



## IMT NEWSLETTER No. 7

May 2006

Ignoring the risk of a flooded Pin Mill causeway, and the possibility of snow putting everyone off, we held our AGM at Pin Mill Sailing Club in January, and combined it with a showing of the film "Ha'penny Breeze" made at Pin Mill just after WWII. Nostalgia unlimited - local and far better than "Howards Way"!!

February saw a "roaring evening" at the Steamboat Tavern when the Pin Mill Shanty Group "High Watermark" gave their all to entertain us. Great fun!

Jim Lawrence gave us a fascinating and highly amusing talk in March on his early days in cargo-carrying Thames Barges. There is more to come and Part 2 will feature in our next series - carrying on from his skippering days at the tender age of 19!

In April, Dr. John Blatchly told the story of the Country Houses and their Estates which line the banks of the Orwell. An over-capacity audience was treated to fascinating stories concerning the buildings and families who transformed our river (and protected its landscape from the ravages of development which would otherwise have overtaken it) together with many impressive paintings of the river and houses.

In May, Mick Lungley (also of shanty fame!) told the story of the building and rigging of a square rigged ship in Tangiers for the Roman Polanski film "The Pirates", whose design was based on a real French ship of the time. A truly massive international job for which the local traditional skills of Lee Ward Rigging, Mick and friends rose to the occasion, involving a total of over 17 miles of rope! The 'Neptune' is still afloat apparently, all 207ft of her, some 20 or so years after Polanski wanted to see her burned as a finale!

The popularity of these functions has been exceptional; so much so that, having rapidly outgrown our original venue of the Waterfront Centre (45 seats), we moved to the Ipswich Library Lecture Theatre (70 seats) which is also proving too small and is not the easiest place for parking. We felt that a venue with even greater capacity was required which offered on-site parking and more "social" facilities. We have found one! More details later in this Newsletter.

With summer well on the way, there are 3 dates to note in your diaries:

June 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, & 11<sup>th</sup>. The Steamboat Tavern on New Cut West is hosting a Folk/Shanty weekend. Weather permitting, much of the goings-on will take place on the newly refurbished Quayside. This is not an IMT "event" as such but we are keen to advise members of any local maritime-oriented functions.

June 24<sup>th</sup>. sees the Barge Passage Match from Gravesend to Pin Mill. Barges may then lie in Ipswich Dock for the week until the Pin Mill Sail Club Barge Match the following weekend. The latter is on Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup>. starting in Butterman's Bay just below Pin Mill. The best view of the start is from the shore at Clamp House. The Trust is arranging an exhibition, in association with the Society for Sailing Barge Research, over the

weekend of June 24/25<sup>th</sup>, at the Waterfront Centre Old Custom House. There will also be a display of work by Valerie Irwin, the artist who has been recording the changes around the Wet Dock.

Members may be interested to learn that the PMSC is arranging a Smack Race on Saturday, July 8<sup>th</sup> together with entertainment ashore that evening.

September 9<sup>th</sup>. & 10<sup>th</sup>. Heritage Weekend, when normally closed buildings of note around Ipswich are opened to the public. As usual, the Waterfront Centre in the basement of the Old Custom House on Common Quay will be open; visitors will be able to see the ship models and other artefacts on permanent display (originally organised by the IMT) together with an exhibition of local maritime interest by the Trust.

Now for the winter lecture programme. The venue for this will be the Royal Harwich Yacht Club at Woolverstone who have generously offered us the use of their Clubhouse and facilities. There is on-site parking, seating for up to 125 people, excellent facilities and is situated on the riverside near Woolverstone Marina. The RHYC offers full audio-visual aids, a bar (it was heartbreaking to watch Jim Lawrence sipping water during his talk!) and pre-lecture meals (subject to a reasonable demand). Where better? Naturally we have accepted their offer and, at the same time, modified our lecture schedule, increasing the number of lectures from 3 to 4 - plus the AGM - and bringing the dates forward to October, November, December (AGM + entertainment), March and April. The first two of these lectures are already arranged and the format will be: An optional pre-lecture meal (pre-booked at £10/head for a 2 course sit-down meal consisting of a selection of excellent main courses and puddings). Bar open pre-lecture and during a short mid-way break. The charge to members for lectures will remain at £2.50 but, to encourage new membership, that for non-members will increase to £3.50 per lecture. Annual Membership remains at £5.00 single, £7.50 joint. A booking form for the (optional) pre-lecture meals and lecture reservations will be circulated nearer the date, but you might like to put the following in your diary now!

Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> "The changing coastline of Suffolk and Essex - How it has evolved and what the future may hold" by Keith Turner of the National Trust.

Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. "My early days barging Part 2". Jim Lawrence continues his memorable talk - given in March - carrying on from the age of 19 skipping barges.

Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. Our Annual General Meeting followed by a talk.

As for 2007, Capt. Richard Woodman, who gave us a fascinating talk on the background to the Battle of Trafalgar last winter, has kindly agreed to return to talk on "The Merchant Service in the Napoleonic War", on April 4<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the above, we have several ideas for the lecture scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup>, but it would be both helpful and interesting to receive **your** thoughts and suggestions for suitable subject, and speakers too if possible. Just give Des Pawson or Stuart Grimwade a call on 01473 690090 or 256461 respectively. We want to offer a "mix" of subjects and your input will be enormously beneficial and much appreciated.

We wish you "sunshine and fair winds" for the coming summer months and will be back with another Newsletter in due course, with more information about our future presence on the transformed Wet Dock Waterfront.