

How a lifeboat ST CEDD guided my life.

Some years ago in the late 1960`s, early 1970`s I was involved as a volunteer at the Essex youth service sailing centre at Bradwell waterside.

The centre had an ex RNLI lifeboat which they called ST CEDD.

A memorable blessing of the lifeboat was held on the waterside at Bradwell I will never forget.

This escort boat`s name was at the centre of the philosophy at the centre.

She escorted us many adventures in the Blackwater estuary & on the east coast & much further on a few occasions.

When we travelled across the Thames & then across the channel with 4 X 16 feet Oyster dinghies.

These Oyster boats crewed by youth from Essex sailed into France like a mini invasion! French flags flying on the shrouds forward .

Red ensigns flying aft proudly announcing our arrival in Calais.

Such an adventure would be unlikely nowadays?

Due to changes in health & safety & the introductions of risk assessments.

An ex merchant navy master mariner called Pete Gurnell acted as a Father figure ran the new Bradwell sailing & field studies centre back then.

Along with his wife Bev who was in charge of all matters domestic & acted as Mother figure to us all.

Some of us came from backgrounds that needed some guidance ?

My experience with the then Othona community was limited.

However I did some alterations to a boat owned by the then Othona leader .

His name escapes me ?

I built a wheelhouse & engine box onto his boat for him when it was moored up the creek beside the slipway.

My job then was a mobile boat building & repair service.

I travelled throughout Essex, Suffolk undertaking boat work in wood & glass fibre/grp was then in it`s early days.

Bradwell outdoors as it is now know made me a more social person, it was youth work at it`s best.

Using experience`s in the outdoors to help youth adjust to society.

Now in my early 70`s myself & having been fortunate to retire at 50 .

From running sailing centres for over 20 years.

I have occupied myself with many boat projects since.

My latest is an ex ships life boat not a former RNLI boat itself.

I plan to name her SAINT CEDD on the bow & have ESSEX on the stern.

Next summer in 2021 I would like to bring her to Bradwell waterside.

For a weeks holiday.

If CV19 restrictions allow?

She is being fitted out to comply with current safety guidelines.

See pictures as is work is not completed yet.

I had a foot operation on the 7<sup>th</sup> September which is stopping work on the lifeboat until I am mobile again.

She is being fitted out for up to 12 persons for inshore waters.

If you fancy a jolly in Saint Cedd next summer get in touch.

She will be based on the Scottish side of the Solway estuary at Kipford river URR.

I live in SW Scotland now.

But she will come to Essex for a week for one of our holidays next summer.

Date yet to be arranged.

The Blackwater & boats are in my blood .

God bless you all.

Dave & Margaret Hart.















