

Roach Sailing Association September 2003 Newsletter

www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa

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Chairman's address

Dear Members

At the AGM earlier this year, we were delighted to vote Kingsley Varcoe as a life-time member of the Roach Sailing Association. Although now retired from sailing, Kingsley was one of the founders of our Association and we are delighted to award this status.

We are also delighted to welcome the following new members:

Steve Coombs	ULABELLA
Shaun Hetherington	DESTAYE
John Muzalewski	LADY J
Alan Wilson	NEMESIS



Shaun and son Ben in DESTAYE

The beginning of the year saw fitting-out activities divided between Stambridge where MARSHMALLOW, FRANCESCA,, SWANTI, STRAVAIG, IMOTHES, SHEMOR and JESTER

were harboured, and Paglesham where EVA ANNIE, HALLOWE'EN, LINDY II and TREGLE were given a stay of execution by the Boatyard as their owners lived in the village. RUTH and IMPUDENCE stayed in mud berths. By mid April, most of the fleet were afloat, with a good cluster of boats downstream on specially prepared moorings thanks to John Langrick's initiative and it can now be said that all owners can now row ashore in the knowledge that their yachts are safe, (Thank-you Ron Pipe).



HALLOWE'EN, FRANCESCA, SWANTI and crews, rafted up at Brightlingsea before the Maldon Rally

The usual East Coast Cruises took place and the Fambridge Rally was as popular as ever (see separate articles on the aforementioned).

Our three deep water sailors, Jon Walmsley (IMOTHES), John Apps (GLAVAR), and Richard Bessey (PHILOMELLE), left us in mid summer for

distant lands – St Petersburg, Poland and Estonia respectively, Reports on their adventures will no doubt fill the pages in either this newsletter or the next.

The topic of summer has been of course the glorious weather with long spells of continuous blue skies, Easterly breezes, and very hot spells – wow! Even I have stood on the burning deck on numerous occasions and doused myself with buckets of water; however John Langrick hasn't caught me on camera yet – not a pretty sight! Perhaps that's the reason why.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for their continued support during the summer, and I hope to see you all at the Laying-up Supper at Burnham on 11th October.

Your Chairman, Rodney Choppin

Introduction

John Langrick (Editor)

Thanks again to all those who have sent articles for this newsletter. Again we have stories from near and far. I am sure we will have some more when Jon Walmsley returns from St Petersburg in IMOTHES.

Racing Cups

Please return these to Richard as soon as possible for engraving.

Laying Up Supper

Note this is early this year on the 11th October. This should enable some to sail there. Trevor Taylor has sold his ferry so we will otherwise have to make our track the long way round.

Changes at the boatyard

There have been a number of changes in the boatyard. Firstly we now all share a shed. This was allocated to me with the 13 moorings I now manage from the end of the slip down-river. Now all RSA members are free to use this shed for no charge, but it will need some TLC this winter and I would appreciate volunteers from those who use it. If you cannot help, perhaps you could make a contribution towards the materials?

The moorings laid appear to be a success, I have 13 which are allocated and please let me know if you wish to keep them in 2004. Also Ron has laid another five additional moorings so there should be plenty of safe locations for us all.



The RSA 'Shed'.

Many now lay up at Carters Yard at the top of the Roach. I will go into a mud berth at this yard and then haul out early next year for re-fit. I have been to the yard recently and the travel hoist has been completely refurbished.



The old 'mushroom' shed has been moved

Back to Paglesham and the yard have moved the old shed on 'mushrooms', back about 20 yards to the East. This will now enable them to be able to use their new motorized travel hoist. This shed has been subject to a lot of damage in its old location, lets hope that it will be safer in the new.



The final link in the jetty.

The final and longest link in the jetty is ready for installation. This will take the landing down to the low water mark. All that will be left will be the hammer head. Some members are now leaving their dinghies alongside which will be beneficial to those who do not enjoy mud bathing.

The Roach Group

Steve Dowding

Over the past couple of years, an informal emailing circle developed amongst some of the active racing &/or cruising members of the RSA. Most of us it happens work in IT or related fields and so emailing was already a thing we did quite routinely.

It was however still quite complex to decide to which particular addresses to send our messages. Both to simplify this process for ourselves, and with the hope that this would make our communications more inclusive and available to other RSA members less comfortable with email, an Internet Newsgroup has now been set up using the free Groups service

offered by 'Yahoo!' One email sent to this single address is then automatically forwarded by the list server to all group members.

This is a membership only group, so private as opposed to the RSA website <www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa> which is the RSA's public face on the Web. Membership to the Roach Group is of course open to all RSA members, and for instance provides the opportunity to discuss possible weekend cruising in company, weather prospects and the like, and even the possibility to keep up with the exploits of some of our more adventurous members when they're off cruising the Baltic or whatever. RSA race series results are also promptly posted to the newsgroup. For more info see the RSA web site, contact the Johns, or Richard or Steve, or email steve.dowding@lineone.net

The Paglesham Yacht Race

John Perry (HSC & RSA)

John, Josephine and Kip sailed the Hostellers Sailing Club wayfarer MERGANSER in the Paglesham race on Saturday. The course was round a red buoy near the head of the Roach then back to Paglesham, the only problem was we did not know which red buoy. By the time we had tacked up to the top of the river we were the best part of a mile ahead of the other boats. We passed an obvious red buoy but Jo reckoned there could be more red buoys even further up. At that stage we assumed that the competition was history so we might as well sail on a bit to make sure we completed the course properly. Eventually we found ourselves trying to tack in about a foot of water near Stambridge Mill so we had to turn back anyway.

When we got back to the big red buoy we were horrified to see Heather in her little plastic dinghy just about to sail round it. Heather's boat, which is like a big surfboard with a triangular red and white sail, went much faster than the wayfarer down wind so we watched helplessly as she disappeared out of sight. John L and Ivan in a very pretty clinker built sailing dinghy came third. If we had followed the course better I think it would have been quite close between us and Heather. After that we came alongside SWANTI for tea and cake swapping.

We then sailed on to Wallasea where we had earlier pitched our tents on the campsite. We stopped at Burnham for an evening meal in the White Hart then we set off trying to row against the ebb tide since the wind had gone. We were making slow progress so we were pleased when the wind suddenly came back strong again, accompanied by thunder and lightning. We were sailing well to windward and only had a few hundred yards to go to Wallasea marina when the rudder and rudder stock suddenly and totally disintegrated. There are a few bits of bent metal and some screws that might be used again but not much else.

I really don't know how it happened since we did not hit anything and although it was a bit windy we have certainly sailed the wayfarers in more wind. The only thing we could do was to drop the sails and row to the bank. Because of the strong ebb tide we ended up on the south bank of the Crouch opposite Burnham where we anchored and waded ashore through the mud. From there it was quite a long walk carrying our gear to the campsite.

In the morning I did an early morning jog back to Paglesham since we only had one car which was at the boatyard. I collected the rudder from the other wayfarer and drove to the campsite. We packed the tents in the car then went to find Merganser safely anchored and still just afloat. We had a nice sail to Foulness landing and lunch at the George and Dragon. (the George and Dragon is now open for meals all through Sunday afternoon) The RSA fleet also anchored there after the ladies race but I don't think they came ashore. We then sailed up to near the top of Paglesham pool from where I was able to walk half a mile to my car while Jo and Kip sailed back to Paglesham, we actually arrived back at Paglesham at about the same time.

Fambridge Rally 2003

John Langrick

Another balmy summer Saturday morning as I left the slip with the RSA dinghy to board SWANTI. The yard was about to lay the ¾ ton anchors for the last link in the new jetty. This last link will take the jetty to the low water mark and then all that remains is the hammer-head. Rodney was inspecting the work-to-date as Ivor arrived and rowed out to MARSHMALLOW.

The wind was in the East and hence head-on as we prepared to set sail on the last of the ebb at 10:30. George and June Phillips in MISTRESS were about to set off for a week cruise up the East Coast to Woodbridge and beyond, but with the wind in this quarter opted to join us for the Fambridge trip.



EVA ANNIE motoring down the Roach.

Tony and Pam Hudson were preparing their dinghy aboard LINDY II and Paul and Mary Bishop (and dog) in EVA ANNIE were ahead waiting in Potton Creek. Paul gave the 'RSA salute' as I came

alongside! Eventually we all motored down river hoisting sails as we rounded Devils Reach.

Into the Crouch and with the wind astern, EVA ANNIE picked up her skirts and sped away with dinghy streaming astern. At Burnham I was called on the VHF by young Vincent Lowen on HAZE sailing with his dad David. They also decided to join us.

FRANCHESCA with Nigel and Noreen Bishop had been sailing further down the Crouch, airing FRANCHSCA's new mainsail. After we all were snugly moored at Fambridge, we were joined by Steve and Hillary Coombs in ULLABELLA John Apps in GLAYVAR, John and June Martin plus John C in AQUA SULIS and Rodney and Annie in HALLOWE'EN.

EVA ANNIE continued into West Wick marina as this is much more 'dog friendly'.



MISTRESS sailing past Cliff Reach

Young Vincent joined me in the RSA dinghy to tour all boats with the menu from the Ferryboat and acted as scribe gathering in orders for dinner. A good excuse to visit all boats. Colin Lockett has EAGER on a mooring at Fambridge, as he is still filling out JOSID. Colin rowed out to EAGER and my 'scribe' took his order. As we motored round the moorings, the ebb started in earnest and we all 'rocked and rolled' with wind-over-tide.

About 5:30 I had a call from Simon Joel in STRAVAIG. He was aground in Devil's reach and at the top of the tide. He would be there until 4:30am, aground almost in the same spot as she foundered last year only the other side of the river. I guess we should rename this spot as the 'STRAVAIG Spit'.

We were joined by other members who travelled by road, Dave Hewett and partner (FRITH), Reg and Cath Seal (DORMOUSE), and Dick Sandwell (TRILOGY) and all sat down at 7:30 in the Ferryboat for an excellent meal.

Our chairman Rodney welcomed all to the meal and I gave a brief update on the travellers: Jon Walmsley (IMOTHES) and Richard Bessey (PHILOMELLE) who were by now in St Petersburg, (and STRAVAIG neaped in the Roach).

I had an early morning call from Simon, he explained that he was still neaped as the tide hardly

made and STRAVAIG was still well aground. Although he was trying to dig the keel out, she would need a 'tug' at high water on the Sunday afternoon. It was my daughter's birthday and I would need to be back, but Rodney agreed to stand by in HALLOWE'EN to pull STRAVAIG off if necessary.



MARSHMALLOW at the start of the race home

The wind remained from the East in the morning and with the young flood about to start, only MARSHMALLOW, ULLABELLA and GLAYVAR raced for the Don McDowell trophy. MARSHMALLOW had to start her auxiliary in order to stem the flood through Burnham, but ULLABELLA and GLAYVAR fought on to the finish at the Branklett. We will have to let Richard decide the winner!

I arrived at Devils Reach and drove SWANTI onto the soft mud with STRAVAIG still high and dry. Rodney had returned to Paglesham to drop Annie off and would return later with Ivor and John Wittingham. John had earlier helped Simon by bringing his dinghy. I prepared some lunch for Simon and we ate while the tide slowly made. The mud is very soft at low water so we waited until we had a firmer landing.

By this time we were joined by FRANCHESCA and GLAYVAR for support. John Apps and I joined Simon to dig away the mud around STRAVAIG's keel as the tide was to be less than that of the morning and we were concerned that she would still not lift. We found the best and quickest way to move the mud is scooping it by hand.



Simon, John Apps and John L – mud scooping.

Slowly the tide made and eventually with the help of three burly crew hanging over STRAVAIG's side, she leaned over and with HALLOWE'EN's 30HP engine, she was dragged clear of her temporary but involuntary home.



Preparing to haul STRAVAG off the mud.

We were all safely back on the moorings by 4:30 and I was in time for my daughter's birthday party. Another enjoyable, and eventful weekend.

All's Well that Ends Well.

Annie Boulter

*A dozen boats to Fambridge sailed
And there they met my gaze
MARSHMALLOW, SWANTI and AQUA SULIS
FRANCHESCA, EAGER and HAZE.*

*HALLOWE'EN bobbed on the mooring buoy
As the wind blew against the tide.
Then MISTRESS arrived; EVA ANNIE sought
The Marina, for comfort inside.*

*From boat to boat went Vince and John
With a menu for all to choose;
The crew of DORMOUSE came by car,
They'd avoided a bumpy cruise!*

*Other boats came and we dined very well
At the Inn on steak and fish.
The men chose delicious fattening puds,
For us all – a tasty dish.*

*The morn saw us up and away by nine,
Escorted by a pair of swan
Flying low above the baa-ing sheep
'Til every vessel had gone.*

*Past Bridge Marsh Isle we saw comorants black,
Baby shelduck, - then to be frank
We increased the knots and hurried to help
STRAVAIG, high and dry on a bank.*

*As Nigel put his weight on board
The vessel leant o'er to one side
With a mighty heave, as HALLOWE'EN pulled
She floated again on the tide.*

--oOo--

2003 RSA East Coast Cruise

John Langrick

We had fabulous weather for our summer cruise this year starting in Pyefleet Creek. The week started with the usual Pyefleet weekend and those who could come for the week then continued up the east coast.

Initially the boats included: EAGER, MARSHMALLOW, LINDY II, TRILOGY, IMOTHES, PHILOMELLE, FRANCHESCA, GLAYVAR, MISTRESS, SWANTI (with STELLA MARIE in tow), STRAVAIG, LITTLE STINT, HOOG SPRINGER and we were joined by Dauntless KING OLIVER from Manningtree. It was great fun sailing STELLA MARIE around the moorings in a light breeze and brilliant sunshine. In the evening, we moored and had a barbecue on the 'Stone' and later on the wind increased. Most boats started to drag and we had a desperate dash to get aboard so that we had to find shelter further into the creek.

We had only one hard dingy suitable for the waves and current, MISTRESS's tender. However, this could only comfortably take three people. An then the outboard packed up. In the late evening, as the wind increased, there were just four of us left on the Stone. I rowed two of the crew out to the boat leaving George in the fading light sat alone on the shore strumming his guitar to the refrain, 'Always look on the bright side of life....'.



PHILOMELLE sailing in the Ore

On the Sunday morning on the ebb and with the wind in the SE, we set sail for Orford. The wind-over tide proved too strong for some boats, but GLAYVAR, STRAVAIG, PHILOMELLE, FRANCHESCA and SWANTI braved the swell and sailed onwards and reached the Ore as the tide turned, mooring at Orford. Here we joined HALLOWE'EN who had sailed from Paglesham that day. With the outboard on the back of STELLA MARIE, we went ashore to see the delights of Orford, which was closed (Sunday night).



FRANCHESCA off the Deben.

On the Monday we sailed up river to Aldeburgh, where we all anchored outside the yacht club and went ashore for a shower and then a visit to the town.



Ashore at Slaughden Quay, Aldeburgh. Left to right, Heather, Rosemary, Nigel, Jon, Noreen, John, Richard and Anne. Stephen in front.

Justine stayed on board PHILOMELLE as she had exam papers to mark. We were enjoying a meal and drink in a local pub when we had a call from Justine, the wind had increased and PHILOMELLE was dragging her anchor.



The fleet moored at Slaughden Quay, before the excitement.

Not only had PHILOMELLE dragged her anchor, but she had snagged FRANCHESCA's on the way. We all dashed aboard our boats and in the ensuing drama, nearly wrote off the whole fleet. But thanks to two local boatmen and their launch, we managed to 'untangle' the muddle and set off to navigate back down river and into the Deben. Here we met Steve

in STORTEBECKER and we all anchored near Ramsholt to await the tide to take us into the tide mill at Woodbridge.



Moored in the Woodbridge Tide Mill

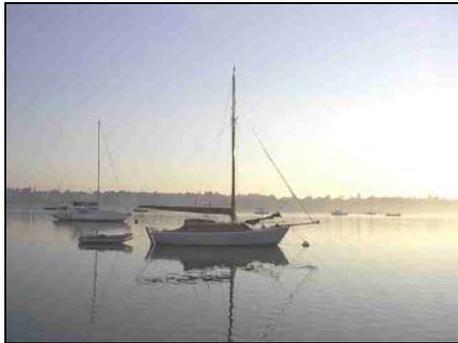
We ate on board that night and rose early to travel back to Ramsholt for lunch. The first to attempt to leave the tide mill was PHILOMELLE, who promptly went aground on the sill. Not to be outdone, GLAVAR followed, also hitting the sill. Then Steve in STORTEBECKER had to repeat the folly. Finally I left in SWANTI ... no problem with 18" draft. John in IMOTHESE wisely waited a further 20 minutes before setting off. Nigel and Noreen in FRANCHESCA stayed in the tide mill as he had an appointment the next day and needed to take the train to London.



PHILOMELLE 'stuck' on the sill.

We all had an excellent lunch at the Ramsholt Arms before taking leaving the Deben just after low water. Our next destination was Pin Mill and had an easy and leisurely sail to tie up on moorings off the Butt and Oyster. Here we met EAGER, MARSHMALLOW and MISTRESS who had stayed at Pyefleet on the Sunday due to the headwinds. We had a meal in the Butt and Oyster in the evening and retired ready for a leisurely morning the following day. This started with a walk along the shore to Wolverstone where we had a shower and

then to Chelmerston for some shopping for stores. The plan was to sail that afternoon to the Backwaters and have another barbecue on the Stone.



MARSHMALLOW in the early morning at Pin Mill

When I returned to SWANTI, I had forgotten I had STELLA MARIE on a long painter and she was rubbing alongside SWANTI, carving gouges in the paintwork. After this I always remembered to tie her alongside.

When we arrived at the Stone, we met HALLOWE'EN and LINDY II to prepare for the barbecue that evening but not before copious beers on board HALLOWE'EN. That evening we had an other excellent BBQ on the beach and retired at sun-down.

The following day, five of us took Stella Marie under outboard up-river to Tichmarsh Marina where we had a shower and then continued to walk into town. One of the locals offered a lift to three, but left John Apps and myself to walk the couple of miles into Walton. After a few beers, we ate fish and chips and then returned before the tide left STELLA MARIE high and dry.

The following day, IMOTHES, STORTEBECKER, GLAVAR and SWANTI made for Kerby Creek where we tied up in the afternoon and again sailed STELLA MARIE in a light breeze. That evening we ate on board and rose in the morning to continue exploring the creeks. Five of us took Stella Marie and the rest aboard STORTEBECKER up Landmere Creek and then continued in STELLA MARIE to Beaumont Quay, where we tied up to explore.



Beaumont Quay, built in 1830 of stone from the original London Bridge.

The quay is made from stones from the old London Bridge and is a fascinating corner of the backwaters. Nearby is an old lime kilne, very well preserved and further up the creek, the remains of the barge ROSE, with her rudder and stern-post still sitting majestically perpendicular while the rest of he hull is spreading over the marsh.



The lime kiln, perfectly preserved.

With no wind, we had to row STELLA MARIE back to STORTEBECKER, now moored off Landmere, and Steve towed us all back to the rest of the fleet as there was no wind at all by this time.



STELLA MARIE gets a 'tug' from STOREBECKER.

That evening we sailed back to the stone for the night to prepare for the sail down the coast to the Blackwater the following day.



STORTEBECKER, IMOTHES, FRANCESCA and SWANTI rafted up on the Stone.

There was very little wind yet again for sailing down the wallet, but slowly and surely we made our way to Bradwell Marina where we booked in for the evening. After a shower and excellent meal on board GLAYVAR, we retired to prepare for a gentle sail in the morning to Pyefleet.



Toasting the sunset in Pyefleet Creek

In the evening we ate on board again and toasted the sunset at the end of an excellent cruise. The following morning we had a 'soldiers wind' to take us all back to Paglesham and I was back on my moorings by high water.

We all had a great time and thanks to the weather and all those who came along to make this one of the best cruises ever.

Fahrting Rund Der Ost See

By John Apps – 'GLAYVAR'

I read a book recently about an Atlantic sailor who had been up a few South American Rivers, including the Orinoco. He described sailing [my paraphrasing, I don't have the book to hand] as: 'A mixture of misery and boredom, occasional terror, interspersed with moments of splendour.' Of course the point he made that I am also trying to make is that we all do it for the moments of splendour.

There was misery aplenty on the way over. Pounding into a NE veering Easterly at F5. When the tide was against you, hardly any ground was made. When the tide was with you the steepness of the waves with wind over tide meant constant pounding and little progress through the water. I thought 'PHILOMELLE' and 'IMOTHES' were probably handling the waves better than 'GLAYVAR' as she is somewhat lighter and beamier. Particularly with wind over tide 'GLAYVAR' was being tossed around like a cork, I had many bruises to prove it – all but one, a bad crack on the shin, have subsequently disappeared. Discussions later with Richard and Jon and the fact that in distance if not always direction we all kept up with each other indicated that I fared no worse than the other two.

3 days and 2 nights from Paglesham to West Terschelling. The fact that we all ended up at West Terschelling was interesting. My understanding had been that we were to RV at Helgoland. We had maintained contact quite well until dusk on the second day. I had heard a discussion between Richard and Jon [my microphone was only working intermittently – so it was next to useless me trying to

transmit], indicating an intermediate waypoint of Buoy TX3, which marked part of the Dutch/German TSS being off the island of Texel. I had just found a point of sail where 'GLAYVAR' was in a groove heading East on port tack. The other boats tacked North on starboard tack. I decided to stay in my groove and meet up at TX3.

Being single handed the second night meant I was going beyond 36 hours without sleep and I had begun to experience major problems with hallucinations. To me hallucinations are one of the things that are endemic to night sailing and help to make it interesting. A wave crest turns into a rowing boat and you dismiss it as a waste product of the mind. The problem I was having the second night was my body was reacting to the hallucinations before my mind could control it. Rounding up and slamming the engine into reverse [motorsailing] when Henley Regatta appeared in front of me. Attempting to drag a spinnaker winch on board when it turned into a little girl clinging onto the side of my boat. The fact that I could hear people constantly muttering on the boat and searching high and low for a radio secreted by a previous owner. Or a set of balloons floating in the water at dusk, from which I could see a man's body hanging.

At approximately 0100, I decided that I would have to sleep, something to this time, as a control freak, had been impossible for me. I came around onto starboard tack, from which I believe I have right of way over everything when hard on the wind in deep water. I got a couple of cushions out of the cabin and lay on the leeward cockpit seat which fortunately is over six feet long and not interrupted by the autohelm. This was out of the wind and spray protected by the sprayhood. The next four hours passed very quickly, even though [I think] I was up every few minutes checking for other vessels. Woke up at one stage with the lights of an oil platform in my eyes. When I had seen it last I should have passed well clear of it, but the tide was very strong. (I further refined my sleeping on my return crossing from Den Helder to Paglesham.

It was blowing Easterly [good this time] F2-3 [too light]. I ran my engine and motorsailed so I could have my radar going. The display is located on the starboard side near the companionway. I could lie in the port saloon bunk with my head towards the companionway and sleep with one eye watching the display. If anything came within 2 miles I'd get up and have a look.)

Anyway when I got to TX3 the next morning there was no other boats anywhere in sight. I decided at this point that I had to stop somewhere for a decent sleep. The easiest Yacht Harbour at that stage to get in and out of, although not the closest was Vlieland. I arrived at Vlieland Yacht Harbour at 1830 that night only to be told that it had been closed since 1600 as it was full. West Terschelling was only about 4 miles across the water so the Harbour Master rang them and found they had room if I was in by 2100 hours.

I battled across the sandbars with wind over tide again. My hallucinations were such now that I even saw PHILOMELLE 2 miles in front of me. When I got to West Terschelling it appeared that once again there was no room at the inn. The boats were rafted up to ten deep. I approached another boat that was on the outside a raft. I asked how we went about finding a likely spot. He instead told me that there was another British boat on a raft just around the corner. I went round to look. It was PHILOMELLE and Richard said IMOTHESE was only an hour or so away.



GLAYVA leaving Paglesham at the start of the cruise.

So I found a raft of only seven or so friendly Dutch boats and joined them as the eighth and spent a very enjoyable night asleep and in the knowledge that I had by pure chance met up with the other two boats. Of course at 0700 hours I was rudely awakened by a boat coming alongside while the raft in front of us broke up to let one of the inner boats out.

Let's get back to why we go sailing, the moments of splendour:

1. Warnemunde the port for Rostock, such a pretty place, pity the food was so ordinary.
2. Darßer Ort a yacht haven in the middle of a bird sanctuary run by the Worldwide Fund for Nature [WWF]. I would really have liked to spend a day here and explored a bit. I did get in early evening, but being short of vegetables I decided to trek to the nearest shop in the middle of a caravan park that had an optional dress code, unfortunately it seemed only men and older women with more robust figures took their clothes off. Worst of all by the time I got to the shop it was closed.
3. The Eastern German lakes particularly at sunset and sunrise were quite magical. The unlit buoys were a bit of a hazard at night, but I learnt to trust the lead lights even when you thought you were going to hit the shore. For once I didn't.

4. While motor sailing from Helgoland to Den Helder in a F2 Easterly, tuning my exhaust and the angle of heel so that the mutterings turned into a vocal rendition of 'Roll out the Barrel' accompanied by French Horn and Double Bass. Even better I was able to change the vocal from male to female, depending on whether I sat on the port or starboard side. [Further to this was one of the great moments of boredom - I couldn't turn it off and still keep up my distance covered. You can imagine after 98 renditions! I was so pleased when the wind picked up and I could turn the engine off].

5. The highlight of my whole trip was the Giselau Canal and Eider River. At any moment I expected to see Toad and Ratty from 'Wind in the Willows'. A calming place that by itself made the North Sea crossing all worth it. While longer than the Elbe River / Kiel Canal, it only took me 2 easy days motoring and sailing from Rendsburg to Helgoland, including being stuck on the bar just short of the last lock at low tide for an hour or so with three Dutch boats.

Moments of terror! None that I can think of. However deep concern entering Den Helder from the Northeast at night. I had been in and out of Den Helder Naval Yacht Club last year in daylight. But entering from a different direction on what was a pitch-black night was somewhat disorientating.

Den Helder has a lovely lighthouse in daylight. But when entering from the Northeast it is in your eyes all the time and completely destroys your night vision. But the real problem was that while the inner harbour is clearly marked with constant red and green lights, I kept imagining I could see the harbour wall in front of me and tried to veer off to avoid it. When I got into the yacht harbour, I found it was chock a block and being well after midnight I sneaked around looking for a berth. Couldn't see anything, but someone emerged from a boat and asked me if I would tie up against any boat and let him sleep. I said I was concerned I would block the channel between the berths. He said someone would wake me and ask me to move if I was in the way. So I did.

I'll say one thing for the Dutch no one ever disturbs you before 0700, but sure enough the boat I had tied up to knocked very politely at 0700 and asked me if I would let him leave. I apologised for disturbing him in the night. He hadn't heard a thing and was very surprised to see me tied up alongside him when he arose.

You may have heard that I was thrown out of Poland. Not quite true. As an Australian passport holder I required a visa to enter Poland. However I was interested in testing the story that a boat's papers were more important than the skipper's and in fact the only papers a skipper needs are the boat's. I explained to the Border Guards, who couldn't speak a word of English, nor could I speak a word of Polish for that matter, but it is amazing what you can do with tone of voice and face and body language., that I required fuel and water and was requesting temporary entrance to Poland as a

registered British Ship [only SSR part III, but every other country seems to have a lot of respect for that].

Basically the Captain who took over from the Corporal, when they looked Australia up in the book and decided that it was not Austria and therefore not a member of the European Union indicated that would be OK, and delegated the corporal to tell me to wait on my boat for a whistle while he spoke to his 'Chef'. Well I was really pleased that they were going to lay on a welcoming banquet for me as a visiting Australian yachtsman, or was I a visiting British yachtsman?

Any way just before the kettle boiled so I could make myself a cup of tea, the corporal whistled me up. The captain had disappeared at this stage and I never saw him again. Basically the corporal told me that the captain's 'Chef' had refused me permission to enter and I had to leave immediately. I said fine I didn't mind as I was due to turn back as I had to be back for 7th August when my Daughter's baby was due, and I would just whip up to Bornholm, a Danish island 25 miles north [We were right at the entrance to the Baltic Sea from the Swinajouscie ship canal].

He said I couldn't do that, but I had to return back down the ship's canal and out through the East German lakes the way we had come. I asked: 'do I still get my welcoming banquet?' Fortunately he didn't understand this, as it may have just been too frivolous for him. As I headed back down the ship canal, not touching land as instructed, I saw Richard waving me into a Yacht haven, so with the engine in idle and still not touching land, I explained the situation to him.

I had already sent a text message to Jon, as I was not expecting to see either of them again. So technically I was not thrown out of Poland, legally I was not allowed to land.

I have discussed this situation on a sailing newsgroup on the internet and a few Poles who inhabit the newsgroup have explained that a Polish yachtsman was thrown out of Sydney for staying too long [about six months] some months previously. So in retrospect it was just a little bit of tit for tat. I must admit when I got to the actual Polish border with Germany [a line of buoys in a lake] some 4 hours later, the border guard in his RIB bade me farewell and offered a brief apology as he came up to check on me. It's a pity with his perfect English he wasn't on duty at the check in station.

Journey to Hel

Richard Bessey

Hel is a small fishing town not far from Gdansk. It made a good destination for us, not least because it was pronounceable (unlike our port of arrival in Poland, Swinoujscie). However it was about 170 miles away.

We set off at about 9:00. Passing the border post,

we turned our backs on them as retribution for sending GLAYVAR back to Germany the day before. However they were having none of this, and fired projectiles across our bows. Happy to start a diplomatic incident, I tied up and asked "What's your problem?". "No, vas is your problem!" was the sharp reply. I quickly switched to ignorant foreigner mode, and we soon made our escape. It seems you have to check in and out of every port here.

The day was fairly quiet, with not much wind, so we motor-sailed much of the time. As night fell, however, spectacular thunderstorms lit up the coast, and soon we were in torrential rain and squalls. Our autohelm was broken, so someone had to be at the wheel at all times, and it was during Naomi's watch that we were struck by lightning. No damage, but a bit of a shock for her!

It rained steadily for most of the next day. The coast is an endless stretch of sand dunes with few signs of settlement and hardly any other boats. Eventually we rounded a headland and set off along the 20 mile Hel peninsular. At this point it began to blow and rain hard, and it became something of a sleigh-ride. Unfortunately our fore-sail ripped and we had to motor the last few miles, arriving in Hel harbour just before dark.

Excellent flounders for dinner at a local cafe, then damply to bed. Next morning another sleigh-ride the last 15 miles to Gdansk, where we are staying a couple of days to do repairs and recuperate.

Entering Gdansk harbour gave us a first glimpse of a major Eastern European port. The crumbling wharves are frequented by few ships today, and shipyards that could once launch several ships every week, are almost idle. Only the grain warehouses and scrap yards showed much activity.

By contrast, the city centre is a miracle of reconstruction. Gdansk was the target of extensive bombing by Britain and Russia during the war, and the area is still surrounded by ancient warehouses with cracked walls and gaping roofs. The waterfront however, and an extensive area of streets and broad squares, have been built from the ruins in the original style, and the view is not so different from the days of the Hanseatic League.

We were met by a local representative of the Cruising Association who was most helpful and friendly – putting us in touch with engineers and other marine suppliers. Jon replaced his broken autohelm, and we had sails repaired. Without this kind of help it is hard to get things done – many times we found ourselves unable find supplies, or wasting days waiting for an engineer.

Refreshed and supplied after a couple of days, we set off once again for the Baltic States, finally arriving in Estonia where we have laid up PHILOMELLE for the winter – but that's another tale...

Laying Up Supper

The supper will be at the Royal Burnham Yacht Club on Saturday 11th October. We meet at 7:30 for dinner at 8:00. The menu will be as follows:

Mediterranean Tomato Soup
--oOo--
Chicken with Mushrooms and White Wine Sauce
Or
Vegetarian Option
--oOo--
Apple and Berry Crumble
Or
Cheese and Biscuits
--oOo--
Tea or Coffee

There will be a vegetarian and an 'afters' option, please indicate requirements on the booking form.

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

Note that we can no longer use Trevor Taylor's ferry as he has sold her. I suggest we all try and share transport, or stay overnight locally. Some members will travel in their own boats and moor in the Burnham Yacht Harbour or on a mooring. The following are local hotels:

Ye Olde White Harte Hotel	01621 762106
Anchor Hotel	01621 782117
Railway Hotel	01621 786878
The Ship Inn	01621 785057
The Oyster Smack	01621 782141

Laying Up Supper

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 11th October 2003.

I require _____ vegetarian options

I require _____ sweets **or** _____ Cheese & Biscuits

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