



The Ipswich Society

# NEWSLETTER

October 2015

Issue 201

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*The Social Settlement drawn in 1961 by Johns Slater Haward, which would have stood across Fore Street from today's UCS Waterfront Building where this and other drawings are currently on display.*

## Editorial

This issue of the *Newsletter* is due to reach you shortly after the official opening by the Mayor, Glen Chisolm, of the Society's long-awaited 'Fore Street Facelift 1961' exhibition at the UCS Waterfront building. Such are the exigencies of writing, publishing and distributing our *Newsletter*, that one has to indulge in a little crystal-ball gazing when composing an Editorial such as this, to assume that all will have gone well and that the exhibits have been a great success and attendances exceeded our expectations. So... well done all round. If you haven't had a chance to see the exhibition yet, do try to view it before the last day, Friday 16 October. We will include some images from the show's launch in the next *Newsletter*, no doubt.

The Heritage Open weekend (12-13 September) organised by the Ipswich Society has once again shown the historical gems to be found in our town. Our Treasurer, Graham Smith, has done a great job with organisation and publication of an attractive booklet and, as ever, huge thanks must go to the volunteers who helped to distribute publicity, attend at venues and make the weekend such a success. It is not acknowledged often enough that the Ipswich Society is an entirely voluntary organisation – and a very active one, to boot – which thrives because of the enthusiasm, passion and dedication of a large number of 'ordinary people' (that is, extraordinary people, of course) for the past, present and future of Ipswich.

This town wears its history and heritage very lightly; some would say too lightly. We see very little around our famous Wet Dock, or on Stoke Bridge to acknowledge that this was the first crossing-point which could be established on the Orwell and the place to establish the first Anglo-Saxon town, arguably the crucible of the English language. Merv Russen's found article on page 12 about Suffolk place names reminds us of the source of 'Ipswich' – at least, one of them – and brings to mind the late Peter Underwood's still-unrealised dream of a Gippeswyc Centre to celebrate the town's origins and rich history. It didn't happen during the so-called 'good times' of the 1980s, 1990s or the 2000s when money was, allegedly, more plentiful. Perhaps this post-2007 recession/austerity period is the time to establish this much needed resource at a site adjacent to the Wet Dock which would act as a major draw to residents and visitors alike. There are suitable buildings sitting empty for a number of years which would make an excellent heritage centre. Despite those whose default setting seems to be to deride Ipswich, our town is a major draw to visitors of all sorts, many of whom are delighted to discover the open secrets of its history. This is a major contributor to the Ipswich economy, too. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see the Anglo-Saxon kiln which Keith Wade literally unearthed on the site now occupied by the Buttermarket Shopping Centre? Come on Ipswich, let everyone in on the secret.

***Robin Gaylard***



**New members**

## Chairman's remarks

Firstly I am indebted to the volunteers, building owners, local authority officers and fellow members of your Executive Committee for their time and effort expended making Heritage Open Days work. It was an undoubted success, and a fair number of the popular venues reported a record number of visitors, including 1,200 on the roof of Willis, I'll hasten to add - not all at once!

We received help from a number of diverse outside organisations, Sarah Holloway, National Organiser of Heritage Open Days (a sub-division of the National Trust), David Stainer who ensured all of our 'open' buildings were on the website and key members of Ipswich Building Preservation Trust who staged a re-enactment of the Archdeacon's Court in the Gatehouse. A big thank you to each and all, especially those I've failed to mention individually.

There were a mere five planning applications to consider at the September meeting of the Planning and Development Committee in Grafton House; you will not be surprised to hear that discussions extended to fill the time available. With respect to the applicants who individually want to know that their application has received due consideration the Committee seem to spend longer on small domestic applications than on major buildings. Possibly because the big schemes are so complex, with so many drawings, specifications and design statements that it is difficult for those with little experience of the industry to fully appreciate the overall scheme.

On Wednesday morning there was little by way of discussion on the important aspects of scale, height, massing and design. The talk instead was about obscure glazing, extraction flues and relative ground levels, none of which are of great importance to the future of the town. I mention this because present were twelve local councillors, a chairman, a minutes secretary, a representative from the Borough's legal team and two planning officers. Not only was justice done: it was seen to be done.

The Victorian Society produced their annual list of Buildings at Risk in mid-September and included in the top ten was the former Tolly Cobbold brewery on Cliff Quay. You might recall that last year the former County Hall was featured. I was asked to comment on Radio Suffolk and surprised the presenter and some Society members by suggesting that if we are to promote movement in the rebuilding of Ipswich the Brewery is not amongst the leading contenders. I mentioned the gateway sites to the Waterfront (the former R&W Paul's maltings, the silo and the Burton, Son & Sanders building), the St Peter's Port site between St Peter's and St Mary Quay and the former R&W Paul's offices at 47 Key Street). All of these and more are in desperate need of a scheme, a future use and some serious investment.

The good news is that a scheme has been submitted for the former Civic Centre site – a new restaurant and 'theatre square', a public open space in front of the New Wolsey Theatre. Let's hope it's the start of further and greater investment in the town.

***John Norman***



## Early Computing Experiences in Ipswich

Recently at work I was asked by one of our apprentices, who was doing some research for an article, for my first experiences of using computers. This got me researching into my first involvement in computing. I would hope that someone somewhere might find this of interest. I am over 50 now, so I grew up as a teenager in the late 1970s, and computers were still very rare.

When I first started studying at High School there were no computers in schools. My first involvement in any programming language was CESIL. This was a simple computer programming language developed in the UK and taught in British schools as part of the old O-Level Computer Science syllabus, until around the mid-1980s.

CESIL stood for 'Computer Education in Schools Instructional Language'. It was a simplified assembler language where we, as students, had to write out special coding sheets which were sent off to a local educational computing centre once a week. In our case this was to the Suffolk College building in Ipswich. About a week later we would get back the results.

Sometimes it would be several weeks before our program would be complete; at other times, if you were very precise and careful, it might work at the first attempt.

The first computer I used directly at school was a Commodore Pet and although we continued to use CESIL for our course work at High School; we were then able to gradually learn \*BASIC on the Commodore Pet. Our school received two Commodore Pet computers, no one knew much about them or how to use and program them. As a result our tutor, like us, was learning how to use them for the first time.

I expanded my own knowledge when I was about 15 when I purchased a second hand Sharp MZ-80K with money I had earned from my part-time jobs. This allowed me to teach myself assembler language, as well as improving my knowledge of the BASIC language, which came with the computer.

From those early days, whilst I was still at school and then when I was at college, this led to my writing a number of programs, mostly games. I had several computer programs published by a Computer magazine at the time. These games were making the best use of the features of the computers at that time but, looking back now, were far away from the games of today!

In around 1980 or 1981 the, I believe, first Computer user group in Ipswich was started by a number of enthusiasts. This was called the Suffolk Micro-Computer User Group (or SMUG for short). For three years I was secretary and I have recently found some old newsletters, minutes and membership details from that time.

I hope that this is of interest, and am happy to share further details as well as more information with regards the CESIL programming language. I would also be interested to hear from anyone who may have an interest in the above.

***Adrian Theobald***

[\*An acronym for Beginner's All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code.]

## Planning matters

A further application has been received to build houses on the car park of the Railway public house. The proposal is for seven small semi's, four along the building line of Cauldwell Hall Road and a terrace of three in a small close further back. The design of the houses leaves a lot to be desired but our real concern is the loss of a community asset, a car park for any future use of the original building.

Our use of electricity is increasing, particularly on cold winter days, so much so that the capacity to generate is potentially short of the peak requirements. To meet this 'over demand' a private company has applied for planning permission to build two diesel generators on the site of the former Cliff Quay power station. The Society has no issues with the location of the generators; they will not be noticeable in the mêlée of the cranes, buildings and plant of Cliff Quay. We simply question the lack of forward planning that gets us into a situation where we have to buy very expensive electricity.

Sohal Healthcare of Essex has applied for minor alterations to the home in Crabbe Street which if approved will ensure the continued use of that facility. Sohal, as well as their Essex Care Homes, have one in Elton Park, Hadleigh Road.

The forty-four acre business park where John Lewis is situated has attracted the attention of three car dealerships, Jaguar, Land Rover and Audi. The site is scheduled for employment but Audi argue that when they moved into Bath Street they sold 200 vehicles per year and employed twelve people. They now sell 1000 new Audi's every year and employ 52 staff.

A listed building at 39 St Margaret's Street, opposite the end of Bolton Lane – once used as a restaurant but empty for a considerable time – is to be converted into a private house. There need to be minor alterations to the historic fabric but mainly the building work is to remove inappropriate 1970s poor quality construction. We welcome more town centre housing.

We are still not sure what the actual plans are for the Rosehill Centre; the latest minor amendment is to render the existing Aldi store white (over the existing brickwork). We are always sad to see brickwork (which is reasonably maintenance free) painted or rendered but assume this is to clearly mark a change of occupant.

The most exciting development received by the Planners this month is the proposal to build a restaurant in a revamped Theatre Square, outside the New Wolsey (and on top of the Spiral Car Park). Changes include re-cladding the ventilation tower and a new bridge from the Theatre across to Lady Lane. This could be the first development in the re-use of the Civic Centre site; we await further proposals with interest.

You might have noticed Gipping Construction are rebuilding some flats above the St Matthew's Street shops (Morrison's to British Heart Foundation): more residential units in the town centre. The latest application is for a Restaurant / Take Away hot food shop two doors to the right of Morrison's (next door to the Funeral Directors).

Elmy's Cycles (of St Helen's Street) are planning to use the disused electricity sub-station on Orwell Quay for a Bicycle Hire facility. We support the reuse of this ugly building and wish the facility every success. It is difficult to foresee the demand for cycle hire on wet winter weekdays and hope that summer sunshine brings sufficient income to cover costs. *John Norman*

## Holywells Park: An Ipswich Society Guided Walk, 18 August 2015

After a very wet day: twenty-three of our members were given a guided tour of one of the great gems of our town. Holywells Park and its buildings have been lovingly renovated over the past two years by Park Manager; Nick Wilcox and his team. Nick himself was our guide and it was clear from the man's enthusiasm that the project was in good hands.



*The rejuvenated interior of the orangery*

Early owners of the land were the Cobbold family and they originally had their brewery at Harwich but moved to Ipswich because of the excellent quality of the Holywells spring water. They built a mansion in the parkland close to their new premises in 1812 as a development of the old Pitt's farmhouse and Cobbold family members lived there until 1929. It was gifted to the people of Ipswich in 1935. The main house was unfortunately demolished in 1962. Luckily the stables, clock tower and orangery remained intact. It became clear in recent years that a considerable amount of work was needed to restore all the buildings and indeed give the whole park a facelift.

A National Lottery grant supplied money for the project which eventually cost £3.2 million. £400,000 worth of the work came from volunteer labour – a huge proportion and a tribute to the people of Ipswich. Nick first treated us to a 25 minute film showing the history of the project covering the period from 2013 to 2015. The film was shown in the newly renovated café section of the old stable block.

The first stage of the project was to remove all the silt from the pond network. Much of the work on the ponds was undertaken by Otley College students. The silt removed from the ponds was laid down to dry after which metal detectors were used to examine it. Examples of finds from the silt included a George III coin and a Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies token.

After the film Nick took us on a tour commencing with the stable complex which has now been converted to a reception area, café, toilet and workshop. One section is occupied by the Green Bike Project which renovates old, unwanted bicycles. I noted that certain artefacts still remained in the stables such as the disconnected gas lighting points, the gas being supplied by the nearby Town Gasworks in days gone by.

New paths led us to the new events area which is the location of the original mansion alongside the orangery. The latter had been located next to the ballroom of the mansion and was constructed at the end of the nineteenth century. The events area is used for outdoor activities and a Tai Chi class meets there each Saturday.

The orangery had been badly vandalised during the seventies and had been clad with corrugated iron for many years to protect it from further damage. The cladding was removed and work began to renovate the windows and woodwork. Much of this work was expertly carried out by Dorothea Restoration Ltd of Bristol. The beautiful tiled floor was renovated and under floor heating installed. The internal pond was restored as a planter and all the Victorian cogs and levers which operate the window opening mechanisms work as they should now. It is interesting that each window has a totally unique set of dimensions making them a glazier's nightmare.

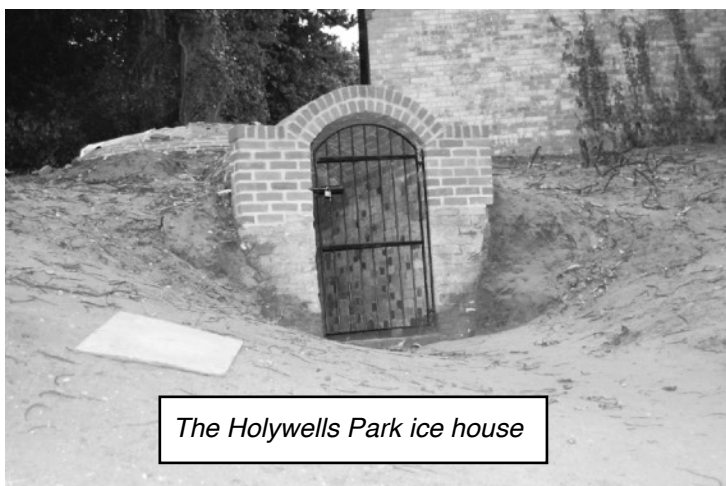
The renovation of the orangery cost close to half a million mainly because of the specialist expertise required. It is an ideal venue for wedding ceremonies and christenings although it is thought that the numbers of these will need to be restricted. The gardens around the orangery have been replanted including a sensory walk – all planted by volunteers.

Nick then took us through to the terraced area which was once the stepped entrance to the mansion. The balustrade around this has been completely re-instated and the view from the terrace is a revelation taking in as it does the rejuvenated ponds and the beautiful woods around them. The ground required piling before the new toilet block could be constructed alongside the impressive, modernised children's play area.

The wooded areas of the park required considerable effort; for example, the bluebell wood had a vast sycamore canopy which was removed to allow more diverse woodland species to grow there. Other new installations included a story telling circle, a new walking trail round the perimeter of the park and an *i.play* area. *i.play* represents a breakthrough in play opportunities for youngsters, combining interactive electronics with conventional play area equipment. It encourages "stealth fitness", where people exercise without realising it.

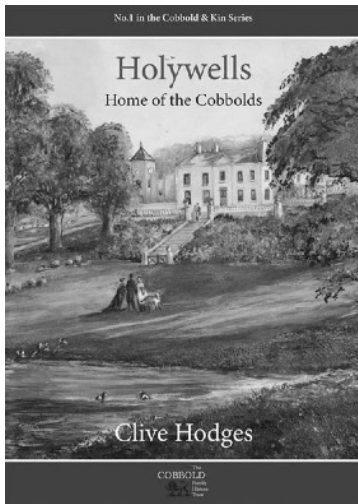
One of the most interesting discoveries in the park was the finding of the remains of an ice house near the car park, close to the old cottages. This has been rebuilt by students from

Suffolk New College – an interesting exercise for them because it incorporates a unique brick domed and arched roof.



Our tour ended back at the stable block and we all agreed that Nick had given us an excellent insight into the problems encountered and the rewards enjoyed from this project, especially when so much of the effort comes from voluntary groups.

**Mervyn Russen**



... and this is undoubtedly the place for ....

**Holywells: home of the Cobbolds** by Clive Hodges  
Hot on the heels of *Cobbold & kin* (reviewed in our Oct. 2014 issue), the next in a planned sequence of volumes from The Cobbold Family History Trust is now available. The Cobbold family lived at Holywells from 1814 to 1929 and today the surrounding parkland is one of the most notable parks in Ipswich. The book has 128 pages and is available for £10.79 (including p&p) from The Cobbold Family History Trust, 14 Moorfields, Moorhaven, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0XQ, or via the Trust's website (<http://cobboldfht.com>).



Photograph:  
John Field

**Brief IBPT Annual General Meeting followed by a talk by John Field:  
“Ipswich Wet Dock – Riches to Rags and Back Again”**

on the planning and architectural treatment of the Wet Dock. The evening is free and open to all; it includes a light buffet and finishes by 9pm. Our friends in the Ipswich Society are very welcome to attend and the AGM is short. Please book a place by contacting

**[njacob@njarchitects.co.uk](mailto:njacob@njarchitects.co.uk)**

7pm, Wednesday 28 October, 2015

at Isaacs Crossways Room. Wherry Quay.

Refreshments.

All welcome (please book).



# Snippets 1

## **Bids for two major projects**

Those of us who have been concerned that High Street Museum is an under-appreciated treasure in town and that Suffolk Record Office in Gatacre Road is running out of space will be delighted to hear that our local authorities have vision and initiative even though their Government funding is being increasingly squeezed. IBC has committed up to £6.25m for the enlargement and linking up of the Museum with the High Street Gallery, former Art School and Wolsey Studio. Similarly SCC is prepared to put in £5m and UCS £1m plus the land to create a new heritage centre alongside the University. Both projects will depend on even bigger sums coming from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other national bodies. But there is a good deal of political, economic and arts consensus which is essential for such serious bids. Success will enhance the status and appeal of our town and county.

## **Keeping it going**

Those of us who walk through Tower Ramparts Shopping Centre frequently see the changes every time as the re-building work progresses. Locally based firm Barnes Construction and their sub-contractors deserve great credit for difficult working on such a scale while most of the shops stay trading.

## **Park restoration**

The official re-opening and celebration of the restoration of Holywells Park took place on a hot day, Saturday 18 July. The new visitor centre, café and 'orangery' were very popular. This Parks for People project was funded by a £2.8m Lottery grant and financial support from IBC and the Friends of Holywells Park. Once again, we were reminded that the major parks of Ipswich are an outstanding part of our heritage. Does any comparably sized town have more in size or number?

## **Buttermarket Shopping Centre**

The conversion is well under way. It is a hugely more expensive job even than that at Tower Ramparts because most of the complex will be completely re-modelled to create a 16-screen cinema. Existing shops, New Look and TK Maxx, will move into reconstructed premises on the ground floor.

## **17 Tower Street**

The former County Council offices have been bought by St Mary le Tower Church to be used as a community centre (church music school, parish hall, cycle café, etc). This is surely an appropriate local connection. Ipswich Education Authority was originally based here before the County Council took over responsibility for education in 1974.

## **Public Houses**

We all know that pubs are closing at an unprecedented rate, and have been doing for a number of years. What came as a bit of a shock is that the Real Ale pubs which have been staging a bit of a revival of late have been hit by the same downturn in customers as the fizz houses did previously. Pubs as we used to know them are surely disappearing; the only ones likely to remain are those that are food-led, particularly those that fall over themselves to offer cheap meals. (Note: I'm crying into my beer as I write...)



## Suffolk Local History Council

The SLHC is an umbrella group for all types of historical societies *and* individuals in the county, and my portfolio is 'Recorders Secretary', a role that I share with my husband. I also represent the Ipswich Society on the SLHC Committee. The purpose of the Local Recorders Scheme is to find a suitable person in each parish to collect and record what is happening 'today' as that will become 'tomorrow's history'. My particular responsibility is to recruit Recorders for those areas without a representative.

Ipswich is too big for one person to cope with, and has been divided using the local government boundaries – which equates to 16 areas. When I wrote last time (May 2014) only 5 areas had a Recorder but that has now increased, thanks to this *Newsletter*, to eight areas. I continue to appeal for a volunteer in: *Alexandra, Bixley, Gainsborough, Gipping, Holywells, Sprites, St. John and St. Margaret*. There are also a number of vacant parishes throughout the county for anyone interested who lives outside Ipswich, and they are all now listed on the SLHC website .

Being a Recorder *does not* involve research into the history of the parish or family histories; it just focuses on the contemporary. We have only two requirements, that the Recorder is on-line and that they submit a *short* annual report. Several Recorders have submitted reports for many years so you can imagine the variety of changes over a period of time. We do ask that an initial report is provided to describe the area to set it in context for comparison against future reports. A Starters Pack is available to describe the role in more detail, and support if required.

If you would like to find out more about becoming the Recorder for your area, please e-mail me on: [janette1407@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janette1407@hotmail.co.uk).

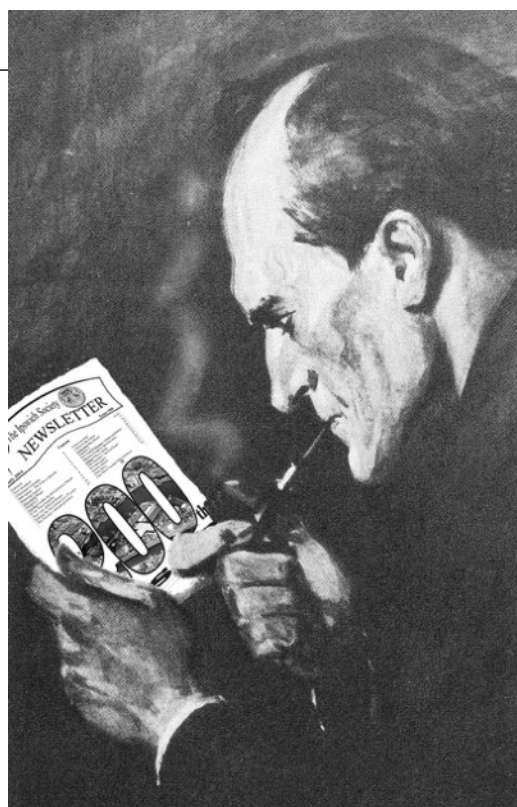
**Janette Robinson**

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## Deliferate Mistale

The perspicacious amongst our readership will have noticed a deliferate mistale on the front of our much-trumpeted 200th issue, published this summer.

Apparently, it was actually published in July 2014 – a feat of time-travel which puzzles and astonishes the current editor. We hope that you all enjoyed this challenge to your observational acuity and that it wasn't too confusing. *[–Ed.]*



Our thanks to Mervyn Russen who found this piece in an old *Fisons Journal* from July 1933. This was a Roneo'd in-house magazine for the fertiliser and compost company.

The writer (A.B.C.) mentions Skeat. This refers to Walter William Skeat (1835-1912), a philologist, whose book entitled *Place-names in Suffolk* was published posthumously in 1913. This was the last of a series of books on the same subject covering various counties.

## Suffolk Place Names.

In these days of increased travelling by road a knowledge of the meaning of place names adds a further interest to any journey.

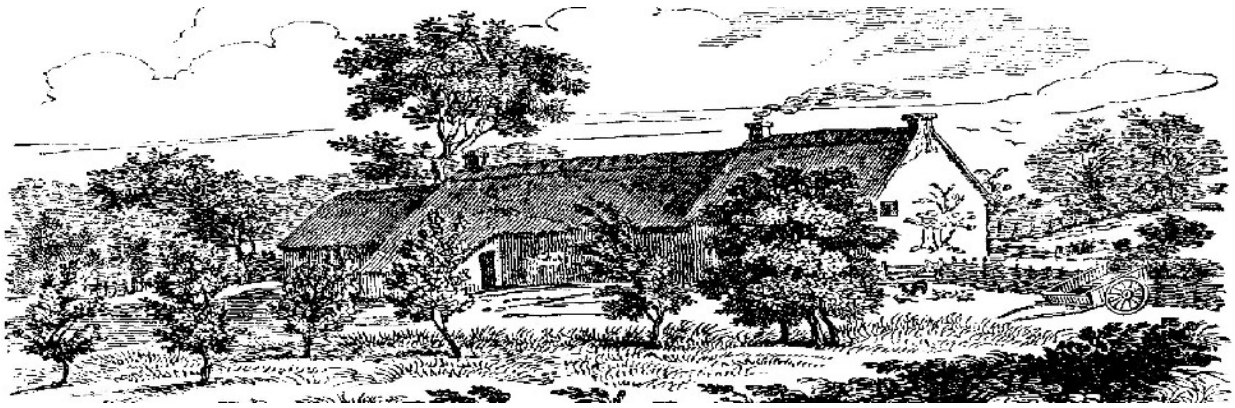
These were first recorded in the Domesday Book by French Priests working from returns received from all parts. As may be imagined many errors crept in when compiling the list and subsequent corruptions and modern spellings have complicated matters still further. Hence there is a difference of opinion in many cases as to the correct meaning and in this brief article we will take Skeat's book as our guide.

Before leaving the Domesday Book reference may be made to the fact that there are to-day a few places called "OTHERTON" - this means "OTHER TON" or "OTHER FARM", Ton meaning a farm, the origin being that the compiler of the Domesday Book, unable to decipher the name on the return he was copying, wrote "OTHER TON", meaning subsequently to elucidate it.

Many places owe their names to local characteristics originating in much the same way as trench names during the War. Suffolk examples under this heading include:-

Copdock	=	Copped or pollarded Oak.
Bramford	=	The Ford by the Bramble.
Bramfield	=	The bramblefield.
Stradbroke	=	Straddle Brook i.e. the place where one could straddle the brook.
Bentley	=	The bent grass lea or meadow.
Hadleigh	=	The heath lea.
Shelley	=	Shelf-lea i.e. a meadow on a high piece of ground.
Yaxley	=	The Cuckoo's lea.
Brundish	=	Burn-eddish i.e. the meadow near a stream that was mown for aftermath.

(continues)



Broadly speaking the suffix is the chief index and in this article the meanings of the more common suffixes are given with a few examples.

Ton	=	Farm.
Barton	=	Barley Farm.
Easton	=	East Farm.
Weston	=	West Farm.
Sutton	=	South Farm.
Oulton	=	Old Farm.
Stutton	=	Gnat or Midge Farm
Ham	=	Either a home or village or an enclosure. Indicates the first step towards fencing in fields.
Barnham	=	The enclosure with a barn.
Elmham	=	The enclosure near the elm.
Langham	=	Long enclosure.
Parham	=	Parkham - a railed in enclosure.
Rougham	=	Rough enclosure.
Saxmundham	=	Saxmund's home or settlement.
Barsham	=	Bacre's home.
Bucklesham	=	Bucle's home.

When in course of time a family grew too big for the existing settlement another one was formed, this being denoted by - ing e.g.

Framsden	=	Fram's valley.
Framlingham	=	Home of the sons of Fram.
Bedfield	=	Beda's field.
Bedingfield	=	Field of the sons of Beda.
Dennington		however does not mean the farm of the sons of Den, but is a corruption of Denegifu's ton or farm.
Gisleham	=	Gisli's home.
Gislengham	=	Home of the sons of Gisli.

By, a suffix denoting Danish occupation only occurs four times:-

Ashby		which as it is of Danish origin is Aski's by or farm.
Barnby	=	Barni's farm.
Risby	=	Hrisi's farm.
Wilby	=	Wili's farm.

Hale or Hall is a suffix very apt to be misinterpreted, as the word hall is comparatively modern. In the Domesday Book most of them are spelt 'hale' meaning a sheltered spot or nook, e.g.

Peasenhall = Sheltered spot where peas are grown.  
 Rickinghall = The nook of the sons of Rica.

We have also evidence of the Norman Conquest in Capel from the old Norman word 'Capele' meaning Chapel, and Bures, which in old Norman meant a collection of cottages. William the Conqueror showed his wisdom in allocating lands to his knights as he made it a practice to give small portions widely separated as opposed to a large territory in one area, adopting the principle that if they were kept busy keeping their eye on several scattered places they were less likely to have time to scheme to upset him. In such cases the name of the receiver is attached after the original name and a Suffolk example is Carlton Colville in North East Suffolk and Weston Colville in West Suffolk.

In conclusion Ipswich, spelt Gipeswiz in the Domesday Book, which according to Skeat means Gippi's wic or Gippi's village, being pronounced Yippy's wic. The Normans disliked a Y being an I and so we have Ippy's wic and finally Ipswich.

A.B.C.

The *Our back pages* column will return next month.

## Don't forget... [www.forestreetipswich1961.co.uk](http://www.forestreetipswich1961.co.uk)

... that our current exhibition on the Fore Street Facelift 1961 will live on and develop as a stand-alone website, linked from the Society's own website, of course. The small sub-committee who worked on the exhibition decided that two weeks at UCS wasn't really enough to reflect the size and importance of the 1961 project and the drawings, photographs, films and audio which have been gathered together.

Launched on September 1 2015, we hope that corrections and contributions will continue to enhance the website and that this small corner of Ipswich history will find its place on the internet and in many people's awareness.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the website 'The Fore Street Facelift Project 1961'. The header features a logo with an eye and the text 'The Ipswich Society'. The main title is 'The Fore Street Facelift Project 1961' with a subtitle 'Celebrating the Ipswich Society's project prior to the Queen's visit in July 1961'. A navigation menu includes 'HOME', '61 DRAWINGS', '61 PHOTOS', 'AUDIO/FILM', 'HISTORY', and 'PRESS'. Below the menu is a search bar and a 'Go' button. The main content area has a heading 'Welcome to the Fore Street Facelift 1961' followed by a paragraph of introductory text. A large photograph shows a street scene with people and a motorcade. Below the photo is another paragraph of text. On the right side, there is a sidebar with a list of links: 'WELCOME TO THE FORE STREET FACELIFT 1961', 'About Us', 'Contact Us', 'Links', and 'Credits'.

## Eltham Palace and The Friends of the Ipswich Museums

This was prompted by the article about the Ipswich Society's outing to Eltham Palace in the July *Newsletter*.

The Friends of the Ipswich Museums (FOIM) visited Eltham Palace in 2004. I organised the trip and remember that a week or so before the day I received a phone call from English Heritage saying that the booking was cancelled. I asked to speak to a manager who said that there was a reason he could not disclose. This was as not acceptable: a coach full of members would all have to be told and have their money refunded. Come on another day was also not acceptable so the manager would investigate further.

A day or so later he phoned to say that they were having a private visit by HRH Prince Charles and that Clarence House had said that FOIM could be the only group that morning. The café would be closed but it was too late to tell everyone to bring a packed lunch so it was agreed that EH would provide sandwiches, cakes and beverages at a modest cost.

On the journey I asked if the group wanted the good or bad news: some members were upset that if they had known they were to meet HRH they might have dressed more formally. When we arrived we were told to be in the Orangery at a particular time for our lunch – which was excellent. We would all be presented to HRH at 11.30 prompt. By this time the weather had worsened and it became very windy; branches were falling off trees on the lawn. Staff busied themselves clearing up lest the Prince might see an untidy lawn!



*HRH, with perfect hair, meets a windswept Alan Swerdlow; Paul Bruce on the right.*

At the correct time we all went out on to the lawn and presentations were made. Prince Charles asked me where we had come from. 'Ipswich, Sir' to which the Prince said that we must have set off rather early. I then presented other FOIM officers before HRH mingled informally with the group. We all walked to the royal car and waved him off. The afternoon was spent less eventfully at the Red House in Bexleyheath, home of William Morris.

*Alan Swerdlow*

## Letter to the Editor

### **Anglia Cameras and the town of Ipswich** from Jim Empson

When I started my business, Anglian Cameras, in St Matthews Street, Ipswich in 1964 I was told by several that I had chosen the wrong site. They also pointed out that a murder had taken place in the Rainbow pub, opposite. However, this had been pulled down and, as we know, the whole area was rebuilt. Not a good time to establish a new business. However, I could see the potential of the area after visiting the Borough Council when it was based in the Town Hall, opposite the Barclays Bank entrance in Princes Street, and viewed the maps of proposed development in the Civic Drive, Elm Street area. With so many offices around me, how could I go wrong?

I paid the key money to Oxborrow, Son & Morgan of £1,500. I later learned that the shop had been empty for two years and that I could, no doubt, have negotiated a better price – but working from a distance, Reading, I had wanted to make sure of the place. It had a car park for six cars accessed via Blackhorse Lane, which I saw as a great asset.

Before leaving Reading, where I had managed University Cameras whose H.Q. was in my home city of Cambridge, I made the necessary shop fittings in my workshop (which I also built!) to be brought up with the house furnishings. I was a sub-tenant of Great Universal Stores who had the two floors above as offices, with the ground floor as a separate lock-up.

Ipswich, then, was a very pleasant county town with a farmers' market every Tuesday, which brought in shoppers too. One farmer always brought me a dozen fresh eggs every week to buy. Ladies with their headscarves would do their weekly shop at Sainsbury's and the International Stores in Westgate Street; fresh fish was also available at MacFisheries. Footman Pretty was still extant, though soon to be Debenhams in a rebuilt store. This was the heyday of Ipswich in recent times.

Now, unfortunately, the demographic has changed –and not for the better. Two years ago I was about to enter HSBC bank in Tavern Street when a young thirty-something fellow fell across my feet, unconscious after a blow to the head. His assailant was led away whilst an ambulance collected the vanquished. Quite an

*(continues)*



unnerving experience. And now we learn that Barclays Bank had to be closed recently because of a fight! This is a change in town centre personnel which **no one can do anything about**. I, like others, avoid Ipswich for this reason. Whereas I would enjoy a coffee with fellow traders and office workers in Ridley's basement, it would still carry on at another venue, I'm sure.

It seems that all of those who are in a position of authority regarding the future layout of Ipswich are thrashing about like fish out of water. I'm sorry, but I am still wondering what Terry Baxter said which was excellent – but then, I'll give him his due, I could not hear all that was said because of the microphone fiasco (yet another one!).

The idea of LARGE department stores on the east side of Upper Brook Street is ludicrous, dividing the town even more than the Waterfront ever will, unless a motorised footway is installed between Barrack Corner and Major's Corner (now there's an idea, the kids would love it!).

And why raise the level of the Cornhill? Who dreams up these multi-million pound ideas which will produce NO result? The design I saw would form the basis of a goodly collection point for the tons of rubbish discarded in the town and a good fire hazard.

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## Ipswich Society Awards 2015

Members of the Society will be pleased to hear that this year's annual awards will take place on Wednesday 18 November; we'll be back at St Peter's by the Waterfront.

You may remember last year that we had insufficient entries to hold an award scheme; however, including those small number from last year and the several new and renovation building projects during the past last year we are hoping for a good evening.

Schemes will have been visible from the public highway, including footpaths, and have met our criteria for judging. These include architectural quality: works which are in character with the surroundings or form a focal point and have impact. We may have seen improvement to an original building or its setting, bearing in mind the scale, detailing, colour and sympathetic, well-considered and appropriate materials. Crucially, we will have seen good quality workmanship and standard of finish, whilst setting a good standard for others to follow.

Our panel of adjudicators will spend a busy October viewing the nominations before deliberating lengthily over the final choices.

We are grateful for the participation of members in the nomination of buildings and projects.

*Tony Marsden*



### **William Morris and the Olympic Park: an Ipswich Society outing, 25 June 2015**

From the Eagle Inn, Snaresbrook we travelled to the William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow: Water House (Listed Grade II\*) is ‘one of the best examples of Georgian domestic architecture in Greater London’. Recently a brick, dated 1744, was discovered during repairs. A blue plaque commemorates Morris’ dates of residence: 1846-56.

The gallery is the only public museum dedicated to his life, work and influence. The collections reflect his prodigious range of activities – no wonder he died of overwork. Examples by his friends and followers are also on display.

Onward to what is now called Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. As everyone knows, the 560 acre site used to be a very run-down area, with old factories and slum dwellings. Transformed, at enormous cost, into the venue for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games it has now transformed again and in April 2014 was opened to the public 24/7 and free of charge. There is a thirty year development programme: 8,000 new houses/flats, an International Quarter, a University of the Arts are all on the cards.

Over the River Lea we could see the Aquatics Centre. I was impressed by the extensive plantings of wild flowers and plants from all over the world (to make every athlete at the Games feel ‘at home’). Off the coach near the Velodrome, we walked past an inventive play area for children – they’re actually *encouraged* to take risks. Through the park flows a much cleaned-up River Lea complete with barges and even a floating cinema. Our thanks to Barbara Barker for a marvellous outing.

### **The Museum of Fenland Drainage and Ely: an Ipswich Society outing, 15 July**

By coach through flat-as-a-pancake Cambridgeshire to the Prickwillow Fen Drainage Engine Museum, near Ely, opened in 1982 to preserve diesel engines and provide an explanation of the need to drain the Fens. Millions of years ago this area had been swept clear by glaciation and formed a freshwater swamp, fed by many rivers. Over time peat accumulated to a depth of over six metres.

In 1630 the 4th Earl of Bedford and his group of investors, ‘The Adventurers’, planned to drain the Fens for permanent agricultural use and appointed Dutch engineer, Cornelius Vermuyden, to take charge. He cut many new drains and channels. However, once the land had been drained, the peat shrank ‘the height of a man in his lifetime’ and the land in the Southern Fens was soon below river and sea level making natural drainage impossible. Hence the need for wind-powered pumps – the only form of energy at the time – to get excess water into the rivers and down to the sea. A steam-powered scoopwheel was installed at Prickwillow in 1832, to be replaced by a Mirrlees diesel engine in 1932.

A short journey to Ely and I went to admire the Cathedral’s fine Norman nave and the marvellous Octagon, the jewel in its crown. Then to Oliver Cromwell’s House (now the Tourist Information Centre) where Cromwell and family lived from 1636-46. The house is mostly 17th century, half-timbered with interior panelling of the time and a wall painting of 1572. The house, previously a pub, was renovated in 1905 in the Arts & Crafts style. Our guide showed us examples of 18th and 19th century brickwork and also of the local soft sandstone on which Ely stands.

A fascinating tour of local buildings, some of them dating from the 15th century, followed: a real insight into the history of the medieval city. Our thanks to Jessica Webster for an excellent outing.

**Richard Worman**



## Travel Ipswich: what on earth is going on?



For many months, as editor of the *Ipswich Society Newsletter*, I have been anxious to cover in its pages the subject of Travel Ipswich. Many people are bewildered by the reasoning behind some of the changes to our road junctions and, after a number of years, the question in the above title is being asked. Our Chairman has had extensive talks with SCC Highways engineers (more of this soon, I hope) and we are still unable to fully explain and examine the outcomes of the scheme on behalf of Society members. Given that Travel Ipswich was last reported in the *Newsletter* long before I took over the editorship, I felt that members would appreciate an update.

However, as each issue's deadline came and went, it was decided to wait until project completion before covering the scheme. This major project is intended to tackle the problems caused by traffic flows in relation to pedestrians, public transport vehicles and cycles in our town. The initial Government funding for the scheme was secured in 2010 and the work started in the following year. The Travel Ipswich website ([www.travelipswich.co.uk](http://www.travelipswich.co.uk)) currently states that the whole scheme will be completed by autumn 2015. Er...

Spring 2016 is apparently now intended to be the deadline for the work on the two crucial, remaining junctions as part of Travel Ipswich: the Major's Corner interchange and Woodbridge Road/Argyle Street, one of our busiest junctions during rush hours.

Travel Ipswich has the potential to ease traffic flow through the town, but we are unable to assess its impact until all the component improvements are in place. What tends to happen at the moment is that, at busy times, all the traffic tends to come towards the centre resulting in gridlock. The whole point of 'signalising' all our major junctions in a co-ordinated way is to enable traffic to come in gradually so that our walkers, buses and cyclists, as well as cars and other traffic, can move freely through the town centre.

This scheme is seriously delayed in its completion – something which will require examination and explanation by Suffolk County Council, the highways authority which is managing it. Ipswich residents should be, on the one hand, very pleased to have secured major funding from central Government (£18m of the total £21.5 million) to improve our over-burdened infrastructure but, on the other hand, important questions do need to be asked. **R.G.**

## The Society's Witch Hazel

The Ipswich Society sponsored a tree earlier this year, one of forty-four added to the Arboretum in Christchurch Park. The Friends of the Park decided which species to purchase (from each of the contributors) and 'our tree' is a Flowering Witch Hazel.

The wow factor in this story is that the Witch Hazel is now in bud and is likely to flower (in January – Witch Hazel is a winter flowering plant). For its own protection the tree isn't named or its location marked but it can be found (if you know what you are looking for). Enter the top of the Upper Arboretum from the Bridal Path and it's a few yards down the path on the left. Expect a multitude of red flowers.

This information comes to me from David Miller who wrote the excellent book; *Ipswich Arboretum, A History and Celebration* (reviewed in the Newsletter) and has just published a Supplement; *New Trees 2014/15*. **J.N.**



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## How do people get to work in Copenhagen?

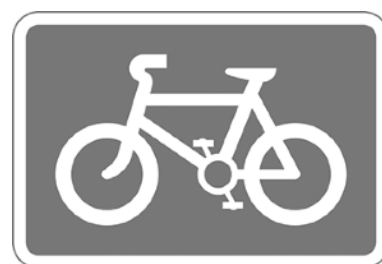
5% walk, 23% arrive in a car, 27% use public transport, 45% bicycle

Why is the percentage cycling so high? Because using a car is simply a pain in the backside. Copenhagen has just overtaken Amsterdam as the number one cycling city in the world (Copenhagenize.eu). How come? Copenhagen is building a massive extension to the underground (Metro) which includes the construction of 17 new stations. At ground level it is causing a major disruption to traffic flows, (but not to the progress of bicycles). There has been a serious and noticeable modal shift from car to bike since the work started (36% - 45% of the number of people arriving at work or education, together with a drop (27% - 23%) of people using cars.

The average bicycle journey rose from 2 miles to just over 2½ miles, (in Ipswich virtually every house inside the Borough Boundary is within 2½ miles of the town centre). What's more, as far as Copenhagen goes, this rise in the use of bicycles is almost all new. Since 1990 the number of journeys by bicycle has risen by 70%, and the number of car commutes has fallen from 350,000 to 250,000 (the latter figure is close to the target the city set itself, the number of cars that could comfortably be accommodated on the existing road infrastructure).

Importantly the figures quoted above include all arrivals at a place of employment or education, including people who have travelled in from the surrounding districts. If we only count the number who started their journey inside the city boundary the numbers change dramatically: 63% cycle and only 10% use their car.

**J.N.**



## Snippets 2

### **‘Healthy High Street’ programme**

Ipswich has been chosen as a town to benefit from a package of support in the form of access to skills and expertise. Working with Ipswich Central, this should help to enhance the appeal and variety of our town centre.

### **Maritime Festival**

The festival in August once again attracted crowds to the Waterfront. News that it won't take place next year has been greeted with dismay in some quarters. But we await with interest to discover what alternative(s) may be created.

### **Downsizing**

Demolition of the 1960s police station in Elm Street leaves the town centre police presence to the small office in Museum Street but opens up the former Civic Centre site giving the opportunity for a major development.

### **‘Tiger’ in town**

Not a cause for alarm but celebration for those who have enjoyed the benefits of this shop elsewhere. The owners have confidently chosen a prime location in Tavern Street. For those of you who haven't been into town recently Tiger has been described as an up-market pound shop.

### **Isaac's**

As members will know, the ‘Isaac Lord’ buildings are unique and very important as a rare example of a complete historical site from the merchant's house on Fore Street, to sale room and warehouses right down to the quayside. To fit in a new 3-storey building in such a precious location was a difficult challenge. Now it's completed and will have a viewing gallery on the first floor. *[See the photograph on page 8.]*

### **Top Trumps**

Bragging rights to the title of the biggest ship in the world isn't straight forward. Do we measure length, displacement or the number of containers carried? Three very similar ships have called at Felixstowe this year all claiming the title and by their own measure they're right: CSCL Globe at 400 metres is the longest, MSC Oscar at 19,224 teu\* carries the most containers, Magleby Maersk at 194,849 gross tonnes is the heaviest. Every day in 2015 a ship carrying in excess of 13,000 teu (\*twenty foot equivalent units) called at Felixstowe. There are currently over 100 ships of similar size to those above on order and being built for delivery before the decade is out.

### **Cruise Ships**

Whilst we're on about ships and shipping have you noticed the steady increase in the number of cruise liners calling at Harwich lately, and not only calling? Fred Olsen's *Braemar* has started cruises from the Essex Port. Ipswich's attempts to become a cruise port a couple of years ago didn't come to anything but we were limited by the size of vessel that could transit the Orwell.

## Dr John Blatchly, MBE, MA, PhD, HonLittD, FSA



*Dr John Blatchly photographed by Tony Marsden at the unveiling of the statue of Cardinal Wolsey in St Peters Street, Ipswich in July 2011.*

It would be remiss of me to let this edition of the *Newsletter* pass without a mention of Dr John Blatchly. John died at the age of 82 on 3 September 2015 after a short illness.

If you happen to be reading this on 7 October and you can hear the bells of St Lawrence Church then you are enjoying but one of a multitude of projects that John championed, following his retirement from Ipswich School in 1993. The bells will be rung on the date of John's birth in celebration of his life and contributions to the town.

The fact that the bells are ringing is because of John's persistence whilst caring for the churches that came into the care of Ipswich Historic Churches Trust in 1981. Six churches came to the Trust; all were redundant, unloved and deteriorating. Five have been found new uses and the sixth, St Clement, is likely to become an Arts Centre in the not too distant future. Through perseverance, persuasion and sheer audacity John brought each back into a suitable community use and Ipswich is a better place for his, and his fellow trustees', efforts.

I will never cease to be amazed by how he persuaded Tesco to contribute a substantial sum towards the statue of Cardinal Wolsey in Curson Place before they had built their store in Grafton Way. It is even more surprising given that they didn't ever build the shop.

John was a scientist; he read Natural Sciences at Cambridge and taught Chemistry, progressing as Head of Science in three different schools. When he applied for the headship *(continues*

at Ipswich School he was one of over 100 candidates but the Governors' choice served them well for 21 years. One of the tasks of the Headmaster is to be custodian of the Town Library, the legacy of William Smart in 1598, a task John relished and one which enabled him to contribute so much to the knowledge of the history of the town. John was Headmaster at Ipswich School from 1972 to 1993.

He wrote articles for a number of publications, not least the *East Anglian Daily Times* 'It Happened When...' which ran to well over 400 editions (each on a different subject). What you may not know is that he contributed 56 articles on notable East Anglians to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for which he was made a Research Associate of the project.

John Blatchly was an occasional contributor to programmes on BBC television, Radio 4 and Radio Suffolk and was the champion of history courses at University Campus Suffolk regularly contributing his time, expertise and advice to staff and students alike.

He was a Paul Harris fellow of Ipswich Rotary Club, was made Honorary Wolsey Professor at UCS and in 1993 received LittD *honoris causa* (Honorary Doctor of Letters) from the University of East Anglia.

Above all he was a friend: a friend to many, to his fellow trustees, committee members and colleagues on numerous bodies from the University of East Anglia, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the more local Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History (to name but three). He will be sorely missed.

*John Norman*

## Ipswich parking charges are killing business in the town!

Town/city	Car park location / operator	Price per hour	Price per 2 hours
IPSWICH	IBC (most of theirs)	£1.00	£1 all day after 3pm
	Crown Street / NCP	£3.00	
	Foundation Street / NCP	£2.20	£4.20
	Spiral, Wolsey Th. / Britannia	£1.50	
	RCP / Docks & Handford Rd	60p & 80p	
BURY ST EDMUNDS	Arc Shopping Centre	£2.00	
	Town centre/Angel Hill	£2.20 (1.50 per half-hour)	
	Ram Meadow / Parkway		£1.50 (no disabled rate)
NORWICH	Castle Mall	£1.20	£2.30
	Chapelfield	£1.70	£3.40
	The Forum	£1.70	
	Riverside Norwich	£2.00	
COLCHESTER	Nunn's Road	£2.50	£4.50
	St Mary's, Balkern Hill	£1.80	£2.70
	Osborne Street	£2.00	
CAMBRIDGE	Grafton Centre & Park Street	£2.70	£3.60

See our January 2016 issue for more on the, er... exorbitant parking charges in Ipswich.

## The Ipswich Society

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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).

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### Dates for your diary

*October 3 to 16, 2015: **Fore Street Facelift 1961*** Exhibition of architect drawings, photographs, short films of the works done to refurbish Fore Street for the Queen's visit to open the Civic College in July 1961. Venue: UCS Waterfront Building, open to all (free event).

*Wednesday October 21, 7.30pm: **Winter Illustrated Talk*** at Museum Street Methodist Church – James Bettley, 'An update of the Suffolk Pevsner'. See the review in the July, '15 *Newsletter*.

*Wednesday November 18, 7.30pm: **The Society's Annual Awards Presentations*** at St Peter's by the Waterfront. Refreshments will be available. Awards to projects in Ipswich completed in the last two years for design, vision and architectural merit.

*Wednesday December 16, 7.30pm: **Winter Illustrated Talk*** at the Museum Street Methodist Church – Gail Broom, 'The work of an Ipswich Conservation Officer'.

*Saturday April 23, 2016:* Chartwell outing.

*Saturday May 14, 2016:* Great Yarmouth, Time & Tide Museum plus guided coach tour.

*Wednesday June 8, 2016:* King's Lynn tour.

*Tuesday July 19, 2016:* Creeks, Cockles & Cockneys Essex tour.

<b>Newsletter deadlines &amp; publication dates</b> (the latter may vary by a few days)
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Deadline for material: 1 December;	Publication date: 22 January;
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1 March;	2 April;
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1 June;	17 July;
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1 September;	9 October.
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*Image from the Ipswich Society's Fore St Facelift 1961 exhibition*

*Ipswich Civic College, later Suffolk College, photographed around 1970. The detail focuses on the college buildings framed by Grimwade and Fore Streets, Back Hamlet and Rope Walk. St Edmund House on the corner of Rope Walk and Grimwade Street would occupy the car park shown here. The Ready-Mix Concrete plant can be seen at the lower left, behind the remaining 14-foot high wall of the former Meux maltings. Duke Street roundabout, now no more, is at the bottom-centre of the photograph.*