

# THE CIVIC Sense

July - August 2010

## CIVIC SOCIETY EVENTS

*Except for October, meetings are at the Library Meetings Room on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30pm.*

### Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> August

**Michael Rose**, the coroner for West Somerset. (We can ask him to explain the law on Treasure Trove before Bob Croft tells us about new finds, such as the Frome Hoard, in November!)

### Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> September

#### “History that Hurts”

Dr Todd Gray, on slavery, Blackshirts and looting in Devon. In writing about the looting after bombing in WWII he has ruffled feathers for telling it as it is.

### Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October

[NB: **FOURTH** Thursday.]  
Joint annual meeting at Wellington: “Wellington Park”.

**Our condolences to the family of Robin Bush, who died on 22 June.**

**Robin was a CS member for many years, and last entertained us with tales from Taunton’s history in April 2008. He was a big personality who will be sadly missed.**

## Planning News

Planning applications are still closer to a trickle than a flood - and subsequent building work even slower - but there is some action.

### **51 dwellings at the Hatcheries, Bathpool (48/10/0023).**

This site is in the Monkton Heathfield urban extension area, but it was not included in the Persimmon/Redrow Consortium proposals that were given the go-ahead by the Planning Inspectorate. This proposal from Strongvox is for 22 flats (12 affordable) and 29 houses (6 affordable), with space to park 77 cars. There are 2 three storey blocks of flats, and the block containing the 12 affordable flats is right opposite the turning from the A38 towards Milton Hill. Density is 61 dwellings per hectare. The combination of this proposal with the Consortium’s masterplan for the main part of the urban extension may present some difficulties, at least in phasing of the developments. The presence of 3 storey blocks is questionable in landscape terms.



### **Hunts Court (38/10/0110LB)**

Loungers (the third restaurant chain to try) have been given approval for installation of a ground level door leading off the Cider Press Garden. The permission is carefully limited thanks to an excellent suggestion by Di Hartnell (the Conservation Officer) – if this approval is implemented, none of the permissions given for the 2 previous applications from other restaurant chains can be applied. It is explicit that there is no permission to extend hard surfacing across the garden to the new access door.

### **Weir Lodge (38/10/0218LB)**

After several planning applications by the Gadd Group, at least 2 of which were granted, Weir Lodge was not developed before the firm folded. Now an application has been made to return the bulk of the site, and the Lodge itself, to its original status as a family home. This is a truly rare opportunity to see the original fabric of the town preserved, as opposed to seeing big Victorian houses and gardens become (however sensitively) the site of many high density dwellings.

### **Midas apartments on Tangier Waterfront (38/10/0107 & 8)**

Midas have withdrawn their request to renegotiate the S106 agreements – however they are asking to meet the District Valuer to review the viability study.

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**Tesco store expansion (38/10/0204)**

The submission is virtually unchanged from the public consultation. The store extends westwards and covers the existing disabled & parent & toddler parking spaces (these are to be repositioned in the existing parking area in front of the store). A mezzanine floor is inserted at the west side of the store, and holds the café and offices. The loss of parking spaces is made good by extending the car park across Steps Water via a new bridge. The existing parking layout has rather unsafe lane crossings for pedestrians, but overall the new parking arrangements seem to be even more hazardous.



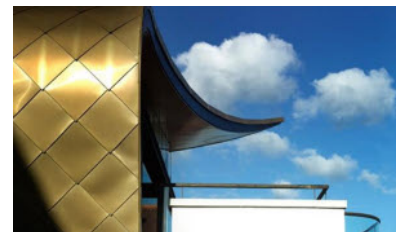
Comments to G Ward at 01823 289605

**REVIEWS:**

**From Carthorses to Computers** was a workmanlike story of a Devon farm, farmers and family. Colin Pady’s land has been farmed for 4,000 years, his ancestors arriving a mere 370 years ago. We were told of boom and bust, of progress and regulations, monoculture and declining wildlife, milk lakes and butter mountains. Change has not always been good or permanent – bovine TB, once eradicated is again at epidemic level, and orchards once grubbed up now attract grants to put them back. Improvements in breeds, yields and hygiene are good, and the Pady milking parlour is now hi tech, attracting the enigmatic comment “but you can’t kick a recalcitrant computer”. *FP*

**Glastonbury** John Brunsdon trotted us around Glastonbury in early June, covering a lot of ground and even more history, with colleague Paul Branson filling-in those at the rear who missed words borne away on the breeze; words about clay tiles, pelicans and peacocks, kangaroos and a whale bone arch. There was a spectacular view of the ruined abbey, but perhaps the greatest pride was reserved for the Assembly Rooms, where composer Rutland Boughton established the first Glastonbury Festivals (1914-26). However, it was the tiny St Margaret’s Chapel and almshouses in their quiet garden that won my heart. *FP*

**A Love Affair with Light** Brixham Architect Stan Bolt is a lucky man: his portfolio of modern buildings would perhaps have been impossible in Britain if his practice had been other than on the English Riviera. Big on natural light and “bringing the outside in, like a picture on the wall”, the dwellings he showed us tended to have expansive views and are not overlooked, allowing for fabulous stretches of glass in invisible frames. All are meticulously planned and executed: nails must be equidistant, whilst a shining flyaway roof (of plywood clad in copper alloy, anchored with tension cables) is obviously his pride and joy. *FP*



**Were you just there for the Hog Roast?** Agents selling the remaining apartments in Aspect on Corporation St. booked a (deafening) band and offered a free lunch of roast pig. 70% of these starter apartments were already sold or reserved, and a lot of people under 35 were looking around. It was good to see that it is very near completion. (See page 1 header picture.) Aspect is well finished, the building form fits well into Corporation Street, and areas such as the rear exit of the arcade by Castle Moat chambers are greatly improved. Some apartments have interesting views over the neighbouring roofs, others had narrow outside terraces, while a few opened onto the first floor courtyard or substantial terraces on the south side. On the down side, the rear of cottages on Bath Place now face quite claustrophobic deep light wells. Even the larger apartments made our members say “no room for stuff”. Apartments facing south were very hot – and all the windows only open a short way at the bottom. That prompted our chairman to ask about fire exits – it seems that all apartments have fire doors and you are supposed to stay where you are and wait for rescue. Just how quickly could the fire service rescue people on the Bath Place side?

On the ground floor, the arcade goes through to Bath Place opposite the Friends Meeting House, but there is no shop access from it, and the opportunity for a couple of modest shops off the arcade has been lost. Most of the shop units are pretty large. *GW*