

The SUDBURY SOCIETY

Newsletter

Spring 2011



From the Chairman's Desk

Nick Hallidie

At the AGM in March I shall hand over the Chairmanship after two and a half years in post. By previous standards this is a short tour, but few can have come to the post with less expertise than I did. Before coming to Sudbury in 2005, I had spent the previous 28 years in Portugal and before that my life was the Army, giving me scant experience of the workings of society in England.

However within the committee and the wider society there is a wealth of experience and knowledge on all the aspects of the Society's remit and many able people. For me it has been a continuous learning experience. I have met many delightful people and have a rough idea of how town planning is supposed to work and the role of conservation. I have seen how very difficult it is to push through important schemes like the Bypass and the Hamilton Road development. The society answers a need in the community and will I am sure go from strength to strength.

Sudbury on Show – Saturday 19th March 2011

Sally Freer

The Sudbury Society is looking forward meeting some of the many visitors to **Sudbury on Show** on Saturday 19th March in St Peter's.

This biennial event has increased in popularity since its inception in 2005 and is a great opportunity for the 250 plus charitable organisations to present their aims and objectives that support the many different needs and opportunities in and around Sudbury.

Most members of the *Sudbury Society Executive* will be available to discuss any issues and concerns that you might have about Sudbury and the neighbouring villages so do pop in and say hello!

We are actively involved in a whole raft of local activities. Our *Planning Group* comments directly to the appropriate bodies concerning planning applications on a weekly basis and has been able to influence decisions that could have been detrimental to the Town.

The *Events Committee* arranges a programme of historical and contemporary talks and events that relate to Essex and Suffolk. These meetings are held on the last Friday of the month in Friars Hall in School Street. They also arrange visits to local gardens and houses. This provides an opportunity for members of the Sudbury Society to meet socially in interesting surroundings and enjoy delicious refreshments!

Many of you will already know that the Sudbury Society's bi-annual exhibition, *Visions of Sudbury*, will once again be on display at St Peter's next October and those of you who are considering submitting a painting or print can pick up a leaflet at **Sudbury on Show**.

There will also be some information about the Sudbury Society celebrating *Civic Day* 25th June in Sudbury Library. This is a national celebration by towns and cities around the UK organised by Civic Voice. This exhibition will continue until 3 July and will chart the history of the Library and possibly find out how it was that the front of the Corn Exchange was selected to be the logo for the Sudbury Society? Why not make a note in your diary to visit the library during that week to see if we have solved the mystery?

Diary

Diana Clifford

Friday 25th March 7.30 pm Friars Hall, School Street - AGM
Followed by "Sudbury's Phoenix" - A talk by David Burnett

Friday 29th April 7.30 pm Friars Hall, School Street
"Ill-tempered churchmen in Victorian Sudbury" - a talk by Dr Peter Cooper

THURSDAY 19th May 7 for 7.30pm MASONIC HALL North Street

Spring Dinner (in place of cancelled Christmas Dinner)

All members with tickets for the Christmas Dinner will be honoured. The 'After Dinner Speaker' will be Andrew Philips on the "House of Lords" - Any member wishing to join us please telephone Diana Clifford on 379499
To book a place. £15.00

Friday 24th June 7.30p.m. Friars Hall, School Street
"A 19th Century Sudbury Man" - A talk by Mr Tony Moore

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 members, £3.00 non-members
(This is a fund raising event for the Society)

August tba - hopefully a trip on River Stour to Little Henny and lunch at the Henny Swan (Week day lunch)

Planning Matters

Stephen Thorpe

The applications for **Prolog** and **Sainsbury's** are still going through the planning system, the former still meeting strong opposition. We are still concerned about the traffic and safety implications for the latter, both at the junction with Cornard Road and beyond the site.

A revised application for the land **East of Carson Drive** in Great Cornard was once more opposed by us - we felt it was now premature since Babergh is consulting on its housing strategy to 2031. The government's new localism bill may give the local community more say in such applications although there will also be financial incentives to encourage more housing.

A new house is planned to the rear of **10 Market Hill** (Ipswich Building Society).

We supported this as an imaginative attempt to provide living accommodation in the town centre.

The Annual General Meeting

Enclosed with this newsletter are the necessary papers for the Annual General Meeting, which will be held on Friday 25th March. Please bring them with you. There are also nomination forms enclosed for submission to Heather for a place on the committee. We would welcome anyone interested in coming on to the committee, as there are always fresh ideas to be had, and often a new head will come up with a new way of doing something. If you don't wish to actually sit on the committee there are a lot of other ways in which you could help.

Diana is always glad of extra help with any catering we do, and welcomes ideas for future events. Stephen fronts our planning committee and would welcome help in that area. Sally heads up the sub-committee which plans and runs the Art exhibitions we hold and we always need stewards for those events. We are in the process of updating our website which we have rather neglected as we do not have anyone with the expertise to keep it updated on a regular basis so there is another "need" we have. So have a think about what you could contribute to the Sudbury Society.

This edition of the newsletter is a patchy affair to issue with the papers for the AGM but our thanks now go to Linda Sebbage, a member, who has volunteered to edit the Newsletter in future, following the retirement of Elizabeth Nurser. Elizabeth, I think everyone will agree, has done the most amazing job for us over the past few years, for which we are truly grateful, and it is wonderful to find someone to carry on the tradition.

There was a packed house – over 100 people – to hear Roger Green unpick the inter-woven French elements in the life of Simon Thibaut (or Theobald) itself a Norman name. He is arguably Sudbury's most famous son, and left the Talbot-dog of the Theobalds as the core of our continuing coat-of-arms. We had a master-class in the lecturer's craft, and no one can now be surprised that the Roger of the Friends of St Peter's is also a senior member of the education faculty at Cambridge.

Perhaps most of us knew that Simon became Archbishop of Canterbury and shortly added the Chancellorship (Prime Minister) of England; that the Peasant's Revolt (1381) held him responsible for the hated 'poll tax'; that he was dragged from the Tower of London to be beheaded; and that his skull (with understandably gritted teeth) is still to be seen in the vestry of St Gregory's church. We learnt much more.

Simon was a younger son. His father, Nigel, and his brother began as capitalists in the local cloth industry, and by the time Simon went to university c 1330 had broadened out into international trade e.g. in furs. The 100 Years war was launched and the king needed money. In the absence of Jews in England for a whole generation, rich men like Theobald were co-opted into lending it. This was a new English class – not the land-rich but the cash-rich. So Simon began his career with contacts at court. He studied canon law at Cambridge and then at Paris, the Harvard of his day.

But when he was 40, his rising star hit problems. He had to leave England quickly to avoid facing charges. He headed for the papal court in Avignon. This old city on the great river Rhone in Provence (not at that time in France) had shot into prominence when two rival popes were elected and one settled there. When Simon arrived there was a fever of building and magnificent display (the income of the Avignon pope was said to be twice that of the French king). His English patrons gave him good introductions: the pope found him a series of rich English benefices with little expectation of duties to perform. There were constant processions around the city to be staffed up and networks established. Avignon was Simon's home for ten years and the basis of his career.

In 1348 catastrophe struck Avignon (as it did Sudbury). Many thousands died of the Black Death in a few weeks. This gave Simon a major career opportunity, under an altogether more sober pope. He became an Auditor of the Rota – something like a judge of the European Court. At this time Simon's patron, the Bishop of Norwich, was founding Trinity Hall in Cambridge, a college specifically for the better training of English students in the skills of government. Simon's arms – recognising his contribution – can be seen on the chapel ceiling.

And then the French connexion ends. The pope thought well enough of Simon to make him Bishop of London, and then Archbishop of Canterbury. Simon found vast sums of money to re-build the nave at Canterbury, and his memory there is kept green. It has become the tradition to lay a posy of hellebore at *his body's tomb in Canterbury* every Christmas. Roger told us of the current project to reconstruct from the *skull in St Gregory's* a recognisable head for Simon. Maybe this could become the focus for our laying a posy of hellebore here in Sudbury at Christmas to match Canterbury?

Moonlighting (or a sideline for the Membership Secretary)

Caryl Knight

Back last summer I received a phone call from a lady residing in London. She was researching her family history and had requested a copy of her grandmother's death certificate merely, she said, to keep the paper work in order. Her grandmother had died in 1945. On the arrival of the certificate she was surprised to see that the place of death was a house in Plough Lane, Sudbury, in the county of Suffolk. She had never heard mention of Sudbury before, and there had never been any mention that her grandmother had not died in the area of London in which she lived. She had Googled Sudbury and come up with our website which gave her my telephone number.

Could I tell her what the house in Plough Lane was or had been? Could it have been an hotel or boarding house? Was it a clinic or private hospital? Any information on the possible reason for her grandmother being in Sudbury would be much appreciated. I promised to do some research and get back to her as soon as I had anything of interest.

My first thought was maybe the Rising Sun pub at the bottom of Plough Lane but a quick walk down there showed me that the number she had given me was at the top of the lane, just behind Salters Hall. Scratching my head I rang David Burnett. He also needed time to think, and like me, did a walk down Plough Lane to get his thoughts in order.

The house was a small one, and certainly would not have been large enough to take in lodgers. David wondered first whether the Salters Hall building had incorporated the use of this small dwelling behind to house servants. Salters Hall apparently was the billet for some American Officers who might have wanted their batmen under another roof, but close at hand. However, he soon discarded this notion.

David thought back to what was happening in Sudbury at the end of the war. CAV had been bombed out of their premises

in Chiswick in 1944 and came up to Sudbury bringing key workers with them. They took over New Hall in New Street (next to the Conservative Club) and continued their vital production for the war effort. They would have needed rented accommodation for their workers. Could this be the answer? Maybe one of the workers was related to the lady in question and had brought her out of the danger zone or maybe she just came for a holiday and unfortunately passed away whilst here.

I rang the London number and relayed all this information. There was a thoughtful pause at the other end and then she said that she began to see a connection. Some of the family had come from the Chiswick area, so there was a link there. Some would have had the qualifications to work with CAV although they would have returned to London immediately the war was over or when there was better work in their original area. It had given her something to work on and she thanked us profusely for taking the trouble to do a bit of research. I do regret that I did not keep her telephone number and that I did not ask her to let me know whether she found any further information, but it was my first time as a contact for possible information through the Sudbury Society.

I am now on another quest, and there may be people out there who can help me. The name I have been given is Herbert. A gentleman from Enfield has contacted me to ask if I know of any family called Herbert who might be related to him. His father was brought up in Acton Lane but left as young man to seek his fortune elsewhere. He knows the family is an old one because he was a Freeman. I have talked to Val Herbert and to other members with this name but they all say they are relatively new to the area. Is there anyone who can help me?

Sudbury Suffolk: the unlisted heritage

David Burnett's beautiful book, *Sudbury Suffolk: the unlisted heritage*, was originally published by the Sudbury Society in 2002. It proved very popular and quickly became out of print. The Society has responded to public demand for more copies and this reprint (not second edition) was done by Lavenham Press in just six weeks.

The book is full of wonderful photographs of fine Sudbury buildings which, although not 'listed' are just as important to Sudbury's rich building heritage. It is a reminder of the need to treat these fine buildings with the care and respect they deserve.

David was busy signing copies in the Tourist Information Centre on Saturday morning 11 December which also provided a good opportunity to promote the Sudbury Society as well as making contact with people new to the town.

Sudbury Suffolk: the unlisted heritage costs £13.95 and is on sale at the Tourist Information Centre in Gaol Lane and Kestrel Bookshop in Friars Street. Copies can also be obtained from the Sudbury Society by contacting The Treasurer: pgm@travelandleisure.com

Membership Update

Caryl Knight

Subscriptions for 2011 were due in January and a goodly number of our members duly paid up promptly. The Standing Orders make life a lot easier for us so if you would like to pay that way next year and in subsequent years please let me know and I will get a form to you. To those of you who plan to settle up at the Annual General Meeting I would make a request. **Please bring a cheque for the amount with you or the exact amount in cash, together with a note of your name.** At the January meeting we were very rushed to give everyone paying a receipt and the correct change, all before the speaker started his discourse. As it was there was one counterfoil receipt for cash which did not have a name on it but hopefully my memory didn't fail me and the correct person was crossed off the 'wanted' list! I hate chasing people for subs if they have actually paid (Reminder: £7.50 single member, £12 for a couple at the same address!

We welcome some new members: Mr & Mrs P Sanderson, Mr S Thornton, Ms C Hatfield and Mrs F Robinson.

NEWSLETTER

This edition is quite spare in content, coming as it does in the quiet closing months of the winter. There are many exciting events coming along this year which will be shown in the new programme which will be posted to members some time in April. If you have an article in you (they say everyone has a book in them!) then please let one of the committee know and we will ensure it reaches the new editor.