

# Newsletter March 2008

## Welcome

We should like to welcome the following new members who have joined the Trust recently -

Mrs Susan Marsden  
Michael Graham  
Peter and Alyne Winter  
Charles Croydon  
Terrence Morriss  
John Carter  
Edward Wood



Three-masted Barque "Picton Castle"  
(see Future Events)

## Past Events

### Lecture programme

Our Winter Programme is almost complete and has proved extremely successful with record audiences

and growing numbers taking advantage of the excellent suppers provided by the Royal Harwich Yacht Club.

### 'Fish and Fishing' – Martin Vince

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, preceded by an excellent fish pie supper, Martin Vince spoke on "Fish and Fishing over the past 40 years".

Martin spent his working life with the MAAF, researching fish stocks and fishing around our coasts and further afield - including the Arctic and the Grand Banks. His shots of icebound waters sent a chill through the large audience but we were subsequently warmed by an image of one of the last Portuguese three-masted Grand Banks Schooners he came across in the '60s – still fishing from one-man dories as in "Captains Courageous".

Fishing is an emotive subject and we learned a tremendous amount about its history, development, problems and future. In addition, Martin gave us an insight into the life of fishermen both in-shore and off-shore. "Tough" is an understatement and, from pictures and stories recounted, this also goes for Martin and his associates as they followed the fleets, tagging fish as they went.

Perhaps the most telling slide was of equal sample catches made just before and after WWII. During the 5 war years, fishing almost came to a stop. The 1938 catch showed a low number of quite small fish whilst in 1946 the numbers and their size were vastly greater. What better proof of the necessity for quotas? Sadly, current fishing techniques mean that huge quantities of non-quota fish are caught and immediately dumped, dead, back into the sea.

Thank you Martin for opening our eyes to all that is involved in fish and fishing. We came away wiser, with a much greater respect for our fishermen (plus "floating Civil Servants") and extremely well entertained.

## **'Harwich Lifeboats' – Capt Rod Shaw**

Our first lecture of 2008 was on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Capt. Rod Shaw, Hon. Operations Manager of Harwich Lifeboats, kindly arranged for Andy Tannock, ably assisted by Mike Duggan, to tell us the story of the Harwich Lifeboats. Andy took us through his station's history including the incredibly fast steam jet-powered boat stationed there early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We were intrigued to learn that the RNLI only relatively recently reinstated its service at Harwich when the Royal Navy withdrew from the Harbour.

Andy illustrated the high-tech equipment and training facilities provided by the RNLI, and the rigorous testing carried out on their current "all weather" and "inshore" lifeboats. He ended with some spectacular pictures of these boats at sea in conditions and circumstances that all of us hope we will never have occasion to meet!

## **'A Voyage around East Anglia' - Robert Simper ; AGM**

March 5<sup>th</sup>. Another full house at the RHYC! Firstly our, now traditional, "high speed AGM" (not quite beating our last-year's record of 12½ minutes). Thanks were extended to Capt. Gerry Jones who joined the Trust after retiring as Ipswich Harbourmaster and has now retired from the committee after many years service.

On conclusion of the AGM, Robert Simper took us on "A Voyage Round East Anglia". Robert is the author of many books on our rivers and coastline, all available locally. His interest began in his youth when he crewed cargo-carrying sailing barges and fishing boats.

Taking superb photographs from his restored fishing boat, Robert started with the drying ports of North Norfolk following the coast southwards to the many small ports whilst, en route, highlighting those which have radically changed - or no longer exist - through coastal erosion and silting. Local beach boats have changed too, fewer in number whilst fast power catamarans are now used which have been found ideal for outrunning the beach surf when coming ashore.

Onwards and southwards, we visited all the rivers, ports old and new – including many farm quays encountered on the way - until reaching the Thames and St. Katharines Dock.

Thank you Robert and Pearl for an excellent, fascinating and beautifully illustrated talk.

## **Future Events**

### **Lecture Programme**

**Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>** - This evening will start and finish with a **BANG!**

Martin Bibbings of the Trafalgar Gun Company and an eminent historian on 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Century naval gunnery will give an illustrated talk on "**Philip Broke of 'The Shannon', Naval Hero of Nacton**".



Philip Broke

Martin is an expert on naval gunnery and is currently writing a book on this subject. He also owns – and fires – cannons. He has kindly agreed

to start and finish this talk with cannonfire on the RHYC lawn!

You may have already witnessed his expertise as he has acted as gunnery consultant for “Master & Commander”, “Hornblower” and “Far Side of the World”.

This promises to be an intriguing and very special evening so come and join us at the RHYC – Gunfire at 20.00hrs preceded by a delicious (optional) 2 course supper at 19.00 for which a booking form is attached.

## Summer Programme:

### June 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>

Barge Weekend (following the Gravesend – Pin Mill Barge Passage Race). Exhibition on “Ships & Trade” at the Waterfront Centre. The PMSC Barge Match follows on Saturday, June 28<sup>th</sup>.

### August 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>

Vessels of the Old Gaffers Association will be rallying in Ipswich Dock – well worth a visit to view the fleet and witness the high-jinks which traditionally take place on the Sunday.

### September 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>

The 180' long, three-masted Barque “Picton Castle” intends to visit Ipswich. Some of the original members of IMT well recall her original visit to our port in the early '80 when, in a sorry state, she was making her way from the Baltic to Canada for conversion into the fine square rigger she is today. We very much hope that this visit comes to fruition. The IMT and members will be involved.

### September 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>

Ipswich Heritage Weekend at The Old Custom House. We are currently investigating the possibility of hosting an Art Exhibition at the Waterfront Centre over this weekend.

## Winter '08 Programme:

Our venue of the RHYC at Woolverstone has already been booked for our, now traditional, 1<sup>st</sup>. Wednesday evening in the month and lectures on a wide variety of subjects are in the process of being booked.

### October 1<sup>st</sup>

Brian Kennell/Rupert Marks on rebuilding the first-class smack "Pioneer" from a broken wreck deep in the Mersea mud to the fantastic vessel she is today.

### November 5<sup>th</sup> (Appropriately!)

“Bangs, Beams and Boffins”. Paddy Haezell of the National Trust at Orfordness will recount the history and goings-on there during the Ministry of Defence's tenure of the Ness. This promises to be both fascination and intriguing. (The writer well recalls being ordered down from the top of his mast by an armed guard whilst innocently sailing up the Ore!)

### December 3<sup>rd</sup>

"James Lawrence Part III". If you came to Parts I & II then you'll come to Part III. If you missed them, this is a MUST!

## Membership

A “thank you” to all who have renewed your membership for 2008, which now stands at 170 members and steadily increasing each year. For the very few people who have not yet renewed this year, you will find a reminder enclosed with this newsletter; your continued support of the Ipswich Maritime Trust would be greatly appreciated.

