



The Ipswich Society

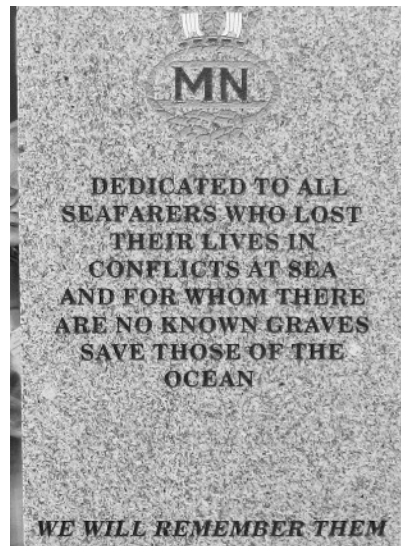
NEWSLETTER

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MNA Merchant seamen's memorial, Orwell Quay, Ipswich, 13 April 2014 (see page 8)



Editorial

Continuing a theme of last issue's editorial, this seems to be the period of the reborn church. In May the ongoing major renovation of St Mary-at-the-Quay was interrupted by a visit and tour which included three members of the Society's Executive Committee. The photographs below are a taster for a full article in the next issue; it was a privilege to view craftsmanship at work which will result in our finest double hammer beam roof, not to mention the other parts of the church, in fine fettle for a new use under the auspices of Suffolk Mind and others.

One should also mention the church of St Michael in Upper Orwell Street, burnt down in 2011 and struggling to re-roof and revive itself as a community centre (see our back page). There are promising signs too at the Mariners' Church: St Clement in Star Lane with a group forming around people from UCS and CSV with the aim of creating an Ipswich Art Centre there. I am sure that we will be covering all these projects in future issues.

St Mary-at-the-Quay spandrel brackets (below): showing the arrangement of the double hammer beam support for the roof. The exposed tenons indicate the places where the missing angels were located.



As each Newsletter print deadline approaches, there seem to be more and more matters of importance to include. The latest is that East Anglian estate agent John Howard (Fine & Country) and his partner have purchased Block A of the unfinished Regatta Quay development on the northern quays. You will know the building better as the Wine Rack and the intention is to complete the 150 flats within 18 months.

My sincere thanks to all our Newsletter contributors.

R.G.

§

New members

Chairman's remarks

I thought that I would start with an update on the Northern Fringe (which Ipswich Borough Council has decided to call a *Garden Suburb*). There have been two major events of late; Mersea Homes have submitted a 'pre-app', an ideas plan for a small part of the site (based on the Master Plan) which enables them to open discussion with council planners and other interested parties. To this end Mersea Homes presented their proposals to the Conservation and Design Panel and held a public exhibition at Henley Road Sports Club in late April.

Mersea Homes' contribution to the Northern Fringe will be in the order of 2,100 homes (out of 3,500). They have the development rights to the south of the railway line (with the exception of the land owned by Ipswich School), land which extends to both sides of Westerfield Road. We understand that land north of the railway (off Henley Road) will be developed by Crest Nicholson.

The Mersea Homes programme is pushing timescales, as the SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) has not yet been adopted, but they are listening and have changed their proposals to incorporate some of the suggestions made by members of the Conservation Panel. Long straight streets are to be broken with right angled turns and terminated with a building which sits central to the vista, i.e. there is a building which provides a stop, a focal point and a landmark by which to navigate. Currently this building will be a standard house type but we are pushing for key feature buildings across the estate, and here there is a difficulty. Do we want homes disguised as pastiche windmills and chapels or should this estate be able to stand on its own design parameters?

The second significant event of late has been the visit and review by the East of England Design Panel, part of the *Design Network*, a not for profit organisation that advises developers including local authorities and promotes better and more sustainable places to live in. Following a site visit and discussions with the planners they have produced a report with a number of important suggestions. They recommend maximising the use of Westerfield Railway Station and doing more for cycling (particularly off-site), ensuring the suburb relates to, and is connected to, the adjacent neighbourhoods and ensuring the houses conform to sustainability standards. Mersea have picked up on this last point and turned proposed houses around such that the roof slope faces the sun and the orientation is suitable for solar panels. Are solar roof tiles (rather than retro-fit panels) too much to ask?

Good news at the former County Hall. St Andrew's House in Grimwade Street is being converted into 50 homes in a joint venture by Icen and Suffolk Housing with the backing of Ipswich Borough Council. St Andrew's House is the 1930s building behind St Helen's Court (the castellated building in St Helen's Street). The main contractors are Barnes Construction with completion planned for 2015.

I had the privilege of climbing amongst the rafters of St Mary-at-the-Quay church in May. St Mary's has a superb double hammer beam roof and photographs of the spandrel brackets are featured on page 2 of this Newsletter. St Mary's is undergoing a £4 million refurbishment to turn the building into a well-being centre for all of the community to use. As well as the refurbished church a new single storey extension is being erected in the south east corner. In conjunction with the building's owner, the Churches Conservation Trust, Mind has secured £3.6 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). As I'm sure you will have seen, from the scaffolding surrounding the building, work has started and is due for completion in September 2015. The external roof covering is being replaced with sand-cast lead laid on restored timber boards.

I received a large number of compliments following the Ipswich Society excursion to east London, *Crossing the Thames*. A coach party spent the day looking for proposed bridges and tunnels downstream of Tower Bridge. Given that none yet exist it was a bit of an interesting expedition but all became apparent when we descended into the access shaft of the original Thames Tunnel in Rotherhithe to hear Museum Curator, Robert Hulse, explain Brunel's contribution to the problem.

John Norman, Chairman

Snippets 1

Ipswich Port (AB Ports)

The Port of Ipswich continues to make a significant contribution to the local economy, perhaps in excess of £100 million worth of trade is generated. Some 1,800 jobs rely on the continuing success of the Port.

From Cliff Quay, exports of grain topped half a million tonnes last year and to the importation of cement (140,000 tonnes) and aggregate (300,000 tonnes) can be added the regular shiploads of fertilizer and timber. There is a monthly sailing to Cyprus and three per month to the Caribbean with occasional loads of general cargo, a total of some 3 million tonnes handled each year.

Car Sales 2014

The prediction for car sales in the UK in 2014 is 2.4 million. The last time this many cars were sold was in 2007 (the last year of healthy sales before the recession).

Major Museum development

Our High Street Museum contains several nationally important collections in a fine Victorian building. On site there are other buildings – the former Art School, the High Street Gallery and nearby the Wolsey Studio in St Georges Street. When all these are fully linked and with a striking new entrance in High Street, Ipswich will have a great ‘new’ cultural attraction for local people and visitors. The application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the first phase of funding has been favourably received so far. As usual, extensive local support needs to be shown. The *Ipswich Star* did a good front page job (28 May) headed “Exhibit Love for Museum”. It seems likely that most Ipswich Society members would be keen to see the project succeed. So keep an eye open for when and how you could show your support. As individuals we could be useful, adding influence to the Society’s collective support.

Waterfront Links

The Victorians who created the Wet Dock couldn’t have anticipated that it would eventually cease to be a working dock but remain a uniquely valuable feature of our town. But the growing attraction of the new Waterfront is still seen by some local people as “miles away”. Our Society has always supported IBC, Ipswich Central and others who want to encourage any improved linkage between the town centre and the Waterfront. So we approve of the paving of Queen Street and St Nicholas Street which could make walking to the Waterfront more enticing. Similarly the shuttle bus service from Falcon Street (Vodka Revolution) to Dance East on the Waterfront should help. It runs on Saturdays (10 am-6pm) and Sundays when there is a special event on the Waterfront. Although limited at present, it’s a good start.

Holywells Park

The restoration project for the park is under way. During the year the stable block and orangery will be converted into a visitor centre and exhibition space and a new toilet block built near the children’s play area. The £3.5m project is part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The parks of Ipswich constitute one of the town’s greatest assets and it is fitting that they should be well maintained.

Please read the note about new subscription rates on the Outings insert in this issue.

Planning matters

Despite the rush of planning applications since the beginning of the year (400 thus far) the past couple of weeks have seen a dearth of applications in Conservation Areas and for listed buildings.

Woodside

Possibly the most contentious is for a large detached property in the vacant space alongside Woodside, Constitution Hill. This plot sits beyond the green space which is seen from Valley Road, space which includes a walled garden and occasional sheep grazing. This was the third application for a single but very large dwelling on this site, the first two having been withdrawn after discussions with the planners. There had been a number of objections to the first two applications including from English Heritage and from The Ipswich Society. We wrote again repeating our general concerns on receipt of the third application but the architect had addressed the comments of the planners, the Conservation and Design Panel and individual objectors.

The Development Control Committee decided that planning permission should be granted subject to a number of conditions including tweaking of the fenestration.

B&M Homestore

A retail outlet, B&M, which has some 370 outlets across the country including Copdock Retail Park and Ransomes Euro Park, is operating in a market previously served by Woolworths. They have applied for a change in one of the conditions which applies to their Euro Park store (The Sandlings). The original planning permission restricted sales to large and bulky goods (with a maximum 10% of floor space to non-bulky goods).

Planning officers recommended refusal on a number of grounds, primarily that there are vacant units in the town centre where this type of store should be located. The original planning permission for The Sandlings restricted sales to bulky goods and specifically excluded food. The granting of planning permission would set a precedent for similar out-of-town stores to the detriment of trade in the town centre.

Ordinarily an application for planning permission for a convenience store (which attracts multiple car visits) should be accompanied by a traffic impact assessment and, if necessary, changes to the road layout. By moving into an existing store and ignoring imposed restrictions on the sale of food and other non-bulky goods B&M have avoided this requirement and the possible expenditure involved.

The letter from the Society supporting the officers' recommendation picked up on the increased traffic a convenience store (including B&M) would bring to a trading estate.

B&M withdrew their application just before the Development Control meeting which probably means they can continue trading (in contravention of the planning rules) for some time.

(continues)

Willis

There are some subtle changes taking place within the Grade I Listed Willis building, very few of which will be noticeable to the occasional visitor. Perhaps the one exception will be the increased security just inside the front doors where turnstiles are being installed. For a building 40 years old it remains remarkably fresh and pleasant.

Fison House, 159 Princes Street

By comparison Fison House diagonally across the road from the Fire Station is showing its age. It was purchased by a developer some time ago but they have been unable to find tenants so have now applied for planning permission to clad the building in large insulated coloured panels. In a random mix of silver and beige which includes enclosure of part of the ground floor (hiding the V columns) the building will hopefully find a new use. Fison House was designed by Birkin Haward (Johns, Slater and Haward) but could not be listed as technically it was never finished (only three of the four sides were ever built). Given its location close to the Courts, the Civic Buildings and three minutes walk to the railway station it is ideally located.

The Regent Theatre

Some might say *at last* but the Regent is getting an improved air conditioning system. The downside is that the air handling units will be on the roof and can be seen from the occasional place on the ground; internally ductwork can be accommodated inside existing features. The good news is that there are to be improvements and restoration of decorative features in the Crush Hall (the bar area just outside the auditorium doors) which will additionally be redecorated in the original colours.

Bridle Way

There is a dilapidated cottage off the bridle way (behind the big houses in Fonnereau Road) converted from what was probably an old stable and coach house. An application to replace the building with a modern architect designed house will improve the ambience of the view from the Arboretum. The Society supports the proposal.

Stoke Quay flats

The flats under construction along Stoke Quay are nearing completion and some are for sale. The development, designed by Living Architects (who started the project in 2007) for Genesis Housing Association has been built by ISG (formerly Jackson Construction) and should be complete this autumn. Under a shared ownership scheme 25% of a single bedroom flat can be purchased for £30,000 with rent payable on the outstanding difference. As incomes rise then the percentage of ownership can be increased and the rent proportionally decreased. This scheme enables first time buyers to get a foot on the housing ladder.

The Unique Selling Point is its proximity to Ipswich Station; perhaps the young people of London who will commute after moving in are a key clientele group.



Great Yarmouth: preservation, conservation and society

The talk by Darren Barker to the Society on 19 March was inspiring. He is Principal Conservation Officer at Great Yarmouth Borough Council and also Project Director of Great Yarmouth Building Preservation Trust.

The Trust was formed in 1978, in a town which had been heavily bombed in World War II and has suffered much more deprivation than Ipswich has. Near-derelict 'Row houses' and former merchants' houses have been saved and restored, as one would hope and expect.

A much larger project was St George's Chapel built by the Corporation in 1714 and Grade I Listed. This major scheme restored "one of the finest Baroque churches outside London" as an arts centre and "a catalyst for regeneration". (The architect, Sir Michael Hopkins, described the work in his talk to the Society.) Mr Barker then took us on a photographic tour of other projects in the town.

Very unexpected, however, was the great emphasis the Trust has placed on involving and professionally training unemployed young people and people with other problems. As he said, it helps to make "heritage inclusive socially." And again in his own words, "we are not social workers but we are socially responsible." Finally, we heard about the Trust's carefully chosen partnerships with an area of Bulgaria and another with Estonia, because "we can learn from their traditional skills." Exchanges of workers have benefited from the practice of crafts such as plastering, wall painting, carpentry and even thatching.

Neil Salmon

What's in a lot more paintings?

That is the question. And now you can provide the answers. The Public Catalogue Foundation, in conjunction with the BBC *Your Paintings* website, has now provided an "Art Detective" facility (<http://thepcf.org.uk/artdetective/>). So all you have to do is browse all the paintings in the Borough collection and if you know anything interesting about one of them, click on the Art Detective button and let the experts know!

Louis Musgrove





A song of their own: the fight for votes for women in Ipswich by Joy Bounds
The History Press, 2014. £12.99

History, they say is written by the victors. It is also, by and large, written by the men. So much of the story of women's struggle for the vote is only recently coming to light. Clare Balding's recent Channel 4 documentary about Emily Wilding Davison, who stepped (rather than 'threw herself') in front of the king's horse at the Derby in 1913 and died of her injuries, revealed how little we know and how much of what we know is wrong. One aspect of the programme which may surprise us is the description of the Suffragettes as a terrorist organisation ('suffragists' worked within the law and had been working for the women's vote since the 1860s).

Joy Bounds has become well-known as our local suffrage historian and this book contains primary and secondary research which reveals the way in which the long campaign for women's votes affected Ipswich and Felixstowe. The Census returns for the period in question only came into the public domain in 2009. Two episodes in particular are described in *A song of their own* and they highlight the two arms of the suffrage movement. Firstly, the evasion of the official Census enumerators in 1911, when women from the area gathered for an all-night party in the disused Museum Rooms (now Arlington's restaurant) in Museum Street. Not illegal exactly, but certainly a challenging and brave thing to do. Secondly, the arson attack by two suffragettes which destroyed the Bath Hotel (on the site of the later Bartlet Hospital), at the time the biggest and most prestigious hotel in the town.

There is much here to surprise and enjoy, but the grimness of the long struggle is the lasting impression: imprisonment, force-feeding (horrific and akin to torture in many's view) and political betrayal. An excellent addition to the Ipswich story of non-conformism over the centuries.

R.G.

Merchant seamen's memorial

Sunday, April 13, 2014: Lord Tollemache, Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, unveiled the three-ton granite memorial, put in place on Orwell Quay after a year-long £13,000 fundraising campaign by the Ipswich branch of the Merchant Navy Association (MNA).

It is the first time Ipswich, with its rich merchant navy history stretching back more than 1,000 years, has had a memorial dedicated to the merchant seamen who lost their lives at sea in wartime, often taking part in dangerous missions to bring food and other necessary cargo home to Britain. During World War II alone, nearly twice as many merchant seafarers lost their lives at sea as Royal Navy seamen. A gap in our history is filled by this modest but important monument.



Ipswich Icons

The series of articles in the *East Anglian Daily Times* under the 'Ipswich Icons' banner have proved a success (in terms of letting the county know of our existence, increasing the Society's membership and occasionally generating correspondence). A case in point was the article on Ipswich's barracks, and the Duke of York (halfway up Woodbridge Road hill). Was this the pub they were in when they were neither up, nor down?

I was aware that there is a similar claim, not only from Woodbridge (the pub there changed its name to *The Seal* before changing it back to the Duke of York) and from other towns where hills and pubs co-exist. However I was contacted by the Assistant County Surveyor for East Suffolk (a local authority disbanded in 1974) who was born in the officers' quarters, Harmony Square next to the surgery in Woodbridge Road (and almost opposite Ipswich's Duke of York). This square consisted of two rows of single bedroom cottages facing each other across an open courtyard: eleven on one side and nine on the other with a chapel at the eastern end, and a narrow passage to Woodbridge Road where the original gate posts are still in place.

One of these cottages suffered bomb damage during the World War II but it was repaired, however the whole complex was demolished in 1957 and flats, now called Hanover Square built on the site. None of this proves that Ipswich was the source of the rhyme but it adds to the evidence.

John Norman



Lacey Street (upper left), Woodbridge Road (Duke of York at right) and Harmony Square as shown on a map of Ipswich, 1883

St Margaret's Plain and Soane Street improvements

Over a period of years there have been significant improvements to the public realm of Ipswich town centre: the paving of Giles Circus, St Peters and St. Nicholas Streets, Northgate and Upper Brook Streets, new lighting in Westgate and Carr Streets and an improved setting to the Willis building all making a contribution. This has largely been achieved by use of a limited palette of quality materials and contemporary street furniture.

The future of the Cornhill has still to be resolved but on the whole, the town centre looks better than ever.

Giles Circus was presented with an Ipswich Society Award of Distinction in 2010 and the highway works at Soane Street and St. Margaret's Plain were awarded a Commendation in last year's awards. To some, this small scheme may seem an odd choice for recognition. It is part of a £21million package of improvements to Ipswich funded by central government with the aim of improving ease of movement for pedestrians and cyclists through the town centre.

The work has innovative elements and resolves some problems in the area:

- The work improves pedestrian movements from Northgate St. and the town centre to Christchurch Mansion and the Park.
- It helps to visually link the historic realm of Northgate Street, Soane Street and the park entrance emphasising a north- south axis of pedestrian movement rather than the east- west main road and vehicular traffic.
- The highway authority has removed the pedestrian safety holding pen and railings at the pelican crossing making it easier for people to cross the road and giving the message to drivers to slow down. One area of railing was installed outside a family house, but the scheme is less cluttered than before.
- Quality materials have been used and opportunity taken for a new tree to be planted. The setts across Soane Street indicate pedestrian priority.

An inner circulatory scheme is essential to protect the town centre from through traffic, but this simple effective scheme shows how physical work can help bridge this barrier and enhance the historic area.



St Margaret's Plain looking eastwards



In the January 2014 edition of the Newsletter, there was an appeal for a volunteer to represent the Ipswich Society on the Suffolk Local History Council committee, following the resignation of Ruth Serjeant. I was happy to offer my services as I am already on the SLHC committee, where I share the position of Secretary for the Local History Recorders scheme.

The SLHC is an umbrella group for local history societies, family history societies, museums and individuals interested in local history in the county, and The Ipswich Society is a 'Society Member'. The SLHC was formed in 1953 and the Local History Recorders scheme began soon afterwards. The aim is to find a dependable person in each parish to collect and record what is happening 'today' as that will become tomorrow's history. My particular responsibility is to recruit recorders for those areas without a representative.

In the case of Ipswich - it has been divided using the parliamentary boundaries – which give 16 areas today. Only 5 Ipswich areas have a Local History Recorder and through the auspices of this Newsletter I would like to appeal for a volunteer in each of the following areas: *Alexandra, Bixley, Gainsborough, Gipping, Holywells, Priory Heath, Rushmere, St Margaret, Sprites, Westgate* and *Whitehouse*. I also have a number of vacant parishes throughout the county for anyone interested who lives outside Ipswich.

I should emphasise that being a Local History Recorder *does not* involve research into the history of the parish or to do other people's family history. The Suffolk Record Office is full of interesting documents recording events of the past, and used by researchers in a myriad of ways, but those documents had to be created and deposited for us to benefit today.

We have only two requirements. First, that the recorder is on-line to aid communication and secondly that they submit a *short* report each year. This can be as little as one side of A4 and it is not an academic essay but a summary of the changes and activities in the designated area. Over a period of time the reports make extremely interesting reading enabling a future researcher to see the changes. Several of our recorders have submitted reports in excess of 30 years so you can imagine the many changes that have been noted over this period of time. We do ask that an initial report is submitted to describe the area and set it in context for comparison against future reports.

To further enhance the role, we ask that parish/local magazines are collected, as well as local leaflets, events that take place are recorded, relevant newspaper articles are cut out and changes noted, such as closure/opening of shops, new buildings etc. In 2012, for instance, the Jubilee celebrations featured heavily in many areas.

A starter's pack is available on the SLHC website – www.slhc.org.uk, click on 'Recorders' and then click on 'Recorder's Pack' within the text on the left hand side to read guidelines on what is involved in the role. No two parishes/areas are the same so there are no definite rules on how to carry out the task.

In return the recorder would receive the SLHC Newsletter, free of charge, and an invitation to attend our annual conference specifically for our Local History Recorders. This is always a successful day that gives the recorders an opportunity to meet other recorders and hear relevant lectures.

If you are interested in becoming the recorder for the area you live in, please have a look at the starter pack on our website and e-mail me on: janette1407@hotmail.co.uk

Janette Robinson

[Website: www.slhc.org.uk]

Letters to the Editor

Ipswich football ground from Ben Gummer MP

I was bemused by Colin Kreidewolf's letter claiming that there was 'a worrying trend' of the Society's Newsletter containing inaccuracies, not least because his own letter contained one. He claimed that I had put a value of a million pounds on the football ground, which I have never done.

I must congratulate Mr Kreidewolf, however, for using the powers in the Localism Act 2011 to help protect the Portman Road ground. It is a fine piece of legislation and I was pleased to have voted for it myself, on behalf of Mr Kreidewolf and all my constituents. I am glad that is being put to good use.

Nothing Changes! 41 years ago... from Chris Wiltshire

I'm a continual reader of James Lees-Milne's Diaries. I suppose he might need some introduction to members but his long association with heritage and conservation matters makes him a very interesting commentator.

Diary entry Saturday 25th November 1972:

" I lose battles all along the line, The Rural District Council has decided – I knew of course that they would – to allow the erection of an enormous cow factory in the Ozleworth valley behind this village [a Cotswold area close to J L-M's house at Alderley], in spite of the valley being within the AONB which stands for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These designations mean absolutely nothing. There is always a reason venal or financial – same thing – for the local authority to give way. Beauty of the landscape is absolutely at a discount in England. Let us face it. The most beautiful country in Northern Europe in my youth will before my death be irredeemably ruined, damned and finished. Within one's lifetime – it is a terrifying thought; and since it coincides within my lifetime I feel fractionally responsible".

From: *A Mingled Measure, James Lees-Milne Diaries 1953-1972*, pub. John Murray 1994

Do members feel that Lees-Milne was being overly conservative, pessimistic and reactionary? After all, he was largely responsible for managing the handover of some of the best houses that the National Trust now cares for. Without his advocacy and skills many would have been demolished in the 1930s to 1950s.

AGM: Cornhill from Kay McElhinney

During the talk at the AGM by Richard Lister and Paul Clement, something was bothering me about their presentation but I couldn't put my finger on quite what. Afterwards it dawned on me what the problem was: whereas during their 'pitch' they reiterated their main campaigning point – i.e. to join the town centre to the Waterfront and restore the North-south axis of the town and the flow of pedestrian traffic in that direction – the design for the Cornhill they are proposing reinforces the current East-West axis and runs counter to their main campaign.

The layout for the new Cornhill runs East-West; the paving design draws the eye East-West; the visual focal point (the tower) is on the East-West axis; and from what I could see, in order to use what is currently the most popular route to the Waterfront on the north-south axis, pedestrians will have to negotiate a flight of steps which could prove to be a barrier.

And if they are keen to stimulate retail in the town centre, where traditional shop-based retail is failing and the main recent retail successes have been the various markets which bring a lot of people into the town, why restrict the space available? Why not use the North-South axis and bring Lloyds Avenue, Princes Street and Queen Street into the market's usable space and really join the town centre to the Waterfront?

(continues)

As a secondary issue, I am concerned about the expense of creating better access to the Town Hall via the steps and losing the steps as picturesque amenity (choirs at Christmas, UCS new-graduate photos, for example) before a plan has been drawn up for how the interior will be used and how it will need to be reconfigured, as once that is done perhaps it may turn out that the best entrance might be via Princes Street and the entrance via the steps could be redundant?

AGM: Ipswich town centre development from Ken Wilson

The speakers at the AGM provoked a lively debate and it was clear that the future of our town centre, particularly the shops, is dear to the hearts of our members.

I felt my thoughts drifting back some years to the time when two or three shopping precincts were on offer and after much careful consideration and debate approval was given to Tower Ramparts. We were assured that because we were a little later than many places we would have a really first-class product, the faults that had emerged in early schemes having all been ironed out. Ours consequently would be flawless.

A couple of years later Tower Ramparts was extensively remodelled.

When not long afterwards the Buttermarket precinct appeared we were invited to make an inspection and a large group from the Society was shown round. During the discussion that followed I referred to the Tower Ramparts experience and asked the manager how long it would be before his development would need to be adapted. He paused to smile indulgently at my naivety then said firmly that this shopping precinct was undoubtedly complete.

A couple of years later history repeated itself.

What this tells me is that the confident assertions of those most ready to assure us that they know just what is needed to revitalise our town must be treated with a degree of caution.

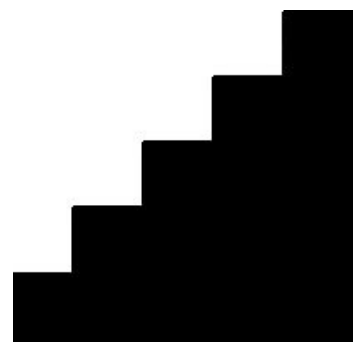
AGM: Steps and slopes for the Cornhill? from Neil Salmon

Our speakers at the Society's AGM, Paul Clement and Richard Lister, made an admirable case for "turning our town around". I am sure that their strategic vision is the way forward, in recognising above all that:

1. The Wet Dock enables the modern Waterfront to be the unique asset of the town.
2. Therefore linking the Waterfront with the town centre is crucial.
3. Modern methods of shopping mean that the town centre must offer more mixed attractions.
4. Some superfluous shops will need to be converted to include residential uses.
5. Attracting new private investment is essential.

My only personal issue of disagreement is their support for proposals to create different levels of the Cornhill which would have potentially hazardous steps and slopes. My view is that the Cornhill is already a *small* area for a large town. To create different levels would make it less, not more, flexible. Despite its present natural slope, it is possible to include an enlarged and varying market, and on other days events involving *free movement across the whole space*.

If improving access to the Town Hall is one reason for changing levels of the Cornhill, that seems to me too big a price to pay. I hope my criticism will be seen not as nostalgic or reactionary but as purely practical.



Capital Curios: an Ipswich Society trip, March 20, 2014

After some delays through Docklands, we met our London guide and had coffee in The Knights Templar freehouse (appropriately decorated), behind the Law Courts.

Back on the coach for the tour of Mayfair. In medieval times a May Fair was held there every year, but was eventually closed down because it had acquired a bad reputation by the time this part of the city was being developed and smartened up. Despite heavy traffic, we had ample time to look at Senate House, a 1930s building used as the University of London's administrative centre. In Orwell's *1984*, his Ministry of Truth was located there.

Bloomsbury was a run-down neighbourhood in the time of the eponymous Group, hence writers and artists could afford to live there. The Bloomsberries 'lived in squares, loved in triangles and talked in circles', as one wit put it. We eventually reached the Mecca of Mayfair. The medieval city with its old street patterns had needed to be modernised; it was the start of the 17th century westward expansion, away from the East End with its 'smelly' populace and industries. (I can recommend John Summerson's *Georgian London* on this westward expansion.)

Originally Mayfair had been made up of aristocratic estates whose owners leased or sold off their land for up-market development; hence Berkeley Square etc. The area is an irregular square bounded by Oxford Street, (New) Bond Street, Piccadilly and Regent Street. We passed posh shops and galleries and smartly-dressed people (no sign of recession here). Alas, due to delays we had to forego our intended walking tour, including the Burlington Arcade. Along to Piccadilly Circus, past Trafalgar Square with its fourth plinth currently occupied by a huge, eye-catching blue cockerel, we returned to the Knights Templar for lunch.

On foot to the Freemason's Grand Lodge in Covent Garden, we passed the 'Old Curiosity Shop', now dwarfed by later buildings but still possessing period charm. The United Grand Lodge of England was created in 1813 and the Masonic Grand Lodge lives up to its name. It was completed in 1933 and is a Grade II Listed, Art Deco building.

We met our Lodge guide in the Library and Museum and were shown some royal portraits including 'Prinny' and King George VI; the Duke of Kent is the present Grand Master. We walked down the Processional Corridor with its mahogany panelling – polished every morning – and softly-coloured stained glass windows. This led to the Grand Temple, modelled on a Grecian temple. To me, there was something Egyptian about it with its richly-decorated mosaic ceilings, carved doors and marble pillars and staircases: a feeling of calm, monumental simplicity – extremely impressive.

At 3.30pm I regretfully had to leave for an appointment back in Ipswich, so couldn't explore further. Fifty-six members, a coachful, give their thanks to Barbara Barker for organising such a fascinating day and adjusting to our delays. Also to Gavin, our Soames' driver, for his patience and navigational skills in central London's gridlock.

Richard Worman



“Looks like we got us a Convoy”

This article will either give you serious cause for concern, or enlighten you on the future of freight transport: an industry, like it or not, that is very close to our town given the proximity of Felixstowe Port and the A14.

The technical revolution that is about to hit the motor transport industry is possibly on a par with the coming of the railways in the early nineteenth century, particularly in terms of the cost of moving goods. A revolution that will increase the number of trucks on the road whilst significantly reducing the number of drivers.

The advances in automation for driverless vehicles and the technology to manage the scenario is here now. As I write, driverless cars are being ‘driven’ in California (Google’s Self-Driving Car) and convoys of trucks are moving across Spain: road trains with a driver only in the lead vehicle. The European Commission’s SARTRE (Safe Road Trains for the Environment) is financing the experiment.

Both Scania and Komatsu have automated diggers in the quarries of Australia, loading driverless dump trucks hauling iron ore and coal to the surface. OK, these guys are in a people-less environment and any damage they do will be to themselves, not to passing pedestrians but the A14 is close to becoming a people-less environment. These trucks are not making mistakes; the on-board computers have multiple detection devices to keep the trucks on the haul road, and their AEBS (Advance Emergency Braking System) will become mandatory for all new trucks in Europe from 2018.

The European Commission has just announced a £4.5 million project which will be led by Scania to develop SARTRE and explore what changes to legislation will be required to allow road trains on to our highways.

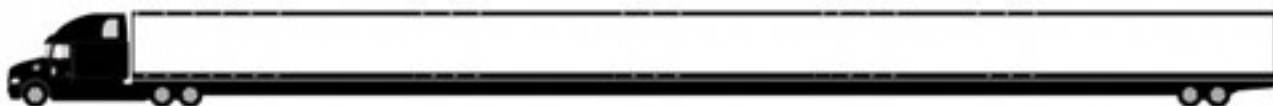
Initially the concept is simple; one truck with a driver is followed very closely by four or five others, all driverless but all taking their instruction by wireless communication, from the lead vehicle. Additionally, each truck will have its own sensors – similar to the reversing beepers on modern cars – with white line detectors and micro satellite navigation. The trucks can be a couple of metres apart, all travelling at a steady 90 kph to save fuel. They take up considerably less road space than a conventional fleet, use significantly less fuel and are economical, having one driver instead of several.

Because each of the trucks will be fitted with AEBS, when the lead truck slows all of the others in the convoy follow, instantly. Each maintains the set distance to the truck in front, but here’s the clever bit. Because our convoy is following a similar convoy a short distance ahead, when the lead convoy is held by congestion our convoy slows to save fuel, allowing the queue to clear.

This type of technological advance needs public support and needs to offer a safer system than we have at present. I predict, therefore, that it is likely to be in use on the A14 between Felixstowe Port and say Alconbury (Freight Depot) before moving to local distributor roads.

The only stumbling block is legislation. Article 8 of the Vienna Convention states that “every driver shall at all times be able to control his vehicle or guide his animals”. The real issue is not how long before we have these road trains with one driver for five vehicles, but how long will it be before we have no drivers at all?

John Norman (Chairman)



Thingstead: the Viking roots of Ipswich (A personal view)

What is Thingstead? It is a song by Finnish heavy metal band, Adramelech. If you listen to it, it sounds very like the music of Ipswich's own metal band, Cradle of Filth. Perhaps this is not so much of a coincidence.

Thingstead is also a Scandinavian word for a neutral meeting place. Perhaps with an element of Judging. Perhaps a sacred place under the watchful eyes of the gods. Usually at a prominent geographical location like a little hill or large forest clearing. Different groups could discuss problems out in the open.

Ipswich has a Thingstead. There are a lot in Scandinavia, but I cannot find another Thingstead in Britain. There are a handful of "Thing" place names, such as Dingwall (Thingwall) in Scotland, and these places are all associated with Viking settlements. So it started me wondering if Ipswich was a major Viking settlement.

The location of Ipswich's Thingstead is unknown, but there has been a bit of speculation where it might have been. I had a bit of luck when I was reading an old dusty book in the Suffolk Record Office, Gatacre Road. There was a contemporary Tudor account. It appears the townspeople were processing up Bolton Lane to go to the Thingstead. As they passed the back of Christchurch Mansion, Edmund Withypoll sent out his retainers who appeared from the back of the Mansion and fell about the townspeople; a great fight ensued. It appears the Thingstead was on Withypoll's land and he did not want them to "trespass" any more. Of course, there are two Bolton Lanes but after consideration I concluded that it was the Bolton Lane to the east of the mansion and that the Thingstead was probably on the high bit of ground near the old putting green next to the ice cream parlour. Mind you, as I have got to know more about the unpleasant Edmund Withypoll, I think he would have done something to spite the townspeople – such as putting a bowling green on the Thingstead. My latest guess as to its location would be the children's play area in the middle of Christchurch Park.

Keith Wade (Suffolk County Council Archaeology) found by excavation that things suddenly changed in Ipswich in the middle of the ninth century. The size of the dwelling plots changed, and the diet of the inhabitants changed. They suddenly were eating a lot more fish. That sounds rather Scandinavian to me. It is known that the Great Viking Army of AD 865 came into East Anglia by sailing up the Orwell. Some language experts say Harwich is a Scandinavian name meaning "The Army's safe harbour". As the Vikings proceeded across England they made large defensive fortifications that they could retreat into if things got difficult. Alfred the Great copied this tactic, with great success, some years later when he established fortified Burghs to defend against the Vikings.

So, I suggest that the Great Viking Army sailed up the Orwell in AD 865 and landed at Ipswich. In order to create a secure bridgehead they made a massive fortress: earth ramparts with ditches and a wooden palisade. The medieval walls of Ipswich were actually the walls of this Viking stronghold, probably one of the largest Viking campaign forts ever built. So large that no-one has noticed it! A bit of arithmetic: the wall of old Ipswich runs for about 3,000 metres. If there were 25 cubic metres of soil in every metre of rampart, and a Viking warrior could move 2 cubic metres of soil in a day (a very conservative estimate), then 40,000 Viking

warriors could have done the earthworks in a day, and perhaps a couple of more days for the woodwork. There are estimates that the Great Viking Army of AD 865 numbered between 1,000 and 60,000. I favour a large number. After the perimeter was secure they would have probably pulled most of their ships out of the water, turned them upside down and – with a bit of turf work – used them as shelter. Perhaps about 538 of them! The river would have been choked with empty vessels with no crew, and for the port to work this would have been a good solution to provide safe and useful storage of the boats.

So I suggest that Ipswich became a Viking town. The main port of entry and supply base for the Viking army in East Anglia. People and supplies were coming and going all the time. Ipswich ware pottery became Thetford ware. The Vikings making pots in Ipswich used the same clay as the Anglo-Saxons but had access to better technology. As the Vikings had a large base at Thetford, it is hardly surprising that large quantities were found there.

The Viking armies came and went and I suggest that some Viking warriors "married" English women and settled down to create the Viking Settlement of Gypeswich, a hybrid settlement that became more English as time went by. It is about this time that I think the Thingstead would have been instituted in order to negotiate with the surrounding Anglo-Saxon communities.

By the time of the reconquest of East Anglia in AD 917 the original Viking warriors would have been in their seventies. The reconquest of East Anglia was more by peace treaty rather than by battle, acknowledging that the Viking settlements had become part of the wider community. I am sure that the treaties would have protected the customs and practices of the settlements as part of a negotiated peace.

And now we come to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which some experts think is a political rewriting of history. I think some entries are just lies. The *Chronicle* states that in AD 991 Olaf and Swein landed at Ipswich and destroyed the town. Yet in AD 996 the Book of Ely states that Ipswich is a good place to do business, because it is in the Danelaw and Danes are more Honest and Straightforward (than Anglo-Saxons). The *Chronicle* states that in AD 1010 Thorkill the Tall landed at Ipswich and destroyed the town. The *Chronicle* states that in AD 1016 Cnut landed at Ipswich with his army and destroyed the town. Yet Keith Wade has found no archaeological evidence for any destruction at these dates. I suggest these destructions are fallacious propaganda. These Viking armies came to Ipswich because it was still a safe harbour, and they would receive a friendly welcome.

However Keith Wade found evidence of destruction in AD 1080ish. I suggest the forces of William the Conqueror destroyed Ipswich after the revolt in the East led by Ralph Wader, Earl of Norfolk. And so in the *Domesday Book* Ipswich is described as in an impoverished state. In the Town's Charter of 1200 the townspeople are allowed to rebuild the town walls and mention is made of their customs and practices. I suggest Ipswich still had a hint of Danish remaining, and the Thingstead continued in folk memory until Edmund Withypoll got rid of it.

Louis Musgrove



Audley End: an Ipswich Society trip, April 26, 2014

Audley End was built to accommodate King James I; however, he is said to have remarked about it: 'Too good for a king, but good enough for a Lord Treasurer'. He only stayed there for three nights in 1614. The house had the ultimate status symbol: matching royal suites in both wings – and early example of “his ’n’ hers” perhaps, although in James’ case more likely “his ’n’ his”... It was the ultimate Prodigy House, the most ambitious Jacobean house in the country.

Walden Abbey was suppressed in 1538 and Henry VIII granted it to his Chancellor (Thomas, Lord Audley), who converted the monastic buildings to a house. His grandson, Thomas Howard (1st Earl of Suffolk) and Lord Treasurer to James I, remodelled and greatly enlarged the house from 1605 to 1614. However, he had embezzled the Treasury to finance its construction. The king rumbled him, he was heavily fined and retired in disgrace to his vast mansion. Ownership passed to Charles II, then back again to the Howards under William III.

The upkeep of such a massive palace was burdensome and in 1751 the then owner ‘reduced’ a large part of it, leaving the house we see today – but it is still huge. Reshapings of house and grounds eventually led to Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown being commissioned to design fashionable gardens and park and Robert Adam producing an equally fashionable suite of reception rooms. I was privileged to have a quick ‘pirate’ tour with a guide: they have marvellous colour schemes and exquisitely delicate decorations.

The 3rd Lord Braybrooke inherited the estate in 1825, made it his main seat and cleverly introduced some neo-Jacobean work – in the best possible taste – no heavy Victorian renovation here. His legacy is the continued Jacobean character of the house despite many alterations by many owners over 400 years.

In 1941 the house was requisitioned for war use; in 1948 the 9th Lord Braybrooke left the house and gardens, but not the contents, to the National Trust. In 1984 English Heritage took over and they have done much valuable restoration work.

The house contains much of opulence and beauty: the Hall with its 1603 oak screen, the Drawing Room with its Canaletto and numerous Dutch School paintings, the Library with its Erard grand piano of 1850 – I played it!, a delightful Gothic Chapel of 1768 and George III’s state bed (never used by him).

On the top floor is the Nursery suite of rooms; there is also the unique Coal Gallery, where coal was shovelled and water boiled for domestic use. Outside, the Service Wing comprises Kitchen, Dairy, Wet & Dry Laundries which show how hard those Victorian house-servants worked. Past the ‘Cloud’ hedge (a heavy fall of snow had distorted the branches, hence the cloud shape) to the Jacobean stables, then the huge, walled kitchen garden; to the Tea House Bridge by Adam.

Go and see Audley End: words alone cannot do it justice. Our thanks to June Peck for another fascinating outing and to Paul, our driver.

Richard Worman

A global engineering business

“I wondered if you would be interested in this photo for the next Newsletter. I took it in Kalka in India, at the railway station which is the terminus for the narrow-gauge 'Toy Train' that runs up through the hills to Shimla. It made me feel a bit homesick!”

Mark Beesley



‘HYDRAULIC BUFFERS
RANSOMES & RAPIER LTD
IPSWICH 1927 ENGLAND’

[The Ransomes Engineering breakaway company of Ransomes & Rapier, founded in 1869, soon made a name for itself that was second to none. In the 1870s it took a leading part in supplying equipment for the Welsh narrow-gauge slate railways, and also for similar railways on sugar plantations far across the sea. Ransomes & Rapier made equipment not only for railways in Britain but for lines in China, India and other parts of the world; they manufactured sluices for the Aswan Dam and for other water control schemes, and built the biggest walking dragline in the world. A testament to their quality and workmanship is the excellent condition of the Kalka railway buffer housing kindly sent in by Mark.]



A remarkable selling-point for the handsomest building on the northern quays: buy, lease or rent this and it will clearly, self-proclaimingly, be... character building.



Snippets 2

Independent Shops

The regrettable aspect of town centre shopping is represented by the closure of Memorable Cheeses in Dial Lane, a small private business but the kind which gives character to a town. Where will the former patrons go now to buy their Berkswell, Ticklemore or, indeed, Suffolk cheeses? And there are three adjacent empty shops. And several more in The Walk and Thoroughfare, all little shops which made our town special. Isn't this a national problem which could only be eased by re-considering rents, business rates, subsidies and possibly more charges on out-of-town businesses?

Cheap and Cheerful Shops

This is the other side of the regrets expressed above. The Tower Ramparts Shopping Centre is obviously receiving a welcome boost by the opening of Iceland and Poundland in the multi-storey premises previously occupied by Littlewoods. Situated ideally between the main bus station and the Cornhill, the Shopping Centre with its considerable 'footfall' feels well used and popular. Those who criticise the increasing number of 'cut-price' shops should recognise the effects of continuing austerity, especially in a rather low-wage town. As in most towns today there are enough empty shops without adding to that number.

New Police Base

An office building in Museum Street, even with its blue lamp, may not look like a traditional police station but it is the town centre base for the police and the Ipswich Central Safe Neighbourhood Team. The front desk is open 8am-8pm and there is an intercom service for out-of-hours use. The former police station (Civic Drive/Elm Street) closed in May.

Thirty Years On

Crown Pools celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in May. In that time it has welcomed over 15 million visitors. It was interesting to be reminded that a referendum was held before the Pool was built and of the small response a small majority voted against it!

'Navigate on the Orwell'

This is the theme of the current window exhibition by Ipswich Maritime Trust. The display celebrates the importance of the Orwell, the ships and seafarers to the prosperity of Ipswich. This is the first of what is intended to be a row of five 'museum windows'. You can find it on the Waterfront in a lane between Dance East and the Custom House.

Arboretum memories

David Miller, who was born in 1971 in the Henley Road Park Lodge (*Arboretum Lodge*) is writing a book: *The history of the Arboretum* and would welcome your anecdotes, stories and memories (by email to the Secretary please: secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk). All proceeds from the book are going to the Friends of Christchurch Park.

Heritage Open Days

The Ipswich Society is again organising Heritage Open Days – buildings which are not normally available to the public. They will be open, free of charge, on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September. Look out for the leaflet at the Tourist Information Centre from mid-August.

Catching the Trolley



IS members Bob Malster and Bob Markham keep Trolleybus 105 company while it dries out.

The Ipswich Transport Museum has completed the restoration of one of our Ipswich trolleybuses and in March it was transported to the East Anglian Transport Museum (EATM) at Carlton Colville where it will run on their overhead wires over the summer. The Ipswich Society sponsored one of its seats and I was invited as our representative to the official launch of Trolleybus 105 (1948) at the EATM on May 10.

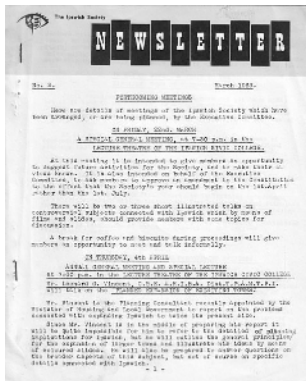
At 11am we, the invited sponsors, plus four bus-loads of ITM members were given tea and cakes while Trolleybus 105 (with Norwich Road Bridge 9A on the destination blind) was driven round the circuit at Carlton Colville to 'dry out the motor' before we could ride on it. The copious overnight rain has caused problems with the earthing. A stroll around the Museum at this point revealed the much older Ipswich Trolleybus no. 2 (1923) on static display. Its I.B.C. lettering only just finished, it was towed up the A12 the day before on a low-loader. Then at 12.15 the event we had all been waiting for – we all piled onto 105 and were underway. Silent and clean, our ride on this vehicle was a delight to those of us who can remember travelling the Ipswich streets on its like fifty-plus years ago.

Caroline Markham

*[Note: Ipswich Transport Museum (www.ipswichtransportmuseum.co.uk),
East Anglian Transport Museum, Carlton Colville (www.eatm.org.uk)]*



Tony Hill, former Society Executive member and editor of this Newsletter, has let us see his collection of *Ipswich Society Newsletters* dating back to the early years of the Society. I will feature selected items from this collection in forthcoming issues with summaries of the contents. With all the benefits of hindsight, certain ironies and parallels with today's problems may be noted. **R.G.**



Issue 2*, March 1963

Forthcoming meetings. A list of meetings including a Special General Meeting at the Lecture Hall, Ipswich Civic College to discuss future activities; two or three talks 'on controversial subjects' illustrated by films or slides. AGM on 4 April to feature a talk by Mr Leonard G. Vincent on 'Planned expansion of existing towns'. 'Mr Vincent is the Planning Consultant recently appointed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government to report on the problems connected with expanding Ipswich to twice its present size.' A visit to the expanding town of Thetford is planned, as is an exhibition of the work of the Ipswich and other Civic Societies. A Symposium on Street Improvement Projects is planned for the autumn.

A report for the year 1962/3. The Streets Improvement Group (chaired by Mr R. Westlake, Secretary: Mr B.G. Law) is still the most active of the original 'study groups'. Reference is made to '... a scheme for the improvement of Upper Orwell Street. After a slow start there has been an encouraging response from a number of the property owners, and traders, in this busy but architecturally undistinguished street, and it is to be hoped to show what can be done to improve the appearance of the less glamorous thoroughfares of the town [several demolished in 2014]... The Group has also made a survey of the Cornhill, and prepared a draft scheme of improvements, which they have submitted to the Borough Surveyor for comment. This follows on their advising on the re-painting of the Town Hall at the invitation of the Borough Surveyor last summer.'

'Arising out of the work of the Street Improvement Group, the Society has started a collection of colour slides illustrating good and bad points about the urban scene in Ipswich. It is hoped that these will provide material on which lectures may be based, and it is intended to extend the practice of sending members to give illustrated talks on the aims of The Ipswich Society to clubs, groups and other societies.'

Meetings are reported on with Messrs Vine & Vine architects for the Civic Centre, showing the latest plans and models which had been before the Council. Similarly with Messrs Skipper & Corless, architects for the Greyfriars Development.

'The Executive has been meeting regularly... has dealt with a number of matters of amenity, including tree preservation orders, the disposal of household rubbish, alterations to Tower Street, and the future of the Sailors' Rest. They have also introduced the "Newsletter" and given some consideration to other means of publicity... The Society's membership list now has 251 names on it.' (It is noted later that this is .2 per cent of the population of Ipswich; subscription 'still only 2/6d.')

'The Newsletter heading... which appears for the first time with this issue, is the work of David Coleman in collaboration with Mr. Bernard Reynolds, who designed the "eye" symbol for the Ipswich Society after its founding.'

(Signed by Hon. Treasurer W.G. Cook and Hon. Secretary P.E. Underwood.)

The March 1963 Newsletter is Roneo'd on 10"x8" sheets, stapled; masthead black on yellow.

[*If any reader of the current Newsletter has a copy of issue no. 1, please let the Editor know.]

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

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Dates for your diary

Ipswich Society Outings 2014

August 4 2014 Houses of Parliament, London
Tuesday 16 September 2014 Barrow Boys and Bankers, London

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

Wednesday 15 October Tim Buxbaum, author of '100 best buildings in Suffolk'

Wednesday 19 November 7.30pm **Ipswich Society Annual Awards Evening**. Venue tbc.

Members are invited to suggest nominations of buildings and developments in Ipswich; send them to the Society's Honorary Secretary (contact details above).

Wednesday 17 December Speaker to be confirmed.

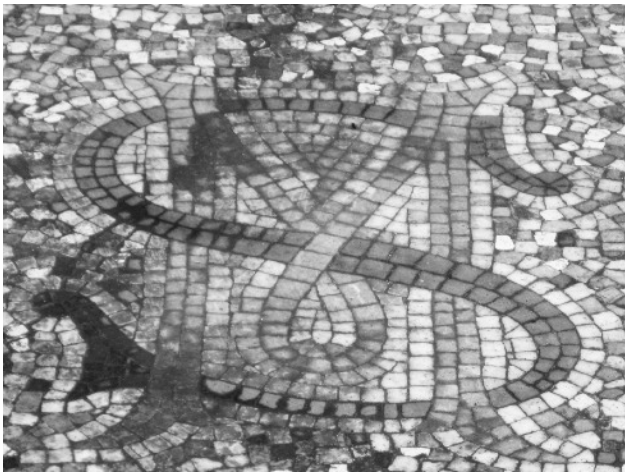


Do contact the Hon. Secretary if you would like to receive the Newsletter by email, rather than the paper version. It has been positively received by those who have opted for it and helps to reduce the Society's costs.



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

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



Church of St Michael (which burnt down in March 2011), Upper Orwell Street: Open Day, Saturday May 10, 2014; stalls, music, food, plans for the future.

