



Roach Sailing Association

www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa

September 2006 Newsletter

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Chairman's Report

Rodney Choppin

Dear Members

The beginning of the season had us all in doubt as to whether or not we would be sailing at Paglesham this year as a couple of 'wise guys' had taken over the running of the boatyard and river, but as quickly as they arrived, they disappeared. I can only say 'you don't make Watermen out of Greenhorns!'

We were pleasantly surprised when Steve Adams took over the yard, ably supported by Anthony Elliot and David Jones. (Anthony served his apprenticeship at the yard some years earlier). Now there is a warm welcome when you arrive at the yard and long may it continue.

Our film show once again was well supported and many thanks to Robin Slater (Films), Peter Edwards (projectionist), and Annie 'B', refreshments. The proceeds went to 'DALLY'.

DALLY is mentioned later in this newsletter but I would like to thank all and sundry who gave 'bits and pieces', (could have been her name if not DALLY), and their time and effort in getting her back in the water again. She looks very trim.

I would like to introduce the following new members for 2006 and welcome them to the RSA.

Fiona, Colin and Kyle Campbell - MAGIC MOTION
Talbot Dixon and family - NORLANDIA

Kieth Egerton - SCHERTZO

Rick Flexton - GRAND TOUR

Cliff Jones - TRIAL AND ERROR

John Walter - ESCAPE

Steve Hills - EVA ANNIE

Nick Burfoot - EVA ANNIE

We have a new venue this year for the laying up supper, the Brandy Hole Yacht Club. I hope you will all support it. May I ask you to dress accordingly, (smart). Please also remember to return all cups to Richard for engraving.

See you there, Rodney.

PARTS from Davey and Co

Ken Wickham has an account with Davey and Co on our behalf, and is about to place an order. Ken has a catalogue if you would like to see it. Please let him know if you want any 'fitting out bits'.

Laying Up Supper

The Laying Up Supper will be at the Brandy Hole Yacht Club this year and we have changed the date to **4th November, 2006**

The club is at Hullbridge. Turn down Ferry Road as if you were crossing the river. There is a Budgens store on the corner by the mini roundabout. Take the last turning to the right down Pooles Lane and the club is at the end of this road, next

to Brandy Hole Yacht station (which is a separate enterprise). We suggest meeting at 7-.7.30pm

We have also secured a better rate for the meal of £15 per person and details of the menu are as follows:

Vegetable Soup
--oOo--
Roast Beef
or
Vegetarian Option
--oOo--
Fruit Crumble
or
Cheese and Biscuits
--oOo--
Coffee and mint

Richard has kindly again agreed to take the reservations for this and cheques can be sent to him and payable to the Roach Sailing Association at the address below and note he will need to know your option for main course and sweet:

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

DALLY's progress

John Langrick

Despite common belief, and with the help of many members of the RSA, we managed to get DALLY back into the water earlier this year and she is now in full commission. She took a tremendous amount of water in the trip from Carter's yard to Paglesham where she lay for a while in a mud berth taking up. A big thanks to Jon Walmsley and Ivor Jones, who along with myself manned pumps and bailers, plus a huge bilge pump, and with Ken in GEMINI standing by we made it. Richard helped us anchor just off Gordon's patch.



Phew, at the end of a long toil. Ready for the water.

All leaks have virtually stopped and with a couple of fastening 'tweaks' this winter she should be fully water tight. In the mean time the bilge pump is coping admirably, moored at low water.

She has already shown her worth in ferrying large parties too and from boats, plus three valiant 'rescues' (tows). She was also invaluable in helping lay the whithies in Potton Creek.

She remains available for all to use at any time, but do remember she does need diesel occasionally!



Laying Whithies in Potton Creek

The Mudcatchers Cup 2006

Richard Bessey

Editor's note: The weather was just a bit breezy, so all photos are from the first race of the season.

Recently whilst repairing an old photo frame, a picture of the smack "JOAN" from Frank Shuttlewood's collection, a letter was found. It invited "owners of at least one perfectly sound seaboot, male or female" to join the Mudcatchers Club, Paglesham. The letter is dated Jan 1937.



Paul and Jamie in LIZZIE, winner of te first dinghy race of the season.

This year we decided to add a new race to the calendar, to be called the Mudcatchers Cup. It preserves the name, invented in jest all those years ago, and also another tradition of racing at Paglesham. The race announcement went: "All crew members to start at the sea wall where the course will be given. At the starting signal one member of each crew will quaff a bottle of beer, (rum or other beverage permitted if same quantity) – before going aboard. Boats may be propelled by sail, oar or seaboot".

Sail, oar and seaboots were all put to the test in a stiff NE blow. They quaffed their beer at the top of the hard, then set off to the boats in various states of rig. Quickest off was SARAH EDITH, Jon and Rosemary had elected to row. Most chose to tack down to the Pool, but John and Ivor in STELLA MARIE headed for Barling Ness. TINKER suffered a capsize after a couple of tacks, and the rescue boat towed her to shore.



Simon and Dan sailing TINKER in the first race of the season. (Right way up for a change).



At the start of the first dinghy race of the season.

Down at the Pool they picked up balloons to find beer bottles attached, checked out the clues and headed back to find Barling Ness. Some looked for it up the Varlett and lost time there.

Nick was sailing a Lazer, out of mothballs for the first time in a decade. He managed to keep upright and tore round the course at a great pace, finishing before most of the rest were half way, but missing most of the "silly things to do" along the way. STELLA MARIE was home next, having completed most of the tasks.

The rowing tactic lost out in the last leg due to mounting seas and exhaustion - but they plugged on anyway, wading waist deep to push the boat home. They were next to finish, having completed all the tasks.

WINKS, sailed by Naomi and Dan, were competing with LIZZIE (Paul and Jamie) for the next home. There were only minutes left when WINKS' rig disintegrated and they were forced to retire, another tow for the rescue boat!

SARAH EDITH wins the Mudcatchers Cup, the only one to complete all the tasks – but at the cost of very sore bottoms. The rest in order of finish - LASER DAZE, STELLA MARIE, LIZZIE..

GEMINI's outing to Pin Mill x 2

Ken Wickham

So full of confidence and a helping hand the intrepid GEMINI set sail to see the Sailing Barge Match start at Pin Mill on Sunday 30th June.

The navigator(John) suggested a start from Pag around 14:00 hrs, as we have the profile of a brick but a shallow draft we could cut across the Ray and slide up past the Buxey Tower

and use the ebb most of the way. With modern technology we recorded an average of 5.5 knots across the ground touching near 7 in places. With two GPS systems, one electric compass and one magnetic given a clear day there should not be a problem. To be fair there wasn't and sail/motor around the "pots" off Walton and we arrived Harwich Harbour with not much effort. Skipper now found his first entry a bit awesome, the navigator set the course for the Orwell pointing out land marks, various buoys and local hazards. Skipper checking his every move and suggestions on the PC plot we continued up to Pin Mill. As we went through Felixstowe it was suggested we dropped the rags to motor up.



GEMINI sailing up the Wallet on a perfect day.

At Pin Mill we found anchorage just opposite the Pub, John gave it its proper name but for the rest of us opposite the Pub gives a true identification. We were amongst the barges, I had a few days before been on "THISTLE" when she was at Tilbury and had mentioned to her skipper I was hoping to see the start. We duly came along side and passed a friendly hand wave.

Dinner a` la "Wickham" was served and a peaceful tranquil evening with wine, cheese and genial conversation to be had



Evening at Pin Mill

Next morning the race started at 08:30 just down stream from Pin Mill and as can be seen from the photo's a very calm start, near float over the line. We managed to motor through and around the fleet before they left and we followed them out through the Harbour.



Barges racing past Felixstowe

We turned south sailing lazily passed Walton/ Clacton in the calm seas of the Wallet. Retracing our steps across the edge of the Buxies passing near to the Tower, clipping the sands edge towards the Ray.

Suddenly a single bang from below, a judder from Gemini and we sailed on. A quick check below no gushing water, look over the side no flotsam. Navigator rose to the GPS checked position, close but not that close to the sands. No idea so we sailed on. Cut the corner into the Crouch and home to Pag.

John picked up his new joy IMOTHES and we returned to Foulness steps for the evening mooring. A few RSA boats arrived and after much of the usual disorganisation we wandered off to the George in small groups for a pint.

In the bar we found a chart of some 50 years and on it was a wreck symbol around where we had hit something, the hunt was on. Rumours were bound as to its location and possible make up. Conversations raised the possibility of an old aircraft engine, some had seen a wreck some years ago in that area but latest chart issues showed nothing.

The following weekend John put that a few were going again to Pin Mill, so full of new found confidence I thought I could do it alone so asked if I could follow along (usual term for a Mac Wester owners). It was to be a single night out returning to Pag on Sunday's late tide.

Weather reported that it should be another fine weekend sail. Ivor accompanied John and Paul (SURAH) made up the fleet heading for Pin Mill. Paul was ahead of us and this time we cut through the Spitway, John reminding me I was a bit close to Gunfleet Sands, I was trying to let the new auto helm take command but lesson learnt they don't like a following rolling sea.

With all canvas up, both a Genoa and a cruising Chute goose winging GEMINI could not keep up.

I could see them entering Harwich, had them on the radio, so just bobbed along. This time I sailed past the giants moored at Felixstowe. And we made up some distance and in the end moored some ten minutes behind John. Another genial meal at the Pub this time and good nights sleep.



IMOTHES – under new ownership.

John wanted away at 05:30 so an early morning start, weather not bad forecast a bit of a South Westerly but no gales predicted! As we headed out through the harbour I noted John had slipped a reef in so I did likewise, shortly after to add another, Paul was away to my east, John was heading in that general direction but I managed to hold a track to the SW so continued down the coast. Winds were now gusting anything up to 20 knts but we kept going, John turned out to sea Paul kept close, criss crossing my path but we were still heading South West. It slowly began to increase to 24 knots just off Walton Tower, seas were breaking on the deck so it was time to find the predicted safe port. I had passed Pye End marker so with a rising tide I should be able to cross the sand bar and take a short route into Titchmarsh Creek and hide out for a while. With just the PC GPS working and having contacted both Paul and John telling I was running for cover I turned heading for what looked like the shortest point on the chart. John radioed in saying he was carrying on, Paul having been nearly flattened in a gust of 35 knts turned back to Shotley.

Now venturing into unknown waters I had only the PC GPS to guide me across the sands. Seems simple to the crewed boats but in GEMINI the plot screen is placed in the cabin and from the deck its upside down. Eventually marker buoys were found and I made safe anchorage in the creek mouth along with a few others souls. I had crossed the bar by scraping the weed off I later found out. John joined me later in the morning as the deteriorating weather made them turn back, Paul made a safe anchorage in Shotley Marina.

Then the real fun began Steve (ULLABELLA) rang to say he was caught up at Brandyhole were we ok, having organised a lift with him I convinced John to stay over in Titchmarsh Marina and he booked us in. Playing follow my leader I chased John into the marina to find I was in the wrong bay. Mac Wester's don't handle too well under sail so under power in close quarters is a bit of real fun. By yourself it gets tricky to say the least, but we swung a clean 180deg without damage to anyone and extracted ourselves into the correct berth whilst John tried a new stunt of parking on the pontoon for a change. Clearing the decks and tidying up took a while and Steve soon arrived to find there were 4 lost souls to transport home not 3 as he thought.

Steve had brought "Mum's" Fiesta so limited gear was the order of the day to be taken back, we went on to Shotley for Paul, he wanted his cooler box to come home and then we were off home via South Wooden Ferrers. Talk about "3 men

a boat" 5 in Fiesta is a load more fun, especially if two lumps and a skinny are in the back John!!

Over the next few days with the help of Pam, the wife, we collected the boats and headed back to Pag. Thanks to all who helped out but I, for one, learnt a valuable lesson or two.

First don't believe the forecast, the marina even had a notice board stating "no gales today" Coast Guard gave out moderate SW winds.

Be prepared to run for cover early, as your boat might make it, but you might not if single handed.

Charts are useful back up to a GPS if it fails, so take them along; problem is reading and steering at the same time in heavy seas.

Make sure you have had or can have at hand quick snack food and drink.

PS even the radio packed up in the end!!

ARABEL's Sailing log 2006

We all will have read the exploits of ARABEL and her crew in 2005 and I am sure this year's log will be just as exciting!

Had some lovely days in my mud berth at Carters yard and had some great barbecues plus drank lots of tea, both on and off board.



At the end of the first dinghy race.. a view from atop ARABEL on one of the rare occasions she left her mud-berth in 2006.

The end

Exploring Barling Creek

Steve Dowding

In my opinion, at least, one doesn't need to go trans-Atlantic every year. In fact this season I'd only sailed beyond then Paglesham Pool buoys once, out to beyond the Ridge where meeting up with WISPER I was informed the Dauntless Benfleet Bash had been cancelled and so turned back. Mostly

this season I'd been (after an extremely late start) fitting out - getting on with jobs half-started or planned over the last five or so years.

The first week of September I found myself able to get away from the immediate demands of clients, and following the extremely changeable weather of August, with a forecast for something more mellow and settled, and most importantly mainly dry. Scrubbing off and various outstanding jobs remained, and STORTEBECKER was extremely foul, but all the same I embarked on a modest cruise to Little Wakering.

Setting off under genoa into a lightly gusting SW-erly around mid-flood on the Wednesday morning I worked out that whilst STORTEBECKER will normally make pretty well to windward scrubbing off was more than urgent. I gave up a little short of the first moored fishing boat and anchored for 'breakfast'. Thereafter I proceeded under motor through the Barling moorings and discovered that the top-most was vacant, looking slightly abandoned even, and so I picked it up. Peace and tranquility was what I'd been hankering for, and my requirements were exactly met.



Barling at High Water



Barling Dry

In the early evening - well and truly dried out - I was greeted from the sea-wall by the cry, "I hope you're not planning to stay on my mooring", to which I responded that I planned on moving off on the next afternoon's tide. With this the owner seemed satisfied if not exactly welcoming. It would have been possible to anchor anywhere above the moorings in what appears to be good-holding mud (and very sheltered) so perhaps I didn't really need to be borrowing the mooring and probably wouldn't in the future, except perhaps to spite this character. As forecast the wind went round to the north and blew up a bit, and as had been forecast, and then not, it rained - overnight - but fortunately STORTEBECKER had dried out more-or-less head to wind so it didn't blow in, and Thursday dawned still blowing a bit but with clear blue sky.

Around 1100, about 3/4 flood, I started to motori up Little

Waking Creek, initially in about 2m. Predicted HW Sheerness/Southend was 5.72m coming up to big springs. About 500m short of the building which had to be Little Waking I started to run out of water, the keel wasn't fully lowered and I ran aground in 1m. Once again the anchoring for 'breakfast' strategy. Afterwards with around 1.8m and still 1 hour to HW I continued. Towards the head of the creek the gutway was marked through its last few meanderings by posts and withies - by some joker who though they were in America perhaps - in any event the wrong way round, green to port and red to starboard going up. Finally after the withies, a pair of leading marks - an orange topped pole on the bank a splash of orange paint behind on the steel topping the sea wall. Deciding not to proceed the final 50m or so to the head where a yacht was moored, and the wind coming off the bank I put STORTEBECKER's bow on in front of these marks and was able to step ashore.



Approach



Head



Leading Marks

I didn't dally and left still before HW and motored back to Pag to arrive about half an hour into the ebb just able to nose into the tiny rill on Maureen's marsh to spend a couple more days fitting out and scrubbing off.

WHEN THE STORM FORMS AROUND YOU...

By John Apps

This year my big sailing excursion was to take part in the Jester Challenge, a single handed race for boats between 20 and 30 feet, from Plymouth to Newport Rhode Island. It meant at 27 feet GLAYVA was one of the largest boats in the race, and likely to be the second fastest, although a Twister at 28 feet could give me some competition for second place if the winds were strong enough. However this was a challenge rather than a true race. Many of the boats were junk rigged as is Jester herself. The smallest was 21 feet and the largest a Beneteau Figaro One just on 30 feet.



Most of the Jester Challengers before the start. GLAYVA, stern on, is next to the black boat [BLACK VELVET - start boat] on the left. SHANTI - Pete Hill is in the left foreground next to BELGEAN - Bill Churchouse.

Roger Cook's MINGMING is the boat with the raised junk sail with a picture of the sun and moon on it [which I believe may mean MINGMING in Chinese].

In front of BLACK VELVET is a Twister 28 - TRIPLE VENTURE and she is rafted up next to STERENN the Beneteau Figaro 30 that was first into Newport

There were two participants associated with the Crouch Estuary, the other was Roger Cook, whom many of you will know from the Old Gaffer Association, in MINGMING a junk rigged Corribee 21.



Eric Andlauer the Frenchman and winner of the 2006 Jester Challenge onboard Sterenn before the start.

Of the entrants only two finished, Eric Andlauer of STERENN the Beneteau FIGARO ONE in 31 days and Pete Hill in SHANTI a Kingfisher 22 in 44 days.



SHANTI arriving in Newport.

Everyone else withdrew for a large variety of reasons but most of them weather related. That is except for Tim McCoy in a Blondie Hasler Folkboat, CHINA BLUE, who decided somewhere short of Falmouth that he needed to propose to his French girlfriend he had left on the dock at Plymouth. This must have been true love as he was quite an experienced Kenyan sailor.

The pride of the fleet was JESTER, a junk rigged folkboat, an exact copy of Blondy Hasler's original lost in the 1988 OSTAR. JESTER has no engine and the current owner, Trevor Leek relies on a single sweep oar for his auxiliary propulsion. I had towed him out of Chichester Marina to Chichester Bar on the Friday night / Saturday morning of the Bank Holiday weekend, so that we could both make our way down to Plymouth for the start the following weekend. Unfortunately on the Sunday JESTER broke her mast and had to be towed back to Chichester for repairs.

Trevor Leek through a lot of dedication and a lot of help from a wooden mast manufacturer in Oxford, a trucking company that took JESTER to Plymouth and a boatyard in Plymouth was on the start line on 3 June at midday still rigging but allowing us all to start. In a spirit of gentlemanly sailing all skippers had decided that they would not start without JESTER.



JESTER rigging her junk sail on the start line.

Mike Richey [standing at the mast] at 88 is helping Trevor Leek [in the hat] and I presume someone from the Junk Rig Association, who were much in evidence. I had proudly towed JESTER out of Chichester marina to the bar and proudly have a little bit of her green paint on my side. Well we ran aground when her anchor line caught around my rudder and lent together until the tide came back. [It's a long story].

GLAYVA's Race

There are three options for crossing the Atlantic from Plymouth to Newport: the Northern, Intermediate and Southern. I had decided on the Northern route as it is the

shortest as it goes the closest to the Great Circle route and is most likely to get more consistent winds. Also if you go far enough North you will avoid most of the effect of the Atlantic Drift [Gulf Stream] for three quarters of the crossing.

The downside of the Northern route is that the winds are likely to be quite strong as you near the Grand Banks south east of Newfoundland, a weather development area. You can expect to get dense sea fog and may have little wind going past Nova Scotia and past New England. However in my planning I had been prepared to go as far north as 55°N but at 46°W to head directly south to avoid the worst of the weather. I had studied the routing charts in detail for both June and July [for my return ☺] and anticipated that I would only have strong winds [F8 or above] for 10% of the time. My biggest mistake was that I assumed that F8 would be the maximum and that I would therefore have only 3 days of F8 – something I thought I could handle.

On the crossing I made with Jon Walmsley and Steve Dowding we had successfully avoided the worst effects of Depressions by steering away from the centre when we hit them. We were quite proud of ourselves when we got to Horta in the Azores and heard from other people how they had had winds of over 50 knots when the strongest wind we had had was 37 knots by our avoidance of the worst of the lows. So I decided that if I was getting into a low and it was starting to blow above F5 I would turn away to avoid the worst of it and hopefully never experience anything more than F7 as the worst of the low passed me by.

The synoptic picture.

It was really interesting to get back to the UK and download the synoptic charts for the days I was out in the Atlantic. The first chart I downloaded was for 10 June. It really wasn't as interesting as the weather that day proved. There were 4 Lows near where I was. The most intense being 997 millibars, but where I was it was 1004 millibars. That was issued at 0000 on 10/6, what was interesting was to see the synoptic chart issued at 0000 on 11/6, those 4 lows had come together and formed two adjoining lows of 983 and 986 respectively and guess who was directly south of the most intense one in a very tight spacing of pressure gradients. I had not realised that this depression had intensified around me rather than me sailing into it. That was the only explanation for the NW winds I encountered in my fourth intense depression. But because the Storm winds were blowing from the West on the first depression I had concluded I had sailed into it. After all depressions are only supposed to form around the coast of Newfoundland, not some 800 miles south of Iceland.

What I hadn't anticipated only 500 miles west of Ireland was to have a severe Low form around me. At the time I thought I had sailed into something that tracked south with me. The other thing that surprised me about my first intense Depression was that while for the day it hit me the barometer had been dropping rapidly I was sitting in a big sea with little wind going nowhere. Between 0900 and 1500 [UTC] of 10 June I had no wind. Because it was superficially a race I didn't like to start my engine. Around three in the afternoon I had enough wind that I started to make forward progress into a westerly. Looking for more wind and ignoring what the barometer was doing I went onto port tack and headed NW. By 1700 the wind still a westerly was F5 and I put my first

reef in and tacked to go SW. The next two hours was a process of constantly shortening sail as the wind built and built. Within an hour I had had to take my main in completely, another half hour and I was down to a scrap of jib. By 1900 hours I couldn't hold the boat at 45° degrees to the wind and turned south. Within five minutes I had completely furled my genoa and turned SE to try and run from the storm under bare poles. Within five minutes I was on the plane under bare poles and very worried I was going to bury my nose in a trough and not come back up. I turned back south and let GLAYVA lie-a-hull. I immediately threw 4 long warps over the stern which brought the stern around slightly into the wind and waves and allowed the stern to lift slightly before the rest of the boat.

At this stage I expected because of the size of the breaking waves that at some stage I would be knocked down by a wave and go through 360°. I basically cleared out the cockpit of anything I didn't want to lose, removed the windvane from my servo pendulum steering. I also found a piece of strong line and tied my spinnaker pole to several strong points on the boat as I thought I would need that for a jury rig when I lost my mast. At this stage I had had waves breaking into the cockpit and was absolutely drenched despite wearing a relatively waterproof survival suit so I retreated to the cabin and put the storm boards in and waited for the roll. I managed to fill in the log for the last two hours despite by now being on an angle of 50 degrees and noted that I was moving east at 4 knots despite lying-a-hull under bare poles. I couldn't make a cup of tea as the gas was turned off at the bottle and I didn't want to remove my storm boards as waves were breaking over them and water was driving into the cabin between the gaps each time.

I was worried about breaking my neck if I continued to sit up and the boat rolled so I retreated to the port [lee] bunk and lay down in the water that had gathered there as this was almost the bottom of the boat the way it was lying to the wind. At this stage despite the evidence of the barometer I was hoping that this was a front that would pass in a couple of hours.

One of the things that was very confusing was that every time you dropped into a trough the wind would lessen slightly and the boat would come back up a little leading you to believe that perhaps the storm was easing. The downside of this was that the water that was in the cabin sloshed around which was annoying. Many of you will know that Glayva is a flat bottomed boat and lacks a sump in the bilge, and my only decent bilge pump is located in the cockpit and not in the cabin. So to pump her out which I did because of the annoying sloshing and as much to give me something to do, I had to use a hand pump with which I filled a bucket. But what do you do with half a bucket of water when you don't dare open your storm boards. I found the only way to get rid of the water in the bucket was to pour a couple of litres into my toilet and then pump out my toilet. Because of the angle if I poured any more than a couple of litres in the toilet overflowed and I was back where I started. As I said it filled in time.

As night fell I turned on my mast head tricolour and managed to check that it was lit by looking out of a little glass hatch above my cooker. How effective it would have been at the angle I was on and with the size of the waves, if there was a ship bearing down on me, I don't know. My two oversize

radar reflectors may also have been useless at the angle I was on and of cause the storm would have been causing a lot of clutter on the radar screens.



The sea a day after the end of the worst of the storm. It's hard to picture the true size of the waves. Still F7 I am beating with a jib alone. I took this picture because it was the first time I had seen the sun in a week.

About 0230 during the first night I was thrown out of my bunk and ended up sitting on top of my cooker and sink. I thought first it had been the 'death roll' but I knew the boat hadn't rolled. I then assumed that the wind had changed 180° as I now had a heel of 50° to Starboard where before the heel had been to port. My compass told the story however. Previously I had been pointing south, I was now pointing north. A wave must have caught my bow or my stern and pushed it through 180°. This was to happen twice more over the next 24 hours. At first I thought it was my stern that was caught by the wave and pushed around, but in retrospect I think it was more likely my bow due to the slowing effect of the warps I had streamed from the stern. I firmly believe that without those warps that the horizontal change of direction of 180° would have been a 360° vertical roll. My stern was lifting a nanosecond before the wave broke over me and saving me from the roll, I think. Although it is really hard to say because the pundits tell us that with my three metre beam I would need a nine metre or larger wave to roll me. My mast is ten metres high. Whether the waves were that high I couldn't say, I didn't want to climb my mast to see if I could see over them. ☺

Around 0700 on the third day, I felt the storm had lessened sufficiently for me to make way again. On checking my GPS I noticed that in the 36 hours since the storm hit I drifted 60 miles east and a little bit north: that was ground I had to make up again. As soon as I put a pocket handkerchief of genoa on I noticed that my leeward shrouds were incredibly loose. I tightened them up, hove to and tightened the other side. In the storm my rigging must have stretched considerably. I had noticed my compression post below my mast creaking every time I dropped off a wave, so there must have been some intense forces acting on my mast. There are now stress cracks in the fibreglass where the mast is stepped on the deck.

A week later after three days of sea fog with two cables of visibility I was hit by another gale. Only F8 this time and I was determined to sail out of it. Unfortunately because of the size of the waves I could only maintain 2.5 knots without slamming over every crest. So I made slow progress down to 46°N where the wind eased enough for me to increase sail.

Sometime in that period I decided not to continue with the northern route but to now sail the intermediate route. I set a waypoint to pass below 45°N 35°. Now I was basically sailing against three elements: the wind; the waves and the Atlantic drift.

As the third deep depression hit me I noticed the leech of my Genoa hanging free for about two feet. This was at 2300 [UTC] and it was still light for another half an hour. I'm so pleased it didn't happen later when I wouldn't have seen the rip until first light as I could have lost the whole sail, bought new for the trip. The wind was too strong for me to take it down so I completely furled it and tried to sail under my fully reefed main. Fortunately about 1000 hours the next day the wind had dropped to F5 and I changed to one of my two spare furling genoas.

My fourth intense low was a bit like the first one. No wind for the day before and then at last light the wind came in and I could start sailing the boat. About 0200 I had to go through the whole experience again of shortening sail every five minutes. This time the wind was coming from the NW rather than the W of the first Storm. The only thing that I could imagine had happened was that the low had formed around me, as it took me another three days of going SW at 2.5 knots with a handkerchief of genoa until we were down to F6 and I was at 41°N 42°W.

It had become my habit at 1700 hours every day before having a glass of wine to go around and check my rigging at deck level and look up the mast and see if everything was ok. This was a fairly damp experience in a big sea with the bow plunging into the waves but it gave me a chance to say 'hullo' to the dolphins who invariably joined me about that time each day. When I got to the starboard inner shroud I panicked, as this was the weather side, over half the wires at the swage were broken. I leapt into the cockpit disengaged the windvane steering and tacked.

I was carrying spare shrouds but I felt the seas were too big [15-20 feet] to replace them. I was 500 miles from St Johns in Newfoundland my closest land but that was on starboard tack. Currently I was running down wind east to the Azores on port tack. 4 days later and the seas were manageable at 6-10 feet. However I was only 150 miles from Flores and still moving along nicely on port tack so I thought I would run into the shelter of Larjes Harbour, which we had visited with ARABEL and effect my repairs.



Larjes on Flores. It was great to be able to swap some books as I had been reading everything twice and have a meal of fish with fresh salad. And even though the showers at Larjes are cold it was heaven to stand beneath it after 5 weeks.

I have difficulty believing that from somewhere past the mid Atlantic point I was able to get to Falmouth all on port tack. It had been my intention to do as well as I could and maybe motor as much as my fuel would hold out. And although I was becalmed for two days in a sea of jellyfish about 5 days out of Falmouth I did it all on port tack.

One interesting thing did happen as I came into the Western Approaches. I had momentarily picked up an Irish radio station talking about a new war in the Middle East, this was the only report I had heard of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Then the weather closed in with cloud and rain at sea level and visibility was down to a quarter mile. I often find with low cloud I can't get any radio reception and the VHF was completely silent. The new Navtex I had bought before leaving the UK was giving me no reports at all and there was not a single ship or fishing boat to be seen. I started to think that Nostradamus might have been right and WW3 would start in the Middle East and wipe out civilisation. Was I like Charlton Heston in the film 'Omega Man' and the last human alive? About 2300 on the second day of this when I was level with Wolf Rock suddenly the sea level cloud lifted and not only could I suddenly hear Falmouth Coastguard talking to ships using the TSS off the Scillies, there were navigation lights all around me – some surprisingly close. So I wasn't the last man on earth, just my Navtex aerial had stopped working and needed to be sent back to Silva for repair.



Heather and Phoebe [my West Highland Terrier] came to Plymouth to see me off. In my right hand I am holding a tube of Vegemite given to me by an Australian journalist who came over from Geneva to see the start of the Jester Challenge.

TRIUMPHANT's Progress

Sheila and John Quilliam

You were correct in your assumption that the bracket is for a dingy not the big boat! The metal rubber covered Avon outboard bracket had finally festered into nothing

Thanks for the offer of looking for another one but I have managed to find a Caribbean solution the problem. The local aluminum welder here in Carriacou has made me a new bracket from scratch for 60 GBP. It took him 3.5 hours and will probably be better than a new one.

It will certainly outlast our poor old 250GBP boat jumble Avon. I suspect that overall this is a cheaper solution than trying to ship one from the UK.

This year our cruising covered Grenada, St Vincent & the Grenadines (various Islands), Martinique, St Lucia, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Antigua (where John raced in the classic regatta on a local wooden 65 foot schooner called JAMBALAYA see www.windwardschooner.com), and Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis

We arrived back in Carriacou on 15th June and we are basing ourselves in Tyrrell bay Carriacou (12.27N 61.29W) for the hurricane season as Tyrell bay has a very good hurricane hole in the harbour. There is also a WIFI connection for boats in the bay costing about 20GBP for 60 hours.

However, we have been moving around more this summer, partly due to the fact that we have fitted an electric anchor windlass after all these years – a lot of money but much easier.

We took part in the Carriacou regatta – round the Island race (and came last). There was very little wind and lots of current/tide so we had to use the engine for an hour. There was a small group of heavy cruising boats at the back of the fleet with us. I think we would need to remove 3 tons of cruising gear to be anywhere near competitive. John also spent a very uncomfortable day perked on the side of a racing boat with wings.

We then took the boat around to Hillsborough – the capital, to see the local regatta – a big event on land and sea here. We watched the local boats racing off the beach – they are very fast and saw Eric Donaldson in concert, Donkey racing, tug of war and a greasy pole over the harbour to name but a few of the entertainments

A few days break then down to Grenada (35 miles south) for the Grenada carnival. Great fun and VERY noisy. We stayed there for a couple of weeks soaking up “civilization” then back to Carriacou for a continuous round of August birthday parties.

Last weekend we went over to Petit Martinique (another Island belonging to Grenada -about 2 hours away by boat) for a couple of days to watch the locals launch a newly built 50 foot wooden trading boat off the beach by hand using adzes and chain saws! The boat was tipped on one bilge then dragged by everyone to the waters edge, from here a tug pulled it afloat.



Petit Martinique has about 500 people living on the Island engaged in traditional boat building, fishing and smuggling. A very good day out.

The whole process was well oiled with large amounts of beer, good cheer and jack Iron (a local home brewed rum which is about 140 proof!!!). The whole event took most of the day. I will post some pictures on the web site but here is a couple for now - see attachments

We stopped off at the Windward side of Carriacou for a night on the way back and threaded our way inside the extensive reefs. This side of the island is also very different from the west side and engages in similar trades to that of Petit Martinique!

Then back to Tyrrell bay (through a 30 knot rain squall towing the dingy and with all the sun covers up – a mistake I suspect) for Tanti Robertina’s 67th birthday party at the Olde Rum shop that she owns. Phew, we are taking a few days off.

We plan to haul out here and anti-foul in October then try and get to the NW Caribbean for the next winter sailing season (Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize). We plan to spend the next hurricane season in Rio Dolce - Guatemala 60 miles up a river.

After this maybe off to the ABC Islands, Columbia and then through the Panama canal into the pacific.

Back to this Hurricane season, we watch the weather each day and so far (fingers Crossed) everything has gone north of us!!! Long may this continue but even Tropical storm Florence soon to be a quite big hurricane) affects the weather this far south – sending westerly swells and winds into the anchorages which are not sheltered from the West. Today we are rolling well at anchor

That’s all for now, please say Hi to all at Paglesham and the RSA and we hope the tides are not too high