



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018-19

Welcome to the Winter edition of the newsletter - in Hertford Civic Society's fiftieth anniversary year!

The Society was formed to campaign for the protection of what was worthwhile in Hertford and for positive development which supported the whole community, where development was necessary, in the face of plans for the wholesale demolition of much of the centre of the town and its replacement by a new shopping complex, as we will describe in more detail in a later newsletter. Half a century on, Bircherley Green is once more being demolished, amid a national debate about the role of the High Street and shopping, especially in small towns, and the Society has an important role to play.

And with the ink on the new District Plan hardly dry and the decision of the Secretary of State on Bengoe Quarry not yet issued, we now see two more examples of the pressure facing Hertford: a massive scheme for over 400 flats on the old gasworks site and an application to reopen and extend Rickneys Quarry. The County Council want to relieve some of the pressure by building a bypass, but would a new road really overcome Hertford's traffic problems, and what are the implications for the future of the town? You will have to chance to hear and speak to County Councillor Derrick Ashley, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport, at our first meeting on January 16th, see p2. There is much for the Society to do to protect the best of Hertford and to help in planning for the future.

If Hertford Civic Society is to have a strong voice, we need our members to be involved. There are many ways in which you can utilise your skills and these are explained in more detail on p4. Please read carefully and think about how you might help.

It is also time to pay subscriptions. If you have already paid or pay by standing order, thank you for your continued support. If you pay by cheque, or want to join the Society, please contact Annette Robinson (details p7) or go to our website at www.hertfordcivicsociety.org.uk

But the year will not only be about campaigning; social life and learning are important too! We have a new programme of talks and events for you to enjoy, including a summer garden party and an outing. All the details are on p2.

We wish all our members a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you at our events.

Contents

Caring for Hertford

Planning Matters	p4
A Bypass for Hertford?	p7
Markets	p8
Hertford Theatre	p9

Serving Our Members

Programme	p2
Can You Help?	p4
Visit to Sudbury	p9
Previous Talks to Members:	

Recording Hertford's Oral History	p11
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A Wider View

Planning Reforms	p12
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Committee Members and Contacts pp6-7

PROGRAMME 2019

A414 Strategy - bypass for Hertford?
Talk then discussion, 16 January 2019

County Councillor Derrick Ashley, Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport, is the County's lead for transport. The County Council is consulting on a potential Hertford bypass during the first part of 2019 (finishing 23 February). It is investigating this option as part of a wider strategy designed to upgrade the A414 into a more major east-west highway. While the County's staff is actively designing a potential Hertford bypass, with a southern route as the preferred option, the issue of whether or not to have this bypass is still a 'live' one among decision-makers, and Councillor Ashley is keen to hear how people in Hertford respond to this proposal. Please do come both to listen and to have your say. Further details p7.

The arrangements for this event are different from usual: the meeting will be in the Catholic church (not the hall, given its limited capacity), and it will run from 7.30 sharp through to 9 pm. It will not be possible to provide preliminary refreshments.

Portrait of a Hertford marriage: the Cowpers at the Castle
Lecture, 6 March 2019

This talk with slides is based on the extensive diaries that Sarah, Lady Cowper, kept in the early eighteenth century. The voices that emerge, often raised in argument, are recognisably all too human. Our lecturer is Clare Gittings, who gives talks to a wide range of local groups. This event takes place as usual: in the Catholic church hall, starting formally at 8 pm (refreshments from 7.45pm).

Hertford's last 50 years: for better or for worse?
AGM, then discussion led by panel, 24 April 2019

Hertford has changed a lot over the last half century, as we sometimes like to lament - or applaud. A panel of speakers with knowledge or experience of different aspects of Hertford life will give their views on the changes that have affected the town, and we will then have a more general discussion, enabling everyone to offer their personal views. We might even take a light-hearted vote at the end. One good reason for focusing on the last half century is that the Civic Society is 50 years old in 2019, and our discussion might help us to reflect on our future, and the town's. If anyone wants to nominate themselves or someone else for the panel, please contact Malcolm Ramsay.

Essex visit: Templar barns, Coggeshall and winery
8th May 2019

We will have an exciting outing in Essex. First we visit two of the most amazing medieval barns in Europe, at Cressing. They are like wooden cathedrals (built by the Templars), though they do need some explanation. We will have a guided tour of the barns, plus farm and walled Tudor garden. In the middle part of the day we will visit Coggeshall, one of the most delightful old villages in the County. There are plenty of places for lunch. These include Paycocke's House, 'one of the most attractive half-timbered houses in England' (Pevsner), more of which has recently been opened up; a National Trust house and garden, it comes complete with coffee shop. Aside from lunch, there should be enough time, if you like, to visit at least one historic place, perhaps Grange Barn (National Trust, you can picnic here in wet weather, joint ticket with Paycocke's House) or the church where many Paycockes are buried.

We will end the day with a visit to Bardfield winery. Just outside the beautiful village of Great Bardfield (favoured by such 20th century artists as Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious), there is a winery even lovelier than Dedham Vale - complete with a Grade 1 listed Tudor barn (Anne of Cleves retired to the manor here after her marriage to Henry VIII was annulled). There will be an opportunity to taste some of the wines, all organic, and quite splendid. Alternatively, cups of tea or coffee are available.

The cost is almost the same as for last year, at £26. This will cover the coach, and the guided tour of Cressing (those enjoying the wine tasting will need to pay a little more). And we will of course travel in great comfort. You can book your place by contacting Malcolm Ramsay (most people now do this by email: his contact details can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter - see pages 6-7).

This year we leave Hertford in our coach at a slightly later time (9.00 am), departing from alongside Hertford East or Tesco. And return by around 6.30 pm at the latest.

Summer party
Sunday 30 June 2019, from 12.45 pm

This is the Civic Society's birthday bash, as we will be 50 years old. We are fortunate to have been invited back to hallowed ground on the side of Port Hill, where one of our founders Alan Melville lived and where, lower down the hill, Jane and Harold Chaplin are our main hosts (at 39 Port Hill). We will have the run of a pair of linked gardens on a series of different levels. There is even a terrace with a seat presented to the Melvilles at the Society's 20th anniversary. This seat rests on paving graced with delightful hand-cut lettering which reads, in conclusion, 'Enchanting garden where the sun smiles on a hundred delicate friendships'. Perhaps that says it all, though there will also be an eco-house under construction, which we may be able to inspect. And there will of course be some music, given we will be the guests of a very musical household. Plentiful free parking is available just over the road at Hartham.

The tickets will be priced at £10 providing that they are purchased more than two days in advance (thereafter £12.50, and no admission without a pre-reserved ticket). They will be available from Malcolm Ramsay and other committee members.

Alternatively, it will be possible, after Easter, to book tickets by contacting Peter and Susan Brown. They have kindly agreed to go on taking bookings even though their shop has closed. They still live at 40 St Andrew St, and can be phoned (01992 589880) or visited or emailed: studio@peterandsusanbrown.co.uk

Lecture, 20 November 2019
Speaker and subject to be arranged.

Malcolm Ramsay

CAN YOU HELP?

WANTED!

Helpers required with social media, graphics, website design and photography skills to expand Civic Society communications.

Can members offer their skills, or suggest contacts such as students wanting project experience for their portfolio? If you can help, please contact

John Bevan john@jbevan.org.uk or
Mike Howarth m.howarth@mhmv.co.uk

WANTED: EVENTS/SOCIAL ORGANISER

How would you like to learn more about Hertford and its hinterland? And about organising enjoyable events? The Civic Society needs a new Events person, or Social Secretary. This job has been carried out by Malcolm Ramsay since 2012; as he is now Chairman, he needs to devote more attention to his new role. By now, it would also be better if someone else, with fresh vision, was to take over the events role. Malcolm would be delighted to provide appropriate support to anyone taking on the job that has become second nature to him.

There are three types of event to be organised each year: four or 5 talks relevant to Hertford and the Society, a day trip to somewhere interesting, and a party or social occasion. Of course, you could start with parts of the role, and slowly build up, over a year or two, to the full spread. Or a couple of people could share the responsibility. If you take on this role you might want to join the Society's main committee, or to come to parts of one or two of its meetings each year. If you think you might want to discover more, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Malcolm.

Adverts like this are an important way of recruiting new helpers for the Society. We gained a couple of 'roadies' to help with IT/AV kit recently, and we are still attempting to

identify someone for the membership role (you could still ask Malcolm about that too, if interested).

Malcolm Ramsay

Website comments blog

This is a new facility. When you read an article and see comment, you can click on this underlined word and leave your views on the topic. They will go first to a moderator, who will remove abuse and other material unsuited for publication, and will then be published and visible to all other website visitors. Indicate whether you are a member, Hertford resident, out of town visitor, or whatever, so others can see your perspective. The first topic inviting comments is the idea for a Hertford by-pass, on the Home page at www.hertfordcivicsociety.org.uk

John Bevan

PLANNING MATTERS

Bircherley Green

On 19 October a planning application was submitted by Barton Willmore LLP on behalf of Diageo Pension Trust Ltd seeking permission for "A non material minor amendment to 3/17/0392/FUL - Alterations to the phase 1 hotel building, including internal layout changes and revisions to external elevations." The application was accompanied by a Design and Access Statement. The following are extracts from that Statement.

"These minor design revisions are necessary to ensure compliance with the hotel operator's technical requirements, to respond to the site conditions as have been established during demolition and to improve accessibility. Additionally, in consultation with the main contractor, design revisions have been introduced to address buildability, sequencing

and to improve overall viability. Great care has been taken to ensure that the design intent of the approved development has been maintained.”

“Following a process of further refinements to the hotel’s design, the roofscape to Railway Street has evolved to ensure the continued viability of the project whilst maintaining the high standard of design achieved by the approved scheme. Given the importance of the hotel as phase 1 of the wider Bircherley Green Shopping Centre regeneration scheme, it is crucial that its construction begins as soon as possible.”

“It has been established that the approved scheme provides insufficient space for the external plant required by the hotel operator.”

“Discussions with the appointed contractor have highlighted several construction issues with the approved hotel building design. By introducing this minimal roof design change, the project becomes viable once more. A simplified roof design will result in a more straightforward construction phase and will reduce the construction programme significantly. In turn, this allows the hotel operator to occupy the site and open sooner enabling the second phase of the scheme to progress.”

These extracts appear to be claiming that without the revisions the approved scheme would not comply with the hotel operator’s technical requirements. In addition there are references to “buildability” and “continued viability”. (I understand that the recent demolition has revealed that the roof structure of the now remaining buildings along Railway Street is not what had previously been thought to be the case.) The extracts also appear to suggest that without the roof design change the project would not be viable.

On 16th November the application was refused by East Herts Council because it was considered

that “The proposed amendments as shown on the submitted drawings go beyond the provisions of S96A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and would be materially different from the original planning permission granted” - in other words, the changes were not “non material minor amendments”. This determination did not say that the changes were unacceptable and it would be possible for the changes to be resubmitted acknowledging that the changes were “material”. As far as I am aware the applicant has not done this.

On 14th November John McHale wrote to members of the Stakeholder Liaison Group as follows “**We had hoped to make changes to the design. These are not acceptable to East Herts and, therefore, we need to reconsider the delivery strategy. I will not be in a position to provide any greater clarity than provided in this email for a couple of weeks but rest assured we will be doing all we can to find the best strategy for the delivery of the project.**”

Terry Betts



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The District Plan

The new District Plan for East Herts was adopted in October 2018. It sets out planning policies and proposals for the District until 2033. The Plan includes highly controversial proposals to build on large areas of land near Ware and Harlow which have been taken out of the Green Belt, although the countryside around Hertford itself is less affected. We objected to several aspects of the Plan at the draft stages, but now that an Inspector has found it 'sound' and it has been adopted, any opposition to future planning applications which comply with the Plan would be futile.

Despite its controversial aspects, the Council are to be congratulated for putting together - at long last - a document which will safeguard the District from development which is unplanned and unco-ordinated, and which hopefully will bring forward new schools, parks and doctors' surgeries in tandem with new houses and flats. However we do remain concerned about the Plan's support for the principle of a Hertford by-pass when the long-term consequences for the town of building, or not building, a by-pass have not been critically assessed.

As development schemes come forward, the Society will be vigilant to ensure that they conform to all the policies and criteria laid down in the Plan. It is the Plan as a whole which has been found 'sound', with all its caveats and provisos, not just the headline policies which allocate sites for residential and other development. We particularly welcome the determination expressed by some Councillors when the Plan was adopted that developers should be obliged to deliver their full quota of affordable housing in accordance with its terms. We'll also be looking to the Council to enforce the stringent new provisions on air quality which were inserted into the Plan partly in response to our objections.

Peter Norman

Media House

A year ago the Newsletter reported our objection to the proposal to add an extra storey to Media House, the former office building in Ware Road once occupied by the *Mercury*. The resulting building would have been more bulky and taller than most of its neighbours, and would have dominated the street scene, including the adjacent Listed building occupied by Network Homes. We urged the Council to give full weight to policies designed to protect the conservation area and the setting of Listed buildings, and refuse permission.

Permission for the additional storey has now been refused under delegated powers.

Peter Norman

Gasworks Site Application

An application for redevelopment of the gasworks site at Marshgate Drive has recently been lodged with East Herts Council at <https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=PHVIS1GLGQR00&activeTab=summary>

A BYPASS FOR HERTFORD?

Wednesday January 16: Cllr Derrick Ashley, Herts CC Executive Member for Growth, Infrastructure, Planning and the Economy

Catholic Church, St John's Street. 7.30pm. Please note time.

The County Council are proposing a bypass for Hertford. It is part of the 'A414 Corridor Strategy', a new transport strategy for the main east west route in Hertfordshire, from Harlow to St Albans. Over 50,000 new homes included in current Local Plans are to be within five miles of the A414 and emerging local plan proposals will increase that number. The impacts on the route are likely to be significant. Between now and the end of February the County are consulting on their proposals.

At the meeting on 16 January Cllr Ashley will be available to explain and discuss the bypass and the other proposals for Hertford which are included in the Strategy. The document describes the proposals for Hertford as:

- A bypass to the south of the town to attract through-traffic out of the town centre and improve journey time reliability.
- Repurposing the A414 dual carriageway as a multimodal sustainable transport corridor primarily serving local movements and access to Hertford, discouraging through trips which neither begin nor end in the town.

Delivering a step change in terms of high quality footway and cycle route provision, including removal of subways, introducing of local bus priority and facilitating a Mass Rapid Transit system through Hertford.

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Members of the Committee can also be contacted by email via the Society's website at www.hertfordcivicsociety.org.uk

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As we said in the last Newsletter, a bypass would be a large and controversial project, costly in financial and environmental terms, with far-reaching implications for the future of Hertford. The benefits of building a bypass have not yet been fully assessed, and so far there is little information about possible alternative routes. A proposal made by independent public transport experts for a cross-County tramway is mentioned as a possibility in the Strategy but again no serious evaluation has been published. Another worry which we know several members have is that, as the County's Transport Plan acknowledges, a bypass would enable - indeed encourage - the town to grow: something which is not necessarily a good thing, bearing in mind the areas of flood plain and Green Belt which surround the town. On the other hand, as we all know congestion on Gascoyne Way is getting worse by the day and the effect on air quality is only too evident. What is to be done?

Come to the meeting: hear from the County Council and have your say.

Peter Norman

MARKETS

Hertford needs its markets more than ever now that Bircherley Green is in abeyance. They help to bring the town to life on Saturdays in particular. While the farmers market only happens once a month, it has a splendid variety of stalls, selling things not exactly available in



shops and supermarkets. Unfortunately, East Herts Council (EHC), which manages the markets quite carefully, now feels that it needs to make financial savings here (around £50,000 a year for staff costs and rubbish disposal). In Stortford, the Town Council has taken over the market, but this has not happened in Hertford, or Ware. How well will Hertford's markets survive in a less supportive framework? Would it matter if traders had to pay similar fees and yet be responsible for their own rubbish disposal?

Hearing of these imminent changes, the Society's main committee decided that some research should be carried out, to check whether traders were happy. So, on the day of the November farmers market, questionnaires and clipboards in hand, two of us (Sue Jones and Malcolm Ramsay) interviewed traders at every stall, in both the main market and the farmers market. We heard comparatively few grumbles about fees or rubbish disposal, and all eight stalls in the main market were broadly confident that they would be continuing to trade in Hertford.

Different findings emerged in the farmers market. There, seven of the 13 traders said they were very worried that, in future, they would be expected not only to use but also to store the official EHC gazebos, currently erected, dismantled and housed for them by the Council. Most already had gazebos of their own, which they would be willing to use, and they did not want to try to find space to store another one at home. For some, including at least one of the most popular stalls, this was a red line issue: they would not be returning once any such rule applied. This view may actually have been based on a misunderstanding, and it is interesting that three other traders in the farmers market were completely unaware of the imminent changes to their terms and conditions.

The research team wrote up its findings [available on request from

Malcolm Ramsay/to be found on our website] and emailed them first to the District Council and then the Town Council. Our emails were sufficiently clear and concerning: prompt responses were received from senior Councillors in both authorities, acknowledging that there were issues needing further thought, or clarification. On that basis, we can perhaps hope that the farmers market might fare better than was apparent to the research team in November. At least the future of the main market, which provides its own gazebos, seems less obviously bleak.

Malcolm Ramsay

HERTFORD THEATRE

In response to the news that the Council intend to substantially refurbish and extend Hertford Theatre we wrote to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Linda Haysey, asking her to ensure that the authority's design and procurement procedures are able to produce a refurbished theatre that will be an iconic building worthy of its central position in the town and in the life of the town. The procurement process should not be such that the Council becomes locked into a 'design and build' situation with a single consortium, and we suggested that what is needed is some form of architectural competition to secure a design which is striking and innovative, but sympathetic to its setting in the heart of the historic core of Hertford.

Peter Norman

VISIT TO SUDBURY

Our outing began with a visit to the Bulmer Brick and Tile Company near Sudbury, which specialises in providing copies of bricks and tiles for restoring historic buildings, including Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace, the Royal Courts of Justice and St Pancras Station. Only three families have owned a works on this

site since the 1500s and our guide was Peter Minter, whose family took it over in the 1930s.

The London clay deposits stretch from here down into Kent and Surrey and can be used for high quality bricks. After being dug and then stored outside for a year, the clay is washed, drained, sieved and then milled to the required consistency before being shaped in wooden moulds. These are hand-carved to the specific design required for the building and the company now has about 8,000 in store. Alternatively, for less elaborate designs, a standard block can be made and then sawn by hand with a bow-saw after firing.



Clay being shaped in a wooden mould

Once the bricks have been shaped in the mould, they are removed and stacked outdoors on wooden racks to dry off, after which they are ready for firing in brick-built, domed kilns. The two kilns can hold 12,000 bricks each and take three days to load, three to heat up, three to fire and three to cool down and consume four and a half tons of coal per firing. In this operation, organisation and timing are important as well as the complex and ancient skills. While young people are interested in coming into the business to be trained, Peter Minter is concerned

about its future because cuts to further education colleges make it difficult for them to get the supporting technical and academic education they also need for this work.

We then moved on to Sudbury itself, where we were given a guided tour by members of the Sudbury Civic Society, starting in the garden they have created to memorialise the wool weavers from whom the town derived much of its wealth in the Middle Ages. By the late 17th century they were joined by Protestant Huguenot silk weavers fleeing religious persecution in France, and although the woollen industry is no more, there are still silk weavers in Sudbury making luxury items, including brocades for the royal palaces.

Sudbury has been occupied since pre-Roman times and a stretch of moat is evidence of the defences begun by the Trinovantes tribe. The medieval church of St Gregory's was heavily restored by the Victorians but still has a very impressive tower-like C15th wooden font cover and a painted ceiling.



St Gregory's church

A medieval clergyman, Simon of Sudbury, founded a college for priests near the church and rose to become Archbishop of Canterbury. Unfortunately for him, he also became Richard II's Chancellor and, as the man held responsible for the hated poll tax, was beheaded by the mob in London during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. His embalmed head is preserved in the church, though not on display, and the bodies of some of the peasants who suffered Richard's revenge are buried nearby under a field known as The Croft. His college survived through many re-buildings and uses, becoming a workhouse, a hospital and currently being converted into flats.

The town has a wealth of architectural interest, especially in timber-framed buildings, which can be found in almost all the central streets and often include local bricks and tiles.



Thomas Gainsborough was born in Sudbury, and his house, now the Gainsborough Museum, has a fine 18th century frontage and houses an excellent collection of the artist's works, as well as temporary exhibitions by other artists. And when you can concentrate on art no longer, it also has a charming and tranquil refuge in a walled garden with an ancient mulberry tree.

By the 18th/19th centuries the centre of gravity of the UK's textile industry had moved from eastern England to the north, but agriculture was still important in this region and the Corn Exchange was built with an imposing Classical front topped by impressively-sized wheat-

sheaves and a sculpture of reclining reapers. It was only just saved from being replaced by a supermarket in the 1960s and is now carefully restored and serves as the library and tourist information office.

Like the Corn Exchange, many buildings in Sudbury have been radically altered over the years for change of use, modernisation and road alterations. The great 18th century road-builder John McAdam, for example, seems to have had no compunction about chopping off the end of the fine medieval Salter's Hall in order to smooth out the gradient up an awkward hill to improve traffic flow.

Another example of architectural evolution is the Mill Hotel. There has probably been a water-mill here since Roman times and in the 19th century it also had a conveyor belt reaching across the road to a large granary, making it a substantial industrial operation. As an hotel, it could still be said to be part of the food industry, but the granary has now been converted into flats.



Our day's outing was packed with interest and also left us with food for thought about economic change and how we decide what to abandon, what to adapt and how to change for the better without destroying what is valuable from the past.

Further information at

<http://bulmerbrickandtile.co.uk/>

www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk/heritagecentre

<http://www.sudburysuffolk.co.uk/>

<http://www.gainsborough.org/>

Sue Jones

Pictures by Ian Nash

PREVIOUS TALKS TO MEMBERS

Recording Hertford's Oral History

Peter Ruffles

When a handful of enthusiasts decided to collect and study the history Hertford through the thoughts and reflections of ordinary townfolk, they had no idea just how rich a resource they would have created 30 years on.

The story of Hertford's Oral History Group - as told by Peter Ruffles at the November meeting of Hertford Civic Society - in itself proved to be a fascinating tour of town's recent history. From the devastation of the wartime bomb near The Wash to the story of one homosexual imprisoned in a less enlightened age for leafleting the public.

Then there was the regular call-out of the fire brigade to hose-down and quell over-heated brawling in Bircherley Green and the story told by 93-year-old Ruby Henry who paints a picture through her words about old Railway Street that few fading sepia photographs were able to capture.

Put simply, Oral History is the gathering of historical information through interviews using tape recordings of people having personal

knowledge of past events. As Peter Ruffles said: “We realised we could gather the sort of historical detail that few academics had access to.”

The resulting resource, that is housed in Hertford Museum and provides invaluable material for local historians such as Jean Riddell, is thanks to a small far-sighted group, he told the meeting. “Eve Sangster was the driving force behind the Oral History Group, founded almost 30 years ago in partnership with the Civic Society, Hertford Museum and Hertford & Ware Historical Association.” Founding members included Eve and Peter, together with Simon Townsend (museum), Alan Greening, Hertford & Ware Historical Association.

The group also contributed much to the community as it developed. “We raised thousands of pounds for charity with events such as *Slides of Hertford* while bringing to prominence the lives of people who have lived here for a long time. We were painting a picture of Hertford as a community. It is the people who make the town as much as the physical environment called Hertford.”

At the outset, a few founding principles were agreed:

- There would be no chair, with the members rotating the responsibility;
- The group would capture the spoken word from the whole of the town community socially;
- Information gathered would be biographically-based, interviewing the person in front of us for their life story;
- The “harvested data” would reflect life at all social levels;
- And the full interviews would be transcribed in note form.

All the material, tapes and transcriptions are now in the museum, he said. “Harvesting meant a lot of wonderful plundering by people including Jean Riddell and Eve Sangster. They

were able to produce personal detail that the history books cannot always give.

For example, Ronald Wright remembered not only the tragic deaths of family members when a WWII landmine on a parachute destroyed his grandparents’ house in Tamworth Road in 1940, creating a crater “deep enough to put a double-decker bus into”, but also poignant details such as broken glass everywhere and the remains of the budgerigars from the aviary in a neighbour’s back garden - “...I managed to get some shoeboxes, I remember, and I was collecting these lovely little bodies, dozens and dozens of them, and they were strewn everywhere, all over the wreckage, these beautiful little birds.”

“In our taking something personal and private, the people we interview are aware that they have given us something pretty important,” explained Peter Ruffles. “So, we make sure we keep saying thank you. Every year, they get a Christmas card and newsletter.”

More information at

<http://www.hertfordmuseum.org/oralhistory/>

Ian Nash

A WIDER VIEW

Planning Reforms

Are major reforms to the planning system in the offing? While a Government consultation is suggesting that planning regulation should be loosened to free up permitted development rights for conversion of commercial premises for housing, the Raynsford Review of planning wants a stronger focus on the needs of communities.

The Civic Trust and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England are pursuing developments in the debate at

www.cpreherts.org.uk/ and
<http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/>