



View from the Wheel

Executive Officer and Skipper Richard Titchener's Review of the Year



2018 was a great year, with us sailing with 227 people. It started with a bareboat agreement with the Cambria Trust, providing the flexibility of the engineless *Cambria* for up to twenty weeks while we awaited completion of *Blue Mermaid* and this led to our busiest year yet with lots of fun and hard work.

We laid a mooring off Heybridge Basin, built a substantial boarding ladder and our guests, water and supplies were mainly ferried across from Stebbens' Boatyard. Sailing to and from the mooring worked well and the barge became a feature of the local scene, as in the photo taken by Colin Swindale. *Cambria* did twenty-one charters including weekends with Tom Cunliffe and with Phil Latham and Dick Durham (both mates in her trading days), barge matches supported by Chris Livett and members of Maldon Little Ship Club (where we

are Commodore's Charity of the Year), and one to thank local supporters. She was also very successful for our accompanied work and the Youth Sailing Scheme for returners; and we gave two seamanship courses for Mates. The end of the year saw us back on the popular *Reminder*, which did six charters.



There were too many highpoints to mention them all. After a long foul-tide beat, finally fetching round the Naze and sailing fast into Harwich to anchor in a Pin Mill sunset took some beating. Apart from the many groups sharing achievements, it was good to see personal successes at the Bargemaster Qualification, A level, university entrance or Merchant Navy Cadetships. In August we welcomed two Canadian sail trainers aboard *Cambria*, supported by ASTO and the James Myatt Trust. They brought maple syrup and good humour to anchor winding.

Meanwhile, Jim Dines and his team continued with gathering momentum to fit out the *Blue Mermaid* and by the end of the year the sails were completed at James Lawrence Sailmakers, with support from the Worshipful Company of Weavers, leading on from their impressive but continuing efforts to make sailmaking flax in the UK.

2018 saw National Historic Ships succeed in their application to Heritage Lottery Fund for the Shipshape Heritage Training Partnership stage two, while the success of stage one was demonstrated by trainee Tom Cook working as a rigger for TS Rigging on *Blue Mermaid*. We have started examining ways we might take this excellent scheme forward after this stage ends in 2020.

As we near the end of the capital appeal for *Blue Mermaid*, thanks to Don Ramsay's tenacity, attention turns to establishing the scholarship fund to assist trainees and an endowment fund to ensure her future.

Thanks to the Appeal Patrons under Rear Admiral David Snelson's guidance and the many individuals and funders who have helped the capital appeal in 2018, including the Bernard Sunley Charitable Trust, the DM Thomas Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, Clothworkers' Foundation, Joan Braithwaite Sailing Trust, Port of London Authority (whose apprentices will sail with us from 2019), Trinity House, Sir Donald Gosling Foundation, Sophie and James Bardrick, Canon Bill Broad, Robin Willshaw, Enover Trust, Maldon Town Council, The Lodge of St Peter and Nick and Christobel Ardley. Many thanks to all those organisations who have supported bursaries too.



December 3rd was the International Day for People with Disabilities, with the theme of empowering through inclusivity and equality, and later that week Richard spoke about engagement on an operational vessel at the Historic Ships International Conference organised by the Royal Institution of Naval Architects with Mary Kinoulty of the Mary Rose Trust and Victoria Wallworth of National Historic Ships.

Sea-Change Youth Sailing Scheme benefits from support from the Essex Community Foundation and as a result we featured in a BBC programme called *Ill Gotten Gains* about how the proceeds of crime are used for public benefit. Shortly afterwards, one of the featured trainees also appeared on TV while telling the UN Rapporteur about her life in Jaywick.

After seven outstanding seasons, Richard Robinson left us for pastures new and we seek a mate for 2019. Thanks also go to volunteers Shiner Wright, Dave Cooper and Carey Brown.

In 2019, after trials and commissioning we plan to arrange a dive on the wreck of the original Blue Mermaid and welcome established and new clients aboard as we work towards cargo carrying with trainees. The topsail still awaits a supporter's logo.

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