



Roach Sailing Association

www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa

September 2009 Newsletter

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Chairman's Report

Mike Green

In this my first report since taking over from Rodney Choppin as Chairman, a hard act to follow, I have in a sailing sense two confessions to make. Both go to show that even with about 50 years of sailing experience it's still very easy to fall flat on one's face and feel very foolish.



Mike with his son Stewart (at the helm) finishing the race back from Fambridge

Most of you will know that I sold my Halcyon 27 VENTO MARA in the early part of the season, a somewhat reluctant sale and it was with some sadness that I parted with her after 24 years and 9 months. She has gone to a good home on the Orwell just upriver on a mooring from the Royal Harwich Yacht Club.

In funds, I decided to purchase a half share in my son's Verl 9 metre VERLOCITY. She needed a new engine which I successfully installed (with help I hasten to add), it started first time in the yard but at launch it would not go, turn over, yes, but start very reluctantly after a lot of cranking. This problem continued and was put down to a faulty key switch panel which was replaced under warranty by Vetus. The new panel was fitted by me but still it would not start, shouts of rage, bad language etc. followed. The Vetus engineer came down from Norfolk at my request for a warranty visit, I rowed him out to VERLOCITY and he spent about 10 minutes looking at the engine installation, moved the battery earth cable to a different stud on the engine and it started first time. With a very red face and £100 lighter I waved him goodbye.



Drinking Pimms aboard PHILOMELLE, Farnbridge Rally

The next occasion was on the Paglesham Gentlemen's Cruise 2009 up the East Coast, or should it have been called the Chairmen's Cruise, when HALLOWE'EN and VERLOCITY were moored up in Brightlingsea getting ready to depart for Harwich. I decided to fill up the water tank from my 10 litre container, I had poured out about a litre when I realised it was into the diesel tank. Again a very red face when I admitted to George, Rodney, Robin and John Whit, what had happened. Departure was delayed whilst I drained the filter and the bottom of the diesel tank of about 5 litres of fuel and water. I'm pleased to report the engine started first time and ran very well.

We had a very pleasant albeit windy week, visiting Pyefleet, Rowhedge, Brightlingsea, Harwich, Aldeburgh and Levington marina. We were weather bound for 2 extra days but that is another story.

There are six new members that I would like to welcome to the R.S.A.

Nigel Campling Southerley 137 DUTCH COURAGE OF COWES.

*Eddie and Jenny Ellis Westerly Berwick RIVERSIDE
Mark & Chrissie Fritter, Folkboat MAESTRO OF WYRE
John Margaron, Figaro, FLUFFY
Norman McDonald, Hurley 22 STRAVAIG
Bob Morgan, Fishing boat TERESA MAY*

In conclusion, I look forward to meeting you at the Laying Up Dinner on the 17th October at Brandy Hole.

Laying up Supper

As Mike mentioned, the laying up supper will be at the Brandy Hole Yacht Club this year on Sat 17th October. We suggest meeting at 7-.7.30pm

The rate for the meal of £16 per person and details of the menu are as follows:

- o0o-
- Melon – A1
- Prawn Cocktail – A2
- Spicy Vegetable Soup - A3
- o0o-
- Vegetarian Lasagna - B1
- Roast Lamb - B2
- Roast Chicken – B3
- Poached Cod – B4
- o0o-
- Apple Crumble - C1
- Fruit Cocktail – C2
- Cheese and biscuits – C3
- o0o-
- Tea or Coffee
- o0o-

Richard has kindly again agreed to take the reservations for this and cheques should be sent to him and payable to the **Roach Sailing Association** at the address below and note we will need to know your menu options.

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

Bosun's Corner

John Langrick

Oyster Pits. I am please to announce that the PVT has managed to purchase the Oyster Pits and a big thanks has to go to Richard Bessey for his sterling services here and also the many members who contributed.. We now have access, (albeit pedestrian), to the river without let or hindrance. There is still work to do and will be detailing this in future newsletters, this includes repairs to the Jetty. Planning for this is currently with the CHA for approval,;

RSA Shed. We have installed lights in the shed so that we can illuminate the dinghy park and also have light inside. There is a bench with vice and power points over. Well done to all who donated parts for this and also time to install. Many have commented since how useful this is.

The shed is rather cluttered. Please note that we should only be storing outboards, oars, wellies and one can of fuel. We will be having a clear out this winter with the potential of a boat jumble in the Spring. Can you please remove any other property and note that inflatables should not be stored permanently in the shed.

Dinghy Storage. We now have a place for dedicated dinghy storage although we do need to have a tidy this winter and perhaps install dinghy racks. Please ensure your name is both on your dinghy and your trailer as we have had instances where both have gone missing.

Gate key. Please also note that there is a gate key in the shed if you need to bring heavy items into and out of the yard, The gate should always be locked.

Rubbish Disposal. Finally, unfortunately, the yard does not provide disposal facilities for rubbish. We are all encouraged to take our own rubbish home. This will cause problems for visiting yachtsmen, who might assume the use of the bins in the yard, but please try and let visitors know of this lack of disposal facility.

Keeping the river tidy

Ann Boulter

Sunday March 15th was a glorious sunny day and the Roach Area Fairways and Conservation Committee along with Rochford River Care, via Ken Wickham, had organised an event with a difference. Meeting at 10am at Shuttlewoods boatyard Paglesham were RSA members, 17 men, 3 women, a boy and a dog. Jonathan Walmsley arrived with his 'trusty' red Land rover, complete with Ken's trailer and all necessary equipment – a neat little vehicle (only 12 feet long) powered by vegetable oil and reasonable windward performance.



So, armed with pick-up sticks, black plastic bags and wearing stout gloves, we positioned ourselves in groups along the sea wall; those comfortably seated on the trailer going well past Blackedge Point, almost as far as the lagoon. The worst spot for litter, blown, we think, from Barling tip, was the ox-bow in the bend of the sea wall just before the lagoon. With such a goodly number of volunteers, we had cleared the various areas within an hour and a half. Jonathan turned his vehicle and trailer around and made his way back, loading at least 40 sacks of rubbish, mainly plastic bottles and other detritus foreign to the saltings, which had been stacked up by the various groups along the way.



The warm sunshine on our backs made up for some of the smelly rubbish we had to deal with, but everyone worked steadily and with stout hearts. The old car wheel, sheets of plywood, lumps of polystyrene, large timber and breeze blocks went into the trailer alongside a large murky assemblage of rope and fishing net retrieved from the mud. We found no treasure or message in a bottle, just the odd tennis ball for Pheobe, the little white Scottie who despite her short legs coped well to keep amongst the foliage of the saltings.



Refreshment after the work is completed

Back at the boatyard an al fresco picnic awaited us. A makeshift table of a board on two oil drums was the stand for welcome cups of tea, coffee and Paglesham Pie, the latter kindly made and donated by Pam Hudson with cake from neighbour Kim. These were eagerly devoured before the lads set to work unloading the rubbish in the car park to be picked up a few days later by Rochford Council. Where there was muck there was no money this time, but a pleasant satisfaction as we returned along the sea wall to enjoy the sight of the saltings completely clear of 21st Century rubbish...
... "and the river flowed on at it's own sweet will."

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Racing Update

Richard Bessey

The 2009 series started as usual with the Paglesham Pot, 8 boats competed in that race, and 13 boats have gained points in the series so far LOTUS leads the series with 10.5 points, SECOND HARMONY has 7.5 and IMOTHES 4.5 (four others have 4 points each). The position could change dramatically with the RNLI race and Roach Plate yet to run!

Dramatic scenes around Rushey Island as the first dinghy race rowed frantically to get home, only one finished out of 9, but all made it home (safe but knackered). This year's Mudcatchers Cup was the first to have light winds and no capsizes, but they still made it to Wakering and back, with silly things to do along the way, and (of course) quaffing. As I write we have the Lifeboat Cup to look forward to.

The Fambridge weekend provided more competition, with the Aaron Lewis Sambuca Cup log competition and the Don McDowell trophy which had 13 entries. Filling the Cup with Sambuca in the evening started, I fear, a new RSA tradition.

But the strongest competition this year has been for the Bosun's Bell (aka clanger of the year) for which there are many entries and the judging will be hard. However the season is not yet over...

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Foreign food

Richard Bessey

Planning and packing is half the fun, and provisioning for a cruise is no exception. Weeks before PHILOMELLE sets sail, I'm adding items to the shopping basket, and filling a crate in the kitchen. Each weekend the crate is emptied into another space beneath the bunks, and the waterline rises a little.

Baked beans, 'Stag' chilli, corned beef, steak & kidney, plum tomatoes, vegetable 4-packs, enough canned basics for a month or more. A few cook-in sauces (our favourite Putanesca), olive oil, lots of soups. Herbs & spices, mustard, fresh garlic. Rice, pasta, flour and sugar, long loaves that you cook in the oven. Dried fruits, cakes, chocolate and (of course) custard.

Plenty of red wine, small beer, cider, sparkling water and lemonade, and of course lots of fresh water.

Only a week to go, a bag of potatoes and of onions. Then come lemons and oranges to hang in nets from the cabin roof (not too close to preserved sausages and garlic). Pineapple, melons, grapefruit and marrow

behind the seats, pot-grown parsley and Greek basil grow under the spray-hood.



PHILOMELLE's herb garden

Last-minute fresh fruit & vegetables, meat, cheese and eggs, yoghurt and milk. There's a cool cupboard, way below the waterline, and fruit & mushrooms go in the hammock. Jon had a hammock made for IMOTHES on our Baltic trip (2003) and we were impressed, so the crew made one for PHILOMELLE too (thanks girls, it's still doing good service).

Crossing to the Dutch coast and beyond, we have plenty of fresh food for a few of days, and cooking keeps me busy, speeding up our progress across the chart. At night, there's fresh or dried fruit to munch, and the full RSA breakfast in the morning. The Craster kippers are still good after a week at sea.



Lunch 'on the go!'

In port or at anchor, we still eat most meals aboard, and have fun making each meal a treat. Often I start with an onion, cooking in oil while I think about the other ingredients. Chop some fresh herbs from under the sprayhood (new shoots keep growing), maybe sweet pepper, chilli or mushrooms. Some potatoes or maybe pasta are cooking on the other burner, while the kettle keeps hot at the back of the cast-iron hob. Now for a can of meat or chilli beans (or fresh if we have some), and some peas or sweetcorn, and the parboiled carrots that were cooking with the spuds. The fresh ingredients make all the difference!



Ashore for supplies

Topping up with local provisions adds further variety. There are local breads, cheeses and sausages to be sampled, fresh fish from the quay, and we have fun sampling mysterious things in jars! Meat is often hard to find in any variety or reasonable cost, and all Danish bacon seems to be exported to the UK! Yogurt is good everywhere though, and keeps well in our cool cupboard. Sild, the silver darlings in all their pickled variety, are staple lunchtime fare, including this year's favourite, Curry Sild.

Fresh supplies are running low as we head for home, and the wind is on the nose. The herbs are still going strong though, and brighten up a can of soup which also has spicy sausage sliced into it. Beans for breakfast get the same treatment (they are still good for your heart).

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NOT THE ATLANTIC AGAIN

By John Apps

Easter Monday 2009

My phone starts playing the Rodetsky waltz. I press OK.

'John'

'Yes Jon'

'John, what are you doing for the next four weeks?'

'Jon, I saw your email about needing someone to replace you as crew on the crossing from Antigua to

the Azores. Heather [my wife, not RSA Heather] is in Australia and won't be back until Wednesday. I was going to ask her then. It's hardly another "once in a lifetime experience for me" so I need to do it carefully'.

'John I've got to find a replacement who can leave this Friday. Can you ring her in Australia?'

'OK Jon, I'll try and get back to you. I think she might be with her sister in Adelaide.'

Ring ring, ring ring, click.

'Hello.'

'Hi Julia [my sister-in-law], this is John, Heather's husband, [this explanation is necessary as we don't get on]. Is Heather there with you?'

'It's Mr R. Sole is it? Just hang on I'll get her for you.'

'Hi John, is Phoebe [our dog] all right?'

'Yes Phoebe's fine, Heather. Look Jon Walmsley needs someone to fill in for him on an Atlantic crossing as his mother is sick. It's on a long keeler, a Nicholson 38, I've never crossed the Atlantic before on a long keeler so it will be a "once in a lifetime experience". He needs an answer today as I will have to fly out on Friday. I was going to ask you when you were back on Wednesday but it can't wait.'

'Of course you can go if it's a "once in a lifetime experience". See you on Wednesday.'

'See at Terminal 4 on Wednesday, Bye.' Click.

So here I was climbing off a BMI flight from Manchester to Antigua sweating like a pig in the immigration line trying to keep the tropical sun from burning my skin. I was with David Hunnable the

NUTMEG OF SHOREHAM, in Falmouth Harbour, Antigua



professional skipper who was to be my boss for the next 3 weeks [he said]. I had argued that in a fairly slow old Nicholson 38 it would take nearer to 4 weeks. But he assured me that we would motor in light conditions and be there in 3 weeks. In fact we ran out of fuel except for one day's reserve after 5 days motoring and indeed it took us 27 days.

After a fairly long taxi ride past every church on Antigua, which resulted in long discussions between me and the driver about religion and politics in the Caribbean we arrived at Falmouth Harbour to meet the owner of the Nicholson 38, 'NUTMEG OF SHOREHAM', Oliver Holden. That night we had

dinner and drinks [lots of drinks] with David and Sue Barnes who were permanently cruising and enjoying the Caribbean. Sue was a girl from Wakering and both David and Sue had met John and Sheila Quillam from 'TRUMPHANT'.

The next day David Hunnable and Oliver sorted out the paperwork that would allow David H to deliver 'NUTMEG' to the Azores and effectively take her out of Antigua waters. Oliver would fly back to the UK and join David in the Azores to complete the delivery to the UK. While all the boring paperwork was being completed, David and Sue Barnes invited me out on 'BARNSTORMER' a Tradewinds 35 to watch the Antigua Classic Week race that was occurring offshore that day.



This Cornish Lugger was sailed from Newlyn to Antigua. It was fascinating to watch the five minutes it took the crew to tack the Lug sail [nowhere as efficient as Richard and Justine]. Later that day they sailed across a packed Falmouth Harbour managing to miss everything despite tacking into a strong breeze.



ELANORA one of the newer J Boats. We also had VALSHEDA and RANGER rushing past us as we tried to track them taking pictures.

The next day David Hunnable and I watched a sail past in English Harbour of all the classic boats. It was fascinating to watch 'RANGER' the only 150foot J Boat that dared enter the confines of English Harbour turn around to exit. I admired the boats the tacked through a tight spectator fleet whereas the majority of

boats motored. A walk around Nelson's Dockyard was a real step back into history.



David Barnes, Sue Barnes, Carl [a friend who was staying on board with David and Sue], and David Hunnable [my skipper], enjoying Pimms, Cucumber sandwiches and Scones, Jam and Cream on the lawns of the Antigua Yacht Club. [out of shot to the left is Pippa, Carl's wife].

Having arrived on Friday and somehow in all the entertainment provided by Antigua Classic Week, David Hunnable and I managed to provision the boat fill up with fuel and water and get away on the Monday into an F6 north easterly.

The trip after Antigua Classic Week was a bit of an anticlimax. David and I had fun competing who could make the best evening meal, who could come up with the most original sweetener for our morning porridge and who could make the most drastic changes to our sail plan in the middle of the night [having two masts rather than the one made it relatively easy], without waking the other crewperson.

We saw lots of sea birds, dolphins and the occasional whale. The odd cargo ship crossed our path and one or two yachts. One evening during our shared dinner, we had a small cruise ship come along side and blow her horn five times at us and we waved at all the passengers. David wouldn't turn on the VHF for ships and I think the cruise ship skipper wanted to tell his passengers where we had come from and where we were going to. Whenever I see a ship I would normally turn on the VHF as their may be a loquacious watch keeper wanting a chat. But when your skipper tells you not to, of course you obey.

After 27 Days we sailed into Horta on the island of Faial in the Azores. After completing our formalities we moved down to berth alongside a Nauticat 44 that was owned by a New Zealander, whose grandfather had founded the school my wife attended at Stratford near New Plymouth in New Zealand

Having arrived in the Azores we were told that Oliver Holden [the owner] would not be able to do the trip from the Azores to Chichester Harbour. Having spoken to Heather [the wife one not the RSA one] I

agreed with David Hunnab that I could stay on and do the last leg. So we set about provisioning 'NUTMEG' again. Having stocked up on wine, cheese and fresh vegetables we received another phone call from Oliver to say he could now complete the trip. This caused a falling out between David Hunnab and myself as I was not prepared to complete the trip as the third member of the crew. As a result I had to fly back to the UK at my own expense even though the original agreement was that all transportation would be paid for.



I had been given a special task by Jon Walmsley to take a photo of the ARABEL inscription on the marina steps at Horta. [Art by Steve Dowding]. If you look closely above and to the right you will see TRAVELLING STAR 2005, Dan O'Herlihy's boat]

I did manage one last highlight. Flying over Pico after taking off from Faial Airport we were almost close enough to touch the summit of Pico which still in May had a dusting of snow – glorious.

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Pyefleet and beyond

Alec Poole

Saturday 27th June

My shopping for supplies took longer than expected so I was late away from Paglesham. I had to motor sail to make the Rays'n by around high water. With some help from the wind I made it into Pyefleet on the last of the daylight as the party was in full swing aboard BRIAR ROSE and BLUE MIST who were rafted together. John Apps rowed across to collect me, but I had just started a quick meal of ready prepared Asda rice plus a chilli. 15 minutes later saw me collected and joining the party. It seemed as though nobody had made the Company Shed rendezvous. Nevertheless boats there included:- ARABEL, PHILOMELLE GLAYVA, SAMARA, MARSHMALLOW and DELPHIS.

Sunday 28th June

Sunday saw me being collected again by John Apps and to ARABEL and BLUE MIST who were rafted up and cooking a combined breakfast for those who had turned up with a contribution. We were also joined by Penny and Alex who happened to be in Pyefleet moored a couple of boats ahead of ARABEL. Once all the cooking, eating, chatting and washing up was enjoyed those intent on spending a few days away went to West Mersea in search of the Company Shed. It was just as well there were only two of us, GLAYVA and CORINE, as moorings were scarce. It was Sunday hot and sunny. The crowds were out and both sheds very popular. As the Company Shed was fully booked for seated meals we opted to buy two pints of prawns and three soles to take away.



Heather made salad on board GLAYVA and a pleasant afternoon was spent eating and drinking. Pheobe watched. We made a very early night of it and had plans to make up the coast to Harwich on the early morning ebb.



Monday 29th June

We were both up early, but the forecast fog was very evident as the houses ashore kept slipping in and out of view. With mixed feelings we hung about making breakfast and doing odd jobs. By about 9.30 – 10.00 it had cleared enough to venture out of the moorings.

Using our plotters all the way and motor sailing in the light winds we kept in close contact as far as Walton pier. The visibility was very limited and we often needed to use fog horns. I took pictures of Glayva as she disappeared and re-appeared in the fog. I also encountered a Thames Barge at one point with her topsail hiding in the clouds.

Of course our departure at mid tide meant that we were pushing the flood beyond Clacton. Off the Naze the fog was now less than 150 yards at times and constant vigilance was becoming tiring. As I was now sailing I could hear better, but I didn't see the Stone Banks buoy. A dredging rig came into view by the shipping channel into Harwich and though I knew when I was inside the harbour breakwater from the plotter the first sight I had inside was of the ships moored alongside Felixstowe dock. GLAYVA was by Halfpenny pier as I made round the corner and we were tied up together inside by about 17.30. Amazingly there was no fog to speak of in the Stour and Orwell just mist and sunshine. After a shower and a little relaxing we made a meal in the Samuel Pepys followed by a walk as the sun was setting.

Tuesday 30th June

'Once bitten twice shy' I think ; we didn't give too much thought about spending another day tied up to Halfpenny pier. The fog was still close 'outside' at sea. Harwich is a nice quiet spot to while away a day. Phoebe had a good run around, which seemed to improve her lame paw. Crews went off to The Bear in the evening filled with expectations of the kind of steaks they imagined. Discussion with the chef/proprietor seemed to take care of our needs, though we both turned up our noses at his suggestion of a Rioja. I let John choose and we went with an Australian Shiraz. This turned out to be an excellent wine. Sadly the steaks when they appeared were less than anticipated; certainly cooked beyond that discussed and looked fried rather than grilled. We agreed that we'd eaten better. The proprietor looked disappointed until we paid anyway. Back to the harbour to collect Pheobe followed by a long walk completed our day.

Wednesday 1st June

After a lazy start it was obvious that the fog had gone and the sun beat down through the haze. Corinne said goodbye to GLAYVA whose crew were headed for the Deben. I needed fuel so set off for Levington. I made it out to Stone Banks at slack water carrying the flood up the Wallet. There was little of wind or traffic so it was a lazy drift that found me by the South Buxey with two hours to HW, 20.30. Motor sailing used some of the new fuel and I was on my mooring by 21.45. It was 22.45 before I was at home munching through the Colonel's 3 piece meal.

Baby sitting duties tomorrow.

Tales from the River

Mark and Chrissie Flitter (with crew Grace and Josh)

What an eventful summer! We bought MAESTRO from a friend almost two years ago now, with the intention of sailing her, but I'd started to believe we just had a project on a trolley. Finally though, at the end of May this year, we decided that we'd done enough to make her float, and arranged for the boatyard to put her onto her mooring.

Once she was floating, we spent a day doing a few essential jobs, then attempted to do some practice at steering and picking up the mooring – only to find that we'd flattened the battery by forgetting to turn the switch off after the initial engine test! Having charged the battery, we went to try again the next weekend: this time with more success, we negotiated our way through the moorings under power, and then put up the main sail. After 3 very short tacks down the river, the main sheet traveller broke, and flew away... a rather disappointingly short first go!



MAESTRO OF WYRE

At about this point, Brian Browne suggested we join the RSA, which we did without delay! The first time we took MAESTRO out on our own, I think we were both terrified. We were also useless! We 'tacked' across the river for an hour or so, between two fixed points, not making an inch of progress, which was very dis-heartening. I canvassed opinion from various people over the week, and we employed lots of great advice (tell-tales made from VHS tape, don't use the main sail on its own etc) for a much more enjoyable sail the following week.

The next event of note was my first foray into racing. John Langrick very kindly allowed me to accompany him on IMOTHEs, where I can't have been too much of a hindrance, as, if memory serves, we came 2nd overall. This was also when I met a few of the RSA members over a cup of tea and a glass of wine.

After a few more weekends of pottering on our own, Brian was kind enough to come out with us and give us some feedback on our technique. We had a fantastic sail, up to Burnham and back. Lots of great

advice was imparted, the single best bit I think being about 'backing' the headsail, which has made things go much more smoothly. Brian was also able to suggest a solution to our puzzles over gas fittings and cookers, which we took up. With the prospect of being able to make hot food and drinks, over-night adventures seemed more attractive!

The next bit was a little embarrassing: overcome with confidence after our trip with Brian, we sailed to Burnham again, and tied up on the town pontoon. We had lunch, and wandered around the town for a while, then decided it was time to head for home. This was where we discovered why it matters where on the pontoon you are – the tide was going out fast, and we were on the up-river side of the pontoon: pinned very efficiently by the flow of water, we couldn't move at all! We waited a couple of hours for the tide to slow, but I was starting to panic as I watched the depth dropping below us, and still we couldn't move! We were just discussing going into a club to beg for help when the ferry arrived, so we tried asking them... as luck would have it, Richard and Ken were passengers (I was so pleased to see some familiar faces!), and they drafted in enough people to pull us off. On the way home, the headsail halyard broke, prompting yet another trip to the chandlers to replace all the halyards. I later discovered that also on the ferry were members of the Harbour Authority... still at least they know now that we don't know what we're doing...

Having recovered from that little incident, we set off for our biggest adventure yet – Fambridge for dinner. We took part in the passage race on the way, stopping for lunch at Burnham (three tries to pick up a buoy, with a Police launch circling in a very distracting fashion) and arrived at about 5 o'clock with a very sulky child. After help rafting from various members, we had a friendly drink, and then off to the pub for dinner. Unfortunately the youngest member of the crew needed bed quite early, so two of us had to retire before the party got to full swing, but co-Skipper and one member of Crew were there for the shock announcement that Maestro had won the Sambuca cup for the passage race. The next day (sulky child transformed after a night's sleep onboard) we sailed home again, with a race in the morning (crossing the line in our rightful last place) and a communal lunch at anchor. After such success we weren't keen on heading home quite yet, so spent a night on our mooring at Paglesham, then sailed back to Burnham for another night, then finally sailed back home on the Monday evening, a fantastic weekend.

The August bank holiday weekend was our last trip of the season I suspect. We set out on Saturday evening with the intention of anchoring for the night in Yokesfleet Creek, but discovered that we don't have a working anchor light, so had another night on the mooring. Sunday was a lovely sail (with a large slice of motoring) back to Fambridge, to prove we could do it on our own, which we could. I was terrified when it came to tying up on the pontoon and I think it must

have shown, as several people came to offer help which was gratefully received. Setting off for home the next morning we looked rather like we knew what we were doing as we left the pontoon (an illusion, of course!) and headed off. It was pretty blowy, so we put in two reefs as demonstrated by John L, and put on the storm jib. Having decided we were low on fuel, the more timid members of the party (those who tend to feel safer motoring than sailing) had to give way to the more gung-ho, and we sailed right from the start. It was a beautiful day and we had a fabulous sail all the way back to Paglesham. There seemed to be hundreds of dinghies as we entered the Roach, which we avoided without panic, which is a sign of how far we've come. It was a shame that when we got back to our mooring and headed for land, I misjudged the amount of water on the pontoon and broke the outboard for the tender, but I'm not too bad at rowing and it only took three trips to get all the people and the essential kit onto land!

Now the season is about over for us I think. We've had a wonderful summer. We've fixed things we didn't know were broken, and broken things which were fine before we started. We've gone from terrified to even come off the mooring, to sailing off for days at a time with the full crew. We've converted both the children to sailing in a big way (pew!), and we've fallen on our feet with membership to a great Sailing Association. We've even got a shiny trophy on the mantel piece. It's been an expensive and exhausting summer, and the best I can remember. Roll on next year: we're even hoping to get out of the Crouch!



Oh, and we've discovered that pocket money goes a long way at the boat jumble!

2009 Season Gallery

A few pictures taken during the season!



BRIAR ROSE circumnavigates Sheppey (small consolation for aborted trip to France) with crew George Phillips and John L



FRANCESCA, SWANTI and ARWEN EVENSTAR scrub off at Paglesham



Shaun and son Ben set of for their late season cruise.



Rafted up at Fambridge for the 2009 rally



Nigel sailing MEMORY in the Roach



Taking PHILOMELLE to Carters for re-engine-DALLY in service!