



The Never Setting Sun



C.S.P.S

Smack Dock Soundings

THE JOURNAL OF THE COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Sept / Oct 2017

ISSUE 78



Sandy Miller sent in this fine picture of some of the competitors milling about before the start of this year's Colne Match. L-R are *My Alice*, *Electron*, *Our Boys* (behind *Electron*), *Gladys* and *Sunbeam*. More photos of the match will feature in the next issue of Smack Dock Soundings.

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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...

Despite my gloomy outlook in the last edition of SDS, the summer has brought plenty of more encouraging news. Two newly rebuilt smacks have been launched this summer (*Priscilla* and *Varuna*), and the bawley *Thistle* was given a very last-minute reprieve from the chainsaw when a group of people took her on. Much in need of the same sort of treatment is the Society's new acquisition, *Victory*, and I do hope she finds a good owner with the skills and/or the money to put some strength back into her so that she may sail again. On the debit side, the smack *Rosena* had to be broken up, and *G & A* has left for her new home of Rye. We wish them good luck with her, and hope they will keep in touch with us.



Smack *Victory* LO111, built by Howard of Maldon in 1894 (first registered in 1895)



Visitors to the Smack Dock will have noticed a new arrival in the *Victory*, which has been placed in the hands of the Society to hold until an interested party will take her on for a proper restoration. She had been laid up in a mudberth at Wivenhoe for many years, uncovered, with little maintenance, and has lost both her mast and rudder to rot. Nonetheless, she was very much loved by her previous owner, and has retained her fine shape well so far, although I believe she is pretty 'ripe' and will need serious structural work to make her seaworthy again. Her gear has been taken ashore for safekeeping.



Victory in better days; photo by Roger Birch

If any member is interested in taking her on, either as a solo project or as part of a consortium, please contact CSPS Chairman Martin Doe (address on the front cover).

Ed Halsall, *Pertwee* – Brian Sinclair

Another new arrival to find a berth in the Dock is the concrete-built smack-yacht *Pertwee*, following her return from Belgium after the sad loss of her owner, Ed Halsall. Whilst Ed was not a member of the CSPS, he was well known to several of our members, and *Pertwee* has been a familiar sight here in the river as well as further afield.

He had made the trip to Ostend on Friday 28th July, and he fell overboard whilst handling the sails in rough weather. Despite being picked up by helicopter remarkably quickly, and transported to hospital in Belgium, unfortunately he gave up the fight three days later.

His family were with him, and his crew Bernie Pilgrim and Graham Churchill brought *Pertwee* back to Alresford soon afterwards.

Ed was a founder member of Alresford Creek Boat Owners Association, and has always played a very active part in that club and the Wivenhoe Sailing Club. In addition, he provided storage for many boats on his farm, and was always read to lend a hand whenever asked. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Letters to the Editor...

The mid-summer demise of Rosena CK65 has sparked a rare run on the Editor's letterbox. Whilst I personally very much agree with the feelings both correspondents express, I would like to say (in the interest of balance), that sadly, Rosena had long since lost her original shape (as can well be seen in the accompanying photograph), and most of her structure was in so poor a state that it was well past saving. Any full 'rebuild' would effectively have been more a representation than even a replica, let alone a restoration. Not that that wouldn't be a very worthwhile project in itself, provided the representation is historically accurate, unless one strays into the territory of 'inspired by' and 'a modern interpretation of'!



Rosena laying on the Smack Dock off-mooring in September 2012

I was saddened to hear *Rosena* CK65, a well-known registered Colchester smack has now been cut up. She was built in 1889 at Brightlingsea by Aldous and owned in Tollesbury for many years by Edward Heard and used for stowboating.

When she became a yacht, one of her early owners was Jim Lawrence, and then she was owned for many years by Bill Coulson at Heybridge Basin.

It is a great shame that a new owner could not have been found who would have had the motivation to restore *Rosena* back to full sailing condition. Another part of our local maritime heritage has gone and cannot be replaced.

Some years ago the *Bertha*, another fine smack was cut up and the general consensus was that this should not have been allowed to happen. Last year the Maldon-built *Joseph T* (which was the subject of a stalled restoration) was cut up and now the *Rosena*. How many more may shortly face the chainsaw?

Sadly we will never see these vessels sail again, now they have become just a few old photographs and fading memories.

Colin Swindale



Rosena laying on Mill Beach in the 1960s, whilst under the ownership of Jim Lawrence. Photo from the Ted Kemp collection.

I was very sad indeed to hear about the breaking up of the smack *Rosena*. I remember her sailing when Jim Lawrence owned her many years ago. The Colne Smack Preservation Society was set up specifically to preserve and promote these fine ex-working boats.

Most of the smacks in sailing condition today were rescued from saltings or mud holes where they had languished for some years. We started a movement that revitalised these boats, and although the enthusiasm seems not to have lasted 50 years, at least some vessels have been saved for posterity.

I do hope that if another smack becomes available to the Society, she be allowed to lay somewhere, where perhaps in later years an enthusiast may wish to restore her.

I would like to see the Brightlingsea Smack Dock as a haven for these exceptional vessels, and perhaps some time in the future for a museum of the fishery to be set up in the town.

Dick Norris (owner since 1962 of the Whitstable oyster smack Stormy Petrel)

On a much more positive note, I have had some correspondence regarding the bawley Thistle RR2, from a member of her new group of owners-

Many thanks for your email and support. We have a web page, <https://www.facebook.com/ironwharf/>, and we will be posting up progress along the way. I've just sent in her National Historic Ships Registration, so we are waiting for that to be approved, and then she has a place stamped into Maritime History, which is deserved. I've attached a picture of how she





was at Hollowshore, and now at her new berth. She's being lifted out very quickly in the next few weeks, to be assessed for works and winter maintenance, then she will be settled back into her berth for the winter. We have to be quick with the lifts so she doesn't dry out, but it is essential we do this inspection so we can get her fully watertight. She is actually a very sound solid old lady, which is a testament to the work carried out by her previous owners.

Victoria Shorland



Thistle in her present berth

Royal visitor launches *Priscilla* CK437



On 29th June, Brightlingsea played host to a rather special occasion- not just a visit from a member of the royal family, but the launching of the rebuilt smack *Priscilla* on the town Hard... The Pioneer Trust have put a huge amount of effort into her rebuild over the last four years, and both the smack and the shipwrights and apprentices involved well deserved Princess Sophie's attendance. A large crowd gathered to



Priscilla ready to launch. Photo by Mick Allen

watch proceedings, and Rupert Marks made a brief speech. The princess then explained her interest as patron of the Association of Sail Training Organisations before making the traditional alcoholic offering. ASTO was also represented by East Coast Sail Trust's barge *Thalatta* the smack *Sallie* (for Sea-Change Sailing Trust) and Ipswich-based charity Adventures Offshore's ketch *Offshore Scout*. Berthed on the floating causeway for the occasion, dressed overall, they added nicely to the occasion. For once Murphy was not in attendance with his famous Law – at the right moment, after the champagne had been ceremonially poured down the smack's stem, *Priscilla* glided down the Hard in the slings of Gary Humm's trolley, and entered the water with perfect smoothness. A fine sight, and a notable launching which few if any of either Aldous's or James & Stone's working boats must have enjoyed when they were first built so near by.

Mick Allen says, "We had the first sail on the OGA East coast event and things went well. We had a good start ,thanks to Josh, and got to



Looking resplendent, back in her element. Photo by Mick Allen



the leeward mark off Clacton; all was going well, she sailed lovely; rounded up for the windward leg when the 1 tonne of portable lead ballast proved to be a little too portable so we retired and motored home at a jaunty angle. Still we did manage to win the seamanship award for that cracking start so all in all not a bad first outing."

Priscilla can now be seen at her berth outside the Pioneer Trust's Harker's Yard.

Varuna CK442 re-launched – Jim and Pauline Lawrence



All photos by Ralph Merry

On Saturday 9th September 2017, over 100 people turned up at Maldon Fullbridge to see the launch of Richard Pattison's smack *Varuna*.



David Patient, Caroline, Richard Pattison and Pompey

The smack having been completely rebuilt by that very fine shipwright David Patient, together with his long-serving apprentice and by now fully qualified assistant Caroline. Food and drink was laid on a-plenty and one lady was heard to say, "What a happy day this is," which reflected the atmosphere perfectly. The smack made an excellent sight as she was lifted by David driving his crane, and amid the cheering crowd was gently placed in the water. The CSPS send you our best wishes Richard and very much look forward to *Varuna* rejoining the fleet.



Wivenhoe regatta 24th June 2017

An overcast day with a force 4 SSW saw eight smacks line up for the Wivenhoe regatta's 10am start. Your editor was spectating from the start line, and enjoyed a ringside view at the gun, with *Maria* first over the line. Unfortunately I do not have the results, but competing were:- *Sunbeam*, *Maria*, *Gracie*, *Pioneer*, *Harriet Blanche*, *My Alice*, *Alberta* and *Charlotte Ellen*.



Pioneer, *Alberta* and *Sunbeam* crossing the start line.



COLNE MATCH RESULTS

2nd September 2017

H.W. 0945 – Wind light and variable
Course 'F'; Smacks start 1200, Barges 1230

Smack	Number	Time	Place	Trophy
<i>Maria</i>	CK21	2:32:35	1 st	Cock of the Colne, and King Colne Cup
<i>My Alice</i>	CK348	2:39:43	2 nd	Arthur Bowles Cup
<i>Charlotte Ellen</i>	CK258	2:47:53	3 rd	<i>Xanthe</i> Trophy
<i>Alberta</i>	CK318	2:51:35		
<i>Peace</i>	CK171	2:53:45	1 st small smack	Brian Percival & Brian Webb Cup
<i>Gracie</i>	CK46	3:06:30	2 nd small smack	Jim Spencer Cup
<i>Electron</i>	CK36	3:10:43		
<i>Our Boys</i>	CK92	3:22:52		
<i>Sunbeam</i>	CK328	3:23:42		
<i>Gladys</i>	LO195	3:24:20	1 st bawley	Rose Bowl
<i>Pioneer</i>	CK18	3:30:15		

Barge	Time	Place	Trophy
<i>Edme</i>	2:44:58	1 st	CSPS Barge Cup
<i>Niagara</i>	2:59:23	2 nd	Sailorman Cup
<i>Marjorie</i>	3:28:35	3 rd	Prior Cup
<i>Reminder</i>	3:42:08	4 th	Weston Cup
<i>Repertor</i>	3:42:37		
<i>Thalatta</i>	3:52:04		

Other prizes given, both classes...

Hammond Bell	<i>Electron</i>	First smack over the start line
Golden Cockerel	<i>Edme</i>	First barge over the start line
Vernon Scott Trophy	<i>Pioneer</i>	Last smack home
David Gowing Memorial Trophy	<i>My Alice</i>	Most traditionally turned-out smack
Bob Harman Trophy	<i>Maria</i>	Fastest elapsed time, both classes
Lowlands Cup	<i>Alberta</i>	Seamanship
Charles Morse Trophy	<i>Priscilla</i>	Best restoration

Also sailing on the day, but not racing, were the smack *Iris Mary* and the bawleys *Marigold* and *Mary Amelia*.



Racing round-up in pictures – all photos by David Chandler

Rowhedge Regatta, 10th June



Alberta leads the other four smacks across the start line.



Kate and *Alberta* hug the shore at East Mersea Stone.



Alberta, leading *Maria* and *Sunbeam*, arrives first at Rowhedge.

Blackwater Match, 17th June



On the return leg, *Ethel Alice* leads a group of smacks and barges as they approach West Mersea.



Back at Osea, *Maria* just manages to hold off *Charlotte Ellen*'s challenge for the first race.

Heybridge Basin Regatta, 8th July



In glorious weather, five of the smacks approach the start line.



Lizzie Annie, Charlotte Ellen and Martha 2 (3rd – 5th) approach Hillypool Point



Martha 2 and Charlotte Ellen finishing 3rd and 4th respectively

Mersea Dredging Match – Will Baker

Well done to you all for making this year's event spectacular with thirteen boats dredging within the match area. This year we raised £280.00 from the raffle, which with the boats' entry fees and sold MDM merchandise, will help with costs of the event this year. We had two double winners, with the smack *Dorothy* skippered by Rob Lee (using my best two hand dredges) taking the foreman's flag & The John Frost Trophy plus Hervey Benham & John Kemp Trophy for the greatest weight. *Maria* took the Cultac for best handled 2nd place, with the Florence Plate for 2nd greatest weight of oysters going to *Charlotte Ellen*. In the bumkins, *Jack*, skippered by Mark Farthing, took home both the Charles Harker Dredge for best handled & The Brig Prize for the greatest weight.

MDM 2017 pictures can be viewed at www.chrissiewestgate.com

Winners of the Oyster opening competition:-

1st Tom Haward, Company Shed
2nd Bram Haward, Richard Haward Oysters
3rd Graham Larkin, Colchester Oysters Fishery

Next year the West Mersea Town Regatta is on the Saturday 1st September 2018; the best tide for MDM is on the Sunday 16th September LW 11.03 HW 17.23 so next year it will be later in the month for us.

See you all next year...

'Gossip from the Hard' – Excerpts from the Brightlingsea Parish Magazine (an antique volume on loan to the Ed. from CSPA member David Watts).

September 1894

The approach of September is always the signal for our fishing fleet to set sail westward, for the Caen Bay Oyster Fishery, which opens on the 1st of this month, and thither a good many of the smacks are gone. We have of course no means of knowing what the prospects of the season are in that direction, and can only wish good luck, and hope for the best.

Very little has been done at Skilling by those who have been there of late, the oysters being at this time of year too much covered up with mud.

We understand that the trade in American oysters is uncommonly brisk here just now.

October 1894

OPENING OF THE OYSTER FISHERIES.- The annual ceremony of opening the Colne Oyster Fisheries was observed in due form on Sept. 5th, when the Mayor and a good number of the Corporation, [...], and other officials started from St Botolph's, and on reaching Brightlingsea proceeded on board the Wyvern, where, according to custom, the company drank gin and ate gingerbreads while the fisheries were formally declared open.



The Colne Smack Preservation Society's

Annual General Meeting

will be held on

18th November 2017 at 2pm

at the

University Community Sailing Club

(next door but one to the Yachtsman's Arms pub)

Mr PETER HARRIS

requests the pleasure of the company of
smack owners, crews and sundry persons

to a **RALLY** in the village of

ROWHEDGE on the
RIVER COLNE.

*Refreshments
will be served*



Sunday 22 October 2017

From 1330 (HW 1430)

All makes of smacks WELCOME!



*The Harris Shipyard in about
1896 with the Thanet (left), a
recently laid up yacht (centre),
and a smack dressed overall
awaiting launch.*

*....for your edification & delight,
Pete Jezard's Blackwater Jazz Band
will be playing aboard the Dutch
barge Vrouwe Alberdina*

RSVP to NickVBaker@aol.com



COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (*= optional information)

Name:

Address:.....

.....

Post code: Date of birth:.....

Telephone: Home/*Work/*Fax.....

Email address:

I would prefer to receive the CSPS Newsletter by post /email (please delete as applicable)

Do you own a smack?..... Wish to/have crewed on a smack? Have history of a smack?

*Details of smack- Name: Number:

Builder: Date:

I wish to apply for membership of the Colne Smack Preservation Society. If elected, I will abide by the Rules.

Signed: Date:

Proposer: Signed: Date:

Secondar: Signed: Date:

Both Proposer and Secondar must be Members of the Society. Leave blank if none known to you.

Your application will be considered at the next Committee meeting.

The Standing Order will not be submitted to your bank until you have been elected.

Return this form to John Gillard, 36 Seaview Road, Brightlingsea, Essex CO7 0PP

STANDING ORDER

To: (the name of your bank) Sort code:

Bank address:

Name of your account:Account number:

Please credit the account of Colne Smack Preservation Society (Barclays Bank PLC, Brightlingsea, Essex; A/c no. 00100498 Sort code 20-21-73) the sum of £12.50 immediately and thereafter on 1st November annually, until this order is cancelled in writing. This supersedes any previous order.

Please notify with payment- Subs from (your name)

Signature: Date: