



The Never Setting Sun



Smack Dock Soundings

THE JOURNAL OF THE COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Sept / Oct 2015

ISSUE 72



Wivenhoe Regatta 2015- All seven smacks head for the start line: l-r *My Alice*, *Pioneer*, *Polly*, *Maria*, *Sunbeam*, *Dorana* (in the background) and *Alberta*. Photo by David Chandler.

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

From the editor...

'Good turn-out the other day,' remarked someone to me as we discussed the recent Colne Match. 'Yes,' I replied unthinkingly, then said 'Well, no it wasn't really! Not so many years ago there would be over 20 smacks on the start line.' I have the results for the 2005 Match before me, when 21 smacks and 8 barges competed. While the number of barges entering has remained relatively steady, the smacks and bawleys have melted away. There are still plenty of them in sailing order, so why aren't they turning up to races? I remember the fun of racing a slow boat (the lovely little *Marigold*, bless her) against the other boats at the back of the fleet, and having a wonderful time doing so. What do we need to do to get people turning up again? Answers on a postcard please, as they say...



Chariman's Ramblings – Bill Williams

The end of another sailing season is nearly upon us with most of the sailing members giving various accounts of it. In a nutshell some loved it and some were not so pleased. As usual, at times there was too much wind and at others not enough (or it was coming from the wrong direction?!). A joyous occasion was the Heybridge Regatta with just the right breeze and lovely sunshine.

From my own personal point of view I've had an excellent sailing season. Having lost the 2014 season following a cancer operation - carried out in the third world using machetes - no, only joking, it was in Colchester - I have crammed in as much time afloat as possible. We've trekked up and down the Wallet, the Swin, Swale, Orwell and Blackwater. Gary Humm's boy, little George, crewed on a trip to the other side. We ended up gale bound in both Nieuport and Dunkirk, then had a bumpy trip home. George was a very capable crew member and remained enthusiastic throughout the voyage. As I understand it, numerous boats, including *My Alice*, had bumpy trips back from Dunkirk.

By the time we got to the Colne Race there was definitely a chill in the air and, as usual, a few chilly comments from some of the competitors. Nevertheless we all need to both thank and congratulate the race organisers, Rosy and Ferret plus their helpers, for all their hard work in making this year's Race a great success.

It is with great sadness that I have to tell you that two of our most active members during the past thirty years, Jane Rule from the *Ellen* and *Bona*, and Tony Atkinson from the *Mary*, are both poorly. If all of us at the CSPA could join together in thinking of them I am sure it would cheer them up and perhaps give them something to smile about.

Outboard thefts and petty vandalism

During the night of 9th September, both outboards on the pair of Harbour Commissioners' launches were stolen; unfortunately (and perhaps unrelated, but who knows) a dinghy was cast off from the end of the smack dock, and a couple of members' oars were found drifting about the creek the following day. The following week another

outboard was stolen from a boat on the public jetty, and the same CSPA member's dinghy was found having drifted onto Cindery Island. Those of you who keep dinghies or gear on the dock may be wise to check their security, or perhaps take your dinghy/things home with you.

Smack Dock working party – 11th October, from 10am onwards

Members are encouraged to come and assist in an autumn clear-up on the smack dock - there are several jobs planned, including giving the 'Smacksman's Return' and the small shed a coat of paint, scrubbing the jetty walkways, and weeding the gravel surface, not to mention the usual tidying-up of accumulated ~~junk~~ important and useful things.

If you can spare an hour or two to help with any of the aforementioned (or maybe you have spotted something not on the list that needs attention?), please come and join us, suitably clad for grubbing about! Or if this all sounds too strenuous for you, how about helping with serving drinks and biscuits to the workers (a highly important job)?

Those of you with gear on the dock, please take the time to mark it with your name and/or boat number so that your treasures don't get thrown out with the trash...

Please come along and help with keeping our most important asset in good order so that we can continue to enjoy it, both as a safe place to keep our boats and as a fine spot to meet for a chat or watch the sun set.

Another missile from your Secretary – Martin Doe

I am grateful to those members who responded to my prodding in the last newsletter regarding your email details. As a result, the number of those who have provided data has nearly doubled.

HOWEVER this is still only some 13% of our membership, and while I know a few of you are not at all computer minded or connected, we still need and expect a much larger response. I am not going to repeat the underlying reason; that was fully set out in the last newsletter, and



you are assured that we will never abuse such information or supplant the other ways in which we make contact. It is solely to save the horrendous cost of postage if we have suddenly to make unexpected contact, or perhaps to remind you that your annual subscription is well overdue!

This is the last newsletter before the AGM on Saturday November 21st, details of which are elsewhere in this issue, and we will be active on that day to attempt to get the information from you if it has not already been furnished. Please spare me one or two minutes to send the details to martindoe@hotmail.co.uk.

CSPS Sail and Picnic – Judy Lawrence

The weather looked a little doubtful with a stiff breeze blowing but luckily it stayed fine. There was a real party spirit as we motored out on *My Alice* for the annual Sail and Picnic. Steve Heppell told us all about the history of the boat and was full of interesting information.

After couple of hours we returned to the pontoon to moor up, then to our amazement a buffet with Pimms was laid on for us (Henley eat your heart out). Food kept appearing from the hold, and I began to wonder if Jamie Oliver had been hired. Many thanks to everyone who made it such a special day.

A few dates for next year's diary...

Saturday 30th January 2016

Cheese and Wine and Vintage Film Evening 7pm for 7.30, at the Colne Yacht Club.

A short film will be shown followed by eats and drinks, then more fascinating old films will be shown. A raffle will also be held.

Saturday 26th March 2016

Fish Supper and Traditional Shanty Night 7pm for 7.30 at the Colne Yacht Club.



Edme runs past East Mersea Stone shortly after the start of this year's Colne Match.



COLNE MATCH RESULTS

5th September 2015

H.W. 0525 - Wind light to moderate N to NNW, overcast.

Course 'A'; Smacks start 0900, Barges 0915

Smack	Number	Time	Place		
<i>Maria</i>	CK21	3.31.07	1 st	First smack over the start line	<i>Polly</i>
<i>Alberta</i>	CK318	3.32.11	2 nd		
<i>My Alice</i>	CK348	3.36.25	3 rd	First small smack or bawley	<i>Kate</i>
<i>Kate</i>	CK52	3.47.38		Second small smack or bawley	<i>Polly</i>
<i>Sunbeam</i>	CK328	3.58.06			
<i>Polly</i>	MN12	4.01.19		First bawley home	<i>Marigold</i>
<i>Charlotte Ellen</i>	CK258	4.05.25			
<i>Emeline</i>	F14	4.10.47		Most traditionally turned-out	<i>Emeline</i>
<i>Gracie</i>	CK46	4.18.54			
<i>Marigold</i>	MN119	4.35.48		Last boat home	<i>Marigold</i>

Barge	Time	Place		
<i>Edme</i>	3.26.05	1 st	First over the start line	<i>Edith May</i>
<i>Niagara</i>	3.39.50	2 nd		
<i>Edith May</i>	3.41.53	3 rd		
<i>Reminder</i>	3.52.52	4 th		
<i>Repertor</i>	3.54.35			
<i>Marjorie</i>	3.56.29			
<i>Dinah</i>	6.17.00			
<i>Pudge</i>	-Retired-			

Both classes - Best elapsed time *Edme*
Seamanship prize *Dinah*





Summer racing in brief – David Chandler

Wivenhoe Regatta (6th June 2015)



My Alice and Maria hug the Mersea shore at the start.

For the Wivenhoe Regatta I was at Mersea Stone, so I only saw the start and finish. The weather was fine throughout with a fresh breeze. It proved to be a close race with the four fastest smacks finishing in the space of two minutes! *Maria* came home first, with *Alberta* 2nd and *My Alice* 3rd.

Heybridge Regatta (4th July 2015)



Lizzie Annie gets off to a good start.

For me, this was so nearly a non-event as my planned 'lift' failed to arrive on time. However, thanks to Jane Barnes, I was able to photograph the start from the Hay Bay; Jane then hailed a local boatman and I was suddenly in among the action for part of the outer leg! Soon after, on returning to base, I found that



Sallie, Gracie and Sunbeam head towards Osea.

my 'lift' had arrived from Maylandsea, so I was able to photograph the closing stages of the race. Five smacks competed in glorious weather; *Lizzie Annie* led for a good while, but *Sunbeam* was the eventual winner. Many thanks to all who helped rescue my day!

Pin Mill Smack Race (11th July 2015)



Transcur, Mayfly and Alberta before the race.

The following Saturday was again blessed with fine weather and proved to be a hectic day. I saw the start from the committee boat (courtesy of John Humby); however, as we weren't fast enough to overhaul the smacks I was dropped off back at Wolverstone. I raced down to Shotley and was just in time to see *Maria* returning in the lead; then back to Pin Mill to photograph the finish. Nine boats took part; *Maria* and *Alberta* finished first and second, but *Ethel Alice* was declared winner on corrected time.



Results from the Mersea Dredging Match – Will Baker

Thank you to all the competitors attending this year's event. The day went well as we had sun and light winds for the match, as well a lovely sunny afternoon for the oyster opening competition and prize giving. This year's raffle raised £224 which will help towards the costs of next year's event.

The John Frost Trophy and Foreman's Flag for the Smack or Bawley judged to have dredged and been rigged in the most seamanlike and professional manner – *Maria CK21*

Company Cultac for the Smack or Bawley placed second when judged to have dredged and been rigged in the most seamanlike and professional manner – *Gracie CK46*

The Charles Harker Dredge for the Brig or Bumkin judged to have dredged and been rigged in the most seamanlike and professional manner – *Bumble WM20*.

The Hervey Benham & John Kemp Trophy for the greatest average weight of clean and culled Native Oysters for a Smack or Bawley – *Dorothy CK 159*.

The Florence Plate for the second greatest average weight of clean and culled Native Oysters for a Smack or Bawley - *Mayfly CK363*.

The Brig Prize for the greatest average weight of clean and culled Native Oysters for a Brig or Bumkin – *Jack*

You can view photos of the event at www.chrissiewestgate.com. There is a short film of this year's event at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7LBdRDDIQM&feature=youtu.be> and there is a write-up with excellent photos at <https://madeinbrixton.wordpress.com/2015/09/07/mersea-oyster-dredging-match-2015/>.

Thanks to Will Baker for passing the information on; the date of next year's Dredging Match is **11th September 2016**.

Tales of the Tollesbury – Pauline Lawrence

The London dockers did not work very often on Sundays, but one Sunday in June 1963 we were loading a freight of sorghum seed for Paul's mill at Faversham. Sorghum is a very small round seed, about the size of a pin's head, and is used in animal feed. This cargo was shot loose into the hold.

It was a lovely sunny afternoon as we made our way down the Thames. Jim asked Richard, the mate, to go and look at the engine to make sure that everything was in working order. On his return to the wheelhouse, Richard had a very worried look on his face. 'Jim, the freight is falling into the engine room.' Jim's reply was, 'Shove a bit of newspaper in the bulkhead.' Richard was a very well-spoken lad and replied, 'It's rather worse than that, Jim, I think you should come and see for yourself the state of things.' Jim cursed and swore but went below while I took the wheel.

On Jim's return to the wheelhouse, I asked how things were. Jim said that we would have to anchor in the Lower Hope whilst he assessed the situation. It appeared that the wooden bulkhead had vibrated with the movement and noise of the engine, allowing these minute seeds to work their way into the engine room. The anchor was let go, and down we all went to see what we were to do.

The seed was level with the bed of the Ruston engine. It was going to have to be removed; but how? Manpower and buckets were all we had, so a bucket 'chain' was set up with Jim first, Richard second and myself as the tipper-overboard. We worked the rest of the afternoon, all evening and into the night. Everyone was shattered but it looked as though we had won, so it was up anchor and on our way to Faversham.

About three weeks later we were laying on Grays mooring buoys in company with another barge. I awoke in the middle of the night with my throat all tight. I couldn't breathe; we were being gassed. The stench was foul. I shook Jim awake. 'Wake up, Jim, wake up- we are being poisoned.' Jim snorted and choked. 'What the hell is going on?' By this time I was really panicking and said, 'We must get out, we will be dead if we stay down here.' We dressed in great haste and went to the wheelhouse to recover, opening the skylight to let some fresh air into the after cabin. At first light, we went



down below very slowly to see if the fumes had gone. All the brass had turned mauve! The seeds which had found their way into the bilge had fermented and were giving off a poisonous gas.

After breakfast Jim went to discuss how we could get rid of this gas with the neighbouring barge skipper. 'Lime, boy, that's your answer,' was his conclusion, so we went all went ashore in search of lime. Various products were purchased; every shopkeeper gave us his verdict of how to get rid of our problem. For a while it appeared that we had conquered the offensive smell, but then it was back again; not as bad as it was before but enough to be very unpleasant. It was always worse when the barge was light, and it was October before it was completely resolved.

On a foggy autumn day we were London-bound motoring through the Walley, when quite suddenly the engine started to make a terrible noise. Jim set a small sail on the mast and we limped into Colne where Jim had to go ashore and telephone Roy Orvis, the Shipping Manager at Paul's. Another barge was sent to tow *Tollesbury* back to the shipyard at Ipswich. The engine was taken out into the hold on runners, and guess what the bilge was full of: that's right, fermented sorghum seed! Jim has always thought that night we had the human bucket chain we took about half the entire cargo out of the engine room.

An engineer came to look at the engine, where it was discovered the crankshaft had broken. 'I can't believe it,' said the engineer, 'It's impossible- they have a lifetime guarantee.' The result was that Rustons repaired the engine free of charge and, better still, all the sorghum was cleared from the bilge. After that episode, Jim changed barges and took the *Lady Daphne*; I went ashore and gave birth to our first daughter, Sara. Happy days.

Reprinted from the TBSC Members' Bulletin Jan/Feb 2001



The *Tollesbury* photographed at fresh Wharf, Barking in August 2013. Photo from the Barking and Dagenham Post's website.



Another of David Chandler's photos of this year's Pin Mill Smack Race, showing *Ethel Alice* in the foreground with *Maria*, *Sunbeam*, *Polly* and *Alberta* in the background shortly after the start.



The Colne Smack Preservation Society's

Annual General Meeting

Will be held on

21st November 2015

At the

University Community Sailing Club
(Next door but one to the Yachtsman's Arms pub, Waterside)

At 2.00 pm

The bar will be available, and we hope for some music and singing afterwards.

Events Calendar 2015/16...

Tollesbury Regatta
Smack Dock working party
Rowhedge Harris smack rally
(all smacks welcome)
Vintage Film Evening
Shanty Night and Fish Supper
Medway Match
Pin Mill Barge Match
Blackwater Smack and Barge Match
Swale Match
Colne Smack and Barge Match
Mersea Dredging Match

3rd October
11th October
18th October

30th January
26th March
28th May
16th July
11th June
13th August
10th September
11th September



My Alice racing home in 4th place, Wivenhoe Regatta 2015. Photo by David Chandler.

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.