



The Never Setting Sun



Smack Dock Soundings

THE JOURNAL OF THE COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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Fly's Stern during recent restoration work in the CSPA smack dock.

Photo Martin Worth.

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

From the editor.

I am sorry that this edition of smack dock soundings is so late. I have been flat out getting Primrose ready for another season and I would imagine that other members have also been busy as new articles for soundings have been slow in coming.

As I write this Primrose sits on her mooring ready for the off. Maria has just been re-launched after a paint up, Fly is nearing completion and many others are on the verge of being ready for a great summer?

Robin Page. 01206 304690



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Smack racing, a personal view:

Over the last couple of years there has been a great deal of discussion in the fleet about the way forward with races and the boats them selves. Before I start to explain the various ideas and indeed arguments I guess that it would be a good idea to explain the current situation with races and boats.

The current situation

Races

Currently the majority of the races are individual events that are organised by local organisations and as a result many of them have different formats and different rules, these rules may refer to handicapping, or what sails can be used etc. currently roughly half of the races are based on first across the water with the other half being handicap events. Some of the first across the water races are split into sub classes and some are not.

Handicap or first to finish

The handicap races in general tend to use a 'golf handicap' type system this means that the performance history of the boat is taken into account, if this is done properly every boat would eventually win regardless of the ability of the crew or the performance of the boat. Some attempts have been made at calculating the potential performance of boats using waterline length etc, the OGA have adopted this method.

First across the water events may be split according to boat type, Bawley, pole mast smack or top mast smack or sometimes based on overall length, Length on deck etc.

Courses

Many of the events run traditional courses or have geographical and tidal limitations that mean that there is little scope for variation; as a result it is not uncommon to have a downwind start or even not have a beat in the race. It is fair to say that

setting an appropriate course for a smack race is not an easy matter, the performance of the boats varies considerably and for example setting a course that guarantees that all boats can finish at Rowhedge is always a challenge.

Sails

For a lot of the races sails are not regulated, but for some specific rules apply; no radial cut sails for the Colne match, or working sails only for Rowhedge. Interpretation of working sails, or radial cut can cause some heated conversations.

Boats

Generally the rule is that all boats should be ex-working boats although some events allow replicas such as Marigold to compete. Currently there are no specific rules that govern what the boats should consist of and inevitably there is a reasonable amount of discussion on this topic, should winches be allowed etc. Today a portion of the fleet are rebuilds that carry next to no original parts from the original boat, but for a boat to be considered to be a restoration and not a replica the original must have existed and been the basis for the restoration. It is not currently acceptable for a boat to be built from plans even if they are original, but it is permissible for a boat to be rebuilt from a few frames dug out of the mud.



Pioneer before



The images of Pioneer illustrate the point. In truth many boats in the fleet have had extensive rebuild work and a reasonable proportion carry little or no original wood. That should not be a surprise when we consider that most of the fleet are 110 plus years old, not forgetting Boadicea at 201 years old.



Pioneer After.

Rigs

Naturally all boats have had their rigs replaced many times over the years and some have had their rigs increased to aid performance, modern sail cloth allows the sails to maintain a flatter shape in higher winds, this lends itself to boats being able to carry slightly more sail, in addition ballast tends to be lead now, rather than pig iron and some boats carry hollow spars lowering the centre of gravity and making the boats slightly stiffer.

What is being discussed:

Boat rules

The great difficulty in setting rules is that unlike conventional racing classes all of the boats were different when new, and that the playing field has never been level. We race boats of 30ft costing a few thousand pounds against boats of 50ft and even 70ft costing hundreds of thousands.

The Sailing Smack Association SSA has started a process to attempt to introduce rules to govern the eligibility of boats to compete, these rules include materials, construction, rig, sails and even colour of rope. These rules have had a mixed reception, and due to the nature of the boats there are some special cases that are difficult to accommodate, I understand that Fly would need to have a slipper keel that was fitted in the 1850s removed to comply and that Boadicea would have to have a shorter mast fitted, this would be shorter than she originally sported in 1808, is this correct? I am not sure. But are we happy to leave the stable door wide open? Is it just a matter of time before a wealthy owner turns up with a Carbon and Kevlar smack. I don't know. It is probably fair to say that the vast majority of the fleet would be able to

agree to banning of some exotic materials, and maybe we should get together and set down what everyone agrees on as a starting point? Whatever we do in my opinion it is imperative that we do all that we can to include boat owners and not to ban them or alienate them, our aim must be to get bigger and bigger turn outs of these wonderful craft and to spend our time enjoying them.

Race rules

As I mention above, currently all events are different and to my mind this is quite a good state of affairs, it makes all events feel like occasions and not like part of some dull race series. In addition it gives a wide range of possible results, some owners tend to compete in more handicap events as they enjoy them more and have a better chance of doing well, others like the purity of first over the water, others just do the races that they like for other reasons like the excellent hospitality that is offered. We are all free to pick and choose, or even try to do them all.

I hope that the status quo remains, the variety is great and there is a reasonable amount of history and tradition tied up in these local regattas.

Final Word

This debate is nothing new and will probably continue for years to come, but what is of vital importance is that we all take time to step back and realize why we do it, surely to have fun and celebrate these wonderful boats. I can remember watching numerous races throughout my childhood from a small outboard engine fishing boat, my father snapping away with his camera, trying to capture an image that he could use as a base for one of his paintings. I was in owe of the grace, beauty and speed of the smacks. Now I have the privilege to own one of the most beautiful (in my opinion) and am the ugly bloke in the shot, that will no doubt be excluded in any paintings. These races are a wonderful spectacle, we need to ensure that they will continue to be so with good attendance for years to come.

Below is a photo from the 2007 Colne Match, what a sight.



This article is my personal opinion and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Colne Smack Preservation Society.

Robin Page



Dates for your 2009 Diary

Date	Event	High water (Brightlingsea)
4 th July	PIN Mill Smack race	
11 th July	Rowhedge Regatta	14.16
12 th July	Sail and Picnic.	15.51
25 th July	Heybridge Basin Regatta	15.19
8 th August	Whitstable Smack Race	14.28
15 th August	Swale Smack and Barge Match	9.28
16 th -21 st August	Mersea week	08.18-13.29
22 nd August	Mersea Town Regatta	14.13
5 th September	Tollesbury Regatta	13.31
12 th September	Colne Smack and Barge Match	17.48
19 th September	Maldon Town Regatta	13.05

2006 sail and picnic. Photo R Page.

Sail and Picnic

The 2009 sail and picnic is almost upon us. This event is normally a great relaxed affair. Weather permitting the plan is to have a sail around and then at around lunch time moor all participating

smacks together in a raft for a lunch. After lunch there is a short sail back to Brightlingsea. Jimmy Lawrence is organising the booking of guests onto boats and can be contacted on 01206304204.



The sail an picnic is a really nice introduction to smack sailing, go ahead and contact Jimmy before all he places are taken. Please note that guests bring their own packed lunch. Also that the boats are basic, some more basic than others, some have toilets etc, but most don't, give any relevant information to Jimmy. The sail and picnic is open to members, if non members want to come membership is only £10 and forms will be available on the day.

Photo; lunch at the sail and picnic.



Authentic James Caird replica to sail the Southern Ocean in 2010

For the last 6 months students at the IBTC in Lowestoft have been building a faithful replica of the James Caird – the most famous of the three lifeboats carried on the Endurance during Sir Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914 – 1917 to cross the South Pole. Completion is anticipated for late 2009 when the boat will be handed over to Australian adventurer Tim Jarvis who in 2010 will attempt to recreate Shackleton's now-legendary journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia.

James Caird was a wealthy Scottish jute merchant and the principal backer of Sir Ernest Shackleton's third polar expedition. In honour of their patron Frank Worsley, the New Zealand born skipper of the Endurance personally oversaw the construction of the largest of the three lifeboats – and ensured that she was named after James Caird.



James Caird

Leaving London's West India Dock on 1st August 1914, the Endurance initially made good progress south, anchoring off South Georgia by November 1914 before pushing on through the Weddell Sea towards the South Pole, but on 19th January 1915 the ice finally froze around her. She zigzagged for a thousand miles beset by the ice floes and on 27th October 1915 was abandoned before being finally destroyed. The 28 men of the crew subsequently camped out on the ice floes for a further 5 months, drifting another 600 miles in this period, before the ice began to melt from under them.

Forced into the 3 small lifeboats they had managed to salvage from the Endurance, (the

James Caird, the Dudley Docker and the Stancomb Wills) the men reached Elephant Island, an outpost of the South Shetland Islands, but being so remote it offered no chance of rescue so the decision was taken by Shackleton to take the largest of the boats (the Caird) and 6 men and try to make for the whaling stations of South Georgia 800 miles away.



Original James Caird

Built at Coldharbour, Poplar, London in July 1914 by the firm of W.J Leslie, the James Caird was 22'6" long, 6' in the beam and had a safe working load of 3 ¾ tons.

She was of double-ended carvel construction, had Baltic pine planking, American elm keel and timbers with English oak stem and stern. Built more lightly than required by the Board of Trade it made her springy and buoyant.

Whilst drifting on the ice floes the Endurance's carpenter William McNeish (described by Worsely as 'a splendid shipwright') added two additional planks to the sheer (making her 15 inches higher), constructed a whaleback at each end and even fabricated a bilge pump from the casing of the original ships compass.

George Marston the ships artist was also called upon to help with the alterations. After caulking with lamp wick cotton, the seams were payed with a mixture of the artist's oil paints and seal blood.

Once on Elephant Island further alterations were made in preparation for the journey ahead. The



whalebacks were decked-over with anything suitable - sledge runners, lids of boxes and old canvas. A mast from one of the other boats was bolted to the keel of the Caird to prevent her breaking her back in the heavy seas and the Stancomb Will's mast and sail were cut down to make a mizzen mast and sail for the Caird. Amazingly the shrouds for the main mast were secured with only four 2" brass screws. She was finally floated in a pool and rocks were added as ballast amounting to about 2 1/3 tons, leaving a



freeboard of 2'2" for the journey.
Launching the James Caird from Elephant Island

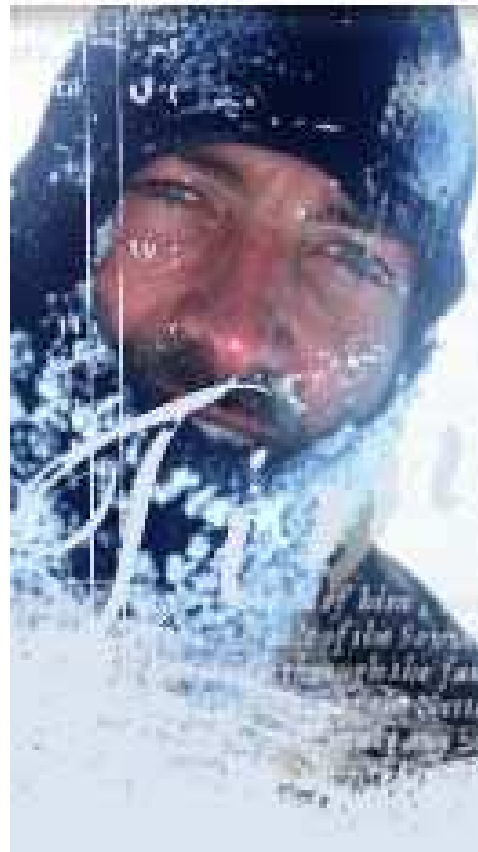
For the purposes of the 2010 expedition the replica IBTC boat needed to be as close as practically possible to the original Caird. After much research and a visit to Dulwich College in south London (where the original Caird is now kept) the boat has been constructed with larch planking on oak timbers with oak stem, keel and stern. Along with the additional 2 planks to increase the freeboard all the other alterations made by McNeish will also be incorporated into the replica – the strengthening mast bolted to the keel, the covered whalebacks and even the rock ballast.

Fastened with copper roves and silicon bronze screws, she will be caulked with cotton and payed with lead putty before being painted – although artists paint and seal blood will probably not be used this time around!

Tim Jarvis - an explorer, author, speaker and environmentalist is no stranger to adventure. From his world-record-breaking unsupported journey to the South Pole to his kayak trip to the dry centre of Australia, his most recent journey saw him recreate the epic Antarctic journey of Sir Douglas Mawson – using only period equipment, clothing and equivalent food rations.

In 2010 Tim and an international team (Brits, Irish, Australians and New Zealanders -in keeping with the original team) will attempt to retrace Shackleton's double by sailing/rowing the James

Caird replica from Elephant Island to South Georgia and then climbing it. For more information see: <http://www.spiritofadventure.com.au>



Tim Jarvis



Recreating Mawsons journey

Should anyone wish to view the James Caird replica at the IBTC please feel free to contact me: Allyn Burton – 07930 837 232.

The following page shows the replica under construction.



Replica Caird – planking layout



Replica Caird - planking underway



Replica Caird – planking almost complete

Replica Caird - bow profile



Progress report on Fly's decks.

Well since the last news letter we are almost there all of the calking and pitching is complete. Our focus since then has been on all the other areas which needed to be looked at and finished off. We fitted a new fife rail for the main halyards, a new wooden knee the Sampson post and finished off the counter.

As you will see form the pictures we have decided to paint the decks which was a dissection we agonised over for some time but as usual on this project expert help and advice was at hand. As any of you will have seen we have recently taken off the cover which has been a huge sociological boost.

As I write we are making plans to move her out of the dock and on to Primrose's trailer for a couple of weeks out of the water where we can paint the hull and antifoul her ready for re-rigging. We have set ourselves a target of being out for the sail and picnic which leave lots to do between now and then so by for now and lets hope it doesn't rain to much between now and the sail and picnic !!



New Taffrail



. Detail of bits and new knee.



Fife rail and mast aperture



New oak grafted onto stanchion.



(Note from the editor.) At the time of going to press Fly is in the Colne yard, work is progressing well and she should be back afloat during July.





2009 Colne Match

A Note About The Colne Race

From this year we are making some changes to the way we apply the Race Rules. For the last few races, we have issued a booklet to race entrants. It was essentially a re-hash of the ISAF Race Rules Sailing. We only did this for smacks, as the barges have a similar booklet specific to them, and the CSPS had accepted and approved it.

On taking expert advice we have decided not to continue along these lines, but we will work directly with the ISAF Rulebook. As some of these rules are not suitable for the type of craft we sail and the confines of the area we race in, we are able to replace some of those rules in our Sailing Instructions/Local Regulations. So we have revised these to take into account this change. Some of the points that override the Rulebook are, the starting procedure is different (that does not change from previous races), no recall at the start, and no penalty turns. There are also some specific points for the barge fleet. All entrants are also reminded that they must comply with the International Regulations For Preventing Collisions At Sea (IRPCAS).

We want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable day, yes it will be competitive, not everyone will win, but that is not the only aspect. There are always little races within the race to keep it lively and fun for all.

Brian Webb (Race Secretary)

Imitation is the highest form of flattery

Super yacht builders Wally must have sent their designer to the east coast for a holiday, and during that holiday the lines of an Essex Smack must have struck a cord. The plumb bow and the sweep of the counter are some what reminiscent of the boats that we all know so well.

The lines of the topsides are where any similarities end. The wallynano features a 2.2m draft fin keel, construction is hi tech foam sandwich carbon fibre. The wallynano can be sailed single handed, with a self tacking jib and Hydraulic Controls for the main and genoa sheets with control push buttons.

Anyway see if you can spot the difference;



The Pink one is the Wally
Robin Page



Chairman's report May 2009

Since the last newsletter we have had the Shanty Night. The attendance was down by about 20 people this year and as a result the profit for it was down to £328. This has been made up to £330 and divided equally between the Deputies Christmas Lunch Fund, the 4Youth Club and the Community Bus, all Brightlingsea charities. I think everyone who went to the Shanty enjoyed it, and I would like to thank all who helped on the evening or who performed, but especially Nickie and Martin Worth who did all the organising.

There was a Sail Workshop evening held at the James Lawrence Sailmaker's Loft which was very interesting and informative. It gave those who went a lot to think about. I would like to thank Mark Butler and Steve Westwood for their hospitality, and Robin Page for organising it. Hopefully they will give us another evening's instruction and advice.

I would like to remind everyone of the forthcoming events. We have the Open Afternoon on the dock on Saturday the 13th of June, with the usual attractions, so please come along and have a look and a cup of tea. The next day, Sunday the 14th of June, we will have a sailing day and will take any one who would like to come for a sail up to Wivenhoe and back. We will be tagging along with the OGA parade of sail, but we will not be stopping at Wivenhoe. Any one who can bring a smack or who would like to come for a sail please contact Brian Croucher for more details. The Sail and Picnic will take place on Sunday the 12th of July. Anyone who would like to come, please contact Jim Lawrence.

We are also trying to organise to take Brightlingsea Sailing Club and Colne Yacht Club cadets out for a sail. If any smack owners would like to join in would they please contact Brian Croucher. Hopefully this will provide some budding owners and crews for the future.

Let's hope we have a better sailing season than last year.

Simon Fox.

Progress on CK222 Ellen

It has been a long winter and spring, but the Ellen team are making great progress in the overhaul of Ellen. Now looking like an even finer smack (if possible!!) we would like to write a detailed account of what has happened up to date in the next issue. We would have loved to have a detailed report in this issue, but unfortunately, time has got the better of us.

The last time these deck planks will pass under the Orwell bridge.



Blackbird gives Ellen a tow towards Felixstowe.



Ellen being lifted out for her re-fit.

I would just like to say a massive thank you to Brian, Jon, Steve, Rob and Ashley and many other people who have helped with advice and labour along the way but a massive thank you to my Dad who has finally made a damn fine job of a well loved smack which hopefully himself and the family can enjoy for many more years to come.

Happy sailing everyone, hope to see you out there
in the summer!
Elly Rule'



COLNE SMACK PRESERVATION SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (*= optional information)

Name:

Address:

Postcode: Date of Birth:

Tels: Home/*Work/*Mobile/*Fax

*Email Address:Occupation:

Do you own a smack?..... Wish to / crewed on a smack?..... Have history of a smack?.....

*Details of Smack; Name:Number:..... Builder:.....

Date:.....

I wish to apply for membership of the Colne Smack Preservation Society. If elected, I will abide by the Rules.

Signed:Date:.....

Proposer:SignedDate:.....

Seconder:SignedDate:.....

Both Proposer and Seconder must be Members of the Society. Leave blank if none known to you.

Your application will be considered at the next monthly Committee meeting.

The Standing Order will not be submitted to your bank until you have been elected.

Return this form to Amanda Stear, 42a High Street, Manningtree, Essex, CO11 2QJ

STANDING ORDER

To: (the name of your bank)..... Sort Code:.....

Bank Address:

Name of your Account: Account Number:.....

Please credit account of Colne Smack Preservation Society (Barclays Bank PLC, Brightlingsea, Essex:

A/c No. 00100498 Sort Code: 20 21 73) the sum of 10 (Ten Pounds) immediately and thereafter on

1st. November annually, until this order is cancelled in writing. This supersedes any previous order.

Please notify with payment; Subs from (your name)

Signature Date: