



Thames Sailing Barge Trust

Newsletter

Issue No. 41

February 2007



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Subscriptions for 2007

Sorry to repeat myself but these were due on 1st January and if you have not yet renewed, can I appeal to you to do so on receipt of this Newsletter. Pudge needs every £ we can lay our hands on, so your prompt response would be appreciated!

Once again a big thank you to those who so kindly supported the mattress appeal.

We are nearly there! £100 will see us home!

Thank you too for all the other non-specific donations many of you have sent in recent times: they are all most welcome!
Brian Dawson

16th March 2007, FRIDAY.
MUSTER AT THE UNION JACK CLUB:
“PUDGE” CROSSES THE CHANNEL FOR THE DUNKIRK 50TH ANNIVERSARY, 1990.

Recollections, pictures and a short film, by John Morgan and others who took part.

7:00 pm for 7:30 start, till 9:30.

UNION JACK CLUB, SANDELL STREET, WATERLOO, LONDON. SE1 8UJ.

In the BURNS ROOM. This is close to Waterloo main line station, Waterloo Road entrance.

Everybody Welcome.

A bar is available in the building. Home made sandwiches can be purchased.

The UJC asks that you bring some identification with you in case they have to check identities for reasons of security.

5th MAY, SATURDAY: FITTING-OUT SUPPER AT MALDON.

FOLLOWED BY OPEN DAYS ON SUNDAY 6TH AND MONDAY 7TH MAY.

Any queries to :John Morgan.
Tel: 01252-512848

SLOWLY BUT SURELY...

The problem with restoration work is that things don't always move forward at the same pace and at times, to the uninitiated eye, it seems that there is very little progress compared to the amount of time spent. We are at one of those times at the moment.

In my last update I said that the shipwrights had started on the port side and that the chine keelson, the main structural timber that holds the side to the bottom, was in position and also that the rider, the lower inside structural timber that goes the full length of the barge, was also spiked in position.

Since then, the shipwrights have fashioned, steamed to shape and spiked in position the chine, which is the outside main structural timber. Then the after half of the rider was made, steamed into shape and craned into the barge, together with the inner chine extensions and various other pieces. These are all just placed roughly in position and all you can see is what looks like a great pile of bent timber just getting in the way. However, it has been necessary to prepare and stack all these pieces inside the barge before the last frames could be made and fitted, thus closing the hole in the side of the barge. How much easier it would have been to have built a new barge!



Timbers inside Pudge waiting to put in place

As soon as Rick and Kevin have finished making and fitting the under chine doubling, the outside edge plank along the underside of the barge, the job will appear to leap ahead as all the parts get bolted together through the frames. To do this will require around 120 specially forged bolts up to 18 inches long. The whole of the lower bottom to side structure will then be complete.

On the other side of the coin Trust members have been working very hard to replace the accommodation on the starboard side. This has been quite involved, especially when we discovered that all the doorways were much wider at the bottom than the top due to the changes in the shape of the hull!

More on this next time - or better still, come and give us a hand and see for yourself! 10th/11th and 24th/25th March are the next working weekends and of course there's every Wednesday.

Peter Boss

CENTAUR'S MEDWAY MATCH MAY 2005

A slightly ancient mariner's tale as told
by **Andrew Berry**...

Our truly international crew, consisting amongst others of 'Australian' Dave Perkins, Hasje Mousley (She's originally from Holland , and her name fairly obviously rhymes with washer as in nut, bolt and...), and Dilys Renouf, (she's from Ken' in'shee)...met aboard Centaur at Maldon on a hot Thursday evening at the end of May in preparation for our four day mission to lift the silverware from the Medway Match, and also to watch the Southend Air Show.

We swiftly adjourned to the nearby Queen's Head for a pint and a meal, and I was able to admire David and Dilys Renouf's own quarter scale barge, 'HOPE' at her berth in the boatyard. We were also able to clock TSBT skipper Geoff Harris's nifty footwork as part of the Morris Men troupe performing on the quay.

At 0345 on Friday morning I awoke slightly after everyone else. My brand new £7.99 Argos de-luxe alarm clock was a failure. Or at least a partial failure. Starting with a polite peep peep, peep peep, it swiftly wound its self up into an angry frenzy, with both volume and speed increasing exponentially. Unfortunately having rammed my ear plugs in with extra enthusiasm in response to the ever more frequent and urgent tip toeing of the rest of the crew from their bunks to the heads, I was unable to hear a thing. Not so everyone else on the barge, who were beginning to panic (some even started reading the instructions for donning a lifejacket) and I suffered the indignity of waking to find (then) assistant Mate Phil Chatfield giving me a shake, and enquiring politely if I could hear that bloody racket.

We were soon away from the Hythe, and with no wind, our skipper Mick Lungley motored us off into the most spectacular sunrise, with a seething red sun heaving itself over the horizon somewhere out by the Bench Head. Past Thirslett, and we came across the yacht barge 'BLACKTHORN' - drifting apparently abandoned on a glassy sea. As we passed her a lone arm, perhaps that of the only survivor of her crew was waved feebly at us. Cheerily we ignored his obvious distress and passed on, through a foggy bit off Bradwell, and found the Spitways buoys, before setting the sails once the wind filled in ,and progressing up Swin. As we crossed the mouth of the Thames we had a race with BLACKTHORN, and won, and



*BLACKTHORN in the sunset...if you look
really carefully...*

REMINDER, and lost.

Approaching the Medway I saw a shark, but by then I was getting delirious in the heat, possibly as a result of a deficiency within the crew that manifested itself early on, something seemed to preclude the production of a proper brown cup of tea. The rest of the gang, the warm milk drinkers, said it was some porpoises, and on reflection I can see that they are more likely to have been correct. In fact the crew were extremely keen; I've never seen so many people up on deck, 'Sail by sail' books in hand gazing up at the rigging, lips silently moving as if in tribute to the late Peter Hearn.

Still chasing and slowly closing REMINDER we sailed up to Gillingham Pier, and anchored at 14:00, most people diving below to examine the deckhead., as we'd had search an early start. Later on we lowered the boat , and motored ashore, but being unable to find anywhere to alight due to the low spring tide, we gave up hope of attending the pre-match briefing, and settled down to a session of using binoculars to watch the match committee on the shore watching us through binoculars, watching them through binoculars etc.

Later on, after a superb dinner Mick and Phil led a sing song on deck, and we were able to appreciate the efforts of those who had made more effort than us to attend the briefing as they paddled and splashed through the mud trying to refloat their boats and get back to the barges.

On Saturday we were woken up early again by skipper Mick loudly asking if anyone wanted to buy a battleship (we were moored right off the old Chatham dockyard entrance), and by 0700 we were under weigh and ready for our class start at 07:30.

The committee had mustered at the end of the pier, with the requisite shot gun to start the match, and so was the man with the cartridges, except he was at the end of a different pier. In a strong force 5, gusting 6, there was much fast and furious close quarter manoeuvring around the line and Mick somehow to master what to me was a fusillade of gun shots and made an excellent start - we were first over the line exactly 60 seconds after the gun. Unfortunately 15 minutes later in the bowsprit class, MARJORIE did the same but in 58 seconds , this we just missed the prize for fastest overall start.

By now the wind was blowing force 6, gusting 7, and with the ebb tide gathering power under us, we lead the fleet down river, with the GPS reading 8.6 Knots.

Gybing occasionally to follow the channel, we had to brail up the Main and ruck the Tops'l each time, and then haul up the Tops'l halliard again, so we were all kept pretty busy.

The committee shortened the course, so no longer were we heading for the Medway buoy, but only to Medway No 6, not nearly so far out past Sheerness. At the buoy we smartly gybed and began the long beat back into the Medway proper. Initially we were contending with the last of the ebb still coming out of the river but the tide soon turned giving us much lumpier wind over tide sea conditions .We were sailing magnificently, often the weather chine keelson was clearly visible coming out of the water, and the lee rail was inches above the roaring bow wave we were creating...

In a gust the fores'l sheet parted, and the crew rose to the challenge magnificently to get the errant canvas back under control,

and rig a new sheet so that the barge could be winded. It wasn't until this episode was over that someone from aft asked me if I'd seen the port leeboard - I hadn't but it had given way under the strain and was cracked through from top to bottom. That effectively was the end of our match, and although we persevered and sailed across the line, we had had to use the engine once to kick the head round, so we retired honourably. Nevertheless we had all had an exhilarating and memorable sail.

After trying to find an alongside berth up river, we gave up and brought up in the same position as the previous night, amongst many other barges, some of which had had struck their topmasts in an effort to reduce their windage. We were not the only barge to suffer damage, and later we found that aboard XYLONITE, the main sheet traveller, the big iron ring that runs along the main horse had parted - which explains why we saw her running off down wind. XYLONITE eventually recovered the situation and resumed the match, and completed the course.

During the prize giving speeches that night, which half of us did not even get to (but that's a long and complicated story) the Race Officer kindly complimented on how well turned out Centaur was, and commented that she was going fast through the water. He also said how well her crew had coped with the conditions and that she had been handled well.

Youth and Family Trust Sails.

The Youth Sail and one of the Family Day Sails were mistakenly omitted from the Sailing Programme published last month. They are as follows:

Youth Sail:

14 to 18 year-olds ONLY for 2 day sail out of Ipswich. Board evening of 14th August, return evening of 16th.

One-Day Family Sail:

Board evening of 16th August or 7.30am on 17th.

Parent or guardian accompanied children from 5 yrs old upwards, to Grandparents are welcome on all the Family Sails.

For further details, contact Phil Chatfield. Book in usual way through Crewing secretary Andrew Berry (contacts list on back page).



Caption Competition.

A varied response (not all printable) to the picture of Trust Mate and Crewing Secretary Andrew Berry in a position he tries not to get into too often...

The Editor's favourites were:

"Does my bum look big up this...?",

followed by:

"Where did you say it was Skipper?".

Both might quite reasonably be heard on a Trust barge trip...

Sales Officer Needed...

Unfortunately, due to growing pressures of work and a lack of time, I am unable to continue as the Trust's Sales Officer and am looking for a volunteer to take over from me please, as soon as possible. The position involves ordering the stock items and maintaining these and keeping the barges stocked during the sailing season and storing the clothing and books over the winter. As well as the May open days.

If you can help, please call me on 01842 890983 during the evening but no later than 9.00pm please.

Paul Van der Hulks.

NEW RANGE OF TSBT EMBROIDERED CLOTHING FOR THE 2007 SEASON

REVERSIBLE COATS / HEAVY SAILING JACKET	£37.00
FLYING JACKET	£35.00
FLEECE LINED BODY WARMER	£28.00
LIGHTWEIGHT JACKET	£28.00
PADDED BODY WARMER	£22.50
CARDIGAN / V NECK JUMPER	£18.00

THESE ARE IN ADDITION TO THE CURRENT RANGE OF ITEMS:

FULL ZIPPED FLEECE	£23.00
SLEEVELESS FLEECE / HOODED FLEECE	£15.00**
RUGBY SHIRTS	£26.00
SWEATSHIRT	£18.00
POLO SHIRTS	£15.00
T SHIRTS	£7.50
BASEBALL CAPS / FLEECE HATS	£7.00

**Whilst stocks last.

All items are available from the Sales Officer or at the open day in May and then after will be stocked on the barges. See article left for contact.

IN MEMORY OF IDEN WICKINGS

On behalf of the Trust Peter and I recently attended, with many others from the barging community, the funeral of member and barge owner Iden Wickings who died in January and would like to share the following with you:

Iden trained in the mid fifties at St. Martin's School of Art in London, with Antony Caro, Elizabeth Frink and Philip King. At that time he assumed that sculpture would be his life. However, National Service in the Royal Navy and then family commitments changed all that. He was to spend the majority of his working life as a manager in the National Health Service and was also a key figure at the King's Fund for more than a decade. He was very proud of his achievements for both.

However, the Trust's greatest link with him was through barges. Iden and his wife Sheena, who passed away last year, lived aboard and sailed the barges *Montreal* and then *Lady Jean* (*Sir Alan Herbert*). *Montreal* was actually built as a Swim Head Lighter in 1902 for Edward Lloyd. She was rigged in 1970 by Owen Emmerson and then bought by Iden a little later. Although she was much loved by Iden and Sheena, with her bluff bows she was never going to win any races. However, Iden would turn up at matches and sail the course, happy to have competed even though *Montreal* would always come in last.

Iden's second barge was the *Lady Jean*, a wooden barge built by Short Bros.,

Rochester in 1923. She was renamed *Sir Alan Herbert* by the East Coast Sail Trust while they were using her as a sail training ship, but she reverted to her original name when she was bought by Iden. She was used as a barge yacht operating out of St. Katherine's before they moved her to Maldon. Many will have seen *Lady Jean* lying alongside at The Hythe, near to *Pudge* and *Centaur*.

Iden was a founder member of the Sailing Barge Association which was formed to establish a definitive status for the sailing barge fleet for recognition by Government Departments. The SBA, together with the Association of Bargemen have worked consistently and diligently to maintain this status which has been extremely important as regulation after regulation has beset us. Iden remained on the SBA committee until his death.

In the last ten years or so Iden and Sheena and *Lady Jean*, along with their invaluable mate Bill Newton, have been an integral part of the waterfront in Maldon and the barge community. Iden helped to form the 'Maldon Barge Operators Group' an important communication link with Maldon Council. Latterly, Iden was also able to resurrect his passion for sculpture and then *Lady Jean* provided him with a sculpture workshop and gallery. As well as exhibitions in Maldon he also sailed to France during the summer months, where he worked and exhibited in several French ports.

Sadly we have lost firstly Sheena and now Iden - and the future of *Lady Jean* is yet to be seen. P.Boss

INTERESTED IN CHARTERING THIS YEAR?

As the current phase of Pudge's restoration moves quickly towards its conclusion later this Spring, so interest in chartering her is also growing rapidly.

Already we have taken bookings for the same number of charter days as for the whole of last season, with June dates for Pudge being almost all sold.

If you are planning a 2007 charter on either Pudge or Centaur, you need to act now by contacting the Charter Secretary: call David Gibson on 01621 893674 or email charters@bargetrust.org.

If you delay you may be disappointed.

TRUST SAILS:

The early trips are often under subscribed so we need a big effort to fill these first trips...bring a friend, or two, as there is no restriction on the number of non-members who can sail.

A full update on bookings will be in next month's newsletter.

Thames Sailing Barge Trust Committee Members 2007/8

President: Barrie Lawrence
22 Long Lane, Grays, Essex. RM16 2PJ
01375 375086

Chairman & Treasurer: Brian Dawson
8 Birch Close, Ely, Cambs. CB7 4TJ
01353 614096

Deputy Chairman & Safety Officer: Martin Phillips
9 County Place, Chelmsford, Essex. CM2 0RF
07802 362973

Barge Manager: Peter Boss
'Crosstrees', The Downs, Maldon, Essex. CM9 5HR
01621 851147

Sailing Manager: Paul Curtis
10 Rope Walk, Maldon, Essex. CM9 5EB
01621 856922

Membership: Jane Dawson
8 Birch Close, Ely, Cambs. CB7 4TJ
01353 614096

Secretary: James Thorburn
29 Battlebridge Court, Wharfdale Rd., London. N1 9UA
0207 2782649

Crewing Secretary: Andrew Berry
29 Northney Rd., Hayling Island, Hants. PO11 0ND
02392 469139

Charter Secretary: David Gibson
charters@bargetrust.com 01621 893674

Fundraising: Pat Boss

'Crosstrees', The Downs, Maldon, Essex. CM9 5HR
01621 851147

Social Secretary: John Morgan
5 Mendip Rd., Cove, Farnborough, Hants. GU14 9HL
01252 512848

Asst. Social Secretary: Carol Brooksbank
9 Donnington Mans., Donnington Rd, London. NW10 3QP
0208 4590588

Open Day Coordinator & Web Master: Vince Webb
2 Stoneleigh Lodge, Branstone Road, Kew. TW9 3LD
0208 9480428

100 Club: Terry O'Sullivan
22 Lonsdale Court, Pin Green, Stevenage. SG1 5EL
01438 358523

Trust Sales: Paul Van Der Hulks
5 Dukes Ride Cottages, Barnham, Suffolk. IP24 2PJ
01842 890983

Archive: Alison Mercer
Gamma Cottage, Kerridge's Cut, Mistley. CO11 1JT
01206 395780

Youth Interests: Phil Chatfield
Gamma Cottage, Kerridge's Cut, Mistley. CO11 1JT
01206 395780

Other Members: Carmel Smith- Marketing,
Patrick Dillon

Thames Sailing Barge Trust.

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