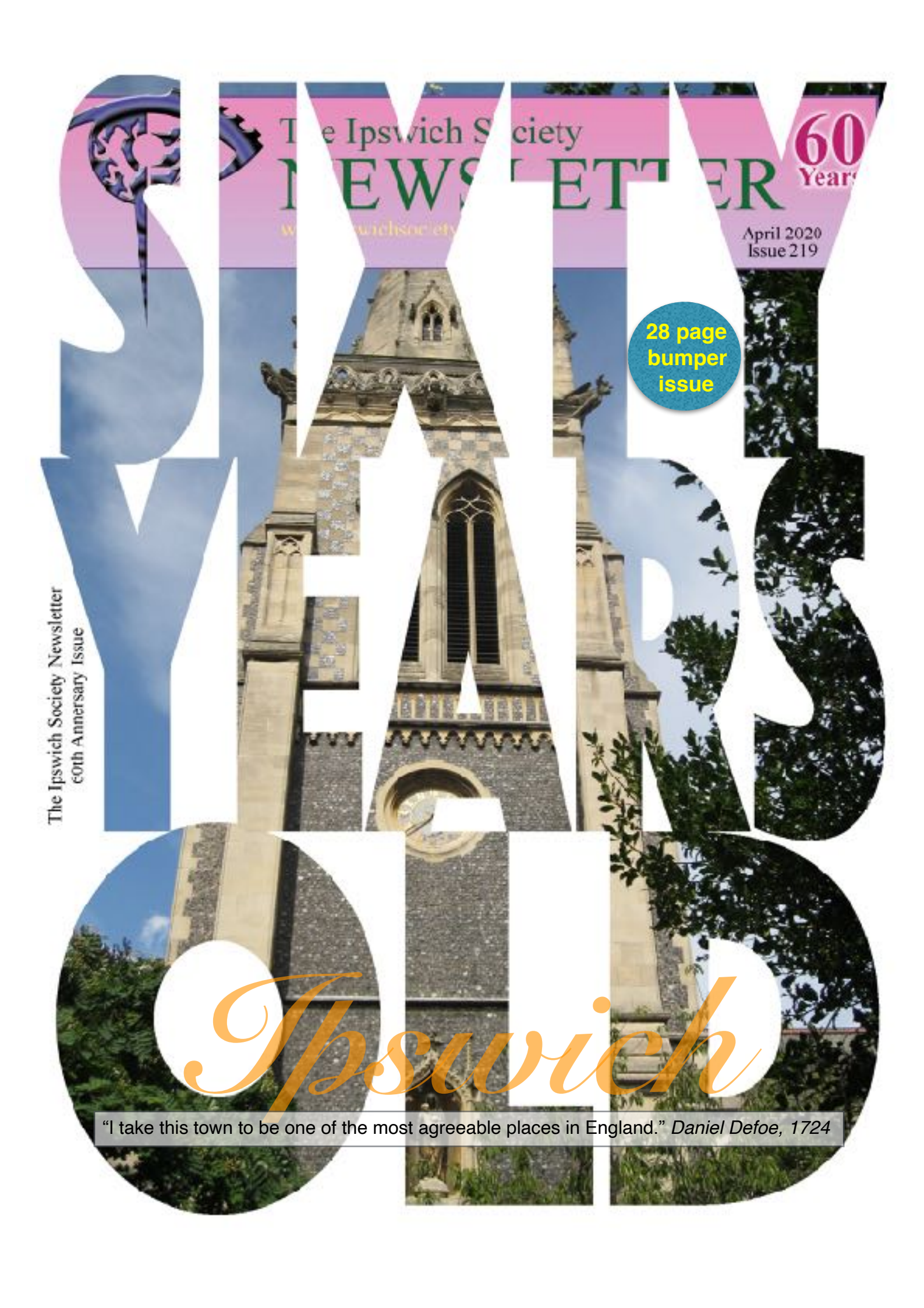
The Ipswich Society
NEWSLETTER
60 Years
April 2020
Issue 219
28 page bumper issue
SIXTY YEARS OLD
The Ipswich Society Newsletter
60th Annersary Issue
Ipswich
"I take this town to be one of the most agreeable places in England." Daniel Defoe, 1724

Editorial

If we were a marriage, this would be diamond. Sixty years of The Ipswich Society makes the relative newcomer like myself think of the people who were there in the early years. 1960 was a time of volcanic changes in Ipswich: social, economic, architectural amongst others. And it was as a direct result of the threat to some of our oldest buildings by a new ring-road that those like-minded pioneers considered it time to form a civic society for Suffolk's county town.

Early *Newsletters* were just that: typed and duplicated documents stapled together to pass on news of meetings well (and less-well) attended, of people working out how to establish a society to treasure our history, protect and enhance what is valuable and monitor new developments and proposals. Oddly, little has changed in today's Ipswich Society. Those original tenets hold true: the past, the present and the future of our town.

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Main cover image: St Mary-Le-Tower Church

The issues seem to be just as challenging as in 1960. Bridges over the docks, by-passes to relieve traffic congestion, large housing developments are all planned or proposed. Industry has gone through convulsive changes, particularly in the 1980s when malting, milling, heavy engineering, corset-making and many other trades were coming to an end. The Wet Dock is a good barometer of the economic revolution. Trading vessels disappeared almost completely, and for some years clear water could be seen across the dock with, perhaps, a red lightship moored on the island for the Sea Scouts. The goods trains around the tramway – once reaching round the northern and eastern quays to meet the ones running across the Island at Cliff Quay and right down to the coal-fired power station near the site of today's Orwell Bridge – vanished and sidings in the Lower Goods Yard became a DIY store and later a skate park.

Ipswich County Borough lost a lot of its functions and funding to the newly-formed Suffolk County Council. Buildings came and went, roads and bridges were changed, parks and public spaces were sometimes neglected, then protected and gained investment. In the still centre of all this, the medieval street layout of the town survived largely unchanged. Archaeology revealed for the first time our Anglo-Saxon origins after the Romans had departed. The oldest, continuously-settled town in the country continued to go through good and bad times, but the people of the town – essentially the town itself – stayed strong.

For sixty years the wholly voluntary Ipswich Society has remained active and gained members who appreciate that so much is done with neither sponsorship nor commercial advertising. The Ipswich Society celebrates its independence and offers excellent value for money, not least this very quarterly *Newsletter*, to subscribers.

Robin Gaylard

Chairman's remarks

This, the 219th edition of the *Newsletter* marks the 60th anniversary of the Ipswich Society. I'm sure you will have gathered by now that there are a variety of events to mark our diamond year. It is, however, essential that we do not forget the contributions the Society has made to the health and cultural wealth of the town over the years.

One of the outcomes of the 'Cubes on the Cornhill' venture (which will have taken place by the time you read this – see page 9) is that we could mount an exhibition of photographs of buildings lost to the proposed inner ring road in 1960. The only part of this project to be completed was Civic Drive and the dualling of Cromwell Street, with the new road ending against the Tudor buildings of St Nicholas Street.

The Ipswich Society campaigned to save these, and other buildings in the path of the proposed road, for example those in Lower Brook Street, but the real saviour was a change in Government policy in terms of town growth. The additional 125,000 'London Overspill' residents which had been proposed were no longer destined for Ipswich.

Cromwell Street became a car park and the dualling of St Matthews Street, Crown Street and St Margarets Street was limited to a very short stretch close to the roundabout. Bond Street and Grimwade Street became one way but their northern and southern ends were not linked as had been originally intended.

Perhaps this inner ring road might have been the answer to Ipswich's growing traffic problems, but at what cost? An historic building, once demolished, is lost forever. And as we know from elsewhere (and from St Matthews Street), dual carriageways are a barrier to the free flow of pedestrians, they are uncomfortable for cyclists and are not favoured by the bus companies who want stops close to where their passengers shop.

You will read in my Annual Report my comments about the Society's stance on the Northern Bypass, perhaps there is a connection between decisions made 50 years ago in abandoning a possible solution to our traffic problems and those being made by Suffolk County Council in 2020. As I suggest in the report, the solution is not to build more roads but to travel less (particularly by private car).

We should spend the money that would have been expended on the Northern By-pass making the alternatives acceptable, convenient, comfortable and available.

The other important news which is happening as I write, 23 February, is a fire at the former Tolly Cobbold brewery on Cliff Quay. To suggest that it was a fire waiting to happen is perhaps stating the obvious, but no more so than Fison's in Paper Mill Lane – which was possibly an even more important building. Unfortunately, most of the copper mash tubs and other non-ferrous artefacts had already been stolen but I understand that the E.R. & F. Turner steam engine, built in 1746, was still in place.

It is a sad state of affairs that we rely on the building owner to take due care of these valuable historic assets when we know that they would, deep down, rather have them out of the way.
John Norman

Planning matters

Old County Hall, St Helens Street. It is a shame it's taken from 2005, when SCC left, until now for a comprehensive scheme to redevelop the grade 2 listed , partly C18 and partly C19 building, for its only possible use, residential. The listed portion will have ten 1, 2, and 3-bed apartments. A red brick new-build in modern style will contain 30 1 and 2-bed apartments. One of the former court rooms will be retained as a heritage area and the other converted into an inserted 2-bed apartment. John Norman endorsed the Society's enthusiasm for its restoration and support for its conversion to town centre residential accommodation. But we do object that the former Council Chamber with protected fireplace, a very large arched window and an exposed hammer beam roof would be spoilt by the insertion of the cabin style pod. This would sit clear of the panelled walls (i.e. surrounded by corridor). The roof of this pod would become the lounge of the apartment, connected to the existing 'public gallery' by a new 'bridge', the rooms inside the pod being bedrooms and other living accommodation. He was also concerned about the proposed fenestration on the St Helens Street facade; they would be asymmetrical and provide inadequate light to the apartments. Nevertheless, the plans have been approved.

The part of the **Waterfront nearest Stoke Bridge, the St Peters warehouse and the old Burton Son & Sanders building** are owned by Ipswich Borough Council (IBC). The quay in front has been completely renovated and permission to convert the old Burton Son & Sanders brick built warehouse to a rehearsal space for Gecko, a 'physical theatre' without a home has been granted. To raise the funds for the conversion, the local EDRM Architects have designed a scheme for the whole site; the concrete framed building (including link section) adjacent will increase by 3 storeys, to provide retail and a cafe/restaurant/takeaway at ground floor and basement level, offices on the first and second floors and for up to 14 self-contained flats with a roof terrace amenity area and ancillary plant at 3rd to 7th Floors. This sensitive scheme will provide, with the Jerwood Regional Dance House, a very welcome creative hub on this part of the waterfront.

No. 4 College Street. The IBC-owned 16th century merchant's house, Listed Grade 2, will be completely renovated and fitted out for office use thus removing it from Historic England's *Buildings-At-Risk* register. The remainder of the site is currently being master planned; the future for this prominent site, an eyesore for decades – where the Saxons built the nascent Ipswich 1,200 years ago – at last looks encouraging.

28-50 Grimwade Street. IBC own the short parade of 1930s shops with flats above. They have demonstrated that it is cheaper to demolish and replace them with two four-storey blocks of two flats per floor, making 16 in total. The blocks are at right angles to Grimwade Street to provide social interaction, views and transparency in an effort to design out antisocial behaviour. The ground floors will be wheelchair user compatible. The architects are Hoopers and all the consultants are Ipswich based.

14 Emmanuel Close: Old St Johns Ambulance Station, Coltsfoot Road; 10-12 Halton Crescent; 70-84 Sheldrake Drive; Garages behind 32-40 Mallard Way.
These five applications by Handford Homes, for IBC, will provide 16 dwellings with 30 bedrooms for affordable rent with appropriate amenity space and parking. This is 'unused portions of land' or brownfield sites owned by the Borough.

Telecomms Screens. J.C. Decaux's application to erect seven 'advertising' screens in the town centre was originally thought to be impossible to oppose. However, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 – known as the GPDO – Part 16 has been amended to remove the permitted development rights for public call boxes. So, on appeal, the one in the centre of the Old Cattle Market and the two in Carr Street will be allowed but the appeals for those outside the Great White Horse, the Ipswich Building Society (Parr's Bank), outside Sainsbury's in Upper Brook Street and opposite Revolution, Old Cattle Market were dismissed, because they would harm the setting of Listed buildings in the central Conservation Area.

75 Valley Road. An outline application to build four dwellings on backland behind 69-75 Valley Road with access from Cotswold Avenue has already generated local resistance. In 2012, an application to build one house was refused and the appeal dismissed. Once more, the Society plus 30 residents have objected to this proposal. The access is inadequate, it would mean the loss of many trees – some of great significance – it divides Green Corridor 'B' which connects Christchurch Park via Dales Local Nature Reserve* to open countryside. The land is Suffolk Sandlands in character and it would impinge on the privacy of several houses.

Park View Dental Practice, 49 Fonnereau Road. Permission was granted to fell the 120+ year old beech tree. No reasons given and no conditions as to replanting except that applicant said he was happy to plant on advice. However, we know that the IBC Arboricultural Officer's advice was that the tree was dying. There were six objectors plus The Society.

57 Henley Road. The first application, to fell a prime red cedar, was refused; the second, to widen the entrance, is regarded as unnecessary by The Society. If granted, it should require a major rebuild of the wall to restore the symmetry of the brickwork panels facing Henley Road.
Mike Cook *[*see page 8]*

At Risk Buildings

There are over a thousand iconic buildings in 'Greater Ipswich' recorded on some authorities' lists somewhere. Currently the future of half-a-dozen give cause for concern. These buildings were designed by a decent architect, had an important use and have been deserted and unused for at least a dozen years. Many have suffered from water damage from leaking roofs, guttering and broken windows. Theft of important historic fittings can lead to use of the buildings by the homeless with possible subsequent further damage and fires. All of them are too expensive and too big to be undertaken as a project by a Building Preservation Trust.

All, bar one, are owned by developers who bought them to turn a profit which they find they can't achieve. The cost of conversion to the standard required in the current state of the property market militates against action by the owners.

The one exception, 4 College Street, is owned by Ipswich Borough Council which has very recently allocated half a million pounds to its complete restoration.

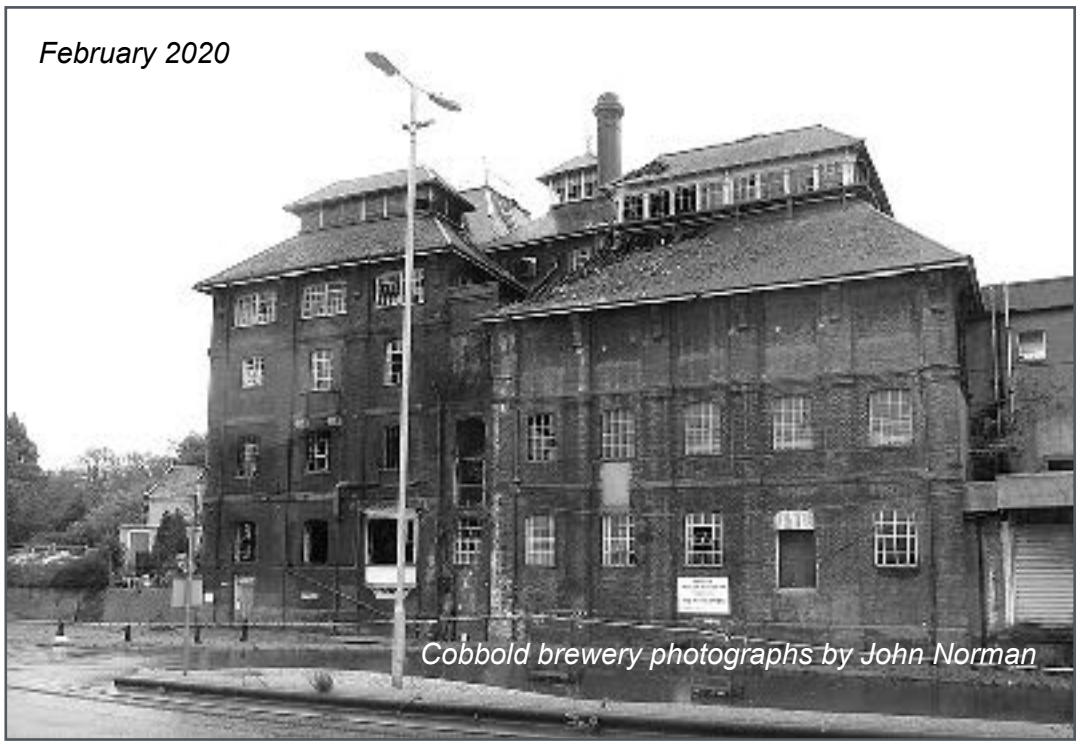
Our Chair asked on ITV Anglia how society can ensure the restitution of such properties and
(continues

indeed answer the problem of 'zombie' sites raised by Graham Day in the January 2020 *Newsletter* (Issue 218) – and Dennis Miller in this issue – is relevant.

Summer 2019

Ultimately, the problem relates to the private ownership of land. Whilst the principle of land owners being able to do what they like with their patch (as long its legal) persists, not much will change. At the moment, once you have received planning permission, they can either carry it out within the three years before it lapses, sell it or do nothing until times change and it seems more profitable for them to do something.

A personal view is that after, say, six years have elapsed the Local Planning Authority should have a right to call the owner to account; to find out what is happening and when. Pressure could then be applied by imposing a crippling Council Tax until something is completed. In these situations, it's vital that the law of unintended consequences isn't enacted. Finally, compulsory purchase by the Council would have to operate; but in order to encourage developers to actually develop rather than hold land for better times, at the same price they purchased it!


February 2020

Cobbold brewery photographs by John Norman

Fantasies, especially in the current political climate!

Mike Cook

Ipswich Hotel Occupancy

Over the past ten years there has been a substantial net increase in hotel beds in Ipswich, particularly mid-market accommodation. New hotels have been built from scratch, notably the Penta Hotel in Ranelagh Road, the Travelodge in Duke Street and the Premier Inn. Actually, there are now three additional Premier Inns: Augusta Close on Ransomes industrial estate, The Oyster Reach on Bourne Hill, Wherstead and The Beagle in Sproughton.

Recently improved hotels include Belstead Brook, now part of the MGM Muthu group, the Novotel which has benefited from a £2.5 million refit and the Holiday Inn, London Road which has just been upgraded. The newcomer is the easyHotel in Northgate Street, a minimalist hotel offering just the very basics, so basic in fact that some rooms have no natural light – they do, however, have clean sheets and an en suite shower.

As can be expected, the easyHotel's rates are the lowest in town, but only marginally more expensive is Marston's Inn adjacent to the Mermaid, Yarmouth Road which has the benefit of car parking.

One would assume therefore that with the increase in available hotel beds occupancy would be thinly spread. Not so; most hotels report a healthy percentage of overnight stays, particularly Monday to Wednesday. Hotel manager Nuwan Jayasena, claims that the Novotel is achieving 90% early in the week. On average 2,500 visitors spend the night in a hotel* in Ipswich. [*hotel, guest house, bed & breakfast etc.]

Ipswich isn't yet the most popular destination for weekend breaks and, with the exception of when the football club play a successful side, hotel rooms are usually available. This is regrettable; Ipswich is an ideal centre for touring the Suffolk coast, Constable country and the wool towns of west Suffolk.

How do we change things? It's really down to us, to recommend Ipswich to friends, family and work colleagues, to sell the positives: the history, the Waterfront, the cultural offer (count the theatres and cinema screens, include the Dance House and the music venues). Also to ensure that they come along to one of the festivals: Jazz, Spill, Music Day, Global Rhythms, One Big Cultural, Maritime, Summer Mela and so on.
John Norman

2020 members outings

All of our 2019 outings were fully booked (with the exception of the Buckingham Palace visit which had very good up-take), so we must be getting it right. However if you have any ideas for outings please let me know and they will find their way onto the list for consideration at our annual Outings Committee meeting in July. We have another varied and interesting package for you this year, with the booking form for the April, May and June visits is in this Newsletter, plus a flyer from the Ipswich Maritime Trust - I have booked one of their trips on the Victor for the Ipswich Society on August 13th. I look forward to meeting up with many of you on outings this summer, and meanwhile if I could just remind you that we cannot guarantee that booking fees will be refunded if you cancel later than one week prior to the date of the excursion. Should we have to cancel any of the outings due to the Corona virus epidemic you will be informed and your cheque will not be cashed.
Caroline Markham secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk

Greenways

As Neil Thompson's article in the January newsletter shows, the Greenways Project manages some little-known, but important green spaces in and around Ipswich. I have been associated for a number of years with the Project and also with Ipswich Borough Council's Parks and Cemeteries Department, based at Holywells Park. As an illustrator I have produced pictorial maps and wildlife illustrations for information boards that are installed in Ipswich parks, recreation grounds and other public open spaces. This has entailed visiting various locations and I have been surprised to discover delightful pockets of green space which I knew nothing about, and I suspect many Newsletter readers don't either.

For example, I have recently worked on information boards for The Dales and Bixley Heath. **The Dales Local Nature Reserve** is a narrow belt of land about 1/3 mile long running parallel to Dales Road. It can only be accessed from Baronsdale Close and via two grass tracks off Dales Road; you could go past and not realise where they lead as the site is concealed by the houses which surround it. They lead to a meadow, surrounded by woodland. A path leads to another meadow where there is a pond fringed by reeds. Beyond, the ground rises steeply to a ridge where clay pits were dug to make bricks from which many of the surrounding houses were built. The pits are now covered in trees and a meandering path will take you the length of the site, but be warned, in places it climbs and dips steeply as it skirts the old pits. Springs arise from the base of the slope, feeding the large pond and several smaller ones. At the northern end is a well-equipped play area. I expect this delightful place is well-known to local children and dog-walkers, but I wonder how many people from further afield know it is there?

The other site I visited recently is **Bixley Heath** which has the status of a Site of Special Scientific Interest and which IBC are managing as a nature reserve, rather than just a public open space, because it has not one but three distinct habitats. Like The Dales it is surrounded by housing and has no direct access by road, so is a very secret place. A footpath runs through it from north to south from Wadhurst Road to Bucklesham Road and another path enters from the west off Dorchester Road into an area of open heath. Here IBC are gradually restoring areas of heather. The heath drops down steeply to a narrow wooded valley which is classed as fen carr; boggy ground supporting damp-loving trees like alder and willow. To the east this valley opens out into marshy meadow, where the conditions are just right for Greater Tussock Sedge – distinctive mounds of tall grasses rising out of the quagmire.

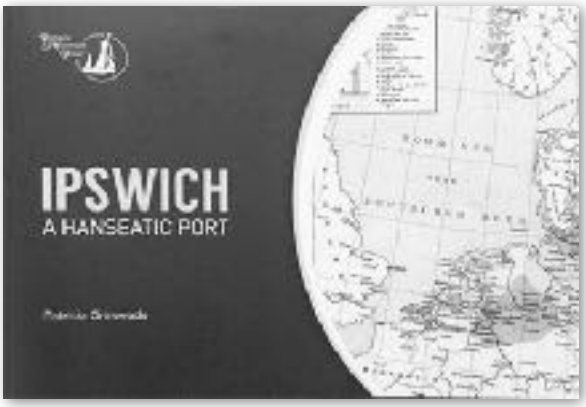
On the other side of the access path, the meadow opens out further into reedbeds fringed with oaks and willows and a circular walk takes you on a boardwalk over the marshy ground, through which the stream flows and disappears into the adjacent golf course.

Both sites have a distinctive character and are well worth a visit.
Mark Beesley

New members

Mr Cavan and Mrs Pam Browne
Mr John and Mrs Marianne Burnell
Mr Colin Bush
Mr David Cresswell
Margaret Foster
Mr Filip Gabrehlik
Sarah Gwilliams
Mr Jonathan Little
Mr Neil Page
Dr Geoffrey and Mrs Celia Poole
Mr Jonathan Ransby
Mrs Julia Ransome
Buzz and Polly Rodwell
Mrs Judith Scott
Mrs Georgia Tamblyn
Mr Graham Thomas
Mrs Jane Wood

Review
Ipswich: a Hanseatic Port



by Patricia Grimwade, published by Ipswich Maritime Trust, 2019 (Available for £2.00 from the Tourist Information Centre)

This 22-page booklet is well-produced and full of illustrations. Pat Grimwade describes the long history of maritime trade, particularly with east coast ports, including Ipswich, over the centuries. Resonances of today's multinational commercial giants (Google, Facebook, Amazon etc.) can be found in the Hanseatic League. This confederation of merchant gilds in north-western and central Europe gained considerable state-like power to the point of holding the first Hanseatic parliament in Lübeck, Germany in 1358.

Hanseatic towns developed their own legal systems and hired mercenaries for mutual aid and protection. It was, in effect a north European commercial empire which had possession of almost all of the Baltic trade. In England, outside of the major trading centre of London, there were 'Kontore' (headquarters of the Hanse, also known as a 'Steelyard') along the east coast including one at Ipswich, which developed in the 14th and 15th centuries. Ipswich became a staple port for wool: it was the sole authorised centre for wool exporting in Suffolk.

There is much here to enjoy, including for those who may not have a strong interest in maritime history. Although there is no surviving Hanseatic warehouse in Ipswich – the only one in Britain is in King's Lynn – the influence of the Hanse on our town's history is laid out here, including the role of powerful merchants in securing the Royal Charter for Ipswich from King John in 1200.
R.G.

'Cornhill cubes'

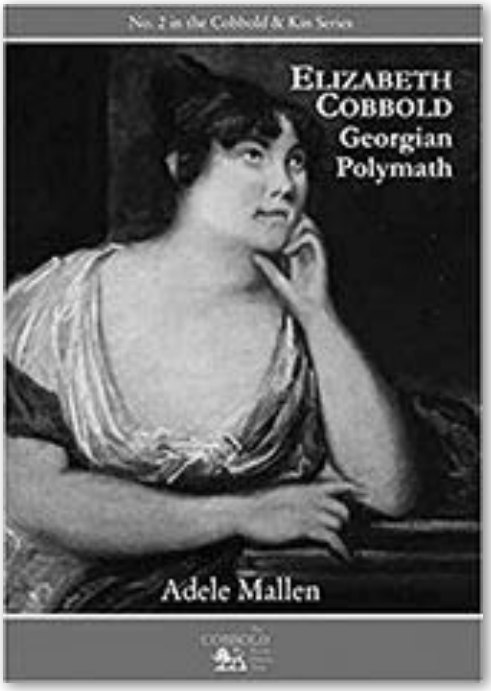
One feature of the Society's 60th celebrations appeared on the Cornhill as a series of photographic panels, erected on March 10. Your editor strongly recommended the use of Tim Leggett's excellent 'then and now' pairs of images for this display, which make full use of the Image Archive on Flickr (you can find the link at the bottom of the homepage: www.ipswichsociety.org.uk). Tim has a knack of really studying the original photographs of Ipswich street scenes and working out where the photographer might have originally stood. The display proved to be hugely popular with members of the public, young and old, and a great success for us.

Cornhill, March 2020

T.L.

See our *Diary dates* on page 27 for more Society 60th birthday events.

Review:
Elizabeth Cobbold – Georgian Polymath



This book by Adele Mallen is the second in the *Cobbold & Kin* series published by the Cobbold Family History Trust.

Born in London in 1765 and brought up mostly in Liverpool and Manchester, Elizabeth Knipe became the second wife of Ipswich brewer John Cobbold in 1791. She was an intelligent and free-thinking woman and the author devotes a chapter to each of her many accomplishments, setting them into their historical background – the Regency, French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars.

The story begins with Elizabeth Knipe's early life as the daughter of a Liverpool merchant. She published a book of poetry by the time she was 18 and took a keen interest in the theatre and politics – with her abolitionist views of slavery evident in her writing. The family took holidays in the Lake District and Derbyshire where she became interested in landscape and botany and also met her first husband, William Clarke, an Ipswich customs officer and Portman. Their marriage in 1790 brought Elizabeth Knipe Clarke to Ipswich, though William, much older than her, died later that year. Fortunately, Elizabeth stayed here and soon became Elizabeth Knipe Cobbold.

Perhaps because her life was more settled (her father had moved around a lot) or because she had to stay put to look after her 15 step-children (plus adding 7 of her own) and certainly because her husband allowed it (in law she was her husband's possession), Elizabeth Knipe Cobbold's creativity flourished after her marriage into the Cobbold family. The author devotes 20+ pages to her prolific production of poetry at this time and her interest in the theatre in Ipswich and Norwich. There is also a detailed chapter on her paper cut silhouettes, used as Valentines at her 'reputed' Ipswich parties and one on her famous servant Margaret Catchpole.

Elizabeth Knipe Cobbold was a scientific pioneer and whilst in Ipswich she took part in the 'Enlightenment' with great enthusiasm. The chapter on her science, though perhaps not so detailed as the others*, covers her correspondence and exchange of specimens with Sir James Smith, founder of the Linnaean Society and Gideon Mantell who pioneered the study of dinosaurs. She collected fossil shells in the crag sands in the Cobbold's Holywells estate and they were published (from 1812) by James Sowerby in the first comprehensive palaeontological publication in this country, 'The Mineral Conchology of Great Britain'.

This is a well- researched book – it is good to see this highly talented Ipswich woman being given the recognition she deserves. It costs £10 and can be bought from the Ipswich Tourist Information Centre or online from *www.cobboldfht.com*.
Caroline Markham

[*for more on Elizabeth Knipe Cobbold's science see Bob Markham's *GeoSuffolk Notes* no.70 at www.geosuffolk.co.uk/index.php/archive/geosuffolk-notes]

New Blue Plaques

Last December Ipswich Society, with Ipswich Women's Festival Group, unveiled two new Blue Plaques commemorating Margaret Catchpole and Sophie Youngman, two important Ipswich women for whom learning and education played a key role in their achievements.

The plaque commemorating Margaret Catchpole on The Manor House, St Margarets Green

Margaret Catchpole (1762-1819) became a Suffolk folk heroine, capturing the public imagination through her association with local smugglers, her daring exploits in riding a stolen horse to London from Ipswich and later escaping from Ipswich Gaol. Two death sentences were commuted to transportation to Australia where she established a smallholding, learned about indigenous communities, the environment and acquired knowledge and skill in midwifery. She wrote letters home, with observations about her new life, including to her previous employer Elizabeth Cobbold, who is thought to have encouraged her thirst for learning whilst in her employment as a younger woman in Ipswich.

Margaret's story has been fictionalised in books, film, on stage and even in an opera. 200 years after her death the Blue Plaque was installed on Manor House, St Margaret's Green, Ipswich, where Margaret had worked as a servant for Elizabeth Cobbold.

Sophie Youngman (1849-1907) was the first headmistress of Ipswich High School for Girls, which opened in 1878. For 21 years she led and developed the school. She challenged local prejudice about education, when opinions did not favour higher education for girls. For the first time girls had the opportunity to access affordable education with a wide curriculum and opportunity to sit exams.

Her leadership and support helped many of the pupils to enter university education and gain professional qualifications. Some of the school's early pupils were involved in the women's suffrage movement and many took active part in World War I, including nursing at the front. The school still awards a yearly prize in her name.

(continues

Celebrating the Sophie Youngman plaque in Northgate Street

The plaque honouring Sophie Youngman is displayed outside 3-5 Northgate Street, Ipswich (now EasyHotel). The building was previously known as the Assembly Rooms and was the home of the school for many years.

The unveiling of the plaques was followed by refreshments at the Ipswich Institute. Ipswich Women's Festival Group has been actively promoting the achievements of Ipswich women for a number of years, including a commitment to redressing the under-representation of women recognised through the Blue Plaque scheme – currently 8 out of 28.

At the previous launch for four Blue Plaques in 2016, Cathy Power of English Heritage Blue Plaques commented: "A local plaque scheme is such a wonderful way to acknowledge the role of women in history and the link to the buildings in which they lived and worked". The two new Blue Plaques will give additional public recognition to Ipswich's exceptional women.
Ipswich Women's Festival Group

Letters to the Editor

The Return of the 'Zombie Sites' of Ipswich from Dennis Miller
My memory banks whirred into action after reading this letter from Graham Day [Issue 218], taking me all the way back to 2004 when I was Minutes Secretary for the Society.

I was struck by the number of derelict and empty sites around town so I set about photographing some and investigating the reasons for their neglect. Nothing was ever resolved but it is interesting now, 15 years later, to see how the situation has changed.

The two properties that I was particularly concerned about were those in Museum Street and St Margarets Street (see photos). Both of these are now back in working order with one now a well established restaurant and the other only just restored as accommodation.

Here also are photos of other properties, some of which still have not been touched!
[See the 'then and now' photographs on pages 13-15. -Ed.] *More letters on page page 17*

Right: the original Ipswich Museum, now Arlingtons Restaurant, 13 Museum Street

Photographs 2004 by Dennis Miller

Photographs 2020 by Tim Leggett

Below: the former Kwik-Fit premises, St Margarets Street / St Margarets Green

Right: the former Prince of Orange / Bar Fontaine, 10-14 St Margarets Street

Below: the former Barnes soft furnishing shop, 12-20 Upper Orwell Street

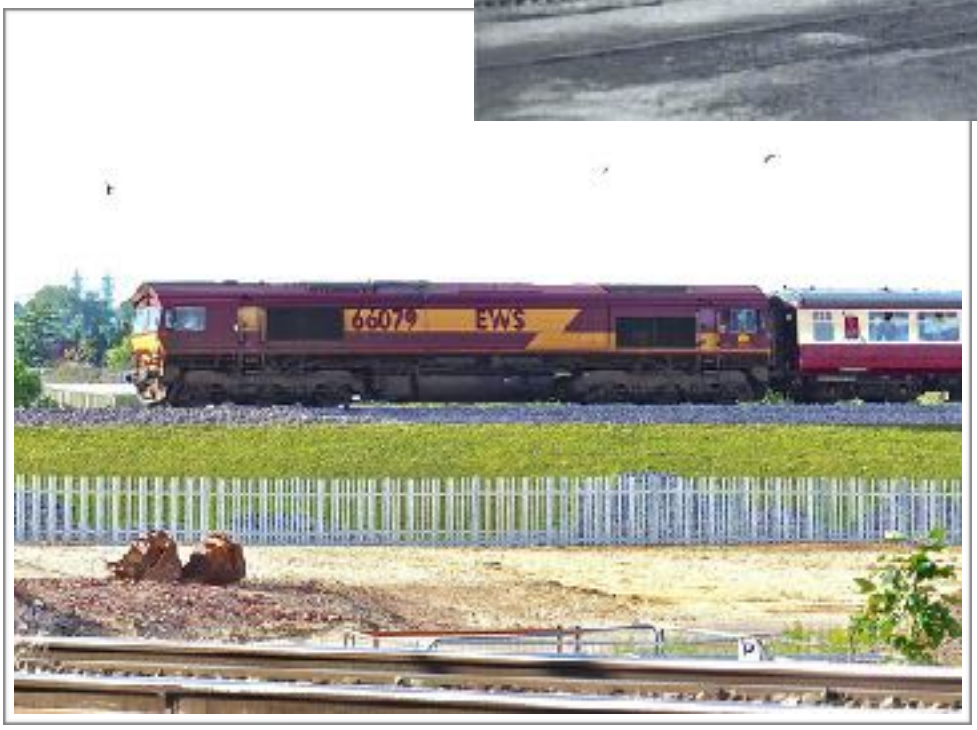
Right: the former Steam Brewery Tap, 39 Upper Brook Street

Below: timber-framed buildings next to the Co-op Education Centre, 13-15 Fore Street

'James Nightall GC' at Thuxton in 2014.

See the following Letter to the Editor from Graham Hardinge.

'Sir Guy Williams' awaiting scrapping in 1966, 22 years after it was wrecked in the Soham explosion.



'James Nightall GC', the name just discernible below the driver's cab window at right.

Letters to the Editor (continued)

Ransomes and railways from Graham Hardinge *(see the photographs on the previous page)*
Thank you for another interesting read [Issue 218]. With my Ipswich Transport Society Vice-Presidential hat on, there are a couple of items I would like to comment upon.

1. By one of those odd coincidences, only two days after I had read Mervyn Russen's 'Ransomes & Rapier' letter concerning the R & R-built turntable at Didcot, I caught up with a magazine article published by the Friends of Vintage Trains. VT operate main line steam specials from their base at Tyseley Locomotive Works, previously a GWR and BR steam depot located in the southern outskirts of Birmingham. Briefly, the detailed and quite technical article describes the former steam depot here, the enormous covered area (220 ft x 360 ft) – long since demolished – containing four turntables. One of these turntables survives (now in the open air) and is currently undergoing restoration. Its history has Ipswich connections in that British Railways (Western Region) ordered four x 65 feet Mundt turntables from Ransomes & Rapier in 1957 to replace elderly existing turntables. Two of these were destined for Tyseley, but in the event only one was installed during the Spring of 1959. Bearing in mind that steam traction was about to be run down at a rapid rate, with Tyseley depot closing to steam little over seven years later, 1957 seemed rather late in the day to place an order for new turntables but it was good for our local engineering employees.

2. The other subject of particular interest was Izzy Lane's story of the Soham wartime explosion which needs some minor amendment. The incident took place in 1944, not 1942, while the naming of the two Class 47s diesel locomotives (47577 'Benjamin Gimbert GC' and 47579 'James Nightall GC') took place at March on 28/9/81, not 1960 (the locos weren't built until late 1964!). Both were regular sights at Ipswich prior to the electrification of the Great Eastern Main Line. While in BR service, they later had their nameplates and explanatory brass plaques removed, but both survive. Of these, 47579 is privately preserved and restored to its 1981 condition, complete with nameplates and plaques, and is resident at Mangapps Railway Museum near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Two, more modern, diesel freight locomotives: nos.66077 and 66079 – note the same last two digits – have now carried the names, but on less attractive plates and no plaques, since 2004.

On the subject of locomotives, the one involved at Soham was an Austerity locomotive, not the other way around. Despite being totally wrecked, it was rebuilt and spent its subsequent life at Longmoor Military Railway in Hampshire (closed in 1969) where Royal Engineers were trained in railway operations and construction. I visited the LMR in April 1966 where I saw it stored and awaiting disposal. For possible added interest, the accompanying photographs are of preserved 47579 **'James Nightall GC'** at Thuxton, on the Mid-Norfolk Railway, in 2014 and WD 400 **'Sir Guy Williams'** awaiting scrapping at Longmoor in 1966, 22 years after it was wrecked in the Soham explosion.

Apologies for the probable onset of boredom, but the facts must be right! By way of a postscript and to complete the series of photographs, I've just remembered that I have a picture of the locomotive that currently carries **'James Nightall GC'** nameplates over the national network. Unfortunately, this is barely discernible (it is under the driver's cab side window) but the train it is hauling was the first passenger train to run over the then new Bacon Factory curve at Ipswich on 25/5/14. Has that line really been open for 5.5 years already! >

The Soham explosion from Spencer Greystrong, River Gipping Trust
Thanks for the latest newsletter, yet again full of interesting facts and pictures.

Could I just pick up on one very minor point in Izzy Lane's article on the Soham explosion. The locomotive was an Austerity type 2-8-0 produced in large numbers specifically for War Department use. This particular engine was numbered WD 7337. The North British Locomotive Company built the majority of these locomotives (545 in total) and virtually all of them were shipped to Europe for use by the Army after D-Day.

If your readers would like to see the only remaining preserved example of these engines they can find No. 90733 on the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway where it is currently being overhauled.

Herbert Clarke and the tidal barrier viewing area from Graham Day
I was pleased to see in the last edition of the *Newsletter* [Issue 218] the letter and photograph from Mervyn Russen about the Ransomes and Rapier turntable now *in-situ* at the Didcot Railway Centre. It reminded me of another part of the engineering portfolio of Ransomes and Rapier: that of water control sluice gates. From the early 1980s until the mid 1990s, we made an annual trip to the Spalding Flower Parade, now sadly confined to the annals of history. Walking from the parking place at a local school, and after watching the parade in the town, we walked to Springfields to see the parade again and look around the wonderfully colourful gardens. Our route took us past a majestic sluice gate, standing proudly on the river with its elliptical plate proudly proclaiming 'Ransomes and Rapier, Ipswich'. The contribution of engineering to the development of Ipswich is always poorly represented.

On occasions when working in Ipswich, I often walk around parts of Old Stoke, my home area. I often pass by the pocket park and the memorial garden to Herbert Clarke, the guard on the Soham munitions train. The excellent *Newsletter* article was well complemented by Izzy Lane's good photograph showing the condition of the plaque on the park entrance. I wonder who is responsible for the park and the plaque. The plaque does need to be cleaned and repaired or replaced. A man of Stoke, Herbert Clarke's bravery on that fateful night needs better recognition than this.

My route on my last walk took me to where I thought the viewing area by the new flood barrier would be. I had heard about the problems with the railway line, but was not prepared for the tall hoardings which had been erected around the viewing area preventing public access. Surely, someone should have given consideration to the possibility that trains might use the track on the odd occasion, and thought through the design before committing to the building work? What would be an excellent feature is now shrouded in hoardings and also in mystery as to its future. Like the Orwell Bridge, we will have a solution at some indeterminate date distant years hence!

And now, from our New Zealand correspondent…

'Germany calling'

One of the Luftwaffe's rare bright spots in the Battle of Britain was on August 15, 1940, when twenty-five fighter bombers (almost certainly Dorniers) attacked RAF Martlesham Heath causing severe damage to a fighter airfield.

I was six and living at Hadleigh – and a bit envious about being away from the action. That feeling was not to last. Decently sandbagged and window-taped, we had seen a lot less warfare than Ipswich. (My Nanna and three aunts were bombed out of Cemetery Road and were living with us, including Joyce (8), now the wife of Neil Salmon, your former editor.)

Some months after Martlesham the bizarre attack on Hadleigh took place. My pals and I were kicking a ball around on the street when an enormous clanking sound occurred. It was a very low-flying Dornier obviously crippled and trying to make it back to the Hook of Holland. The nose gunner (either a father of boys or a fan of amateur football) was machine-gunning in a fairly arbitrary fashion but ceased as soon as he spotted us. We didn't get off entirely. His comrades jettisoned racks of incendiaries, scoring direct hits on the Station Road allotments, whose blasts threw some of us into neighbours front lawns and set tiles and windows flying. My Aunt Rose's almost last words were: 'Look! They're only practicing'. Nanna Welton dived for the protection of the indoor shelter, a 'Morrison', only to be knocked over by the dog who got there first.

Brian Jepson's photograph of the Fore Street Post Office opposite Grimwade Street in 1961. The sign in the window: 'C.H. Healey ... Printer, Stationer'.

The sole Hadleigh casualties were the Old Mill, marginally, and a Mrs Hall who lived – and died – next to it.

My Aunt Rose is key to this saga. Very elderly Ipswichians will remember her, after hostilities, as co-owner with her husband Charlie Healey of two sub-post offices in Fore Street: one near the municipal baths, the other down on the other side close to Fore Hamlet. Rose had married Charlie, an RAF Warrant Officer from Plymouth, in 1931 or 1932.

They 'borrowed' me, aged about 3, in 1937 for a couple of weeks in married quarters at RAF Digby in Lincolnshire. Charlie showed me the latest prototype of the Spitfire, gleaming silver and converted from a seaplane, in a hangar. I'm pretty sure it was my earliest memory of anything. The aircraft was a thing of sublime beauty – like a perky robust seagull. It, with the

Hurricane, radar and anti-aircraft ground fire, was to save us as a nation. I shall think of that Spitfire until I die.

Charlie finished the war as a Squadron Leader (engineer). He died suddenly in the night in 1961 at Halliwell Road, Lattice Barn. When Rose went to open Fore Street next morning – the show must go on – she learned that their workmate Bill Bailey, who had gone through training and the whole war with Charlie, had died in Belstead Road, I think, at the same hour.

Rose went on into her nineties and died in Halliwell Road. My mother, her sister, got to 99: the oldest Girl Guide (Lone Grey) in the world. With her at the end was Joyce Salmon, her 1939 London evacuee, of Warrington Road.
Bernard Brown *(Auckland, N.Z.)*

Affordable Homes

The changes in planning rules which allow the conversion of office blocks to flats without the developer having to apply for planning permission has seriously undermined the provision of affordable homes. Ordinarily the granting of planning permission for new homes, flats or houses will stipulate that a percentage of those homes should be affordable.

In the absence of the requirement for planning approval, office conversions are undertaken without the development needing to comply with this basic social requirement. However the arrival of these additional flats depresses the market and the developers of traditional homes are less likely to push ahead with their own schemes, particularly if the percentage of affordable units required makes their scheme marginal.

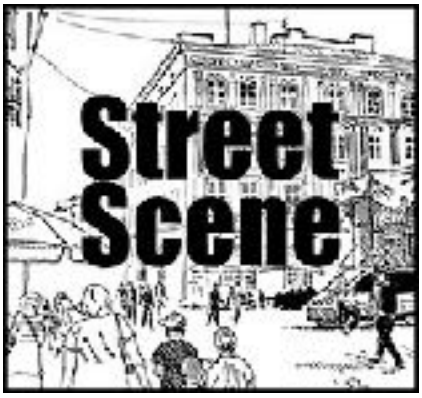
Converting offices also deprives the local authority of the income they would otherwise obtain under 106 agreements (for example; roads, schools and other infrastructure). With a shortage of affordable stock families are left with no choice but to live in these converted offices, often on industrial estates and in high rise towers that don't necessarily meet modern safety requirements.

It is interesting to note that Ipswich Borough Council through their own company, Ipswich Borough Assets Ltd, have purchased the former BT office complex in Bibb Way for £4.1 million with the intention of converting it into flats. Again, planning permission will not be required – providing the external appearance doesn't change – and there will be no requirement for 'affordable homes'.
John Norman

Notes about **Ipswich Borough Assets**

Ipswich Borough Assets Ltd created: April 2016

Birketts, Princes Street,	£12.5 million	
Portman House (Archant) *Buy and Lease back*	£2.15 million	
Europa House (formerly Billingtons)	£3.5 million	
17 – 19 Cornhill (formerly Burton's)	£3 million	
Anglia Retail Park	£42 million	
Bibb Way (formerly BT)	£4.1 million	***J.N.***



High streets have always changed but today they are changing faster than ever and Ipswich is no exception. Shops are closing and towns everywhere are filling up with coffee shops, barber shops, nail bars, vape shops and gyms, cinemas and other activity venues. Charity shops were always there but have been become more central and conspicuous as sites become vacant. Shops move around and chain stores have been closing multiple units leaving one branch per town, but there are still new shops opening up.

Possibly the best news for Ipswich town centre in the last three months is the announcement that Sports Direct intend to move from Carr Street into the former BHS premises in Butter Market which have been empty since the chain crashed, leaving a big gap in the town centre. We are told this will also include new branches of the fashion stores Flannels and USC. All three brands are part of the group owned by retail entrepreneur Mike Ashley. USC used to occupy the site where Tiger is today.

Carr Street retail has been in decline ever since the Co-op Department Store closed, and only recently Orwell Butchers closed. Other stores have moved from Carr Street to more central sites including: Superdrug, Argos, Game and even The British Heart Foundation. Maplin crashed nationwide and Peacocks have had 'closing down' signs for many months, though staff seem to think that if they can find a suitable site they may also move closer to the town centre. This will leave very little worth having in Carr Street. B&M already have three other branches around Ipswich and are probably looking at the future of their Carr Street site. There are plans afoot to build a Primary School on the old Co-op site beyond Cox Lane and the buildings the town side of Cox Lane are being turned into residential apartments.

CAFES and RESTAURANTS

All over the country cafés and restaurants are filling the empty sites as town centres are edging more and more towards being social and activity areas as much as retail centres. Several new cafés have opened since the last *Newsletter* and more are in the pipeline. Such establishments include *On the Huh* in St Peters Street, *Café 43* in Carr Street, *The Bloom Lounge* in Tacket Street, *Combat 2 Coffee* in Princes Street and *Papaky* in King Street. There have been reports of three other café/restaurants possibly opening in the near future including a 1940s-themed café in St Peters Street next to the former Rovian, Honey + Harvey in the former Mambos in Queen Street, possibly this summer, and hints that a pizza restaurant may be opening soon on the upper floor of the Buttermarket centre next to Cosy Club.

NEW SHOPS

The most exciting newcomer is Dial Lane Books, an independent shop which opened on March 3 in a unit which has been empty for a long time, leaving Dial Lane full up. Although we have lost Burtons and Dorothy Perkins, as have many other towns, Deichmann shoes have taken over the site and hope to open this summer. The Thomas Cook group closed nationally last year and Hays Travel have moved into the building. Blue Inc in Sailmakers, which was closed for a year, has reopened after a take-over by a new company.

(cont.

8 Dial Lane

Sadly we have lost Whittards (Tavern Street), one of only four branches in East Anglia, Jessops (Butter Market) has also gone without warning and Paperchase (Tavern Street) has announced that it will be closing in April if suitable alternative premises cannot be found in the town. Staff understood that another shop is allegedly already lined up to move into the premises.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

After a two year construction period the WINERACK apartments are complete which has included paving Albion Wharf to match the rest of the Waterfront. This is a huge step forward for the Waterfront regeneration (suspended after the global crash of 2007/8) with hopes that it will kick-start plans for the remaining part of the old Wet Dock.

THE HOLD (Suffolk Records Office) on the University Campus is progressing fast and expected to open in spring, possibly late May.

THEATRE SQUARE – this project, in front of the New Wolsey Theatre, is expected to be completed in May and includes a new pavilion rehearsal studio for the theatre as well as a complete refurbishment of the theatre concourse. The old and tired paving is being replaced with a resin surface and there will be new landscaping. We wait to see if the 'virtually ever-dry' fountain will be reinstated.

BROOMHILL POOL – this Heritage Lottery funded project is expected to move forward dramatically this year as tenders have gone out for the building work and trees have already been cut down in preparation before the nesting season starts. It is hoped the well-remembered lido will be open to the public once more in 2021.

CORNHILL – Snagging work has been in progress where more visible paving has been laid top and bottom of the steps. Work will start again at the end of March when new stone planters will be set into the paving replacing the plastic planters and the tapering step will go, being replaced with one large planter and seating. Additional handrails are being added in the middle of the steps and down the Town Hall steps. Work should be completed before the schools' summer break.

WHERRY QUAY – This area has had temporary metal fencing near the Mariners floating restaurant for over a year where the quay has been crumbling. Divers are currently working from a diving platform alongside the quay. Work is expected to be completed by the end of March.

THE FUTURE

Grimwade Street shops

GRIMADE STREET shops have been boarded up. Owned by IBC, the block is likely to be demolished and replaced by 16 new council flats.

PRINCES STREET – The former Botwoods, more recently a car wash, has recently been boarded up. IBC wants to borrow £7million to build a new 700 space multi-storey car park on the former Portman Road livestock market, demolish the old Botwoods and build a new hotel and restaurant on the site and that of the former Drum & Monkey pub.

GECKO – Now that Ipswich Borough Council own the major part of the St Peters Dock buildings, a new world-class facility for physical theatre company, Gecko, 14 new flats and a restaurant with striking views of Ipswich Waterfront are among major intentions for the derelict former Burton's factory site.

Exciting times ahead for Ipswich.

Tim Leggett

Snippets

Suffolk Local History Council

New Local Recorders are welcome. They note significant happenings in their parish and collect their local parish magazines, leaflets, election pamphlets and newspaper cuttings. At the end of each year, they are asked to submit a short report summarising the activities of their parish. The reports are deposited at the Suffolk Record Office and are available to future researchers together with the collected items. To volunteer to help in this important work, please contact recorders@slhc.org.uk

House building

New research from the Local Government Association (LGA) has revealed that more than a million homes were **not** built in the past decade despite planning permission for them being granted. The figures showed that 2,564,600 units have been granted planning permission by councils since 2009/10 but only 1,530,680 units were completed in the same period. In Ipswich the housing target (Ipswich Local Plan) has been as high as 700 units per year, currently nearer 500 but we typically only build somewhere over 300.

Charter Hangings

The Charter Hangings are eight superb pieces of embroidery marking the 800th anniversary of Ipswich: eight centuries since King John gave the town its Charter; they were completed and first went on display in the year 2000.

As it is now 20 years since they were completed there is to be a celebration in St Peter's On The Waterfront, where they are currently hanging, in the middle of June. Everybody who contributed to the Charter Hangings, and their subsequent exhibition in this country and abroad is invited to the celebration.

Please contact Isabel Clover for details: 01449 720424

14th in the world?

'From strolling through the arboretum at Christchurch Park, taking in a show at the famous Regent Theatre, viewing Constable's art at Christchurch Mansion, it's little wonder travellers are falling in love with Ipswich.' Thus spake the tripadvisor website when it placed Ipswich, the only U.K. representative, at 14th in the chart of the *World's top emerging destinations*. Of course, one can quibble with the source, its methodology and 'The Sheeran Effect', but the volume of positive media coverage for our county town surrounding this placing is worth its weight in gold.

Richard Ayoade

Actor, presenter, author, humorist and all-round excellent fellow Richard Ayoade was born in Hammersmith of a Norwegian mother and a Nigerian father. The family moved to Ipswich when he was young. Ayoade studied at St Joseph's College, Ipswich, where he recalls being so obsessed with J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, that he dressed like Holden Caulfield. Living on Martlesham Heath, his memories of life in Ipswich crop up in his latest entertaining book *Ayoade on top* (published by Faber, 2019). This attempts to establish, by intensive critical analysis, the rather slight Gwyneth Paltrow film *Life at the top* released in 2003 as one of the greatest pieces of cinema ever made. The dissection is both absurd, fascinating and hilarious. The evocation of the Ipswich of the teenage Ayoade will be recognised by many who knew the town at the time. He describes himself as 'insubstantial'. He's anything but.

Ipswich Society Awards 2019

This was another successful and enlightening conclusion to the 2019 celebration of our town's acquisition of new structures and projects.

We gathered on a chilly night in St Peter's On The Waterfront where, in the absence of the Vice Chairman, the Society's Hon. Secretary Caroline Markham conducted the ceremonies. It was pleasing to see that our Executive Committee contains a fine variety of personalities who can front such an occasion with assurance and aplomb. Members of the audience commented on the ability we have to be balanced and equitable in this manner.

Our Vice President Bob Allen took charge of the presentation of the nominations for this year's awards, the presentation having been prepared by Tony Marsden, the Vice Chairman.

In a typically thoughtful and probing account of the proceedings leading to the final announcements of successful contenders, Bob was broad in his praise of the variety of entrants and incisive in his commentary. He indicated the ways in which projects architecturally enhance the character of the place, improve – with good materials and workmanship – and impact on the street scene of the town.

As one might expect there were nominations from business, domestic, residential and the public realm projects. A majority of the nominations were to do with houses or apartments which have been finished, refurbished or improved during the year with the impressive Belgrove Place, the old St Clement's Hospital (listed grade 2) off Foxhall Road, attaining a High Commendation and Foundry House opposite the central library in Old Foundry Road earned a fine Commendation.

In the business sphere there were two awards: the Easy Hotel in Northgate Street earned a Commendation with consideration given to the reuse of a fine old Ipswich building based on the original Assembly Rooms. However, the refurbishment and conversion of Princes Street Maltings was considered to be of such significance in its treatment of another landmark building in the important portal to the town that it deserved an award of Distinction.

In the realm of public works the outstanding transformation of Maple Park Playground (Rendlesham Road – Ainslie Road in West Ipswich), with the award of Distinction was a superb example of how the needs of a little-regarded part of town can be heard and responded to with style and agility by the Council. It focused on the hopes of residents and their aspirations for the area in a climax to the evening which was tremendous.

We have, once again, to thank the committee and volunteers for assisting with the evening – the food and drink were welcomed. We must also applaud the panel of judges whose time and consideration produced a collection of projects which reflected the variety and vivacity of the town.

We were pleased to welcome a large number of guests, residents, builders, developers and Council officials alongside a slightly reduced membership attendance. Perhaps the temperature of the venue was not sufficiently warmed by the evening's events; in any case, this might be our last use of this splendid church for the time being.

All of the projects feature in the album Awards 2020 in our Image Archive on Flickr accessible via our website home page. Incidentally, albums exist of the winners and nominations for many recent years, the earliest being 1977 – once again all visible on our Image Archive.
Tony Marsden

[All photographs except Princes Street Maltings by Tony Marsden]

Belgrove Place, High Commendation

EasyHotel, Commendation

Foundry House, Commendation

Princes Street Maltings, Distinction

Maple Park Playground, Distinction

PHOTO COMP

The Ipswich Society's 60th Birthday
Photographic Competition: Call for entries

The Ipswich Society invites members and non-members of the Society to enter our Diamond Anniversary competition to celebrate Ipswich in all its variety: its buildings, environment and open spaces. It is open to photographers of all ages. The rules are very simple and the selected images will be part of a special exhibition in October 2020.

How to enter

1. Each entrant may submit **up to five** photographs which have been taken between January 2017 and the closing date (**July 1, 2020**). There is no entrance fee.

2. Photographs must be submitted by email to: **secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk**.
(This email address replaces the earlier submission email address.)
If you have any problem emailing the images, let us know.)

3. Please submit each photograph separately, in this format, one per email:
Jpeg format (high resolution); max. largest dimension: 40cm; 200dpi.
(Larger image files will be requested if selected.)

Each image should be accompanied by :-

[**adults]** your name, postal address, phone number and email address;

[**under-18s**] your name and age. **A parent/guardian must submit entries on your behalf** and include their own name, postal address, phone number and email address;

also:

- **the title (if any),**
- **location,**
- **subject,**
- **date of the photograph.**

The Society will award 1st, 2nd and 3rd awards to the winners, plus an award in the Under-18 category on Thursday 1 October 2020. The judges' decision is final and we reserve the right to refuse photographs. Costs of printing/mounting the selected entries will be borne by The Ipswich Society.

NOTE
By entering this competition you are consenting to the use of the photograph (if selected) in an exhibition and possible use in The Ipswich Society's *Newsletter* and Facebook page. Submitted photographs will be added to the Society's Image Archive on the Flickr website. All selected entries will be credited to the photographer, who will retain copyright.

If you have any questions or require further information, please email our Hon. Secretary: secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk

The Ipswich Society

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This *Newsletter* is the quarterly journal of Ipswich's civic amenity society established in 1960. Views expressed in the *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Society. We make every effort to comply with copyright and GDPR law in our publications; please contact the Hon. Secretary if you have any concerns about any content.

If you would like to receive your quarterly Newsletter by email, please let the Hon. Secretary know. Emailing saves the Society money and cuts down on paper, printing and postage.

Diary dates

PLEASE READ THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE AGM BOOKLET (p.8) REGARDING SOCIETY EVENTS

Wednesday April 22, 7.30pm: Society AGM, University of Suffolk Waterfront Building (please note change of venue). Speaker: Amy Rushton, Project Co-ordinator for 'The Hold'.
Friday June 5 - Sunday 14: 3 Silent Street; Society exhibition for the 500th Anniversary of the Field of the Cloth of Gold (as master-minded by Cardinal Wolsey). Free/open to the public.
Thursday July 16: The Society's 60th Anniversary Celebration Garden Party at Ransomes Sports Pavilion, Sidegate Avenue, Ipswich.
August 13: Visit Harwich aboard the sailing barge Victor with IMT *(see the flyer in this issue)*.
September 12-13: Heritage Open Days.
November 18: Annual Awards Evening at The Hold (tbc).
Outings: *20 May* - Guided tours of Hadleigh and Finchingfield Guildhall; *11 June* - Gressenhall Museum; *7 July* - Kew Gardens
Thursday July 2, 7pm: Diplomacy with Axe, Lance and Sword: 500 years since The Field of Cloth of Gold Tournament, a talk by Dr Tobias Capwell, Christchurch Mansion. Contact: emma.roodhouse@colchester.gov.uk for information (Friends of the Ipswich Museums).

Newsletter deadlines & publication dates (the latter may vary by a few days)

Deadline for material:	Publication date:
1 December;	22 January;
1 March;	2 April;
1 June;	17 July;
1 September;	9 October.

Tanwy owl photographed in Christchurch Park, December 2019, by Graham Smith