



The Ipswich Society NEWSLETTER

www.ipswichsociety.org

April 2024 Issue 237

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The 'Brook' Flows Again: A walk in Christchurch Park on January 6th, after 24 hours+ of rain from Storm Henk, showed the 'brook' had abandoned its culvert and was flowing across the surface again past the Boer War Memorial towards the trees at the bottom of Fonnereau Road - and thus on down to Brook Street as per John Speed's 17th century map of Ipswich (copy in Pykenham's Gatehouse). Caroline Markham

Please read the plea from the Membership Secretary about subscription renewals on page 5.

Editorial

2024: a year of anniversaries in Ipswich. The Ipswich Institute is 200 years old. The Ipswich Art Society is 150. The County Library in Northgate Street is 100 years old. It's approximately 550 years since the birth of Cardinal Wolsey – the celebration of which (the 'Wolsey 550' project) continues until September this year. In addition, our sister Civic Society in Norwich is 100 years old this year (see *Letters*, page 26).

This issue of the Society's *Newsletter* was being completed when the sad but expected news of the death of our Chairman, John Norman, was received. John will undoubtedly feature in the July issue; members are welcome to send memories of him. Our thoughts and best wishes are with Christine and the family.

Typically of John, he not only provided articles for this *Newsletter*, but for the next one as well. As ever, my thanks to all the people who contribute to the *Newsletter*.

Robin Gaylard

New members

Ipswich Museum under wraps – photographs from summer 2023



Rosie the Rhino has seen some changes at Ipswich Museum – she had her original horn stolen in 2011 and now, the ultimate indignity, she has been placed on a gurney and covered in dust-sheets while the museum undergoes remodelling and refurbishment. Photographs taken on a Heritage Forum visit.



And Rosie's neighbour in the Victorian natural history display, the famous giraffe, will be staying put in his cabinet, but very carefully wrapped up and protected during the works. It was transported to Ipswich Museum from London by train (!) in 1909.

Interim Chair's remarks

Tony Marsden, who for twelve years has acted as Vice-Chair to John Norman, has stepped up to fill – temporarily – the Chairman's role in The Ipswich Society.

2023-24 has turned out to be a successful, but also difficult year for your Society. It goes without saying that John's recent death has affected us all, but it has made the Executive Committee look at what we do and the way in which we do it. John, such an enthusiastic, innovative and knowledgeable Chairman, would certainly have been in favour of this. This is an ongoing process, but we would welcome members who might like to come along to one of our monthly meetings as observers.

All Civic Societies will be facing similar challenges to ours as they move into the next generation of both members and committees. New ideas, new approaches to reaching members and the wider public will be part of the process, but we do need somebody in the Chair and people to help us to organise our programme of events.

Please do read Tony's excellent annual report which is in the Annual General Meeting booklet included with this *Newsletter*. It eloquently covers the Society's past year, its present situation and possibilities for the future.

Editor

Snippets

Otter

One anecdote prompted by Richard Stewart's article *Otters in Ipswich* on page 12: after an evening meeting in Freehold Road last spring, I and friends saw an urban fox nearby. As we were looking at it, another friend indicated, through a threadbare hedge, an otter enjoying the rear garden pond. **RG**

Celebrating 325 Years of Dissent: The Unitarian Meeting House in Ipswich

A Conference by the University of Suffolk and Ipswich Unitarian Meeting House; 17 May, with guided tours of the Meeting House in the morning and UoS talks in the Hold in the afternoon, plus a display of Meeting House archive material. More information to follow.

The Ipswich Society will be sponsoring the event and will support with volunteers. The University will be supplying refreshments at the Hold and helping with publicity.

Ipswich's flood barrier viewpoint opens five years after completion

The £67m tidal defence barrier in Ipswich was completed in February 2019, alongside a public view point at New Cut East. The area, owned by the Environment Agency, had since remained closed; Andrew Osborne, Project executive at the Agency, says: 'The space was created as part of the tidal project, which protects more than 1,600 homes and 400 businesses from flooding, and benefits from seating and river views.' John Norman has been documenting this saga (*Newsletters* passim); however, it does appear that temporary fencing is still in place to ensure public safety. Paul Ager, divisional port manager at Associated British Ports said that ABP was 'actively engaging' with partners to implement a permanent fencing solution. N.B.: Tony Marsden has created a new Album of images of this site on The Society's online Image Archive.

The Cricketers

The pub giant Wetherspoon is investing money in The Cricketers as much-needed work is carried out. While the Crown Street pub is closed, designers will be delivering a brand new back bar layout. There will also be new fittings and equipment, new bar flooring and interior decoration.

Planning matters

Land on Sandyhill Lane, off Landseer Road. This brownfield site has been previously granted permission for 85 dwellings. Because of the site constraints of position, noise, odour and the need for decontamination, it was agreed, at that time, that it would not be viable to allow any affordable housing. The land owners now seek permission to erect a further 11 houses; this time, 'the dwellings will be transferred to a Registered Provider so 100% will be affordable tenure'.

Bus stop outside Axa offices, Civic Drive. JC Decaux would like to place one of its 7 foot high advertising screens on the pavement. It does have a defibrillator as well as wifi, emergency telephone communication and local information. It uses about four units of electricity a day, obstructs the pavement and distracts the drivers on a fast urban dual carriageway. Decaux are one of the world's largest providers of advertising sites. This has been denied planning permission.

Similar screen at entrance to NCP car park from Tacket Street. Though in the central Conservation Area, it is slightly out of line of sight; otherwise, see above.

69 Nelson Road. This large house on the corner of Nelson and Woodbridge Roads, has been a fourteen room HMO for some years. The owners propose a large extension and other alterations to increase that number to 21, ie a 50% increase. After a lengthy preapp (published) in which the officer stated that it would be regarded as over development and loss of amenity the applicant has made some changes so that the new extension might appear to be smaller but, remarkably, the rooms are now up to the required size.

17 Orwell Place. This C17 grade listed building has been painted a hideous pink and covered with vinyls. Retrospective planning permission is sought to repaint it a pale green colour and to remove the vinyls –permanently.

Land to rear of 79a Henley Road. This is a repeat of a successful 2018 application for a modern bungalow in the rear garden with access from Dale Hall Lane. We have previously commended the design.

The Cambria Building, Regatta Quay. The cladding of the apartment block north of the Old Custom House on this 14 storey building is deemed to be of high risk in three out of four parts. Terracotta tiles, render on EPS* and Rockpanel are rated high. The brick is medium risk and thus OK. The recladding will be with Rockpanels with extensive remediation within. The chosen colours are carbon, white and verdigris. Doubtless the colours will be discussed at length.

Land north of railway and east of Henley Road (Crest Nicholson). This application details the design of 100 houses, a local centre, landscaping and other infrastructure. The dwellings consist of 65 houses for the market containing 179 bedrooms, also 24 apartments and 11 houses containing 50 beds. I note the lack of larger affordable houses and of market flats. There will be a 600 sq metres amenity space within the 'U' of the apartment block. There is a 6000 sq m commercial space divided into four unequal units. This development lies on Henley Road just on the town side of the second entrance and beyond the railway. In this application there is no suggestion of connecting across the new railway bridge and thence to Valley Road for cyclists and pedestrians. The actual design of the houses is better than we have seen in the past. I am intrigued by the statement that they will abide by Part M of the building regulations for 25% of the dwellings! However, their energy consultants advise that the way forward is Photo-Voltaic panels and gas fired central heating. They consider that the extra cost (of installation at 5 to 7 thousand pounds plus the cost of running an air-source heat pump) to be not viable for owners/tenants. They put great weight on their intention to build in high fabric specifications; there is no mention of air gap width or of triple glazing. A chance missed.

Island site, Greyfriars Road. This proposal to build a tunnel car wash on a spare piece of land opposite the Novotel is inappropriate and should be refused on grounds of increased traffic, difficult vehicle access and ugliness.

[*EPS: Expanded polystyrene]

9 Upper Brook Street. It is proposed to convert the first and second floors into two one-bedroomed studio flats on the first floor and one on the second. The ground floor will still be available for retail use. It's probably one bedroom too many for the site.

2 Christchurch Street/64 Woodbridge Road. This house on the corner of these two busy streets is already an eight bedroomed HMO; it is proposed to turn the kitchen into a ninth bedroom and the existing living room into the kitchen. Therefore, there will be no communal sitting area; the first floor corner bedroom has the dimensions of 8 ft 6 inches by 9 foot 4 inches.

Elm House (formerly Gotelees) 25 Elm Street. It is of note that, despite permission for 25 apartments granted in 2021, developers now wish to convert it to three larger apartments. The listed building has both external and internal features worth conserving; these new plans are a distinct improvement and hopefully will increase the Council Tax banding.

30 The Havens, Ransomes Europark. The East of England NHS Ambulance Trust proposes to build a new restocking and maintenance ambulance station. It includes a double-deck car park. The layout could easily be improved and thus the TPO'd* Oak tree easily preserved. Hopefully this advice will be taken on board. Whether this will lead to the closure of the facility at the rear of The Ipswich Hospital site is unknown. [*TPO: Tree Preservation Order]

The Mill Building, Regatta Quay. This 26 storey block of flats lost a lot of cladding in a gale in October, 2013. Replacement will require much scaffolding. Its ownership is reported as being bankrupt and the *East Anglian Daily Times* recently reported that remediation would cost £30m; a flat-owner said that they had been told their apartment was now valueless. Ipswich Borough Council and the Government are said to be seeking ways that can assist.

Ipswich Garden Suburb. Two new bridges have been installed across the railway; the one nearest Henley Road is for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians. It will connect the south and north developments to schools, retail and community uses. It will be closed to cars during rush hour to prevent it becoming a rat-run. It won't be needed in the immediate future which is lucky because Network Rail cannot complete it because the railway is too busy to be closed. This also applies to the pedestrian and cycle bridge near Westerfield railway station which needs to be opened because it already connects to 2 right-of-way footpaths to Valley Road.

The Ipswich Conservation and Urban Design Panel has met under its new constitution. The Chair is to be a Councillor who has no connection with Planning & Development, appointed by the Borough Council. The first Chair is Cllr David Ellesmere. The Councillor representatives are no longer members of the Planning & Development Committee. The co-opted members who earlier resigned have now returned. John Field, who has chaired the panel for thirty years, is now the Heritage Forum representative. Now more legal but more Council-controlled.

Mike Cook

A reminder to pay the *new* Annual Membership Fees

At last year's AGM it was agreed to increase individual fees by £5 to £15, and family fees by £5 to £20. Membership fees are due from 1 January – 29 February, and many members have paid the new fees. Thank you. However, at the end of February, 209 members had not increased their fees – this equates to a £1,045 shortfall in fees paid. This is a significant sum for the Society to lose at a time when costs are rising. If you pay by Standing Order, please check that you have paid either £15 for an individual, or £20 for family membership. Any shortfall to be paid to Ipswich Society bank account, Sort Code 204451, Acc. No. 80489018. Or a cheque to 'Ipswich Society' posted to the Membership Secretary, 791 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich IP4 4NN, please. If you haven't yet paid any of your annual fee, it's not too late. Please send in, to arrive no later than 30 April, to the Membership Secretary, or pay by direct bank transfer. Any queries, please contact the Membership Secretary. Contact details on the page 27 of the *Newsletter*.

The Eleven Presidents of Ipswich Museum

(Notes from a talk for the Ipswich Society, December 2023 – Part 1; Part 2 next issue.)

William Kirby (President 1846-1850)

Kirby was Minister of Barham and an entomologist. His contributions to the Literary Institute Museum in Ipswich Town Hall (not the present building) in the 1830s were recognised when he was made the first President for the proposed new Ipswich Museum in Museum Street. The Museum opened on December 15 1847, when Edward Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, addressing Kirby (who was 88 years old) said, ‘You are sinking in the Vale of Years.....may you sink to your grave, happy in having done your duty’. The President was recorded in portrait – done by Frederich Bischoft at the Museum in September 1848. It portrays Kirby in front of a window showing Barham Church, with the setting sun ‘indicating the decline of life’. Beside him is a table holding a beetle and one of his books on entomology. That year Kirby presented a piece of oak beam from his church to the Museum, complete with its *Anobium tessalutum* (death watch beetle). Bishop Stanley died in 1849 – William Kirby outlived him! *The Ipswich Journal*, June 15 1850, advertised the ‘Advowson and Presentation of Barham’ – the right to nominate a person to the vacancy at Barham. Kirby was still alive but died soon after on July 4.



2009 Mozambique stamps featuring William Kirby

IPSWICH MUSEUM.

A LECTURE

WILL BE DELIVERED
AT THE CORN EXCHANGE,
AT EIGHT O'CLOCK,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 13th. 1851,

BY THE
REV. PROFESSOR HENSLOW,
(President of the Ipswich Museum.)
ON THE
TERTIARY STRATA OF ENGLAND.

Members admitted Free—Non-Subscribers 6d.—Reserved Seats 1s. each.
THE SAME ARRANGEMENT FOR THE ADMISSION OF WORKING CLASSES AS BEFORE.

PAWSEY. PRINTER, OLD BUTTER MARKET, IPSWICH.

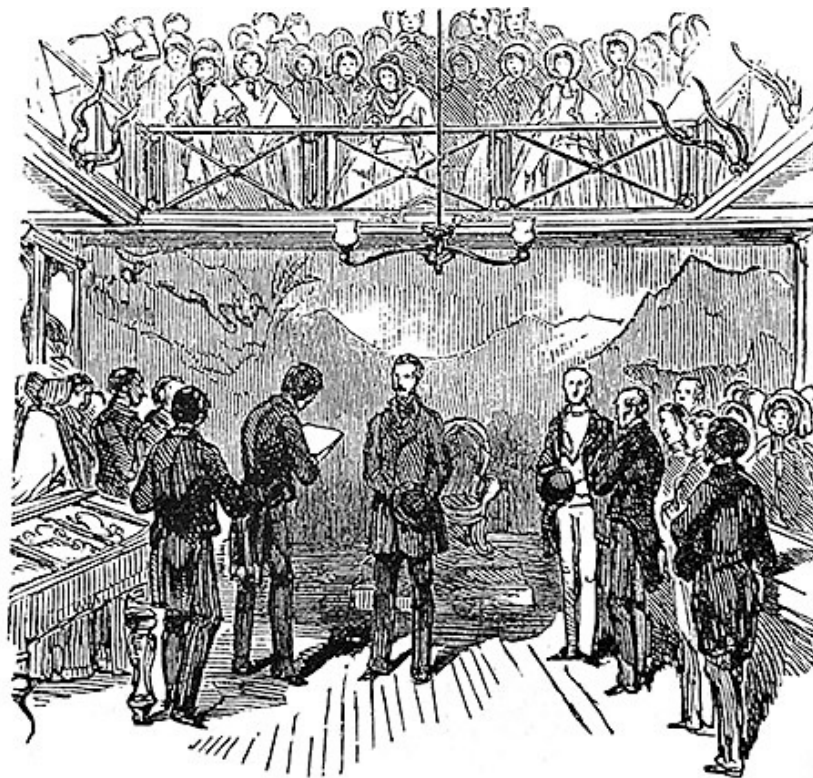
John Stevens Henslow (President 1850-1861)

Henslow was Professor of Botany at Cambridge University and Rector of Hitcham, Suffolk. His experience of museum work at Cambridge made him the ideal person to organise and arrange the Museum displays in Ipswich, and he continued as President when Ipswich Corporation took over the Museum (for financial reasons) in 1853. In 1851, one of his Ipswich Museum lectures at the Corn Exchange was on ‘Tertiary age strata’, to which he had made a major contribution when he

discovered ‘coprolites’ (actually phosphatic nodules) in Crag strata at Felixstowe in 1843.

Henslow read the address to Prince Albert at the Museum on July 4 1851 as part of the British

Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Ipswich. He was a tutor to the royal children – did he use his Indian elephant skull and lower jaw, now in Ipswich Museum? He may also have used it with his student Charles Darwin at Cambridge University. In 1848, one of Henslow's Museum lectures was illustrated with 'coral material received from Mr Darwin'. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859 – traditional faith was confronted by evolution. Henslow presided over the ensuing clash between Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, and the biologist Thomas Henry Huxley at Oxford in 1860.



PRESENTATION OF THE ADDRESS TO PRINCE ALBERT, IN THE IPSWICH MUSEUM.

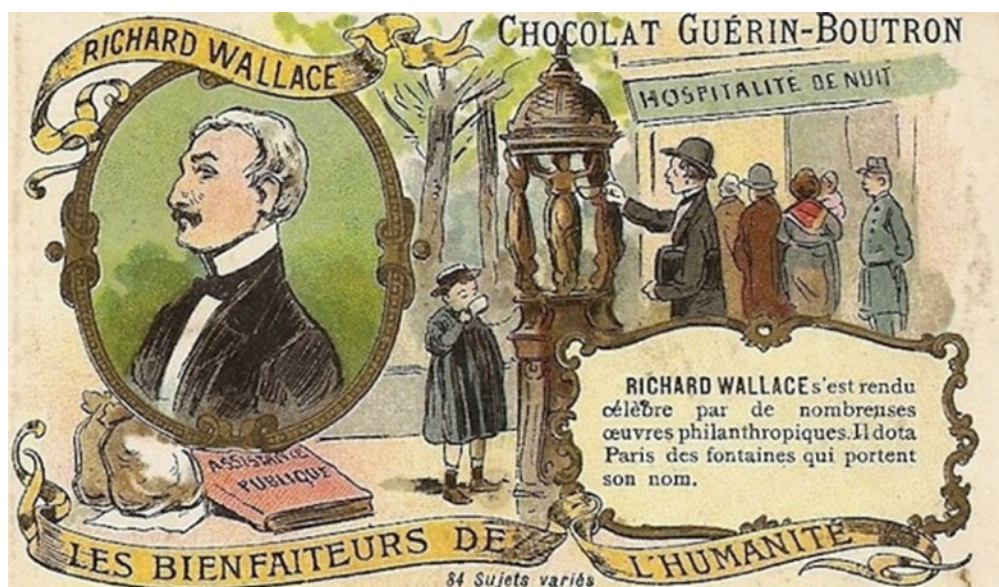
A contemporary illustration of Prince Albert at the (Museum Street) Museum, with Henslow reading the address.

Charles Austin (President 1861-1874)

Austin was a lawyer, specialising in private parliamentary bills relating to railways. His income from this was large and he retired in 1848 to Brandeston Hall near Wickham Market. He was High Steward of Ipswich and, in relation to the Museum, it was said that he was 'not even on nodding terms with science'.

Richard Wallace (President 1875-1890)

Richard Seymour-Conway, the 4th Marquess of Hertford, was rich and the greatest collector in Europe, especially of 18th century French art (he lived in Paris). His agent at saleroom auctions was Richard Wallace – when he entered the saleroom the others left! James de Rothschild took him on at the auction of the painting known as *The Laughing Cavalier*, but



A French chocolate card celebrating Wallace's good works in Paris.

Wallace outbid him. The 4th Marquess died in 1870 - he never married so the title (5th Marquess) went to a second cousin. However, his art collection went to Richard Wallace (who was said to be his son) who thus became a very rich man. Because of the Siege of Paris (1870-71) the art collection was taken to Hertford House in London, the family home. Wallace's philanthropic work in Paris during the siege was recognised by Queen Victoria with a Baronetcy.

For his country seat, Sir Richard Wallace bought Sudbourne Hall, near Orford, from the 5th Marquess – Lady Wallace spoke only French which caused some problems with visitors. Meanwhile in Ipswich, £2,500 public subscription was required towards the cost of the new Museum in High Street. Alderman Sterling Westhorp and Curator John Ellor Taylor visited Sudbourne Hall and persuaded Wallace to donate £550 towards the new building. Of the three major collections of fossils made when the local coprolite pits were open, two had gone to York Museum, but Wallace bought the third (that of Rev. Henry Canham of Waldringfield) in 1876 and presented it to Ipswich Museum. He also had casts made of some York specimens for further study.



The stag and hounds sculpture in the snow outside the (High Street) Museum which was donated by Lady Wallace after Sir Richard's death. The entrance to the Victoria Free Library is in the background.

In 1879 Wallace financed the east window of Sudbourne Church in honour of his Grandmother – Maria Seymour-Conway, 3rd Marchioness of Hertford. She lived in Paris and brought Wallace up from the age of six. Two extremely rich men believed they were the father of the 4th Marquess and bequeathed their fortunes to Maria, hence the Wallace riches. Sir Richard Wallace died in Paris and Lady Wallace, following her husband's wishes, presented his art collection to the nation (the Wallace Collection, now housed in Hertford House, Manchester Square in London's west end). To Ipswich Museum she gave, in memory of her husband, a bronze stag and hounds probably by the French sculptor Jean Debay. This statue was disposed of in 1961, but the fossils remain as a 'Wallace Collection' in Ipswich Museum.

Sterling Westhorp (President 1893-1895)

Sterling Westhorp was a solicitor in Museum Street and had been Mayor in 1885. A young bear he presented stood in the entrance lobby of Ipswich Museum for many years.

Bob Markham (Part 2 next issue)

Broomhill Lido: positive news

Fusion-Lifestyle, the charitable sports and leisure management organisation, has announced that it has secured grant funding from The National Heritage Lottery Fund and Ipswich Borough Council to complete the long-planned restoration of the historic, Grade II listed Broomhill Lido. The three funders have all increased their financing and the Pool will be restored, hopefully by 2026. Members of The Society played a seminal role in the early days of the campaign to save the Pool and Mike Cook has maintained close interest in the project over twenty years along with other campaigners and user groups in support of the proposals.

Fusion-Lifestyle, the leading operator of heritage leisure buildings, will lead the £10m restoration of Broomhill Lido. The project will see the pool provide swimming, fitness and community facilities. The new facility will undergo some modernisation works but will maintain its characteristic Art Deco feel and will be enhanced with a new gym/studio, restored clocktower, a café as well as the reinstatement of the lido and nursery pool.

A bus tour of Ipswich industrial heritage locations

During 2023 the Eastern Angles Centre in Gatacre Road obtained funding from Historic England for what was called the *Work Furnace Project*. The project had the aim of recording memories of Ipswich's extensive industrial heritage which has, over many years, been effectively airbrushed out of the history of the town. The memories were to be used in a street parade and exhibition which was held on 17 June 2023. An important contributor to the project was a bus tour around the former industrial sites of Ipswich.

Although I was never an industrial worker in Ipswich, my late father was an engineer at Ransomes & Rapier. A one-company man, he had a very great pride in what the company manufactured and what they achieved on the national and international stage. His working life at Rapiers encompassed the horrors of the Second World War, the post-war boom and the eventual prospect of closure by Newton Chambers (the parent company) in 1972. My mother and I walked with him on the protest march from the factory to Christchurch Park, where we were addressed by the MP Sir Keith Stainton, who had taken on the fight to save Rapiers. The campaign was eventually successful, but my father did not live to see its sad demise, dying at the age of 58 in 1973. Because of this, three years ago I decided to attend the annual employee re-union meetings arranged in Kesgrave by Derek Clarke, which have gone from strength to strength.

When the Work Furnace Project arrived I felt that, in memory of my father, I should be involved. I contributed to some discussion groups held at the theatre and then, in conversations with Co-ordinator Hannah Houghton, the prospect of a bus tour at some stage was mooted. After considering this for a while, I outlined a possible route for a tour which went from Nacton in the east to Claydon in the west and included Bramford. The tour would have taken around one-and-a-half to two hours. I was then offered the chance to do the tour commentary on an open-topped bus and I was happy to accept the challenge and prepared some notes.

In the event, the tour became time-constrained to enable the open-top bus to be prepared for a parade which would end on the Cornhill where there was an exhibition of the stories gathered.

On the day, I met bus driver and owner, Andy, whose vehicle was a superb Leyland 'Atlantean' in the former green and cream livery of Ipswich Corporation Transport. I remembered catching the bus in 1987 from my in-laws' house in what is now Old Norwich Road. At the time we had returned from 'exile' in Banbury and were staying with them until our new house was completed. I had a job at Havering Borough Council in Romford and caught the train from Ipswich. At this time, early in the New Year, there was heavy snow. The Atlanteans coped extremely well with the conditions, I always got to the station on time and, ultimately, to work before some of the London-based staff.

Departure time arrived, and the passengers on the bus had been fuelled by glasses of prosecco served by the theatre staff. All went well with the commentary until we were approaching Stoke Bridge. This was the day of the Trooping of the Colour in London; Ipswich is on the route of the ceremonial flypasts to the capital. Just as I was about to explain what we could see, several planes flew over low and at speed. I then lost the whole of the top deck to the cumulative excitement of the aerial spectacle.

I am very proud of the town of my birth and hope that it will go from strength to strength in the future, with part of its back-story paying homage to the industries which forged its prosperity.

The tour

Portman Road. At the football club the Churchmans stand commemorates the Churchman tobacco factory, later John Player Ltd. Some of the first cigarette cards (of football players) were produced by Churchmans in 1939. The factory changed from producing cigarettes to cigars after the Henri Winterman brand was acquired. At its height, the factory produced one million cigarettes a day. The apartment building at the back of the stand was part of the works; the

triangular building on the junction of Portman Road and Princes Street was once a tobacco warehouse.

Commercial Road/Princes Street. The business centre here was once the Ipswich headquarters of the **Fisons** fertiliser company. In the 1960s, the group headquarters was at Harvest House, Felixstowe.

As we cross Stoke Bridge, we can note the site of a large yeast factory. **British Fermentation Products** (N.G. & S.F. Yeast) produced yeast for the trade. It subsequently moved to Felixstowe Docks.

Over **Stoke Bridge** and into Dock Street are premises once owned by **Edward Fison**. There are plans to convert this into a house. However, the distinctive name of Fison on the building is to be retained. Ipswich and Stoke were once two separate communities. Old artistic works of Stoke show windmills on the hill.

Felaw Maltings, Felaw Street. Running round into New Cut West; now converted into offices, the maltings were once owned by ABM Ltd (Associated British Maltsters).

Ransomes and Rapier. Waterside Works, Bath Street. In an era of railway mania, this company was established as an offshoot of Ransomes Sims and Jefferies, to produce railway equipment. They were builders of the first railway in China, from Shanghai to Wusung. Rapiers manufactured trackside railway equipment, turn-outs, and turntables, and then later, excavators, mobile cranes, and truck-mounted concrete mixers. They became specialists in water control equipment, including sluices for the Aswan Dam in Egypt. Their most iconic product was probably ‘walking draglines’ used the world over for open-cast mining operations. All walking draglines were named after winners of The Grand National. In 1957, the dragline called Sundew ‘walked’ the 19 miles from Exton in Rutland to Corby in 9 weeks – a world record which probably still stands. An unusual additional product was a pedal-powered crane for a railway in India.

Cocksedge and Co-structural steelwork. Initially established in Grey Friars Road, one of the founder’s sons had worked in India and saw the potential in the fast-developing manufacturing environment in Ipswich for structural steelwork. The company built three stands for racegoers at Newmarket. In 1933 they supplied road signs, direction posts and other street furniture. The company produced steelwork for the satellite dishes at the Goonhilly Downs tracking station in Cornwall, where the first signals from the Telstar satellite were received the UK.

The area known as Halifax: a port for whalers in past times, and in earlier centuries the centre of a shipbuilding industry where many merchants’ ships were built. To the west, before Bourne Bridge is Bourne Park. Within the park is a memorial to employees of Ransomes & Rapier who lost their lives in the two world wars. The memorial was once located at the chapel on Wherstead Road at the bottom of Station Street where apartments now stand.

Between the old Bourne Hill and The Strand was **Wherstead Brickyard**. The brickworks in the Ipswich area manufactured Suffolk reds used in local housing developments, for example the terraced housing in Stoke.

Crossing the river on the majestic **Orwell Bridge** (opened 1982) reminds us that many local companies were involved in its construction, including Ransomes & Rapier who provided cranes and concrete mixers. It was built by the Dutch company, Stevin (today VolkerStevin who built the Flood Barrier in the New Cut).

Nacton Road. To the west is the site of Ipswich Airport: the first municipally-owned airport in the UK. Opened in 1938, it was used by the RAF in the Second World War. In the 1960s Channel Airways ran flights to Southend to connect with continental air services. It is now the Ravenswood housing estate.

Ransomes Jacobsen. Originally part of the Ransomes Sims & Jefferies works, manufacturers of lawnmowers. Rotary, flail, and drum mowers are still made for parks and sports grounds.

Crane Boulevard. Opposite the former airport is the site where Crane Ltd manufactured central heating pipe fittings, valves etc., also cast-iron radiators for industrial and commercial heating systems. German documents captured after the Second World War show that the factory, which was then producing munitions, was a prime target for the Luftwaffe, although this was not known at the time.

Foxhall Road, the location of **Bull Motors.** From early beginnings in Stowmarket, the firm developed a quiet-running electric motor. Then, in later years, it shared the site with Rola Celestion Ltd, manufacturers of quality hi-fi speakers.

North of **Cliff Lane** opposite the shops, and next to the Margaret Catchpole pub is the entrance to Holywells Park. Water from the springs here was used in the **Cobbold Brewery.**

Landseer Road. The tower brewery building of the Cobbold family, later Tollemache & Cobbold (the original Tollemache Brewery was behind Upper Brook Street in the town centre – a ‘temporary’ car park). The Tolly Cobbold brewery was bought out by the management team in 1990. At the time there was a television programme called *Troubleshooter* hosted by the former Chairman of ICI Sir John Harvey Jones, where he advised businesses on strategy and approach. He advised the management at Tolly, and in 1993 they named an ale after him, calling it *Tollyshooter*. As a token of their gratitude, they sent him annually a case of their ‘beer of the year.’ Nearby, on Cliff Quay was the fertiliser works of **Fisons.**

Coprolite Street. So-called because it was a site where coprolites (aka ‘fossilised dinosaur droppings’) were used by **Edward Packard** in his first works to make phosphates used in agricultural fertilisers. The coprolite was first brought to Packard’s attention by John Stevens Henslow, Professor of Botany at Cambridge and mentor of Charles Darwin; he discovered the coprolites in Suffolk. He afterwards became vicar of Hitcham in Suffolk; Henslow Road in Ipswich is named after him. The coprolite was collected by families on the Orwell and Deben estuaries who became known as ‘treacle miners.’

The Wet Dock. The site of **Ransomes Sims & Jefferies Orwell Works,** Orwell Quay. The factory produced much of the agricultural equipment in common use at the time. In the First World War, fighter planes were produced. The factory also made the telescopes at the Royal Observatory at Greenwich.

The University Waterfront Building is on the site of the former Eastern Farmers’ co-operative animal feeds mill.

College Street. On St Peter’s Wharf is the site of Cranfield’s Flour Mills. Cranfield’s were millers and bakers and had a fleet of barges as well as lorries. Flour would be loaded into sacks for distribution by lorry; in later years bulk tankers were introduced.

Numbers 1-4 College Street is the former office building for **Burton Son and Sanders,** manufacturers of confectionery items for the bakery trade: sugars, fondant icings, marzipan, and macaroon pastes. One brand was Diamond Caster sold under the slogan ‘where quality is appreciated.’

Cardinal Lofts apartments have had fire-safety cladding problems. This was once Burtons main factory in Ipswich with its own rail siding into the plant from the dock tramway.

Greyfriars Road. **Jewsons** was once William Brown & Sons, timber importers.

Butter Market. By the corner of where the HBOS bank is a closed-off lane. Down that lane were the printing works of **W.S. Cowell Stationers and Printers** who also had a department store where the Buttermarket shopping centre is now.

Carr Street. The original **East Anglian Daily Times** printing presses were in a turreted building where Sports Direct is here; later EADT moved to Lower Brook Street – the site is now a retirement home complex.

Graham Day

John Norman honoured

Mark Pendlington, the High Sheriff of Suffolk (left in the photograph), delivered the citation summarising John's work, interests and contributions to the community. Then Clare, Countess of Euston, The Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk (centre in the photograph), presented our Chairman with The Suffolk Medal – which was designed by previous recipient, Maggie Hambling. The Suffolk Medal is the highest award that can be made by the county to an individual from Suffolk.

Terry Hunt then gave a heart-felt tribute to John, describing his remarkable work on behalf of Ipswich, his extensive knowledge of the town and its history. As editor of *The East Anglian Daily Times*, Terry recalled asking John 'on a whim' to contribute a weekly column to be called 'Ipswich Icons', thinking that John would run out of material after two years (about 100 'icons'). He told us that John finally laid down his metaphorical pen after 450 columns had been published. Along the way, the former editor realised that John himself was undoubtedly 'an Ipswich Icon'.

John is the 14th person to be honoured with this medal. This moving investiture took place in The Hold with John's family and friends around him on Saturday 2 February, 2024.



Photograph: Mandy Gaylard

Otters in Ipswich

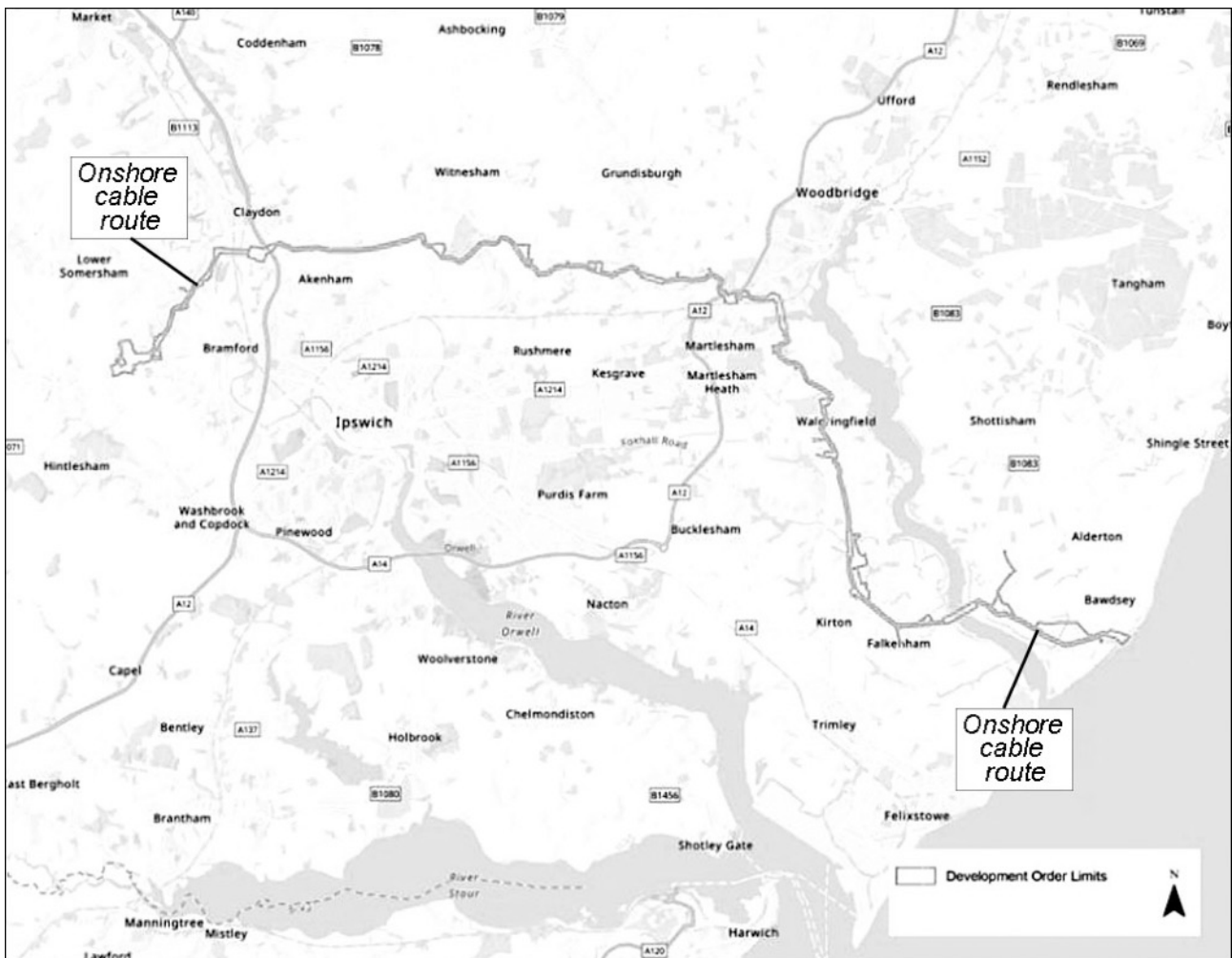
Otters have occasionally been seen along the rivers Gipping and Orwell but a park sighting is a rarity. Alerted by an article in the *Ipswich Star* my wife Anne-Marie and I visited Holywells Park on 26 January, 2024. We entered by the Cliff Lane path and spent some time, without success, exploring all the waterways including the largest pond. The presence of several photographers with telephoto or zoom lenses suggested one was present but our frustration increased when we were twice told that it had been seen ten minutes earlier. A strong wind didn't make waiting particularly pleasant so we adjourned to the nearby café. Suitably fortified we headed back and eventually saw one photographer had left his seat close to the pond and had his camera pointed to one particular spot. We moved closer and saw the otter swimming past at a distance of about five metres, head and body clearly visible. It moved to the edge of the pond, under overhanging vegetation and I just saw its tail as it left the water, crossed a path of about two metres in width and went under a large bramble bush. By looking carefully you could see its entrance tunnel. From there it followed the stream until it reached the waterways close to Landseer Road, thus avoiding running across open grassland.

From subsequent conversations we were told it was probably a young otter evicted by its parents and having to find its own territory. The newspaper article suggested its presence was possibly due to recent flooding and the river Orwell and Ipswich Docks are close by. One photographer showed us the otter surfacing with a fish, possibly a roach. One attraction of this park is the abundance of prey items, both in and out of the water. Also the water purity is much better than in the nearby Orwell. Holywells Park also has many areas usually free from dog disturbance that could be used if a breeding pair were to become present.

Richard Stewart

[N.B. - we hear that, sadly, the otter was killed on the road in February 2024. – Ed.]

EA3 (East Anglia 3 Wind Farm)



EA1 was built and generating electricity by 2019 whereas the initial construction phase of EA3 only began in 2023. EA3 is an array of 95 turbines, each 260 metres high (to the top of the 230 metre diameter rotating blade). With some amazing foresight, the design of the EA1 onshore cable route between Bawdsey and Bramford was installed with sufficient duct space to accommodate the cables from EA3. Pulling these new cables will begin in April 2024, so there will be contractors in the fields north and east of Ipswich for the next two years. The new cables are scheduled to go live in 2026.

The EA3 Windfarm area amounts to some 305 square kilometres with two 150 kilometres (km) sub-sea cables between EA3 and landfall at Bawdsey. The windfarm will be situated 69 km off Yarmouth – approximately one-third of the distance to Ijmuiden (Holland).

Each turbine is rated at 14.7 Megawatts (MW), so this windfarm will generate up to 1,300 MW, sufficient to provide the electricity for one million homes. The combined output of EA1, EA2 and EA3 will collectively provide the power for 2.7 million homes and small businesses.

Once fully operational, EA3 will be the second largest windfarm in the world. It is expected to cost in excess of £2 billion but will generate electricity for 25 years.

The converter station at Bramford receives incoming power generated offshore as DC (Direct Current) and converts it to AC (Alternating Current) for onward distribution via the National Grid. Before the cable route was dug, Scottish Power Renewables commissioned archaeologists



to excavate and explore; the finds uncovered have now been analysed and artefacts from the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval periods recorded. By far the most important discoveries, however, have been items which confirmed that, near Woodbridge, the cable route crosses a **Neolithic** site. Discoveries included a 30 metre length of Neolithic trackway and a wooden platform. It is possible the trackway enabled a dry-shod crossing of boggy ground close to natural freshwater springs (which are still flowing today). The waterlogged ground meant that organic material, such as bone and wood was preserved. It is likely that the endless supply of freshwater was the reason the site was chosen, over 4,000 years ago, as a special place.

Archaeologists – there were 70 of them working on this important site – also discovered the skull of an Auroch: an extinct species of wild cattle. It is likely that the skull was close to the platform because of its significance to the Neolithic people. It has since been carbon dated to around 4,300 BC, an amazing 2,000 years before the trackway was built. ScottishPower Renewables engaged over 400 archaeologists to excavate, explore and research the 37 km cable trench site and it has already provided a valued insight into the early history of Suffolk.

The development of the adjacent windfarms, EA2 and EA1 North are both subject to the approval of the Secretary of State under the National Infrastructure Planning Act (large projects of national significance).

John Norman



‘Little boxes’: has architecture become boring?

Do our streets in the 21st century lack interest, decoration or finesse?

What happened to the Victorian Art of terra-cotta mouldings, carved stone, or decorated porches? Which, in your opinion is the most attractive modern building in Ipswich, which one is different, sufficiently unusual to be recognised for what it is, where it is and who occupies the space inside? – and if your answer is WILLIS then you refer to a 50-year-old building without any external decoration.

To appreciate what I mean stand in the centre of the Cornhill and look around, The Town Hall, 1868 with its Italianate porch, a mix of red Mansfield Sandstone columns and Bath Stone lintels. The porch columns are a repeat of the inset columns built into the front elevation (pilasters). Atop the two storey portico statues, representing commerce, agriculture, law, and learning, simply as decoration.

The former Post Office, 1881, now the Botanist, also boasts a porch supporting statues, and as is the case with the Town Hall, the whole building raised a half storey above the street, with a stepped entrance creating a building of major importance. Notwithstanding that such steps create a major access problem for the disabled.

Opposite is Lloyds Arch, cut through the T.W. Cotman-designed Bank, described by Pevsner as the Cornhill’s best building. Red brick with stone and stucco dressings. The general effect is Flemish but again the variety of decoration, oriel windows and ogee arches collectively lead to a memorable, distinctive frontage.

Head east, along Tavern Street and the next two banks are slightly more recent: NatWest, 1928, and the stone-fronted HSBC of 1900, each occupying a stylish building. My point being that this small portion of the town centre is enhanced by decorated buildings. The Victorians, in particular, knew how to create a building with style.

Thomas Heatherwick has just written a book, *Humanise*, which tries to persuade readers to get enraged about the global ‘blandemic’ of boring buildings. His point – and I agree with it – is that the built environment is getting bland, from Argentina to Moscow there is nothing outstanding. He illustrates his point with photographs: bleak, unforgettable urban scenes occasionally counterpoised by the buildings he loves; for example, Gaudi’s Casa Mila in Barcelona.

Heatherwick argues that what we’ve done is to dehumanise buildings, strip them of their human related details, ignoring the human scale of the street. What we get is cheaper, but the architects tell us is that it’s more sophisticated, efficient, and green. What we get is identikit multi-floored blocks with multiple small windows. There are always exceptions; the Gerkin, Gateshead’s Millennium Bridge, Norwich Cathedral Refectory, for example. But for every exception there are scores of repetitive boxes. The epitome of this is house building. Estates built by the national house-builders which are, for the most, almost identical – bland and, quite honestly, uninspiring.



There is nothing about them that reflects the 21st century, vernacular, or even regional variations. For example, enter the Crest Nicholson site (Ipswich Garden Suburb) and once past the show-houses just off the Henley Road you'll immediately realise that this could be anywhere: any estate on the outskirts of any town, anywhere in England. To be fair, Crest are building a mix of their standard house designs (e.g. The Cromer and The Redgrave, spot the difference).

Over at Wolsey Grange, off the Hadleigh Road and behind the Holiday Inn you could be anywhere – and identical houses probably are being built elsewhere. The major difference at Wolsey Grange, compared with Ipswich Garden Suburb, is lack of amenities. Within the Wolsey Grange development there are no community facilities (other than a pocket park), no village centre, no shops or medical facilities and residents are almost entirely reliant on the private car for transport. Land has been set aside for employment, 4 hectares off London Road, the new junction between the A1071 and the Tesco roundabout will eventually provide access.

Ipswich Borough Council (IBC), as the adjoining local authority, recommended refusal based on the *'very standardised housing design which has little or no relationship to a recognised Suffolk vernacular, urban or rural.'* IBC also noted in its response to the planning application: *'the design of the main frontages to the A1071 are a disappointing response to the site's "gateway" location. The A1071 frontage will be dominated by car parking, accessed from a road that runs parallel to the A1071'*. IBC recommended: *'if traditional architectural style is to be used, it should use the detail and variation in scale, position and form which is characteristic of a Suffolk town and villagescape, avoid repetitiveness, blank gables, and ensure that buildings set on corners actually turn the corner. Planting and building layouts should work together rather than one being used to hide the other.'* Given that phase one of Wolsey Grange is now almost complete you can form your own opinion; is this estate of suitable design quality to be at the Gateway into Ipswich?

Things are never that bad that they can't get worse!

I'd just finished writing about Taylor Wimpey at Wolsey Grange when Mike Cook referred me to the Bellway development, Richard's Orchard (on the brow of the hill along Old Norwich Road). This had originally been an application for 315 dwellings which was refused, an alternative application for 190 dwellings was also refused but allowed on appeal. It is the 190 dwellings that are currently being built (in stages).

A quick site visit and review confirms Mike's opinion. This development offers nothing other than minimal standard Bellway boxes. No community facilities, no shops (20 minutes walk to Asda), no educational provision (The Beeches Primary School is on the Whitton estate) and the minimum of open space.

It should be noted that the planning officer included the following note in the Committee report: *The NPPF [National Planning Policy Framework] identifies that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. A collaborative approach to the creation of good places is also encouraged. Developments which are poorly designed and fail to realise opportunities to improve the character of the area in which they would be located should be refused. At the local level, several core strategy and local plan policies identify the Council's aim to secure high quality developments within the district. Members will also be aware that the recent White Paper Planning For The Future issued by central government reinforces the need for quality design to be achieved in development proposals.*

John Norman

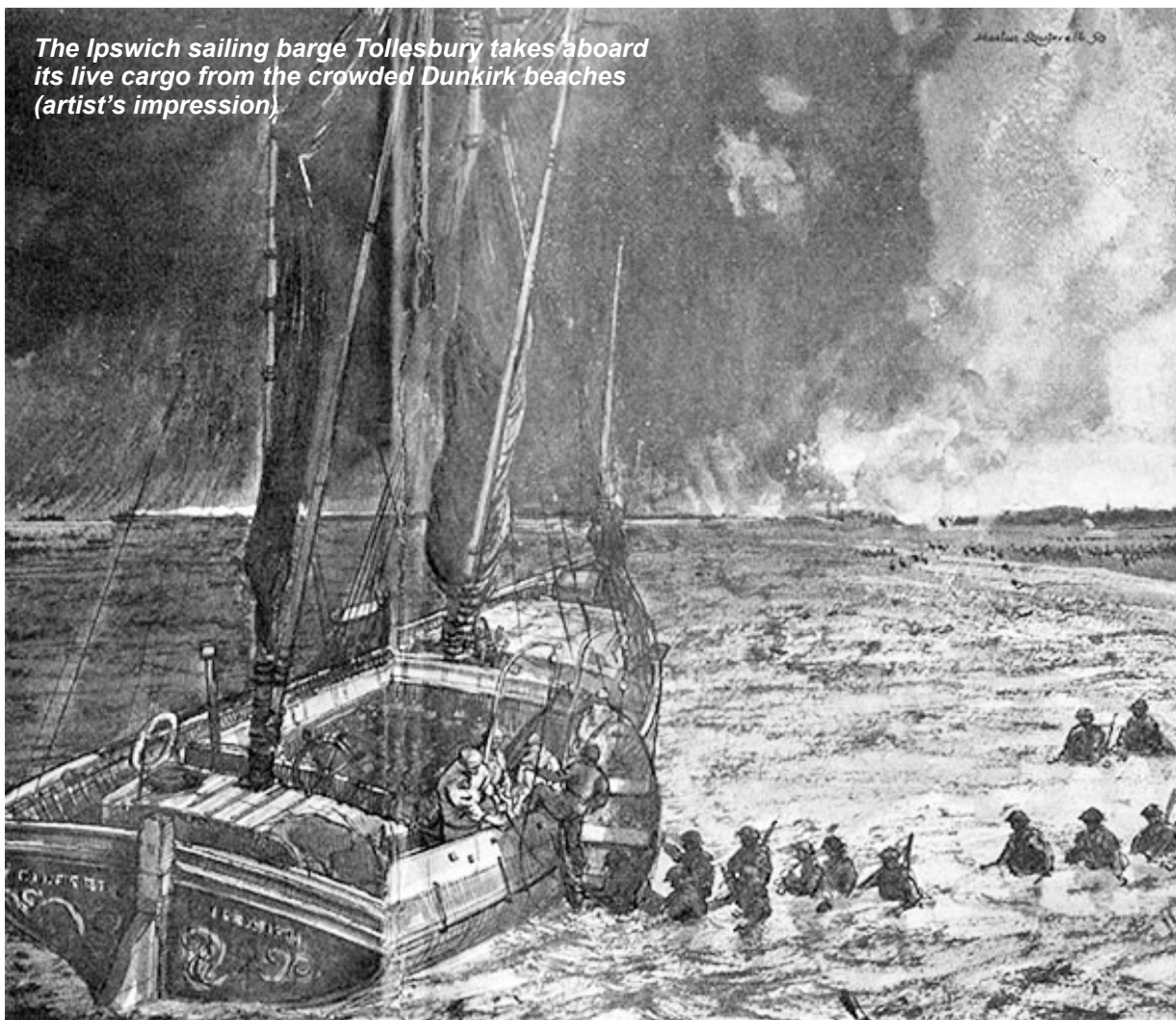
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Presumably if beauty is in the eye of the beholder, then so is Good Design.

'Humanise'2 by Thomas Heatherwick (Viking, £15.99).

Just as I finished writing this article, I read of another new book, *The Iconic British House: Modern Architectural Masterworks since 1900* by Dominic Bradbury (Thames & Hudson, £50). I mention it only because of the punchline: *'That 50 lovely houses deserve a book is a sign that the other 23.7 million may not be worthy of that kind of interest.'* –*Alain de Botton.*

The Ipswich sailing barge *Tollesbury* takes aboard its live cargo from the crowded Dunkirk beaches (artist's impression)



Operation Dynamo

Although there has been a recent celebration of the life of Cardinal Wolsey, in more recent times Ipswich was well represented in quite a different way. The town had a humble band of brothers who gave of themselves in World War II and which, fortunately, was recorded in a well-known local publication of the time. In the now defunct *East Anglian Magazine* of July 1950, a piece by J.O. Whitmore, a name not unknown to those of an Ipswich maritime disposition, caught my attention.



Capt. Lemon Webb

Entitled *The Little Ships of Ipswich* it concerns Dunkirk and the local vessels sailed by Ipswich men, captains all, that made a gallant contribution to that remarkable deliverance.

Five of the craft, Thames sailing barges, were owned by R. & W. Paul namely *Aidie* (Harry Potter), *Barbara Jean* (Young Charlie Webb), *Doris* (Fred aka Dick Finbow), *Ena* (Alfred 'Titch' Page) and *Tollesbury* (Lemon Webb – aged 63 but still volunteered to go with the rest).

Of the five Ipswich barges, only two returned, *Ena* and *Tollesbury* but, providentially, all the sailormen from the port survived. It should be mentioned of course that Captain Lemon Webb with the *Tollesbury*, heroically rescued no less than 273 soldiers from the beaches in France.

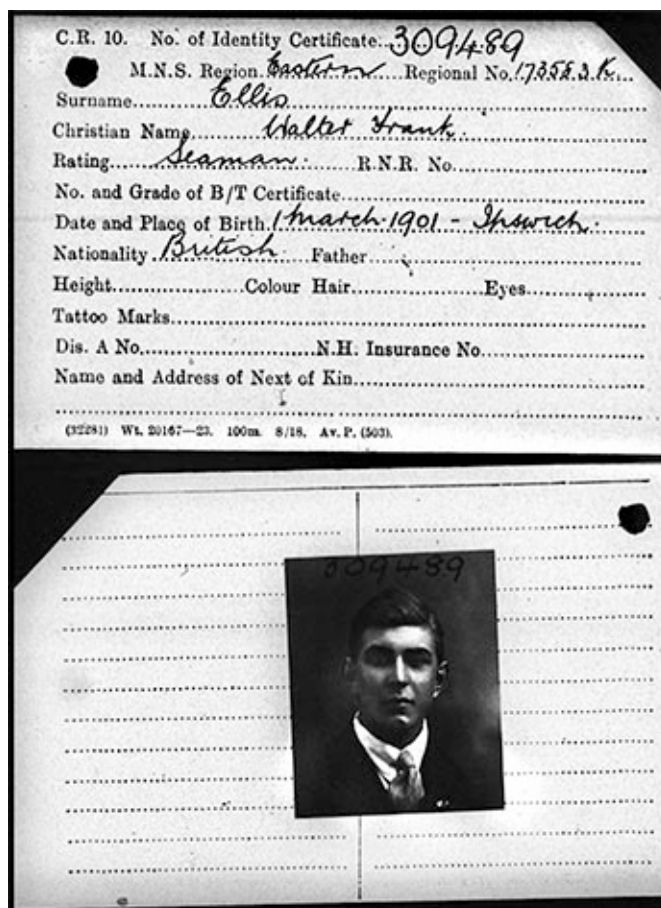
Whilst the details and the exploits of the Paul's skippers are quite well documented, another Ipswich man, Captain Ellis, who was skipper of the

Lady Rosebery during Operation Dynamo, has proved more elusive. It transpires that the *Lady Rosebery* was owned by London company, Samuel West and under the command of Walter Frank Ellis (1901–1966), not to be confused with his father William C. Ellis, also known as Walter (1867-1932). William, also a bargemaster, was mate of *George & Annie* and *Renown*, as well as master of the Ipswich *Matilda Upton*.

Following the loss of *Lady Rosebery* at Dunkirk, Walter Frank, with almost indecent haste, was given the *Glenway* by Wests as a replacement. He was another brave Ipswich man who was prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice. His maritime career continued with service on Sully's *Una*, *Raybel* and *Edith May* during the 1950s. Like his father, he was a Master Mariner.

There is an early record of William C. Ellis living in York Road but thereafter the family home was in Myrtle Road Ipswich. Son Walter moved away from the town at a later date to Ospringe, Faversham, it is thought by reason of marriage to Bertha Annie. However, his unmarried sister, Daisy (1892-1940), continued to live at Myrtle Road until her passing.

Regarding Walter Frank, again, too short a life. An ordinary man who was not ordinary at all.
Barry Girling

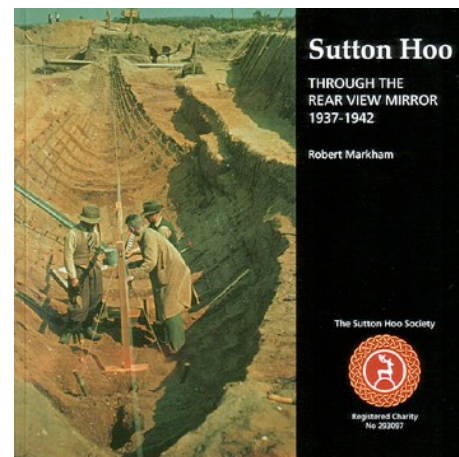


Identity Certificate of W.C. Ellis

Republished: *Sutton Hoo: through the rear view mirror 1937-1942*

The second edition of Bob Markham’s book was published by The Sutton Hoo Society at the end of 2023. It is the story of the famous ‘dig’ based mainly on the contemporary correspondence and diaries of Guy Maynard, Curator of Ipswich Museum, and Basil Brown, archaeological excavator. It chronicles the chain of events which led to the discovery of one the greatest archaeological finds of our times. Bob discovered Guy Maynard’s diaries and his and Basil Brown’s correspondence in the Museum archive whilst researching his history of the High Street Museum, *A Rhino in High Street*, published by Ipswich Borough Council in 1990 (now out of print). He set the papers aside for this book, originally published in 2002, which is, in effect, the story of Ipswich Museum and Sutton Hoo – its cooperation and tribulations with Edith Pretty the landowner, Cambridge University and the British Museum. The story begins at the Woodbridge Flower Show with Edith Pretty and local historian Vincent Redstone agreeing to contact and meet with Guy Maynard regarding the burial mounds on her land at Sutton. It ends, overshadowed by the onset of World War II, with the gold and silver treasure being hastily removed to safety somewhere in the London Underground while Basil Brown covered the Saxon longship with bracken and re-buried it for protection.

Available from www.suttonhoo.org £12 plus p&p.



Ipswich Society Awards 2023

The Annual Ipswich Society Awards ceremony was held at the Hold on 22nd November.

Our Vice-Chairman Tony Marsden conducted the evening's events displaying impressive images and with an intention to elaborate on the deliberations of the judging panel well to the fore. The sixteen nominations made by members of the Society could be for complete new builds, private houses, business or educational premises, public spaces, or renovations and restorations - and we had a very good and wide variety of projects to consider.

There was a hotel and a pub; dwellings and a housing scheme; a couple of very interesting refurbishments; two new educational establishments; three play-park schemes, which were of immense interest, particularly to the grandchildren; one statue; some traffic control measures on Colchester Road; a large and impressive retirement development and a clubhouse – a very diverse bunch indeed!

An album of images of all nominations can be viewed on our image archive at:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ipsoc/albums/72177720310792430/>

We were reminded of the six criteria which had to be met before judging and the three categories of awards that *could* be made if the projects were good enough namely: Commendation, High Commendation and Distinction. It was emphasised that the more of the criteria met - the more likely it would be that an award would be given.

Each project was displayed to see whether they met any of the criteria mentioned, but also kept in mind was legacy - the long-lasting impact and sustainability -the prevention of the depletion of natural or physical resources.

Two projects were considered to be worthy of awards this year. They both were presented with certificates of Commendation. The first was for the conversion of the church of Saint Stephen into a music venue and the second was for the construction of the new clubhouse at the Ipswich Model Engineering Society.

Certificates were presented to the two winning projects by the Mayor, Councillor Lynne Mortimer and by our Chairman John Norman.

This event proved to be a very prestigious affair where projects, importantly, nominated by members of the society are displayed, described and indicated as being worthy of an award. The evening culminated in an appraisal of the work of our retiring Chairman and the inauguration of a new award of distinction to be named The John Norman Award of Distinction.
Tony Marsden



A Commendation winning group at the 2023 Awards. The team from the Ipswich Mechanical Engineering Society (IMES) project receive the award from John Norman our retiring Chairman and the Mayor, Cllr Lynne Mortimer - November 2023. They are Andrew Grace, Tom Rose, Terry Woodward, Alan Burrows and James Turley..

A Commendation winning group at the 2023 Awards. The team from the St Stephen's conversion project receive the award from John Norman our retiring Chairman and the Mayor, Cllr Lynne Mortimer - November 2023. They are Darren Webb, Hugh Bunbury, Alex Darlington and Stuart Oxborrow.



The John Norman Award of Distinction

While researching the manner in which Civic Trust makes its awards, the realisation dawned that many of the awards were named after important or significant members of the Trust or associations with which the trust was involved or with whom it dealt.

This prompted the thought that we in the Ipswich Society might also follow a similar pattern. In consultation with our vice presidents, the trustees and members of the executive, it was decided that we could pay a fitting tribute to our retiring Chairman. This would be for all that he's given to the town of Ipswich, not just over recent years, but during all the time that he's been living here - moreover, significantly recognising his central successful role in the Society.



John with our Mayor, Cllr Lynne Mortimer

It was decided therefore, that we should inaugurate a new award which, in future we might possibly present on an annual basis to a noteworthy project which we felt embraced and incorporated the qualities which we perceived in John Norman and his varied contributions.

Looking back at the awards during the course of this century, we saw that fifteen projects had reached such a peak of brilliance that they were awarded a Distinction.

Just to reassure ourselves of the pre-eminent qualities of this century's projects we compiled a dedicated album called "Distinction - an Ipswich Society Album" which can be viewed in our Image Archive.

The peak of excellence we see achieved in those projects - the demonstration of careful thought, of meticulous planning, of pursuing an end with vigour and a certain amount of relentlessness to reach a coruscating resolution can be identified in all of the projects.

We felt that John Norman had demonstrated the sorts of qualities that we expected in the above projects of extreme quality if not going beyond! Therefore he deserved a similar recognition to those projects which we'd rewarded in the past.

We planned that when awarding a Distinction in future it would have a specific new name. The Honorary Freeman of Ipswich was one thing, the Suffolk Medal was another, but to have an AWARD named after you was certainly another matter, we felt.

We decided, therefore, as the final act of 2023's award ceremony that we would inaugurate the 'John Norman Award of Distinction' for the first time. Moreover, in future years, when a project of sufficient quality deserved it, we should present a similar certificate on that occasion to that project.

Tony Marsden

Ipswich as others see us

We were on a tour of Glemham Hall last year and at the end, when we joined a table for our coffee and cake, a couple were telling the others how they had visited a wonderful place that morning, it was full of room settings with stunning pictures on display, then his voice full of amazement added 'and it was all free!' It was, of course, Christchurch Mansion he was talking about. Then another couple at the table said that they had always driven around Ipswich, but friends of theirs had just come back from a stay at the Salthouse Harbour Hotel that they had really enjoyed, so Ipswich was now definitely on their list of places to visit.

This got me thinking of all the positive comments I had heard about Ipswich.

Friends from Sussex saw Christchurch Park on the Antiques Road Show and immediately booked a break in the Salthouse Harbour Hotel. Another friend said that her brother had gone halves in a boat and kept it in Ipswich marina, he loved it especially as there were fireworks the first weekend he was here.

At a fair at Copdock village hall, a stand-holder told me that when they were away for work, they liked to explore the area and last time they had gone to Ipswich and went down to the waterfront and said it was just like being on the continent, enjoying a meal looking out over the marina and all the boats.

A young friend from Hadleigh said that she had visited Christchurch Mansion and excitedly showed me the photos she had taken of the old dolls houses on display there.

A friend from Clacton likes to come to Ipswich for the jewellers; we do have a lot of them.

A person from Felixstowe said that Ipswich has always punched above its weight when it comes to museums.

I overheard someone in the Ancient House on one of their open days, say that this must be unique in all of the country.

I was sitting on a bus in the Old Cattle Market bus station once when two people rushed on at the last minute saying they thought they had missed the bus as they had spent too long at the waterfront, someone replied 'yes, it is lovely down there'.

As we were coming out of lockdown, we were walking towards Cherry Lane park, when we are asked if we would mind waiting a few minutes as they were filming in the park, he was not able to tell us much about the film, but he said say that they were an independent film company from London and they were in Ipswich as there were so many good places to film here.

We went to a Town Lecture where author Beverly Birch was talking about her books (her next one is set in Ipswich). At the end she was asked if she lived in Ipswich and she said she had moved here from London and loved it; she only had to walk across the road to the park and it was also only five minutes into the town centre.

A lot of people say they only come into Ipswich because of Marks and Spencers, particularly those from Felixstowe who have lost theirs, with one slight variation of going into town for Primark.

Before lockdown, when we still had a Tourist Information Office, I got talking to a lady from Lincoln and she said, if she'd realised that Ipswich was like this, she would have stayed for more than one night; the previous evening they had a walk round the park and she was hoping that the house was open that day. *(continues)*

We took a friend from north Norfolk to see Rodin's sculpture *The Kiss* when it was in Christchurch Mansion (he too was surprised that it was free, unlike Norwich); then on to the art gallery for an exhibition and finally down to the Tourist Information for a printmakers' exhibition. When we left he asked 'Why doesn't Ipswich do more to sell itself?'

Charlotte Willmott

Ipswich Tourist Guides

The Afternoon Tea Walks continue until the end of April. Starting at 1.30pm from the Ipswich Institute in Tavern Street, each walk costs just £10 per person (including refreshments). Advance booking is essential for tea walks with the following themes:-

Tuesday 2 April – The Victorian Dock; Tuesday 16 April – They Came, They Saw, They Stayed; Friday 26 April – A Tudor Walk from Town to Countryside.

From the beginning of May to the end of September 2024 regular guided walks will take place every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon starting at 2 pm. No advance booking is needed and the cost is £5 per person. This year's programme includes several walks designed to support anniversary celebrations of the Ipswich Art Society (150 years) and Ipswich Institute (200 years). See our website <http://ipswichtourguides.onesuffolk.net> for further details.

Bookings can be made at the Institute, either in person or using the Guides special section at the bottom of the Institute's opening 'Welcome' webpage <https://ipswichinstitute.org.uk>. All are welcome – you do not have to be a member of Ipswich Institute.

Newsletter formats and Gift Aid

If you currently receive a paper *Newsletter* but would be happy to receive it by email, please contact the Membership Secretary to switch to **e-Newsletters**. We have always respected the choices of members in this regard, and we will continue to produce a paper version for those who prefer one, or who are unable to receive the e-version.

Gift Aid provides some valuable additional funding for the Society, at no cost to you. If you are eligible for Gift Aid and aren't currently registered, please print a copy of our Gift Aid form from the Ipswich Society website at:

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk/assets/Uploads/PDFs/Online-Membership-Application-and-GA-2023-New-Fees.pdf (just page 2) and send to the Membership Secretary (details on page 27).

As most members will know, the Society is a 100% voluntary organisation which is entirely self-funded from membership subscriptions (and the occasional gift/bequest). Our Committee members volunteer their time, to ensure that all membership subscription income is spent on Society events and publications. With the rise in membership rates voted on by members at the 2023 AGM we are solvent, so we do not accept, nor do we seek sponsorship from commercial organisations or individuals. We see this as a central part of our independence as a Civic Society.

Exhibition

The Suffolk Folio - 100 works on Paper for Collectors: exhibition of drawings by George Thomas Rope of Blaxhall, George Frost of Ipswich, Henry Bright of Saxmundham and other Suffolk Artists.

March 8 - 23, 2024 at the East Anglian Traditional Art Centre, 48 High Street, Wickham Market, Suffolk IP13 0QS. [email: dayefa@aol.com]

A glimpse of the Sutton Hoo burial ship excavation

The Anglo-Saxon site at Sutton Hoo, across the River Deben from Woodbridge has gradually grown in the public imagination – not least from the release of the film *The Dig* in 2021 based on John Preston's book.

From a dry, sandy site with a few grassy mounds to a busy heritage centre, its historical significance is reinforced by recent archaeological discoveries at Rendlesham, not far up the river (see our January 2024 issue). It is always interesting to hear personal connections to famous events and an Ipswich Society member recently told the Editor of his own family connection.

Following Frank Pretty's death in 1934, the owner, Mrs Edith Pretty, had

developed an interest in excavating the burial mounds that lay to the north-east of Tranmer House at Sutton Hoo. Through the Ipswich Museum, she engaged a local archaeologist, Basil Brown, to undertake the dig. In June 1938, Pretty took him to the site, offered him accommodation and a



Basil Brown at front with (probably) Jack Jacobs behind him, excavating the burial ship at Sutton Hoo in 1939. A so-called 'ghostly' image of the buried ship was revealed. The 'ghost' effect was the result of sand discoloured by the organic matter which had rotted away. Still from a film made by H. J. Phillips, brother of Cambridge archaeologist Charles Phillips.



John Barbrook with his parents and sister, together with Jack Jacobs and his daughter, Dallas outside Tranmer House at Sutton Hoo.

wage of 30 shillings a week, and suggested that he start digging at Mound 1. Because it had been disturbed by earlier grave diggers, Brown – in consultation with the Ipswich Museum – decided instead to open three smaller mounds (2, 3 and 4). These only revealed fragmented artefacts, as the mounds had been robbed of valuable items.

In May 1939, Brown began work on Mound 1, helped by Mrs Pretty's gardener Jack Jacobs, her gamekeeper William Spooner and another estate worker, Bert Fuller. They drove a trench from the east end and on the third day discovered an iron rivet, corroded but recognisable, which Brown identified as a ship's rivet. Within hours others were found still in position. The colossal size of the archaeological find became apparent. After several weeks of patiently removing earth from the ship's hull, they reached the burial chamber.

John Barbook writes: 'My mother's cousin was Ethel Jacobs (née Welham – an old Stoke family). She was Mrs Pretty's maid/cook/housekeeper at Tranmer House, whilst her husband John (Jack) Jacobs was the estate gardener/groundsman.

They lived in the servant's quarters, together with their three children: Ivan, Raymond and Dallas. Sadly, Ivan died last year aged 95; Dallas (lovely girl) died about 18 months ago at 85, but Raymond, at 92, is still about. We last met Raymond at Ivan's funeral. When he was working, Ivan was head horticulturist for many years at Notcutts.



John Barbrook and his sister on Ivan's motorcycle in 1948.

'Immediately after World War II, my father got a car and we spent many hours with them out there at Sutton Hoo. My sister and I played with the Jacobs children on the estate. We 'rode the mounds' frequently on the pillion of Ivan's motor cycle.'

John continues: 'It was Jack Jacobs who found that first iron rivet which was given to Basil Brown in May 1939 which began the whole fantastic years of discovery. Indeed, the

story still goes on. Jack appears on several of those 1930s photographs of the excavation and is frequently mentioned in books and articles. He lived until he was 97 years old. There is, of course, a great deal online about the whole discovery and Jack gets mentioned several times.'

A final regret from your Editor is the disappearance of a small shed adjacent to the stables at Tranmer House. Prior to the major refurbishment of the Sutton Hoo site by the National Trust in recent years this shed was the place where Basil Brown kept his archaeological tools and, perhaps, a spare cap and coat. The major changes to the house and surroundings seem to have removed the echoes of those who went before. John Barbrook's contribution establishes a link, not to the wealthy owner, but to the workers who grafted on The Dig.

RG

See also:

The Sutton Hoo ship burial by Angela Care Evans (1994).

The Sutton Hoo story: encounters with early England by Martin Carver (2017).

Both available to borrow from Suffolk Libraries.

Letters to the Editor

Street art from Graham Day

Although I am over 65, I still do some work in the education sector, and more importantly as far as this letter is concerned, I am employed also as a social research interviewer. Nowadays, I principally work on radio listening surveys. Over some 16 years, that has taken me all over the eastern counties and, since the pandemic, mainly in Suffolk, Norfolk and North Essex.

Whilst out and about I am often surprised to find new things. In Pulham St Mary during the summer, I found a small museum devoted to Pulham Airfield and the airships that flew from there. I also met a villager who told me that his grandfather was one of the villagers who would hurry to the airfield, pedalling furiously on his bicycle, to help guide the airships in with their trailing cables.

In the week before Remembrance Sunday and, whilst working in the Marlow Road area of the Whitehouse Estate, I suddenly saw two artists working on a blank boundary wall at the Westbourne Academy. Intrigued as to what the husband and wife team were doing, I went up and spoke to the artist known as 'Sketch'. Behind him the mural was taking shape: the outline of a soldier in a landscape full of poppies which were bisected by The Orwell Bridge. He explained that the family of local lad, Aaron McClure, who was killed in a friendly fire incident in Afghanistan, had commissioned the mural at Aaron's old school.



He then took out his smart phone and showed me some pictures of the murals they had completed in Hartlepool. The major one was of a French warship, very much in the style of *HMS Victory* at Portsmouth. We then talked about the French War and the story of 'H'Angus the Monkey'. After a French warship had been shipwrecked off the coast of Hartlepool, the locals were surprised to see on the beach a strange creature. Assuming the ship's monkey to be a French sailor – and having no knowledge of the appearance of French sailors – they dispensed summary justice and sent the poor animal to the gallows!

So, the story was born. We both also remembered that in 2002 a local politician, Stuart Drummond, was a candidate in the mayoral election and campaigned as H'Angus the Monkey (also the mascot of Hartlepool Football Club) in a monkey suit with a campaign slogan of 'free bananas for kids'. He was the directly elected mayor for three terms.

The mural was completed and unveiled in the days before Remembrance Sunday. It is a fitting tribute and shows what can be done with the 'blank canvas' of a perimeter wall with the consent of owners/occupiers.

I was pleased that the artist had been prepared to stop for a moment and talk about his work. The mural is now a spectacular sight worth seeing in an ordinary area: street art in Ipswich at its best and born from the wishes of local residents. Very commendable indeed.

Local press from Mike Neale

It was interesting to read John Norman's remarks about local news (January 2024 issue). Clearly the daily newspaper is being replaced by electronic news. When this trend started I complained to the senior editorial staff at the *Ipswich Evening Star* about the intrusive advertisements which made the page unreadable.

I suggested that I would pay a subscription for an ad-free page or at least with advertisements limited to side edges rather than in the middle of articles. This was greeted with some incredulity as it fitted no business plan.

What business plan puts advertisements above readability? The result means that they have lost my readership and, I suspect, that of many others.

The Norwich Society from Peter Theadkell

Being a Suffolk/Ipswich 'exile', I find *The Ipswich Society Newsletter* very interesting.

I am also a member of The Norwich Society which has just become one hundred years old. I thought that you might be interested in the enclosed booklet which was issued to celebrate the centenary.

[The booklet contains articles covering the founding of the Society and key campaigns and aspects of their work. Free to Norwich Society members, you can also buy it from the City Bookshop in Davey Place at £5.

Email: admin@thenorwichsociety.org.uk – Ed.]



St Stephens Church from Jack Earwaker

The picture of the Leman memorial in the January 2024 Newsletter gave me a vivid memory as, about 1984 and as architect to The Ipswich Historic Churches Trust, I was asked to have a raised pew area removed to provide a level floor for the proposed Tourist Centre.

The contractor appointed for this work had only just started work when I was called to the site. As floorboards were being lifted in the south aisle, an arched cap to a tomb was tight under the boards and creating a problem. The arch was cut and removed and the tomb exposed. It was two metres in front of the memorial in good quality brickwork finished in white limewash and was one 1.5 metres deep.



Society Image Archive

There were no bad odours. It contained three coffins, two of which were side-by-side supported by cross-timbers. Below, one side, was the third. The timbers had been weakened by damp rot and the pair of coffins had jammed sideways against the brickwork. All coffins were of lead, not timber, and clad with leather jackets in a frail condition, exposing the lead in places. They were the traditional shape, each with a small zinc plate and a scratched name. The surprising feature was the score of decorative brass or copper studs on each of the coffin leathers, reminding one of the motor cyclists' leather jackets of the nineteen sixties.

I took record photographs and later handed sizeable prints to the manager of the Tourist Centre when it opened. I have spent hours searching a couple of thousand slides to try to find the negatives without success so, what happened to the pictures that were in the Tourist Centre? With the coffins and monument so widely separated, a descriptive plaque seems desirable. At 93, I must be the last person to have witnessed the inside of this tomb.

The Ipswich Society

Registered Charity no. 263322

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk | <https://www.facebook.com/ipswichsociety> | <https://www.instagram.com/theipswichsociety>

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Diary dates

AGM: Wednesday April 17, 7.30pm at The University of Suffolk, Waterfront Building, 19 Neptune Quay, IP4 1QJ. Annual General Meeting for members. After the AGM, there will be a talk by Kath Cockshaw, Project Manager Wolsey 550. Refreshments follow.

Monday April 22, 2pm: George Frost Workshop, Christchurch Mansion (see outings insert).

Tuesday May 14, 7pm: *Colourful and Courageous Characters*, an Ipswich guided walk. Meet at the 'Question' sculpture, Neptune Quay (see outings insert),

Friday May 17: *Celebrating 325 Years of Dissent*, all day at the Unitarian Meeting House and The Hold (see page 3).

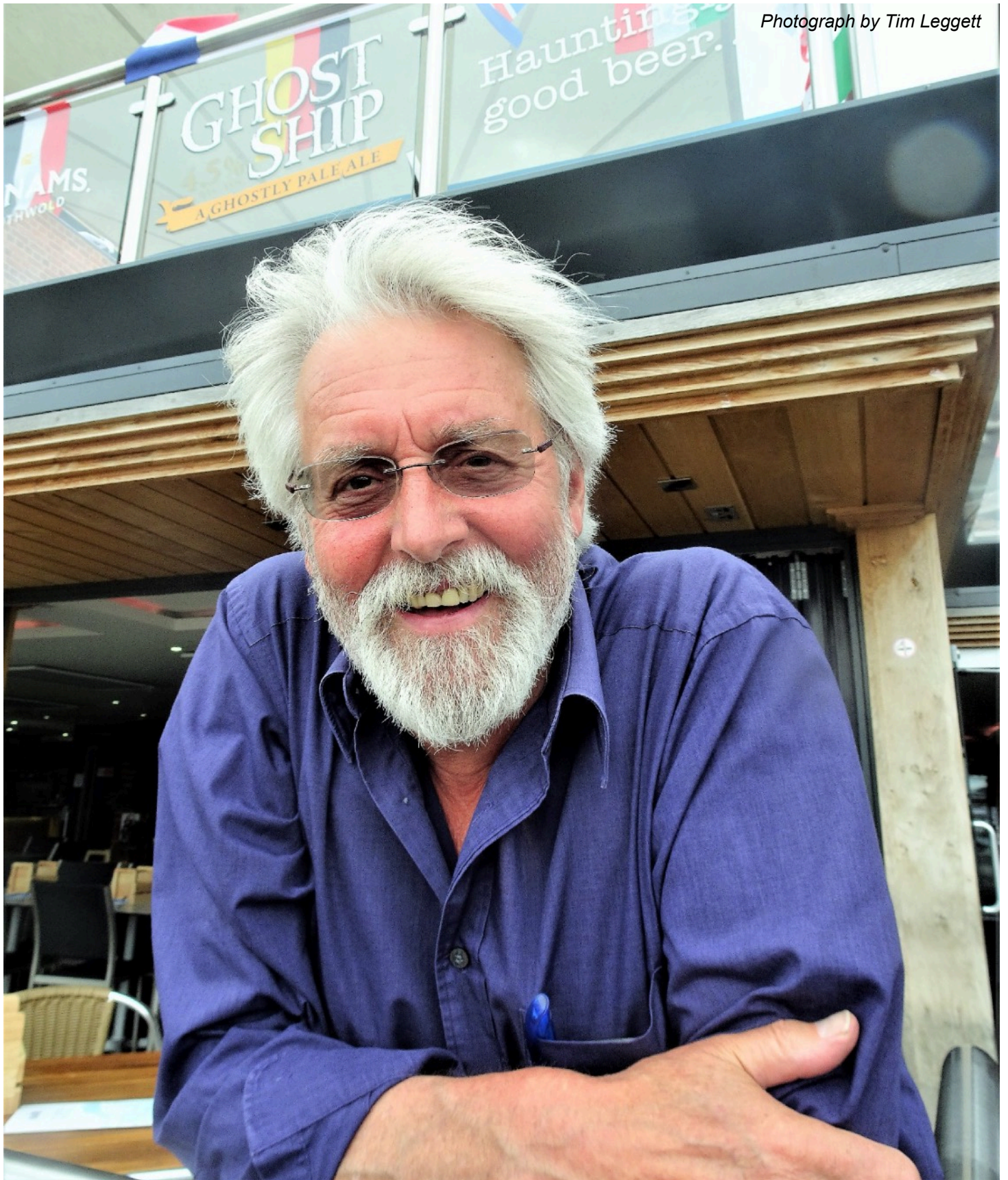
Thursday June 13, 8.30am: River Orwell and Harwich cruise on the *Sailing Barge Victor*, Old Custom House (see outings insert).

Tuesday July 9: Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse, Norfolk- coach departs Crown Street 8.30am (see outings insert)

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

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

Photograph by Tim Leggett



John Norman

20/9/47 - 28/2/24