



Newsletter June/July 2012



Please confess your e-mail addresses!

Some members will be receiving this newsletter by e-mail. The hike in postage charges in April means that we need to maximise its distribution by this means. So if you have received this as hard copy but have e-mail please let our membership secretary, **Ian Webb**, know your e-mail address. His e-mail is napier_nimbus@btinternet.com. There are additional benefits – we can notify you of late changes of speaker for instance or additional events in the Civic Society calendar. We give a firm undertaking not to release your email to any other party.

Apethorpe House visit

Our planned visit to **Apethorpe House** on 11th July proved very popular indeed. All 24 places were taken for the 3.30pm tour and a further earlier tour was also organised. If you would have liked to have gone but couldn't make the 11th, you can book a place on another tour by contacting English Heritage on 0870 3331181 or e-mailing customers@english-heritage.org.uk. Tours are run on Wednesday, Friday and Saturdays during the summer.



Plans for Bridge Street

Following the felling of some of the trees in Bridge Street, an action which your committee did not oppose (as letting in more light to street level and enabling the buildings to be more easily seen), we learned in April of plans to implement the latest phase of 'Public Realm' improvements there too. In addition to repaving and replacing street furniture, we understand that cycle parking facilities are to be removed from Bridge Street and resited in side streets where they would be less visible. We wrote to the Leader of the Council to oppose this part of the scheme as contrary to the Council's 'cycle city' claims. We also suggested that the cycle ban be lifted since a mingling of cyclists and pedestrians is proven to work well in many other cities.

Cllr Cereste replied explaining that the relocation of the cycle racking would reduce congestion on Bridge Street and keep the space available for other functions in the City Centre. He argued that the locations being chosen would be highly visible. With regard to lifting the cycle ban, he said, "This is not something I could support. We have had too many instances of incidents between cyclists and pedestrians even with a ban in place for me to have any confidence that any change would be effective."



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Progress with 'Peterborough and its villages in Detail'

Our joint project with Peterborough Photographic Society is progressing well. Some 3000 photographs have been taken from which about 500 are being selected. Henry Duckett is devising a text which gives a narrative to each topic (doors, windows, carvings etc.), Toby Wood is doing an excellent job managing the picture files and Peter Lee and David Jost have editing roles. As we go along some additional photography has inevitably been necessary to fill in gaps and great care is being taken to ensure accuracy and the best possible finished product.



Over 300 books have been pre-sold to subscribers at the special pre-publication price of £16. This offer has now closed with grateful thanks to all who have subscribed and in so doing enabled us to complete the funding of the cost of printing. That said, Tony Knighton is collecting names, addresses (and cheques!) from anyone who wishes to order a book for £18 at this stage.

Whilst good progress is being made, the scale of the project has meant that the original launch date notified to subscribers has had to be changed. A new date (still prior to Christmas) is being arranged and this will be notified to subscribers nearer the time.

Ideas/suggestions for future talks and events

The Civic Society committee has been working hard to arrange events and talks for the autumn of 2012 and into 2013. However if you have any inspired ideas for topics that might enthuse and interest members please let our chairman Peter Lee know.

Peter Lee 2 Nene Way Sutton Peterborough PE5 7XB
Tel: 01780 782703
peter.g.lee@btinternet.com

Similarly, if you have any interesting photographs of recent or upcoming developments in Peterborough or surrounding area please send them to Toby Wood for possible inclusion in future newsletters.

Toby Wood 40 Newark Avenue Peterborough PE1 4NS
Tel: 01733 345123
tobywood2008@googlemail.com



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Planning - GN Hotel scheme

The scheme for development of the land beside the GN Hotel has occupied some of your Plans Group's time recently, sadly to very little good effect to date.

The pre-application scheme, about which we submitted our serious concerns, has been very slightly altered and the outline planning application now consists of:

- Retention of the main original GN Hotel building and demolition of its 1970's ball-room extension with replacement bedrooms and car park provided in a 4-storey extension to the existing building and fronting onto the Station;
- The reversion of the south side car park and garden to open space and public footpath;
- The construction of an 8 storey building fronting Bourges Blvd and turning the Station Rd corners north and south and stepping down to abut the residual Hotel site. Mainly offices, the ground floor is shown retail and the top floor residential.



Our principal objections in summary are:

- Excessive height and impact on Bourges Boulevard. We consider that a limit of 5 or 6 storeys should be applied;
- Lack of consideration given to the Bourges Blvd elevation;
- Aggressive corner feature oversailing the site boundary and inflating the floorspace;
- Poor transition between the new building and existing hotel;
- Adverse impact of 8-storey building close to the Station Road exit route;
- The new bedroom block should be subservient to the existing hotel with a 3-storey rather than 4-storey elevation;
- Adverse effect of major retailing floorspace on future Westgate scheme.
- Inadequate public consultation (6 hours in the afternoon of one working day)

The committee heard our case and debated the issue of height. However by a majority they approved the outline application on the basis that height and design could be revisited at the detailed application stage.



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Recent Events



Henry Penn Walk re-opening

The new plaque in tribute to Henry Penn was unveiled on 9th May. Castor Handbell ringers performed pieces as the plaque was unveiled by Fotheringay Church Bellringers' tower captain Jane Saunders. Historian Michael Lee informed those present about the importance of Henry Penn (1685 - 1729) who cast more than 250 bells at his Bridge Street foundry, near Peterborough Magistrates' Court.

Nene Park Trust visit

On 19th June, James McCullough, chief executive of Nene Park Trust spoke to a group of members about the work of the trust and the development of Ferry Meadows.



Chairman's Evening – 22nd May

In a packed Becket Chapel Matthews Saunders, secretary of the Ancient Monuments Society and director of the Friends of Friendless Churches, spoke enthusiastically about the conservation challenge facing England's historic churches.

Peterborough Heritage Festival

The Society had a stall in a prominent position for both days of the Heritage weekend in June. Hundreds of people visited the stall and talked to members about the Society's work, aims and objectives. Saturday was particularly bright and well-attended, Sunday less so, due to the unpredictable nature of the weather!

