

CHURCHGATE AREA ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No 64 Autumn 2019

The Association promotes the interests of all residents and businesses, not only in Churchgate Street, but also in the general area of all those streets that lead off it.

www.churchgateassoc.org.uk

EDITOR: Nick Law. For future articles, comments, etc. please contact nicklaw1@hotmail.com

**The AGM will be held on Friday 25 October 2019 in
the Unitarian Meeting House, Churchgate Street at 7.00pm.**

**Peter Riddington, local resident and semi-retired architect with Douglas
Insall Associates, will give an illustrated talk on**

The Domestic Architecture of Bury St. Edmunds

Peter will talk about the changing designs of residential buildings in the town from the earliest days to the 21st Century, explaining how changes in technology, fashion and societal needs have affected the way buildings look. He will also talk about how to identify the age of buildings from their forms and details.

Wine and canapés will be served after the meeting

If you have anything that you particularly wish to discuss please email Vivien on

vgf.masongill@gmail.com or telephone 01284 750887 so that we can include your observations

New Parking Spaces now in sight

I told you about our February walkabout in our last newsletter – it is now August and we are starting to see some progress. County Highways have been round our streets again and confirmed 35 of the additional spaces identified in February. They are: Churchgate (2), Chequer Square (4), Whiting Street (2), College Street (3), Bridewell Lane (1), Westgate (8) and Friars Lane (15).

The next steps are:

- Residents bordering those spaces to be notified by letter and have 21 days to reply
- Work to then take place to remove yellow lines and mark out spaces
- Certain single yellow lines to be changed to double
- Signs to be changed to indicate residents' parking from 8am to 8pm (presently 6pm)

Our thanks go to County Councillor, David Nettleton, and the officers at West Suffolk District Council for moving this forward for us.

You will have noticed that the existing yellow lines in our streets have been overpainted (except for Whiting Street). This is because the police, especially the Town Council funded PCSOs, have had a recent push in issuing tickets to those parking on yellow lines. We await CPE (Civil Parking Enforcement) for this to become truly efficient as it would then become the duty of the council traffic wardens, who are in our streets every day, to enforce yellow-line parking. After much delay, we hear that this CPE order should go before Parliament in October for implementation in January.

Alan Broadway

Litter Picking Kits

West Suffolk Council are offering FREE Litter Picking kits to anyone (whilst stocks last) wishing to help keep our area clear of litter. Please contact Andrew Harvey at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/lwyl/arrangelitterpick.cfm.

The Nearly Festival

The CAA has received a letter from Jo Rayner, one of our West Suffolk Councillors, detailing findings from a report by the Councils' Environmental Health Officers. The conclusion was that "the 2019 Nearly Festival did not constitute a Statutory Noise Nuisance." Therefore, in future "the Council is minded to organise and manage events of this type in the Abbey Gardens under the terms of the approved Operational Procedures."

Membership Renewals October 2019

The CAA membership year runs from October. If you don't pay already by standing order, you can renew your membership at the AGM on October 25th. Membership remains at £3 for the year to October 2020. If you are not coming to the AGM, you can renew by sending membership fees to the Secretary, Judy Broadway, 68 Whiting Street. Please make cheques out to the Churchgate Area Association. I have standing order forms if you wish to use these. judy@jbbroadway.co.uk 01284 724034

Three New Businesses in the Grid In Langton Place: Milly's Tea Room and Woosters Bakery. In Whiting Street: Abigail Hayden's Hairdressing Salon

11 High Baxter Street, its Known History and Importance, by Peter Riddington

Historical Background

High Baxter Street was a part of the Norman layout of the town, created by Abbot Baldwin in the 12th Century. So the building on the site now is almost certainly not the primary construction. It is likely that by the late medieval period the street was built up with buildings along the pavement edge and probably with their first floors cantilevering with jettying.

From site evidence by the late 15th C the current house was built apparently always with a first floor and probably two rooms on the ground floor. High Baxter Street would have been occupied by

people who were reasonably well off but probably tradespeople or craftsmen, ideally located adjacent to the market square, but also likely to trade from their premises.

By the late 19th C the street buildings had probably been either rebuilt or, as in the case of No11, heavily remodelled and extended to accommodate workshops and service buildings, such as livery stables, supporting the local population and businesses.

The Known History of the House

From site evidence the house was altered considerably in the late 16th/ early 17th Century when it was remodelled and the attic converted to habitable accommodation. It was further altered in the later 18th/ early 19th Century, so it was apparently still in reasonably affluent occupation.

By the mid 19th Century it seems to have been in multiple occupancy of tradespeople. According to the Rate Books and Census Returns between 1831 and 1841 the house was occupied by Richard and Mary Kemp, who seem to have shared the building with others including the Reffell family (with five children) in 1841. Richard Kemp was a Livery Stable Keeper but it is not known if the stables were on the site of the house, this could explain why the site evidence suggests there was a passage from the front to the rear.

This 1851 census records the Reffell family still in occupation with Samuel (pipe maker) and Elizabeth by now having eight children.

By the late 1960s High Baxter Street had been largely demolished and the historic buildings all removed except No 11. 1970 was the year that the house was bought by the Suffolk Hotel, who were in Buttermarket, they used the house for staff accommodation. They undertook thoroughgoing 'modernisation' of the house covering up most of the building's historic fabric and fitting it out with modern joinery and finishes.

The Significance of the House in its Context

In terms of the Town Centre Conservation Area and High Baxter Street in particular the historic and architectural interest the building's fabric exhibits is of major significance. It is the last remnant of what had been an almost continuous terrace of buildings from the late middle ages onwards until mass clearance of the 1960s. While there remain historic buildings at the extremities of the street this is the last historic building between on the West side of the street and a reminder of the very mixed nature of buildings and their uses in the town centre from the very earliest days right up to modern times. In some ways that the building illustrates quite how much was lost during the 1960's clearances makes it significant.

The Significance of the House

The building itself is a palimpsest. It is not an architectural statement of any significant quality but, rather, it is an extremely old structure which exhibits its history to those who are prepared to study it, but also give significant hints of its origins even in passing. It is clearly a very old building; it needs further interest to discover its most special qualities. The building's history is not remarkable, there have been no events or people of particular interest associated with the house but, rather, the building has been occupied for good or bad by a mixture of people who until more recent years Jane Austen might have described as of the 'middling' type. But these people had their effect on the fabric, not in any grand manner, but in ways which allow us now to enjoy the history of the building through its fabric and plan forms. It has no particular historic interest, excepting of course it tells a long and complicated historical story, but special interest it certainly has:

- It has a core and significant historical fabric and plan form dating from the late 15th Century.
- The building was changed significantly in the late 16th or early 17th Century when the attic was converted, and staircases and chimney stacks were added and much of this fabric survives.
- In the late 18th or early 19th Centuries there was further remodelling and the first floor layout still survives from this period.

There were other changes from the late 19th/ early 20th Centuries when changes were made in particular to the staircase from the ground to the first floor and a rear extension was rebuilt. Fabric of this period added little to the interest of the building and has no particular quality in itself. Finally, there were even more fundamental changes effected in the 1970s when the building was converted to multiple occupancy. None of those changes are of special interest and in many ways served to hide much of the historic fabric. Only one thing survives of any interest from this most recent period of use and that is a 'folk art' panel of no great artistic quality but, at least, providing a reminder that even in adversity the artistic spirit can survive.

The Future

The Bury Town Trust intend to restore the house for residential use and are looking at ways to raise funds for the works locally. If you would like to get involved in any way please do contact Peter Riddington. P.riddington@outlook.com

Robert Blandy RIP 02.11.1924-06.02.2019. Late of Greyfriars, Whiting Street

Robert was born in Chelsea; the youngest of three children. He was sent to The Old Malt House prep school in Swanage and then to Eton following in the footsteps of his father and brother.

He briefly entered Cambridge to study Politics but quickly realised that science based courses were more to his liking and then joined the Navy in 1943. Before long he was in Scarpa Flow aboard the destroyer HMS Walker and on the Arctic run to Archangel in Russia.

He worked on a tomato farm in Hampshire, and then enrolled at Wye College to study horticulture. Within the first year he met the love of his life Elizabeth Hyde-Smith, known to many as Jane. He described meeting her like winning the football pools and they were married in September 1949 in Worlington church, his parents-in-law owning Worlington Hall.

Robert pursued his chosen profession as an agronomist and worked at Research Stations in Kent and Bristol. The opportunity arose to join the Colonial Service in Kenya researching pineapples for canning and green beans for export back to the UK. Kenya had looked like a secure post but the rise of the Mau-Mau led Robert sleeping with a pistol under the bed: not the best place to bring up a family.

Robert and his family jumped at the opportunity of a posting in Burma in 1962 assisting in the cultivation of apples and pears. They loved the rich culture and friendly people; but, unfortunately, an

army coup led to a rapid return to the UK in 1964. On returning to Britain he found a post at the Ministry of Agriculture in Bury St Edmunds near to his in-laws who were now living at Greyfriars.

He was appointed a Horticultural advisor on soft fruits, becoming the first vine expert for East Anglia when grapes were reintroduced as a crop in 1976. This was when Robert and Jane moved into Greyfriars. He pursued an active life gardening and propagating plants for the Royal Physic Garden, and for over thirty years he opened Greyfriars for the Hidden Gardens of Bury. He was a judge for the hanging baskets for Bury in Bloom and contributed to many other community projects.

He was an eternal optimist, his glass was always half full saying on more than one occasion that every day he woke up he saw it as a bit of a bonus. He had a large group of friends who always remember him as ready to participate in fun and laughter. He and his friends lived on the mantra, "Use it or lose it" playing bridge, badminton and tennis, finally hanging up his racket at 89.

His daughter had to ban him from using the ladder when he reached 90 only to find him balancing on a chair placed in a wheel barrow!

Robert loved living in Greyfriars and took care of it as a base for family and friends to enjoy. We will always remember Robert as a kind, modest, good-natured gentleman of the highest order.

He will be greatly missed.

(This is an edited version of the Eulogy given by Richard Blandy at Robert's funeral service in Worlington on 22 March this year.)

Campaign For Real Ale (CAMRA) Award

Earlier this year Liz and Tony Fayers from The Rose and Crown pub on the corner of Whiting and Westgate Streets were awarded the **Special Award for Long Service** by CAMRA. In addition, the pub has been awarded the **Suffolk Pub of the Year** for 2019 and has been a long standing entry in The Good Beer Guide.



This is in no short measure to the work of a couple who have held the tenancy continuously since 1986, some thirty four years ago. However, the story does not start there as Liz's parents were the tenants for eleven years prior to that having taken over The Rose and Crown when Greene King closed The Old

Angel pub in College Street. As Liz and Tony had been working shifts for her parents, whilst holding down day jobs, it seemed an effortless move to take over the tenancy when her parents retired.

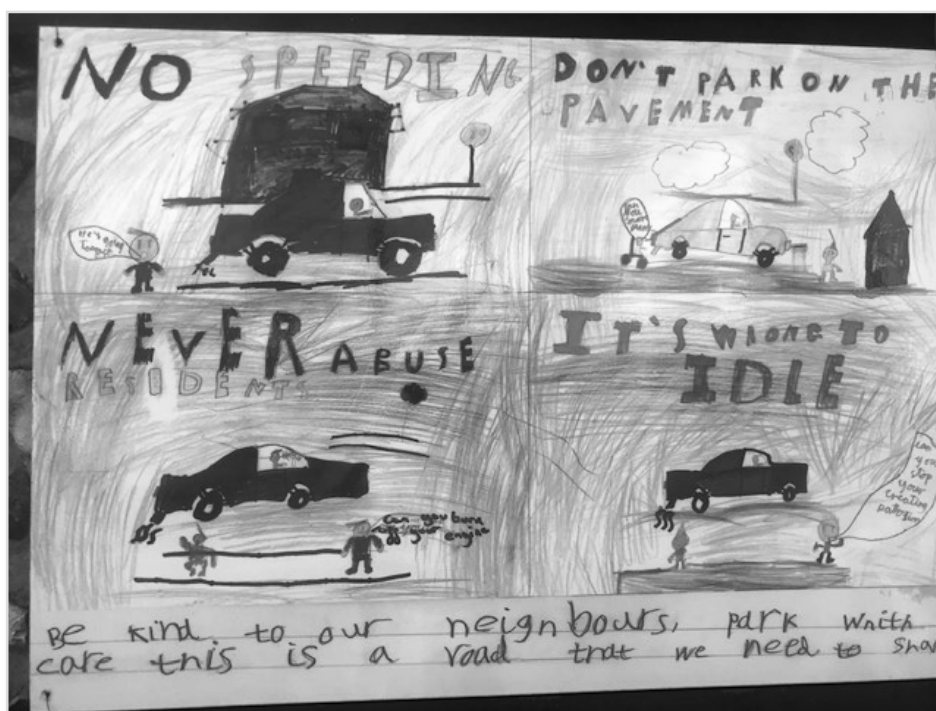
They have always resisted Greene King's wish to see the interior updated and so no changes have taken place since 1986. Their belief is that customers wish to see the pub retain its old world charms which can be so sadly missing in many other establishments. Without doubt, the Rose and Crown is a true 'local' and is a pub that its regulars seem keen to keep that way. No TV or loud music, just dominoes, darts, crib and chat as it has always been.

However, both Liz and Tony admit that these are testing times in the pub trade, particularly with the availability of cheap alcohol in the supermarkets and the overall change in drinking habits. The rise of the coffee shop culture for socialising must also play its part. Liz and Tony have not regretted a moment in their thirty four years tenancy and when asked about some of their customers Liz would wryly remark "all our customers make us happy - some for coming and some for going."

Liz and Tony retire in September but CAA members, whether regulars or not, will wish them every happiness in their well deserved retirement. Naturally, they plan to stay in Bury.

Request for Children's Books

Do you have any spare children's books in good condition? The Guildhall Feoffment Primary School in Bridewell Lane has a comprehensive library but is also keen to enhance its collection on offer to children. If you can help please email the Editor, nicklaw1@hotmail.com, and he will collect from you. Thank you.



A LAMINATED POSTER FOR ALL PARENTS TO SEE OUTSIDE THE GUILDHALL FEOFFMENT SCHOOL IN BRIDEWELL LANE.

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