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From Cambria's Wheelhouse

Changing the Watch

Following a very busy season with a full programme of Charters for Young Carers sponsored by Rotary, two Sea Change Charters, several barge matches and one mid-week school charter culminating in the Classic Boat Festival in St Katherine's Dock. Nancy and I are passing the editorship of the Newsletter over to Matt Care, who as you will appreciate from his 'blog' entries has a nice way with words.

Matt Care writes: "Thank you Nancy and Basil. And, on the subject of Charters, I thought readers might appreciate some more detail on the nature these and our current main sponsors and users – the Rotary Club and the Sea Change Sailing Trust.

The Rotary Club

These charters are organised to give respite to young carers, young people who are the main carer for a sick or disabled family member, perhaps the Mother is blind, the Father bed ridden or a sibling or other family member might also be in need of care or nursing.

These carers can often have little respite because there is no-one else to look after Mum, they might be on duty every day, all evening, 7 days a week.

The Rotary Club steps in, providing funding to allow the young person to go on board Cambria, learning how to sail her, enjoying the complete change of environment and having a bit of social life with other children who are (pardon the pun) in the same boat while alternative care arrangements are made for the patient.

They also enjoy being looked after by our crew and the 'Bosuns' assigned to that trip to look after the children's own welfare, sometimes supplied by Rotary Club, or being Cambria Volunteers such as Julie Brooks or Maggs Casey Kelly. The crew for many of these trips is Skipper Ian Ruffles, First Mate Den Johnson and 3rd Hand Reggie Andrews.

The Sea Change Sailing Trust

These trips are funded by the Sea Change charity and again are about sail training and respite for young people. In the words of Sea Change, they make "a real impact on the lives of disabled, disadvantaged and socially excluded young people". They take children

- Not in employment, education or training (NEETs)
- Experiencing social exclusion
- With special needs
- Challenged by traditional educational settings

- Considering a maritime career, and
- Young offenders, or those in danger of offending

They provide

- An alternative approach to education in a unique setting
- Learning through activity
- Individual learning plans with ongoing mentoring
- A structured, safe, yet challenging environment
- Accreditation

- Traditional sailing and seamanship training

On these trips the Skipper is Richard Titchener, the First Mate (and frequent poster of “Cambria Watch” reports to Facebook and the blog) is Hilary Halajko and the Third Hand is ‘Stretch’.

The Trust is very proud of its association with these two Charities and the excellent work they do.

A Mate’s Eye View

Phil Latham, Mate on SB Cambria for some four years, in her last days as a sailing merchantman, joined the renovated Cambria on a charter to Wells-Next-The-Sea

As soon as I learned that Cambria was going on a coasting voyage to Wells I negotiated a place as a hardy passenger and reported on board at Maldon, on 12th August 2013. The voyage was the result of a lot of hard work by Basil and Rob at the Cambria Trust negotiating with MCA to get permission to travel outside of the usual barge limits. Originally I had suggested Great Yarmouth but problems with price and availability of tugs seemed to have ruled that out, and we were bound for the ‘Harbour Day at Wells’.

I now met the crew for the trip; Skipper Richard and Hillary in charge of the Starboard watch with Tom, who normally sails the Will, with Stretch in charge of Port watch backed up by two Third Hands, Anna and Zack who had sailed several times on Cambria so were thoroughly clued up on deck: Then came two young ladies, trainee third hands from a school in Wells, sponsored by the Harbour Commissioners, under their programme to involve the younger generation in the port and its history, bringing up the rear. In the ‘antiques division’ was yours truly, there were supposed to be more of us in this category, but the others had work to do so I

attached myself to the starboard watch as supernumerary.

The plan was to tow down alongside ‘Thalatta’ to below the yachts at Heybridge, but as the wind served the skipper decided to proceed under sail, giving me the wheel but keeping a close eye on my directional stability. Once in the lower Blackwater we put the barge through the usual manoeuvres, going about, gybing, etc., to show our trainees their various duties and where not to be. Finally we did a ‘man overboard’ drill, which I very nearly mucked up but was saved by Tom’s quick reactions and the apparent arm extension of an orang-utan. So to anchor below West Mersea ready for an early start in the morning.

Mustering before breakfast is a familiar thing to a bargeman but there was a short delay whilst our trainees ‘put their faces on’. This was new to me, but compared to staring at a face covered in stubble, with the odours of the unwashed, as it was in former years, the inconvenience of a short wait pales into insignificance.

After I had assisted in hauling in three fleets

only to see an anchor shackle appear I relinquished my handle to Stretch, admitting to having been too enthusiastic with the chain the previous evening. This was all forgotten as we set everything to a broad reach, wind on the port quarter. Our watch trainee Annalisa took the wheel and steered very well, definitely NOT writing her name in the ebb! A really pleasant sail. We took the barge down the Wallet and across the Harwich approaches, neatly avoiding the commercial traffic, handing over the Port watch near Felixstowe Ledge and went below for a well merited rest.

I often thought that I had merited a rest when I sailed in the Cambria during the sixties, but not having a second watch to take over I suffered in silence. Breakfast followed by a two hour ziz is a far better plan than the old model. Our friendly wind continued strong enough to punch the flood and never heading us but shifting between a close reach to close hauled, the block staying happily to starboard. When we returned on deck the barge was down off Dunwich, a little further off shore than ideal, as we were not laying the Stanford Channel into Lowestoft North Roads so for the only time on the whole voyage we wended and stood in towards the Barnard, before we completed the board of wind headed us. Quickly back on to our favourite tack and through the Stanford into the roads. Since sailing, I had learned, to my surprise, that we were after all going to spend a day in Great Yarmouth thanks to a pilot and maritime genius, who had solved the towage problem.

It is quite simple really, towing involves a vessel preceding another vessel on a rope, but if you moor up on its quarter, absent-mindedly leaving the engine running and steering from said vessel you are NOT towing. Problem, what problem; this genius proved to be one of many old acquaintances of mine from the barging and sailing coaster

period of my career with whom I had lost contact, they were all attracted by Cambria's appearance among them, as were many people who remembered her from the sixties and before. We didn't tow up to the Heritage Quay below the Haven Bridge, just a few hundred yards from where we used to discharge into lorries for J. Lee-Barber when not required on his north river berth.

Cambria's visit had not been so well



Cambria in Wells Harbour

publicised, as had been the case in Wells but nevertheless a steady stream of people stopped to ask about her; all good publicity for the barge and her operations. We were due to sail early next afternoon but our absent minded boat crew failed to arrive, telecommunications established the fact that the boat's mechanic, not being aware of expected activities, had begun to strip out one of the fuel systems. He spent the next two hours in company of our marine genius putting it back while the crew speculated on

the return of the death penalty in special cases.

Meanwhile aboard Cambria there was much shaking of heads over the new-fangled diesel engine and its likely demise in the near future in favour of sensible wind power. The boat finally arrived in time to get round Brush-Bend and through the pier heads before the tidal stream made it dangerous. We set what sail we could to help, gybe-o through the bend and we basically pulled the boat out on our quarter, the engine revs not changing with the wind.

So, block over to starboard, our favourite position and all sail to boltsprit jib and mizzen to punch the flood north, in proper style the Skipper ignored the buoyed channel and strong tide, followed the coast round close aboard on the ten meter line. Against the tide we never dropped to less than three and a half knots over ground often on a tight sheet but our friendly breeze continued and we handed over the port watch near Haisbro' or Happisborough as some call it; so to rest, don't knock these new-fangled ideas, some have merit!

When we went out again we were just short of Wells so continued to anchor in Holkern Bay, just to the west of the port off nudist beach which our Norfolk expert and independentist Tom told us had been closed due to its popularity by sightseers, can't think why, it now sports a nice line in naked grey seals but they don't seem to attract the same public, so binoculars away and await tomorrows tide.

The Wells Harbour Master, who was a prime mover in our visit was delayed in coming out to us with his harbour work boat, a highly manoeuvrable pontoon with plenty of power. No semantics about towing here, he got hold of us and lugged us in. Amongst the passengers were Bob Robert's two daughters who were 'thrilled skinny' (sorry about that

ladies) to see the barge come into the harbour. Master announced to a dubious skipper that he would swing the barge off the quay and moor her head down. The wind was down and the flood done but they are not daft in Wells, he finished swinging the barge right around to finish head up starboard side too on the pontoon berth but he had given the considerable crowd on the quay a grandstand view of Cambria, the main attraction for his Harbour Day on Sunday. Total sailing time for our passage from West Mersea to Wells was twenty hours, a very creditable performance and our two trainees Rosie and Annalisa had been very involved and sported one or two blisters; a good result for their sponsors and hand cream will soon solve the problem.

During the time that we spent in Wells the barge was the centre of attention and the harbour crew couldn't do enough for us, the Skipper's merest wish was their command, really friendly people. Personally I continued to meet old friends, it's peculiar but they've all grown old! When did that happen? The bell was carried away by a local guy involved in salvaging old traditional boats and refurbishing them. He came aboard, shook my hand and said "Do you remember the last time we spoke, 49 years ago"? Er no, but of course he remembered the barge and me by association. I am not famous, but the barge most definitely is, and Cambria Trust should exploit that fact to the max.

On Sunday the barge was open to the public, the harbour put a ticket system in place with a control on the pontoon access. It lasted for less than half of the day with a constant queue on the pontoon. Streams of people going below via the main access or the cabin scuttle. We had third hand Anna from port watch exercising some control but from the opening of the barge at 10 30 am until 05.00 pm it never stopped. We all answered questions and helped the kids in and out of the hammock, a huge attraction. What struck

me most was of all the people whose questions I answered only one asked about the rig, the usual incomprehension about the spreet but at least he seized on the fact that we were uniquely sail powered. In this modern world I think that passed over the heads of most despite the educational information available.

I treacherously left Wells leaving the crew plus two replacement trainee third hands to navigate back to Southend for the match. I did have a prior visit to make but also

doubted that our 'magic' wind would continue, how much luck can one have on a voyage?

Anyway good luck and fair winds to Cambria and all who sail in her. I hope for more voyages coast-wise and can only congratulate the Trusts' Team in persuading the doubtful authorities that coastal barge passages don't represent a danger to young people. No one cares about old antiques, but it was great to see the enthusiasm of the young contingent.

Cambria at St Katherine's Dock

Matt Care, Volunteer, Website Manager and (from this edition) Newsletter Editor joined SB Cambria at the Classic Boat Show at St Katherine's Dock in September.

Readers may know that I currently live in Ireland, but like to take one of my holidays on board Cambria if I can manage it. This year that proved to be by volunteering to show the public round while we were moored at St Kat's, so that is where I was headed on Saturday 7th September.

I am a bit of a country bumpkin and these trips into the big smoke are always scary adventures for me. They say, though, if you want to know the way, ask a policeman and there were hundreds of them about because they had just broken up an English Defence League march trying to recreate a Moseley Black-shirts demo. "Which way to St Katherine's Dock, Officer?" They were queuing up to help me!

The barge had been out on charter with a group of young people from the Sea Change Sailing Trust and was only just 'locked in' to St Kat's.

The professional crew (Skipper Richard, First Mate Hilary and 3rd Hand, 'Stretch') had handed their youthful charges over to their land-based responsible adults, tidied up the barge and handed the 'keys' to our 'Boss of Volunteers', Basil B. We had to get on board,

fine-tune the tidying and ready the boat for a likely onslaught of visitors - this was a sunny Saturday, yards from the Tower of London and Tower Bridge and we had a bloomin' great 'advert' up in the form of our huge red-ochre topsail with its Rotary Club logo, glowing in the sunshine, 75 feet up! We were expecting 'busy'.

We weren't wrong. The public started arriving way before we were ready and kept on coming - queues and queues of them non-stop from mid morning till we could start to close the 'shop' with relief at 6pm. We were a bit disorganised and short staffed and did not get our 'clicker' head-count thingy out, so we can only estimate but it was definitely a record, and might have been as many as 900 or 1000 but they all got a proper show round, a chance to photo themselves by the ship's wheel, for the kids to try out a hammock and to see the (107 year) old restored Captain's Cabin aft, and the "new yachty bit" (accommodation) for'd. We talked them through the history of the barge and the restoration and present use as both the 'Sea Change' boat, but also the Rotary-sponsored Respite-for-Young-Carers role. We encouraged them to drop a few quid in our box, write a comment in the Visitors' Book,



Cambria at Tower Bridge

and buy books, pens, book marks etc from the shop.

We were so busy that a number of pots of tea were made but then went cold and stewed where nobody had time to stop for a cup, and most of us had abandoned mugs of cold coffee or tea 'parked' around various bits of barge. At one stage I was bounced by a lady from a local radio station who asked me to give her a potted version of my spiel in 3 minutes into the microphone. I did OK, managed it without stumbling and she said she liked my 'rich' voice, but I have no idea which radio station I was on (West of London Radio?) or whether it was ever transmitted. It was meant to be going out on the Monday.

It was mad, too, on the Sunday but by then we'd been joined by 2 more staff so we were able to properly man the gangway and count people on board, as well as controlling the flow a bit. We know that we had 919 souls that day and sometimes 48-50 on board at

once. It was thick and fast again but great fun. After 6:30 pm each evening the boat was ours and we could relax and recover. The marina had set up with the marina-side eateries, for boat 'owners' to get discounts, so we ate in a lovely Italian (20% off) on two of the nights and a Wetherspoon's on another night. The marina also has a lovely office building with showers and loos for the berth-holders and a restaurant upstairs

The Monday was a whole different kettle of fish. It lashed with rain and it was, anyway, a Monday, so all the kids were back at school and grown-ups back at work, so we had a big fat zero visitors before lunch and only 6 all day. They got luxury treatment, of course, but we were able to 'lay off' three of our staff mid afternoon to let them get home prior to the rush hour. We watched old barge videos and kipped in the hammock. At one stage, Cambria Trust Patron, David Suchet (yes - he of the Poirot role) phoned the barge. It turns out he has a flat at St Kat's, overlooking our

berth so we all rushed out onto the deck to wave at him up at his window.

Then it was Tuesday and I was done, with my flight home from Gatwick to Knock leaving at 12:50. I helped with the breakfast washing up, stripped my bunk and packed. I bade them all farewell (they are there till Sunday 15th) and trundled my wheelie-case back along the pontoons to Tower Hill underground.



Rod Stewart and Penny Lancaster pose before the Cambria transom with Skipper, Ian Ruffles, and Volunteer and Bosun, Julie Brooks

Just as I disappeared into the Underground, apparently, rock legend Rod Stewart and his wife, Penny Lancaster, showed up at the Dock. The crew on board (Basil, Nancy, Dave, Julie and Ian) were delighted to show them over and tell me they were most impressed. After

the tour, they posed for photographs with the crew and Cambria and agreed to these being put on Facebook and used in the Newsletter.



Get Involved



Richard Weekes holding his Volunteer of the Year trophy and flanked by Trust Patron David Suchet, who presented the trophy, and Skipper Ian Ruffles

Would you like to be involved in a unique piece of Britain's Maritime History?

Over the last four years we have been indebted to our band of volunteers while rebuilding Cambria. Now we need **more** volunteers to help take Cambria forward.

Cambria overwinters at Standard Quay in Faversham between October and March. Throughout these months, we need volunteers to help with painting, cleaning and the minor maintenance Cambria needs to ensure she stays sea-worthy.

During the sailing season, from April to September, Cambria is involved in many

static charters and we need people to help our visitors embark and disembark safely, show people around and also look after the sales desk which is a vital part of raising Cambria's operational funds.

If you are interested in volunteering for any of these tasks, and enjoying a very hands-on Cambria experience, please email Dave Brooks at CambriaTrustSecretary@live.co.uk to talk about what you can do to help.

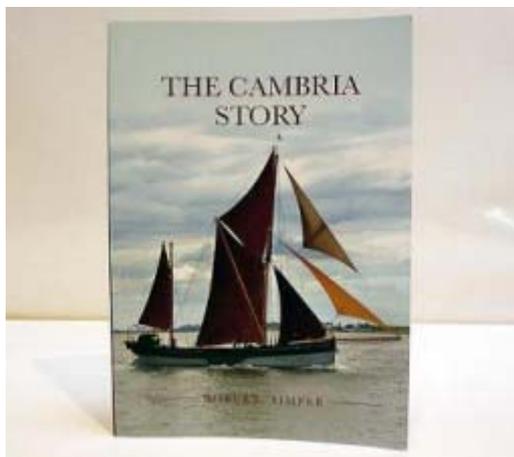
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Day and Weekend Charter Service

Cambria will again be available to individuals and groups to charter for a day or a weekend in Summer 2014. The barge can accommodate up to 12 visitors and the Trust will provide all the food you will need (and bedding if you are making an overnight stay) as well as a Skipper and crew. All at a cost of around £95 per person per day (to be confirmed).

Watch the website (www.CambriaTrust.org.uk) for opportunities to book these charters or contact our Operations Manager, Guy Peto, for more details of this exciting opportunity to sail on our historic barge and experience the Kent coast from the point of view of a Bargeman.

Cambria Merchandise



The Cambria Story, by Robert Simper
£7.50



Cambria, by Anne Robert
black and white print

We also have

Cambria Mugs: £6.50

The Story of Cambria's Restoration DVD by Mark Chapman:
£10.00

A range of stunning photographs of Cambria at sea: £3.00
each

Fridge Magnets: £2.00 each

Key Rings: £2.00 each

Ball Point Pens: £2:00

Postage will apply to all of these items and the amount will depend on how much is ordered and to where it is to be sent.

Please telephone 07721625423 or email markandcathychapman@yahoo.co.uk for more information.

Please make your cheque or postal order payable to
CAMBRIA TRUST and send to:
Catherine Chapman (Merchandise)
Cambria Trust
13 Beauvoir Drive, Sittingbourne
Kent, ME10 2TQ.

You can find more information about SB

Cambria on our website:

www.CambriaTrust.org.uk

Email: CambriaTrustSecretary@live.co.uk



Sailing Barge Cambria