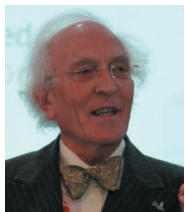




New proposals for St Peter's revealed

The Friends of St Peter were able to display the draft concepts put together by the Churches Conservation Trust, at a public consultation event held recently. Chairman Roger Green (*left*) said



"We have long known that in order to be a key focus for town centre community events, we need to

provide better facilities. It is our intention to bring some changes within the building including installation of a mezzanine gallery, toilets, an improved food serving area and an improved interpretation centre.

See page 14

Bus Station resiting still wrong?

A noisy public meeting to review the outcome of the Steering Group's deliberations on the chosen site learnt that this was one of the two Girling Street options, the in-line one rather than the reverse-out one. The split site option was summarily dismissed as undeliverable in the short term. The need for most bus services to make a complete circuit of the one-way system in order to come along Girling Street seemed a minor disadvantage compared with the loss of 71 very well-sited parking spaces.

See page 9



Section of St Peters Church on the Market Hill, showing new mezzanine

Decision hangs over Belle Vue House

Anne Grimshaw has researched the history of the house and gave a talk at the Quay History Talks on 24 January. Anne's presentation illustrated highlights of architectural detail that re-inforced the fact that Sudbury may well lose one of its finer Victorian



buildings. Owners, Babergh DC, are currently poised to announce the impending sale to a preferred developer. If a viable use for the house cannot be found, the site may have to be developed in a way that requires demolition.

See page 11

Chilton Woods - planning deadline

The most important planning application for Sudbury submitted in the last 15 years is now open until the 18th March for public consultation. The Society's planning team is currently working on a formal response to the application. Why not get involved and put your views too?

See page 9

Solution to traffic - let's do easy stuff

Committee member Sam Thornton has suggested a range of simple changes which need to be explored. They are simple, cost effective and practical, and they could ease the flow of traffic in Sudbury town centre. Perhaps Suffolk Highways could look at implementing some of these.

See page 14

TOWARDS A TOWN PLAN

The ongoing discussions about re-siting the bus station in order to facilitate the development of the Hamilton Road Quarter seem to be taking place in a vacuum. New houses are being built on part of 'Peoples Park', the Chilton Woods development has been submitted for planning permission, there are other housing developments being considered, all of which will impact on streets such as East Street/Waldingfield Road, and together with development of the Hamilton Road Quarter, on parking provision within the town centre.

Since the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan, on which Hadleigh and Lavenham have already embarked, has been discounted for Sudbury, the need for an agreed Town Plan is pressing. Here are some suggestions for what it should contain.

An assessment of the town's assets:

NATURAL ASSETS such as the Commonlands, Friars Meadow, the Croft.

HERITAGE ASSETS such as our urban spaces prime of which are Market Hill and Old Market Place, our historic streets, our listed and unlisted buildings.

COMMUNAL ASSETS such as the markets, a train service and our many cultural ones such as a still functioning Library, The Quay theatre, Gainsborough House, Belle Vue House and Park.

All these assets need to be valued and protected from damaging developments.

An awareness of the threats to these assets:

THROUGH TRAFFIC. Is a western bypass at all likely, what immediate solutions are possible and could they be long term ones if necessary?

TOWN GENERATED TRAFFIC. While the heavy through traffic is causing structural damage it is this ever increasing local traffic which is causing more nitrogen dioxide pollution, particularly from diesel engines. Use of buses should be positively encouraged along with other means of discouraging car use. This is a bigger issue than just re-siting the bus station.

ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY

This is a concern of the Society going back to a survey Val Herbert and I carried out in 2003.

It should be considered alongside Sam Thornton's

suggestions for low cost in-town solutions. Possibly a new survey dealing with both traffic and people in the interests of improving all ways of getting round the town. Pavements need to be wider, crossings made safer, surfaces made less hazardous, traffic speeds reduced probably more effectively by physical measures than lower and hard to monitor lower speed limits. Elimination of traffic lights may counter-intuitively improve traffic flow and benefit pedestrians as the raised crossing in King Street demonstrates when functioning as intended.

Stephen Thorpe

AFTER THE FIRE

Javelin and the HSBC building are currently under plastic sheeting to allow restoration to proceed in dry conditions.

The owner of Javelin has applied for planning permission and listed building consent for converting the top floor to residential use and reinstating the original dormers. A historic building survey was therefore required and this was provided by Philip Aitkens, an experienced historic buildings consultant. This is a fascinating but interim document since more investigation needs to be undertaken. It is also frustrating as it provides tantalising evidence of the old White Swan Inn, particularly a painted timber framed screen which is presently under the Javelin sheeting but may have been an element in the Inn.

To quote from Philip's email to me - "As for no.41/42, it was completely demolished, and as far as I know, no archaeological assessment was made of the remains before the clear-up was done. I can comment that this was a serious omission because I was only employed by the owners of the Anchor site. When an urban site becomes vacant in these circumstances there is no real benefit in replicating the old façade - it would at best be a copy without a history. What is needed is a modern building designed to a high standard by a proven architect which will make a positive contribution to the centre of the town".

Stephen Thorpe

From the Chairman's Desk...anyone for an Options?

Oh, if only some of my tasks this month had been as easy as ripping open a small sachet of cocoa powder and settling down to a warm and comforting drink. The presentation of the Options for the siting of the Bus Station, held at the Town Hall, proved more difficult to cope with. At the end of the meeting each member of the Sudbury Steering Committee (and I am one) was asked to make a choice: Option A having been discounted, would it be Option B or Option C? I felt a massive weight of responsibility as my turn came to pronounce judgement. Which would the Society members choose? Had I a right to decide on their behalf, not having been able to consult them?

In the end I said something about not being able to speak for the Society as a whole. And I could not make a strong argument for either option. I felt that, overall, Option C, the drive-through layout in Girling Street, was the best of the two, yet the drive-in-reverse-out Option B, also in Girling Street, had its good points. (The Society's alternative - our plan for a series of bus stops around town and an out-of-town 'hub' near the Health Centre was fully described in the local Press and created some interest but was not considered.)

Mine was not a dynamic and convincing response. In fact, a better example of fence-sitting I have not recently come across, but it was the best I could do in the situation. In the end, Option C won the day. Seventy-one parking spaces will be lost with no plans to replace them (also the case with Option B) which is difficult to understand when there is a drive to attract increased retail and tourism to our town.

No other options were discussed when it came to deciding which campaigns the Society should consider this Spring: the retention of a second fire engine for Sudbury and also of the free three-hour parking facility. We support these wholeheartedly and hope for a positive outcome.

Another option presented itself recently: whether to flounder my way through Suffolk County Council's document, the Chilton Woods Outline Planning Application, or simply to give up and hope that some astute Committee member with expertise in code-breaking could provide some means of explanation. Thankfully this has proved to be the case and you

can read more elsewhere in this NewsJournal. Why the necessary interpretation? The publication consists of no less than 151 separate documents with many corresponding attachments. There are no straightforward headings or summaries, and many hours of work (I kid you not) are required to discover where individual sections are contained within the application, in order that people can respond – by 18th March, incidentally. Is this sort of nonsense designed to deliberately discourage public response? A major development such as Sudbury has not seen for many years will surely affect all our lives and change the character of our town – and it isn't an option.

And any mention of the Bypass, you might ask? I quote: '...it is important to note that this major piece of infrastructure is an entirely separate proposal and not a requirement directly attributable to the Chilton Woods scheme...' So there we are. Sorry.

Time to reach for that sachet of cocoa, methinks.



Traffic trouble 1

Your Chairperson hunts in vain for a parking space in Girling Street car park on the morning of Wednesday 27th January. According to a January traffic survey, there should be no problem here, except on Market Days. Wrong!

Traffic trouble 2

My friend Eddie was driving down the road and met a car coming the other way. Although there was room to pass easily Eddie forced the on-coming car to slow down, wound down the window and shouted 'Pig!' The other driver looked in his rear-view mirror and uttered the usual expletives at Eddie. Then he hit the pig...

THE VICTORIAN GHOST HUNTER

October's meeting was the day before Hallowe'en and so one SudSoc committee member turned up on her broomstick, apparently purchased from Witch and Blatch, and witches' hats were in evidence.

The speaker also took a spooky theme: Andrew Selwyn-Crome, with goatee beard, in natty embroidered waistcoat, wearing a top hat and carrying a cane, epitomised the Victorian ghost hunter. The tools of his trade were displayed: dowsing rods, a Bible, cotton thread, candle, thermometer, clock, compass, rosary beads, holy water, crucifix, mirror, notebook and pencil. And a pickled baby werewolf, from Rumania, I think he said... hmmm...

Andrew began by setting the scene of this period of intense intellectual debate when natural sciences were beginning to explain the world in ways that challenged the traditional, religious views. Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) was one of these.

About the same time there was a burgeoning of paranormal claims which included speaking to the dead through a medium who may or may not have been a fraudster. It was surprising just how many mediums' séance rooms had curtains in them... Strange too that the dear departed should manifest themselves by vomiting 'ectoplasm' (aka cheesecloth).

Then there were ghosts, apparitions, poltergeists and spirits (non-alcoholic) of various kinds that led to the foundation of the Ghost Club in 1862.

Since Borley Rectory burned down, the title of the 'most haunted house in Britain' is claimed by Abbey House, Barnwell, near Cambridge. Andrew explained that it had a ghostly nun (I misheard and thought he said 'gnome' which, for a moment or two, rather gave the wrong impression) who had committed some misdemeanour with a local monk (we can guess what). She was walled up for her 'sin'.



**Abbey House,
Barnwell**

So was there life after death? Only the dead could tell us.

It was to investigate such claims that the Society for Psychical Research was established in 1882. The Society also looked at mesmerism, telepathy and hypnosis. It was a genuine attempt to prove scientifically, one way or another, apparently paranormal events. And to do this required equipment, methodology and recording – using the things that Andrew had set out before him. The haunted room to be investigated could be sealed using cotton thread which would break if disturbed, chalk to draw around 'control objects' to check if they had moved, thermometer to record any change in temperature and so on.

This was not a Society for 'nutters' but a genuine attempt to investigate some of the intellectual debates of the period, not all of which have been resolved even today.

Anne Grimshaw



**Victorian ghost hunter
Andrew Selwyn Crome**



Victorian ghost hunting equipment

WE'LL MEET AGAIN

January's meeting saw the return of Bryan Thurlow who had last year entertained us with his history and characters of music hall. Here he was a different persona: 'Billy Jackson', now a pearly king from Bethnal Green, recounted his stay as an evacuee on a Suffolk farm during WW2 and the dramatic events that befell him and his sister, Doris, on their brief return to London.

If we hadn't known that Bryan was too young to have been an evacuee, we'd have thought he actually had been!

Billy's childhood had been spent in Bethnal Green in a close-knit community based on his family (Mum, Dad and sister) and a neighbour 'Auntie Maud'. He recounted charabanc trips to Southend before the war and the joys (or otherwise) of eating winkles with a pin.

As war threatened, he captured perfectly the mood of the time, the seriousness of adults and the lack of understanding of children. His father, a milkman, joined the army and left the family home but there was the thrill of going on a train with his sister to stay with relatives on a Suffolk farm and the delight of seeing a litter of piglets and ride on their uncle's big Suffolk horse, Sampson.

Still there at Christmas 1939, his mother sent him a present of a knitted balaclava and a pair of gloves and a promise she would be with them for Christmas but then came the disappointment that she

had to work at the munitions factory over Christmas after all. Billy and Doris went home, however, after Christmas when Dad had a 48-hour leave and they stayed there as everything was quiet – the Phoney War.

In September 1940 the London Blitz began. At first they hid under the stairs then joined others sheltered in the Tube.

He spoke of the palpable tension as people emerged from the shelter after the air raids and the shock of his mother on seeing their house wrecked. It was horrible. Billy and Doris returned to Suffolk. The devastating news that his father was "missing presumed dead" was broken to Billy by his uncle when they went to fetch Sampson from his field. It was very touching.

Billy returned to Bethnal Green after the war and lived with his mother in a new prefab. Later, he became a milkman, like his father.

Anne Grimshaw

Evacuee Poster



MY EVACUEE EXPERIENCE

I found Bryan's 'performance' very interesting, reminding me of the months I spent as an evacuee. I was only nine years old, and together with my five year old sister and many of my classmates, was sent away for safety as the doodlebugs had started to fall. I have a very clear memory of us all standing on the platform waiting for the train to take us to Exeter in Devon. We felt as if we were going to the end of the world. There we stood, not knowing what was happening and in fact not even being informed of our destination, our box containing our gas mask flung over our shoulders and, in many cases, with a luggage label pinned to our coats to say who we were.

Patricia Thorpe



Gas masks & labels

Have YOU any memories of being an evacuee? We would love to hear them, even if it is just a few lines. Send to:

patricia.thorpe@btinternet.com



Waiting for the train

CHRISTMAS QUIZ & BUFFET

If you arrived at the Sudbury Society Christmas Quiz and Buffet evening thinking 'This is going to be a walk-over; a prize is definitely ours' then I hope you had more success than the poor unfortunates at my table. The Quiz was a musical one, provided by Sue Ayres and much looked forward to as it was such a novelty to have a musical quiz for a change, plus its theme was Sixties and Seventies music. Well, what a treat! No nasty modern pop stuff, but decent old numbers like Lipstick On Your Collar and artists like Pat Boone and Eddie Cochran – what could be better?

When the musical questions started coming thick and fast our table soon realised we were in trouble. Oh, we knew the song 'Dream Lover' so well, but who sang it? And we hummed along to 'A Teenager in Love' but who was the artist? Cliff Richard? Marty Wilde?

A sumptuous buffet at half-time, plus bottles of red and white wine on the tables, eased the pain somewhat, but as the evening wore on it became apparent that our table was not going to star. Perhaps our youth had not been depraved enough to know all the answers? At any rate we had some worthy winners, who were much admired for their vast and hitherto useless knowledge of 'vintage' music.

Sue gave us a most entertaining evening, providing all the music and the questions, and also some dexterous finger-work on the CD player when we needed re-plays or had forgotten the question. Many thanks to her and to all who helped to make this evening one of our most enjoyable – even though my table didn't win. Didn't come near, in fact.

**Bobby Darin sang 'Dream Lover' and 'A Teenager in Love' was sung by Dion and the Belmonts – but, of course, you knew that...*

Lorna Hoey

A MAYOR'S TALE

November's meeting was a talk by former mayor, Adrian Osborne, who began by clarifying that this was to be a mayor's tale, not a mare's tail! It was a very personal talk in which Adrian briefly described his background of living in London before coming to Sudbury (via Great Dunmow and Frinton); his passion for cricket and his role as a cricket umpire and his early life as an engineering apprentice. He found Sudbury to be full of generosity, kindness, volunteers of all sorts and huge community spirit.

Being mayor was, he said, a huge honour. In 2009

he was elected mayor for the first time – the 678th mayor – a role which dates back to 1331. He was mayor for a second time in 2013. The role demands responsibility, a variety of special skills and 'personality'. It sometimes involves making difficult decisions and coping with sadness but the rewards are many: pride, happiness and being an ambassador for Sudbury perhaps being the main ones. Sudbury has a reputation its civic pride and its representatives are welcomed everywhere; Sudbury is highly regarded throughout Suffolk.

But what does a mayor do? Well, Sudbury is a pretty busy place and there is no shortage of events that require the mayor's presence. Some of these are 'one-offs' such as 'shadowing a councillor' where four school students accompanied a councillor in his or her duties for an insight into local government. Then there was the centenary re-enactment of the unveiling of the Gainsborough statue in 2013, the opening of the new entrance to the Quaker Meeting House.

Other events are annual such as the St George's Day service, the Poppy Appeal, the Remembrance Day Parade, Armed Forces Day, Sudbury Festival of Dance, Drama and Music, Sudbury in Bloom and the Christmas card competition. Some of these events involve young people and charities of various kinds.

There have been sad times such as the death of much-loved Reverend Greg Webb and the closure of Sudbury Middle School. There are frustrating times such as writing to the *Suffolk Free Press* to correct TV presenter Fiona Bruce's negative and incorrect comments about the town. There are happy times such as sending a letter of congratulation on the birth of Prince George and receiving a letter of thanks from the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. There was cycling in Sudbury's participation in 'Most Active Town', the provision of more paths in the Gainsborough Trail and receiving a Gold Award for Sudbury in Bloom in 2013.

On a personal level Adrian referred to his devastating cancer diagnosis but he has come through that and feels humbled and honoured to have been mayor of Sudbury



The Mayors' Chain

and happy to devote his time and efforts to its citizens. Andrew rounded off his talk by reading a poem about how it feels to be an EX-mayor.

Anne Grimshaw

IDEAS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF TRAFFIC FLOWS IN SUDBURY

During the course of our regular committee meetings, it is absolutely clear that one of the principal issues impacting on Sudbury is that of traffic. Therefore, I thought I would look at a range of simple changes which could be explored and which I think might ease congestion in our road network and improve the situation. A copy of the detailed ideas is available on the Sudbury Society website at www.sudburysociety.org.uk and under the heading of Latest News, the ideas can be seen under the heading 'Those Town Centre Traffic Lights!'.

In traffic terms, the town centre junction where the A134 meets the A131 at the bottom of Melford Road, is one of the major junctions in the town. Linked to this flow of traffic is a three way pedestrian crossing without traffic lights which is heavily used, particularly at school opening and closing times for St Joseph's Primary and the Ormiston Academy. This junction only is congested when there is a backlog of traffic from Girling Street. A good advert for not installing traffic lights. I question whether the traffic lights on the A131 at The Croft add anything to the flow of traffic through the town and if the traffic lights on The Croft Road/New Street junction remained in place, I believe this traffic could filter into the one way system, hence reducing evening rush hour traffic which queues along the road to the Gainsborough Street/Stour Street junction.

Now that the County Council have installed very reasonably priced (?) speed reducing ramps, in King Street could the pedestrian crossings at both ends of the Market Hill run without the necessity for traffic lights which often show red when there are no pedestrians waiting to cross. This could be done if the traffic was travelling at a speed appropriate to the town centre. The proposals include some ideas on this issue.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION CAUSED BY NARROW ROADS

In effect, Cross Street is a trunk route. Congestion should only occur when HGVs are trying to pass parked cars. One of the main reasons for this is that tentative car drivers wait when there is another domestic vehicle approaching. This is absolutely not necessary and, by simply remarking the central white line of the road at the mid point between the parking bays and the opposite kerb, it would encourage vehicles to keep moving slowly which would have the great benefit of reducing congestion and help to reduce pollution in this area. We all know that the only real solution involves a by-

pass but again this has a massive cost implication and environmental implication.

Moving now to the opposite side of town, East Street/Waldingfield Road is already heavily trafficked. The road is narrow and has parking and it suffers from the road either not being marked or being marked in the centre of the carriageway. This road can run in both directions for its full length if two domestic cars wish to pass. Vans and lorries or cars driving swiftly create the problem. We should therefore try to slow traffic for the present traffic levels which use the road but with the increase in traffic which will occur when People's Park and Chilton Woods is developed we think it is important to place a restriction on this road so that it is not available to heavy traffic other than buses. This action, together with a re-marking of the road and possible use of part of the pavement for parking, could radically improve the flow of traffic along this road.

Please read the detailed proposals on the Sudbury Society website and let us know if you have any comments. We have raised these ideas with Suffolk County Council officers and our County Councillors, together with local Babergh District Councillors who represent the town.

Sam Thornton

KEEPING IN TOUCH

The Society's website provides an in-depth profile of what the Society is about - news, ideals, contacts, events etc. It is also regularly updated with up to-the-minute information regarding our general stance on the many issues that surround the town's development and the preservation of its historic character. You are welcome to take on board our reasoning and also have your say. There is a 'comment' facility on the homepage - sudburysociety.org.uk. Here too you will find contact email addresses of committee members.

The Sudbury Society Facebook page has now gone live. Here you are welcome to follow us and leave your comments. Just go to Facebook and search for The Sudbury Society.

WEBSITES

It can be fascinating trawling through the internet for interesting websites but also frustrating. Here are a few sites mainly concerned with environmental and architectural issues which you can and should try. You may be able to share others.

sudburysociety.org.uk

our own site, now being upgraded and one you should visit often, you can now add your comments to articles.

sudburysuffolk.co.uk

concerned with the town, useful links to sites including the Heritage Centre.

cornard.info/contents.htm

worth a visit with stuff on Sudbury, like the bus station.

civicvoice.org.uk

the successor to the Civic Trust, the Society is a member.

cpre.org.uk

The Campaign to Protect Rural England.

suffolksociety.org

we are affiliated to this local branch of CPRE It is very much concerned with quality of new buildings.

historicengland.org.uk

now distinct from English Heritage and the government's statutory adviser on the historic environment and handles listing applications.

architecture.com

the RIBA website

spab.org.uk

set up by William Morris in reaction to the over restoration of older buildings especially churches, emphasises Protection not Restoration – new work to or in old buildings should be distinctive and of its time rather than a copy of the old.

victoriansociety.org

campaigns for Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

c20society.org.uk

campaigns for post 1914 buildings, currently concerned about steady loss of good 1960's buildings.

landmarktrust.org.uk

restores interesting old buildings for holiday lets, its work for Ashley House an example of applying SPAB principles to the new work.

[living- architecture.com](http://living-architecture.com)

commissions new buildings for lets, notorious for the Grayson Perry house

vam.ac.uk

Victorian and Albert Museum, undergoing updating, houses the architecture gallery with permanent and changing exhibitions.

designmuseum.org

changing exhibitions down river from Tower Bridge but due to move to Kensington.

assemblestudio.co.uk

the joker in the pack - the group of young architects and others who won the Turner Prize.

visionforfrome.org

a lively small town with a Council composed entirely of independents, maybe some ideas here.

suffolkefw.co.uk

the new energy from waste centre at Great Blakenham, where electricity is generated from your black bins. Community and visitor centre attached.

Stephen Thorpe

CHILTON WOODS CONSULTATION

***** IMPORTANT NEWS *****

The most important planning application for Sudbury submitted in the last 15 years is now open until the 18th March for public comments and observations. The Society urges everyone who is concerned about the future development and prosperity of the town to join in this process and make their views known to the local authority. The Society's planning team is currently working on a formal response to the local authority about the details surrounding the application.

We are horrified at the way in which the information is being made available to the general public. It is an extremely large application, which is supported by 151 separate documents, some of which individually are nearly 200 pages long. They cover all aspects of the development although the current matter for consideration is an outline consent with access details. The more detailed issues of house types, design etc. will follow in subsequent applications but it is still extremely important for everyone to become involved in this issue.

The proposals before us involve alterations to several road junctions around town and outline the scale and impact of the development which is planned to take place right through until 2031.

If you look on the Babergh District Council website, the information with regard to this application is frankly impenetrable, as has been mentioned by our Chairperson Lorna Hoey. To address this issue and facilitate easier access to the documents, we have already produced a more detailed list of the application's contents and a copy of this can be obtained by sending an email to: office@thorntons-agents.co.uk

Please let us know whether you are happy to receive further updates with regard to the Society's deliberation over this important issue and we will subsequently dispatch emails to you.

It will be impossible for the Society to incorporate everyone's views in a single formal response. It is therefore up to you to involve yourself if you wish to have any voice in this extremely important planning decision, and we urge you to do so.

Please get involved to try to ensure that we get the best possible solution for the future of Sudbury.

Sam Thornton

CHILTON WOODS AND THE BUS STATION

A noisy public meeting to review the outcome of the Steering Group's deliberations on the site of choice learnt that this was one of the two Girling Street options, the in-line one rather than the head-on one, the split site option having been summarily dismissed as undeliverable in the short term.

The need for most services to do a complete circuit of the one way system in order to come down Girling Street seemed a minor disadvantage compared with the loss of 71 very well sited parking spaces. In defence of this loss it was maintained that carpark usage was around 70%. On Market Days?

Concurrently the Chilton Woods development has finally been submitted for Outline Planning Permission. That the bus station solution should apparently have been studied and recommended without any reference to this development beggars belief.

Where will the cars from 1100 or so houses find parking spaces in the town centre? Equally seriously how will they reach the centre? Down Waldingfield Road/East Street? Out to the Melford bypass roundabout and in up Melford Road and down Girling Street? Down Newton Road? In all three cases ending up at Belle Vue junction.

Other solutions – more buses? Park and Ride? Possibly combined with a bus station out of the town centre with well distributed bus stops throughout the centre?

Any answers to this conundrum can be posted on our website.

Stephen Thorpe

CHILTON WOODS UPDATE

At a specially convened meeting we discussed the outline planning application, ably assisted by Sam Thornton who had heroically prepared a manageable précis of the 151 documents submitted. We resolved to make our individual responses to enable Lorna to compile and submit a formal Society response.

Stephen Thorpe

THE SUDBURY SAFETY NET

In early Victorian times life could be very hard for a young woman, especially if she made a mistake.

The on-going future of Walnut Tree Hospital, previously the Sudbury Union Workhouse, reminded me of the hard life led by one of my mother's ancestors. Her name was Eliza Smith, (married a second time to an older man, Daniel Gardiner of Newton), who for periods of her life found herself incarcerated in the Sudbury Union Workhouse. She died there in 1895 aged 66 years. She was born in nearby Gestingthorpe, her parents were John Smith a farm worker and Roseanna a straw plaiter. John's great grandfather's name was interestingly, Richard Perry alias Smith.

To support her parents she also worked as a straw plaiter and in the local Vicarage, which lay across a field from their tied cottage in Pot Kiln Chase. What fascinated me was the story she told me about how she became an unmarried mother, having a son called Alfred, born in June 1848. Alfred lived to the ripe old age of 98 dying in Walthamstow, London, in 1937. According to my Grandfather and other relatives, Alfred's father was none other than the Vicar of Gestingthorpe, Barrington Syer! (born in 1780). Barrington's grandmother, Sydney Arabella Cotton of Kentwell Hall, Long Melford was herself 'no stranger to controversy, having been divorced by her husband, Richard Moore, for having an affair with their Estate Steward, John Miller! A divorce at that time (1812) was an extremely expensive business and involved an Act of Parliament.

Having some scepticism about the tale of Alfred's birth, which had been well covered by the Syer family and local establishment, I made up my mind to see if I could get at the truth of the matter. There seemed to be no reason to doubt the sincerity of my Grandfather, in particular his mother Susanna. I managed to find Arthur's marriage certificate of 1878 at Bethnal Green and was duly rewarded by seeing father named as Syers Smith! (His mother Eliza, must have 'spilled the beans' and although they were both illiterate, the name Syer was correctly spelt). After Arthur's birth it was not long before Eliza had her first experience of Sudbury Union Workhouse when her elderly father couldn't work anymore and her mother died. (I found a letter of their placement in The Essex Record Office).

John, her father, died shortly after this sad move and Eliza met a man called Thomas Albury, marrying him in 1857 at Long Melford. They lived for a while in Church Street, Sudbury, before eventually entering the Work-

house where Thomas died.

In 1864 a Statement of Accounts for the Poor in the town of Sudbury shows them receiving 'Indoor Relief' stating also that one of her children had died. This left Eliza no alternative but to stay in the Workhouse.

In 1873 she married Daniel Gardiner, the rat catcher of Newton. Perhaps at this time there was some stability and a happy change for Eliza. Whatever, Daniel and Eliza lost their tied cottage in 1894 and were forced to take shelter in the Workhouse where they both died in 1895.

As the Guardian minute books are missing and much else, there is little to go on with regard to the working conditions and lives of the Inmates of the Workhouse in Sudbury. Whatever happens at Walnuttree Hospital, it would be pleasing to know that the planners will respect the memory of all those unfortunate people of long ago.

We hope the plans enhance the environment and preserve as much as possible of an architecturally interesting building with its unique history as a 'safety net' for the people of Sudbury and the immediate area.

Michael Groghan

Michael is one of those who has responded to our request for more contributors and has produced this interesting article. Perhaps more people can be encouraged to write something even if it is only a paragraph.

HOPEFUL SIGNS

Some good news to set against the closures-

- Mountain Warehouse has replaced Clinton Cards.
- Gaol Lane enlivened with new restaurant, The Loft, and Westons Bakers with bread making on the spot and a café.
- Javelin Women's shop has now opened in Friars Street opposite their Men's section.
- Change of use from shop (Burtons) to restaurant/café granted.

BELLE VUE HOUSE

Belle Vue House has a history – but will it have a future?

The Quay Theatre opened 2016's series of local history talks on Sunday evening 24 January with my new slide-talk about the history of Belle Vue House which has been in the news during the last year or two. Owned by Babergh District Council who wish to sell it, it has an uncertain future which could result in demolition. However, my talk was about the house itself: when it was built, who was the architect, who lived in it, what has been its role in the town.

My biggest scoop was finding an advert in *the Ipswich Journal* of 1872 showing the architects' details which no one had known before: the partnership of Henry Spalding and Samuel Knight, both Fellows of the Royal Institute of British Architects, London.

Then came Belle Vue's time as a Red Cross Hospital in the First World War when soldiers and nurses were its occupants. With the war over, Belle Vue House was sold and had one or two short-term owners before being sold to Sudbury Town Council in 1936.

In 1964 it was the location of Public Inquiry regarding the possible demolition of the Corn Exchange (now the Library). Ironically, Belle Vue House finds itself in the same situation. The Corn Exchange survived – can Belle Vue House?

You can see a slide presentation of Belle Vue House at the Sudbury Heritage Centre in Gaol Lane.

Anne Grimshaw



Close-up of front

(Incidentally, Henry Spalding had won a competition in designing “dwellings for the labouring classes” in Manchester where my grandmother had begun her married life!) Examples of the work of Spalding and Knight showed they were certainly not provincial nobodies in the architectural world.

Belle Vue House is not easily visible from Newton Road. Indeed, you have to look for it although its back overlooks Belle Vue Park. I had photographed the architectural details, the porch, the stonework, the corbels, the painted glass windows and their designs: a pelican pecking blood from her breast to feed her young; decorative fish, birds, flowers and animals, and on one window the initials HCC of the owner Henry Crabb Canham, and on another panel those of his wife, Ellen Elizabeth, EEC. It was built for the Canhams who lived there for 40 years.



STATION ROAD JUNCTION

HOW ABOUT THREE-WAY LIGHTS AT THIS JUNCTION?



Traffic from Market Hill



Nanook Corner



Looking down Station Road



Turning from Friars St to Station Rd

The junction of Station Road and Friars Street has never been easy to negotiate, either for vehicles or pedestrians. Since the devastating fire on 6 September last year after which, for a short time, vehicular access into and from Friars Street/Market Hill was blocked, it provided an opportunity to look at this junction more closely and resolve its safety issues.

Pedestrians and users of wheelchairs, buggies and shopping trolleys experience serious problems at the Station Road/Friars Street junction. The narrow pavement in Station Road on the Javelin side forces pedestrians onto the road into potential collision with the traffic turning from Friars Street. On the Nanook side, the narrow sloping pavement can tip pedestrians onto turning traffic.

After the fire, the temporary traffic lights installed to control the traffic flow offered a solution by changing the road from dual to single lane. Perhaps this idea could be elaborated?

By alternating the movement of traffic between Station Road and widening the pavements, the newly installed *permanent* traffic lights would enable pedestrians to negotiate these corners safely.

The traffic lights would also impact on the Station Road junction leading towards the Market Hill. Cur-

rently, traffic from Market Hill is a single lane leading into Friars Street or turning into Station Road. This section could be part of three-way traffic lights at the Station Road junction that would impact on the pedestrian experience in another way. By widening the existing pavements alongside Barclays and Javelin and removing the four parking bays in front of the former Oxfam building, there would be space for a small piazza area that safely links the Library with Friars Street and Station Road.

These changes would greatly improve a corner of Market Hill that has been ignored for too long.

Sally Freer



BOOK ON SUDBURY'S LISTED BUILDINGS - perhaps you can get involved?

Following the recent 'Visions of Sudbury' art exhibition, the Sudbury Society committee are in the process of putting together a book - *A Brief Look at the Listed Buildings of Sudbury*. The



show, that was staged in St Peters last October, was purposely aimed at encouraging local artists to produce work responding to these often intriguing and ancient buildings. There are nearly 250 of them listed by English Heritage. Sadly, as you probably know, five of them were lost in the recent tragic fire. The new book, which will feature some of the

art, is not intended to be a 'scholarly' publication but a snapshot of what we have now, and a window onto Sudbury's past. The intention is to create a format that is largely visual as well as being an entertaining read.

With such a rich heritage of interesting buildings, many of which have been here for more than 500 years, we felt that it was time that some of their story was told. We hope that both local people and visitors might be better able to appreciate how such a variety of dwellings around the town centre add so much to Sudbury's special character. As part of the process of putting this book together we are keen to hear from and involve the owners of these properties. Maybe you are one of these people?

We need material - in the form of good photos of internal and external features, and perhaps photos of bits of ephemera that might be associated with the building- maybe old photographs, old deeds, letters? We need to hear what you may know of the history of yours or even other buildings in the town that might not be common knowledge. For instance, if it is a house did it have a former use as a pub or a shop? Perhaps you know who lived there in the distant past?



As you may already know, in 2002 The Sudbury Society published *The Unlisted Heritage*, which was the brainchild of our former Chairman, David Burnett. This was a very popular book but essentially produced in order to establish that many buildings of quality and character in Sudbury needed recognition and were not protected with 'Listed' status. That book now forms the basis of the town's 'Local List' helping to prevent erosion of our more significant building stock. This new book based on the listed buildings is a natural follow on.



If you would like to become involved and did not make it to the presentation event that we held in St Peters in February, please email me - robin@sudburysuffolk.co.uk or phone 373710, or you can write to: Listed Buildings, The Sudbury Society, c/o The Christopher Centre, 10 Gainsborough Street, Sudbury CO10 2EU.

We greatly value the care that you, as owners of these properties, give to the upkeep of them and look forward to working with you in making this book become a reality.

Robin Drury





PROPOSALS FOR ST PETER'S CHURCH

Roger Green – Chairman of the Friends of St Peter, Sudbury

Thanks to all Sudbury Society members who attended the public consultation on proposed developments at St Peter's. Further thanks if you left your comments to be recorded. We need to know the thoughts of those who have an interest in the town.

St Peter's stands at the heart of our town and it is vital to the life of so many. Nearly 60,000 people pass through the door each year. I hope you are among them. Since it was closed in 1971 and declared redundant in 1976, the Friends of St Peter have, in the words of our constitution, have had two main aims:

1. The preservation of St Peter's Church for the benefit of Sudbury and District.
2. The provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for the recreation and leisure time occupation of the inhabitants of Sudbury and District with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants without distinction of sex or political religious or other opinions.

We believe that St Peter's is now starting to look a little tired and so we are seeking to ensure that it remains, for the future, at the heart of our town. This will involve many repairs to the fabric of the building including major work on the roof and clere-story but it will also effect some changes within the building including installation of a mezzanine gallery, toilets, an improved food serving area and an improved interpretation centre. We hope that the use of modern wood will enhance the present structure.

Our plans are at stage one at present. There might be seen to be two elements for comment at this point:

1. Do the materials and designs that we are suggesting add or detract from the beauty of the

wonderful building of St Peter's and are they respectful of the heritage of that building?

2. Will our plans enable all the activities that are enjoyed at present to continue and will they attract even more groups and individuals to use the building?

Although the main period of this first consultation is over I am still happy to receive your thoughts and add them to those expressed at the consultation. To that end I hope to be able to leave a small exhibition in the church for a few weeks more into February.

St Peter's is a place that inspires people. Perhaps it has inspired you at some point. At the last meeting of the Management Committee of the Friends I noted some of the words people were using. I think these words are an indication of how seriously we take our responsibility and the way that we think about the building.

Of the building

A place for activity - A place for contemplation - A place of bustle - A place of tranquillity - A centre for the community of Sudbury - The medieval centre, the modern centre - A high-quality, accessible, vibrant venue, at the heart of the town - It is loved - Inspiring and inspired - multi-faceted - All things to all sorts and conditions - You'll find it there - A place of contradictions and contrasts.

Of the project

An opportunity to influence the future direction of the town - An opportunity to attract new audiences - An opportunity to secure the fabric for the future - An opportunity to show respect and enjoy innovation - An opportunity for a new dimension.

In case you have not time to visit the church, I offer some of the drawings and plans.



St Peter's Church, Sudbury

Consultation Exhibition, January 2016



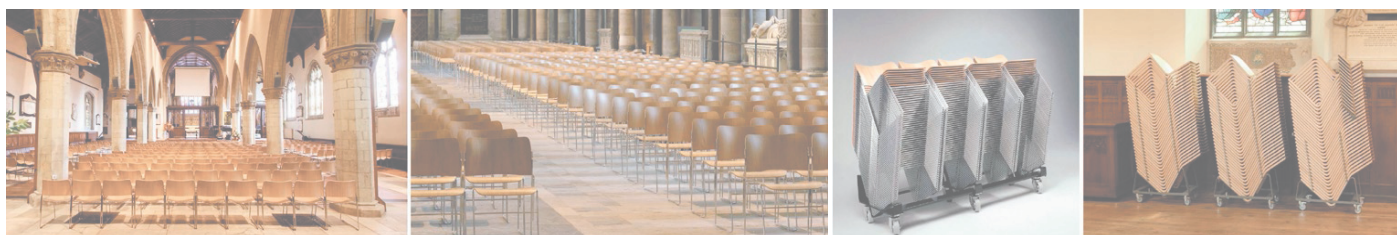
The main proposals are:

1. A new 'reversible' timber gallery structure at the west end of the church housing new toilets, kitchen and storage facilities
2. A new stair and platform lift to provide access to the gallery which will house display and interpretation opportunities
3. A new glazed entrance lobby to the main entrance, replacing the existing one
4. A new treasury and private prayer space within the historic Chapel
5. New stackable performance style seating which can be stored away in new cupboards along the aisle edges
6. Extensive repairs to the exterior of the church including re-roofing of the north aisle and consolidation of the mediaeval stonework

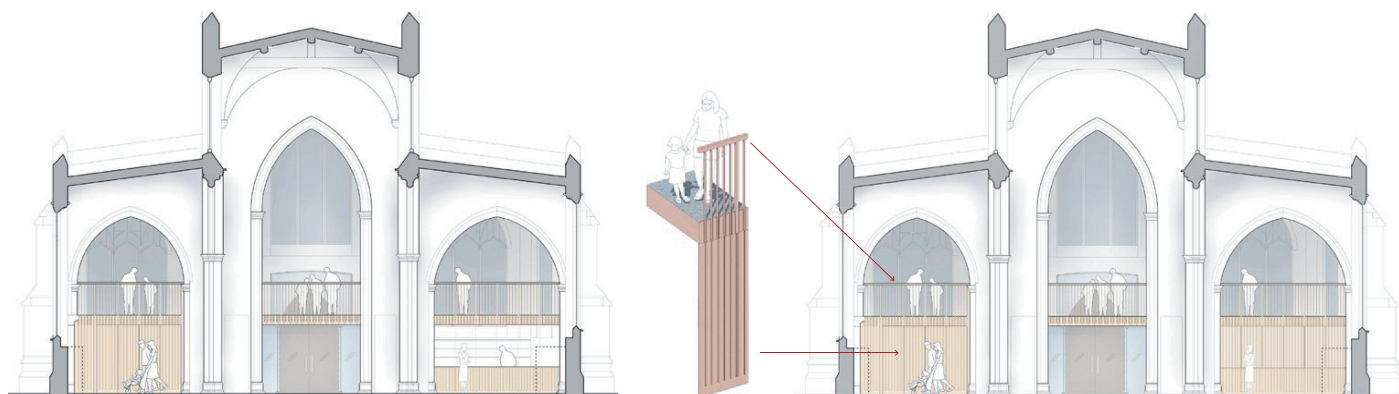
In accordance with best conservation practice, the proposals will be entirely reversible and will seek to enhance the historical significance of the Grade 1 listed Church.



Recent precedents of reversible timber framed galleries and facilities inserted within churches to house toilet, kitchen and storage and facilities



Examples of the style of stackable concert seating which is proposed for St. Peter's



A section through the church looking west towards the proposed new facilities (open)

Oak Joinery of new Gallery facilities

A section through the church looking west towards the proposed new facilities (closed)

We are very excited about these initial ideas and we would love to hear your views.

Please leave them with us or contact the Churches Conservation Trust on southeast@theccct.org.uk or phone 01223 324 442.

MFA / Malcolm Fryer Architects



EVENTS & NOTICES

COMING EVENTS

Wed 24th Feb ***

8pm St Peter's

Presentation to owners of Listed Buildings by Robin Drury

Details from
vicechair@sudburysociety.org.uk

Friday 26th February

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street
'Dad's Army'.

a talk by Elizabeth Brown.

Friday 18th March

AGM followed by a talk by Mark Bills, Director, Gainsborough's House.

Friday 29th April ***

7.30pm Friars Hall, School Street
'Call My Bluff'. Followed by Fish and Chips from the Codfather. Bring your own drinks. £10 per person.

Friday 27th May ***

Visit to Wardman's Meadow with Adrian Walters
Details from Rosemary
01787 372186

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Mark Bills, Director of Gainsborough's House, will be speaking to the Sudbury Society on Friday 18 March at Friars Hall, School St, Sudbury at 7.30pm. The Society's AGM takes place the same evening; nomination papers and Any Other Business items should be sent to the Sudbury Society, c/o The Christopher Centre, Gainsborough St, Sudbury, **before 1 March.**

BOOKING ESSENTIAL ***

Please note that booking is essential for events marked ***

Contact Rosemary on
01787 372186 for more details

MEETINGS

£3 members
£5 non members

CORRECTION

My caption to the picture on page 1 of the last Newsletter credited Robert Mattingly with giving permission for the reproduction of the 17th century wall painting - it was **Roger Mattingly.**

My apologies.

David Burnett

CONTRIBUTORS

We are pleased welcome three new contributors to this issue:

Sally Freer

Michael Groghan

Roger Green

Thanks also to our regulars.

Deadline for copy for next issue
31st May. All copy to:

patricia.thorpe@btinternet.com

WANT TO JOIN THE SOCIETY?

See our website
sudburysociety.org.uk

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

NewsJournal

Patricia Thorpe
881661

Other Members

Pat and Roy Laithwaite
377697

John Taylor
373921

Sam Thornton
375646