

# Newsletter February 2019

[Special 'The Hold' time-capsule edition]

## The forerunner to Ipswich Maritime Trust?

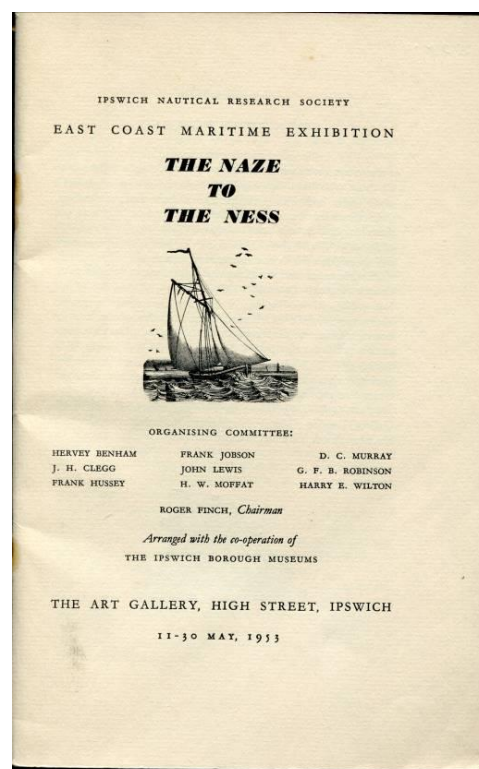
70 years ago in 1949 "four young men interested in ships and nautical affairs met in a waterside pub in Ipswich and agreed that something ought to be done to discover and record the wealth of maritime history in Ipswich and nearby rivers before it was lost forever" <sup>1</sup>. They were Roger Finch, Hugh & Jim Moffatt and George Robinson. They decided to call themselves the Ipswich Nautical Research Society. By October the 9<sup>th</sup> 1950 the Ipswich Nautical Research Society were inviting the Ipswich and District Natural History Society to visit St Clements Shipyard, with a talk by Roger Finch.

Regular meetings were held in the winter months at the High Street Art Gallery. These meetings must have been successful as May 1953 saw the opening there, by the then director of The National Maritime Museum Frank Carr, of "The Naze to The Ness, an East Coast Maritime Exhibition", put together by the Society.

The Ipswich Nautical Research Society continued to hold regular meetings, certainly until 1957. In the autumn of 1959, the Museum Committee of the County Borough of Ipswich put together another exhibition, this time at the Wolsey Art Gallery, Christchurch Mansion, "The Story of the Orwell". Part of the team involved were Roger Finch and Hugh Moffatt of the Ipswich Nautical Research Society.

After this I can find no more mention of the Society, but true to their aim, Roger Finch went on to write a number of important books on East Coast Maritime matters, including "The Ship Painters", "Coals from Newcastle" and "The Cross in the Topsail", whilst Hugh Moffatt produced the definitive work "Ships & Shipyards of Ipswich 1700-1970" which is still in print.

*Des Pawson*

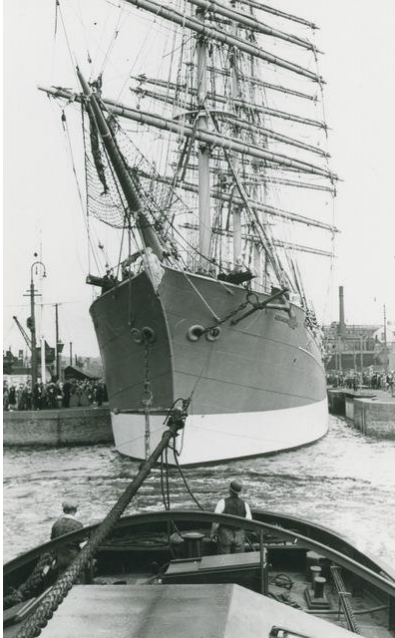


My thanks to Phil Hubert, whose father's papers alerted me to many of the Society's meetings and Louise Kennedy of the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch, who found the newspaper article that gave me a clue to the origins of the Society.

<sup>1</sup> Evening Star May 12.1953

# Three-quarters of a Century of Ipswich Dock by Mark Grimwade

My first memory of the Dock is of being pushed there in the late 30s in my pram to see the square rigger "Abraham Rydberg" leaving port.



Jump to the early '50s when I became a "Special Apprentice" at Ransomes Sims & Jefferies at Orwell Works on the Dock in the days before their move to Nacton. At the tender age of 19 I was lent a wonderful old sailing Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter measuring 50ft and weighing 33 tons named "Hirta" (now "Cornubia") which is still going strong and featured some years ago in the TV series "Island Race" with Sandy Toksvig and John McCarthy. I was allowed to moor her at Ransomes Quay (now Orwell Quay) at the cost of 2 shillings (10p) a week during the winter months. (To moor her in a marina there now, this hefty sum would buy her 3 minutes and 30 seconds berthing!)

As well as being an economical spot it had many other advantages:

Unofficially and probably unwittingly, Ransomes supplied me with electricity, water and coal.

The boat next door - an old Admiralty pinnace - was home to "Professor Jack Zeek" the Ipswich tattooist (his Parlour was behind Whitmores) who, with his wife "Reet" became great friends. Jack was an ex fire-eater and sword-swallower, so our security was first class! To keep fit, he would walk to the lock gates and back *on his hands!*

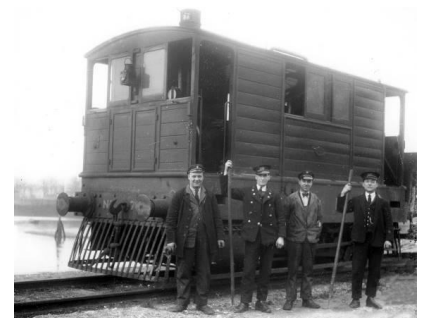
The quay was ideal for parties. Upwards of 100 friends could park alongside whilst Tolly Cobbold's Brewery on nearby Cliff Quay was handy for the odd barrel of "Racked Beer".

One night, after a gig at the Baths Hall, Humphrey Lyttelton and his jazz band joined us aboard and Humph reckoned that the acoustics on the waterfront were second-to-none – but the beer may have helped.

On another night, one of our visitors became stranded on the buoy then positioned in the centre of the Dock (for ships compass swinging) from which he recited all 44 verses of "Eskimo Nell" to quayside applause.

We had a Rayburn cooker in the galley and ran it on shovelled up spilt coal from the gasworks just along the quay. Whilst doing this, a Dock Policeman apprehended me but, having learned that we had a stove on board, encouraged me to completely fill the sack and push it back on his bike – then he joined us for a warm . . . as did his associates for the rest of that winter. (Better than spending a night in the cell at "Police Station No2" which remains to this day – in the Waterfront Centre beneath the Old Custom House.)

Moored to the quayside, we frequently came into contact (fortunately not literally) with the Dockside steam shunting engine – complete with cowcatchers front and rear. We got to know the shunters well who, when the quayside was cluttered with our cars and motorbikes, would come and join the party. Suffering a flat car battery one day, they kindly tow-started my car behind the engine. On several occasions I was allowed to drive the engine!



Some years ago these events prompted me to start a campaign for a tram service round the Dock, to the Station and possibly up St Nicholas St. to the town centre. Sadly, this didn't come to fruition but would have been a distinct advantage bearing in mind the traffic congestion and number of people now living around the Dock.

Whilst "Skiving off work" aboard the boat during the working day, I was spotted by the Works Director. Nothing was said at the time but I received a memo the following day saying "If you must go yachting in Company Time, I suggest you first remove your conspicuous white overalls!"

With "Hirta" for sale, Ransomes looked into buying her for use as their Apprentice's Sail Training Vessel. Perhaps fortunately, this came to nothing and after several years happy and not altogether sober sailing, she sailed out of my life – although I still keep in touch with her through her various subsequent owners. (She has, in 2017, just reappeared - for sale - at Haven Marina but under her original "Piloting" name of "Cornubia"!)

Enough of Ransomes here but, having served my apprenticeship with them and over many years worked in most offices and departments and travelled and lived overseas, there are a lot more tales to tell.

Over the following 50 years I have frequently wintered my boats firstly at Ransomes Quay and later used Neptune Marina nearby. (That's me on the Newsletter page on IMT's website 'ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk' together with the sadly long-gone Meaux Brewery where Bellway Homes now stand.) Whitmores chandlery was just along the quay and featured strongly in my dock life. They stocked everything one could need for a boat and Percy, their sailmaker, made me a couple of sails from Thames Barge's "offcuts" (any colour you like as long as its red/brown!). Their shop had the wonderful reek of Stockholm Tar – a preservative for the manila, hemp and coir rope they sold. There was another sailmaker Mr. Nethercote on the Island Site which burnt down in the '50s.

My first encounter at the Dock, when I saw the "Abraham Rydberg", was repeated years later when I took on the job of helping to organise "Sail Ipswich 97", a Festival of the Sea held just a few weeks after ABP had taken over the Port. This proved to be a major, long (2 year), but worthwhile task. We welcomed 4 square-rigged sailing ships and the largest in the world – the Russian "Kruzenshtern" – got as far as Harwich but was too high to pass under the Orwell Bridge! The Dock filled with nearly 400 classic vessels of all shapes and sizes whilst music, dancing, stands, Dragon Boat racing and fireworks over the festival's two days attracted nearly 40,000 people and made a handsome profit for charity!



"Sail Ipswich" introduced me to The Ipswich Maritime Trust, a local charity which has a huge interest in the past, present and future of the Ipswich Dock as well as its wellbeing. We have established a Museum Window in the public concourse of the old Cranfields Mill Development with more windows to come. A

series of monthly winter lectures on mostly local maritime subjects take place as do Dockside events featuring visiting ships of interest together with themed exhibitions and receptions.

The Dock provides Ipswich with an almost unique jewel in its centre, one which I, and many others, appreciate and enjoy. It is heartening to witness the growing number of people strolling the quays, using the new and growing facilities and simply enjoying the proximity of water and boats as have I for the past 70+ years!

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the tree-lined Promenade on the "Island Site" (which ought to have a much more romantic name – perhaps a competition?) could be re-instated possibly together with the Bandstand which used to grace the lock gate area. With the Upper Orwell Crossings as originally envisaged abandoned the possibility of the development of the Island Site has receded for the time being.

Maybe we should try again for an electric tramway around the Dock – it would reduce the traffic too. Ransomes made trams!

## Leonard Woolf, 1934 - 2018

Stuart Grimwade writes:

Those of us whose IMT memory goes back more than fifteen years will know of the beginnings of our Image Archive. In many ways its very existence was due in large part to the life-time efforts of Leonard, whose love of early postcards and other historic photographs of the dock created a vast and read-made private Archive in its own right. Bob Pawsey, himself a keen collector of photo-postcards, arranged for me to see the albums.

Once aware of my interest in them, Leonard generously offered not only to allow me to scan them all, but more importantly also permitted us to make whatever use of them we liked in the interests of the Trust. Working closely with Bob on this collaborative project over the last fifteen years or so, Leonard continued to expand his collection right up to the time of his death, giving us a priceless collection of images that must be unique. Leonard always took a quiet, but keen interest whenever the collection was shown publicly, but what is probably not so

widely appreciated was his own huge background knowledge and maritime expertise which he always generously but discreetly shared. I shall always be grateful to him for this, and my one regret is not thanking him more publicly. Even so, I like to think that he knew how much his work was appreciated, and that this gave him some comfort towards the end.

**Members may also be interested to know that, with the help of members of the Woolf family and friends, Bob Pawsey is hoping to prepare a fuller account of Leonard's maritime and other activity in the form of an 'Occasional Paper'**



*Leonard Woolf – right, Bob Pawsey - left*

# Upper Orwell Crossings update

The recommendation to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet that the Upper Orwell Crossings scheme be terminated with immediate effect was almost inevitable after the costs investigation showed an increase of some £43 million.

The main Bridge A, crossing the Orwell just south of the lock, is no more. There is likely to be some weight behind a move to proceed with Bridge B over New Cut and the restoration of the link over the lock, Bridge C. This latter link would enable the redevelopment of the Island Site to incorporate the lost Promenade along the west bank of New Cut and over the lock to the east bank.

The New Cut bridge, a continuation of either Felaw Street or Mather Way, may well be thought necessary to enable the hoped-for Island Site redevelopment, albeit that such a bridge has not been needed for the last 175 years. Needs change, however, and for many years the Ransomes swing bridge over the lock, still there, gave access to the site at the southern end.

The concern of IMT is that the New Cut bridge should not be fixed but should be an opening bridge. This is vital to the preservation and improvement of St Peter's Dock. The dock has been scarcely used since access from the wharf was cut off by the construction of the flood wall in the late 1960s, but images in the IMT Archive show the dock previously almost full of barges and small ships. A fixed bridge would cut off for ever such a sight.

The importance of the location can hardly be under-estimated. It is at the historic heart of the town; Gipeswic was the first new settlement after the Romans left, at the point of the lowest ford and the highest navigable point on the Orwell. The site can be said to be of both local and national importance. It occupies a strategic location in the town, at the southern end of the north-south axis, and at the entrance to both the Waterfront and the town centre. It has huge potential. not least as a heritage harbour. both to complement the Borough Council's proposals immediately to the north and to showcase the town's great maritime history.

The potential of the dock will be lost if, for all practical purposes, water access is restricted to craft not much above 2 metres above water line. Such would be the consequence of a fixed bridge over New Cut.

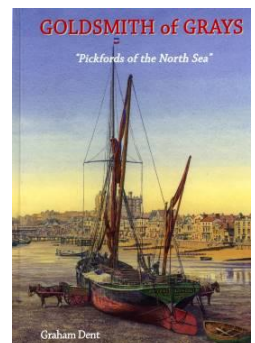
IMT put forward no views on the Upper Orwell Crossings scheme as such. We focussed instead on the effects of the scheme on maritime activities. Many hours were spent in constructive discussions with the Project Team, particularly on maintaining access into the Wet Dock for taller craft, and we hope for similar discussions on any new proposals put forward.

*Geoffrey Dyball*

## Book reviews

### **'GOLDSMITH OF GRAYS – the Pickfords of the North Sea'**

One of the largest projects undertaken by the Society for Sailing Barge Research has been published in the form of a new book by Graham Dent, with the help of Richard Walsh. This large and extensively researched book tells the remarkable story of a firm that had been founded in the mid-1600s. By the early 1900s, among many other transport enterprises, EJ & W Goldsmiths operated the largest fleet of sailing barges in the 'seeking' trades of the south and east coasts. Packed with photographs, this 500-page volume gives us a comprehensive and detailed record of life on Thames sailing barges, and later motor vessels covering five generations. In their introduction to the book Graham and Richard kindly record their grateful thanks to IMT for the use of photographs from the Image Archive.



Published by Chaffcutter, price £35, on behalf of the Society for Sailing Barge Research. [www.chaffcutter.com](http://www.chaffcutter.com)

*Stuart Grimwade*

# IMT and 'The Hold' time-capsule

You may be aware about 'Suffolk Record Office's ambitious project to transform the way we engage people with archives in partnership with the University of Suffolk: The Hold – A Suffolk Archives Service for the 21st Century' which is being built opposite the University on the former car park. [www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/the\\_hold](http://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/the_hold). As part of that project SCC are placing in the foundations a time capsule filled with artefacts, items and documents from the local community in Ipswich, to which Ipswich Maritime Trust have been invited to contribute.

We are contributing four items to the capsule to record a snapshot of maritime Ipswich in the 21<sup>st</sup> century –

- a copy of the Ipswich Maritime Trust newsletter dated February 2019. The newsletter documents some of the activities of the Trust in 2018 and has items on the developments around the Wet Dock area which affect Ipswich's maritime future.
- a wooden 'plug' 100mm diameter and 35 mm thick from a boat currently being built by Spirit Yachts, the world-famous boat builder in Ipswich. The 'plug' is a piece of the hull which is drilled out when a skin-fitting, such as a water inlet or outlet, is to be fitted and gives an insight to the hull construction.
- 2 small pieces of dinghy rope as would be used by dinghy racers on the River Orwell. The first piece is from the Museum of Knots & Sailor's Ropework, a piece of 1-inch circumference (today 5mm diameter) finest 3 strand Yacht Quality Italian Hemp, with a breaking strain of about 448 pound or 200 kilos, made by Halls Barton Ropery, Barton-on-Humber about 1960. The other 5mm diameter Marlow Excel Racing rope, with a 12 strand Dyneema core, protected with a braided polyester cover, having a breaking strain of 143 kilos, made in Hailsham Sussex and given from their current stock by Fox's Yacht Chandlery, Bourne Bridge, Ipswich, January 2019.



One would hope that someone in the future would be pleased to find these little items that may not otherwise survive in pristine condition.

## The Saga of St. Peter's Wharf

They say that familiarity breeds contempt. Certainly, for the last thirty years or so, Ipswich has appeared to abandon all interest not only in the upkeep of this part of the town, but more significantly, in exploiting its huge historic significance. It is not an exaggeration to say that this particular site marks the origins of the first English town. From this quay, international maritime trade has been continuously carried out for over 1300 years, a claim few, if any cities in Europe can make. For many years the Trust has been seeking to play its part in telling this story, and we can at last now say that action is being taken to remedy the neglect.

This image from around 1900 reminds us of the activity we could have back again if imaginatively planned. Elsewhere, this Newsletter reports on the current position regarding the future of a new crossing over the lock



and its possible implications for the New Cut and St. Peter's dock, so I won't reiterate those issues. Members will know of our campaign to keep alive the possibility of retaining access for historic vessels such as those who shared our aims and kindly brought their vessels up into the dock last September. Sadly, neither the Press nor the broadcasting media seemed to appreciate its significance and ignored the event. But those passers-by who did stop and stare enjoyed what they saw, as shown in these two images taken on the day at the top of the tide. We are extremely grateful to all the skippers and vessels owners involved.

I think it is true to say that the prospect of this being a regular sight ought to excite the town, its promoters, and all those who have any awareness of the economic value of tourists' interests, since it lies on the busiest pedestrian route between the Waterfront, the town centre and the railway station.

*Vessels on St Peter's Wharf*

- sb Victor*
- sb Melissa*
- sb Thalatta*
- Fenland (tug)*
- Gladys (bawley)*



- sb Victor*
- sb Melissa*
- sb Thalatta*
- Fenland (tug)*

For its part, Suffolk County Council has appreciated the need to introduce an improved vehicular access to the island site from Stoke Bridge, and work is now well underway on this scheme, as shown in this artist's impression. As part of this, the project engineer is currently working with us to incorporate features to mark and describe the historic importance of the site, possibly finding a new home for the two bronze plaques that once marked, on the Cornhill, our geographic location in relation to other western European cities. Work on the scheme is expected to be completed in time for this year's Maritime Festival.



Meanwhile Ipswich Borough Council is believed to be active in the purchase of adjacent derelict buildings with a view to their future redevelopment. Our views were recently sought on the correct naming of this area, and I am pleased to report that the original quay name of 'St. Peter's Wharf' has now been officially reinstated; we hope this is the first action to restore all the other historic names around the dock as set out in our 'Occasional Paper' still available to read on our website. Finally, if members ever set foot on Stoke Bridge, they may care to pause and read the text of the plaque recently restored by the Borough Council in which the Trust explains in more detail than this report, the history of St. Peter's Dock.

*Stuart Grimwade*

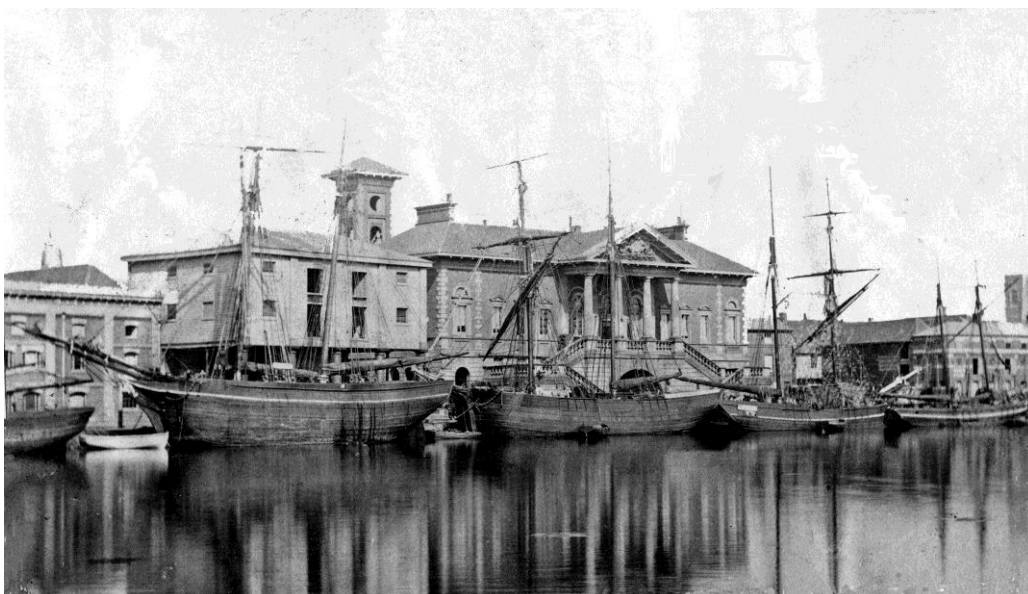
# IMT Image Archive goes world-wide

When the internet works well, it's wonderful! We are now being contacted from all points of the compass with offers of images. Two of the most recent are fascinating and shown below.

First is this image sent from Somerset which I couldn't believe was of Ipswich as I'd not heard of either Dorling's Wharf or the Alma Inn. However, it seems both existed, and this is the New Cut soon after it was built with one of our earliest paddle steamers looking her best.

The second, more familiar scene comes to us from Alastair Kellock in Melbourne Australia. It appeared in a scrapbook that Alastair writes to say he has in his possession and belonged to a family called Pettit. He understands that Joseph Ablett Pettit lived in nearby Lower Orwell St. and was a builder in Ipswich. One of his sons migrated to Victoria in 1852 and worked as an architect in his latter years until his death in 1895. Another son, also Joseph Ablett Pettit, remained in Ipswich, as far as he knows. The print was probably taken to Australia in 1852, which helps us to identify the likely photographer as Robert Burrows.

*Stuart Grimwade*



# Window Museum News

## The 18<sup>th</sup> Window Museum Display

### Maritime Ipswich: a selection of historic buildings with a maritime connection



The exhibition is based on the 10 cast plaques placed on buildings with an important maritime connection in 1982. There is a map showing where the buildings are and photos descriptions and some models of the buildings. Centre stage is a model of the Isaac Lord's courtyard, perhaps the most historically important secular building or group of buildings still in existence in Ipswich.

*Des Pawson*

## Ipswich's membership of the New Hanseatic League



You may remember reading in the last newsletter that Ipswich gained membership of the New Hanseatic League during 2018. Following our contact last summer with Richard and Alison Austin from Boston (Lincs.) and what seems to be a dearth of readily accessible information about Ipswich's history as a Hanseatic port I have undertaken some research for IMT on the history of Ipswich in the Hanseatic period, aiming at publication of an information booklet for the general public.

Our port history stretches back of course to Anglo-Saxon times, but the 12th -15th centuries saw a huge expansion of Ipswich's economy as one of the most important ports in the land, trading throughout the Continent, and welcoming Hanseatic merchants from central Germany to export the wool and later the cloth for which Suffolk became so famous.

I have recently been in discussion with some leading Hanseatic historians from Kings Lynn and Boston, and they look forward to more interaction with us. Maybe we can look forward to a Maritime Festival with a Hanseatic theme, and a visit to Ipswich by the fine replica vessel, the Lisa von Lubeck, in the not-too distant future!



*Pat Grimwade*

# Future Events – talks

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm**

**‘Ipswich Tidal Barrier – the Environment Agency’s Project Engineer on the construction of this £70m scheme’** by Andrew Usborne, Project Manager

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm**

**‘The River Gipping Trust’** by Spencer Greystrom, Treasurer and a founding member

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at approx. 8pm (after AGM at 7.30pm)**

**Henry VIII and the Ownership of the Orwell** by Andy Parker, IMT member and local historian

Full details are on page 15 of this newsletter. Reminders for the talks will be sent out closer to the time, but please make a note of the dates in your diary.

We will carry on providing tea, coffee and biscuits after the talks; this has proved very popular and has provided the opportunity for members to meet and chat amongst themselves and with some IMT Council members.

## Thames Sprintsail Barge Trips 2019

***IMT Thames Barge all-day sailing trips and Harwich visit for guided tours***

We have three all-day sailing trips booked on Thursdays 13<sup>th</sup> June, 25<sup>th</sup> July and 5<sup>th</sup> September, and new for this year day trips on 4<sup>th</sup> July and 15<sup>th</sup> August to Harwich, complete with a 90-minute guided tour around Harwich by guides from the Harwich Society.

**Full details of the trips are on the booking form at the end of the newsletter.**



# Autumn 2018 talks

We had yet another series of interesting and varied talks in the Autumn this year.

## Wednesday 3rd October

### 'An Ipswich Link with Nelson's Victory at Aboukir Bay'

by Roy Clare CBE

The opening talk of our autumn series was a first in two respects. It was our first joint venture with the Friends of Ipswich Museum, and the first time the speaker had arrived by sea.

Roy Clare CBE began his naval career at HMS Ganges, eventually rising to command the aircraft carrier *Invincible* and the Naval College, Dartmouth. He retired as Rear Admiral and was for many years Director of the National Maritime Museum. His talk, 'An Ipswich Link with Nelson's Victory at Aboukir Bay?', explored the influence of naval leaders from Blake through to Cunningham.

The origins of the navy can be traced back to Dover's Bronze Age boat. By the time of Elizabeth I, it had earned the loose description of state-sponsored piracy. It was one of Cromwell's 'Generals at Sea', Robert Blake, who in 1649 instigated the first major transformation. He not only defeated the Dutch and the Spanish, he wrote and imposed the manuals 'Fighting Instructions' and 'Articles of War'. As a result, he became known as the Father of the Navy.

Edward Vernon had a less steady career. He went to sea in 1700, and by 1706 had been promoted to Captain. As Vice Admiral, he captured the *Porto Bello* in 1739. Peace intervened, and he was appointed MP for Ipswich. In 1745 he was promoted to Admiral, but in the following year had a serious disagreement with the Admiralty and was dismissed on the orders of George II. He is credited with having a big influence on naval warfare.



*Capt. Edward Vernon by Francis Hayman*

The Blake and Vernon traditions were carried on by Hawke, in his annihilation of the French fleet at Quiberon Bay in 1759.

The last of those picked out by Roy was, almost inevitably, Nelson. A reputation perhaps now being chipped at the edges, but the Battle of the Nile showed an understanding of naval warfare and qualities of leadership coming in a direct line through Blake, Vernon and Hawke. He was influenced also by Shakespeare's 'Agincourt' speech, by Napoleon, and of course by Emma Hamilton.

In the phrase of Admiral Cunningham in the last war, it takes three years to build a ship, but three centuries to build a tradition.

About eighty-five members and friends thoroughly enjoyed a talk which was both informed and well presented.

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm**

## **'Harwich for the Continent, a history of the route from about 1600'**

by Chris Turland

The second talk in the autumn series began with a presentation by Sally Chicken, the volunteer Vice-Chair of the Shotley Heritage Charitable Community Benefit Trust. This is the organisation set up to acquire, restore and manage the late-Victorian former railway pier which runs out into the Stour from just opposite the Bristol Arms.

Sally showed an Admiralty plan of the pier from 1886; the pier predates those plans by many years. Other photos showed the original Ganges moored nearby, with young sailors embarking. A narrow-gauge railway ran the full length, and for many years motor boats owned by the railway company operated a service between Ipswich (New Cut), Harwich, Felixstowe and Shotley. More photos showed biplanes and seaplanes during World War I.

The acquisition of the pier has been completed. The renovation stage is part-funded, provided there is a viable ultimate use. The planning application for that use is still in negotiation. An initial refusal seemed not to reflect changes underway in the immediate area, but this is a sensitive site and there will inevitably be local concerns.

The pier has a big history, and Sally and her colleagues are on course to secure its future.

The evening's main speaker was Chris Turland, whose subject was the North Sea ferry routes; 'Harwich for the Continent'.

Chris touched on some of the early geography of Harwich Haven, and particularly how the coastline had changed. (Going further back, England was joined to Europe, which would have changed the basis of Chris's talk). West Rocks, now under water, was a Roman town.



The ferry route was really put on the map by the Great Eastern Railway's paddle steamers, sailing from the Town Pier at Harwich. The 'Essex', built in the 1890s, was two-directional. with rudders at both ends. All were solidly built. At the end of its 'ferry' life, the 'Claude Hamilton' was gutted and served for many more years as a cattle ship. The GER had a contract to tow out the lifeboat in foul weather; they were thus in pole position to claim salvage rights.

Paddles inevitably gave way to screw propulsion, as pleasure cruising became fashionable. This was encouraged by the building of piers at any seaside town of consequence; happily, most have survived.

The North Sea route was mainly served by two ferries, giving day and night crossings seven day a week. Accidents were inevitable. One ship ran up Felixstowe beach to the extent that at low tide she was completely dry. The 'Berlin' was broken at the entrance to the Hook. A sister ship to the 'St George', the 'Juliana', rammed an oil tanker off Livorno and both caught fire, with huge loss of life. Others had better history. The 'St Edmund' saw service in the Falklands; the 'Brussels' sank a U-boat by ramming it, albeit her master, Fryatt, was later captured by the Germans and shot.

The roll on/roll off railway ships were introduced in about 1916. Built by and for the Admiralty, they saw service in WW I, and were bought by GER in 1924. They were bought back by the Admiralty for service in WW II; two were sunk, but the survivor was bought again by GER. in all, she saw some sixty years' service.

The record of the ferries speaks for itself. Over a period of sixty-four years, not a single sailing was cancelled.

A talk very well received by over seventy members and guests.

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm**

## **'The Woolverstone Project. The project, RYA Sailability, Disabled Sailors' achievements, Para Olympic sailing.**

by Andy Beharrell

The last talk of the autumn series was given by Andy Beharrell, the chairman of (to give its full title) The East Anglian Sailing for Persons with Disabilities Trust, but known as The Woolverstone Project. The aim is to provide freedom from disability through sailing; Andy's talk was 'Its sailing, but not as we know it ...'



The evening was unfortunately very badly disrupted by a lorry overturning on the A14, causing traffic chaos in the town, and resulting in just twenty-five member and friends to hear an entertaining and informative talk.

The charity was founded in 1993 and registered in 1995. They now have 22 boats in all, sailing both on Alton Water and on the Orwell at Woolverstone marina. The boats at Alton Water are Hansa 3.03s and 2.03s, both with weighted keels and sailed and reefed from the cockpit. They are exceptionally stable; a 3.03 was raced from the Orwell bridge to Tower Bridge. There is also an RS Venture 4.9, a side-side two-seater, with a 100 kg keel.

The boats based at Woolverstone are a Hawk 20 and a Wheelyboat. Generally, hoists are needed for many of the disabled sailors, but the Wheelyboat has tank landing craft type access enabling wheelchairs to be rolled straight on.

Sailing is provided for all ages and for any disability. The charity currently takes sailors from 41 diverse organisations. There were 595 sessions for 1344 sailors in 2017; there were fewer last year on account of the water problems at Alton Water. There are some 60 active volunteers; a lot are needed just to get the sailors safely in and out of the boats.

There have been a number of inspirational disabled sailors, some of whose achievements seem barely credible.

Geoff Holt was paralysed at 18. As a quadriplegic, he sailed across the Atlantic three times. Hilary Lister died in August this year aged 46. She had no mobility from the neck down and controlled her boat through straws – sip and puff. One straw controlled the sails, another the rudder, and the third accessed the range of navigation equipment. Natasha Lambert is a quadriplegic but sails a mini transat 'Miss Isle'. The last Sydney to Hobart race was completed by 'Wot Eva', sailed by a fully disabled crew.

Paralympic sailing has been a great adventure for British crews, but the sport is no longer included. The disability classifications were from 1 to 7, 1 being say a complete quadriplegic. For a three-handed boat, the sailors' classification could total no more than 14. However, the World Championships continue; the last had 101 sailors from 42 countries. Blind match racing has the sailors relying on sound signals from the buoys and the other boat; the last series saw GBR1 undefeated and GBR2 second.

Andy closed his talk by emphasising the need for volunteers and for funds. The Project is surely deserving of both.

*Geoffrey Dyball*

## Past Events – exhibitions

### Ipswich Maritime Festival – 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August 2018

We put on an exhibition of local maritime photographs in the Old Custom House, and also over the two days there was a 'stall' outside where

- there was the opportunity to make baggywrinkle
- an explanation and live demonstration of caulking a deck
- an opportunity for children to dress up as a pirate and be photographed alongside our own 'Ben the Pirate'

The whole event was very well attended and our stall activities particularly appreciated by those who took the time to stop and observe or take part.



### Heritage Open Weekends: 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Sept.

The IMT opened the quay level of the Old Custom House on both the weekends that were nominated for Heritage Open Weekend in 2018 and mounted an exhibition of a photographs of the dock area from our Image Archive.

## IMT Membership news

Subscriptions were due in January and a big 'thank you' to those members who pay by Standing Order and help keep the administrative task and costs down. A renewal form is sent out with this newsletter to those members whose subscription have not yet been paid. If I have made a mistake in my records, and it does occasionally happen, please let me know by email or leave a message on 07531 083576.

Our subscriptions have remained at £5 single and £7.50 joint ever since we started the membership scheme in 2005 with 48 members! Our membership stood at 336 at the end of 2016 and we are helped in maintaining the same subscription (which covers administrative costs) primarily due to the large number of members whom we communicate with by email.

It really does help if we can communicate by email with our members.

*Fraser Yates*

### New Members in 2018

Kim & Tony Macdonald	John Lewis
Kelvin Dakin	Ann Warren
Anthony Cobbold	Dr & Mrs John and Jodi Warren
Bob Lichtensteiger-Keeble	Augustus Coke
David Goldsmith	Raymond Wheeler
Thirza Witts & Clive Taylor	Peter Smith
Margaret & Philip Hancock	Robert & Helena Mutton
Anthony Finbow	Paul Wade
Wilf Thompson	Val Bint
Martin Gibbs	Russell Harvey
Simon Lavington	

# IMT 2019 Spring talks



**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30pm**

## **‘Ipswich Tidal Barrier – the Environment Agency’s Project Engineer on the construction of this £70m scheme.**

by Andrew Osborne, Project Manager



The newly-completed flood barrier sits at the southern end of the New Cut. It is the final part of a reported £70 million scheme to protect the Waterfront and the town centre from the ‘one in 300-year event’ – an otherwise overwhelming tidal surge. The main section of the barrier is the 200-tonne rotating gate, operating on a similar principle to the Thames Barrier. Some 1,600 homes are now better-protected than ever.

The speaker, Andrew Osborne, was the Environment Agency’s Project Engineer for this major work.

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm**

## **‘The River Gipping Trust’**

by Spencer Greystrom, Treasurer and a founding member



In 2007 the Ipswich Branch of the Inland Waterways Association decided to form the River Gipping Trust. Its aim is to preserve the heritage and structures of the Stowmarket Navigation and to care for the flora and fauna of the Gipping Valley. This talk follows the course of the River Gipping from Stowmarket to Stoke Bridge, and aims to give a brief history of the Navigation and the work of the Trust over the past 11 years.

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April at approx. 8pm (after AGM at 7.30pm)**

## **Henry VIII and the Ownership of the Orwell**

by Andy Parker, IMT member and local historian

The spring of 2019 will see the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII’s gift to Ipswich Corporation of the major rights to the River Orwell. By these rights, the Corporation took control of navigation, trade and commerce. The gift to an extent consolidated rights which had existed since King John’s charter of 1200 and subsequent charters, but Henry’s support was a major factor in the growth of Ipswich, for example through the wool trade.

Andy Parker is an enthusiastic local historian, and an IMT Committee member.



All are welcome to our lectures at the Waterfront Building, University of Suffolk. The cost for attending a talk is £3.50 for members and £4.50 for guests.

Free tea and coffee provided after the talk and the chance to chat with the speaker and other members and guests.

# Sailing trips on 'Victor'

Join IMT on a full day trip on the rivers Orwell and Stour



Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 9am

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 9am

A great chance to get the best views of the rivers Orwell, Stour, and the Walton backwaters depending on the weather, and to help with the sailing of an iconic boat.

Victor was built in 1895 by Shruballs at Ipswich for Owen Parry of Colchester, mainly for use in the linseed oil trade. In 1947 she was the last sailing barge to be decommissioned. She was converted to a motor barge in the 1950s but restored in 1974 and refurbished in 2005/7.



Victor was the National Maritime Historic Ships Register official Suffolk representative for the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant in 2012.

Leave from her usual berth in front of the Old Custom House about 09.00.

- Bacon roll and coffee breakfast
- Mid-morning coffee and biscuits,
- Two course lunch with wine, and
- Afternoon cream tea.

Return about 17.30, depending on wind and tide.

Parking available on the Island site by prior arrangement, courtesy of ABP.

**The cost is £60 per head.**

Book through **Bob Pawsey on 01473 252893**, or complete the form and send with cheque to the address shown below.

## Booking Form

### **Barge Trip on Victor – 13<sup>th</sup> June/25<sup>th</sup> July/5<sup>th</sup> September\*\***

\*\* delete as appropriate

Please reserve ..... places at £60 per head, cheque made payable to 'IMT', enclosed for £.....

Name: .....

Address: .....

Phone number and/or email address for confirmation of reservation, and in case of need to contact:

Phone number: .....

Email address: .....

Is a car parking space is required on the Island Site - **NO/YES (please write car Reg No on reverse)**

**Please return form and cheque to B Pawsey, 82 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, IP4 2XN**

# Visit 'Historic Harwich' all day trips



Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at 9am

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 9am



Leaving from outside the Old Custom House, Ipswich at 9am and returning approximately 5.30pm, 'Victor' will motor/sail to Harwich Ha'penny pier. Passengers will leave the Victor at approx. 10.45/11.00 for a conducted tour of Historic Harwich Town by two guides from the Harwich Society. The tour will last approx. 90 minutes and the passengers will return to the Victor at 12.30 for drinks and lunch at 13.00 (two-course meal with wine). Victor will then leave Harwich at 15.00 to sail/motor back to the Old Custom House with a tea on the way.

**The cost per head will be £65 which includes a donation to the Harwich Society.**

Victor was built in 1895 by Shruballs at Ipswich for Owen Parry of Colchester, mainly for use in the linseed oil trade. In 1947 she was the last sailing barge to be decommissioned. She was converted to a motor barge in the 1950s, but restored in 1974 and refurbished in 2005/7.

Book through **Bob Pawsey on 01473 252893**, or complete the form below and send with cheque. Parking available on the Island site by prior arrangement, courtesy of ABP.

## Booking Form

### **Harwich Trip on Victor – 4<sup>th</sup> July/15<sup>th</sup> August \*\***

\*\* (delete as appropriate)

Please reserve ..... places at £65 per head, cheque made payable to 'IMT', enclosed for £.....

Name: .....

Address: .....

Phone number and/or email address for confirmation of reservation, and in case of need to contact:

Phone number: .....

Email address: .....

Is a car parking space is required on the Island Site - **NO/YES (please write car Reg No on reverse)**

**Please return form and cheque to B Pawsey, 82 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, IP4 2X**