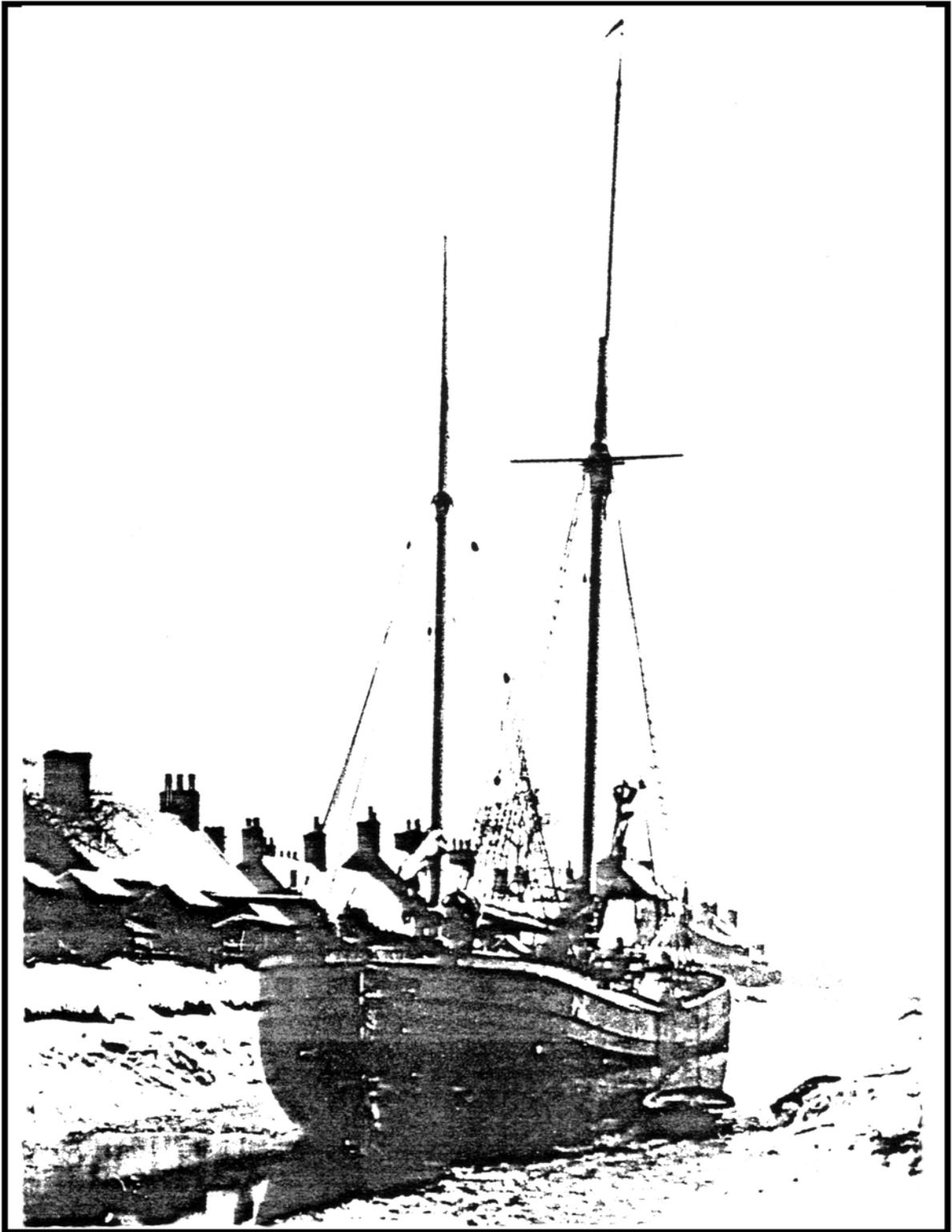


The Slabline



JOURNAL OF THE HUMBER KEEL AND SLOOP PRESERVATION SOCIETY

THE HUMBER KEEL and SLOOP PRESERVATION SOCIETY LIMITED

Registered as a Charity

HONORARY COMMODORE: Captain F Schofield
CHAIRMAN: J Hainsworth, Amen Cottage, Church Lane, Ellerker
Tel: North Cave (043-02) 3147
SECRETARY: D Robinson, 135 Waterside Road, Barton-on-Humber
Tel: Barton (0652) 635288
TREASURER: G I Jones, 31 Westland Road, Kirkella, HU10 7PH
Tel: Hull (0482) 655708
PRESS OFFICER and
'SLABLINE' EDITOR: M E Ulyatt, 28 Blackthorn Lane, Willerby, HU10 6RD
Tel: Hull (0482) 657200
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Mrs M Wilson, 55 Sutton House Road, Hull HU8 0NJ
Tel: Hull (0482) 704868
ARCHIVIST: B Roustoby, 14 Chanterlands Avenue, Hull HU5 3SR
Tel: Hull (0482) 45983
HON. AUDITOR: Malcolm M Strachan
SALES OFFICERS: Miss H Darby, 13 Middle Garth Drive, South Cave
Tel: North Cave (043-02) 2511
Mrs F Harrison, 137 Waterside Road,
Barton-on-Humber, South Humberside

THE SOCIETY'S SHIPS:

'COMRADE' Humber Keel - Purchased December 1974
Hon Sailing Master: C S Screeton
Relief Sailing Master: J W Thompson

'AMY HOWSON' Humber Sloop - Purchased March 1976
Hon Sailing Master: C Harrison
Relief Sailing Master: D Robinson

SHIPS' AGENT for both vessels: J W Thompson, 218 Victoria Avenue, Hull HU5 3DZ
Tel: Hull (0482) 441277

COVER PHOTO: Billy Boy FERN on the River Welland at Spalding.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

In the last issue of 'The Slabline', we referred to the possibility that the Society might acquire a Humber Billyboy for preservation, and members who attended the AGM will be aware that we were pursuing this quite actively. Regretfully we are now less optimistic.

Of the four metal hulled bullyboys known to have survived into recent times, MAVIS is believed to have been scrapped down in Kent, and HALCYON is thought to have been broken up in Scotland. Two remain locally. Before Christmas we looked carefully at one of them, BRILLIANT STAR, the once cutter rigged vessel owned from new by the Eastwood family. BRILLIANT STAR was offered to the Society for a moderate price. Unfortunately she had been lengthened by the insertion of a 15-foot steel mid-section into her iron hull. An estimate of £6,000 was obtained for cutting out most of this and joining the two ends by welding. Her general condition, on preliminary inspection, seemed poor with extensive corrosion in the decks and the upper parts of the hull and we felt that it was not justifiable to incur the expense of docking and survey in the circumstances.

The other surviving vessel was SAIRA built in 1899 and lying partially converted at Wakefield. SAIRA's hull had lost its original decks and bulwarks, but was otherwise in reasonably authentic condition. Superficially she seemed in better shape than BRILLIANT STAR. Her owners were prepared to negotiate a sale. At the same time, the British Waterways Board was planning an Environmental Improvement Scheme for the Aire and Calder Navigation and the Dutch River at Goole, and was keen to have a restored vessel as a centrepiece. The Board showed great interest in SAIRA and was prepared to co-operate with the Society to ensure her preservation, subject to survey and to agreement on price. It seemed likely that the Science Museum would provide some funding towards the cost of restoration. It was agreed that SAIRA should be brought to Goole where, through the good offices of Bob Watson, the No.1 Dry Dock was made available without charge by Associated British Ports, and the British Waterways Board agreed to bear the expense of a full survey.

Sadly, the docking and survey have made it plain that the undertaking is much more daunting than we had hoped. Without going into detail, it is enough to say that Dave Robinson managed to push his ballpoint pen through the plating. This does not mean that the restoration of SAIRA is an impossibility, but it almost certainly means that it is too big a task for our Society, with its existing commitments and limited resources, to undertake, at least in the short term. It would be tragic if SAIRA were to go to the scrapyard, and we are continuing to look at ways in which she might be saved.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

A reminder that all subscriptions are due on 1st May. Unless you pay by Banker's Order, please send your subscription to Mary Wilson at the address opposite.

Rates are: Ordinary Member £5.00; Husband/Wife £6.00; Pensioner £2.00; Junior £2.00; Corporate £8.00.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's AGM was held on February 16th at South Ferriby, in the congenial surroundings of the Hope and Anchor Inn. Formal business was satisfactorily conducted. Two members have retired from the Council: Ron Kelly, whose firm moved him to Teesside soon after he joined us, and Alan Binns, who now lives in Germany and whose article on 'Hope' appears in this issue. We shall miss their experience and expertise. Three newcomers have joined the Council: Graham and David Corby ("the real welder"), both of whom live in Hull and sail and work regularly on 'Comrade', and Bob Watson, the Secretary of the 'Sobriety' Project based in Goole. We welcome them and look forward to some new ideas.

The Chairman expressed the Society's appreciation of the highly efficient work done by our treasurer, Ian Jones, over this and other years, and of the invaluable help given by our Auditor, Mr Malcolm Strachan, and his staff at Hodgson Impey.

After the meeting we heard a first class talk by Alf Wedgwood, BEM, on the work of the Coastguard Service. It was illustrated by his own slides, some of them highly dramatic, of rescues and near shipwrecks. It certainly brought home to us the dangers of the coast, but also the expertise and commitment of the men who guard it.

OPEN DAYS 1986

SATURDAY 7TH AND SUNDAY 8TH JUNE

AMY HOWSON is to be on view at the Inland Waterways Association Branch Rally at Leeds.

SATURDAY 19TH JULY

COMRADE will be on view at the revival of the Owston Ferry Regatta, to be organised on the Trent by the Owston Ferry History Society.

THORNE HERITAGE CENTRE

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council is planning to open a museum or heritage centre at Thorne. It is intended that the Keels and Keel families, so many of whom live at Thorne, should be prominently featured. A canal-side site will almost certainly be chosen, possibly at Dunston's Shipyard which recently closed. Mr John Barwick, Doncaster's Director of Museums, would like to see the new museum become a centre where the traditional skills of the shipwright, practiced for so many years at Thorne, could be actively carried on. Discussions have already been held with the Curator of the Waterways Museum, Mr Tony Conder. The Borough Council has asked our own Society for help, and John Hainsworth is to speak at the inaugural meeting of a new Historical Society which is to be actively engaged in planning, and perhaps in running, the new museum. Suggestions from our own Members, and offers of exhibits by donation or on loan, will certainly be very welcome.

TO TRAVEL IN 'HOPE'

HOPE is a Sheffield-size keel built in 1908 by his next-door neighbour in Beverley, Mr Scarr, for David Holgate, from whose son and successor as owner/master, Edgar Holgate, I bought her in 1982 on my early retirement from the University. Only the third master and owner in three-quarters of a century; it's probable that she is now the oldest British registered sea-going square-rigger, which she was certainly never intended, or expected, to be.

But I had always wanted to retire to a floating home, and our family circumstances (ties on both sides of the North Sea) made it a sensible solution. I wasn't very impressed by most of the stuff written about "the retirement yacht" as it clearly involved rather vulnerable, expensive craft which by their requirements would either be condemned to be unsuitable houseboats or dependent on the whims of the necessary skilled and volunteer crew. A keel on the other hand with its ability to take the ground (and other hard knocks!) and to move with a crew of two who have to know what they are doing but not necessarily in the flower of youth, with no job on board that cannot be done by two men (or one if he takes his time) seemed the ideal solution, quite apart from my interest in the writings on single-mast square-sail craft like Viking ships and cogs (with the latter a keel has much in common).

Most other vessels with equal space for comfortable living with a few hundred books need a large crew to move about safely, and being over 20 metres long are increasingly subject, even in England, to very expensive legal requirements such as double provision of life raft spaces, two certificate holders aboard for a voyage of 8 hours, and so on. In the waters of the Continental countries where we now sail the bureaucracy is very much more demanding, in spite of (or because of) their much worse accident record than British ships have, all my European friends regard the Sheffield size of 19.6 metres as an uncanny piece of early rule-cheating half a century before 20 metres became a decisive measurement. Indeed I think it has to be said that anyone who now buys an old sailing vessel over 20 metres long should accept that the costs will be (for the extra foot!) about double those of a Sheffield-size keel if he intends to go foreign.

So I had no doubts about a keel being the right vessel for me. HOPE was particularly attractive to me because I'd actually made odd trips on her whilst she was trading, having known her owners for thirty years or so and learnt from them how to lose at dominoes, tell people at the masthead tactfully and without giving offence, that because they are turning a shackle with their arms desperately wrapped round the topmast they are tightening it instead of unscrewing it, which will be fraught with consequence for us, as well as the 3.15 from Selby, and also how to take a vessel requiring 5ft briggage under a bridge with only 4ft 10in (send a lot of heavy men forward and then aft!). I also felt that it would be a great pity if such an interesting craft were to end up as a restaurant, because there were several features that I knew professionally were rare enough to establish a special claim. Because of the unbroken family ownership she was not only well preserved (though very hard-worked!) but had all the original documentation and many original spare parts (e.g. for the irreplaceable pump-handle winch) and a lot of the original equipment, including the original 1908 mainsail (latterly of course a spare hatch-cover), fog-horn, serving-mallet, splicing-fid and blocks.

Quite apart from this 'antique' value the hull itself has unusually interesting features which suggest that owner and builder had long consultations over their garden wall. There is more sheer than usual and the run, unusually fine, starts already in the rear of the hold. No wonder that built as a keel she was initially sloop rigged for the down-river trade: it looks very much as if David Holgate, known for his vast array of prizes won, had wanted to build a vessel combining the best of both Humber types, a sea-capable keel/sloop hull that could still make a living by going to Sheffield when the estuary trade slacked off (as they did). The sides are flared out above the waterline so that the width a deck-level is almost 6" more than at the waterline. Many good judges believe, that this is not a design feature, but the consequence of pressure over the years on the long unsupported sides. This may be true in some cases: I haven't closely examined enough keels to judge. But in HOPE it is so regular, and present in way of the force of the fore and after bulkheads exactly as in intervening unsupported portions, that I think in this case it was deliberately built in for a purpose. Whether this was to improve the performance in a cross-sea and sea-kindliness (which it does), or to protect the side-plating by ensuring that bumps against the wall were taken by the stronger 4" half-round at the deck edge and not the flatter sides, or to increase capacity and side deck width (important for comfort and safety, particularly with any movement on the vessel) I do not know: all three have been powerfully argued.

Having secured HOPE the next question was simply one of priorities. It was clear to me that we don't need two authentic museum ships. I wanted a keel which could follow her predecessors to the Frisian Islands and the Baltic, and common prudence as well as the Board of Trade dictated that for this we had to depart from the ordinary up-river keel. Obviously the first requirement was to put the hull back into a state in which it could stand bumping on a hard bottom, and the deck works into a state which could stand breaking seas whilst floating off an unprotected Frisian sandbank. These didn't necessarily involve big departures from HOPE's original appearance but in practice it proved that further doubling of the bottom would have led to unacceptable overlapping without any great access of structural strength, and I therefore chose the alternative of a complete new bottom incorporating double-bottom ballast tanks as a way of killing two birds with one stone, giving a much stronger foundation for the original hull and solving the problem of how to ballast a big hull in a way which can be easily controlled (involving of course a big ballast-pump in an enlarged engine room).

Watertight integrity on deck meant scrapping and blanking off with steel plate the original hooded fo'c's'le and engine room hatches, and providing alternative access with truly watertight hatches, to the fo'c's'le by a companionway emerging through the hatch covers port side forward, and to the engine room by a spiral iron staircase into the wheelhouse, in both cases separated from the weather deck by a high coaming and thus meeting the regulations. Quite simply if I hadn't done that we wouldn't have been allowed across the North Sea. The original hatch covers were replaced by curved steel plate mounted on the original angle irons, except for the portside forward of the mast where we have kept a portion of the original hold (cut off from the rest of the ship by watertight bulkheads) partly for historical reasons, partly to hold our little Suzuki Jeep.

I was very sorry to lose the laid timber deck over the engine room (originally cabin) but it needed replacing, and it seemed pointless to put a laid deck over the engine room of all places! The steel replacement retains the original camber but has a large bolted-down plate to enable the engine to be lifted straight in or out instead of having to be moved forward on skids into the hold first, no longer possible with a solid watertight engine room bulkhead in the way.

The old fore bulkhead was made watertight with an Admiralty watertight door, and in place of the main beam to support the mast lutchet another w/t bulkhead with w/t door was built in, producing a three compartment ship aft of the collision bulkhead which will float (by calculation!) with two compartments flooded, though I certainly would not like to be on board at the time.

A solid steel bulwark, like that of a modern tanker barge, was run round the stern to protect the wheelhouse door against following seas, but the original frame heads were re-mounted on a shelf round it's top so they are still available for mooring and towing.

A sunken passenger well like COMRADE's seemed rather vulnerable, so ours is solidly roofed in and makes a sunken deck saloon from which we can look out at whatever harbour or snow squall we happen to be in. It was easier to decide on this, the most substantial departure from the usual keel, because I had already wanted to keep the wheelhouse (in time even 1930's keels are going to look historic!) and low accommodation in front of the wheelhouse is common in continental barges and not unknown in UK tank barges.

This in turn meant that the mast could no longer pivot on it's heel, as the sunken deckhouse would prevent it lying horizontally, and the mastway would have come through the middle of the accommodation, so the mast has to be hinged at the top of the lutchet, and it's heel (containing a 5cwt counterweight) rises forward through a mastway like that of a Thames barge. In this way, with the top of the wheelhouse hinged down, we can get through the 3.75 briggage of the lowest bridges on the North German canals.

Because of the wheelhouse the sails are hoisted by a sloop halyard winch on the hatch coaming just aft of the mast, and this is protected by a short solid bulwark which carries the three deadeyes for the shrouds. This gets the shrouds out of the way so that it is easy to walk inside them, and widen their angle to the mast, which for reasons of cost and maintenance, is an old snebby steel mast with a light alloy topmast sleeved into it. The yards are for the same reason of light alloy, tapered by using three different thicknesses of tube, and set a mainsail 8m by 8m and a topsail 2.5m hoist by 7.5m on the yard. The greatly increased strength makes it possible to use only a single foretopmast stay, with the topsail set beneath it so that it can very easily be dropped in front of the mainsail as it is the practice in similar Norwegian square-rigged single mast vessels.

This sounds (and is!) rather a mixture of traditions, but if you are to set a keel rig and keep a wheelhouse I don't see any better solution. HOPE, though built as a keel was actually first rigged as a sloop for some years until her sloop sail was re-cut into a keel sail (as can still be seen from it today) making her one of the few keels with a red sail, though our present ones are the traditional white. It would be very interesting to know how many vessels did

change between keel and sloop rig: I have been told of other instances but do not know any names. If the original intention was to use her for down-river work (David Holgate was, it seems, the last to sail in a keel to Bridlington, as a boy) then that would explain some of the features of her hull, an attempt to produce a vessel that could convert as some sailing fishing smacks did.

Many original blocks, and both original sheet winches are still on board. I was lucky enough to get three headledge rollers from Selby to make up the required complement (using two as rather oversize sheet winches on the side of the wheelhouse, and the original sheet winches as tack winches) but fear that anyone who comes after me will probably have to get them specially made.

The compass on HOPE, as on most traditional keels I know, suffered from deviations quite impossible to compensate satisfactorily. This doesn't matter much when you are regularly sailing the same courses in the same waters and can rely on the same compass course from experience, and I know that HOPE has often moved safely between Goole and Hull when even radar-equipped vessels would not, but if you want to make a reasonable landfall after 36 hours in strange waters you have to be able to say ExN really being ExN and not just 'Redcliff' to 'Fish Docks Wall End' in the particular keel involved. I know some people think I am over-fussy about this, but we took out all the soft iron from the wheelhouse, chain steering gear, the massive engine control levers, replacing them with bronze, and made the front bulkhead of the wheelhouse and the after part of the deckhouse roof of light alloy, to keep the poles of the variable ships magnetism away from the compass (the original) which was carefully serviced at Kingston Observatory. It still needed two 6" magnets and one 3" thwartships to correct it when we adjusted it one Saturday morning in the Fish Dock, with the correct magnetic bearing of the Humber Bridge tower set on the pelorus, another fairly un-keel-like but very traditional innovation on board. I can only say that in heavy rain squalls approaching the Dutch coast and in thick fog on the Zuyder Zee I did not grudge the time and money involved.

As we were replacing the steering gear anyway, for another reason, I wanted the new gear to leave the stern deck clear and to allow an instant change-over from wheel to tiller steering. I found in Southampton a marvellous pre-1914 bronze hydraulic telemotor gear with great toothed direct-acting rams like a medieval siege machine which my anxious calculations suggested should just have enough power to work HOPE's rudder direct (without a steering engine) and FRK Marine on the Fish Dock were able to provide a modern Japanese hydraulic cylinder of matching capacity which coupled to the steel rudder head with an instant release ball-joint which we later had occasion to test in a crowded waterway in Holland. Fortunately it proved to be really instantaneous, and no-one noticed a thing, unless they had an ear for English profanity and saw we were suddenly steering with a wooden tiller.

The propeller also needed repair or renewal and once again I preferred a fairly radical solution, fitting the largest possible variable-pitch feathering propeller, which certainly hasn't improved HOPE's previous performance in some aspects. But the variable pitch does make possible efficient motor-sailing, particularly important with square sail, and in need you can run the Gardner 4L2 flat out to get effective full power even though, because of

severe head seas or wind, the actual speed through the water is very low and this is an important safety factor. Feathering, because although the drag of this relatively large propeller is not very significant when sailing free with a good wind, it becomes quite decisive when you carry enough way to tack through the eye of the wind in a light air, when nobody wants the equivalent of four buckets hanging over the stern, or in a choppy sea when one wave on a keel's blunt bow can destroy most of the momentum. This may not directly affect safety but it considerably affects my enjoyment of sailing. The other engine room alterations involved fitting electric starting to the Gardner because, though I can start it by hand, I'm not sure I could if I were exhausted, and also the addition of a venerable Lister 3.5hp 600rpm auxiliary which appears to drive quite effortlessly not only a 3.5kw alternator for power tools and welder, but a 20 amp dynamo and two old Weir reciprocating pumps for ballast and fresh water all at the same time. I can only conclude that they don't make horsepower the way they used to, though to be fair it weighs as much as 20 Japanese portable sets and has two immense flywheels so that the handle not only starts it but is quite prepared to take one round as well.

I have left the question of internal accommodation to the end, because that is where I think it belongs. Restoring a historic vessel is a bit like amateur archaeological excavation or treasure hunting. Anything you do is actually destroying evidence about the past, and you need to be sure that what you're doing has good reason (e.g. increasing the vessel's seaworthiness and therefore survival) rather than your own comfort and, in fact, I have lived very comfortably in winter for months in HOPE's cabin. When the first engine was installed in 1930 the cabin was (unusually) rebuilt in the bows so that it must be the only pre-1914 keel cabin still afloat: and I've seen many conversions of historic craft mouldering away because too much of the necessarily limited time and money had been spent on cosy domestic rather than strictly nautical aspects. So HOPE's interior is still bare steel, though the floor levels (higher than Comrade's because of the water ballast tanks beneath them) enable one to see out through ports in the hatch coamings, and in the deckhouse the side benches with tables are raised enough to accommodate sleeping cabin and bathroom beneath them, and ensure that the eye-lines are right for looking out through the large ports of the deckhouse whether you are sitting, eating or standing cooking or washing at the galley, which is an island in the middle (so there is room all round for everyone to take part). It will certainly be a long time before the interior is finished as the exterior, ship side now is. I only hope I find in North Germany such sympathetic collaborators as Cook brothers of New Holland, Erik Hammond of Offshore Boats, Anglo-Dansk Engineering of Grimsby and Frank Kitchen of FRK Marine, all of whom took a lot of trouble to realise many of my ideas, which they didn't necessarily share and privately disapproved of.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating: when you start to try to adapt a traditional craft to a role different from that it evolved to fit, you have to face some hard but unavoidable choices. I've tried to keep alterations to the minimum necessary, in my judgement, for the safe working of the ship. But obviously if you block off the hatches which admitted air to the engine room and cabin they have to be replaced ventilators – which might just as well be proper Admiralty flood-proof cowls as not. The original curved hatch covers would no longer be accepted by the Board of Trade for a voyage below Immingham, but at least the steel plate, which replaces them for North Sea voyages, can be covered by a traditional

green canvas hatch secured with bars and wedges. I hope the anchors show the compromise we aim at. The historically picturesque 5cwt monster, whose stock alone is over 1cwt, normally kept aft of the wheelhouse to keep the screw down, is complete with cat davit, three-fold cat-tackle and slip-hook, provokes admiring photographs in harbour, and in any sort of weather at sea strikes me as only marginally preferable to stranding. The other, which people notice only to regret, is a 90lb Stokes of the type used by most modern oil-barges and I can get it down and up single handed without getting out of breath. It's a very tricky business to balance progress and authenticity in something as living and real as a historic vessel that is moving in and out of unfamiliar harbours. Certainly you have to preserve the authentic gear, but you also have to preserve the ship, which may on occasion mean getting an anchor down quickly, or, equally important, knowing that you can if you have to.

But a question like that rather leads on to our experiences in sailing HOPE from Hull via Wells, Yarmouth, Ijmuiden, Delfzijl, Emden to North Germany, from where I hope to report on our attendance at the 1986 gathering of old sailing ships at Bremerhaven, and the voyage to date.

A L BINNS

PRESERVING A NORFOLK KEEL

During the autumn, the Editor received the following press release:

NORFOLK KEEL TRUST

PROJECT GROUP

This project is to recover the Nation's only known remaining 'Norfolk Keel' which lies buried partly in the river bank, partly in the River Yare at Whitlingham (4 miles south of Norwich, Norfolk).

The design of the 'Keel' is possibly derived from the Scandinavian Clinker tradition or the later Saxon period War Keel. Histories indicate that this vessel type was the main passenger and cargo carrier from Saxon times to the early 19th century. With central mast and large square sail she could not sail against the wind, so even with the use of oar, current and towing, progress was slow in inland and coastal waters.

In the 16th century an influx of people from the Netherlands brought new ideas to Norfolk. The fore and aft rigged Dutch vessels were faster and in the 17th century soon established their place as the passenger carriers, although the Keel was still the major cargo transport. During the 18th century these vessels grew in size, taking over the heavy cargo trade and by 1800 the Keel, a design that was possibly in use for 1000 years, was almost entirely superceded by the 'Wherry'.

Only a few more Keels were built, a last attempt to maintain use of the type for heavy loads. Our Keel at Whitlingham is most probably one of these, records indicate that she was

built as a timber cargo carrier around 1780-1830. Clinker-built, length overall 54ft 6ins and depth 4ft 6ins. She was initially sunk in 1890 and filled in, as an extra support for the river bank, uncovered in 1912 for measurements to be taken, then re-sunk. Although models still remain in the Science Museum London and Bridewell Museum Norwich few further details of this exercise have survived.

In June 1985 a basic survey of the site was conducted by Marine Archaeologist Theole Douglas-Sherwood BA (Hons) now site controller and organiser for the Norfolk Keel Trust Project Group.

It was found that the hull had suffered great recent damage where it projected into the river, caused by broads boat propellers. Also that the vessel was fast becoming structurally unsound. The Port and Haven Commission considered the Keel to be a navigational hazard and although the timbers appear firm, deterioration has taken place. If it is to be saved for further study and preservation it needs to be moved immediately to a place of safety.

During the summer of 1984 much work was done to clear the site using volunteer helpers and loaned equipment. Under the direction of Theole Douglas-Sherwood seven feet of earth, trees and concrete blocks were cleared from off the Keel site and with use of volunteer RAF divers much silt and debris has been cleared from around the Keel itself.

The position now is that the excavation must be completed using dredges operated by divers. At each step the Keel will be tested for condition of timbers and the hull strapped and supported as necessary. A frame is to be constructed around the vessel and with the use of airlifting bags, gain sufficient floatation to enable a large towboat to navigate the waterways to Norwich, Norfolk. Support vessels will be used to ensure all possible safety during the trip. After reaching Norwich a safe haven has been provided by Hales Hall, to where the Keel will be transported for preservation work to be carried out.

Part of the operation will be accomplished by volunteer workers, and some equipment kindly loaned by local firms and services. Running costs and hire charges of equipment are still high for actual lifting and transportation. Overheads to enable the rescue of this most important contribution to British Heritage have been kept to a modest professional estimate of £20,000.

During February, Mr Douglas-Sherwood wrote again and confirmed that the Keel has now been successfully raised and that conservation treatment, similar to that applied to the MARY ROSE is being carried out. She will not be restored to sailing condition, but will be presented to the Broads Museum as a static exhibit. Enquiries should be addressed to the Trust at 22 Hardley Street, Hardley, Nr Loddon, Norfolk.

I.W.A. NATIONAL RALLY

The Inland Waterways Association's National Rally, always a spectacular event, will be held this year on 23rd-25th August at Brentford, Middlesex. One of the vessels attending will be the Keel DAYBREAK, owned by our member Tony Woodward, who is restoring her to sailing condition and hopes to have the mast up by then. It has been suggested that the Society might have an exhibition and sales stand on board. If any members would like to help with this – it should be fun – please contact the Chairman.

BSS CALENDAR

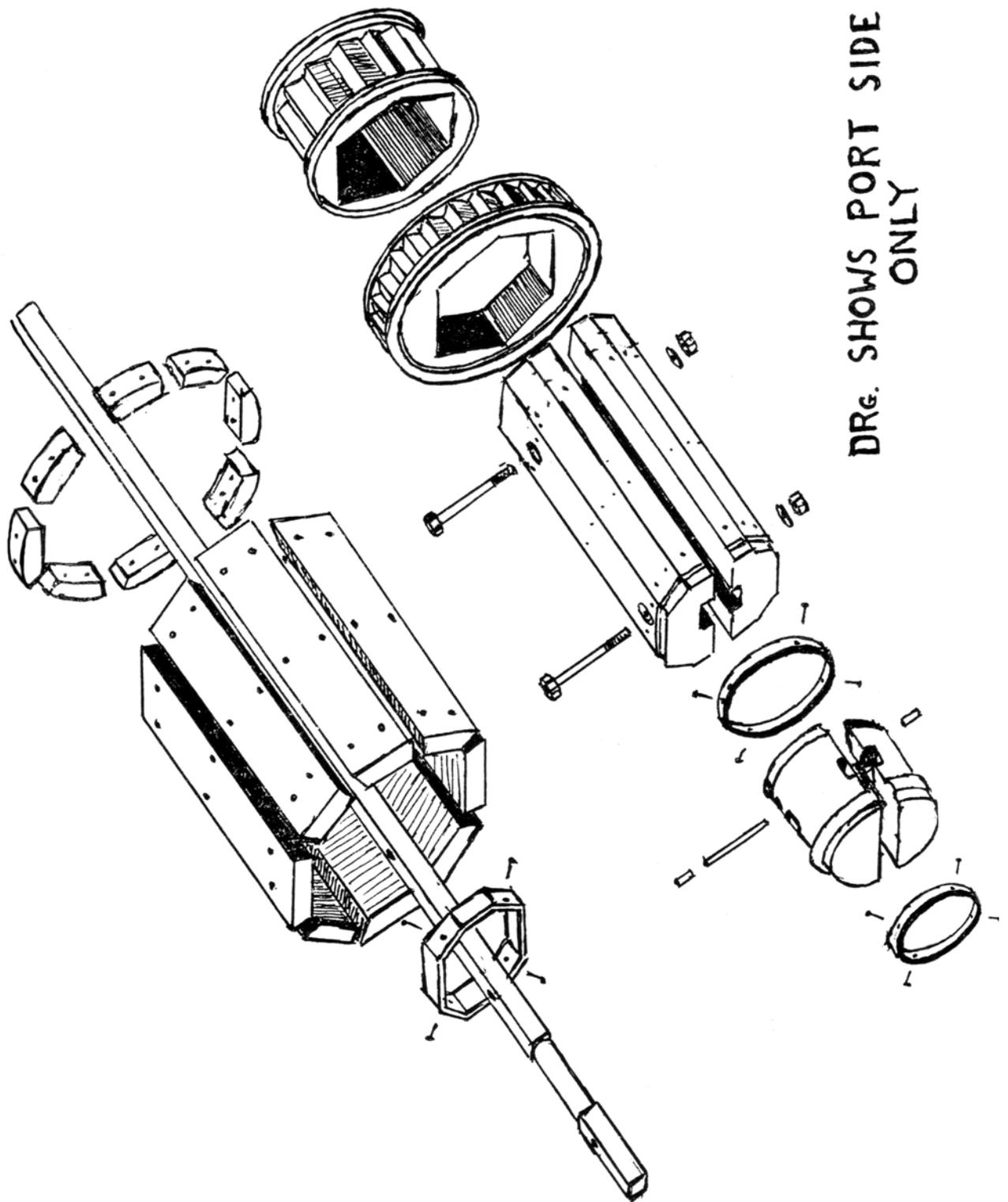
BSS, a Leicester-based firm which makes industrial heating and pipeline supplies, has produced a spectacular colour calendar showing inland waterways crafts. They approached the Society for materials, and as a result, one page shows a fine painting of COMRADE on the Ouse at Cawood. Copies can be obtained from BSS at Fleet House, Lee Circle, Leicester LE1 3QQ.

"THE WINDLASS HAS JAMMED"

COMRADE has been anchored half a mile downstream of Immingham for two hours to ride out the ebb, the wind being WSW and blustery. As the flood started to make, the cable was hove short, the mains' l loosely set and an attempt to weigh the anchor resulted in the windlass jamming as the port side purchase ring started to slip round on the wooden core. The anchor was hove clear of the ground using the davit, fish tackle and a strop. This involved some gymnastics over the ship's bow by members of the crew. The port side connecting rod was rapidly unshipped by the 'Purchaseman' and the 'Real Welder' and the rest of the cable recovered and the kellick got aboard using only the starboard side of the rocker gear, an operation requiring a considerable amount of brute force and sweat.

At the end of the season COMRADE was taken back to Beverley to lay up, so the opportunity was taken to examine the windlass thoroughly. Both drum ends were found to be rotten and on removing the chesting from the port side of the barrel, the whole oaken core was found to be in an advanced state of decay. It was decided to unship the whole barrel, dismantle it on the foredeck, save the three castings, two purchase rings and the pawl ring, and rebuild the whole thing ashore during the winter. As the cost had to be kept to a minimum (zero if possible) friendships were strained to the limit, some became merely acquaintances afterwards, and I managed to acquire eight cubic feet of elm and a suitable length of two inch mild steel bar for the new shaft, the old one being beyond redemption after sixty-years of usage.

The lathes at my disposal were totally inadequate to turn the journals of a shaft 87 inches long, so they were filed round with constant resort to callipers and micrometer, resulting in a concentricity within .007 of an inch. The shaft was then drilled to take $\frac{5}{8}$ inch dia. Bolts at suitable centres, these being obtained from the original shaft.



DRg. SHOWS PORT SIDE
ONLY

The elm was now cut into suitable pieces to produce the drum ends in two halves and the core in four sections. The six pieces were planed to size and the rebates cut in for the shaft. In the drum ends the holes for the handspikes were produced by drilling out the meat, then finishing off the hard way with a mallet and chisel. The drum ends were next glued together on a mandrel and turned up using a 'Colchester Master' lathe requiring a fair amount of ingenuity and crossed fingers.

Following this the four steel rings were shrunk on and the complete drum ends put to soak in linseed oil. The four parts of the core were now planed to fit the inside of the pawl ring and the holes for the bolts transferred from the shaft. The pawl ring was positioned at the centre of the shaft and the core sections were driven into place from each end after being liberally applied with glue, and the bolts pulled down flush with the face of the timber. Wooden spacers were glued and screwed either side of the pawl ring following which the two purchase rings were driven home and glued wedges were hammered in to take up any discrepancies between the octagonal holes in these rings and the core.

Ten coats of raw linseed oil were applied to the core and allowed to soak into the rapidly drying elm, it had become a race to replace the disappearing moisture in the wood with oil to minimise the shakes that were appearing. A well-heated workshop is an ideal place to work, but not the ideal environment for wet elm!!! At night the core had to be covered in wet cloths until I was ready to introduce the linseed.

Leaving the core to absorb its oil I converted some mahogany offcuts and a piece of pitch pine left over from the leeboards into sixteen new chestings, eight from each type of timber. These were drilled for six screws each, the original chestings having been nailed. The screw holes were transferred to the core then the chestings were immersed in linseed. Three coats of bitumastic paint were now applied to the core after fitting the octagonal steel bands, and the castings given their final coat of red lead, two previous coats having been put on immediately after chipping away years of old paint and scale. The under-sides of the chestings had two coats of bitumastic applied, then they were screwed into place, the screw heads being sunk well below the surface and the holes plugged. Final trimming was now done and any small gaps filled with putty. The two drum ends were now fitted, the steel pins driven in and the holes plugged, bringing to an end the hard part of the job. Two coats of undercoat and two coats of gloss paint were applied to the metalwork and five coats of marine varnish given to everything. The job has taken most of the winter, working lunchtimes and after hours in the late afternoons, it's been interesting and enjoyable and seeing it in the corner of the workshop makes it all seem worthwhile.

The cost? One tin of bitumastic paint, one gallon of linseed oil (I ran out of friends), a lot of sarcasm at work, some people take a lot of convincing that a windlass is not part of a windmill, and NO!!! it is not part of the MARY ROSE.

If it lasts as long as the last one then I shall be far too old to be involved in replacing it and, if anyone else wants to build one, I'll give them all the advice they want but that's all.

DEADEYES

'SAIRA' AND THE AARON FAMILY

Lying in the Calder just below Wakefield Flood Lock is an intriguing looking vessel. The canal passer-by might dismiss her as just another 'barge', evidently laid up, with hatches missing, rust on her decks, and some unsightly delves and bulges around the bow. But what distinguishes her, to anyone with an eye for ships, is her truly spectacular sheer. At the same time, whilst her bow is bluff, the lines of the stern are unusually fine. She looks like a sailing vessel, and so she was. SAIRA is, as far as is known, the only billy-boy hull to survive in anything like original condition.

SAIRA's name received its present spelling relatively recently. As SARAH she is the second vessel to be listed in the Hull Register of Ships for 1900, now preserved in the City Record Office. She was built, by Hunt and Fowler of Hull, in 1899. She was 71'-4" long and 17'-9" wide. The material was steel. She was built for William Nettleton, merchant of Lime Street, Hull. She is described as having two masts with a ketch rig.

So far we know nothing about SARAH's early years. A little basic research should provide more information on her first owner, and this remains to be done. At present the more detailed story begins in 1914, when 48 shares in the ship were purchased by Mark Aaron of 25 Morrill Street, Hull and 16 shares by Claudius Thomas Aaron of 89 Jalland Street, Hull. The latter was to be the managing owner.

For information on the Aaron family, and on their ownership of SARAH, I am indebted to Mr Stanley Aaron, the son of Claudius Thomas, who now lives in retirement near Scarborough. Stanley Aaron went into banking on leaving school, but his recollections of his father's ship are still vivid after seventy years.

The Aaron family came to Hull from Louth. Stanley Aaron's great grandfather, Thomas Aaron, is listed in White's 'History and Gazetteer of Lincolnshire' 1856, as a Sloop owner of Norfolk Place, Louth. A son, Stanley Aaron's grandfather, was born around 1846, and continued in his father's profession. The family still own a water-colour painting of the billy-boy WOODLARK, a tiller-steered wooden vessel shown with a square topsail, which Mr Aaron thinks may have been worked from Louth. Another Aaron ship was the BROTHERS, which may have been owned jointly with one of grandfather's brothers who lived at Thorne. But the Louth Navigation was deteriorating, and Louth was no longer an adequate base from which to work a coasting trade. So around 1900 the whole family moved to Hull, living first in Hornsea Parade, Holderness Road.

Grandfather Aaron had five daughters and two sons. The elder son was called Mark, and it was his father's intention that the second should be called Walter. Unfortunately he was away at sea when the baby's birth was registered, under the name of Claudius Thomas; however, the boy was always known, in and outside the family, as Walter.

The first family ship which Stanley Aaron personally remembers was MAVIS. She was an iron ketch built at Beverley in 1896. According to John Leather's account in 'Barges' (published by Adlard Coles in 1984), she was first owned in Barton: Mr Aaron thinks his grandfather acquired her around the time they moved to Hull. Grandfather then has a bigger ship, the HALCYON built by Henry Scarr of Hessle. HALCYON is recorded as having

been launched in 1903, though family tradition gives the date as 1911. She was exceptionally large, being 83ft long by 20ft beam, and was ketch rigged. Mark, the elder son, became her Captain: later she had an engine installed, and Mark went on running her into the 1930's. Stanley Aaron recalls his uncle's surprise at finding that, now working into the wind instead of with it, he needed to fit a wheelhouse, a refinement he had previously scorned. In the 1950's HALCYON was owned at Campbeltown on the west coast of Scotland.

SARAH was required as a replacement for MAVIS which was sold, probably back to Barton owners. (In the 1960's she was still working, as a powered vessel, out of the Medway). Grandfather Aaron had died about 1911, and Walter was to captain the new ship. Some money for the purchase was put up by Walter's brother-in-law Edward Johnson, who worked as a joiner and millwright at Spillers Flour Mills and was something of a shipping enthusiast. SARAH was bigger than MAVIS and may have been more suitable for taking the ground.

Walter Aaron worked SARAH extensively along the East Coast; an important cargo was bricks, from the Barton brickyards to the Thames. Sometimes she would return with a cargo of bones, occasionally for a fertiliser works at Bridlington. She went to the Tyne for coal, and once or twice to Par in Cornwall for China clay: on one occasion she had to be towed into Ramsgate. She often carried cake from Chambers and Fergus's Mill to Kings Lynn, and sometimes went to Ipswich where Paul's had a mill. During the First World War she carried military stores to Boulogne. Many of the cargoes were arranged through an agent in Hull, Ernest Tottle.

Stanley Aaron made several trips with his father during the school holidays. At the age of eleven, in August 1919, they travelled by train to London. The city was still bedecked with flags and bunting for the Victory Parade a few days before. They went down to Grays in Essex, where SARAH was lying with a cargo of maize for Paul's Mill at Lynn. She was moored to a buoy alongside a schooner, the SARAH LIGHTFOOT. After setting sail they encountered persistent head winds, spent two or three days in Yarmouth Roads and eventually went into harbour. When the wind changed they sailed again for Lynn and, after discharging, returned light to the Humber.

Walter Aaron sailed with a crew of two: a mate and a boy. Stanley Aaron remembers her being wheel steered, the wheel being right aft. Forward of the wheel was the skylight, "like a dog kennel with glass sides", which Walter Aaron added to give more light in the cabin. He also added a more spacious companionway, with double doors and a sliding top, which stood up two feet or so above the cabin deck. On each side of the deck were the leeboard rollers – little winches set horizontally in a frame. Stanley Aaron thinks his father may have substituted steel leeboards for wood.

The mizzen mast was just aft of the main hatch, with a rail forward of it to take the main sheets. There was a deck between the two hatches, with winches set on either side of the mainmast for the halyards. There was roller reefing on the main boom. Stanley Aaron remembers a main, though not a mizzen topsail. There was a (steering) bowsprit with a foresail and two jibs, and a barrel windlass for the anchor with monkey box and rocker. The

rolls were brown and had been made by a sail maker in Lime Street, Hull. All round the decks were steel bulwarks, though the lee side was pretty well awash in a stiff breeze. The rigging was mostly wire, set up with rope lanyards and round wooden deadeyes. Stanley Aaron thinks the ship may have been painted red below the bulwarks, which were grey. A boat was carried on the main hatch, and there was also a small dinghy. SARAH's cabin was fairly simple, with the usual lockers and seat in the stern and a flat-topped stove where the boy did the cooking. HALCYON with a walk-in stateroom off the cabin was much more luxurious.

During the 1920's competition from Dutch coasters was increasing, and SARAH was becoming less economic to run. Unlike his brother Mark, Walter never installed an engine. Eventually in 1927, he sold his ship to James Barraclough and Co. of Hull. Walter Aaron then retired from the sea.

Norman Barraclough of Barton now takes up the story. He had just gone to work for his uncle when SARAH was acquired, and he remembers her being towed up from Grimsby where she had been lying. She still carried her ketch rig, and he recollects her having a small wheelhouse with an open back, at that time. Her sheer, and the exaggerated slope of her side decks, made her a difficult vessel to get about on. Although Barraclough's owned a number of sloops – at one time they had 21 vessels under sail – they had no use for a coasting billy boy. SARAH was unrigged and used as a lighter. She was employed chiefly on the Ouse, and was towed to Selby or York with such cargoes as sugar or cocoa beans. Her long run made her one of the best towing lighters on the river.

Barraclough's already had on ship called SARAH: the little sloop once owned by Dick Cook of Owston Ferry. To avoid confusion, the new ship was re-christened SAIRA. She was re-registered under this name in 1938. When an engine was finally installed the bulwarks were removed at Clapson's Yard in Barton, the two hatches made into one and the cabin dismantled. A new engine, a Lister, was installed in 1952.

Barraclough's ceased to trade in 1975, and SAIRA was sold to a Mr Hiley of Goole, who worked her for a short time. She was then sold to Mr John Melville, who now owns her jointly with Mr Jerry Duncan. A start has been made on converting her hold into accommodation, but externally she is much as Barraclough's left her. It is not difficult to visualise her restored, with her two masts and red-brown sails, surging down the river on her way to the sea.

AMY HOWSON IN WINTER '85

Every two years both ships are slipped and inspected to ensure they are in good order and if not, remedial work is done to restore the vessels to good condition. This year was AMY HOWSON's turn, so during the summer Cyril, her Sailing Master, and I had a preliminary inspection of her general seaworthiness, coming to the conclusion that, if possible, the stem and the foredeck should be overhauled. Accordingly at a Council Meeting it was agreed, if nothing else was more urgent, this year's work would be 'farrard'.

So at the end of the sailing season we left AMY HOWSON on the slip at New Holland Shipyard for her hull inspection by Dave Cook. Although her bottom plates were sound and would only need chipping, scraping and black varnishing, he found the plates each side of her stempost very cankered and weak and the whole foredeck, which was thin when we got her, badly buckling under the strain imposed by the forestay and stayfall. To make it safe for us to sail or lower the mast, everyone concerned agreed the obvious thing to do was a wholesale professional rebuild of the bow section to bring the ship back to good condition.

To an onlooker the sloop must have resembled a madhouse – while the burners were cutting away the foredeck, hawse plates, top strake and middle plates off her bow, the 'blackgang' were underneath black varnishing for all they were worth!

Our Hon. Chairman emerged looking like a demented redskin sweep having transferred about a hundredweight of dried mud and black varnish to himself.

The other stalwarts, Tom and Alice Humphries, attacked 'Amy's' side plates with their brushes, so while her bow was disappearing, the rest was being spruced up.

Eventually the platers and welders began to place new steelwork and her new bow began to take shape. With several ribs replaced AMY HOWSON is resplendent with a new foredeck, hawse plates, top and middle plates, convex irons and re-welded whiskers. Cyril got a coat of red oxide on her sides before her return to Baton Haven.

DAVE ROBINSON

AMY HOWSON IN EARLY '86

Once the Society's Sloop was safely moored in her winter berth we could make a start on refitting the fo'c'sle, replacing and repainting sundry items of gear and of course preparing for the coming sailing season.

The fo'c'sle had been completely ripped out for the shipwrights so we took the opportunity to start afresh with it. While I cut out and replaced the rotten steel plate on the cabin sole – rotted by rain through the deck before we got her, Cyril scraped and black varnished the plating under the dennings (floorboards) which he replaced a few inches lower to ensure adequate headroom when the deck ceiling is put in.

Little of the 'woodwork' which was put in during her earlier restoration was fit to replace so Cyril cut up a bit more of Saltend Jetty (what was) to restore the traditional bedhole, bos'ns locker and our galley.

Most of the black emulsion the BBC painter lashed on was gone with the rebuild, only the after rail and after timbers needed rubbing down for the blue paint AMY normally wears. The orange red lead of course is covered eventually by the red oxide final coat.

As the weather permits more topside jobs are getting done, such as painting and varnishing ready for lowering the mast to scrape and linseed it, clean and linseed the rigging, a delightful messy job prior to bending the sails on and preparing for the spring 'shakedown' sail.

Although we are members of a relatively young society, we are preserving and sailing ships which are well past their half century, nay nearing three-quarters of a century, so we must be realistic; the days spent sailing must be repaid by days of care and maintenance.

DAVE ROBINSON

PREPARING COMRADE FOR SAILING IN 1986

Last year, as some members will be aware, we had trouble with the windlass, necessitating the dismantling of the gear on the port side. (Working with the starboard side only made weighing the anchor more than twice as hard!). After sailing had finished in 1985, close investigation revealed that the central core of the windlass was irretrievable and a complete rebuild was called for. This was undertaken by Colin Screeton and is described in another article in 'Slabline'.

Rather more members will be aware that leeboards for COMRADE have been under construction for some years and have been a familiar sight in the hold for a very long time. So much so that the doubters reckoned that they might never be seen at their proper station. Nevertheless, the wedges were finally secured to the inside of the boards, all the gear was ready and we were ready.

We were fortunate to obtain the services of Keith Marin of Marin Engineers, Beverley and his crane. Each board weighs perhaps three-quarters of a ton and the windlass is hefty too. On April 10th we took COMRADE up Beverley Beck where, with great skill and precision, the windlass was put aboard, and the leeboards taken up through the mastway and secured alongside. On the following day, we had the satisfaction of confirming that everything works, dropping the port leeboard two or three times.

COMRADE now has a complete set of gears so that we are 'only(!)' left with maintenance. However, we are never likely to run out of that.

'PURCHASEMAN'

THE HASHOLME BOAT HOMEWARD BOUND

By sheer chance on a summer morning in 1984, in a field near Holme-on Spalding Moor, Humberside, two archaeologists stumbled across one of the most astonishing prehistoric finds ever made in Britain. Drainage operations had just torn from the clay a huge oak timber weighing ½ tonne. This was soon found to be merely a fragment of the bow of an enormous Iron Age boat, entombed in waterlogged clay on the site where it sank over 2,000 years ago.

On 27th February 1986 this boat, in its specially constructed steel cradle, is to be lifted by a 130-tonne capacity crane over the roof of a Hull primary school onto a scaffolding stage in the playground, from where it will be winched through a hole cut through the outside wall of a swimming baths. Here it will straddle a full-size swimming pool in order to be sprayed continually with water for 18 months, to prevent it drying out.

The boat known as the Hasholme Boat, is the biggest pre-historic logboat in Britain, and was probably used for transporting heavy cargo in the tidal creeks around the Humber estuary several centuries before the birth of Christ and nearly 2,000 years before the launch of the MARY ROSE.

Hewn from a single gigantic oak tree, the boat is over 42 feet long, and weighs around 6 tonnes. Experts at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, have spent over a year analysing the Hasholme Boat which is in such remarkable condition that mysterious carvings and unusual examples of maritime technology and tool marks can still clearly be seen.

Hull Museums, to whom the boat was donated by the landowner, are masterminding the 250-mile return journey of the boat to Hull by road along the M1, M18 and M62 and its installation into a disused baths in the city. There it will be cleaned and kept saturated under a specially-designed spray system, prior to its impregnation with wax (polyethylene glycol) over an eight-year period, which will stabilise its structure.

The Hasholme Boat will be on display to the public throughout its treatment period, and it has already excited enormous interest among scholars and laymen alike. Much of the cost of the operation has been met by Hull business interests including Sangwins Ltd as well as Worthington-Simpson Pumps of Newark. The project has also received major sponsorship from Mansfield Brewery. The unique vessel will form the centrepiece of a new museum in Hull from 1987.

For further information contact:

David Crowther	Hull Museums and Art Galleries
or David Fleming	Town Docks Museum
	Queen Victoria Square
on (0482) 222737/8	HULL

Proposed Sailing Programme

for 'COMRADE' and 'AMY HOWSON' in Summer 1986

Date	H W at Hull	COMRADE	AMY HOWSON		Date	H W at Hull	COMRADE	AMY HOWSON
Sat May 10 th	0800	X	X		Sat Aug 9 th	0918	N/A	
Sun May 11 th	0830	X	X		Sun Aug 10 th		N/A	N/A
Sat May 24 th	0714	X	X		Sat Aug 23 rd	0913	N/A	
Sun May 25 th	0757	X			Sun Aug 24 th	0951	N/A	
Sat Jun 7 th	0707	X	N/A		Sat Aug 30 th	1549	X	N/A
Sun Jun 8 th	0738	X	N/A		Sun Aug 31 st	1706		N/A
Sat Jun 21 st	0608	X	X		Sat Sep 6 th	0817	X	
Sun Jun 22 nd	0658	X	X		Sun Sep 7 th	0852	X	
Sat Jul 5 th	0609	X			Sat Sep 20 th	0810	X	X
Sun Jul 6 th	0647	X	X		Sun Sep 21 st	0847	X	X
Sat Jul 26 th	1021				Sat Oct 4 th	0715	N/A	
Sun Jul 27 th	1102				Sun Oct 5 th	0750	N/A	

- Notes:
- (1) All times are British Summer time.
 - (2) Sailing trips for both ships normally leave from Ferriby Sluice.
 - (3) Members wishing to make bookings of places must confirm them with D Robinson (tel: 0652-635288) for AMY HOWSON and J Thompson (tel: 0482-441277) for COMRADE.
 - (4) All sailings are subject to weather and tide permitting. The Society reserves the right to cancel any sailing on the advice of the Sailing Masters.