

The SUDBURY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2014



THE BIG DIG

Sudbury Big Dig 3-5 October 2014



Peter Rednall & schoolboys



The Banner



Spot the digger, Phil Boulanger



Shoe Bazaar, Gainsborough Street



Sawbones



A Tudor button



Napoleon III coin 1854



Clay pipe 1



Clay pipe 2



Alan Liddell pit 14



Staffordshire slip work
c. 17thc

COMING EVENTS

Friday 28th November

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street

'Gestingthorpe Roman Villa and Craftsman's Village'

A talk by Ashley Cooper

Friday 12th December

Christmas Buffet and Quiz

7.30pm Masonic Hall, North Street

Enter as part of a Team or just come along and join others to form a team on the night. Bring own drinks. **Booking essential**

See note on page10

2015

Friday 30th January

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street

'Conservation on the Sudbury Riverside'

A talk by Adrian Walters

Friday 27th February

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street

'The History of Winch and Batch 1300 to the present day'

A talk by Judith Blatch

Friday 27th March

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street

AGM followed by a talk by Sam Thornton entitled 'The Estate Agent's Perspective'

Friday 24th April

7.30pm Friars Hall

QUIZ AND SUPPER

Booking essential. *Details in next Newsletter.*

HOW TO CONTACT US

Lorna Hoey

Chairman

379598

David Burnett

Vice- Chairman

371880

Sue Ayres

Minutes Secretary

310219

Neil Pearson

Treasurer

881173

Tina Read

Membership Secretary

464507

Stephen Thorpe

Planning

881661

Anne Grimshaw

Press Officer

375736

Rosemary Woodward

Events

372186

Robin Drury

373710

Rod Gray

883368

Pat and Roy Laithwaite

377697

John Taylor

373921

Sam Thornton

375646

Peter Thorogood

379050

NEW CHAIRPERSON

The Sudbury Society now has a new Chairperson in Lorna Hoey having been without a Chairman since Peter Thorogood stepped down after three years in the post. Lorna is something of the new kid on the block but has been a committee member for a while.

Says Lorna, "I love Sudbury - it's a great little town with a character all its own. And when I discovered the Sudbury Society, with aims which included the promotion of sensitive care of our historic architecture and our wonderful resources like the Water Meadows and the riverside, I joined at once.

"I relish the chance to make an active contribution to the Society's community concerns, such as transport and parking, and the future of Walnuttree Hospital. Now I will be heading a great team to further the work of the Sudbury Society, including the planning of an exciting programme of speakers for 2015. "Unlike our Thomas Gainsborough who stated that he wished to 'enjoy the fag end of life in quietness and ease', I am looking forward to leading on a new phase in the life of the Society - continuing the work, but with new projects and interests."

There is also a new Membership Secretary, Tina Read, who has stepped in after the sad and untimely death of Caryl Knight. Sam Thornton, one of Sudbury's leading estate agents, has been co-opted onto the committee and will bring an expert and professional eye to planning, buildings and suchlike. Despite these posts being filled mid-term, they will, of course, all come up for election as usual at the AGM in March.

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW CHAIRPERSON

A few years ago I would not have imagined myself living in Sudbury – in fact I'd never heard of the place. I must have done, though, because I'd been an Art teacher in Northern Ireland and in London for many years and had taught an Art History course which definitely featured Thomas Gainsborough.

So, after retirement, my husband and I decided to leave London and move to – where? We hunted for over two years and despaired of ever finding somewhere suitable until one day when we were trundling gloomily up the M11, armed with maps. On a whim, we decided to 'go right a bit' and so we came to Sudbury. We walked across a smooth green sward (which I now know is Friars' Meadow) to a sparkling river – right beside a lively market town with an interesting mix of buildings old and new – and I turned to my husband and said 'I think we've found our place'.

When I discovered The Sudbury Society, with aims which included the promotion of sensitive care of our historic architecture and unique resources like the Water Meadows, I joined at once. Now, I am proud to be a member of such a dedicated and active Committee, and delighted to be your Chairperson. At the moment, we are planning some exciting talks and events in the coming months, with wider plans to promote awareness of our 'Local List' of significant buildings, and hopefully involve some of our young people in aspects of our work.

When I arrived in Sudbury it was surprising to find that many of the people I met had made that same journey before me – leaving London to start a new life in Sudbury. I've been warmly welcomed by people who know exactly where I'm coming from, and their help and advice has been invaluable.

The same goes for our previous Chairman, David Burnett, who has been a tower of strength on the Committee and whose dedication to the Society is always apparent. I would like to thank him warmly for all the work he has done. I know that in his continuing role as Vice-Chairman he will provide wise counsel through his great experience and will certainly be a welcome support to me in my new responsibility.

I look forward to seeing you all at the monthly meetings and am always open to your ideas and suggestions so do come and say hello!

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

Miss V Simpson, Mrs V Wiseman, Mr R Carpenter, Mr T Bird, Mrs J Madgwick, Mr P Gray

NEW COMMITTEE

Please adjust the list of Committee members on your Events Card to include the following changes:

Chairperson Lorna Hoey 379598

Membership Secretary Tina Read 464507

Add: Sam Thornton 375646



Lorna Hoey

CAN YOU HELP?

Since the loss of Caryl we have no-one to do the sterling work that she did in sourcing and chasing up contributions for the Newsletter. Until someone comes forward to do this important side of things please send contributions direct to me, preferably by email.

Patricia Thorpe (Editor)

patricia.thorpe@btinternet.com

01787881661

WHAT WAS UNDER OUR GARDENS?

Sudbury Big Dig 3-5 October 2014

The Sudbury Community Big Dig, organised by the Sudbury Society, the Sudbury History Society and the Sudbury Museum Trust, began on Friday 3 October with five test pits on The Croft dug by over 100 Sudbury schoolchildren working in relays. Said, one teacher of her primary school class, "I've never known them be so quiet and so focused for so long! I could hardly tear them away!" Some children returned over the weekend with their parents to continue to dig. Those pits were continued over the weekend, along with 30+ pits in private gardens dug by some 70 volunteers under the supervision of Dr Carenza Lewis of Cambridge University's Access to Archaeology (ACA).

I was one of the volunteers and allocated to the pit at the Old Vicarage, All Saints, the home of Suzie and Ian Liddell. We had listened to Carenza's briefing on the Saturday morning before starting on the pit: measuring out a one-metre square, removing the turf then carefully digging in 10cm contexts (layers) following standard archaeological procedures. Great excitement when we found the first piece of red roof tile. By the time we had dug up the 596th piece we were less thrilled...

Then there were the bones... a long thin bone (yes, *definitely* a bone), then another one parallel to it and another parallel to that! Rib cage – had to be, didn't it? Well, er, no. The first was a bone, the second a rib-shaped tree root, the third the edge of a white brick... oh well It was fun washing the finds (well, most of them – I did get a bit bored with scrubbing oyster shells after a while but cleaning and fitting together a broken clay pipe bowl was fun. It was strange to be cleaning a row of teeth still embedded in the jawbone. I didn't need to be an anatomist to know this wasn't human but most likely pig. After being washed the finds were carefully recorded and put into labelled bags. The ACA's record book was completed. Finally, we took the finds to HQ at Friars Hall and placed them with the finds from the other pits. It was also a chance to grab a very welcome cup of tea. (Many thanks to Roy and Pat Laithwaite for the catering – much appreciated.)

Carenza had visited all the pits to offer advice and identify items found. In our pit she identified in one corner what might have been a tiled medieval floor laid on flint and mortar but now minus the tiles. We didn't have time to dig it further but it made a convenient step for getting in and out of the pit.

On Sunday afternoon Carenza gave a summing up. She was at pains to stress that it was not individual finds that were the object of the exercise but the big picture made up of all the finds. Pottery is the key as it can be dated quite accurately – well, within a century or two. Pottery expert John Newman said that the most boring-looking grey lump can be crucial. However, the presence or absence of various pottery types can indicate the movement of population within an area. For instance, nothing Roman was found, nor was there much from the late medieval period. If I remember rightly, the earliest was some Ipswich ware of the Middle Saxon period c. AD 650-850.

Carenza asked for a quick report from each pit. Val Herbert's garden in Christopher Lane produced what might be the 'star find' – a Tudor button. Another pit yielded an 1854 French coin of Napoleon III. A curiously coincidental find was a plastic toy elephant (c.1970) found in the pit behind Bazaar on Gainsborough Street – the emblem of the shop is – an elephant! (Quite bizarre...) Another pit produced medieval glass that was most unusual in a domestic setting of that period. Lorna Hoey's pit in Cross Street involved digging through concrete and clay and was more reminiscent of tunnelling out of Colditz than *Time Team*.

Early next year Carenza will return to Sudbury to report the results of ACA's analysis.

Anne Grimshaw

A BIT GRUESOME BUT THAT'S HOW IT WAS!

The first talk of the winter season was on 26 September and pretty well attended it was too. The speaker was Henry Ruse, one of the famous Ruse family of butchers who own a shop in Long Melford on the same site as the first one 150 years ago. Indeed, the business is thought to be the oldest family-run food shop in Suffolk.

Most people will be familiar with the shop which has changed considerably since it opened in 1860 by Henry's great-great grandfather, Teverson Ruse, who with his billycock hat, long apron and cleaver looks like a character out of a Dickens' novel!

Next in line in 1878, was Teverson's son, Henry, not a butcher at all but a draper, and a rather dapper one at that and, in all honesty, butchery wasn't his forte. His apprentice, Jonas Ambrose, took over the reins in the 1920s until the next generation, Freddy, was old enough to do so in 1939 – a time of rationing during the war and all that that entailed with Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Ministry of Food regulations – not to mention the black market....

In 1966 Henry, Freddy's son and our speaker tonight, took over. Now the business has been run by his son, Oliver, since 2007.

Henry brought in some 'butchery antiques': wooden pulleys and massive hooks and chains for hauling up carcasses, pigskin scrapers, fleams and bloodsticks for bleeding calves so their meat would be pale and devoid of blood. Pigs were conscious when their throats were cut – now they are electrically stunned and unconscious when killed.

In the past, cattle were driven through the streets to slaughter. Things did not always go according to plan such as the day two bullocks decided to go into a shop and had difficulty turning round to come out again... Meat was delivered to customers by pony and cart – not great on a hot summer's day. And meat was a rare luxury for the less well off.

Unusually for butchers' shops these days, there is an abattoir at the back of the Long Melford premises which, of course, adheres to the strict animal welfare and hygiene laws today – thank goodness!

These days customers do not want fatty meat, suet, liver, offal – they want it all nicely cut up and 'sanitised' in sausages and burgers. I was struck by just how much of an animal is wasted these days. In the past, they used every bit of it for something. Even so, can't say I relish the thought of tripe and cow heel...

Anne Grimshaw

**Teverson Ruse
1860**



**Ruse Butcher's
shop 1912**



GHOSTS AND GHOULS A talk by Sheila Wright

Very suitably for Halloween a good audience turned out to hear Sheila Wright's tales of things that go bump in the night or walk through walls.

Before the start of proceedings, however, David Burnett was very pleased to announce the Society's new Chairman, Lorna Hooey. She was suitably attired for the occasion in red velvet and a pointy hat. She introduced herself and was given a warm welcome, the more so as the Society has been without a chairman since March. We wish her well in her new position.

Mrs. Wright told us that she started investigating one story and found that there were more and more tales to be told which she has collected in several books. The following are just a few of the experiences she has followed up.

She began by telling us of a relatively recent haunting. A Mary Pocock had bought a cottage a bit off the beaten track but after she had moved in found that one room was extremely cold and unusable and her dog refused to go anywhere near it. Eventually she decided that perhaps if she said a prayer it might lay any unhappy spirit. Having done so, suddenly she had an overwhelming urge to drown herself and was propelled out of the house towards a nearby pond. Luckily she didn't get as far as jumping in but was extremely shaken and had the room officially exorcised by a clergyman who warned her of the dangers of such actions. After this the room was liveable in with no further strange happenings. Further research revealed a young bride had drowned herself on the eve of her wedding! We were told of many more strange happenings. A young couple bought an old Irish door knocker for their front door; it was regular sounded but nobody was ever there... finally they moved the door to another part of the house and the knocking stopped.

Another tale was of a 'grey lady' who would put the children of the house to bed or look in on them to see that everything was alright. She was a benign spirit and the children were never afraid. The parents thought she might have been pleased to have more children to look after.

There were many more stories of hooded monks seen near an old Abbey farmhouse; of a little girl who ran out in front of a car, in 1933 when cars were a novelty in the countryside. She was killed but is still sometimes seen running from her old house. Perhaps one of the strangest was of an airman in full flying kit seen in a pub in Lavenham near where he was based *after* his plane crashed in Kent returning from a raid over Germany!

By the end of the evening everyone was feeling a little shivery and were glad of a hot cup of coffee and biscuits before venturing out in the night of All Hallows.



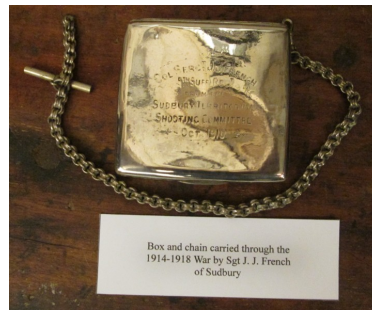
Heather Holtman

Watch out there's a bin thief about! Sudsoc members in Church Street recently found their blue recycling bin had vanished, stolen after it had been put outside for a routine Monday clearance. They have searched the neighbourhood in vain and now the District Council has quoted £30 for a replacement. Another bin in nearby Straw Lane has also been stolen. Painting your house number or name on your bins could be a worthwhile deterrent.

Val Herbert



Val, David & Anne with the silver box



The box



Group of some of the Sudbury Society visitors

SUDBURY SOCIETY VISIT TO THE SUFFOLK REGIMENT MUSEUM, BURY ST EDMUNDS

29 August 2014

The Suffolk Regiment Museum at Bury was new territory for most of the Sudbury Society visitors. We were given a potted history of the regiment by curator Gwyn Thomas then taken to the gallery and left to browse through medals, uniforms, photographs, weapons, equipment and personal memorabilia.

The regiment was formed in 1685 to counter the threatened Monmouth Rebellion. Ninety years later the regiment was in Gibraltar from which it takes its cap badge of a castle and key. It spent many years in India, Australia, New Zealand, Afghanistan and South Africa. If you haven't seen the fine Boer War monument in the Buttermarket in Bury, do have a close look next time you are there.



Not surprisingly in this year of the 100th anniversary of the start of WWI, there has been much interest in tracing Suffolk Regiment soldiers for family history. However, the regiment's documents are housed in the Suffolk Record Office in Bury. Amongst the artefacts of particular interest was a small silver box presented to Sudbury man Colour Sergeant J.J. French of the 5th Suffolk Regiment by the Territorial Shooting Committee in 1910 and carried by him throughout the war (see photo).

The Suffolks were in action early in WWI, a mere 20 days after war had been declared they were in action at Le Cateau and in just about every major engagement for the next four years. WWII saw them at Dunkirk, Normandy, Burma, Singapore, India, North Africa and Italy. Post-war service was in Malaya, Palestine and Cyprus on peacekeeping duties – the period of National Service that maybe familiar to some readers!

A little nearer home, did you know that Minden Road in Sudbury takes its name from the battle of Minden on 1 August 1759 (Seven Years' War) in which the Suffolk Regiment (then the 12th Regiment of Foot) earned its battle honour and from then on its soldiers wore yellow and red roses every Minden Day.

Did you know that the phrase "Women and children first" comes from the tragic sinking in 1852 of the *Birkenhead*, a troopship carrying soldiers and their families to South Africa (Kaffir Wars)? It was wrecked on rocks near the Cape of Good Hope and 55 Suffolk Regiment soldiers died standing to attention on deck while their families took refuge in (too few) lifeboats.

The Suffolk regiment is now part of the Royal Anglian regiment .

Anne Grimshaw

PLANNING MATTERS

Current applications – Nothing significant to report. Walnuttree and St Leonards are still going through the planning process.

Bypass – some significant moves seem to be taking place towards a solution, involving A120/A12/A134, which would avoid harm to the sensitive western edge of the town. These are still long term, if indeed they do take place, and meanwhile the Town's need for immediate and medium term solutions is pressing.

Belle Vue – can the House be 'saved'? This is the outcome most people wish for - but it needs a viable business plan to buy it, adapt and possibly extend it and to secure its long term future. Or is there an "economic" solution? If the latter will it be an inclusive one which also replaces the current vehicle dominated wasteland with a good piece of urban design and forms a worthy gateway to the town centre? If new building is involved will it be of a high standard or as lacking in architectural quality as Borehamgate? See the Society's published view on our website.

Bus Station – seven options are being considered, to be made public shortly. Bus travel is still regarded as a poor substitute for the car, unless you don't have access to one, and critical to wider bus use and less car use are lots of convenient stops and probably more town based routes linking car parks, station, new hospital and various residential developments, Chilton and more to come and to be added to the mix. And more accessible bus design of course.

Hamilton Road redevelopment – seems as far off as ever. A decision on where to site the "bus station" could delay or revive it.

Traffic – Babergh's 2011-2031 Transport strategy sets out a hierarchy – pedestrians, cycles, public transport, goods vehicles, private cars. Is there anywhere in town where this is followed rather than the reverse?

To quote – "Often the "highways design" of spaces is separated out from the overall design development. This can lead to places where roads dominate and pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are downgraded in terms of the environments they have to use." A fair description of our town? And how do we change it?

Shared space" is an attempt to rebalance things to everyone's benefit but Highways seem reluctant to go down this route. It can work, perhaps counter intuitively. Go to YouTube and look up "Poynton Regenerated" for a fascinating video. You can then compare this shared space solution with what is planned for the Belle Vue intersection, to be revealed soon, and the junction between Great Eastern Road and Station Road.

A Town Plan – an idea which seems to be a long time coming into being but which would draw all these issues together rather than their being a series of unrelated interventions and would allow for future developments such as the Tax Office site and maybe the BT one. The Society has put together what it feels should be included, perhaps more wide ranging than Town Council and Babergh have in mind. Check out our website.

Stephen Thorpe

DON'T MISS THIS

Christmas Quiz and Cheese and Wine party

As last year's quiz and cheese and wine party proved very popular, we are running it again at the same place – the Masonic Hall on North Street. 7.30pm on Friday 12 December 2014. It is open to members and their guests and is a ticket-only event. Tickets must be purchased in advance from Rosemary Woodward (01787 372186) or Lorna Hoey (01787 379598).

They are £10 per head. This covers two bottles of wine per table (six people) so there is no need to bring your own wine. If you want any more, there will be wine for sale.

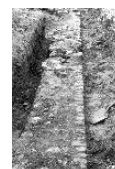


REMINDER

November meeting

Just a reminder that our meeting on Friday 28 November sees the return of a very popular speaker, Ashley Cooper. His topic will be the Gestingthorpe Roman Villa and Craftsman's Village. Ashley is always interesting and it's a pleasure to have him back. Usual place and time:

Friars Hall, School Street, Sudbury, at 7.30pm Admission: Members £2, visitors £3.



ANTIDOTE TO SUNDAY NIGHT BOREDOM

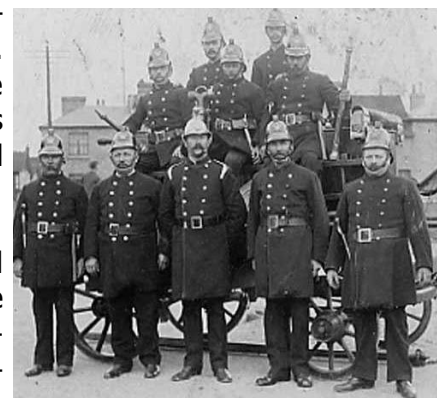
Sunday evenings can be dull in winter but a lively series of local history talks is in prospect at the Quay Theatre. The 15th season of the Sudbury History Talks kick off on January 25th with local historians sharing their knowledge of the town's rich past. Each evening will feature two speakers and give members of the audience the opportunity to join in by adding their own knowledge. Andrew Phillips, the Society's President, wittily holds everyone in check. He launched the idea at the Millennium as a fund raiser for the Quay. Nobody gets a fee and the series of six talks last year raised more than £4,000 towards keeping the lights on.

The talks are at fortnightly intervals, apart from a three-week gap between programmes five and six to avoid Easter. Tickets at £7 an evening are on sale, or you can book the whole series for £36. Such is the popularity of the event that bookings for 2015 were being made in October before the programme had been confirmed!

The illustrated talks mainly range in period from Sudbury and Suffolk during the Civil War to what it was like to grow up here in the 1940s. Along the way the subjects include death from disease and pestilence in the 19th century; the relationships between nurses and the patients in Belle Vue Red Cross Hospital in WWI; life on the River Stour; what lies under our feet and how Middleton almost became a focus for pilgrimage in the 1930s. If you want to know the history of fire fighting in Sudbury you could learn all from the illustrated talks. In fact every talk will be accompanied by images on the big screen.

Full information about the programme can be picked up from the Quay Theatre or the Tourist Office at the Library.

Valerie Herbert, Coordinator 2015 series



Sudbury Fire Brigade a century ago

BELLE VUE

My thinking on the future of Belle Vue House has changed. Formerly, it seemed quite logical that demolition (with regret at the passing of a fine Victorian house) followed by construction of a modern hotel would sort out the use of the site and Babergh's financial dilemma over current use and maintenance.

But if Barry Drury is indeed generously offering to buy and then 'gift' the house asset to his town with no strings, then I now feel that the £750,000 capital receipt from the BDC sale should surely be used to the advantage of a complete makeover of the existing building and retain the character it bestows on our town centre.

Given that, according to Babergh's valuation office, the entire site (including the skateboard park) only has a market value of £750k if flogged to a hotel developer, it follows, with Mr Drury only being interested in purchasing Belle Vue House and immediate grounds that BDC would retain ownership of the remaining land which currently benefits the community. So why are Babergh officers not opening the door to this and splitting the site?

Without doubt this £750k would fund a total remodelling of Belle Vue House which could include a modern extension, greener credentials, sensitive office makeovers and an external uplift that would return the house to its former impressive appearance. There is a direct parallel here with what our district council managed to achieve with William Wood House (opened by Diana 20 years ago).

Babergh insist that the £750 receipt will be retained for the benefit of Sudbury. Too often we have seen such sums (section 106 money) frittered away in the council coffers with no questions asked. But this money should be ring fenced to ensure a bright future for Belle Vue.

I would suggest that Sudbury should be targeting Belle Vue as a well managed community centre. Neither the Delphi Centre or our Town Hall serve this function. Cornard has the Stevenson Centre and our tiniest villages seem to have been able to fund their thriving village halls. What better place, with its juxtaposition to the park and town centre position. Surely further funding sources are out there to help achieve this? Look across the border to Witham or Braintree Community Centre and what Braintree Council has achieved using a similar refurbishment project as a springboard.

The trend for budget hotels is to develop low cost land, next to a main road, out of town. To my mind it doesn't seem essential for a cheap hotel to occupy this prime site, merely expedient to our District Council. At the date of writing, according to Councillor Barrett a plan for the new hotel on the Belle Vue site is to include bar/café/restaurant facilities. This will put yet more pressure on our local retailers and continue to decimate the town centre of the character that independent pubs and cafés provide.

I fear that Babergh are dropping the true value of this site in order to shed responsibility for it. We need to hear that Barry Drury's offer is being considered seriously, without prejudice and that the Sudbury Society are pressing Babergh and Sudbury Councils to pick up the gauntlet of upgrading Belle Vue house to a state that allows it a continuing significant role in our community.

Robin Drury



ACCESSIBLE SUDBURY?

If only! Because of a recent accident I have had to resort to being pushed around Sudbury in a wheelchair. Saturday should have been a great day - my first day for weeks being able to visit the shops for some much needed retail therapy. What a salutary expedition it turned out to be. What should have been therapy ended up being a very frightening and uncomfortable experience.

Having been married for years to an architect much of whose career has been concerned with access issues and making life easier for disabled people, and also in improving the environment for elderly people or parents with children in buggies, in fact for us all, I should have been well aware of the problems of mobility and of getting around safely. However, it took a journey in a wheelchair myself to bring it home to me how inaccessible Sudbury is.

My daughter and I set off along Friars Street in great spirits. Sadly we met our first hazard a few yards from home- a freestanding "No Access" road sign left over from recent nearby work and dumped against our neighbour's wall, thus narrowing the path. To negotiate it necessitated either my daughter moving it or pushing me out into the busy road. This kind of thing is not a one off. It is usual to see them dumped anywhere in Sudbury where they stay until eventually taken away in a lorry and that could be days or even weeks later. We had not gone much further on before we realised that the path suddenly narrowed to get round the wall of a house. I felt very vulnerable as I was then right against the kerb with the traffic passing by right next to me. Later we met a drop down for a car to the main road. Good, you might think, but no. Instead of sloping gently to the dropped kerb it was 'U' shaped. The wheelchair negotiated going down but the push up the other side was quite difficult as, by now, my daughter was already tired by the efforts so far and the fact that the path all along this side of Friars Street has a definite camber towards the road and trying to keep me straight was having its toll on her right arm. Having to do this every time would result in repetitive strain injury for her. Most drop downs for cars were equally difficult. It would have been better had we crossed to the other side of the road but could find no dropped kerbs to help us do this. Also we would then have had to cross over the dangerous junction with Station Road with traffic coming from three directions. We eventually crossed from HSBC to the traffic island and from there to the Library now, through the efforts of some local people, properly accessible. No longer do mobility impaired people have to go round to the dreary back entrance like a postal delivery. The journey on to Winch and Blatch was very bumpy over the uneven paving stones. Why do we have to have other towns discarded paving stones? The rough surface of York stone is entirely unsuitable for wheelchairs, scooters and buggies, and also for people who rely on walking aids. Their number is rapidly increasing.

The rest of our journey was very uncomfortable. Most dropped kerbs turned out to be not properly implemented. Even if one side is good the wheelchair user is met by the one opposite that either has to be negotiated by tipping the chair up, an almost physical impossibility for the average carer, and frightening for the occupant, or be jolted against a raised edge which was for me was also a painful experience. On more than one occasion I felt that I was about to be inelegantly deposited on the pavement or worse still in the street.

There were very few dropped kerbs that met the standard laid down which is that "**a dropped kerb should be such that the pavement is flush with the adjacent road**". If they are not flush they become the very hazard they are meant to avoid. Having the chair tipped up over a badly executed so-called flush kerb jolted my already painful hip and back, and resulted in an aching shoulder for my daughter. Some kerbs were fine on one side of the road, only to meet the opposite one so badly made that it is virtually unusable or in some cases did not exist! Not everyone has a younger carer to push them. I saw older people pushed by partners as old as they themselves. How they manage I don't know. A pavement survey was carried out by Val Herbert and my husband a year ago but not much has improved. Little did I think that I would be experiencing it at first hand. I feel so sorry for those who must negotiate Sudbury every day. My use of a wheelchair is, I hope, only temporary, but one journey was enough to open my eyes to the poor condition of our pavements and crossings, to say nothing about cambers on paths that nearly tip you into the traffic.

I would like our councillors to be willing to be pushed around Sudbury for an hour or so. Perhaps then something will be done to improve the unacceptable situation.

Patricia Thorpe

ACCESSIBLE SUDBURY A POSTSCRIPT

There are two crossing points in the town which I have always felt needed serious attention since using them is both hazardous and difficult, especially for users of wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

The first is across Stour Street at the end of Gainsborough Street. To cross from the School Street side you have to go into the path of traffic coming down Gainsborough Street since although there is a dropped kerb the pavement is too narrow for passage let alone to turn to cross. Once you reach the island there is a convenient cut through but then you must trust to a driver being prepared to stop. The reverse crossing is equally hazardous, perhaps more so as it is impossible to see traffic coming up Stour Street until you have committed yourself to crossing.

The other one is at the junction of Station Road and Friars Street where coping with traffic coming from three directions is made more difficult by impossibly narrow pavements and a steep camber as you round the old Javelin corner. What to do about them? One could be really radical, for Sudbury, and raise the whole crossing to pavement level with brick or granite setts to alert drivers – a mini bit of “shared space” if you like. Equally radical might be to make this stretch of Station Road one way, towards Great Eastern Road, so that the roadway could be narrowed and the pavements widened. Also you can’t cross Friars Street at this critical point as my wife has noted. Steps or wheel revolutions too far? Then what is your solution?

Stephen Thorpe



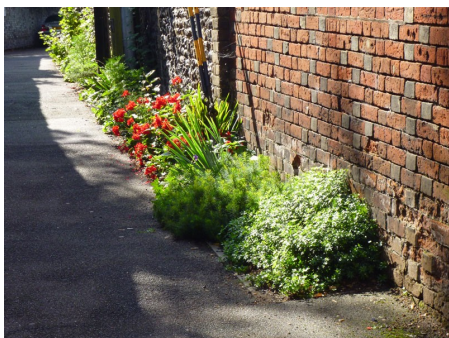
School Street and Stour Street



Station Road and Friars Street

LITTLE SOCIETY AT WORK

So said someone of these two pieces of planting which have brightened up neglected places: Bullocks Lane and the Quay Lane garage. Our compliments and thanks to the enterprising volunteer planters. Are there other places that would benefit from similar treatment?



Bullocks Lane



Quay Lane