



The Never Setting Sun



Smack Dock Soundings

THE JOURNAL OF THE COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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Iris Mary CK105 and *Peace* CK171 take an early lead 9 minutes after the start of the 2012 Colne Match.

Photo by David Chandler

From the editor...

Chairman Nicky Ennion.
Plough House, Plough Lane, Leavenheath,
Suffolk CO6 4PL.
Tel: 07919 088518

Journal Editor Lucy Harris
22 The Waterside, Brightlingsea,
Essex CO70BB
Tel: 07528 156 459
e-mail: lucy@pangolin.co.nz

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily the views of the CSPS or its committee.

Despite the general lousiness of this summer's weather, the smacks seem to have managed to be pretty active, as you will see from the contents. I do sympathise with event organisers when the forecast for the day before is so poor that few boats are able to attend; the Pinmill Smack Race being a good example, when only three of the eight Brightlingsea-based smacks who had intended to participate made it to the Orwell, one in awful weather. It's also disappointing for owners, who have probably put in a lot of effort getting their crew organised and boat prepared, but don't want to risk straining a boat which is probably over 100 years old.

Fortunately the only thing strained by this year's Colne Match was the crews' patience, which was well tested by the light airs prevailing down to Colne Bar; but they did provide a great spectacle in the early morning sunlight.





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Chairman's Report- Nicky Ennion

Well, we thought it was going to be difficult year weather wise and so it has proved to be. Late July & mid-August have given some balance to the possibilities of more enjoyment.

However some hardened souls, *Electron* CK36 & *Pioneer* CK18 rose to the challenge in the OGA Race, and latterly *Maria* CK21 & *Alberta* CK318 have been engaged in an interesting tussle at each race. The Pin Mill, Rowhedge and Blackwater Matches, not to forget the Swale have all had their moments of glory; *Polly* MN12 did well in the Pinmill match, which seems to becoming a firm favourite in the matches' series.

The Sail & Picnic has added a new twist to the fun. The skippers sensibly deciding that a lunch time rendezvous on the Smack's Pontoon was preferable to an anchored raft up in the strong winds. This seems to have been a very popular decision. The society's thanks go to Stephen Heppell on *My Alice* CK348, Robin Page on *Alberta* CK318

The Saturday Mersea Town Regatta was equally interesting. The race started with *Pioneer* under a working topsail rig and one reef in the mizzen and *Maria* with a deep reef (2nd out of 4), topmast housed, working staysail and small jib set half way along bowsprit. Course went west from the Nass start towards Thirslett Spit. Away from the start *Pioneer* was footing faster, whilst *Maria* was heading higher. *Maria* decided that the challenge was too close and put up her tow-staysail. After that she was pointing higher and footing well. Here after being within a boat length on tacks *Maria* gained on a big wind veer as *Pioneer* had to put in an extra

couple of tacks to make the mark. But all was not lost. On a lovely downwind sail, occasionally a broad reach, *Pioneer* made up on *Maria*. Responding to bigger gusts *Pioneer* dowsed her topsail, but had caught up closely on *Maria* at the Bench Head turn mark. The race back for the finish line was extremely competitive! On a close port tack *Maria* crossed the line maybe only two boat lengths ahead of *Pioneer*. Wonderful racing. The turnout of Mersea boats was good as well, with *Peace* looking very strong. Ah, wonderful sailing on someone else's boat!

We have been doubly successful on the funding front; all due to the efforts of Madeline Geikie. The Town Council have agreed to help with both the signage at the Smack Dock and the erection of the work shelter.

The Colne & Smack Barge Race was an indisputable success. Many thanks go to many people, which Robin has mentioned (under the race results). The Race itself was spectacular to watch from Bateman's Tower. I'm sure there will be write-ups elsewhere. But will someone please explain exactly how *Fly* was breathing down *Maria*'s neck at the finish?

Here's wishing good winds at Maldon.

Nicky Ennion

Smack Dock Clear-up
21st October, 10am onwards.
 Please come along and help- no doubt there may be some refreshments for the workers...



8th September 2012

H.W. 0514. Wind light and variable, sunny and warm. Smacks start 0800, Barges 0830; Course 'D'.

Smacks	Sail no	Corrected time	Place
<i>Maria</i>	CK21	4 50 48	1 st
<i>Fly</i>	MN17	5 04 36	2 nd
<i>Alberta</i>	CK318	5 05 30	3 rd
<i>Charlotte Ellen</i>	CK258	5 12 00	
<i>Peace</i>	CK171	5 12 04	
<i>Transcur</i>	CK365	5 16 35	
<i>Iris Mary</i>	CK105	5 17 13	
<i>Polly</i>	MN12	5 20 53	
<i>Harriet Blanche</i>	CK9	5 23 18	
<i>Emeline</i>	F14	5 26 58	
<i>Nellie</i>	CK276	5 46 50	
<i>Boadicea</i>	CK213	5 52 38	
<i>Electron</i>	CK36	6 09 03	
<i>Gracie</i>	CK46	6 14 31	
<i>Pioneer</i>	CK18	6 20 33	
<i>Marigold</i>	MN119	6 28 41	



Harriet Blanche, Charlotte Ellen, Electron and Alberta with Boadicea in the background.

Barges	Place
<i>Edme</i>	1 st
<i>Cambria</i>	2 nd
<i>Edith May</i>	3 rd
<i>Decima</i>	4 th

Most traditionally turned out smack- *Boadicea*

Best restoration- *Niagara*

Seamanship prize- *Repertor*



Cambria, Lady of the Lea and Niagara.



Boadicea running back to the finish with everything set.

All photos courtesy of David Chandler.



The 2012 Colne Match committee would like to thank...

...the following people and organisations, without whose help the race would not take place. In no particular order- James Lawrence Sailmakers, for making the winner's pennants, and Brightlingsea Harbour for laying the Clacton Pier mark and delivering the winners pennants. The Colne Yacht Club for allowing us to use Bateman's Tower and the CYC jetty; Brightlingsea Sailing Club for the use of the club for the registration and for the Prizegiving, and the Ladies of the sailing club for the excellent meal on Saturday night and particularly Glynis Sorrel for her effort. Jimmy and Pauline Lawrence for presenting the prizes; Roger Robertson and Barry Newman who are new recruits as OOD and line spotter. Brian Percival and his starting/finishing team, with the excellent and loud guns; John Carr for the use of *Colne Clipper* as a committee boat, and all of the effort that he puts in. Martin Worth for his effort. Tom Wild for designing the posters and programs, and Brian Adams of C3i for printing them. Last, but definitely not least. Brian Webb, who has been race secretary for many years and has ensured the future of the event, which due in no small part to his effort is the best attended smack race on the calendar. We had a great race this year with a good turnout; there were lots of very positive comments from competitors.
Thanks,

Robin Page

Smack Dock News- Judy Lawrence

Clean-Up Day – April 22nd

This was well attended and the 'Smackman's Return' looks smart after a new coat of paint. Many thanks to Chris and Tom Canham for their help and use of the trailer to remove loads of rubbish. The gentler folk supplied everyone with endless cups of tea and a sausage rolls. Amazingly it didn't rain...

Thursday Afternoon Opening

These have proved very successful and people dropping in have included visitors to Brightlingsea from Suffolk, Norfolk, Devon and even some Dutch visitors. All are welcomed

with a smile, a cuppa and a brief history of fishing smacks. Many lingered on the outside bench to take in our wonderful views.

Acoustic Entertainment

Musical evenings start again in September and in the meantime informal sessions have kept everyone in fine tune. For further details contact Madeleine on 01206 304802.

Rowing Club

We were pleased to offer the 'Smacksman's Return' to the Brightlingsea Coastal Rowing Club for their committee meetings and I believe they also held a couple of BBQs on the dock.

Old Gaffers Race - June 9th

The dock was packed, the beer and chat flowed, music played, all contributing to a highly successful afternoon – one to be put in the calendar for next year.

Sail & Picnic – July 22nd – see elsewhere in Soundings and website for poetry and photographs.

Brightlingsea Town Regatta Weekend – 7th/8th July

Saturday was the busiest day with about forty visitors. Madeleine kidnapped a group of singers who were performing nearby, and they kindly repeated their repertoire which led to much spontaneous cavorting on the dock. On Sunday, despite the rain, more visitors strolled by on their way home to watch Wimbledon. We shall definitely open up for these events again next year.

2012 Blackwater Match, a chance to learn- Robin Page

I consider this year's Blackwater Match to be our first proper race in *Alberta*. It would be an understatement to say that the start of the season had been a disappointment. I did not take part in the first two events, Brightlingsea Old Gaffers and the Pin Mill match as it was way too windy for us to learn the boat, and I messed up my chances of a race at Rowhedge regatta.

The forecast for the race was a mixture of good and bad; the good being that the wind was due



to be a force 2-3 NW becoming NE, the bad was the promise of low temperatures and torrential rain.

The format of the race is to start and finish off the old pier at Osea Island. The wind for the delivery was on the nose and the rain was... torrential as promised, so we motored to the start area and dropped the hook for an hour before getting underway for the start. Bacon butties and hot tea warmed the soggy crew. Once all the sails were up we started our timed runs to the start line. The tide was under us and the wind had shifted so that it was a tight port tack fetch down the estuary. We started well, just behind *Lizzy Annie*, and soon took the lead for a short time. It wasn't long before *Maria* took the lead from us; she was pointing higher and managed to avoid the line of moored yachts off Marconi and Stone sailing clubs. It was clear that *Maria* was faster up wind than we were. In compensation, the rest of the fleet were not doing so well with most of them pointing much lower and having to put tacks in across the river, when we could just point and make good progress. The course set was Bench Head, Inner Bench Head, NW Knoll, finish. At Bench Head *Maria* was well ahead of us; after rounding we picked up a good lift and started to lee bow across the current to Inner Bench Head- *Maria* seemed to be getting headed, but stood on (to our relief). We made it to Inner Bench in one board, while *Maria* had to put a tack in; we were clear ahead. After that we managed to hold our lead, finishing roughly 2 minutes in-front of *Maria*. Job done, all damp, but happy.

For the return trip we were once more faced with wind on the nose, and this time a foul tide. We elected to use the luxury of our new inboard engine and motored back finishing off the bottle of champagne that I cracked open as we crossed the finish line.

Once more the Blackwater Match was a well-run event, and my thanks go out to all of the people who put time in to make it happen.

Some members' experiences of the Sail and Picnic... Photos by Ann Berry



Smack Picnic ~ Sunday 22nd July 2012- Frances Warns

We were allocated to the smack *Alberta*. "Welcome aboard", said the owner, Robin. "I am a horrible skipper. I shout at everybody and order them about". The first statement was not true but he certainly had a loud voice. We left the pontoon, the sails were hoisted and we were soon tacking seawards, changing tack when the depth sounder reached 12 ft. The sun shone and the wind blew and sea was milky turquoise. We passed the *Molliette* and had a broad reach towards West Mersea. The *Alberta* loved it and so did we. The four children on board leant over the rail and squealed with delight when the bow wave splashed them occasionally. Robin let us take the helm, and I was surprised how balanced the boat was. It was good to see the other smacks as we sailed amongst them.

All too soon it was time to head back to the pontoon for lunch and music. In order to get the sails down the children were told to go below, which they did and by the time we were moored up they were having so much fun having a sleep-over that they stayed below, until finally they came up for crabbing. I had doubts about sailing a smack with children but they were fun to have aboard. Robin invited us to eat our picnic on his boat and I hope we did not leave too many crumbs.



Not written by a sailor (or a poet)-

Yo Ho Ho and a bottle of water
Picnic hamper and the skipper's daughter
Ellen, a spanking fishing smack
Sailing away on a starboard tack

With five nice ladies who, feeling fit,
Are all decked out in appropriate kit
Hoping that day the ropes to learn
Admiring Richard reclining astern



Somebody says, "Take the rudder, dear"
Mary steers around Point Clear
"Hit the deck girls, head between your knees
We've got to catch that following breeze"

The captain's curse, the halyard's groan
Nautical terms quite unknown
Bollards, bulwarks, rowlocks 'n stuff
A slapping jib and a windward luff
"Do what in a bucket???" I think not"
"O-o-h look at that, what a lovely big yacht"

Almost back under engine power
With a close-up view of Batemans Tower
Safely home with no deserters
Wine and picnic on the smack *Alberta's* - deck

Marvellous musicians play a fine tune
Singing and dancing on the pontoon
Five happy ladies on a day afloat
Going home now in a rubber boat

All too soon the lovely day ends, so
Thank you all very much

From Auntie Iris and Friends

Wivenhoe Regatta in pictures- David Chandler



Charlotte Ellen, Dorothy and Alberta pre start.



Maria, Alberta and My Alice setting off down Colne.



Maria arriving in Wivenhoe.



Roger Bates 1947-2012 - Judy Lawrence

Roger wrote the following impressions when he first came to live in Essex from Kent:

EASTLAND

Too cold for me, this land by the sea.
In the east.
So barren a space,
thin hardy grass,
bulrush and marsh.
Bland and featureless,
nowhere to rest the eye,
just the ceaseless chill wind'
and the vast empty sky.
No cheer in this landscape,
no undulation to break

the dreariness of the scene.
Just a dull empty ache
where my heart used to be.
This land by the sea
is no good for me.

Roger changed his mind once we bought 'Kes', a 22-foot wooden Kestrel sailing sloop built in 1964 and for the next two years we both sailed at every opportunity from Bradwell to Heybridge Basin, Pin Mill, Wivenhoe and Rowhedge, spending many nights just sleeping aboard to watch our beautiful sunrises and sunsets. It was with great sadness that we had to sell her owing to Roger's illness.



Forthcoming Events

Maldon Town Regatta
Smack dock clear-up
CSPS annual general meeting

22nd September
21st October
17th November



The Colne Smack Society's

Annual General Meeting

Will take place on

17th November 2012

At

Brightlingsea British Legion

in Sydney St, opposite the 'Freemason's Arms' pub.
Parking may be found in the YMCA car park off the High St

At 2.00 pm

All motions from the floor to be notified to the Chairman by 15th October 2012.

After the meeting, Jim Lawrence will give a talk.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Bring along your recent pictures of smacks to enter the photo completion, which will be judged at the AGM. The winning shot will feature on the cover of the next issue of Smack Dock Soundings.

If you are unable to attend the AGM in person but would like to enter a photo, please contact Nicky Ennion or Lucy Harris- details on the front cover.