

JEAN INGELOW

1820 - 1897 2 Elm Street

A distinguished Victorian author highly regarded by Tennyson and Ruskin, Jean Ingelow was one of the best-selling authors of poetry, children's stories and novels from 1850 until her death. However, her fame critically declined in the 20th century, though she is still celebrated in the USA.

Born in Lincolnshire, Jean moved to Ipswich, aged fourteen, when her father became manager of a banking company. Living in Elm Street for ten years in the spacious first floor rooms over the bank she began her first experiments as a writer. After bank failure and the family's departure, the arch was created and Arcade Street was built on the site of the Ingelow's garden.

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

1727 - 88 32 Foundation St

Although born in Sudbury the great Suffolk artist spent formative years in Ipswich from 1752-1759.

He came to Ipswich after apprenticeship and a time in his birthplace because commissions for portraits were more easily obtained here.

The house he rented in Foundation Street was shamefully demolished in the early sixties, but thirty-two, where the plaque is mounted is very similar.

As well as painting he was a keen member of the Ipswich Music Club, playing several instruments.

Moving to Bath in 1759 the artistic opportunities were even more favourable, but it is appropriate that in Ipswich at Christchurch Mansion one of the best collections of his paintings outside London is housed.

V S PRITCHETT

1900 - 1997

41 St Nicholas Street

Simply calling V S Pritchett a "writer" is accurate because he excelled in so many genres of writing. Arguably amongst the finest of short story writers, he also published novels, travel books, literary criticism, reviews and an absorbing autobiography: *A Cab at the Door*. This includes an account of his parents, lodging at the address when Victor was born in December 1900. Pritchett was knighted in 1975 and was made Companion of Honour in 1993. He died in 1997. The plaque records him as "V S Pritchett", because that is how he signed himself as a writer and how he is known to all his readers.

JOHN HARBOTTLE

**d 1577 Jarman House,
2 - 4 Northgate Street**

The wealthy, influential wool merchant and landowner lived in an imposing Tudor mansion on this site. Chamberlain in the town in 1542 and later he was co-leader of the Suffolk contingent of Kett's rebellion.

According to historians it would appear that the Suffolk upheaval differed from the Norfolk rebellion mainly in that it attracted fewer yeomen tenants and artisans. Although the rebel leaders achieved little, their families were installed in the folklore of Suffolk: among them the Harbottles. They are remembered not for what they accomplished but for their audacity, bravery and according to Dairmaid McCulloch: "*adroitness in surviving the upheavals...*" at his death Harbottle was termed an esquire.

RICHARD DYKES ALEXANDER

**1788 - 1865 Alexander House,
St Matthews Street**

A Quaker, pacifist and banker, his grand house was built in the fields to the west of the town, parts of which are still discernible, holding his plaque. An amateur photographer, many of whose images are accessible at the Record Office he was involved in the committee of management of the Ipswich Museum in the 1850s. He was deeply concerned for the social and spiritual welfare of the working population of the town and was a devoted supporter of the abolition of slavery. In the 1850s he made neighbouring land available for housing, specifying that some streets be named after leading abolitionists.

NATHANIEL BACON

**1593 - 1660 Manor House,
St Margaret's Green**

Nathaniel Bacon was a member of the Bacon family which achieved great prominence under Elizabeth I.

A key figure in Ipswich political life in the mid-17th century, Bacon became its leading lawyer: the Recorder; MP and historian, being the compiler, 1654, of the *Annals of Ipswich*, *The Lawes Customes and Government of the Same*.

During the Civil War he was a supporter of the Puritan cause. This made him very important regionally and nationally during the war, although he was opposed to the execution of the King and the proclamation of the Commonwealth.

WILLIAM KING

1786 - 1865

19 Lower Brook Street

William King was born here where his father, The Rev John King, was Master of Ipswich (Grammar) School in this building. He became a physician, working in Brighton, but he is celebrated as a founder of co-operative democracy. He created a Co-operative Benefit Fund and a Co-operative Trading Association. He also founded and wrote the periodical *The Co-operator* (1828-1830), which helped to inspire the "Rochdale Pioneers" of the Co-operative Movement later in 1844. It is fitting that in Ipswich, where Co-operative retailing held its own remarkably well, we should acknowledge this pioneer of the social and philosophical principles of Co-operation.

LEONARD SQUIRRELL

1893 - 1979 82 Spring Road

A most distinguished and well-loved Suffolk artist Leonard Squirrell spent his childhood in Spring Road. After training at the Ipswich School of Art, he went on to the The Slade in London. An outstanding topographical artist he depicted the landscapes of Suffolk and East Anglia at its exquisite best, he also produced works abroad. A superb etcher and pastelist, but he is best known as a watercolourist: of railway carriage prints; glowing railway posters and outstanding watercolours for commercial companies including Rolls Royce. Equally at home with local companies he produced masterpieces for Ransomes, Sims & Jeffries and Fisons. All his work is much sought after.

JOHN GLYDE

1823 - 1905 9 Eagle Street

John Glyde lived at this address and is considered the foremost 19th century historian of Ipswich and Suffolk, the author of books which are still standard reference works on broad social and economic issues of the time. A radical thinker, he was involved in many organisations working for social and cultural improvements of Ipswich, including the founding of Free Library for the town. His bequest of books and manuscripts to the Ipswich Corporation in 1905 is now in the Record Office. During his working life he was a bookseller, an agent for domestic servants and a registrar of marriages.

LESLIE BAREFOOT GC

1887 - 1958 The Walk

H.J Leslie Barefoot GC was the architect of the pedestrian shopping streets in the centre of Ipswich known as Thoroughfare and The Walk, the latter of which is the site of his plaque.

Born in Dulwich he served with distinction in WW1. In 1920 he came to Ipswich with his family and designed laudable buildings throughout East Anglia, becoming president of the Suffolk Association of Architects. Rejoining the army in 1939 with the Royal Engineers he volunteered to form a new unexploded bombs unit. The 1941 citation for the George Cross states: *"for most conspicuous gallantry in carrying out hazardous work in a very brave manner."*

He was the first army officer to receive the award and is commemorated, with other GC recipients, by a plaque in Westminster Abbey.

ROBERT RANSOME

1753 - 1830 Old Foundry Rd

As far as manufacturing was concerned, for centuries the most famous global Ipswich name was probably Ransome.

Robert Ransome came to Ipswich in 1789 setting up an iron foundry near the quay and later at what is now Old Foundry Road, the name commemorating the site.

After his death the family moved the foundry in 1849 to the dockside eventually becoming Ransomes, Sims & Jefferies, making agricultural equipment. The company became renowned for its heavy engineering throughout the world as Ransomes and Rapier.

Robert was a member of a group of influential Quakers in Ipswich-very sympathetic towards his workers he was also instrumental in bringing gas lighting to Ipswich.

CHARLES DICKENS

1812 - 1870 The Great White Horse Hotel, Tavern Street

A frequent visitor to Suffolk, Dickens made references to the county in his works and stayed in the hotel, dubbed: *"more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing mane and tail"*.

In one episode in *The Pickwick Papers* our eponymous hero, takes rooms at the hostelry, mistakenly disrobing in the small hours within the room of *"a middle-aged lady, in yellow curl-papers"*. The ensuing consequences contribute greatly to the delight of the novel. Dickens opened the lecture hall for the Ipswich Institute Mechanics in 1851; he reported on our elections; toured the county giving recitals of his works - he even came for fishing on the River Gipping.

The Ipswich Society has installed a number of blue plaques in the town - our version of the English Heritage Blue Plaques seen elsewhere in Britain.

What started at the turn of the century continues to be an important and relevant tribute to some of the most distinguished people who were born in the town or subsequently lived here.

Our hope is that the plaques will make the streetscape and our history more interesting. Most of our plaques are in and around the town centre. We now have three which are a greater distance away from the centre. However, those focused on the town centre are where most passers-by might see them; they form a "trail" which could easily reveal to visitors some secrets or gems of the town.

There are further plaques around the town, erected by other organisations; these are also listed in this leaflet.

The Ipswich Society
IPSWICH'S
BLUE
PLAQUES

ARTHUR FREDERICK SAUNDERS VC JP

1878 - 1947

180 Cauldwell Hall Rd

Arthur Saunders lived here at the time he won his Victoria Cross, the first such decoration ever awarded to the Suffolk Regiment or a citizen of Ipswich.

Joining the Royal Navy aged just 15 in 1893 he was a Petty Officer for fifteen years. He married Edith Everetts in 1908 and they had three children. He worked for Ransomes, Sims & Jeffries.

At the outbreak of WW1 he joined the Suffolk Regiment being quickly promoted to Sergeant. Within a month of arrival in France he saw action at Loos where, despite a shattered leg "*for conspicuous bravery ... defending the remains of the Battalion and covering its retirement*" the Victoria Cross was awarded on 26th September 1915.

Arthur Saunders became an Honorary Freeman of the Borough and a Magistrate. During WW2 he re-enlisted and became RSM in the Home Guard.

SIR CHARLES SCOTT SHERRINGTON OM GBE PRS

1857 - 1952 Ipswich School, Henley Road

This eminent man of medicine had many associations with the town. In the 1860s the family moved to Anglesea Road and he was educated at Ipswich School from 1871-1876. Sherrington played football for his school, for Ipswich Town Football Club, and rugby while a student at St. Thomas' Hospital, London.

After study at Cambridge, work in Liverpool and Oxford, he is most renowned for his research into neurophysiology, for which he received the Nobel Prize in Medicine with Edgar Adrian in 1932. This was for their work on the functions of neurones.

Sherrington, in retirement made his home in the town where he continued to work on his poetic, historical, and philosophical interests. From 1944 he held the honorary office of President of the Ipswich Museum.

FELIX THORNLEY COBBOLD

1841 - 1909

**The Reg Driver Centre
Christchurch Park**

Born at Holy Wells and educated at Ipswich School, Felix was a great son of Ipswich. After Eton and Cambridge he became a lawyer, a brewer, a farmer, a banker, a JP and MP.

He gave the site and funds for public baths in Fore St; a clock and carillon to St. Clement's Church and his Mayor's fund provided great sums for the East Suffolk and Ipswich Hospital.

By 1906 he was MP, a seat which he held until his death. He bequeathed Gippeswick Park to the Borough; considerable sums for the purchase of works of art in the Mansion and much land to the county.

A most memorable generous act was, when Christchurch Mansion was threatened with development he bought it for the Borough: he later gave townsfolk parties there. He truly was "a munificent benefactor".

EDITH MAUD COOK

1878 - 1910

90 Fore Street

Edith Maud Cook, born here on 1st September was a balloonist, a parachutist and on the RAF Museum website is stated as the first woman pilot in the United Kingdom.

Making hundreds of balloon ascents she demonstrated the use of parachutes years before her solo flights in 1910: she did not obtain a pilot's licence.

In July 1910 as reported in The Times: "*Miss Viola Spencer (a pseudonym) in a parachute descent at Coventry on Saturday, alighted on a factory roof ... Spencer fell onto the roadway injuring herself severely.*" Edith died on 14th July as a result of her injuries.

In her book *Before Amelia* Eileen Lebow relates accounts of women pioneer aviators: Edith Maud Cook is praised there as an adventurer and a very courageous woman.

Thomas Wolsey

1475 - 1530 47 Nicholas Street

The most distinguished of all Ipswich people. Wolsey, Cardinal of the Church, Archbishop of York and for fourteen years Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor was, after the King himself, the most powerful man in the realm. The plaque is mounted on Curson Lodge close to the David Annand statue commemorating the great man unveiled in 2011. The building is of appropriate age to remind us that a similar structure: Wolsey's birthplace, stood on a site on the opposite side of the street.

The family of Geoffrey Chaucer

21 Tavern Street

Plaque is low on the right side wall in Tower St

The Malyn family of Ipswich and London, vintners, took the name of Chaucer, derived from the trade of leather working, with which they were also associated. The Chaucer/Malyns including Geoffrey Chaucer's grandfather, owned and occupied premises on this site in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Thomas Eldred

d 1622 97 Fore Street

Plaque on the side wall facing east

An Ipswich merchant and mariner, Eldred sailed with Thomas Cavendish on the second English circumnavigation of the globe 1586-88 - Drake's voyage 1577-80 having been the first. Eldred's house has been demolished but the houses standing across the street today remind us of the period and perhaps the style.

Admiral Benjamin Page

1765 - 1845 13 Tower Street

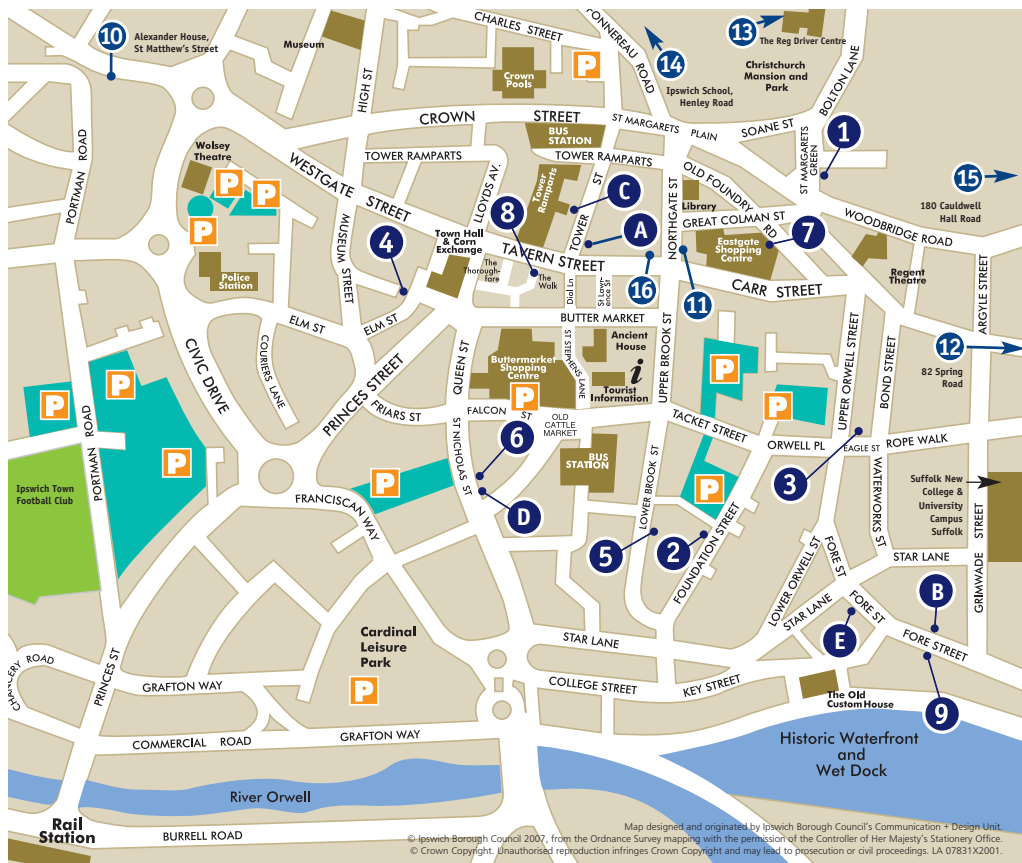
The plaque on this building commemorates the Ipswich-born admiral who lived here on his retirement after a distinguished naval career. He was made an honorary freeman of the borough in 1835. His portrait and paintings of six naval actions in which he took part, which he gave to the town, hang in the library room of the Town Hall.

Cor Visser

1903 - 1982 44 Fore Street

Born in Holland, the artist settled in Ipswich after WW2 during which he was the official war artist to the Dutch government in exile. He lived for some years on a boat in Ipswich dock, finding inspiration particularly in dockside scenes, before making his studio and home in Fore Street in 1962. Ipswich Museum collections contain some of his works.

OTHER PLAQUES...



location of plaques in Ipswich town centre

- 1 Nathaniel Bacon
- 2 Thomas Gainsborough
- 3 John Glyde
- 4 Jean Ingelow
- 5 William King
- 6 VS Pritchett
- 7 Robert Ransome

- 8 Leslie Barefoot GC
- 9 Edith Maud Cook
- 10 Richard Dykes Alexander
- 11 John Harbottle
- 12 Leonard Squirrel
- 13 Felix Thornley Cobbold

- 14 Sir Charles Scott Sherrington
- 15 Arthur Frederick Saunders VC JP
- 16 Charles Dickens

Other plaques

- A Chaucer's family
- B Thomas Eldred
- C Admiral Benjamin Page
- D Thomas Wolsey
- E Cor Visser



The Ipswich Society was founded in 1960 and is a community of people who care about the appearance, character and well-being of the town, its past and its future.

For further information please visit our website:

www.ipswichsociety.org.uk