



The Ipswich Society

NEWSLETTER

April 2016

Issue 203

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Editorial

Our cover photograph reminds us that, at the time of writing, the Suffolk County Council Fire and Rescue Service consultation, which closed on 22 February 2016, proposed cutting the number of fire engines in Ipswich from six to three. The article on page 5 looks back to the time of the Bond Street fire station.

Ipswich, as in many towns of comparable size and history (no other town has *quite* the history of Ipswich...), has suffered many losses of fine historic buildings over the centuries. However, we must be proud of our surviving buildings, the great, the good and the interesting. There are over 700 Listed buildings in Ipswich; many are timber-framed, wattle-and-daub, lathe-and-lime-and-hair plastered in structure. All rather flammable. On page 20 we show the most important in our town (updating an article in the *Newsletter* Issue 151, April 2003).

As a natural extension of that thought: ‘Who does what in Ipswich?’ appears on page 15. When you next hear someone blaming a particular authority for something, or saying “Why isn’t the Council doing anything about this?”, this short piece might help you to find an answer. It’s always ironic to hear this latter question from someone who has previously and repeatedly complained about the ‘nanny state’.

Many thanks to all contributors to this issue and to those who write to the editor or pass on comments – mainly favourable, thank goodness – about the *Newsletter*. **Robin Gaylard**

New members



Tony Marsden, Mike Cook and Bob Allen with the 1958 map of the Ring-Road that never was (see page 12 for the article)

Chairman's remarks

There are one or two pleasurable duties associated with being Chairman of The Ipswich Society, as well as a couple of difficult challenges. For example, I occasionally record a piece for the talking newspaper, Sound-On.

My *Ipswich Icons* articles are frequently included using volunteer readers – whose clarity of voice and intelligible diction bring life to what can occasionally be nothing more than a list of facts with dates.

Editor Tim Pennick asked me to think about an essay for the summer edition and we decided to cover shops and shopping in Ipswich. There has been so much negative comment recently one could start believing that town centre trading has collapsed, that the majority of shops have closed and that certain streets have become a wasteland of charity, betting and pawn shops.

To add credence to the piece we decided to interview Mike Sodhaindo, manager of Sailmakers shopping centre, Nardine Weatherley of The Buttermarket Centre and Mike Young who runs the fish stall on the market. Mike is the spokesperson for market traders and has a clear measure of trading conditions, footfall as it varies throughout the day and across the week and has some clear views as to the locations in which the market will work, and those in which it won't.

There is talk of moving the market to Lloyds Avenue; the first 75 yards are claimed to be flat, or at least as flat as the Cornhill, but footfall is almost non-existent, to Queen Street which Mike Young suggests is too narrow and has space only for a limited number of stalls, or on to Giles Circus: the wrong use for this important public space.

Mike Sodhaindo of Sailmakers shopping centre gave a clear picture of what the recent £4 million investment had done for the old Tower Ramparts (built 1984): bigger*, brighter with longer sight lines (*apparently bigger: achieved by removing the clutter along the centre of the mall, including the feature glass-sided lift). New shops have brought additional customers, an average 7% increase in trading figures.

There is a much greater investment currently in the Buttermarket Centre: a reported £35 million – although I suspect this includes the £9.5 million purchase price – in conversion from retail to mainly leisure use. The Butter Market (street) entrance will remain retail with New Look and TK Maxx providing the anchor stores.

The St Stephens Lane entrance will be predominantly restaurants with Wagamama, Prezzo and Five Guys promised. New escalators will whisk visitors to the first floor bowling alley, gym and further restaurants (nine in all) also the box office for the twelve screen Empire Cinemas. When the centre opened in 1984 the Owen Owen department store occupied four floors. Since moving downstairs within the centre TK Maxx are only using the ground floor; the upper floors are being converted into the cinemas.

Clearly the centre is not as busy whilst this building work is proceeding – you cannot currently walk through the centre – but the finished project should bring a welcome boost to the late afternoon and evening economy of Ipswich.

So to the main point of the recording: Ipswich is doing fine, changing but still reasonably healthy, certainly no worse than numerous other towns of comparable demographics. The town centre has always been a sea of change: some independent shops have gone, the car showrooms have moved to the outskirts, the furniture shops are now on the retail parks. The only notable returns are the food shops which are making a comeback as we abandon the big weekly shop.

John Norman, Chairman

Planning matters

In February 2016 Ipswich Borough Council decided to redevelop the **Crown Street car park** to provide 400-500 spaces on two decks with an additional 100 spaces on the surface. The cost at just over £5million would be met by “prudential borrowing”. Underground was rejected as much too expensive. The Society surveys of car park pricing in the region (by Tim Leggett – see the last *Newsletter*, Issue 202) show that the cost of parking in an Ipswich Borough car park is amongst the lowest in the region, a story that has received substantial positive press coverage.

Nevertheless, it is true that some of our car parks around the Waterfront are in a poor state and some way from the shopping areas. The one expensive car park is run by NCP at Tower Ramparts (£3.50 per hour). The new Crown Street multi-storey will address all three points. Meanwhile, there is to be a survey of car parking resources, pricing and policies.

Whilst on this popular, contentious and boring subject, the new owners of the Civic Centre site have moved swiftly to open it as a 520 space car park (including the existing spiral car park). It will be swiftly followed by an Ipswich Borough Council car park on the old Police Station site with 53 spaces.

IBC will enlarge its **South Street car park** from 43 to 60 spaces with a cycle shelter and landscaping. Using the plots of three dwellings in Norwich Road will improve the derelict area but some of us feel it would have been better to have three units either as retail or dwellings; but there is huge pressure to get the casual parkers off Norwich Road.

The former **Woolworths store** did not sell at auction at the end of February (guide price £4,250,000, current annual rent £250,000 until 2023). I can find no other substantial property for sale at auction or otherwise. Thus Archant press headlines from the past of exciting times in the ‘Mint Quarter’ (Cox Lane/Tacket Street car parks) have once again proved to be a false dawn.

The Cliff Brewery has been granted permission to proceed but, whilst the developers, Cliff Quay Developments and Pigeon remain active, there is some way to go in bringing the scheme to fruition. The Directors all seem confident at the moment.

Permission has been granted for new buildings for the Jaguar/Land Rover and Audi dealerships at **Futura Park** so you'll be able to do your weekly shop at Waitrose whilst your Discovery is being serviced. However, the surrounding traffic situation will get worse despite minor facelifts to the nearby roundabouts. Don't say we didn't tell you when we objected to the original development but the, then, the Highways Agency said, “*Oh no, it won't*”.

46 Anglesea Road, the former Spiritualist Church, in a large Suffolk brick Victorian house, reputedly visited by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, has been sold to a developer; he's nearly finished a smart, modern house in the garden with access to Paget Road and is dividing the original house into two large semis after extensions. I remain doubtful about using the bottom of gardens for infill; many people buying large houses will only buy if the original large garden remains. The design appears to be quite good but it is very difficult to judge the final aesthetic effect until it has settled in for a little while.

On **St Margaret's Green**, the former Kwik-Fit exhaust centre was demolished and a planning application for a car wash refused, but won after an appeal. The Planning Inspector insisted on a wooden fence to screen the site. In late 2014, the owner made an outline application to build a 50 bedroom, 3-4 storey care home which was also refused because it would not enhance the Central Conservation Area and would adversely affect the setting of the Grade 1 St Margaret's Church. The Planning Inspector rejected the appeal on all grounds except highway which he felt could be dealt with by conditions. Furthermore, many are extremely concerned about the air quality particularly NO_x*, at this site if such a tall building is erected producing a canyon effect. The Society has set up a small working party to consider its position on the *Vision for Ipswich* document and will report very soon. [*nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide] **Mike Cook**

Bond Street Fire Station



Bond Street in the 1950s looking south towards the Eagle Street and Rope Walk junction. The taller three storey building is the Fire Station which was in use from the days of horse-drawn fire engines through to the 1960s. The striking hose tower can be seen behind. The building in the right foreground with the large doorway was used as an annexe to the fire station to accommodate motorised fire engines etc.; today it is a school of dance. In the immediate right foreground is clear evidence of demolition in progress. Below this is the same view today.

The old Bond Street Fire Station closed in 1982 on the opening of Princes Street Fire Station. Bond Street predated the Colchester Road Fire Station by a considerable time but when the latter opened Bond Street became a 'satellite station' of Colchester Road. Each watch (shift) would detach a crew of five down to Bond Street for six weeks at a time.

It was a fantastic opportunity for new firefighters to learn the topography and risks of the town. Crews serving down there for their six week detachment were largely left to themselves under the command of a leading firefighter. There were regular venues we visited and trained at around the town and docks including risks such as the malting buildings in Felaw Street. They allowed us to pitch ladders against their buildings and carry out breathing apparatus drills.

I was fortunate enough to serve many detachments there under the command of a leading firefighter called Dave Knight, who made it his duty to ensure we learnt something every shift (I hope he gets to read this if any member knows his contact details). *(continues)*

Bond Street fire station housed two fire appliances at the time, one crewed by the full time firefighters and one by retained firefighters who responded when additional fire crews were needed in the town. Bond Street crews were usually first on the scene of any fire in the town centre, a valuable opportunity to gain experience.

Very much part of the full time fire cover for the town and surrounding areas, Bond Street fire crews were a key part of the Suffolk Fire Service response to what were then known as the Standards of Fire Cover, Home Office standards set just after the Second World War and updated in 1985. Much has changed in the work of the (now) Fire and Rescue Service and the risk profile of the town itself has changed and, of course, continues to change. Quite rightly more emphasis was, and is now, given to fire safety in the home and community. This cannot be argued with and has led to significant reductions in the number of fires in the home and fire casualties.

What does not change is the potential for fire and its consequences. I do not envy those now responsible for balancing budget cuts and the provision of an adequate, responsive fire and rescue service. Suffolk has always been well served by its Fire and Rescue Service personnel and crews and I hope they remain adequately resourced for that to continue.

I would urge all readers, both at home and at work, to be ‘fire aware’. If you need advice contact your local fire and rescue service. They are always hugely helpful and keen to assist and advise.

Footnote:

It was always rumoured that the Bond Street fire station building was haunted. I recall hoping I would not miss a ‘shout’ in the middle of the night and be left there alone! Bit of a confession but I assure readers – I was not the only one.

Graham Smith

(Graham is The Ipswich Society’s Treasurer and a retired fire officer.)



Photo from Ipswich Society Flickr collection

The two red appliance bay doors: a view of how Bond Street Fire Station looked just after closure.

Snippets 1

Hospital buildings

Ipswich is fortunate to have a very good NHS hospital, but it is not helped by the vast spread of its disparate buildings from north to south. So it's good news that the hospital has bought the site of the former school on Heath Road. But it may be years before we see the benefits of building new clinical departments linking into the Garrett Anderson Centre and closer to South Wards. The northern wing (some parts built as a workhouse in the 19th century) could then be closed and the land re-used.

St Lawrence repairs

Quality repairs to a medieval church are necessary but expensive. It is pleasing to see that the repairs and renewals to stonework, brickwork and buttresses at St Lawrence have been done, thanks to the continuing care of Ipswich Historic Churches Trust with community funds from Viridor, the recycling and waste company.

'Welcome to Ipswich' signs

Proposals for six new signs have been sent to the Dept of Transport for approval. They will state 'Welcome to Ipswich, East Anglia's Waterfront Town' – which is a precise and fair claim when you think about it. The UCS building will feature on two signs and the other four will show the Town Hall, Christchurch Mansion, the Willis Building and Giles's Grandma.

Sir Trevor's 'Dream'

A fitting full circle for Sir Trevor Nunn to return to his home town to direct *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Wolsey Theatre – remarkably the only Shakespeare play he has never directed previously. And all the more appropriate that the production will include some local schoolchildren, since he himself first trod the professional boards, aged 13, at the former Ipswich Arts Theatre. The production runs from 16 June to 9 July and will be a boost to the town's cultural life.

Hopes for Park & Ride?

This double facility using Martlesham Heath in the east and London Road in the south is under threat because of its cost to SCC and rather fewer people using it. It is encouraging to learn that various local bodies are working with SCC to try to save a service which is important to the town centre and to hospital visitors.

Politicians and the arts

It was pleasing to read in the *Ipswich Star* Ben Gummer's appreciation of public art in the town, with particular reference to Giles's Grandma and the Question Mark at UCS. David Ellesmere also wrote in praise of theatre in Ipswich, especially about the Wolsey, but pointing out that Ipswich has six Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations for theatre work, more than Cambridge or Norwich. Two of them, the Wolsey and Dance East, have received more than £300,000 each from the Arts Council to upgrade their facilities.

Tickets in the rain

Work on the major re-vamp of the railway station necessitates a relocated ticket office. But the portakabin being used is too small to hold more than a dozen customers at one time. The rest wait outside with no awning or any other cover.

Ipswich Symphony Orchestra – the first 114 years

Ipswich Symphony Orchestra is the new name for an orchestra which has been giving concerts in the town for 113 years. Ipswich Orchestral Society was established in 1902 by its founder and first Conductor, Dr Walter Sinclair, an Ipswich optician. A friend of Sir Henry Wood, he modelled the programmes of the Society on those of Sir Henry's famous Promenade Concerts. In those days, with the phonograph a new invention, and well before the introduction of radio, access to orchestral music was difficult and people were limited in what they could hear played in their own home or circle – thus there was an appetite for a wide range of music at public concerts.

The first concert was given on 27 November 1903 at 8.00pm in the Public Hall in Westgate Street, (now the site of Primark). The programmes of those days show how fashions in musical taste have changed – it was not unusual for the orchestra to perform ten musical items at one concert with three individual soloists, one of whom would have been a singer with piano accompaniment.

The Orchestra has always been well supported by members living in the country districts, and it is amusing to recall that many of the players came to the weekly rehearsals in horse-drawn vehicles! Special trains were even laid on from Stowmarket and Felixstowe to bring concert audiences into Ipswich.



June 2012 concert with soloist Jennifer Pike

A notable concert in November 1913 brought world-famous “celebrity” pianist and composer Percy Grainger to play Grieg’s piano concerto, after which he conducted two of his most popular pieces, *Walking Tune* and *Mock Morris*. In November 1914 the Orchestra gave a Grand Patriotic Concert to raise money for relief in recently-invaded Belgium. Dr Sinclair resigned in 1919 owing to ill-health, to be succeeded by Mr Edgar Wilby, Professor and Conductor at the Blackheath Conservatoire of Music, and a violinist of the London Symphony Orchestra. He continued as Conductor until the outbreak of World War II, with his final concert bringing the celebrated pianist, Solomon, to play Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto.

After the War, regular rehearsals restarted, with Peter Burges appointed conductor in 1948 and remaining in post until 1953 when he was succeeded for two seasons by the young Colin Davis, later a renowned maestro.

After the Public Hall burned down in 1949 concerts were given in school halls and local churches until 1977 when the Orchestra celebrated its 75th anniversary in the Grand Hall of the newly refurbished Corn Exchange. Beethoven's *Emperor* Concerto was performed by John Lill and conducted by Christopher Phelps.

IOS's annual Family Concerts have been popular since the first was held in 1979 - a rather informal event in the Willis Faber sports hall at Rushmere. Five years later the Family Concert also moved to the Corn Exchange and continues a unique tradition, that children are allowed to go onstage during the interval to handle and try the orchestral instruments. Many local musicians will admit to having first been inspired to take up their instrument at an IOS Family Concert.

The Orchestra marked the millennium by appointing its present conductor, Adam Gatehouse. A professional conductor, and a senior editor with BBC Radio 3, Adam has led and inspired the orchestra to a high level of performance in concerts with international soloists such as Nicola Benedetti, Julian Lloyd Webber, Dame Felicity Lott and Benjamin Grosvenor. The next concert in June, presents young Russian pianist Pavel Kolesnikov, who is currently receiving 5-star reviews, performing Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto, and in November, renowned British pianist, Steven Osborne, plays Brahms' First Piano Concerto.

After 113 years as IOS, the Orchestra recently voted to update its name to **Ipswich Symphony Orchestra**, which sounds more modern, and also more accurately describes this large orchestra of around 75 players. ISO is proud that Ipswich now has its own symphony orchestra, continuing a long tradition of high quality music making with top-class soloists performing here in our county town.

Pat Grimwade (Chairman ISO)

www.ipswichsymphonyorchestra.org



The beat of the street

I'm going to start at the end with Borin Van Loon's summary of his January Winter Illustrated Talk, "I love the snapping-up of unconsidered trifles* and the things we learn from them." This attention to detail with documentation of our town's small street statements was presented to us in a plethora of signs, milestones, boundary markers and dates. We recognised some of them, pledged ourselves to look for others and we learned a fundamental truth about our town.



Buildings may come and go, but much of the street plan remains intact – and the evidence for the antiquity of some of our streets is in their names. Bishop's Hill, picked out in black bricks on red refers to the residence of the Medieval Bishop of Norwich in Holywells Park. King Street, painted on to the limestone of the Corn Exchange is possibly named for King Edward I, commemorating the marriage of his daughter. The old cast iron sign (one of the "best signs in Ipswich") of Cutler Street, on the side wall of The Sailors' Rest, refers to William Cutler who endowed Cutler's Charity in 1620. There are 17th century dates carved in wooden bressummer beams at the Old Cattle Market (1620), the Fore Street ropemakers' cottages (1620) and the Captains' Houses on Grimwade Street (1631).

We also learned about our Victorian forebears; their crowded living conditions in the courts and yards of Ipswich illustrated with the Dove Yard cast iron sign. And those with better quality terraced homes loved to name and date them, often with scroll-work or bows on the cartouche as at Blue Gown Villas in Foxhall Road and York Terrace (1879) in York Road. The area across the river in Stoke bustled with industry and commerce in the 19th century. Inns were needed and the Eastern Union Railway Hotel in Croft Street has a monogram 'EUR' (with a lovely curly E and R) in the faience of its frontage. Jacob Garrett's St Mary's Iron-Foundry is immortalised in the milestones it created, which still announce their distance from London to passers-by and C Mills & Co, St Nicholas Foundry (in Tanners Lane), is cast into many hydrants and drain covers in our pavements.

We still add to our street lettering heritage – Stuart Hill of the Claydon Foundry casts clever, attractive letters into his iron fencing. Front place in the queue at the traffic lights is just right to catch the elusive IBH (Ipswich Borough Housing) in the Argyll Street fencing. And if you have trouble seeing that, try the ITFC in the blue fence behind Alf Ramsey.

Oh, and who beats the streets? The Church parishioners do (or did) at their boundary markers – it's called 'beating the bounds'§. Look out for M^{GT}B (St Margaret's Boundary) on the old County Hall, S^TC B (St Clement's Boundary) in Alexandra Park and many other parish boundary markers scattered throughout our town. They are all on Borin's web site: www.ipswich-lettering.co.uk/

Caroline Markham

[*actually a quotation from Shakespeare – Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*]

[§We will reprint an article about *Beating the Bounds* in St Clement parish from an earlier Society publication in a future Newsletter. -Ed.]

Letter to the Editor

Ipswich Icons and Fore Street memories from William Thompson, Norwich.

I am writing to say how interesting and enjoyable the articles in *Ipswich Icons* are to me. My daughter, Jean, who lives in Colchester, cuts them out and sends them to me at regular intervals. The reason for my interest is that I lived in Ipswich from 1951 to 1972 and took my employment at Smyth Bros, Builders Merchants. Fore Street in those years was a busy thoroughfare.

I also brought up my family of three in Ipswich.

In addition to retail outlets there were one or two manufacturers: Conder's (gloves) and Gardiner's (sweet factory). In Tolly's bottling store the team of girls worked in cellars below street level.

The ill-reputed club was situated in cellars below Gale & Galey's. When you entered from the main street it was a long, dark passage and at the end an illuminated photo of the Queen. The club was in the cellar which had steel supports. The owner had an Alsatian, which had one blind eye, chained to a support.

I have one request. Can you find out any information about a merchant's house east of Isaac Lord's. It had a large studded door entering into a domestic area and, at the rear, a beautiful garden. Mr Scott lived there at the time, but worked in London.

[We think that Mr Thompson is referring to the Neptune Inn at 86 Fore Street. This undated photograph (courtesy Phil Snowden) is of the garden behind the Neptune, once Neptune Antiques, which used to have open days for potential customers. Note the ship's figurehead. – Ed.]



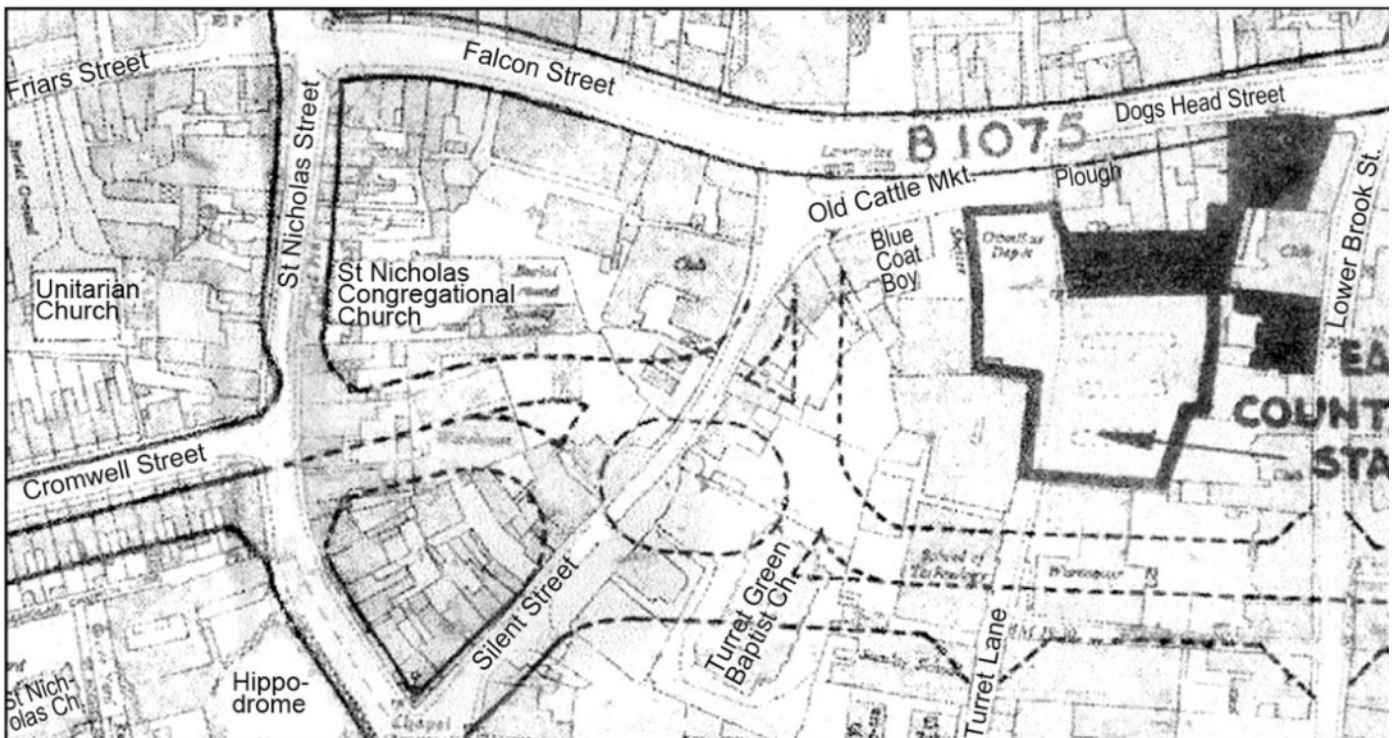
The Ring-Road

Just imagine a government deciding that a town's population should double; the town preparing for such an influx of population by demolishing, reconstructing, providing new infrastructure and the means by which a large new population could be absorbed into the framework of a town.

Imagine the building of the new roads including Civic Drive; the construction of a new shopping centre, Greyfriars; the preparation for further expansion, all being undertaken with the vigour and the enthusiasm that the prospects of increased population can bring to a town – even a ring-road eventually to encircle the town centre as a dual carriageway.

Imagine the first phase, well under way: roads constructed, preparations for further stages including the demolition of buildings along planned routes for extensions of roads; the concerns and worries of local people and interested parties in the history and archaeology of that place swept aside by a great plan for the future success of the town. Imagine all this only to find that the government has changed its mind. The London overspill programme hadn't been a roaring success. Evidence was to be found in Haverhill, Thetford and Great Cornard; so, a new town was developed, Milton Keynes. Ipswich was no longer to double its population. Ipswich was to get nobody at all.

The construction of the planned ring road came to a halt. People were listened to, the worry about the destruction the road would cause to the town's ancient fabric was heard and, anyway, the pressure was off Ipswich. However, work had already started to clear the route for the next phase: Richard Felaw's house in Foundation Street had been demolished and the remnants of Blackfriars monastery were threatened. Today we can see Peninsular House, carefully chamfered to fit a roundabout in Lower Orwell Street and the multi-storey car park in Foundation Street proudly stands on Richard Felaw's house which had originally been cleared for the new road. Then there is Cromwell Square. This car park is formed from the last section of the dual carriageway to be built which ended at St Nicholas Street.



that never was



The demolition approaches St Nicholas Street

For Ipswich during the 1960s there was no question that some improvements were needed. It was a traditional but booming market town where the livestock market was still operational, farmers and rural Suffolk people came into town regularly. There were great local shops: Ridley's, Footman's, Cowell's Department Store in the Butter Market and Sneezum's as well as many successful manufactories.

Various individuals opposed to the destruction of the town's historic buildings and streets grouped together to form The Ipswich Society in 1960.

Photographs from the Society's Image Archive. Below: Detail of the 1958 map of the ring-road with our annotations.



Path of the dual carriageway



But there was a demand for new roads as the numbers of commuters and traffic coming into town grew. A wave of prosperity was flowing over Britain and over the town; people wanted better, newer things, so this was reflected in the aspirations of central government and local government too.

If we look at a current street map of Ipswich it is possible to see the sweep of Civic Drive from St Matthews Street down to Saint Nicholas Church. This is the remains of the ring-road plan and the vestiges of the last stretch head eastwards through Cromwell Square car park.

Had the plans come to fruition the ring-road would have destroyed the jettied, timber-framed, 17th century buildings around 25-29 St Nicholas Street, putting a large roundabout over Silent Street, striding through Turret Lane, Lower Brook Street, Foundation Street, and Upper Orwell Street (see the map detail on the back page). *(cont.)*

continues) The ring-road then looped northwards to flatten and broaden a dualled Bond Street, meeting St Helen's Street at a large roundabout just outside the Regent Theatre, always supposing the theatre had been spared. Our back page detail of the 1958 map dramatises this.

From here traffic would head westwards to the Robert Ransome. Old Foundry Lane and St Margaret's Street would now surround an island on which all the buildings in the middle would remain. A dual carriageway would sweep across the bus station to a roundabout at the top of Lloyds Avenue, in front of Crown Pools. At this point the traffic would continue straight along Crown Street, St Matthews Street (sections of which are still dualled today) and so complete the circuit at the top of Civic Drive.

Members of the Executive Committee were reminded of this last autumn when a map was handed over to us by a Society member. It was dated 24th April 1958, produced on behalf of the Borough Engineer and Surveyor John B. Storey; it graphically outlined the plans for the town to be radically changed. It had been produced in response to government plans and measures to create an 'Ipswich New Town' scheduled to get a mass of London overspill in the 1960/70s which would double the population of the town.

When we examined the map there was no big surprise because much of what it indicated had been known in the intervening years and we were aware of the narrow escape that the town had experienced; the striking thing was the detail and scale of what had been planned in such simple graphic form. Moreover, at the behest of the central government of the time there seemed to be a complacent ease with which the lines were drawn paying little attention to the potential destruction of parts of our historic town. But some of us were reminded of another occasion, when there was not an escape but an opportunity missed – the effect being that of shock.

In December 2007 the planned Unitary Authority for Ipswich was deemed by the Secretary of State, Hazel Blears, to be unaffordable:

"Politicians in Ipswich today reacted with shock and dismay after proposals for home rule were controversially shelved amid claims it would prove too expensive" said the local press. One councillor at Ipswich Borough, Lib Dem leader Andrew Cann, said he found the decision to abandon unitary status for Ipswich "inexplicable".

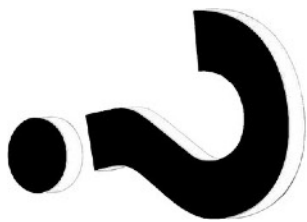
It was a move that rendered hundreds of hours of officer time and thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money wasted: central government announced that Ipswich's unitary bid would not get the green light. The then Department for Communities and Local Government told the town that Ipswich had not met "the affordability criteria".

There seems, on occasion, to be an apparent arbitrary nature to governance witnessed by people who are unaware of the full story, or who have the full picture obscured from them. The question often asked is: 'Who makes judgments and who decides?'. In the cases here mentioned the central government of the time takes responsibility and we at the local level can only react and respond accordingly. The map is interesting and provocative especially at a time when devolution for Suffolk, Norfolk & Cambridge seems to be imminent and Suffolk Coastal & Waveney are looking to merge. On this occasion the government has distanced itself from the decisions: it is a local matter, the responsibility will not rest with Whitehall.

I wonder whether in fifty-odd years' time there will be a map to contemplate which our successors will find reflects an escape or a shock – and who then will be there to take responsibility?

Tony Marsden (including contributions from John Norman and Mike Cook)

Who does what in Ipswich?



‘Why isn’t the Council doing something about it?’ can be heard and read quite often. During a long economic recession, as budgets shrink and demands rise, perhaps it is the right time to look, in broadest terms, at those areas over which each council has responsibility:-

Ipswich Borough Council

- Benefits (esp. housing benefit)
- Business advice and support
- Cemeteries and crematorium
- Communities and health
- Council Tax
- Environmental health
- Housing
- Arts & entertainment, sport & fitness, parks
- Licenses and permits
- Parking, transport and streets
- Planning, building and conservation
- Sustainability
- Waste recycling



Suffolk County Council

- Children, families and learning
- Jobs, careers and business
- Council and democracy
- Adult social care and health
- Roads and transport
- Planning, waste and environment
- Fire, rescue and emergencies
- Community and safety
- Births, deaths and ceremonies
- Culture, heritage and leisure



“It’s important to remember that the SCC figures include education funding which is passed straight to Local Authority schools without touching the sides. Similarly the IBC figures include Housing Benefit payments which aren’t really IBC spend.

It’s notoriously difficult to get a true picture of what an authority actually spends as ‘ordinary people’ would recognise it. The gross expenditure figures give a good idea of the scale of the operations and the relative difference in scale between the Borough and the County, though.

From the annual statements of accounts for each authority for 2014/2015:-

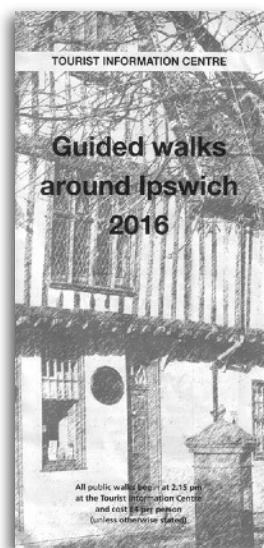
- **IBC - £139 million**
- **SCC - £1.232 billion**”

Quotation from David Ellesmere, Leader of Ipswich Borough Council

Snippets 2

Grimwade's. The Ipswich Society understands that Grimwade's on the corner of the Cornhill has been sold to a developer. Although the shop has a wide frontage both to the Cornhill and to Westgate Street there is no rear access. Internally different floor levels (all pertaining to be the ground floor) make it a very difficult building to use as a modern trading unit.

The developer is investigating the possibility of demolition (with facade retention) and rebuilding as a 'big box'. We await the planning application with interest.



The leaflet *Guided walks around Ipswich 2016* has just been published with a wide range of walks ranging from 'Queen Victoria was not amused' to 'The Ipswich of Carl Giles' to 'Saxons! Vikings! Normans!' All walks start from the Tourist Information Office in Arras Square and that is the place to pick up copies of the leaflet and pre-book walks (if needed).

Waterfront Gateway

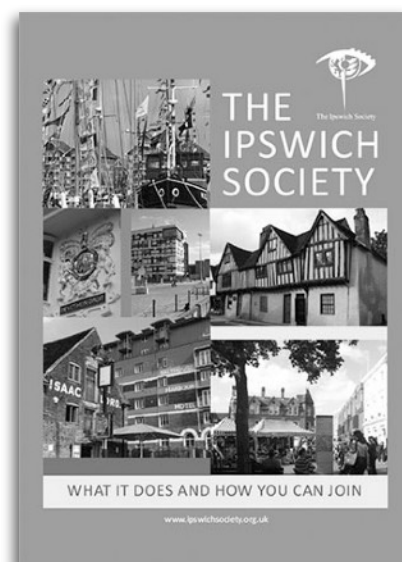
There are a number of unfinished and ugly parts of the Waterfront. But because they are the most exposed and strategic, the worst ones are the adjoining three sites nearest to Stoke Bridge, i.e. the former Burton's building, the Paul's concrete silo and the site of the burnt out warehouse. Three different owners compound the problems. The £50,000 grant from the Dept of Communities and Local Government for a feasibility study may be a useful starter. It has often been said that this 'gateway' area demands high quality attractive architecture: so it doesn't sound encouraging, if it's true, that the Paul's building could be converted for residential use. Pedestrians in St Peter's Street and motorists driving from the west or from the south need to be impressed so that they know that the whole of the northern quays would be well worth visiting.

Investment Opportunities

The Foreign Direct Investment Survey of 'Small European Regions' lists Greater Ipswich as one of the top three regions of Europe for future investment. It might be surprising to some, but our relative closeness to London (without London prices), our ports, our heritage and our weather all make it seem likely that Ipswich has a great future. In the light of this, the EU Referendum could be very significant for us.

A new, colourful **membership leaflet for The Ipswich Society** has been published. Copies will be available at the usual outlets including the Tourist Information Office and at our own events. Thanks to our Hon. Secretary, Caroline Markham, for pulling this together after a long period of reliance on laser-printed black-and-white A4 forms. Also to our Treasurer, Graham Smith, for navigating the shifting sands of the rules about Gift Aid.

It costs only £10 for individuals to join and a bargain £15 for families. Non-profit groups: £25 and Commercial/corporate membership is £50.



The future of town centre shopping

It has been pointed out that an element of ‘churn’ is valuable – shops have always come and gone as life-styles and tastes have changed, and there needs to be room for newcomers. Right now, however, our town centre is on the cusp of big changes. Some of these factors can be seen in the developments at our two indoor shopping malls, and perhaps lessons can be learned.

In the Buttermarket Shopping Centre there is a big reduction in the amount of retail space because of the insertion of the new cinemas and restaurants. But the popularity of TK Maxx now on the ground floor shows that there is still a demand for suitable retailing. In consequence the vacant shop units on the right as you enter from Butter Market itself ought to be occupied soon. It seems regrettable though that New Look on the left of this entrance arcade has blanked out most of its windows. Hardly a welcoming entrance at present!

At Sailmakers, the bright and airy refurbishment is welcoming. This is the perfect site for a town centre shopping mall. The entrance from Tavern Street, so close to the town centre, is thriving as expected. Yet the upper floor, approached on its own natural level from the main bus station and from important car parks, is at present (early March) very under-used. Perhaps the Crown Street car park when finished and enlarged might make a difference. But one wonders whether the small off-centre lift is not attracting enough shoppers to go up to the higher level as they used to.

Perhaps a local regular shopper is presumptuous in thinking that the professionals and experts could have done some things better at both shopping malls. But it is crystal clear that town centre shopping has to be made very attractive and easy so as to combat competition from out-of-town retailing and the internet.

Neil Salmon

The future for town centre housing

Successful and appealing big towns and cities need the presence of plenty of people as well as good buildings and public services and attractions. It is therefore very interesting to note that the Ipswich Vision document envisages 2000-2500 new homes in the town centre. However, this means a major reversal of what has happened in the 20th century. Victorian sub-standard houses were demolished just north of Crown Street, the ‘Potteries’ in the east and the ‘Mount’ in the south, and never replaced by better houses there. Private cars, especially, made living in the suburbs or on the edge of town desirable and the council estates were built beyond the centre because that was where there were acres of open land.

So, is it unrealistic to think that the Mint Quarter could house people, or that the best Co-Op buildings in Carr Street could become spacious upmarket flats, or that Lower Brook Street (where EADT will move out) will be an area for “a high quality residential scheme” as has been said by possible developers?

These sites do have potential assets – easy walk to shops, to the Waterfront, to the Regent, to the new cinemas, to the Wolsey Theatre, to Portman Road and, above all, to the railway station. Ipswich Society members might need some persuading of this because it would be a new world for them. Younger people could see it differently – if the prices are right, if stable communities are established, if there are schools and if it is clean and quiet at night. Certain types of older people might also find it convenient to live so close to the centre. It is relatively easy to envisage an Ipswich Re-born on this wonderful natural historical location around the head of the estuary and surrounded by its wooded hills. In practice many factors would need to come together and it would take more time than many of us will live to see. But in many ways is this not a desirable future for social and ecological reasons?

Neil Salmon

Cycling



I sing the praises of cycling so frequently anyone would think I'm a campaigning cyclist, which is not entirely true. I do appreciate that we cannot go on as we are, (and have been for the past fifty years). There simply isn't (and can never be) enough road space. We've tried the simple options of bypasses, town centre ring roads and gyratory systems and they are all close to capacity. I despair at the number of times I hear that we need a northern bypass to relieve the Orwell Bridge, a Wet Dock Crossing to relieve the Star Lane Gyratory and that traffic lights need removing so cars can flow easily (without consideration for other road users).

What we actually need is a modal shift from private cars to alternative healthier options, walking, cycling and public transport. I've seen it happen in Holland and Copenhagen and it's beginning to happen in London. Firstly the Mayor introduces congestion charging, then makes huge improvements to public transport, increases the provision for cycling and changes in the way people commute begin to happen.

The one area we are losing direction, in London and elsewhere, is in the number of young people taking up cycling. I see that new bikes were the second most requested item on wish lists sent to Santa (Lego was at number one). Unfortunately young people are not riding those bikes anything like they used to. Children no longer cycle to school, they no longer 'go out to play' (on their bikes) and they don't ride their bikes to the park promising to be home before dark. Is it possible that the knowledge they fail to gain about road use at an early age contributes to a lack of skill when they start to drive?

In making these statements I fully understand that a fair number of professionals require a car at work, and thus they need to drive to work such that the car is available during the working day. It is also true however that a vast number of commuters take the car to work 'just in case' or even because they've never considered the alternative. They sit in the queue moaning about congestion without realising that they are the problem.

The single statistic that should concern us most is, according to Break, the road safety charity, the fact that 80% of drivers admit to making the majority of their short journeys by car. Nearly 70% of all traffic movement is of less than 5 miles, and 25% is less than one mile! Congestion costs the country £4 billion each year, a figure which could be halved if we left the car at home when we pop to the shops.

The new Tesco Express stores that have opened in the last 5 years all have car parks and the vast majority of their customers live within one mile! There are six Tesco Express stores inside the Borough Boundary; they've got the population covered.

In Ipswich we have a dilemma with Park and Ride; some are issues being brought about by the relationship between Borough and County. Park and Ride is a subsidised provision, paid for by the County who are under tremendous pressure to reduce spending. It is not an essential service (unlike education and social services) and thus can be cut and even curtailed. Park and Ride generally only works when two key elements come together: one the desire of the outlying population to get into town (usually to shop) and the lack of competitively priced parking in the town centre.

(continued)

Thus in both Norwich and Cambridge Park and Ride is successful, although subsidised – in Norwich to the tune of £1 million per site per year! In Ipswich the current linked twin sites at Martlesham and Copdock (with buses running via the town centre and hospital) are costing £700,000 per annum.

In Ipswich the Borough Council are the planning authority and under pressure from local businesses and from Ipswich Central (the BID Company) in not only granting planning permission for temporary town centre car parks but also the rebuilding of Crown Street car park to increase its capacity. There are numerous vacant sites close to the town centre and each that becomes a temporary car park reduces the demand for Park and Ride, increases the number of vehicles coming into Ipswich and therefore leads to more congestion.

John Norman

Traffic's getting worse!

There has been a marked increase in traffic over the last 12 months. Most notably the total number of miles travelled by van are up 6%, car miles are up almost 2% and HGV miles up 1.2%. A total of 320 billion miles were covered by the nation's vehicles, up on average by 5% on the previous year.

There is one obscure but important factor in this increase, House Sales (or lack of them). Changes to Stamp Duty have caused house sales to fall. Broadly speaking people changing jobs don't move house (in the same sort of numbers as previously); they simply commute greater distances. Whether they are tradesmen driving the van to work or an office worker dashing from home we are all travelling further, adding to the congestion on our roads.

The Government is spending £15 million on the major highway infrastructure nationally but local authorities are cutting back on expenditure. The result is that roads get busier and busier but there are no new local roads. The £21 million UTMC scheme in Ipswich has not resulted in any new road space (but should result in better traffic flow). *J.N.*

Bonus Letter to the Ed.

Traffic lights from Ken Wilson

I was interested to see in the October *Newsletter* a picture of traffic lights with the top one labelled 'Stop'. Your older readers may remember that in the early days of these lights, in order to ensure that motorists understood what they had to do, not only was the red light labelled 'Stop' but the green one was labelled 'Go' – an encouragement later very sensibly qualified in the Highway Code.

There wasn't space to write 'Caution' on the amber light but most motorists were cautious anyway and, when at night there was little traffic, the lights were simply left on amber all the time.

When roundabouts were introduced at junctions they were widely praised since, not only did they ensure a smooth flow of traffic, but they also avoided the great expense of traffic lights. (There is, of course, no shortage of money at Suffolk County Council.)

[N.B.: The number of traffic lights in the UK has gone up from 23,000 in 1994 to 33,000 in 2014. It's no wonder the average speed across all streets and roads has reduced from 25.3mph (2012) to 23.6mph (2015). Perhaps fewer non-drivers are getting knocked down, however.-*Ed.*]

Listed buildings in Ipswich

Ipswich is an historic town with many precious features. It's not just retail parks and car parks.

Grade I Buildings

- **Christchurch Mansion** The Listing also includes the Ice House (GII), the wall and gates south of the Mansion (GII) and the Lodge at No.1 Soane Street (GII).
- 30 Butter Market: **The Ancient House**.
- **Gateway to Wolsey's College** (also an Ancient Monument). 1-5 College Street, the former Burton Sons & Sanders offices, of which Wolsey's Gate is an integral part (GII).
- 80 and 80A Fore Street (**Isaac Lord's**). The G1 buildings are the **Sale Room**, the **Crossway** and the **Warehouse** running down to the quay, now the main bar. The former Malt Kiln is Listed GII* and numbers 1-7 Wherry Lane are GII.
- Friars Street: **Unitarian Meeting House**.
- Friars/Princes Streets: **Willis** office building.
- 7 Northgate Street. Formerly the **Royal Oak Inn**, today Jackaman's Offices.
- Northgate Street: **Pykenham's Gatehouse** and the wall to the Ipswich & Suffolk Club.
- **Church of St Margaret** and the wall around the churchyard.
- 2 St Peters Street (**The Sailors' Rest**) The first building 'rescued' by the Ipswich Society.
- **Church of St Mary-at-Stoke**. Adjacent are the cellars to Stoke Hall, Listed GII.

Grade II* Buildings

- Cliff Lane: **The Margaret Catchpole** public house. A Cobbold pub built in 1936 as a counter to the 'Tolly Follies' being built at that time by Tollemache & Co. The two brewers didn't amalgamate until 1957.
- College Street: **Church of St Peter**.
- Constitution Hill: **'Woodside'**.
- Dial Lane: **Church of St Lawrence**, Ipswich Historic Churches Trust.
- Elm Street: **Church of St Mary-at-the-Elms**.
- 24 Fore Street, formerly **The Wheatsheaf** public house, in the same style as the Ancient House in Butter Market but without the decoration.
- **56-58 Fore Street** (opposite Fore Street Baths).
- **80-80A Fore Street** (Isaac Lord's warehouses, see above).
- Wherry Quay: **Isaac's** public house & restaurant, the former Malt Kiln pub.



Christchurch Mansion



Willis building



St Mary-at-Stoke Church



Unitarian Meeting House

Photographs from the Society's Image Archive

- **86-88 Fore Street**, the former Neptune Inn.
- Cromwell Square: **Church of St Nicholas**.
- Gippeswyk Avenue: **Gippeswyk Hall**, now home to Red Rose Chain theatre.
- Key Street: **Church of St Mary-at-the-Quay**, soon to be opened as ‘Quay Place’.
- Key Street: **The Old Custom House**.
- **9 Northgate Street**: Listed GII on Historic England listing. Georgian/Tudor house.
- St Clements Church Lane: **Church of St Clement**.
- 24 St Margarets Plain (is also 2 Soane Street): the former **Pack Horse Inn**.
- 56-58 St Margarets Street: the St Margarets Street frontage of the **Pack Horse Inn**.
- **35-39 St Margarets Street** (37-39 St Margarets Street on the Historic England list at GII*); Half-timbered buildings on the corner with Great Colman Street.
- **1-9 Silent Street**: the first four buildings on the north side of Silent Street, including Claude Cox’s former bookshop.
- 43 Tavern Street: **The Great White Horse Hotel**, its bedrooms extend above 37-41 Tavern Street, Listed GII).
- Tower Street: **Church of St Mary-le-Tower**.
- **19 Tower Street**. Note that 17 Tower Street (Church House) and 21 Tower Street are both GII.

Additionally, Blackfriars Priory, between Foundation and Fore Streets, is classified as an Ancient Monument (AM).

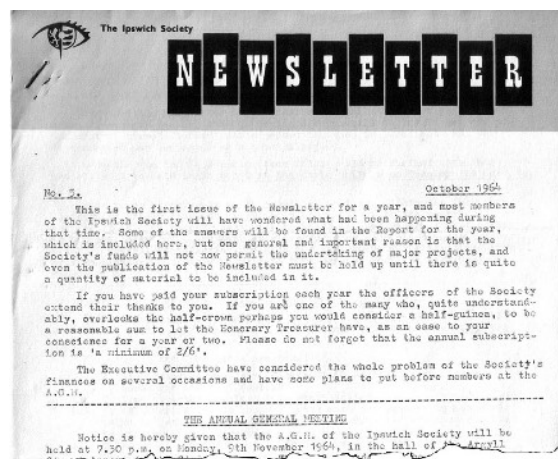
There are 677 Grade II Listed buildings. The highest concentration of Listed Buildings is in Fore Street with two Grade I, five Grade II*, and 77 Grade II. Between 1985 and 1994 only four Listed buildings disappeared, and none have been demolished since 1995. **R.G.**



Our back pages

Since our last look at the early *Newsletters* of the Society in the July 2015 issue, we note a year's gap between issue 4 (Oct.'64) and issue 5 (Oct.'65). Clearly such publications came out only when needed (and could be afforded); Issue 6 was a month later. Clouds seem to be gathering over the Society's activities and aspirations.

An appeal to those many members who have 'quite understandably' overlooked the half-crown subscription due and they are asked to consider a half-guinea 'to be a reasonable sum to let the Honorary Treasurer have, as an ease to your conscience for a year or two. Please do not forget that the annual subscription is "a minimum of 2/6" '. Such appeals may have resonance for our current Membership Secretary and Treasurer.



A favoured venue for both the forthcoming Society AGM and for a talk (arranged in association with local branches of the Workers' Education Association and Geographical Association) by Mr J.R. James OBE, the Chief Planner at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, on *Population & Planning* is the hall of the Argyle Street Annexe to the Civic College. In early 2016, the builders are working on the former Argyle Street School site and it has still to provide a long-term, sustainable function since it ceased to be a Board School and college annexe. 'There should be a large attendance so it would be advisable to get there in good time... cars should be left at the Rope Walk or Civic College parking areas' – the former probably a reference to the car park on the site of the future St Edmund House.

Volunteers are sought to join a Sub-Committee to progress the idea of making the Butter Market a pedestrian shopping precinct – this would be the first in the town.

The main article is the Society's report for the year 1963-64. The main event of the previous eighteen months was the *Crossroads* exhibition staged at the Civic College in November and December. 'A great deal of work by a small number of members' was 'stimulating ... provocative', '... but it is impossible to gauge its impact. In fact only one person joined the Ipswich Society as a result of seeing it'. A window sticker promoting the exhibition was distributed to every member. 'These were not much in evidence subsequently, but then there were only 250 of them anyway. Once again it is difficult to assess the effect, except to observe that this effort, too, only produced one new member.' Things darken further with reports that the two meetings related to the exhibition were 'poorly' and 'very badly' attended respectively.

The Vincent Report on Ipswich had been published and the Society does not seem to have had time to arrange a considered response. But the local Labour Party 'has been asked by Mr Dingle Foot QC MP to arrange a meeting about the Vincent Report. The Executive Committee regretted that such a meeting had not been called under the auspices of the Ipswich Society...'

'There are now 256 names on the Society's list of members.'

R.G.

The Ipswich Society

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk

email: secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 263322

This Newsletter is the magazine of Ipswich's civic amenity society established in 1960
(views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society).

Dates for your diary

*Wednesday April 20, 7.30pm: **Annual General Meeting*** at The Jerwood Dance House, Albion Wharf on the Waterfront, next to Foundry Lane. **Speaker - John Lyall**, architect of The Mill on the Wet Dock and the proposed changes to the Tolly Cobbold Brewery.

*Friday July 15, 7.30pm: **Ipswich Society Members' Garden Party*** at The Orangery, Holywells Park, Ipswich. Wine, soft drinks and canapés will be served.

Society Outings are organised through the summer months, publicised via *Newsletter* inserts:-

Saturday April 16: Chartwell outing (now full).

Saturday May 14: Great Yarmouth (some places left).

Wednesday June 8: King's Lynn tour.

Tuesday July 19: Creeks, Cockles & Cockneys, Essex tour.

Saturday August 13: Whitechapel Bell Foundry.

Thursday August 25: Guided tour of the New King's Cross and Regent's Canal cruise.

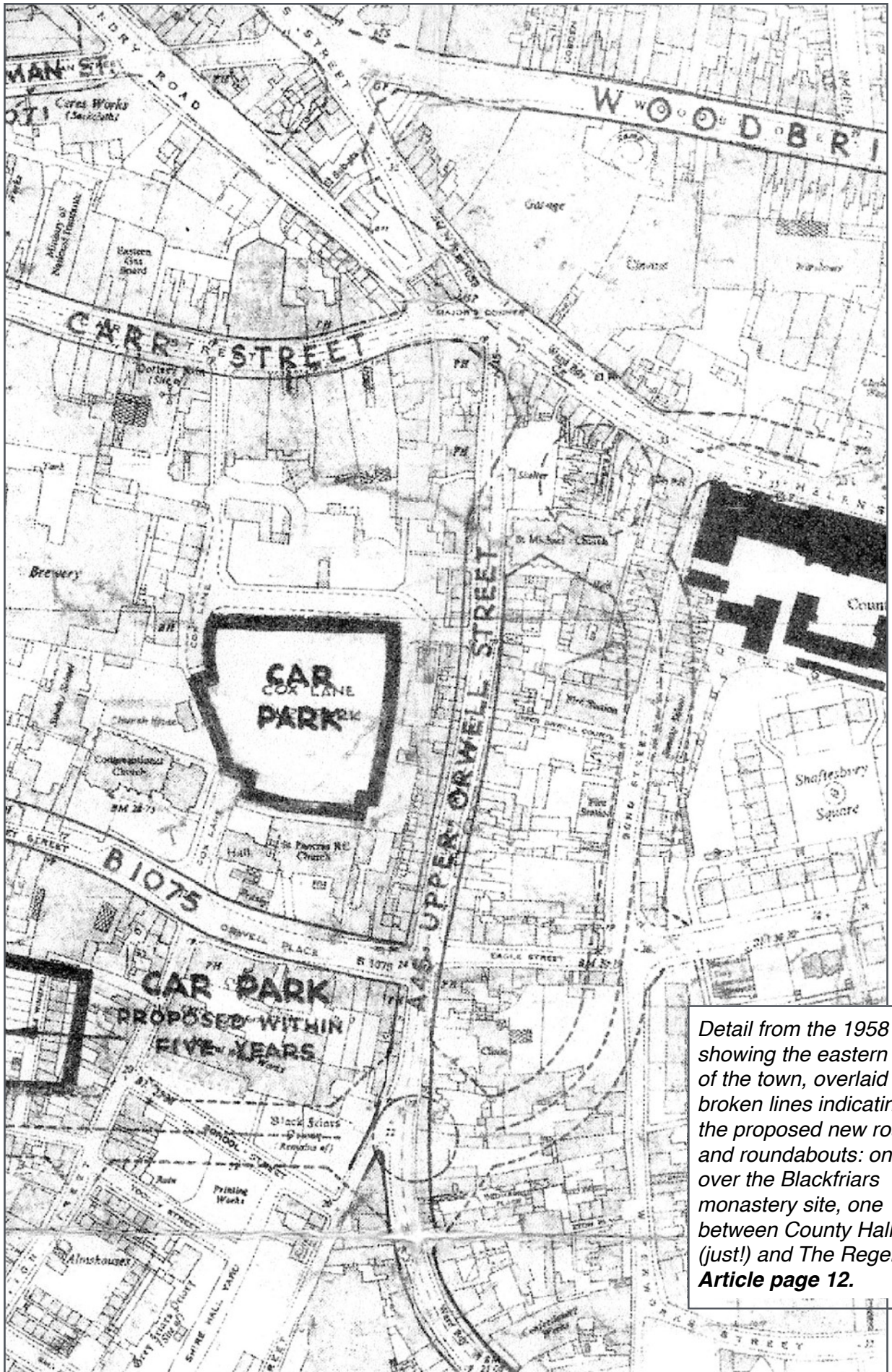
Newsletter deadlines & publication dates (the latter may vary by a few days)

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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Detail from the 1958 map showing the eastern part of the town, overlaid with broken lines indicating the proposed new roads and roundabouts: one over the Blackfriars monastery site, one between County Hall (just!) and The Regent. Article page 12.