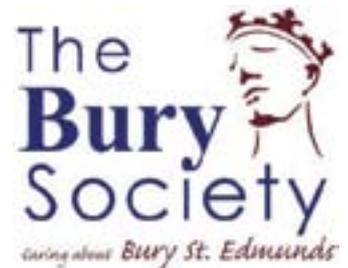


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# SocietyReview

Summer 2016

## New development and revelations

**Time is moving on and we are about to see the implementation of the infrastructure that will see some of the biggest changes in the history of the town.**

The master plan, Vision 2031, will not only be affecting brownfield sites such as Station Hill and Tayfen Road but greenfield sites at Compiegne Way, Rushbrooke Lane, Moreton Hall and land towards Fornham All Saints.

Outside the medieval boundary of the town, known as The Banleuca, some of Fornham All Saints will be contributing to a greater Bury St Edmunds whose population is expected to rise by an extra 5,000 inhabitants.

As is standard procedure an archaeological dig is paving the way for the development which met strong local opposition. However, only in recent times did an aerial view bring to light an important ancient feature, that of the Fornham Cursus.

A cursus (Stonehenge has one), evidently derives from Latin for 'course', and they were once thought to be rare examples of Roman athletic courses, parallel banks with external ditches some of indeterminable lengths.

Whether any Roman attribution can be made for the Fornham Cursus is speculative. After all, the only real finds from that period locally was during the preparation of 11, Cullum Road, Residential Care Home where pieces of pottery and butchered animal bones were uncovered.

It is now accepted that the cursus feature, which is close to the River Lark, is many thousands of years old.

*By Martyn Taylor,  
Bury Society Chairman*

Following field walking trials and geophysical surveys in 2012 trial trenches were dug; in early April 2016 excavations uncovered ring ditches and 120 storage pits, mainly for grain from the Iron Age 400-100 BC. Shards of datable pottery confirmed this.

One major missing piece in this historical jigsaw is that of human burials, the soil here being unkind for the preservation of skeletal remains.

An open day in April attracted over 360 people to the site to hear the importance of the dig explained and to look at finds. Hosted by the very helpful Suffolk County Council Archaeological Services everyone left with a feeling of satisfaction and wonderment at what lies beneath our feet.

What most certainly helped was the number of enthusiastic volunteers who allowed every pit to be properly

excavated. As the Fornham site covers 163 acres more volunteers are required, although I am sure their trowels will not be wielded over all of it.

This is one of the Vision 2031 sites. I wonder what else will be found? Recently a dig in the playground of the Guildhall Feoffment School in Bridewell Lane where Horsa huts were demolished revealed medieval foundations of possible kitchens and off Cotton Lane excavations for Crosspenny Court uncovered a wealth of history including a very fine limestone lined well.

Tayfen Road, a place of execution in the middle ages and part of the town wall may surprise us. These are in central Bury and peripheral sites may yield nothing.

As far as I am aware east of the town at Moreton Hall digs have been quite bare of archaeology. So we wait and see.

## Bury puts on its best blooming face



*Anglia in Bloom judges this year's display. See report on Page four.*

# People and places make Bury in Bloom

Bury in Bloom co-ordinator Melanie Lesser reports on the many activities and successes of this year's campaign with more projects and people involved than ever.

## Realise Futures

Bury in Bloom are proud to work with Realise Futures, an award winning social enterprise with projects around the town.

The team from Realise Futures helped provide some muscle to move the greenhouse at care home Stradbroke Court (pictured right).

Realise Futures also provide the plants for the Angel Hotel's colourful troughs.



## Northgate Roundabout replanting

Around 600 bulbs were planted on the Northgate roundabout by Bury in Bloom with the help of the sponsors Hazells.

Crocus, tete a tete daffodils and grape hyacinth bulbs were planted in three drifts across the roundabout.



The flowering of the bulbs was tweeted by the sponsors and received a number of likes.

## Westgate Corner

Local company Proscap have given the Westgate Corner (pictured above) a



Top right and left: Crafty Foxes and volunteers are helping to create a bee friendly garden underneath the mosaic in the Abbey Gardens. Right: The Patchwork Tree.

makeover. The community garden is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

A rubbish bin has also been provided by Bury Town Council at our request.

We are delighted that 10 local residents have volunteered to keep an eye on the corner, collect any rubbish and weed the beds.

Kitchenology have also agreed to sponsor Westgate Corner which will ensure we are able to keep the area looking good.

## Patchwork Tree

Patchwork panels from the UK, Ireland, Canada and United States were stitched together around a tree in the Abbey gardens. The project 'Yarn on 2016' has raised over £1,000 with funds going to the charity Breast Cancer Now.

## Mike Ames Bed in the Abbey Gardens

The flower bed in the Abbey Gardens has now been replanted with 11



different plants suitable for the bed and that will complement the acer planted last year.

## Focus 12

Focus 12 is an independent charity offering abstinence based drug and alcohol residential treatment for adults. They have begun work on a space with potential to be a therapeutic courtyard. Bury in Bloom are assisting in raising awareness for the project.



## Hanging Baskets

This year there are over 330 Bury in Bloom baskets together with 500 provided by the Borough, all supplied by Woolpit Nurseries.

We have worked closely with the Borough to co-ordinate the colours across the town.

## Bee garden

A bee friendly garden has been planted in the Abbey Gardens.

Rebecca Davis, horticultural officer, has chosen the plants to attract bees and other insects underneath the mosaic in the gardens. The Abbey Gardens Volunteers helped the team to plant them.

Michelle Freeman from The Crafty Foxes will be installing bees and ladybirds made from recycled cans by local children in the garden.

Hartest based company Dragonfli, has provided a solitary bee house for the garden.

## Crafty cans

Bury in Bloom and The Crafty Foxes are relaunching the Crafty Cans packs that were so successful in 2014, the packs will be available **free of charge** at various outlets around the town.

The Crafty Foxes will be running 10 workshops sponsored by Bury in Bloom in local schools for the children to decorate their cans and learn about bee friendly plants and the importance of insects pollinating plants.

## Roundabout sponsors

We are delighted to have two new roundabout sponsors on Moreton Hall.

Commercial Drivers have sponsored the Symonds Road/Orttewell Road roundabout and Abbeycroft Leisure have sponsored Orttewell Road/Compiegne Way Road roundabout, both have premises on the Moreton Hall estate.

Abbeycroft Leisure will be running the new sports facilities at the Sybil Andrews School.

## The Guildhall

Bury in Bloom have paid for four new troughs to go on the Guildhall railings. Woolpit Nurseries have planted the troughs, these will now be part of the planting each year.

# Why the Bury Society and our lovely town needs you!

By Martyn Taylor

A phrase similar to that spoken by Lord Kitchener for recruiting in WWI. It could equally apply to the Bury Society for the more members it has the stronger its voice.

I begin my unexpected term of office as Chairman following Tim Page who has stepped down to become Vice Chairman and Secretary and to concentrate on the society's constitution.

This is because it needs updating to conform with the new guidelines set down by the Charities Commission following the Kidscape scandal.

He has a somewhat mammoth task to undertake and I wish him well with it.

Another change of officer is that of Doug Beardon who we welcome to his role as our treasurer. Outgoing Treasurer Roy Proctor has in the past few years been a stalwart of the committee and deserves all the accolades for his stewardship of our funds.

Another new face on the committee, although a Bury Society member for many years, is that of Stephen Moody as Events Organiser. He is relieving some of the burden our Membership Secretary, Sue Savage, has been carrying in recent years. What would we do without her!

To all these and the rest of the committee, I say thank you.

## Important notice regarding overdue subscriptions

Subscriptions were due on 1<sup>st</sup> June and a number are currently outstanding or incorrect amounts paid.

If you have not paid your subscription please send a cheque urgently (£15 for individuals, £20 for a couple living at the same address) payable to The Bury Society to: Mrs Sue Savage, 19 Sicklesmere Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 2BP.

Bank transfers are also acceptable payable to Barclays Bank (Cornhill) sort code 20 16 12 account 30225134 clearly marked with your surname and initials.

Any queries should be referred to Sue on (01284) 719243 or by email: [susan.savage60@virginmedia.com](mailto:susan.savage60@virginmedia.com).

**This is a final reminder** – members with unpaid subscriptions will shortly be removed from the circulation list.

## Response to events questionnaire will shape members' new programme

May I take this opportunity to thank all of those who responded to the events questionnaire sent out with the last review.

We received a great response and we were extremely pleased by the favourable comments, ideas and suggestions which will help to formulate the type of events going forward to meet our members wishes and expectations.

I will be taking all of the ideas forward, and the MCE (membership, communications and events) sub-committee will be using the information to shape events, talks and social activities for the coming year.

One of the main themes coming from the questionnaire was our members wish to know more about the architecture, social and general history of the town plus more social events for existing and new members plus possible stronger relationships with other local groups and organisations.

### Better communication

Better communication was also mentioned to encourage a better understanding of the work of the Society in the town and to encourage new members to join.

The Society's relationship with the borough on planning and development was an important thread for many members as was the input the Society should have in the future planning of the area.

The committee will now look at all the ideas to ensure that we provide an interesting and varied programme going forward.

The questionnaire is not the end of your input; we are always more than happy to listen to your suggestions and ideas and would encourage your further involvement.

Thank you again for taking the time and effort to let us know how we can improve.

**Stephen Moody**  
Events Secretary



The judging party in Langton Place. This picture and on Page One courtesy of Carol Street.

## Umbrellas out for judges as the sun shines on Bury

On the hottest day of the year to date two Judges from Anglia in Bloom arrived to judge Bury St Edmunds in the Anglia in Bloom competition, writes Alan Jary, Chairman of Bury in Bloom.

Out came the umbrellas, this time not to keep off the rain, as so often in the past, but to shield the judging party from the heat.

The judges were impressed by the 500 sponsored baskets, the attention to detail and the community spirit of so many volunteers.

Bury has been entering this competition for many years and our record of achievement can be seen on the awards boards in The Athenaeum.

Part of our campaign for 2016, is 'Love where you Live', a leaflet has been distributed to every house in the town encouraging residents to get together to litter pick, to create natural habitats, and to tidy kerbs and verges adjacent to properties, and generally take a community interest in the location of their home.

Hopefully this will encourage good relations between neighbours to the benefit of all members in the community, including the wildlife.

A scheme to improve a service yard used by retailers is in the early stages of planning and we hope to set up a challenge for the best service yard in the town.

Please see the article on the new street art in Eastgate Street which is

one resident's response to LWYL and a gift to his community. We are asking everybody to join in this campaign, a little effort from a lot of people can make such a difference.

Bury in Bloom is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016, and is gifting 30 trees across the town. The first of these, a birch tree is now planted in Windmill Rise, off Hospital Road.

We are seeking further applications, so if you have a suitable site, on a public space which would benefit from one, please go to 30trees@buryinbloom.org.uk and register your application. We offer assistance with tree selection, etc.

For many years Rotary International has been raising funds and awareness of the fight to destroy Polio across the world. They are close to achieving their aim and the campaign is having a final push to raise the profile of their goal and attract the further donations required.

Bury in Bloom is delighted to announce that we have joined in the Purple for Polio new campaign, which is supported by the Royal Horticultural Society to plant Purple Crocus.

More than 5000 crocus bulbs will be planted along Bury's Parkway road in the autumn, which will bloom next spring.

There will also be some work going on in schools to promote and encourage young people to get involved in Purple for Polio.

## More pressure for homes

The unrelenting pressure for new homes in the town centre continues - especially the conversion of commercial premises into apartments.

The Society commented upon plans to construct a three storey extension over a small car park on Lower Baxter Street to create two apartments.

A new staircase will also provide access to the existing offices over the Cancer Research and Phase Eight shops to create a further three apartments.

A parking area will provide five car spaces - but it's tight - and we are unsure how the shops will be serviced. We are also concerned about the view from Angel Hill. Plans have also been lodged for the change of use of offices at 50 Long Brackland into five flats.

We wrote supporting the development of the EMG Motors site on Tayfen Road for flats - but asked for Section 106 requirements in respect of affordable housing etc. to be met in full. We also suggested alterations to reduce the building's apparent height.

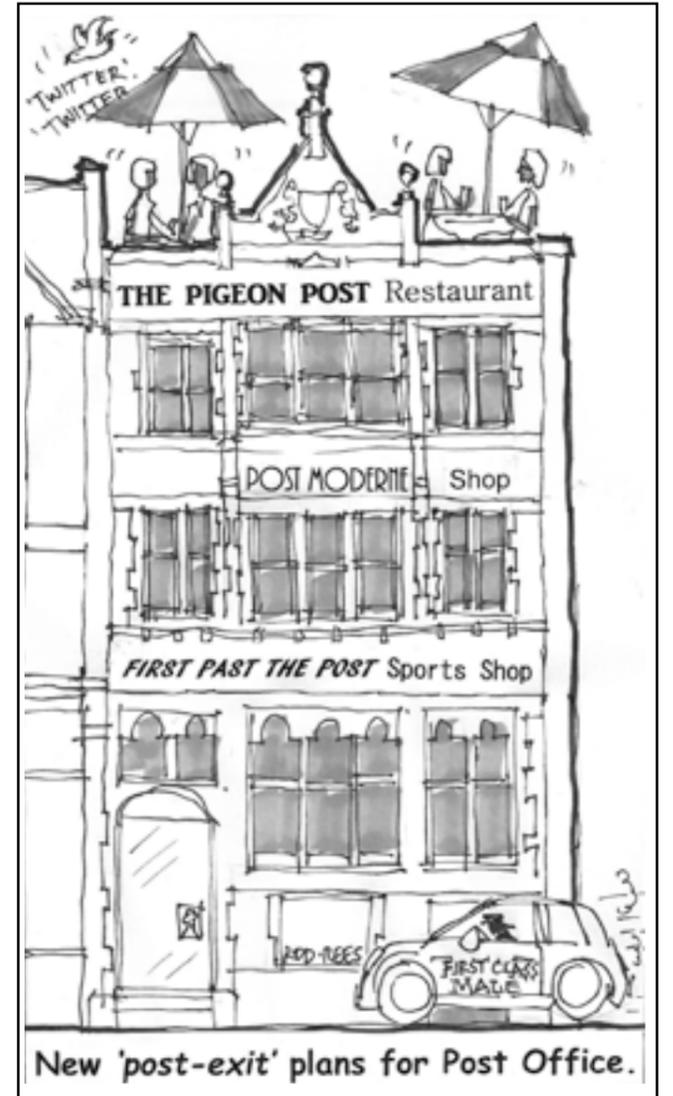
The Society wrote in support of a detailed planning application to redevelop the former ACAS/DEFRA premises on Southgate Street. The plans show the conversion of the existing office building into 6 houses and 26 flats plus ten new dwellings - and 125 parking spaces.

Application has also been lodged for the conversion of solicitors' offices at 3 Hatter Street into three apartments.

Earlier plans to convert the Regency House Hotel on Looms Lane into five houses have been approved.

The Society is generally supportive of plans to bring new homes into the town centre, but our mantra remains. . . 'it aint what you do, it's the way that you do it'.

Roderick Rees



## Society must review its constitution

At our AGM in May I stepped down from the Chair to take on the role of Secretary.

Keen historians of the Bury Society will know there is a precedent for this. Reg Sharpe became one of our finest Secretaries after he was Chairman. And if I'm half as good a Secretary as Reg, I'll be a happy man.

The Secretary is an important role for the Society not least because we need to review and reform our governing documents - our constitution.

This need is more urgent in the wake of the Kids Company scandal, which I am sure we all remember such was the level of public interest, as all registered charities are being tarred with a similar brush and will face a greater regulatory burden.

At the July executive committee meeting, the Trustees agreed that

**Tim Page, Vice Chair and new Secretary of the Society explains the task ahead.**

*'A review does not automatically mean radical change'*

I should form a working party of interested Trustees and members to progress this review.

A review does not automatically mean radical change.

There is no need or wish to make fundamental changes to the purpose of the Society as the town's civic society; that is as a wide group of people who love our town and want to keep it special.

Any changes that are proposed will be designed solely to enable the Society

and its Trustees to achieve its charitable objectives more effectively.

The Trustees have also agreed in principle to draw up the paperwork necessary to change the current legal structure of the Society from that of an unincorporated association to a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO).

It is the view of the Trustees that CIO status, which has only recently become available as an option, is more suitable for the Society.

Obviously, no changes will be made without formal consultation and agreement of a majority of the Society's membership, followed with ratification by the Charity Commission.

If any members would like to contribute to the Governance Review they should write to the Society or email: timothy.r.page@icloud.com



Above: Tim Page presents the Society Award to Nicola and Andrew Hunter for their reformation project of properties along Maynewater Lane. With them is architect for the scheme, Lionel Thurlow. Pictures by Alan Baxter.



## Awards highlight excellence of two very different projects

A now traditional highlight of the Bury Society's Annual General Meeting is the presentation of an award for the architectural excellence or merit of a project that has been completed in the town within the previous year.

The Society makes annual awards for exceptional restoration, new build and landscaping work completed in the town.

This year the Society deemed it fitting to celebrate two schemes which have done much to enhance their surroundings through the use of careful and sympathetic design and excellent workmanship.

The citations were read out to the meeting by Roderick Rees, retired architect and the Society's lead advisor on planning matters.

### *Coherent, modern, harmonious design*

Announcing a Certificate of Merit for Maynewater House, Maynewater Lane, Rod told the meeting: "This skilful and imaginative refurbishment significantly enhances the appearance of a 1960's building on one of the main gateways into the town.

"It also enhances the Conservation Area by creating a coherent and harmonious design behind a modern façade."

The Award went to Nicola and Andrew Hunter who commissioned the conversion of the former police accommodation block into flats. With them to collect it was local architect Lionel Thurlow of Thurlow Architects Ltd.

The second Certificate of Merit was awarded to Francesca Popham-Cooper and Alex Duchesne for number 6 Mill Road.

Rod told Society members: "This new house complements the street scene within the Conservation Area by careful attention to detail and skilful workmanship".

To enthusiastic applause, Society Chairman Tim Page presented the certificates to the award winners at the AGM in the Unitarian Meeting House in May.



Above: Tim Page presents the award to Alex Duchesne and below the new house in Mill Road that blends into the Victorian street scene.



The morning after: the fine façade ravaged by the fire.

## The fall and rise of the iconic Cupola House

On the night of Saturday 16 June, 2012 at around 9 o'clock an unexpected and disastrous event took place in Bury's Traverse which robbed the town of one of its most iconic, historic houses.

While diners enjoyed their mid summer outing at the Strada Restaurant, fire broke out and raced from the kitchen in one of the three large cellars upwards to rapidly engulf and entire building.

First and foremost it must be noted that no-one was injured as the fire took hold and the blaze was restricted to the Cupola House itself.

This was entirely due to the prompt and expert way in which the Suffolk Fire Service responded to the emergency.

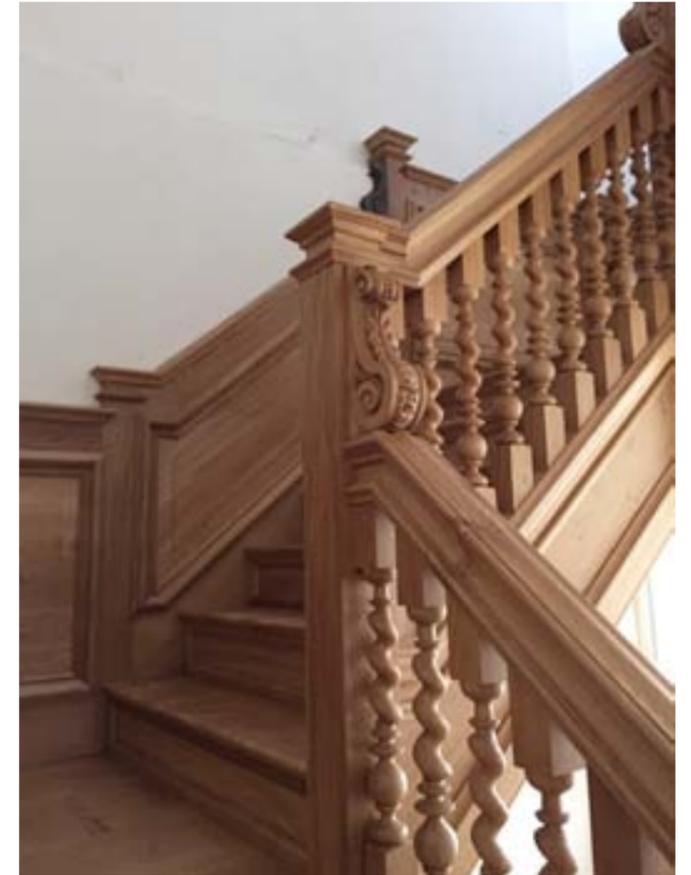


Happier days: a study group stops to admire the Cupola House.

The following day, that of Bury's annual Hidden Gardens event, smoke hung over the town centre together with an odour of burnt wood and crowds gathered to witness the destruction.

Four years on this precious building has risen from the ashes.





# From destruction to fine restoration . . . Cupola House re-emerges from the ashes

*By Simon Marks and  
Alicia Ridout of Purcell*

Cupola House in Bury St Edmunds is now nearly fully reconstructed back to its former glory after a major fire ripped through the building and damaged a large proportion of the Grade I listed structure in 2012.

Since then, architect Purcell and contractors Seamans, has been working in partnership with Historic England, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and a team of specialist consultants to stabilise the surviving built fabric and reconstruct the lost historic features.

Using the available information about the building, the architectural team has recreated the principal spaces and reintroduced many of the building's architectural details, including panelling, cornices, architraves and the staircase.

Wherever possible the original fabric that survived the fire has been salvaged

and re-used. These include elements of the stairs, panel mouldings, a significant amount of the exterior cornice and the metal fireplace grates which have been fitted back into the reconstructed chimneys.

A new steel frame, which has been intricately threaded through what remains of the original timber frame, is completely concealed within walls and behind the wall linings. This has been installed to distribute the weight of the new and surviving structures over the original basement.

The timber framed cupola once again sits atop the double range of Cupola House's roof, between the two towering chimneys which both required considerable reconstruction after the fire left them in an unstable condition.

It has been a significant challenge to ensure that Cupola House is brought up to current safety and load bearing standards, allowing it to continue as a publicly accessible building.

Today, a building of this use (as a restaurant) and height is expected to incorporate methods of preventing the spread of fire, and containing fire or smoke in restricted areas while the occupants leave and the fire brigade deal with the fire.

A building containing a single staircase constructed entirely of timber is an unpromising starting point for fire

safety. However, the staircase is one of the glories of the building and a way had to be found to retain the single staircase. The solution to this conundrum was a particularly demanding part of the design.

The fire safety strategies are complex and involve the interaction of a number of separate systems. This was to minimise the effect of fire safety systems on the appearance and form of the building.

The structure now incorporates fire resistant layers, both vertically and horizontally the staircase is isolated by fire resistant glass and treated as a 'fire sterile' area, while the kitchens are now also isolated.

Smoke detectors, alarms and water sprinklers have been installed throughout and now there is provision of a facility to vent smoke through the top of the stairs.

As a result, more of the building is accessible for public use than was previously possible. However, it has not been possible to allow general access to the cupola.

The room layouts generally reflect the changes that had occurred in the building before the fire. Some service rooms were relocated from the east side of the building to enable more of the west facing rooms to be publicly accessible as these contain the surviving historic fabric.

Additional partitions which sub-divide historic rooms are built in a plain style to differentiate them, and so feature no cornices or panel mouldings. New stud partitions were built over the panelling so that if the partitions were removed to return the room to its pre-fire arrangement, the panelling would not be affected.

The reconstruction of Cupola House is now externally and structurally complete. Interior finishes that comprise the historic features are near completion and the building is ready for the tenants to move in and fit the facilities they require to use the building as a restaurant once again.

*Left hand page: from the top, on the morning after the blaze firemen continued to probe for fire hot spots.*

*Below: the destruction within is revealed with floors gone, ancient timbers and brickwork severely damaged and rare Delft tiles shattered.*

*This page: from the top, the new fire proof glass screen goes around the staircase; finely carved bannisters and newel posts are once again the crowning glory of the interior.*

*Below: the inner skeleton of the cupola is reconstructed and a newly created joist-end sits alongside its fire-damaged predecessor.*

*Pictures are used courtesy of Purcell, Richard Jackson Partnership and Karen Hurden*





Thanks to enquiries by Stephen Moody, myself and three other invited committee members were able to go around the nearly finished project.

Along with members of the fire service and others we were shown all the areas except the basement/cellars by Simon Marks of Purcell, the architects responsible for the project. Seamans builders were the main contractor.

#### The Ground floor

We were told that only one small surviving area from the original two buildings on site has survived although it is hidden from view. The west side or façade survived mostly intact but had to be shored up as it was at risk of collapsing and causing injury.

The building caved in resulting in a 20ft pile of debris which had to be sifted through to retain any architectural features within.

A massive steel structure is concealed from view in public areas. The toilets, which were once at the front of the building, have been moved to the rear. There are two 'dumb waiters' now in place. Only the ground and

#### Bury Society Chairman, Martyn Taylor reports on a special visit to see the 'new' Cupola House.

first floor are to be used as a restaurant with the top floor for staff, and no accommodation.

Every floor has a sprinkler system, smoke detectors, alarms, emergency lighting and fire proof sheeting behind finished walls. The stairwell has 25mm thick opaque fire resistant glass screens which gives an hour's protection.

#### The staircase

The original magnificent oak staircase did not survive the fire though some pieces of valuable ornamentation did. Where possible they have been incorporated or replicated into the new staircase. This is made of European oak and is fitted to a steel frame.

The oak is still to be finished off as waxing can only be carried out at weekends. I must say it does look very good. Access to the actual cupola for the general public is denied but on inspection, as far as I can remember, it has been faithfully restored.

#### The chimney

The north chimney survived the fire but due to large cracks it was considered unstable and most of it had to be demolished resulting in a loss of time.

The brick size was not standard but this was overcome and consequently it has been built as it was. The new chimney now incorporates a boiler flue and ventilator shaft.

#### The panelled oak room

This iconic room of the Cupola was destroyed. It is being fitted out as it was. A wrought iron fire grate survived but not its surround. Also surviving were very rare Delft tiles which have been conserved in panels and are being put back onto another surviving part of a fireplace.

#### In conclusion

The erroneous oval plaque to Defoe is now on the ground floor and I asked if the weather vane with the original date of 1693 should be replaced with 2016. Whether the Grade 1 listing is affected, will be up to English Heritage.

The Cupola House now awaits a new occupant who is reported to be the restaurant chain Bourgeois.

Whether it is considered to be a re-construction, re-build or renewal is up to those who knew it as it was; a building that had evolved with time.

It cannot be what it once was but we should be thankful for what has been done to the best ability of all concerned.

● The Society has offered a Blue Plaque to mark what has happened.

# Nothing is now plain about this tree stump

*Sculptor John Williams explains how he turned an unloved tree stump into a fine example of street art.*

Having pretty much completed the sculpture it's difficult to remember exactly how it all developed but what I do recall is the jolt I got when I discovered why my street now looked so different; a great tree was missing. All that was left was a gaunt, seemingly overgrown stump.

As someone who carves with recycled wood and stone the stump seemed to nag me and what it said louder and louder was "if you don't like me as I am you had better change me".

I took up carving again just over two years ago. I didn't call it carving at the time but "whittling". It's a much less serious sounding activity and reminded me of my early childhood activities. Initially I used left over wood from my new garden design and it was then that I decided to use just recycled material.

*I saw the soft curve of the trunk as a long neck'*

Although still securely rooted to the earth the stump itself was recyclable, especially as it stood at 1.5 metres, my own chest height.

So as I walked up from the town one Saturday I saw the soft curve of the trunk as a long neck, possibly a horse's neck; that's how I decided I would like to change it. I could elevate it and bring it to life. It was probably the stump's rooted nature which drew the horse neck downward, maybe having a drink? A rationalisation perhaps of an unconscious and ready made decision?

That's how it works with creative

people, they rarely know exactly where their ideas come from.

Anyway by last March I was sharing an exhibition, at the Edmund Gallery in Bury with friend Rob Lansman, a wood-cut printer. I knew Melanie Lesser was connected with the very successful Wolf trail so I invited her to our private view. Melanie brought with her the "Love where you Live" flyers and, what a bit of luck my horse idea might fit in nicely, I thought?

It did, Melanie said, as long as I liaised with the Eastgate street residents and sought their opinions as to what they might like represented. Maybe then I could have Bury in Bloom's support for the idea. After all it should be a win-win situation as this would be a voluntary activity and would enhance the street as well.

The site of the stump is opposite Hanover Housing's Josselyn Court supported living flats. I introduced myself to Jane, the facilities manager, and she arranged a meeting with the residents. It was at this meeting that Josselyn's name arose with discussions of who the scribe worked for and what he was required to do. I got the impression he was a bit of a "yes-man" for our monastery which did little to endear him to the people of Bury.

I produced a design for the horse's head plus a monk/scribe like figure and Jane pinned it up on the Josselyn Court notice board. After a week I collected it along with the residents' comments and waited to hear from Melanie and the Suffolk Highways department to



*The Plane tree stump in Eastgate Street. see if they too approved the design. Permission was granted on 15 May and I began work the following day.*

I have only worked with seasoned woods and this stump proved to be very much alive, compromised and dangerous to leave at full height but never the less alive.

At the end of a day's work I was spattered with sap which had dried tight on my face and which I was eager to wash off.

Initially it was the very local residents who commented as they walk by but soon others from further afield paused and entered into conversations. Eventually, cars would pull up, windows wound down conversations started and cameras poked out.

The whole process was delightful and one of the main reasons for my undertaking such a long and sometimes very demanding piece of work.

An old school chum who I knew had carved his children a rocking horse called by and gave me his set of chisels. A few days later he also brought a very useful vice. Not just generous but also very thoughtful gifts. Thanks David.

Finally, I selected gravel to match the colour of the pavement. I dug out three barrow loads of gritty soil and raked the "washed" shingle in. Job done until the Autumn when either the stump will have literally leafed up (yes there is a mini cluster of leaf buds forming) or it will have completely dried up and can be sealed. I don't mind which!

## Good to see an old friend restored to health

*How quickly four years pass by. The morning after the night of the Cupola House fire is etched onto my memory; that smell of burning across the town. Now we have it back - different, of course, but in essence the same to the non-expert - and gracing the town centre.*

*The Society has kept a close eye and interest on the 'restoration project' and Review has done its best to record the events of the long road back. My thanks to all who have contributed to the articles and photographs over the years.*

*My thanks also to the many other contributors to this issue. Please note that the opinions expressed in Review are not necessarily those of the Bury Society and that the editorial deadline for the Winter 2016 issue is Monday 7 November. Please send contributions to carter-richard@tisclali.co.uk*

*Richard Carter, Editor*



*A view from the top of the 'new' Cupola House across the Bury skyline.*

# Ambitious Smiths Row plans still on track

'The railway...a golden thread that connects our towns and cities...'  
Claire Perry MP, Rail Minister, May 2016

In November 2014 Smiths Row initiated a groundbreaking project in partnership with Transport Regeneration, Bury based transport consultants. As you may be aware, this comprises a Community Rail Partnership between Ipswich and Cambridge - the first dedicated to contemporary art - combined with restoring derelict rail buildings for our events and artists' studios. Bury is, of

By Alison Plumridge,  
Director, Smiths Row

course, at the centre of the Ipswich to Cambridge rail line and includes a substantial Station House that spans three floors, the top floor of which formed the old waiting rooms on the Cambridge bound platform. It has been derelict for over 20 years and in such a poor state of repair it is on the Buildings at Risk Register.

Over the past few months Abellio Greater Anglia have been carrying out

major work on the station, primarily on the canopies but also repointing sections and repainting parts of the Station Master's House. They have also carried out a survey of the roof which shows the damage as a result of lead flashings being stolen.

We expect work to move forward apace when the new successful bidder for the East Anglia Rail franchise is announced.

Our project exemplifies the objectives of the Department for Transport for regenerating derelict rail properties and it has also received backing from The Cabinet Office through the Big Lottery and Arts Council England. Both have awarded grants to Smiths Row in the past three months to complete the next key stages of the project.

The first has been to research and develop operational plans for a network of artists' studios along the Ipswich to Cambridge rail line. This follows mounting evidence from artists in Suffolk and further afield about the devastating impact of the loss of studio space is having, particularly as a result of regeneration in East London and Cambridge.

Over the past few months our Curator, Natalie Pace and I have carried out extensive research and consultations including visits to rail based arts studios in Middlesbrough and Liverpool.

At Edge Hill in Liverpool, the visual arts lab Metal have created an inspiring resource for artists which reflects its importance as the world's oldest passenger railway station and yet works for a contemporary audience.

These visits have been vital in shaping our plans for the restoration and operation of rail buildings here in Suffolk for it is our aspiration to create at The Station Master's House:

*A place to make, a place to think, a place to learn, a place to be social.*

If you would like to hear more about the project, to volunteer, or ask questions please do contact us: Smiths Row c/o The Guildhall, Guildhall Street, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1PY Tel: 07505746477 email: [enquiries@smithsrow.org](mailto:enquiries@smithsrow.org)

# All sorts of people are going to the 'TIP'

Two years on from its creation Stephen Moody sings the praises of the Angel Hill's Tourist Information Point.

Two years ago (yes, it's that already) the Tourist Information Centre on Angel Hill closed and the service relocated to the Apex.

At the time, cuts were being made across the country to various services, and here in Bury one of the things to go was the lease on No.6 Angel Hill, then the home of the 'TIC'.

To ensure that the service would not close altogether, the Apex became the main tourist information centre, and was set up to offer brochures, leaflets and advice.

In addition, Tourist Information Points were set up around the town centre to serve other parts of the town away from the Apex. These 'TIPs' include Moyses' Hall, Theatre Royal, Bury Town Council offices on Angel Hill and the Greene King brewery, and offer a selection of leaflets and advice.

It was felt important by many connected to tourism in the town that premises on or near to Angel Hill needed to be available as a TIP, as the square is the heart of the 'tourist and visitor' experience, the main coach drop off point, start point of guided walks by the town guides and point of reference from the 'Historic BSE' long stay car park at Ram Meadow.

After much discussion and hard work on the part of the former Cathedral PR manager Sarah Friswell, premises were secured next door to the Cathedral Shop on Angel Hill and



Volunteer Euan Allen mans the desk at the Angel Hill TIP.



an 'official' TIP opened. The office even bares the old TIC sign from the old No.6 - courtesy of our very own Martyn Taylor!

The Office is open from 10am to 4.00pm each day during the summer season, with reduced hours of 11am to 3pm from October to May.

Staffed entirely by a great team of volunteers (of which myself and Martyn and other Bury Society members are part), we offer a full tourism service to welcome visitors and local people alike.

Brochures, leaflets and bus and rail timetables are available, and we try to ensure we keep abreast of events taking place on a weekly basis.

Being located in a prime spot on Angel Hill ensures that we are usually the first port of call to visitors, the team always try to 'sell' Bury and the county to ensure our visitors have a positive experience.

We do get asked some very strange questions apart from the usual 'Where is?' 'How do I get to?' Some customers expect us to know everything that's happening anywhere in the UK at all times.

We also get lots of people who are looking to relocate to the area. Their questions are different to the usual and focus on the shops, roads, schools, house prices, restaurants and culture.

We also welcome many foreign visitors from all over the world. One minute you can be discussing ancestor resting places with folks from the US, the next visitors from Italy wanting to find a B&B... we see it all.

A hugely important relationship

for the TIP is with St Edmundsbury Cathedral, which owns the current TIP space as well as the adjoining premises of the Cathedral shop. Without the support from the Cathedral team, the TIP would simply not survive and we owe a huge debt of thanks for their continued support.

To strengthen that working relationship further, a wall between the TIP and Cathedral Shop was recently removed to open up the two sides and ensure a better footfall from one to the other.

Plans are in hand to refurbish both spaces and have a dedicated TIP offer, with future aspirations to then knock through to join the current art gallery to create one large flexible space.

The TIP is also the starting point of the daily guided walks and, again, the working relationship between the guides (myself and Martyn are in both camps) is hugely important to ensure a professional service to our guests.

Two years on from the threat of no or very little tourist offer on the Angel Hill the current set up is working very well. We currently have a dedicated team of 25 volunteers who staff the desk, give out information and advice and welcome our visitors.

The most often heard comments from our guests is that 'They didn't know much about the place before but after visiting the TIP and then exploring the town they will definitely be back' and 'What an amazing place - you are so lucky to live here'.

It just reiterates what us Suffolk folk already know!

# Decision day approaches for go ahead to Guildhall project

It is said that one visitor to Dublin, when asking for directions, was told 'If I were you I wouldn't be starting from here'. Were it not for the publishing deadline I wouldn't be starting this update now; rather in three weeks' time when I hope to have the positive news that we are at last really on our way to delivering the project, writes Project Director Mike Jackson.

But first we have to pass another hurdle when we meet the Heritage Lottery Fund on 4 August to seek their permission to start with their grant of £669,000. While there are encouraging signs that we will succeed there is also the possibility that we will fail because we are still unable fully to supplement their grant with the balance of the overall cost, so-called partnership funding. Despite our efforts over the past few months we are still short by about £200,000 of start-up funds.

However, the good news is that we have had some very generous support since the last update. The Town Trust has offered us a wonderful grant of £50,000. This will be assigned to the repair of the roofing at the back of the Guildhall, notably the roof over the former Council Chamber which later became the Royal Observer Corps Group operations room in WWII.

It is the poor condition of this roof which keeps the Guildhall on the Historic England (formerly English

Heritage) 'Heritage at Risk' register. So we were very excited to learn that Historic England has also offered us a grant, of £99,000, towards the repair of that roof. Hopefully those two grants will do the job, although experience from the front roof repair tells us to expect the cost to exceed the estimate.

Also Bury in Bloom has donated flower baskets which now adorn the railings at the front and make a display which is attracting attention to a building which can surprisingly go unnoticed by passers-by.

Visibility is an important factor as we build interest and support for the project and now that we are clear that the building will be in a suitable condition we shall be opening on Saturday 10 September during the national Heritage Open Days period. On 3 December, we are planning a fundraising event which will be attended by our Patron Lord Bristol.

If all goes well and we are given the green light next month it is likely that, after tendering and commissioning, conservation and alteration work will get underway straight after the fundraising event, with a target for completion of July 2018.

**But first we have to pass muster on 4 August.** We are still exploring funding options and it is not too late for ideas or offers from our many local friends.

# The ups and downs of planning control

Whoever thought it would be a good idea in 1891 to build a coal-fired power station directly opposite St. Paul's Cathedral, marring the appearance of its handsome dome with a monstrous chimney and challenging its fabric with noxious fumes?

Fortunately, Bankside Power Station was rebuilt in 1952 as an oil-fired generator and survived until 1981 when it ceased production and has become the Tate Modern art gallery.

It is sometimes said that the Tower of London would never have received planning permission under current legislation. So how and when was that legislation derived, and where are recent Government changes leading us? *Reg Sharpe* is very concerned.

As long ago as the reign of King Henry I (1100-1135) construction of fortifications without permission was an offence which would "place a man in the King's mercy", often meaning decapitation. But it was much later that wider, and less severe, regulations gradually came into force.

The Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909 conferred powers to improve existing dwellings and secure new housing for the working classes. It also introduced a means of preventing the spread of slum houses on the fringe of towns. So planning control really began as a branch of public health.

The T&CP Act 1935 empowered local authorities to make planning schemes and an Act in the same year dealt with the problem of shallow development spreading along major new roads, called "ribbon development".

In 1943 a new government ministry was set up to deal solely with planning matters, and four years later the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 hit the Statute Book.

Its effect is still with us, maimed, amplified, adjusted and succeeded, but still very recognisable. It required local planning authorities to produce long-term plans for their area, the word "development" was defined, the need to obtain permission to develop was established, the 'listing' of architectural or historic buildings was introduced, and so much more. But this is not intended to be a technical article and it would be boring and needless to try to recite all its provisions.

This proceeded fairly satisfactorily until the surge in population and the 2008 economic crisis, and it is a pity that

control is now being eroded, principally to aid the provision of new housing.

There is now a presumption to grant planning permission for any application for sustainable development which accords with the local plan. Developers are allowed to build homes on almost all brownfield sites and are permitted to bypass councils if planning permission is not given.

*With presumption in favour of sustainable development and design not being a reason for rejection . . . standards are banished*

Rear extensions to houses are permitted without the need for consent. Shops, offices and launderettes may be converted to housing without planning approval and light industrial premises will be treated the same way from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017. Green belts are being censured and so on.

In Mid Suffolk appeals against planning refusal are often successful because there is no approved development plan in place.

The presumption in favour of sustainable development sits alongside a statement by a Secretary of State that appreciation of design is subjective and criticism of design should not be a reason for rejection. Thus standards are banished.

The effect of all this on the local environment can be disastrous, and when applied nationally the policies would seem to counter the intention of the Localism law passed less than five years ago.

In February this year a select committee of the House of Lords published a report titled "Building Better Places". Whereas it broadly supported the Government's focus on increasing and speeding-up the supply of housing, it was concerned that this must not work to the long-term detriment of planning.

In June this year the All Party Parliamentary Group for Civic Societies and the APPG on Local Democracy held a joint meeting in Parliament, asking "is the planning system working?"

Economic pressures have required local authorities to cut staff. In London, planning departments have reduced by more than 50% in the last five years.

In Bury the most astonishing step was to dispense with the services of the man who so successfully guided the Borough through all its planning responsibilities and whose knowledge and experience have been invaluable and would have continued to be so if he had been allowed to remain in his post.

Coupled with the shortage of planning staff, the obvious intention of government that applications to build houses should succeed encourages local authorities often to see little point in fighting an appeal and they may allow doubtful borderline applications through.

At the same time some larger house developers are choosing to defer development of land they own and on which they may already have approval to develop.

Frequently this is because deferment benefits the company from the escalating sale price of houses. Last year planning permission was granted for 261,000 homes, but fewer than half, only 125,110 were built.

Earlier this year the *Guardian* revealed that nine major housebuilders still had a total of 615,152 housing plots in their land banks, and the four largest development companies distributed more than £1.5 billion to shareholders in 2015.

One has no need to ask where their loyalty lies.



Members who donned hard hats and high viz jackets to see behind the scenes at Gt Blakenham.

## The great power of waste

*Margaret Charlesworth gives a personal account of the visit by Bury Society members to the Great Blakenham power plant.*

I was really looking forward to a visit which had been arranged to view the Energy from Waste (EfW) plant at Gt Blakenham. At least, I was really looking forward to it until the morning of Tuesday, 19 July when the weather forecast was for the hottest day of the year and we were going to visit. . . an incinerator!

We'd been told we must keep our legs covered and wear sensible shoes, no shorts or sandals, so that was a very necessary nuisance to start with

Fortunately, on arrival we were given a talk in an air-conditioned room with cold water to drink – that was a good start. Then we were taken to see the machinery but first had to don high viz jackets, *with sleeves*, and thick gloves.

To add to our well-being we also had to put on hard hats (obviously) plus goggles, and ear pieces to listen to the commentary which the guide gave us through her mouth-piece.

Now we were in a fit condition to enter the plant: the smell was absolutely minimal as we first entered and after that we were hardly aware of any odour at all. Everything that works or moves is enclosed; well, nearly everything.

I think my favourite part was seeing the open conveyor belt which rattled along under our feet at one point carrying the resulting ash after the rubbish had been burned. There really was just ash but with some larger pieces of mostly metal that just couldn't be reduced to ash.

Later we saw the open bays with various grades of ash, the fine, fly-away ash, the bigger pieces and then another pile of bricks and similar – had these really been thrown into someone's black bin?

In a separate area were things like the bed springs of a mattress; yes, everything can go through the incinerator and the resultant ash is recycled.

The most interesting statistic for me was the fact that this EfW plant generates enough electricity to power 50,000 homes, as well as operating itself.

We were given a peep into the furnace – I guess we could have stayed there much longer, but who wants to look into a furnace emitting such a high heat in the middle of our own heatwave?

We saw the large pipes, drums and containers which operated to extract the heat from the waste and could look down, down into the well where the trucks which empty the county's black bins disgorge their contents.

Sitting behind glass at quite a height were two men operating giant claws to grab the mass of rubbish, lift it up and over a very high wall, and then allow the rubbish to fall into the furnace. The operators were very skilled and could probably 'fish out' any cuddly bear at a fairground attraction!

This was a fascinating visit. I was so pleased I went especially if being in my home-made sauna suit allowed me to lose a little bit of weight!

Many thanks to Stephen Moody for arranging the tour.



# Members meet for the AGM

*Report by Stephen Moody. Pictures by Alan Baxter*

The 45th Bury Society AGM was held on Thursday 26th May at the Unitarian Meeting House. An impressive 65 members attended the meeting.

The Committee worked hard to ensure an informative and engaging evening; feedback said that it was a good opportunity to meet and learn about the work of the Society over the past year.

A buffet, organised by Stephen, the events secretary, and wine supplied and served by David Rees, got the evening off to a relaxing start.

Mark Cordell was the speaker for the evening. He is the Chief Executive of 'ourburystedmunds', the organisation which promotes the businesses of the town, organises various town centre events and produces the excellent

shopping and eating out map.

After 32 years in the Suffolk Constabulary, Mark took on the BID role and is a key player in engaging the various authorities, tourism, retail and other town centre businesses to ensure that Bury punches above its weight in providing a successful and attractive business environment.

He told of how 'ourburystedmunds' works with others to promote the town, the work involved in organising events that we all enjoy and the plans and aspirations of the group.

Society Chairman Tim Page began the AGM. Minutes from the meeting are to follow.

AGMs are the time for changes to the committee; we said a farewell and thank you to Roy Proctor, treasurer,



*Mark Cordell.*

who stepped down after nearly 10 years in the role.

Tim Page stepped down as Chairman and was elected Secretary and Vice Chairman. Martyn Taylor was elected as the new Chairman.

The AGM concluded with a Q&A session and a thank you to all members for their continued engagement and support.

## MEMBERS' PROGRAMME

### SATURDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

**Heritage Event** Green Badge guide, Martyn Taylor gives an illustrated talk on 'An A-Z of Bury St Edmunds'.

What landmarks and details might we have missed around Bury?

The Quaker Meeting House, St Johns Street

Free to everyone but please book at the Tourist Information Point at Angel Hill

### THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER

**Quiz Night** The 'multiple-choice' questions will be on Bury St Edmunds past and present. All welcome but booking is essential. Teams of 4 people. £10 per head including fish & chip supper. St Edmund's Catholic Church crypt, Westgate Street

*Booking form in this edition of Review*

### PLANNING FOR 2017

#### **Winter Lunch**

Southgate Community Centre  
21st January

#### **February Talk** - tbc

#### **April Coffee Morning** -tbc

#### **Annual General Meeting** - May - tbc

#### **June** Bury St Edmunds Treasure Hunt

#### **July** Excursion to City of London- tbc

#### **September** Heritage Open Day - tbc

#### **October** Coffee Morning - tbc

● The results of the recent members' questionnaire are being used to formulate the events programme for 2017.

**Don't miss the opportunity  
to add your weight to the Bury Society team.  
Apply for membership now.  
Either use the website: [theburysociety.org.uk](http://theburysociety.org.uk) to download a  
membership form from the Home Page by clicking the  
"Join us" panel  
or  
telephone the Membership Secretary, Sue Savage  
on 01284 719243**