



February 1997 Newsletter

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Secretaries Introduction

A.G.M.

The 1997 A.G.M. will be held on Sunday 16th March 1997 at the Alexandra Yacht Club at 7:30PM. Our thanks to Dai Williams who made the arrangements. The yacht club is on the Cliff where I am told there is ample free parking space in the evening.

The current committee members will be up for re-election and new members may apply at that time. If you have any other issues that you would like to raise at the meeting, please let me know and we will schedule time for discussion.

The current members are:

Norman Bishop - Chairman and Treasurer
John Martin - President
Dai Williams/Caroline Gibb - Racing Officers
John Langrick - Secretary

Other members of the committee on your behalf are:

Nigel Bishop Richard Kirton
Mike Dallimore Michael Figg
Rodney Choppin

1997 Subscriptions now due

I have attached a form for you to send your 1997 RSA Subscription to Norman. Remember we increased this subscription to £3 last year.

A welcome to new RSA Members! - Ian Bland, John Tobin and Val and David Whittingham.

Thanks for the articles

In this issue Dai Williams tells of the return leg of his 1995 voyage to France that we started in the February issue last year. Dennis Haggerty recounts adventures crossing the Maplins and Johnathan Walmsley writes about his father Jack, and the many boats he owned.

Norman Frith

We were sad to hear that we lost Norman Frith last year. Norman had been sailing from Paglesham since the 1920s. Many will know that he donated the Gracilda Cup for the winner of the ladies race. The cup was named after one of his many boats. His son Roger remains a member of the RSA and has written an article on his father's boats for this newsletter - **From Dinghy to Cruiser and Back again.**

Yard News

We have many boats laid up in the yard at the moment. SAMANTHA of BURNHAM in her

new, slightly bent cradle and MARSHMALLOW are wintering ashore this year as is STORMFAGELN, She is tucked away nicely with RUTH and DORMOUSE nearby. Happily RUTH had a good season last year with most of the damage from the previous winter now put to rights. APERITIF and HASTAWAY are tucked away at the river side of the east field, which is where SWANTI is sheltering. HAZE is laying nearby and SPARKLER over in the west field.

HALLOWEEN FRANCESCA, JEMIMA PUDDLEDUCK and MOONBEAM are all laid up in mud berths, as is RIPPLE. Just a few boats remain on the moorings, PAISANA STORTEBECKER and MOON RIVER. I visited the yard early in January and most of the river had frozen over. Hopefully this has caused little damage.

New owner for Miracle Boats

Miracle Boats has now been sold, the new owner is already well known in the yard with his fishing boat Nu Venture. Russ will be keeping Dave on as the shipwright and will be introducing his son as his apprentice. We all wish him well. Chris, the previous owner, is pursuing other opportunities in the West Country.

1995 Race Results

Congratulations to the following race winners in 1996

Paglesham Pot - No Race
Blue Shoal Trophy - Memory
Roach Plate - Pud Muddle
Seamanship Cup - Kilindi
Championship Cup - Tess

RNLI Lifeboat Cup (Dinghies) - Mini

John Langrick

Secretary RSA (Phone 01702 588199)

One Man and His Boats

A tribute to Jack Walmsley by his son Jonathan

I expect that most members have already heard of the recent death of Jack Walmsley. He was a familiar figure on the Roach since he first sailed there from Leigh in his late teens. My father owned five boats spanning the last 64 years:

Cirrus

James Barke will run the boat-yard

In the summer of this year, David Barke will retire and hand the yard over to his son. James is just finishing his degree course at University and will be starting as the new full-time proprietor of the yard as his studies end.

We wish him good luck in his new career.

Facility charges

Those of the RSA who are on Ron Pipe's moorings will see that there has been a severe increase in facility charges. I am told by the yard that they intend to increase these charges regularly as they feel that the yachtsmen on Ron's moorings have an 'unfair price advantage'.

Although the charges may go up, history does not indicate that the level of facilities have improved. However, the yard is insisting that these will get noticeably better and that the moorings will also receive better attention.

I suggest that, for those who are on Ron's moorings, this be a matter for discussion at the AGM.

Shuttlewood Cup - Tess
Gracilda Cup - Tess
RNLI Race - Trish
Whitaker Cup - Lady Hamilton
Paglesham Yacht Race - Memory

Cirrus was the first, bought while my father was a teenager. She was a sixteen foot dinghy which he sailed mainly in the Thames estuary, always in thigh boots and with an eight foot stem dinghy in tow! One long weekend he sailed with his friend to Paglesham, spending the night in the Plough and Sail. This was his first visit to the Roach by sea, although he had learnt to swim as a child at Stambridge where a neighbour kept a houseboat. He kept all the bills for the work he did on Cirrus, and by applying 'a bit of art' sold her at an overall profit.

The Kaye

She was a grey straight stemmed gaff cutter of around twenty seven feet, excluding the eight foot bowsprit, which he kept on an anchor just below Paglesham. He must have been a memorable sight in the lane during the 1930s on his bicycle with oars strung along the crossbar. Despite being full of cement and having 'sieve like' decks, he enjoyed sailing her up and down the East Coast with his friends until joining the Royal Navy in 1940 to cruise on bigger boats.

Arabel

He had many adventures during the war including escorting the first Russian convoy and being sunk in the Java Sea. By applying for every training opportunity available, (the theory being that you were less likely to get into trouble if you were on a course), he rose to the rank of Lieutenant.

On his return he bought Arabel, which he kept anchored in the same spot below Paglesham. She was another straight stemmed gaff cutter, 25 feet long with blue topsides. He spent many seasons sailing with my mother on Arabel, including their honeymoon. Family commitments led to his selling Arabel in the late 60s.

Jo-Ann

Arabel was replaced by a twelve foot Walker Tideway gunter rigged sailing dinghy in which I learnt to sail. She was kept on a running mooring at Chalkwell. With the family growing up, and retirement looming, it was time for another keelboat.

Helius

This was a great departure from the yachts my father had owned previously, being bermudan rigged **and** having an engine. With a short counter and varnished mahogany cabin and cockpit she was a very pretty boat. Helius was Twenty one foot overall and built as a 'one off' in the late fifties of iroko on oak frames. She was kept on a drying mooring at Wakering.

Stravaig

Nearing his eighties the seasonal varnishing and painting was becoming too much, even with the boy helping. Helius was sold in the Spring and replaced with a 'plastic' Hurley 22 6 weeks later. After a season on a mooring at North Fambridge, my father returned to the Roach. The speed and sea worthiness of Stravaig allowed cruising as far as Woodbridge

and Aldeburgh. Although initially reluctant, my father took part in his first ever yacht race two years ago. He very soon entered into the spirit of the events, which culminated in winning the Whitaker Cup, in his last season.

Stravaig will be back racing on the Roach next year, although I fear she will not be quite as competitive as before. The boy will, however, give it his best shot.

The Sceptics Guide to Short Cuts Across the Maplin

Or, how not cross the Maplin Sands approaching Havengore Creek from the South

In the September 1995 newsletter, John detailed how he sailed Swanti from the Thames Estuary returning to Paglesham via Havengore Creek. One thing that struck a chord with me was his observation that, whilst the chart and pilot books warn of numerous obstructions on the sands anywhere outside the recommended course, he did not see any.

Over the years of sailing past the Maplin sands, both my father and I have developed a deep suspicion that the Department of 'Boats not Welcome Here' just want to keep the yachties out. The powers that be, responsible for the firing range, are happy to perpetuate the myth that the sands are strewn with poles, wreckage and unexploded shells. Undoubtedly there are a few, but none to speak of between Shoebury and Havengore, hence, in reality the risk is negligible. Whether we are considered spies and saboteurs, or floating new age travellers just waiting to set up camp, I remain unsure. But, they don't want us there and what better way than marking these waters with the modern day equivalent of "thar be monsters" that medieval sea captains would see on their ancient charts?

If you are a sceptic or an aficionado of the conspiracy theory, this is all very well, but would you risk putting it to the test? Well, not intentionally. Alternatively you might be interested in accounts of those who have.

My father in his Kingfisher 20 and myself in a similarly shoal Hunter 19 (triple keel version - 2' 4" draft) have frequently strayed (and prayed!) on the Maplin without so much as a near miss.

Not that damage was not altogether a risk, once in the late 1960's, engineless and becalmed my father was towed by an army DUKW, toward Havengore, under arrest. Now there's military logic, they did not tow him out of the range, but into it. Further surprises were in store, when the DUKW's wheels touched the sands it steadily climbed out of the water. Our soldiers basic training may not cover the finer points of yacht design, but boats haven't got wheels! Hence, when his boat began to plough the sand with her keels, following protestations from the skipper (I believe the parentage of most of the British army was called into question!), the tow was abandoned. They then drove off, leaving stern instructions to anchor and await orders. Having obediently anchored for a while, a favourable breeze set in, so dad and DUKW parted company and did not reacquire themselves that season.

Several calm weather and tide induced excursions on to the Maplin occurred, all without incident, but then, his boat was named "Escape"

My own trip across the Maplin did not involve military intervention, as I was sailing on a Sunday, but it was classic corner cutting and certainly not best practice! It was my maiden trip (1990) in my Hunter 19, Sophie (predecessor to Lady Hamilton) sailing from Thorpe Bay to Paglesham via Havengore. With a force three from the East and two hours of spring flood remaining, Sophie was hard on the wind. From the end of the Shoebury obstruction, I was just about able to lay the Havengore entrance. But, with the tide and a fairly lumpy chop, the boat was being pushed down to leeward.

This meant that my course was well over the sand and in only about four feet of water. Indeed, I was unable to prove my vintage Seafarer echo sounder was giving a true reading until the end of my boat hook surfaced with a good coating of mud. My hitherto disbelieving sailing companions were simply amazed that we could be so far from the shore and sailing in so little water (something of an illusion, as the crews estimation of distance was distorted due to the spring tide changing their perception of the height of the featureless seawall).

My final approach to Havengore was well inside the wreck and diagonally across the Broomway, exactly one hour before high water. I cleared the entrance, picked up the can

buoys marking the channel and finally saw recorded depths in double figures! Do the range markers that allegedly festoon the sand exist in reality or rather in history? Or was I just lucky? A sharp watch had failed to reveal anything breaking surface, so this account supports the sceptics view.

The greatest hazard, bearing in mind Sophie having a freeboard of 18", were the waves in shoal waters, many with breaking crests. A particularly large one, mounting the foredeck, then running over the smooth sloping cabin top, depositing half a gallon down the main hatch! Had the wind been blowing a force five, rather than force three that day, I am convinced it would have been madness to follow such an inshore course. The potential for breaking waves over such a wide expanse of shallow water being only too apparent. In the event it was salt water in the crews tea that proved to be the only 'obstruction' to a thoroughly enjoyable sail.

Dennis Haggerty

Dennis is the co-owner of a Shipman 28, "Lady Hamilton" moored at Paglesham. Now having to contend with a fin keel and drawing five feet his days of 'shooting the gore' are over, which is perhaps just as well!

From Dinghy to Cruiser and back again!!

By Roger Frith

Walter 'Norman' Frith kept boats at Paglesham from the late 1920's until the 1980s. The first boat owned by the Frith family was the HOOKER a converted lifeboat purchased for £10 (so Hilda thinks) in the late 1920s.

In 1931 Norman purchased their first cabin sailing boat RED WINGS and also often sailed in SECRET owned by Les Hughes in 1932.

The JEANNIE was purchased in 1933 and in 1934 a new boat was constructed by the Shuttlewood yard which was launched by Norman's sister Hilda in the March with the name GRACILDA - All the family gathered at the boatyard for the launch, but Norman and Eric were down in the Plough and Sail when Hilda was told that the launch must take place now or never so as to catch the tide. So the co-owners missed the launch of their new boat! GRACILDA was kept up to the war, when she

was sold and whilst sailing up the Thames was bombed.

After the war, Norman purchased the barge yacht DOREEN. She was constructed at Paglesham in 1895 and was the first ever barge yacht built. There is still a model of her in the Science Museum and she is currently being lovingly restored to her former glory in Suffolk. She was sold in 1953 as with 3 children and a 'wish my wife Mary' for an engine, a new boat was sought.

Norman also owned a caravan at the Woolcotts for many years and the family spent many holidays and weekends sleeping in the caravan in the early 50's and walking down the lane to don thigh boots and wellies to push the tender down the hard to the water. The next craft to belong to the Norman Frith clan was MAROBEL a clinker built 3 berth cabin cruiser built by John Mackay at Stromness, Orkney Islands. She was sailed over by the boat-yard to Wick and put on a train to Southend. She was lost by the railway for three months and found eventually in a siding in Crewe!! The family at this time owned a number of tenders. Duckling dinghies, Walker 12s and pram dinghies.

In 1960, Norman was up the Deben in Suffolk when he spotted dinghies with 'DB' on the sail and thought them ideal to take the place, or sail along-side, the T.E.O.D.s and E.O.D.s at Southend. After some enquiries where they were made, he discovered that the 'D.B.' stood for the Y.W. 14 foot Dayboat class and obtained the plans. This caused problems as the craft he had seen were in fact the Deben One designs and they had to change the sail insignia after the Y.W. Dayboat Association complained. Anyway, Norman asked Lew Walker of Leigh to build him a dayboat and so in 1961 the first Y.W. 14ft Day-boat class dinghy was seen sailing at the Alexandra Yacht Club at Southend, and in races up the Pool and round Potton Island. She cost £240 ex works and was named 'DEBONAIR' after the River Deben where Norman first thought he saw them. Subsequently Len Walker was to build more day-boats than any other boatyard.

Dai Williams, in the 1960s down at the 'Alex' was heard to say 'you can't put a little dinghy like that out on a mooring, it will be forever blowing over'. One day the wind was blowing a fair rate of knots and changed as the tide had gone out. Over went DEBONAIR to cries from Dai and other T.E.O.D. owners of 'I told you

so'. By the time everyone had bottomed their pints and descended the cliffs to the slipway, every T.E.O.D. and E.O.D had blown over too!!

I sailed his cadet dinghy in races at Paglesham and his 'enterprise' daughters Joan and Beryl have also competed in races at Paglesham over the years in Tideways, Mirror Dinghies and other day-boats.

In 1966, 'ORTHELLES' was purchased, she was a 6 ton Johnson and Jago Bawley class Bermuda rigged auxiliary racing yacht and she also spent her time at Paglesham, at West Mersea and finally at Brixham in Devon. She was sold in 1976.

Dad loved Paglesham, the people, the Plough and Sail and his boats. It was part of his life and I'm sure he would have wished me to thank all the members of the R.S.A and everyone who knew him for their friendship and comradeship over the years.

Shortly before his death, Norman spent a brief time in hospital. His son kindly put his treasured photographs in an album and took it to his bedside so that he could look back over his boating memories. Roger brought the Album for me to see and it certainly contains a wealth of Paglesham history, including the building and launch of the Gracilda. Roger will try and attend the AGM where other members can perhaps see this unique history for themselves. Other items of interest includes the press cutting below - sec.

A story from the Southend Standard in 1934

Launch of the 'GRACILDA'.

'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 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.

Home to N51.35.31 E00.48.41

Dai and Caroline make their way back from France

Friday 5 Jul 95

1015 Clear Les Sables d'Olonne
1527 Saint Jean de Mont's bearing 020 deg - largest block of flats we've ever seen.
1625 S Cardinal (wreck) Pont d'Yeu
1945 Tied up in L' Herbaudiere (113 FF) - this is the island that isn't! A long peninsula joined to the mainland by a bridge and causeway. Watched cars circling single roundabout in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions!

Saturday 8 Jul

1015 Leave L'Herbaudiere
1520 Pointe de Croisic abeam
1630 On La Turballe Marina
1900 La Godille Restaurant 10 Rue Mal Leclerc - very good seafood & Rose

Sunday 9 Jul

0830 Frenchman insists on dropping his anchor to demonstrate his own design for release & retrieval - surprisingly it worked but we have our doubts if it would on a heaving deck.
0950 Leave marina with this Frenchman who said he was heading south but hoisted his chute and went due North!
1442 Le Pot de Fer
1615 Enter La Palaise (on Belle Ile) and tie up fore and aft on buoys
1800 Surreptitiously watch Frenchman doing water-colour. Dig out my smudges and do

sketch of the overpowering citadel overlooking the harbour and then discover Frenchman looking over my shoulder.

Mon 10 Jul

Go ashore for shopping - get caught in torrential rain and thunder and dodge from door to door until we found refuge in harbourside bistro and watch ferries arriving from mainland. Lunch and dinner ashore - most places pricey - settled for moules, frites and cider Pleasant surprise - mooring 41 FF

Tuesday 11 Jul

0815 Leave Belle Ile
1245 On fore and aft mooring Port Tudy on Ile de Groix
1300 English lady married to Frenchman on next yacht recommends restaurant up the hill with ship's models in the windows.
1500 Ashore up the steps to top of cliffs where boys are jumping 30 feet in to what looked like 6 feet of water with rocks everywhere. Meet Belgian couple from Louvain area eating numerous raw carrots Linger over spectacular panorama of approximately 50 miles from Pte de Penmarc'h to Belle Ile including Benodet, Port la Foret, Concarneau, Lorient and Quiberon peninsula

1900 proceed to recommended restaurant up the hill on the left with crocheted curtains and model yachts in windows. Excellent meal with exquisite ice cream to follow. Then a 1,000-1 chance, Ann and Arthur from sister ship "Wild Thyme" from Burnham arrive in restaurant - neither knew of the other's cruise. 30 FF for mooring.

Wed 12 Jul

0920 Leave Port Tudy
1445 Arrive Concarneau. Massive ramparts huge squares and good supermarket landward side of fish market

Thurs 13 Jul

1030 Leave Concarneau. Sail up pretty Odet river under genoa for approx 5 miles through wooded banks and turn around in sight of Quimper at 1445 but struggle at 1515 to a mooring with 2.2 knots against us.

1715 Slip mooring

1815 In Sainte Marine on west bank opposite Benodet

1900 Lovely dinner 100 FF with good view. Very pricey

Friday 14 July BASTILLE DAY

0800 Go to chandler's for Gaz. Closed - in fact most of France closes on this day it seems. Meet Breton Garr who insists on helping and takes empty Gaz but leaves me 50 FF, his lighter and fag papers as surety. Returns with full bottle and insists on carrying bottle back to the marina. I asked him if he was celebrating

Bastille Day and his reply was "Francais - spit spit spit! Breton, Breton! "

0920 Leave Odet river Very lumpy at entrance - bow and foredeck awash repeatedly - gets better further offshore.

1320 Cap Caval - very rough again

1400 French yacht with drunken crew came into close (say 40 feet) proximity which was extremely dangerous in the conditions- their idea of Brit-baiting!

1450 On mooring Audierne (St Evette) surrounded by Snipes at their Open meeting.

2100 Turn in for early start - rock and roll all night!

Sat 15 Jul

0400 Alarm call 0500 Clear West Gamelle off Audierne

0845 Bse Vielle abeam 1/2 mile

0924 Raz de Sein clear astern

1100 Arrive Morgat - one of our favourite locations especially after almost sleepless night and fireworks display. La Grange Toul Boss restaurant for good crepe, cidre and coffee 88 FF Meet Colin and Fay and have wine - Past Commodore of Civil Service YC at Plymouth. Charming couple.

Sun 16 Jul

1130 Leave Morgat

1245 Warned of submarine (and got sight of it) - alter course to north

1521 Go "inshore" route through rocks in Toulinguet channel very meticulous attention required

1600 Tie up Cameret

1715 Neighbouring British yacht blew all fuses trying to get his immersion heater to work.

1915 Excellent meal (80 Fr) excluding wine and coffee at second cafe at NE corner of inner harbour, Fish soup with croutons and cheese, Fruits de Mer, Langoustine mayonnaise, crepe Coquille St Jaques, crepe chocolat and Glace Strawberry. Pichet of rose and coffees.

Mon 17 Jul

1150 Clear Camaret - much too soon for tide - we forgot to add 1 hr to Dover HW.

1447 Platresses (and slack water) about halfway to L'Aberv'rach

1700 Le Liberator off L'Aberv'rach

1740 On mooring L'Aberv'rach near Alan & Fay

1900 Ashore for more frites again!

Tues 18 Jul

0550 Slip mooring

0632 La Liberator

0900 Le Batz and Roscoff abeam

1230 In marina Trebeurden

1330 Meet Madame Andy Capp complete with lip-stuck nicotine stained roll-your-own and an abusive line of chat

1900 Eat aboard - could not face another pink slug after our previous experience.

Wed 19 Jul

0815 Clear marina

0910 Bar all Gall headland 1051 Trip Log shows 1,000 NM 1130 Treguier river entrance

1155 Pen ar Guezec

1210 Tamean Bn Tr & Les Trois Pierres

1214 La Corne 1220 CO 904 Tigris ex Lowestoft (Contessa 32) heading to sea.

1315 Treguier

1430 Coffee and crepes in Cathedral square in sunshine. Visit Cathedral (very chilly) and see lawyers patron saint (St Yves) statue.

1500 Visit supermarket

1530 Very very hot - fix up awning and wait for lobster to thaw

Thurs 20 Jul

0900 Leave Treguier

1057 La Fument (N Cardinal)

1945 St Peter Port

2000 To Waterfront restaurant (just past Royal Channel Islands YC) Super meals of brill. sea bass, courgettes, new potatoes and chips followed by profiterolles and orange Italian and cream and 1 litre house white (very dry) and coffee £33.75

Friday 21 Jul

0430 Woken up by crash from French boat on port side. Argument- call Port Control who promised to help but did not arrive.

1139 Fog clears and leave St Peter Port

1215 Visibility down to 50-100 yards - Platte Fougere rock on 290 deg magnetic. Fog patches visibility 50 yds up to 1/2 mile plus.

1400 Approaching Swinge

1415 "I've seen the rocks" says Caroline but then visibility went down to 50 yds with Decca and GPS (agreeing - thank goodness) giving 9 Knots over the ground. First reaction was to consider how to reduce speed or even turn and stem the tide but the latter which would mean 5 knots backwards did not appeal. Decca and GPS agreed on range and bearing of waypoint but about 2-4 cables wide feels a very narrow channel. Then a motor cruiser hurtles past in the opposite direction about 2 boat lengths abeam doing 15-20 knots on the plane. Phew! So it continued for about 30 mins until we had passed our waypoint going east of north - then we turned east to clear Braye's submerged portion of the breakwater and within a few minutes suddenly saw the rocks under Fort Albert. Then we turned south towards the harbour and suddenly - clear sunshine. I think that was the longest 45 minutes of our lives. 1500 On mooring Braye harbour after putting prayer mats away.

Sat 22 Jul

0545 Leave Braye in sunshine 1000-1030
Aphrodite of Yar sitting on us. Furl jib and
motor to get to windward of him.
11.23.30 SIGHT ENGLAND from 28.3 Nm
from Poole Fairway Buoy
1615 Anchored Studland at original ETA. Log
59.9 Nm

Sunday 23 Jul

1000-1100 Paint watercolour of Old Harry and
his pals at Studland
1250 Weigh anchor
1530 North Head buoy off New Milton
1620 In Yarmouth harbour
Monday 24 Jul
1055 Board bus with £5.95 Rover ticket -
roughest trip of the holidays double decker bus
along cliff road through Freshwater, Blackgang
Chine to Ventnor with road subsidence - it
seemed as if the bus was struggling against the
driver and trying to dart off in any direction but
the road and then it broke down! On
replacement bus as we neared Ventnor the next
battle was against mile after mile of
overhanging branches being hit by the bus in
rapid succession. This was followed by bad
beer and poor pub lunch in Ventnor. So - on to
Shanklin and Sandown - 2 coffees very weak.
Very nearly run down by foreign students
jumping bus queue in Newport - thence via
Arreton to Yarmouth. Excellent cream tea in
tiny garden near delicatessen in High Street.
1815 Thankfully return to Tess.

Tuesday 25 Jul

0900 Leave Yarmouth
1210 In Cowes marina - wind up to Force 6
now and at least 3 knot stream off Royal Yacht
Squadron even 'tho only just past neaps.
1300 Lunch at Island Sailing Club very good.
Liver & bacon £3.95 and home made pizza
£3.95. Good real ale (including Brakespear) at
£1.43 per pint. Warm welcome here as always
from Ron the steward.
1405 In Charles Dickens Bookshop - Caroline
finds Calahan's Learning to Race,
2000 Devon crabs dressed by Caroline -
beautiful

Wed 26 Jul

Lunch at Island Sailing Club and more books
1630 Video QE II as she passes us in the
Solent 1730 Good sail into Hasler Marina at
Portsmouth

Thurs 27 Jul

0710 Leave Portsmouth in heavy thunder rain
0925 At Beacon in Looe Channel
1345 In Brighton marina £15 per night + £3
deposit for key

Friday 28 Jul

0735 Leave Brighton in light westerly and
heavy swell

0937 Seven (or we counted eight) Sisters
1005 Beachy Head
1130 Tied up in Sovereign Marina, Eastbourne
(Lock in 24 Hrs)

Saturday 29 Jul

0735 Locked out followed by 2 Belgian and 1
Dutch yacht then thick FOG 0844 N50.48.62
E00.29.13 1145 Dungeness - still fog 1210
N50.56.32 E01.03.28 1300 Engine stops dead
- no warning find 15-20 foot of polypropylene
trawl and plywood on propeller. Haul some
aboard.
1430 With fair tide and very light breeze
covering 1 knot over the land!
1530 Still in thick fog, anchor in 12 feet on top
of Channel Tunnel near Shakespeare cliff. Get
in dinghy and cut off a lot of trawl but still
immobilised.
1600 Weigh anchor and tide still favourable
for approx 1 hour whence Dover would be
unattainable.
1615 Call Dover Port Control and explain
situation. Continue under sail.
1640 Dover launch (Diplomat) takes us in tow
and puts us on pontoon in Wellington Dock
area

1650 Diving Club on holiday appear and offer
assistance
1833 All fouling cleared and Club take away
trawl and our gratitude and gratuity
2030 Topo Gigio's good Italian style meal - £2
taxi back to marina

Sunday 30 Jul

1120 Cleared E entrance Dover
1350 On pontoon Ramsgate
1930 Nok Chui (Thai Restaurant) closed
(normally closed Monday) Harvey pub - quite
good upstairs. 3 fresh herring and chocolate
fudge cake were notable.

Mon 31 Jul

0610 Clear Ramsgate
0710 Rounding North Foreland
0755 E Margate
0845 Tongue Sand Towers
0905 N Edinburgh No 7 0955 Edinburgh No 1
1012 Barrow No 10 1035 SW Sunk Beacon -
after touching 4 times (at Sheerness -5hrs
12mins and 15.1 feet range.) Little or no wave
or swell. Chart shows 2 metres - a worthy
reminder that tides are PREDICTIONS only.
1100 Barrow No7
1222 Ridge buoy
1300 Outer Crouch - water temp 75 deg F, only
65 deg in Biscay
1350 On mooring Rice & Coles No 11
1700 Wallasea Marina

Wed 2 Aug

Home to Paglesham via Royal Burnham and
meeting "Buzz" Mountstephens, Bernard Law

and John Ayshford (both ex AYC) and Brian Castle.

SUMMARY

Logged	1331 Nm
No of visits	44
Total	48 days
Days in France	27
Sailing hours	267

Good Sailing - "Tess", Dai & Caroline

SWANTI's Travels

Pyfleet Weekend no 1

The first Pyfleet weekend simply wasn't, at least for me. The wind was from the NE, 3-4, not the best wind for a fat old gaff cutter that has difficulty sailing to windward. The forecast was for it to increase 6-7. As I appeared to be the only member foolhardy enough to make any trip, I thought I would at least sail to the Branklet Spit and then decide on the plan from there. In the event, the wind did not abate and so I decided to sail up to Hullbridge. A friend had bought a small gunter sloop in the yard there and earlier in the season I had promised to give him a 'tug' to Paglesham as he had little experience in sailing and the boat had no engine. The sail to Brandy Hole was uneventful and that evening, after dinner and a few beers in the Brandy Hole Yacht Club, I returned to SWANTI, lit the stove and curled up in my bunk with a book.

My friend was making his boat ready for the tow when I awoke the following morning. High tide was not until lunchtime, so we had time to spare. After a lazy late breakfast and barely a breath of wind, we set off down the Crouch. The high winds forecasted the day before never materialised. Instead, a breeze of about F2 from the west, allowed me to sail most of the way to the Branklet Spit, with no engine while still towing my rather large tender.

However, the iron topsail came into it's own while making the final journey to the yard. Later that season I had a call from James and Maeve who have the Gaff Yawl SALUS. They had sailed from Walton for what became a lonely weekend at Pyfleet. Still, they enjoyed their weekend as did myself.

A trip to Benfleet Creek

My boat SWANTI is a Dauntless, and you may know that the Dauntless boat yard is next to the Benfleet Yacht Club on Canvey Island.

Recently a number of Dauntless owners have formed an association and it was decided to have the inaugural meeting at the Benfleet Yacht Club. We had arranged dinner and berths for those boats that were prepared to brave Benfleet Creek.

Alan Holland with RUTH and myself planned to sail on the Friday, through the Havengore to spend the night at Thorpe Bay, ready to take the flood up to Benfleet on the Saturday lunch time. 1996 was the 50th year since Ruth was built. What better place to celebrate her birthday? Another member of the Dauntless Association, Robert Grey with his Dauntless CHRISTABEL had been 'stranded' at Paglesham with a 'temperamental' Stuart Turner, (are there any other types?) As Robert is the Chairman of the Dauntless Association, and of course wanted to attend the meeting at Benfleet, and the wind was negligible, there was little option but yet again to play tugs. So it was that a procession of three Dauntlesses motored out of the Havengore that Friday morning. With RUTH deckled out with bunting, it was quite a sight.

By the time we had reached Thorpe Bay, the tide had turned with a vengeance and I only just managed to pick up a visitors mooring and allow CHRISTABEL to drop back on another. During the night, RUTH took CHRISTABEL in tow and pulled off the sands into deeper water. When I had enough water to leave the mooring, I could see both RUTH and CHRISTABEL out by the pier. We were aiming to meet in Leigh Creek where the Bosun from the Benfleet Yacht Club had kindly offered to guide us to the yacht club. RUTH followed the Bosun in his yacht with CHRISTABEL in tow followed by SWANTI and the Saturday lunch time saw RUTH, the oldest surviving Dauntless plus two later models, making fast in front of the Benfleet Yacht Club. It was a brilliant day, bright sunshine and not a cloud in the sky.

I have made no mention of navigation in Benfleet creek so far. As you see, we had a pilot for this trip. If you should plan a trip to Benfleet, it is worth knowing that the yacht club maintains a chart of Benfleet Creek from Canvey Point to South Benfleet. These are available from Benfleet Yacht club for price of a small subscription to the RNLI. This chart gives far better navigation detail than I can. I used a copy of this chart to navigate my way back down the creek and found it excellent.

That evening we moved the three boats to the club slipway where the club invited us to remain that night. Quite a sight to see three Dauntlesses spanning the years tied up together so close to the yard where they were built. The evening meal saw over 20 members of the Dauntless Association, including Syd Lattimer, the designer and builder of Dauntless boats enjoying an excellent meal after which the association presented a plaque to Syd in celebration of 50 years of boat building. There followed an excellent photo opportunity of Syd Lattimer and his boats.

Very early, at first light saw RUTH providing her tug services to CHRISTABEL as we three made our way back down the creek. CHRISTABEL was finally taken in tow by a yacht sailing to Fambridge, CHRISTABEL's home port. After coffee in Leigh Creek, Alan and I beat our way back down the Thames towards the Havengore. RUTH made small tacks to keep out of the very choppy deeper water while SWANTI was able to make better headway. We both tied up in the lee of the man-made island off the Havengore where we had breakfast.

Unfortunately we had little wind all week-end, but with the help of the engine, RUTH was able to celebrate her 50th birthday with style and we have some excellent photographs to prove it! These include a portrait of a thoughtful Syd Lattimer with the three generations of Dauntless in the background. Our thanks go to the Benfleet Yacht Club for making us feel very welcome. I would recommend any RSA member who would like to visit those waters to spend a night at Benfleet. Although the creek does dry out completely, they are equipped to cater for all keel types to take the mud and keep upright.

A trip to Faversham

Towards the end of summer I had promised I would sail to Faversham. The tide was at 1000 and I took the ebb out of the Crouch, heading for the Whittaker. From there to turn SW down the Swin and across the Thames between the two sets of towers. Tony Hudson and Len Lewin were to meet me in PENDRAGON at Whitstable after sailing from Thorpe Bay. I had an excellent wind from the NE, not helpful on the leg out to the Whittaker, but once around the Maplins, I had a fair wind right to Whitstable. However, as usual, my timing was way out. I did not appreciate the considerable distance around the sands. This led to my rendezvous time of lunch to be teatime!

PENRAGON was at anchor at the bottom of Faversham Creek in the Swale. I came along-side and joined Tony and Len for a brew.

Our plan was to take the young flood up to Faversham. That way we could see the channel. PENDRAGON draws about 3'6 and hence I was to go first and test the water. When at Faversham, I had been invited to moor SWANTI in Alan Staley's boat-yard and he kindly gave me the combination to his excellent toilet facilities in the yard. PENDRAGON was to tie up near the Iron Wharf.

With high tide at 2120 and darkness at 2030, I hoped that I could get as near as possible to my destination before night fell. The tides were neaps and so, with a little trepidation, we set off 'up the creek'. The channel is well buoyed with both port and starboard markers, but as we started, the buoy anchors (lumps of concrete) were visible high and dry on the mud bank.

It is surprising the amount of junk that litters the sides of the creek. Good advice would be to follow the buoys and where there are no buoys, stick to the centre of the channel. We passed the Shipwrights Arms at the mouth of Oare Creek which boldly flew its Union Jack. All around as we sailed the creek was evidence of our sailing heritage, from sunken barge yachts to the most delightful smacks. Shortly after passing the Shipwrights Arms, the buoys stopped. Further up the creek I could see a small gaffer and eventually caught up with what appeared to be a Chesapeake Bay sloop. It was about 15 feet long with massive beam had very little freeboard and a most beautiful sheer. Upon hailing the skipper I heard that he too was heading for Faversham and indeed the deepest water was to the centre of the channel. By this time light was failing and I could see that occasionally PENDRAGON was grounding at the bottom of the channel. But we were in sight of Faversham by now.

At the start of the jetty at Faversham is a steel barge. Unfortunately this evening there was a small tug tied along-side and a fin keel yacht on the outside of the tug. The yacht had dried out with the mast laying over the channel at a crazy angle. We would certainly have to wait awhile until the tide lifted it free. But the tide was pushing me down on the small gaffer which by now was stopped by this obstruction. I threw out my kedge anchor which immediately disappeared into the very soft

mud. At least it held until at last the small gaffer was able to make it's way. I followed, but even with my 15 inches of draft was scraping the bottom of the channel. Eventually I 'pushed the mud' in front of Alan Staley's yard and a helpful hand from shore took my line. Although there was still not enough water to go along-side, I still had an hour of tide left. Hence, as darkness fell, with my bow pulled well onto the mud and stern out in the channel, I awaited the last of the flood.

Looking back down the channel I could see that PENDRAGON was now along-side other yachts further down the creek and had a safe berth for the evening. Further past PENDRAGON, I could see the steaming lights of a huge craft, but surely, with not enough draft for a Dauntless, nothing could get up the creek? I was wrong. Pushing a large bow wave, a sailing barge was heading towards me at full throttle. I have since learnt that these craft sail up the creek on what must be a cushion of water and mud. Now I was in the way!

With inches to spare (and the help of some rubber tyres), the bow wave of the barge pushed me high onto the bank at one side while it hissed past me with inches to spare. Looking down into the bottom of the creek, it was almost dry! Shortly after a wave of water lifted me off the mud and I was able to make fast at my destination. A pint was welcome that night.

Alan Staley's yard is a good old-fashioned Boat Building business. Full of traditional yachts receiving good old fashioned style TLC. The whole yard is a fascination to me as it is surrounded with classic yachts. Inside the shed, Alan not only showers TLC on traditional craft but also builds new wooden yachts. I would recommend a visit should you ever be in this area. Also a walk along Iron Wharf will bring you to 'Lena's Nauti Bits', where a vast array of second hand chandlery is served up (with good strong coffee) by the owner Leena Reekie (who is also the secretary of N Kent OGA, and owns a *Dauntless*).

The following day broke with still a strong NE wind and promised the excitement of having to motor, wind over tide, across Whitstable sands. A very uncomfortable trip. PENDRAGON was away first, and before long was on the horizon. Eventually, upon my reaching the Spaniard buoy, I was able to set a course and cut the engine to sail across the Thames again, pick up the SW Swin and to

retrace my steps from the day before. I also caught PENDRAGON, who by this time was beating against the wind again up the Swin. I kept as close to the Maplins as possible and motor-sailed this particular leg. After rounding the Whitaker at low water, the sail back down the Crouch was gently relaxing. Quite a contrast to the morning.

You may see in the RSA 1997 Sailing Programme, I will try and arrange a trip over to the Swale. I have set aside the dates of 6-8th June and 22-24th August. Both weekends have spring tides and the plan is to cut across to the Swale via the Havengore on the Friday, this shortening the journey considerably and plan to rendezvous at Harty Ferry on the Friday evening. The following Saturday would give time to explore Faversham and Conyer creeks or the Swale. On Sunday the plan would be to return via the same route. A journey such as this should be fine for the smaller boats too. Of course if the weather will not permit, or not enough interest in making this trip, then Pyefleet remains the option on both dates. I will put a notice on the board nearer the time.

Pyfleet Weekend no 2

The second Pyfleet weekend was a bigger success than the first, I guess namely because it actually went to Pyefleet! The wind was very fickle, but enough to push most of us out to rendezvous at the Ray Sand buoy. The boats that made the trip were SAMANTHA of BURNHAM, PUD MUDDLE STORTEBECKER and SWANTI. As we sailed up the Ray Sand Channel, it became clear that we were simply not going to make it under sail alone. Hence I threw a line to STORTEBECKER and we proceeded in unison into Pyefleet. (I never stop playing tug boats). SAMANTHA offered the same to PUD MUDDLE, but she was almost in Pyefleet before the last of the wind petered out.

The evening was spent in the 'bar' on SAMANTHA of BURNHAM and was accompanied by one of those magnificent Pyefleet sunsets. The following morning broke to very little wind, but eventually a light SE wind picked up, enough to guide us all safely back to Paglesham.

Roach Fairways News.

Rights of way down the hard

The debate continues about whether the public have a right of way over the hard at Paglesham.

The RAFCC, villagers and many of the RSA will be submitting evidence forms that they have used the hard without let or hindrance in the past, in order to prove that a right of way exists.

01702 586459

SSSI in the Crouch and Roach

The Crouch and Roach are to be designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). After protests from the CHA, CAYF, and the RAFCC, English Nature has excluded ***slipways, jetties and similar permanent constructions existing at notification.***

English Nature tell me that assigning SSSI to the Crouch and Roach area will not affect the rights of navigation anywhere in the rivers.

Committee members of the R.A.F.C.C.

Dai Williams (Chairman)
Nigel Bishop (Second)
Norman Bishop
John Martin
Rodney Choppin
John Langrick (Secretary)

Any other members who would like to serve on this committee, then please let me know at the AGM.

Two Rivers Rally

It is the turn of Essex Marina Y.C. to organise the Two Rivers Rally and we have been given plans for what is hoped to be an invigorating event. The date will be 17/18 May and the venue will be Shotley Marina.

As many of you will know, the facilities at Shotley are extremely good and the overnight mooring prices for Shotley have been obtained at a special rate of £1 per metre. A buffet meal has also been arranged following the announcement of the winning club and presentation of a cup on Saturday. This will be a wide choice buffet and will cost £12.50 a head. Should you wish to participate in the meal, you need to order it in advance.

The tickets are available from 6th April to 11th May (you can have your name put down earlier if you wish), and will be available from many of the Crouch Yacht Clubs, or directly from:

Richard Stace
15 Willingale Way
Southend SS1 3SL

Roach Sailing Association 1997 Sailing Programme

Start times: *Boats with handicap 124 and above 1000hrs*
Boats with handicap 123 and below 1030hrs
Course for Dinghy races to be decided on the day, meet on the slip at
10:30

Date	Event	Tide (Burnham)
16 March	AGM at the Alexandra Yacht Club, 7:30pm start.	
11 May	Paglesham Pot	HW 16:16
17/18 May	1997 Two Rivers Rally at Shotley	
24-26 May	OGA Crouch Rally	
6/8 Jun	Weekend Cruise to Pyfleet/Harty Ferry	HW 1410
8 Jun	Paglesham Yacht Race - Dinghies	HW 1520
15 Jun	Whitaker Cup	HW 0817
19-26 Jun	Classic Boat Festival at Shotley	
27-29 Jun	Sail Ipswich	
6 Jul	Lifeboat Cup (Dinghies)	HW 1431
12 Jul	Cruise to Fambridge	HW 1759
13 Jul	Race Fambridge to Branklet Spit	HW 1849
19 Jul	OGA East Coast Race	
3 Aug	Jack H Coote Trophy	HW 1336
10 Aug	Shuttlewood Cup	HW 1728
22-24 Aug	Weekend Cruise to Pyfleet/Harty Ferry	HW 1609
23-30 Aug	Burnham Week	
14 Sep	Gracilda Cup (Ladies' Race)	HW 1103
21 Sep	RNLI Race	HW 1630
5 Oct	Roach Plate	HW 1423
18 Oct	Laying-up Supper (RBYC)	

Dai and Caroline