

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I would like to wish all members a happy Christmas and thank you for your support during 2007. Another year has passed and we seem little further forward in respect of facilities and regeneration of the town centre. We do however seem to have more and more gardens being built on and buildings of character being demolished! The recent statement by Breckland that housing is top priority was made in relation to the potential sale of contaminated land on the Ladies estate for housing. One wonders how successful the Thetford Master Plan will be, if it merely comprises developing every inch of 'spare' land without associated facilities. The whole area to the north of Rosemary Musker School is earmarked for development causing further traffic on Croxton Road so what is proposed? Remove the car park which services not only the school but the church and shops!

The demands and needs study for the Carnegie seemed phrased to deter the individual in responding and wanting to support a replacement facility. The use of the Carnegie, for the Remembrance Concert, the Archaeology Day, the Croydon Choir, the Family Learning Day and school plays, all within the last month, clearly demonstrates the need for such a venue.



We opened the Dad's Army museum for the Xmas lights which was covered by Anglia TV. Thanks go to all Society members who were involved in the fitting out and to those who have loaned/donated items. As many may have read, the idea of a statue of Captain Mainwaring has really caught the public imagination and given Thetford some media exposure for the right reasons. We have had the backing of the writers Perry & Croft and Arthur Lowe's grandson is behind the idea. We have already had some offers of support both monetary and in kind. If anyone wishes to donate to the fund please send donations to Thetford Town Council.

Plans are progressing for the 2009 Thomas Paine commemoration and the Society is playing a leading part with the organisation. Following the success of last year's Thomas Paine meal the Society is organising a similar one for 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2008.

The Tourist Information Centre has a Thetford calendar on sale priced £6.50. Telephone 820689 to reserve your copy.

## Future Activities

### Meetings

All at the United Reformed Church at 7.30pm unless stated

January 8<sup>th</sup>

History of Aviation in Norfolk

Stephen Pope

February 5<sup>th</sup>

History of Euston Estate

Ed Wortley

March 4<sup>th</sup>

Thetford Update

### Outings &

### Events

January 5<sup>th</sup>

Christmas Social -

Carnegie Room 7.30pm Cost £8

February 2<sup>nd</sup>

Thomas Paine Dinner, Bell Hotel.

Tickets £20 from Stuart Wright

Anyone interested in any of the outings or events please contact Danny Jeffrey unless stated otherwise (01842) 753770.

### Other Forthcoming Events in Thetford

February 2<sup>nd</sup>

Concert Club - Kamaris Singers -

United Reformed Church 7.30pm

March 23<sup>rd</sup>

Burrell Museum Miniature Engine

Rally 10am-4pm Somerfield Car Park.



## ACTIVITIES REPORT

### Meetings

At the AGM in September the committee were elected en bloc. The meeting was followed by John Weeks giving an overview of the proposed activities surrounding the bicentenary of the death of Thomas Paine in 2009. In October we were to have had an update on 'Moving Thetford Forward' however the speakers concerned were too busy so Danny Jeffrey gave an overview of the Growth Point Status enhanced by Mike Brindle and Stuart Wilson gave an update on the Abbey Barns situation. In November Geoff Hinchcliffe gave an excellent talk with slides on his visit to Antarctica and in December David Osborne spoke to us with his usual authority on 'Victorian' Thetford.

### Outings

The visit to the whisky distillery and the mechanical music museum was a great success.



The October trip to St Andrew's Hall for a symphony concert was cancelled due to lack of support but the trip to the House of Commons was very pleasing to those who went. The quiz and sausage supper in aid of EACH in November raised £200. Thanks to all who helped run the event. The December symphony concert was appreciated by the 24 people who attended.

## ENVIRONMENT

A planning application to demolish the Anchor has been tabled. The Healthy Living Centre is improving but there are still some accessibility issues especially for ambulances. The proposed transfer of play areas and WC's from Breckland to the Town Council has not yet been completed owing to the poor level of settlement offered by Breckland. No movement on the Bus Station and there is a possibility of closure of the toilets in the near future.



The Cottage Hospital site has seen some activity recently but no plans have yet been submitted and the Society would like to see the old building incorporated into any proposed scheme.

The Priory security fencing has been submitted to Breckland for planning permission. Work is supposed to start January. The Abbey Barns development plans were passed by Breckland and the Society and many residents and heritage organisations have written to the Secretary of State for a public enquiry into the plans for these nationally important buildings.

In White Hart Street, the plan for six apartments has been withdrawn but access alterations to the wall have been granted. A planning application to demolish the Candy Shop has been submitted but the proposed replacement of two shops with flats above is not in keeping with the adjoining printers or terraced houses. There are also reservations about the possible takeaway.

St Mary the Less continues to deteriorate and Breckland need to act in order to save this historic building. St Peter's is going through the first stages of redundancy and the Society is anxious that a suitable use can be found for this high profile building.

The Haling path has had a new surface of sorts laid, however the long term maintenance of this important pedestrian route continues to need attention. The upgrading of the access path across the allotments to the Norwich bound platform of the railway station should be completed in early 2008. Further access improvements are also being considered and these are welcomed by the Society.