

# IPSWICH SCENES

## Christchurch Park



PICTURES: DERRICK BANYARD

One of the seven Ipswich public parks, the undulating Christchurch Park was purchased by the town, opening to the public in 1895. It was formerly the grounds of the Elizabethan Christchurch Mansion. With a round pond and a wilderness pond, flower beds and trees, the park is a delight to many. Christchurch Mansion was one of the earliest country-house museums in the country, and displays domestic life as lived in times past. Among the exhibits is a ducking stool, for the treatment of 'scolds', or fault-finding, nagging women—a kind of person not unknown in Biblical times (Prov. 21:9,19). One history of 1830 refers to records of "money paid to the porters for taking down the 'Ducking Stole' and assisting in the operation of cooling by its means the inflammable passions of the female inhabitants of Ipswich". Another item is the corner-post of a public house in Lower Brook Street, carved to depict the fable of the Fox and Geese; the fox wears a priest's robes and preaches to a congregation of credulous geese—a variation of Paul's comments about sheep and wolves (Acts 20:29).

Christchurch Park has other reminders of history. Standing on top of his plinth, the lonely soldier with bowed head is a memorial of the South African War, 1899-1902. A large memorial commemorates World Wars I and 2 and records lives lost. Another memorial reminds us of nine Protestant martyrs burned in the sixteenth century. The beauty of this splendid park is therefore tinged with sadness for the contemplative. Those who seek comfort in the Bible can be confident that the day will come when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4), and there will be an end to religious strife, when God "turn(s) to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9).—*Derrick Banyard*