

Issue 179 Newsletter Apr 2010



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Editorial: Our Anniversary

This little splash of colour in the Newsletter should help you to appreciate that this is our Golden Jubilee. There is much to celebrate as we recall some of the past - the various ways in which the Society has tried to make Ipswich a better place to live in and to look at. Sometimes we've been successful, sometimes not, but there's been no lack of commitment from a purely voluntary society. Dozens of committee members and others have freely given their time and made their efforts to improve our town.

In this issue of the Newsletter you will find a brief summary of some of the Society's aims and achievements in those fifty years. On a lighter note, you might like to consider how the very disparate hopes for Ipswich expressed by members ten years ago have worked out.

Today's problems are dominated by the Tesco issue, with important contributions by Mike Cook and John Norman. I hope members won't think this an over-reaction or an approach based on prejudice. It is our contribution to defending the town centre - surely one of the key aims of any civic society? Without a real centre a town becomes an American 'doughnut'!

In the foreseeable future the Society's work - often behind the scenes - will continue unabated. And for members there is a wonderful programme of special anniversary events to come, as outlined on the page opposite. But there are also ways in which you could actively help the community through the Society. You will find in this Newsletter Bob Kindred's invitation to photographers to assist the Borough Council in updating the Local List (the original version of which the Society compiled and published in 1984) and Geoff Knight's suggestion of how people could contribute to establishing Rights of Way in Ipswich.

I'd like to thank all contributors to the Newsletter, past and present, and in particular this time thank Brian Jepson for his cover design of buildings old and new. Finally, I remember with gratitude the late Bernard Reynolds who designed our logo - Keeping an Eye on the Borough which has served us so well for decades. It is fitting that I can feature in this Newsletter the new book about Bernard's work as a very distinguished sculptor.

Neil Salmon

Greeting from the Chairman

I am most pleased to welcome this birthday Newsletter. In its 50th year the Society is in good shape with its work as important as ever it has been in its history. To mark our anniversary year we have, as you can see below, an exciting programme of lectures and events, some free and some chargeable. As a more permanent mark of our anniversary, the Society is funding a renovation of the 'triangle' between Christchurch Mansion and the Round Pond. Chairs, tables and parasols on a tidily paved area will be our gift to the town. I hope you will attend as many events as possible and help us to celebrate our anniversary year.

Jack Chapman

Anniversary Events

Friday, 23 April 7.30 pm AGM in the atrium of Suffolk New College. After the brief AGM there will be a talk by Jonathan Glancey, architecture and design correspondent of The Guardian. Refreshments will be canapés, wine and soft drinks.

Wednesday, 12 May 7.30 pm Our first evening of the year in St Peter's Church on the Waterfront. Music by the Ipswich Youth Steel Band. Talk by Tony Burton, Director of the Civic Society Initiative. Light finger buffet, wine and soft drinks.

Wednesday, 16 June 7.30 pm An evening in the Willis Building, with an open roof garden. Talk by Jay Merrick, the architecture correspondent of The Independent. Drinks and a fork buffet supper. Cost of ticket £10.00. Booking on the pro forma separate sheet enclosed (because the numbers are limited).

Wednesday, 14 July 7.30 pm A summer evening at Woolverstone Hall with a chance to explore the grounds. Our speaker is Neil Clayton who taught at the Hall for several years and knows it very well. Drinks and buffet supper. Cost of ticket £10.00. Booking on the separate sheet (numbers limited).

Detailed information and booking details about autumn and winter anniversary events will appear in the July Newsletter. The dates are: Wednesday, 13 or 20 October with Ken Powell of The Twentieth Century Society as speaker; Wednesday, 10 November for our Annual Awards Evening; Friday, 3 December for our end of year dinner.

Our First Fifty Years

A history of the Society is being prepared in book form, but it seems appropriate that this celebratory Newsletter should include a brief survey of some of the many things which the Society has been involved with. Peter Underwood, our Vice- President, with some assistance from me, wrote an account of our first forty years in the October Newsletter of 2000 (Issue 141). What follows here is a brief summary with necessary updating.

Why and how the Society began

After the Second World War a general feeling of needing a new start led to a willingness, even eagerness, to clear away the past to make room for the new. Historic towns and villages began to lose their character. Contrary concerns led to the creation of the Civic Trust in 1957. Then, seeing what civic amenity societies were achieving elsewhere and prompted by the 1959 Review of the Ipswich Town Plan, local people saw the value of creating our own civic society which officially came into being at its first AGM in July 1960.

Our involvement in three schemes

One of the projects which the Society backed and helped to advance was the refurbishment of Fore Street in the days before it was bisected by Star Lane. We set up and helped to advise the Fore Street Association. The resulting repairs and planned colour scheme, spurred on by the Queen's visit to open the Civic College (Suffolk College) were captured on film made by Gordon Hawker and devoted Society member, Don Chipperfield. The Society also took great interest in the proposed inner ring road which seemed a good way of reducing vehicles entering the town centre. But

attitudes changed and the new road was stopped at Cromwell Street. The Society helped to draw attention to the value of historic buildings in St Nicholas Street and nearby which could have been lost to the road but were then seen as assets to the town. Thirdly, improvements were made to the riverside thanks largely to the Society's initiative and work on the ground by some of our members on Sunday mornings. These were areas alongside Ranelagh Road and later near Stoke Bridge where after clearances a striking feature using sarsen stones out of the river was designed by Bernard Reynolds. (photo p.13)

Town and country

During the 1960s Central Government appointed planners to greatly expand Ipswich under the New Towns Act. In the event the Government chose other towns for expansion but the possibilities sparked much internal debate in the Society. In the late 1980s the Society helped to oppose large housing developments at Westerfield, Chantry Yale and Belstead Brook which would have blurred the distinction between town and country. Today these issues are arising again but in a context where there is a greater demand for housing.

Keeping an eye on planning applications

The Society's volunteer monitors have studied and evaluated many thousands of planning proposals during these fifty years. Frequently our monitors have worked in teams under a co-ordinator but at other times one person has shouldered the responsibility, as Mike Cook does now. The number of applications has reduced recently after a few years of heavy demand but big complex schemes which are quite time consuming can still crop up. Our responses are made direct to the Borough Council which values contributions from us as independent non-political observers, even though they don't always agree with us! Much of this work is unspectacular but there have been some striking achievements, such as saving the Sailors' Rest in St Peter's Street (photo opposite) which was threatened with demolition in 1970.

We also gave valued support to the Borough Council in opposing the demolition of the Great White Horse in 1968 and the proposed change of use of Manning's on the Cornhill. Some members would probably be even more grateful that the Society helped to prevent Brazier's Wood from becoming a landfill site!

Our other major activities

Our Annual Awards scheme recognising notably good architectural or refurbishment achievements in the town has helped to raise awareness of the value of attractive street scenes. We have also organised and funded the Heritage Open Days in Ipswich; in most other towns this has been the responsibility of the Civic Trust. Our Blue Plaques scheme begun in 2000 has alerted the general public to distinguished people associated with Ipswich. We have also been represented on many sister organisations which also aim to improve the quality of our town. Our various hard working organisers over the years have arranged hundreds of visits to places of interest in England and many study visits (although unfortunately not recently) to towns and cities on the near-mainland of Europe. Finally, as you can see on the cover, this is Issue Number 179 of the Newsletter and I can't begin to calculate the number of articles, let alone words, that must represent!

Neil Salmon

News about Planning

There have been several important planning applications and issues recently despite the economic recession. Here is a summary of some of these matters, the first one being of paramount importance because of its potential impact on the town centre.

Tesco, Grafton Way: The not quite final verdict on this saga which started in September 2008 was given at the Planning and Development Committee on Wednesday, 3 March 2010 when, amidst scenes of near farce, the application was given approval by seven votes to six. It's not quite final because, under the rules of the Shopping Directions, a new retail scheme of this size has to be referred to the Government for the East of England (GO- East) for final approval which is normally granted if the proper procedures have been complied with.

To re-cap: Tesco wish to build a two-level convenience and comparison store with car parks above and below for 700 cars, 125 apartments (25% affordable) and two hotels on the old B&Q site and the lower railway yard in Grafton Way (Commercial Road) stretching between Stoke and Princes Street bridges. The design is beginning to look good but is eight storeys high and is going to change the Ipswich scene over-dramatically.

The Council's own retail consultants' report estimates that the town centre would only lose trade from between 2% and 10% depending on speciality. The sceptical view of that estimate expressed by Ipswich Central, the organisation representing over 700 of the town centre's businesses, was dismissed as exaggerated.

It is agreed that this is not a town centre development. The idea that people will park at Tesco free for three hours, walk to the town centre and then do their supermarket food shopping on the way back is surely fanciful. Planning policies require that town centres be protected. Suitable sites close to the centre are sequentially analysed to ensure that they are suitable and available. Sadly, the Mint Quarter is neither. The Westgate (Civic Centre) is at present too small and the car parking inappropriate, but we were assured by Turnstone (the potential developers here) that letters of intent from Hanover Housing and the Police Authority showed that it would be possible to build a store as large with good parking on this site. However, this was dismissed as being not immediately available.

I (Mike Cook) spoke mostly about the traffic but additionally about the architecture and the size as well as the public realm. Everybody agrees it will produce a big increase in car traffic. 1600 vehicle movements in the peak hours will bring big queues stretching back to Staples and lengthening in every other direction. Despite widening the Novotel roundabout to one large three-lane gyratory, with traffic lights integrated with the proposed pan-Ipswich traffic control scheme, increased congestion will result. It is hoped, but not yet agreed, that Tesco will contribute substantially to this scheme. Amazingly the Head of Highways at Suffolk County Council, Dave Watson, professed to be unaware that the car parking would be free. Only when the condition, inserted at the last minute, that the car parking would be managed was the recommendation carried.

It must be said that the architecture itself is now looking pretty fine (and has CABA's guarded approval) and that it will bring regeneration of a critical site close to the Waterfront together with car parking spaces needed for the area. However, in our view it will be the death knell for the

undeveloped sites in the town centre and the town centre as a whole. It will create traffic stagnation in south central Ipswich to which there are no solutions. Everything points to a big change for the worse in Ipswich.

The Mill (formerly the Cranfields site on the Waterfront): The central portion of this development is on hold until economic conditions improve. Meanwhile to protect the Edwardian structures it will be wrapped in plastic with huge illustrations of the Waterfront.

Arcade Street: Approval granted to demolish the building on the north side next to the County Court. The proposed building for apartments is modern in tone and acceptable.

Hayhill Allotments: IBC has approved a modified scheme (no high apartment block and a small reduction in housing units) for the remainder of the site. Its architectural style is 'traditional' as described by the developers, Crest Nicolson. There are ongoing discussions concerning affordable housing.

6 Tuddenham Road: Despite winning approval for a single house, the site owner has come back to propose two detached semi-bungalows whilst preserving the important tree. We consider this over-development.

Fire Station, Colchester Road: As the Fire Service becomes more a rescue service and fire prevention body it feels its fire stations are inappropriate. It is therefore intending to move to Ransomes Estate (a utilitarian shed of no merit) and to sell Colchester Road station. It will retain Princes Street. Colchester Road is strictly speaking not zoned but presumed to be for residential. There is a rumour that Waitrose is interested. If this were to come about it might bring delight to some members of The Society but it would have a very serious meaning for the future of the town centre. The loss of such an attraction as a Waitrose would make it much more difficult to open the Westgate Centre (Civic Centre site) or the Mint Quarter. It would also make traffic on Colchester/Valley Road even worse.

St Peter's Quay: IBC are proposing improvements with paving, coach and car parking, pedestrian routes, trees and planters. It can only be an improvement on the current area.

St Mary at Quay: East Suffolk MIND has submitted a well thought out application for its conversion of the church to a centre for helping those with mental health problems. The many repairs to the main fabric would be carried out, a new floor inserted with a mezzanine floor in the south aisle and an extension to the south churchyard. The architects are a London firm with good ecclesiastical experience. The application is prior to Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage bids.

Great White Horse: It has lain largely empty for some years and the hotel and its roof are in poor condition despite planning permission to convert the ground floor to retail. Cotswold applied to use the remaining ground floor and part of the first floor (the ballroom) as a shop. There are no proposals for the hotel portion. Whilst all would like to see a boutique hotel use, it is unlikely since there is no car parking. A good shop would sharpen up that end of the street. The advertising proposals are excessive and will be objected to.

Shed 8, Orwell Quay (the big site on the east side of the dock south of Neptune Marina): Another proposal has been put in by the developers, London & Provincial, using the same Liverpool

architects, KDP. It consists of three buildings containing a 90 bed hotel, a health club, 200 residential units (25% affordable), retail units and underground car parking. It's of strikingly modern 'kinetic' forms, with ship references in shape. If it were built (and it would be expensive) it would be an exciting addition to the dock area. CABE apparently approve.

Foundation Street and Rosemary Lane: Another proposal to convert MIND's current HQ in a Georgian Grade II Listed house to a dementia care home and to build a 28 bedded annexe in the garden. We have no objection to change of use or the new building in principle, but its exterior design is an unthinking box totally unsuited to the site, or indeed anywhere.

St George's House, St Matthew's Street: the Society found the amended planning application to be a considerable improvement. It is approved by IBC.

Mike Cook

More on the Tesco Debate

On Wednesday, 3 March, I sat through four hours of debate, argument and counter-point of view. I listened intently to the proposals for and against a new Tesco superstore for Grafton Way, just outside Ipswich town centre. Key members of the Ipswich Society Executive had spent 18 months reviewing the extensive range of papers that had been drip fed on to Ipswich Borough Council's web site, trying to understand the changes that had been proposed and implemented and had, as would be expected for a planning application of this magnitude, written letters with comment and objection.

There was an incredible alliance of objectors, independent shopkeepers and town centre businesses. I clearly have a biased opinion but I felt the arguments against the development, and thus for the preservation of the town centre, were much more logical and came across with greater passion than those for investment by the retailer. However, it wasn't until we were reaching the conclusion of the debate that a stunning revelation was made by the officer from Suffolk County Council; they hadn't understood the free parking scenario. Clearly this would change the dynamics of vehicle movement around the town. Drivers in much greater numbers than SCC had estimated would make for Grafton Way for their first choice of car park; traffic loads on the Novotel roundabout and other road junctions would lead to considerable queuing, delay and gridlock. And so to the vote. Despite the earlier promise that the planning Committee never took the whip, it was along party lines [And approved by 7 votes to 6.]

Another new Tesco for Ipswich, so close to the town centre it is bound to have an effect on the viability of the existing retail offer. Because Tesco offer such a wide variety of goods in their Extra stores (60% convenience, i.e. food) and 40% comparison (clothing, electrical, beauty products, toys, sports goods, etc) it means that any possibility of another department store in Ipswich has been seriously reduced. I cannot see any benefit that this store will bring to Ipswich or its residents; it is simply another enormous Tesco.

John Norman

Wolsey Statue Launch

Planning permission has been granted and the launch of the Wolsey statue project will take place in St Lawrence Church Centre on 7 April at 4 pm. Some of you may receive this Newsletter just in

time to go, but in any case you will probably be pleased to hear about this progress. The chosen sculptor will show examples of his previous comparable work and explain how his design has been developed from research and ideas brought together by Dr Blatchly and others locally. The seated Wolsey (and his cat) will be in Curson Place near where he meant to live and facing towards St Peter's Church, the chapel of his great college.

Hopes for Ipswich in 2000

In 2000 the Editor asked a number of members about their main hopes for the town as we entered the new millennium. It wasn't meant to involve soul searching but off-the-cuff thoughts, with humour not excluded! You might like to look at those hopes and do your own thinking about what has been achieved and what hasn't.

So here goes - "I hope for....

- "Enough jobs for townspeople."
- "A fully fledged university which will attract more brains and business."
- "A town more comfortable with itself, not bothering to become a city."
- "Restitution of the Museums Service to past glories" and "Flourishing museums."
- "A sorting out of traffic problems and synchronising of traffic lights."
- "A more rational and balanced view of needs by the Borough Council."
- "Successful regeneration of the Wet Dock area."
- "A re-opened and thriving Wolsey Theatre."
- "The Town to be promoted to the Premiership and to stay there." "Better shops" and "More real shops and fewer charity shops."
- "A better balance between the needs of private and public transport in the town centre."
- "A cathedral so that I can hear choral evensong without going to Norwich or Bury."
- "A House of Fraser department store."
- "A pedestrianised town without traffic gridlock."
- "An extension to the playground in Christchurch Park."
- "A solution of the traffic problem between dock and town."
- "The waterside to come together as the beginning of the vision we are working for."
- "All our fine old buildings to be brought back into use."
- "A more dynamic and visionary approach by our town leaders, including the IBC, business and voluntary organisations."

Shared Spaces

Making road space available to all road users

There's a major opportunity for Ipswich to move forward in Shared Space road schemes with the alterations at Giles Circus. The agreed scheme is to move the statue further north on to a widened pavement outside Barclays Bank and to move the road south such that it follows the curvature of the old Oxborrow's building (leaving a pavement too narrow for the parking of motorcycles). A public consultation exercise suggested alternative ways of indicating the re-aligned road - either a

low kerb solution (preferred by the partially sighted) or a kerb marked only by different surfacing, with both road and pavement at the same level.

Members of our Society's Executive pushed for a more radical alternative - one without any demarcation of the road whatsoever - a true Shared Space scheme. Such schemes have been increasingly successful across Europe since the introduction of the 'Woonerf' in the Netherlands. Roughly translated as 'streets for living' it was developed by Hans Monderman and pioneered in Denmark, Sweden and Holland. The essence of shared streets is uncertainty. Car drivers do not have priority and proceed slowly and carefully in much the same way as we all push our trolleys around the supermarket. Lots of eye contact, non-verbal communication and courtesy to other road users ensure all share the available spaces. One of the keys is to reduce vehicles so that they don't claim priority by sheer weight of numbers - and we feel this could have been achieved here.

The number of buses using the Queen Street loop has declined and the couple of remaining routes using the Giles Circus stop could easily be diverted along Friars Street. There are simply too many cars passing through the junction looking for on-street parking spaces and the proposed electronic traffic management schemes could lead to a substantial reduction. Thus the remaining delivery vehicles, essential users and bicycles become a manageable number in the Shared Space.

Shared Space schemes are spreading and a number in this country have won awards for their innovative approach to traffic management and for the 'de-cluttering' of the street scene. Railings, road signs, zebra crossings and traffic lights can all be removed - all are effectively signals that give vehicle drivers priority over pedestrians and Shared Space schemes redress this balance.

New Road in Brighton was about to be closed to vehicles but traders were concerned about servicing their premises and the consequential Shared Space won a Civic Trust Award. The number of people using New Road has grown and trade has improved considerably. But not all Shared Space schemes are totally successful. Newbury's Market Square is probably the most contentious, but it is Shared Space on a massive scale. In Kent, Ashford's scheme was promoted to create viability and a sustainable place for living and working. The single direction ring road was identified as a barrier to people and development.. The result has been to restore these streets to a series of interconnected public spaces. These streets however still carry up to 10,000 vehicles per day but in an environment where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles have equal priority. There have been other benefits not obviously apparent at the design stage - air quality has improved, noise levels are down, the number of people walking and cycling has increased dramatically and cross-town traffic speeds have halved but without increasing overall journey times because stop-start driving has been eliminated.

In Ipswich we need Shared Space schemes along the Northern Quays and in Key Street if the proposed development of the BOCM offices (to be called Custom House Square) goes ahead. IBC is doing the easy one first!

John Norman

[**Editor:** As John Norman says, the Society would have preferred no kerbs at all in Giles Circus but we applaud the scheme nevertheless. If it works as intended it will give our rather cramped town centre another public space and, in this era of competition between towns, it should help to make visiting Ipswich more attractive. The cost of £650,000 for the whole scheme is being met largely by

funds from the Haven Gateway and the County Council. It is unfortunate that opponents have sought to give the impression that moving the Giles Grandma statue will cost £650,000! It also needs to be said that the town's first Shared Space scheme in Handford Road is hardly a good example of what can be achieved and might even have given the concept a bad name! It is a busy through road, arguably the main road into the town centre from the A12 and far less important for pedestrians, except on match days at Portman Road and for people walking that way to the railway station. Motorists here generally seem oblivious to other road users.]

A Tale of Two Cities & A Town

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times - for some - in late 2006. There were the two cities of Norwich in Norfolk and Exeter in Devon, and the town of Ipswich in Suffolk. Their councils felt oppressed by the shackles imposed by their respective counties. They aspired to break free and pursue their own distinct ambitions. So they went to the Secretary of State to ask for Unitary Status. The Secretary of State heard them and praised them for their spirit but judged they were not yet strong enough to make their way in the wide world. So she asked her advisors, the Boundary Committee, to see if they could find a way to help them.

The Boundary Committee did their work and consulted with the people. The years passed by and there was a new Secretary of State, and the Boundary Committee advised him, "We have looked at Exeter in Devon and Norwich in Norfolk, and the cities still wish to be granted Unitary Status but the counties do not. And we have looked at Ipswich in Suffolk, where the town and the county and the people generally have a strong appetite for unitary Status, but will not accept our advice on how they might make their way in the world."

So the Secretary of State thanked the Boundary Committee for their work. Then he turned to Norwich and Exeter and said, "You are yet young and, in my view, still not strong enough to achieve your aspirations; yet you are very ambitious and we need spirited and innovative communities such as yours to develop our prosperity. So you shall have Unitary Status." And there was great joy in the Look East studio.

Then he turned to Ipswich and Suffolk and said, "You too should have Unitary Status but you have rejected the wisdom of my advisors, so it must be brought about in a manner of your own choosing and to which you must all agree. I will tell you how you must go about it, and you will go away and agree how it will be."

And Look East reported that "Home Rule for Ipswich" had been rejected.
To be continued?

Mike Brain

Walking in Ipswich

Committee has approved five as Public Rights of Way for inclusion on the IDM&S. It is likely that landowners and port/ business interests may object, which means a Public Inquiry before any decision. Only if the outcome of the Public Inquiry is successful will they be added to the IDM&S.

Last year the paths forming the Fonnereau Way were claimed and the User Evidence presented was sufficient to be accepted by the SCC Rights of Way committee in January 20 10. The Modification Order has now been made and, unless cogent objections are received, should be confirmed in a few months and be added to the IDM&S.

Please do think about what information you, your friends or neighbours - especially dog-walkers - can provide so that paths are not lost! With a full set of paths, walkers could know where they are entitled to walk and where developers and mc Planning Department need to be aware of these claims.

It would do nothing but good to mention these matters to any Councillors with whom you may be in contact! Many fully support this process but some could be more pressing and supportive for this cause.

There is a good map which shows most of the paths within the Ipswich area. It and others produced by Wilfred George can be obtained from the Tourist Information Centre. Wilfred George has been producing these hand-drawn maps of much of East Anglia for over 20 years in his spare time. Another useful map is the Ipswich Cycle Route Map published by SCC, which shows some useful paths. But neither of these maps has the legal status that the IDM&S has.

SCC has a website that explains the process of claiming a path with links to the form for providing evidence. The Rights of Way Section of SCC can be helpful, but evidence required must be collected by the public. The two ways in which a path may be claimed are by User Evidence and by Documentary Evidence. This latter may require finding information from the Tithe Maps and similar documents at Suffolk Records Office. User Evidence requires the claimant or other individuals to have walked a path legally over a number of years, i.e. where no objection was made or sign displayed to the contrary. For a Claim to succeed, SCC normally requires evidence that covers a 15-year period from at least six people. For further information one could contact

Geoff Knight

[Information: Suffolk County Council's website or the Ramblers Association's website.]

Do you trust Science?

Two swallows don't make a summer, two cold winters don't make an ice age, and a handful of mishaps in the IPCC and UEA should not discredit the entire body of climate science. But the questionable behaviour of a small number of scientists, whether deliberately devious or naively innocent, has been made sufficient to break the trust between the public and the scientific community, according to a BBC survey.

In response, some commentators are calling for "greater transparency" by having all the raw climate data published on-line. An understandable knee-jerk, but how will it help? Any non-specialist who is remotely concerned about climate change might reasonably yearn for someone to resolve the differences with the so-called sceptics and to "make everything clear to them". But that is not the kind of "transparency" that access to the raw data will provide. Far from it, unless they already have

the skill to interpret it for themselves. How many such commentators have trained even as scientists, let alone developing as climate specialists?

Other commentators call for a fresh start "from the bottom up" to re-establish the validity of climate science. But where is the point in that? For the past three years I have sought to provide some degree of transparency regarding these issues for the benefit of readers of the Newsletter. Only you could say whether I have had any success, but I do not see any point now in reiterating everything I have ever written, and I am sure you would agree. Instead, therefore, I will offer a topical analogy from everyday life to illustrate why we should not allow our trust in climate science to be shaken.

This winter has been perhaps the coldest in thirty years or more, sufficient to test the robustness of the new breed of super-efficient gas boiler, the 'combination condensing' variety. They efficiently extract so much heat from the burnt gas that it condenses into water which drains away through an external condensate pipe. This winter many such boilers have been reported to be failing owing to the condensate pipe freezing solid in the sustained sub-zero temperatures, resulting in the boiler flooding with the condensed water which can no longer drain away. I know this from first-hand experience. I bought such a boiler four or five years ago and I watched the engineer install the condensate pipe, and questioned at the time whether it should have been inclined at a greater angle to drain the water away more effectively. He said not, and I trusted him, and sure enough it was fine in last winter's freezing weather (coldest for only eighteen years) so I assumed all was well.

Until the boiler failed only days before last Christmas when the temperature plummeted. And the reputable company which installed the boiler had ceased trading in the hostile conditions of the recession.

If that happened to you, you might be both angry and disappointed. But would you rip out the entire central heating system and start again? Or demand greater transparency in the design of central heating boilers? Or re-train as a gas engineer so that you wouldn't have to rely on trusting others? Neither did I. Another company fixed the boiler and rectified the installation of the condensate pipe. And I was able to get on with enjoying Christmas. The boiler was perfectly sound, the underlying principles were sound, and only the questionable practice of the original installer was at fault.

The reported mishaps in the pursuit of climate change science represent only a tiny fraction of the total effort and the people involved worldwide. By all means the errors should be thoroughly investigated, but meanwhile the important work should be allowed to progress. The very process by which science progresses puts it beyond having to trust the word of individual scientists or sceptics. Or is there perhaps a perverse eagerness to find reason to doubt what is becoming increasingly evident?

Mike Brain

Revising the Local List

Formal national protection for buildings of special architectural and historic interest ('Listed Buildings') was introduced in 1947, resulting in nearly half a million buildings in England now being protected. Current Government-led heritage protection reforms are now placing greater

emphasis on other components of the local environment that are of value to local communities. In this context the Borough Council considers that revision of the Local List (Buildings of Townscape Interest) is now timely for a variety of reasons, principal among which is to provide supplementary guidance supporting the Local Development Framework Ipswich Core Strategy approved in September 2009.

As currently proposed, the policy on buildings of townscape interest (DC9) makes a presumption in favour of retaining and repairing buildings of particular townscape interest, with loss only being permitted where a replacement is of an equal or higher standard of design and incorporating sustainability features. The policy is more robust and potentially more effective than the one in the adopted Ipswich Local Plan which relied on the Council serving Building Preservation Notices to protect local buildings irrespective of their individual merits or the prospect of such Notices being confirmed by the Government.

Buildings of special local interest are also more likely to be retained where such inventories have been the subject of public consultation and command widespread local public support. With continuing growth in interest in local history and the quality of the local environment, it is hoped the revised Local List will help identify what is special and worth retaining in particular neighbourhoods.

When reported to the Council's Planning and Transportation committee in September 1984, the Ipswich Society's Local List was warmly commended and the content has been continuously useful to the Council since in the exercise of its planning and conservation functions. The Conservation Service has therefore taken the publication as its starting point for the current review.

Of the 600 buildings of local interest originally identified in 1984, 56 are now formally Listed, 16 have been demolished in whole or substantially, and 5 located in Westerfield are now part of Suffolk Coastal DC's administrative area. Many buildings have been altered (often unsympathetically). Consequently, without revision the List has become less useful.

Since 1984 Conservation Area coverage has also widened - the Park Conservation Area for example was designated in 1985. Furthermore, much more is now known about many of the architects (both parochial and national) of local buildings, which enables their significance to be put in context.

While a number of local authorities closely base the selection criteria for buildings of local interest on those for Listed Buildings, this seems not particularly suited to selection of local buildings as the meeting of such criteria would in all probability have resulted in the statutory protection which would make a Local List unnecessary. However, the main generic criteria are pertinent - architectural interest, historic interest, close historical association and group value, together with age and rarity. The older the buildings are, the fewer the surviving examples (and the more likelihood of automatic protection). The evaluation of the historic development of Ipswich and the regular review of its most historic buildings suggests that, for example, almost no surviving medieval buildings have been missed, but economic stagnation in the Georgian era leaves only a small legacy of such architecture. The content of the existing Local List is therefore strongly orientated to the 19th century and later.

The draft revised Local List has initially identified about 800 potential buildings for inclusion and this inventory is likely to be published for public consultation in the summer. Unlike the Society's

original Local List (and indeed many other local authorities' lists -which are often just address lists) the Council intends to identify why the buildings have been recommended for inclusion. In common with the Society's 1984 List, it is intended (where practicable) to include a current photograph of the buildings. Twenty-five years ago, before the advent of digital cameras, this was a major logistical exercise and currently it still remains a significant part of the work to be completed.

The Ipswich Society's Chairman has remarked that this recording aspect would probably be of interest to members. The Conservation Team would therefore be grateful for offers of assistance from Society members to complete the photographic coverage.

If you would care to come forward, please contact Mrs Gail Broom, the Council's Conservation Officer:

tel 01473 432935

or email gail.broom@ipswich.gov.uk

Bob Kindred, Ipswich Conservation & Urban Design Service

Ipswich Building Society

Now Available at Suffolk Record Office...

This year Ipswich Building Society celebrates its 160th anniversary. As a result of early business activities under its original name of the Ipswich and Suffolk Freehold Land Society (FLS) the Society amassed an extensive archive of estate plans, sale particulars and architects' drawings of houses as well as over 350 bundles of title deeds for land in Ipswich and other parts of Suffolk. This rare example of a local business archive is now available to researchers at Suffolk Record Office in Ipswich.

Twenty years ago the Society took expert advice from professional archivists at Suffolk Record Office and work began to produce a comprehensive catalogue for the collection. More recently this catalogue was transferred to a CALM database. The purpose of this work was to prepare material for eventual transfer to the Record Office in a format that would make it instantly available to researchers. The project came to fruition in spring 2009 when the Society's Chief Executive, Paul Winter, formally handed over the archive to Councillor Rosemary Clarke of Suffolk County Council.

The Society's most treasured possessions are two very large bound ledgers of plans and ballot posters containing almost 200 plans for estates developed and FLS houses built between 1850 and the late 1930s. The ledgers are now too fragile to be handled but each plan has been professionally photographed and digital images are available to view; these can also be reproduced by Record Office staff on request. Why not visit Ipswich Record office soon, to investigate this valuable resource available to researchers of local and family history? (Catalogue reference GF419). Alternatively there is a guided walk on Saturday 5 June to discover the history of the Rose Hill area of Ipswich and learn how the FLS archive can be used in conjunction with other Record Office sources to study areas developed by FLS from 1850 to 1936 in Ipswich, Felixstowe, Framlingham and Lowestoft. Contact Ipswich Record Office for more details.

Margaret Hancock, Ipswich Building Society Archivist

Bernard Reynolds

Book review: *The Sculptor Bernard Reynolds*

by Gwynneth Reynolds and Pat Hurrell: Sansom & Company, £30

People who knew Bernard Reynolds (1915 -1997) will find a great deal of interest in this book. His sculptures which can be seen locally, his teaching at Ipswich Art School and the College, his life drawing groups at home, his involvement with local societies and his family life are all vividly recalled in the book. But as I read it through and related the text to the photographic illustrations it dawned on me more and more that Bernard Reynolds wasn't just a good regionally based sculptor but an artist worthy of national respect and appreciation.

I marvelled at his range of interests and skills which were so inter-related - drawing, woodcarving, etching, photography, and the use of several kinds of metals which he could master thanks in part to his war-time experience as an engineer in Norwich. But all this craftsmanship was put to the service of his observations of nature and mankind. "I was one who was always interested in things, in specimens, and so that brought me round strongly on the side of sculpture ... the forms of solid nature rather than views of nature." And to quote Bernard again, this time apropos of his bird skull series, " ... it's symbolic of primaeval life which runs through nearly all my themes ... an upthrust of growth and energy."

These are the qualities which make his work perennial. Far from being an artist of gimmickry, his work was deeply serious and the product of years of experience. In his later life he thought it might have appeared unfashionable, but I don't believe work that is so rooted in nature can ever be sidelined. So we should treasure his semi-abstract Ship on the Civic Drive roundabout, his little Mycomorph in the garden behind Christchurch Mansion, his Conch Avian 111 and Head of Jonathan purchased by IBC, and should conserve his Pylons at the College, and should help to find a home for his Sea Bird Skull. The photo below is of Bernard supervising the re-locating of the Ship on the roundabout in February 1995.

The book contains a well written text and good illustrations of his sculptures and drawings of many subjects. There are a few works which sound important but aren't illustrated, unavoidably I presume. However, it is a splendid production, both sophisticated and homely and therefore a very fitting tribute to a fine artist.

Neil Salmon

Selling the Town's Silver

If Ipswich Borough Council and its successors in title want to keep taxation to minimal levels they should consider selling the family silver!

In 1897 the Corporation was given the right by Parliament to generate the town's electricity. Being Suffolk, they didn't rush into things and it wasn't until 1903 that they began generating electricity for both trams and street lights. The corporation had compulsorily purchased the (horse drawn)

Tramway Company for £17,552 in 1901 and converted the system to run on electricity. The Electricity and Tramways Committee was appointed at a Town Council meeting in November 1901 such that the services of each could be combined for their mutual benefit and for the people of the town.

The Seven Acre Field was purchased on Portman's Marshes for the combined electricity power station, tram shed and refuse destructor. You will know the buildings today as those in Constantine Road. The tram sheds are still there, as are the bus company's offices and the power station, now converted into administrative offices for the combined services of SCC and BT. What was innovative in 1901 was the burning of refuse to generate electricity! Electricity generation was transferred to the new coal fired power station at Cliff Quay in 1935, which was compulsorily purchased by the CEGB (i.e. nationalised) in 1948.

The land at Cliff Quay was chosen for a number of reasons. It was in the mutual ownership of the people of Ipswich through Ipswich Port Authority. A site of sufficient size was available and a new quay could be established for the importation of coal. When the port was sold to Associated British Ports in 1997 the power station was still operational and therefore remained under the control of the Central Electricity Generating Board, but following the demolition of the power station the land was returned to the Corporation (by now Ipswich Borough Council) who swapped the fourteen acres for just under five acres on Orwell Quay, and then gave this site to the University.

Towns can only flourish with a clean wholesome supply of drinking water and the Corporation (and others) have been supplying the town for over 800 years, initially with piped water from springs close to the Wilderness Pond In Christchurch Park, but in Victorian times from springs in the Cauldwell Hall (cold well) area, with water piped to Waterworks Street where there was also a bored water supply. The Waterworks Company was purchased by Ipswich Corporation in 1892 but lost to the Anglian Water Authority in 1973 (privatised to become Anglian Water in 1989).

One of Ipswich's little known claims to fame is that it had gas street lighting as early as 1821, the gas being the by-product of coke production for Robert Ransom's foundry. However, like all gas companies, the Ipswich Gas Light Company was nationalised by Attlee's Labour Government in 1948, and then sold (remember "If you see Sid, tell him" campaign) in 1986.

Still- at least we have the bus company !

John Norman

Some Facts about Ipswich

Population of the Borough, 124,000; in the 30 minute travel catchment area, 310,000. Our population has above national average population of 15-34 year olds and over 65s. It has below the below the national average of 35 -64s.

National average of residents classified as social class C2DE is 45.5%; Ipswich is 50.1 %. Below average numbers of educated young people; should be improved by UCS and SNC.

Dr Blatchly on Blue Plaques

It rained all day on 21 October- a rare occurrence in the dry period August-October 2009. But the attendance at our first winter lecture was nevertheless good, for which there is a clear explanation - Dr John Blatchly. Most of us know that Dr Blatchly's enthusiasm and scholarly curiosity can make anything interesting. But Blue Plaques aren't just 'anything' for him because he provided helpful information when the Society set up our scheme in 1999-2000, and when English Heritage decided to promote Blue Plaques in Eastern England he and Norman Scarfe were asked to nominate suitable candidates for commemoration. English Heritage, incidentally, were pleased with the Society's scheme which we had already started and simply gave us their blessing.

We learned that it was Gladstone's idea to commemorate famous people with plaques in London. The first ones installed were for Byron and, surprisingly, the exiled Napoleon III. Apparently the only one which had to be taken down because of vandalism was Karl Marx's! The criteria in London are stricter than ours. We share the principle that the person should have contributed to "human welfare or happiness" but we can't stick to the condition that the plaque must go on the actual building lived in. For example, Gainsborough's house in Foundation Street has been demolished, but we've done the next best thing in putting his plaque on the wry similar house next door to where he lived in 1752-59.

Dr Blatchly commented interestingly on all the people the Society has commemorated, which I shan't mention here because you can pick up our leaflet from the Tourist Information Centre and read all about them, albeit without his fascinating extras! But he went on to talk about many other Ipswich worthies whom we could honour. I select from that number Samuel Ward, the hugely influential Town Preacher of the early 17th century and John Harbottle, leader of the Suffolk Rebellion in the mid-16th century, whose exploits are so little known compared with Robert Kett's in Norfolk, perhaps because Harbottle was a good organiser who treated his prisoners well and no lives were lost. He also highlighted Sir Charles Sherrington, O.M. and Nobel Prizewinner for his pioneering work on neurology and, as Dr Blatchly said, the Ipswich man second only to Wolsey in national and international importance.

More recent people were not ignored. Dr Blatchly underlined the claims of Birkin Haward as architect and architectural historian, and members were eager to add their suggestions which included Sir Daniel Goddard, Clifford Gray, John Moore, Nina Layard, Sir William Reavell and Peter Bruff (see October Newsletter and letter about Bruff in this edition).

The Society will hope to create some more plaques - if not all of those somewhat overwhelming suggestions - because as Dr Blatchly said at the beginning, Blue Plaques "enliven one's visit to a town or city."

Neil Salmon

Our New Blue Plaques

In recent months we have celebrated the mounting of the plaque to Richard Dykes Alexander (1788-1865) who was a Quaker banker, amateur photographer and most notably the anti-slavery

champion. The plaque is on the new student accommodation in his house, Alexander House, St Matthew's Street, Barrack Corner. There is a minor adjustment to be made to the wall where the plaque is located; this will be undertaken very soon.

In the next month or two we shall see three new plaques mounted.

On the Reg Driver Centre, Christchurch Park, will be fixed a Blue Plaque to celebrate **Felix Thornley Cobbold** JP MP (1841-1909), the Ipswich philanthropist whose life encompassed wide fields of interest -lawyer, brewer, farmer, banker, JP and MP. He donated many sites and great funds to the locality and to the benefit of local people including the public baths in Fore Street, a clock and carillon to St Clement's Church and great sums for the Ipswich and East Suffolk Hospital. Most memorable was his gift of Christchurch Mansion to the Borough, later giving parties there for the townspeople. On his death he left considerable sums for the purchase of works of art in the Mansion. He truly was, as the Fellows of King's College, Cambridge put it, "a munificent benefactor".

Leonard Squirrell (1893-1979) will be celebrated at 82 Spring Road. One of Suffolk's most distinguished and best loved artists he spent his childhood in this house. We have spent a great deal of time obtaining permission for this plaque and are extremely pleased. Squirrell trained at Ipswich School of Art and the Slade. He is an admired and outstanding topographical artist depicting the landscapes of Suffolk and East Anglia and some Ipswich townscapes which are still popular. He was also a talented etcher and pastelist, but he is best known as a watercolourist of railway carriage prints and glowing railway posters. He was commended also for his watercolours for a number of commercial companies including Rolls Royce and many local companies.

John Harbottle who died in 1578 will be celebrated at Jarman House, 2-4 Northgate Street. The sixteenth century wealthy and influential wool merchant and landowner lived in an imposing Tudor mansion on this site. He was a chamberlain in the town and was co-leader of the Suffolk contingent of Kett's Rebellion. According to Diarmaid MacCulloch "the rebel leaders showed adroitness in surviving the upheavals - [and] were responsible, sophisticated men ... " and at his death he was termed an 'esquire'. Although the rebel leaders achieved very little (though their skins were saved) the families took their place in the folklore of Suffolk not for what they accomplished but for their audacity and bravery.

Tony Marsden

Letters to the Editor

THE CRICKETERS, AGAIN

From **L H (Dick) Barton**

I am sure Mr Cheney is not alone in his appreciation of the unusual weather vane on the roof of The Cricketers. Speaking for myself, I would like it even more than I do if the cardinal points were indicated correctly. North for example is shown in a very easterly direction. Anyone doubting this should refer to the weather vane atop the spire of the nearby St Mary le Tower Church. Perhaps correcting this error would be difficult and expensive and the present owners have got the clock going very nicely and restored the proper name back to the pub - so well done them! Two out of three is pretty good.

PETER BRUFF, THE BRUNEL OF EAST ANGLIA

From **Merv Russen**

I would like to thank Barry Moore for his letter in the January 2010 issue of the Newsletter. I particularly liked the two ideas of changing the name of Civic Drive to Bruff Drive and the statue. These would be fitting tributes to a remarkable man.

I would also like to apologise to Jill Freestone concerning the reason for building the Ipswich Tunnel. She quite rightly says that the tunnel was built to facilitate a line from Ipswich to Bury. Unfortunately my article was too long to include everything that I originally wrote.

A key paragraph was edited out. It lay between the third and fourth paragraphs in the piece as published and read as follows:

"In 1845 the Board of Trade had accepted a scheme from the EUR to build a line from Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds and a spur line from Haughley to Norwich. The ECR rival scheme which proposed a route from London via Cambridge to Norwich was rejected. A separate company, the Ipswich and Bury Railway chaired by John Chevallier Cobbold was formed to construct the rail link from Ipswich to Bury."

If this is inserted in the article then everything follows makes more sense. That will teach me not to be so verbose in the first place!

PUBLIC CLOCKS AROUND IPSWICH TOWN CENTRE

From **Ken Wilson**

Brian Jepson's list of clocks (in the January Newsletter) is very interesting but he is rather severe when it comes to 'Lit at Night' since he lists only those with lamps behind the face, whereas many others are quite adequately illuminated externally.

THE NAMES OF STREETS IN IPSWICH

From **N Chandler**

Perhaps with financial assistance from a body like EEDA, the plaques concept could be extended to every central and Waterfront street and with an explanation of the origins of the names and places of interest. I have seen this in Berlin and it is being adopted in other English towns. With increasing numbers of tourists and students in Ipswich there would surely be a curiosity about streets such as Westgate, Butter Market, Dial Lane, Tower Street, Tower Ramparts, Coprolite Street, Upper Brook Street, Wherry Lane and the Cornhill, etc.

News & Comment

Help needed at St Peter's

Jean Hill is once again organising a list of Society volunteers to be in St Peter's Church on Thursdays from May until the end of September. Two sessions are available: 10am-1 pm and 1 pm-3.30pm. Those of you who would be willing to help, not necessarily every week, are asked to contact her.

A future for a better range of films

The recently formed Ipswich Film Theatre Trust has successfully negotiated with the Borough Council to re-open IFT for public shows, probably three times a week from May.

A 'Vision for Ipswich'

We welcome efforts by Ipswich Central and IBC to inspire development of the Ipswich economy. The conference held in the Town Hall on 21 January discussed the town's strengths (e.g. history, blossoming higher education, location) and weaknesses (e.g. the retail centre compares unfavourably with regional competitors). Although investment-led progress is difficult right now, 'vision' rightly precedes co-ordinated action.

Well done, traders

Ipswich market has been named as the best small market in Britain. Since the admirable decision to move the market to the Cornhill in 2002 it has brought new life to the town centre on four days a week. But it is still a 'small' market for a bigish town. Many stallholders only come for a day or two each week, so most of the credit should go to the regular nucleus which includes the two fruit & veg stalls, the fish stall, the florist's and the 'biscuit stall'. These are the people who are there rain or shine and who get to know many of their customers.

Controversial sale

Reports that IBC is likely to sell a stake in Ipswich Buses to the national firm, Go Ahead, are causing concern amongst frequent bus users. Although Go Ahead is said to have a good reputation and will probably have only a minority stake, this could be seen as the thin end of the wedge. Ipswich Buses, one of the town's greatest assets, is a very well run facility and responsive to local needs, far more so than is seen on the town routes run by First Bus.

Your Committee & Events

Saturday, 1 May -- Sandringham, Norfolk (in previous Newsletter)

Wednesday, 26 May -- 50th Anniversary Heritage Bus Ride, Ipswich Saturday in June Blickling Hall, Norfolk (date to be announced) Wednesday, 21 July Warner Textile Archive, Braintree, Essex

Thursday, 19 Aug -- Clarence House, London