



# Thames Sailing Barge Trust

## Newsletter

Issue No. 42

March 2007



### Last Call for 2007 Subscriptions!

By now I hope that you have renewed your membership as we really do need all the funds we can gather to see Pudge through the present phases of her restoration.

If you have decided not to stay with us, and I very much hope this is not the case, could I ask you to contact either Jane or I at home on 01353 614096 or by email to [cambridgerp@netcom.co.uk](mailto:cambridgerp@netcom.co.uk) as this action on your part will save the Trust having to go to the expense of contacting you.

Similarly, if you have been intending to renew, please get in touch without delay.

Thank you...  
Brian & Jane Dawson

### SUCCESS!

**Thank you** to all who have supported the Pudge Mattress Fund. We are pleased to announce that we have reached our target and all who stay on her will now be sleeping in renewed comfort...

### DON'T FORGET...

5th May: Fitting-Out Suuper at Maldon. Please see booking form for details.

Followed by open days on Sunday 6th and Monday 7th May.

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

## Centaur on the Blocks

The sun is shining and rigging out has begun on Centaur! Also, she will be on the blocks over the Easter weekend, starting on Good Friday for the usual scraping, tarring and antifouling. The more people we get the easier it is and the more fun it is! You will need wellies and old waterproofs/overalls and a hat will be useful... Refreshments will be provided but bring some sandwiches for lunch, or you will be forced to go to the pub or the Yacht Club.

**We need you - please come and help.**

## Pudge Picture Update



A photo report by Peter Boss of just one of the many tasks being done by volunteers, as we work towards readying Pudge for re-floating.

We are still in need of helpers, particularly if you have useful skills to offer. All levels of help welcome though!



*top left Saturday* - Rick has informed us that he needs the sternpost removed. Phil Spiers and Peter Duckworth take it in turns to grind off the bolts.

*above Sunday* - getting late, but nearly there!

*left* Stern post ready for refitting.

## MIKE SEYMOUR

It is with great sadness that we record the death on February 10th of Mike Seymour, one of our long-standing members. We extend our deep sympathy at this sad time to his wife Vanessa and to their children and families. Peter Ferguson, another of our long-standing members, who has been a personal friend of the family for many years writes the following tribute:

You couldn't help but like Mike Seymour from the moment you met him. Tall, dark and with rugged good looks, he cut an impressive figure, every inch the country gentleman, yet down-to-earth with a certain gentleness of manner and quiet enthusiasm for all his many and varied interests, whether it was the Reform Club, archery, all things Viking, Shakespeare (his favourite play King Henry V), medieval history, Thames barges, renaissance music, leather-button-making or wood-carving, to name but a few.

He lived for most of his life in East Anglia, in the Ingatestone area and many members will remember Adam and Powis Farm, which he and Vanessa made their home for much of their married life, until moving a few years ago to Sternfield near Saxmundham. Mike loved Maldon and nothing pleased him more than to visit the Hythe and the barges there. In the 1960s, he sailed with Martin Loverock on LADY GWYNFRED, joining the Thames Barge Sailing Club in 1970. He joined the Society for Sprintsail Barge Research at about the same time, and our friendship was sealed on one of that Society's famous 'hulk

walks' which I happened to be leading in the absence of Hugh Perks. We met at Maldon Hythe, walked round to Sadds and along their quay to Heybridge Creek, where Mike and I made a measured survey of the transom of the BEAUMONT BELLE, which was hulked there. We then walked the sea wall to Heybridge Basin, had lunch in one of the two pubs there, and walked the Chelmer navigation, eventually returning to Maldon from up near Beeleigh.

I was at the time on the TBSC Committee as sales officer amongst other things, having taken on the job from Margery Bates some years before. In 1976 my wife Sheena was expecting our elder daughter, Catherine, and I found that being a father for the first time didn't leave time to be sales officer as well. Mike offered to take on the job and was duly elected to the committee to serve in that capacity, a job he did well until handing over to Brian Boorman a year or two later. Mike's wife Vanessa became godmother to Catherine and so our two families' friendship matured as our respective children grew up. I recall with great affection charters on PUDGE with Mike and Vanessa, particularly one when Catherine was old enough to join us. One year we spent a wonderful Christmas at Adam and Powis Farm and only a couple of years ago, Sheena and I went on holiday with Mike and Vanessa in the Scottish Highlands and the Outer Hebrides.

When Mike gave up his seat on the TBSC Committee, he still took an active interest in the Club, especially the major



restoration of CENTAUR and PUDGE, where his craft skills, particularly as a wood carver, came to the fore. Many of his friends in the TBSC and SSBR marvelled at his beautiful model at half-inch to the foot, of a typical Thames barge hull. The craftsmanship displayed was, to those familiar with the term, 'dockyard standard' - as finely detailed as that of the best professionals. Mike told me how he had salvaged a psychiatrist's couch which had been abandoned in an office block being demolished near his office in London. This he patiently dismantled and cut into sections small enough to fit discreetly into large brown-paper envelopes which he carried home one by one on the train after work! The couch was made of 'good dry beech', ideal for converting into the barge model, which he constructed with the aid of a previously-made half-model from which he took off the lines and carved the frames. Mike's model was 'plank on frame', built like the real thing, with keel, floors, frames and futtocks, chine and main keelsons, knees, carlings, in fact, the lot. He even panelled and furnished the after

*Continued on back page...*

## CENTAUR BOOKING UPDATE

As the new sailing season draws closer the bookings should be rolling but they aren't: in fact after an initial flurry they seem to have stopped and I haven't had a booking or even an enquiry in the last 4 weeks.

Following feedback received last year that more day sails were required; we have put on more day sails, but where are the bookings? Most bookings so far have been from regulars securing places on their favourite trips well in advance.

The early trips are often under subscribed so I need a big effort to fill these...bring a friend or two, as there is no restriction on the number of non-members who can sail. Remember, we still need as much money as possible to complete the restoration of Pudge, and in particular don't forget to book up those matches early if you want a place on them

As with last year, David Gibson the charter secretary and myself will be working closely to ensure that the Trust as a whole gets the maximum usage possible out of Centaur, whether it be a Trust sail or a charter. Trust sails that do not look like filling up may well be cancelled if a charterer comes forward or if PUDGE does not come back into commission in time for any reason.

Please get your bookings in NOW, so we can see those weekends that might better suit as a charter. We cannot afford to send Centaur out only half full on any trip this year, yet we are only 15% booked up so far.

Amazingly with all the publicity and huge effort surrounding PUDGE, there has been no take up of the two rare opportunities to take her for a sail without having to charter her - trips 4 and 22.

We have now added the FAMILY and YOUTH trips into the programme in August. These show as trips 26 & 27 in the table under, and as usual will be hosted by Trust Mate Phil Chatfield.

As with last year I will be publishing the booking status at regular intervals in this newsletter, as well as sending out updates via my E-mail distribution list to those of you who have asked to be on it.

Many, if not most of you, are using E-mail to book and this suits me fine. It makes life easier for me, especially if you have sailed in previous years, as I will have all your details on file. For this reason you don't need to repeat them on the booking form



unless something has changed. Of course if you book by email please do not send an SAE.

If you have any queries whatsoever, please contact me on 02392 469139 to discuss (but no later than 9 pm please), or via email to [CREWING@BARGETRUST.ORG](mailto:CREWING@BARGETRUST.ORG).

GOOD SAILING in 2007,  
*Andrew Berry*

CENTAUR BOOKINGS 2007					
TRIP NO.	MONTH	DAY	FROM / TO	TRIP DESCRIPTION	PLACES AVAILABLE
1	May	12	Maldon	River Blackwater 1 Day Sail	10
2		19/20	Maldon	R Blackwater and R Colne	10
3	Bank Hol	26/27/28	Maldon	R. Blackwater and R.Roach 3 Day	9
4	June	9	Maldon	PUDGE Blackwater Match 1 Day	5
5		9	Maldon	CENTAUR Blackwater Match 1 Day	8
6		16/17	Maldon	R.Colne - Rowhedge on the tide	2
7		23/24	PASSAGE	Maldon to Ipswich one way 2 day	9
8		30/01	Ipswich	Suffolk Rivers / The Backwaters	9
9	Jul	07/08	Ipswich	Pin Mill Match	4
10		14/15	Ipswich	R.Orwell & R.Stour - Mistle lunch	6
11		21	Ipswich	Ipswich 1 Day Sail	10
12		22	Ipswich	Ipswich 1 Day Sail	10
13		28/29	Ipswich	Harwich Harbour and Sea Festival	9
14	Aug	03 - 06	Ipswich	Swale Match (4 day)	9
15		11/12	Ipswich	Suffolk Rivers and Coast	0
16		18	Ipswich	Ipswich 1 Day Sail	10
17		19	Ipswich	Ipswich 1 Day Sail	10
18	Bank Hol	24 to 27	Ipswich	R.Alde and R.Deben 4 Day	7
19	Sept	01/02	Ipswich	Colne Match / Brightlingsea	12
20		08/09	Ipswich	R.Orwell & R.Stour	11
21		15/16	PASSAGE	2 Days Ipswich to Maldon	12
22		22/23	Maldon	PUDGE -R. Blackwater etc	10
23		29/30	Maldon	CANCELLED	n/a
24	Oct	6/7	Maldon	River Blackwater and R Colne	10
25		13/14	Maldon	River Blackwater and Essex coast	6
26	Aug	15/16	IPSWICH	YOUTH	10
27	Aug	17	IPSWICH	FAMILY	10

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cabin and carefully scaled down a copy of the Essex Chronicle, folded it and placed it on the cabin table.

On a broader front, Mike's woodcarving extended to beautifully executed crowned heads of medieval kings and queens, chess pieces, dragon figureheads from Viking longships, exquisitely crafted boxes decorated in Celtic designs, the lids fitting so perfectly as to be airtight, the bases carefully inlaid with vellum on which he signed his name. He used 16th century oak and the much older Irish bog oak, which he doggedly tracked down from all over the country, for much of his work. Mike worked on full-size projects too. His and Vanessa's magnificent oak dining-room furniture was all designed and made by Mike: refectory table, benches, an enormous carver chair. So when decorated bow and quarter boards and transom carving was required for CENTAUR and more recently PUDGE, who better than Mike to carve it? Peter and Pat Boss recall that big lumps of oak were transported to Mike's tiny workshop and somehow squeezed in. After careful research to establish the precise design of the barges' original carving, Mike set to work and the results are now there for us all to enjoy. That our two barges are 'proudly adorned' will stand as a lasting tribute to Mike, but perhaps there is another job which stands out in my mind above the others because it speaks so much about this lovely, modest man. Many years ago PUDGE

was in need of a set of hatch cloth wedges and Mike offered to make them. Not all of them survive now, but next time you go on board PUDGE have a look for them: they are unmistakable. Each one is meticulously shaped, planed and bevelled on all leading edges, with the name PUDGE carefully carved into the upper surface. Mike lavished the same care and attention on the little things of life as he accorded the greater.

In the days when Mike and I both smoked pipes, he watched me one day packing the bowl and tamping it down with my forefinger. Next time we met he presented me with a beautifully crafted tamper made of brightly burnished steel. It was flawless and, stood on its end, took the shape of a tiny balustered and moulded column or table leg. It was so perfectly rounded that one could be forgiven for thinking it had been turned on a lathe but it had not. Mike had made it all by hand out of a steel fastening which he had prised from a derelict Thames barge hulk lying somewhere on the Essex marshes. Even thirty years later there is hardly a spot of corrosion on it. Like the armourers and sword makers of old Mike knew his metals just as well as he understood his woods...

His family and friends have lost a very special man.

*Peter Ferguson*



## SUBMISSIONS.

We are always 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  
8 Birch Close, Ely, Cambs. CB7 4TJ  
01353 614096

Crewing Secretary: Andrew Berry  
29 Northney Rd., Hayling Island, Hants. PO11 0ND  
02392 469139 (before 9pm please)  
CREWING@BARGETRUST.ORG

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

Archive and Newsletter: Alison Mercer  
Gamma Cottage, Kerridge's Cut, Mistley. CO11 1JT  
01206 395780  
ali.mercer@bargetrust

For other committee members' details, please see previous Newsletters.

**THAMES SAILING BARGE TRUST, FITTING-OUT SUPPER 2007**

**SATURDAY MAY 5th, 7:00 FOR 7:30 pm, to 11:00 pm,**

On board CENTAUR alongside the quay at Maldon.

MENU: Catering will be done in house this year; Comfort food to the highest standards; Vegetarian alternative available. Apply on the form below.

BAR OPEN FROM 6:30 pm.

VIDEO: A video, title to be decided, will be shown during the evening

DRESS: Casual.

TICKETS: £8-00 per person. Must be ordered in advance using the form below, from:- Miss Carol Brooksbank, Flat 9, Donnington Mansions, Donnington Road, London. NW10 3QP Tel. 020-8459-0588. Please enclose an s.a.e. for your tickets.

B&B: £3-00 per person. Bed and Breakfast for Saturday night and Sunday night is available on board CENTAUR. Bring your own sleeping bag. Full cooked breakfast at 8:30 am Sunday and Monday.

For alternative local accomodation, see website [www.maldon.gov.uk](http://www.maldon.gov.uk) .

RAFFLE: Any donation of gifts for the raffle in aid of Trust funds will be gratefully received, and should be brought along on the night.

MALDON OPEN DAYS: The Maldon Open Days will follow on Sunday and Monday, 6th May and 7th of May (bank holiday). It would be helpful to Vincent Webb if you could indicate on the form when you can help with stewarding, making cakes, serving teas, or manning a stall.

KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS: Cheque sent, Total: £ \_\_\_\_\_ Date sent: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any queries on the above, contact the Social Secretary John Morgan,  
Tel. 01252-512848

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**APPLICATION FORM FOR FITTING-OUT SUPPER, 5th May 2007**

<b>Name/s</b>	Supper Tickets Saturday £8-00/ea	Stay on Barge Saturday Night B&B £3-00/ea	Stay on Barge Sunday Night B&B £3-00/ea	Any Special Dietary Require- ments.	Open Day Help Offer Sunday. (tick)	Open Day Help Offer Monday. (tick)

Your telephone number in case of a query:

TOTAL: £ \_\_\_\_\_ Cheques payable to: Thames Sailing Barge Trust. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SEND TO: Miss C. Brooksbank, Flat 9, Donnington Mansions, Donnington Road, London. NW10 3QP

ENCLOSE: YOUR CHEQUE AND A STAMPED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.