



CITY HERITAGE SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021

Once again it has, indeed, been another challenging and strange year. I remain very much your fledgling Chairman with little opportunity to arrange any events or to meet you after another confusing year of hibernation due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The much hoped for new age braking last summer was very short lived with the continued restrictions on gatherings and member's reticence to meet. However, things have been kept ticking over with the committee continuing to hold meetings. The Annual Award ceremony did not take place and it is hoped that there can be an Awards ceremony this year covering 2021 and 2022 but, as can be seen from the article on planning application comments, there are doubts about this. A pity on this, the 50th year since the formation of the Society.

We had a most fascinating and intriguing walk guided by our President, Desmond Fitzpatrick around the Temple and legal quarter. It was attended by a goodly number of members keen to re-establish contact, meet fellow members and enjoy Desmond's insights and other attendee's fascinating contributions too.

We had a very enjoyable AGM at Guildhall with an unusually high turnout. An opportunity to meet fellow members and explore some good ideas for activities when the world opens up once again, which we are all doubtless much looking forward to. There was a debate about the future of the Annual Dinner centring on whether we should move to a less formal occasion and,

perhaps, a move from the traditional autumn date to one of the summer months.

Onwards and upwards!

Dorian Crone

Visits

In July a City Walk was organised by Desmond FitzPatrick. A dozen members gathered outside Temple station on a day of sunshine and showers for the first event since the tour of the Royal Opera House back in November 2019.

The walk began with Desmond describing the great engineering feat that is the Embankment. The party then made their way past Two Temple Place, the former home of the Astor family, a building which the architect had an unlimited budget to work with. Next was Essex Street where, like the adjacent streets, legal chambers are prominent and then on to Devereux Court, (below) named after the 2nd Earl of Essex. It contains barristers' chambers and three pubs.





New Court followed. Since 1801 it has been the HQ office of the banking dynasty, Rothchild & Co. Just nearby is Middle Temple, (above) one of the four Inns of Court and where 'Twelfth Night' was first recorded. Passed through Pump Court and on to Temple Church, founded by the Knights Templar. Next was King's Bench Walk where No 2 was designed by Sir Christopher Wren and is listed Grade 1. A trip down Bouverie Street, which leads into Fleet Street, was a reminder of the days of the newspaper industry. Adjacent is Carmelite Street, once the home of the White Friars. From Magpie Alley the party was able to view the vaulted cellar of the medieval friary which is now under 88 Fleet Street.

Final stop was Salisbury Square, once the property of the Bishop of Salisbury. The square is dominated by an obelisk (below) dedicated to Alderman Robert Waithman, a draper who became a politician and Lord Mayor. He was described as "The friend of liberty in evil times."



This was an interesting walk in a part of London which could be said to be a little off the beaten track. Indeed, something of an oasis sandwiched between the busy thoroughfares of Fleet Street and the Embankment.

As a footnote, the Salisbury Square area is going to be re-developed to include 18 City of London courtrooms plus a new police HQ.

Carol Service

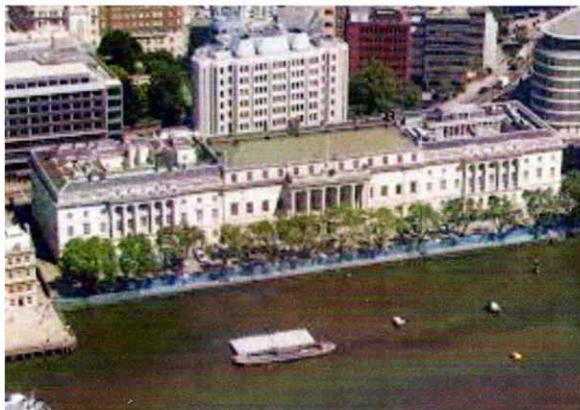
On 16 December we were once again made very welcome as we shared in the Annual Parish Carol Service at St Botolph's – without – Bishopsgate. A pew was reserved for the Society. Normally the church is packed with office workers and the music is provided by the choir and band of Coopers and Caborn School. Not so this year due to Covid-19. Office workers were thin on the ground with the school deciding it would not be wise for the pupils to attend.

Nevertheless, it was an excellent service backed by the choir of St Botolph's who were in fine voice. Usually at the end of the service the congregation gather after the service to indulge in mulled wine and mince pies. This time, refreshments were delivered to the pews. Sweet biscuits instead of mince pies and white wine in place of mulled wine.

Planning Application Comments

Due to the pandemic, there has been a paucity of refurbishments linked to conservation in the City so much so, that the Society's Annual Award ceremony did not take place in either 2020 or 2021. Indeed, there are indications that this year there will be insufficient candidates to justify a meaningful contest. Applications are being granted in respect of new developments but these, of course, are of little interest to the Society.

There has been just one application on which we commented and that was in respect of the Custom House, Lower Thames Street (below). The Custom House was constructed in 1817 and is listed Grade I. Some years ago the Crown sold the building to a developer who wishes to turn it into a 5* hotel complete with conference and meeting facilities. HMRC staff finally vacated the building in January last year.



The City of London, together with Save British Heritage and the Georgian Society, have lodged objections to the scheme. City planning officers have listed 12 reasons why

the scheme should be rejected. They argue that the redevelopment would not ensure the 'continued beneficial use of a historic building' and is not compatible with the City's long-term development which is focused on opening heritage assets in the Square Mile for public use.

Now the government's planning inspectorate and, ultimately, a minister will decide whether the proposal goes ahead in its present form

No doubting Thomas!

Joshua Thomas, grandson of Anne and James Thomas and studying at King's College, London aiming to be an accountant in the City, came a very creditable fourth in the World Duathlon Championships held last year in Aviles, Spain. A duathlon involves running and cycling as distinct from a triathlon which consists of running, cycling and swimming. Joshua lives in Stratford which enables him to practice running and cycling in the Olympic Park.

The Society's Executive Committee 2020

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| Dorian Crone RIBA, MRTPI, IHBC | Chairman |
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