

"Hats off to the Award Winners"



Suffolk View

A PUBLICATION OF THE SUFFOLK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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- *Green Awards - see pages 5 & 16*
- *Green Homes - see page 15*



SUFFOLK
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Suffolk Preservation Society



The County Branch of CPRE
Founded in 1929, the SPS, a registered charity, (registered charity number 249981), is working to safeguard the buildings and landscape of Suffolk.

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Front top: The Director at the River Rat Meadows
County Wildlife Site, Rattlesden

Below: The Director, Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds

Back: Snowdrops in February

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Snippets from the Cutting Room

SPS Director, Richard Ward, writes



The assault on local democracy which I have referred to in previous *Suffolk Views* continues, as does the centralisation of decision-making on planning. The *Boundary Committee* announced, after its latest round of consultation, the options for unitary local

government in Suffolk. While nobody would claim that the existing system of local government in the county is perfect it does not need total replacement to make it more effective and efficient. This view was supported by the majority of people and communities in Suffolk who, during the last consultation, expressed a desire for the existing structure of local government to be retained and improved. Yet these views are not being taken into account at this stage. Therefore, one asks what **is** the value, role and purpose of the current consultation exercise? Is it aimed at avoiding a legal challenge to any final decision by the *Secretary of State* or to further **persuade** Suffolk of the supposed benefits of Unitary Local Government?

It is, of course, good to see that *Lowestoft* is no longer being hived off to Norfolk. But that was a non-starter and was so very clearly wrong. We should not, therefore, congratulate the *Boundary Committee* for correcting such a flawed and fundamentally misjudged option. A **single** Suffolk Unitary Authority is now likely to be the favoured one if the option to retain, and fine-tune, the existing structure is ruled out, wrongly in my opinion. Well, the infighting between the 'districts' and 'county' will start now as they each seek to secure the upper hand and power base in any new structure. I envisage that any unitary authority will be based on a modified county council calling itself *Suffolk Council*. It will be, in fact, except for the name change, the County Council modified to take on board the district council functions, especially planning.

Will we end up with a structure *fit for purpose*, I doubt it? It will, at best, be a slightly modified urban model imposed onto a rural landscape.

This will be a poor model to adopt because rural communities' requirements are so very different: they require sensitive balance, support and comprehensive understanding built in to the equation. Those living at a greater distance from the central planning hub cannot so easily participate in it, and many councillors will not know or understand their locality and its needs: not the best or most democratic way to reform local government.

What is fundamentally required is a structure that understands rural problems.

At my first Conference as Director of the Society I wrote a 'tongue in cheek' play based on a Suffolk planning system of the future, and how it might work. It was penned for amusement and to lighten the programme. However, some of my absurd ideas in the play are materialising in the planning system today, which is unbelievably scary! Finally, on this point, I recommend you to look at the programme of Cornwall's recent restructuring to a unitary authority from one not dissimilar to Suffolk's, which will give us some sobering lessons as to what this county may face in the near future.

As many of you will know I am leaving the position of Director after a little over six happy years. Therefore, this will be my last report to *Suffolk View* where I hope I have informed and well as warned, in my planning capacity. I am sure the Society will want to build on the reputation, status and position it now has as the lead environmental organisation in Suffolk. There must be no looking backwards but only forwards to the external challenges to be faced and battles to be engaged in and won. You, as a member of the Society, are so critical to our work and successes. I hope you will give the new Director all the help and support you have given me over the past six years. **Thank you** and I wish you all every success in your fight to safeguard Suffolk for the future.

Editor's note: see the Society's latest response to the *Boundary Commission* on the website.
www.suffolksociety.org

Comment

SPS Chairman, Alfreda Thistlethwaite, writes

What a lot has happened since writing for the last edition! Although a recession was then being predicted I doubt if many could foresee the situation we would be in by the beginning of 2009. The significance of the near collapse of banking and financial institutions is impacting on every aspect of our lives. Who would have thought, and no doubt he's as surprised as the rest of us, that *Robert Peston*, the *BBC's Business Editor*, would become a national guru. Now when we hear the latest piece of bad news on the economy we want to hear what *Mr. Peston* thinks of its significance before others! The physical effect of the situation on the fabric of our town centres is becoming significant. Businesses that we think of as a traditional part of our main shopping streets have been affected.

The closure of *Woolworths* as well as the loss of other retailers from our high streets is leaving gaps which are unlikely to attract new traders for some time to come. This, coupled with the reluctance and even inability of shoppers to spend, is giving an air of despondency where previously there was vibrancy. This could be the time for planning authorities to face up to the challenge and see this as an opportunity to rethink the future size, pattern and appearance of our town centres. Some of the sites of buildings, other than listed buildings, which now stand empty may present, on redevelopment, possible opportunities for better pedestrian and traffic circulation or the introduction of new uses. Listed buildings are at their most vulnerable when unoccupied for long periods and can quickly fall in to disrepair. Local authorities may have to take action to remedy problems.

Another consequence of the economic crisis is the downturn in income from planning fees received by local authorities. Eighty-four per cent of planning authorities across the country have reported a drop in planning fees of three per cent or more, one authority in the south has even reported a fifty per cent fall. Development Control

staff are being made redundant when they might be better deployed to policy and planning making to put the local authority into a stronger position when the market improves. *Richard McCarthy*, the *Director-General* of housing and planning at the *Department of Communities and Local Government*, has stressed that planning authorities should capitalise on the decline in development control workloads to improve the preparation of *Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)*. "It is important to prepare for a rise in economic activity. Please use this opportunity to get ahead with spatial planning to enable sustainable development as a whole".

It is a matter of great concern to all who care about the county when resources devoted to caring for the environment are reduced. We are finding that where this is happening then people are turning to us for advice where hitherto they would have sought this from planning staff at their local council offices. Little Hall staff, of course, assist where they can but we too have limited time and resources. **Dealing with conservation areas and listed buildings requires specialist knowledge and experience.** Retaining staff with such skills should be a major priority in Suffolk.

The *2008 Planning Act* is now in force. The Act brings into being a new system of dealing with infrastructure projects of national significance; *National Policy Statements (NPS)* will be prepared and will include specific proposals on location. An *NPS* will be considered and decided by an *Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC)*, a number of commissioners will be specially appointed for this purpose. It will be for local authorities to advise on the nature and adequacy of community involvement in the process at both the policy stage and at the subsequent development approval stage. They are charged with providing a statement of local impacts. These are important roles for councils as they must ensure that due regard is placed on the *Local Development Framework* and that as elected bodies they properly represent local views. I have drawn attention to all of this as a proposal for a further nuclear power station at *Sizewell* is likely to figure



in one of the first *National Policy Statements*. This will be Suffolk's first experience of this new planning process. The Society will need to be well advised on how to become involved. We must work with our colleagues at CPRE to ensure we can engage in the policy making stage at national level and work with local planning authorities to play our part at the detailed development stage.

I am conscious that what I've written is rather gloomy and I haven't even mentioned the problems on the housing scene! We are experiencing some difficult times and will need to be vigilant to the effects the recession is having on our environment. Rural communities are equally, if not more vulnerable as urban areas. Food is an essential commodity and that aspect of farming needs not to be affected but improved. Prior to the recession, farmers were being encouraged to diversify, for example, in the development of other uses for redundant buildings to help local employment. One must wonder how such new enterprises are faring.

It is important that local authorities keep safeguarding the environment and that the need for *sustainable* development is foremost when determining planning applications and making staffing changes. There is a danger that in the bid to stimulate economic recovery inappropriate development will be allowed and experienced professionals will be lost.

Postscript: *Can I take this opportunity to thank you, our members and volunteers, for continuing to support us – especially during these difficult financial times. The Society's obligations remain the same whatever the state of the economy: it's important that we continue with our vital work in the County.*

'Suffolk - Creating the Greenest County Awards'

Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Strategic Partnership came together to create an Award for 'Creating the Greenest County' as a spur to delivering a more sustainable and environmentally aware county. Schools, businesses and

communities were asked to put forward initiatives which they considered were in line with the objectives of the award scheme.

The Society's Chairman, *Alfreda Thistlethwaite*, attended the launch last November, and as a consequence the Society forwarded to the judges the *Elmswell exemplar affordable housing project*, with its clever use of orientation, thermal gain, natural ventilation, some carbon negative construction materials and high quality insulation. It was hailed by the *Architects Journal* as a build which was 'as close to zero carbon as any multi-unit residential project completed to date in the UK.'

The award ceremony was held in the lovely setting of the West Wing at Ickworth House on Wednesday, 18th March, 2009. *Vice-Chairmen Ralph Carpenter and David Rees* were pleased to receive the Award in the 'Building' category on the Society's behalf. The certificate citation reads -

Greenest Community 2009 – "*Suffolk Preservation Society are awarded Greenest Community for their outstanding work to improve energy efficiency in buildings.*"

In addition, the Society received a cheque for £200.

The *Elmswell affordable housing scheme* was an initiative, in the *Society's 75th Anniversary Year*, of an exemplar building project in sustainable new build with a Suffolk context. This Award is accepted on behalf of all those involved in that project and in the hope that others will take forward many of its lessons and concepts.

Ralph Carpenter & David Rees accept the Award on behalf of the Society



A mortise and tenon relationship?

SPS member, Richard Toft, writes

Some years ago, when I was attending a meeting in London organised by the CPRE for Branch Chairmen, I remember mentioning to a fellow-delegate our concern in the Suffolk Preservation Society for the built environment. My colleague's brow furrowed and, drawing me aside as a teacher would an erring student, he said "Let me tell you quite plainly, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England has nothing whatever to do with the built environment. Our sole concern is the countryside. Anyone who tells you anything else is wrong." He fixed me with a firm look and moved off among the crowd.

I had encountered this line of thought before when debates were raging about the need for by-passes around sensitive towns in the South. Many commentators did seem to take the view that any by-pass that was proposed over open countryside had to be opposed without further discussion, no regard being paid to the pleas of inhabitants of villages and country towns that their heritage of buildings was gradually being destroyed by through-traffic.

I believe that the CPRE and the Suffolk Preservation Society now have a shared view that every case must be examined upon its merits. In some instances the balance of

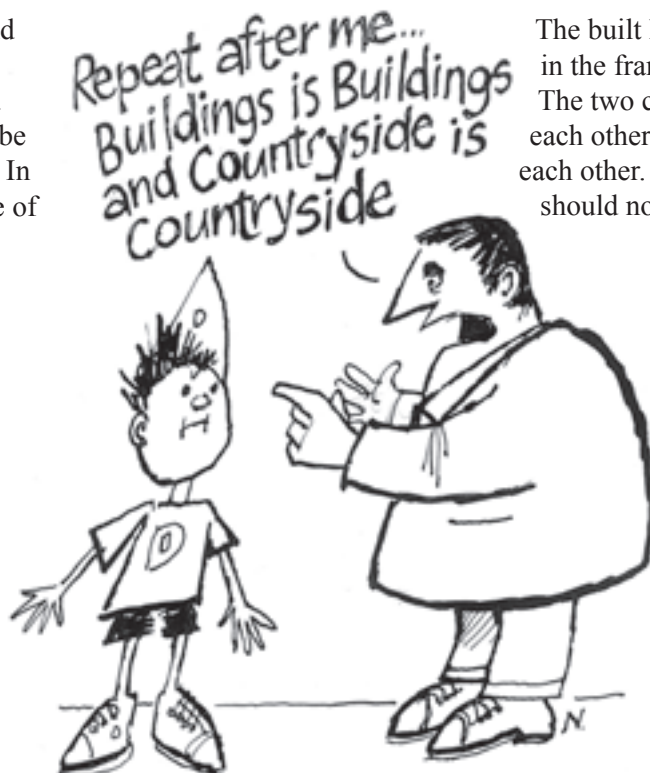
benefit will tip in favour of a by-pass, in others it will not. So be it. There can and should be no dogma, no absolutes.

All of this inclines me to the view that in a small and crowded nation like ours a recognition of interdependence is a very necessary attribute. Residents in the countryside should not shrug their shoulders in indifference over the problems facing the built environment, and residents in more urban areas should, likewise, not close their minds to the challenges facing the countryside.

Who was it who said something on the lines that the fluttering of a butterfly's wing could have its impact across the world? I forget, but I am sure someone will be able to tell me. The image does convey a truth: that no man is an island: that for every action there is a re-action.

As we go about the world doing whatever our business is, it behoves us, perhaps, to reflect upon our mutual interdependence and the potential for good or harm that any of our actions can have.

The built heritage in Suffolk is set in the framework of its countryside. The two can and should complement each other and draw strength from each other. They need not be and should not be in competition.



Have you heard this one?

The right kind of 'change'?

Six 20,000 home towns could be created in the East of England, and three regional centres doubled in size. Consultants *Arup's* brief for the *East of England Regional Assembly (EERA)* was to look at possible locations for major settlements as evidence for the review of its *Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)*, which is being extended to cover the period to 2031. As well as major expansion around Stansted to Braintree the report adds that Cambridge, Chelmsford and Norwich could become regional centres for populations of up to 400,000 people. There are, of course, knock-on consequences for *Suffolk* in this expansion on its borders. *Bury St. Edmunds*, *Colchester* and *Ipswich* also have the potential for major growth within existing urban boundaries.

Sustainable living in 1821

The reformer, John Claudius Loudon, in 1826, started *The Gardener's Magazine*, a journal which ran for seventeen years. A contributor to the magazine was a gentleman called J.H. Moggridge, a landowner, coal-owner and magistrate in Monmouthshire, who had built a village for his colliers in 1821, with an inn, a village hall, house for the baker, blacksmith, tailor and shopkeepers, and cottages for the colliery workers. Each cottager was allotted 20 rods of land (an eighth of an acre) on which to support his family. Was this the first of the sustainable villages which grew up successfully around the UK and can we ensure today that the country's rural villages and small towns are sustainably robust and reasonably self-supporting?

Perseverance is the name of the game?

A planning inspector has overruled Norwich City Council and granted consent to *Tesco* for an Express store, despite local concerns. Meanwhile, the supermarket giant announced that it will submit a smaller proposal for a store in *Sheringham*, *Norfolk*, after previous plans were rejected by an Inquiry. This does not bode well for *Suffolk* with *Tesco* seeking permission on several sensitive sites, like *Hadleigh*, and where the balance of local food circulation and

the vitality of rural shopping will be adversely affected. It is rumoured that *Tesco* are also interested in taking high street space in some of the ex-*Woolworths* stores. Let us hope that the *Bury St. Edmunds Cornhill* site will escape their notice. The loss of key town centre shops could be an opportunity to create a more diverse shopping experience with well-designed shop fronts.

England needs one too?

Donald Trump's much publicised golf resort in Aberdeenshire has been voted the worst planning decision in the 2009 *Carbuncle Awards*. The awards, only in Scotland, seek to examine where architects, planners and policy-makers have failed so similar mistakes can be avoided in the future. The judges complained that *Trump's Balmedie Scheme* gave precedence to commercialism over natural beauty. It's a great pity that England, or even *Suffolk*, does not have a similar award: there are plenty of candidates to receive it.



"...and I'd like to blame my fellow architects, the pretentious aspirations of my clients, (who kept changing their minds), the surveyors and... etc. etc"

Stansted's Second Runway Inquiry hearing – dirty tricks or just new legislation?

Revised procedures introduced in the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* now



A protester's banner saying "Lavenham says no runway" – featured in *Planning* in January, 2009.

means that *different subjects* will be examined *simultaneously* in separate rooms at the Planning Inquiry. Protesters from *Suffolk* joined those from Essex, Hertfordshire and South Cambridgeshire in stressing that airport expansion will not only affect people living in the immediate area. Areas more than 80km away would also suffer significantly increased noise from overflying. It was hoped to complete the Inquiry in six months but it has been claimed by protesters, in *Planning*, as not "*fair and thorough but quick and dirty*".

A precious commodity

Soil grows food and fibre, regulates water flow and quality, stores water, provides minerals and raw materials, is a platform for the landscape and all human development, holds much of our cultural heritage and is where the majority of the earth's living organisms live. Soil is a natural recycling centre: every year the soils of England and Wales recycle the nutrients and carbon from 110 million tonnes of livestock excreta. UK soils store 10 billion tonnes of carbon. By 2016 another 1.3 per cent of England's soils could disappear under *building development*, and that includes Suffolk.

Million homes will stand empty

According to figures released in mid-February, (so by the time you read this it could be more), the number of empty homes in the UK is expected to top one million for the first time as the full effect of the recession takes hold. This has

been caused partly by repossessions. However, developers have bought up houses but have struggled to fund renovations. The charity, *Empty Homes Agency*, estimated that there were 943,414 empty homes in 2007, and that in 2008 the number in England rose by 24,000, the biggest annual jump for nearly 20 years. It must be time to look again at the housing requirements for this county and adjust the crazy house-building statistics that are feeding through. Homes should not be used as an economic or political tool, but to put sustainable 'roofs' over peoples' heads.

Enduring architecture admired

Presenter, film-maker and architect, Francesco da Mosto, talking to the National Trust recently, spoke of his admiration for a fellow Italian architect of some substance, *Andrea Palladio* – who wouldn't? The quin-centenary of Palladio's birth in 2008 heralded a review of his buildings which embody proportion, light and detail, all of which work together, whether in Italy or elsewhere: just think of President Jefferson's eighteenth-century home, Monticello, in the States, and the perfect little Palladian bridge at Stowe. "*He crafted a new, cosmic architectural language. His rules for design were so harmonious, so classical, but with light touches. He was witty and shared his knowledge. I have a copy of his work (published in 1570), I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura, (The Four Books of Architecture)*", says Francesco. How many of today's buildings will receive such praise in the future: will they even endure in to the next century? We need to design and build well for the long term – it is the only sustainable option, it must not be just about short-term cost.

The Council of Food Policy Advisors

The Government has set up a new organisation to advise on all aspects of food policy, and will work on a wide range of food issues including production, retail regulation, affordability and the industry's environmental impact, to try to ensure that the UK's food supply is as secure and sustainable as possible. Let's hope it will not be too long before we have some good planning legislation which protects local food shopping.

Back to the Future – the long view of protecting Suffolk and shaping its future

The Editor looks back over the past five years

The first 2009 Issue of *Suffolk View* is taking the opportunity to look back over the past five years to examine some of the planning problems we have tackled and to ask what the future holds for Suffolk. The past informs the future: to understand what has gone before adds sharpness to the focus. In Suffolk's case, in planning terms, it pays to have varifocal vision that allows both the near and far to be viewed at virtually the same time. It gives the whole picture.

The Government's land-use planning programme is reflected in all we see around us. What affects Suffolk is often part of what is emerging from, or is influenced by, plans mapped beyond its county boundary. Since 2004, the use of county names in 'planning' has been diminishing as they gradually assume a changed status. Land is now planned from Regional Offices, based on economic growth, in "corridors", "sub-regions" and "gateways", crossing county boundaries. This system frequently compromises landscape quality and character but links up city centres, ports or major trunk roads with a view to economic expansionism. Suffolk's position on the map says it all: it is extremely vulnerable.

Suffolk View, over the past five years, has endeavoured to highlight how government planning policies have affected local situations. Changes to planning guidelines issued in 2004, with the new *Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act*, heralded the start of something different. Through new policies, local planning departments would, in future, be steered to support the case for development, unless it could be shown that to do so would be detrimental. This took them away from the role of *arbitrators* between conflicting interests to a pro-development position.

In the newly styled *Suffolk View*, **Issue 97** 2004, my first as its Editor, we noted that the Government had turned its attention to the planning system with the new *Act*. The Director warned of the county being at a watershed. "There would be no hit-squad to hold back the

tide of the mass-building programme threatening the rural countryside. The presumption would be in favour of development rather than proving the case for it." Also "sustainable" became a Government byword to tag on to anything it wanted to persuade as acceptable – *sustainable communities, sustainable building*, and so on, but these policies were far from it. That year *Suffolk View* also delivered to your unsuspecting doormat the effects of *Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1)*, a planning document that would set out the framework of what was to come, "... the challenge for the countryside and the battles that would be fought, not over foreign fields, but over rural England". Strong stuff that sounded almost alarmist at the time, but how quickly we became attuned to the big housing numbers: they just kept rolling in, like the waves upon the shore of an incoming tide. *Regional assembles and regional spatial strategies* starting to trip off the tongue: and farm land was eyed speculatively as building land unless we thought seriously about how to focus attention on retaining it to feed ourselves. The Society objected to the massive increase in house building figures, calculated to an 'economic' formula, and which failed to include additional infrastructure. It highlighted the *lack of social housing* and the energy consumption that is generated by all new build. It also focused on *empty dwellings* and how they could be brought into use, and the matter of ensuring the refurbishment of older property before building more housing: a sustainable approach. *Suffolk View* warned of *Stansted Airport's expansion* which would have repercussions far beyond its Essex boundary, especially over Suffolk with passenger capacity increases, many more flights, and additional holding stacks over the rural countryside causing noise and disruption to many. In fact, by the end of 2004 research consultants *Levett-Therivel* had concluded that the growth and economic development forecast would intrinsically damage the East Anglian environment and threaten many aspects of life quality there – now there's a surprise. The Society's Conference that year '*Suffolk under Pressure*' roundly and bravely covered the important issues: homes, transport,

farming, shopping, heritage protection and changes to Suffolk's landscape. It also produced a 'first' for the Society – a play which took place in *Seafolk* in, wait for it, 2009. The audience was introduced to the frenetic world of town and country planning as they had never known it before – planners in short supply, target turn around time for planning applications in just four days, and a planning system struggling to cope with ludicrous situations – but back in 2004 we thought these comic absurdities were just make-believe!

In 2005, *Suffolk View* brought you the big topic, *climate change*, the subject of a Society conference. Some still think the ice-cap (and this subject) a long way from Suffolk concerns. 'Climate change' legislation now feeds in to every aspect of our lives through planning, and not before time. Also in 2005 the Society produced its **100th Edition** of news and comment with the debate about *on-shore wind farms* and their contribution to energy saving measures: it studied the '*new dawn for the countryside*' portfolio, and asked whether it would be possible to deliver the number of *rural homes for rent* that were needed.



"Do you remember saying the melting ice-cap was not our concern..."

2006 brought another couple of big topics, *nuclear energy* and *coastal erosion*, both on our local foreshore. That year also produced evidence in the form of *Regional Spatial Strategy 14* of housing figures which were now hotting up, or totting up, should I say. *Local food and supermarkets* were also rising up the agenda, followed closely by *CO₂ emission revelations*, and the merits of *alternative energy*. The Director said in his introduction "... *the reality is that changes to the planning system and the Suffolk we see around us, as well as the raft of indifferent planning decisions, do little to help retain the distinctiveness of the county we all love.*" The planning 'chickens were coming home to roost'.

2007 – wait for it, *The Barker Report*, a developers' 'wish list' and an economist's bad idea: just flood the market with housing in the South East to bring house prices down in line with Europe! (Kate Barker needn't have bothered.) Never mind the subtlety of the English countryside and whether the infrastructure was in place, or a flood plain, might not be a good idea, just build, build, build. Then we had some sense in the form of *The Stern Report*: thank heavens *Nicholas Stern* had taken climate change seriously and the economists could see the sense of acting immediately rather than 'too late'. Getting on with it, however, has proved more difficult but *Lord Stern* believes that, **in recession**, economic recovery and climate bolstering measures can and should proceed together.

Suffolk View 2008 questioned the soundness of the *inward migration figures* and asked for a mature debate about optimum housing forecasts, and the Director warned of Suffolk doubling in size by the end of the century if housing numbers were maintained at the same level. And so on

So what conclusions can we derive from this sketchy look back at planning in Suffolk over the past few years? It is certainly a fact that for *rural requirements* the present planning system is not fit for purpose as it does not deliver what communities need. Moreover, it tells us that the dim distant dot on the horizon very quickly

comes into focus and with rapidity lands on the proverbial doormat. There is very little that happens in neighbouring counties or beyond that does not affect Suffolk. If we are to cherish what is near we must be far sighted. We cannot afford, or be content, to only look to our own back yards. When a vocal minority of local people dare to question 'big business' or 'big government' as to whether an area should be transformed to its detriment it takes courage, as well as the sacrifice of personal time, to try to do something about it. When that back yard becomes a much bigger place under threat it is much more difficult. We need less short term, earth-depleting, poor quality building programmes in the wrong place, and more intelligent and sustainable ways to manage our environment. We also need to continue to protect traditional and listed buildings from poor planning decisions around them. Once their setting has gone they are devalued. We have here in Suffolk coastline beauty, a network of attractive villages and hamlets, market towns of local character, picturesque river valleys,



“Of course as you are aware you are in a sub-region and your pig-sties are in the corridor to the gateway across the county boundary.”

woods, pasture and good farmland – the stuff that has drawn poets, artists and musicians over centuries. Do we want to lose it all to a dot on the horizon? Our homesteads will not look so good, however well cared for, if they are located in the conurbation of Haven Gateway, that once-countryside between the ports of Harwich and Felixstowe, along the A12 corridor in the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough sub-region growth area, in the part of the country called Suffolk!

Editor's note: “*East of England Plan – Haven Gateway 13.27* Haven Gateway Sub-Region spans part of northeast Essex and southeast Suffolk. It consists of Tendring District, the Boroughs of Colchester and Ipswich and parts of Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal Districts. It is focussed on the key centres for development and change, Colchester and Ipswich, the towns of Clacton, Felixstowe, and Harwich and the major ports at Felixstowe and Harwich (Bathside Bay). The sub-region has substantial potential to develop further as a major focus for economic development and growth, which is recognised in its identification by the Government as a new growth point.”

The London/Standed/Cambridge/Peterborough sub-region growth area extends to Sudbury in the east of the County.

If you care about the future of Suffolk and the Society's work please join us. Membership is open to all and is vitally important to us: it enables the Society to continue its work to monitor planning and help prevent poor outcomes. You can also support the Society through donations, bequests and legacies. Please encourage membership and pass this publication on to someone who might not have seen it before, and encourage them to join.

Society's Director bows out

The Society's Director will be leaving us to face new challenges. He goes, not only with our good wishes, but with many thanks for his hard work and endeavour on behalf of the Society over the past six years. Many of you, I know, have reason to be grateful to Richard for his assistance and would not wish him to go without saying “thank you and good luck for the future”. Richard's enthusiastic approach for the work of the Society has positively increased its standing in the environmental campaigning field, so please come to the AGM on the 4th June to give him your best wishes.

Planning Overview

the Society's Director, Richard Ward, writes

National Planning Issues

The energy company, EDF, recently consulted the Society on their bid to have the Sizewell site allocated in the Nuclear *National Planning Statement* (NPS) for future development. They are to be applauded for making their intentions clear from the outset and their bid came as no surprise. The consultation allowed the Society to set out its position on the issue of the principle of further nuclear power stations at Sizewell, and the provisos it attached to agreeing to the principle. These included – an holistic approach to reduce energy consumption, manage demand and deliver security of supply; ensuring any land-take is, given the sensitivity of the site, the absolute minimum; that environmental considerations determine the type of, or design of, any new station; that the implications of transferring power, overhead wires and pylons are considered, and in the AONB are under-grounded; and strategic landscaping is designed, implemented and retained as soon as possible.

The right to be *heard* is to be reduced to the right to be *read*. An important right of citizens in respect of **planning appeals** is to go – *the statutory right to appear before, and be heard by, a planning inspector has been removed by the government under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008*. The Planning Inspectorate, acting in the name of the Secretary of State, now has the power to determine which procedure should be used for planning and enforcement appeals under the new Section 319A. There is no right of appeal against this but their decision can be challenged through the courts. The Society predicted that this might happen. The emphasis of appeal work is now on administrative efficiency and delivering targets. Both the Barker and Eddington Reports heralded a future reliance on written evidence. However, the citizen closely affected is no longer protected by the grant of a statutory right to be heard in support of his objections, and the Minister is no better informed about the facts of the case. *Democracy has taken another tumble.*

Regional Planning

While I know there are many who dislike regional government, we have in the main been well served as a county by the East of England Regional Assembly in relation to planning. However, the Government is now consulting on what will happen when the Assembly is no longer responsible for planning and we move toward a Single Regional Strategy.

Through CPRE National Office the Society was able to express great concern that the initial guidance for the content of the Single Regional Strategy appears not to give any priority to protecting the environment as other factors, such as economic growth, are given the greatest priority. Balancing conflicting demands in the region will be a great challenge in the single strategy but planning has been trying to do exactly that for many years. The signs are not good in terms of planning at regional level, and what we may end up with in the future might be worse than what we have now.

Local Planning

Suffolk County Council

Minerals and Waste Development - Waste Core Strategy – Issues and Options Consultation

The previous issue of *Suffolk View* gives the background to the consultation. The Society appreciated the Council's consideration in allowing additional time to submit its comments.

The Society commenced its response by calling for a holistic approach to the management of waste and for policies to be devised to deliver this. It considered that the forecast amount of residual waste to be managed appeared blinkered and pessimistic and this, in turn, had led to flawed outcomes. It advocated cutting back on waste and maximising recycling as the starting point. In terms of residual waste treatment, it felt that before sites for any process were selected, (a

major part of the consultation), the opinion of the public and communities of Suffolk should be sought. (It appeared that the Consultation had pre-determined that incineration was the preferred method of treatment.) The Society, therefore, could not agree to any of the proposed treatment sites because it considered, in its opinion, that the County Council had not asked the questions which would bring forward the most sustainable and environmentally sensitive waste disposal future for Suffolk.

St. Edmundsbury Borough Council

Victoria Street, Bury St Edmunds – Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan - Consultation

The Society was able to congratulate the Borough Council on the document. It contained much detail and demonstrated that *the sum of many minor parts* is important in assessing the character of an area - this included things like traditional meter boxes, boundary walls or planting in private gardens - and that all can play a part in making the area attractive. The Society did ask that in relation to Victoria Street Square the role, function and importance of the trees are referred to in order to avoid any doubt about the need to retain them if there are any *improvements* to the Square.

The Arc Development

The Society's view on 'the Cattle Market Redevelopment Scheme' now called 'The Arc', in Bury St Edmunds, (pity they changed the name), was reported in full in *Suffolk View, Issues 99, 101, 102, 104, 106* and 107. Its support for the principle of redevelopment was always conditional on the redesigning of 'the link' concurrent with the new development. This critically connected the new retail area of *The Arc* to the historic town centre retail area. Despite assurances from the Borough Council that this would happen, *The Arc* is now operational and 'the link' is still a dark, narrow and draughty passageway. Whilst there has been a recent renewal of the commitment to deliver 'the link' it is unacceptable that the two central retail areas are 'competing' with each other when many retail businesses are struggling

to survive. The impression is that 'the link' has never been, to the Borough Council, as important as it is to everybody else in the safeguarding of the retail integration of the town centre.



1. One of the unsatisfactory passageways linking *The Arc* development to the existing shopping centre of Bury St. Edmunds

But let us be quite clear that while *The Arc* is better than many other new retail developments, it is still no great architectural masterpiece. Its design is a repeat and reflects similar developments up and down the country. *The Arc* is a fantastic new retail area, (if this additional retail capacity can be absorbed), but represents a major missed opportunity both in its architectural integrity, and in adding to the identity of Bury St. Edmunds.

See also *News from the Districts*, page 24



2. A view of the flats in *The Arc* shopping area

Forest Heath District Council

Red Lodge, Proposed new truck stop

The proposal represents a major land-use change to the area. There was no application indicating what would happen to the existing truck stop site. Government guidelines have stated that major changes to an area should be considered via a *plan led* system, ie: the Local Development Framework (LDF). The District Council had been advancing the LDF at the time and had engaged in major debates about the level of future development at Red Lodge. The new truck stop site was not within the LDF as it stood. Given these facts, the Society concluded that the application was premature, pending the completion of the LDF, and should be refused.

Editor's note: This planning application was refused at the District planning committee meeting in April.

Mid Suffolk District Council

Potash Lane, Wyverstone – Erection of two turbine generators

The Society reiterated that it is not against wind farms or turbines *per se*. In all cases it is a matter of judging the supposed benefits of any wind turbines against any adverse environmental consequences which flow from their impact on the landscape and countryside. In essence that was the heart of the issue in this case.

The Society noted that a specialist report by independent landscape architects stated that “*There are a number of inaccuracies and omissions in the Environmental Assessment.*” The Society concluded that the impact of the proposed turbines appeared not to have been properly assessed. Furthermore, the proposal failed the stated objective of the Government to “*protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty...*” The local community did not support the case for the turbines as they saw no tangible benefit, only potential harm to their environment. The Society objected, therefore, to the proposal. The District Council’s Planning Officer *recommended refusal* but the application was withdrawn following this recommendation, before determination.

Suffolk Coastal District Council

Local Development Framework – Core Strategy and Development Control Policies – Preferred Options Consultation

see News from the Districts, page 25.

South Sea Front, Felixstowe – Construction of 158 dwellings, etc.

This planning proposal is an ‘old favourite’ of the Society’s – see *Suffolk View, Issue 97, page 10 and Issue 101, page 18* for background. The application has been amended to take account of changes to address potential flooding issues on the site. The Society stated the site is critical to the future regeneration of this part of Felixstowe. It will establish the standard of development that others in the town will need to adhere to, and follow. As the site is owned by the District Council, which acts as the Local Planning Authority, the highest possible standards for the proposed development will be required.

The Society has recently asked *English Heritage* to consider giving greater protection to the compound of the *Martello Tower* in the centre of the site. The applicant’s proposals appeared still to compromise the wider setting of the tower, a major feature and landmark in the area. In conclusion the Society objected on *six* detailed planning grounds to the amended application. Might Felixstowe, and the area, might be better served by no development rather than what is being offered in this proposal?

The setting of Felixstowe’s Martello tower at risk?



"Can a Green House Ever Be Graceful?"

The title of this article appeared in the *Architects' Journal* at the end of last year when *Germaine Greer* challenged the eco-credentials of *Barratt's 'Home for the Future'*. "*Ultimately I am left wondering how long the British will insist on stacking their dwellings side by side like toast ...*"

The 12-apartment, three storey eco-build of one and two bedroom low-energy affordable homes, located on a narrow site on the inner ring road, adjacent to the Conservation Area in *Bury St. Edmunds*, does not resemble 'stacked toast', although it has excited other emotions and opinions. *Architect, Richard Scales*, admits that it "*breaks radically with the local vernacular; although it has some stylistic themes in common with the modern run of shops on the opposite side to its Victorian neighbours, but not everyone was pleased.*"

This striking, uncompromising and innovative timbered structure, with its textured surface of double-layered sawn larch, lime-washed oak window frames, and a covering of metal wires on a vertically planted (wisteria and clematis plants) 'screen' is, however, inherently sustainable. The planting, for instance, gives solar shading, creates a cleaner and cooler micro-climate, and gives visual privacy from traffic and pedestrians on a busy corner. Highly insulated in its construction, this build incorporates rainwater collection, low flow minimisation of water-consumption, a community heating system, and more. Whether you love them or hate them these eco-homes embody low carbon living technology, both inside and out – there are no bolt-on afterthoughts here, and after a difficult transition through the planning process this scheme has already received many accolades.

But back to our first question – can eco-homes ever be graceful. "*The first person to design a gracious zero-carbon home will have to be a genius at least as innovative and epoch-making as Brunelleschi*" says *Greer*. It is only when designers build as tight as a drum with adequate insulation plus efficient heat recovery, and make use of sunlight and internal heat gain, that they can begin to consider what such homes might look like, or is their 'form'

dictated and moulded by the technology? Will we, in the future, have to accept quite different architecture to accommodate ecological credentials - or perhaps there is a *Brunelleschi* for today who can combine zero-carbon construction with *beauty*? The answer could just lie in the 'eye of the beholder'.



Showing structural framing for 'green planting'



Looking out of a new apartment onto the Conservation Area



Timbered building sited on the corner of Kings Road and Parkway (near the new cinema)



Elevation viewed from Parkway

Photographs and information on the affordable housing scheme courtesy of the Architect, Richard Scales, of Studiomm, Hartest, Suffolk

The Society's 'Award for a Better Environment'

The purpose of the SPS Award is to acknowledge and encourage exemplar projects in respect of new buildings, countryside management or conservation work in Suffolk.

The Award is divided into three prizes:-

- **Alfred Williams Prize** for modern buildings or extensions of distinction and excellence, achieved in the best environmental and sustainable manner utilising, where possible, local materials and minimising its carbon footprint.
- **Duke of Grafton Prize** for exemplary work to protect or enhance the historic built heritage
- **East Anglian Daily Times Prize** for exemplary and environmentally sensitive work to manage, protect or enhance the countryside or coastline.

The winning entry in each category receives a cash prize of £2,500.

The **independent** judges are experts and specialists in the disciplines of design, modern architecture, conservation and the countryside. They are **Meredith Bowles**, Dip Arch, RIBA, Architect, **Eoghan Sheils**, BA Hons, Dip LA, MLI, Sheils Flynn, Landscape Architects & Urban Designers, **Richard D. Button**, BSc, MRTPI, Town Planning Manager (Regeneration), Planning Protection and Licensing, Colchester Borough Council, **David Green**, Environment Correspondent, East Anglian Daily Times

Entries – there were **six** entries in the Alfred William Prize category, **four** in the Duke of Grafton Prize category, and **two** in the East Anglian Daily Times Prize category.

The judges examined the applications in detail and made site visits, accompanied by those shortlisted for a possible prize.

Alfred Williams Prize

Shortlist:

The Wilderness, Westleton
Another scheme was withdrawn at the request of the owner.

The scheme did not reach a standard sufficient to merit an award in this category which required that climate change be addressed, and that specific measures to recognise and reward sustainability be included.

Duke of Grafton Prize

Shortlist:

Abbey West Front, Bury St. Edmunds
Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds

Both projects met the criteria and it was a difficult decision to make.

Winner: *Theatre Royal*

Judges comment: Exemplar project, restored for posterity, a truly unique building of local and national architectural and historic importance, providing a valuable cultural facility for the community.

East Anglian Daily Times Prize

Shortlist:

River Rat Meadows County Wildlife Site – Museum of East Anglian Life

Connect – various projects along Suffolk coastline – Suffolk Coast & Heaths Unit/Heather Carroll

Winner: *River Rat Meadows – Museum of East Anglian Life*

Judges comment: Collaborative project involving the local community, enhancing biodiversity, extensive project restoration with modest expenditure.

Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds

Front elevation before 2005



After redecoration in 2007



Curtain back-drop prior to 2005



After restoration 2007



Bar and foyer after restoration 2007



Auditorium after restoration 2007



River Rat Meadows – Museum of East Anglian Life



Seated area made from sustainable resources.



Ancient varieties of daffodils and wild garlic (amongst other varieties returned in abundance after removal of the dense rank foliage from the under-story of the woodlands.



Large footbridge built over the river leading to the boardwalk in Snipe meadow.



Note 'dead hedge' utilising the over-grown rank woody vegetation.



This type of bank maintenance work has led to the return of many species notably the water vole.

*'Award for a better Environment'***Award Ceremony, Haughley Park Barn, Thursday, 5th March 2009**

This competition for good landscape restoration, conservation repair in the built environment, and excellence in new sustainable building design have brought together a range of very different but imaginative projects in Suffolk that have been highlighted through the Society's Award Scheme. The independent judges had a difficult task in selecting the winning entries from the specific and demanding criteria. The competition demonstrated that an holistic approach to the development of schemes with care, sensitivity and imagination, can have hugely rewarding outcomes and add value to the lives of many people, both those who have worked on them and those who enjoy the end results. The Society is proud to have played a part in promoting excellence in protecting and enhancing Suffolk's environment and this celebration award scheme serves to show the truly impressive projects that are being undertaken in the county. The Award Scheme is the culmination of many months of hard work and endeavour for everyone who participated, and for those who worked behind the scenes. We would like to sincerely thank everyone who played a part.



Left and right: Society Chairman and Vice-Chairman Alfreda Thistlethwaite and Ralph Carpenter; and Architect, Meredith Bowles, one of the judges.



Left to right: Chairman Michael Caddock and Patsy Cane and Steve Howard from the Museum of East Anglian Life.



Left to right: Richard Button, Planning Manager, Colchester Borough Council, one of the judges, with Geoff Finch from Haymills Builders.



Left to right: Geoff Finch, Project Manager, Haymills for Theatre Royal; Steve Howard, Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL); Michael Caddock, Chairman, MEAL; Patsy Cane, MEAL; Alfreda Thistlethwaite, Chairman SPS; Derek Blake, Chairman, Theatre Royal; Keith Turner, Conservation Manager, National Trust, (the lease holders of Theatre Royal), Axel Burrough, Architect, Levitt Bernstein for the Theatre Royal project. (The Theatre Royal building is owned by Greene King Brewery.)

CPRE in Focus

Strategic Plan strengthening

As advised and set out in *Suffolk View, Issue 109*, CPRE has been working with its branches, regional groups and staff to develop a five year Strategic Plan for the whole organisation. All groups were asked to engage in the consultation process to review policy and campaigning priorities that will underpin the final Plan, and how it will be set out and delivered.

Many comments on different aspects of the organisation have been forwarded to National Office, and these have been evaluated and, where considered pertinent and workable, included in the draft Strategic Plan. This will be summarized to produce a good model for progressing the policies and aims of CPRE with a view to setting out a positive strategic programme, not just about aspirations but for delivering specific aims.

The subjects/policy matters covering all aspects of its organisational work have been assessed. The subjects covered included ‘a succinct statement that captures the essence of CPRE’, its income, membership, ‘sharing income between different parts of the organisation’, brownfield targets, influencing housing policy, raising the standard of local development frameworks, water and food sustainability, sustainable land-use management, a planning system fit for a low-carbon future, renewable energy, the impact of demographic trends on the countryside, designated landscapes, tranquillity, farming policy, initiatives to draw attention to an appreciation of the countryside, and so on, not forgetting the importance of delivering a united, cohesive CPRE, working together for common goals and betterment.

A summary of the operation plan, entitled “*What is national office doing in 2009?*” should be available shortly.

Energy Policy Assessment Up-date

CPRE continues to revise its energy policy in line with changing information, and its approach to *renewable energy* continues to be rooted in the informed belief that man-made climate change is a major threat to the countryside and the wider environment, and this entails support for:

1. an 80% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050;
2. a 15% renewable energy target to be delivered through investment in a wide range of renewable technologies;
3. a role for on-shore wind in helping us to meet these targets but with a stronger focus on off-shore wind; and
4. a planned approach – *strategic and case by case* – to the deployment of on-shore wind *which takes full account of landscape sensitivity*.

Town & Parish Council Comment

Update - The Boundary Commission for England which controls Local Government boundary changes for Suffolk has consulted further. Its Preferred Option will be released by 14th May, a final decision being reached by 15th July, 2009.

Parish landscape character

If your parish is interested in producing a village design statement, adding a *community landscape character statement* will give a broader understanding of the village. This added document records what your local landscape looks like and what it is about that you value. CPRE have produced a *step by step guide* to help parishes draw up their own statement called *Unlocking the Landscape*. Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) allow for community involvement at many stages and CPRE’s *action packs* explain how to be part of this process. You can talk to your local planning department

about how your community landscape character statement, village design statement or parish plan can feed into the LDF, and you can have this landscape assessment statement adopted as a supplementary planning document.

For guidance and action pack see
www.cpre.org.uk/library

Website wisdom

Two CPRE websites which will be of interest and help in local planning matters are detailed below.

Planning Act 2008 – A CPRE Briefing on Changes to Planning for Major Infrastructure Projects – The Planning Act 2008 is largely concerned with new procedures for planning and approving major or ‘nationally significant’ infrastructure projects in the fields of energy, transport, water and waste. This briefing gives an early interpretation of how the Act may work and the opportunities for the public to influence the new procedures associated with nationally significant infrastructure projects.

CPRE website: Library: Planning system
cpre.org.uk/library/results/planning-system

Planning Act 2008 – A CPRE Briefing on Changes to Town & Country Planning legislation – The Planning Act 2008 contains a number of reforms to existing town and country planning legislation, particular the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This briefing outlines the reforms to existing town and country planning legislation of most significance to CPRE and its Branches.

CPRE website: Library: Planning system
cpre.org.uk/library/results/planning-system

Two pilot schemes, one in Suffolk and one in Norfolk, will inform the way forward for an environmentally and socially sustainable way of living. Adapting to a low-carbon economy is essential for the future and a major joint workshop, ‘Vitalising Rural Communities for the 21st Century,’ is being held in May at Elmswell. Please see page 32 for details.

Elmswell Affordable Housing Project – DVD out now!

For the benefit of parish councils, and others, a professional, thirty minute DVD recording by Nils Film, has been produced of the building of the affordable housing project at Elmswell, from inception to completion, and is being made available from Nils Film. They cost £10 each and are available from Little Hall, Lavenham, telephone number 01787 247179.

New Members of the Society

(From 27th October, 2008 – 31st March, 2009)

(CPRE)

Mrs. S. Shephard, Cookley
Mr. J. Corrie, Bury St. Edmunds
Mrs E.M. Payne, Layham (*ex-Essex Branch*)
Mr. N. & Mrs. A. Davison, Woodbridge
Mrs. A. Maltby, Kersey
Miss J. Worley, Lakenheath
Professor D. Empey, London
Ms. C. Graves, Bury St. Edmunds

(SPS)

Ms. S. Denniston, Drinkstone
Mr. B. Johnson, Bawdsey
Mr. N. Smith, Barsham
Mrs. M. Gifford, London
Mr. & Mrs J. Finch, Nayland
Lord & Lady Hart, Chilton

Once again, we are delighted to welcome new members to the Society. Membership is vital to the Society’s work and progress.

Quote of the Issue

“There’s a downside to most change, but to be against change is seen as a bad career move. So would it not be a good idea that when anything new and important was planned, there should be a sort of devil’s advocate – a Downside Advocate – whose job it was to sniff out the possible snags and losses of the brave new plan?”

Katharine Whitehorn, Broadcaster, Writer and Journalist

News from the Districts

SPS Waveney District Report

District Chairman, Mike Coleman, writes

There are several potentially contentious developments in the District which involve the Society. Not content with a proposal for two wind turbines at *Kessingland*, bestriding the A12, (now at Judicial Review, hearing on 13th March in London), there are distinct moves towards erecting up to nine turbines at *Ringsfield* and *Barsham*, near *Beccles*, and on the edge of *The Broads National Park*. This proposal, if submitted for planning, is similar to one that was successfully defeated on the edge of the *Lake District National Park* last year. It would require an environmental landscape assessment to be carried out as a first step, but is considered inappropriate in this setting.

In *Halesworth* there is, again, an attempt to build a *Tesco Superstore* on the relief road to this traditional and thriving market town. Such a development would be totally out of keeping with its environment, impair the visual amenity of the town approach and threaten the thriving local economy and local food chain. Superstores should, through planning, be guided away from small market towns like *Halesworth*, *Hadleigh* and *Sheringham* in Norfolk, the latter having bravely rejected *Tesco*.

In *Southwold* there is a planning application to redevelop the former *Adnams Dray Stables* which are now redundant. The stables are located close to the market square, and this proposal for shops and homes will require the demolition of a number of the stable buildings. The over-arching problems though are those of access and parking. The vehicular access will be from the narrow *Mill Lane* which is very constrained, but worse is the parking situation. Parking is already difficult in this area and such a development would increase the need for parking spaces. Additionally, to afford access although the application does not say it there would be a need to reduce the on street parking presently enjoyed, which will only make matters worse. Consequently, the Society has objected to the proposal.

Finally, and sadly the District Council has agreed to the *Waveney Campus*, their new premises. Although the Council's planning group had, belatedly, criticised the design, as did this *SPS District Committee*, the Members thought differently. So the mere £50m or so cost (insignificant in terms of the Government bank bailouts) will now go ahead. The scheme is supposed to save money as it is 'green' and, of course, will free up the District Council's Offices across *Lowestoft* and in particular the town centre, including the Town Hall. Consultation on their possible re-use is underway.

Mentioning bailouts also brings to mind the sad situation of the refusal of *Government* and the *Environment Agency* to support coastal defence work in critical coastal areas because of lack of funds, and the policy of 'managed retreat' where some parts of the coast are abandoned. The excuse is that built up areas will receive the funds while *The Blyth Estuary* looks as if it will be a victim of this policy. What a tragedy for the once glorious coastal and estuarine landscapes of Suffolk if it should be spoilt, although coastlines always have been shaped by the elements!

The District Chairman can be contacted at The Grange, Nightingale Road, Lowestoft, NR33 7AX, telephone number 01502 518708, mobile number 07747 623276, email address mikecoleman@supanet.com

SPS Ipswich Report

Ipswich Society Representative, Mike Cook, writes

Planning applications last year fell by 25% and numerically the trend continues; this is reflected in the lack of new building starts. However, there have been some major consultations and proposals which are going to provide mixed feelings here in Ipswich.

Tesco has shown interest on two sites close to the town centre. The first, a *Tesco Express* on the old St. Matthews Street baths site was, in planning terms, irresistible and opened in double quick time on 1st February. This store could well discourage other potential supermarkets from taking space in the redeveloped *Civic Centre*: the developer,

Turnstone, maintain that they are in continuing discussions with major retailers to take space, but it now looks unlikely that Waitrose or the House of Fraser will do so.

The second proposal by Tesco is to build an *Extra Store*, which would have more retail area than at Copdock, on the site of the old railway yard and B&Q Store, between Princes Street Bridge and Stoke Bridge. The proposal includes the store with a car park above and below, 149 apartments and two hotels. It will involve traffic increases and consequent highway realignments. The Ipswich Society is extremely concerned about these proposals and intends to work to try to bring about a better arrangement and object to the present proposed plans.

In the Ipswich *Development Plan* the space to the north of Ipswich, between the Henley, Westerfield and Tuddenham Roads, is earmarked for major *greenfield* residential developments around 2020. Ipswich School has jumped the gun with a proposal to move its playing fields from Valley Road to Tuddenham Road. Help in funding this move would come from developing the Notcutts field for 450 residences, a community centre and an old people's home, with access from Valley Road across the site of a house to be demolished. Further, Mersea Homes announced in mid-February that there was a need for over a thousand houses on the next space north before the railway line. From inception, a primary school, some open space and a new "super-route" bus are promised. These proposals are not in the *Local Development Framework*, and are not needed. They are, in the Ipswich Society's opinion, too small to provide the necessary impetus for proper architectural planning and infrastructure.

We are fortunate that the *University College* is continuing to grow. A start is soon to be made on their second site on Orwell Quay on the east side of the Wet Dock. Three major applications have been received and are likely to receive permission soon for over a thousand student accommodations. This will help to keep the Education quarter looking better.

We hear that the *Boundary Committee's* public consultation into the preferred division of governance of Suffolk will continue until mid summer. Increasingly, the local sentiment is that procrastination will ultimately bring about no change!

Finally, some good news. Ken and Liz Ambler, previously of Mortimer's Restaurant in Bury St. Edmunds, On the Quay in Ipswich, and the Fish restaurant have bought and restored the original *Ipswich Museum* at the bottom of Museum Street. This was opened in 1845 and has been a ballroom and a kitchen shop. It was Ipswich's longest standing 'building-at-risk'; it is now a fine and affordable classic Parisian bistro.

Michael Cook, Planning Co-ordinator, Ipswich Society can be contacted at 9 Constitution Hill, Ipswich IP1 3RG, telephone number 01473 251498, mobile 07889 050607, email address mickck@onetel.com

SPS St. Edmundsbury District Report

District Chair, David Rees, writes

I am writing this in Melbourne, Australia where the two topics of conversation, as in England, are house prices and the weather. And what weather – last week was the hottest since records started with temperatures up to 45c on three successive days! There was no rainfall in January. Increased use of air conditioning led to power over-load and grid breakdown. Hordes went to cinemas and shopping malls to get cool. Heat buckled rails and a third of commuter trains were cancelled. The Government is giving huge grants to householders who fit photo-voltaic roof panels to generate electricity. The reservoirs are at their lowest and hose pipe restrictions have been in force for months. Again subsidies are being offered to those who fit tanks to harvest rain water to use for toilets, washing machines or the garden. Nearly all grass is withered and brown but those with green lawns are obliged to put up an explanatory notice that they have rain tanks or a bore hole. Even the croquet lawn at Government House is a sea of dusty sand. New creeping drought resistant grasses are recommended and petunias are making way for native Australian plants that need little water. Everyone seems aware of climate change and how vulnerable they are if sustainable plans are not implemented.

So back to St. Edmundsbury – the economic situation is reflected by the increasing number of empty shops even in the Cornhill and Buttermarket. The closure of Woolworths leaves a horrid gap and sadly plans to redevelop the site seem fanciful.

One bright spot is the total refurbishment in Abbeygate Street of the former pharmacy, now occupied by a countryside and sports shop. The mediaeval beams have been displayed and the fabulous roof upstairs is now available for all to enjoy. The carving of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn on the ground floor “dragon post” is no longer obscured by an advert for beauty products. District Committee Members recently viewed the Havebury flats on the corner of Parkway and Kings Road. The unanimous feeling was most favourable. Inside, the apartments, on three floors, were attractive and well planned. From outside we were impressed by the massing of the building on a difficult corner. The larch covered flats, *see page 15*, merge well with the stark pop cinema to the east, *see Issue 100*, and the converted army buildings across Kings Road. The untreated wood brightens up this corner and we await its weathering with interest. We hope that the already planted clematis armandii (evergreen) and wisteria will further enhance this significant building. After our unhappy discussions with Havebury Housing Association over the Out Westgate plans it is good to congratulate them on this project.

A week later some of us were able to visit a first floor relatively luxurious flat in the Cattle Market development. Our worries were of the closeness of the flats opposite and consequent loss of privacy. The flats are again faced with larch but the finish here is deliberately finer with a grey “sacrificial” stain hiding the natural colour of the wood, in marked contrast to the Havebury flats. It will certainly be interesting to compare the passage of time, rain and sun on these two projects. The closeness may be a criticism but the intimacy of the streets (why were they not called passages, lanes or alleys) is surely a plus factor? What was particularly upsetting was the view from the balcony across St. Andrews Street South, to the backs of the Post Office, the bookmakers and Iceland – such an untidy jumble with no redeeming features. At the start of the Cattle Market development we stressed the need for a radical facelift for this street if the old and new were to coalesce, but the only change so far is the poor resurfacing of the street, (it already shows unevenness), which is hardly enough to fulfil these earlier hopes.

Several Members recently visited the recycling depot at Great Blakenham and were interested to see what happens to the contents of our “blue

bins”. We also heard the gospel of recycling convincingly told by the site’s education officer. There are problems ahead – China no longer wants so much waste paper and land fill sites are decreasingly available. Consequently new methods of waste disposal are sought and incineration is next in line. Suffolk is considering five such plants – one in St. Edmundsbury. We feel that a radical rethink of such plans is needed. Fewer sites will mean large sites and very soon wastage will be flowing into and across Suffolk from other counties. Incinerators generate useful heat and we should consider smaller neighbourhood units that contribute to the heating needs of the community without wasteful transport of energy or of the raw waste.

At the Borough Council’s request plans for a new Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy and Strategic Sites have been discussed. They, too, are commanded from above and the plans for so many new dwellings in St. Edmundsbury come not from local residents or employers but from central government. It is good that the villagers of Risby objected to their up-grading and that Westley residents are preparing to fight the plans that if not quite destroy their identity would surround the village with new housing leaving only a narrow doughnut to separate them from it. Surely the people of the county should have more say in Suffolk’s future. The consultation process so far assumes the inevitability of development and only gives residents a chance to mitigate or slightly modify such major proposals.

Transport is the overwhelming problem in Bury and unless serious plans are made to cure this any proposals for expansion are premature. The A14 is overloaded and is incapable of being widened through the town – perhaps a southern bypass is one answer.

The St. Edmundsbury District Committee of SPS meets regularly, usually on the second Tuesday of the month, at 5.00 pm, and Members of the Society with interest in any topic are welcome to attend by arrangement with the Chairman, David Rees.

The District Chairman can be contacted at 44 College Street, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 1NL, telephone number 01284 754618, email address david.rees@talktalk.net

SPS Mid Suffolk District

District Chairman, Douglas Evans, writes

The two proposed 'on shore' wind turbines at Wyverstone have presented a major focus of concern over the last months, and the planning outcome should be known by the time that this issue of *Suffolk View* is published.

The major issue is the proposed size of the turbines, each 130 metres (425 feet) from ground to top of rotating blades. This makes them six to seven times the height of an average parish church tower, or large clump of trees (around 18-20 metres) and, of course, they are moving structures. They are designed to be that height because the location is not particularly windy, so why not follow the logic of this by building new houses on active flood plains, perched on 10 foot platforms?

The argument for inland wind turbines is fraught with controversy. Clearly we have to meet climate change and energy efficiency by using renewable sources, but this must **not** be done by decimating the landscape and blighting locations where people live. If the top of these was just above large tree-height (like the one installed at Kings Langley, near Junction 20 of the M25) and suitably grouped together, it might just be possible to blend them into the landscape, but those proposed at Wyverstone could never achieve this. If planning permission is given for these turbines then a very serious precedent for others to be built, anywhere in Suffolk or beyond, could become the norm. It is vitally important, therefore, that professional landscape assessments should inform the matter taking all factors in to account, especially their efficiency in a particular location and whether they really are a sustainable option taking in to account their manufacture, installation and life span.

Editor's note: See *Planning Overview*, page 14 for up-date

The District Chairman can be contacted at Oak Cottage, Daisy Green, Great Ashfield, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 3HS, telephone number 01359 242643.

SPS Suffolk Coastal District

Much time was spent at the beginning of the year in responding to the District Council's consultation on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies – Issues and Options Document.

The full submission is on the Society's website www.suffolksociety.org The Society expressed the view that those areas identified for future housing, as required to meet the housing targets in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) were not acceptable and would harm the special environment and character of the District. Therefore, the document stated, the District Council should not, perhaps, have agreed to the high housing targets set in the RSS without detailed knowledge or evidence-based work on the impact of delivering those targets on the District. The Society also questioned whether the LDF Core Strategy sufficiently acknowledged the District's special environment and proposed sufficient action to protect its countryside/landscape and historic built heritage.

It is hoped that the Society's many positive comments, as well as its concerns, are taken into account when the next version of the LDF Core Strategy is prepared.

Obituary to Beryl Webster

Beryl, who died in January in her 89th year, had a long, varied, and very effective life in public and voluntary service. As Beryl Cope, she was studying in Lugano, Switzerland when war broke out in 1939. Managing to return to England, she took a job as secretary to the director of a munitions factory, the engineer Peter Webster. She married Peter in 1941, and became the mother of their three sons. After the war she wasn't altogether surprised when her husband, with whom she shared an interest in motor sports, became managing director of Lagonda Cars, at Staines. Beryl herself used to participate in events such as the Monte Carlo Dash.

From the early days of her marriage, Beryl involved herself in women's organisations, starting with the WVS, now the WRVS, which she served from 1942 to 1975. Later she also devoted her considerable energies to the National and International Councils of Women. As an active board member of the International Council (and fluent French-speaker) she travelled the world on its business.

The family moved to Easton Hall near Woodbridge in 1957. A keen horsewoman, she rode to hounds with the Easton Harriers for several years, and supported, or started, many of the other village organisations, notably the cricket club.

In the Suffolk Preservation Society, she found a countywide organisation to which she could unhesitatingly commit herself. She was active at many levels of the Society's work, was one of the master-minds behind the SPS 50th Anniversary Ball, and will be specially remembered for her dedicated Chairmanship of SPS Coastal District, steering it to rapid growth in membership, action, and scope. On retiring from the post in 2001, she was presented with a special award from CPRE at the Annual General Meeting. (However, she never quite forgave the national office of CPRE for its 'neutrality' over the anti-hunting legislation; in her opinion that was essentially anti-countryside).

Beryl is survived by her three sons, five grandchildren – and a grateful SPS.

Contributed by Victor Gordon

SPS Forest Heath District

Warwick Hirst, writes

The Local Development Framework has been issued in terms of the Core strategies, and 500 plus comments have been received. In March the preferred Options went out for consultation, and this will cover site issues as well. All this leads to Government Inspection by mid 2010. I think the rest of 2009 is going to be very important for our District.

There has been a sharp drop in applications for house building, and yet hotels are now very popular! There are several key developments which are still ongoing. There is an application in Forest Heath Council for a truck stop in Red Lodge, which is, to put it mildly, a controversial issue. Forest Heath has just approved a complex in Barton Mills by the A11 roundabout for a hotel, burger restaurant and garage complex.

In Newmarket there is a proposal for a site on the edge of town for 1,200 houses, retail units and leisure facilities. At the other end of town, the Cambridge side, there is another hotel and leisure complex. Both these have implications for the racing industry, but they need to be aware that the non-racing side wants to see Newmarket grow. Equally there are challenges to the Newmarket horse-racing Policy and these will come to a head in the next 15 months.

Mildenhall is due to get a large Sainbury store which has full planning permission. However, elements of the Parish Council have challenged the decision on the basis of ancient rights and ownership of a key piece of land used as a car park. It is on hold as I write.

The other major environmental challenge is the proposal to dual the A11 carriage way from Mildenhall to Thetford. This is essential for traffic volumes, safety and the local economy, but we are keeping a watch on the impact of the detailed proposals.

Finally the arguments over the housing plans for Red Lodge continue. What is clear is that developers need to put the services and shops in first, rather than building houses and then arguing about services.

SPS Babergh District

District Chairman, Douglas Chivers, writes

Horkesley Park Heritage Centre

A further application has been submitted to Colchester Borough Council on behalf of the proposed Heritage Centre. A similar proposal for a large-scale development on this site was refused permission in 2006, following previously failed applications. The Society lodged a reasoned objection at that time. The site lies outside the built-up area of Great Horkesley, on the edge of the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Projected visitor numbers in the first year are 485,000, with an estimated three-quarters of the income to be derived from sales of merchandise and food. As before, the Society's view is that this proposed development is entirely contrary to national, regional and local planning guidelines under which AONBs are given special protection and totally inappropriate. As well as its potential major impact on the countryside, traffic volumes would inevitably increase significantly, placing huge pressure on the A134 Sudbury – Colchester route, and on local lanes.

A formal objection to the proposal on behalf of the Society has been submitted.

The District Chairman, Douglas Chivers, can be contacted at Bridge Cottage, Hartest, Bury St. Edmunds, IP29 4ES, telephone number 01284 830339, email address douglaschivers@yahoo.co.uk

Suffolk Building Preservation Trust Limited

Martin Lightfoot, SBPT Chairman, writes

Decisions, decisions

As Trustees for the management of the two historic buildings in our care, Little Hall at Lavenham and Pakenham Water Mill, we are inevitably faced with making decisions to ensure both their maintenance and structural health combined with providing safe access for both the general public and our volunteers.

The fire and security risks to both the buildings and to the wonderful collections from the Gayer Anderson Brothers at Little Hall are being addressed, as is the ongoing maintenance of the machinery at Pakenham Water Mill.

At the Water Mill decisions are required on how best to implement the legislation covering disabled access. In principle, we want all of our visitors to be able to access equally all that we offer at the Mill. However, the Grade II* listing does preclude some structural alterations to the building's fabric, but we are confident that we will be able to offer full access to all of the ground floor. We are sure that as an important principle, everyone should be able to enter the Mill through the farmhouse front door, although this may mean making slight alterations to the front porch, for which listed building consent will be required.

We very much recognise that this Trust should represent the very best aims and ideals which guide the Suffolk Preservation Society so that we represent the very best practice in Building Conservation. All our decisions are also very much constrained by, and are subject to, financial considerations, although we consider this, in itself, to be no bad thing, as it does prevent our buildings being subjected to unnecessary and merely fashionable alterations.

PWM Curator, David Eddershaw, writes

C'est interessant, mais pas assez motive

The teenage girl who wrote this in the Visitors Book after her visit to Pakenham Water Mill last summer had been brought there by her English pen-friend's well-meaning parents. Quite clearly both girls would have preferred to be doing

something else. The English girl wrote very firmly "My parents dragged me out here!!" Of all the comments in the Visitors Book, those written by children are often the most revealing. There is a certain uninhibited frankness about them and fortunately they write nice things just as emphatically: "I love it. I love old things especially when it is brill!" An even younger visitor wrote "I love this place becous it is all old fashion things." The guides (several of whom are retired teachers) do make special efforts to involve children in the groups they show round and it is gratifying to read comments from a parent like "Brilliant talk, very active for children."

Of course it is re-assuring to read numerous entries saying "Fascinating" and "Very interesting", but it is the ones that say something a bit different that catch the eye and make one think about the things that make the mill especially attractive: "Loved the noise the mill machinery and cogs make; Lovely mill, lovely setting; Very nice interlude on a long journey" (a visitor from York); "Very good value, we'll come again" and sometimes unexpected remarks like "Very good ice-cream"

An important feature of our tours is to explain the nutritional merits of wholemeal flour and to encourage people to bake for themselves with it, and this is reflected in several comments: "Going home to make a crumble; I look forward to making bread; We're going to make scones from flour, my Mum knows about it."

Sometimes the visit is a special treat: "Birthday outing for Dad"; or a visitor from Kyoto: "Today is Ryohei's birthday". However, not all such surprises are welcome. A comment overheard (but fortunately not written in the Visitors Book) was made by a disappointed wife who had just arrived with her husband on the special bus run by the Tourist Office in Bury on Mills Weekend: "You said you was taking me on a day out and we've seen nothing but b----- mills!"

The French pen-friend was only one of many foreign visitors who come to Pakenham Water Mill each year. The most remarkable range of visitors seems to have been recorded in July 2001 when in one month there were visitors from as far afield as South Africa, Sweden, Sudetanland, Australia, Dubai and USA, plus others from 13 different English counties. Perhaps an Italian from as long ago as 1990 should have the last words: *Bellissime! Stupendo!*



Through the Portal

A light-hearted look at Little Hall – office, house and garden

The House

Building Trust says ‘thank you’

One of *Martin Lightfoot’s* first and pleasant duties as Chairman of the *Suffolk Building Preservation Trust*, at the end of last year, was to present *Ted Ingilby of Ingilby Traditional Paints* with a certificate and a bottle of champagne in recognition of his advice and generosity in supplying limewash, for Little Hall’s exterior and interior painting programme. Ted had given advice and technical help to the Society over many years and this small gesture, presented in the Panel Room of Little Hall Museum, was a mark of the Society’s appreciation.



Obituary to Audrey Poston

We have lost another of our most loyal and long standing volunteers. Audrey sadly died at the end of February. She was a volunteer at Little Hall for over 20 years and also a committee member for most of those years. She was a role model for a perfect volunteer, so kind, welcoming, reliable, discreet and a most eloquent and elegant lady, a great loss for our volunteer team: we will miss her. *Renee Attew, Little Hall Management Committee Suffolk Building Preservation Trust*

Audrey was also a long-standing and hard working member of the *SPS Babergh District Committee* and as a former Chairman of that Committee I had the privilege to work alongside her during the late eighties and early nineties. Her loyal support for the work of the Society, and for me, was unwavering and I shall always be grateful to her.

Her reputation as a kind host at home in Prentice Street, Lavenham, was legend. I remember a lovely occasion when members gathered there, the wonderful buffet lunch having been provided by her, to say good-bye to a departing Director. Audrey’s loyalty, kindness and hospitality marked her out as a very special person.

Linda Clapham – Editor, Suffolk View Suffolk Preservation Society

Please note that both Little Hall Museum & Garden in Lavenham, and Pakenham Water Mill will open for the season at Easter and remain open until the end of October. The Museum management and gardeners have been working hard to prepare for the opening of Little Hall. Everything has been made bright and clean and the garden tended.

This is also the case at Pakenham Water Mill and a warm welcome is extended to visitors.

Local food event - Sunday, 17th May, 11.00 - 5.00

For further details please ring –

Little Hall – 01787 247019 or 01787 247179

Pakenham Water Mill – 01284 724075 or 01359 232025

(Milling demonstration the first Thursday morning of each month.)

Technical Tack

Technical advice on aspects of the care and repair of traditional buildings

Chimneys on old buildings

In the previous Issue of *Suffolk View* we looked at the importance of *roofscapes* and their place in the street scene. We acknowledged that they were, in one aspect, fashion statements giving clues to the status of a building. Chimneys are no less part of that picture. Placed as an independent structure, above the roof line set against the sky, they draw the eye. They are also part of a building’s history.

Chimneys are outward signs of what usually lies inside – the fire hearth. Fireplaces reflected fashions too, and were *the* important source of heat. As houses evolved the means of channeling the smoke upwards and out through the roof were incorporated into its fabric, and how that happened is frequently still evident today. However, this article is more about the chimney as an important part of a *roofscape* and its contribution to the character of a building and its setting.

Chimneys need regularly re-pointing and re-rendering because of their exposure to the elements. We talked about the maintenance checks that should be carried out on a chimney in *Issue 11*, but many sound and attractive chimneys, that no longer supply a fire hearth, are being taken down. (On a listed building this procedure requires the consent of the local planning authority.) Unless unsafe, it is often detrimental to the character of a building to dismantle stacks completely: as already stated they add interest to a roofline and reflect its history.

If you need to close off a chimney stack, because the fireplace is no longer required, ensure that ventilation is provided to prevent condensation within the chimney flue. An air brick inserted as high as possible on the least conspicuous side is generally the best option.

If you have a leaning stack, do not assume it will need rebuilding. Chimneys often lean and it may have been like that for a long time and be stable. If you are in doubt a structural engineer, with experience in old buildings, should be able to give you reassurance. Often a tie rod from the chimney to a roof angle will give anchorage, if deemed necessary. If a chimney does need rebuilding ensure that you photograph the stack before having it dismantled to help with accurate reinstatement. Great care should be taken when undertaking chimney removal: hopefully many of the bricks should be reusable, or will need to be matched. Remember to reinstate 'detail' brickwork - that which overhangs to protect the lower part of the stack by shedding water away from the masonry below.

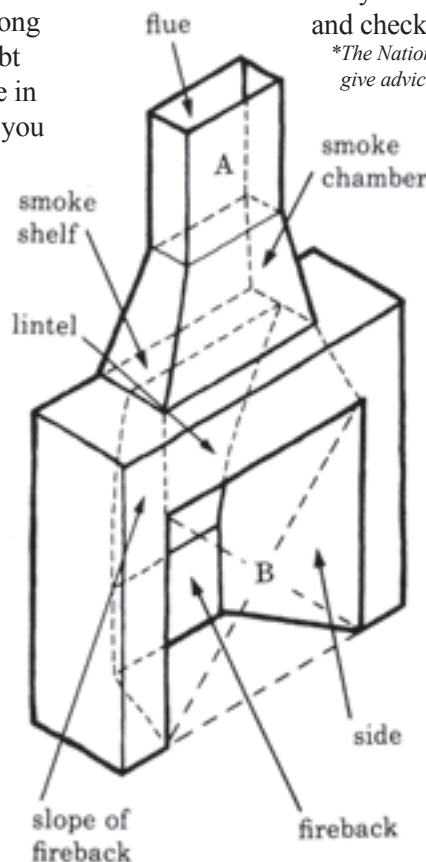
In the event of needing to terminate the top of your chimney stack remember that it may not be necessary as it

often works best if it is left to work as it always did - simply left open to the elements and when rainwater entered the flue it was absorbed into the flue walls and evaporated out through the action of heat and draught.* Later chimneys included a 'pot' which raised the height of the chimney to improve the draw. Chimney pots were not common until the eighteenth century when fireplaces and flues were reduced in size to improve efficiency.

Those with *thatched roofs* or *timber-framed chimneys* need to **take specialist advice**. Consider whether a fuel burner with a liner is appropriate as it generates a great deal of concentrated heat within the chimney breast and roof space. Check your roof space annually while the fire is lit for any signs of smoke leakage. Spark guards on chimney pots on thatched roofs may increase the risk of fire.

It is important in an old building to maintain a chimney on a regular basis, have it swept regularly, and check your insurance cover.

**The National Fireplace Association publishes guides which give advice on chimney and smoke problems.*



The illustration above shows a *Count Rumford* fireplace. The inside area of the flue A should be one-tenth of the area of the fireplace front opening B

Rumford revolution

I expect many of us have had a fire in the hearth during the early part of the year to combat the cold weather, and hopefully it did not smoke? Inefficient and smoking fireplaces were common until *Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford*, a fascinating 18th century American who was a scientist, soldier and diplomat, developed a formula in the 1790s to calculate the optimum dimensions for the opening in relation to the flue. This work had a dramatic effect on the design of hob grates, resulting in many inglenooks being closed in to create smaller openings.

Views, News and Reviews – letters – book reviews – stop press news

Letters

Food Miles to Food Metres

(see Issue 109, page 10)

“I have been reading the latest edition (of *Suffolk View*) and I was particularly interested in the item about food. I know about the *Fife Diet* and the *100 Miles Diet* and as a member of the *Hadleigh Chamber of Commerce* I am organising a *Hadleigh Local Food* project. Having been looking in to the impact of supermarkets for the past ten years I have acquired quite a lot of information and this seems a positive way to perhaps persuade a few more people that there are alternatives to supermarkets.

It is really quite frightening the power that four companies have over our food supply and the way in which governments have allowed them to control so much of our lives. I went to the *County Council's Greener Suffolk* meeting in December which was very thought provoking. Food security is one of the things concerning thinking people. There is a new book by *Caroline Steel* called “*Hungry Cities*” which covers the subject and the way supermarkets have taken over our lives.”

Email from Jane Haylock to the Editor in January, 2009

Editor's note: *The Hadleigh Local Food project launched its inaugural meeting at the end of February 2009 with a panel of speakers talking about farm shops, a sustainable food project at a primary school, 'grow your own food' advice and allotment keeping, and Mark David (well-known local cookery school chef) gave helpful advice on seasonal food with suitable recipes. The group intend to build on this with further meetings and support for those wishing for practical support.*

Terminal Control North (TCN) Consultation Team – up-date

National Air Traffic Services (NATS) is to conduct a *new consultation*, on revised proposals to redraw the aircraft route map in the area of south-east England known in airspace terms as Terminal Control North. This follows detailed consideration of feedback received during our original consultation in 2008; and from meetings last autumn with local authorities and

representatives of AONBs to discuss feedback and options. The second consultation will be later this year; ... The revised airspace design is still being formulated, tested in simulation and assessed for safety, operational efficiency and impact on populations.

Many people were concerned that the proposal was a “done deal” and that NATS would not listen to feedback. ... this second consultation demonstrates that we did listen and we have taken note and where possible options will be included for consideration. ...

Email forwarded by Carol Barbone, Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE), and she adds – “the proposal to change aircraft stacking areas, arrival and departure routes for planes using Stansted and other airports in the south east in the years to 2014 caused uproar across Essex, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, and Cambridgeshire because of the threats posed to the tranquillity of rural areas. Overall, there would have been more losers than winners, extra flying miles and increased emissions per flight. Many who had never been over-flown would have seen a radical change in the character of their area.

Editor's note: *The High Court Appeal against Stansted's proposed increase in passenger numbers took place in March 2009, with the rejection of the Appeal.*

BAA has been informed by the Competition Commission that it is to sell Stansted Airport.

Book Reviews

THE WALLACE CONNECTION

The Story of the Restoration of Orford Church

By Jane Allen

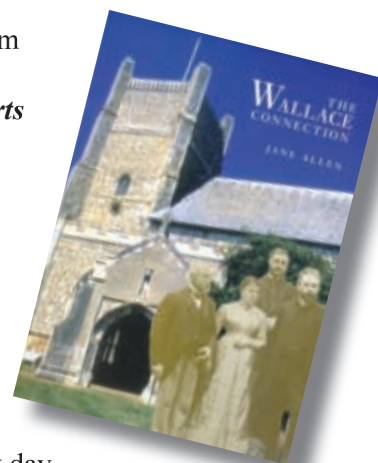
Published by Orford Museum

Price £14.50

Reviewed by **Richard Roberts**

Jane Allen's book has achieved a very interesting blend between the history of successive restorations of *Saint Bartholomew's Church* and the whole sweep of *Orford's* development from Norman times to the present day. It is, however, of more than just local interest.

The central focus, however, is upon the links between the families of two Rectors, the



Maynards and the Scotts, and their relationship with *Sir Richard Wallace*, the owner of the *Sudbourne Hall* estate from 1877-1884, and perhaps even more significantly, with his secretary, later *Sir John Murray Scott*, and through him with *Lady Wallace*. On her death, in 1897, the best of Sir Richard's magnificent collection of artistic treasures was left to the nation although, intriguingly, most of his other wealth and property, she bequeathed to John Murray Scott. When he died, in 1912, a multi-millionaire in modern terms, his very controversial Will, leaving more than half his wealth to his friend *Lady Sackville*, became the centre of a legal *cause celebre* brought, unsuccessfully, by the Scott family.

This Lady Sackville was the mother of *Vita Sackville West*, famous, with her husband *Harold Nicolson*, for the restoration of *Sissinghurst Castle*. She is only one of many historical celebrities who enter this story – to name just a few, the *Prince Regent*, driving through the night from *Sudbourne* to the death-bed of *Princess Charlotte*; the notorious third *Marquis of Hertford*; the *Prince of Wales* (later *Edward VII*), a guest of the *Wallaces* at *Sudbourne Hall*.

I was equally impressed by the emerging picture of a succession of remarkable Rectors from Victorian times onwards. Alongside them are the men and women of *Orford* and *Sudbourne*, ranging from the wealthier worthies to the unfortunate wounded gamekeeper, who has just lost an eye, in one of the Town Hall shooting party pictures. The continual efforts at fund-raising and the occasional dissent or outright criticism of proposals were no different then from now.

The Wallace Connection is much more than just an account of church restoration. It is a rich insight into village and church history of both *Orford* and *Sudbourne* with an extra layer of aristocratic and artistic associations. *Jane Allen's* accomplished writing and scholarly notes are backed by splendid illustrations, including 69 black and white illustrations, maps, and 4 colour plates in this 160 page paperback book. Most generously, all proceeds will be divided between the funds of *Orford Museum* and *Saint Bartholomew's Church Restoration Fund*.

Send orders (cheques payable to *Orford Museum*) to: *Orford Museum Book, Bell House, Quay*

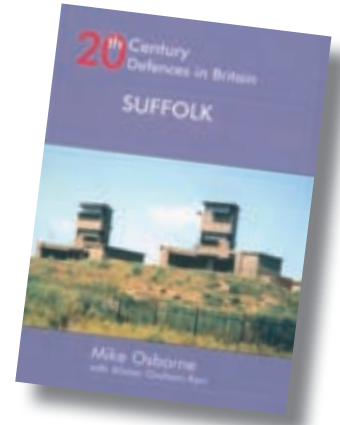
Street, Orford, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 2NU.
For **queries** telephone 01394 450789 or
email: jane@bellhouseorford.com

SPS member, Jane Allen, writes

20th Century Defences in Britain: Suffolk

By Mike Osborne with
Alistair Graham Kerr
Published by Concrete Publications
Price £11.99

The illustrations and maps in Mike Osborne's book really open our eyes to the fact that Suffolk is a museum of military relics, particularly those of the last 100 years. Quite apart from the indestructible, unadaptable and, therefore, unmistakable pillboxes and anti-tank blocks, many buildings which we pass without a second glance, some now used for agriculture or industry, were in origin defensive structures.



It was a two-way traffic. Some familiar civilian buildings were pressed into military service in wartime – Greene King's brewery and the Guildhall in Bury were used, respectively, by the Home Guard and Royal Observer Corps. Hotels and large houses were commandeered as Officers' Messes.

The meticulously researched text describes and explains the function and history of them all – riverside slipways where amphibious craft were tested, hardened aircraft shelters of the Cold War era, a World War I explosives factory in Stowmarket and, dating from World War II, a chemical weapons assembly facility at Barnham. There is a gazetteer of all the 34 military airfields in the county.

This book deserves to join the Suffolk volume of Pevsner's *Buildings of England* and Norman Scarfe's *The Suffolk Landscape* as an indispensable reference work.

Diary Dates - Events

Stop Press News

The Italian icon painting 'Virgin and Child', owned by the *Suffolk Building Preservation Trust*, has now been restored by *The Hamilton Kerr Institute*, a department of the *Fitzwilliam Museum*, which undertakes the conservation of easel paintings for public display, see *Issue 106*, page 30 for details.

Diary Dates – Events

If you have not received an *Events Programme for 2009* please contact the *Membership Secretary, John Paton*, 01394 450651 or Little Hall 01787 247179

Please note revised date –
'Vitalising Rural Communities for the 21st Century'
Blackbourne Hall, Elmswell, Suffolk
Wednesday 13th May, 2009

A major joint workshop by Suffolk ACRE, CPRE Norfolk, Suffolk Preservation Society and Norfolk Rural Community Council. This Conference, postponed from 11th March, will be chaired by Professor Tim O'Riordan, Emeritus Professor of Environment Sciences at the University of East Anglia.

Its aim is to help rural communities in Norfolk and Suffolk to be truly environmentally and socially sustainable and adapt to low-carbon living. This will be undertaken by examining problems looking at recent initiatives elsewhere and sharing experiences. Working in co-operation, without the need to 'reinvent the wheel', will be the main purpose of the day, enthusing delegates to take action in their areas to prove the point that it is often the sum of many small changes that deliver progress. Subsequently, two pilot schemes, one based in each county will inform the way forward.

This will be of interest to town and parish councils, local authority officers and councillors, non-governmental organisations, community campaigners as well as local businesses. Book now with Karen Richardson, Suffolk Acre, telephone number 01473 242500

The Society's AGM will take place at Haughly Park Barn on Thursday, 4th June, 2009 – 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm followed by supper – all welcome.

Market Place – Directory



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