

Savour the Moment The Life and Work of Alan Ingham

Published by Halsgrove, Tiverton, England in 2005

Many hydrographers will remember Alan Ingham, first as a fellow surveyor in the Royal Navy; and then as the first lecturer in hydrography at the North East London Polytechnic (NELP), a task he performed with distinction during the twenty years he laboured there, and where he published two training manuals.

During his time at NELP he formed a steering committee for the formation of a Hydrographic Society. Once it was formed in 1972 he became the Hon. Secretary with much assistance from his dear wife Rose.

Alan had, since his days at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, an interest in drawing and painting. On retiring from NELP in 1984 he became a professional artist.

Alan had come under the influence of Roland Hilder, the doyen of English rural painting. He himself turned to the dales of Yorkshire and Derbyshire for his subject matter where his youth had been spent; and then to the farms and fields of Gloucestershire where he retired.

His beautiful book of many such views – 'Under Watercolour Skies' - was published in 1996. However, from then on Alan began to have health problems and eventually, on leaving hospital in

2002, the doctors warned him to 'take life easily', a routine he found difficult to follow while preparing for this book now under review.

Before his death in May 2002 Alan had already completed a Foreword and an introductory article entitled 'Amateur Years and Caricatures 1940s-1960s' which is an entertaining essay on his life during those years, illustrated by sketches and paintings he made along the way.

The many paintings reproduced in this book are divided chronologically into six sections. As a sailor I have always enjoyed Alan's less numerous marine paintings. He painted for me *HMNZS Lachlan* entering harbour in Tahiti on a memorable occasion which now hangs in Auckland Maritime Museum in the care of the Director, Commander Larry Robbins former Hydrographer of New Zealand.

In this book I was surprised and delighted to find a few paintings of Thames Barges trading out of Maldon and Harwich. Having witnessed large numbers of these barges operating out of the Medway before the War I was unaware that any had survived.

In the 1990s section, interspersed among English Countryside scenes, are to be found eight delicious pictures

of Venice, a city which had obviously captivated Alan. It seems a pity that in a busy life he did not find time for more overseas ventures.

colourist were the same as those attained by 19th century hydrographers who enhanced their surveys with exquisite views of the coast.

While looking through the pleasurable pages of this book I came to realise that Alan's skills as a water-

Reviewed by Steve Ritchie

Book Review

Sea Charts of the British Isles A Voyage of Discovery around Britain and Ireland's Coastline

By John Blake, published by Conway Maritime Press in 2005, ISBN1-84486-024-8

John Blake's 'Sea Charts of the British Isles' is aptly described by its own sub-title: 'a voyage of discovery around Britain and Ireland's coastline'.

The presentation of this book is highly pictorial. There are beautiful colour illustrations of charts and views on every page, each with carefully researched notes and original references. It's 28 x 24cm x 128 page format can possibly be best described as 'for the coffee table'; the sort of book one would delight at finding in the

lounge of a yacht club, wardroom or hotel. Though the author disclaims it as a work of reference, it contains such a wealth of historical fact about harbours and estuaries, navigators, surveyors, cartographers, their sponsors and their methods, that it would also be well placed in a reference library.

Because geology underlies the way these islands were formed and subsequently shaped by the forces of the sea, the book begins with a general geological description of Britain and Ireland. It explains how rock and shoal hazards come to be where they are and then leads naturally on to an historical review of the motivations of war and trade lying behind efforts to pictorially chart the coast of the British Isles. Prominent organisations and individuals who took initiatives to do this are introduced with illustrations of their early

