

# The Slabline



*Keel in Hedon Haven*

**JOURNAL OF THE HUMBER KEEL AND SLOOP PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

## THE HUMBER KEEL and SLOOP PRESERVATION SOCIETY LIMITED

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Registered as a Charity

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### 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, C Atkinson

SHIPS' AGENT's: AMY HOWSON: D Robinson, Tel: (0652) 635288  
COMRADE: J W Thompson, Tel: Hull (0482) 441277

COVER PHOTO: By kind permission of Mr Dale Smith, Hedon

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

### Annual Subscriptions

Once again, our annual subscriptions have remained unchanged. Members are reminded that all subscriptions were due on 1 May. Please send yours to Mary Wilson at the address on the inside front cover, while it is fresh in your mind! A standing order will save you trouble, and facilitate the completion of a covenant: Mary will be glad to supply the necessary forms.

### Shanty Evening

All our Members, their families and friends, are invited to a shanty evening and barbecue aboard COMRADE and AMY HOWSON at South Ferriby on the evening of Saturday 30 June.

This is a new venture for the Society, and we hope it will prove a successful and enjoyable evening. Two of our long serving members, Tom Humphries and Charlie Atkinson, are useful performers on the squeezebox, and they will be joined by Patrick Purves from Louth and other shipmates. There will be no formal programme: other folk singers with a shanty or two in their repertoire will be very welcome to join us, and we would be glad if members would pass the word round and give the event some publicity.

Barbecue suppers will be available, and the Hope and Anchor Inn will provide a bar. We shall make a start around 8pm. There is no need to book in advance and no entrance charge, though donations will be welcome and we hope to earn a little money from the barbecue suppers and snacks which will be on sale. The ships will be tied up on the Ancholme, just above the lock.

### "Spilling the Wind"

The half hour documentary programme made by Dave Beresford's Gardengate Productions in September finally went out on Yorkshire Television at 10.30 on 26 April. Many of our members were able to see a preview at the AGM. There has been a good deal of favourable comment; the programme was beautifully made, and the blend of sailing shots, old photographs, words and music gave a vivid picture both of keels in the past and our own work in the present. We hope the programme will be repeated before long; it surely deserves a national screening.

### Annual General Meeting

The AGM was duly held at Ferriby on Saturday 17 February. Formal business was transacted in record time, and warm appreciation was expressed of the work of the Society's Sailing Masters, Ships' Husbands and other crew members who have maintained the vessels and kept them sailing. Ian Jones, our Treasurer and Mr Colin Palmer, our Auditor, were also thanked for the time they have given to looking after our finances. Mr A

G Bell gave a most enjoyable talk "A Dockland Miscellany", with many fascinating slides made from old photographs of Hull which few of us had ever seen before.

### Miss Lois Latham

We are sad to report the death of one of our first members, Miss Lois Latham. Miss Latham was formerly a lecturer in the Geography Department at the University of Hull. She attended many of our meetings in the early days of the Society, and supported us in various ways. Miss Latham was active in a wide range of societies, always preferring to be an active member. She remembered many of them in her will, and we are among a number of local organisations to receive a legacy, which we acknowledge with gratitude.

### Hull Marina

In the past, relations between the Society and Hull Marina were a little strained, as the City Council had turned down our request for berthing and the previous operators had made it clear that our ships would not be welcome. Recently the present Harbourmaster, Captain Exley, contacted us to assure us that we were now most welcome to use the Marina at any time. The offer is much appreciated, and COMRADE and AMY may well be seen in the Marina in the future. In particular a concert of folk music and sea shanties is to be held there on Saturday 8 September, and we have been asked to allow both ships to be used as a floating stage. We look forward to being there.

### Owston Ferry Regatta

We had been looking forward to taking the ships the Owston Ferry Regatta again this summer. To our disappointment, we now learn that the River Authority has said that the jetty where the ships were previously on view is unsafe and cannot be used. This has led to the cancellation of all the waterborne events. The regatta has always been a very pleasant occasion, and we very much hope that it will be possible to repair the jetty so that it can continue to take place.

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### **WHAT IS A SPOUT?**

In November we received a letter from Mr Stewart England of 16 Stirling Avenue, Waterlooville, Hants. This is an extract from his letter.

"For many years my family lived in Goole and was involved with the Aire and Calder Navigation. Prior to moving to Goole my antecedents lived in and around Fishlake. The specific enquiries I am making at the moment concern my grandfather Joseph England who worked on the Aire and Calder Navigation from c.1914 to 1938. During this time he worked on flyboat 112 travelling to Huddersfield and Leeds. He also worked, during the 1920s, for Hudson Ward, flour millers, for a time on a barge believed to be called CAROLINE. Joseph is also believed to have worked as mate on a "spout" with his father, Albert. What please is a

spout? Albert is believed to have been in charge of barges on the Aire and Calder Navigation, but no names or numbers of vessels are known. Albert's father, another Joseph, came to Goole from Fishlake c.1960 and he is believed to have had a barge JOHN AND ELLEN.

The various male members of my family married in Fishlake prior to 1860 usually referred to themselves as "master mariners" although I fear this was stretching a point as other references are made to "boatmen". The only other reference I have is to the one Thomas England being master of the 45ton sloop Richard (Adam)? owned by Ann Furniss, registered at Doncaster 25 May 1803. This sloop is said to have worked mainly from Rotherham to Hull - records in Doncaster MBC archives."

We referred Mr England's enquiry to our Honorary Commodore, Fred Schofield, who was on this occasion unable to provide very much information. Fred remembers a Mr England living at Goole who traded to York with coal. He was around retirement age when Fred knew him, 60 or more years ago, and he did not know him well. Fred remembers CAROLINE as having been owned around that period by Joe Hirst. He does not recall Englands in Fishlake in his time.

A spout was a dumb vessel owned by the Aire and Calder Navigation Company. Spouts were up to 80ft long by 14ft beam. They were towed by steam tug, and traded up to Wakefield and Leeds. They were built of boiler plates, riveted together. They did not carry coal but goods from Goole Docks, coming back down light.

Perhaps one of our members knows more about the England family?

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## **FURTHER ENQUIRIES**

In February the Sobriety Project received a letter from Mrs J Hawkins of 25 Prince Street, Haworth, Keighley. Bob Watson passed it on to us. Mrs Hawkins wrote as follows.

"I am seeking information regarding my family who traded as bargees between Knottingly and Goole. I enclose details of the 1881 census return, and I know that the family lived in this area and had four more daughters in the years following 1881. Particularly I am interested in the boats which they had; I understand one of these was named THE FIVE SISTERS.

### 1881 Census

The vessel ANILINE OF KNOTTINGLY moored near Lock.

George CUSWORTH	Head of Household	Age 27	Occupation is Master
Caroline CUSWORTH	Wife	Age 26	
Edward CUSWORTH	Son	Age 7	

George CUSWORTH	Son	Age 5
Ellen CUSWORTH	Daughter	Age 1
William Rhodes	Mate	Age 18

The family also resided at a dwelling House at Racca Green, Knottingley during the same census."

The situation must have been a common one: a captain, his wife and four children, with a house ashore but living aboard, along with a young mate. One wonders whether, a few years later, all "five sisters" were living aboard together, and whether the brothers were still there; it would have been distinctly crowded. We have been unable to give Mrs Hawkins any further information about the family or their ships: can a reader help?

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### **MEMORIES OF A KEELMAN'S FAMILY**

In 1986 Mrs Beatrice Burton began to write down her memoirs. Sadly, Mrs Burton passed away earlier this year, but her daughter Mrs Audrey Halliday, who lives in Beverley, has very kindly allowed us to publish excerpts from her mother's manuscript. We have selected the main passages related to our subject, and these appear below.

"I was born Beatrice Whittles at 9, Lees Entre, 193 High Street, Kingston upon Hull on May 5 1907. This house is no longer there - it was pulled down to make way for the new Queen's Gardens. I was the youngest daughter of Olive and Arthur Whittles. My father was born 23.2.1871, the son of Eliza Hastings and George William Whittles. Their son Arthur was born at 87 Bright Street, Carbrook, Attercliff. My mother Olive was the second eldest daughter of Elizabeth Hinchsliff and George Stephenson Hinchsliff who had a small grocery shop at 193 High Street, Hull.

My father was a Keel Owner, and at this time Hull was rapidly developing as a fishing port, so my father had plenty of work - sailing and sometimes being towed up the Humber to Keadby and on up the canals to Doncaster and Sheffield with grain from Rank's flour millers and calling on the way back at Dalton Main Colliery, Roundwood, for coal. I well remember the lovely school holidays spent on the ship. At Roundwood there were fields to play in, and there was a laundry and bakehouse where mother could wash our clothes and bake bread and cakes ready for our return journey to Hull, after Dad had filled the ship's hold with coal which he used to take to Rafferty and Watson's near Scott Street Bridge.

My father had one sister Beatrice who I was called after. Unfortunately their parents died when my dad was nine, and they went to live with their grandma Hastings. She only lived six months and she died, so dad and Auntie Beatrice went to live with their Auntie Carrie and Uncle John Hastings at Stainforth, where they stayed until they married. Dad said Uncle John was very strict with him. I remember Uncle used to turn the wooden bridge at Stainforth. He wore a navy blue guernsey and a blue tippy hat. Sometimes he used to let us help turn the bridge. They had a nice house overlooking the canal. The house had a deep

cellar where Auntie Carrie kept all her butter, milk, cheese, etc. Also at the bottom of the yard which overlooked a stream was a double closet, which interested us children - it was beautifully clean, all whitewashed, and the seats were scrubbed white. Of course they were my great aunt and uncle and we thought them very old. Dad never passed without calling - I always had a clean dress and pinafore put on, and the boys had new shirts to go and see them.

On our way back from Roundwood we would also call at Temperton's of Thorne and Dad would buy hampers of fruit from their orchard and Mrs Temperton would tell us children to go and help ourselves to fruit and say I could have as much as I could carry in my pinafore. Mum and Dad would be having a cuppa and a chat while we played in the orchard. Sometimes I helped John and Arthur pull the ship along, but sometimes Dad would hire a horse and a man and we would just run along the canal bank behind the horse. My mother was born at Thorne, so we had quite a lot of relations we used to visit. There were the Robinsons and Whiteleys and Whites, all mothers' cousins.

I don't remember a lot about the 1914-1918 war, except my brother George had to go, and he was on a minesweeper and was stationed at Stromness and in the Orkney Islands. When he came home on leave he used to bring a pocketful of the tiny 3d pieces (silver), we called them threepenny diddlers. The first bombs were dropped on Hull on June 6 1915 and I remember mum and dad being so worried about Doris; she had gone to the Holiness Mission in Tadman Street to play the organ and all the trams had stopped and she ran all the way home. One bomb dropped on Edwin Davies' and one on Holderness Road-Walker Street. A gun was mounted on top of Rosedown and Thompson's foundry and when the zeppelins came over people wanted to know why the gun hadn't fired - it turned out it was a dummy and made of wood. Later on another zeppelin came over in June 1916. Dad decided we would all go into the fields away from the house and Horsley Smith's, a timber yard, was across the road from our house. We got to the corner of Bellamy Street when mam said "Come on, we are going home - we must trust in God, that He will watch over us", and I remember sitting on the front step wrapped in a blanket waiting until the all clear went.

I remember going with mum and dad to see King George and Queen Mary open King George Dock in 1914. They had put up rows of stands on the dock, and with dad being a Keel Owner he had got tickets for us. Once a year there would be a special display at the Pier, and keel and tug men came from Goole and Thorne etc. doing rowing and sculling and walking the greasy pole. My father taught me to scull. All my brothers could do it. Dad would tie the coggy boat on a long rope and push us off and I had to scull up to the ship.

In 1912 dad had a new ship built at Scarr's of Beverley and I was chosen to christen her - with the help of my dad, as I was only five. She was christened ONESIMUS meaning a faithful servant. The name was taken out of the Bible - Collossians Chapter 4 verse 9 and Philemon verse 10. I was very excited when the day came and got a new dress and hair ribbon. Dad wouldn't have champagne, so I christened the ship with a bottle of lemonade

with a marble in it and all red, white and blue ribbons on it. I kept the top of the bottle until we moved into Shannin Road. The ribbons had all rotted...

In 1917 the Germans started using U-boats and were sinking our ships, so food was rationed. Sugar went from 2d to 6d a pound and flour 1/- to 2/6d a stone.. We called the bread black - it was made of flour and potato. Butter, sugar and meat were in short supply. Milk used to be 2d a pint, coal 10d a bag and oranges three a penny. Dad used to buy a stick of bananas! During that war Dad did very well - his ship was often filled with grain and he was paid what they call demurrage however long it was in, and in the meantime Dad and my brothers were able to earn money working on other ships. But at the same time they were worried about George, not always knowing where he was. They did get word from the Navy saying George had been ruptured and could they operate on him and mother said yes - if he could come home - but the Navy said no! So George wasn't operated on until years later at Kingston General Hospital...

[My] next recollection is of George being demobbed from the war - great rejoicing and of course he wanted to start work on his own - before the war he had worked for dad. He went to work on a keel for Whittaker's and he eventually bought a ship of his own (with dad's help) called GERTRUDE - but that's another story. We were all getting bigger so in 1921 dad bought a house at 90 Jalland Street which we thought was lovely. We had our own bathroom with hot and cold water and flush toilets. Plenty of rooms - we three girls had the middle bedroom and the three boys the back bedroom. But I forgot to tell you I had another brother, born June 3 1917, Ivor Hastings. He was a lovely little boy and spoilt by us all. He was 3 when we moved into Jalland Street...

My eldest brother George decided to get married to Gladys Fletcher at St Andrew's Church on September 20 1923 and I was bridesmaid along with Gladys' sister Janet. We were in ice green with black plush hats - we all went over to get them and mother paid a lot - 15/-. Olive made our dresses and decorated the sleeves with bugle beads. George bought us pearl necklaces. So with George getting married Ivor moved into the back bedroom with John and Arthur. However not long after John kept being ill and kept going to different doctors until February 1927. Dad had a specialist to him and sent him to Hull Royal Infirmary where he died. That was a terrible blow to us all, especially to dad because he had lost his mate as well, because Arthur had gone to work for Fletcher's a few years before to earn more money than dad paid and he eventually bought the ship IDEAL...

[On] June 17 1936, Frances and I had gone to a Guild Rally and the Rev. Turnbull came to meet us. He took us to the manse for a cuppa, only to tell me that my father had died on the ship at Doncaster. Doris, George and Arthur had gone to Doncaster to mum. Dad's cousin George Holmes was there with mum and took them all home with him to Goole, then brought them home to Jalland Street."

Mrs Burton looked after her mother, and her narrative continues with an account of life as a civil defence worker and first aider in the Second World War, up to her marriage. After Arthur Whittle's death ONESIMUS was bought from the family by his son, also called Arthur.

He converted her from sail to power and worked her until 1964. Subsequently she was sold and converted into a powered pleasure craft. Recently she featured in the Yorkshire Television programme "Stay Lucky" with Dennis Waterman. ONESIMUS is now for sale at Leeds.

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### **IT'S A PITY THERE'S NOT A BIT MORE WIND**

To the majority of people a day's sailing on COMRADE conjures up the picture of blue skies, small fair weather clouds, a wind force of 2 - 3 (tops'l breeze) and a temperature that enables everyone to relax in tee shirts and drink cool beer or soft drinks. (The crew drink gallons of hot tea regardless of temperature.) This image is fortunately near enough true on most weekends plus the occasional shower, and 1989 turned out to be probably the best sailing season for COMRADE and crew since she was re-rigged; but as the saying goes, "there are exceptions" and July 30th proved to be one of them!!

The day started innocently enough, a rather dull uninteresting sort of morning; no wind although the forecast did promise a fair bit more 3 - 4 possibly 5 late afternoon. COMRADE left Ferriby Sluice at 0930 hours under power and the mainsail and topsail were set when the Chalder Ness beacon was abeam. The engine was shut down and the ship drifted under the Humber Bridge aided from time to time by just a breath of wind. From St. Andrews Dock it was a case of just drifting as far as Hull.

The sky was a uniform grey colour by now and just a light drizzle started. Off the Old Harbour a cold breeze came out of the west and COMRADE gathered steerage way and was put before the wind heading down river. The rain became heavier and the wind freshened rapidly until the ship started to stagger so the topsail was lowered at the run, hauled down onto the hatch where the crew managed to partially smother it. Approaching King George Dock a 60° alteration of course to port had to be made to avoid a dredger which crossed COMRADE's bows although she was outside the main channel and apart from having the right of way on two counts was obviously hard pressed by this time. This manoeuvre brought the wind almost on to the beam and as the wind was now about Force 7 the ship was laid well down and snorted past the dredger, the bridge crew of which appeared to be totally oblivious of the keel's plight. Hauling the tiller up to windward brought the wind aft and as the ship was obviously very hard pressed the engine was started and an attempt made to lower the mainsail. This proved to be impossible for quite a few seconds as the pressure of wind held the yard aloft although the halyard was loose. Eventually the yard came down and the sail was quickly subdued by the crew and a few willing helpers, both male and female. By now COMRADE was off Saltend and as the wind was now in excess of Force 8 she refused all attempts to come head to wind, and as the run down wind meant going ashore on the mud at Thorngumbald Clough, or running right down river, course was made for the Lincolnshire shore.

The wind had now increased to Force 10 (stated later in the local papers) with torrential rain which made it impossible to look to windward as the raindrops hitting exposed eyeballs

at 50mph was extremely painful. Visibility was down to about 2 ships lengths and COMRADE with the wind on her starboard beam in the short steep vicious seas that were being knocked up was rolling about 20° off the vertical to windward and about 40° off the vertical to leeward. For the party penned down in the hold this proved somewhat less of an enjoyable experience than they had expected and three cases of mal-de-mer appeared and one of near hysterics!! For the crew and helpers on deck a constant battle ensued to hang on and stop the mainsail taking charge along with a hatch cover that worked loose. The saying of "one hand for yourself and one for the ship" was ignored by all hands and the sail and cover kicked, punched and smothered into submission.

About half way across, out of the murk appeared a sight seldom seen in a lifetime, that of the "Sand End" light float rearing up out of a smother of foam with its mooring cable stretched bar tight and clear of the water for about 2 ships length. COMRADE continued to stagger and roll her way across picking up seas with both gun'ls, repeatedly knocking the helmsman off his feet until eventually she was brought up to her anchor in the lee of Killingholme Jetty. Even here quite a sea was running and an enquiry to V.T.S. Humber over the radio was answered with the advice to "Stay where you are until this blows through".

By the time the ebb had finished running and the tide started to flow the wind steadied at about Force 6 West South West so under a single reefed mainsail the anchor was sailed out, during which time the female member of the crew received a battering from the foot of the sail as she and two other crew members operated the windlass. Her remarks, fortunately somewhat muffled by the sail, were reported to be a trifle less than ladylike!! The helmsman offered to bring his birth certificate on the next trip to disprove one of her suggestions.

Tacking up river the ship was sailed hard and the crew really earned their tea on the fore deck as the weight on the tacks was something else. By the time King George Dock was reached it was apparent that the crew had had enough and to avoid the embarrassment of a "mutiny" the sail was lowered and the engine started. The trip was finished under power and COMRADE returned to her moorings in the River Ancholme. Most of the party seemed to have enjoyed the day, retrospectively, except for one individual who said on going ashore - "I never want to see you people or this ship ever again"!!!

The crew were disappointed that the marine artist didn't set up his easel and paint the scenes on the river. The TV Director chap, out to gain ideas for "Spilling the Wind" was delighted although the cameraman smashed the camera. As for the individual who made the comment early on in the day when you could have lit a match - "It's a pity there's not a bit more wind"!!! Next time it won't be the sail that beats her about the head it will be the mainyard!!!

"DEAD EYES"

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## **BORROWING A COG BOAT**

About fifty years ago I was mate of a Humber Sloop. The skipper I was with was also the owner. In those days before engines, it was nearly impossible to work a sailing ship without a cog boat. We had our boat damaged the week previously so we were left without one.

We loaded a cargo in King George Dock for Grimsby. On the day we wanted to sail, the wind was in an awkward direction, so the ship had to be warped across to the Lock, this we could not do without a cog boat to take the warping line out so the skipper told me to go and see if I could find one. I went along the dockside until I saw one. There was no one on board to ask if I could borrow it, so I noted the barge's name with the intention of returning it in about an hour or so.

It was about five o'clock on a winter's morning, so no one saw me take it. We got our ship warped across to the lock and, as we had plenty of time before we had to go into the lock, I said I would take the cog boat back where I got it from. The skipper said "Leave it here we are not allowed to go to Grimsby without a boat".

After we had discharged at Grimsby, we got orders to go to Barrow Haven to load bricks for Hull. We did not get finished loading bricks that week so we saw the ship safely moored with our borrowed cog boat alongside and went home for the weekend. We came back on the Monday to find the cog boat full of muddy water. We saw then it had been foul of our leeboard. It wasn't damaged in any way, but it was in a filthy mess and caked with mud.

I hove one end of the boat up with our gaff halliards so the water ran out. I then got bucket and brush to clean it out before the mud had time to dry.

The skipper saw me doing this, and said don't clean it out. I thought this was wrong at the time, but you don't ask questions.

We finished loading bricks and went across into the Old Harbour. As we were going up the harbour on the next tide, who should be coming down the harbour but the barge I had borrowed the boat from. I wondered what was going to happen next.

My skipper untied the boat and and, as the other barge came alongside, he handed the rope to the other barge skipper and said "Harry, I think this is your coggy", "Yes, it is, Jack, where did you find it? It's been missing a week". Jack said, "It was at Barrow Haven full of water". I then realised why he had stopped me cleaning the mud out of it!

Harry then said "I will tell them in our office you picked our boat up, and if you call in some time they will probably give you something for your trouble". One day soon afterwards we went past their office and the skipper told me to go in and see them. I don't suppose he had the cheek to go in himself. Anyway I went in and they thanked me very much and gave me fifteen shillings.

C. ATKINSON

## AMY HOWSON – WINTER 1989/90

The Society's Sloop was moored as usual in Barton Haven for the winter and her crew Cyril, Charlie Atkinson and Alan Gardiner assessed which jobs ought to be done.

Mr Chambers of Richardson & Sons, our Surveyors, had recommended lifting the hold ceiling shutts, so that he could inspect the state of the inside plating. So while Alan dismantled the engine for a rebuild, Charlie and Cyril set about unbolting the coach belts holding down the boards. It was not an easy job, being thirteen years since the boards were bolted down in the restoration, but all of them were shifted eventually and Charlie was able to needle gun and wire brush the frames and floors. Some of the cement wash had crumbled, caused by the hammering and welding on the outside of the hull when Cooks put on the doubling plates in '81. New cement was laid and the metal work well painted.

To save any struggling when they next have to come up, Cyril bolted hardwood battens soaked in preservative and tarred each nut and bolt as they fastened them along the frames. Then he and Charlie replaced each board and screwed them to the battens with bronze screws - needless to say we were given the screws! Each screw went in with a dab of tallow.

While this work was being done Alan had dismantled the top of the engine. A few years ago Cyril had acquired new pistons, rings and liners for a modest sum and the time was right to renew the existing ones. Obviously the Society lacks the machinery to machine out the old liners, so Alan took the blocks and new bits to a specialist firm. The job cost a bob or two as the old liners had been welded in.

The engine was soon reassembled and ready for work again.

Every year since AMY HOWSON was restored to sail her skipper and crew have strived to get the best out of her sailing abilities, as we should, because she's a working ship and we shouldn't be complacent.

John Franks had said he kept doing a bit at his sloops and over the years would get a bit more out of them, serious stuff when cargos had to be delivered and new ones fetched!

So, this year, after a good look at the foresail, Cyril asked if we could afford a new one, cut a bit fuller than the existing one. Funds would run to it, so Jimmy Lawrence the sailmaker who measured up and made AUDREY's sails duly paid us a visit (with his mother) and he and Cyril got the tape measures to the job.

There were of course many other jobs Cyril and Charlie saw off including a complete paint job (twice), rudder off and pintles built up by welding bushes in, new convex bar welded to it where necessary, rudder pin resized where worn by welding and grinding. New lighting brackets made up to fit the quarter rails, mastboard hatch beam straightened and strong

back added, steel scotchmen fastened to the chainplates to prevent the leeboards rearing up on to the deck, mast and rigging down, oiled and back up and so on.

The new Durodon foresail was bent on and a shakedown sail cheered us up and justified the expense, besides sail "Mark I" was about ready for replacement anyway.

The improvement in her windward ability is good and of course the added wind flow to the main makes AMY pick up like mad after going through stays.

One more job which cropped up and had to be done was replacing the gaff jaws which, after giving excellent service for years, were rapidly delaminating (Roy Smith created them by gluing mahogany strips to a jig). Cyril went to see our friendly timber merchant and returned with oak gaff jaws band-sawed to pattern (plus the offcuts). A couple of evenings work shaping them up and he fitted them just before returning AMY HOWSON to South Ferriby for the first sailing trip.

So that's another essay for 'Slabline' scribbled. I usually set off thinking I'll bang three or four lines about what was done and then rabbit on right clever about some attribute of the sloop rig or hull but I realise that 'Slabline' readers - that is you members out there, are contributing towards this vessel so you ought to know what we're up to and that the best is being done for AMY HOWSON, THE Humber Sloop.

DAVE ROBINSON

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### AUDREY AND BLACKTOFT JETTY

AUDREY is the Sobriety Project's Billy Boy

Towards the end of 1988 it began to look as if AUDREY might be ready for work so arrangements were made to take a party of school children and their teacher for a week away aboard.

Naturally as the day of departure loomed up all those jobs we would take in our stride began to pile up but on the big day all seemed in order.

Top of tide at Goole being midday, the children and their teacher arrived and stowed their things below. Water and diesel tanks were topped up and we cast off from Aldam Dock. Crew-Skipper Cyril, myself and John Sharpe who was awaiting instructions to board a coaster. The weather was wet and windy, not particularly cheerful for a maiden voyage but of course the first few miles on a first trip one's mind is pretty occupied, making sure the children are wearing their lifejackets, all lines coiled aboard, engine running sweetly and so on.

Steering was by a steel tubular tiller because as yet the wheel and gypsy were not shipped, but of course AMY HOWSON is tiller steered so there was no problem. After the first half

hour we settled down to merely making a passage down the Ouse, having left fairly late we had the river to ourselves and set the throttle up a notch or two to speed progress. All was well.

The passengers were all suitably clad in waterproofs and lifejackets and we crew in an assortment of overalls, donkey jackets and anoraks against the chill wind blowing into our faces.

Blacktoft jetty loomed and was left portside as we crossed towards Apex light.

The engine stopped.

I looked at Cyril "The engine's stopped" I remarked, he left the tiller and turned the ignition key, the engine turned over but didn't start. He jiggled the throttle and tried again. John Sharp approached "Problems skip?" he enquired. Still no engine.

"Let go the anchor" said Cyril as if asking for sugar in his tea. John was at the windlass in a few strides, the wind was blowing AUDREY's bow around the starboard, Mrs teacher had taken the children below at this point for which I was glad as, broadside to the waves, AUDREY was probably going to start rolling.

The engine started.

"Leave it John" roared Cyril and, grabbing the tiller, spun AUDREY's bow towards Blacktoft Jetty John came aft again.

The engine stopped.

Cyril grabbed the ignition key, nothing doing, he ducked as the tiller wafted across the deck, I didn't move fast enough and was fired into the scuppers. The engine started - John grabbed the tiller and AUDREY raced towards the jetty.

I scrambled to my feet and John and I, leaving Cyril at the tiller, rushed forward to get a rope on.

The engine stopped.

Here AUDREY decided we'd messed about long enough and stopped all the fuss. She slotted her bowsprit neatly through the pilings and stopped us. Solid. With several knots of tide running one way and a gale of wind the other Audrey said "get out of that" and lay firmly athwart the tide.

John and Cyril turned their efforts to drawing in the bowsprit. A man appeared on the jetty high above us "Are you in trouble?" he asked cheerfully. "Put that on a bollard" shouted John and literally hurled a mooring warp up onto the jetty.

We had some control of the ship then, and after a bit got the bowsprit fully in board. Then we organised the children on the warp and by heaving on one and checking on another gradually eased AUDREY round against the tide until she was safely moored alongside the jetty.

The children thought the operation marvellous! Sadly an ignominious return to Goole alongside a graveller ended the maiden voyage. But the children even thought that exciting - especially as it was at night.

The engine failure was my fault - months before I had made up and I had fitted armoured fuel lines as required by the BWB surveyor but I had got pressure pipes instead of suction pipes - so when the revs went up and the demand pump did its job the pipe simply sucked flat!

We've since fitted pukka diesel fuel pipes - it's easier on the nerves.

DAVE ROBINSON

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## **TRUE LOVE - PART II**

When we arrived at Fleetwood in June 1957, we had a mixed reception varying from "You can't f-ing well moor here" to "give us your warps mate". Seeing the registration letters BRD (Bradford), many local fishermen assumed we were from Birkenhead on the River Mersey. All the Mersey fishing boats are registered L. L. Liverpool; and there are still some.

The locals wanted to know if I was pleasuring and when I told them if I could get help and advice from them I would go fishing they very readily promised to do this and almost within a few hours a young fisherman named Tony Patterson (a Scandinavian name like my own), suggested that he and a friend would crew TRUE LOVE on a share basis and give me as much help as they could.

I was introduced to a ship's chandler who specialised in supplying inshore boats and he readily agreed to supply me on a month's credit, but we agreed that this was not to apply to any of the crew. Also I was introduced to a fish salesman who agreed to take all the fish I could catch and sell it for me on commission. I should say now that both of these merchants were very straight and looked after my interests.

The first thing was to rig a trawl. Mr Johns, the chandler, did this out of sheet netting and dyed it green with chrome tanning in his cellar. Three glass floats held up the head rope and mysteriously an old piece of waterlogged rope was secured to the foot of the trawl. A local blacksmith made a matching pair of "otter boards" or trawl doors. One has to be cast to port and one to starboard. They cannot be changed. If one is lost it is quite difficult to replace one to balance the other. Lengths of combination bridles were bought. This has

fibre and steel wire spun together. It wears well but becomes bad to handle after much use. Wire warps were attached to the bridles. Backstraps, Kelly's eyes and messengers were rigged and a lazy deckie. The boom for the mainsail was rigged as a derrick with blocks and tackle.

A word about this tackle, because it led to an accident later. The derrick was about 25 feet high and the blocks had a three-fold purchase. I calculated that I would require some 36 fathoms of rope, but when I consulted the crew they thought I had very much over estimated it and suggested that I needed much less. I compromised, with the result that the whip to the donkey drum was just too short and I had to splice a piece on. Now I know that a "long splice" should go through a pulley block but having seen a "long splice" done by a professional pull out on an underground haulage and cause an accident that brought a thousand miners to a standstill until it was fixed, I have always been suspicious of long splices. I therefore made a short splice. I knew this would not go through a block but reckoned that it was only needed to extend to the drum driven by a belt from the engine. In the event the trawl became "fast" and in trying to tear the net from the wreck TRUE LOVE nearly capsized. The hand at the winch let go the warp suddenly and the boat rocked upright smashing the whip into the block where it jammed and the sudden shock broke the mast off short. End of trip.

That of course happened later. The first haul of the first trip was wonderful containing sole, plaice, dabs and roker or thornback skate of which there was one over 6 feet across. We were fishing in the vicinity of the Isle of Man and doing well, and deciding to stay out till next day; the crew suggested that I took my tum to sleep - which I did. Suddenly I was awakened with the news that the engine room was flooded. I stumbled down the engine room ladder and was up to my waist in warm water, and it dawned on me that the boat was not sinking as I feared, but that the engine cooling system was leaking. But where? The engine was still thumping away and splashing water over all the auxiliary equipment. Feeling below the water I turned on the bilge pump and returning on deck organised the crew and myself to taking turns with the hand pump. TRUE LOVE's course was then laid eastward for harbour. After about 20 anxious minutes another fishing smack hove in sight and the water lowered sufficiently in the engine room to discover a broken brass tap in the cooling water circuit gushing warm water and floating in the bilge. I found a whittled peg of wood wrapped in flannel which just fitted into the hole. However, I retrieved a cork out of one of the many empty whisky bottles left aboard by the previous owners and this made a more secure plug.

We made port safely and received quite a good price for our fish so the crew had some wages for their wives, but the engine badly needed servicing. The Ailsa Craig K series engines, known as Kelvins, were a diesel development of originally petrol-paraffin engines and petrol was used to start them also. In order to do this a decompression lever opened an ante chamber to each cylinder which contained a sparking plug wired to a magneto as in pre-war motor cycles and some cars. The magneto has to be timed to flash the plug at top dead centre and the ante chamber has to be primed with petrol in advance. If all goes well, a sharp jerk of the starting handle fires the petrol and the engine revolves for a few

seconds. The decompression lever is quickly shut and the engine turns over to gas oil; at that time one shilling and five pence per gallon. At full speed the engine did 300 revolutions per minute.

Now, however, with all the electrics thoroughly soaked in brine, there was no way the engine could be started once the diesel was turned off.

Regretfully, the crew had to seek other employment while I dismantled the engine, got the magneto rewound, cleaned the brine out of the sump; it had gone down the dip stick hole; cleaned the gear box, and retimed the engine. I also fitted new piston rings which I found had seized up at some time but must have freed itself almost at once. After a week's work I had the engine running smoothly and dropped the hint on the quay that I could do with a mate.

A young, blond man named Ted Peak whose parents originated from Grimsby offered his services, and together we had the most successful season of any. He was left-handed and had taught himself to braid netting as the right-handed fishermen could not do this. He was a Jehovah's Witness, so did not drink or swear and had a very pretty wife and nine children. He devised a system of C-links which are excellent for joining chain, rope, wire and combination together quickly and so having installed a locally made miniature trawl winch with brakes, dog clutches and donkey drums all working off the engine we could fish easily with just the two of us. In one week of 72 hours in 1960 we caught £112 worth of fish. Very satisfactory for that time.

One day out fishing off the coast of Cumberland we spied a smack in full sail with its engine running and its trawl down but no crew in sight. Shades of the "Marie Celeste". As our courses converged, Ted hailed the smack and eventually its skipper appeared fastening his fly buttons and crossly demanded to know what we wanted. Ted shouted "Are you all right?" He snapped back "Yes, of course" and at the same time a 17 year old blond dollybird put her head out of the cabin fastening her blouse. We drew away and continued fishing, but of course it was only a matter of time before the story got round among the fishing community. Eventually Walters, that was his name, wife taxed him about this and he explained that he had caught a mermaid. His wife replied that if he took her and threw her back in the sea she would believe him. At least that was the story. Actually, the young lady was the daughter of a cotton mill owner in Preston and he was furious and bundled her off to a finishing school.

On another occasion when I had my older sister and a French student aboard, a different crew, while moving from the quayside for a short trip managed to wrap a mooring rope and a combination bridle round the propeller, jamming the engine and the rudder. They stood looking as if they had had an accident in their trousers. I was fed up with them and went below and removed all but my trousers. As I emerged from below the young French woman screamed. I think she thought I had no trousers on either. Anyway I took a knife, dived overboard and swam down to the propeller. Eventually I managed to cut the warp and unravel the combination rope. I then had to restart the engine, as the "crew" couldn't.

We went for a trip in Morecambe Bay. When we returned the crew crept shamefacedly ashore and disappeared.

Also, once out near the Morecambe Bay lightship, a vessel of 1000 tons because of the rough weather, we beheld an aldis lamp signalling. When we drew alongside we were asked to take a technician ashore as a storm was expected. Unfortunately the technician let slip that I would be well paid for the service. This encouraged the crew to expect a share in lieu of fishing. Trinity House however expected such services to be free in gratitude for their services to mariners. This left me in a dilemma, but eventually I pacified the crew with a modest sum.

I fished TRUE LOVE on and off for several years when I was persuaded to apply to a training college to become a teacher. At the same time a mother of five grown up sons persuaded me to sell the boat so that we had a reserve of capital while I was training.

TOM HUMPHRIES

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### **BOOKSHELF**

The Hutton Press are publishers of local and regional books with particular emphasis on transport. Three recently published titles are:

The Train Now Standing (Volume One). Life and Times of the Hull and Barnsley Railway by Ted Dodsworth. Many evocative photographs including several dock scenes in Alexandra Dock and King George Dock involving keels. Price £6.50.

Grimsby's Fighting Fleet - Trawlers and U-Boats during the Second World War by Jarry C. Hutton. Fifty rare archive photographs. Price £5.95.

Images of Victorian Hull - F. s. Smith's Drawings of the Old Town. A selection of 122 illustrations, including 15 river and dock scenes. Price £5.50.

Available from 130 Canada Drive, Cherry Burton, Beverley. Add £1.00 for postage and packing.

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### **HUMBER KEELS 1880 - 1920** **A Study in the Persistence of a Transport Medium**

In 1977 Mr Stuart Broadhurst was working on a research project in the Department of Economics and Related Studies at York University. He was fascinated by the survival of the sailing keel into the 20th century, and was aiming to carry out an analysis of the traffics involved and of the factors that had enabled the keels to remain competitive for so long. Mr Broadhurst approached the Society, and we were able to loan account books for the keels

RESULTS (1887-1897), WAVERLEY (1905-1915) and WILLIAMS (1921-1922) a Fletcher's account book for 1929-1931 and the Thorne Lock book for 1902-1904, as well as various documents relating to the ships owned by the Schofield family. We were also able to arrange the loan of two log books for the Keel HANNAH AND HARRIET for 1892-1900 and 1908-1910, owned by Mrs Evelyn Holt. (Our own account books are now deposited on loan to the Town Docks Museum in Hull.) Working from these and from other, mainly printed, sources, Mr Broadhurst was able to carry out his analysis, and the research project was completed in 1978.

We hope to be able to reproduce further sections of this work in future issues of 'The Slabline'.