning has already begun. We have such an amazing team of volunteers, sponsors and supporters and I am so proud and thankful for everyone involved.

The theme for 2025 will be to mark 200 years of Train Travel – the possibilities are endless, I might get a little “carriage away” – but let's stay on track.

Since the departure (sorry, another railway pun) of CCG Gardeners as a volunteer partner who planted and maintained the Smile Bed, at Parkway, our new Flying Squad volunteers have been helping to keep the area presentable, with the support of Woolpit Nurseries who continue to donate the annual bedding plants twice annually.

Other volunteer-led jobs include litter picking, planting and maintenance of other areas around the town.

We have also welcomed a few new sponsors, including Hopkins Homes, who now sponsor the Parkway/ Risbygate Street roundabout just down the road from their new HQ. Havebury have committed to spon-



Robin Burnett, the chairman of Bury in Bloom with Chris Wiley and Lynne Wright, the outgoing co-ordinator of Certificates of Merit.

Continued on next page.

as town set for Britain in Bloom

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sor a brand new Plant Swap event, on the back of our popular new Seed Swap – once again being sponsored by Councillor Sayer at Bury St Edmunds Town Council.

Councillor Chung has offered to fund refreshments for a thank you event in the new year to show our appreciation to our amazing volunteers, via his West Suffolk Council locality budget, which will offer volunteers a guided tour of the Theatre Royal – kindly offered for free by the Theatre and Tour Guides.

Another new sponsorship angle this year is via the 10 pyramid planters around the town and at the West Suffolk Hospital.

Currently six are now sponsored and this provides an opportunity for smaller businesses without huge budgets to be included in Bury in Bloom.

We are also looking for a successor to Lynne Wright who has worked incredibly hard to scale up the Certificates of Merit front garden scheme.



One of the 10 pyramid planters around the town and at the West Suffolk Hospital.



People attending the Seed Swap event.

It's a mammoth task, but having overseen it for the last few years, Lynne has decided to hang up her gardening gloves and pass on the baton.

The clock is ticking to find a replacement co-ordinator, otherwise sadly the scheme may come to an end.

However, with big plans in the pipeline, we are working closely with Our Bury St Edmunds BID and one of the project managers of the Ipswich Mural Trail to obtain permissions and funding to add floral/historical murals into the town.

One thing at a time, we're focussed on one location in particular (more details to come as discussions advance) – and with agreement from the wall owners, council, funders etc, we can really enhance the look of our amazing town. Before that, though, four wooden planters in St Andrews Street South and four new ones in Brentgovel Street will be painted with colourful floral murals by a local artist, then filled with herbs to create new community herb planters – for members of the public to pick and

enjoy on their meals. Sharing is caring and community projects are key to our success.

Chris Wiley

Extra car parking for Christmas shoppers

Christmas shoppers in Bury St Edmunds will have more choice on where to park at weekends. Greene King is making 200 spaces at its car park off Cullum Road available for parking every Saturday and Sunday through to December 22. The car park, which will be open from 8am to 5pm, is around 10 to 15 minutes' walk from the town centre. West Suffolk Council is also promoting the availability of spaces at its car park in Olding Road. The car park, which is 10 to 15 minutes' walk from the town centre, is available every weekend throughout the year and provides another 300 spaces. Both the Olding Road and Greene King car parks are available in addition to the town centre car parks and there is no charge to use either of them.

Businesses seeking to invest in the potential of Bury St Edmunds

Time flies.

Now that the chilly dark nights have returned we are suddenly in full Christmas mode. What happened to autumn?

The season of goodwill (also known as the season of shopping amongst other things) certainly gets earlier. Selfridges, on Oxford Street, launches its Christmas shop in July every year to a crowd of customers all eager to get their first baubles, cards and festive candles.

Thankfully, in Bury, we wait until Remembrance Day has been observed before heading into the season.

The shops and restaurants have their Christmas goods and menus out to entice custom well before, but we are lucky to have an “official” start with the lights switch on, an event enjoyed by thousands and organised by ourburystedmunds, the town centre business improvement district.

This year has been an interesting one for Bury business-wise when compared to its competitors; we have been very fortunate to see a whole range of new businesses see the potential of Bury and investing in our town, from large international names such as Primark, Deichmann and Oliver Bonas, to local entrepreneurs such as Lisa Angel and Waffle Chino. They have been researching the mood and confidence of the public before deciding that Bury is a good place to be.

Other local towns are sadly being faced with dwindling footfall (Ipswich town centre has suffered a 30 per cent drop) with empty properties and a rash of “To Let” signage. Retail and hospitality is being polarised into the “better centres” and the “less attractive” which is having the “knock on” effect of lowering confidence and leading to little or no investment.

We have, of course, seen businesses call it a day here too.

Rising costs and the influence of Internet shopping have seen long es-



tablished companies such as Denny Bros, Gastrono-me and Sneezums, amongst others, sadly close their doors. Quite often, the premises are worth more to sell on or lease out than remain as a business.

Some premises are re-let quickly but others, such as the former Toy Master shop on the Cornhill, seem to take time to find a new tenant. The old Post Office has also struggled to let; recently an independent coffee shop operator pulled the plug on plans to open in the larger unit.

Costs are certainly rising rapidly - staff, food and energy rises continue to have an impact on business decisions, and companies large and small are at the mercy of the uncertainty and politics across the world. “Events dear boy, Events!”

But, Bury is noted nationally as a profitable place to trade, and we continue to see new businesses taking the decision to open.

Our “foodie” reputation is growing by the month and we have seen the opening of more hospitality venues across the town ... from waffles to a juice and smoothie bar, a trattoria and an upcoming steak and grill through to the planned reopening of the Rising Sun as a pub.

Retailers continue to invest in new

shops and the refurbishment of existing premises.

The Arc Shopping Centre has only a basement unit available to let, Cornhill and Buttermarket are basically full and St Johns Street and Abbeygate Street, Hatter Street, Whiting Street, Risbygate Street and Angel Hill are seeing their lowest vacancy rates in years.

Footfall is certainly up throughout the town, helped no doubt, by the arrival of Primark, who are attracting customers from across the region to choose Bury instead of Ipswich, Cambridge and Norwich.

The town centre will continue to change and evolve, and it is vital that it does, or it will stagnate and die.

Residential developments are bringing in new life and a larger customer base which will help the economy, businesses see the positives and then choose carefully where to invest their resources, the car parks fill up and the town benefits ... busy car parks are a sign of success, customers are choosing where and how to shop, be entertained and enjoy all that the town offers over competitors.

So, get out into the throng and “have a very Bury Christmas!”

Stephen Moody

Postcard Club's rare distinction

For this edition of the Review we feature one of the long standing clubs in the town which has been running for 26 years and which is the only club of its kind in East Anglia.

What is deltiology?

It is the art of collecting and studying postcards.

The Bury St Edmunds Postcard Club began when a group of deltiologists, mainly from Bury St Edmunds Philatelic Society, decided to form a postcard collectors club in Bury St Edmunds.

The inaugural meeting, consisting of 18 people, was held in the WVS tearooms, in Looms Lane, on Tuesday, June 23, 1998, and the club has been running for 26 years.

As the club grew, meetings were held at various venues in Bury St Edmunds to accommodate the increasing membership.

Meetings are currently held on the third Tuesday of every month at The Crypt, in St Edmunds Church, in Westgate Street, having been there since September 2021.



A postcard of Cupola House.



A postcard depicting the entrance to the Theatre Royal, in Bury St Edmunds, in 1906/07.

We have a mixed programme of visiting/internal speakers, members' displays and a variety of interesting evenings such as themed "show and tell" nights along with quizzes, an occasional dealer with their stock, and every now and then a barbecue.

This year, we have covered a wide variety of postcard topics such as the Falkland Islands, UK Railway Stations, Bells Series Postcards, WW1 Comic Postcard Artists – McGill & Spurgin, Great Holland Village History, The PH Topic Story, Preston – Echoes Through Time, and signed/autograph postcards.

We also managed a visit to the Suffolk Archives, which our members found very interesting.

Our 2025 programme is almost complete and is promising to be another exciting year with a good mixture of

speakers on a diverse range of topics, all postcard-related of course. We are currently the only Postcard Club in East Anglia, and we are very grateful for the support of members, not only from Bury St Edmunds and the local area, but also those who travel regularly from Newmarket, Ipswich, Diss and North Norfolk. We are very lucky to have a friendly and supportive group, where new members are always given a warm welcome.

For more information about the club/events, contact Sue Rawles on 01284 769480, email burystedmundspostcardclub@gmail.com or find us on Facebook: Bury St Edmunds Postcard Club.

Maureen Barker
Secretary

Bury St Edmunds Postcard Club



A postcard of Angel Hill.

Fine art, history and witches to feature in displays at museum

Moyse's Hall will be undergoing a period of redisplay in 2025. Our focus will initially be the Gershom Parkington horological and 17th Century fine art and artefact collections.

2026 will see our collection form, along with loans and partnerships, a wider exhibition exploring the life and times of Edmund, the Great Heathen Army, and the rise of the Abbey.

Discussions with accredited horologists are helping us to reconsider the items in the Gershom Parkington collection, not only for their social history but also the artistry within their workings and their aesthetics. A new space at Moyse's Hall will be dedicated to 17th Century fine art, including works by Mary Beale, and some superb spotlight items from that period. This will offer a space to view and research Beale's art, hopefully leading to, in 2027/2028, the largest display of her work ever seen with possible expert celebrity partnership support.

2025 exhibitions:

Look out for "Superstition: Strange Wonders and Curiosities", mid-February to April 2025, which will explore folklore, witchcraft, and oddities from throughout human history with some impressive institutional and private loans.



The Roundhouse Project underway at West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village.

"Prehistoric Beasts: Land, Sea, Sky" next summer will see the museum work in partnership with The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences to display real and cast remains of dinosaurs, sea reptiles, and infamous prehistoric beasts.

At West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village two significant projects have seen the building of an Iron Age roundhouse and the end of the "Oldest House" experiment.

Archaeologists uncovered evidence from Mesolithic through to the Anglo-Saxon periods.

Evidence from three Iron Age roundhouses have inspired us to build our own dwelling which is nearing completion.

West Stow staff, the public, the Friends of West Stow, West Suffolk Council apprentices, pupils from Risby School, and groups from the Community Payback Scheme, have helped with the build.

In 1974, the "Oldest House" was the first Anglo-Saxon reconstruction built at West Stow. In recent years closed to the public as it was leaning significantly. It was encouraged to fall in the direction of the lean, simulating the pulling down of an original building. A team of West Stow staff, archaeologists from Suffolk County Council, students and professors, collected evidence from this study to be published soon.



Raptor Skull for dinosaur displays.

Daniel Clarke

Certificates of Merit growth

Lynne Wright, the retiring co-ordinator of the Bury in Bloom Certificates of Merit campaign, tells of the success of the scheme which she has transformed in her five years in charge.

When the first seedlings were sown for Certificates of Merit, who could have envisaged how Bury St Edmunds would be developed.

Over 20,000 gardens were enjoyed by a pool of over 100 judges in 2024.

The residential properties scheme was extended, using the same points system, to include certificates for commercial properties. The RHS vision for urban gardeners to adopt was to encourage more wildlife and environmentally friendly gardens, which continues to evolve.

This triggered the first update of the points system for awarding Front Garden Certificates to include, for example, perennial planting, container recycling, access to water and wildlife-friendly elements, as well as traditional front gardens.

These details were shared with the public on the Bury in Bloom website and in numerous articles in the local press.

Judges were briefed to reward front gardens where residents had put in plenty of effort and thought into what to plant.

Lifestyles have changed, it is not unusual for what was planned as a front garden is now being required for parking.

Residents who added floral planting eg baskets, troughs, would not lose out as points were made available for houses with little or no front garden.

Our motto has been "Evolution not Revolution".

Everyone involved in this project



Lynne Wright, the co-ordinator of the Bury in Bloom Certificates of Merit, meeting with the judges.

is a volunteer who wants to give something back to the community. Judges are invited to attend a briefing where the criteria are explained, followed by plenty of photographic examples to highlight what qualifies for points and hopefully sufficient points to be awarded a Certificate for that front garden. The lengthy PowerPoint presentation is shared with all judges.

In the Autumn team leaders meet to share feedback to highlight any improvements that can be made for the following year.

In 2024 the borough of Bury St Edmunds was divided into 11 zones and these were subsequently subdivided into 33 subzones with the team leaders managing the judges during the initial 11 days of the project. Team leaders deal with initial residents' queries aiming to resolve them by the end of July.



Judges at the thank you drinks event held at the Guildhall in August post judging of the Certificates of Merit.

This has become increasingly challenging as it is almost impossible to respond to traditional feedback (emails and phone calls plus the social media indirect feedback).

Many residents still think a few hanging baskets are sufficient and are reluctant to accept that their front garden was viewed but judges did not award a certificate.

During the lifetime of Certificates of Merit Bury St Edmunds residents have been very fortunate to have such a dedicated team of co-ordinators, team leaders and judges who have worked very hard to deliver a consistent standard over the years.

Unfortunately Bury in Bloom have not persuaded anyone to volunteer to run Certificates of Merit 2025; therefore 2024 could well be the final year of this excellent and well established format of viewing front gardens. Over 2,000 properties were given certificates this year. Ideally a team of three would take over the co-ordinator role so the workload could be shared to continue to develop Certificates of Merit with the much needed support of 11 team leaders and a judging pool of 100 people.

Having been the organiser of this project for several years it has been very rewarding to work with so many people and appreciate the enthusiasm it generates in the community. It has at times been very challenging trying to persuade residents to step up to become a judge.

Time for me to catch up with tidying up my back garden.

Many thanks for such brilliant support from volunteers and residents.

Bulbs planted for polio campaign



Students along with members of the Bury Abbey Rotary Club promoting the End Polio Now campaign at St Benedict's School, in Bury St Edmunds.

Since World Polio Day in October, Bury Abbey Rotary Club has been raising both funds and awareness of the Rotary Foundation's End Polio Now campaign.

Earlier this month (November) club members were at St Benedict's School to speak at a school assembly.

The School Council representatives from each tutor group in Years 7 and 8 then joined Rotary members to plant the bulbs.

These students have opted to represent the voice of their year group to bring about positive change in school.

It is hoped that these students might join the school's newly formed Interact group, a student leadership group, supported by Rotary.

Their mission is to bring about positive action in their school, local and global community.

"We are very fortunate to have a



Two students planting the crocus bulbs at St Benedict's School, in Bury St Edmunds.

successful vaccination programme against polio in the UK but polio still affects children in certain parts of our world" said Rotarian Max

Weatherby. "When the purple crocuses bloom in February they will provide some nice colour around the grounds and these students will remember why they planted them."

St Benedict's Year 7 student Manuel Manoj said: "I really enjoyed planting these flowers because soon all the dull areas of the school will be bright purple.

"I hope that everyone will take care of these wonderful bulbs".

The purple crocus flower is the emblem of the End Polio Campaign because children are given a temporary purple mark when they are vaccinated in the field.

In October the worldwide Rotary Foundation donated \$500,000 to support the emergency vaccination of children in Gaza where outbreaks of polio have been detected amongst Palestinian children.

Max Weatherby

Cycle routes planned in and around Bury St Edmunds

The Active Travel Forum for Bury St Edmunds and surrounding villages is convened by EcoCarriers to lobby policy makers and planners for better active travel infrastructure in the area. The forum facilitates information sharing, discussion and joint planning of active travel improvements for our part of West Suffolk and will shortly submit its proposals to

Suffolk County Council for cycle routes as follows:

Risby to Newmarket Road via a route south of the A14;

Chevington to Horringer via Ickworth Park;

Whelnetams north into Bury running to the east of Sicklesmere Road;

Culford to Fornham St Genevieve down to Tollgate roundabout;

Fornham All Saints to Marham Park via Tut Hill, through Mildenhall and Howard Estates, Northgate Avenue, train station, up to Brentgovell Street via Cannon Street. The forum's working definition of active travel is "travel in which the sustained physical exertion of the traveller directly contributes to their motion" - so walking, cycling, scooting.

Libby Ranzetta

The value of a personal tour

Bury Tour Guides have put their summer tours into hibernation having achieved a record number of bookings for daily tours and taking an additional 600 people on the Masters of the Air tours.

Chairman, Adrian Tindall, recently had the pleasure of guiding Peter Prinsley MP (*pictured right*) who enjoyed his tour of the Abbey and town.

The popularity of tours has reached tourists from 20 different countries and all parts of the UK but the majority of our customers are local. I often ask myself why this should be since there must be a finite pool of Burians who want to walk our streets.

The answer comes in several ways. Locals genuinely like to show off the beauty of the town and have a factual and personal narration of its history which is why they often bring their friends along; there are locals who are curious and want to have someone point out those landmarks that they have previously walked past without noticing or to hear about the origin of phrases, for example "Chapter and verse".

Then we have those who like to combine learning and fun as guides regale them with stories of the past, as once proclaimed by a comedian: "It's the way they tell them!"

Importantly for the guides, nearly 300 reviews on TripAdvisor answer the question - it is their knowledge, personality and credibility and their accreditation to a national standard that often outweighs trying to read a book on Bury or placing reliance on information that proves to be inaccurate.

Winter was once a time when guides would recharge their batteries, top up their knowledge and have the occasional break.

Last year we took 828 people on ghostly and macabre tours - before this year had kicked off we had 400 bookings and have now sold out to the end of 2024, largely as a result of widespread media coverage.

So, it seems that those spirits that we keep in a darkened place will



be working overtime. We still have space for group tours, an ideal way of organisations having a fun night out in the company of the Grey Lady, Witchfinder General, monks and funeral chaps.

If you are stuck with an idea for Christmas gifts, why not treat your loved one to a tenner's worth of spine-tingling and rib-tickling pleasure?

As 2024 draws to an end, we will be repeating our successful town/Abbey dog-friendly tours. The new year promises to be as busy as ever with new ideas being pursued so make sure you occasionally view www.burystedmundstourguides.org where you will discover what's on and when.

John Saunders
Bury Tour Guides marketing officer

Dog friendly award for the town

Dog-lovers have voted Bury St Edmunds the most dog friendly in the UK.

At an awards ceremony in London the town was named the UK's most dog friendly town after winning silver and the crown for English towns last year.

The DogFriendly Awards recognise and reward dog friendly places and pet businesses that go the extra mile for the benefit of the United Kingdom's 12.5 million dogs and their owners.

Winners of the DogFriendly Awards in each of the categories are chosen by public vote.

With more pet owners now taking

their pooch on holiday with them, Bury St Edmunds has developed its own dog friendly scheme to help visitors and residents easily identify where their four-legged pal is made welcome.

Around 140 shops, eateries, places to stay, attractions and more have signed up to the scheme meaning they can display a blue paw print logo sticker and water bowl showing they are part of the scheme. For more information about Bury St Edmunds Dog Friendly Scheme visit www.dogfriendlybse.co.uk or watch the video on YouTube, which gives a real dog's eye view of the town.

Working for safer communities



Bury Society members will have heard of Neighbourhood Watch but we wanted to highlight that the Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association is reinvigorating Neighbourhood Watch in Suffolk and is keen for volunteers to help build safer communities for ourselves and our families.

With the launch of the new Suffolk policing model last December, greater emphasis is placed on more visible and stronger ownership of local community engagement, including links with Neighbourhood Watch.

A meeting in Chedburgh, in October, brought police inspectors, West Suffolk Council, town/parish council representatives and Neighbourhood Watch together.

This partnership is seen as a powerful way forward for safer communities. "This is the first time Neighbourhood Watch has hosted such an important partnership forum for us", said Nick King, on behalf of the association.



"It was encouraging how the quality of presentations and discussions underlined the value.

"We can now build a strategy and hopefully set up similar meetings across the other two Police Command Areas: East and South."

Inspector Andy Beeby (Bury St Edmunds) added: "it was a pleasure to be invited to take part. Working closely with our partners from Neighbourhood Watch is one of the key areas of work for the Community Policing Teams (CPT's) under the new model.

"This helps bring intelligence into policing which would otherwise be

lost and helps our officers establish enduring contacts within their local communities."

You can help us by following these simple steps:

- 1 Visit www.ourwatch.org.uk and sign up. Membership is free and you'll gain the benefits of crime prevention advice for you, your family and business, with added benefits such as discounts on insurance and security products.
- 2 Try the postcode search: Find my local NW. If a Watch scheme is near you please join it. More members mean stronger and safer neighbourhoods.
- 3 If there's no scheme near you, map your area and apply to set one up. There's not a lot of work to do and our volunteers can help and support you.

Issued by the Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association contact via www.suffolknwa.co.uk

Earl's Summerhouse project getting underway

On a blustery day towards the end of August, Bury Society members were treated to a free talk and tour around Ickworth House's Walled Gardens to hear about the history of the Earl's Summerhouse and learn about the ongoing restoration work. Situated in the centre of the walled garden, the Summerhouse predates the Rotunda, built in the first few years of the 18th century, the first project of John Hervey, later 1st Earl of Bristol, on inheriting the estate. It would have been much closer to the original, but now lost, manor house, which is

believed to have stood to the east. At first the building would have been a heated summer house, but over time it came to be used for protecting tender plants and seedlings, and growing more exotic fruit trees. While an impressive presence at the edge of the River Linnet, recent building surveys have highlighted that significant restoration work is needed, and the Summerhouse is currently at the beginning of a multi-year restoration project. The work will include significant repairs to the basement, repointing of the parapet and cor-

nices to stop water penetrating the brickwork, and restoring the interior. As well as discovering the history of this building and the Hervey family, we were shown the restoration work that was in progress and learnt about the future plans for the Summerhouse and its surroundings. The National Trust team at Ickworth House went out of their way to support our visit. The Bury Society was able to offer this talk free of charge due to the generosity of the Alfred Williams Charitable Trust.

Sam Saloway-Cooke

Loss of the brewery leaves ‘a vacuum’ which needs to be filled

Many of those who live in the medieval grid in the town would agree there may be advantages to the proposal to move the brewery to a new facility at Moreton Hall.

The reduction in heavy traffic in the historic parts of the town being one of them.

However, while Greene King are being very open about their proposal to move the brewery, they are being less than clear as to what they propose for the historic buildings and other holdings they have in and around the existing estate.

Greene King are adamant that they will keep “some presence” at the historic Westgate site, but have not divulged what this may be. It seems they will not address this until they have planning permission for the new building. But they must know what activities will take place in their new brewery (and the dispatch building for which they already have planning permission) and what the residual ones will be that need to be located elsewhere so, surely, they must know in principle at least what will be retained in the historic sites.

The loss of the brewery in the town centre will be a sad one, bringing to an end over 200 years of such use in the same location and the result will leave a vacuum to be filled.

Greene King must understand that their actions could have major implications for the character and use of their current landholdings.

It is most concerning that sites may become vacant and surely there is likely to be pressure for most to be developed for residential uses, they include:

- Greene King maltings;
- Greene King brewery buildings on SE and SW corner of Crown Street
- Green King main brewhouse brewery yard;
- Greene King brewery buildings on SW corner of St Marys Square;
- Bridewell Lane, old fire station;



The Greene King Brewery in Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds.

- Property on Crown Street, Cullum Road, Maynewater Lane, Westgate Street and the car park behind the Theatre Royal.

While the historic buildings have a measure of protection, other parts of the estate do not: several are statutorily “listed” and a large percentage of the holdings are in Town Centre Conservation Area (CA).

To get technical for a minute (it’s important to know what is and what isn’t statutorily protected), the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment.

In respect of conservation areas it requires that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

With regard to listed buildings, it requires the planning authority to have “special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

In effect this means that listed buildings are protected from harmful change and what are known as “undesigned heritage assets” (in effect buildings, or parts of buildings, that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area) are also protected, or at least their elements which make the contribution to the CA are. Any undesigned assets outside of the conservation area have very limited protection.

A few years ago the Bury Town Trust undertook an exercise which identified the undesigned heritage assets in the town centre CA.

This is accessible to all at the BTT’s website (heritage assets – Bury St Edmunds Town Trust) and I’d urge you to look at the entries for the brewery buildings under the various streets they address.

The largest majority of the buildings were felt to make some contribution to the CA.

Addressing the reality of the situation, redevelopment for housing may be acceptable in places but the wholesale development for this purpose would lead to hugely increased traffic movement and would compromise the character of the grid.

We have already a gated development off Westgate Street which followed a sale of Greene King land. And, of course, the robust nature of the brewery buildings adds significantly to the character of the CA.

Greene King should come clean and make it clear what their intentions are and start with a plan for the future of this large and very important historic area. To start with a Conservation Management Plan should be prepared to guide any future proposals. This would set out the historic significance of the sites and their relationship to the wider historic and natural environment, to guide planning for new uses which will protect this significance.

Cafe fixes electronic quiz game

It might surprise you to find out that the Repair Café, in Bury St Edmunds, has run every two months for over a year.

In this time we've fixed over 200 items from toys to toasters. Bikes, toasters, mixers, toasters (did I mention toasters?), stereos, garden equipment and so on.

Pretty much anything and everything that would otherwise end up in landfill.

"Bin it? No way" is our motto and even if we can't repair it, we might be able to advise you as to who might help.

Alongside all the repairing there's a café which means that there's a chance to have a nice cuppa and a piece of cake while you wait.

The November café featured a heart-warming story of two brothers and an electronic quiz show game they remember playing as children in the 1980's.

Theirs is long gone, but one of the brothers bought the game on eBay as a surprise for the other, but it didn't work. They bought another one to see if they could make one good one out of two broken ones, but that proved too complicated for them. This is exactly the kind of challenge we love at the Repair Café.

Ben and Alastair got out their soldering irons and their multimeters and set to work.

In pretty short order "Mr Game-show" was talking, waving his microphone and flashing his (frankly alarming) teeth once more.

The two brothers (*on the left in the photo pictured above*) were delighted. Not only had we restored their childhood memory, but they also said it was going to make their Christmas as they could share the fun they had with their own families. Our three textile experts Lesley and the two Sues have been busy at the cafe.

Between them, they have a wealth of knowledge about sewing, knitting, crochet and repairing and altering clothes.

Sue-2 is a hat specialist and brought



along an impressive array of tools and formers and other kit that was equal in size and complexity to any of the other repairers bulging tool-boxes.

At the moment, these three talented repairers are tragically under-utilised. We'd like to make them a lot busier. So, if your hat's a bit flat, your knitting's just sitting or your sewing's not growing, book a slot for the next café.

They'll be available not just for

repairs, but for help and advice and tips on how to set up your sewing machine or pick up your dropped stitches.

Bring something for us to fix. Drink tea. Eat cake.

The next café is scheduled for January 11, from 11am to 3pm. To book a slot fill in the online form at <https://tally.so/r/3lyvqo> or email repair.cafe.bse@gmail.com.

Mark Wharton



Hats given the treatment at the Repair Cafe.

Photographic competition launched with workshop



The launch of the photographic workshop at the Guildhall, in Bury St Edmunds, which took place during the half term break.

Fourteen youngsters aged between 11 and 17 gathered on Monday, October 28, at the Guildhall, Bury St Edmunds to participate in a photographic workshop aimed at inspiring them to take their photography to the next level.

Led by local photographer and sculptor Nigel Kaines and assisted by members of the Bury Photographic Society, the young people worked hard to capture imaginative images from around the Guildhall Garden and Tudor Kitchen.

This year's theme is Wonderful

Water and the students found many examples around the garden of where nature and water interact. The workshop was organised by Bury Abbey Rotary Club and supported by Bury St Edmunds Town Council. The event is the launch pad for the national Rotary Young Photographer competition open to any young person between 11 and 17. All workshop attendees were encouraged to enter their photos for the competition with the Wonderful Water theme.

Wendie Summers

A successful coffee morning

Despite strong winds and rain, we had another fantastic turnout for our Autumn Coffee Morning in October, at the United Reformed Church. Members were able to come in from the storm to enjoy hot drinks and choose from the range of cakes prepared by Bury Society trustee Stephen Moody. We had a display of materials from the Bury in Bloom archives for people to peruse, including newspaper clippings and award certificates from across its almost 40 year history. Society chairman Martyn Taylor also updated members on current planning news and

on our latest campaigns around the town. As always, thanks to the rest of the Membership, Communications and Events committee and the volunteers who make this regular event such an enjoyable morning, as well as to the United Reformed Church for the use of their facilities. Our coffee mornings give members a chance to socialise and meet the Bury Society Trustees. The next one will be held on Saturday, April 12, at 10.30am at the United Reformed Church.

Sam Saloway-Cooke

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www.thebursociety.org.uk

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Enriching day at Saffron Walden

In September, Bury Society members enjoyed a day exploring historic Saffron Walden, learning about the town's long and colourful history and discovering some of its hidden cultural gems.

After a very warm welcome at the Eight Bells – a beautiful 16th century timber-framed pub – we spent the morning learning about two projects of the Quaker Gibson family: the Fry Art Gallery and the Bridge End Gardens.

At the Fry Art Gallery, which now concentrates on the work of the Great Bardfield Artists, we were given a private talk on three artists all born in the same year – Edward Bawden (1903-1989), Eric Ravilious (1903-1942), and Charles Mahoney (1903-68) – before exploring their stunning collection of paintings, illustrations, ceramics and more. Just around the corner, the Bridge End Garden have been lovingly restored to their original Victorian greatness.

Our tour guide showed us around the gardens, which are designed as a series of interconnected rooms, including a sunken parterre in the Dutch Garden and a yew hedge maze, and introduced us to the Gibson family, who played a huge part in the development of the town.

After lunch, we had a fantastic tour of the town courtesy of Blue Badge Guides, tracing the history of Saffron Walden from its Neolithic origins and through its turbulent medieval relationship with the nearby Walden Abbey (which, after the dissolution of the monasteries, became Audley End House).

We learnt about Saffron Walden's historic connection with the flower that (literally) made its name, the Saffron Crocus: saffron was grown extensively in the town during the

16th and 17th centuries for medicine, dyeing, perfume and for eating. We also heard about the history and architecture of the spectacular St Mary's Church, parts of the construction of which were supervised by John Wastell, who had also been responsible for the new nave of what is now our own St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

Overall, it was an enjoyable and enriching day, for which we must thank the friendly and knowledgeable individuals from both the Saffron Walden Blue Badge Guides and the team members at the Fry Art Gallery.

We are also very grateful for the generosity of the Alfred Williams Charitable Trust, which allowed us to offer this excursion for a reduced price to many of our members.



Sam Saloway-Cooke St Mary's Church, in Saffron Walden.

Events programme for 2024/25

A series of event has been planned for the coming months with others to be arranged.

Friday, November 29: Talk on Ronald Blythe by his biographer Ian Collins at the Quaker Meeting House, from 3.30pm.

Saturday, February 22: Annual Bury Society Winter Lunch, at Southgate Community Centre,

11:45am. Tickets £30. See booking form enclosed.

Saturday, April 12: Spring Coffee Morning, at the United Reformed Church, Whiting Street, 10.30am.

Dates for 2025 excursions and talks are in progress. Keep an eye on the events page of our website for more information.

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 the views 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 24.

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