



Thames Sailing Barge Trust

NEWSLETTER

Celebrating
60
years
1948-2008

Issue No. 50

January 2008

COMMENT

WELCOME..

To the first of our 60th Anniversary year's Newsletters.

We are hoping for great things during 2008 and we shall be doing our best to keep you informed and entertained. This month there is a great deal of information for you, plus some old and new recollections from our members. Enjoy...

P.S. Many thanks to those who answered my call for more submissions: please keep them coming. Pictures of whatever kind are also gratefully received to brighten things up too. See back page for contact details.

Ali Mercer

BRIAN'S BIT

THANK YOU AGAIN!

Very grateful thanks to those of you who have sent me subscriptions, subscriptions with donations added and straight donations. All thankfully received and banked!

May I just remind you that we are a Registered Charity and as such can claim Income Tax refunds on donations made under the Gift Aid scheme. Many of you have lodged a Gift Aid Declaration with me, but if you have not or can't remember, please get in touch and I will tell you. You can contact me on:
01223 471051 or
cambridgegrp@netcom.co.uk during the week or drop me a line.

I am of course happy to receive your subs as well if you have not yet renewed.

Brian Dawson, Treasurer,
8 Birch Close, Ely, Cambs.
CB7 4TJ



That's the verdict of *Mary Bryan* and friends, as she writes here:

One of the highlights of last year was my husband Bob's charter of Centaur with the intention of reaching Woodbridge in time for the Woodbridge Folk Festival weekend.

Most of us were Morris dancers and/or musicians, so there was plenty of music on the trip, although Bob was banned from playing his bagpipes on board until we reached Woodbridge!

Working together as a team preparing meals, doing chores and helping on deck with expert tuition from the Skipper and Mate was great fun (although the weather was somewhat unkind the first week) and with so much good food, I'm sure we all put on a few extra pounds.

An interesting week brought us to the quayside at Woodbridge by the Tide Mill. The barge proved quite a tourist attraction, as several teams were programmed to dance on the hard there, including our team Royal Liberty Morris.

The best part was the evenings when any 'Folkie' was invited on deck for a music session- and what a variety of instruments, singers, tunes and characters we had! The weather that weekend was very hot and it was great to see people from all parts and all ages enjoying themselves, the public on the quay singing along and as a bonus, incredible sunsets.

Not too many people can say, as we can, that Jesus guided them from their moorings... Jesus did indeed guide us out of Woodbridge into clear water: you see the pilot was a Reverend and his boat was called Jesus!

The second week we sailed and it was so exciting! Harwich, Pinn Mill, Wivenhoe, Rowhedge, Brightlingsea and finally back to Maldon.

Barge trips certainly have the 'X' Factor and I can't wait for the next 'Strictly Come Barging'. It takes a lot to beat a Barge trip!

A FRESH START

During what was a difficult 2007, facing many challenges and stretching finances to within an inch of breaking-point, we were also aware that we were approaching a time for real celebration: the achievement of 60 years of maintaining and sailing Thames Barges.

We therefore supplemented our General Committee meetings last year with a few 'Think Tank' sessions, in order to identify our strengths and weaknesses and what we'd like to change and achieve over the coming years.

This resulted in an agreement during our first meeting this year to a reorganisation of our operational structure, with an emphasis on better communication and a sharing of responsibilities and workloads between a greater number of people.

To do this we have created management teams: Finance/Admin, Sailing, Barges, Membership, Heritage and Events/Publicity. The plan is for these groups to meet, with any Officer or interested member/volunteer attending whichever meeting/s they wish. Each team will report back to the General Committee on plans and actions, seeking ratification for any big decisions.

We've already generated plenty of ideas which we are putting into action, e.g. contacting new members personally to welcome them and talk about the Trust's work. We'll be looking at publicity, the website, volunteer co-ordination and fundraising amongst many other things.

What we really wish to encourage is

the participation anyone who would like to help in moving the Trust forward, giving what time and skills they can with no obligation to become an Officer of the Trust or attend General Committee meetings.

Members' interest, financial support and sailing participation are all important and appreciated, but we really need more direct involvement by more people to stand any chance of surviving for another 60 years...

We will be moving to monthly General Committee meetings while we feel our way with the new structure. If you are interested in generating new ideas and helping put them into practice, please contact Chairman Brian Dawson 01223 471051 or cambridgerp@netcom.co.uk or Deputy Chairman Martin Phillips 01245 600829

EVENTS

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

15 th February Note Date Change

Mr. Frank R. Turner. An Illustrated Talk: "The Maunsell Sea Forts"

Built out at sea during the early days of the second world war. These groups of towers are often seen in the distance when sailing in the Thames Estuary or off the east coast. They were built for anti-aircraft defence and to look out for anti-shiping mines dropped in an attempt to shut off the port of London. More recently, they came to wide public attention when pirate radio stations set up on some of them. Maunsell was the engineer that designed these towers which are now regarded as forerunners of the North Sea oil rigs A preservation trust has been set up to restore one.

7:00 for 7:30 till 9:30 pm.
Burns Room, Union Jack Club,
Sandell St. SE1 8UJ.
Off Waterloo Rd, Close to the
Mainline Station.

8 th March Diamond Jubilee Lunch

We have booked the King William Restaurant in the Old Royal Naval College.

Capt. Mick Lungley will be our guest of honour. We expect about 100 guests, members past and present and friends of members.

The cost of a ticket will be £19-00 in advance. Buy your own wine.

See the enclosed flyer and application form.



4 th May Diamond Jubilee Sponsored Walk For the Joint Benefit of the TSBT and the RNLI

The date is the Sunday of the May Day bank holiday weekend, coinciding with our Open Days. The Mayor of Maldon has accepted our invitation to attend.

We will need many volunteers to act as marshals and numerous other tasks. We also want lots of walkers young and old, with friends that will sponsor them. Look out for more details in the next two Newsletters.

We hope to see you at one or other of these events. They are a great chance to catch up with people, remince about the old days and exchange news. You'll also be helping to raise much needed funds!

COULD IT BE YOU..?



As has been mentioned opposite, we are in need of people to come and help us in a variety of ways to develop the Trust for the future. However, we are also in need of more immediate and specific help: we'd like to hear from volunteers to take the positions of Sales Officer and Secretary.

Our present Sales Officer, Barry Butler, has long had plans to move to the furthest tip of Scotland and it's now come to fruition rather sooner than he expected. We wish him the best of luck and thank him for his efforts in 2007.

Would you be prepared to take on the role, keeping the Barges stocked with merchandise, providing goods/sales support at Open Days/events and ordering supplies as necessary? If you'd like to find out more, please ring Barry on 01621 851044 or Brian Dawson on 01223 471051.

Is anyone out there able to take minutes of our General Committee meetings, to be held monthly in Chelmsford for the time being, writing them up with an agreed action plan and disseminating them to Committee Members promptly? There would be some responsibility for dealing with correspondence too, with the support of other Officers. To discuss what's involved, please chat with Brian on the number above. We duly thank James Thorburn for his services in this position, but who's recently increased professional workload now prevents his continuing.

Please give the above your consideration: the Trust is entirely dependent on volunteers for every aspect of its operation.

PUDGE 'ONE HUNDRED CLUB' DRAW

The lucky winners of £10, £20 and £50 respectively were:

for November:

3rd	Tim White
2nd	Ron Weyda
1st	Len Hunt

for January:

3rd	John H. Cousins
2nd	Pauline Chell
1st	Brian Dawson



Photo: Mike Wignall

Congratulations to you all: a nice start to the New Year...

EVENTS

BARGE MATCHES

Here are the dates for matches in 2008.

MEDWAY	31st May
PASSAGE	21st June
from Gravesend to Mistley, followed by rally of former Horlocks barges from Shotley to Mistley.	
PIN MILL	28th June
THAMES	12th July
BLACKWATER	26th July
SWALE	9th Aug
WHITSTABLE	16th Aug
SOUTHEND	23rd Aug
COLNE	6th Sept

To find out which matches our Barges will be in, see our 2008



sailing programme.

A group of you may wish to charter for a Match weekend: speak to Charter Secretary David Gibson to discuss- 01621 893674 charters@bargetrust.org

To find out about past Matches, see the SSBR's website www.sailingbargeassociation.co.uk or Member Mike Wignall has set up a new Barging Website to help

gather info for his forthcoming book, designed to promote the barge matches to the public, so helping provide the revenues needed to maintain barges that charter and sustain the supporting skills base ashore. www.thamesbargeracing.co.uk

Please note, dates have been compiled from a variety of sources: please double check details closer to the time if you intend to travel to see a Match.

PASSAGE TO - SHOTLEY!**28th June 1991**

I thought I'd better write this log, well- someone's got to do it!
 They've almost nearly all gone home, bad luck- we nearly blew it!
 We assembled there all ten of us arriving at Ipswich Wet Dock,
 We slowly moved out in middle of night making our way through the main lock.

Excitement mounted- a journey ahead and 'sis' Eileen was all of a tizzy,
 We busied ourselves with 'this' and with 'that' and watching things made us quite dizzy.
 It was Eileen's first trip and enjoy it she would, come what may through hell and high water,
 We tried everything, as we hoped that we could, doing everything right as we 'oughter.'

Peter Boss was great and encouraged with aid and Brian as usual was super-
 The laughs that we had were all tailor-made, making us fall in a sort of a stupor
 Thursday night started bright and all seemed alright, so we sailed away feeling delighted,
 The weather got BAD and it blew and it hailed, then- we weren't feeling quite so excited!

Centaur keeled right over- the crockery smashed, for a time it was mayhem all round,
 But we all rallied round, dropped the sails, cleared the mess and- we didn't get stuck well aground.
 But it caused quite a stir, was good talking point which will last us for ages and ages,
 I could go on and on about what occurred, which would simply use dozens of pages!

Now Eileen's fame will go on and on- with our Skipper she had such a 'cheek',
 She told him to move- he'd obscured her view- when she said it we let out a shriek!
 'You don't say those things to the man who's in charge, it's not really quite the done thing',
 So we told her so nicely 'not to do it again'- whereupon Eileen started to sing!

We ate so much food between sails and stops that we'll all need to go on a diet,
 What was offered we ate with delight, our mealtimes became quite a riot.
 Friday arrived, the sky was bright blue with clouds that were fluffy and white,
 We sailed up the Stour in a most stately way, the sun shining warmly and bright.

Lovely things have to end, as we know that they do and the time soon arrived to 'lock in',
 To Shotley Marine the Barge was now bound, the lock gates were open- we went in.
 The crew have been great, the trip has as well and that goes without really saying,
 Some have departed and made their way home when they'd all really rather be staying.

We all had a steer and we've all pulled a rope (and some of us held on quite tight),
 All of it's fun and now that it's done, Skipper's hair's turned quite grey overnight!!
 Goodbye Maureen and Gwynne, Gwen and Ken and Eileen, goodbye Jane, John and Dorothy too-
 Goodbye Skipper and Mate (make another quick date), please let's all come sailing with you!

*With thanks to Member Gwen Ives***SNIPPITS****WRITE UP IN STYLE**

Cyril Varley is in possession of the Bargeman's Service Log Book for sale at the princely sum of £15 plus £1 p&p.

If you'd like one contact:
 Cyril Varley,
 Association of Bargemen,
 1, Hillside Cottages,
 Freston,
 Ipswich,
 Suffolk, IP9 1AA.
 01473 780430

SUBMISSIONS

Particularly out of season, we are in need of articles, pictures, poems, sketches etc. for the newsletter. Do you have something you'd like to share?

If you have, you can send it via e-mail or post: see contacts below. I'm happy to type up handwritten or typed copy and scan photos or other pictures. If you'd like something returned, please supply a S.A.E. Please don't post anything valuable or precious!

USEFUL CONTACTS...

Membership: Jane Dawson
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