

## Interview of a star

Robert Coppin has a candid interview with Sheila covering her 40 years at the Club

**To celebrate 40 years of service to the Club we decided to have a party for Sheila.**

The result of this made me think of all the memories that Sheila must have and now that the excitement of the party has calmed, I decided to interview Sheila for this newsletter and answer some poignant questions and chat over old times.

Sheila immediately said no, but after some persuasion we settled down and here we go. By the way, Sheila is the only tea-total bar person I have ever known.

**When you started work at the Club who made the biggest first impression?**

Oh that's easy, it was Dr Hughes who I had my interview with. I had come with a friend who worked here for a part time sort of fill-in position as she had family problems.

I had to leave the interview early as I was late for my girls carol service and anyway thought I would not get the job as I only wear trousers and this was not allowed at the Club. I got up and Dr Hughes came running after me and said come back and you can have a full time job trousers or not. As Dr Hughes ruled the Club there was no problem.

**Who over the years has been the naughtiest and for what? On that subject how did you deal with "hands on" members in the past?**

The naughtiest was a member who passed away and just after this I was then told he was besotted with me. You have to remember I was in my 30s and naive country girl. I did wonder why he was always the last to leave and "going in for the kiss"

rather than the cheek kiss. A quick backhander in those days was the norm. The worst was a member at our 1985 Centenary Dinner at which I was forced to wear a skirt (and for the last time), who while his Wife was on the same table placed his hand up my skirt.

I could do nothing on the night but made sure he did not get another chance.

**How do you feel about women in the Club and what can you remember when the decision was made to allow women into the Club?**

The Club was a far cry from today. Ladies were only allowed into the Club on a Saturday morning and even then they had dagger eyes on them from the Men. You could feel the tension. After a huge Annual Members Dinner in 2000 when the subject of Lady Shareholders was debated Ladies were allowed in, thank goodness. Ladies have brought about a massive change to the social element of the Club.

**Out of all the changes to the Club over the years which has been the best for the Club and why it's still strong?**

I think the relaxation of the Club dress code some years ago along with Lady Members and an active Social Calendar has ensured the Club's survival.

**Are you going to stop the rumours that you are retiring as it was a nightmare trying to tell members while we were organising your party that it was NOT a retirement party?**

I have no intention of retiring. You (Robert) and I have an agreement that we will both decide when I'm too old.



**I have heard that some "hanky-panky" used to go on at the Club some years ago. Would you like to elaborate a little?**

I cannot say a great deal on this. But times back then over 30 years ago were very different to now and many relationships were formed in the background. Suffice to say thank goodness the Adam Room walls cannot talk.

One night we were looking for a person who suddenly came out of the Adam Room looking like she had been pulled through a hedge backwards by the state of her hair.

**We have seen many members pass on with super memories. Who sticks in your mind and for any particular reasons?**

So many Ipswich greats have been Club members. Dr Hughes, Alan Mattherson, Mike Mulley, John Chapel, and Jack Bernard to name a few. As we have both said in the past it hurts when we lose a member.

**Robert Coppin**  
*Club General Manager*

## From the General Manager's office



**The past six months has been a testing time as I have been busy with refurbishing 11 Northgate Street for new tenants which is not an easy task when having to work with local planning, conservation officers and contractors.**

Then drafting new leases for three new individual tenancies. This is while I have been working on bookings and functions etc.

I am delighted the new automatic gates are working well on Northgate Street, and as Northgate is working so well I insisted the contractors for Tower Street gates return, rip out their problematic system and copy the Northgate system free of charge. All done and now working well.

In conjunction with the automatic gates I have upgraded our CCTV system and can now view the Club on-line while remotely operating the gates.

I will work on the CCTV system further by adding more security cameras as

the recordings come in very handy when an incident is reported.

I am now starting work on internal decorating with the Ladies and Gents toilets done in February while we assess a radical change to the Pine Room before we decorate. This area is currently undergoing a feasibility study as to the direction we need to go. The old days when mostly Men would pop in for lunch while working in a Town Centre office are gone and I feel increasing pressure from lunchtime events for the dining room.

External decorating to our Northgate side of the building will start soon which needs to be done very carefully as to not disrupt any Weddings we have booked.

We had a strong start to this financial year and hope we can meet our catering budget, unlike last year.

Members who do read the accounts do however need to understand that catering, bar, room hire, car park are all dependant on each other and should not be read in isolation. As such the Club has a healthy balance sheet.

I cannot write this report without making comment on Sheila's 40th year party. Dick Berresford and Basil Tenwick who co hosted the event were absolutely brilliant while so many of you came and so many more could not get in. IT WAS A REAL PARTY FOR A REAL STAR!

**Robert Coppin**  
Club General Manager

## From the Wine Committee

**In September we held our New Annual Wine Committee Challenge Trophy Tasting.**

The challenge was for Wine Committee members Stephen Britt and Melvyn Eke to choose two wines to complement each course for the diners to sample with their food. The guests then voted which wine wins for each course. Melvyn Eke the winner won and had his name engraved on the newly commissioned annual trophy.



Winner Melvyn Eke (left) accepting trophy from Wine Chairman Bruce Murrill (centre) with loser Stephen Britt (right).

**Bruce Murrill**  
Wine Chairperson

## A note from the President

**On the social scene in the last six months the most sought after booking was for Sheila's "40 years with the Club". More than 140 members turned out on a Friday evening to say thank you to her.**

It was a really fantastic atmosphere and even though I am sure she must have suspected something was afoot she carried off the surprise with great aplomb. We owe a huge debt to our staff and just to single out two, Denis will have been with us 22 years this summer and Linda has clocked up 16 years!!

They must like us as much as we like them, such continuity is so very reassuring for Members. As ever there was a big turn out for the Annual Dinner. It is most gratifying to see that Members still enjoy dressing up for special occasions. Do please continue to uphold the standards.

It is now a foregone conclusion that speakers lunches are going to be sell outs. This is due to not only the quality of the speakers but also to the

great meals produced. A big thank you to Robert, Denis and Richard. We must not forget Jayne and her team too. Jayne is now quite a whiz with the projector too! Even I could not get in to the "Margaret Catchpole" lunch.

One lunch that was out of the ordinary was the one on "Drones". We all ended up on the car park posing for an Ariel team photo. "Historic Lettering in Ipswich" also caught the imagination with the great photographs of well known buildings with little known signs. We now go round Ipswich "looking up" to spot more. Coastlines, Carder Bees and Conservation taught us much about insect diversity in East Anglia. Dr Tim Gardiner held the audience with explanations and illustrations on habitats.

Probably the best, most fluent, most enthusiastic and well presented talk was by Wayne Burns who manages the Leiston Film Theatre. Built in 1914 and still very much part of the Suffolk scene. He traced its history to date



with great illustrations. Such enthusiasm met with a wonderful response from those lucky enough to hear him.

As I seem to say in every report I write, my role is so easy due to Robert's organising skills. With help and recommendations from Members we have an endless stream of good speakers - long may this continue.

**Pauline Young**  
President

## Financial Report for the year

**It is my pleasure to have been able to report to the AGM a reasonable financial performance for the year to 30 September 2018.**

We must again thank Robert and his team for all of their hard work, even more so this year if you scratch below the surface of the overall result.

We have for the first time this year combined the bar and catering result in the accounts, as the allocation of wage cost was becoming more arbitrary. However, on a comparable basis catering lost approximately £18,000 compared to just under £3,000 in 2017.

We commented last year how difficult the catering trade had become to manage, our turnover was lower and increased supplier price pressure resulted in reduced gross margin of £8,000. In addition, we had a 7% i.e. £7,000 increase in wage costs. A total increased loss in catering of £15,000. I am sure you will be aware of the challenges across the restaurant and catering trade and there have been many publicised closures. In particular, as noted last year, living wage, pension commitments and holiday pay are particularly costly not just for us but our suppliers as well. We have, on top of these costs, an issue peculiar to our operation in that

we cater for members at lunchtime when we cannot plan for numbers and have a fixed staff cost.

However, that said, we have taken very active steps to increase lunchtime activity, including organised lunches, and to work more flexibly with staff to deliver our usual standards of service over differing hours. This has resulted in an improvement in our current trading and we are hopefully now running nearer to break even in our catering function.

We continue to maintain strong reserves in the Club, which we hope will be enough to sustain our Club and in particular our fantastic building. Net current assets have increased to £190,000 within the acceptable margin set. The total cash balance at the end of September of £390,000, is a good indicator of the peak balance which we hold following the annual subscription income receipt in advance of the 1st October subscription renewal.

The low point of our cash occurs in August and this is effectively our buffer against surprise costs.

Another strong year for Robert and his team and the Club still is in good financial health for your continued enjoyment.

**Keith Ferguson**  
*Finance Director*

## Scrabble

**We have a lovely nucleus of Scrabble members in the Ipswich and Suffolk Club and my thanks go to them for continuing to support it.**

It would be nice, though, to see a few new faces. We meet nine times a year - the months of January, July and August we take a break.

Incredibly that leaves 356 other days to do other things!

Our evening starts with a meal and is then followed by three games of scrabble and you don't have to be a champion to play. We welcome all abilities and a great social evening beckons!

If you are interested please give me a ring for further information.

**Sarah Swallow**  
*Captain of Scrabble*

## Bridge matters

**Playing duplicate bridge in the Adam Room every Tuesday from 9.30am to 12.45pm, with a welcome coffee/tea break in the bar 'at half-time', is an opportunity to exercise our grey cells and enjoy some excellent company.**

After our session on 11th December thirty two of us enjoyed a superb Christmas lunch at the Club, kindly organised by Val Hindes and Dottie Kennerley.

Steph Mallett, who usually directs the sessions, and I were very kindly presented with John Lewis gift vouchers and poinsettias as a token of appreciation from the members.



*Bridge Club members enjoyed a superb Christmas lunch at the Club*

It is a pleasure to be involved with such a friendly and appreciative group.

**Maurice Barnes**  
*Bridge Captain*

## Snooker & Billiards news

**The 2018/19 Snooker & Billiards Competitions are in full swing and as usual I am grateful to Tony Harmer for their organisation. To ensure that as few problems are encountered as possible, please make sure that matches are played before the deadline date. Tony will be very grateful!**



*David Lawrence and Robin Watson, winners of the Taylor Tankards Finals night.*

The first internal competition of the season, The Bill Allin Cup, has been completed and congratulations to the victors George Ridgway and Russell Leeburn.

The Taylor Tankards Finals night has been held and the winners were David Lawrence and Robin Watson. Congratulations to them and thanks to Tony Harmer, Andy Johnson and Mike Devitt who undertook the refereeing duties on the night.

Following the break for Christmas the spring season of Thursday night club matches has now started. The Fixture List is on the snooker notice board outside the bar from which it is evident that we have a fairly full season ahead of us.

In addition we are in the process of trialling a monthly competition in the daytime which is proving to be very enjoyable and well supported.

All these matches are played on a friendly basis and from my experience they are very enjoyable.

We do like to include as many club members in these matches so please let me know should you wish to play.

Ability levels are definitely not the criteria for selection rather the ability to have a very social and entertaining evening!

Club night is held on Tuesday evenings and all members are welcome – we play from 5.15 pm to around 9.00 pm.

If you are interested please just turn up or give me a ring if further information is needed.

**Allan Williams**  
*Captain of Snooker*

## Golf news

**Our annual golf day at Purdis last September was the second time we competed for the Andy Booth Memorial Trophy in memory of a great golfer and friend.**

The winner was Allan Williams, second Richard Parry and third Des Cunningham, the best front nine winner was Bernard Clarke best back nine David Tuckwell, and the two nearest the pins winners were George McLellan and Barrie Henderson.

The Northgate Trophy our annual knockout golf competition was won by Robbie Adams and the runner up was David Lawrence, a big thanks to all who took part.



Allan Gosling with winner Robbie Adams.

In October a team of eight had a match against The Cronies (a Purdis based group of golfers). After the match we all had an excellent meal at the Ipswich & Suffolk Club. This is the first of what we hope will be many future matches.

We are now in contact with The Colchester Garrison Golf Club to arrange this year's match, a team will be needed for this fixture.

**Allan Gosling**

*Captain of Golf*

## Book Clubs

**The Club's two book clubs, meeting on the first and third Wednesday mornings each month, continue to thrive and to be very well attended.**

We enjoy a variety of novels and choose from a selection suggested by our avid readers. Our choices are on the Club noticeboard and we welcome any new members to come along and join in our friendly but frank discussions.

We all enjoyed a post-Christmas get together in January, followed by a celebratory lunch and are greatly looking forward to welcoming author Emma Healey to our April meeting to talk about her books, 'Elizabeth is Missing' and 'Whistle in the Dark', and telling us about her life as a writer.

## Mahjong Group

**Having played for many years with our good friends Peter and Julie, John and I started a Mahjong group at the Club last September, meeting twice a month on Monday mornings.**

We have a very regular group of players and others who have come along more recently but we are always looking for more of you to learn this fascinating game with us. Don't worry if you have never tried it before, come along and we will teach you! If you have a Mahjong set please bring it as well.

We all enjoyed a 'Christmas Mahjong Special' morning at which the winner was awarded a mah-jong-themed prize, well done Susan!

This month we had a Chinese New Year event and some of us dressed in the Chinese style making it even more authentic, lovely dress Amy! We celebrated the Year of the Pig with lunch in the Club dining room afterwards.

**Mo Plunkett**

## The Chess Club

**We are a small group of people who meet at the club once a month to play chess.**

We enjoy these evenings and would like to share this enjoyment with some more members.

If you have played chess some time ago or want to learn or just want to see if chess is for you then do come to a chess evening. You would be made very welcome.

**Liz Molander**

## Ladies Lunch



Andrea Davies, Selig (Suffolk) Trust (the charity behind the Ipswich Winter Night Shelter and Ipswich Hope into Action) donation of £400 to Hope into Action project by Club members and guests who meet regularly for lunch at the Club.

## Trafalgar Club Dinner

**On the 19th October we held our Trafalgar Club Dinner with guest speaker Lt Cdr (ret'd) Nigel M Griffiths QGM.**

This was a flagship event with a classic British menu flogged out of our French Chef to celebrate our historic battle against the Franco-Spanish fleet 1805.



Club member David Layte MBE (left) who invited Lt Cdr Nigel Griffiths QGM to speak at our dinner.

## New members

**The Ipswich & Suffolk Club warmly welcome the following new members:-**

Janet Maidment  
Abigail Elsom  
Nick & Natasha Hampton  
Amy Svendsen  
Andrew Dicksbury  
Julia Heathcote  
Geoffrey & Anne Swain  
Paul & Louise Moss-Peiron  
Janet Elmy  
Charles & Helen Brookson  
Michelle & Gerry Morrow  
David Wilkins  
Michael & Sylvia Mays  
Peter Aldis  
David Llewellyn  
Steven & Maria Johnson  
Stephen & Belinda Runnacles  
Christopher Chenery  
Terry & Tracy Baxter