



# Newsletter

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**SUMMER VISITS EDITION** see back page



## OUR COMMUNICATION DURING LOCKDOWN

This is your first newsletter since December. We hope that you have been keeping abreast with our work through reading our articles and letters in the Peterborough Telegraph, our posts on Twitter or hearing our interviews on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire. There is no shortage of media through which to express our take on Changing Peterborough. The latest outlet we have been pleased to provide material for is Peterborough Matters, a daily on-line newsletter. Fortunately we have talented writers and commentators who are willing to put the time and effort into producing material. We hope too that you have joined us for our monthly speaker sessions via Zoom when chairman David Turnock takes the opportunity to brief members on current issues exercising the Society.

## GAS HOLDER DEMOLITION



Peterborians will remember (not always with fondness) the gas holder that dominated the skyline at Wellington Street in Boongate. In March Gasholder No 93 was demolished. The structure was built by Newton Chambers & Co in 1949, a Coal Gas Works having previously been on the site since 1870. It remains to be seen how the site will be developed in the future.

## THE FUTURE OF THE EMBANKMENT

The prospect of a new stadium to serve both as a base for POSH and a major regional draw for concerts and other events is an exciting one and would undoubtedly enhance Peterborough's leisure and cultural 'offer'. But the Society is concerned that it must be in the right location and with excellent access. We are not at all convinced that a sizeable portion of Peterborough's riverside embankment should be allocated to this massive (8-storey equivalent) building and its supporting infrastructure. We have seen no evidence of assessment of any other sites which could accommodate the development. The project seems to be a product of an overly close relationship between the City Council and the POSH owners which is ruling out all other options without consultation with the people of Peterborough. We were alarmed to hear that the whole Conservative group (save the members of the Planning committee who must remain objective) were supportive of a stadium on the Embankment. This is before any plans examining the impact of loss of a major part of the open green space close to the City centre, the effect on views of the Cathedral, traffic circulation and access have been produced and before a Master Plan has been produced setting out the future form of this hugely valuable open space asset for the City.

The Society is not opposed to development on the embankment. It is an underused asset, especially its river side setting. But it deserves a measured approach with careful attention not only to retention of sufficient green space for outdoor events and enjoyment by residents of Peterborough, including the new residents of the City Centre and Fletton Quays, but also to the grain and scale of new development and its linkage to south of the river. As it is we are still waiting for a Master Plan for the embankment whilst the POSH owners are speaking of the next opportunity for public input being the planning application – far too late in the process.

[www.peterboroughcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.peterboroughcivicsociety.org.uk)

## SUMMER VISITS

We are pleased to announce the resumption of our summer visits. The arrangements made for each visit will comply with Covid 19 regulations in force at the time. Should it not prove possible to go ahead with any visit, payments made will be promptly refunded. **Please return your booking form and payment by June 26<sup>th</sup>.**

### Fletton Quays and the Embankment



**Date: Tuesday, July 6<sup>th</sup>. Cost: £10.00, including afternoon tea at the Key Theatre.**

**We will meet at the Key Theatre at 1.45pm for a 2.00pm start.**

This tour will be led by our Vice—Chair, Toby Wood, assisted by Kem Mehmed and David Turnock.

We will progress from the Key Theatre to Fletton Quays, taking in the various aspects of housing, commercial and hotel development, plus four blue plaques and the re-installed Mitchell bas-relief. We hope to obtain approval from the City Council to view the interior as well as the exterior of the outstanding repurposing of the Victorian former engine shed. We will then move on to view the former flour mill and the site of the new footbridge now promised as part of the Towns Fund investment. We will return to the Key Theatre at 3.15pm for tea and cakes, to be provided by The Chalkboard. At 4.00pm we will set off for a tour of the Embankment, so that we can judge for ourselves the effect that the mooted new Posh Stadium could have on the use of the Embankment as public open space and the implications for views of the Cathedral. If time permits, we will also view the site of the new University. The visit will end back at the Key Theatre at approximately 5.00pm.

### Picturesque Peakirk

**Date: Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Cost: £12.00, including afternoon tea at the Church.**

**Parking: at the Village Hall car park, St. Pega's Road, PE6 7NF (opposite the Ruddy Duck pub).**

The Hall will be open for access to the toilets.

**We will meet at St Pega's Church at 2.00pm for a 2.15pm start.**

Trish Roberts will give a talk about the history of the church and village, followed by a talk from Dr Avril Lumley-Prior about the famous wall paintings.

**3.15pm – 4.00 pm:** a “scrumptious” home baked tea in the church.

**4.00pm:** walk led by Dr Lumley-Prior around the tight medieval core of the village.

**5.00pm:** finish, but we can stay later if we wish. Weather permitting, the Peakirk Archaeological Survey Team will try to make our visit coincide with an archaeological test pit and display on the village green, which is bisected by the Roman Car Dyke. We will also be able to visit an engineering museum, not normally open to the public, where the knowledgeable owner will show us round. St. Pega's Church has recently lost its lead roof due to thieves, thus threatening its precious wall paintings. Our visit will give the Society an opportunity to contribute to safeguarding both church and paintings for future generations.





## **The Shuttleworth Estate – aircraft, gardens, and heritage**

**Date: Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>. This is a get yourself there trip.**

**Cost: £36.00 (includes coffee/tea on arrival and afternoon cream tea).**

**We will meet at the Shuttleworth Collection Visitor Centre, Old Warden, near Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 9EA at 10.30am. Ample parking is available on site.**

The Shuttleworth Estate contains three separate attractions:

- The famous Collection of sixty veteran and vintage aircraft (1909–1960) and other transport items.
- The Swiss Garden, an outstanding example of the Regency fashion for creating landscapes in a picturesque alpine style.
- Shuttleworth House, a grade II\* listed mansion, built for the Shuttleworth family in 1875 and set in attractive parkland.

In the morning, starting at 10.30am, we will receive an overview of the Shuttleworth story with coffee and tea. We will then have self-guided entry for the whole day to all three parts of the site. The Aircraft Collection is housed adjacent to the reception area and can easily absorb a full morning's attention. Most of the aircraft, even some of the very oldest, are maintained in flying condition and, if we are lucky, there may be aerial activity for us to



watch. Lunch is not included in the cost of the trip, but it can be taken on site at the Restaurant or, for those bringing their own food, at the picnic area. In the afternoon, we will travel by vintage bus from the Collection to Shuttleworth House for a guided tour lasting about one hour. (The House can also be reached by car, having its own car park, or by a pleasant twenty-minute walk through the park.) After we return in the bus, there will be time to explore the Swiss Garden before we gather at the Restaurant for our cream tea at 4.15pm, with a 5.00pm finish. The journey by car to/from Shuttleworth takes approximately one hour each way. The site is very straightforward to reach from the A1 at Biggleswade and details will be circulated before the visit.

## **WEBSITE**

Members are reminded that the website contains a wealth of information about the society and is regularly updated. To access all areas of the website, don't forget to use the drop-down menu bar (below our masthead). Not just all our plaques from the very earliest are on there (in some cases extra information that could not be included in the booklet), but previous publications from the Peterborough Telegraph, Nene Living, The Moment and past newsletters and annual reports. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining, our application form can be downloaded from the Join Us page, plus there is a handout leaflet about the Society.

All the committee contact details and the roles they look after can be found on the Contact Us page.

Incidentally you can still buy a copy of Peterborough and its Villages In Detail via the 'For Sale' page on our website. But hurry! Stocks are now down to ten books so will soon become a hard-to-find collectors item.

Just a reminder if you do change your email address, please remember to tell Ian Webb, and of course if you move home (otherwise we cannot contact you). Thanks as always to Ian whose hard work behind the scenes is much appreciated.

## PETERBOROUGH 'GOING UP'

**Towns Fund** We have been closely following the shaping of the major strands of this successful win of up to £22.9m of capital funding for the city. The Vine Culture Hub in the former Woolworths/TK Maxx building on Bridge Street and the Activity Centre (climbing wall) in Nene Park are but two of these which have received considerable publicity and whose business plans appear to be well advanced. The Vine will include the relocated Library, and culture and community hub. Planning approval has been granted for the Activity Centre and it is expected that it will open in 2022. Another project is to be focussed on the 'public realm' of Lincoln Road in Millfield. Clearly the area is vibrant but has a number of problems which such a localised approach will not address. The relocation of the bus depot would be a further huge bonus for the area but indications are that the Council is not yet able to take this forward. Nevertheless, we plan to make a positive input to a welcome public realm project.

Whilst celebrating the Towns Fund win, and the potential enrichment of Peterborough's communities which could arise from most of these investments, the one party which seems to have negligible input into how these funds are spent is the community. Over the past year we have become increasingly frustrated by the lack of community consultation, information sharing and representation on the Towns Fund Board, contrary to Government guidance. We have taken up this issue with the Council's Chief Executive and in meetings with senior Council officers and are promised improvement.



**Levelling Up Fund** Peterborough has been chosen to bid for Levelling Up Fund moneys and proposals for Peterborough are currently being assessed by Council Officers. Details have not been released but we shall comment when the opportunity arises.

**Business Improvement District (BID)** A BID for Peterborough looked very much on the cards until Covid struck. A ballot of some 485 city centre businesses will now be held in October to decide whether they should opt to accept a levy in order to create a fund to promote the City Centre in a manner no longer affordable to our cash-strapped Council. Clearly you can argue that it is the worst possible time to be launching such an initiative. We can only hope that enough businesses realise that it could be a decisive step towards securing the very revitalisation our City Centre needs at this time.

## IN BRIEF

**Heritage Open Days** This popular annual event was a Covid cancellation locally last year. This year Chris and Gerry Nicholas have kept in touch with previous and new potential participants. However many are still reticent to commit for this year. Nationally the scheme will go ahead between 10 and 19<sup>th</sup> September. Our local contribution will be small scale this year. Details will be in the local press and circulated to members as soon as feasible.

**Planning Applications** Normally we devote space to planning applications, our responses and their outcomes. On this occasion, despite the fact that these are undoubtedly important, we have decided that there has been adequate coverage of the major ones in the local press and on our own website.

**New Local List** Back in February the City Council publicised its winning a grant to deliver a revised Local List of Heritage Assets. The current Local List (not to be confused with the Statutory List of buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest) was first drawn up in a partnership between ourselves and the Council in 2010. It focussed on buildings. Some additions have been made to it since. But this new list will be a major expansion of the current local list. It will include for the first time anything forming a significant part of our historic environment, whether buildings, archaeology, parks, street features, abandoned railway lines etc. Public nominations will be sought - so look out for an opportunity to contribute- and your committee is looking forward to playing a major part in the work.

**Relaunch of Blue Plaques** As you already know the Society installed a further 15 blue plaques in 2020, this making a total of 36 in and around the city centre. However, due to the pandemic, we have not been able to hold a formal launch with the press in attendance. It is hoped that, within the next few months, we are able put on an event - possibly on the Guildhall steps in Cathedral Square - to publicise the plaques. We will send you details via email nearer the time.

**River Nene Photographic Project 2021** This project will provide a photographic record of the river throughout the year and as we are now into Summer we would be happy to receive current views. Details for submission of photos are given on the website under "Activities".