



SOMERSET BUILDING
Preservation Trust

NEWSLETTER

September 2020

Dear Members

Firstly, may I say how much we appreciate your continued support during what has been a very difficult and challenging year for everyone.

Like most organisations we have had to cancel or postpone a number of planned events, including the ever-popular member visits to historic homes and our biennial Stansell Awards.

Unfortunately, there was no other option as our main priority was to stay within the guidelines and keep everyone safe during this pandemic.

It is still not possible to predict with any certainty what the coming months will bring in this fast-changing situation but we will endeavour to keep you in touch with developments.

As our programme this year has been so greatly curtailed, it has been agreed that your current membership will be extended until the end of 2021.

However, if you wish to continue to contribute to our work, by paying your annual membership in the usual way, we would be extremely grateful. This would really help us in our task of safeguarding some of the county's most historic buildings.

Our secretary Jane, who was furloughed, has now returned to work part-time and, despite the various restrictions, our input to a number of current projects is continuing.

We have managed to complete the sale of the Temple of Harmony and we are still hopeful of a successful outcome of the plans to restore the Bishops Barn at Wells, more information about both of these appear in this newsletter.

We look forward to seeing you before too long. In the meantime, please stay safe.

Russell Lillford
Chairman

A reminder..

The best way to keep up to date with our activities, is to look at our website www.sbpt.info .

The redesigned site is easy to navigate and gives access to a wide range of information, including past projects and research documents.

Temple of Harmony



Before and after restoration.

The sale of the Temple of Harmony on the Halswell Park Estate at Goathurst has now been completed.

The 18th folly, a replica of the Temple of Fortuna Virilis in Rome, has been sold to Edward Strachan who has already acquired the surrounding land, known as Mill Wood, and is restoring Haswell House back to its former glory.

It is a condition of the sale that the Temple will be open to the public for at least 28 days a year. This fulfils one of the Trust's original objectives.

It was back in 1996 that SBPT purchased the Temple and with grant aid from Historic England repaired the building after it had become derelict and used as a cattle shelter. After the restoration, it was leased to the Halswell Park Trust who opened it to the public on Sunday afternoons in the summer.

Bishops Barn

Work on plans to restore the historic 15th century tithe barn in Wells have been slowed by the restrictions during the past few months.

Before the lockdown, SBPT and Mendip District Council had appointed architects to work out a costed plan of improvements that would enable greater use of the building by local organisations and the public.

Councillors will get the opportunity to discuss the proposals in the next few weeks and it is hoped that, before too long, we will be able to report some positive progress on this project.

Stansell Awards

We had been planning a very special occasion this autumn to mark the 20th anniversary of the launch of the Stansell Awards. However, we have had to postpone it until next year.

It was in 2000 that the Trust introduced these awards to acknowledge and encourage excellence in design, craftsmanship and conservation and highlight the positive contribution that well designed and conserved buildings make to their surroundings.

In normal times, the awards are given to projects that have been completed in the previous two years. In view of the postponement, we have extended this period and will now look at builds in the previous three years – 2018, 2019 and 2020.

The new closing date for entries is May 7 2021. Those projects that had already been entered for the 2020 event do not need to reapply.

If members know of owners, developers or organisations who have undertaken projects in the last three years that might qualify for an award, please contact our secretary Jane or download an entry form from the website.



The Shell House Aviary at Jordans, Horton, one of the winners in the 2018 Stansell Awards.

AGM

Normally at this time of year we are planning our Annual General Meeting, an event that is followed by a tour of an interesting building or current project. This will not be possible this year within the current restrictions. So we are planning to circulate the annual report, including the financial accounts, by email later in the autumn. This will give members to opportunity to comment on any items.