

Issue 191 Newsletter Apr 2013

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The Ipswich Society
NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2013
ISSUE 191

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We know all about Christchurch Mansion - or do we? See pages 12-13

Editorial: Farewell & Welcome

This is my last Newsletter as Editor. My first effort, Number 100 of July 1990, seems a long time ago now. In those 23 years there have been changes in The Ipswich Society but very much more so in society at large - in economics, politics and in many people's life-styles. I hope you will have found many things of interest in our Newsletters. One problem editors often face is shortage of material, but I'm pleased to say that's never been the case with The Ipswich Society. Because we are a Society with a broad base of interests - virtually anything to do with the well-being of our dear old town - the quantity and variety of contributions almost look after themselves. But I have also been mindful that 'shorts', 'snippets' and 'news and comment' are useful additions to more sustained articles, partly because busy readers might not have time for a lot of steady reading and partly because items picked up from the local press or from conversations with people 'in the know' may not have been published elsewhere.

Members might like to know that all our Newsletters are kept by Suffolk Record Office where I feel sure they constitute an archive of many intriguing facts and opinions about the town which future researchers could find useful.

I am really delighted to say that **Robin Gaylard** has readily agreed to take over as Editor of the Newsletter. At my suggestion, he has written the following little self-introduction, but I should like to say first that I am confident he will be an ideal editor for the Society. He has shown elsewhere a deep and detailed knowledge of aspects of the town's heritage and as a graphic artist he will be able to create and oversee interesting developments of our Newsletter. Moreover, some members will find it easier to contact Robin than it has been to contact me. A warm welcome to Robin!

Neil Salmon

Robin Gaylard has been involved with community and radical publications since his youth, notably The Waveney Clarion, the long-lived paper born out of the fairs movement and covering north Suffolk and south Norfolk. He recently built a website celebrating the Clarion. He has written and made illustrations and cartoons for these and many other publishers over the years and has published his own graphic novel. He is a qualified librarian and specialised in film, music and spoken word materials for Suffolk libraries. He is interested in local history and issues affecting Ipswich and Suffolk, also antique wall-signs and advertisements. He has been a member of the Society since 2000.

Annual General Meeting

There is a reason for this seemingly bad piece of planning. The Annual General Meeting needs to be held towards the end of April and we were also very keen to book a talk by Sir Michael Hopkins in the Willis Building, the construction of which he substantially controlled as the site architect. But Willis has a more limited capacity than would be acceptable for an AGM which members are entitled to attend, of course. The best solution your Committee decided on was to hold the AGM in the larger venue of St Peter's Church and, after the business part of the evening, invite a speaker with an unrivalled knowledge of Ipswich to explain and illustrate conservation issues and achievements in Ipswich. So, to set out these events more fully and clearly they are as follows:

Annual General Meeting at St Peter's on the Waterfront on Wednesday, 24 April 2013 at 7.30pm

The meeting will be chaired as usual by the Mayor of Ipswich, the Society's President. After the business meeting, John Field will talk about Conservation in Ipswich and show 'before and after' slides of sites around town. John was previously a Planner and then Town Centre Manager with Ipswich Borough Council. He currently chairs the Ipswich Design and Conservation Advisory Panel. His outline of the history of conservation organisations in Ipswich is on pp 8&9 of this Newsletter. So come along and hear about the meaty details of many disputes and decisions, and frustrations and achievements.

Sir Michael Hopkins' Talk

An Evening with Sir Michael Hopkins

at the Willis Building, Friars Street
on Friday, 26 April 2013, at 7.15pm

As mentioned above, the speaker was greatly involved with the creation of the Grade I Listed Willis Building when working with Norman Foster's company. Subsequently he has designed a number of notable buildings including the Forum in Norwich, The Arc in Bury St Edmunds and Portcullis House, Westminster and the Mound Stand at Lords. In this talk he will visit Some Suffolk Buildings. This event was advertised in the January Newsletter. Members were invited to apply for tickets (£15 each) from Caroline Markham, our Secretary.

Chairman's Remarks

Firstly a big thank you to Neil Salmon who has edited the Newsletter for the past 92 editions, won awards and gained the admiration and respect of hundreds of readers. This has been a quality magazine, an excellent read and has been extremely well put together. We owe Neil a round of applause but equally we wish Robin Gaylard all the best as he takes over.

It is possible that by the time you read this April Newsletter the Tesco planning application for a new store in Grafton Way will have been determined. I say 'possible' because the case has been going on for some time. Permission was given in April 2010 for a much larger store, partially on land which the applicant didn't own - not unusual in that once permission is granted negotiations can begin in earnest with both parties understanding the true value of the plot in question. Unfortunately that wasn't to be the case here and the current application is for a much smaller store. Why? Because the economic climate has changed, or because the bigger store didn't fit? Whereas the 2010 application received a fair number of objections from a range of different parties, this submission has attracted only a handful. Ipswich Central, outspoken and single-minded previously, have on this occasion simply pointed out the difficulty road works will cause in the pre-Christmas period. The Society's letter of objection is on pages 7-8.

Irrespective of the outcome of their application, there is some talk of the store never being built, delayed indefinitely in similar fashion to stores in Hadleigh and at Walton. But with approval for Tesco, it is unlikely Morrison's will open a store on the old Civic Centre site.

An article by Ken Nichols in the last issue prompted response from a number of readers supporting the idea of a Museum of Ipswich. You will know that Ipswich Transport Museum have artefacts from both the Ransome's companies as well as from other engineering firms. You might be surprised to learn that the Museum in High Street has in store machinery from the previous cigarette, brewing and clothing industries of the town, Tudor buildings and costumes from across the centuries. Enough exhibits to create an extensive Museum of Ipswich. But how do we achieve one?

A considerable amount of time and effort has been spent during the past year on the Northern Fringe, in order to get the master plans acceptable to developers, councillors, planners and to the community. Initial workshops created wish-lists of community facilities, including schools, shopping facilities and green space, not all of which are affordable by the developer.

The aim is to create a garden suburb which when the new towns were first mooted had low densities. Clearly the Northern Fringe needs to meet current Government requirements with a density in the order of 30 units per hectare. If you are thinking four-bedroom detached with back and front gardens, beech hedges and parking for two cars you are thinking less than 10 per hectare. The Northern Fringe will be more like Ravenswood than Letchworth.

The Agency responsible for the maintenance of, and changes to, highways in Ipswich is about to change, from the Borough who have been responsible for the past 40 years back to the County, and in October to a private contractor, May Gurney of Norwich. In a final bid to get more superfluous signs removed, three members of the Society carried out a quick survey in the town centre and gave the technicians at the Borough a list of priorities that could be achieved before their 31 March deadline. Enjoy your summer.

John Norman, Chairman

Long-term Future of High Streets

Not this again, you may think. But it's a changing situation and what was written, say, a year ago would need to be modified now. Last year, I did draft, but not use, an article on two facing pages - one a rosy view of the future of 'high streets' and one a black view, and they were of equal length and seriousness. I'm not so sure they'd be equal now.

Nation-wide closures of a number of big shops have left more gaps in our shopping streets which are impossible to ignore. Yet some of us who love Ipswich feel we have to defend our town as if Ipswich is doing something wrong. And we and some Ipswich-based organisations may try to reassure ourselves that it's an economic blip which market forces will correct in time. But even when the economy picks up, the mighty factors of internet shopping and out-of-town shopping will still apply. In the long-term it's hardly likely that the presently empty big shop premises will all be filled.

There are some encouraging initiatives already to be seen in our town. The previous Newsletter referred to the success of Patisserie Valerie in Butter Market and we can add now the arrival at last of a proper shoe repairer (not a heel bar) in the town centre, just across the road in the same street. But specialist newcomers don't need premises of the size of the former Croydons in Tavern Street, nor the vast floor area of the Co-op in Carr Street.

Rationally and ideally, 'high streets' would contract and businesses would move closer together leaving only a few empty premises. But the owners (mostly insurance firms, pension funds, etc) are holding on to capital assets expensively purchased and nominally still very valuable, even if empty. So, rational decisions won't be made overnight!

In the meantime, I should hope that people who value their 'high streets' will continue to use them regularly, whether for chain store purchases or specialist shopping (where it's more likely one could chat with staff) and, of course, for meeting friends in town. Only then could a vicious circle be avoided.

Neil Salmon

Recent Planning Matters

98 Henley Road: On a large plot of land next to the entrance to the sports club, permission has been granted to build four detached houses with garages and car parking spaces and garden. Previously a single dwelling had been granted approval. Objectors include the sports club. Density is lower than the planning policy dictates and spacing is normal but not as generous as is the case in this area. IBC Officers' advice is to give consent; however the IBC Committee decided on a site visit and thus it is deferred.

Russet Road (GPO) Engineering Centre, Woodbridge Road) Outline planning permission has been granted for 39 houses at medium density (35% affordable). The Section 106 requirements are high (£250,000) because both St Helen's and Northgate Schools are full. Design issues will be considered when the Full planning permission application is made.

Hotel at former Pooley's Yard, opposite the railway station: Approval has been granted for a 5-storey, 105 room hotel. The details of materials used will have to be improved as a condition of the planning permission.

211 Rushmere Road: The application to demolish the house and replace with two houses of 'two and a half' storeys each was refused. There were many objectors. A fresh application has been made, reducing the heights to two storeys each. [Approved now by IBC]

15 The Avenue: The applicant wishes to demolish a Peter Barefoot house of the mid-1950s and replace it with two new higher houses. It is not in the Park Conservation Area and is not Locally Listed. (His own house nearby is Locally Listed.) We felt the house is of little architectural merit and thus there is no practical objection to demolition. However, the site is not big enough to take two five-bedroom detached houses. This is over-development and smaller less prominent houses are indicated. IBC has refused the application.

The Emperor, Norwich Road: Tesco has applied to build an extension in the rear garden to convert the inn into a Tesco Express store. No application is needed to convert it into such a store. The building is presumably Edwardian and the exterior largely unaltered. There is fine lettering of 'The Emperor' and 'Tolly Cobbold'. There would be eleven parking spaces, the access being directly on to

a light-controlled crossing on a very busy and fast road. There is a small but active community objecting. I have sent a letter of objection from the Society. [But approved now by IBC, with conditions attached concerning deliveries, etc.]

47 St Nicholas Street, Curson Lodge: Permission granted for the insertion of a 'pod' to provide medical travel advice, vaccinations, etc. The pod would not touch any part of the historic structure. Unfortunately, on the morning of the proposed contract exchange, a car demolished the column by the doorway on the front corner of the building. Luckily, Hilary Brightman, in its extensive restoration by the Ipswich Building Preservation Trust, had redesigned it so that it no longer had structural significance.

The New Wolsey Theatre: The two new extensions, one small to accommodate a lift on the Civic Drive side and a much larger two-storey one on the east side to accommodate a much needed space for the technical area, were approved. The Twentieth Century Society and The Ipswich Society feel that this is Ipswich's most important 1970s building after Willis and thus any alterations must be done to the highest design standards. Whilst the Civic Drive extension is fine, we feel that the other extension has not been handled well, which is to be flat where it fails to marry successfully with the interesting roof slope angles of the original. We are sorry the Planning and Development Committee of IBC did not follow the advice of the Design Panel and seek a review of this design. [Architects of the Wolsey Theatre were Roderick Ham and George Finch who also designed the Derby Playhouse; sadly, Finch died on 13 February 2013 after a distinguished and varied career.]

Mike Cook

Tesco at Grafton Way



View of the Tesco site from The Mill on Ipswich Waterfront with Grafton Way to the right.

Proposed (Tesco) Development at Grafton Way

This response to the planning application has been sent to the Borough Council

The Ipswich Society does not support this application and recommends refusal as submitted. In the three years since the planning application was debated by the IBC Development Control Committee, much has changed in the retail sector both locally and nationally. In our view there has been sufficient change to constitute a material change of circumstances.

The (IBC) Committee needs to determine this latest application in accordance with the Core Strategies & Policies Development Plan Document adopted in December 2011. It reaffirms that major retail new development should be in the Central Shopping Area. Furthermore, Ipswich town centre has been identified as a regional centre of strategic importance for retail and other town centre purposes. The site of this application is not in the town centre; in fact it is, by the applicants' own admission, some 700m away from the Cornhill and on the wrong side (for pedestrian access) of the inner ring road. The applicant describes the site as being highly accessible, but this is primarily by vehicular traffic.

The Policy Document suggests that through the IP-One Area Action Plan, the Council will extend the Central Shopping Area to include a variety of sites in the town centre - Grafton Way is not one of them!

The addition of a major new Tesco store to the periphery of the town centre is unlikely to enhance Ipswich's role and status as a county town and a regional centre. It will add nothing to the central core, to comparison goods on offer in the High Street or to the number of shoppers from outside the immediate catchment area. Residents from the villages and market towns all have the opportunity to shop at a Tesco store closer to their own homes.

If we turn our attention to the National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, it becomes clear that National Policy is about the preservation and enhancement of town centres, their very vitality depending on no further out-of-town centre superstores. If a sequential test is applied, then it is clear that town centre sites are available, so the Grafton Way site should be refused as it is likely to have an impact on the vitality of the town centre.

In detail, there is one major unacceptable change with this application, and that is vehicle traffic on to the pedestrian walkway outside the domestic residences. The Ipswich Society (along with other local organisations) fought a long and hard battle to remove traffic from the Northern Quays, a situation which the County Council is about to implement. To allow more delivery vehicles on to the riverside walk during busy pedestrian times is unacceptable.

This submission puts the private cars and wheelie bins belonging to each of the residential units immediately outside on the walkway. The only vehicle access to the hotel reception is along the walkway; it is likely that taxis will use this route to collect residents and hotel guests. The only decision available to the Planning and Development Committee should be refusal as submitted.

40 Years of Conservation

When in **1970**, the then Ipswich County Borough Council established a separate Town Planning Department under Geoffrey Ramsdale, I was appointed Principal Planning Officer heading up the Civic Design Division. One of the duties of the new division was responsibility for the protection and enhancement of the town's built heritage. I have been asked, four decades on, to provide a brief history of the initiatives introduced by the Council, during that period, to achieve these aims.

We quickly realised that the town's stock of historic buildings on the **Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest** was seriously inadequate and that the first step was to have it updated. As a result, the number of properties on the revised List was extensively increased when it appeared in 1972. This reassessment formed an important basis for the Council's future work on the environment.

The next step, in **1974**, was to **designate Conservation Areas**, giving the Council the extra powers of protection needed to safeguard our heritage. This work started with the Town Centre. Two approaches were considered. The first was to simply draw a boundary around the whole of the established centre, including areas of lesser environmental quality; the second was to be more selective and draw a tighter boundary encompassing only those areas of high quality. Following advice from the then Department of the Environment, the Council opted for the second approach. Today there are fourteen designated Conservation Areas in Ipswich, including the Wet Dock and Christchurch Park.

In **1975**, the **Ipswich Conservation and Design Panel** (initially the Ipswich Conservation Advisory Panel) was established by the Council to facilitate full local involvement in decisions affecting the town's historic areas. The then Chairman of The Ipswich Society, Peter Underwood, was invited to become Chairman of the Panel and this was a function he fulfilled admirably for 20 years. The Panel, comprising councillors, officers and representatives of local interest and professional groups, advises the Council on all matters affecting Listed buildings, Conservation Areas and, more recently, on a wide range of proposals throughout the town.

In **1977**, the **Ipswich Building Preservation Trust** was set up by the Council with the provision of a long-term interest-free loan of £40,000 initially, and a second similar tranche a few years later. It operates on a 'revolving fund' basis, purchasing and renovating buildings in need, then re-selling them in their enhanced state to recoup the funding for further projects. So far it has saved nine important buildings which might otherwise have been lost or seriously damaged by neglect.

In **1979**, the Council established the **Ipswich Historic Churches Trust**. Its object is the preservation and maintenance of the town's redundant historic churches. St Lawrence, St Peter, St Clement, St Stephen and St Nicholas were passed to the Council by the Church Commissioners for a nominal sum and then offered to the Trust on long leases. The Trust has financial assistance from the Borough Council, with grants from English Heritage.

This resume has concentrated upon five important early initiatives which together provided a firm base for the protection and enhancement of Ipswich's precious heritage. Many other initiatives, aimed at improving the environmental quality, particularly of our Conservation Areas, have since been introduced. These include the Positive Planning projects, pedestrian priority measures, environmental improvement schemes and removal of unsightly signs.

Finally, a conclusion which I feel should be drawn from the last 40 years experience, is that the environment of Ipswich has benefited greatly from the close co-operation which exists between the Council and the voluntary sector within our community.

John Field, Urban Planner and Landscape Architect, Chairman of the Ipswich Conservation and Design Panel

News & Comment

Ipswich Museum Development Project

There are three significant consultations being carried out (regarding the potential for a heritage 'campus' including the High Street Museum, the former Art Gallery on its south side, the former Art School on the north side and the New Wolsey Studio).

1. Audience development which will involve consultation with a wide spectrum of groups, including The Ipswich Society and Friends of Ipswich Museums and others. This is to discover ways in which the Museum and the wider sites can be enhanced.
2. A Campus Master Plan to give an overview of the Museum estate. Museum staff are making a series of visits to new and established museums and galleries around the country to inform the discussion. A leading architectural firm will be appointed to prepare a master plan
3. The commissioning of a consultant to help develop the artistic programme for the site.

Alan Swerdlow, Chairman Friends of Ipswich Museums.

The Old Town Library

This library collection created in 1615 is the second oldest municipal public library in the country. It consists of about 700 works covering local history, topography, theology and natural history, housed at Ipswich School. Dr Blatchly, until recently its archivist, tells us that a DVD about the collection has been produced, copies of which can be obtained from the School's Reception at the main entrance in Henley Road (cost £6) or by post from Melissa Joralemon, present archivist, at Ipswich School, 25 Henley Road, Ipswich, IP1 3SG (cost £7).

Miracles in Lady Lane: The Ipswich Shrine at the Westgate

An illustrated lecture about this once famous Ipswich shrine will be given by John Blatchly and Diarmaid MacCulloch to launch their new book about this extraordinary subject. The lecture is at 7 pm on Tuesday, 16 April at the University's Waterfront Building. Copies of the book, hardback, will be available at the special launch price of £10 (normally £12).

Money for Skills?

'City Deal' is the rather strange name for the scheme in which local authorities can bid for Government money for specific purposes. Having cleared the first hurdle, a successful application for the Ipswich area would be used for improving the skills level which at present is one of our shortcomings. The bid by IBC, SCC and the three neighbouring district councils is one of some twenty in the country.

News about University Campus Suffolk

Information from UCS is encouraging - and the town is getting more used to having a university here! Applications for admission for the next academic year have increased by 8.2%, with a much larger proportion from students across the EU. Women comprise 70% of the present student numbers. UCS has also won Olympic Legacy investment to create an outdoor sports facility next to the James Hehir Building on Orwell Quay.

Ipswich Film Theatre

A plaque has been installed at IFT commemorating the achievement of Bob Cross. It reads, "This cinema was created in 1975 thanks largely to the personal enthusiasm, foresight and determination of Robert Cross, Chief Executive of Ipswich Borough Council who led the transformation of the Corn Exchange into an entertainment venue." He would have been delighted to know that the Film Theatre, run largely by the IFT Trust and its many volunteers, is bringing Ipswich all the best of world cinema.

Town Lectures and Concerts

This is the fourteenth annual series of events organised by Ipswich Arts Association. They take place on Thursdays 1.00 - 1.50 pm at the Museum Street Methodist Church (where the Society holds our winter lectures) the only exception being the Corn Exchange organ recital on 8 August. Entry is free, though a small donation to cover costs is requested. Programmes are available from Ipswich Tourist Information Centre, libraries and other outlets.

Lectures:

- 9 May — 'Britten and the Documentary' by Professor Chris Green
- 11 July — 'The Military Presence in Ipswich 1859-1959' by Taff Gillingham
- 12 September — 'The Families who Lived in Christchurch Mansion' by Marjorie Carter
- 14 November — 'Leonard Squirrell- Suffolk Artist' by Mark Beesley

Concerts

- 11 April — A violin and piano recital by Yu Zhou Zhang
- 13 June — A concert by Grundisburgh Primary School children
- 8 August — Organ Recital at the Corn Exchange by Suffolk Organists' Association
- 10 October — Light Orchestra Wind Ensemble
- 12 December — Sally Voakes (voice) and Keith Krykant (guitar) jazz duo

Christmas Tree

April is an odd month to be writing about last year's Christmas tree, which certainly provoked plenty of discussion and often disagreement.. But information about the tree and the lights wasn't readily available until January, so here it is now. Society members will be better informed than most of the general public come next Christmas!

The display was the creation of Blachere Illumination, an international company with over forty years experience. They have made similar trees for Dublin, Paris, Lisbon and Montreal. The tree was made up of 41 aluminium spheres with more than 40,000 low energy LED lights and, importantly, it matched stylistically the lighting in the adjacent streets.

The Age of Christchurch Mansion

Christchurch Mansion is well known, both locally and far beyond. It is a fine building set in delightful parkland and housing a wonderful collection of pictures and artefacts all in an imposingly appropriate setting. However, the house itself is perhaps more interesting than is at first recognised.

Where the mansion now stands there was in early medieval times the Augustinian Priory of Holy Trinity, that was also known as 'Christchurch'. It had extensive grounds (over 600 acres) and appropriate wealth. Someone once said, and this has often been repeated, that following the

suppression of the priory in 1537 the buildings were completely destroyed and that a new house was then built on the vacant site by Edmund Withipoll- but does this bear close inspection?

At the time of the dissolution an inventory was made in which, interestingly, the priory is described as 'an ordinary brick-built building'. Now it is well known that, once abandoned, stone buildings were either deliberately or casually demolished and the stone reused, whereas mere brickwork was not usually worth recycling. An example of this practice is Thomas Wolsey's short-lived college of which nothing survives but the sturdy brick watergate that stands to this day in College Street.

We know that following the dissolution of the priory the land was held under the stewardship of the Wingfield family and so it is most likely that Holy Trinity, once stripped of anything valuable, was simply left derelict.

Is there further evidence to support this theory? An intriguing clue lies in the Latin inscription over the front door, dated 1549, that translates loosely as 'Frugality is the way to avoid dissipating one's wealth' and these words would no doubt be in the mind of Edmund Withipoll as he planned his new residence and measured the cost.

Pursuing this idea we see that on the east wall of the east wing there are three chimneys, the middle one of which has a plaque with the date 1550 and a cipher for Edmund. The style is certainly what one would expect for such a date. However the other two are different. The bricks are smaller and there are crow-steps, both more suited to the 15th century, which suggests strongly that they are survivals of the original priory. It follows then that rather than demolish completely a basically sound structure the frugal Edmund simply remodelled and enlarged what remained.

The front wall provides further evidence of an earlier period as the diaper-work there would have been rather old-fashioned in 1550 and in fact is very similar to that of the bishop's palace in Ely which was constructed in the 1480s. Edmund was a man of the city and very familiar with the latest fashions; if starting from scratch he would surely have opted for a more modern appearance for that important frontage. As it is, the impression is undoubtedly early- Tudor rather than early-Elizabethan.

The house passed through several hands until 1895, when it was presented to the town by Felix Cobbold - a famous local name -leading to its use as the museum we know today.

Much repair and many alterations and improvements have been made to Christchurch Mansion throughout its history, right up to modern times, but in the light of what we now know we may surely assume that in addition to the visible signs there must also be, tantalisingly hidden from our view but securely encased within those sturdy walls, some substantial remnants of that earlier structure.

Louis Musgrove and Ken Wilson

Ipswich Transport Museum

If you've never been to the Transport Museum, make this the year when you'll go! Anyone with Ipswich Society sorts of interests would be fascinated by the variety of vehicles and engineering

objects all associated with our town and county, and all lovingly restored and cared for by enthusiastic volunteers. It's one of the very best in the country. Opening days and times vary so it's best to pick up a leaflet from the Tourist Information Centre or visit their website. Brian Dyes wrote a good article about ITM in our last October's Newsletter.

Money for the Cornhill?



John Norman speaks to Kevin Burch of BBC Look East about Cornhill - February 2016.

I read with interest Ipswich Borough Council's plan for an architectural competition to revamp the Cornhill following Stuart Rose's criticism at the Beacon Town conference last September. Clearly money is available, architectural competitions aren't cheap to run and there is no point unless the organiser intends to spend something on building the results.

But why the Cornhill? If there is money available to spend and we look around the town centre, which locations cry out for investment? Sorry, but the Cornhill is not top of my list. Upper Orwell Street, Tacket Street with Brand's former department store (photo below) looking forlorn, or a scheme to improve walking routes to the Waterfront (and I don't mean turning the town around into a north-south shopping experience as proposed by Ipswich Central).

One of the proved ways of getting footfall back into town centres is to increase the number of residents, achieved by building and adapting more residential units. Let's run an architectural competition to turn the Mint Quarter into a mixed use scheme, a competition to demonstrate to building owners that County Hall or St Peter's Port could work as residential schemes rather than the retail dream that is unlikely to ever be realised.

John Norman

40 Years of Planning in Suffolk

Clifford Smith was Chief Planning Officer, then Chief Executive of East Suffolk County Council and from 1974 Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council. With so much experience of local government it was not surprising that he gave the Society a talk (on 9 January) which was comprehensive, methodical and coloured with thoughtful personal opinion. It is hard to do justice to the detail and quality of his talk but I should start by summarising that his 'Fifty Years of Planning' is inextricably wedded to 'Fifty Years of Reorganisation of Local Government'!

The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act was administered by Local Authorities, often without qualified planners although sometimes informally aided by civic societies such as ours and by architects' panels. There were 33 Local Authorities in Suffolk, of which three were planning authorities with limited resources. In 1964 the South East Study was a "first bombshell". Planning consultants came up with bright ideas such as expanding Ipswich along the Orwell to link up with Felixstowe. Few Local Authorities would have been able to handle such big proposals but East Suffolk's response was that before any development should occur, an Orwell crossing must be built. Then the Shankland Cox plans of 1965 proposed major housing developments adjacent to Ipswich, one in the south and one in the south-west, with a motorway through the middle of town!

Future plans and Public Inquiries took place until the Government in 1969 decided not to proceed. Clifford was pleased about that decision because a New Town governance would not have had much, if any, local control. But at least all these deliberations had led to the existing Local Authorities working together, especially East Suffolk and Ipswich Borough Council, now with its first planning officer, Geoff Ramsdale (1970).

The "next bombshell" was the 1972 Royal Commission to reorganise Local Government - just as authorities had starting working together! One of its aims was to create larger authorities. Suffolk County Council was created with seven District Councils (including Ipswich) - as now. Suffolk County Council was then big enough to run education, social services, strategic planning, highways, etc. But the reorganisation had created eight planning authorities instead of the previous three. Clifford acknowledged that this didn't go down well with Ipswich which, having lost its County Borough status, wanted to become a unitary authority.

His assessment of Suffolk County Council's achievements since 1974 included many different aspects of the County's work, e.g. welcoming more employment such as BT, Willis and Axa, the growth of the Port of Felixstowe, ensuring that housing growth has been in the right areas, the Orwell Bridge, dualling of the A14 and A12 (part), keeping the East Suffolk railway, designing and managing the Heritage Coast, and resisting imposed growth.

He regretted Central Government's "increased powers" and "increased privatisation of services" and not surprisingly he argued strongly that two-tier Local Authorities are wasteful. At the end, there were some searching questions from the floor and some thoughtfully reasoned answers. It was a splendidly delivered, worthy talk and a thought provoking evening. Many of us felt that the County Council had been in good hands with such a Chief Executive.

Neil Salmon

Battersea Power Station

Yet another company is trying to develop the Battersea power station site. A Malaysian consortium is proposing to spend £8 billion (on phase one) building 800 homes, hotels, restaurants, gym and theatre. This is a risky project. They plan to demolish and rebuild the power station chimneys at an estimated £11m. Previous developers have ripped the roof off and the heart out of the massive building only to go into administration when it became time to invest. And no matter how powerful the law, no matter how important the Listed building, no local authority can afford to press beyond a Building Improvement Notice.

Why mention this in an Ipswich Society Newsletter? Because Ipswich has similar buildings at risk (albeit on a much smaller scale), buildings where the heart has been ripped out, where the main reason for Listing is no longer present and where no developer can afford replacements that meet the Listed building status. The former Tolly Cobbold brewery at Cliff Quay has lost all its mash tubs and brewing vessels, (but see page 23 for latest news - Editor) County Hall its copper cupolas and interior decorative joinery, and the former Burton, Son and Sanders offices in College Street are a sad reflection of their former importance.

John Norman

Unwanted Signs

The Society has had some success in the removal of items erected without planning permission, mainly down to the swift action of John Pallant, IBC's Senior Planning Enforcement Officer. A 2.3m high spiked-top metal fence erected by The Homes and Communities Agency in Dove Street (St Helen's Conservation Area) was removed just days after being installed. Banners unrelated to the premises to which they were attached (Tower Ramparts car park) and promoting a local commercial radio station were removed immediately following our complaint.

If you can remember how much time, energy and effort Society members spent trying to get the barbed wire removed from the floating pontoons belonging to Neptune Marina, then you will understand our disappointment to see a wire-topped fence between the university car park and Orwell Quay. The three strands are unsightly, unnecessary and already loose and untidy. There was no mention of this wire on the planning application and the Enforcement Officer has written to the university, received a reply and action is promised before April.

We've been unlucky with the large signs promoting the new car wash at the bottom of Bolton Lane, at the junction with St Margaret's Street - the former Kwik Fit site. As you may be aware, this use for the site only received planning permission on appeal.

John Norman

Response to 'Puzzled'

I was gratified to read Jo Stokes's concerns in the January 2013 Newsletter regarding climate change, about why "little seems to be happening" and whether anyone else shares the same anxiety. I may have stopped writing on the matter, not because I no longer care or have changed my views, but because over five years I have said what I have to say, and do not wish to become tiresome to readers through repetition; and because I now doubt that the solution lies within the compass of our archaic and unrepresentative democratic processes. But I can offer some thoughts on Jo's questions.

Of the handful of responses I received on climate change, half were from like-minded people who were doing what they could, but could see no way of persuading seven billion other people to do likewise, and in any event that would not be enough: to avert catastrophic climate change would require nothing less than global intervention and co-operation to replace our fossil-based energy infrastructure with sustainable sources of power worldwide. The other half were from serious and thoughtful people who had heard alternative accounts which said there is no problem, and they saw no reason to believe (or rather, to trust) the mass of scientists reporting through the IPCC in preference to their own preferred sources.

We live in a democracy, yet trying to change the tide of public opinion on such a matter feels distinctly Canute-like. But Canute's purpose was to demonstrate that he did not have the power to over-rule nature, and nor do we. On the other hand, as rational people, we do have the power to decide whether to follow the prevailing tide towards climate catastrophe, or to turn away and find a sustainable future for succeeding generations before it is too late. Time is short, and I recommended that readers might most usefully make their views known to their elected representatives in government, since public opinion still appears to count for something in our democracy.

Did anyone? I don't know. But I am grateful to 10 for cataloguing so much evidence that is readily available for us all to see in the outside world around us and through the news media, and showing that there is no sensible room for complacency. But what has happened to our democracy? In recent decades successive governments from both sides of politics have sold off the proverbial family silver and surrendered difficult decisions to lightly regulated market forces, with the result that true power now lies with the likes of the financial services industry and multinational corporations, and we have forsaken our nation's true wealth in the pursuit of mere money for a relatively few individuals. It has been remarked (by Chris Mullin, I believe) how galling it must be to climb to the top of the political ladder, only to find that you are still only half-way up the hierarchy of real power, but that sounds chillingly plausible.

Personally, I suspect that people are indeed concerned, but feel helpless. The news is currently filled with stories of great wrongs left unchallenged because no-one in power would believe the hapless victims until the truth could no longer be denied, whether the Savile scandal, or the abuse of children by priests, or the Irish laundries, or the neglect of hospital patients in Staffordshire. The list goes on growing. There are more than enough prominent and authoritative people bemoaning the lack of any effective global response to global warming. The question is, who has the will and the power to do something about it? In the words of one well known East Anglian figure, crying out in shrill rage and impotent despair at the inert 'supporters' around her, "Where are you?"

But we are mere spectators and, however much we may shout, it is the players on the field who will win or lose the match. Where are they, and what game are they playing?

Mike Brain

Opportunities & Thoughts

Walking through Ipswich the other day, I noticed some of the changes that are currently happening in the town, and thought my musings may provide some food for thought.

Public Spaces: The County Council is carrying out major road improvements, many in the Conservation Area. Some, such as St Margaret's Plain are nearly complete; others such as the Old Cattle Market and Princes Street are work in progress. The Ipswich Design and Conservation Panel were consulted on the schemes but owing to the nature of the funding some design has been done 'on the hoof' and the final project detail has left something to be desired. However, it is hoped that new quality materials, good workmanship and reduced clutter will improve the standard of the public realm and make these areas more pedestrian friendly.

The Highway Authority: The agency agreement whereby mc undertakes the role of Highway Authority in the town comes to an end in March and the role will revert to the County Council. The County is intending to work in partnership with May Gurney. These changes are of concern as existing Borough staff will move to the County from April and to the new contractor from October. The Design and Conservation Panel has had a good working relationship with the Borough engineers, and new partnerships will have to be forged. It is important that the Society continues to lobby for involvement as to how the public spaces of Ipswich are treated.

The Environment Agency: Development around the Waterfront is mostly at a standstill. The Environment Agency has directed that there shall be no residential development within the area liable to flooding. Developments already given consent have solved this problem by proposing either street level parking or new shop units. The former leads to a dull street scene and the latter is preferable as long as the shops are let and not left empty with estate agents' notices attached. This brings me to:

Vacant Shops: These are appearing all over the town centre, partly owing to the recession and partly because of increased internet shopping and out-of-town retail parks. Ipswich is not alone with this problem and solutions are not easy to find. The recession may lead to a fall in rental values and other uses may be attracted to take empty premises. Policies to encourage more residential use in the town centre could be a way forward. Notwithstanding the opinions of Sir Stuart Rose, I am firmly of the view that the market should remain on the Cornhill. It is the life blood of the town and attracts shoppers to use other services and shops at the same time. Whatever the solution, the physical fabric of the town relies on its economic vitality; the two are interdependent.

The Green Deal: This is a Government initiative to encourage people to better insulate their homes. One possible method to deal with properties with solid brick walls is to externally clad them with insulation which is then rendered. This will require ongoing maintenance. These properties are from

housing stock constructed typically before World War I. The Green Deal, if taken up by owners of these houses, could lead to some strange sights in the Victorian areas of the town.

Conclusions: These are a rather disparate range of topics but they illustrate the importance of a strong and vocal Ipswich Society. The town has always been subject to change, but times have never been so challenging and vigilance is essential.

Ruth Stokes

Council Meetings

Sometimes I despair! I have just spent the day in Endeavour House listening to SCC debate the issues of the day: Middle Schools in Stowmarket, Suffolk's Strategic Growth, Access and Transport arrangements for the Northern Fringe (which is why I was there) and other items.

There were questions from the public (submitted in writing a week in advance) with published answers provided at the start of the meeting, and then read out loud and verbatim for the benefit of democracy. I heard point and counter-point from Cabinet members, from members of the Council (who were present but couldn't vote) and from the Executive member presenting the paper. Some of the points were relevant, constructive and poignant. All were ignored. With a Cabinet of nine, all from the same political party, every vote was unanimous in favour of the paper presented. The debate had been superfluous, time wasting and expensive. Most of the politicians spoke simply to score points off the opposition, and particularly to criticise Ipswich Borough Council.

Within the discussion on the Northern Fringe was the promotion and support for a 'Brownfield First' policy (to be commended). A Councillor with positions on both IBC and SCC pointed out that the Borough had already given planning permission for a number of Brownfield developments, some of which had even started (and stalled). "What," the councillor asked the portfolio holder across the table "can Ipswich do next? How do we get developers to finish what they have started, or build out what they've got planning permission for when nobody is buying Waterfront flats?" The real question here is, Ipswich needs more housing but how do Ipswich Borough Council refuse an application for planning permission on a Greenfield site when there are still undeveloped Brownfield opportunities?

The reply from the portfolio holder was to re-state the Brownfield First policy and then a snide reminder that planning permission was a Borough not a County issue!

O, and the same Cabinet member's solution to Access and Transport issues on the Northern Fringe was a note to all new residents 'the use of your car will be restricted', with a rider when he realised this was unrealistic, 'during the rush hour'.

John Norman

The Crane Family

John Barbrook retired after 35 years as Personnel Manager at Crane's Ipswich foundry. Having become increasingly interested in the centuries-old history of the Crane family, he gave Society members a talk on 13 February which was full of fascinating details and enthusiasm. He amply enlarged on the article he wrote for the October Newsletter (Issue 189, pp 14-15) with a few details modified now as his research continues.

He took us on a journey from the thriving Ipswich factory, sometimes referred to as "the Yanks up Nacton Road", to the founding of the company in Chicago in 1855, to the family's Castle Hill estate near Ipswich Massachusetts, back to the purchase of the site in Ipswich (1919) and the building of the factory in 1921, and then a survey of the Cranes in England from the late Middle Ages and the emigration of some to the United States in the 17th century, and so ending up again with Richard Teller Crane in 19th century Chicago. It wasn't breathlessly presented as my summary might suggest but a uniquely structured talk and well illustrated on the Methodist Church's four bright new screens, and often amusingly anecdotal. I am pleased to recount a few of the intriguing facts and opinions we learned in the evening. From its beginnings in a rather primitive 1855 Chicago, RT Crane developed a hugely comprehensive business on paternalistic but caring lines (doctors for his workers, hired trains for their outings). In 1895 Crane sold his elevator business to the Otis Elevator Company - whose name John couldn't help noticing on the lift at the new John Lewis, built on the old Crane's site! In Ipswich the factory was designed to use American mass production methods but not until 1927 was the first metal cast here; previously American-made castings were assembled in Ipswich, just as Chinese parts are brought in for assembling in the UK today.

John outlined the family's success and huge land holdings where in West Suffolk especially they owned 22 manorial estates. Near Sudbury the Cranes at Chilton Hall were neighbours of the Winthrops of Groton. John Winthrop became the first Governor of Massachusetts and although there are no mentions of Cranes there at that early time, John thinks the Ipswich branch could have emigrated from Crane Hall (photo of the 'modernised' house in the October Newsletter, p 15) in about 1650. We also learned that Chilton church, cared for by an independent trust, can be accessed and contains not only table tombs of earlier Cranes but also a fine early 17th century Crane wall monument.

Why was the foundry set up in Ipswich, making boilers sold all over the country? Yes, there was suitable land to be developed and a useful deep water port for importing and exporting, but John is sure that the Cranes' extensive ancestral connections and therefore some sentiment in the decision were also factors. Perhaps he will one day discover a document that clinches this perfectly reasonable supposition.

Neil Salmon

Advanced Medical Research

We have a new university in our town but many townspeople know little about what goes on there. It was therefore especially useful on 12 December to hear Professor Brendon Noble's talk about the

pioneering research he is heading with a team of bio-technologists, chemists, mathematicians and engineers working in the James Hehir Building on Orwell Quay.

The research is into ways of using stem-cell derived material to treat cartilage damage and joint disease. Unlike invertebrates such as worms, which can be cut up into pieces and still regenerate, mammals have limited capacity for regeneration - blood, skin, liver, etc can re-grow but not cartilage. Consequently we humans losing our shock-absorbers can end up with osteo-arthritis, which claims a huge number of victims. But in these still early stages of research there are no trials yet on arthritis sufferers.

This research, Professor Noble said, is well ahead of competitors. Hitherto it has been in collaboration with a major Californian partner, although that partner now needs replacing by other sources of funding (there is no direct Government funding). The local connections are important. UCS works closely with Ipswich Hospital Orthopaedic Department; Professor Noble also teaches an M.Sc course, so successful students could become a valuable "Suffolk export"; and as the research spreads out it will generate a variety of job situations in this "emerging industry".

The Ipswich Society is, of course, deeply interested in the heritage of our town, and in its present achievements and problems, but also in its future: Professor Noble's talk was an encouraging outline of a very promising future.

Neil Salmon

The Tailors of Ipswich

Bernard Brown, a member of the Society, is a legal historian based in New Zealand. His late mother Beatrice Brown (nee Welton) lived in Providence Street and worked as 'a gentlemen's tailoress' for Mr John White, Tailor, of the Arcade, Butter Market, in the 1920s and 30s.

'The Case of the Tailors of Ipswich' came before Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke (pronounced 'Cook') in the Court of the King's Bench c.1615, reported in Coke's own words and in Rolle's Reports (in law-French). Coke, a Norfolk man, is revered on both sides of the Atlantic as "the master and magician of the Common Law" - magician but not master in the conventional sense of dutifully following precedent which, by Elizabeth's reign, was already becoming the law's hallmark. For all that, Coke was a great Elizabethan of typical gusto, intent on reform and perfectly cheerful to ignore precedent when it suited him - and to push for law as he thought it should be Yes, there are judges like that today.

'The Tailors (or Taylors) Case' makes that 'activist' point. There had been established in Ipswich since the early 14th century a guild (gild) of Tailors incorporated by the King and legally empowered to make its own by-laws. A tailor could be barred and fined who went about the trade without proof he had served an apprenticeship of seven years. Even before James I's reign the nation was integrating itself and widening its markets. Guilds had largely served their purposes and were irritatingly conservative to Coke and others, being 'combinations' acting in restraint of trade. They were monopolistic. In spite of that they had served a

useful economic regulatory role in ensuring a high quality of product and of fair dealing with the public; not least they protected the conditions of their apprentices' service.

William Shennings had come to Ipswich and set up as a tailor without proving to the Gild that he had served a seven years' apprenticeship. He had lived with a family known as Penney and had made and sold clothes to them and possibly to others. Coke's court held, against the weight of precedent, (with which Coke would have been conversant) that no man could be prohibited from working in any lawful trade "for the law abhors idleness, the mother of all evil, and the law abhors all monopolies." To prohibit men and punish them as the Ipswich Gild had done was to act in restraint of trade "against the liberty and freedom of the subject (and being) a subtle device for the oppression of young tradesmen by the old and the rich of the same trade."

Coke who, when it suited him, could function as a kind of Francis Drake of the law, certainly had played ducks and drakes with the terms of the Magna Carta and given them much of their modern meaning. In an earlier cause, 'Doctor Bonham's Case', Coke had gone so far as to suggest that in extreme circumstances the courts could overrule statute law. His modern namesake (by pronunciation) Sir Robin Cooke, a New Zealander, made the same daring point some ten years before he was appointed to the House of Lords in the early 1990s as a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary. Bernard Brown adds, "My mother, who lived to her 99th year, was interested in suits rather than law suits. Well taught in Ipswich, she could make a man's entire three-piece with hand-stitched lapels ('to curve them') and button-and-fly holes. She gave up when men's zip-fronts were introduced."

The Society in the Local Press

The Ipswich Society's articles each week in the EADT (Saturdays) and Ipswich Star (Wednesdays) have created a lot of interest. Recent subjects have included Pretty's corset factory (Tower Ramparts/Crown Street), the Coach & Horses (Upper Brook Street), the New Wolsey Theatre, the Victorian sewers and the original museum (now Arlingtons).

Shorts of All Sorts

The **population of Ipswich** as recorded in last year's census was 138,000 - although within the 'A14/A12 box' it is nearer 155,000. Rather more than some think. How many not listed?

The **New Wolsey Theatre** has been awarded £420,000 by the Arts Council, to be used for a backstage lift, a technical teaching workshop and improving heating and washroom facilities.

Royal Mail- the future of the sorting office in Commercial Road is still unclear at the time of writing. IBC owns the present building and is doing its best to retain this service in town.

County Hall still has a very uncertain future; it would be so difficult to adapt for modern uses. The owners have finally made some effort to protect it, especially in securing the roof.

Waterfront Markets have become regular attractions, making local people aware of this new area of growth. The first this year will be on Sunday, 26 May, for food, gifts, etc.

New bus shelters are being installed along some major routes in town. Unlike the ones they replace, there are simple seats for passengers, who will be able to see the bus coming!

IBC' parking charges, reduced before Christmas, are retained for a longer period. Charges are very comparable with those of 'rival' towns - e.g. Crown Car Park has often been full.

An ice house (used for storing food before refrigerators) has been rediscovered in Holywells Park. It will be fully restored if the Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the whole park succeeds.

Letters to the Editor

Promoting Ipswich from Linda Erith

In my opinion, Sir Stuart Rose was totally wrong to suggest moving the market from the Cornhill. It is the market that gives the town centre vibrancy and if anything it should be extended. The Christmas Market brought a real festive feel to the town and I thought the Christmas tree and lights were innovative and a great success and I'm sure attracted additional shoppers to the town centre. In order to build on this success we need to promote Ipswich as a tourist attraction by exploiting its history and its famous son, Thomas Wolsey. This can be done by encouraging tour operators to organise day excursions or weekend breaks to Ipswich. A Wolsey themed weekend break could include a guided walk taking in St Lawrence's Church with the newly restored bells, Wolsey's statue and gateway and perhaps a visit to the New Wolsey Theatre, with plenty of free time allowed for shopping.

Newmarket Holidays do in fact have coach trips to this area but the excursions are predictably to Lavenham, Southwold and Jimmy's Farm with never a mention of historic Ipswich, even though the brochure states the hotel will be in the Ipswich/Felixstowe area. Ipswich is the county town of Suffolk and should be promoted as such. Cambridge market sells T-shirts advertising its tourist attractions. Why don't we follow suit?

Remembering Peter Underwood from Trevor Hart

I read the tribute to Peter Underwood in the most recent issue of the Newsletter with great interest. Peter fuelled my lifelong interest in town planning (I currently work at the planning school at Newcastle University), not so much through his teaching of Geography as by persuading me and a few other pupils at Northgate to become a free workforce for the recently formed Ipswich Society - I remember a study of the potential to pedestrianise Butter Market - and also by stressing how important it was that, in the early 1960s, everyone became engaged with the proposals for the expansion of Ipswich.

Reading the tribute prompted me to delve in my 'archive' of material about the expansion proposals - the Vincent & Gorbin and Shankland & Cox reports and their coverage in the local papers - and I discovered a little curiosity - some publicity material produced by the developers of Greyfriars. I've enclosed a copy of this in case someone who is more familiar than I am with recent developments in Ipswich might make a little piece out of it for the Newsletter. It is about fifty years since work began on the studies for an expanded Ipswich - but as a planner it is a little humbling to be reminded just how views of utopia can change.

Dream on re Ipswich Museum Service from Ray Atkinson

Ken Nichols' letter (Issue 190) dreaming about the local museum service and your own footnote re Peter Underwood's concept for a Gipeswic Centre lead me to suggest that the Society should strenuously pursue these matters with the 'powers-that-be'. As may be known, since c 2007 the Ipswich Museum Service has been managed in partnership with Colchester. The architects and stewards of this relationship will argue that it has been a considerable success inter alia in adding the Ipswich Art School and in acquiring some major additions for the collections. What they may choose to forget is that, at Ipswich, a number of key members of staff have either left or have lost their jobs. Those that remain could be forgiven for feeling that this town would be better served by a return to local control, in order to restore the facility to curate, conserve and produce further excellent exhibitions for future generations of schoolchildren, tourists and locals.

As someone who has had the privilege and pleasure of working for the Museum as a volunteer for a number of years, I have been trying for the last 8/9 months to alert those with potential influence as to the perceived deterioration of such a key part of the town's cultural heritage. Sadly, there has been little positive response so far, except for support from the Society's own representative on the Friends of Ipswich Museums committee.

Notwithstanding current financial realities, I am sure that the Society's weight behind the dreams of Ken Nichols and Peter Underwood could help considerably in persuading elected politicians, senior council officers, local media and even potential sponsors that this is too important an issue to let slip.

Bus Loops: More for Less

In these times of increasing cuts, our bus services have declined, particularly in the evenings and on Sundays. Apart from the 'bus war' areas in town, our daytime services are threatened with further cutbacks. Had the buses not been deregulated, a transport planner might be making the most of what we have, rather than leaving it to commercial pressures.

Many of the Ipswich town routes sensibly employ a loop, but the economic advantages of this fail to be grasped by those that provide the longer distance out-of-town services. An instance of this insanity is provided by the services to Shotley, which comprise two routes run by the same provider, one via Chelmondiston, the other via Holbrook. Each runs every two hours and returns by the same route every two hours. Anyone travelling from Ipswich to Freston (where the loop starts) or on through to Shotley thus has an hourly service, but for anyone else on what could be a loop it remains two-hourly. The same applies to return trips. A simple solution requiring the bus out via Holbrook to return via Chelmondiston, and vice versa, would improve the frequency to those on the loop to an average hourly service, and all without any additional drivers or buses. More service for no additional resource. Surely this is the sort of thing we should be doing when resources are tight.

A similar situation exists with the hourly services to Aldeburgh and Leiston. One route goes via Saxmundham, the other via Snape, each returning its own way, when a continuation around the loop

would provide a better service for all. Here admittedly the two services are in the hands of different providers, but is it not about time this deregulation was ended and this sort of anomaly removed?

Patrick Taylor

Cliff Brewery Proposals

IBC has given Outline Planning Permission to developers, Pigeon, whose plans for the site include a supermarket, new houses and a hotel. Interestingly, there is a possibility of the County Archives being re-housed here and perhaps the equivalent of a Gipeswic Centre. But these are early days and talk is easy! An important condition, however, is that the fine old brewery building should be restored before the other developments are begun. This is to ensure that the County Hall fiasco is not repeated where the 'easy' work was done first and the main building untouched when the owners ran out of money.

Society Events

Dates for your diaries

- 13 April — Visit to Royal Gunpowder Mills, Waltham Forest
- 24 April — Annual General Meeting
- 26 April — Talk by Sir Michael Hopkins at the Willis Building
- 21 May — Legal London
- 12 June — 'I never noticed that' - an evening walk in Ipswich
- 11 July — 'Ipswich's Oldest Valley' - an evening walk in Henslow Road
- 21 August — Ingatestone Hall
- September — John Norman's East London