



The Ipswich Society

# NEWSLETTER

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summer  
special

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## LOCKDOWN SCRAPBOOK



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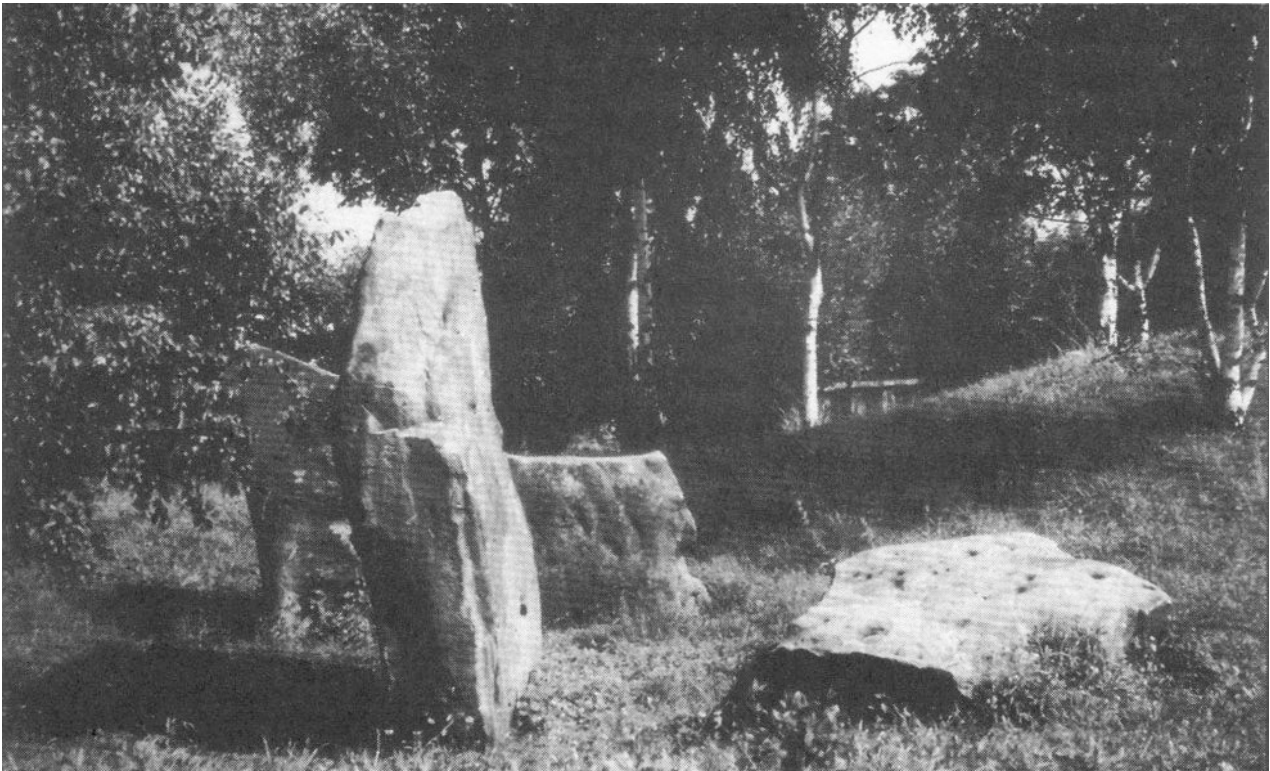
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## Editorial

In the light of the Society's *Public art in Ipswich* booklet, distributed free in January, Bob Markham reminded us of one of our largest – not to mention heaviest – piece of public art: the Sarsen stones arranged on the river path near to the skate park. His article on page 17 and the photograph below places the assemblage in context and deals with the problems of abuse and spray-painting of the ancient stones. We should reclaim this massy geological artwork for the town and celebrate the vision of the enthusiasts who asked Bernard Reynolds to arrange the stones by our river. Burying two of them on end must have been quite a feat. Compiling that booklet revealed the number of additional works which could arguably have been included.

***Robin Gaylard***



*Our back pages... The Sarsen stones near Stoke Bridge in more sylvan times (1999). Article page 17.*

**New  
members**

## Chairman's remarks

### **Permitted street paraphernalia.**

Ipswich Society planning monitors are again being taxed with the contentious issue of telecommunications equipment which, in simple terms, can be erected in the street without planning permission. The telecommunications company need to inform the planning authority in advance and officers can object should the equipment be particularly intrusive, especially in Conservation Areas and outside listed buildings.

But if the telecommunications company have decided that this particular piece of equipment is essential then it has to go somewhere, and they have frequently chosen a spacious location (extra wide pavement) where they can park their vans.

This month's string of prior notices is for 5G monopoles, each 60 feet high (20 metres, a house is typically 6 or 7 metres high). Within limits, the higher the mast, the greater the area it serves; so overall, fewer masts will be required.

These masts are, of course, a necessary intrusion into the landscape. If mobile phones are to work, particularly those accessing the internet and performing multiple functions – receiving television broadcasts and video calls from family and friends – then these masts are essential.

Just like electricity pylons galloping across the countryside, television aerials and satellite dishes on every house and cars parked nose-to-tail on both sides of every street of terraced houses, they are a necessary intrusion into the visual amenity, but one which society chooses to tolerate. Be it wheelie-bins blocking the pavement or giant television screens advertising some familiar product and distracting drivers at major highway junctions we learn to live with them. On this basis monopoles are probably one of the lesser eyesores in the street, but don't tell the planners I said that!

Another up and coming issue with planning is the proposed new primary school in Carr Street, on the face of it an excellent idea and one which we support. The issue we have is the developer's proposal to demolish the locally listed Co-operative Society's former department store to create the necessary space.

We were consulted at the pre-planning stage and our advice, then as now, is that there is more than enough space in the service yard, the site of the former garden centre, the demolished Barnes haberdashery in Upper Orwell Street and, if that's still insufficient, then a part of Cox Lane car park.

I was writing a piece yesterday about how we destroyed, building by building, significant pieces of the history of this town in the 1960s, to build Greyfriars, Carr Precinct and St Mathews Street dual carriageway. Ancient buildings were lost in the name of progress and yet, sixty years later, we still have acres of undeveloped land.

We see no justification in making the same mistake again.

**John Norman**



## Planning matters

**2-4 Russell Road.** The site is the car park of the former gym, next to Staples, opposite the Crown Court. A 100-bed Travelodge hotel is proposed with a café, bar and usual offices on the ground floor and the bedrooms in four stories above. The external appearance is an ordinary concrete frame with coloured panels as part of the cladding. Car Parking is provided under and behind the main building. It's interesting that the hotel trade sees a shortage of beds in central Ipswich. We have no objection.

**The Old Post Office, 1 Cornhill.** To further the projected use of this fine building as a restaurant, Nicolas Jacob Architects for IBC, the owners, propose to externally floodlight the north and west walls, provide temporary external seating, erect exterior signage, also install protective grilles and ventilation louvres in basement windows. These works will be beneficial to the use of the building as a restaurant and will have an acceptable degree of impact on the listed building. Potential concealment of the Ipswich Coat of Arms mosaic under a floating floor could be avoided by placing a glass panel over it.

**33 -54 Upper Orwell Street.** A fresh and welcome design by Stan Beanland Architects for nine three-bed terraced houses on the small IBC car park is within the vernacular of the current street scene whilst being modern. This might work out rather well.

**Buttermarket Shopping Centre.** The north entrance to the centre from Butter Market has been approved. This is close to several buildings of architectural importance and aesthetic sensibility. So it needs to be done more than well. It is an improvement but it's never going to be listed. We will watch their separate signage applications very carefully as they may be inappropriate for the area.

**Ex-RBS Bank, Princes Street.** The plan is to convert the first and second floors and add a third floor with a terrace to provide nine apartments. The additional floor will barely be noticeable from the street and is, from the proposed photos, aesthetically satisfactory. The building for The National Provincial Bank was designed by their notable chief architect in the late sixties as a main office in what was planned to be an expanding city. It's an attractive example of its time, so it's good news that the alterations have been designed by architects Barefoot and Gillies.

**Mobile Phone Masts.** See *Chairman's remarks* (page 3).

**Land, Anglia Parkway, North.** The erection of an incredibly mundane building to support an off-site industrial jet-washing operation on a vacant plot will mean trucks and lights 24/7; it is screened by a lot of undistinguished trees and is reasonable in itself, but its operation may disturb the Old Norwich Road Conservation Area and there have been public objections.

**17 Tower Street.** This fine eighteenth century house now belongs to the Parish of St Mary-Le-Tower. For disabled access and safe use as a 'song' school, various – largely internal – changes are proposed some of which were approved in a previous application. There would be few external signs in a building which has had many alterations and additions. It is hoped that the 20th century parquet flooring can be retained.

**Former BT Regional HQ and data centre, Handford Road.** Ipswich Borough Assets have acquired the site and buildings, and, having demolished the data centre on Handford Road, will replace it with 15 terraced houses and 24 flats with gardens and parking. On the south site, 16 houses and 17 flats with gardens with parking, cycle spaces as well as a shed space in the gardens will be erected on the former car park. The office building will be converted to mostly one-bed apartments. There will be a sustainable heating system, landscaping and electric car charging points. Even the individual cycle store sheds will have a sedum roof! It seems a meticulously well thought out and satisfactorily designed sustainable new affordable housing scheme for the Borough Council by Stanley Bragg Architects of Colchester. (The data centre – the white building parallel with and visible from Handford Road – was said to be unconvertible to residential and has been demolished.) The external appearance of the office block to apartments is uninspiring and we would hope that there will be some improvements here.

**556 Woodbridge Road.** The developer's previous application for conversion with an additional fourth storey and a metallic facade was refused because it was overbearing and not well designed and would have caused loss of amenity and privacy as well as dangerous access to the car park. The new design is a remodelling of the existing building with additional brick slips to the facade.

**Henley Gate.** These are two reserved matter applications for the land north of the railway and east of Henley Road (ground works have already commenced) by Crest Nicholson, concerning primary streets, local centre open space, sustainable urban drainage, landscaping, access points from Henley Road and bridges over the railway and outline planning permission for up to 1,100 dwellings. There has been much consultation and there were many local objectors and the Northern Fringe Protection Group posted two pages of bullet points. At the Planning Committee, Brian Samuel spoke eloquently to reiterate that the highway design and its suitability for cycle use in decades to come and for which there is no funding mechanism. Surface and foul water drainage and the possibility of a pumping station are not adequately dealt with and sufficient details are not in the application.

He also expressed concern about the management plan for the landscaped and other areas, particularly in view of Crest Nicholson's poor record on the Hayhill allotment site. Councillors' comments were on similar lines with points about the foul water drainage and possible pumping station, all unmentioned in the application. However, they were granted permission by a majority vote.

**Henley Gate.** The third application concerned the design of the 1,100 possible dwellings and associated works. The Society, The Conservation and Urban Design Panel, the Suffolk Preservation Society and the Northern Fringe Group responded similarly, commenting on the low design quality of the housing and the layout. The lack of strong and distinctive architectural character fails to meet our expectations of this important new Ipswich Garden Suburb. This theme was strongly stated by Brian Samuel and reiterated by many councillors. There was considerable discussion of the heating mode; this to be by individual gas boilers for the first 133 houses with seven solar panels in total. Because of the original planning permission granted and the new Building Regulations, Part L – which governs heating systems in new builds – not coming into force until the summer of 2022 it is not possible to prevent the installation of outdated systems in the first tranche.

Several noted that the affordable housing provision was a mere 7%; the meeting was told that independent assessors advised that a higher percentage would render the overall scheme unviable due to the infrastructure being provided: three schools, two bridges over the railway, a district retail centre, much landscaping and a country park larger than Christchurch Park. In due course, permission was granted with one vote against.

N.B. The Planning and Development Committee has resumed public meetings but, in order to maintain social distancing, has moved to the Grand Hall of the Corn Exchange. The logistics were exemplary; sound and vision better than at Russell House.

**Former Co-op department store, Carr Street.** We support the concept of a new primary school on this site but together with all the other consultees believe it would best built further back towards the car park, allowing the retention of the buildings fronting Carr Street to be retained for future use. Unfortunately the funders, the Department for Education, will not support the retention of buildings unless they are nationally listed – and in this case they are only locally listed. The intention is to incorporate the 1930s signage 'IPSWICH INDUSTRIAL COOPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED' on the new facade which we feel is out of place on a school. The stone corner plaque, '1908 EACH FOR ALL AND ALL FOR EACH' would be replicated within the school which seems a good motto for a school. The fine mosaic on the rear of the Cox Lane passageway is intended to be preserved. As so many works of art from demolished buildings have been retained then broken or lost, we are requesting that it is a condition of permission that a suitable site for its re-erection is stated.

*Mike Cook*



## My California

It was in 1850 that the Ipswich Freehold Land Society, with its shareholders' money, bought a large area of land to the north-east of Ipswich belonging to the Cauldwell Hall Estate. The land was bordered by Woodbridge Road to the north, Foxhall Road to the south, Cauldwell Hall Road and Britannia Road. Spring Road at that time was known as Grove Lane. Plots of land were allocated to its members. One Friday, men carrying pick axes and shovels walked up the hills to 'stake their claim' and because it was at the time of the great American gold rush this new area of Ipswich was called California.

Soon there would be a St John the Baptist Church and school built in Cauldwell Hall Road, California Chapel on the corner of Cowper Street and California Boys School in Spring Road. With the growing population by the beginning of the century larger churches were needed so St John's C of E was built in Cauldwell Hall Road and still stands today; St. John's Congregational Church was built next to the California Chapel.

By 1898 my grandfather Durrell had opened a fish and chip shop at 167 Spring Road, probably



R. Durrell fish shop, c.1911

one of the first such shops in Ipswich. Grandfather had been a seaman and, visiting Lowestoft, had seen these shops becoming popular. He thought this a good place to set up shop as the horse drawn trams came up the hill as far as Cauldwell Hall Road so people would pass his shop and call in. The shop was in a terrace named Giles after the builder's son and the only stipulation was that it could not be a beer shop. Behind his premises was his smoke house, fish was collected from Wrights of Eagle Street and also Derby Road Station by his sons. One hundred bloaters would sell for one penny! Here he also bred bulldogs. His stud dog Referee having passed his peak was exchanged for a three-quarter ton sack of potatoes valued at £1.7s.6d. The highest price for an animal being £5.5s.0d.

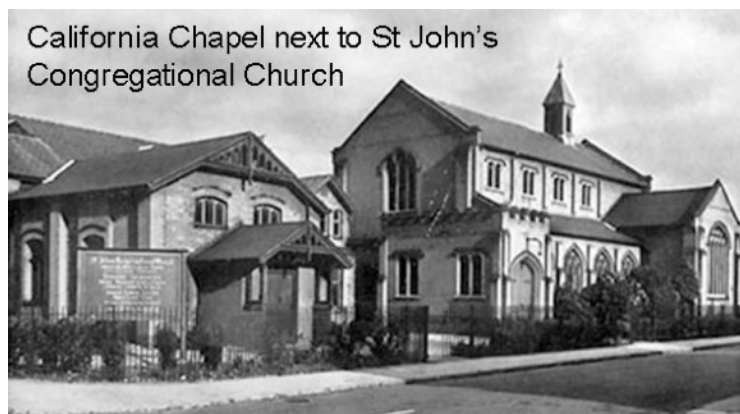
The Spring Road area of California is where both my Durrell and Saunders families lived. Both sets of grandparents were married in St John's Church and the story goes that some couples who married

before the church was dedicated had to re-marry! Most members of the two families were baptised and married there but later the younger members of the Durrell family seem to have married at the new St. John's Congregational Church which was built next to the old California Chapel.

This area had a very close-knit community – large families and not much money. People looked out for their neighbours. My



Original church in Cauldwell Hall Road



California Chapel next to St John's Congregational Church

grandmother always had a basket of baby clothes ready for a new arrival. On a Saturday evening, Grandfather always cooked more fish and chips than needed so that on Sunday morning my aunt, carrying a large wicker basket, took the 'left overs' to the poor of the district for their Sunday lunch. She was known as 'The Angel of St. Johns'.

Tramps would walk up the hill on their way to Heathfields Workhouse, where now the Two Rivers Surgery stands. This was a regular sight, stopping at Tom Newton's, the cobblers, to leave any pennies they had for safe-keeping. These were put in a little cupboard in his workshop and when the shop was eventually sold, many years later, little stacks of coins were found, witness to a kindness shown. Another relative once owning the Brickmakers Arms always provided a clean shirt in exchange for one needing washing and repairing for these men of the road. Just some examples of the community spirit at the time.

The Durrells were a large family: seven boys and four girls. The oldest boy told of going to a field near Barnards Mill on Woodbridge Road to pick up stones, these used for building roads; another of getting up early before school to deliver milk and one of helping in a bakery. As the boys grew, they joined the Boys Life Brigade at California Chapel and became good footballers. A number of them went on to play for Ipswich Town and Ipswich Town Babes.



Opposite the shop was Buscall's the butcher and Mr Lee had the shop on the corner of Cauldwell Hall Road with the Post Office. When my mother was twenty-one her father asked her what she would like as a present. Unlike her older sisters she did not want a gold bracelet but knowing her father was becoming unwell she asked to take over the shop as a florists and greengrocers. My mother married into the Saunders family in 1931. She ran this shop until 1945 when the last family member died and the house was no longer being needed as a family home.

By the time I came on to the scene, I feel not much had changed. My grandfather Durrell was no longer around but there still remained his last bulldog, Bonzo. Also another legacy from grandfather was a bad-tempered green parrot in a huge cage. My brother tells that when this parrot died, he went up the garden with my blind aunt and buried it. The butcher's was now owned by Mr. Copsey and the corner shop was run by one of my Durrell uncles who had married Mr Lee's daughter. Mr Lee ran the Post Office on the opposite side of the road next to Greengrass's, a gentlemen's outfitters and Mr Welham's greengrocers on the corner. On that corner was the horse trough, one of many which stood at the top of most of the hills ready to refresh passing horses and even dogs at a trough underneath.

Mother ran the shop, so much of my young childhood was spent in this environment. I remember vividly having to sit quietly so my uncles could listen to the one o'clock news, I could feel the tension as it was just before declaration of war. The old wireless wheezed and crackled, the battery having to be taken to Harvey's just up the road to be recharged. *(continues)*

There were lots of small shops in this area. Next door was the barber's – John Hamilton had moved here when the slum area of Fore Street was demolished. He had been offered a place in Reynolds Road where people were being re-housed but chose to come to Spring Road. In the same row was a couple, Mr and Mrs Bee, who sold bird seed and such like. A dear little couple who, looking back, reminded me of characters from the children's programme *Trumpton*. I must not forget Mrs Dickman at the sweet shop where, in the war years and until rationing ended, we children went with our sweet coupons every Saturday to get our weekly allowance of 2 oz. of sweets. And, of course, Mr Harry Starling, the chemist's at the corner of Kirby Street, where everyone went for advice rather than call a doctor. Round the corner in Cauldwell Hall Road was the Co-op grocery, their butchers opposite and, at the top of Upland Road, the Co-op bakery built in 1904. Just into Bloomfield Street was Mr. Smith's market garden. My brother and I remember having to collect various vegetables for mother's shop. I quite liked this job as on the corner of Spring Road and Bloomfield street a lady sold penny drinks from her front room so I always stopped there!



In those days everything was delivered by horse and cart: coal, greengrocery, bread, milk, beer. Just down the hill on the right was the drift to the blacksmith's where Mr. Whiting had his forge. The farrier would walk the horses from their stables to the Smithy. Some of the Suffolk Punches looked difficult to handle, the Farrier having to pull hard on their reins, whilst others trotted sedately down the hill. I can still picture those horses on a frosty morning, foaming at the mouth with clouds of steam belching from their nostrils and the loud clatter of hooves on the icy road. There never was any shortage of garden manure in those days, a bucket and shovel always at the ready.

Lots of tramps still walked past our shop on their way to Heathfields. They looked dishevelled and dirty with their belongings in a bundle over their shoulders and a battered tin mug tied on with a piece of string. I suppose there were female tramps but I cannot remember any. Gypsies too were regular visitors, such colourful characters with their long swaying skirts, babies tied on with a shawl, carrying their baskets of pegs, lace and ribbons. I must say I was a bit scared of them. They had parked their beautiful, old-fashioned, caravans on Rushmere Heath but I don't think they ever stayed for more than a day or two.



One visitor to our shop was a short, bent, scruffy man with an oily cap, long coat, a sack on his back and a permanent drip on the end of his hooked nose. I declare my mother was scared of him. He walked in from Ufford to sell his watercress. Mother always bought some from him. My brother and I would wash this in a bowl of water and look for tadpoles. No pre-packed watercress in those days. Hygiene was a thing for the future.



A familiar sight was Mr Robinson, the chimney sweep, black from head to toe, cycling along with his poles and brushes resting on a little platform at the side of his bike. When shrimps were in season Mr Gibbs from Woodbridge Road came round with a large basket in front of his cycle, ringing his bell and shouting ‘Harwich Shrimps, lovely Harwich shrimps!’ And of course, the rag and bone man visited regularly, just like Steptoe and Son!

Down the hill in the grounds of Cauldwell Hall was a lake with a number of pink flamingos. We were all sad when one day, we heard that these beautiful birds flew up into the trolley bus wires on the nearby Spring Road and were electrocuted.



California Boys School, Spring Road

I must not forget the two schools. All of my two families had been pupils at St. John's School with girls staying there to finish their education whilst the boys went to California School in Spring Road. Masters at the boys' school were strict and were very liberal with the cane. Of course, we younger generation all went to St John's, staying until we took the eleven-plus. By that time California School was an annex to Copleston Road Secondary School. Behind the St John's School was a vinegar factory.

This area seemed, to a young child, like a sanctuary – little traffic and long days, a close-knit community where all shared in the joys and sorrow of their friends and family – so important during the war years.

Now as I travel along Spring Road, I feel a great sadness as the shops have almost all gone. I have difficulty locating where my mother's shop was, gardens replacing where once the shoppers congregated and gossiped. No longer are there any white Ipswich trolley buses: No. 3 to Whitton and 3A to Adair Road, just the half-hourly red bus to Felixstowe. Somehow, the soul has gone out of the area.

California? Yes, the Boys School still stands now re-named Parkside Academy and on Foxhall Road the California Bowls Club. A name forgotten by most and I wonder if the bowlers know the history behind their club name.

**Maureen N. Frazer (née Saunders)**

## BSC Multicultural Services

Previously known as the Bangladeshi Support Centre, BSC Multicultural Services (BSCMS) was established in 1998 by volunteers with just a small grant of £250; it has helped thousands of people over the last two decades.



It provides help to people from all faiths and backgrounds with programmes like the supplementary school run on Mondays and a befriending scheme which supports vulnerable elderly people to stay fit, healthy and independent. It has also delivered hundreds of food parcels to some of the town's most vulnerable people during the coronavirus pandemic. During the pandemic, The Ipswich Society has been unable to use its spare copies of the *Newsletter* through networking, at events and via the now-closed Tourist information Centre. We were therefore delighted to provide two batches of recent issues to BSCMS, a copy to be included in each of their food parcels.

BSCMS celebrated its 20th anniversary in November 2019. As well as planning and delivering dozens of projects in Suffolk, including training and education, cultural understanding and cohesion, the charity has also organised several major annual events in Ipswich (for example, the One Big Multicultural Festival, and the Suffolk BME Business Awards – the latter organised with the University of Suffolk). It aims 'to highlight Ipswich as a role model of social integration and community cohesion in the east of England, if not the whole country'.

BSCMS has excelled itself during the pandemic and has been working closely with Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group and local ethnic minority groups and communities to organise vaccination sessions from a bus which visits localities; this is aimed particularly at the disadvantaged and the vulnerable. As a result, 500 people (and rising) of Asian, African, Chinese, Turkish, Middle Eastern and Eastern European backgrounds have already been vaccinated. This initiative was important for both ethnic minorities and the NHS as Covid-19 has affected members of these communities more than the wider population. **R.G.**

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## Our Photographic Competition comes to the Cornhill

Some good news at last (we have to play the long game in these troubled times...) Members may remember, way back in the first lockdown (or was it the second?), the Society ran a photographic competition to celebrate our 60th anniversary. A good number of photographers entered a wide variety of images in a range of styles and approaches, from the opportunistic snapshot to the carefully composed view; some had post-production image editing, too. Some, no matter how good, weren't eligible because they weren't of Ipswich. However, the judges had much from which to select. Our colour booklet which was included with the January 2021 *Newsletter* celebrated the short-listed photographs and they will all be featured (enlarged) in a Cornhill Cubes exhibition on, logically, the Cornhill from Wednesday 30 June until Friday 30 July.

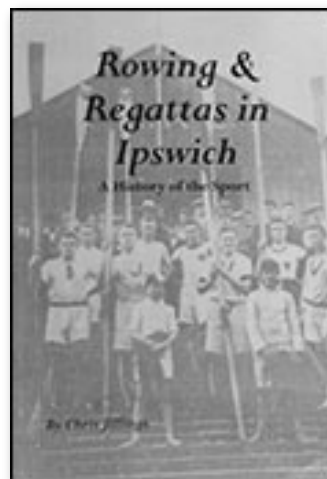
If you haven't ventured into the town centre since the last lockdown, this may tempt you out to see how the town is faring (see also *Street scene* on page 14). Huge thanks to all those who entered photographs in 2020 and congratulations to those who were short-listed. After the exhibition we will announce the winners. [View all the photographs on our Image Archive.]

## A new publication

*Rowing & Regattas in Ipswich* by Chris Jillings. 2020.

This diligent book rises from a mass of newspaper archives, the Record Office, libraries and photographic collections to document the history of rowing and regattas in the town. Many of the photographs are from the IMT archive and the book is an excellent companion to this year's IMT calendar.

Chris Jillings took an interest in rowing the Orwell in the 1980s and set up a new Ipswich Rowing Club in 2013 that has been so successful that two women training from the New Cut were awarded the Club Crew of the Year (UK) by British Rowing.



The historical context is explained well. Competition to drop off a pilot in all-weather fostered the design of fast gigs that were raced in annual regattas held around the coast for substantial prizes. Inland competitive rowing started in East Anglia in 1813; an Ipswich Galley Club is mentioned by 1835. Two years later a large Ipswich Town Regatta coincided with Victoria's Coronation. Subsequently boats from the Ipswich Aquatic Club, *Orwell*, *Nautilus*, *Petrel* and *Naiad* rowing clubs, joined by teams from several industrial works and pubs, competed with visiting crews from around East Anglia. Competitive women's teams were seen throughout the Victorian era. By 1862 a crowd of 25,000 jostled on the Wet Dock to witness rowing, sailing and swimming races. Even bigger crowds were seen periodically until regattas started to wind down in 1913.

There were plenty of sinkings and fallings-in, though fortunately few fatalities. The crowd were treated to spray from the earliest torpedoes, exploded for their amusement in 1871. Most races were rowed between the Wherstead Beacon and the committee boat moored outside the lock gates, though timed-start races up the Gipping were also held.

In 1905 the *Woolwich Bell* cut the Hog Highland bend too fine at full speed to demolish a skiff. The five crew were rescued, one embarrassed to be without his shorts, by the packed paddle steamer.

A fire in 1948 destroyed the two splendid rowing clubs that had been built at the edge of the salt water bathing place in 1903. Since then, the potential for the river in the town to be an aquatic park has faded from public consciousness. We should lament the loss of the splendid tree lined boulevard on the Wet Dock to a desolate, locked lorry park; the loss of beach access at Hog Highland; replacement of the swimming pool and riverside gardens of Wherstead Road by the West Bank Quay; the banning of public access to the lock gates, Umbrella site and Ship Launch Road; the concreting of much of the Gipping river bank and the extensive silting of the New Cut.

A useful addition to the shelves of those interested in maritime Ipswich, this book is a timely reminder of what might be achieved. Most of the hive of social activity and sport were carried out in the past in a river thick with sewage and industrial waste. Now, the Orwell is cleaner than at any time in the last two hundred years, yet not used by the majority of the town.

The Island site and dock will develop further. Whether this is dominated by gated towers of second homes, or whether there will be greater access for the communities of the town for sport and leisure, will depend on an informed public who is aware of what has gone before. Chris Jillings has led the way in restarting competitive rowing in Ipswich and I recommend his book.

Price £20. Contact Chris at: [intertech@btinternet.com](mailto:intertech@btinternet.com)

**John Warren**

[This article courtesy of The Ipswich Maritime Trust.]

## Diana Graves (née Heath) and the Wolsey Angels



Many readers will remember seeing these four Renaissance sculptures which were reunited, restored and came to the Wolsey Gallery in 2017-18 (*Newsletter* in Jan. 2018). Noticed in an April *Guardian* obituary column, 10 April 2021, was a tribute to Diana Heath – her professional name – Head of Metals Conservation at The Victoria & Albert Museum in London, having worked there for 32 years. She is pictured working on one of the Wolsey angels in 2016 and was very highly regarded as an expert conservator. We have her and her team to thank for the remarkable condition of the angels after a chequered history. If you watched the BBC2 television series *Secrets of the museum* in early 2021, you will appreciate the infinite pains taken to clean and sympathetically restore all sorts of artefacts and art works by the V&A experts.

## Clock has come home after 150 years!

An early Victorian mahogany and circular dialled wall clock made at 19 St Peter's Street, Ipswich about 150 years ago has returned to 19 St Peter's Street. The clock face bears the name 'Birkle Bros, 19 St Peter's Street, Ipswich'. David Birkle, whose family came from the Black Forest valley settlement of Schönenbach, was a tenant at number 19 between c.1851 – c.1881 and ran the Ipswich branch of the Birkle Bros. & Co. clockmaker and watchmaker business from here.

Three history students, researching owners and tenants of 19 St Peter's Street since it was built c1700, discovered that the clock was coming up for sale at Adam Partridge's auction room in Cheshire.

My interest in the property started in November 2012 when our family bought it for my daughters, Hannah and Beth, to start a coffee shop. It opened in July 2013 under the name Baker & Barista, however after a trademark challenge it was renamed Applaud Coffee in 2015. Soon after completion the previous owner handed over a large bundle of documents relating to the ownership which started a journey of discovery.



In 2019, after carrying out my own research on the web, I realised that I needed expert help. John Norman, Chairman of the Ipswich Society, suggested I contact Harvey Osborne, the Head of History at the University of Suffolk. I did so, providing a list of previous interesting people who had either owned or lived at the property, and I quickly received a favourable response. Within a couple of weeks a team of three students had confirmed that they were interested in taking on a project and in December I met the students - Maria Senior, Hannah Castle and Kerri Stevenson.

A presentation of their work will be on display at Applaud Coffee, 19 St Peter's Street, from Saturday 24 July to Friday 3 September 2021. A leaflet about some of their research will also be available.

One interesting owner was brewer Robert Bowman. He was connected to the Falcon Inn in Queen Street (known until recently as Bowmans). His three daughters – Susannah, Harriet and Amelia, were made 'tenants in common' by their father in 1846. Susannah lived at the property for the longest period of time with her husband, George Green Sampson, and later they bought out her sisters in 1846. The husband of Harriet (m.1835), Robert Burrows, was an artist, pawnbroker, woollen draper and in 1856 he took up photography. Robert's work is significant – it is some of the earliest surviving examples of photography taken outside London in the nineteenth century.

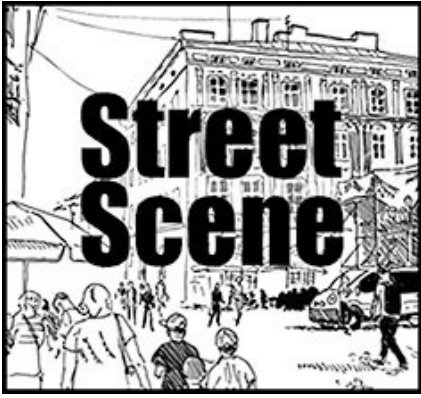
George Green Sampson was a surgeon. A letter published in *The Ipswich Journal* in 1880 attacked him for vaccinating children against smallpox. He served as Mayor of Ipswich on four occasions (1838, 1846, 1870 and 1871); more times than any other Mayor of Ipswich. This is testament to his popularity. He was often described as a passionate and fiery political figure.

In 1881, Charles Ganter was running his clock-making business at 19 St. Peter's Street. He was later joined by his brother John and sister Louisa, who acted as housekeeper. They all worked and lived together here until the early twentieth century. None of the siblings married or had any children. Originally tenants, the brothers purchased number 19 in 1894 for £450. This marked the first separate sale of the properties of numbers 19 and 21 (21 is now Loveone).

### **Timeline**

- c.1700 - Property was built.
- 1757 - William Easterby (butcher)
- 1757 - Samuel Howes Sr (wig maker)
- 1823 - Joseph & Elizabeth Bacon (née Howes)
- 1839 - Robert Bowman (brewer) buys lot No. 2 (19 & 21) at Rose Inn auction
- 1846 - Three daughters of Robert Bowman made tenants in common Susannah, Harriet & Amelia
- 1846 - Susannah & George Green Sampson buy out the sisters' shares
- 1851 – Birkle Bros (clockmakers)
- 1885 - William Whymark buys the property at public auction at the Crown & Anchor Inn
- 1894 - Charles & John Ganter (clockmakers)
- 1921 - Grace & Frederick Holmes (shorthand school and jeweller/watchmaker)
- 1938 - Arthur Samuel Green (builder)
- 1947 - 1968 – Winifred Demain milliner/ ladies hatter (Ernest Demain, an Ipswich Corporation Electric Tramway employee, bought the property in 1948)
- 1979 - Ann Knights (Militaria shop) bought for £9,750
- 1989 - Craig Stephen Glover Marchant (barrister) & Anne Vivienne Kinella-Jaques
- 2012 - Hannah Huntly & Beth Cook (Applaud Coffee)

### **Rodney Cook**



At the beginning of 2021 I was wondering if there would be any shops left at all in the town centre when lockdown ceased. I had visions of a ghost town. After four months without going into town at all, I was pleasantly surprised to find that no more shops had gone in the meantime. We knew Debenhams and TopShop were on the way out but other than that the rest seem to have hung on, so far. People have also returned in their droves to the town centre.

The last three months have seen a succession of new independents gradually springing up, filling the gaps. Still a few spaces remain, but things are moving in the right direction. So, we may currently have eight phone shops in Tavern Street but they won't all be there forever – better than eight empty units. Shops are constantly changing and always have done. I'd far rather see a unit with lights on with people in it and being used, even a phone shop, rather than a row of shops like that of Poundworld when it closed and was left as a boarded up and unloved eyesore in Tavern Street for nearly three years. Most of us only use a small percentage of the shops and businesses in any town we visit anyway, walking past the majority of them, but they all add to the ambiance and hustle and bustle of the town whatever they are and someone uses them – otherwise they would not survive.

Let me list just a few of the shops and businesses which have already opened or are opening in Ipswich this year. There are many others if you search around.

FOX AND BRAMBLE baby boutique opened in St. Peters Street as well as BRIDES OF ST PETER'S wedding dress shop, the BLITZ 1940s Tearooms and BLACKTHORN Beauty and Piercing.

BEX BAIT AND TACKLE opened in Upper Orwell Street, WILDGOOSE Fine Foods opened in St. Stephens Lane.

THE COFFEE CELL opened in Northgate Street and PIZZA NAPOO PASTA is moving into the former Vietnamese restaurant, nearly opposite, very soon.

MICROSHOPS market is moving into the former Peacocks in Carr Street and further along WAFFLE AND MORE is moving into the former Superdrug unit.

FONE TECH has filled Kiko Milano and 'A PHONE SHOP' has filled Whittards in Tavern Street. THE MOLOKO Cocktail Bar and Tapas Restaurant has opened in Lion Street in the former empty Aqua Eight restaurant. Round the corner on Cornhill THE BOTANIST Restaurant, part of a popular chain, is expected to open in the former Post Office around September time.

In Giles Circus the popular HONEY & HARVEY patisserie and café found in Melton and Woodbridge also hopes to open in the former and, for a long time, empty Mambos unit in August whilst further down Queen

Street KARE PLUS has moved across the road filling the empty Lady Norfolk and Lord Rust unit whilst the JOSEPH Property Agency has filled the space they left behind.

SOURDOUGH STREET has opened on Lloyds Avenue where Pizza Express closed and, just out of town in Cardinal Park, DOUGH & CO is getting ready to open in the former Frankie & Benny's.



*Microshops, Carr Street.*

FIREAWAY AUTHENTIC PIZZA is soon to open in the former Jennings Bet, once a Pizza Hut site in Upper Brook Street. Just along from there LOCKHART LEISURE games and toys has submitted a planning application for the former Age UK Suffolk unit. IBC is in advanced talks with a restaurant operation to take over the former Little Waitrose unit in the Corn Exchange, although nothing is signed yet. BELFAST BEDS, who own the unit, have filled the empty Bon Marché shop in Westgate Street with their own shop.



*Honey & Harvey café, Queen Street.*

The TURKS HEAD gastro pub at Hasketon near Woodbridge is reported to have bought the empty ZIZZI restaurant in St. Nicholas Street to turn into a restaurant and bar. Further out the empty church on Key Street known as QUAY PLACE has signed a lease for the RIVER CHURCH to move in. THE GALLERY Lounge Bar Cocktail and Tapas is opening in the former John Russell Art Gallery in Wherry Lane. JUMP has opened in the empty Bounce unit in the Anglia Retail Park. The NEW OASIS LOUNGE bar is planned on Albion Wharf in the former Anytime Fitness. There is currently much local opposition on this for fear of noise and late night drinking. Ipswich Debenhams has been bought by the UNEX GROUP estate investors based near Newmarket.

Marks & Spencer has just announced there will shortly be another 30 store closures. The group currently has 254 full-line stores, which sell food and clothing, but it plans to reduce this to around 180 over the next 10 years, with some of these being replaced by food-only or purely clothing and home sites.

On the positive side Phase 2 of the work on the former BHS site is reported to be starting soon where, we believe, SPORTS DIRECT, GAME, FLANNELS, USC and JACK WILLS are expected to open in one form or other and there is mention of, perhaps, a restaurant or café. Staff in Game said realistically this will not be complete until late this year or even early next year. The BUTTERMARKET Shopping Centre restructure will resume soon which will include a modernised entrance from Butter Market.

Construction has continued in Ipswich with the 'BLUE LIGHT HUB' progressing in the Fire Station on Princes Street where the town Police Station will also be sited in the enlarged complex with an Ambulance 'call out' unit as well. Close by, plans for a 99-room Travelodge just off Russell Road next to Endeavour House (SCC) have been submitted by the Essex-based developers Burney Group. It is intended to start



*Proposed school on the Co-op store site, Carr Street.*

construction by the autumn of this year, and should open 12 months later. The Burney Group also said it has plans to submit a second application to re-clad and modernise the existing retail warehouse buildings, formerly Office Outlet and Better Gym, as well as subdividing the space to create up to five modern units.

Proposals continue to demolish the former Co-op department store in Carr Street and replace it with a school for 420 students. Ipswich Society Chairman, John Norman, said: ‘That is quite a big site. We want to see a school there – but if they cannot make it work with the existing building, there is plenty of other space on the old garden centre site and part of Cox Lane.

The proposal to demolish the locally listed former department store, a building that is culturally important in the social history of Ipswich as an industrial town is unnecessary, especially as the proposed replacement isn't architecturally outstanding.’

A clean-up of the former Burtons building on St. Peters Wharf removing pigeon droppings is under way so that, once finished, surveyors can prepare plans for redevelopment of the site. Plans have been submitted to turn HAVEN HOUSE office block (formerly occupied by HM Revenue & Customs) in Lower Brook Street into 75 flats.

THE NEW WOLSEY THEATRE slowly keeps adding to its improvements! With the concourse and ‘NW2’ Pavilion completed as well as improvements inside the theatre, work is now in progress adding a ‘sail’ canopy over the front entrance terrace. Work is going full speed ahead now that Gipping construction have demolished the former BT building facing Handford Road to make space for 13 terraced town houses. The remaining office block behind is to be converted into 74 residential apartments and a mix of 16 detached, semis and terraced town houses with gardens and two parking spaces each are planned for the former BT staff car park site.

The HOPE CHURCH conversion of the old Odeon Cinema into not only a church but a conference, meetings and community venue with public café – has continued. John Norman had a tour over the site and was very impressed with the conference facilities for hire in the building with a huge auditorium where two of the former cinema screens have been knocked together. Several ‘break-out’ areas are also included in the mix.

Plans are being made to turn ST CLEMENTS CHURCH into a music venue. Work is progressing to re-clad ST FRANCIS TOWER which is currently surrounded by scaffolding and plastic sheeting. Now work to replace it is finally under way; the building’s owner, managing agents, and those doing the work remain tight-lipped on the value of the project, as a legal battle rumbles on over who pays for the repairs.

Work is in progress building 16 one-bed and 28 two-bed flats on a site beside Duke Street just along from Tesco. Around 15 of those will be designated as affordable housing.

**Tim Leggett**



*New housing coming in Handford Road.*





## The Sarsen stones on the river path

*(In the mid 1970s several dozen large sarsen stones – sandstone boulders – were removed from below the riverbed a short distance upriver from Stoke Bridge. They had impeded the driving of steel piles for a flood protection scheme and were placed on ground beside the former yeast works, most being arranged to form a seating area.)*

The 30 January 1977 was a cold and very frosty day when, well wrapped up, members of the Ipswich Geological Group enjoyed a walk looking at a wide variety of stone in our town's buildings. Of particular interest was an impressive new artwork at the Riverside Walk near Stoke Bridge. Peter Underwood, wearing both his Geological Group and Ipswich Society hats, told us that the three largest sarsens had been arranged by Bernard Reynolds, two of them on end and well dug in, as part of a landscaping scheme by the Ipswich Society. A fine example of local sculptor and local natural material. (There is an early photograph of them in *Newsletter* no.137, October 1999 – shown on page 2 of this *Newsletter*.)

This impressive work of art soon attracted attention. I noted on 10th January 1978 that the largest stone had received minor graffiti work but that there was no litter on site. They were becoming much more colourful by the Millennium as local 'artists' spray-painted the surfaces. Some of the graffiti were removed or painted over, but some is of a sensitive nature, recording the death of a young man. The surface of the largest stone has also received mechanical distressing, causing even more damage to surfaces.

The site continued to receive visitors. The Greenways Project 2002-03 report on the adjacent skatepark noted that 'vast quantities of litter have been collected around the sarsen stones by the river.' Ipswich Borough Council's River Path User Surveys 2009-10 at the sarsen stone site noted 'socialising; drinking; toileting; some drug-taking.' Indeed one stone has suffered chemical discolouration apparently from urine. For a period a fixed seat was placed in front of the artwork but this has been removed.

So is all of this 'street art' or vandalism? The skatepark informs us 'This park has zero tolerance of graffiti, which is an act of vandalism.' And is it heritage crime and what can be done about it? It is possible to take legal action against heritage crime. Education is part of the answer - Greenways provide an information panel, but this has been subject to vandalism.

The sarsen stones are of great interest to geologists and GeoSuffolk has designated Stoke Bridge Pocket Park as a County Geodiversity Site. The sarsen stones are well worth visiting. There are quite often local youths, or young men speaking Eastern European languages at the site. Talk to them, tell them you have come to look at the sarsen stones – most are, of course, quite friendly. Take your own friend if you are nervous. Or you could visit the sarsens in the Lower Arboretum in Christchurch Park, but Stoke Bridge Pocket Park is more of an adventure. Enjoy the rocks.

**Bob Markham**



*The stones in April 2021*

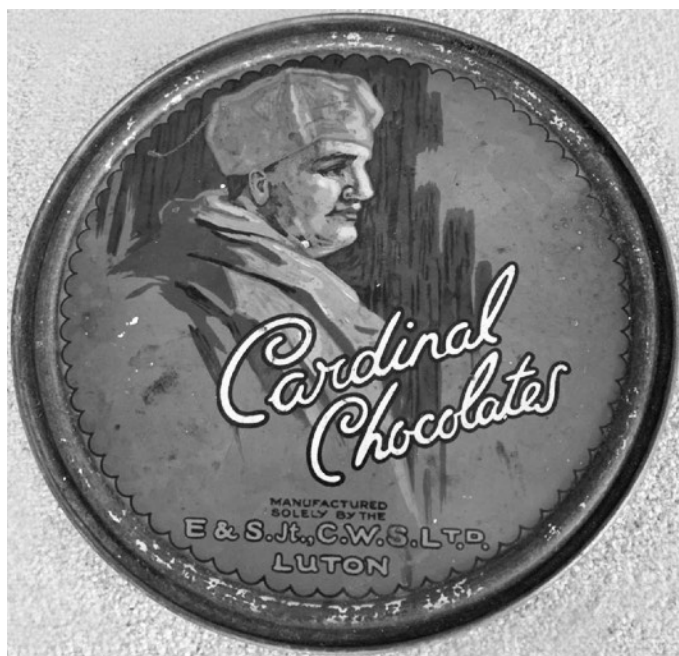
## Letters to the Editor

### Cardinal Chocolates from Sylvia Patsalides

I read the article about the Silburys, lockdown and Cardinal Wolsey [Issue 225] and attach a photograph of my Wolsey Chocolates tin produced by E & S CWS Ltd of Luton. I believe that the factory in Luton used to do all the chocolate-related stuff, but will admit to have so far done little research. What chocolates were contained within I wonder?

[Historical note: **E&S Joint CWS** was the Co-op's 'English & Scottish Tea Society'.

As well as packaging tea they also made chocolate (in Luton): the 'Lutona' brand. -J.N.]



### Ipswich Dock Tramway from Stephen Poole

I'm glad I listened to Stuart Grimwade's talk to the Ipswich Society on 28 April 2021. In case it's of interest to any members of the Society, here are some comments regarding the last use of the dock tramway – along with some of the wider issues that affected it. I'm basing my comments on recollections from my time as a Development Manager for one of BR Railfreight's sectors in the late 1980s.

I recall that the Lower Yard was used at various times for stone trains and container traffic as well as for the BOC industrial gases tanks from Ditton (near Runcorn). Stuart showed us a picture of the BOC tanks crossing Ranelagh Road Level Crossing. These flows, from Railfreight's perspective, were 'trainload', i.e. they ran as full trains from origin to destination under contract for a single customer. The container trains would at that time have been run under contract to Freightliner, which was a separate entity. The sector I worked for, however, ran most of its traffic as 'wagonload' and this meant scratching around to get traffic to make up trains that could sometimes be as little as one wagon and at other times mean leaving wagons behind because there were too many. Therefore it was hard to allocate or underwrite resources – or to provide a consistent level of service. Malt and grain were two of many examples where we had dearths of traffic and then gluts and these were the two remaining traffics to and from the docks at Ipswich, where we ran them for R&W Paul. These were the only flows to go further than the Lower Yard, and so our sector had to foot the bill for maintenance and renewal of the infrastructure across the Stoke Bridge road. We also had to pay the full costs of the pilot engine needed to move the wagons to and from Paul's. Despite these costs, there was no regular contract for any of this sporadic traffic and, as accounting practices sharpened up, it became increasingly apparent that wagonload was not paying its way. This was important when you bear in mind that public subsidy for Railfreight had been stopped by the outgoing Labour government in 1979. The miners' strike in the 1980s then cost Railfreight about £300m, none of which could be recovered other than from

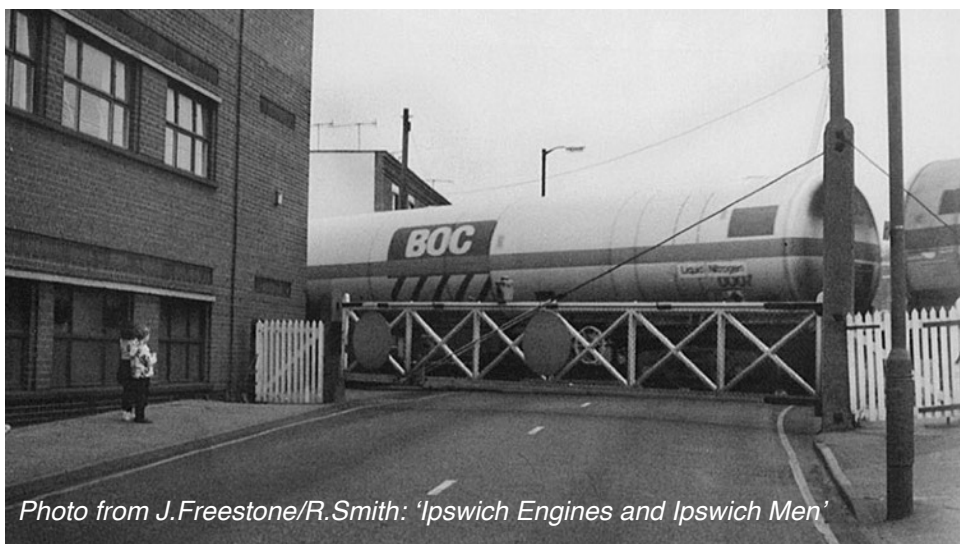


Photo from J.Freestone/R.Smith: 'Ipswich Engines and Ipswich Men'

within its own resources. So loss-making services were increasingly coming under very harsh scrutiny. Looking back, it's a miracle wagonload survived for as long as it did.

We made huge amounts of effort, however. Our sector had three sales reps in south-east England and I recall the one for East Anglia (Paul Philips) making frequent trips to the grain and malt traders in order to drum up traffic for rail. I know he went to R&W Paul's on a regular basis. Similarly, I visited places (although not Ipswich as far as I can recall) to develop new flows and try to make savings on the operation of existing traffic. We actively marketed grain movements by rail under the brand name *Grainflow*. As late as 1987 we were investing money in a new fleet of two-axle rail vans, such as we saw with *Railfreight* branding at R&W Paul's silo in one of the photos Stuart showed us. But the plug was pulled and Railfreight went over almost entirely to trainload. Consequently very many sidings and freight-only lines were closed and the traffic went by road instead. The private sector freight companies which took over after privatisation were not interested in wagonload traffic and they still aren't.

As I say, I'm basing this on recollections rather than research, but anybody interested in the wider issues I've hinted at can 'read all about it' in my book *Inside British Rail*, The History Press 2018, ISBN 9 780750 985567 90100.

**Stephen Poole**

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## Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House restored

Our Unitarian Meeting House is regarded as one of the finest surviving 18th century Dissenters' meeting houses in the country. It was opened for services in 1700 and has been used continuously for worship since then. Daniel Defoe waxed lyrical in 1722: 'as large and as fine a building of that kind as most on this side of England, and the inside the best finished of any I have seen, London not excepted.' The elegant simplicity of the exterior gives little clue to the classical grandeur of the historically complete interior. The pulpit is an elaborately carved early 18th century construction with intricate and beautiful three-dimensional carving. The congregation sit in original wooden box pews and there are special historic features such as wig pegs, a Dutch brass chandelier and a spy hole, used in times of persecution to check for any approaching persecutors.



*No step down into the building now.*

This Grade I Listed building was placed on the Heritage At-Risk Register in 2018 following a structural survey commissioned by the Trustees. Extensive structural repairs were needed, including the re-covering of the entire roof, an overhaul of all drainage, and works to remove unsuitable and corroding steel repairs and rectify structural movement in the timber frame. Cracked composite cement render covering the exterior was replaced with a historically accurate lime render. The year-long restoration project, starting in February 2020, was made possible by grant funding from Historic England and fundraising efforts by volunteers and community members. The Meeting House will be removed from the Register this year, following the extensive restoration work designed by KLH Architects on the recommendations of the survey.

If you'd like to lend a hand in keeping this beautiful historic building alive for visitors to enjoy, a new Friends of the Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House Group is welcoming new supporters. To get involved visit [www.unitarianipswich.com](http://www.unitarianipswich.com) or contact Ann Baeppler on [annbaeppler@gmail.com](mailto:annbaeppler@gmail.com) **Caroline Markham** (information from the Historic England press release)

## The 21st century housing dilemma

The gradual easing of lockdown restrictions has seen an increase in activity in and around Ipswich that is of potential interest to members. The Government's determination to create more housing seems to be taking off with a multitude of applications – which fall into one of three categories (not all of which will meet the standards of space and amenity we have come to expect):-

### a) Application for Prior Approval

The conversion of town centre offices into homes. In its simplest form these applications do not require planning permission, simply a notice of intent to the local planning authority. Developers, not unreasonably, wishing to maximise the return on their investment, squeeze the greatest possible number of units into the space available. In Ipswich we haven't yet seen an application for an apartment without windows (which would be necessary for an open plan office spread over a large floor area) but bathrooms and occasionally bedrooms relying on mechanical ventilation and artificial light are often included in the proposal.

These notifications are often accompanied by an application for an additional storey to be built on the roof and here the planning officer can offer guidance prior to a decision by the planning committee. In Ipswich there have been a number of successful applications for this additional accommodation.

What it does mean, however, is that a large number of residents are squeezed into a limited space, usually without any provision for car parking (although bicycle storage is an essential requirement). The amenity space (garden) is frequently contrived and inevitably used for other purposes and the density achieved means that residents tend to be transient, staying only a short while and thus not 'loving' their flat as they might do were it to have more breathing space.



### b) HMOs or Houses in Multiple Occupation

Over the past few years planning legislation has been simplified to enable householders to expand their dwelling (within strict limits) without the need to apply for planning permission. This relaxation was particularly aimed at growing families, the attic could be converted into an additional bedroom (with a window on the rear elevation), a small extension could be added to extend the kitchen or add a bathroom on the first floor.

Unfortunately this permitted development has been exploited by some landlords, particularly when converting small starter homes (terraced houses) into Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Providing the extension is at the rear of the property, no higher than the existing building, and extends no further than 3 metres into the garden (with first floor windows on the side of the extension fitted with obscure glazing) then, with careful understanding of the various restrictions, they fit within Permitted Development rights.

On the one hand, this allows additional 'homes' to be added to the country's housing stock, however in many cases it allows too many individual tenants to be squeezed into a small property (where the lack of amenity space, and access to the basic necessities is restricted).



*Left: rear of HMO.*

*Above: front of HMO.*

We have heard of cases where nine bedrooms can be squeezed into an extended two-bedroom terraced house.

Such property never appears in an estate agent's window as such, but they are frequently advertised on social media as 'House Share'. You will get your own individual locked bedroom but rarely are the number of people sharing the same facilities mentioned.

Houses in Multiple Occupation need a licence issued by the Local Authority, together with smoke alarms throughout, a gas safety certificate and an electricity compliance notice.

**c) New-build, speculative developments** (for first-time buyers and young families, rather than executive homes).

Here, we are our own worst enemy: couples starting out on the housing ladder, or couples with a young growing family search the new-build market for 'detached' homes with (enclosed) garden. Houses that are designed down to an absolute minimum in terms of space – and quality – particularly space between adjacent properties, storage space in bedrooms or even enough space for a garden shed.

These houses tend to be repetitive in their design, never vernacular, on estates where on-street car parking becomes inevitable and where buses and refuse collection vehicles struggle to manoeuvre. Calling such an estate a 'garden suburb' by including the occasional street tree just doesn't work.

My criticism isn't aimed at local planners who are simply operating in the current environment but at ourselves, who have allowed this so-called 'home building' to degenerate down to the lowest acceptable standard and then take one step further.

***John Norman***

## Ipswich Museum

Interesting proposals have been released regarding improvements and alterations to Ipswich Museum. The plan is to reconfigure the internal spaces and to redisplay the collections; there will be new (rear) stairs, a new lift, toilets and a café to the left of the entrance which extends outside into the courtyard.

Significantly, the staff workroom north of the Natural History gallery will become additional display space and the new stairs will allow a logical circulation around the entire building.

The proposals rely on a £4.5 million contribution from the NLHF but they have already expressed strong support for the proposals (mid-term review, January 2021). The existing building (1881) is listed Grade II\* and this grading will be protected and enhanced. (NLHF: National Lottery Heritage Fund)

The Victorian Natural History Gallery is home to some interesting taxidermy (Rosie the rhino, and a giraffe) but also historic display cases. As you enter the gallery, Wool-i-am – the woolly mammoth – either welcomes you in or scares you off. Too many young visitors were unsure of the beast and he's being moved into a less prominent position.

The north wing currently houses staff workrooms and storage and it is proposed to bring this valuable space into public use. The staff will be accommodated in the 1956 extension. This is a logical and workable solution and will create a museum that is not only worth visiting, it will be worth going back to visit again.

*John Norman, Chairman*

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## A new approach to Heritage Open Days

It is becoming increasingly apparent that owners remain cautious about opening their buildings to the public for Heritage Open Day. Understandably, the vast majority of those who have responded have declined to be included and the occasional hint of a possibility carries the rider of a late final decision.

As an alternative, The Ipswich Society are creating a series of web-pages: '**Heritage Icons**' where each building will feature on its own individual page. And this is where you come in; Ipswich has 600 listed buildings together with, perhaps another 400 with sufficiently interesting history to warrant inclusion.

Here's what you need to do:

- i) Select a building (or any other Ipswich asset), check with Neil Thompson that it isn't already being researched and gather some basic facts. Neil's details are on page 27.
- ii) The web page will need a few words (no more than 500, one side of A4), a couple of photographs and, if you are confident, a video. Importantly, it is up to you what to include; you know what to expect so create a similar picture for visitors to the website.
- iii) You don't need to create the actual web-page, we'll handle the technicalities, just send your notes and visuals to Neil and we'll do the rest.

There is a guidance sheet online on the Ipswich Society Homepage (which we can post if required). Good luck, but get in quick in selecting your favourite building.

*John Norman, Chairman*

## A choirboy's tale

My parents and grandparents – all Stoke people – were committed members of the Methodist Church, in particular The People's Hall in Stoke Street, Ipswich. They were all very involved in the life of this active congregation throughout the years of WWII and I was baptised there. I recall being a member of their children's church and sang in their children's choir.

In the autumn of 1946 one of my school friends who lived near us in Belstead Road, called on me and asked if I would join the choir of St Mary at Stoke church. He was taking part in a choirboy recruiting exercise and told me that he would get sixpence if I came along, even if I only attended one practice. I could not remember ever having been in St Mary's church before. I am sure I talked to my parents about it and of going with my friend to a practice to find out more. It was, of course, only months since the end of the war and not many 10 year-olds were accustomed to wandering far from home in the evening on their own, certainly not after dark with no street lights. However, it was only 100 yards away and I went along – and was hooked.

I was initially enrolled as a boy-probationer/chorister and for services wore a black cassock and had to sit on the front row of the congregation with several other probationers, finding myself in the company of some other boys who I knew from school. I didn't sing in my first service until Easter 1947 on which occasion I was formally 'admitted' and presented with a certificate to mark the occasion.

There were then probably around a dozen boys aged from about 8 to 12 years, but numbers were increasing. Their recruitment campaign was obviously a success. Choir practices were held under the leadership of the organist/choirmaster Frank Andrews.

One of the first pieces of kit issued to all boys on joining was a bottle cork. At the beginning of each practice, scales were always sung and the cork had to be held between the front teeth to instil the habit of opening your mouth properly when you sang - at first quite a painful experience. One-hour practices for boys took place on Tuesday evenings - sometimes Wednesday as well and we joined with the adult members for an hour on Friday evening. As their voices deepened (or broke) some were moved to the back row of the choir stalls with the adults and taught to sing alto, tenor, or bass. Inevitably some failed to make this transition and left. Occasionally some left due to schooling pressures, so there was a fair degree of turnover.

This choral tradition at Stoke went back many years - as ancient photographs hanging on the vestry walls demonstrated. For services, all members were fully robed, wearing ankle-length black cassocks with white outer surplices. Boys additionally had to wear an infuriatingly stiff and sharply starched ruff which buttoned around the neck.

Over the next decade or so the predominantly male choir continued to grow. At one time it had around 22 boys and probably the same number of adults, which included a half dozen women who sang soprano or contralto. Several of the adults were parents of one or more of the boys and for some it became a family affair. With often a wedding or two on the Saturday to sing at and two services on the Sunday, for boys it was a busy, demanding week.

The rising standard of the choir's singing was such that it became affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music and was able to participate in choirs' festivals elsewhere in the county. Eventually, this standard of excellence led to it receiving invitations to sing the services at churches and cathedrals further afield whilst their resident choirs were away on tour or on holiday. These included cathedrals at Liverpool, Rochester, Salisbury, Coventry (where we sang the weekend services after Easter for seven years), and Chapel Royal at the Tower of London (during which there was a bomb alert, with the Tower being cleared entirely of the public, leaving us to sing Evensong in the chapel with a few Tower Warders as congregation). But one of the most daunting of all was St Paul's Cathedral. The organisational challenges faced were often considerable, involving the transportation (and sometimes overnight accommodation) of around

20 boys (some with their parents) and as many adult choristers.. Young girls were only admitted to the choir in later years.

During the years up to age 15, boys were paid, the amount determined by a combination of age, seniority, and the number of attendances. There were additional payments for singing at weddings (of which there were



*St Mary at Stoke Church choir, Easter 1949*

quite a few), bonuses for singing solos and for recruiting new members. Occasional invitations were received to sing at funerals providing this did not interfere with schooling. For an 11 or 12 year-old it was immensely exciting to receive a quarterly pay packet of around 15 shillings.

Alas, the lives and interests of the younger generation now are much changed. We may all have a view as to whether this has been for better or worse. Although cathedrals, particularly those linked to colleges, have been able to hold on to the choral tradition (but even here, the closure of churches and cathedrals during the Covid lockdown has been giving serious cause for concern), for the majority of smaller churches, robed choirs are sadly fast disappearing, often at best being replaced by an adult singing group.

Perhaps of interest, at St Mary's (even though, of course, due to the pandemic lockdown the church was closed for many months) three of the adult male singers are still members – one having been choirmaster since 1969 – who were part of that exciting era, all having joined the choir during the 1940s.

But what the future holds for any parish church choir, we can only guess.

Some of the choir's engagements:-

1970	Salisbury Cathedral	Evensong
1971	Norwich Cathedral	Eucharist and Evensong
1972?.	Chapel Royal, Tower of London	Evensong
1973	St. Paul's Cathedral	Evensong
1973	Liverpool Cathedral	Eucharist and Evensong
1974	Ely Cathedral	Evensong
1974	Salisbury Cathedral	Eucharist and Evensong
1975	Coventry Cathedral	Evensong
1975	do.	Eucharist and Evensong
1976	do.	Evensong
1976	do	Eucharist and Evensong
1977	Rochester Cathedral	Eucharist and Evensong
1978	Coventry Cathedral	Eucharist and Evensong
1979	do.	Eucharist and Evensong
1982	do.	Eucharist and Evensong
1987	Royal Albert Hall	Massed Choirs Festival

**John Barbrook**

*See also the choir photograph on page 27.*



## Ipswich Icons: The Ipswich Bed Company

**A response to John Norman's *Ipswich Icons* (EADT 8.5.2021) about The Ipswich Bed Company (Barnes, Ransomes Industrial Estate), founded by Thomas Barnes, more recently run by Peter Barnes but, following his retirement, now run by his daughter Chloe Last (née Barnes).**

You have produced yet another very interesting article about Ipswich and the latest about the Barnes Company turned my mind back to when I worked in Trafalgar House, although I never knew it had such a prestigious name. I started working there in 1954 as a sixteen year old trainee Screen printer at Chamberlin Signs & Displays (CS&D). This was my second job after working at Burton Son & Sanders in College Street, where I was a trainee printer.

CS&D produced all types of screen printing from giant street posters to Paul's pig bats. There were also ticket writers, signwriters, carpenters and a painter who produced display work for shop windows and the shop floor. I worked on the first floor where the printing took place above the car showroom area which was at street level, although I cannot recall any vehicles being in the showroom, maybe they had already moved out.

However, I do remember that when the sign writers, of which there were at least three, used the vehicle lift to hoist small vans or pub signs up to the second floor so they could work on them, the whole building shuddered when the lift transported the items. On the floor with the sign writers there were about three ticket writers who worked at an amazing speed to write with various coloured paints to produce shop tickets. At sale times they produced the thousands of tickets for all the large department stores in Ipswich and beyond, they worked on large slightly sloping benches from long lists provided by the stores. I can never remember ever seeing them having to rewrite a single card because of a mistake, but they did discourage anyone talking while they worked.

There was also a painter who had his spray booth up on the top floor between the rafters, where I rarely saw him wear a mask. The narrow design studio and tea room overlooked the Zebra crossing in Crown Street and we would watch the antics of pedestrians as we sipped our tea. Each floor was very open and spacious, with the sign writers drawing up and painting the small vans and inn signs there. Health & safety was unheard of back then, whether in hours worked or fire safety.

We had a contract with Tolly Cobbold to repaint and refurnish all their inn and pub signs, so there was always a continuous flow of these signs being worked on. Screen printing in the 1950s was a rather messy business with all types of solvents involved, plus ink, paper, card and wood all a high fire risk.

We worked very long hours that included a 44 hour week with Saturday mornings included. There was always lots of overtime too, even at my age. My rate of pay was £2. 6s per basic week (one shilling more than at Burtons) A man was only being paid about eight to ten pounds per week at that time. Some of my friends were only getting 30 shillings, so my rate was good.

In 1956 we were bought out by Mills & Allen the national billposting company and we then moved to a large wooden four story building behind Suffolk Seed Stores in Princes Street, but that's another story.

***Ken Nichols***



*Barnes of Ipswich shop in Tower Ramparts, 1990s.*

## Teresa Wiggin 1946-2021

Teresa Pawlowska's parents made their way to Britain in 1940 and joined Polish squadrons of the RAF and WRAF. They met at one of the many airfields they were posted to and were married at the end of the war. While they were stationed at Blairgowrie, Teresa was born in Edinburgh hospital in January 1946.

They hoped to return to Poland one day, so when Teresa started school at Ipswich Convent, she did not speak any English. Luckily, the other girls were keen to help, and Teresa progressed well. She had two brothers and a young sister. One of her friends at school was a cousin of Nick's from Debenham. Teresa went on to study at Portsmouth College of Technology where Nick was on a pharmacy course.

After returning to Ipswich, Teresa had a job in the laboratory at Cranes with a very friendly group of chemists. Everything coming into the works, not only metals but such things as oil and coke had to be tested. Many of the valves were for Royal Navy ships so the metal content had to comply with extremely high standards.

Teresa and Nick married in 1971 and soon Teresa joined Nick at the shop (Wiggin's Chemist which was on the corner of Berners Street and St Matthews Street) where they worked together for many years. Their daughter Giselle was born in 1977 followed by their son Seth in 1980. They inherited Teresa's brains, and both did well at university.

On retirement, Teresa was busy with several organisations, which she had not had time to join before. After offering to help with teas one month at a meeting of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, the organiser had to give up, so Teresa and Nick took on the role for several years. Nick's aunt Muriel Wiggin, giving up teaching at a girl's school, taught English to foreign students at the Civic College. One of her friends was the retiring Minutes Secretary of the Ipswich Society, so in 2008 Teresa's name was suggested for the job.

During her eleven years on the Ipswich Society Committee, Teresa not only kept valuable records of our meetings but was also a voice of reason on the Committee – often asking pertinent questions about the way forward and keeping us up to the mark on hygiene and many other practical considerations at events. She is much missed.

***Nick Wiggin and Caroline Markham***

### Exciting news about guided walks in Ipswich

Ipswich Tourist Guides will resume guided walks around Ipswich at the beginning of July. Regular walks will start from The Hold every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon and explore various parts of the waterfront and town centre areas. These walks will continue until the end of September. Tickets can be either be booked online through Suffolk Archives events at TicketSource, or purchased on the day at the shop in The Hold.

Once summer is over why not brighten the dark days of autumn and winter with an afternoon tea walk? These extremely popular events include a themed guided walk followed by refreshments and a relaxed chat with your guide in one of Ipswich's local cafes. A full programme covering a wide range of topics will be on offer from October 2021 to April 2022. Advance booking is essential for afternoon tea walks.

For full details of all walks visit: <http://ipswichtourguides.org.uk/>

For advance bookings visit: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/suffolk-archives>



# The Ipswich Society

Registered Charity no. 263322

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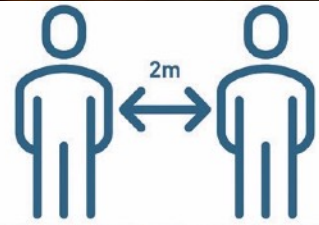
*The choir of St Mary at Stoke in 1973. See article on page 23.*

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

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



Butter Market, 5pm 8.6.20 by John Hatfield



# LOCKDOWN SCRAPBOOK

