

THAMES SAILING BARGE MATCH

Saturday, 15th June 2024



MATCH PROGRAMME
92ND THAMES SAILING BARGE MATCH
DONATIONS WELCOME

THAMES SAILING BARGE MATCH

This match (or race) for historic Thames Sailing Barges is an annual event, the first of which took place in 1863. This makes it the world's second oldest organised sailing race after the America's Cup, which was first held 12 years earlier in 1851. However, the Match Committee now considers the Thames event the longest running, regularly organised, national racing event for traditional sail in the world. This belief is based on the view that, although the America's Cup started 12 years earlier, it has now changed out of all recognition. In contrast, the Thames Match remains true to the original vessel design and sail plans of the 1860's.

THAMES SAILING BARGE MATCH 2024

Entries may include

Barge	Built	Year	Reg Tons	Start	Mark	Finish
COASTING CLASS (Start 09.30)						
Gladys	Harwich	1901	68			
Lady of the Lea	Rotherhythe	1931	27			
Pudge	Rochester	1922	70			
Thalatta	Harwich	1906	67			
CHAMPION STAYSAIL CLASS (Start 09.45)						
Niagara	Wivenhoe	1898	79			
Repertor	Mistley	1924	67			
Wyvenhoe	Wivenhoe	1889	83			
CHAMPION BOWSPRIT CLASS (Start 10.00)						
Adieu	Mistley	1929	66			
Blue Mermaid	Polruan	2016	84			
Edith May	Harwich	1906	50			
Marjorie	Ipswich	1902	56			
Will	Great Yarmouth	1925	150			

THAMES SAILING BARGE MATCH 2024 PROGRAMME

This year's Match will be held on Saturday 15th June 2024 and will be sailed from the Lower Hope to the North Oaze Buoy, returning to finish at Gravesend.

Friday 14th June

Briefing for Masters and Mainsheetmen at 19.30 at the Port of London Authority, London River House, Gravesend.
Please return engraved cups awarded in 2023 at this meeting.

Saturday 15th June

The three classes will start at the following times, with a ten minute and a five minute horn and flag before each start:

COASTING CLASS

START 09.30

CHAMPION STAYSAIL CLASS

START 09.45

CHAMPION BOWSPRIT CLASS

START 10.00

COURSE (Weather permitting)

The race starts in Lower Hope Reach (off Stanford-le-Hope in Essex, about four miles downriver from Gravesend) and runs down river past Southend-on-Sea to the North Oaze Buoy before returning to finish at Gravesend – a total distance of 43 nautical miles. The finish line is St Andrews Gardens next to the Three Daws public house in Gravesend.

PRIZE GIVING AND SUPPER

The prize giving and supper will be held at the Three Daws, Gravesend. Supper will be served from 19.00 and the prize giving will commence at 20.00. Prizes will be awarded by The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of the City of London, Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli.

Tickets for the supper are available from Sue Akhurst,
07803 951008, thamesbargematch@gmail.com

THAMES MATCH REPORT 2023

“Thames, Dover: wind cyclonic force 3 or less; sea state slight; weather showers perhaps thundery for a time; visibility good occasionally poor”. The forecast for the 91st (Coronation) Thames Sailing Barge Match on Saturday 8 July was not particularly encouraging. The early morning flat calm at Gravesend had given way to the lightest of southerlies just about giving steerage way to the eight barges mustering in the Lower Hope for the start.

The start of the Coasting Class at 0800 saw *Gladys*, newly rebuilt at Gloucester, just stemming the tide until the breeze failed for a moment and she drifted inexorably over the line, stern first half a minute before the gun. With no prospect of re-crossing, she took a time penalty and carried on. *Pudge*, on the Kent shore, timed a good run at the line and crossed with all sails drawing two minutes after the gun. The staysail barges at 0815 were a little more cautious but made a good job of it with *Wyvenhoe*, back at the Thames Match after a ten-year absence, crossing in just over two minutes with *Repertor* and *Edith May* five minutes later. The three barges in the Bowsprit Class adopted different strategies. The engineless *Blue Mermaid* anchored on the Kent shore close above the line to wait for the start, while *Marjorie* stayed fairly well upstream sailing to-and-fro. *Niagara* went into the slacker water over Mucking Flats which made for an easier wait but she then had to claw off to windward to get around the Mucking 3 buoy limiting the northern end of the line. All three plans worked well with *Marjorie* starting after three minutes, *Blue Mermaid* and *Niagara* after four.



Fortunately, there was enough wind for all the barges to avoid being set into the Thames Gateway berths. The three bowsprit barges were neck-and-neck entering Sea Reach but tactics differed as *Marjorie* and *Niagara* held up to windward on the Blyth while *Blue Mermaid* eased off to the north in search of the stronger tide. By the time the barges had reached the Chapman the wind had dropped to almost nothing and the barges' headings were all over

the place as they sought to take advantage of each fickle puff. *Wyvenhoe* had worked out a useful lead over *Repertor* and *Edith May* but *Pudge* having drifted faster than *Gladys* still led the fleet.

The decision was taken to shorten the course and the Sea Reach 6 South buoy was chosen as the turning mark. *Wyvenhoe* had slowly overtaken the coasters



and was the first to reach the mark at 1028. There was by now a light breeze from the north and with some ebb stream still running could not immediately start back but stood close-hauled across the tide toward the Essex shore. *Gladys* was the first coaster to the mark at 1034, followed by *Edith May* and *Pudge*. But now something strange happened – the light breeze, still only about force 1, started to back into the west and slowly fill, giving an advantage to those reaching the mark later. By the time *Repertor* got to the mark at 1101 she was able to round closely and start to make

progress back upstream ahead of those that came before her who had drifted further east. For the bowsprits the effect was even more pronounced and *Blue Mermaid* and the Bowsprit class led the fleet back up the river as the order of the fleet had been effectively reversed. When *Marjorie* was the last to round at 1119, the ebb had all but finished and she was able to make a tight rounding with smart sail changes.

The light but now steady westerly wind gave the barges a long but straight forward turn to windward back up Sea Reach aided by the strengthening flood tide. Passing the Chapman at midday *Blue Mermaid*, sailing beautifully, had worked out a significant lead which she held from then on. *Repertor* was leading the staysails by a good margin but *Wyvenhoe* was slowly clawing back the ground lost at the outer mark. *Niagara* and *Marjorie* were engaged in some close racing with *Marjorie* eventually pulling ahead.

Dark clouds over Gravesend and a flash of distant lightning reminded us of the forecast and by the time *Blue Mermaid* crossed the finishing line just before two o'clock it was raining gently. *Marjorie* followed some fifteen minutes later followed shortly by *Repertor* and *Niagara*. *Edith May* finished third in the staysail class, although she subsequently retired, while *Gladys* came home to beat *Pudge* in the coasters. All barges finished within an hour of the leader and all had been smartly and safely handled with none of those incidents which might vex an officer of the day.

The prize giving was held outdoors this year on the Clarendon lawn, the Three Daws not being available. Prizes were presented by Anne Stanbrook, widow of the late Roy Stanbrook, formerly a PLA harbourmaster, whose interest in and support of the Match had been instrumental in keeping it going. First prize in the



Bowsprit class, and being the fastest around the course this year's Champion of the Thames, was again *Blue Mermaid*, master Richard Titchener. *Repertor* won the Staysail class and *Gladys* the Coasting class. Tony de Winton of *Pudge* had made the fastest start of the day, the seamanship prize went to David Pollock of *Repertor* while Simon Devonshire of *Marjorie* was judged to have made the best rounding of the turning mark. The Mainsheetman trophy was given to Oli Evans, and the Crew award to Rose Ravetz, both of *Blue Mermaid* whose crew had turned in yet another polished and professional performance. Sophia De Bont-Burgess of *Marjorie* took the under-16 crew award. The Gold Belt Trophy was awarded to *Gladys* on the successful completion of her major rebuild for the twenty-first century.

An additional prize was given this year by Richard Titchener and Hilary Halajko of the Sea-Change Sailing Trust. The Roy Stanbrook Salver is to be given for services in supporting the Thames Match Committee. As officer of the day for some twenty years, I was delighted to be the first recipient of the award from Anne Stanbrook. I very much hope that younger volunteers will come forward to take the Match on to another generation.

Thanks were expressed to those who had helped with organisation of the Match: to David Allsop and his team at the PLA, to John Hargreaves our timekeeper and to Dawn Franklyn for making winners pennants.

Next year's Match is to be held on Saturday 15 June 2024. Do put the date in your diaries.

Julian Cass, Officer of the Day, 2023





HENRY DODD FOUNDER OF THE THAMES SAILING BARGE MATCH



Organised sailing barge racing began on the Thames in 1863. In that year Henry Dodd, known as the Golden Dustman, due to the fortune he made from moving London's rubbish, together with his friends at the Corn Exchange, organized the first Thames Match for spritsail rigged sailing barges on the lower River Thames. The purpose was to improve craft design, promote competition between owners and improve the speed of cargo delivery. No records remain of how many barges took part in that race but its success

meant that it was repeated in 1864 with no fewer than 40 barges entering. So who was Henry Dodd?

Dodd was born in Hackney on 29th October 1801, the son of William Dodd. He started his working life as a 'Ploughboy' within a mile of St Paul's London. By 1836 he was established as a scavenger and rubbish carter at Pump Row, St Luke's, Old Street Road, moving around 1841 to the banks of the Regent's Canal at City Wharf, Eagle Wharf Road, Hoxton. The Regent's Canal formed a link between the Midlands via the Grand Junction Canal and the Thames at Limehouse. Dodd was one of the first to become established on this stretch of the canal and he remained there for 40 years. With the enormous consumption of coal in London, Dust contractors were essential to remove the ash and cinders from businesses and houses. They were contracted by local parish officers, originally bidding for the right, but as the amount to be removed increased, paid to complete the work. Cleansing the streets was classed as scavenging and was a separate contract. Dodd held the contracts for St. Luke's, Shoreditch and St. James's Clerkenwell. He employed 66 men for dust, rubbish and scavenging work together with 9 men, 12 women and 4 boys in his yard to sort the collections before dispatch by barge to the brickfields of Kent and Essex.

By the 1860's Dodd's business had expanded and he was now a barge and canal boat owner, brickmaker merchant, and salesman, carman, road and general contractor, as well as a wharfinger. In 1862 he "was sworn a freeman of the Butchers Company". By 1863 his wealth put him in a position to fund the prizes for the first Sailing Barge Match.

Dodd lived at City Wharf for many years, having two sons, William Henry and Mark Antony. In the late 1860's he bought and moved to The Hall, Rotherfield,



Sussex. His sons remained at City Wharf running the business, successfully establishing their own position in the City. The 1871 census entry for The Hall shows him as a Land holder, farmers' contractor and a member of the Metropolitan Board of Works. As a member of the latter he was involved in the development of the

new Finsbury Park and building the Thames Embankment.

Dodd died on 27th April 1881. He is buried in the tomb he had prepared some years earlier in Farnham Royal Parish Churchyard. Since his death other members of his family have been buried in the somewhat ornate vault. His connection to Farnham Royal started with his father William, who died in 1846, owning a property, Cherry Orchard, in the parish of Farnham Royal. After his father died, Dodd continued to visit the area and donated a considerable sum of money towards the rebuilding of the parish church, including £1,200 for the Tower alone.

A central character in Charles Dickens' "Our Mutual Friend" is Nicodemus Boffin, nicknamed the Golden Dustman, because of the wealth he inherited from his employer, who made his fortune as a Dust Contractor. It is believed that Dickens knew Dodd and based Boffin on him.

When Dodd died he left bequests totalling £115,652 2s 3d to his family. Dodd made bequests to a number of his servants and his two canal boat captains. Henry Dodd's concern for orphans is shown in bequests to several orphanages, including the French Orphan Society in Paris and the British Orphan Asylum, Slough. One bequest he is remembered for in the Sailing Barge world, is the £5,000 left to the Fishmongers Company "in order that the said company may invest the same and apply the annual income thereof at the discretion of the said company in providing cups either gold or silver to be awarded annually as prizes for Sailing Barge Races on the River Thames and in providing for the support and comfort of poor bargeman or lightermen in such manner that each beneficiary may receive not less than one shilling per day". No longer used to provide Race prizes, the annual Dodd Pension to bargemen and lightermen was still in existence in 1980.

From ploughboy to wealthy businessman, a Victorian Entrepreneur.

THAMES SAILING BARGE MATCH 2023 RESULTS

COASTING CLASS

1. Gladys
2. Pudge

CHAMPION STAYSAIL CLASS

1. Repertor
2. Wyvenhoe
3. Edith May (Ret)

CHAMPION BOWSPRIT CLASS

1. Blue Mermaid
2. Marjorie
3. Niagara

TROPHIES AWARDED CHAMPION BOWSPRIT

First Barge Home: BLUE MERMAID FT Everard Cup

Second Place: MARJORIE Allied Mills Cup

Third Place: NIAGARA Royal Thames YC Cup

First to outer mark (Master): BLUE MERMAID Fishmongers' Cup

Master of Winning Barge: Richard Titchener, BLUE MERMAID
Hervey Benham Trophy

CHAMPION STAYSAIL

First Barge Home: REPERTOR Shipowners' Mutual Cup

Second Place: WYVENHOE Tate & Lyle Cup

First to outer mark (Master): Gerard Swift, WYVENHOE
Watermen's Company Shield

Master of Winning Barge: David Pollock, REPERTOR John Kemp Cup

COASTING CLASS

First Barge Home: GLADYS Hays Cup

Second Place: PUDGE Blue Circle Cup

First to outer mark (Master): Tony de Winton, PUDGE PLA cUP

Master of Winning Barge: Gary Diddams, GLADYS Jim Uglow Cup 1956

OTHER PRIZES

Master – fastest start of Day – Tony de Winton, PUDGE

Master – fastest to Mark – Gerard Swift, WYVENHOE

Master – fastest overall – Richard Titchener, BLUE MERMAID

Master – first barge home – Richard Titchener, BLUE MERMAID

Master exhibiting best seamanship – David Pollock, REPERTOR

Master – best seamanship at Mark – Simon Devonshire, MARJORIE

Mainsheetman – Oli Evans, BLUE MERMAID

Valued Crewman – Rose Ravetz, BLUE MERMAID

Young Crewmember – Sophia de Bont-Burgess, MARJORIE

Achievement – GLADYS, Allied Mills

Committee Support – Julian Cass, OOD 2002 to present



Match Committee

Hon Chair Michael Everard CBE BA
Hon Match Sec Brian Pain
Captain Julian Cass
Michael Mainelli
Roger Newlyn
Sue Akhurst
Rachel de Bont - PLA
Michael Spice - PLA

Bridge Committee

Commodore: Captain Julian Cass
Timekeeper: John Hargreaves

With special thanks to

The PLA for all their valuable advice,
information and practical assistance
The Three Daws Public House
Gareth John for providing Hurricane as
Committee Boat and water taxi service

Patrons

Allied Mills
Chaffcutter Books
The Fishmongers' Company
The Shipowners' Club
Worshipful Co of World Traders
Society for Sprintsail Barge Research
Thames Sailing Barge Trust
Faversham Creek Trust
Mrs Sue Akhurst
Mr & Mrs Basil Brambley
Mr & Mrs Julian & Bridget Cass
Mr Michael Everard
Mr John Hargreaves
Ms Christine Lawrence
Mr & Mrs Michael & Elisabeth Mainelli
Mr Roger Newlyn
Ms Heather Rooke
Mr David Rye
Mr & Mrs Richard & Mary Walsh
Mrs Ann Wignall

Contact

Thames Match Committee – Mrs Sue Akhurst
Kent Lodge, 20 Newton Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8DZ
thamesbargematch@gmail.com 07803 951008

The 93rd Match will be held on Saturday, 19th July 2025



THAMES SAILING BARGE MATCH

15TH June 2024

Start from Mucking No. 3 buoy, Lower Hope Reach, River Thames to North Ooze Buoy (weather permitting), returning to the finish off Gravesend.

High Water Tilbury 07.09 BST

Low Water Southend 12.20 BST

E S S E X

K E N T

