

Launch of the 'GRACILDA'.

from the Southend Standard in 1934

'Dood luck to you boath,' lisped master Geoffrey Meering as he doffed his sailor's hat and handed Miss Hilda Frith a bouquet of carnations. Mallet in hand, Mr. Frank Shuttlewood stood ready to knock away the last wedge.

Miss Frith raised the bottle of champagne, 'I name you GRACILDA', she said and shivered the bottle as the sleek bows quivered on their first journey to the sea.

Everyone held their breath as foot by foot the massive cutter slid stern first down the skids. Would she stick, as happened on the last occasion of a launching? No, majestically she ploughed her way into the water - freed herself of the supporting cradle and swung buoyantly to her off-haul warp. A rousing cheer went up from the crowd of spectators. Another addition had been made to the ever growing fleet of yachts and yachtsmen at Paglesham.

Paglesham has only a bus connection with Southend - and not a very frequent one at that, but constant deep water and sheltered anchorage is worth going a long way for. The place is becoming more and more popular for Southend yachtsmen.

GRACILDA is an eleven-ton pole master cutter. She measures 33ft. by 9ft. 8ins. beam and draws 5ft. 6ins. of water. In addition to the 550 square feet of canvas, she is fitted with an Ailsa Craig engine. She was designed and built by Mr. F. Shuttlewood, of Paglesham. Accommodation consists of two cabins, a spacious saloon, and a large fo'cstle. A coal stove will supply warmth. There is standing headroom with six inches to spare.

Among the guests were Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Frith, Mr. and Mrs. Mayhew, Mr. and Mrs. L, Meering, Mr. Leslie Hughes, Mr. Meering Senr. and Miss. Connie Pike.

More on Gracilda...

Gracilda was named after the the owners' (Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Frith) daughters, Grace and Hilda. They are also linked to the Gracilda Cup, donated to the Roach Sailing Association for an annual ladies race.