

KindredSpirits

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FEATURE
with David Kindred



■ Buildings in Fore Street, Ipswich, during restoration for the Queen's visit in 1961. The workmen in the foreground are outside Sneezum's shop at the junction with Lower Orwell Street.

How we spruced up town to make it fit for the Queen

Fore Street, Ipswich, was for centuries the main road linking the town centre with the east side of the town. In 1961 the Queen was due to visit the town, the first official visit by a reigning monarch for four centuries.

It was decided that Fore Street needed restoration for the visit as this was part of the route to be

taken by the Queen.

The Ipswich Society is planning an exhibition about the restoration and royal visit in October and would like to feature your memories of the visit. In this week's Kindred Spirits I have featured photographs of the Queen's visit in 1961 and some of the restoration work.

In September the Queen becomes the longest-serving

monarch in British history, overtaking Queen Victoria. The Ipswich Star is planning to feature the Queen's local visits during her reign since 1952 in a special publication.

→ If you have any photographs or memories to share send them to The Editor, Ipswich Star, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, or email terry.hunt@archant.co.uk



■ The Queen as she arrived to open the Civic College building in July 1961.

FEATURE

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An exhibition is planned featuring the restoration of Fore Street, Ipswich, in the early 1960s.

On Friday, July 21, 1961, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited Ipswich to open the newly-built Civic College which stood off Grimwade Street to the east of the town. It was almost exactly 400 years since Queen Elizabeth I had made a similar progress through Suffolk and it was the first official visit of a British sovereign to the county since that time.

The 1960s heralded a new era of hope and prosperity, with technological advances and a shift in global politics. In 1961, four years after prime minister Harold Macmillan's "The British people have never had it so good" statement, the country was thriving. Post-war austerity was beginning to ease, modernist buildings were seen rising from bomb sites and slum-clearance areas, just as the Civic College did.

Following the opening ceremony at the Civic College, Her Majesty's motorcade was to travel along almost the whole length of Fore Street, one of the ancient thoroughfares of the town linking the docks with the eastern parts of the town centre. It became clear that the general condition of the buildings in the street, many of which were of historical interest and value, was dirty and in a neglected state of repair. Fore Street itself was a major route for heavy traffic which added to the problem.

In February 1961 an improvement scheme was inspired by The Ipswich Society, itself barely a year old, at a meeting with the occupiers of Fore Street. The idea was taken up with considerable enthusiasm and a committee was elected to carry it

into effect.

A co-ordinating architect, Birkin Haward, was appointed and asked to empanel the necessary number of young architects to draw up proposals. This he did with great enthusiasm, believing that there was much of architectural value springing from 16th and 17th century origins and connected with the maritime trade of that period and since.

The Ipswich Society is staging an exhibition, "The Fore Street Facelift 1961", running from 2 to 16 October 2015 at the UCS Waterfront building, Ipswich, Suffolk.

The exhibition will show original architect drawings, colour schemes and material surrounding that historic day in July 1961. It will also cover the historical importance of Fore Street when the centre of the town was around the northern quays of the dock and to childhood memories of the street in 1920, when it was a major shopping area. Given its close links to the maritime activities on the dock, it is unsurprising that Fore Street boasted many public houses and alehouses as well as pawn shops and other less salubrious premises.

A remarkable amount of work was achieved in a short space of time and an Ipswich Society-sponsored short film records the whole project and will be shown as part of the exhibition.

Robin Gayland.

By e-mail.

→ Do you have any memories, photographs or information about the renovation of Fore Street? Send them to Kindred Spirits, Ipswich Star, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AN or e-mail info@kindred-spirit.co.uk



■ Crowds in Fore Street, Ipswich, for the Queen's 1961 visit. The buildings in the left foreground opposite Grimwade Street have been replaced by flats. Do you recognise anybody in the picture?



■ The Queen's car travelling along Fore Street in July 1961. The junction with Salthouse Street is in the background. Were you there?



■ The Queen was greeted at the Civic College by Sir Claverling Fison (left) and college principal Frank Metcalfe.

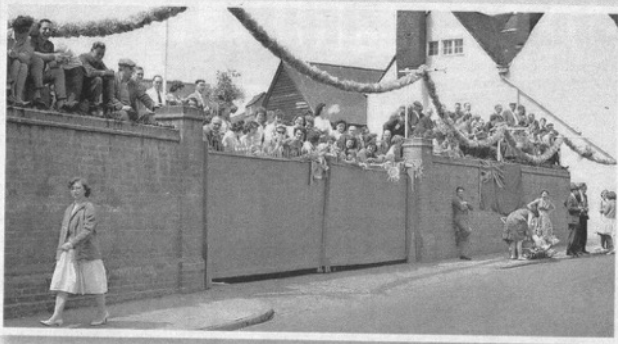
■ A section of the crowd waiting for the Queen to pass at the junction of St Helen's Street and Grimwade Street.





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■ The walls and gate of this yard in Fore Street provided a vantage point as the Queen passed in July 1961. This is where Star Lane now crosses Fore Street. The buildings in the background are still there today.



■ Were you one of the children who watched the Queen pass the Fore Street filling station in 1961? Write to Kindred Spirits, Ipswich Star, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AN, or e-mail info@kindred-spirit.co.uk



■ Schoolchildren were among the crowds who waited for the Queen in Grimwade Street, Ipswich.



■ These buildings in Fore Street were decorated for the Queen's visit in 1961.