



The Ipswich Society

NEWSLETTER

October 2017

Issue 209

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One of the many attractions over the 2017 Heritage Open Days weekend: Mutual House, on Princes Street and King Street, currently undergoing extensive restoration & renovation by Ipswich Building Society as its new town branch.

Editorial

Introducing a two-plaque issue of the *Newsletter*. The Basque children of Wherstead Park (the subject of one of our Winter Illustrated Talks) and Quay Place are featured in this issue. We also include an article on page 14 published at a time when central government – continuing its cuts to public services and reassuring us that the voluntary sector would ‘take up the slack’ – is now cutting funding to those very voluntary organisations.

The controversial Garden Bridge once planned for the Thames, surreptitiously slipped onto the cover of our July issue, is no more. Provoking strong arguments for and against, our own Upper Orwell Crossings are the subject of a talk after our AGM in April 2018 (see *Diary dates* on page 23). In addition, not one but three write-ups of Society Outings are included to reflect the diversity of destinations and the popularity of these trips amongst members. But please note the announcement on page 8.

We also look at the importance of Portland Stone to Ipswich and Suffolk and delve into the poverty-stricken history of ‘The Nichol’ in Shoreditch. Who remembers the Ipswich firm of Kenyon & Trott (page 6)? And if you were wondering why it’s been so problematic getting a train to London at weekends over the last fifteen years, our article on page 20 might shed a light. My grateful thanks to all the contributors to this issue.

Robin Gaylard

New members



Chairman's remarks

The October *Newsletter* is always the most difficult to write; a lack of activity throughout July and August means that as we reach September (as I'm writing) there is little to report.

Not that we haven't been busy, for example putting Heritage Open Days together is an incredibly frustrating and at times annoying task. It seems as if almost every property 'owner' wants to amend some minor detail of their entry. This frequently occurs when they've seen the printed copy of the booklet. 'No, we can't reprint, nor correct every single one by hand or even insert an addendum slip'.

For example, an offshoot of the Felixstowe Society, *Felixstowe Offshore Radio*, held an event to mark fifty years since the Marine Offences Act effectively put an end to Radio London and the other offshore stations. Their initial intention was to unveil a commemorative stone at tea-time on September 9 but over the summer had decided to change the time to 2.30pm. Unfortunately, it was too late: the flyers had already been printed, the word was out and the public confused.

Neil Thompson, the new volunteer who has done the vast majority of the hard work for our Heritage Open Days is to be congratulated for his unassuming ability to stay calm when yet another email arrives.

In my research for the weekly column in the *East Anglian Daily Times* (occasionally repeated in the *Ipswich Star*) I started looking into coffee shops. Back in the nineteenth century they were meeting-houses where business between companies was discussed and agreed. Today it is the multiple outlet coffee shops which dominate, but what I wanted to know about was the cafés of the 1960s and 1970s and I was advised to talk to Bob Shelley. What an amazing life story Bob has to tell, one of rags-to-riches repeated and repeated again throughout his life. Not only did he own four well-known Ipswich cafés, The Nippin, Fore Snax, Jack's and one in the former Eagle Tavern in Wherstead Road, but he used his sporting contacts to raise thousands of pounds for charity. Bob also ran a taxi business, a security company, a Tonibell ice cream franchise and a bed & breakfast establishment (above Jack's Café). His greatest interest was, no doubt, sport: from boxing at Westbourne School to running the Arcade Boxing Club, to staging black tie boxing dinners at Copdock and commentating on the BBC.

His father was in the army and transferred between camps on a regular basis thus Bob didn't stay in a single school for more than eighteen months – not the best way to get an education. He cut his teeth in the catering business in Quick Snax in Norwich Road where he worked the late shift, serving customers until well past midnight. You can read about the café in a forthcoming *EADT* article.

It is perfectly understandable that Ipswich Borough Council should maximise the income from its assets. If central government grants are being reduced while the demands on public services continue to grow, then it's only natural that the Council should look elsewhere for income.

Some of the new income streams have not gone down well with the council tax payers. One large and brash example is 'The Beach' – nothing more than a travelling fair that has stayed far too long in Christchurch Park. Yes it was themed around a pile of sand and a few deckchairs but it certainly upset regular park users. Being travelling showmen, they have the right to display posters around the town giving the populous notice of the forthcoming event. A number of Ipswich Society members felt that the proliferation of 'Beach' posters was way beyond an acceptable limit.

This event will need careful review before it happens again.

John Norman

Planning matters

36 Westerfield Road. A second application for a single storey house, this time with a pitched rather than a flat roof, was discussed at the Planning Committee on June 28 and was granted permission. Thus we have a modern bungalow in a back garden with a pitched roof rather than a flat roof.

21 Museum Street. An excellent proposal to convert this 17th century house (Listed Grade II) on the corner of Museum and Elm Streets, formerly used by Scrutton, Bland as part of their offices, back to a house.

New Wolsey Theatre. A few months after his death, the distinguished modern theatre architect, Rodney Ham's last work, is in trouble again. Built in 1979, it had to be re-roofed after 25 years; the roof was changed in 2004-5; it still leaks and this time Graham Lambert proposes its replacement with a steel outer, coloured grey, bonded to thick insulation. This should provide a satisfactory waterproof, insulated and aesthetically satisfactory solution.

Pooley's Yard Hotel. Travelodge have been granted permission to build an hotel opposite the railway station. It is functional rather than beautiful.

57 Henley Road. The large late 19th century redbrick house on the corner of Henley and St Edmunds Roads is already in multiple use, one of which was a Spiritualist Meeting Room. New owners have made two separate proposals. (a) Firstly, to convert the house into six apartments which will require the conversion of a garage to a kitchen and the demolition of a 1970s ground floor extension to the rear. We have made some minor objections to the details, but otherwise support the application which has been granted permission.

57 Henley Road. (b) Secondly, the application is to build a three-bed house in the back garden with access from St Edmunds Road. This would result in the loss of amenity space for the inhabitants of the new apartments and for the new house. There is inadequate car parking space for the new house and the new access would lose a street parking space as well as a length of Victorian garden wall. Additionally, the pastiche design is unacceptable in 2017. We have objected. This has been refused; at the time of writing the decision notice was not available.

Old B & Q site, Grafton Way. The proposal for 130 houses, 81 flats (in a 12 storey tower), 48 live-work units, six restaurants, 60-bed hotel with restaurant, public open space and cycle/walkway has now come to application. Whilst we are keen to see redevelopment of this critical central site, it is vital that it is carried out to a high quality architectural design and landscaping. To that end, the developers carried out a small public consultation last year at the Novotel at which members of the public gave their opinions; there have been three 'preapp' meetings with the IBC and dialogue with Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE).

So far, the developers have failed to produce adequate plans for the riverside walk/cycle-way, its landscaping and connections to the bridges at either end. There would be few trees, no indication of street furniture such as seats, no design details of the cycle and pedestrian way. The double ramp access to the frail Princes Street Bridge is inadequate to encourage people to walk and cycle from the station to the town centre, Cardinal Park, the Waterfront and the University. This is a key part of a transport link to the Sroughton development in due course; it is vital for the future transport links in the town centre and to form an attractive water feature that this is done properly. It is more important for traffic flows in the future than the proposed bridges but far cheaper. You can object directly in the usual way and you can also contact STG, the consultants hired by Ipswich Borough Council to review the Public Realm in the Town Centre.

The developers of **Snoasis**, the proposed leisure and ski slope centre at Great Blakenham have submitted another application to deal with outstanding matters and have announced to the media that they are going to go ahead and that they have raised the money: ("£450,000,000 is not a lot these days" they said to the *Star!*).

Mike Cook

The Basque children of Wherstead Park

The Spanish Civil War was a bitter conflict, which divided the nation. Even now, the Spanish people are still learning to come to terms with their past which saw tens of thousands of deaths and millions uprooted and destitute. The plight of the Basque people was particularly tragic following the bombing of the town of Guernica in April 1937 by the planes of the Nazi Condor Legion.

The destruction of Guernica, which inspired Pablo Picasso to paint his masterpiece of the same name, also brought nearly 4,000 children to Britain as refugees from the Spanish Civil War. They sailed on the steamship the '*Habana*' on 21 May 1937.

Permission was reluctantly granted to accept the Basque children but the government refused to be responsible financially for the children. It demanded that the newly-formed Basque Children's Committee guarantee 10 shillings per week from non-government sources for the care and education of each child.

One hundred Basque refugee children arrived at Ipswich railway station on 23 June 1937 and were taken to Wherstead Park, then an empty mansion owned by local businessman Stuart Paul. The Ipswich Industrial Co-operative Society played an important part in their care and it was a happy coincidence that an event to mark eighty years since their arrival took place at the mansion on Saturday 10 June 2017. Wherstead Park today is home to the offices of the East of England Co-op, who hosted the gathering; a commemorative plaque was unveiled by one of the original inmates, Paco Robles, on his first return to the venue in eighty years. He is wearing the pale grey suit in the photograph.

There were camps set up all over Britain and the children were moved a number of times. The last Basque children left Suffolk in 1939. Some returned to Spain just as World War II started; others, like Paco, were lucky enough to remain in Britain and make a life here.

R.G.

See Diary dates on page 23 for our January 2018 Winter Illustrated Talk on this subject by Dr Edward Packard.



Kenyon & Trott

I joined Kenyon and Trott at age 15, as an apprentice electroplater. There were eight of us workers, plus Mr Flory the boss.

On the left of the photo is a large tank for cadmium plating. Above it are bars for suspending items to be plated. Across the window you can see two car bumpers which would be waiting either to dry or to be plated. Further right is a tank for chrome plating solution – pretty horrible stuff. There were fumes everywhere and little ventilation. The dials on the wall were for setting the voltage/current of the process. Plating was all done on DC current.

If there were bumpers being plated, the first process would be to strip off and de-rust the metal to get the old plating off. Nitric acid was used to clean the brass, hydrochloric acid – in a big vat – was used for the de-rusting, and sulphuric acid was used with electrolysis to get the old chrome off. Non-ferrous metals (e.g. copper and brass) didn't need the heavy copper plating.

Then the bumpers would be ground progressively finer by a series of abrasive belts and dollies (a dolly is a stitched cloth pad two inches wide, coated in glue and rolled in abrasive, at various grades). The belt would have been on a roller at the back and a dolly at the front going very fast. I saw a workmate cut his arm badly by walking into one of the belts: there were no belt-guards. There was not much awareness of health or safety in those days.

After grinding to a fine finish, the bumpers would be copper-plated with a heavy coat of copper, then polished on a lathe, then nickel plated, again polished to a high degree; finally they would be cleaned again and chrome-plated. Headlight rims and motorcycle exhausts and vehicle radiators were also done.



Photograph taken by Ron Wragg between 1954 and 1960, showing the inside of the works of Kenyon and Trott, electroplaters and metal finishers, of St Stephen's Lane, Ipswich. (The premises are now under the Buttermarket Centre)

We also carried out silver-plating of antiques: teapots, coffee pots, cutlery, trays, jugs etc. We also did a small amount of gilding of the insides of silver cigarette cases and pots; very small-scale work with a very small amount of gold on a bit of wire.

Small items would be cleaned by acid and then rinsed and stopped with sodium cyanide (which was in an old gas copper) prior to cadmium or zinc-plating. For instance, things like nuts and bolts, tie rods etc, would come from Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies to be cadmium-plated.

There was a process called barrel-plating, using a machine which looked like a cement mixer which went round and round. This was the plating vat, and contained plating solution plus an anode of the metal you wanted to plate onto the very small items which would be put in there *en masse* instead of being hung on a piece of wire.

We passivated (dipped in a mix of chemicals) a lot of radio chassis (I think it was for Pye, the radio firm) to stop them corroding in hot climes. We also did a tremendous amount of work for the US Air Force: steel helmets for parade purposes, the air police; we also did slide-action pistols (45s) for them, bayonets, and all the bits of rifles. They thought that they looked good on parade, but I thought they looked ghastly. Some British RAF regiment blokes also had their bayonets done but they brought them back later, asking for it all to be taken off because they got into trouble for doing it! We polished copper and brass domestic items, also tin-plated the inside of copper saucepans and did lacquer-work, polishing brass items and lacquering them to keep them shiny.

There were three workshops in the one building: the first one was for nickel and zinc, the middle one contained a stripping vat to take off chrome and rust, and then the third one was for grinding and polishing.

My apprenticeship took six years and got me three years deferment of my National Service, which then followed. We worked Monday to Friday, with Saturday morning on overtime. We worked 7.30am to 5pm, or something like that. My pay as an apprentice was miserable – I never got to full wage as I never went back after my National Service! After 17 months open air work in the RAF in Cyprus, factory conditions didn't appeal any more.

Ron Wragg

[Kenyon & Trott Limited was registered in 1934 with its registered office in Ipswich.]

Ipswich Building Preservation Trust



Annual General Meeting

Guest speaker: Fiona Cairns, Director of the Suffolk Preservation Society

will give a talk on the work of the SPS, with emphasis on the historic built environment.

Fiona is the Director of SPS, having joined in 2012. She has had some twenty years previous experience as a conservation planner, including with Westminster City Council and Monmouthshire County Council.



Please book your place

Tuesday 14 November, 6.30 for 7pm

Isaac's Sale Room and Crossway (first floor), Ipswich Waterfront

Light refreshments will be served from 6.30

RSVP to: gcd@fennwright.co.uk

Coytes Gardens

The name of this by-way comes from a time when there were many gardens in Ipswich and Dr Edmund Beeston (died 1713), an eminent physician in Ipswich who was ‘exquisitely skilled in botanic knowledge’, established his physic garden behind his house in Queen Street. His grandson, William Beeston Coyte, inherited the garden and it is his surname after which Coytes Gardens is named. If there was any justice, it really should have been ‘Beestons Gardens’.

In the summer of 2017, the Highways Authority (Suffolk County Council) has seen fit to rip up all the limestone setts, destroying the middle gutter. They have apparently reused as many of the original blocks as they could – the yellow parking line paint can be seen dotted about in the new surface – and created a cambered roadway with side gutters. The blocks have been set into concrete. Thus we lose a last vestige of the first attempts to pave the streets of Ipswich. Presumably a number of blocks were broken in the process; this is reflected in the extension of modern block pavements deep into Coytes Gardens from the Princes Street end. These comparison photographs put together by Tim Leggett highlight what some are calling ‘corporate vandalism’; others might see it as an improvement.



Coytes Gardens in the 1960s, 2014 and summer 2017

Ipswich Society Outings

Our members' outings this summer have been very successful with interesting venues and high attendance – a big thank you to the volunteers on our Outings Committee. At our meeting in July to discuss the 2018 programme it was noted that there has been an increasing number of last-minute cancellations. We should remind you that we cannot guarantee that booking fees will be automatically refunded if a cancellation is made later than one week prior to the date of the excursion.

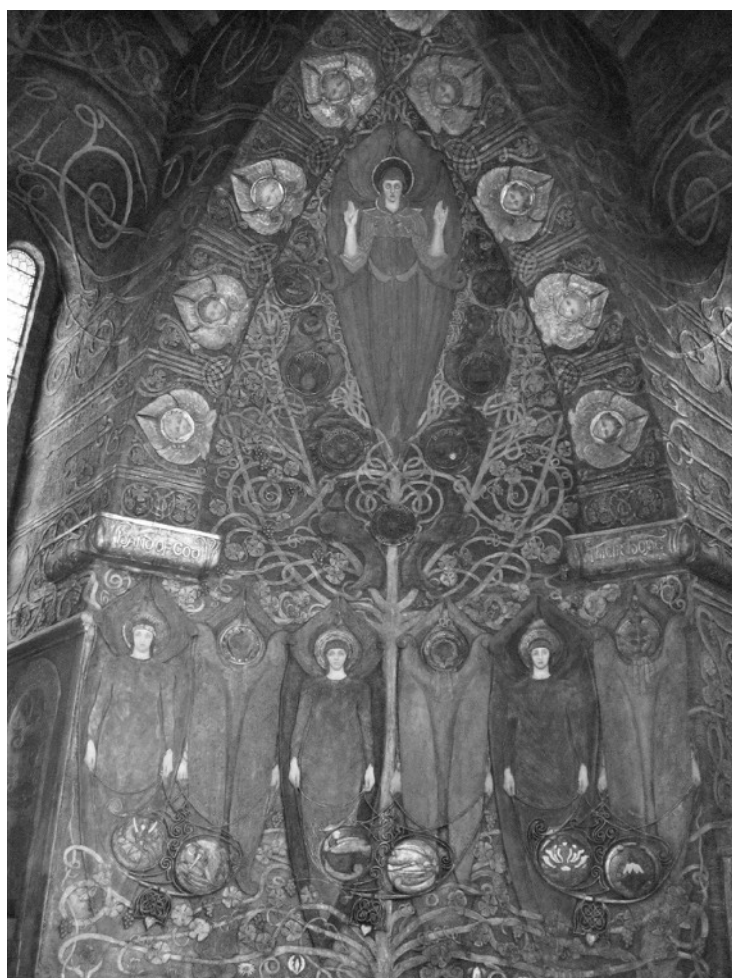
Caroline Markham

The Watts Gallery and Chapel

In July a group from The Ipswich Society visited Watts Gallery, an artists' village near Guildford founded by the Victorian Symbolist artist G.F. Watts. We had a guided tour around the gallery to discover the diverse collection of works by George Frederic Watts (1819-1904). There were over 100 paintings and sculptures on display.



Exterior and interior of the Watts Memorial Chapel



We then visited Limmerslease, the artist's home and one of the most celebrated Arts and Crafts houses in Surrey, designed by the famous architect Sir Ernest George. Watts lived here with his wife Mary (1839-1938) who designed the decorative gesso panels on the ceiling. While at the house we saw the studio where he painted and visited the modern extension with exhibitions of works by others including the De Morgan collection of ceramics.

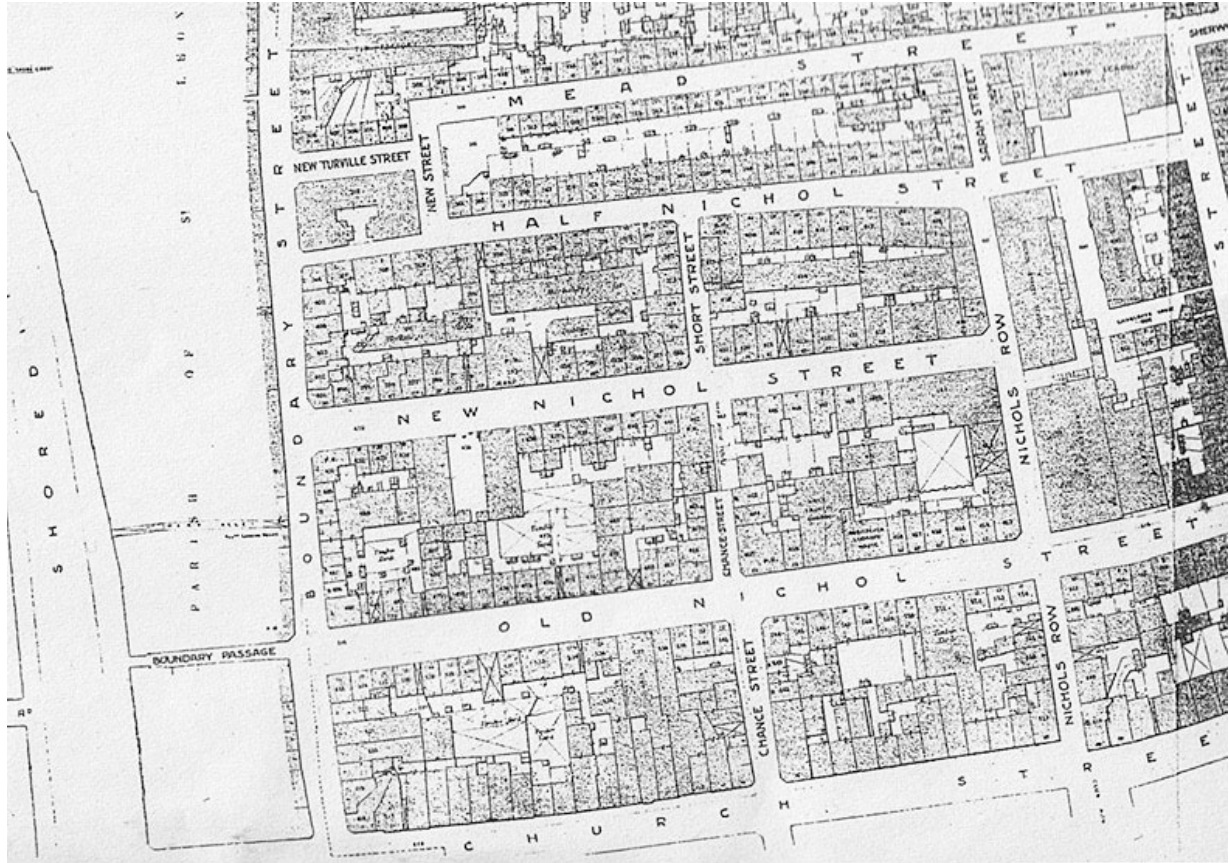
We walked a short way up the lane to the chapel, entirely designed and built by Mary with help from the local people at Compton. This was a memorial chapel for the overflow graveyard from the parish church nearby. It is a Grade I Listed, Arts & Crafts masterpiece. The interior is a unique example of Art Nouveau and Celtic design. Nearby were the cloisters, beautiful terracotta stones and the memorial to G.F. Watts and Mary Watts.

Including morning coffee and lunch this proved to be a very interesting and enjoyable visit.

Barbara Barker

Shoreditch & Bethnal Green

On 18 March my wheelchair, husband Martin & I went on the Ipswich Society outing for a fascinating guided walk (Tate Modern to St Pauls) to view ancient & modern city art in context, visit the 'Walkie Talkie' Sky Garden and Whitechapel Bell Foundry (we were the last tour before its closure). Led by John Norman, the day could not have been anything but informative and enjoyable.



<https://boundarylaundrette.wordpress.com/boundary-estate-a-vicar-an-author-the-jago/>

As it happens, I am extremely interested in the Shoreditch and Bethnal Green area of London and the 15 acre site once known as The Nichol. In 1875 The Nichol was regarded as London's most notorious slum where up to 6,000 people existed in appalling poverty but where 'slum lords' were profiting by anything up to 160% in rent from houses described by pioneering social reformer and founder of the Salvation Army, Charles Booth: 'as broken down and deplorable as their unfortunate inhabitants.' After investigation by Government Inspectors in 1875, the Nichol was one of the first slum areas to be cleared, but promises of rehousing the inhabitants were not fulfilled: a familiar story?

Originally, The Nichol was provided for Huguenot refugees; very profitable where silk was woven and the introduction of French upholstered furniture proved very successful until the industrial revolution overtook their unique skills and all spiralled downwards.

My paternal great-grandparents lived in Boundary Street, The Nichol c.1849 -1856. In 1849 they returned there from Upware in Cambridgeshire where my Great Grandfather was a Toll Collector connected with river trade which failed completely when the railway came alongside.



www.redherringsandwhitelies.co.uk/mary_a_hockerday.html

Great Grandfather was involved in the furniture trade but in hard times they ended up in *Homerton Workhouse where my Grandfather was born on the same day his sister died, aged 18 months. My Great Grandmother registered the birth of her son and – so expressive of the tragedy – the Death Certificate records, ‘mother present at the death’ of her daughter. I am slowly piecing their story together. There is a family legend that they were of Huguenot stock, difficult to prove, and were returning to The Nichol to be with other families they had known. My Great Grandfather disappeared c.1855 – but Great Grandmother struggled on, making a marriage of convenience (to a widower with 3 children) and eventually got her two surviving sons out

of the Nichol. Both boys became Master Craftsmen: one went out to Canada, the other, my Grandfather (1849-1894) remained in the East End. The ‘Canadian’ had nine children; my ‘London’ Grandfather had a family of seven, the youngest being my father 1890-1956.

[*Ironically, Homerton Workhouse became one of the first lying-in hospitals, now The Homerton NHS Trust where our younger son, Dr Adam Croucher, is now a Consultant specialising in AIDS/HIV, STDs, and Contraception.]

During my ongoing research of the area, I came across two interesting buildings: 19 Princelet Street which once housed weavers, then became a “hidden” Synagogue, a place of world refuge. The building is so fragile that private tours are limited. There is also another house at 4 Princelet Street, with its original Georgian interior maintained. One of our sons has visited and found it fascinating. Could this area of interest be a suitable follow-on from the lost house/business at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry? (Sadly, we missed out on the Ipswich Society visit to the Foundling Hospital.) The East End is always full of life and colour including the shadier side, of course. Whether Bethnal Green & Shoreditch could become the subject of another Ipswich Society outing only our indefatigable Chairman John Norman could say; but my wheelchair, husband Martin and I have pens poised to sign up!

Janice Croucher

References:-

Booth, Charles: *In Darkest England and the way out*, London, 1890.

Wise, Sarah: *The Blackest Streets: the life and death of a Victorian slum*, Bodley Head, London, 2008.

Snippets

Hope for Butter Market premises

It is welcome news that plans are afoot to convert the former BHS site into separate units. Sad as was the demise of BHS, the buildings themselves never looked like a single department store from outside or inside. There are three separate shop fronts, at least. It's not clear how four restaurants could flourish here but any viable use would enhance the street scene in this important part of the town centre.

More awards for Ipswich parks

Green Flags are a national award for the country's best parks and open spaces. So this year's awards to Christchurch Park (now 10 annual awards) and Holywells Park (now 7 awards) are a wonderful reminder that our parks collectively have long been seen as one of the town's greatest assets. The 2017 summer of sunshine has seen the parks hugely appreciated by people of all ages, perhaps children especially.

Arts Council's NPOs

National Portfolio Organisations don't sound very appealing. But this is the name given by the Arts Council to organisations delivering nationally significant cultural work. The New Wolsey Theatre, Dance East and Eastern Angles have received this funding for several years but the total number of NPOs in Ipswich now is eight, more than any other town or city in the East of England. It reflects very well on the variety and innovation of our arts scene.

Increased numbers of tourists and visitors

Figures for 2016 show that there was a 2.5% rise in visitors to Ipswich. (Will 2017 be even better?) This is a welcome boost to the town's economy, with shops, hotels, restaurants, bars and cafés all benefiting. There may also be longer term benefits if visitors decide they would like to live or work here or perhaps start a business.

Hotels in Ipswich

A new 100 bedroom Travelodge may be built on the site of Pooley's Yard almost opposite the railway station. This would certainly be convenient for travellers by rail. The existing Travelodge in Duke Street is similarly convenient for the University and Suffolk New College. There are 15 hotels within Ipswich and 8 on the outskirts.

A 60 bedroom hotel is also proposed as one element of the Grafton Way riverside development, which would also include town houses, flats and live-work units.

British Sugar site at Sproughton

The huge concrete silos will soon no longer be a landmark. Demolition is expected to take about 16 weeks and the concrete will be further broken up and used as hardcore when IBC is able to develop the 130 acre site as a business park.



Offices into flats – but cars?

Proposals to convert offices on the corner of Arcade Street and Museum Street will be followed by many others in the area when Birketts Solicitors move into their new building in Princes Street. These offices could house many people in quite spacious flats. But the absence of on-site car parking must limit the types of residents who would be interested.

Ipswich Grain Terminal

We no longer talk of European Grain Mountains but the reference could still apply to Ipswich Grain Terminal, one of the largest storage bins in the country of combinable crops. Over one million tonnes of grain is handled each year, 85% going to mainland Europe. Ipswich today exports some 25% of the UK's total wheat exports. To get the grain to the port from rural Suffolk up to 400 trucks per day trundle along Nacton and Landseer Roads following the summer harvest. This grain is a serious contributor to the UK's total exports, earning a substantial foreign income and contribution to the balance of payments.

Waterfront Life

Those of us who live on the Waterfront or close to it, for that matter, will have seen the excellent monthly magazine known as *Waterfront life*. Meeting the editor Richard Stewart recently, we realised that the aims of the magazine are similar to those of the Society – but very different from our *Newsletter*.

This smart glossy, upmarket magazine suits the subject matter which, of course, is our smart glossy Waterfront. It contains sections on a bit of history, many matters to do with business on the Waterfront, a useful recurring part dealing with student life and features about shopping in the Saints area adjoining the western end of the Waterfront.

Supporting and subsidised by local businesses this is a great addition to the Ipswich scene. Richard Stewart tells us that the success of the subsections suggests that there may be offshoots from *Waterfront life* as interest around the town develops in this worthy project. Other members in different parts of Ipswich may find a copy of a freebie magazine promoting their part of the town landing on the doormat in the near future; good luck.

Crewless Shipping

In Issue 196 (July 2014) under the headline *Looks like we got us a convoy* we told you about driverless trucks, convoys of up to five vehicles in close succession that were undergoing test runs in Spain. You may have seen in the National Press recently that a similar scheme is to be trialled here in the UK (but with only three trucks, one with a driver and the others computer controlled). Well, driverless technology is now spreading to shipping and the world's first 'crewless' container vessels are currently under construction in Japan. Rolls Royce are developing unmanned drone ships operating by GPS that will sail the world's oceans without a crew and Norway is building a fully automated electric ship that gathers its power from solar panels.

That simply leaves one question, do such ships need a pilot to sail into Harwich Harbour and can they dock at Felixstowe without the aid of tugs? (NB. 'Crewless' means nobody on the bridge; we assume that they still need a maintenance crew to keep the engine running. Currently, on a container ship the crew account for just over 40% of the running costs.)

Heritage Open Days 2017

It seems to be tempting fate to describe the event on September 9 and 10 as 'the best ever'. Surely, one day we will merely equal the previous year – or even have an average one? This major element of the Society's calendar owes its success to those from the many participating venues who open their buildings to the public, also to the numerous volunteers who help out in distribution of leaflets and booklets, also manning the venues, welcoming visitors and generally promoting our Society. Behind it all is the Society's Executive Committee, notably the Chairman and Hon. Secretary, and this year the baton in drawing all the information together and editing the HOD booklet passed from our Treasurer, Graham Smith, to Neil Thompson. Such a magnificent event, of course, ultimately relies on the large number of visitors who make it all worthwhile. (And support from the media was most gratifying, too.)

The changing face of charity in Ipswich

“Charities play a fundamental role in our civic life. They are often in the front line of support for the most vulnerable and are therefore in the best place to assess their needs. They not only provide. They inspire and innovate and through their advocacy help shape our laws, government policies and society as a whole.”

(House of Lords Select Committee on Charities report 2017)

We live in interesting times. As national government cuts funding to local government and health, our local public sector is now reducing statutory services provided to the public. This includes services they buy in from local partners, including charities. As a result, many local charities are now facing a devastating double hit of rising demand from those in need, and reduced funding to support the people they are committed to help. They must now rely on their resilience and ability to adapt.

The role of charities in public services is not a new one. Long before there was a public sector, charities were the only providers of services to the public and those in need. Hospitals and schools, for example, all started this way. A charity should only ever undertake an activity because it is in the best interests of its beneficiaries and keeping that as an absolute principle is at the heart of why charities can deliver services for the communities in such a powerful way. They're not just cheaper. They provide support *with* people – with volunteers, businesses, local and national donors and foundations and the communities around them. Charities enable us to help each other.

The charitable sector has faced negative national media coverage over the last few years, especially following the fall of Kids Company. Ironically, the factors that contributed to that one situation will have little resonance for our local charities, as our charitable sector, like our business sector, is largely made up of small and medium sized organisations. Over half of our charities in Suffolk have an income of under £10,000 and rely almost entirely on volunteer support.

Of the 2,650 registered charities in Suffolk, just over 40 have an income of over £1 million. While some people blanch at seeming duplication, it's worth remembering that each charity is a local powerhouse, driven by local people determined to make a local difference. Each group creates a hub of committed volunteers and expert staff to serve communities they know well.



These organisations have an extraordinary but often hidden impact for all of us. A recent survey for the Charities Aid Foundation showed that our use of charity services is widespread and increasing, with 98% of us having used a charity at some point and 83% having used a charity service in the last year.

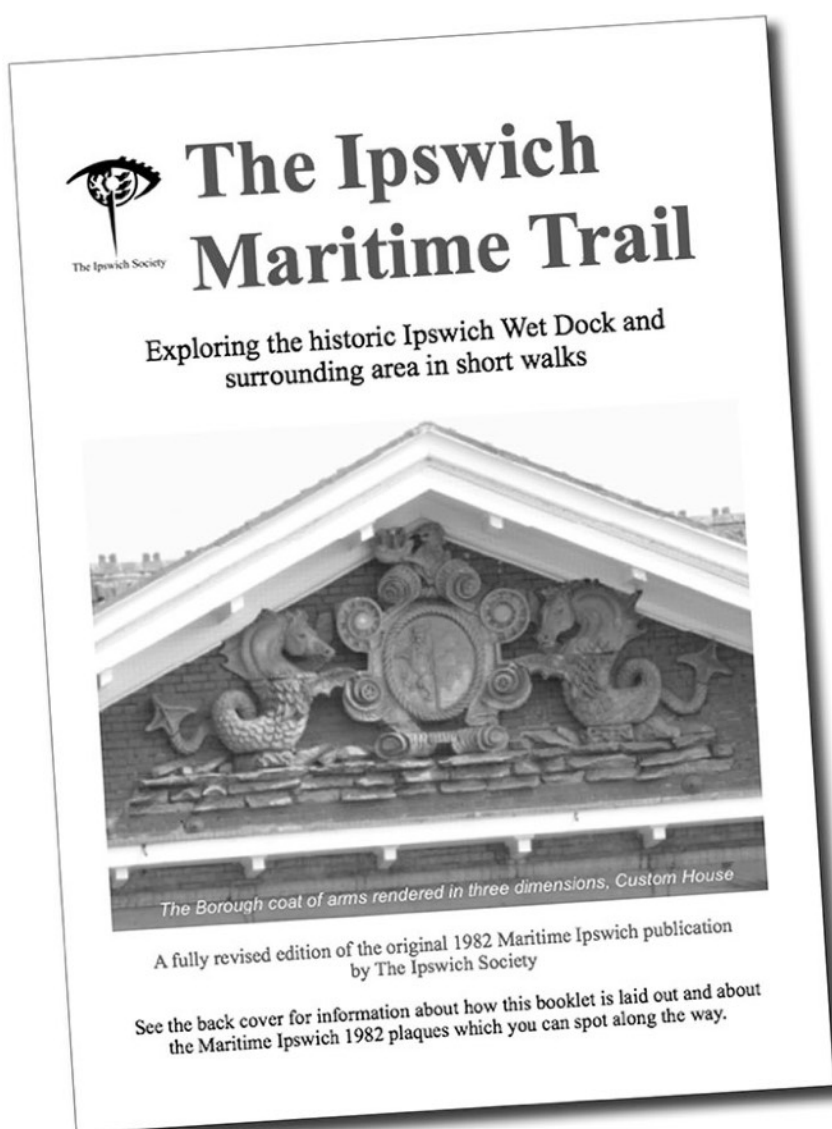
Ipswich is a vibrant and generous town and hosts a wide range of organisations, many of

whom meet the sharpest need. Our Hospice is one of the largest charities in Suffolk, well known by all, but many may be unaware of the host of other organisations supporting the young and old, responding to financial, social and health crisis, bringing the community together and supporting wellbeing.

Last year, the Suffolk Community Foundation distributed over £2 million of funding in Suffolk and over £800,000 of these grants were made to Ipswich based organisations. This reflects both the level of need that Ipswich faces, as highlighted in our recent *Hidden Needs* report. It also reflects the role that Ipswich plays as our county town, providing a base for activities that are delivered across the county.

So, as funding grows ever tighter, what is the future for our local organisations? Charities enable us to come together and change the world and those they support need our help more than ever. With an estimated 78p in every charitable pound raised in Suffolk leaving the county, it's time to look at how we can use local money to tackle local issues more effectively, whether that's our public-sector funding or our local giving.

Wendy Herber (*Head of Partnerships, Suffolk Community Foundation*)



New Society publication

Ipswich is the oldest, continuously-settled town in England with a rich maritime and manufacturing past. The *Ipswich Maritime Trail* booklet takes visitors to some of the most interesting heritage buildings and locations in Ipswich, on and around the historic Wet Dock. Along the way, you can spot the ten Maritime Ipswich plaques mounted by The Ipswich Society in 1982.

Illustrated in colour and with a useful map, the *Ipswich Maritime Trail* is available for £2 from the Tourist Information Office in the Church of St Stephen, Ipswich.

Portland comes to Suffolk

You may have admired Ipswich's fine old Post Office on Cornhill, but did you know where its gleaming white stone came from? Many people know about the white Portland stone buildings of London, including St Paul's Cathedral and Buckingham Palace. Far fewer know that some of that Portland stone has found its way to Suffolk. Suffolk has its brick and timber-framed buildings.



If stone was needed in medieval times, there was flint. Other stone for churches was traditionally brought by river and sea from Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire. But by the nineteenth century stone from the tiny island of Portland off the Dorset coast had become very fashionable. London was busy building government and public buildings of Portland stone and others across the country were following London's example. Architects and builders were realising that Portland stone is very strong and weathers away more slowly than many other stones. Improved transport meant that stone could be obtained more easily and mechanisation helped to keep costs down.

Portland stone was formed from deposits on the floor of a warm shallow sea about 150 million years ago. If you look closely at it you can see that it is made of small spheres of limestone that built up around fragments of sand or shell. If you are lucky you may even find the cast of a fossil. You can find the stone in buildings and monuments across Suffolk.

Ipswich Cornhill is a good place to start a Portland stone spotting expedition. There is some Portland stone on the Town Hall, although the bulk of the building is of stone from near Bath, with pillars of Mansfield stone. The Corn Exchange, behind the Town Hall was cleaned in 2009, showing off the white Portland stone and pilasters of Scottish sandstone. But the star is the old Post Office.

In the 1870s Ipswich was growing fast and its old public buildings were becoming too small. Ipswich Corporation decided to have a new Post Office built on Cornhill, on the site of the old Corn Exchange. Following an architectural competition, and advice from the Royal Institute of British Architects, a design by John Johnson of Queen Victoria Street in London was chosen to provide space for a Post Office and offices for other public purposes. Money was raised and D.C. Jones of Gloucester was chosen to erect a splendid Portland stone building with four figures over the portico, representing industry, electricity, steam and commerce. The building was leased to the Post Office in 1880 and was until recently a bank.

Each piece of stone used to build the old Post Office will have been quarried by hand, typically by a team of four from the same family.

It will have been pulled by horses to the top of a tramway and carried by gravity down the steep slopes of the island. The individual stones were most probably cut to shape on the island, possibly at the new steam-operated saw mill that opened in 1877.

They may have been transported from the island on the recently opened railway, but it is likely that they were loaded on to a barge for shipment to Ipswich.

Elsewhere in Ipswich, smaller objects are made of Portland stone. For example, Ipswich Old Cemetery has many Commonwealth War Graves Commission Portland headstones.

Ipswich also played a role in providing the Portland headstones for many war graves around the world as Saunders of Ipswich had a contract to produce some of them. After the Second World War these gravestones will have been quarried by hand in the traditional way, although by then mechanised cranes, excavators and drills were starting to be used in peripheral activities. Masonry works prepared quarried stone for use and were becoming highly mechanised, with saws, planing machines and overhead gantries.

More recently, Linda Thomas used Portland stone for her sculpture in Christchurch Park known as *Innocence*. Carved in 2007 out of a single piece, the sculpture is intended to be touched and a hole, inspired by the windows at the entrance to Christchurch Mansion, provides views into the Park. Linda's stone was from one of the few surviving quarries on Portland. It came from Bowers Quarry where stone is cut in the open air by giant saws attached to tractors. Today a great deal of the Portland stone is mined underground, minimising damage to the environment and to the stone itself.

Elsewhere in Suffolk there are Portland stone window sills, steps, doorways and memorials to be found by the keen Portland stone spotter. It is difficult to know where to start, but a few examples may help.

At the end of the High Street towards Cambridge, Newmarket has an impressive Portland stone drinking fountain, about five metres high. It was erected in 1910 in memory of Sir Daniel Cooper a merchant and philanthropist who had a house and owned race horses in Newmarket. Nearby, a new bronze statue of the Queen with two of her horses standing on a Portland stone base was unveiled on 3 November 2016.

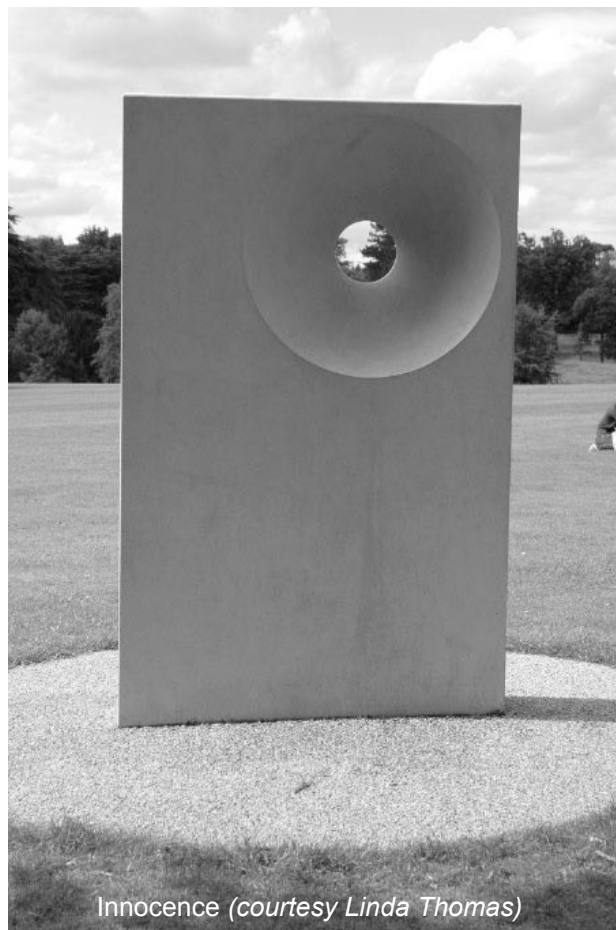
In Bury St Edmunds a Portland stone sundial and a drinking fountain, used as a planter, is to be found in the Abbey Gardens. It was donated to the town in 1869 and moved to its present location in 1939. The south facing side has a normal sundial whilst the west has a diagram showing how many minutes to add or subtract to get Greenwich Mean Time.

Nearby, The Suffolk Record Office in Raingate Street is a listed building built between 1963 and 1965. It is built of brick with Portland stone dressings.

Scattered around Suffolk there are many Portland stone war memorials. The eighteen foot high memorial at Framlingham is particularly well-maintained. It was completed in 1921 after much debate about its location, style and stone. The Portland stone soldier on Mildenhall war memorial is also quite striking. Some Suffolk churchyards, for example Southwold, Haverhill and Brandon also contain war graves with Portland stone headstones.

Gill Hackman

(see over for references)



Innocence (courtesy Linda Thomas)

Further information on Portland Stone

Bettley, James and Pevsner, Nikolaus: *Buildings of England, Suffolk: East and Suffolk: West* volumes, Yale 2015

Bury Society (www.burysociety.com)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org)

GeoSuffolk Times, December 2009: *Ipswich Town Hall and Corn Exchange*

Hackman, Gill: *Stone to build London, Portland's Legacy*, Folly Books, 2014

Historic England, Listed Building records.

Ipswich Journal archives

Ipswich Borough Council Minute Books, Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich

Newmarket Local History Society (www.newmarketlhs.org.uk)

Ipswich Society visit to Eltham Palace – Tuesday August 8

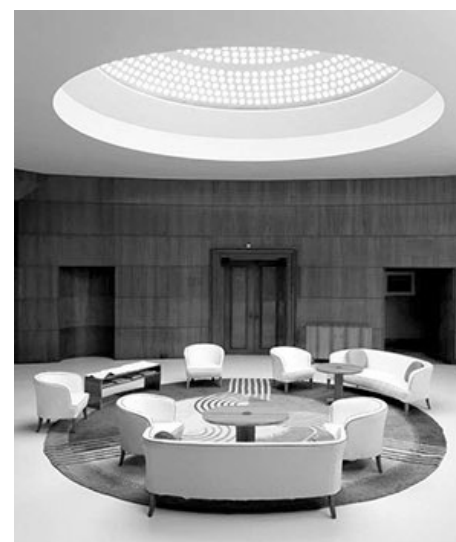
We knew a certain amount about the transformation of Eltham Palace by the Courtauld family but little besides, so this was a journey of discovery and delight. From 1305 until the late 16th century Eltham was a major palace and where Henry VIII spent much of his boyhood. Some ten miles south-east of the City, it stands on a low hill, within what would have been an extensive deer park, with views from its bastions towards Greenwich and the Tower beyond. The palace was once surrounded by a moat, which we crossed by way of the fine 15th century arched bridge. Full of carp, the moat now surrounds two sides of the site while the rest has long been filled in and grassed – the ancient walls giving shelter to a glorious long herbaceous border replanted in 2000 – plus rose and topiary gardens.

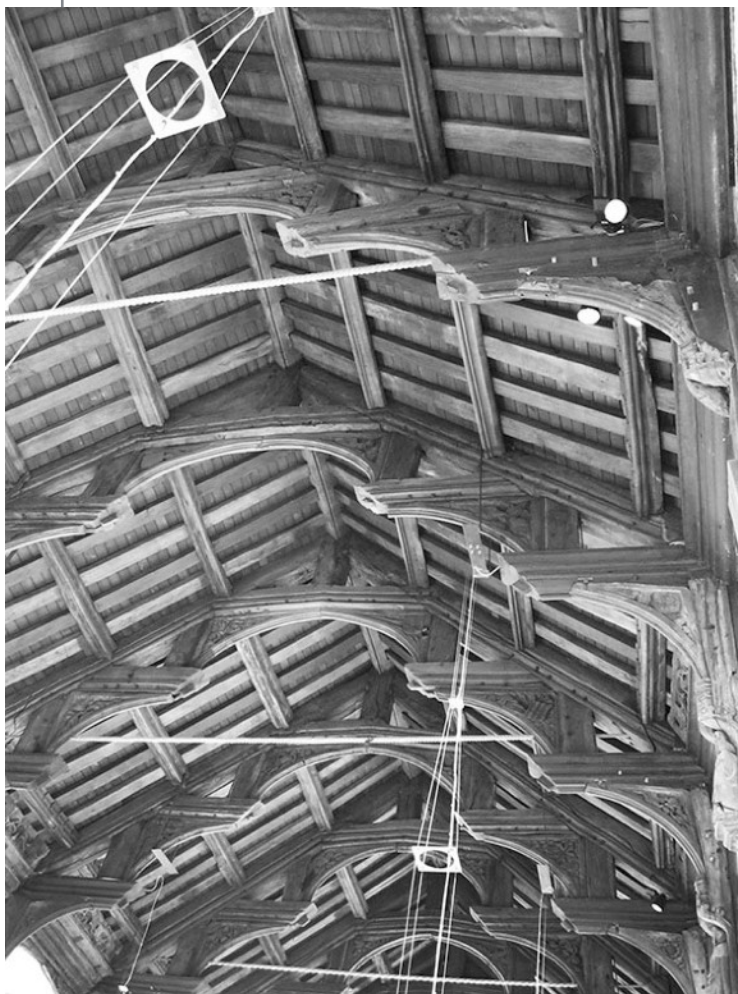
The palace is dominated by the splendid mediaeval Great Hall of royal proportions, with a glorious double hammer beam roof, but this is the only part of the ancient building to survive. The rest fell into disrepair until re-modelled by Stephen and Virginia Courtauld as a contemporary country house of the 1930s. The exterior in brick and stone harks back to older times, but the Art Deco interior is a total surprise.

The circular entrance hall of Scandinavian design has original furniture and fittings and leads to a drawing room, library and dining room in Art Deco, with no expense spared. Details in the dining room include splendid double doors of lacquer with gold inlays of wild animals. Upstairs, bedrooms include the master and lady's bedrooms, with every "modern" comfort, including electric "coal" fires, telephones and central heating. A bathroom with marble bath and gold plated taps with walls of gold mosaic is lavish even by today's standards. And not forgetting the central vacuum cleaning system to which a machine could be connected in each room. Certainly an advance on Downton Abbey!

The site now benefits from a very pleasant new café and facilities, plus children's area. We also noticed that the discovery trail for children was providing a lot of interest and entertainment. Our thanks to June Peck and her helpers for all the organisation which resulted in such an intriguing and enjoyable visit.

Pat Grimwade





Ipswich Heritage: Past, Present and Future

Saturday 18 November 2017

Organised by the Ipswich Heritage Forum, this symposium explores Ipswich's rich heritage through a number of fascinating presentations from a variety of voluntary groups and organisations that have been involved in the town, as well as an opportunity to discuss how best to sustain and further develop heritage priorities for the future success of Ipswich.

Organisations attending will include: Ipswich Heritage Forum & Ipswich Conservation and Design Panel, Ipswich Society, Ipswich Historic Churches Trust, Ipswich Building Preservation Trust, Ipswich Archaeological Trust, Friends of Ipswich Museums, Friends of Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Transport Museum, Ipswich Maritime Trust and Ipswich Town Tourist Guides.

Tickets: £18.00, includes complimentary lunch and refreshments.

Event Time: 10.30am – 4.00pm (doors open 10.00am) Saturday 18 November.

Venue: Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF (entrance in Black Horse Lane).

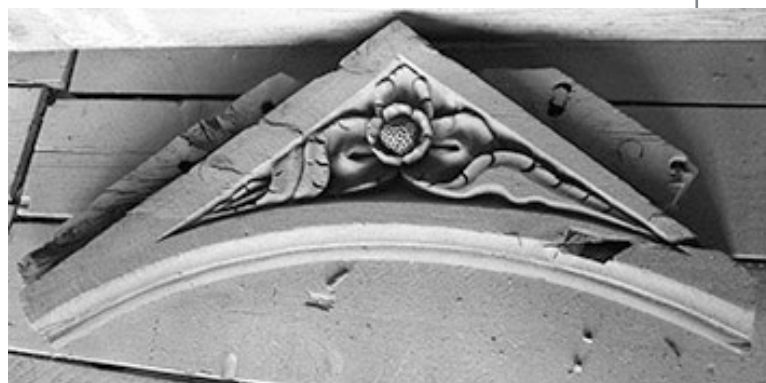
Pre-booked tickets are available to collect from the **Ipswich Tourist Information**

Centre Monday to Saturday, 9.00am to 5.00pm (opening hours vary on bank holidays; please contact the Tourist Information Centre for details). There is a £1 handling fee for each ticket.

Tickets can be posted for a fee; please allow a minimum of 48 hours for delivery.

For further event details please contact robert.w.allen@btinternet.com

For all ticket sales enquiries please contact the Ipswich Tourist Information Centre: tourist@ipswich.gov.uk



'Oh, no. Not again!': Ipswich and its rail service

One wonders how many hundreds of times over the years that this has been the reaction of intending 'customers' (they used to be called 'passengers') planning to travel from Ipswich to London and return by train on a Saturday and/or Sunday and/or Bank Holiday, only to discover that there are no through trains owing to 'Planned Engineering Works'. Instead, what should be a comfortable 75 minute or so train ride transmutes into an Ipswich to Witham or Ingatestone rail journey, followed by a bus along the A12, viewing the joys of Harold Hill, Gallows Corner and Eastern Avenue, en route to Newbury Park station on the Central Line for a claustrophobic tube train ride over the final leg to Liverpool Street (or vice versa). On a good day that adds an hour to the journey time for no reduction in fare to take account of either the lost time, the inconvenience or sheer discomfort and misery on a cold and damp winter evening. Carrying luggage over the Himalayan-like footbridge at Ingatestone is no joke either.

Not that it is any fun for our local train operator, Greater Anglia (GA). Their Train Planning Department is constantly having to produce revised timetables (after negotiating with Network Rail, as fitting in terminating trains at somewhere restricted like Ingatestone is somewhat different to Liverpool Street), buses have to be arranged, extra staff has to be drafted in to assist customers at strategic points while train and crew workings have to be amended to take into account the alterations while complying with regulatory breaks, etc. If, for example, an engineering blockade takes place between Norwich and Ipswich, then there is the added problem of rolling stock having to be located south thereof the day before to provide trains between Ipswich and London and train crew (mostly Norwich-based) having to be ferried by road to reach their trains. It is not so easy as it may seem.

Anyway, your worthy Editor approached the Editor of the ITS' 48page illustrated monthly *Journal* via our Facebook page to essentially enquire whether or not so much seemingly constant weekend work is really necessary. As an Ipswich Society member and the ITS' Rail Report Sub-Editor, I drew the short straw to formulate a reply. While not a professional railwayman, I write as an informed layman. It should perhaps be firstly pointed out that such closures are nothing new (going back within my memory to British Railways (BR), Anglia Railways and National Express before the present incumbent Greater Anglia) but they have become much more frequent. Although these closures annoy me as much as they do everybody else, regrettably I have to conclude that, yes, they are necessary for a number of reasons:-

- Renewal of the overhead wires. Overhead wires to power electric trains were first installed for the 1949 Liverpool Street to Shenfield scheme and the 1956 extensions to Chelmsford and Southend Victoria. In those days, the wires were not tensioned to the extent of more modern schemes, this resulting in expansion and sagging during very hot days with the propensity of the wires being caught up in a train's pantograph and the 'knitting' being brought down, hence severe temporary speed restrictions being introduced. BR did nothing about this and neither did the privatised Railtrack. It has only during the past few years that the renationalised infrastructure provider, Network Rail, has not only been renewing the wires over some 140 track miles but also replacing many supporting structures too, tasks that can only be undertaken with the line closed for engineering 'possessions', i.e. strictly only engineering trains allowed over the stretch of line in question.

- Crossrail. Most readers will be aware from the excellent BBC2 documentaries of the monumental work involved with this new east-to-west railway to run between Shenfield/Abbey Wood and Paddington/Heathrow/Reading from 2019. While the tunnels under central London are new, the extremities are modernised existing railways. So far as the Shenfield to the tunnel mouth, near Stratford, section is concerned, all the suburban stations are now under the control of Transport for London (not Greater Anglia) and are all subject to platform extensions for the new longer trains, together with new footbridges/lifts, etc. The work at Shenfield itself has been much more extensive with new overhead structures to accommodate the revised track layout, new sidings and a new bay platform somehow inserted between the station and the parade of shops on the western side of the line. Most work could not have been completed without full line closures.
- Routine maintenance/renewals. It may not be appreciated just how heavily used the Great Eastern Main Line is. Between Shenfield and Liverpool Street there are nine off-peak passenger trains per hour over the fast ('Main') lines in each direction and a further six in each direction over the slow ('Electric') lines, with even more during the peaks. Added to these are heavy freight trains mainly heading to/from Felixstowe. So the track takes something of a pounding, especially from locomotive-hauled trains, but the time available to carry out essential routine maintenance work is strictly limited. For example, GA's last train is the 00:46 Liverpool Street to Colchester and the first in the morning is the 04:45 from Colchester in the reverse direction, so there is less than a four-hour window. Many freight trains run at night too although most can be diverted to run cross-country, engineering work permitting. Accordingly, it follows that the more major jobs, such as track relaying, cannot possibly be carried out on weekday nights but only during weekend closures.

Harking back to the so-called 'good old days', while the railway had already long prided itself in its safety culture, nevertheless the more onerous requirements of more recent Health and Safety legislation spelt the end of many everyday time-saving practices. I recall seeing wiring for the Chelmsford to Colchester 'gap' being installed (in 1962) on one line while I was in a train passing on the other! Quite rightly, that would not be countenanced today but, by the same token, arguably at times perhaps we have gone too far the other way.

There are, after all, two pairs of tracks beyond Shenfield but frustratingly often both are shut while the work may relate to just one pair. Increased safety documentation and briefings result in extended timescales for managing engineering possessions, with the need to avoid any over-run for fear of incurring penalties meaning that timeframes are not always maximised. It should also perhaps be pointed out that while closing the A12 for 'engineering' reasons (e.g. the Kelvedon by-pass for two Sundays earlier this year) might have been highly inconvenient, at least road vehicles could relatively easily be diverted. This is obviously not the case with rail services.

I apologise for the 'ramble' but hope this article has given some insight as to what happens behind the scenes and also helps GA's disgruntled 'customers' appreciate that weekend closures are not the fault of your local train operator.

Graham Hardinge
(Vice-President, Ipswich Transport Society)



Sissinghurst Castle Gardens: and Ipswich Society outing, 13 June 2017

Sissinghurst began to be settled by the Anglo-Saxons who fed their pigs on the local acorns. A small, moated manor house was built in medieval times when the affluent and ambitious Sir Richard Baker, from Cranbrook, came into possession in the mid-1500s. He created a Prodigy House (the Tower was its central point) surrounded by a large deer-park. As so often happens, this brief glory had its day, decay set in and it all ended up a 'ruin': most of the buildings went and the deer-park reverted to farmland.

In 1930 Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson bought the run-down estate and set about creating the gardens. In their partnership Harold did the planning and Vita did the planting; everywhere there is a contrast between his orderliness and her extravagance. There are five garden 'rooms' round the Tower, all different, all coming into their own at different times. On our visit the roses were at their peak and a glorious sight it was. Beyond is a large orchard bordered on two sides by the moat.

From the 1560s Tower there is a marvellous view of the estate and the Kentish Weald. Vita's writing-room on the first floor is viewable, just as she left it. The room above houses a printing-press given to Vita by Leonard Woolf, founder of the Hogarth Press. Virginia Woolf was one of Vita's female lovers – there were quite a few – and Harold had his male lovers.

Sissinghurst is an experience not to be missed; no words can convey its magic – we were so lucky with the weather. A coachful of members thank Lois and Chris Terry for organising this marvellous outing.

Richard Worman



Another Civic Voice Design Award for Ipswich

Rachel Barrett, Regeneration Manager from the Churches Conservation Trust, and Tony Marsden, Vice-Chairman of The Ipswich Society were presented with the Highly Commended award in the Historic Buildings category of the Civic Voice Design Awards 2017 on Friday 14 July 2017.

The CCT and our Society were co-nominators of St Mary-At-The-Quay Church, Ipswich ('Quay Place') at the ceremony which took place at the Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners architectural practice on Floor 14 of the Leadenhall building ('The Cheese grater') in the City of London. Tracy Meller, an associate partner of the practice, was one of the judges and gave an enlightening and amusing speech. Another attendee was Laura Sandys, Vice-President of Civic Voice and

daughter of Duncan Sandys, who pioneered the introduction of Conservation Areas into legislation in 1967.

Given the high standard of the short-listed projects in the Historic Buildings category, Ipswich did very well to secure the Highly Commended award and the Civic Voice plaque is now displayed at St Mary-At-The-Quay Church.

The Ipswich Society

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk

email: secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 263322

This Newsletter is the magazine of Ipswich's civic amenity society established in 1960
(views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Society).

Would you like to give someone the gift of membership of The Ipswich Society for next year?



Let me have the details of the recipient/s and your payment, and I will send the welcome pack and current Newsletter nearer Christmas. Alternatively, I can send them to you to give in person.

Membership for the year is £10 for an individual and £15 for a family, and can be paid by cash, cheque or direct to The Ipswich Society bank account – number 80489018 – sort code 204451. Forms can be printed off the web site: www.ipswichsociety.org.uk.

Dates for your diary

Society Outings

Saturday April 21, 2018: American Cemetery, Cambridge and King's College Chapel.

Tuesday June 12: Bradenham Hall gardens.

Saturday July 21: Penshurst Place, Kent

Winter Illustrated Talks at Museum St Methodist Church (entrance in Black Horse Lane); all talks start at 7.30pm and free tea, coffee and biscuits are provided afterwards. All are welcome.

Wednesday October 18: Lisa Wade (University of Suffolk), Sex in 18th Century London.

Wednesday December 20: John Harvey, Fire Service history in Ipswich and Suffolk.

Wednesday January 17, 2018: Dr Edward Packard (University of Suffolk) The Basque Refugee Children in Suffolk, 1937-1939.

Wednesday February 21: Brendan Keaney. Artistic Director and Chief Executive of DanceEast.

Wednesday March 14: Russell Williams, Chief Executive of Ipswich Borough Council

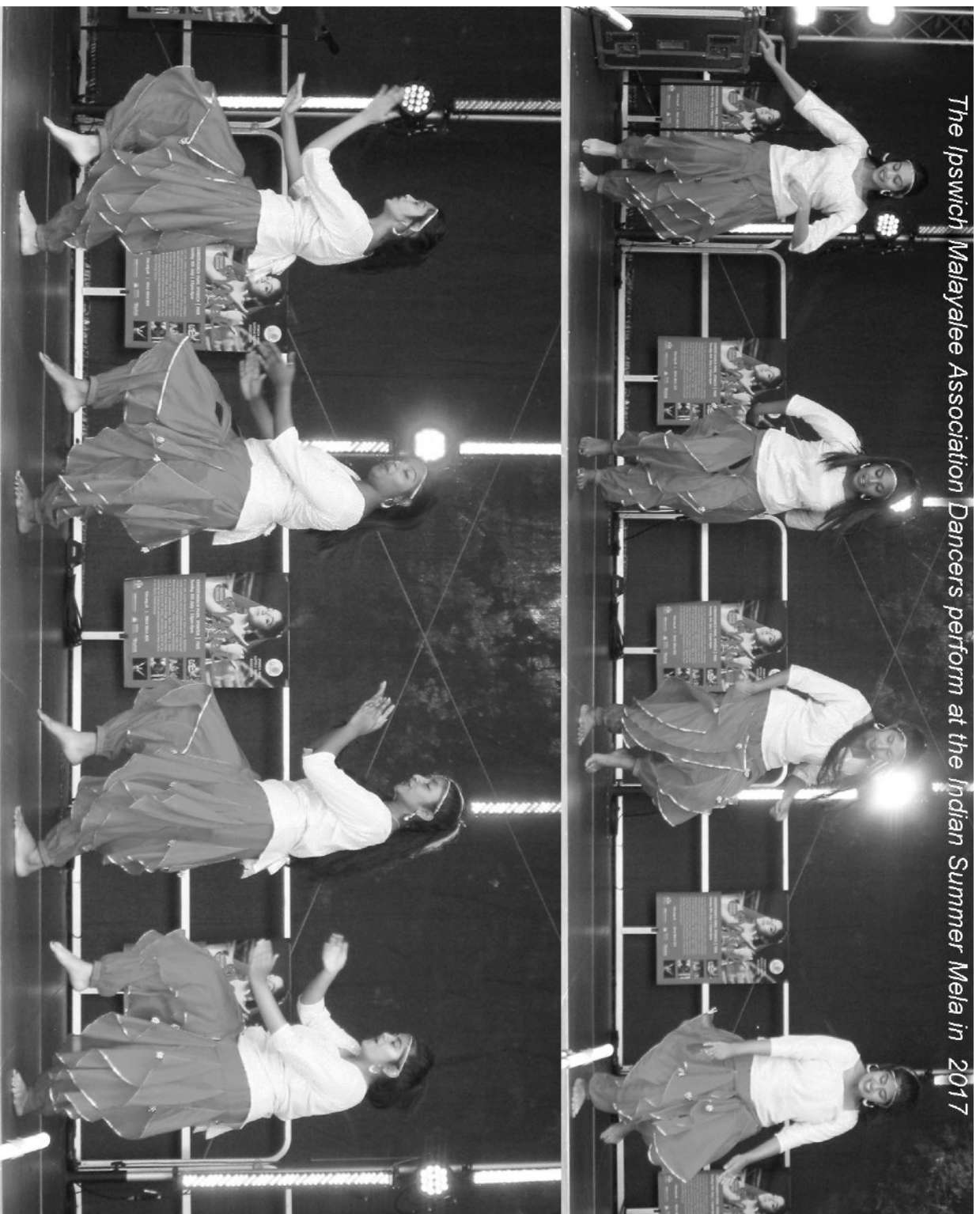
Annual Awards Evening: Wednesday November 15, 7.30pm. St Peter's-on-the-Waterfront.

Tuesday 14 November, 7pm: **Ipswich Building Preservation Trust AGM.** Guest speaker Fiona Cairns, Director of the Suffolk Preservation Society. Isaac's, Wherry Quay, Ipswich.

Saturday 18 Nov., 10.30am-4pm: **Heritage Symposium 2017:** Ipswich Heritage: Past, Present and Future. Museum St Methodist Church. See page 19 for details.

Ipswich Society Annual General Meeting: *Wednesday April 18, 2018 7.30pm:* followed by a talk by SCC Highways Engineer, Suzanne Buck, on the Upper Orwell Crossings. Waterfront Building, University of Suffolk.

The Ipswich Malayalee Association Dancers perform at the Indian Summer Mela in 2017



Ipswich can be proud of its 'alternative' festivals and cultural events.

The Mayday Music Day in Alexandra Park is well-known and very popular. Over eight days in early July, Christchurch Park plays host to the biggest one-day music festival in the country: Music in the Park. Following this is the Global Rhythms day with Peppery Productions at its heart, plus two other big stages with performers from all over the world. Barely has a week passed before the Ipswich Summer Mela takes over the area between the Mansion and the Cenotaph. With dance as its central activity, the thundering rhythms of urban/Eastern/crossover music pervade a colourful event fragrant with the spices and flavours of Asian cuisine. Bhangra and bhaji. Back to Alexandra Park and The One Big Multicultural Festival is at the end of August: rich, eclectic and full of music, crafts, sport, conversation, play and much more.