



The Ipswich Society

NEWSLETTER

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Ipswich Freight Chord from Hadleigh Road bridge: a new lease of life for rail transport, page 3

This issue of the Newsletter is particularly well-timed as its preparation has coincided with a major – but very brief – public display and consultation regarding the proposed works on the Cornhill. Looking at the visualisations on the Ipswich Borough Council website isn't very helpful to those who wish to grasp the detail and concept behind the five designs. Further, the response prompted is 'Which one do you prefer?' with no alternative option for those being consulted. Eye-watering amounts of money have been mentioned in connection with the current Cornhill project. I wonder how many Ipswich residents who really care about their town would opt for repair and refurbishment of the existing red block-paving. Its introduction twenty-five years ago (and not without considerable cost and controversy) marked the establishment of this most precious public open space in the town as a focal point and – after many itinerant years – as a home for the



Public sculpture? Where can this cheeky mouse be found? Answer on page 23.

market. Looking at archive images of the Cornhill on our Flickr website (see the article on page 10), reminds us of the clutter of bus shelters, barriers, kerbs and traffic thoroughfares which once covered the space. Many would say that a market occupying the Cornhill on four days of the week brings a buzz to the town centre and attracts shoppers and browsers. Of course, there is always room for improvement in the range of stalls and quality of wares on offer, but that is a separate argument.

Shunting the market into side streets and installing a water feature, new paving and more pavement coffee shops on the Cornhill may get some support; it may get much opposition. It will probably go ahead.

As ever, huge thanks to the contributors to this issue.

R.G.

New Members

Stop Press

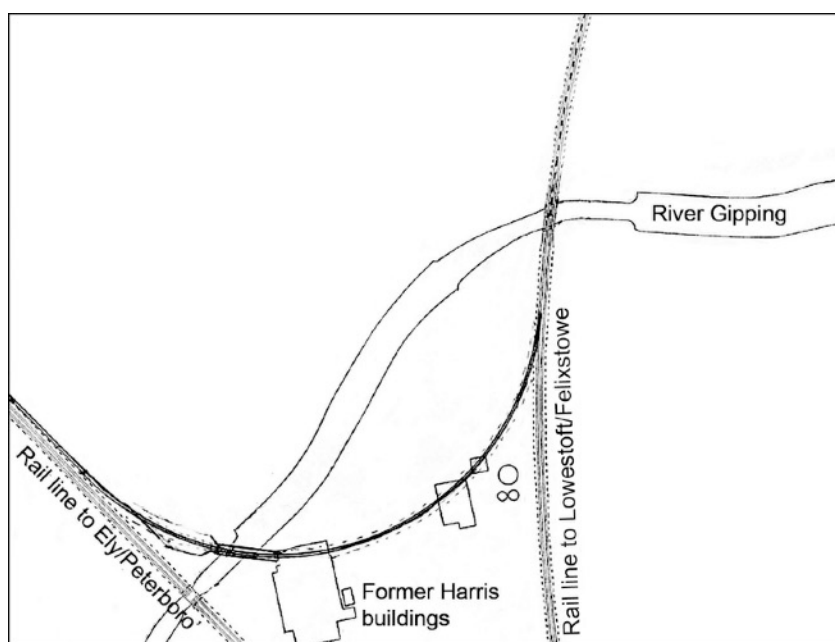
Hugh Moffat, author of *East Anglia's First Railways* and other works sadly died on Friday 20 September at the age of 87. His photograph collection is on its way to Suffolk Record Office.

Ipswich Freight Chord – its place in Ipswich history

Readers will be familiar with the story of how the railway came to Ipswich in 1846. The Eastern Counties Railway (ECR) planned to link Norwich to London via Ipswich but abandoned the project at Colchester when an alternative alliance was developed via Cambridge with the 'Norwich & Brandon'. It was left to the local people to form the Eastern Union Railway (EUR), with Peter Bruff as its engineer, to continue the line to Ipswich opening in June 1846 and by the end of the year the Ipswich and Bury railway had been opened. The next route to be opened was the East Suffolk line in 1859 and finally, in 1877, the line from Westerfield to Felixstowe.

It was the fortunes of Felixstowe Port in the latter part of the twentieth century as a major container port that prompted local Councillor, Phil Smart, to ponder the desirability of creating a north facing link to take freight trains to the midlands from Westerfield. The original proposal was a joint construction with the then proposed 'Northern by-pass', later dropped when the road scheme was abandoned.

In the year 2000 the government proposed developing the 'Felixstowe to Nuneaton' rail route. By then the Harris factory on Hadleigh Road had closed offering another option. Phil drew up a scheme and persuaded the council to protect the site from alternative development. In August 2000 Railtrack was not convinced that "the curvature across the Harris site would accommodate the minimum 7.5 chains radius curve necessary for freight trains" and that there was no commercial case for them to be involved. However, backing from the Rail Freight Group and Felixstowe Port helped to secure the route in the 2001 Ipswich Local Plan.



In 2009 Network Rail, who emerged after the demise of Railtrack, announced their intention to build. Construction has been underway for over a year now and the first trains are due to run in March 2014.

<Diagram of the Ipswich Freight Chord construction.

Phil Smart will be giving a Society Winter Illustrated Talk on 'Getting back on track' on Wednesday 19 February 2014.

The line is part of an attempt to avoid 750,000 lorry movements using the A14, but with the recent opening of the new rail terminal at Felixstowe attention must now turn to upgrading the Felixstowe branch to double track wherever possible.

The increasing proportion of freight going by rail is good news for the environment but good news for rail passengers too. By diverting freight trains across country, more capacity becomes available between Ipswich and London and, as the case for electrification of the route from Felixstowe to Nuneaton is strengthened, passengers for Peterborough and Cambridge can look forward to faster services in future.

Many thanks to Phil Smart for the information in this article.

Chairman's remarks

It is with much sadness that I report the passing of Dianne Hosking in August after a short illness. Dianne may not have been as well known as other members of the Executive but she was hard working, dedicated and had served the people of Ipswich for many years. Dianne represented Town Ward on Ipswich Borough Council between 1996 and 2002 and became Chair of the Development Committee. For the Society she organised Heritage Open Days, contacting building owners and putting together the excellent brochure. Dianne had made Heritage Open Days in Ipswich different by including a vintage bus to take visitors between venues, one of which was the Sailing Barge *Victor*. I also note the death of Vic Lowne, stalwart member of Ipswich Hospital Band but best known to Ipswich Society as one of the key players in turning St Peter's Church into a Concert Venue and Conference facility (Ipswich Society Awards evenings are frequently held there). Vic was Project Manager during the renovations.

Cornhill

I am disappointed with the alternatives offered by the five architectural practices chosen to transform the Cornhill (and incidentally by the presentation of these schemes in the Town Hall). In my opinion there is nothing new or revolutionary about any of them, and none deserve the investment they obviously require. I have a particular aversion for fountains, particularly in the public realm. They are extremely costly to maintain and across the country there are literally hundreds that were a good idea at the time, particularly in 1960s shopping centres, but all too soon became eyesores. Derelict and abandoned, our own useless example is situated above the underground spiral car park adjacent to the New Wolsey Theatre – has anybody ever seen it work?

One of the major problems with the Cornhill is the number of banking halls surrounding the public realm (and even with extended opening they present a lifeless façade to the square out of banking hours). The second problem, almost unique to Ipswich, is the reluctance of shoppers to divert off the 'golden mile', Tavern Street through to Westgate Street, and at least three of the schemes reinforce this, one with a line of masts, another with a line of seats, others with demarcation in the paving. All schemes mention the need to provide interconnection with the Waterfront but only one has a possible solution. Overall it's goodbye market, hello to... not much!

Ipswich Borough Council commissioned DTZ to research and write a report on the future of retailing in Ipswich town centre. DTZ recommended that any additional shopping space be created on the former Civic Centre site (owned since the Civic Centre was demolished by Turnstone Estates). The report further suggests that Cox Lane car park, sometimes called the Mint Quarter, which has been awaiting development since the early 1960s, be used primarily for residential use, and that The Link – the Star offices in Lower Brook Street – could be developed but not with a retail focus.

The Society's view has been one of entrenchment rather than expansion, ensuring the heart of the town centre remains viable and attractive to retailers and shoppers alike. I look forward to seeing you at our Illustrated Winter Talks (dates and details on page 23).

John Norman



Actually, this isn't just about the River Action Group; it is also about the man who initiated and has guided it through the decade and a half of its existence. Tom Gondris, senior and respected member of the Ipswich Society, was accorded the MBE in 2009 in recognition of his services to conservation and heritage in Ipswich and Suffolk, much of which has to do with his work through the River Action Group in improving the corridor of the River Gipping as it flows through Ipswich. Anyone who remembers the river as it was until the 1980s must be aware of the enormous improvements to the riverside scene between the Ipswich Waterfront and the Borough boundary. What was once a scruffy and neglected former tow-path is now for the most part a hard-surfaced, well lit pedestrian- and cycle-way. Signs indicate directions and distances between landmarks. Information boards illustrate points of wildlife or historical interest. Sculptures point up the connection between the town and its river. Many people now use the river path as a safe and convenient commuter route between the western outskirts and the town centre or simply as a pleasant place to relax and enjoy fresh air. These things have come about with the active encouragement of the River Action Group, inspired and driven by the enthusiasm of its chairman, Tom Gondris.

For health reasons Tom has sadly had to step down from this post, although the riverside will always be affectionately and gratefully associated with him. Because of this and other changes the River Action Group needs help. We are a small committee with lay members of the community working together with officers of the relevant local authorities, the Greenways Project and Sustrans. For particular projects we may occasionally be helped by others, such as the MP for Ipswich. We meet for a couple of hours every two months throughout the year, although of course much of the work goes on at other times. We need people who are interested in caring for the local environment of the Gipping. That could involve for instance keeping an eye on a stretch of the river to spot – or perhaps remedy – particular problems. Or it could mean taking part in the much publicised clean-ups. We would like representation from particular groups who use or have an interest in the river: anglers, walkers, cyclists, naturalists. Specifically we need a minutes secretary to maintain records and communication within the group.

The River Gipping is the reason for Ipswich being where it is and it remains an important feature of our town. So the work of the group touches on developments associated with the river corridor, and there is much of interest to those concerned with the future of Ipswich and its riverside, as well as the rural reaches between the Ipswich Borough boundary and Sproughton.

If you would like to help or would simply like more information please contact either James Baker at greenwaysproject@ipswich.gov.uk or myself on jfrani.36@gmail.com. Tom would be the first to agree that there is still a great deal to be done.

John Ireland



Review

Public sculpture of Norfolk and Suffolk

Richard Cocke with photography by Sarah Cocke. Liverpool University Press, 2013.

This, the sixteenth volume in the Public Sculpture of Britain series, covers three dimensional works of art on open display in the two main counties of East Anglia. As The Ipswich Society has an interest in the book and assisted the author and photographer with a preparatory tour of the town's public sculpture, that is the section which first draws the eye. Within the first paragraph about Ipswich, the ever-shifting civic landscape is illustrated by mention of Antony Robinson's *Longship screens* on the Old Cattle Market bus station, which at the time of writing have been removed during a major refurbishment of the site. We await the reinstatement of this fine work with its art nouveau-inspired whiplash metalwork (but it sadly won't be in its original place). Since publication, Miles Robinson's *Grandma* statue in tribute to Carl Giles has been relocated as part of the Giles Circus reconfiguration.

A good selection of Ipswich sculpture is included with detailed annotations; many are illustrated by Sarah Cocke's fine monochrome photographs. Perhaps the inclusion of the Wolsey Gate in College Street and several other public buildings is a surprise. John Ravera's *Spirit of youth*, tucked away off Museum Street and now, sadly, lacking the sculpted bronze hat which lay on the nearby bench, is omitted, but his *Trawlerman* on Hadleigh Road is there. Also missing is Linda Thomas' *Innocence* in Christchurch Park as are the park's several chainsaw sculptures: perhaps the latter are seen as temporary works. It would be churlish to list all the omissions as a book such as this can only hope to provide a general survey. Having said that, the level of scholarship of the entries is impressive; attributions and historical detail inspire renewed interest in oft-ignored pieces.

The author has remarked that Ipswich, in particular, is forward-thinking in its incorporation of new public sculpture in recent residential, infrastructure, retail and industrial developments. The inspirational flying female figures of *Formation* by Rick Kirby at the entrance to the Ravenswood development on the old airport site are perhaps the first and best known example of such commissions. The resiting of Bernard Reynold's 1971 *Ship* sculpture from a 'lost' space next to the old Civic Centre to the middle of the Handford Road roundabout resulted in an excellent piece of work becoming well-known and seen by thousands of people every day. Sadly, the *Big Question Mark* by Langlands & Bell on the Waterfront is too recent to be included.

Ranging over the whole volume, one can identify some works (I'm particularly pleased to see the inclusion of a sculpture which, at certain times of day, isn't there: the *Fountains* on the Royal Plain in Lowestoft which combine sequenced lights, music and dancing, prancing water-jets) and be surprised and intrigued by others. Richard Cocke is a distinguished Renaissance art academic, first at Cambridge and later at UEA. The selection of works is based on a database of sculptures in the two counties compiled by UEA and the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (www.racns.co.uk).

(continues)

Sections on church monuments and artist biographies complete a fine book. However, a short section at the end gives food for thought: lost sculpture. The Henry Moore *Reclining figure* once on display at Snape Maltings was returned to the wonderful Henry Moore Foundation at Perry Green, Hertfordshire and stolen – presumably by scrap metal thieves – in 2005.

Richard Cocke will be giving the first of our Winter Illustrated Talks based on his sculpture book on Wednesday 16 October (see the inside back page for further details).



Finally, a brief tip o’ the hat to a related book published at the same time: **Public sculpture in Britain** by Geoff Archer published by Frontier Publishing which lives at a cottage in Kirstead, just north of Bungay. Again the balance of imagery and text has been carefully chosen. An image catches the eye and the accompanying text gives fascinating commentary and detail about the artist, work and context. Nothing shown comes from Ipswich, as far as I can tell, but with such a huge subject that is not surprising. The chapters include monarchy, military heroes, The Great and the Good, war memorials, architectural sculpture, sculpture in public and public art. The variety and quality is dazzling and the book benefits from the cover image of the extraordinary 65 feet high *Dream* by Jaume Plensa in St Helens. I was particularly pleased to see David Mach’s *Train*, sited in Darlington: a Mallard-style locomotive and tender with streaming smoke all created in red brickwork.

R.G.

Both books reviewed here can be borrowed from Suffolk Libraries.



The Big ? by Langlands & Bell on Neptune Quay as climbing frame

Snippets 1

Holywells Park

The Heritage Lottery Fund's £2.8m grant towards the restoration of buildings and the creation of new facilities in the park is very welcome news indeed. The appeal for volunteers to help in some of the new work is sensible. It underlines the fact that Ipswich's parks are a community asset – probably our greatest asset *vis à vis* other British towns. (Christchurch and Holywells have both been re-awarded Green Flag status, national recognition of first-class maintenance and appeal.)

Screens still to come?

Vue Cinemas intended to convert the former department store spaces in the Buttermarket Shopping Centre to house nine screens. But the company has now been bought by a Canadian private equity group, the sort of owners often looking for a fast buck. It would be a sad waste of space in the town centre if this admittedly expensive and complicated conversion didn't happen.

Too long for Ipswich?

Boris's banned bendy buses might have found a new home here as Ipswich Buses have won back the Park & Ride contract, starting beginning of November, with reduced frequency: every 12 minutes rather than every 10). One was spotted in St Matthew's Street in late May like a rare visiting bird, but not seen since then. These snakey buses have greater capacity (standing room for passengers and extra luggage space). Extra capacity *is* required on a Saturday, particularly on the Copdock route.

No big Tesco

Tesco's decision not to build their mega-store on Grafton Way, just across the river from the railway station, brings sighs of relief from retailers in the town centre. But one wonders what will happen on this important and very visible site. Tesco reportedly expect £10-12m for the site, a price which would rule out residential development, a better use for this location.

Stoke Quay

Since the pre-recession building boom the only large-scale new housing scheme ongoing is at Stoke Quay where Genesis Housing Association will provide 388 affordable and 'extra care' homes although including (only) 25 town houses. The new £38m flood barrier (like a smaller version of the Thames Barrier) is being built nearby with funding from the Environment Agency and the New Anglian Local Enterprise Partnership.

Recalling flight

Ravenswood was the site of Ipswich airport. Hence the choice of a flying horse, Pegasus, for a new public sculpture there. It is the creation of Paul and Catherine Richardson. Paul's work is well-known in the town – the Foxgrove bandsmen gates in Foxhall Road, the ball room dancers at Ipswich Hospital and the fly-swatting Major at Major's Corner.

Easier on the eye

The new direction signposts for visitors in the town centre are more user-welcoming with clean neat lettering generously spaced on a very pale green background. They also include times likely to be taken walking to a destination – figures which will help, or be debatable!

The painting of a church

A picture presented to me by the Society at our AGM might not sound like a matter of continuing interest six months on. But “bear with me” as the fashionable plea goes.

Brian Jepson’s painting of St Pancras Church, Tacket Street, was a clever Ipswich Society choice for me – so clever that I didn’t grasp all of its significance when Mayor Mary Blake presented it to me! Yes, Brian and I have often worked together on the Newsletter (he designed the splendid coloured cover for our 50th anniversary issue) and I happened to be sitting next to him at the AGM. And as an artist and retired architect living nearby he has long been a keen observer of buildings in the Tacket Street and Fore Street area.

But the real significance is this. A year or so ago Brian and I were chatting in Cox Lane about the founding of The Ipswich Society. We discovered we were both present at a lecture held to promote the concept of a civic society. It was given nearby in the Co-op Hall, Carr Street, by Ian Nairn, controversial architectural critic and author of *Outrage*, which castigated the philistinism of some architects and planners who were creating what he called ‘Subtopia’. The lecture succeeded in that it helped to inspire many people to join this new society.

But the one specific and surprising judgment offered by Ian Nairn which I remembered was that he said St Pancras Church was the most under-rated building in Ipswich. I mentioned that to Brian last year. Hence, my warmly welcomed picture and its connection with the creation of The Ipswich Society in 1960.

Neil Salmon



‘St Pancras, Ipswich by Brian Jepson, 2005; presented to Neil Salmon, Editor of 92 Ipswich Society Newsletters, July 1990 - April 2013’

The Society's Flickr site

The story of our Slide Archive

The slide archive was begun in the 1970s. Tony Hill a member of the Executive Committee and a group of other members of the Society, began to collate images which reflected the town and the changes that were taking place.

By the mid seventies when, at his suggestion, the Society began to make Conservation awards to structures and projects in the town, Tony felt it was necessary to photograph them for display during judging and the award ceremonies.

This increased interest in the changing town meant that he determined regularly to take colour slides around the place to trace the manner in which the town was evolving. Other members with a similar interest also contributed from time to time.

Ruth Serjeant, former County Records Archivist, and also a member of the Executive began the process of cataloguing the slides and continued to do so until well into the new millennium. It was her assiduous attention to the minutiae of the collection, which led to such a comprehensive catalogue and detailed indexing of the slides.



Digitising the slides: Tony Hill, Chris Wiltshire and Ruth Serjeant

The six thousand cards, pencilled and arranged by number are a masterpiece in themselves.

Other members of the Society who were involved in a variety of ways included Margaret Michael, Norman Collinson, Don Chipperfield and Brian Jepson.

A further spur to the collection of images was the effect of planning matters when it was felt that photographic records were of vital significance.

Around the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the Society the keepers of the collection considered it was necessary to make the wealth of the image resource available to a much wider audience. They considered there needed to be access from the World Wide Web to the images and so digitisation of the resource was explored.

Chris Wiltshire embarked on the lengthy and time-consuming process. He says that he drifted into the project, having previously obtained an automated slide scanner. This enabled generally speedy and reliable digitisation, although antiquated formats and worn paper mounts created some interesting problems at times. After an experimental period, during which such matters as scan resolution and working practices were decided, work began in earnest in April 2011.

Tony Hill, who had responsibility for holding the collection, cleaned the slides in batches, collated and packed them into slide carriers. These were delivered to Chris for scanning. He then carried out basic post scan editing, colour and exposure correction and numbering. The scanned images were assigned files and were transferred to disc for safe storage. One year later the project was complete and the resulting scans on a single DVD-ROM were presented to the Ipswich Society.

The card index was laboriously transferred to a database last year and the final move towards publication was made. There seemed, after a great deal of research and investigation, only one easy option which would enable the public access to the collection and that was the use of the Flickr website.

Once the slides and the index cards associated with them were in a safe digital form, the Suffolk Record

Office quite gratefully accepted the artefacts themselves. They had encumbered various people's homes for too many years and latterly were not especially well secured: now both slides and cards will be safe for the foreseeable future.

The process of matching index cards to the images was begun in the summer of 2012 and has made slow progress since then. The reception to the early tranches of images appearing on Flickr has been one of nostalgic fascination and great local interest. It is important, therefore, that the process continues to stir the population of the town and to “illustrate people's memories” to quote one comment on the website (Flickr enables comments and contributions). It is felt that a slow release of slides is the best way forward with the associated data being applied before proceeding to the full release.

What are needed now are some volunteers happy to continue the process of combining data and images. If you feel you could devote a short amount of time to the slide collection by attributing data to individual slides (there will be some training available) then we should be grateful if you would contact the Hon. Secretary of the executive:

secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk
[other contact details on page 23]

You can visit the slide collection on Flickr by following this particular link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ipsoc/with/8634602310/>

Since the completion of the original archive there have been further additions of small but valuable collections. We now have slides from Peter Underwood, Dr. Steed and from Keith Wade the archaeologist. Although they do not have the detailed data associated with them, they too have been digitised and await accession to our burgeoning collection.

It is gratifying that goodwill and volunteer labour has meant that the project has been accomplished at minimal cost. If the scanning had been assigned to a commercial company *each* slide would have cost at least £1 to archive!

Tony Marsden



The corner of Falcon Street and St Nicholas Street, 1966 (from The Ipswich Society Flickr photostream): vehicles, hoardings and hemlines from nearly fifty years ago.

“Well, I’ve never noticed that before!” An evening guided walk on Wednesday 12th June 2013

On a rainy evening in mid June a group of fifteen Ipswich Society members met on Arras Square for a watery wander around the town centre to discover fascinating features and details, most of which had previously gone unnoticed.

We began at St Stephen’s church, now the Tourist Information Centre, where traces of a ‘hidden’ doorway which once led to Thomas Rush’s chantry chapel can still be detected. Rush was a wealthy merchant and influential Ipswich citizen in early Tudor times. To the rear of the church, on the back wall of Wilkinson’s, is mounted an ornately carved bressumer beam which once formed part of Rush’s house/business premises located on Upper Brook Street.

If you peep inside the ground floor of BHS on the Butter Market you can see the ornate ceiling of a former merchant’s house from around 1600. Also in the Butter Market area a rather unfriendly looking Green Man gazes down on passers -by and a pair of wonderful Art Deco spectacles form the gate to what was once an optician’s premises.

The buildings on the Cornhill display a real wealth of interesting features including statues on the Town Hall representing Commerce, Agriculture, Law and Learning and Justice, whilst just below them are the faces of Thomas Wolsey, Richard the Lionheart (who originally promised Ipswich a charter) and King John ,who finally did grant the town its first charter in 1200.

The Ancient House with its intricate 17th century pargetting is certainly worthy of close inspection. For example look at the quirky representations of the four known continents and the figures of St George and the Dragon, the former wearing contemporary 1660’s attire.

Finally, returning to Arras Square, we saw the yellow French post box – a reminder of our friendly relationship with the town of Arras.

And , yes someone did exclaim at one point - “Well, I’ve never noticed that before!” Thanks to all who braved the inclement weather.

Lois Terry



Scarborough the optician’s former premises, now Pickwicks Tea & Coffee House, at 1 Dial Lane designed by J.S. Corder (1856-1922): an art nouveau gem in the heart of our town.

Planning matters

33 Silent Street (The Labour Club) Demolition of function room and replacement. Last and Tricker's proposal is for a three storey function room. The demolition of the current WWII army huts originally from Colchester can only be objected to by a very small group of enthusiasts for such militaria. However the design of the replacement three storey function room is hard to describe. Of brick it has bricked-in reveals as if the window tax still existed and brick piers whose function is obscure. This building affects the setting of listed buildings nearby and thus must be revised.

ex-Littlewoods Tower Ramparts. The developer has managed to let the ground floor (reputedly Iceland). New doors and separation of the remainder of the two floors are required, though the plans say nothing about how this is to be achieved. In addition, the River Island clothing shop is moving into a unit of Tower Ramparts shopping centre fronting Tavern Street.

Bader Close 108 dwellings for IBC/Orwell Housing Association. This important project (value £11m) on a disused sports area has been designed by Chapman Architects of Norwich. Whilst we are unhappy about the layout in so far as not enough houses face south, the levels of insulation, the lack of play areas and car parking provision, the architects have agreed to revisit these points. Overall, the scheme is good-looking and is to be welcomed.

Tudor House, Stone Lodge Lane. Both the Society and the Conservation & Design Panel supported the development of this garden for a sizeable new house or that is to be a Swedish flat-pack highly sustainable build, but we had serious concerns about the appearance; the Officers and the Planning and Development Committee appeared to give no weight to our views and granted permission.

I find it hard to know how to improve this continuing granting of permission to aesthetically unsatisfactory buildings. Partly it is due to the Borough Council Officers' unwillingness to discourage any developer with only a half baked idea from building it.

10 Museum Street. Suffolk Police intend their Ipswich presence to be this office building, difficult to reach by car. They wish to place an information board, an emergency telephone point and move the Blue Lamp from the Town Hall. Permission granted, despite advice as to the effect of the various additions to the exterior of a listed building.

Business Development Land, Ravenswood (next to Bluebird Lodge). A very reasonable development of an 82 bed care home was agreed with some conditions attached as to boundary treatments and landscaping.

Tesco, Grafton Way. It is still unclear what will happen. It should be remembered that permission has *not* been granted because no section 106 agreement was reached. When the three years from granting *conditional* permission is up (February 11 2014) the planners may well reconsider the zoning of the site for something other than retail. However, Tesco could well reapply or sell on. The redevelopment of the site is, to me, one of the key decisions for both the Waterfront and the town centre.

John Bull Woodbridge Rd. The pub is now closed and is being converted into three take-away hot food outlets.

St Clements Hospital. An outline application for demolition of some unimportant buildings and conversion of locally listed hospital building to:

- i) 48 dwellings: 12 town houses, 10 duplex apartments and 26 apartments and
- ii) 179 dwellings: 2,3,4 and 5 bedroom houses, retention of sports facilities, public open space etc. also new substation at retained mental health facilities.

The Woolpack is alive and well under its latest management and, assuming that they can extend their catering arrangements slightly, quality food will be available.

We look forward to the Pack's return to flourishing.

Mike Cook [N.B. The Cornhill plans are covered in the following article and elsewhere.]

Town centre consultation

I'm writing because I am truly annoyed at the lack of imagination shown in the proposals for the market square (Cornhill). Although there was recently a consultation about what should take place there, it seemed to me to be superficial and manipulative: it didn't quite ask if we are all in favour of motherhood and apple pie, though all but...

I have a few comments to make.

The Market

The market stalls should be an asset in terms of quality, price, choice and variety. In my view at the moment it competes only on price. Compare it with other successful markets. For example, I work in Chelmsford and often do my shopping there on a Friday because the quality of produce and the choice and variety is excellent, whilst still giving the same value that people expect from markets. I haven't met a single person who doesn't like the Ipswich market, though people often forget on which days it's held. The Council has a pivotal role in enhancing what could be considerable asset if the stalls were better. Perhaps rather than being moved it should be treasured and extended.

Coffee shops

As for the suggestion that the area should be used for coffee drinking: is this seriously being put forward by professional planners?

- a) Are the local coffee retailers so overwhelmed with custom and profit that they are pleading with the council to introduce more competitors?
- b) Do people continually complain that the one thing that's wrong with Ipswich is that there is nowhere to get a decent cup of coffee?

I suggest not.

I used to live near Portobello Road and the now defunct business start-up agency there gave out as standard issue information on how to start up a coffee shop. The area had no need for a single additional coffee shop: new ones lasted only months. There seems to be a similar lack of thought, imagination and business planning in the Ipswich market square proposals.

I can't detect the strategy. What are the desired objectives? What's the budget and financial plan? What investment will the town put in for itself or is it all to be dictated by the business strategies of commerce? For example:

- Is the idea to get more people into Ipswich? Which people? What profile, what spending power?
- Is it to increase the commercial turnover on the town?
- Is it to increase commercial profit?
- Is it to provide young people with activities? What activities? Ones that require them to spend money? Ones that meet the ever increasing need for after school activities and post school age learning? Something worthwhile to do?
- Is it to provide social intercourse, interest and learning for all ages?

Many of the above are sorely needed and it is often those ones which require some considerable financial investment and commitment whose returns will be made not in money

but in health, happiness, lower crime and lower illness.

What are we prepared to spend in order to achieve that? There is huge need in Ipswich for employment, for skills to be taught, for premises for education. The important point about this is that we already have in Ipswich the people with the skills and time who can provide these- but apparently no resources, time or administration willing to bring these together.

Whilst it is true that there are far fewer jobs than there used to be, it's worth remembering that a job isn't an end in itself. People work for what jobs provide: food, clothing, rewarding occupation, self-respect etc. Ipswich has the knowledge, premises and skills to provide all these and create a vibrant community. What effort and expense is the town prepared to expend in order to achieve this?

Here are two further ideas.

The Clerkenwell Studios in London have for many years provided unique and much needed workshop facilities for many skilled craftsmen. The old County Hall cries out for such use.

Near Waterloo, there is the excellent workshop, the Goodlife Centre (www.thegoodlifecentre.co.uk) that teaches essential skills to make, mend and repair. Ipswich needs something like this here so much.

I've been in Ipswich for only four and a half years, though I've known Suffolk since my childhood. In this time I've come to appreciate greatly the philanthropy of Felix Thornley Cobbold. What he did for Ipswich is reasonably well-known although perhaps not as much as it should be. My point is that we have Christchurch Mansion and the park (much else besides, too) because of him, not because of the Council who, remember, at the time were prepared to tear the Mansion down and build over both it and the park. Perhaps this time, too, it won't be the Council that helps the people of Ipswich: certainly not if the best it can do is suggest, heaven help us, more coffee shops and more trees in planters.

I suggest that the time has come for local individuals and organisations actively to consider how best to help the people of Ipswich.

Norma Laming



The Cornhill 1960

Great Dunmow Maltings and Ingatestone Hall

Through the golden, harvested fields of north Essex to Dunmow. Those who equate Essex with the eponymous Girl, White Van Man, estuarine English and TOWIE (*The Only Way Is Essex*) are obviously unaware of its outstanding natural beauty and ancient villages. (I speak as an Essex boy!) Of course, the threatening shadow of Stansted Airport hovers over all.

Great Dunmow Maltings is a unique example of a classic restoration project, recognised nationally and internationally. It dates back to c.1565, operated until 1948 and is the oldest surviving urban maltings in the country. This Grade II* Listed building, saved and completely renovated by The Great Dunmow Maltings Preservation Trust, has received numerous awards since its public opening a decade ago. Our group looked at the Town Museum downstairs, full of fascinating exhibits to do with Dunmow's past including a tiny but complete shoe shop, the contents of which were rescued from a skip. We all looked at the story of the Dunmow Flich 'trials' which were mentioned in *The Canterbury Tales* and still held every leap year; the 'jury' used to consist partly of six maidens. "Difficult to find nowadays", as our guide remarked. The same goes for male 'maidens', of course. Upstairs in the Barley Room we looked at the drying floor and were taken through the malt production process – I don't think anybody really understood it. A malster had a very skilled job and it was hard, physical work. A boy of 12, we were told, had to carry heavy sacks from one end of the maltings to the other. The man who turned the grain three times a day had to pull a 'plough' behind him.

South of Dunmow: a really beautiful vista in the golden afternoon over the Roding villages and thence to Ingatestone Hall. It was a manor in the nunnery of Barking; in 1539 it came into the hands of Sir William Petre, the son of a wealthy farmer and tanner. He was the protégé of Thomas Cromwell, busy in the commission of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, a Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Order of the Garter. He was a model of discretion, had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the affairs of state and managed to keep his job and his head through the reigns of four Tudor monarchs. His son was ennobled and his family have lived here ever since; the eighteenth Lord is Essex's Lord Lieutenant.

The house of 'rose red' brick, but not 'half as old as time', was built as a manor house and was externally complete by 1548. Consisting originally of three courts, now the inner court is the only survival and its west wing was demolished in 1800, leaving a three-sided building. The charming Clock Tower range still exists, remodelled in the 18th century; it greets you at the end of a short, straight drive. The house itself is homely rather than grand; the Petre family seat is now at Writtle Park. Before that it was at Thorndon Hall (1764, burnt out in 1876). The Hon. Dominic Petre and his family live in the private wing – he runs the Hall, his father the estate. The house has many royal and family portraits, some frayed and ancient curtains and chair covers, two priest holes which were discovered by accident and much really old furniture. The Long Gallery at 95 feet contains portraits of every Lord and some of their Ladies. There is much of historical interest to do with the Petres and some beautiful lacework. On display were the robes, one for the Coronation, the other for the State Opening of Parliament in 1999. Tony Blair abolished the right of hereditary peers to sit in Parliament's second chamber; there is a framed letter from TOPS: "Turfed Out Peers' Society". Our thanks to Caroline Markham for arranging such a fascinating day and to our coach driver, John.

Richard Worman

Snippets 2

ITFC21

The above acronym, Ipswich Transport Fit for the 21st Century, doesn't seem to be used so much now. Perhaps the ongoing work this year has created so much bad feeling that people don't like to associate it with what looks like 'Ipswich Town Football Club'! Road works holding up motorists and the re-building of the two bus stations inconveniencing passengers will be largely forgotten next year. Then, hopefully, we shall all benefit from the improvements. One improvement seldom referred to is treating pedestrians like human beings, and not herding them into railed off sections at road crossings, e.g. at 'Hyde Park Corner' (St Matthew's Street / Crown Street) where it's much more open for pedestrians.

Portman Road

The football ground has been registered by its owners, the Borough Council, as an Asset of Community Value. So if ever a future Council wanted to sell it they would have to give the local community 'first refusal' for six months. All this is rather hypothetical but it should be another layer of protection against what has happened at some other football clubs, where the clubs own their grounds. A potential buyer of the club is attracted by its 'real estate' value, sells the land to a supermarket and builds a new football ground outside the town where most supporters would have to travel by car. We should value the ideal location of Portman Road between the railway station and the town centre.

The death of the local?

Three local public houses are being converted into supermarkets – The Emperor in Norwich Road: Tesco, The Golden Key, Woodbridge Road: Sainsbury, now open and Heathlands, Foxhall Road: Tesco. How many more branches of these giant grocers do we need? Who would have thought that when John James Sainsbury opened his first shop in Drury Lane in 1869, when Jack Cohen started his first Hackney market stall in 1919, when Frank Asda started (OK, OK...), that their power in the land by the twenty-first century would be so dominant, both in shopping and in planning terms. We now face the destruction of, most significantly, the relief characters 'Tolly Cobbold' (the last of its kind in the town) and 'The Emperor Inn' and the art deco windows 'Smoke Room' and 'Saloon' at the Golden Key.

The B&Q store on Ransomes Europark is to divide into two separate shop units. B&Q will continue to operate but the greater part of the store will be a new food store for Morrison's. The reason is that B&Q are downsizing, their latest results show turnover down, profits down and a company that needs 20% fewer stores.

Ian Cheshire, Chief Executive since 2005 has said it can maintain turnover and market share with less space and fewer stores. B&Q currently have 651 stores in Britain and Ireland and they are negotiating with supermarkets to take approximately half the floor area in their larger superstores. So far they have planning permission for 18 conversions but most planning authorities are resisting the change on the basis that they do not want any more out-of-town comparison outlets (supermarkets). B&Q are also in talks with the restaurant chains and coffee houses to take a proportion of their smaller stores. Good news for the residents of east Ipswich who will be able to food shop the length of Ransomes Way choosing between Sainsbury's, Waitrose, B&M, Morrison's, Lidl and the Co-op.

Ipswich's oldest settlement

An evening walk on July 11 2013

We met by the 'soldiers' gate' at Foxgrove Gardens dip, where Foxhall Road crosses the shallow valley we would follow that evening. Brick clays show that this valley was occupied by a 'lake' in prehistoric times.

Robert Carr owned a brickyard here, between Foxhall Road and the Felixstowe railway to the south. It was here in 1902 that archaeologist Nina Frances Layard discovered flint Acheulian hand-axes of the longest lived human technology, indeed one that transgressed several hominid species. In 1903 she employed two brothers to find flints, which they did plus finding fossil elephant bones and a tooth of a rhinoceros. Brickmaking here was abandoned by the early 1920s and the site is now covered by the houses of Celestion Drive and Bull Road.

Walking along Henslow Road we noted 'Henslow Terrace 1902' built of red bricks, presumably from Carr's brickyard. A short diversion took us to (modern-day) Churchill Avenue, where J.V. Todd excavated in the brickearth at the former small-holding in 1957 and where I put down boreholes in 1966 - neither found any hand-axes. Further along Henslow Road a hand-axe was found in the garden of no.9 in 1942 - it is now in Ipswich Museum.

Excavations at the corner of Freehold Road and Bloomfield Street were investigated by me in 1972 and by John Wymer in 1978 – again, no hand-axes were found.

Our last stop was at Starfield Close off Bloomfield Street. This was the site of a brickyard in the early 1870s, but is now occupied by new housing of 'imported' Oxford Clay bricks – what would Robert Powell, brickmaker of Bloomfield Street (1870s) think of that?

We finished the meeting with thoughts on the lives of Ipswich people over 400,000 years ago – the first Ipswich Society?

Bob Markham

Changes to our administration arrangements

The Society has recently provided our Honorary Secretary with a dedicated laptop. This was a much overdue acquisition and enables our secretary to separate her work on behalf of the Society from her personal work.

We are very grateful for the support, assistance and advice provided by one of our members, Fraser Yates. He assisted in setting up the laptop and the new "generic" email address of **secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk**

That is now the published email address and contact point for the Society. Very importantly contact group email messages can be sent out to members with greater ease saving valuable time for our secretary and keeping members up to date and informed in a timely manner. This is an important step in our efforts to increase our electronic communication with members. However, don't worry if you prefer to be contacted in traditional methods; they remain in place.

Letter to the Editor

40 years of Conservation in Ipswich from John Field, Chair, Ipswich Conservation and Design Panel

I feel that it is necessary for me to bring to your attention, and to that of your readers, my deep concern regarding the report on the talk I gave at the Society's recent AGM, which appeared in the last edition of the Society's Newsletter.

I am concerned that as the article is headed "AGM Talk by John Field" in the Newsletter index, readers will understandably assume that its contents are a review of the points made by me in my talk. I would like to stress that this is not the case and that only the first paragraph of the article, and some of the second, relate to my talk.

I must make it very clear that the points raised in the remainder of the article cannot be attributed to me. In fact, I must also stress that these do not reflect my own views or my memories on the issues it raises.

I would like to suggest that, in future, any views put forward in the Society's Newsletter should be clearly and carefully attributed to the person responsible in order to avoid a repeat of the type of ambiguity and embarrassment I have referred to above.

Finally, whilst writing, I would also like to express some disappointment that the bulk of my talk covering, with illustrations, the many initiatives aimed at protecting and enhancing the town's architectural heritage, introduced by Ipswich Borough Council over a 40 year period, was not referred to at all. I consider this important message to have been the main thrust of the talk but, unfortunately, this was not touched upon at all in your review.

[See also '40 years of conservation in Ipswich' by John Field, *Ipswich Society Newsletter*, April 2013, page 8 – Editor]

Gift Aid – Ipswich Society members' update

Gift Aid is a Government run scheme that allows charities, including The Ipswich Society, to reclaim tax on your membership subscription and/or any donations. For every £1 you contribute (provided you are a current taxpayer), the Society gets an additional 25p back. This has to be claimed for and a number of changes have been made to the HMRC arrangements for managing these claims. Paper based claims for income from most charities are no longer accepted. As a result this year's claim was made using the HMRC Charities Online Service. Not without challenges, this year's claim was successful (Phew!).

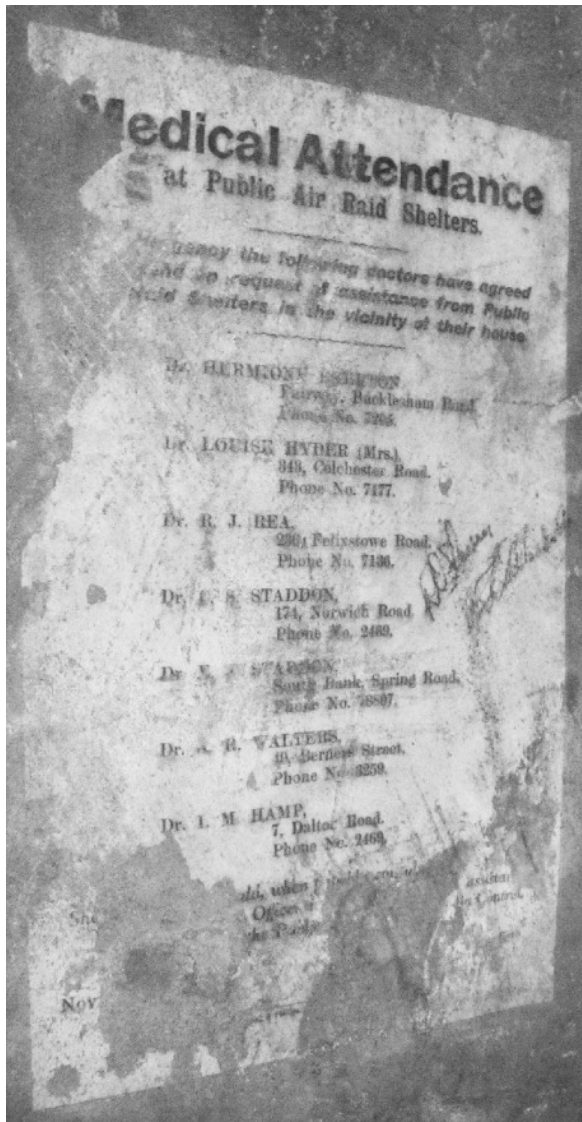
More work is now required to update our new member application forms to ensure we capture all the information needed for future claims. In addition some of the information needed for successful claims may be missing from our older records and necessitate requests for that information once identified.

A further update will be provided in the January Newsletter. The Ipswich Society Registered Charity No. is 263322.

Graham Smith, Treasurer

Troglodytic Ipswich

Stoke Hall Road, off the bottom of Belstead Road hill is an unassuming residential cul de sac. Its name, however, commemorates a lost great house of Over Stoke. Stoke Hall was a large mansion house built by the wine merchant Thomas Cartwright in 1744/45. Cartwright also excavated beneath Stoke hill a vast series of wine cellars, eighteen in all on three underground levels, and a total of 180 feet in length. By 1892 the Hall was up for sale following the death of the owner Robert James Ransome of Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies. The stables of the Hall were not demolished and continue to be used by businesses; indeed they and the tunnels are Listed Grade II.



stretchers. A small canteen was set up at which tea and biscuits could be bought.”

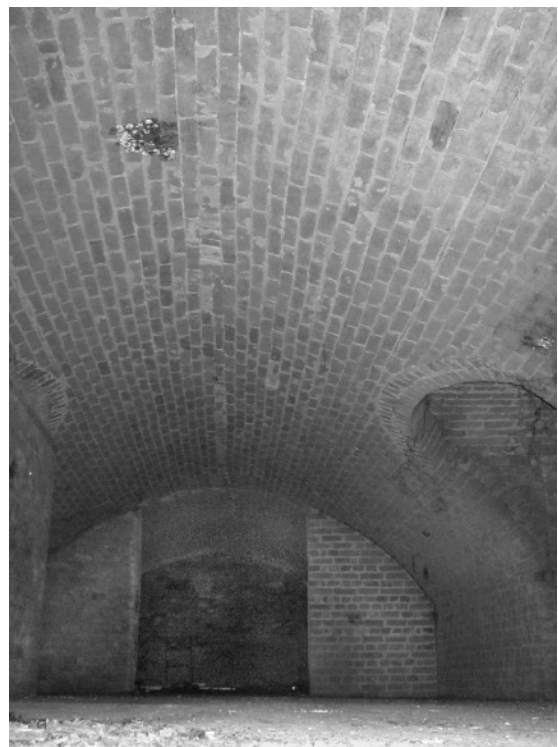
R.G.

*Above: On-call doctors poster from World War II
Right: Original brick vaulting untouched by the M.o.D.*

(See <http://ipswich-lettering.org/stokehall.html> for more detail and images)

At the kind invitation of the current tenant of the larger unit, Suffolk Marquees, the Society’s Chairman and I were shown round on a hot July afternoon; tunnels are always intriguing. Cartwright’s wine store has had a chequered history, most notably as a public air-raid shelter. Much additional rendering, wall-building and adaptation was carried out to make the spaces suitable. Former Ipswich Museum curator, David Jones’ fine book *Ipswich in the Second World War* (Phillimore, 2005) tells us more:-

“The largest public shelters were the pre-existing cellars in Stoke Hall Road, the only shelter [in Ipswich] to hold more than 500 people. The records suggest a shelter *de luxe*. Like other public shelters, it had illuminated signs which were switched on in line with the blackout and off at 10.30 or during an alert. It was heated by a Cara stove. It had its own stirrup-pump, two buckets and fire extinguishers. In addition to a first aid box, [part] was set aside for a casualty holding section provided with extra lights. The emergency exit was purposely widened to take



The Ipswich Society's Annual Awards Evening Wednesday 20 November 2013 at 7.30pm, St Peter's at the Waterfront

There have been close to twenty nominations for new buildings (including private houses), public realm paving and works of public art for the Ipswich Society Awards 2013. The judges will be considering the nominations at the same time as this Newsletter is published and the results will be announced at the Awards Evening on 20th November in St Peter's.

Heritage Open Days

The success of this year's Heritage Open Days in Ipswich is entirely due to Dianne Hosking who successfully arranged for some twenty-seven buildings, a bus and a boat to be available to visitors over the weekend of the 14 and 15 September. Despite the weather (heavy rain on Saturday morning and a strong wind from lunchtime on Sunday) a healthy number of visitors climbed aboard the *Victor*, were stunned by the second largest organ in Europe (Royal Hospital School) and impressed by the efforts of the Maritime Trust in the Customs House. We got one or two things wrong (the fly-past at Martlesham had taken place the weekend before) and we did run out of leaflets before things started but overall the event was very successful. Many thanks to all the volunteers who worked so hard in the venues.

If you have any suggestions for buildings that should be open next year please let me know.

John Norman



If you would prefer to receive your Ipswich Society Newsletter as a PDF file, rather than a paper version, please send your desire on this matter, along with your email address, to:

secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk

Unloved and unoccupied streets in Ipswich

There are a number of areas of Ipswich that cry out for improvement and probably have a greater claim on the £3 million we intend to spend on the Cornhill to attract visitors and provide a better environment for residents and those who work here. Upper Orwell Street and St Peter's Wharf have been mentioned in previous editions of the Newsletter.

Today I single out Crown Street from St. Matthew's Street roundabout to the back of the Odeon with St Margaret's Street being a particular eyesore. I'm not sure what can be done, given that the property presenting a poor appearance to the passing public is in private ownership but given that the majority of visitors, and locals in their cars or on the bus travel along the route every day it is time we collectively sought solutions.

Of particular concern is the former nightclub Bar Fontaine between Old Foundry Road and St Margaret's Street, a Grade II listed building that hasn't been used for twenty years. I understand that there is a *conservation deficit* on this property, that is unauthorised building work has been carried out and this will need to be put right before further improvements can happen. At the very least the façade to St Margaret's Plain could be tidied and repainted*

The long blue fence hiding the car wash opposite is the result of the Planning Appeal, the inspector determining that the commercial use of the site could continue providing it was hidden behind a new fence. How much better things were when we could see the front elevation of the Manor House.

Two of the three major office blocks on the north side of Crown Street between Hyde Park Corner and Crown Pools are empty, and the third, Crown House is actively looking for more tenants. I'm not sure there is an immediate solution for empty offices but the lack of activity, lights and people has a knock-on effect on town centre retail. If you have ideas for improvement or other examples of unloved Ipswich streets please drop a line to the editor.

John Norman

[*Editor's Note. The hoardings have been repainted since John wrote this article.]

Illustrations on the back page: Former Shimla Indian restaurant and neighbour, Crown Street; The Blue Fence, site of former Kwik Fit premises, now a car-wash – Crown Street/St Margarets Green; 'General Accident': Hyde Park House, 1 Crown Street; The Beached Liner, the former Odeon Cinema, Major's Corner; the former Bar Fontaine / The Prince of Orange, St Margaret's Street.

Thursford Christmas Spectacular 2013

I know Christmas is several months away, but I have been allocated 40 tickets for December 14th for the 7pm performance of the Thursford Christmas Spectacular. I have booked a coach, which will leave from the bus stop at the junction of Ransome Road and Felixstowe Road and also from All Hallows Church Landseer Road where there is a car park (at your own risk, of course) and Crown Street. The coach will leave Ipswich at 10.45am (Crown Street at 11am) spending the afternoon in Norwich and going to the show in the evening. We return as soon as the show finishes, arriving back in Ipswich at midnight or thereabouts. If you are interested please ring me on 07867525422 or 01473421296 soon as I must pay for the tickets in October. Cost is approx. £49, but if I fill the coach there may well be a refund on the day.

June Peck.

The Ipswich Society

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk

email: secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 263322

This Newsletter is the magazine of Ipswich's civic amenity society established in 1960

Dates for your diary

Ipswich Society Outings 2013-14

Saturday 14 December 2013	Thursford Christmas Spectacular, Norfolk – see page 22
Thursday 20 March 2014	Capital Curios, London
Saturday 26 April 2014	Audley End, Essex
Wednesday 21 May 2014	Ipswich Waterfront walk
June 2014	Ipswich walk (to be announced)
August 2014	Houses of Parliament, London
Tuesday 16 September 2014	Barrow Boys and Bankers, London

The example of gothica seen on page 2 can be found on the end of a projecting beam at 2 Cardigan Street, a coach house dated on its wall '1789', which is home to St Jude's Brewery.

Winter Illustrated Talks at the Museum Street Methodist Church – entrance in Black Horse Lane – 7.30pm (followed by tea and biscuits):

Wednesday 16 October 2013: Richard Cocke, 'Public sculpture in Norfolk & Suffolk' (see p.6)

Wednesday 20 November 2014: The Society's ***Annual Awards Evening*** at 7.30pm, St Peter's at the Waterfront (wine and canapés).

Wednesday 18 December 2013: Borin Van Loon, 'Historic trade signs in Ipswich'

Wednesday 15 January 2014: Mervyn Russen, 'The first railway to Ipswich and beyond'

Wednesday 19 February 2014: Phil Smart, 'Getting back on track' (see p.3)

Wednesday 19 March 2014: Darren Barker, Principal Conservation Officer at Great Yarmouth Borough Council

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STREETS

IN



IPSWICH

See page 22