



## News letter January 2007

The Committee of the IMT wishes you a Happy New Year  
and looks forward to welcoming you to our events

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### Subscriptions Special Offer

Membership subscriptions are now due. If you have not paid by Standing Order, a reminder is included with this mailing. Free entrance to a lecture is given to any member who changes their payment method from cash/cheque to Standing Order.

### New Members

We would like to welcome to the following new members of the IMT

David Smuk  
Patrick Fisher  
Dr C & Mrs G Craggs  
Nigel Waller & Felicity Green  
John Lusher  
Miss O Plowman and Mr I Smith  
Sue Lewis & Howard Wheelton  
Dr. and Mrs. Chris Brown  
Peter Dye & Jane Best  
Frank King  
Colin Fox  
Mr B & Mrs L Askew  
Tim & Louise Hunt  
Pauline and James Lawrence  
Renee & Keith Waite  
Tony & Jeanette James  
Mr. and Mrs Andrea Dickinson  
Dr. and Mrs. Baxter  
Mr & Mrs C Wilkinson  
Brian & Lorna Hammett

### Future Events

#### March 7<sup>th</sup> John Field

#### **Maritime Ipswich in the story of America with a focus on Jamestown**

This year is the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gosnold expedition to America. This lecture is one of the IMT's contribution to the commemoration to this event.

#### April 4<sup>th</sup> Capt Richard Woodman

#### **The Merchant Service in the Napoleonic War**

Richard Woodman's expertise on this period in our history is well known, as is his ability to tell an enthralling story.

*The booking form for March 7<sup>th</sup> is enclosed with this newsletter. Please remember that guests are welcomed to all our events.*

In addition more events are being planned for the summer including exhibitions in the Old Custom House on 30<sup>th</sup> June/1<sup>st</sup> July, and Heritage Weekend 8<sup>th</sup> / 9<sup>th</sup> September. More details of these and other events will be included in the next newsletter.

## New Timings

During 2006 the membership of the IMT has increased from 116 to 156. The RHYC has proved to be a very popular venue, with many members taking advantage of the pre-talk suppers. However, we are changing the timings of the meetings; the **bar will open at 6.45pm**, with supper being served at **7.00p.m.** and lectures will begin at **8.00pm**.

## AGM 2006

The very brief AGM which preceded Brian Hammett's excellent talk on Arthur Ransome, was very well attended. As committee members are elected for a three year term, one third stood down. The new Committee is composed of the following;

Chairman	Des Pawson
Treasurer	Richard Thomas
Membership	Fraser Yates

John Field	Bob Fox
Judith Grimwade	Mark Grimwade
Stuart Grimwade	Geoff Hartgrove
Gerry Jones	Bob Pawsey
Richard Smith	

## Past Events

### November: Jim Lawrence My Early Days Barging Part 2

A large gathering of IMT members and their guests (many of whom proceeded to join the Trust) enjoyed Part II of Jim Lawrence's talk "My Early Days Barging" in October at our new, extremely comfortable and hospitable venue, the Royal Harwich Yacht Club at Woolverstone.

Jim is a born raconteur! His talk was enhanced by some excellent images, both visual and verbal. He had a great deal to tell us about the early post WWII years of his

youth when Thames Barges plied their original trade of carrying cargoes and made

a precarious living with no assistance from an "iron tops'l".

He continued from where he ended Part I – at the tender age of 19 when he was given his first command. Time has moved on but, happily we know much more about those days from a true "insider". Meanwhile, barges continue to sail but with cargos of charterers in place of haystacks, cement, grain and timber. He recounted in exquisite and often hilarious detail the different handling qualities of his numerous commands and his exploits up and down the coast, the various people who served as mate and his changes of employer.

Jim was also deeply involved in the post-war resurgence in Barge Racing, giving us an insight into the "behind the scenes" preparations and goings-on for at these Matches together with stories about the many skippers and barges concerned - now mostly – a part of our local maritime history.

The evening ended with the tale of his (brief!) foray into motorbarging .... which resulted in "fire down below"!

Thanks indeed Jim

### December: Brian Hammett and Arthur Ransome

The Arthur Ransome expert, Brian Hammett, entertained and informed the large and appreciative audience following the Trust's recent AGM. He started by recounting how his Ransome addiction was sparked at the age of eleven by a present of the book 'Swallows and Amazons' from his father. After that, he said, his life changed for ever.

Having acquired and read all twelve of the 'Swallows and Amazon' series he then went about researching the life and times of Arthur Ransome and shared a fascinating summary of this with us. This included Ransome's early years in Bohemian London where his erratic eating habits probably

started his ulcerated stomach which was to cause him great discomfort in later years. It followed with his disastrous marriage to Ivy Walker. Despite the couple having a child, Tabitha, Arthur felt that he had nothing in common with Ivy and in 1913 escaped to Russia to report on the start of the Russian revolution for the Manchester Guardian.

Whilst in Russia Arthur met and fell in love with Evgenia Shelepina who was working for Trotsky. Despite still being married to Ivy, Arthur and Evgenia had a passionate affair and became inseparable. In 1921 they set up house just outside Riga in Latvia where Arthur had his first cruising yacht, Racundra, built.

After having 'Old Peter's Russian Tales', 'Rod and Line' and 'Racundra's First Cruise' published Arthur used his knowledge and love of the Lake District where he had stayed as a young man with the Collingwood family to write 'Swallows and Amazons' which was published in 1930.

Brian went on to describe Arthur's time in Pin Mill where he and Evgenia, now married, rented Broke Farm in 1933. By this time Arthur had a thirty foot cutter, Nancy Blackett, which was moored at Pin Mill and was the model for 'Goblin' which features in 'We Didn't Mean to go to Sea' published in 1937.

Nancy Blackett was followed by Selina King built by King's Boatyard in Pin Mill in 1939. Sadly the outbreak of war prevented the Ransomes from using Selina King for the duration of hostilities, after which Arthur felt too unwell to handle her and sold her. Unable to give up sailing completely Arthur commissioned Peter Duck, a Giles designed ketch, to be built by Kings. Arthur had a love and hate relationship with Peter Duck selling her once, re-purchasing her and finally selling her again in 1948 when they moved to Lowick Hall near Nibthwaite.

In 1950, suffering from considerable ill health the Ransomes moved to London, and Arthur commissioned yet another yacht, Lottie Blossom to be built by Hillyard's of Littlehampton. Lottie was moored in Chichester. Despite being seventy and

having 'an anthology of ailments' Arthur and Evgenia enjoyed their cruising until 1954 when Arthur finally swallowed the anchor.

After answering some questions, Brian concluded his talk with a highly amusing, spoof shipping forecast which included sea areas Lundy, Monday and Funday, Doggerbank, Barclays Bank and HSBC, and Iceland, Tesco and ASDA. I wish I could remember more. The audience's verdict was GOOD!

We would like to thank Malcolm Harding for this excellent review.

### **Artefact Collection**

The Trust is building a collection of Marine Artefacts for a Maritime Museum in Ipswich. Those artefacts already in store are being professionally catalogued. These stern boards were very kindly donated by Colin Fox who recently joined the Trust.



The IMT is always please to receive contributions for its collection.

### **Can You Help?**

To further the work of the IMT, we would like to create our own Web-Site. However, we need help to first build the site and then to maintain it and keep it up to date. You would not be required to produce the information that would go on the web-site,

but to concentrate on the technical parts. As there are distinct parts to this brief, the tasks could be shared. Volunteers would be welcomed and should contact.....

Alternatively, do you know of someone who could help us?