



Roach Sailing Association February 2006 Newsletter

www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa

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Chairman's Report

Rodney Choppin

As we begin the new season may I on behalf of your Committee wish you a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

I understand from sources at the boatyard that now the bulk of their "Tupperware" has gone to Wallasea Island, they intend to return Paglesham Boatyard back to traditional ways and cultivate the Sailing Boat scene again. I await in anticipation and hope!

Virtually the whole RSA fleet has now found Winter berthing at Carters, Stambridge; it is a first time for Hallowe'en after 55 years to be away from Paglesham, and I think she likes it there. The fitting out season should be interesting and whether or not much work is achieved depends on the numerous tea-breaks. Will Jonathan be cooking a roast on Sunday for us?

The AGM is on 5th March at the Ferry Boat Inn, Wallasea. This is a golden opportunity for you to voice your opinion on any matters associated with the RSA. On 19th March we are holding another film show – Peter Edwards has kindly offered to project and show some of the RSA "starlets" in action. Fitting out Super is on 1st April.

Darwin's Beagle has caused much interest locally, and numerous members have asked "How is it progressing".

The Beagle Team is continuing its research, so my lips are sealed on that issue. However in delving through many old records, anything "Paglesham" is highlighted and recorded. An interesting article came to light the other day which emphasizes the enormity of the oyster industry at Paglesham, and through it the Paglesham Regatta. From an article in the Illustrated London News, July 1858 we learn: "... The excellent arrangements of all concerned in the management made it one of the most satisfactory and agreeable occasions we ever remember being present at. The day was beautifully fine, with a good breeze from the North-West. In the centre of the river, gaily dressed, lay the yawl 'Gnome', owned by Mr Arcdeckne, Commodore of the Royal London Yacht Club, who had kindly made his vessel flagship for the day, and astern of her was Mr Cooper's 'Pearl, similarly decorated. The shores were lined with tents, marquees and refreshment booths; an unusual concourse of spectators from neighbouring villages lined the banks, while the river was enlivened by the presence of several yachts under sail. At eleven o'clock the Commodore arrived on board his yacht and immediately the preparatory gun was fired (10 minute gun). Fifteen vessels lay at their moorings, divided into three classes." Among the names of owners were

Brownings of Cupola House, Allen of Paglesham House and Wisemans from the Chase and several houses in the village. All vessels were working craft in oyster dredging. After the races the prizes were presented and boat races and duck hunting completed the day's sports. "...Gyes band played well-selected music during the day, and the amusements terminated with a Ball in the evening, which was well attended by the local gentry."

The regatta must have been a marvellous sight, and the people organizing it clearly had a lot of clout, or 'pulling power'. I wonder of Lloyds register includes any of the vessels mentioned? Interesting stuff! Of the Beagle, she would have had a grand view as in 1858 she had been only 8 years in the mud berth.



Another article in 1883 describes how "this little village put on an unusually gay appearance; the numerous boats on the river were dressed from fore to peak with flags of the brightest hues and of every conceivable shape and colour, in honour of the wedding of Mr John Roger, jun, of Burnham. The following day a beautiful little craft of 12 tons, built by Mr William Hall of Water Rat Hall for Mr Z Pettit was successfully launched. It was christened 'Kate' by Mr Pettit's small daughter." A little boat of 12 tons – it shows the size of craft on the river in those days.

Well, I've mixed business with a little history! May we all enjoy a good Summer!



*Kate - Hall, Paglesham 1883
Still sailing today.*

RSA 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
- Simon Joel – Treasurer & Membership Secretary
- John Langrick – Newsletter Editor
- Ivor Jones
- Ken Wickham

RSA subs

Subscriptions for 2006 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 £25 (see Harbour News above). Please send your subs and river duties to our treasurer Simon Joel, 28 Chapman Walk, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2XA 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 Creeksea Ferry Inn, Wallasea on Sunday 5th March, with a start at 7:30.

Harbour & Fairways News

Richard Bessey

Harbour dues have now been set at a sliding scale from £15 to £30 depending on length. The CHA promise to be tough on non-payers and any craft on the river without a plaque could be due a £100 fee. See www.crouchharbour.org for full details of fees and exemptions. Boat owners can buy a plaque direct from the CHA or through the RSA as before – easiest way is to come along to the AGM!

Houseboats and casually moored boats on the saltings have become an issue in Paglesham and the CHA have posted notices on all unauthorised vessels. It will be interesting to see how this is followed up, but I suggest that owners take this seriously.

RSA racing 2005

Richard Bessey

The 2005 RSA racing season saw record numbers, with 12 open boats and 17 cruisers taking part

The cruising series started in May with the **Paglesham Pot**, and winds from everywhere and nowhere, but eight boats started and eight finished. They took 2 hours to get to Foulness, and then the Easterly breeze gradually picked up. The leading boats had to contend with a ship, complete with mother-hen escort "Watchful". It was Holliwell to Port, and a reach home. Philomelle was overtaken by several boats, but just regained the lead from Mistress in the final reach. Gemini won the Paglesham Pot, with Destaye 2nd and Mistress 3rd.

It was a very blowy Southerly for the **Shuttlewood Cup**, but still 7 boats were there, well reefed for the start. The course was Holliwell to Port, and we had a sleigh-ride down to the Crouch. Stravaig lost time replacing a torn foresail, but managed to overhaul all but two. The way back was harder work, but mostly long tacks. Philomelle retired after motoring off the putty, though Ulabella had already taken the lead on Whitehouse corner. Swanti has 1st place, with Ulabella 2nd and Surah 3rd.

It was a scorcher for the **Blue Shoal** race, but fortunately there was some breeze from the East as seven boats set off to the Crouch in search of the "Winkle Bay" buoy. They searched in vain, and instead rounded the 8 knot buoy below Burnham, then back to Redward before a finish off the Foulness Quay. Brian Browne's new boat "Puma of Paglesham" was first home, with Haze close behind. On handicap Wisper had 1st place, Marshmallow 2nd, Puma 3rd.

The signal for the **Whitaker Cup** went at 09:00 at Foulness Quay, and seven boats set off for the long race, beating into a NE 3-4, objective the Ron Pipe Buoy. Only one was to finish. Swanti's jib halyard came away just after the start. Philomelle was shaking a reef out of the main, turned too slow, and spent some hours on the putty. Gemini and Marshmallow passed the Outer Crouch, but the tide had turned and they didn't get much further.

The course was shortened to S Buxey. Ulabella was well ahead when she grounded on the Maplin; finding this uncomfortable she motored off. Stravaig was left to battle on alone, finally completing the course after 6 hours 18 minutes.

The day of the **Paglesham Yacht Race** started with rain, but cheered towards midday, the clouds cleared and there was a light northerly breeze. The course was around Potton island, with three contenders - Shuki, Makedo, and Winks. They started from Paglesham Hard, and tacked up over the ebb towards the Middleway...and tacked....and tacked. Makedo made it, but Winks gave up the struggle, then Shuki. They went round the other way to meet Ken - who completed the course and wins the cup.

Next day there were 5 contenders for the **Gracilda Cup**, including Arabel (which arrived the day before from Florida). They set off from Paglesham on the early flood, with a light NE breeze. Gemini decided to fly a cruising chute (which proved a mistake, as under RSA rules they had to wear it throughout the course!). Slowly and acrimoniously, they tacked around the corner into Quay Reach. The wind faltered, and then to general relief, a sea-breeze picked up and they headed for the mark (Ulabella attempting to slay a dragon on the way round). After that it was plain sailing, and they were not many minutes apart at the finish. Wisper has first place, with Arabel 2nd and Philomelle 3rd.

The morning after the festivities at Fambridge, nine boats set off down the Crouch – first to the Branklet wins the **Don McDowell Trophy** – and buys the first round at the George & Dragon. They soon spread out, but the leaders were pretty close, with arable hotly pursued by Glayva and Surah at the end.

After the Summer cruising break, the competition was heating up, with more than half the fleet in with a chance of winning the series. 11 boats turned out for the **RNLI race**. Ulabella came 3rd, Mistress 2nd, and Stortebecker won the cup.

12 open boats started and finished the **Lifeboat Cup**, the course taking them to the first Rochford buoys and back. We had gaffers and luggers, mirrors and minis, hybrids and classics. The fastest boats were home after an hour and a half, the last in nearly 3 hours. On corrected time, Merganser was in 3rd place, Lizzie 2nd, and Memory 1st.

There was another fine show of sail for the **Roach Plate**. The stiff breeze came Northerly during the race and headed the fleet in Quay Reach, against the flood. Three boats retired here after a long struggle, and Stortebecker suffered a torn main. The rest made it round Holliwell and Horse Shoal, Glayva finishing not far behind Limbo Daze in an hour and a half. On corrected time, Ulabella had 3rd place, Stravaig 2nd, and Glayva takes the Roach Plate.

There are two important factors in the series. Winning races helps, or at least getting in the top three, but equally important is being in every race if possible. Gemini didn't miss a race this year, Swanti and Ulabella only missed one. With Stravaig, these have the top four places.

But Stravaig squeezed ahead at the end and wins the **Len Choppin Trophy**.

RSA members also achieved successes in other races in 2005. Ulabella won her class in the ACE race, and Surah won the Brandy Hole pursuit race in December. It's great to have members who are active in other local clubs!

RSA Racing in 2006

Handicaps are carried over from last year without further adjustment. If any member wishes to request a change in handicap, please contact the racing officer.

Open boat racing has been popular so we have another race in the calendar – with a difference! The **Mudcatchers Cup** will involve more than just sailing – some older members may recall races that started by downing a pint on the sea-wall... We hope to time this race with a village boating event in July.

Yard Update

We have had two main projects in 2005. The repairs to the 'Sheds' and also starting work on restoring Dally (more later).

We had a work party in the summer to repair the two sheds. A big thanks to:

- Baa Quilliam – for donation of cladding (Ex Barn Row)
- Steve Coombs – new timber for frames
- Ken Wickham – roofing for the mushroom shed.



Richard gets to grips with the roof on the mushroom shed.



John, Peter and Ivor patching up the big shed



Simon, Ivor and Peter take a well earned break

We also had labour from the Hostellers, Pete Edwards, Richard Bessey, Ivor Williams, Charles Brind, Tony Hudson, Jon Walmsley, Simon Joel, Rodney Choppin, Stuart Butler and John Langrick. Plus many more supporters. A big thanks and well done to all.



The 'empty' yard

A recent visit to the yard reveals it is now virtually empty. Nearly all the boats in the yard have moved to Wallasea. The new managers are Steve and Danny, with Danny permanently at the yard. I suggest you should introduce yourself to him as soon as possible as he will naturally challenge visitors he does not recognise.

I spoke with Danny this week who tells me that they want to return the yard to be more of a traditional boatyard and am sure we all wish him well with this. Danny can be contacted on 07903 550226.

A day out on the water

Shaun Heatherington

It all started when my Nan turned 80 in the summer and expressed a desire to 'come sailing' for the day. A date was set for the beginning of September and it was agreed that both my Mum & my Nan would have a day on the water.

I was concerned at the idea of the dinghy transfer to the moorings at Paglesham so I arranged for my Mum to drop me off at the yard, and then following my directions, drive round to Wallasea where they could both step on board Destaye with minimum fuss.

Once I was safely clear of the pontoon, Mum & Nan set off for Wallasea, leaving me to motor round. We had been very fortunate with the weather as it was a warm sunny day with only a light wind. High water was just before 3.30 in the afternoon so having safely got my crew on board by soon after 11, we set off up the Crouch. With light winds we were gently motor sailing with the flood and soon passed Cliff Reach, Fambridge and on to Brandy Hole. Having only previously ventured as far up the river as Brandy Hole, I was keen to see what lay further up. With Destaye drawing less than 3 feet, there was plenty of water on a spring tide to carry on somewhat further. We passed the 4 Yatch clubs and the police launch at Woodham Ferrers, and on to a sharp bend in the river. We were still somewhat ahead of the top of the tide so as decided to drop anchor and have

lunch. We all sat in cockpit enjoying a pleasant lunch washed down with a glass of wine enjoying the peace and quiet.

Soon after the lunch things were cleared away we set off heading yet further up the river. By this time the river had narrowed and the depth of water in places was very shallow. We finally rounded the last bend when the old mill came in view. I was concerned at our ability to turn round in such a narrow space

but as we reached the road bridge the river was just wide enough for us to do so. After a few tight manoeuvres we managed to tie up on the quayside on the north bank. The tide was still over an hour from High water at Burnham, so we decided that a visit to The Barge Inn would still leaving enough water to make it safely back to the deeper waters by Woodham Ferrers before the tide turned.

The only problem was that the cabin roof was about 3 feet below the height of the Quayside. My Mum stepped up to on to the quay and I stayed on deck to help my Nan from the boat. This process was watched with great interest by two men fishing from one of the barges tied up near by. My Nan resorted to crawling from the boat on to the Quayside and while still down on all fours, one of the fisherman shouted out 'How many has she had?'. This caused my Nan to laugh, and with my mum & I also laughing, my Nan was unable to get up as she was laughing so much. Finally with composure restored, she got to her feet and headed for the pub.



After a short stop we were soon safely back on board, this time the process somewhat smoother as the boat height had risen a bit. We motored as far as Woodham Ferrers and with the tide beginning to ebb, and a gentle wind blowing, we put all the sails up and cut the engine for a very pleasant sail all the way back to Wallasea. The crew having been safely dropped off, I headed back to Paglesham to be meet up with them.

On the return journey in the car, my Nan was talking about the next trip and where we could go next time, so I guess a good time was had by all.

So you think you are ready for a West to East Atlantic Crossing?

John Apps

Do you need some help deciding to do the Crossing?

This is a multiple choice questionnaire. Answer each question honestly. To save you having to go through the whole questionnaire and then find from the results that you are not ready to do the crossing. We have tried to make it easy to self eliminate after each question.

Q1. Which would you prefer to do?

A. Spend 8 weeks visiting exotic places like, Cuba, Bahamas, Bermuda, The Azores and Falmouth, with some sailing in between.

B. Spend 8 weeks moored at Paglesham, getting up every 4 hours to sit in the cockpit for 2 hours, inviting 'Hard Labour' and Gareth to do 'doughnuts' around you at every possible opportunity. Every two weeks you would need to go ashore to go to the toilet, have a shower and buy some food from Tesco's.

[If you answered A. Stop now you are not ready for a West to East Atlantic Crossing. If you answered B. go on to Q2].

Q2. Do you suffer from seasickness?

A. I sometimes feel queasy in the bath.

B. I am seasick as soon as we leave the Crouch.

C. I once felt queasy when cleaning the heads in a F7 in the North Sea.

D. I can sit with my head in a bucket of body fluids/solids for 3 days in a true gale and still eat my lunch and enjoy it.

[If you answered A. B. or C. STOP now you are not ready for a West to East Atlantic Crossing. If you answered D. go on to Q3].

Q3. Which of the following best describes your culinary preferences?

A. I like fresh pasta cooked al dente, with a light sauce and just a touch of parmesan. I will only eat off bone china, using silver cutlery. A dry white, preferably a chablis, should accompany the meal served in a long stem glass.

B. Greasy Irish Stew served cold is best. I do prefer it if the peas are on the cabin floor, the carrots in the sink, the meat in the cockpit and lapping congealed gravy out of the bilges is especially delectable. This is best accompanied by several gallons of salt water in the face.

C. I'm a vegetarian.

[If you answered A. or C. STOP now you are not ready for a West to East Atlantic Crossing. If you answered B. go on to Q4].

Q4. What is your favourite odour?

A. Socks that have been worn wet for 3 weeks in shoes made of man made materials.

B. Essex mud.

C. A freshly cleaned dairy.

D. Chanel No.5.

[If you answered B. C. or D. Stop now you are not ready for a West to East Atlantic Crossing. If you answered A. go on to Q5].

- Q5. When in your berth, how do you like your sheets?
- A. Freshly laundered with a light touch of starch and a faint lemony smell.
 - B. I prefer a sleeping bag.
 - C. Wet with a strong odour of mildew.
 - D. Taut. Even a lazy jib sheet should have two turns around the winch and be cleated off.

[If you answered A. or B. Stop now you are not ready for a West to East Atlantic Crossing. If you answered C. you may want to rethink your need for a mattress much less sheets but may proceed to Q6. If you answered D. got to Q7.]

- Q6. As you lie in your berth nodding off to sleep, which of the following do you prefer?
- A. A Brahms lullaby.
 - B. A regular drip of salt water on the face from the closed hatch above you [during the Korean War a similar torture was used on POWs by the Chinese].
 - C. An intermittent drip of salt water on the face from the closed hatch above you [if the Chinese had known about this one, Kim Il-sung would have had the South as well].
 - D. A proper splash in the face every time a wave come over.
 - E. That frightening jar as you drop down the wave as though you have hit something.

[If you answered A., Brahms I can't see how you got this far - just go away and stop bothering us this is serious. Those who answered B. C. D. E. can proceed to Q7].

- Q7. When visiting Bermuda, most yachts spend some time in St Georges. Where do you buy icecream in that town?
- A. I don't know.
 - B. That's funny we couldn't find any either.

[If you failed to put either A. or B. as an answer to this question you are not ready for a West to East Atlantic Crossing. Either answer is acceptable and you may proceed to Q8].

- Q8. Getting to Woodbridge in Suffolk in a fin keel yacht requires good planning to cross the Deben bar at the right time and then make the tide mill marina at the top of the tide. Where do you buy fish and chips in Woodbridge, Suffolk?
- A. I don't know.
 - B. That's funny we couldn't find any either.

[If you failed to answer A. or B. to this question you are not ready for a East Coast cruise much less an Atlantic Crossing in either direction. Either answer is acceptable and you may proceed to Q9].

- Q9. While undertaking a West to East Atlantic Crossing you see a yacht attempting to beat to windward. It looks like a white double decker bus, it sounds like a double

decker bus and it points like a double decker bus. Which of the following best describes it?

- A. A duck.
- B. A double decker bus.
- C. A Southerly 115.

[If you answered A. you should be made aware that Groucho Marx is not a valid role model. If you answered B. you are eligible to walk the streets of an English town but not sail the Atlantic. If you answered C. and have got this far you have won the mid Atlantic boat recognition trophy. Please attend in the vessel of your choice at N38°52.4' W049°53.9' on the 23 May 2006 to receive your prize.]

Scilly to Alderney

Richard Bessey

Philomelle arrived in the Scillies in late July 2005, Justine & Richard aboard. We have a great affinity for island places, and this little archipelago is well worth a visit. Cycling round St Marys, we visited neolithic tombs, which looked over the sea to distant Lands End – think of the boatmen of those times and the perils they faced! Probably islands were once windswept and grew little but thin turf, but generations have grown tall windbreaks and now the place is justly famous for its gardens and prolific flowers. It is wonderful to see a wild hillside with stray Agapanthus clumps showing a blaze of colour.

We anchored off Tresco and walked all round the island (including a shopping expedition at “Tresco Stores”. We had another day on St Martins, walking the Atlantic side, and then back to Hugh Town, where the choice of evening entertainment rivalled that of, well, Paglesham anyway – there being two alternative talks in rival church halls! The people here are courteous and friendly without exception, and even the smart set in the Castle Hotel bar didn't bat an eyelid when we appeared in our scruffy sailing gear!

When the forecast gave a SW7, we left the rather exposed harbour for an anchorage off St Agnes (several others had the same idea) and after a last cream tea retired for the night. It was a noisy night but we were well protected, and in the morning the wind had moderated. We were sorry to leave the Scillies so soon, but had to get back to Falmouth as our replacement autohelm had arrived there. We set off and made Falmouth just after dark, a pleasant passage during which we had a small group of dolphins jumping alongside. Falmouth was packed out for the regatta, so we anchored in the harbour for the night, but found a berth alongside a lovely Edwardian cutter next day.

Bob, our electronics engineer, arrived to fit the autohelm, then we motored round the Carrick Roads for an hour to swing the gyrocompass get it tuned. It still seemed a bit hazy about direction but we hoped it would ‘learn’. We spent the rest of that day shopping and visiting the library to use their internet machines. Next

day was the Classics race, so we followed round the course before sailing up to the Truro river, anchoring off Turnaware Point and next day had a long walk to St Just and back with stunning views over the estuary. St Just is a lovely remote place with an extraordinary landscaped churchyard; however there are no refreshments to be had and we were parched and hungry by our return to Philomelle!

We prepared to set off for Guernsey and passed out of the harbour in the late afternoon. This was our first test of the autopilot at sea, and it became apparent after a couple of hours that it was not going to 'learn'. Frustrated, we returned to Falmouth – we needed Bob to make sure it wasn't faulty. As it turned out, the fault had more to do with a worn keyway on the steering wheel shaft – another engineer kindly cut us a new one and fitted it. Further tests around the Carrick Roads proved more successful. Still at least we had the chance of another excellent Nepalese curry!

We set off again on our overnight passage, and motored in light winds all the way with few concerns about traffic. We finally approached St Peter Port via the Little Russel channel the following afternoon, and took a pontoon berth on the outer harbour. Next day we explored the town and harbour, and planned to catch a ferry the next day to Herm or Sark. First thing in the morning though, I visited the harbour fish wholesaler and procured a fresh turbot and some kippers. We miscalculated the ferry timings, so in the end set off for Herm in Philomelle. After a nervous passage though turbulent eddies between the rocks, we anchored in a sandy bay for lunch – the lightly baked turbot was a real treat! However we had to leave Herm without going ashore – we were running out of water fast – so we slalomed off towards Sark for the afternoon. Passing the Barclay Bros private island, and an outcrop aptly named "Les Dents", we anchored in the bay between Greater and Little Sark. The two parts of the island, ringed by tall cliffs, are joined by a narrow isthmus with a narrow road perched on the top. We climbed up the winding path and joined the ponies and cyclists. It's a fine, smug thing to stand looking at your boat anchored in the bay below! Later, Justine was not that keen on the descent, but was glad of the opportunity for a swim back on the beach. The wind

was getting up now, so we set off back to St Peter Port as most of the available anchorages were rather exposed.

The Alderney Race is a necessary experience, and we set off forthwith. Careful calculation determined the exact timing and speed to maintain, to take the full tide NE, then catch the turn round Alderney and into the harbour. It will never work we said – but (stand back in amazement) it did! We picked up a buoy and rowed ashore in the rubber dubby (we made this journey several times and it's a long haul!). Alderney has an abandoned air about it, having been a stronghold in successive invasions, but now a peaceful place with prolific bird life. We spent a rainy day walking round, and arrived dripping in a deserted restaurant. The wind was getting up again.

We left Alderney next day, the wind having dropped to F6 and the forecast improving. It was rather choppy in the Race, and a struggle at the helm, but with wind and tide on our side we certainly got along! At nightfall we had the Isle of Wight in sight, and followed the coast Eastward overnight, making Beachy Head not long after dawn. By now there was little wind and Philomelle motored on to Dover where we anchored for the night. On our last day the wind came SE and brought us home in good time, via Fishermans Gat and the Sunk beacon at neap LW.

Dally

Dally is an ex-Admiralty 17' workboat that we are restoring as a club work-launch. We have yet to discover her full history, but she started life as a boom-boat, operating the submarine booms across the Thames estuary. She has had several owners on the Roach, including the Dallimore family, but had been laying derelict on Potton Island for a long time and a group of members 'rescued' her in 2004. She is now in Carter's yard undergoing major surgery!



The hull is about complete and we would like to take the opportunity to thank the following members for hard work and contributions:

Richard Bessey & family, Simon Joel, Nigel and Noreen Bishop, Ken Wickham, Peter Lilley, Rodney Choppin, Mike Dallimore, Peter Edwards, Steve Coombes, Charles Brind, Jon Walmsley, Shaun and Ben Heatherington, Derek Elliston, Alan Holland and 'master shipwright' John Langrick

Dally is now ready to have her engine fitted, floors made up, and the last of the cleaning and painting done. With luck she'll be in the water ready for the start of the season!

Holiday of a lifetime?

John Langrick & family

My family have never been really interested in sailing; it has always been 'daddy's hobby'. I had always hoped as my son and daughter grew older, they would become more interested. In the early days they would come with

me at fitting out time, sit on the boat and eat lunch, or play with the dogs in the yard – but that was about as far as it went. The last time we were all out on the boat at Thorpe Bay to watch the air-show, it lasted about an hour before returning in a rush to the shore with four youngsters being uncontrollably sick. I guess that finished the sailing lark for years. That is until one day at a barbecue.

My Daughter, Joanna's partner Gavin has always had a passion for fishing and will often fish off the beach in front of the hut, or fish with his father in Kent. In the past his dad had a few small boats and would often fish off Chalkwell and Leigh. As usual, my topic of conversation went to sailing and the potential of using SWANTI for a fishing trip. This led on to the fact that weather was always a restraining factor for both Julie and Jo. Somehow this then moved onto fishing in the Med, which quickly moved onto a sailing boat in Greece. I made the promise that it would be more sunbathing than 'sailing' and was delighted they all agreed. That is how it all started.

A search of the Internet found 'Golden Sails', a charter company based at Athens. The boat selection had to be one that was manageable between Gavin and myself and with good accommodation for the four of us. We chose a Bavaria 38 as it had separate accommodation in the forepeak as well as an en-suite. Julie and I could have the stern cabins with our own 'facilities'. The picture of the boat and layout looked great and within a week I had booked the 'CONSTANTIN', early August for eight days.

Jo and Gavin had a 'practice' one Sunday afternoon in SWANTI, sailing down the Roach and up the Crouch to Cliff Reach. There we deployed the anchor and fished, (unsuccessfully) while I prepared lunch. On our return, Gavin was in charge of lifting the anchor and all seemed fine. Hence, fully 'trained' we returned to Pag.

In preparation I bought a Greek Waters Pilot from TCS Marine and ordered the charts for the area. This I scanned into my small portable GPS, which proved invaluable throughout the trip

I arranged flights via Easyjet and found the best prices were to fly out on a Wednesday and back on the Sunday week. This gave us a spare day to visit Athens and another spare day on our return to refresh ourselves after the holiday. Again I booked both hotels via the Internet at excellent rates. Late July saw us at Gatwick catching our flights.

Athens was very hot and after visiting many of the key attractions and having lunch in the old city, we returned to the hotel, which was opposite the marina. That evening we walked along the quay for our first sight of COSTANTIN. Both Julie and Jo were very impressed although apprehensive as to whether Gavin and I could manage such a huge 'ship'. I guessed (reassuringly) that we could, especially after having a practice run in

ARABEL, from Falmouth back to Pag. Surely that was enough practice?

The following morning we took our cases down to the marina and after a few phone calls, located the key and we all made ourselves at home. Maria, our contact at Golden Sails brought down contract documents and I would have to wait for George to show me the 'ropes', while Gavin and the 'girls' went shopping for supplies.



The 'planned' route

Our first mistake was to use the services of a guy who encouraged us to use him to take him to the local supermarket for supplies. He drove them to his local friend's store, where all goods were hugely marked up. He did not account for the fact that both Julie and Jo are the original 'shoppers from hell', insisting that he took them to a supermarket we have seen the previous night where goods were half the price. I am glad I was not there to attend the ensuing row, which had their driver walking off in protest. They must have come to some arrangement as they arrived back with bags full of goodies... and plenty of beer.

In the mean time George had been showing me around CONSTANTIN. How to fill the two water tanks, shore power, starting and maintaining the engine, setting the sails etc.



CONSTANTIN

The next challenge was the contracts. I learned that Greece is well known for paperwork and had to sign seven copies and provide 'papers' for the port authority.

This included details of experience, yachtmaster shore based, first aid, vhf etc. I had taken Photostat copies, but it seems I should have taken the originals. In any case the papers seemed OK and by mid afternoon we were off.

On a blazing hot Friday afternoon, we manoeuvred out of Alimos marina without mishap and left the harbour groins with myself steering the boat a complete 360 degrees. This (I explained to the crew) was to check manoeuvrability, but in fact it was because I was not used to the power of the boat and wheel steering. This should be real fun!

The wind was bowing about F5 from the NE and we were on a course SW across the shipping lanes of the gulf of Athens. I partially unfurled the jib which gave us an easy six knots on the GPS and we made course for our first anchorage which was a small bay to the south of the island of Aegina. This choice was made as I did not fancy entering a harbour for the first time and making the dreaded 'stern too' business. Far better to find a quiet bay and hang on the anchor .. just like in the roach?



Crossing the bay of Athens

As we approached the shipping lanes, the sea became a bit choppy. Not as much as 'wind over tide' in the crouch, but a few waves making the boat skew slightly. The crew were not amused and dived below for life jackets. We had to change course slightly, which meant a jibe of the jib, to avoid a freighter bound SE and the slap of the sail when it set on the other tack brought further cries of dismay and disapproval. With comments such as 'Is there a hotel on the island, we will stay there for all the holiday', 'take us back to the marina, we don't like this', we sailed on, I personally was loving the 'gentle' sail, beer in one hand and the other on the wheel, but suggested that when we got in the lea of the island, things would get smoother. Thank goodness it did.



The islands and coastline are mostly mountains descending directly into the sea. Occasionally there is a small strip of land where mountain meets the sea and there, small villages of white houses studded the shoreline. I had put waypoints of the mouth of our chosen bay into the GPS and could see we would arrive well before nightfall.

Rounding up into a small bay with a couple of other boats swinging at anchor, we dropped the 'hook' in a couple of fathoms and motored astern to dig into the soft sand. We made it in plenty of time. The sea was a wonderful turquoise green as over the stern we all dipped into the warm sea. A quick shower on the stern and we prepared an excellent meal as the sun set on a perfect evening. The early traumas were forgotten as we settled down for the night.



*Julie and Jo on the beach at our first anchorage.
CONSTANTIN is in the centre of the bay.*

In the morning, we swam in the bay and I inflated the dinghy and found that the outboard would only run about two minutes before oiling up. It appears that someone had been using a mix of standard oil with the petrol and given a 'generous' mix, i.e., mostly oil.

Our trip in the morning was simply to round the headland to Perdika, a small harbour to the south of the island. My plan was to arrive in plenty of time in order to practice the stern to manoeuvre and it appeared our luck was in as there was only one boat moored on the concrete jetty, we had plenty of space.

I motored the bow to what I believed to be the correct spot and shouted to Gavin to let the anchor go. He could not hear me too well, so shouted again, in went the anchor and I started to motor in reverse towards the jetty. In the crystal clear water I could see some huge boulders beneath the stern, this would not be the ideal place to land. I asked Gavin to pull the anchor in again with the electric winch and we tried again, this time nearer the moored boat. However, this time the anchor did not hold and in dismay we had to try and again.

By now the owner of the motorboat, a short fat German, was beginning to doubt my seamanship and started to hurl instructions and directions. He then offered to demonstrate how to moor the boat.

Opening up the throttle, he motored off the quay again, forgetting the anchor was deployed. The result was a

tight circle at full throttle (rather similar to the manoeuvre we made leaving the marina. His mistake seemed to make him quite angry and shouting at Gavin and myself continue reverse the boat to the exact same spot I had tried at first, yes the spot with the boulders.

We were all pretty fed up by then and the bars on shore beckoning, so we stayed, with the stern about two meters from the quay. We lowered the boarding ramp, a folding device stored on the transom. I learned since then it is called a 'passarelle', and the German demonstrated how to make it 'secure'. Making a hurried departure ashore, he then proceeded to almost fall overboard as he had not made it as secure as he first thought! This seemed to compound his anger and he stormed back to his boat. The ramp was still short of the jetty and hence we inflated the dinghy and tide this astern. This gave far safer passage ashore



Dad! Couldn't you have moored closer?

The village was simply beautiful; restaurants surrounding the harbour above a small balcony. Before the end of the afternoon, the harbour filled with other yachts. We went ashore and walked a couple of hundred yards to a small beach where we swam and sun-bathed. A small shower on the beach prepared us for the evening and after changing climbed a few steps to a restaurant overlooking the harbour for cold beer.

In the evening we went back to the same parade of restaurants for an excellent meal overlooking the harbour and CONSTANTIN awaiting our further 'adventures'.

The following day we were to travel southwest to Ephidavros, again to anchor off the harbour in a small bay. It was then we discovered another mistake. The 'Fridge' only really functioned with the engine running and soon flattened the battery. It was pretty useless in any case and all the perishable food we had purchased was now starting to go 'off'. When we arrived after about four hours, mostly under motor, the bay again was idyllic. The small village was over to the corner, but we stayed at anchor.

I rowed ashore to find a good restaurant for the evening and also to buy some fuel to try and even out the 'mix.' I was directed to a filling station about 2K out of town, but enjoyed the walk. In the mean time Gavin walked along the headland to try fishing, only to catch 'dinosaurs', small hideous looking moray eels. That evening the

outboard failed as we tried to get ashore, but the rowing was good for the appetite.

The following day, the batteries were too flat to power the anchor winch and also we had totally run out of water, much to the dismay of the ladies. Running the engine gave us more power to finally stow the anchor and we made a short motor sail (mostly motor) of about two hours to Vahti, a most beautiful village on the mainland. This was a small square harbour surrounded on all sides by low buildings. We made a perfect 'stern to' manoeuvre right outside the taverna. A couple of steps and I could sit down for a beer. Better still there was both water and electricity on the quay.



Could I be close enough to the bar?

We found this a great village to explore, and a short walk took us to a small rocky cove where we swam and bathed in a rock-pool. That evening a small flotilla of boats came in, I have to say that our mooring was far better than some of theirs. They were mostly English and smaller boats, about 30' on average. That evening we all ate at the same taverna, and staggered the couple of steps back to CONSTANTIN late that night.



Jo 'navigates' the passarelle

The following day we planned to sail to our furthest planned port, a place named Port Kheli, about 40 miles to the South. This would be a full six hours sail, but from there we could make our way back to Athens in short hops. We set off early with no wind at all and started our journey round a peninsular to sail south.



Another 'restoration project' at Vhati

The biminy kept most of the sun's rays from the skipper's head, while the rest of the crew basked in the sun. Gavin trailed a line from the stern of the boat, but never had a bite throughout the whole trip. We eventually came to the conclusion that fish in the Aegean were vegetarian.



Typical sailing.

The sea was a beautiful deep blue, spoilt in many places by plastic bottles and carrier bags floating in the water. Occasionally we were 'buzzed' by hydrofoils and fast ferries as we sailed between beautiful mountainous islands dropping steeply into the sea. The echo sounder was of little use here, as it simply could not see the bottom. Towards evening we rounded into a very small opening which revealed a huge calm bay with hotels all around. We were in Porto Kheli. We lay the anchor in a couple of fathoms and settled in for the evening. We cooked on board and I was sent ashore to find ice cream. This was mostly liquid when I returned, but still enjoyed by all.



Anchored for a swim at Porto Kheli

In the morning the crew were desperate for a swim and we sailed a short distance to a sandy cove where anchored and swam in the warm water. Mid morning we re-traced part of our route to Hydra, a small village on an island rather like an amphitheatre surrounded by mountains and only accessible by sea. All trade came in by ferry. The harbour was tiny and we could find no space against the quay. We had to moor three boats out (end to end) and use the dinghy to get ashore. But this was the most beautiful of all the places we visited.

Julie and Jo were at home looking around the pretty shops and boutiques around the quay. We were advised to always seek out the restaurants away from the waterfront and look for where the Greeks eat. However, the restaurants on the quay looked so quaint, we could not resist them. The food was great as the sun went down and the village lit up around the tranquil harbour.



The harbour at Hydra

In the morning, I spent a time fascinated by the water taxis and hydrofoil, which seemed to enter the harbour at full tilt and slam into reverse next to a loading key opposite. The resulting wash woke up the crew and we had breakfast. A 'salty' looking man on the quay we determined was the harbour master and he handed the water pipe to us and we filled up our tanks again. About 5 euro was the charge for filling our two tanks. Julie and I had a 'hike' around the harbour and took photos high up among the houses. A freighted was against the dock when we returned and a long line of donkeys was being laden with all manner of goods from sacks of sand to microwaves. Julie took an immediate shine to them feeling sorry for their life of burden, but this turned to fear when she tried to stroke one and it nearly nipped her fingers off.



Donkeys at Hydra

Mid morning we set off to our next destination, Poros. We knew this would be busy as there is a lot of water traffic in this area. The wind was increasing slightly F4, but right on the nose. We had a token 'sail', but this was interfering with the sunbathing on deck, so motored most of the way to a small bay just south of the town where we anchored for a swim and lunch at a bar on the beach. The wind increased more as we set off for Poros and was blowing strongly along the shore as we made our first attempt to back onto the quay. This idea was abandoned PDQ and we rounded a small headland which enabled us to perform the same manoeuvre, but this time with the wind in the nose. We made a reasonably comfortable docking manoeuvre, but had to lay at the extent of the passarelle. We had read in our guide that the ferries create quite a swell and the surge could push the stern of the boat into the quay.



The quay at Poros

The girls went shopping while Gavin and I watched a huge powerboat, about 80' or more, moor alongside us. To our other side was a most beautiful wooden gaff ketch of about 50'. The crew on board were just finishing a refit and I was invited on board for a look around her beautiful features. She was very traditional topside, but the hum of the air conditioning below was to keep us awake part of the night.

Shopping complete, we set sail again for the same bay as our first night out. Here we would have a pleasant afternoon before starting early to get the boat back to Alimos by 9:0am. The bay was just as beautiful, but in the night a large swell came in from the south, resulting in the stern slapping down in the water. The noise in my bunk kept Julie and myself awake most of the night and we were pleased to haul up the anchor and set sail in the morning twilight back to Athens. Although the wind blew up slightly, (about F5 on the nose) and we had the same conditions as our outward journey, we made Athens before Jo and Gavin appeared from their bunks. We were safely back on our jetty by 09:00 on the dot.

That afternoon we took a taxi to our last hotel of the trip, which had a pool on the roof and we all had time to 'chill' after our adventures. We ate in the hotel that evening

where all declared that it had been the best holiday that we had ever had. Everyone had thoroughly enjoyed the time and looking forwards to our next charter!



The best holiday ever!

ROACH SAILING ASSOCIATION

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ending 31st December 2005

2004	Income	2005	2005
£		£	£
290.00	Annual Subscriptions	300.00	
576.00	Crouch Harbour Authority Disks	950.00	
110.00	Race Subs	95.00	
12.86	Profit on Sale of Flags and Burgees	10.70	
37.00	Donations to workboat restoration	211.21	
294.30	Boat jumble proceeds	261.50	
0.00	Bank Interest	0.00	
(18.00)	Excess Inc/(Deficit) for dinner (including flowers)	(140.00)	
<u>1,302.16</u>			<u>1,688.41</u>
2004	Expenditure	2005	2005
£		£	£
70.00	RYA Subscription	74.00	
0.00	CAYFE Subscription	10.00	
135.00	Printing, Stationary & Postage	66.98	
0.00	Cup Insurance	52.50	
55.00	Cup Engraving	65.00	
576.00	Crouch Harbour Authority Disks	950.00	
55.00	Mission Hall & Paglesham Parish Council	0.00	
	Creeksea Ferry Inn	30.00	
	Shed repairs	30.00	
	Workboat restoration	127.91	
0.00	Depreciation on stock of flags and burgees	0.00	
<u>891.00</u>			<u>1,406.39</u>
0.00	Excess of Expenditure over Income		0.00
411.16	Excess of Income over Expenditure		282.02
	<u>Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2005</u>		
2004	Assets	2005	2005
£		£	£
1,020.33	Balance at Bank 31st December		1,366.63
102.86	Stock of Flags and Burgees		<u>38.58</u>
<u>1,123.19</u>			<u>1,405.21</u>
Reconciliation of Assets			
712.03	As at 1st January		1,123.19
411.16	Surplus Income/Excess Expenditure		<u>282.02</u>
<u>1,123.19</u>			<u>1,405.21</u>

Signed 
 Simon P Joel, Honorary Treasurer

Roach Sailing Association: 2006 Sailing Programme

All boats start races at 10:00, except where other times are stated.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
Sun March 5 th	AGM (Ferry Boat Inn, Wallasea Island) 19:00 for 19:30
Sun 19 th March	Film show - Mission Hall, Paglesham 19:30
Sat 1st April	Fitting Out Supper Plough & Sail 19:00 for 19:30
Fri 28 th April to Mon 1 st May	OGA rally - Brandy Hole & Foulness
Sat 13 th May	Dauntless association AGM, Foulness
Sun May 14 th	Paglesham Pot (HW 1400)
Sun May 21 st	Frank Shuttlewood Cup (HW 0733)
Weekend May 27-29 th	Thames weekend cruise
Sat June 10 th	Paglesham Yacht Race (open boats) 13:00 start (HW 1221)
Sun June 11 th	Blue Shoal Trophy (Jack H Coote) (HW 1304)
Sat 17 th June	ACE Race hosted by Brandy Hole YC
Weekend June 16-18 th	Pyefleet weekend (<i>also OGA meet at Brighlingsea</i>)
Sun 18 th June to Sat 24 th	East Coast Cruise <i>plus OGA East Coast Race</i>
Sun July 2 nd	Whitaker Cup - early start 09:00 in Quay Reach for long race if conditions permit (HW 1743)
Sat July 15 th	Mudcatchers Cup (open boats) 13:00 start (HW 1632)
Sun July 16 th	Gracilda Cup (ladies race) (HW 1715)
Weekend July 29- 30 th	Dauntless Association Benfleet rally
Sat August 12 th	Cruise to Fambridge (HW 1528)
Sun August 13th	Don McDowell Cruiser Trophy (Fambridge to Branklet).
Sat August 26th	Paglesham Show
Sun September 3rd	RNLI Race (HW 2109)
Weekend 16-17th Sept	<i>Weekend cruise</i>
TBA	Dauntless Association Paglesham rally
Sun September 24th	Lifeboat Cup (open boats) (HW 1428)
Sun October 1 st	Roach Plate (HW 1915)
Sat 14th October	Laying Up Supper – venue TBA

