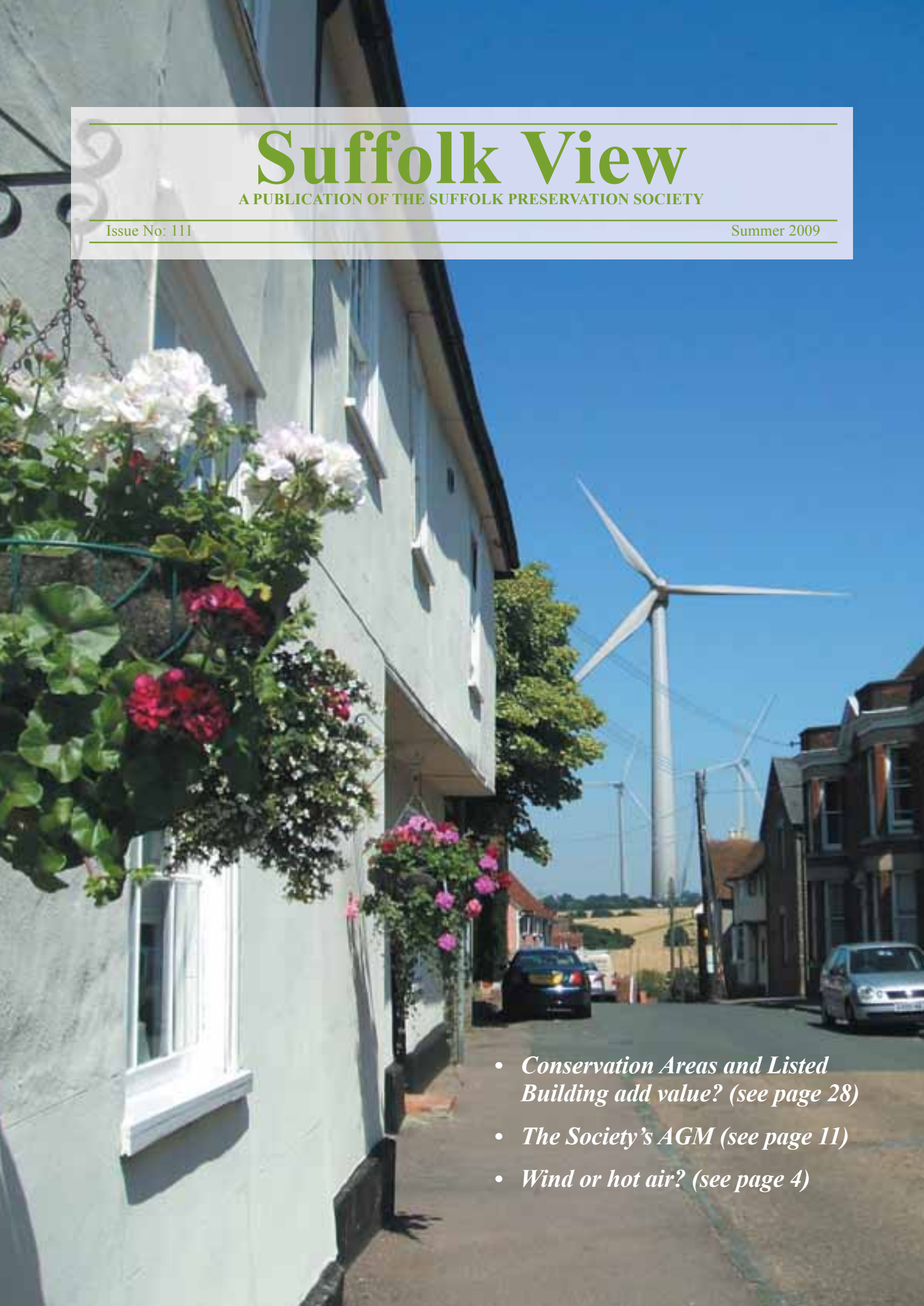


Suffolk View

A PUBLICATION OF THE SUFFOLK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Issue No: 111

Summer 2009

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- *Conservation Areas and Listed Building add value? (see page 28)*
 - *The Society's AGM (see page 11)*
 - *Wind or hot air? (see page 4)*

Suffolk Preservation Society



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

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: Listed Building, Lavenham

Back: Conservation Area, Lavenham
(Wind turbines are superimposed.)

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Snippets from the Cutting Room

SPS Chairman, Mike Coleman, writes

It is just a year since I communicated with you through *Suffolk View* and I am indeed honoured to be given the privilege to do so again, if only for a year. The Chairman, *Alfreda Thistlethwaite*, has stood down for health reasons and we wish her a speedy recovery and very much hope that she will return. Our grateful thanks go to her for all her efforts on the Society's behalf.



The year ahead is likely to be an extremely busy one. We are in the process of seeking a new Director to replace Richard Ward, who has moved to Cornwall, to take forward the Society's important work and take up the challenges that face it. These challenges are greater than ever because of wider financial uncertainties, and a planning system which has become increasingly impoverished focusing, as it does, on the economic element at the expense of everything else. The right person will be crucial for the Society's success and we are determined to ensure a continued proactive approach to all we undertake for the benefit of Suffolk.

At the present time both CPRE and the Society are suffering, like most charities, from the credit crisis and the consequent decline in income, and will be thankful when the markets start to recover and there is a better return on investments. But the timing of this is by no means clear. The Society has control over its own finances, and so is insulated from some outside influences and changes. It receives the whole of the membership contribution of the Friends of the Society, part only of the contribution made by those who join CPRE. Legacies and donations are always adversely affected in a financial downturn, so it is very heartening when good people leave the Society a donation – it really makes a difference. The important work of the Society is continuing, and we endeavour to carry out the aims and objectives of the Society in the very best way we can, with your support.

Meanwhile the challenges to the Suffolk countryside posed by housing, wind farm, supermarket and other developments, both large and small, continue unabated. The Society has to remain alert and active and try, through the planning system, to ensure good planning outcomes, as they affect us all.

With the more extreme and damaging policies of government, like housing numbers, we

are working hard to try to achieve informed, intelligent change. We all know these extreme targets are not realistic or reasonable and are certainly unsustainable in the true sense of the word. We must all be vigilant if we are to ensure that most of the Suffolk we know and love is to survive in good shape, although it appears that the government favours giving rather a lot of it back to the sea rather than protecting it now. Sea-defence work is expensive, but nowhere near as expensive as bailing out the banks, and when you live or your livelihood is by the sea, which is the better investment? This is a matter that requires very careful and sensible management - some land will inevitably be lost to the sea as has always been the case over time, but there must also be responsibility and financial recompense for those adversely affected by 'managed loss' imposed by government.

It seems to me the more land we lose to the sea the more development we allow on green field land. When oil gets too expensive, and we cannot import our food, we will come to regret not using our land wisely. Land-use planning needs to think a bit further ahead. Our own food production in Britain could be the one thing we will have to fall back on!

This is just the time to take that well-earned rest from all the concerns around us. May I take this opportunity to wish you all a happy summer holiday.

Comment

Which way does the wind blow?

Dr. Mike Coleman looks at wind as a source of renewable energy.

Are wind turbines beneficial?

The world has a long experience of using wind. For aeons it powered trade via sailing ships and provided the means of grinding corn or pumping water. However, the old timers knew a thing or two, such as that the wind blows at different speeds, from zero to very strong, and from different directions. Hence windmills, or various parts of them, were built to swivel, for example post and tower mills, and some were able to make some allowance for different speeds by feathering the blades slightly. They could be turned to withstand storms and so not lose their blades. There were also long periods of inactivity when wind conditions were totally unsuitable: sailors for example dreaded the Sargasso Sea with its lack of wind (and current).

Modern wind turbines built with modern technology are a far cry from the old windmills. However, they are still vulnerable to the variability in the wind, something their proponents do not acknowledge when they claim a turbine can supply the needs of 'x' number of people. The statement is true, but only for the period of time when local wind conditions are favourable, estimated to be between 17 and 30 per cent of the total time. So a wind turbine cannot live up to the generating claims made for it and, if global warming predictions are true, storminess and wind speeds will increase, thus further reducing possible operating periods. By contrast, a conventional power station's claim to supply 'x' number of people refers to an uninterrupted supply.

Is the wind turbine a really green source of energy generation? This is not an easy question to answer as we all agree the wind is natural, albeit with some small man-induced effect if global warming arguments are true. Discounting this, it depends on whether you are using a domestic turbine in your home or to supply a self-contained population on, for example, a remote island, or whether you are connecting it to the National Grid, so that a group of people can use its output. In the first two cases it is usually very green, especially as you will have a grid connection anyway, and will not notice the intermittent loss of generation from the turbine. However, if you need to connect an industrial scale turbine to the grid then it is not. The reason is simple. The grid is there to supply everyone with all they need without disruption as far as possible. To do this it needs to know, as far as possible in advance, how much generation capacity is available at every minute of the day and to estimate the likely demand. From this it can then determine how much plant it needs to run, and how much to have on standby, to cater for unexpected events. A wind turbine does not comfortably fit this model. You cannot guarantee its output so you must cater for its unpredictable loss with a power station which can make up the shortfall immediately, and that means it has to be ticking over to avoid the longish start-up time. Hence its proponents' claim that turbine use reduces the quantity of power required through customary generation must be tempered by the variability of output via a turbine system and the reality that a reliable and continuous supply of power remains dependent on a conventional power station.

Should wind turbines be placed on a financially level playing field with other forms of energy generation? Developers claim that commercial turbines should be operational for 20 or more years, but if the big subsidies for building and

operating them are removed, as can be done at a stroke, the economics will become very unattractive. An abandoned or obsolete turbine will leave a damaged landscape, and the planning position is unclear as to what should happen. Will the land be returned to the countryside as were Second World War airfields? Should we set up a decommissioning fund to ensure the turbines will be removed at the end of their lives?

Do the photomontages provided by developers give a fair idea of the scale of the turbine in the environment? More often than not they show short turbines and what appears to be minimal intrusion. However, do not believe the pictures! The evidence can easily be distorted just by varying the focal length of the lens used in the photographs. The shorter focal lengths such as 35mm give a very flat landscape but as you move up the distortion decreases: 50mm is not too bad but for a fairer representation 70mm focal length is better. It will show the landscape reasonably well and the size of the turbine can be judged properly.

Is there a role for wind generation? I think the

major use for wind should be in domestic use where turbines are small and, although unlikely to be a good investment, will have a minute effect on global warming. Large scale turbines should be abandoned as totally useless and those already built viewed as expensive follies. That is before we even think of the damage to the landscape where huge areas of the countryside have to be covered in turbines to produce output equivalent to a single power station, and the installation methods and vehicle movements on-site are damaging to both the land and its habitat. While renewable energy should be seen as making a contribution to reducing carbon emissions, it can only be a very small part of the equation.

Do we need a National Grid? We started without a grid but one was soon developed to move excess generation to areas with a deficit. They will always exist. The argument that grid losses are huge is not correct. The greatest loss occurs at the local level and sadly is a simple consequence of the laws of physics. We transmit in bulk at high voltage and very low current but at local level that is reversed and so the heat losses rise. Life, sometimes, is not so simple when you look at the physics.



"I've been refused permission to build a wind turbine in my garden"

Ladybird, ladybird fly away home!

SPS member, Richard Toft, writes



The news in *The Times* that a swarm of an estimated ten million ladybirds has suddenly descended upon a twenty acre “farm” in Somerset is, apart from being a mildly interesting snippet in its own right, also illustrative of the often unintended consequences of human action. The ladybirds were, apparently, attracted to the farm by an equally numerous plague of aphids. Now the good news, from the point of view of the farmer if not the aphids, is that ladybirds enjoy eating aphids. So, presumably, if the ladybirds do their bit they will consume all the aphids and all will be well for the farmer. Or will it?

He might have got rid of the aphids, but he will still be left with a suffocating swarm of well-fed ladybirds, unless, of course, they pass on to pastures new. In that event they become someone else’s problem or some other creature’s next meal. It is an ill wind ... et cetera. This is, after all, what a balanced ecology is all about.

Now some of you will be asking “*Well, where does the human action come in?*” The answer is that the farm attracted the aphids in the first place because the farmer had installed eco-friendly sedum roofing on his farm buildings. Sedum roofs look better than many commonly used roofing materials and provide good insulation as well. Unfortunately, in this instance if not elsewhere, they seem to be irresistible to aphids.

All of which, in a roundabout way, brings me to an abandoned airfield at *Rackheath* in *Norfolk* where, as you may be aware, the Government is in the process of agreeing to the creation of “an eco-town” on the northern outskirts of Norwich. Whether a new township is needed in Norfolk and whether Rackheath is the best location for such

development are issues best left to local voices to comment upon, but the one observation I would make is that I hope that the attachment of the label “eco” on to the project will not blind people to the fact that it is still a proposal for a lot of new housing and associated development.

That is not necessarily a bad thing, and it is laudable when new developments genuinely have low impact on the environment and, in particular, do not add more than they must to the world’s stock of carbon dioxide but the fact that they meet such criteria does not mean that the impact of the development on the appearance of the surrounding countryside and landscape and on nearby communities can be ignored. The judgment should still be made whether the development is appropriate in this particular location. It may be that it is, but the people of Norfolk should be allowed to make that decision rather than have the decision made for them at national level.

Present indications are that the die is probably cast and that, despite local objections, the scheme will go ahead. If it does, it is to be hoped that the scheme’s protagonists will have managed to calculate accurately all reasonably likely consequences of their actions so that no one has occasion to start having regrets soon after the last brick is laid. A plague of ladybirds can be expected to move on, a new town will not and what happens on an abandoned airfield in Norfolk today may be a precursor for what happens in other counties tomorrow.

Have you heard this one?

Let's hear it for Suffolk orchards!

Natural England and *The National Trust* have joined to launch a rescue of the rare varieties of apples, pears and plums contained in the country's orchards, before they vanish from the British landscape, predicted to be by the end of the century. Sixty per cent of traditional orchards have vanished since the 1950s, their owners persuaded by Government grants, and other commercial considerations, to use land differently, and by the policy to import much of our fruit.

Orchards in Suffolk tend to be different from those in counties more commonly associated with them, such as Gloucestershire. Suffolk orchards are usually small, highly diverse and frequently sited close to farms and country houses. A majority lie in the clay lands of High Suffolk. They not only provide a haven for wildlife, but also play a role in the county's history and culture. There are about 20 highly characteristic varieties from Suffolk such as *Clopton Red*, *Sturmer* and *Lady Henniker* apples, *Burrell's Red* cherry plum and *Polstead Black* cherries. The *Suffolk Biological Records Centre*, supported by the *Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership*, is to identify and map Suffolk orchards.



"Psst, hang on, I know where there are some Clopton Reds."

Stansted's Second Runway Inquiry hearing – update

Further to this matter, reported in the last issue of *Suffolk View*, it is now envisaged that discussions regarding a second runway at Stansted Airport may not be concluded until after the General Election. The Inquiry will be delayed until the future ownership of the airport is resolved. *Stop Stansted Expansion's (SSE)* High Court Appeal against permission for an extra 10 million passengers per annum on the existing runway was refused on 18th June by the Lord Justices. *SSE* will not seek any further leave to appeal because these particular Appeal Court judges have **clarified important aspects of the unsatisfactory original ruling** which could have compromised *SSE's* case at a future Public Inquiry to consider the far bigger issue of a second runway at Stansted. *SSE* advises that the *Competitions Appeal Tribunal* has set a date of 19th October for the hearing of the BAA Appeal, which means a decision on any sell-off is likely by the end of this year.



It was also noted that a reversal of a decision to try to run concurrent Inquiry sessions and complete the process in six months has been shelved. The Shadow Transport Secretary has renewed her pledge to scrap plans for a second runway if the Conservatives win the next General Election.

A plague on both your houses!

Eco-homes may prove to be the future, but their appearance is not to everyone's taste. The historian, *David Starkey*, presenter of the Channel 4 series *Henry VIII – Mind of a Tyrant*, likened a zero-carbon house planned near the remains of Richmond Palace to “*a snotty-nosed punk in an elegant drawing room*”. He told the *Evening Standard* that it “*would add insult to a grievous injury to the surviving fabric and setting of Tudor England*”. I think we can assume that he didn't like it.

Heritage professionals in decline!

A group led by *English Heritage (EH)* have warned that local planning authorities are cutting back on conservation officers and heritage professionals, including architects and archaeologists, thereby threatening regeneration and renewal schemes, and leading to longer waiting time for planning approval. According to research by *EH*, the *Institute of Historic Building Conservation* and the *Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers*, the number of specialists in local authorities has dropped by 5 per cent and continues to ‘fall sharply’.

Carbuncles, modernism and the Prince

Kieran Long, writing the leader in the *Architects' Journal* in May, related how he was approached by TV and radio researchers, desperately trying to find someone with an opinion on modern architecture. Prince Charles had delivered his speech to the *Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)*, and journalists were hunting for fodder to attack or defend the Prince, or to say that he was irrelevant. *Mr. Long* was looking for **one comment** to show that architects are light years ahead of where the Prince thinks they are, and that the lack of meaningful debate was perhaps due to the fact that most of what the Prince has to say about sustainable, sociable towns is very general, and therefore difficult to disagree with. Prince Charles' approach to architecture focuses around the human form – the ‘*Leonardo*’ model of scale, that feels proportionate and comfortable to us humans. It follows a tradition of symbolic reflection on the order, proportion and harmony of

nature. However, in his speech the Prince started by saying that he was sorry if he had left the impression that he wished to kick-start some kind of ‘style war’ between classicists and modernists, or that he wanted to drag the world back to the eighteenth century. Tradition, says the Prince, is but the accumulated wisdom and experience of previous generations, informed by intuition and human instinct and given shape under the unerring eye of the craftsman, whose common sense provides the organic durability that we so urgently need. He considers a ‘grounding’ in precedent, building upon what has worked well in the past, understanding locality and place with local intelligence and community input, and the incorporation of the best of new technology is the way forward. But *Kieran Long* considers that the modernists feel so threatened by this enthusiastic amateur that they can't even countenance engaging with the substance of his message. “*Architecture is so paranoid that it would rather bury its head in the sand than just take the Prince on.*” ... He continues “*The fact that architecture is in the news should be an opportunity to deepen the debate about modern architecture and show that the profession's concerns are broad enough to include everybody.*” Modern architecture is very much in the news and this subject is set to run and run, particularly with the onset of a spat between Richard Rogers and HRH regarding the demise of the plan for the former Chelsea Barracks site.

Traditional village life ‘lost and gone forever’?

According to the *National Housing Federation* more than 100,000 under 35s are expected to migrate from villages and market towns across England to urban areas by 2012 because of a chronic shortage of affordable places to live. It gives warning that schools, shops and transport services could face closure because of the exodus as younger workers are priced out of villages by an influx of commuters, second home owners and retirees. *David Orr*, the *Chief Executive* of the Federation, said rural England desperately needs young adults to support and contribute to their communities, but high house prices and a chronic shortage of affordable housing are threatening to turn our villages into family-free zones. Waiting

lists for affordable housing have risen by 40 per cent in rural areas during the past five years to 700,000 people.



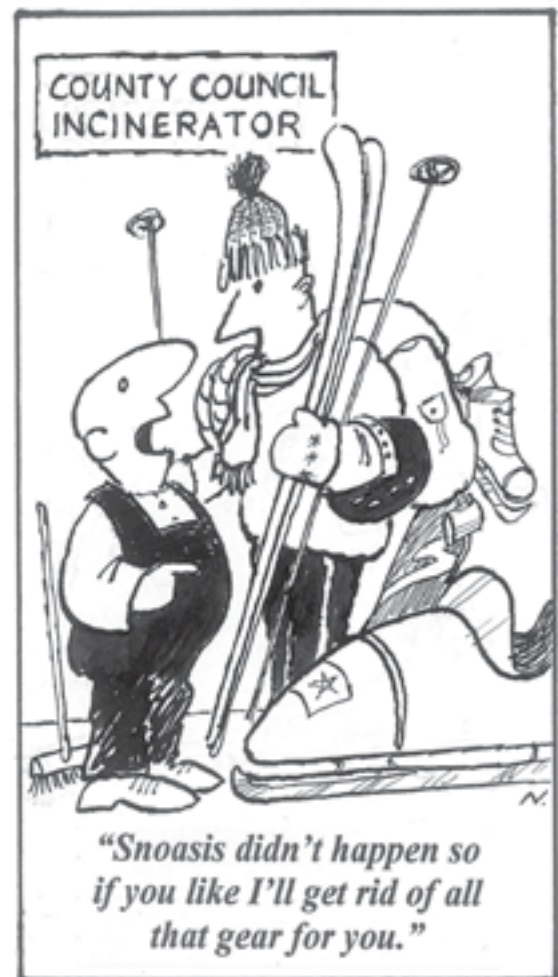
Clay Field wins RIBA Award for RHM

The Society's 75th Anniversary visionary 'affordable housing initiative', achieved through a Royal Institute of British Architecture (RIBA) design competition, has **won a prestigious architectural award in the RIBA 2009 Awards**. The scheme at Clay Field, Elmswell, architected by *Riches Hawley & Mikhail*, managed by *Orwell Housing Association*, and with support from *Inspire East*, has established the benchmark for low-cost, truly sustainable affordable housing in the countryside. It now needs sustainable building to become 'marketable' by the volume house builders to ensure low-carbon delivery of mainstream housing, and for more affordable homes to be built in rural areas, where they are most needed, to sustain local communities and slow the exodus of younger people. However, to be successful this housing supply in the countryside should be of organic growth and respond to the needs of local communities.

Spanner in the works

It appears that *Mr. Spanner* is finding difficulties with the 'planning conditions' attached to the *Snoasis Approval* given by the *Secretary of State* to *Onslow Suffolk Limited* for a ski resort with restaurants and accommodation, market housing and a railway station at Great Blakenham on the former *Blue Circle Masons Cement Works* and quarry. *Mr. Spanner*, the owner of *Onslow*, appeared on television in May to report his disquiet about the planning conditions, but meanwhile it was reported that the *Irish High Court* has appointed a liquidator to the company behind *First Equity Group*, an Irish investment firm that owns more than 70 per cent of *Onslow Suffolk Limited*. The company's projects are now reported to have stalled. The planned sale of the old cement works site for housing to *Persimmon Homes* has also fallen through. The *Snoasis Community*

Alliance, comprising 'sNOasis Concern', *Suffolk Preservation Society*, *Suffolk Wildlife Trust* and 11 town and parish councils, do not consider that the developer has adequately answered the concerns over the supply of energy or proper protection of wildlife species on this Special Landscape Area site. Meanwhile, *Suffolk County Council* has earmarked the site for one of its major new waste plants, to include incineration, to cope with the increasing amounts of household and industrial rubbish.



Timely structural support of weak mediaeval church tower

The bells of *St. Lawrence's Church, Ipswich*, are set to ring again in August after 20 years of lying silent because of a weakness in the tower's building fabric. The circle of five bells, which date from between 1450 and 1458 are reputedly

the oldest set in the world, and are likely to have been heard by *Thomas Wolsey, Henry VIII's Cardinal*, who was born in Ipswich. The bells have been taken to *Whitechapel Bell Foundry* in London where they will be cleaned and restored by specialists. A new frame, made of steel and cast iron, will be installed in the tower, 26ft lower than the current wooden frame. The sound of mediaeval bells will be well worth waiting for.

Phoenix from the Ashes

The *Civic Trust*, representing more than 700 civic and amenity societies across England, went into administration because of a lack of funding. The Civic Trust, established in 1959, undertook a range of important work to improve public spaces, encourage people-friendly architecture and support the preservation of local heritage sites. They created one of the oldest built-environment award schemes in Europe which went to 'outstanding projects in architecture, planning, environmental design, landscape, public art and urban design'. Awards went to more than 5,500 buildings, including cafes, churches, houses and hospitals. It was congratulated for highlighting the madness of the idea of running huge motorways into the middle of London. According to *Griff Rhys Jones*, President of the Society, talking on *BBC Radio 4's Today Programme* in early June, there is a plan to launch the *Civic Trust Initiative* – a smaller, leaner organization reverting to its core values but set up differently. Also in June, we were informed that *Tony Burton* (ex CPRE and NT) is to act as national champion for the 250,000 members of amenity societies. He said the collapse of conventional politics makes vibrant civic societies that defend places for people all the more relevant. *"The focus will be on what is needed at the grass roots. We will help them do their work better."*

Exit – stage left clutching a carrot!

An "eco-warrior" who lives in a 7ft cave which he dug on his allotment, and who has lived off the land for 16 years, has been evicted because it does not have a fire exit. *"I know lots of people in this town who live in houses with only one door with no fire exit"* he said. He plans to take his case to the *European Court of Human Rights*. Well that will be a case worth hearing.

MPs call for action to protect scenic countryside from aircraft noise

It appears that current airspace guidance is to allow unchecked increases in flights over sensitive areas of the countryside, including *AONBs* and *National Parks*. This is already affecting large parts of Suffolk, particularly in *Babergh, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal* and *St. Edmundsbury*. CPRE is now collaborating with the *Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)* to develop new measures to assess the impact of aircraft noise in tranquil areas. A new National Airspace master plan is being called for. At present changes to airspace are considered without reference to each other or their overall impact.

Built heritage at risk with the appearance of Draft Planning Policy Statement 15?

The newly released draft planning document replacement for *Planning Policy Guidance 15*, which controls planning changes to **heritage buildings and conservation areas**, has now been revised and drafted by Government. The Society has yet to study this document in detail, but the word is don't expect this to be an improvement. The consultation period ends 30th October. See www.communities.gov.uk/document/planningandbuilding/doc/consultationhistoricpps.doc

Congratulations to Tom Grondris on receiving a MBE for Building Conservation, through his work with the Suffolk Architectural Heritage Trust, a registered charity, which takes on 'buildings at risk', completes their repair work, and sells them on to caring owners.

"Thank you" from Richard Ward, SPS Director, who recently moved to Cornwall

He writes *"Can I thank all those who sent me either a 'thank you' or 'best wishes for the future' message when I recently left the Society. Jane and I have quickly settled in Cornwall. I am now working for CPRE Cornwall as the Planning & Development Manager and using the knowledge and experience gained at SPS to maximum effect. I enjoyed my time with SPS and wish it all the very best for the future."*

The Society's AGM- Haughley Park Barn, Haughley 4th June, 2009



Haughley Park Barn in June – venue for the AGM

On a pleasant evening in early June the Society held its *Annual General Meeting* at Haughley Park Barn, by kind permission of *Mr. Robert Williams*. The meeting was attended by 63 members, friends and guests who enjoyed a delicious supper in good company, and an illuminating presentation and talk by Architect, *Meredith Bowles*.

Chairing the meeting, *Lord Marlesford* extended a warm welcome to all present, and especially to *Corinne Meakins*, the *Director of the East of England Regional Office, CPRE*. An apology had been received from the *Society's Patron, Lord Tollemache*, who had been unable to attend but had sent a letter which was read to the Meeting by the President, and paid a special tribute to the work and achievements of the retiring *Director, Richard Ward*. Lord Marlesford reiterated the Patron's words in respect of Richard's contribution to the Society's work over the last six years. He also paid tribute to the Society's role in safeguarding the beauty of the County of Suffolk for future generations, especially when it faces challenges such as the expansion of *Felixstowe Port* and the probability of a new nuclear plant at *Sizewell* on the Suffolk coast.

Included in the business of the evening was the decision by *Richard Toft*, not to seek re-election, and Lord Marlesford proposed a vote of thanks for his service, professional expertise, energy and commitment on behalf of the Society over many years. As a former Chairman of the Society,

and a Vice President, Richard Toft's contribution was graciously acknowledged.

Lord Marlesford regretted to inform the Meeting that *Alfreda Thistlethwaite* had stood down as Chairman of the Society. However, *Dr. Mike Coleman* had indicated his willingness to return as Chairman for a year, with the support of the Society's Executive. Taking the Chair, Dr. Coleman referred to

the issues that had impacted on the health of his predecessor and caused her to stand down, and she was thanked for her work and wished a speedy recovery. He went on to express the enormous debt of gratitude owed by the Society to the retiring Director, Richard Ward. In particular, he commended him for raising the Society's profile in the area of planning so that it was now respected nationally, regionally and locally. He also paid tribute to the commitment, work and service given by the retiring *Membership Secretary, John Paton*, and wished him well in his retirement. *Adrienne Jackson, Office Manager* at Little Hall for the past three years was departing to take up a new post at a company based in Newmarket. *Vice President, Sue Tamlyn* warmly thanked her for all her hard work with a presentation on behalf of the Society and the Suffolk Building Preservation Trust.



Adrienne Jackson receiving a lovely bouquet of flowers from SPS Vice President, Sue Tamlyn

Dr. Coleman said his priorities for the year ahead were to find a worthy successor to Richard Ward, and with this successor re-establish a strong team at Little Hall so that the Society could maintain its high profile in the field of planning and building conservation, and to undertake a comprehensive review of the Rules of the Society to ensure their efficacy.

The business of the re-election of the officers and trustees proceeded. One new appointment was the confirmation of *Tim Rose* as *Honorary Secretary*, a post which he had taken up during the year.

The Director's tabled Report looked back over the year and highlighted the completion of the ***Elmswell Exemplar Affordable Housing project*** which had won a *2009 RIBA Award* for its *Architects, Riches Hawley Mickhail*. The official opening of the development had taken place in November 2008 and offered an opportunity for all the partners involved to commemorate the completion of the project by planting native Suffolk apple trees in the orchard, which had been created as part of the development's amenity. During the summer the Society had organized a series of seminars at Elmswell, attended by professional planners, architects and community representatives, with a view to understanding the complexities of the sustainable elements of the development and to view the finished houses and talk with residents. A Ministerial visit by *Baroness Andrews* ensured that the Society's 75th Anniversary initiative received regional and national attention and acclaim for an innovative, sustainable development which could only have been achieved with the co-operation of the various stakeholders, working and acting together.

He remarked on the ***Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14)*** highlighting the fact that if housing growth targets stayed on the same course as set, then Suffolk's housing would double in size in the next 91 years. The character of Suffolk was such that it could not accommodate such growth without damage to its character and social well-being, and a major submission to *Suffolk County Council* had stated that even the lowest growth scenario was untenable.

The ***Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)***, the planning blueprints for county districts, had concentrated communities' minds against inappropriate future building development, and the Society had appeared at *Examinations in Public* into the soundness of the *Mid Suffolk* and *Waveney local development framework documents*.

The long awaited 'call-in decision' regarding the ***Snoasis*** indoor ski development (*see page 9*) gave approval for the scheme irrespective of the outstanding work undertaken by community groups, including the Society, in putting forward strong planning objections to a damaging development proposal for the former *Masons Cement Works Site* at *Claydon*.

The Government's ***Boundary Committee***, which was in the process of reviewing local authority structures, had requested a unitary model for Suffolk. The Society had questioned whether an *urban* model was appropriate for *rural* Suffolk and whether the consultation process had allowed for anything other than the model offered, having excluded the *status quo*. Taking local authorities away from their county district locations reduced accessibility and imposed hardship for many people who needed to attend their local planning authority departments, while planning decisions taken by Councillors remote from the relevant locations were often inappropriate. The Society also did not want to see *Lowestoft* detached from the county structure, and considered that fine tuning of the present, admittedly imperfect, system was preferable to the impersonal and over-large new proposal which did not have the support of the people of Suffolk. In fact, the Society's letter to the Commission generated the largest mail-bag response to Little Hall in recent years, with all but one strongly supporting the Society's position.

The credit crisis had brought about some unusual and interesting outcomes for **house building rates**, which have plummeted, and that, some felt, had helped to reduce the pressure for inappropriate development in the countryside. However, the county's affordable housing crisis

had not benefited as builders, to fill the gap, had sought to renegotiate their commitment to build various community projects as a way to being granted planning permission in a wider context, which might otherwise not have been possible. It was noted that developers were also preparing for a post-recession position, which could herald more of what had gone before, when there had been hopes, instead, to mark a new holistic approach for better designed, more sustainable housing and only where it was needed. This opportunity should still not be missed.

The **Financial Report** indicated that the financial credit crisis had impacted on the Society's investments making the setting of the budget for 2009 even more difficult, but it was considered that with careful and prudent administration the Society could charter a course which continued to serve its aims while fulfilling its duties to the *Charities Commission*.

Richard Ward ended his Report by adding that it had been another extremely busy year for the Society, its volunteers and staff at Little Hall, and that the Trustees were indebted to all those who supported it at the various levels of its work and campaigning.

The **Treasurer's Report** drew the meeting's attention to the Society's substantial operating deficit, incurred by significant losses on investment income. The Society had striven to operate prudently within its terms of reference and the requirements of the *Charity Commissioners' guidance*, and with the wishes of past legatees. It was noted that although the Society's investments had suffered considerably during the year under review owing to the financial climate, there were signs that they were now starting to slowly recover, and it was considered important that its reserves were not run down further. The accounts, as presented, were adopted by the membership, with two members voting against.

Questions from the floor concentrated on the financial position of the Society. The Treasurer

reassured Members that sufficient funds were available going forward and cost savings, where practicable, were being achieved. There were signs that investments were slowly recovering. In answer to the question of whether a 'Life SPS Friend' had voting rights at the SPS Annual General Meeting, the Chairman advised that the existing Rule, a condition of CPRE Branch membership, stated that only CPRE members had those voting rights, but that this matter would be revisited with CPRE.

The business of the evening concluded, *Meredith Bowles*, one of the independent judges for the *Society's Award for a Better Environment*, presented a personal view of modern architecture, and was thanked by the Chairman.

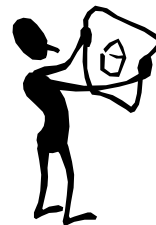
Before the Meeting withdrew for supper, Member and former Treasurer, *Henry Gold*, rose to express the appreciation of Members for the services of Richard Ward the retiring Director. In reply he thanked the Members for their support and assistance over his six-year term as Director, making particular mention of the three Chairmen he had served under – *Richard Toft*, *Mike Coleman* and *Alfreda Thistlethwaite*. The business of the evening concluded the meeting closed.



Parting shot – the Director on his third pudding!

Planning Overview

A look at national, regional and local land-use planning



National Planning Issues

The merging of PPS6 with PPS4 and the “needs, impact and sequential tests”

According to political economist *Kate Barker*, quoted in **Planning** in May, the Draft PPS4 is “*clear and cogent in ensuring that town centres remain vibrant and are protected from out-of-town development.*” The problem in Suffolk is more about the **physical building impact** of large-scale town centre development **on the historic centre** and environmentally sensitive areas. The new Draft removes the “*needs test*” and replaces it with an “*impact test*”; the “*sequential test*” still remains. To cut through all this ‘gobbledygook’, these changes do not help to protect historic market towns from large scale development at their centre, in fact the “*sequential test*” encourages it. **These new tests are about economic fairness not environmental impact.** The “*sequential test*” guides developers to build in the centre-of-towns *first*, edge-of-towns *second* and out-of-towns *last*. These policies are designed to persuade people to shop in their town and not drive out for their requirements. Although PPG15, whose guidelines protect the historic environment, is still a counter-balance in any planning determination, it is increasingly being thwarted by the strength of new economic considerations, something which needs to be urgently rebalanced. If we cannot protect important historic market towns, like *Hadleigh*, from an inappropriate, large-scale, *Tesco Superstore*, with a large car park on its riverside conservation area (flood-plain), and especially when there is an alternative site available a little further from the centre, then this is clearly a very damaging planning policy. Bad interpretation or weak policies can lead to high profile court appeals. Policy may be drafted by Government but the *courts* will set a definitive interpretation.

Regional Planning Issues

Coastal Change Policy

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, launched, in mid-June, a consultation on Coastal Change Policy, inviting comment on how communities can successfully adapt to the impact of coastal change. The *Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)* have contacted Consultees and require a response by 25th September, 2009. This consultation is a key part of the Government’s wider programme of activity to support communities in adapting to flood and coastal erosion risk. The following documents may be found on Defra’s website - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/coastal-change/index.htm>

- Coastal change policy consultation document
- Coastal change fund impact assessment
- Coastal erosion assistance package impact assessment
- List of consultees

The Society will be commenting on this important matter.

Local Planning Issues

Suffolk Coastal District Sizewell C

With regard to coastal erosion, the Met Office and consultants considered that with the current methods this site could be protected for the expected lifetime of the station. Radio-active waste would be stored on site or sent to designated areas for disposal, and there are no plans to use Sizewell to store waste from elsewhere. However, traffic problems are still being assessed. It appears that the Government is short-circuiting the system by identifying existing nuclear sites for expansion, as opposed to looking at new sites.

Felixstowe South – proposed Conservation Area

Suffolk Coastal District Council is thinking of creating a new **conservation area** in part of *Felixstowe South* to extend the protection given to the town's important late Victorian and Edwardian architectural heritage as a seaside resort. A large conservation area already covers central Felixstowe; the new area will take in the grid of streets laid out by *Colonel Tomline* in the late 1800s, and key features including the sea road frontage, Martello Tower Q and its former military compound. If the scheme is supported, the District Council will engage with *English Heritage* as a partner in the provision of grant aid, where there is householder's consent, for the repair of buildings and the reinstatement of features that contribute to the character of the area but have been lost through removal or unsympathetic replacement, including front windows and doors, front boundaries, roofs, balconies, chimneys and brickwork. For more information see www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/conservation/felixstowesouth

Conservation Area Appraisals are also being undertaken in *Aldeburgh, Melton, Woodbridge, Earl Soham, Grundisburgh, Orford, Peasenhall, Thorpeness, Westleton* and *Yoxford* – if you have any comments or require further information contact -

robert.scrimgeour@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or
adrian.craddock@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Babergh District

Lavenham Market Place - resurfacing

Because of deterioration, resurfacing of the Market Place was proposed. At present, there is a natural carriageway/shared space with no specific parking directions. The surface material on the Market Place delineates the rights of traffic, parking and pedestrians. On the whole, this works well and is attractive and appropriate for the Conservation Area. However, it was proposed

that the new carriage-way should be identified by a black tarmac coating which the Society considers unsuitable for this historic centre. The Society, therefore, has written to all concerned, including *English Heritage*, expressing concern about the proposal saying it is not necessary or appropriate for the area. The Society also considers that the existing scheme harmonises well with the area and should be renewed as it is with some adjustments.

Proposed Tesco Store at Hadleigh on the Conservation Area Riverside

Tesco has submitted further evidence to justify the demolition of *Bridge House* (a traditional brick building, next to the allotments and *Babergh District Council's (BDC)* staff car park, owned by the *Hadleigh Town Council*), which is preventing it from accessing the riverside land for development (*see page 19*). The Society has written to BDC asking for the applicants to produce evidence in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 3.16 to 3.19 of PPG15 in respect of the justification for the demolition of *Bridge House* and stating that their proposals do not “*preserve or enhance the character of the area*”, as directed by the guidance.

Waveney District Council Halesworth - Tesco Store

This application is for a new retail store substantially larger than the existing permission granted for the town centre site and twice as large as the existing supermarket. The case for the need for such a large store has not been made. The case for moving the store from a town centre location to an edge-of-centre location has not been made. The scale of the building makes fulfilling the design criteria for such a sensitive site impossible. It contravenes both the Local Plan allocation for housing and the emerging Local Development Framework proposals for retail and community use.



Do we have lift off?

The editor recognizes the CO₂ and land-use planning connection which affects all of us

Entrepreneur, *Sir Richard Branson*, wants to take scientist, *James Lovelock*, (now in his 90th year) and theoretical physicist, *Stephen Hawking*, aboard the first Virgin Galactic flight into orbit later this year. Let's hope they come back down to earth again with big ideas for saving the planet!

Conservationists delivered the hard scientific facts about the great harm they instinctively suspected had been caused by man-made pollution. *Earth System Science*, as it is now referred to in the academic world, (once known as the *Gaia Hypothesis* and regarded as a 1970's new-age ideology, see *Suffolk View, Issue 99 & 106*), acknowledges that the composition of the earth's atmosphere, 21 per cent oxygen and 79 per cent nitrogen, is **exactly** the conditions necessary for life on earth. It is the magical balance and even *Richard Dawkins*, ethnologist & evolutionary biologist, has belatedly come to this view but *Professor James Lovelock*, whose lifetime work exposed the 'theory', wishes the biologists would acknowledge this more publicly.

It seems that global warming has been underestimated. Seas are rising faster, oceans are turning acidic, chunks of the world will be too hot and rainforests and ice sheets are in retreat. Prince Charles, addressing in June the *Nobel Laureates Symposium* at St. James's Palace, in London, commented that the world was in the 'last-chance saloon' to avoid a global catastrophe. Eighteen months ago the Prince set up his *Rainforests Project*, involving the creation of government-backed rainforest bonds, to be offered to investors, with guaranteed returns. The economist, *Lord Stern*, who first advised the Government on the

economic threat of climate change, also supports using financial mechanisms, such as investment bonds, to raise money to prevent deforestation. His theories ridiculed for 40 years, *James Lovelock* cites **nuclear fission** as the best and only viable energy source, (see *Suffolk View, Issue 103*). He dismisses bio-fuels, and wind power he describes as "a giant scam" which is grossly inefficient and tears up too much habitat. *Lovelock* says that a nuclear future is the best we have to hold on to – (that's if you don't fancy outer space with Richard Branson.)

It is all very well agreeing, as the Society does, to an eighty per cent CO₂ reduction target gained from renewable energy contributions, but no source in Suffolk or the country can deliver 24/7 constant energy, except nuclear, which will mean re-commissioning nearby *Sizewell*. No renewable systems, be they wind or wave, have the power to run all the time but need to be supported by coal, gas, hydro or nuclear energy. Government appears to have embarked on a short-term, financially inefficient and unreliable programme of wind power which sadly does not, in the experts' views, meet the scale of the requirement. Nuclear energy, while unpopular, is the cleanest technology available and can, at a stroke, help to solve the more deadly CO₂ dilemma.

All this excess CO₂ in the atmosphere, unbalancing our world and bringing with it the serious threat of



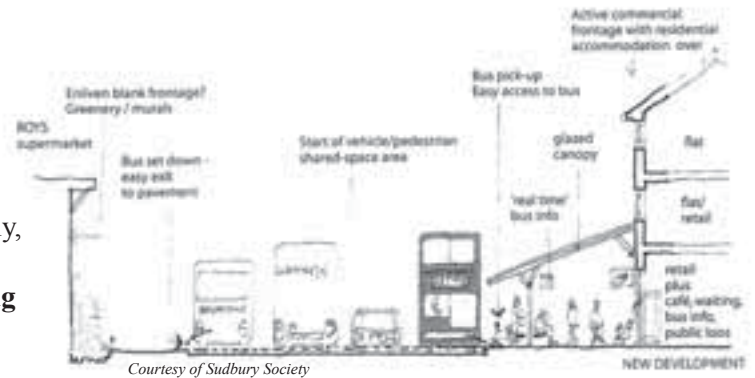
"Eco-friendly? You bet. That lead will take me as far as the front gate... then I walk to the station."

flood, famine and disease has brought us, belatedly, to have **land-use planning concerns and sustainability safeguards built into the planning system.** The Government Planning Statement says “*Planning and Climate Change sets out how spatial planning, in providing for the homes, jobs and infrastructure needed by communities, should help shape places with lower carbon emissions and resilient to the climate change, now accepted as inevitable.*”

Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change, which is the supplement to PPS1 and takes precedence over other guidance, advises how “*planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change. It should take into account the unavoidable consequences, delivering a fundamental change.*” These statements influence **all** aspects of planning – they effect large and small development, building regulations, and planning conditions. Whether delivering new housing, extending existing property, making alterations to new and old houses, or providing for new shops, schools, public buildings and roads, energy used to build and fit-out now have to be assessed. They require all new building technology, materials, fixtures and fittings to be energy-efficient before planning permission is given, to reduce carbon. What is not so readily taken into account is the principle of ‘building’ in the first place. Most modern building materials and work create a lot of carbon. A policy to be pursued, where appropriate, is to bring empty properties or buildings worthy of conversion, adaptation or reuse, back into operation first before allowing new build.

This Society needs to examine all new planning applications in this light. Here in Suffolk we are taxed with the problems of coastal erosion and sea defence provision, *see page 3*. If you want to know what is happening, just look at the rising sea levels and storm damage. The sea is our thermometer. Responsible government needs to return to long-term policies which protect the future. We have a lot on our plates, planning-wise, but unless all of us in this equation take responsibility for carbon reduction, we may all be hitching a ride to a galaxy.

Editor’s note: James Lovelock’s latest book *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning* is now available priced £20.



Does ‘vision’ come in the form of a new Bus Station?

Vice Chairman, Ralph Carpenter, considers the future of bus transport in Sudbury

The Sudbury Society, through their involvement in the *Market Town Partnership*, has produced an interesting report on the treatment of a revamped bus station in Sudbury. They advise that all three *Suffolk County Council* schemes retain the bus station where it is now in *Great Eastern Road*, and all schemes retain bus movement through the site, much as now, which would make realisation of the proposed *Civic Trust scheme* impossible. The *Sudbury Society’s* proposal gives the bus station a linear form, placing it on *Great Eastern Street* and adjacent with the new development. This allows for realisation of the main elements of the *Civic Trust scheme*, a key point of which is a lively pedestrian link from *Market Hill* through the site to *Roy’s Supermarket*, *Kingfisher Pool* and the *Waitrose Store*. *Stephen Thorpe* of the *Sudbury Society* believes this would help to reinvigorate the area and could be a more flexible system than the fixed space model used in conventional bus stations.

The Society has been involved in discussions with *Babergh District Council* and *Suffolk County Council* for a number of years but there seems to be little enthusiasm for an imaginative re-think on the bus station function and site.

SPS Babergh District has consistently argued, along with the *Sudbury Society*, that in this day and age a bus station is no longer essential. Historically, buses parked in a bus station for several reasons, but our argument is that these reasons are, or need not be, any longer valid.

They are:

- Bus transport used to rely on a fixed point and a fixed start time for a timetabled journey. Buses no longer need to have regular breaks to cool down. Furthermore, efficiency relies on vehicles staying on the move and modern technology makes it possible to indicate arrival times along the route.
- Travellers used to see a bus station as a fixed place to sit and chat while they waited for the bus. Transport operators saw bus stations as a place of interchange between one route and another. (It has been shown that because of the infrequency of some bus services there is still a need to wait for a 'connection'. But this is unsatisfactory and requires a better integrated system creating a more fluid service.)
- Drivers used bus stations as a place to have a break. The increase in town centre site values makes it hugely wasteful to park buses in town centres. They can go to other parking areas at the end of their journey and, indeed, in Sudbury there is a place which is already used for this purpose.

The other more critical but difficult issue to address is one of the physical environment of a bus station. The only truly successful bus stations result from high quality design and budgets which are not mean and begrudging. There is no real evidence that the *Suffolk County Highways Department* has the mechanisms in place to commission a stunning design or that there is a generous enough budget to create a truly outstanding space for travellers. Without excellence in both the space and the fittings, bus stations quickly become dirty and shabby and lose their appeal to the wavering public transport user.

Ultimately, the best way to get people onto public transport is to make it work efficiently, for buses to be comfortable and on time, and for fares to be as low as possible. A bus station will do none of these things and it could be argued that it will suck valuable revenue from the service, making people even less likely to travel by this form of transport.

One solution to this problem is for *Suffolk County Council* to free up the bus station site for a more useful purpose (ensuring that imaginatively planned development for the site is secured at the same time), and to use the capital receipt to commission and construct a set of well-designed stopping points along the bus routes. The Society should be allowed to take an active part in the debate. **Let us have your views on a new bus transport system in Sudbury, one that you would use.**



Sudbury Bus Station



Bury St. Edmunds Bus Station



London Bus Stop with shelter, seating and information

"Billy Two Sheds" (A David and Goliath Tale)

I wonder if anyone remembers the excellent TV play "*The Last Will & Testament of Billy Two Sheds*", written by *Alan Plater*. To summarise briefly, yarn-spinning grandfather (actor *James Bolam MBE*) has an allotment with two sheds (new one not liked) which, upon his death, he passes to his granddaughter, his "bonny lass". Our frenetic young heroine, a philosophy student, consumed with two part-time jobs and studying, has scant time for an allotment and even less for her law-student boyfriend. Somewhat bemused by her 'inheritance', she becomes drawn in to the 'philosophy' of allotment gardening, and its merits, causing her to reconsider her first reaction – just as developers and city planners, who have other plans for the land, make their move. Through "ghostly conversations" with her eccentric grandfather in the old potting shed, and his somewhat dodgy 'recall', coupled with the boyfriend's placement at the city's law firm, she learns how the 'land lies'. This sets them on a course to try to save the allotment land from developers who want to build a health farm amenity.

I mention this tale because it is amazing how allotment gardening is 'taking-off'. The *National Trust* is the largest non-governmental landowner in Britain and already provides allotments at around fifty of its properties. It is to create another 1,000 new allotment plots to help fuel the current grow-your-own movement. Currently, *ninety* per cent of the fruit and *forty* per cent of the vegetables we eat are imported, and cost us £6.4 billion in 2007.

In the late nineteenth century, the provision of a plot of land for the working classes to grow vegetables was advocated as the answer to a range of social ills including heavy drinking, poor health and low life expectancy. In 1908, the *Allotment Act* was the first in the UK to grant the legal right to a productive garden. In fact, the *Act* stated that the local authority should

satisfy the demand for allotments, if necessary by compulsory land purchase. Since then there have been various *Allotment Acts*, mainly aimed at giving some security of tenure to allotment holders. Unfortunately, the *Town & Country Planning Act 1947* removed the requirement made in the *1925 Act* for town planning authorities to consider allotment provision within town planning schemes, something which should perhaps be reviewed.

Soil that is fed, planted and nurtured over time becomes a cherished plot and even more so, it seems, with a shed! This healthy activity provides a meeting place for like-minded people; they share time together as well as produce good food and it is difficult to relinquish this for planning gain, even when alternative land is provided. Their allotment has a *sense of place*. This is the situation at the riverside allotments in *Hadleigh* across the river from *Babergh District Council's (BDC)* offices. *Tesco Stores* cannot access the Conservation Area riverside site for their new build other than through the long established allotments, BDC's staff car park and by demolishing *Hadleigh Town Council's (HTC)* attractive brick building. However, HTC owns the allotments and has voted not to sell them to BDC, and therein lays an unfinished narrative. Meanwhile, the *Hadleigh Allotment Association* has received a grant of £9,980 for a composting loo and a shed for this site from *Awards for All England!*

Returning to our tale it was the *Land Settlement Facilities Act 1919*, or something very like it, which assisted servicemen returning from war to take up allotment land for themselves, and their families in perpetuity, that clinched it for our "bonny lass" and her fellow allotment friends. The land could only be sold provided the city council could trace, and get the agreement of, all the descendents of the original allotment holders, an impossible task!



CPRE in Focus

In its manifesto, *2026 – A Vision for the Countryside*, published in May, CPRE is calling for a richer countryside which is “*more beautiful, more varied and more tranquil*” than now.

Shaun Spiers, its *Chief Executive*, said there was unrelenting pessimism that the countryside would not survive the pressure of development, globalisation and climate change, but farmers, families and campaigners were leading the way with low-carbon housing and small-scale renewable energy, and backing local food production. However, the campaign’s promoters would like better links to the countryside, more sustainable travelling within it and the revival of rural railways, good local services and encouragement for walking and cycling. It would also like to see the creation of more woodlands and new wetlands. Broadcaster and CPRE Vice-President *Jonathan Dimbleby* remarked that “*In 2026, we hope that everybody will realise that ‘our national backyard’ is crucial to us all: not only is it a place to relax, work, live and play, but it is the source of our food with a major role to play in protecting wildlife and meeting the challenge of climate change.*”

Another CPRE Vice-President who has been in the news is *Lady Cranbrook* who, by the time you read this, will have been a guest on *BBC Radio 4’s Desert Island Discs*. *Caroline Cranbrook*, who lives on the family farm at Great Glemham, is known nationally and locally for her campaign to protect and encourage local and regional food produce, and speaks on food, food marketing, and livestock farming. She has challenged the power of the supermarket giants who she says have an unfair advantage when dealing with suppliers and with local planners. Her battle, with others, to prevent a large new *Tesco* superstore opening in Halesworth continues. For her fight for the retention of small abattoirs she was named *BBC Radio 4’s Food Programme ‘Campaigner of the Year’*.

Town & Parish Council Comment

Exception sites for homes - a short term fix

Earlier in the year Government published its response to the *Taylor Review* on the rural economy. CPRE and the Society are concerned about aspects of the Government’s response, namely ideas for more flexibility and incentives for *landowners to come up with rural exceptions sites for new affordable housing*. Rural communities do need homes for rent and shared equity, but they should be planned for through the development plan process. Exception sites in rural villages often mean giving up a playing field or some other valuable piece of land used over time for recreation and pleasure. This land was not included within the planned village boundary for that reason. It is important that new homes in villages continue to be built but only when and where they are needed, and built to a high standard. Exceptions to rules lead to compromise and amenity loss.

New Members of the Society

(From 1st April – 8th July, 2009)

(CPRE)

Mr. G. Roscoe, Drinkstone
Professor G. Reeves, Bury St. Edmunds
Mr A. Fiddy, Wetherden
Mrs. M. Rowe, Stowmarket
Lady Hart, Chilton

(SPS)

Mr. A. Scott, Shelley
Mrs. S.E. Bain, Lewes
Mr. R.D. Aldrich, Saxmundham
Mrs. R. Attew, Ipswich
Mr. J.D. Patman, Woodbridge
Mr. & Mrs. E. Clanzly-Hodge, Easton

We are delighted to welcome all new Members. Membership, donations and legacies are the life-blood of the Society, particularly with the economic downturn.

Quote of the Issue

“No generation has a freehold on this earth. All we have is a life tenancy – with a full repairing lease.”

Lady Thatcher

News from the Districts

SPS Forest Heath District Report

District Chairman, Warwick Hirst, writes

Forest Heath, at present, has two dominant issues.

The first is the Local Development Framework (LDF). This is in its final consultation phase and then it goes back to the Government. They will appoint an Inspector to hold a Public Inquiry early in 2010, with one of the major issues being *housing*. The Government and the Regional Assembly want 10,000 new houses by 2031, but with most of them required by 2021. Red Lodge is one area to which they are being directed, but the residents argue, and so do the parish councils, that no such new development can take place until proper infrastructure, promised but not delivered, is in place. Newmarket is also proposed as a major new housing growth area, and this has clashed with the horse-racing industry's view that 'the town is developed enough'. A meeting will take place in July to review these matters. Another important issue is maintaining the growth of towns and villages in a sustainable way, or trying to keep them from *imposed* growth. One positive point is that the horse-racing policies of the 1995 District Plan are maintained in the new LDF.

We have also seen the formation of the *Save Historic Newmarket Action Group*. This essentially represents the horse and stud industry, and is very vocal on planning matters. There have been issues with a proposed new hotel, wine supermarket and apartment developments, and resistance to major house building programmes. How Newmarket develops in the next 20 years is now in focus, whether it remains the same or expands with major housing development.

The reverse is the position with the towns of *Brandon, Mildenhall* and *Lakenheath*. They have pressed for more new houses and for more retail and business development land allocations. They want to expand, as there is always the possibility of the USAF moving from Mildenhall: of real importance as the 15,000 USAF personnel

represent twenty-five per cent of the District population.

So there are plenty of changes coming and the effect on the countryside and on existing towns is very crucial. Certainly the LDF examination in early 2010 will see developers, residents and pressure groups, like *Save Historic Newmarket*, in competing positions at these public hearings.

The District Chairman can be contacted at 1 Malcolm Way, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7DX, telephone number 01638 664252 email address hirstjwh45@aol.com

SPS Waveney District Report

District Chairman, Mike Coleman, writes

Waveney District is under planning pressure at present. The threats are wind turbines and a potential supermarket in the wrong places.

Let's consider the wind turbines first. The Society, unfortunately, lost its jointly (*Kessingland Parish Council and Benacre Estate*) funded *Judicial Review* on the proposed two wind turbines at *Kessingland*. However, the objections it raised caused a delay while the Inspector consulted on the finer points of the case, resulting in a better outcome than would have been. It was interesting to learn informally that the developer does not see these wind turbines as sufficiently profitable and so sells on as soon as they are built and shown to 'work'. The company did this with the first one it built and you can see its frequent 'non-working' at *Ness Point, Lowestoft*. The District was under no illusions regarding its economic capability although it may have been a surprise for the company concerned.

Since then, the first shots have been fired on the potential 12, formerly 9, wind turbines on four farms around the *Barsham* area. This took the form of a 'scoping report' for the *Environmental Impact Assessment*. At a more advanced stage is the application for 5 wind turbines on the old airfield at *Upper Holton* near Halesworth, in the

ownership of the *Bernard Matthews Company*. This was a very well-presented planning application but, as with all of them, there was no real recognition of the detrimental impact on the landscape, where there is currently nothing higher than a church tower, balanced against inflated benefits. The scale of the turbines means they will be visible over a very large area extending from the coast inland for many miles because of the relatively flat landscape. Their installation and ongoing maintenance, set against their limited life-span, would damage the land surface. The effect of all these giant machines, if built, would mean that much of the Waveney District would be blighted by views of them without guaranteed benefits.

The assault of major applications has been completed by a poorly presented application by *Tesco* for a large, in the context of the town, supermarket on the relief road at *Halesworth*. This is not a good omen for the long-term option of choice, even though the need for the retention of small independent shops to serve the town is recognised. The District is objecting to all the foregoing applications.

On a lighter note, in late June the Society arranged a visit for members to *Southwold* to visit the pier, the *Alfred Corry Lifeboat Museum* and the old and new *Adnams Distribution Centres*. This was a really interesting day out and included a good fish and chip lunch. At the end of July the Chairman and his wife hosted a *garden party* for the Society's members and their friends to view in comfort the *Lowestoft Air Show* featuring the *Red Arrows*, *The Battle of Britain Memorial flight* and the *Vulcan Bomber*. Net proceeds for the Society amounted to almost £180 and it was a most enjoyable day.

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

Editor note: *Grateful thanks goes to all those who have arranged events for Members and Friends during the summer, and we hope future events will be well supported.*

SPS Ipswich Report

Ipswich Society Representative, Mike Cook, writes

The planning scene remains quiet in Ipswich though some evidence of 'green shoots' is appearing and preliminary work on the St. Peter's Port site is in progress. The Regatta Quay, next to the Custom House, has applied for planning permission to include a hotel rather than apartments in the development, which accords with Ipswich Society's view that there are already too many apartments. Next to this site the twenty-three storey "the mill" is appearing out of scaffolding. It is as intrusive from all the cardinal views as we feared, and to add insult to injury, the developer put "the mill" on the tower without planning consent. We hope the Planning and Development Committee will take note of this selfish tower, which turns its back, windowless, on the town centre, and consider future applications more sensitively.

Tesco, with whom the Ipswich Society has had meetings, have withdrawn to at least refine their plans for the Lower Railway Yard site near the docks. It is clearly too high, too big, and will pour even more traffic on to the busiest road junction in Ipswich, possibly Suffolk. Its effect, despite their reassurances, can only be deleterious to Ipswich's smaller town centre shops and discourage new retailers in similar lines of business. They are not the easiest of applicants to deal with and at the time of writing we are uncertain of their next step.

The Ipswich School application to build a vast, international-standard sports facility, available to all sections of the community, at the northern end of Tuddenham Road, abutting the railway line has now been published. It would like to build on Grade 2 agricultural land, extending the conurbation of Ipswich towards Tuddenham village, introducing light pollution and traffic problems and destroying the natural break between town and countryside. This is clearly contrary to good planning practice and is not

included in the Local Development Framework (LDF). Although it would bring to Suffolk a fine and much needed facility which would be an economic driver, this proposal is contrary to planning procedure and is in the wrong place. The funding the *Ipswich School* requires would come from the development of their current playing fields, to the north of Valley Road, for a 220 mixed housing development, a large care home and a community hall. Access would be obtained from Valley Road by demolishing Number 160, a fine 1920s five-bed residence – there is no suggestion of an alternative approach, or of how the traffic problems created might be ameliorated. This planning development was not included in the Local Plan, the Local Development Framework or in the Options Appraisal, nor was there any suggestion of such a development. It is likely to encourage other speculative and even more undesirable development, outside the proper planning route. A professional campaign, supported by planning consultants, has been established to fight the proposal and has forwarded to the Borough Council close to a thousand objections; the Borough planners have held a public meeting, attended by three hundred people, mostly objecting, at which all spoke strongly. This matter is likely to rumble on for a while but any plans, including speculative ones, should follow correct planning procedure being tested through the LDF.

Finally, I would like to add a word of thanks to our departing Director, *Richard Ward*, who was a member of the *Ipswich Conservation Advisory Panel* and gave trenchant and helpful opinions based on his training and experience on the applications we reviewed. We thank him and shall miss him.

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

Well, the Arc, better known as the Cattle Market Development, is open even if not fully let. The reactions are mixed, ranging from an ecstatic letter in last week's local paper to severe criticism of the "iconic" anchor store leased by *Debenhams*.

Market traders are reporting more shoppers and, certainly at weekends, the town seems full of more people, but the number of empty un-let shops in the old town and Cornhill Walk are increasing. Thank goodness they are no longer boarded up! We have seen *Milletts*, in the Buttermarket, close because they are a *Blacks'* subsidiary and the parent firm has opened in Auction Street.

Old criticisms remain – the new area is separated by the grotty St. Andrews Street South from the existing shopping area and the link promised for so long has not yet materialised. Market Thoroughfare was closed for improvement, but apart from a whitewashed wall and some new paving slabs it remains narrow, unattractive and an unwelcoming access from the Arc to the old Cornhill. The view up Central Walk towards the "clam" of *Debenhams* is interesting and welcoming but the reverse sight lines are not nearly so good because of unsightly cooling systems on the roof of the old Fire Station.

Bury has been described, rather inaccurately, as a grey town, thanks to the preponderance of *Woolpit White* bricks. Sadly this development does not alleviate this impression. The buildings are grey rather than silver and the only colour is from hoardings over un-let shops. There are long blank walls without gaiety or liveliness and the paucity of floral planting is disappointing.

The new wall separating the car park from the shops to the west, however, must be singled out for praise as it forms a splendid visual barrier to

the cars and has been well- built using reclaimed brick, flint and Abbey stone. It is satisfying that a far less attractive design was abandoned after criticism.

The eccentric positioning of the lavatories is bizarre. The public building reputed to be a state of the art meeting-place is a long way from opening and until then it is too early to judge the merits of Charter Square. The skinny wood supports of the building's canopy, however, do look disappointing. The whole precinct is well patrolled and litter should be no problem. But there is little in the shops for the over 50s, their loyalty must remain with *Marks & Spencer* or the St. John's Street shops.

A month ago, the *Civic Trust* and the *Royal Society of Arts* held an architectural/ environmental symposium in the Bury Unitarian Meeting House. A walk round the Cattle Market was followed by a lively critical discussion of the scheme. The conclusions were that the town had been 'short-changed' on the "link", and that the overall blandness, lack of colour and paucity of green planting was disappointing. The open character of Charter Square was praised and most delegates thought it was a better shopping centre than any recently built elsewhere in the country. The public building necessarily remained an enigma – we await, with bated breath, the announcement of its expensively-researched chosen name. Overall the impression was favourable although a return visit in a year was proposed to really assess the effect of the development on the whole town. It was interesting to note how one's loyalty to the town rose illogically when strangers from *Bournemouth*, *London* or *Cambridge* criticised features of Bury, even those that one had always deplored!

In April, two planning applications were made for "Anaerobic Digesters" one in Denham and the other in Saxham, in open country to the west of Bury St. Edmunds. These large structures would use biological substances to produce methane, which in turn would be burnt to produce heat and electricity. The suggested substrate would

be spent grain from the brewery and apple residues from an apple producer in Boxford. In addition, it was suggested that a large estate's agriculture should be wholly converted to the monoculture of maize to produce fuel for the scheme. Considerable local opposition was encountered and the applications were withdrawn. The principles involved in the objections remain - in the present ecological climate it is too easy to be carried away by such schemes for so-called green energy. Tankers of apple waste would need to be carried along country lanes day in, day out. The cattle fed by Greene King's malt husks would grow hungry and the monoculture of maize would spoil many people's rural enjoyment. This type of development is too important to be approved locally; a strategic policy for such plans should surely be decided through the LDD. Congratulations to the villagers of Denham for their articulate, energetic opposition, but such plans are not likely to go away for good.

It is easy to become despondent when reviewing and objecting to planning applications. Do the planners or the Development Control Committee ever take notice? But then something cheers you up. Cafe Rouge in Bury applied to cut down several trees in their courtyard, including a Paulownia, a fine tree with attractive blue foxglove-like flowers produced in May, claiming it was too near a listed wall. But following the Society's objection the application was withdrawn, so do enjoy these unusual flowers once again next spring.

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



Suffolk Building Preservation Trust

Martin Lightfoot, SBPT Chairman, writes

Support the Trust's unique attractions

I think we run two of the very best attractions in Suffolk, each of them unique. Seeing families able to picnic in the garden and water meadows at Pakenham Water Mill, or enjoy the eclectic and remarkable collection of the Gayer Anderson Brothers at Little Hall, together with the house and its sheltered walled garden, is testament to all the time and dedication of our volunteers and the management teams.



Little Hall, Lavenham - rear view

LITTLE HALL, LAVENHAM

Opening Times

Open 4th April to 1st November, 2009

Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday & Sunday
2.00 – 5.30 pm

Bank holiday Mondays 11.00 am – 5.30 pm

Last admission 4.30 pm (allow 1 hour)

Groups by arrangement – 01473 827365 (calls between 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm)

House 01787 247019

Fax 01787248341

www.littlehall.org.uk info@littlehall.org.uk

Adults: £2.50 - accompanied children free

Groups: Adults £2.00, schools £0.50

Visits by groups of 12 or more can be arranged, at least one week in advance, for any time of the year.



Pakenham Water Mill – relaxing by the mill pool

PAKENHAM WATER MILL

Opening Times

Pre-booked parties by arrangement – 01284 724075 or 01359 232025

Open 4th April to 1st November, 2009

Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays

1.30 – 5.00 pm: Thursday 10.00 am – 4.00 pm

(milling demonstration first Thursday morning of each month)

Heritage Weekend: Sunday, 13th September

Free admission 11.00 am – 5.00 pm

Milling and baking

Craft stalls and demonstrations

Harvest Songs of Praise: Sunday, 17th September

Norton Salvation Army Band

Mill opens 1.30 pm

Salvation Army Band at 3.00 pm

Half-term: 26th – 30th October 1.30 – 4.00 pm

Hallowe'en activity

Father Christmas at the Mill: Sunday, 6th December

Mill opens from 3.00, Father Christmas 4.30 pm



Father Christmas on the river – don't tell!

THE MILLER'S KITCHEN

Pakenham Water Mill Curator, David Eddershaw, writes



Miller's Kitchen at Pakenham Water Mill

The big black kettle has a knitted wool holder wrapped round its handle to protect the miller's wife from burning her hands. It sits on the hob of the iron range and on the high mantel shelf above are brass candlesticks, an ornamental china plate and a George V Coronation Mug of 1911. Standing ready for use on the scrubbed deal top of the kitchen table are an assortment of earthenware and enamel bowls, a wooden rolling-pin and a set of scales with weights measuring in pounds and ounces. An old clock ticks away steadily in the background, its gentle rhythm adding to the illusion that one has stepped back into the past.

That is precisely the point of the re-creation of the Miller's Kitchen, opened this season in the recently converted Miller's House adjoining Pakenham Water Mill. The original plans for the house had two aims: to provide improved facilities for visitors and to create a flat on the top floor which would be let commercially and would generate income. The flat is now let and the new facilities include a very successful small tea-room, much appreciated by visitors. A third aim was achieved more recently, recognition of the historic nature of the house and the social history enshrined in it. The Water Mill itself is a rare working example of milling technology and the work of a miller, but the house provides

an opportunity to give visitors a glimpse of the domestic life of the miller and his family. It thus adds a whole new dimension to the educational importance of this site. Generations of millers have lived here and the re-creation of the kitchen shows visitors an aspect of daily life for one such family about a hundred years ago, shortly before the First World War.

In addition to this, the old 'back kitchen' with its brewing vat, open hearth and brick oven is a remarkable survival which takes the story back to the eighteenth century.

SPS celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1989 with an impressive series of events, talks, visits and exhibitions throughout the year.



A special souvenir programme was printed which included a letter from *HRH Prince Charles*. In June of that year there was a *Suffolk Artists Exhibition* in the *Phoenix Gallery Lavenham* and among the artists was *Clive Madgwick*. One of his paintings, a beautiful view of *Pakenham Water Mill* from the mill pond, was featured on the front cover of the souvenir programme, *see above*. It would be interesting to discover where that painting is now. Perhaps it would be possible with the owner's permission to produce prints or postcards for sale at the mill. **Does anyone know where it is?** If you can help please contact the Curator, David Eddershaw, via Little Hall, telephone 01787 247179.



Through the Portal

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

The Office

In early June, staff and volunteers at Little Hall, said goodbye to Richard Ward, the outgoing Director who had completed six years with the Society, but he did not escape without thanks for his endeavours on the Society's behalf and a final toast and good wishes for his future. It is rumoured that a quick audit was taken of the office biscuit tin! Later in June the SPS Office said good-bye to Adrienne Jackson, the Society's Office Manager, who had been with the Society for three years. They wished her the very best for her future career and noted that her efficiency and cheery persona would be greatly missed. *Linda Cockburn, office assistant pictured left below, has taken on her duties and is continuing the good work.*



The House

The restoration of the '*Virgin and Child*' **oil on board** Icon painting, owned by the SBPT, had conservation implications because of the specialist nature of the challenges presented by paintings on wood panels; unfortunately there are only a few experts worldwide, and the expertise gap is widening. How many of us pay attention to those words, **oil on board**, when reading a label next to a painting hanging in an art gallery or museum?

Paintings on wooden panels were common in Europe, especially in Italy and the northern European countries, up until the sixteenth century, when canvas became increasingly popular as a surface. Many world-famous paintings are on panel, eg. *Portrait of Henry VIII* by Hans Holbein the Younger. Panel surfaces, prepared by skilled

woodworkers, were either made from a single piece of wood or, for larger paintings, constructed from a number of pieces joined together. Wood continuously responds to changes in temperature and humidity. Its ability to absorb and desorb moisture from the surrounding air makes paintings on panels susceptible to structural damage, including warping, twisting and splitting – all of which affect the paint layer in a negative way. The worst of these processes can cause paint loss. After repeated cycles of swelling and shrinking, paintings of this kind were no longer flat, and a common way to impose flatness on a deformed panel was to remove half or more of the thickness of the support and to attach a rigid structure, called a cradle. An extreme intervention was to remove the wooden surface completely and to transfer the paint layer to canvas.

In more recent times, with advances in professional conservation, less invasive treatments have been developed that respect the original materials and construction of a painting, and the Trust is particularly grateful to the *Hamilton Kerr Institute* for its work. The Trust's Icon painting has much of interest to convey, both through symbolism as well as beauty.



Little Hall Museum Management Committee with Regine Page of the Hamilton Kerr Institute oversee Icon's return

The Garden

Once again, the garden was made ready for the Lavenham Hidden Gardens *Open Day* in June, and after some heavy rain, looked lush and attractive for the occasion. Appreciation goes, as ever, to all the volunteer gardeners who gave their time to make it look so lovely, and continue to do so each week.

Technical Tack

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

Our Heritage at Risk

The East of England 2009 Register, produced by *English Heritage (EH)*, is now available and records listed buildings, scheduled monuments, traditional parks and gardens, battlefields, shipwreck sites and conservation areas which are at risk through neglect, decay, a lack of funding for appropriate repair, or the pressure of building development. *Heritage at Risk* is a national project which identifies the endangered and helps to secure their future. However, on these pages, it is intended to discuss the **listed buildings and conservation areas** aspect, and to throw some light on to this 'risk' subject.

The problem with buildings at risk is that one often only hears about them when the damage is done and the result evident. It is important to monitor areas and anticipate possible threats, whether to a single building, or a conservation area, or a building's environment. Good planning and planned budgeting can prevent the gradual erosion of old buildings and their settings; be it from a physical change to the building or merely a detrimental change in its environment. Conservation adds value.

A **Listed Building** is a building (or structure) that has been designated as being of 'special architectural or historic interest'. The older and rarer a building is, the more likely it is to be listed and *Suffolk View* has previously covered the detail of listing in *Issue 106*.

The Eastern Region has 15 per cent of England's listed buildings, and a higher proportion of its most architecturally and historically important churches. There are, at present, 122 identified buildings at risk. Some buildings stay on the register for a long time because there is a reluctance to invest in them, particularly in non-beneficial structures or buildings with very large conservation deficits, but *EH* continue to work with owners to repair more beneficial structures that provide enjoyment within the countryside and the region's landscape.

In Suffolk the *RSPB* has been helped with the

consolidation of the 12th century remains of *Leiston Abbey's* first site, located on the *Minsmere Nature Reserve*, and a local farmer has received support to stabilise the remains of a fragile 12th century chapel at *Mells*, close to the coast. *St. Peter's Church in Ipswich* has also received grant aid for repairs, and the *Isaac Lord site*, which comprises a Grade I and two Grade II* buildings is a success story. It is one of the finest examples in the region of a late 15th to early 16th century merchant's house and warehouse complex surviving in a single ownership. All of the buildings have now been brought back into use and are exemplary cases of sensitive repair and adaptive re-use.



Isaac Lord building complex, Ipswich

Conservation Areas are defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. They form the historic backcloth to national and local life and are a crucial component of local identity and community cohesion.

The Conservation Areas (CA) at Risk campaign surveyed every local authority in England to ascertain the condition of each of the conservation areas in their district, and 70 per cent of them responded. It appears that most CAs are in a relatively stable state and have not significantly changed in recent times. The most common problems are to do with the loss of a building's historic detail, damage to streetscapes and 'vacancy' in connection with the economic downturn. Also the government's growth agenda

brings pressures for the future of conservation areas in our region. However, it is clearly evident that where a local authority retains a dedicated conservation officer or an elected member who has been appointed as a heritage champion to promote the historic environment with the council, the prognosis is greatly enhanced.

Looking after conservation areas is a responsibility we all share. Some of us own homes or run businesses in conservation areas, or we visit them to shop or to just enjoy, and there are those who are responsible for managing the space between the buildings or make decisions about their future. The undoubted social value of lifting the appearance and functions of towns and village streets has been recognised and grant-givers have done much in this direction. English Heritage states that *“work on market towns, seaside towns and those communities with populations under 250,000 remain key areas of endeavour. The effects of climate change will continue to be a major factor and the pressures on the rural economy and its historic buildings and the region’s rich ecclesiastical legacy are also important.”*

Planning Overview on page 15 informs of a proposal for a possible new conservation area at Felixstowe South and mention is made again of the loss of important features that contribute to the character of an area, including inappropriate replacement windows and doors. As one travels the country where, for example, stone buildings are evident, mass-produced *any period goes* doors and plastic windows are evident. Whilst the houses may not be listed or even be in a conservation area the character of the stone building is immediately diminished because of the inappropriate changes. Where old houses exist in terraces there is a noticeable difference in the treatment of their frontages. Their original state was often one of neat conformity with a garden path edged decoratively with stone

or brick leading to the well-architected front door, brick wall with attractive iron railing tops and a simple but well-designed gate with solid gate furniture. The door knocker, foot scraper and letter box were modestly in keeping but interesting. Today, without planning adjudication, and with owners wishing to convey their individual taste, the majority of these modest but attractive terraces are a mixture of paved or shingled front gardens to accommodate a car or motorbike with most of their walls and front gates demolished and the front doors and windows changed beyond their original character, often with plastic replacements. Repair, rather than replace, is the correct mantra and in doing so the property will be preserving its character and appearance, and also its value.

Perhaps a last word should come from *Architect, Quinlan Terry*, who lives in the Dedham Vale AONB. Writing recently in the paper he talks of the ugliness and proliferation of plastic windows but particularly of a greater problem and cost which is seldom realised, their short life. The guarantee on the seals of double-glazed units is only five years. Whilst they may last a little longer it will not be long before the seals break down under ultraviolet light and mist up, requiring expensive replacements. He invites comparison with a traditional single-glazed, hardwood window which lasts for centuries, if well cared-for. New regulations require two layers of glass to save on heating, but a glazed window inside the outer window (which has been used for centuries in central Europe) will meet these requirements and preserve the architectural quality of new and old buildings. Mr. Terry complains that ugliness in buildings always runs parallel with short-term solutions which need constant expensive maintenance and leave a legacy of landfill sites filled with carbon-toxic plastic and glass. *Suffolk View* couldn’t agree more.

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

Letters

Regular readers of *Suffolk View* will know that the Society has been critical of the government's policy of unsustainable, target-driven, housing provision and, as a consequence of the Bill going through Parliament, the Society wrote to **Tim Yeo, MP, Chairman of the cross party Environmental Audit Committee**, who has replied as follows.

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill

I appreciate the concerns you raise about the Government's housing targets and regional planning strategies. Indeed, the whole regional and target-driven approach to planning is undemocratic and has led to planning decisions that ride roughshod over strongly-held local opinions. If local people were more involved in the planning process and if that process was more locally-led, there would not be such a level of unsustainable development. You may be interested to know that in April, the Conservative Party published a Green Paper on housing titled '*Strong Foundations*', which proposed various measures to devolve power to local authorities and residents. The Green Paper is available to read in full at the Conservative website. As you are aware, the Bill is now passing through the House of Lords and will be considered by the House of Commons in the next few months. I will ensure that my colleagues on the Conservative front bench are aware of the concerns you have raised and will continue to campaign for a planning system that delivers what local communities need. As requested, I have also drawn your concerns to the attention of the Local Government Minister. Furthermore, if this Bill passes but the Conservative Party wins the next election, we will aim to repeal the elements of this legislation which work against democratic local control.

Since replying to the Society Tim Yeo received the following reply from John Healey MP, Minister for Local Government.

Dear Tim, I refer to your letter dated 14th May enclosing correspondence that you have received from a number of your constituents, regarding aspects of the *Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction (LDEDC) Bill*. I

note their concerns in relation to Part 5 of the Bill which concerns the new regional strategy that will replace separate regional spatial and economic strategies. As you may know, the Bill has been considered by the House of Lords and is now due to be considered in the Commons. In response, I would like to draw your attention to the *Policy Document on Regional Strategies* which we published in January 2009 to help explain the provisions in the Bill and how it is intended to operate, because I think this will provide advice which is relevant to their concerns. The document is available at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/citiesandregions/lledcregionalstrategies

I particularly refer you to paragraphs 1.1-1.6 on the purpose of regional strategy, paragraphs 2.3-2.5 on content of regional strategy and paragraphs 3.17-19 and 4.18-24 on stakeholder and community involvement. Your constituents specifically suggest that the Bill should contain a definition of 'sustainable economic growth' and include minimum standards for stakeholder and community involvement. These both relate to matters raised during the debate in the House of Lords, but ultimately the Peers agreed to a Bill which did not include such changes.

"Can a green house ever be graceful?" Suffolk View – Spring 2009, Issue 110, Page 15

"Yes" - is the answer. And it may surprise the reader to know we've been building graceful 'green' homes for thousands of years. Nothing is new, not even today's fashion for the eco-home. My home, like many, many others throughout the UK was built with locally sourced materials such as oak, hazel, clay, straw, chalk (lime), brick and flint. Unlike many of today's so-called 'eco new builds', nothing was imported from Scandinavia, Austria, America or any other country for that matter to build my robust and ancient timber-framed home, which still stands proudly today after many centuries. To repair the shallow (6 inch) footings I go to the field next door to collect flints. I make daub to repair the infill panels and render from clay and straw collected from within my village. Hazel to repair the wattle

and daub comes from Bradfield Woods up the road, although I can sometimes obtain this free from local woods if I speak politely to a kindly farmer. Everything my home is built with can be reused or recycled and at the end of its life, will harmlessly bio-degrade. To date, my ancient eco-home has lasted over 450 years and, should our world survive that long, could easily last another 450 provided it is kept in good repair. Now that is graceful 'zero-carbon construction'. I wonder how long eco-homes built today will last?

Regards, Paula Sunshine”

Teaching traditional repair of historic timber-framed properties
www.paulasunshine.co.uk

Book Reviews

SPS member, Jane Allen, writes

New Aldeburgh Anthology

Compiled by Ariane Bankes
and Jonathan Reekie
Published by Aldeburgh
Music and The Boydell
Press

Priced at £35.00

It has to be said that Suffolk is not the home of many institutions or activities of international renown.

One thinks of the *British Telecom Research Establishment* at Martlesham, the horse-racing industry at Newmarket, the huge container port at Felixstowe, and *Aldeburgh Music*, which runs the Festival, concerts and the associated music school, at Snape Maltings.

This year *Aldeburgh Music* has opened new buildings to enable a great expansion of the musical education programmes and thus to ‘reinforce the Suffolk coast as one of the world’s

great centres for nurturing musical and artistic talent’. The *New Aldeburgh Anthology* has been published to coincide with this landmark event. The contributions from 112 writers, musicians, artists and photographers offer convincing evidence to support that bold claim for our county’s importance.

The first *Aldeburgh Anthology* was edited by *Ronald Blythe* and published in 1972 by *Faber*. *Benjamin Britten* and *Peter Pears* were then both living. The Aldeburgh Festival, started in 1948, had settled into its new home at the Snape Maltings Concert Hall: 1972 was also the year when the first master class was held – the beginning of the great plan that Britten and Pears had for musical education. The anthology was a big book of essays and reminiscences by a galaxy of distinguished contributors, celebrating both the Aldeburgh Festival and the Suffolk countryside which so completely permeated Benjamin Britten’s life and music.

The *New Aldeburgh Anthology*, a slimmer volume, reproduces some of the best pieces from the earlier book. But it is the new articles, poems, photographs and drawings which demonstrate how the Festival and the activities of Aldeburgh Music have continued to develop and grow in the succeeding thirty-five years and have attracted an enthusiastic following from a new generation. This, surely, is a tribute to the vision and genius of Britten and Pears and is their magnificent legacy.

Ronald Blythe has written a Foreword to the new book which, he says, ‘allows Suffolk to speak for itself and in all kinds of voices. Local historians and fishermen, natives and “foreigners” all put their oar in, so to speak, adding to the vigour of the selection’. Indeed it does, and I urge you share the experience.



Stop Press News

Little Hall Garden Party

On a lovely evening at the end of July, in the setting of the attractive walled garden, the Building Trust (SBPT) hosted the Little Hall Garden Party on behalf of the Society, for SBPT volunteers and new members. Museum Guides, Little Hall gardeners, Pakenham Water Mill volunteers, Officers of the Society and SPS District Chairmen enjoyed a social occasion together and had the pleasure of meeting new members who had joined the Society during the year. Martin Lightfoot, the Building Trust's Chairman said he admired all that the volunteers did and achieved, both at Little Hall and Pakenham Water Mill, and without whose help the SPS would only own two buildings. As it was, two lovely venues were open to the public to visit and enjoy.

Diary Dates

Society Events – 2009

Event in SPS Suffolk Coastal District

11.30 am - 19th September, 2009

A visit has been arranged to the *late John Western's Studio* at *Cretingham* to see his remarkable collection of drawings of Suffolk architecture, showing its distinctive character, with an explanatory talk on his style and what makes his work of interest. This visit will be followed by lunch at *Cretingham Golf Club*.

Cost: £15 for members and £20 for guests. Cheques should be made payable to *Suffolk Preservation Society*. Open to all members but booking essential through *Jo Rogers, Manor Farm Cottage, Rendham, Saxmundham, IP17 2AH*: tel. 01728 663462

Market Place – Directory



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