

HUNT'S YACHTING MAGAZINE – 1871, P228 THAMES SAILING CLUB

The first match of this club came off with great success on Saturday, March the 18th. There were nine entries, out of which the following seven started:- Ago, Mr James Hoare; Gnat, Mr CM Cottam; Amy, Messrs. Simpson and Selby; Daisy, Mr HH Harrison; Reckless, Messrs. Price and Barton; Little Ank, Messrs. EE and A Hayes; Lurline, Messrs. TE and CF Graham. The course being about from 200 yards above Kingston Bridge to a flag-boat moored a little below Messenger's Ait*, the wind at the time being nearly due North, and consequently up the river. The boats had to leave Kingston Bridge, run up and round the flag-boat at Messenger's, tack down to Kingston, round the flags, and then run up and finish at Messenger's Ait, which occupied one hour and a half. There was a strong steam down, although being sufficiently counteracted by the wind to enable the boats to overrun it. An excellent start was effected, and the Gnat took the lead, the Little Ank being the second to get off, but only to be very soon overhauled by the Amy, who drew steadily ahead. The Daisy took a long time getting up her topsail, and thus did not effect quite such a good start as the others. The Amy still continued to lead the way, closely followed by the Gnat, the Reckless being third. They continued to this order reaching the turning flags, when a foul occurred, owing to the Reckless not giving sufficient room for the Gnat to round the flags, thus compelling her to pass on the wrong side, and carry away her topsail shed. This brought the Gnat into the third place, which she maintained steadily throughout, though clipped in her wings, as the damage could not be repaired. All the time the Amy was steadily increasing her lead, which she maintained to the end, winning easily, the others coming in the following order, viz., Reckless, Gnat, Daisy, Lurline, Argo, Little Ank.

The members dined together at the Antelope, Surbiton, after the match, when the prizes were presented. The first, being a cup, given by the commodore, Mr FJB Beckford, went to the Amy; and the second, a compass, given by the club, fell to the lot of the Reckless. After the match other gentlemen were balloted for and elected as members of the club, and several donations for prizes towards future matches, and especially for the one to take place below bridge, were offered. – Field. Exclusive of the above, the following craft belong to the club: Helen and Midge, Mr FJB Beckford; Spray, Mr WG Bellairs; Shadow, MR CM Cottam; Happy Thought, Messrs. AT Simpson and EB Selby; Thalatta and Merlin, Mr L Shadwel; Lily, Mr V Wing; Pervit, Mr A Manning.

(Understood to have been located and retyped by TSC member Mark Laity.)

* Messenger's Ait otherwise known as Ravens Ait

Below are more fascinating reports

Early Races at TSC

(Taken from A Century of Sailing by TSC member Ingrid Holford)

While the Rear-Commodore was showing the flag overseas, Commodore Beckford was busy organising the 1871 regatta at Surbiton which was to publicise the new club. Imagine today's top helmsmen taking part!

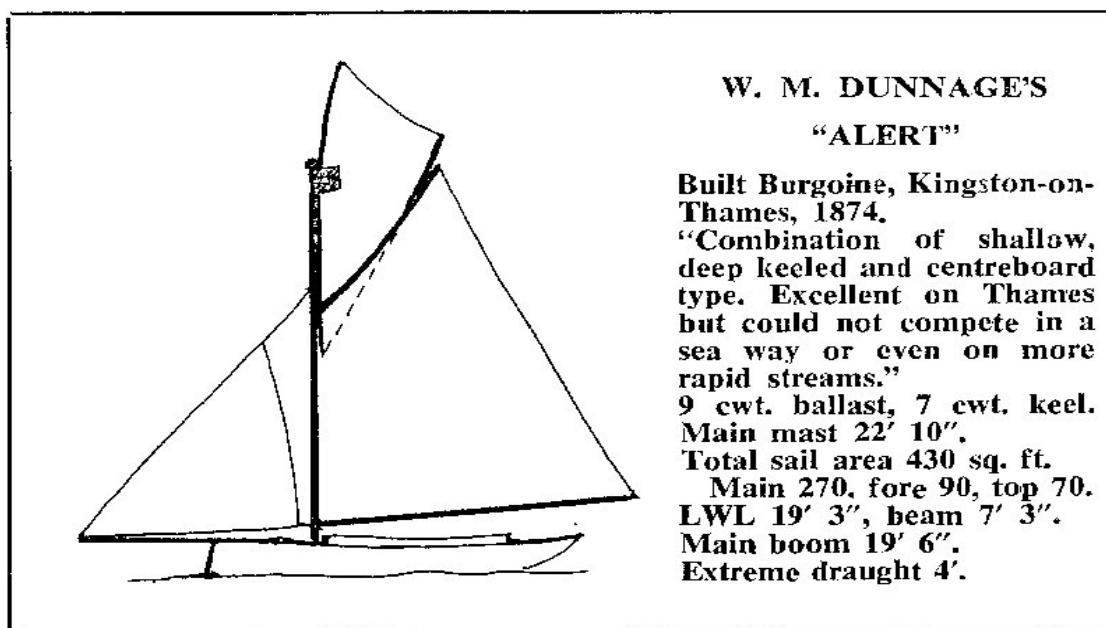
“The gig race was open to all bona fide rowing boats carrying

in these matches will not be exposed. Centreboard rowing boats will have a match to themselves with any other boats who chose to meet them, and will have to do some beating to windward. There will also be a match for sailing canoes."

One other race in this season deserves mention, both for the psychology of the promoter and the winner's method and sex. Mr. Shadwell offered a prize of a gold locket and chain for a race, "the distinguishing feature to be the compulsory presence of a lady in each boat. As ladies have theories of their own as to the stability of ships under canvas and generally believe an inclination of 5° produces all the effects of an inclination of 180°, this race should be interesting." It was. Wind died light and all were about to retire when Mr. and Miss Price crept slowly up in slack water close to the Middlesex shore to gain a well deserved victory. The era of the bank crawl had begun, and with it a realisation that skill and tactics could search out wind and beat stream. Naturally, I like to think it was Miss Price's hand on the tiller, not her father's! Either was apparently permissible.

But in case all this gives the impression that the Thames Sailing Club was merely trifling with their subject, the report of the concluding match of the 1871 season shows there was also good sport. The race was at Teddington, a 5 mile course, four times round the buoys. Once again there was a mixed bag of boats, but very different from the regatta boats.

There were seven starters. All carried topsails except *Reckless*, a cutter 14' x 5', small, deep in the water, heavily ballasted and with much canvas. *Madeline*, sloop, had a raised cabin, well and cockpit and rated about 5 tons. *Amy*, sloop, was a deep boat of the centre-



Dixon Kemp's Manual of Yacht and Boat Sailing.

board class and Shadow similar but shallow. *Little Auk*, 16' x 7' had Una rig of the 'old type' and a centreboard.

Interest centred on *Seamew*, yawl, "a pair-oared gig in which a centre board has been placed. Her presence amongst the regular racing boats may seem presumptuous but during the race she held good position, till she shipped much water in a squall, having to strike a topsail. Therefore the position of this class was not ascertained by the race but will probably be a favourite for above bridge sailing." Full details were given of this exciting race, offered as proof that there were little grounds for the sneers often levelled at sailing above bridge. "Practical skill of a high order is required and is excellent training for future yachtsmen in the vigilant and often fidgetty steering required. The race showed that good centreboards will beat fixed keels in river sailing, but even fixed keels give good sport if well handled."