

## Roach Sailing Association September 2002 Newsletter

[www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa](http://www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa)

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### STOP PRESS

***The date for the Laying Up Supper has changed to 9<sup>th</sup> November  
See last page for details, and book now!***

***Please also remember to return cups to Jon Walmsley for engraving***

#### Introduction

*John Langrick (Editor)*

We have had a great year for cruising and hence no apologies for some great cruising notes in this issue. And there will be more to come in the Feb 2002 newsletter.

Thanks to all our cruising members for the articles, please keep them coming.

#### Secretaries Note

*Jon Walmsley (Secretary)*

This season has seen an excellent turnout for the cruising events. On the first Pyefleet weekend we decided to go to West Mersea. Five boats attended; SHEAR STRESS, IMOTHES, SWANTI, PUDMUDDLE and TRILOGY. John Langrick brought the large RSA dinghy and did sterling ferry duty to the shore, where we went to the fish restaurant on the quay, (as seen on TV). Bring your own wine and bread, shuts at 17:30.

The Summer cruise to the Continent, and for some the Baltic, is covered by two accounts in this newsletter with a full account from me in the next newsletter. For those of you that cannot wait that long, Richard has promised to post it on the RSA website. These longer trips are not as daunting, or as 'Dauntless', in practice as one might think. Ask

your loved one to buy you a North Sea Pilot for Christmas and you will have to come next year.

The second Pyefleet Cruise was attended by SWANTI, SHEAR STRESS, PUDMUDDLE, STRAVAIG and IMOTHES. Beautiful weather, much better than forecast. Join us on Mersea Stone for kite flying next season.



#### *Welcome new member.*

We have a new member since the last newsletter and would like to welcome Ken Wickham who sails a 29' McWester GEMINI, based at Paglesham

### Committee News

We have a change around on the committee this year the members are as follows:

John Martin	President
	Represents us at CAYFE
Rodney Choppin	Chairman
Jon Walmsley	Secretary
Richard Bessey	Race Officer
Nick Eddery-Joel	Treasurer
John Langrick	Newsletter Editor
Mike Dallimore	Represents us at the Fairways Committee

Other members of the committee are:

Ivor Jones  
Nigel Bishop

We wish to thank all the departing members of the committee and welcome the new, wishing them luck in their new roles.

### Racing

*Richard Bessey*

There has been a great turn-out for races this season, with some hot competition for the cups. As we go to press there are two more left to run, culminating in the Roach Plate on Oct 6<sup>th</sup>. SHEAR STRESS, IMOTHES, MISTRESS and PUDMUDDLE are neck-and-neck for the Series, with STRAVAIG and EAGER snapping at their heels. There will be a summary of the year's racing at the laying up supper and a more complete account in the February 2003 newsletter.

### DAUNTLESS (RSA) Events

*John Langrick*

It is always great to welcome RSA members to the Dauntless 'creek crawling' events and for the Dauntless AGM we were joined this year by RSA boats IMOTHES, PUDMUDDLE and SHEAR STRESS. Richard is already a member of the Dauntless Association and for such events as this, all the rest become 'honouree Dauntlesses'. I was joined on SWANTI by Alan Holland and we set off with Malcolm Rittman in Sea King LISA JANE. Malcolm was en route from Harwich to Chichester wife as crew.

We met at Paglesham and took the ebb out of the Crouch on the Friday evening. This was the first major cruise in LISA JANE and was a good opportunity to test out the sail wardrobe as we sailed down the river with a slight wind astern. Her new owner was quite confused with what was the jib and what was the staysail, but nevertheless had a great evening sail.

We were too early at the Wittaker beacon and anchored for a quiet supper while waiting for the flood to carry us back past the Maplins down the Swin. We were graced with a magnificent sunset as the wind died and we set our riding lights.

We turned to meet the tide at 11:00pm and we had to motor most of the way in darkness down the Swin, buoy to buoy, then over the Thames and past

the towers, over to Whitstable. The night was quiet and still save for couple of ships that we had to dodge in the main channel. At the entrance of the Swale, we were most confused as we could not make out the mouth. By nudging the shallows in a westerly direction, we eventually picked out the buoyage into the Swale. (You can do this sort of thing in a Dauntless, but not so easy in a Sea King that was following us).



Setting the riding lights on LISA JANE

Our confusion could be that there were arc lights all around the Shipwright Arms in Oare creek ready for the Jubilee celebrations. The lights confused us as we thought this must have been a town. We tied to a mooring buoy at 4:00 and got our heads down for a rest.

We rose late the following morning to greet IMOTHES, PUDMUDDLE and SHEAR STRESS. The wind had increased by now and MARSHMALLOW had turned back in the Crouch that morning due to strong wind and tide.

Shortly we were joined by CHRISTABEL from Faversham and all set off for the mouth of Conyer Creek. There we met HAYNOR, EVITA and SARA JANE. The RSA members had to anchor in the Swale as there is not too much water in Conyer, but the Dauntlesses were all able to follow the tide as the wind dropped and we sailed into the creek in flat calm.

There is a new pontoon and jetty in the approach to Conyer and we had the privilege of being the first boats to use them. I can certainly recommend the excellent facilities, including a new shower block. We all had a great meal in the pub, suitably lubricated as you will expect.

When we returned to the boats, we found CHRISTOBEL perched at an unsteady angle as the creek bottom was at an acute angle. Robert and crew had an uncomfortable night, but the rest of us were fine.

In the morning we had a delightful sail back down the creek at 05:00 with the mist laying over the water and sun just appearing over the horizon. We left the rest of the RSA boats still sleeping and set off for our return. We had fair winds back to the

Wittaker where we arrived about an hour before low water. It is remarkable how shallow it is around the beacon and had to travel about half a mile beyond for good water. We then turned and had the pleasure of an excellent sail all the way back until we anchored off Foulness in the Roach and went ashore to the George and Dragon.



Moored on the new pontoon

It is not often that the winds and tides are so much in our favour and to cap it all, when we got to the pub, Fred offered us half price drinks and free nibbles due to the Queen's celebrations. Later that evening as we climbed aboard the dinghy to return to SWANTI, there was a slight fall of light rain. As it fell around us on the river, it created bright phosphorescent stars all around us in the water.. really quite magic.



Sailing out of Conyer creek at 5:00am

In August I took SWANTI around to Thorpe Bay where I have another mooring. As this is close to my house. My brother came to visit me this summer and we could easily walk down to the mooring for a few hours sail. This made a trip to the Dauntless Benfleet Rally very easy.

I had four crew leaving from Thorpe Bay on the Saturday morning, Richard Bessey, Justine and Jenny, and Jon Walmsley. I also took my new 'tender' with me. I have recently bought Colin Lockett's 12' Dauntless sailing dinghy LUCY BROWN and towed her behind to join us on the Rally. I have since renamed her as 'STELLA

MARIE'. This was my mum's name, (who sadly passed away this year). We were joined by CHRISTABEL off Southend Pier and sailed together up the creek where we were joined by HAYNOR.



Alan Holland, Robert Gray with crew on the slip in CHRISTABEL at Benfleet rally



STELLA MARIE in Benfleet Creek.

We all had a great time sailing STELLA MARIE in the creek, all taking turns to put her through her paces in the place she was born. Later we had 20 members and guests from the RSA for a great meal in the yacht club.



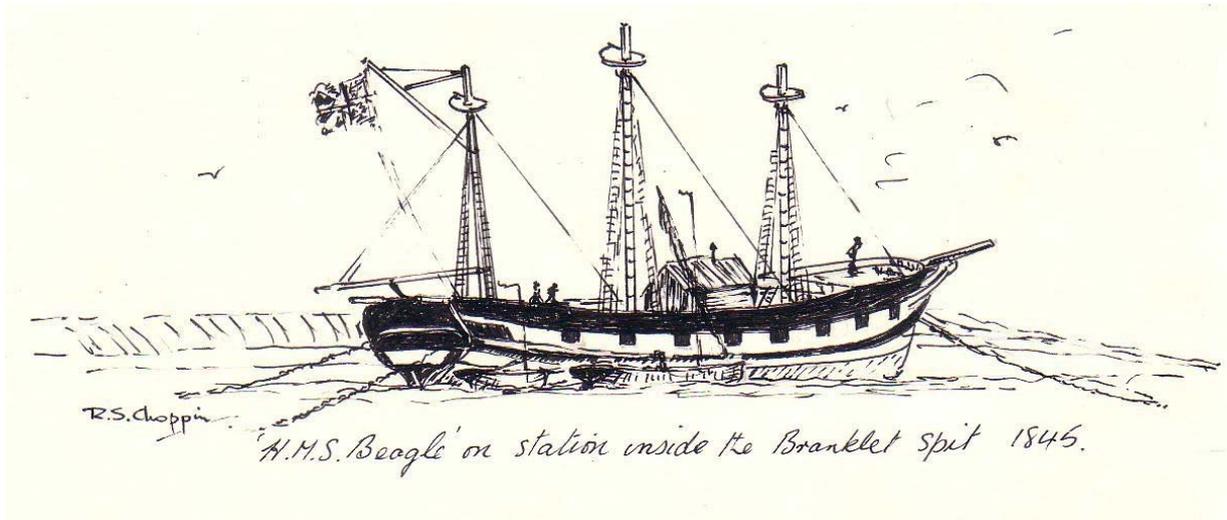
Early morning sailing down Benfleet Creek

With no wind at all in the morning, we all sailed back from Benfleet, returning to my mooring at Thorpe bay on the top of the tide.

## H.M.S. BEAGLE

Rodney Choppin Ever since a professor of history from America arrived here at Paglesham and started digging and prodding in the mud along the saltings in search of Darwin's ship the "Beagle" interest has been shown locally. I felt it was time to do "a search" and find out as much as possible about this ship myself. Most of us have heard of Charles Darwin's exploits and his papers "On the Origin of Species",

but what of the ship? I have rummaged deep to find out the history of the Beagle's ascendancy to fame, based on a naturalist's voyage around the world. It should not distract from the fact that besides playing host to a man who was later to become world famous, the exacting completion of her assignments alone would have earned this ship a place in the history books.



In 1807, Sir Henry Peake, surveyor of the Navy [1806-22] designed a 235 ton Brig Sloop, armed with ten cannons, eight short-range and two long range guns, which was to become the "Cherokee, Cadmus, Rolla" class. More than one hundred were built to this design during the course of the next thirty years of which the Beagle became the forty fifth. Their main roles in life were for coastal defence, anti-piracy or smuggling duties, surveying, intelligence gathering and communications work. In 1817. The Beagle was ordered as one of a group of twelve to be built. June 1818. Her keel was laid at Woolwich Dockyard, her measurements being 90 ft. long x 24 ft.6 ins. beam with a draught of 12 ft.

11th. May 1820. Launched and placed "in ordinary" (In regular or customary attendance). Her costs were £7803.. July 1820, Coronation of King George IV. The Beagle took part in the Review of the fleet and had the distinction of being the first man-of-war to sail fully under the Old London Bridge [from main mast truck to waterline, height 112ft. It must have been a glorious sight!]. At this time The Hydrographic Office, with its survey ships and personnel, had the arduous task of providing up to date, where possible, information regarding tides, reefs, inlets, depth of ocean floors, and new coast lines etc, as safe sailing instructions for guardians of the British Empire, the Royal Navy and British merchant ships. As one would expect the logbook[s] of the Beagle as a Royal Navy survey ship would record all details of her activities as a surveying ship and also her every day "in house" duties and disciplines. This is all well documented and recorded, and lack of space does not allow me to

mention all incidences and events that took place on her travels. I will therefore be brief and highlight only certain events that occurred on her five commissions.

1825, FIRST COMMISSION: under Commander Pringle Stokes. 27th Sept 1825. Docked at Woolwich for repairs and fitted out for her new duties. Reduced her guns from ten cannons to six, deck raised by 18 inches and her rig changed from Brig.sloop to Barque by the addition of a mizzen mast. The mizzen made her easier to handle under sail and the raised deck increased the space below. Orders from the Admiralty as follows: "An accurate survey be made of the Southern Coasts of the peninsula of South America, from the southern entrance of the Rio de la Plata round to Chiloe Island, and of Tierra del Fuego: In such manner and order, as the state of the season, the information you may have received, or other circumstances, may induce you to adopt. You are to continue on this service until it shall be completed." This survey took nearly three and half years to complete, during which time on the 1st August 1828 the exhausted and depressed captain, Cmdr. Pringle Stokes, committed suicide by shooting himself. He was buried at Port Famine. First Lieutenant Skyring took interim command.

1828, SECOND COMMISSION: under Commander Robert FitzRoy. 13 Nov. 1828. Commander-in-chief of the South American Station, Admiral Sir Robert Otway, commissioned Commander Robert FitzRoy to take charge of the Beagle for the duration of present survey. 30th Jan. 1829 Lost two men

overboard during a bad storm at the mouth of Rio de la Plata. Masts and spars damaged, one whaleboat lost and another badly damaged. Only a quick letting-go of the bowers saved the ship from destruction. Late February. On her way to Port Desire the ship lost another boat in a gale. 9th July. San Carlos. Lost another boat on the way. Refitted the ship, and carpenter, J May, built new boats. Note, the Beagle carried a total of seven boats, a 26ft yawl, and a 23ft cutter, [these were shipped on deck, one on top of the other midships between mainmast and foremast], two 28ft whalers which were upside down on skid beams between mizzen and mainmast, two 25ft whalers hung in davits adjacent to the mizzen, and finally a jollyboat [dinghy] in horn davits astern. These boats were the eyes and ears, the essential tools, of a survey ship and did most of the inshore work. 24th Nov. 1829. Reached the western entrance of the Magellan Strait and surveyed the southwest coast of Desolation Island. 2nd Aug. 1830. Reunited with HMS Adventure and HMS Adelaide in Rio de Janerio. 6th Aug. HMS Beagle and HMS Adventure sailed for home. 14th Oct. Returned to Plymouth. 27th Oct. 1830. Ship paid off.

1831, THIRD COMMISSION: under Commander Robert FitzRoy. 25th June 1831. Re-appointment of Commander Robert FitzRoy; ship extensively refitted and improved, partly at the expense of FitzRoy. It should be noted that it was standard naval practice to combine hydrographic work with general scientific observations on land and to collect rare or unknown flora, fauna and geological species for the betterment of scientific knowledge. His restricted interest in these fields made FitzRoy pledge after returning from his first command to comment: "...if I ever left England again on a similar expedition, I would endeavour to carry out a person qualified to examine the land while the officers and myself attend to hydrography."

5th Sept. 1831. Charles Darwin met Robert FitzRoy and was accepted by the latter as an unpaid naturalist. This twenty two year old Bachelor of Arts with studies in medicine and religion and an intense interest in natural history would embark on a journey to study the natural history of all countries visited. This journey took in most of South America, the Falkland Islands, the Galapagos Islands, Tahiti, Bay of Islands, near New Zealand, the southern coastline of Australia, Cocos Islands, Mauritius, Simons Bay, near the Cape of Good Hope, St. Helena, the Ascension Islands, then back across the Atlantic to Bahia in Brazil [to check errors in longitude] and finally the Cape Verde Islands and then the Azores before heading for home. No fewer than 76 personnel were aboard her 90 foot hull when she sailed for South America. 2nd Oct. 1836. After a voyage around the world lasting four and three-quarter years, HMS Beagle arrived again in England and anchored at Falmouth. During the following weeks Beagle travelled to Plymouth and Portsmouth. 28th Oct. Arrived at Greenwich, where observations were made and chronometer rates ascertained. 17th Nov. Ship paid off

1837, FOURTH COMMISSION: Commander John Clement Wickham, and the FIFTH COMMISSION: Commander John Lort Stokes took the Beagle to Australia for the next five and a half years, in which time by tedious work the officers and men eradicated all the blank spots from Australia's coastline not filled in by previous explorers. They also made Endeavour Strait, Bass Strait and the entrance to Port Phillip Bay safe for large ships.

30th Sept. 1843, After more than six years of absence, arrived at Spithead. 14th Oct. Paid off at Woolwich Dockyard. The captain, Commander John Lort Stokes, left HMS Beagle at the same place he had first stepped on to the ship's deck as a young midshipman eighteen years before. Talk about dedication to duty!  
20th Oct. Sent to Sheerness Dockyard.

14th June 1845. After spending eighteen months at Sheerness, she was sold to the coastguard authority, and the ship was fitted out as a watch vessel. The Coast Guard reforms put forward in 1822 aimed at 'an uniform system controlled by one authority. In this system the primary force would be that which is now called the Preventive Water Guard, although from the change in the nature of its duties since its first establishment the term "Coast Guard" would be a more appropriate distinction.' This was the beginning of the Coast Guard service, a body of boatmen who were expected to patrol ashore when the weather precluded the use of their boats. While demobilised Navel officers and ratings were largely employed, the Coast Guard remained a civilian force under the control of the Customs for the first twenty-one years of its existence. The boatmen were employed not less than twenty miles from their homes, to avoid collusion, thus ending the 'local' tradition of the Revenue cutters, and incidentally introducing many new families into previously close-knit, inter-bred coastal communities. These new measures were needed against a new type of smuggling. Naval supremacy and military power had ended the old gallant system of the eighteenth century, when smugglers carried arms and fought their way. Speed had replaced guns as the smuggling vessel's first need, and, more important, clandestine sinking of contraband in rivers and creeks had largely replaced the open landing on shores and beaches. A new force was required to link the cruisers at sea and the Riding Officers ashore, hence the use of watch vessels, or "floating police stations."

11th July 1845. Left Sheerness for Paglesham on the River Roach to be stationed at the mouth of the river. There is a deep hole [11ft at low water springs] just inside the Branklet Spit just under Wallasea Island that we all know so well, and I imagine the Beagle was kept there out of harm's way, free of all commercial traffic which would be using the river, but in full view of both the River Crouch and Roach. For her stationary duties her upper masts were dismantled and taken away. [One would have thought that her upper masts would have been removed at Sheerness, but one assumes that these

were necessary for her passage to the Roach.]. In September, a small caboose [a ship's kitchen] was installed on deck.

Little is known of the Beagle's coast guard activities, but it is worth mentioning of an incident that took place on Foulness Island, which as one would expect was another favourite haunt of smugglers. It is an island which can be reached from the Crouch or the Roach or at high water across the Maplins from the Thames estuary. It also has a "back door" through Haven Gore, navigable at high water, but also has an exit at low water along the Broomway to the mainland. Because of its isolation it was clearly a lawless place. It is said bare knuckle fights under Queensberry Rules also took place near the inn, the George and Dragon. You wouldn't want to 'mix it' with that lot!

When the Glasgow brig "Conqueror" was wrecked on the Maplins in 1849, bound from Bremen to Rio de Janeiro, with the loss of all her crew, 600 demijohns of spirits were missing! The Wivenhoe Lloyd's agent, J G Chamberlin, found much wood from the wreck at Foulness and suspected the spirits also finished up there. He accordingly asked the Customs for a 'strong force at the 'Dove' watch vessel at 10am on Saturday to search the island. The Dove watch vessel was possibly stationed in deep water on the North side of Foulness. Officers and men of the Beagle could have been involved in the search too. But that is purely speculative.

Other watch vessels which were stationed on the River Crouch at different times included the Chanticleer [1837], Ruswarp [date unknown], Kangaroo [1872-1890 which was stationed off the shore where the present Royal Corinthian Y C is sited], and no doubt there were others. If in sight of each other, one would imagine flag communication and cannon signals would have been used to inform for assistance, etc.

About this time [1845] most cargos were conveyed by water. On the River Roach and its tributaries, there were many industries and trades. At the head of the river was the Stambridge Mill where grain was ground into flour, where also supplies and freight for the nearby town of Rochford would be off-loaded at the quay. Wakering had its brickfields, and Paglesham was a hive of industry in the oyster-fishery business; it is said that up to fifty large smacks laid off Paglesham in those days, and I can quite believe that too, for example, between Frank Shuttlewood's boat shed and the first 'kissing' gate on the sea wall in Paglesham Pool, there are about 100 oyster pits alone; there are also oyster pits on

## **Friesian Cruise 2002**

*Richard Bessey*

Three RSA boats set off together this year, Imoths, Pudmuddle and Shear Stress; destination for some - the Baltic. As we had less time than the others, we planned to take Pudmuddle as far as possible in the

the marshes of Potton Island, Wakering, Barling, and further up the reaches on the Roach. All in all, a considerable amount of oysters must have been harvested when you think of 1,500 to 2,000 oysters per pit. Besides the Thames barges coming to and fro, trying to earn an honest living, but making a bit on the side too, there was obviously a lot of traffic on the rivers for the men of the Beagle to keep an eye on.

1850, Beagle is removed from the mouth of the river and moored at Paglesham. It is not known why the Beagle was sent to Paglesham, but the oyster trade was becoming a lucrative business and perhaps the oystermen required some added protection as much pilfering and smuggling took place. The Beagle was to spend the last twenty years of her life at Paglesham, and as far as we know remained a watch vessel at least until 1863, when after the Royal Navy integrated coastguard operations in 1859, all watch vessels were stripped of their former RN names.

25th May. 1863. HMS Beagle was redesignated WV 7. At this time the local oyster company [Wiseman] and local merchants petitioned for the Beagle to be laid ashore, she was probably becoming a hazard as no doubt very little money or maintenance would have been spent on her, and she more than likely leaked like a sieve.

13th May, 1870. WV 7 sold to Murray & Trainer for the sum of £525 to be broken up, a lot of money in those days, but her copper plating alone would have accounted for most of the sale price.

If one looks across the marshes towards the pillbox at Paglesham these days, one will see a large tug being converted into a houseboat. Why I mention this is because of her size, she is 72 feet long, with a draught of 8 feet, and was brought up on the edge of the salting on a good tide. This will give some idea of the comparative sizes, and I doubt that the Beagle ever ended up on the saltings. The Beagle, 90 feet long, had a draught of 12 feet at the beginning of her life, a further 15 tons were added to her displacement in 1831 due to extensive alterations, and with her ageing I would imagine she drew no less at her laying ashore. It is possible she was brought up to the 'hard ground' in front of the boat shed, assisted by barges to be broken up. This would make it convenient for horses and wagons to load the removed copper, deck beams, grown frames, and anything else that could be salvaged from her hulk. The remains would have probably been burnt. A sad end to such a historical ship.

Friesian islands, then return through the inland waterways of Holland.

We arranged to meet at Levington on Saturday 20th July. Pudmuddle got off to a great start, having overheated the engine, and had to return to

Burnham for spare exhaust parts. We eventually arrived at 4am Sunday!

At 9 on 21st we all set off for Den Helder, a 140-mile crossing. Daughters Naomi and Jenny joined the other boats who would otherwise have been single-handed. Our route was direct from N. Shipwash buoy, with a brief deviation to cross the shipping Deep Water Route. There was a steady F3-4 W

wind and we made good progress, though the sea became increasingly 'moderate' as we progressed. As soon as we set out it was clear that the centreboard case leaked in great spurts during choppy conditions, but after a bit of on-passage strengthening I decided it would be OK. This meant that we had more than the usual bilge water, and this inevitably makes its way into the side lockers and across the floor on the roll. Things got wet!



Imothes was getting ahead, and by the evening was out of sight. Jenny was very seasick and we agreed that Jon should press ahead to shorten the journey. For a time the wind slackened, and even John Apps was berated into starting the engine to keep schedule - however not for long as the wind soon got up, now stronger than before. Pudmuddle kept behind Shear Stress through the night, using the engine to keep pace. By morning several of us were feeling pretty sick from the uncomfortable motion. We were fortunate to encounter few ships on the trip, though it began to get busier off the Dutch coast, with many oil rigs as well.

all pretty tired, and glad to make contact with Imothes who had made the crossing in 27 hours (3 hours ahead of us). Den Helder is the principal Dutch naval port, and an interesting visit. The little yacht marina is tucked between great warships, and had all the friendliness and good clean facilities we have come to expect in the Netherlands (it was also very cheap at €6.5 per night). The town is 20 minutes walk; there is a large maritime museum and extensive docks. In the town we encountered a stall promoting the museum, and we were given a long lecture by a man who spent a career caulking minesweepers. As he spoke very little English it was an interesting exercise in communication (handy hint - hammer splinters of reindeer horn into your caulking mallet to make it more durable)!



**Schooner in the Waddenzee**

Jenny soon got over her ordeal after a dose of Shopping, and the next morning we set off for Texel - only 7 miles to our first Friesian island. This was an incredible surfing ride in the strong wind. At the harbour in Oudeschild we had our first taste of the wooden boats of this area - every place is packed with traditional boats from small yachts to 3-masted schooners. The marina is very new, with a machine where you pay with plastic for your berth, and a 'smart key' to get showers, electricity etc. It was a bit rainy, so we made use of the laundry facilities and then had an (expensive) meal at the quayside fish restaurant. Next day we hired bikes, including a tandem, and set off across the island. The town 'Den Burg' was superb for shopping and street entertainment, including an excellent kite shop. Later we spent some time kite-flying on the NW beach.

It was a helter-skelter ride into Den Helder - I wouldn't want to try it in a southerly gale. We were

Next morning we set off across the Waddenzee for Harlingen on the incoming tide - a route with plenty of water. We had a gentle sail, arriving mid afternoon and locking straight into the canal. We had no time to tarry in Harlingen, but I'm sure it would be worth a lingering visit as the largest port on the Waddenzee. The canal system from here gives access to a large area of northern Holland, from the IJsselmeer to the Eems. We were able to sail this first leg with a following wind, and the bridges opened ahead of us with few waits. Imothes was well ahead and we eventually caught up in Leeuwarden, where we moored on the town quay and went aboard for takeaway Pizzas. Here we were first asked for 'brug-geld' - a toll levied by the bridgekeeper by lowering a clog on a fishing rod to passing boats (this caused some confusion as Imothes' crew waved happily and ignored the clog, so the keeper came pedalling after them, and Pudmuddle paid for 2 boats so John was upset when he missed out on the clog-waving ceremony!).



An early start on Thursday took us north again on the Dokkumer Ee canal, passing through the Friesland countryside with its typical farmhouses (large tiled barns with house on one end) and canal villages. At one of these villages we were neatly trapped for lunch, as the bridges closed for an hour.

After passing through industrial Dokkum, we crossed the Lauwersmeer to arrive in the harbour of Lauwersoog in the evening. Here again were literally acres of wooden masts in box moorings, and a very friendly yacht club (their most recent exploit was a Colin Archer memorial race to Norway and back).

In the foggy morning we locked out into the Waddenzee once more, and followed the channel to sea between the islands. It was a quiet day, and it was only by motoring and cutting across the shallows that Pudmuddle arrived at Borkum ahead of the rest. The marina make use of what appeared to be WW2 'floating pontoon bridges' - great steel box constructions capable of carrying tanks, but horrible to moor against.

Borkum clearly has a past military significance as Germany's NW outpost, but is now primarily a beach resort and part nature reserve. There is a short railway from the ferry port to the town, but we used the bus which comes into the marina. The famous and beautiful "Borkum Riff" is a curved sandy spit, overlooked by the town and heavily populated beach.



We stayed two nights in Borkum before the parting of the ways, with Pudmuddle on the homeward journey leaving Imothes and Shear Stress heading for the Keil Canal. Naomi and Jenny continued with Imothes to Keil.



Pudmuddle headed West for the sands of the Waddenzee first stop Nes on the island of Ameland. Daylight took us outside the islands as far as the Pinkegat, and at sunset we ran out of water near a similarly stranded schooner on the rising tide. We slept for a couple of hours, then followed the schooner through a channel towards the watershed. The schooner ran out of water again, but we continued by soundings and GPS through to deeper water. Another kip at anchor, then into Nes in the early light. Here we found a small harbour, full of traditional boats as we had come to expect, and many others dried out on the sands. We found a steep-sided creek where we could step ashore for a bit of shopping and a shower, then as the tide rose we set off again for another 'Wantij' (watershed) towards Terschelling.

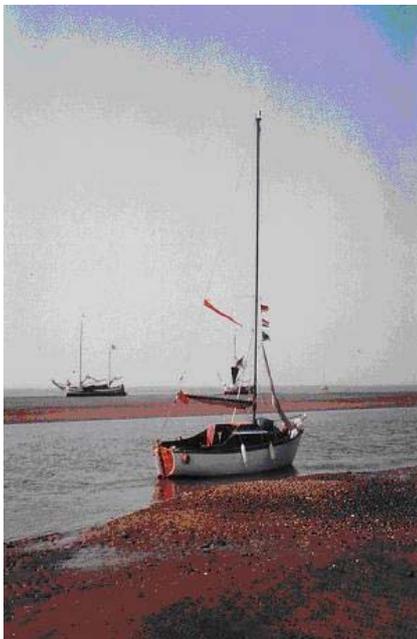
On every rising tide, great convoys of sail set out along the winding channels of the Waddenzee, to cross the shallow places at high water. Approaching the watershed, they meet other convoys coming the other way. Most boats follow the many post-buoys which mark the main channels, though some (with local knowledge or more confidence) cut across corners and thread between the small forests of withies.

Pudmuddle arrived at West-Terschelling in the afternoon to find many vessels drying on the beach, and so joined them. It was hot and calm, and a fine opportunity for scrubbing the bottom. Justine & I then set out to explore the sand hills and the extensive harbour - then the weather turned. A ferocious SE blow set up, accompanied by torrential downpours, putting Pudmuddle and the others (all larger, steel boats) on a lee-shore. We quickly returned to the boat and made things fast, and laid out the anchor well into the surf.



Nes, Ameland

As we could do little then but wait, we headed back to town for an Italian meal, then to the beach cafe to watch the tide. Shortly after dark we waded back to the boat and were very soon afloat, the wind having abated a little. Rather than risk further discomfort, we motored into the harbour and (after groping about the marina for a while) tied up alongside a larger boat.



Next morning once again dawned still and sunny. We were soon off towards the IJsselmeer. After an uneventful crossing through deep channels, we locked in at Kornwerderzand and headed South. After anchoring for a swim, there were hints of

another storm and, as we headed to the nearest port, another boat reported local weather warnings. So we arrived at Hindeloopen where we checked into the marina (we later regretted this as the price was very high and the town harbour was cheaper and more friendly). The next day was pretty wet, so we stayed put, did the laundry, and wandered round the town - full of antique & craft shops and a junk emporium.



One of our objectives on this trip was to look at boats for sale, and our next stop was to some brokers at Enkhuizen - where the IJsselmeer meets the Markermeer. We looked at several boats over the next week, and were impressed by the good value of steel boats in Holland - mostly in excellent condition. After a short overnight stay in the canal leading to Edam, we headed on towards Amsterdam where Jenny and Naomi were due to meet us (from Keil by train). We arrived in Amsterdam in a downpour, but this soon cleared and we checked into the Sixhaven marina, right opposite the Central Station. We knew from text messages that the girls were setting off from Keil, and their arrival time. Having met successfully we walked around the town, sent some mail from a net cafe (which also sold 32 varieties of nefarious plant matter), did some shopping, and had a fine dinner.

In Amsterdam you can see many strange things, but the oddest for me was the heron pacing the canal bank opposite our cafe, scrounging chips from passers by. Indeed the tameness of the water birds was remarkable everywhere - in one place a Crested Grebe and her chicks swam complaisantly around the marina pontoons.



Our next leg was by canal to Rotterdam, but we soon discovered that the first railway bridge only opens at 2am! There was nothing for it but to drop

the mast. This was accomplished after hunting the back streets of Amsterdam for abandoned timber (for props). We were then able to go under most bridges (don't worry we've got inches to spare - inches!). We motored on past Schipol, through various lakes and villages, stayed overnight alongside in the centre of Alphen aan de Rijn, then on past Gouda to rejoin tidal waters again - the Maas.

The waterway through Rotterdam is wide, with immense and spectacular bridges. Commercial traffic is busy, though no threat to a careful yacht. However the constant criss-crossing wakes of ships and barges make it very choppy and uncomfortable. We only stopped briefly at a yacht brokerage, then sought the peace and refuge of the canal system that heads South from the vast industrial area. The afternoon saw us travelling through quiet countryside once again, 'till we emerged in the Haringvliet in the evening and checked into the WVH (Watersportverenigen Hellevoetsluis) , a yacht club where we were made most welcome. For a very modest fee we could use all the excellent facilities, including a crane to put our mast back up, and free bicycles. The club has a section of the large marina West of the town. Next day we were invited to their barbecue after we had explored the town, with it's fortified canal walls and immense cannon.



And so onward, East then South, threading the branches of the Schelde delta. We visited Zierikzee next evening, then across the Oosterschelde to Zandkreek and the Veersemeer, and through the canal to Flushing, finally crossing the Westerschelde to the marina at Breskens. The journey was sometimes dampened by heavy downpours, but there were fine intervals to see places familiar from last year.

The weather was too uncertain for a long crossing with Pudmuddle somewhat overcrowded, so early next morning we set off along the Belgian coast, making Nieuwpoort in the early afternoon. A last rest before the last leg. After another early start, we stopped briefly at Dunkerque for fuel (thus scoring four nations for the trip!). The initial SE breeze turned NW and then almost disappeared, but we motored on and having made the Ramsgate offing by early afternoon, decided to carry on home. We crossed the Thames estuary in a flat calm via Fishermans Gat and the Sunk Beacon, arriving at LW in the Swin, and the pontoon at Wallasea at midnight



**Brilliant bash for British Boats in the blue and brown Baltic and Holland [pity we hadn't gone to Belgium for my alliteration].**

*John Apps – 'Shear Stress'*

What a great club the Roach Sailing Association is. We have nice friendly racing; a great social atmosphere both on and off the boats; people who really care about other club members and couldn't be more helpful. And to make it really easy remembering names nearly everyone is called John or Jon. As foreigners in England both Heather and I are so pleased that we found the RSA.

But then to be able to visit four different countries in a period of six weeks is to me the raisin in the scone. Where we live in Australia [Brisbane] our nearest country is approximately 2000 miles away, so it is unimaginable for us to sail there for a short holiday. If you planned that you may as well keep going and circumnavigate.



At first I had decided that I would just do the two weeks to Holland, but Jon Walmsley's extension to the Baltic did have a certain appeal, as I had never

met anyone who had sailed there. So the Thursday before we all left on the Saturday I decided that yes I would do the lot. In retrospect it was too long, maybe I should have started off with the two weeks this year learn all my lessons and move onto longer next year. It was devastating to me to find my presence was not critical to our business and that everything hummed along very nicely in my absence.

What were the highlights in my opinion? The Dutch Canals were great, in that we could sail when the wind was with us, although having to drop the sails quickly as you came around a corner and were confronted with a closed bridge with one foot of clearance was a test of your skills single handed. I notice Pudmuddle had a filled water bottle on his jib halyard, to aid a quick drop, I didn't connect mine to my forestay and just let it drop into the water most of the time.

Then there was Copenhagen. We moored on one of the canals right near the centre of the city, and I think I have never had such a great mooring. I am very disappointed with the photos I took as they just can't convey the ambience of the place. The only part of Copenhagen I was a unhappy with was the Tivoli Gardens which did not live up to my expectations. But now I can say I have been to them.

Best anchorage was one where I stopped on a day that the winds were so light I could not keep up with Imothes. Thuro Bund was an inlet in the middle of an island, surrounded by wooded hills. Very few people in the Baltic anchor out, many don't appear to even have anchors. There were only about five boats in this quite large anchorage at least the size of Pyefleet and although I arrived at dusk and left at dawn it was one of the prettiest places I have ever stayed.



Imothes crew doing their washing as we went up the Kiel Canal

The least enjoyable aspect of the holiday was the second day crossing the North Sea. I enjoyed the first day and the night both ways. But that second day without sleep is a real chore. It was great that Pudmuddle and Shear Stress stayed together most of the way across and particularly through the night,

it not only helped me stay awake but gave me a lot of confidence. I ran out of wind just on the Western edge of the Deep Water Route on the way back at night. I was most impressed how, as I wallowed for about two hours before starting my engine, the ships all passed me quite happily with no sounding of horns or putting of lights on me.

The most frightening experience was going up the Elbe at night, with the tide running with you at five knots and a fifteen knot headwind. I had the engine going as I didn't like to tack amongst all the ships running up with me even though I was just out of the main channel. About one in three of the ships would put these very high powered search lights on you. I still don't know why as I was well out of their way. Maybe in the spray and waves my radar signature was poor but just enough to mystify them. I arrived in Brunsbuttle at 0700 with only fumes in my petrol tanks. I used the last of my petrol patrolling up and down looking for Imothes and finally went into a Yacht Haven on the Elbe side of the Kiel Canal. After a couple of hours sleep I got up to find Jon, Jenny and Naomi walking down the opposite side of the Yacht Haven to where I was moored, so we were all back together again after one and a half days and two nights coming up from Borkum. The other thing I discovered was that I had completely killed my battery after two nights on nav lights and unfortunately I had fitted a solar panel and wired it the wrong way round.

Only ever saw one other British boat with the exception of the British Kiel Yacht Club. Peter and Anne were on a Moody 30 something footer on the island of Femo waiting out a bit of rough weather, I had to keep going I was still trying to catch Imothes. They were from Colchester and belonged to the Maldon Little Ships Club. The one thing they told me that might be very useful for the club is that the Fish Restaurant at West Mersea will deliver to the Oyster Sheds at Pyefleet if you have sufficient numbers. So that might have been worth going to the Baltic to find out.



*Fogged in at the British Kiel Yacht Club. This is basically a British Military establishment for adventure training in sailing. Met some Americans/Canadians here on a 57' foot Arens with a air conditioned cockpit and really cold beer*

My best sail was between the island of Terschelling and Ijmuiden. Started at 0500 with a relatively light following wind that gradually built to about 20 knots. I had a full main and a genoa poled out. I should have shortened sail but I rationalised that if something was going to break now better in sight of land than crossing the North Sea which we were to do the next day. I averaged 7 knots and hit 10.6 knots according to my log. That's not bad for a 22 footer. I did snap a shackle on my boom vang or kicking strap but easily replaced that.

The major lessons I learnt were that: yes an autohelm would be useful when you are single-handed doing legs that last 30 hours. The autohelm may have been useful on some other occasions as well. Don't take a petrol engine to the Baltic. It is impossible to get petrol without a long walk carrying containers. Diesel is offered at every yacht haven no matter how small. Don't buy tinned meat in Denmark, there is only one type, it is expensive and it looks tastes and smells like dogfood. The tinned fish in Denmark is not much better. Tinned meat and fish in Germany is without par for variety flavour and quantity of vegetables. You also need a reliable means of charging your battery if you don't want to spend every second night in a yacht haven on a charger. I must admit I never had trouble charging my battery in a yacht haven from shore based power. Don't expect your mooring to be waiting for you when you return to Paglesham even when you have paid in advance for the time you will be away.

Some of the great members of the RSA who made my trip so enjoyable deserve thanks. Firstly Jon Walmsley in Imothes planned our whole trip, provided much needed tools and advice and lent me money when my debit card expired. [I don't know what I thought the date was as I had checked it before I left]. John Langrick lent me extra flares although I never got to use them so had to give them back, which was a big disappointment. He also lent me a North Sea pilot, which I must admit I only ever looked at once and that was to find the Yacht Haven at Ijmuiden. He also lent me a handheld VHF, to supplement my main one as the aerial connection was misbehaving although I later fixed that with Jon Walmsley's tools. Richard and Justine in Pudmuddle must be the easiest boat in the world to follow. Not only is their hull very easy to see, but at a distance there yellow sails always stand out from all other boats. Of course when she decided to cut a corner with her keel up, she is not so great to follow. Naomi Bessey also joined me for the first crossing of the North Sea, but found the only way she could stop herself from being seasick was to crawl up into a quarter berth headfirst and sleep. I felt so sorry for her but found the fact there was nothing I could do to help her was very frustrating.

One thing that does trouble me about the whole trip is that I had known we were going on a motoring holiday, I might have been better with a Morris Minor instead of a sailing boat.



Lastly a little competition. If you are the first\* person to correctly identify the three green objects on the right of this picture I will give you a bottle of my finest Australian Cabernet Sauvignon or Chardonnay. Your choice. If no-one can identify the objects I will have to drink it myself or bring it down for a club night. [First is defined as the first communication I receive telling me what the objects are. My email is [shearstress@raskl.freeseerve.co.uk](mailto:shearstress@raskl.freeseerve.co.uk)

## Roach Archive

### Three Tiny Mites

Many members will remember the Barge Yacht 'Tiny Mite', built by Frank Shuttlewood in 1956 and moored for many decades not far from the builder's shed. Not everyone will know that there were at least two other 'Tiny Mites' built at Paglesham.

In 1886, a local paper reported:

*"LAUNCH OF A DREDGING BOAT. - On Saturday, November 27th, the Tiny Mite, a screw steam-dredging boat, was successfully launched from the boat-building yard of Mr. W. Hall, Paglesham. The vessel has been built for Mr. Z. Pettitt, of Loftmans, Canewdon, and the way in which the work was carried out reflects great credit upon the builder, whilst the fact that she was the first steam vessel built at Paglesham created an unusual amount of interest.*

*The christening was gracefully performed by the owner's little daughter Eva, "Tiny Mite". - In the evening the men engaged in the work, together with their friends, sat down under the genial presidency of Mr. Z. Pettitt, to a substantial supper, which was well served by Mr. Saunders, at the Plough and Sail Inn. A very pleasant evening was passed in toast and song. "*

Who knows the fate of this innovative oyster dredger? At any rate she appears to have started a trend in names, for in 1904, a 46' smack was built by JW Shuttlewood and launched as 'Tiny Mite'. She was registered as CK322 and later MN37. This vessel is still around today and is under restoration in Holland. The following is an extract from Arthur and Michael Emmett's 'Blackwater Men'.

*Ernie's (Pitt) brother, Tablo, along with his sons, Arthur, Reg, and Charlie, worked the Tinymite MN37 which had been built by Shuttlewoods of Paglesham and had originally been powered by a steam engine. During their ownership she was fitted with a three cylinder Lister diesel engine. Her name was something of an anomaly as she was actually the largest vessel ever to be worked from Maldon at that time. The catch of shrimps had to be cooked on board and then laid out in trays to dry, so Tinymite's vast expanse of deck was invaluable. She had been purchased just after the war to replace their two smaller smacks, Grace Darling MN7 and Thistle MN243. Tablo had sold them because of his advancing years and his wish to work collectively on one boat.*

Tiny Mite the barge yacht is still around too, and can be seen around Leigh (along with another Shuttlewood barge yacht, Nancy Grey). She is a 35' vessel with main and mizzen spritsails and

leeboards, very much like the Thames barges. Owned for many years by Don McDowell, she was a familiar sight on the Roach, and the last of her type to be built at Paglesham, home of respected barge-builders for over a century before.

Visit the RSA archive at [www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa](http://www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa)  
We are always looking for new information on Roach vessels and waterside history – do get in touch if you have a suggestion.

### Laying Up Supper

The supper will be at the Royal Burnham Yacht Club on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November. We meet at 7:30 for dinner at 8:00. If you wish to travel on Trevor's ferry, please be on the jetty at 7:00pm sharp. The price will be £2.50 return, (£2.00 pensioners). The menu will be as follows:

**Cream of Celery Soup  
Chicken Chasseur  
Apple Pie  
Coffee**

There will be a vegetarian option and please indicate if required on the booking form.

Please send your form to Richard Bessey, who has agreed to coordinate the booking.



### Laying Up Supper Registration

I would like to reserve \_\_\_\_\_ seats at £17 per person for the Laying Up Supper at the Royal Burnham Yacht Club on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2002.

I require \_\_\_\_ vegetarian selections.

Please return this form with a cheque payable to the Roach Sailing Association and address to:

**Richard Bessey  
2 Research Cottages  
Paglesham  
Rochford SS4 2DS**