

Slaughden Sails



The Newsletter of Slaughden Sailing Club

SPRING 2005

Contents

A note from Ed	1
Commodore's message	2
Nautical Terms Explained	6
Duckling's Report	7
Fund Raising Update	7
Notices	7

Articles

Cutty Sark	2
A Hell Voyage	4
Iken Picnic	8
Gypsy Moth IV	9
Why Race?	10

A Note From Ed.

Well this is Newsletter number two already. I hope you all enjoyed the last one. Thank you to all those who wrote in. One thing I am keen to set up in this newsletter is a letter's page, so write in with your views on anything to do with sailing, for example, what did you all think about Dame Ellen McArthur's achievement? Now that the sailing season is well and truly with us once more why not share your experiences by writing an article for the club? These may be true accounts of a personal sailing experience you have had or factual information that you think everyone will find interesting. For, instance this issue contains an article about the Cutty Sark and a story about one of her voyages. This is the first of a series of articles about famous ships that I hope you will enjoy. Finally, if you have any unwanted sailing gear etc that you wish to sell or even give away why not advertise it here (free for club members but it must be sailing related). Anyone can contribute to this newsletter after all it is your club, so get writing!



The Cutty Sark as she sits in dry dock today. Read more about her on page 2.

Commodores Message

I hope you all found the last newsletter a good read. It is a really important way of keeping the club membership together. I'm really looking forward to reading articles written by non-committee members. If you have anything to say about sailing, however tenuous the link, please send us something. This way the newsletter should go from strength to strength.

Well, the sailing season has started and it was good to see such a strong turnout for the first Thaw race. I hope we can look forward to great sailing in the events to come. I'd like to encourage a lot more of our dinghies to be on the water. Please do not feel because you do not want to take part in any of the race programme events you would not be welcome to sail at these times. It is a really good time to come down for a sail because not only will there be an opportunity to meet other members but the support boat is out to give all of our members cover whilst we are on the water.

A big thank-you for the £700.00 that the Commodores appeal has so far raised towards the displacement launch, which we would like to have in the club to further extend our activities. We will continue to nibble away at this cause.

I've asked the V.C. Cruising to try this season to get more of our members involved in the clubs cruising programme. Allen has put a series of activities together which all start with a briefing session. These briefings are open to everybody who is interested in cruising activities even if it's just to see what this part of the membership get up to. You don't need a boat and you don't have to have organised a berth, just come along.

Finally, it's really important that we get a lot of members along to our Open Day on the 7th May. We've got a great programme and it will be a lot of fun. Let's hope we see lots of new people who will come along to see if sailing is for them and your support will be much appreciated.

Happy sailing

Graham

The Cutty Sark

*On the afternoon of Monday, 22nd November 1869, a beautiful little clipper ship of 963 tons was launched from Scott and Linton's shipyard at Dumbarton, on the Clyde. She bore a name that was to become famous throughout the world and was destined to win a place in the hearts of British seamen second only to Nelson's immortal Victory herself. Her name was the **Cutty Sark**.*

The name Cutty Sark comes from Robert Burn's poem, Tam O'Shanter. Tam meets a group of witches, most of whom are old and ugly except for Nannie. She is young and beautiful and described as wearing only a 'cutty sark', that is a short chemise or shirt. The ship's figurehead is a representation of this witch.

She was recorded to have reached speeds of 17½ knots, her best day's run is recorded at 363 miles, averaging 15 knots, and on one occasion she sailed 2,164 miles in six days and on another 3457 in eleven days.



Cutty Sark rigging.

Cutty Sark was built for John 'Jock' Willis, a seasoned sailing-ship master who had 'swallowed the anchor' and set up as a fleet owner in the port of London. Here he became better known as "White Hat Willis" because he always wore a white top hat. His previous vessels had not had the performance results he wanted and his ambition for Cutty Sark was for her to be the

fastest ship in the annual race to bring home the first of the new season's tea from China.

The ship was designed by Hercules Linton, a partner in the Dumbarton firm of Scott & Linton. His achievement was to mould the bowlines of Willis's earlier vessel, *The Tweed* into the midship attributes of Firth of Forth fishing boats, creating a beautiful new hull shape that was stronger, could take more sail, and be driven harder than any other.

The company had never built a ship of this size before and was keen to accommodate their client's every demand. Unfortunately for them, Willis, being so canny a Scot and wanting the best for the least, drove so hard a bargain, £17.00 per ton, that the builders, together with their brilliant young designer, sank without trace! The final details of the fitting out had to be completed by another company, William Denny & Brothers

Although her early years under her first master, Captain George Moodie, saw some sterling performances, fate was to thwart her owner's hopes of glory in the tea trade: in the very same year of her launching, the Suez Canal was opened, allowing steamers to reach the Far East via the Mediterranean, a shorter and quicker route not accessible to sailing ships, whose freights eventually fell so much that the tea trade was no longer profitable. So Cutty Sark's involvement in the China run was short lived, her last cargo of tea being carried in 1877.

For the next several years, she was forced to seek cargos where she could get them, and it was not until 1885 that she began the second (and more illustrious) stage of her career.

The ship's heyday was in the Australian wool trade, which was overseen by Captain Richard Woodget, from 1885 to 1895. Here was a virtuoso mariner who 'played' the Cutty Sark like the responsive 'instrument' she was: He knew how to get the last quarter-knot from the ship, and, during his time, she repeatedly made the fastest passage home from Australia. However, by 1895, she was again no longer making money for her owner and was unceremoniously sold off to the Portuguese and renamed as *Ferreira*, although her crews referred to her (significantly) as Camisola Pequena ('little shirt').

She laboured steadfastly for her new masters for almost three more decades; regularly trading between Oporto, Rio, New Orleans and Lisbon, in the service of Portugal's colonial possessions.

Dismasted in a storm in the Indian Ocean in 1916, she was re-rigged as a barquentine to carry less sail; a decision necessitated by a wartime shortage of spar timber.

In 1920 she was sold again to another Portuguese company being renamed *Maria do Amparo* in 1922.

By 1922 she was in a sorry condition, at which time she underwent a refit at London's Surrey Docks. On her journey home from that refit, she was driven into Falmouth harbour by a fateful Channel gale. This gale was 'fateful' because Captain Wilfred Dowman, a Cornish mariner who, as an apprentice seaman back in 1894, had seen her 'slicing by' at full sail and had never forgotten that breathtaking sight, spotted her there.

She was now very much dilapidated, so Captain Dowman made his move; he approached her Portuguese owners, bought her for the sum of £3,750 and had her restored, re-rigged and flying the 'Red Duster' once again.

Upon Capt. Dowman's death in 1938, his widow presented the newly restored clipper to the Incorporated Thames Nautical Training College at Greenhithe on the Thames, where the vessel remained until after the Second World War, when the college acquired a larger, steel-built ship for its cadets. Once more, Cutty Sark became 'surplus to requirements'.

Lengthy discussions ensued over her future, which ultimately led to her being towed to a mooring off Greenwich in 1951 for the festival of Britain. Eventually, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh formed the Cutty Sark Society and the ship was gifted to the society. In December 1954 she was moved into a specially constructed dry dock at Greenwich. In June 1957 HM The Queen formally opened her to members of the public



(For more information about the Cutty Sark log on to the official website at: www.cuttysark.org.uk)

The Hell Voyage (a true story)

John Willis, the owner of Cutty Sark ordered her to Wales to fill up with coal, and as he dispatched her so quickly, her crew was made up of various men and boys from other vessels in his fleet, who just happened to be in London at the time. One of these men, the First Mate - Smith, was a hard despotic character, and not well liked by the

crew. When the ship docked at Penarth, the crew deserted, leaving Captain James Wallace to scratch a crew together from those available in the port. He had great difficulties finding men of sufficient calibre and experience, but eventually, Cutty Sark set sail with an assorted crew from around the world, on 4 June - a Friday.

It is an old superstition that bad luck will befall a vessel that sets sail on a Friday!

On board was an old seaman who prophesied doom and disaster, and almost immediately Cutty Sark had to drop anchor in the Severn to ride out a wild southwesterly gale, which delayed their departure for a further three days. Cutty Sark then made fantastic speed on her outward passage, much to the disgust of the old sea-croaker! In the strength of the trade winds Cutty Sark fell in with Titania who was also bound for Anjer for orders. For the next four days the two clippers raced side by side with every sail set, but then their courses differed, although it was clearly understood by both crews that it was a race to Anjer!

Once Cutty Sark reached the doldrums, that area of the Atlantic where winds are few and far between, Smith had the opportunity to work his watch with spite and fervour. He directed most of his spite against John Francis, one of the black seamen, who was particularly clumsy and incapable, and so often left himself open for criticism. In shifting the mainsail, Francis managed to get his hand mangled in a block, and in severe pain talked back to the mate who was swearing at him from the deck below. The watch began to show sympathy for Francis and very shortly the whole ship was in uproar. So much so that Captain Wallace called the apprentices and officers to the poop and armed them. By the time the men came down, Captain Wallace decided that Francis should either apologise to Smith, or accept a beating from him.

Despite his injured hand, Francis decided to fight, and the Captain let them proceed for about fifteen minutes, all the time brandishing a revolver and threatening to shoot anyone who interfered. The fighting was vicious and without rules, so the Captain called it to a halt, ruled the matter at an end and warned the men that the next

one who abused one of his officers would be clapped in irons!

For a while, this cleared the air, and Cutty Sark made excellent speed, passing through terrific squalls unscathed. Then at about 3am one morning, the Captain gave the order to alter course, and Smith barked an order to Francis who was on the fo'c's'le head. Francis didn't comply, and when he ignored the second order, Smith ran forward full of rage to impose his authority on Francis in any way he saw fit! Francis met him with insolence and a raised capstan bar. A short and brutal struggle ensued, resulting in Smith wresting the bar from Francis and dealing him a severe blow over the head with it. Francis died three days later never having regained consciousness.

John Francis was buried at sea, and whilst he had never been very popular with the crew, they hated Smith far worse. The ship became very silent, and the crew sullen and surly. The mate was sent to his cabin, and not seen on deck again for the rest of the voyage.

Cutty Sark arrived in Anjer on 18 August having made a very fast passage, so fast in fact that her orders weren't waiting for her, because John Willis hadn't expected her to reach port so soon! Whilst the ship was at anchor Smith persuaded the kind-hearted Captain to help him escape, so, early the next morning when the small native boats came to the starboard side selling their wares to the crew, and through the hullabaloo of the bartering, Smith slipped over the port rail onto a waiting boat that was to take him to an American ship also lying at anchor, and one much in need of a 'man-handler'.

It wasn't long before the crew realised he had escaped and refused to work until Smith was found. Despite his popularity, Captain Wallace was unable to pacify them and eventually agreed to take a party ashore to see the authorities. The native police searched boats at anchor, but no crewmember of Cutty Sark was allowed to accompany the searches - Smith was not found. After much fuss the crew realising they had been hoodwinked still refused to work.

At this moment the orders arrived. Cutty Sark was to set sail for Yokohama. Captain Wallace decided to man the ship with his apprentices and petty officers. The more determined of the crew tried to interfere, but the Captain armed his officers and the ringleaders were captured and clapped in irons. The rest of the crew retired sulkily to the fo'c's'le and the ship sailed out into the Java Sea.

Bad luck struck again with the wind dropping and the ship becoming becalmed for three days. The ship now rang with the dreadful prophecies of the old seaman. He described the evils that would befall the poor Cutty Sark and all on board with such a wealth of horror that some of the hands became really frightened. The whole ship's company felt tragedy in the air - it was not long coming.

Captain Wallace now had time to reflect what a predicament he had placed himself in by helping Smith to escape. He realised that there would be an official investigation when the ship reached Yokohama, and that he would be held responsible for allowing the Mate to escape. The best he could expect would be the suspension of his certificate, and he had an old mother and young wife to look after. The once jovial skipper became care-worn and morose. Unable to sleep, day and night he stood gazing out to sea or walking the decks with bowed head. The crew were sullen, the atmosphere stagnant and the Captain was indifferent to all around him.

On the fourth day after leaving Anjer the watch had just been called at 4am when the Captain who was standing at the break of the Poop deck with the carpenter, asked him if the second mate was on deck. 'Chips' replied that he was just coming up. Whereupon Captain Wallace left the carpenter, walked aft, called the helmsman's attention to the course, then deliberately stepped onto the taffrail and jumped overboard. The man at the wheel quickly threw over two life buoys and put the helm down. The crew, who had for so long refused to work, flung themselves upon a boat which had been used at Anjer and so was still in the davits, and managed to get it in the water in record time. The sea was as calm as a millpond, the life-buoys were

picked up but no trace of the Captain was ever found. The frenzied activity of the circling sharks was all that told of the fate of a fine seaman and good man.

Both articles are courtesy of the Cutty Sark trust.

S.S.C. Open Day

Saturday May 7th
Starting at 13:15 hrs

This is an event for all
the family so come
along and bring your
friends



Other meaning – A space in the roof of a house for storing unwanted items, which is thought, may, one day, be useful.

BALE

Nautical meaning – To remove water from a boat with a bucket, jug, sponge, old boot or whatever else comes to hand.

Other meaning – A quantity of hay.

BACKING

Nautical meaning – When the wind direction changes in an anticlockwise direction (against the sun).

Other meaning – An unreliable means of making money when applied to horses. Alt. (full) something given by the Prime Minister to another member of the cabinet just before that person is sacked!

CABLE

Nautical meaning – 200 yards

Other meaning – Someone from whom to rent a mooring or a knitting stitch.

CAT'S PAW

Nautical meaning – Ripples on the surface of the water caused by a gentle breeze during a period of calm.

Other meaning – Something for holding cat's claws.

DRAUGHT

Nautical meaning – The depth of water required for a vessel to float.

Other meaning – A type of beer.

For your further education watch this space!

.....

Nautical Terms Explained

By the Ancient Mariner

AVAST

Nautical meaning – Stop

Other meaning – A large space

ALOFT

Nautical meaning – Above the level of the deck.

DUCKLING REPORT

By Leslie & the Flock

We will have had the fitting out supper by the time this reaches you – hope you had a good time!! If you missed out there is more to come. Every club event has Duckling input with teas and cakes and more substantial eats (ploughman's, toasted sandwiches etc.). And don't forget that the

bar is licensed and fully functional now with beer and wine. There will be an impromptu BBQ and other events courtesy of the weather. Please watch the notice boards. By the way, any offers of help are always gratefully received.

Ducklings have various items for sale, sweatshirts and polo shirts (£15), dinghy burgees. All of these items are on display in the cupboard at the end of the clubhouse corridor. We also have cruising burgees (special orders – please see Leslie).

Lastly, anyone working in the safety boat or being rescued will be glad to hear that we have purchased 2 huge stainless steel vacuum flasks for hot drinks.

Definitely lastly this time! There will be a photographic competition at the end of the season. This will be made up of 2 categories, sailing and water/non-sailing.

Start taking your photos now! I look forward to a big display and we might even have a prize for the winner!!

Happy sailing and we hope to see you at the galley counter lots of times!

FUND RAISING UPDATE

By Val Tyndale-Biscoe

Fund raising has been hectic and effective over the last few of weeks.

An antiques fair in aid of the sailing club was held at Snape village hall on 28th march. 14 stall holders were doing business and over 200 people paid to enter and take a look. Most of the stallholders had an excellent day and so did S.S.C. Over £250 was banked for the club and the help from Barrie & Shirley Skelcher, Pauline & John Hayter, June Walker & Sarah Best was really appreciated. A contribution of £20 was sent to the MS charity in addition to the figure mentioned above.

On the evening of 9 April a quiz dinner was held at Knodishall village hall. 84 people took part and were split in to 14 tables of 6. Bob Lawrence did a great job as quiz master. Between the 2 quiz sessions, dinner was served. A choice of meat dishes was available together with vegetarian dishes. A selection of desserts followed and wine and beer were available for all who wished to partake.

The whole event went very well and the net profit for S.S.C. over the course of the evening was £570. Many thanks to all those who helped with cooking, making desserts, giving raffle prizes etc. and to Oliver Cullen who ran around the whole evening collecting papers and selling raffle tickets. Over £820 has been raised for the club over the last couple of weeks. Well done everybody!

NOTICES

Sale of the old Club RIB.

It was indicated in the last newsletter that when the replacement RIB was up and running the old RIB would be sold with members having the first option. The Management Committee have now decided not to sell this RIB but to keep for instructors/ coaches use. It is therefore no longer for sale.

Lost Property

There is a large amount of lost property to be claimed in the cupboard at the end of the clubhouse corridor. In the near future we will be having a clear out so please check now for those lost items.

Iken Picnic 2004

Last year's picnic at Iken was well attended. The event is always timed to

coincide with high tide at Iken where there is an isolated sandy beach. A few members sailed the extra half hour to go all the way to Snape Bridge and back.



Early Arrivals Hoping that the early birds catch the worm, that is get the best pick of the grub! (Sorry about the poor pun).



Graham, Trish and Pauline

Peter and Gill



High Tide (and not much beach left)

If you want to take part in the Iken race or just turn out for the picnic then put Sunday June 19th in your activities calendar and we'll see you there!

(Pictures courtesy of Chris Best)

The Gipsy Moth IV

By Ed.

After Ellen MacArthur's awe inspiring and dramatic round the world record it is good to see the Nation reflecting on our maritime heritage. What a year to break the record and in what style! 2005 is the 200th anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar and

sailing clubs countrywide will be finding ways to celebrate (watch this newsletter for details of S.S.C. celebrations). What would Nelson have thought of Ellen's achievement? No doubt once he had got over the shock that she was a woman (for in his days women had much more restricted lives to say the least) he would have been proud that she was a British Sailor.

Much has been made of the technological advantage that Ellen had over previous round the world sailors. But that does not detract from her achievement as all previous record attempts were made with the full use of cutting edge technology from their time. One such record breaker was Sir Francis Chichester in his yacht Gipsy Moth IV. Chichester first started making plans for his round the world voyage following research for his book "Along the Clipper Way", which charts the voyage taken by the great 19th century wool clippers like the Cutty Sark. These ships could make the passage in 123 days. Inspired by this, Chichester started making plans in 1962 and commissioned Camper and Nicholson to build a boat worthy of the voyage, the Gypsy Moth IV. She is a monohull with an overall length of 16 m (53 ft) made from cold moulded Honduras mahogany. The boat's design was to incorporate the maximum amount of sail for the minimum amount of rigging whilst employing self steering gear that could enable steerage from the skipper's bunk! Ketch rigged, the sail area was a massive 79.4 sq m (854 sq ft)! The building of Gypsy Moth IV and preparations for the voyage took 4 years with Chichester finally putting to sea on 27th August 1966 at the age of 64.

The round the world voyage was completed in 274 days and set a new record. Although this seems slow by modern standards that record stood for many years before the eventual and inevitable technological advances in boat design and navigation allowed something faster. So the Gypsy Moth IV was also at the cutting edge of boat design for her time and she made a hero of Sir Francis Chichester who returned home to Plymouth to a ten-gun salute from the royal artillery and a knighthood. Incidentally, he was knighted publicly by the Queen at Greenwich with the same sword Queen Elizabeth I used to knight Sir Francis Drake.

When asked why he embarked on the voyage Chichester replied, " Because it intensifies life", a sentiment echoed by Ellen MacArthur who holds Chichester as one of her all time heroes.

And what became of the famous boat? After returning home, the Gypsy Moth IV never sailed again. She was placed in dry dock next to the Cutty Sark where she has sadly deteriorated over the years. However, there is a happy ending for this historic vessel. She was recently bought by a consortium of enthusiasts for the princely sum of £1 and a gin and tonic on 17th November 2004. She has been transported to Camper and Nicholson's (her original builders) where she is undergoing full restoration. The new owners plan to take her to sea again starting with a 22-month voyage with people from all walks of life on board, including disadvantaged young people and a group of recovering leukaemia sufferers. On her return she will be used to inspire future generations of sailors perpetuating the adventurous maritime spirit for which she was built.

The owners of the Gypsy Moth have set up a charity to enable them to restore the Gypsy Moth and continue to sail her. If you are interested in following the restoration works or wish to make a donation details can be found on the Internet at:

www.gypsymoth.org

Or by mail to
Gypsy Moth IV Project
C/o United Kingdom Sailing Academy
Arctic Rd.
West Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO31 7PQ

WHY RACE ? by Barrie Skelcher

In most sailing clubs, where dinghies are dominant or present in large numbers, the programs seem to revolve around racing. Many people enter the sport of sailing with the idea that all they wish to do is to enjoy the pleasure of making a boat go where they want by controlling the action of wind

on sails. Well that is how I started some fifty years ago and I suspect much the same applies today. So why did I start racing? The simple answer is because it was fun! Once having mastered the technique of being able to handle a sailing dinghy, racing or not racing, is rather like the difference between having a tennis racket and either hitting the ball up against a wall, or taking on a friend in a game.

There are other considerations as well. Racing is really advanced boat handling and without the incentive of trying to win a race, it is unlikely that best sailing performance would ever be attained. The water is a hard master and we never know when it is going to turn spiteful. On such occasions, ability gained through racing can prove invaluable. It is also satisfying to notch up a win, even today, with a number of trophies behind me, I still get a kick out of winning, so does my crew.

I am not discussing America's Cup or Olympic Racing, but Club standard. So don't be put off by the thought of outrageous costs, intricate knowledge of complex rules and cutthroat protests! Our Wednesday Evening and Sunday Trophy races are not like that, they are just good fun trying to outsail or out maneuver another member. And when the contest is all over? It is back to the clubhouse for suitable refreshment and a yarn about what went wrong! From that point racing becomes the lifeblood of the club, it gets members together and is a focal point of our activities.

Apprehensive about "being a beginner, or never having raced before"? Don't be, we all had to start some time! My entry into competitive sailing was adorned with suitable embarrassment.

Fifty years ago I was living in Birmingham and, in partnership with a friend, bought a second hand Merlin Rocket. In those days membership space in inland clubs, such as those in the Midlands area, was in much demand and short supply. In fact the only way we could get into this particular club was by buying the Commodore's old boat! The Club sailed on a small lake and mainly raced Merlin Rockets. The Commodore had done well in his old boat but now sought to keep up with technology and ordered one of

all glue construction, rather than the traditional plank and rib, thus gaining a weight advantage and easier maintenance. At that club they used personal handicaps and, as new members, we would start with the maximum. The old boy assured us "we should do well in his old boat with that advantage"

Came the great day for our first race. We launched and then rigged the boat as it lay at the quay head. It was my turn to be skipper, Ron clambered in ready to set the sails which we had already bent on. "Up Main" I commanded. Ron hauled on the halyard and the sail ran smoothly up the mast. "Up the Jib" I barked my next command. The sail ran smoothly up the forestay, but it was **upside down!** It was then I heard the voice of the Commodore from behind, "Well it is a restricted class" he remarked laconically, "You can try it like that but I had never thought of doing so". Undeterred, we corrected our error, joined in the start and then, in light winds, found ourselves well up with the leaders. It was just after Ron had remarked that we seemed to be doing quite well, things started to go wrong. All the other boats caught us up and sailed past. Somehow we just seemed to have stopped and the others drifted by. We adjusted the sails, altered our trim but all to no avail. It was when we were being lapped for the third time some kind soul called out, "Try lifting the centre plate, it gets quite shallow there." See what I mean, **Racing Is Fun!**

Finally

Please e-mail any notices or articles to the Editor at:

leeandkaren01@btinternet.com

