



SOMERSET BUILDING
Preservation Trust

NEWSLETTER

September 2019

Dear Members

We have enjoyed two excellent visits during the past six months. Firstly, a conducted tour of Nettlecombe Court, the West Somerset mansion with a long and rich history, then the trip to the superbly refurbished Ven House, near Milborne Port. Both were very special occasions and it was good to see so many of you there.

Our next visit will be to North Cadbury Court for our Annual General meeting (see details below). This will give our members a chance to hear about the Trust's work in helping to preserve Somerset's built heritage and ask any questions. After a sandwich lunch, members will get the chance to look around this splendid Grade 1 building and grounds. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

As you will know, every two years we present awards to building projects, including restorations, extensions or new builds, that our judges feel have made a positive contribution to their setting.

So, if you know of anyone who has undertaken such a project in the past two years, please encourage them to contact our secretary Jane for details of how to apply.

Russell Lillford
Chairman

Hope to see you there!

We hope to see as many members as possible at our AGM which is being held on 8 October 2019 at North Cadbury Court, which is just north of the A303 about five miles from Wincanton.

Coffee will be available in the Great Hall from 11.30am and the AGM will begin at 12. After a sandwich lunch, members will be able to tour the superb 16th century house, that has a history stretching back 700 years and is not normally open to the public, and the extensive gardens. Further information about this property can be found on the website www.northcadburycourt.com.

There is a £15 per person contribution. You should have received a booking form from the secretary. We would ask you to return this by **September 24** at the latest.

Directions (travelling towards London): Use the A303 and take the exit signed S Cadbury/N Cadbury/Compton Pauncefoot/Sutton Montis/Corton Denham - about 5 miles before Wincanton. Follow signs to North Cadbury and turn right into Woolston Road as you enter the village. North Cadbury Court is on your right after 200 yards. The postcode is BA22 7DR

History in Stone

There was an unexpected bonus for members who visited Nettlecombe Court, near Williton, in March. After being shown around the fascinating Grade 1 mansion, with its medieval, Tudor and Elizabethan architecture and learning of its turbulent history, they had the opportunity to see the conservation work being carried out in St Mary's Church which stands in the grounds.

Conservator Torquil McNeilage took time off from his painstaking restoration of a medieval effigy and tomb to explain the techniques used to preserve historic stonework and carvings.



We are already looking at a list of interesting historic properties which we could visit in the coming year.

Final choices have yet to be made but we will keep you in touch and let you have the full details when the arrangements have been confirmed.

If members have any suggestions of places we might visit in the future we would be glad to hear from them.

Ven House

Ven House, at Milborne Port, was once described as “by far the grandest house in Somerset” and few who visited the house and gardens in June would disagree with that description. The Trust had been trying for some years to arrange a visit to this Grade 1 listed manor house, designed by our old friend Nathaniel Ireson. It proved well worth the wait.

The ownership changed four years ago and the new owners have spent time, effort and, no doubt, considerable sums of cash, lavishly restoring this early Georgian mansion. A splendid tea was provided in the Orangery and Palm House.



Members took time out from a tour of the gardens of Ven House to make friends with the resident goats.

Update.....Update.....Update.....Update.....Update.....Update.....

Bishop's Barn, Wells

We are continuing to work with our partners to find ways to increase the community use of this historic building. A number of studies have been carried out and these are now being considered by the Wells Recreation Ground Trust. We will let you know the outcome in due course.

New Look Website

Our new website is up and running – and already proving its worth.

We have given the site a fresh, clean format that hopefully is much easier to navigate and gives access to a much wider range of information, including an extensive archive of material, including past projects and research documents.

We have already signed up new members via the website so it is obviously being noticed.

The site has kept the same domain name – www.sbpt.info – so why not visit it and see what you think. We would be interested in your views.

Buildings at Risk

There is cautious optimism that work may restart in the near future on the derelict historic mansion at Sandhill Park, Bishops Lydeard, which featured in our last newsletter.

The legal teams of the district council and the administrators are negotiating changes to the original planning conditions that would release money to enable restoration work to resume possibly as early as this autumn. There have been so many twists and turns in this sad saga that non-one is making any firm predictions.

We await developments and will keep you informed.

A Reminder....

As our chairman has pointed out, it will not be too long now before judges will start assessing entries for the next William Stansell / Somerset Building Preservation Trust Awards that are given every two years to recognise exceptionally high standards of design and craftsmanship.

So, if you know of any recent project that might qualify for one of these prestigious awards or want more information, please contact our secretary Jane Boyd-Brent.