

News

from The Victorian Society

AUTUMN 2007

Welcome to the third friends' news update from the Victorian Society, our twice-yearly newsletter designed to keep you up to date with what we're doing now. We plan to send this letter out every six months. However, if you would prefer not to receive news from us, please get in touch.

We're always pleased to receive your comments, so if there is anything you would like to add to any of our campaigns, please do let us know. Once again, thank you for all the support you have given us over the years. Without your help, we wouldn't have been able to do nearly as much.

Ian Dungavell
Director



Shadwell Park, near Brettenham, Norfolk

Our Top Ten Endangered Buildings cause a stir

This summer we appealed for people to let us know about threats to buildings they value. We were amazed at the response: pictures and information flooded in from all over England and Wales. We heard of many excellent buildings in need of our help, among them the Grade I-listed Shadwell Park (extended by Edward Blore, 1839-42; enlarged by SS Teulon, 1856-60) pictured here. After much deliberation, we selected the ten best and most threatened buildings for our Top Ten list which we publicized widely, drawing a great deal of notice from the press and putting pressure on the owners of the buildings to take action to save them before it is too late. The list was so successful that we are planning to draw up another one in 2008, so please keep your eyes peeled for potential candidates and let us know what you find.



A carved pew-end at St Edmund in Mansfield Woodhouse

Taking to the air waves

If you are a regular listener to BBC Radio 4's *The Archers* you will be well aware of Vicar Alan Franks plans to strip the Victorian pews out of St Stephen's, the fictional thirteenth century church in the village of Ambridge. Given the lively debate these plans provoked among the characters, we thought this might be an excellent opportunity to air the question of pew removal more widely, as it is an issue we are frequently dealing with. We are not against pew removal in all cases – where the pews are unremarkable or there is a specific need for more space or access we rarely object outright – however, we are concerned by the number of applications we receive to take out pews without any clear reason for doing so. In the case of *The Archers*, it seemed clear that the quality of the pews in question had been given little consideration. For this reason, we started a 'Save the Ambridge Pews' campaign, complete with badges, which are available free from us at the address below. We received considerable coverage and were even invited onto Radio 4's *You and Yours* to talk more about the issue. In addition, *The Archers* production team has been in touch to discuss the development of the storyline. Who knows, there may be a Victorian Society site-visit to Ambridge yet...

**THE VICTORIAN
SOCIETY**

1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT. Telephone 020 8747 5897
Email community@victoriansociety.org.uk Web www.victoriansociety.org.uk
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Easington Colliery Junior School



Easington Senior Girls, Class 5, 1919

Mining memories

You may remember reading about the Grade II-listed Easington Colliery School in our last friends' newsletter. The future of these imposing 1911 buildings by John Morson was hanging in the balance. Having stood empty for nine years, the buildings were up for total demolition and we were awaiting the outcome of a Public Inquiry, at which we had fought alongside English Heritage, to see whether or not they would be saved.

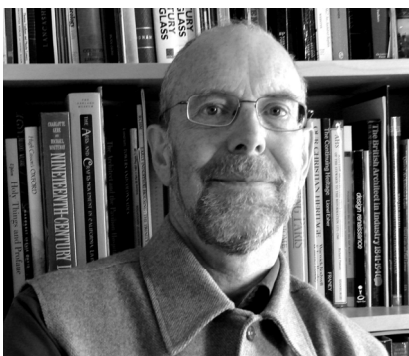
We are delighted to report that, having heard the evidence from both sides, the Planning Inspector agreed that the school should be retained as an irreplaceable record of the development of the coalfield community. Yet the struggle for Easington Colliery School is far from over: the buildings remain empty and in poor repair with no future use agreed. Once more, local people are forced to live alongside the derelict buildings that are blighting their already deprived village. It is imperative that a good scheme for the buildings be agreed quickly so that local people can be proud of them again. We have been maintaining a campaign in the local media to try and achieve this but so far little progress has been made.



Some of the crawlers at the Anchor, Digbeth in Birmingham

Victorian Society members drink to Birmingham's heritage

As the next step in our campaign to encourage more people to use and enjoy Britain's historic pubs, an intrepid band of our Birmingham group members followed Dr Geoff Brandwood on a pub crawl around five of the city's best listed pubs. Starting at the Market Tavern (James & Lister Lea, 1899-1900) on Moseley Street, the group visited the White Swan, the Anchor and the Woodman, before finishing with a Thai meal at the newly refurbished, Grade II*-listed Barton Arms (James & Lister Lea, 1900-01). The event aroused a lot of interest in the local and national press and we hope that it will encourage architecture enthusiasts everywhere to get out and go for a drink at the Victorian or Edwardian pub near them.



Dr Colin Cunningham

Changing places

In August, we welcomed Dr Colin Cunningham as our new Chairman. Former Chairman of the Society of Architectural Historians, Dr Cunningham was Reader in Architectural History and a Senior Visiting Research Fellow at the Open University. Among his publications are *Building for the Victorians* (Cambridge University Press, 1985) and *Alfred Waterhouse 1830-1905: Biography of a Practice* (Oxford University Press, 1992), for which he was jointly awarded the Alice Davis Hitchcock medallion. He replaces Dr Geoff Brandwood who steps down after six years as our Chairman. We thank Dr Brandwood for all he has done for the Society and look forward to working with Dr Cunningham as we go into our 50th anniversary year.



Alex Baldwin

We are also pleased to announce the arrival of our new Conservation Adviser, Alex Baldwin, who is responsible for casework in the North of England and Wales. A former architectural consultant for the Peak District National Park Authority, Alex has an MA from the University of Edinburgh and is just completing an MSc in Historic Conservation at Oxford Brookes. Alex started with us in July and is already a valued member of the team.



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