



# The Ipswich Society NEWSLETTER

[www.ipswichsociety.org](http://www.ipswichsociety.org)

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See Editorial, page 2

Photograph by John Norman

## Editorial: Co-op mural ('Harvest')

It is time to correct and supplement the information shown in our *Public art in Ipswich* booklet published in January 2021 and distributed free with this *Newsletter*. Now that the plans to develop as a school the site of the former Co-operative stores running east from Cox Lane down Carr Street have been approved, one proviso imposed by the Borough Council planners is that the developers should remove, restore and resite the large mosaic mural which can be found on the rear of the rather brutalist 1960s block and above Cox Lane (our cover image this issue).

Our entry in the booklet reflected the general opinion that the creator of this work of industrial art was not known – this was frustrating for me as the compiler of the booklet. However, Ed Broom, Mike Taylor and, more recently, Keith Wade have pointed to the work of architectural historian Lynn Pearson. Her 2020 book *England's Co-operative Movement: An Architectural History* (Historic England imprint of Liverpool University Press) makes a clear attribution:- 'The final mural in the series was a collaboration between Gyula Bajo [1907-1984] and his old friend Endre Hevezi [1923-2017], probably carried out during 1963-4 and certainly complete by spring 1965. Designed for a site at the rear of Ipswich's modernised premises (1960-5, CWSAD\*), it is a colourful and elegant mosaic mural, a stylised abstract representation of co-operation based around a female figure holding a wheat sheaf. Although further developments were planned for the area, nothing materialised and the mural now looks out over car parks and back entrances to anonymous buildings.' (\*Co-operative Wholesale Society Architects Department)

These two Hungarian refugees were talented ceramicists with architectural skills, but it appears that they did not work for CWSAD for very long. Our Ipswich mosaic is 'one of only four surviving large-scale English Co-op murals from the 1950s and 1960s' in the country. The name *Harvest* seems to have been attached to the work over time, associated to the central sheaf of corn, a typical symbol of the Co-operative movement. It can be difficult to untangle all the shapes and colours of this design, which harks back to the modernism of the 1930s to 50s.

One commentator refers to two doves of peace flying off to the left, a large brown bird and a Loch Ness monster-like sea creature on the right. However, what we have here are two figures: Ceres, goddess of the harvest, is central – her hair echoing the colour of the corn sheaf she holds. The figure of Mercury, the Roman god of commerce, lies, or floats, horizontally behind her. The feathery shapes on the left are his winged boots. As his body appears on the right, his hand holds a *caduceus* (herald's wand, or staff with intertwining snakes, as he is the messenger of the gods). His other arm and hand are raised, coloured dark blue. In between, we see the semi-profile in red and black of Mercury with his winged helmet. It looks as if he wears a long cloak which projects across to his feet.

It is good to supply an interpretation of the subject matter and, at last, an attribution to one of the largest works of public art in Ipswich (3 by 9 metres). For further information, see Ed Broom's blog: [www.freston.net/blog/index.php?y=2021&m=01&d=25](http://www.freston.net/blog/index.php?y=2021&m=01&d=25).

In April 2022, with everyone taking their first cautious steps into 'society' – as most of us haven't been able to for two years – The Ipswich Society is gradually doing likewise with our Awards, AGM, talks, guided walks and (ta-daah!) the return of Heritage Open Days in September. Our HOD officer, Neil Thompson (his details are on page 27) welcomes regular and new venues – do get in touch.

*Robin Gaylard*

### **New members**

## Chairman's remarks

Unsurprisingly, there has been very little going on, either with the Society or in the town, although we are pleasantly surprised at the number of restaurants poised to move into the town centre, particularly those on, or close to, the Cornhill. The revamped square could actually become quite lively after dark.

### **Waterfront Partnership + BrewDog**

I sat on the Waterfront Partnership for ten years, a group of Waterfront Landowners, Council Officers (Strategic Planners) and representatives of the Port Owners. The key purpose of the group was to ensure that the proposed developments didn't turn the Waterfront into a housing estate, devoid of life during the day. Included in the planning mix there would need to be restaurants, bars, visitor attractions and people, people who would use the Waterfront with a purpose other than simply living there.

The key was of course the University, staff, students, visiting academics and parents all of whom would require a snack at lunchtime and probably the occasional meal in an evening. And these bars and restaurants would attract others, office workers during their lunch-break, a night-time economy and weekend promenaders. Things were slow to get going, and the financial crash of 2009 didn't help but slowly businesses around the Waterfront have grown, there is now a choice of where to take coffee, where to eat and enjoy the company of friends.

It is for these reasons we welcome the pending arrival of BrewDog into a ground floor unit under The Mill. The west end of Albion Wharf doesn't enjoy the most 'open' of Waterfront views, but BrewDog will bring people, money and jobs, and this will inevitably lead to other units being taken in Cranfield Square (which unfortunately has no view of the water at all).

We appreciate the concerns of residents, particularly those whose apartments are upstairs, in The Mill or the Winerack but we are sure BrewDog will turn out to be good neighbours.

### **Museum**

Elsewhere in this *Newsletter* you will read of the financial award that the National Lottery Heritage Fund will make towards the planned improvements at Ipswich Museum. It is important to appreciate that they are not the only contributors; some remarkable negotiations have gone on to ensure that there will be sufficient funding in place to complete the proposed package. As I understand things, the total cost of £8.7 million is made up of £4.3 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, £3.6 million from Ipswich Borough Council, £40,000 from the Friends of Ipswich Museum, a grant of £110,000 from the Wolfson Foundation with £340,000 through fundraising (Trusts and Charitable Foundations) and £300,000 from various sources including volunteer time. [*See 'Letter to the Editor' and response on page 22. -Ed.*]

### **Heritage Open Days**

Heritage Open Days are back in 2022; inevitably the event will be different from those we organised in the early 21st century – perhaps it was time for change without us realising. One idea we are working on is the history of clusters of buildings, perhaps around a street junction such as St Nicholas Street / St Peters Street / Silent Street / Rose Lane, ie. Curson Place, marked today by Wolsey's statue. Literally thousands of people walk through the area every day on their way to the Waterfront or to cross Stoke Bridge. Lord Curson's house was once here, the house Cardinal Wolsey coveted as his own. Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon stayed in the house in 1522 with their entourage in the inn opposite (Curson Lodge which stands today). Heritage Open Days in Ipswich will require volunteers to welcome visitors to those buildings we can persuade to open (including Pykenham's Gatehouse). You don't need to know anything about the venue, most will have a brief history on a sheet of A4 which you can hand to visitors. If you read it first you'll no doubt be able to answer 90% of their questions. Interested in contributing a couple of hours? Drop an email to Caroline ([secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk)). We need you.

**John Norman**



## Planning matters

**The former Defiant public house, 22 Stoke Street.** This is a 17th-18th century building refronted by Cattermole and Eade in the mid-1860s with interesting trapezoid (coffin) shaped windows. It has been shut for at least five years, and despite various approved proposals it remains untouched and deteriorating. The latest idea is to convert the ground floor into two two-bedroom flats and the first floor into a four-bed HMO. The exterior will be largely unchanged. The regulations concerning HMOs limit the number in any given street (the Defiant is in Stoke Street – not Burrell Road).

**2 Coytes Gardens.** The latest iteration returns to three flats on floors one, two and three; the ground floor is returned to a car, cycle and bin space. The exterior design is good and fits well with its modern next-door neighbour.

**Former Paul's office building, Key Street.** This proposal is to convert only the first floor of the northern, unlisted, wing of the complex. Under class 'O', it is a permitted development with certain limitations; it must also conform to flood risks – it is in flood zone 2, so only the first floor is habitable and egress must be provided outside the flood risk zone to the north. The development does not interfere with either the listed building to the north nor to the old Jewish Cemetery.

**6 Westerfield Road and 10 Parkside Avenue.** Thornbank Nursing Home has moved to Henley Gate so the three buildings can revert to their original Victorian function as three five-bedroom houses. Modern excrescences (lift tower and extension will go) and a new arch to the middle house constructed. At the rear, the ground floor will be faced in Corten steel – unusual in this setting – with modern kitchens and bifold doors to the reduced (see next item) gardens.

**Land between 15c and 17 Constable Road.** Two modern houses, again with Corten steel on the facades, in what are the gardens of Thornbank. Parking, but no garages. These two developments bring five windfall dwellings with 25 bedrooms.

**34-54 Upper Orwell Street.** The development of a terraced row of nine three-bedroomed three-storied houses was granted permission. The houses are well designed by Stan Beanland but it is a short-term solution to a longstanding problem. We should only comment on what is in front of us but it would surely have been better to await the purchase of number 36 and to negotiate the use of a piece of IBC-owned land north of number 34. Then the whole length of the site would have had one developer and, with a little less greed, the ground plan could have been for a lesser number of slightly shallower houses to allow more privacy from the car park, more amenity space and more room for bins and bikes. This would then have avoided the need to put a bin storage cupboard on the front of each property.

**26 Warrington Road.** It's always been a mystery why a previous owner was allowed to put a garage in the front room of this red brick double-fronted, 1890s detached house on the east side of the street. Thankfully, the new owner is going to rectify the indignity.

**Land opposite 289-299 Henley Road** (the most northerly portion of the Ipswich Garden Suburb next to Sparrowes Farm). Permission has been granted to build 28 houses on this site, despite reservations concerning the design and layout as well as the landscaping and tree management. However, these can be dealt with at the Reserved Matters stage in the future.

### **Land east of Henley Road and north of the railway.**

This is the detailed application by Crest Nicholson for the Ipswich Garden Suburb (IGS) Country Park. A few points from Ms Rosemary Claxton's presentation – the Borough officer whose sole job it is to deal with the IGS – show that it will be a great addition to our green spaces. Some short lengths of hedge will be lost, cut-throughs for cycle/pedestrian paths. These paths will be low-lit, 3 metres wide tarmac, one south-north, a continuation of the Fonnereau Way and one west-east from Henley Road to Westerfield station. In addition there will be pedestrian-only paths, including a 2.75 km circular walk on grass and compressed gravel. There will be areas of planting, shrubs and large deciduous trees. They are aware of the existence of elm trees and hedgerows and will do their very best to retain them. The park will be managed by IBC's Parks Department and the rights of way by Suffolk County Council.

The proposals were received with acclamation by the committee and passed unanimously. Let us hope Crest's good intentions do not flounder on their usual altar of engineered cost savings.

### **Appeals**

These appeals have been won: there will be no large distracting disfiguring digital advertisement panels (giant TVs) in the garages at the Bramford Road/ Chevalier Street junction, nor at the Shell garage on London Road opposite Sainsbury's. However, the inspector accepted that the 15 metre 5G monopole close to the railway bridge on Albion Hill, Woodbridge Road would not be an imposition.

**Ipswich Local Plan 2018-2036.** The Planning Inspectors' report of their review completed eighteen months ago has been published. The two inspectors agree that Ipswich Borough Council has fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate with adjoining Local Planning Authorities on many matters and policies; this was the subject of marked criticism in the inspector's report on the Examination in Public. At the request of IBC there have been many major modifications to the wording to ensure effectiveness and clarity. There are no major policy changes.

The plan, as accepted, states that 8,280 new dwellings will be constructed by 2036; 3,250 on the Ipswich Garden Suburb and 650 (with East Suffolk Council) north-east of Humber Doucy Lane. Figures show that windfall sites are coming in at 105 dwellings a year compared with an expected 50; in the last three years there have been 971 completions compared with an expected 900. This does mean that IBC can say that it has sufficient land and policies and allocated sites for dwellings. Developers will no longer be able to say, 'you must grant permission to us to build because you haven't got a sufficient land supply'.

If you wish to read more – it's only a hundred pages – here's the link :-

[https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/ipswich\\_local\\_plan\\_review\\_report\\_-\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/ipswich_local_plan_review_report_-_final_report.pdf)

**Land to south of railway and east of Westerfield Road.** The site is bounded to the south by Bromeswell Road, to the east by Tuddenham, Road, to the north by Westerfield Station and the railway and to the west by Westerfield Road. It surrounds Red House Farm on three sides but does not include it.

I shall report more fully on this large application in due course.

**Mike Cook**

See also Mike's report on the Henley Gate Community Liaison Group meetings, page 14. –Ed.

## Ethel's album

Several years ago I inherited a family photo album. The photographer was my maternal grandmother, Ethel Hewitt (née Edwards) 1895-1973, and the photos were taken between 1909 and 1922.

Ethel had an elder sister, Kate (aka Kit) 1894-1927, and a younger brother, Bernard 1911-1999. Their father was John Edwards 1866-1950 who was the co-founder of the firm J&J Edwards, gentleman's outfitters of Tavern Street together with his brother James.

Their mother was Ada Edwards (née Popplewell) 1870-1956 and the family lived at 22 Tuddenham Road, Ipswich.



1. Ethel's self-portrait



2. Bernard in his pushchair April 1913 with a flock of sheep in Christchurch Park. Is this how the council maintained the greensward? The houses in the background would be in Westerfield Road.

3. This photo is annotated 'Christchurch Park Donkey and Kate feeding him', June 1911.

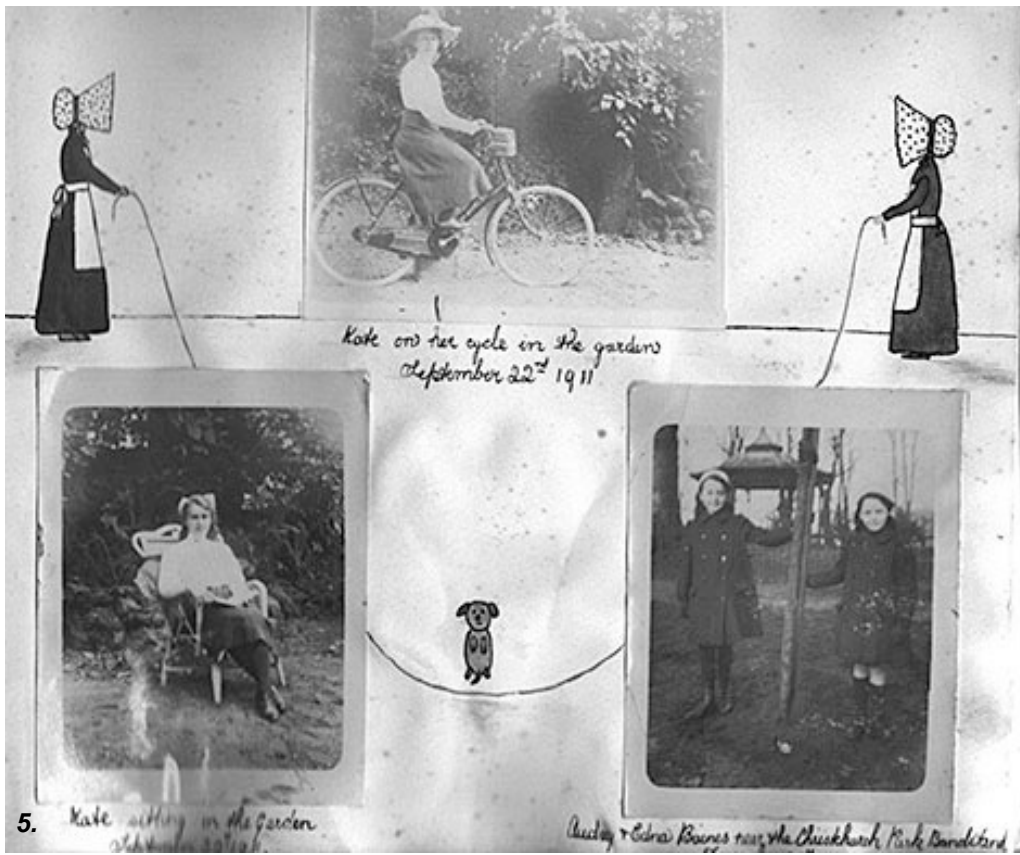


3.



4.

4. This photo is annotated 'Ransomes No.6 out on a test without a body. Miss Rose and Kit wired this up on their own' and is dated March 18 1918.



5. 3 photos in 1.  
Bottom left September  
29 1911; bottom right  
December 30 1911.

6. Picnic at  
Framlingham. Bottom  
L&R Ada, Bernard,  
Kate and John  
Edwards.

7. Wool Pack Inn. This  
is annotated 'Kate,  
Kathleen and Margaret  
snapped on the tree  
trunk before a set of  
tennis' June 17 1915.



8. A Picnic at Orwell September 5  
(1917?) from left Kate, Bernard and  
John Edwards, Mary Popplewell,  
John Popplewell and Ada Edwards.

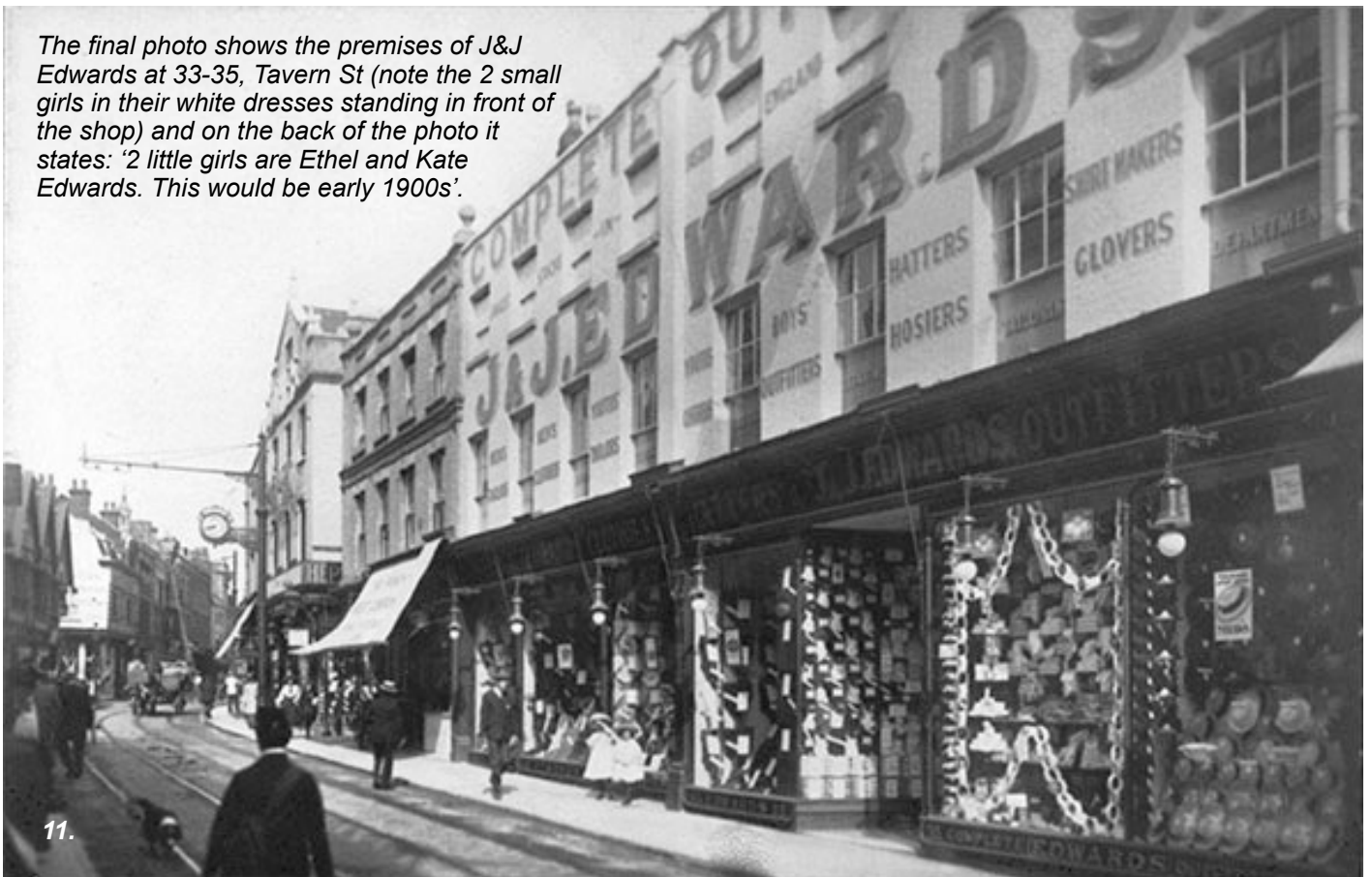
*The Cenotaph with the Butter Market beyond. It bears the words: 'For the fallen'.*



*Snow scene: Christchurch Park, December 1920 by the Wilderness Pond.*



*The final photo shows the premises of J&J Edwards at 33-35, Tavern St (note the 2 small girls in their white dresses standing in front of the shop) and on the back of the photo it states: '2 little girls are Ethel and Kate Edwards. This would be early 1900s'.*



Photograph of J&J Edwards shop and the information on the W. Popplewell & Son business came from the family archive held by John Edwards.



Ethel's maternal grandparents were John (1840-1928) and Mary (1844-1933) Popplewell and they lived at 49 Bolton Lane – see the photograph 8 on page 7: 'A Picnic at Orwell'. John ran a business which had been started by his father in Woodbridge Road called W. Popplewell & Son. Originally selling bicycles, they then progressed to motor cycles and later cars. On a receipt of the 1920s they describe themselves as 'Cycle and Motor Cycle Agents for Sunbeams, Singers, Rovers, Triumphs, Calcotts and Auto-Wheels'. On a receipt of 1935 they are then main agents for 'A.J.S., B.S.A., Douglas and Triumph Motor Cycles. Austin and Triumph Car Agents'.

In April 1921 there is the first photograph of a young man named Cyril Hewitt, 1898-1978, and he appears with increasing frequency until the final photo in the album which is dated September 1922. He and Ethel married in July 1923. Cyril took over, from his father, the running of the family grocery business, W. Hewitt & Son of 23-25, Upper Brook Street until it closed in, I believe, 1969.

Regarding J&J Edwards (photograph 11), Bernard joined the family business and continued to run the firm after his father retired. It was a popular and successful shop with a highly regarded reputation before it eventually closed in January 1968.

**Michael Atkinson**

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## Yoxman

You might be surprised to learn that Suffolk has a statue to rival *The Angel of the North*. *Yoxman* stands tall alongside the A12 just north of Yoxford. At nearly eight metres tall he is taller than the ridge on a two-storey house. He's a big guy weighing in at eight tonnes. Sculptor Lawrence Edmunds spent four years hand crafting, casting and welding the fifty sections of the statue, each a large sheet of bronze, all carried out in the unlikely surroundings of Halesworth Business Park.

*Yoxman* stands in a meadow in front of the 16th century, Grade I listed Cockfield Hall, clearly visible from a lay-by on the A12. Installed in November 2021 by the spring the meadow will be grazed by longhorn cattle, rubbing up against the statue and polishing everything they touch.

Lawrence Edwards suggests this will add to the patination of the statue.

**John Norman**



*Photograph by John Norman*

## My time in the Tax Office

I enjoyed reading Graham Day's piece in the October 2021 *Newsletter* (Issue 227) describing his time working for the Ipswich 1 Tax Office at St Clare House, Greyfriars. I was Christine Pyman then, and worked there from 1968 until 1976 and was part of the new district 3 that occupied the second and third floors.

I left Northgate Grammar School after my 'O' levels and wanted to go to art college but I was persuaded to 'get a proper job' and went for a Civil Service job interview ending up in the Inland Revenue, probably because I said I liked numbers. The pay was good and I began as a Tax Officer in the PAYE section. No computers in those days, of course, and we needed filing clerks like Steve as there were files stored in racks and each taxpayer had a 'concard' with all their details. All tax officers were given certain sections of the alphabet to look after and I was allocated employees working for companies beginning with E and F so looked after Fisons and Felixstowe Dock & Railway Company amongst others.

I do have fond memories of working there: the lovely tea ladies who looked after us and one in particular who I think was called Rose. She used to rattle along with her trolley full of goodies to tempt us, especially the scones – they were delicious. I also remember the evening overtime sessions when we were served up a very limited but welcome menu of ham, egg and chips. I have no memory of watching the illicit football matches that Graham mentioned, probably because we didn't have the view that Ipswich 1 had up there on the 5th floor!

I was in my teens and loved making and buying clothes and spent my spare cash in the wonderful boutique called Abacus situated somewhere at the base of St Clare House near the roundabout. Very fond memories of going there to choose my outfit for the annual tax office Dinner and Dance at the Cavendish Hotel in Felixstowe.

I was promoted to Tax Officer Higher Grade at some time and packed off to Stanmore in Middlesex to do my training. I would have been able to rise to the lofty status of Inspector Of Taxes if I had stayed on but I didn't feel that it was the career for me, my creative side had been unfulfilled.

I left the Tax Office in 1976 to have a family and started a machine knitwear business 'Chrissy Norman Knitwear' with my husband in the early eighties making all those animal jumpers that were so popular then. The shop was based in Woodbridge Road opposite Barclays Bank. This kept us busy for a few years and we then started up 'Rumbles' Sandwich Bar in Queen Street and ran it until 1995.

Since then I have finally concentrated on being an artist specialising in printmaking, in particular etching and I am a member of Sudbourne Park Printmakers, a community of artists based near Orford.

One postscript to mention: when I left the Inland Revenue I had the option of taking all my pension contributions in a lump sum or leaving it all in or taking some and leaving some. I did the latter and had forgotten about it but was pleasantly surprised to find out when I was 60 that my meagre pension sum had been index-linked and had grown into a reasonable amount – more than enough to keep me in pencils!

*Chrissy Norman*



'London plane' etching by Chrissy Norman

## The Guild of Our Lady

In the January 2022 Ipswich Society Newsletter [Issue 228] the article *The shrine of Our Lady of Ipswich* by Fr John Thackray referred to the medieval shrine and the establishment of the Guild of Our Lady of Grace in 1977. I am now the only person left around who was at the very first meeting which led to the formation of that Guild.

Stanley Smith, a parishioner of St Pancras Church in Tacket Street, took a large group from Ipswich on a pilgrimage to Rome in 1975. He had been researching the origins of the Ipswich shrine, leading to the publication of his book, *The Madonna of Ipswich* (now out of print). We cannot know whether he or John Blatchly was correct. However, Stanley believed that because the Nettuno statue had a silver shoe, as did the Ipswich one, and had an inscription which could only make sense if it said 'Thou art gracious' in old English (hence Our Lady of Grace) it was likely to be authentic. Thus, his pilgrims spent a day in Nettuno, Italy, where they were given a wonderful civic reception and taken to the church where the statue now resides.

One of the pilgrims was Dr Maire Heley, another St Pancras parishioner, well known to many in the town as the senior partner of the Woodbridge Road medical practice. She was clearly impressed by the Nettuno visit; in July 1977 she and Stanley called a meeting at her home of a few local Anglicans and Catholics. I was one of them. Their aim was to pray for Christian unity and to re-establish the shrine. We were all very enthusiastic and the Guild was soon established. In those days it was totally lay led, not only by Anglicans and Catholics but soon joined also by Methodists.

The big event was on 8 September 1978, a 'pilgrimage walk' starting near to Wolsey's Gate and going through the town to Lady Lane, where the shrine once stood. It was 450 years to the day after the walk planned by Cardinal Wolsey along that exact route from his college to the shrine; in fact, they had a rehearsal on 7 September but the 8 September was 'a day of foul weather' and it did not take place. We have walked that route every year since and have never been rained off!

*Sculpture in Lady Lane  
by Robert Mellamphy*

Much more mundane activities in those days focused both on ecumenism and concern for the sick. Our Lady's Clock allowed members to choose a time, even in the middle of the night, when they would pray the Guild Prayer (which Dr Heley and I composed) for unity of Christians and devotion to Mary, Our Lady of Grace. Small groups visited the sick or housebound monthly, to pray with them. A quarterly magazine had a variety of articles with contributors from a wide range of churchmanship. Much more ambitious were pilgrimages to Nettuno in May around the Feast Day of The English Lady (i.e. the statue they believe came from Ipswich). These included huge processions with the statue, endless courses of delicious food and terrific firework displays. We even took a group of Ipswich primary children one year.

As time went by, initial members died (including Stanley) but activities remained, with Dr Heley always a key figure. Her funeral, on the second day of the first lockdown, marked the end of an era. We are now re-emerging with a new team and invite readers to our celebration of twenty years since our own statue was installed in St Mary Elms church. Just as on that day, at the service at 11am on 26 March there will be representatives not only from a variety of Christian traditions but also from the Muslim community. Details of a variety of imaginative activities to take place over the next year will be revealed on that day.

**Jean M. Johnson**



## The bridge on the river? Telford got it completely right!

Growing up ‘Over Stoke’, the view from my back bedroom window of our house on an elevated position of Rectory Road, halfway up the steep Station Street hill, was of the chimneys and structure of the coal-fired Ipswich power station at the end of Cliff Quay. I could see past the power station, where cormorants used to fish off the coaling jetties, past Freston Reach, and towards Pin Mill.

The Ipswich power station was sanctioned in 1939, with construction commencing in 1945, and final commissioning for electricity generation in 1949. It suffered a disastrous fire in 1982 and was finally closed in 1985. It was a familiar sight for me, particularly when bird-watching along Freston Reach, when I wondered precisely what the processes were inside the building. I never managed to go on a tour inside, but a friend’s father had retired from being an engineer there, so I learnt a little. It was finally demolished in 1994, a spectacle watched by hundreds of people along the river shore.

After getting married and leaving home in 1978, I used to regularly visit my mother at Rectory Road. After many years of planning, the long awaited Ipswich Southern By-pass was being created, and as part and parcel of the scheme a new road bridge was being constructed across the River Orwell at Freston Reach to carry the road. The view from my old back bedroom window was fantastic, particularly when cranes on barges were lifting into place the 18 spans which would constitute the structure of the bridge. My late mother was enthralled and excited about what was happening. Every time I visited we would look out of the window at the work in ‘real time’ or, if not, she would update me on the progress. It also gave her a positive outlook in her final years, replacing the sometimes prevalent memories of raiding German aircraft following the route of the Orwell to unleash their deadly cargo on the docks and engineering works of Ipswich.

Fast forward to the current times, and the dire situation posed by lockdowns during the pandemic. When one is unable to do ‘normal activities’ to fill up the available time, other jobs are suggested and are tackled, often with surprising results. While loft-clearing, an *Ipswich Evening Star* supplement of 16th December 1982 relating to the Orwell Bridge fluttered down through the trapdoor. By that stage it had been constructed with the official opening very much on the horizon. Some interesting facts emerge.

I can recall the proposals to accept ‘overspill’ population from London to expand the town. Shankland Cox Associates were appointed consultant architects and they proposed two options: one a linear town along the banks of the Orwell to Felixstowe and the other development to the south of the town in the Wherstead/Belstead area. As part of an assignment for my fifth year examinations, I somehow managed to secure an interview with a member of the consultant’s staff who told me about the project brief and more details of the proposals.

The supplement states that: ‘since the war the expansion of Ipswich has been hampered by the lack of an efficient communication system round and within the town. In the early 1960s the Vincent report was the first of many expansion planning reports on how and where expansion would happen. With monotonous regularity, these reports were prepared, reported on, studied, debated, and then consigned to files or waste paper baskets as Whitehall policies changed.

‘The Orwell bridge idea was born in a Cliff Quay office of Fisons at a meeting of the transport committee of the Ipswich Chamber of Commerce and Shipping in 1965. At the time Ipswich had suffered another of many enquiries into its development and in this one, a particularly silly idea was mooted – proposing to infill a section of the dock by the lock gates and run an internal main traffic route over it. This would have had the effect of isolating the inner dock area, including Cranfields, Pauls and Whites and the south-west quay.’

The Chairman of the Transport Committee was Fisons transport manager, Mr H.C. Chandler. He recalled that: ‘during a routine lunchtime examination of our shipping and transport position I





had this matter very much in mind and, from the bridge of one of the ships, I had an excellent view down-river with the high ground at Wherstead in the background, the view south of Cliff Quay power station showed up markedly. The thought occurred: a bridge somewhere around this area might provide the solution. The ability to pick up Felixstowe dock traffic and by-pass Ipswich was immediately apparent, plus the opportunity to spur off and pick up our own dock and industrial traffic.'

In 1966 the Chamber of Commerce issued its report upon the consultant's proposals and the bridge concept was fully backed. It was eventually decided that the River Orwell should be bridged and not tunnelled under. In 1980 the exact route of the southern by-pass was decided after a public inquiry. I can remember seeing plans of the route options for the Southern By-pass. I believe that the preferred route was as exists now, but prior to the public inquiry it appeared that the Ipswich Borough Council had purchased potential housing land in the Bobbits Hole area with the intention perhaps of achieving a route of the by-pass at a point nearer to Capel St Mary!

The route of the new road serving the bridge (the A45, later the A14) had to be adjusted in the Seven Hills area of Foxhall/ Nacton, to avoid a bronze age burial ground, of which there were possibly as many as 14 tumuli. The £10.2 million south-eastern section of the Ipswich Southern By-pass was diverted to avoid a very visible mound, designated 007, which averaged 100 feet in diameter. It was estimated that the mound-builders lived between 2000BC and 1500BC.

Why 'Seven Hills'? There are other 'Seven Hills' between Ingham and Great Livermere, near to Bury St Edmunds and another near Brettenham, in Norfolk. Others exist in Berkshire and Hampshire. The archaeological Field Officer, Mr Martin, suggested that the 'seven' did not relate to the number of long barrows on the cemetery site, but that the number had a special significance for the Anglo-Saxons: a breach of the peace by seven or more men was considered to be an act of war and not an act of private violence. This also brings to mind the Biblical 'seven years of plenty and seven years of dearth'. This has neatly answered a long standing question of mine regarding the name of the interchange which was built here!

Construction work started from the east bank of the Orwell by driving foundations deep into the river bed, and slightly later from the west bank with eventually the concrete foundations rising up from the river bed like motionless guardsmen. Then the bridge itself began to take shape with the first sections of the 18-span box girder structure being lifted into place. Although the construction was well underway it apparently was 'not yet impressive enough to quieten local people who are not convinced even at this time that they want a bridge across the Orwell'. When the final sections were lifted into place, a bystander, measuring with his eye, thought that the two ends would not meet – an optical trick as it happened. The chief engineer on the bridge project was Mr Sydney Telford, so there could be no error. The internal structure of the bridge is also a viaduct and an aqueduct, as it contains a steel pipe carrying a flow of up to eight million gallons of purified and treated water from Alton Water for domestic and commercial use in Ipswich and Felixstowe. Whilst construction was in progress several 'finds' were made – a sarsen stone (initially thought to be an unexploded bomb), shark teeth and the indentures of an apprentice doctor, in a canvas bag. The last of these was some 200 years old at that time; it had been probably thrown overboard from a ship leaving Ipswich as perhaps the apprentice had some second thoughts about a medical career.

The Orwell Bridge was finally opened by the Secretary of State for Transport, David Howells MP, on Friday 17th December 1982. The preceding Sunday some 5,000 people were able to walk across the bridge before it was opened, many raising money for charity by their endeavours. As explained by the *Evening Star*: 'the thorn in the side of politicians and planners – the Ipswich traffic bottleneck will be eased tomorrow – the official ceremony will take place at 11.30am near

*Don't forget the 77 images in the Ipswich Orwell Bridge Album in our online Image Archive.*

the A143 Wherstead Road interchange at the Orwell Bridge. It will be followed at 1.30pm with the public opening, when traffic will be able to use it for the first time’.

It was also recognised that the bridge would benefit drivers going to the coast, but also regional traffic, around-town drivers and home-owners – who would notice a vast difference on the streets of Ipswich. The original expectation was that the western section of the by-pass, the bridge, would be able to accommodate some 22,000 vehicles a day. To use this, the largest pre-stressed concrete bridge in the UK, there would be no toll charges, and this situation has mercifully never changed.

However, high as the bridge is, the project manager, a Mr Lewis, stated that ‘compared to the high bridges and westerly winds in the west of England and in Scotland, in relative terms, there should be no particular wind problems’. In the event of there being high winds, provision had been made for tall vehicles to be diverted. As we all know, bridge closures over the years have caused traffic chaos with the town and resultant economic impact. Hopefully, now that there are options to reduce speeds on the bridge in high winds, threats to closure will be reduced. But who really knows as the changing climate in the UK often causes unexpected problems? In Orwell bridge terms, this was probably not considered to be significant almost forty years ago.

From conception to completion of construction was a period of ten years. Although the traffic situation in Ipswich itself has worsened over the years, it would have been next to impossible had the bridge not been constructed. When approaching the town from the Shotley direction the sight of the bridge is still impressive and a really graceful structure across the Orwell.

I would have hoped that either the ruby anniversary of the bridge opening, or even the silver anniversary, was marked or celebrated in some way. We must never be careless of our history.

Claude Monet once said: ‘My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece’. The Orwell Bridge nearly forty years on is still a beautiful, inspiring masterpiece. As for Mr Telford: ‘Didn’t he do well!’.

***Graham Day***

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## **Henley Gate Community Liaison Group**

I am attending the meetings of this group on behalf of The Ipswich Society; most of the members are neighbourhood councillors with some other interested parties represented. So far the meetings have been held remotely. At our last meeting, which are held bi-monthly, Andrew Owen for Crest Nicolson brought us up to date on the progress of the development.

The Country Park works in six phases: phase one will start at the beginning of March and last for 16 weeks, to complete by June 2022. The remaining phases will take until March 2024. It will be completed at about the same time as one hundred houses are occupied, probably over two years according to how sales proceed.

The planning of the two bridges across the railway is proceeding satisfactorily. The legal agreement with Network Rail will hopefully be signed off in March; a planning application can be made soon afterwards.

They will be prefabricated off-site and delivered by truck and crane for fixing to prepared foundation with planned completion by March 2023. Crest Nicolson are paying Network Rail £160,000 for an upgrade to Westerfield station so that access routes should be safe.

***Mike Cook***

## The Ipswich boy who ruled the country

The opening years of this decade mark 550 years since the birth of the most famous son of Ipswich. Thomas Wolsey (c.1472 to 1530 – his date of birth is uncertain) was the son of an Ipswich butcher\* and he was blessed with academic brilliance, rapacious ambition and, until the end of his life, good fortune. His birthplace was probably a house in St Nicholas Street (or St Nicholas Church Lane), long since demolished, at the corner of a passage into the churchyard – although the site of The Black Horse has also been suggested. It's a matter of opinion which of Wolsey's characteristics was more responsible for his rise to become first minister of Henry VIII, and his chief political confidant, but once he had got to the top, he had a lot to offer.

He was perhaps the finest ministerial mind England ever had until at least the 19th century. He was obsessional in his micro-management of affairs of state and refusal to delegate; his overwork was to take its toll on his health over a long period. In many ways, Wolsey led a charmed life. The young Wolsey benefited greatly from the patronage of the rich and powerful who recognised his gifts and potential. His education was promoted by his uncle, Edmund Daundy, and he secured the scholarship to Ipswich Grammar School, a bequest of Tudor merchant, Richard Felaw. Then, at an unusually early age, he studied theology at Magdalen College, Oxford. As his power increased he collected ecclesiastical titles and properties like stamps and enjoyed the finest luxuries. His greed accounts for his later corpulence and contributed to his poor health.

He went from being a royal chaplain to the Bishop of Lincoln, then became Archbishop of York and finally Lord Chancellor of England. He also became Cardinal Wolsey, Papal Legate whose authority from the Pope in some respects went beyond that of King Henry VIII himself. Wolsey began building Hampton Court Palace in 1514, and carried on making improvements throughout the 1520s. Descriptions record rich tapestry-lined apartments; a visitor had to traverse eight rooms before finding his audience chamber. He always embraced the trappings and rituals which people expected of a man of power, they also satisfied his vanity.

His passion for education influenced his endowments to 'Cardinal's College', today's Christ Church College in Oxford. He then turned his attention and wealth to the establishment of a college dedicated to St Mary The Virgin in his home town to act as a feeder college to Oxford. He seized the Church of St Peter to be used as the college chapel, which was eventually only returned to the parish through the good offices of Wolsey's right-hand man and successor, Thomas Cromwell. The College was virtually complete to high standards of building and materials, but within two years was forfeit to the King, as was Hampton Court and all Wolsey's estate. The only trace we have of the College is the much-eroded Watergate, still to be seen on today's College Street where the riverbank would have been.

Cardinal Wolsey was accused, after his death, of imagining himself the equal of sovereigns; his fall from power was seen as a natural consequence of arrogance and overarching ambition. Much of this can be



*Images: Sampson Strong's portrait; the drawing attributed to Jacques le Boucq of Artois (1520-1573) in the library of the town of Arras, France; facsimile of the foundation stone of Wolsey's College held in the Church of St Peter, Ipswich.*

\*Some say 'a prosperous Ipswich merchant'.

seen as black propaganda spread by his enemies, now that Wolsey was out of the way of their own ambitions. Yet Wolsey was also a diligent statesman, who worked hard to translate Henry VIII's own dreams and mercurial ambitions into effective domestic and foreign policy. When he failed to do so, most notably when Henry's plans to divorce Katherine of Aragon were thwarted by Katherine herself and the Pope, his fall from favour was swift and final. In 1530 Thomas Wolsey died on his way to a possible final and fatal meeting with royal wrath, at Leicester Abbey.

Over the fourteen years of his chancellorship, Cardinal Wolsey had more power than any other Crown servant in English history. As long as he was in the king's favour, Wolsey had a large amount of freedom within the domestic sphere, and had a hand in nearly every aspect of its ruling. For much of the time, Henry VIII had complete confidence in him and, as Henry's interests inclined more towards foreign policy, he was willing to give his Lord Chancellor free rein in reforming the management of domestic affairs, for which Wolsey had grand plans in the fields of taxation, justice and church reforms.

Thomas Wolsey was a unique cocktail of merits and failings – perhaps this lay at the very heart of his extraordinary success. Was he likeable? Would we have admired or feared him? How is he remembered today? I recently read an excellent biography of the man – and there are a number of such books available – John Matusiak's *Wolsey: the life of King Henry VIII's cardinal* (History Press, 2014) which reads like a novel and is most enlightening. Copies are available from Suffolk Libraries. Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*, later dramatised for television shows us a Wolsey towards the end of his power (and life). The only known painting of Wolsey by Sampson Strong was made at least sixty years after his death – it may have been a copy of a contemporary portrait. It now hangs in Christ Church College, Oxford. All subsequent images of the cardinal are based on this unflattering profile. We don't really know what he looked like; and, in fact, he called himself 'Wulcy'... An enigma.  
**R.G.**



*Thomas Wolsey by James Williams, Ipswich Town Hall; Tondo of Wolsey, Wolsey Gallery entrance, Christchurch Mansion.*

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### **Problems, problems, problems: the public viewing area, New Cut West and the Griffin Wharf branch**

I was at the virtual Suffolk Local Access Forum\* meeting on 27 January where these problems were discussed. The parties involved are working to find a solution acceptable to all, hopefully one that allows the public space to open before the spring. [\*Public Rights of Way committee meeting]

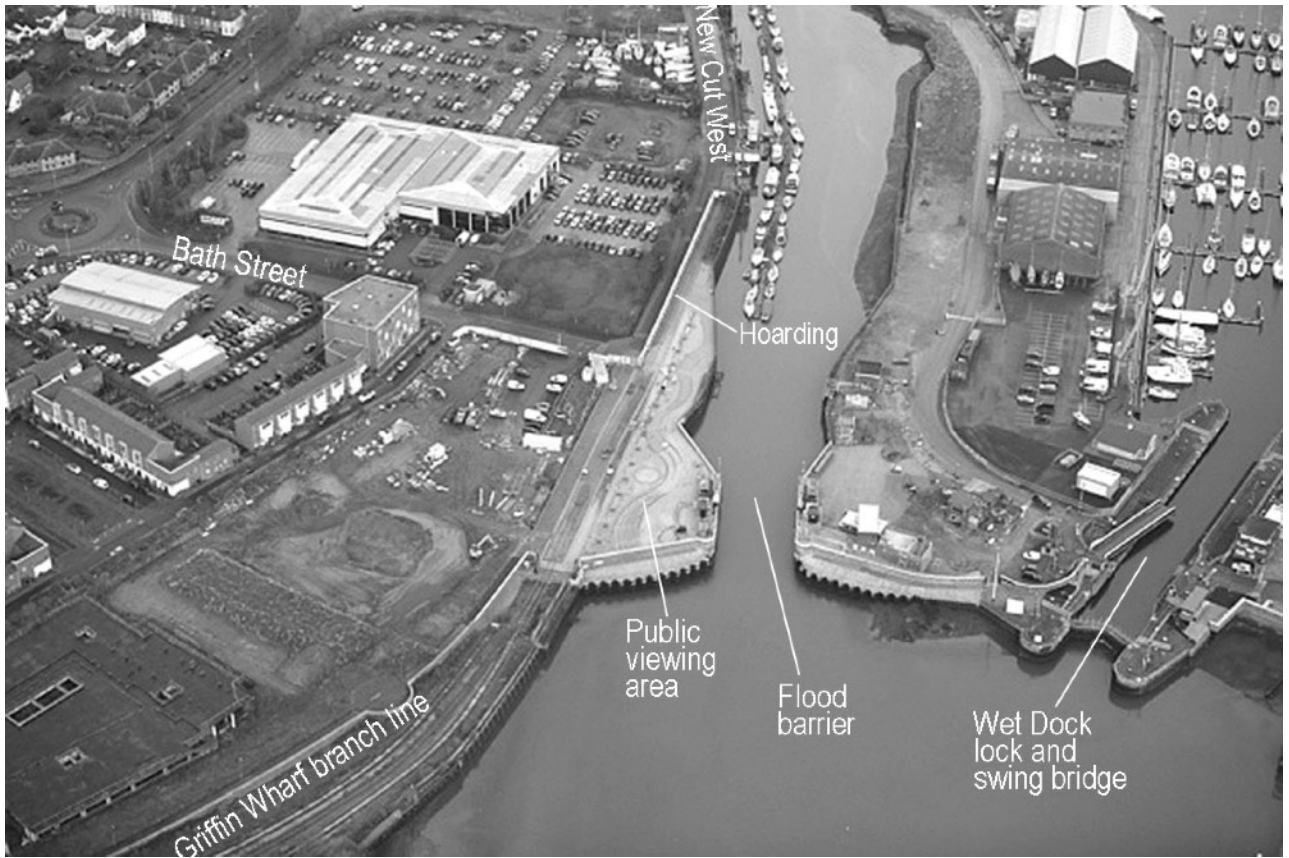
#### **Aggregate trains**

Goods are occasionally moved by rail from the Port of Ipswich, usually sand and gravel from Brett Aggregates on the West Bank to the North London Concrete plant. However, the frequency of trains is usually less than one per week. It is possible that some of the aggregate for Sizewell C will travel by rail along this track; in that case, the frequency of trains will increase. A suitable sustainable method of moving heavy materials,, until you read of the difficulties the train track causes.

#### **Ipswich tidal barrier – Public viewing area**

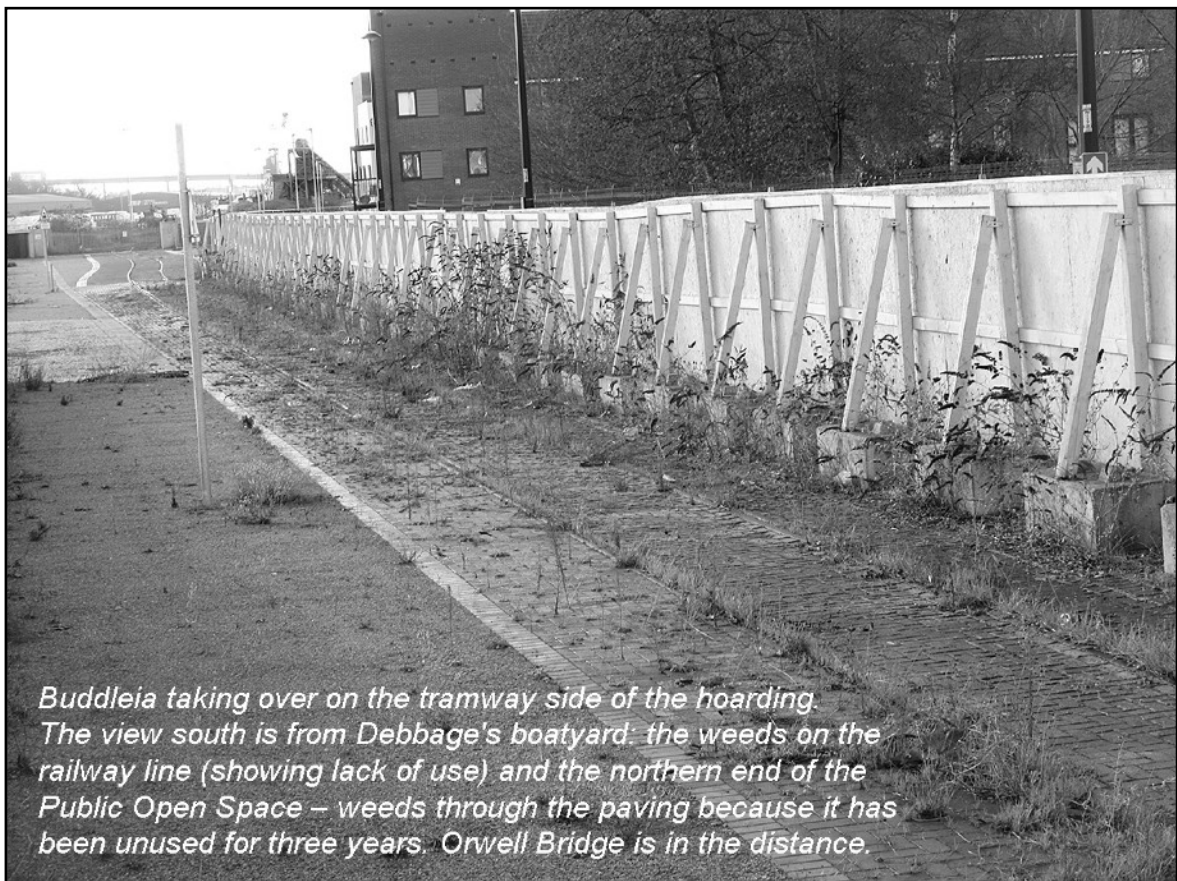
At the far end of Bath Street, the eastern end where it adjoins New Cut West, there is a public open space: an opportunity to view the Flood barrier and to look across the open River Orwell, the old Cobbold Brewery, Cliff Quay and the Orwell Bridge. Except that it is closed, and has





remained so since February 2019 when the landscaped viewing area was built by the Environment Agency as part of the flood defence works.

To complicate matters, between the end of Bath Street and the public open space is an operational railway line, a line which runs from Halifax Junction across Wherstead Road and down an embankment onto Griffin Wharf. At the end of Bath Street, the line emerges from the



*Buddleia taking over on the tramway side of the hoarding. The view south is from Debbage's boatyard: the weeds on the railway line (showing lack of use) and the northern end of the Public Open Space – weeds through the paving because it has been unused for three years. Orwell Bridge is in the distance.*

right and runs along the quayside on the road, much as a tramline would occupy road space. The same rail line carries the Brett Aggregates away from the west bank.

The road is New Cut West (a Byway Open to All Traffic), a Public Right of Way maintained by Suffolk County Council. It is illegal to obstruct the public highway unless temporary permission has been granted. In this case a *Scaffold licence* which allows for the hoardings and associated building works. This licence, having been extended on a number of occasions, expires in the spring of 2022.

To complicate matters, railway safety requires suitable measures to be in place to prevent the public trespassing onto the railway, hence the hoardings. Suffolk County Council's Rights of Way officer wants the hoardings removed to restore the full width of the highway, Network Rail require a fence around the rail track to prevent public access and the rest of us simply want access to the viewing area.

ABP, the landowner, and the county council have been in discussion since the flood barrier was completed trying to find a workable solution to the problem. Other parties involved include Network Rail, ABP's land agent, DB Cargo (the train operator) and Ipswich Borough Council – any permanent fence might require planning permission; a temporary solution will be regarded as an obstruction of the highway and Network Rail don't want the public wandering across the rail track. Solutions on a postcard to the editor.

**John Norman**

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### **Robert Mellamphy's Sutton Hoo art work** (*see the back cover image*)

This fine painted relief work by the late Robert Mellamphy (known to Ipswich Society members for his works in Lady Lane and St Mary-at-Elms Church) recently found a home in The Longshed on Tide Mill Way, Woodbridge. The Woodbridge Riverside Trust (WRT) is the custodian of this work from the Mellamphy family. The Trust has recently installed the relief in their gallery and the organisation is, perhaps, best known for facilitating projects such as the first ever full-size reconstruction of the Sutton Hoo burial ship, which is being carried out by the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company in the large area below the gallery.

Do visit the Longshed and nearby museum. The former Whisstock's boatyard has been developed for heritage and leisure purposes and includes a bar/restaurant and shops. The ship and relief can be viewed on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays between 11am and 1pm.

Bryan Knibbs, Chair of the WRT, points out that the relief is in need of some conservation work and cleaning. Perhaps Ipswich Society members know of someone who could carry out this work for them.



returns next issue

## Letters to the Editor

**A positive step forward in the renaissance of Suffolk's 'New Brighton'** from Graham Day  
I was pleased to see that, just before Christmas 2021, it was announced that it is anticipated that once the pandemic permits, work will start on the redevelopment of the former HMS Naval Training establishment (*HMS Ganges*) at Shotley 'Suffolk's New Brighton'.

The final reserved matters under the planning permission have now, apparently, been satisfactorily concluded by the planning officers, and it is hoped that the redevelopment to provide 285 homes, a sports park, shops and medical facilities will commence in the very near future.

The Ganges training establishment was opened in 1904, finally closing in 1976. My first and only visit took place with a youth group in 1972; the naval cadet who showed us round memorably explained that he had joined the Navy to see the world and importantly, to improve his social opportunities with young ladies. Unfortunately, as far as he was concerned, neither of those important things had happened.

The iconic training mast on the site was in situ for many years after closure; when I was growing up I marvelled at the skill of the recruits to climb the rigging on the mast during displays on the parade ground. I looked on with incredulity when probably the smallest and lightest recruit became the "button boy", standing as I thought perilously on the small 'button' platform of the masts top. A triumph of discipline over fear. Never for me, I thought. However, the mast was sometimes climbed by those who were not in the Navy. In his book *The life and times of Southwold's Town Crier* Mr John Barber recounted an occasion when he went, as an active RNLi crew man, on a radio/wireless communication course at *HMS Ganges*. Somehow, they obtained permission to climb the mast, and once they had fitted the correct shoes they attempted to climb it, one man getting close to the top which was 'a heck of an achievement given his age'.

The mast was the most iconic symbol of *HMS Ganges*, and recognised around the world. However, in 1995 whilst working in Surrey, by chance I found the mast of a former *HMS Ganges* behind Guildford Cathedral. It had been formed in the shape of a cross, and erected on the prominent hill where the splendid Art Deco cathedral was built in the 1930s. Mast symbolism indeed.

Over the years since closure, the site has seen many proposals for development, including in the 1970s a suggestion that it could be used as a training school for foreign paratroopers. However, finally it looks as though the dereliction and decay is finally going to be replaced by a project which will breathe more life into Shotley. Hopefully also, some better premises will be found for the excellent *HMS Ganges* Museum where the existing comprehensive collection of memorabilia and artefacts will be able to be more effectively displayed, thereby making them more accessible. The Museum deserves this.

With the completion of the restoration of Shotley Pier, and the redevelopment of the *Ganges* site, Suffolk's 'New Brighton' will become even more of a destination in the future. A real renaissance indeed.

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**Early days of a Building Society** from Margaret Hancock (Archivist, Suffolk Building Society\*)

As Corporate members of the Ipswich Society, we were interested to read Derek Lay's article in the last newsletter about his employment at R W Paul Ltd in the 1950's. His recollection of pushing a trolley laden with printed leaflets from Key Street to the Post Office Sorting Office is one example of the complete transformation of office work within living memory. It reminded us of another change in practices that even came as a surprise to expert archivists at Suffolk Record Office when our extensive business archive was placed on permanent loan some years ago.

Retained amongst our collection of minute books, cash books and other handwritten ledgers is a rather insignificant looking notebook. This contains lists of members passbooks despatched and received at Head Office in Ipswich between 1959 and 1963 from the Society's network of agents. In those pre-computer days passbooks had to be manually updated annually with interest earned on savings or due on mortgage accounts. Staff needed to work overtime for around three months at the end of each financial year to complete the work.

What is even more remarkable is the method used to transfer these passbooks from numerous agents across Suffolk, North Essex and Norwich. A now retired staff member recalls walking across to the office at Old Cattle Market bus depot to deposit and collect envelopes full of passbooks for transportation via the local bus network.

All sorts of parcels were delivered in this way; a town centre fishmonger regularly sent fresh fish to the cook at Kesgrave Hall with her young son sent to collect it from the conductor as the bus travelled along the main road to Woodbridge!

The development of branch offices across Suffolk (beginning in 1979 at Hadleigh) has removed the Society's need for a large network of agent – thankfully before the demise of bus conductors and reduction in local bus services!



[\*The new name for Ipswich Building Society. 'Providing a safe home for savers and safe homes for our communities since 1849. Our new name is inclusive, connecting to a broader community – and it's an old name to stay true to our roots.']\*



*Archive photographs of the building society (courtesy Suffolk Building Society)*





**My father's time at Pauls** from Tony Grayston (re: Derek Lay's article in the January issue)

I found Mr Lay's article of interest as Pauls figured in my life until 1965, although only vicariously, as my Dad was employed there as a Fitter from the time of his demob from the RAF in 1950 until 1965; Dad had served in the RAF for 15 years having begun his career as a Halton "Brat" in 1935 at age 15 years. Dad was proud of his RAF service, the worst time he experienced being the hell of Malta where he served for the whole time of the siege and was hospitalised with lung and sinus problems having ingested the air – borne chalk caused by the incessant bombing. So now to a less idealised view of working for Pauls because for those on the shop floor, so to speak, their working lives in many ways mirrored, and for Dad particularly, the conditions of dust and filth he experienced during his Malta RAF days.

The job Dad had at Pauls, was in 1950, the only job he could get, even with the service background he had ( he was an accomplished mathematician – entry to Halton was rigorous and only took the best practical and bright boys pre-war ). I too was at Northgate from 1958 to 1964 and Dad (a tough taskmaster), was always there to help with homework and especially Maths which I loathed.

The groups of non-office workers were not encouraged to visit the main office on any account, any complaints if they were fielded, had to pass up the chain of command and were most often "lost" along the way. There were some highly skilled people in the workforce including sheet metal workers, maltsters etc. all of whom worked in what I would regard as Dickensian conditions – no Union representation, no pension fund ( unlike those in the main office ) and if they were lucky sick pay at the company's discretion.

Pauls was one of three companies in Ipswich "Blacked" by the Unions, the only other one I remember being Cranes. If Dad was fortunate he would be able to draw "Mutton Cloth" from the stores to tie around his mouth as a mask or filter to keep out the filthy muck in which the labour force had to work and he almost always turned up on his bicycle at his mother's house in James Street in filthy overalls which he removed of course before entering the house and then returning to work after dinner (Suffolk version), at about 1.45pm. There was no Health and Safety legislation in place, only the well outdated Factory Acts which were basic and outmoded. The pay for Dad was pitiful as no Union representation meant the company could pay the lowest rate they could get away with and we were "lucky" that his general dealer background enabled him, though having to work in our shed at Whitehouse in all seasons, to subsidise his meagre wages and eventually, after my sister and myself left Northgate in 1964 to use his outside skills to go into business and make a decent living for himself.

Thank goodness that at a short time before Dad left the company's employ, a more enlightened member of the Paul family arrived on the scene and over a relatively short period of time conditions of service for the non-office staff were improved considerably.

**R&W Paul's 'Kositos'** from David J. Norman

I read the article [Issue 228] by Derek Lay about his time at R.&W. Paul with interest. I wondered about how the term 'KOSITOS' originated. As a very young boy my family used to visit my maternal grandparents who owned a farm in Mendham, Suffolk during the 1960s. They had a herd of cows who used to consume Kositos. I used to enjoy eating it as well. Older, 'wiser' relatives advised me that rats could have been around the Kositos before me. I have suffered no ill effects from the experience during the intervening years.

### **Ipswich Museum and the new funding** from David Jones

I wonder what the Ipswich Society's thinking is on the proposed alterations to the interior of the High Street Museum as depicted in the *Ipswich Star*? I have a particular interest in the museum because I worked as Keeper of Human History there for 38 years and have written a detailed history of its development in manuscript. The Museum is a listed Grade II\* building and therefore its interior is protected.

As you probably know the Main Hall of the Museum was built to accommodate the displays of the previous 1848 Museum Street building and re-used the existing showcases from the old (Arlingtons) museum moving them with original displays into position, including all the balcony showcases. Thus the displays are older than the building and represent the original display scheme of the Reverend Professor Henslow who, together with the eighty leading natural scientists of the day, created the original museum which represents the breakthrough in Victorian natural science which culminated with Charles Darwin.

For those of you who are less familiar with the Professor's story he was Darwin's mentor, the man who got him his place on *HMS Beagle*, who collected and sorted Darwin's specimens as they arrived in England and who supported him through the controversies which followed. It was Henslow who chaired the famous Oxford 'monkey' debate. In that debate the speaker for Darwin was T.H. Huxley. Henslow had got Huxley his place on his first scientific expedition on board *HMS Rattlesnake*. This display and its underlying principals represented the peak of museum planning at the time and is connected to the complex struggle which led to the creation of the South Kensington Natural History Museum. They were opened by the British Association for the Advancement of Science by Prince Albert at the meeting which planned the Great Exhibition.

The Main Hall is a clear example of one of the triad of unique Victorian buildings, the railway station, the department store and the museum, all dependant on the same building technology of cast iron and plate glass. It is a clear illustration of Henslow's theories and his great drive towards making science education available to all.

The Hall is not completely unchanged. Between 1904-7 the Curator Woolnough, alongside the President of the Museum, E. Ray Lankester, Director of the Natural History museum – also a friend of H.G. Wells and Karl Marx and depicted by Conan Doyle as Professor Challenger – added the gorillas, the rhino, the giraffe and some other larger mammals; he also repaired the African case.

After that however the displays, remain unchanged until 1989-1990, when the front half of the Main Hall was remodelled. Many of the specimens which had been displayed together in the Main Hall of the old museum and later in High Street are still on display elsewhere in the museum or are currently in store. Some of the Victorian showcases have also been moved around the buildings. As well as the original voucher specimens of the museum much of the original scientific and early educational equipment used by Henslow and other early curators and even early office equipment are preserved. The remarkable series of eighty portraits of the original members of the museum and of its early presidents and patrons are dispersed through the galleries and stores.

There are two clear options for the display of the Main Hall. The first is to actually go with its unique story, that of Henslow, Victorian natural science and the history of a museum, to highlight its Victorian features, and communicate the story using a combination of modern display and the existing period displays. It is true that the whole gallery is not Victorian. This allows the remaining half to interpret the whole story in an engaging and contemporary fashion.

The alternative is to 'modernise' and hide its Victorian aspect beneath an attempt to create a white box and the display approach of a modern art gallery; that is, to make it as far as possible

resemble all contemporary museums everywhere else, which is what the illustrations of the *Ipswich Star* depict. I have always thought that Ipswich Museum is a priceless, unique historical artefact in its own right.

These remarks apply particularly to the Main Hall. With the exception of The Bass Rock and the ichthyosaur, the rest of the museum has been changed many times and the specimens can obviously be displayed to much better effect than at present; in 1881 these other spaces were used as the Library and the School of Art and Science, anyway. Museums have to change and evolve but they, perhaps more than any other institutions, should be about taking heritage, history and tradition forward into the modern world.

The museum has signally failed to promote its own history, the importance of the researchers associated with it, the richness and diversity of its collections. The second President (Henslow's) contribution I have given above and I have also touched on the career of E. Ray Lankester.

1. Which Nobel Prize winning scientist was a President of Ipswich Museum? 2. Which leading woman war artist was President? 3. Which founder of a major industry was President? 4. Which famous collector of French art and founder of a major London Museum was President? 5. Which pioneer woman archaeologist was closely associated with the museum? \* You will not find the answers in the displays of the museum at present. Will they be there in the future?

[\*Answers on page 27 -Ed.]

Because of its distinctive and very long history, its status as the first museum financed by local government and, because of the history of Ipswich itself, the Ipswich Museum collections are truly outstanding. Because of a long period of decay and poor documentation, the importance of its collections have fallen from public awareness. With little accessible documentation and much research on the collections to be done, even incoming management has had a hard job to reconstruct the knowledge base on which display of the collections must be built. Colchester & Ipswich Museums Service has triumphantly acquired the capital and has developed knowledge of the collections to a level very much better than the largely disorganised situation which I found in 1974. It will shine if it plays to its own strengths and allows the new displays to showcase as much as possible of the range and quality of the collection.

### **John Norman, Chair of The Ipswich Society writes:**

Ipswich Borough Council and their team of architects and advisors are to be congratulated on winning a substantial Lottery grant, a sum which will make substantial changes to Ipswich Museum possible and worthwhile. Winning National Lottery Heritage funding (£4.3 million) is not easy, evidenced not only by the failed first attempt at the Museum but by the relatively low number of funding awards made to this part of the country. Quite rightly the lottery trustees require a return on their investment, not necessarily a financial return but an increase in the percentage of the population making use of the facility once the improvements are complete. It is notoriously difficult to attract visitors into provincial museums, particularly those that are dark, staid and hold little interest to children, the proposals at Ipswich are planned to lift the museum into a different league.

Important inclusions in the proposed changes include making all of the ground floor rooms publicly accessible space, creating a level floor throughout to make it much easier for all visitors to wander, unhindered by steps or ramps and converting basement storerooms into spacious toilets. There will also be a café, an education space (enabling the museum to be used by school children on a wet February afternoon) and a new conservation laboratory, enabling visitors to see the fascinating work being carried out.

Our congratulations to the museum staff, volunteers and The Friends of the Ipswich Museums who have all contributed to this wonderful development opportunity.

## Ipswich Society events May/June 2022

Our two Ipswich walks planned for May celebrate Ipswich Society publications. On Thursday May 19th, Vice-Chairman Tony Marsden will lead a **Maritime Trail themed walk**. On Wednesday May 25th Tony Robson, our Blue Plaques Officer, will lead a **Blue Plaques themed walk**. Both walks start at 2pm and will last about 1½ hours. They are for members only, free of charge and limited to 25 participants. If you would like to book a place on one of them, please email me, Caroline Markham at [secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk) clearly stating whether you wish to attend the Maritime Trail walk or the Blue Plaques walk. I look forward to hearing from you and joining you at these events.

On Thursday June 9th we have once again booked a **Maritime Trust Cruise on the S.B. Victor** for Ipswich Society members. This is the third season the Ipswich Society has organised a day trip on the historic 1895 sailing barge. Leaving from outside the Old Custom House at 9am and returning 4.30-5pm, 'Victor' will motor/sail to Harwich Ha'penny pier with mid-morning coffee, biscuits and bacon roll on the way. After a 90 minute tour of Harwich with guides from the Harwich Society, we return for drinks and a two course lunch with wine. Harwich has a remarkable collection of old buildings including the lighthouse, the newly-opened house of the captain of *The Mayflower*, one of the first ever electric cinemas and a medieval wooden treadwheel crane. *Victor* will leave Harwich to sail/motor back to the Old Custom House with a tea on the way. *S.B. Victor* was restored in 1974 and beautifully maintained since. The cost is £65 per head, including a donation to the Harwich Society. To book go to <https://ipswichmaritimetrust.setmore.com>.



Issued by Her Majesty's Government



Spotter: Mark Beesley

### **WARNING!**

A new virus is currently spreading across the UK. Known as Grey Disease or Anthracitis, it attacks seemingly healthy houses, transforming them into monochrome. If one house in a street is affected, it can quickly spread to neighbouring homes. Grey Disease can affect interiors too, quickly draining them of colour, and there are signs that it is transmissible to pubs, restaurants and even offices. The only cure for this disease is to ensure your house is provided with plenty of colour. Removing all lifestyle and interior design magazines may also help protect your precious home.

→ **Be vigilant!** ←



## What's happening to the brownfield sites in Ipswich?

Answer: nothing!

Let me explain: Ipswich is a low wage town, and has been since Robert Ransome attracted agricultural workers into town by offering agricultural wages but paid at the same rate 52 weeks per year. On the farm the wage fluctuated with the season, sometimes nothing during the winter (when there was no work). This low wage economy has prevailed, outlasting the engineering, clothing and cigarette industries to perpetuate into the new financial-based (insurance) institutions.

Despite the national housing shortage there is not an excessive demand for higher priced housing. Many of the proposed new developments are changing the balance of the range of property on offer, reducing the number of four and five bedroom, detached houses and increasing the number of two and three bedroom properties, especially those with three floors. We have seen this happening at **Henley Gate** (Ipswich Garden Suburb) and what, I consider, should be one of the best sites in Ipswich. Persimmon's **Discovery Avenue** (near the new tidal barrier and overlooking the river) where the developer is building the smallest possible starter homes, most of which will go into the *Buy-to-Let* market.

**The Mill**, East Anglia's tallest residential tower block: there are a variety of reasons why this hasn't been developed. The main reason is that it isn't economically viable to finish it, that is the cost of the building work required to complete the flats exceeds the return on that investment (remembering that developers will require 25% - 30% 'profit' to cover the risks involved). The completion of the nearby 'Winerack' was only possible because the Homes and Communities Agency contributed £15 million towards completion costs (technically a loan) and £5 million came from New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). I understand that sales haven't been as brisk as had been hoped. You will appreciate that The Mill (tower block) is currently an empty shell, no lifts, no bathrooms, kitchens or plumbing services as well as the obvious problems with the external cladding. Access for 'fit-out' will also be difficult: nowhere does the external wall of the 23 storey block reach the ground, so nowhere can scaffold start from the ground to rise up the external walls. A further issue is that the lift shaft is too small for building purposes; once a lift car is installed, it will be of insufficient size to convey sheets of plasterboard. It will be a brave developer who takes on these risks in the current market.

The **vacant site between the Churches of St Peter and St Mary-at-the-Quay** has a wealth of buried history; it can be argued that this is the original heart of Anglo-Saxon Ipswich, and we know it is where Cardinal Wolsey started his college. It was the site of a Friends Meeting House and more recently St Peter's Ironworks. Archaeologists are suggesting that there may be 1,000 bodies buried on the site. No wonder then that they are also suggesting that the archaeological dig will cost over £1 million. A hefty outlay even before the first brick is laid (and as I've already said 'high rise flats in Ipswich don't sell').

Much the same applies to **47 Key Street**, the vacant site bounded by Key Street, Slade Street, Fore Street and Salthouse Street and previously the offices of R&W Paul (Pauls and Whites). The Jewish Cemetery sits in the middle of the site. The whole site is currently owned by Investec, – it has received planning permission for various redevelopment schemes but there have been no takers.

**Burton Son & Sanders offices**, 1-5 College Street, (the building shrouded in scaffolding on the right as you drive towards the Novotel roundabouts). It is in the same ownership as the vacant site behind the building (see above for the archaeological problems). This is a listed building and has been – and still is – subject to an Urgent Works Notice requiring the owner to make it weatherproof and secure. He has carried out some work and we understand that repairs to the temporary roof are in hand. The issue for the local authority, who issued both Urgent Works and Building Repairs Notices is what to do next. Failure to comply with the latter means that the

local authority can compulsorily purchase at a price set by the District Valuer. Unfortunately, the local authority has no budget for this type of expenditure and so cannot proceed; I'd guess that the building owner knows this.

In the case of the small merchant's house opposite, number **4 College Street**, Ipswich Borough Council purchased the whole site, including the house and car park and are spending a fair amount of money renovating the building. They hope to sell the site to a developer and influence them into a scheme that will be the gateway into the Waterfront. With the small merchant's house renovated, the whole should be somewhat more attractive to modern developers.

Between Stoke Bridge and Princes Street bridge, former **Lower Yard** (a railway goods yard) fronting Grafton Way was to be a massive Tesco supermarket and planning permission had been granted. This was probably the first major supermarket to be cancelled when retailers realised we were all swapping to home-shopping. Spenhill, Tesco's property arm, offered the site for sale and a number of different planning permissions have been sought; the latest is a series of town houses (with gardens) – more of those three bedroom, three storey houses mentioned earlier. However, the developer still isn't confident that when built they will sell, so the site is still a car park. Incidentally the retail units opposite the Royal Mail sorting office are owned by Trinity College Cambridge, one of East Anglia's biggest landowners, and they have a policy of not selling. So, this bit of the site isn't included in the planning permission.

**New Cut West:** *see article page 16.*

Why not develop these brownfield areas as green parks? Unfortunately, this is about ownership. The majority of these sites are in private ownership, and all of the owners are expecting a return on their investment. Even if there is no immediate prospect of development the owner can borrow against the asset and use the money to develop elsewhere. Take, for example, the Tacket Street/Cox Lane car parks; these are owned by National Car Parks and are on their books as potential retail development land. On paper this is (was) four times the value of residential land and, although NCP have no intention of developing either car park, they have been using their portfolio of property assets as security against borrowing for developments in other towns.

**John Norman**

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### **Membership Secretary vacancy**

I am standing down as Membership Secretary as of the end of June this year.

If you think you would be interested in taking on the post, please contact me. I will be pleased to give you the information about this interesting, and essential, job on behalf of the Society. What is basically required is keeping paper and computer records up-to-date of our 1,000+ members, answering queries from members and co-ordinating, as required, with other members of the Committee.

I look forward to hearing from you (*contact details on page 27*).

**Celia Waters**

### **Donations and Gift Aid**

Several members, when renewing their membership, have included a donation to the Society funds. Thank you, it is very much appreciated – and when also Gift Aided the donation is increased still more.

If you completed a Gift Aid form a few years ago, it is possible that you are no longer registered because some of the paperwork is missing. The Gift Aid scheme is of great benefit to the Society by significantly increasing funds. To be sure your contribution is covered, you can find the form on the website or write to/email or phone me giving your full name and home address, state that you want to Gift Aid your donation to the Ipswich Society.

**Membership Secretary** (*contact details on page 27*)

# The Ipswich Society

Registered Charity no. 263322

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## Diary dates

*Wednesday April 27, 7.30pm: Annual General Meeting* in the auditorium at The Hold with our speaker Jackie Sadek, co-author of *Broken Homes: Britain's Housing Crisis: Faults, Factoids and Fixes*.

*Thursday May 19, 2pm: Maritime Trail themed walk* with Tony Marsden.

*Wednesday May 25, 2pm: Blue Plaques themed walk* with Tony Robson.

*Thursday June 9: All-day Cruise* from Ipswich to Harwich on the *Sailing Barge Victor* with The Ipswich Maritime Trust.

(Booking details for the walks and cruise are on page 24.)

<b>Newsletter deadlines &amp; publication dates</b> (the latter may vary by a few days)
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Deadline for material: 1 December;	Publication date: 22 January;
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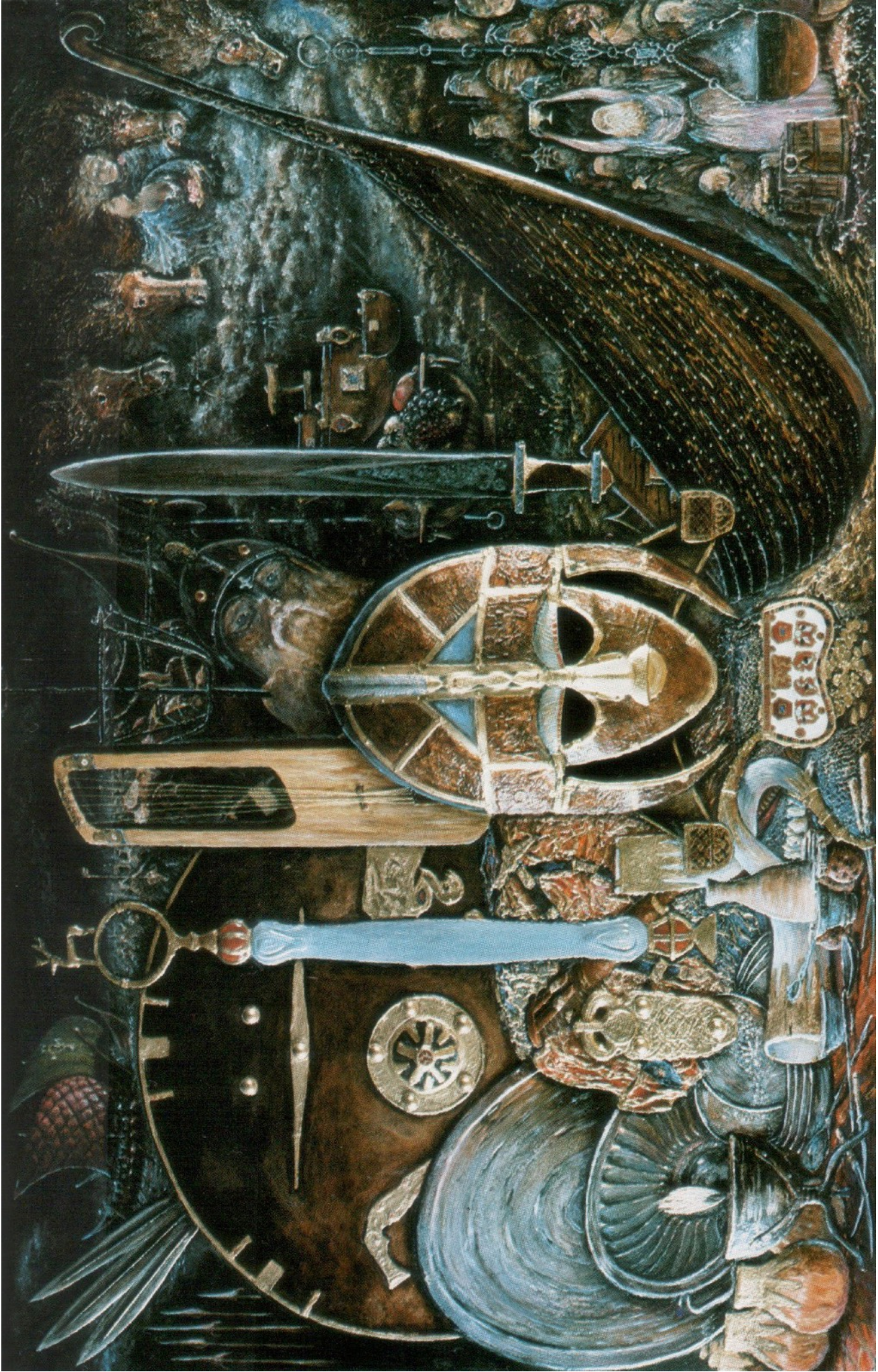
1 March;	2 April;
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1 June;	17 July;
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1 September;	9 October.
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**Answers** to David Jones' questions on page 23 1. Sir Charles Sherrington (1944–1952). 2. Anna Airy (1882-1964). 3. Edward Packard senr. (1895-1899) founder of the artificial fertilizer industry. 4. Sir Richard Wallace, Bt of Sudbourne Hall (1874–1890). 5. Nina Frances Layard (1853-1935).





**Sutton Hoo (impression):** the ship burial of Anglo-Saxon High King Raedwald 625 AD. Painted relief by Robert N. Mellamphy reproduced by kind permission of Woodbridge Riverside Trust, installed in The Longshed, Woodbridge, February 2022.