



SOMERSET BUILDING
Preservation Trust

NEWSLETTER

October 2021

Dear Members

After the difficulties and uncertainties of the past 18 months, it is good to have some encouraging news for you.

We have been able to complete the judging of the much-delayed Stansell Awards and the certificates have been presented to the winners and those highly commended by the judges.

This was a very special milestone because it marked the 20th anniversary of the launch of these prestigious awards which aim to promote good design in new and restored buildings. The prize list is included in this Newsletter.

It has still not been possible, given all the uncertainties, to arrange a visit for members. However, restrictions permitting, we are now looking at options for visits next year. We remain optimistic that we will be able to meet up again very soon.

It was also pleasing to learn that the fire-damaged mansion at Sandhill Park has been purchased by a development firm that plans to restore the building and turn it into apartments. Hopefully, this will be the start of a bright future for the building which has been a sad sight for a very long time.

But it is not all good news, I'm afraid. We were very sad to hear of the death of our president Ralph Clark in early September. He was a stalwart supporter of the Trust, although he had not been able to attend many events in recent years, and was our founding chairman. He will be greatly missed.

May I repeat how much we have appreciated members' continued support during what has been a very difficult and frustrating time for everyone.

Russell Lillford
Chairman

The Annual General Meeting...

Members will recall that in the past we have combined the annual meeting with a visit to a house or current building project.

Unfortunately, that has not been possible again this year but there are certain formalities that have to be completed so we will be circulating the annual report, including the financial accounts, by email later this month. This will give members to opportunity to comment on any items.

Stansell Awards

Six building projects were awarded certificates marking the exceptionally high standard of their design and craftsmanship.

Normally these awards – named after William Stansell – are presented every two years but the Covid restrictions meant that last year's ceremony had to be postponed. There were 19 entries and our judges - architect and town planner Colin Johns and former conservation officer Adron Duckworth - praised the research, design and workmanship that went into each project.

The award winners:-

The Forge, West Porlock - An old village smithy that has been converted into a family home whilst respecting the location and exploiting the view.

Castle House, Bridgwater – A project that has saved a nationally important piece of construction history. Built in 1851, Castle House was one of the first buildings to make extensive use of pre-cast concrete.

St John the Baptist Church, Axbridge – An ingenious and highly effective solution to providing an access ramp to the church while retaining the geometry of the original steps.

Tickenham Court, Clevedon - Careful research has resulted in a scheme that addresses issues of inappropriate earlier work together with 21st century intervention to enhance the spaces.



Castle House, Bridgwater



The Clockspire, Milborne Port

The Clockspire, Milborne Port – A Victorian school that has been brought back to life and is now a restaurant.

Low Ham Church, near Langport – The repair of this important church by the Churches Conservation Trust was well executed and has enhanced its role as an important local landmark attracting new interest.

The judges gave commendations to –

Number One Bruton – An important historic building given a new use as a boutique hotel.

Greenham Barton, near Wellington - Essential, authentic and enduring repairs have rescued this building from years of neglect.

Bruton Barton, Bruton - A complex of buildings now transformed to provide attractive living accommodation.

Ralph Clark

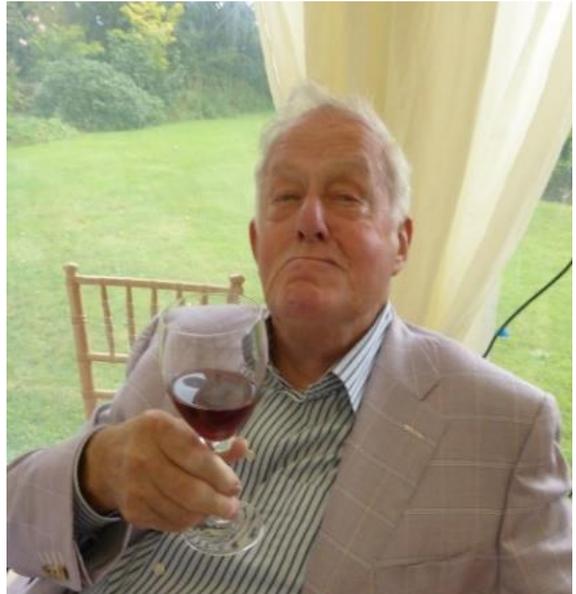
We are very sad to report the death, at the age of 94, of our president and founder chairman Ralph Clark.

Mr Clark, seen here celebrating his 90th birthday, was a Mendip district councillor and county councillor for Street for many years.

Over the years he had worked tirelessly for many good causes across the county and was great supporter of the SBPT and its work to preserve the built heritage.

He became the Trust's first chairman in 1988, a post he held until 2000.

In 2018 he was made an honorary alderman of Somerset County Council, a mark of the esteem in which he was held by his colleagues and the community.



Sandhill Park

There are fresh hopes that restoration work on the fire damaged historic mansion at Sandhill Park, on the edge of Bishops Lydeard, could resume.

Members will recall that the firm that planned to restore the Grade 2 listed building and convert it into apartments went into liquidation.



Now Somerset West and Taunton Council is working with the Akkeron Group, trading as Blackdown Hills Living Ltd, to ensure the mansion is preserved.

The first step will be to carry out emergency works, including making the building water-tight, with the aim of eventually turning it into apartments.

The stately home, built around 1720 for MP John Periam was later the home of the Lethbridge family for 150 years. During the past century it was used as a prisoner of war camp, military hospital and a children's home. It was badly damaged by fire in 2011 and is currently on Historic England's At Risk Register.

Conservation Engineering

SBPT Board member Patrick Stow, a chartered engineer specialising in the structural repair of historic buildings, has published a detailed casebook of many of the projects on which he worked over the years.

The weighty volume, which runs to 864 pages and contains more than 600 colour photographs and over 400 diagrams, has been described as “a most unusual but fascinating book”.

Patrick worked on many different buildings ranging from the agricultural to the grand house with a few small churches, devising some imaginative solutions to mitigate defects. Reviewer Robert Bowles commented: “The author’s enthusiasm for addressing the engineering challenges which historic buildings can present is clear and to be applauded.”

More details of the book can be found on pjstowauthor.uk



CONSERVATION ENGINEERING — A COLLECTION OF CASEWORK

P J STOW
Structural MSc CEng

VOLUME 1



And finally

You can get fuller details of the Stansell Awards and photos of all the prize-winners on our website www.sbpt.info .

The redesigned site is the quickest way to keep up to date with our activities. It is easy to navigate and gives access to a wide range of information, including past projects and research documents.

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