

The Ipswich Society  
**NEWSLETTER**

JANUARY 2003

ISSUE 150

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The former school, Bolton Lane (see pages 6, 16)

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

This Newsletter contains a good deal of news and comment about proposed big development schemes in Ipswich. I hope you'll find it quite enlightening. One good feature of the welter of planning applications being submitted is that the Borough Council planners will sometimes be able to "set a degree of co-ordination in the area" as Mike Smith, Head of Development Control has said. That was apropos of three new schemes almost in a row on the Waterfront near Stoke Bridge - the burnt-out St Peter's Warehouse, Burton's and Cranfield's. Hitherto, the schemes around the Wet Dock have had to be treated piecemeal.

The possibility of a newly shaped Ipswich is beginning to emerge - where the centre would extend from the Cornhill to the Waterfront, as indeed was the case before the the exodus of people from areas like St Peter's Street, Foundation Street and Fore Street. For that to happen fully, much more investment would be needed to "reclaim" some of those areas between the present centre and the dock. And most of the new residents there, unlike their predecessors centuries ago, will have cars. Which brings us to the other problem - making sure that the new Waterfront isn't cut off by the present traffic canyon of the Star Lane system. I hope I live long enough to see some of this new Ipswich being recreated on its old site down to the Waterfront.

### **'Gridlock' and After**

At the end of a visit to Australasia, my wife and I had a few exhilarating days in Singapore where the astonishingly well-informed taxi drivers all seemed proud of their little city-state. They were eager to discuss anything from race relations to their economy and to the primacy of the English language. We also talked about traffic management. Our first driver indicated how the electronic congestion charging worked. He thought that taxis ought to be exempt from this charge - I agreed - but they have to pay like everybody else. We have a receipt to prove it!

Back in Ipswich, our taxi driver from the railway station wondered how long we'd been away. On hearing the answer he said, "Oh, then you won't know about the disaster we've had here?" [Disaster? What could it be?]

"No, I don't know."

"The Council have created gridlock in the town."

I didn't comment then, nor will I now. As one of only two non-motorists on your Committee, I'm the last person to comment on the new gyratory system in Ipswich. All I will say is what I hope is commonsense. That all changes need time to bed down. That all cities and towns experience bad traffic hold-ups for some or even most hours of the day, as private motoring continues to increase. (The only exceptions I'd guess are new cities built on prairies.) And that the authorities wherever they are will have to go on introducing radical changes simply to avoid worse. I await letters from those of you who really know what you're talking about!

### **And how to cope with air traffic?**

Air traffic will also continue to grow. So I found it thought-provoking to read recent conclusions by Sir Peter Hall, the visionary planner who contributed the last chapter in the Society's book Ipswich from the First to the Third Millennium. He argues that Heathrow should eventually be closed in favour of a new airport on the Thames estuary. It's not a new idea. Several possible sites have been identified, always greeted with incredulity or horror. But why is it that of the five big international airports I used in Australasia, four of them were built on land partly reclaimed from the sea? Must we wait for the M25 to clog up completely or a 747 to fall on central London?

### **A final thought closer to home**

I shall have to be careful. The cover of the April 2002 Newsletter featured the steel framework of the TXU HQ building in Russell Road and the new North Stand at Portman Road. The kiss of death! TXU Energi has sold off its "Energi" minus the new building, which faces an uncertain future. The North Stand has been filled, but for how long? I try not to think it's all my fault.

I await your letters, articles, drawings, ideas for the next Newsletter by 20 February.

**NEIL SALMON** 16 Warrington Road, Ipswich, IP1 3QU

## **Chairman's Letter**

Let me begin by thanking you for your wonderful response to the Society's membership survey which accompanied the October Newsletter. There were sceptics (some on the Committee) who forecast a very poor response, In the event you proved them wildly wrong because we have had nearly 400 responses already. Not only is this a magnificent result, it is the more gratifying in that so many of you offered help in a variety of ways - over 100 of you in fact! I have allocated these to various Committee members and you should be contacted very soon to thank you and explain how you might be able to assist the Society. It is interesting to note that our questionnaire has raised great interest among other Civic Trust societies and many have asked for copies of our form. We are of course pleased (but not surprised) that The Ipswich Society has set the pace for other societies. At the time of writing, the Society has just completed its meeting in the Town Hall about a possible East Bank Link Road. I will not write in detail about this event which you will find covered elsewhere in the Newsletter. What I would like to say is simply that for those present I gather it was much appreciated as a means of airing the arguments on the subject, pros and cons. The two sides invited to make presentations found it very helpful and I have had several requests from members to hold more such events. Almost certainly we shall repeat the event on the subject of the housing development proposed at Westerfield.

Earlier in November we held our Awards evening which incorporated many changes. You may remember it was our intention (and your wish) to make the event more prestigious. We therefore changed the venue, using the Suffolk College (with food provided by their Catering and Hospitality students). The event was greatly appreciated by all those present, and this has encouraged us to use this venue next year. Furthermore, the College has expressed a wish to be associated with this Awards event on an ongoing basis as sponsors of the event. Your Committee is delighted to accept this offer and next year the event should be even more prestigious, with better publicity. You as members should rest assured that parking at the College is easy, and as we used the main Lecture Theatre just off the foyer, access within the College could not be simpler. Suggestions were made at the event that perhaps it should be in future an open public meeting, and not simply an event for members, and this is a development that your Committee welcomes and will examine with care, but it does seem likely that we shall be having some public meetings in future.

You will recall the interest we have all had in encouraging some kind of Visitors'/Heritage/Maritime Centre on the Waterfront. The issue has not died but has been quietly worked upon in the background. I am very pleased to announce that a full-scale Feasibility Study is about to be commissioned, funded by EEDA, the East of England Development Agency. This is just about to go out to selected organisations to compete for the work and a consultant should be chosen, with the study being completed in late spring 2003. This is enormously satisfying, and although there is a

long way to go and many hurdles to be overcome, it has given a great boost to the project. A positive study should indicate clearly the way forward and this should make it more feasible to gain backing for the project to be realised.

Finally, let me use the opportunity to wish you a fruitful New Year.

**JACK CHAPMAN**

## **Ipswich Maritime Trust**

Thanks to the efforts of the Ipswich Maritime Trust, over a thousand people have visited the Old Custom House during the summer months of 2002. It was opened for the Dunkirk Little Ships event, for the Old Gaffers weekend and for the Heritage Open Days weekend.

Plans are going ahead to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Ipswich Maritime Trust with some exciting happenings towards the end of June 2003. More details later.

## **Our Annual Awards 2002**

Developments in Ipswich are beginning to look up, if The Ipswich Society members' nominations for awards are a good pointer - eleven in 2000, thirteen in 2001 and nineteen in 2002. With such a goodly number of projects to hear described and to be shown on the screen, it made for a fascinating occasion, even though our six judges failed to find a nomination worthy of our highest Award of Distinction. There were however four High Commendations and three Commendations. This is the Society's most important event of the year. Many regular activities, such as studying and discussing planning applications, take place behind the scenes. And, indeed, a great deal of "hidden" work goes into setting up the Awards Scheme, done as usual by the Society's Awards organiser, Russell Nunn. But the Annual Awards constitute the more public presence of the Society. It was pleasing therefore that the new venue at Suffolk College was so suitable, that our former Chairman Chris Wiltshire returned to present and shrewdly comment on the nominations, that John Norman had designed a computer programme of slides operated beautifully smoothly - and that the College provided some good food to round off the evening!

After our Chairman, Jack Chapman, had welcomed members and guests, the Assistant Principal of Suffolk College, Peter Funnell, outlined the College's achievements and future aims, the main one being to create a university campus for Suffolk.

Chris Wiltshire's comments on all the nominated projects were partly based on the opinions of the six judges but spiced with inimitable remarks of his own. This is a sample of what was said:

### **Christchurch Square, Bolton Lane.**

Good use of worthy old building with welcome increase of housing in town centre. Involved a lot of new structural work.

### **Scholars Mews, Devereux Court, Bolton Lane.**

New town houses behind the old school. A place to enjoy living in. Windows flush to the brickwork create a relentless effect.

**Mortimer's Restaurant, Duke Street/Fore Hamlet.**

Respectful treatment of an honest industrial building (electricity sub-station). Well chosen lettering and painting. Clock restored.

**Sir Bobby Robson statue, Portman Road.**

Good representation. Not its final resting place. The town hasn't sufficiently celebrated its famous people.

**Coe's, 20-28 Norwich Road.**

An impressive statement of confidence and intent. Dramatic appearance although rather monolithic at the sides. (Photos below.)

**Churchman's House, Portman Road.**

This divided the judges. Does the new superstructure sit well on this 1920s/30s building? A striking new development, especially at night.

**Northern Quays (Common Quay and Neptune Quay) paving scheme.**

Nicely patterned paving for this important area. Seats pleasing, although somewhat vandallised already. Chains a good idea but they do collect rubbish.

**Fore Street, Star Lane to Salthouse Street paving scheme.**

A useful improvement to what used to be one of our best streets. Some blocks cut in awkward ways lead the eye astray.

**New multi-storey car park at Ipswich Railway Station.**

Good parking but not as userfriendly as one would like. Not the ideal colour green.

**New Piper's Vale Community Primary School.**

A bold design which ought to be inspirational to children and families. Architecturally a few awkward features.

**Curve Bar, Civic Drive/Princes Street.**

A tidy refurbishment; nothing specially worthy.

**Peacock's Store, Eastgate, Carr Street.**

Noted with interest.

**NCP Car park, Tower Ramparts: new iron fences and arches.**

Tidied up and looks purposeful. Pleasant railings. Trees blown down in recent gale.

**Ragged School, Waterworks Street : conversion into 16 flats.**

Attractive Dutch gable facade lifted up and moved back. Big improvement but concrete tiles and lots of tarmac car park.

**New Skateboard Park, Stoke Bridge.**

A creditable innovation. Well used.

**Ipswich Town F C, new North and South Stands.**

Good to keep stadium close to town centre, but a disaster for the built environment. Did lighting gantries need to be so prominent?

**Nacton Road, highway improvement Ransomes Way to Maryon Road.**

Example for elsewhere - makes a more pleasant entry into town. Could cycle path have been integrated more?

**12-26 St Clement's Church Lane, conversion of warehouse and new building to make flats.**

An improvement to street scene from run down warehouse. A lot of uPVC at back.

**Cawthorne, 80 St George's Street, new house.**

Good use of very difficult site. The front a little bland but back view has wealth of good details and surfaces. (Photo below.)

**The 2002 Awards:**

The Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor Richard Risebrow, acting, as the Society's President, then presented the following successful owners, designers and contractors with their certificates.

**HIGH COMMENDATION for Christchurch Square conversion of school to flats.**

Client and Contractor: Nell Davies Ltd

Design: Wincer Kievenaar Partnership and Abbotts Development and Design

**HIGH COMMENDATION for Mortimer's Seafood Restaurant.**

Client: Ken Ambler

Design: Mullins, Dowse and Partners

Contractors: W A Hills Ltd

**HIGH COMMENDATION for paving scheme at Common and Neptune Quays**

Client: East of England Development Agency and Ipswich Borough Council

Design: KLH Architects Ltd and Ipswich Borough Council

Contractor: Ipswich Borough Council (Photo below.)

**HIGH COMMENDATION for Piper's Vale Community Primary School.**

Client and Design: Suffolk County Council Contractor: Farrans (Construction) Ltd

**COMMENDATION for Coe's Store new extension**

Client: Coe's Design: Poole and Pattie

Contractor: Elliston, Steady and Hawes Ltd (Photo page 4.)

**COMMENDATION for Nacton Road highway improvements**

Client, Design and Contractor: Ipswich Borough Council

**COMMENDATION for new house, Cawthorne, 80 St George's Street**

Client: J Hawkshaw

Design: Keith and Garry Johns

Contractor: V A Marriott Ltd (Photo page 5.)

Chairman Jack Chapman thanked all concerned, we went into the next room for some excellent refreshments, and everybody must have gone home having had an enjoyable evening.

## **Cranfield's - Star of the East**

Following a competition the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) have at last announced their development partner for the Cranfield's Mill site. Cranfield's is EEDA's biggest redevelopment scheme and is set to become the star in urban regeneration across the East of England. This scheme brings investments in Ipswich by EEDA to £5 million, including £2.7 m on Felaw Maltings and £400,000 on the Northern Quays repaving scheme.

Wharfside Regeneration, led by Angel Property (Charles Style and his brother Spencer) are the successful developers and plan a wide range of mixed uses on the site. At the launch, architect John Lyall pointed out how close the site is to the very heart of Ipswich town centre, and that by ensuring direct public access from the north and open walkways across the site the public will quickly find their way to the Waterfront. Along the colonnades there will be restaurants, bars, galleries and cafes. Above live/work units and a large open space - the studios of Dance East. The high number of residential units proposed will suit the location and the existing silos give an indication of the height, mass and density proposed.

A cross-section of the site shown to an audience of councillors, civic dignitaries and members of the business community showed an indicative height no taller than the tower of St Peter's Church. There were suggestions that some of the older buildings, without architectural or historical merit would come down, as would the steel and asbestos-clad shed-like structures. Their form, however, is likely to be repeated in modern materials, particularly on the elevation overhanging Albion Wharf.

Much emphasis was placed on the likely synergy between Dance East and their activities in the building, between the digital arts concepts that Spencer Style is trying to introduce and in the computer communication links between the occupiers of the buildings (a broadband backbone based intranet).

Peter Gardiner, Leader of Ipswich Borough Council, welcomed the launch, suggesting it was an important day for the town. Ipswich Borough Council owned little on the Waterfront (except for the Customs House, where the launch took place) yet had seen a substantial amount of development cross the planners' desks.

**JOHN NORMAN**, Vice-Chairman

## **Recent Planning Matters**

During 2002 planning applications to the Borough Council increased by some 25%. Many of these were as usual small matters such as extensions to houses but there were also quite a large number of major applications, especially for flats in new blocks or in conversions. Here are a few of the Society's comments from the period September- December which should interest members.

### **Ranelagh Road/Princes Street bridge: erection of 7- to 16-storey blocks of 333 one- and two-bedroom flats and A1 and A3 retail uses.**

"The Society supports the development of this site for mixed use with a predominance of residential units. However these well presented plans are open to early criticism from their very height and resulting density. There would be a large increase in traffic at a junction that is already overloaded..."

### **Toller Street, timber storage yard: erection of 5-storey office building.**

"This is an attractive building but the Society is concerned that a five-storey building would impinge on the view from Cliff Lane and Landseer Road towards the Wet Dock and the town. It would also be very close to the brewery cottage. It certainly appears to be quite a small tall building that would occupy only a small proportion of the site. Perhaps the architects should be asked to review the situation?"

### **67 Norwich Road (former Revetts) : conversion of vehicle sales/repair premises to two ground floor shops and 22 apartments (involves erection of two additional storey heights).**

"This is a problem building; it's a not very attractive late 60s rather brutalist building in an area where current development of any sort is a problem. These proposals do mean raising, the overall height to about fifty feet but the new storeys are recessed and therefore it should not seem too massy. We would like to see the inclusion of a secure bicycle storage area which should be possible in the unused eastern end of the car park."

### **Land at rear of 24-40 Goodwood Close: use of land for residential development, including estate roads.**

"The Society's Executive Committee discussed this proposal at length when it was felt that this idea should be refused on three grounds.

1. It is an extension into the northern de facto green belt that surrounds Ipswich. This necessary lung, once impinged on, would make it more difficult to refuse similar applications.
2. Because it is highly likely that the Northern Fringe site on the other side of Henley Road will in due course be developed to a 1,500 unit 'village', it does not mean that other nearby developments should be allowed. The developers' suggestion that 150 units on this site would reduce the size of the Northern Fringe development is disproportionate as it would only be 10% of the larger proposals. Indeed it is counter-productive in that it would detract from the concept of having one large development that will support real infrastructure provision.
3. Access appears to be only feasible from Goodwood Close via a series of narrow estate roads from Defoe Road. We understand that it is impossible to reach Thurleston Lane and that a further junction in Henley Road is unlikely to be allowed by the Highway Engineer."
- 4.

### **1-3 St Matthew's Street: external alterations and infilling doorway facing Lady Lane.**

"The Society has in recent years spent considerable time and its own money on improving Lady Lane. Thus we welcome a new occupier of this shop and hope there will be a general upgrading of this area. We hope that the Development Committee will find some way of enforcing the use of the windows as display areas and not allow them to be blocked out by promotional posters or painted over..."

### **The Old Rep, Tower Street: internal alterations including removal of staircase to mezzanine floor, removal of pillar and additional structure within former auditorium.**

"The internal alterations to this historic building suggest that it is to change to a night club with the installation of a DJs podium, dance floor with what appear to be poles! Very serious consideration would need to be given if this is the long term proposal."

### **6-8 Friars Street: erection of 9 flats and class A3 (food and drink) unit in 4-storey building.**

"The revised plans are certainly an improvement on the previous set. The two facades are much more acceptable. However the rhythms of the fenestration and the differentiation between the storeys still seem unnecessarily awkward to us. We would like to see the Development Control Committee refer these plans back for further consideration and discussion with the Development Officers." IBC has granted conditional permission. Building is proceeding. (Photo above, in December.)

At the time of 'going to press, the Society is still considering its response to the application to convert the former **Tolly brewery** into 27 flats with another (new) block of 41 flats nearby on the southern part of the brewery site.

Our October Newsletter quoted our approval of converting 20 Princes Street offices into flats; our support for change of use from residential to nursery school at 18B St Nicholas Street; and our objection to a "garish" shop sign at 41 Tavern Street. We are pleased to note that IBC have approved the first two and refused the third.



## **Pathfinder Societies**

I have spent many years in education and attended numerous training courses designed to make me a better teacher, a better manager and to be better informed about the latest thinking on one initiative or another, but I have never been on as comprehensive a course as Pathfinders. This is a series of three weekend courses to develop one member of selected Civic Societies such that they can return to their towns and cities and help the organisation become a Pathfinder Society.

What is a Pathfinder Society? One that uses the resources of its membership to the full. (You will recall the audit of your skills in the questionnaire with the last Newsletter.) It is a Society that takes on tasks that it believes it can complete - and completes them. Such tasks could be practical projects, political lobbying for changes to the town or services to members. I gather from fellow delegates that members of The Ipswich Society are, by comparison, well provided for with newsletters, social events, winter lectures and summer outings. This does not mean we cannot do more and Pathfinders has given me a host of ideas to discuss with the Society's Executive Committee.

The first weekend in September was on leadership. The latest in November was on Civic Design. (We suggested improvements to Coventry Civic Centre, not a difficult task!) The final weekend will be in February. That's not the end of proceedings however as I have to take the results of our chosen projects back to Civic Trust headquarters later in the year.

**JOHN NORMAN**, Vice-Chairman

## **East Bank Link Road Debate**

(held in the Council Chamber, Ipswich Town Hall, 20 November 2002)

Welcoming people to the Society's meeting our Chairman, Jack Chapman, explained that the purpose was to listen to the arguments for and against the building of an East Bank Link Road. Vice-Chairman, John Norman, described the planning background and emphasised that members could contact him with their considered views because the Society will be making representations at the next stage, a Public Enquiry into the Second Draft of the Borough Council's Local Plan.

The first speaker was Alan Deville, Chairman of Samuel Beadle, the developers who wish to create large retail units on the old Volvo site of the East Bank and to link this with their building of a new road to join the A14. The road would follow some, but not all, of the protected route envisaged in earlier plans. Mr Deville argued that Ipswich wants to grow and so needs better transport links. His plans would provide economic benefits to the whole area and assistance to a deprived part of the town. His company would fund the building of the road and the costs of environmental mitigation, perhaps beyond the means of the public purse. He welcomed the forthcoming Public Enquiry where his company's plans could be subjected to a detailed test.

The arguments against the new road were put by Dorothy Casey from Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Geoff Sinclair of Save Orwell Country Park. Dorothy Casey said that SWT understands economic needs and rarely objects to development unless it seriously endangers wildlife sites. In this case there would be serious and permanent damage to wildlife. She commended the foresight of the Borough Council who designated Orwell Country Park in 1995 and supported IBC's present

position in removing the new road from the Local Plan. In similar vein, Mr Sinclair pointed out the value of the Country Park. He feared that the road would destroy the status of the Country Park and Piper's Vale Nature Reserve and could eventually lead to new housing there.

Sadly Landseer Road and Nacton Road Residents' Association was not represented. But the other initial speaker was Bob Blastock of Wherstead Road Residents' Association. He stressed that the port would continue to grow and that all the new flats around the Wet Dock would also increase traffic. Wherstead Road on the West Bank was already subjected to very heavy traffic. He supported the County Council's original idea that a new road route be adopted and protected on the East Bank. He believed that Orwell Country Park would survive despite a new road.

There were many earnest and thoughtful contributions to the debate from the floor. A sample follows. Gordon Terry, an IBC Councillor, wondered whether it had been sensible for IBC to designate a Country Park across the protected line of the potential new road and why there should be local objections when English Nature and the Environment Agency seemed not to object. Peter Odell regretted the absence of Landseer Road residents who suffer from the lorries using the port. If nothing is done the urban environment will be even more threatened. Martin OHara, speaking from the point of view of Associated British Ports, confirmed that two-thirds of the port's activity was on the East Bank which will continue to grow. ABP supports the building of a road from the port to the A14. They don't mind what the exact route is or whether it is built by private retail developers or public money. He said that a balance must be struck between economic benefits and environmental costs.

Specialists from the developers spoke of their intention to create a "semi-tunnel" with green bridges over for wildlife and of the likely effects on traffic, which could be reduced by 20% on Landseer Road. But the contrary view was put by others who thought that retail development would greatly increase east-west traffic and that the developers' road was not a relief road but a means of increasing car-based business.

Suffolk County Council's view was said to be that traffic would increase in the whole waterfront area so what was needed was a package of investment which works. Although building roads is a last resort, where they are necessary the public purse can provide compensation and mitigation, as in Lowestoft where 'mitigation' accounts for £10m of the £30m budget for a relief road.

Summing up for the opposition to the East Bank Link Road, a Suffolk Wildlife Trust speaker argued that an increasing population will need more facilities for leisure and education, both provided by the Country Park. She approved of IBC's present position that radical improvements to the Star Lane gyratory roads and a Wet Dock crossing would be viable without the new road.

Mr Deville's summing up in favour of building a new East Bank Road was to reiterate that his company's private offer to bring benefits to the community will remain and he looks forward to the Public Inquiry into the Ipswich Local Plan when the evidence will be tested by an independent inspector.

Jack Chapman thanked all the contributors who had produced "light and not too much heat", as he had hoped. There was a final reminder from John Norman that members of The Ipswich Society should write to him or Jack or the Newsletter with their considered opinions, which will help the Society to make its representations at the Public Enquiry later this year.

## Snippets (1)

### **The Crown for the town**

Work has begun on the new 4-storey Crown Court. Situated just off Princes Street and between Russell Road and West End Road, it promises to be a striking architectural contribution to the town. We have had few attractive modern buildings since Willis 30 years ago. And most of those have been publicly funded - two new schools at Ravenswood and Piper's Vale, and the extension to the library in Old Foundry Road. Let's hope the private sector will be more adventurous and produce some beautiful modern buildings around the Wet Dock and elsewhere.

### **The hole in the middle**

The longer it stays empty the more the Mint Quarter seems an unintentionally comical name for this large area in central Ipswich. Yes, NCP and their partners Helical Retail have been badly held up, most recently by uncertainty over the ownership and then the future plans of Woolworths. The result has been the prolonged unsightliness of the car parks - an uneconomical use of prime urban space where a multi-storey car park could accommodate that number of cars on a fraction of the land. And it's also led to the decay of the west side of Upper Orwell Street. But Woolworths are said to be showing some interest now and Helical might submit plans this spring.

### **Belated appreciation**

Dr S J Plunkett wrote an outstanding article for the Society's book, *Ipswich from the First to the Third Millennium*. It was called *Municipal Reform and Civil Progress in 19th Century Ipswich* and showed that Ipswich was a pioneering town in providing a scholarly stimulus for its working people as well as its middle classes. He has followed that up with a heart-warming article *Dr John Ellor Taylor: Guide, Philosopher and Friend in Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History (Vol XL, Part 2, 2002)*.

Dr Taylor was Curator of Ipswich Museum from 1872 to 1893 and therefore "the driving force behind the creation of the new museum in High Street in 1880-81". His selfless dedication to scholarship and education makes us realise that the highest standards can be, and must be, compatible with what we now call "outreach".

### **Nonpareil**

Sir Trevor Nunn is a member of The Ipswich Society. As he retires from running the National Theatre, he might find a few minutes to read this Newsletter. But he probably won't, as he's sure to have numerous other projects lined up! In five years at the National he has overseen the presentation of 58 new plays and personally directed 20 productions ranging from Shakespeare and Chekhov to big musicals and the Tom Stoppard trilogy. We congratulate him.

## **Waterfront Visitor Attraction**

Whilst the Chairman, Jack Chapman, was encouraging the great and the good to join him on a committee exploring the possibility of a Visitor Attraction in Ipswich's Wet Dock, other members of the Executive Committee were out and about seeing what has been achieved elsewhere. I knew I had drawn the short straw when the Newsletter Editor told me his travels would take him to New Zealand and the maritime museums of Wellington and Auckland. I doubt whether there will be

anything of that scale in Ipswich however, so I travelled from Glasgow to Cardiff investigating marina developments and visitor attractions in both, and in numerous towns in between.

The town with the greatest opportunity to create a new visitor attraction is surely Newport, South Wales, where they have just uncovered a rotting hulk older (and probably more important) than the Mary Rose. Public pressure has encouraged the Welsh Assembly to find £3 million to ensure the small part of the boat uncovered so far is preserved in the basement of the new Arts Centre. It was whilst excavations were being dug for this Arts Centre that the ancient timbers were discovered. Dendrochronology (tree ring dating) of one of the ship's timbers indicates that it was cut from an oak tree felled between September 1465 and April 1466 AD. This ancient ship will join the recently restored 1906 Transporter Bridge and Newport's dock which surpassed Ipswich in the late 19th century to become the largest enclosed body of water in the country. The town can also upstage Ipswich with a cathedral, a castle and a 2000-seat conference centre. No wonder it's the "First City in Wales"!

Glasgow has certainly tried. A number of visitor attractions have been created on the banks of the Clyde, not always successfully. The Garden Festival of 1988 was a great success as a one-off event but the aspirations that it would be the seed corn for urban regeneration came to nothing. The site has recently become the home of Glasgow's Science Centre with the unique 400 feet high revolving tower. Unfortunately the tower closed for engineering repairs soon after the official opening and the ensuing bad publicity means visitor numbers at the Science Centre are very low.

Newcastle and Gateshead have seen an upsurge in visitor numbers since the opening of Eyre Wilkinson's Blinking Eye Bridge and the £22 million Baltic Arts Centre. Further downstream, adjacent to Albert Edward Dock in North Shields there are 200 acres of vacant land available for industry, housing or leisure facilities. Some have been developed but the biggest attraction by far is the Royal Quays Outlet Shopping Centre.

A similar magnet is bringing people to Hartlepool. The Historic Quay may be a vivid and atmospheric recreation of life in the Napoleonic era but it is the Designer Outlet Centre that draws the crowds. Visitors can go aboard a magnificent three-masted warship and the historic paddle steamer, the Wingfield Cavtle, but most prefer the 50% discount offered in the shops. Catherine Cookson costume dramas have been filmed on the quayside but today's visitors are more interested in clothes from Nike, River Island and Gap.

Gloucester is home to Britain's most inland port. The fifteen outstanding Victorian warehouses have starred in numerous period films and television dramas. (Photo on opposite page.) Today some have been converted to become variously the Inland Waterways Museum, a Regimental Museum, the City Council head-quarters and offices for the Regional Health Authority. To attract visitors there is the obligatory shopping mall and a five-storey antique centre. In its heyday Gloucester Docks formed the gate-way for waterborne traffic into the Midlands. Today it has become a very successful tourist destination but, with the resident population of office workers, one that is popular all week long.

For a waterfront development to succeed it doesn't have to start with old buildings. Salford on the banks of the Manchester Ship Canal, has Michael Wilford's outstanding Lowry Centre, not only an art gallery dedicated to the great northern artist but a complete entertainment complex. Across the canal is Daniel Libeskind's Imperial War Museum North. There were 200,000 visitors in the first

three months, considerably more than at the Royal Armouries in Leeds, where they would be pleased to see that number in a year.

My favourite, and I suspect the one that is likely to become the most successful economically, is Cardiff Bay. This is a scheme that started as a dream, then a model, displayed in a futuristic tube of a building and is now reality. Cardiff Bay (Tiger Bay) was a run down, derelict coal port on the mouth of the Rivers Taff and Ely. For most of the day, where there should have been sea, there was only mud. Cardiff has a tidal range of 14 metres; the bay was inaccessible to boats for most of the day. Today a 1.1m barrage encloses 500 acres of fresh water and lock gates allow 24 hour access to the Bristol Channel. This has created eight miles of prime waterfront, space for 5,400 homes (3,000 already built) and prestigious office, leisure and commercial developments. And, yes, Atlantic Wharf, the shopping and leisure complex.

Lincoln, Stockton and Sunderland have their waterfront universities, Hull its fish tank (called The Deep), Portsmouth and Chatham their Naval Yards, Bristol has qBristol, the Arnolfini and the Watershed. But what sort of visitor attraction for Ipswich? A question that will no doubt tax the team carrying out the feasibility study and Jack's committee.

#### **JOHN NORMAN**

[Editor: The consultants working on the feasibility study will have access to the Society's previous proposals for a "Gipeswic Centre". They will take into account those and many other ideas in their appraisal of possibilities.]

### **Heritage Open Days**

This annual national event started in 1994. The Ipswich Society has continued to act as coordinator on behalf of the Civic Trust. Peter Odell got the project off the ground and I took over some four or five years ago. This year the weather was fine, numbers held up pretty well, except for the Sunday when Ipswich were playing at home, which must have cost us a number of visitors - including our Editor, I suspect!

Star of last year's event had been the Atfield family's Sun Inn, a miraculous restoration of a beautiful medieval building. This year the Atfields were able to fill in a number of areas which had not been completed in 2001. Doug Atfield provided visitors with an update of the year's work, from which I should like to quote:

"Two major hold-ups have delayed fresh progress ... The first in the form of a ten foot long by eight inch square wall plate in the north wall of the upstairs long room. Though inspected and thought to be sound, it proved to be unsound with both rot and worm in its one hidden part. This was a family 'all hands' call, with a lot of weight and awkward manoeuvring involved, unfortunately forcing us to re-do some previously finished work. The second hold-up was that I fell off a ladder and broke an ankle, wasting the best part of seven weeks. The team worked even harder and faster, removing the irreparable lath and plaster ceiling from the front shop exposing the timbers once again...

"The final 'big dig' under the long room (middle room ground floor) has just been completed. This was a dual-purpose dig, first to remove tons of earth from beneath the rotting floor to allow air

circulation under the new floor, and secondly as an archaeological survey. Every trowel-full of soil was sifted and the resulting finds are on display. We are indebted to Keith Wade, Tom Loader and Sue Anderson of the County Archaeological Department who logged and plotted the finds and identified most of the shards of pottery which may eventually help to establish the history of the site. Also during the dig an early red brick foundation twenty inches wide was found, running northwards from the north wall of the long room.

"In digging down further, we discovered a complete skeleton of a 12th century male aged 30-34 years, and evidence of at least two other graves. These were identified as Christian burials, and so we can assume that the Sun Inn was built on part of the St Stephen's churchyard, which has shrunk considerably over the years. The skeleton was left in situ and the grave was re-filled with the minimum of disturbance. This has caused us to reappraise the age of 'Freda' who we now believe to be contemporary with these latest discoveries, and not Saxon as first thought. It would now appear that the Saxon graveyard is confined to the Buttermarket (west) side of St Stephen's Lane, whilst the eastern side is a separate Christian site.

"Further work during the year has been the re-opening of an early glassless mullion window (upstairs long room) which has brightened a dull corner .... In the room next to this, up a step, the lath and plaster ceiling has been saved by the laborious process of supporting it with about two hundred screws and large washers..."

Visitors will have been shocked to learn that some ten days before Heritage Open Days, Sheila's husband (Sheila of Atfield and Daughter days) Derek Jeffery, had died. This was of course a dreadful loss to Sheila and the whole family, who, 'like the troupers they are, rallied round and provided a full visitor service over both Saturday and Sunday. Not many of us would have managed that.

New to the 2002 programme was Admiral's House in Tower Street. For many years this has been Diocesan House and when it came on the market a year or two ago it was acquired by the Ipswich Institute who are converting it to provide additional space for lecture and meeting rooms as well as for a restaurant. It is quite amazing how much space has been provided behind the modest but attractive exterior. [Photo] Admiral's House is named after Admiral Page who lived in it in the 19th century. Another new entry was the Ipswich branch of the Suffolk Record Office, offering guided tours of the site including a fascinating explanation of what went on in the various departments.

We were very glad to be able to include again St Peter's Church where Society members Roger and Stella Wolfe, with the help of a team of volunteers including Jill Freestone and other members of the Over Stoke History Group, have been active for much of 2002 in opening on a regular basis this important redundant church in the hands of the Ipswich Historic Churches Trust. St Peter's was of course the chapel of Cardinal Wolsey's short-lived college.

Two of the premises which took part in 2001 dropped out. Ipswich School had their Open Day for potential parents so felt unable to accommodate members of the public. The Foyer dropped out for no obvious reason which is a shame as it is such an interesting project for the town. All the other buildings reported satisfactory numbers of visitors. If any member can provide access to other buildings of interest, do please let me know.

**TOM GONDRIS**

## **Broomhill Pool**

Broomhill Pool's future is again under threat. At Ipswich Borough Council's Executive Committee meeting on 5 November, Councillor John Mowles, Chairman of Leisure and Sport, said that its whole future would be under consideration when they had received a report on the Asset Management of all three of the Borough's pools. I would remind members that a survey carried out in 1998 showed that if £95,000 was spent then it would give a stay of execution until 2003, when it would be necessary to spend over £2 millions.

That time fast approaches and it is vital to strengthen the Council's sinews and impress upon them the health and social necessity of the pool. A Friends of Broomhill Pool has been formed; it has already presented a petition with 3,000 signatures in support to the Council. Meetings are taking place with MI's and Councillors. There will have been a swim in the sea at Fellxstowe Dip on Christmas morning when Ipswich's world record holding Channel Swimmer, Mike Read, will have demonstrated his qualities.

Your support is urgently sought for this Grade II building of enormous use. If you can contribute in any way to maintain this facility for our children (and grandchildren, in the case of many Society members!) please contact me.

**MIKE COOK**

## **Snippets (2)**

### **Progress for the Park**

Ipswich's greatest asset is its parks. So we were told in childhood if we were brought up here. The parks were said to be the one incontestable superiority we had over the Other Place up the A140. All the more welcome therefore that the procedure of getting grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund seems to be progressing well. The aim is to win 75% funding for a £4.2m restoration of Christchurch Park. That would include the restoration of park shelters, cleaning up the Wilderness Pond and Round Pond, tree planting, a new refreshment kiosk and repairing footpaths and edging. But those footpaths and edgings, and indeed the grass itself, will need to be more carefully protected when ground-churning events like last November's funfair and fireworks take place. Christchurch Park is our premier park because of its wonderful central location and its Mansion, and therefore justifies special investment. But it's dangerous to allocate nearly all of the biggest events to this one park.

### **Motty's reward**

Suffolk College organised its usual enjoyable graduation ceremonies last October, with an interesting range of celebrities also receiving honorary degrees. John Motson, now doyen of BBC football commentators, recalled his football-starved years at Culford School and forbidden attractions of Portman Road. Having graduated to the commentary box, he enjoyed reporting on Ipswich games. But slightly sheepishly (it's that coat) he remembered two gaffes. "Paul Mariner has now scored 35 goals, exactly twice as many as last season." And at the Wembley play-off in 2000, "Tony Mowbray with the last kick of the game scored with a header."

### **Unearthing the past**

Suffolk archaeologists haven't had many opportunities for big digs in Ipswich since the Buttermarket Shopping Complex site in 1988. But 2002 was better. They have investigated a Saxon cemetery in Elm Street and, more visibly, the site at the junction of Franciscan Way and Wolsey Street where some 30 skeletons dating from the 13th century were found. This site, originally intended for Fisons shiny black granite office block, has been re-scheduled for flats. The owners seem to have changed their minds, put it up for auction and then withdrew it when it failed to reach the reserve price. Surely buyers aren't scared of 800 year old remains?

### **Bin it thoughtfully!**

Some of your Committee members have been pleased to be new recipients of brown bins for recycling vegetable matter. The bins have been very useful for disposing of all those autumnal dying off plants. Seeing the black bins surprisingly empty brings home the value of recycling - our Council will pay far less in Landfill Tax and the useful stuff will become useful compost. True, it was easier to dump it all into one black bin but we must play our part.

### **Follow that cat**

The gallery at the High Street Museum has been used imaginatively to depict the history of Ipswich. Going round clockwise, you can follow the development of our area from the earliest beginnings to the founding of Gipeswic and to almost the present day. It's sketchy history, but the well chosen artefacts can inspire a deeper study - by both children and adults. The children's 'guide' is the cartoon Ipswich Cat. Not quite sure why a cat. But he works, and even members without children or grandchildren could enjoy the display. And while there, you might feel happier now that the Ipswich Museums have regained national registration, vital for winning outside funding. We all know how provincial museums desperately need more financial support.

### **It won't SIT still**

Suffolk College has announced the launch of the Suffolk Institute of Technology (SIT), one of only 18 in the country. It will provide courses in telecommunications, computing, digital art and business skills - all of which will help to spread new skills into the local and national business community. The aim is to recruit 700 students over the next three years. Our local economy should benefit in many ways.

## **Roof and Roof Again**

Conservation Areas are designated to ensure that change is managed in a way that protects and enhances "the cherished local scene". In Ipswich, additional planning controls have been Imposed in two Conservation Areas. This ensures that such changes are in sympathy with the prevailing historic character by requiring planning permission not normally required in undesignated areas. These measures have generally been supported and appear to be well understood. Planning proposals requiring consent have usually been sympathetic to the area and been approved swiftly. When properties have changed hands, a specific note accompanying the Local Land Charges Search has also made the procedure clear.

In September, the Council was made aware by several local residents that the natural grey state roof of a semi-detached villa in the Anglesea Road/Norwich Road Conservation Area was being



removed, and inappropriate (and heavier) red concrete roof tiles were being readied for installation. Not only would this work have required planning permission, but would probably have had structural implications (as a consequence of the extra weight) under the Building Regulations. The nature of this visually inadvisable refurbishment seemed to follow the concepts of house renovation which it was hoped had long become discredited, particularly in a Conservation Area designated over 25 years ago! The new owner claimed to be unaware of the restrictions made explicit in the Search and was clearly intending to "renovate" the property quickly and resell it - diminishing the special character in the process.

Since the Council would not have granted consent in retrospect for this unsympathetic work, it felt obliged to threaten that enforcement action might ensue. Fortunately commonsense prevailed and the original state roof was reinstated shortly thereafter.

Three points are worth emphasising from this episode. Firstly, the character of Conservation Areas is usually derived from harmonious use of traditional materials and designs which collectively enhance the appearance, but also make the areas attractive to live in and command a premium when they are sold. Would anyone choose to live next door to a house, for example, covered in crazy paving?

Secondly, the Council was heartened that local people had taken the trouble to complain about the works as soon as they got under way. Not only was this helpful in dealing with the works before they had become too advanced; it suggests that the additional controls enjoy public support. Thirdly, when things do go wrong, the democratic checks and balances of the planning system can result in the Council's enforcement actions becoming drawn-out by the perpetrator. In this instance the matter was resolved expeditiously but in some other cases, where no physical remedy is swiftly implemented, it may seem to the public that the Council is not intervening to rectify the situation, when in practice the process is far slower than we would wish. Fortunately, the Government also recognises this and is currently consulting on ways of speeding up the resolution of cases similar to the one described here.

**BOB KINDRED**, Ipswich Conservation Service

## **St Margaret's Church Upgraded**

The status of St Margaret's has been raised to a Grade I Listing which was announced by the DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) on 26 September. This will not surprise those of us who have long regarded it as an outstanding parish church worthy of greater national recognition.

Nikolaus Pevsner described it forty years ago as "certainly the most spectacular church in Ipswich." He went on to note many good features including the "splendid double-hammerbeam roof" but only mentioned the "Baroque painting on the panels between the main timbers."

The DCMS citation gives no reasons for the upgrading but it seems a reasonable deduction that the recently cleaned uniquely painted roof would have enhanced its claims. Other Grade I buildings in Ipswich are the Ancient House, Christchurch Mansion, the Unitarian Meeting House and Willis.

## Hampton Court Palace

Every one of the forty Society members who took part in this, the last of our summer season excursions, will have returned home with many different impressions of this wonderful building. Shepherded very capably by our leader Joyce Peck, we assembled at the West Front of the Palace and were given into the hands of two very knowledgeable guides. My particular group guide, Sara Burn Edwards, earned 'Brownie points' right from the start when she acknowledged that we would not require any instruction on the life and background of Cardinal Wolsey!

Wolsey had developed the manor house of Hampton, which he acquired in the early 16th century, into an episcopal palace and the centre for his administration of affairs of state as Henry VIII's Chancellor. On Wolsey's fall from power in 1528, the Palace passed into the hands of the King, and from that time on, like Topsy, the building just grew, and what we see today is an amalgam of changing fashion in architectural styles, and the taste and preferences in decoration and furnishings of subsequent royal inhabitants from William and Mary through to Victoria.

Henry VIII has left us his Great Hall with its superb hammerbeam roof and Flemish tapestries, and his Chapel Royal with the finest Tudor fan vaulted ceilings. And who could not fail to be impressed by the exuberance and skill of the Tudor bricklayers seen in the wonderful chimneys on the buildings surrounding the two great courtyards.

Impressions of the new palace- the Baroque architecture of Wren for William and Mary - centre on the Grinling Gibbons carvings on overmantels and friezes: Ionic columns, decorative plasterwork ceilings, white and gilded paintwork, the homeliness of the private apartments - or as homely as royal living allowed - the small private dining room, the drawing room, the Little Closet (bedroom) of King William. After the fire of 1986 in this part of the Palace, these rooms have been restored to become again as William and Mary knew them. Particularly memorable will be the restoration of the Cartoon Gallery - a 'phoenix' indeed risen from the ashes of 1986. This was one of the first purpose-built picture galleries in Britain, designed by Wren to house the Raphael Cartoons - drawings depicting Acts of the Apostles - intended as designs for tapestries. The original cartoons are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum: what we see are copies dating from 1697 made when the originals were first hung in the Gallery.

King's apartments, Queen's apartments, Georgian rooms, Tudor kitchens - something will be remembered from each of them, but for me the most abiding impressions will be not of architecture or furniture or interior decoration but of paintings, paintings, paintings, all part of the Royal Collection spanning over five hundred years. In the Wolsey Rooms and the Renaissance Gallery - a series of original Tudor rooms thought to have been part of the private accommodation of Wolsey - while the world milled around outside, I enjoyed in splendid isolation the company of Titian, Lotto, Brueghel, Correggio, Gentileschi, and in the Communication Gallery which joined two sets of royal apartments, admired the beauty of the court ladies in Lely's portraits known as the Windsor Beauties. In the King's dining room another series of court ladies, this time painted by Kneller, were in great contrast, in dress and style, though only thirty years apart in time.

Two final little impressions that will remain - one concerning the erudition of one of our party, who very knowledgeably spotted the deliberate mistake in a painting of Henry VIII with his wife Jane Seymour and his three children, Mary, Elizabeth and Edward - the 'mistake' being the inclusion of Jane Seymour who was long dead when the picture was painted. She did not survive the birth of

Edward, who is shown as about six years old in the painting. Producing a son got her into the picture! And finally a little story from our guide of the humour of Elizabeth I -her enjoyment of a practical joke played on guests whom she had assembled in the Fountain Courtyard to admire the sculpture of a fountain, before having the water turned on! No doubt they had to enjoy the joke as well! Then, as now, a happy day at Hampton Court Palace!

**RUTH SERJEANT**

## **Big Challenges for Suffolk**

Some forty members launched the Society's Winter Lecture programme on 9 October at our new venue In the recently refurbished Museum Street Methodist Church Hall, which was promptly acclaimed as being comfortable and convenient. Our lecturer was to have been Suffolk County Council's Chief Executive, Lin Homer. Mrs Homer was about to leave her post to become Chief Executive of England's largest local authority, Birmingham City Council. She had nevertheless still intended to come but a late demand on her time called her away and she had therefore asked her successor, Mike More, currently Director of Resources, to take her place.

Mr More has been with the County Council for some three years, having had a varied background in local government, and he gave us a wide-ranging survey of this subject. The County Council is a huge enterprise, employing some 27,000 persons and spending £600 million annually. Mr More covered the changes which have been implemented over the past year or so, whereby the council committee structure has been abandoned in favour of an Executive Committee of portfolio holders with substantial powers subject to criticism by a Scrutiny Committee. It is still early days to assess the success of this new system.

Much of the effort of local government is to do with involving the community. Our speaker had obviously done his homework, for he was able to quote Tom Plunkett from our Millennium Symposium book highlighting the Victorians' interest in community empowerment. Local government is now very much prescribed by central government and great emphasis is laid upon the need to meet centrally set targets. The big issues faced by the County Council were summarised under the following headings:

- Facilities for the young
- Our ageing population - the over 75s will increase by 10% by 2010
- Employment and economic regeneration - particularly in parts of Ipswich and Lowestoft and some of the villages
- Educational attainment - not good enough
- Crime and safety - perception led to fear sometimes unjustified by reality.
- 

As far as Ipswich itself was concerned, Mike More felt that our major issues could be listed thus:

- Provision of decent housing
- Emphasis on the town as a centre for culture and learning
- Good public transport
- The feel -safe factor
- Economic growth
- Reduction of health inequalities

The meeting finished with a lively discussion and members were left with an impression of someone coming to his new job with an open mind, accessible and interested in working closely with the Borough.

**TOM GONDRIS**

## **Obliterate it Quickly**

Graffiti is not unique to this country. Towns in Holland and North Germany, to name but two, also seem quite badly afflicted. It's worth saying that Ipswich is better in this respect than many other towns in Britain. Even so, recent graffiti on cable telecommunications boxes and post boxes in Ipswich is unsightly.

Sadly, those responsible for the boxes don't act quickly. Authorities which do clean up the mess quickly soon deter the vandals who won't waste paint on something that will only advertise their presence for a day or two. The side walls of the Ancient House in St Stephen's Lane show the effectiveness of a quick clean up. Long may that continue. Most people surely find it refreshing where graffiti is rare or even absent in a town. You feel that the environment is respected and thought to be as important as your own house.

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **THE NEW STYLE OF THE SOCIETY'S AWARDS EVENING**

**from Barbara and Peter Barker**

We attended the Society's Annual awards evening at the Suffolk College and were very impressed with the new venue. Parking was easy and free - the Lecture Theatre was a short walk from the front entrance, past an interesting display of photos of the nominations. Comfortable raised seating made for a good view of the screen and the hall was just the right size for the event. The slide presentation used up-to-the-minute technology - no getting slides stuck in the projector - the images glided across the screen from the computer. Afterwards we went into another room for the super buffet laid on by the College.

It was a pity more Society members didn't attend - you missed an excellent evening. Hopefully this will be a permanent venue for further awards evenings.

### **IPSWICH'S INTERNATIONAL STAMP DEALERS**

**from D L Saunders**

I read with interest Ruth Serjeant's article in the October 2002 Newsletter and it brought back memories from my childhood.

As a young boy in the late 1950s, I started to show an interest in stamp collecting. My father took me to the Whitfield King office in Lacey Street to get my first 'proper' stamp album, a smart red loose-leaf album with gold embossed lettering on the spine. Unfortunately, the only thing I can remember about the visit was that the building was an office rather than a shop and it was on the

right hand side of Lacey Street. I still have that first album tucked away and enclose a copy of the frontispiece with the company name and logo ....

### **NOT MANY VICTOR MELDREWS IN THE IPSWICH SOCIETY!**

**from Ken Wilson**

I was interested in your reference to Victor Meldrewism in the October Editorial, particularly since in this necessarily condensed analysis I recognised a few "Irregular verbs". They are:

- I complain -justifiably, I expect things to be done properly,
- You grumble - unnecessarily, You are a bit fussy,
- He whinges - annoyingly. He seems to think everybody should be perfect,
- I recognise possible difficulties, I am prepared to trust people,
- You look on the black side, You are a bit easy going,
- He is a dreary pessimist. He is a gullible fool.

### **THE FORMER SCHOOL IN BOLTON LANE**

**from Beryl Harding**

I was interested in the letter from Beryl Savidge in the July 2002 issue of the Newsletter about the work in the former school in Bolton Lane. The description of the development of the school is accurate, as far as my knowledge goes, although I cannot agree that the provision of secondary education for all was a disaster. However, the history of the evening work was not entirely as described and goes back further than suggested. The Women's Evening College, offering evening classes in what were then called Domestic Subjects, was the brainchild of Miss Jarrett, the Headmistress of Northgate School for Girls. As she left for a London appointment in 1934, it must have existed before then; indeed I taught an English class there in 1934 and 1935.

The transference of this work to the Civic College was a small part of a general reorganisation. Before that formation, Ipswich had four institutions of further education - the Schools of Art, Technology and Commerce and the Women's Evening College. These four units were transferred to the Civic College as seven departments. The School of Art was unchanged; the School of Technology provided the Departments of Engineering, Science and Building; the School of Commerce was divided into the Department of Commerce and Management, and the Department of General Studies, of which I became the Head. The bulk of the evening work in English and Foreign Languages had been provided by the School of Commerce; they became the core of the evening work in my new department. The Women's Evening College became the Department of Domestic Studies and its English classes were discontinued.

[Chairman's note: Beryl joined the College before the building of the new campus and retired in the 1970s, having established the new Department of Social Work which pioneered such professional courses in this area.]

## **St Peter's Church Open Days**

**The church was open to view on 31 occasions**

Following two days devoted to cleaning the church and the setting up of displays, the church was regularly opened to the public on Thursday afternoons from May to mid-October, as well as on

other occasions such as the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust's annual bicycle ride day and the Heritage Open Days. In addition, a number of specially arranged visits took place for adult students from the University of East Anglia and from local history societies from Norwich and Felixstowe and the Ipswich Archaeological Trust.

### **Over 900 visitors**

All visitors seemed to be very appreciative of finding the church open and having the opportunity to enjoy such an attractive and important part of Ipswich's heritage. We were pleased to be able to welcome tourists from many parts of the UK, most western European countries and from the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, many coming in parties led by Blue Badge guides. There were also many visitors from the Ipswich area, including people from 'Over Stoke' who were pleased to recall associations with the life of the parish in former days and in some cases keen to contribute their memories for the benefit of the Over Stoke History Group.

### **Over 400 hours of volunteer effort**

In addition to staffing the church during opening hours, a major task undertaken by volunteers has been the preparation and production of displays, guide books, leaflets, explanatory captions etc to draw attention to the wealth of architectural features and historic associations of St Peter's for the benefit of visitors. Jill Freestone of Over Stoke History Group has made an outstanding contribution to the research, production and mounting of this material, some of which was displayed on boards specially constructed by fellow Over Stoke member, Bob Blastock. Other volunteers have given freely of their time to help provide a welcoming atmosphere to visitors.

### **Plans for 2003**

Volunteers are hopeful that a similar series of openings can be arranged for next year, and provisional arrangements have been made for Roy Tricker to conduct a guided tour of the church on what we hope will be the inaugural open day, Saturday 26 April.

**ROGER WOLFE**

## **Ipswich Arts Association Lectures**

These lectures are held on Thursdays at 1pm in Ipswich Film Theatre. They cover a wide range of local subjects and should be well worth hearing. Admission is free with a retiring collection.

- 13 February — The History and Future of Brewing in Suffolk by John Murphy (St Peter's Brewery)
- 10 April — Belstead House - the First 900 Years by Janet Dann (Conference & Courses Manager there)
- 12 June — Changing Face of Ipswich, 1950s to Present Day by Harold Mangar (Chairman, SCC)
- 14 August — Films Made in E Anglia in Last 100 Years by David Cleveland (Director E A Film Archive)
- 9 October — The Ipswich Wall Hangings by Isabel Clover (Designer of the Wall Hangings)
- 11 December — The Role of Women in Ipswich 1900-1945 by Diane Sawyer (Ipswich Women's History Group)

## Maldon & Burnham-on-Crouch

On 21 September 2002, a smallish party of 28 proceeded towards Essex. We were lucky to have almost constant sunshine. We stopped in Maldon (the name means "Cross on a hill top") a late Saxon town, not a Roman town insisted our excellent Blue Badge town guide who took us round the town for over an hour. Situated at the head of the estuary of the River Blackwater, Maldon was a port in Saxon times. Mentioned in the Domesday Book, the town was granted a Royal Charter by Henry II in 1171. These links with royalty and the port are shown on the town sign: three lions on the left and a ship on the right.

The town has three medieval churches. All Saints has the peculiarity of having a triangular tower (13th century) probably because of lack of space. This feature is unique in the UK. Several statues on the outside of the church represent significant figures in local history, from the 7th century St Mellitus, who first brought Christianity to Essex (and is shown sitting down because he had gout) and Brihtnoth, the hero of the Battle of Maldon against the Danes in 991, who lost the battle and his head but showed great courage and is buried in Ely Cathedral, to Thomas Plume, Doctor of Divinity, a great scholar who in the 17th century gave his library of 5,000 books to the town of Maldon.

We also saw a stained glass window given by the citizens of Maiden (sic) Massachusetts in 1928, the Washington Window. The great- great- grandfather of George Washington, vicar of Purleigh, is buried in the church. The vicarage is the fourth oldest building in the town, after the churches. We wandered through the town centre in which a large number of medieval buildings remain, often covered by 18th or 19th century fronts. On the side of the Bell pub we could see the old beams behind the more modern window. Maldon seems very proud of its 15th century famous citizen, Edward Bright, who died of typhoid at the age of 29 weighing 44 stones (though his obesity was a problem). Seven hundred men could fit inside his waistcoat (seven men from the Dengie Hundred). The "heart of Saxon Maldon" was represented by an irregular shaped pond which until 1900 was used to wash clothes, water cattle and wet carriage wheels.

For the second part of the morning, some members went to visit the Maeldune Centre which houses an exhibition and the Maldon Embroidery retracing the history of the town. With another group I visited the Moot Hall. This red brick building was originally built for Robert D'Arcy in 1435 and heightened to become a three-floor tower in 1576. It was then sold to the Borough for £55 (expensive at the time) and has since always been used by the local government.

The ground floor room had various uses, from warehouse to prison and police station, and is now a committee room. We visited the small exercise yard whose walls are covered with graffiti from the prisoners, and admired the magnificent spiral brick staircase, with inbuilt handrail. There are only two others in the country, one being in Oxburgh Hall visited recently by the Society. The first floor houses the court room, which is still in its 18th century state and was used until 1970. The balcony overlooking the High Street is still used on civic occasions. The council chamber, used until two years ago, is on the second floor. Steep steps brought us to the roof and gave us a chance of admiring a magnificent view over the town and the wide estuary full of boats (and with a Thames barge). We could see the site of the Battle of Maldon, facing Northey Island. At low tide there is a causeway joining the island to the mainland, through which the Danes invaded and fought Brihtnoth. While we were on the roof top the bells rang 12.30 joyfully and loudly.

In the afternoon we went to Burnham-on-Crouch where we were free to explore. That quiet riverside town is home to several yacht clubs and the river was very full of boats. I wandered along the promenade fronted by quaint pubs, houses and gardens, and went to sit at the head of a small promontory enclosing a little cove filled with yachts and smaller boats. There was a gentle activity with a few sails sliding noiselessly on the river. Thoughtful of our troubled world, I relished the peace and quiet, and felt thankful to Adrian Patten for organising the day.

**SOPHIE PRYOR**

## **New Economic Activity**

If the economic activity of a town is measured by the number of tower cranes on the skyline then Ipswich was doing considerably better in 2002 than in 2001. If we also include piling rigs in the score line then the work load in the construction industry is looking buoyant.

Work is under way on the new County Court off Princes Street, with an expected completion in September 2004 - quite a lengthy building period by modern standards. By way of comparison Persimmon are bulldozing their way through the old gas works site, such that the first property will be ready for occupation next June. House builder Redrow have two schemes just started - flats behind the Foyer in Star Lane and the Coprolite Street apartments (a scheme which also includes a marina office and waterfront restaurant). The live/work units on the site of Bright's furniture store in St Peter's Street are closer to completion.

By the time you read this, planning applications will have been submitted for developments on the site of the burnt out St Peter's Warehouse (ex-R & W Paul) and a separate application at the eastern end of the same block (the former Allied Mills Weigh Bridge and Burton's factory). I understand both are for buildings less domineering than the original applications.

Salthouse Harbour Hotel is progressing rapidly on the waterfront and although the new roofline is visible from various locations immediately to the north it is not unduly dominant. A restaurant in the Isaac Lord's warehouse continues to be discussed, but there is the ever present difficulty in fitting modern kitchen extraction equipment into a Listed building. However as the other Listed buildings in the complex are renovated the idea gets closer to becoming reality.

The one question I am continually asked is how can the housing market possibly take all these additional apartments? In my opinion there are three reasons:

1. The changing life styles of young people, who want a property of their own, rather than living, at home until their wedding day;
2. The increase in the number of people getting divorced;
3. The easy commute - with Ipswich property half the price of that in London it's no wonder that property in this town is selling off the plan.

Nothing is so sure that if they can't sell them they won't build them - which takes me back to my opening line.

**JOHN NORMAN**, Vice-Chairman