

The Ipswich Society
NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2009

ISSUE 175

Contents

Editorial Confidence	2	John Hutton's Artwork	12
New Members	2	Shopping Centres	14
AGM at UCS	3	Museums' Collections	14
Cocktails & Canapes	3	Fred Olsen	15
Pykenham's Gatehouse	3	River Action Group	16
Giant Tesco in Town	4	Ipswich Maritime Trust	17
Northern Fringe Proposals	5	Roll Over Darwin!	18
Recent Planning Matters	6	Ipswich Geology	20
Distinguished Edwardian	7	Obolensky comes to Town	21
The Flood Barrier	8	Letters to the Editor	22
Sir Bobby Robson Bridge	9	The Value of Eastern Angles	23
John Hansen (1918-2009)	10	Recent Observations	23
Intrepid Pioneer	10	Your Committee	24
News and Comment	11	Events for Members	24



The construction of South New College
as seen from the roof of the old College

Issue 175 Newsletter Apr 2009

Contents:

- Editorial: Confidence
- New Members
- AGM at UCS
- Cocktails & Canapes
- Pykenham's Gatehouse
- Giant Tesco in Town
- Northern Fringe Proposals
- Recent Planning Matters
- Distinguished Edwardian
- The Flood Barrier
- Sir Bobby Robson Bridge
- John Hansen (1918-2009)
- Intrepid Pioneer
- News and Comment
- John Hutton's Artwork
- Shopping Centres
- Museums' Collections
- Fred Olsen
- River Action Group
- Ipswich Maritime Trust
- Roll Over Darwin!
- Ipswich Geology
- Obolensky comes to Town
- Letters to the Editor
- The Value of Eastern Angles
- Recent Observations
- Your Committee
- Events for Members

Editorial: Confidence

I should particularly like to draw your attention to two major planning matters, namely the proposals for new developments between Valley Road and the railway line and Tesco's application for a massive supermarket in Grafton Way, just across the river from the railway station. Although the Society makes our own responses clear, it is also always useful for individuals to respond with their own ideas and in their own words to a planning application. Tesco's is a Full Planning Application, so now would be the time.

It's tempting to write about the general economic malaise because every downturn seems to connect with every other downturn. The Bubble bursting in the City and Wall Street has repercussions for Ipswich as it does for all other towns. In addition, at a national level, we in Britain have a greater problem than our continental neighbours because of the role of house values in our economy - homeowners have become accustomed to the feel-good factor of increasing unearned capital. And although house prices have come down, they are still at 2006 levels, which even then necessitated mortgage debts beyond a sensible proportion of income. Consequently, as a celebrated journalist has said, homeowners are in effect saying, "Please can we have our Bubble back." Which is understandable but not helpful if we wish to build a more securely based economy. But, back to Ipswich ... !

In Ipswich, shop closures are of course noticeable in our town centre - most obviously the national chains which have folded, like Woolworths, Zavvi and Adams. The analysts Experion anticipate a loss of some 10% of 'High Street' shops across the country. More distressing, if less noticeable, is the departure of a shop like Partridge's Farm Shop in The Walk which sold mostly local produce. However, Ipswich is probably not so hard hit as many other towns. So once again, as in my previous Editorial, I commend the Evening Star for its positive attitude. Its 'Fight Back' campaign may seem a little forced at times but there are good things to point to. Some locally owned businesses are experiencing their best results even if they don't shout about it. And outside the business sector, the growth of UCS and Suffolk New College has come at the right time and will provide more work in the near future. Moreover, the coming of SnOasis to the area will lead to more economic activity in the medium term. If confidence is essential in a strong economy, isn't it just as important to look for reasons for confidence in relevant areas of an ailing economy?

Please read on in his Newsletter to find out about more Ipswich-based topical matters. I shall warmly welcome your contributions to the next Newsletter by 20 May.

Neil Salmon

Pykenham's Gatehouse

This fascinating little building will once again be open to the public on the first Saturday of each month from May to October between 10.30 and 12.30. For more than 500 years the Gatehouse has stood here, and stands today, a rare and valuable survival of medieval Ipswich. Many of you will already have made a visit but those who have not should seize the opportunity. Children especially are intrigued by the hidden stairway. Those who would like to be more closely associated by assisting on these open days should contact Caroline Markham.

Ken Wilson

Giant Tesco in Town

Before you read this article, a few facts and figures may help to put things into perspective. Marks & Spencer's Westgate Street store is 1,250 sq m with a turnover of £13 million. Tesco Copdock is 8,800 sq m with a turnover estimated at £110 million. Spenhill's application on behalf of Tesco, Grafton Way is for a store in excess of 12,000 sq m (with an additional 6,000 sq m of hotel, leisure and retail space).

Spenhill Regeneration, a wholly owned subsidiary of Tesco's, has, after consultation with stakeholders and the public, applied to build a Tesco Extra, two hotels, a health club and 149 apartments on the site of the old B&Q, its car park, the Carpet and Fabric warehouse and the old railway yard. It stretches from the river in the south to Grafton Way in the north and from Stoke Bridge in the east to Princes Street Bridge in the west, except for the retail business units by Princes Street Bridge.

- The store would be 50% larger than Tesco's at Copdock - in effect a department store on two floors with car parking underneath and on the roof.
- There would be two hotels.
- The apartments would be 83 market duplexes and 29 'affordable' units on one floor. There is provision for leisure in the form of a health club.
- There would be 749 car parking spaces.

Tesco argues that the retail scene in the town centre is failing in the Council's aims to become a high class shopping destination because it has no central Ipswich superstore to attract shoppers for their main food shop and because the rising population due to the Waterfront regeneration will support an enormous convenience store which would be in the top one hundred Tesco's by size in the UK. Tesco and their agents do not appear to have done a fresh survey to support this contention, relying on a DTZ retail survey of 2005 which was based on a mere 200 interviews, representing less than 1 % of the catchment population of 185,000. They themselves admit it is inadequate. They also say that sequential analysis of the other large sites (the Mint Quarter, Crown Street and the Civic Centre) reveals none to be suitable. Some of their arguments are dubious. We do not feel that there is a proven or provable need for such a large store in central Ipswich.

The Ipswich Society will oppose the application on a number of grounds (see below) but objections to the retailing proposals should be the prerogative of those who better understand the impact such a store would have on town centre shopping. This could of course be you, and the greater number of independent objections the planning committee receive the greater their rationale for refusal. There has been some public acceptance of the proposals not only in the provision of a major superstore within the heart of Ipswich (one of the justifications in the application is a reduction in travel distances for shopping) but also because of the lack of alternative uses for this derelict site. But the opinion of The Ipswich Society is that although Tesco will provide employment, housing and other developments it will be at the expense of the retail offer in the town centre. In our opinion the number of jobs lost as businesses close would exceed the number of jobs promised by the developer. It would also make unviable the development of the Mint Quarter and the Civic Centre site.

The design of the development is open to considerable criticism.

1. The only entrance is by car from Grafton Way.
2. Its appearance from the town centre would be largely of blank walls and a car park.

3. It only gives lip service to a linear riverside park, barely fulfilling the demands of the Environment Agency for access to the river.
4. Because the Environment Agency will not as yet permit any building that does not fulfil current flood strategies (rather than what will be the case assuming the flood barrier is in operation by 20 12) the developers would be forced to build a utilitarian 300m long concrete box containing a pedestrian escape route from the site to Princes Street Bridge.
- 5.

This large site is currently zoned for mixed use development. The Society suggested that the site should have a linear park on the river bank with wide cycle and pedestrian ways. This would be backed by low-rise housing and a retail park.

In summary, the Society is extremely concerned about this proposed development and will be resisting it strongly throughout a struggle which may well last for many months if not years. We believe that before permission is granted there should be the following:

- A top grade architectural and town planning view from outside of Ipswich.
- A retail survey to show that such a development is necessary and that if in place it would not have a deleterious effect on shops in the town core.
- An independent traffic survey.
- Tight Section 106 requirements - after all, 12,000 sq m of store area at £8,000 pa per sq m would give a turnover of £96,000,000!

Mike Cook and John Norman

Northern Fringe Proposals

Two outline proposals for residential development have been put forward for the southern most proportion of what might be called the southern most portion of the Northern Fringe. The sites are the current Ipswich School playing fields, behind the houses on the north side of Valley Road and to the east of the sports club in Henley Road and the fields beyond but on the town side of the railway line. It must be emphasised that the true Northern Fringe proposals in the Local Plan are for land beyond the railway.

The first, by Ipswich School governors, is to utilise farming land they own on Tuddenham Road beyond the new cemetery next to the railway for a much enlarged sports field for their own (now 50% female) pupils and for other schools as well as colleges. To pay for this they intend to develop their current playing fields as a residential area with around 450 market homes, an old people's home with access from Vere Gardens, an open space and a 'community' centre. Access would be from Valley Road, not across the vacant plot which remains unavailable, but by enlargement of the existing narrow access by demolishing a comfortable five bedroom 1920s house. They suggest that there would be an improved pedestrian and cycle access using an unspecified route.

The second proposal, by Mersea Homes, is for the adjacent fields for a development of 1,100 homes (30% affordable), local shops, a primary school and a large open space. There would be two access roads from Westerfield Road and it would be served by a new bus route as well as improved pedestrian and cycle access by the Fonnereau Way.

The Society had believed that though these sites were allocated to mixed residential use in the Local Development Frameworks and the Local Plan we had assumed that they would not be developed until all brownfield, small greenfield and windfall sites had been used up. This would deliver the requirements of the East Anglian Regional Spatial Strategy (EARSS) of 2007. However, and this is a big BUT, we have discovered that the National Housing Planning and Advisory Unit (NHPAU) has increased the current 2021 requirement of 23,000 housing units to a low of 26,000 and a high of 31,000 new units. These figures, whilst extremely worrying, are not yet confirmed. Suffolk County Council as the statutory authority is currently testing them and will report later in the year. Ipswich Borough Council remains totally opposed to the proposals. If however the Council is forced to increase the new build numbers, then it is likely that new build will become necessary on these sites.

Until then we are totally opposed to any development on these sites for the following reasons:

1. It is not in the Development Plan
2. It is not needed to achieve Ipswich Borough's new build targets.
3. It is piecemeal development without an overall master plan.

Mike Cook

Recent Planning Matters

The former Cranfield's garage site, Key Street: students' accommodation of 4-8 storeys.

The previous application was refused permission. The Society has responded to this new application:

"It seems that this proposal is the most sensible use of this site, constrained as it is between two major traffic flows. In the present financial climate we should allow what are required residencies close to the University Campus. The overall design is adequate with some interesting features of prefabrication off-site which will aid construction here. Now that air quality studies have been carried out we think permission should be granted."

'Shed 7', Duke Street/Orwell Quay, 6 storey academic building for UCS.

See January Newsletter. Permission granted by IBC. [UCS is short of money, but we are pleased to add that they will receive IBC's grant of £1m, although in two annual instalments.]

'Shed 8', Duke Street/Orwell Quay, the site nearer to the existing Neptune Marina flats; a planning application for up to 13 storeys for 190 flats and a 93 bedroom hotel.

IBC has refused permission because the design is not good enough.

Site of driving test centre, 243 Woodbridge Road, 29 houses and 19 flats.

Approved.

Harris Bacon factory, Hadleigh Road, refurbishment and new commercial units.

Permission probably granted but subject to Section 106 agreement with Head of Planning.

Great Whip Street/Stoke Quay, 8m high steel sculpture.

Approved.

Norwich Road/Orford Street, Coe's, first floor extension.
Approved.

53-55 Westerfield Road; application changed from two dwellings to re-building the present structure.

Approved - which represents a small victory for the many objectors!

6 Tuddenham Road, application to build two detached houses.

Permission refused because of overcrowding and loss of trees, etc.

36 Gainsborough Road, erection of 2 storey house in back garden.

Refused because of overdevelopment and loss of green areas and trees.

Toller Road, timber storage yard, 6 storey block of 28 apartments.

Permission refused.

Regatta Quay, an extra storey on Tower A requested.

The Society will respond soon.

Trafalgar House, Tower Street, former Yates's Wine Bar.

Application by J D Wetherspoon for changes of hours of business. The Society will write soon.

Mike Cook

The Flood Barrier

With Jack Chapman and Tom Gondris and 35 others (a third from the Environment Agency) I attended this all-day event at the Holiday Inn. Everybody finished more knowledgeable about flood risks in the Gipping Valley and Orwell Estuary, possible solutions and their costs and their effects, both wanted and unwanted. We also felt we had been able to communicate our own wishes and fears and listen to other people's.

The facts are that Ipswich is very likely to flood to a great depth – 2.5 metres in the dock area – if preventative measures are not taken. Up to 2,500 homes would be affected and over 250 Listed buildings in the medieval core of the town. It would reach the police station in Civic Drive. Clearly action is essential. The solution needs to prevent hold up to excessive Gipping flows in case of torrential rain, as well as preventing huge spring tides backed by a North Sea low pressure system with north westerly winds. It needs to be effective, affordable and visually attractive. Furthermore, it should have a minimal environmental effect on the natural habitat, which is hard to predict.

The solution will be a small Thames-type barrier, called a quadrant lift, placed at the seaward end of the New Cut. It will have a minimal effect on navigational rights, which are paramount on a tidal river. (The man from Debbages seemed quite happy.) It will not prevent back up flooding in the Gipping. When down, the structure is not a major visual intrusion; it also acts as a velocity control structure. Additionally, the lock gates have been replaced. Downstream defence for Wherstead Road

and the docks would be ensured by heightened embankments and walls, to be disguised with grasses and other vegetation.

The barrier will cost £45 million. This money seems fairly certain but is by no means guaranteed. It was clear that the Environment Agency feels the biggest risk to the scheme is the withdrawal of central funding.

It became clear that there was no way that the EA would allow a vehicle, cycle or pedestrian crossing at this site. It was not their brief to relieve communication or transport problems; the barrier could not work as a bridge and there were major Health and Safety considerations. Moreover and unfortunately, they could not allow the Gipping between Stoke Bridge and West End Road weir to become non-tidal and therefore an attractive town centre water space.

I had a lengthy discussion with the EA person responsible for local planning issues. He said that they would continue to insist on their current requirements until the barrier was built, as there was always the risk of a flood occurring before it was operative. Even then, they would insist on sensible prevention and escape measures, as it was always possible for the barrier not to come up or, perhaps worse, go down. At least one pessimistic engineer preferred high walls as they always worked!

Mike Cook

Sir Bobby Robson Bridge

Communities develop, economically, by means of communication. The simple most important factor in economic activity since time began is the ability for mankind to talk to whoever they are trading with. Originally this meant rivers, roads, canals and railways, except that things got in the way - rivers, roads, canals and railways each forming a continuous barrier to the line of communication. The solution - bridges.

And to this day, bridges are still an important communication link. This is the simple reason that the new bridge across the river connecting Ipswich Village and the former Compair Reavell foundry is essential, not only to the Fairview Homes 'Voyage' development to the west but also to the Civic Quarter on the east bank. Fairview Homes are building almost 400 housing units, mainly low rise grouped around courtyards. Some are live-work units and 25% are 'affordable'. All are within 500m of Ipswich railway station along Ranelagh Road.

The bridge spans 61m from the Fairview development on to West End Road, hanging from a 35m high wishbone pylon with eight suspension wires in four parallel pairs. The soffit of the bridge is some 5m above sea level, which allows clearance for debris during the most severe flood (expected by the Environment Agency to be 4.75m within 50 years) and 2.3m of clearance for inland waterways traffic during normal spring tides. The Gipping still has a right of 'navigation' although all of the locks have been removed.

Although the bridge was an essential condition of Fairview's planning permission, obtaining the necessary landowners' consent was not easy. At the time Compair Reavell owned the foundry,

Ipswich Borough Council the bed of the river (and therefore the rights overhead) and Suffolk County Council the derelict land adjacent to West End Road. The bridge is 3.7m wide to allow passage of cyclists and pedestrians and the cycle route continues across the Fairview site to Ranelagh Road. It was named the Sir Bobby Robson Bridge following an Evening Star competition.
John Norman

John Hansen (1918-2009)

The Society was saddened to learn of the death of John Hansen, one of our founder members. Although always sympathetic to the aims and work of the Society, his active participation would have been difficult in his profession because he was Chief Planning Officer for East Suffolk. Clifford Smith, former Chief Executive of the County and a friend for over fifty years, paid tribute to John's integrity, flair and knowledge. He estimated that John had overseen 30,000 planning applications in his career, including the responsibilities involved in the huge implications of Sizewell power station, Felixstowe Dock expansion and BT at Martlesham, as well as helping to preserve the heritage of Wood bridge and Framlingham. John was a dedicated sailor but he loved living in Ipswich, being amongst people in the town.

Intrepid Pioneer

The Gifts of Frank Cobbold

by Arthur W. Upfield edited by Sandra Berry

(£14.99 plus p&p £2.01 from Number 11 Publishing, PO Box 459, New Malden, Surrey KT3 9DH).

This is the biography of an extraordinary man. Felix Thornley Cobbold is the most warmly remembered of the famous Ipswich family for his gift of Christchurch Mansion to the Borough. And the family has produced several other notable scions, but surely none else to match the life of Francis Edward Cobbold (1853-1935), known as Frank or FE.

His exploits as a teenager and young man were so demanding and outlandish that 'you couldn't make it up!' As a 14 year old apprentice on a 3-masted wool clipper, his experiences were indeed hair-raising. But what followed was almost incredible - one of three British teenagers trying to start a cotton plantation in remote Fijian islands, hiring labourers who were soon killed by the local islanders. You wonder whether there could be worse tribulations to come - and over the page, there are; sometimes two at once. Moving to Australia, he managed and owned huge cattle stations and sheep stations where, in the early days, there were no fences, very little assistance and long drives of the animals to market on largely unmarked routes, all of which makes the American West sound quite domesticated!

Later, buying and selling estates was greatly affected by years of droughts and by the collapse of most Australian banks in 1893. "There were no safeguards in Australia to prevent financial systems from becoming sufficiently elastic to admit practices little short of criminal." How does that sound to us in 2009?

The book was written in 1935 apparently shortly before FE died but it was only acquired by the Cobbold Family History Trust in typescript in 2005. The author, Arthur Upfield, often writes in 'derring-do' style but appropriate for such a life story. He is clearly so much on the side of the pioneering stock men that he has only scorn for the townies who never venture into the Australian bush. He is also tight-lipped about FE's married life and about the Aborigines (always 'blacks'). But it was written in 1935, and for that reason conveys the extraordinary achievements of Empire building which can easily be under-estimated today.

FE's whole estate was willed to a charity now called Independent Age which helps finance elderly people in the UK (originally only Suffolk) to stay in their own homes. For the last 50 years his Gift has paid out annuities from the interest on his capital, currently worth £9 m. Like Felix Thornley Cobbold, FE is worthy of being appreciated in Suffolk.

Neil Salmon

News and Comment

Unkind cuts

Closing the Corn Exchange in January/February and July/ August/September will save money and in some ways is understandable as bookings have dropped off. But it will leave a cultural gap in the town centre. We shall have a delightfully clean building on the outside but dark inside for five months of the year. The Regent and the refurbished churches may be competing venues but they are very different and should complement the Corn Exchange. However, it should be emphasised that the Film Theatre will remain open all year round.

Winter sports

The governing body of the British ski and snow boarding teams will sponsor SnOasis and may relocate to Suffolk. Fourteen winter sports will feature at SnOasis with its indoor ski slope the largest in Europe set to open in 2012. Just as the Manchester Velodrome has transformed British cycling, it is hoped SnOasis will do the same for British winter sports.

Some of our ancestors

'Art in the Round' is the exhibition of Anglo-Saxon artefacts in Town Hall Gallery 3. It's a very impressive show of loans from the Fitzwilliam Museum, plus many objects from our own museum including the first public display of items from the 'bed burial' at Coddendam.

Starts and stops

Asda has re-started construction of their supermarket on Stoke Park Drive after a delay of 18 months. But at much the same time it was announced that the start of the Custom House Square development in Key Street has been postponed indefinitely because of the decreased demand for flats. A start at St Peter's Port, between St Peter's and St Mary at Quay was promised last December but nothing has happened yet. Consequently the protective scaffolding on Wolsey's Gate has been removed.

Stay as we are?

The Government's decision on whether to change the shape of local government in Suffolk has been postponed again till 15 July at least. The Society favoured the North Haven proposal (Ipswich,

Felixstowe and surrounding parishes) which, we realise, pleased some but not all members. But it looks increasingly like 'no change'.

Brass in the park

The Society has agreed to sponsor the concert to be given by Phoenix Brass in Christchurch Park as we did last year. That event proved to be a pleasant occasion, we gained new members and it helped to publicise our existence and aims as well as those of the Friends of Christchurch Park. The date is Sunday, 19 July, 2.30-4.30 pm.

Support for the shuttle bus

Good news that SCC and IBC are to continue subsidising the shuttle which links the town centre with Russell Road, etc. It has been well used. One would like to say that the principle of free shuttle buses would lead to new routes being opened. But the credit crunch has probably put paid to any increase in such public expenditure. [Did you notice that in addition to the American swindler, Madoff, the boss of AIG's casino financing in their London office was called Cassano? Dickens - whose Ipswich Society blue plaque will soon adorn the Great White Horse - would have thought such names too obvious for a novelist to invent!]

John Hutton's Artwork

The Ipswich area has lost three important works of art by an artist of international renown - John Hutton. Before I come to those, perhaps I should tell his story from the beginning.

John Hutton was a muralist and glass engraver born in Clyde on the South Island of New Zealand in 1906. He married fellow artist Helen (Nell) Blair in 1934 and they made England their permanent home in 1936. They lived for a while in an artists' commune at Assington Hall in Suffolk. John worked on several mural commissions until the war broke out in 1939.

During the war he joined a camouflage unit where he met and worked with the architect Basil Spence - a relationship which was to prove invaluable later on. In 1947 he designed his first large scale glass engravings - a series of four panels depicting the seasons for the restaurant area on the Cunard ship Caronia. By 1953 he had developed a unique method of engraving using a grinding wheel attached to a flexible drive.

At about the same time he had been commissioned to design a seventy feet high screen for Coventry Cathedral. The design stage took eight years and the engraving process a further two years. The screen consists of glass panels depicting 66 figures representing saints and angels. The work was not without its frustrations and dangers. After the screen had been assembled on site, Basil Spence said he felt that the opacity of the figures would obscure the view of Graham Sutherland's tapestry. He asked John if he could reduce the 'whiteness' of the engravings. John reluctantly agreed and with his two sons he climbed the scaffolding to carry out the polishing process which would satisfy the architect's demands. One day they climbed up to continue the work and found that the screen seemed further away. In fact the whole screen had sprung loose and had moved from the vertical by approximately fifteen inches. Needless to say the three men descended the scaffolding faster than they had climbed it. Steel cables were eventually attached and they remain in place to this day.

When designing the screen John had used an artist's model, Marigold Dodson, to pose for many of the figures. His first marriage ended during this period and he eventually married Marigold in 1963. He still did work with his former wife subsequently on joint art projects.

John Hutton had worked on other commissions concurrent with the cathedral screen project. Two of the commissions were located in the Ipswich area. In 1956 he produced a sgraffito image showing the four elements - earth, air, fire and water - commissioned by Birkin Haward. It was located in the stairwell of the main building of Fison's Levington Research Station. This was the first and only time he used the sgraffito technique. The final work was achieved by first applying a layer of coloured plaster. This layer was allowed to set and a second layer of a different colour spread over the first. John then scraped away the still wet top layer producing an image of the figures. He had to work fast before the plaster set, which he said was very nerve-racking. Unfortunately this artwork was destroyed in the 1980s despite the ministrations of a number of ex-Fison's employees.

In 1961 he was asked again by the architect Birkin Haward to produce three engraved glass panels for the Foyer of Fison House in Princes Street, Ipswich. They represented the Roman goddesses of flowers, fruit and agriculture - Flora, Pomona and Ceres respectively. Unfortunately, after Fisons had moved out of the building, the panels were removed by an over-zealous builder who destroyed the Ceres panel in the process and managed to break the Pomona panel in half. The remaining panels were placed in a basement storage area with the broken furniture and dead computers. Berkeley Business Centres now own the site and thanks to Hazel Warrington and Rupal Patel who work for them they contacted me and we were able to have them moved to a safer room of their own where I photographed them.

I contacted Colchester and Ipswich Museums, who had shown some interest, but they had no way of displaying the panels and eventually I contacted Marigold Hutton for help. She bought the panels from Berkeley Business Centres and found a glass conservator, Kenneth Watt, in Chichester who has agreed to restore them. Marigold has also given me Hutton's original chalk drawings on black paper which he used as a basis for the Fison House engravings. The drawings are very fragile and they were therefore boxed up and sent to Chichester with the panels. Eventually Marigold intends to display the panels in Clifton Hampden near Abingdon where Hutton worked in his final years and where she still lives.

The third work was a ceramic produced in collaboration with his ex-wife Nell together with Jan and Zoe Elliston. This was commissioned by the former Eastern Electricity Board for their Russell Road headquarters in Ipswich in 1966. This too is believed lost.

John Hutton lived and worked on until 1979 when he finally succumbed to cancer. His ashes were appropriately buried beneath a stone at the foot of his finest work - the screen at Coventry Cathedral.

I feel some sadness that this artist with the unique ability to design and engrave glass on a huge scale in the UK, Canada, New Zealand, etc., is not represented in and around our town which once housed three of his works. After all, the panels he cut and the sgraffito he accomplished symbolised the work and products of an old local firm which had premises in Ipswich and Bramford for 150 years. The artwork and the original Fisons Company are now but a memory in the town. But if you are ever in Southwold you can see a window engraved by Hutton. It is located in the north wall of

the church of St Edmund. It depicts the figure of St Edmund at the moment of his death and martyrdom.

Merv Russen

Shopping Centres

I don't know much about the Arc Shopping Centre in Bury St Edmunds. I have been to have a look (when it was a building site) and have heard it's the only new shopping centre to open this year. But why in Bury? And why has Capital just built Chapelfield in Norwich?

Ipswich seems to be missing out and I need to find out the reason. There are some good clues in the DTZ Retail Study of 2005, and maybe it's this information that drives developers elsewhere. Only two-thirds of residents who live in 'outer Ipswich' (outside the Colchester Road ring) shop in Ipswich for clothing, fashion and specialist purchases. The attractiveness of other regional centres (Norwich and Colchester) despite their distance, continue to draw Ipswich shoppers. And if you live in north Ipswich you are more likely to travel to Norwich for your specialist shopping because of 'the quality of the retail offer'.

Ipswich is short on floor space offering 'comparison goods' and investment in this sector has been limited. There has been almost no change in the total over the last five years and the changes have, if anything, been downmarket.

Given the projected population growth and the predicted per capita expenditure, there is likely to be a shortfall of retail floor space over the next few years. So why isn't the Mint Quarter becoming economically viable, why can't Turnstone find an anchor for their Civic Centre site, and will Crown Pools ever move? Perhaps we have a preponderance of out of town superstores, each in turn increasing in size and range, expanding from food into clothing, entertainment and electrical goods (and I hear Sainsburys are looking to increase the floor space in their Hadleigh Road branch).

Prime rents are low compared with both Norwich and Cambridge, a figure which reflects the footfall in the 'Golden Mile' - a situation that is likely to continue until quality fashion stores, leisure facilities and a new department store invest in Ipswich. And that's unlikely in the current economic climate, or whilst online shopping grows at the pace it is.

John Norman

Fred Olsen

One sad note to come out this recession is that Fred Olsen, the Ipswich based cruise operator is to retire the Black Prince, one of their best loved ships. The 440 passenger ship was built for Fred Olsen in 1966, as a ferry, converted to a full cruise liner in 1987 and underwent an extensive re-fit in 2004. This will reduce Fred Olsen's cruise fleet to four ships but passenger capacity has been increased by adding new middle sections to the Balmoral and the Braemar.

All the major cruise companies have been hit by the huge increase in the price of fuel. Large passenger liners are heavy consumers; not only do the engines move the ship but they also generate electricity and desalinate water.

I also hear that Fred Olsen have delayed building their new headquarters, which was to be in Sprites Lane, opposite Tesco, Copdock.

John Norman

River Action Group



Members will perhaps recall that the Group was set up by the Borough Council's Environmental Protection Panel in 1998 following a brainstorming session of that body which wanted to do something specific rather than acting only as a talking shop. Of the original members, those who are regular attendees at our bi-monthly meetings represent Sustrans (the national cycle campaign), Ipswich Cycle Campaign, Ipswich Wildlife Group, Inland Waterways Association, IBC planners and a councillor and, of particular importance, the Greenways Project of which I have written occasionally. I have represented The Ipswich Society and am the Chairman of the Group since its inception.

So what has been achieved in these twelve years? One of the most significant changes has been in the way the river as an amenity to be cherished is now accepted. Previously the town seemed to have turned its back on it. Planning guidelines now require new development along the river to face on to it and developers to provide high standard footpaths and cycleways. The results can be seen by walking from Yarmouth Road to the flood control gate under the railway bridge. The River Action Group helped to promote the now very successful skateboard park. We do our best to look after the Ipswich Society's sarsen stones picnic area. Sadly the graffiti on the stones can only be sand-blasted!

We have been successful in obtaining Lottery funding for some of the artwork along the river path. The Navigator is a bold piece of sculpture recalling the industrial engineering past of Ipswich. Our ancient rower at Stoke Bridge is by a local sculptor and was cast by him in his Butley forge. The murals on some of the retaining walls fight a continuing battle with would-be graffiti improvers!

The Ipswich Society has been very supportive and has funded a simple river walk leaflet which is in its third edition. The Society has also now agreed to fund the cost of renewing the vandalised information boards where this has become necessary.

We are hopeful of obtaining funding to provide disabled, cycling and push chair access under the flood control unit railway bridge as part of Ipswich's participation in the Haven Gateway Partnership. This has updated its integrated development programme for important infrastructure needed to support the growth of the area and help to justify growth point funding into the Haven Gateway. Early days I am afraid!

There are possibilities of benefiting from the development of the old B&Q site now purchased by Tesco. Then one day the old British Sugar factory site will be developed which should also benefit the river towards Sproughton - the limit of our Group's ambitions. The newly established River Gipping Trust wants to establish navigation rights up to Stowmarket (as described in the January Newsletter).

I should like to encourage members to walk the river path and see our achievements for themselves.
Tom Gondris

Ipswich Maritime Trust

A photographic competition organised by the Trust and the Ipswich Borough Council Tourist Information Centre in February to celebrate "The People's View of the barque Picton Castle" proved to be a great opportunity for Suffolk's amateur photographers. Their images, recording the visit of the Tall Ship last September, made a splendid exhibition at St Stephen's Church. Special thanks go to David Stainer who hosted the event at the TIC.

The winners were:

- 1st - Patricia Bugg
- 2nd - G K Deal
- Highly commended - Brian Jepson, Geoff Hartgrove, Janet Austin, Des Pawson
- Commended -- Robert Simper, Brian Jepson, Jenny Ball, Heather Grenfell
-

The Maritime Trust has come a long way since it was started over 27 years ago by a small band of enthusiasts. The membership has risen to over 200 and our monthly winter talks at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club continue to attract capacity audiences. During 2008 we have contributed to a permanent display of our maritime heritage at the newly refurbished St Peter's Church, sponsored a local sea Cadet on a sail training ship and encouraged Ipswich Museum to purchase and retain a painting by John Moore of Ipswich ("The West Cut"). The Custom House was opened for the Barge and Heritage weekends. Richard Smith's unique exhibition of our maritime history and Brian Jepson's artwork attracted many visitors.

Our plans for 2009 include the realisation (we hope) of "Windows on the Wharf" as part of the Cranfield Mill site redevelopment. The idea of a maritime museum presence on the Waterfront has been our most cherished goal for many years. It will consist of very large windows which are in

effect museum cases built to the highest standards of conservation, security and design. We have many maritime related models. Pictures, documents and other artefacts in our store but we are always hoping to find more. In particular, we are looking for a sitting display dummy to represent a sailmaker at a bench. Can anyone help? Any offers would be gratefully received by Des Pawson.
Diana Lewis

Roll Over Darwin!

St Margaret's Environment Group Energy Day, 7 February 2009

Optimism and overcoming climate change don't readily go together in many people's minds, yet what else will get us all moving? What is it, then, that leads many people to "switch off" or even respond belligerently whenever the subject is raised?

This was what I wanted to explore at the St Margaret's Energy Day, having been invited to represent the Society there. The event comprised a programme of talks, demonstrations and an exhibition to share ideas on what communities can contribute to reducing carbon emissions. Nineteen visitors to the Society's exhibition stand kindly agreed to share their views on global warming in response to my six questions, as follows:

1. Is man-made global warming a serious threat to the earth's climate system?

A unanimous "Yes" - though perhaps not surprising for such an event!

2. If so, what limit should be placed on the average temperature rise due to man-made global warming?

All agreed "It should be as small as possible". Out of eight people who specified a figure, five said less than 2 deg C and all said less than 5 deg C.

3. Will the UK meet its targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and 2050?

Nearly 70% thought it unlikely with 42% saying categorically "No". Only 21 % saw any possibility at all of success, due more to the recession than any conscious action.

4. Is enough being done to reduce emissions? If not, what more should be done, and by whom?

We must all stop wasting energy; but we will still require energy in the low-emissions world beyond 2020, and micro-generation by individual households will not meet all demands. Significant corporate contributions will still be needed to match the supply of energy to the instantaneous demand, and the unanimous perception was that not enough is being done: Government should drive this forward.

5. Carbon footprints: on average, how many tonnes/person/year of carbon dioxide are emitted in a) the UK b) the world c) what level is regarded as sustainable for the global average footprint?

Only four people offered any answer, of which three were of the right order, namely a) 9-12 b) 5 c)2 (though estimates vary according to what is included).

6. How big is your own carbon footprint? What have you done or are doing to reduce it?

Only two people had calculated this, but certainly everyone knew that theirs was too big and they were acting to reduce it, some even going so far as collecting rain water to flush the lavatory, and turning the thermostat down to 16 deg C.

So: a threat to the climate, targets being missed, not enough being done by anyone, not least because almost no one can do it all for themselves. It sounds pretty hopeless. But we should do

what we can. In our "post-society" isolation, are we caught between guilt if we don't respond and the fear of austerity if we do? So if acting in isolation isn't the answer, should we perhaps act together, to sustain our standard of living while drastically cutting carbon emissions? To do so effectively, equitably and promptly will require a proper strategic intervention by Government on our behalf, which will require popular support. So what are we waiting for? What has this to do with Ipswich? Let me count the ways ...

Firstly, in the preceding Newsletter, I reported on last November's seminar on Low Carbon Homes, at which the presenters emphasised the urgent need for Government to give strong policy guidance to drive reductions in carbon emissions. A similar popular view has now emerged from the St Margaret's event. And last December saw the publication of the Committee on Climate Change's first full report, "Building a Low-Carbon Economy", which provides a coherent rationale for defining targets for the UK's contribution to a global framework for emissions reduction, and for managing the supply and use of energy to meet them. One of the headline recommendations was to increase the target for cuts in UK emissions from 60% to 80% by 2050, but both that target and the pathway towards it may yet need further tightening following the global climate conference in Copenhagen this December, especially if new evidence for the acceleration of climate change is confirmed.

Crucially, the Executive Summary concludes: "The challenge now is for the Government to strengthen the policy framework and for individuals and businesses to respond. Meeting this challenge is vital if we are to avoid dangerous climate change and the significant consequences and costs that this would involve." We can thus see a potentially powerful consensus emerging on the roles of Government, organisations and individuals, between bodies as diverse as the CCC (which advises the Government), those organisations involved in developing the housing sector, and the Ipswich residents who participated in the Energy Day, a growing consensus which everyone might usefully build upon.

Secondly, the Government's Department of Energy and Climate Change has recently launched three public consultations², on the Heating and Energy Saving Strategy, the Community Energy Saving Programme, and amendments to the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target. Together, these proposals aim to reduce emissions, energy bills and fuel poverty, and you can have your say on how these measures might affect you. The closing date for the first two consultations is 8 May, while that for the third is 14 April.

However, their announcement in February may have been overshadowed by news stories on the banking crisis and the bad weather. The hardest UK winter for 18 years, following two dismal summers in a row, might suggest to some that global warming was, after all, just a passing aberration that we can safely forget about. Not so: that was just the local weather, varying daily and seasonally from place to place, occasionally to extremes. In contrast, the average of those extreme variations over large areas and many years is one measure of climate, which has been remarkably constant for centuries, if not millennia. Against this constancy, the observed rise of 0.8 deg C in average global temperature since pre-industrial times may seem trivial compared with everyday fluctuations in the weather which dominates our individual experiences, but it is a matter of immense and growing concern for its more subtle climatic disruption to the timing of the seasons and the complex inter-dependencies within the food chain, on which life in general depends. And that is only the beginning.

My third point is that this crucial distinction between climate and weather, which was the theme of my talk at the Energy Day, is currently echoed on the Met Office web site by Dr Vicky Pope, Head of Climate Change³. That site also carries a timeline whose entry for 2007 states: "The IPCC (Fourth Assessment Report) declares that warming of the climate system is unequivocal (as evident from observations) and most of the recent warming is very likely (>90% probability) to be the result of human activity." In plain English: having looked carefully at everything that might explain the measured rise in temperature, man-made global warming is driving climate change.

The choice grows increasingly stark: do nothing and let nature take its course, or acknowledge the consequences and plan for survival. In the year of celebrating Charles Darwin, whose life's work provided evidence for a natural evolution of species in which the fittest survive, this is surely a worthy challenge! Will 6 billion varied individuals reach the right decision in time? Of course not! Will Copenhagen provide a realistic global strategy? It had better! Will Government provide the wherewithal to guide us safely to the desired destination, so that we can undertake our own personal journey with confidence? How else will it happen?

This issue requires action by you, the rest of Ipswich, the Government, and the rest of the world. Would you prefer a bright future to the extinction of the species? If so, why not tell the DECC, and your MP, not to mention family, friends and acquaintances, so that we can all get our act together with optimism while we still have time!

Notes:

- <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk> -- 15 February 2009
- <http://www.decc.gov.uk/consultations>
- <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk> -- 11 February 2009

Mike Brain

Ipswich Geology

This lecture was presented on 10 December 2008 by Bob Markham, a very long-standing member of The Ipswich Society. Bob's interest in the geology of the local area began as a schoolboy and extended throughout his long career as a professional geologist.

The lecture was illustrated by a series of colour photographs taken by himself mostly during the period 1960 to 1980. These featured mainly a number of sites located throughout the town on which excavations were taking place in building projects. These enabled the geology of the strata exposed to be studied. The materials which occur in this area of Suffolk include sands, crags, chalk and London Clay.

The projects shown included:- the construction of the foundations for the central pillars of the Orwell Bridge; the construction of the Civic Centre underground car park; construction of the Ipswich Port West Terminal; the building of Debenham's store in Lloyds Avenue; and the building of Stoke High School and sports centre.

The effect of springs above layers of impermeable London Clay was illustrated by photographs taken inside the railway tunnel at the railway station showing the very damp conditions.

Coprolite Street is the site of one of the first fertiliser factories in the UK to manufacture superphosphate by the treatment of coprolites with sulphuric acid. Coprolites, which are phosphate nodules, occur in the surrounding area including at Levington and Waldringfield.

Bob was supported by his wife, Caroline, who was responsible for the control of the technology used to project the photographs.

Russell Nunn

Obolensky comes to Town

An aristocratic Russian emigre is now commemorated in a square named after England's most famous regicide. The statue of Prince Alexander Obolensky was unveiled on 18 February by the Prince's niece, Princess Alexandra Obolensky, watched by a large gathering including representatives from the Russian embassy, members of the Rugby Football Union, ex-members of the RAF and various intrigued townspeople.

Obolensky's name is especially remembered as the 19 year old scorer of two tries in England's victory over the All Blacks in 1936 - remembered particularly because he was fast and exotic. He joined the RAF in 1939 but sadly was killed at Martlesham Heath when his Hurricane fighter crashed. He is buried in Ipswich cemetery amongst the war graves.

The idea for this memorial came from IBC's Chief Executive, James Hehir. Funding was secured from several sources including Graeme Kalbraier of Call Connection, whose offices overlook the statue, and from Roman Abramovich, owner of Chelsea FC.

Sculptor Harry Gray let us into the secret that the Prince had been lying with the Queen Mother - in the foundry. (Her statue was installed a few days later in London.)

It could be argued that Prince Obolensky had only a tenuous connection with Ipswich. (And in the opinion of one Society member the statue should have been put in Hurricane Place on the former airport site.) But one part of Princess Obolensky's brief speech did strike a chord which is surely indisputable - "Ipswich now has something that's unique and I think in this day and age it's important for towns to have something a little bit different." For saying that she deserves to be made an honorary member of The Ipswich Society!

Neil Salmon

Letters to the Editor

IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE GREEN TARMAC IN UPPER BROOK STREET!

From Des & Liz Pawson

We really must take issue with the suggestion that the green tarmac is unnecessary (January Newsletter page 21). Cycling is a green alternative to any form of motor transport and should be

encouraged. As cyclists we need all the protection we can get when trying to cycle down Upper Brook Street. Defining the cycle lane with green is a start.

The width of the roadway in Upper Brook Street is such that the bus, in the form of the bus, overrules the bike time and again, as the buses often stray into the green area, even when there are cyclists trying to use it. It is all very well to speak of shared use and eye contact but until we have a culture that is cycle aware, cyclists trying to be responsible citizens take their lives in their hands every time they venture on the road. No wonder some take to the pavements, whilst others give up altogether and revert to motor transport. It is a sad fact that we are not Dutch citizens, of whom most if not all, have been regular cyclists in their time and therefore understand the needs of the cyclist.

CYCLING ACROSS TOWN

From Margaret Hancock

I find John Norman's regular contributions detailing progress with Waterfront developments very useful in keeping up to date with the ever changing scene in this part of Ipswich. In the January Newsletter he refers specifically to the opening of Star Lane 25 years ago and the advice from the Borough Engineer that "cyclists should find an alternative route."

As one of the Society's members who regularly cycles into and around Ipswich I was delighted when the developers of Regatta Quay and The Mill re-opened the dockside route between the Custom House and Stoke Bridge for pedestrians and cyclists last summer. As many will know, this forms part of a National Cycle Route which will (eventually) link Felixstowe with Oxford. It also provides an attractive local alternative to the heavily trafficked and polluted Star Lane.

In fact, I am now able to cycle between Nacton Road and Suffolk Record Office in Bramford Road without crossing the town centre. This extremely pleasant journey makes use of the Cycle Route through Holywells Park on to the Waterfront via Patteson Road. After an enjoyable meander along the dockside to Stoke Bridge, I use the toucan crossing giving access to the towpath near the skateboard park. This section is technically for pedestrians only but is already well used by many keen to find alternatives to travelling by car. Cycling on this riverside path does require concentration and due care to other users as it is rather narrow in places. Hopefully Tesco's will be required to make improvements in this area as part of the planning gain for their proposed development on the former B&Q site.

Leaving the river frontage at the (soon to be opened) pedestrian/cyclist bridge named after Sir Bobby Robson - why not Sir Chris Hoy?! - I use another toucan crossing at West End Road allowing me to cycle past Endeavour House and the Football Ground, across the very attractive green space of Alderman Park and out into Handford Road. It is then a simple matter of zigzagging through the residential streets, where there are no through routes for traffic, and out into Bramford Road.

The Value of Eastern Angles

When the Arts Council seemed likely to withdraw its funding from Eastern Angles, protesters weren't difficult to find! The theatre company formed in 1982 has produced something like 70

shows, two or three a year, and taken them to towns and villages throughout East Anglia. A loyal and appreciative audience has grown up and newcomers are discovering the joys of Eastern Angles' creativity. I was one of many who wrote strongly to the Arts Council, which thankfully reinstated most of the company's grant.

Ivan Cutting, one of the five founders and now Director of the company, gave his stimulating talk to the Society on 14 January. He described the group's wish from the outset to invent truly local shows with local topics and local speech, speech culled for example from 19th century newspapers which in those days printed what people actually said in full. Inspiration came from the sort of local history written by George Ewart Evans (e.g. Ask the Fellows who Cut the Hay), and from the Radio Ballads of Charles Parker and Ewan MacColl (e.g. The Ballad of John Axon) and from the plays compiled and put on by Peter Cheeseman in the theatre at Stoke-on-Trent. For a great many of their shows they have enjoyed the ever-fresh musical compositions of Pat Whymark ("a natural Paul McCartney").

Their topics have featured, to name a few, herring fishing, agricultural workers, brewing, fire fighters, lifeboatmen, the Anglo-Saxons and coming up soon Return to Akenfield and Getting Here, which will be about incomers from the Caribbean, Portugal and Poland.

Ivan explained Eastern Angles' continuing wish to be "true to the region". It would be easy and popular to adapt a Hardy novel for instance but it wouldn't be right to do so. Moreover, the company is keen "to push audiences a little further" rather than doing an East Anglian Lark Rise to Candleford! Above all, Eastern Angles aims to engage audiences many of whom don't see themselves as theatregoers. They come along because for some of them it will be seeing "their story".

Neil Salmon

Recent Observations

Former Sun Inn in St Stephen's Lane - good to see that this fine old building, restored by the Atfield family, is open again, as a furniture and gift shop - a local specialist shop.

Underpasses get a bad press, people complaining of their dirtiness. But the St Matthew's St and Princes St ones seem to us well kept, even though we prefer crossing at street level!

The bull sculpture has sadly been removed from Civic Drive where it looked good but was damaged by vandals. We hope it can be returned to a safer place; it is missed.

East Europeans are contributing to the local economy and still noticeable in reasonable numbers in town despite opinions to the contrary - the pound is worth more than the zloty!

Museums and art galleries across the country, especially in London, have reported better attendances because of the credit crunch - which may be the only good that's come of it.

Dance East have taken possession of their new studios in The Mill (Cranfield's) and are fitting it out. We wish them success as they bring more variety of use to the Waterfront.