



The Ipswich Society

NEWSLETTER

January 2015

Issue 198

Contents

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2. Editorial | 13. Brian Jepson (1932-2014) |
| 2. New members | 15. What's gone wrong with supermarkets? |
| 3. Chairman's remarks | 16. Snippets 2 |
| 4. Planning matters | 16. Quality in building construction |
| 5. Our logo | 17. London Paramount |
| 5. Bernard Reynolds, artist | 18. Suffragettes and the buildings of Ipswich |
| 8. Suffolk Local History Council | 20. Barrow boys and bankers: outing report |
| 9. Snippets 1 | 21. Maritime Trust latest Window Museum |
| 10. Planning & architecture: impact on Ipswich | 22. Our back pages |
| 11. Letter to the editor | 23. Ipswich Society Officers & contacts |
| 11. Volunteers at St Peter's Church | 23. Diary dates |
| 11. World War I exhibition | 23. Newsletter deadlines & publication dates |
| 12. How will High Streets survive? | 24. The Brett fountain as you've never seen it before |
| 12. Restaurants expansion | |



*Vintage bus tour arrives at The Wheatsheaf in Fore Street
Heritage Open Weekend, September 2014*

Editorial

Have you noticed the mistletoe? Well, it must be ‘that time of year again’ which prompts the observation. I write these words in mid-December and recall that an eyecatcher tree on Rushmere Road, near Digby Road, has for years boasted globular growths of mistletoe, high up in its boughs. Now, I notice, even immature trees around the Heath Road Hospital site are hosts to this harmless, parasitic plant. For some reason, mistletoe is sprouting on garden and estate trees in Ipswich. Perhaps it is climate change or, dare I say it, the fact that I haven’t noticed this phenomenon until now...



Putting this issue together through November and December 2014, it seems that there is no shortage of things to talk about in and around Ipswich. Judging by the *Newsletter* archive, it was ever thus. The town faces new challenges in the twenty-first century unimagined in the era of the Ipswich Society’s birth, the sixties. This observation is prompted by some work currently underway on an exhibition which the Society will stage next year on the ‘Fore Street Facelift’ carried out in 1961, prior to the visit by Queen

Elizabeth II to Ipswich. The recent, sad death of Brian Jepson calls to mind that it was Brian’s kind gift of architect drawings of the buildings in Fore Street prior to the makeover which will form the core of the exhibition. If you have memories or memorabilia relating to the project and the colour scheme which was overseen by noted local architect, Birkin Haward, please contact the editor.



My thanks go to contributors to this issue. Letters to the editor, articles, snippets, are always welcome.

Robin Gaylard

New Members

Another fine image from the Society’s Slide Collection/Flickr website: the demolition of Turret Green Baptist Church, near Silent Street. The congregation moved into Christ Church, Tacket Street in the 1970s (hence the current Baptist/United Reform Church denomination) and the church was demolished soon after. The original church in Turret Lane later became the Church Hall, and survives today as offices.

Chairman's remarks

Ten years ago Mike Cook and I sat in a crowded corset factory in Letchworth and argued the case against having to meet Ipswich's seemingly impossible target of 20,000 houses in the period until 2021. Such a target was always going to be difficult to reach, not because we didn't want them, not because we didn't need them, but simply because there wasn't that amount of green space within the Borough. In Ipswich there is an abundance of previously used land, brownfield sites that are central and available, but such sites are not at the top of the developers' *build here next* list. We used to call them 'bomb sites'*, today they are typically untidy, unloved and an eyesore to passing motorists, visitors and in particular nearby residents. This surplus of brownfield land is typical of most UK towns and cities.

And what we also lack is the ability to insist on a 'brownfield first' policy. Developers know that spacious, level, accessible farmland is much cheaper to develop than brownfield sites. Previously used town centre sites frequently require demolition (particularly the removal of the foundations of what previously stood on the site), they probably require an archaeological dig (to be paid for by the developer), the site might need de-contaminating and such spaces are usually restricted and confined by adjacent property.

The outcome of the Letchworth meeting was that the Regional Assembly imposed a target for house-building for Ipswich and other East Anglian towns. Luckily for Ipswich, the Regional Assembly folded and this effectively removed the target. What this didn't do, of course, was to remove the demand for new homes. Jump forward ten years and we have the Northern Fringe developers pushing timescales and requesting they start building, before the SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) is finalised.

The difference today is that we are operating under the New Planning Policy Framework together with a Government that suggests house building is the cure-all for the economic troubles of the country. Gone are the halcyon days of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act which put an end to ribbon development and added protection for the greenbelt around towns. The new rules have been formulated by the Home Builders Federation, the Country Land & Business Association and the British Property Federation, who reported to Eric Pickles's Local Government department.

Ten years ago 80% of housing development was on brownfield sites but under the present Government this has dropped to about 50%. When applications for out-of-town supermarkets have been referred to Eric Pickles as Secretary of State, 75% have been allowed.

The Land Bank held by the major housing developers is currently in excess of 1.5 million plots, to which can be added the one million existing houses which are empty. This bank of property which could be made available in a short time frame exceeds the expected house building output twenty-fold. Nationally we need 230,000 houses per year; however we are currently building only 110,000 houses per year.

Almost without exception – not including central London – almost all housing development is limited to two, three or occasionally four storeys. On the continent five is the norm and in continental city centres the whole terrace rises to typically eight storeys.

Ipswich currently has just under 60,000 homes of which two thirds are owner occupied but new build housing which should be 700 per year has dropped below 200 and last year, according to the Government website, we actually built less than 2.5 houses per 1,000 of existing stock (just over 150 homes added to the 60,000).

John Norman

*[*landowners often refer to them nowadays as 'car parks' – Ed.]*

Planning matters

Many will have heard that planning permission for the **Northern Fringe** has been refused. Unfortunately, this is quite untrue. For a major development impacting on transport, access, education, drainage and nature, Suffolk County Council is a statutory consultee. Thus its Officers produced a report for the SCC Cabinet which, after due consideration, has sent the Borough Council a damning comment on the hybrid application. This confirms all that the objectors have been saying on transport, access, education and nature. They say that owing to inadequate evidence and a poor transport model, it is unlikely to agree to the development.

The report is lengthy and it is available on either councils' website.

At the Ipswich Borough Full Council Meeting on November 18, the adoption of the *Ipswich Local Development Plan: Core Strategies and Policies Review*, after a twelve week public consultation, was agreed. The Society will be replying formally in due course. This early review is partly necessitated by the adoption of a *Supplementary Planning Document* for the Northern Fringe. Overall, the Plan will be for 3,500 dwellings on the Northern Fringe, 677 new dwellings annually with 12,500 new jobs over the period of the plan which extends to 2031.

32 The Sandlings. B & M Retail (prop. Sir Terry Leahy, late of Tesco) have been persistently selling small items including food and textiles which is against the terms of their planning permission. A failed appeal has not stopped this and nor has the council's recourse to law. After much discussion the company has reapplied to continue trading in the style it has become used to with a condition that it will open a second store in Ipswich town centre within the next five years. This would then satisfy all parties, except perhaps for B&Q and Morrisons, which companies had their planning application for a supermarket on the nearby B&Q site refused because this retail estate is not designed to accommodate convenience shopping (food).

Regatta Quay. The new developer wishes to insert a thirteenth floor (the last one, one would have thought, to make it successful!). No digital visualisations nor fresh plans are available to make a rational decision on what effect this would have on the medieval street scene on and around the Waterfront. Whilst applying to increase the income from their development, they are also applying to reduce the tax on the profit of their development, otherwise known as Section 106: they claim that any payments would render the scheme unviable. Thus, it will be assessed by a valuer and surveyor – no longer a District Valuer – who will report to the Officers in due course and secret discussions will determine the outcome. John Norman spoke, with my support, to great effect, I felt, at the last meeting. Last week, he wasn't allowed to speak again. The Committee passed it *nem con*, persuaded by the man from Savill's that it was good for the town. When you complain at the finished article, don't forget that the Society has always objected every time to these skyscrapers. They are too big for their immediate neighbours, they are too big for the Ipswich bowl, they provide little useful housing for the less well-off in Ipswich and now they have successfully claimed they cannot afford to pay their due taxes!

St Clements Hospital site. Demolition of ancillary 19th & 20th century buildings and conversion of main mid-1860s, locally listed, hospital building to form 48 dwellings: 12 houses, 10 duplexes and 26 apartments. Additionally, everything else except the social club, The Hollies and a residual mental health facility will be demolished and 179 new dwellings from 1 to 5 bed units erected. A new local park, on Foxhall Road and sports facilities with improvement to the social club will be provided. This outline application (i.e. we do not yet know the details of the design etc.) is basically the same as the developers and the council failed to come to agreement on previously; they have now done so, settling for £1.2m education, £200,000 highways, £860,000 for open space and 20% affordable housing. Compared to the developer's previous stance of sticking to 4.5%, this is a triumph for the planners.

Mike Cook



The Ipswich Society

Our logo

The logo used on our *Newsletter* masthead was commissioned by the Society and designed by Bernard Reynolds: a clean, crisp piece of design which is, perhaps, a little more complex than it looks. I know this because one of my first jobs when I joined the Executive Committee as an observer was to tinker with the design. A bit like being asked to pull out the Koh-i-Noor from the crown jewels and give it a bit of a polish.

The modernist treatment of the eye – always a popular design element, perhaps indicating that the Society's main role was to keep a watch over the town – incorporates the sword, descending from the centre and indicating the many invasions, skirmishes and fights which are part of the town's history and the plough-shares, acting as lashes to the upper right of the eye to suggest our agricultural heritage. The iris incorporates the lion rampant and three ships' sterns of the Ipswich Borough coat of arms.

Our Chairman asked me, most importantly, to give these three hulls rudders. The first known depiction of a rudder separated from the hull on a ship – as opposed to a steering oar commonly in use during that era – is depicted on the back of the town's Great Seal; it was made some months after Ipswich was granted its Royal Charter in May 1200). This was a technological breakthrough worthy of a busy maritime port such as ours. It is possibly an early representation of the collier ships that would, in future centuries, become known as 'Ipswich Catts'. My solution was to insert a thin white arc into the hull profiles to suggest the separate rudder. It's not technically accurate, but suggests the innovation, so important to the history of the town. In redrawing the logo I realised the the eyeball wasn't circular, so tightened this up and sharpened the fast-disappearing rampant lion shape. As with so many logos in voluntary organisations, the danger is that an original piece of artwork gets used by a printer, is lost and a copy later used which is then regularly re-copied. The only other incarnation of the logo I have seen shows the lashes/plough-shares more like the former than the latter: pointy. Don't anyone ask why the pupil is white, rather than black; the ghost of Bernard Reynolds will come to haunt you.

Anyway, the re-draughted logo was accepted by the Committee and I was able to use it on my first *Newsletter* masthead in July 2013. Not sure if anyone noticed, but it pleased me. It is there, albeit with a shorter 'sword', on *Newsletter* No. 2 in 1963 reviewed in Issue 196. I am delighted to continue its use as part of the story of the Society.

Bernard Reynolds

'...as near, in these days of specialization, to the archetypal renaissance man as one may find' – *Colin Moss*

Born in Norwich, he lived and worked for almost fifty years in Ipswich. Bernard Reynolds (1915–1997) is most widely known as a sculptor but he was also an inspirational teacher. At the age of 17 he studied at Norwich School of Art, then went to the Westminster School of Art in 1937. He met and exhibited with Henry Moore in 1936-37. Becoming involved in several influential artists' groups, Reynolds was characterised by his quietly rigorous but passionate,

(continues)

self-imposed discipline to every project he undertook; owing to his multiple pursuits, his works were many and varied.

He was an astute critic of art, whose carefully judged opinions were valued by colleagues, friends and students alike. In conjunction with these artists and later, Edward Barker of Norwich, Reynolds' multiple pursuits led him to run exhibitions of East Anglian Sculpture from 1949 to 1966. The very first one happened within Ipswich School of Art in the High Street, a building happily reopened for art exhibitions in recent years.

As a man who "lived by and for his art", Bernard Reynolds' deep dedication to his calling was never in question. Apart from his involvement in exhibitions and teaching, Reynolds was commissioned to create sculptures for several buildings in Ipswich. He made cement reliefs on the Castle Hill and Sprites Lane schools, a stone relief on the Eastern Counties Farmers Head Office, the pair of 22 foot high *Pylons* (which once flanked the entrance to our Civic College and now stands, rather imposingly, in a grassy area shaded by maples near to Suffolk New College), a 24 foot stained-glass window in St. Matthew's School and the fourteen foot-high *Ship fountain sculpture* at the Civic Centre. Because of this last work, he was awarded the Sir Otto Beit Medal for 1972. It was "the best piece of sculpture to come to the notice of the Royal British Society of Sculptors as being set up anywhere in the British Commonwealth, excluding London, during that year". Since being moved from its original position to the Civic Drive roundabout near the spiral car park in 1996, this fine work is familiar to many thousands of people every year.

A more intimate work by Bernard Reynolds is to be found in the Wolsey Garden behind Christchurch Mansion. The *Triple mycomorph (Fungus form)* bears on its stone plinth the powerful inscription: 'This sculpture is dedicated by Tom Gondris in memory of his parents Eugene and Else who died in World War II'. Tom's role in several groups and organisations including the Ipswich Society is well known. You can walk right up to this pleasing combination of swelling stems, pierced parasoles and projecting 'necks' and turned 'heads' above.

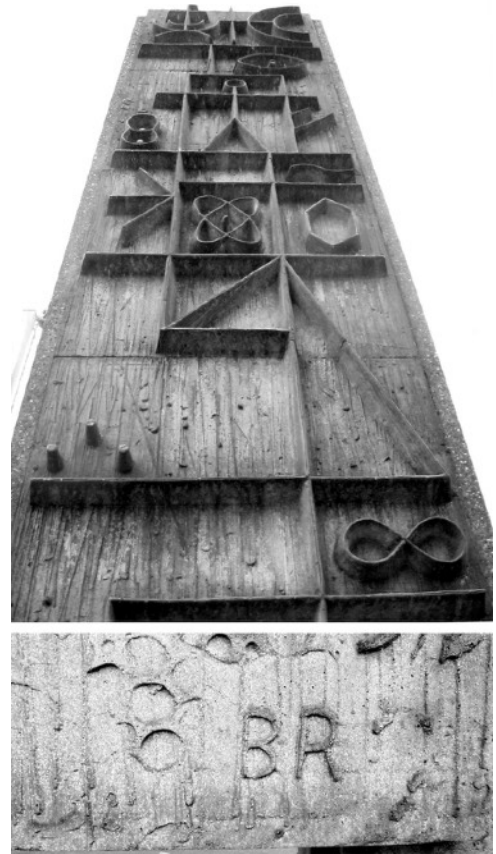
For more information, see Gwyneth Reynolds and Pat Hurrell's book on the artist (Sansom & Co., 2009) or visit the website:

www.bernardreynoldssculptor.co.uk

R.G.



Triple mycomorph (fungus form) by Bernard Reynolds



Above: one of the college Pylons today; still striking even in December rain. Detail: the artist's initials near the base.

'Ship' and College images from the Society's Flickr collection (our talk on this on 21.1.2015, see p. 23)



Suffok Local History Council - Peter Northeast Conference, 2014

On 18 October 2014 SLHC held their annual Peter Northeast Conference at Blackbourne Hall, Elmswell. The topic of the conference was Suffolk and the First World War and consisted of four lectures, each followed by question-and-answer sessions.

The first lecture, 'From Murder to the Marne', was delivered by Dr Anne Folan, secretary of the SLHC. This set the scene by highlighting in detail the origins and early stages of the Great War, a complex and controversial topic which has been a subject for much historical debate during the past century. It would appear that the only consensus is that there is no consensus; a heated debate followed, with the many interesting contributions made from the floor supporting the theory that no single factor could be said to be the direct cause of the war.

The second lecture put the contribution of the Suffolk regiments into context when Dr Margaret Thomas, chair of the SLHC, enlightened the audience about the experiences of the 5th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment and the Suffolk Yeomanry at Gallipoli in 1915. The Military's lack of preparation, the appalling conditions in which the soldiers lived and fought, and the high casualty rates among the soldiers were illustrated in great detail by a series of maps and photographs. Particularly moving were accounts written by Cyril Smith and the diaries of Major Edward Cadogan, both of the Suffolk Yeomanry.

After lunch, the third session, presented by SLHC Vice-Chairman Dr Nick Sign and supported by some fascinating photographs, examined the effects of the war on life in Suffolk. The county was actively recruiting for the services throughout the 1914-18 period, and was used as a training ground for many units of the British Army. Having a lengthy coastline, the threat of invasion and attack from the sea made it necessary to fortify the Suffolk coast, echoing the earlier fortifications built to counter the Napoleonic threat. Some coastal towns were subjected to naval bombardments by the German fleet, and many towns, including Ipswich, were attacked by Zeppelins. As in other areas of the country, those living in Suffolk saw a dramatic change in lifestyle, with women increasingly taking on roles previously carried out by men. Factories, particularly in Ipswich, were taken over to produce aircraft, weapons and munitions for the war effort. Most notably, the Stokes Mortar was invented by Sir Wilfred Scott Stokes of Ransomes & Rapier in Ipswich. The final session, presented by Gwynn Thomas from the Suffolk Family History Society, gave an in-depth description of the many types of War Memorials found in Suffolk. A series of photographs illustrated some of the one thousand plus memorials to be seen in the county. These were very important to those who lost loved ones in the war as it was the policy of the government not to repatriate the bodies of those who were killed abroad.

The day was rounded off with much appreciated coffee and cakes and we can thoroughly recommend this annual conference to other Ipswich Society members.

Tony and Jacky Robson



Snippets 1

The presence of the University

It is pleasing that UCS is increasingly making its mark in our town, e.g. the degree awards ceremony in the Town Hall and Corn Exchange also involved a striking long hospitality marquee in King Street. (UCS, we are told, now has students of 69 different nationalities.)

The “Wine Rack”

IBC granted planning permission in November for completion of this ugly reminder of the recession. Regardless of individual opinions of the development, it is surely encouraging that use will be made of this valuable site before the concrete shell rots. (See *Planning matters* on page 4 for more about this.)



A plus for buses

The planned electronic information boards showing the times buses are expected have now been activated at Tower Ramparts bus station and elsewhere. All such provisions to make buses easier to use are to be welcomed in a busy town.

Indications of caring

Scaffolding on buildings in the town centre doesn't enhance the street scene. But it is a good sign of recent planned maintenance of some of our most notable buildings, e.g. Marks & Spencer's and various sites in Butter Market, nearly all owned by what used to be called “absentee landlords”.

Delays on the line

“Freight train breaks down near Chelmsford.” A typical problem leaving one line blocked and passenger services to/from London disrupted. Good to hear of improved trains and stations, etc but with only two tracks from here to Shenfield it's a regular hazard to reliability.

A new statue

Proposals for a statue commemorating Edith Cook, the first woman pilot in Britain, are progressing. Some £60,000 is needed. On a plinth in Fore Street opposite UCS she could look towards her birthplace at No. 90 where the Society's Blue Plaque is sited.

How to use it?

The Island Site between the dock and the New Cut will be the most difficult part of the Waterfront to re-develop. It's good that attention is now being paid to the site. Proposals for an ‘Enterprise Island’ have been advanced including a business hub for hi-tech companies and two rising bridges to make a new link between Wherstead Road and Cliff Quay.

Moving into town

Attwells Solicitors' move into the former Bank of Scotland premises, Sun Buildings, in Princes Street is welcome in two ways: it restores the use of one of our most attractive buildings and brings more workers and more life to the town centre.

(More *Snippets* on page 16)

Planning and architecture – its impact on Ipswich

As one door closes another one opens. The long, hard haul since the 2007-8 recession finally meant that an Ipswich Society Awards Evening 2015 would have only a handful of entries. The decision to carry these over to next year opened the way to a different sort of presentation. Our speakers were the Society's Vice-Presidents (our President being the Mayor): Bob Allen and Chris Wiltshire.

The wealth of images on the screen, many unfamiliar to members of the audience, took us through various aspects of the town in relation to conservation, regeneration, and planning. Unafraid to be a little provocative, the two speakers extemporised a fascinating commentary on the somewhat chequered history of our town. The Greyfriars, Civic Drive, St Matthews Street blocks and carriageways – very much a first phase in a planned major expansion of Ipswich to take resettled populace from London, which was eventually abandoned – was contrasted with the adjacent Willis Building, now Listed Grade I. The subsequent removal of the roundabout and subways here and the introduction of public spaces, seating and planting brought the story up to date.

Historic buildings were not ignored. The Society's role in saving The Sailor's Rest in St Peter's Street invoked the story of Peter Underwood and Don Chipperfield jumping up and down on flooring joists to demonstrate that the building structure was much more sound than claimed by those who wished to demolish it. The invaluable role of the Borough Council in saving and restoring The Ancient House was praised; is it possible to imagine what would have happened if the then-owners had let its dilapidation result in the ultimate demolition of that key site in Ipswich? The story of the saving of The Ancient House is worthy of a talk of its own.

Opportunities missed and taken: pressures from the drive for profit have been either acceded to or resisted in the interests of the culture of our town. Chris Wiltshire made the point that Ipswich wears its history very lightly in comparison to, say, Norwich or Cambridge: in its own way this is rather admirable. However, it seems sometimes to have led to a lack of confidence in the town when crucial decisions are made about the nature and quality of regeneration.

To finish on a high note, Bob Allen reminded us that Ipswich is the first Anglo-Saxon town, possessing a unique heritage and place in the story of our nation. Challenged, amused, entertained and informed, the audience broke up to enjoy a glass of something and admire the reshaped interior of St Peter's on the Waterfront with the Charter Wall-hangings now well displayed and lit. Many thanks to the speakers and to John Norman and Tony Marsden *et al* for putting together such an interesting presentation.

R.G.



Letter to the editor

Possible road closures around the Wet Dock from Ken Nichols

At the Ipswich Building Preservation Trust AGM held at Isaacs on the Waterfront on October 29, Dr Geraint Coles, lecturer in Cultural Heritage at UCS, mooted several interesting ideas during an excellent illustrated talk. One idea which I hope will be taken up is that Salthouse Street, Key Street and College Street could be closed for at least one day a year to give an idea of how amazing it would be to extend the Waterfront towards the town centre.

The public of Ipswich has been used to seeing closed roads for cycle sport, marathons and Christmas Markets since the 1970s. Therefore closing the above streets on the Sunday of Heritage Weekend should be possible without too much of an outcry.

Just imagine the sight of those streets free of traffic for just one day a year, with stalls and Ipswich Transport Museum vehicles parked for people to explore and for the crowds to enjoy the freedom to walk through to the Waterfront. There is another bonus to this idea. The Council could monitor where traffic will travel to avoid the closures, ready for the day when the ideal situation for this route would be part of the Waterfront.



Ipswich Archaeological Trust has a new website at <http://ipswichat.org.uk/>

Volunteers at St Peter's by the Waterfront

I would like to thank all Ipswich Society members who volunteered for duty in St Peter's by the Waterfront between May and September 2014. Their happy, smiling faces were much appreciated by the visitors to the Church.

I would particularly like to thank Beryl Jary who was rota organiser before me and who also volunteered in the church until recently.

As usual I will be contacting people in March 2015 with a view to organising a new volunteer rota and if there's anyone in the Society who would like to join our merry band, I would be pleased to hear from them.

Jean Hill (26 Christchurch Street, Ipswich IP4 2DJ, 01473-413253)

World War I exhibition

Andrew Beals, Ipswich Town Sergeant, has let us know that the World War I exhibition held at the Town Hall from 4 to 8 November 2014 will be repeated from 24 to 26 April 2015. 25 April is the St George's Day Mayor's Dinner and 26 April is ANZAC day – this year to be celebrated in Ipswich. The exhibition will provide a backdrop for these events.

How will High Streets survive?

In my opinion by diversification: by offering a range of leisure facilities, gastro pubs and restaurants, cinemas, and children's play areas. There was a temporary sand-pit for children in an unused shop unit in Tower Ramparts until recently. The provision of a leisure facility in a shopping mall increases 'dwell time', increases both the spend and the happiness factor. People feel good when engaging in, or planning to participate in the leisure offering.

Since 1990 the standard leisure offer in a shopping complex has been a cinema, in out-of-town retail parks these are multi-screen venues. This is the sort of provision that was planned for the Buttermarket centre in Ipswich. The anchor store is currently empty, but has been Owen Owen, Allders, and TJ Hughes. It was to be converted into a nine screen Vue Cinema supported by restaurants. The operator became nervous when the five screen Odeon in St Helens Street was sold recently with the potential of overprovision of cinemas in town.

Westfield Shopping at White City to the west of London is experimenting with KidZania, an education and entertainment complex, adult style role-play situations that apparently children love. To enjoy the games and rides inside Kidzania, visitors have to pay using the 'KidZo' (local currency). They get 50 KidZos on entry and have to budget their stay to enjoy the facilities to the full. To make the visit even more life-like they don't carry cash (KidZos) but deposit them in the bank and receive a credit card that only they can use. Nobody else in the KidZania can spend their KidZos.

The other leisure provision that seems to work in retaining the public in town are roof gardens, particularly when available for a picnic or just looking at the zoo. Sometimes roof gardens can become skate parks and roller-skating rinks.

J.N.

Restaurants expansion

The increase in the number of people eating out has led to restaurant chains looking for additional premises for their outlets. Although they have strict criteria in terms of space, footfall and neighbours, most will consider town centres, main road sites and out-of-town shopping centres. There is a marked increase in the simplification of the food offer accompanied by an increase in the quality. By default this increases the price and therefore turnover, providing there is sufficient money in the local economy, hence their careful analysis of location.

TGI Fridays, Café Rouge, Byron Hamburgers and Five Guys are all looking for new sites; they are keen to do to the hamburger what Starbucks did for coffee. Brewers with managed pubs are building new, and converting existing buildings: Greene King with *Hungry Horse*, Mitchells and Butler with *Toby Carvery* and *Harvester* and Marston's are falling over each other for the best new pub sites.

Existing chains are investing in refurbishments, Pizza Hut (Pepsi Co.) have invested £60 million in the UK, McDonald's £500 million over eight years into 1,200 UK restaurants and now attract three million customers every day.

J.N.

Brian Jepson (1932-2014)

As many members will already know, Brian Jepson died unexpectedly on 27 October. He was a very valued contributor to The Ipswich Society for most of its existence. With his detailed knowledge of his home town and his wide experience as an architect, he could be relied upon to help in many ways.

JBj – November 2010
Drafted in my chaotic studio on the second floor of presumably my last abode,

44 Fore Street, Ipswich, Suffolk

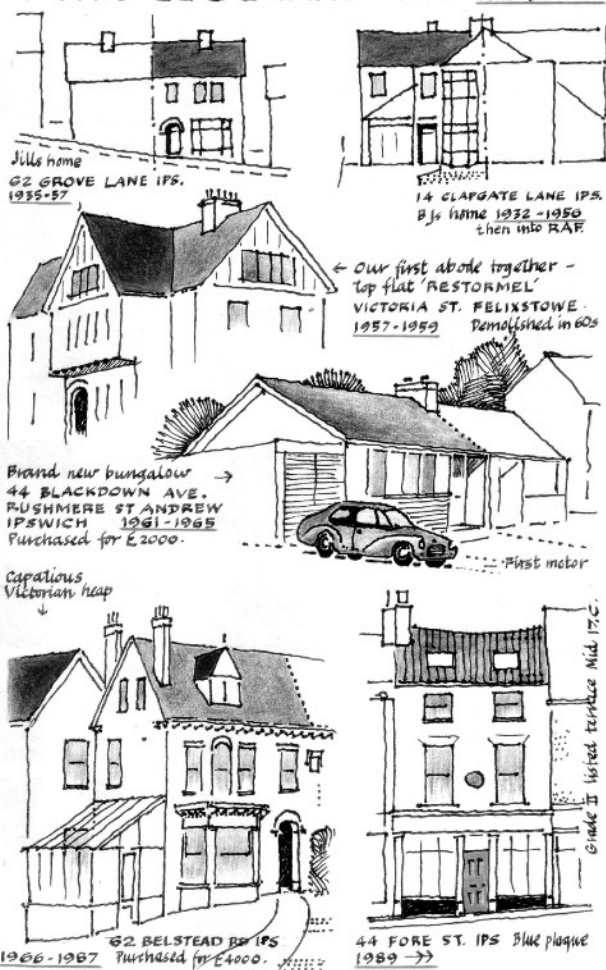


He was a most useful planning monitor when the Society depended on a number of members sharing the responsibility for studying planning applications and making sound judgments on them. Similarly and more recently, he was an important witness in the Public Inquiry into Rights of Way around the Waterfront.

It was Brian's own designed blue plaque commemorating the Dutch artist Cor Visser, who had lived in the same house in Fore Street, which suggested to me that he was the person to design and advise on the Society's Blue Plaque scheme which we started in 2001.

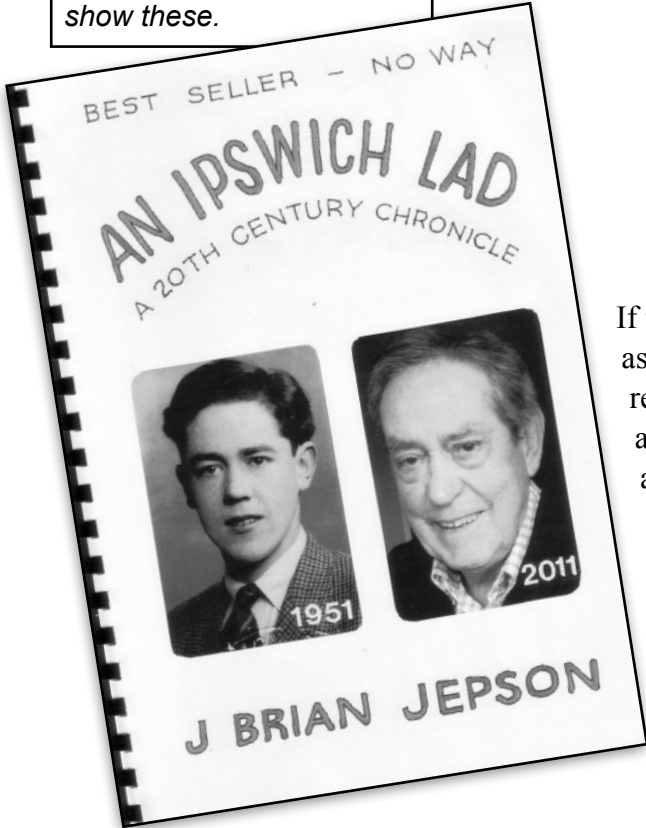


OUR HOMES OVER THE YEARS



Moreover, Society members of some years standing will remember that Brian's drawings sometimes graced our *Newsletter* pages. Especially memorable is the cover which he designed for our half-century in April 2010, depicting in his own radical way four old and three new key buildings in Ipswich.

One of Brian's legacies to family and friends is a (very) limited edition autobiography, typically witty and detailed. It includes a number of Brian's Illustrations, selections from which are shown here. We are grateful to Jill Jepson for permission to show these.



If those of us who attended Brian's funeral were astonished at the number of mourners, it was a true reflection of the esteem in which he was held and also evidence of his great range of interests and activities, as professional architect, as distance runner, golfer, member of several societies and, above all, family man and husband of Jill. He will be greatly missed by many people and by many organisations, not least The Ipswich Society.

Neil Salmon

What's gone wrong with supermarkets?

Three things: the first is the internet; second, home delivery which is having a serious impact on the number of in-store customers; and third, the profit per trolley-load of shopping.

The *raison d'être* of supermarkets is self-service. By reducing the number of staff required to service each customer, expenditure is reduced and profit increased, an idea that has recently expanded to self-service checkouts. Home delivery on the other hand requires in-store pickers, delivery drivers and a host of components including special trolleys and plastic boxes, somewhat more expensive than getting the customer to DIY.

It is probable that each home delivery is currently costing the supermarket at least £10 and generally this is not recovered by the charge for delivery.

Not only is self-service cheap and convenient for the retailer, it puts a whole range of goods, including the 'added value' version of the chosen item (for example, Tesco's *Finest*) in the customer's sight line on a shop display. The customer might just buy such when they are in a store; they are much less likely to on a computer screen. One of the reasons the total cost of a weekly shop at Aldi or Lidl is much less than other supermarkets is that customers don't buy these added cost items. They are not available in these stores.

Who's got it right?

Supermarkets are coming back to the town centre, not with the massive out-of-town superstores but with mid-size units, bigger than the corner shop style convenience stores which they are opening on main roads (a store of up to 3,000 square feet enables them to open 6.00 am until 11.00 pm including Sundays).

Aldi and Lidl require units of 6,000 – 8,000 square feet and the big four are looking for similar sized shops in residential areas. There aren't many town centre retail spaces this big, hence Little Waitrose negotiated to move into the Corn Exchange, Tesco are said to be moving into the former Croydon's and Sainsbury's are staying put in Upper Brook Street.

This is obviously good news for the High Street. As more and more comparison goods are sold on-line a multitude of convenience (food) stores provides a better trading environment than coffee shops, pay day loan outlets and betting shops. It could be argued that things are improving; there is now a convenience store on three out of the four corners of St Matthews Street roundabout – a less than ideal trading position – three 'Pound Shops' selling food in Carr Street and by Easter, four multinational convenience stores in the prime shopping area.

J.N.

"Ninety eight percent of everything designed and built today is pure shit."

Frank Gehry at an Architectural Awards ceremony in Spain.

Frank Gehry has designed examples of some of the most outstanding architecture of recent times, his latest being the Louis Vuitton Arts Centre in Paris.



Snippets 2

Regent Theatre

IBC's £0.5 million expenditure in upgrading and restoring the theatre is a lot of money but is a valuable investment in the region's largest theatre which attracts many visitors into town.

Holywells Park

Renovations to the stables and orangery will have been completed in December with a full opening in July. The bulk of the £3.5m funding came from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our major parks were arguably Ipswich's greatest assets *vis à vis* other comparable towns and perhaps only rivalled even now by the potential of the Waterfront. So, money well spent.

A new theatre

Red Rose Chain has opened its purpose-built theatre at the corner of Gippeswyk Avenue and Birkfield Drive. The company's success in encouraging community involvement has been recognised by a grant from the HLF with contributions from SCC, IBC and Viridor. The first production (in February) will be *Progress* suggested by Elizabeth I's visit to Ipswich in 1561.

Quality in building construction and finish

Readers will know that this year's Awards Evening was cancelled owing to a lack of suitable nominations. This reflects the general downturn in the building trade and the lack of larger projects in the town in recent years. I have been looking at new-build schemes around the town recently and have been struck by the difference in quality of finish between some sites. These photographs of 'new builds' under construction were taken within a mile of each other.



Park Road

One picture shows a traditional build chimney finished to a high standard. The second shows a pre-formed lintel over a window with disappointing brick finish around it. Better qualified people than myself comment on our built environment regularly on behalf of the Society and its members, but I am astounded that poor workmanship is not picked up and corrected by site agents or others
(continues)



Colchester Road

charged with supervision of building sites. After all, once built and finished these buildings, whatever their scale and price, have an impact upon our street scenes for decades.

Hopefully one of these buildings will be nominated next year. I rather doubt that the other will. Readers' opinions on the impact of material and build quality upon our built environment are welcome.

Graham Smith

London Paramount

London's newest theme park and Europe's biggest water park is being planned on the south side of the Thames adjacent to the Dartford crossing. The resort will include an entertainment street, cinemas, a 20,000 seat arena, 5,000 hotel beds and sports facilities all on a spaceship theme.



Blade Runner or Logan's Run?

To be built on the peninsula between Swanscombe and Northfleet a short monorail ride from Ebbsfleet international railway station this 111 acre complex will seriously add traffic to the Queen Elizabeth Bridge and Dartford Tunnel river crossings.

This is the first project to be considered for planning under the new *Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project* framework. The £2 billion financial package for the project was secured in 2013, local people are being consulted on the details and the Secretary of State is expected to approve the scheme in 2016. The project is expected to generate 27,000 jobs and completion is due by Easter 2020.

50,000 people are expected to visit every day to watch world class sporting events, to enjoy the theme park or shop across the road at Bluewater.

J.N.

The Suffragettes and the buildings of Ipswich

When I was researching my book *A Song of their Own*, about the local campaign for Votes for Women a hundred or so years ago, I enjoyed looking for and at the places where some of the events occurred, and where they were organised.

The first thing the two new suffrage organisations in town did when they set up in 1909 was to hire office premises. The most radical of these, the Pankhurst-founded Women's Social and Political Union, started out at 4a Princes Street.

The Women's Freedom League first had a room at 13 Friars Street (right by the Unitarian Meeting House), and then moved to a larger office at 16 Arcade Street. This was on the corner of Arcade Street and Museum Street until part of it became the Henslow Room within Arlingtons Brasserie. It is fitting that the old WFL office is now part of the restaurant. The Old Museum Rooms, as the restaurant was called then, belonged to an auctioneer, who let out rooms for meetings. In 1911 the Women's Freedom League, led by the social reformer Constance Andrews, hired it out for a night of protest.

The Census Boycott – No Vote, No Census – involved women staying away from home on Census night (April 2 1911) so their personal details could not be entered on their household Census form. This was in protest at having no say in how such information would be used by the Government. Astonishingly for a small town like Ipswich, about thirty women went and spent the night in the Old Museum Rooms. If we remember how little power, influence and freedom women had at this time, their courage is noteworthy. We're told that they had an all-night party, singing political songs and playing games, eating supper and breakfast.



Constance Andrews continued to show her absolute commitment to the cause when she was fined for not buying a dog-licence. In a national campaign called *No Vote, No Tax*, women refused to pay taxes until they had a say in how the Government spent their money. Constance

refused to pay her fine, and when the bailiffs turned up at her home in 160 Norwich Road, they found that she had signed all her possessions over to her sister. She was arrested at what is now the Ipswich Institute and taken to the women's section of Ipswich Gaol. This law-abiding, determined woman served a week's sentence to demonstrate the strength of her beliefs.

The women's prison was a tiny part of Ipswich Gaol. The records of the time show that there were only three other women in prison at that time. On her release, Constance was met at the prison gates by a huge crowd. She was placed in a carriage which led a triumphant procession through the town centre to a celebration breakfast in Arcade Street.

The suffragettes rented shops in the town. The WSPU were at 2 Dial Lane first and then Tower Street (where H&M is now), and the WFL had a shop at 22 Queen Street. Their shop fronts were decorated with banners and posters. Inside, they sold propaganda booklets and their weekly newspapers, suffragette games and other merchandise. They might have a little library of suffrage books, and a tea-room for people to meet and talk.



Photograph of Tower Street courtesy London School of Economics library

In the picture of the WSPU shop in Tower Street, the placards relate to the force-feeding in Ipswich prison of two women from the Midlands who came to the area and burnt down the Bath Hotel in Felixstowe in April 1914.

Details of all these, and many other, events by local campaigners are in my local history book A Song of their Own – the fight for Votes for Women in Ipswich. Published by The History Press, it is available from Waterstones and Ipswich Tourist Information Office.

Joy Bounds

[Joy will give a Winter Illustrated Talk to the Society on *The fight for votes for women in Ipswich* to the Society at 7.30pm on Wednesday 18 February 2015 at the Museum Street Methodist Church (see *Diary dates* on page 23 for more full details).]

Barrow boys & bankers

An Ipswich Society outing, 16 September 2014

An early, misty start. Along the A12 through endless London suburbs to Bow, thence to Whitechapel Road where we picked up Stephen, our brilliant Blue Badge guide. Through the city to Bishopsgate, developed by the Romans in AD 200. This part of London resembles a building site with constant demolitions and re-erections all round. How long before the Cheese Grater is pulled down?

Stephen led us to Spitalfields, passing the imposing facade of the Jewish soup kitchen (1902); there was a large influx of Jewish immigrants here in the 1880s. Immigration has been a feature of London life – particularly in the East End – for centuries, with a steady ebb-and-flow of different peoples and cultures. Eastern Europeans are the latest wave. In Spitalfields, derived from the fields of St Mary Spital, a priory or hospital, the Huguenots were possibly the most valuable immigrants, bringing their silk-weaving skills in the seventeenth century. We walked down narrow streets lined with their elegant houses, having wooden shutters and large windows on the top floors to let in the light for their looms.

We admired Hawksmoor's Christ Church Spitalfields, built 1723-39 as a 'parish church in a growing suburb' (Pevsner); this monumental church found us at the end of one of the vistas down the streets. This area is now 'über-trendy' (Stephen's phrase) with the likes of Tracy Emin and Gilbert & George living here. However, in the past it had been Jack The Ripper's hunting-ground and the Kray Twins' killing-ground. Along Brick Lane to Spitalfields Old Market – 'Modern since 1887' it says on the engraved stone – built in an attractive redbrick.

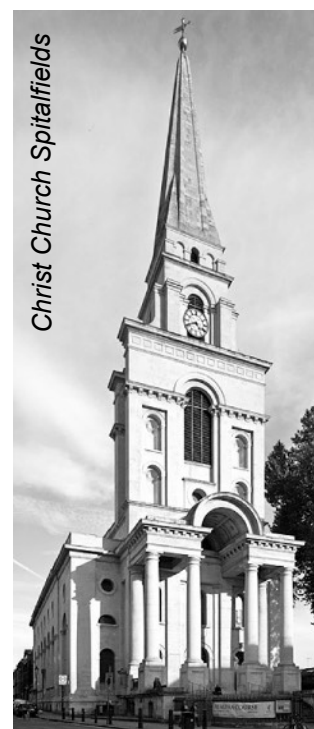
At 2 pm, a coach-trip taking in Moorgate, one of the gates in the old London Wall, High Holborn, the Aldwych and back along Fleet Street to the Bank of England ('The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street': Gillray's satirical title to one of his cartoons). The Bank was founded by Royal Charter in 1694. After several redesigns, Sir John Soane redesigned the building in 1788; it was greatly enlarged in 1935 in an 'Empire' style and the columns of the curtain walls are all that remain of Soane's exterior work; inside, the Stock Hall retains his design. This is the world's second oldest bank; 400,000 people work in the City but only 10,000 actually live there; until recently London had more American bankers than New York itself!



Most countries in the world have a bank in London; banking sends millions of pounds to the Treasury in tax every year. Love them or loathe them, banks are of immense importance to the well-being of the country. We had an hour to look round the fascinating exhibition which included coins and notes going back centuries and finally to the Counting House, an old banking hall, for refreshments.

A coachful of members thank Barbara Barker for a truly fascinating outing, the last in this year's excellent series and thanks to Paul, the Soane's driver, for his patience and skill.

Richard Worman



Ipswich Maritime Trust

The IMT Museum Window exhibition just off Albion Quay currently features a display entitled *A celebration of local yacht and boat-building* which includes fascinating ship, boat and yacht building facts in the Ipswich area from ancient times to James Bond.

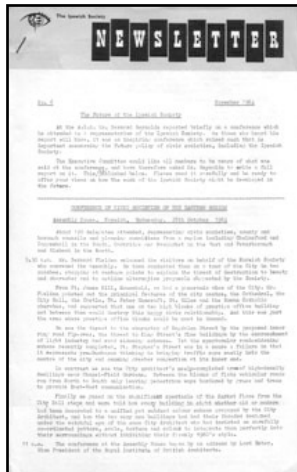
The reputation of Ipswich shipwrights for quality and skilled shipbuilding was well established in past centuries and many of the Admiralty commissioned ships were built here until the supply of oak became depleted. Stuart Grimwade, a Director of the Trust: "What is perhaps not so well appreciated is that since the early days of yachting for pleasure, this same tradition for invention and world beating revolutionary design flourished and continues to flourish in local boatyards today."

How many local people know that the very first folding pram dinghy was developed by local designer Austin Farrar of Woolverstone Shipyard in 1958? The same man designed the wing sail used around the world today and in the Americas Cup. How many people have enjoyed watching Daniel Craig as James Bond aboard his yacht in Venice and realised that 007's yacht was built by Spirit Yachts in Ipswich Wet Dock? How many people remember rowing on the River Gipping where they could hire a boat from Wright and Sons, boat builders on Cullingham Road (the same yard that developed and built the "Twinkle" sailing dinghy), and row up to Bramford?

The display is well worth a visit. IMT change their Museum Window exhibition with a different local maritime theme every six months and eventually hope to have five museum windows on Albion Quay when the Waterfront development is completed.

Tim Leggett





Our back pages

We take a leap from Issue 3 to Issue 6, dated November 1964 this time. The lead article is entitled ‘The future of the Ipswich Society’ which tells us that at the recent AGM Mr Bernard Reynolds [qv page 5] reported on a Conference of Civic Societies of the Eastern Region he had attended in Norwich on behalf of the Ipswich Society (Wednesday 28 October, 1964).

The following article tells of how the host organisation, The Norwich Society, took delegates on a tour around what would now be called endangered heritage sites in the city. Then on to the Market Place viewed from the City Hall steps.:

“...[we] were told how every building in sight whether old or modern had been decorated to a unified yet subdued colour scheme prepared by the City Architect, and how the two very new buildings had had their facades designed under the watchful eye of the same City Architect who had insisted on carefully co-ordinated pattern, scale, texture and colour to integrate them perfectly into their surroundings without inhibiting their frankly 1960s style.”

So to the conference report. Lord Esher, Vice President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, was the main speaker who launched into the 1947 Planning Act as a failure and a great disappointment to all. “It was impossible, it seemed, to legislate to ensure planning with visual sensitivity. There was a state of extreme crisis at the moment needing attention of the utmost urgency.

“The problem was that of bridging two gulfs. The first was the gulf between the public and planning going on behind closed doors leading to public cynicism and even ridicule. The second was the gulf between the English tradition and modern technology which leads to appalling visual conflicts.

“The second gulf was mainly a problem for architects themselves who must stop wearing blinkers while they design their little masterpiece but must relate with care and sensitivity each new building to its environment on a broad scale. The first gulf between public and planners, however, could best be bridged by the civic societies. Their aim must be:-

1. The education of public opinion.
2. The formulation of a brief for the planners – become the planners’ client, in fact.
3. To become the consultative body to both public and planners, to open the planning office’s doors.

“We are distressed at the spoiling of our cities, said Lord Esher, but even worse (because more permanent) was the destruction of our countryside. Village redevelopment has been a tragic failure, he said, and had better stop altogether until we find out how it should be done. The individual houses were often excellent but the total scene terrible.

“Altogether, said Lord Esher, planners are in the dark and desperately in need of informed advisers and this puts civic societies in the front line.” More of this next time.

R.G.

The Ipswich Society

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Registered Charity no. 263322

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

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 22 April 2015: Eltham Palace outing, London;

Wednesday 20 May 2015: Colourful characters and fascinating facts, Ipswich evening walk;

Thursday 25 June 2015: William Morris and the Olympic Park, London outing;

Wednesday 15 July: Prickwillow Drainage Museum outing with guided tour of Ely;

Thursday 3 September: Elton Hall, Peterborough outing.

2014/15 Winter Illustrated Talks at the Museum Street Methodist Church – entrance in Black Horse Lane – 7.30pm (followed by tea and biscuits):-

Wednesday 21 January 2015 Tony Marsden shows the latest incarnation of our Slide Collection – the remarkable historical resource created by the Society's Flickr website;

Wednesday 18 February Joy Bounds on *The fight for votes for women in Ipswich* (see p. 18);

Wednesday 18 March Gail Broom on *The role of the Ipswich Conservation Officer*, which includes the monitoring of historically important buildings in our town;

Wednesday 29 April The Society's Annual General Meeting, UCS Waterfront building, speaker to be announced in the April 2015 issue of the *Newsletter*.

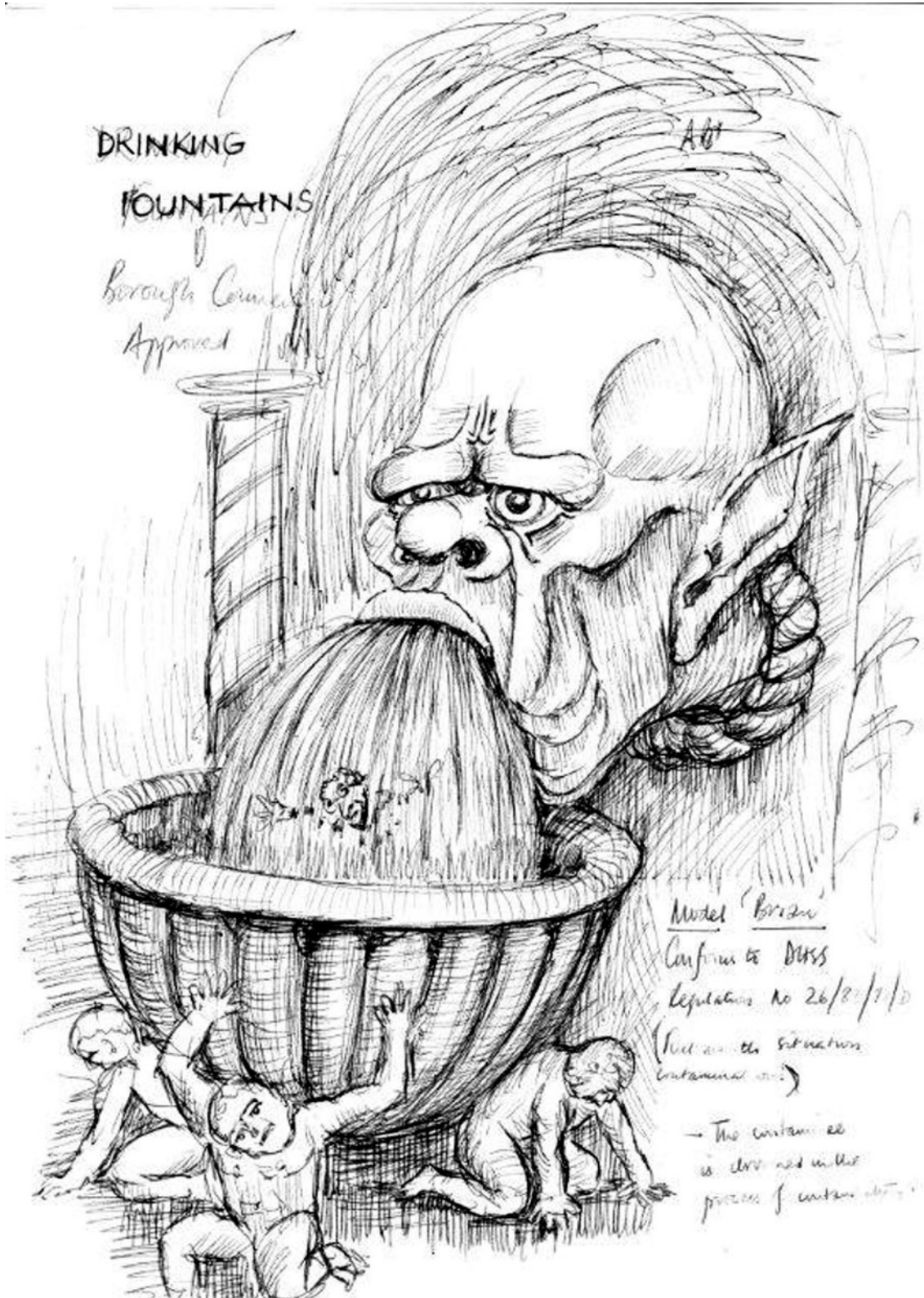
Newsletter deadlines & publication dates (the latter may vary by a few days)

Deadline for material: 1 December;	Publication date: 22 January;
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1 March;	2 April;
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1 June;	17 July;
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1 September;	9 October.
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“I used to enliven the HOURS spent in Ipsoc cttees with doodles (after all, I was Chairman at the time!). Alas, most went when I cleared out some years ago. I have rediscovered these ‘precious relics’. The Brett drinking fountain [in the Upper Arboretum] was long a source of discussion in the early 80s. The front page image 2 is a standard agenda of the time... the back image 3 is another matter! The character drowning in the stream is Bob Allen who was bearded at that time. We were taxed with making the water safe to drink! – Chris Wiltshire”
(More archival doodles by Chris in the next issue.)