



The Ipswich Society NEWSLETTER

www.ipswichsociety.org

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In 2015 Holywells Park won an Ipswich Society Award of Distinction for new work and renovation... and now another. See the article on page 6.



Editorial

It's well recognised that the unusual name 'Humber Doucy Lane' comes from the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815) when Ipswich had a number of militia barracks and also played host to French prisoners of war. On their hot march to and from whatever labour they were required to do during incarceration, they were grateful for the cool shade of the trees along this lane, so called it 'ombre douceur': sweet shade. This became anglicised as 'Humber Doucy'. Bob Markham's article on page 13 employs the conceit that the lane carries the name of Ipswich's 'River Humber', which is an interesting twist in the tale. The information in this article is possibly unique and we're happy to publish it and make it available to all.

On page 19, we feature a mural by George Robert Rushton (1868-1948) who was a painter, muralist, and stained glass designer. Born in Ladywood, Birmingham, he attended Birmingham School of Art before furthering his studies in London. Painting mostly landscapes, his colours having a luminous richness, not unlike that found in stained glass. He also painted in East Anglia and, for a period, lived in Ipswich and was Principal of Ipswich School of Art, 1906-29. You never know when an Ipswich connection will arise – in this case on an old postcard saved by our late Chair, John Norman.

A mini-Street scene column

So farewell then, Can Can bag shop. Claire and Sue, who set up and ran the tiny-but-perfectly-formed shop at 39a Upper Brook Street for thirty years have closed their business to enable them to go travelling. A small, unique landmark of the Ipswich street scene, it will be remembered for its exterior dripping with bags and cases which spilled into the passageway. Also for having no toilet for the staff... This is a particularly interesting historical part of town. Across the passage, The Steam Brewery Tap/Tavern served the products of the Charles Cullingham Steam Brewery behind (closed in 1920). South of Can-Can, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk (c.1484-1545), is said to have lived where the former Coach and Horses Inn, 41 Upper Brook Street, still stands (whose coach houses may have been the last remaining parts of the Duke's mansion), and adjoining the possible Brandon property fronting Tacket Street. Across the road was Sir Thomas Rush's (1487-1537) mansion, but that's another story.



Can Can photographed by Tim Leggett in 2024.

New members

Chairman's remarks

I appreciate members' support for my election in November as Chairman of the Ipswich Society. I was, of course, delighted to accept. I am particularly grateful to the Committee and Trustees for their support to date. I would also like to thank Tony Marsden who stood in as Chairman at a difficult time in 2024 and ensured that the Society continued in its work.

It is an impossible task to follow somebody like John Norman. I have warned the committee that if I heard "that new bloke is alright, but he's not as good as John" I'll be off! I, along with many others enjoyed John's company for several years whilst organising and contributing to the judging of the annual Suffolk Architects Craftmanship Awards.

This involved racing around the wonderful Suffolk countryside and having the privilege of being invited into people's homes and businesses to view exemplary design and workmanship. Initially, we navigated via a folded map to locate the likes of Gazeley, Fressingfield and Kettlebaston but always seemed to end up at the Sole Bay Inn in Southwold for lunch. Whitebait was a particular favourite. I learned a lot from John; in addition to construction expertise, I admired his enthusiasm and ability to engage with people. He was a big supporter of my architectural practice in our formative years and remains an unparalleled champion of the construction industry in Suffolk.

In the three months since my election, I have attended over a dozen external events on behalf of the Society, a number of which were to introduce myself to other organisations and individuals with an interest in the town.

Until I accepted this role, I had not fully realised the extent of the effort, love and commitment people are investing in Ipswich. Wherever I go I meet people saving our historic churches, creating in fantastic arts venues in underused buildings, meticulously repairing an historic building as a true labour of love, or transforming waste ground into a beautiful retreat. This work is in most cases carried out without payment and, no doubt, in some cases in the face of negative comment from a few naysayers.

Alongside the plethora of worthy small-scale and community projects there are potentially several larger commercial scale projects in the pipeline. It is hoped that work on Broomhill Pools will commence in the Spring, an exciting bespoke visitor attraction at Maritime House on the Waterfront is in for planning and the second phase of the refurbishment of the Regent Theatre should be completed in time for the 2025 panto!

In addition, the Borough Council is proposing to carry out improvements to Lloyds Avenue, with the aim of encouraging greater interaction with the street frontages and improving the overall environment. Finally, planning applications have been submitted for re-cladding and upgrading of The Mill and for extensive works to convert the former Cliff Quay brewery.

This amounts to significant private and public investment in the town, and will hopefully provide additional attractions with benefits to residents and visitors. What is apparent is that despite the negative background noises, there are a huge number of people who are actively committed to this town, and it is the job of the Society to support and encourage this positivity wherever possible.

Graham Lambert

Planning matters

Travellers' site, West Meadows. This is a proposal by one family to add five self-build plots for their large family. They will be hard standing, impermeable pitches with soakaway drainage. A sound-proof fence will be erected between them and the A14. This will help to fulfil Ipswich Borough Council's requirement for more such pitches.

ITFC land to south of Football ground. This area, the site of the now-demolished Staples and Better Gym buildings, will be used as a 180-space car park: 17 spaces for the Travelodge, 55 solely for the football club's staff at all times, and 113 public long-stay spaces including 6 disabled spaces; 20 of these will be reserved for media on match days. Access will remain the same, i.e. from Chancery Road. Note that the 45 space area on the corner of Chancery Road and Princes Street is marked as a future development site. These proposals, designed by Hoopers, will open up the vista of the ground from the railway station and help to relieve the car-park space shortage whilst the Portman Road multi-storey park and the Aqua Centre are constructed. There is concern that the landscaping design is inadequate.

161 Valley Road, Ipswich School Playing Field. The school would enlarge to a full 5.2 metres, the access from Valley Road to Notcutt's playing fields by using some of no. 161's garden and demolishing the garage (The school owns no. 161). This will give access to a 90 car- and 3 coach- space park. It will avoid the current use of Henley Road and then The Grove to access the fields. This approach is yet another entrance/exit onto Valley Road, which will be close to the pedestrian/cyclist route to Ipswich Garden Suburb. There is, as yet, no public or private response.

3-21 St Nicholas Court, Friars Street. The current combustible cladding on the modern block of flats next to the Unitarian Meeting House is to be changed to 50mm mineral wool insulated render type 2 cement board. The application form says that the finished render will visually match the existing. However the elevation drawings show that the new cladding on the balconies and the round tower will be a striking royal blue. This is being looked into as it would not be appropriate on this sensitive site.

593-595 Felixstowe Road. It is proposed to change the use of the existing small care home, itself in a pair of thirties semis, into a nineteen bed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The plans appear to be a warren of small spaces; two kitchens and two toilets on the ground floor and one bath and shower/toilet on the first floor. Two rooms on the ground and five on the first floors are ensuite. There appears to be no lounge provision. This is not the right location for such an establishment and the plans indicate far too much has been rammed into too small a space.

The Gallery Studio Theatre, St Georges Street. The Theatre needs to update and rearrange the layout of the seating, build a technical control room at the back of the auditorium and remove the last fragments of the original balcony rail. They hope to open up the original ceiling space in part and add an interpretive display and timeline. Commendable.

85-87 Fore Street. Despite reservations over Juliet balconies, storage of disabled kit for the 15 out of 22 accessible apartments and doubts about section 106 payments to Suffolk County Council (SCC) for education in a development of single-bed flats which is barely viable, it has been granted permission.

Ipswich Sports Club, Henley Road. Permission for a Padel court was deferred for a noise assessment. Padel racket is the fastest growing sport in the UK but the thwack of ball on plastic paddle is disturbing according to several recent press reports.

26-32 Carr Street (originally Woolworths). This scheme to convert the first and second floors of the building to residential use in the town centre has at last produced some interesting results.

There will be a new entrance with a lobby, two lifts and stairs opening into the yard from Cox Lane. There will be elements of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the provision of a roof terrace and areas of planters. It is said to be viable.

Humber Doucy Lane (HDL) Hybrid application (i.e. Ipswich and East Suffolk) for 660 houses. This was refused for 13 reasons. There is no Master plan; transport assessment is inadequate; changes to HDL are without support; flooding problems; loss of sports pitches and no alternative provision. Nevertheless, David Wilson/Barratt Homes have appealed the decision which has been heard by a Planning Inspector, mainly live in the East Suffolk Council Offices in Melton, but also on-line and, once, at Grafton House. On Tuesday 11 February 2025, I attended the hearing of evidence from Brian Samuel, (Northern Fringe Protection Group), Cllr Sandy Martin (Local Suffolk councillor) and Mike Hancock (Chair, Ipswich Rugby Club). In sum, of their two hours of evidence and cross-examination by the appellants' KC, Mr Christopher Boyle, there is no master plan; there are no suggestions put forward to ameliorate the already inadequate road system (HDL, Tuddenham Road with its two narrow bridges, and the A1214). Further, SCC Education has recently decided not to build a secondary school on the Ipswich Garden Site so secondary education for those pupils will take place at either an expanded Northgate High School or at Suffolk One. Clearly, this worsens the transport problems. There is no 15% modal shift in transport, as is required. The loss of the rugby pitches and their availability is severe. Their failure to provide any replacement is reprehensible in view of the problems that the country's health faces. Sometimes there are 300 children and teenagers (boys and girls) on the site in age groups 6 to 18.

Lloyds Avenue Undercroft. The street is to be resurfaced, maintaining the service and drainage *status quo*. Lloyds Arch will be repainted, decluttered and a multifunctional art installation will be introduced. Two light boxes on the east wall, with one integrated display screen will feature some art and provide information on upcoming events, operating silently from 5 am to midnight; all will be under Borough Council control. The proposal will create a planted plaza with rationalised street furniture in the lower part of Lloyds Avenue. The east public footway will be widened and the roadway narrowed to 3.2 metres. The number of taxi ranks will be reduced from 21 to 11 – this is not a part of this application.

The Mill, College Street. The Mill's current cladding is a 'fire risk', so it will be reclad. Before and after elevations don't look much different. However, the developer decided that the contractor should use a new temporary car park on a flattened and asphalted part of the Cardinal College site on the opposite of College Street. This work has been carried out in a Conservation Area close to a Scheduled Monument, Grade II listed buildings and on top of two thousand burial plots. An enforcement action is envisaged.

Waterfront House (formerly Contship, later Ashton Graham offices). This, once a warehouse for R&W Paul and then offices, has come under the control of a retired architect who proposes to install a Museum of Clay. Not only would there be exhibits of clay objects but the history of clay, particularly locally, would be explored. To do this, he would dismantle the 20+ year old glass frontage over the waterfront replacing it with a red painted steel canopy with giant circular windows, one glazed. An atrium would be created and the first two floors would become open exhibition spaces. As far as one can tell, he has funded this and other similar proposals himself. We have doubts about the circular designs and the details of the doors and windows being inserted on the west (Custom House) facade. The principle of a new museum on the waterfront is very attractive; whether it would survive as a clay museum is another question.

Planning Applications. There were 1,012 in 2024; this is a slight increase on 2023 – much higher than the Covid-period 2020 (975) not as high as in the peak of 1,370 in the noughties.

Mike Cook

Our Chairman



The Ipswich Society was pleased to announce Graham Lambert as Chair, following a Special General Meeting on Wednesday 20 November, 2024. By means of introduction to the members, Graham has provided the following description of himself.

In 1978 after finishing at Northgate High School (it had morphed from a Grammar School) my professional career began, somewhat by chance, at Hoopers Architects in Ipswich. Having failed in an attempt to become a cartographer at the MOD earlier that year, there had been no back-up plan.

The offer of two weeks' work in Hooper's office was happily accepted. In the end I stayed there for six years and gained a degree in architecture, studying part-time, from North East London Polytechnic (now The University of East London).

Moving to Wincer Kievenaar in Hadleigh enabled me to complete my training, and become a fully qualified architect in 1988. It was here I met 'K' and 'H', and after a meeting on a cold February night in the Eight Bells, Angel Street, KLH was formed.

After an initially tough start during the recession of 1990, KLH has grown to a practice of over thirty people today with a specialism in healthcare and mental health projects. It has built strong relationships locally and remains determined to provide young people with the opportunity of training which I enjoyed. The practice is currently busy working on Broomhill Pool and Cliff Quay Brewery.

My final project before retirement from the company in 2022 was the new Urgent and Emergency Care Centre at Ipswich Hospital. I remain a Director of the KLH Trust Board which oversees the architectural firm.

I have been a member of the Ipswich Conservation & Design panel for over 25 years, I co-ordinated Craftsmanship Awards with the late John Norman and enjoyed membership of various construction- related bodies during my working career.

As well as the role of Ipswich Society Chairman, I undertake other volunteer roles whilst ensuring that I leave enough time to watch cricket and fit in the odd holiday. I have an interest in military history and regularly visit battlefield sites in Europe.

Graham Lambert

Ipswich Society Awards 2024

This article is based on the notes provided by our usual Awards presenter, Tony Marsden.

On Wednesday November 20, 2024 our newly-elected Chairman, Graham Lambert, introduced the evening. Despite the lack of entries for 2024's awards (they will be carried over to next year), the Executive Committee decided that our ceremony for 2024 should still go ahead. However, a different approach was conceived this year and this involved a re-examination of the Awards of Distinction given during the first quarter of the 21st century.

Our purpose was to judge the 'Best of the best' of the sixteen projects which could be candidates for the recently inaugurated *John Norman Award of Distinction*. It was important to the Society to consider what makes the winner distinctive in the built environment. Questions were raised: about sustainability, about how successful the projects might be and whether these projects are now considered as successful as we might have hoped?

The usual Awards judging criteria include:

1. Is the work in character with the surroundings or forms a focal point?
2. Has it improved the original building or its setting?
3. Are the scale, detailing, colour and materials sympathetic, well-considered and appropriate?
5. Is there a good quality of workmanship and standard of finish?
6. Impact: does it set a good standard for others to follow?

Previous winners

2000/2021: Unitarian Meeting House (Grade I listed)

2000: the Unitarian Meeting House Forecourt, creating a surfaced space with appropriate fencing and a commemorative obelisk. 2021: repairs and renovations to timber, roofs and other works, including a well-sited toilet; complete re-render of the exterior walls. The work is what should have been done, and whilst it's of a high standard the

work has made little change to the impact of the building.



2003/2009: Isaacs refurbishment and renovation (Grade I and Grade II* listed)

Renovation of the whole site (still ongoing) has been made and has sparked activity and attraction for Waterfront recreation. The rescue of – and enormous investment in – such an assemblage of fascinating buildings is to be highly praised.

2004: Suffolk County Council HQ at Endeavour House

Endeavour House replaced an Eastern Electricity Accounting Office (demolished in 2001) to make way for the 'Ipswich Village' development. The building (2001-2003) was revolutionary in design and concepts such as the solar panels in the specialised glazing. SCC moved in from the ageing County Hall. The building thrives now, containing Babergh and Mid Suffolk District councils, NHS elements, and departments of the fire service.





2005: Brett Fountain, Christchurch Park (Grade II listed)

The Brett drinking fountain was originally saved by The Ipswich Society rescue efforts in the 1970s or very early 1980s. Like so many other Victorian remnants, it could so easily have disappeared. This fountain near the Henley Road entrance to the Arboretum had been donated in 1863 by John Brett, son of a Carr Street shoemaker who wanted to provide clean water to the urban poor. The fountain was the first feature to be restored in Christchurch Park under the Heritage Lottery-funded project.

2007: Cabman's Shelter, Christchurch Park (Grade II listed)

This timber shelter began life in 1892 and originally stood on Cornhill for use by cabmen and

Hackney carriage drivers between 1892 and 1895, before being moved to Christchurch Park. In an unfrequented corner of the park it was victim to decay and some vandalism. Finally, in 2006 it was restored and moved close to the Westerfield Road entrance. A lot of new carving and replacement of sections were required. It was virtually re-built, but brilliantly so. Now it is well-loved.



2007: Curson Lodge, St Nicholas Street (Grade II* and Grade II listed)

As all good Ipswich Society members know, this was *not* Thomas Wolsey's birthplace but it *was* a building Wolsey would have seen. Begun in 1500, it is a rare survivor of a medieval large guest house/inn, for Curson House across the way, where Wolsey had planned to retire as Provost of his new College. But Wolsey fell from grace with King Henry VIII and died broken-hearted in 1530. Its later history is interesting: the building was listed in 1951. The building was renovated in 2007 by the Ipswich Building Preservation Trust. This is a significant building within a row of similar structures.

2009: Arlington's, Museum Street (Grade II listed)

A remarkable historic building saved for the town. Remarkable because this was the original museum building. The dilapidated space was rescued by Ken and Liz Ambler and turned into a restaurant. The interior is not quite so accessible now, being predominately available for private hire. But it is a lovely space and well-preserved inside.



2010: Giles Circus redevelopment

From a busy interchange in the centre of town, the decision to increase the pavement space by the Borough Council was easy to make. This scheme opened up the whole area with a mirthful



monument to a local worthy: Carl Giles. The Grandma statue is raised from ground level on to a plinth, with stepped seating.

2011: Treehouse Children's Hospice

A restrained, almost hidden, elegant new building, the East Anglian Children's Hospice enhanced the wooded site near the busy suburban junction, just across the

roundabout from St Augustine's Church. It sits well in its setting. Obscured from the road, it is welcoming and encouraging in its open approach.

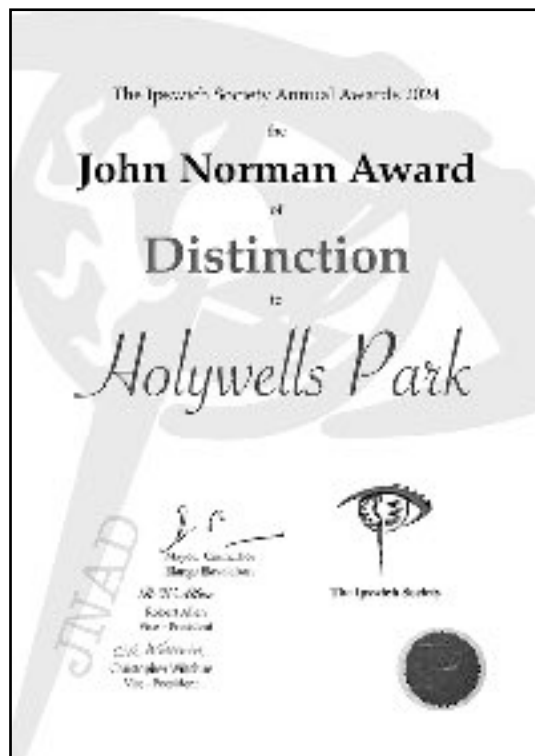


2015: Holywells Park (Stable block and Orangery: both Grade II listed)

Several areas on the site are in this nomination. It also received a Civic Voice award. There was Lottery funding and some IBC funding. The combination of buildings in the location makes for a more interesting space.

Renovation has made this an important destination and attraction in an area of town which did not have anything like this before. Holywells has been a great catalyst for the whole area. The café is always busy. The Orangery is now safe and is respected; the maze is developing. It has been a big project with great community impact. Space is available for all age-groups and has raised the profile of the park to one of the

most significant locations in the town. The restoration of ponds has been impressive and the new playground was among nominations for an award too.



2018: The Lantern Room extension to St. Augustine Church, Felixstowe Road

The Church of St Augustine of Hippo is a familiar, imposing landmark for drivers in the east of Ipswich. It was the work of diocesan architect Henry Munro Cautley. All the work in 1927 was carried out by firms based in Ipswich. The addition in 2017 of a more useable space for the church, offered a sustainable social base including a kitchen and toilets around a

large, open, airy hall. The clever design made it – and the church – more accessible and welcoming, with underfloor heating and special glazing. It is in daily use.

2019: The Maltings, Princes Street refurbishment (Grade II listed)

Members of the Executive were invited to the opening of the completed works in 2019. It is a marvellous transformation. The building is significant because of its location on the route into Ipswich from the station through the business section of the town. It was in a terrible condition, having been a night club with a negative reputation, adversely affecting the area. There is great planting in the courtyard and the interiors have exceptional quality. Not surprisingly, Network Rail leapt at the tenancy.



2019: Maple Park Playground

An important transformation, bringing a care-worn and obsolete site out of the negative reputation it had. It was considered to be a stimulus for improvement. Many locals and parents commented favourably on the range of, admittedly, off-the-shelf

play equipment and the possible range of its users. It does lift the whole area out of a neglected community space into a great asset.

2022: 4 College Street, The Benet Aldred House (Grade II listed)

The position of this historic building next to heavy traffic has been its major misfortune. But it has been saved from ruin, upgrading a blighted corner. Action of the Borough to undertake the work is to be lauded, with St Peters Church across the way. It is intended to be a catalyst for further restoration in the area and it will fit in with the Wolsey 550 project while lifting the spirits as you drive around the area.



The judges then chose a ‘Top five’ from the sixteen previous winners: -

1. Isaacs Saleroom and Crossway refurbishment;
2. Endeavour House in Russell Road;
3. Holywells Park;
4. The Lantern Room at St Augustine’s Church;
5. The Maltings, Princes Street.

A worthy winner

Finally, a worthy winner in the first quarter of the 21st century was selected for the retrospective John Norman Award of Distinction: **Holywells Park**.

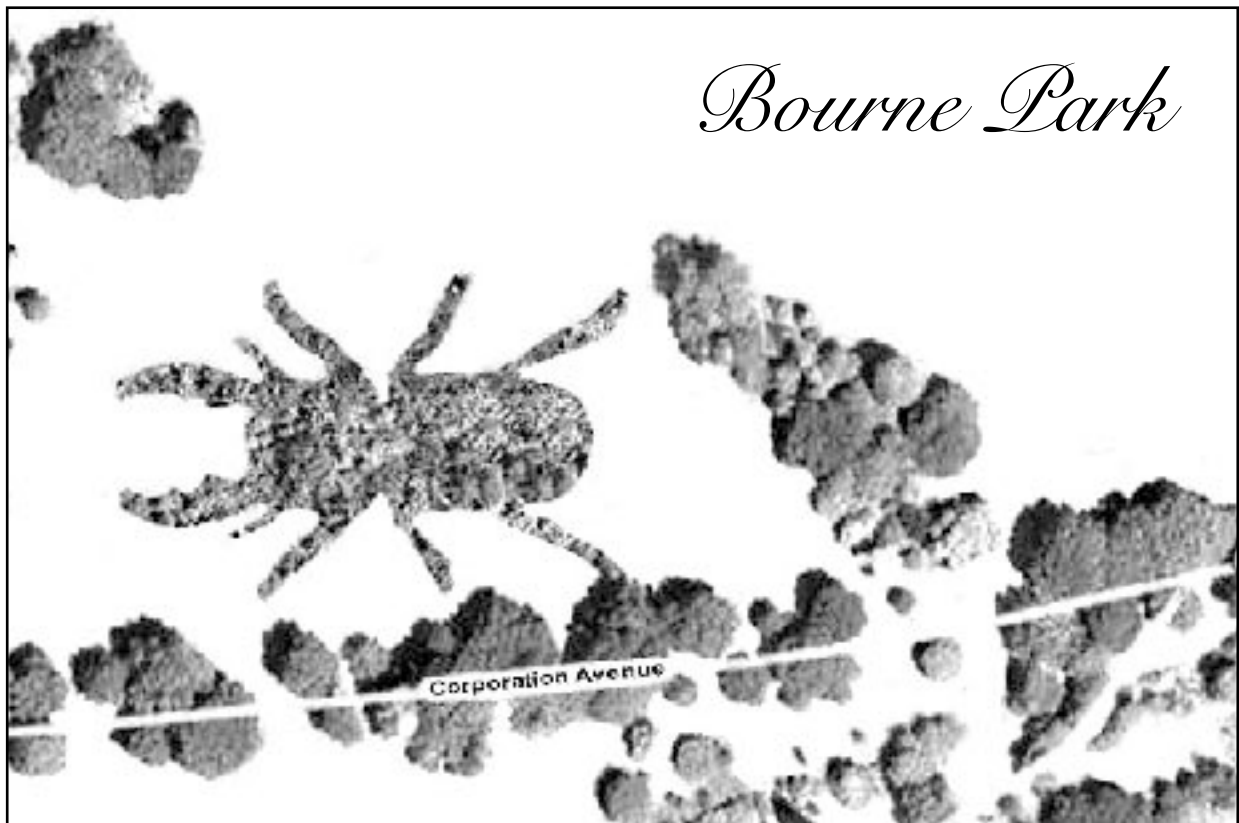
The Award was made by our President, Mayor Elango Elavalakan, to Chair of the Friends of Holywells Park: Robin Gape, Park Manager: Nick Wilcox and Portfolio holder for the Parks & Climate Change: Cllr Lucy Trenchard.

See page 12 of our January 2025 *Newsletter* (Issue 240) for a photograph of the presentation.

New Stag Beetle shaped woodland for Ipswich

This winter the Greenways Project is planting an imaginative new woodland in Bourne Park. Comprising 2,500 trees and shrubs, it will be shaped to look like a stag beetle from above. This new project has been funded by a corporate sponsor via Trees For Cities. This latest project will allow a wide range of local people the opportunity to be involved in the planting and subsequent care of the new trees. Some of the trees are being moved from within the park, others are from a local nursery, grown from local UK sourced seed.

The first planting was carried out during *National Tree Week* at the end of November, 2024 and the remainder were planted in *Ipswich Loves Trees* week – 8 to 16 February, 2025. The end of each 'leg' will have a stag beetle log habitat pile to make sure the woodland provides for these wonderful insects from the outset.



A visualisation of the stag beetle woodland after about 10 years' growth

Ipswich is established as a Tree City of the World to recognise the Borough Council's efforts to manage its existing tree stock as well as planting more and encouraging an overall increase in canopy cover across the town. The inclusion of a large proportion of hazel in the new Stag Beetle planting and elsewhere will, one hopes, provide habitats for hazel dormice.

Source: Local Wildlife News published by Ipswich Greenways Project:
greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk
Also: <http://wildipswich.org/wildlife-news>

Stag beetles are nationally scarce insects, but the Ipswich area holds a globally significant population of this magnificent insect. The male stag beetle, which can be up to 75mm long, is easily identified by his huge jaws that resemble the antlers that give his name. The females are smaller and do not have the 'antler-like' mandibles. Both sexes have a shiny black head and thorax, while wing-cases are a chestnut brown. The new woodland can be seen as ecologically important, as well as a subtle form of land art in Bourne Park.

When is an e-bike an electric motorcycle?



The market for e-bikes is growing at over 10% every year. No one has any doubt that in most European markets, e-bikes will be an important part of a greener transport mix. Anyone walking or cycling around Ipswich will have probably noticed a new breed of powerful electric bicycles. Your editor has seen, rather than heard, an electrically-powered bike travelling up Albion Hill at an estimated 30 mph. Apart from a quiet buzz, there was just the sound of the knobbly-treaded tyres on the tarmac. It prompted the question posed in the title of this article. (In the interests of balance, I'm also aware of at least one petrol motorcyclist who makes a habit of roaring up the same hill at a ridiculous speed.) These whizzy machines are particularly popular among fast-food deliverers, for obvious reasons.

An e-bike is an Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC) which is equipped with an electric motor to assist a rider when they are pedalling. By law it cannot propel the rider on its own - if it does, it is classed as a motorcycle or moped. To ride an e-bike, a person must be at least 14 years old; its motor must have a maximum power output of 250 watts and should not be able to propel the bike when it's travelling more than 15.5 mph. If an e-bike motor goes faster than this, it is not road-legal. However, you do not need a driving licence and an e-bike does not need to be registered, taxed or insured. If a bike meets the EAPC requirements, it is classed in the same way as a normal pedal bike. This means it can be ridden on cycle paths and anywhere else where a pedal cycle is allowed.

More than 250 watts of continuously rated power and the electric bicycle ceases to be that and becomes, in the eyes of the law, an electric moped. Indeed, if the power is over 4kW it becomes an electric motorcycle. An electric moped is no different to its petrol-powered cousin. To use it requires training, a driving licence, L-plates, third party insurance, a full-size number plate and a motorcycle helmet. Once you have sorted all that, you can use your electric moped on the road, and only on the road, or on private land with permission.

Communities across the country have been faced with numerous incidents of anti-social behaviour and dangerous driving concerning modified e-bikes, electric motorcycles and off-road motorcycles, putting innocent members of the public at risk. The Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA) and the Bicycle Association of Great Britain (BA) are the two trade associations responsible for the growing e-bike sector. The growth in the e-bike sector is bringing valuable new business opportunities to motorcycle and cycle dealers and the continued growth will hinge on the public continuing to embrace this new sector. Mis-selling by a small segment of the industry, which may lead to significant legal problems for some customers, has the potential to derail the e-bicycle sector and has wider implications for conventional cycling.

However, further concerns have been expressed around e-bikes and e-scooters. Whilst they offer a great way round the town or city, if the batteries become damaged or begin to fail, they can start fires. Lithium battery fires can spread quickly. Many of these fires are caused by incompatible chargers, modifications to e-bikes, or faulty or counterfeit products which are purchased online. This includes chargers, lithium batteries and conversion kits for e-bikes.

As a society, we haven't really got to grips with e-scooters. Apart from those towns running pilot rental projects (Norwich, Cheltenham and Cambridge for example), as far as I understand it, riding an e-scooter isn't legal on either the road or the pavement. And shouldn't riders have to wear a helmet? There are two requirements in primary legislation that will continue to apply to e-scooters in rental trial areas. They need to be covered by a motor vehicle insurance policy – it is understood rental operators will ensure a policy is in place that covers users of the vehicles. Also, e-scooter users need to have a valid driving licence.

We await long-delayed legislation on all e-scooters and e-bikes. Enforcement and the choking-off of the sale of illegal and potentially dangerous products would help.

RG

Ipswich's 'River Humber'

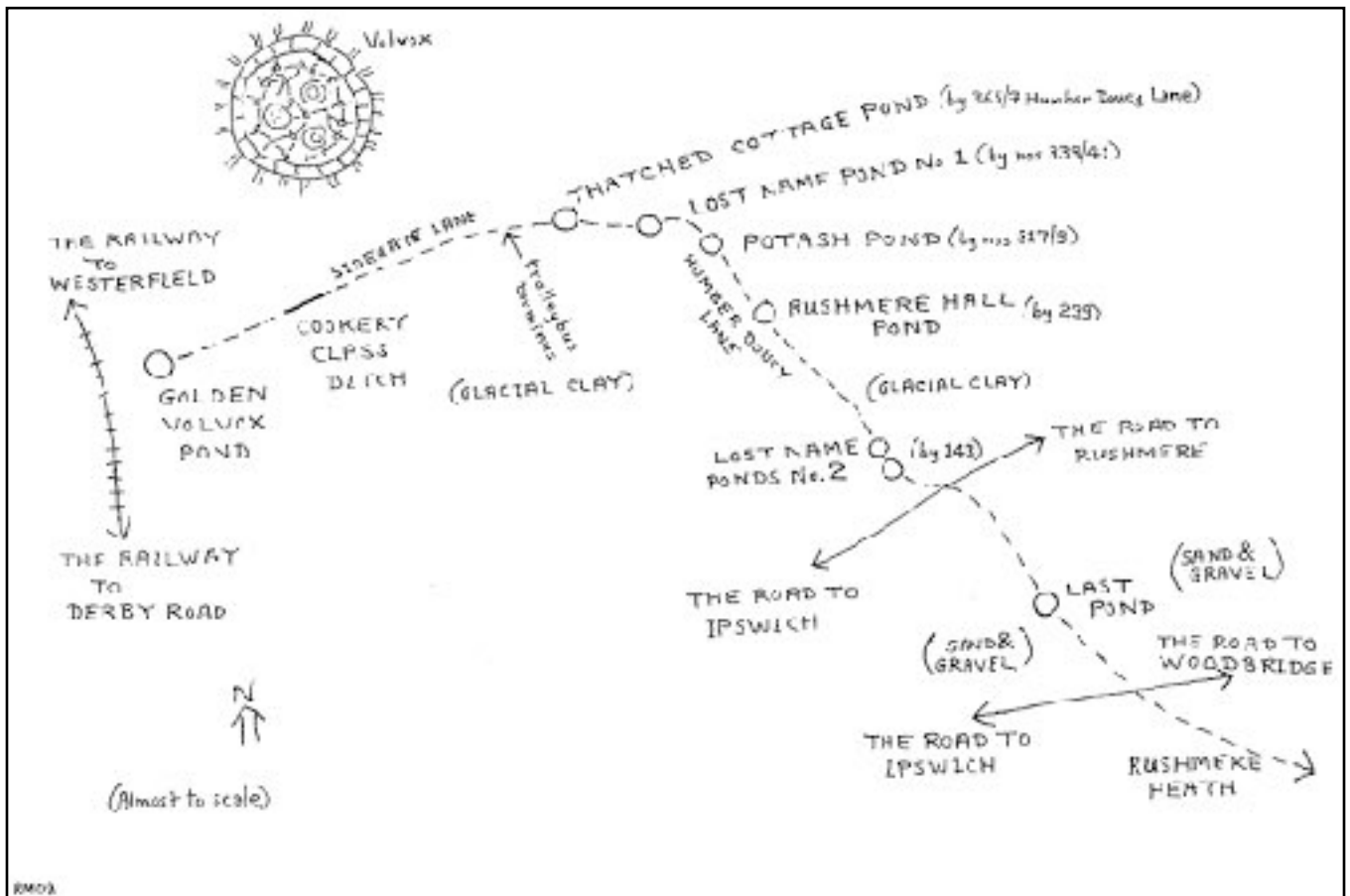
Humber Doucy Lane is the site of a lost drainage system on glacial boulder clay. The small stream from Sidegate Lane West to Playford Road was converted into field ditches and a chain of ponds which supplied drinking water to farm stock. With the post-World War II development of Rushmere Hall housing estate, redundant ponds were filled in and, except for a section of ditch in Humber Doucy Lane, the old drainage system vanished into modern culverts.

Water from fields drained into Golden Volvox Pond in Sidegate Lane West near Colchester Road. The pond was the habitat of a 'golden' variety of the microscopic *Volvox* organism. In very wet seasons this pond overflowed into Cookery Class Ditch, on the south side of Sidegate Lane opposite Northgate Schools – the ditch was a favourite place for schoolgirls in the 1950s to dispose of their unwanted cookery class productions whilst waiting for a trolleybus to take them home. The water then flowed along Sidegate Lane and into a (generally dry) hollow just beyond the trolleybus terminus turning circle. When the hollow filled up, the water ran into a small pond beside a thatched cottage – the lay-by and set back nos 365/367 Humber Doucy Lane mark the site of the former Thatched Cottage Pond.

From there the water flowed in the ditch-like Humber Doucy Lane stream into a (lost name) pond approximately at the junction of present day Kinross Road (nos 339/341 are set back here). Next was Potash Pond (by nos 317/319), the main pond of the system and which often flowed across the road, the large pond at Rushmere Hall (by no 239) receiving the overflow. There was a further (lost name) pond or ponds by no 143. The last pond in the system was situated near the entrance to Ipswich Wanderers Football Club. Having passed off the boulder clay land the water then percolated down into and through the sand and gravel of the heathland (although in part sometimes becoming a small seasonal stream) into the Rushmere Heath valley, where a pond still takes surplus water from Humber Doucy Lane.

Bob Markham

(Some information from Harold Spencer and Francis Simpson of Ipswich Museum, about 50 years ago.)



Ivy Buss

The Ipswich Society was recently gifted letters and papers authored by Miss Ivy Buss. Ivy was a member of the Society until her death in 2006 at the age of 97. She moved to her 'beloved' Ipswich after World War II and a series of events in her life which are difficult to comprehend. They include, as a 7 year-old, witnessing the Silvertown Explosion, West Ham in 1916, recalling: *'The force of the explosion- a wave of hot air, blew us down the hall'*.

In 1935 Ivy and her sister Floss spent time at Oberzell in Germany with their cousin Nell and her husband Carl. Carl was a committed Nazi who had been offered a position as one of Hitler's bodyguards. Ivy writes:

'Carl was inclined to take it, and wanted me to come with him to meet Hitler. I have always been sorry that, as I couldn't bear the sight of him, I wouldn't go'.

In 1944, her mother Louisa and elder sister, named Louise were killed when a V-1 flying bomb (doodlebug) hit the family home in Lewisham. Her father Robert and other sister Florence (Floss) were dug out alive from the wrecked house. Ivy's brother Bob who was an intelligence officer engaged in the battle of Caen at the time was granted leave to briefly return home.

Ivy worked at the Canadian Embassy in World War II and post-war in Geneva with the fledgling World Health Organisation. Her time in Ipswich is not particularly documented although it is clear she had friends here during the war:

'My friend who lives in Ipswich where there are a great many Americans about from the airfields, had been ill. One sunny day she thought she would go into Christchurch Park and ended lying on the grass asleep. She woke, startled, to find a huge GI lying alongside her, with his arms around her, cooing away! He didn't do it for long. Mary has a truly withering turn of phrase when needed – and this one got more than he'd bargained for. Unfortunately, they seemed to have a feeling that all English girls were trollops, and could be bought by a chocolate bar, or the promise of nylons'.

The papers are perhaps more of national interest rather than local. We hope to find them a permanent home with The Imperial War Museum or another appropriate organisation.

Graham Lambert

Sad news for Ipswich music lovers

Due to increased financial pressures on the events industry, the Global Rhythm organisers have made the tough decision to cancel this year's event. Numerous funding opportunities, partnerships and other options have been explored but, unfortunately, they were unable to achieve the financial support required to proceed.

Last year over 11,000 people attended Global Rhythm in Christchurch Park and enjoyed three lively stages and a workshop tent in the 14th year of the event. From the organisers: 'To each and every person who attended, and every artist who went on stage, all the crew and all the supporters, we love you and we wish you a bright and beautiful summer.'

*Luzmira Zerpa, lead singer of the band
Family Atlantica playing at Global Rhythm
in Christchurch Park 11 July 2014*



Elizabeth Knipe Cobbold (1766-1824) blue plaque

Our new Blue plaque on the Holywells Park Stable Block, commemorates the 200th anniversary of Elizabeth Cobbold's death. She laid intellectual foundations for the palaeontology collection at Ipswich Museum which was designated of national/international importance by the Arts Council in 2023. On 30 November 2024, in the presence of Mayor Elango Elavalakan, members of the Ipswich Society and invited guests, Professor Elizabeth Harper (evolutionary biologist of Cambridge University) introduced the plaque with a talk setting the historical scene and describing the work of Elizabeth Cobbold.

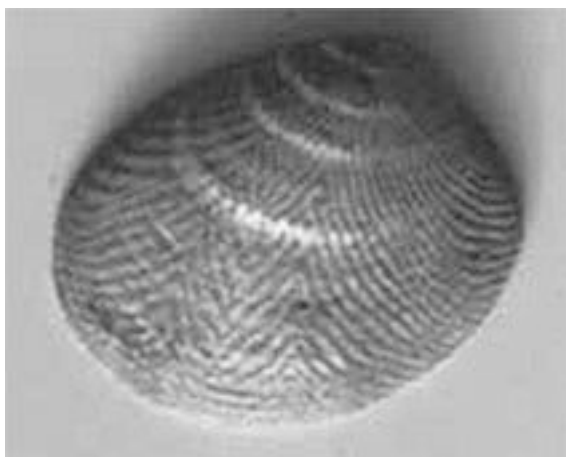


If you walk up the valley at Holywells, towards Nacton Road, you will come to a viewing point at the stream where springs of clear water can be seen bubbling up in the stream bed. The water is issuing from the Red Crag and often contains finely comminuted pieces of fossil shell from the Crag. GeoSuffolk has designated this area a County Geodiversity Site and it may be that Elizabeth Cobbold collected fossils from here, though it has not yielded complete specimens in recent times. Landseer Park is a more likely location for her finds including the fossil mollusc *Nucula cobboldiae* (this has recently been renamed *Acila cobboldiae*). This is more than 200 years ago, eight years before the first paper on Mary Anning's specimens was published by the Geological Society of London and 46 years before Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published.

The term 'Renaissance woman' is a cliché, but it is appropriate for Big John Cobbold's second wife; she also became the stepmother of fifteen children as well as, in time, giving birth to an additional seven – having had seven by her late husband. Georgian philanthropist, poet, artist, paper-cutter, scientist, socialite, polymath. How she managed to fit all this in, not to mention having the strength and drive, is remarkable. A well-known portrait by George Frost is in the collection of Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service.

Congratulations to Tony Robson and members of GeoSuffolk for an enlightening event.

RG / Caroline Markham



Acila cobboldiae



A superb talk on a lost engineering giant

There was absolutely no room left at the Museum Street Methodist Church when Ipswich's own 'R and R' (Ransomes & Rapier) expert, Derek Clarke, presented his talk on the innovative engineering giant at the Society's January 2025 meeting. Derek outlined the history of the company: an offshoot of Ransomes Simms and Jefferies Ltd, which had been solely established to take on the work for railway companies.

There was everything of note in his presentation, from the building of the first railway in China from Shanghai to Woosung to the Stokes gun – a lightweight weapon for use in the trenches of the First World War. Water control equipment was also produced, which led ultimately to the construction of the Aswan dam in Egypt and to water control equipment being installed at Niagara Falls between Canada and the USA. In the world of entertainment, revolving stages and floors were built for use in London theatres, and a revolving floor for the restaurant of the Post Office Tower in London.



Photo: Merv Russen

There was also, as part of the company's portfolio, the production of cranes and excavators, including mobile cranes capable of turning on a sixpence and railway breakdown cranes. Pride of place was given to the mighty Walking Dragline excavators, which were mainly employed in the coal and iron & steel industries. Used for open cast mining, these leviathans were dominant in the industrial landscapes of Britain and overseas. In the 1980s I drove home from Birmingham via Corby and was astonished to see a colossal Dragline still working on site. In the 1970s a Walking Dragline

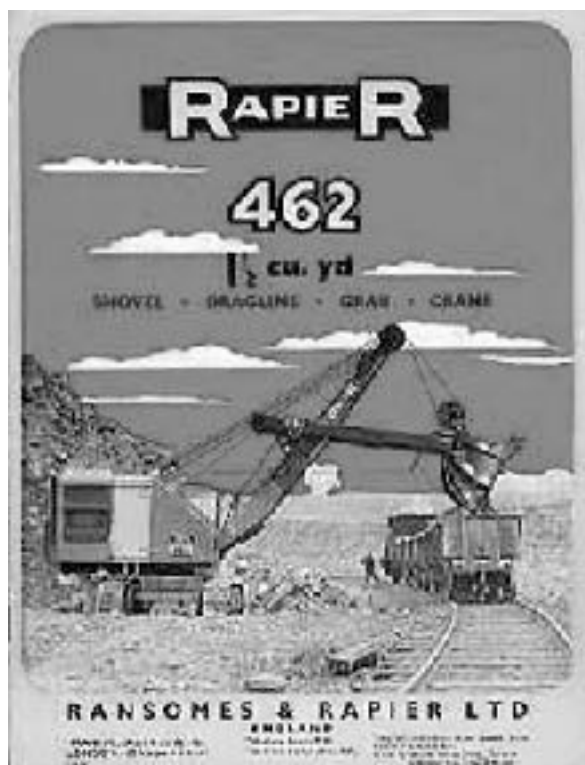
named *Sundew* (all Draglines produced were 'Christened' with the names of Grand National winners) 'walked' from Rutland to Corby as the cost of transporting it by road would have been prohibitive.

The company was eventually acquired and then closed down by the disgraced tycoon Robert Maxwell, with all work being transferred to another of his companies in Bath. Since then, all heavy engineering and other industries have disappeared from the industrial landscape which once led Ipswich to be described as 'The Glasgow of the East'.

This was a superb talk which was delivered by an expert on one of the UK's foremost engineering companies of both national and international renown.

There was a large number of questions for Derek which delayed our departure from the church. However, we had been very well-informed and entertained and the resultant prolonged and loud applause was very well merited indeed.

Graham Day



Could Ipswich be the City of Culture 2029?

When you start thinking about it, Ipswich has so much going for it: the first English/Anglo-Saxon town with twelve medieval churches and over 600 listed buildings, beautiful parks and it is a tree city of the world. Our Heritage Open Days must be one of the best in the country with numerous buildings open.



We also have first class museums, visitors can't believe that entry is free (Gainsborough's House charges £16.50, not that I am suggesting charging as I remember the fiasco when it was tried in the 90s), five theatres, DanceEast and three cinemas – King Street Cinema often shows lesser-known and foreign films.

We have exhibition spaces all over town, Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich Art Gallery next to the museum, which surely will be open again by 2029, St. Clements Church, The Hold, the university foyer and MF Gallery & Framers and Frame Workshop and Gallery, all of which cater for different artistic tastes. Similarly there are a number of talks held around the town, in venues including the Museum Street Methodist Church, the Salvation Army Citadel on Woodbridge Road, Ipswich Institute and The Hold.

Taking a walk with our Town Guides [*see page 26 – Ed.*] is a very good introduction to Ipswich and its history, or people can take a self-guided leaflet for our sculpture tour or the geology of the town; apparently 'Coprolite Street' causes amusement amongst those who know it is the proper name for fossilised dinosaur poo.

We have numerous musical groups and choirs with many places for them to perform from the Corn Exchange, Ipswich School, St Peters by the Waterfront and other churches, to the bandstand in Christchurch Park where brass band performances are very popular in the summer.

Ipswich is bucking the national trend of the closure of small grassroots music venues by having fantastic smaller venues described by one 17 year-old, when talking to the BBC, as being the best in East Anglia. Of course, we must not forget Ipswich Music Day, the biggest free, one-day festival in the UK attracting nearly 25,000 people.

Ipswich can look very sad (along with many other towns) due to the closure of the big shops, so we have to look at other ways to attract people into the town centre, not only with art & music, but beer festivals and things such as the recent pop-up retro gaming event – and there now a number of gaming shops (not to be confused with betting shops), which are places for people to go and play games. Also, the craft and needlework shops offer classes. All of these get people into the town centre.

The art trail supporting St Elizabeth Hospice is a very good free event for families, who go around ticking off all the painted animals they have seen and must walk for miles around the town. The Ipswich Charter Hangings in St Peters Church are in the first place that visitors from the waterfront find and their visitors' book shows that they come here from all over the world. Our parks host many events such as the Ipswich-to-Felixstowe Historic Vehicle Run, bonfire night fireworks and the Holywells Park Christmas light trail. It is to be hoped that some occasional events on the Waterfront, such as Gay Pride and the Ipswich Maritime Festival will time their events so they are on in 2029.

We are a very multi-cultural town and have a number of celebrations for different faiths, including:-

- The colourful Sikh *Nagar Kirtan* parade last year;
- One Big Multicultural Festival: the celebration features music and dance, reflecting the county's Bangladeshi, Indian, Polish, Chinese, African, Caribbean and Kurdish communities;

–Holi: The Hindu Festival of Colour;
 –The Summer Mela in Christchurch Park;
 –After the Eid prayers in front of the Mansion, sweets and dates were given out and at sunset people of ‘all faiths and none’ were invited to join

them for a curry at the Bond Street Mosque;

– the Windrush living room celebration has attracted new funding and can now continue; many of us will remember things in there from their own youth.

The Riverside walk in front of the new Galliard houses will make a very attractive new entryway to the waterfront and up into the town through the Saints, rather more pleasant than walking up Princes Street from the station. Crispin Kelly’s new waterfront attraction *At Home With Clay* is something very different and it is quite exciting that he has the confidence in Ipswich to do this. It should be completed in 2028.

If Ipswich becomes a City of Culture, the inspiring plans for the Great White Horse to update the hotel, make a coffee shop with exhibition space around the walls, artists studios and the upstairs reception rooms where Dickensian readings could be put on, will all enable them to raise the capital to realise this. It is bound to be a big attraction for Dickens lovers, particularly from America and, of course, coach tours as they have no parking.

The Ipswich.love website lists nearly everything going on in Ipswich from music, talks and art exhibitions to children’s classes, but not many local people seem to know about it – certainly not visitors – so we would need a central point for visitors to find out what is happening during their stay, whether for just one day or longer and, of course, to promote all the events taking place in Ipswich.

Personally, I think that if the Ancient House has not found a new tenant before 2029, that would make a perfect starting point for visitors to Ipswich, it is a fascinating building even when empty and a little money could be made from selling Ipswich cards, tea towels, bags etc., charging for guided tours of the building and hiring out space for smaller art exhibitions.

We have all this and I have not even mentioned football; Ipswich just needs to sell itself more and be proud of our heritage and cultural offerings.

Charlotte Willmott



Malayalee dancers



Detail from Antony Robinson's Longship screens at the Old Cattle Market.

St Peter's by the Waterfront

The Ipswich Society has provided stewards for opening St Peters by the Waterfront to the public on Thursdays in summer since its renovation in 2008. This contribution to the heritage of our town, helping to keep this important building open for all to enjoy, relies on Society members as voluntary stewards. A big thank you to all who stewarded at St Peter's last year. All Ipswich Society members are most welcome to join the 2025 rota - stewards keep an eye on the displays, talk to visitors and sell booklets. They are not responsible for opening or locking up the church.

There is much to explore while you are in St Peter's, not least the 12th century Tournai font. Made from a Belgian limestone, this represents an extraordinarily early example of imported stone. Whilst cataloguing John Norman's archive for the Society, I came across *The Tournai font in St Peters Ipswich* by John Blatchly and Birkin Haward published by the Ipswich Historic Churches Trust in 1983. It

records only nine 12th century Tournai fonts in England of which two are in Ipswich. Part of the second was found under the Tower Ramparts area in 1894 and is also on display in St Peters.

The limestone, found near Tournai in the west of Belgium, is about 350 million years old. It contains a small proportion of organic matter, giving it a much darker appearance than most limestones. It is very fine-grained, meaning it polishes well – as evidenced in the twelve identical animals (Blatchly and Haward make a good case for lions) around the St Peter's Font. Generally, Tournai Limestone has very few fossils; however some years ago GeoSuffolk, led by Bob Markham, investigated the Withipoll slab in Christchurch Park (it stands against a wall immediately to the east of Christchurch Mansion). It appeared to be a muddy limestone with fragments of fossil crinoids/

corals. Blatchly and Haward state this to be of Tournai limestone and the fossil fragments support the identification of the rock.

Please do contact me if you can give three hours on a Thursday during summer 2025 to keep this heritage icon (www.ipswichsociety.org.uk/churches-1) open for the public.

Caroline Markham (secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk)



Carved decoration on St Peters Tournai font. Photograph by Caroline Markham.



The Picture House Lounge, Tavern Street was decorated by panels painted by G.R. Rushton A.R.B.A. A 1928 postcard given to John Norman and addressed to 'Messrs. J.H. Grimwade Cornhill Ipswich' from Westbourne Road, Ipswich, it reads: 'Please post to me pattern and prices in brown gents suiting.'

The Picture House: a lost gem

The striking frontage of the Picture House in Tavern Street was originally designed by the renowned theatre architect, Frank Matcham.

It was Ipswich's first purpose-built cinema. It was built for British Cinematograph Theatres and opened on the 14th of December 1910, with an auditorium which could accommodate 650 people. The theatre also had its own Jacobean Style Tea Room. The Theatre's auditorium would later be enlarged with an additional 120 seats and a new cafe was also added at the same time.

The Theatre also had its own small orchestra and an organ made by the Ipswich firm Bishop & Sons. It was eventually closed on the 14th of September 1958 and was subsequently demolished to make way for Timothy White's (now Boots The Chemist).

RG



1957 photograph

Mayor Kavas Jamas Badshah

Kavasji Jamasji ('Kavas Jamas') Badshah was born in Mumbai in 1858.

Badshah was educated at the Elphinstone High School, Mumbai followed by Bombay University. He then completed his education at University College London. He passed the exam for the Indian Civil Service in 1877 and took up appointment on 12 November 1879.

He was a senior officer in the Indian Civil Service in various posts, from Commissioner of Excise and Salt, Bengal in 1879 to Postmaster General, Bengal in 1902.

Badshah had married Emma Collington Pierson in 1885. Their son, Cecil Pierson Badshah was born in 1886 followed by Lilian Mary Collington Badshah in 1890 in Allahabad. His family settled in Ipswich in 1892, with Badshah joining them when he retired in 1904.

His son Cecil qualified as a solicitor and changed his name to Cecil Pierson Bradshaw in 1915. He died in 1919 in Ipswich, survived by his wife and daughter.

Kavas Jamas Badshah was the Mayor of Ipswich, Suffolk from 1925–1926. He was also the first Indian to be elected as a councillor in Ipswich in 1913.

Badshah was involved in civil life in Ipswich and contributed to the community. In 1913 he was elected for Middle Ward, Ipswich, the first Indian to be elected as a councillor in Ipswich. In 1918 he was awarded the Order of the British Empire for war services. He was Mayor of Ipswich for the period 1925-6. He died in 1931.

His wife Emma died in 1922; his daughter Lillian died on the Isle of Wight in 1951.

Badshah Avenue off Felixstowe Road and near Ransome Road commemorates this pioneer.

Our current Mayor, councillor Elango Elavalakan, having been born in Sri Lanka and worked in India, Uganda and Rwanda before moving to the UK, is the first Hindu to hold the position. He follows in the footsteps of Kavas Jamas Badshah as the second Ipswich mayor from the Indian sub-continent.

RG (thanks to Charlotte Willmott for suggesting this article)



Ipswich Society Awards 2025

It's not too early to send in your nominations for consideration by the judges for the Ipswich Society Awards for 2025 – which will include nominations carried over from 2024 (see page 7).

Please send details of newly-completed building (house, office, other) and public realm nominations with location to our Mandy Gaylard. Her contact details are on page 27 of this issue.



Pykenham's House over ten centuries

In 2014 local historian, the late Dr John Blatchly, gave a talk in The Ipswich & Suffolk Club at an event organised by the Ipswich Building Preservation Trust (IBPT). Your editor was so impressed – and regretful that this wasn't recorded – that he asked John to write an [essay on Archdeacon Pykenham's House and Gatehouse](#). With thanks to IBPT.

The Ipswich and Suffolk Club still has 'The Archdeacon's House' on its letterhead despite the fact that archdeacons ceased to live here early in the eighteenth century. The great convenience of this urban residence was that the Archdeaconry Court was held in the south aisle of the Tower Church almost next door. There, wills were proved and cases where ecclesiastical law was involved were heard. The greater grandeur and idyllic situation of the Deanery Towers at Hadleigh which William Pykenham built for himself after improving his Ipswich residence was part of the lure which took some later archdeacons eight miles west.

The Norman King Henry I in about 1130 and the first Plantagenet King Henry II in about 1160, both founded Augustinian Priories in the town: the senior, St Peter and St Paul based on a six-acre site with St Peter's church at its southwest corner and the junior, Holy Trinity or Christchurch on a similarly large area stood where the mansion with that name is today. The secular black canons of the order did not live enclosed monastic lives but took pastoral responsibility for groups of parishes in the south and north of the town respectively, for eight of the then fifteen town parishes.

When King John gave the town its first charter on 29 June 1200, the burgesses received it in the Tower churchyard, and met in the church several times in the next month to draw up the constitution of the town and received their new seal on the following 12 October, the Ipswich Ship on the obverse and the west front of the then Tower church, their current town hall, on the reverse.

Until 1914 the Diocese of Norwich covered almost all of Norfolk and Suffolk, and to assist the bishop in governing such a large area, the four archdeacons of Norfolk and Norwich, Sudbury and Suffolk took about a quarter each. The archdeacon of Suffolk lived in what was called Brocstrete, much later Northgate Street. One surviving Holy Trinity rental (rent-roll) for 1245 shows 'Archidiaconus' paying 2s 6d every Michaelmas for the residence (he was Roger le Boteler) and in another nearer the end of the century, 'D'n's [My lord] Archidiaconus' seven pence each quarter, totalling 2s 4d per annum, a small reduction.

Before the battle of Crecy which was fought in August 1346, Edward III mustered the English fleet at Kingsfleet, an inlet north of Felixstowe Ferry. The Archdeacon of Suffolk, Michael Northburgh, was recruited as royal clerk; he was literate and numerate and could keep the score. His eyewitness account in a newsletter from the English camp, gave the French casualties as 1,542 'without reckoning the commons and foot-soldiers'. Northburgh later became bishop of London and Lord Privy Seal.

Pykenham's Gatehouse photographed in 1983 after its complete refurbishment by the IBPT.



In the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, senior clerics were targets for the wrath of mobs after the taxes they had imposed. Simon of Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, was beheaded on Tower Green. There was unrest in Ipswich and the house in Northgate Street was attacked. The archdeacon at the time, a Cardinal with an Italian bishopric, was almost certainly safely abroad at the time, but the high wall along the street frontage is a reminder that defence was important at some points in history.

The archdeacon whose name is still associated with the house, William Pykenham, held the office from 1472 to 1497 when he died and he is likely to be the occupant of the Easter Sepulchre tomb in Hadleigh church. The indent of a small kneeling figure brass on the east facing wall no doubt showed him in his vestments. On his first arrival he improved the Ipswich house and built the gatehouse, the upper chamber perhaps holding his library. If he was an ambitious cleric his hopes died with Richard III's death and the Yorkist cause at Bosworth in 1485. Perhaps instead he built the Deanery Towers at Hadleigh as a country residence where he could also hold the living, a Canterbury peculiar, the deanery of Bocking.

The next archdeacon, John Dolman, founded Pocklington School, and then it was Wolsey's illegitimate son Thomas Wynter. As he was only 16, unordained and living it up in Paris at the time, it is unlikely that he ever visited the house. Fifteen archdeacons later the Royalist Laurence Womack and the antiquary John Battely may have lived here, but David Wilkins the orientalist preferred Hadleigh where he also held the living from 1724-45.

"The Doctor's House" would have been a more appropriate name for the building from the 1740s when a succession of physicians and surgeons lived and practised there, but the name was not changed. The first, Jonathan Hammond, died in 1744, and his successors in the house included the Quaker surgeon James Brooke, tall and heavily built. He separated from his wife with considerable unpleasantness and was the last doctor in Ipswich to wear a pigtail. He also used a high awkward gig on long journeys. At the Public Dispensary he was very fond of bleeding, purges, cupping and leeches.

Dr William Henry Williams was the only man to establish himself both as a fashionable and effective physician in early 19th century Suffolk. He was short and robustly active, his dignity of manner verged on the pompous. He was remarkably complacent and professionally pugnacious, touchy and vain, and a staunch Tory. The physician Dr Edward Beck JP came to the house in 1845, lost heavily in railway speculations and ran up debts of £25,000. Barrington Chevallier of the Aspal Hall family ran madhouses here and at the Grove in Grove Lane.

The last private owner before the premises became the Ipswich and Suffolk Club in 1885 was the lawyer, Peter Bartholomew Long. He was four times mayor, a liberal and a churchman. Less parochial than most of his fellow Ipswichians, his interests were far broader.

Dr Ted Cockayne's online version of Dr David van Zwanenburg's *Suffolk Medical Biographies* supplied the amusing details of the doctors living and working in the house.

Dr John Blatchly

[No portrait of Archdeacon Pykenham is thought to have survived.]

Left: Archdeacon Pykenham's house, watercolour by Ipswich artist Leonard Squirrel (the original hangs inside the Ipswich & Suffolk Club), showing the lawn/bowling green which once stood on the site of the current car park off Tower Street.



Mystery mural

In October 2017, *The Ipswich Star* featured the owner of a Grade II Listed 17th century building at 19-23 Fore Street and her desire to find out about a classical figure painted on the old plasterwork (probably a fresco: painted onto plaster while it was still wet). It shows a robed woman looking at a snake which she holds in her left hand. During the conversion of the building into flats, a glazed case was mounted over the mural to protect it.

Both John Norman and myself were intrigued when we were approached by the owner and hoped to visit the property when she could let us in; sadly, it could not be arranged. Interestingly, the listing text does not refer to the mural; the owner had been given 1644 or 1645 as likely dates of construction.

My initial thought was that the mural showed Cleopatra being bitten by the asp (Egyptian cobra) which killed her, in a Renaissance-era (14th to 17th centuries, so the presumed date of construction fits) depiction. Cleopatra, although known as an Egyptian Queen, was from a Greek family. At her death she was probably poisoned rather than bitten by a poisonous snake – but one shouldn't get in the way of a good legend. From the rather blurred image (shown at right), the painting is quite accomplished in style, anatomy and use of light and shade. The modelling of the head – hair, face, earrings and necklace – the foreshortening of the limbs and drapery is quite sophisticated.



Roxana

The press coverage sparked a few responses. One pointed out of the importance of the building's name: Alexander House. David Howe, member of the Society, said: 'I am not an expert but I am wondering if the subject may be Rahksan (Roxana). She was the beautiful wife of Alexander after whom the house was named.

She fits the classical style of the subject who was popularised in Daniel Defoe's novel [*The Fortunate Mistress; or, a History of the Life and Vast Variety of Fortunes of Mademoiselle de' Belau; afterwards called the Countess of Wintelsheim, in Germany. Being the Person known by the name of the Lady Roxana, in the Time of King Charles II.* 1724]. Alexander died in mysterious circumstances and may have been poisoned by Roxana with a snake.'

Olympias

Going back a bit in Greek history, 14th century King Philip and Queen Olympias of Macedon were to have two children: Alexander III of Macedon (later 'Alexander the Great') and a daughter, Cleopatra (see below). But after King Philip saw his wife sleeping with snakes; his days of visiting the bedchamber were over. Olympias had long been a devotee to the cult of Dionysus, something that angered many of the Macedonian people, and she may even have introduced the practice of handling snakes to the cult.

Cleopatra

However, Cleopatra of Macedonia (c.356-308) was **not** the Cleopatra who was the last active ruler of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, who allegedly died of a snake bite.

So, you can choose between Roxana and her Mum-in-law, Queen Olympias, as to the identity of the woman in the fresco. Isn't Ipswich a fascinating place?

RG

Letters to the Editor

40-42 Museum Street from Bob Kindred
MBE IHBC

As the unofficial biographer of T.W. Cotman, I was interested to read the article on pages 13 and 14 of the October issue of the Society's *Newsletter* (No.239) regarding 40 and 42 Museum Street.

There are good archival photographs of his original ground floor front and, of course, Cotman's original drawings are held in the Suffolk Record Office.

I enclose a copy of Cotman's drawing of the front facade of No.42 as I was quite shocked to see the very poor quality of the design of the recent ground floor reinstatement.

It would seem that there was no understanding of the basics of (Flemish Renaissance) classical architecture so clearly evident on the upper floors. Did anyone look?

At least a reinstatement of the arched windows; proper pilasters with suitable capitals; and a proper entablature and a plinth (even if done in relatively inexpensive materials - such as in timber or painted as *trompe l'oeil*) would have been a huge improvement over the recently completed, poorly conceived, ill-proportioned, so-called reinstatement. Even pedimented architraves to the windows (as used on the upper floors) would have been better than the blank picture-frame rectangles.

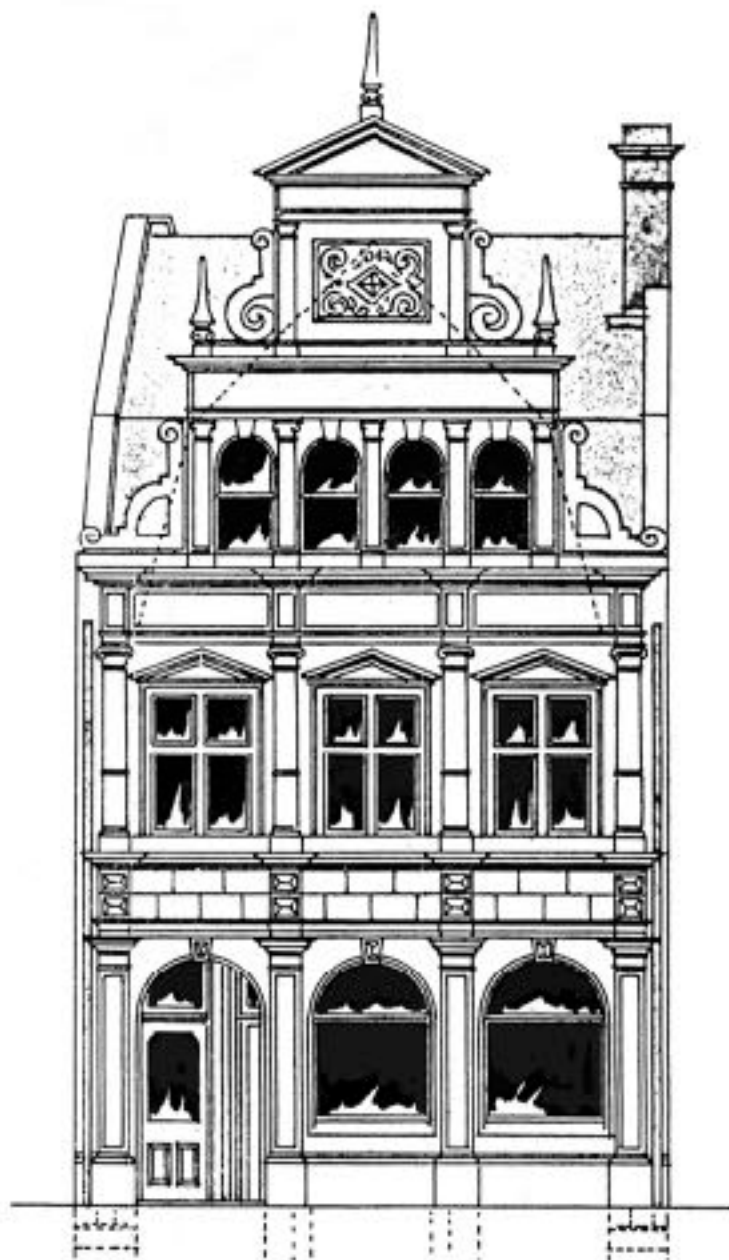
This does seem to be to be a huge missed opportunity.

K6 as urban art from Izzy Lane

Thank you for the latest *Newsletter*, which was as interesting a read as usual. You may be interested to know you can pick up a copy of *Local Wildlife News* at the library. I've picked up a copy from the Central Library and Stoke Library, on several occasions.

Also, I'm surprised you were taken aback 'by a whole string of negative comments about the repainting [of the Stoke Bridge phone box] on Facebook'. That box is a total eyesore, and needs to be removed! They didn't even try to repair it before they painted it.

I know other old boxes have been re-purposed as Little Free Libraries, mini Tourist Information hubs and homes for defibrillators, but the box on Stoke Bridge was vandalised, so that it was 'minus its door and the phone broken', before it was decommissioned. So, whatever purpose it was put to, it was clearly going to continue being vandalised. I'm not sure how much a defibrillator costs, but two were vandalised before that idea was abandoned.



The Ring-Road that never was from Ann Petherick

Thank you for reprinting the notorious 1958 Inner Ring Road map, drawn with a ruler through the medieval buildings in St Nicholas Street.

Might I suggest that you reprint it at regular intervals, as there will now be so many people in the town unaware of the horrors we narrowly escaped from?



David Routh (1929 - 2025)

from Maggie Humphries

My dear neighbour, David Routh of High Street, Ipswich passed away peacefully at home on 9 February. He was well known in the town and used to run his own printing company (Bayleys). He was 96 and had been struggling for the past couple of years. He was a huge advocate of sympathetic planning and was very proud of the heritage of High Street, where he did his best to encourage the owners not to stray away from original features (e.g. he was so cross when one of the dental practices painted over the iron Suffolk whites brickwork).

He was a well loved member of The Friends of Christchurch Park and I think he organised Brass in the Park. He was a much loved son of Ipswich and a real gentleman and character.

Guided walks by Ipswich Tourist Guides

Afternoon tea walks cost £10 per person (including refreshments), and start at 1.30pm from Admiral's House in Tower Street (close to bus stations and car parks). Advance booking is essential to ensure a place. Forthcoming walks:-

Thursday 10 April – *Strange but True*;

Tuesday 22 April – *Victims and Martyrs*.

In the summer months regular guided walks starting at 2pm take place every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. No advance booking is needed; the cost is £5 per person. We've planned a diverse programme which runs from the beginning of May to the end of September 2025.

Themes include: Christchurch Park, Hidden Corners, Happy Birthday Willis!, As Giles Saw It, and Corn to Coprolite. Other walks will focus on different parts of the town: centre, west and north – as well as two to explore particular sections of the waterfront.

Bookings: <https://ipswichinstitute.org.uk/ipswichtourist> or in person at Ipswich Institute
More info: <https://ipswichtourguides.onesuffolk.net>

The Ipswich Society

Registered Charity no. 263322

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk | <https://www.facebook.com/ipswichsociety> | <https://www.instagram.com/theipswichsociety>

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 concerns about any content.

Diary dates

Wednesday April 16: The Ipswich Society's AGM, 7.30pm at the Hold; speaker: Taff Gillingham, owner of the Great War Huts Project at Hawstead.

Members' Outings

Tuesday May 13: A guided walk 'From Whitefriars to the Waterfront' 6.30pm from Arras Square (see insert for details)

Monday June 23: All day Coach tour to Gainsborough's House Museum, Sudbury and Great Lodge Vineyard, Bardfield (see insert for details)

13/14 September: Heritage Open Days.

Wednesday September 17: Winter Talk 7.30pm at Museum Street Methodist Church, 'Charter 825' by Dale Banham.

Wednesday November 19: Our **Annual Awards Evening** at the Hold.

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

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



St Mary-le-Tower Church became a Minster on January 19, 2025. There were Minster-making events, including an open day, a talk by Richard Edgar Wilson on The making of Ipswich: the call of its Minster, a bell-ringing workshop and a children's singing workshop to celebrate the event.