



Chairman's Message

The installation of a much-improved and enlarged Website has been an important event for the Society [see item alongside]. Following a complete redesign by the M&P Committee's Web Development Group, we now have an excellent, modern link to members and to the public - one that is highly informative and easy to use. For all who are able to access it, do please explore the various illustrated topic screens with their openable sections.

To keep our own internal links well-organised, I am glad to welcome Mike Holmes of the Web Group and Rory Quinn of our Conservation & Development Working Group (and a former President of the Society when Lord Mayor) on to the Executive Committee as extra, co-opted members.

The more active the Society is, the more extensive the areas where we should be involved and commenting. At present there are an increasing number of crucial larger-scale planning questions; these range from the new Joint Core Strategy for Greater Norwich to the more focused issues of the Northern Area redevelopment. As a result, we are reconsidering the structure of our sub-committees to allow us to respond more effectively.

Recently I have had the pleasure of talking to new members at our special Sunday occasions at the Assembly House. The variety of their interests and experience can be helpful to the Society, and I hope that many new (as well as longer-established) members will be prepared to offer assistance with sub-committee and group work.

By the beginning of 2008 it will be five years since any changes were made to subscription levels. Following discussion of detailed cost and comparative information prepared by our Treasurer, Kate Anetts, the Executive has decided (as provided for under the Constitution) that it is a suitable time to increase subscription rates. A table of the new rates is given on p.2.

A third guide in the Society's "Finding out about Norwich" series is now published. This follows *New Architecture* [July 2006] and *Public Sculpture* [July 2007], and looks at *John Moray-Smith - A Very Public Artist*. As the authors (Society members Alec Hartley and Spencer Chapman) note "It is rare to find a hidden treasure" [see item on p.3]. A copy of the guide is enclosed with this Newsletter, and I hope that you will enjoy reading it and searching out some of Moray-Smith's work.

Jeremy Taylor

New Website

Tony Beck

Earlier this year the Membership and Publicity Committee gathered together a group of people to remodel the Society's website. The old site had served the Society well but compared to other similar sites it seemed in 2007 to suggest the Society was well-meaning but rather genteel and old-fashioned. Also, technically, the old site proved difficult to update quickly.

The Web Development Group consisted of

- Michael Holmes (webmaster)
- John Knowles (design and photography)
- Frances Holmes (corporate recruitment and corporate pages)
- Tony Beck (text composition and editing)
- Brian Payne (M&P oversight)
- Kate Anetts (monitor for membership and financial management)
- Vicky Manthorpe (Society Administrator).

Their purpose was to enhance the way the Society communicates in the twenty-first century. The team aimed to:

- reflect the reality of the Society as independent, active and forward-looking
- increase the impact of the Society by developing the site as a more effective way of communicating with
 - its members
 - the people it seeks to influence and work with
 - the press and other media
 - the wider public (from which new members will be recruited)
- publicise the Society's work
- highlight its activity – show that it does useful things
- recruit new members, individual and corporate.

These were its strategic objectives and the team tried to make each webpage work to achieve them. Building upon the existing site the group developed a new series of pages and adopted a technical facility ("accordion pages") for each page. Such pages contain more than appears at first sight and are accessed through buttons which open sub-pages within them.

The result is a superb new source of information about the Norwich Society that reflects its distinguished past and its current interests. The site provides details of events and booking procedures so please don't ignore the website – use it, enjoy it, tell your friends about it.



Picture Quiz Prize Giving

Photo by Sarah Cockle



The President of the Norwich Society, the Lord Mayor of Norwich, Councillor Roy Blower, graciously opened the Lord Mayor's Parlour for the NS/Evening News Picture Quiz prize-giving. The winners in the under-13 category were: Henry Simmons; Shannon Trett; and James Hansell. The adult winners were Miss Claire Louise Reynolds; Mr John Doy; and Mrs P M Turner. Prizes were donated by The Bear Shop of Elm Hill and Barrett and Coe of Castle Meadow as well as cash prizes from the Norwich Society. Sarah Cockle took the pictures of architectural details on historic buildings along the Costume and Textile Trail. Answers to the quiz are on the Norwich Society website. **VM**

Norwich Society History

It was very pleasing to be asked by a student at City College for information about the Norwich Society's attempt to prevent the Magdalen Street flyover. As part of her research project on the history of Magdalen Street, Jennifer Whiting came to consult our records and talked with our Vice-President Andy Anderson about the Society's tragically failed attempt to prevent what is still one of the worst eyesores in the City. With film from the East Anglian Archive, Jenny was able to put together a CD that highlighted the history of Magdalen Street in the twentieth century, including the Civic Trust initiative that drew national attention with its 1959 scheme of improved shop fronts and façades.

Jennifer Whiting's project, for which she was awarded distinction, points the way to the Norwich Society becoming both an object of study and increasingly a source of information. Older members who have served on committees might like to see if they have papers or photographs relating to Norwich Society campaigns or activities and bring them into the Office for archiving. **VM**

EEACTS – AGM

EEACTS – The East of England Association of Civic Trust Societies - held its 2007 AGM in Norwich on Saturday November 3rd. The Chairman, Dr Jeremy Taylor, and the Administrator, Vicky Manthorpe, welcomed the delegates to their meeting in the Mancroft Chantry and members of the Now-And-Again Group served coffee and tea. Blue Badge Guide Rod Spokes and Dr Taylor conducted tours of the city with special emphasis on modern buildings. After the AGM, Alec Hartley gave a talk on the work that the Environment Committee undertakes annually on auditing sections or aspects of the City. **VM**

Subscription Rates 2008

Kate Anetts

Subscriptions have been held at their present level for five years now and in that time, despite very careful housekeeping, running costs have multiplied. Your subscription includes two Newsletters and the Annual Review plus four free lectures in the Assembly House. In addition, during the last twelve months members have received three excellent Map Guides. (These have been paid for by grants and legacies – not through subscriptions). Our events programme is so popular that we are increasing the number of outings for 2008-9. We have also introduced specific corporate events. None of the events is supported by subscriptions but they all have to be organised and administered. The Executive Committee has agreed the following new subscription rates for 2008.

We feel that the new rates still represent excellent value for money and we very much hope that you will renew your membership for the new year.

Annual subscriptions for 2008

Single: £18	Corporate: £65
Joint: £27 (two people at the same address):	Life Memberships:
Under age 25: £6	Single: £200
Group and non-profit organization: £40	Joint: £300

Old Costessey

The Norwich Society would like to thank the Old Costessey Society, and particularly the Chairman, John Denby, for organising such an excellent afternoon tour of their village, showing us their wonderful archive of old photographs and providing such a lovely tea in their village hall. We hope they will come to visit us in Norwich next year.

Public Sculpture: Debating a way Forward

The Conservation and Development Working Group issued a discussion document in August on the potential for new public sculpture in Norwich. The author, Roger Last, began by acknowledging Norwich's latest piece of public art, Anne and Patrick Poirier's assemblage of forms on Hay Hill, as "good to touch and to look at" and also to intrigue. "This new work is directly allied to the statue of Sir Thomas Browne, but this, with Barbara Hepworth's *Sea Form* in the Castle Gardens, is one of the few sculptures in the City in a public place. The Norwich Society's recent publication *'Public Sculpture in central Norwich'* highlights the diversity of sculpture in the city in form and period. But it also highlights the paucity of sculpture as a whole, in particular sited in key public places".



Peace by George Wade. Photo by Sarah Cockle.

Last's document emphasised that "Norwich does not want second rate forms but quality pieces in line with the excellence of the city. However, in some instances the use of new materials can reduce cost. Not everything has to be in carved stone or cast in bronze. By using a range of new materials and techniques, as well as traditional ones, a rich diversity of art could be added to the street scene." The document concluded with some suggestions for both subject matter and siting of new works. The paper, which can be viewed in full on our revised website www.thenorwichsociety.co.uk, invites comments from members and the public to further the debate. **VM**

Wellington Green & Ten Bell Court

by Edward Skipper and Associates, architects.

An appreciation by architect Jason Bill

The project by Edward Skipper was the first phase of a greater vision for revitalisation of an area stretching to the river, and included a club and riverside terrace. Sadly it was never completed.



Skipper's scheme lifted the bar for creative and thoughtfully designed housing in Norwich; it developed an integrated concept formed by the character of the intricate pedestrian routes, intimate spaces and inspiring open landscape. The robust Modern design demonstrated a faith and courage in progressive Modernist ideologies, whilst achieving humanity in the urban spaces created. These lessons are still as relevant, but often overlooked, in the creation of urban housing today, with space provided for people having prominence. Skipper had the foresight to

understand that on a restricted site, areas devoted to vehicular traffic often destroy the human scale of the environment.

The design also achieves a remarkably impressive density and urban grain, without destroying the character of the landscape. Spaces such as Wellington Green, where the housing is grouped around a pleasant open area dominated by the Saxon tower of Saint Benedict's Church, are evidence of Skipper's measured thought in forming the environment.

The architecture may have drawn on the considered schemes of the Finnish Architect Alvar Aalto, and projects such as the Säynätsalo Town Hall completed in 1952. Interestingly Skipper's original thoughts were to utilise painted brickwork as employed in Aalto's residence in Muuratsalo. Skipper sustains the ideologies of the earlier generation of European Modernists with a progressive architecture that is characteristic to their time and a visual delight.

The scheme won the Department of the Environment's bronze medal in 1978. It is scandalous to consider that at the time of writing, there is a possibility of demolishing such a rare example of Modern Architecture which the Twentieth Century Society regards worthy of Grade II listing.

CONNECT2

Alec Hartley

Following publication of our *Wensum River Parkway* report (see last Newsletter) the Executive Committee has given its full backing to Connect2. This is a £50 million bid for National Lottery money by Sustrans, the cycling and sustainable transport charity. It includes nearly £1million towards improving cycle and pedestrian routes through Norwich to Whitlingham and building bridges across both the Yare and Wensum.

Connect2 is one of six schemes being put forward by various environmental groups for trial by television in December on ITV1. The public will be asked to vote on-line or by telephone or text on which of the six will succeed. A win by Sustrans could lead to completion of one of the main aims of our Parkway report - a complete walk and cycle-way through the City along the Wensum from Whitlingham to New Mills.

The Norwich Rivers Heritage Group (on which I represent the Society) has been asked by Sustrans to co-ordinate local support and publicity for Connect2. ITV will be broadcasting lead-in programmes from late November. On-line voting will begin November 26 (www.thepeoples50million.org.uk), and phone and text voting is scheduled December 7-10. The voting numbers will be issued after the Friday night programme. In making up their minds, we would ask members to take the Society's support for CONNECT2 into account.

John Moray-Smith

A Voyage of Discovery

Alec Hartley

Picture two middle-aged gentlemen standing in the massive Norfolk Museums Service store at Gressenhall (like nothing so much as that in the last scene of "Raiders of the Lost Ark"), uttering cries of delight as they uncover yet another dusty treasure. Or the same pair conducting "research" in pubs as far away as Kings Lynn and Cromer (well, it's dirty work but *someone* has to do it!).

They're not high-minded or difficult to understand, just good, honest, vigorous public art. Perhaps that is the reason they've been overlooked for so long by the City and County that this very individual artist adopted as his own. We hope our small pamphlet (very ably edited by Jeremy Taylor) may lead to two things. First would be restoration of and better care for the works already on public view, wherever necessary - some are already in safe hands. Secondly, we would hope that Norfolk Museums Service would be able to clean, repair and exhibit the panels in store at Gressenhall.

We also hope our pamphlet will jog the memory of those who remember this remarkable artist - maybe some of them members of this Society - or even lead to the discovery of more of his work. Who knows, there may be yet more hidden treasure for us to uncover!

Local Listing

In September the City issued a new Local List for buildings in the *City Centre Conservation Area*. We were pleased to see included the Bethel Street Fire Station - a building in which we had taken a special interest. We were also glad to be able to offer volunteers for the preliminary appraisals of *Old Lakenham* (Michael Innes), *Trowse* (Andy Anderson) and *Eaton* (Tony Eggleston). However, we are aware that many important local/vernacular buildings fall outside the Conservation Areas and are at risk. This was most obviously demonstrated by the removal of The Earl of Leicester PH at the corner of Dereham Road and Bowthorpe Road.

We would, therefore, like to initiate and undertake a survey of buildings of local interest in non-conservation areas so that at least we have some record of them, with a picture. Even though the listing will have no legal weight, it will be helpful in alerting our Planning Appraisal Committee and the City Planning Department to buildings of historic local significance that should be conserved.

This is the kind of essential survey work that a civic society can undertake and we will need as many volunteers as possible to spread the load. If you would like to help, please contact the Administrator or return the form enclosed. **VM**

Corporate News

Frances Holmes

During 2007 we have launched a new package of benefits to enable us to attract more Corporate members to the Society. For the first time we are running events exclusively for corporate members. By popular demand these are taking the form of Business Breakfasts at buildings of historical interest. July saw us visiting the Guildhall as guests of the Sheriff, and in November we will be at the Great Hospital.

In recognition of the importance of the Business Community, the relaunched website includes dedicated Corporate Pages - which enables us to report on activities, outline the corporate package and also publicly recognise the support these organisations are giving to Norwich.

The initiative is proving popular and we are pleased to announce that we have welcomed twenty-two new members which represents an 80% increase in the membership - one which we are continually looking to grow.

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday 12 December

7.30pm-9.30pm

Society Christmas Party

The Dragon Hall, King Street

Festivities and refreshments including wine and desserts in the upper room of Dragon Hall.

Tickets £15.00 per person

from the Society Office.

Fully booked – waiting list only.

2008 EXTRA Event

Tuesday 22 January 3.00pm

Tea and Talk at The King of Hearts,
7-15 Fye Bridge Street, Norwich.

Tour and talk by the Director, Aude Gotto followed by Tea.

Tickets £10.00 per person

from the Society Office.

Booking form enclosed.

Please send SAE with application.



Dragon Hall

Sunday 17 February 2.00pm

Music Room, The Assembly House,
Norwich.

Early Photography in Norfolk and Norwich

A talk by John Benjafield on the pioneers of photography in the region, with exceptional illustrations.

Tea available in the Ivory Room afterwards.

Non-members £2.00.

No booking necessary.

Sunday 16 March 2.00pm

Music Room, The Assembly House,
Norwich.

The Historic Parklands of Norwich's Hinterland.

Dr Tom Williamson of UEA's Centre for East Anglian Studies.

Tea available in the Ivory Room afterwards.

Non-members £2.00.

No booking necessary.

Extra Event King of Hearts



There has been such a demand for our events that I had to increase the size of the coaches for the three out-of-town tours this summer. Most of the local walks have been over-subscribed and many members have been disappointed that there were

no places left. I will be repeating some walks next year and also scheduling two rather than one where possible. I would like to give a special thank you to Blue Badge guides Rod Spokes and Jan King for accommodating extra numbers.

As a small palliative, I have scheduled an Extra Event to brighten up a winter afternoon (Tuesday January 22 2008) – a specially arranged tour of the King of Hearts with Director Aude Gotto, and a talk about her superb art collection followed by tea in the King of Hearts restaurant. Full details under Forthcoming Events (above) and on the application form enclosed. **VM**

Annual General Meeting: Speaker

The AGM will be on **Wednesday 16 April 2008** in the Music Room of the Assembly House. The proceedings will begin at 7.30pm.

After refreshments of coffee and wine, we welcome our speaker Hugh Aldersey-Williams, who will talk on *Vulgar Errors: Thomas Browne as science communicator*. Hugh Aldersey-Williams, who lives in Norfolk, is author of numerous books on art, architecture and popular science, including *The Most Beautiful Molecule* (1994), *Zoomorphic: New Animal Architecture* (2003) and *Findings* (2005). His new book, *Panicology* (Viking, 2008), debunks contemporary media scare stories based on science, making it a timely update of Browne's *Vulgar Errors*. Hugh curated the *Zoomorphic* (2003) and *Touch Me* (2005) exhibitions at the V&A, and was, for five years, design critic on *The New Statesman*. He is a member of the Royal Society of Arts. **VM**



Becoming Active within the Society

The New Members Tours of the Assembly House, which we began last year, have proved very popular. We had to add an extra date so that everyone would have an opportunity to hear Jan King's expertise on the history of this many-layered building. Next year I will be scheduling two dates as a matter of course.

This is a splendid opportunity not only for new members to meet each other but also to talk with the Chairman and the Administrator to discuss their special interests and capabilities with a view to joining committees in the future. Next year we will also be offering a similar opportunity for our long-term members, but please do not hesitate to contact me **now** if you would like to take a more active part in the Society. **VM**

Gift Membership

A Gift Membership is extremely good value and a considerate gift, offering a full twelve months of lectures, social outings and publications – ideal for singletons and a great “welcome” for people new to Norwich. The cost is £18.00 for a single adult, £27 joint, and only £6.00 for anyone under the age of 25. If you would like to give a NS membership as a Christmas gift please contact the Administrator by December 10th on 01603 765606 or by e-mail : admin@thenorwichsociety.co.uk. **VM**

Administrator: Vicky Manthorpe, The Norwich Society, The Assembly House, Theatre Street, Norwich NR2 1RQ

Telephone: 01603 765606. E-mail: admin@thenorwichsociety.co.uk <http://www.thenorwichsociety.co.uk>

Editorial team: V. Manthorpe, J. Taylor, K. Anetts.

The Executive Committee of the Norwich Society welcomes items submitted to this Newsletter but does not hold itself responsible for the views expressed.

Registered Charity No. 311118