



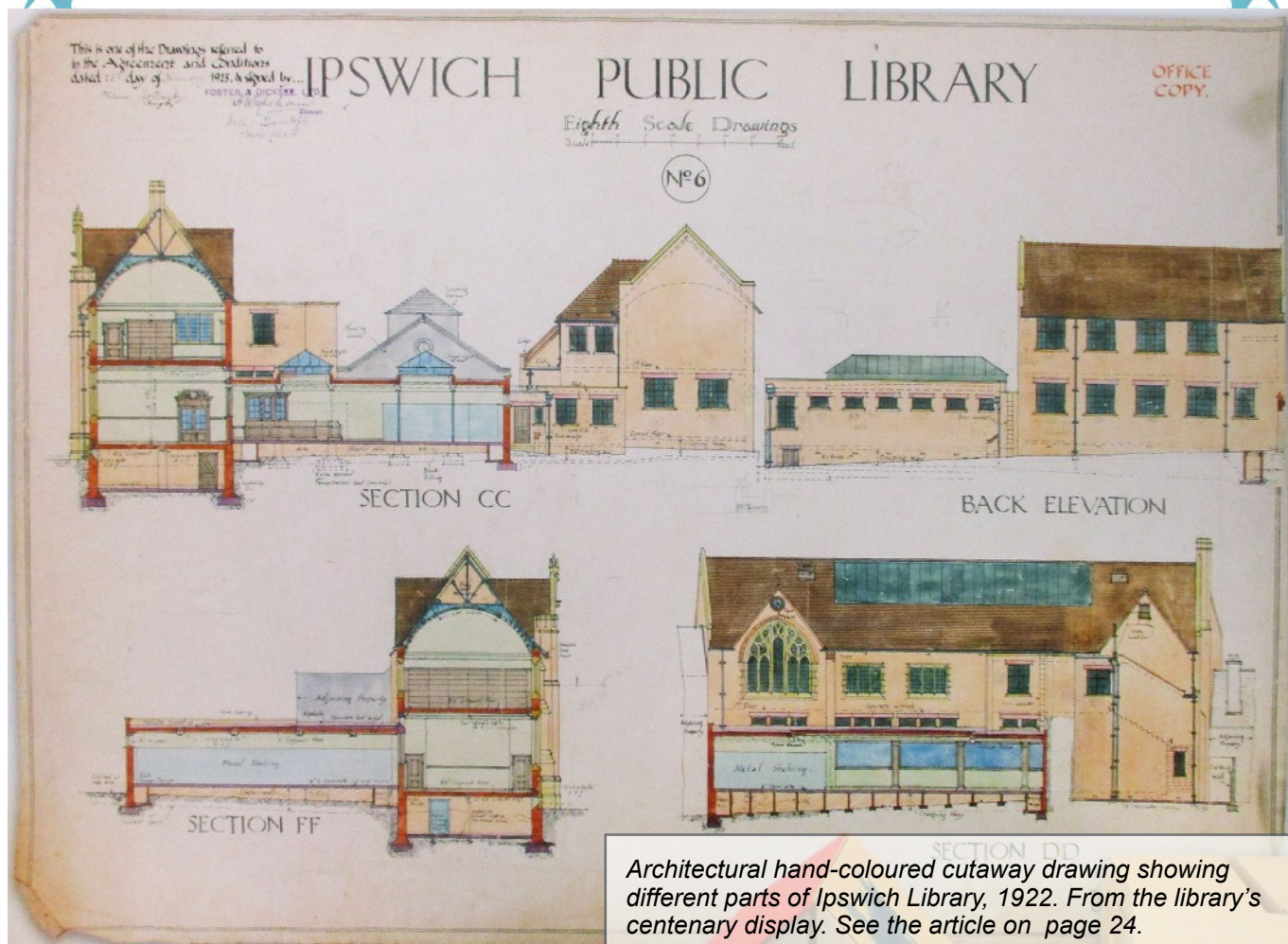
# The Ipswich Society NEWSLETTER

www.ipswichsociety.org

January 2025 Issue 240

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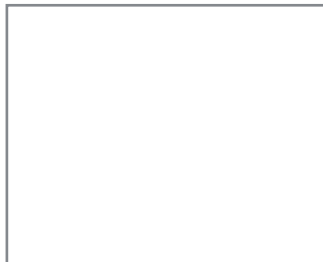
## Editorial

One additional aspect, not covered on Colin Mayes' excellent account of Voewood House (page 25) was the eclectic, eccentric choices of interior decor which reflect the owner's passions and celebrity friendships. Original psychedelic posters by Martin Sharp rub shoulders with Warhol, Damien Hurst, Robert Crumb, Jamie Reid (Sex Pistols), Keith Haring, the Tretchikoff bedroom (full of variants of the *Green girl* – no, really) and Dali's *May West's lips* sofa. From Pink Floyd (he's good mates with David Gilmore – the cellar night club is called Pink Lloyd, after the first owner), items from his trade in rare books, kitsch ornaments to Deco furniture and fine Arts & Crafts features, it all seems to work in the labyrinthine stairwells, passages and 42 bedrooms.

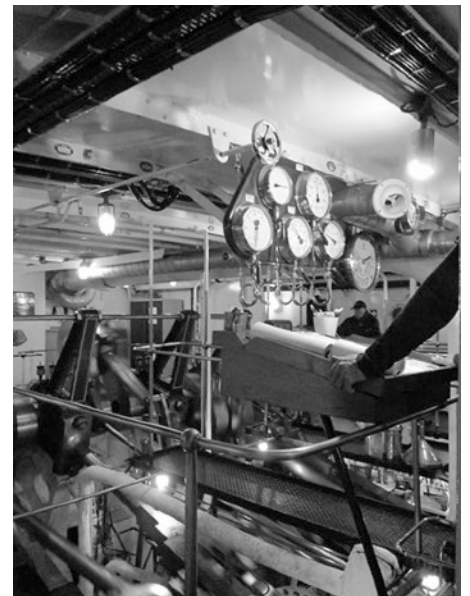


My apologies that certain articles (pp. 6 to 8) had to be held over from our October 2024 issue. My thanks to those and all other contributors to this issue of the *Newsletter*.

**Robin Gaylard**



Right: the engine-room of Paddle Steamer Waverley, see page 26



## Chairman's remarks

Within the Ipswich Society committee there was certainly some trepidation about the unusual approach to the election of the new Chairman, prior to our recent Awards Evening...

They had to consider:-

- A. It had been so long since the last one, due to John's inspired and extended leadership
- B. There was no precedent for an election other than at an AGM.

The committee having dusted off the rule book decided to hold an election at a Special General Meeting before the Awards presentation.

Despite the bitterly cold evening there was great attendance by members, and the Mayor arrived to be fully briefed by your Secretary. The vote was unanimous and I was delighted to be elected as the new Chair of the Society.

It was just as well as we had no 'Plan B'!

I had spent some time thinking about what to say (maximum five minutes!) to the members should I be elected. I considered the best approach was to give a brief history of my career, and to emphasise my lifetime connection with Ipswich. I had prepared a few prompt cards, had a run-through in my head and I felt fully prepared.

Unfortunately, the Vice-Chairman was not well enough to attend and present the awards after the SGM. Tony Marsden had spent a lot of time preparing the images together with the script, and I know that the John Norman Award particularly means a lot to him.

I was handed twelve A4 pages of Tony's words and told it was 'my job now!'

What followed went pretty much to plan marshalled brilliantly by our excellent Hon. Secretary. The Mayor was fully engaged and interested in our work, and as a lens fell out of my glasses about five minutes in, it meant Tony's twelve pages became a bit more demanding.

It has been suggested that I repeat my opening speech here, but I hope to save that for a future report. I will say, however, that I was very pleased with the John Norman Award of Distinction for Holywells Park.

It means a great deal to me personally. My grandfather, Gordon Lambert, having retired from a lifetime of farm labouring on the Shotley peninsula was employed by Tolly Cobbold to tend the gardens at Cliff Quay Brewery and the bowling green at the Margaret Catchpole pub. With the job came a cottage in Holywells Park.

I presume the cottage was tied to Tolly's and was the right-hand cottage of the pair at the bottom of the track leading down from Cliff Lane. It was pretty basic accommodation: no heating, outside WC with no permanent lighting, spiders, and torn pages of the Radio Times hanging up with bailing twine. In the dark to the sound of hooting owls, you had to navigate outside using a battery lamp with a temperamental sliding switch. If you were lucky it was a full beam, if not it was a bright red light or flashing amber!

It was quite a privilege to have 'out of hours' access to the Park and to pick bagfuls of fresh conkers for no real reason: I also remember the old fire engine being stored in the Courtyard. There was certainly an eeriness and air of neglect about the buildings and the glass house in the 1970s. The park has been transformed and it is a worthy winner.

***Graham Lambert***

## Planning Matters

**Ipswich Garden Suburb.** Crest Nicolson is continuing its part of the IGS with the phase 3A and 3B which will be 210 dwellings, 48 being affordable. It includes a local centre. It is hoped that the Visitor Centre will open in May 2025; negotiations continue between Network Rail and Ipswich Borough Council for the opening of the Westerfield pedestrian and cycle bridge – possibly by the end of 2024! The new primary school should be open for the new school year of 2026. The interesting figures which the Government should take careful note, as they indicate how the Big Six housebuilders actually deliver. 119 houses built so far, of which 82 are occupied. ‘Crest Nicolson will be building only the number of houses sold and expect this to be about 30 a year.’ And what he didn’t say was ‘... and that number only if we can make a 25% profit on each house.’

**Elm House.** This fine early 19th century house, until recently Gotelee Solicitors headquarters has, been granted permission to be converted into three separate dwellings. There’s little landscaping, no identified site for the bins and only *one* parking space for a total of ten bedrooms. There is little anti-noise insulation (provision for installing this was conditioned). I fear this will descend into a poor set-up. Planning Officers stated that planning permission would be needed to convert them into HMOs.

**Communication hubs.** J C Decaux, one of the world’s largest advertising hoarding purveyors, appealed IBC’s decision to refuse permission for the erection of three communication hubs around the town; they are basically advertising static screens but with some USPs (unique selling points): phone-charging, a defibrillator, public messaging and wifi access etc. The council – most unusually – lost and it was not discussed at committee. The Inspector decided that they would ‘not affect the character and appearance of the street scene or highway safety.’ They are at 4 Friars Bridge Road/Civic Drive, opposite Old Cattle Market and 37 Carr Street. These unnecessary pieces of street furniture are now on our scene.

**Mitford Close.** This outline, i.e. no details at present, application by a small property developer, is to build eighty dwellings (30% affordable) on a field, currently occupied by two horses and a shed, north of Defoe Road, 100 metres west of Henley Gate development. There were 122 objectors, 279 named petitioners of whom 35 attended the Planning Committee. Their Leader spoke extremely well. The reasons for objection are encroachment on the countryside around Ipswich, the site is unallocated in the Local Plan and extremely poor sole access via Mitford Place. Additionally, there are local flooding problems. Suffolk County Council Highways were criticised for accepting the totally inadequate access. It has been deferred.

**Christchurch Cottage, Bridle Way.** This replacement was built, but not according to its planning permission. The owner extended the first floor balcony to full-length across the rear of the house, installed a large window with an opening door on the ground floor, added solar panels and changed an opaque glass balustrade with a metal one. These changes at the rear have impinged on the privacy of the rear gardens of 20 and 22 Fonnereau Road with resultant overlooking. There is considerable opposition to these amendments and there remain many problems. It was decided to defer a decision so that mediation could take place between the applicant, the objectors and the planning officers.

**Charles Street Multi Storey car park.** It was agreed to allow all day parking for reduced fees for local business employees nearby. This will increase office hours working which will have a beneficial effect on the town centre economy. It is, of course, against the council policy of reducing car usage by commuters.

**23 Henley Road.** This is an application by Ipswich School to convert the large late Victorian house, on the southern corner of Ivory Street, together with the 1950s two storey former main Pathology Lab. for Anglesea Road Hospital. The house was for many years the Institute of Family Psychiatry, an internationally renowned treatment centre for children and adolescents’ mental health. Currently used by Ipswich School (the owner) for offices, it will be converted into five flats on the ground and first floors, all ten of which more than fulfil national size requirements but do mean they have squeezed at least one, if not two, extra apartments on each

floor. It is a shame that commercial pressures have led to this outcome. 57 Henley Road is an exemplar with three flats per floor. A more spacious flat is proposed for the second floor, making ten in total.

**Former Gym and Trim, Fore Street.** We are very concerned that the applicants are proposing a development which will affect a Scheduled Monument and its archaeology. That is, the site of the Blackfriars monastery. We have been in contact with the Council for British Archaeology Listed Buildings caseworker, who then decided to submit a written objection. The application is still pending.

**158 St Helens Street.** This a retrospective proposal to convert a two-storey terraced house, close to Rope Walk, into a three-roomed House of Multiple Occupation (HMO), an application for a four-roomed HMO having been refused. The rooms are just legal but there is only one toilet on the plans. There are no other HMOs nearby, they claim.

**Cliff Quay Brewery.** This is an enterprising application to save Ipswich's only building on the 'At-risk' register. Mac Kahn proposes:-

- > the erection of an eight-storey building for 80 class-assisted living units\* with associated facilities and car park [\*Residential nursing care accommodation is considered as being in Use Class C2.];
- > the alteration and conversion of the brewery to 38 assisted-living units and a brewery museum;
- > The alteration and refurbishment of the Brewery Tap pub/restaurant. This includes alteration and conversion to provide 3 flats, part-demolishing of front bays and incorporating single-storey side extension and second floor rear extension;
- > The alteration and conversion of Cliff Quay cottage to assisted living units, incorporating a two-storey rear extension, with associated facilities and car park configuration.

This is a minimum synopsis of a vast application, running to many thousands of pages. The current state of the large site is disastrous; dangerous to life and limb, land contaminated and deep pits. There is more work to be done here than we have seen anywhere else in Ipswich. Luckily, it is in the hands of KLH Architects and Planning Direct. It is well worth flicking through the application for (a) its photographs, many courtesy of The Ipswich Society, particularly the KLH Design & Access Statement; (b) Planning Direct's enormous Heritage Impact Statement and (c) Castledine's Contamination report. Doubtless, we shall be reporting more in the future. This could be, at last, the proposal that saves the brewery.

**33 Elm Street.** This maybe a perfectly reasonable and legal application to say that the developer is going to change the use of a modern office building to twelve flats, but no application form, no Design & Access Statement, no Heritage Impact Statement, also no photographs are in the public realm. This rush to convert cannot be the right way forward.

**St Lawrence's Church.** Five-yearly report by Nick Jacob to Ipswich Borough (the owner):-

- > Urgent repairs and repointing recommended on all 4 elevations of the tower with particular concern over detached and bulging flint facing at the top of the 2nd stage on the west and south elevations. Due to the risk of imminent collapse, temporary scaffolding protection has been erected and will remain in place until repairs are carried out later in 2025.
- > Further urgent masonry repairs and repointing are recommended to the chancel south elevation.
- > Internally, the condition remains good except for damp staining the nave west wall and south east corner.
- > Many other repairs and redecoration but generally the condition of the church is sound.
- > The urgent tower repairs are estimated at £180,000; the remainder another £150,000.

**33 Upper Orwell Street.** Various retrospective applications are being made for this listed shop on the east side of the street, opposite Upper Barclay Street. We shall be objecting to the installation in 2019 of a solid green steel rolling shutter. A reticulated pattern is just as secure, does not harm the look of the building as much and doesn't make the street look and feel like a canyon out of hours.

*Mike Cook and Mandy Gaylard*

## What an epoch it is for Ipswich anniversaries! And here's another one...

October 2024 marked the beginning of Ipswich Chamber Music Society's 100th Season and the celebration of its centenary.

The Society was founded in 1925 by two Ipswich businessmen, who happened also to be excellent amateur musicians. Hendryck Spruytenburg had come from Holland to work in the bacon industry. He was a talented pianist, who had, among other things, played in the silent cinema. Martin Slater played both the violin and the viola, while making his living as an architect. His firm built various notable buildings in Ipswich, including Marks and Spencer and, the Great School in Ivory Street – suitably, as this is where all our concerts are held. With an excellent acoustic, good sightlines and available parking, it is a splendid venue close to the town centre.

Previously, the Society tried a number of venues. First was the British Legion Hall. Then there were a number of others, including the Garratt Memorial Hall, the Art Gallery in High Street, the Town Hall and the Civic Hall (now Suffolk New College). Finally, in 1985, Dr John Blatchly, himself a keen musician, invited the Society in, and we remain grateful to Ipswich School for their hospitality.

The Society has kept going for 100 years, without a break. It continued to manage concerts during the war, sometimes dodging between air-raids. Concerts were held during the day, in order to avoid travelling during the blackout. We continued to manage concerts during the pandemic by offering two short concerts instead of one, socially distanced and thoroughly fumigated!

We offer a winter season of five concerts of world-class chamber music at accessible prices to Ipswich and its surroundings. This will always include the great classics from the likes of Haydn, Schubert and Mendelssohn, but also new and less familiar works. For our Centenary, we have commissioned a new work for clarinet quintet from an acclaimed young composer Sebastian Black. His particular charm for us is that he is a former pupil of Ipswich School and was taught music by our Chairman, Andrew Leach.

So we consider ourselves truly part of Ipswich's rich cultural scene. We are proud of our hundred years, and are looking forward to a season of celebratory concerts. All the details are on our website – [www.ipswichchambermusic.org.uk](http://www.ipswichchambermusic.org.uk)

See you there!

*Viola Jones (Committee member)*



*The Minerva Trio performs Mendelssohn to the Ipswich Chamber Music Society in the spring of 2024.*

*Photograph by Mike Kwasniak.*

## Dr Charles Tracy (1938–2024)

Charles Tracy died in early March 2024. He joined the Board of the Ipswich Building Preservation Trust in 2002 and, on the retirement of Tom Gondris, Charles became the Chairman for the year 2008-2009. Charles was a distinguished historian and heritage consultant, with a particular specialism in church furnishing. He published extensively in learned journals and was an expert on the way in which continental church furnishings were acquired and re-used in English locations during the early years of the C19.

He took up academic life as a mature student at the Courtauld Institute in 1978 and went on to complete his doctorate in 1984 with studies of mediaeval Gothic choir stalls which later formed the basis of major publications. Dr Tracy was much involved in a range of institutions which exemplified his interests. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London from 1989, and was a Director of the British Archaeological Association shortly after he stepped down from the Chairmanship of the Ipswich Building Preservation Trust. He also served as a member of the Council of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History.

During his time with the Trust, he contributed significantly to research work on the various properties the Trust was concerned with. He worked with Leigh Alston in documenting the history of Curson (sometimes 'Curzon') Lodge. This was a major project undertaken by the Trust in 2007 and it was possible to establish the important link between these buildings and Lord Curson's House which stood opposite. The Lodge was used as additional accommodation when important guests were visiting. It is important to note the visits of Queen Katherine of Aragon in 1517 accompanied by Thomas Wolsey and in 1522 of Henry VIII himself. Both of these were in direct response to the 'miracles' occasioned at the shrine of Our Lady of Ipswich in 1515 – 1516 and documented by Sir Robert (Lord) Curson. It is likely that these visitors stayed at the House while some of their retinue may well have stayed at the Lodge. An account of these events is presented in 'Miracles in Lady Lane', by John Blatchly and Diarmaid MacCulloch.

Charles also wrote a detailed monograph on Master William Pykenham, LL.D (c 1425 -1497) in which he presented the latest thinking about the origins and development of Pykenham's Gatehouse, the headquarters of the Trust and the first renovation project carried out by it. This is published as Vol. XLI, part 3, 2007, of *The Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*. It is a vigorous and detailed study which plunges into some of the controversies surrounding Pykenham's family and their status in the fifteenth century. It also provides a detailed examination of the nature of the gatehouse in relation to the range of buildings constituting the Archdeacon's Ipswich residence, and the evolution of the gatehouse itself. Particular attention was paid to the possible functions of the gatehouse and the high status of the upper chamber itself, with its fireplace, three windows, and possible panelling, not to mention access via a staircase from the adjoining structure.

Charles gave his energies to the Trust at a time when we were engaged in re-thinking our role and the possibilities of heritage activity within a context of reduced funding and few suitable properties becoming available to us. We very much appreciated Charles' contributions as Trustee and Chairman, and valued his expertise and clarity of thinking. He made a distinguished contribution to the academic understanding of our heritage in Ipswich in its European setting. Our very best wishes go to his family.

**Bob Allen**

## Church Recording

I became involved with Church Recording ten years ago as a member of The Arts Society (previously NADFAS, the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies). This organisation supports active engagement with the arts and Church Recording, as one of those activities, is now supported by the individual Arts Societies such as South East Suffolk and Woodbridge.

Church Recorders are groups of enthusiastic people who obtain permission, or are asked, to regularly visit a place of worship to record meticulously all the details of the fixtures and fittings. There is a prescriptive methodology and quality control procedure to be followed; copies of the finished product, either in paper or disc format, are deposited with the church, the diocesan records, the Victoria & Albert Museum Art Library, ChurchCare and the Church Recording Society.

When I moved to Suffolk five years ago, I joined the local group who were in the process of recording St Mary's Woodbridge, and that record was formally completed and presented to the church during a service earlier this year. It is a large church with many artefacts and the recording process was interrupted by covid, so it took a long time. Churches typically can take two to three years to record. We have just started recording St Peter's Levington, a small but delightful church overlooking the River Orwell and next to a very good pub! We would love to record the medieval churches of Ipswich, but the logistics have so far proved impossible.

There are about twenty of us in the Church Recording Group, and we usually work in pairs on a specific section, with some overlaps. The sections are: memorials, metalwork, stonework, woodwork, library, textiles, paintings, windows, and miscellaneous. I am recording stonework at Levington and liaising with the Windows pair on items such as the window tracery. Few of us had any prior experience of the items we record but the format and resources available to us means that we learn as we go. We meet at the church for two hours, twice a month.

Just by standing in front of an item such as a wall memorial and trying to describe it, initially in layman's terms, is very instructive. We then pore over the literature and guidance notes and turn our subjective description into something resembling an objective description which will then be critiqued by our group leader – and eventually the area representative, before being finalised for publication.

The research can be done from home using books and properly referenced internet information; also in Suffolk Archives at The Hold, looking through primary documents such as Church Faculties and Parish Council minutes. The result is a bound book (in five volumes for St Mary's Woodbridge) and archive-quality discs. Over 2,000 records have been produced across the UK with more than eighty for Suffolk. They provide invaluable, searchable information for researchers and, occasionally, police and insurance companies. Sadly, on many occasions, something has been stolen from a church, but the investigators have been shocked and delighted with the response to their question 'can you give me a detailed description of the stolen artefact'.

Church Recording started at the request of the Victoria and Albert Museum Exhibitions Officer when he was trying to put together the Victorian Church Art Exhibition in 1971 and was on a train journey with the then Chair of NADFAS, bemoaning the fact that the treasures in parish churches were not catalogued in any detailed and methodical way. NADFAS took up the challenge and now, under the guise of the Church Recording Society, we continue this absorbing and rewarding work to this day. New volunteers are always welcome. No previous experience is needed, just an interest in the many different treasures to be found in our wonderful church buildings.

Have a look at our website, [www.churchrecordingsociety.org.uk](http://www.churchrecordingsociety.org.uk),  
or contact: [enquiries@churchrecordingsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@churchrecordingsociety.org.uk)  
**Gill Bellenie**, Church Recording Society



## Heritage Open Days 2024 reviewed

The perspicacious amongst our esteemed readership may have noticed that The Ipswich Society, at the suggestion of our late Chair, stepped back from organising HOD in 2024. Melanie Willis, Communications Manager at Ipswich Central, stepped into the breach. Our thanks to Melanie for the following article. The Ipswich Society will resume organisation of HOD in September 2025.



### Thousands visit Ipswich for Heritage Open Days 2024

Every year in September ‘Heritage Open Days’ give the many thousands of people interested in history and heritage the chance to look inside properties around the UK to enjoy free tours, events and activities that celebrate important venues.

For the 2024 event, Ipswich Central kindly agreed to support as co-ordinators, ensuring that 28 local venues and special events were promoted on the national Heritage Open Days website to attract visitors to the town. These were also promoted locally on the All About Ipswich website and social media channels to engage local residents.

Melanie Willis, Communications Manager at Ipswich Central said: *“Heritage Open Days offer an opportunity to visit all types of heritage venues and here in Ipswich we have so many interesting places to see around the town, it’s important that we take part to showcase and celebrate the history and heritage venues we have.”*

It’s estimated that 10,000 visits were undertaken over the ten days to venues around the town. Many were local residents visiting more than one place as a planned tour of the town from information online, but there were examples of people choosing to visit by train from London or enjoying a long walk into the town centre from the outskirts of Ipswich for a relatively low-cost day out.

*(continues over*

The theme for 2024 was Routes, Networks & Connections and Ipswich Maritime Trust organised a fantastic maritime celebration on Ipswich Waterfront to mark the town's Heritage Harbour, attended by 350 people for the one-day celebration. A new sign was unveiled, sea shanties were sung and knot-making workshops run, with a display of heritage photographs in the Old Customs House and the opportunity to hop aboard *Sailing Barge Victor*.



Other highlights saw more than a thousand people visit Broomhill Lido for the last chance to see it before restoration work starts, the ever-popular Tudor experience at Christchurch Mansion saw 600 visitors, which is double what they would typically expect and the former Ipswich Magistrate's Court saw 300 people visit in just one day to take part in mock trials!

Visitors could also enjoy walking tours with the Ipswich Tour Guides Association, see the Mayor's parlour at Ipswich Town Hall, inside Ipswich School on Henley Road or inside Pykenham's Gatehouse and talk to Ipswich Society experts in a venue not usually open to the public!

Ipswich School saw 100 visitors, Ipswich Town Hall welcomed 220 people for six tours of the building and Ipswich Regent Theatre hosted 180 people for eight intimate tours.

Ipswich Central was pleased to support the event last year, and will be happy to promote future events on the All About Ipswich website at [www.allaboutipswich.com](http://www.allaboutipswich.com) and its social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Tik Tok) as things to do in and around the town centre.

Looking ahead, the 2025 dates for Heritage Open Days are 12-21 September\* and the theme will be Architecture, making 2025 a great opportunity to highlight the Willis Towers Watson building,

the Ancient House and Ipswich Town Hall as three key venues to attract visitors!



For those interested in planning an event or volunteering to help at 2025 events, you can keep up to date with Heritage Open Days news, advice and ideas online at: [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

[\*The Society usually selects one of these weekends for HOD.]

## The Ipswich Institute: a historical miscellany

- The Institute was first a "Mechanics Institution" founded in 1824 as part of the Victorian 'Self Help' movement by Dr George Birkbeck, founder of Birkbeck College in London. The term 'Mechanics' was dropped in 1893.
- Mr John Raw first suggested formation of such a society in Ipswich, during the winter of 1823-4. 107 people enrolled as members at the inaugural meeting in November 1824. Membership has fluctuated over the years, but the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen the highest sustained level - at c 2,500 members.
- The Institute began in a schoolroom in St Matthew's Church Lane, moved to the Buttermarket in 1825 and to its present site in 1834. 15 Tavern Street was formerly a chemist's shop and was purchased for £1,000.
- A daily newspaper (second-hand the day after publication) was first taken in 1831. Members were required to write their name on a slate and wait their turn to read it, being limited to ten minutes and timed with a sand-glass.
- The Institute has had some very long serving Committee members and staff. Mr T Shave Gowing was Committee Chairman from 1848 to 1872, Mr Herbert Walker was Secretary from 1904 to 1940 (becoming Librarian in 1925) and The Hon. E G Prettyman served as President from 1893 to 1931.
- Of the Institute's 40 Committee Chairmen, only three have been women: Miss E M Debenham (1927-1928), Mrs Garrett Brown (1931-1932) and Mrs A C Dunford (2001-2008). \*Now 4: currently Alison Stewart.
- The Ipswich Chess Club first met at the Institute in 1880, and still does today.
- In its early days, following the donation of "a specimen of natural history, viz., a cat which was found starved to death in the roof of a building after having been missed five years" the Institute developed a museum. Chief exhibit was the skeleton of a whale which had been stranded at Harwich.
- Lectures on many subjects have been popular over the years. The first lecture, by Mr C Vaux in 1825, was about "pneumatics". In the early days it was noted that "a feeling of prejudice against a female lecturer prevented the room from being well filled during the delivery of (her) interesting and valuable discourses"!
- In 1850 the Institute built a new Lecture Hall in Tower Street. The building, subsequently Poole's Picture Palace and then The Ipswich Arts Theatre, still exists as The Rep public house.
- The Institute hallkeeper, who was supplied with a new uniform every three years, retired in 1925 at the age of 78 after 40 years' service. 72 people applied for the job, a man and wife were appointed - to work 66 hours a week between them. The Institute was then open in the evenings until 10pm.
- Traditionally, Institute Committee meetings are held on Mondays. During World War Two, evening meetings were held, but during the winter, they were held on the Monday nearest the full moon, so it was easier for members to get home in the black-out!
- In World War Two, the back room of the Institute was manned by firewatchers from 8 pm to 7 am. Fortunately, the Institute suffered no war damage.
- The present Conversation Room was originally "for ladies only".
- In 1971 the Institute acquired charitable status and the requirement for membership applications to be proposed and seconded was dropped.
- Until 1971 you really did have to "spend a penny" to use the Institute's lavatories.

SOURCES: The Ipswich Institute, 1824-1924 (Herbert Walker) and 1925-1987 (Eric Hanson).  
The Moral Social & Religious Condition of Ipswich in the middle of the C19th (John Glyde).

*This article was found in John Norman's papers; an apt celebration of the Institute's 200th anniversary.  
Thanks to Jo Rooks for the update of point 6.*

## Newsletter reverberations

Our article in the October 2024 issue of the *Newsletter* 'HMOs in Ipswich and the Article 4 direction' prompted: (1) a request from a local reporter, (2) Civic Voice to summarise the article and to ask other civic societies if they had similar experiences, (3) Baroness Ros Scott to ask a question in the Lords.

The second of these was a little disconcerting because the problem of existing housing being turned into Houses in Multiple Occupation appears to be a national problem, particularly in towns and cities.

The third occurrence was, perhaps, even more surprising/encouraging to the Editor. Lisa Wall's article was noticed by local resident and Ipswich Society member Ros Scott, Baroness Scott of Needham Market. Ros is a former Leader of Suffolk County Council when it had a Labour/Liberal Democrat administration.

Ros writes: "A contributor to your most recent magazine asked whether conversion to HMOs would be counted in the national target. I thought it was an interesting question, so I tabled a written question in the Lords." The written answer by Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: "The Government is committed to building 1.5 million homes over the duration of the parliament. New residential dwellings, including Houses in Multiple Occupation (an HMO) that have not been converted from an existing home, will be included in the target for building new homes." The story inevitably will continue.

RG



## The John Norman Award of Distinction

At the Awards Evening on November 20, Graham Lambert was unanimously elected as Chair of The Ipswich Society and he gave us an overview of his life and career in architecture in Ipswich and beyond. This event also saw the inaugural award of the above award, outlined by Tony Marsden at the 2023 event, when John was present. Graham gave an overview of previous winners

of the Distinction Award

which the judges shortlisted and he then announced the overall winner: Holywells Park – the major refurbishment of the park, the Stable Block and The Orangery creating a varied landscape welcoming visitors of all ages. More about this achievement will follow in our April *Newsletter*.



*Graham Lambert, Robin Gape (Friends of Holywells Park), Nick Wilcox (Park Manager), Cllr Lucy Trenchard and Mayor Elango Elavalakan.*

## Visitors bowled over by Ipswich

Ipswich Tourist Guides had a busy year in 2024. This small, enthusiastic team of volunteers enabled around 600 adults and 130 children to discover some fascinating facts about Ipswich and its past. Visitors from as far afield as Dubai, Mumbai, USA and Australia, and many parts of the UK, were bowled over by the town's impressive buildings, beautiful parks, and long history of trade along the waterfront. Locals and tourists alike were inspired by tales of former inhabitants from Anglo Saxon settlers, Tudor merchants, Victorian engineers.

Several businesses sought help in introducing their staff and clients to Ipswich's heritage and cultural activities and learn about successful companies based in the town today like the amazing Spirit Yachts. Walks were devised for groups with particular interests, from genealogy to folklore, and others to celebrate significant local anniversaries for Ipswich

Institute, Ipswich Art Society and Wolsey 550. The guides especially enjoyed helping local schoolchildren with their studies of Tudor Ipswich, Cardinal Wolsey and the rivers Orwell and Gipping. They also supported local causes including the Mayor's Charity by leading walks without charge to help fundraising.



In the early months of 2025 all are welcome to brighten up the dark days of winter by joining one of our occasional themed, guided walks followed by tea and cake in a cosy cafe. Costing just £10 per person (including refreshments), the walks start at the Ipswich Institute in Tower Street at 1.30 pm.

### **Dates and titles for tea walks in the coming months are :-**

Fri 17 Jan	Walking in Wolsey's Footsteps
Wed 5 Feb	Theatres & Cinemas
Mon 24 Feb	Name Dropping
Mon 10 Mar	I Never Noticed That Before
Wed 26 Mar	Iconic Buildings
Thurs 10 Apr	Strange But True
Tues 22 Apr	Victims & Martyrs

Bookings: <https://ipswichinstitute.org.uk>

Information: <http://ipswichtourguides.onesuffolk.net>

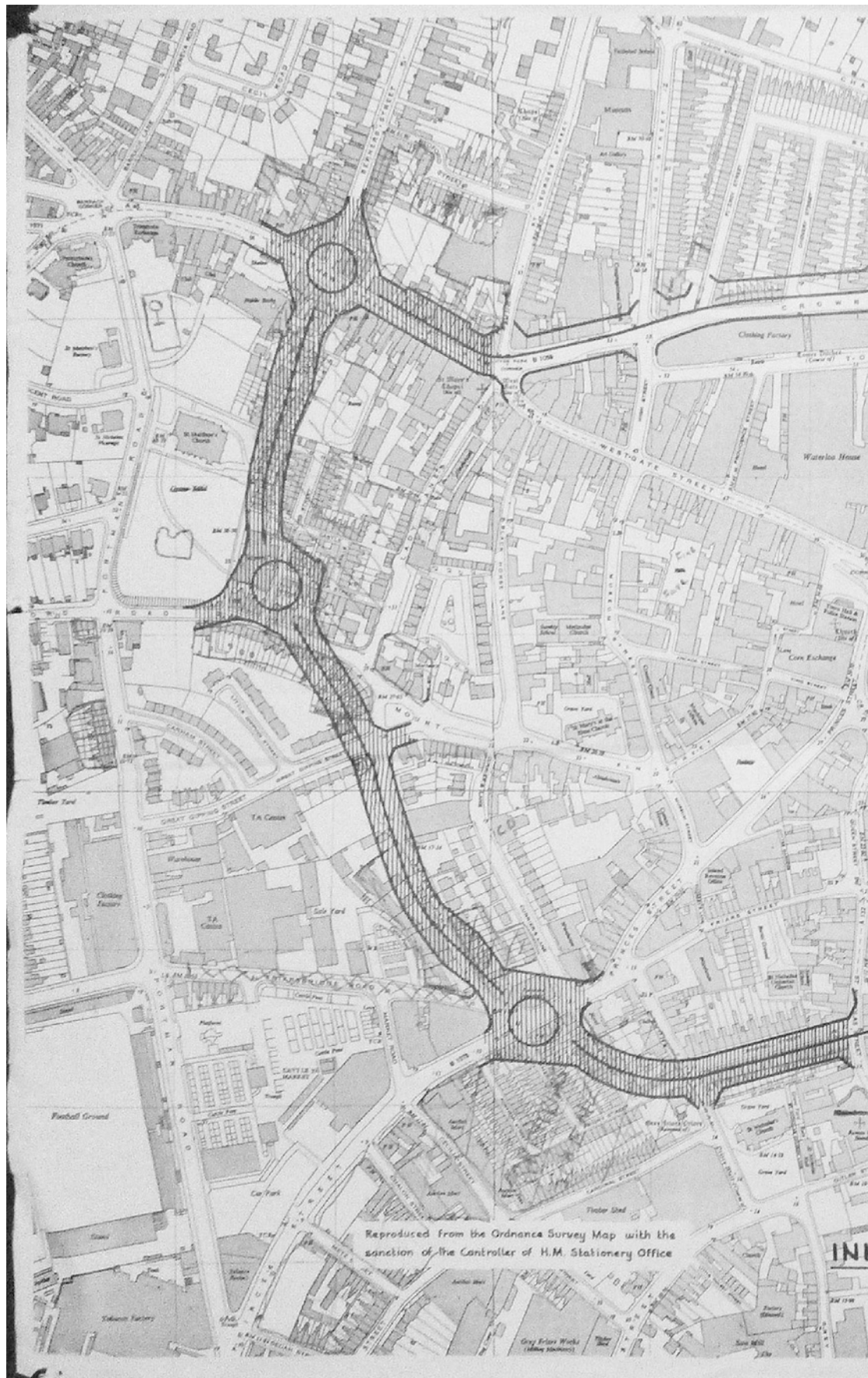


# Déjà vu corner: The Ring-Road that never was

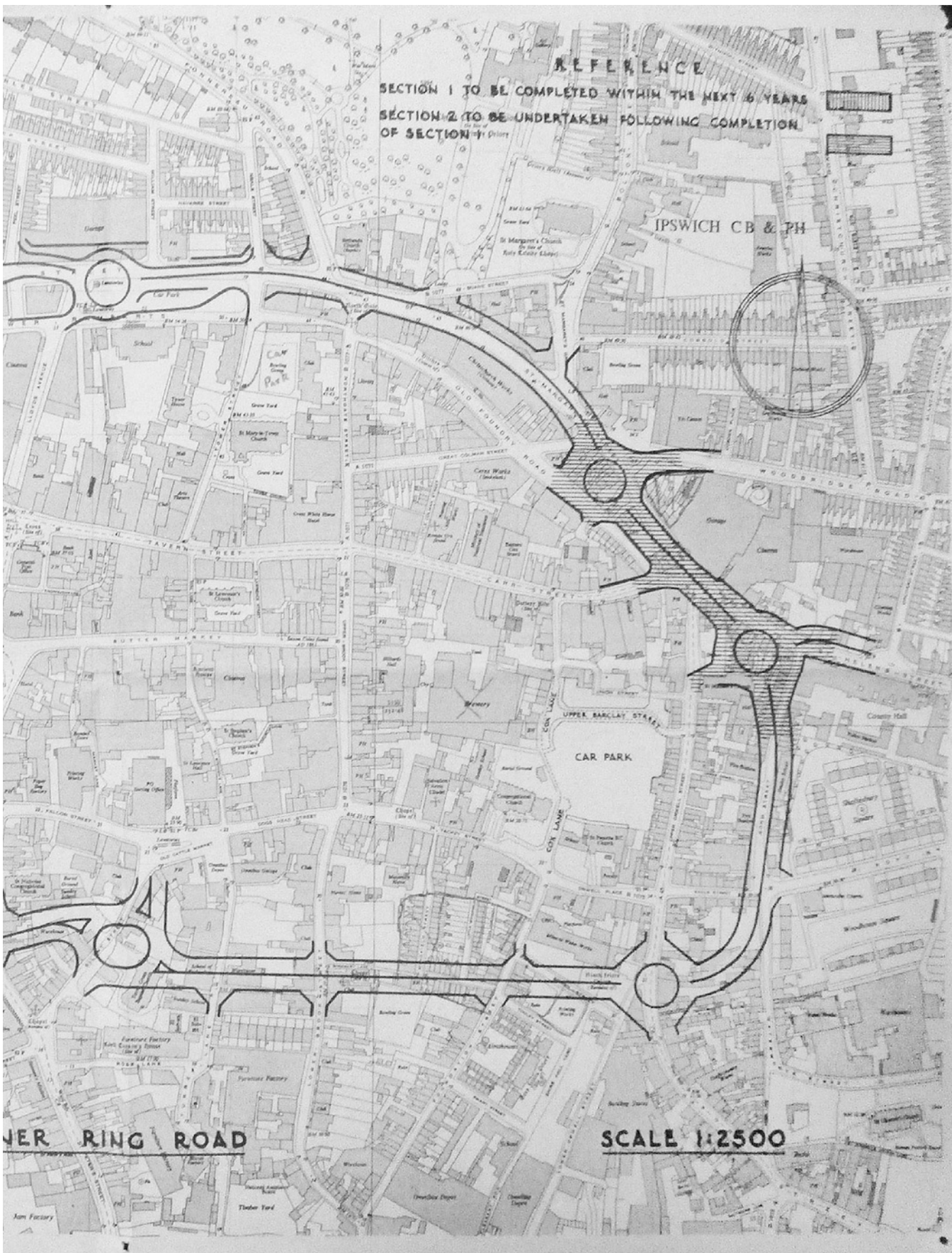
From his extensive archive, Nick Wiggin lent us this map of Ipswich town centre, probably dating to 1958. It is the best map we have seen which shows the whole planned scheme.

The hatched section to the east indicates the part of dual carriageway with its three roundabouts (from St Matthews Street down to Cromwell Street) which was actually built. Almost all of the rest was not. To the south is the ill-fated Greyfriars scheme. Dualling stopped at Cromwell Street.

The threat of further demolition of historic buildings from the east side of St Nicholas Street onwards provoked an outcry from Ipswich residents and others who eventually banded together to form The Ipswich Society in 1960. Members spoke out in favour of preserving and using the historic buildings which still remained intact, and still do today.



A call-back to an earlier article in the *Newsletter* by Tony Marsden (with contributions from John Norman and Mike Cook) from 2016. It can be read in full with additional information and images on: <https://www.ipswich-lettering.co.uk/ipswichtomorrow.html> .



## The time is right!

Holywells Park users can set their watches to the right time again. The historic clock in the Victorian clock tower of the stable block in the Ipswich park is on time again, and the bell is chiming on the hour, following maintenance work. It had been out of action for a few weeks.

Park manager (east), Nick Wilcox, has known the clock all his working life for the borough council. 'It is great to get it back in action again. People have been asking and emailing me about it. It is an important feature of the park and the community really love it. I think people still use it to set their clocks. Now it is electronic it is the most accurate time-keeper in Ipswich, along with the Town Hall clock. People have missed it while it has been out of action. The clock tower and stable block were renovated with the National Lottery funding in 2014 and are now back in use. For many years the stables were just used for storage. Now they include Bishops Cafe and look really good.'

'Before the clock was restored it was run by clockwork. The gardener used to have to climb the clock tower once a week, and to wind it 40 times! The weights remain which used to drive it but today it is all electronic.' When it was updated a fourth clock face was added, to duplicate the three originals. And the original weather vane was replicated.

At the time of the Cobbold family, who built the house and owned the estate, the clock would have been seen and heard over a wide area. Where the homes of the Rivers estate are today were fields where wheat and barley were grown. Perhaps for malting? The springs on the parkland, supplied the fresh water for brewing beer at Cliff Quay which the company, later Tolly Cobbold, exported around the world. Local residents will have heard the chimes for decades. The mansion itself was demolished in 1962 having stood on the site since 1814. Only outbuildings, including the stable block and orangery remain and they are listed buildings.

*David Vincent*



*Photograph by David Vincent*

## It's a wrap



*Photograph by Mandy Gaylard*

*No, it's not the latest work by Christo (one for the art students), it's a view of Ipswich Museum from the Crown Car Park on 25 November 2024.*

*Things are getting serious with the refurbishment of our 1880 Queen Anne-style building. Rich in terra cotta detailing, this masterpiece was built by J.B. and F. Bennett of Ipswich; it was designed by Londoner Horace Cheston, who had won an architectural competition.*

*Portrait sculptures of William Hogarth (arts) and Isaac Newton (sciences) look down from roundels on the gables. The High Street Museum opened officially on 27 July 1881.*



## ***From Ipswich with love***

On 10 September 2024, I was wandering around the area of the waterfront when I noticed some activity by the James Hehir building. A man was in the gondola of a large cherry-picker, painting a mural on one of the outside walls.



*ATMA at work on the mural*

I spoke to him about the difficulties of scaling up from preparatory drawings to the final piece.

I found it difficult enough creating murals for my grandchildren's bedrooms.

I found out later that this is the region's largest mural and is part of Ipswich's first urban art festival.

The huge mural which measures 576 square metres, was created by London-based artist ATMA and is entitled 'From Ipswich with love'. It is one of four large murals created as part of the Wild Walls Festival which is a celebration of creative urban art.

ATMA said: "The mural, called 'From Ipswich with love', is like a love letter from Ipswich to the world."

The University of Suffolk is one of the Wild Walls Festival supporters and in addition to providing space for the mural, also hosted the free art fair and VR graffiti exhibition at the start of September.

I went back to see and photograph the completed work in early October. (See the back cover.)

***Merv Russen***

*The mural partially completed 10/9/2024*

*Photographs on this page by Mervyn Russen*





Joining the Stag beetle near the rear entrance of The Hold is Nathan Murdoch's new mural showing a hand with a portal, a book with origami butterflies, made with folded archive records, flying out of the pages.

Other towns have embraced public murals. The first was probably Bristol with its association with Banksy's stencil-based work.

However, Cheltenham, in particular, features a wide range of colourful, imaginative and often sophisticated wall art works resulting from its annual public art festival.



## Horse Power: Ipswich

Our town in 1901-1903. It is easy, from directories and the census, to find the people who lived here. And the cabs, buses and trams – they were all licensed, so information on them is relatively easy to find. But the town was also full of horses – they pulled the cabs, buses, tradesmen's carts, (and provided gardeners with manure). Who were they? I say 'who' because we share (on one measurement) 87% of DNA with them. Fortunately, the period 1901-1903 has records buried in the depths of newspapers and Corporation records.

As part of a wider study, I investigated the horses which pulled Ipswich's trams. The first I found was *Kitty*, a black mare, who died on 9 October 1901. Trace horses were used to assist trams to ascend St John's Road hill. They were commonly unclipped, for warmth, having to wait for some time for the next tram. *Violet*, a brown mare, was a tramway trace horse. On Christmas Eve 1901,



*The Cornhill in 1894. Ten horses can be seen, mostly harnessed to cabs. There is a single-deck horse tram (with one horse) to the right of the cabman's shelter and a double deck horse tram (with two horses) beyond the cabman's shelter, outside Lloyds Banking Chambers.*

a cab collided with *Violet*, broke her leg and she had to be destroyed. Ten tramway horses were sold in April 1902. They were *Moggy*, a 12 year-old black mare; 11 year-old roan gelding *Prince* and bay gelding *Boxer*; 9 year-old brown mare *Leapon*, grey mare *Lottie* and brown gelding *Punch*; 8 year-old bay mares *Bess*, *Jenny* and *Duke* (sic); and 7 year-old chestnut mare *Depper*. All started tramway service when five or six years old.

When the horse-drawn trams ceased in June 1903, twenty-seven horses lost their jobs and were sold. They were - bay mares *Diamond*, *Kate*, *Brag*, *Fanny*, *Smart*, *Poppy*, *Kitty*, *Dandy* and *Nora*; bay geldings *Peter*, *Bob*, *General*, *Jack*, *Jimmy*, *Charlie*, *Jolly*, *Spider* and *Doughty*; grey mare *Pattie*; grey gelding *Barleycorn*; black mares *Gypsy* and *Polly*; black geldings *Tinkler* and *Dumpling*; blue roan mare *Nell*; brown mare *Dumsey*; and brown gelding *Turk*.

Each horse covered about 20 miles a day pulling trams and they quickly learned which way to go at points on the track. They lived at the stables in Quadling Street with periodic access to a meadow. And what did they eat at the stables? Oats, bran, stover, hay and beet were on the menu, and a vet and blacksmith (for fitting their shoes) were available. Horses working for the competitor bus company perhaps had a more exciting life – as well as pulling buses they were also hired out to go hunting!

R.I.P. horses of Ipswich.

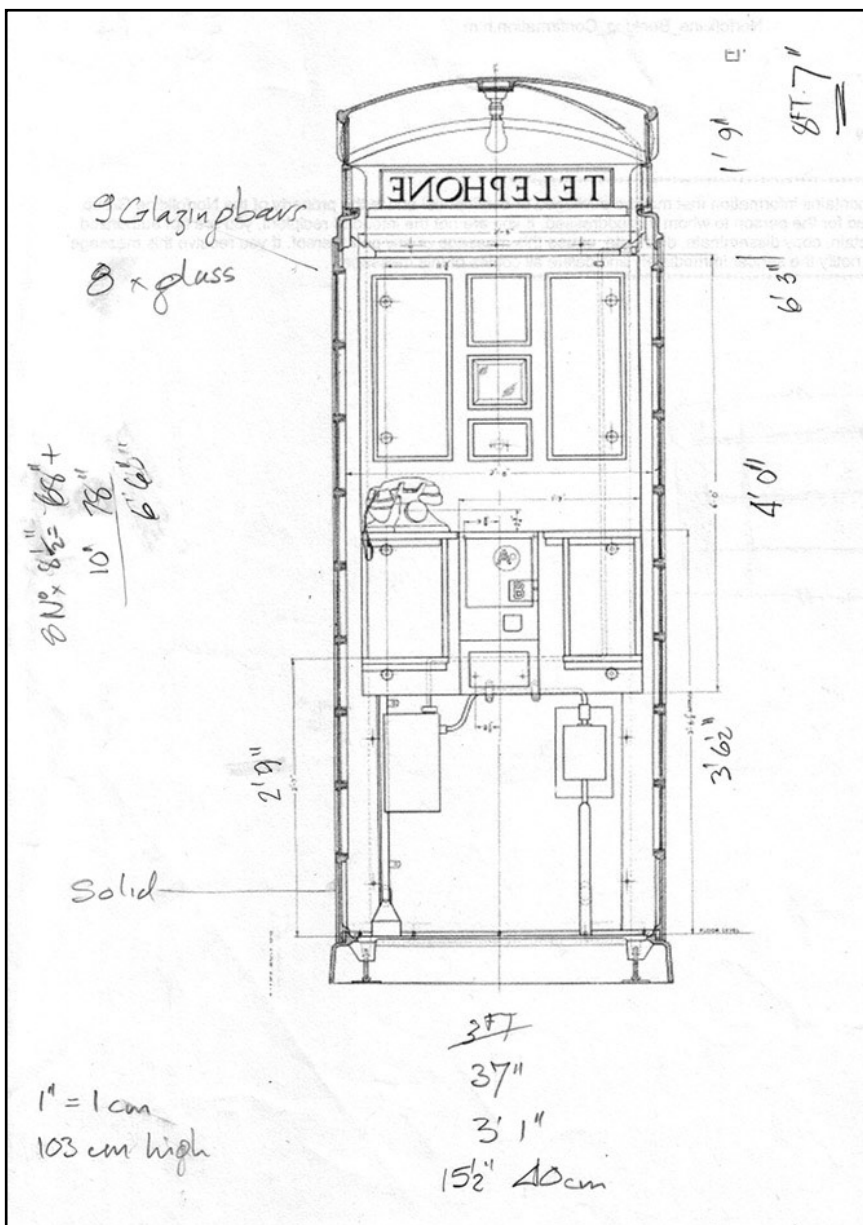
***Bob Markham***

## The Stoke Bridge Phone box

Many moons ago when I joined the Society's Executive Committee, I suggested that we should use this K6 telephone kiosk (then minus its door and the phone broken) to promote the historical importance of this area of Ipswich and its dock. This met with some support.

Chair John Norman got in touch with BT and was offered the box for £1. He was clearly as fired up by the project as I was and he suggested that we install a large printed panel on the back wall showing a traditional phone box interior with historical information in the panels, plus some promotion of the Society.

We could paint the metal structure and replace the broken windows, keeping it clean and in good order. The rather beautiful drawing (right) made by John was found in his papers and it shows how far he got with the idea, including a bakelite telephone, Button A and Button B and the central light-bulb. Ever the recycler, John executed this piece on the back of a print-out of an email.



However, it became clear that ownership meant that the Society would be responsible for it. If, say, a lorry backed into it so that it toppled over and damaged the highway, we would be financially responsible. A classic case of an asset becoming a liability.

Eight kiosk types were introduced by the General Post Office between 1926 and 1983. The K6 was designed by the great architect, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (1880-1960) and became known as 'the red telephone box' – a ubiquitous feature of our streetscapes. However, the use of mobile telephones has caused most kiosks to be removed. Ours has been a defibrillator station and, more recently, just neglected and beleaguered.

I think that John would have been amused to find that the Stoke Bridge box had been included in the Urban Street Art Festival (see page 17) in the autumn of 2024. The interesting grey chequerboard treatment changes the whole 'feel' of our familiar, butchered phone box turning it into a work of art.

I was taken aback by a whole string of negative comments about the repainting on Facebook: 'Why couldn't they paint it traditional red?', 'Surely ITFC blue would have been better' etc. You can't please everybody...

**RG**



Photo: Wild Walls/Joe Barton

## Ipswich rivers

This talk by John Warren on October 16th was very well-attended, with an audience of about 80. Crediting the archives of the River Gipping Trust and the Ipswich Maritime Trust for his source material, John began with the historic location of Ipswich at the lowest bridging point of the River Orwell/Gipping, at Stoke Bridge. This ensured good transport links both by water and land (including by rail from the mid-nineteenth century). What happens if this no longer applies? Felixstowe is the main port on the Orwell now and the Orwell bridge by-passes the town. The recently developed logistics hubs, with acres of warehousing, at Stowmarket, Ipswich Eastern Gateway, Felixstowe and Great Blakenham enhance the ties of maritime trade from Felixstowe to the A14 rather than Ipswich.

What is to be done? In the 1970s Ipswich embraced road transport and the Brutalism of Paul Rudolph, with the 1972 Jameson and Mackay Ipswich Transportation Study and the 1975 inner city ring road, which gave us Civic Drive, but was not completed. In the new millennium we turned our attention to the river, and this was regenerated as a residential and leisure area – the Waterfront.

We were given a pictorial history of the Waterfront, from its Hanseatic links in the 15th century, with the Isaacs buildings surviving from this period. The Buck brothers 1741 engraving of Ipswich from over Stoke shows, especially, the evidence of shipbuilding in the St Clements area. The industrial revolution revived the fortunes of the dock, with steam dredgers straightening the channel. Sale of the dredged sand provided some of the money for the wet dock to be built in the 1840s and the splendid Custom House, still with us today, was completed in 1845.

At the end of the 18th century, the River Gipping was made navigable with 15 locks along the 17 miles from Ipswich to Stowmarket. The River Gipping Trust is restoring the locks, but the modern low slung concrete Stoke Bridge (built in 1933) precludes passage underneath, except at low tide. (Compare this with the George Frost 1770s image, which has three high arches, in the July 2024 Newsletter.)

We were shown images of 19th and early 20th century leisure use of the Waterfront area and River Gipping in Ipswich – rowing, fishing, swimming, walking (promenading). Our speaker ended with a plea for a new definition for the river in Ipswich with enhanced leisure use of all kinds on its waters and along its banks, and with a special plea for pedestrian access across the wet dock lock gates and better links with the town centre.

**Caroline Markham**



### **Clifford Road Tunnels: A WW2 Homefront experience Would you like to volunteer to help?**

We are looking to increase our team of enthusiastic volunteers at the Clifford Road Tunnels, located under the playground at Clifford Road School in Ipswich. Our Heritage site (previously known as Clifford Road Air Raid Shelter Museum) has been open to the public for over 30 years, through the dedication of a group of wonderful volunteers. Our site is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays once a month during the spring and summer season. We are hoping to be able to open more frequently but require a dedicated team of volunteers to do this.

Further information about the Tunnels: [cliffordroadtunnels.co.uk](http://cliffordroadtunnels.co.uk)

To apply to be a volunteer please go to the volunteer Suffolk web page and search for Clifford Road Tunnels. <https://volunteersuffolk.org.uk/get-involved>

## St James' Leper Hospital

This long-gone institution is one of the historical nuggets which can be mined (here by Mandy Gaylard) from the Suffolk Heritage Explorer web resource compiled by Suffolk County Council: (<https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/Monument/MSF4954>).

The hospital existed from the 13th to the 15th century (1200 to 1499). It was united to the hospital of St Mary Magdalene in Ipswich in the 14th century; there was a common master for both, in the gift of the bishop. To the Leper Hospital was annexed the church of St Helen, with the Chapel of St Edmund (presumably the Chapel of St Edmund Pountney which stood just off Lower Brook Street next to today's Rosemary Lane).

During the Middle Ages hospitals served different functions to modern institutions, being almshouses for the poor, hostels for pilgrims, or hospital schools. The word hospital comes from the Latin *hospes*, signifying a stranger or foreigner, hence a guest. Another noun derived from this, *hospitium*, came to signify hospitality, that is the relation between guest and shelterer. The Latin word then came to mean a guest-chamber, guest's lodging, an inn. So, *Hospes* is the root for the English words host (where the 'p' was dropped for convenience of pronunciation) hospitality, hospice, hostel and hotel.

The site of the hospital may come as a surprise to those of us who are used to the modern street scene where Fore Street meets Back Hamlet, Fore Hamlet and Duke Street. The Suffolk Heritage Explorer website map shows the Leper Hospital straddling the land between Back Hamlet and Fore Hamlet and projecting eastwards down Fore Street. We must remember that streets in the Middle Ages were very much narrower (or only existed as alleyways or lanes). In fact, the Society's mini-website *The Fore Street Facelift 1961* shows a narrow finger of two-storey Victorian buildings projecting even further eastwards at this location (the 1881 map, right).

It wasn't until 1958 that Don Brothwell, Professor of University College London, excavated part of the site. He found an incomplete skull of a leper, with indications of myelomatosis (blood cancer). In addition, there were two layers of skeletons packed closely together, one foot apart. That fact alone tells a grim story.

**RG**



*Local Wildlife News*, a three-issues-per-year publication, is produced by the Greenways Project, Ipswich Wildlife Group and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to help promote the huge amount of excellent events and activities going on in and around Ipswich.

Paper copies are available at the Reg Driver Centre in Christchurch Park, the Stable Block in Holywells Park, the Greenways office at the Scout Hall, Stoke Park Drive, Millennium Wood (Bobbitts Lane entrance) and Mill Stream, Rushmere (Glemham Drive entrance).

The magazine is also available online at: [www.wildipswich.org](http://www.wildipswich.org). The contact email is: [iwg@wildipswich.org](mailto:iwg@wildipswich.org).

## Voewood House: an Ipswich Society outing



On a sunny late summer's day thirty-five members travelled to Voewood, near to Holt, Norfolk. Voewood, approached via a short drive, suddenly appeared at an angle, a stunning house beneath a clear blue English sky.

We were greeted by Simon Finch – the owner since 1998 – and his colleague Andrew for tours of the Grade I Listed garden and the Grade II\* Listed house. Simon pointed out that the site had been a turnip field up to the 20th century.

Far and away the most interesting building in Holt, and previously used as a school and a convalescent home, the gardens and house were designed by architect Edward S. Prior and built in 1903-5 for the Rev. Percy Lloyd. The project was superintended by Randall Wells and Detmar Blow and no contractor was employed. The building is most lavish and at the same time idiosyncratic and cost £60,000 to build.

In a butterfly-plan (central building with two wings), the walls are of mass concrete with a cast iron frame and faced with flints, tiles and bonded-in Norfolk carrstone. The colours produced by these materials are of paramount importance for the Arts and Crafts vision the house represents.

While the entrance side is a good introduction to the house, the garden facade is far more elaborate, and is set at right angles to the entrance. With colonnades, a recessed centre and octagonal carrstone columns, the plan is to blend the point at which the house ends and the garden begins, a typical idea of the time. The fine formal garden is sunken because the flints used on the house were dug from it.

Simon Finch has made a great restoration task an obvious success, which prompted our expressions such as 'fantastic', 'fabulous' and 'wonderful'.

Subsequently two hours were spent in Sheringham for lunch. Thanks to Peter and Caroline for this enthralling visit.

*Colin Mayes*



## Northgate Street Library centenary

I was pleased to see that the Ipswich County library in Northgate Street Ipswich reached its centenary on the 3rd September, having been opened to the public in 1924. The library was funded by Alderman William Paul and the Carnegie Trust. It was designed by local architect H. Munro Cautley, who also designed St Augustines and other churches. He was also involved in the design of the pedestrianised shopping street, The Walk, in Central Ipswich which was inspired by the medieval Shambles in York.

Growing up in Ipswich and attending Tower Ramparts School, I often visited the reference library; that portion of the library became very important when I worked at County Hall in St Helens Street. Needing a quiet space to work on assignments or projects for my ordinary and higher national exams during my lunch break, the library was invaluable.

I can still picture and hear the librarian shushing when people had the temerity to talk even in whispers in what was a 'quiet' zone. A far cry from libraries today.

A happy centenary to an important building in the street scene which is still used for its original purpose.

### Graham Day

*From May 2024 to the end of the year an exhibition in the Northgate Street Library showed architect drawings of the 1924 Carnegie Library, memorabilia and explorations of the place of the library in the 21st century. Also a timeline from 1612 (the beginnings of the Old Town Library) up to the opening of Ipswich Library in 1924 when over 5,000 people attended.*

*Below: silent study in the Northgate Room.*



Images from Suffolk Libraries



## Letter to the Editor

**In praise of Des Pawson – and Thomas Wolsey** from Graham Day

I was pleased to see in the newsletter a feature on Des Pawson, probably the acknowledged UK authority on nautical knots who has now retired and relocated to perhaps the more temperate climes of the Isle of Wight, the gem in the Solent where I have had several happy holidays.

Whilst I was working as an Administrator at Babergh District Council between 1974 and 1979, I changed job roles for a while and became responsible for office services. In my early days in that role I recall that I was visited by a younger office stationers' sales representative (for Rymans), one Des Pawson.

In 2023 we went to a day seminar at The Hold which Des attended and, over the lunch break, I managed to have a brief chat with him; he was as interesting and engaging as when I first met him all those years ago.

I am glad that the contents of his Knot and Ropework museum have now found a home in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. What a legacy – and I hope all has gone well for him across The Solent.

I was pleased that for the first time I was able to attend the Society's AGM held at the University of Suffolk in April. It worked well for me as, immediately prior, I had attended the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce celebrations at The Hold.

I was interested to hear the speaker from Ipswich Central [Kath Cockshaw] talking about the Wolsey 550 celebrations. She talked about how the Cardinal's route from the Cornhill to St Peters was being marked by painted bollards; an eminently sensible idea.

However, I recalled that there had been a little bit of 'kite flying' some months back in which it had been suggested that the former St Nicholas Church and Centre would make a suitable location for a visitor centre for Cardinal Wolsey (the Ipswich equivalent of the superb Richard III visitor centre in Leicester) and that Stoke Bridge could be renamed Wolsey's Bridge – something which I could never support, due to its probable inaccuracy and also that I was born 'Over Stoke'. As nothing further had materialised since the suggestions were made I was ready to ask the question as to progress, but unfortunately there was no opportunity to do so.

A few weeks later when visiting the town centre, I parked in Wolsey Street and walked toward Silent Street expecting to see an impressive array of coloured bollards 'illuminating' the route from the Cornhill to St Peters. Near to the statue of Wolsey there were three artistically painted bollards, but that was it\*. Fine as a 'bollard centrepiece', but could not other bollards at least be topped with Cardinal red paint to clearly mark the route? The need for proper direction signage to the waterfront area was emphasised a few weeks later when, on a mainly banking and occasional shopping trip, on the Cornhill we were asked by an older man and his younger companion for directions to 'The Key'. We worked out carefully the route to the premises near Bethesda Church; subsequently in discussion we realised that they meant 'The Quay'. The younger man then managed to get a route map on his smartphone and they then started on a much longer walk. If only the route to Wolsey and the Waterfront had been properly marked.

When Wolsey 550 was announced I was pleased that, at last, Thomas Wolsey would take centre stage and that it would raise the profile of the town for visitors. However, whilst I applaud the work which has been done with schools (my late father was always keen to stress the history and legacy of the Cardinal) as it was very necessary, I feel that other events have been far too low key (perhaps due to budget considerations).

*[\*See the 'Wolsey Plain' bollard images on the back page of our October 2024 issue. – Ed.]*

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Congratulations to Project leader Kath Cockshaw and Chair Terry Hunt plus organisers and many helpers and volunteers on the success of the Wolsey 550 18-month project in Ipswich. For just some of the successful initiatives and events see: <https://thomaswolsey550.co.uk/project-update>.

*PS Waverley* about to dock at Clacton pier, October 2025.



### ***PS Waverley*: the world's last sea-going paddle steamer visits Ipswich**

John Warren's talk on *Ipswich rivers* (page 21) coincided with our recent trip on this famous vessel. The modest voyage from Clacton Pier to Ipswich docks took place on a clear autumn evening. Most of the passengers on the vessel, which has travelled from Tower Pier in London, disembarked and we had plenty of space on our journey. As the sun set we sailed past Holland-on-Sea, Frinton and Walton and the ghostly Naze Tower. Passing Walton Backs Dovercourt and Old Harwich, we were greeted by Felixstowe Docks, lit up like a huge Christmas tree. A drone circled us for quite a while and, on our return home, Mandy found a rather fine film by Jeff Welch of the *Waverley* from that very evening\*. (We may be among the few passengers on deck.)

The heritage importance of this vessel cannot be over-stressed, with almost 80 years of history. Once a coal-powered steamer, it now runs on gas and the remarkable engine-room is open to be inspected. The operators offer coastal and river cruises and voyages to Scottish islands and sea lochs. It's always a good idea to wear plenty of warm clothing, as some others discovered.

The familiar River Orwell landmarks from Shotley to Freston Tower were topped by our passing beneath the Orwell Bridge which is always a thrill at night – some were convinced that the mast-top would scrape the bridge.

Finally, we turned northwards at Wherstead and entered docklands. I was intrigued to discover where we would disembark. The *Waveney* moored at the Grain Terminal on the east bank and would remain there with its 26 crew overnight, ready for an early departure in the morning. It must have been quite a sight for the early risers on the river banks. We boarded our coach and were escorted out of the dock security area to finally arrive at Ipswich railway station.

It was quite moving to have journeyed in the historical wake of the paddle steamers (including the *Orwell*, the *Suffolk*, the *Essex* and the *Norfolk*) which once regularly went right up into New Cut to moor at The Steamboat Tavern carrying hundreds of pleasure passengers.

**RG**

\* <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=WC7FNe&v=1063445471975407&rdid=rTAhkZOgSbxDdMHa>

# The Ipswich Society

Registered Charity no. 263322

[www.ipswichsociety.org.uk](http://www.ipswichsociety.org.uk) | <https://www.facebook.com/ipswichsociety> | <https://www.instagram.com/theipswichsociety>

This *Newsletter* is the quarterly journal of Ipswich's civic amenity society established in 1960. Views expressed in the *Newsletter* are not necessarily those of the Society. We make every effort to comply with copyright and GDPR law in our publications; please contact the Hon. Secretary if you have concerns about any content.

## Diary dates

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

*Wednesday January 15:* Derek Clarke on the Ipswich engineering firm Ransomes & Rapier.

*Wednesday February 19:* Graeme Mateer, Head of Transport Strategy, Suffolk County Council on their Walking and Cycling Strategy.

*Wednesday March 19:* Liz Harsant, Chairman of Suffolk County Council.

### Ipswich Society Annual General meeting

*Wednesday 16 April, 7.30pm:* venue: The Hold. Speaker: Dale Banham that he will be talking on the Ipswich Charter and the 825 Project. The meeting will be followed by refreshments.

<b>Newsletter deadlines &amp; publication dates</b> (the latter may vary by a few days)
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Deadline for material: 1 December;	Publication date: 22 January;
1 March;	2 April;
1 June;	17 July;
1 September;	9 October.



*'From Ipswich with Love' by ATMA is the region's largest mural, which measures 576 square metres. It is on the side wall of the James Hehir Building on Ransomes Quay. Photograph by Mervyn Russen. See page 16.*



*Giant ladybird by Woskerski, painted on the rear wall of the Ashtons Legal building on Portman Road/Princes Street, once the home of Churchman's Tobacco, Ipswich Community Radio and, later, Archant.*

*Stag beetle by ATM on The Hold – he featured on 2024's Springwatch programme and is well known for his accuracy in depicting animals at huge scale.*