



THE SUDBURY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Caring for the past and the future

SUMMER 2011

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Please submit items for the next issue of the newsletter (Autumn/Winter) no later than 18th October 2011 – thank you.

QUESTIONNAIRE INSIDE!

Find us on the Web!

www.sudburysociety.org.uk



AGM NEWS

The Society's AGM was held on Friday 25 March 2011. Last year's minutes were agreed and those who had wished to stand again for election to the committee were re-elected.

The Society's chairman, Nick Hallidie, stood down after three years in office. The new chairman is Peter Thorogood. Peter has been in the area since 1985 when he and his wife, Marilyn, ran the George and Dragon pub in Long Melford then a dozen or so pubs and restaurants in Sudbury. At present, he is resident manager of the Masonic Hall in North Street. He writes and lectures on Freemasonry and other subjects, his favourite being the life and works of Rudyard Kipling.

He is past chairman of the Sudbury Licensed Victuallers Association and was the co-founder of the Pubwatch Scheme. He was also the founding chairman of the Long Melford Business Association. He is a

member of the local Catholic church and a committee member of Sudbury's historic Institute Club.

Peter hopes to put his experience in chairmanship to good use, campaigning vigorously on important local issues that affect Sudbury. He is a doer, not a talker. He believes that the Sudbury Society could be in the forefront of preserving Sudbury's heritage and if it means ruffling feathers for the sake of the future of our town, so be it!

MESSAGE FROM PETER THOROGOOD

First, many thanks for electing me Chairman of the Society. I am honoured to follow in the footsteps of such luminaries as Andrew Phillips, Betty Bone, David Burnett and of course Major Nick, and I hope to continue in like vein the service and leadership they have so successfully given in the past.

Mindful that next year is our 40th anniversary I hope that we can celebrate this event in true fraternal fashion (I love a good party). I am therefore making enquiries with the management of the newly refurbished Mill Hotel with a view to hosting a grand birthday party overlooking the Stour in what should be the town's premier venue. The owners have invested well and maybe soon Sudbury will have that fine hotel and facilities that we so badly need.

Also mindful of our predecessors sterling fight to preserve our Corn Exchange, which was to unite and galvanise the townspeople and led to the eventual formation of our Society, I would like us again to take the forefront in campaigning on a suitable (or contentious) issue of importance. Although our library may be safe until 2014 we cannot afford to be complacent and a strong watching brief must be kept. I have asked all committee members to identify the other most pressing issues on which we must campaign. Be it the preservation of Walnut Tree Hospital, our unloved Girling Street (the grim condition of which could grace many a derelict industrial town) our bus park and its environs or any other item of concern.

If you wish to have your say and opinions discussed, please, please email me or complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. We are your voice and are elected to represent your views. To summarise, only with an increased and vibrant membership and vigorous campaigning can we, working together with our elected councillors, make a difference to our unique town for the benefit of future generations.

And, most importantly, we can have fun and take great satisfaction in so doing!

Peter Thorogood





Moonlighting Part two

“.....during Sudbury on Show a lady told me a rather tingly story!

You may recall that in the spring edition of this newsletter I wrote about researching a house in Plough Lane, when we rather felt it may have been used at the end of the Second World War by key workers coming from London to work at the CAV factory in New Street. A member, Ron Ince, has been in touch with me and confirmed that CAV moved out towards the end of the War but he told me that their factory at Chiswick in West London had not been bombed at all. In fact the factory was at Acton, an area just north-west of Chiswick. At that time the Germans were sending over “Doodlebug” bombs and these were reaching areas not previously targeted. The Government was worried about key industry and was encouraging firms to move away from London, so CAV upped sticks and moved to Sudbury. Now hearsay has it that someone in the Boardroom threw a dart at a map of East Anglia and it landed on Sudbury, but I prefer to think that they spotted our local village of Acton and decided that such a coincidence could not be missed so moved their operation out here and found a factory unit to their liking in Sudbury. Sometimes these decisions are that simple!

offered rather a good deal if they would leave London and move to an expanding town. A small business with about a dozen employees would not be able to move without this sort of help. Having decided in principle that a move out of the Metropolis would be advantageous we began travelling to find a suitable town on the expanding town “list”. We went to Andover and Banbury in a westerly direction, down south to Hastings, up to Braintree and Haverhill, and further north to Thetford and beyond. It was on one of these trips that we came back through Sudbury. We had been told it was an expanding town but that there were no suitable industrial units left so for us it was not an option.

never have seen Sudbury and its rather splendid industrial estate. And I think that we should be very appreciative of our Chilton Industrial Estate. As estates go the main thoroughfare through it is extremely attractive with its quite inspired tree and shrub planting, and while there are always a few units that could do with a bit of spit and polish, I would urge you to keep your eyes open when travelling because there are some real eyesores elsewhere – think Thurrock for starters!

A TINGLY STORY!

Going back to my original article I was asking about the Herbert family. There was not a lot of information out there. A member looked on the 1911 census for me and said there were a lot of Herberts in Sudbury back then, and was Harold a Cabinet Maker? So I am still on the hunt. But during Sudbury on Show a lady told me a rather tingly story! She had moved to Sudbury because the town seemed right and there was a suitable home for her. After settling in she started researching her family history and discovered that her grandfather (I think it was) had been born in the Workhouse, which is now Walnuttree Hospital. Until that moment she did not know she had any connection with Sudbury at all!

TO LET!

Driving through the industrial estate we spotted a To Let sign on a factory which looked an ideal size, so made a note of the telephone number and returned to base! The upshot of my rambling is that the GLC were happy for us to take on a privately rented factory unit and would step in with the housing and other assistance necessary. We moved up with five key workers who were housed in Sudbury and Great Cornard and within a week were manufacturing again to keep the cash flow moving. So here we are by accident rather than design, maybe just like CAV who fancied a name seen on a map.

Are there any more stories like that out there?

*Caryl Knight,
Membership Secretary*

If there had been a Sudbury bypass we probably would



The attractive trees along the Chilton by-pass

“We should be very appreciative of our Chilton Industrial Estate”

FROM LONDON TO SUDBURY...

Which brings me to the reason why I am living in Sudbury. My husband’s company was working in Stratford in the East End of London and back in the 1970s the powers that be already had their eyes on vast swathes of land in that area. As incentives to move, firms were





Sudbury's Phoenix



This fine sepia photograph has 'Samuel Humphrey Sudbury Suffolk May 10th 1893' on the back. We do not know who Humphrey was but we think that the photo was taken to celebrate the opening of The Phoenix Brewery next to the Waggon and Horses PH. The office on the extreme right is still there but the rest of the site is occupied by 'Phoenix Court' today. The brewery was built by the Grimwood family following the spectacular fire which destroyed their builders' yard in 1890 (still commemorated by a plaque on the wall.)

Courtesy Sudbury Museum Trust

Americans of the 486th Bombardment Group who were based here during World War II. This was research undertaken by Shirley Smith and Val Herbert.

New technology has brought about a 'Virtual Museum' available on the Internet which can, of course, be seen worldwide. Under the umbrella of the Sudbury Museum Trust is a wonderful collection of photographs – 'Caught on Camera' – as well as highly detailed maps of the town in 1885, a look at the 'Friendly Invasion' of wartime American servicemen and dozens of others. The Virtual Museum shows artifacts in the Heritage Centre and elsewhere, and even in private ownership. Have a look on: <http://sudburysuffolk.co.uk/heritage/>

By the end of David's talk it was obvious why its title had been 'Sudbury's Phoenix' for the museum has not only risen from metaphorical ashes but from real ones when the old railway station building in which it was housed burnt down in 1985 and a new home had to be found.

David also pointed out another 'phoenix': Phoenix Court off Church Walk near the Waggon and Horses. Why is it so called? Because it is on the site of a former brewery called the Phoenix Brewery. And that, in turn, had risen from the ashes of a fire in Grimwood's builder's yard in 1890, commemorated by a stone plaque set in the wall. What better name could there have been for it?

Anne Grimshaw

Membership News from Caryl

I cannot urge you to pay your subscriptions because if you have received this newsletter, you have done so! I am permitted to cross off non-payers at the half year point of 30th June, so a plea to those who have not subscribed would be wasted in this issue. However, I would like to make a small request, which I hope will not be taken up by any of you. **IF** you do wish to leave the Society for whatever reason please let me know. I seem to have

wasted so much paper, envelopes and stamps, not to mention time and ink, on chasing up people who eventually tell me that they no longer wish to subscribe, that I get very disheartened.

Those who find it difficult to remember that 1st January is the beginning of the new subscription year can overcome that by completing a Standing Order form to their bank. I can provide these and will willingly fork out the cost of a stamp to

post them (gosh - aren't stamps extortionate?) Standing Orders do make my life a lot easier, not to mention that of our Treasurer.

Finally, you will know that we are trying to up our membership numbers so please do get out there and persuade your family, friends or neighbours to join us. We want to represent many more of you.

Caryl Knight





PLANNING MATTERS by Stephen Thorpe

Bulmer Road

After several years outline proposals have been submitted for redevelopment of the derelict industrial site as housing with a few token workplaces.

The Society's planning group criticised the initial scheme which was withdrawn and were invited to comment on new and far better proposals prior to their submission. You will find our detailed comments on the website. The scheme consists of terraces to a contemporary design rather than the usual pastiche traditional one and the spaces between them are carefully designed to accommodate people and cars. Our concern is that the developer may seek to dumb down the design to save costs and we shall check the detailed planning application carefully.

Waldingfield Road

We consistently opposed this development in the rear gardens to 98 -108 through its various solutions but it was finally approved on appeal leaving us only the scope to criticise its poor design and lack of good provision for people as well as cars.

Queens Close

We supported this infill development, by local architect James Blackie. Although the local residents were concerned about the 3/4 storey development the use made of the sloping site results in a two storey frontage to the Close which will be a positive contribution. We did support the residents'

concern about increased parking problems although each of the 3 houses has 2 parking spaces.

Friars Street

We strongly opposed an application to convert no13 from a shop to a fish and chip restaurant/takeaway. We strongly suspect that the takeaway element will be the dominant one in which case the parking restrictions will present problems and however good the extraction equipment the residents living close by will be badly affected.

We would welcome additional members to the group. We are nominally 5 strong but often only two of us are present. Let me know and come to sample a meeting – every other Friday morning at the Town Hall at 9.15. You don't have to be professionally qualified, just interested in protecting the town and adding to its continuing heritage.

LIBRARY EXHIBITION

This was a Society initiative and our contribution to Civic Day, promoted by Civic Voice, and intended to celebrate the building's history as the Corn Exchange and the town's library.

It ran from 25 June and we marked the opening with a one off "Alan Phillips Award" in recognition of the recent fine refurbishment.



SUDBURY SOCIETY'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

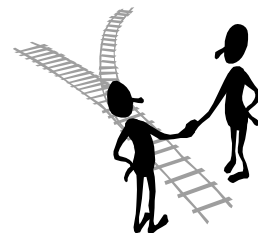


Next year we are 40! Strictly speaking we were born in late 1971 at a meeting at Salter's Hall but the first meeting of the newly appointed committee took place on 27 January 1972, at which date there were over 60 paid up members. As is well known the Society was formed as an outcome of the group set up to defend, the Corn Exchange against demolition in 1964. Success here generated the need for a body which would care for both the town's past and its future. We are planning ways of celebrating and information will appear on the website and in the next issue of the newsletter.

Welcome!

We welcome what we hope will be the first of many new members, namely:

- Mr B Stear,
- Mr P Gear,
- Ms P Kuczma,
- Mrs P Johnson
- Mr P Whitney
- Mr V Rybacki and
- Ms P Eden

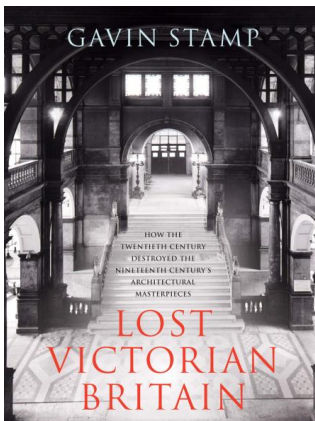




BOOK REVIEW

Lost Victorian Britain

Civic Week (25 June – 3 July) was celebrated in Sudbury by an exhibition in the library showing the campaign in 1964 to save Sudbury's Corn Exchange from demolition. This subsequently led to the formation of the Sudbury Society in 1972, and the adoption of the Corn Exchange as the Society's logo.



Civic societies, like the Sudbury Society, sprang up in towns and cities all over Britain in response to the widespread and needless destruction of old buildings, especially Victorian ones like Sudbury's Corn Exchange. But, sadly, the damage had often been done. (Remember the Euston Arch?) Since then the voices of civic societies

have become louder and, we hope, and stronger.

A book published late last year is a timely reminder of those dark days (architecturally speaking) of the 1950s – 70s. Gavin Stamp's *Lost Victorian Britain: how the twentieth century destroyed the nineteenth's century's architectural Masterpieces*. It brings home the gigantic scale of official vandalism during those years. I read it with despair and rage. How could anyone with a scrap of sensitivity have sanctioned this mass destruction of grand, solid and striking buildings in favour of characterless monstrosities that were totally out of keeping with their surroundings?

Thus when I came to Sudbury in 2006 and stood on Market Hill from where I could not see one horrible building, I immediately warmed to the town and felt how fortunate it had been. (Yes, I know some very worthwhile buildings were demolished and horrors erected but they are comparatively few – and long may it remain so.)

However, I digress. *Lost Victorian Britain* is an eye-

opener. Gavin Stamp does not mince his words in his condemnation of those who sanctioned this willful desecration of our towns and cities. Turns of phrase ("tawdry mediocrity ... gratuitous vandalism") and pithy remarks ("...redeveloped in a frenzy of naïve utopianism in favour of what?") drive home his points. Stamp has produced a stunning book that illustrates and explains what happened to 200 buildings erected with Victorian pride and self-confidence to last forever but now, alas, remain only as photographs, demolished simply because they were unfashionable.

Stamp's book covers public, commercial and industrial buildings, places of worship, public and private institutions, urban and suburban domestic architecture, country houses, hotels and buildings for pleasure, and railway buildings. (But see what has been achieved at St Pancras! Fantastic!)

What Gavin Stamp said needed to be said. His book should be compulsory reading for all members of Planning Departments, Planning Committees, architects,

"tawdry mediocrity ... gratuitous vandalism"

developers and anyone else involved with or who cares about the built environment. What Stamp says applies not only to Victorian and Edwardian buildings but all old buildings that have architectural and historic interest.

When you have read this book you will understand how truly remarkable it was that in 1964 Sudbury's Corn Exchange survived and became the town's library – a shining (and national) example of what can be achieved when there is the will, the skill and the money to sensitively adapt an old building to a new use.

Anne Grimshaw

Lost Victorian Britain: how the twentieth century destroyed the nineteenth's century's architectural masterpieces. Gavin Stamp. Arum Press, 2010, £25. ISBN 978 84513 532 4





UP, UP AND AWAY - TOM'S VIEW OF THE MARKET



It is not often that we can share the same view of the Market Hill of Sudbury as the statue of Thomas Gainsborough. However, a small number of local people did take advantage of a ride up high in Turner's cherry picker on 2nd May. This year the event was organised by Gainsborough's House who dedicated a week of events to link with the garlanding of the statue.

People who did take this opportunity were able to catch both panoramic views of the heart of Sudbury's Market Hill and the bustle of the many different garden and plant stalls at the Plant Fair organised by the Quay Theatre below and also see in detail the wonderful statue of our famous artist garlanded to celebrate Gainsborough's birthday which is sometime in early May.

This year the flowers in the garland glowed with a golden hue to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Gainsborough's House.

Visitors can see some of the works by the great artist and his contemporaries in their collection in the Museum in Gainsborough's Street.

It was in 2003 whilst visiting the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition that Sudbury Society Member and Friend of Gainsborough's House; Roy Freer noted that the statue of Sir Joshua Reynolds was bearing a celebratory wreath of laurels to mark the great painter's relationship with the RA. Roy wondered why it was that the statue of the equally famous artist Thomas Gainsborough located in Sudbury was not being celebrated in a similar way?

"When local Decorator Sean Cook provided his cherry picker the problem was resolved!"

The Sudbury Society, Gainsborough's House and the Town Hall all agreed to support the proposal to garland the statue and it seemed appropriate that the date should link with Gainsborough's birth. Arranging the placing of the garland that first year proved daunting! There was a slow drizzle making surfaces slippery and the ladders only just reached the statue's legs! A system ropes was devised by Roy to lasso the garland of fresh flowers into position. The following year in 2004 the Gainsborough's House Print Workshop Technician placed the

garland. After an awkward throw of the rope she was required to wear a neck brace for a month or so! When local Decorator Sean Cook provided his cherry picker the problem was resolved!

These celebratory events would not have been possible without those proud Sudbrarians who got together to commission Thomas' statue about 100 years ago. Sir George Agnew who was the Chair of the Subscribers Committee engaged an Australian sculptor called Bertram Mackennal to create our wonderful statue. Much discussion at the time suggested that the sculptor might have based his work on the head upon one of Gainsborough's self-portraits. On the 10th June 1913 the statue of the artist was unveiled by Princess Louise, Queen Victoria's 4th daughter. Those present included Bertram Mackennal, Lord Bristol, Mayor Marten and his wife plus many other dignitaries and the Town was decorated with banners and bunting.

Gainsborough's House has produced an informative leaflet detailing much of this event and information can also be found on the website of the Sudbury Museum Trust: www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk/heritage and look under 'Recent Research' for a couple of articles entitled: 'A Royal Unveiling' and 'The Unconventional Princess'.

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Special offer for members of the Sudbury Society



The Sudbury Society's membership of Civic Voice brings some benefits for our own members who can claim free day passes from both the National Trust and English Heritage. These passes can be downloaded and printed out from the website of the organisations using the links below. If you do not have access to the internet (or a printer), you can obtain passes by writing to Civic Voice and enclosing a SAE. You should provide your contact details and mention that you are writing as a member of the Sudbury Society. The address to write to is: Ian Harvey, Civic Voice, Unit 101, 82 Wood Street, The Tea Factory, Liverpool L1 4DQ.

The free **National Trust** day pass is available to members of the Sudbury Society and gives free access to any National Trust property subject to a small number of restrictions. The pass is transferable and can be given to friends or family if you are already a member of the National Trust. The free pass is available to download using the following link:

<http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/about/partners/the-national-trust/national-trust-special-offer/>

You can find a full list of National Trust properties at www.nationaltrust.org.uk

The free **English Heritage** day pass is available to members of the Sudbury Society and gives free access to any English Heritage property subject to a small number of restrictions. The pass can be used between 1 September 2011 and 31 January 2012. Please note that this pass is not transferable. The free pass is available to download using the following link:

<http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/about/partners/english-heritage/english-heritage-civic-voice-pass/>

You can find a full list of English Heritage properties at www.english-heritage.org.uk

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Those who came to Roger Green's talk back in January on 'Simon and the French Connection' may recognise this image but, honestly, how many of you remember in detail what he **said**? Now both those who came and those who could not make it can find his fascinating illustrated talk on the Sudbury Museum Trust website.

Just go to: www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk/heritage and then the "Recent Research" section.

David Burnett





Sudbury Society's Sally Freer, courageously places the floral garland around Thomas Gainsborough's statue!

Photos courtesy of Ann & Hugh Homan

Continued from page 6

Over the years the celebrations for Gainsborough's birthday has grown. Gainsborough's House Friends have invited Morris Dancers to perform in Weaver's Lane and GH Volunteers have dressed up in 18th century costume and paraded round the Market Hill accompanied by a strolling musician.

Next year the Sudbury Society is looking for ideas to celebrate the occasion as part of our own birthday celebrations and we look forward to our members joining us round the statue in May 2012. Certainly, it would be good to think that all of Sudbury might celebrate the actual 100th birthday of Mackennal's statue in 2013. This might prove an opportunity to bring out the bunting and celebrate the statue dedicated to Sudbury's special son! The Sudbury Society would certainly be proud to support this event.

Sally Freer

WHAT'S ON 2011 ~ 2012

Unless otherwise stated, the cost will be: for members: £2.00 and non members, £3.00

Saturday 30th July

11a.m. – 2.00p.m.

Coffee and Cake at Mill House
By kind invitation of Maria and Peter Mills, if the weather is kind enjoy a glass of wine on the lawn overlooking the Water Meadows. There will be a raffle. Entrance £2.00 for members, £3.00 non members. (This is fund raising event for the Society).

Wednesday 24th August

Trip on River Stour to Little Henny and lunch at the Henny Swan. The journey takes 1 hr to Little Henny through the Lock at Great Cornard to reach the Henny Swan. Two hours are set aside for lunch before boarding the boats for the return trip. Cost £25.00 to include the boat trip and lunch at the Henny Swan.

Friday 30th September

Friars Hall, School Street, "Free Masons in Victorian Sudbury the Rector and the Rogue"
A talk by Peter Thorogood.

Friday 28th October

7.30p.m. Friars Hall, School Street - "Anyone for Duet Two Sudbury Musicians"
Music and a talk by Roger Green.

Friday 25th November

7.30p.m. Friars Hall, School Street, "Lost Country Houses of Suffolk" A talk by W.M. Roberts author of the above book.

Friday 9th December

Our Christmas Event
At The Masonic Hall, North Street:
"Call my bluff on Wines".
Members will be tasting the wine and using their skill!
With cheese or pate supper.
Cost £15.00



Friday 27th January

7.30p.m. Friars Hall, School Street, "Famous and Infamous Sudbury Doctors in the 19th Century"
A talk by Val Herbert.

Friday 24th February

Quiz Fish & Chips supper.

Friday 30th March

AGM 7.30p.m. Friars Hall, School Street, followed with a talk by Graham Patrick entitled "Violent Agitation in Lavenham"

Friday 27th April

7.30p.m. Friars Hall School Street.
"A History of Sudbury's Cottage Hospital (St Leonard's) 1868 to the present".
A talk by Phyllis Felton.