



The Never Setting Sun



Smack Dock Soundings

THE JOURNAL OF THE COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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Ellen CK222 and Thalatta crossing tacks at the finish of the 2019 Colne Match.

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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.

CSPS Social Events :

21/03/20 : Vintage film night

12/04/20 : Smack Dock Working Party

07/06/20 : Blessing of the Waters

21/06/20 : Sail & Picnic

21/11/20 : CSPS AGM



Reflections on 2019, Martin Doe

As autumn extends its chill grip more firmly, we can look back over a generally good, if rather hot, summer, with pleasant memories.

We can recall another vintage film night and great supper, the wonderful spectacle of the Reclamation and Blessing of the Waters ceremony, a well-supported sail and picnic day, the busy smacks racing and the culmination of our annual race, accompanied by the Thames spritsail barges together for the first time by the West Mersea winkle brigs. A prolonged spectacle on a chilly but dry day.

All this happens because behind the scenes your officers and committee have been hard at work planning

ahead and refining the detail of all that you enjoy. Many hours pass to put before you these events while we look after our precious smack dock which many of you frequently visit. The weeds seem to grow there more vigorously than anywhere else!

Apart from the Tollesbury race and visit to the Harris yard in Rowhedge there is still the Annual General Meeting on Saturday November 23rd at Brightlingsea Sailing Club at 2pm. Frequently very poorly attended, we cannot complete our business unless we have a quorum of at least 25% of our membership present, ie some 40 people. I hope you will give us a pleasant surprise this year, the meeting is a vital formality and the last chance to meet together in 2019.



Photo : David Chandler. Sunbeam, Maria and Charlotte Ellen at the start of the 2019 Rowhedge Regatta.



NOTICE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice of the Colne Smack Preservation Society AGM

Saturday November 23rd 2019 at Brightlingsea Sailing Club at 2pm

(We have moved here this year because at our AGM Last year upstairs in the University Communities Sailing Club, we did not have a quorum or minimum of 25% - of members present to agree to amendments to our Constitution. This was through inertia, or being subordinated to

hectic seasonal shopping, but in part the steep stairway is very difficult for those with a mobility problem.

At this convenient and convivial site, easy parking and ground level entry, with a bar, we need at least 40 members to attend and I hope that most of the Brightlingsea resident members will help by attending.

We hope to see a very good contingent of you here this year so we can conduct our business properly).
M Doe, Secretary

Lucy Harris

Very sadly we have had to bid Lucy a fond farewell from her long and estimable time as Editor of Smack Dock Soundings. She has always produced an excellent and varied newsletter and will be a hard act to follow.

Lucy, we are extremely grateful to you for all your input over so many years and will miss that fine-tuning hand on the articles that have been submitted to you. We wish you a happy retirement from this role and hope we will see you often on Helen and Violet and at Waterside boatyard.



THE SMACK EMILY OF COLCHESTER No.160 John Salmon of Brightlingsea Master, taking the rescued crew of the Italian brig “Maria Theresa” on board, having been saved by her boat from the Longsand January 2nd 1864.”

The rough sea is very well rendered, which is extremely difficult to achieve in both paintings and photographs. The way it is throwing the well reefed smack about shows it perfectly.



This quite small book of only 74 pages by a member of the family, gives in dense detail a family history of the Brightlingsea Salmon family of smacksmen, oystermen

and salvagers and later foreign going merchant marine captains. All starting with the redoubtable Captain John Salmon, born 1814 died 1895 after a full and successful life of 81 years.

As such it provides a social history of Brightlingsea and to some extent an economic one of the ups downs and finally outs of the fishing industry and salvaging as well.

It is true history based on many sources, 42 are noted under acknowledgements at the start. The contents read easily as it has been through written, although there are over 50 quotations.

This careful text is very well illustrated by 65 pictures of all types and a family tree. It can be thoroughly enjoyed by a straight read through; although perhaps better savoured by dipping in, taking each chapter separately.

It is well recommended as a splendid book to anybody interested in Brightlingsea, Smacks and the very able bold people who crewed and owned them.

Copies can be obtained from **Margaret Stone, Curator Brightlingsea Museum on 01206 303286 at a price of £9.95 plus postage and packing.**

Andy Lindley September 2019



Colne Smack & Barge Match

7th September 2019

RESULTS

Barges – start time 09:30

Sail No	Name	Finish Time	Elapsed Time	Position	Overall	Trophies
	BLUE MERMAID	13:05:39	3:35:59	1	3	CSPS Barge Cup – 1 st
	EDME	13:12:32	3:42:32	2	4	Sailorman Cup - 2 nd Golden Cockerel - 1 st over start line
	NIAGRA	13:22:32	3:52:32	3	8	Prior Barge Cup - 3 rd
	REPEDITOR	13:23:14	3:53:14	4	9	Weston Shipping Cup – 4 th
	IRONSIDES	13:27:40	3:57:40	5	10	
	EDITH-MAY	13:37:51	4:07:51	6	12	
	ADIEU	13:49:11	4:19:11	7	16	
	THALATTA	14:09:49	4:39:49	8	18	
	CAMBRIA	14:21:36	4:51:36	9	20	
	CENTAUR	15:22:00	5:52:00	10	21	

Smacks – start time 10:00

Sail No	Name	Finish Time	Elapsed Time	Position	Overall	Trophies
CK318	ALBERTA	13:29:26	3:29:26	1	1	Cock of the Colne – 1 st King Colne Cup – 1 st Skippers Trophy - 1 st Cock of the Colne Flag – 1 st Bob Harman Memorial Trophy – 1 st Overall
CK21	MARIA	13:33:42	3:33:42	2	2	Arthur Bowles Cup - 2 nd
CK348	MY ALICE	13:43:15	3:43:15	3	5	Xanthe Trophy - 3 rd
CK171	PEACE	13:46:07	3:46:07	4	6	
MN23	LIZZY ANNIE	13:48:07	3:48:48	5	7	Brian Percival & Brian Webb Cup – 1 st smack <36' Hammond Bell Trophy - 1 st over Start Line



	LIZZY ANNIE	13:48:07	3:48:48	5	7	Brian Percival & Brian Webb Cup – 1 st smack <36' Hammond Bell Trophy - 1 st over Start Line
CK258	CHARLOTTE & ELLEN	14:01:55	4:01:55	6	11	
CK222	ELLEN	14:08:57	4:08:57	7	13	
CK46	GRACIE	14:09:18	4:09:18	8	14	Jim Spencer Cup – 2 nd smack <36'
LO190	GLADYS	14:15:51	4:15:51	9	15	Rose Bowl - 1 st Bawley
CK18	PIONEER	14:29:44	4:29:44	10	17	
CK437	PRISCILLA	14:48:02	4:46:02	11	19	Vernon Scott Trophy – Last Smack Home
CK328	SUNBEAM			RETIRED		

MFOB's – start time 10:30

Sail No	Name	Finish Time	Elapsed Time	Corrected Time	Position	Overall	Trophies
CK79	GYPSY	11:56:00	1:26:00	1:18:11	1	1	CSPS Trustees Cup – Line Honours Robelia Trophy – 1 st Corrected Time
WM	THRIFT	12:06:35	1:36:35	1:23:25	2	4	
CK91	JACK	12:10:20	1:40:20	1:23:37	3	3	The Commissioners Cup – 3 rd Corrected Time
FAITH	FAITH	12:15:56	1:45:56	1:27:01	4	2	Winter & Co Trophy – 2 nd Corrected Time



2019 Colne Match – Ellie Rule, Ellen CK222



Photo: David Chandler Repertor, Thalatta & Adieu standing out of Colne at the start of the barge class

It was going to be a busy start albeit with a far more sociable start time of 9.30 for the barges, smacks at 10 and for the first time, at 10.30, the MFOB's were joining us for the day too but on a shorter course.

It wasn't our best start. The main had to come down as the sheet had made a

lovely locking turn around the gaff, twice. Maybe the socialising the night before and the smell of burning bacon wasn't helping. When the start gun went, we still hadn't raised our jib topsail as the sheet had gone the wrong side of the bobstay.

Those with a better start had their spinnakers hoisted all poled out.... meanwhile we were still trying to untangle ropes.



Photo : David Chandler. Alberta CK318 on her way to victory at this years Colne Match.

As we were coming up to the Spitway buoy Peace was round but then we had an overlap on Lizzie who kindly gave us room at the mark but the barge Cambria, who was to leeward of Lizzie, did not get the memo on the rules and she squeezed Lizzie into quite a tight sandwich.

There didn't seem to be any panic at all on Lizzie, our crew were shouting at the

barge but they just stared, blankly. How we didn't hit each other was down to pure luck than judgement.

Then the fun really started. As Peace and Lizzie gained pace we struggled, Ellen was very sluggish and was taking on water. Then a squall hit. We were over on our ear and the topsail was quickly taken down. I was pinching as I just wanted to keep high to keep clear



of Peaces dirty wind. The wind was building as did the height of the bilge water. More gusts. To give our port pump a break we tacked. We should've tacked a lot earlier to clear Peace and give us more speed.

We had our jib topsail flapping around on the bowsprit and despite the crew offering to get it back in by this point I thought it was just too rough and not worth losing someone off the bowsprit.

We tacked again. The water ever rising and the gusts being now a more persistent strong breeze we decided to reef. We passed Colne Bar and saw how much we had lost.

Peace and Lizzie were well ahead and

Charlotte Ellen was coming past us like we'd stopped. We all felt a bit frustrated.

Poor Rory was stuck below manning two bilge pumps and our manual one.



Photo : David Chandler. Maria pressed, having led the 2019 Colne Match for the majority of the race coming in a close 2nd.



The crew on deck were clinging on and in-between wondering why they said yes to coming on board. They were trimming sails and sorting the reefing issue.

After some time, the weather front seemed like it had gone past, the wind had eased so the topsail went back up. We were then tacking well and each time tacked across Charlotte Ellen - until a barge decided to join in the party and then all was lost! We had an unlucky tack and that was that. Sitting in a barge's dirty air is not ideal for any boat. Wind got up again, topsail back down. The only thing that was consistent was the amount of water filling up our cabin. The smacks we had left behind were catching us. The bilge water just held us at such an angle that she started to stall on the gusts. In the end a quick tack into Mersea stone then back over the finish line allowed us to just nip in front of Gracie.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. We should've checked our reefing lines before heading out and we should only ever be sociable on the night after the race and not the night before! But where is the fun in that...

After we finished, I just felt completely disheartened and apologised to all the crew for what turned out to be a very wet race and poor Rory for finishing another race in the bilge and missing all



Mark Farthing, Gerard Swift and Alasdair McKenzie (winners of the new MFOB class) receiving their trophies.

action. We moored up safely, the bilge was empty and we just drank copious amounts of tea and ate until the cool box was empty and laughed about all the action.

Thank god for great crew. They all went home saying it was great fun.... despite being placed further down the results page than last year!



The Annual West Mersea Native Oyster Dredging Match September 2019

We're not going to make it! I panicked. Not a sailor, I was an outsider, an unusual passenger aboard the East Coast Smack, Maria CK21, as she was bearing down on her mooring buoy. With no modern engine our heritage boat had to do everything under the power of the wind alone. But a halyard was seriously snagged and we could not drop the sail efficiently at the right moment.

The tide was falling and we only had one chance to secure our mooring. On top of that, it was a matter of pride for the crew: they had just excelled showcasing their skills dredging oysters according to traditional methods under sail for two hours. They weren't about to bungle it in the last minutes.



Maria casting 2 of her 3 dredges.



Jon Brett teaching his son Joe how to empty a dredge.

Where others may have lost their cool, our unflappable skipper, Paul Winter, quietly assessed the situation. Our crew of solid sailing lads, was one of few words. Within seconds, one of them was swiftly shimmying up the mast.

Problem averted, we proudly hauled our cargo of oysters ashore on Cobmarsh Island, alongside dozens of

boats of competitors. There was a great atmosphere, a fission as east coast folk came together in their remote meeting place. I had a sense of timelessness, this unique community meeting, just as they have over many years before.



Photo: Kevin Dale.

I was privileged to join the annual West Mersea Oyster Dredging Match on a bright, sunny morning in September. Committee members William Baker and Beverley Green warmly welcomed this outsider on the pontoons and saw me safely onto one of the tenders to go out to join Maria (CK21).

To see so many heritage boats together under sail, Smacks, Bawleys and Bumkins was quite a sight for those watching from shore. But to be in amongst them competing was breathtaking. I marvelled as salt water stung nicks in my fingers when I leaned against the boat's side to sort starfish, crabs and sea urchins from the native

oysters in the estuary silt, freshly dredged from the seabed below us. There was a great feeling as we came together for the weighing-in and prize giving, crunching over the winnowed seashells of Cobmarsh Island. I cheered-on the skilful oyster shuckers competing to prepare our hauls against the clock outside the heritage packing shed and surrounded by dozens of excited onlookers.

It was such a privilege to be able to take part in this event, an exciting sunny day of Essex tradition and heritage that I will never ever forget.

My thanks to committee, skipper and crew for welcoming me aboard.

Kevin Dale 8th Sept 2019 (aboard Maria CK21)



Photos : Kevin Dale





Photo Kevin Dale. Dorothy CK159 working 2 dredges.



Photo : David Chandler. Lizzie Annie competing in the 2019 Rowhedge Regatta.



Photo : David Chandler. Sunbeam finishing half a bowsprit length ahead of Maria at the 2019 Rowhedge Regatta.



Photo :David Chandler. Dorothy and Maria running out of Colne at the 2019 Rowhedge Regatta.



Photo: David Chandler. Maria and Dorothy chasing the lead boats My Alice and Gracie at the Rowhedge Regatta.



2020 EVENTS

30 th May	Medway Barge Match
06 th June	Rowhedge Regatta
7 th June	Reclamation & Blessing of the waters
13 th June	Blackwater Smack & Barge Match
20 Th June	Wivenhoe Town Regatta
21 st June	Sail & Picnic
27 TH June	Pin Mill Barge Match
4 Th July	Heybridge Basin Regatta
11 Th July	Thames Barge Match
25 th July	OGA East Coast Race
15 th Aug	Swale Smack & Barge Match
16 th – 21 st Aug	Mersea Week
22 nd Aug	Mersea Town Regatta
12 th Sept	Colne Match
13 th Sept	Mersea Dredging Match
19 th Sept	Maldon Town Regatta
TBA	Tollesbury Smack Race

