



The Ipswich Society

NEWSLETTER

January 2017

Issue 206

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Cornhill, October 1982. Paving work in progress, site of old bus shelters (from our Image Archive)

Editorial

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2017. I do try to highlight one or two aspects of town life which may not have featured in past issues and the photograph on this page relates to an annual event which is establishing itself in the cultural calendar: our Multicultural Festival staged in Alexandra Park. World music fans will have noticed in 2014 a band led by a former member of The Bhundu Boys from South Africa (which also featured a young female bassist from Essex). Last year, Peppery Productions excelled themselves with headliner Kanda Bongo Man, king of Kwassa kwassa, and his band. Although he was born Bongo Kanda, the compères of the day seemed a little ill-informed and expected a bongo-player judging by their announcements. Suffice to say that the band has, since 1979, featured some outstanding musicians including the guitar superstar, Diblo Dibala. The band playing in Ipswich did not disappoint and this was a splendid end to a rich mix of Bollywood dance and song and Asian hip-hop. Unmissable.

The Cornhill refuses to go away as a talking-point, rightly so. Our cover photograph shows its last major makeover when roseate block-paving covered the gentle slope and wags began to refer to it as 'Red Square': perhaps also a reference to the complexion of the Borough's majority party.

Robin Gaylard

42 new members



Master Congolese soukous musician, Kanda Bongo Man and his band perform at the Ipswich Multicultural Festival in Alexandra Park, September 2016.

Chairman's remarks

A Happy New Year to you all. Could this be the year we see some marked changes to the landscape of Ipswich? As I write this the press has been full of good news about the occupancy of shops in the town centre, but at 85% it still means 15% of units are unoccupied, and of course, one would expect an upturn in the month before Christmas. What I'd really like to see is some of the long term vacant sites subject to a planning application, an archaeological dig or dare I say builders on site.

There are generally two major stumbling blocks to housing (or apartment) development; the obvious is that the cost of construction exceeds the potential income when the units are eventually sold. Quite reasonably the developer needs to make a profit, with some sites that mark up is high, to cover the risk of failing to sell as planned. This particularly applies to flats where the complete block has to be finished before the first residents can move in.

The second, not quite as obvious, is the need for archaeological exploration prior to any work starting on site (and obviously before any return can be realised on the investments made). Sites close to the northern quays, particularly those alongside original quay sides (College Street) potentially have extensive remains, for example, evidence that Ipswich was a significant Middle Saxon town or the extent of Wolsey's college.

The rules of an archaeological dig are that the developer pays, which effectively means that house prices are increased to cover these costs.

I am particularly pleased with the changes made to upper Princes Street, suitably resurfaced in the proximity of the listed buildings, with the new contra-flow of cycles and vehicles but I was extremely disappointed that white lettering and particularly large arrows were painted on to the new surface. You may recall that when similar white lines appeared in the Butter Market (outside Costa) I persuaded Suffolk CC to remove them as unnecessary. No such luck in Princes Street; here the arrows are 'essential' because the direction of vehicle traffic has changed!

How many bus stations does Ipswich need? How many have we got? And do the County Council understand what is meant by an integrated transport hub? It's where you get off one form of transport (a long distance bus?) and get into another (a local bus or your dad's car?).

Network Rail and Abellio seem to have grasped this; it is now considerably easier to get off a train and on to a bus or taxi at Ipswich Station. I have high hopes that the new forecourt will work well, particularly for pedestrians, especially those walking into town. It remains to be seen if car drivers observe the changes and restrictions rather than assuming that theirs is the only priority as the London train arrives.



And of those bus stations? We appear to now have four (five if the Station Forecourt is included). Tower Ramparts for a local bus, the Old Cattle Market for a not so local bus, Cardinal Park for the regular coach service to the rest of the country and Crown Street lay-by for coaches arriving in town with visitors. The next question of course is what do most passengers need after a longish bus journey – and which of the above bus stations have such facilities?

Finally a plea: you will have read elsewhere in this Newsletter requests for volunteers to undertake various occasional roles for the Society. I would personally welcome additional people on to the executive committee to help out with our regular events, Winter Talks, Summer Outings, Heritage Open Days and Annual Awards. Please get in touch.

John Norman

Planning matters

The Ipswich Garden Suburb aka The Northern Fringe

At last the Highways Department of Suffolk County Council have woken to the traffic implications of the developments and to the inadequacy of the traffic surveys produced by the developers. Is the replacement of Westerfield Road roundabout by traffic lights all that's necessary? The plans have been called in and the developers asked to produce new proposals not only regarding transport plans but also for the drainage systems. We are concerned at the proposed public transport provision of only one bus route to the town; there are no proposals for traffic going east towards the hospital, Ransomes Europark or on to Felixstowe docks. Nor has there been any consideration of the effect of the increased traffic on air quality, particularly in the town centre where we are already over the NICE limits.

There were about 2000 replies to the **Cornhill** public consultation; we suspect 90% politely requesting different schemes (and a few unprintable). The proposers are now considering the next steps and we can only guess that they might draw up an alternative brief. An application for changing Grimwade's store into a restaurant has been made but we understand that there are major difficulties with such a conversion. However, we are optimistic that a good use will be found for the site in due course.

Ipswich town centre is looking fitter than it has done for a long time; even Carr Street has had a boost with the occupation of the old QD store by B & M Stores. They might have moved in spontaneously but the continuous pressure, including the threat of legal enforcement, by the planning department pressurising them to open a town centre shop must have had an effect.

However, a recent national survey shows that Britain now has too many shops at too higher rents. Predictions by the Centre for Retail Research show store numbers falling by 22% with 316,000 job losses; 41% of town centres will lose 27,638 stores in the next five years. Meanwhile, online sales will have risen to 22% by the end of the decade. We tend to remain insular in Ipswich, thinking that we can prevent this major change in our way of life but it is happening all around us. Our leaders need to formulate a long term plan for what is going to come about in the near future, not for reintroducing the golden era of times past which anyway only existed in sepia-tinted rosy-hued memories. We need a plan that accepts that the town centre will have a greater focus on leisure and housing rather than retail.

It looks as though the **Upper Orwell river crossings** will be built. Currently, a competition for the design is under-way and engineers are on site drilling trial holes. The Society has considerable doubts on the business case and the traffic figures and we would like to see the detailed numbers.

St Clement's Hospital (built to the design of W.R. Ribbons in 1870) is to be redeveloped; the original hospital buildings will be retained and internally remodelled to provide a total of 47 dwellings. This is a good scheme retaining most of the Victorian buildings which surveyors report are in good condition. Ipswich is unusual, then, in retaining their asylum buildings for a long term use. Most of the 150 mental hospitals in the UK have been demolished in their entirety and replaced by housing developments by one of the big private house-building companies. The southern half of the site is a different story; this was sold by the NHS and is now owned by Bovis Homes. Their plans for 227 dwellings (20% affordable), have been discussed at three meetings of the Urban Design Panel who have major reservations about the site layout and the design of the proposed houses. In November the Borough Planning Committee heard an impassioned speech from our Chairman and, despite the Officers' recommendations deferred their decision for four weeks for Bovis to come up with changes in the design. Watch this space.

Edith Cook was the pioneering aviatrix whom the Society has memorialised with a Blue Plaque. The Suffolk Aviation Heritage Group applied to have their latest design of a memorial on the plinth at Back Hamlet. The Society said the statue must be 'sufficiently well designed to convey a clear message from a distance' and their proposal failed in this respect. The Planning Committee agreed and rejected the design as not complying with the relevant design policies. We remain highly supportive of the project.

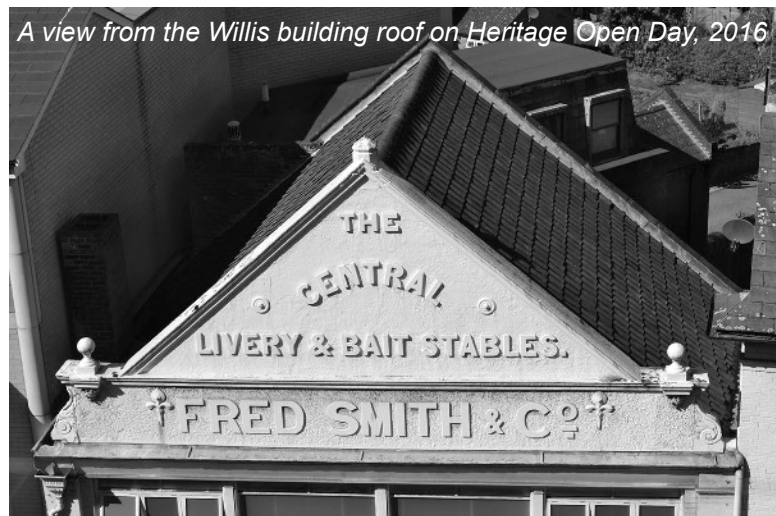
There are fresh developments of 60 council houses on the **Took's bakery site** with access from the Old Norwich Road and, separately a large warehouse and distribution centre behind the old Bury Road B&Q building on a greenfield site. We will report more fully in the next issue. *Mike Cook*

Heritage Open Day Weekend 2016

Well, what a weekend 10 and 11 September was here in sunny Ipswich! The weather was good, the town was full of people and all of the venues and attractions open for the weekend reported best ever visitor numbers! The town centre enjoyed a weekend that included the final exhibition of the Pigs Gone Wild in the Corn Exchange. That contributed to the numbers in town and we benefited from those making a 'full day of it' by also visiting one or more of our venues.

This year we had thirty-six venues and attractions open plus the ever popular guided walks and the Ipswich Transport Museum bus trips. Something for everyone and feedback informed us that visitors came from far and wide in addition to the many local people. Of particular note for me, as the coordinator for the weekend, was the increased number of families and young people seen at the venues.

Huge thanks are extended to all involved in agreeing to open buildings, provision of stewards, guiding walks and driving buses and volunteers from the committee and membership of the Society. Thanks to Ipswich Borough Council who provide us with valuable assistance in designing our flyers and booklets and support through the team at the Tourist Information Centre.



So what can we do in 2017 to build upon this year's weekend? Firstly, it's time for me to step aside as the lead coordinator.

I have been involved for four years and it is time for someone to take a fresh look and inspire new thoughts and improvements. I will, of course, be available to assist in any way required.

Secondly, when I joined the Executive Committee our late Chairman, Jack Chapman, tasked me with engaging the Society with young people. Whilst I have had some success there is still a desire within the entire Executive Committee and the current Chairman to increase interest in the Society's work and what it may have to offer to young people.

Amongst our membership's families and contacts, could there be students, pupils or youth groups that might consider getting involved as part of a project or particular topic they are studying? Is there something different we could do to increase interest? I would welcome contact from anyone interested in exploring the potential or with any ideas. Members of the committee would be able to support and mentor anyone wishing to get involved. It's a big task to coordinate and any help would be welcome.

Finally from me, if readers can think of any buildings or locations that they may wish to be included for the first time, please just let us know. We are keen to increase our annual 'offer' and get more buildings open over the Heritage Open Weekends.

Graham Smith HOD Coordinator

What lies beneath the car parks? Archaeology and development in Ipswich

This piece outlines some of the considerations for archaeology and development in Ipswich. The town has origins as a significant Anglo-Saxon and Viking-Age settlement – *Gippeswic* – which was one of four recognised apparent trading gateways for emerging kingdoms in the seventh century. These were *Gippeswic* (East Anglia), *Hamwic* (Southampton; Wessex), *Lundenwic* (London; Mercia) and *Eoforwic* (York; Northumbria).

Corresponding ‘wic’ sites existed around the North Sea, and together they yield evidence for cultural, social and trading connections, contributing to the international story of Early Medieval society. The heritage of Ipswich into the eleventh century rivals that of places such as York and Dublin, which capitalise on their stories in the *Jorvik Viking Centre* and *Dublinia* attractions.

On the one hand, the importance derives from the corpus of material from sites investigated over the years. On the other, it comes from the potential of undisturbed remains. A significant consideration for future developments is, therefore, the impacts of proposals on remnants of the past. Many areas are highly sensitive, and several are statutorily protected as nationally Scheduled Monuments. So what lies beneath, and what issues might there be for redevelopment?

Inference as to what may be present can be drawn from previous excavations: burnt buildings; waterfronts; personal items; kilns; cemeteries; Rhenish wine barrels; churches; friaries; roads; bread; ship rivets; animal bones; craft; local and imported goods; leather; wood, plant remains... Future development sites have the potential to hold further evidence relating to the evolution of the settlement. Any sites near St Peter’s, for example, may preserve more about earliest origins. College Street lies along the former strand line of the Orwell and the waterfront has developed since the 7th century through revetments built out successively deeper: sites between Bridge Street and The Mill, where timber structures have been recorded, may lie over surviving early stretches. Eastwards of St Peter’s lie the monastic cemetery, foundations of Wolsey’s College, and the Friends burial ground. Between Key Street, Star Lane and Fore Street, evaluation hints at the lost church of ‘Ostirbolt’. Cox Lane car park, a large Scheduled area, is probably the early ‘industrial’ zone.

Generally, the complexity and significance of urban archaeology is a consideration for development. The National Planning Policy Framework requires developers to present



evidence on the significance of sites so that the impacts of development can be assessed in planning decisions. Evaluation also identifies the condition and vulnerability of remains – they are usually part of a long sequence and may have been affected by later foundations, cellars, basements and services.

Discussion between Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council, Historic England and developers on the principle and form of proposals is essential. To protect nationally important remains, management options may include preservation through set-aside, or, where feasible, through foundation design – although this presents logistical challenges if it is to be successful and avoid damage. If intrusive development impacts on a site are considered acceptable, high-quality excavation work and assessment is a means of ‘preserving by record’, with enhancement of public understanding. Costs for this, which are the responsibility of the developer, can be high.



Excavation on Foundation Street in the early 1980s: a sunken building of c1000-1200 AD which had been destroyed by fire. It had a clay floor, and a large Theford-ware storage jar inserted into the floor in the corner. At least two earlier buildings had preceded it.

Across historic towns, archaeological management is one of the multiple considerations in the viability of new schemes. However, into the future the archaeological record is a unique and irreplaceable record of undocumented history for all periods of Ipswich’s past, for which we have a collective responsibility to curate and promote.

Abby Antrobus, Senior Archaeological Officer, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Find out more:

Ipswich Urban Archaeological Database: <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/ipswich-uad>

Suffolk Historic Environment Record: <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/home>

Ipswich Excavation Archive 1974-1990: http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/ipswich_parent_2015/

Ipswich Archaeological Trust: <http://www.ipswichat.org.uk/>

Historic England National Heritage List: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

abby.antrobus@suffolk.gov.uk, Senior Archaeological Officer, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

The Empire strikes back

One couldn't help being reminded of a Hollywood action movie set as we prowled carefully around the building site which is currently concealed inside the upper storeys of the Buttermarket Centre. At any moment I felt we might be confronted by Bruce Willis or his nemesis Alan Rickman from *Die Hard*: one toting a bazooka and the other an Uzi machine pistol in the shadows of one of the dim rooms or uneven passages which are slowly being transformed into the Empire Cinema & Bowling complex.

Andrew Mackenzie of the builders Maeve and his assistant Max conducted a small group of us around the labyrinthine site during the course of a dark afternoon in late November.

Entering the bowels of the delivery bay we were elevated to the third floor where we saw the plans for the conversion and the way in which the individual cinemas were being conjured from the enormous space. It was

revealing to see the extent to which the old building had been eviscerated – so impossible to gauge where Allders had met TJ Hughes and Laura Ashley in the past.

The preparation of partition walls and portals was very nearly complete, the interiors with steel structures and boarded podiums for seating were being fitted. We

heard that the opening date for the end of January 2017 was feasible, though Empire would have preferred to open in the run-up to Christmas.

It was comforting that our guide, Andrew from Zimbabwe, knew very well his domain as it would have been easy to lose ourselves. Amongst the rough concrete and sleek plasterboard which exposed itself, we made our way along barely finished passages into enormous auditoria and quite small and intimate spaces, soon to become film theatres.

The donning of hardhats and high-vis vests was an exciting part of a fascinating visit and the discussion afterwards was divided between the exploration of the daunting site and the prospect of twelve new screens next year.

Tony Marsden



Snippets 1

More on Heritage Open Days, 2016.

“Full marks to the organisers . . .

I cannot hazard a guess as to how many locals and visitors took advantage of opportunities to visit the various places open to the public during the Ipswich Heritage weekend. I am pretty certain that the great majority of them were delighted with what they saw and the enthusiasm shown by the volunteer stewards who shared their knowledge of buildings etc they clearly adored. I’ve not walked so far, climbed so many stairs or admired so many rooftop views in many a long year. The good people of the area should be terribly proud of what their Ipswich Society achieved during the weekend. To co-ordinate a comprehensive programme defining seven centuries of local history must have been a mammoth task. Full marks to everyone concerned from all of us who thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of ‘bagging’ as many buildings as possible in such a relatively short space of time. By the way, do the good people at the iconic Willis building know they have a couple of mini-squatters in their lawn on the roof?”
(A review from Ron Eyley on the Society’s *Facebook* page.)

Post Office controversy

In October the Post Office announced its plan to move from Sailmakers to upstairs in W H Smith in Westgate Street. This mirrors similar moves in other towns. Obviously the Post Office has received very favourable rental terms from WH Smith. Many customers in Ipswich are not amused because the spacious convenient access in Sailmakers will be hard to match in Smith’s cramped premises. It’s all a far cry from pre-privatisation days with Crown Post Offices serving the public’s needs. But, it’s also true that fewer people use P O services.

What next for the Cornhill?

Improvements to the Cornhill are likely to be less drastic than the multi-step hazards originally proposed. This seems a logical deduction from the opinions expressed, after the unfavourable responses from public consultation, that it will be a less expensive alternative.

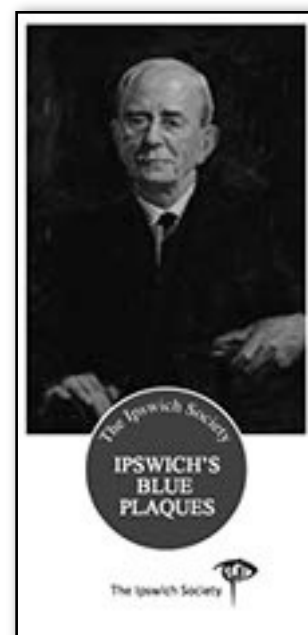
Suggested dates are that the new plans – yet to be decided – should be approved by late 2017, work started in 2018 and finished before Christmas 2018.

More Blue Plaques to see and read about

The Society’s informative brochure about our Blue Plaques has been brought up to date with the addition of the four new plaques commemorating Ipswich women – Nina Layard, Constance Andrews, Mary Whitmore and Margaret Tempest. Dozens of people joined a walking tour on 8 October to see the unveiling of these plaques.

Employment in Princes Street

Work is proceeding on the site of the former Rileys snooker hall where a 5-storey office block is being built for Birketts Solicitors. Another new office block is planned across the street, which it is said should appeal to an expanding local firm or perhaps a company re-locating from London. Together with the many other offices nearby this will clearly be a major business hub which could employ some 6,000 people.



The Future of 'High Streets' in Black and Rose

Anyone interested in our historic towns and cities – and that must surely include all Ipswich Society members – will have thought about the future of Britain's 'high streets'. I say 'Britain' because this is a national problem, however much some people may deplore what is less than ideal in Ipswich. I thought it might be helpful to set out in general terms the 'pros and cons' which I will call the 'black view' of pessimism and the 'rosy view' of optimism.

The BLACK view of the future of town centres

a) Starting in the 1950s and 60s, town centre properties were bought up as investments by pension funds, insurance companies etc. so that now very few shops belong to individual



owners and occupants. (Half a dozen at most in our town centre?) Rents have surged accordingly so small businesses rarely set up and grow.

b) In the 1980s especially, the Government encouraged or watched benignly the building of superstores out-of-town which catered for increasing numbers of car owners and free parking. Retail parks also appeared, attracting various businesses to huge 'sheds' with huge stocks.

c) The convenience of internet shopping is obvious. It is increasing fast, benefiting delivery firms but certainly not town centre shops.

d) This means that all 'high streets' are too big, especially those that don't serve a large and affluent catchment area. Empty shops then create a bad impression on potential shoppers, making a vicious circle.

e) Consequently, reducing the size of 'high streets' to make areas of viability more compact might be a logical idea but in practice commercial decisions produce closures like a scattergun. (In Ipswich 'abandoning' shops in St Matthew's Street and the west end of Westgate Street and the east end of Carr Street would be unlikely to happen neatly!)

f) Niche-market shops are sometimes advocated as a partial solution but these are small by definition and how many delicatessens etc. could a town like Ipswich sustain?

g) Town centres are sometimes viewed as dirty and dangerous so there are many people who prefer to drive to out-of-town stores whenever possible.

The ROSY view of the future of town centres

a) Whilst some people dislike crowds, many others - especially the young - enjoy the bustle of town centres, not necessarily to buy but to socialise. The present profusion of coffee bars and snack bars illustrates this wish to relax and chat.

b) 'Comparative shopping' where the customer can feel and try on clothes, for example, will always have a place not to be destroyed by internet shopping.



Butter Market 1980s, St Lawrence Street at right

c) A pleasant built environment will continue to attract users. Cleanliness, good paving and trees all complement what an historic town should provide, with well designed shop fronts making the most of old buildings. (Sensible improvements of the Cornhill should help.)

d) Ample and relatively cheap car parking in town needs to co-exist with the option of good park & ride services and good local bus services. (Ideally, a frequent and well advertised bus service needs to run between the town centre and the Waterfront, which is fast becoming such an important part of town.)

e) More people living in the town centre is an advantage. This requires new town houses and flats (e.g. on the former newspaper Archant site as proposed) and more people living over the shops (there was a scheme pioneered in Ipswich but Government funding was withdrawn).

f) A safe and unthreatening environment is essential. (g) A thriving market is a big asset.

h) Promoting the uniqueness of a town centre helps to motivate shoppers and visitors. (Sceptics need to be persuaded that Ipswich is no longer mainly an industrial town – but one with a mixed modern economy and housed in many attractive buildings and a historic street pattern with its subtle twists and turns.)

Conclusion

My guess is that the health of our town centre, compared with towns of similar size in Britain, could be described as 'above average but must continue to improve'.

I feel sure that the Editor would be pleased to receive your thoughtful views on whether the future is largely 'black' or 'rosy'.

Neil Salmon

The John Blatchly memorial armillary sphere sundial

It is well-known that an armillary sphere sundial once adorned the Rock Gardens in the Lower Arboretum in the early 1900s. It formed the centre-piece of the gardens on the north-west side of Christchurch Park's Wilderness Pond. The sundial was featured on many early Arboretum postcards of the period (picture 1).

The origin of the sundial is a fascinating mystery. It has been speculated that it originally belonged to the Fonnereau family of Christchurch Mansion. James Mann, former Head Gardener of the Arboretum, wrote on the back of two postcards of the Rock Gardens "This is the Lower Arboretum which I have reconstructed" and "This is another view of the Lower Arboretum garden that I laid out, with its very old sundial and rustic bridge." Mann had probably designed the Rock Gardens in the early 1920s and even then was referring to the sundial as "very old".

The sundial was removed from the Arboretum probably when the Rock Gardens were later redesigned and it was then displayed in the gardens at the back of Christchurch Mansion next to the Wolsey Art Gallery until it fell into disrepair (picture 2).

The Friends of Christchurch Park have led a project to restore the sundial and locate it back to the Lower Arboretum. The dedication is to the late Dr John Blatchly MBE, former Headmaster of Ipswich School who died in 2015. Suffolk Masonry Services are carrying out the restoration and relocation (picture 3).



This project has attracted considerable interest and support. We are very grateful to Ipswich Borough Council, Ipswich School, Suffolk County Council, The Friends of the Ipswich Museums, The Ipswich and Suffolk Club, The Ipswich Society, The Lord Belstead Charitable Trust and W. D. Coe Ltd and a number of individual patrons who have made generous donations. The Friends of Christchurch Park invite further contributions from Ipswichians as a mark of their esteem and regard.

A short booklet is in preparation explaining the full story of the restoration which will be ready to accompany the unveiling of the restored sundial.

Note: If you have any information about the history of this sundial or any old photographs we would love to hear from you. Please contact the Reg Driver Visitor Centre on 01473 433980.

David Miller

Abellio Greater Anglia

Abellio have won the franchise to operate the railway between Norwich, Ipswich and Liverpool Street (and most of the trains in East Anglia) for the next nine years. One of the conditions of the new franchise is that they replace their entire fleet of trains by March 2021, almost 1,000 new passenger coaches across the region.

This caused me to wonder how many trains they need to run the Liverpool Street - Norwich service. Currently there are 15 class 90 locomotives, each hauling ten coaches and a DVT (driver cab trailer – at the opposite end of the train to the engine). On a typical weekday eleven are ‘in service’, one is undergoing routine maintenance at Crown Point, Norwich and three resting, all to run a twice hourly service into the capital. Thus the next question is how many new train sets have they ordered to replace the existing ones?



Over the entire franchise the answer is 170 sets consisting of 1,043 vehicles. On the Great Eastern Main Line however it is a mere ten train sets, each with 12 coaches, not enough to run three trains per hour to the capital as the contract requires. The likely scenario is that regional trains will fill the timetable gaps, as happens at present, so check the timetable before booking. The new train sets will be Stadler electric FLIRTs (Fast Light Innovative Regional Train) built in Switzerland.

The bulk of the rest will be Stadler bi-mode (electric under wires / diesel elsewhere) units, 24 four car trains and 14 three car trains to replace those currently being used Ipswich – Felixstowe, Ipswich – Lowestoft, Ipswich – Peterborough and on similar routes out of Norwich and Cambridge. Note here that the shortest trains will be 3 car, replacing the single car units currently used, for example, on the Felixstowe line.

In addition there will be 89 new five-car trains (445 vehicles) and 22 ten car trains (220 vehicles) for use across the region, all to be built in Derby by Bombardier. This contract alone is said to be worth £900 million.

Thus there will be an investment of £1.4 billion on rolling stock, £60 million improving stations, £120 million on maintenance facilities and a £3.7 billion contribution to the Treasury for the privilege of running a railway; ‘tis no wonder train fares are rising.

New Schools

There could be nothing as easy as predicting the number of school places required in five years time; or at least you would think that would be the case. Simply count the number of live births, make a minor adjustment for incomers and hey – we will need that many places.

For some inexplicable reason we are going to be short of school places from next September and an amazing 800,000 places short by September 2020. That’s 2,000 new schools required over the next four years or to put it another way two every working day!

Predictions by Local Authorities are that there will be 792,000 additional pupils spread across an estimated 1,744 primary schools and 378 secondary schools. Uncertainty between Local Authorities (who need to provide the schools) and the Government (who decide who will run them) has contributed to the indecision and delay.

The East of England (population 6 million) will have 90,000 new pupils and require 267 new schools (222 primary and 45 secondary). In Suffolk there are likely to be 10,000 pupils without a place (if no new building takes place).

[East of England: Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambs, Herts and Bedfordshire.]

John Norman



There is a noticeable shift in the social-economic profile of the people who live immediately outside the city centre. This has been partially brought about by the increased acceptability of living in the very centre.

Pokey flats above town centre shops (where they existed) have given way to spacious 'lofts' and similar high specification, highly desirable apartments, frequently converted from office blocks. What these city centre homes lack are basic but by no means

essential amenities: private gardens, views of open countryside, car parking. This omission is more than compensated for by the convenience of the proximity to the theatre, the railway station and a wide array of restaurants. The outcome is that city centre homes are now commanding a premium, pushing essential workers (cinema ushers, station porters, restaurant waiters) one step further out.

The effect can clearly be seen in Ipswich; houses 500 metres from the shopping core have become 'rented accommodation' with short term tenants whose basic need is simply a bed for the night but have a tendency to forget to put the bin out, don't prune the roses and display previously used furniture in the front garden.

This is the first step towards these houses becoming less desirable for ordinary families who in turn move to the suburbs, typically on to the new developments. Unless there is local authority intervention the houses become modern day slums, unfit for human habitation. When this happened between the wars it led to 'slum clearance', hence the doughnut. A core of expensive property in the centre is surrounded by cleared land, bomb sites as they were called in the 50s and 60s; today it is previously developed or Brownfield land.

The phenomena hit the northern cities in the mid 1960s. Liverpool in particular became a doughnut, a functioning centre with shops and leisure facilities surrounded by acres of cleared housing and the rebuilding programme coughing and stumbling. To a certain extent it was noticeable in Ipswich, the terraced housing north of Crown Street condemned as unfit for human habitation, the Potteries swept away under a slum clearance programme (and in this case a new college built on the site) and the housing on the Mount (St Matthew's) giving way to the Civic Centre.

So what is to be done? How can we stop Norwich Road, St Helen's Street and Burrell Road becoming run down, unloved and deprived?

John Norman

The Planning jungle

Another Wednesday, another Planning meeting. The Ipswich Society tries to attend every meeting of the Planning and Development Committee of Ipswich Borough Council. Either myself or Mike Cook will sit through the discussions for a dozen or so applications which fill a Wednesday morning. Generally there is no particular application of immediate interest but at almost every meeting there is at least one application that we need to keep an eye on, perhaps comment on and occasionally 'speak' at the meeting.

And members of the committee listen: they value our contribution; they don't always agree but we do help provide a balanced view of the significant developments across the town. Such was the case on November 16 when the application for 179 houses on the St Clement's Hospital site came before the Committee. The officers had recommended approval and the mood of the meeting was probably going the same way until I took the opportunity to speak.

I pointed out certain aspects of the design that we thought could be improved with very little expenditure by the applicant, Bovis Homes. At this stage the application was simply pencil lines on a plan. We suggested they move a road a few meters west (to align with the centre line of the existing hospital), to pave the entire length of the 'boulevard' in a single material and comply with the Borough's Cycling Strategy (amongst others). The committee agreed and the proposal was deferred to enable the architect to revise these details and bring the application back to the next meeting.

The important point here is that I spoke before the decision to defer had been made. The objectors to any planning application are allowed to speak only once, thus I would not be able to comment on any of the changes made at the subsequent meeting.

If I had wanted to speak during the second consideration, I should have held my comments and not spoken in November. But if I had not spoken I'm sure the application would not have been deferred. The committee would have almost certainly followed the officers' advice and approved the proposal (no doubt with conditions).

Another Wednesday, another Planning meeting. This one is on December 14 and the application by Bovis Homes is back before the committee. It is a long meeting, more 'garden grabbing' schemes than usual and each takes an hour. The officers present the case for acceptance. I'm fuming, hastily writing notes, hoping I get a chance to present the Society's view.

The report however says it all "the traditional house types are generally disappointing" (how can the officer recommend approval of a housing scheme they suggest is 'disappointing?'). "Further details of the east-west avenue are required" (how can Councillors make a decision without essential details?). "Some detailed elements of the design could be improved further, particularly in terms of fenestration." Note that if the scheme as proposed is approved, any changes to design would need to be the subject of an application for a 'variation' and thus the applicant is unlikely to make changes.

And if the papers provided by the officers did not provide enough evidence to defer the application yet again for some real changes to be made to the scheme, then the minutes of the November meeting should provide the pointer: "Councillor Knowles proposed that the application be deferred to enable discussions to be held with the applicant to resolve these issues, but if the applicant was not willing to accept the deferment due to timescales, then the application be refused on the grounds of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area (National Planning Policy Framework), and this was agreed".

You will gather that I don't believe the applicant made any significant changes to the design and it was approved at the meeting on December 14, 2017.

John Norman



Letters to the Editor

Des Pawson and The Museum of Knots & Sailor's Ropework from Peter and Angela Beard

It occurred to us that perhaps, if it has not already been arranged, it would be an appropriate gesture to include in the *Newsletter* a thankyou note to Des Pawson for his hospitality in opening his Museum for members over a recent weekend [5, 6 and 7 August 2016].

We found the Museum to be a most interesting and a fascinating 'treasure'. It may not be known to Members that if they missed visiting over the open weekend a special visit can always be made by arrangement

directly with Des Pawson [<http://despawson.com>]. It is certainly well worth a visit. I attach a photograph of some of the visitors outside his original workshop.



'The Future for Town Centre Housing' from Ann Petherick (York)

This article in your April Issue: when I came to Ipswich in 1971 I was told that the chief planning officer "did not believe in people living in towns."

Fortunately, we've come a long way since then, although it did take a while. For example, when I was studying town planning in Leeds in the early 1980s we were addressed by a developer who, when it was suggested he might build on the riverside, replied vehemently "nasty, dirty, smelly – rats!" Developers being a breed of sheep, so much was built on the riverside in the 90s that the Leeds market became severely overloaded.

There is a tendency to assume there is no demand for town centre housing but it is not demand which is lacking but supply. When the first upper floors conversion took place in Manchester I asked the developers who was buying. There was a complete mix but many were retirees.

Yes, the Mint Quarter could indeed provide housing. It seems unlikely to provide shopping, as that land has now been vacant for more than 40 years, but until the owners of the land face up to that fact (or are served with a CPO) nothing will happen. It is ironic that they don't appear to have realised that residential returns have now overtaken commercial in many locations. So, not only is it possible for in-town areas to become housing, it is probably the only viable use for many sites and one which would support the remaining in-town shopping rather than undermining it.

Thank you – I enjoy the *Newsletter* as always.

Birthday thoughts

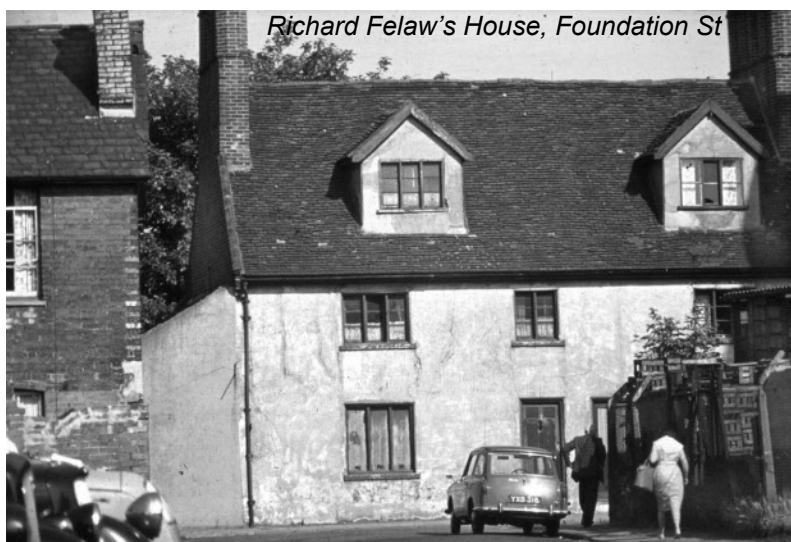
From *The Ipswich Society Review* 1981

OUR BACK PAGES

‘The first decade of the second half of the twentieth century included the years when everyone determined that the effects of the War would finally have been shaken off. Rationing came to an end and a “New Elizabethan Age” dawned.

The Festival of Britain in 1951 demonstrated to all that new shapes and fresh colours could transform our man-made surroundings (in those days we had yet to talk about the “built environment”). The urge to discard the old in favour of the new became the accepted order, and “re-construction” was an honourable term. So were words like “planning” and “development” – they represented the right approach in most people’s view. There were, of course, conflicting under-currents of thought: we could not turn our backs on the greatness of our past. We were out of India but there was the Suez Campaign, and we had not yet been told that a “wind of change” was blowing.

In Ipswich our pace as we moved into this new age was slower than in many towns, and this turned out to be no bad thing. There were, however, some events which alerted me to the significance of change in the fabric of the town. An exhibition held at Christchurch Mansion, as I remember it, brought together plans, drawings and documents which revealed the fascinating details of the history of the town, and particularly the richness of the buildings it once had. Some years later a competition was held for architects: it was to re-design the Cornhill ready for the day when the Town Hall was demolished! By the end of the decade we had several places in the main streets where interesting old buildings had been replaced and the new ones set back from the original line, in the anticipation of road widening, so that the frontages presented a disagreeable discontinuity. There were increasing areas of “temporary” car parks as the programme of pre-war slum clearance was taken up again. Not all of the demolished buildings were sub-standard Victorian workers’ houses, though. Towards the north end of Foundation Street a terrace including Felaw’s House [see photograph from the Society’s Image Archive], turned out to be a timber-framed structure of some interest which disappeared without adequate investigation. At the southern end of the same street a splendid timber-framed building with rich carving inside and out, the disused Half Moon with its famous fox and geese corner post, disappeared and was replaced by a windowless brick shed.



In other historic towns the moves to re-build the central areas advanced rapidly, and alarm at the destruction began to be expressed in the press, particularly aptly by Ian Nairn. He was the choice of a group of people, mainly architects practising in the town, who wanted a speaker for an inaugural meeting to found the Ipswich Society. The Co-operative Hall was full for that

public meeting in 1960, and at the end there were queues of people waiting to pay their half-crowns to join. The meeting was chaired by the Mayor, Councillor Dick Lewis, who subsequently was elected Chairman by the executive Committee of the Ipswich Society. I became Honorary Secretary in 1962 and about a couple of years later, after the death of Dick Lewis, I became Chairman. Quite soon it was clear to me that many people regarded the Society as having a political bias, because Dick Lewis was thought of as a politician who was decidedly to the left of the local Labour Party. Such alarm was totally unfounded, and from the beginning there had been Conservative Councillors on the Executive Committee, to demonstrate balance between party interests! Nevertheless, some influential people in the town obviously felt doubtful, and I made it an early task to dispel any such ideas that we were other than non-political, as our constitution stated. This had to be achieved by being quite impartial in all that was said and done on behalf of the Society, but above all by some persistent work behind the scenes.

An impetus to the first activities of the Society was the 1961 visit of the Queen to Ipswich. Our first “high rise” building other than those of the dock-side had appeared on the slum cleared land south of the Rope Walk, and H.M. was coming to open it [Civic College]. She would have to travel along some rather sad looking streets to get there and, since the Norwich Society had demonstrated possibilities in their Magdalen Street, it was felt that at least as good a face-lift could be given in Ipswich to Fore Street and Upper Orwell Street. Cleaned walls, fresh paint and the removal of the clutter of signs demonstrated the value of the variety of old buildings in our streets. It took many years for sufficient numbers of people to realise this, however, and the idea that ‘new’ was automatically ‘good’, and even if it wasn’t ‘you can’t stop progress’, was a widespread belief. Gradually, it has also become more accepted that new buildings and roads can be made to fit the older fabric of the town, provided they are designed with both care and skill.

During the early years of the Ipswich Society there was much suspicion about its intentions among some members of the Corporation. Some of both the senior elected members and officers felt uncertain of the value of having, or even the need for, such a body in the town. “Busybodies” was undoubtedly how some viewed us. The Executive Committee very soon came to the conclusion that there would be no advantage in antagonising the Corporation as we set about persuading them to move from some of their established paths and channels of thought. Challenge was there, but it had to be handled with care. I spent a lot of time cementing relationships and, as members of the Executive Committee set themselves high standards in knowledge and competence, we gradually gained the confidence of those in authority in Ipswich. At one time, part of this pattern of building mutual understanding consisted of my meeting two senior officers in the discreetly empty back room of a local pub whenever plans of proposed developments or coming projects needed to be discussed. Now-a-days things are able to be spoken of much more openly and some of the Council’s staff are actually members of the Society!

This is not meant to be a history of the Ipswich Society: merely some recollections of its infancy provoked by its having reached majority years. What a suitable birthday it would be if we each presented one new member...’

Peter Underwood, 1981



Gift Aid – an update for members

Readers will know that over recent years a number of rule changes by HMRC have resulted in the need to redesign our Gift Aid forms to ensure we fully comply when making our claims each year and I have kept you all informed through this newsletter and the annual accounts.

I am pleased to report that this year's submission was successful and we received the sum of £1,715.50 repayment direct into our community bank account. This was based upon £6,862 in membership fees or donations by members who have completed a Gift Aid form in the past. Whilst I know some members no longer pay income tax or choose not to gift aid their subscription or donation, our income from subscriptions and donations to date during 2016 total in excess of £11,000 and there may well be additional monies we could claim.

This brief update offers me the opportunity to appeal to any member who is not currently Gift Aiding (and paying income tax) or is not sure if they have previously completed a form, to contact me to request a Gift Aid form or to check their status on our membership database. This is an important source of additional income for us and I am keen to ensure we are claiming the full amount available to us as a Society.

Graham Smith Treasurer

Volunteers rewarded

On Sunday 2 October 2016, all volunteers having been on duty from May to September of that year in St Peter's by the Waterfront were invited to an afternoon of music and refreshments in the centre.

As Thursdays had been covered by Ipswich Society volunteers, we duly turned up to enjoy an afternoon of chat and background music plus nibbles, as a 'thank you' from the staff of St Peter's. It was a delightful session – to be the first of many – and was a really nice gesture by the organisers.

As we will be volunteering again next year from the week of Thursday 4 May 2017, I will be contacting all on my list of members who have expressed an interest in the past. This will be in early March.

Jean Hill,
26 Christchurch Street
Ipswich
IP4 2DT
(Tel. 01473 413252)



Review: The Butterflies of Christchurch Park by Richard Stewart
Published 2016 by The Friends of Christchurch Park



This delightful small book is one of a series about Christchurch Park published by the Friends of the Park. Over twenty species of butterfly may be seen regularly in the park and some even spend some of their life cycle within its boundaries. Take this book with you when you visit the park: its colour photographs, mainly by Liz Cutting, make identification easy, but also keep it for use in any Ipswich garden. As soon as you enter Christchurch Park at its lower end, well within the town centre, there are favourable habitats for butterflies. A map of such habitats can be used to explore lesser known parts of the park. There are notes on creating a butterfly garden – reproduction and food being important, as one may have guessed. Brave readers of ‘Predation in the Park’ will find that some species have their ‘young’ (caterpillars!) eaten in their thousands by birds. The index (pages 79 and 80) shows how much is incorporated into this book, and there is the bonus of the author’s haiku epilogue. Richard Stewart lives near the park, is an acknowledged authority on butterflies and shares his knowledge with us in this very readable book. Recommended at £7.50.

P.S. The subtitle of the book is *Past, present and future*. The clouded yellow butterfly is a definite possibility for the future. Will you spot them before Richard and his wife Anne-Marie – who themselves may sometimes be spotted in the park?

Bob Markham

The Ipswich War Memorial website

In the early 1920s Ipswich people hoped to raise £5,000 to build a lasting memorial to the local men who lost their lives in the Great War, giving the families the recognition for their sons’, brothers’ and fathers’ sacrifice. It was unveiled on 6 May 1924. Remarkably, the total amount raised was over £50,000 enabling the surplus funds to go to Ipswich Hospital which, up to 1919, dealt with 7,777 casualties.

The Ipswich War Memorial website (www.ipswichwarmemorial.co.uk) launched on 22 October, aims to digitally preserve images and create profiles of the Ipswich individuals who lost their lives in both World Wars and up to the present, giving a greater understanding of the sacrifice of so many. The site uses all the names from the Christchurch Park memorials as well as those from churches, factories and public buildings in Ipswich creating a free database of men and women from 1914 until 2007. The website gives details of their lives and the chance to see hundreds of unseen and rare images donated by family members and research into their lives up to the time they died.

The research was started in October 2014 by a small group of dedicated people. This is a continuing project and new images and documents are unearthed each day making it a unique view into the past of Ipswich. You can search for a specific name on the site, or use your favourite search engine. The associated Facebook page seeks to feature individuals who died on the particular day and month of the entry.

The work will be displayed at a series of exhibitions. If you have a picture of a family member on the memorial and wish to have them commemorated contact the project by email: ipswichwarmemorial@gmail.com [See *Diary dates*, page 23, for our January Winter Talk.]



Snippets 2

Crown Car Park welcome but a little late

The proposed 3-storey car park with 522 spaces should be a big improvement on the old multi-storey car park which had to be demolished in 2010. It will help to boost the use of the town centre, especially if the access on foot to Tower Ramparts is better. But it's unfortunate that completion is likely to be just after Christmas 2017.

The importance of 'affordable' homes

The term 'affordable' has been much stretched to suggest a solution to the housing crisis of shortages and sky-high prices. Nevertheless, isn't it true that we owe it to our grandchildren and their children to make it possible to own or rent a decent sized home? So it is quite understandable that there is the priority of 41 'affordables' for the planned 60 home development on the former Tooks Bakery site (off Old Norwich Road) and that other developments like the Northern Fringe should have a significant proportion of 'affordable' homes. All this is in addition to IBC's own council house building.

Park & Ride

The ongoing saga of Park & Ride continues with both Councils making noises as to why changes are being made, why the contract with the bus company is changing again and why it is failing to pay its own way.

Reading the papers for Suffolk County Council Executive Committee however it becomes obvious that the real reason is the ongoing squabble between SCC and IBC. The provision of Park & Ride is a really delicate balance between the provision of sufficient 'in town' parking to ensure that the retail economy works but charging at a level that causes visitors to use P&R. The provision of a service should be sufficiently frequent to reduce the waiting time to a few minutes but not running empty buses during quieter periods and to ensure journey times are minimised by allowing the bus to skip the traffic queues (bus lanes, bus activated traffic lights) without causing the motorist undue delays.

The five year contract with Ipswich Buses to run the present system was agreed in 2013 but will terminate in July 2017 with the replacement contract being awarded to First Bus. The real loser in all of this is Ipswich itself, Suffolk's county town.



Buttermarket Leisure

You will have read elsewhere in this Newsletter (page 8) that members of the Executive Committee visited the Buttermarket Centre in November to observe progress on the conversion to a cinema and bowling alley (part of the centre has already been converted into a gym).

There have been a number of planning applications changing the number of cinemas to be constructed (12), and the number of lanes the Bowling Alley will provide (24). Amongst the many superlatives the contractor shared he was unsure, whilst we were walking round, how many people would be accommodated when it was all up and running. My guess is in the region of 1,350 (assuming full capacity – this almost never happens in a multiplex; the blockbuster attracts the numbers, the other screens are showing, by definition, less popular films). I'm sure it will be a success, and a real asset to the town. The new restaurants are already attracting customers into the centre of Ipswich during the early evening quiet spell (4.30 – 7.30pm).

Are you interested in Christchurch Mansion, concerned about what's happening in the Museum, wondering why Ipswich's Museum Service is managed from Colchester? Are the right artefacts on display, why are so many pictures hidden away, what days do they open?

The Friends of Ipswich Museums are looking for new Committee members to help ensure Ipswich has museums of which we can be proud, museums that are used because they are interesting and celebrate the history of Ipswich and more over thousands of years.

<http://friendsofipswichmuseums.org.uk/>

The return of The Longship Screens

(See back page photographs)

It is over three years since Antony Robinson's fine, wrought iron public sculpture was taken down from the Old Cattle Market Bus Station, prior to the refurbishment of the site by Suffolk County Council. I say 'Old Cattle Market Bus Station', but former Borough Planning Officer and Ipswich Society member, Ruth Stokes, tells us that when an earlier makeover of the facility was nearing completion in 1995 the County Council was set on changing its name to 'Buttermarket Bus Station', to match the branding of the nearby shopping centre. This met with opposition from Ipswich residents and Borough Councillors because the terminus/stop on maps, bus timetables and in travellers' minds has always been 'Ipswich OCM' (Old Cattle Market). Indeed, the town's historic livestock market had moved to this site from the Cornhill, eventually ending up between Princes Street and Friars Bridge Road (now a car park). The issue clearly became quite a hot potato.

Because of the proposed use of rather poor quality bus shelters (they eventually used somewhat better ones), it was decided to commission a piece of public sculpture to screen them and act as an eye-catcher from the bottom of St Stephens Lane. The brief to the sculptor was to strictly avoid any visual allusion to either 'butter' or 'cattle' in the work. Such are local politics. The agreed theme was based on a Viking ship on the seas with the famous Sutton Hoo helmet in stainless steel at its centre. However, when the work was installed, some people suspected a possible resemblance in the wrought ironwork of the smaller screen to a cow's head, face-on. Mildly scurrilous and mildly satisfying...



The sculptor himself made reference to 'a surprise' in the screen. So, a cow produces milk and from milk we get butter. Perhaps honour was served on both sides.

Winter Illustrated Talks volunteers request. As readers will know, The Ipswich Society runs a season of Winter Illustrated Talks usually held at the Methodist Church accessed from Black Horse Lane. These events on all sorts of subjects of interest to members are entertaining and sometimes revelatory. Readers will also be aware that we are an entirely voluntary organisation. We are seeking two or three members to assist in organising the topics and speakers for these talks as a small sub-committee to the Executive Committee. This work would involve the drawing-up of a list of potential speakers, liaising with the Hon. Secretary and Executive and booking the speakers; support would, of course, be available. It shouldn't be too onerous and would prove interesting for the right person or people. Please contact our Hon. Secretary, Caroline Markham, whose details are on page 23 if you would like to participate.

The Ipswich Society

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk

email: secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 263322

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

Dates for your diary

Winter Illustrated Talks at Museum Street Methodist Church; all talks start at 7.30pm and free tea, coffee and biscuits are provided afterwards. All are welcome.

Wednesday January 18, 2017: Andrew Beale (genealogist researcher): The fallen Ipswich men of the Great War; research and images of the brave Ipswich men who paid the ultimate sacrifice from World War I

Wednesday February 15: Mike Young – The story of the Orwell Bridge

Wednesday March 15: Tony Marsden – Blue Plaques: the catch-up, 2016

Wednesday April 26, 7.30pm: AGM Mike Taylor, Conservation Officer – 'Area Appraisals (Ipswich)'. Venue: 2nd floor auditorium, University of Suffolk Waterfront Building.

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

Thursday April 27, 2017: Tour of Bungay and St Peter's Brewery, South Elmham.

Thursday May 11: Evening walk with Bob Markham – Barrack Corner to Bobby Robson Bridge.

Tuesday June 13: Sissinghurst Castle and Garden.

Tuesday July 18: Watts Gallery Artists' Village, Guildford.

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

Deadline for material: 1 December;	Publication date: 22 January;
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1 March;	2 April;
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1 June;	17 July;
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1 September;	9 October.
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Members of The Ipswich Society join David Ellesmere (Leader of Ipswich Borough Council), SCC Cllr. Mandy Gaylard and John Mowles (former Ipswich Borough Councillor & Mayor) to celebrate the return of sculptor Antony Robinson's *Longship Screens* to the Old Cattle Market bus station after an absence of three years.

Below: the screens in the 2000s.



Ipswich Society Image Archive