

## Information sheet no 010

### James Inman

James Inman was born in 1776 at Sedbergh, Yorkshire. Inman received his early education at Sedbergh Grammar School and then became a pupil of John Dawson. Although he entered St John's College, Cambridge in 1794, he did not take up residence until 1796. After graduating in 1800, he intended to undertake missionary work in Syria, but due to the war, could travel no further than Malta. He then decided to stay in Malta and study Arabic.

When he returned to England, he was recommended to the Board of Longitude for the position of Astronomer on board the discovery ship HMS *Investigator*, and in June 1803 he joined the ship. After exploratory and navigational survey work in Australian waters for the Royal Navy, he returned home in 1804. In 1805 he gained his Masters degree, and in the same year was ordained, although he did not take up any ecclesiastical office. In 1815 he became a Bachelor of Divinity and in 1820 a Doctor of Divinity.

When the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth became the Royal Naval College in 1808, Inman was appointed Professor of nautical mathematics. He remained in this post for thirty years. In 1821 he published his work entitled, *Navigation and nautical astronomy for seamen*. These nautical tables have been used by generations of seamen for solving nautical problems connected with observations of the sun, moon and stars. It has also been claimed that it was Inman who suggested to Captain Broke some of the improvements in naval gunnery which were introduced on board the HMS *Shannon*. In 1828, he published *An introduction to naval gunnery*. He also produced short treatises on *Arithmetic, algebra and geometry* in 1810, and *Plane and spherical trigonometry* in 1826.

At his suggestion, the Admiralty established a school of naval architecture in 1810, and Inman was appointed Principal. In 1820, due to the lack of textbooks on the subject, he translated and published *A treatise on shipbuilding, with explanations and demonstrations respecting the architectura navalis mercatoria, by Frederick Henry de Chapman*. He added explanatory notes and a few remarks on the construction of ships of war. This translation helped to improve English shipbuilding during the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1839 Inman retired from the college. For the next twenty years he continued to live in Portsmouth, and died in Southsea on 2 February 1859.