

## Roach Sailing Association

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

### February 2004 Newsletter

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#### Chairman's Report

*Rodney Choppin*

Dear Member

As we shake off the hangovers and put away the Christmas decorations for another year, our thoughts turn to the numerous tasks to be accomplished before the sailing season begins, and of course we look forward in anticipation of another fine Summer.

We expect the arrival of the 'exiles' from Stambridge, sometime in April, while the few who winter at Paglesham will likewise be fitting out for summer cruises etc.

*While fitting out, you may be clearing your sheds of all those nautical articles that you no longer need – so remember the RSA stand at the Essex boat jumble on 29<sup>th</sup> Feb! We need members to man the stand during the day, so please let John Langrick, Richard Bessey, Jon Walmsley or myself know if are interested in selling anything or wish to help.*

*If you have items to sell, please stick a label on them with your name and price needed. Note that 20% will go to RSA to cover stand costs. Then take the bits to any of the committee members, or put in the RSA shed at Pag.*

Our AGM is on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March at the Mission Hall, Paglesham. This is the ideal occasion to voice your views on the running of our Association, so please come along.

I would like to conclude by wishing you all a prosperous New Year, good cruising, and for those of you contemplating a Baltic cruise – watch out for the Polish Navy!

#### Don't miss... Roach on TV in February

*Rodney Choppin*

You remember I wrote an article in this newsletter about HMS Beagle and the Paglesham connection some issues ago? Much activity has taken place since Richard Bessey put it on the web. It attracted the attention of the Institute of Maritime Studies at St Andrews, and also involved the Meet the Ancestors BBC team, who will hopefully be broadcasting a documentary on her 25 years spent at Paglesham as a watch vessel in the service of the Coastguard. I expect viewing sometime early in February.



*Myself, Simon Joel and Jon Walmsley introduce 'The Beagle Anchor'!*

## Committee News

Please note that all members of the committee stand down and are due for election or re-election at the AGM. Please let Rodney know if you would like to join the committee, or stand as one of the officers.

The current members of the committee are:

John Martin	– President
Rodney Choppin	- Chairman
Jon Walmsley	– Secretary
Richard Bessey	- Race Officer
Nick Eddery-Joel	– Treasurer
John Langrick	– Newsletter Editor

Other members of the committee on your behalf are:

Mike Dallimore  
Ivor Jones

### **RSA subs**

Subscriptions for 2004 are now due. The rate agreed at last year's AGM is £5 per year. Note that we have a slightly higher subscription for those who race. This is to cover the cost of cup insurance and engraving. The supplement is an additional £5, total subscription £10.

Please also note there has been an increase in the Harbour Dues this year to **£16.00**. Note that this is a concessionary rate and the full due of **£100** must be paid if later than 31<sup>st</sup> July 2003. Please send your subs and river duties to John Langrick who maintains our membership records, 10 St James Avenue, Thorpe Bay, Essex SS1 3LH with your cheque and a self addressed envelope, (if harbour dues paid), made payable to the **Roach Sailing Association**. Alternatively bring them along to the AGM in March!

### **AGM**

The AGM will be held at the Paglesham village hall on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March, with a start at 7:30. We may very well adjourn to the Plough and Sail later.

### **RSA racing 2003**

*Richard Bessey*

This year's racing started and ended with a good blow. The *Paglesham Pot* must have been the windiest race we've had for years - approx 5-6 SSW and quite gusty. The course was Paglesham - Inner Crouch to Port - Paglesham and it was all over in 2 hours. Six boats took part including 3 new to RSA racing - Ulabella (Buchanan Great Dane), Glayva (UFO 30) and Philomelle (another Buchanan). On corrected time, Ulabella had 1st place, with Eager 2nd and Imothes 3rd.

The *Shuttlewood Cup* was a quieter day, presaging a season of light airs. The seven contenders jostled to round the Horse Shoal (Philomelle was forced to turn away in a failed bid to oust Stravaig) and headed for the finish at Foulness Quay, where Stravaig took the Cup, with Stortebecker 2nd and Glayva 3rd.

Eight boats started for the *Blue Shoal Trophy*, but all but two retired, unable to find enough wind to head the tide. Stortebecker was ahead of Glayva when the rest came motoring past on the

way to the George & Dragon, so the result was declared then and there.

With light easterly winds (opposite of forecast), the fleet of eight set out at 11:00 from Quay Reach. The course was S Buxey to Port, then back. The tide turned against us and boats approaching the Outer Crouch found themselves drifting backwards to Shore Ends. Meanwhile the two leaders agreed to shorten the course to Buxey No 2.

After six had retired and returned to the Quay, and five hours had passed, Stortebecker led Glayva past the post with only 2 minutes to spare. So Stortebecker is awarded the *Whitaker Cup*.

Our guests the Hosteliers gave an account of the *Paglesham Yacht Race* in the last newsletter. On handicap Heather's mini-sail won, with Stella Marie 2<sup>nd</sup> and Merganser 3rd.



*Marshmallow*

Next day was the Ladies Race. Five boats set out for the *Gracilda Cup* with a slight westerly, gusting occasionally SW. Marshmallow had a bad start, but with topsail set was soon in the lead to the mark which was inner crouch to Starboard and finish at quay reach. Turning at the mark, Marshmallow stuck to the south shore and made the Roach with one tack. The rest of the fleet had to tack more as the wind increased. Swanti retired as the crew started to feel uneasy with the squalls. The rest finished in very close positions. Anne brought Stravaig to 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Heather with Marshmallow had 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Rosemary took 1<sup>st</sup> place with Stortebecker.

Unusually, the race for the *Don McDowell Trophy* was against the flood, and as sod would have it an East wind. Quite a number of boats had come up to Fambridge the night before, but with dinghies to pull, few stayed in the race for long. Ulabella persevered all the way to the Branklet, tacking through Burnham with the dinghy in tow. However she took 2<sup>nd</sup> place to Glayva who was by now well ahead.

The *Lifboat Cup* race was another day of 'variables' which produced another crop of retirements as we struggled against the tide. We welcomed Saraband to the racing, and also the return of Haze. First to finish at Foulness Quay was Stortebecker (1st), closely followed by Haze (2nd). Glayva (4th) and Mistress (3rd) also completed the course.

John Apps was at the start line in his sailing tender, to contest the *RNLI race* with Winks. As it was too early to find water round Potton, we chose to go round Rushey island first. With a NE wind we made rapid progress to Wakering, sailing

downhill over the ford to arrive at Havengore bridge. Then the trouble began.

They tacked back and forth in the pool by the bridge, unable to gain ground. John was concerned he would get swept into the bridge, and went on the mud to adjust his rig. Meanwhile Richard discovered that Winks' centreplate had dropped and was swinging beneath. He joined John on the mud. John helped to tip Winks over and Richard re-fitted the centreplate, held up with a piece of string.

They set off again for another attempt at Narrow Cuts. This time Richard was able to make progress, though it was not many yards each tack. Over an hour later the two boats met between Rushley and Potton - John had sailed back up Rushley Creek and up to the Potton Bridge, which he found closed. They sailed back to the Roach and up to Paglesham. Winks crossed the line after 4 hours 45, and went ashore in Paglesham Pool just as a rain squall hit. John suffered this squall and the turn of tide, finally rowing into Paglesham against the ebb. And so home for a cup of tea. So Winks won, but only by default!



*Stortebecker*

We had whistled for half a gale, and half a NW gale we got! Still nine boats turned out for the **Roach Plate** starting line. It was a quick race from Paglesham to the Crouch, Redward and Horse Shoal both to Port, then finish at Foulness Quay. Imothes was first over the line and all the rest followed within 15 minutes. On corrected time, Imothes took 3rd place, with Mistress 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Swanti gets the Roach Plate.

The **Len Choppin Cup** went to Stortebecker which held a clear points lead from early in the series.

## RSA Racing Handicaps for the start of 2003

Handicaps were adjusted at the end of the season to match the performance of each boat in that season's races. This could only be done for boats which finished at least 3 races, and where performance was within 20% of the boat's race handicap. For new boats, an adjustment was made on the basis of the average difference (26%) between RSA and RYA performance numbers (where both were known).

If any member wishes to request a change in handicap, please contact the racing officer.

### Cruisers

Boat	Adjustment	Club No
Little Stint		1201
Philomelle		1217
Ulabella		1280
Saraband		1314
Haze		1321
Eager	+97	1329
Imothes	+72	1371
Mistress		1402
Stravaig		1413
Shear Stress		1448
Glavya	+272	1479
Stortebecker	-54	1519
Marshmallow		1525
Pudmuddle		1576
Swanti		1687
Gemini		1846
Open boats		

Boat	Adjustment	Club No
Mini		1281
Merganser		1286
Stella Marie		1495
Memory		1583
Winks		1740
Shuky		1750
TT Stortebecker		1750

**To: roach@yahoogroups.co.uk**

From: Simon  
 To: roach@yahoogroups.co.uk  
 Subject: Re: Stravaig mooring tag

Heather, Many thanks.  
 At least it was only the tag this time !!  
 Simon

-----Original Message-----

From: Heather  
 Subject: Stravaig mooring tag

I rowed across the Pool and walked down to the Branklet on Saturday, found Stravaig's mooring tag on the saltings opposite Foulness stairs, will leave it in the shed.

## Paglesham to St Petersburg (and back)

Jon Walmsley



After dipping Imothes keel in the Baltic in 2002, I decided that in 2003 I would make a full scale assault. On the twelfth of July Imothes set out with her usual cruising buddies, Richard Bessey and family, and John Apps, but this time they had new boats; Philomelle and Glayva respectively. Our ambitious plan to head straight for Helgoland was unanimously declared void by adverse weather. In the end it took us fifty nine hours to reach Terschilling. The next day it was still blowing NE6 so we decided to go to Harlingen and head North through the sheltered canals. Imothes could just make the course to the Harlingen Locks hard on the wind under full genoa. She rapidly overhauled Glayva who was under engine. John responded by increasing his engine revs to keep up. I think he was on some kind of motoring holiday! I was glad of Glayva's engine the next day when a lack of communication between skipper and crew, (no-one was helming), saw Imothes very firmly aground just after a bridge. John to the rescue!



*Swapping grub on the Kiel Canal*

A few days later than planned we made it to Brunsbittel, the West entrance of the Kiel Canal, where Philomelle's crew of Justine, Cat and Naomi were augmented by Jenny and Ben. As usual there was a fair

amount of crew swapping between Imothes and Philomelle. On leaving the Kiel Canal we headed East along the German coast taking the 'inland' route south of the island of Rugen. Bridge opening times are very short due to the high volume of road traffic in this area. At Stralsund the bridge only opens a couple of times a day for five minutes. At 09:20 thirty-five boats surged through the narrow opening at full throttle waving to the massed spectators above. Once we reached 'open' water the wind picked up and mischievously took my hat. You need four people to retrieve a hat under sail, one to helm, one to manage the sheets, one to hang with half his body out board and the last to sit on his legs. After three attempts we were successful. The inland route gave us the opportunity to visit Peenemunde where there is an excellent museum dedicated to the development of the V2 and rockets in general. We continued on through a couple of bridges, again with very limited opening times, to Swinoujscie in Poland where we said goodbye to John and Glayva. Would you let someone into your country with corks hanging round their radar dome?



*Jenny keeps Imothes hard on the wind*

From there it was back to sea along the Polish coast. Imothes was reduced to only Jenny as crew when extra hands were required on

Philomelle due to her Autohelm problems. In the night I was pointing out Philomelle to Jenny, when she came on watch, when Philomelle was struck by a bolt of lightning. Just call me Thor!

The hit was confirmed when we reached Hel, three hours from Gdansk. In this famous city, (Solidarnosc and Lech Walesa), we had a couple of days rest and recuperation before setting off on the last day of July, (again via Hel), to Klaipeda; the only port of entry in Lithuania. Here we found an interesting restaurant where Richard ate pig ears much to the horror of Jenny his vegetarian daughter.



*Is it a boat – is it a plane?*

Another day, another country, this time Latvia where we cleared customs in Liepaja. This part of the Baltic has beautiful beaches, with very fine sand, which stretch for miles. We took advantage and went swimming in the warm virtually salt free sea, followed by a dry off in the sun with beer at thirty pence a can. Richard was impressed by the well stocked supermarket that even sold live fish, I stocked up on ice pops. The next, and last, Latvian port was Ventspils from where strong NW winds propelled us to Roomasaare in Estonia. Imothes surged along at five knots with just a scrap of jib while Jenny helmed for twelve hours to keep her seasickness at bay. Another windy day meant we were harbour bound which gave the opportunity to explore the castle; where we had a picnic, and the market. Although still a bit fresh the next day, we set off for Virtsu; a ferry port with few facilities and very exposed berths. The next day the wind was still blowing from the NW which was virtually on the nose. We set off at midday and motored hard for seven and a half hours, averaging two knots, before Imothes engine failed due to water ingress through the tank breather. The only option was to head downwind back to Virtsu. Philomelle went ahead to receive us. Just to add to the excitement, as we aroached in the dark, a cargo ship started to enter the narrow channel that led to the port. After an initial panic, it looked as though it would be docked well before we arrived. However it, and its accompanying tug, decided it was too rough to dock and started to come out again. I got no response to my calls “yacht to large red ship” on channel 16. There was very little I could do, but somehow the ship and tug came out and Imothes went in. Jenny and I were happy to see the massed ranks of Philomelle’s crew waiting for us on the outside pontoon to catch Imothes as she careered into the marina making four knots under bare poles .

A day off for repairs, (I made a snorkel), before we set off again, this time making Tallinn in twenty six hours. This was where Richard decided to overwinter Philomelle, so we said goodbye to Richard Justine and Ben. Imothes set off for Vergi, the last port of clearance in Estonia, with Cat, Jenny and Naomi crewing.



*Tallinn*

From Vergi it is one hundred and fifty miles to St. Petersburg via Fort Kronstadt; where you officially enter Russia, before clearing customs in the city. We were met by Vladimir Ivankiv, the extremely helpful local representative. Vladimir saw us through the formalities, of which there are many, and we eventually tied up in the Central River Yacht Club. This was the site of the 1980 Olympics, but is now very much run down. The top floor of the main building has been abandoned and the ‘facilities’ for visiting yachtsmen are in a portakabin. You cannot fill your water tanks either, which is a problem with three girls on board.



*Central River YC, St Petersburg*

St. Petersburg is a fantastic city and well worth a visit, (you don’t have to go by yacht!). We spent a day in the Hermitage and I also visited the Maritime Museum and the Cruiser Aurora; which played an important role in the Revolution. Unfortunately this is where I said goodbye to my crew who caught a coach to Helsinki from where they flew home.



*Imothes crew in front of the Church of Blood St P*

After a week in St. Petersburg and nearly out of water, Imothes headed West for the first time on the trip to Haapasaare in Finland where we cleared customs despite the large quantities of Vodka on board. A couple of hours away is Kotka where Rosemary signed on as crew.



*Scenic Finland*

The scenery in Finland is unbelievable, (the pictures do not do it justice), as is the navigation. In a typical day we would cross four or more chart folios and up to sixty waypoints.

Strong NE and SE winds coupled with flat water in the islands, saw impressive speeds propelling us rapidly to Helsinki. A day sightseeing in Helsinki, including a dinner cruise, and we were off, ever westwards, visiting beautiful, but empty marinas, (it was the end of August and Scandinavia was shut), with excellent facilities, especially the saunas.

Log Extract: Sunday 31 August 47 miles 10.5 hours

“My big day today. After a week of learning all about plotting courses and using the GPS and chart plotter, Jon trusted me to plan our route for the day. Didn’t have to leave too early as it’s only 29 miles, an easy day’s sailing, nice NE wind. Days of nurturing Jon’s trust in my navigation abilities were soon to be tested. First leg, tight on the wind, making good time, only a fraction off my next waypoint. Second leg a bit more tricky negotiating rocks and a narrow channel. On to the third map, only one to go and we’d be at Mariehamn in a couple of hours. It was at this point that I learned a new word in sailing and navigation: Reciprocal. This means going back on your route. There are a lot of islands around here. Some have people living on them and they need roads to get to their houses. Our route passed, as it frequently did, between two such islands, but obviously these Finns had to have a bridge, just to be different. This was when I learned about reciprocal routes. Going back was easy, as I remembered most of the buoys from half an hour before. The rest of this has been abridged for my benefit – what had taken us two hours to reach, took an hour to retrace. Jon was very patient.

Our next route Jon planned as there was no passage marked and he mapped a route due North through uncharted waters, with lots of rocks, some submerged, some visible. Wind very strong. Two and a half hours later, missing some “growlers” by a whisker, Jon found a short cut through to where we would have been six and a half hours earlier. Got into harbour at Degerby on Degero just twenty minutes before it closed for the season. We had the last ticket. Ferry leaving took all inhabitants away to hibernate. How we laughed when we realised that the bridge that stopped our passage was within a mile of us!”

We reached Mariehamn in the Aland Isles on the First of September where Rosemary departed by ferry to Stockholm and a flight to Blighty. I followed at a slower pace reaching Stockholm on the Fifth. I went to the Vasa Museum for the second time, it is the Swedish equivalent of our Marie Rose but twenty times more impressive. Imothes then worked her way down the East Coast of Sweden where her luck dodging rocks finally ran out entering the marina at Nynashamn. The chart and navigation marks didn’t agree, even in daylight the next day, honest!



*Sweden – closed!*

The last port in Sweden was Kalmar from where we set a course for Ronne on the Danish island of Bornholm. I was concerned about the good weather running out so made sail while the sun shone. I therefore left

Bornholm at five in the afternoon, (having arrived at seven in the morning after a twenty four hour passage from Kalmar), and reached Gedser, on the Island of Falster the following evening. This put me in shouting distance, (seventy five miles), of the Kiel Canal where I met John Langrick who would see me safely home across the North Sea.

Bad weather changed our plans from a swift exit down the Elbe to a gentle cruise down the Eider, (a right turn off the Kiel Canal through the Gieslau locks), a route taken by Glayva a couple of months earlier. I am glad it did as this was one of the highlights of this leg. John and I played lots of conkers, but kept arguing about the scoring. Friedrichstadt was built by the Dutch and known as ‘Little Amsterdam’, very picturesque. The other main town on the Eider is Tønning, equally as interesting.



*Arriving at Tønning*

From the Eider we set sail for Helgoland, (got there at last!). Everything on Helgoland has been built in the last forty years as the British gave it a good seeing too with high explosives before returning it to the Germans in 1952. Lots of duty free though to John’s delight. I’m not sure why he needed all that perfume though.



*Leaving Helgoland*

There followed a sleigh ride home to Paglesham, (during which we played a lot of Scrabble), with only one other stop on the Dutch Fresian Island of Oost Vlieland.

Imothes was away from her mooring for ten weeks, visited ten countries and logged over three thousand one hundred and fifty miles. Anyone fancy a trip to North Farnham this year?

## Laying up in Tallinn

*Richard Bessey*

Having explored the Southern Baltic coast, from Kiel to Gdansk, we had headed for the Eastern Baltic States. After a blowy night off the Russian coast, the first stop was Kliepeda, Lithuania's only significant port. Then on to Latvia with its hundred-mile beach of fine white sand, backed by coniferous forest and hardly a sign of human presence, (apart from the ubiquitous radar towers). We called at Liepaja, (a very pleasant visit, though brief) and Ventspils. It was time for a decision - to head for home, or to overwinter Philomelle in the Baltic. To turn back now would have meant missing the jewels of the Baltic - the archipelago of Estonia and Finland. The decision was made.



*Philomelle off Latvia*

Riga, Parnu, Tallinn, Helsinki, Marieholm - choosing a suitable port proved a challenge. Jon's Cruising Club contact list had proved invaluable in Gdansk, but now we spent expensive minutes on the mobile in vain. In the end we plumped for Tallinn on the strength of good reports of facilities in the Baltic Pilot. Also we would keep company with Jon for longer, as Tallinn was on his route to St Petersburg.

Getting there was another matter. The weather turned wet and squally as we crossed the Bay of Riga, and it blew from the NW throughout our stay in the Estonian Archipelago. This area is wonderful for sailing, though your navigation has to be spot on since there are rocks everywhere, often with steeply shelving channels giving you no warning of shoals. The local portfolio charts are excellent but expensive; unless you plan to cruise the islands extensively, buy conventional charts ahead, and stick to the better-marked channels.



*Crossing the Bay of Riga*

We found ourselves hemmed in by weather at the ferry port of Virtsu, a place with few attractions and a really awful harbour for yachts. On one day we beat up the rock-bound NW channel for 7 hours, only to turn back after Imothes engine packed up (the incessant spray having penetrated the fuel supply).

Eventually the weather abated a little, and we set off non-stop for Tallinn. The long day allowed us to clear the islands and get some offing in the Gulf of Finland before darkness fell (even then the loom of the arctic circle can be seen in the North. Dawn saw us rounding the last headland and a few hours later we entered the 1980 Russian Olympic harbour at Pirita - Philomelle's home for the winter.

Winter at N 59°30' away from the warm Atlantic presents different challenges. Philomelle could expect temperatures of -20°, long periods of rain and snow, and ice-locked harbours. Fortunately reports proved correct, and at the Kalev Yacht Club we found people who know about boats. They have workshops on site, where a fleet of Dragons are beautifully maintained. There is also a rigger and a sail maker in the yard, and a chandlery nearby.

Communication was difficult at first, though having made contact with the club Director, Olev Roosma, we were able to arrange for Philomelle to be lifted out, have the mast lowered, and the boat covered. Also we arranged quotes sails, and for some extensive work on the decks. The cost of lying up would prove a fraction of the cost in England, and watching their work on other boats we gained confidence in the yard.

Meanwhile the boat had to be cleaned and prepared. Any clothes and bedding had to be laundered, dried and double-wrapped. Books and charts were sent home with us, some carried by Imothes. No foods that might freeze could be left. Water tanks were emptied, and 50% antifreeze filled the engine cooling circuits, heads and sink drain. Engine oil was changed and new filters fitted. Sails dried and packed, boom fastened on deck, and the upper hull primed and painted wherever it showed scratches or wear. I also removed head linings and wiring from under the decks, and took measurements for a new switch console to be made up at home.

We spent about 6 days at Pirita, seeing Tallinn and laying up the boat, before flying home (Estonia Airlines £140 return). We miss Philomelle in the winter, when she would have remained afloat on the Crouch, but we still get to sail with friends in the RSA occasionally, and I have Pudmuddle to get afloat in the New Year. Next spring, Philomelle will be launched; we hope to get a few days sailing before the ice has all gone. Then in July we set off for Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Home.

**To: roach@yahogroups.co.uk**

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From: John  
Subject: Thanks to RSA

Hi, Had a nice letter from RNLI thanking us for the £158.25 we raised for their cause at laying up supper. Well done all.  
Cheers John L

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### **To Maldon with the OGA**

*John Langrick*

Alan Holland joined me in SWANTI as we set off in a light wind blowing from the South East as we motored through the Narrow Cuts from Paglesham to meet HAYNOR at the other side of the Havengore.

The bridge has been a bit unpredictable over summer as it has been known to occasionally be out of action. This usually happens when approaching from the sea especially in bad weather when you most need the shelter.

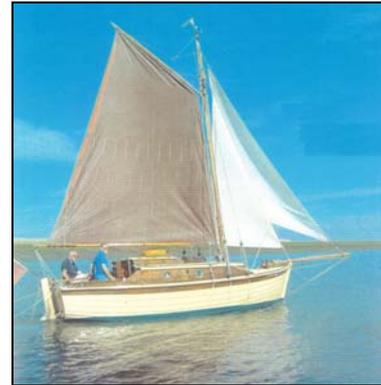
Alan and I made coffee as we waited for HAYNOR to arrive from Southend – wards and we both motored back through the ‘gore and into the Roach.

Our plan was to spend the evening at Brightlingsea, the rest of the Old Gaffers boats would be jostling for space at Mersea, so we thought we could find a more quiet spot where we would join friend Rodney, in HALLOWE’EN and Nigel in FRANCHESCA. Nigel also has a beautiful Shuttlewood 16” clinker sailing dinghy ‘MEMORY’. During the trip we met the owner of Memory’s sister ship HOPE (apparently there were two others, FAITH and CHARITY – what happened to them?).



*HOPE*

We hoisted sails in the Roach and had to motor sail down the Crouch as the wind faded. Still time for a brew again.



*Three ‘old gaffers’ although to be fair, SWANTI is only 33 years old!*

We were able to stop charging the batteries as we turned down the Ray Sand Channel and had a gentle sail towards Brightlingsea. We had a slight ‘chop’ on the water as we approached the Bench Head. This is a point where the ebb from the Ray Sand Channel meets the Blackwater and the Colne.



*Alan Saker in HAYNOR, in the Ray Sand Channel.*

Within a short while we were navigating up the small channel that leads to the pontoon moorings at Brightlingsea where we rafted up against FRANCHESCA and HALLOWEEN. HAYNOR tied up on the other side of the pontoon and we prepared to go ashore to the Colne Yacht Club for dinner.

The following morning was one of those many idyllic days we have had this year. I made an interesting manoeuvre to turn SWANTI around in no water by walking the bowsprit along the side of FRANCHESCA so that the flood tide swung my stern around. This would have worked fine other than when I let loose the bowsprit, no-one was hanging on the stern and SWANTI almost sailed off on her own.

We managed to leap on board without hitting anyone. In retrospect, any on-looker would have admired our seamanship. But we knew better and motored slowly out into the Colne.

With sails set again, we took various short-cuts across Mersea flats according to draft and raced HALLOWEEN, FRANCHESCA and HAYNOR up the Blackwater, in pursuit of the rest of the Old Gaffers who had set off racing a half hour earlier.



*Smack in the OGA race*

Being a Dauntless, we kept well in over the Mersea Flats, turning up mud in our wake as we made a good four knots over the tide. We met up with the rest of the OGA fleet off Osea Island, but never being one for racing, stayed towards the rear and drank a beer while we watched the spectacle of the whole fleet tacking up past Heybridge Basin.

Here we were met by Dauntless Assn member Richard Bessey in WINKS, a very pretty 12' lugsail clinker dinghy.

We lowered sails as we approached Maldon to prepare for shuffling around for a berth. Maldon dries out completely at low water and visitors have to vie for space with Thames barges, fishing smacks and bawlies.

HALLOWEEN was there before us and had managed to moor with her bows directly onto the beer garden of the Queens Head pub on the Hythe, tying up against John Wainwright's DEVA. We squeezed next to HALLOWEEN and HAYNOR next to SWANTI, with the bowsprit hanging over the beer garden wall..Could we have got closer? FRANCHESCA decided that her 4' draft would have made her lay over in the mud so returned to moor at Osea Island where there is always deep water.

We had a great time meeting old friends and drinking almost too much. Late in the evening we rested, fully dressed as we needed to leave at 2:00am. I really could not sleep much and woke at 1:00 to make coffee and prepare for the return. We slipped moorings and I followed the stern light of HALLOWE'EN in the early morning darkness. Alan Saker in HAYNOR stayed behind as he was meeting crew there on the Sunday for an extended weekend. At about 3:30am, we laid anchor off Osea Island for a sleep and to wait for the morning light.

We were wakened about 8:30 with the sun streaming into the cabin. These beautiful days are beginning to be predictable. A good breakfast and we were off on the last of the ebb towards Mersea. I wanted Alan H to meet John Gladwell who was restoring Dauntless AMANTE in the saltings near the house boats that Mersea quarters are so well known for.



*Ron Pipe's Dutchman*



*HALLOWEEN, with SWANTI and HAYNOR alongside, WINKS astern.*



*AMANTE being restored on Mersea Saltings*

We picked up a mooring in the Besom, and in brilliant sunshine rowed ashore to the stone just off the Quarters. A short walk over the saltings brought us to AMANTE. She was still without any spars, but the Dauntless Assn. have managed to locate rig for her and they should be shipped to John by now. It was good to meet John and see progress to date.

Alan and I then continued on to the Victory (pub) for 'refreshment', and then back to SWANTI to prepare for our trip back down the Ray Sand Channel. With the wind still very light and from the East, we had to use the engine again, but this we cut as we shaped more to the West down the channel. We had the most perfect winds to blow us down the Crouch and Roach and back to the moorings at Paglesham.

As a footnote, the winds must have been quite strong as I did not realise I had torn the luff of my jib badly. I only discovered this when I was racing the following weekend and had to immediately retire. I am afraid it is new sails for me this Winter..

## A Quick Trip to France

**By John Apps – ‘Glavya’**

Some of you may have heard that my family and I made an aborted trip to France when we found that between Essex and France there was Kent and ran aground at the top of the high tide on the Horse [why does every waterway seem to have a shallow bank called ‘The Horse’?] in the Swale. I can tell you I was not very popular with either my wife or my son or his girlfriend as we waited out 12 hours between highs at an angle of 25 degrees. Of course as skipper and having the responsibility of getting us off at 0400 the next morning I took the only comfortable bunk.

Anyway it had been my intention to prove that a trip from Paglesham to Boulogne and back was easily achievable in a three-day weekend and still allow time for shopping, sightseeing and a decent French dinner.

For the August Bank Holiday weekend I set off by myself at Friday lunchtime [I had cribbed a little bit of time off work]. I had a Westerly blowing F3 gusting F4, which was ideal for my purpose and about 2+ hours of ebb tide left.

Probably the hardest part of the trip in both directions is crossing the Thames Estuary, particularly with the Edinburgh Channel buoys removed. But I’ve worked out a system that works brilliantly for me except for low Springs. Out to the Whittaker Buoy and continue for 2 nm. Then head straight for the Sunk Tower. Leave the Sunk Tower to Starboard [very important] going South and Port [just as important] going North. At the Sunk Tower head directly for the Tongue Spitway, and this will take you over 70 % of the Edinburgh Channel with just some shallow bits at either end. After that the whole trip can be accomplished in deep water.

I went into Ramsgate on the Friday night at about 2200 hours. Had dinner on board and hit the bunk. Back up next morning at 0600, breakfast and leaving at 0700 with a stream of other boats. They all seemed to continue straight on to Ostend. I was the only one that turned right down to South Foreland.

I had misjudged the tide after South Foreland and crept past Dover at 2 knots [over the ground] on a foul tide and wind on the nose. Being a holiday weekend there was an unbroken line of ferries [almost] going into and out of Dover, but I stayed the requisite mile off the harbour and they all managed to avoid me. I noticed boats closer in shore tended to get hooted at and forced to turn off.

I find the most comfortable place for me to cross the TSS is a line roughly between Folkestone and Cape de Gris. Once again I find the ships are very good and take early avoiding action allowing me to steer a straight course. I went out with engine on as the wind had dropped to a F2 and on a broad reach that would be slow progress without the engine. As I turned South after the buoy marking the French side of the SW TSS I had the wind just off the nose and had a fast Starboard tack all the way into the Boulogne outer harbour, arriving at Port Plaisance at 1600 our time or 1700 European Summer Time. Didn’t bother looking very hard for a supermarket, after a quick shower I went out and identified a likely fish restaurant before puffing my way up to the old town inside the castle walls for a good look around. There is nothing more enjoyable for me than

strolling around a French medieval town on a summer’s day with the sun glinting through the broad leafed trees.

As expected the meal although not the restaurant of my first choice was exquisite – moules marinere followed by a rare steak with mustard sauce.

Next morning away by 0700 our time. Wind on the nose going up to Cape de Gris, blowing F4 and the tide with me so made good time. A very fast run across the TSS averaging 6 knots and no need for the engine this time. A beat up past Dover but the tide still with me and much easier to thread between the ferries. Expected a reach as I rounded South Foreland but the wind stayed on my nose so I continued the beat up to Ramsgate still with the tide. The tide change slightly SW of Dover had worked against me on the way down, but I caught it perfectly on the way back. The first problem I had with tide on the way back was after Ramsgate where it was against me except for a small patch between the Whittaker Buoy and the Ridge Buoy.

Something is seriously wrong with Thames Coastguard weather forecasting, all the way up the Thames Estuary they were forecasting 3-4 NE. But if it wasn’t blowing F5 I would be most surprised – the top of the waves were definitely breaking and doing so consistently. Even at one stage they mentioned looking out at the wind at Walton and it was blowing F3-4. Except for the Northerly turn at the Sunk Tower to clear the Barrow the wind allowed me to sail a close reach which had me moving across the ground at just on 5 knots against the tide. Unfortunately with the wind on the nose after the Sunk Tower and slamming into a steep sea I was only able to achieve 2-3 knots over the ground.

On a pitch black night, once you pass the Inner Crouch Buoy it is hard to navigate the Crouch/Roach. I crept past the Branklets Buoy at within 50 metres according to my GPS but couldn’t see it. There were boats in Quay Reach and I’m glad they all had anchor lights out as otherwise I would never have seen them. I normally curse the Paglesham Boatyard lights as they make the channel buoys at the start of Paglesham Reach hard to see. But by keeping the moored boats between the light and me I didn’t hit anything and even managed to find my dinghy on her Buoy.

Back on my Buoy at Paglesham at 0200 Monday morning, giving me a return trip of 19 hours. Not bad I thought and well worth the effort. Next time I would do a single run down and sail through Friday night and split the trip back at Ramsgate. But an enjoyable trip with a bit of wind. I’d be really interested in doing it as a club excursion next year on a Bank Holiday weekend.



*Glavya in familiar pose*

## Roach Sailing Association: 2004 Sailing Programme

*All boats start races at 10:00, except where other times are given below, or on the day. Tide times are at Burnham-on-Crouch*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Tide (BST)</i>
Sunday 29th February	RSA stand at Essex Boat Jumble	
Sunday March 14 <sup>th</sup>	AGM (Mission Hall, Paglesham) 19:00 for 19:30	
Saturday 3rd April	Fitting Out Supper Plough & Sail 19:00 for 19:30	
Weekend May 1-3	OGA rally - Brandy Hole & Foulness	
Sunday May 9 <sup>th</sup>	Paglesham Pot	HW 16:35
Sunday May 23rd	Frank Shuttlewood Cup	HW 15:42
Weekend May 29-31	Thames weekend cruise	HW (Sat) 21:02
Sunday June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Blue Shoal Trophy (Jack H Coote)	HW 15:42
June 18-26	East Coast Cruise <i>OGA East Coast Classics</i>	
Sunday June 27th	Whitaker Cup	LW 14:10
Saturday July 3rd	Paglesham Yacht Race (open boats) 13:00 start	HW 13:55
Sunday July 4th	Gracilda Cup (ladies race)	HW 14:46
Saturday August 7 <sup>th</sup>	Dauntless Association Benfleet rally	
Saturday August 21 <sup>st</sup> - 22nd	Cruise to Fambridge	HW (Sat) 16:45
Sunday August 22nd	Don McDowell Cruiser Trophy (Fambridge Race to Branklet Spit).	LW 13:22
Saturday September 4th	Dauntless Association Paglesham rally	
Sunday September 5th	RNLI Race	HW 17:20
Weekend September 18- 19th	<i>Maldon Regatta &amp; OGA rally</i>	HW (Sat) 15:33
Sunday September 26th	Lifeboat Cup (open boats)	HW 11:40
Sunday October 3rd	Roach Plate	HW 16:06
Saturday 9th October	Laying Up Supper at Royal Burnham Yacht Club	