



The Ipswich Society NEWSLETTER

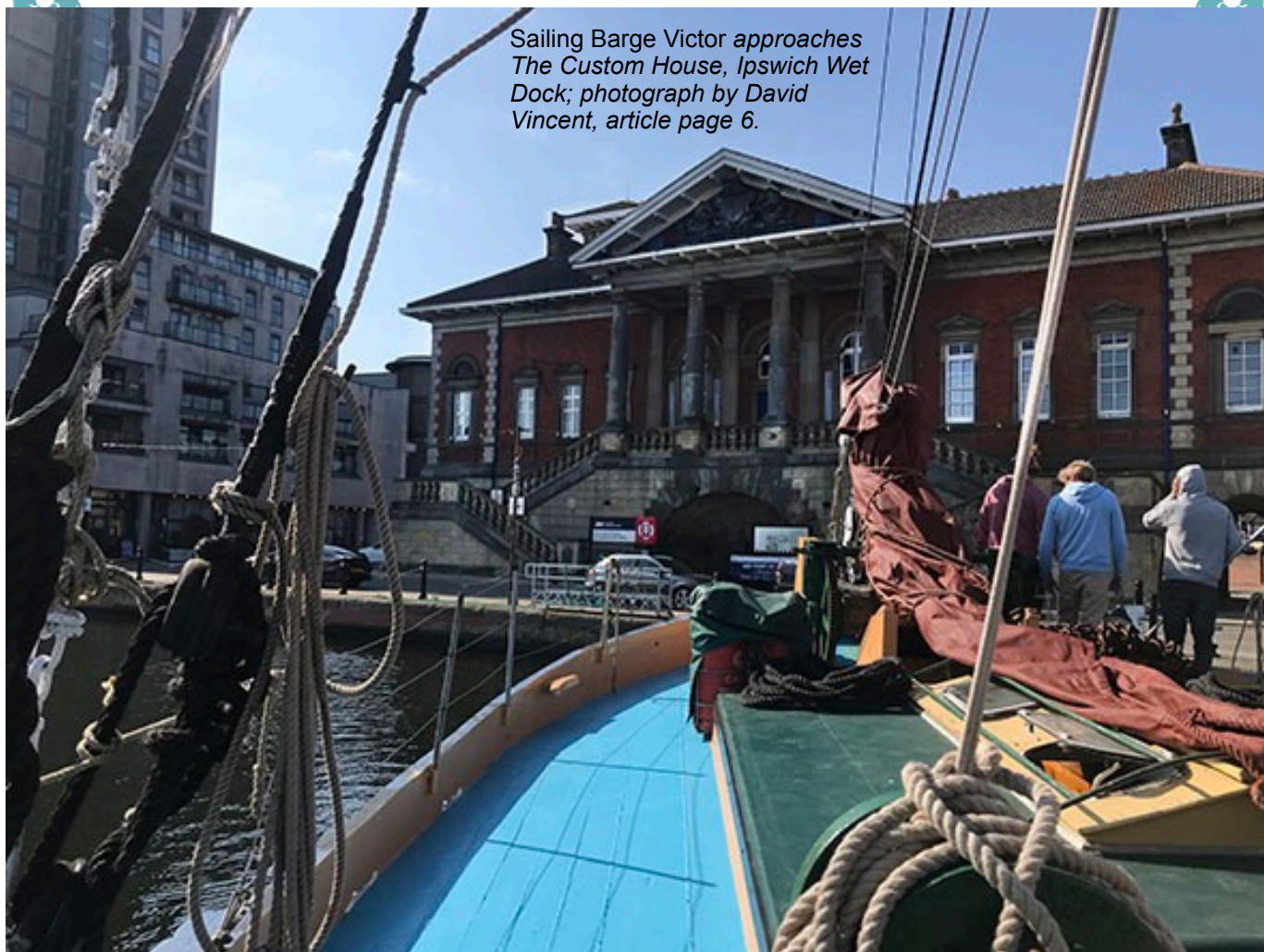
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October 2023 Issue 235



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*Sailing Barge Victor approaches
The Custom House, Ipswich Wet
Dock; photograph by David
Vincent, article page 6.*

Editorial

This issue of the *Newsletter* arrives a few weeks after the Society’s Heritage Open Days took place on the hottest weekend of the year. Our HOD booklet and poster promoting the event featured a novel bird’s eye view of Christchurch Mansion and Park (shown below) achieved by Richard MacRae – who officially joined the Society’s Executive Committee at the 2023 AGM – using his drone to capture this Elizabethan wonder in the heart of our town. As is customary, we will review the event in our January 2024 issue.

This issue has the customary cocktail of the old, the new and the bits in between. I am indebted to all those who contributed to this *Newsletter* to ensure its continuing success, particularly my regular and prolific writer, John Norman.

And to Cardinal Wolsey...
RG



1917 advertisement

A GAINST winter dangers—Wolsey is the best safeguard. Against winter discomforts—it is the sure protection. Wolsey will keep you warm and snug on even the coldest day.

The Government, heedful of the health of our troops, insist that every fighting man wear wool next the skin. And in spite of every weather hardship the health of our soldiers and sailors is maintained. The manufacturers of Wolsey have made millions of garments for our troops. What science and experience has shown is fact for our fighting men is also best for you. So order your Wolsey today.

Wolsey keeps the body warm equal throughout every extreme of heat and cold. Here is the secret of the value of pure wool—and Wolsey is pure wool. So quality of wool and consistent Government requirements make it difficult to meet the still growing demand for Wolsey. We are doing our best, however, to meet every similar need. But purchasers outside the wars of our fighting men must come first. For that you will agree.

Wolsey
Pure Wool Underwear

Wool costs more, so also does pure wool Wolsey. But Wolsey is worth paying for—worth waiting for. Made in many weights and sizes for men, women and children. Every garment is guaranteed unshrinkable, or replaced free of cost. Always look for the Trade-Mark.

THE WOLSEY UNDERWEAR COMPANY, LEICESTER.



Chairman's remarks

Firstly, a heartfelt thank you to every single one who has supported my 'Just Giving' page. I have been amazed at the generosity of friends and colleagues who have collectively helped raise an amazing total. I'm still cycling every day although some days I'm feeling pretty low due to the effects of chemotherapy.

Ipswich Borough Council has two separate initiatives published which are worthy of our support: 'Proud of Ipswich', *Championing our community and revitalising our town* and, secondly, a draft Strategy for the Cornhill.

Fine words – and multiple pictures – in the two separate papers, but what are the Borough promising by way of action, what changes are afoot and who else across the town is expected to contribute? As the Cornhill paper suggests, the Cornhill is the beating heart of the town, when the Cornhill thrives, the town succeeds. One of the problems of the Cornhill is that it is multi-functional, and a number of those functions occasionally take precedent, preventing others occupying the space. A good example is the market, reasonably successful when occupying the central space but moved off the Cornhill, all too frequently for other events.

One of the immediate issues the Borough Council is trying to resolve is the empty retail units which present an image of inactivity. The former Grimwade's outfitters has been without a tenant for far too long, with a distant landlord not too concerned; one void in a portfolio of perhaps one hundred properties is to be expected. Grimwade's is arguably in the number 1 prime position in the principal shopping street and really does deserve a decent tenant with a desirable retail offer. Unfortunately, the premises are not ideal, with split floor levels, chimney stacks extending down to the basement and no 'back door'. There is no way of getting deliveries in, and rubbish out except into Westgate Street and this means that the upper floors will not easily convert to residential accommodation.

Across the street is the former Debenham's, in Waterloo House. Owned by a local company, UNEX of Newmarket, who have removed all detritus from previous occupants and are using their experience from elsewhere trying to find a tenant, not only for the ground-floor small retail units, but also for the upper floors. There was talk of the NHS using the first floor as a non-invasive drop-in clinic, freeing up space at the hospital and elsewhere. Such a facility works well in other towns, and brings footfall into the town centre.

The Cornhill is surrounded by banks: Lloyds, NatWest, HSBC and Barclays, each of which has seen a marked decrease in the number of customers walking into their banking halls – customers who would then visit other retailers in the immediate area and, of course the long term question remains, will they stay open? The Golden Lion (and the Vaults) would be a great addition to the leisure economy and could spill out onto the square on hot summer evenings. I doubt whether it will ever become a hotel again, but the night club was popular, and it could function as a restaurant.

The Botanist, in the old Post Office, is a successful example of how the Borough has achieved lasting tenants and a useful contribution to the square but the evening economy works best in clusters. With two or three additional night-spots in reasonably close proximity, the Cornhill could come alive. Town centres today are places for people to meet, socialise, and spend their leisure time with less emphasis on shopping and the retail offer. Ipswich is trying hard – compare with Thetford, Lowestoft, Haverhill or even Colchester.

The new leader of the Borough Council, Neil MacDonald, has set out a vision for Ipswich with 'a thriving town centre' as the number one priority. Ipswich is already one of the fastest growing economies amongst UK towns and in the top ten when it comes to opportunities for start-up

companies. Amongst the key statements used by Neil is: ‘to achieve our aims we need to be bold, take more risks and deliver change at a faster pace’.

There is a recognition that the future is a new town centre model, rather than trying to recreate the past; a town centre which thrives with entertainment, leisure-based activities (including eating-out), a choice of cultural facilities including theatres, cinemas, exhibitions and sightseeing opportunities, such as river trips, together with opportunities to live and work. Key amongst that list is town centre housing with a variety of unit sizes, leisure-based activities are only successful if there are a sufficient number of local people.

One simple measure which the council is proposing is a review of planning and licensing rules to enable landlords to set up tables in the street outside their premises. Such a move immediately creates an image of a ‘busy’ town centre encouraging others to join the party. A parallel move is to ensure that, together with the police, the town rangers and additional CCTV coverage, the streets remain ‘safe’ both during the day and into the evening. Evidence from elsewhere shows that more people using the town centre increases ‘natural surveillance’ and reduces anti-social incidents.

There is a host of additional initiatives in Neil MacDonald’s paper including reducing rough sleeping, increasing opportunities to cycle into and around town and ensuring that there is sufficient signage to enable visitors to find their way around.

I am saddened to report the death of Ken Wilson, 1928-8/8/2023. Ken was a former treasurer of the Society, also a Borough Councillor and former Mayor of Ipswich in 1991-92. He was a lecturer at Suffolk College of Higher and Further Education working, alongside myself in the Construction Department. Ken died peacefully in his sleep age 95. I am further saddened to hear that Ruth Serjeant died in early September. Ruth was an assistant working on the Local Studies Collection at Suffolk Records Office, a job she loved to such an extent she continued to volunteer for many years after her retirement.

One (almost final) note from me. I announced my intention to stand down as Chairman of the Society at the AGM next April. My oncologist has suggested that I will need to reduce the number of organisations that I am involved with, and I’ve already resigned as Chairman of the Suffolk Architectural Heritage Trust and withdrawn from my position as a Trustee of the Suffolk Building Preservation Trust. I wouldn’t for a moment suggest that being Chairman is ‘just a couple of meetings a month’; for the Society to have an influence in the town requires time, effort and not inconsiderable paperwork but it has been very enjoyable, and I thank you for your occasional correspondence, your support and particularly, those who have volunteered your time.
John Norman

Planning matters

Victoria Nursery site, 1 Kettlebaston Way. The site has been sold, it appears, to another care home developer, First Care - the proprietors of Park View on London Road. After a public consultation, the Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal on the grounds of insufficient parking and increased traffic. They have squeezed in another five parking spaces and a travel plan will follow. We await the full application which will be resisted.

196 St Helens Street. Conversion of the existing five bedroom HMO plus one flat into an eight bed HMO. As this was the conversion of a long standing permission, the situation was not clear so a decision was deferred. It would be interesting to see a map of HMOs in Ipswich; this might help in controlling numbers.

48 Carr Street. The mosaic on the rear of the former Co-op building was listed by Historic England at grade 2 at the end of March 2023. An independent consultant with specific expertise working with murals of this type, has recommended that it will be necessary to carry out an asbestos survey to ensure that this material is not present within any part of the mosaic or structure. Given the potential threat to human health during works to the mural, further exploration is needed to determine the risk, and for mitigation options to be determined. Is this yet another delaying tactic by the DfE? The Twentieth Century Society is visiting the site in September.

Amenity Land Constable Road/Tuddenham Road junction. A proposal to erect a 15 metre (50 feet) 5G antenna (monopole) and four large cabinets. There is no doubt that the antenna ‘has no value for the amenity of the area’ and on these grounds IBC planners should refuse this application. In some senses the cabinets are more of an eyesore and some would say, a traffic hazard. Normally they do not require planning permission but are described in such applications; the cabinets remain beyond such legislation, despite being in a Conservation Area. Our best hope is local opposition – as quickly as possible. The Gorsehayes monopole refusal arose because there was a petition of 237 signatures and another thirty letters of objection.

19 St Margarets Green. This site in the Central Conservation Area, backing onto four listed buildings, has been a hand car-wash for many years, surviving a Planning Inspector's visit. In the past, there have been proposals to build apartments or for a care home. Many of our members feel strongly that it should be an open space; planners and others feel a rebuild is appropriate. In the current Local Plan, the site (IP 172) is zoned for 9 dwellings. The car wash is an eyesore and its hoardings ridicule the street scene in the town centre.

Arras Square. Consideration was postponed because of an urgent site review to discuss the provision of railings around some of the tombs.

Appeals. The Borough lost three: a record for one month. We are sorry that a precedent of a large screen advert will be sited in the car park of the California Club on Foxhall Road. Temporary permission was granted for a car park in Pooley’s Yard, Ranelagh Road and for the continued mooring of the restaurant boat on the waterfront.

The Constitution of the Ipswich Conservation and Urban Design Panel has been under consideration by the Borough Council for some time. There is considerable concern as to the lack of any democratic input or control so the chairman, John Field, will be relieved of his post and replaced by a Borough Councillor who is not on the Planning and Development Committee or has any declared interest in planning, conservation or urban design. Further, no elected members of the Planning and Development Committee will be allowed to attend meetings of the Panel. Additionally, The Panel will no longer be able to have co-opted members who give useful, experienced and committed advice.

The members of the Panel voiced considerable unhappiness at these proposals but it is almost certain that, after it is rubber-stamped at the full council meeting on the 20 September, it will come into force the next day, allowing one last meeting of the original Panel on Thursday 21 September. It is vital that Planning Officers do have an independent panel to give advice on conservation and design matters; we continue to believe that the Panel is respected and listened to by the Council as a whole.

Mike Cook



A day trip on the Sailing Barge Victor is a real delight

Is the River Orwell the town's best kept secret?

It is nice talking to visitors to see what they like about the town, rather than the local moaners. I met a couple from the Isle of Man who had made a special trip to visit the Ipswich Transport Museum the other day, for example.

I was chatting to an Australian couple (staying with family in Framlingham), who had come to town for breakfast at the Hullabaloo café and a walk on the Waterfront.

The *Things I should do before I die* blackboard has now gone from near DanceEast, replaced by a tree mural. Perhaps I should have written, 'take a barge trip to see the glory of our beautiful river'.

I joined skipper Wes and the crew at the end of May for one of their 'cream team cruises' down river. In the summer season the *Sailing Barge Victor* does three cruises per week, for individuals or groups, as well as private bookings and charters for everything from wedding celebrations and birthdays to bird-watching.

Once you are through the historic dock lock and beyond the industrial and commercial area, you get to see the river as it has been seen by sailors for centuries. A wide expanse of water bounded by rolling banks, mainly covered with trees. It is no wonder it has been named as one of the most beautiful UK rivers.

Yes, there are modern marinas at Woolverstone and Levington, and houseboats at Pin Mill, but it is surprisingly unchanged in many places. There are historic buildings peeping out from behind the trees: Freston Tower, Orwell Park and Broke Hall. But there are large areas of woodland, and no 20th century mansions dominating the views.

It was a bright warm day but with a stiff north-easterly breeze so Wes could shout his commands for the crew and take us out below the Orwell Bridge under sail.

David Vincent

Ipswich Society Outings Committee

For many years the Society has run local walks and coach outings further afield for our members during the summer months. These have always been very well-attended and we have been fortunate to have a strong Outings Committee to organise them. Last year two much appreciated members of this committee retired. June Peck and Barbara Barker have both made a huge contribution to the Ipswich Society in this way for many years. June took us to venues as varied as Eltham Palace, the Royal Gunpowder Mills in Waltham Abbey, not to mention several visits to the Thursford Christmas Spectacular. Barbara took us all over the place: Rye, the Chilterns (Metroland), Penshurst Place, Clarence House, and most memorably to the Stratford Olympic site whilst under construction (two coaches full, so 100+ of us went there!). I would like to thank June and Barbara on your behalf.

The Outings Committee is down to three people now; not enough for (at least) four summer outings. We will be meeting in November to discuss next summer's outings.

Please do join us if you feel you could help at all – contact me at:

secretary@ipswichsociety.org.uk for the date, time and venue of the meeting.

Caroline Markham

A 15th century day out

On a breezy day on 30 May 2023, twenty-seven members visited Hadleigh with excellent guides Margaret Woods and Roger Kennell from The Hadleigh Society.

Medieval Hadleigh centred around the site of a Saxon church adjacent to present-day St Mary's Church, the Deanery Tower, Guildhall and Corn Exchange; there were six religious guilds.

Of particular interest was the Deanery Tower, one of three Grade I listed buildings here. William Pykenham was Archdeacon of Suffolk from 1471 and his Deanery Tower was completed by 1495, two years before his death. Built in a (then fashionable) gatehouse style, it's an impressive building.

Building work took place in the summer months to avoid winter frosts!



Ipswich Society members on the roof of Hadleigh's Deanery tower

Then on to Finchingfield (population 800), the picture- book village of journals and calendars with a completeness not often found. The guildhall, a long jettied building was built in 1470 for the religious Guild of the Holy Trinity. Guilds were disbanded in the mid-16th century and the building was abandoned.

Subsequently, it had various uses but was renovated in 2012-13 with funding from several sources, including the National Lottery and National Heritage. Today it remains an interesting building to visit and has a small museum. Dodie Smith, author of *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*, lived in the village.

A full and enjoyable day and thanks go to Caroline Markham.

Colin Mayes

More on the Wolsey enigma: his education

‘Not bad for a lad from Ipswich whose musical education probably began at his school in what is now the south aisle of St Mary-le-Tower church...’ [*Newsletter* Issue 234, July 2023, page 18]

Kath Cockshaw, Project Director of the 'Thomas Wolsey 550' project, contacted the Editor to ask for further information.

As with so much concerning Wolsey's early years, there is much speculation, and we certainly do not *know* where he was educated. But we can make some informed guesses, of which this is one.

As so often, we start with George Cavendish, Wolsey's early biographer who knew him. He reports that Wolsey 'being but a child, he was very apt to learning'. By far the most likely place for him to have received such an education in Ipswich at the time was at the grammar school.

We don't know when he was born, of course. The grammar school found its first permanent established home in the house left to it in Richard Felaw's will of 1483. According to Cavendish, Wolsey was made a BA at the age of 15. It appears that he attended Magdalen Hall [College] School Oxford from age 11 (before it became Magdalen College), so even if he was born in 1473 (some prefer 1470 or 1471) any schooling before 1483 – necessary if he was to have graduated at 15 as Cavendish states – would have been elsewhere in the town.

In 1200 the burgesses of the town had met in the churchyard of St Mary-Le-Tower when Ipswich was granted its first Charter. The town's Great Domesday Book describes this meeting and the licensing of the guild merchants which about a century later became the Guild of Corpus Christi. In 1482 the corporation ordered that 'the said grammar school master shall celebrate mass, for the whole term of his life, for the Guild of Corpus Christi'.

The late John Blatchly believed that the chaplains appointed by the guilds were likely to have been the most appropriate people to educate the sons of the prominent townsfolk though, sadly, there are no records to prove this. In his history of Ipswich School *A Famous Ancient Seed-plot of Learning* p.5 he writes: 'The south aisle of St Mary le Tower church had secular uses for many centuries and may have been used for teaching'. He goes on to say that other venues are possible, though I have not come across any others that seem as likely. John Blatchly repeated his thoughts in an interview with Steve Russell for the *East Anglian Daily Times* 21 January 2015: 'The chaplain of the Guild of Corpus Christi "probably taught the sons of members in the partly secular south aisle of St Mary-le-Tower church".'

I'm sorry that we cannot know definitively, but perhaps the mystery is what keeps us so engaged!

Richard Wilson





The construction of the full-size replica ship being carried out by the Sutton Hoo Ship's Company is one of many projects facilitated by Woodbridge Riverside Trust through provision of space and equipment in the Longshed, which stands on the site of Whisstock's boatyard close to the Tide Mill and Granary buildings on the River Deben.

The Sutton Hoo Ships Company, an independent charity, started work on the reconstruction of the 7th century Anglo-Saxon burial ship in 2019. By summer 2023, despite the set-backs of the pandemic, the above photograph indicates great progress by the boat-builders. The ninety foot long structure fits precisely in the purpose-built Longshed. The team is made up of professionals, volunteers and enthusiasts who are working together to fully understand the dimensions and construction methods.

They are designing and making a royal Anglo-Saxon ship using authentic ship-building methods using green oak, as in the original build.

<https://saxonship.org>

RG

Associated British Ports (ABP) and modular housing

We have known since the war that, in this country, modular homes don't work. There is no single rational reason for this, but time and time again things go wrong. Both manufacturers, and developers using modular construction techniques have hit trouble. Logically it should be straightforward, like building cars. Automobile quality has improved over the years until today; the vast majority of new cars are near-perfect, start first time, and last.

Not so with modular buildings. Legal & General (L&G), which was planning to build 177 modular homes on the Island site in Ipswich, currently has three other sites across the country:-

Selby in Yorkshire: the modular units were ready before the site so were temporarily stored outside, under canvas. Now installed they are suffering condensation, mould, and other internal damp problems.

Bonnington Walk, Lockleaze, Bristol: these homes were close to completion when problems came to light with the foundations. After much debate the houses are coming down (that is, the external skin of brickwork removed, the modular unit lifted off the foundation and the below-groundwork replaced). The modular units can then be reinstalled and the brick skin reinstated. L&G is financially contributing to the mortgage repayments of prospective home buyers (that is, for those units sold but not finished).

Westwood Acres, Broadstairs, Kent: another L&G site with, as yet, undisclosed problems.

Is it not surprising that L&G have closed their Sherburn-in-Elmet, Leeds factory and pulled out of modular house-building. Their costs however, go on mounting.

In Ipswich the future of development on the Island site remains. We now know that ABP is keen to develop the site but obviously not in partnership with L&G. In my opinion, the two-storey modular housing wasn't the right solution. The Island could carry higher density – possibly 4 or 5 storey – apartments with an additional mix of uses for this important public asset. The Local Plan is much along these lines. To confuse matters, ABP is proposing to move Neptune Marina across the water to the Island: a reasonably good idea from a commercial standpoint but we need to understand the implications such as boat storage, yacht owner's car parking, boatyard facilities and what will happen along the Northern Quays without a population of boat owners?

One of the drivers for these changes is that boats are getting bigger. When a customer's existing boat is exchanged, the new vessel is inevitably wider and longer and will no longer fit between the pontoons. So, as well as the additional Neptune Marina berths being moved across the Wet Dock, there will be changes of layout to accommodate. Unsurprisingly, ABP is likely to increase the overall total of berths within the Wet Dock, decreasing free water, reducing manoeuvrability space, especially the turning circle outside the Customs House required by the Sailing Barge Victor, and the ability to accommodate visiting historic vessels (e.g. for Maritime Festivals).

Owners of the existing Waterfront businesses along the Northern Quays are concerned about the loss of customers. Neptune Marina berth holders can currently nip ashore for a morning coffee or an evening meal and it's only a few paces to Coffee Link or the Bistro on the Quay. Once berthed on the Island those few paces will lead to, for example, The Last Anchor.

ABP has not yet made a planning application for this proposal but is consulting with existing boat owners and Waterfront businesses. The Ipswich Society would like to see a master plan for both the housing development on the Island and the extended marina – together with its infrastructure. What we would really like is public access to the Island and the ability to perambulate around the perimeter, including a look-out platform on the southern tip.

Latest News. You probably haven't heard of them but **ilke** Homes have also gone into administration. **ilke** employed some 1,150 staff and produced 2,000 modular homes per year in the factory in Flaxby Moor, North Yorkshire. It claimed to have an outstanding order-book of more than £1 billion (4,200 homes) but had insufficient cash or credit to source materials or, as a company director put it, 'volatile macro-economic conditions and issues with the planning system'.

ilke has been around for five years but claims to produce the UK's only carbon-zero home when in use. The company delivered the UK's first-ever homes to guarantee residents no energy bills as part of its ZERO Bills offering, which was launched as part of a pioneering partnership with Octopus Energy Group in 2022.

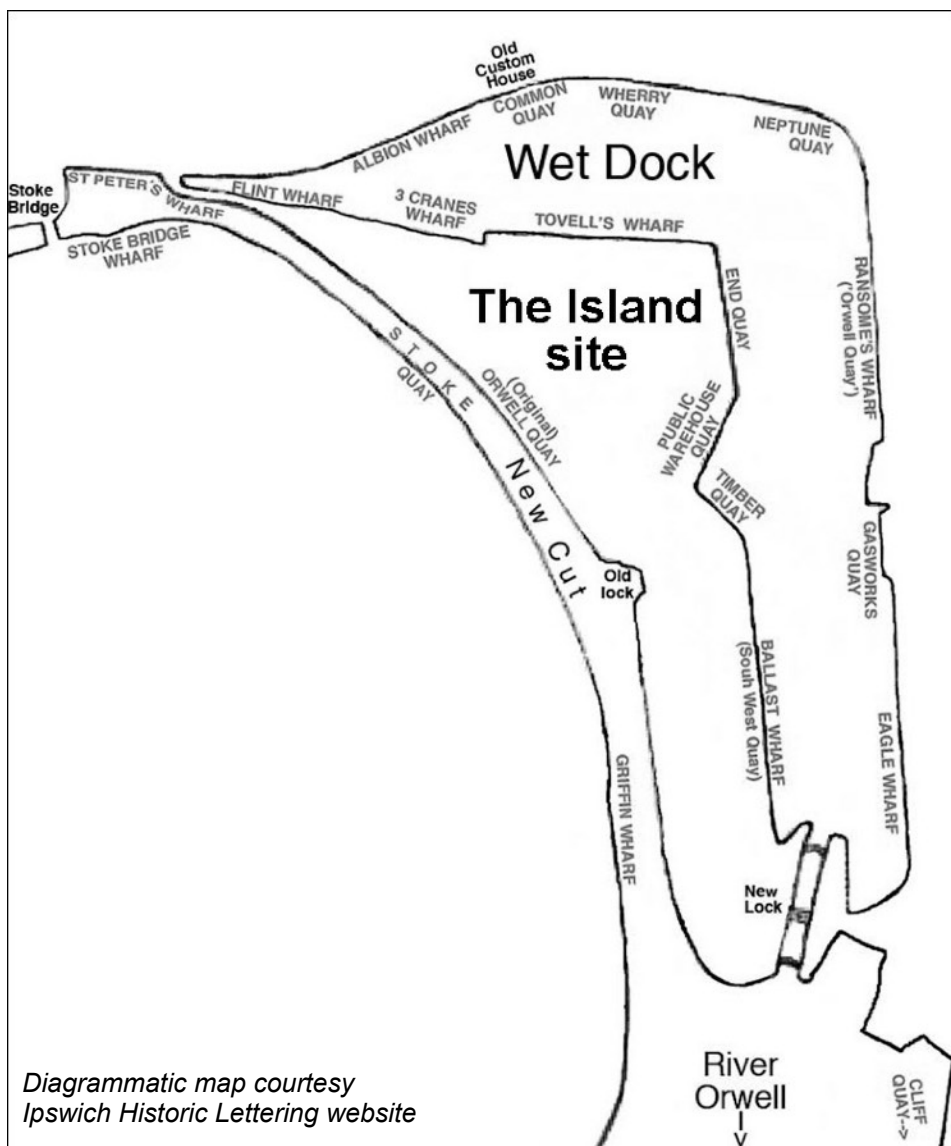
Essex housebuilder **Countryside** closed their modular homes factory (Bardon, Leicestershire) in 2002. Countryside had invested £20 million into the timber frame production facility with the capacity to produce 3,500 homes per year. Bardon is one of three MMC (modular methods of construction) production facilities owned by Vistry, the consortium which includes Countryside. The other facilities produce 'flat-pack' homes: whole wall panels, which are much easier to deliver.

The country's largest producer of modular homes **TopHat** largely financed by Goldman Sachs and with production facilities in Derby (800

homes per year) and Corby (up to 4000) again made a loss last year – £20 million on a turnover of just £10 million! TopHat, trading since 2016, has notched up total losses of £200 million, including money from their other investors: Persimmon and Aviva.

You will have gathered from all this that factory-produced modular homes are not that popular with buyers, that they are only cost-effective when volumes are high and the assembly line is working efficiently. They still need skilled labour on site and close quality control, something that's been slipping for all forms of volume house-building. The Government is unlikely to meet their promise of 300,000 new homes per year in the current climate.

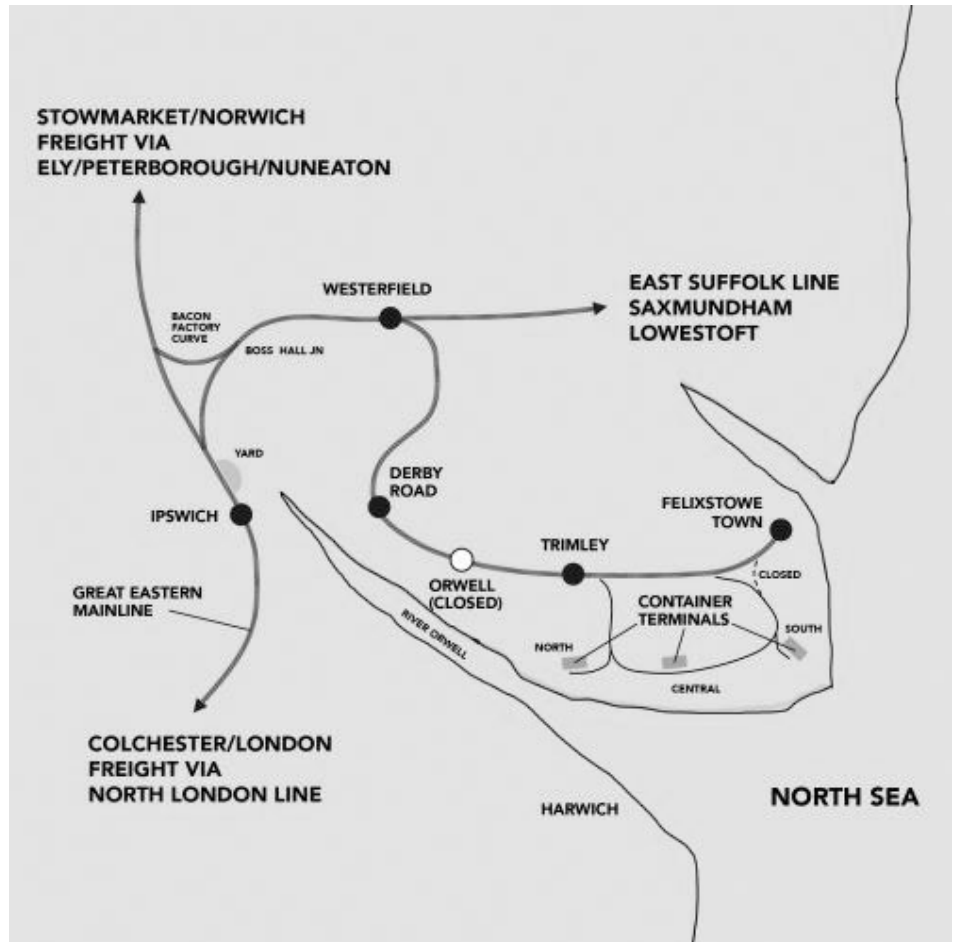
John Norman



The Felixstowe branch line

In the second half of the nineteenth century there were three applications to the Government to build a railway from Ipswich to Felixstowe. One was for a traditional railway, the second for a much lighter tramway and the third eventually received permission. The first required extensive earthworks and other infrastructure and was much too expensive to build, the tramway may have been an ideal way to move people but it wouldn't have carried much dock traffic.

The third application, which resulted in an Act of Parliament that enabled Colonel Tomline, a prominent local landowner, to build his railway was granted on 19 July 1875. It was a speculative venture by Tomline who hoped that Felixstowe could be developed into a port to rival historic Harwich across the water. At the time Felixstowe port, in the mouth of the Orwell but protected from the gales, the waves and the open sea by the Landguard peninsula consisted of nothing more than a jetty protruding into deep water (a pier with a 'landing stage at the far end). The railway track was to run along the pier enabling the movement of goods directly from ship to train, and hence to Ipswich and onto the Greater Eastern Railway network.



The original Felixstowe Railway and Pier Act of 1875 was followed by two further acts of 1876 and 1879, one enabling the construction of the dock basin, the other a change of name to the Felixstowe Railway and Dock Company. The railway opened for traffic in May 1877 taking an unusual, circular route from Ipswich that virtually doubles back on itself to reach the suburbs of east Ipswich. Derby Road station is just over a mile from Ipswich station as the crow flies, but six miles distant for the rail passenger.

There is good reason. The East Suffolk Line already made the loop from Ipswich station to Westerfield on route towards Woodbridge; an alternative direct line would have needed a major civil engineering structure to cross the valley and a bridge over the River Orwell. The incline from Ipswich station onto the higher ground at Westerfield is long and gradual, eminently achievable by the steam engines of the late nineteenth century. A direct link from the main line in Ipswich to Derby Road would involve a slope far too steep for the locomotives of the nineteenth century.



Westerfield station

Incidentally, modern electric trains have multiple electric motors – a couple under each carriage – and can accelerate quickly, and climb much steeper inclines than previously.

Tomline's Felixstowe branch left the East Suffolk line at Westerfield Junction. Westerfield station could now boast four platforms, an up line and a down line on the East Suffolk Line, and similar on the Felixstowe branch, trains from Felixstowe frequently terminating here. There were also stations at Derby Road, Nacton – known as Orwell after Orwell Park, the home of Colonel Tomline – and originally two in Felixstowe, one later renamed as Felixstowe Beach, and the second, Felixstowe Pier, within the port. Almost all the route was single track with just one passing loop at the Orwell Station.

Derby Road was a surprising location for a railway station. In 1877 there were virtually no residential properties in the vicinity; clearly Colonel Tomline knew what was to come because the Ipswich & Suffolk Freehold Land Society had started offering plots for homes with large (market) gardens in the vicinity.

Great Eastern began operating the line under contract from the beginning of September 1879 but did not purchase the infrastructure until 1887 when they changed the name to the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company giving priority to the word 'Dock' rather than 'Railway'. The station at Trimley was built in 1891 on Tomline's land and in 1893 Great Eastern built a new spur into Felixstowe town centre with a splendid new station. It was named 'Felixstowe Town' and required the former station to become 'Felixstowe Beach'. The latter was by far the most popular station, both before and after the First World War as holiday makers and day trippers discovered the delights of Felixstowe as a resort.

In 1923 the Great Eastern was absorbed into the Eastern Region (L&NER), the second largest of four National Railway Companies which in 1948 collectively became British Railways.

There was a proposal in 1937 to dual the line from Felixstowe to Westerfield (the East Suffolk Line into Ipswich had been built as a double track) but the Second World War put an end to the idea. The terminus station at Felixstowe Pier closed to passengers for the duration of the War, reopened in the summer of 1946 but never recovered the traffic it had previously enjoyed and closed permanently in 1951. The platform of Felixstowe Beach Station (closed 1967) can still be seen from the level crossing on Beach Station Road.

The docks had silted up during the war years – RAF seaplanes hadn't required any great depth of water – so the commercial shipping of any draught was unable to return. The docks complex was purchased by Mr Gordon Parker in 1951 (the railway having been nationalised) and, following investment, trade returned reaching 87,000 tons in 1957 and 600,000 tons by 1965.

Passenger traffic on the railway reached its zenith during the 1950s; all stations (except Orwell) were crowded with day trippers, particularly on Sundays when it wasn't unusual to have to wait for a subsequent train, particularly at Derby Road. The station at Nacton (Orwell) closed in June 1959 and the passing loop was taken out of use. This proved to be a decision of some regret when commercial traffic increased half a century later. Diesel services (DMUs) were introduced for passenger at the end of the 1950s.

The Beeching Report of 1963 was devastating for branch lines and rural stations but the line from Westerfield to Felixstowe didn't feature amongst those recommended for closure. In fact, as far as I can discover, the Felixstowe line has never been the subject of an investigation into its closure. The only notable closure following the Beeching Report, although not mentioned therein, was Beach Station after the summer of 1967.

There were however changes in the early 1970s. Felixstowe Town station was reduced to a single platform, staff were withdrawn and in 1972 a new container depot was opened at Landguard. This required reinstatement of the direct line to the docks at Trimley (which formed the third side of the triangle) which had been lifted at the end of the last century. Freight traffic, notably containers increased considerably in the 1980s and a new container loading facility was built, known as Felixstowe North together with a direct line to Trimley constructed, saving a tortuous journey through the Port.

At the same time the passing loop at Nacton was reinstated and extended to accommodate the length of a Freightliner container service. At the same time plans were made to increase the length of the passing loop at Derby Road (opened 1999) enabling trains to wait here while the service from Ipswich passed over the single-track Spring Road viaduct. At the beginning of the 21st century the line was re-signalled with all control coming from the box at Chelmsford.

The splendid Victorian station at Felixstowe was effectively closed in 1984 and converted into a shopping centre with a large Co-operative supermarket as the anchor store. Passenger services were moved to the tail end of the old platform 1 which had been severed to create a car park for both shoppers and commuters.

Today Freightliner runs regular container traffic services from Felixstowe Port (there are currently three container terminals) to distribution centres across the country. These include Hams Hall (Birmingham), Manchester, Liverpool, Cardiff, and Coatbridge (Scotland).

Economically, it becomes commercially advantageous to use rail rather than road if the destination is more than 150 miles from Felixstowe.

There are lots of interesting photographs on the website:

<https://ipswich-lettering.co.uk/felixstowebranch.html>

John Norman

Talking about our History

Last September we set up the Ipswich Hansa Group to promote our history as a Hanseatic port during the 14th and 15th centuries. At that time Ipswich was a Headport, with a trade rivalling that of London in exporting wool and woollen cloth to northern Europe. Ipswich is now a member of the modern Hanse movement, with links to over 180 Hanseatic towns in northern Europe as well as five other English towns, Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Boston, Hull and Beverley. www.hanse.org

Ipswich Society members are most welcome to join us for the first in a series of talks on Wednesday 1st November, 7.30pm at the University Waterfront building when Dr. Keith Ruitter of UOS will be giving his presentation, 'We need to talk about the Vikings!'

Forget the Tudors, we need to take a minute to talk about the Vikings! It may surprise you to learn just how much Viking-Age history is all around us here in Ipswich, Suffolk, and East Anglia generally. It may also come as a shock to realise how topical some of that history is today. Come along to the Waterfront Building for a public lecture by Dr Keith Ruitter who will highlight the complexity of Viking-Age peoples in this region, as well as some of the ways that their societies laid the foundations for important developments like the later medieval Hanseatic League.

This event is in association with Ipswich Maritime Trust. Entry is £4.50 (£3.50 for IMT members) with cash or card. There will be light refreshments afterwards and the opportunity to chat with our speaker.

Pat and Stuart Grimwade

Photograph: Leslie Sadler from Purplett Street on passage in 1957 from Ipswich to London on Cranfields sailing barge Venture. Image from the final book in the bargemen sequence: Band of brothers: Directory of bargemen associated with the Port of Ipswich to be published by Barry and Elaine Girling in 2024.



Rosalie Hare: an intrepid Ipswich woman

Rosalie was born Rosalie Hancorn Ambrose Lind in Ipswich in 1808 and died 20 July 1880 in North Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. These bare facts conceal a great story of adventure on the high seas and on the other side of the world. Rosalie married Robert Hare – also born in Ipswich – at St Margarets Church on 20 February 1827, when she had not completed her 18th year. Remarkably, she departed with her new husband from Hull on the ship *The Caroline* on July 17 the same year to sail to the other side of the world; Rosalie was 19 years old. Robert Hare was the 30 year-old captain of the vessel. The ship carried sixty passengers, many from Yorkshire, with livestock and stores.

Rosalie probably knew little of the world beyond the immediate surroundings of her Ipswich home. Nor did the young woman appear to intend to keep a diary. The plain, vellum-bound volume in which she has set down the story of her travels, although intended as a journal, does not appear to have come into her possession until after she was on board ship. And it had had two previous owners. She inscribed a poem addressed to her husband by Rosalie and a sonnet to one of her friends at the front of the journal. The account was eventually published in 1927.

The pages are closely-written and show that the writer was industrious and observant. She intended the entries to be for the benefit of her brothers and sisters in Ipswich. She comes across as deeply religious and devoted to her husband, who seems to have fully returned her affection. Conditions on board – for such a long journey – were probably cramped and smelly and that was as they set off. Months at sea were to follow and the precious water on the vessel would hardly have been spring fresh. The men on board were occasionally violent and abusive to the officers and crew and sometimes ended up in irons.

Incidents on the long voyage to Van Dieman's Land, today's Tasmania, are recorded which otherwise would be lost to us. She describes how *The Caroline* was stopped by pirates in mid-ocean; she has left vivid sketches of Cape Town, of the newly-formed settlement of Circular Head, North-Western Tasmania, of the many different peoples inhabiting Batavia (Jakarta, Indonesia), as well as Port Luis (Mauritius) and of the island of St Helena – then the burial-

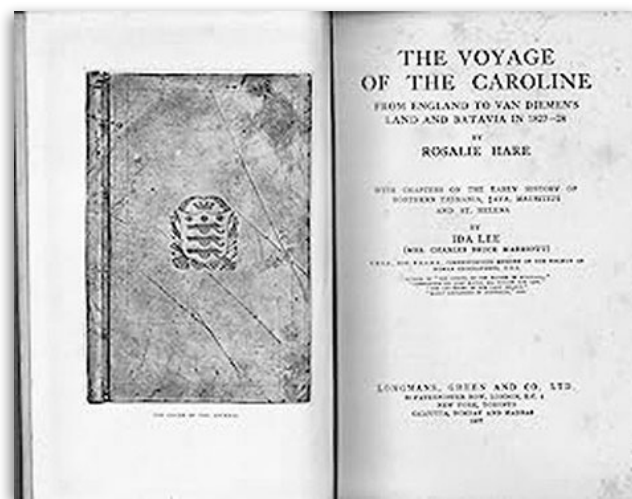


VAN DIEMEN'S LAND COMPANY'S ESTABLISHMENT AT CIRCULAR HEAD.

CIRCULAR HEAD SETTLEMENT, FOUNDED BY THE VAN DIEMEN'S LAND COMPANY

place of Napoleon Bonaparte, whose tomb she visited. The busy life on board ship made extended description of places and people difficult and, at last, a serious illness caused her to curtail the entries in her journal.

The introduction of the 1927 book written by Ida Lee strikes a typically colonial note: 'The arrival of The Caroline added a fresh page to the history of the settlement, and was the means of implanting sturdy British stock amid the rugged wilderness and grassy slopes of Tasmania's north-west coast.' Rosalie Hare's journal entries have been hugely supplemented by context and further information in many places. These additional sections make up a majority of the 308 pages of the published book.



However Rosalie's voice rings true in the pages, here in a description of the fatal interactions of white settlers and Aboriginal Tasmanians. She noted in her journal the frequency of Aboriginal attacks on shepherds, but added:-

'We are not to suppose the Europeans in their turn take no revenge. We have to lament that our own countrymen consider the massacre of these people an honour. While we remained at Circular Head there were several accounts of considerable numbers of natives having been shot by them, they wishing to extirpate them entirely if possible.'

Indeed, the hope for a better life than that of the rural poor in England in a new world which motivated the migrant settlers was often dashed. Stockmen and shepherds were subject to attack and, not to put too fine a point on it, there were very few women; their frustrated appetites led to all sorts of terrible behaviour and violence.

The wonder experienced by Europeans in Tasmania is encapsulated here:-

'Here were plenty of trees, but they were of stringy-bark, so called from their bark continually falling off and hanging in strips. Leaves only at the top. I was much pleased with the beautiful little parrots and cockatoos flying about; the kangaroos skipping on their hind legs are also very curious. The head of this animal is something like the head of a rabbit. The body very large in proportion, with a long tapering tail. The forelegs are not more than one-third the length of the hind legs. They spring from place to place with great swiftness upon their hind legs and tail.'

Rosalie Hare died in 1880 aged 72 and was buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery in Australia. Alas, there doesn't appear to be a painted or engraved portrait of her in existence, so our picture of her depends wholly on her writings.

Peter Hodgson sums up Rosalie's book *The voyage of The Caroline*:-

'The story is a real ripping yarn – storms, pirates, strange lands, people and animals, including crocodiles... Honestly, I think she must have been a remarkable woman. My daughter is 19 – I simply could not imagine ...'

RG

Sources

The voyage of the Caroline from England to Van Diemen's Land and Batavia in 1827-28 with chapters on the early history of northern Tasmania, Java, Mauritius and St. Helena. Longmans, Green and Co., 1927. You can view the whole, scanned book online at: <https://rcin.org.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=84933>. Thanks to Kester Clarke for the loan of the book.

Peter Hodgson's www.BromptonOnSwaleHistory.com, which tracks the history of the Yorkshire village of Brompton-on-Swale, was an unexpectedly fruitful source; eight men from the village sailed to Australia on The Caroline. This website gives plentiful quotations from Mrs Hare's journal and excellent, well-researched commentary by Peter and Sharon Burnell on her times and experiences.

What do you do when M&S, Debenhams and New Look are all gone? Knock down the shopping centre and replace it with a riverside oasis – could the ‘visionary’ plan of Stockton-on-Tees spark a revolution?

An empty Debenhams, a shuttered Marks & Spencer, an abandoned New Look: the town centre of Stockton-on-Tees has suffered a similar fate to countless high streets up and down the UK, struggling to survive in the online shopping, Covid-stricken era. But, while some towns scramble to convert empty department stores into flats, or fill vacant shops with community pop-ups and urban farms, Stockton Council has come up with an altogether bolder proposition for the post-retail age. It plans to demolish half the high street and replace it with a park.

‘The government asked for “transformational” proposals for our high streets,’ says Councillor Nigel Cooke, cabinet member for regeneration. ‘If this is not transformational, I don’t know what is.’ If the plans go ahead, the project will see an ailing shopping arcade ripped up and replaced with a riverside park three times the size of Trafalgar Square, providing grandstand views across a bucolic scene of rowing, sailing and waterside promenading along the Tees. As retail continues to retreat, might our future high streets embrace the great outdoors?

‘Ever since Woolworths closed in 2008, Stockton Council has been rethinking what the town centre should be,’ says Cooke. ‘The future is not more shops. It’s about leisure, culture, events and recreation, and making it a nice place for people to simply be.’

Standing in the council’s sights is the Castlegate shopping centre, a tired 1970s retail arcade, hotel and multi-storey car park designed by the notorious architect John Poulson. Stretching over 300 metres along the eastern side of Stockton high street, the building acts as a blunt brick barrier between the town centre and the river, blocking any sense that Stockton is indeed on-Tees. Described by one local blog as ‘the biggest act of vandalism since Oliver Cromwell demolished



Stockton Castle during the civil war’, Poulson’s project trampled a network of Victorian streets that led down to the river, replacing the alleyways with an impermeable, intractable lump, and compounding the sense of severance inflicted by a dual carriageway along the river’s edge. In 1973, a year after the Castlegate centre opened, Poulson was jailed for his role in a web of corruption, bribery and fraud across the north of England, but his legacy would continue to blight Stockton for decades to come.

‘You can see why they wanted to turn their back on the river in the 1960s,’ says Cooke. ‘It was black. The industry had made it so polluted that there weren’t any fish in it for years, but now we have salmon swimming and rowers gliding through town. The river is a real asset. We’re not ashamed of it any more.’

The provisional designs, drawn up by Ryder Architecture and unveiled today, depict a new land-bridge covering part of the riverside road (which will be reduced to two lanes), connecting the high street to the river with a cascading series of steps, forming an informal amphitheatre facing the waterfront. The park itself will include an extension of the market square at the northern end, with space for adjacent restaurants and cafés to spill on to, along with an undulating playground area and a large circular lawn for outdoor events. Two new buildings at the southern end of the site will potentially house a new central library, customer service centre and council headquarters, with the council planning to consolidate its ten existing offices into two.

As part of a strategy to concentrate the shops in one place, Castlegate’s existing tenants are being offered the option to move into empty units in the nearby Wellington Square shopping centre, which the council also acquired in 2019. Both had vacancy levels of around 30%, but this way it is hoped they will form one commercially viable centre. To fund the riverside project, the council has secured a total of £36.5m from the Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Government’s Future High Streets Fund; it plans to contribute a further £5m, as well as committing to deliver the offices – at around £30m – to be confirmed in the next phase.

‘It’s incredibly bold for a council to be operating like this,’ says Bill Grimsey, former Iceland chief executive; also author of several national reviews on the future of high streets which have urged a move away from retail. ‘Stockton is probably the best example in the UK of a town that’s recognised that shops are not going to be the mainstay of town-centre survival in the 21st century and we need to do something radical about it.’

A consultation exercise found that 80% of respondents were in favour of demolishing Castlegate, and the Twentieth Century Society is not objecting, but the building is not entirely without its fans. Local film-maker Jonathan Thompson describes parts of the interior as ‘absolutely stunning’, the soaring, geometric ceiling above the food court as ‘like a modernist cathedral’.

His photographs of the space convey the drama of the original vision, and he urges that at least the market hall and spiralling car park ramp are somehow incorporated into the redevelopment plans. With retrofit and reuse at the forefront of the environmental agenda, given the huge amount of embodied energy locked into existing buildings, demolition should only ever be a last resort; but the council insists that reusing parts of the Castlegate centre would be unviable here.

A few Poulson ruins dotted around the site would add a poetically Ozymandian* touch, and they might help to mitigate the potential sense of agoraphobia. The plans currently envisage a gargantuan amount of public space for a town of 85,000 people – particularly when it is located right next to the widest high street in the UK. Could it all end up feeling like a barren, windswept expanse: a gaping void in the town’s heart?

Cooke is confident that Stockton has the energy to fill it. ‘We are very much an events town,’ he says. ‘The international riverside festival pulls in hundreds of thousands of people from across the country each year, and we’ve held international athletics and cycling championships on the high street before.’

The park’s success will rest on the finer detail of the design, and Ryder don’t have the kind of track record in public realm and landscape design that inspires the confidence they will really pull it off. The council says it is currently ‘reviewing procurement options’ to develop the design, and intends to ‘engage a contractor at an early stage to maximise innovation and buildability’ – which makes the chances of an architectural competition seem, sadly, unlikely.

But the social and cultural life that the park will hopefully support might trump niggles over the design. Annabel Turpin, director of Stockton’s ARC theatre and arts centre, describes the riverside proposals as ‘visionary’, and sees the park as a canvas for extending the theatre’s programme of

performances. She moved to Stockton in 2008 and has witnessed a range of improvements that have transformed the town centre, ‘from feeling like a neglected northern town into a place you’d be proud to show someone around’. She cites new paving, street furniture, lighting and a big fountain for kids to play in, along with the Stockton Flyer kinetic sculpture, which cheerfully erupts from its plinth in a mad cloud of steam and clanging bells every lunchtime. The council is also funding the refurbishment of the Globe theatre, a 1930s art deco gem, nearing completion at the top end of the high street, and has even built a hotel nearby.

Another successful initiative, highlighted in the Grimsey review, has been the transformation of a former department store into an ‘enterprise arcade’, where start-up businesses can take space for as little as £10 a day to try out their format. Around 15 former tenants have already moved into more prominent units in the town centre, aided by £5,000 council grants to help them refurbish vacant shops.

‘As the big national chain stores move online, we’re seeing a real growth in independent retailers,’ says Rachel Anderson, assistant director of policy at the North East Chamber of Commerce. ‘Stockton has been first out of the blocks to intervene in the market and facilitate these new businesses, and others are following suit. Middlesbrough council recently bought one of its shopping centres to repurpose into a leisure destination, while others are looking at everything from escape rooms to crazy golf.’ As anchor tenants depart, there are opportunities for different kinds of uses appearing on high streets, from medical centres to educational colleges. The kinds of things that are often stranded on the outskirts could help to bring life back to the core.

As embattled council leaders across the country face the quandary of what to do with their struggling, post-pandemic town centres, they would do well to look at Stockton-on-Tees, quietly leading the way.

John Norman

[*From the Percy Bysshe Shelley poem Ozymandias: ‘My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings; Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!’]

Ipswich Building Preservation Trust Annual General Meeting

Thursday 12 October, 2023 at 7pm
Venue: The Sale Room, Isaacs on
The Quay, Ipswich Wet Dock

Our speaker will be Lisa Wall on
‘Where did all the houses go?’

–Lisa’s talk will discuss her ongoing research examining the loss of buildings from Ipswich and Suffolk at the start of the 20th century, and some of the firms involved.

Refreshments will be available. All welcome.



Wolsey music concert

As Ipswich marks the 550th anniversary of Thomas Wolsey’s birth, at 7.30pm on Thursday 5th October the 2023 Ipswich School Music Festival opens with a special evening of music and words to celebrate his life and times. Richard Edgar-Wilson will bring Wolsey’s story to life, and there will be performances by early music trio Hexachordia and by the school’s Wolsey Consort singers. For booking details and more information go to: <https://www.datathistle.com/event/2116139-celebrating-thomas-wolsey-in-music-ipswich-school-festival-of-music-2023/>

Eastern Angles and the long road forward

How can you tell you're getting old? When something you saw built as brand new is no longer fit for purpose. It first happened to me in 1962 with the Colchester Road Fire Station. We lived in Sidegate Lane and I remember the woods behind our house being cleared to make way for the gleaming new Fire Station and its tower. I also remember how each New Year's Eve the appliances were parked outside and the station turned over to a massive party. It's how, later, I got the idea of Eastern Angles making a show about the Fire Service and performing in the Station itself. But imagine my surprise when some forty years later it gets turned into housing!

The Suffolk Records Office (SRO) had an even shorter life. It must have been about 1986 when it was first mooted that The Drama Centre in Gatacre Road, a tiny corner of which Eastern Angles had just moved into as its base, was to close. I asked Peter Labdon, County Librarian of Suffolk, if there was any possibility of us keeping a small part of it due to our regular use of Suffolk Records, and amazingly he said we could do them a good turn by keeping the little theatre down the other end open for local groups and stop some of the complaints about the closure of the centre. He did say they might need it back if they expanded.

Although we had similar outlooks, we did make for strange bedfellows and kept very different hours. We renamed the theatre after Sir John Mills, who had turned 70 that year, and persuaded the builders to let us use their car park over Christmas despite the strong room being only half-built. The biggest problems came when we wanted to use smoke and haze in our theatre, and early on we brought out the fire brigade a couple of times. I got a severe dressing down from a headmasterly David Jones, County Archivist, in his office.

By the time there was talk of a new Records Office on the Waterfront (Suffolk Archives in The Hold), relations were much more affable. It seemed extraordinary that something so new could so soon be unfit for purpose but it was always slightly playing catch up due to being built just prior to the great digital revolution of the 1990s.





Rehearsals for Moll Flanders and building work going on simultaneously!

The first I knew about the plan was in 2016 and I heard that the site had been given a valuation of £300 thousand, which hardly bought you a house in those days.

Our Board formed a task group to research a new base for the company –

although we were interested in staying at Gatacre Road, we had to look at other options in case the whole site was sold or developed. Suffolk County Council acknowledged our interest but investigated other possible uses for the building – Ipswich needed a new school space in the town and this seemed like an ideal place but there were financial constraints (especially surrounding the retro-conversion of a listed site where the cost of re-inventing things like toilet spaces would have been prohibitive).

We drew up a case for converting it into an arts & heritage centre that would not only be our base but also a hub for community activity, especially in the disadvantaged area around us. We offered a business plan, risk assessment, and a summary proposal that was acceptable to both sides. We would have a 100 year lease on the old school part of the building in return for a payment that included replacement of boilers, permission to install solar panels on the strong room roof and some reconfiguring of security access and the separate running of the 1980s building by Suffolk Records Management.

Opening and developing the Eastern Angles Centre brought with it many challenges. The first, Covid-19, hit just as we were discussing dates. Of course, the pandemic also brought other practical challenges, not least with us moving in and the SRO moving out. It wasn't until after a year of lockdown that in May 2021 we finally reopened the doors, albeit with cabaret seating instead of our usual rake and a strict one way entrance. Actually the new access and layout helped enormously and made it relatively stress-free. Many of our audiences commented on how much they appreciated the measures and how safe it made them feel.

The second challenge was the building exterior. Although it has wonderful decorations (lauded on the wonderful Borin Van Loon historic lettering website)*, outside the demeanour is really rather off-putting: most of the doors are closed off (apart from the SJM Theatre entrance, which was really open only in the evening), the main SRO entrance was round the back, hidden from view – and all the windows had blinds down most of the time. It was a place that said don't come in unless we know who you are. Things had to change. We have reopened the door for Homework Club to make it more accessible and inviting. And we've pulled up the blinds. (*We have incorporated the features in our new logo and used the shapes in various other ways to give the place a new identity.)

During the lockdown period we also applied to various grants bodies to help with kitting out the new spaces. The Theatres Trust, with the Wolfson Foundation, offered us £20 thousand towards

the solar panels; the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership matched our own £25 thousand investment to install cameras, vision mixing and other technical equipment to allow us to livestream shows from the theatre. The Borough Council, especially local councillors for the Westgate Ward, have also supported many new initiatives such as Homework Club for local primary school children, digital drop-in facilities for the unemployed and under-resourced families, and a new Young Creatives programme. Likewise Suffolk County and Unlimited Activities have supported Holiday Activities for children on free school meals and other project and trusts and foundations, such as The Ganzoni Trust, supported capital costs.



Next up was getting local people involved. To start with we got some Heritage Fund support for celebrating local legends. Students from Handford Hall School (just down the road from us) were asked to nominate people in their community who had played a part in keeping things going during lockdown. Under the tutorship of local artist Catalina Carvajal they then made artwork to celebrate teachers, postal workers, delivery drivers and other community heroes which we were able to display in our windows.

But we were only going to make the extra space work if we could bring in users who would pay for the privilege, especially as our previous hirers of the space had largely melted away since lockdown. We have welcomed various organisations like Inside Out Community, a local arts and mental health charity who love the space. Another attractive advantage is those high ceilings and windows which makes it safe for people to participate in all sorts of activities.

So what have we got? A new co-working space that includes our own office, box office, hot desks and zoom facilities; a community room whose users include Ipswich Reggae Choir, arts workshops, a paleography (the study of ancient writing systems) workshop, and various board meetings or training sessions; a rehearsal room that doesn't clog up the theatre and offers research & development facilities for other professional companies; a Homework Club room for young people to carry on their education after school run by University of Suffolk trainee teachers and a storage room for Easy Read and Let's Talk Reading.

Finally, we now have volunteers who have made the garden space in the middle of the site a nice place to picnic in summer and provide a lit grotto for Christmas.

Most recently we have secured funding from Historic England for our Work Furnace project celebrating the working class industries of Ipswich, and from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for our production of Medieval Miracles with a large heritage outreach programme. Both projects have been made possible by the new facilities.

Ivan Cutting, Artistic Director of Eastern Angles

Plaque replaced

Our *Newsletter* article in July 2020 (Issue 230) showed a neglected and damaged Ipswich Society plaque on Handford Road, close to the end of Elliott Street, which commemorated 'Diana Cowley (1934-95). Who cared about Ipswich'. This had been revealed after shrub overgrowth had been cut back. The Society has recently mounted a replacement blue plaque on the wall. *Photo: Tim Leggett*



Letters to the Editor

Cupiss Balls from Tony Grayston

Excerpt from the article *Packard's Ipswich Series printing inks* (July 2023 Newsletter, Issue 234):
'Edward Packard senior (1819-1899) had qualified as a chemist apprenticed to Francis Cupiss, who not only provided horse medicines but also established a letterpress in Diss in 1830.'

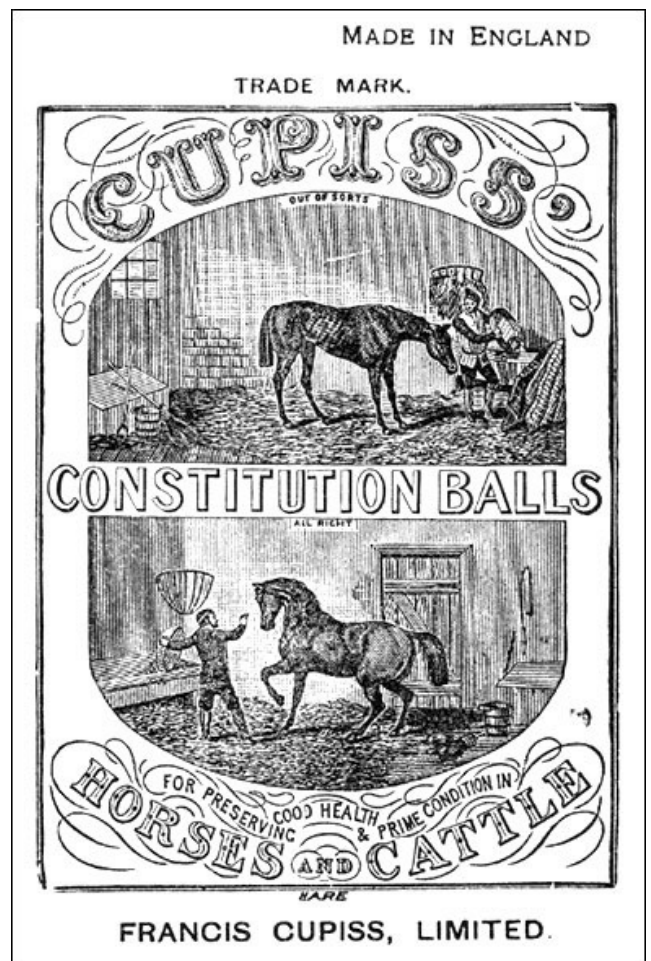
I was very interested to read the recent article regarding 'Cupiss Balls' and wondered if your members might be interested in my association with their use.

During my working life I was territory manager for a well-known oil company, my patch being Norfolk and Suffolk. I also had the good fortune to be involved with a local family who farmed in a village outside Ipswich and, because of their equestrian activities, had some wonderful horses which I was privileged to be able to ride. One of the equines was a heavy-weight, liver chestnut called 'The Tank'. He was sadly suffering from some tummy trouble and the owner thought that an old-fashioned remedy might provide relief for the horse's condition.

I received a request on my car-'phone to call in at the printing works in Diss to pick up some Cupiss Balls. I had never heard of them, but was happy to comply with the request, so duly delivered them. Thus, the fun in delivering the medication to the 'patient' began. Imagine that the gob-stopper-sized ball had to be got down to the horse's stomach. The grey ball had to be administered via a 'balling gun' – a hollow wooden tube with a plunger. The ball was inserted in the open end, the tube being then placed in the horse's mouth, over the tongue, then shot down the extended throat. Simple? – definitely not. The operation involved three people: the two owners and myself.

The horse wore a head collar, the rope of which was thrown over a beam in the barn. The gentleman/farmer holding the rope from the ground, thus forcing the horse's neck in a relatively straight line, the lady owner stood on a straw bale rubbing the horse's neck to (a) give some comfort and (b) assist the passage of the medicine down to the stomach. Yours truly used the 'gun' to force the ball past the tongue. Eventually the objective was achieved but not without hilarity as the lady in question was deposited on the barn floor, off the straw bale, when half a ton of equine shifted its quarters in her direction.

Perhaps I should also say that such medicines as Cupiss Balls – and there were hundreds available when horses were the main motive power – were used by men known as Horse Copers, a famous Ipswich one being George Oxford, who kept his sovereigns sewn into the collar of his shirts to prevent theft. He was a great friend of my grandfather, Frederick Grayston, who was often charged with shopping in local chemist's shops to buy the ingredients for the horse medicines which George mixed himself and then administered with a 'Long spoon'. Coping was a very secretive occupation and the ingredients were only ever purchased one at a time at one supplier so that the secret mixtures were kept that way.



Parking and ANPR horror from Graham Day

I was interested to read Dave Vincent's letter in a previous Newsletter [Issue 223] about the difficulties he has experienced in parking in Ipswich.

In the last twelve months or so I have experienced particular problems with ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras which have sprung up like a virulent contagious rash in recent times. Two particular occasions spring to mind. In February 2022 I visited a large supermarket at Copdock Mill Ipswich specifically to buy fuel for my car, as I was travelling a long distance down to metropolitan Essex. On that day I drove into the filling station at around 8am.

Subsequently, on the way home in the evening, at around 7pm, I called in at the same store to go inside to buy a product urgently needed. I thought I was doing nothing extraordinary. I was therefore surprised to receive in the post a few weeks later a penalty charge notice from the parking company, Horizon Parking (based in Chelmsford), showing pictures of my car entering in the site early in the morning, and leaving later in the evening.

I was being accused and fined for overstaying my time, when this was patently not the case. All the duty manager at the store would say was that I needed to take it up with the parking company; it was nothing to do with them. My contention is: 'Yes it is, as it is presumably on their land!'. I researched on the internet and found that this is happening all over the country, with this company being a principal culprit. Indeed, there was a case where a disabled driver had suffered the same fate, when it was patently quite clear that he would not have been able to stay that long in the supermarket.

I also noted that there is a recognised defect with ANPR cameras in that – you have probably guessed it – they have a proclivity to record the first entrance and skip any intermediate excursion to focus on the last exit. This was what happened to me: a deliberate distortion of the facts. Appealing to the car parking company is futile because, frankly, how many people are likely to keep their supermarket till receipts for a long period?

Ultimately, I paid up, as the consequences financially if it had not been resolved would have been greater. However, I resent such companies fleecing me. Then, not thinking, and being in the same situation in October 2022, I again called twice in one day at that same store. I thought that lightning could not strike twice... Oh yes it could! Within two weeks the penalty charge notice dropped through the letterbox on to the hall carpet.

As a consequence, I never go into the same supermarket twice in one day – if I need something urgently, I either look for it at an alternative shop, or buy it the next day. Why do we now have problems with ANPR cameras? Many years ago there was a serious problem across the UK with the illegal clamping of cars. The Government of the day 'solved' the problem, with much acclaim. Unbeknown to the rest of us, it gave unfettered access by the parking companies to the DVLC database of car ownership, which the parking companies had wanted for ages. One problem solved and another created. Car owners being treated as uncomplaining and compliant 'cash cows'. A sad part of this tale, is that staff working for the same supermarket have suffered the same fate. That is even more disgraceful.

A salutary warning to all, as nothing will probably ever change.



A Book Festival for Ipswich? from Linda Erith

I was very interested to read the article Ipswich's Future in the July issue [No. 224] and note the list of organisations that have a remit and possible funding to help plan the future of Ipswich.

Having enjoyed the Felixstowe Book Festival in June, I think the time is right for Ipswich to have its own festival. We have an independent book shop, which seems to be one of the essential requisites, and the monthly Book Group that Andrew Marsh hosts at Dial Lane Books usually has the author present so, in fact, is like a Book Festival session and is well-attended.

I am in the early stages of forming a working party to see if my idea is viable and would be interested to hear from anyone who would like to join the working party or offer advice, especially with regard to sources of funding.

Also, is a Book Festival something The Ipswich Society itself could support?

Ipswich Tourist Guides on the move

We are pleased to announce that Ipswich Tourist Guides Association (ITGA) is once again based in the town centre. The Guides have led Afternoon tea walks specifically for members of the Ipswich Institute for a few years now, and these were well received by its members.

As a result of this success, both organisations have agreed to broaden this affiliation. Public walks led by Ipswich Guides will now start from the Ipswich Institute in Tavern Street. Locals and tourists alike will, in future, be able to book ITGA walks directly through the Institute, either in person or via its website <https://ipswichinstitute.org.uk>. This is an exciting development for ITGA and we are grateful for the Institute's co-operation.

Ipswich Society members may wish to note that our programme of extremely popular Afternoon Tea Walks will commence in November and continue until the end of April 2024. Booking is essential.

Initial walk dates and titles:-

15 November – Ipswich Medics

22 November – Tales of the Secret Seven

6 December – Tudor Ipswich

10 January 2024 – Street Art

22 January – The Other Secret Diary of Gippeswyk aged 1500³/₄

Further details available on our website:

<http://ipswichtourguides.onesuffolk.net>



The volunteer team members behind this initiative love living, working and running businesses in Ipswich. Some of them grew up here, others are glad to have moved here. There is no hidden agenda. Ipswich.love wants to promote good things that they know happen in every corner of

Ipswich. Ipswich.love is not part of any profit-making organisation, political party or faith group. The first project is to ask people to write a 'love letter' to the town and to post on the website: www.ipswich.love

Social media: you can also find Ipswich.love on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

The Ipswich Society

Registered Charity no. 263322

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk | <https://www.facebook.com/ipswichsociety> | <https://www.instagram.com/theipswichsociety>

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Diary dates

Thursday 12 October, 7pm: at Isaacs on the Quay. Lisa Wall on Where did all the houses go? (page 20)

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

Wednesday October 18: John Field on 'Ipswich's Twelve Medieval Churches'.

Wednesday December 20: Bob Markham on 'The eleven Presidents of Ipswich Museum'.

Wednesday January 17: Mark Bailey on 'Global Pandemic: Suffolk towns in the age of the Black Death'. Mark Bailey is Professor of Later Medieval History, University of East Anglia.

Wednesday February 21: (to be confirmed).

Wednesday March 20: Isabel Clover on 'The Ipswich Charter Hangings'.

Wednesday November 22, 7.30pm: **Ipswich Society Annual Awards evening** (followed by wine and canapés) at The Hold, Fore Street.

Newsletter deadlines & publication dates (the latter may vary by a few days)

Deadline for material: 1 December;	Publication date: 22 January;
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1 March;	2 April;
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1 June;	17 July;
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1 September;	9 October.
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To celebrate 300 years of brewing in Ipswich, the Cobbold Family History Trust presented a 'Cut-leaf Beech tree' to the Arboretum in Christchurch Park in August 2023. Photograph: Anthony Cobbold.

