

## Issue 188 Newsletter July 2012

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# Notes from the Editor

I should like to draw your attention to the Chairman's invitation on the opposite page. If you are very interested in one or more aspects of the Society's work you might like to come along to a committee meeting - with no commitment on either side at that stage. I hope you will also notice the Society's continued involvement with students.

Civic Day (actually Civic Week) took place in June. The event should make us better known to a wider public. (As the Chairman said at the AGM, our membership numbers of 1200+ are good, but still less than 1% of the town's population.) We have produced a simple handout to tell people about six of the town's outstanding buildings near the centre. These were given out at our stand on the Cornhill and should be useful later.

Several articles in this Newsletter concern important aspects of the town's future, such as the future of the 'high street', the controversial 'Northern Fringe' and Ipswich more generally. And for Society members, there are separate enclosures about the talk on the role of civic societies by Griff Rhys Jones, about our Annual Awards (for which, please feel free to make your own nominations) and about our popular outings.

*Neil Salmon*

## Jack Chapman's Retirement

A Reception to mark Jack's retirement as the Society's Chairman and Chairman of the Waterfront Steering Group was organised by the Mayor's Office and held in the Reg Driver Centre, Christchurch Park, on 13 June.

Several other local groups were represented at this enjoyable occasion during which the Mayor, Councillor Mary Blake, presented Jack with a certificate of appreciation, a medal and (tongue-in-cheek) a replica of the 'Chapman's Place' street sign, the little lane behind the New Wolsey Theatre and at the end of Lady Lane.

## Chairman's Remarks

A big thank you to all members who confirmed my appointment as Chairman of the Society at the AGM in April. It is a privilege and an honour and I will do my best to serve the Society and its members. I follow in some illustrious footsteps, most recently those of Jack Chapman who served the Society as a member of the Executive Committee and Chairman for a score or more years. Jack's quiet unassuming style has proved an asset for the Society and I thank him wholeheartedly for his dedication. He is already proving to be a valuable mentor.

In the opening lines I promised to do my best for the Society but I cannot do this alone and the work of the Executive Committee still needs some volunteer help. We would welcome occasional offers in such diverse roles as strategic planning, leaflet production and distribution (such as the recent stand on the Cornhill where we informed passers-by of the valuable work the Society does in Ipswich) and in practical activity (such as the distribution of the Newsletter). There is a long-standing 'open invitation' for you to attend meetings of the Executive Committee as an observer. As these meetings are currently held at Suffolk New College there is plenty of room.

My main activity since the AGM has been the consideration of a Master Plan for the Northern Fringe. New planning regulations (NPPF) give the developer assumed permission for a sustainable development, to their specification if there is no 'local development scheme' in place. To this end Ipswich Borough Council invited four interested parties to comment and provide a draft IO point plan for inclusion in the Master Plan. The four organisations are Westerfield Parish Council, the Northern Fringe Protection Group, Save Our Country Spaces and The Ipswich Society.

After extensive consideration and discussion with the Northern Fringe Protection Group we have put forward some points for consideration by the Borough's strategic planners. I am fully aware that a substantial number of members, particularly those in close proximity to the proposed development and its obvious access routes, have reservations but the Executive have responded on the basis that the development is going ahead, albeit over a period of time likely to be set by the economic climate rather than by the planners, and on the basis that further brownfield re-development must take place before building on green spaces.

Continuing a tradition set by Jack, I have met with the Chief Executive of the Borough Council, once in Grafton House and once in the Tourist Information Centre. On both occasions he was being shadowed for the day by another employee, open government in action, not least because the outcome of both meetings was fruitful, opening further avenues for dialogue with other officers. Finally, the need to communicate with you individually between the publications of the Newsletters becomes ever more apparent and consequently we would value your e-mail address. Please correspond with the Secretary electronically and you will be added to those already receiving occasional notices.

**John Norman**

## Recent Planning Issues

### **The National Planning Policy Framework**

This new national policy is the biggest series of changes for thirty years. The Government's attitude was that the system had been overloaded with documentation (1200+ pages) and developers had argued that the process for approving new development was too slow and holding back growth. There are also concerns that England needs to boost house building to support a growing and ageing population - although that is surprising considering that planning permission already exists for approximately 300,000 homes. The Ipswich Society agrees that the planning system needs sensible reform. However we do not accept the assumption that planning has been an obstacle to growth; the facts don't support the arguments. Even as a regulatory tool we see over 80% of planning applications granted permission and over 30% of planning appeals are successful. Furthermore, less than 1% of planning applications take more than a year to be determined.

The new policy makes it clear that the Local Plan is the keystone of the planning edifice. Planning Minister Greg Clark MP summed up by saying, "It is the end of top down targets .. It now puts power into the hands of local people." The policy makes explicit that the presumption in favour of development must work through, not against local plans. A 'brownfield first' policy has been introduced which insists that town halls actively encourage the recycling of 'brownfield' land in urban areas before fresh planning permission can be granted on 'greenfield' sites. The policy includes a 'town centre first' provision that will require councils to promote development of shopping areas in town centres ahead of new out- of-town retail parks. (Rather late in the day!) There is a clear mention that "well designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities" and local planning authorities should have local design review arrangements in place.

Local authorities with a good track record of allocating land for housing must ear-mark a five-year supply, plus 5%. The policy also allows councils to protect back gardens and ensures that playing fields continue to benefit from the same protection they had done previously. The new document also recognises the intrinsic value of the countryside (which had not been included in the first draft). Designated beauty spots such as National Parks have been promised "robust protections", as has Green Belt land.

This brief summary may be helpful to Society members but the full National Policy Framework can be accessed via this link.:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

### **Local Planning Matters**

The recession has reduced planning applications to such an extent that the April 2012 meeting of the Conservation Advisory Panel, on which the Society is well represented, was cancelled, unparalleled in its 37 year history. However, there are a number of issues, responses and decisions which will interest members of the Society - as follows.

**Orwell Quay.** The re-paving scheme continues, using Section 106 monies (from developers). Largely York Stone paving will be used. The fence across the quay at Neptune Marina will be replaced by five rising bollards. The wish of the Conservation Panel to have trees in a line was rejected by Associated British Ports.

**Derby Road station.** The application to demolish the station buildings and replace them with a care home was refused by IBC because it would be over-development of the site and would impact on the residents of Stanley Avenue. There were also noise considerations.

**Braziers Wood Academy, Gainsborough.** This is a County Council application which has been rubber stamped by the Borough. It is a bland modern H-shaped plan with a community assembly hall in the 'horizontal' link. The Society really can't have any objections although it is another lost chance to build a good school in Ipswich. It underlines the loss we suffered when the County closed its architecture department.

**The Old Rep, Tower Street.** Greene King, the owners, wish to carry out refurbishments which will improve the exterior by removing the fascia and canopy and replacing them with simple letters fixed to the wall.

**Thurleston Hall cricket stadium, Henley Road:** "children's home (20 children aged 7 -11) to include onsite education and therapy facilities". IBC has granted permission to a grim institution despite disapproval from the Society and the Conservation Advisory Panel.

**70 Fore Street:** "change of use from bank to microbrewery". Regrettably, after attempts to ensure a suitably designed new building, the owner has decided to put his micro brewery into the old Lloyds Bank building on the corner of Fore Street and Salthouse Street.

**Local List.** The list of notable buildings outside Conservation Areas has been completed and the owners corresponded with. There have been fewer than ten refusals by owners. Their reasons are unclear - perhaps dislike of being on a public list or a fear of not being able to carry out appropriate developments and maintenance.

*Mike Cook*

## Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held on Wednesday, 25 April at University Campus Suffolk overseen by the Society's President, the Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor John le Grys. John Norman as Acting Chairman warmly thanked Jack Chapman for his greatly valued twelve years in the Chair. The Minutes of the 2011 AGM, the Chairman's Report and the Society's accounts were all approved. Following the retirement of Jack Chapman as Chairman and Ken Wilson as Treasurer, John Norman and Graham Smith were elected Chairman and Treasurer respectively. Members of the Executive Committee retiring by rotation, viz. Caroline Markham (Secretary), Pat Grimwade, Dianne Hosking, Tony Marsden and Russell Nunn, were all re-elected. Jack Chapman and Ken Wilson were also elected as Committee members. Mike Brain, who has left the Committee, will be missed for his contributions to environmental and ecological matters. Full details of the Committee are on the back page.

John Norman invited members present to fill in a card with their e-mail addresses (useful for urgent contact) and indicating whether they would be prepared to buy the History of the Society in book form, which is still being prepared.

The AGM proved to be a pleasant occasion partly because of the fine talk by Alastair Lang which followed (see below) and the excellent drinks and nibbles at the end, made all the more enjoyable by the help of several members whose contribution was much appreciated.

## The Future of Ipswich

Alistair Lang said in the introduction to his talk that he wanted to present "a considered and honest outsider's view of Ipswich" from his perspective of having lived here for twenty years. He certainly achieved that. Brought up in Paisley, with a good knowledge of Glasgow and Edinburgh and with working experience in Cardiff and New York, he has been able to appreciate what has succeeded in regenerating parts of cities. He emphasised the importance of vision and leadership rather than suggesting that solutions could be simply transferred from one place to another. (For instance he described how Cardiff's Waterfront had been separated from the city centre by a major traffic route but by using "cut and cover" the traffic had been put underground and I think his listeners realised that the sort of money invested in a capital city would not be available for Star Lane in Ipswich!)

Mr Lang's working life in Ipswich makes him well worth listening to. He has worked in banking and is now Chief Executive of Birketts Solicitors, is a member of the CBI Eastern Regional Council

and was actively involved in the renewal campaign for the Ipswich Business Improvement District (BID).

He underlined some of the positive features of our town - the revitalised Waterfront, the heritage as represented in our medieval churches and museums, the outstanding number and quality of parks - as well as, in the business and educational sectors, Suffolk New College, UCS, BT (not in the town but a big part of our community), Willis ("a world leader"), AXA, and Ipswich Building Society ("a little gem"). "Ipswich is peppered with good things."

The less good things he described were the town's retail offer, some of the poor entrance routes into town (with the exception of the descent of London Road from Chantry Park), the dead town centre in the evening, and his doubts about whether we have sufficient good quality housing stock.

Although he was sure that the first five years of the BID have brought improvements such as extra street cleaning, better security (partly through the presence of street rangers) and better access to the centre, there is much more to be done. He takes heart from the fact that the successful second BID (starting this year) had the biggest percentage approval rating in the UK. And the Master Plan being developed by Ipswich Central and IBC should help to re-shape the town. But so far there is no 'Wow factor' to inspire all those who could make Ipswich a more dynamic place.

In a more anxious part of the talk he wondered whether the town would be vulnerable to more job losses as insurance companies restructured globally - and already centralising by banks and insurance firms has meant that layers of well paid managers no longer live here. Another problem is that office rental values are low so that developers can't afford to build new premises to let. His main message to all decision makers, and indeed to all townspeople, is to increase a joined up approach to improve the town. It's not sufficient to be "peppered with good things". Ipswich has "the raw material" but needs to harness its heritage, its business and cultural activities and its political will in promoting whatever would be helpful to the town.

*Neil Salmon*

## The Northern Fringe

### **Ipswich Borough Council's Core Strategy consultation Towards a draft Master Plan**

The Ipswich Society's Response The Ipswich Society have accepted for some years that development on greenfield land to the north of Ipswich is both a necessity and inevitable. We also accept that the time span of progress is not pre-determinable by master-planning (evidence - Ravenswood which is being built at a rate determined by the developer rather than the original planners - and this rate is, in turn, determined by economic activity elsewhere).

The Ipswich Society are also aware of the potential within the Northern Fringe of a substantial number of homes (possibly up to 5,000 over an extended time frame). The importance of these extremely high figures is that infrastructure, in the form of roads and services, should be designed to be capable of carrying the expected traffic irrespective of any short term lower target housing figures.

Therefore there must be a comprehensive master plan for the whole geographical area (which includes, where necessary, off-site alterations and additions). For the purpose of long-term planning the whole area should include those parcels of land between Henley, Westerfield and Tuddenham Roads, north of Valley Road and south of Lower Road and Church Lane, Westerfield. Master planning within this area must take account of existing communities (and the need for open space between existing houses and new development, open space for leisure and recreation - country park, nature reserve, sports grounds and children's play grounds) and the possible retention, at least in the medium term, of some agricultural land.

In respect of planning for a transport infrastructure, a wider geographical area must be considered to establish and counter the likely impact on movement between the Northern Fringe and the town centre, and across existing residential areas both east and west of the proposed development. Of particular concern is the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure between residential areas and existing employment hubs.

There are three important considerations before master-planning of the Northern Fringe:

1. The availability of previously developed land close to the town centre, including land currently earmarked for retail, land on or close to the Waterfront, and land within Greater Ipswich but currently lying just outside the Borough boundary.
2. The likely growth of employment opportunities and the demand this will make on the requirements for housing, together with the location of such jobs., i.e. the demand for new housing will to some extent be driven by employment growth; thus the need to develop the Northern Fringe should be delayed until other development land, closer to the town centre, closer to employment areas east of Ipswich, is at least under way.
3. Increased traffic will be an inevitable consequence of residential development on the Northern Fringe and the infrastructure necessary (including public transport and cycle routes) should be constructed and operating before the first residential unit is occupied.

Footnotes:

- Retail land that should be used for town centre living could include Cox Lane and adjoining car parks and the former Civic Centre site.
- Brownfield sites close to the Waterfront for development before the Northern Fringe include Eagle Wharf and immediately adjoining sites, the former Volvo site and land adjacent to Stoke Quays.
- Sites on the boundary of Ipswich include the former Sugar Beet site at Sproughton, the former Took's bakery on Norwich Road and land close to the Suffolk Showground. Note must also be taken of developments that may be granted permission at Martlesham and Trimley which will impact on the demand for housing within the Borough boundary.
- Comprehensive plans for the use of Westerfield station and suitable connections to employment sites, retail and leisure provision and other transport hubs should be explored and exploited.
- A primary cycle route between the town centre and the Northern Fringe. Further cycle routes should be identified across the reasonable level ground between the Northern Fringe and the employment sites in east Ipswich which avoid main roads.

# The Society's 10 Point Plan

Ten Point Plan for the Northern Fringe as proposed by The Ipswich Society:-

1. A sense of **Community**, although we accept that this is very difficult to achieve within a new development, particularly when the houses are predominantly occupied by young families. But by identifying common goals and by providing facilities to meet common needs, the beginnings of a unified community can emerge.
2. A sense of **Place**, and ideally the space must have a (village) centre. In this respect Martlesham Heath has a centre but Ravenswood doesn't (or at least it doesn't have a single simple centre). Master-planning should include provision for a local centre (shops), primary school, doctors' surgery, public house and village green (park). Later development could include a community centre and recreational facilities.
3. A sense of **Purpose**; the Northern Fringe needs to be much more than just a housing estate, more than just another suburb of Ipswich, and certainly more than row upon row of tacky little boxes. Purpose is created by employment, well being, recreation and leisure facilities, and ease of communication.
4. A sense of **Security**, which Ravenswood has achieved - partly by layout, partly by design and to some extent by the singular vehicle access. There is much to commend in the Suffolk Police' Security by Design' standards but equally some points are inhibiting to good neighbourliness (e.g. security fencing). One key factor within the Design Guide is natural surveillance, whereby there are no dark alleys or blind corners on walking and cycle routes.
5. A policy of **Pedestrians First** in the design of road layouts, crossing points and sight lines. Footpaths should be convenient, continuous and conspicuous. Pedestrians will take the direct line across the grass, planted areas and will break down simple barriers to achieve a straight line to their destination. Such routes should be pre-determined and surfaced to meet requirements. Footpaths can have joint use as cycle tracks which offer the advantage of increased width; ideal for prams, trundle toys and families walking together. The cycleway should not be constantly interrupted with 'cyclist dismount' signs as they are at Ravenswood.
6. The development needs to meet the highest standards of **sustainability**, in particular making extensive use of local materials that have required the minimum energy in manufacture and delivery. Wherever possible, materials from renewable sources should be specified and there should be avoidance of those made from hydrocarbons. It should also be borne in mind that sustainability can be achieved by orientation, that is turning the property to face the sun rather than the road.
7. The Northern Fringe is a 21st century development and the styles of architecture should reflect this. The variety of housing types constructed should reflect the requirements of modern living and although we accept family homes with gardens are a prime requirement in Ipswich there should also be units to meet a wide and diverse range of living styles. Consideration should be given as to how planning conditions can be applied and enforced, in particular individual satellite dishes and the restrictions on the parking of second and third vehicles, particularly the overnight parking of vans.
8. The Ipswich Society can offer no suggestion as to how the inevitable increase in traffic could be accommodated on to the current road layout but suggest that there should be an independent study of the existing congestion problems across northern Ipswich together with suggestions for possible solutions once the additional Northern Fringe traffic is added to the mix. We suggest that there are no through routes for vehicles (other than public transport) across the development, so a northern by-pass is not created by default.



9. Open Spaces. Careful account should be taken of existing trees, hedgerows and bio-diverse spaces which should be preserved and enhanced, and the Master Plan should include a country park (as recommended in the Core Strategy).

10. Public Art. It goes without saying that multiple works of public art should be included across the Northern Fringe, as at Ravenswood.

## The Government & Mary Portas

### The Government's Response to Mary Portas' High Street Review

Here is a summary of the measures that will interest societies like ours. Members might care to consider how many of these are likely to be realistic and effective.

- The Government want to see high streets become "the beating heart of the community", offering more than just retail- with entertainment venues and leisure facilities, as well as housing and local public services.
- 100 areas will benefit from a High Street Innovation Fund focusing on bringing empty shops back into use. [Ipswich has been awarded £100,000 for this.]
- A new National Markets Day to celebrate the role markets can play, help aspiring entrepreneurs try out their business ideas and encourage more visitors to town centres.
- Recognition that free car parking can have a big impact on a town centre, so giving local areas freedom to implement controlled parking schemes that work for their town centres - and "local authorities should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres".
- The Government would like to see hundreds of town teams- made up of key players including the council, local landlords, business owners and local MPs. Civic groups should campaign to join these teams. [Ipswich Central fulfils at least some of this role.]
- The Government have said Town Teams should actively promote good design in improving the high street, the evening and night time economy.
- The Government will run a high profile campaign to get people involved in the development of High Street Neighbourhood Plans.
- The Government say "towns should remove street clutter to make them more pleasant for visitors."
- The Government has launched 'Portas Pilots' for towns to bid for £1m. [See below]

But the Government rejected the recommendation for a clampdown on shopping centres outside towns -- what many felt was the most far-reaching proposal in the Portas Review. The Government believe the changes in the Planning Framework will manage this through Local Plans.

## Portas Pilots

Should you fancy a bicycle rickshaw ride next time you visit Bedminster, a suburb of Bristol, or listen to the new Town Criers in Wolverhampton, then thank Mary Portas who included these bizarre activities as a means of regenerating the High Street. These were two amongst many

suggested by towns bidding for a share of the Â£1.2m hand out following the call for bids for Portas Pilots.

I shouldn't mock, however - rather, search the ideas suggested by the winners and see which would work in Ipswich. There was a noticeable call for changes to town centre car parking from a majority of towns, a clear belief that cheaper, closer, easier access by private car was the solution. However, equally noticeable was that no one suggested how to stop commuters parking in these newly created cheaper spaces, a dilemma that Ipswich Central have been considering for some time. There was also a cry for support for new businesses to come into town, either by mentor support, short term rent- free trials or by offering pop-up shops.

There were 371 entries and the very fact that most had reviewed their current offer and decided what was lacking is reassuringly satisfying. Even if Ipswich didn't win, it now has a slightly better understanding of why it is slowly fading.

The twelve towns that were successful in the first round are:

- Bedford
- Bedminster (Bristol)
- Croydon
- Dartford
- Liskeard, Cornwall
- Margate
- Market Rasen
- Nelson, Lancashire
- Newbiggin by the Sea
- Stockport
- Stockton on Tees
- Wolverhampton

[Croydon, Stockport and Wolverhampton were also recipients of the High Street Innovation Fund which did benefit Ipswich ~ see previous page.]

Each Portas Pilot wins:

1. £100,000 in funding to put their ideas into action.
2. A dedicated contact point in Government to provide advice and support in identifying and overcoming challenges to local business growth.
3. Free support from retail industry leaders including Mary Portas.
4. Opportunities to meet with fellow Pilots to share their experiences and lessons learned.
5. An expectation that they will deliver a blueprint for town centre regeneration that can be adapted by others, and a benchmark of progress so that we can all see if their strategy works.
- 6.

Ipswich didn't win, but it can learn. There are some clever ideas amongst the winning entries, particularly amongst retailers to build trade together by joint activity. I recommend you take a look at the website.

***John Norman***

# Artathon: Public Art

## **'Artathon', A Trail of Art works Around Ipswich**

The second edition of this useful booklet is available now from the Tourist Information Centre. Its rather strange title combining Art with Marathon is presumably referring to athletics at the London Olympics because it is "Inspired by London 2012". People are being encouraged to use suggested routes to see some of the very many works of public art in Ipswich. But the small print on the back cover contains a warning and disclaimer. "To reduce the risk of any injury and/or illness ... please seek medical advice for guidance ... If at any point of your workout you begin to feel faint, dizzy or have physical discomfort, you should stop immediately ... Ipswich Borough Council accepts no liability from and in connection with these exercise routes."

But assuming that Ipswich Society members won't run from sculpture to sculpture, you could enjoyably use the booklet and visit some of the 47 (yes, forty-seven) art works. This new edition, with a better choice of sculpture on the front cover, includes the newcomers, Cardinal Wolsey and the DCS Question Mark.

## 1930s Architecture in Ipswich (part 1)

The wealth of historical buildings in Ipswich has been well recorded up to the start of the twentieth century but those dating from the inter-war years are often overlooked. The style of this period is often referred to as 'Art Deco', and is represented by clean cut buildings with straight lines and geometric shapes, often painted white. Many people will be aware of Broomhill Swimming Pool in Sherrington Road, which was built in 1938 and is a good example of Art Deco design, but there are many other fine examples in the town. Architecture and design were influenced by the change in building materials and technology and other things such as the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1928. All things Egyptian became fashionable and this is reflected in buildings by stepped parapets and sunray decoration; a reference to the Egyptian sun god, Ra.

Lloyds Avenue was cut through in 1929 to allow vehicular access from Tower Ramparts to Cornhill. Therefore, it could be said that the whole avenue is a monument to the architectural style of the 1930s. However, some of the buildings are more noteworthy than others. At first glance Lloyds Tavern looks unprepossessing but an upward glance reveals that it has quite a grand facade with a multi-stepped parapet, which is reminiscent of a pyramid, sided by two flaming urns. Its strong geometric lines complement the rectangle windows and the intricate pattern carved into the stonework. The building was originally an ironmonger's shop run by Smyth Bros, and seems rather ornate for such a purpose, but perhaps it signifies the importance of ironmongers in the local community at that time. In common with many historic buildings in Ipswich it probably goes unnoticed by most of the people passing by because most ground level frontages tend to be plain plate glass.

Another significant building in Lloyds Avenue, both from a cultural point of view as well as design, is the former Odeon Cinema. The cinema was very popular entertainment in the inter-war years with their grand exteriors and luxurious interiors contrasting sharply with the living conditions of

the majority of the patrons. It doesn't have a vertical element which was a feature of many of the Odeon cinemas, but it does have a curved end and a decorative facade and column insets of ceramic tiles, not unlike the decorative edging round the doorways and shop fronts of Commerce Chambers in High Street. Curves were often incorporated into the design of a building and reference the shape of the ocean-going liners which were in their heyday in the 1930s.

At the top of Lloyds Avenue is Electric House. When it was opened in 1933 by the Electricity Department of the County Borough of Ipswich it was a milestone in the history of the town and it was commemorated in a souvenir booklet. The building, which was of the latest design, signified the importance of the new medium of electricity as it contained a Demonstration Theatre as well as a showroom. Its past glory now seems forgotten and its future is somewhat uncertain but at the time it was a landmark building in the town and was fully illuminated at night. The beauty of the building is now masked by the trees at the front and it has become a favourite roosting place for the pigeons that infest Tower Ramparts bus station, but it is well worth a visit to the Suffolk Record Office to view the souvenir brochure (SRO 621.31/stack).

**Linda Erith**

Download the scans of both 1930s Architecture ([www.ipswichsociety.org.uk/assets/Uploads/PDFs/1930sArchitecture.pdf](http://www.ipswichsociety.org.uk/assets/Uploads/PDFs/1930sArchitecture.pdf)) articles to view photographs.

## More Houses Needed

Britain needs more new homes for two reasons. Firstly, throughout the 21st century we have not built a sufficient number to meet the ever-growing demand of the population increase. Secondly, the activity of building has an important knock-on effect to the rest of the economy - and gives us a chance to replace ageing housing stock, develop seemingly derelict 'brownfield' land and attract new people (and new money) into the community.

In 2011 the nation only built some 100,000 homes, half the target set by the Government and some 38% of the 2007 peak. Worryingly even this low number is dropping, with new starts down 50% in 2012. One clear reason is the difficulty in obtaining a mortgage with lenders typically requiring a 20% deposit (in early 2007 loans of 120% of the value of the property were available to first time buyers - the additional cash for furniture, electrical goods and carpets which the buyer would have otherwise purchased with shop credit).

One key problem is the planning requirement that 35% of units on a development of over 15 houses must be affordable. This onerous requirement makes the entire development unaffordable to the builder, thus contributing to the lack of starts.

You will have seen figures in this journal as to the number of houses required in Ipswich, targets that have recently been abandoned (with the demise of the Regional Assembly) but the requirement for somewhere to live remains and we must build, both inside the Borough boundary and in the parishes immediately adjacent.

**John Norman**

# Purple Flag for Ipswich

At this year's AGM, guest speaker Alistair Lang contrasted Ipswich's good points with some of its less attractive features, including the "Night-Time Economy" and the abusive unfortunates he encountered on one occasion in town. However, readers may be reassured to know that much is already being done to address the root causes of night-time binge drinking and day-time street drinking in the town: indeed the announcement was made on that very day of the AGM, on 25 April, that Ipswich had been awarded the Purple Flag.

The use of alcohol permeates our culture. Moderate consumption can be a social benefit, but drinking to excess is a harmful and perennial concern. Ten years ago, licensing hours were much more restricted and town centres often degenerated into scenes of drunken rowdiness as pubs and other licensed premises disgorged their patrons on to the streets all at the same time. The Government's solution was to relax the licensing laws and create a more relaxed "cafe culture", through the Licensing Act of 2003 which entered into law in 2005. In parallel, the Cabinet Office produced an Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy in 2004, which recognised then the two familiar groups of binge drinkers (predominantly under 25) and chronic drinkers (typically over 30) to which Alistair Lang referred. This strategy was updated in 2007 under the title "Safe, Sensible, Social", indicating that the more positive leisure environment should be promoted primarily through messages on the harms from alcohol misuse.

Dealing with residual alcohol-related problems was then devolved to local strategic partnerships, supported by Home Office guidance on "Tactical Options for Dealing with Alcohol-related violence" which addressed the different stages of a night out - arriving, being there and getting home. Certainly the drinking culture changed, but not in the way intended, with many clubbers "pre-loading" with cheaper.

alcohol from supermarkets and off-licences before they even go out. In 2009-10 almost half of all violent crime was linked to alcohol, with obvious implications for the cost of policing and the health service (and indeed the lasting scars of physical injury and criminal records for the participants). The irony is that these violent conflicts are not premeditated, but random consequences of conspiring circumstances exacerbated by excessive intoxication.

By 2009 Suffolk Constabulary had thoroughly analysed the problem across our county and prompted the formation of a multi-agency working group to address it, and the "Tactical Options" formed the basis for a comprehensive action plan which was pursued for the next 18 months. In parallel, my own neighbourhood had become the unwilling host to groups of street drinkers who had moved out of the town centre when the Designated Public Place Order came into force in 2007. By 2009 I had compiled a Community Impact Statement from residents' testimonies to this anti-social behaviour, which also recognised the deterioration in the town centre's night-time economy, and sought lasting strategic solutions. As a result, I was invited to join the multi-agency working group.

Complex patterns of consumption and conflict clearly create problems which are difficult to pre-empt. Tactical options naturally address incidents as they arise, by which time they are already too late to avert harm. The working group was successful in reducing levels of violence, perhaps through more strategic initiatives such as the "Best Bar None" scheme, trialling of taxi marshals to

avert conflicts in queues, training door staff in crowd management, and so on: but not to the extent that was desired.

Presumably this experience was common to other towns and cities, for in 2010 a new scheme was launched jointly by the Association of Town Centre Management and various partner agencies, aiming more fundamentally to raise standards and enhance the appeal of the night-time economy by providing a framework to draw together all relevant sectors in a common agenda, to celebrate achievement, change perceptions and reverse the tide of negative publicity. Participants are thus motivated to embrace the new standards, rather than shrugging off responsibility or passing the blame to others. This is the Purple Flag, which is supported by the Home Office. Its award involves the assessment of the location for well-being and safety, ease of movement, breadth of appeal and sense of place, all within a strategic policy envelope.

And if this sounds like nebulous management-speak, it is because of the need to condense a plethora of detailed requirements into a few simple headings.

Suffice to say that Ipswich is fortunate in having an energetic and determined Community Safety Partnership which has grasped the nettle and has achieved Purple Flag status on its first attempt, in only the third year of operation of the scheme.

Does this mean that all the problems are solved? Of course not. But it does mean that Ipswich is determined to tackle them, and the Purple Flag is a clear symbol of aspiration to unite all participants in seeking that common goal. And no group could be more important in this than the users of the night-time economy themselves.

*Mike Brain*

## Architect, Artist, Antiquarian

The above was the sub-title of Martin Harrison's lecture about Birkin Haward (1912-2002) on 10 May. It was a Town Lecture organised by Ipswich Arts Association and not an Ipswich Society lecture but it's worth some space in our Newsletter because Birkin was such a distinguished man of Ipswich and a keen supporter of our Society. The three-word sub-title was so thoroughly justified in Mr Harrison's talk that, as he said, he could have given three separate substantial lectures rather than the one in 50 minutes allowed at lunch time.

Birkin's boyhood ambition was to be an artist - and he always remained a good painter and draughtsman, as was seen in the Town Hall exhibition a few years ago. But persuaded by his parents, he was articled to Monro Cautley who introduced him to the delights of Suffolk's medieval churches. After Ipswich Art School, Birkin experienced the neo-classical education of the Bartlett School of Architecture in London but he soon became an enthusiastic follower of Modernism while working for the German emigres, Mendelssohn and Chermayeff.

As Mr Harrison said, the opposite poles of Cautley and Mendelssohn help to explain the marvellous eclecticism of his post-war career with Johns Slater and Haward in Ipswich., where he worked on some 2,000 commissions. The designs of his schools especially revealed his warm humanity and

social purpose, making buildings for people to use - as seen in Chantry Infants, Sprites Lane and Gusford, better designed and more interestingly shaped than the more celebrated Hertfordshire schools of the same era, in Mr Harrison's opinion. The lecture also drew attention to some of his other notable buildings such as Castle Hill church, the Fison building in Princes Street (its fourth side never completed so unfortunately it's not eligible for Listing), the work he did with Bernard Feilden at UEA, Ipswich School library and, of course, his own house, The Spinney, in Westerfield Road.

Although Birkin's own artwork had to be somewhat glossed over in the lecture, we were properly reminded of his outstanding antiquarian achievements after he 'retired' in 1982. His books on the (mostly Victorian) stained glass of Suffolk and Norfolk churches, and on roof carvings (using his specially designed telephoto lens) and on medieval church arcades, measuring and analysing "as only a trained architect could do", were pioneering and now standard works. The lecture seemed a labour of love for Mr Harrison who had become a friend of Birkin in the mid-1970s, and it was a masterly survey of such a varied career. There were many Ipswich Society members there to enjoy it.

## How to Cross the Road?

The Waterfront continues to evolve. Yet the town centre and what has been called "the Waterfront town centre" remain relatively cut off from each other. The two main traffic flows of Star Lane and Key Street/ College Street are problematic.

The Ipswich Star's survey into the public's view of the town's future showed that the majority of respondents favour footbridges over the roads. But each pedestrian route so created would involve crossing two bridges with lots of steps or huge areas devoted to gradual ramps. The 'ideal' solution would be to put the traffic underground in 'cut and cover' tunnels but there is a major sewer outfall in the way, and the total cost would be prohibitive for a town which is important to us but less than a big city. Therefore ...

## Shorts of All Sorts

**The Tour of Britain**, the country's biggest professional cycling race, will start at the Waterfront on 9 September. The 'Grand Depart' will be a good advertisement for the town, the Waterfront especially. This will also be one of the Heritage Open Days - so, busy there!

**Fraser's former department store**, now offices originally converted by Royal Sun Alliance, is available to rent, together with the adjoining Maple Court. (Fraser's sold out to Maple's.) Both fine buildings, coincidentally, were on the cover of our April Newsletter.

The new **Travelodge** in Duke Street should open soon. And the building of the Premier Travel Inn in Key Street (next to St Mary at Quay) is under way. They should be useful for visitors coming for leisure activities and for connections with UCS and Suffolk New College.

**Ransomes Jacobsen** based in Ransomes Europark at least keeps one famous Ipswich name going. A top golf course in Spain is buying Ransomes equipment which they consider to be the best available. Let's hope there'll be enough euros to pay for it!"

**County Hall** (St Helen's Street) and **Cliff Brewery** (ex-Tolly Cobbold) have had to be put on the national list of 'Buildings at Risk'. Sad news for IBC which had reduced 'At Risk' buildings so successfully. But it's hard to envisage how County Hall could be re-used: and converting the brewery into flats is difficult but the latest news sounds promising.

**Red Rose Chain** has received nearly £1m from the Heritage Lottery Fund for its new theatre and heritage centre at Gippeswyk Hall (corner of Ancaster Road and Birkfield Drive). A well deserved award for an adventurous and socially valuable company.

**Chantry High School**: There is similarly good news that the school will be re-built on site within the next 2-3 years - although it's sad that buildings (only) 50 years old need replacing.

**Grimwade's** (as older members will all remember it) on the Cornhill is now" empty after Clinton Cards' financial problems. Clinton's never seemed a suitable occupant for such a notable building but it's better used than empty. Let's hope a good tenant can be found soon.

**Carr Street Co-op department store**, vacant for over a year, is at least getting some partial use now as a second-hand furniture shop for Age UK. These huge premises are a reminder of the sad demise of town centre department stores.

**Cinemas in the Buttermarket** shopping centre? This follows on from the 'Short' above. After successive closures of Owen Owen, Allders and TJ Hughes, the multi-storey area built for department store use is apparently being considered as a venue for a multi-screen cinema.

**Azerbaijan athletes** will not be staying and training in Ipswich after all. Not enough of their competitors reached the Olympics qualifying standards. The Ipswich Star couldn't resist the headline 'AzerBYEjan' on 15 May. However, gymnasts from Brazil will be here.

The **numbers of rail passengers** continue to increase. Ipswich station users rose by 8.3% last year. The biggest increases were on the Ipswich-Cambridge route, which goes to show that upgrading trains from the very poor to the more adequate pays off.

## Awards for College Students

Readers of this Newsletter will know that The Ipswich Society has been developing a link with students at Suffolk New College embarking upon their BTEC Extended Diploma in Business. In this academic year, first year students have included within their marketing assignment consideration of the aims and objectives of the Society.

Seven students were selected by their course tutor, Ian Howlett, to present their assignments to a panel made up of members of the Society's Executive Committee, Sue Partington of Suffolk New College and William Coe. Proposals included new shops for the town, a new sport for the town (paddle tennis), the refurbishment and use of old buildings and, not surprisingly, improving the nightlife within Ipswich for young people. All of them recognised the need to promote Ipswich as a university and education town, able to attract students from both Suffolk and beyond.

Without exception, the students acquitted themselves well and answered searching questions from panel members during what must have been a nerve racking evening for them. Following deliberations by the panel, William Coe presented business idea awards and Jack Chapman presented an award recognising links to the interests of the Society.



Once again for me, it was rewarding to see young people of this College represent themselves and the College in such a positive manner. It was clear they valued the experience and opportunity to debate ideas for the town with William Coe, not only as a local businessman himself but a key player in the important work of Ipswich Central. The Ipswich Society recognises that a prosperous economy in the town is extremely important, something the students are also keenly aware of and hoping to play some part in, in the near future. So, once again, I find myself suggesting that these young people are included and consulted by those organisations and groups considering and planning the future of our town. They have much to offer and deserve the opportunity to contribute. It has been a delight working with students and their tutor at Suffolk New College and the Society would be pleased to hear from others in the education sector who would like to consider engaging with us.

***Graham Smith***

## Kill or Cure

Thanks to our erstwhile coach driver we arrived in London after a somewhat frustrating journey due to traffic problems and we met Martin for the tour. We first had a refreshing coffee at the 'Shooting Star', off Bishopsgate, before starting our tour of some of the sites of medical interest in London. Martin explained that hospitals in medieval times were run by churchmen and were places to go to in order to prepare oneself for death during a final illness.

The first site we came to was Bethlem Hospital which stood on part of the site now occupied by Liverpool Street station. This was the notorious 'Bedlam' famous as epitomising the idea of a lunatic asylum. It was founded in 1247, as a priory for the Order of the Star of Bethlehem.

In Southwark is Guy's Hospital, famous as one of the great teaching hospitals. It was founded in 1721 by Sir Thomas Guy who had made a fortune from the South Sea Bubble affair. In 1704 he had become a governor of St Thomas's Hospital and built three wards there. He opened Guy's Hospital opposite St Thomas's in order to treat incurables discharged from St Thomas's and those who couldn't afford to pay. Both hospitals are now part of the same Foundation Trust and the current building incorporates Guy's Tower which is the tallest hospital building in the world.

The Lock Hospital site in Southwark was one of several Lock Hospitals set up in the London area. They were originally established to treat leprosy and venereal diseases. "Locks" refer to the rags covering lepers' lesions. One of the chemicals used in the treatment of syphilis involved the use of mercury salts. Inorganic mercury has the side effect of attacking the central nervous system which causes the patient to tremble and shake. Mercury compounds were also used in the curing of animal pelts during the making of hats. The men carrying out this job developed "the shakes" which became known as Mad Hatters' Disease - the Mad Hatter was later immortalised in Alice in Wonderland.

During the Victorian era the Thames was heavily polluted and in the summer of 1858 the smell became known as 'The Great Stink'. It was thought that the vapours from the river were the main source of the cholera epidemic and not the water itself. Sheets were soaked in a solution of chloride of lime and draped over the windows of the Houses of Parliament to protect the Members. The river was eventually cleaned up after the sewer network of central London was built by Sir Joseph Bazalgette in 1865.

After lunch we visited the Wellcome collection. Sir Henry Wellcome was born in the United States in 1853. He was not a chemist but he was brilliant at marketing. He teamed up with Silas Burroughs in 1880 and formed a pharmaceutical company, Burroughs Wellcome and Company. The big marketing breakthrough for them came in Britain where they introduced 'the tabloid', medicines in tablet form to replace liquids and powders. The company also introduced the concept of direct marketing to doctors by providing them with free samples. In 1895 Burroughs died, but the company flourished. Wellcome became a British subject and consolidated all his commercial interests under the Wellcome Foundation in 1932. He died in 1936 and the Wellcome Trust was formed.

The Wellcome Collection is in the Euston Road and housed in the original building, next door to the headquarters of the Well come Trust, his philanthropic legacy. His vision was to create a space where professionals could come to learn more about the development of medical science. He was a great collector and amassed more than a million artifacts from around the world. The venue offers exhibitions, the world-renowned Wellcome Library, a cafe, a bookshop and conference facilities. We explored three exhibitions - 'Medicine Now', 'Medicine Man' and 'Brains'. It was interesting to see how eclectic and amazingly comprehensive the exhibitions were. For example in 'Medicine Man' there were collections of 25 different kinds of medical forceps, nineteen types of amputation saws and sixteen surgical knives. I must admit to enjoying the morning tour more than the Wellcome Collection but that was a personal view. The enjoyable anecdotes imparted by Martin during the morning tour were a major source of interest for me.

*Mervyn Russen*

## Ambitions for our Museums

From 2007 the combining of the Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service has brought about more funding and investment in both towns. But earlier this year changes in the structure of Government funding organisations led to our museums losing out on a bid for Arts Council funding. Transitional funding for one year has softened the blow but it is still a setback with jobs lost.

The next big development planned is for our High Street Museum, whereby it would become one of four heritage venues on this site, the others being the former Art School and the former Art Gallery (one on each side of the Museum) and shared use of the New Wolsey Studio in St George's Street which backs on to the museum site. The funding for these developments would come via successful bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund, bids which will now be phased over a few years. This completed scheme would be a major cultural and heritage attraction, so we sincerely hope the bids succeed.

*Neil Salmon*

## Why Two Beacons?

The disdain that the majority of the rural populace show for Ipswich as their county town is matched only by their dislike for Norwich City Football Club (although they prefer shopping in

Norfolk's rather than Suffolk's county town). However, it is heartening to see that some effort is being expended into bringing town and county closer together, not least by the series of Beacon Town Conferences promoted by the local press (as reported in the April Newsletter). Furthermore, the MP for Ipswich, Ben Gummer, together with the leader of Suffolk County Council, Mark Bee, and the local press are calling for greater harmony, exploring ways of bringing unity to town and county.

So how come we need to light two beacons to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee? Traditionally the Ipswich flame has been lit in Christchurch Park but this year SCC chose to 'do their own thing' and light a second, atop of Endeavour house. There needs to be more joined up thinking in the simple things if any economic activity is to come from the weasel words of the politicians.

*John Norman*

## Wimpole Hall and Estate

Wimpole Hall is the largest house in Cambridgeshire, and the most important in view of the famous architects and landscape gardeners who have worked there over the last four centuries. The present Hall was built c.1640 by Sir James Chicheley near the site of an earlier manor house. Eventually it passed into the ownership of the Harleys, Earls of Oxford. (Wimpole has been characterised by having a succession of owners whose extravagance finally forced them to sell to a new family, until the last owner, Rudyard Kipling's daughter, gave the hall and contents, garden, park and the Kipling archive to the National Trust on her death in 1976.)

Edward Harley, 2nd Earl, employed James Gibbs who built the west wing and the chapel, designed by Thornhill. In 1730 Gibbs added the library to house the famous Harleian collection. Charles Bridgeman extended the landscape in the 1720s with ha-has and avenues; the great 3 mile long South Avenue was intended as the start of a direct route to Whitehall, but the money ran out. In 1740 Harley's extravagance and lack of male heir forced a sale to the Yorkes, created Earls of Hardwicke. The 1st Earl commissioned Henry Flitcroft to reface the central block in a warm red brick, create a Long Gallery and re-build the parish church. (When the park was enclosed, the village of Wimpole was demolished and re-formed on the far side of the Cambridge road.) In 1767 the 2nd Earl called in 'Capability' Brown to extend the park to the north; he also built the Gothick Tower (a folly typical of its time) and created a chain of lakes. The 3rd Earl, a friend of John Soane, (then at the height of his brilliant career and before he was knighted) commissioned him to create the Yellow Dining Room, a unique design with a glass dome; it was used as a grand reception room and has beautiful late 18th century sofas and chairs in blue upholstery. Soane also provided a Bath House in 1792, again unique in design and cleverly using a confined space. (Not that anybody used it to keep themselves clean - rather it was a plunge pool with health benefits.)

Between 1801-09, Humphrey Repton made further alterations to the park: he produced one of his famous Red Books for Wimpole. In the 1840s, the 4th Earl employed Henry Kendall (not an eminent Victorian, but he did some very fine plasterwork) to design the stable block and create new ceilings in some state rooms. The extravagant 5th Earl had to sell Wimpole in 1894 to Lord Robartes, who in 1938 sold it to the Bambridges, Kipling's son-in-law and daughter. Elsie Bambridge used her inheritance to re-furnish the state rooms, sometimes acquiring ex- Wimpole

furniture and paintings. She also restored the house and demolished most of the Victorian east and west wings. Luckily for the Hall, she had good taste and rooms like the South Dining Room and her bedroom are a decorative delight and still retain the feeling that she's just left the room. The National Trust, I was told, have been careful not to label things and create a 'museum' atmosphere. I heard several visitors remarking on the 'lived in' feeling.

The interior of the Hall is marvellous. Highlights for me were the South Dining Room, the Gallery with a Blüthner grand piano (unfortunately 'Do Not Touch' - unlike the piano at Felbrigg), the Book Room (Soane) and Yellow Dining Room, the darkly sumptuous Dining Room with its closed shutters, twinkling lights and fully laid table, the Print Room with a stunning view down the full extent of the South Avenue, and two of the basement rooms - the Housekeeper's Room (she wielded a power second only to that of the mistress of the house) and the Steward's Room. From the inner hall of the house there is a view up to the Gothick Tower, and down the South Avenue.

The Home Farm, designed by Soane in 1792, is used as a rare breeds centre for farm animals, including the Suffolk Punch, and was teeming with life; in one pen I noticed a heap of piglets, one of which was foraging under the straw with only its rump visible. I shouldn't have had that ham sandwich at lunch! Inside the thatched barn, you feel as if in a cathedral - smaller than the Cressing Temple barns but equally impressive. A brisk walk through swathes of daffodils brought me to the Walled garden, a huge expanse, which in the old days supplied fruit and veg to the Hall. Wimpole must have been a very large employer for local people - 30 men in the wood yard alone, and 24 staff living in the attics; did the gardeners, horsemen and chauffeurs live in?

A quick look at the Chicheley and Hardwicke memorials and stained glass in the church. No time to get into the park. Cattle and sheep and their young gave a truly rustic, old-fashioned look to the landscape. We were blessed with the weather - sunny, dry, a bit cool, but better than the previous day's hailstorm. Thirty members owe their thanks to June Peck for her wonderful outing organised with her customary cheerfulness and to Charles, our driver.

***Richard Worman***

## Suffolk's Coast and Heathlands

Nick Collinson, Manager of the Suffolk Coast and Heath Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), has a job which encompasses many responsibilities. His talk to the Society on 14 March was very comprehensive - and it needed to be! The AONB extends from Kessingland to the Shotley Peninsula and includes five estuaries. As he pointed out it does contain much of 'natural beauty' but also a great deal of landscape shaped by Man, even though by UK standards the coast is relatively little 'developed' because there is no continuous coast road.

Mr Collinson explained that although AONBs may not have the same high profile as National Parks they are nevertheless very important. The concept of AONBs stems from the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act which aimed to protect areas for future generations to enjoy. Our AONB was confirmed in 1970.

His role is to look after the interests of the AONB in partnership with 26 other organisations, including the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, DEFRA, and the Local Authorities. He tries to ensure that planning decisions don't harm the landscape, so he is (for example!) working closely with EDF regarding Sizewell C, and with the Galloper Wind Farm proposals regarding undergrounding of the power lines.

The AONB can provide grants for community projects such as improving footpaths and tree planting. It has also pioneered an active Beach Watch in which some 800 volunteers have collected up litter, and there are about 135 volunteers working on such projects as clearing and maintaining woodlands.

The future is likely to be greatly affected by increased tourism in which, as he neatly put it, the private sector will continue to promote the area but "the public sector must shape it". The future will also bring changes in farming with more farm reservoirs and new crops. Sizewell C will also create an impact on the area; it was interesting to hear his view that Sizewell A is "jarring" but the golfball design of Sizewell B (the only design of its kind in the world) is much less visually intrusive. The problems of coastal erosion are not his responsibility (sigh of relief?) but inevitably will continue to impact on management of the AONB.

This was an informative and well delivered lecture. The few members who knew that Mr Collinson's uncle, Norman Collinson, was Secretary of the Society (1968-72) will have been even more sure that this was a happy occasion.

*Neil Salmon*

## Heritage Open Days

Our annual opportunities to go and see notable buildings many of which are not normally open to the public will be mainly during the weekend of 8-9 September. But Thursday and Friday, the 6th and 7th, will apply in one or two cases because of the huge crowds expected at the Waterfront for the start of the Tour of Britain cycle race on the Sunday.

We are expecting two or three new venues to be available, including RHS Holbrook. The Society's illustrated brochures with full details of all the places to visit will be published in mid-August. Copies will be in the Tourist Information Centre (St Stephen's) and libraries, etc.

## Letters to the Editor

### **Ipswich Historic Lettering from Borin Van Loon**

A belated thank you for the review of our website published in the April 2011 issue. We have now added it to the site. One important feature of the Ipswich Historic Lettering website is to encourage contributions of information and images, also amendments (we don't get everything correct) from

residents and former residents of the town. This sort of local knowledge is invaluable and seldom documented. In the last twelve months a large number of new pages have been added and better quality images are replacing the old ones; the most recent of these are listed near the top of our homepage: ([www.ipswich-lettering.co.uk](http://www.ipswich-lettering.co.uk))

In a world where so much has been torn down, cleaned and painted over, the remaining pieces of lettering in our town ('Symonds for Kodaks' in Upper Brook Street, the ghost of 'Ransomes' in Wykes Bishop Street, for example) bring us closer to the rich history which surrounds us.

### **Improving Design and Architecture from Jim Empson**

Anticipating a kick back from my observations in the April 2012 Newsletter [on the Society's Awards] I feel somewhat exonerated by Mr Michael Cook's paragraph at the top of page 7 where he declares "The Society is dismayed at the quality of the design and architecture of recent renovation and new builds." How I agree. The poor standard of in fill at the Civic Drive side of Princes Street some years ago, was one of the first to alert me to the defacing of our town.

Where established trading streets exist such as Norwich Road, a main thoroughfare to the centre, then I think that the local authorities should look into recommending and enforcing (an inflammatory word!) colour shades for each property, incorporating colour schemes in a muted way - as I believe happens to those which surround the entrance to Windsor Castle. Plastering windows with unsightly A4 and A3 posters should also come under the general tidying up. If Central Government do go ahead with financing a general 'clean up' of our towns and cities, then this could be used to help shopkeepers or landlords to carry out this scheme. After all, it is an important Jubilee year. Let's mark it for more than just a few weeks. Money wasted on the Handford Road [shared space] fiasco would have gone some way to completing this scheme, with a longer pay back time!

### **Education in Ipswich from Michael Hyde**

After reading in the January Newsletter your reasons why you love Ipswich I could comment on many! I pick just one - "your children can walk to school." But what about when they arrive? The latest Key Stage 4 league tables show "two Ipswich schools were ranked in the bottom 200 across the country" and "Suffolk is ranked 121st out of the 152 local authorities in England."

As Graham Smith said in the Newsletter, "Young people face many challenges in preparing for their future careers." Perhaps pushing Ipswich schools higher up the league tables would be a useful start?

## **We Were There**

Ipswich and Suffolk were represented at the River Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant. S.B. Victor, built in Ipswich in 1895 for carrying bulk cargo and now a charter vessel, represented the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Lord Tollemache, at this Jubilee celebration. As the Queen processed along the Thames through the Avenue of Sails she passed the Victor, moored between

HMS Belfast and London Bridge (with the dramatic Shard in the background). Students from the Royal Hospital School in full naval uniform manned the vessel- surely a day to remember. Prior to setting sail for London, the Victor was moored alongside the Common Quay in front of the Custom House. The Deputy Lieutenant of Suffolk, Henry Strutt, presented flags for the skipper and these were duly hoisted. There were four in all: the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk's flag, the Suffolk flag, the Ipswich flag with the familiar three demi-ships and lion rampant and the Ipswich Maritime Trust flag - specially created for the occasion.

*Diana Lewis, Ipswich Maritime Trust*

## Rooms at the Mansion

Some twenty-five members led by Bob Markham visited the Mansion on the afternoon 30 May. Memories were soon brought back for many of us. The former Fitzgerald Room containing furniture and pictures once the property of Suffolk poet Edward Fitzgerald, renowned for his translation of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, is now the Learning Room.

Beyond our memories, at the end of the 19th century the Museum Committee used the Kitchen for cookery classes (the Committee were then responsible for Science and Technology teaching in the town). I would have enjoyed their Lobster Cutlets and Banana Charlotte but "Hints about Stoves and Scullery Work"? Oh, and which rooms went to Aberystwyth during the Second World War? To keep them safe from the bombing which was breaking windows at the Mansion, the contents of the Wingfield Room and of the Hamlet Watling Room (now the Butler's Room) spent several years at the National Library of Wales.

*Bob Markham*

## Committee & Members' Events

Members' Outings and Events:

- 21 August -- The Buckinghamshire Chilterns
- 6-9 September -- Heritage Open Days
- 12 September -- A Day Out in the Fens - Prickwillow and Wisbech
- 12 October -- Griff Rhys Jones will speak about Civic Voice
- 21 November -- The Ipswich Society Annual Awards
- 12 December -- Winter Lecture: Professor Brendan Noble (UCS) on "Advanced Medical Research in Ipswich"