



BTT Members,

The BTT Board hope you will find this newsletter useful and informative.

If you wish to comment or include something in the publication, please contact the Chair on p.riddington@outlook.com

Or the Secretary on gayerynsardbtt@gmail.com

The Board values your feedback and contributions.



Chair's Comments

Newsletter No 8

Dear Friends and Members

August 2021

Well, we do seem to be finally able to start to plan some returns to normal and one of the things we are looking forward to is having our AGM in November as a face-to-face event. While last year's was practical enough as a Zoom session, we all missed seeing everyone together. So, hopefully, we'll be able to confirm a date and venue shortly.

We are also hoping to get a guest speaker as usual, and possibly to talk about the

historic environment and how it can contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions. We are trying to have our board meetings face-to-face in Margaret Charlesworth's garden but have been thwarted by the weather to date.

Despite everything, things have been progressed with great interest at 11 High Baxter Street which Paul Rynsard elucidates below. We are hoping to perhaps relaunch regular talks with an evening talk about the project and the house.

Otherwise, John Popham reports below on his activities particularly the successes with the West Suffolk College, what's happening with the Railway Station Group and a new activity to help put together advice for householders and others on where to find information about making the pre 1919 properties more sustainable.

One further piece of news is that the Gazetteer of non-designated heritage assets in the Town Centre Conservation Area has, at last, been completed. This has been a major piece of work and we have to thank former trustee and friend Peter Fuller for his assistance in completing this, his knowledge and eye for detail has been an invaluable asset for us.

Finally, while we are welcoming Caroline Commins as our new membership secretary (see below). We are still a couple of trustees short and so I repeat the plea from the last newsletter for someone with a legal background and someone who has had involvement with practical building conservation to join us.

Best wishes to you all,

Peter Riddington

11 High Baxter Street

Stage 2 of the building work is nearing completion which will see the new extension added and other works in the house progressed. This includes a new staircase and the removal of some internal walls to create improved space and flow.

The property continues to throw up surprises relating to previous generations who used and lived in the building. These will be saved and integrated into the refurbishment.

Please have a look at the BTT Instagram account [@burystedmundstowtrust](#) for updates and photographs as the work continues.

As in all projects, we have had to face some challenges particularly with suppliers and suppliers. This has results in the windows for the extension being delayed for a minimum of four weeks. When the site is clear, we will review options with estate agent Paul Bedford and see if there is any interest in a sympathetic purchaser completing the project.

This may take a little while and we will use this time to consider how much more work we can do to enhance the selling prospects of the house. An early idea and low cost will be to work on the garden and we have had a volunteer design team who will give us ideas. It has been suggested that we ask members to donate plants and pots when we have a design and if this approved, I will send out details.

The Board also feels an added option of a car parking space near the property

would be a boost for any potential purchasers. In the meantime, I will contact West Suffolk DC to ensure a permit.

We are really proud of the work undertaken to save this historic house and we have received many compliments on the improvements to the house and the street. We are mindful however that we have to balance the value to the community of having rescued this house

Interesting . . .

Renovations have unveiled an interesting find hidden inside a Victorian wall (picture below).

This unusual detail is thought to be an example of flat splats ie, a flattened version of a turned balusters which you sometimes find on 17thC staircases. These look to be barley sugar twists but flat.

They may have been reused from elsewhere or could have originally been in situ but are quite ornate in a simple, vernacular way and were clearly meant to be seen. They could have provided light and ventilation to the space behind



with financial considerations going forward. Thanks to the team working with

us on this project, Seamans the main contractors and Whitworth Architects. A final word of thanks to those members who have supported the BTT financially, the Architectural Heritage Fund and West Suffolk District Council for rates reduction grant and, of course, our generous members.

Paul Rynsard

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**Membership Secretary –
Caroline Commins**



I have recently taken over the role of membership secretary for the BTT after Marian Shaw.

Happily, Margaret Charlesworth has been of great help in giving me some background to the role, enabling me to continue the work that both Margaret and Marion Shaw have done in the past.

I come to the Trust from an accounts and finance background but also with a very keen personal interest in the built environment. I have lived in the centre of Bury since 2016 but already feel very much part of the community. I am a local magistrate and I also work in the town centre.

I am looking forward to meeting you, although I know that many of you are my near-neighbours, many of whom I am already acquainted with.

After looking through the membership records, I can see that many of you remembered to increase your standing order to £12 per annum (or £18 for a couple at the same address) for January 2020, but some are still paying the old amounts. Please could I ask that you check your accounts to ensure that your standing orders are set up for the correct amount, to arrive with us at the beginning of January. There are also a few people from whom we have not received subscriptions yet for this year and I will be contacting them individually in the next few weeks to see if they would like to continue their membership of the BTT. I will also be sending out reminders for annual renewals for next year in due course.

We will be trying to encourage businesses to join the Trust in the coming year, with the introduction of company membership. There will also be a student membership category, to reflect our work as educators in the local community and encourage younger people to join us.

Please contact me if you have any questions about your membership at BTTmemsec@btinternet.com.



**Bury St Edmunds
Railway Station**

In the last issue we reported that we were awaiting the publication of the

government's William's Rail Review. In the event, it appeared in late May as the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail reflecting the fact that the Secretary of State had had an influence on its content. After considering the plan BTT, which acts as coordinator for the BSE Rail Station Group, was one of the signatories of a letter to the Secretary of State. We concurred with the creation of Great British Railways and supported the proposed separation of managing rail fabric, including stations, from train operation.

Given the fact that there is mention in the report of the formation of local management teams for stations, the Group sought assurance that at the start of the new arrangement Bury St Edmunds station would not once again find itself at a disadvantage because of its 30-year repair backlog. We drew attention to the fact that despite all the excellent work that had recently been done there were still major outstanding repairs to be completed in order to catch up – work that was the responsibility of the DfT in the guise of Network Rail. We therefore sought an assurance that at the start of the new regime Bury's important listed station would not once again find itself at a disadvantage.

In response, the DfT letter, while outlining the manner in which the Department would be proceeding with reform, explained that planning was still at an early stage and decisions about funding had yet to be made. Notwithstanding the helpful intervention of our MP, Jo Churchill, and further correspondence with the Minister at the Department, we remain no further forward at this stage, but will be continuing to press for DfT confirmation that the station's repair backlog will be made up.

Despite this recent, we hope temporary, set-back a great deal of repair and enhancement has taken place at the station since BTT's 2015 campaigning report on the problems at the station was first published.

This has been in no small part due to the efforts of Greater Anglia, initially prompted by West Suffolk Council. However, further major repairs remain to be done before the essential catch-up is complete. We need to achieve this before our rail station can fully take on the role of a major commuting hub and become a fitting entrance to the town.

John Popham



Education

In the last issue we reported on how the **BTT/ West Suffolk College BTEC, Level 3 course, Construction and Conservation in the Built Environment** (the first permanent course of its type in England to have a mandatory conservation element) had relied on virtual teaching for most of this last academic year.

During the summer term, however, we managed a partial return to normality with a very successful town tour (thanks to

Chris Rand and our Chair), and an excellent day of practical work on hot lime pointing on some of the flintwork in the Abbey Gardens (thanks to Andy Cunningham and English Heritage). Since then, there has been a further meeting between the Trust, West Suffolk College and English Heritage (EH) when we agreed to strengthen our working relationship. This is particularly important for us as EH have been genuinely supportive of what we are seeking to achieve. They have offered excellent practical trade experience on the range of monuments for which they are responsible. Finally, we are pleased to report that all the organisations and companies that have supported us by providing practical training in the last two years have agreed to do so again for the academic year 21/22.

John Popham



Towards a Zero Carbon Footprint for pre-1919 buildings in Bury

If we are nationally to reach a net zero carbon footprint for our existing dwellings by 2050, and preferably beforehand, we have a massive national task ahead of us over the coming decades. The Trust is concerned that in order to achieve this it will be necessary to undertake low carbon retrofitting work on pre-1919 properties in the town. Of the 30,550 dwellings in Bury in 2019 it is estimated that some 20%, or 6,000, are of pre-1919 origin. In the town centre area the percentage is even higher – perhaps exceeding 40% in parts.

Our prime object is to conserve the built heritage of the town for the benefit of its residents, the nation and future generations. Unless the required work is carefully undertaken, a great deal of

damage could be done to the town's historic fabric, including many listed buildings. Reducing the carbon footprint of these buildings to an acceptable level will be complex. The work varies between dwellings of differing ages and styles, and the cost to householders will be considerable.

The Trust is therefore considering how best to ensure that there is a reliable source of information to help owners decide on the work that is most appropriate for their properties. Our objective will be to provide an understanding of the nature and extent of work likely to be required, in order to assist owners when instructing professionals to specify and supervise the required schemes.

John Popham

