

Roach Sailing Association

www.paglesham.org.uk/rsa

September 2012 Newsletter

In this issue

Chairman's Report

Racing Update

PSGC Cruise 2012

CORINNE Makes The East Coast

Laying Up Supper

Bosun's (and Editor's) Corner

Carry on Down Channel

Pyefleet Cruise 2012

Chairman's Report

Mike Green

I have spent the last several weeks complaining how weeded up 'VERLOCITY' was and how poorly she performed. All down to the ineffective antifouling I used and the high cost of perhaps more effective alternatives. After scrubbing off at Carter & Wards slipway recently with the considerable help of John L. our Bosun, what a difference in performance !

To celebrate, John and I decided to go for lunch at the Swallowtail restaurant in Burnham marina. We had a very fast sail against a big spring tide down river under full main to the Branklet and then a beat up Crouch to the Burnham moorings after putting a reef in the main and several rolls in the genoa. It was blowing 20 to 25 knots from WSW and she really went well, even the yacht name seemed more appropriate. Another lesson learnt, scrub off at least once, if not twice a season to maintain sailing performance. On returning to my mooring we found that the two galvanised shackles securing the mooring lines to the stainless steel swivel fitting above the buoy had almost worn completely through and had to be renewed. Yet another lesson, stainless steel to galvanised steel fittings cause electrolytic corrosion resulting in the galvanised fitting wearing away, so check your mooring if you have this combination. By

the way, we had an excellent lunch, sitting on the balcony out of the wind, in the sunshine.

A good turn out of yachts for the Pyefleet weekend recently, six boats rafted up with Richard's anchor taking the strain overnight, plus two others anchored nearby, we all enjoyed the shared food and drinks and were very lucky with the weather in what has proved to be a poor summer. At least I reached the Orwell this year and had good weather for the three days away. Still, the season isn't over yet, another five or six weeks to go before haul out and I trust you will make the most of them as I intend to. We still have another significant event taking place afloat, this is the Steak and Oyster Feast on Sunday 21st October and I hope to see you there.

Finally I am sure you will join me in wishing Simon our Treasurer, a speedy recovery from the operation to repair his head where bone was removed after his serious stroke.

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Ray Lilley with his fishing boat CELTIC WARRIOR
Wayne Miller with his Mirage 27 SUNSHINE

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Laying up Supper

The laying up supper will be at the Thorpe Bay Yacht Club on 10th November. We suggest meeting at 7-7.30pm

The rate for the meal is £20 per person and details of the menu are as follows:

French Bread and Butter

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1. *Our Homemade Chicken & Duck Liver Pate Served with Salad Garnish and Toasts*
2. *Cream of Chicken Soup*
3. *Prawn Cocktail*

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1. *Roast French Trimmed Loin of Pork Served with an Apple Cider Gravy*
2. *Our Homemade Steak & Ale Pie Served with Rich Beef Gravy*
3. *Poached Salmon Fillet Served with Prawn and Dill Cream Sauce*

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1. *Fresh Strawberry Individual Pavlova Served with a Fresh Strawberry Couli*
2. *Apple Crumble with Custard*
3. *Trio of Ice Cream*

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Tea or Coffee available separately at the bar

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. Please note we will need to know your menu options.

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

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Racing Update

Richard Bessey

Strong winds, Pageants and double-dip woes did nothing to stop the RSA dingy series, which culminated in its sixth race, the Oyster Cup. We have four cup winners (APPLE, MAKEDO, MERGANSER and STELLA MARIE), and the final point scores are below.

MAKEDO	15
APPLE	13
STELLA MARIE	12
SARAH EDITH	6
MERGANSER	4
ELG	3

WINKS	2½
NEMO	2
SUSIE	1½



Last race of the season, APPLE, STELLA MARIE, ELG and MAKEDO round the mark

Meanwhile there are still some cruiser races to complete, and with only 5 points between the top 6 positions, anything could happen (and probably will). A new contestant SUNSHINE will hopefully be joining the 12 boats already competing.

Aaron Lewis Sambuca Cup

For the 2013 season the Sambuca Cup, which is in memory of Aaron Lewis who lost his life in Afghanistan, will have a change of format. It changed initially this year with a challenge to all boats to log the position of all racing buoys passed from Paglesham to Fambridge.

The idea is that members register a personal sailing challenge with the Committee before the start of the season. The degree of 'challenge' will obviously vary between members, for some it may be a first foreign cruise, for others it might be something nearer to home, for example entering every RSA race.

A written account should also be submitted, which for some may be a challenge in its own right! The Committee will judge the 'most challenged' before the Laying Up Supper.

Finally, can you please return the cups to Jonathan for engraving as soon as you can.

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Bosun (and Editor's) Corner

John Langrick

Many thanks for the excellent articles for this newsletter. We have a new award which will be presented for what the committee feel is the best article at the Laying up Supper.

Please do keep these coming as we have another newsletter in the Spring 2013.

Laying up dates

I have booked the following slots for those who would like to haul out at Carters Yard this year. Please let myself (John Langrick), know your option so that we can coordinate

logistics. You will need to arrange for your cradle etc to be assembled for your haul out and I can help with this.

Wed October 31th – Fri Nov 2nd
Monday 12th November – Fri 16th
Monday 26th November – Fri 30th

Please note that the rates have increased by 10% this year

Paglesham Yard update.

I will be arranging a shed and dinghy park and PVT land tidy this winter and dates will be announced via the Roach Group.

The yard has explained that, in future, they would like to run all the moorings individually rather than be managed as a group. They also say that the road, slipway and yard are to be tidied up. This was announced at the beginning of this year, but as yet nothing at all has happened.

We plan to have a small group of interested parties who will form a 'Mooring Committee' who will represent mooring holders interests to the yard in future.

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PSGC Cruise 2012

Mike Green and David Hanchet

Foreword

In the words of Maurice Griffiths (*The First of the Tide, 1979*) "Cruising is what you make it" and this year in particular, the Gentlemen of Paglesham had to duck and dive a bit to get the show on the road!

At short notice Rodney Choppin had to decline and leave *HALLOW'EEN* in port. This left his crew, John Whittingham and (potentially) Robin Slater minus a passage. Especially "O me miserum" for John as he had travelled from Australia! (we would like to think it was just for the Cruise and to bring a good supply of Sue's delicious spiced cake, but the honest truth is that they were over visiting family and friends, as well as for John to take to his beloved East Coast waters again).

Step in Mike Green, Chairman of the RSA and his son Stewart! In a trice John was offered safe passage aboard their boat, *VERLOCITY*, and Mike stepped up to the role of Fleet Commodore. (This was doubly good as Mike proved to be an excellent leader, not least for introducing a new custom, namely that skippers pay for **all** the drinks at The West Mersea YC Dinner, and it also meant that Sue's cake did not travel from Os in vane).

Dear reader you may think that that is alone enough ducking and diving at short notice for one cruise involving (now) just 2 boats and 5 men, but on the morning of Sunday 1st July at Paglesham it was blowing a hooley and Ivor Jones decided to follow the advice of Jon Walmsley who had said in the "Punchbowl" the night before "If I were you I'd sail the pub for a few days". Ivor concluded that it was too brisk for *MARSHMALLOW* to set forth across the Ray Sand Channel, let

alone The Spitway. The reason for this wise decision lay partly in the size of his boat compared with the weather conditions, but it has to be admitted, mostly in the inexperience of his crew (that'll be me, David Hanchet, Hon.RSA Member, old friend of Ivor's, wooden boat lover, but pretty hopeless at charts and, especially, spotting buoys).

So, in this climate Mike and Stewart decided to pile John, the gear and the cake aboard *VERLOCITY* and set off. The Fleet Commodore therefore takes up the Log from there on until *MARSHMALLOW* joined *VERLOCITY* on Tuesday 3rd July at Bradwell. Ivor and I did take Jon's advice, although by day we did also visit some boatyards in Maldon and its environs.

The Dates Sunday 1st July – Saturday 7th July

The Boats and Personnel

VERLOCITY Mike Green – Co-Skipper
Stewart Green – Co-skipper
John Whittingham – Senior Crew

MARSHMALLOW - Ivor Jones – Skipper
David Hanchet – Crew

Persons/Boats Joining on a Temporary Basis

CORINNE Skipper, Aleck Poole (night of 5th July)
Rodney Choppin Night of 6th July
Robin Slater ditto

Appointments and Positions

Michael Green Esq - Fleet Commodore and RSA Chairman
Ivor Jones - 2-I-C Fleet Command
John Whittingham - Crocodile Look Out
Stewart Green - Deputy Hon. Purser
David Hanchet - Hon Purser and O-I-C Log

The Toasts

The North Fambridge Toast to Comradeship
The Toast to The Roach Sailing Association

The Cruise Part I

Mike Green

Sunday 1st July 2012

Departed Paglesham at 12.00 in strong SW wind on route to the Pyefleet after settling John Whittingham in the forecabin with his bags and packages. A reasonably fast passage through the Spitway and up Colne ensued in winds up to 25 knots. Ivor made the right decision not to join us in *MARSHMALLOW* as it was rough entering the Blackwater in company with two other yachts, one of which we overtook!

We picked up a mooring buoy in the Pyefleet at 17.00, cleared away and then drinks and nibbles were taken in the cockpit. Soon followed by a tinned dinner of Irish Stew, potatoes and beans accompanied by red wine and followed by cheese and biscuits plus late bottled vintage port. A pleasant evening passed talking over previous voyages and John's experiences in Australia.

Monday 2nd July 2012

After a quiet night, after breakfast we departed without any demand for a mooring fee and headed up Colne through the barrage and past Wivenhoe up to Rowhedge on the rising tide. It was still quite blowy and cloudy with a few spots of rain and our aim was to have drinks at the Anchor. We moored up alongside the grassy area just upriver from the pub, looking forward to a pint or two but to our horror opening wasn't until midday.

So off to the local store for a few provisions, milk, cereal etc then a walk round the village, spinning out the time until opening. Still not quite 12.00 when we noticed the tide had started to ebb, there was just not enough time for drinks at the pub and remain afloat. Stewart was dismayed and I wasn't too happy so we cast off for Brightlingsea and a berth alongside the pontoon where we arrived about 13.30.

It was still windy so we had lunch aboard then a zizz, on waking it was tea and John's cake, made by Sue in Australia and carefully carried on and off aeroplanes, cars, dinghy etc to arrive in perfect condition to eat on board. It was well received and we made sure there was enough left for another day and for MARSHMALLOW's crew.

Stewart pumped up the dinghy and we went ashore in the evening to the Yachtsman calling in on the harbourmaster on route. He complained about the lack of trade and the awful weather, it had started to rain, so we paid our dues and headed to the pub. After refreshments we felt the need for an Indian curry supper which was satisfied by an excellent Kerala based meal just down the road from the pub, very tasty and to be recommended. Back on board without getting too wet after an enjoyable run ashore.

Tuesday 3rd July 2012

The weather had considerably improved and after a light breakfast we set off motor sailing down Colne against the tide heading for the Blackwater and Heybridge Basin. Engine off and we had a good sail up towards the Basin then turned around and headed for Bradwell Marina. Speaking with Ivor on route to learn that they were well on their way to join us.

The Cruise Part II

David Hanchet

Meanwhile, MARSHMALLOW left Paglesham and made her way through the Ray'sn and, having had word from Fleet Command, made her rendez-vous with VERLOCITY at Bradwell Marina. VERLOCITY's crew had kindly arranged berthing and after a brief hooray (drinks) we were soon off to the "Green Man" for a good night. It was great to be back cruising in company again and even better when Mike and Stewart invited the crew of MARSHMALLOW to join them aboard VERLOCITY for breakfast!



Ivor and David in MARSHMALLOW

Wednesday 4th July 2012

Any trace of a hangover was quickly lost to the bacon and eggs provided on VERLOCITY and afterwards we were fortified for a stroll around the marina and, in particular the far reaches of the boatyard. For some of us it was sad to find that MULDONICH, the 1930s Albert Strange designed Yawl, was still languishing in the darkest corner of the furthest bit of the yard. This was particularly regrettable as it had been reported in the yachting press that she had been acquired by Jamie Clay of Maldon and taken to his workshop for restoration. It is hoped that he still intends to do this!

Then it was time to take the tide for a glorious sail on the Blackwater as far as the entrance to Heybridge Basin. But, it being Wednesday, it was important to get a table booked at WMYC for supper and Mike radioed ahead for moorings and table reservations. After Mike and Stewart had put their outboard to extreme test (by towing Ivor and myself behind their dinghy in our Avon) we sat outside the club in glorious sunshine having pre-dinner drinks. Our table, by the window and overlooking the club moorings and the Quarters was befitting of a party of distinguished visiting yachtsman, so it is somewhat surprising that we got sat there! Perhaps it was because I had mentioned that Mr Green was the Chairman of the Roach Sailing Association, or because he had mentioned that his party included the man who had just had built the first West Mersea OD (Club 10 Footer) for 80 years (see Classic Boat No 288 June 2012) and had become a personal acquaintance of the (then) Honorary Secretary! There was a splendid atmosphere and you almost expected Maurice Griffiths and Coppie to toddle in for a gin at any time after finishing listening to the six o'clock news on their Roberts radio.

As has been reported elsewhere (but it is so important that it is worth restating) Mike and Ivor, in a demonstration of generosity which knows no bounds, decided to pick up the tab for all the drinks that evening. Some regretted that this fact was not generally announced when orders were being made. As always the hospitality of the WMYC and the quality of its food (and showers!) was beyond reproach, and it remains for me, along with Venice and a small walled town in Tuscany called Lucca one of my favourite places.

Thursday 5th July

After going ashore to shower and buy provisions in West Mersea (tip: the Club launch provides a free taxi service if you are using the Club for refreshments or a meal) we made

the short passage round to Pyfleet where we anchored for the evening whilst Stewart slaved away below deck to provide an excellent meal. Those of us on deck saw the Blackwater ladies gig boat heading for us, propelled by 5 ladies. Mike and Stewart became very excited when they thought the gig was named after their ship – but it was actually *VELOCITY*. Anyhow cheery ahoy's and other exchanges were called across the water.



John and Mike in VERLOCITY

Hardly had the excitement calmed down and the meal started than Mike spotted *CORINNE* coming up Pyfleet and hailed her. More ahoy's and exchanges, this time successfully alluring personnel to come aboard. Aleck Poole joined us around the table and took some drinks and food with the assembled company. Aleck, who was sailing alone, had intended a quiet night and supper based around a German sausage – but what he got was a rowdy bunch of Roach sailors. As Stewart and myself had not been aboard *CORINNE*, Aleck kindly gave us the tour of his yawl – and demonstrated how his architect's quest for order had led to many cunning and space saving initiatives – including a draw where he kept said German sausage(s) for long trips.

Friday 6th July

Following yet more recovery from alcohol we slipped away from Pyfleet leaving *CORINNE* at anchor. We wanted to get to North Fambridge where supper had been booked and Rodney and Robin had been invited to join us, travelling by road as soon as Robin got back from his London office.

However, the weather was closing in – the wind was light but the real trouble was the rain which resulted in poor visibility. In full in -shore jackets and trousers we struggled to see through the rain to pick out the buoys. Our course had to be across the Spitway and we had to reach it and cross it before the tide started to fall. Fortunately, and in true RSA spirit, *VERLOCITY* stuck with *MARSHMALLOW* so that the latter could benefit from the chart plotter aboard the bigger and more modern boat.

Just as *MARSHMALLOW* entered the Crouch the sun began to break through and a rib stuffed full with armed policemen all sitting in little straight rows came powering alongside and bamboozled us with questions. *Where are you from? Where are you bound? How many of you are aboard? Are you British? What supplies are you carrying?* Before Ivor could reply to the questions (in order) Iraq, Buckingham Palace, us two and 6 Iraqis, not really, and white powder, I intervened and said that we were Old Gaffers enjoying sailing this 1966

Blackwater Sloop built by Dan Webb and Feesey in Maldon around her home waters. “*Sorry to trouble you Gents*” was just audible above the roar of the engines as the craft and her unsettling crew sped off. And, just before I had time to add “*And I’ll have you know that I am an Honorary Member of the Roach Sailing Association*”.

We achieved our aim and came alongside the pontoon ahead of the arrival of The Two Rs (Rodney and Robin). The sun shone on us as you may care to witness in the photo of the group taken. (*Had the ed been sent it!*).

As RSA Members who attended the Supper at North Fambridge will know, the Ferryboat now belongs to the Yacht Haven and they have jazzed up the conservatory, making it rather too couth for visiting yachtsmen at the end of a cruise (where clothes and gear are wet and generally recycled). Still it is very nice, although one wonders what Francis B Cooke would make of it!



‘The Gentlemen’, left to right, Robin Slater, John Wittingham, Ivor Jones, Rodney Choppin, David Hanchet and Mike Green

The main business of the evening was for Mike to propose the customary toasts – that to Comradeship in which we also remember with affection the late George” Bunny “ Jago , and to the Roach Sailing Association, its members and their boats. This accomplished it was good to catch up with news from Rodney and Robin. The latter remains very positive about his Brixham trawler “*OUR BOY*” the restoration of which has survived both fire and the recession. And it is still hoped that the PGSC will one day be aboard “*OUR BOY*”, even if that means sailing in the West Country and risking the pirates!

Saturday 7th July

It was with some regret that we made ready to leave the pontoon at North Fambridge for it meant that the 2012 cruise was entering its last lap. However, the skipper of *MARSHMALLOW* left with the satisfaction that Toby, who collects the berthing fees, still remains oblivious to bowsprits!

MARSHMALLOW and *VERLOCITY* ran with the tide down the Crouch and into the Roach. Home river again!

We had soon picked up the moorings at Paglesham and had some lunch on board whilst we tidied the boats and made them ready to be left. We ate the last of Sue’s cake.

Postscript

All in all, ducking and diving had worked. We had been able to play to our strengths (and weaknesses) and regardless of

necessary changes in personnel and the harsh weather at the beginning of the week, we had made the most of it. This may have been England's worst summer for over a hundred years, but it had not stopped the Gentlemen of Paglesham, even if they had had to make compromises.

We had checked out that West Mersea, North Fambridge et al are still there and that with an average age of around 69 (it would be higher but for Stewart!) we can still get round the decks and into the dinghy! Indeed we can do this with great alacrity if the words "food and drinks" are called out.

Roll on 2013. After all, "*Cruising is what you make it....!*"

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Carry on Down Channel

Richard Bessey

Wed 18th July

We were late. Having arranged to meet GEM in Quay Reach on Tuesday evening, it was late Wednesday morning before we set out from Paglesham to sail to Ramsgate. With a strong SW wind we got to the Sunk beacon (or where it used to be) at about high water, then on through the Fishermans Gat. Our course took us almost out to the wind farm off Ramsgate before beating up for the port, which disappeared in a rain squall as we approached. Paul & Paula, aboard GEM, had arrived shortly before us and had dinner prepared by the time we tied up to the pontoon. Like many others, the marina had plenty of spare spaces due to the unseasonal weather of the last few months.

Thur 19th July

Similar weather, so we stayed in port until the afternoon. The Olympic torch was in Ramsgate that morning, the town all decorated with flags. The sea was quite rough as we came round the corner to Dover, which immediately disappeared in a squall of rain. Our timing coincided with the arrival of two ferries and departure of another, so we jilled around in the murk until we were allowed to enter port. There was some swell in the harbour anchorage, so we only raft up briefly for dinner, then anchored separately for the rather bumpy night.



GEM in the Downs

Fri 20th July

The sea having moderated considerably with an offshore breeze overnight, we sailed at 05:00, rounding Dungeness by 08:30. It was slower going from here, with more headwind and punching tide, tacking inshore to Eastbourne then out round Beachy Head. Brighton, as we passed, disappeared in heavy rain, which flattened the sea but killed the wind. So we motored slowly on to Shoreham (whose distinctive chimney disappeared in a rain squall), and just make the 9:30 lock-in. The lock (aka "the washing machine") filled with foam as we rose to the ship basin. After tying up at Lady Bee marina, curry was served aboard GEM.



The Washing Machine

Sat 21st July

We found some good local shops up the hill from the marina, and stocked up on fresh provisions before departing. The local chandlery was exceptionally well stocked (good job we had to hurry away). There was insufficient water to lock out until 09:30, when the lock was jam-packed – but we squeezed in amongst the local fishing day-boats (a friendly crowd, pro-Shorham and anti-Brighton, which is "full of drug dealers"). We had a fine SE F3-4 wind, so out with the cruising chute for a while, but we had to take it in before Selsey Bill as the wind strengthened and backed for a short time. We had hoped to make the Solent in time to see the J Class race around the island, but our slender hopes were dashed as the race was shortened (according to some news clips that Justine picked up on her phone). But we sailed on up to Cowes, and anchored on the East side for the night.

Sun 21st July

A day in the Solent (which is busier than ever): late morning start, sailing down to Yarmouth in company with oligarchs in their super-yachts. At Yarmouth we filled up with fuel and procured a relatively cheap pontoon berth with no land access (so pump up the rubber D). Paul spotted SWEET SURRENDER (John Negus) tying up to a mooring outside, so we called him on the VHF. John had had a rough crossing from Guernsey, so was retiring early. After ice-creams in the village and dinner aboard, we had a long walk along the shore towards Freshwater Bay.



A rather large yacht in the Solent

Mon 23rd July

We set off 04:30 into thick fog at the Needles. We were glad of the radar as there were several other vessels near us, headlong in the tide. It soon cleared when we got away from the land. The wind was very light and southerly. At 08:00 we called up GEM and decided to change destination to Alderney since wind was no help and speed too slow to make Guernsey on a favourable tide. Later the wind did go SE but remained light. So we had a smooth sea and sunny crossing, arriving at Braye harbour about 18:30. GEM picked up a buoy and we anchored nearby, and we all dined aboard GEM.



Braye Harbour, Alderney

Tue 24th July

We went ashore using GEM's outboard as we were about half a mile from the quay. Along the north shore of the island we walked, to survey the Swinge channel, then up by the airport and down through the town for supplies. We were back on board for a cream tea and a snooze in the afternoon, followed by a fish supper aboard PHILOMELLE.

Wed 25th July

The outboard failed to start so rowed ashore for another walk, visiting various military remains around the East of the island, and some fine beaches. We narrowly escaped an in-depth lecture on German pill-box architecture from a local enthusiast. Shops and showers by the quay (some good local produce

including bacon we had met earlier), then back to the boat to depart for Guernsey at about 15:00 via the Swinge (the tide having turned West shortly before). This was an easy 4-hour sail with NE wind (rather light) to arrive in St Peter Port along with a flotilla of other yachts from the East. Harassed-looking harbourmasters allocated us berths in the outer harbour. These pontoon-rafts are not connected to shore, so up with the rubber-dubby again, and to join GEM on a different pontoon for dinner.

Thur 26th July

A short walk turned into a rather longer one after a forced detour inland, then a march in search of a Lucas agent for a spark plug (suspected cause of outboard failure). Eventually back on board, we motored round to Herm via the Corbette passage (rocky with cross-tide), anchored off the steps (rather close to the ferry mooring) and went ashore for a walk across the island. Dinner aboard PHILOMELLE was a large Brill (from the fish quay). We moved away from the ferry mooring to anchor for the night, after a clueless motor boat owner picked up GEM's anchor buoy for a mooring! There was a small shower and lightning to the South overnight, but otherwise peaceful.



Rather close to the ferry mooring

Fri 27th July

Sailed at 06:00 for Le Jaudy river in Brittany, the town of Treguier at its head. A good NE wind gradually went NW in the afternoon. Halfway we passed North of the huge Roches Douvres lighthouse and its surrounding rocks. Approaching the Jaudy estuary at slack water, PHILOMELLE entered via the Passe du Nord-Est but advised GEM to take the longer route via the Grande Pass buoyed channel as our route was unmarked and rather strewn with rocks. Coming into the peaceful river at 14:30, we had a pleasant sail 4 miles up to an anchorage under the cliff in a curve of the river. This spot is within sight of the town, with a small chateau above and wooded hills all around. A beautiful anchorage (in company with 3 other boats) but one is afraid to pass wind as every little sound echoes around the cliffs. GEM arrived later having had a rougher entry but with the bonus company of a porpoise in the river entrance. Much needed Chillie aboard GEM for dinner.

Sat 28th July

Richard sprained his back getting back into the forepeak during the night. This meant taking it easy for a few days, so after a late breakfast Paul set up the outboard and we went up the river

to the town quay, looked around the town and bought some local produce. We were back on the boat for lunch (langoustines, cheeses and pate), followed by another walk ashore. The farmer has constructed an extensive maze in the maize crop (already 2M high) which local children (and us) were exploring. In the centre was a grassed clearing with bouncy castles. Back aboard for a siesta, then dinner of pate on toast, followed by moules and red wine.



Anchorage in the Jaudy river

Sun 29th July

Another trip to town for further supplies, and another fine seafood repast for lunch, washed down with excellent local cider. Then up-anchor for a short motor down-river, to anchor again up-stream of the Porte Jaune village. Here they were having a sea-festival with many traditional boats sailing about, and traditional music ashore. After dinner aboard GEM, we went ashore to the festival. The traditional Breton dance music they were playing as we arrived, had an edge to it, especially the sharp tones of the wind instrument (a type of brass horn). They were still playing after sunset, and under a full moon we returned to the boats in the rubber dubby.

Mon 30th July

We sailed at 06:00 down the river and out through the western channel. The porpoise was there again, fishing around a red buoy. Our route then went East around the peninsular and up the Lezardrieux river. It was another fine day with a fair westerly wind, very pleasant sailing amongst the rocks and channels. We tied up at the marina at Lezardrieux, and after stocking up at the supermarket, went aboard GEM for a seafood extravaganza of crab, langoustine and shellfish.



GEM approaching Lezardrieux

Tue 31st July

After a leisurely start we sailed down the river and south-about to an anchorage off the island of Brehat. Anchoring well offshore next to a Breton lugger, we all rowed ashore to explore. The island is full of flowers, with many stone houses and walled gardens interspersed with small fields. The views, over the rocky archipelago all around, are stunning. Returning to the boats, anchored in the strong tide, we motored back up the channel to a protected spot off Loguivy. Dinner aboard PHILOMELLE consisted of kebabbed French sausage and steak.



Breton lugger off Brehat

Wed 1st Aug

The day was windy and occasionally showery, but we decided on another visit to Brehat. Returning to yesterday's anchorage, we found it a little exposed, and decided to keep anchor watch until the flood tide brought smoother conditions. A chap (hereinafter known as Monsieur LePlonkeur) and his long-suffering wife, attempted to anchor his large trimeran in the middle of the other vessels. Chaos ensued as he yawed about, Repeatedly paying out and retrieving scope. After the tide turned, Paul accompanied us on a walk around the north part of the island. The high point of this walk was coming across a traffic jam – a tractor towing a passenger trailer had met a donkey and cart in the narrow lane: the tractor could not reverse, and the donkey refused! Returning aboard, M. LePlonkeur was still yawing about, and we went back to our protected anchorage for he night, and 'Stag' Chilli aboard PHILOMELLE.



View from Brehat

Thu 2nd Aug

We had planned to visit Paimpol, a harbour with a drying channel, the previous day, but had left it too late to cross the sands with confidence. So we had to be up early to catch the morning high water. But as it happened, we were up at 04:30

anyway, as GEM was dragging in the strong current (it was approaching Spring tides). Paul had trouble getting the anchor, as the chain jammed in the winch; meanwhile Paula was stemming the tide under engine. Eventually with the anchor aboard, we sailed through the tortuous rocky channels, and approached Paimpol over the sands. Think of Friesland, but with rocks everywhere, and wooded hills all around. On arrival in the harbour through the free-flow lock, we found the place preparing for a festival and expecting 60 boats on the afternoon tide. We were nevertheless given berths and decided to stay for a couple of days to see the festival. It was then that we received some family news which meant cutting short our cruise and heading home. Justine and I spent the day walking around the bay, dodging the occasional shower. Dinner was chicken pie aboard GEM.

Fri 3rd Aug

We set off early in the morning, at high water, for Guernsey. The tide was fair to the North of Les Roches Douvres, but it was slow-going after that. But we arrived in Guernsey in the early evening, and secured berths alongside. Beef casserole aboard PHILOMELLE.

Sat 4th Aug

We sailed at 06:00 through the Little Russel channel and down to the Alderney Race in a SW F4-5 wind, which decreased as the day went on. The race was relatively smooth, giving us 12 knots over the ground at times with the following wind. We turned North to cross the channel, making excellent time with the favourable wind and moderate sea (though it was a bit roly-poly as times). We passed the Needles and tied up outside Yarmouth at dusk.

Sun 5th Aug

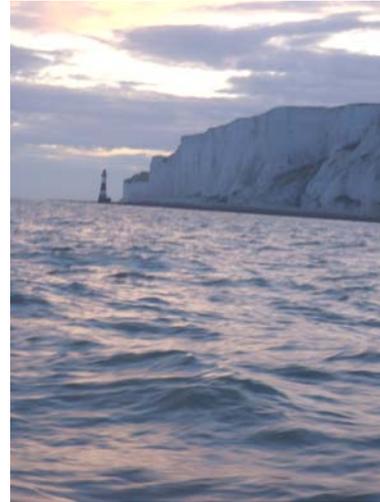
Departing at 05:00 with the East-going tide, we passed through the Solent and on to Eastbourne. Somewhere off Shoreham, the engine revs suddenly reduced, and would not increase even on full throttle. Taken out of gear, the engine revs became normal, so it seemed we had something round the prop. We decided to put up the cruising chute and try to get past Beachy Head under sail, and check out the prop in harbour. For a while we had a fine southerly breeze and made good progress, but during the afternoon the wind faltered. So I fished around with the boathook and was lucky enough to get hold of a netting sack, which came free from the prop. The sun set as we rounded Beachy Head, and it was dark as we approached Sovereign Harbour, and almost low water. The navigation lights seemed rather weak, a wreck loomed out of the water near the entrance, and the channel inside was rather hit-and-miss; however we missed the shoals and entered the empty lock without mishap. GEM arrived shortly after, but had to wait a few minutes for the next lock. Inside it was like a deserted city centre, rather gloomy and creepy. A sunken pontoon added to the hazards in the marina – not a triumph of ‘elf and safety’! Having found GEM we all went in search of refreshment - but no chance late on a Sunday night. So back to GEM for a late supper and farewell drink, as GEM would be staying another day but we needed to press on.

Mon 6th Aug

Another early start, aiming to make Ramsgate with the stiff following breeze. It was rock-and-rolly off Dungeness, but

nothing to the conditions off the South Foreland and close inshore by Dover harbour, where we surfed over very steep waves at barely controllable speed. It was calmer round the corner in the Downs, but blow me down if Ramsgate didn't vanish in a rain squall as we approached!

We filled up with diesel and procured a fish & chip supper in Ramsgate.



Beachy Head

Tue 7th Aug

This wind was mainly SW4 for our Thames crossing, via Fisherman's Gat and the Sunk as usual. It was low water neaps at the Sunk, and as our depth sounder was playing up, I had the lead out to check our way over the sand (no problems, passing a little South of the old beacon position). We made the Swin Spitway buoy in one tack from the Sunk, then beat slowly up the Whitaker Channel and home to the Roach.

We had less drama than usual, and better weather (we were really lucky with our timing, as the week before our departure, weather had kept many boats away from the Brest festival). Hooray for sun, sand and the chart-plotter, plus good company and good food.

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CORINNE Makes The East Coast.

August 2012

Aleck Poole

Monday 13th Aug

Mike had arrived on Monday from London and I met him off the train at Chalkwell with Jettson. We had a salad lunch in Old Leigh. Whilst Jettson went to play at a friends house Mike and I went out to CORINNE to scrub off some weed whilst she was on her mooring. I'd devised improvised brushes and scrapers on the ends of some drain rods and we did our best.

Tuesday 14th Aug

After breakfast, mine that is, because Mike doesn't eat breakfast, we loaded CORINNE and cast off. A nice sunny day

with a light favourable wind took us out to the Spitway and along the Walle channel. It was a bit light as the tide approached slack water and we were motor sailing to arrive at the Deben entrance about 2 hours after low water. With the latest chartlet the entrance over the bar was easy and we were swept up into the river. I had to pick up a mooring as soon as we were in the river as there had been a fuel problem which I could no longer ignore. Cleaning out the water filter seemed to fix it and it was no more trouble whilst we were away. That short stop was to make a difference as we motored on up the 9 miles to Woodbridge. It got dark and then it got darker. There are some sharp bends and low water as you near Woodbridge. I couldn't find the route under the backdrop of some trees on Troublesome Reach, but as I'd spotted Loder's Cut we crept through there with a few inches to spare. However once through it was impossible at first to locate the channel again against the town lights. After some wandering from side to side I discovered the channel and memory of many day light approaches made it possible with care to miss other boats and creep into the Tide Mill Marina. Tied up by 10.00 pm we went into town in search of late food. All we got was a bag of crisps and a couple of beers, but it was a pleasant warm night sitting outside the Anchor chatting with a tool calibrator who was visiting the old American Air base in the forest near Woodbridge.



Crew Mike taking it easy on an earlier trip.

Wednesday 15th Aug

We were in town before places opened, ravenous for a full English breakfast.

We had a choice and soon found the right one. Shopping for a few essentials Mike came across an outrageous outfit for his holiday. A loose bright red 'T' shirt with a gaudy boating scene painted on the front and a pair of long baggy shorts mostly black emblazoned with the words 'Weird Fish' back and front, which he wore practically every day thereafter. It was great fun. I was going to pass him off as a location finder from the film industry, but the opportunity never arose. On High tide we set off down river for Ramsholt and an afternoon nap. The Avon dinghy was inflated for a trip ashore to eat. Mike had a steak and couple of lagers whilst I had whitebait washed down with a couple of pints of Adnams. Back on board we hauled the Avon on deck and half deflated it. We slept well.

Thursday 16th Aug

Another bright sunny morning saw us making for the Deben bar again early in the morning on the first of the flood. Once heading north we were pushed nicely towards Orford Haven Buoy under full jib. Once again with the latest chartlet the entrance over the bar was easy. The wind from the SW at c. F6 was more than enough to carry us all the way to Aldeburgh under No1 jib alone. As we passed through Orford there were racing classes everywhere. It was a week of racing from Aldeburgh Yacht Club which ended Friday. From Aldeburgh the course is across a vast stretch of open water only passable at half flood and ebb following a tortuous route marked with withies some of which tend to lose their top marks. With about an hour to go before HW I was concerned that we should negotiate the last stretch without grounding and fortunately there was a pleasure trip boat from Snape which enabled us to see the twists and turns before we reached them. Once safely tied up at the quay Mike set off to explore and came back with two promenade tickets (bring your own cushion – err... we have those in abundance) @ £6.50. It was that or sit in isolated single seats, tickets for which had been returned. We knew from the internet that the Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra was performing tonight. There was time for a pint and a nap before then, so we got our heads down.

Thoroughly rested we spruced up and donned our concert going clothes; orange shirt and dark slacks in my case, the red 'T' shirt set off with blue jeans and smart broad blue braces in Mike's case. A full 130 piece orchestra was very impressive with the surprise of an American lady conductor. They performed a Brazillian opening number followed by Dvorak's Cello Concerto. The interval gave everyone a chance to stretch their legs with a walk out on the marshes as the sun set. After the magnificent No.4 the orchestra were persuaded to give two encores of Brazillian pieces.

Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra

Marin Alsop conductor

Antonio Meneses cello

Dvo'k Cello Concerto; Tchaikovsky Symphony No.4

As the UK hands the Olympic torch to Rio, Brazil's flagship orchestra makes its first visit to Britain bringing two of the pinnacles of the romantic orchestral repertoire. In Tchaikovsky's brooding and often turbulent symphony, the dark calls of an insistent fate are warded off with tender introspection and typically glittering orchestral writing. The orchestra's compatriot Antonio Meneses brings his lustrous sound and eloquence to Dvo'k's great concerto, a work that from its arresting, tempestuous opening to radiant conclusion is suffused with some of the composer's loveliest melodies.

After an excellent concert we retired to the nearby Plough and Sail, a modernised pub, for a first class meal. Mike had a rare steak, I had Pork Belly followed by a couple of beers. And so to bed.

Friday 17th Aug

I had an easy morning waiting for the tide in the sunshine whilst Mike took a bus to the nearest Tesco for provisions, but finally it came for time to say farewell to the Maltings as we let the pleasure craft show us the way. Picking up a vacant mooring at Aldeburgh I enquired from the passing yacht club launch if the owner was expected back. He informed me he was out of the

water with a broken prop shaft; lucky for us unlucky for some. I had intended to drop down to Orford but the pm nap was extended until I was woken to hear on the Tannoy the long list of the week's race winners being presented with their trophies. Having decided to stay the night we took the Avon ashore and walked into Aldeburgh. It turned out to be Carnival weekend and there were fun fairs set up in town. Having located the Cross Keys we were all set for a meal and beers. An Irish fiddler was keen to perform, but the landlord declined his offer, so we returned to CORINNE. Just as the crew had settled down for the night to the strains of a ten piece band at the grand yacht club dance the peace was broken by a massive celebratory fire works display on the club pontoon. We had a grand stand view watching rockets and hundred shot cannonades; seeing lit balloons disappear over the marshes to land, who knows where.



'Aldeburgh YC - winner announcements - note Marquee for Grand Dance.

Saturday 18th Aug

Sunny again with, still that strong south westerly, a lazy morning passed watching dinghies including a fleet of Optimists race by up tide. Mike prepared lunch as we made our way on the ebb towards Orford. He introduced me to a New Zealand salad dressing which he says is to be found in every NZ kitchen. Made using condensed milk, malt vinegar and mustard in any quantity to suit your taste – delicious!...voted tops by me. On arrival in Orford a mooring was not available for our size of boat, so I was informed. We made our way to Upper Gull, about a mile away, for a quiet afternoon. The Jolly Sailor became our target for an evening meal and beer after a trip in the Avon under outboard. Mike picked at some prawns and I had a vegetarian risotto, all eaten in the dark in a sultry summer heat with hunting mosquitoes kept at bay by Mike's cigarette smoke. After another beer in the pub we were soon following the bank until we located CORINNE's riding light in Upper Gull.

Sunday 19th Aug

It is recommended to leave the Ore on a rising tide. Having hauled the Avon on board and half deflated it, we set off following a barge to the entrance with full sail and a light SEly wind. We were entertained by a novice water skier in the river, often in the water close to port of us. Even with the favourable tide it took us best part of the day to reach Pin Mill, with a stop to re-fuel and take a shower in Suffolk Yacht Harbour (Levington) on the way. As evening approached we notice that the spring tide was leaving less than anticipated water at the hard and we'd have to hurry if we were to make it to the Butt and Oyster. Seeing the antics of the guy in the inflatable ahead of us gallantly hauling his all girl crew to shore waist deep in

mud we turned round and made a meal aboard CORINNE. As the tide returned we still got ashore for our beers.

Monday 20th Aug

Yet another sunny day. We made a walk up the Hill from the pub to Chelmondiston (pronounced Chumley). Here we found provisions including some locally produced food from the in house butcher. After a lazy lunch we took the afternoon tide to Harwich. I favoured stopping at Half Penny Pier for the night. The friendly harbour master helped us settle against the pontoon after some uncertainty as to who was leaving and who was arriving. It seemed a popular spot for visiting boats to meet their foreign friends. The boat outside us was sailed by an architect and interior designer couple from the Backwater. After a refreshing shower and with two sets of discount vouchers supplied by the harbour master a visit was made to Government House, the man hauled historic crane, the Faros, and the local 'hole in the wall'. Settling into a smoker's shelter in the courtyard of the Alma Inn we enjoyed a steak and a chicken and chorizo paella respectively. The Inn is under new management as a pub restaurant with Spanish chef, hence the voucher which gave us 15% off. Earlier in the afternoon a pilot boat passing at 30 knots had set us dancing, but a peaceful night was had.

Tuesday 21st Aug

Off after coffee and cereal a light Swly with the tide under us gave a couple of long and short tacks up the Wallet from the Naze and into Brightlingsea. Get ashore very early if you want to eat here. The Harbour Master had recommended the Brewer's Arms as best food in town, but on arriving there I discovered it was the place I'd had an unpleasant meal last year. We then found the Yachtsman's Arms stopped serving food at 8.30, just as we arrived with our order, so they passed on about £30 we would have spent. It ended not so well with Fish and Chips out of the paper in the shelter as even the chippy had closed its indoor dining space.

Wednesday 22nd Aug

At a respectable hour and with an easy departure from the pontoons at early flood it soon became necessary to put a reef in the main and with a small jib we made out of the Colne and across to the Bench Head in what Mike says was the best sail of the week ;) It was so good that we were going to be a tad too early at the Rays'n' channel. A small jib got us there at about 2.5 hour BHW. New buoys in the form of a RW pillar and RW spherical buoy are now placed some distance north of the old yellow spherical mark. Although there was good water between the RW's it got pretty shallow by the yellow with 0.9 M at the worst on this rising spring tide. As the RW's were not on my NEW Imray chart I'm not sure what they are supposed to indicate as best water. Do you head for the yellow or keep the RW's in transit?? The next two hours up to HW were spent motoring into wind over tide in rough waves arriving on my mooring just as it was turning at around 4.20pm. After tidying up it left just enough time to get Mike on his way from Rochford Station.

Skipper and crew both agreed it had been an enjoyable trip and there was no rain all week.

Pyefleet weekend 7th-8th-9th September 2012

for Jettson 7 ½ yrs.

Aleck Pool

Friday 7th September

I collected Jettson from his mum with the intention of a fish and chip supper on the way to Paglesham. Driving there at about 6.30 we passed the KFC near The Bell on the 127 and with the sun setting it made a nice place to enjoy the Colonel's two piece and three piece meals, his with a 7Up mine with a regular Pepsi. Once at Paglesham we loaded provisions and sleeping bag etc. into the dinghy and were soon aboard CORINNE with all stowed. We sat in the cockpit in the warmth of the evening gazing at the afterglow of sunset, now well down below the NW horizon.

Saturday 8th September

We were awake early as the first rays of sunrise peeped horizontally through the portholes from a clear sky. Jettson had decided he wanted to sleep on the starboard saloon cushion rather than the forepeak so it was not possible to make breakfast without including him. With nothing to detain us after clearing up we set off under engine with sails set, looking for a breath of wind.

HW had been at 05.40 so we needed to be at the Swin Spitway around low water at 13.00. It was 10.00 before we found any sailing wind around the Outer Crouch buoy. During the motoring I had explained to Jettson how the engine is cooled using seawater passed through the engine and sent out through the exhaust pipe. I sampled this warm water for him in the ship's bucket. This became Jett's amusement as we motored along, the bucket having been tied onto the rail. He wore his lifejacket when not down below and I had rigged a line around the mast and cockpit so he could clip on and walk right around the deck in these easy going conditions. The southerly wind was not quite enough to make the Spitway in time so we motor sailed for another hour. Once past the Wallet Spitway buoy we were able to drift with what little wind there was to the Colne Bar buoy.

Some of the other Roach Sailing Association boats had overtaken us during the day and as we arrived they were already anchored by Stone Point for a planned evening bar-b-que. As I was rounding up into the wind and tide making for a spot to anchor I was hailed by Richard Bessey in PHILOMELLE who beckoned me to tie up alongside. I hadn't rigged lines and fenders as I was expecting to anchor, but Richard swiftly rigged his and we were soon snugly tied up. We settled down as he set off to take the dog ashore. Johnathan from PAKLJHAWA soon came by in his new inflatable and invited us to help him test it with a run ashore. It took six, including Jettson. We stretched our legs in the late afternoon sun and discussion turned to the bar-b-que. It was generally agreed that with the southerly wind still blowing and the tide about to turn it would be prudent to make for Pyefleet Creek for a 'raft up'. Jett wants to return to this spot another time.

The raft up took place slowly until boats tied up together were PAKLJHAWA, AEGIR, IMOTHESE, PHILOMELLE, SWIFTSURE and CORINNE, all on Richard's anchor.



Jettson and 'granddad' on Pyefleet cruise 2012

KETOS and MARSHMALLOW laid off. We all cooked and ate separately with some sampled sharing activity. By agreement I introduced Jett to the art of stepping from vessel to vessel and he was soon hopping from boat to boat like a veteran sailor. John Langrick, IMOTHESE, suggested Jett should inspect each boat in turn and decide which was 'best boat', this developed into a 'gold, silver and bronze' contest and took several inspections. Jon Walmsley stopped his dinner to give Jettson the hard sell on PAKLJHAWA, his Wharram cat. I'd never seen such a dedicated piece of salesmanship.

http://www.roachriver.org.uk/rsa/newsletter/2011_feb.pdf

It was no surprise that PAKLJHAWA won gold. Silver and bronze I don't remember and I'm not sure why CORINNE came last but suspect that some bribery and corruption was involved. My suspicions were aroused by the large chocolate bar.

Sunday 9th September

Sunrise this morning was something of a surprise. It was light below decks but on inspection outside the light was filtered through a dense mist with visibility no more than a few metres. In the time it took to cook and enjoy a hearty breakfast the sun had burnt off quite a lot of mist and by 09.00 there was no reason to stay. Motoring out of the Colne we passed some of the dozen or more Thames Barges we'd seen racing in a barge match yesterday. Setting full sail we now tacked towards the Bar buoy with the wind still southerly. From the Bar buoy I made a course to the North Eagle and then towards the Wallet Spitway. Once tacked through the Spitway we were on one long reach back into the R.Crouch. Lunch was easy to make in these fine sailing conditions and Jett took the helm briefly. Somewhere near the Crouch Buoy the sails were backed and flapping like crazy. It had been like hitting an invisible wall of stronger wind from the south west. The tide under us increased the effect and it was a more robust sail from here on. PAKLJHAWA soon flew past us. Inevitably CORINNE's sails came down and we motored the last stretch as we entered the R. Roach making for my mooring.

By the time I'd cleared everything away and we were safely ashore I was exhausted. Jett had been making plans in his mind during the trip for sailing 'his' boat to France and other European destinations before making for the rest of the world. I think both of us had a good time.

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