

From Cambria's Wheelhouse

A belated, but very Happy New Year to All of our Supporters.

In the last Newsletter we left Cambria at Gravesend with Richard Titchener, as you recall he brought her back with a few 'firkins of Old Bob' for the Rum Puncheon PH close by Town Pier.

Once his crew of trainees were assembled SB Cambria proceeded to Tilbury Docks, where she loaded a token cargo of building material for Ipswich. This run was to re-enact her last cargo run in 1970; the last cargo run by a British registered sailing vessel without auxiliary power. *

After unloading the cargo at Ipswich she stayed for the Crew to entertain, on board, several members of the Ipswich Maritime Trust. Ann and Jill, daughters of Bob Roberts were amongst the group, and were recalling events from their childhood when they sailed aboard Cambria with their Father.

Sea Change continued their training cruises of Essex Waters, this included the Colne Match in which Cambria was placed second, finally delivering her back to Gravesend.

From her mooring at Gravesend she had four more Rotary District 1120 charters taking young carers for sailing and other onboard experiences. Three of these charters were under the guidance of skipper Ian Ruffles, and the last, by Tim Goldsack who sailed her back to Faversham with the last charter party of 2012.

Tim was the shipwright responsible for Cambria's rebuild at Faversham, and it was quite fitting that he should bring her back at the end of her first full working year.

After a couple of weeks to sort things out below decks before the winter set in it was time to lower her gear down, and her sails removed for stowage below together with her running rigging.

Later the mast was raised with the remaining standing rigging, this operation carried out under the guidance of Ian Ruffles and his mate Den Johnson with the help of a group of volunteers who were then left with the task of overhaul all the blocks and rigging.

Some statistics for Cambria during 2012 season :

This year Cambria took to sea 72 Young Carers to experience working and living aboard a large sailing vessel.

Sea Change gave extensive training and on board experience to 12 sail trainees, covering many miles of Essex Coastal Waters and the London River. (a more detailed report can be found on the Sea Change website)

With visits by children from Gravesend schools earlier in the year, when some 150 pupils came on board the barge, in small groups, to look around and find out a little about her working life.

With such a total we hope that Cambria has fulfilled her first full year of engaging young people.

Last Entry from Captain Bob Robert's Cargo- book 1970.

October 15th and 16th, loaded 100 tons ground nut cake, ex SS Falaba(MV Falaba), Tilbury Docks, for Eastern Counties Farmers' Wharf, Ipswich. Sailed October 17th 3 pm : arrived Ipswich 19th at midnight".

First the Good News

Presentation by HRH Princess Anne to Hannah and Beth Pihama



Well Deserved Recognition

We are delighted to announce that three of our Cambria Volunteers gained national recognition for their work as Cambria Volunteers in the 2012 “Marsh Volunteer Awards” competition held by the National Historic Ships Register.

Pete Snelling won a ‘Highly Commended’

Beth and Hannah Pihama won the “Young Persons” category outright.

This is their story.

It was last summer that we saw the link on Facebook to the National Historic Ships volunteer awards. Officially called the Marsh Volunteer Awards, these are the brainchild of Brian Marsh, Chair of the Marsh Christian Trust and are aimed at “Recognising those who do it out of love, not for money”.

The Trust literature goes on,

“There are hundreds if not thousands of ordinary people who do something extraordinary every day of their lives - yet go unnoticed by most of us. Perhaps it’s because their deeds seem only minor in the scale of today’s global headlines ... but if it weren’t for these individuals, our world would be a sorrier place. These are the people the Marsh Awards seek to honour:

They work or volunteer with those in need, from the elderly to asylum seekers

They dedicate their lives to ensuring a future for the ecology and animals of our world

They create great works of literature and of art

They work to maintain and restore our national heritage

All these things they do out of love and dedication, not for personal fame or fortune. They don’t expect recognition but they deserve it, and that’s what the Marsh Awards aim to do”.

Under the Heritage section of the awards scheme, the Marsh Christian Trust included awards via the National Historic Ships organisation for voluntary work on listed vessels including, of course, the Cambria.

A very quick discussion between some of our Volunteers led to us deciding that we definitely had 3 candidates on our force well deserving of these awards, our two teenage girls, Beth and Hannah Pihama, and our veteran “2CV Pete”, Pete Snelling. We decided to do the applications a bit sneakily, behind their backs. They are all so modest that they would have cringed from being put forward and singled out in this way.

I was privileged to do the actual deed, downloading the application forms, one for the “Young Person” category, and one for the grown-ups. We assembled a small portfolio of pictures of them in action and write a glowing ‘school report’ on why they so deserved. Not a problem. The girls and Pete used to turn out weekend after weekend, whatever the weather, happily immersing themselves in the often filthy, bitterly cold work. They were down in the bowels of the lighter painting anti-foul on to the barge bottom, or balanced on planks in the teeth of the Nor’ Easterlies coming across from Nagden Marshes painting the sides and wales. They were down on hands and knees with trowels shovelling damp, compressed sawdust out of the limbers. Sometimes their hands were so cold they could not let go of the paint brushes at the end of a session. How many teenage girls do you know who would willingly do that (in fact bullying their Mum and Dad into

letting them and coming too) weekend after weekend? In Pete's case he was also making a considerable journey in his ancient French car from Broadstairs to be there, too.

Well, off went the applications and, of course, we had no idea how our applicants had fared. We soon heard back from National Historic Ships to say that the girls were invited to an awards ceremony to be held on board HMS Belfast attended by HRH Princess Anne and they needed to submit details including which Trust Member could be the accompanying adult, so that the Security people could do the necessary checks on those names.

It so happened that I was in Ireland and several other likely Trust members were tied up with other Cambria meetings on the date so we decided that the girls' father, Owen, our barge electrician and another hard working volunteer could fill the role. Obviously we still did not know whether 'we' had won anything, the ceremony might have been for all the short-list for all we knew.

Well, it turned out that Pete had won a beautiful, laminated "Highly Commended" certificate which came with a lovely covering letter. He was touched and delighted.

Our girls had won the Young People's category and some handy cash for their sailing adventures. They were over the moon and had a lovely day visiting the Belfast and meeting Princess Anne, but I will let them recount that. Their names were in several local papers and I know we wrote about it in the blog and it got a good coverage in Facebook. Typically, on receiving the money, immediately they opted to give back a share of the winnings to the Cambria Trust as a Thank You.

It was beautiful too, for we in the Trust to be able to do this for them and to recognise their hard work. Thank you once again, Beth, Hannah and Pete.

Thanks to Matt Care for this contribution.

Unfortunately there is also Sad News

At the end of 2012 Cambria lost two longstanding members

Catherine de Bont and Mark Boyle

CatherineDeBont1947-2012

Catherine De Bont, who was a great friend to *Cambria*, and was well respected by the entire barging community, passed away on Monday, 10th December, after her long struggle with cancer. Born in Saintes, Belgium, Catherine was brought up on the north Kent marshes, and for a time lived on the sailing barge *Glenway*. Her ability to sail boats was learnt from an early age.

Catherine sailed as mate aboard the sailing barge *Portlight* for many years and was second engineer aboard the replica frigate *Grand Turk*, as well as being a member of many a barge racing crew. Despite a limited formal education, Catherine gained a degree at the Kent Institute of Art and Design, was a journalist, photographer, artist and poet. She exhibited her paintings at the Pall Mall gallery in London.

Through her publications in *Classic Boat* and *Traditional Boats and Tall Ships*, Catherine kept up to date with all the developments in the barging world, and in that way became a friend to all the barges as well as encouraging others to learn and get involved with barge restorations. When encouragement and publicity was needed to continue seemingly impossible restorations, Catherine reported on the hard work already completed and the intention to bring barges and smacks back to working condition. She displayed considerable tenacity, perseverance and dedication to ensure that her articles were accurate. In this way, her articles were accepted readily by the barging community as a means to drive the barge restorations forward.

Catherine visited *Cambria* at Dolphin Yard on many occasions and helped with the voyage from Sheerness to Faversham in 2007, when *Cambria* journeyed to start the restoration proper. She recently sailed on the restored *Cambria* before the Swale barge match in 2011 and on the journey up the Thames to take part in the Avenue of Sails for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Catherine was on the organising committee of the Swale barge match for many years, and was active in the Kentish Sailing Association. She was also involved in the organisation of the Horlocks Barge Rally at Mistley.

Until the very end, Catherine was certain that she was going to beat cancer for the second time, and demonstrated the same tenacity and dedication in researching new therapies for cancer, learning a great deal about medical science from the internet. She never displayed any self pity about her condition, but did not ignore her enemy. In her last year, she continued to be positive about the future, travelled to Asia, and gave encouragement to others. She is survived by Paul, Richard and Rachel, to whom she was devoted, and was especially proud of her grandchildren, Bella, Seb and Sophia.

Dave Walsh

Mark Boyle 1957 – 2012

Mark was a member of the Cambria Trust and a life-long barge enthusiast who died in late December.

The congregation assembled at Barham Crematorium, Canterbury to celebrate his life. Two thirds of whom were standing in every available space in the Chapel, a fitting farewell to Mark, so widely known in the community and barge fraternity.

Mark was involved professionally, in the later part of Cambria's rebuild. He worked on the completion of her decks, and his rigging skills came to the fore during her final fitting out. He sourced and overhauled the vast number of blocks used, and was very much to the fore in her rigging; a job in which he continued, as a volunteer, to be involved during her first year of commission.

His most visible work was done, again as a volunteer, when he completed all the detailed paintwork. i.e. scroll work, badge boards, and beautifully finished lettering across her transom.

I have only known Mark for a short time in comparison to so many other people, and hardly able to give him full appraisal. I am aware that he was very much involved in the organisation of the Thames Barge Match, and it is my intention to include a further article in the May newsletter by those who are able to do him full justice.

All the volunteers will retain lasting memories of Mark while he worked amongst them on board Cambria. We pass our deepest sympathies to his family.

Basil Brambleby

Editor's apologies:

The September 2012 newsletter was numbered incorrectly. It was in fact No 39, May issue having been No 38.

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Current subscriptions: Annual Subscription: £15. Senior Citizens: £7.50.

Please let me know if you have access to a computer, we will add your name to the e-mail address list and keep you informed when the Newsletter is available via the website. This helps us to keep running costs as low as possible whilst at the same time keeping you up to date with latest Cambria happenings.