

Newsletter January 2009

A very Happy New Year to all our members. It was not the best Summer in 2008 for weather – but an excellent one for the IMT!

A new Landmark: We now have over 200 members – and increasing! We welcome the following new members - Brian & Jillian Jepson, Mr & Mrs Ward, Niccola Kippax, Harry Durell, Ben Gummer, Leonard Woolf, Geoffrey Dyball, Stephen Minoprio.

New Developments

Windows on the Wharf: As The development on the old Cranfield's Mill site progresses so our dream of a maritime museum presence on the waterfront gets nearer. Something we have been looking forward to for many years. The development is in 2 stages and the 1st stage will shortly be finished; this will include the first of our museum cases as windows. This one will be the biggest, almost 4m long by 3m high! This window will be built to the highest museum case standards of conservation, security, lighting, humidity control etc. This will ensure that all artefacts and paintings are looked after properly. Shortly we will come to the task of filling this space with a display.

HELP!

Whilst we already have a number of very interesting pictures, ship models and other maritime related items in our store, we are looking for more things that could be used to tell a part of Ipswich's maritime story. We are in particular need of a **SITTING DISPLAY DUMMY** to act as a sailmaker sitting on a bench working on a sail, can any one help? Also anyone interested in joining a team that will research, plan, design, prepare and install exhibits for the display please get in touch.

If you can help please contact Des Pawson
01473 690090 or e-mail des@despawson.com

Achievements in 2008

One of our objectives is to sponsor local maritime worthy causes. This year we have:

- Contributed, practically and financially, to the permanent display in St Peters Church near Stoke Bridge with a display of our Maritime Heritage. (see August 2008 Newsletter.)
- Provided sponsorship for a worthy, local Sea Cadet to experience sea-time on a sail training ship.
- Sponsored the visit of the Barque "Picton Castle" to the town . . . see report below.
- Encouraged Ipswich Museum to purchase and retain a painting by John Moore of Ipswich. (see August 2008 Newsletter.)



'The West Cut' by John Moore

St Peters Church display



- Hosted our "Barge" and "Heritage" weekends, both with associated exhibitions . . . see report.
- Continued the series of monthly winter talks at the RHYC to capacity audiences.

Whilst on the subject of achievements – and a "Special Offer" - - - -

Tim Voelcker, a member of the Trust, has recently published his book: "Admiral Saumarez Versus Napoleon, the Baltic 1807-12" and will be giving our March talk on the Admiral (whose family home was later at Shrublands Hall, Claydon). Boydell & Brewer have just published his book in hardback (296 pages with 15 B/W 7 & 5 Line illustrations). The full price for this book is £45.

On the night of his talk, Tim will generously offer his book to IMT members a special price of £25 per copy. If you cannot wait until that date, or are unable to attend his talk, he would be very happy to post a copy to you for £25.00 plus £2.75 postage. Please contact him direct on 01473 659572.

The Future of the Ipswich Maritime Trust.

The IMT was started over 27 years ago by a bunch of enthusiastic volunteers.

As IMT grows, so do the tasks that need to be thought about. Opinions must be listened to and decisions have to be taken and then carried out. This year there will be 2 vacancies on the committee that need to be filled. Perhaps you have some ideas about how the Trust can develop and grow and could spare a little time to help our ever expanding organisation. The committee meets about 5-6 times in a year in the early evening at the Old Custom House.

Even if you feel that joining the Committee is too much, there are also little jobs that need to be done that do not necessarily mean attending the committee meeting but where a helping hand would be much appreciated. For example helping arrange the winter lecture series, maybe planning a summer trip out, helping with the collection of bookings and monies, working on the newsletter, planning exhibitions and displays, representing IMT at the meetings of other organisations or standing in for someone on holiday. Every little bit helps. If you feel that you may be able to contribute, either by standing for the committee or in some other way, please speak to any of the committee members or myself.

The future is in your hands.

If you can help please contact: Des Pawson
01473 690090 or email des@despawson.com

Retirement of Richard Smith from the Committee.

Members will either know, or know of, Richard Smith. Richard has decided to stand down from the committee of the Trust, having served on it since its inception in 1982.

His contribution has been enormous, not only to the Trust but also to recording the maritime history of "our" port and river. Many will have attended his exhibitions which he so ably organised with the help of Joan his wife, starting in the late 1970s and which showed the way for "Maritime Ipswich" the big event of 1982 and the start of IMT. Many of you will also have heard his fascinating talks over the years. Richard has written numerous books on a wide range of nautical matters which cover their varied subjects in well-researched detail and are beautifully illustrated. His latest, "The Thames Barge in Suffolk", is available directly from him or from The Tourist Information Centre and we look forward to his Magnum Opus on "The Trade of the Port of Ipswich" in the not too distant future.

Thank you Richard and Joan for your tremendous contribution to the Trust over the past 27 years and for all you have done to increase awareness of our Maritime Heritage. Richard has assured us that, although he wishes to reduce his IMT profile, we shall definitely continue to benefit from his knowledge and expertise. GOOD!

Des Pawson.

IMT Website

The Trust now has its own website www.ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk where details can be found of events, news and other items of interest. It is early days and we hope to expand the site as the Trust grows.

Our thanks to Stephen Cheek for designing and managing the site for us.

Last Summer's Events:

Barge weekend 21st 22nd June.

Once again Richard Smith & his wife Joan helped by Ben Bendall, Geoff Hartgrove, Bob Pawsey & Michael Ayden opened up the Old Custom House and put on a display of Barge related material on the weekend before the Pin Mill S.C. Match - it being the weekend of the Barge Passage Race to Ipswich. As in previous years, IMT had arranged with ABP that barges could lay in the dock for that week without charge unless they were chartering. It is always uncertain as to when barges arrive and where they will lay, unfortunately, this year those barges that did arrive lay on South West Quay rather than outside the Custom House. Thus visitors to our exhibition were not very numerous and we will have to think about what to do next year.

"Picton Castle" visit.

Here am I standing on the main mast cross trees of the PICTON CASTLE, looking down on Ipswich Dock and realising how this sight has changed over the centuries. By her visit the PICTON CASTLE gave the people of Ipswich a window back to the time when bluewater sail was seen as a regular thing.



It had been a very stressful week for both Captain Dan Moreland, storm bound off the island of Terschelling, on the north coast of the Netherlands and myself here in Ipswich, fending enquiries as to when, or if, she would arrive and all that implied. By dint of a strong first class ship, skilful seamanship and a strong master the PICTON CASTLE made it through

the lock gates at 16.10 on Saturday, a day late, but just in time for the Mayor's reception.

Geoff Hartgrove and I helped secure her lines after a fine display of seamanship, turning her round in the confined space of the dock, hemmed in by marinas. She has no bow thrusters, but used her engines, her yawl boat and spanker sail; marvellous work, especially after a 32 hour hard crossing.

What a different ship she was to the somewhat nondescript & battered old trawler converted to a coaster with no masts or spars that I had last seen in the spring of 1994. The dream that had bought her to Ipswich then had come true and here she was looking magnificent returning to the port that had been her home for almost 6 months.

It was very important that the Mayor and his party should have their reception on time; it was a close run thing with the caterers following the immigration officers on to the ship. It would have been very difficult to get across to the Mayor and his guests as even in these modern times, whilst a gentleman can come when he wishes, a sailor comes when he can. Dan Moreland, the master, who has spent a lifetime in bluewater sail, said that the crossing of the North Sea was some of the worst weather he had ever endured where he had a deadline to meet.

The Trust members who were lucky enough to attend our own reception on Sunday found an interesting and happy ship with her crew most welcoming. Dan Moreland spoke well on the importance of the WATERFRONT to a town, it being that place of interchange between ship and shore, a place where only certain things can be carried out. The dentist or solicitor can have their offices anywhere, but there are certain trades and tasks that can only take place on that point between land and water. This is something that I think that the IMT should not forget. Dan also explained the heritage of the port of Ipswich in the story of deep sea sail training, with Alan Villiers and his JOSEPH CONRAD setting out on her world circling trip in the 1930s and Irving Johnson's YANKEE coming from Pin Mill, the PICTON CASTLE continues in this tradition of providing true deep water sail training, keeping alive all

aspects of traditional seamanship skills, something that is very close to my heart.

Weather delayed the PICTON CASTLE'S departure, but she finally left Ipswich on Friday the 12th of September in the morning, with Geoff Hartgrove letting go her last line.

I feel sure she takes with her the goodwill of the people of Ipswich; we were certainly very lucky to have her here.

Des Pawson



This is Dan Moreland's message titled "DOWN CHANNEL" sent after leaving Ipswich.

"We have just sailed from Felixstowe heading for and past the mouth of the Thames and Dover and head down channel. It was great to see you in Ipswich. Yesterday we took the skiff, locked out and went down to the Butt & Oyster at Pin Mill, charming spot.

Weather looks OK for now - It can be just as bad as all those Hornblower novels around here, gale after westerly gale this time of year. Mostly spent hurricanes and tropical storms but still with plenty of punch left in them. And then in late October it gets worse. But we have a high pressure area building right now which

means good weather so we will put the pedal to the metal and get as far west as we can as quickly as we can. We are bound for Wales to make our pilgrimage to the Picton Castle about 450 miles away. Then on to France and St Nazaire which this ship last visited in March 1942, while participating on the first surface assault on Nazi occupied France. This was to take out the big dry-docks there, the only ones that could accommodate the German Battleships TIRPITZ and the BISMARCK. I have read somewhere that the HMS PICTON CASTLE swept mines for the advancing flotilla.

Leaving France we truly head south to Spain and Portugal and away from this turbulent weather of northern Europe. After spending the summer with all these fine Scandinavian sail-training ships, I am pretty impressed how they bang around the nasty North Sea all the time. As I have commented on a lot already, the weather hereabouts is volatile, oil-rigs and an enormous amount of traffic (large and small) everywhere, Traffic Separation Schemes to avoid, the waters are shallow making for square seas and plenty of current. And on top of that most of these big sailing ships really aren't doing regular sail-training anymore but more the two week adventure sailing that has become current today. Only the little Danish full-rigger GEORG STAGE is still making proper 6-month sail-training trips anymore. The rest are pretty much bending to market forces and taking anyone who can pay to play on one and two week trips, even daysails. In ships like the 1700 ton Bark STATSRAAD LEHMKUHL that's quite a stunt, methinks.

On the Tall Ship race from Bergen to Bremerhaven, the LEHMKUHL boarded 110 Dutch people the night before sailing, made the race and discharged those five days later in Germany. How they pull this off successfully I do not know, but they do. They don't have a big pro crew, in fact quite small and they have a very big impressive ship. And the ship looks great too. Painted nicely and clean as a whistle she is, first class operation.

As you know we sailed from Terschelling to Ipswich in 32 hours in modest gales across the bottom of the North Sea after being anchored in strong gales for three days. Ship did fine as did the crew. She is a pretty tough old bird. We

were pretty groggy when we saw you when we came in.

Now, we are ready to get going. We need a long sea passage. We will get one soon enough I guess. Very nice stop in Ipswich and nice break from the frenzy of Tall Ship festivals. The famous Johnson's bought the wooden pilot schooner that became the YANKEE here in Ipswich to start their seven world voyages and Captain Alan Villiers started his Cruise of the full-rigger JOSEPH CONRAD here too in the early 1930's. The two lads 'Hardcase' and 'Stormalong' who figure prominently in the book were still around 15 years ago and we became well acquainted. Sad to say they are gone now. YANKEE books and Cruise of the CONRAD also worth reading as they relate very much to what we do.

We are all fine and looking to turn the corner soon, crave some trade-winds, we do. However, regardless of any grumbling about the North Sea, it has all made for a pretty strong crew – the lock keepers played us a song on the way out! Thanks for all and best regards, Dan”

Heritage Weekend 13th 14th September.

IMT once again opened up the Old Custom House for this nationwide event. Richard Smith put on an exhibition on Barges in Suffolk and Brian Jepson exhibited a fine selection of paintings, drawings and photos covering the Dock and other maritime subjects. Our exhibition was well supported by the public. In addition to Richard, his wife Joan and Brian Jepson the event was supported by Bob Fox, Fraser Yates, Des Pawson & Diana Lewis. Our thanks to them all.

Winter talks 2008

“Pioneer”.

The first of our series of '08-'09 Winter lectures was, as usual, held at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club on October 1st and was, again as usual, a great success!

On Wednesday, October 1st Brian Kennell told a crowded house how he and a small number of dedicated enthusiasts decided to “investigate” the few remaining pieces of the Essex smack “Pioneer” which were protruding from the mud at West Mersea.



Hosing away the mud and applying airbags, they managed to retrieve the last remaining 1st Class Essex *Skilling*er ketch – all 68' of her. (Skillingers were far larger than the Essex smacks we know well and were built to cross the North Sea to dredge for oysters off Terschelling.)

Her ragged and frail remains were transported to a nearby barn and, using a few old photographs and some of the remaining structural components, she was completely rebuilt by Brian and Sean White whilst Rupert Marks managed the project.

The work was illustrated by a series of excellent photographs which went on to show the new “Pioneer”, parked on a trailer outside Colchester Castle! Next came her launch, commissioning and then under sail.

Today, she is operated by the “Pioneer Trust”, taking the young to sea.

Thank you Brian for a talk which left the entire audience spellbound, not only by the skill and dedication displayed on this project but also the “vision” of seeing, in a few ribs protruding from the mud, a beautiful - and useful – vessel.

“Bombs, Beams and Boffins”

This lecture title certainly teased the mind! On November 5th (appropriately!) Paddy Heazel gave his talk to a crowded room on the part Orfordness played in the 2 World Wars and later, the Cold War.

Chosen for its remote position and inherent security, Orfordness became a test site for the military before WWI. An airstrip was



built and the earliest bomb aiming trials and experiments carried out. Paddy showed us pictures of those hit-and-miss days (more miss than hit it seems) together with the structures built on The Ness, mostly now long gone. Between the wars, Watson-Watt came there and the development of RADAR began along with enormous aerials – this in conjunction with Bawdsey.

Nuclear warhead detonators were developed and tested. The bunkers (looking like Pagodas) remain. Paddy told us that the remoteness of the site made high security unnecessary and the lack of this apparently led the Germans to believe that nothing suspicious was going on there – so left it alone!

With the Cold War came ‘Cobra Mist’ – a means of long distance detection of aircraft and missiles. It was developed at Orfordness in partnership with the USA. Many other secret weapons and devices were tested but little remains of this work other than odd structures dotted here and there. Investigations continue! Since the MOD left the site, it has been cleared of the many bits of unexploded ordinance and the site taken over by the National Trust. The Ness is open to the public where the NT offers tours of this fascinating piece of our military history.

Our thanks to Paddy for his expert and entertaining talk.

Would you be interested in an IMT Group Visit to Orfordness?

“It warn’t always Summer”

James Lawrence did us proud yet again on December 3rd! This was his third talk to IMT covering his early days sailing cargo-carrying barges. The over-capacity audience was treated to another feast of James’ ability to take his audience to sea with him and to thoroughly enjoy the experience!

We accompanied him on a typical winter voyage of that time from Ipswich to London, on to Gt. Yarmouth and back to his home port of Mistle. (The accompanying



photo of a barge “surfing” into Yarmouth made us glad we were sitting in a warm clubhouse!) Throughout his talk we were treated to many amusing and other, frightening, tales of life aboard a working barge.

“James Lawrence Part IV” (and onwards) is very much on the cards – we can hardly wait!

Thanks Jim, for yet another wonderful evening.

Coming Events

The People’s View of the Barque PICTON CASTLE

Photographic Exhibition 2nd – 28th February 2009.

The Ipswich Tourist Information Centre, St Stephens Church.

Hopefully many of you that took photos when the PICTON CASTLE visited Ipswich will have contributed to the competition that has created this exhibition. All the photos will be on show at the Ipswich Tourist Information Centre, St Stephens Church, St. Stephens Lane, Ipswich IP1 1DP between the 2nd and 28th of February from 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday. Come and see the 6 photos that have been selected to be sent to the PICTON CASTLE as “a thank you” for visiting Ipswich. Dependant on the exact number of entries there will also be a selection of historic photos of the port.

Drop in and see some history!

(see next page for details of 2009 talks)

Membership renewal

Membership subscriptions for 2009 are now due. If you pay by Standing Order – a big thank you for renewing your membership.

For those that do not pay by Standing Order, a renewal form is enclosed – we look forward to your continuing membership.

Spring 2009 Talks



February 4th. '09. Wednesday.

Ron Davies, “Ships and Shipping on the Orwell”.



Ron has been closely involved with our river for over 40 years, working as a shipping agent here and on the Thames. Armed with a camera and tremendous enthusiasm, he has recorded the wide variety of shipping using the port and the many changes which have taken place on and around our waters. There are several tales to tell

March 4th. '09. Wednesday.

Tim Voelcker, “Subterfuge and Skulduggery: the Voyage of the Wilhelm Gustave”.

Tim, a member of the IMT, looks at smuggling and politics in the Baltic during the Napoleonic Wars and how Admiral Saumarez’ used skilful diplomacy to defeat the French Blockade and set Napoleon on his fatal march on Moscow.



Tim’s book “*Admiral Saumarez versus Napoleon – The Baltic 1807-12*” has just been published and is now available, see special offer above.

April 1st. '09. Wednesday.

Sean McMillan, “Spirit Yachts - the Story so far”.



Sean, co-founder and managing director of Spirit Yachts, talks about how he got into yacht design and building, how Spirit Yachts started, how they came to be in Ipswich Dock and what they do in that big shed on New Cut East.

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 served at 19.00, talk commences at 20.00hrs

Members £2.50, non-members £3.50

Supper reservations at £12.00 (Optional, but why not enjoy a full evening out!)

Enquiries/bookings - email bookings@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk

April 1st '09. Wednesday. Sean McMillan, "Spirit Yachts - the Story so far".

Reservations for supper must be received by Wednesday, March 25th. It is only necessary to reserve places for supper but please add payment for the lecture.

Please reserve place/s for supper at £12.00 per head. £ _____
Any special dietary requirements
I require members' seat/s at £2.50 per head £ _____
I require non-members' seat/s at £3.50 per head £ _____
Total enclosed (by Wednesday, March 25th.) £ _____

Name (Printed please):

Cheques made payable to 'IMT' and sent to: IMT, Gleniffer, Lower Holbrook, Ipswich IP9 2RJ
Or you can email your reservation to <bookings@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk> and pay on the night.

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Please reserve place/s for supper at £12.00 per head. £ _____
Any special dietary requirements
I require members' seat/s at £2.50 per head £ _____
I require non-members' seat/s at £3.50 per head £ _____
Total enclosed (by Wednesday, January 28th.) £ _____

Name (Printed please):

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