

East Coast Sail Trust Ltd – Sailing Barge Thalatta



Thalatta in her glory

February 2011

Thalatta Centenary

The purpose of the East Coast Sail Trust Ltd is to run the sailing barge **Thalatta** for the benefit of young people, some of whom are disadvantaged or have special needs, and to conserve a vital maritime vessel.

Thalatta is 100 years old and retired from commercial service in 1967 to undertake her present role of providing 5-day voyages for youngsters aged between 9 and 14. During this second phase of her career, Thalatta has benefited over 10,000 children who have learnt many life-changing lessons from teamwork to self-reliance, responsibility to understanding true values. We are proud that many of the early crews now bring their own children to Open Days to explain their experiences, and we are able to provide copies of the actual logs of those cruises.

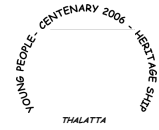


End of the Norwich School group's voyage

In her 100th year, the Trust has undertaken a major refurbishment of Thalatta so that she will be able to resume her educational role, as well as preserve the vessel for future generations. The estimated cost of this work is £1.1 million and we are supremely grateful that the Heritage Lottery Fund has agreed to provide 66% of the total, leaving the Trust to 'match funds' for the remainder.

We are pleased to be able to report excellent progress on the project to date. The early part of 2006 was somewhat dispiriting because this stage involved dismantling our lovely old vessel in order to get to the root of the rot problems, and this clearly meant removing a great deal of the old

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timbers to get back to a sound base.



So much rot.....

Having done that, however, and taken stock of the additional work which was revealed in the process beyond our original estimation by professionals, the shipwright has made astonishing progress in restoring the massive frames, stem, sternpost and deadwood and we are very happy with how the work is progressing. The pictures below illustrate how matters have moved on:



The refurbished central keelson and complex frames at the bow

A sailing barge does not have a conventional external keel as the vessel needs to be able to dry out on hards between tides for loading/unloading, but a huge central girder runs the entire length. Here Thalatta's central keelson has been refurbished and re-fixed to the new and very complex shaped frames in the bow.



Exceptional craftsmanship

As in the bow area, the stern frames are very complex in shape and 'grown bends' have been used extensively for maximum strength.



Hull planking nearing completion



Substantial deck beams installed

This picture shows the heavy framing needed for a commercial vessel of this type and the attention to detail in the restoration where the refurbishment will result in original levels of quality of materials and workmanship. This project is invaluable in preserving the traditional shipwrighting skills, as well as the craft herself.

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The lining and ceiling installed

The ceiling, confusingly, is the floor we walk on, which is secured to the `floors' which are the transverse timber frames.



Side deck beams being installed, up to hatch coaming



Deck planking prepared for installation

Traditional deck planking is being fitted, caulked, rather than a modern plywood alternative. This will last another 100 years and accommodates the flexing that a sailing barge naturally experiences.

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The rail being fitted

The massive rail is being steamed and shaped into place and Thalatta now once again proudly bears her name carved into the bow rail as she re-awakens from her long slumber.



Decking underway



Main hatch coamings in place

The Trust is pleased with progress to date, achieved with the greatly valued support of many sponsors who recognise how important it is that Thalatta continues in her role of introducing young people to seafaring.

The project is scheduled to complete by Q3 2011 when Thalatta is due to resume her greatly valued programme of cruises for numerous schools who have patiently awaited her return.

Nick Hayward
February 2011