

# Golden Chaffcutter Thames Sailing Barge Trust



Issue 131

[www.bargetrust.org](http://www.bargetrust.org)

December 2020

From the Helm	1
Membership Renewals	2
Dates for your Diary	3
Cann's Case for Damages	3
100 Club	4
Five Year Plan for the Trust	4
Chêne Français de Pudge	4
Trainess Getaway on Blue Mermaid	6
Pudge Update	7
Centaur Update	8
Britain in Grip of Snow and Ice	9
Keith Kingdom Mate on Pudge	9
Sailing Programme	10



## *Seasons Greetings*

### From the Helm

On behalf of the Trustees and Committee may I wish all our members a Happy Christmas. This morning as I was thinking about these jottings, the good people of breakfast TV confirmed (for the benefit of the nation's children) that Father Christmas is still coming despite lockdowns and other restrictions. Good news indeed. We all need some good news at the moment, and hopefully reading through your copy of the Golden Chaffcutter will bring you just a little with the update on Pudge, our successful training scheme and a taster of the proposed program for 2021.

Pudge is indeed the good news story of the year for me. Kevin Finch our shipwright and his team are continuing apace and as I write, the decks are in place, caulking well under way and the first of the coamings is being shaped in the workshop. Whilst there have been some delays most notably the replacement of the five steel beams, everything is moving ahead nicely. Those who have seen that work, say that the standard of work is exceptional, and I believe that we will be the envy of the fleet once Pudge is fully back in action.

Just stepping back a little, I

would like to thank the members for their support at the "virtual" AGM. It was really heartening to see members taking part both using the Zoom facility and by submitting proxy votes. Don't forget that we intend getting back to a more conventional AGM for 2021 and this will be held in April as usual. Not long then for members to consider nominations for Committee, Officers and Trustees. More details will of course be sent in good time.

The combination of the effects of Covid 19, the associated financial contraction, and the financial commitments of owning two nationally recognised historic ships



sits quite heavily on the Trust's shoulders, and we are embarking on an exercise to look forward over the next five years to plan for likely financial commitments and the income opportunities to fund those commitments. We have excellent relationships with a number of funding charities, and of course Lottery Heritage Fund. However it does not take a genius to see that these organisations will be under huge pressure from all manner of good causes moving forward. We know that even before we have Pudge fully back in commission, there are significant issues with Centaur that will require another major funding drive and we have Sailorman which sits quietly on the quay, but is also due for a survey, repaint and some TLC. We simply have to pursue new routes to raise money for these jobs or consider wheth-

er we can continue with both barges. Perhaps there is an experienced fundraiser sitting in our midst. If so, please come forward and get involved.

One of the areas that we do need to address is membership. Our loyal members have been hugely supportive, but we simply need to bring in more. The Committee is looking at membership benefits and how other similar heritage charities operate. Anyone who has ideas in that area that would like to get involved would be very welcome. Please contact David our Secretary and let him know.

We are also taking a serious look at our prices for sailing with the Trust. We are still significantly cheaper than our principle competition in Maldon and will retain a differential but must reflect market conditions. As by far the largest proportion of sailing clients are not mem-

bers, we will however be increasing prices for 2021 and beyond. There are a number of factors not least crewing costs which have been held down for many years, and which make life difficult as and when we need to pay outside skippers to meet commitments.

Please then as you make the most of this Christmas period give some thought to how you can help the Trust maintain our wonderful fleet. If you are able to add a little new year goodwill in with your subs this year, I can assure you it will be very well received.

Good luck to every one of our members this winter, stay safe, and let us hope for a better 2021 with good sailing and a fair breeze.

*Peter Taylor*  
Chairman

## Membership Renewal

Inside this issue of the Golden Chaffcutter you will find a membership renewal form. All subscriptions are due for renewal on the 1st January 2021.

If you pay by **standing order**, or are a Life Members, then you do not have to complete and return the renewal form, unless you wish to make a donation to the Trust's funds.

If you pay your membership by **cheque** then please could you complete and return the membership form with your renewal subscription and any donation, to the membership secretary. We would ask that members renew as soon as possible and at the latest by the end of January.

Full Details of the process are on the renewal form and please check the address box

on the back page of this issue as to whether you are a standing order member, or a pre April 2018 Concessionary Member.

Pre April 2018 Concessionary Membership renewal is £25.

If you know of anyone who would like to become a member, please get them to join. This can be done on line or by contacting me.

New members in the last two months:

**Glynis O'Leary** of Maldon  
**Mac Macartney** of Maldon  
**David Daines** of West Mersea

The Trust has a life membership category and we are happy for members to upgrade their membership at anytime. If any members would like to consider upgrading then please contact the membership secretary.

Trust membership may also be a good Christmas present so if you have a friend who you know is interested in sailing barges then why not get them a years membership subscription.

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](mailto: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)

## Dates for your Diary



6th & 20th March (either of these will be blocks weekend)

3rd & 17th & 18th (17th & 18th rigging out weekend)

These dates are subject to any Covid 19 restrictions so only six volunteers will be allowed on each date, although this will be reviewed if restrictions change and published on our website.

If you plan to help, can you please call Tim Jepson a few days prior so he can manage numbers. If you are trainee then please advise Mick Nolan.

Tim Jepson can be contacted on 01621 851817 or [timjepson411@gmail.com](mailto:timjepson411@gmail.com)

**We have provisional dates for the 2021 AGM and Fitting Out Supper and these are below along with provisional Open Day dates.**

**Saturday 24th April** —Maldon Little Ship Club.

**2021 AGM** to start at 2:00 pm  
**Fitting Out Supper** 6:30 pm for 7:30 pm Start.

**Provisional Open Days**  
(all dates subject to change depending on Covid-19 restrictions)

**May Day Open Days**  
**Sunday & Monday 2nd & 3rd May**  
Hythe Quay, Maldon

**Maldon Mud Race Open Day**  
**Sunday 23rd May**  
Hythe Quay, Maldon

**Maldon Maritime Weekend**  
**Sunday & Monday 30th & 31st May**  
Hythe Quay, Maldon

**Children's Day**  
**Thursday 3rd June 11:00—16:00**  
Hythe Quay, Maldon

### 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 will only be on Saturdays and the dates are detailed below.

12th December

9th & 23rd January

6th & 20th February

## Cann's Case for Damages

***In 1895 Centaur was launched by Cann's at Harwich. Whilst doing some research through the newspaper Archives we have come across an interesting article regarding a claim for damages against John Cann made by possibly a labourer who was working on Centaur. Editor***

Essex Herald Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 1895

SEQUEL TO A  
HARWICH ASSAULT CASE

"A LITTLE BIT OF A TALK TOGETHER"

A FORMER TOWN COUNCILLOR SUED  
FOR DAMAGES

At the Ipswich County Court, on Wednesday, before his Honour Judge Eardley Wilmot, the case of Mudd v Garling, which was a claim of £50 for damages for assault, came on for hearing. – Mr. A. W. Jones appeared for the plaintiff, and Mr. A. J. H. Ward was for the defendant. – Mr. Jones said his client was a carpenter and joiner, living

at 3 Bath-side, Harwich, and the defendant was a retired painter and decorator, now residing in Ipswich. The plaintiff was employed at the close of last year by Mr. John Cann, shipbuilder, Harwich, and he gave notice to leave on Saturday, the 29<sup>th</sup> December. Between one and two o'clock on that day the plaintiff was coming down a ladder from a loft. Cann used very violent and abusive language without any provocation, and Garling, when the plaintiff was on the second or third step from the bottom, put his hand on to his (plaintiff's) shoulders and caused him to fall across the ladder on to his hip. While he was down Cann gave him two or three blows in the face.

Afterwards he summoned Cann before the Harwich borough justices, and the bench came to the conclusion that the assault, if there had been one, was of such a trivial nature that they dismissed the case on payment of costs by the defendant. From the effect of the push upon the steps, however, and the consequent injury to his back, the

plaintiff alleged that he was unable to work for seven weeks. – Edward Fox, 16, who works for Mr. Cann, called as a witness for the plaintiff, said he heard his master having a "little bit of talk together" – nothing unusual, – Dr. Gurney, of Harwich, certified that plaintiff was suffering from contusions of the muscles of the back.

Mr Ward submitted that the only assault committed was by Cann, which had been dealt with, and that his action for damages was an afterthought. – The defendant said he was for nine years a member of Harwich Town Council. He never laid a finger on plaintiff. – His Honour said the plaintiff had failed to make out his case. Judgement must therefore be for the defendant, with costs.

## 100 Club

The winners of the bi-monthly draws are published in the Golden Chaffcutter.

All income raised through the 100 Club is put aside towards large scale projects such as the new decks on Pudge.

Due to the renewal of the Club for the

forthcoming year we are now publishing the winners of the last three draws.

### November/December

1<sup>st</sup> Prize £50 Mary Guilder  
2<sup>nd</sup> Prize £20 Pat O'Sullivan  
3<sup>rd</sup> Prize £10 Frances Lewis

If you would like to take part in the 100 Club, and help raise funds for the Trust, then please contact me on 01621 788276

Thank you for your support.

*Terry O'Sullivan*

## Five Year Plan for the Trust

As mentioned in the introductory notes to this newsletter, the Committee are developing a five-year plan for the Trust. Why would we need to do that? Well we know from the experience of the current Pudge project that any significant fund-raising can take years to come to fruition and we also know that Centaur, and to a lesser extent Sailorman are going to need significant work over the next few years. We have also had to contend with a period of limited income, initially due to Pudge being out of commission, but compounded by Covid-19.

Bearing in mind these issues in particular, we see the next few years as being challenging and as I have indicated in previous communications, we need to

develop new ideas to keep the Trust with its head above water. Our membership is static and needs to be grown and our sailing activities need to generate a profit for reinvestment into future projects. We have seen a growth in sale of Trust products and this can be further enhanced. Are there other commercial opportunities out there?

To achieving our objectives, we need to understand what they are, likely costs, timescales and funding routes. By setting a five-year plan this can be managed in a step by step way, hopefully avoiding too many unforeseen problems. I hope that you will see this as a positive step by the Committee and as always, I would encourage anyone that

feels they could contribute to get in touch.

On that note, we are looking for a new Treasurer to take over by the beginning of 2022. Gerald has done an exceptional job seeing us through the last two years but has indicated that he will step back at the end of next year. This is an enormously important role for the Trust. If you feel you might be able to take on that role, or even help out, please contact [secretary@bargetrust.org](mailto:secretary@bargetrust.org) or speak to David Gibson.

*Peter Taylor—Trustee & Chairman*

## Chêne Français de Pudge

### ***Pudge's French Oak***

***In recent articles about Pudge's restoration we have been focusing on the work being carried out since the timber arrived and she went into dry dock. Our timber was purchased with the help of Eddie Smith a longstanding member of the Trust and a timber merchant. Eddie has provided us with detail on how some of the timber was sourced and this is accompanied by some photographs taken by our shipwright Kevin Finch.***

The Oak "Boules" which came from France were the result of a great deal of thought, effort and expertise on the part of Kevin.

The selection of suitable logs involved exchanges of emailed photos over several weeks and then, during a 3-day visit to France, the final choice of logs to buy

was made after visiting several very muddy log yards.

It was an agonising time for Kevin involving a great deal of discussion on the merits and demerits of individual logs and their potential suitability for essentially different purposes, according to which part of the barge they were intended for.

The sawing of every log was supervised by Kevin and involved meticulous positioning of each log on the bandsaw carriage in order for example to maximise the yield by taking advantage of the natural curves in the logs which he had earmarked for curved beams, necessary due to Pudge's heavy deck camber.

Also sometimes changing the instructions as to the next thickness of cut required, in order to maximise or minimise any defects revealed as the sawing proceeded.

The logs were the maximum weight and length for the bandsaw carriage and we were fortunate in having a very amiable Head Sawyer who allowed our time-consuming antics.

At one point the slab coming off the saw tipped in a different way than expected and was in danger of sliding into the spinning sawblade and being so heavy probably pushing it off the top wheel. The sawyer said in a calm, conversational tone of voice "poussez le bouton rouge s'il vous plait" – "push the red button please!")

The timber as you have seen has been put to good use and a further update on Pudge's progress can be found on page 7.

*Eddie Smith*



## New Stock for Sale

Following enquiries received when the Trust opened the Pop-up Shop on the Quay at Maldon during the summer, the Trust has some new stock which you can purchase through our website.

The Lapel Pins are priced at £3 each and the Tee Shirts at £10 each. Postage and packaging as detailed on the website is extra.

Why not visit the website shop and see if there is anything you might like to purchase for Christmas.



## Membership Renewal

**Please remember that your membership is due for renewal on the 1st January 2021**

**Please renew early and where possible by the end of January 2021**

# Trainees Getaway on Blue Mermaid

2020 has been an exceptionally strange year. The sailing season got off to a false start and then almost entirely disappeared - with only the Swale Match and Colne Match getting the go-ahead for barge racing. The former was postponed to a later day and then, in the end, cancelled due to foul weather. The latter had a grand total of just three barges in attendance.

With Pudge temporarily out of commission and Centaur at the mercy of the necessary COVID-19 restrictions it has been a disappointing time for the enthusiastic TSBT trainees. After a weekend of sloping about in the Blackwater mud chipping and tarring Centaur, the country dived straight into lockdown the very next day. Suffice to say when the opportunity for a training weekend aboard Blue Mermaid arose, all were champing at the bit (or whatever the nautical equivalent is - champing at the bits?).

However, our dreams of a weekend barging were once again dashed when gale forces winds were forecast. The only other available dates were in early October - a notoriously unpredictable time for weather. We crossed our fingers and hoped for the best.

Many more eloquent articles have been written about Blue Mermaid, but for the uninitiated: she is an 88-foot steel bowsprit barge with no engine and was commissioned in 2019 as a replica of



one of the last Thames sailing barges. The original Blue Mermaid was built in 1930 but unfortunately was lost during World War 2. In her new form, she is operated by the Sea-Change Sailing Trust who offer residential sailing trips for young people and vulnerable adults.

We were picked up from Heybridge Basin at 0500 on the 10th October in the cold and damp. I have to say I was half expecting that our engineless weekend would begin with a scull across the river, however, the trusty 'Yama-Oar' was deployed. After a safety briefing and COVID-19 chat from our wards Hilary and Richard, we slipped the mooring and took the ebb tide down the river. It was a topsail breeze but with the threat of 25-knot winds later.

As the sun began to rise the first thing that struck me about Blue Mermaid is how fascinatingly anachronistic every-

thing seems - old and traditional in design but brand spanking new. We dropped the anchor just off Osea Island, and 'practised' rolling hitches whilst setting the anchor ball, before heading down below for a very informative rigging refresher classroom session.

the bowsprit was lowered, the anchor was weighed and off we went under full canvas. Hilary and Richard were excellent tutors and I believe we all got a lot from the training. We anchored for lunch off Mersea Island which was followed by another classroom session. The wind was building, and we knew it was going to be a beat back, discussions on the various methods of rigging a bowsprit barge as a coasting barge were had, but promptly ignored.

We raised the bowsprit and headed back in 18 to 20 knots. Just to keep us on our toes suddenly the fans were turned off, and ominous black clouds began to creep in. This is where ordinarily the 'iron topsail' would be switched on, but alas Blue Mermaid does not have that modern luxury! As we part-tacked and part-drifted upriver, the heavens opened. Wet and bedraggled we made it back to the mooring at around 1800 - a quick stow and we headed back ashore. Of all the lessons learned on day one I believe the most poignant was: if you are contemplating putting oilskins on, then that's the time to put them on! (Unless of course, you enjoy a pint in the Jolly Sailor wearing dry oilskins with a carrier bag of soaking clothes by your feet.)

Day two, a slightly later start and everyone was feeling notably more at home with the barge and comfortable with their roles. Once again, we dropped anchor at Osea, gobbled some breakfast and then drudged downriver in glorious sunshine much to the bemusement of a local yacht race. We lowered the bowsprit once more and all canvas was set beautifully, and another great day of sailing to the Bench Head buoy and back was had. True to form the wind died at sunset, but the mooring was expertly located by Richard and retrieved by Laurie. The whole experience was an excellent end to a very peculiar barging year.

*Article and Pictures  
Chris Snelson  
Trainee*



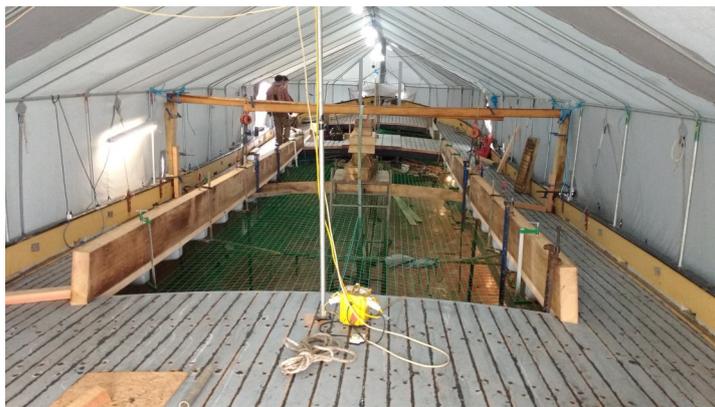
The westerly wind was filling in nicely,

# Pudge Update

For this edition we have a change of correspondent. Terry O'Sullivan instead of Peter Boss has provided the update.

At the end of Peter's last report, the king planks were cut and ready for gluing. These have now been fitted. These two planks are now both continuous from bow to stern, and are supported by the main beams, and deck carlings. The carling inner ends finish flush with the inner edge of the king planks, and eventually will be bolted through the coamings. This will stiffen up the whole barge structure.

The main event taking place since the last report has been the laying of all the remaining deck planks. To enable the work to proceed safely, Kevin has spread a safety net just below the deck level. Also, the aperture for the foc's'le scuttle was cut through the foredeck to allow access below deck by ladder. The apertures for the Skippers skylight, and engine room scuttle have yet to be cut. Deck work started with the planks next to the king planks and working outwards towards the covering boards. As the sides of the barge are not straight, the parts of the planks abutting the covering boards have to be shaped to fit. The nearest deck plank to the covering board requires the most fettling for a good fit. Kevin and the boys have done an excellent job with this, and then got stuck in with the time-consuming job of caulking the decks.



**Pudge's new deck from aft with coamings clamped in position**  
*Pictures by Terry O'Sullivan*

There was a long discussion about which method was best to use for this. Modern materials have provided alternative methods, but, as one the Trust's aims is to continue all the traditional skills associated with sailing barges, we have chosen to stick the traditional method of deck caulking, using oakum sealed with tar. Our plan was for this job to be done by our volunteers, but Covid-19 put paid to that. As a result, Kevin and his team had to take it on. All the deck is now caulked, and looks to be a great job. The tar is still proud, but, will be smoothed down before painting starts in earnest.

the sides. For Sheer, the decks are higher at either end with the lowest point being abaft the mainmast. Unfortunately, the old starboard main hatch coaming had rotted in the centre along with the associated supporting deck carlings. This caused the starboard deck to have a reverse camber, and any water on the starboard deck formed a puddle alongside the coaming when the barge was upright.

To restore the deck's shape, Kevin has made many measurements, used straps, jacks, and props to correct this problem to give the fine deck shape that can be seen from the pictures.

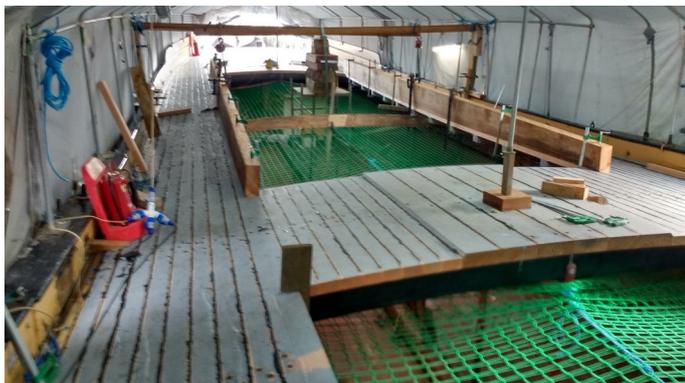


**Pudge's deck plank ends over the Transom. The new Saddle Chock will sit on them (one of the next jobs)**  
*Picture by Terry O'Sullivan*

As the boys were finishing off the caulking, Kevin has been shaping up the two main hatch coamings. These two coamings have now been clamped in place. They are slightly higher than the finished height, and the top inner edges will be rebated to create a ledge for the hatch boards to sit on. The coamings are impressive pieces of timber (Iroko), and appear to have no serious flaws in them.

Pudge will certainly be stronger when all the new coamings, and headledges are jointed together and fastened to the decks and beams, but that is for the next report.

*Terry O'Sullivan*



**Pudge's new deck from for'ard**  
*Picture by Terry O'Sullivan*

Kevin has taken a great deal of care to restore the deck shape to where we think it was as original.

Sailing barges, like most other water craft are not flat. The decks have camber, and sheer. The camber is like a road, so that the centre of the decks, are higher than at

# Centaur Update

The weather on Saturday October 17th was fine and dry so a small team got stuck in and had the gear lowered as soon as Centaur floated up. The barge needs to be level so the mast and sprit come down nicely in the middle, it makes it much easier and safer and saves hauling on tackles and vangs to keep everything central as it is lowered down.

We worked on the rig, removing and labelling everything then stowing it all away in the lighter with the sails being stowed on top of the lighter hatch boards and covered over with one of our heavy covers. There were a few bits left over for Sunday, the mizzen had to be lowered and everything stowed away, also the topmast undressed, we had time to oil the Topmast and main standing rig which due to its size and weight stays outside but is covered up. The stayfall blocks were unshackled to get them out of the way. The windlass, all the winches, the hounds and the skipper's cabin top have also been covered over to protect them from the winter weather, it saves us work in the long run.

Two of us work a few hours a day doing essential maintenance such as deck leaks (not too many), changing engine oil and gearbox oil. A leaking gearbox lubricating oil pipe to the cooler needed replacing. The decks need scrubbing with salt water which cleans and preserves the wood. The problem with the forward loo change over valve control has been rectified by fitting a completely new pump assembly.

When we lower the gear down the lower part of the main mast lays in a cut out in the main hatch which has a cover fitted over it once the mast is down to keep the



***Centaur's saddlechock removed  
Picture by Tim Jepson***

rain out. The old cover we have been using is some 35 years old and is now leaking so a new one has made to replace it. The steering spindle has been greased to stop it rusting and the top and sides of the steering box have been removed to clear the area ready to work on the replacement saddle chock.

The 40 year-old saddlechock was in a poor state, we have been patching it up for years and this winter decided to replace it. It has been removed and sawn into firewood, the large iron fairleads have been carefully removed, old iron castings are fragile although very strong but will crack if hit with a hammer. The fairleads are most probably original,

they are a pair made by the well-known firm of ships chandlers Davey & Company London Ltd established in 1885 and who were based near the West India dock in the east end of London where we wintered our barges in the 1970's. Davey's have been trading since 1885 and are now based in Colchester where they still manufacture high quality marine fittings some of which have been in production since Victorian times .

The aft mooring bitts , some of the rigging blocks also the large stayfall blocks are all Davey's products from long ago. Talking of the rig, this is being looked over and serviced, we have no idea when we can get working parties together again so thought it prudent to push on with the work.

*Tim Jepson*



***A photo of Centaur's aft cabin, not many people get the chance to go down below and see the joinery work and the mis-spelt carving on the deck beam which always amuses visitors. This beam broke some years ago and we cut the carved part of the beam off and glued it to the new beam***



PERPETUATING PUDGE'S FUTURE  
**THE PUDGE PROJECT**  
THAMES SAILING BARGE TRUST

For regular updates on the Pudge Project visit the NEW Pudge Project website at

**[www.thepudgeproject.com](http://www.thepudgeproject.com)**

Designed by Ben Gosling a pupil at Plume Community Academy, Maldon

# Britain in Grip of Snow and Ice – Frozen Roads Death Traps for Motorists

*Will this be the headlines this winter? Lets hope not, but this was a headline in the Daily Mirror of the 14th December 1933 and has come to light during research on the dangers of being a bargeman for the Pudge Project and I thought you might like to read it. Editor*

## DOUBLE 'V.C.' IN RESCUE THRILL

### Britain in Grip of Snow and Ice – Frozen Roads Death Traps for Motorists

The Cromer lifeboat, under Coxswain Blogg, the double "V.C." lifeboatman, rescued two men who had been clinging to the rigging of a barge for six hours.

Weather conditions on land and sea were the worst experienced for many years. Some Channel services cancelled. Mountainous seas lashed the sea walls at Dover and Folkestone. Inland, icebound roads were a death-trap to motorists.

## THRILLING RESCUE

Crowds at Cromer yesterday afternoon cheered spectacular feats of seamanship when the motor-lifeboat rescued two members of the crew of the Dover barge Sepoy which was being dashed to pieces only 200 yards from the beach.

The men J. Hempstead (the captain) and J. Stevenson both of Grays (Essex), had been clinging to the rigging for several hours.

When the barge's distress signals were first seen Cromer's motor-lifeboat was at sea having gone to a barge in distress at Haisborough Sands.

An attempt was therefore made to launch the old rowing lifeboat, but time after time it was driven back on the beach.

## BOAT DRAGGED A MILE

Hundreds of helpers dragged it a mile along the beach, and managed to launch it, but it was eventually driven back again on the beach.

Then the Cromer motor-lifeboat arrived back from Haisborough, and Coxswain Blogg twice succeeded in maneuvering it close to the Sepoy, but each time it was driven back.

At a third attempt the coxswain got the lifeboat close enough to the barge for the two men to spring overboard, grab the side of the lifeboat, and be hauled on board.

## PEAL OF JOYBELLS

As Coxswain Blogg brought the lifeboat ashore many people waded into the water, some grabbing hold of the lifeboat, while others helped the rescued men ashore, where they were taken to hospital in an exhausted condition.

A merry peal was rung on the church bells to express rejoicing at the rescue.

Coxswain Blogg is the only living man



**Picture from THE SPHERE Saturday 23rd December 1933 with the lifeboat on the beach and the Sepoy in the distance.  
From British Newspaper Archives.**

twice to be awarded the gold medal, the V.C. of the lifeboat service.

He has been Coxswain at Cromer for twenty-four years, and during that period has been out on service 148 times and has helped to rescue 298 lives.

Coxswain Blogg spoke modestly of the rescue to the Daily Mirror last night.

"The sea was very rough," he said. "Two men were clinging to the rigging while the waves were breaking over the barge's deck. It was fairly difficult to get alongside but after one or two attempts we managed it and got hold of the men and dragged them on board. Coming back, the seas were so rough that we could not make the landing stage and had to beach the lifeboat to get ashore at all."

The incident was featured in numerous newspapers all across the country.

# Keith Kingdom – Mate on Pudge from 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1964 – 9<sup>th</sup> April 1964

In recent editions of the Golden Chaff-cutter we have included information about people who worked or were involved in Pudge during her trading days. As part of the research work we have been undertaking here is a story from Keith Kingdom.

As I can't remember a lot about my

time on Pudge I am giving you a bit of my memories of my time on the barges.

I left school at 15 in 1962, my first job was in the Rock with Jim Diddams for a few weeks while his regular mate was sick. Then I got a job with Laphorns as a mate on the Mavis carrying ballast for

the new M2 Motorway from Brightlingsea to Sittingbourne.

Us mates on the barges were frequently changing barges, I was mate on the Rock, Thistle, Victor, HT Willis, Pudge and Maguda.

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

I was mate on Pudge in 1964. Pudge was a strong dry barge which needed very little pumping of the bilges, hence most of our cargoes were grain. Dockers did not like working Pudge as she still had the mast case which made their work harder. The only time we were 'wet' as a cargo was at Rochford Mills. I was left to unload Pudge as Les, the skipper (Les Foreman) had gone home. At 5 pm the unloading gang went home leaving a few tons of grain in the bows, when the tide floated us in the early hours, the bilge water rushed forward over the ceiling wetting several tons of grain, even though I was pumping as fast as I could. Les was not pleased!!!

One of the best experiences I had on Pudge was when we were running back from Ipswich empty one Saturday, Les still had some sails on Pudge, it was a bitterly cold NE gale blowing. As usual Les said 'let's go and have a look at it',

then as expected said 'we're out here now might as well keep going!' He pulled up this bit of main, laced to a spar like a gunter rig, this looked like an old gib on its side, the clew reached nearly aft. Then a jib, again the clew reached well aft. We roared down wind leaving a trail of foam behind us.

We sailed right up to Strood Buoys arriving early evening. Les jumped ashore to catch the train to Queenborough where he lived leaving me to tidy up. I managed to get the sails hung up in the empty hold to dry, not an easy task on my own. They were heavy and wet.

The masters cabin aft, I only saw once in my eyes, it was immaculate, painted oak panels, oval entrance to the bunks.



**Pudge at Felixstowe 1961, cargo was 150 tons of wheat from London**  
**Photograph by Terry Sullivan**

Little curtains in the bunks, the best I had seen on any barge.

It's a pity I cannot remember more but we are talking over 50 years ago.

*Keith Kingdom*

## 2021 Sailing Programme

Although we did manage some sailing in 2020, it was mainly half day trips from Maldon. Let's all hope that 2021 allows us to return to our normal weekends away including Matches and some longer Charter trips sailing on the wider Thames estuary.

Although we received some emergency funding from the Lottery Heritage Fund the Trustees have reluctantly agreed that sailing fees need to increase. The Trust's financial reserves are committed to getting Pudge sailing again and both

Centaur and Sailorman will require the shipwright's attention over the next 2/3 years.

The good news is we are able to share with you our sailing programme for next May, June and July. There are plenty of dates available for Charters so give me a call on 07840 862685 or email me at [bookings@bargetrust.org](mailto:bookings@bargetrust.org) to discuss your requirements, dates etc.

All of our Public Cruises, weekends and

Day trips and on the tide trips, can be booked on-line via the Trust's website [www.bargetrust.org](http://www.bargetrust.org). Each trip is priced individually depending on its length and what it includes.

We anticipate a high demand for sailing in 2021 as we all make up for a lost year, so book early to be sure of getting on board.

*David Gibson*  
*Bookings Secretary.*

## 2021 Sailing Programme May—July 2021

Date	No. Nights	Boarding & Time	Disembark & Time	Description of Cruise	Price per person
<b>May</b>					
1st		<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 1st 14:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 1st 17:00 hrs	<b>On the Tide Small Group 3 hour Afternoon Cruise</b> A small group cruise down the Blackwater enjoying this scenic river onboard the 126 years old sailing barge Centaur	<b>£34</b> (Inc. soup & roll, cake tea & coffee)
7th		<b>Maldon</b> Friday 7th 08:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Friday 7th 11:20 hrs	<b>On the Tide Small Group 3 hour Morning Cruise</b> See details 1st May	<b>£34</b> (inc. Bacon Roll, tea & coffee)
8th		<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 8th 09:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 8th 12:10 hrs	<b>On the Tide Small Group 3 hour Morning Cruise</b> See details 1st May	<b>£34</b> (inc. Bacon Roll, tea & coffee)
9th		<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 9th 10:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 9th 13:00 hrs	<b>On the Tide Small Group 3 hour Morning Cruise</b> See details 1st May	<b>£34</b> (inc. Bacon Roll, tea & coffee)

Date	No. Nights	Boarding & Time	Disembark & Time	Description of Cruise	Price per person
<b>May Continued</b>					
20th to 23rd	3	<b>Maldon</b> Friday 21st 06:00	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 23rd 21:30 hrs	<b>Medway Barge Match</b> Leaving Maldon Quay head to Upnor on the River Medway, for the River Medway Barge Match. There will be a Prize-giving ashore on Saturday evening and post-match meal. Passage back to Maldon on Sunday, returning to Maldon Quay Sunday evening.	<b>£260</b> (inc. meals)
28th to 31st	3	<b>Maldon</b> Friday 28th 19:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Monday 31st 20:30 hrs	<b>Southend Airshow</b> A leisurely Bank Holiday three-day cruise from Maldon to anchor off Southend pier for the long awaited return of Southend Airshow. After the airshow, Centaur will make her way back to Maldon Quay returning on Monday afternoon.	<b>£235</b> (inc. meals)
<b>June</b>					
5th		<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 5th 6:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 5th 20:30 hrs	<b>Full Day Blackwater &amp; Mersea Island Cruise</b> Come with us on a full day sail with only 12 passengers, on the river Blackwater. When under sail see how 2 men handle the barge and when appropriate you may fancy a go on the wheel or pulling some ropes. Our plan is to visit the hidden gem that is West Mersea, a delightful blend of old fishing village and seaside town. We will anchor just offshore around midday and take the barge boat ashore for about three hours. There is an excellent Museum; the beach is good; there are lots of places to eat, lots of cafes, an Oyster Bar, the Victory pub and the famous Company Shed fish restaurant. For the more energetic there are local walks.	<b>£95</b> (Inc. cooked breakfast and tea & coffee)
6th		<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 6th 8:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 6th 21:30 hrs	<b>Full Day Blackwater &amp; Mersea Island Cruise</b> Details as 5th June	<b>£95</b> (Inc. cooked breakfast and tea & coffee)
12th		<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 12th 12:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 12th 15:15 hrs	<b>On the Tide Small Group 3 hour Afternoon Cruise</b> A small group cruise down the Blackwater enjoying this scenic river onboard the 126 years old sailing barge Centaur	<b>£34</b> (Inc. soup & roll, cake tea & coffee)
13th		<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 13th 12:45 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 13th 16:00 hrs	<b>On the Tide Small Group 3 hour Afternoon Cruise</b> See details 12th June	<b>£34</b> (Inc. soup & roll, cake tea & coffee)
18th to 20th	2	<b>Maldon</b> Friday 18th Evening Depart Sat. 06:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 20th 20:00 hrs	<b>Available for Exclusive Two Day Charter</b> Why not hire Centaur for a trip with your Friends and Family? Contact David Gibson for details 07840 862685	Call David Gibson for details
<b>July</b>					
1st to 4th	3	<b>Maldon</b> Thurs. 1st Evening Depart 05:30 Friday	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 4th 20:30 hrs	<b>Pin Mill Barge Match</b> Three-day cruise including one of the toughest barge matches due to the narrow channel, the Pin Mill barge match, offers an impressive nautical spectacle. Always well attended, with lots of barges racing through Harwich Harbour, followed by a evening ashore in the Pin Mill Yacht Club for the prize giving and evening meal. Sunday will be a relaxing sail back to the Maldon Quay.	<b>£260</b> (inc. meals)
9th to 11th	2	<b>Maldon</b> Evening Friday 9th Depart 23:30	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 11th 14:00 hrs	<b>Available for Exclusive Weekend Charter</b> Why not hire Centaur for an unforgettable trip with your Friends and Family? Contact David Gibson for details 07840 862685	Call David Gibson for details
17th		<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 17th Board 05:30 hrs. Depart 06:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Saturday 17th Evening	<b>Blackwater Barge Match</b> A nautical spectacle not to be missed. Always well attended, with lots of barges and fishing smacks racing on the River Blackwater. Back to Maldon Quay for the Saturday night prize-giving event and evening meal.	<b>£130</b> (inc. meals)
18th		<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 18th 06:00 hrs	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 18th 18:30 hrs	<b>Full Day Blackwater &amp; Mersea Island Cruise</b> See details 5th June	<b>£95</b> (Inc. cooked breakfast and tea & coffee)
23rd to 25th	2	<b>Maldon</b> Evening Friday 23rd Depart Midnight	<b>Maldon</b> Sunday 25th 14:00 hrs	<b>Available for Exclusive Weekend Charter</b> Why not hire Centaur for an unforgettable trip with your Friends and Family? Contact David Gibson for details 07840 862685	Call David Gibson for details

Registered Address: Thames Sailing Barge Trust, Handsel House, Walden Close, Great Totham, Maldon, Essex CM9 8UJ

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Visit our web sites  
[www.bargetrust.org](http://www.bargetrust.org) &  
[www.thepudgeproject.com](http://www.thepudgeproject.com)

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 5th February 2021



*Centaur passing the Tower of London on Bell's Scotch Whisky Charter 1969  
Picture from the late John Prime Collection TSBT*

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