

 The Ipswich Society
NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2005

ISSUE 158

Contents			
Editorial: Architecture, Arts	2	Snippets (2)	18
The Society's Exhibition	3	The new Crown Court	17
New Members	3	Putting the House to Bed	18
Chairman on Current Affairs	4	Building a Bigger Ipswich	19
How Many Houses to Build	5	Saving Valuable Buildings	20
Our Annual Awards 2004	6	Belstead House Course	20
Snippets (1)	9	Making a Difference	21
Major Planning Matters	10	CSV Media Clubhouse	22
Now there's a Question...	12	Grimsthorpe Castle	22
Letters to the Editor	14	Gambling and Casinos	23
SnOasis Again	15	Your Committee	24
The Town Library	15	Members' Outings & Events	24



Our Vice President, Peter Underwood, presenting a Special Award to Douglas Atfield (left) for the Atfield Family's ongoing restoration of the former Sun Inn, St Stephen's Lane.

Issue 158 Newsletter Jan 2005

Contents:

- Editorial: Architecture, Arts
- [The Society's Exhibition](#)
- New Members
- [Chairman on Current Affairs](#)
- How Many Houses to Build
- [Our Annual Awards 2004](#)
- [Snippets \(1\)](#)
- [Major Planning Matters](#)
- Now there's a Question
- Letters to the Editor
- SnOasis Again
- The Town Library
- [Snippets \(2\)](#)
- [The new Crown Court](#)
- Putting the House to Bed
- Building a Bigger Ipswich
- Saving Valuable Buildings
- Belstead House Course
- [Making a Difference](#)
- CSV Media Clubhouse
- Grimsthorpe Castle
- [Gambling and Casinos](#)
- Your Committee
- Members' Outings & Events

The Society's Exhibition

4-9 April 2005

Tourist Information Centre

The Society's membership has continued to grow very pleasingly even though we have not advertised ourselves a great deal. Our new leaflet, Ipswich - it's Our Town, has clearly helped. But your Executive Committee is keen to make ourselves better known to the general public - not necessarily to recruit, but to let people know what a civic society is all about. We hope to display newly prepared information boards about the Society, together with our publications.

It would be very useful if a number of members would volunteer to take a turn sitting with the exhibition, giving out leaflets and chatting with interested visitors.

Please contact our Secretary, Beryl Jary if you could help.

Chairman on Current Affairs

I write with Christmas looming: by the time you read this it will be over, but nevertheless I hope you had a happy and peaceful holiday.

It has been a busy and very interesting period since my last report to you, so I shall attempt to touch upon some of the many things your Society and its Committee have been involved in.

It has been a good year for membership which had a net increase of 32 in the last year, keeping us one of the largest of civic societies in the country (bigger than some in large cities). We are not only large; we are well respected in the Civic Trust, something in which we can all take pride.

Meeting councillors

On 29 November, your Executive Committee held a meeting with Dale Jackson and Inga Lockington, the leaders of the new administration in the Borough. This was held at our initiative and a wide ranging agenda was covered, including Finance, Housing, Culture, Waterfront, Environment, Transport, Ipswich Village and the Mint Quarter. The purpose of the meeting was to explore each side's thinking in approaching these problems and then understand more the other's views. In this it was eminently successful and we may well have other meetings with other leaders/ decision makers.

Making a Difference

One of the issues we discussed with the councillors was street clutter. The Council has recently launched a scheme labelled M.A.D. - Making a Difference - which is concentrating one at a time on the wards in the Borough to see if we can tidy up the streetscape. Of concern are the unnecessary clutter of street signs, often put up by different agencies, many outdated and all confusing. Litter and graffiti are also included. This initiative on behalf of the Borough coincided with a booklet on the same lines published by English Heritage entitled Save Our Streets.

Your Committee decided the Society should play its part in this, and in Alexandra Ward (where the initiative began) and also in Rushmere we have had members on the streets listing eyesores and problems. The Borough Council has welcomed this and you should already have seen an

improvement in these wards. Others will follow. If you feel moved to play a role in this, please contact a committee member for a pro-forma so we can tabulate the results.

Awards evening

November saw our Annual Awards evening held at the College. The lecture theatre was filled to overflowing, and these numbers were more than I had estimated for the caterers, so there were a few problems. Next year I shall estimate a full house and cater accordingly.

The Waterfront

The development of the Waterfront continues apace. Cranfields Mill has now received its planning permission (including the tower block of 23 storeys) and Albion Wharf next door (the Paul's business) is on the way to being developed. Initial plans have been unveiled, and these look promising - removing the silo and giving more space around the Old Custom House.

The proposed Visitor Attraction on the Waterfront is being progressed. The forthcoming big Persimmon development near the lock gates on Eagle Quay has offered us a building right on the waterfront as part of their development of this site. Three sites - Eagle Quay, Albion Wharf and the land between the churches of St Peter and St Mary at the Quay behind Wolsey's Gate - are currently all being evaluated by the consultants, Continuum. All is very promising.

Flood barrier

Speaking of the Waterfront, I can now report on the outcome of consultations held by the Environment Agency about improving flood defences in the area. You will perhaps remember that the cheapest option was simply to raise the existing barriers along the New Cut and up river, and this was the option they proposed to go for, which would mean it would be impossible to see our river. I'm glad to say that as a result of the public consultations, and numerous letters from your Society, the Environment Agency has now decided to recommend a barrier across the New Cut, which could mean some existing walls could even be reduced in height. The decision has yet to be approved by DEFRA, but it is looking good at this stage.

Meeting with the Chief Executive

In August I had one of my regular meetings with James Hehir, the Borough Council's Chief Executive Officer, and we had our usual broad review of issues, challenges and opportunities. These meetings are private - just the two of us - and extremely useful I hope to both of us in helping to see that the changes to Ipswich are for the better.

Our website

Those of you with access to a computer will by now have visited our website on www.ipswichsociety.org.uk. It is considerably enlarged and improved and we are already receiving numerous 'hits' from locations all over the world. Our thanks go to Ed Broom who with John Ames not only developed the new site but manages it for us. I urge all of you who can to visit it.

Please contribute

Finally, the Editor has recently spoken to me about the paucity of articles and letters he receives from you. Our Newsletter has won praise and awards from many quarters, but it is true that most of the content does seem to come from Committee members or the Editor himself. There must be many things going on which please or outrage or simply interest you, and it would be very good to hear from you. Articles, letters or questions of any lengths would be most welcome. Make a new year resolution to contact us!

JACK CHAPMAN

Our Annual Awards 2004

Thanks to the sponsorship received from Suffolk College the Awards Evening was held for the third successive year in the Lecture Theatre at the College on 10 November. Eleven nominations were received including one for an ongoing restoration. The nominations included large public and private and small private projects.

The Chairman of the Society, Jack Chapman, welcomed the full capacity audience of members and guests, and apologised that the Mayor was unable to be present because the event coincided with a meeting of Ipswich Borough Council.

The Chairman then introduced John Norman who on behalf of Suffolk College gave a short illustrated presentation on the proposed development of the area bounded by Rope Walk, Alexandra Park, the Waterfront and Grimwade Street for new buildings to accommodate the work of Suffolk College and establish a university campus.

This was followed by the main business of the evening which was a computerised slide presentation by Chris Wiltshire, a former chairman of the Society, in which each nomination was considered together with comments of members of the panel of judges. At the end of the presentation Chris announced the details of the awards which had been made.

NOMINATIONS:

Crown Courts, Chancery Road

A new building within Ipswich Village occupying a very prominent position on a previously undeveloped site. It replaces existing facilities close to the Civic Centre complex.

Endeavour House, Russell Road

A new building within the area designated as Ipswich Village. (Photo below) The building was commissioned by TXU Energi to be erected on the site of the building put up by Eastern Electricity in the 1960s. TXU Energi went into liquidation before the completion of the new building and as a result Suffolk County Council was able to purchase the building considerably below market value for use as its headquarters, replacing a collection of buildings in the area of Rope Walk and St Helen's Street.

Turret Court, Turret Lane

A large new development of apartments on a former industrial site adjoining the Old Cattle Market bus station.

St Nicholas Court, Friars Street

A large new development of apartments on an important site adjoining the Unitarian Meeting House and the nearby Willis offices, two Grade I Listed buildings.

6 St Helen's Street

A small two-storey rear extension to shop premises opposite the Regent Theatre. The extension can be viewed from the landscaped area in Upper Orwell Street.

Methodist Church and Community Hall, Bramford Road

A new building attached to the side of the 19th century Methodist Church.

Former School, Cavendish Street

Refurbishment and conversion of a 19th century school building into live/work units together with new buildings also accommodating live/work units.

St Mary's, Woodbridge Road

A development involving the refurbishment of some existing buildings and the erection of new buildings in the large area previously occupied by the Convent and School of Jesus and Mary. There were two nominations from within this development:

The Lodge.

A new building erected at the entrance to the St Mary's development in Woodbridge Road. (photo below)

The Square.

A large square faced on one side by Holmwood, a 19th century Listed building which has been converted into seven apartments, and on the other three sides by new three- and four-storey houses. (photo below)

1 Hatfield Road

A private residential scheme involving a two-Storey extension to an early 20th century house.

The former Sun Inn, 17 St Stephen's Lane

A nomination for a Special Award for the ongoing restoration by the Atfield Family, which has been in progress for approximately ten years.

The awards made were as follows:

AWARD OF DISTINCTION for Endeavour House, Russell Road. Client: Suffolk County Council
Design: TTSP Contractor: Bovis Lend Lease

HIGH COMMENDATION for The Square, St Mary's, Woodbridge Road Client, Design and Contractor: Hopkins Homes Limited

COMMENDATION for The Lodge, St Mary's, Woodbridge Road Client, Design and Contractor: Hopkins Homes Limited

SPECIAL AWARD for the Atfield Family for their dedicated and painstaking ongoing restoration of the former Sun Inn, 17 St Stephen's Lane. Client, Design and Contractor: The Atfield Family
The award certificates were presented to the winning clients, designers and contractors by Peter Underwood, the Vice-President of The Ipswich Society.

This is the first occasion since 1991 that an Award of Distinction has been made for a new building, when it was for Churchgates House, Cutler Street. In his presentation Chris Wiltshire had said of Endeavour House: "Overall, the feeling of the panel was that it was the best designed and built building in Ipswich for a long time. It was felt that it was a building which works superbly well and looks good."

After completion of the formal business, members and guests adjourned to the adjacent dining hall where excellent refreshments, prepared and served by catering students at the College, were enjoyed. This also provided an opportunity to discuss the projects with members of the winning teams.

RUSSELL NUNN

Snippets (1)

Big bucks in this!

Starbucks have arrived - only a few yards from Costa and making four coffee houses in Butter Market. The only surprise is they haven't come earlier. It's easy to see where there are good profit margins nowadays. Perhaps rivalled only by the profits on greetings cards?

University at last?

All of us with the long term interests of Ipswich at heart should have bated breath during January when big decisions will be made. The university will need the £15m of funding which the Higher Education Funding Council for England has been asked to provide. And the development of Suffolk College for its Further Education work will also depend upon a successful application to the Learning and Skills Council. IBC's Chief Executive, James Hehir, has rightly said, "This is the biggest ever single chance Ipswich has had to bring a university to town. It is going to have a huge impact on every sector of the community."

It's good to share

A Shared Space initiative is being proposed and will be discussed. The idea is to blur the boundary between roads and public spaces. It would lower some speed limits, remove curbs and encourage drivers to be responsible users of roads shared with cyclists and pedestrians. The scheme proposed for Alderman Road, Cullingham Road and Handford Road is the only one in the UK, so for many reasons it's essential to give it a fair trial and get it right. But Handford Road, one of the main ways into town from the A 12?

Complete at last

Congratulations to Ipswich Royal British Legion for their efforts and achievement in completing the war memorial in Christchurch Park. The 620 names of the Borough's Second World War dead have finally been added to the First World War names and the memorial has been refurbished. Better late than never. And it accords with the Museum's exhibition, Ipswich at War, and the 60th anniversary of the end of WW II.

It must be an improvement

On the north side of St Matthew's Street, between Berners Street and St George's Street, there is surely the ugliest bit of the town centre - worse than Carr Street Precinct. If you walk along that side of the road you don't see the ugliness above the shops, but visitors to the town (on a Park & Ride bus perhaps) must shudder. So new proposals for a hotel, flats and shops must be welcome in principle but will need a lot of tuning before being suitable for this prominent site. There are a few worthwhile shops there which deserve relocation. And we could miss the continuous canopy, a feature always welcome in a town when shopping in the rain.

Major Planning Matters

These are some of the Society's responses to planning applications and IBC's decisions where known.

Eagle Mill, Helena Road: development comprising 566 residential units over 9 blocks with a typical height of 8 storeys and a tower of 14 storeys on south-west corner. Proposal includes visitor centre, doctors'surgery and community performance space and new vehicular access.

"This huge development has been discussed by the Executive Committee of the Society; we welcome it and most aspects of the high quality of architecture. We think the deep U shape of the main block and the enclosed open area with the flight of steps is very exciting. The public building and performance area facing the Wet Dock is innovative and we look forward to seeing it in use. "The only part of the plans to which we take exception is the rectangular tower block (50 metres high) at the south-west end on Helena Road. We felt the external appearance to be very retrospective. It seemed to hark back to buildings of the sixties in Ipswich which are going to be demolished. Further, architecturally it seemed quite different to the remainder of the proposals. Clearly a radical rethink is needed for this part. Otherwise we congratulate the developers and the architects on the scheme."

Land bounded by Cardinal Street and Wolsey Street, Franciscan Way: erection of 50 two-bedroomed apartments in 5 storey block

"This is a very sensitive area with two Grade I and Grade II buildings in close proximity. The Planning Committee should therefore expect an outstanding building. This is by no means so and thus we would ask the Committee to reject it."

[IBC has granted permission. The Development Control Committee thought it was a good building and could even have been higher.]

Kennings, Duke Street: proposal for a 5- and 6-storey mixed commercial/residential development

"This proposal has some attractive features but it is over-development on this site. The Duke Street facade has no coherent rhythm and the details of the roofing surely need to be improved. The trouble with allowing a very large building on one side of a street is that developers have every reason to expect to be allowed to build as large on the opposite side, thus creating a canyon effect. This attempt should be refused."

2-8 Fore Street: internal and external alterations including demolition of No 2 Fore Street warehouse to rear and erection of 2.5 storey building and works to 10-14 Orwell Place (ex-Martin & Newby's)

"The Society, whilst sad to see the demise of Martin & Newby, is pleased that the new development includes 5 shops as well as the now usual apartments. We also note the minimal parking provision with approval. The Council officers are working hard to ensure the retention of several interesting Georgian features (fireplaces, staircase and wine cellar) as well as an archaeological survey. Assuming the details are satisfactory, permission could be granted."

Ipswich Sports Club, Henley Road: installation of 8 flood lighting columns to illuminate all-weather hockey pitch.

"This application needs to be refused as it will cause two sorts of pollution in a quiet residential area. When the majority of these houses were built and purchased the Sports Club was small and quiet; now it has grown to have the presence of the Ipswich Hockey Clubs, both nationally important and well supported. They will create light, noise from the crowds and from their cars leaving in the late evening. To have this in one's back garden is insupportable in planning terms." [IBC refused permission on grounds of ugliness of columns, noise pollution, light pollution and inappropriate use in residential area.]

ALBION MILL: (formerly Pauls), College St.

This was a presentation prior to a formal planning application when ready. The Society's letter was addressed to the developers. "Thank you for inviting us to attend your presentation. In general terms we were happy with your general proposals for the site but we feel that a lot more thought needs to go into key areas.

1. The corridor of view is not big. On the quayside elevation it forms what appears to be a 10 metre square opening. This is clearly unsatisfactory; the idea is excellent but needs review.
2. We are unhappy with the arrangement of the massing.
3. The presence of 23 storeys on the next site should not encourage you to build any higher than the current hideous concrete silo.
4. We need to look at the security arrangements. The Society is totally opposed to enclosed and gated communities. They must be avoided by design.
5. The Society recommends the inclusion of an Arts Cinema as the major need. We would be delighted to make the case for this separately."

The outcome of previous planning applications:

Water tower, reservoir, Park Road: installation of antennae, etc.

IBC refused permission and the applicants have appealed against this decision. The Society has written to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol repeating our original objections. All apparatus was to have been installed behind a fibre-glass screen but this has not been adhered to and the tower has become an unsightly mass of straggly poles, wires and panels.

67 Westgate Street: retention of shutters.

Society objections but IBC approved it.

Crown Pools: new car park on existing lawn.

The Society recommended refusal. IBC granted permission but the new IBC coalition Council has decided to postpone building it.

Snippets (2)

Food in town

It's been confirmed that IBC will move out of Civic Centre to a new HQ in Russell Road, opposite the County Council's Endeavour House. If, as expected, the police station and the old Crown Court buildings are also demolished, there will be a big site for redevelopment on the west side of the town centre. Rumour has it that Waitrose have renewed their interest in building here, and there's been a separate comment that we could have "one of the largest intown food stores in the eastern region." Despite the increased traffic, such a scheme should boost the town centre and perhaps begin a swinging back of the pendulum after the massive shift to out-of-town food shopping in the 1980s.

Yates and yobs

The Yates Group has been praised for cutting out the "all-you-can-drink" offers. Let's hope others follow suit. It might start to make a difference to the British "drink problem" and drunken

vandalism in particular. It used to be argued that the late night drinking scene at least brings more wealth into the town. Perhaps so, but that's no consolation to innocent shop owners whose windows are smashed or householders whose garden walls are pushed over. One of the joys of holidaying overseas is that it happens much less there, if at all.

At the end of the road?

Yes, it is at the end of Broom Hill Road, but is Broornhill pool in a worse situation than that? IBC has decided not to pursue making an application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. But they do say they'd like to see the pool re-opened. How?

Bags for bins

The Society is not alone in criticising the way that wheelie bins are often left out on pavements, sometimes long after collection times. IBC StreetCare Service will issue sacks instead where householders have not responded to requests to move bins. Smaller bins -which may be requested - may also better suit some homes. Again, this is a national problem - an unfortunate downside of good intentions - and especially problematic with small terraced houses.

All pleasure and no business

Pauls Malting officially closed on 30 November. This was the last industrial use of the northern quays of the Wet Dock, the sort of industry for which the dock was dug. Sad, but no good lamenting such changes: they've happened everywhere. But our great Victorian engineers have unwittingly left us facilities for pleasure craft, and a wonderful setting for the mixed development of the quaysides which the Society, and probably most people, would like to see. Now it's up to the developers and the planners to ensure that what is built is worthy of the legacy of Victorian vision and ambition.

The future of Isaac Lord's

It was reassuring to learn that when Ipswich Society members Stuart and Gina Cooper sold the Isaac Lord's premises (three times winners of Society Awards) they had sold them to an equally conservation minded individual. Adrian Coughlan founded Anglian Telecom in Handford Road in 1984. We understand that he wishes to carry forward the business plans developed by the Coopers, which include a restaurant in the long warehouse and little shop units in the courtyard behind the Malt Kiln. The Society wishes Mr Coughlan well in his endeavours to re-establish Isaac Lord's premises as one of the premier businesses in town.

"Welcome to Ipswich"

Some of the Christmas lights in 2004 were a welcome change from the repetitive garlands of old. There were new "welcome" signs outside the Co-op in Carr Street and in Upper Brook Street and the top of Westgate Street. Congratulations to Ipswich Partnership and IBC's Community Improvements Steering Group for making them shine.

The new Crown Court

On 26 October, 17 members of The Ipswich Society were shown around the new Crown Court building in Russell Road by Robin Hill, the most informative Customer Services Manager. Having done jury service in the old building a few months ago I was interested to compare the two.

Entry is similar: a search of bags and passing through the "pinger". I asked Reg, one of the security men, if he liked his new surroundings. He shrugged: the job was much the same but the building was big and impersonal. Not impressed, I felt.

The contrast was enormous. A ramp gives disabled access. The entrance and reception hall is vastly high and light, clad inside and out in silver metal, with blond wood balconies and tiled floor. Rows of metal seats all facing one way suggest an airport lounge. Toilets, phones and drinks vending machines are all present, clean and working - a pleasant change from the old building! The Thermadeck heating system consists of a series of concrete planks which retain heat, the whole building being heated by three domestic-sized boilers with temperature controlled at an average 21degrees C.

There are now five bigger, lighter and better air-conditioned courts, one of them with a glassed-in dock. Outside, a van dock provides much improved security for the custody cel Is. Global Solutions Ltd transports prisoners from Norwich, the nearest jail, while young defendants travel from Warren Hill at Hollesley rather than all the way from Rugby. It was surprising to see less space for visitors (only 12-16 seats in court) and disappointing that the microphone system for barristers, defendant, witness and judge was not entirely satisfactory. The TV link to protect vulnerable witnesses was not working that day either, so there are things still to be sorted out.

The new IT screens should mean there are no longer people wandering about with messages and they make it easier for records to be kept, expenses worked out, etc. Everything is recorded verbatim. Jurors have more room for files and papers and we were told that their waiting area contains food and drink, magazines, TV, radio, cards and games to relieve the sometimes prolonged waiting times. The cafeteria is certainly a huge plus point.

All in all there are many improvements. But will this building, opened officially by Lord Falconer on 15 October 2004, last longer than its predecessor, built as recently as the 1960s? Some of us may be here to find out!

Note: for a virtual tour log on to www.courtservice.gov.uk/ipswich.

GILLIAN BARELLA

Making a Difference

I reported in the October Newsletter the Society's contribution to the Ipswich Borough Council scheme to remove redundant traffic signs and other street clutter. This was the culmination of an ongoing campaign by the Society to rid the town of unwanted street furniture, white paint in the highway and graffiti. (See page 9, October 2004)

Once again The Ipswich Society is one step ahead of colleagues nationally with English Heritage using Bill Bryson to launch their Save Our Streets campaign. "Throughout England the beauty and distinctiveness of our historic settlements and landscapes is disappearing under a blizzard of traffic signs, discordant paving schemes, obtrusive road markings and ugly street furniture. The resulting

visual chaos diminishes the quality of all our lives." (English Heritage) Their booklet is full of photographic examples so I thought I'd include a couple taken in Ipswich.

"One Sign on Top of Another" is in Falcon Street and reflects previous attempts to prevent queuing for the Buttermarket car park (the "Other" is underneath)! The redundant sign at the back was originally erected by one of twenty different agencies who are permitted to erect traffic signs, none of whom has the contract to remove the clutter.

"The Information Overload" is outside the Novotel and includes sponsorship of the planting on the traffic islands by Scottish Equitable who were taken over by the Aegon Group in 1994.

JOHN NORMAN

Gambling and Casinos

Whilst your Newsletter Editor was enjoying southern hemisphere hospitality, I was confined to the eastern shores of the United States (and enduring presidential electioneering at its worst).

I had primarily travelled to open up channels of communication with the people of Jamestown, Virginia, where almost 400 years ago Bartholomew Gosnold and others founded the first permanent English speaking colony in the New World. Already IBC officers and councillors are talking of establishing links to reinforce the Ipswich connection. Gosnold, aboard the Godspeed, probably sailed from the Waterfront in the autumn of 1606.

During my travels I took the opportunity to visit waterfront developments in New York, Baltimore and Norfolk, Virginia and the casinos of Atlantic City. You will understand my obsession with developing waterfronts but I'm not a gambler, so why the latter?

Atlantic City was a typical east coast seaside town that had seen better days, similar in many ways to Great Yarmouth and Southend. The hotels were not attracting visitors and the retail outlets along the Boardwalk (promenade) were failing. The city fathers decided that Las Vegas style casinos were the way forward; they would create jobs and bring wealth to the town. Ten years on and the new casino hotels tower above the deserted beaches. However, the employment on offer is limited, predominantly at the minimum wage level and the regeneration of the seaside town has not occurred. The gambling visitors drive into town, park in the multi-storey, cross the bridge into a glittering reception area emblazoned with slot machines, get elevated to their rooms and then spend their cash in the casino below.

If there are any windows in the casino they are glazed with a dull grey glass that makes the outside look as if it's raining on a dismal November day. The lights glitter, the "eat all you can" buffet is cheap and the apparent chance of winning ever present. All reasons to stay indoors and push quarters into the casino owners' pockets. If you do attempt to venture out you'll almost certainly finish up on an interconnecting walkway into the next casino. We did make it on to the Boardwalk - a more depressing social plight you could not wish to see.

The tourists are almost all gone, replaced by beggars, serial gamblers who have lost everything, prostitutes and empty aluminium can collectors. The money made by the casinos is going to the multi-national corporations and their shareholders and, for the most part, not being re-invested in Atlantic City. It should be conditional that any British politician considering changing the laws on gambling here spend a weekend on the Boardwalk!

JOHN NORMAN