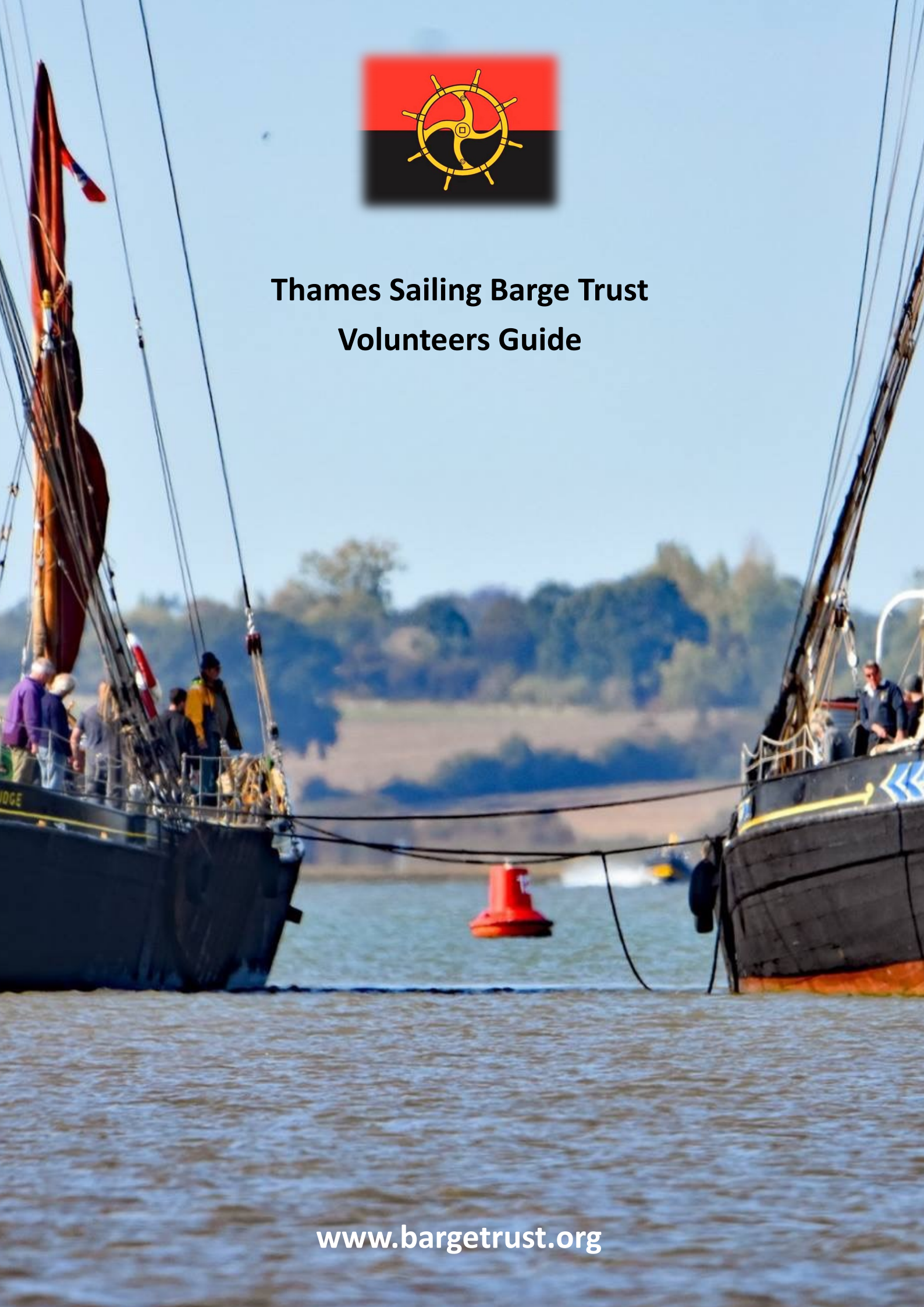




# Thames Sailing Barge Trust Volunteers Guide



[www.bargetrust.org](http://www.bargetrust.org)

**VOLUNTEERS GUIDE**  
**and**  
**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**INTRODUCTION**

This booklet has been put together by the Thames Sailing Barge Trust to assist members who volunteer for Open Days, Events or in a Maintenance or Sailing Capacity

The Guide provides historical and practical information about the Trust and our barges, enabling you understand more about the Trust and be able to explain the role of the Trust, its aims and objectives to those who visit us on open days and events or who with whom you may just pass the time.

**THAMES SAILING BARGE TRUST (TSBT)**

The Thames Sailing Barge Trust, previously known as the Thames Barge Sailing Club, was formed in 1948 by Frank Carr the then curator of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and Hugh Vaudrey, with the objective of preserving and just as importantly continuing to regularly sail a Thames sailing barges.

In those days there were still over 150 barges trading under sail but he recognised that these unique craft that for hundreds of years had dominated maritime trade on the East Coast were in terminal decline. There are now very few left, which are in sailing condition and only a very small number of these are managed by preservation trusts.

Since its foundation in 1948 the Club/Trust have kept at least two barges sailing as well as publishing magazines and articles about sailing on barges. Over the years many thousands of people have been introduced to sailing a Thames Barge.

With the closure of the London Docks in 1982 the Club sought a new base, leaving the London River for Maldon on the River Blackwater.

The Thames Barge Sailing Club became a charitable Trust in 2003 with the aim of making the Trust's two sailing barges accessible to the wider public through its programme of sailing, training and public lectures.

**The key aims of the Trust are:**

To preserve and maintain for the public benefit both Thames Sailing Barges in sailing condition as part of the maritime heritage of Great Britain.

To advance the education of the public as to the historic and cultural role of Thames sailing barges in the heritage of Great Britain and to provide training in and practice of the traditions and skills and seamanship involved in the sailing, handling and maintenance of Thames sailing barges in the waters traditionally sailed by them.

Support the above by producing written and photographic records together with relevant artefacts to develop and maintain an archive of the Club/Trust activities in association with the Essex Records Office.

We promote and teach the practice and the traditions and skills of seamanship involved in the sailing, handling and maintaining of these craft by taking people sailing and operating a Trainee Skippers & Mates Course.

In the summer months (May to October) our barges sail the Thames Estuary and the rivers of Essex, Suffolk and Kent, in the winter period they are the subject of restoration projects and maintenance work.

We are a preservation society that has been and remains open to the public. At the centre of all the activities of the Trust are a dedicated group of volunteers and the Trust has no paid staff.

As the Trust operates on a non-profit making basis with every pound being spent on the operating and restoration costs incurred to keep Centaur and Pudge sailing.

Our barges now have to meet higher safety standards than ever before. They are equipped with modern safety equipment and have to pass a regular Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) survey. We are licensed to carry up to 12 passengers with a qualified skipper and mate. The barges are subject to rigorous surveys and safety procedures.

We also actively participate in Barge trade associations namely the Association of Bargemen (AOB) and Sailing Barge Association (SBA)

The Thames Sailing Barge Trust owns two of these magnificent barges, "Centaur" (built in Harwich 1895) and "Pudge" (built in Frinsbury 1922) plus the steel hulled Thames lighter "Sailorman" (built in 1931) who have their home at the Quay in the historic Essex town of Maldon. Our area of operation today is the Thames Estuary and the London River, the traditional waters of the Thames sailing barge, and our cargo are now people.

## **OUR BARGES**

In 1968 PUDGE was acquired straight out of trade as a motor barge. The members converted her back to sail and later acquired the one time charter barge CENTAUR. A lengthy restoration and rebuild of CENTAUR was then carried out.

### **CENTAUR**



Centaur was built in 1895 by John and Herbert Cann of Harwich for Charles Stone of Mistley to carry 130 tons or 600 quarters of wheat. A typical Essex coasting barge she is 65 registered tons and measures 85.6ft long and 19.5ft wide. Like all Cann's barges she was built to the highest standards and since Charles Stone planned to use her for annual family holidays she was built with an extra fine master's cabin which she still retains. Centaur is rigged as a staysail barge. She was built as a coasting barge, ie with a bowsprit (with jib and jib topsail). Her sails/gear are typical size but not her rig, as she is missing the bowsprit.

In 1965 after a long career in trade she was converted to carry passengers. She is a genuine 19th century sailing ship, although fitted with modern safety equipment and a diesel engine.

Under the ownership of Charles Stone, Centaur regularly traded to the continent.

Later owners included 'Dolly' Rogers until 1911, Edward Hibbs 1911-1916, John Sawyer 1916-1923 and from 1923 she was owned by Francis & Gilders of Colchester. This company was eventually taken over by London and Rochester Trading co. Ltd.

In 1955 the barge was sold to Brown and son of Heybridge Basin near Maldon, who removed her sailing gear and used her as a dumb barge for timber lightering - transferring imported timber from the ships anchored off Osea Island and taking them through the sea lock into the canal basin.

Ironically this brutal de-rigging probably saved her life - and that of many other wooden barges too - keeping them in use for ten crucial years - just long enough for the preservation movement to grow up and save them.

In 1965 Centaur was bought by Richard Duke. She was re-rigged, and an engine - a Ruston - was installed for the first time in her life. Internally her hold was converted for charter work and she began a new career as a holiday charter vessel based at Maldon.

The TSBC bought her from Richard Duke in 1974.

Since 1977 she has been extensively restored and rebuilt. She celebrated her 125th birthday in February 2020.

Centaur is listed on the National Historic Ships List, The National Historic Fleet and is a Dunkirk Little Ship





## **PUDGE**

PUDGE - is one of the last sailormen built, and probably the penultimate barge built of wood. Pudge is a Dunkirk Little Ship and a member of the association of Dunkirk Little Ships

Pudge of Rochester was built at Frindsbury on the River Medway, in 1922 by the London and Rochester Barge Company Ltd; one of the few wooden barges built after the First World War.

Registered at Rochester in July 1922, her dimensions are: length 83ft, beam 21ft. originally rigged with a bowsprit, Pudge traded under sail mostly between London, Ipswich, and Rochester. She also worked

down Channel to the Isle of Wight with cement, occasionally crossing the Channel with cattle cake and to the Humber for coal.

In 1931 she was fitted with a 44hp K2 auxiliary engine and in 1935 this was replaced by the 66hp K3 Kelvin which was to power her until 1991, when the current Bedford 160hp unit was installed.

In May 1940 while waiting to lock into the Millwall Dock, she was requisitioned and towed to Dover from where, with the barges Doris and Lady Rosebery, she was towed across to Dunkirk by H.M.Tug St.Fagan to assist in the evacuation of the British Army

Pudge was third on the tow line and furthest away when the tug hit a mine. The tug and the first two barges were sunk. Pudge picked up survivors and was later taken in tow home by the tug Tanga. Almost immediately she returned to the grain trade, carrying Empire grain from London to Ipswich returning with East Anglian grain for milling. After the war Pudge was progressively unrigged and eventually worked as a pure motor barge. In 1968 LRTC decided to sell her.



Thanks to contacts in the company, the Thames Barge Sailing Club bought her, re-rigged her and built cabins in her hold during the 1968/9 winter. She joined the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships and visited Ramsgate for the reunion in 1970. In 1990 & 2015 she visited Dunkirk again to take part in the wreath laying ceremony for the 50th and 75th Anniversary of the Dunkirk Evacuation. She also took part in the Parade of Sail for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

Pudge is well known as a handy and comfortable barge to sail and she is held in great affection by the thousands of people who have sailed on her over the preservation years. It is thanks to the continuous hard work and fund raising activities of Club and Trust members that Pudge has survived to her 98th year.

In 2020, Pudge underwent major restoration work to replace her decks, coamings and other timber work as well as upgrading her below deck accommodation. This work was financed by donations and grants along with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The work was completed in April 2023 when she returned to sail.

In July 2022 we celebrated Pudge's 100th Birthday with the publication 'Pudge ...A Survivor'. Available on our website to purchase.

## **SAILORMAN**

The TSBT Thames Lighter, which we named Sailorman, was built in 1931 for William Henry James Alexander of St. James Wharf, Wapping. She went into the fleet of Silvertown Services Ltd on the 3rd October 1938 when Alexander's sold off virtually all of their lighterage fleet. (The sale of the lighterage fleet left Alexander's as owners of the various Sun tugs).

Silvertown Services sold her to the Thames Barge Sailing Club, now the Thames Sailing Barge Trust in 1969. Tonnage 101.75 tons, Length 79.5ft, Width 23.25ft and Depth of side 7.75ft.

## SOME BARGE TERMS

Here is a Glossary of Terms that you may wish to talk to the public about.

**Block** – A pulley with one or more sheaves (grooved rollers) through which a rope is rove, and which can be used to change the direction of moving ropes.

**Bob** – The flag mounted on the topmast trunk, bearing the owner's colour scheme or other device. It is made up both of the flag itself and a steel frame. It is used to indicate wind direction and for helming.

**Bowsprit** – A spar extending forward of the stem on which the jib and staysail may be set. The bowsprit on a barge is pivoted so that it may be steeved up in docks and harbours. (Both Pudge and Centaur once had bowsprits).

**Ceiling** – The inside planking forming the floor of a barge's hold, on which the cargo was carried.

**Chaffcutter** – A barge's wheel of cast iron, mass-produced to a design which resembled the style of curved spoke wheel used on agricultural implements, including chaffcutters, hence the name.

**Horse** – A wood or steel beam across the deck carrying the fore sheet, or main sheet on its traveller. The horse is curved aft so as to keep the sheet tight as the barge winds.

**Keelson** – A large baulk of timber or nowadays steel girder fitted on top of the floors to form the central internal backbone of the barge; it is through-bolted to the much less significant keel plank.

**Leeboard** – A large fan-shaped wooden board fitted at each side of a barge and pivoted at its forward end or 'head'. When the board on the lee side is lowered it increases the effective draught of the barge and serves to reduce the amount of leeway when sailing close-hauled. It operates in much the same way as the centre board of a dinghy.

**Lee** – The side of the barge (or other object, land, island etc.) away from the wind i.e. the sheltered side.

**London River** – The Thames. It is always up to London. Up is the direction of the flood tide.

**Port** – the left side of the barge when facing forward.

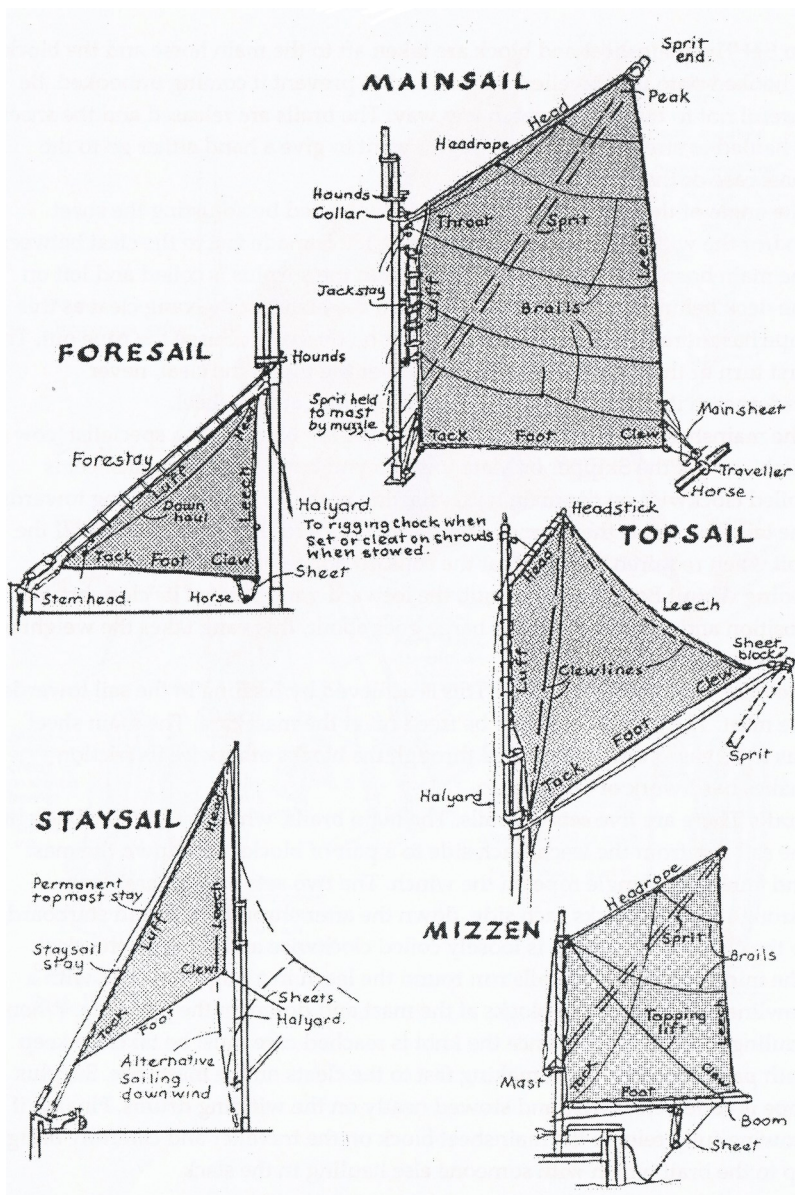
**Sprit** – (pronounced 'spreet') the larger spar used to extend the peak of the mainsail/mizzen. It extends between the peak of the sail and the foot of the mast (Starboard side), to which it is held by the muzzle and band. It is supported by the head rope of the sail. The downward thrust of the sprit is taken by the standing lift or stanliff.

**Spritsail** – Is a type of rig, not a sail. It dates back to the middle ages and is ideal for sailing in sheltered waters such as the Thames estuary. Its great advantage is that because the sail is already hoisted, you do not need a big crew to haul up the heavy sail.

**Stanliff** – (literally, 'standing lift'). The heavy wire cable fitted to the mainmast at the hounds to carry the weight of the sprit at the heel. The stanliff is adjusted by taking up, or adding to, the chain links at the lower end.

**Starboard** – The right hand side of the barge facing forward.

**Windlass** – The powerful hand-operated winch mounted between the bits; used primarily for raising the anchor and also for raising and lowering down the mast and gear, i.e everything attached to the mast.



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Why are the sails red?**

The typical, attractive rusty-red colour of the flax sails was due to the dressing used to waterproof them (traditionally made from red ochre, cod oil, and seawater).

### **Why does the barge have a flat bottom?**

Thames barges have a shallow draft which enables it to sail up the many small tidal rivers and creeks around East Anglia and the South coast to load and unload cargoes. No harbour is required as they can dry out on a flat beach.

### **What are the typical cargoes carried by barges?**

Owners would carry any cargo that they could, however some barges were often used for specific purposes such as: carrying clay for the manufacture of bricks, the carrying of finished bricks. They would usually return with rubbish to burn in the brick kilns. The collection of arable crops for the delivery to manufacturers. The delivery of hay to London for horses and the shipment of manure from those horses back to the farms. Some of these barges became known as 'Stackie's' because they carried a tall stack of cargo, up to 14ft high on their hatches. The delivery of sand and cement. The delivery of gunpowder. Centaur and Pudge both traded with Maldon bringing timber from London.

### **How many people sailed a Thames Sailing Barge?**

Usually they would be sailed by a skipper and his mate. The mate may have been his wife. Sometimes the skipper would have had his family with him. Often barge sailing was a family trade.

### **Can we sail on Pudge or Centaur?**

Yes. You can sail with us in two ways between the months of May and October.

You can form your own group of twelve people and charter a barge for two days or more or, as an individual or couple you can join with others on one of our scheduled weekend Trust sails. (sailing leaflets are available or trips can be viewed on our website [www.bargetrust.org](http://www.bargetrust.org))

These board on Friday evenings and return on Sunday afternoon, times are dependent on the prevailing wind and tides.

### **Do you have anyone who can give a Talk to groups?**

Yes, contact David Gibson on 07840 862685 or John Rayment on 07587141054

### **How can we get involved?**

You are welcome to join the Thames Sailing Barge Trust. We have working groups who meet throughout the year to help keep the barges sailing.

A Thursday Group meets every Thursday throughout the year on Maldon Quay. We also have a weekend group who meet every other weekend between October and April, working on preparing the barges for the following season. You do not have to be a member to be involved. Call John Rayment 07587 141054

### **How do I join the Trust?**

I can provide you with an application form which requires some basic information and you can complete and join right now or visit our website. Membership costs £37.50 a year, Joint membership is £55 Joint Concessions is £45 per annum. You will receive a regular newsletter detailing what is happening within the Trust.

### **Can I become part of the sailing crew a Mate or Skipper?**

Yes we are keen to train people in these roles. If you have sailing experience it helps. For more details contact Mick Nolan by email at [training@bargetrust.org](mailto:training@bargetrust.org)

Where can I find out more information about the Trust?

Visit our website at [www.bargetrust.org](http://www.bargetrust.org) or pick up one of our leaflets.

Volunteers should know where leaflets are available for the public. These are usually on the Quay in the dispensers on the quayside or ask John Rayment.

## **VOLUNTEERS RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Trust has a number of differing volunteering roles. There are roles for those who would like to help us maintain the barges and they can join either the Thursday Group who meet each week to help maintain Pudge. There is also the Winter Working Parties who meet every other weekend from October to April to maintain Centaur.

You can also volunteer to help at Open Days and Events.

For details on ways in which you can help, contact the Volunteer Liaison Officer, John Rayment on 07587 141054 or email [membership@bargetrust.org](mailto:membership@bargetrust.org)

## **EVENT VOLUNTEERING**

The Trust attends events and operates open days throughout the year at which one or both barges are in attendance. As a volunteer you are asked to be the 'face' of the Trust and to make sure that the general public have a safe and great experience whilst on the barge and go away with some knowledge about the history of the Centaur or Pudge and maybe become a member of the Trust.

### **Non Barge Events**

At non barge events we are trying to publicise the Trust, gain new members and details of people who wish to charter or sail on Centaur or Pudge, and maybe sell some items from our stock of goods for sale. We usually have display boards erected to show what the Trust does and an audio visual display showing pictures or videos of Trust activities. Your role is to talk to the general public and show your enthusiasm for the Trust and the work it does on the barges. Leaflets on the Trust are always available along with details of the sailing programme and these should be handed to the public.

### **Barge Events**

There are a number of roles you can be involved in at Barge Events and these are detailed below. We will try and allocate a role you are happy to do, however if you wish to change, please just let the organiser know.

#### **Roles:**

**Deck Stewards** – These are very important roles. You are expected to make sure that the public are safe when on board the barges and when crossing between either the lighter or barges, and that they are helped down stairs to the saloon in a safe manner. You will also be expected to answer questions and be able to talk about the things mentioned in this booklet.

**Sales** – The Trust has a selection of goods for sale to members and the general public. You can help in selling these items and talking to the public about the Trust and its barges. You only need basic skills in dealing with money. The sales manager is Kate Rodman. Items can be purchased on our website or at our Pop up Shop. Credit and Debit Cards can be used.

**Membership** – At present this is a key priority for the Trust. We need more members and if you take on one of these roles we would require you to talk to the public about the Trust and the advantages of being a member, including joining working parties, sailing opportunities, receiving the regular newsletter and helping to save these historic vessels. More detail on this role is given below.

**Catering** – When we can, we try and provide refreshments on board the barges. This involves selling teas, coffees and selling cakes. We are always in need of donations of homemade cakes but also people to sell them. This role will involve dealing with cash as well as serving the public.

**Meet and Greeters** – These two roles relate to welcoming people on board and thanking them for coming on board when they leave. Usually we have a donation box at the entrance/exit to the barges and if the public donate funds then we would ask that you thank them for their contribution.

The Trust would ask that as a volunteer you wear where possible a Trust polo shirt, sweat shirt or cap, however name badges will be provided to all volunteers on the day.

When we have refreshments on board the barges, volunteers will be provided with lunch which will be sandwiches, along with tea and coffee throughout the day.

## **POLICIES**

### **SAFEGUARDING**

#### **Safeguarding Statement**

The Thames Sailing Barge Trust is a charity that maintains two historic Thames sailing barges, Centaur and Pudge, and provides opportunities for people to charter them to go sailing or join a sailing trip for a couple of hours or nights away. A variety of events are held throughout the year to raise the profile of the historic boats, including Open Days and Children's Open Days, which are attended by families and groups from the local and surrounding area.

Outreach to schools and uniformed groups are offered for visits on board the barges. The Trust has behaviour, risk assessments and safeguarding policies for both children and adults at risk, which are available on the website. When children are on board they are always accompanied by their responsible adult. Visiting groups work alongside their own policies. Training prepares volunteers to be confident they know the procedure to respond to any safeguarding concerns.

### **BEHAVIOURS**

#### **Discrimination, Equality and Bullying**

Thames Sailing Barge Trust and TSBT Sailing & Charters Ltd (the "Trust") are committed to eliminating discrimination and recognising equality and diversity in our own policies, practices and procedures and encouraging those outside our organisation to do the same in their dealings with volunteers, customers, suppliers and third parties.

The Trustees and Management Committee are committed to complying in both letter and spirit with all legislation and associated codes of practice in force either now or in the future insofar as they can apply to an organisation based upon volunteers and a maritime environment.

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of: [Equality Act 2010 source Gov.uk]

Age, Gender reassignment, Being married or in a civil partnership, Being pregnant or on maternity leave

Disability, Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation

You are protected from discrimination at work, in education, as a consumer and as a member or guest of a private club or association and also if you are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic or you have complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

We aim to treat everyone equally and the same attention, courtesy and respect and we expect our volunteers and members to do likewise.

The Trust will investigate all reports of alleged verbal and non-verbal conduct which may have created an Intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment perceived by any person.

In the first instance, behaviour causing offence should be reported confidentially to the Chairman, or a Trustee or a member of the Management Committee or, if at sea, the Mate. It will be logged.

The Trustees will consider all complaints and if an amicable resolution cannot be achieved, reserve the right to protect others by removing the offender.

The Trustees cannot tolerate repetitive breaches of conduct which might tarnish the Trust and personal reputations.



## MEMBERSHIP

As already highlighted, membership sales are an important priority as we try and keep membership numbers growing. It is not always easy to sell membership and where we can we need to be proactive in mentioning membership to those members of the public who show an interest in the barges. Remind them that we are a registered charity.

### **Here are some ideas on how to approach the subject:**

Know the product - what the Trust is about.

Converse in a friendly way with the person, gaining their trust. Be a good listener don't try to impress them with your knowledge.

Ask them open questions about what they do in terms of hobbies and interests as well as work.

Do they feel they have any skills which would help the Trust, these can be varied manual or non manual. If they have no skills they could still help.

If something useful comes to light which would help the Trust focus on it.

Find out if they have ever had any interest in becoming involved or being a member. Take them through what the Trust provides, opportunity to sail, newsletter; wealth of knowledge and reward in thinking you are saving a piece of history; friendship and social benefits as well as joining working parties.

Find out how much they think they could afford a month towards membership. Most would suggest around a couple of pounds, advise them that for the cost of a pint of beer or a cup of coffee a month they could be a member of the Trust.

The key is not to give a hard sell. At the end of the day it is the individual's decision, however we should ask for names of those we talk to and get a contact number or email address so we can communicate later, perhaps by sending them a copy of our latest newsletter or other details. This will give us follow up opportunities.

### **FURTHER READING:**

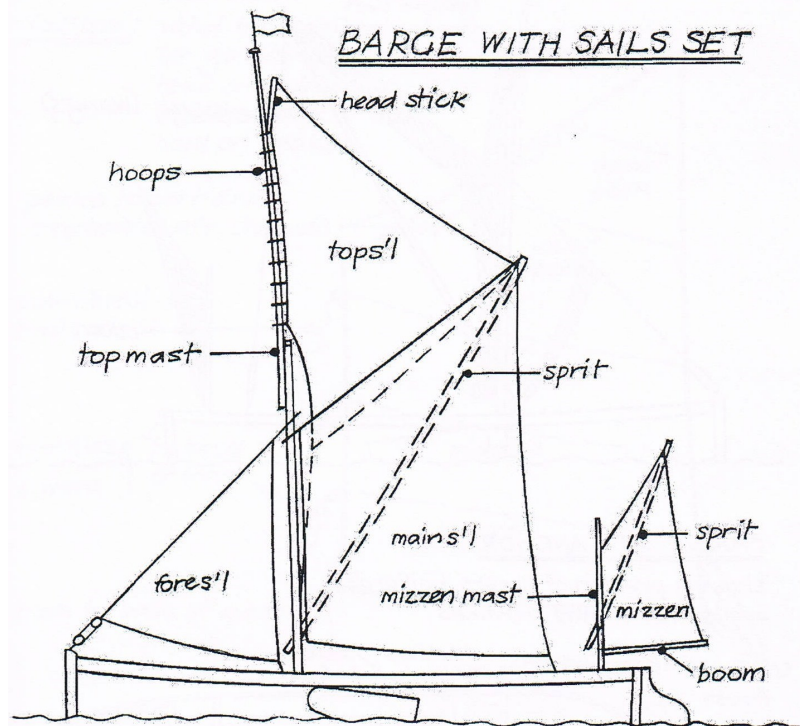
The Trust's leaflets

Sailing a Thames Sailing Barge 'Sail-by-Sail' by Peter Hearn

'The Golden Chaffcutter' - story of the Thames Barge Sailing Club 1948—1998

(the books above are available through the Trust and can be purchased online)

web site: [www.bargetrust.org](http://www.bargetrust.org)



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