



The Never Setting Sun



C.S.P.S

Smack Dock Soundings

THE JOURNAL OF THE COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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This eye-catching view of *Alberta's* deck comes from the lens of Brightlingsea photographer Tim Bees, who often crews for Robin Page; taken during this year's Colne Match.

Chairman Bill Williams

24 Manor House Way, Brightlingsea, Essex
CO7 0QR

Ph: 07732 016139

e-mail: wmwill@tiscali.co.uk

Journal Editor Lucy Harris

22 The Waterside, Brightlingsea,
Essex CO7 0BB

e-mail: lucy.pangolin@gmail.com

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

From the editor...

Here we are at the tail end of another season; there have been as many events to attend as ever, but unfortunately the attendances have been quite low at most of them. One wonders why interest in the smacks has dwindled so much; with the racing dominated by a small handful of boats, at least eight smacks being for sale (with a wide range of asking prices) yet with no enquiries, and now the *Joseph T* having been broken up, the future looks dull to say the least. Hopefully, there is a season for the smacks too, and perhaps this is their winter- with a new spring of enthusiasm just around the corner... What goes around usually comes around, eventually, but I wish it were possible to spur the process along somehow! Any ideas, anyone?



Pioneer Sailing Trust visit – 20th October

For a privileged few, we have managed to arrange a daytime visit to the works of the Pioneer Trust, situated just above Morgan Marine's premises. The object is to have a short talk on the general ethos of the Trust, and then a guided tour of the works, from where the apprentices learn their craft and get to build the rowing gigs we see afloat so often in Brightlingsea, to the full restoration of a Colne smack (the *Priscilla*, featured in the previous issue of SDS).

The date: 20th October 2016 The time: 10.30am, lasting approximately one hour.

The problem: this can only be available to a maximum of TEN people, and is restricted to those who already pay the full annual subscription, ie. £12.50.

The solution: To attend, you must ring the CSPA Secretary, Martin Doe, on tel.no. 01206 272000, between 6 and 7pm on Friday 7th October, on a first-come-first-serve basis.

The first four in order who fail to call in time may leave their number in case someone has to fall out, but this will end on Tuesday 11th October at 9pm, as we have to provide the Pioneer Trust with the names of the lucky attendees.
Good luck, and enjoy- this is a really interesting opportunity!

CSPA Annual General Meeting – 19th November 2016 at 2pm

Our AGM has been booked at the University Community Sailing Club, next door but one to the Yachtsman's Arms.
The bar will be open, and you can hear of the events that have taken place in 2016 and a report by the Chairman, followed by a report from the Treasurer, and then voting for the Officers and Committee for 2017. Views from members on how we might improve any aspect are always welcome under the Any Other Business heading.
We look forward to seeing you there...

Looking further ahead...

The Society will be hosting not one but two of the popular Archive Film with Wine and Cheese evenings this winter. At present I have no details of what will be shown, but the dates for your diary are 25th January, and 25th March, both occasions being 7pm for a 7.30 kickoff, at the Colne Yacht Club. Please call the Secretary, Martin Doe, for further information (his number can be found elsewhere on this page).

An update on the *Joseph T* MN9– Dave Hart



In Smack Dock Soundings no.74 I printed an appeal from the owner of the Maldon smack Joseph T, who was looking for someone else to take her on as he was unable to continue the long-term project of rebuilding her. CSPA member Dave Hart responded with interest, and I put them in touch with one another. However, I was sorry to hear the following this week :-

*"Joseph T has been cut up, she was a dream too far, an uneconomic repair or rebuild. I had two boat builders' opinions & the Director of Lowestoft boat building college; there is no gear left from her.
'Mick the Brick' who lives on a ferro boat at Tollesbury had the sails & some fittings; the Mauser shotgun found with her gear was handed into the police. The spars, apart from one I intend to use as a flag pole, had all had it, they will be bench legs, so at least be used.*



The new rudder & tiller has gone to a man in Danure near Aye in Scotland who collects marine items to adorn his old fisherman's cottage.

The unclean timber went to a man from Danbury who was pleased with it.

The clean timber & some of the bow part of the keel & stem post was left at the yard by request of the Manager to use for blocks etc around the yard.

It is a sad end to her, I had great ideas for a trust to rebuild her but was getting vibes from all directions that it was a bad idea & would bust me financially.

So sometimes we have to be realistic & have more realistic dreams.

I have a Lune pilot 14 feet lugsail dinghy at home on a trailer, and just bought a Devon Day boat 16 feet cruising dinghy with a cuddy."

A great pity that this was the outcome, as there are very few transom-sterned smacks left in existence. –Ed.

Rowhedge Regatta – David Chandler



The four smacks set off in a light breeze

Disappointingly, only four smacks took part in this year's regatta. The first race was run in testing conditions, varying from dead calm to Force 4 winds, sun, rain, etc. I watched the start from Mersea Stone, but fled the approaching rain, so missing the finish! I did, however, see the end of the second race at Rowhedge.

Kate CK52 won the first race, with *My Alice*, *Alberta* and *Maria* finishing 2nd, 3rd and 4th respectively. The second race was won by *Alberta*, followed by *Kate*, *My Alice* and *Alberta*.



Alberta arriving at Rowhedge with the finish in sight.

Wivenhoe Regatta from *Alberta* – Robin Page (with photos by David Chandler)

This year's race saw only the larger topmast smacks entered: *Pioneer*, *My Alice*, *Maria*, *Alberta*, *Sunbeam* and *Charlotte Ellen*. The forecast was quite fresh with a Force 4-5 occasionally gusting 6, with it due to build during the day. The course was set to start at Batemans's Tower, then Colne Bar, Eagle, Wallet No.3, and then back the way we had come.



Close together, the leading smacks head down the Colne

With the first leg being a reach/fetch, we decided to go with a small jib, intermediate staysail, full main and topsail for the start; the logic being that we would have to reduce sail before the slog back from the Wallet, the wind being in the west. The jib is quite time-



consuming to change, but the staysail is easy, and it is not too bad to drop the topsail. On the start line, we could see that we were the only one going for a topsail, and some had reefed... had we made a mistake? Our run into the line was a little early, so we did what we could to slow down, and ran down the line a little to avoid being over. It was a good start for all, with *Maria* and *Alberta* being the closest to the line. We made a good start and, with full main and topsail, started to pull away a little. The boat was groaning under the press of sail, and I don't think we could go much faster. Behind us, we could see that *Maria* was soon shaking out her reef, and *My Alice* was having problems; I later found out that she had blown the head of her job out and had had to send someone up the mast to sort out the mess. At the Bar buoy we were clear ahead, but *Pioneer* was hot on our heels, with *Maria* close as well. It was obvious that we would struggle to hold off *Pioneer* as this was going to be a drag race, and the boat with the greatest waterline length should win.



Pioneer, returning in first place, powers her way to victory

What didn't help was that having rounded the Bar we headed off for the wrong mark, North Eagle! That cost us a bit, but we were still in front. At the Eagle, *Pioneer* took us; we had a token attempt at luffing them, but it was to no advantage. I then messed up the gybe at the Wallet No.3 buoy, and ended up gybing three times; that gave us a rather untidy rounding and the topsail to drop on the beat back. From that point on, we managed to hold *Maria* off taking second behind *Pioneer*, with *My Alice* 4th and the other two smacks a long way behind. We tucked a reef in for the second, upriver, race, and after a good start managed to lead to

the finish. It was a dead beat from White House Beach to the Fingringhoe ballast quay, and we



Sunbeam finishes well behind the leaders in fifth place

were lucky enough to get a little puff at the right time to allow us to get through a half-tack and avoid running aground. *Maria* and *My Alice* didn't benefit from this luck and found the bottom; *Pioneer* and *Sunbeam* managed to finish, which was an impressive feat for *Pioneer* given her size.

Colne Match 2016 – all photos by Gill Moon East Coast Photos - www.eastcoast.photos



Despite the very civilised start time of 9am, this year's Match had a pretty thin turn-out, with only nine smacks and six barges competing. The weather was dull and overcast, with quite a fresh breeze from the SW. *Pioneer* went the wrong side of the committee boat so had to do a loop to cross the starting line, and a couple of smacks were over the line and incurred the 15min penalty. The barges were all keen and bunched up competitively for the start, but none topped *Edme*, crossing the line less than 20sec



after the gun. From Colne Bar to the Clacton Pier mark was a fetch, but as the next mark, Wallet Spitway, was dead to windward, many opted to tack round the new Clacton buoy (provided by Peter Hickman) back onto port, and apparently retracing their steps until they could roughly lay Wallet Spitway. This gave for some close quarters sailing, unusual for this part of the match, which must have looked exciting viewed from the Clacton seafront. As the race progressed the wind eased, and the leading smacks could be seen getting their

topmasts up as they fetched back to the Bar buoy, with a variety of running sails appearing on the run upriver to the finish. The leading smacks had an exciting finish, with only 2 secs between the eventual winner, *Alberta*, and the next home, *Maria*. *Edme* managed to beat the smacks on elapsed time for a second year running. Also sailing on the day but not competing were the bawley *Marigold* and the barge *Hydrogen*, both with charter parties.

COLNE MATCH RESULTS

10th September 2016

H.W. 0608 - Wind moderate SW, overcast.

Course 'A'; Smacks start 0900, Barges 0930

Smack	Number	Time	Place	Trophy
<i>Alberta</i>	CK318	3.45.13	1 st	Cock of the Colne, and King Colne Cup
<i>Maria</i>	CK21	3.45.15	2 nd	Arthur Bowles Cup
<i>My Alice</i>	CK348	3.51.28	3 rd	<i>Xanthe</i> Trophy
<i>Pioneer</i>	CK18	4.15.57		
<i>Charlotte Ellen</i>	CK258	4.17.40		
<i>Harriet Blanche</i>	CK9	4.23.48	1 st small smack	Brian Percival & Brian Webb Cup
<i>Iris Mary</i>	CK105	4.48.52	+15min penalty (OTL)	
<i>Ellen</i>	CK222	4.59.50	+15min penalty (OTL)	
<i>Dorana</i>	MN2	-Retired-		

Barge	Time	Place	Trophy
<i>Edme</i>	3.33.00	1 st	CSPS Barge Cup
<i>Niagara</i>	3.41.57	2 nd	Sailorman Cup
<i>Repertor</i>	4.15.57	3 rd	Prior Cup
<i>Xylonite</i>	4.17.29	4 th	Weston Cup
<i>Reminder</i>	4.59.33		
<i>Centaur</i>	5.44.39		

Other prizes given, both classes...

Hammond Bell	<i>My Alice</i>	First smack over the start line
Golden Cockerel	<i>Edme</i>	First barge over the start line
Vernon Scott Trophy	<i>Ellen</i>	Last smack home
David Gowing Memorial Trophy	<i>Iris Mary</i>	Most traditionally turned-out smack
Bob Harman Trophy	<i>Edme</i>	Fastest elapsed time, both classes
Lowlands Cup	<i>Maria</i>	Seamanship



Harriet Blanche and My Alice at close quarters after the start



Alberta and Maria run neck and neck for the finish



Maria looking very businesslike with her topmast housed and a reef in her mainsail



Ellen was well snugged down, very sensible with her relatively few crew

Gill's website has a load more beautiful pictures from the day- well worth a look if you have internet access. Her web address is on Page 4.

‘Gossip From The Hard’ - Excerpts from Brightlingsea Parish Magazine, 1892 (on loan to the editor from David Watts)

August 1892

The oyster's holiday is about over now, and with the first week in August, "black Monday" comes round again to raise them from their beds. Natives indeed will mostly be privileged to lie a little longer undisturbed, but the Skillingers and such like are wanted again, and several of our fleet have already been despatched to fetch them.

Advantage has been taken of the slack time to overhaul the smacks and give them a "paint up," and it is a very smart and tight looking fleet the now turns out for the autumn fishery.

One of the questions of the day just now is- What prospects of a Spat this year? We are not in possession of any definite or certain answer at present. We have heard indeed of an average of 3 or 4 on a shell, in Pont, and we trust that the accounts may be verified, but like ghost stories, they mostly come to us, so far, at second or third hand.



Work appears to be pretty brisk in the shipyards; and there are new vessels building at Messrs. Aldous's, James's, and Stone's.

The fishermen tell us that they have scarcely ever known such an abundance of shrimps as there has been in these waters this season. On the other hand, there has been an unusual scarcity of soles and the other kinds of small fish, that the shrimpers generally get into the bargain, in their catches.

September 1892

The difficulty of getting oysters home from the North Sea in good condition during the hot weather, and the very low price to be obtained for them, rendered last month a dull time for the Dredgermen. There will be somewhat better prospects we hope now. A good many of the boats are about starting down Channel, for the Caen Bay fishery.

We do not hear of much spat having been seen in the Colne yet; some people however are hopeful that the hot weather of August may result in a late fall of spat even now.

When the racing yachts come home, we suppose that none will be able to show more prize flags than the *Corsair*, witnessing alike to

her own speed, and to the skill with which she has been handled by Capt. Sycamore.

Brightlingsea Regatta is fixed for Thursday, September 29th, and as far as can be judged at present, promises to be not less attractive than usual.

October 1892

It had almost seemed as if the Equinoctials had "quite forgot to rave," this autumn, but there are signs now (Michaelmas Day) that we are not to escape a taste of their quality together. We can but trust and pray that the latter months of this year may be less stormy than were those of 1891.

There is a rather large fleet of our vessels now down Channel, and from what we hear of the work in Caen Bay, we trust that there is a chance of earning a living there this autumn, subject to the indispensable condition of favourable weather.

The market for Skilling Oysters is slightly improving, but prices are still very low, and it will need very big 'trips,' to make a fortune out of the North Sea, at the present rates.

Forthcoming events...

Harwich Sea Shanty Festival
Pioneer Sailing Trust yard visit
Harris Smack Rally (Rowhedge)
CSPS Annual General Meeting
Archive film, wine and cheese evening
Archive film, wine and cheese evening

7th-9th October
20th October
6th November
19th November
25th January
25th March



Photo: A Colne Match start by Peter Fisher

**Brightlingsea waterside from the air; believed to be mid- to late 1960s**

This photo showing Aldous's shipyard and the Hard was provided by Peter Fisher from his collection. Birthplace of many smacks, the yard also built vessels in steel such as the canoe-sterned gentleman's motor yacht *Margery* (built in 1925, she features in the book 'River Colne Shipbuilders') and the roll-on roll-off ferries intended for Nigeria which are visible in this picture (looking like large flat platforms). The

yard closed down in 1962 after 129 years of working; the ferries were completed by James and Stone. Peter (having been apprenticed there for seven years) went back to help finish them off. The old sail lofts in the bottom right hand corner are all gone now, with the exception of one which is in use at Morgan Marine as a shop/store.

The Colne Smack Preservation Society AGM

will be held on

2pm - 19th November 2016

at the

University Community Sailing Club

Voting of Officers and Committee
Chairman's and Treasurer's reports
The club bar will be open...