



The Never Setting Sun



Smack Dock Soundings

THE JOURNAL OF THE COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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Fly MN17 and other vessels competing in the 1990 Pyefleet smack race.

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The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the CSPA or its committee.

From the editor...

Here we are on the brink of another summer sailing season, with all the fun to look forward to. By the time you receive this newsletter the Wivenhoe Regatta will be about to happen, with all the excellent opportunities that offers for spectators at Bateman's Tower and on the quayside at Wivenhoe. While the keen smacks' crews are negotiating the tide barrier and frantically trying to avoid the dinghy race competitors, whilst equally frantically trying to beat the next boat not to mention staying off the mud, the more sedate amongst us can watch all the excitement with a pint in hand!





Chairman's Ramblings - Bill Williams

Welcome to 2015 but what a start to the season. I think we've all had our fill of cold winds, rain and generally unsettled weather. Best described as "Chuck another lump of coal on the focsle stove boy" type of weather. Be that as it may smacksmen (and women) are made of stern stuff. I've just come from the Hard where *Dorana's* owner, Mr Humm, was laying under his ship rolling on antifouling surrounded by men holding dogs and offering, in the true Brightlingsea tradition, advice and encouragement. Threatening black clouds were overhead but he carried on. Our illustrious editor passed by with very wet hair having either been caught in a recent downpour or having been in the new Yacht Club showers. However it's looking good for the Bank Holiday so let's hope for warm dry wood, smooth varnish and pleasant sailing.

Shore based, both our Film Night and Shanty Night were very successful, mainly due to the hard work and commitment of Judy Lawrence and her helpers. Our heartfelt thanks are extended to them. The Blessing of the Waters involved the smacks *Polly* and *My Alice* and our thanks also go to their owners, Mandy Stear for providing *Polly* at short notice, and Steve Heppell who returned from abroad to make *My Alice* available.

As I write this we are only eleven days away from the start of June so let's be optimistic and look forward to a glorious summer to be enjoyed by all our members both ashore and afloat.

Vintage Film Evening

The 28th of March saw a good gathering of forty souls at the Colne Yacht Club for a repeat of the very successful evening held in 2014. Immaculately hosted by Judy Lawrence, and happy evening was enjoyed by all, commencing with a history of smacks a bawleys. Old film of the inevitable Jim Lawrence on *Saxonia* (of course a completely original bawley) followed by Richard Titchener with a smack, then anecdotes from the inimitable Dick Harman. This was followed by a break for the excellent and ample cheeseboard provided by Kristy and her colleagues, while raffle tickets were sold. Then there was a monochrome film history of the London Docks,

quite fascinating if slightly marred by a jarring commentary. In all a most enjoyable evening that realised a profit of some £200, with a convivial and friendly atmosphere from our attendees, many of whom seemed reluctant to leave at the end of the evening! Well done Judy.

CSPS Shanty Night

May 9th saw forty-two cheerful souls gather at the Colne Yacht Club for a fish pie supper followed by traditional music and song. Hosted this time by Martin Doe, considerably helped by Judy Lawrence, Kristy Wallis and her team produced excellent food for consumption, with a sunset evening giving a beautiful sight across the creek and anchorage. The Verrier family again provided their wide repertoire of music and song, with several new items, much enjoyed by the audience. During a mid-term break, the raffle was drawn; all profits from the evening going to local charities, we were able to distribute £132 in total. Our President then regaled us with his own range of songs, followed by a return to the Verriers for more of their music, including a magnificent hornpipe lead by Penny. All too soon it was time to draw the curtains on a hugely convivial evening, with many staying for more conversation and laughter. An event that seemed to give great entertainment to our members and other friends, even though the attendance numbers were rather disappointing. We hope to attract better figures next year.

Memo Update from your Secretary – Martin Doe

I threatened to return to inform you of progress on gathering all your email addresses for the records. The CDM goes to Gerry McGandy for being easily first past the post with a reply, but... he has had only ELEVEN responses to follow him. Busy though I am sure you all are, this is a disgraceful response to a serious request.

I am departing here to illustrate to you all, a collection of reply sloths! why we want this information. Last year, with our Shanty Night, we were alerted at a late stage that the Colne Yacht Club had been double-booked on our evening, for which we were second. All our



publicity was already out, and therefore we were faced with writing to all members to notify you of the change of date. That cost us £72 in postage alone!!! most of which could have been avoided had we got your email addresses.

You are promised that we do not want to fill up your Inbox regularly with internal or even external matters, but in what we cannot escape is the modern age, it is the best and cheapest mechanism by which we can make contact when essential. I hope you appreciate the above example.

Please let me now be hugely more overwhelmed by your response, which will not take more than a minute or two, in order that our records may be updated. If any of you feel strongly to the contrary, please email me martindoe@hotmail.co.uk with an appropriate message, which we will put in the next Newsletter, but COME ON TROOPS AND DO A SPOT OF DUTY FOR US.

CSPS Sail and Picnic

This will be held (weather permitting) on **Sunday 21st June**. Those of you wishing to participate should contact Jim Lawrence or Robin Page as soon as possible to book a place- Jim's phone number is 01206 304204, and Robin's is 07768 522957. At the time of writing, smacks *My Alice*, *Maria* and *Alberta* are intending to be available; guests should meet on the public jetty at 11am. If any other smack owners would like to join in, please contact Robin or Jim as above.

Tales from the *Tollesbury* – Pauline Lawrence

March 1963, the temperature at last rose above freezing point. Slowly everything was beginning to get back to normal. The motor vessel *Tollesbury* was bound to Paul's mill at Faversham loaded with animal feed. We laid in the Swale awaiting the high water in company with the *Ena*. I had produced the evening meal and washed up. It was a fine evening with a moderate southerly wind. Charlie and Richard came aft, they wanted to go on board the *Ena* to play cards.

About an hour later the wind began to get up; by 2200 hrs it was a full southerly gale. Jim was very concerned about the lads getting

back on board, so we went to wait in the wheelhouse to give assistance should they



The barge *Tollesbury*.

require it. There was no ship-to-shore radio in those days, only a loud strident voice. I kept going on deck hoping that I would be able to see a boat leaving the *Ena*, but it was a very black night and no voices could be heard above the wind. We waited all night; going below at times and returning to the wheelhouse; sometimes walking around the deck. Our hope was that they had decided to stay on the *Ena* for the night.

Daylight dawned and the wind eased, it was bitterly cold; was our dinghy tied up astern of the *Ena*? It was not in sight, our hearts sank into our boots. Jim started the engine while I attempted to wind the anchor up; in the end I had to have help. Jim eased the *Tollesbury* alongside the *Ena*, Charlie Webb from Ipswich was her skipper. 'Charlie,' shouted Jim, 'Are my lads on board?' 'No, they left last night just afore ten, you won't see them any more'. We were both in despair, what the hell had happened to them? Poor Jim was so worried, he kept saying 'I shall have to go round to visit their parents'.

Slowly we made our way up Faversham creek. I turned and looked astern through the window



in the wheelhouse. Over at Harty Ferry I could just make out a tiny speck of blue, could this be our dinghy? As we passed the Shipwright's Arms, Barry Tester stood on the shore. Jim called out telling him we had lost the two crew members, could he inform the police.

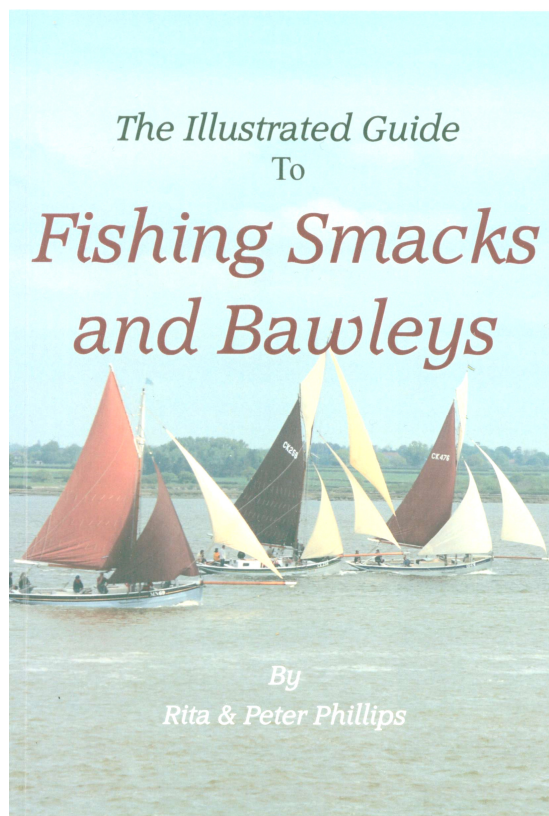
The *Tollesbury* was making her way up to Paul's mill, the river twisting and turning, sheep grazed in the fields. There was quite a gathering of people on the quay, barges were arriving again after the big freeze-up. Our anxious eyes looked into the crowd; could it be that our lost crew had managed to get ashore somehow? Then we saw them, looking very forlorn and bedraggled right at the top of the quay. Hallelujah!! All we had to find now was the missing barge dinghy.

I was dispatched to the police station to let them know that the lost crew members had turned up on the quayside. Later Richard explained what had happened. They had heard the wind and left the *Ena* about 2130 hrs, their only method of propulsion was a single oar for sculling over the stern. Charlie was sculling and had missed the barge, in vain he had tried to turn the heavy dinghy around, and they decided to try to make for the lee shore. The gale force wind had taken them to a rill at Harty Ferry. After making the boat secure, they decided the only thing to do was to make their way back to the mainland. Through the night they walked, running at times to keep warm. At Sittingbourne they caught a bus to Faversham. They apologised for all the trouble that they had caused, I cooked them a hearty breakfast and we all got on with getting the barge unloaded.

It was now the weekend and Barry Tester was willing to take us over to Harty Ferry to find the missing dinghy. It was there in the rill where the lads had left it, but somehow Barry managed to end up in the freezing water. It was a good excuse for us all to end up in the Shipwright's Arms...

Reprinted from the TBSC Members' Bulletin
Nov/Dec 2000

Book Review – David Chandler



The Illustrated Guide to Fishing Smacks and Bawleys by Rita and Peter Phillips (2014 published by Phillips Design Publishing, Tollesbury £8.00).

Those members who are familiar with the authors' *The Illustrated Guide to Thames Sailing Barges* will welcome this new guide on smacks and bawleys - especially those of us who may lack specialist knowledge but like to watch and admire these classic vessels at Brightlingsea and along the Colne and Blackwater.

Within its 64pp is contained a treasure trove of information, certainly enough to satisfy the most curious of spectators. There are plans of sails and sterns to help distinguish between smacks and bawleys; notes on fish and fishing techniques; notes too on the different classes of smacks and a list of surviving vessels. At the heart of the booklet are 40 full colour photographs of those smacks and bawleys most likely to be seen afloat; 26 of these have useful histories attached. The photographs are mostly side-on views to aid recognition. The booklet concludes with a list of the events where smacks and bawleys may be seen,



relevant organisations, a short bibliography and a glossary.

All in all the authors have produced an excellent and indispensable pocket companion for the onshore enthusiast.

Crew Available...

Two of Morgan Marine's staff would like to get some crewing in- both can sail, and are very keen.

Contact Will Goodman
07425 152788
Will.goodman4@googlemail.com



One that's unlikely to be seen out and about - *Victory* LO111. Currently laid up in a mudberth at Wivenhoe, she is rumoured to be for sale. If you have any details, please pass them on to the Editor.

Photo: Des Kaliszewski

For Sale – Oyster 17



16' 9" length x 6' 6" beam
Draft 1' plate up to 4' 6" plate down
Sail area 149 sq ft.

Built 1998, clinker, larch on oak, copper fastened, recent scrape & repaint, black outside, white inside, new larch planking, floors, gunter rig, tan sails, cream painted mast & spars, new stainless standing rigging, heavy centre plate, lifting rudder blade, long oars, rowlocks, heavy work boat style build, original letters from John Leather for plans dated 1995/8.

New trailer chassis, new suspension units 750kg, new hubs, new hitch, new winch, jockey wheel, mudguards, good wheels & tyres, spare wheel, slipway style trailer giving full keel length support, one person launch & recovery possible. £3500 o.n.o. View NW Cumbria. Can deliver UK for fuel /expenses, can email pictures.

Tel: 01900-881-080 or email:
dhart503@btinternet.com



Events Calendar 2015...

Wivenhoe Regatta

Rowhedge Regatta

CSPS Sail and Picnic

Pin Mill Barge Match

Heybridge Basin Regatta

Brightlingsea Regatta and Boat Show

OGA Swallows and Amazons weekend

Pin Mill Smack Race

East Coast Old Gaffers Race

Blackwater Smack and Barge Match

Harwich Sea Festival

Pyefleet Week

Swale Match

Ipswich Maritime Festival

Mersea Week

Mersea Town Regatta

Southend Barge Match

Colne Smack and Barge Match

Mersea Dredging Match

Maldon Regatta

Tollesbury Regatta

6th June

20th June

21st June

27th June

4th July

4th - 6th July

4th - 5th July

11th July

18th July

25th July

26th July

1st - 7th August

8th August

15th - 16th August

16th - 22nd August

22nd August

30th August

5th September

6th September

19th September

3rd October



Rowhedge Regatta 2012 – Maria CK21 Hot on Alberts CK318's heels

Details listed are believed to be correct at the time of going to press.
Please notify the Editor with any changes or corrections as soon as possible.