







Thalatta's History

A brief overview



	1906	Built at the Naval Shipyard in Harwich by a man called McLearn. She was named after a full-rigged sailing ship which had arrived in Harwich from San Francisco via Cape Horn in 1905. She was bought by Fred Horlock of Mistley who wanted a big, strong sea-going barge with maximum cargo space.
	1908	A lucky escape – <i>Thalatta</i> was caught in a heavy storm when on passage from Sunderland to the Thames, and was towed into Lowestoft with a broken main gaff and a torn sail. Seven other barges were either lost or driven ashore in this storm.
	1909	Another close thing – when loaded with maize from the London Docks, she was in collision with the steamer <i>Forth</i> in Blackwall Reach, sustaining considerable damage to her starboard side, and had to be repaired by Shrubsall's at Greenwich before continuing her voyage.
	1914	<i>Thalatta</i> carried some coal freights to the continent (and once returned home with a cargo of eau de Cologne!) before being taken over by the Royal Navy for use as a fleet supply vessel.
	1916	In 1916 she ran between Shoreham and Dieppe deep loaded with pig iron (the intermediate product of smelting iron ore, to be worked into wrought iron in finishing forges). Many barges were destroyed during wartime at sea but <i>Thalatta</i> avoided the mines and submarines.
	1917	<i>Thalatta</i> was sold to Wynfield Shipping Company of Grimsby. A 70 hp two-cycle vertical oil engine was fitted in the former skipper's cabin aft. She was used as a supply vessel to the Humber boom defences. Her fore-hold was converted to accommodate her crew which now included an engineer. Her boomie rig was cut down and she worked from Grimsby as a motor barge – her original registration as a sailing vessel was cancelled.
	1918	At the end of the war Herbert Body took over as skipper, and she was employed taking materials to Flanders for post-war rebuilding. Between 1919 and 1921 her passages took her to Paris, Antwerp, Brussels and Rotterdam.
	1923	<i>Thalatta</i> was sold to her skipper Herbert Body, who traded her to ports on the north-east for coal and the south coast with wheat, as well as the near continent. Her engine was taken out and she returned purely to sail, but now rigged as a spritsail rather than a boomie.
	1933	Sold to R. & W. Paul (maltsters) of Ipswich, who owned her for 33 years. She was employed carrying imported grain from Royal Docks in London to Ipswich, returning with malt or flour.
	1940	<i>Thalatta</i> narrowly missed being sent to Dunkirk. Sixteen Thames Barges were among the boats sent to help evacuate the hundreds of thousands of British soldiers trapped on the beach, six of those barges were from R. & W. Paul. Nine never returned.
	1947	R. & W. Paul installed a Ruston and Hornsby marine diesel engine. Over the following years her rig was reduced to just a foresail.
	1967	She was sold to Skipper John Kemp, and re-rigged as a 'mulie' for her new role of taking children on educational study and adventure voyages.
	2006	<i>Thalatta</i> , at 100 years old, was in need of major repairs. With the help of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and hundreds of donations large and small, work begins on her restoration project.
	2011	After 5 years of hard work, the restoration project is complete and <i>Thalatta</i> is 'as new' again.

