

 The Ipswich Society
NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2003

ISSUE 153

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St Peter's Wharf: all "wanted" open, now, but not for much longer!

Articles and letters which are not explicitly from the Society are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Ipswich Society itself.

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Editorial

I wrote in the July Newsletter, "I've no idea what the summer will be like." Now we know. It's been the driest warmest summer since 1976 creating various records including the highest ever recorded temperature in Ipswich on 10 August; 35. 1' C, or, if you prefer, the more impressive sounding 95.2' F. When you receive this October Newsletter, it may be raining at last, in which case I hope you'll find plenty of time at home to read it and find much of interest in it.

Best wishes for both park and pool

I should be delighted to see both Christchurch Park and Broomhill Pool restored to their former glory, And I guess that most members of our Society would agree. Like-minded people everywhere must have been disappointed to see our local newspaper implying that the Borough Council should treat this as an "either ... or". It wrote: "Is it right to seek millions to restore Christchurch Park as Broomhill continues to decay?" This might encourage readers to assume quite wrongly that the millions from the Lottery could be transferred from one project to another. Surely we should welcome the news that the bid for Heritage Lottery money for the park, N ears in preparation, is apparently going well - and that the newly formed Broomhill Pool Trust (see page 4) will be making similar efforts with the help of local authorities to raise funding?

Wonders of our industrial past

I have been able to borrow a 1932 booklet extolling the range of manufacturing firms in Ipswich and their even bigger range of products. I have also been introduced to the very impressive Long Shop Museum in Leiston based on, and at, the former engineering firm of Garretts. Putting these two experiences together, I wonder whether Ipswich's incredibly rich industrial past can ever be displayed adequately in the town. We have the admirable Ipswich Transport Museum and the Ransomes display at the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, but this is only part of the story. The "visitor attraction" referred to on page 3 should have many other demands on its space. Contributions to the next Newsletter are always welcome. The deadline is 20 November.

NEIL SALMON 16 Warrington Road, Ipswich, IPI 3QU.

Annual Awards Event

Wednesday, 12 November, 7.30 pm at Suffolk College

Your Executive Committee has decided to promote the Annual Awards Ceremony to try and increase the number of ordinary members attending. This is the most important "public" event of the Society. Once again it will be held at, and this time sponsored by, Suffolk College. The College Principal, Professor Dave Muller, will introduce the evening. Dr Chris Wiltshire will talk about the nominations as they are shown on screen, reporting what the judges have said and no doubt adding stimulating comments of his own. Come and see how the various schemes nominated by members have fared.

There is plenty of parking and you should be able to enjoy a sophisticated slide presentation in a comfortable setting. After the main business of the evening there will be an opportunity to discuss matters with friends and with the architects, owners and builders who have attended to receive their awards. And there will be an excellent buffet!

Chairman's Letter

Let me start with an update on developments on the Waterfront. Since the spring I have chaired the Waterfront Steering Committee, taking over from Bob Wales from Tolly Cobbold Brewery on its take-over by Ridleys. The Society has been a member of the Group since it was formed some seven years ago. The Group consists of the IBC, SCC, East of England Development Agency, Suffolk College, Ipswich Port and a broad selection of private developers. Its purpose is to monitor (and influence as far as this is possible) the development of the Waterfront. As you will know there are many developments taking place in this area, most of them residential and the skyline is changing rapidly. It is the concern of the Group that development should be mixed and balanced and we are encouraging bars, cafes, restaurants and shops, although in the present economic climate all the commercial pressures are for housing.

The redevelopment of Cranfields mills and the surrounding area (including land across College Street) is particularly welcome. Planning permission is about to be sought and the scheme looks interesting and imaginative, including as it does generous accommodation (four studios) for Dance East which currently is the only regional dance group which does not have its own suitable accommodation. Housing will also be provided in a carefully placed tower block.

Another major player on the Waterfront is Education. Major activities at Suffolk College and renewed interest in a university, perhaps backed by UEA and Essex University, throw up exciting ideas for an educational presence from the present College down to the Waterfront on land already owned by the College. The removal of SCC from its sites around County hall to the former TXU building generates another massive site adjacent to the present College.

Perhaps the centre of plans for the Waterfront (in more ways than one) is the Island site, owned by the Port (ABP). Because it is within one ownership it can be developed as a whole, and ABP are currently developing their proposals for this important site.

The Waterfront Group has long pressed for a "magnet" on the Waterfront - a public building that would attract interest from locals and visitors alike. Money was gained from EEDA for a feasibility study, the first phase of which is about to be presented. The concept of a Visitor Attraction has been carefully developed, to include our Anglo-Saxon history, Ipswich's connections with America, and other themes. Work will now proceed on phase 2 which will include a study of potential sites and details of finances and funding. I do believe that we will see a building on the Waterfront telling the story of Ipswich and linking it to Sutton Hoo and West Stow.

I was recently contacted by the son of an old Ipswich Society member who has donated a large selection of papers, cuttings and photographs relating to the work of the Society and going back many years. This has brought to a head a problem we have. For many years we have kept cuttings and photographs about the Society but we have never been happy about how they might be used. The only space we have is in Pykenharn's Gatehouse (which is cramped enough) but of even more concern is how more use can be made of this material. I suppose we really need a "librarian" to firstly catalogue what we have, and secondly advise on making it more widely available. For many years Ruth and Bill Serjeant have acted as our "archivists" and much of our more important material is in the Suffolk Record Office in Gatacre Road, but more help is needed. If you think you may be able to help, perhaps you could contact me or any Committee member.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will read of John Norman's idea for the Society to have a presence on the Cornhill during the summer months in order to complement the Town Guides and the Tourist Information Centre. Your Committee has discussed the matter and approves it, but I want to stress that it could only go ahead with the active support of ordinary members: it is not something which the Committee can undertake. So it's up to you!

Finally I want to draw your attention to the Awards Ceremony to be held on 12 November at Suffolk College. This is the second year we have held the event in the College, and the College has agreed to sponsor it. (Those who came last year will remember the excellent food and drink.) This is in many ways the most public of the Society's activities, and I do look for a good audience, so please make the effort. Car parking is available and the event is held in the Lecture Theatre just off the main foyer, so access could not be easier. I look forward to welcoming you.

JACK CHAPMAN

Broomhill Pool

The Friends of Broomhill Pool have done terrific work raising public consciousness over the last year with a Saturday stall on the Cornhill, holding meetings and collecting over 16,000 names for the petition which was presented by Sir Michael Lord MP to Councillor John Mowles. They have been supported by numerous letters to the Evening Star and East Anglian Daily Times as well as appearances on local radio and one on TV.

The good news is that the full council and the Executive Committee of Ipswich Borough Council have agreed to set up a Steering Group to oversee the development of options for securing the future use of Broomhill Pool. The Steering Group's members will be locality councillors of all hues, representatives of the Trust and local residents, Council officers and Sir Michael Lord. The exact composition has yet to be decided.

To ensure the continuing support of the community, to improve the cohesion of the organisation and to start raising funds, the Friends of Broomhill Pool have changed into The Broomhill Pool Trust, a simple trust that has applied for Charity Commission registration. Clearly the group will have an enormous task to raise the finance but we feel it is possible. We will then have to grapple with the problem of how to manage the pool for the next twenty years so that it loses less money. We have a lot of ideas; it looks as though climate change will be on our side! Over the next few months the Committee of the Trust will be helping the Steering Group as well as keeping up the publicity. Suffolk County Council through its Locality Fund has supported us generously so that we can set off on the next steps. We shall start fund raising soon and we are looking for active supporters who can help us - any volunteers please get in touch. And we have a web site www.savebroomhillpool.org and a logo. Visit and sign our petition on-line.

MIKE COOK, Chairman, The Broomhill Pool Trust

Action Plan for Ipswich

(The Action Plan area extends from Ipswich Village to Suffolk College, including the River Corridor, Cardinal Park, Ipswich Station and the Waterfront.)

The firm of Urban Initiatives was appointed by the East of England Development Agency and Ipswich Borough Council to advise on future developments in this area. The report will be presented to Ipswich Borough Council members later this month but will probably include some interesting suggestions on infrastructure improvements. Foremost amongst these are new bridges over the river. One is between Great Whip Street and Foundry Lane to create a north-south pedestrian link from the town centre to Over Stoke and Wherstead Road. Another is possible close to the weir in West End Road to provide a link between Ipswich Village and Ranelagh Road.

But the most exciting one is between the railway station and Cardinal Park to provide a direct walking route to the town centre. The approaches to town from the railway station have always been at best unattractive. This new bridge will give visitors the opportunity to walk into town along a purpose-built legible pedestrian route. The details of the exact route are still to be established but in outline as you leave the station, cross Burrell Road east of the Station Hotel and cross the new footbridge to pass in front of the multiplex cinema and along the recently repaved Cutler Street, Silent Street to the Butter-market Centre and St Stephen's Lane.

The bridge across the river at St Peter's Wharf has been mooted for some time (it could become part of National Cycle Route #1 Harwich - Hull, which in turn is part of the great North Sea Cycle Route). Engineers have been working on various designs with the remit that the bridge should provide an aesthetic solution rather than a simple engineering one. The various alternatives are due to be presented to advisory bodies including the Conservation Advisory Panel and the Waterfront Steering Group (The Ipswich Society is represented on both) in mid-November. I hope to include the chosen design and a time-scale for construction in the next Newsletter.

JOHN NORMAN, Vice-Chairman

Recent Planning Matters

Planning applications great and small continue to pour into the Borough Council's planning department. The number of applications to build new flats or to convert existing buildings into flats is especially notable. Society members who have lived in the same houses for many years may find it hard to believe there are so many potential occupiers of all these flats. These development proposals must indicate a continuing demographic change - namely, lots of youngish singles and couples with no wish for a garden or a garage, often with no children but with the freedom to go out for nearby entertainment, and meals or take-aways.

These are some of the recent applications which the Society has commented on - a very interesting range, as you'll probably find as you look through them. In many cases IBC's response was not yet known when this was compiled in early September. We hope to indicate in later Newsletters whether these applications were successful or not.

12-14 Princes Street : conversion of part of first floor and second floor from office use to 6 flats, erection of third floor to provide 2 additional flats

"The Society supports the change of use of the upper floors of this office building to apartments and the addition of an extra floor. However the new entrance from Princes Street is a completely unacceptable design in a Conservation Area..." [IBC granted permission subject to agreement on new entrance canopy on Princes Street, etc.]

2 St Peter's Street (The Sailors' Rest) : conversion of offices into 3 self-contained flats

"The Society having had a major part in the rescue of this fine Grade I Georgian building is well aware that it is only a facade. However it is vital that the developers are seen to keep to their word on the application that these alterations will not affect in any way at all the Listed portion of the building." [Permission granted by IBC with necessary provisos.]

Town Hall forecourt, Cornhill : continued use of land for siting of market stalls

"We have always believed and supported the view that the town needs and can support a market. We believe that Lloyds Avenue, the Cornhill, Giles' Circus and Princes Street should be used in the short term. There are considerable concerns about the surrounding historic core of Ipswich, the unavailability of the only open space in the centre and the intrusion into the exterior space of shops, cafes and businesses. We therefore support a grant of a further limited time to the market but we would like to see the Council continue to investigate other sites such as the Mnt Quarter." [IBC granted further permission until 31 August 2004.]

Rear of 9-11 Waterloo Road, Bramford Lane: erection of 2 semi-detached houses

"The Society is delighted to see another piece of this site being proposed for residential development which is a "windfall" for this area. We feel sure that the Officers will ensure that the bricks chosen are sympathetic to its neighbours' red bricks." [IBC refused permission - unattractive design; insufficient spacing requirements.]

Territorial Army Centre, Yarmouth Road : erection of 123 flats in 4 and 5 storey blocks

"...An earlier application was considered unsuitable for the site. The present proposals appear to be a great improvement and would blend in with the recent riverside developments further up the river. It is also understood that, despite the location, there are no great fears about liability to flooding. However, it appears that access/egress will be to Yarmouth Road - a very busy road, being part of the original inner by-pass and careful planning and road layout will be needed in these days of ever-increasing traffic numbers."

49-53 Fore Street : conversion of offices into dwelling house

"Whilst the Society would support change of use to a dwelling house, we are extremely unhappy about the plans. Further, external inspection would suggest that some alterations have already been made. The application should be refused and the appropriate action taken if it is indeed the case that unauthorised changes have been made to a Grade 11 building." I IBC approved the application subject to work being done strictly in accordance with all drawings and specifications.

Former Waterside Works, Bath Street : erection of 2-5 storey buildings on raised ground comprising hotel, 223 houses and apartments, plus retail and offices, dry basin, paved area and sculpture

"The latest proposals for the Griffin Wharf site have been inspected by several members of the Executive Committee. We are extremely unhappy with the hotel which is of a most undistinguished

chain design ... The majority of the site is devoted to domestic habitation; it is possibly too formal around the water feature and the actual units are of a uniform and forbidding appearance. We feel that this needs reviewing before acceptance. This site is of course of historic manufacturing interest [former Ransomes & Rapier] at the westerly approach to the waterside area and it is important that the Committee insists on an extremely high standard of architecture. That the site whilst designated for employment will be habitations is irresistible in today's economic climate."

NCP car park and land between Woodbridge Road and St Helen's Street, Orchard Street : erection of 25 town houses and 10 flats

"Although there are no specific recommendations for this area in the Draft Local Plan these proposals represent a useful rationalisation of several dilapidated plots for small residential units... but it would appear that in order to achieve a high density the terraces are three or three and a half storeys which would be out of scale with the surrounding Victorian terraces. The full plans will need to be viewed carefully when available but in principle the Society supports this application." [IBC has granted permission for this outline application with conditions such as archaeological work first, a play area, noise impact assessment before occupation, double glazing throughout.

Ravenswood, Nacton Road : erection of (a further) 36 houses, 16 flats (private sector) and 27 affordable dwellings

"It is sad that one of the country's largest house builders has so little confidence in modern design that they propose these sad pastiche houses. The award winning primary school to which many of the future inhabitants of Ravenswood will be accustomed has not been used as a standard to follow. In such a large development surely CABE and its local design champion should be able to enhance these plans. We realise that saleability is vital but in a reasonably buoyant housing market the Development Committee and the Council Officers ought to be able to persuade the developers that Ipswich has a keen interest in good quality architecture in all its buildings. This application should be re-thought before it is granted planning permission."

11-15 Great Colman Street : partial demolition (front facades to be retained) to facilitate development for 22 flats

"We are pleased to see these new proposals which retain the existing Edwardian facades to allow the construction of apartments and car parking"

St Nicholas Church and Churchgate House, Cromwell Square : alterations and extension to vacant church building to convert into use for Diocesan Resource Centre with meeting rooms, bookshop and external works to churchyard

"Whilst the Society supports the change of use to a meeting place on an open plan basis whilst preserving the sanctity of the church, we are disappointed with much of the detailing and the imprecision as to use of the churchyard for car parking..."

Phones 4U, 25 Westgate Street : replacement shop front

"Since the proposal is for a completely new shop front in what is the platinum quarter mile of Ipswich shopping, the Development Committee must insist on the highest standards of design. This does not reach those levels; in particular the shape of the window tops and the dropping of the square box holding the 4 U insignia below the lower horizontal line of the fascia are particularly unfortunate. They should be asked to think again."

Heritage Open Days

What a fantastic weekend we had for this ever-popular annual event. Twenty-one buildings participated including the recently refurbished and re-ordered Museum Street Methodist Church. I spent the whole weekend visiting most of the properties with Tony Hill, who had agreed to video record the event. Our idea was to produce an hour long video highlighting interesting features of the buildings which could then be shown to disabled persons in future years; several of the properties are quite inaccessible to disabled people. We also hope that the video will be of interest to members generally.

David Stainer of the Tourist Information Centre was well pleased with the number of visitors over the weekend, and the two principal attractions of Isaac Lord's and The Old Sun Inn proved as popular as ever. New at the latter was the opening up of the original frontage where Sheila of Atfield and Daughter had re-laid cobbles and flints to create a most pleasing open space within the courtyard. We met historian John Webb there (author of The Great Tooley) who reminded Doug Atfield that the name "Sun Inn" used in early deeds might only have been the name of the house. I had never joined one of the Ipswich School tours, which I found quite fascinating. For those who have missed out, the Ipswich Town Library housed in the Headmaster's study and the four John Piper windows in the library impress particularly.

Some 180 visitors called in at the Gatehouse, and Roger Wolfe, Jill Freestone and their team had a continuous flow of visitors at St Peter's, some 450 over the two days, most of them showing great interest in the details of the church and the historical exhibitions there. The Suffolk Record Office had more visitors than before for their tours of the Strong Room but were disappointed at the lack of takers for their bus service using a vintage bus to the Transport Museum.

It was interesting to see the Ipswich Institute's Admiral's House, now fully utilised and including an attractive restaurant. Upstairs Bob Forster was taking a painting class and there was a general buzz of activity - as indeed there was at most other places during this enjoyable weekend.

TOM GONDRIS

Snippets (1)

The third P & R for Ipswich

Work on the Martlesham site is visibly proceeding. During September, drivers leaving Ipswich or Kesgrave may not have been able to glance left at the cleared woodland because they will have been negotiating the avenue of cones on the A 1214 at its junction with the A 12. The terminal building will be made of timber with a sedum grass roof. There will be spaces for 550 cars and an area for cycles. Ipswich Buses will operate the service, as they do at both Copdock and Bury Road.

No home yet

Isabel Clover's spectacular Charter Hangings - probably admired by most of our members - have been displayed in the cathedral at Bury and in St Mary le Tower. It was indeed welcome that they were seen in other places, even though they need proper lighting to be fully appreciated. Display in

our "sister" town, Arras, will also be welcome if that can be arranged. It is greatly to be hoped that Ipswich Arts Association will eventually find willing partners to create an ideal home for what will continue to be the best single visual advertisement for the history of Ipswich.

New sightlines

Five empty shops in Upper Orwell Street were demolished during the summer. Although a security hoarding has been put up, it's still possible to see St Pancras Church from this different angle - the church which the architectural critic, Ian Naim, described as one of the town's finest buildings when he lectured in Ipswich in 1960 at the time of the founding of our Society.

Historic Town

The Ipswich Society has become an affiliated member of the English Historic Towns Forum, the aim of which is "prosperity and conservation in historic towns". The Society hopes to gain valuable ideas from their Newsletter and from the conferences and seminars they hold. The EHTC has helped to promote Historic Core Zones Projects in Bury St Edmunds, Halifax, Lincoln and Shrewsbury.

The Society's book

If you haven't bought a copy of *Ipswich from the First to the Third Millennium* our Secretary, Beryl Jary, has some of the second impression left. New members might like to know that it consists of six papers delivered at the Society's Millennium Symposium. They cover the history of Ipswich from Anglo-Saxon times and look ahead to the possible place of Ipswich in the Greater South East and in Europe. All the speakers were leading experts in their fields. There are 112 pages with 33 illustrations and 11 charts and maps. The price to members is £6. (Is it too early to mention Christmas presents?)

Convenience appreciated

A member who didn't wish to write a letter for publication is nevertheless keen to record in the Newsletter her appreciation of the new public toilets at Major's Comer. She's certainly not alone in recognising that such facilities with full-time attendants are a civilised feature of the town.

The Gatehouse open

Pykenham's Gatehouse is open to the public on the first Saturday of the month. It used to be until October, but this year you can visit on 1 November and 6 December, 10.30 am till noon. Members of the Richard III Society were interested visitors during the summer. Their Society exists to counteract what they contend is Tudor historians' (and Shakespeare's) bias against Richard III. His short reign, 1483-85, occurred soon after William Pykenham, Archdeacon of Suffolk, built the Gatehouse in about 1471 as the entrance to his substantial residence. Of course like Wolsey's Gate, it is only a fragment of the whole but it remains a precious survivor. The Ipswich Society's Executive Committee holds its regular meetings there, as does the Ipswich Building Preservation Trust.

Letters to the Editor

TWO BLIGHTS IN OUR TOWN

from Dave Morgan

Fortified and encouraged by you, Mr Editor, in the submission of my first epistle to the July edition, I venture to draw attention to two blights to our fair town! On both I have complained over recent times to the Borough Council with little success. Perhaps the Society could "take up the cudgels" with better results?

My first "bleat" is about the tatty, sub-standard safety railings, most of which remain in the original dull grey dip (where they haven't rusted or otherwise discoloured) prominent on virtually every roundabout and major junction across the town. Actually the ones at St Matthew's Street/ Civic Drive roundabout were recently painted - just before the Queen last visited us! All is not gloom, however, for I have noticed outside the Manor Club leading into Woodbridge Road that splendid black, slightly ornate railings have been erected as part of the improvements to this busy junction. Perhaps this is the start of a concerted programme for improvement across the town?

The second "bleat" is about the old trolley bus standards (tatty and unpainted) still carrying overhead lighting and wires evident in a few places in town. For example, have a look in Upper Orwell Street (The Wash) or that part of St Helen's Street near to McNamara's (Marshall's) empty garage. Surely it is time they were replaced by modern attractive standards? There are surely sufficient monies in the Borough Council's annual agency monies for highways from the County Council? Oh, and while I am still on my hobby horse, when oh when will the promised development on the car parks behind the Co-op and Woolworths commence? Everything seems to have gone to sleep on this blight in the eastern town centre - not least at Civic Centre!

A HISTORY OF IPSWICH HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

from Rosemary Rooke

We have just received The Ipswich Society Newsletter and I notice that you have a paragraph on John Blatchly's History of Ipswich School. I hope you don't mind but this has prompted me to send you a complimentary copy of the informal history of Ipswich High School for Girls which I wrote to celebrate our 125th Birthday this year in April.

I am a fairly new member of The Ipswich Society and have an interest in "things historical" but have never done anything like this before! However, I was fascinated by the history of the School which in many ways mirrors the changes in the role of women in society, and as time constrictions dictated a small scale booklet, found that the main problem was not what to put in but what to leave out.... Although we are no longer based in Ipswich, I feel that this might be of interest as the School was a small but quite important part of the history of Ipswich. If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy it is available for £3 from the School Office.

DRINKS AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

from Jennifer Stimpson

I was very surprised to read in the July Newsletter of the "situation" at the AGM - mentioned not once but twice. Surely intellectual people such as yourselves are aware of the fact that nonconformist churches do not allow alcohol on their premises? Would it not (if no one was sure) have been courteous to have enquired beforehand instead of whinging afterwards? When in Rome ... etc.

The Society has also received a letter from . He refers to Vera Underwood's mention in the July Newsletter of the Lyceum Theatre which used to exist in Carr Street. He recalls seeing Love on the Dole performed there in about 1936, when employment was high!

Parking Problems

Illegal Parking in Ipswich

It is becoming apparent that a significant proportion of motorists do not read the plates restricting parking, particularly where, for reasons of visual intrusion, yellow lines have not been used. A typical case is St Peter's Street, recently repaved and an Ipswich Society Award winner but now subject to almost saturation parking. There are clearly marked parking bays which allow customers of the local businesses to park for a short time, but cars are frequently parked in any other convenient space, blocking the road and restricting access for emergency vehicles. Rich picking here for an astute warden.

The open question is how do we inform motorists of parking restrictions without yellow lines or other visually intrusive street furniture? The answer is ably demonstrated along the Northern Quays where a heavy chain keeps cars off the pavement; this is unfortunately not a suitable solution for St Peter's Street.

Parking on the Pavement

Parking on the pavement is inconsiderate, particularly for pedestrians, and has other consequences including damaging the surface, which makes the footway unsafe when the vehicle has gone. However, parking on the pavement has become the norm both in the town centre for delivery drivers and in the residential suburbs where cars are left on the pavement overnight. Many suburban streets are now reduced to a single vehicle width (or less) by vehicles parked on both sides and are subject to local congestion. In London, parking on footpaths is not permitted; however there is no equivalent Act in force elsewhere.

The Department of Transport is sufficiently concerned to have recently commissioned consultants to carry out research and recommend possible remedial actions. One possibility is that the Department might identify ways of helping local authorities to use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to control pavement parking, but we wouldn't want to see signs and lines having a bigger visual impact than the parked cars.

Sign o' the Times

Amendments to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions mean that it is no longer necessary to display no waiting "at any time" signs next to double yellow lines. This should give the Borough Council the opportunity to take down signs and the grey post on to which they are fixed, thus removing street clutter and improve the street scene. The posts obstruct the footway, especially for the visually impaired and for parents with buggies. Nottingham City Council have taken the lead in this and employ a "clutter buster" to remove these and other redundant traffic signs - a move which is already making an impact on the conservation areas in the middle of the city.

JOHN NORMAN

No Enlargement of Ipswich

Why the Enlargement of Ipswich Didn't Happen

Peter Odell updates his Millennium Symposium Paper "Ipswich's 20th Century Challenges and Responses"

After 30 years of statutory secrecy the Government's files on the expansion of Ipswich under the New Towns Act of 1965 have been opened for public inspection in the National Archives (formerly known as the Public Record Office). And what a massive collection of letters, minutes of meetings, reports, comments on proposals, records of dissent and decisions etc they are - emanating from the Cabinet Office, the Treasury and four or more Departments of State.

In my presentation at the Ipswich Society Symposium (published in the book Ipswich From the First to the Third Millennium) I argued that the agricultural lobby was responsible for preventing Ipswich's designation as a New Town; this was robustly challenged. The voluminous files I have examined show that my arguments were valid in large part, but that another - and more powerful - force finally inhibited the expansion proposed.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) files include a personal letter from the Chairman of the Suffolk Agricultural Executive to Mr Fred Peart, the Minister of Agriculture.

"I feel so strongly about the proposals that I think I am justified in drawing your attention to the matter and in pointing out the extremely serious view which farmers and landowners would take should the proposals be accepted." (ref. MAF/264/2: 15.10.66)

A few weeks later a Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) official summarised the situation as follows:

"Ipswich's expansion is accepted by everyone except MAF It dislikes the proposals very much and the NFU and the Country Landowners Association also strongly oppose it." (ref HLG/115/653 : 19.12.66)

He went on to propose the near-future draft designation of Ipswich New Town, but this was not effected as it became clear that "the Minister of Agriculture will fight against designation in the Cabinet...as a test case for avoiding use of good agricultural land." (ref. HLG/1 14/14: 20.7.67) There then followed another year of in-fighting between the government departments (MAF, MHLG, Board of Trade, Ministry of Planning, etc) until a draft designation was finally made in February 1968, prior to a local planning inquiry in June 1968. Much to the consternation of the MHLG, this produced only a reluctant "go ahead" for an expansion over a much reduced area given "the weight of the agricultural objection" and in spite of the East Anglian Economic Council's plea for an approval of the original scheme as "planning policy for the region is based on Ipswich's expansion." (ref. HLG 115/705: 5.5.69)

By this time four years had passed since the initial proposal and a frustrated MHLG considered abandoning the scheme because "agricultural interests are implacably opposed to it and are likely to cause maximum trouble." (ref: HLG 148/14) The Minister, however, with the backing of the Minister of Planning insisted that the proposal must go ahead as "a withdrawal at this I lth hour from amoral commitment requires overwhelming justification." This, he went onto observe, "does not exist as East Anglia badly needs an injection of this kind." (ref: ibid)

At this late stage, given the resolution of the economic and planning ministries and given that Ipswich's expansion was now to be limited to a significantly reduced area of agricultural land, the Minister of Agriculture finally withdrew his objection. Approval for the Ipswich New Town at long last seemed to be a formality. The delay generated by agricultural interests now, however, proved to be the critical variable: the project had now been pushed "out of time" by recent events of national importance, viz. the devaluation of sterling in November 1967 and the consequential problems facing the country's economy.

Thus, on the advice of the Treasury, the Cabinet decided that the expansion of Ipswich should be abandoned "in light of the costs of the project to the national exchequer at a time of severe difficulties in Government finances." (ref. EP 69) Only if the expansion of Swindon, a relatively recent addition to the proposed New Towns, was curtailed, would the Treasury agree to finance Ipswich; and this was impossible as the Swindon expansion was already well under way. Ipswich did, indeed, lose out from the delays engendered by agricultural interests.

On 13 June 1969 the Minister of Housing and Local Government announced the demise of the Ipswich New Town proposal ; with a final irony, given the advice of the Treasury that the country could not afford it. His decision emerged, he said, from "the lack of justification for the designation of so large an area of high quality agricultural land." (ref. *ibid*) ! A politically less embarrassing reason, perhaps, than the admission of the parlous state of the Government's finances in a pre-election period?

PETER R ODELL

Editor: Peter Odell has provided these other references from papers in the National Archives

Ipswich - capital town/city?

A MHLG official, commenting on the expansion of Ipswich, said that the intention was to make Ipswich the regional capital of East Anglia. (ref. HLG/ 115/7051

Ipswich University?

Thirteen cities and towns attempted to persuade the University Grants Committee that they were suitable locations for the proposed new universities which the Government had decided to establish. Ipswich was not numbered amongst them, whilst Norwich "led the pack" in the competition based on the establishment of a Norwich University Promotion Board in April 1960. Both the East Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council offered Norwich an annual contribution to help finance its efforts! (UGC Memorandum to Dept of Education, March 1960)

Nothing new on the railways

This is a precursor to the contemporary plan to develop expanded railway freight facilities to serve the Ipswich and Felixstowe ports' traffic on a site between Bramford and Stowmarket: "In August 1967 British Rail wrote to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government re the expansion of Ipswich to say that its freight traffic centre for the Ipswich area would be moved to a site north of the disused Bramford station." (ref. HLG/1 16/354: 30.8.67)

Best Foot Forward

Intrepid explorers we were not, and the Ipswich hinterland is hardly uncharted territory, but even so, the groups of members who assembled to walk the proposed Fonnereau Way on 22 June and Churchman's Way on 2 July, under the guidance of Roger and Stella Wolfe, were probably discovering places they had never reached before!

The purpose of these two proposed routes is to provide easily accessible "green corridors" out of Ipswich into the surrounding countryside, short walks of not more than three miles which can be started from or terminated at public transport connections. They are intended to form part of the much wider "Greenways Project" which through the agency of a consortium of the Suffolk County Council, district, parish and town councils, the Ipswich Borough Council and a range of wildlife and environmental groups, is putting into place a wide variety of environmental preservation and improvement features in and just beyond the Ipswich borough boundary. Forty-three such features are listed in the recent annual report of the Project, including for example improvement to heathland at Belstead Heath, managing a wild flower bank at West End Road and maintaining Grundisburgh's Millennium Meadow. Most of the work is being done by dedicated volunteer groups.

The Fonnereau Way is intended to provide a route from Christchurch Park to Westerfield, using public transport at the beginning or end of the trail. We enjoyed an eight minute train ride, Ipswich to Westerfield. It was said that probably Westerfield had not seen so many passengers alighting at one time for many a day! Along the walk back into Ipswich, features of the route were pointed out by James Baker, the Greenways Project Officer, Peter Scotcher, an Ipswich Parks Ranger, and Paul Jackson, a tree surgeon. The route [photo below] has a varied content - a village footpath in Westerfield, an ancient hedge and ditch boundary, a railway crossing, hay meadows, and last but not least all the interesting features in Christchurch Park itself.

The second outing took us along the proposed Churchman's Way, named for Sir Arthur Churchman (later Lord Woodbridge) who presented Chantry Park and Mansion to Ipswich Borough in 1927. The route takes in a large portion of the Park. This time the group walked out from Ipswich, starting first through Gippeswyk Park. This park was given to Ipswich by that other notable benefactor of our town, Felix Cobbold, giving rise to the off-the-cuff suggestion that an alternative name for this green corridor should be Cobbled (sorry - Cobbold!) Way.

We progressed to Chantry Park after navigating a rather busy London Road, gaining access by what was until very recently an "unofficial" entry into the park up a steep roadside bank. This has, under the Greenways Project, now become an official one with the construction of a very sturdy set of wooden steps. It was there and then ceremonially opened by the cutting of a tape by our President, the Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor Penny Breakwell, who had undertaken to walk with the group. Both she and her husband who accompanied her are keen walkers. As on the previous walk, we had been joined by James Baker and Peter Scotcher, and as we passed through the park we were kept informed about the management of all the different environmental areas and concerns within it - the hay meadows, the wilderness areas, the woodland, the ponds, as well as the more formal gardens and sport and recreational areas.

After strolling down Church Lane into Sproughton - to the church naturally - the Mayor then proceeded to perform an unexpected but popular little ceremony, when she presented a medal and scroll to Roger Wolfe, confirming him as one of Ipswich's "Unsung Heroes", a recognition on behalf of Ipswich Borough Council of the dedicated work he has undertaken in planning and walking out these proposed routes as part of the Greenways Project.

From Sproughton, after suitable refreshment, the energetic ones walked back to Ipswich along the Gipping Path and two defaulters, who are named below, decided to test out the public transport. Definitely worthwhile!

RUTH and BILL SERJEANT

Holywells Park

After a long-awaited rain the night before, ten dauntless members met Bob Markham at the park entrance. His enthusiasm for all things wet, muddy and strata-related soon became apparent as he showed us a plan of the park defined by sand, clay and loam layers.

We wound our way around the upper perimeter along a very clear line between clay and sand, indicated by change in vegetation and with natural springs erupting at intervals along the line. At the bottom of the park we stood on an area of ground which for over hundreds of years has been, and still is, slipping down the hillside. The old "canal" with retaining earth banks is remarkably close to the industrial estate and Myrtle Road. Various trial holes dug some time ago by Bob showed the layers of sand and clay.

Climbing up to the Bishops Hill boundary, we saw evidence of this dry summer in the cracking of the clay surface, with a few springs still visible. The hour-long walk, finishing at Nacton Road end of the park, found the uppermost springs still flowing strongly into the well known series of ponds (immortalised in Gainsborough's painting in Christchurch Mansion). This particular area was somewhat neglected not only being overgrown with shrubs and trees but by invasion of the dreaded Japanese knotweed. It was a most informative and enjoyable outing. Thank you, Bob.

TED JILLINGS

In Search of Bishop Salmon

We were fairly confident that under the able leadership of Charles Tracy our search would be rewarded, and so it was.

The Bishop emerged as a powerful figure, close to Edward II, and a man of wealth and influence. In Norwich, by the cathedral, we toured the remains of Bishop Salmon's Camary College, now incorporated into the buildings of Norwich School, and admired its magnificent chapel (its ossuary now disappointingly bereft of bones). We were privileged to enter the present bishop's garden and to explore the surviving but crumbling gateway of his illustrious predecessor's palace. We walked through the cathedral cloisters, the eastern range of which was Bishop Salmon's work, and zoom lenses were soon in evidence snapping the intriguing roof-bosses.

We examined St Ethelbert's Gateway (to the cathedral) and then the Arminghall Arch, originally the entrance to the nearby Carmelite Priory, which following a spell as the doorway to a country house was again displaced and is now encapsulated within the new Magistrates' Court, the business of which swirled around us as in leisurely fashion we admired the carving.

From the bustle of urban Norwich we journeyed to the lonely site of the ancient Abbey of St Benet of Holme where in a wide Broadland landscape under brooding clouds we viewed one of East Anglia's strangest sights - a fine abbey gateway, richly carved, but now partly and incongruously incorporated into and supporting the brickwork of a decayed 18th century windmill.

This long-gone abbey has one further claim to fame; it was never formally dissolved by Henry VIII. Thus since the reign of King Canute there has been an Abbot of St Benet and to this day that title is held by the Bishop of Norwich.

KEN WILSON

Woburn Abbey

On a brilliantly sunny morning 45 members left Ipswich for Woburn. The journey was swift and pleasantly uneventful, though as the morning grew hotter it was hard not to envy the cows standing in the shallows of the flooded workings as we crossed into Bedfordshire. Once on the far side of the M1 our coach soon began to run alongside the brick walls and extensive woodlands of the Woburn estate and, passing through the spick and span village of Woburn, we came to the gates of the Abbey.

The approach to the house was intended to impress the visitor and impress it did, as we drove through Humphrey Repton's park (watched from the shade of the trees by handsomely antlered deer) up the long curving drive and caught our first sight of the house, its elegance slightly marred at present by restoration work being carried out in places on the porous stonework.

We took a coffee break in the Flying Duchess Pavilion, named for the 11th Duchess of Bedford whose many interests included aviation and who lost her life in 1937 when her Gypsy Moth disappeared over East Anglia. We then split into three groups for a guided tour of the house.

The story of the Russell family's association with Woburn begins with John Russell who served at the court of Henry VIII and was left the buildings and land in the King's will. It had been a Cistercian monastery until the Dissolution and remained a fairly modest house until extensive rebuilding in the 18th century, when the four wings surrounding a huge quadrangle transformed it into one of the greatest houses in England. Unfortunately its timbers became riddled with decay and in 1950 the then Duke took the drastic step of demolishing the indoor riding school, the real tennis court and the whole of the east range of the main house. His successor, however, decided to take advantage of advances in the treatment of timber and the house was saved from further destruction. To finance the work, the house was opened to the paying public - one of the first stately homes to do so.

The treasures of Woburn Abbey are so many that you will simply have to go and see them for yourselves, but it was good to see - among the Chinese wallpaper, French and German china, and paintings from the Low Countries and Italy (28 Canalettos!) - that the building and its interior decoration were largely the work of British architects, designers and craftsmen and that the wonderful ceilings, mantelpieces, plasterwork and carvings are now in splendid condition.

Perhaps it is the number and quality of the portraits which is most striking. Mainly of family members - from a 17th century duchess in a gown designed by Inigo Jones to Lord John Russell holding in his hand a copy of his great Reform Act - all the paintings are unusually lively, whether they are Van Dycks, Gainsboroughs and Reynolds or by lesser known artists. As an admirer of the

beguiling portrait of Anne of Denmark, wife of James I which hangs in Christchurch Mansion, I was interested to see a later portrait of her which looks, sadly, rather less vivid.

In the crypt can be seen an astonishing collection of porcelain and silver; the wealth of possessions owned by the family is illustrated by the fact that an entire Sevres service (the gift of Louis XV) lay forgotten until it came to light recently still in its original wrappings. The silvery, shell-lined Grotto contains many curiosities, not least the pale green and delicately painted coffin which the 15th Duchess (still a young woman) has had made - as the caption says "for future use".

After lunch we had a choice of Woburn's many attractions and I visited the Antiques Centre which conformed to the general style in being extensive and expensive. Those who visited the Safari Park sighted animals from all the continents - Canadian bears and wolves to elephants and tigers - but I gather it was the hippos, enjoying a good wallow, who were most happy in the afternoon's heat. We left with many of us hoping to return for a second viewing and all feeling grateful to Joyce Peck, who organised the visit and shepherded us kindly throughout the day.

KATHLEEN DANIEL

Building on Gasworks Site

A few members of the Society's Executive Committee were pleased to accept a private invitation to visit the former gasworks site in Duke Street being developed by Persimmon Homes. The invitation arose from my use of a photo on the front cover of the July Newsletter of one of the newly completed blocks of flats there.

The visit was particularly illuminating at this stage because of the valuable re-use of what must have been the most contaminated site in Ipswich. The general public - and I suppose most Society members - are keen to see as much residential building as possible on brownfield sites. And this site couldn't have been any browner! Cyanide and cadmium were only two of the many dangers there. It is therefore very gratifying to discover that Persimmon, one of the country's biggest house builders, should see this as a viable commercial challenge. In fact 90% of their work is on brownfield sites.

From the rooftop of their current site office, it was possible to appreciate the enormous amount of work that has gone into decontaminating the site. You can get some idea of this still from Patteson Road alongside the site, although as that side will be the next part to be built on you need to go soon. When we made our visit in August there were great heaps of cleaned soil being regularly turned over, as one does a compost heap. When ready, this soil will be spread over the site. Only the very worst of the polluted material was taken away, although that still necessitated over 4,000 large lorry movements to remove it to a special dump in Bedfordshire. If the whole site had been cleared of contaminated materials that would have taken 150,000 lorry journeys.

Much of the decontamination was by bio-remediation: the addition of wood bark enabled microorganisms to break down some of the pollutants. Further cleaning of the site is still going on with water under high pressure forced through the soil, the impurities being collected in big sunken tanks. Much of the concrete on the site has been crushed and will be used to help restore levels.

The environmental benefits of the clean-up are already noticeable in the river. There is no longer a seeping of black sludge from the site into the river and Wet Dock. Such environmental improvements used to attract Government financial support - what used to be called "gap funding". But that is no longer the case, although there is some tax relief for a developer's expenditure (£3m for this site). And the Local Authority can relieve the developer of such a big site of his obligation to contribute to the cost of new or enlarged schools - which Ipswich Borough Council has done.

Because of possible flooding, all the more likely owing to global warming, this site like all the others around the port will not have residential accommodation at ground level, where car parking and shops will be located. The buildings themselves ought to be stable since we learned that the pilings can be as deep as 25 metres where necessary! Another interesting aspect of the development is the use of factory-made units for some walls and even complete bathrooms. There ought to be more scope for prefabrication, but it appears there still isn't enough take-up of these possibilities nationally for industry to develop really profitable production lines. However, the selective use of prefabricated units must have helped Persimmon to speed up the erection of their first two blocks of flats which were begun little more than six months ago and now are occupied.

It won't be possible, of course, to judge the appearance of the whole development until it is complete with its restaurant, its grassy spaces and trees and its bigger blocks of flats on a vast podium at the waterfront. That will be in about five years time. But thanks to the clear and enthusiastic explanations of Managing Director, Andrew Jay, we were able to appreciate that this most difficult site in the town is being put to good use for the future.

NEIL SALMON

Tourist Information Point

Your Executive Committee is working on an idea that will hopefully enhance the visibility and standing of the Society. It has been suggested that on busy (tourist) days we could have members (by rota) on the Cornhill offering advice and guidance to visitors, information about the Society to locals and directions to all who ask. The idea is not to compete with the Tourist Information Centre - rather to complement their excellent service. It is likely we would be directing perhaps half of the enquirers to St Stephen's Church. David Stainer and his team there can provide most of the answers to questions that may be beyond the knowledge of our members. Nor would our service be a history lesson. Again we would direct visitors to the TIC from where Blue Badge Guides start their excellent and informative guided walks.

Perhaps by way of experiment we might limit our presence to one day per week during the summer of 2004 (July and August), we would listen to the questions (and typical answers) and establish what device we need to mark our presence. In the first instance this could be limited to a sash which could be easily passed from person to person. Eventually we might need something more substantial - a sandwich board, banner or stand. Your suggestions would be useful.

Where a similar service operates elsewhere (for example in Cambridge) the volunteer distributes maps of the town centre from a pad. Ours could be sponsored by the businesses that might benefit from the trade which a mention on the map could bring. At the end of the day both visitors and

locals should know that Ipswich has a Civic Society, that we care about the town and that we are willing to share our knowledge of it with others (and maybe we would recruit a few new members).
JOHN NORMAN, Vice-Chairman

No Geishas Here!

Research into a recent enquiry concerning the naming of Tokio Road, which runs between St John's and Marlborough Roads, turned up what appears to be a possible intervention of moralistic disapproval at the beginning of the last century.

In February and March 1905, a Mr Arthur Warne was evidently planning to develop land between these two roads. He submitted layout plans to the relevant Borough Committee - Paving and Lighting - for three new roads, and proposed for them the names of Weymouth, Tokio and Geisha, which were agreed to by the Committee. But in May 1908, he asked its approval to a change of name of "one of his proposed roads" from Geisha to Lansdowne Road. This now forms the extension of Tokio Road across Marlborough Road.

One can't help but wonder why one of these names of obvious Japanese association should have been abandoned like this. Surely it couldn't have been that the choice of the name Geisha upset the sensitivities of some of Mr Warne's Ipswich fellow citizens? Or could it?

RUTH SERJEANT

St George's Street, Ipswich

[**Editor:** Beryl Savidge, an Ipswich Society member for many years, has sent me an extensive account of what she knows about the St George's Street area. I have selected these passages which show her particular interest in the site of the new house, Cawthome, an award winner in the Society's 2002 awards. Miss Savidge explains at the beginning of her account that her great grandparents' small farm in Wiltshire had been commandeered in 1915 so that the Porton Down Gas Research Station could be created - later Porton Down Micro-Biological Research Station.]

I was born on 10 September 1920 in my parents' very large flat at 12a St Matthew's Street, which of course at that time was single carriageway. The Home & Colonial Stores was underneath our flat, and at No 10 there was a baby-clothes and knitting wool shop. I remember the Rainbow pub on the corner of St George's Street where some twenty years later the licensee was murdered in an affray one night.

Within days of my birth a Mrs Anna Stopher arrived to help my mother - she was to become our much loved Nanna and remained with our family for the next forty years and a firm family friend after that until her death at 88. Her husband was a three-colour printer (a highly skilled job in those days) with the Ipswich Printing Works until their disastrous fire in Princes Street in the early 1950s - or it may have been Haddock & Baines which caught fire but it gutted the Central Cinema also. Our Nanna and Bob Stopher lived at 55 St George's Street - these small terrace-type houses were

considered a' cut above" the back-to-back houses in Little Queen Street, Bacon's Buildings and Salem Street and finally Dyke Street

Because of their association with Porton Gas Research Station, my parents were very interested in the small low building on the site of No 80, Cawthorne. I was always told that this, and an identical building approached through the brick railway arch off Wherstead Road, were built in 1916 as the two Gas Decontamination Units for Ipswich, which because of the ease with which German aircraft and airships could come up following the Orwell and let loose gas canisters, were positioned fairly close to the docks.

I remember this as a longish brick building with a central door and could see from High Street that the rear door was not opposite the front door - this was undoubtedly because of the early 1800s conduit carrying spring water across this site under St George's Street, down beside Civic Centre (where it caused two firms to go bankrupt when trying to construct the spiral car park there) and across to Alderman Cut and so into the River Gipping. A very elderly friend of mine told me that this is why this Gas Decontamination Unit was built on this empty site, and similarly the situation of the one in Wherstead Road which could be tapped into a stream coming down from higher ground at Belstead. It was the cutting through this D-shaped conduit which caused so many problems when dealing with the footings for Cawthorne - filled up day by day and by next morning they were like cement-soup and had to be pumped out.

When Ipswich Civic College - now Suffolk College - decided to use this building for their Photographic Section, they put on an outside "skin" of breeze blocks, but they left the original low buttress-type wall intact. This remained until the building was demolished.

Yes, in the Second World War we were, each and every one of us, issued with a gas mask, but I can truly say I never heard of the slightest suggestion of any gas being used on civilians here in Ipswich or anywhere else in the UK.

BERYL SAVIDGE, 23 August 2003

STOP PRESS:

Another new step in making the river an interesting feature of the town is the painting of a mural on a wall near Princes Street bridge and near The Navigator sculpture. The mural by Natalie Toplass depicts some of the industrial heritage of the river and the town. It has been funded by the Local Heritage Initiative via a grant to Ipswich Wildlife Group.

Snippets (2)

New underfoot

Two more paving schemes have been completed. The more frequented one is Fore Street where the new surface enhances this splendid old street which houses the largest number of Listed buildings in the town (2 Grade I, 5 Grade II*, 77 Grade II). The other is Sir Alf Ramsay Way (formerly Portman Walk). The football club was responsible for financing the paving as part of the planning permission for the North Stand, but the work was stopped while the club was in administration. Again, the paving enhances the building - the shiny new stand with its sturdy lower verticals - although the overhang should not be a precedent for other planning permissions! Yes, these paving

schemes are an improvement, but without a supply of relatively cheap attractive natural stone in Britain, our schemes tend to be less beautiful than the best ones in Italy and Spain.

Redundant small brown bins

New legislation from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has banned the inclusion of kitchen waste in compost recycling schemes. This must be frustrating to officials in Ipswich and elsewhere and probably makes the schemes less viable with only garden waste accepted. Does anyone know what the reasons are for the Government's new restrictions? Kitchen waste used to be (still is?) an important part of similar schemes in Germany where many of the recycling methods originated and where our bins are made.

If you can't beat them, buy them

A new twist has been given to the peculiarities of railway privatisation. The Greater Anglia franchise will be operated by only one company, eliminating the present competition (for which there are pros and cons) between our two local operators, Anglia Railways and First Great Eastern. After failing at the first bidding stage, Great Eastern's parent company, First Group, has now cleared the way for a takeover of Anglia Railways' parent company. (National Express and Arriva Trains are the other competitors still in the bidding process.) Boardroom manoeuvres may benefit shareholders in the short term but will they be good for passengers in the longer term?

Hospital no more

Christchurch Park Hospital, later Suffolk Nuffield Hospital, is up for sale. Potential developers must be prepared to excel themselves in sensitive conversions because Fonnereau Road is arguably the most spectacular residential road in the town.

Lavenham and Hadleigh

What a blessing that the twin brothers Arthur (the Colonel) and Robert Gayer-Anderson decided to buy the Great House in Lavenham for £600 in the 1920s to house their collection of Egyptian artefacts. For with the house came another building next door. It was covered in ugly pebbledash, with metal window frames and was divided into six occupied tenements.

But the twins saw through this rough exterior and realised that they had a medieval house, The Little Hall. They sold the Great House, gave their Egyptian collection to the Fitzwilliam Museum and used the money to restore their medieval treasure. It was built originally in the 1390s, and in the 16th century as the woollen industry prospered and Lavenham flourished The Little Hall was extended. But when the woollen trade moved from cottage industry to the mills and factories in the 18th century Lavenham became a quiet backwater and The Little Hall fell into disrepair. But the twins had flair and vision. During the 1920s and 1930s as the tenants left they restored the Hall to its Tudor glory. They replaced the windows with Tudor ones, removed the pebbledash to show the lovely timbers, reinstated the fireplaces and imported a Tudor door and a Georgian staircase. They also added many original and personal touches. Drawings of the twins' mother, original bronzes and a splendid oak dresser are all examples of their own handiwork.

There are few relics of the wool trade left now in The Little Hall, but one visiting Kiwi knelt unexpectedly on the floor, sniffed the boards and announced, "I can smell lanolin." And he should know. It was a delightful house, with a beautiful garden where ashes of the remarkable twins are scattered. Be sure not to miss it next time you visit Lavenham.

In Hadleigh, three of the town's finest buildings face each other across the churchyard. The church is of locally gathered flint, the Deanery Gateway is in Hadleigh brick and the Guildhall is a timber frame of (probably) Suffolk oak. [Photo below: Guildhall from Deanery tower]

The red-washed Guildhall houses Hadleigh Town Council, whose modern offices have walls of oaken studwork raised in the mid-15th century to accommodate Hadleigh Market House. It is a complicated building, as is its history. Here it has three storeys, there two. One end was dismantled in 1851 when iron piles were driven through to carry the New Town Hall. The other end was pulled down after severe storm damage in 1884.

In between are rooms showing superb examples of the joiner's craft. In one room, shortly to house an exhibition about the wool trade on which medieval Hadleigh's wealth depended, the roof timbers remain unfinished as until recently they were covered by the original decking. These timbers were not intended to be seen. But in another room of similar construction the beams and crown posts are elegantly and richly carved to show off the prosperity of the town.

Downstairs the Council Chamber boasts a tiny minstrels' gallery, but the musicians must have been agile midgets to climb the ladder. Downstairs again a partition wall has been removed to reveal a medieval doorway and two shop fronts, from which a hitherto unexplained footpath leads at an angle across the churchyard. In the cramped archive department we were shown the only surviving copy of the will of Archdeacon William Pykenham, who built the Gatehouse in Northgate Street Ipswich where our Society's committee meets. Pykenham's Hadleigh Gateway, however, is a much grander affair. Its four storeys were raised in 1495 of the finest locally made red brick. Pykenham intended it to give access to his planned Deanery Palace, but he died before that could be built. Brick was in those days an innovation. The art of brickmaking had been lost when the Romans left Britain. It was reintroduced from Flanders around the 12th century but only on a small scale. It took the Hampton Court of Wolsey and Henry VIII to bring it into fashion in England. The Gateway Tower is constructed in English bond - alternate courses of "stretchers" (brick laid end to end) and "headers" (side by side). Laid with lime mortar, this style gives the building immense strength while allowing it flexibility to take up any slight movement (it has no foundations) without cracking. Today the brickwork and the interior timbers are as sound as new and will doubtless survive the odd bit of damp. No two handmade bricks are identical so the mortar must be laid to maintain the strict verticals and the spiral pattern.

Inside, a circular staircase leads to the fascinating study of the Dean, not used by the present incumbent, although a door leads through to the adjoining Deanery. In the opposite corner, a bookcase moves aside to reveal the medieval en-suite - a garderobe with a chute to the garden below. We gathered that this is not now used either. Another door leads into the turret housing the oratory, a diminutive circular chapel with an exquisitely moulded brick vaulted ceiling.

The study has its place in ecclesiastical history. In 1553 the Protestant rector, Dr Rowland Taylor, was disturbed while working in this room by the sound of the church bells, unsanctioned by him. Hurrying across into the church he found a Catholic mass in progress, celebrating the accession of Queen Mary 1. He ejected the offending priest but was himself arrested and imprisoned in the

Guildhall and two years later was burned at the stake. His monument stands beside the Hadleigh by-pass. In less violent but no less divisive days, another rector, Hugh James-Rose, hosted a meeting in 1833 in this same study to set up the conference that launched the Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement, which should perhaps more correctly be called the Hadleigh Movement. We rounded off the day in which we had been guided through three extraordinarily fascinating buildings with an excellent cream tea in the gardens behind the Guildhall. Our thanks to our expert guides and to Lois and Chris Terry for arranging such a successful outing.

PAM and JOHN IRELAND

Martlesham Police HQ

At seven o'clock on the evening of 17 June members of The Ipswich Society assembled at the Suffolk Police Headquarters, Martlesham, where they were met by Mr Alan Boon and a colleague from the communications department of Suffolk Police. They proceeded to outline the communications network used by Suffolk Police, and members were able to observe the police communication office in action.

The new Airwave system was about to be introduced. This new digital system will have many advantages over the present system including the ability to cover the whole of the UK and better communication with the general public, as each handset doubles as a mobile phone enabling officers to contact members of the public directly while on duty. It also has an emergency button in case an officer needs assistance.

Members then had a round table discussion with the two representatives of the Police Force about a number of police-related topics which included: policing - now and then; the use of the police helicopter; recruitment of officers; policemen on the beat; the continual threat of litigation, and many more. A most interesting and informative visit.

MEL JOHNSON