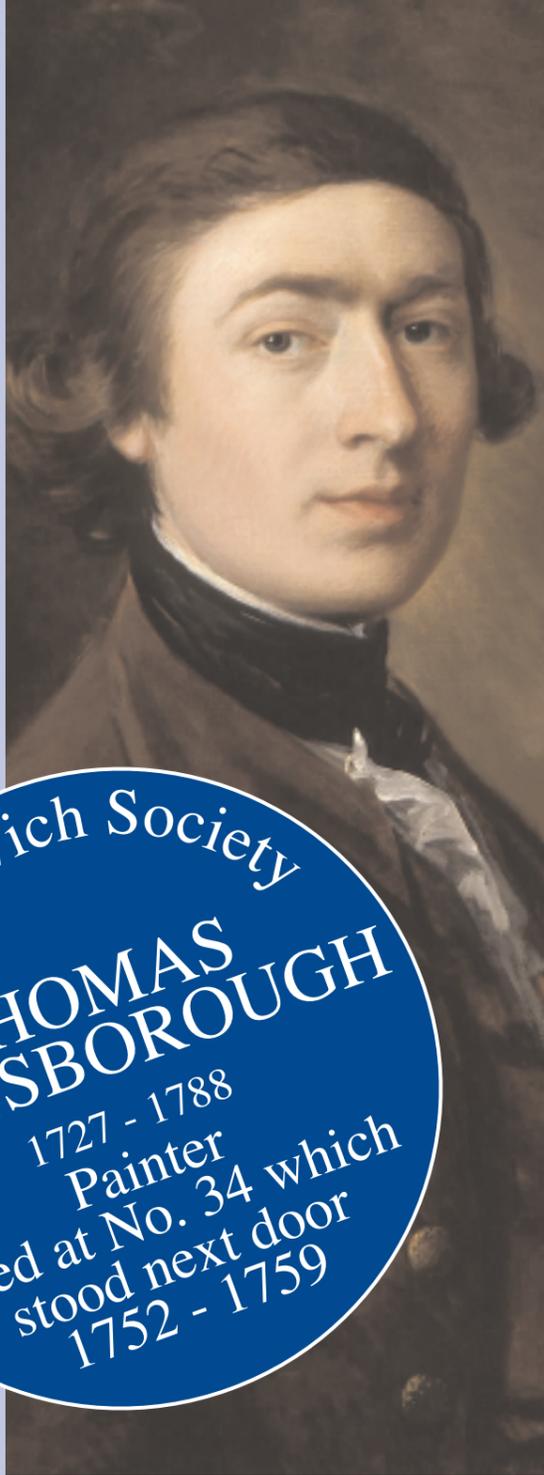


The Ipswich Society has installed a number of blue plaques in the town - our version of the English Heritage Blue Plaques seen elsewhere in Britain.

What started at the turn of the century continues to be an important and relevant tribute to some of the most distinguished people who were born in the town or subsequently lived here.

Our hope is that the plaques will make the streetscape and our history more interesting. We have only focused on the town centre where there are most passers-by and where anyone interested in methodically following a "trail" could do so.

There are further plaques around the town, erected by other organisations; these are listed at the end of the leaflet.



**The Ipswich Society**  
**THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH**  
 1727 - 1788  
 Painter  
 lived at No. 34 which stood next door 1752 - 1759



**NATHANIEL BACON**

(1593-1660) Manor House, St Margaret's Green

Nathaniel Bacon, described as a "pious, prudent learned man", was a member of the Bacon family which achieved great prominence nationally under Elizabeth I. Nathaniel was a key figure in Ipswich political life in the mid-17th century. He became its leading lawyer - the Recorder; its MP from 1646 to 1660; and its historian, being the compiler, in 1654, of the Annalls of Ipswiche, The Lawes Customes and Government of the Same.

During the Civil War he was Chairman of the Eastern Association Committee and a strong supporter of the Puritan cause. This made him very important regionally and nationally as an administrator and organiser during the War and the period of Commonwealth government, although he was opposed to the execution of Charles I and to the proclamation of the Commonwealth.

**The Ipswich Society**  
**NATHANIEL BACON**  
 1593 - 1660  
 Recorder of Ipswich  
 Parliamentarian  
 lived here  
 1642 - 1660



**THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH**

(1727-1788) 32 Foundation Street

The great Suffolk artist Gainsborough was born and educated in Sudbury, where he has long been properly honoured with a statue on the Market Hill. It is less well known that he spent seven formative years in Ipswich, 1752-1759.

After a few years of apprenticeship in London, he had returned to Sudbury in 1748 but he moved to Ipswich in 1752 because commissions for portraits were more easily obtained here. He rented 34 Foundation Street, a house similar to No 32 where the plaque is mounted. No 34 was shamefully demolished in the early 1960s.

As well as painting portraits and landscapes in Ipswich, Gainsborough was an enthusiastic member of the Ipswich Music Club. He played several keyboard and stringed instruments. He moved to Bath in 1759; the fashionable spa gave him more opportunities for meeting and painting rich patrons. But it is appropriate that Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich houses one of the best collections of Gainsborough's paintings outside London.

**The Ipswich Society**  
**THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH**  
 1727 - 1788  
 Painter  
 lived at No. 34 which stood next door  
 1752 - 1759

**Other plaques ...**

**The family of Geoffrey Chaucer**

21 Tavern Street (plaque is low on the right side wall in Tower St)

The Malyn family of Ipswich and London, vintners, took the name of Chaucer, derived from the trade of leather working, with which they were also associated. The Chaucer/Malyns including Geoffrey Chaucer's grandfather, owned and occupied premises on this site in the 13th and 14th centuries.

and for 14 years Lord Chancellor of England for Henry VIII, was, next to King Henry himself the most powerful man in the realm. The plaque, mounted on Curson Lodge, a building of appropriate age, reminds us that Wolsey's birthplace stood on a site on the opposite side of the street.

**Admiral Benjamin Page**

(1765-1845) 13 Tower Street

The plaque on this building commemorates the Ipswich-born admiral who lived here on his retirement after a distinguished naval career. He was made an honorary freeman of the borough in 1835. His portrait and paintings of six naval actions in which he took part, which he gave to the town, hang in the library room of the Town Hall.

**Cor Visser**

(1903-1982) 44 Fore Street

Born in Holland, the artist settled in Ipswich after the Second World War, during which he was the official war artist to the Dutch government in exile. He lived for some years on a boat in Ipswich dock, finding inspiration particularly in dockside scenes, before making his studio and home in Fore Street in 1962. Ipswich Museum collections contain some of his works.

**Thomas Eldred**

(died 1622) 97 Fore Street (plaque on the side wall facing east)

Eldred was an Ipswich merchant and mariner who sailed with Thomas Cavendish (also of Suffolk) on the second English circumnavigation of the globe 1586-88 - Drake's voyage 1577-80 having been the first. Eldred's house has been demolished but the houses standing across the street today remind us of the period and perhaps the style.

**Thomas Wolsey**

(1475-1530) 47 Nicholas Street

Wolsey, Cardinal of the Church, Archbishop of York



**The Ipswich Society**

**Ipswich's Blue Plaques**

**The Ipswich Society**

The Ipswich Society was founded in 1960 and is a community of people who care about the appearance, character and well-being of the town, its past and its future.

For further information please visit our website - [www.ipswichsociety.org.uk](http://www.ipswichsociety.org.uk)

You can join by filling in this form.

I/We\* wish to join the Ipswich Society as an individual/family\* member and enclose a cheque for £6/£10\* as first annual subscription. (block capitals please)

Name

Address

Postcode

Email

Signature  Date

\*please delete as appropriate

Cheques are payable to The Ipswich Society and should be sent, together with the form to:  
**Membership Secretary, The Ipswich Society, 5 Nelson Road, Ipswich IP4 4DS**

Designed and originated by Ipswich Borough Council's Communication + Design Unit

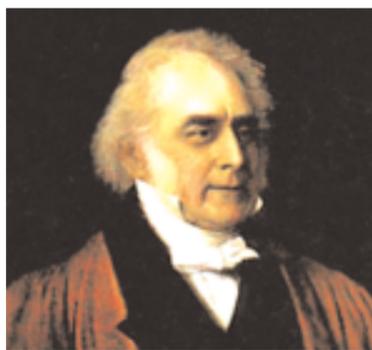




John Glyde



Jean Ingelow



William King



VS Pritchett



Robert Ransome

(courtesy of Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd)

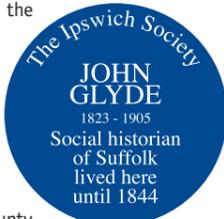
## JOHN GLYDE

(1823-1905) 9 Eagle Street

John Glyde is recognised as the foremost 19th century historian of Ipswich and Suffolk, the author of books which are still standard reference works on the social and economic aspects of the town and county.

A radical thinker, he was involved in many organisations working for the social and cultural improvements of Ipswich, including the founding of a Free Library for the town.

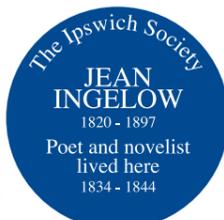
His bequest of books and manuscripts to the Ipswich Corporation in 1905 is now in the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich. During his working life he was a bookseller, an agent for domestic servants and a registrar of marriages.



## JEAN INGELOW

(1820-1897) 2 Elm Street

One of the most celebrated authors in Victorian times, Jean Ingelow's fame declined to almost nothing during the 20th century, although there is still a Jean Ingelow Society in America. However, she was



one of the best selling authors from 1850 until her death and was highly regarded by such eminent authors as Tennyson and Ruskin.

Her work included poetry (the best known of which was *A High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire*, still widely anthologised in the 20th century), children's stories and novels, such as *Off the Skelligs* (most of which is still very readable).

Born in Lincolnshire, she moved to Ipswich, aged 14, when her father became manager of the Ipswich and Suffolk Banking Company in Elm Street. Living here for ten years in the spacious first floor rooms over the bank she began her first experiments as a writer. After the bank failed and the family moved out, the arch was created and Arcade Street was built on the site of the Ingelow's garden.

## WILLIAM KING

(1786-1865) 19 Lower Brook Street

William King was born at 19/21 Lower Brook Street where his father, The Rev John King, was Master of Ipswich (Grammar) School in that building. William King became a physician, working in Brighton, but he is celebrated as a founder of co-operative democracy.

He created a Co-operative Benefit Fund and a Co-operative Trading Association. He also founded and



## LESLIE BAREFOOT G.C.

1887 - 1958 The Walk

H.J. Leslie Barefoot G.C. was the architect of the small central pedestrian shopping streets in the centre of Ipswich known as Thoroughfare and The Walk, the latter of which is the site of his plaque.

Born in Dulwich he married in 1913 and served in The Great War with distinction. In 1920 he moved to Ipswich with his family and during the inter-war period designed buildings throughout East Anglia, becoming president of the Suffolk Association of Architects. Re-joining the army in 1939 in the Royal Engineers he volunteered to form a new unit to deal with unexploded bombs. The George Cross database indicates: "During the early days of the blitz Major Barefoot, who was a pioneer in bomb disposal dealt with some of the first unexploded bombs which fell on Britain. He was able to put invaluable information at the disposal of the authorities."

His citation in 1941 for the George Cross states: "for most conspicuous gallantry in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner." He was the first Army officer to receive the GC. He is also commemorated by a plaque in Westminster Abbey together with the other recipients of the GC.



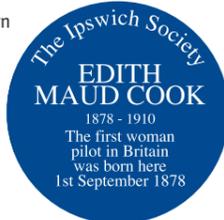
## EDITH MAUD COOK

1878 - 1910 90 Fore Street

Edith Maud Cook was born at 90 Fore Street on 1st September. She was a balloonist, a parachutist and is stated, on the RAF Museum website to have been the first woman pilot in the United Kingdom. Edith made around three hundred balloon ascents and demonstrated the use of parachutes over a period of ten years. After she learned to fly in early 1910 she made several solo flights but did not obtain a pilot's licence before July of that year.

On 11th July 1910 as reported in The Times: "Miss Viola Spencer (a pseudonym) in a parachute descent at Coventry on Saturday, alighted on a factory roof. The parachute turned over and Miss Spencer fell onto the roadway injuring herself severely."

She died on 14th July as a result of her injuries. In her book *Before Amelia* Eileen Lebow tells the remarkable story of the world's women pioneer aviators who braved the skies during the early days of flight. At a time when the mere sight of ladies wearing trousers caused a sensation Edith Maud Cook was one she praises as an adventurer and a very courageous woman.



wrote the periodical *The Co-operator* (1828-1830) which helped to inspire the "Rochdale pioneers" of the Co-operative Movement later in 1844. It seems fitting that in Ipswich, where Co-operative retailing has held its own remarkably well, we should acknowledge this pioneer of the social and philosophical principles of Co-operation, even though this work was done after he left Ipswich.

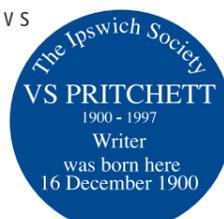
## V S PRITCHETT

(1900-1997) 41 St Nicholas Street

The plaque simply calls V S Pritchett a "writer" because he excelled in so many genres of writing that there wasn't room to specify!

He is regarded as arguably the finest English short story writer of his time. He also published novels, travel books, literary criticism, reviews and an absorbing autobiography, *A Cab at the Door*, in which he explained how his father, a London businessman in financial difficulties, lodged with his wife over a toyshop at 41 St Nicholas Street. Here baby Victor was born a century ago on 16 December 1900.

The family returned to Ipswich in 1910, living for a year in the Cauldwell Hall Road area. Pritchett was knighted in 1975 and was made Companion of Honour in 1993. He died in 1997. The plaque records him as "V S Pritchett", rather than "Sir Victor



Pritchett, CH", because that is how he signed himself as a writer and is known to all his readers.

## ROBERT RANSOME

(1753-1830) Old Foundry Road

For the best part of two centuries, Ransome's was probably the most famous Ipswich name around the world — certainly as far as manufacturing was concerned. Robert Ransome came to Ipswich from Norwich in 1789 to set up an iron foundry, first briefly near St Mary at Quay and then soon after in that year at St Margaret's Ditches, now Old Foundry Road, where the street name still commemorates the site. The works, in time, stretched from Great Colman Street to Carr Street.

Still under family control after Robert's death, the foundry closed on this site in 1849, moving to the dockside, and the firm eventually became Ransomes Sims and Jefferies, making agricultural machinery, lawnmowers, etc. Later another company, Ransomes and Rapier, was created making heavy engineering products such as dragline cranes, railway equipment and large sluice gates for dams. Robert Ransome was one of a group of highly influential Quakers in the town. He set up a fund for employees unable to work through sickness or injury. He was also instrumental in bringing gas lighting to Ipswich, installing a gas making plant in part of his foundry.



## Location of plaques in Ipswich Town Centre

- |                        |                       |                           |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Nathaniel Bacon     | 6. VS Pritchett       | Other plaques             |
| 2. Thomas Gainsborough | 7. Robert Ransome     | 10. Chaucer's family      |
| 3. John Glyde          | 8. Leslie Barefoot GC | 11. Thomas Eldred         |
| 4. Jean Ingelow        | 9. Edith Maud Cook    | 12. Admiral Benjamin Page |
| 5. William King        |                       | 13. Thomas Wolsey         |
|                        |                       | 14. Cor Visser            |

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