

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The main talking point in the town about developments recently concerns the Academy 'Forum' site on the site of the Anchor Hotel and the new Bus Station in St Nicholas Street. Firstly I think I represent the consensus of opinion in that the Society is not against the idea of an Academy in an effort to improve educational standards in the town. The issue becomes less clear when the idea of a third site at the Anchor is introduced. It seems that because this site is earmarked for the 'Forum' then the bus station must move. Given that the bus station must move, the old 'Cosy Carpets' site is the only site left within walking distance of the town centre. This site needs to be designed to accommodate the needs of not only Thetford today but of Thetford with another 6,500 homes, larger buses and increased use of public transport (as we are told that will occur with Growth Point!) The current plans are to renovate the listed Cosy Carpets building as part of the scheme but to leave it as a shell with a use to be determined. I keep pressing that any new bus station needs to have toilet and refreshment facilities. If this means a café facility needs cross subsidy from other users of the building so be it, but what we don't want to end up with is a few bus stops and a 'burger van' parked up which I can see happening. If we are to move the bus station let us give the travelling public an improved offer and first impression of the town. Tim Edmunds of Norfolk County Council stated at the Thetford Neighbourhood Forum that the Thetford Society had been invited to the Bus Station steering group but had not yet attended. What was not pointed out was that the invite had only been given the day before the meeting and unfortunately we were unable to send a representative. Rest assured we will campaign to get the best facility possible from the steering group's deliberations. I think as a Society we welcome the idea of the listed building being repaired; however I know a number of members have asked why the owner hasn't been forced to repair it before the liability is met by the public purse. The renovated building will however present some opportunities for community use and we will be putting forward a number of suggestions.

Many members have spoken to me about the unsuitability of the Anchor for Academy use and I would like to point out I have relayed these messages on. What I try to do is represent the views of the membership to the powers that be. However, some involved in the process would like me to try and change the membership's views to allow the process to sail on unhindered, without giving the public the full picture.

The archaeological dig has been carried out on the Anchor site and the next stage will be the feasibility stage to convince the government to release funds for the Forum to be constructed. Whatever the result of the deliberations about the third town centre site, the Thetford Academy will open on the Burrell & Musker School sites from 1 September 2010. There is now a dedicated website up and running for those wanting more information about the Academy. [www.thetfordacademy.com](http://www.thetfordacademy.com)

A new Thomas Paine exhibition opened at the Burrell Museum in May and will run to the end of October. Admission free. The Burrell Museum is open every Tuesday and the last Saturday of the month. This exhibition was supported by

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## Future Activities

### Meetings

**All at the United Reformed Church at 7.30pm unless stated**

- July 6<sup>th</sup> The 'Norkies' - Ian Hingley
- Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> Elizabeth Truss MP
- Sept 7<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

### Outings

- Aug 7<sup>th</sup> Cromer Pier Show matinee booked. Contact Danny to reserve a place
- Aug 21<sup>st</sup> Summer Barbeque at Paul Clark's house

Anyone interested in events or trips please contact Danny Jeffrey (01842) 753770.

### Other Forthcoming Events in Thetford

- Jul 11 Phoenix Folk Group - King's House Gardens 2.30pm
- Aug 27 - Sep5<sup>th</sup> - Thetford Festival.



See [www.thetfordfestival.org.uk](http://www.thetfordfestival.org.uk) for programme

For details of the many other events in the town visit the calendar of events on:

[www.explorethetford.co.uk/events](http://www.explorethetford.co.uk/events)

or check in the About Thetford magazine.

# Activities Report

## Meetings

In April Rod Telfer gave an interesting talk about the moon. The not too distant past in Norfolk was brought to life by David Grimes in May and in June our very own David Osborne gave a talk at the last minute on Thetford's old Inns & Public Houses. The talk by Claire Treadwell on her ride through India will now take place in December.

## Outings & Events

The visit to the Ancient House Museum for their 'Moving Stories' exhibition was well received. The spring Cheese & Wine was a great success, raising £250 for St Nicholas Hospice, special thanks to Corinne Brindle for her help & David Freeman on keyboard. The Strawberry Tea was also successful with good weather & entertainment by Martyn Williams. Thanks due to all who helped.



## ENVIRONMENT

*St Mary the Less* - the building failed to sell at auction and Breckland have finally issued an emergency works notice on the owner to make the building watertight and stop further deterioration. The previous planning permission for residential use has expired and the owner has reapplied using the previous plans, presumably to make the building more saleable. *The Bell* has recently undergone some long overdue decoration and the *Thomas Paine Hotel* is undergoing a major refurbishment.

Digby Smith and our volunteers have been busy improving the *River Corridor* through the town, cutting back invasive undergrowth & highlighting issues to be addressed. Anyone wishing to join in should contact Digby Smith on (01842) 760369.

The proposed merger of Breckland Council & South Norfolk Council has been called off & the proposed unitary council for Norwich has been shelved leaving us with the status quo with regard to local government in the county. For those wishing to report matters of concern the Community Ranger's Handbook gives useful information who to contact for graffiti, lighting & litter problems. Download from:

[www.breckland.gov.uk/community\\_rangers\\_a-z\\_handbook\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://www.breckland.gov.uk/community_rangers_a-z_handbook_low_res.pdf)  
or contact Breckland on (01362) 656870 for more information about becoming a Community Ranger.



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the Thomas Paine 200 Legacy Committee, a sub-committee of the Thetford Society.

The Captain Mainwaring statue was unveiled during June and a Dad's Army stage show in the preceding week was well received. Thanks to all Society members for their support. The statue attracted nationwide media coverage despite the lack of interest shown from *Look East*. The following week the Thetford was again the centre of attention for the homecoming parade of troops based at RAF Honington.

The 2011 Thetford Society calendar featuring local views by local artists from the Thetford Arts Centre will be available at the AGM. The Charles Burrell & Dad's Army Museums are looking for volunteers to help out, if you can assist contact Corinne Fulford on 07802 701911, no previous experience necessary.

The Thetford Tourism & Heritage Partnership (TTHP) is co-ordinating a Thetford Festival from 27<sup>th</sup> August - 5<sup>th</sup> September. Many groups will be delivering their own events during the festival period with the TTHP providing an umbrella to promote the festival. For more information contact David Brooks on (01842) 751975.

Finally, a reminder that subscriptions are due on 1<sup>st</sup> September. If you were able to bring a cheque along to the AGM this would be greatly appreciated by our Membership Secretary, Mrs Pat Pearson.