



THE HISTORY AND CONSERVATION OF THE SUDBURY

This was the wide-ranging title of Adrian Walters' illustrated talk to members at the Sudbury Society's meeting on January 26th.

It was a particularly bitter evening so it was a sign of the popularity of Adrian's talks that so many people had braved the cold to hear him. He began with a short history of how the Sudbury Common Lands Charity came into being in 1897 when the Freeman expressed concern about the management (or lack of it) of the water meadows and riverside. The written records for the area go back to the 12th century and there have been various changes from the original King's Marsh land to the present. The Freeman set up a board of 16 trustees of whom four were Freeman who oversaw the management of an initial 115 acres, with various other blocks of land being acquired over the years.



North Meadow in November

The water meadows have been grazed since at least mediaeval times and it is this which has helped to preserve them as a wildlife habitat. However, there have been times when poor management caused a decline in many species of both plants and avifauna and the more recent introduction of feral mink which almost extinguished our native water vole, 'Ratty' of *'Wind in the Willows'* fame. (The vole is now making a slow comeback since there has been concentrated trapping of mink). After devastating floods in 1947 a decision was taken to straighten the river to prevent future flooding of the town but luckily later plans to build on the flood plains were abandoned. The meadows *do* flood after prolonged rainfall but that of course is their main function.

Adrian also pointed out that as the meadows have never been fertilized they therefore support a wide range of grasses which are not only beneficial to the cattle but also to insects and invertebrates. Management of the trees along the river – particularly willow and alder, is another factor in keeping



Early Marsh Orchids

the area wildlife-friendly; he mentioned that the willows have to be pollarded every few years to keep them strong, the resulting heaps of brush are not to everyone's liking but of course they provide habitat. The trees also provide crops of wood which can be sold. There was a sharp intake of breath when Adrian revealed that Friars Meadow (not strictly part of the Common Lands) could have ended up as a municipal rubbish tip.

A source of great satisfaction was the discovery, some years ago, of Tubular Water Dropwort on the Wardman meadow. This is a nationally endangered species that is now flourishing, as are several different species of Orchid. Early Marsh Orchid having increased over the last few years from 16 individuals to 1635! Their preservation is

helped by the lack of public access to that particular area. Although there is little trace now, Wardman Meadow was the site of a thriving brickworks; the remains of a lime crusher are still visible.



Pollarded willows on Kings Marsh

continued on page 9

COMING EVENTS

Friday 24th April

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street

QUIZ AND SUPPER

***** Booking essential**

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Contact Rosemary on
01787 3721866 for more details

Friday 29th May

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street

'Music Hall Memories'

Entertainment by Bryan Thurlow

All other events
£2 members
£3 non members

Wednesday 10th June

6.30pm Meet at Gainsborough's statue, Market Hill

Walking Quiz.

Pay on arrival £2 members, £3 non members

Contact Rod Gray on 01787 883368 if you plan to come

Friday 26th June

Visit to Copped Hall, Epping

******* Booking essential, £11 per person

A form will be available at the April meeting

Car share

Friday 25th July

6-8.30pm Garden party

at **53 Cross Street** (the home of Lorna & Bob)

£5 per person. RSVP to lehoey@btinternet.com by 17th July

Friday 28th August

4.30pm Visit to the Roman Villa, Gestingthorpe

with **Ashley Cooper**

******* Booking essential. Places limited

Care share

Friday 25th September

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street

'Got Any Gum, Chum?'

A talk by Peter Thorogood. Tales of American Servicemen stationed in Suffolk

HOW TO CONTACT US

Chairman

Lorna Hoey
379598

Vice- Chairman

Robin Drury
373710

Minutes Secretary

Sue Ayres
310219

Treasurer

Position to be filled

Membership Secretary

Tina Read
464507

Planning

Stephen Thorpe
881661

Press Officer

Anne Grimshaw
375736

Events

Rosemary Woodward
372186

Pat and Roy Laithwaite
377697

John Taylor
373921

Sam Thornton
375646

NEWSLETTER

Patricia Thorpe

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

As you will see from recent communications from the Society, it is now possible to leave correspondence for us at a town centre location (The Christopher Centre in Gainsborough Street) which I hope will be helpful for most of our members.

I would also like to be able to use email as much as possible for general communications with the Membership **although the Newsletter will continue to be delivered as normal to all members.** If you have not had an email from me in the last six months, the chances are that I do not have an email address for you!

My email is: christinaread36@gmail.com
Tina Read
Membership Secretary

URGENT

You will see from the above that we are in need of a Treasurer.

If anyone feels that they would be willing to fill this post, please contact Lorna - 01787 379598

Copy date for Summer Newsletter July 16th.

CHAIRPERSON's REPORT March 2015

My father once told me 'Never volunteer for anything.' Not that he took his own advice; in spite of being a head teacher of a busy school he was happily involved in many different Civic projects. His concern was, I believe, that volunteering for a worthy cause can take over your life. I am delighted that I did not listen, as stepping into the role of Chairperson in October has proved to be most rewarding. My father was absolutely right, however – volunteering can take over your life.

So how can this be rewarding? To be part of a Society where there is possibility to influence change when so much change is being planned (particularly at present), can only be a good thing.

It seemed that I soon as I had sat down in the Chair's chair, big changes were upon us. We saw those as a great opportunity to make our presence felt and our voice heard. This became a priority for our work this year. We stood under a banner at Belle Vue House, maintaining that it should be kept or, at worst, be sensitively re-designed and used for the benefit of the people of Sudbury. We continued to monitor carefully the plans for St Leonards and Walnuttree, while making our feelings public on the weak transport links and the draughty waiting area in the new Health Centre. Each month we attend Sudbury Steering Group (an elected body which reports to Sudbury Town Council) to voice our opinion – most recently members of the Planning Sub-Committee presented our alternative plans for the Belle Vue Junction to a group of councillors and urban planners who agreed to consider our idea. A small step, perhaps, but certainly in the right direction. We feel frustrated, nevertheless, by the apparent constraints put on our local councillors and feel that we were dealt a very unfair hand when Sudbury ceased to be a Borough.

This time last year, one of the Committee's concerns was the retention or removal of the Anchor sign above the Javelin shop in Friars' Street. While no less important, this seems to pale into insignificance beside current proposals to build 1200 houses and more in the Chilton and Cornard area, where it appears that little infrastructure has been considered. What on earth are all those cars and lorries going to do to our historic market town? Streets will be choked, we will be choked with rising pollution levels and our mediaeval buildings will be shaken to the core. Naturally we responded strongly.

A bypass? The issue rumbles on. Several of my Committee colleagues believe this to be some kind of urban myth, to be handed down through generations of future Sudburians with much shaking of heads. Others are more optimistic. At any rate, we will keep a close eye on developments - as we will on the so-called Local Plan. The consultation was a farce and we told them so. Apparently that was a pre-consultation and there will be more to look forward to.

On a positive note, the Society was part of the very successful Big Dig, while your Committee has produced a new Guide to Sudbury, available at the Tourist Information Centre, and a new Membership leaflet. Our colourful stall at Sudbury on Show earlier this month brought a steady stream of visitors to ask 'What is it you actually *do*?' and several new members. Our regular contributions to the Press also serve to get our image out there; the more we are recognised as an active Civic Society, the stronger we will become.

Although much of the work has been meeting our Planning concerns, one of our aims this year has been to try to involve young people in our work, or at least to bring our existence to their attention. This is in early stages, but our Visions Art Exhibition in October will contain a section devoted solely to the work of the young people of Sudbury. The theme of the Exhibition is to produce artwork based on one of our 247 listed buildings – surely a fitting theme for our Society. And this too, has produced outreach work as Committee members have made visits to our local schools to promote the Exhibition.

And so the work continues apace. Be reassured however – although we will comment on the big issues, we do not forget the smaller ones – like the aforementioned Anchor sign. If those small details are allowed to slip through unchecked, a thin-end-of-the-wedge situation will surely arise. Our Constitution reminds us to 'promote high standards of planning and development' and we will continue to do so.

I would never have told my father he was wrong – in those days a clip round the ear was fairly normal parent behaviour. But he was. This is a worthy and worthwhile Society and I have been privileged this year to be part of it.

Lorna Hoey

FROM THE EVENTS COMMITTEE

Sudbury Society Events 2015-16

The Events Committee has been busy arranging outings and talks for the next year.

Beginning on **29 May** with popular local personality– Brian Thurlow – who will entertain us with *Music Hall Memories: a pocket history of Music Hall*, featuring songs and monologues. Hear about the artistes, their songs and the many other acts that contributed to the success of British Music Halls. This promises to be a very enjoyable evening.

On **Wednesday 10 June** we will have a Walking Quiz- meeting at 6.30pm at Gainsborough's statue on Market Hill to receive instructions for a one and a half hour stroll around the town centre, answering questions en route. Compete as individuals or teams; there will be a prize for the winners. It would be helpful to let Rod Gray know by 3 June if you are planning to come (Tel. 883368; roderickgray@btinternet.com). There will be welcome refreshments at the finish for a small charge.

This will be closely followed by a trip to Copped Hall, Epping on the **26 June**. You may have seen this house when travelling on the M25 towards Heathrow – set high up on the right amidst rolling countryside. This is a chance to see restoration in progress: a Palladian mansion of 1751-8, burnt in 1917, asset stripped in 1950. The Hall and gardens were saved from massive development schemes in 1995 by the purchase of the freehold by the specially formed Copped Hall Trust. Architect Alan Cox, who helped rescue the mansion, will lead the tour to show how the hall and gardens are being brought back from extreme dereliction. The Abbots of Waltham lived at Copped Hall from 1350. Henry VIII took the building from them and his daughter Mary Tudor lived there before she became queen. Her sister, Elizabeth I, gave the estate to Sir Thomas Hennage. Shakespeare's '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' was first performed there in 1594. The estate later passed to the Sackvilles who sold the estate in 1701. The present house was built on a different site to the southeast. The mansion was altered in 1775 and in 1895. All the gardens can be visited, including a large rock garden, a 450-foot long herbaceous border and a four-acre, 18th century, walled kitchen garden. All parts of the mansion can be visited including a vaulted kitchen and cellars – together with grand stables. We will have refreshments on arrival but as this is a whole day trip – take a picnic lunch!

On **25 July** Lorna and Bob will be very kindly hosting our evening summer party – drinks and canapés will be served. Let's hope for a balmy summer evening.

Following on from the fascinating talk by Ashley Cooper we will visit Gestingthorpe Roman Villa and local museum in the late afternoon of August 28 and hear and see more about this amazing find. If it is dry we will probably visit the site of the villa - which is now grassed over - so stout footwear/walking boots are recommended. Places are limited to 22 – so be sure to book nearer the time!

Heading into Autumn and on **25 Sept** our own Peter Thorogood will regale us with tales from the American servicemen stationed in Suffolk during wartime, with his talk *Got Any Gum, Chum?*

30 October sees us meeting a Victorian ghost hunter and taking a look at the tools of his trade. Hear about the Society for Psychical Research, which started in Cambridge in 1882 and discover the strange and bizarre tale of Edmund Gurney, one of its founding members. *The Victorian Ghost Hunter* is a costumed talk for your added interest and entertainment with Andrew Selwyn-Crome.

On **27 November** we will be having a talk by former Mayor of Sudbury, Adrian Osborne, entitled *A Mayor's Tale*.

On **11 December** we will be holding our ever popular Quiz Night and Buffet.

The New Year begins and Brian Thurlow will make a return visit on **29 January**, with *We'll Meet Again*, an evacuee's story. Billy Jackson, a pearly king from Bethnal Green, vividly describes what life was like when he and his sister were evacuated to an East Anglian farm at the outbreak of WW2 and the horrors of the blitz in London.

On **26 February** we welcome Elizabeth Brown who will give an informative talk about the BBC television series '*Dad's Army*' - speaking informally about the series and offshoots from it; the writers and those who played the main characters in the series; some of whom she knew personally.

18 March is our AGM and after the formal meeting Mark Bills, Director of Gainsborough's House, will be bringing us up to date with the happenings there.

We end our year with *Call My Bluff*, followed by a fish and chip supper.

For the visits we suggest car sharing – this will keep the costs down by not having to organize coaches. We do hope you will enjoy these events. If you have any ideas for 2016-17 please let us know!

Rosemary Woodward
Events Committee

MYSTERIES OF GESTINGTHORPE ROMAN VILLA

It is always a pleasure to listen to Ashley Cooper talking so passionately about his farm, his father, their mutual interest in history and their archaeological finds around the Roman villa on their land at Gestingthorpe.

Ashley illustrated this November talk with photos of the villa's remains, the excavations, finds and artefacts but even more vivid were the beautiful watercolours by Benjamin Perkins of what had probably taken place on the site at certain dates throughout the centuries. These paintings were meticulous in detail and incorporated finds, discoveries and what was known from other sources in the context of the time and the villa.

It all began with Ashley's father, Harold, in (I think) 1947 ploughing. Red (and some white) tiles came to the surface – what were they? Harold did not simply ignore them for, being of an enquiring mind, set about finding out what they were – they proved to be Roman roof tiles. His initial query snowballed into a full-blown archaeological excavation but without the sophisticated techniques of today.

The villa threw up lots of styli (writing tools), a hypocaust heating system, pudding-stone querns for milling cereals, storage jars, weighing scales, horse harness decorations, tweezers, nail clippers – and many other items of everyday life in Roman Gestingthorpe. A painting showed a very elegant Roman lady wearing a locally found necklace, hairpins and a fish brooch. Was she an early Christian Romano-British woman?

Gestingthorpe was a market and settlement on a main road, the line of which can be followed but where was the road? There is no sign of it and so it may have been a 'green road' that would have left no trace.

The most exciting find was part of a mould. What had it been used for? Making bronze statuettes of the god of wine, Bacchus.

At the time of discovery, the mould was the first evidence that the sophisticated lost-wax process had been used in Roman Britain.

Ashley's last slide was a painting showing the villa in its last days: its roof had caved in, its walls were falling down, plants were growing all over it, a door hung on by one hinge. Ashley said that if he could go back in time he would love to speak to the last person who closed that door as he left Gestingthorpe Roman villa for the last time about 1,600 years ago.



Gestingthorpe Roman Villa, as depicted by artist Benjamin Perkins, (c) Ashley Cooper.

Note especially the white dividing roof tiles, semi-circular room on the south-eastern corner and craftsman's workshop to the right.

Addendum: In 2014 Ashley was awarded the prestigious Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group's 'Silver Lapwing' Farming and Conservation Award by His Grace, The Duke of Westminster. The award, sponsored by Waitrose, recognises the extensive efforts Ashley makes to protect and enhance the countryside. The farm was chosen from a national shortlist of four farms, each selected for demonstrating outstanding commitment to good environmental practices, alongside the production of food.

Anne Grimshaw

GONE UP IN FLAMES - Book review

This welcome addition to books on Sudbury, *Inns to Ashes* by Peter Thorogood, tells the story of the Rose and Crown and the Four Swans, two iconic inns that hosted the great and good of Sudbury and the men and women who served them. Both inns were destroyed by fire, the former in 1922 and the latter in 1997.

Having been an innkeeper himself, Peter is well qualified to cast an eye over his predecessors: Joseph George (1853-1901), landlord of the Rose and Crown, a cricketer and a freemason, and William Bailey (1843-1904) landlord of the Four Swans, also a cricketer and freemason, as well as an alderman and councillor. Both were pillars of Sudbury society themselves and fulfilled their civic duties admirably. There is a short biography of each man with family photos and other documents.

The inns themselves are illustrated by old photographs, drawings and paintings of lively coaching scenes. A photo of the courtyard shows what a wonderful building the Rose and Crown was. (Winch and Blatch is now on the site.) The Rose and Crown was a coaching inn and coaches left from here for their destination at the Spread Eagle, Gracechurch St, London.

Menus for various functions show the kind of fare on offer: turbot, lobster, pheasant, partridge... as well as the less attractive sounding boiled beef and mutton. A programme of the musical accompaniments lists now-forgotten items such as 'Mandolinette', a gavotte by Fabian Rose. The waltz, 'Louisiana Lou' sounds a bit jollier. But not everything was so genteel: in 1889 a cockfight between Suffolk and Essex birds was to be held there.



The Four Swans

Sudbury was immortalised in a non-too-flattering way by Charles Dickens in *The Pickwick Papers* as the rotten borough of Eatanswill. This Pickwick connection was embodied in the town by the Pickwick Society until it disbanded about 1999, its last dinner being held at the Four Swans.

The Four Swans on North Street now houses M & Co., a High Street fashion chain, but at least above the shop windows is a hint of the old Four Swans in the windows and panels.

A niggle: some of the illustrations in this book are slightly pixelated/fuzzy reproduction which is a shame when compared with others which are sharp and clear.

I have to admit a little input in the book for Peter asked if I could find the grave of William Bailey in Sudbury cemetery. We knew the plot number, it should have been easy but it proved to be a grave with no headstone or ornament, only a 'kerb' around it, most of which had sunk and become buried so that little was left above the ground. It required a considerable amount of real digging with a spade to reveal the kerb showing the name of William Bailey. I had, in fact been standing on it to photograph the stone angel that marks Joseph George's grave!



**The Rose and Crown
before 1922**

Inns to Ashes by Peter Thorogood. £7.95. All proceeds to the Sudbury Freeman's Trust.

Anne Grimshaw

OUR NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU

Do the contributors' names seem familiar? We need some extra ones. Your article need not be long and can be just the one. As a guide, if you are new to the town what brought you here? What do you particularly like about Sudbury? (or dislike). If you have been here a while what changes have there been? What would you like to see done? Pictures are always nice but not essential.

Send your copy to patricia.thorpe@btinternet.com.

CONSULTATIONS

We have been active on your behalf responding to consultations on the Chilton Woods development, sites for more housing east of Sudbury and Great Cornard, and the western by pass. You can read what we said on our website.

www.sudburysociety.org.uk

BELLE VUE HOUSE: A VICTORIAN GENTLEMAN'S RESIDENCE

Belle Vue House, Newton Road, Sudbury, currently owned by Babergh District Council but now on the market (March 2015) for 'development', is under threat of demolition unless a buyer is found who can restore it *and* ensure it has a long-term stable financial future.

So, perhaps before it is too late, I have tried to discover the background to the house as not much seemed to be known about it – not even the architects or the landscape gardeners.

I have not had access to the deeds of the property and have had to use books, town directories, newspapers, census returns, wills and probate records and civil registration of births, marriages and deaths to put together a brief history of the present house. First of all: the present house was *not* built in the 18th century as is often stated in the newspapers. There was a house called Belle Vue on the same site that was built in the 18th century but that house no longer exists.

Another mistake is perpetuated by Grimwood and Kay's book, *History of Sudbury*. They state that the present house was built for Edmund Stedman. It wasn't. They do correctly state that the original house was demolished in 1871 – but Edmund Stedman died in 1864. So, when was it built and who was the architect?

TO BUILDERS.
PARTIES desiring to TENDER for the Erection of a RESIDENCE for Henry C. Canham, Esq., at Sudbury, Suffolk, are requested to make early application to the undersigned, at their Offices, No. 1, Bloomsbury Place, London.
SPALDING & KNIGHT, Architects.

The censuses for 1881 -1911 show Belle Vue House to be the home of Henry Crabb Canham and his family. But when did they move in? The earliest town directory showing Belle Vue House lived in by Henry Canham is 1874. A trawl of newspapers on the internet (*FindmyPast*) searching under the name 'Canham' and 'Sudbury' from 1871 (the demolition of the earlier house) onwards, produced a scoop! An

advert for a builder in the *Ipswich Journal* of 8 June 1872 gave the names of the architects! Spalding and Knight of London. The Holy Grail! Something that no one now appeared to have known.

This was a partnership of Henry Spalding and Samuel Knight. Both later became Fellows of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Both had designed significant buildings, now Grade II Listed, many of them in London. These included Dulwich and Camberwell Public Baths, Finchley Road Synagogue, a monument in Highgate Cemetery, offices in Covent Garden and a Temperance Hotel, Langholm, Scotland. Spalding and Knight were not provincial nobodies in the architecture world.



And look at this: Victoria Square, Manchester. It's pretty impressive. Henry Spalding won a competition for designing dwellings 'for the working classes' in Manchester.

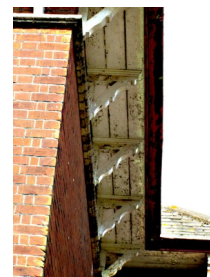
So, let's have a look at their efforts at Belle Vue. As you look at the photographs, try to imagine it *without* the later unsympathetic flat-roofed additions, out-of-

keeping doors and windows, cables, pipework, air conditioners, notice boards, signs, bins and scruffy vegetation. Better still, go and have a look at the building itself: imagine the walls cleaned so that the red bricks glow contrasting with the white string course that encircles the house. Imagine the greenery on the main road lowered, so that the elevated façade, resplendent in red and white, stands proudly above the traffic and pedestrians.

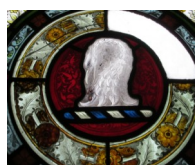


Imagine the portico over the front door and the stonework on the porch pillars and over the windows cleaned to a pale buff, revealing the sharpness of the decorative leaves, shells and shields.

Then look at the roof. Imagine the fancy corbels under the overhang of the roof painted a bright white – and the window frames with their fine glazing bars to match.



At the east end are two long, narrow windows on either side of a half-landing. Inside, the staircase with its turned banister rails leads up to three stained glass windows on the half-landing. I have heard it said that the stained glass (actually painted glass) "isn't much" but it is decorative and so typical of its time – mid Victorian. The middle panel's centre circle shows the Pelican-in-her-Piety – an image of self-sacrifice: a pelican (with eagle-like head) plucking at her own breast to draw blood to nurture her young.



continued on p. 8

And what of the other two panels? Both have decorative animals and birds, fish and flowers, but in the centre of the right-hand one are the entwined initials HCC – Henry Crabb Canham and the left-hand panel has the entwined initials EEC – Ellen Elizabeth Canham, Henry's wife. The Canhams are listed on the 1911 census: Henry Crabb Canham, a solicitor; Ellen Elizabeth, his wife; Ellen Mary, his daughter; Alfred Henry, his son and also a solicitor, plus a live-in a cook, parlour maid and housemaid. The house had 15 rooms excluding scullery, lobby and various others. Henry Canham was one of Sudbury's leading citizens being at various times Clerk to Board of Guardians of the Workhouse, Clerk to the Paving Commissioners, Clerk to Sudbury Union and Superintendent Registrar. The Canhams had lived there for over 40 years – the only family to have lived in the house on a long-term basis.

A photograph of 1910 shows a garden party with elegant guests but within four years the visitors to Belle Vue House were very different, for it was taken over in 1914 and converted into a Red Cross Hospital for wounded and sick soldiers in the First World War. This was probably Belle Vue's 'finest hour'. Many local women became VADs – Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses. The house was sold in 1922. The sale particulars describe the reception rooms containing white marble mantles and stoves and the lobbies had tiled floors. There was a bathroom and WC, a telephone cupboard, wine cellars and a larder. There were stables, flower gardens, two kitchen gardens, croquet lawn, tennis court and greenhouse. The whole estate covered five acres. The gardens were laid out by James Veitch and Sons, the largest family-run plant nurseries in Europe during the 19th century. In 1902 Veitch laid out the gardens at Ascott House in Buckinghamshire for Leopold de Rothschild and his wife. So Belle Vue House's gardens were up there with the best of them! In 1936 Belle Vue was sold to Sudbury Town Council for £2,500. Then, following local government



www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk/photoarchive/viewimage.asp?id=206]

reorganisation in 1974, the property passed to Babergh District Council which has owned it ever since. The Belle Vue House was built when Sudbury was a prosperous market town, a fitting residence for the family of a Victorian gentleman. Now it seems to arouse strong feelings: some dislike it and refer to it as a 'monstrosity' and not worth keeping – exactly like those people who wished to see the Corn Exchange demolished in 1964. Others love it and call it 'the finest Victorian house in Sudbury'. So which is it? (Note: Belle Vue was the setting for the "public enquiry" into the fate of the Corn Exchange. Stephen Thorpe)

But who will own it next? And what will they do with it? Or will it go the way of its predecessor? And all that will remain will be photographs?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b03k1zvf/restoring-englands-heritage-south-west>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b03k1zq3/restoring-englands-heritage-north-east-and-cumbria>

(These programmes are from last year available on iPlayer but they take on a new significance now we have Belle Vue House in a similar situation to some of these buildings – interesting – and so familiar. Definitely worth watching. They are each 30 minutes).

I'll just reiterate my thoughts: I know about and appreciate the problems and the lack of a long-term financial strategy for Belle Vue to ensure it can earn its keep, but if Belle Vue is demolished, the town loses another historic building – another piece of its character gone, its sense of place dwindles and it starts on the downhill path to become Clonville... Remember Borehamgate Precinct, the Post Office and Sulby House on North Street ... it could happen again. There's no guarantee we'll get some wonderful new architecture that is a real asset and worthy of being at the gateway to the town. To those of you who say "demolish Belle Vue – it has no architectural merit" – be careful what you wish for... We could get something a lot worse... Sorry to be pessimistic but I am still suffering from the "architects' dreams / citizens' nightmares" of the 1950s-70s.

Anne Grimshaw

PLANNING

Along with the big issues your planning group looks at and if necessary comments on the small scale stuff – shop fronts, domestic alterations, extensions. We always hope for something positive and creative, however minor, which we feel will add to the town's ongoing heritage, and occasionally we are rewarded. For those who feel we should not lose links with the town's past some good news – the proposal to remove the original Anchor sign above the new Javelin shop as part of new signage has been withdrawn.

We have been updating the Local List – on the negative side we have decided to omit those buildings, usually houses, where "modernising", such as pvc windows, has seriously damaged their character, but on the positive one we have added buildings which should have been included earlier along with more recent ones, both individual ones and groups.

Stephen Thorpe

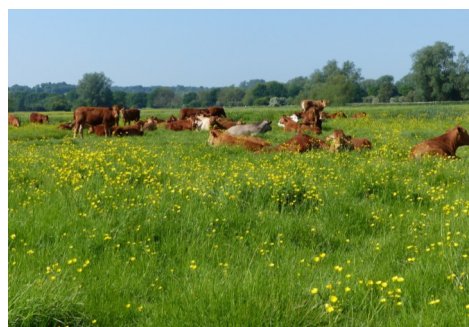
SUDBURY RIVERSIDE *continued from page 1*

Many other species have also been doing well including: Barn Owls—10 young raised; Buzzards which have recently started nesting; fish varieties have increased since dredging was stopped and thus provide food for Grey Herons which were rare and are now a common sight, and many others. The Egyptian Goose is an extremely rare visitor.

Heather Coltman



Egyptian Goose



Fullingpit Meadow in May

CHEESE AND WINE CHRISTMAS QUIZ

About 70 people enjoyed the Society's Christmas event, cheese and wine and a quiz on 12 December. The room in the Masonic Hall had been beautifully set out with coloured tablecloths, pretty table decorations, bottles of wine and crackers. The food was laid out on a side table, the raffle prizes on another and the quiz scoreboard stood waiting. Lorna Hoey, the Society's new Chair, welcomed everyone and explained the plan for the evening before handing over to Rod and Lyn Gray who were the quiz master/mistress and scorers. Each team chose a name and then we were off with the quiz rounds. Meanwhile, each table had a 'marathon' to be worked on throughout the evening – the answers to cryptic clues were London tube stations. Very clever and original; for example "A rough channel crossing would...?" An Answer: "Turnham Green!" Groan! More groans greeted the usual cracker jokes "What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?" Answer: "A Christmas quacker!"

Putting a quiz together requires a lot of thought (I know because I am working on one for the Suffolk Family History Society). You can't have too many difficult or obscure questions as people get discouraged, you can't have too many really easy ones as it's boring because everyone knows the answers.



Photo: Heather Coltman

You can't have just topics that *you* are interested in. You have to pitch it to the participants. Rod and Lyn got it just right. When all that was over the raffle was drawn using a speeded up method which was much better than the often long, drawn-out procedure of drawing numbers. One of the prizes was a copy of Peter Thorogood's new book *Inns to Ashes* (about Sudbury's two main hotels – the Rose and Crown and the Four Swans – (see review on p.4) and a copy of David Burnett's excellent book *Sudbury: the Unlisted Heritage*. Peter then acted as auctioneer in disposing of the left-over cheese with the proceeds going to Gainsborough's House.

A big thank-you to Rosemary Woodward, Tina Read, Lorna Hoey, Sue Ayres, Rod and Lyn Gray, for all their hard work in the preparation and to Peter Thorogood for use of the Masonic Hall at no charge. (I hope I haven't forgotten anyone there!)

Anne Grimshaw

HEALTH CENTRE - 2 contrasting views



(1.) Stephen Thorpe

To some this will seem a lot of unnecessary carping when Peter Clifford and others worked so hard to achieve it but I just wish it was a better tribute to their efforts on our behalf.

I spent some time wandering around this building inside and out trying to work out how it fitted together. An architectural obsession I'm afraid. Finally I located the fire plans and all became clearer, on paper if not in reality. Basically the building comprises a rectangular two storey spine block which kinks in the middle and which is faced with shiny grey panels with individual windows. Attached to it are two partly curved blocks with white rendered walls and horizontal strip windows with coloured panels. The attractive two storey block which you see as you approach the Centre contains Siam surgery on the ground floor. The single storey one which is largely hidden round the back contains Physiotherapy. Both enclose a courtyard thus providing daylight to all consulting and related rooms.

Why the two disparate styles in the one building? I could not detect a functional reason. It does lead to some awkward junctions outside and in. I did wonder whether the building was a diagram realised in three dimensions rather than the result of a creative dialogue right through to completion between architect, consultants and clients, all of them, including the users. I wondered also whether this was a "design and build" project, beloved of civil servants, where the architect is not, for supposed cost saving reasons, engaged to deal with those all important details. I was assured otherwise but there is the evident lack of care over some details which is often the result. And some strange decisions: main stairs wider than four feet, two lifts? And the apparent lack of an access consultant or lack of attention to the guidance available – aluminium door handles rather than contrasting ones fitted to aluminium doors for example. The rather defensive reception counter could have been better detailed with people of shorter stature or using wheelchairs in mind if some good examples had been studied. And the signage is generally too discreet in size and positioning for easy wayfinding.

The approach to the building is announced by a bright orange curving wall which sadly ends with a harsh right angle on the way to the entrance. For all the welcome colours and curves the process of entering and leaving the building does not seem to have been thoroughly discussed at an early stage. Does a small community building need an airport type lobby with two sets of automated doors which are constantly activated by people waiting, hesitating, queuing? Or could it have been something more friendly and appropriate with better sheltered space outside to wait for transport and space inside to orientate oneself, look for clues as to where to go?

The central space is very indeterminate. It's where the spine block meets or clashes with the curvy wings, and there are no obvious routes to Physiotherapy, lifts, stairs to the upper floor, and above all the tucked away toilets – very important to older people like me! I did query at planning stage why there was no provision within Siam surgery – it could be quite a wayfinding exercise to leave Siam, locate and use the toilet, then get back. There is provision in Audiology.

Waiting arrangements are the acid test in such buildings and very difficult to get right. That for Audiology is quite well defined with a view out, that for Physiotherapy seems rather mean, perhaps emphasized by the narrow double height space although there is a view into a courtyard. Waiting for blood tests is unresolved because there is no appointments system and numbers can vary with provision needed for enough chairs to cope with a large number. The waiting experience is not a nice one with the ceiling oppressively low after the daylight entrance – one soon tires of the insistent digital messages screen. And the all important route to the toilets is blocked or impeded. Waiting here does make me wonder whether the building solution was arrived at or agreed on too soon and after not enough discussion.

And since the first floor space above seems excessive was a double height space considered with daylight flooding in?

(2) Robin Drury - First impressions

It's not often that I come across a piece of architecture in the UK that gets my pulse racing. It seems both appropriate and a blessing that, in the new Sudbury Community Health Centre we have such a building. For the NHS to depart from its standard blue/grey steel and glass carton design and allow both the architects and local influence to govern the end result deserves much praise. Just for once Sudbury has come by a truly flagship piece of modern architectural design.

Praise too to Peter Clifford, who took a small group of us on the open day tour around the building. Peter, now retired chairman of Chilton Parish Council, has been in the thick of getting this concept right with the Primary Care Trust for eleven years. I suspect he is behind major touches such as the sweeping curved structure, the energy efficient heat exchangers and the planted roofscapes. I was also struck by the beauty of the location, with views across open countryside to little Chilton Church, nestling in the valley below. How inappropriate it seems to dump Prolog's gigantic warehouses here, apparently hard up against the health centre's southern boundary.

The internal treatment is as breathtaking as the outside, with a sense of originality, light and space. There is an organic and friendly feel to the layout and much of the core of the building seems to have done away with the need for 'rooms' and corridors at all. So nice to see how varied and high spec furniture design adds so much interest at every turn - although the cerise coloured padded chairs are just a bit over the top!

This is a building that lifts the spirits and must go a long way to helping the medics set their patients on the road to recovery.

HISTORY OF WINCH AND BLATCH TO PRESENT

Judith Blatch our speaker for the evening had a packed audience to hear her talk on the history and development of both the buildings and the well known business in the town. She began by giving a little background on the company and how it became Winch and Blatch. Before the second World War Lennie Winch (son of founder Charles) had traded as a Draper and Milliner in premises at 22 King Street, next to the Rose and Crown Hotel. One night in 1922 a disastrous fire broke out in the hotel. The fire brigade found their hoses were too short to reach the bottom of a nearby well so other water sources had to be found. A strong wind didn't help as there was a hardware shop next to Winch's with quantities of flammable goods which could have blown up most of the town centre. We were shown old photographs of the devastation with nothing left standing between the hardware shop and the current alley next to the former Mauldon's brewery.

Judith went on to tell how it was discovered that the old building (now the main shop) dated from C.1320 as it has a 'crude' crown post which did not feature in buildings of earlier date. A parlour was added some time in the 16th C. It was altered again in 17th C. when the row of sash windows was added on the first floor and the jetting filled in. It may have been a wealthy merchant's house. Rumours of cellar tunnels linked to the church are unfounded - Judith had explored herself!

In 1963 John Blatch decided to modernise some of the premises. On the fashion shop the up-to-the-minute laminated Greek Urn façade was *not* universally popular - 'vulgar', 'revolting' and 'rubbishy' just some of the comments made about it. However, it went ahead and was there until the early 2000s when it was rebuilt again as it is today. An operation much delayed by the opening up of a large 'sink hole' caused by one of the numerous streams that run underground in the town. This and much other interesting information about the shops and stores which have come and gone over the years brought the first half to a close. After the break Judith told us more about the difficulties of trading in a small town in the 21st C., with some astonishing facts and figures on closures and changes in shopping habits since 1991. The British apparently having a passion for online shopping that outstrips even the U.S.A.! As was pointed out, online shopping pays no business rates or other overheads and contributes little or nothing to the local economy whereas local shops contribute almost 60%. Winch & Blatch employ 70 full and part time staff and use local tradesmen for any work that needs to be carried out, thus keeping the local wheels turning.

There was much food for thought in Judith's interesting presentation and possibly some crusading by the Sudbury Society on the matter of business rates.

Heather Coltman

MORE LITTLE SOCIETY

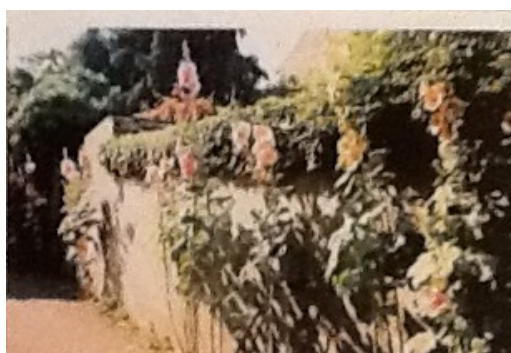
Following on from the Autumn 2014 Newsletter (back page) '*Little Society at Work*' we were asked for any more 'citizen created gardens' in public areas. It's not the best time of the year for gardens now but here are some photos I took earlier this year of the gardens created by the residents on Gregory Street in front of their newish flats opposite the fire station. Note the hanging basket in the tree in the picture on the right. Nice!



Anne Grimshaw

A LABOUR OF LOVE

Also following on from and in praise of the two pieces of planting displayed in the *Little Society at Work* article in the Autumn Newsletter, here are further examples of working with nature in maintaining lively and colourful areas in our environment.



Top two photos: Noah's Ark Lane, Cross Street, leading to Sudbury's water meadows.

Bottom three photos: The river's edge at the foot of gardens 63 and 61 Cross Street.

Evidence shows, as one walks around our charming and ancient market town, that individuals work diligently on their immediate surroundings. Hopefully this approach and the examples collectively will inspire and encourage continued revitalisation of other neglected areas.

Jude Biggs