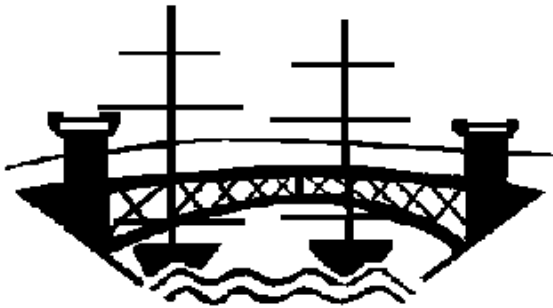


BRIDGWATER & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

(Established 1972)

*Patron: The Rt. Hon The Lord King
of Bridgwater C.H.*



Registered Charity No. 265031

NEWSLETTER Edition 11

Society website: www.bridgwatercivic.org.uk
Newsletter email: newsletter@bridgwatercivic.org.uk

Some Wonderful News

Many of you will be aware of this, but for those who are not, we were delighted to learn that our President and founding member of our Society, Mr Derek Gibson, has been awarded an M.B.E. in recognition of years of dedicated and loyal service to so many organizations in Bridgwater and the surrounding district. We know you will share our pleasure and offer him heartiest congratulations.

And even more good news! Our Vice Chairman, Dr. Peter Cattermole, has been awarded the prestigious Bridgwater Cup for 2009, for his invaluable service to various organizations and the Bridgwater community. Of note, was his outstanding voluntary work as Co-ordinator between the Bridgwater Town Council and the Friends of Black Museum, as well as being a leading member of our Society. His knowledge of planning law, and his passion for the historic environment and the Town's heritage has been of enormous benefit to the community.

He has worked closely with many of the young people in the town by mentoring those aspiring to University placements and by encouraging them to give their free time to further the ongoing needs of the Museum and the Civic Society.

We are extremely proud of and grateful to both gentlemen for the loyalty, dedication and selfless service.

Obituary

It is with much sadness that we record the death of Mr. Tony Sampson in November 2009. Tony was a much respected member of our Society, a strong supporter and regular attendant at our Talks and outings. He was the first baby to be born in Church Path, Bridgwater. He attended Junior School in West Street, before going on to Dr. Morgan's Grammar School. He went on to qualify as an Accountant, eventually becoming Company Secretary of Kellands. He married Margaret (Maggie) in 1961. Both belonged to, and were active, in a number of organizations, notably the Wine Circle. They travelled extensively throughout Europe. Tony will be greatly missed by family and friends alike.

We must also send our best wishes for a speedy recovery to Maggie, who has spent a brief spell in hospital.

The Civic Trust

Matters have moved in the past few months. A new organization under the name *The Civic Society's Initiative* has been formed. The National Trust, Council for the Protection of Rural England, English Heritage, The Royal Institute of British Architects and others, have come together to create this new body under the leadership of Tony Burton, formerly of the National Trust.

Your Executive Committee has discussed the pros and cons and, in the name of democracy, propose to discuss the matter with the membership at the Annual General Meeting on 21 April 2010. Your overall decision on the day will dictate the direction in which we shall proceed.

Wembdon Road Cemetery

Firstly, we are disappointed to report that the application which Miles Peterson made to English Heritage to have the memorial of Captain George Lewis Brown registered as a listed building has been turned down by the Secretary of State. The grounds for the refusal were that Captain Brown's memorial was not considered of significant National importance to warrant registration. This does not bode well for the registration Miles also made for James Cook's memorial, but we live in hope!

The Dissenters' Burial Register for Bridgwater has now been completely transcribed and has been placed on the Society's website. Work continues apace on the Burial Registers for St Mary's Bridgwater at Somerset Record Office, of which there are many! More volunteers would be welcome please, to speed up the work. We are grateful to Mr Miles Peterson, Mr John Hill, Dr Peter Cattermole, Mrs Bertha Day and Mrs Bernice Lashbrook for their work and support to date.

Bridgwater Heritage Regeneration Partnership

The Society President, Derek Gibson, represents the Civic Society in service to the *Bridgwater Heritage Regeneration Partnership*, other Members of which include Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Bridgwater Town Council, Bridgwater Chamber of Commerce and Viridor Waste Management. The Partnership was "constituted to

promote the regeneration of Bridgwater through conservation and enhancement of the Town's built heritage".

As elected Chairman since its inception, Derek has endeavoured to take a proactive role in leading its various considerations which, initially with its own allocated fundings, comprised the offering Grant-Aid to worthy projects, the most notable of which was the decorative enhancement to the Cobblestones Inn at the end of Eastover.

Durleigh Brook Project,

Currently attention is being given to the Durleigh Brook Project, enhancing the historic southern end of the town centre by the visual opening up of that section of the Brook, located between St Mary Street and Blake Street, adjoining the Town Museum and the currently derelict Town Mill. The proposed works, for which design drawings have already been prepared, include the provision at street level of a timber decked walkway along the northern flank of the brook, enabling pedestrian access between the two streets. It is anticipated that owners of brook adjoining properties, who have been enthusiastically supportive of the proposals, will then grasp the opportunity of enhancing their respective premises.

It is anticipated, following consultations with the Environment Agency, that planning permission for the project will shortly be sought from Sedgemoor District Council, as the local Planning Authority, before actions are taken to invite competitive tenders for the execution of the proposed works. One serious hurdle affecting future progress appears to be the matter of establishing which Authority is prepared, in the interests of the town's enhancement, to accept responsibility for future maintenance of the walkway following its creation!

Projected funding for the works themselves is not at this time envisaged as difficult to arrange.

Planning Matters

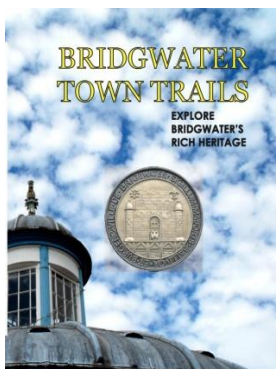
The downturn in construction work has meant that there have been very few planning applications over the winter upon which the Society felt it necessary to make

comments. However, there has been significant upturn in the New Year. In the first two weeks of February alone, the Society made representations to the Town Council Planning Panel or to Sedgemoor District Council, or to both, on several applications affecting listed buildings or which were within Conservation Areas. Our representations included alterations to properties in King Square, new buildings proposed behind the old Post Office, alterations to listed buildings in St Mary Street and Penel Orliou, the Railway Station, and St Mary's Church. Our comments on the first detailed application and design for 400 houses near the Willow Man are being prepared. It looks as though our little team of commentators on planning applications will be kept even busier as the construction industry recovers further. If you are interested in lending a hand to your President and Vice-Chairman, just let us know!

Blue Plaques

A Blue Plaque has been commissioned for erection at the end of March, which will commemorate a neglected but important aspect of Bridgwater's industrial past. The firm of Sully and Co., with its yard at Crowpill near the docks was once well-known, and the Society intends that it should not be forgotten.

Town Trails Guide



The new guide will be published at the end of March. It will be available from the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, at £2.50. The 36-page fully illustrated guide has been written for the town and its visitors by a young team of volunteers, led by Miles Peterson of the Civic Society.

The Church of England Primary School

The school at Enmore celebrates 200 years of education this year, and the Society is collaborating closely with the Headmaster and Governors over a Blue plaque to be erected before the end of the summer term.

Newsletter Production

We are delighted to welcome Mrs Portia Mitchell who will in future be producing our quarterly Newsletter (starting with this issue!). We look forward to a long and fruitful friendship with her. We know you will make her welcome and give her your full support.

We are all aware that due to circumstances beyond our control, this issue was published late. While acknowledging that contributors to the Newsletters have other commitments that are often very demanding, it has been suggested that working to deadlines for submission of articles and production of the Newsletter, would in the future, ensure that our Newsletter is made available to the readers on time.

The next issue is due on 1st April 2010. Members are kindly requested to email their contributions to Portia at newsletter@bridgwatercivic.org.uk by the 20th March.

Dates for your Diary

Both meetings will take place in the Activity Room, Victoria Park Community Centre, Victoria Road, Bridgwater.

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| 03/03/2010 | 7.30pm: | <i>Nautical Sayings and more</i> by Gerald Toghill. |
| 21/04/2010 | 7.30pm: | Annual General Meeting |

For further information about meetings/events visit the Society's website or call Bernice on 01278 459659

The cancellation of the January 6 Talk by Chris Sidaway was disappointing, but it will be re-scheduled in our 2010/2011 Programme