

Newsletter January 2021

2020 – a brief summary

2020 was a challenging year and has affected us all, members, volunteers and supporters alike. We have adapted and tried new ideas to keep Ipswich Maritime Trust going and promoting our local maritime heritage.

What we have achieved includes

- Awarding the inaugural 'Richard W Smith Memorial Prize' to local historian and author Robert Malster
- Held a trial of on-line talks in December on 'Ropemaking in Ipswich' by Des Pawson which attracted over 60 'attendees' including a number from Europe and the further afield.
- Successfully ran a number of Thames barge trips on sb Victor, albeit with reduced numbers to keep within the Covid-19 requirements.
- Installed the 20th Window Museum exhibition on the theme the 'Development of the Dock'
- Expanded the website to include 'Our News', which is also sent to our members on email and often features contributions from our members as part of the 'Maritime Memoirs', another exciting new project
- Worked with Suffolk County Council on exhibition planning for 'The Hold' building opposite the UOS, and worked with Ipswich Borough Council to restore historic quay name plates along the Waterfront
- Added two more titles to our series of Occasional Papers on 'Ropemaking in Ipswich' and on 'The New Cut and Over Stoke'
- Launched a Maritime Library with books available for anyone carrying out research.

Further details of some of these are in this newsletter and our 'Our News' page on the IMT website features an article by Andy Parker on the challenges of 2020 under the heading 'Roundup of 2020'.

Maritime Memoir Project

During the first lockdown we held discussions to see how we could best preserve and share maritime stories before they are lost forever. This led to the launch of the Maritime Memoir Project and an appeal to IMT members to get in touch with us with their stories. We have had some amazing stories shared with us and cannot wait for more submissions. Find out more on the [Maritime Memoir Page](#) and please get involved to keep these stories about Maritime Ipswich alive. If you have a story you would like to contribute but would prefer to write rather than contact us via email, you can write to us at IMT, 501 Wherstead Road, Ipswich, IP2 8LL



One of the stories we received is from Barbara Butler who last year, in the 80th year commemoration of the Evacuation of the British Expeditionary force from Dunkirk, was due to give us a talk on the subject of 'Ipswich Barges at Dunkirk'. One of the stories that would have featured is reproduced below.

Andy Parker

TWO TINS OF BISCUITS AND FIVE CANS OF WATER

Five of R & W Paul's barges took part in the evacuation, *TOLLESBURY*, *ENA*, *BARBARA JEAN*, *AIDIE* and *DORIS*.

TOLLESBURY is a wooden barge built in 1901 by H. Felton, at Sandwich, as a cargo vessel. Official Number: 110315. Length Overall 84ft, displacement 70 tons. She was named by Mr. Fisher, her owner in 1901 from the fishing village of Tollesbury in Essex, on a tributary of the river Blackwater. The village was a loading port for the stack barges which could lie alongside for horse drawn wagons to unload them.



TOLLESBURY entering Ipswich docks through the lock, 1920's *

From 1912 she joined the fleet of R & W Paul Ltd, of East Anglia, maltsters, purchased for £500. She carried mostly grain, malt and animal feeds but also stone, coal, coke and pitch around the south coast and across the channel.

Roger Finch:

"The organisers of 'Operation Dynamo' were especially anxious to enrol wooden sailing barges in the rescue attempt, for they could run up the gently shelving Dunkirk beach, immune from magnetic and acoustic mines, and act as embarking points for the troops who, using them as a bridge, could then reach the safety of deeper draught rescue vessels."

Ipswich Port records show *TOLLESBURY* departing 26th May; skipper Lemon Webb (Lem). Next day, Lem with his mate Edward 'Gunner' Gunn and third hand 'Scotty' Scott, (of 13, Kemp Street, Ipswich) were sailing *TOLLESBURY* up the Thames near Erith when a naval launch came alongside. The Port of London official ordered him to go instead to Cory's jetty at Sheerness. There, he, the mate Gunner and a young lad, nineteen, were given the choice to leave the ship or to volunteer to evacuate the BEF from Dunkirk. None of them hesitated. From there she was towed to Tilbury Basin and on to Dover with skipper, mate and third hand onboard.

On 31st May *SUN XII*, (owners: W H J Alexander and Co Ltd), with no recorded Naval Officer on board left Dover for Dunkirk at 16:00 under tug master A. V. Mee and navigator B. R. Mastin. The tug *SUN XII* towed both the big Everard barge *ETHEL EVERARD* loaded with shells, small arms ammunition, water and provisions for Dunkirk and *TOLLESBURY* loaded with stores and dynamite. Just making that dangerous journey with such a cargo, under heavy attack from the air, knowing that any direct hit would blow the vessel and its crew to smithereens would be enough to unnerve the bravest of souls. The tug *FAIRPLAY I* was also towing barges in company.

There was an air attack en-route and by the time *TOLLESBURY* arrived, the light was fading. They arrived at Dunkirk at 23:50, both tugs putting their barges ashore at Bray-Dunes. The tow rope was dropped as far inshore as the tug's deep draught would allow. The three-man crew were left to get on with it. Lem's orders were to beach, but as there was no wind at all, using the barge's long sweeps, the crew of three actually rowed her in the direction of the shore.

The calm night sea of summer was full of phosphorescence, so when an enemy aircraft approached the rowing had to stop so as not to give away their position. The sky was lit up by explosions or the eerie light of flares. Cries for help came from the shore as waiting troops sighted them.

Lem, his mate and the third hand got the soldiers to help them discharge the cargo and once done they were ordered to abandon *TOLLESBURY* for use as an embarkation platform to enable troops to reach the ships anchored in deeper water. At that moment Lem Webb displayed the most extraordinary courage. A barge man is a different fellow from a naval officer. He is an independent so-and-so, used to making his own decisions about the vessel in his charge. He was no less captain of his ship than those who commanded the destroyers and frigates lying off-shore. He could, and did, disobey orders.

As he looked at the desperate men wading out towards him, their eyes full of hope, he said to himself 'b***** that'. He stood on his 84 feet of solid English Oak and decided he would not abandon her, or the men she could bring home. He lowered the heavy boarding ladder; a surge caused it to break against the hull. He and the mate swung the barge boat from the davits, lowering it so that the stern was level with the water. He then improvised a gangplank and waved the men to come aboard. Other men frantically clambered or were pulled up the leeboards and over the rail, sliding down into the illusory safety of the hold where they stood as one solid body in the darkness. Some were sea-sick,

some relieved themselves against the inwales; the barge smelled like a sewer and would have to be hosed and bilges pumped out before she could ever take another cargo of grain for Paul's. Under constant attack from the air, the barge was a sitting target as they waited anxiously for her to float, expecting at any moment to be hit.

Full as she could be, push as they might with the setting booms both the soldiers and crew could not get her clear of the shingle beach. As another day dawned, with the threat of more air attacks, then she lifted to the swell, carrying 273 soldiers off the beaches. Setting all sail Lem tacked further out before the wind dropped and he was forced to anchor. A signaller from among the soldiers fixed up two semaphore flags using broom handles and code flags. A destroyer, realising her plight, dashed to the rescue, preparing to take the soldiers off, but as a second destroyer came to the other side of the barge further air attacks forced them to move away. Both ships were sunk, but astonishingly *TOLLESBURY* was not hit.

Captain Simmons report continues to recount the events of the crossing until they anchored in the Old Cudd Channel:

"Motor-boats then disembarked our troops, also took off the wounded out of the barge TOLLESBURY which could not be taken into the harbour on account of the congestion in there. In all about 270 soldiers were landed from us and from our tow. We were ordered to take the barge to Gravesend.

I enquired as to what had become of a fleet of 30 French and Belgium fishermen who had spoken to me early that morning on my way to Dunkirk, who were sailing with all their families to England. I had given them a course and wished them luck. I was told that they had all arrived safely well loaded with families and troops after having sailed right over the Goodwin Sands on the High water. That was just one of the Miracles of the evacuation.

We proceeded at 6 am towing the barge TOLLESBURY, ORION 1V and two small boats. We had towed the TOLLESBURY across with 15 fathoms of chain out on her anchor, forgetting all about the magnetic mines. At 10 pm we dropped anchor at Southend.

Sunday 2nd June: Proceeded at daylight for Gravesend. Made barge TOLLESBURY fast at the Ship and Lobster buoy and the ORION 1V and the two small boats I handed over to the Gravesend Customs."

Miraculously *TOLLESBURY* still was not damaged. On 1st June the tug *CERVIA* brought her safely home 100 miles to Blighty. Off the North Goodwin a mine exploded near her to starboard. Again she sustained no damage, finally dropping anchor in Ramsgate Roads.

As they brought them home Lemon Webb and his two-man crew were able to give the 273 men aboard water from the cans loaded at Dover, two tins of biscuits and five cans of water.

TOLLESBURY continued in trade under sail. Her first engine was installed in 1950. She was taken out of trade in 1965, and then sailed privately. In 1978 she was a houseboat at Pin Mill on the River Orwell, owned by Mrs. D. Tonkin. She was rebuilt at Ipswich Dock-end in 1989/1992 and powered by a Ruston and Hornsby engine. She moved to London, owned by David Paling as a floating pub at Millwall. She was badly damaged by the IRA Docklands bomb in 1996 after which she was again restored. Having been put up for sale in 2004 she sunk at her berth in September 2005. She was raised and laid up at Fresh Wharf Estate, Barking Creek as a houseboat in 2010. She is registered with National Historic Ships UK.

Re-instatement of Historic Quay and Wharf names



Our Chair Geoffrey and Ipswich Borough Councillor Phil Smart with one of the new nameplates for Wherry Quay

Our first Occasional Paper, published in 2011, was in part designed to encourage all those involved in the future redevelopment of Ipswich's historic Waterfront to recognise the importance of the old quay names, and of the need to reinstate them in their rightful locations, in preference to new and entirely irrelevant names of no local significance.

Since then every opportunity was taken to exert what felt like unrelenting pressure on all those bodies with a role to play to bring this about, and so it is gratifying, but with a sense of relief, that we can now report that action has finally been taken, celebrated with a small 'launch' ceremony on 2nd December with the help of Wes on Victor's foredeck.

However more work still needs to be done. As Geoffrey Dyball's Press Release said, some of the old quay names, such as Common Quay, pre-date the coming of the postal address system, and so the Trust is hoping to re-establish these too in an informal way with the help of the Ipswich Society. We are pleased to be working with the Borough Council to reintroduce the historic quay names that were once commonly used during the working lifetime of the Wet Dock. The chosen design is a most attractive variant on the usual street plates and bears the Borough crest at the top.

Work on this topic therefore continues, not only in respect of additional quay names we still wish to reinstate, but also research into the many old names long since lost in the mists of time. The current state of play on this is listed in the newly updated version of Occasion Paper No.1, available to view

or download from the website. Everyone with an interest in local history is of course welcome to help with this research.



The images were taken on 2nd December, which perhaps when seen in future years will put in perspective the sobering thought that plagues and pestilence have always regularly affected our port, possibly more frequently than we have ever realised.

Stuart Grimwade

To find out more about the Historic Quays and Wharves please check out our [Occasional Paper](#) on the subject

Another Maritime Memoir -

A maritime wintry tale - January 1963

Many will remember the 1963 winter. It was January and the Ipswich Dock Commission dredger became an ice breaker to retrieve the navigation buoys swept away by ice floes. She could do nothing about the tide gauge, which was a piled dolphin at Collimer Point, which indicated the tide depth at Ipswich. The ice had demolished it, and I believe it was never replaced.

Against this background, Fox's Boatyard received a telephone call from a Harley Street doctor, could we rescue his yacht the Ailsa. On her mooring at Pin Mill, he had reports of her imminent loss and was most distraught. The yard launch was well iced in, her winterised Kelvin engine resembling a polar bear's idea of heaven, so no help there. Taking a 10ft ft fibre glass dinghy and a 10hp Mercury outboard engine from the chandlery stock, we ventured out on to the ice, on foot, dragging the dinghy to Bourne Bridge. Once afloat, we, being Bob Fox and the yard rigger Cookie, well muffled but no life jackets, proceeded down

the river to Pin Mill. Although late in the day, the iceblink' enabled us to easily see and dodge round the bigger floes, a reversed oar fending off the smaller ice, and going very slowly!

Once alongside the 40ft Ailsa we moored, so as to enable all 10hp to be used. After clearing the ice forward, and using the yacht's helm, we motored up to Ipswich Lock gates, having time for a well-reinforced cup of coffee to restore circulation to hands and feet.

Oh yes, come the spring, the proud dinghy owner never did know of his dinghy's winter adventures. And we never received our polar medals!

Bob Fox

Development of the Dock

The Window Museum 20th display



The display tells the story of the transformation of the Ipswich waterfront and the Wet Dock from the early 1800s to the present day.

Since Anglo Saxon times Ipswich has been a port town. Ships used to sail up the River Orwell, ideally on a rising tide, berthing at quays close to the town to load or unload their cargoes. When the tide ebbed, the ships were left high and dry, often leaned over and were impossible to move. This became an increasing problem at the end of the 18th Century as ships became larger and deeper and something had to be done to keep Ipswich alive as a growing commercial port. Edward Caley's 1837 drawings depict an active waterfront but the quays were quite dilapidated in places.

A 'Dock Committee', was formed in 1836 and asked the civil engineer, Henry Palmer, to assess the viability of a 'Wet Dock', whereby ships could stay afloat in deep water at all stages of the tide. A copy of Palmer's report is in this display. The idea was to dam the River Orwell near the present lock, dredge out the river bed and remove adjacent boggy marshland to provide a stay-afloat dock some 13 hectares in extent – the largest in England at the time. The tidal river channel would be diverted along a new cut and ships would enter the dock through a lock opposite what is now Felaw Street. Work started in 1838 and the dock opened for business in 1842.

However the lock was awkwardly placed for ships to enter and was replaced by new lock in 1881. This lock is still in use today. New quays were constructed around the dock during the 19th

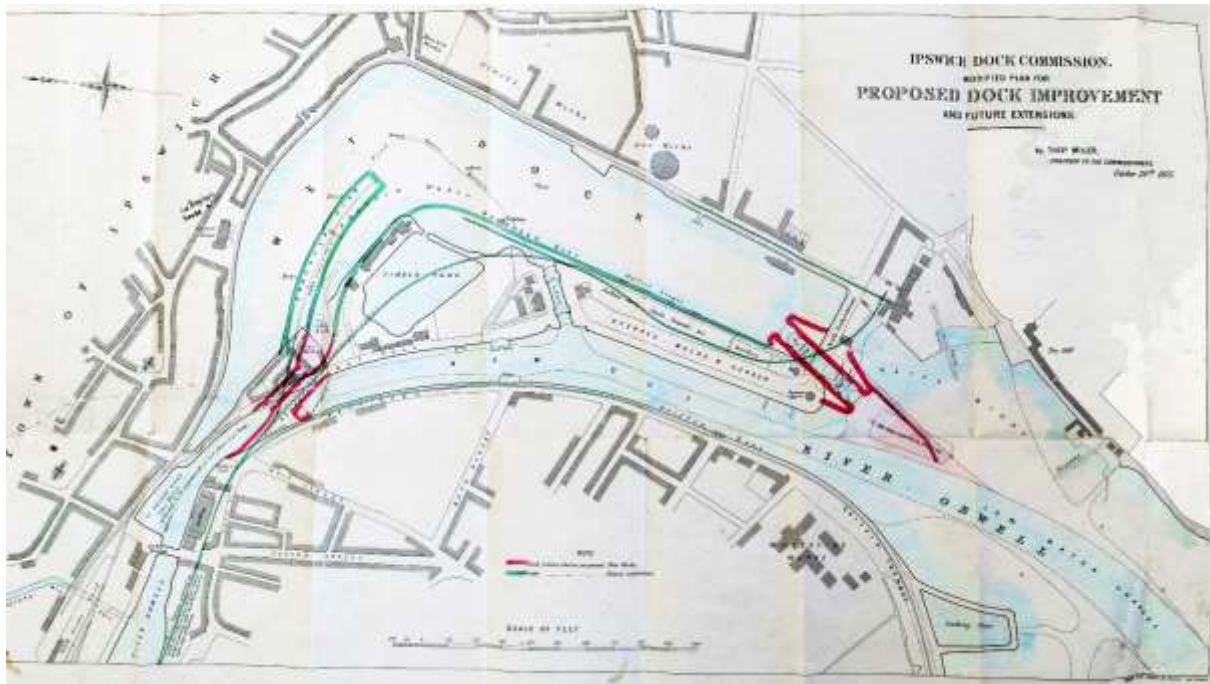
and 20th Centuries to cater for new industries in the town. The dock's 'heyday' was probably the 1960s but by this time larger ships were using Cliff Quay and the West Bank Terminal outside of the Wet Dock. After a near stagnation of trade in the wet dock, with the exception of the import of pirt props and export of malted barley, leisure boating increased during the 1980s and the dock has been largely converted to a marina, although timber is still regularly imported into one dockside warehouse.



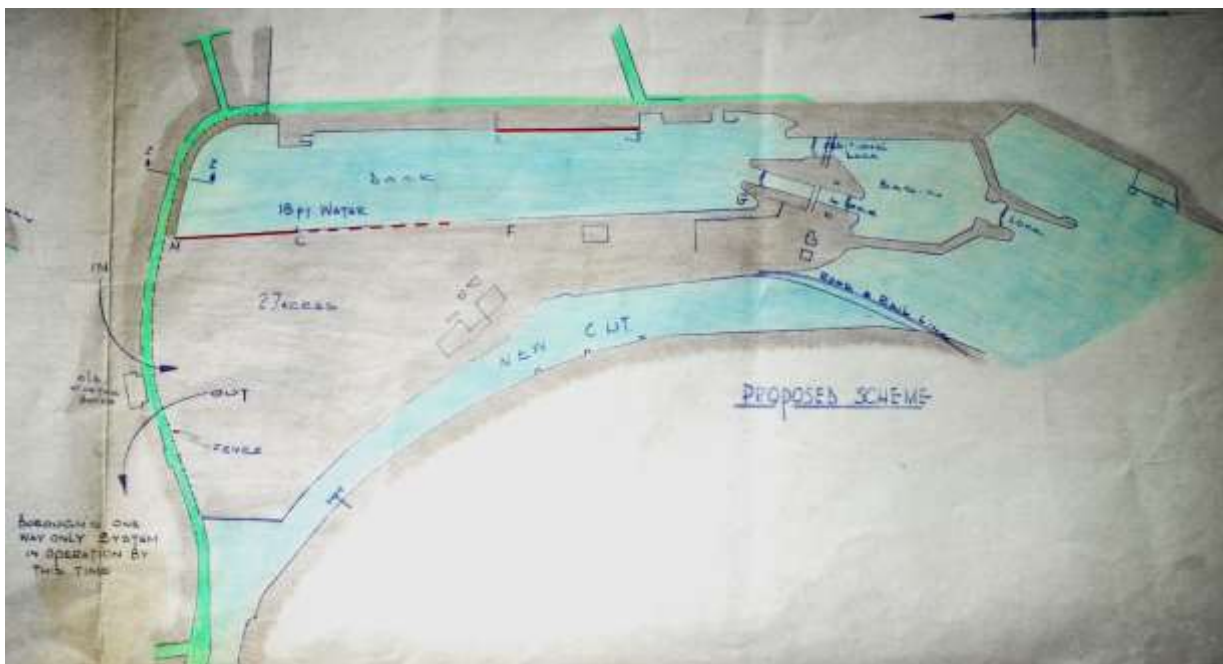
The centre piece of this Window Museum exhibition is a historic map of the Wet Dock adapted by our volunteers Colin and Stuart to make it 3D, highlighting the Wet Dock prior to the creation of the New Lock Gates in 1881.

We have included some incredible images of the Wet Dock since its creation, including a unique illustration of the Ipswich Docks prior to the creation of the Wet Dock, a drone photo of the Wet Dock and rare images of the construction of the New Lock Gates in 1881.

A selection of plans are showcased, including those that were put into use and those that were merely proposals, such as the two shown below from 1875 and 1971.



The above plan is copied directly from the original Proposals Map drawn by Thomas Miller for the Dock Commissioners in 1875. His proposals were radical, and included (in pink) a weir across the New Cut (in front of the present day Stoke Quay buildings) and a lock to give direct access for Stowmarket Navigation barges into the River Gipping under Stoke Bridge. This would have resulted in water in the Gipping remaining at a high level above the new weir at all states of the tide. A complementary proposal, in green, was for a cargo transfer 'finger' wharf in the middle of the dock. In the event, these elements of the Proposals were never implemented. His second major proposal was for the new lock at the southern end of the dock giving easier passage for sailing vessels approaching and leaving the dock, and a new quay along the western side of the dock, then a shelving beach.



In 1971 the Ipswich Dock Commission engineer prepared alternative proposals to fill in much of the Wet Dock, one of which is reproduced here. It is believed that this was a response to the then declining number of commercial vessels trading into the dock, and also concern over the future costs of stabilising some of the dock walls and quay surfaces. How fortunate we are that none of the proposals to fill in the dock were ever implemented!

Also included are some models of the Customs House's and Umbrella created by former volunteer Peter 'Ben' Bendall, who sadly passed away earlier this year while still working and contributing to this display. The next exhibition will be in tribute to Ben and the incredible work he provided to the Window Museum and the Ipswich Maritime Trust during his time with us.

*Andy Parker
Additional material by Stuart Grimwade*

Big plans for the future of the Ipswich Maritime Trust collection.

It is hoped that we will soon be able to share with the world, details of the collection of interesting artefacts that we have been lucky enough to acquire over the last dozen years or more. We anticipate making access to this information via a digital system called **e-Hive**, which a number of other Suffolk Museums already use.

To achieve this aspiration, every item will have to be photographed and details entered into a database. This is quite an undertaking and we need help in the process. Are you, or do you know anybody that may be interested in helping with this big leap forward?

If so, please contact Richard Watkinson at richardwatkinson7@gmail.com or Des Pawson on 01473 690090 or des@despawson.com

The IMT Reference Library

Over the years the Trust has been given maritime books to sell. The Window Wizards saw that some of these books were rare or useful reference works and so decided to keep them and create a reference library.

Currently there are 186 items in the following categories: Barges, Dictionaries, East Coast Shipping, General Interest, General Maritime, Ipswich (Town, Port & River Orwell), Maritime Art, Navigation and Seamanship.

Should any member of IMT be interested in seeing the current library catalogue please email library@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk and a copy can be sent. If any IMT member believes that a listed book might help them with their research it should be possible to arrange for them to see the book and perhaps borrow it for a maximum of 3 weeks.

Des Pawson, for the Window Wizards

The Richard W Smith Memorial Award

This new award¹ from the Ipswich Maritime Trust is to be given annually to the person or organisation who, in the opinion of the IMT Trustees, have contributed in a significant way to the understanding of local maritime culture or heritage. For 2020 IMT it was awarded it to the local author and historian Robert Malster.

When it comes to knowledge of East Anglian history and heritage, especially maritime matters, there is no one who has contributed more than Robert Malster.

Robert has been a leading supporter, often taking an active role, in many local history societies. Whenever a question of local maritime history arises, the answer would be “ask Bob Malster” and, when asked, he is always be helpful and frequently going beyond a simple answer and providing information in depth.

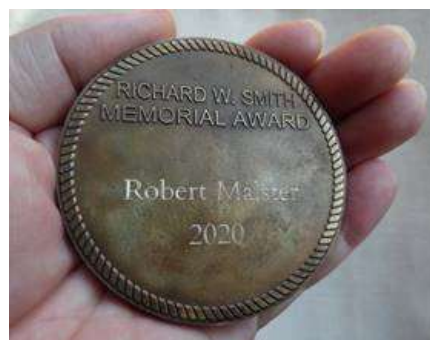


Not only has he written and spoken on many aspects of East Anglian local history and has been active in many societies, but less obviously, he has been for many years instrumental in getting large numbers of other people to put their researches into writing, championing them and helping them to be published. It is not just the books that bear his name, but many, many others that have been published on East Anglian local history in the last 45 years owe something to Robert Malster. Indeed, at times, he has provided his editorial services freely in order to get an important work of local history before the public. Recent examples would be his work on R. W. Smith & J. Freestone’s important book “*The Port of Ipswich, its shipping and trades*” (2011) as well as H. Moffat’s “*Ships and Shipyards of Ipswich 1700-1970*” (2002). An earlier example would be Ted Frost’s “*From Tree to Sea*” (1985). These important works of local history would never have been published but for Bob Malster’s efforts.

Over the last few years, he has completed four major volumes of work on maritime East Anglia: “*Maritime Norfolk Part One*” (the coast from Wisbech to Caister) (2012), “*Maritime Norfolk Part Two*” (primarily Great Yarmouth) (2013)² “*North Sea War 1914-19*”(2015)³ “*Maritime Suffolk*”, (2017), as well as “*The Minute Books of the Suffolk Humane Society*” (2013), for Suffolk Record Society.

In his late 80s, Robert he still continues to work on other publications.

It is for all these reasons that Ipswich Maritime Trust chose to honour him as the first recipient of Ipswich Maritime Trust’s ‘Richard W Smith Memorial Award’.



Footnotes.

[1] Richard W Smith (died 31st July 2017) was a founder member of the Ipswich Maritime Trust an author photographer and great contributor to the appreciation of local maritime history and heritage.

[2] See Review for this pair of books in International Journal of Maritime History 2016 Vol 28(3) pages 624-625

[3] See Review in International Journal of Maritime History 2016 Vol 28(4) pages 962-963

Future Events - Talks and Exhibitions

YES – we do have talks lined up for February, March, and after the AGM in April this year. Like so many societies and organisations we are holding these as virtual talk using the 'Zoom' technology – if it is good enough for the government it is good enough for us!

To manage the limited number of attendees we will be using an on-line booking system at <https://ipswichmaritimetrust.setmore.com> The on-line Spring talks are free to members but there is a possibility we may have to introduce a small charge for the Autumn talks, if we are still unable to hold talks at the University of Suffolk.

The trial run in December was very well received but we are aware that a few people had problems with connecting to the talk via the Eventbrite link and we are changing the process to minimise problems that may occur.

The possibility of the Maritime Ipswich and Heritage Open Weekend events taking place is very much unknown at the moment but if it is practicable and safe for us to hold any exhibitions this year there is a good chance we will do so.

The talks that are lined up are:

3rd February Cape Horn Sketchbook by Claudia Myatt
3rd March (speaker to be confirmed)
7th April Ipswich Dock Railway by Stuart Grimwade (after the AGM)

An email address is required to book for the talks and for the talk invites to be sent to. If you are not currently on our email list and wish to receive an invite, please get in touch by sending an email to membership@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk

IMT 2021 Spring talks

Wednesday 3rd February at 7.30pm

Cape Horn Sketchbook

by Claudia Myatt

In November 2019 Claudia Myatt joined Dutch sailing ship 'Tecla' for a two month voyage from Galapagos to Falklands via Easter Island and Cape Horn. 'Tecla' is an ex herring drifter, gaff ketch rigged and built of steel. She's sailed by the Sluik family who specialise in chartering to unusual places - the more remote the better. When Claudia joined her she had already spent time in Iceland and Greenland and sailed the North West Passage, so that by the end of her season in 2020 she had effectively circumnavigated the Americas.



Claudia decided to take no camera on her voyage, but keep an illustrated sketch book in the way that mariners did for centuries in the days before cameras were so readily available and, perhaps, so over-used. This talk is a fascinating glimpse into the sketchbooks and the challenges of the voyage.

Claudia is a well known marine illustrator and writer, contributing regularly to Classic Boat Magazine and other national yachting magazines. She is the author/illustrator of the RYA Go Sailing series. She lives on an elderly tug boat on the River Deben and runs away to sea as often as possible, both on sailing boats and as art tutor on cruise ships. Later in 2021 she will be joining Royal Navy icebreaker HMS Protector for a sketching trip to the Antarctic as Artist in Residence to Friends of the Scott Polar Research Institute. She insists that she is not, in fact, a particularly tough sailor, just a rather timid lady in her sixties who has discovered the importance of behaving badly and having adventures before it's too late.

Wednesday 3rd March at 7.30pm

(Details to be confirmed)

Wednesday 7th April at 8pm (approx.) after AGM at 7.30pm

The Ipswich Dock Railway

by Stuart Grimwade

The coming of the railway to Ipswich coincided with the construction of the Wet Dock, but getting steam on to the dock tramway took a lot longer to achieve. For more than 100 years it was the principal means of transporting goods to and from commercial shipping, sharing its buried tracks with horses, carts, stevedores, and cyclists not to mention cars and lorries once they had been invented.



While building up our Image archive over the past 20 years Stuart has gradually amassed images of the railway with the particular interest which comes from loving trains and railways, and remembering to old dock as it used to be. This recorded talk is a shortened version of the one he gave in December 2019 onboard sb Victor to a small group of fellow devotees.

Future Events - Barge Trips

Thames Sprintsail Barge Trips 2021

IMT Thames Barge trips

Following on from the success of the 'reduced number' Covid-19 compliant barge trips in August and September last year, a total of **six** day-trips have been planned for 2021 by John Warren and Bob Pawsey.

The dates of the trips which can be booked now are:

Full-day 'Two rivers' sailing

29 July

19 Aug

02 Sept

Visit Historic Harwich trip

3 June

1 July (booked by Ipswich Society)

16 Sept



Booking and payment can now made on-line at <https://ipswichmaritimetrust.setmore.com> and is the preferred method. If this is not possible or you wish to contact John Warren regarding any special dietary requirements or parking permit requests, then John can be contacted at jbwarren5@gmail.com or on **07789 825 680**

There is more information on the flyer at the end of the newsletter and just to show everyone is optimistic that the barge trips will go ahead as planned.....

All Ship-shape and Ipswich Fashion



This photo, taken by Stuart Grimwade just before Christmas, skipper Wes Westbrook and mate David Polly are making sure Victor's running gear is kept up to the usual high standard.

IMT Occasional Papers

If you have delved into the 'Resources' area of the IMT website you may have noticed the heading 'Occasional Papers', or you may well have picked one up at one of our exhibitions in the Old Customs House. As mentioned in the piece above about the reinstatement of quay names, these started off in 2011 with the intention of them being exactly what they say they are – an 'occasional' paper covering a specific topic that is of interest to the writer and hopefully to IMT members and the public. After the initial paper two more followed related to our Image Archive and to images taken around the Wet Dock.... and then it went quiet.

Fortunately, the forced leisure time of last year's lockdowns prompted a re-interest in writing some more.

We now have five of them:

- #1 Quays and Wharves of Ipswich
- #2 A brief Tour of Ipswich Wet Dock in Photographs
- #3 The Ipswich Maritime Trust Image Archive
- #4 Ropemaking in Ipswich
- #5 The New Cut and Over Stoke (available soon)

The Occasional Papers can be viewed from the website or downloaded and printed.

We would love to expand the topics covered so if you would like to write on a suitable topic and expand our body of knowledge, please please get in contact with Des Pawson.

Heritage Suffolk

Are you interested in Suffolk's heritage? If so you may already have come across the website <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/> . If not, it may be worth a look as there is a goldmine of information which includes one of particular interest to Ipswich (OK, we are biased but there is a plethora of information on more than just Ipswich)

As one of six videos on Anglo-Saxon Rendlesham, Keith Wade, former Suffolk County Artcheologist, gives a talk on Anglo-Saxon Ipswich

<https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham-behind-the-scenes>

Ipswich is one of a handful of towns in north-west Europe with origins in the seventh century, and of those it is the only one to have remained continually occupied on the same site ever since. In the 8th century it was a major craft production centre engaged in international trade. This talk examines the origin and development of the town and its possible relationship to the East Anglian royal house at Rendlesham.

Past Events – talks

December 2nd

The usual programme of evening talks at the University was pretty much wiped out by the pandemic, with only in February and March taking place. The committee felt that we were losing touch with our members. Some similar organisations had put on virtual meetings; Des Pawson volunteered to give a prototype talk for IMT members.

The talk went out on Wednesday 2 December, titled 'Ropemaking in Ipswich'. Des is the trust's vice-chairman, the longest serving trustee of the Trust, and an internationally-acknowledged expert on ropes and ropemaking.

The first use of rope goes back many centuries, certainly before recorded history. Locally, traces have been found in the earliest excavations, and rope would have been in common use at the time of the first settlement of Ipswich in the sixth century. It went side by side with maritime trade, mainly with Europe, and of course with shipbuilding.

Des then showed a video clip of him making a length of rope - standard technique but a much shorter 'walk', twisted in the manner developed over hundreds of years. Des explained how the tensions were maintained, and the ropes finished. 'Walks' were commonly of one hundred yards in length and many in Ipswich of more than 200 yards, whilst that at Chatham is almost 400 yards long.

There are a number of 'rope walks' to be found on the eighteenth and nineteenth century maps of the town, but very little current evidence remains. The street name Rope Walk, on the east side of the town centre, is still there, but little else. In all Des identified 8 in Ipswich places where rope had at some time been made. Pictures were shown of a rope walk in Harwich and rope walks in Holland and Belgium which would have been similar to walks around Ipswich.

This was a fascinating and informative talk. Comments at the end were wholly favourable; the talk attracted some sixty viewers, not just locally but nationally indeed from around the world.

For those that want more information the Ipswich Maritime Trust Occasional Paper #4 'Ropemaking in Ipswich' is available for free downloading from our website.

Geoffrey Dyball

IMT Membership news

2021 Subscriptions

The start of the year and the low-cost subscription for 2021 is now due (same cost as when introduced in 2005). Approximately 70% of our members pay by Standing Order or bank transfer and this is very much appreciated. This very considerably reduces the time and cost overhead of sending reminders each year. If you pay by Standing Order or transfer – **thank you**. If you don't, can we persuade you to either set up a standing order or set up a reminder to yourself to pay by bank transfer on 2nd January each year?

Received newsletter by email -

The email has a link to the renewal form which details how subscriptions can be paid if they are still outstanding.

Received newsletter by post –

A renewal form is included unless our records show that you normally pay by standing order or have already paid.

IMT members

Our membership ended 2020 at a healthy 333 members despite the lack of events and talks which meant that there was much less opportunity to reach out to new members. To all our loyal members - thank you all for helping to support the Trust and its aims.

If you are still receiving our communications by post and would like to change to email, please either send me an email to membership@ipswichmaritimetrust.org.uk , or call 07531 083576 and leave a message and I will call you back.

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

Fraser Yates

New Members

Ian Oakley

Elizabeth & Stephen Pettman

Mrs Ann Dopson & Mr B A Wade-Smith

Mrs Susan Chainey

Dr Stewart & Margaret Young

River Gipping Trust

The Ipswich Maritime Trust has an affiliation with another local charity, the River Gipping Trust (RGT), who do so much good work preserving the historic heritage of the Stowmarket Navigation by restoring the structures that enabled navigation of the River Gipping.



They have an excellent website and produce a regular newsletter the 'Gipping Gossip'. You can find the December 2020 copy on-line here

<https://rivergippingtrust.org.uk/gipping-gossip> .

If you are not on-line and would like to find out more about the RGT and their work, please contact their Secretary on 033 033 08531

The Ipswich Rowing Club

In the August 2020 newsletter we had a small article about the Ipswich Rowing Club. We mentioned at the time that not many people seemed to know about this active club. Since then the club has achieved national fame through the British Rowing National Award.

British Rowing National Award - Ipswich Rowing Club

British Rowing's UK awards ceremony of March 2020 was another casualty of the virus. This delayed the announcement of the winners until after Christmas, when a huge boost was given to Ipswich. Jen Titterington and Bev Goodchild were recognised as the Best Club Crew in the UK for 2019. This is a remarkable achievement for any crew. They are the first ever women's crew from East Anglia to qualify for an Elite level event at Henley Royal Regatta. What makes this a fairy tale is that all of their training was at Ipswich, one of the smallest clubs in the country, although Jen also races in Sudbury RC colours.



Rowing in Ipswich dates from 1835 and after disappearing in 1948 was reintroduced through the efforts of Chris Jillings in 2013. Our tidal river can be choppy and is busy with motorboat traffic. A single portacabin serves as a clubhouse, changing room and equipment storage, with boats racked and launched from a small pontoon in the New Cut. A drafty, ex-shipping container serves as a weights gym. The phenomenal success of the crew was despite the intensity of the competition from large, well-funded, well-equipped and long-established clubs throughout the UK.

Chris Jillings, Ipswich Rowing Club

And finally!

A tool with an Ipswich name on it, and a bit of a puzzle.

In the age of sail most ports would have had a sailmaker and Ipswich, being a busy port, certainly had a number. As trade under sail diminished, yachting continued to provide work for sailmakers.



This brass square, with 12 inch and 9 inch arms, marked *Sadler Bros Sailmakers Ipswich*, is slightly curious, as the square is not regularly mentioned as a tool of the sailmaking trade, although it could be used in laying out and cutting the panels of canvas. If not all wood, brass would be an ideal material to work on canvas that may have been salt laden, but one especially marked is certainly very unusual.



From the 1820s the multi-branched and multi-generational sailmaking family, the Sadlers, who I think originated in Brightlingsea, appear all over Essex.

Kelly's 1894 Essex Directory lists, at Burnham on Crouch, Sadler Bros sailmakers. I believe that this was Ernest D Sadler, born in Brightlingsea in 1863, the son of a sailmaker, working with his brother Samuel B Sadler, born 1854, Brightlingsea. Samuel previously had a spell working for the famous makers of yacht sails, Ratsey & Lapthorne in Cowes, and went on to write the *Art & Science of Sailmaking* (1892).

Sometime shortly afterwards, and certainly by 1900, when Ernest D was living in Ipswich it would appear that they set up a branch in Ipswich on New Cut East near the Lock Tavern, yet the entry in Kelly's 1900 Directories always give Ernest D Sadler , with no mention of the "Bros"

Perhaps the partnership was very short lived. Ernest D Sadler continued trading into the 1930s, first in his own name and then as Ernest D Sadler & Son. The business subsequently was taken over by one of his long term employees, Frederick Nethercoat, who carried on up until 1955, when I understand the premises burnt down. They were always known for their yacht sails, whereas the other major Ipswich sailmakers, J O Whitmore, were known for their barge sails.

Unfortunately, The Suffolk Record Office is closed due to moving to new premises, the Hold. This on top of Covid restrictions, means I cannot consult their archive.

I wonder, does anyone have Kelly's **Ipswich** Directory between 1894 & 1899, showing the arrival of Sadlers? How did they trade?

Des Pawson



'Two Rivers' sailing trips

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

Thursday 29th July 2021 at 9am

Thursday 19th August 2021 at 9am

Thursday 2nd September 2021 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, restored in 1974 and refurbished in 2005/7.



Leave from her usual berth in front of the Old Custom House about 9am.

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

Return about 5pm, depending on wind and tide.

The cost is £65 per head.

Booking and Payment information:

For all trips please book and pay-online at <https://ipswichmaritimetrust.setmore.com>

If booking and payment on-line is not possible or for any questions regarding the trips, please contact John Warren at jbwarren5@gmail.com or on 07789 825 680

Parking and special dietary requirements

Limited parking available on the Island site by prior arrangement, courtesy of ABP. For a parking permit or for special dietary requirements please contact John Warren at jbwarren5@gmail.com or on 07789 825 680



Visit 'Historic Harwich' all day trips

Thursday 3rd June 2021 at 9am

Thursday 1st July 2021 at 9am (rsvd. Ipswich Society)

Thursday 16th September 2021 at 9am



Leaving from outside the Old Custom House, Ipswich at 09.00 and returning approximately 17.00, '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 as soon as possible to sail/motor back to the Old Custom House with a cream tea on the way.

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The cost is £65 per head, including a donation to Harwich Society