



September 1998 Newsletter

In this issue

Secretaries note
Round and Round Part 2
Laying up supper reservation details

Secretaries note

We have had mixed weather so far this year, but hopefully fair weather to come. Most races have now been completed, so could last years cup winners please return the cups to me for engraving as soon as possible.

I know members have had some good sailing but some are still in their winter berths (Nigel!). A bit of late news, Paul Bishop has just bought a 22' Dauntless Gunter Sloop. She is yet to be named and Paul and Mary will be fitting her out over the next few months.

Alan Holland has just converted RUTH back to Gunter and pretty as a picture she looks. I had the pleasure of sailing RUTH since and she sails like a dream!

First Pyefleet weekend

The first Pyefleet weekend of 1998 promised North Easterly on the Saturday and South Westerly on the Sunday. Hence it was decided to go to Fambridge instead! Boats attending included MERIS, RUTH, STRAVAIG, PUDMUDGLE and SWANTI.

I was joined by 'new' and ex member, Richard Everett. (Richard used to sail INDEPENDANCE II from Paglesham) All had a great sail there and back. We all planned to lunch at the George and Dragon on the Sunday, but the wind was blowing so strong and creating such a lumpy sea that we decided best neglect the dinghies and make for Paglesham.

Fambridge meet

The rally and meal at Fambridge coincided with gale force winds and rain! Hence it was a trip to the

Are You a Tall Ship? Creek Crawling

Ferryboat at Fambridge by car! We still had a full house and all had a great time despite the weather.

The fishing Boat

Local members noticed the arrival of a 160' Arctic trawler named 'ARCTIC CONCORD' and accompanying tug. There was an abortive attempt to moor said vessel across the tide next to the slip-way at Paglesham, but I guess Frank Shuttlewood's ghost had something to do with it as on the day it was planned, the wind picked up to F6, and then overnight a gale blew.

She ended up down the Roach near Potton Creek. She was then manoeuvred to Paglesham Pool and threatened to stay there indefinitely, but the CHA has now moved it on and she has now moved to Colchester. **Thanks Frank!**

Chandlery opens in the black shed!

Vic has opened a chandlers in the black shed. He is also offering services such as battery charging, hire of such items as jet washers and generator and a ferry to and from your boat! He is being subsidised by Russ at Miracle Boats, and I am sure we all wish him well. (Especially on 6.3m tides and wind in NE!).

North Fambridge Yacht Club Centenary event

The North Fambridge Yacht Club has invited the RSA to its centenary celebrations on the weekend of 3/4th October. These celebrations mark the Club's formation by Frances B Cooke and his friends in 1898.

The programme will include a review of the fleet by the Commodore on Saturday, and awards for various categories, plus a memento for every boat attending. The awards will be presented in the club-house on

Saturday evening. On Sunday, after breakfast, there will be an 'Hour under Sail' when it is hoped that every vessel will be under way in Longpole Reach. The Club Bar will be open on Friday and Saturday, courtesy of the Ferry Boat Inn.

For further details and application form please contact myself, or the Vice Commodore of the North Cambridgeshire Yacht Club, Richard Walsh (Day) 01920 823200, (Eve) 01920 821683..

Laying Up Supper

The 1998 laying up supper will again be held at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club on Saturday 10th October. We should meet at the RCYC at 7:30 for dinner at 8:00. Trevor Taylor has been booked to take members by river from Wallasea Island at 7:00. The ferry cost will be £2 per person (return), to be paid on the boat, but please be prompt!

Richard Bessey has again agreed to be the contact point for dinner registration this year and, if you would like to attend, please send acceptance detail and cheques to him using the form at the end of this newsletter. The price of the meal will be **£16.50** per person and we will have a modest choice of menu this year but I must ask you to select your option on the attached form.

Welcome new members!

I would like to welcome seven new members to the RSA

Derek Brain who has a 23' Dauntless cruiser PLUTO, moored at Paglesham.

Nick Eddery-Joel who has a 21' Jaguar sloop, LITTLE STINT, moored at Paglesham

David Hillman who has a 31' Westerly Berwick QUINTILLA, moored at Paglesham

David Knight who has a Pegasus 25 moored at Tollesbury marina

Colin Lockett who has Finesse 25 JOSID, moored at Paglesham. Colin also has a 14' Dauntless brig.

Rosemary Patston, who is interested in crewing opportunities, please call me for details.

Robin Slater who has a Clinker day-boat again at Paglesham. *A big welcome to you all.*

ARE YOU A TALL SHIP? ***by Ron Watts***

'Gwenili' is an old-fashioned gaff yawl, some 38'OA excluding the bowsprit, built in France in 1910. The

owner, Brian, and myself will, by the time you are reading this, between us have celebrated 144 birthdays. In short, boat and crew are a geriatric combination!

On passage from Pin Mill to the West Coast of Scotland, we sailed into Blyth during the late afternoon of Monday 7th July 1997. It was not a port we had planned to visit but light airs meant that we had been motoring rather more than we would have liked and in consequence we deemed it prudent to top up with more diesel. To our amazement and dismay, enquiry once we had moored resulted in the news that marine diesel is no longer available for yachts at Blyth: it would be necessary to go to the marina at Amble some 15 miles further north and with tide constraints on entry. We decided to stay where we were for the night. This proved a wise move as that evening we visited the Royal Northumberland Y.C. for a drink and one of the members, on hearing that we had cans available for all the fuel we wanted, offered to take Brian plus cans into North Shields by car the following morning to get the fuel we needed from a supplier there. This Good Samaritan not only turned up the following morning as arranged but also insisted on giving us two 5 gallon containers for us to fill and lash on deck, pointing out that unless a diversion was made into the Forth, there was nowhere between Amble and Peterhead where supply of marine diesel to a yacht could be guaranteed.

The excursion into North Shields for fuel plus tasks such as topping up the water tank meant that we were later leaving Blyth than we might have hoped. Even so, when we left the harbour in the late morning we were in high spirits. Not only did we have everything we needed in way of fuel, water and provisions, the sky was blue, the sun was shining, visibility was excellent and we had a fair wind. What more could we ask for?

Sadly, the good conditions were not to last. By the time Coquet Island was astern visibility was noticeably deteriorating and once past the Farne Islands and the Longstone, the mainland coast was at best no more than an indistinct blur, more usually totally invisible to us. However, about dusk the visibility improved, and we had the reassurance of the St Abbs Head light. Unfortunately, the wind also chose to drop and about 11.00pm we started the engine. We did not know it at the time but it was to run non-stop for more than 20 hours.

Despite the noise of the engine, the night was not too tiring as there was a drizzle of breeze sufficient to keep the mainsail asleep and the boat reasonably comfortable despite a slight sea. However, with the dawn the wind went

completely and the mainsail started to slat. Allied with the noise of the engine, the constant noise of the reef-points slapping against the sail plus the jerk from the boom at the end of each roll, it quickly became very tiring but there was nothing we could do but grin and bear it.

About 8.00am came the first hint of trouble. The sun became very watery then disappeared. The visibility

steadily shut down and soon we were motoring into a solid wall of fog. Very occasionally and just to tantalise us with the belief the fog was lifting the shape of the sun would become evident, the fog would brighten and visibility would go up to a few hundred yards but after a while even this stopped happening and visibility stabilised at no more than about 50 yards.

The 1355 forecast brought no hint of probable improvement and it seemed the fog was widespread as Fifeness, the nearest weather report station although by now some 40 miles distant, was also reporting dense fog. We held a Council of War to decide what we should do. There were three possibilities. First, we could keep at sea but we could tell from the amount of radio traffic that there was considerable oil industry and fishing industry traffic in the area. Rattray Head and Kinnaird Head at the corner of the Moray Firth would inevitably see traffic at its most concentrated and if we pushed on we would be off those headlands in the dark. Even the thought of the fog plus dark was and we would, by then, be very very tired. Second, we could try and get into Peterhead but the same objections applied. We would not be there until after dark and it would take us into a heavy traffic zone. Finally, we could try for Aberdeen which we could reach before dark and would not involve tangling with the heaviest traffic route. Rightly or wrongly, we set a course for Aberdeen.

The decision was, at best, debatable. The R.N.Y.C. pilotage notes were unequivocal 'Yachtsmen are advised to avoid Aberdeen when possible'. The pilot itself did give the leading mark/lights bearing and referred to an offing buoy but perhaps through tiredness if not stupidity, we could find no any reference to the coordinates of that offing buoy. Our chart covering that section of coast was relatively small scale and the offing buoy was not shown. Meanwhile, the OPS was playing up, refusing to accept way-points and losing the program completely if shut down. Fortunately, we had it powered off the ships supply so could get round this latter problem by leaving it running continuously. Nevertheless, in light of the problems we wondered if the position shown, although apparently correct, was in fact accurate. We consoled ourselves with the thought that anything must be preferable to boxing around amongst shipping in dark and fog and that if all else failed we could work into soundings and anchor although the sea still running would make it extremely uncomfortable.

During the afternoon our hopes were raised briefly by hearing on the VHF that at Aberdeen the fog had lifted slightly to allow two tankers which had earlier aborted attempts to enter, to get in. We soon learned that the respite had been only short-lived.

In the early evening we reached our guesswork position for the offing buoy but despite a long time spent searching we found no trace. At last we gave up and asked Aberdeen Harbour Control if they could give us our position from their radar. Their response was perplexing 'Are you a tall ship?' Their further reply in response to our negative was merely 'We ~

you are about half mile south of the harbour entrance'. A quick reference to the chart showed that if this were indeed so we were ashore on Girdle Ness! We decided they must mean south of the offing buoy so crept cautiously due north then, just when we giving up hope, we sighted the buoy dimly on our starboard beam. We turned on to the harbour entry bearing quoted in the pilot, prayed there was no cross-entrance current and crept inshore! Fortunately we had done our homework and when a yellow light was seen dimly away on the port bow, we knew it was a fog signal exhibited from the north pierhead so were able to take immediate action to avoid going up the wrong side of the pierhead!

Harbour Control now came back to tell us to proceed to the ro-ro berth in the Albert Dock, giving us instructions from their radar track when, despite being inside the harbour, the fog prevented us from seeing where we were supposed to be going. When we got there we joined four or five German and Scandinavian yachts tied up to the rear of the ro-ro berth floating bridge. A harbour official was already awaiting us there and instructed us to report to the Harbour Office the following morning.

It was hardly the ideal yacht mooring. The Albert Dock from the ro-ro berth onwards turned out to be the fish dock and, so far as we could make out in the gloom, entirely surrounded by warehouses. The water was jet black with its surface covered by a thick layer of oil and rubbish including literally hundreds of plastic sacks, many floating just below the surface. Large bubbles regularly appeared on the surface. Overhead, until a ro-ro ferry for Orkney and Shetland had finished loading, tractors and trailers roared over the floating bridge every few minutes. We did not care! We had a meal and then turned in to sleep like logs.

We turned out in the morning to find the fog had thinned to a heavy mist. More than twenty fishing boats were discharging in the dock and the mystery of the floating plastic sacks was solved; at the nearest berth a dockside worker was busily engaged with a hose, washing even more off the dockside into the dock!

Meanwhile, our attention was claimed by a German on one the other yachts who was asking all and sundry if it was true yachts were only allowed to stay one night.

When Brian returned from the harbour office he confirmed this was indeed the case. However, he had pointed out to them, I hope tongue in cheek, that we were elderly and needing rest and in any case had repairs to do the violent slatting of the mainsail on the previous day had resulted in the stitching of at least one seam failing - so they had grudgingly condescended to allow us to stay a second night. An hour or two later Brian realised that this agreement to our second night had come after he had paid the harbour dues so I went back to the harbour office to pay for the second night. The clerk I saw looked puzzled when I explained my errand. 'The dues you have already paid' he said 'cover you for five nights'!

In the morning we recovered our mooring warps, coiling them down on deck to await the opportunity to scrub every bit which had dipped into the water with detergent and hot water to rid them of the coating of oil they had gathered. We moved out into the centre of dock then tried to radio harbour control for permission to pass down the harbour and out, only to find that for some unknown reason the set would not transmit. We hesitated for only a moment before acting on the assumption that the attitude towards yachts was such that the last thing they would do would be to try and hinder or stop our departure. We motored out without a squeak from harbour control. As we cleared the offing buoy and brought the bow round towards the north we heaved a sigh of relief and agreed that Aberdeen had been an 'interesting experience and one that really drove home the fact we were a long way from our usual East Coast haunts.

So, why were we asked if we were a 'tall ship'? The answer is that the 1997 Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race was to start from Aberdeen the following week and the smaller yacht entries were starting to arrive. One reached Aberdeen an hour or so after us. On an affirmative to the harbour control question as to whether they were a 'tall ship' they were immediately advised that a pilot boat was being despatched to locate them and guide them in. Once in the harbour they were conducted to the relatively clean waters of the Upper Basin in the Victoria Dock with berthing on proper pontoons whilst even before they had moored, harbour control was asking what they needed in way of fuel etc. How nice it must be to feel wanted!_-

Round and Round - Part Two

Caroline and Dai

Tues 24 Jun 98

1000 Take launch across to Oban - brilliant morning
 1100 Coffees at Royal Hotel
 1200 Tesco
 1300 Lunch at Royal Hotel. Haddock and chips £4.75; Lasagne £4.50 - both excellent.
 1400 Launch - return to Ardantrive Bay.
 1430 Meet steel boat "Elft" (means Shad) from near Wilhelmstad with English wife. See Oberon from Haven Ports YC.
 1630 Climb up to Hutchinson monument - erected by public subscription (1883) in gratitude for his services to "steam communications between the islands" It must have revolutionised their lives! Wonderful views to the west.
 1830 Dinner afloat - garlic steak and peas followed by Rombout and biscuits - five star!

Wed 25 Jun

1000 Launch to Oban. Buy kilt and gifts. Lunch at Box Tree Cafe for Monkfish and Mussels.
 1400 Return to Tess and meet up with Malcolm and Pam Yates on Oberon from Lexington - immaculate 42 ft Nicholson. They decide to go south around South Coast home so we swap charts!
 1530 Gale arrives on schedule.

The marina area during WWII was used to complete flying boats built "in the south." The brick shelters we discovered in the hillside near monument were air raid shelters.

Thurs 26 Jun

1000 Yes (again) launch to Oban. Search everywhere for trousers but largest waist size found was 38" - incredible.
 1300 Good lunch at Pancake cafe.
 1520 Leave Ardantrive for Corpach (near Fort William)
 Wind on the nose and develops to force 6 gusting 7 - well above forecast. Reefed main helps but down to 2 knots through the water and heavy, heavy rain. Too deep and steep sided to anchor so plod on hoping to reach Corpach before dark. Rain squalls develop in to continuous heavy rain - horrible horrible.
 2120 Anchored Corpach west of lock. Some shelter but not really hospitable. Ben Nevis brooding over us. Thank goodness for Baxter's tomato soup, Tesco rolls and Primula cheese.

Log reading 956.5

Fri 27 Jun

0900 Informed that lock sluice is broken!
 1400 Enter lock.
 1610 Enter Neptune's Staircase (multiple locks up to Banavie) tied to starboard side of tug (Lock Shiel of Stammers)
 I only just escaped a nervous breakdown - every lock "the lad" who disappeared below making the tea arrived back late to tend the port quarter warp with the result that Tess' quarter drifted to within 2 feet of the lock wall. Thoughts of being crushed like an egg hell kept recurring. Para Handy (TV series) had nothing on this!

1710 Tie up at pontoon at Banavie with full views of Ben Nevis - don Long Johns - eventually only discard a week later. Horrible night with extreme cold and shrieking wind and this 6 days after longest day of the year.

Sat 28 Jun

0900 Leave Banavie - see Buzzard over Inverlochrie.
 1315 At Laggan - wait repairs for sluice.
 1650 At top of flight of locks Fort Augustus and SUNNY Log 981.1
 1930 See woman on boat next to us pour half a gin bottle in to a glass and down very rapidly.
 2000 Wild mountain haggis drenched in whiskey with green ginger etc £3.25; Venison hot pot £6.95. Both excellent. Meet Arran Comrade (28' Twister) which had just finished the Bergen - Banff North Sea 97 Race. Home port Largs. Lady and the gin bottle mentioned in conversation -only to discover later it was the lady from Arran Comrade!! - phew.

Sun 29 Jun

0915 Enter Fort Augustus Flight
 1025 Exit Fort Augustus Flight
 1615 In basin beyond Muirtown Bridge (Inverness)
 1915 At Muirtown Hotel. Good value Haddock; Lasagne £9.60 total.
 2030 Meet Dragon King (ex Belfast) when we could not return into the marina only to find that key should have been given to us at Corpach. 3 days, 29 locks and 60 Nm in canal.

Mon 30 Jun

Gale warnings, toilet blocks up and rain promised - signs of a good day.
 Clear toilet, improve faucet. Dream of force 4-5 sun and warmth all the way to Paglesham.
 1315 Adjourn to Caley Inn next to locks - Excellent toasted cheese and onion for £1.75.
 1430 Shop at Co-op supermarket. Carrier bag fails and wine bottle smashed in car park. No quibble at Co-op for replacement.
 1500 Plot waypoints to St Abbs Head then make do and mend.

Tues 1 Jul

England and Wales rainfall double normal (5" cf 2.5")
 Today WET WET WET - force 8 in Cromarty. 3" of rain in cockpit bucket overnight.
 Confined aboard so do waypoints to Gorleston. Thames Barge May (Tate and Lyle) has been here for two weeks mainly waiting for weather.

Wed 2 Jul

Leave Muirtown
 1005 Exit Clacknaharry sea lock
 Sight one seal and eight to ten dolphins
 1130 Lighthouse at Fort George narrows (tide predicted to be favourable at 1115)
 1300 Dodge 35 foot fir trees floating in red-brown flood water; River Spey burst its banks and railway out of commission for a week.
 1615 Change plan - to head for Buckie instead of Lossiemouth
 1951 In Buckie rafted up to Eurocrat (ex Chichester) heading for Shetlands (approx 60 miles north) Log reading 1016.4

Thur 3 Jul

1000 Say farewell to Eurocrat and exit Buckie (past nearly completed Clyde ferry boat)
 1123 N57.42.61 W02.45.41 Visibility becoming poor.
 1513 Very rough seas nearing Fraserburgh - difficult to identify entrance - just west of entrance could be mistaken for Fraserburgh in the conditions. Navigate around disabled trawler.
 Meet 50 ft Swedish Myjoy ex Gotenberg heading for Orkneys. Log reading 1094.4
 1600 Ashore in rain, rain, rain. (£10 per week or per night)
 1615 Head for Presto (Safeway)

Fri 4 Jul

1020 Exit Fraserburgh - SUN
 1100 Turn SOUTH outside Streraton Rock. Dolphins surface nearby. Barometer 1010 rising.
 1140 Rattray Head lighthouse
 1250 Enter Peterhead harbour
 1300 In marina in SW corner of bay (£12 per night)
 1700 Ashore to Prison Officers' Club. Calders Cream bitter with excellent hoppy taste. Proceed to WC Fields pub - good haddock and scampi £11.20.
 2200 Angling boat returns (after 6 hours for £50) with 17 codling. Good but watery sunset.

Sat 5 Jul

0840 Exit Peterhead harbour
 1000 Off The Scares
 1240 Aberdeen fairway buoy - rain

1830 On hook in 16' in Lunan Bay opposite Red Castle Log reading 1167.4

1920 Paglesham 165 deg mag and 325 Nm

Sun 6 Jul

1030 Leave Lunan Bay
 1430 Past Carnoustie, Arbroath etc and on hook off Royal Tay YC twixt Broughty Ferry (of the lifeboat disaster) and Dundee.
 Log 1188.9

Mon 7 Jul

1000 Leave mooring Dundee (2.4Kn on mooring)
 8.9 Knots over the ground
 1110 Alter course to 160 deg for the South!
 1245 Crossing St Andrew's bay - Bell Rock bearing 090 deg
 1715 Alongside Tara from Amble in Eyemouth
 2036 276 Nm to Pag on 164 deg mag
 2130 Hartlepool Renaissance (approx 65ft OA) play fast and tight with masthead halyard across our stern to save their rigging leaning on the quay as they dry out. Refuse my request to release despite our and Tara's necks literally in extreme danger. Get coast guard on VHF who quickly got the Harbourmaster on the job.
 1155 Halyard released. If that's renaissance then let's stay with status quo!

Tues 8 Jul

1425 Exit Eyemouth - lovely stay enhanced by excellent Harbour Master who was most helpful and fuelled and watered us. A most heart-warming man - any time we're in the area we will certainly want to look him up.
 1546 English waters. St Andrew's flag lowered.
 1553 Off Berwick on Tweed
 1750 On hook, Holy Island

Wed 9 Jul

Ashore - wonderful Priory and Church - a very strong sense of history and mystery grabs you as soon as you step ashore. Pub lunch and then Caroline scared the living daylights out of some teenagers who had used our wellies and hidden our oars. Imagine being chased by CMG in a fury wielding an oar.
 1425 Weigh anchor after a memorable visit including winning a bottle of cider and a tin of peaches in the school fete.
 Wind SE 2/3

1550 Off Sea Houses
 1610 N Sunderland buoy
 1855 Finish with engine in Amble marina in 14.3feet
 Log 1277.5
 2030 In Waterloo (free house) £1.40 for Theakston

Thur 10 Jul

Bus to Alnwick for lunch
 1710 Leave Amble
 2015 In Blyth and good welcome at Royal Northumberland YC pontoon. Beer £1.30 /pint

Fri 11 Jul

0605 Leave Blyth
 0634 St Mary's lighthouse
 0710 Off River Tyne
 0900 Engine failure - water outlet detaches from exhaust manifold. Drift with favourable tides off Sunderland - no wind.
 1000 CMG magic works and underway very gingerly for Hartlepool

1230 Outside Hartlepool marina - dredger in mid channel - go for widest gap on starboard only for Caroline to scream "Hawser" - the dredger had a hawser to the shore below mast height! Screeching halt then proceed safely on other side.

1240 In lock - engine won't restart - towed to pontoon. Remove starter and solenoid and take to Jay Kay in Hartlepool - an Aladdins cave crammed with starters and alternators - probably thousands. Quick test shows solenoid OK but starter brush gear the problem. Mr Garlick (ex nuclear scientist who preferred this work) rectifies starter and gratis gives one old solenoid as spare, new pinion and all for £25. What great luck

Numerous acts of help by Harbour Master - wonderful people - can recommend Hartlepool except the dredger.

Sat 12 Jul

Spend morning exploring Hartlepool and afternoon putting engine back together.

Pouring rain in evening then thunder and lightning.

Sun 13 Jul

0731 Exit Hartlepool

1130 Entering Whitby harbour - wait for bridge to enter marina - HW +/- 2 hrs

1205 Into marina 16.3 ft at pontoon

1315 At the Granby pub near church on West Hill. Excellent roast lamb and Yorkshire pudding £3.70, and good scampi £4.20. Campbell's (Hartlepool) bitter at £1.50 all good value.

1600 Thunder and rain.

Mon 14 Jul

0800 CMG to Co-op for victuals

0815 DW with Harbour Master to garage (25.9 p/litre)

0945 Through bridge and leave harbour entrance
Sunny - no wind

1040 Off Robin Hood bay

1245 Off Filey Brigg

1430 Round Flamborough Head into Bridlington Log 1376.1

Harassed by speedboat trips from the harbour and quite a swell

Tues 15 Jul

0940 Weigh anchor Bridlington - wind less than 10 knots

1530 No 3A SHM Humber Spurn Point

1610 Anchored inside Spurn Point

Evening aboard. Night reasonable, ship's wash.

Starry night - would not recommend above force 4-5. 0230 get up to check position - bewildering array of lights. Get fix and OK.

Wed 16 Jul

0925 Weigh anchor

1000 Heading 125 deg for Rosse Spit

1041 Rosse Spit. For an hour continued buzzing by low flying RAF jets playing "hide and seek"

1140 Mablethorpe TV Mast on 210 deg

1337 South Inner Dowsing

1915 Anchored off Mundesley in 11.7 feet.

Log 1477.6

Earlier CMG courted by coxwain of Cromer Lifeboat who jumped aboard!!

Thurs 17 Jul

0640 Cockle mark

0654 N Scroby

0720 Mid Caister

0900 In to Lowestoft - BEDLAM, BEDLAM dredger and pneumatic drills, unsafe half broken jetties and they want to charge £12.50 per night. The work was involved in marinarising the Yacht basin. And so to Southwold.

1030 Call Southwold on Ch 12 with immediate response and info on access etc. Wonderful.

1230 Lunch in Bridge pub (Lowestoft) Good fish but cloudy beer.

1300 Again rain, rain, noise, noise and dirty giant fenders - lumberjack expertise needed to retain balance on these.

1600 Leg it for Southwold to let motor cruisers into our berth.

1900 In Southwold

1930 Excellent grub in Harbour Inn. Mushrooms in garlic, cheese salad etc and superb Fisherman's Pie £12.25 total. Highly recommended.

2030 The Wired Ones duo entertain - very good and free.

Fri 18 Jul

0855 Exit Southwold. Strong wind warning till midday. NW veering NE 6 at times, 4 later. Up to 8 knots over the ground - BEST SAIL OF THE WHOLE TRIP.

0955 Sizewell abeam

1035 Aldeburgh Ridge buoy

1150 SW Whiting

1304 Woodbridge Haven buoy

1400 Landguard 3 hrs 5 mins from Southwold

1515 In Levington Log 1545.1

1930 Dine with Alec and Ann Parker (Accelerando) in lightship. Great evening.

Incidentally Levington charges £11.66 and Woolvestone £13.75. £2.11 difference.

Sat 19 Jul

CMG up mast to retrieve main halyard. Lunch aboard Accelerando and then to see Bob Lister at Woolvestone.

Sun 20 Jul

0705 Leave Woolvestone

0810 Shotley Spit

0918 Walton Pier

1010 Clacton Pier motor sailing

1055 Colne Bar

1145 Nass Beacon

1146 ENGINE FAILURE. Engine mounted AC fuel filter falls off engine. Many attempts to refit.

Sail in to Mersea Quarters and anchor

1500 Made very welcome by Joan at WMYC, 90p Scrambled egg on toast. Dover Sole for dinner. Jim Clark to get fuel filter Monday.

Mon 21 Jul

Get fuel filter. Walk to village for coffee, delicatessen, Spar and Bookshop.

Tues 22 Jul

Fit fuel filter but fuel starvation and no wind.

1515 Spitway

1815 Outer Crouch after exhaustive trials of makeshift pipe from pump to filter. Engine started about 1750 hrs.

1945 On mooring Paglesham.

Summary

Logged 1650.1 Nm

Places visited 50

Days aboard 68

Creek Crawling?

John Langrick

I had planned to scrub off on Saturday, set sail on the Saturday evening through the Havengore to moor at Thorpe Bay on the Saturday night. On Sunday the forecast was set to be good would the family for a 'sail'. I had an invite by a member of the Dauntless Association and also commodore of the Halcon Yacht Club to join them for a rally drying out on the Westcliff Ray. (we do this sort of thing for fun in Dauntlesses!). The Sedorf (largest sailing vessel in the world) was also moored at the end of the Pier, what a great opportunity to view!. Simple plan? This is how it all worked out..

I had planned early in the week to use the travel hoist on the Saturday morning. This is the only way I can scrub the bottom of SWANTI. David Barke had assured me that the hoist, needing to be put down the slip on Friday evening, would be ready for me for the 6:30 tide the following morning. But, knowing things can go wrong, I called down on Friday shortly after lunch to find JOSID (26' Finesse) in the hoist. David explained that he had no-one to launch the boat out of the hoist and hence plans were now in jeopardy.

Silly me volunteered to launch JOSID, and hence would have the travel hoist for the Saturday as planned. So down the slip we went. At 4:30 PM, I had planned that there would be enough water to slip the slings and be away. As Julie had an appointment that night, I felt sure that I could get back home by 6:00pm. But...

As the water came up JOSID's sides, the water flooded in. It poured into the bilge like a waterfall. I know clinker boats take water when launched, but was not prepared for this. Alan Holland was just going aboard RUTH for the weekend and I hailed him to come and look. By this time the water was still flooding in, but it did seem to slow a little from the first flood. I tried to call Colin, the owner of JOSID, but ex-directory.

It was clear that she would need some attention for the next few hours. Alan volunteered to 'man the pumps' for a couple of hours while I went home to pacify the other half and collect my sleeping gear. I planned to moor JOSID near SWANTI so that I could check her through the night. This would also mean that if she kept leaking I could put her back in the travel hoist, if not I would be down early to start my scrubbing off.

In the event she took less and less water and by morning she had virtually taken up completely. Alan volunteered to help me put SWANTI on the hoist at 6:00am and as I went to RUTH to collect him, the heavens opened and it started to pour with rain. Alan also took the same idea and he decided to take RUTH to the far side of the dolphins to scrub her off too. With SWANTI safe in the hoist, we manoeuvred RUTH onto the dolphins, (which is another story that you might persuade Alan to tell you about over a pint!)

The rain did stop - for a while, and we both managed to scrub off to our satisfaction and I gave SWANTI another coat of antifouling. I always use a third strap on the travel hoist so that I can clean and paint under the other two straps. As the tide came in again, I passed a rope through a mooring boy astern of me so that I could release the straps and pull SWANTI out of the hoist alone, hang on the buoy while I started the engine and then away. Good plan eh?

I released the straps and started to pull. She would not move! Without the down-stream strap ends, she started to move sideways to hit the travel hoist. Still she would not move. One of the straps had stuck to the hull with the wet antifouling and now the port navigation light was rubbing along the hoist, eventually knocking the lens into the 'oggins'... I cast off both ends of the strap, leaving it stuck to the hull with the 'by now dried' antifouling and pulled myself to the buoy. A quick 'broddle' with the boathook indicated that the strap had come free and must be lying with the nav light lens in the mud.

I called out to another RSA member Steve, who was about to scrub off STORTEBECKER on the next tide, and asked if he could try and retrieve the items and set off for the Havengore. The wind was now F3-4 from S and I estimated had just 40 mins to get to the Bridge. With a clean hull, I reckoned that I should be able to make Thorpe Bay by 8:00pm.

Passing through the Bridge, I gave the keeper a wave and checked to ensure that he would open the Bridge at 7:58pm tide on Sunday. He confirmed and bade me a good trip.

With the wind in the S but fading and by now a foul tide, I made Thorpe Bay at dusk and picked up a visitors buoy. The club launch was just returning from a trip out to the SEDORF and I was able to hitch a lift ashore and walked home.

The following morning, with wind by now SW 2-3, I was at the Thorpe Bay Yacht club at 8:00am, (HW 7:30am). I expected to see throngs of club members but was on my own. I waited half an hour, still no members so called at the yacht club and persuaded Steve (who lives in the club-house) to ferry me to SWANTI - splendid fellow. He explained that there should be enough water for at least 3 ½ hours after high water to take SWANTI next to the slip-way. This would enable me to pick up the family without the need for ferrying in the dinghy.

I inflated the dinghy anyway and rowed ashore to check out the landing. All appeared fine and I returned to SWANTI to set fenders at the appropriate height. On seeing Julie and the kids on the slipway I motored slowly towards them. 'Crunch'... There was only one plank slightly proud of the rest on the jetty. It just had to be this one that caught one of SWANTI's shroud plates. Not too much damage, but scraped paint and a very annoyed skipper. Family safely aboard, we set sail for the pier end.

The SEDORF is a magnificent sight and daughter Joanna snapped happily with camera (she wants to enter photo competition at school). Then we made for

the Ray. We could see many boats anchored there, but no Tino II (Dauntless Association buddy). There was no response on VHF, so I called him on my mobile. He was still out of the water with 'leaking sea cocks'. He would not be able to make it.

So we anchored with a group of strangers, (not strangers for long when you have kids aboard), and had a splendid time on the mud. Barbecues, Cricket, Football, rowing in the Ray, all good fun. Perhaps we could organise a similar event on Foulness sands? Any volunteers??

About 3:00, we set sail back to Thorpe Bay and with a SW 2-3, made excellent progress until we dropped the sails off Southend. We had to wait a further half hour to be able to take SWANTI to the beach at Thorpe Bay in less than 2 foot of water. I was able to jump overboard and help Julie and the kids to climb out and walk ashore. I turned SWANTI off-shore and motored out to pick up a mooring, put the kettle on and await more tide. There would be just 5.1M tide, probably only 3° over the Broomway, so I would need to arrive at the Havengore as close to high water as I could.

With 2 ½ hrs to high water I hoisted sails and set out for the Havengore. The wind remained from the SW and had increased slightly to F3-4 so it was a quick and easy sail firstly for the end of the submarine boom and then across the sands towards the Havengore. I arrived close to the Havengore with still 1 hour before HW, so I tacked out to the man-made island and back. As I approached the Broomway, the bridge opened to let a couple of motorboats through and the bridgekeeper called me on CH 72 to indicate that there was still less than three feet over the Broomway. No problem for me I responded and continued. I was just too late for the Bridge keeper who lowered the bridge as I passed over the Broomway. It is still about 10 mins to the bridge from here and I could see that there was cars waiting. I tacked too and fro in the mouth of the creek as the cars passed over the bridge. And I waited and waited.... By this time I was joined by another motor boat who, like me passed backwards and forwards in the creek. I lowered my sails and put out the anchor. "anything wrong" I asked the bridge keeper?

"We have a problem in that the barriers will not fall on the bridge, I am on my own and I have to walk to each one and close manually". I waited as it started to grow dark. About ¾ hr after high water, the bridge keeper explained to me that the bridge now would not operate. He had called up technical help, but that had to come from Kent and would not be there (Sunday evening) for at least two hours. There was nothing left for it but to ask for permission to stay 'up the creek' that night.

I explained the situation to the motor boat and we decided to find the safest place to anchor and dry out for the night. A couple of months ago in the 'Practical Boat Owner', there was an article about someone who was forced to dry out in the creek for tidal reasons. The author explained that he dried out as close to the bridge as possible. When he did dry and he looked around in the creek, he was amazed to

see large chunks of jagged iron jutting out from the creek bed. It appeared to be the remains of the wartime frogmen defences. It just happened that he dried out in such a position that he missed the worst pieces. With SWANTI drying out flat on the bottom, there would be no way I could dry out and miss such obstructions. I called up the Bridge again.

"Where is the best place to dry out?" The bridge keeper explained that at least up to the two sets of cable markers from the Bridge is unsafe. He also explained that there are parts of the old bridge still lying at the bottom. He suggested moving beyond these cables towards the mouth of the creek. As the creek shoals here, I would take the ground earlier and there would be less chance of any obstructions. Again I relayed this information to the motorboat and I anchored about 50 yds seaward of the cables. Then all the lights went out on the Bridge and I was left in darkness. I retired to the cabin and a beer and meal. The Range officer called me up to give me permission to lay in the creek (very kind) and also asked if anyone had offered to help me ashore.

The following day was Joanna's birthday. We had planned to drive to Chessington. I called up Julie and explained the predicament. It was decided that I should stay with the boat and do my best to get through the bridge as soon as possible the following day.

It was pitch dark when I took the ground and stumbled out of the cabin and into the cockpit. The beacons out in the Thames were blinking beyond the Broomway but these and the cabin lights were all that could be seen. I shone a torch around the bottom of the creek and I seemed to have dried out on shingle with large puddles all around. Looking back into the creek I could see none of the obstructions, but they were well out of the range of my torch. I thought better of walking down the creek lest I should get stuck in the mud, decided against riding light and retired to bed.

I awoke at 6:30am on the Monday (Joanna's birthday) and called the Bridge. The maintenance man was on his way, I had breakfast. At 7:30, the bridge-keeper explained that the maintenance man had still not arrived and even if he did there was no guarantee that he would get it working. My choices were to leave the boat there or try the long way. As there was still no guarantee when the bridge would be back in commission and the tide, a mere 5.0m was about to ebb, I made a quick decision, it was to be the long way round. I called up the Range officer who explained they were firing at 09:00, It was now 08:30. I explained that I was planning to sail straight for the man-made island (directly into the wind which was now SSW, and when clear of the sands (about 1.75 miles) I would turn up the Swin. The Range officer agreed on the understanding that I would not deviate from this course and asked me to relay this to the motor-boat.

The two on the motorboat told me that they did not know the way over the sands and could they please follow me. So with plate up and engine on I made my way back across the Broomway. 'Good luck' called

the Bridge keeper over the VHF, ‘Sorry about the problem’.

SWANTI does not hold a course well when I leave the helm and especially when I try and hoist sail with the plate up. Still with one duff tack after another, I managed to hoist full main and stay sail. The jib is on a furler and can wait until I have set course. I looked back at the motor boat. He was following each of my wallowing haphazard tacks! I bet he must be thinking ‘this guy knows what he is doing, what a complicated route over the sands....’

With full sail I managed to motor a few points off the wind out beyond the island and turn up the Swin. I had forgot to check the weather... F5-6 SW. With full sails it was going to be hard work, but with the ebb tide beneath me would at least be a fast trip.

I called up the Bridge keeper. ‘Put me out of my misery, did you get the bridge working?’ ‘Yes, just had a trial run and it is perfect’.

It was now 2 hours after high water and had I stayed in the creek would have been home in less than an hour for Joanna’s birthday. As it was I was thundering out of the Swin at (according to GPS) 7.2 knots, the mechanical log was stuck (as usual).

I had hoped that with wind and tide together, the Swin would be relatively calm. This was definitely not the case. A large swell would build up behind SWANTI, threaten to jibe and then pass beneath leaving her to wait for the next. I grimly held onto the helm trying to prevent her from slewing with that inevitable jibe - and the wind increased even further. Passed the Maplin and approaching the NE Maplin. It was now 11:00am, and I called up the Range officer. If I could now cut across the sands, I could cut miles off my trip and also prevent having so far to turn up the Crouch with foul tide and wind. But with a falling tide...

The Range officer confirmed that he had now stopped firing and I could make my best course into the Crouch. With the wind now increasing to what began to feel like a F7, I turned NNE from a depth of 70 feet towards the sand and the yachts I could see sailing beyond in the Crouch. And still a steady 6 knots.

The echo sounder gets confused when the bottom is disturbed. When it ‘thinks’ it knows the depth, instead of 36.7 feet, it will display 3:6.7 feet. I assume the colon indicates uncertainty. The echo sounder started to go down until it eventually thought it was about 10’ I could see the Sunken Buxey tantalisingly close,

still 6 knots,
full sail,
broad reach,
gripping the helm with white knuckles,
echo sounder now thinking it is 6’,
plates up, (I now draw 1.5’)
echo sounder now thinks the water is 2.5’,
looking in my wake a huge wave, probably 6’ high is building up behind me.

I can see sand in my wake,
echo sounder now thinks :1.9’....

But she kept going, probably being buoyed along by the wave behind me until slowly the depth increased, 2’, 3’, 5’ then 6’. I was at the Buxey 1 & 2 and the seals were there blinking at me!

I hove to, lowered the sails, threw out the anchor and brewed tea. It was now 12:30 and I was safely back in the Crouch.

After I stopped shaking, I had lunch and went to sleep in the cabin to await the flood.

When the tide turned, the wind remained on the nose. I took ‘George’ out of his case and set a course close to the sand with the ‘iron topsail’ set.

A steady plod saw me back at the moorings by five. Steve called out to me that he had retrieved my nav light and strap, so all was well. But my ever faithful outboard would not start on the dinghy.....

We took Joanna to Chessington the following day.
And had a great time!

Roach Sailing Association Laying Up Supper 10th
October 1998

Menu

This year we would like to offer you a choice of menu. This will complicate things some-what, but the RCYC has asked us please select our options and to name the person so that all the meals will be ready at the same time. Could you please let me have the name, followed by the option, For example, I will be having the Stilton and Cauliflower Soup for starter, the Chicken for a main course and Creme Brulee for sweet. Hence my reservation will read:

John Langrick b,1,i.

Soups

- a) Cream of Celery Soup
- b) Stilton and Cauliflower Soup
- c) Tomato and Roasted Red Peppers

Main Course

- 1) Traditional Roast Chicken served with a Fresh Sage & Onion Stuffing
- 2) Old Fashioned Steak & Kidney Pudding
- 3) Smoked Haddock with Spinach & Chive Butter Sauce
- 4) Provencal Nut Wellington

Sweet

- i) Creme Brulee
- ii) Bramley Apple & Cinnamon Pie
- iii) Chocolate Truffle Torte

Fresh Filter Coffee

Laying Up Supper Registration

I would like to reserve _____ seats for the Laying Up Supper at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club at £16.50 per head on the 10th October 1998

The menu choices are as follows:

Name	Choice
_____	____, ___, ____.
_____	____, ___, ____.
_____	____, ___, ____.
_____	____, ___, ____.

We will/will not require a ferry trip from Wallasea to Burnham . (Please be at Wallasea by no later than 7:00pm!)

Please return with a cheque payable to the Roach Sailing Association to:

**Mr Richard Bessey
2 Research Cottages
Paglesham
Essex**