

The Ipswich Society
NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2003

ISSUE 151

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The new end of 'The Footmoss Way' (see page 3)

Articles and letters which are not explicitly from the Society are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Ipswich Society staff.

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Editorial

A welcome change?

This Newsletter comes to you together with the booklet about the Society's Annual General Meeting. For many voluntary organisations, the AGM is a tedious necessity. Yes, it does have an important role to play when people can ask questions, express pleasure or displeasure, and vote for or against those who run the society on behalf of its members. But when members are broadly satisfied with the progress of their society, AGMs are not exactly exciting occasions. The Ipswich Society has long been mindful of that, so in the past we have arranged little talks and slide shows to lighten the evening. Now we wish to go further and make the AGM more of a social occasion when people can talk with each other and discuss matters with members of the Committee. Our new venue, the upstairs hall of the Museum Street Methodist Church, should help to make a more congenial evening. See the back page for more details.

New buildings and the wheel of fortune

Photographs of the steel frames of the TXU building and Ipswich Town Football Club's North Stand were splashed on the front cover of our April 2002 Newsletter. They represented the town's brave new world. In the January issue it had to be admitted that that world had collapsed with TXU taken over and the building abandoned, and with ITFC relegated and struggling in the First Division - and now in temporary administration.

However, the news that Suffolk County Council is to acquire and occupy the TXU building surely represents an important upturn. It is appropriate for the County Council's HQ to remain within the county town and good for the economy of Ipswich that it will do so. No doubt, snack bars and other service facilities will gravitate to the area, all helping to boost the Borough Council's vision of an "Ipswich Village" in that part of town. These new facilities should coalesce with the redevelopment of the West End Road surface car park which will be a 1000 space multi-storey car park with a hotel near Princes Street bridge.

As for ITFC, there is indeed a lot to play for. The stadium has been successfully upgraded but of course its continued full use will depend upon success on the pitch - a more unpredictable operation than the workings of the County Council! But different as they are, success in both camps would bring considerable benefits to the town.

Manage the traffic!

My previous Editorial in January referred to congestion charging in Singapore. Since then, congestion charging has begun in London watched carefully by many elsewhere. It's probably unlikely that such charges would be introduced in a medium-sized town like Ipswich. But I'm surprised that nobody has sent me letters on that subject. And there was only one letter on the whole question of traffic management in central Ipswich. Is it that most members accept what has been done? Or think that there's no point in sounding off because the authorities don't listen?

Measures such as congestion charging raise even more sharply the dilemmas facing all historic towns. Since buildings aren't going to be bulldozed to make wider roads and out-of-town one-stop shopping is here to stay, how do you get car-owners to come into town to do their shopping and use the leisure and entertainment facilities? The range and quality of shops which members of a society like ours would like to see enhanced will always depend upon the custom of fairly affluent people. Specialist wine shops, delicatessen and large florists, for example, only open up where they can rely

on regular customers who spend quite a lot of money. That in turn usually necessitates reasonably easy access for cars and/or very frequent and top quality public transport. More easily said than done, I'm afraid. The one certainty is that traffic must be managed. It can't just go on as in the 20th century!

Please let me have all material for the next Newsletter by 20 May. The more the better!
NEIL SALMON 16 Wamington Road, Ipswich, IP1 3QU

Membership Cards

Your Committee has decided to stop issuing yearly membership cards. After all, these are never used but, with over 1100 members, they involve a lot of work, most of it concentrated at the beginning of January. New members will receive a membership card as an initial receipt.

Those of you who pay by standing order and rely on the arrival of the card in January to remind you of this should have no concern. Starting now, the address label on your Newsletter envelope will show an "S", meaning that a standing order exists and your subscriptions are up to date.

A standing order is very easy for all concerned and anyone who would like to start paying in this way should write to or telephone our Membership Secretary - see back page - and say so.

Another letter that may appear on Your address label is of course the "G" that indicates a Gift Aid declaration, enabling us to recover tax at no cost to the member. Most of you have signed such a declaration, but if you haven't and would like to do so (and are a taxpayer) please tell our Treasurer. The address label may also contain a "D" followed by a number, which indicates that your Newsletter is delivered by hand.

If you would like to start paying by standing order and also make a Gift Aid declaration (check your address label - no "S" or "G") then tell either Philippa Isaac, our Membership Secretary, or Ken Wilson, our Treasurer - one call will do both!

Previews of Two Walks

Most of the ancient footpaths and bridleways which once linked Ipswich town centre and the surrounding countryside have been lost to suburban development, but a few routes have survived and continue to provide virtually traffic-free links for walkers to enjoy.

In addition to the existing, Gipping Valley River Path and the Stour and Orwell Walk, two new routes have been identified for which the names Fonnereau Way and Churchman's Way have been suggested. To allow members and friends to sample these proposed routes two gently paced guided walks have been arranged.

Sunday, 22 June, Fonnereau Way, 2.75 miles.

Meet at Ipswich rail station for 9.50 am train to Westerfield. (Ticket from booking office before travel.) Walk back along country paths via Grove Farm to Christchurch Park. [See cover photo.]

Sunday, 6 July, Churchman's Way, 2.75 miles.

Meet 10.30 am at Princes Street bridge, near pedestrian entrance to West End Road car park. Walk via Gippeswyk Park, Crane Hill, Chantry Park and footpath to Sproughton. Picnic stop on riverside Millennium Green (pub nearby). Return to Ipswich either by bus or walk Gipping Valley River Path to Princes Street, 3 miles.

No need to book for either walk, but please phone Roger Wolfe (01473 726649) a few days before each event to check the arrangements. Bring suitable clothing and footwear for country walking; possibly also a picnic for 6 July.

Recent Planning Matters

Here are some of the Society's responses to planning applications during December - early March. They were submitted to the Borough Council's Head of Development Control.

Ipswich Haven Marina, Floating Pontoons to create an extra 38 berths:

"ABP have invested heavily in Ipswich and this has brought rich rewards for the town. Visitors and yacht owners use the bars and restaurants, the shops and cafes, making them increasingly viable as the Wet Dock develops - economic activity we support and endorse. The Chairman of The Ipswich Society has, with numerous others, been working towards the establishment of a Waterfront Visitor attraction. Whatever becomes of the consultant's recommendations, the single most important visitor attraction is the water itself. Water is fascinating; it adds value to property, to the ambience of the town and the enjoyment of the people.

"Activity on the water is even more important. There can be a sense of movement as yachts bob in the wind but the real draw is when there is movement with purpose. Visitors will stop and watch when boats float by, when they pass through the lock and particularly when they engage in mock battle.

"The Ipswich Society has campaigned for some time for "mixed use" with developments on the quayside and, as you well know, planning guidance insists that 20% of residential development should be devoted to other uses. We would like to see this principle extended to the water. A truly attractive dock will have a variety of watercraft of all sizes, from canoes and rowing, boats to visiting warships and tall ships.

"Equally, just as the space between buildings is important in built environment terms, so the vista across open water is tremendously important at Ipswich Wet Dock, especially in respect of its setting in the tree-lined valley with distant views of the Orwell Bridge. It should also be

remembered that as well as being able to see moving boats from the quayside it is important to see land and buildings from the boat. The popularity of the Orwell Lady cruises emphasises this point. "The water can provide a favoured location for celebration and festival and is an absolutely essential place for visiting vessels and their crew. There is currently space for dragon boat racing occasional raft races and for the sea cadets to practise their rowing. Let's keep it that way. Sequential applications from two marinas are incompatible with this aim and are unsustainable. There must be a limit to such growth."

Erection of 66 retirement flats in three 3/4 storey blocks at 15 Christchurch St (i.e. former Jaeger factory site)

"We are pleased to see that the developers are now using a proper architectural firm and consequently there has been a quantum leap in the quality of the design. However this does not mean that the Society is satisfied with this, we think, the fourth application. "The pitch of the roof on the Christchurch Street elevation is very much higher than the existing houses. Could this not be ameliorated so that the disparity is less? The architectural handling of the vehicle entrances is bare and bleak. The rhythm of the windows on the Cobbold Street elevation is odd and uninteresting. Surely this could be better done in a building overlooking a Conservation Area. If there were major improvements along the lines suggested it might be acceptable. Meanwhile we feel that the (Planning) Committee should refuse permission."

Erection of 2 storey rear extension and construction of gates, 41-43 Berners St The Carlton Hotel

"The Ipswich Society is continually disappointed by the low grade proposals for extensions to the Carlton Hotel, and this application gives additional concern in terms of 'buildability', durability and access or maintenance. However, given the applications we have previously seen, this one is an improvement. The proposal for the gates is a different matter and as presented unacceptable. There is a lack of detail to the supporting structure and no detail of the overhead fascia which is likely to be an important intrusion into the street scene.

Conversion of hotel to 11 apartments and 3 houses, erection of three 2-storey houses at rear, 73 Henley Road, The Marlborough Hotel

"Though the Society is unhappy at the loss of a useful amenity in north Ipswich, we cannot really oppose the change of use. However, there are two aspects of the developer's proposals we would ask the Committee to take special note of and ask the Officers to be allowed to take the appropriate steps. Firstly, the Henley Road facade is an important part of the street scene and we are pleased to see that the alterations carried out in the 1960s are to be removed. However, it is vital that the detail of the restoration work particularly in regard to windows and doors is carried out to the standards required by the (Council's) Officers.

Secondly, there will be problems of overlooking and reduction of privacy if the three new-build houses in the present car park are constructed as in the application. There needs to be careful consideration of this point with perhaps a reduction in height before the (Planning) Committee grants approval."

Reconstruction of railway bridge, Derby Road, by Railtrack

"It does seem strange that the railway authorities can ride roughshod over any local development committee in what they can demolish (if it is not Listed) and replace one of the original Victorian

bridges on Colonel Tomlin's railway line. The Society has no major objection, though the design of the replacement does seem to be particularly utilitarian, but then we can have no say in this."

Erection of 3 antennae, 3 microwave dishes and meter cabinet, Park Road Reservoir

"Our enquiries reveal that a continuous fibreglass screen surrounding the aerials on the top of the tower would not impede the signals in any way and would be an acceptable aesthetic solution. There should be no need for any openings therein."

Erection of rear conservatory and external alterations, 27-29 Fore Street

"We would like to ensure that the Development Committee takes full recognition of the advice of the Conservation Officer in maintaining the integrity of a timber framed Grade II building.

A FESTIVAL OF ALL THE ARTS

This summer Ipswich will host Ip-art 2003 - a two week Arts Festival of exhibitions, performances, activities and events. It will be held between 28 June and 13 July 2003, and include all the arts - visual arts, performing arts and music.

The organisers are looking for volunteers to help with the event - as exhibition invigilators and event stewards. If you are interested please contact Jonathan Stephenson, Events Officer, Ipswich Borough Council, tel: (01473) 433155 or Sara Newman, artsroute, tel: (01473) 256868.

Urban Design in Ipswich

A two-day workshop with the above title was held at Ipswich Town Hall/Corn Exchange on 5-6 February. It was organised by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the British Urban Regeneration Association. Peter Underwood represented the Society and I also attended.

On the first evening, Annie Atkins, the Regional Co-ordinator for CABE, introduced the 'Fundamentals of Urban Design' to a distinguished audience of architects, planners, local government officers and lay-persons, all with strong interest in the development of our town. She enthused about modern architecture and architecture in an urban context, a good briefing for the exercise that was to follow the next day. Key themes included ensuring that good quality (pedestrian) links were established between residences and the various hubs - shops, transport, entertainment, etc.

On Thursday we assembled in the Town Hall and were introduced to the ten-strong CABE facilitators. Six teams, each a regional mix of participants, were assigned the task of considering the future of the land between Upper Brook Street and Grimwade Street - the currently yet to be developed Mint Quarter and SCC's St Helen's Court. Bob Kindred and Rod Lay led informative conducted tours, primarily for the out-of-town participants.

Back to the Town Hall, and working in our allocated groups, we set about considering the possible development framework for this east of the town centre area, applying what had been said the previous evening, what we knew was possible in Ipswich and what had been achieved (and planned) elsewhere. Much debate ensued, ideas explored and rejected, and the practical solutions

analysed. Thus, at the end of the afternoon, each team presented its findings. You will appreciate that there were too many to list here - other than those repeated by most.

Notably these included the problems created by buses in Upper Brook Street and how this had potential to sever the Mint Quarter land from the core of the town centre. Most groups suggested moving these buses further east, an idea that has been discussed in our Newsletter previously. Two groups wanted to divide the space that is currently Cox Lane car park into nine blocks (grid pattern) with a pedestrianised east-west lane between the end of the Butter Market and the Church of St Michael [see drawing opposite] which would make a good closure to the views along the lane. There would be a second east-west lane a short distance further south on a line between.

St Stephen's Church Lane and Upper Orwell Court, and two north-south lanes, both currently in evidence on the ground - one alongside the existing Woolworth's store down to Wingfield Street and one on the line of Cox Lane.

The central square of this grid could then become a town centre space, urban in design, with hard landscape features rather than grass but with trees to add greenery. The other sections could retain their existing shops (outward facing to Carr Street, Upper Brook Street and Upper Orwell Street) and gain new units facing the lanes. There would be space for a market and space to relocate - for example Woolworth's - should an anchor store be required, and space for town centre living above the shops. Ipswich planners were present and took part, so they have the message. We now need to convince the developers.

JOHN NORMAN with **PETER UNDERWOOD**

Future of Wall Hangings

The Millennium Wall Hangings have been on temporary display at the High Street Museum, as most of you will know. That display is about to come to an end because the Museum will be setting up its delayed exhibition of Ipswich at War. Commissioned by and owned by the Ipswich Arts Association, Isabel Clover's wall hangings depicting the history and townscape of Ipswich have been greatly admired wherever they've been seen.

Clearly they deserve a permanent home in Ipswich, open to the public. In the interim they may be displayed at the Manor House Museum in Bury St Edmunds in June-October and perhaps in Arras from November, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of cultural exchanges between our two towns.

Affordable Housing

[Chris Mole, MP for the Ipswich constituency, offered to write a piece about housing for the Newsletter. We were pleased to accept his offer because the principles governing new developments are of course one of the Society's many concerns. Editor.]

In July, I was appointed to the Select Committee that oversees the work of The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The ODPM is responsible for local government, housing, planning regional policy and social inclusion. The Select Committee has recently published a report on "Affordable Housing". (On-going studies also include issues such as "The Evening Economy" and "Planning for Sustainable Housing and Communities".)

The report into Affordable Housing has just been published and it has recorded the decline in the number of affordable homes that have been built and the difficulties this creates both in terms of the number of families living in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and the challenges to some businesses to recruit and retain staff where they cannot afford to buy property. The committee recognises that a huge amount of private housing would have to be built in order to produce a market effect on prices, and the environmental consequences would be catastrophic.

The report therefore sees that planning gain from new private developments should continue to be used to leverage investment for social housing, although it recognises there is competition for such income to pay for brownfield site remediation and infrastructure costs such as transport, education and health facilities. The committee is recommending that small sites (less than ten houses) should not any longer be exempt from such planning gain obligations.

The committee are keen to see more mixed tenure developments (I understand this is happening on the Ravenswood site in Ipswich) but challenges Government to find ways of ensuring that private housing is not segregated. Nor should councils take compensatory payments for off-site affordable housing. The Housing Corporation should be given a bigger role to play in developing mixed tenure developments, but need to ensure that service charges such as those for car parking or concierge services are affordable to those living in subsidised housing.

There is evidence that bigger sites initially owned by a public authority do allow the best opportunity to ensure sustainable development, and the committee are suggesting that the Regional Development Agencies should have simplified Compulsory Purchase Powers to ensure a good supply of brownfield sites for housing. Public agencies such as the NHS, which are having recruitment problems, should be given flexibility in using their significant land holdings to enable social housing schemes to proceed. The report wants to see the Housing Corporation better ensure the quality of social housing, particularly in the South East where costs per unit are higher. This is important as we move to higher density housing in order to maximise brownfield use and minimise greenfield take.

Finally, there are enormous issues about the availability of skills in the construction industry, as many training facilities were run down in the 1980s. The committee has noted the potential of the off-site fabrication of housing components to improve productivity, quality and environmental benefits - with a weather eye to ensure the mistakes of the pre-fab era of housing are not made again. I was particularly interested in this as we have a company called Torwood in Ipswich that is developing very skilled jobs in off-site fabrication.

As with all such reports, the Government is obliged to respond, and I hope that some of these objectives are delivered through the Government's new "Communities Plan".

I hope this report is of interest to members of The Ipswich Society.

CHRIS MOLE MP

Local Plan: All Change!

The first Borough-wide Ipswich Local Plan was adopted in May 1997 and covers the period until 2006. In line with Government guidance, a review of that Plan commenced in 1999 and the First Deposit Draft Local Plan was published for public consultation in November 2001. But a Bill, currently going through Parliament, has brought this system to a standstill.

The most sweeping update of planning legislation for forty years proposes a fundamental change to the way in which the system operates, particularly the policy framework. When the Act comes into force (Spring 2004?) Local Plans and County Structure Plans will be abolished and replaced with Local Development Documents (LDDs). Despite being some distance into the existing Local Plan process, and having received and analysed thousands of comments, Ipswich Borough Council have decided to be innovative and to be one of the first to produce a Local Development Document.

The First Draft Local Plan was in its way innovative, using an interactive CD to spread the message to the business community. This proved very successful with two local maps, each with pictures of nearly all the featured planning sites, video clips and the whole of the 250-page report.

The Borough received almost 3000 representations. Each was read, analysed and categorised. 60% were on three main issues - Hayhill Housing, Northern Fringe Housing and Access to the Port. As a result at an IBC Executive meeting in September 2002 it was agreed that the East and West Bank Link Roads should be deleted from the Second Draft, but that the housing proposals remain in the Plan. It is interesting to speculate what will happen to these issues now the Local Plan process has been dropped.

The IBC Executive meeting on 4 March 2003 agreed to the new system, but until LDDs are produced and adopted, the 1997 Local Plan and the First Deposit Draft (2001) remain the Council's statement of planning policy.

JOHN NORMAN Vice-Chairman

Three Churches Open

Following the highly successful Thursday afternoon openings of St Peter's Church last summer, it has been decided to extend the scheme this year to include the neighbouring churches of St Mary at the Quay and St Clement. An attractive new illustrated leaflet Ipswich Treasures to Discover invites visitors to follow the trail provided by the splendid towers which rise above each church to enjoy the wealth of architectural and historic features they have to offer. The leaflet also contains information about the famous Unitarian Meeting House, which can also be visited at the same time. There are seventeen illustrations in the leaflet of some of these fascinating details. How fortunate is Ipswich to have such riches in close proximity to the rapidly developing dockland area of the town!

To mark the beginning of the season, a guided tour of St Peter's has been arranged for Saturday, 26 April, led by Roy Tricker at 11am. Society members and friends will be most welcome. The church will remain open until 4pm. Admission is free and there is no need to book. All three churches will be open on the following Thursday, 1 May, from 2-4pm (3-5pm at St Clement's).

The regular opening of the three dockland churches, every Thursday afternoon between May and mid-October, is made possible by the efforts of a small band of volunteers, several of whom are members of the Society. More helpers would be very welcome, so if you can spare some time on Thursday afternoons, or with the pre-season 'clean up day' at St Peter's on Thursday, 24 April, please contact Roger Wolfe on 01473 726649.

Snippets

Recycling a project?

The wastepaper recycling scheme called Not Redundant Recycled has been commended to our members by this Newsletter. It's sad that NRR has had to close because of a fall in funding and decrease in participation. Over 2,500 tons of wastepaper have been recycled over the last decade - most of which otherwise would have gone to landfill sites. NRR has been a great asset especially to people who don't find it easy to take heavy paper to out-of-town paper banks. The good news is that IBC is hoping to run a pilot scheme to 5,600 homes for the collection of "dry recyclables". We wish the project well. And hope that householders will co-operate.

Our third P&R

The site is at the junction of the A12 and A1214 at Martlesham. Work is due to start this month and Park & Ride should be operating by Christmas. P&R is helpful to visitors who realise that town centres can have complicated traffic routes and limited parking. It is also to be hoped that commuters who work all day in the town will regularly use P&R, leaving town centre car parks more readily available for short- and medium-stay motorists, especially shoppers.

Beware the summer of 2004!

It's still a long time off but knowing that Ipswich station railway tunnel will be closed for about nine weeks next summer must fill commuters with dread. Buses from Ipswich to and from Marks Tey will be the order of the day. Holidaymakers might have to avoid that time when booking up for next year. The object of the exercise is to lower the track bed so that taller containers from Felixstowe can go through. If you've wondered why we don't have double-decker commuter trains in this country, think now of all that track lowering or bridge raising that would have to be done on our aged rail network!

Market manners

The market has continued to be a centre of activity on the Comhill. Space is very limited so it's still small. But most of the market traders are more cheerful than when it was quietly dying on the Civic Centre car park. Regular customers can enjoy buying some decent produce and have a chat with the more friendly traders - which you can't do with supermarket check-out staff.

A tale of two churches

The C of E has re-taken control of the medieval church of St Nicholas to create a new resource and conference centre due to open by Easter 2004. It will be linked to Churchgates House (an Ipswich Society Award of Distinction in 1991) which is now the Diocesan Office. Meanwhile the Victorian church of St Michael (see drawing of it elsewhere in this Newsletter) in Upper Orwell Street remains empty and has been added to the list of Buildings at Risk in Suffolk.

Great painters in a new light

"Ladies from the Family of Mr William Mason of Colchester" has joined the Mansion's Constables, described as the biggest collection of his work outside London. This family group provides an extra dimension to most people's idea of Constable. It is said that the lighting of the pictures is to be upgraded - essential and long awaited. Ipswich's Constables and Gainsboroughs ought to be a magnet for tourists, perhaps stimulated by our Gainsboroughs on show at the magnificent Tate Britain exhibition. If you missed it, you'll have to catch it in Washington or Boston! Constable's two garden pictures will be going to London for exhibitions at Tate Britain and the Hayward Gallery. Good that they'll be seen there, but tough on tourists to Ipswich this year.

Wherstead Road

The intention to upgrade Wherstead Road with some tree planting, some paving and residents' parking spaces is to be welcomed. This is after all one of our arterial routes which at present is not exactly impressive to newcomers. But residents are understandably concerned that the volume of traffic is unlikely to be reduced.

Public and Convenient!

Many people will welcome these new public lavatories at Major's Comer. They replace the old ones there and have the added important advantage of being staffed by an attendant.

Some Society members will recall that Ipswich also had quite spacious and staffed public lavatories, underground, at Tower Ramparts and the Old Cattle Market. There were others (I'm not sure whether staffed) at the back of the Corn Exchange. Those three sites covered the very centre of town more fully than is the case now. They presumably went because they needed repair, had no disabled access and were costly to staff.

But those loos were a loss! A loss of a very British facility. I well remember many years ago on an early visit to France (in Valenciennes, I think it was) being disconcerted that there were no public lavatories and that I was expected to visit a cafe and buy a drink, which I didn't really want, in order to make myself comfortable. Indignantly acting on good old British principles, I refused - only to spend the next couple of hours very uncomfortably! I'm certainly not a chauvinist, but it's good that we are going back to the creation of this type of British institution. I hope there'll be more to follow in the town centre and especially on the Waterfront.

NEIL SALMON

Ipswich Maritime Trust

The Trust continues to work to promote interest in our historic legacy of seafaring and all matters maritime. This year a short series of lectures is being held on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 pm at the ABP Waterfront Conference Centre beneath the Old Custom House. (N.B. These dates do not clash with Ipswich Society meetings!)

- Wednesday, 9 April — Evening lecture by Stuart Grimwade - "40 Years of Sailing Barges"

- Wednesday, 14 May — Evening lecture by Capt John Swift and Martin O'Hara - "The Wet Dock"
- 28-29 June — Sailing Barge Family Heritage Weekend to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Society for Sailing Barge Research
- 5-6 July — A Maritime Trust Weekend Exhibition to complement the Rally in the Wet Dock of entries for the 2003 Small Ships'Race - Ipswich to Delzijl

A small entry fee of £2.50 will be charged for the evening lectures which are open to the public.

DIANA LEWIS

Our Lady of Ipswich

It is just over a year since I first saw the Madonna of Ipswich in the home of sculptor, Robert Mellamphy. Like most local people I had admired the bronze half-scale replica which has graced Lady Lane since 1990 and located near the site of the original Chapel of Our Lady of Grace. In its time this shrine was almost as important as Walsingham. Large numbers of pilgrims visited the chapel including Henry VIII in 1527, Catherine of Aragon in 1517 and Anne Boleyn. Wolsey's attempt to lead an annual procession on 8 September 1528 to celebrate the birthday of the Blessed Virgin was famously curtailed by rain. As a result of the Reformation the chapel was dissolved and the original wooden statue sent to Chelsea to be burned. It is believed that it was rescued by sailors and eventually ended up in Nettuno on the west coast of Italy, south of Rome. Some four hundred years later this was the scene of the bombardment of Anzio in World War 11, as a direct result of which she was taken to Rome for safe keeping. On her return she was placed in a church in Nettuno dedicated to Our Lady of the Graces. Each April the statue is carried in procession from her present home to her original church of St John, a distance of about a mile along the seafront. The men who carry the statue are known as guardian-bearers and this revered honour is passed down from father to son.

Robert Mellamphy was born in Ireland and trained at Crawford College of Art and Technology in Cork. He joined the RAF and travelled the world as an aircraft engineer. He was based at Wattisham when he retired from the Air Force in 1953. He married and settled in Suffolk. He went on to gain a degree in Set Design and Animation and he maintains his connection with Cork as a member of the National Sculpture Factory. He uses a wide range of media and art forms combining a passion for detail with huge imagination. An enthusiasm for local history is clearly his inspiration as illustrated in his painted relief of Sutton Hoo, his tiny scale models of medieval Ipswich and his sculptures. Two of his paintings were accepted by the Royal Academy.

Thanks to Dr Maire Heley, current President of Meryemana (formerly the Guild of Our Lady of Ipswich), I was able to contact Robert Mellamphy. The Guild was the body which commissioned the project. Mellamphy was at pains to point out that the statue was much more to him than an art project. It is obvious that the work was carried out in a spirit of faith in which he sees his role as that of catalyst. In 1984 Stanley Smith, author of the definitive account of Our Lady of Ipswich, approached Mellamphy on behalf of the Guild with a view to creating a replica of the statue in Nettuno. This resulted in a visit to Nettuno which lasted several weeks in the autumn of that year. During this time Mellamphy took meticulous measurements and photographs of the original oak statue, having gained the co-operation and encouragement of the Mayor and Church officials. He

has vivid memories of this period. Few people had ever had access to the statue apart from the stalwart guardian-bearers as she is positioned high up in the sanctuary above and behind the high altar.

The result of his dedication is this beautiful serene precise replica in English oak. There is, however, an extra personal element not visible from the front view. Delicate carvings have been worked on the back depicting some of the events in the story of the Madonna of Ipswich. Closer scrutiny reveals the figures of Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey and Anne Boleyn forming a part of this historical narrative.

On 10 September 2002 Our Lady of Ipswich was "re-established" in her new home in the ancient church of St Mary at the Elms. The service of consecration was led by Father Haley Dosser in the presence of representatives of other denominations and Muslims. Those present included the Right Reverend Bishop Richard Lewis, the Episcopal Visitor The Right Reverend Bishop Keith Newton, Mgr Peter Leeming, Father Andrew Phillips, Rev Elizabeth Bellamy and Elahe Mojdehi. Also civic dignitaries were present led by the Mayor, Councillor Richard Risebrow. It was a truly ecumenical occasion and a cause for great celebration. Happily, this medieval church, on the site of an even earlier church of St Saviour, is the nearest to the original shrine in Lady Lane.

DIANA LEWIS

Ipswich Arts Theatre

A talk by Douglas Ditta, 8 January 2003

Our speaker was introduced as an actor of wide experience in theatre, radio and television who came to the Ipswich Arts Theatre in the early sixties and later became its General Administrator. Mr Ditta started with a brief review of the long history of theatre in Ipswich and reminded us of the original theatre in Tacket Street and the Mechanics' Institute in 1850, the lecture hall of which eventually became the Arts Theatre. David Garrick and Charles Dickens were just two of the famous names associated, respectively, with each. In the early part of the last century, the lecture hall was sadly neglected then became first a cinema and later, during the war, a WVS canteen; both these uses were remembered by some of those present!

The unlikely transformation of the hall into a theatre was an impressive piece of municipal enterprise. In the fervour of post-war reconstruction, and inspired by a letter to the press, a public meeting attended by 800 people voiced its determination to have a repertory theatre in the town. An energetic committee supported by Ipswich Borough Council and ably steered by the Chief Executive Officer, Tom Hill, led after much hard work to the opening in 1947 of the Ipswich Arts Theatre - although the name came a little later. The theatre was not only popular and profitable but entirely free of the coarseness that seems an inevitable and tedious component of so many modern productions. The early voices of doom were finally vanquished and Ipswich was once more clearly on the theatrical map.

Mr Ditta then took us on an anecdotal romp through his years at the Arts Theatre which included references to the many later-famous names that had been associated with it. Humour was never very far away even at times of stress or even alarm, and it was usually - but not always - All Right on the Night. Even the constraints imposed by the building seemed to inspire rather than inhibit

achievement and it seemed that the Wolsey - and the New Wolsey - although superior in many ways can never inspire the same feelings as the old Arts Theatre.

An entertaining evening suffused with happy nostalgia came all too soon to an end.

KEN WILSON

Still Chewing on the Mint Quarter

No more news at present about developers Helical Retail's talks with Woolworth's. The whole ambitious scheme for this vast area in the town centre seems to hinge on Woolworth's willingness to have their store re-built and to stay on. See the report of the CABA workshop on pages 6-7. The workshop took this area as an example of what urban redevelopment could be. A pity that Helical Retail weren't involved in that exercise.

A New Local List

List of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest in Ipswich

Though not a legal obligation, a Local List or Grade III list of locally important buildings is vitally useful for development, planning, conservation and educational reasons. This records all those parts of the built environment which don't quite make the Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II standards of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The Ipswich Society last published the List in 1985. It is now urgent to recreate the List and where necessary to describe and illustrate. By the time you read this, members of the Society who volunteered in the Newsletter questionnaire will be helping to compile, describe and photograph some 3,000 buildings with the Borough Conservation Officer, Bob Kindred, and his assistant, David Emmerson.

To be included will be most 16th, 17th and 18th century buildings, major 19th century buildings, particularly representatives of type and function especially when in groups and original, and major 20th century buildings up to 1973, particularly if by a local architect, and other examples of the built environment if technically innovative or if they have an historical association with events or people or townscape value.

Sources will be The Ipswich Society Local List of 1985 as modified by the Conservation Officers and other lists that are available. The Suffolk Association of Architects, Ipswich Society members and other interested bodies will of course be consulted. We must hope that this long and difficult project can be brought to fruition over the next few years. It will indeed be another landmark in the Society's history.

MIKE COOK

Listed Buildings in Ipswich

Our January Newsletter reported that St Margaret's Church has been raised to a Grade I Listing. It is pleasing to report now that parts of Isaac's Lord's warehouses have also been accorded the national

top Listing - recognition of the outstanding value of this wonderful complex of buildings which many members will have visited on Heritage Open Days.

We thought that readers would like to see the full complement of Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings in Ipswich, which is indeed an historic town with many precious features.

Grade I Buildings

- Christchurch Mansion
- The Ancient House
- Gateway to Wolsey's College (also an Ancient Monument)
- 80 and 80A Fore Street (Isaac Lord's)
- Unitarian Meeting House
- Willis (Corroon) office building
- 7 Northgate Street
- St Margaret's Church
- 2 St Peter's Street (The Sailors' Rest: photo page 23)
-

Grade II* Buildings

- Cliff Lane: The Margaret Catchpole public house
- College Street: St Peter's Church
- Constitution Hill: "Woodside"
- Dial Lane: St Lawrence's Church
- Elm Street: St Mary at the Elms Church
- Fore Street: Nos.56-58
- Fore Street: Nos.80-80A (Isaac Lord's warehouse at rear)
- Fore Street: Nos.86-88
- Fore Street: Wherry Quay public house
- Friars Road: St Nicholas's Church
- Gippeswyk Avenue: Gippeswyk Hall
- Key Street: St Mary at the Quay Church
- Key Street: The Old Custom House
- Northgate Street: No.9
- Northgate Street: Pykenham's Gatehouse
- St Clement's Church Lane: St Clement's Church
- St Margaret's Street: Nos.56-58
- St Margaret's Street: Nos.35-39
- Silent Street: Nos. 1-9
- Soane Street: No.2
- Tavern Street: No.43 (Great White Horse Hotel)
- Tower Street: St Mary le Tower Church
- Tower Street: No. 19

Additionally Blackfriars Priory is classified as an Ancient Monument (AM).

There are 677 Grade II buildings on the DCMS Statutory List for the Ipswich District, a list which was last updated on 14 September 2001.

The highest concentration of Listed Buildings is in Fore Street [photo below] with two Grade I, five Grade II*, and 77 Grade II. The list is available from Reception at Civic Centre for £2.25. The

interesting and helpful website concerning all aspects of conservation in the Borough is <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/services/historic-buildings-and-conservation>.

How many people in Ipswich appreciate that Fore Street is so rich in distinguished buildings? It was given a lift with the co-ordinated redecoration scheme in the 1960s but was cruelly sliced through to create the Star Lane gyratory system. Out-of-town shopping also greatly reduced its importance. Until recently it has seemed off-centre and leading to nowhere.

The creation of the Maritime Trail has helped to draw attention to what was once a major route to and from the docks. But clearly much more is needed to bring Fore Street fully back to life. We must hope that the multiplicity of new developments around the Wet Dock together with other developments in this vicinity will once again make this grand old street a thriving part of Ipswich.

Letters to the Editor

TOWN CENTRE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

from Alastair Thomson

In response to your Editorial in the (January) Ipswich Society Newsletter, I would like to make my comments known to the Society based purely on my personal experience. Firstly, several taxi drivers appear to be very frustrated by the traffic management system currently operating in Ipswich, which in turn is reflected when a customer needs to get a taxi - that is, taxis are not in the right place at the night time.

Secondly, I do some work for a charity shop in Upper Brook Street and the manageress has commented that since the changes made by the authorities, 102 buses per weekday travel along Upper Brook Street but it is not possible for the delivery vans to off-load or on-load the donations made to her charity shop, which involves her and her staff in driving, to collect from places away from the main business premises. I hope that you understand my comments and that this is of assistance to you.

FOOTBALL STANDS: not "a disaster for the built environment"

from John M Button

I read with dismay the comments in the last Newsletter on the North and South Stands for ITFC. The new developments represent a massive improvement on their predecessors and are a welcome addition to the skyline of Ipswich. They afford an interesting and pleasant spectacle on all of the approaches to the town centre.

The stadium itself is now a credit to the Club and the people of Ipswich. The views expressed in the last edition are not echoed, I am certain, by the majority of Ipswich residents.

Wm Mason of New Zealand

I enjoyed the experience of eating lunch in Old Government House, Auckland. Not only is it a pleasant building, currently used as a Senior Common Room at Auckland University, but for any visitor from Ipswich there is the extra satisfaction of knowing that its architect was born in Ipswich.

He was William Mason, first child of George Mason whose role in Ipswich was equivalent to Borough Surveyor. George is described in The Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840 as a "builder-architect of Ipswich where he allegedly designed the New Assembly Rooms" in 1821 (now the Chicago Rock cafe?).

William was baptised in St Nicholas parish on 24 February 1810. After studying and working in London, he set up his own architect's practice in Ipswich, designing churches in Essex and a workhouse in Ipswich. He emigrated to Australia in the winter of 1838-39 and moved on to New Zealand as Government Superintendent of Works where he designed the first Government House in 1840 and other buildings including Auckland's first flour mill. He was a member of the official party under the first Governor who declared British sovereignty in New Zealand.

The first Government House was burnt down in 1848 and Mason was commissioned to design the present one in 1854. Typically for 19th century New Zealand, the buildings were mostly of wood, so the present Government House, now nearly 150 years old, has done well to survive as home to university staff, graduation ceremonies and social events. Long and spacious, it has probably been easy to adapt for its various purposes over the years. Its harmonious proportions and historical importance must make it a valued part of New Zealand's heritage.

As well as working as an architect William Mason led an extraordinarily varied life - in a very pioneering spirit, clearly alive to all the opportunities offered by a new country. He farmed, was a Captain in the Auckland Regiment and a Member of Parliament for Auckland. Following the discovery of gold in Otago, he moved south to Dunedin in 1861, where he could practise his architectural skills to the full, designing the Provincial Government buildings, the Post Office, banks, warehouses, churches and private houses, while also becoming involved with the development of the railways. Unfortunately few of these buildings survive, although the firm of Mason and Wales still exists. He was elected first Mayor of Dunedin. Mason died in 1897 as Dunedin was preparing to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. He was the last surviving member of that first official party which had declared British sovereignty in New Zealand.

I went to Auckland in the autumn of 2002 already armed with some of this information. It had been kindly provided by Ruth Serjeant whose article about William Mason in the Suffolk Review (New Series, Autumn 1989) was itself inspired by John Stacpoole's William Mason, The First New Zealand Architect (Auckland University Press and OUP 1971). I found further information accompanying Mason's photograph which hangs on the wall of Old Government House today and on the blue plaque on the building itself. A pity we haven't an address for a plaque here!

NEIL SALMON

Ipswich Port Today

Mr Robert Smith, manager of the Port of Ipswich, was a most welcome speaker on 11 December. In every way an experienced manager with a great knowledge of shipping and a keen eye to business, he described the port's recent achievements and outlined further aspirations. The wealth of detail he provided was always interesting and often surprising, although it can only be sketchily generalised in this report for the Newsletter.

Now owners of 21 ports, Associated British Ports (ABP) acquired the Port of Ipswich in 1997. The Ipswich Port Authority had suffered badly in the previous few years. Mr Smith didn't say so but members of this Society may well suspect that much of the decline was due to uncertainty over the then Government's intention to privatise the port.

However there would be little dispute with Mr Smith's description of the port then as run down, with little modern warehousing and a devastating loss of container trade - In 1994, Ipswich was the UK's 5th largest container port, but all four container lines left in 1995.

ABP took over the port with the ability to invest in it. Focusing more on the area's agricultural hinterland, they have built a new grain terminal (the old one wasn't waterproof). There is a new 7-acre timber store on the West Bank to allow for ro-ro expansion - the ferries returned in 2001 after a six year gap. Furthermore, the acquisition of the Cliff Quay power station site will help to ease the problem of lack of space. (In answer to a question about decontaminating that site, Mr Smith explained that it was much less of a problem because, unlike the old gas works site, it won't be used for housing - the site can be capped and then piled for new commercial facilities.)

There have also been other investments. The lock-gates to the Wet Dock were replaced at a cost of £1.1m so as to develop the marinas; in fact the lock is only used about once a fortnight by Anglo-Nordem vessels and less by Paul's, so the gates are mostly a facility for yachts. And the multi-functional nature of ABP's investment is also indicated by their early acquisition of a new fleet of fork-lift trucks, the creation of a conference centre in the ground floor level of the Custom House and the building of The Last Anchor bistro.

Despite the investments, the variety and the upturn in some parts of its business, Mr Smith made it clear that the Port of Ipswich faces some major challenges. The value of trade hasn't yet returned to the best pre- 1994 figures. And the short sea routes across the North Sea are so competitive that Ipswich has to provide such services at half the price of those on the Humber. The work involved is just as demanding as that in a larger port but the returns are lower. On the credit side, Mr Smith praised the good flexible workforce at Ipswich.

Looking more to the future, Mr Smith emphasised the Port's wish to see the building of an East Bank Link Road for the expansion of their business. He also envisaged that all commercial shipping will be on the lower river (i.e. not in the Wet Dock) within 3-5 years.

In discussion about the possibility of a bridge crossing of the Wet Dock he outlined the problems - it couldn't be a fixed bridge (the highest yacht masts are 30m) yet the road should never be closed to traffic. Perhaps a Dutch-type solution of two parallel bridges might be possible.

Yes, it was a fascinating talk - worthy of a bigger audience in our comfortable new venue, the upstairs hall of the Museum Street Methodist Church. Anyone interested in Ipswich can't help being aware of its history, in which the port has been in many ways the centre of our town. Commercial shipping has now moved down river, as in most other parts of the world, and from now onwards the Waterfront (Wet Dock) will become a centre of a different kind. But Mr Smith reminded us very strongly that the port, the original *raison d'etre* of Ipswich, still exists and has a future.

NEIL SALMON

Swimming Pools

There is a certain irony in that Fore Street Baths, the earliest built of the remaining public pools in Ipswich, are the most robust. [Photo below] Crown Pools, now 21 years young, requires half a million pounds for general repairs and maintenance, together with, if the opportunity taken, a further half million on improved changing, facilities.

During the latest year for which figures are available (2001-2), 479,000 used Crown Pools, 106,000 used Fore Street and across the very limited season 18,000 paid at the turnstiles at Broomhill. (In simple terms, a typical Band D taxpayer contributes £26 each year towards the running of Crown Pools.)

I ramble towards the sad state of Broomhill, Grade II Listed, almost unique but loved and valued by generations of Ipswich people. What is to become of it? Ipswich Borough Council has decided to consult further and I urge you to take part. Do you want to contribute (via your Council Tax) to the £3 million repair or should we allow this classic 1930s lido to be demolished?

JOHN NORMAN, Vice-Chairman

Stop Press : Broomhill Pool

The report of the Asset Management Review - Swimming Facilities - was published on 4 March 2003 by IBC. We are given four options on the future of swimming in Ipswich.

1. Rebuild Broomhill including disabled access and maintenance for ten years but no other improvements. Cost £3m. (Refurbishment £2m.)
2. Demolition of Broomhill, and site put to leisure or other use. Cost £0.4m.
3. Improvements to Crown Pools - training/diving pool (£2.5m), improved changing, flume and catering facilities (£0.95m)
4. General repair and maintenance of Crown Street and Fore Street (£0.75m)
- 5.

There will be a period of wide public consultation which will finish on 12 May 2003. There is therefore little time to construct a viable plan to save Broomhill Pool and make suggestions for its future management. The Council's Portfolio Holder is Councillor John Mowles and he will be pleased to receive all your suggestions. The Friends of Broomhill Pool will be putting forward their own ideas. I should be delighted to forward any that readers may have.

MIKE COOK

Paul's: A Local Firm

Mr George Paul captivated the Ipswich Society audience on 12 February in recounting the history of the family from its 18th century origins in Lincolnshire to its present status. This was a very enterprising family who managed to establish a variety of businesses before settling into a longish period when they developed into a major player as maltsters and animal feed suppliers.

We were of course taken through the technology of malting which during the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries was an extremely labour intensive industry with the malting processes carried out in low ceilinged buildings - which one day would prove difficult to convert to other uses. In the

second half of the 20th century new processes requiring vertical buildings came in. While the family malting and animal feed business was the mainstay of the operation, the acquisition of land was never forgotten with the Paul's becoming major landowners, and NIT Paul is still based on his estate in Freston. The Paul family is widely distributed throughout the country.

Paul's became Paul's and White's in the mid-20th century and with the acquisition of numerous smaller companies became the fourth biggest firm in the UK industry with maltings distributed over the whole country. The company also developed as a Major force in animal feed. Having, become a public company, Paul's were taken over by Harrison and Gossfield, a huge international trading organisation. George Paul became a director of the new group, finishing as Chief Executive. Harrison and Gossfield then embarked on a policy of concentrating on very few chemical products much to Mr Paul's despair. This policy got them into trouble and during the disposal of the many subsidiaries, George Paul managed to facilitate a management buy-out for the original Paul's malting operation, which now operates as BOCM Paul's Ltd with its head office in Key Street. The circle has therefore been completed and he is now Chairman of an independent locally based malting and animal feed operation which has been able to buy out its principal Irish-based competitor.

The Paul family has included a number of major public benefactors. The various Paul's tenements in Ipswich are well known. Less known is the gift to the town of the land which became Bourne Park. In my role as Heritage Open Days Co-ordinator, I asked Mr Paul whether the Society might include again the beautifully restored medieval warehouse, now a Visitor and Training Centre, to which he readily agreed. This was a fascinating evening for some 70-80 members who were happy to keep questions going for all the time available.

TOM GONDRIS

When SCC Moves Out

St Helen's Street and Rope Walk will probably see many changes in the near future. Suffolk County Council currently occupies an inconvenient collection of large buildings, including the old County Hall, St Edmund House, St Andrews House and St Giles House. It must be quite difficult for staff to find each other there!

SCC's move to the unfinished TXU building - it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good! - will leave all these buildings empty. All are close to Suffolk College. Since the College is keen to expand and to develop its university level courses and may possibly sell the northern part of its site to fund the expansion, a very large area of town could be transformed. The importance of these changes could hardly be exaggerated. The Society will watch with great interest.

Two Books to Explore

Benton End Remembered

Compiled by Gwynneth Reynolds and Diana Grace, Unicorn Press

This lovely book should be of interest to members of The Ipswich Society as a record of an unusual

episode in the cultural history of our area. Cedric Morris and Arthur Lett-Haines set up a School of Painting in their home, Benton End near Hadleigh and maintained it from 1940 until their deaths in 1978 and 1982. This book is a series of reminiscences by former students, visitors and friends, of their work. The book is beautifully produced, generously illustrated with reproductions of the artists' work, well designed and pleasant to handle. The compilers (both members of the Society) have done an excellent job in giving these memories form and continuity.

Some overall impressions emerge. The methods of teaching, were unconventional and owed everything to the characters of Cedric and Lett; and they had a great influence on the lives and work of the artists who gathered at Benton End. [Editor: the artists include such notable painters as Lucien Freud, Frances Hodgkins and Maggi Hambling.]

The experience was heightened by the beauty of the Tudor house and its wonderful garden. Cedric Morris, besides being a painter of great ability, was a distinguished plantsman and bred irises, so that gardeners as well as artists made the trek to Benton End. There was also that slight air of grubbiness that seems to cling to the unorthodox artistic way of life; descriptions of the kitchen will bring a shudder to the conventional. Altogether, for East Anglians, a book to buy and enjoy.

BERYL HARDING

Ships and Shipyards of Ipswich 1700-1970

by Hugh Moffat

Malthouse Press £17.50 (available from the publisher tel: 01473 328927)

Hugh's book is based mainly on research in local newspapers and the Custom House Register of Ipswich Ships.

In the 18th century Ipswich was one of the leading twelve shipbuilding centres in England with more than 10,000 tons to its credit. The shipbuilding yards were located on the River Orwell in the parishes of St Clement's, St Peter's and St Mary Stoke and also at St John's Ness, close to where the Orwell Bridge now crosses the river.

In the 19th century East Indiamen, the largest craft to be launched into the Orwell, were constructed in the Halifax Yard. The launching of the Orwell in 1817 was watched by a crowd of some 20,000. This vessel made eight voyages to the east and later traded along the coast of China.

The output of the Ipswich shipbuilders was not confined to large ships. The range of vessels included little schooners, brigs, brigantines and ketches and also later in the 19th century many spritsail and boomie barges. Many of the vessels built were for Ipswich owners, and the book is also the story of more than two centuries of shipowning in the town.

The book is a good quality hardback containing 180 pages with approximately 80 photographs, sketches and other illustrations.

RUSSELL NUNN

Congestion Charges?

11-15 Bedford Street

These three houses on the south side of the street (between Berners Street and St George's Street) are in a poor state - one uninhabited, another bedsits and the third lived in by a lady for most of her

long life. All three have been inspected and found to be "unfit for human habitation" in accordance with the Housing Act 1985. The Council therefore has a statutory duty to take action.

Part of the disrepair is due to some ongoing structural movement, which an independent structural engineer has estimated will cost £150,000 to rectify. Attempts to reach a consensus for Group Repair have not been successful.

The Housing Department has therefore decided that demolition is their only option to allow redevelopment. To this end they have consulted local residents and held a public meeting. Their proposal goes to the Executive Committee of IBC on 8 April 2003. This is a unique situation in England. There are no compulsory demolition orders on housing which could be restored in a Conservation Area.

The Society has been in contact and supported the active local residents' group, attended the public meeting and written letters. The Council say that all negotiations have failed and that the order must go ahead unless a last minute solution is found. We shall press for more time to find a less destructive solution.

MIKE COOK