



SMACK DOCK SOUNDINGS



SPRING 2002

ISSUE 31

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SUNBEAM CK328 at the start of the Colne match with BONA LO 178 just ahead.
Photo by Tony Pickering

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TALL SHIPS RESTORATION COMPANY LIMITED

APRIL 2002

The Company has completed its first major restoration project, the hull rebuild of West Mersea Oyster Smack "George & Alice".

She will shortly leave the Gloucester Shipyard of T Nielsen & Co Ltd., and will return to her home waters on the East Coast for completion and refitting. Her new owner, London based Architect Sir Richard MacCormac, intends to keep and sail her in the Essex rivers. "GEORGE & ALICE" was built by Aldous of Brightlingsea in 1909 for West Mersea Oysterman George Stoker



and his wife Alice. George worked the Mersea and Blackwater oyster beds with her for many years, together with his son, until World War Two. Sadly, George's son never returned from the war, but George refused to believe he was lost and would not sell the Smack. The East Coasts floods of 1953 washed her up on to the saltings and she was eventually sold. That well known Brightlingsea fisherman "Mac" MacGregor worked and raced her for many years, finally selling her for restoration when fishing fell on hard times. "GEORGE & ALICE" went to Devon where she was reframed in oak by Colin Shephard and from there the Tall Ships Restoration Company took her to Gloucester. The hull rebuild has included totally replanking the Smack in larch, bronze fastened, and a traditional quarter-sawn Douglas Fir deck with oak beams and hatch coamings.

"GEORGE & ALICE" is the second restoration project undertaken by the Tall Ships Restoration Company.

The Company was founded in 1996 by enthusiasts to save the famous topsail Schooner "KATHLEEN & MAY" from demolition in London. Her owners, the Maritime Trust, wished to find a new owner to undertake the restoration of the vessel and agreed that the Tall Ships Restoration Company should have her. Substantial funds were raised to undertake the extensive temporary repairs needed to refloat her from her permanent dry dock in Southwark and remove her to a berth for restoration. These repairs were carried out by Shipwrights from T Nielsen & Co Ltd., and on a big tide on 31 July 1996 "KATHLEEN & MAY" floated again. The vessel was towed to Gloucester Docks which was accomplished in 4 days, the vessels life had been saved and the task of fund raising for the permanent restoration began. The vessel was eventually restored by enthusiasts at Bideford, her last port of registry. The Tall Ships Restoration Company also owns The Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter "CORNUBIA" - built at Polruan in 1911 and sailed by Pilot Morrice out of Barry. Known during her later yachting career as HIRTA, she fell on hard times and was bought by the Company at auction in 1999. With the future of "GEORGE & ALICE"

now secure, the rescue of
“CORNUBIA” will now proceed so
that she may regain her rightful place
in the burgeoning fleet of restored
original Bristol Channel Pilot Cut-
ters.
End.



**TALL SHIPS RESTORATION
COMPANY LIMITED**

The completed hull of restored Smack “George & Alice” CK 76
at the yard of T.Nielson & Co. Ltd., Gloucester

The C.S.P.S would like to congratulate Sir Richard MacCormac on the purchase of the G&A she is a very fine smack that has great potential and we look forward to seeing her this season.

GLADYS LO195

BUILT BY ALDOUS IN 1904 OF OAK ON OAK FRAMES

**Built for Richard Kirby at the same time as ‘Bona’ Kirby had his Bawley built
BONA LO178**



Her entry and run are very fine for a Bawley. She has turned out to be a very shapely Bawley indeed, in fact she is absolutely gorgeous.

The last time we met Joe and Gus she was just in frame but as you can see she is completely planked.

They made her frames slightly larger than the original to make her stronger (for some reason or another both Gladys and Bona were quite lightly framed).

They have planked her in larch using a 2 inch planking for the shear strake and 1 1/2 inch planking for the rest of the hull including the garboards.

They have fastened her with 4 inch galv spikes and her keel bolts are stainless steel, the dumps are galv steel .

They decided that for caulking they would use cotton instead of the more traditional oakum this was mainly to save time and as Joe quite rightly said you 'can' spend weeks teasing and rolling oakum. They payed her with red lead putty .



Looking forward you can see that Joe and Gus have made a superb job of her frames.



You can see here by her frames what a tremendous run aft she has.



The stanchions are now going in including the stanchions for the barrel windlass.

They are now preparing to fit the massive beam shelf

a baulk of larch 6 inches by three inches has been prepared ready for the next operation which is fitting the deck beams themselves.

In her rebuild they have managed to save some of her old frames but Joe said that what appeared to be a good frame on top was often rotten underneath.

We know of no other Bawley that has been so completely rebuilt as Gladys and after visiting her that day it begs the question 'why'. She is the most magnificent vessel we have seen in a long time she has (to coin a phrase) everything in the right place.

Joe and Gus are making a beautiful job of her and all that visited her that day came away truly amazed and envious. We must make an effort to save more of these wonderful vessels.

CHARLOTTE ELLEN CK 258
BUILT BY KIDBY IN 1904 OF PITCH PINE ON OAK FRAMES



Charlotte Ellen seen here at the Tollesbury race. One of the very few time's we have beaten her. The picture was taken by Tony Pickering on Ellen's foredeck

We wake up on race days and one of the crew go on deck to have a look round, I can see Lizzie Annie (the crew groan) there's Sunbeam and Martha II (more groans) There she is there's Charlotte Ellen, with those words you know that you are not going to win that day. In fourteen years of racing we have only beaten her 3 times and perhaps it was a error on their behalf that let you do it.

She is one of the most travelled smacks along with Ellen (CK222), Sunbeam (CK328) and Sallie (CK 224) and even then she gets there before you she is incredibly fast and seems to get all the right weather to do it and how she does it only Mr Kidby could tell us. Well James Bardrick the owner is having a major overhaul carried out at Tollesbury and as



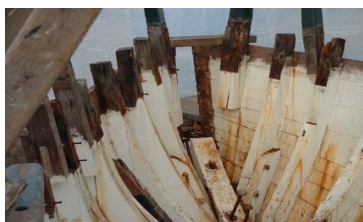
The deck and deck beams have been removed exposing her counter



Seen here the deck has been removed and her hull has been braced



One of her knees and rotten deck beams

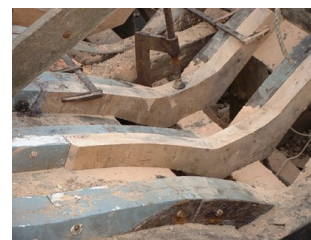


They have removed her stem



A new keel has been fitted to her

you can see the fol-



New floors have been made and fitted

in

When Charlotte Ellen is finished she will have a new keel, floors, stem, beam shelf, deck beams and deck plus new garboards. The shipwrights are doing a good job on her and we wish them well and keep up the good work.

We are so pleased that James is looking after such a unique and lovely smack. Well done James we have all been through it and it takes nerve and courage to take on such a task.

Smack Events 2002

1 st June	Blackwater Smack and Barge Race
15 th June	OGA Race Brightlingsea
29 th June	Rowhedge Smack Race
13 th July	Heybridge Basin Regatta
14 th July	The C.S.P.S Sail and Picnic (CSPS)
27 th July	Fun Race /Brightlingsea Regatta (CSPS)
3 rd August	Swale Barge and Smack Race
10 th August	Whitstable Smack and Barge Race
18 th --- 23 rd August	Mersea Week
25 th August	Wivenhoe Smack Race
1 st September	Mersea Oyster Dredging Match
7 th September	Tollesbury Smack and Classic Race
14 th September	Colne Smack and Barge Match (CSPS)
5 th or 12 th October	Laying up race Blackwater TBC

There are three new events this season, Rowhedge have decided to have a smack race and the organisers are Steve Watcham and Steven Green.

Wivenhoe have also decided to add a smack race to their Regatta day and Wivenhoe sailing club will host the event and Richard Barnard is the contact name.

The CSPS have decided to resurrect Christopher Kerrosin's old race which will be held on the same day as Brightlingsea Regatta.

The format of the race will be almost the same but a lot of emphasise on smack handling and traditional rig will also be judged.

We have asked permission to be able to anchor the smacks in Brightlingsea harbour after the Fun race so as we can also join in the general festivities.

SHAMROCK?

There seems no end to this old girl's torment, she has been pushed from pillar to post from Exeter Maritime Museum (defunct) to Bristol, Lowestoft and now to Southwold where she is supposedly to be rebuilt. According to the local paper the yard where she is was trying for planning permission to make it a museum alas there were objections to this, so the sad story goes on. Even worse there is a question mark to exactly which **Shamrock this is**. **Please can you help us with her history.**

Mr John Leather has given us three Shamrocks it could be.

Quote.

Smack Shamrock built as a cutter in 1932 numbered CK58 built at Whitstable Kent and converted to a yacht in the winter 1931-32.

Shamrock CK 200 owned at Tollesbury into 1940s built 1900 builder unknown.

Shamrock CK 247 built by Aldous in 1905.

We spent some time looking at this smack and although her frames appear to be in good shape some of her butts have up to 11 fastenings. As you can see she is also suffering from nail sickness although her planking is generally sound the new planks that have been fitted are in appalling condition (This yard is not at all responsible for her condition I hasten to add) we believe this yard should have the job to rebuild her and save her from any more strife.



A typical Essex smack counter stern



She has an unremarkable entry and a very short run



Very narrow gutted I would have thought for an Aldous Smack

THAMES SAILING BARGE "EDME"

Edme was built by Cann's of Harwich for the Horlock family of Mistley in 1898. She was designed for maltwork having a bulb-iron keelson instead of wood and high coamings to enable larger quantities of cargo. Edme was narrow to enable her to work in Limehouse Cut and the Regents Canal in London.

Named after the Maltings Company (English Diastatic Malt Extract), it was hoped that she would be used by the company for cargo's. Edme was known to have a false bulkhead, certified sail

locker and Bosun's store. She was registered as 49.99 tons just under the 50 ton limit enabling her to escape light dues. Carrying capacity was 110 1/4 tons.

Edme is a relatively small barge and was known as the "boys barge" within the Horlock fleet. She was often given to newly qualified skippers to use. She was skippered by Richard Horlock (apparently considered to be the black sheep of the family) and Dick Cresswell. Bob Wells also had his first job as "mate" on her.

In addition to her malt work she often worked to and from Brantham with an acid cargo. This accounted for the rusted half deck beams in later years from the acid running through the decks. Marks from the storage containers could be seen in her keelson many years later.

It was recorded in 1930/31 that she did the same number of cargo runs as the larger barges. However she also worked half as many again lightering freights from Bate-mans Bay to Ipswich unloading the square riggers.

Edme ceased trading in the war and was used in Harwich Harbour as an anchor point for a barrage balloon. In 1946 she was struck off considered to be too small and uneconomical to continue trading. Following this period she was used as a timber lighter in Heybridge Basin eventually becoming a houseboat.

In 1971 Ian Danskin swapped the Salcotte Belle for Edme as she was a sounder barge. He spent 18 years rebuilding Edme in Maldon before she was brought by some of the present owners in 1989.

Work that initially took place by the new owners at St Osyth included: planking of starboard side and lining put in; doubled the bottom; replaced starboard chine; rigged and ready to go racing in 1992 !.

Edme has NEVER had an engine.

Following a break from sailing the barge for 4 years a group of enthusiasts made up from previous owners and crew decided to get Edme up and running again. After alot of work she was up and sailing for the 1st race of the season in 2001. A new mainsail was brought and we now have sponsorship from EDME Maltings for a new topsail.

Present owners:



Andy Harman - Jane Harman - Dick Harman - Nick Mosely - Andrew (Droid) Balfe - Roland Strube - Lucy Balfe - Vanessa Lewis.

PLANS for 2002

Work is underway to get our exemption certificate. We hope to provide engineless sailing for enthusiasts that wish to charter the barge . We are also in the process of negotiating with a couple of companies to have the barge loaded with a token cargo. This will enable us to experience sailing Edme whilst carrying a load. If this comes to fruition Edme will be the first barge to carry a cargo purely under sail for over 30 years (possibly more). Exciting stuff !!!

We are hoping to sail with a cargo on 1st to 20th of July. We are hoping to offer a limited number of charter places and would be grateful if a mention of this could go in with the article. Jane Harman is the best person to contact for any details you may need regarding this.

Thanks for your help and interest.

Andy Balfe.

If any of our members wish to take up this once in a lifetime opportunity to sail on a laden barge please phone Jane Harman on 01255 820005

Sailing Smack Association AGM 16th March 2002

The Annual General Meeting of the SSA was held in Maldon last month aboard S/B Hydrogen.

Chairman Colin Swindale reported the Association had seen a good year in that membership numbers were increasing and various topical issues were being addressed by the committee in response from letters received over the past twelve months.

Various committee members were standing down due to time served and the new committee was elected thus:

Chairman Paul Winter

Vice Chairman Jim Dines

Secretary Marion Dines

Treasurer / Membership Hilary Halajko

Committee Members James Green, Brian Kennell, Ian Wilson, Colin Swindale, Richard Titchener, Chris Cumbers

The incoming Chairman thanked Colin Swindale for all his work over the past five years and congratulated him on his accomplishments in securing berthing at numerous national and international maritime events. Colin has remained on the committee and it is hoped he will remain as active as he was in his role as Chairman.

Much discussion was given to the subject of Tradition vs Evolution, a point included on the agenda as many letters have been received over the past few months encouraging the SSA to

take this issue in hand.

Paul Winter summarised that there is much controversy on the way in which East Coast smacks in particular are being restored and rigged and also the decisions of Race Committees excluding various types of ex fishing craft from their races or particular classes. He went on to say that it was not the role of the SSA to dictate to Race Committees which or what type of smacks attend or race in the various classes. However, the question of restoration methods was perhaps an issue the SSA could address.

The main objectives of the SSA include *the representation and protection of the interests of smack owners* and *the fostering of traditional boat handling and seamanship*.

It was proposed that a subcommittee was formed to discuss the methods in which smacks are being rebuilt and rigged for the purpose of perhaps producing a manual for future smack owners undertaking restorations outlining the advantages and disadvantages of traditional and more modern approaches.

A trophy has been donated to the SSA which, when a point system has been devised, will be awarded on an annual basis to the most authentic smack taking part in the various races and regattas. This is aimed to encourage the more traditional approaches in sailing and racing smacks.

It is an aim of the association to increase the coverage on the national smack scene. Other smack organisations are being contacted to input their news and views into the four magazines produced each year. It is hoped that the CSPA will also contribute.

The Sailing Smack Association would welcome new members and a membership application form has been included in this publication.

***We are delighted that Paul Winter has taken over the reins of the SSA
Paul as you know keeps his superb Harris smack Maria CK21 in Brightlingsea creek
where she is a welcome addition to the ever growing fleet of smacks that moor in the
creek.***

We must encourage Paul and support him with his task of running the SSA..

You will find a Membership form on the last page of this newsletter.



Paul Winter the new Chairman of the SSA at Rowhedge with his smack Maria CK21.

Traditionalism A Modern Approach.

Dear Smack Dock Soundings

When we completed the rebuild of Ethel Alice CK476 in early 1995 we never could have realised how much controversy would be created and how many different opinions and standpoints would be expressed (both good and bad), as a result of the approach we made and the direction we are taking with our boat. The original intention behind the rebuild of Ethel Alice was to maintain a foothold in the traditional virtues of sailing; the exact size and type of smack were determined by the want to sail as a family group. Ethel Alice suited our purpose ideally.

Ethel Alice was rebuilt in such a way that the pattern and construction methods used will not be lost in the future. The use of grown frames and knees (selected and cut from the trees for the most part by us) and a grown stempost; the laid and pitched deck; the use of galvanized fastenings throughout, etc. A huge amount of care and time was taken in selecting, cutting, drying and choosing timber for every aspect of the rebuild. This has resulted in the strongest and most proficiently built vessel we could ever have hoped for. Our choice was also not to have an engine – this means that we spend a lot of time maneuvering up creeks and picking up moorings under sail. We have tried to preserve some of the traditional seamanship techniques that sailing of this type affords; however seamanship comes with a cost. Modern life dictates that the vast majority of us need to go to work on a Monday in order to fund our hobby and maintain our vessels to the highest possible standard. Therefore we must all make sacrifices in order to fulfil these needs.

Sailing as a family means that the mechanical and physical aspects on board have to be both light and user-friendly for **anyone** using them. Safety is also a large factor in the equation as we make approximately 15 estuary crossings every season; therefore everything must be capable of doing its job with the lightest of crew and doing its job well. If the boat were unstable and incapable of coping well with the heavy and often-fickle local weather conditions, the overall enjoyment would soon be lost. It was therefore apparent to us that radical changes would have to be made to the rig in order to minimize this.

These changes have included (in no particular order): Lightening the mast to help reduce weight aloft, as we had experienced a few occasions when, without this stability, the boat became a hostile place and (as we now appreciate) many of our crew were unlikely to want to come again. Polyester cloths were also chosen for the sails because of their low maintenance and high durability, coupled with the general lack of good alternatives readily available. Of course, without an engine we need to achieve propulsion by sail alone; this necessitates a range of sails for different conditions. You would not, after all, expect to drive a car up a steep hill in fifth gear. So it is with the boat. When purchasing light weather sails special care and attention was taken, upon advice from a sailmaker, to achieve a light and durable sail that was not liable to destroy itself within six months of first being set. This was also the deciding factor behind a radial cut sail, a high-strength, low-stretch cut that must ultimately represent better value for money.

Of course all these changes cannot help but improve the boat's performance on a day to day basis but, because these changes are made under the scrutiny of anybody watching, criticism is inevitable. Perhaps more importantly than anything else in these criticisms are the issues of the boat's construction. It appears to be something of a double standard when, if a vessel

with plywood decks and/or a ballast keel wins one of the races, this 'bone of contention' blatantly does not exist. We fully accept that both plywood decks and ballast keels are, as mentioned previously, aids to maintenance, durability and stability. When the safety factor behind any of these choices becomes apparent then surely they cannot be deemed to be a bad thing.

So why, with all this in mind, is there so much contention and hypocrisy? We use and are proud of our boat's properties and would not change anything, except perhaps to improve on what we have. Enjoyment is the sole purpose of the exercise, something we fully appreciate. All this whinging will only serve to detract from the good spirit and many friendships we have accumulated and could, in time, dishearten those looking to invest in our sport in the future. We should never forget that preservation of these boats should be foremost in all our minds and no one should be derided or frowned upon for wishing to be a part of that. In short, is it all worth it for the sake of a race? Or are we all missing the point?

Dan Tester

Thanks a lot for taking the trouble to write us a letter and to explain the reasons on how your rig was evolved

I do not want to alienate you or any of our members in what I am about to say.

I think a lot of trouble is always caused when a smack seems to be unbeatable and that people assume that the rig or boat has been altered in such a way that it is a far cry from its former self.

However when Laura came on to the scene surely not enough credit went to the helmsman and crew for her success and of course Gael was a sailmaker and was able to tweak his sails to perfection. I always vowed that Laura would be beaten one day. That day came when 'Sunbeam' and 'Charlotte Ellen' beat him on the 25th anniversary Colne match and subsequently you beat him on your own race. Now you have taken over that mantle.

As you are aware there are some extremely rich smack owners out there and of course they can afford to go to any extremes to win a race. Smack owners must understand that there must be some form of control to stop radical rigs appearing and one way of controlling this is not to invite them to race and add in to the rules of the race what the race committee can expect to see from their entrants.

Dick Harman once said 'we do not want to go down the same road as the Falmouth boys' where the race is now so diluted with fibre glass boats and radical rigs that the real historic Falmouth boats are rarely to be seen.

I personally think that we have a good balance where healthy discussion and persuasion can always win the day and it is nice to think that as you have taken the trouble to put pen to paper that this discussion will continue to keep the smacks in traditional rig.

We need people like Dick Harman to now and again point us in the right direction and to reign us in if it is in his opinion things are getting out of hand. I think you would be the first to agree if a smack sails through the start line full of see-through kevlar sails and a pointy rig.

Before my committee goes berserk. May I add this is my own personal view point and not theirs
Andy Rule Editor

AVOLA GOES TO RUSSIA

The talk night was well attended and we would like to thank Brian Hammett on his fascinating talk on re tracing the very steps that Arthur Ransome took on his journey in the Baltic states.

This culminated in Brian editing and compiling a book called RACUN-DRA'S THIRD CRUISE where Arthur Ransome (the writer of Swallow's and Amazons) had a boat designed and built for the cruise and where he met his second wife.

Brian commented on how grateful he was to be invited to the inner sanctum of the CSPA.

Thanks again for the talk Brian.

Mr Hammett we wish to remind you that the C.S.P.C is not an exclusive elitist club .It may appear to you that it is more difficult to join than say the Masons 'maybe', (and perhaps justly so) apart from the initiation ceremony that takes place in the 'fish hold' of a Colne smack whilst dressed in tarred marlin with waxed cotton ear and nose decor (our Master rather enjoys that part). I can assure you that it is a perfectly normal society to join as long as you promise our 'Worshipful Master', allegiance, love and adoration of the Colne smack 'as long as ye may live and breath'.

There are but a few rules of the road that we have to abide by for instance :- Heartily acknowledge a working barge, (cos it may contain our Worshipful Master) Give a slight nod to an old Gaffer (not to much cos they get excited and start consuming beer by the barrel load) It is obligatory to run down speed boats, water skiers, jet bikes and the like (we always practice a tack just in front of them 'works a treat') You do gain points if you happen to sink them.

We have achieved quite a lot of points our selves, 1 x skier (5 points) 1 x French wind surfer (5 for the surfer and 20 for being French) 1 x mirror dinghy (2 points) 1 x cabin cruiser (bowsprit went through the cabin as well (10 for a hit 10 for internal damage) 1 x set of lock gates (don't try this one it hurts) (0 points they won) next year we aim to do better.

From a Member (name and address not supplied)

SHANTY NIGHT

Over 180 people attended the shanty night the best ever turn out for one of the CSPA functions

The shanty band comprised of seventeen players with our own chairman Jim Lawrence playing his banjo and Crispin Yarker and his violin (dark horse this one, he never told any one he was a professional violin player). Cyril Fenner (Sec) dealt with the prize draw and John Pitt did a splendid job at the auction (he managed to get 30 quid out of the Bona skipper for 7 lettuces) . It turned out to be one of the best Shanty evenings I have attended with a delicious sea food supper into the bargain, It raised £500 for the Air Ambulance.

We would like to thank all of those members who worked to hard to make the evening a success

Food girls were Pauline Lawrence and Sandi Green. The Band were 'Twin set and Pearls',

'Bill Kitchen and Friends' plus Jan and Brian Sinclair not forgetting our own Chairman and Crispin Yarker. Cyril Fenner, John Pitt, and the community centre bar staff.

Smack gossip:

John Brett is recovering well and is up and about after his crushing experience with 'Iris Mary'. We wish you all the best on your recovery John and offer you our support.

Lily May LN 230 has been sold and is going to stay local. We hope Richard buys another smack we will miss him out on the water and good smack skippers are hard to come by.

MARY CK256 has been sold to Mersea and Chrispin is being very tight lipped on the smack he is about to purchase

WILLIAM AND EMILY (Odd Times) may be coming into our dock at Brightlingsea.

‘SEAFISH’ IS UP FOR SALE

Hi Andy,

Here are some details I received tonight from Peter Garnett of Kings Lynn. He has decided to sell the **Seafish** after fishing with her since 1973. She was built by Norfolk in 1927 as a Fishery protection vessel. She is about 35 ft long and has an elliptical stern. Draft 4ft 6in, beam about 10 ft. She does need work doing and he has implied that he will sell her as a bare hull for about £5000. I do have some pictures of her about 4 years ago, and one old one taken in the 20s with some sails. When I looked at her 4 years ago she needed work. Stanchions, bits of decking, beam shelf in places. Looks potentially fast. Never worked with a bowsprit but had staysail and full main. Peter Garnett used to own the **Rob-Pete** about 15 yrs ago.



Queen Alex is still up there getting worse as is the **Kenneth Williams** (hauled out). The **Onward** is still at Bole Quay basically abandoned supposedly owned by a German.

Peter Garnett's phone no is 01553 764789. Or Peter Thomas 01473 832 808

Hope this is helpful.

Alberta CK318

Aldous smack built 1885. 44' on deck.

FOR SALE-reluctantly

No engine but otherwise all there.

Berths for about 10. She would benefit from a complete re-build.

Currently in the Smack Dock at Brightlingsea.

Offers to Roger Walker
01206 211143

More details of her on her website at:

[Http://www.alberta-ck318.freeserve.co.uk](http://www.alberta-ck318.freeserve.co.uk)



ALBERTA CK 318 on the Colne