

Newsletter January 2012

Newsletter No. 22

IMT into 2012

A very happy New Year to all our members - 2012 is well and truly with us now and the Ipswich Maritime Trust is looking forward to another eventful year.

Our membership is now over 250 and we are regularly getting between 80 and 100 people at our talks, which is a fantastic turnout. At the last count we have had 45 talks of diverse maritime related topics - from wildlife, through naval battles, Thames barges, fishing, smuggling and much much more. A full list of the talks will be on the website in the near future.

Apart from the talks the two other main activities are the Window Museum Display together with the acquisition of maritime-related artefacts, and the IMT Image Archive. The June 2011 newsletter mentioned the growing importance of the Image Archive and the links the Trust now has with University College Suffolk. Since then the archive has grown considerably and we are actively looking at how the Image Archive can be managed for the future in order that it is available for researchers and the general public.

Stuart Grimwade, to whom we are indebted for all the time and expertise he has put into the acquisition of thousands of images and their restoration, has written the following article to update us on the Image Archive.

Ipswich Maritime Trust Image Archive

Last year, in the June Newsletter, I briefly introduced Leonard Woolf's collection of historic postcard images of our river and dock, and described how many hundreds of his

images had by then been successfully digitally restored in our Image Archive.

Since then, our Archive has just kept on growing and growing, leaving me with the increasingly heavy, but nevertheless enjoyable task of restoring each new image as it was offered to us, so that they can be shown to best effect. So much new material has poured in since then that the work on Leonard's collection has had to be temporarily put to one side, as there are only so many days when I want to be slaving over a hot computer!

Both UCS and the Borough Council have become interested in using our Archive in various novel electronic ways, the latest being in the form of QR tags allowing Waterfront visitors to bring up on their mobile phone screens Victorian images of the view in front of them as they walk along. For this, I have also written an illustrated historic 'Tour of the Dock' which will, I hope, shortly appear on our website and complement the 'Occasional Paper on Quays and Wharves'.



Ransomes Quay c.1890

Meanwhile new discoveries continue to be made, the most recent of which have come from an old school friend, Nick Wiggin, in the form of original images made by his great (x3!) grandfather John Wiggin around 1850, and his successors (one of whom took this Victorian scene of Ransomes Quay). These are truly unique, so much so that they have excited the interest of the Fox-Talbot Society in what may

well be the earliest known surviving examples of wet paper negatives – a very fragile format from the earliest photographic processes. From these Dave Kindred, the now retired Ipswich professional press photographer, has recently taken direct scans which Nick has kindly agreed to donate to us. Nick's relative, John, had his chemist's shop near to the Alexander family home on Barrack Corner (the building is now used as a student hostel), who were to found what is now Barclays Bank. Dykes Alexander was himself some time later an enthusiastic photographer of the Wet Dock scene, and Dave Kindred amusingly suggests that this might perhaps explain the young Wiggins' ability to experiment with expensive new chemical ideas where money was no object! In any event, his images are of exceptional quality, even better than those exposed by his contemporary Robert Burrows whose images we have up to now thought were the only known of the dock to survive from those times.

And so we now have some priceless new and exceedingly rare images, thanks to Nick Wiggins' generosity, together with many collections from others too numerous to mention here, although I must single out Dave Kindred for his generosity in always sharing with me any new images he comes across in his own researches.

A very recent revelation has been a large box of negative and colour print files shown to me by Bob Malster containing literally thousands of images of each and every barge trading through the Dock during the 1960s, including many of the dockside buildings still operational in those days. All this material has actually been donated to the Ipswich Transport Museum, but, thanks to the generosity of Brian Dyes, I am hoping we shall be able to access their scans of these negatives once they have completed that (mammoth!) task.

The problem for me (and Richard Watkinson, who has the responsibility of accessioning our overall archive), but a pleasurable one, is to decide what next to do with our huge Image Archive to try to make it more 'user friendly'. We can now show 19th and early 20th century

images of every corner of the dock, but accurately dating and titling each one is a challenge, since many display nothing to help us, other than the dockside buildings of the day, all of which seemed to change with amazing frequency (there's hope for the demise of the 'wine rack' yet!). But the fact is that we must surely now have one of the oldest and most comprehensive collections of maritime images of a single place ever assembled! Quite a thought!

Although it has unfortunately become slightly degraded, below is one of the most interesting of John Wiggins' images from the 1850s. I have so far not been able to locate it, but it may be part of the medieval shipyards then still on the site of what was later to become Coprolite St, or alternatively perhaps it was part of the old shipyard at the Stoke Bridge end of what had only just become part of the island site with the construction of the Wet Dock. Certainly there is shipyard debris in the foreground, and the name 'Forster – dealer in marine stores - Sail lofts' on the wall. Or perhaps someone can identify the washing! Any thoughts, anyone?

Stuart Grimwade



Where was this.....?

Museum News



The latest Window Museum display on Albion Quay celebrates the trade that made Ipswich such an important port over the last 200 years. Inspired by the recently published book *'The Port of Ipswich - its Shipping & Trades'* by R W Smith & J Freestone, the display recalls many of the famous old dockside companies such as Cranfields, R & W Paul, and Isaac Lord. Samples of their grain, animal feed, and other raw materials are set out in miniature sacks, along with many nostalgic items kindly loaned by those companies' representatives still living locally.

Dominating one end of the window is a huge sack chute last used 60 years ago to load the small Sailing Barge *'Cygnet'* with wheat from the Shotley peninsular, manned by a life-sized model of a dock worker. A beautifully made model of a corner of Isaac Lord's historic yard by a Suffolk College student around 40 years ago, together with an original delivery cart name board remind us that Isaac Lord was not always a place for eating and drinking, but had been malting grain and coal merchant in medieval premises.

Samples of timber bought at the current time shows that the dock is still trading, something that the Trust celebrates with some recently taken photographs of the Anglo-Norden ship *'Suntis'*, while old photographs from the Trust's Image Archive show dock scenes from past centuries.

A large and fascinating map of 1884 illustrates the historic Wet Dock quay names that the Trust is seeking to have brought back in

common use (rather than the irrelevant names imposed by modern developers)

The success of the Window Museum is dependent on those who loaned and donated such interesting artefacts. The Trust is always looking for more items so we can continue to celebrate Ipswich's rich maritime heritage.

Please contact Des Pawson on 01473 690090 or at des@despawson.com with any ideas or offers of loans.

Des Pawson

Other News

East Anglian Film Archive

Although the East Anglian Film Archive no longer bring their films to be shown at the Corn Exchange, you can still view some amazing footage as they are now offering a large number of films free to view on-line.

<http://www.eafa.org.uk/search.aspx>

Everything East Anglian is covered –

- search for Companies and see E. R & F Turner, Ransomes, Rapiers
- search for Barges and get the Venture and more, and there is even ropemaking at Hadleigh in 1946

and that is only a small selection.

Many of the films have snippets of interest - enjoy an exploration!

'HMS Royal George'

The extremely large model of 'HMS Royal George' (a 100-gun first-rate ship of the line) is back on display in The Ipswich Museum in the High Street. This huge model is impressive and well worth making the effort to see.

Future Events

Spring 2012 talks

Once again we have an interesting and varied programme of talks booked for the Spring series -

Wednesday 1st February, 8pm – **‘Colonel Tomline and the Development of Felixstowe’** by Phil Hadwen, Felixstowe Historian.

Wednesday 7th March, 8pm - **‘On the Beach – the work of Coastguard Rescue Officers’** by Peter Creasey and Sara Hopkinson, Coastguard Officers.

Wednesday 4th April, 8pm – the **IMT AGM** followed by the second of the **‘IMT DIY nights’** at approximately 8.30pm.

Further details on all the talks and supper booking slips can be found at the end of the newsletter.

Past Events

Autumn 2011 talks

Wednesday October 5th – **“71 Years of a Coasting Ship”** by **Captain G Hartgrove**



Many years ago when our Chairman, Capt. Geoff Hartgrove, took command of the MV “Mepple”, little did he imagine that he would

be presenting us with the incredible story of his command and the history of this vessel.

“Mepple” was built in Holland before WWII and plied her trade under the Dutch flag. When Germany overran Holland, she was sailed to England by her then captain and transferred into the British Navy. Geoff vowed to dig into this story and came up with a most incredible story.

He traced the original captain’s family and, through them and other sources the story of her wartime exploits – and far more!

“Mepple” was detailed to take part in the evacuation of Dunkirk, making innumerable trips across the Channel, continually under fire from land, air and sea. She and her crew succeeded in rescuing over 3,000 men from the beaches. An incredible feat of bravery which was rewarded by 3 medals. The remainder of her war was spent around our coasts as a supply and barrage balloon ship.

She resumed trading under the captaincy of the original skipper’s son after the war until Capt. Geoff took command when, soon afterwards, she was sold and Geoff was detailed to deliver her to the Caribbean. This proved not to be the gentle cruise one might imagine! Being January, several gales were encountered including one off Brest where they were forced to anchor in considerable peril.

Having finally and safely reached her destination, the island of Anguilla, Geoff left her – and lost touch - while “Mepple” pursued her inter-island trading until, at the end of her working life, she was sunk off-shore to provide a diving point and fish haven, but a hurricane carried away her marker buoy and her location was lost. Geoff’s research at that time revealed her supposed position, but even after a painstaking search involving a Royal Navy aircraft carrier (which happened to be on hand!), nothing was found. Finally, and very recently however, a local islander did manage to find her, and a dedicated website was created by those who had dived down to photograph her. So Geoff was able to take us on an amazing underwater tour of his old ship down in the depths of the deep blue sea. An extraordinary end to a brave and historic ship.

IMT's "Photograph Archivist", Stuart Grimwade, did a superb job in enhancing the many historic pictures which Geoff had assembled.

A most entertaining and intriguing evening, well told and a tribute to Geoff's tenacity and "detective qualities"!

Mark Grimwade

Wednesday 2nd November "Alternative Energy" by Professor John Midwinter



Another "Full House" for *Climate change - what we should and could do about it?* presented by Professor John Midwinter.

John's presentation was, effectively, in three parts: What means are available to combat Climate Change followed by what we, as individuals, should and could do about it and then what should and could the "powers that be" do?

The world's climate IS changing . . . slowly at present but with increasing speed. It is also running out of fossil fuels at an alarming and increasing rate. For the past several years, demand for oil has outstripped discovery of new sources. John detailed the various sources of alternative energy and presented some very surprising figures showing that some of the most favoured – and practiced – means (eg. biofuels and solar panels) are the least efficient (in terms of units of sunlight to produce units of energy) as opposed to using wind, tides and heat pumps including geothermal sources.

However, by far the most effective means of fuel conservation, as opposed to generation, is insulation! Living in an old and therefore far from well insulated house, John has practiced what he preaches on the "could and should do" front and saved 75% of his heat losses so reducing his fuel usage by the same percentage!

One of the problems is that we still can't store energy efficiently. We need to distribute electricity as we generate it. During the colder months in Europe, northern countries have wind – for turbines – whilst in summer, our more southerly neighbours have sun, for photovoltaic and parabolic mirror power generation. John described a scheme to establish a Europe-wide north/south power supply grid which is already developing and can balance supply and demand.

At the end, the questions flowed thick and fast – which is a sure sign of a successful talk.

Our "warmest" thanks to John for a fascinating evening which has undoubtedly given all those present a great deal to think about and hopefully, to do!

Philip Leech

7th December 2011, 8pm – "The work of Greenwich Observatory" – by Jonathon Betts, Senior Specialist, Horology

A Brief History of Time

It isn't always right to put a value on speakers in the winter programme of talks, but Jonathan Betts gave a stunning presentation bejewelled by the objects he brought from the Royal Observatory and his own collection to explain the long history of position finding through **longitude**. Many IMT members are familiar with Dava Sobel's book of that name. Jonathan demonstrated a clear pathway taking in the historic relationship between celestial observation and recording time through to the present. Now we know that measuring time through rotation of the



earth just isn't good enough, so in the future we will have ion clocks accurate to one second in the whole of eternity – or at least until the end of this universe.

The driving force behind the development of accurate timepieces was saving lives at sea. On land it didn't matter too much whether we lost the odd fifteen minutes a day – or at least until the unifying force of rail development (since when we've lost hours not minutes on National Express East Anglia). But through driving weights and pendulums to watch springs and balance movements, accuracy improved slowly, until over 20 years the great Harrison produced a series of increasingly large and complex chronometers finishing with a fourth, an elegant small watch that was better than any of them. Following much debate in Parliament and elsewhere and intervention by the King, that watch eventually won him the financially monumental prize that had been offered by the Government many years earlier. But for Harrison, the money mattered less than the recognition he finally achieved.

So many things to remember – from the reasons we have a 24 hour clock (from 12 Egyptian gods), to the wonderful engineering of Ransomes that produced two of the most iconic telescopes worldwide. Ipswich has its place in history!

Jonathan shared with us some of the moments he has rubbed shoulders with celebrity, with stories from meeting Neil Armstrong (“I don't do autographs”) to Prince Philip (“I can't see a bloody thing”) before he rushed off into the future via excited Caesium and the single ion. He showed us how we are dependent every day on the absolute accuracy of time keeping that we all take for granted, from our mobile phones to our chart plotters.

The fashion for wearing time pieces as “bling” may have come full circle in three centuries, but at the Royal Harwich on 7 December it was the true value of accurately measuring time that shone through.

Philip Leech

Talk evening raffles

A big 'Thank you' to Maureen Fox for not only donating two very nice prizes for the raffles, but also for cajoling members and visitors to part with their money in aid of a good cause.

Geoff Hartgrove

24th July 2011

2nd Joint Sea Cadet and Sea Scout - Water Sports Event - Wet Dock

The Open Weekend in Suffolk saw a very successful water Sports Event organised jointly by the 13th Ipswich Sea Scouts and the Ipswich Sea Cadets for the second year running. The event involved taster sessions of sailing, rowing, canoeing and motor boating.

Three Dutch training ships, ("Sittard", "Freyr", and "Bulgia") were moored in the Wet Dock over the weekend and up to 120 Dutch personnel joined in the event

The IMT hosted a welcoming reception in the evening at the conference centre of the Old Custom House for the Dutch contingent together with the Sea Cadets, Sea Scouts and IMT members. It is hoped to arrange further visits by the Dutch vessels to Ipswich in the future.

**18th August and
1st September**

Barge Trips on s/b Centaur



The two barge trips on the s/b Centaur were fully booked and, despite the weather on the 18th August, were good days on the river and enjoyed by all. It is hoped to be able to offer more barge trips this year.

Thanks are due to Bob Pawsey for organising the trips, and Ben Bendall for the excellent catering on both days.

10th - 11th September

Heritage Weekend

The Trust once again manned, on behalf of ABP, the quay-level floor of the Old Custom House for visitors during Heritage Weekend 2011. On display were a collection of paintings from the celebrated local artist Roger Finch, and items related to the shipbuilding skills of spa-making and caulking.



Many thanks to Ben Bendall for organising the exhibition, ably assisted by many IMT volunteers who helped arrange the displays and 'man' the premises over the weekend.

Without IMT volunteers the Old Custom House would not be open to the public at the Heritage Weekend (over 800 visited this year), and so we are very grateful to those who give their time for this annual event.

Appeal No 1! Models

Ship/yacht models.

If anyone has a model of a ship or yacht of a type that would have been seen on the River Orwell, and would consider loaning it at some time in the future for display in the Window Museum, please please get in touch with Des Pawson on 01473 690090.

We are looking for both traditional and contemporary models for a possible future exhibition.

Appeal No 2! Volunteers

Newsletter Editor

Is there anyone amongst our talented members who would like to volunteer to take on the editing of the IMT Newsletter?

The Newsletter is sent out usually 2 or 3 times a year, and the majority of the material is provided by other members. This is not an onerous task, but what we are missing though is someone, perhaps with a creative flair, to bring it all together ready to be sent out to our members.

If you would like to know more or volunteer, please get in touch – fraser@infocomm.co.uk

Appeal No 3! Speakers

IMT-DIY nights

If any member is willing to talk on a subject of their choice (even if only remotely maritime) for no more than 15-20 minutes at this or any of our coming DIY nights, please contact Mark Grimwade on 01473 787210 or markgrimwade@yahoo.co.uk

Membership News

The membership has steadily increased this year and we reached the 250 member mark in December. Thank you all for continuing to support the Ipswich Maritime Trust.

Annual Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions are now due and a renewal form has been enclosed (or attached to the email) for all members who do not pay by Standing Order.

Thank you to all of you who do already pay by Standing Order – this does considerably reduce the cost of sending out reminders and a significant administrative overhead.

With a Standing Order you specify how much and when the payment is made, unlike the Direct Debit system. If you are able to change to a Standing Order payment that is greatly appreciated.

New members

A warm welcome to the new members who have joined since June last year (with apologies for missing off names of some of the joint memberships where it has not been supplied) -

John & Linda Davey, Michael Williamson, Pete Bowen, Steven Lock, David Melton, Ralph Cryer, Alan Fisher, Reg Joy, Bob Malster, Philip & Annie Leech, Robert Hartley, David & Diana Pegram, Lesley & Peter McDonald

e-mails!

If you have received this newsletter through the post and would prefer to receive by email, please let me know by emailing membership@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk

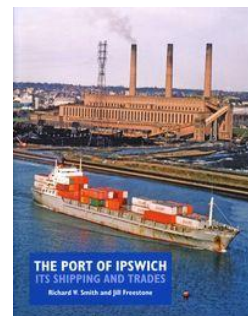
Sending out newsletters etc. by post accounts for approximately 60% of the annual subscription fee (which has remained at the current level since 2005!) Please help us control our costs and maintain the subscription level.

Fraser Yates

Publications

The Port of Ipswich its shipping and trades - new book published

The Port of Ipswich - Its Shipping and Trades, Richard W Smith and Jill Freestone, Malthouse Press, Suffolk. Large-format paperback, 280 x 210 mm, 384 pages inc. approx 400 photographs. ISBN 978-0-9539680-4-6, £30.



This book was published in Summer 2011 with the help of donations of £2000 from the Ipswich Maritime Trust, £2000 from the Over Stoke History Group, and other smaller donations. These donations were made to bring the sale price of the book down to a level which would enable it to reach a wider audience.

250 copies were printed and made available through Malthouse Press, the Ipswich Tourist Information Centre, Ipswich Transport Museum, and selected book suppliers, and have sold extremely well.

"The Port of Ipswich - Its Shipping and Trades", by Richard W Smith and Jill Freestone, has been a 12-year labour of love for the two authors, who both grew up within sight, sound and smell of the docks and river.

Both Richard and Jill have vivid childhood memories of the paddle steamers, sailing barges, mills, and cranes that typified the working port and have compiled these, along with their research, into the magnificent 382-page book telling the story of 150 years of the working port, incidents on the Orwell in war and peace, and bringing to life characters and ferrymen (and their dogs).

This is an important book for those interested in the development of Ipswich or more generally in ports and shipping. Although the history of Ipswich shipping dates back to Saxon times, this book deals with the past two centuries. This is a period that saw the town's engineering companies, based around the Dock, grow to have worldwide fame and then decline; a period that started with sail, went on to steam and ended up with a 'Waterfront' jangling with moored pleasure yachts.

The book is beautifully illustrated by photographs brought together by the authors.

Spring 2012 Talks

Wednesday 1st February, 8pm

'Colonel Tomline and the Development of Felixstowe' by Phil Hadwen, Felixstowe Historian.

Colonel Tomline was an extremely rich man, owning the 18,000 acre Orwell Park Estate and much of Felixstowe's seafront. Thoroughly eccentric, as well as being a philanthropist, he set out to enhance the area he owned thus bringing benefits to the local economy and populace as well as to himself.



Photo courtesy of Marjorie Carter

Wednesday 7th March, 8pm

'On the Beach – the work of Coastguard Rescue Officers' by Peter Creasey and Sara Hopkinson, Coastguard Officers.



Holbrook Coastguard Station Officer Peter Creasey (an IMT member) and Deputy Station Officer Sara Hopkinson will offer an insight into the work of Coastguard Rescue Officers.

HM Coastguard is a national emergency service and the Holbrook rescue team is based at the RHYC and has responsibility for the Shotley Peninsular from the Ipswich Wet Dock to the White Bridge on the Stour at Manningtree. The team is often in the news concerning incidents at the Orwell Bridge but is also involved in a range of other tasks, some dramatic and some very routine.

4th April, 8pm – the IMT AGM followed by the second of the 'IMT DIY nights' at approximately 8.30pm

After the very popular series of 15 minute talks by IMT members at the AGM in 2011, we are repeating the format this year with three more very varied maritime themed talks. More details will be sent out closer to the event.



All are welcome to our lectures at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club, Woolverstone where a warm welcome, bar, adjacent parking and an optional supper await. Supper commences at 18.45 hrs, and the talk at 20.00 hrs.

The cost for attending a talk is £3.50 for members and £4.50 for guests. Please note that it is only necessary to book for suppers (1 week in advance, please!)

Supper reservations at £12.50 may be made by email to: bookings@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk or call Mark Grimwade on 01473 787210.

Wednesday 4th April, 8pm (supper served at 6.45pm)

IMT AGM followed by the second of the 'IMT DIY nights' at approximately 8.30pm

Reservations for supper must be received by Wednesday, March 28th.

Please reserve place/s for supper at £12.50 per head. £ _____

Any special dietary requirements

I require members' seat/s at £3.50 per head £ _____

I require non-members' seat/s at £4.50 per head £ _____

Total enclosed (by Wednesday, March 28th) £ _____

Name (printed please)

Cheques made payable to 'IMT' and sent to: IMT, 309 Norwich Road, Ipswich IP1 4BW

Or you can email your reservation to bookings@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk and pay on the night

Or call Mark Grimwade on 01473 787210 and pay on the night, (email bookings will be acknowledged).

Wednesday 7th March, 8pm (supper served at 6.45pm)

'On the Beach – the work of Coastguard Rescue Officers' by Peter Creasey and Sara Hopkinson, Coastguard Officers

Reservations for supper must be received by Wednesday, February 29th.

Please reserve place/s for supper at £12.50 per head. £ _____

Any special dietary requirements

I require members' seat/s at £3.50 per head £ _____

I require non-members' seat/s at £4.50 per head £ _____

Total enclosed (by Wednesday, February 29th) £ _____

Name (printed please)

Cheques made payable to 'IMT' and sent to: IMT, 309 Norwich Road, Ipswich, IP1 4BW

Or you can email your reservation to bookings@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk and pay on the night

Or call Mark Grimwade on 01473 787210 and pay on the night, (email bookings will be acknowledged).

Wednesday 1st February, 8pm (supper served at 6.45pm)

'Colonel Tomline and the Development of Felixstowe' by Phil Hadwen, Felixstowe Historian

Reservations for supper must be received by Wednesday, January 25th

Please reserve place/s for supper at £12.50 per head. £ _____

Any special dietary requirements

I require members' seat/s at £3.50 per head £ _____

I require non-members' seat/s at £4.50 per head £ _____

Total enclosed (by Wednesday, January 25th) £ _____

Name (printed please)

Cheques made payable to 'IMT' and sent to: IMT, 309 Norwich Road, Ipswich, IP1 4BW

Or you can email your reservation to bookings@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk and pay on the night

Or call Mark Grimwade on 01473 787210 and pay on the night, (email bookings will be acknowledged).