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SEA BREEZES

THE WORLDWIDE MAGAZINE OF SHIPS AND THE SEA

■ *Happy New Year* To all our readers

■ **SOS** Kathleen & May

■ **OIL CANS HAVE THEIR USE**

..... Ask the chief?

■ **UP THE PUSUR RIVER**

Pilotage takes second place to diplomacy

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Calendar





SAIL REVIEW

Campaigning to save the . . .

“Kathleen & May”

BY ROBERT SIMPER

Steve Clarke, owner of the 98ft, 29.97m wooden 3 masted trading schooner **Kathleen & May** built in 1900, has launched an ‘SOS – Save Our Schooner’ campaign to keep the schooner in North Devon. Last summer the **Kathleen & May** made her second voyage to southern Ireland since being rebuilt. In a six-week cruise she visited Youghal, Waterford and some smaller ports before returning to Penzance and Cardiff and finally her base at Bideford. Steve Clarke has worked very hard to keep the schooner financially viable, but interests in southern Ireland have been very keen to buy her and there is also interest in having her for a display near the Barrage at Cardiff.



The 3 masted schooner “Kathleen & May” at Bideford, North Devon

The wooden Baltic ketch **Glaciere** sank again in a dock at Liverpool. Another Mersey based Baltic trader, the brigantine **Zebu** has had almost all new rigging and has been up to Manchester for drydocking. The steel 3-masted schooner **Jacoba** was brought from Copenhagen to Whitehaven by Alan Haney, in 1998. It would be interesting to know the history and future plans for this schooner.

The barque **Europa**, which is on an ‘Around the World’ voyage, has sailed from San Diego for Easter Island and then plans to round Cape Horn. This will be the first time a Dutch square-rigger has rounded Cape Horn for over a century. In the autumn, Square Sails three square riggers, the barques **Kaskalot** and **Earl of Pembroke** and the brig **Phoenix**, returned to Charlestown to be rigged down for the winter. The **Earl of Pembroke** was used in the filming of the Hornblower series as HMS **Hotspur** and at

the end of season was filming ‘Robinson Crusoe’ from Falmouth and Penzance.

The Bristol Channel pilot cutter **Marianne** has been totally rebuilt and re-launched at Gweek. The Swansea race for the pilot cutters held in September was won by the **Peggy**, making her the 2002 champion of the three pilot cutter races. Annia and Rob Brunyee’s 53ft pilot cutter **Marguerite** also raced at Swansea. This cutter was on passage back from Stornoway where they had met the Faversham smack **Rosa & Ada**, which runs charter trips from the Clyde. On passage back to Falmouth the **Marguerite** called in at the Ardglass Traditional Regatta, Northern Ireland, and Padstow. The **Marguerite**, built by Rowle’s at Pill in 1893 was totally rebuilt, apart from the keel, by John Steel in Newfoundland. She could not be sailed by two people without the roller reefing gear. She was the first pilot cutter to

be fitted with roller reefing gear and still has the original gear.

The 38ft gaff ketch **White Heather**, a Cornish lugger built by Dick Pearce at Looe in 1926, finished a refit at Looe and sailed for Brazil, intending to sail up the Amazon. Paul Greenwood has bought the Looe lugger **Our Boys** and a replica of the 38ft Looe lugger **Talisman** is being built in steel at Bristol. Mike Darlington’s Looe dandy **Our Daddy** led the fleet around, and won the lugger class, at Brixham Heritage Festival Race last summer. The **Vigilance** was first of the six Brixham smacks in the trawler race and won the King George V Perpetual Challenge Trophy.

To mark the opening of the native oyster season the seventh Mersea Dredging Match was held on the Common Grounds at the mouth of the River Blackwater off Mersea Island. Fourteen smacks and two open winkle brigs dredged for oysters under sail

with hand hauled dredges. In the days of working sail the oysters were sorted on the deck, but when the smacks were fitted with engines old tables were used. Some of the smacks, such as **Mayflower** were fitted with tables for this Match.

The event started, following the old working practice of the oyster companies, with the foreman's smack, in this case Donald Rainbird's **Mayflower** hoisting a flag. It should have ended when the flag came down, but in fact the wind died when the flood tide started and the smacks ran back into West Mersea for the prize giving at the restored Packing Shed on a marsh island. Bob Fawkes's **Lizzie Annie** won the Hervey Benham Trophy for the most oysters landed, while Johnnie Milgate's **Boy George** won the prize of the most oysters landed by a winkle brig and Gerrard Swift's **Kate** won the prize for the smack handled in the most professional manner under sail. In the 30th annual Colne Smack and Barge Race from Brightlingsea the smacks completed for the Golden Cockerel, Cock of the Colne Trophy. In the first series of races sailed in the Victorian era the working smacks used to sail for a trophy of this name and it appears that this idea was taken to Wivenhoe, Tasmania. Later Melbourne, Australia picked up on the idea and they also race for a Golden Cockerel trophy.

Eighteen smacks, three bawleys and eight barges raced in the Colne Race and the **Edith Alice**, originally built by Aldous at Brightlingsea in 1897 and totally rebuilt at Hollowshore, Kent in 1994, won the Golden Cockerel. The first bawley home was the **Bona**, built by Aldous in 1903 and taking part in a smack race for the first time was the bawley-rigged cockle boat **Mary Amelia**, built by Heywood at Southend in 1914.

Also in the Colne Race, sailing for the first time after being rebuilt on the original keel by T Neilsen & Co at Gloucester Dock, was the **George & Alice**. The 42ft **George & Alice** was built by Aldous, who built most of the Essex smacks, in 1909 and Malcolm MacGregor worked her as a motor fishing craft until about 1972 when he returned her to sail. The hull of **George & Alice** was taken by road to Maylandsea where Rick Caldly completed the fitting out for the owner Sir Richard MacCormac.

The Colne Race was sailed in a fresh NE. There was only one class for barges and they could set any sail used by traditional working barges and craft were only allowed to set white, cream or tan sails. The two bowsprit barges, **Edme** and then **Xylonite** were first and second, then came the **Marjorie**, which has sailed as a staysail barge for at least the past fifty years. I understand that she is due to be fitted with a bowsprit for next season.



Barque "Earl of Pembroke" and brigantine "Phoenix" docked at Charlestown



The dandy "Our Daddy" entering Looe



Mersea Dredging Match winner; MN 23 "Lizzie Annie"



Colne Smack & Barge race beat back up river, "Edna" and "Repertor"



Barge "Edme" flying her race winning pennants after the Colne Race, Brightlingsea

The **Marjorie**, had a very successful season racing and having sailed in the eight main barge races amassed the most points to become the champion barge of the season. The **Phoenician** had also been in all eight races and was awarded the Seamanship prize in the Colne for rescuing a man overboard under sail and continuing the race.

Owen and Rita Emerson of Upnor have bought the swim head stumpie barge **Whippet**, a former London River lighter, from Reg Coombs. Another former swim head lighter, the **Montreal** has been down to Kent to have some of her rigging renewed.

The stumpie barge **Lady of the Lea** was due to go to Tim Goldsack, at Faversham to have a new quarter and he was also going to take the wheelhouse off **Raybel**. The **Glenway** has been moved to Maldon to be used for static charters until such time as she can be returned to sail. Losing her topmast last year delayed the **Reminder** being fitted with a bowsprit. Also at Maldon the coaster **Johnno** has been cut down to form a dry dock in which the barge **Dawn** will be rebuilt. The **Dawn** should be moved down river to Clint Swan's yard at Heybridge Basin. ■

All photos by Robert Simper