

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The recent outcry in the letters pages of the local press prompts me to update members on a few issues. The reinstatement of football pitches on the area of Barnham Common would I think be generally supported however as part of the scheme it was proposed to put structures, fences, etc on the land which would have required for the area concerned to be deregistered as common land. There is no reason why a lesser scheme of reinstatement without the fencing could not be pursued in the short term, as clearly we have a demand for more pitches within the town. However in order to utilise the FA funding on offer, long term, a suitable secure site elsewhere will need to be identified. The Town Council is in the process of taking over the responsibility for the toilets in Cage Lane & Castle Park from Breckland. The toilets at the Bus Station have been closed by Breckland. The whole Bus Station question drifts on and as part of the Growth Point money recently allocated one of the priorities is to look at a replacement Bus Station. So, yes a replacement facility is still being talked about however I think we will still be talking years, rather than months before we have a facility that can be called a Bus Station. Meanwhile travellers in need will be asked to hold on.



Castle Park, Thetford

The replacement of the Castle Park play area is slowly moving forward with the bulk of the finance in place. The designs for the scheme have yet to be decided upon and due to the sensitive nature of the site an archaeological dig will be required.

The Town Council's decision to close the Tourist Information Centre in the town came as a disappointment to all in the Society who have been trying to promote the town's tourist potential. The offer of local travel agents, *2newhorizons*, to host a tourist information facility at their site next to the Post Office is to be welcomed and we wish them well.

As the town continues to expand there is a growing importance for residents' associations campaigning on specific issues in their locale. I would urge Society members to join their local group and give them the support that they need.

The Society is taking the lead in the Thomas Paine events being proposed for 2009 to mark the bicentennial of his death. A dedicated website [www.tompaine200.org.uk](http://www.tompaine200.org.uk) has been set up to keep those interested up to date. I have been approached to organise an event to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dad's Army. We have pencilled in Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July for some activities around Market Place and School Lane areas and anyone with ideas, offers of support should contact me on 01842 754166.

## Future Activities

### Meetings

All at the United Reformed Church at 7.30pm unless stated

Apr 1<sup>st</sup> The real Edith Cavell - Barbara Miller

May 6<sup>th</sup> Anglo Saxon Towns - Mr Robertson

Jun 3<sup>rd</sup> To be confirmed

### Outings

Mar 29<sup>th</sup> Trip to Ely - Dep Bus Station 10am Cost £9

Apr 17<sup>th</sup> 'Cats', Theatre Royal, Norwich- Dep Bus Station 6.15pm Cost approx £30

*This is provisional and those interested should contact Danny immediately - 753770*

Apr 26<sup>th</sup> Burghley House - Dep Bus Station 8am Cost approx £9

May 9<sup>th</sup> Hatfield - Dep Bus Station 10am Cost approx £9

May 17<sup>th</sup> Barbecue - The Watermill, 12 St Audreys (courtesy of Paul Clark) with entertainment by the Breckland Hand Bell Ringers

### Other Forthcoming Events in Thetford

Mar 23<sup>rd</sup> Burrell Museum Miniature Engine Rally 10am-4pm Somerfield Car Park.

Apr 19<sup>th</sup> Thetford Concert Club - St George's Day Concert, Carnegie Room 7.30pm

Jun 7<sup>th</sup> Thetford Concert Club - Red Beans & Rice Jazz, Carnegie Room 7.30pm

## ACTIVITIES REPORT

### Meetings

We have had some very professional and entertaining talks from Stephen Pope on Aviation in Norfolk and Ed Wortley on the History of Euston Estate. Neil Stott updated us about Keystone Development Trust in March.

### Outings

The Christmas buffet in the Carnegie Room was a great social success. The Thomas Paine Dinner at the Bell was attended by 40 people and the first



*Thomas Paine Hotel*

proprietor of the Thomas Paine Hotel gave a witty and entertaining speech. John Weeks updated those present on the plans for 2009.

A list of potential outings was given out at the Christmas Social to gauge support. As a consequence trips to King's Lynn, Hadleigh, Felbrigg & Sheringham, London and Harwich will not run.



*EDP Printworks*

The first trip of the year was to the EDP printworks in Norwich. Eighteen of us attended and found it interesting.

## ENVIRONMENT

**N**orfolk County Council has recently announced a list of proposed waste landfill and gravel extraction sites. We have until 28th March to comment on the proposed sites. Locally the Hockham & Wretham action group are opposed to a quarry & landfill site and have a useful website [www.hawitage.co.uk](http://www.hawitage.co.uk) which may be of interest to members wishing to object to the plans or to learn of the sites in our area.

**Healthy Living Centre:** Some Out-Patients' services have been transferred from West Suffolk to the Healthy Living Centre. The Centre lacks signage as NCC policy is not to sign non-A&E health centres, however we are hopeful that this may be addressed in the near future.

**Planning Issues:** William Nunn has been contacted regarding the access and safety issues arising from parking problems on Kilverstone Grange.

Committee members are due to visit various new developments with a view to report back on best practice at the sites in order to feed into the design code which is being drafted for the new developments under Growth Point.



*View of St Mary the Less*

**Listed Buildings under threat:** With a non-action response from the District's Conservation Officer the problems have now been referred to English Heritage. In particular, the sorry state of St. Mary the Less needs to be addressed.

**Growth Point Status/LDF:** the committee made on-line comments and were represented at the Consultation 'Day' (four hours to determine the future of Thetford!).

**Vernacular Building Survey:** As part of the Growth Point plans we are hoping that this can be carried out in conjunction with the Breckland Society.

**Abbey Barns' site:** following many representations from local individuals, our Society and national bodies, the Secretary of State still refused to hold a public inquiry by calling in the application. GO-East are withholding (in the public's interest!) an internal memo which relates to the site, which makes everyone suspicious of the process of calling in applications. A case is now being prepared for a judicial review.