



**Thames Sailing Barge Trust
Pudge Project
Key Stage 1 English**



Tiptree Jam-makers Stranded all night

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TIPTREE JAM-MAKERS STRANDED ALL NIGHT

On Friday the indoor employees of the Britannia Fruit Preserving Company, Tiptree had an exciting experience on the river Blackwater. Starting from the Factory at six a.m., the party, which included 80 employees—men and women, boys and girls—and Mr. C.J. Wilkin, made the journey to Heybridge Basin in the firm's vans.

The Company, as usual, met the whole expenses of the beanfeast, and at Heybridge the barge "Saltcote Belle," which had been specially chartered for the trip down the Blackwater, was boarded at half-past seven. Mr Thompson had got his craft well ready, and Messrs. Tew Bros., of Maldon, had been entrusted with the catering.

The weather was delightful when the party put off, and a pleasant sail was experienced as far as Bradwell Point, where dinner was served. At three o'clock, when the party were off St. Lawrence Stone, a storm arose, and the captain, after consultation with Mr. Thompson, who was on board, did not consider it safe to proceed further with the voyage. The sails were accordingly reefed, and anchor was let out, and the skipper had no option but to lay the boat to for the night.

The party were about a quarter of a mile from the land, but the storm increased in vigour, and the water became very heavy, the waves being "crested," a very unusual state of affairs for the Blackwater.

The condition of the passengers can well be imagined, and when at midnight the storm increased to a gale matters became very serious indeed, for nearly all the party were troubled with violent sea-sickness. A blinding, driving rain, with an intensely cold atmosphere, completed the misery of the unfortunate excursionists, who were huddled together all over the barge.

By a remarkable piece of good luck, Messrs. Tew Bros. had put a double stock of provisions on board, so that the passengers wanted for nothing in that respect.

The barge lay to until ten o'clock on Saturday morning, when the gale abated, and the return voyage to Heybridge Basin was rendered possible. After nineteen hours' stay in the open river the party were able once more to reach terra firma, none of them, luckily, being seriously indisposed, although the girls suffered terribly during the night.

At three o'clock on Saturday afternoon the beanfeasters landed once more at Tiptree, after as exciting an adventure as the most arduous could wish. It should be stated that the sailors on board showed every consideration for the passengers and arranged the sails in the hold so as to enable the women to lie down during the night, while the men were accommodated in the cabin and forecastle.

Although stranded so many hours, the excursionist behaved admirably under Mr. Wilkin's direction.

During the Friday evening three young men were enabled to put off from the barge in a small boat, and they dispatched from St. Lawrence's Stone several assuring telegrams to the trippers' relatives at Tiptree.

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