

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The meeting with Breckland leaders in April certainly got the town buzzing and I believe it gave the opportunity to clear the air and hopefully allow some of our concerns to be acted upon. Following the meeting we had some minor remedial works carried out in the town, Trevor Holden has met with Serco to look at areas where an improved service could be delivered, there have been positive noises regarding taking the idea of a skatepark forward and we understand that the broken paving on the market place is to be replaced. A walking audit of signage is to take place later this month. Breckland will be holding a follow up meeting in October where it is hoped representatives of both the County and Town Councils will be present. In order to continue this positive momentum I would like to receive comments on areas where we would like Breckland to deliver an improved service. Clearly there are issues such as the Bus Station which are already being addressed through the Growth Point Work which I will talk a little more about later.

Another issue that arose at the Breckland meeting was the Bus Station toilets and following the meeting, Breckland have allowed those toilets to be reopened at the Town Council's expense whilst the Bus Station remains on that site. Unfortunately reopening cannot proceed until the water is reconnected by Anglian Water.



*Barnham Common - the site of the proposed football pitches*

The issue of football pitches on an area of Barnham Common has moved forward since our last newsletter. At the April Town Council meeting, a representative from Norfolk FA gave a presentation about possible schemes on the area previously used for football pitches. The Town Council were adamant that the area should not be deregistered as common land however, with the agreement of Charles Burrell School, a scheme for incorporating 'permanent' structures such as changing rooms, floodlights etc on their land, the prospect of pitches being reinstated onto the Common whilst allowing access to the public is a real possibility.

## Future Activities

### Meetings

All at the United Reformed Church at 7.30pm unless stated

Jul 1<sup>st</sup> Bess of Hardwick - Geoff Hancock

Jul 8<sup>th</sup> Thetford Growth Point - Richard Kay

Aug 5<sup>th</sup> To be advised

Sep 2<sup>nd</sup> AGM

### Outings

Jun 29<sup>th</sup> - Strawberry Tea - 3pm Cost £3.50. Entertainment by Norwich Road School Choir.

Jul 15<sup>th</sup> - 7pm: Thetford Society visit to Thetford Treasure at Ancient House -Free but numbers limited. Contact museum on 01842 752599.

Jul 30<sup>th</sup> - Provisional trip to RAF Museum at Honington preceded by a visit to the Tank Museum at Barnham & lunch at the Grafton Arms. Depart Bus Station 10am. Cost - Bus approx £10, Honington Free. Members to pay for their own lunch & entrance to Tank Museum. Please register interest before end of June.

Aug 2<sup>nd</sup> - Cromer Pier Show (matinee) Cost approx £24 including transport. Please register interest before end of June.

Oct 4<sup>th</sup> - If anyone is interested in going to 'La Boheme' (Cost £29.50) on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct or 'Tosca' (Cost £34) on 4<sup>th</sup> Oct at Norwich Theatre Royal please contact Danny a.s.a.p.

Nov 26<sup>th</sup> - Thursford Xmas Spectacular (Evening Performance) - Cost £38.50 including transport.

### Other Forthcoming Events in Thetford

Jul 5<sup>th</sup> - Cricket Club Ball - Tickets from Andy Gray 01842 764327.

Jul 27<sup>th</sup> - Dad's Army 40th Anniversary Event -Town Centre 10am - 4pm. Stewards, Volunteers, etc required. Contact Corinne Fulford Tel 07802701911).

Aug 9<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> - 'Upstairs Comes Down' Art Exhibition in the Guildhall.

Sep 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> - Heritage Open Days.

## ACTIVITIES REPORT

### Meetings

All meetings have been well attended and we have had interesting talks on a variety of subjects. A very professional talk was given Barbara Miller on Edith Cavell. David Robertson gave us a new insight into Anglo-Saxon towns and John Bloomfield gave us an interesting perspective on the Cold War.

### Outings

Trips to Ely, 'Cats' at the Theatre Royal and the Nunnery Stud were successful, but stately homes seem out of favour and the trips to Burghley and Hatfield were cancelled.



Mayor and Mayoress John and Lesley Harding

The Barbeque was a great success and £521 was raised for the St Nicholas Hospice. It was attended by the Mayor and Mayoress, John and Lesley Harding, with entertainment by the Breckland Handbell Ringers.



Breckland Handbell Ringers



As part of the Growth Point, the Thetford Area Action Plan has been produced. Residents will have six weeks from June 23rd to respond to the document, asking for their views on the development proposals and about the regeneration of the town centre and other infrastructure improvements for Thetford. Views will be sought on where to relocate the bus station and their opinions on health, parking, road infrastructure, education and community and leisure facilities.

The document will be available to view on Breckland Council's website, however residents will also receive leaflets asking them the same questions as the online document. The final Thetford Area Action Plan is set to be submitted to the Government in August 2009. Richard Kay, Principal Planning Officer for the Thetford Growth Point will address a Special Meeting of the Thetford Society on July 8th to present the document.

The tenders for the Castle Park play area have been received and are being assessed and an archaeological dig will commence upon removal of the old equipment.

You may have read that the subcommittee of the Society leading the Thomas Paine events for 2009 were successful in getting their £50,000 bid to the lottery agreed. There are still a few amounts of matched funding required to ensure the full programme of events can go ahead and anyone able to help in this respect should contact John Weeks on 01842 820060.



The gates of St Mary's Church

## ENVIRONMENT

The Society published a 'Listed Buildings Under Threat' article in *About Thetford* and this has been sent to English Heritage. English Heritage seems reluctant to take action over St Mary the Less even though they have a statutory responsibility in this regard. The church now has a 'For Sale by Auction' notice on the gates and we await proposals from the new owner.

Abbey Barns - the matter is now with the High Court which will decide whether there is a case to answer. If the Court decides there is a case then a Judicial Review will take place. Lately, most of the Barns' site has been put up for sale at £1.6m. Someone purchasing the site for this price would need to sell the 26 units (most of which are two bedroomed) for approximately £203,000 just to break even! Environment Committee members visited various new developments in order to assess their positive and negative aspects. A report of their observations will be sent to Breckland and the Growth Point Team for incorporation in the new design code being prepared for the town.

Following a well organised campaign, the Forestry Commission withdrew its proposals for gravel extraction and landfill for the Hockham/Wretham site. A battle continues over the Bridgham proposal

At our June meeting in conjunction with the Town Council we distributed a questionnaire on the River Corridor. Anyone with ideas about enhancing the River Corridor or wishing to volunteer for work parties should contact Marion Chapman-Allen on 01842 750700. You can also obtain a copy of the questionnaire from the Society's website.