



SOUTHWELL CIVIC SOCIETY

Newsletter - October 2011



40 YEARS WORKING TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF SOUTHWELL

We celebrated our 40th Birthday on Saturday 16 July. The day turned out to be wild and windy and the proposed Garden Party in Brendan Haigh's garden was quickly moved to the Old Courthouse. Early reports, documents and drawings were on display illustrating the hard work put in over the last four decades. The above drawings by Christine Measures were used to campaign against demolition in Westhorpe and establish the conservation area.

The last year has seen no new major housing schemes put forward; nevertheless the Society has been working hard to put together a strong case against the proposed wind turbines at Brackenhurst. The objection has been strictly on planning grounds, especially the overbearing nature of the turbines and the effect on our unique historic heritage. We are supported in our view by both English Heritage and Newark and Sherwood Council's own conservation officer. The National Trust has expressed its concern over the effect on the setting of the workhouse. The university's heritage consultant enthusiastically acknowledges the high quality of our historic landscape but then says the detrimental effect is only temporary as the turbines are only designed for twenty five years. The decision by NSDC is not expected before Christmas.

The future of the old school site in Church Street remains unresolved. We have just received the latest archaeological mitigation strategy; however, this does not alter our views and we continue to object to the scheme. On the positive side we have contributed £1,000 so that the Town Council, the Local History Society and SCAG can purchase the parcel of land known as The Orchard which is bordered by the archbishop's palace the dean's garden, the development site and the playing fields. It is under this land that most of the known mosaics are located. We have contributed £110 to apply for planning permission to develop the school site and orchard area into a Roman Heritage Park. This is a joint submission by The Southwell Local History Society, SCAG, The Southwell Heritage Trust and ourselves. We aim to demonstrate there are better uses for the site than housing.

Sadly this year we have lost two of our prominent members; David Measures and Sir Frederick Warner, both national and international figures in their own fields, attracting full page tributes in the national press. David was a driving force in the founding of the Society, and a personal tribute by Peter Cartwright is included in this newsletter.

Our work to influence the shape of our town continues. Once again we are being consulted on the District Council's proposals for the development of Southwell over the next fifteen years. The Allocations & Development Management Options Report has been published showing proposed new housing and industrial sites, and areas to be protected from development.

Barry Austen, our social secretary, is resigning this year after over ten years' service. Barry has organised a remarkable programme of wide ranging talks and visits which have been thoroughly enjoyed by all who have taken part in them. We thank Barry most sincerely for all he has contributed to the Society.

Mike Struggles, Chairman

Social Events 2010/11

We started the year with an excellent talk by Andrew Parsons entitled "Farming with Wildlife", beautifully illustrated by his wonderful slides of the wildlife he has attracted to his farm by leaving uncultivated strips around his fields. This was followed in February by "House Detectives" a talk by retired county archivist Adrian Henstock on how to research historic buildings and in particular your own home.

In March we travelled to Loughborough to visit Taylors Bell Foundry famous for casting "Great Paul" in St Paul's Cathedral, which at over 16 tonnes, is the largest bell in the British Isles. The Foundry is one of only two remaining bell foundries left in Britain. We were very warmly welcomed, and in the first part of the visit we were taken by knowledgeable guides round the museum and factory to gain an understanding of the history of the bell-making process. We then visited the tuning shop where the castings were machined to give the bells their correct notes.

The highlight of the visit was to be present during the casting of a bell. The mould had been previously made from a mixture of sand with high clay content with chopped hay and horse manure for binding. The bell metal had been heated to 1200 °c. The white-hot liquid was stirred with a willow pole to remove pockets of gas, and bring impurities to the top, transferred from the furnace and poured into the mould to form the bell. It would take three to four days for the bell to cool. "Great Paul" took two weeks. The members felt very privileged to visit this historic factory to witness a craft which has changed little over the centuries and still survives in our modern global economy.



We discovered that it was not necessary to travel far afield to experience our next very enjoyable and stimulating visit. The destination was the Brackenhurst campus of Nottingham Trent University (NTU).

The visit started with a brief talk by Rob Wall about the history of Brackenhurst as a private house and its association with the Allenby family. The estate was acquired by Nottinghamshire County Council as an agricultural college in the 1950s before becoming NTU's School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences.

The Society members were shown the work being carried out to restore the beautiful Edwin Lutyens-style gardens to their former glory, before embarking on a tractor tour of the farm

and facilities. This included a tour of the new animal and veterinary science building, where veterinary nurses can gain experience on the treatment and care of a whole variety of creatures great and small, was hosted by lecturer Kat Cooper.

The visit concluded with a walk along the Halloughton Dumble to see how tree planting and leaving uncultivated margins around the fields had greatly encouraged an increasing variety of wildlife to inhabit the estate.

The final visit of the year was to our own Minster School. We were pleased that Rafael Marks the project architect came from London to talk about the design process and the factors which had influenced both the concept of the building and the construction details. This made the tour much more meaningful, not only for our members but also for the excellent student guides. The many ex-teachers and school governors who were in the party were very envious of the marvellous facilities and the wonderful teaching environment which the staff and pupils now enjoy and are able to share with the wider community.

Allocations & Development Management Options Report.

Newark and Sherwood District Council have just issued this report for consultation. It is effectively the structure plan up to 2026 and importantly details where it is anticipated that new houses will be built in the town. The Society will formally respond. If you wish to send in your own comments full details can be found on www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/planningpolicy. Closing date for comment is 24th November 2011.

David Measures



Artist – Naturalist, Civic Society Committee Member

Some personal memories.

My friend and colleague David Measures, who has died aged 73, was an extraordinary character and artist. His practice was highly creative in its movement between very particular, distinctive depictions of his experience of wildlife, and painting numerous extended series of landscape watercolours.

His work - drawing and painting - was an intense, obsessive engagement. Among a large number of working locations was one particular place that meant a great deal to him, Cressbrook Dale in the Peak District. A deep wooded part of the dale inspired in him an evolving creative response to the changing seasons, the weather, colour and light. There was often an interplay of abstraction and representation in his later works.

David was eventually making weekly visits to Cressbrook Dale and would be out working in almost all weathers. David produced a number of books, particularly about his investigation of butterflies. However, one of his most revealing pieces of writing about his way of working is an article, *Closely-observed Creatures*, which he wrote for – SECOND NATURE, edited by Richard Mabey, back in 1984. Here is a short quote – *"In zero temperatures you can no longer use fingers for painting. A clip-on water pot and a brush are needed. At dusk, when the frost tightens its grip, each dip of the brush into the pot reglazes it and each application to the paper sheds less and less of its colour load. You need to work fast to get your effect before the brush is clogged like a mop and the water pot choked with ice. Once home the frozen painting must be left in the coldest part of the house to dry slowly, for if you take it into a warm room, the layers of coloured ice melt and merge into a flood."*

My first memory of David was in 1965 when I was waiting for my job interview at Nottingham College of Art & Design; he peered round the door to observe the "cache" of interviewees. From that time we taught together for nearly thirty years. David was very curious and was constantly questioning. This was very evident in his teaching and particularly in his concern for the visual environment and the environment in general.

We visited David and Christine in their cottage in Westhorpe in 1966, an experience that inspired our move to Southwell in 1968. This was at a time when areas of old buildings were still intact, but regarded by the planners as unfit and in need of redevelopment for social housing. David's involvement with the Civic Society was from its beginning. I remember him telling me about the threat to Sunnyside and Westhorpe Cottages, to replace them with H-block flats. This threat led to a meeting at David and Christine's house. This first meeting included Norman Summers, Martin Duffy, Bill Joynson, Peter O'Mally, and others. Norman Summers said that the only thing to do was to form a civic society – Bill Joynson became chairman. As part of the campaign to save the unique environment of Westhorpe, David produced written comments and Christine made a series of drawings of the areas under threat. As a result of this campaign, Westhorpe became the first conservation area in the county.

Another significant memory I have of David's active involvement with the Civic Society, is of our - David Measures, Giorgio Ceccarelli, Peter Cartwright, production of the large book of photographs, and detailed information about the Southwell conservation areas. This was our contribution to the 'European Architectural Heritage Year - 1974'. We attempted to be as comprehensive as possible in photographing the buildings. It was necessary to take some photos above ground level, and my memory of David is of him perched on top of an 'Austin Mini' with the tripod taking the shots as Giorgio Ceccarelli drove slowly from building to building. David always had a great sense of balance.

As a long term, highly supportive committee member, David held passionate and individual views about planning and conservation. In Civic Society meetings he would always express his own distinct opinion on planning and any issues discussed, and although keen on appropriate conservation, he was also supportive of good contemporary architecture.

A gentle, thoughtful, generous and yet determined character, he had an idiosyncratic sense of humour. His determination, strength of character and optimism enabled him in spite of his long illness, to continue with his art and writing, and his wider involvements. David's wife Christine has been a constant, dedicated support to him over the long period of his illness. He will be missed enormously by everyone who knew him.

Peter Cartwright



Southwell Civic Society Museum

The museum was opened on Sat 25 April 1971 by the Bishop of Southwell. With him is Peter Kent, Chairman of the Society. The first exhibition which traced the history of Southwell's pubs and breweries was organised by Mrs Marilyn Varley who lived at The Shoulder of Mutton.

Over the next nine years, nineteen exhibitions were staged often with other organisations such the Minister School and the Scouts and Guides.

The museum was situated in the King Street car park which had been an outbuilding associated with the White Swan. The subjects were diverse including Mills and Baking, Victorian Water Supplies, Southwell Fashions up to 1930, Southwell Industries past and Present and Byron's Southwell. The last exhibition Southwell Old and New was held in 1990.

Photographs loaned and given for these exhibitions formed the basis of the Society's photographic collection.

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Planning Report

We have been consulted on 113 planning applications during the past year. No objections or comments were raised on the vast majority.

There were four planning applications submitted on behalf of Southwell Diocese for alterations at Dunham House, Westgate. We supported the demolition of the old toilet block and the 1960s office extensions. We were in favour of the conversion of Dunham House into six residential units. We were not happy, however, with the proposed new office block. The building was much higher than had been expected, and we were concerned that this new building would adversely affect residential properties both on Westgate and on Lowes Wong.

We objected to 56 photovoltaic panels being attached to the south aisle roof of Holy Trinity Church. The Church is an important grade 2 listed building in the Conservation Area, The installation of the panels would be a detriment, in visual terms, to the prominent south elevation of the church, and the installation runs the risk of seriously damaging the fabric of this historic building. The application was refused, however a planning appeal is pending. By contrast, we made no objection to NTU's application to completely cover the Brackenhurst Equestrian Centre roof with photovoltaic panels, which were on an industrial style building and not in a prominent position.

We were of the opinion that to build two houses in the garden of Zenor, on Halam Road would be too intensive a use of the land, and that the new houses would overlook neighbouring properties which are situated in the Conservation Area. The application was approved by the District Council.

The Newcastle Arms public house in Station Road has been renamed "The Final Whistle". It is an "Unlisted Building of Local Interest". We objected to the proposed new decorative fascia for the main entrance. We asked that the existing brick finish should be retained.

We were concerned that the lovely view enjoyed of Cranfield House on Church Street could be spoiled if cars and vehicles were to be parked in front of this splendid example of a Queen Anne house. It was proposed that the ground floor should be converted from residential to professional office use.

Boots has moved into Harris & Sons furniture shop in King Street. We opposed the proposed signage. The large fascia sign to be painted "Boots" blue would be far too garish and too dominant in this narrow street in the Conservation Area. A district council policy says "Signs which use excessively bright or intrusive colour schemes or reflective synthetic materials should not be used in Conservation Areas." Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in our approach to Boots to persuade them to adopt a similar approach adopted in other heritage towns by painting the fascia cream and not using any plastic materials. On the other hand we had a better response with the Co-op's proposal for a tall bright green internally illuminated plastic totem sign and the removal of some of the new trees. This was achieved by talking to their head office and more particularly with the local manager who was in complete agreement with us.

The Society has submitted a long and detailed response to NSDC recommending refusal of the Brackenhurst wind turbines. This is available on our website.

Visit our new improved website for all the latest news and planning decisions

www.southwellcivicsociety.com