

Golden Chaffcutter

Thames Sailing Barge Trust



Issue 128

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***On Wednesday 12th May Pudge was pulled out from between Sailorman and Centaur and taken down to Fullbridge to start on her restoration.
Picture by John Rayment***

From the Helm

I am sure that we are all equally frustrated to find our sailing season suspended as the Country deals with the awful Covid 19 virus. Many members will know families affected and I am sure that all our thoughts are with those that have lost loved ones in such dreadful circumstances.

We have had to call time on the planned trips for May, June and July and the rest of the season's program remains subject to change. Looking at the Governments guidance, it is going to be difficult to comply with the current arrangements but we are looking at how we can adapt our plans.

Centaur is close to being ready to rig out, and the weekend team plus trainees will have her in sailing order as and when we are allowed to get a team together safely. Thanks go to Tim Jepson who has been working away on his own to get us as ready as possible.

On a positive front, Pudge has now been towed down to Kevin Finch's yard at The Fullbridge ready for work to start. The Trust have acquired a container to store the equipment that had been removed by the Thursday group. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 restrictions, we cannot access the yard which will mean some of the jobs scheduled for

volunteers will now be completed by Kevin. The technical committee, for the Pudge project, are keeping very close tabs on costs. In addition we are looking at replacing the stem and stem band while in dry dock which involves the purchase of more oak.

The object of the Pudge project is of course to get Pudge to a position where she will be ready to give us many years more service without any further major restoration work in the foreseeable future and I am confident that we are well on track for achieving that goal.

I was recently reminded that it is

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(Continued from page 1)

more or less ten years since we started preparing for the work we are now doing on Pudge. That has focused our minds on Centaur, and early plans are now developing for the next stage in her restoration. A small team is starting to think about fund raising for Centaur, and anyone who feels that they would like to

get involved with that project would be very welcome. Please let David Gibson know. In my opinion we need to keep the Centaur project team separate from Pudge, not least as new ideas are really needed in these potentially difficult financial times.

As I write these notes, I am hearing of various barges abandoning the season, and the

Match season being decimated with cancellations. Rest assured if we can sail this season we will.

Thank you all for your support.

Peter Taylor

Membership Matters

Following the membership renewal process at the beginning of the year, we unfortunately lost a number of members who did not renew for a variety of reasons. It is important that we try and maintain our membership at reasonable levels as the income from fees goes towards supporting the Trust's activities.

If you know of anyone who would like to become a member, please get them to enrol.

This can be done on line or by contacting me.

New members in the last two months:

Chris Flower—Maldon

Matt Ingham—Chelmsford

If you have any questions about membership, please contact the membership secretary, John Rayment at: 25 Repertor Drive, Maldon, Essex CM9 6FQ.

Tel: 07587 141054 or at:

membership@bargetrust.org.

Membership rates for new members are now:

Full Member: £35 pa

Joint Membership £50 pa

Joint Concession £40 pa

Corporate Membership £360

pa

Life Membership £600

(Concession [65+] £400)

Joint Life Membership £900

(Concession [65+] £600)

John Rayment

Covid-19 National Lottery Support

The Trust has received £25,200 from The Lottery Heritage Emergency Fund to assist the Trust with its cash-flow and help cover extra costs in relation to work required under the Pudge project.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown began the Trust has been unable to sail and has had to cancel a number of fundraising events which has therefore impacted on its ability to meet its obligations. It has also been unable to use its volunteer workforce to undertake work on Pudge as part of the Heritage Lottery supported project.

David Gibson (Trustee) said: "Thanks to the National Lottery and its players we can

now feel confident that we will be able to maintain our two historic sailing barges through the summer. We're grateful that The National Lottery Heritage Fund is supporting us at this crucial time – it's a lifeline to us and others who are passionate about sustaining heritage for the benefit of all."

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "Heritage has an essential role to play in making communities better places to live, supporting economic regeneration and benefiting our personal wellbeing. All of these things are going to be even more important as we emerge from this current crisis.

"Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players we are

pleased to be able to lend our support to organisations such as Thames Sailing Barge Trust during this uncertain time."

Like the Thames Sailing Barge Trust other charities and organisations across the UK that have been affected by the unprecedented impact of the coronavirus outbreak are being given access to a comprehensive package of support of up to £600 million of repurposed money from The National Lottery. This money is supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and span the arts, community, charity, heritage, education, environment and sports sectors.

Escape from Dunkirk

This year is the 80th Anniversary of the evacuation of British Expeditionary Forces from Dunkirk in May 1940.

If Pudge had not been awaiting her restoration and the Coronavirus epidemic had not been with us, we would have taken her back to Dunkirk for the celebrations.

However to mark the event, I have been delving through the Trust's Archive and found the following account which was published in the Thames Barge Sailing Club's journal of the Winter of 1956.

Editor.

Here is the answer to the 16-year-old mystery of the crossing of the "Beatrice Maud" from Dunkirk, made known as a result of a visit to the Fenchurch Street Office of the owners G.F. Sully by a brother of Lt. José Heron.

The editors acknowledge the kindness of our members Messrs. Raymond and Bernard Sully in sending us this report.

About midnight on the 3rd June 1940, the French and British Admiralties ordered that the evacuation of troops should cease, leaving nearly 40,000 men still on the beaches of Malo-les-Bains.

About 4 a.m. on the 4th June Lieutenant Heron, who had reached the shore at Malo-les-Bains with a small detachment of men from the rear guard, decided to try and avoid captivity by attempting a private evacuation. The Germans were actually occupying Dunkirk, and the remaining Allied troops, caught like rats in a narrow trap, had no chance to escape except by sea. But at dawn on June 4th the pale calm sea only offered a misty horizon, with the wrecks of many ships sunk during the evacuation, standing out like skeletons.

Here, however, follows the story of the departure and the miraculous crossing of the "Beatrice Maud".

While the first German tanks and armored cars could be heard approaching along the lanes leading to the Malo-les-Bains beachhead, I hurriedly made my

way along the sea shore with a few men, hoping to find some boat that would still float. We first found a large grounded barge, then several holed boats, but finally, about a mile from Dunkirk East Pier I came across a small fishing boat full of water. I immediately decided to float her. One of the men pointed out that she was unseaworthy, being full of water. I promptly replied that, on the contrary, as she held water she would certainly float! We baled her out, and found two good oars under the thwart. With some difficulty we got her down the 200 yards to the sea. Nine of us got aboard, and as the boat had only 5" to 6" freeboard, we had to row very carefully. I decided to make for a torpedo boat, which, although listing from a distance appeared seaworthy. We quickly reached her, as she was only about 400 yards off shore. Alas! we found that she was a complete wreck with not a living soul on board.

Several of the men asked to be left on board of her. They were scared of risking a crossing in so frail and over-

laden boat as ours. I refused, pointing out that if they did stay on the torpedo boat, they would have no further chance at all of reaching freedom. They decided to remain where they were.

I was also worried, though, about attempting a crossing to England in an open boat, only 14 feet long, with nine men on board. We had little

chance of making a safe crossing, and several of the men were fathers of families, I decided, however to take a chance and make the attempt. Just then, through the morning mist, I caught sight of a boat fitted with leeboards drifting southwards with the current. At first, I took her to be a small fishing boat, but gradually, as we drew alongside, I saw that she was a big Thames barge. The outline was familiar to me, as I had often seen pictures of these craft. I had also seen some in the Port of London during a visit in 1930.

I tried to attract the barge's attention with my signaling lamp from about 200 yards, but there was no sign of life on board - nobody was at the wheel or on deck. We came alongside and some French soldiers popped up from the hold. We scrambled on deck and found that we were on the barge "Beatrice Maud" of London. She already had about 250 French soldiers on board. A lieutenant among them explained that they had come aboard the day before - June 3rd at Malo-Les-Bains. They had waited eight days and nights on the beach for evacuation, under incessant bombing. Absolutely exhausted, these men boarded the barge. They thought they would be safer at sea than on land, even though they had no idea where they were going.

I immediately took charge of the "Beatrice Maud", as I was the only one on board with any knowledge of sailing. I found an acrobat and an ex-marine amongst the men, and with this "crew" I managed to hoist the sails and lower the leeboards. Unfortunately, one of the latter stuck halfway. As we were getting aboard the "Beatrice Maud", the German tanks were penetrating onto the beaches of Malo-Les-Bains running up and down rounding up any troops that were left.

We had incredible luck in being able to reach the "Beatrice Maud" just half an hour before the Germans arrived. I still tremble to think that if these providential circumstances had not occurred, we would have had to face 5 years of captivity in Germany.



Beatrice Maud—Picture kindly supplied by Society of Sailing Barge Research

(Continued from page 3)

As soon as the sails were hoisted I took the helm. I felt quite proud to command this fine craft, and to feel her gliding along in the gentle breeze. Alas! after less than a quarter of an hour, we were carried between two grounded cargo boats, only 100 yards apart, and the "Beatrice Maud" was ashore on a sandbank. I thought that this was the end of our journey. I realised, however that it was low tide, and that we would re-float as the tide made. The men on board were so exhausted that none of them noticed that we were aground. We re-floated in about half an hour.

At the same time a very lucky thing happened. A mist shrouded the sea, blotting out the coastline; hiding us completely from the eyes of the Germans. I am certain that this saved us. Without this friendly mist the Germans certainly would not have forgotten us.

As soon as the "Beatrice Maud" re-floated, I took the helm again and set course approximately North West in the hopes of reaching Dover or Folkestone. We sailed all morning with a gentle breeze from the North North West. Every now and then we passed through a graveyard of wrecks, cases and drifting boats. We also saw a Belgian plane half submerged. A capsized vessel intrigued us greatly; at a distance in the fog she looked like an island, and we wondered if it was an hallucination!

About midday the wind began to freshen, causing a slight sea. Several times during the morning we picked up men from overloaded rowing boats attempting the crossing to England, these frail craft would certainly have been in trouble in the rough sea we met later on. We sailed on through the afternoon with a freshening wind. About 5.p.m. I had to get the topsail and jib down, using only the foresail, mainsail and mizzen.

I began to feel very tired about 5.p.m. as I had not left the wheel since early morning. So, I decided to rest a bit in case we should have to sail all night. I gave the wheel to a companion, to whom I had given a little instruction in the art of sailing, and went below. I had not been lying down a quarter of an hour when I was called on deck because of all the broken water dead ahead.

I saw that we were heading straight for a sandbank. I immediately turned about and sailed back on our tracks for an

hour or so, then steered South West.

After another hour I steered North North West again. We passed near a half-submerged lightship, absolutely deserted. It was very difficult to distinguish the name in the poor visibility - perhaps it was the South Goodwin.

We were spinning along at a good speed, when, about 7.p.m., the lookout in the bow reported that he could see something through the fog. Through my binoculars I saw the outline of a small naval craft; then a second, then a third. They proved to be armed trawlers.

We headed towards one of them, and passing close under her bow, I hoisted the letter "T" flag of the International Code - the reverse side of which shows blue, white and red. I asked her the name and direction of the nearest port. The reply came from the bridge - "Dover - just a mile".

Soon the fog lifted, and we saw the cliffs of Dover - God be praised! Because of the difficulty of entering harbour under sail with so poor a crew, I decided to ask the trawler to tow us in. We were drifting Southwards, so I dropped anchor and furled the sails.

The sea was rather rough now, and the trawler was circling us, waiting for the right moment to take us in tow.

We waited about a quarter of an hour, and finally the trawler put a man on board to assist us. We tried to weigh anchor, but the rough sea made this an impossible operation, so we sawed through the chain and slipped the anchor.

The trawler then took us in tow, but the tow rope broke twice. We then threw them one of our own ropes that we found neatly coiled up in the bow. This held us, and we entered Dover Harbour at 8.p.m.

A large crowd gathered on the quay as we came ashore. It was low tide, so ladders had to be provided so that we could climb up onto the quay. We were well received by the British, particularly the Red Cross, who supplied us with all kinds of things. I remember those small delicious English sausages. Having starved for so many days I devoured a great number of these. I do not think that many Englishmen believed our story to be strictly true. Perhaps because it has been only on rare occasions during past centuries that the French have re-

turned an English ship to England.

I would have been very surprised to have met the owner of the "Beatrice Maud" and hand his ship back to him personally, safe and sound. She suffered the minimum of damage despite the crossing from Dunkirk to Dover with more than 300 soldiers on board.

The same night, we were sent to a reception camp at Southampton. On June 6th we were repatriated, sailing in the steamer "Vienna" to Cherbourg. The Battel of France was not yet over.

After the end of the war I wrote to an English friend living in Liverpool and asked him how I could trace the owner of the "Beatrice Maud", but he was unable to help me. It was only in 1955 that I traced the name of her owner in a very interesting book by C.G. Carr on Thames Barges.

My family and I are deeply grateful to God for allowing me, with so many of my comrades, to escape the misery of five years captivity - thanks to the presence of the "Beatrice Maud" at Dunkirk.

In memory of this marvelous epic, one of my daughters has been named "Beatrice Maud".

Owner's notes: -
"Beatrice Maud" then went to Sittingbourne. Despite Lieut. Heron's well-meant remarks, she was in need of an extensive refit. She was now fitted with an 88h.p. Kelvin-diesel engine, but still retained her full sail plan with the exception of her bowsprit gear and mizzen. As is usual when converting these craft to power the dubious luxury of a wheelhouse was added. Thus fitted, in 1943 she was taken on charter by the Ministry of War Transport and sent round to the Bristol Channel. There she remained on Government Service until her return to the Thames in 1946. Since then she has been employed in the normal East Coast barge trade. Sail lovers will no doubt be sorry to learn that her sail plan has now been further reduced by the removal of her topmast.

Editor
Beatrice Maud became a barge yacht in 1972 at Maldon and 1986 at Faversham and at Morwellham Quay fro 1987—1993. But was broken up in 2006 at Landrake.

New Child's Activity Book

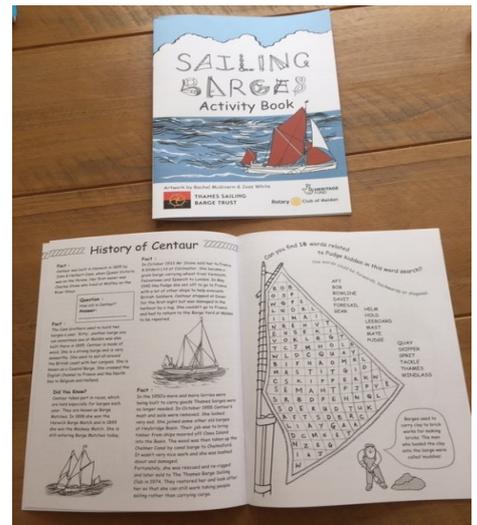
In the next article there are details of the work we have been doing in creating relationships with local schools in helping us meet the outcomes of the Heritage Fund Support we received. However we have also just published a new Activity Book which has been designed under the guidance of John Rayment by a team of teachers and young designers.

We would like to thank Pat Boss, Jenny Baines, Jess White and Rachel Mc Givern for all the hard work they have put into this publication. The Activity Book has been created to be educational and fun and help raise the pro-

file of the Thames Sailing Barge amongst 5 to 11 year olds.

They will be given to children during any activities where we interact with 5 to 11 year olds.

Funding has been made available from the Heritage Fund, Maldon Rotary Club and Maldon Regatta Committee



Pudge Project Activities

As you will read elsewhere, Pudge has now moved to Fullbridge so that work can continue on her rebuild after the Thursday volunteers removed all her deck fittings and the accommodation below deck.

The Restoration is only part of the Pudge Project and the Heritage Lottery require the Trust to undertake a number of outcomes/activities in lieu of its support and these are being managed by John Rayment and will run long after Pudge is back sailing.

One area we have been concentrating on has been setting up a programme to work with primary school children who are studying at Key Stage 2 and with the help of Jenny Baines (a primary school teacher and Trust member),

and Nicola Archer a teacher at Maldon Primary School we have now prepared a programme which we aim to deliver to schools once they are back learning post Covid -19.

The programme consists of three lessons. The first is an illustrated and interactive talk which will be delivered by a Trust member to the pupils and will tell them about the history of the barges and what they were used for, specialising on the cargoes they carried and their importance in East Anglia.

The second two lessons focus on science aspects and in particular pulleys, levers, buoyancy and resistance.

The final two lessons can be delivered by the teacher and materials will be provided by the Trust which are funded

through the Heritage Lottery Grant that we received. use when they pass by Pudge at Fullbridge. As part of the Project it has been agreed that the public must be able to view the work in progress and in cooperation with Kevin Finch the shipwright a gallery will be built which will allow the public to view the restoration.

Four students at Plume Academy, Maldon have designed two display boards telling some of the history of Pudge and details of the work being carried out, along with a leaflet which the public can take away and read. Another student is working on a Pudge Project website which we will use to highlight the work as it progresses on Pudge. We hope that this will go live shortly.

The boards for the display were to be produced by another community group 'Men in Sheds', but due to the virus this has not been possible and Richard Walker a Thursday volunteer has produced these for us.

Once Pudge enters the dry dock we will invite the students to view their work.

If anyone is interested in becoming involved in our school work, please get in touch with John.

John Rayment



Maldon Primary School Pupils doing work on Pulleys as part of HLF Pudge project—by John Rayment

through the Heritage Lottery Grant that we received.

An experimental course was run in early March at Maldon Primary School where the Trust has created close links and the programme adapted after receiving feedback.

If anyone has a relationship with a Primary School in Essex, we would love to get in touch and see if we can deliver this to their pupils.

Another way in which we have been working with a local school is in the preparation of display material for visitors to

John Fuller (1938 – 2020) An Appreciation

The BOR (Brotherhood of Revelry) have chartered *Pudge* or *Centaur* every year since 1987. These charters were initially organised by Mary Gilder, and when John joined in 1990, he soon became her assistant and chauffeur. Both lived in Surrey and John would happily drive her, and four day's provisions, to Maldon each June until 2009 when Mary handed over to Penny and me. John continued sailing with us until 2015, having been diagnosed with MS in 2010, and dying peacefully on 21st April 2020.



John Fuller (Center Back Row) on the 2013 BOR Charter on Pudge. Picture by Don Baines

John had been a BOR member since 1959. This was the year I first met him, sailing on the Norfolk Broads along with my older brother. I was fourteen, John was twenty. We sailed regularly on the Broads with the BOR for the next ten years. During this time John and a friend built a 26 foot sloop, *Agena*, in his back garden, which they sailed out of Chichester. Marriage and a family required a larger boat, and John traded *Agena* for *Katy Girl*, a Moody 31, which he sailed until 2015.

In a tribute on John's MuchLoved memorial page Terry O'Sullivan wrote: "John was one of the mainstays of Mary Gilder's BOR Charters. As skipper, I

always looked forward to having John in the crew. From the first time he had the chance to helm *Pudge* it was clear he had an instant feel for the old girl. I was soon comfortable to leave him on the wheel, and walk about the barge checking things. I could do this without worrying that the barge would veer off course, or lose the wind from the sails. Some yachtsmen never get that feel of the barge, but John did, and very well."

In 2000 the BOR formed *Pudge's* crew for the Thames Match (skipper Terry O'Sullivan; mate Wendy Yates). We didn't win our class but had an excellent

race. Several barges rafted up three or four deep on a lighter off Gravesend Pier for the prize-giving, then settled down for the night. In the small hours the wash from a passing ship caused the barges to surge and one of *Pudge's* springs parted with a loud crack. This was the one stopping us from hitting *Centaur's* transom, moored just ahead. John and I were the only crew members to join the skipper and mate on deck, perhaps because we were the only boat owners, used to sleeping with one ear cocked. The rest of the crew slept on, oblivious of the drama on deck. John was soon handing warps to the mate, and all was made fast.

As well as the sort of friend you need in a crisis, John was also a steadfast friend for life: a lovely chap, who will be very much missed by all who knew him. Following his MS diagnosis he never once complained, and bore his steadily diminishing mobility with fortitude and dignity. His mind remained sharp to the very end, and it was his request that any donations in his memory should go to the TSBT.

Don Baines, Commodore, BOR

Gary Butler



Gary (3rd from the left) in Mate mode with Peter Duckworth at the helm, Val Dudley, Terry O'Sullivan, Graham Munday, Wendy Yates and Dave Batley aboard Pudge

We are very sad to pass on the news of the death of Gary Butler on 16th April, Gary died unexpectedly whilst undergoing chemotherapy for bowel Cancer.

I'm sure Gary will be greatly missed by many of you. He had been one of our senior mates, and endeared himself to all those who have met or sailed with him.

Gary joined us with his wife Barbara in early 1980. He soon became an active member, and joined in with the winter working parties, some-

times bringing his family along to help out. Once he had managed to grasp how a barge works, he quickly progressed from crew through to Mate status. Gary was a very capable mate who was good at explaining how the gear worked, and when to do things. However he was always aware of when he needed to step in to get it done. He never let chaos ruffle him, and appeared to be totally laid back. Over the years Gary became in great demand as charterers repeatedly asked for him as their mate, and he became the regular mate for some of the annual charters

Gary also joined our committee, and took on the task of Secretary, and very efficiently. His minutes were generally

accurate, and he always made sure incoming correspondence was passed on to the right person to deal with it. He also kept a vigilant eye on the 'Notices to Mariners' and Harbour regulation changes, and passed on the relevant one's to the Skip-pers.

Since standing down as mate, Gary has kept up his sailing on Daphne Mair's charters. This, without the pressure of being mate. There he was able to offer advice to some of the new breed of trainees and Mates. Also, they could witness his calming effect on the chaos amongst a gath-

ering of eccentric senior members.

Our thoughts go out to Barbara & Family. We all miss him dearly.

Terry O'Sullivan.

Pudge 100 Club—New Members

The Trust's 100 Club is looking for new members. Funds are used towards major works on Pudge. Members can join for a period of 12 months, by completing the form on the right and forward it to Terry O'Sullivan.

Annual renewal of the club is taking place and Terry will be contacting existing members shortly. Rules to join are detailed below.

Rules:

1. The fee for membership of the Thames Sailing Barge Trust 'Pudge 100 Club' shall be £1 per month per share, payable in advance. No member may be admitted to participate in the draw by chance, except after payment.
2. Membership shall be limited to 100 fully paid members, over 18 years of age. Any number of chances may be purchased, but there is no variation permitted to the monthly subscription.
3. There will be a maximum of 6 draws annually.
4. Prizes to be paid as follows:- 1st £50, 2nd £20, 3rd £10.
5. No prize will be paid to any member, other than the member holding the winning membership share number.
6. Share numbers are not transferable, but on members defaulting paying for their allocated number, when called upon to do so, it shall be withdrawn, and may be reallocated to another member.
7. Draws will take place at a Trust Committee meeting, or other Trust function or meeting as may be decided from time to time.
8. In the event that the membership of the '100 Club' is less than 100 members the promoter shall be entitled to reduce the amounts of the prizes or number of draws (or both), provided however that in these circumstances the ratio of prize money to subscriptions shall not be affected. In the case of any dispute the committee ruling shall be final.
9. In the event that the demand for membership of the '100 club' exceeds 100 members, additional members may be admitted up to 50 in number, with a proportionate increase in prize money.
10. The minimum period of membership is one year

S.B. PUDGE "100" CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2020

Completed forms and cheques where applicable should be sent to:-

T.O'Sullivan
32, Fish Street,
Goldhanger,
Maldon,
Essex.
CM9 8AT.

I wish to apply for membership of the Thames Sailing Barge Trust 'S.B. PUDGE "100" CLUB'. I confirm that I am over 18 years of age, that I have read, understand, and am in agreement with the "100" Club Rules.

NAME (Capitals Please)

.....

ADDRESS (Capitals Please)

.....

.....

POSTCODE

Tel No.

Email Address

I wish to purchase Chances per month at £1 per chance per month.

I wish to pay on an annual basis (12 month period) and enclose a cheque for £ payable to the:-

"THAMES SAILING BARGE TRUST "

I agree to the my personal data being held in line with the Trust's Data Privacy Statement, and the Trust contacting me either by:- Post / Telephone / email / regarding the 'SB Pudge 100 Club'. (View the Trust's Data Privacy Statement on www.bargetrust.org)

Signed.....

Date

The winners of the last draw were:

- 1st Glen Fenemore-Jones £50
- 2nd Andrew Berry £25
- 3rd David Jupp £10

If you have any questions about the 100 Club, then please contact Terry O'Sullivan on 01621 788276

Thank you for your support.

Terry O'Sullivan

Centaur Update

With the corona virus situation things have gone very quiet at the Hythe, it seems very strange with no barges underway in this lovely weather, the only movement being Pudge when she was pulled out of her berth and towed up to Kevin Finch's yard at Fullbridge. Luckily we had got Centaur on the blocks and scrubbed and tarred and also managed to get the sails dressed before the virus shutdown. The article written by Jocelyn Low of the weekend on the blocks was a splendid account and it was interesting to see it through the eyes of one of our newer trainee's, it reminded me of my early days with the barges in the mid 1970's



when everything was new and unfamiliar.

Once we had got Centaur back alongside, we had to abandon the working weekends, so I have been doing essential maintenance and helping (from a distance!) to fit the new stem band. Luckily the weather, which changed from persistent rain and wind during February and March, to the dry settled weather we have had for quite a while now has allowed some painting and small repairs to be carried out while Centaur is not working. The most essential thing on any timber craft is to get rid of any deck leaks. Rain water causes rot and it is also extremely annoying for passengers if they are laying in their bunk with water dripping onto them, they may not want to repeat the experience! After going on the blocks there are usually a few new leaks due to the hull straightening out. When the barges were carrying cargo the bow and stern kept their shape but when the cargo carrying stopped the ends slowly start to drop and going on the blocks put the hull back to its "as built" shape.

To remove the stem band the knee behind the stem/apron had to be removed as it covered a couple of bolts that had to be removed to get the stem band off. Once the knee was off, we could see that the 2 deck planks underneath it had softened up, there was also a plank just inboard of the port bitthead that

need replacing. After some searching in the lighter, we found some pitch pine left over from the re-decking we carried out on Centaur in the early 1990's and we were able to make up some short planks to put in. To get at the plank alongside the bitthead meant moving the windlass barrel out of its bearings. Once the new plank was in place the barrel was refitted, not an easy job due to its weight and lack of room to jiggle things about. With the barrel back in place the refurbished pawls and beds were refitted along with the drive pinions.

On May 23rd John Prime passed away at his home in North Street. He was very much involved with Centaur in the mid 1960's when she was converted from a trading barge to a charter barge. John and Eddie Smith built up the partitions to create the cabins and saloon and engine room and fitted the bunks. John told me that he had obtained the saloon doors and saloon table from an ex government sale in Chelmsford. John and his wife June owned the sailing barge Gipping for a number of years prior to their involvement with Centaur, and when she and the Kitty were ready to go into the charter business John and June acted as the booking agents from their North Street address not far from the Hythe.

Tim Jepson

Pudge Update

After an appropriate period of being in 'lockdown' along with the rest of the country Kevin Finch looked into all the Government advice regarding starting up again and decided that with just himself and his two assistants, Ben Cardy and Dan Scully, all social distancing, in a large Yard and mostly outside, it would be safe to start work on Pudge. So she was towed upriver on the 12th May (pictured on the front cover) and work began.

As soon as Pudge was made fast alongside the Quay at Fullbridge the three got to work opening up a large enough area of the main hatch to enable them to clear Pudge's hold. First they craned

out the two large water tanks which we had previously disconnected. At this time there is not a final decision as to whether to keep or dispose of them, so they have been stored alongside the shipping container that the Trust had already had organised to be delivered to the Yard a few days earlier. Everything else which we had stored down below was lifted out and transferred into the container. All the items that we will not need for some time, such as galley equipment etc. have been placed at the back and towards the front are all the deck fittings that have been made ready for the shipwrights to re-fit as soon as the new deck and hatches are in place.





of the barge at deck level. These beams will be fitted at fixed positions to ensure that the barge keeps her shape. Also when in position they determine the placing of both the main and the fore hatches. Nine beams have been fashioned, all of slightly different

These include the winches, windlass, ventilators, chimneys etc. The diesel fuel tank has also been craned out and stored near the container also awaiting a decision on whether or not we need one of a larger size.

With everything in place it was finally time for the reconstruction work to begin. Kevin started with the main beams, using the oak trees which had come from France. Firstly there was a great deal of measuring to be done to determine the exact shape, size and positioning of all the 9" square, curved beams that span right across the inside



sizes and they have each been craned into Pudge and laid out on the ceiling ready for fitting and final rounding off and finishing.

Alongside them are the 30 carlings which have also been made. These are the short beams, which have one end fitted to the frames at the side of the barge with the other end fitted to the underside of the hatches. They are designed to support the side deck planks.

It's an impressive sight to see all these beautifully shaped new pieces of oak laid out down below out of the sun and ready for the next stage.

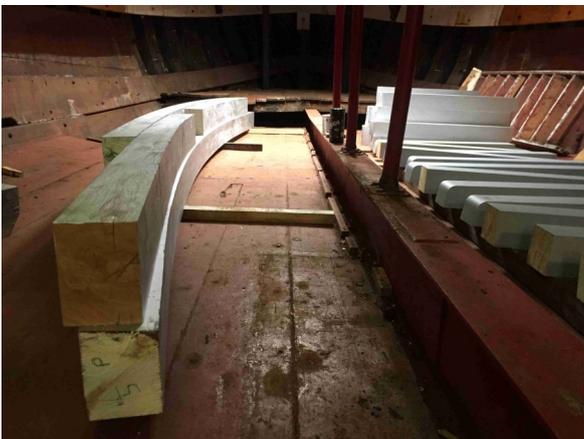
This will happen quite soon now. By the time you are reading this, if all goes to plan, Pudge will have been floated into the dry dock.

In the meantime, Kevin has re-organised the timber piles again (a never ending task) and has selected the best pieces from which to fashion the windlass bits, the lodging knee etc. and work has begun on measuring and shaping up

these next pieces.

Our volunteers still have work to do on some of Pudge's fixtures and fittings which have been stored on Sailorman for the time being. There is also work to be done on Sailorman herself. But all has obviously had to be put on hold until we can all meet again safely. Hopefully the volunteers will be able to start again soon, when we can ensure that we can work in totally safe conditions.

Peter Boss—Pictures by Peter Boss and John Rayment



New Mugs for Sale



The Trust has always had mugs for sale often featuring a picture of Pudge and Centaur, although in our 70th Anniversary year we had a new design printed which was bold and seemed to be liked by many. As the supply of picture mugs was coming to an end, we have decided to move away from the previous design and have had produced new mugs which bear the Trust's bob and logo. We plan to place a supply on Centaur for the season once sailing starts so that all the mugs match, but we

have stock to sell.

If you are interested in buying a mug for you morning tea or coffee, then these can be purchased online via the Trust's new website at a cost of £7 plus £2 postage and packaging. They will also be available at Open Days and events.

Peter Holmes

Ship to Shore

During the lockdown, I have had a chance to review a few old copies of the Thames Barge Sailing Club's publications and in doing so found this article written by Fred Cooper and which appeared in the Journal for the Winter of 1956. Editor

With the modernising of transport so many of the farms dotted around the rivers and creeks of Essex and Suffolk (and elsewhere for that matter) now obtain their supplies by lorry and send away their produce by the same means. Before this, the usual means of communication had been by water, and studying the scene one can see how close the connection between farm and water had been. Many of the old wharves, "loadings" and "stagings" have either disappeared altogether or but a few broken stumps remain visible to the eye.

Many of these landing places were in use on the various islands served by the Crouch and Roach and the mainland farms on the banks of these rivers. Any goods landed on the seaward side of the islands (Foulness and Havengore) were discharged from the barges lying off one of the "headlands" (merely a road running over the sea wall from the Maplin Sand connected to the "Broomway" into carts. The "Broomway" mentioned was at one time the only communication between the islands and the mainland and was a roadway that ran across the sands from Wakering Stairs

parallel with the shore to Fisherman's Head on Foulness Island, with "side-roads" running into the "headlands".

The origin of the road is lost in history and it is marked on early Estuary charts (C.1590). Its name is derived from the brooms or bunches of twigs used to mark the road and helped late travellers to follow the route when caught by the tide. The name Maplin is derived from the dialect, map or maple meaning broom, and is a later name for the one time Shoo Sand.

Along the Crouch and Roach banks of Foulness Island the barges berthed at the foot of the sea walls at the various "loadings" with bow anchor well off to get a start away if the wind came on shore by the time discharge was completed, and often a large kedge was laid as quarter mooring if the weather made it necessary. The connection with the shore consisted of a plank or planks laid from the barges rail to rest on a permanent staging built on the side of the sea wall. This often left a length of at least 50 ft. of plank, unsupported except at the ends and it needed a lot of experience to run these planks and time the spring so as not to be sent off balance overside. It takes little imagination to picture the result of careless walking especially when carrying a sack of wheat or similar load!

Most of the cargoes were "humped off" on the backs of men, bricks and tarmac etc. barrowed off and flints and bagged cargo hove out from the hold on the

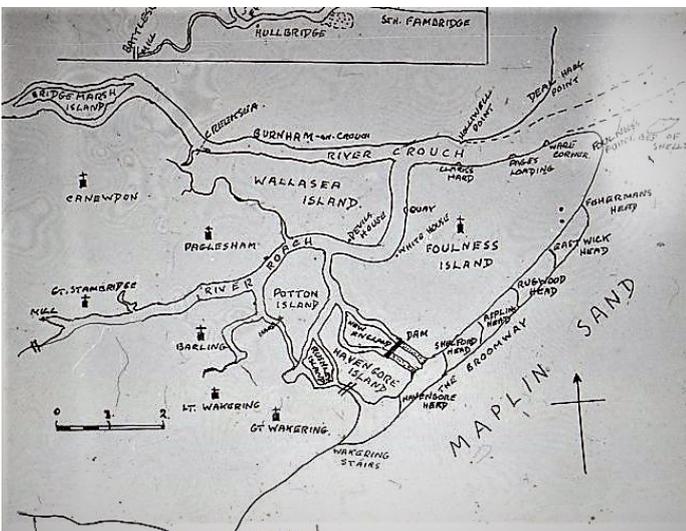
barge's gin gear to shoulder height of the men on the plank and carried ashore. (Flints etc. would be in baskets or skips).

The gin gear was rigged by taking the topsail halyard tye from off the headstick and the sheet from the clew of the topsail and joining both to a short wire leg. The large gin wheel (10½" diameter) was attached to the other end of the wire leg and a

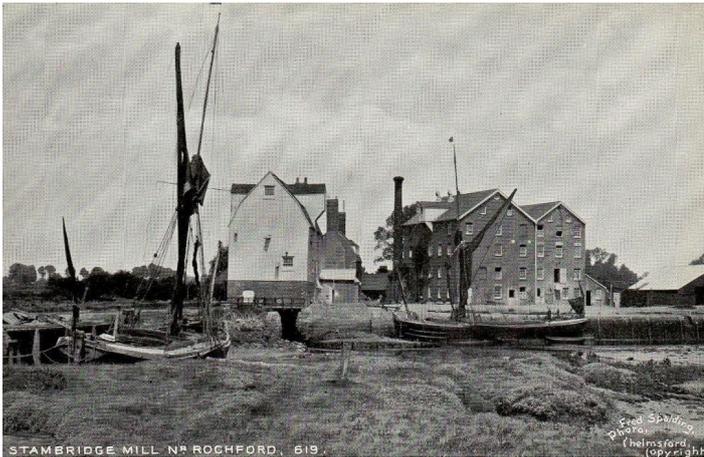
wire runner (1" Circular.) led "Single whip" through the block. (In very early days hemp rope and single wood block). The standing end of the runner was fastened to the dolly winch fitted to the forward coaming of the main hatchway, or a portable single barrel winch stood on deck and ballasted down, and the running end of the wire led to the hold and usually had a swivelling hook. By adjusting the sheet or halyard the gear could be adjusted to work in any position over the main hatchway. To work the forehold the topsail sheet was removed and the gin gear left hanging on the halyard only and passed round forward of the topmast and the dolly winch used in its usual position on the bitheads. This gear was in use at Colchester at the end of the Second World War, and with two men on the winch handles and three runners on the planks 120 tons of cement was discharged in ten hours, each winch hand getting 3d per ton. The cement was hove out in 1 cwt. bags, all 2,400 of them! The barge was paid 5/- by the merchant for supplying its own heaving out gear.

There were "stagings" at Ware Corner, Pages Loading and Clarks Hard (whoever named that had a peculiar sense of humour!) on the Crouch side of Foulness Island, and White House and The Quay on the Roach side. The Quay was the most pretentious of all the "loadings" being built out as a small "headland" from the sea wall halfway through Quay Reach in the entrance to the Roach, and at one time had a small hand derrick to assist in the handling of goods. White House, or Rugged Gutter as it was known locally, (the name of the latter was derived from Rugwood the farm whose land drain came out at the "loading" but was pronounced Rugged!) was a very uncomfortable berth and barges were prone to slide away from the berth and have been known to launch themselves! The usual "away" freight was a hay or straw stack with mangel for feeding stuff in the bottom occasionally.

At one time a coastguard watch-vessel had a berth just below The Quay, but the landing causeway used by the Custom's men has disappeared under the mud, and the steps over the sea wall



**Map of the rivers and creeks around Foulness
Picture from TSBT Archive**



Stambidge Mill Nr. Rochford

went soon after the last War.

On Potton Island the solitary farm was served by a "halftide" wharf. The water was too shallow at the foot of the sea-wall opposite the farm, even at Spring tides, for a barge to berth close to the wall and so a low wharf was built out from the wall and was about 3 ft. high on the outer face with large rubbing piles at each end to keep barges off when the tides were extra high. Access from the farm to the wharf was through a "gate" in the sea wall, blocked by heavy boards and backed with earth when not in use. The wharf was covered by any spring tide but not enough to stop carts from going alongside the barge and cargoes were handled direct between barge and-cart and saved the plank connection. One unusual delivery to Potton Island was a small steam engine used to drive threshing plant, loaded on to the barge "Hadleigh Castle" from a similar low quay at Barling on the Roach. A photograph of this exploit is in existence with the loading gang looking very pleased with themselves with the steam engine on the main hatchway of the barge, and not without reason, as they had no crane to assist them. I wonder what modern stevedores would think of this job?

Wallasea Island had a half tide quay at Devils Island.

Most of the other farm quays in the Roach area were below the level of big spring tides but higher than the half tide loadings. There were three in Hell Hole, the bargemen's name for Fleet Head creek, Barling Hall quay, Baldwins and Wick Farm. Barges going to the latter places had to navigate stern first for a quarter of a mile one way or the other, usually choosing to do the stern first passage when empty.

Barling Quay and Mucking Hall were on the south side of the Roach, Barton Hall on the north side, Fleet Hall Dock and Purdies Wharf were on the south fork at the head of the Roach and Featherby at the head of the north fork or Broomhills River. Here too are Stambidge Mill and wharf, a built up quay, still used by barges but not as much as of old. "Lord Roberts"(Maldon) is still owned there by A.M. & H. Rankin Ltd. the mill owners. Featherby's and Purdies' were brickfield wharves and freights of sand or rough stuff (decayed refuse) were landed there the cargo being shovelled from the hold on to the deck boards laid on the deck as protection against the shovels, and thence to carts.

Before the installation of the elevator at Stambidge Mill cargoes arriving in bulk had to be bagged up and hove out by

gin gear and carted to the granaries. This form of discharge known as "bushelling-out" was a back breaking job and the crews assisted in the discharge. Three hands were employed in the hold, one holding the sack and one man on either side filling his bushel measure and tipping it into the sack. The bushel measure held 64 lbs. of wheat and by the time one had scooped a bushel full, lifted it to pour into the sack, it felt considerably more at the end of the day. The sack held 4 bushels and when filled was hove out by the winch party. The bushelling gang took turnabout at holding the sack and filling and took about 10 hours to discharge 500 qtrs. (Approx. 110¾ tons) and in the mid 1920's a busheller received 18/- for the job! This form of discharge went on until the 1950's at Battlesbridge at the head of the Crouch, but with the aid of a power operated chain lift instead of the hand winch. Battlesbridge still has an occasional motor barge, perhaps six freights in a year, and the berths are rapidly filling with mud.

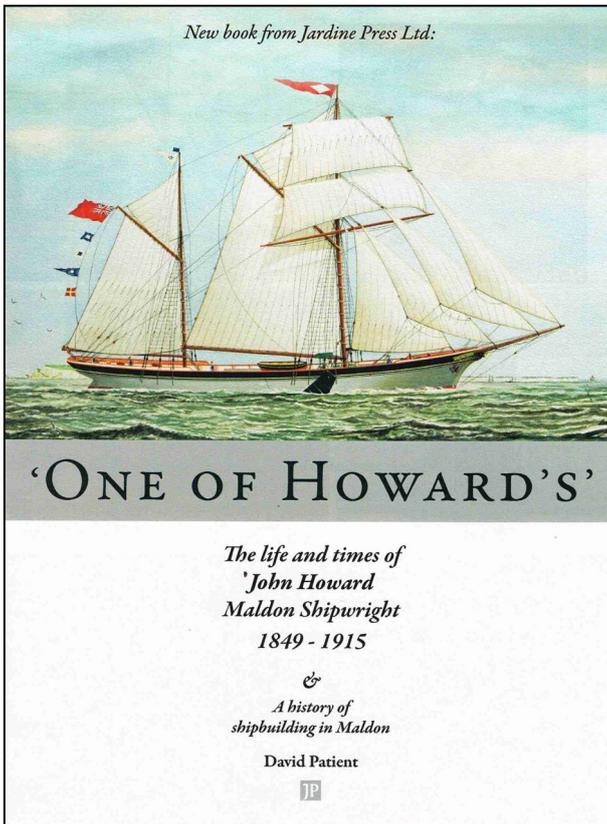
The brickfield berths at Great Wakering were level, with top spring tides except for Bullers which was built up above tide level and had a steam crane to handle cargo. The older berths at Churchfield, The Parlour and Millhead, and the still earlier Landwick Dock were at spring tide level. At these berths the cargoes were worked manually, with planks laid from the wharf across the barge's hold and cargoes conveyed to and from the shore by barrow.

Apart from Battlesbridge and Stambidge all the berths mentioned have fallen into disuse with the exception of Barling Hall quay which is used by the local Oyster Company as a landing, and many others have almost disappeared apart from a few stumps, and the greatest load carried by these is the eternal cormorant.

Fred Cooper 1956



**The River Crouch Battlesbridge Matthews Mill and The Barge pub.
Lew Foweraker Collection TSBT**



New Book

Purchase direct from David Patient
18 Victoria Road, Maldon, CM9 5HF or online at
www.jardinepress.co.uk

New Volunteers Needed to Help with Events

As part of the Trust's activities relating to our heritage Lottery Award, the Trust is being asked to attend more events and hold more Open Days.

Although we have a band of loyal helpers at present, the more events we do, the chance is that many of these volunteers will be unable to help.

It is proposed that we recruit some new members to help out. If you are interested, please contact John Rayment.

Once we know of the numbers a meeting will be arranged to discuss what would be required and provide details that would help you answer the public's questions.

Contact johnrayment1954@gmail.com

Westmoreland

As many of you will know from the article in the October 2018 edition of the Golden Chaffcutter, that the Thames Barge Sailing Club, the for-runner of the Trust used to own the sailing barge Westmoreland.

We reported that in 1973 she broke her back at Hoo and was taken to Faversham for rebuilding, but unfortunately this was not completed.

A few years ago the Westmoreland Trust did try and raise Lottery funding for her rebuild and moved her to Lower Halstow, but unfortunately this was not successful and Westmoreland has been residing in a dry dock ever since awaiting the next



Westmoreland being broken up in May 2020 (Facebook)

chapter in her history.

Raybel Charters who are working on the Restoration of Sb Raybel were offered the dry dock as it was clear that Westmoreland could not be saved.

Raybel therefore had to dispose of the Westmoreland and in early May work started on breaking her up. The good news is that some of her fittings and timbers will be used towards Raybel's restoration.

Editor

Centaur—Visits to Maldon 1935—1953 Part 2 to 1950—1953

Following the article in the last issue of the Golden Chaffcutter we are now able to publish the final details from the records held at The Essex records Office of Centaur's movements and cargoes in and out of Maldon between 1935 and 1953.

Once we are able to visit the Records Office again we will see if we can find further information of Arrivals and Departures

John Rayment

Records only exist at ERO until this date. Currently trying to trace further information. Extracted 7/2/20

Year	Arrival Date	From	Cargo	Master	Arrived at	Departed To	Cargo	Departure Date
1950	07-Feb	London	Timber	Hewson	Sadds Wharf	London	Light	09-Feb
	10-Jun	London	Grain	Yeates	Greens Wharf	London	Light	13-Jun
	23-Jun	London	Timber	Yeates	Sadds Wharf	Colchester	Light	30-Jun
	15-Jul	London	Grain	Yeates	Greens Wharf	London	Light	20-Jul
	30-Jul	London	Grain	Yeates	Greens Wharf	London	Light	03-Aug
	06-Aug	London	Light	Yeates	Haslers Wharf	London	Grain	10-Aug
	15-Aug	London	Light	Yeates	Town Quay	Colchester	Light	26-Aug
	11-Oct	Ipswich	Light	Yeates	Stansgate	London	Light	23-Oct
	14-Nov	Creeksea	Light	Yeates	Heybridge	London	Grain	18-Nov
	28-Dec	London	Timber	Yeates	Heybridge Basin	Colchester	Light	03-Jan
1951	05-Apr	London	Timber	Yeates	Sadds Wharf	Colchester	Light	06-Apr
	22-Jul	London	Grain	Yeates	Greens Wharf	London	Light	24-Jul
	31-Oct	London	Timber	Yeates	Heybridge Basin	Colchester	Light	31/11
	26-Nov	London	Grain	Yeates	Greens Wharf	London	Light	28-Nov
1952	30-May	London	Timber	Jones	Sadds Wharf	London	Light	07-Jun
	22-Jun	London	Timber	Jones	Sadds Wharf	London	Light	26-Jun
	28-Jul	London	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	London	Light	30-Jul
	08-Aug	London	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	London	Light	12-Aug
	16-Oct	Colchester	Light	Wilson	Stansgate	Colchester	Timber	21-Oct
1953	30-Jan	London	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	Colchester	Light	03-Feb
	22-Feb	London	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	Colchester	Light	25-Feb
	15-Mar	London	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	London	Light	20-Mar
	03-Apr	London	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	London	Grain	16-Apr
	03-Jul	London via Stansgate	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	London	Light	04-Jul
	08-Sep	London Surrey Docks	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	Fingeringhoe	Light	17-Sep
	26-Nov	London	Timber	Wilson	Sadds Wharf	Colchester	Light	08-Jan 54

Dates for your Diary



Working Parties

The Thursday Group meetings have now been suspended until further notice. Members will be advised when these are set to re-start.

Weekend Working Parties for the winter have now ceased and dates for 2020/21 will be advised later in the year

All Events up to July have been cancelled and those the rest of the year are under review pending government guidelines. Please visit our website for up to date details.

Saturday 8th August—CENTAUR & KITTY 125th Birthday Celebration—Harwich

Saturday 19th September—Maldon Regatta

Social Events:

NEW DATES FOR AGM & LAYING UP SUPPER

Saturday 31st October—Maldon Little Ship Club.

AGM to start at 2:00 pm
Laying Up Supper 6:30 pm for 7:30 pm Start.

(More details in next issue of Golden Chaffcutter)

Trust Sails—Revised programme (still subject to changes)

Due to Covid-19, the Trust has had to unfortunately cancel all sailing until August at the earliest.

Once we have some social distancing restrictions lifted, we hope to be able to

look at ways in which we can sail during the latter part of the season.

The programme below details the plans for the period August to October, and this may also be subject to change de-

pending on the guidelines that are provided by the Government. In the meantime we hope that you understand the circumstances and that as soon as we are able to offer sailing opportunities you will look to book with us.

Date	No. days	No. Nights	Board Port/Time	Disembark Port/Time	Description of Cruise	Price
August						
7th to 9th	3	3	Ipswich (Thurs Evening) Depart early Friday	Ipswich (Sunday Afternoon)	Centaur & Kitty 125th Birthdays Celebration Join Centaur for a leisurely trip from Ipswich Dock on Friday taking in the picturesque River Orwell on the way to the Harwich Sea Festival, on Saturday. Centaur will be open to the public for the day, and she will be joined by her sister barge Kitty, who is also celebrating 125 years. Sunday will be a leisurely sail from Harwich back to Ipswich.	3 nights £180 (inc meals)
25th to 28th	3	3	Maldon (Tues Evening) Depart early Wed.	Maldon (Friday Evening)	Clacton Airshow Front Row Seats Boarding at Maldon Quay on Tuesday 25 th evening, Centaur will be making an early start from Wednesday 26 th morning, down the River Blackwater. On Thursday 27 th , she will sail on to the Clacton Airshow to enjoy front row seats of this ever popular event. Friday will be a leisurely sail back to Maldon Quay, arriving Friday 28 th evening.	3 nights £215 (inc meals)
September						
5th to 7th	3	3	Maldon (Fri Evening)	Maldon (Monday Evening)	Squeeze, Scrape, Strum, Blow, Bang, Sing Folk Music Cruise Arrive Friday evening for a weekend full of live music. Bring your instruments and your voice, or just come along to enjoy all the fun. All meals included.	3 nights £215 (inc meals)
11th to 13th	3	3	Maldon (Thurs Evening) Depart early Friday	Maldon (Monday Afternoon)	Colne Barge Match Your last chance to see the barge fleet racing in 2020. Arrive Thursday evening and leave Friday morning from Maldon for a passage down to Brightlingsea, ready for Saturday's match, which is a race down the River Colne from Brightlingsea, and out into the River Blackwater Estuary. An evening ashore on Saturday night for the prize giving and a passage back to Maldon, arriving Sunday evening	3 nights £240 (inc meals)
25th to 27th	3	3	Maldon (Thurs Evening) Depart Friday	Maldon (Sunday Evening)	Burnham Carnival Cruise A passage from Maldon to Burnham-on-Crouch for the fabulous Burnham Carnival Parade. Arrive Thursday evening to leave Maldon early Friday morning and return to Maldon on Sunday evening	3 nights £215 (inc meals)

VHF Course Lockdown Training

One of the amazing opportunities given to TSBT trainees, is that the Trust subsidises relevant RYA training courses. So, when Mick sent an email round offering a place on the RYA VHF course on the 1st of March, I was straight in there. The course was going to take place in the Maldon Little Ship Club, our regular haunt for a beer and a cheese roll the night before going sailing on Pudge or Centaur. An exam in a Pub! What could possibly go wrong?

Luckily for everyone, it was tea and biscuits only at that time of the morning. TSBT legend Lee Shepherd, had of course already consumed about 8 cups by the time I arrived. Suitably caffeinated, we joined the rest of our class of friendly boaty people and sat down to our radios. Our instructor Pete assured us we were on a closed circuit and that our mayday calls would definitely not be heard by anyone outside the room... Until a few minutes later we heard the coastguard responding to a call by a

vessel that was definitely outside the room.

Pete quickly switched everything off and on again, adjusted the frequency and for good measure called the coast guard just to make sure they were not hearing us. It turned out to be a glitch in the matrix and we carried on with the course.

Apart from a few people saying "over and out" occasionally, (which Pete told us was not a good thing to say on a radio unless you want your barge cred to be in tatters for ever) everything went very smoothly. Lee and I of course totally aced it and are now officially allowed to use a VHF.

I was very much looking forward to putting my newly acquired skill to good use possibly on the shakedown sail or one of the upcoming training weekends. But then...Lockdown happened.

Initially I thought that would be my TSBT training for the season over, but Mick Nolan is not one to let his trainees slack off for a few months. He quickly started a WhatsApp group for mates and trainees, and as well as a Barge related 'film of the day' we also get links to useful resources and the occasional Barge theory test question to keep us on our toes. We've even got a TSBT singing sailors group for those trainees who are interested in the squeezebox side of things.

It's been fantastic to be able to carry on with some aspects of the training during these difficult times but most importantly the WhatsApp group has been a way for us trainees to stay in touch and talk about something we all love and look forward to doing together again very soon: mucking about on barges.

Patrick Schulenburg -Trainee

Letter to the Editor

Editor

The Trust has received the following letter from James C Marwood MFA MRCS LRCP.



Dear Barge people, I was a (not very active) member of the Trust before I came to Australia in 1961. I recently found two photographs that I would like to share with you. I took them aboard the *Arrow* on a day's sailing from Whitstable under skipper 'Frosty' on 11.9.55. I remember clearly the initial feeling that the jetty was moving away from

our great massive hull - so different from the small boat experience, and I remember 'Frosty' kept the mizzen brailed up because under the weather conditions

Arrow was 'a bit of a weatherecock'.

Later I was instructed in the techniques of big-boat steering, in order to avoid what Frosty elegantly described as 'screwing the arse off her.' I think my memory of that day was dominated by the feeling of power, suggested in the photographs that great dark red spread of mainsail canvas filled. Sadly the nearest thing to be found around Tasmania were the centre board ketches, of which just

one survives, *May Queen*, 'mothballed' in Hobart Harbour. With best wishes for your continued success in these difficult times,

Jim Marwood



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Visit our web site

www.bargetrust.org

Newsletter produced and edited by John Rayment. Your comments are welcomed about the newsletter. Email or write to the Editor or Trust.

Deadline date for articles for the next issue should be sent to John Rayment by the 9th August 2020



*A Line Up of Primed New Carlings on Pudge
Picture by John Rayment*

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