



Roach Sailing Association

www.roachriver.org.uk/rsa

September 2013 Newsletter

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Chairman's Report

Mike Green

After that glorious spell of weather at the start of September where Valerie & I were away for a week of hotel holiday in Bosham (not sailing you notice), we are now back to quite an autumnal spell. I have not been further North this season than the Blackwater, no Orwell, Deben or Ore, I have not even scrubbed off yet which was my usual September issue Chairman's theme.

I did go down to the Southampton Boatshow on the first Sunday where it blew & rained quite hard, at 2.30 pm the pontoons were deserted & we spent 3 hours in the cabin of the Ovni 445 'ONYAMARKS' chatting amongst ourselves waiting for customers who didn't arrive!

It all sounds, or should I say 'reads' rather depressing so far BUT I have high hopes for the remains of the season. Firstly, I am away sailing on the West Coast of Scotland in a 40ft Feeling at the end of the month, a party of 4 including 2 ladies who are both very good cooks. There will be plenty of G&Ts, wine & good company plus the

food & wonderful scenery plus some excellent sailing. Secondly we still have the Steak & Oyster Afloat feast on the 20th October & the Roach Plate cruiser race on the 6th October to look forward to. I will be away for the Shuttlewood Cup race on the 29th September.



RSA Committee 2013

I cannot end this report without thanking our committee for their support throughout the season plus the efforts of Richard Bessey, Ken Wickham & John Langrick on the Roach Moorings Group who negotiated with the Barkses for the 23 moorings we use downstream of the Jetty &

organised the pulling & relaying of the ground tackle. The core of any club is its committee & we are very lucky to have such a dedicated team.

Finally, it is very good to see Simon Joel our Treasurer, on the water in his yacht ' BRIAR ROSE ' after his serious stroke, well done Simon.

A very warm welcome to the following new members:

Steve Barker	DISCOVERY
Stephen Brett	CAVALLIER
Don Carruthers	MERLIN
Robert Crane	LEVANTA
Rodney Curtis	CAPRICE
Gary Gooman	Fishing boat
John Keith	SPARTACUS
Vince Lowen	REMIS VERLESQUE
Eric Michell	MIRELUNE
David Pierce	SEVERN
Neil Porter	Motor Boat
Norman Tomilinson	RED ADMIRAL
Alan Wilson	SQUARE PEG

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Laying up Supper

The laying up supper will be at the Thorpe Bay Yacht Club on Sat 23rd November. We suggest meeting at 7-7.30pm

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

Starters	
1. Starter's Horn-	Smoked Gravlox Salmon filled with a seafood mousse served with a crispy salad.
2. Sea Wall Picking	A Portabella mushroom stuffed with crispy Bacon and St Auger Cheese and Breadcrumbs
3. After Race Drink-	Fresh lambs Kidneys served on a crouton and a rich tomato sauce.
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Mains	
a. Horseshoe Corner-	Chicken Roulade stuffed with spinach and cream cheese served with champ mash and sautéed leeks.
b. Yolksfleet Supper-	A braised Lamb Shank served with Fondant potatoes and a concert of vegetables and a rich mint Jus
c. Race Officers Fancy-	Fresh Fillet of sea bass served on crush potatoes and roasted mediterranean vegetables and a caper sauce
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Desserts	
i. Mudcatchers Delight-	A chilli Chocolate Bavious served with caramelized oranges
ii. Branklet Spit-	A citrus Crème Brulee
iii. The Finishing line-	A strawberry shortbread Tower
iv. The last race -	Cheese and Biscuits

Coffee and Mints

Richard has kindly agreed to take the reservations for this and please send your menu options with your booking. We do need payment in advance with your booking. There are two methods of paying. The first and easiest is direct transfer to the RSA account of the Roach Sailing Association. If you chose this way to pay, please also send a mail to Simon, cc Richard.

The alternative is by cheque payable to the **Roach Sailing Association** at the address below. Please note either way we will need to know your menu options.

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

Roach Sailing Association

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Racing Update

Richard Bessey

We have had some brisk racing conditions this year for both dinghies and cruisers, with 21 boats taking part. Only one race was postponed due to weather conditions (the Paglesham Yacht Race which was re-run in September).

During the Whitaker Cup race the boats met congestion at the mouth of the Roach, due to the course setting of a National dinghy race, and were confronted with some poor behaviour from RIBs with the other race. As the result of this CAYF launched an investigation into improving sailing instructions for racing, which will be put before the Harbour Authority. At the time of writing the RSA series points stand as follows:

Cruiser Series

RODE GRUET	12
ULABELLA	12
IMOTHES	7.5
PAKLJHAWA	5
VERLOCITY	4
SUNSHINE	3
PHILOMELLE	2.5
LOTUS	2
SEA JAY	1.5
REMIS VERLESQUE	0.5

Dinghy Series

CHIRP	8.5
STELLA MARIE	8.5
WINKS	7.5
APPLE	6.5
PUGWASH II	6
MERGANSER	4
MAKEDO	3
ELG	3
SUSIE	2
TT CHIRP	1
GERALD's SKIFF	1

Please can all 2012 cup holders return the cups to Jon Walmsley or Richard Bessey ASAP for engraving.

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Bosun (and Editor's) Corner

John Langrick

Again, many thanks for the articles for this newsletter. We will present the award 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 Spring 2014.

Laying up dates at Carter and Ward

The dates currently booked at Carter and Ward are as follows.

Mon 21, 22 Oct

4th – 8th Nov

18-22nd Nov. Note that there will be a large trailer down the slip on Wed 20th so only shoal draft boats can haul out on this date. As usual, all help would be greatly appreciated and remember to assemble cradles before you haul out. Of course you can lay up on other dates but please make your own arrangements if this is the case and note the yard do not haul out at weekends. Can you also let me know if you want your mast lowering.

Laying up at Paglesham

For those who wish to lay up at Paglesham, please note that if you lease a mooring from the yard, or from the RMHA (Roach Mooring Holders Association), that the storage is at no additional cost. Only the haul in or out must be paid for at a cost of £8 per metre with no VAT. Please arrange this with Gary. The yard have purchased a new travel hoist, to replace the old, which should help on haul-out.

Paglesham Yard update.

We have had some further improvements at the yard at Paglesham.

Firstly, our new storage area seems to have been a big success. We now have a more secure area where we can keep our dinghies, but we can improve this ourselves and will be looking to erect some dinghy racks, Has anyone got any spare scaffold? We will be arranging work parties during the cold months so please await for any dates via the Roach Group. This will include work on the shed, storage area and PVT land.

The yard has built an excellent toilet block which has been a very welcome improvement. For those who do not know the security code, please speak to Gary or myself.

The large hole at the top of the slip-way has been made good and the repair to the access road is continuing.

There are two new scrubbing posts on the edge of the slip. I have used it twice for boats that had problems and had to be moved with Dally. Note there is a £25 charge for their use and again please book with Gary.

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REMIS VERLESQUE (RV) challenge and East Coast trip

Kay Callahan (first mate)

Vince Lowen (skipper)

The following is Kay and Vince's log of their challenge for the Sambucca Cup

Left Paglesham on the Saturday and motored all the way down the Roach and Crouch to the Ray Sands to Pyfleet. We put all sails up with wind on the beam and sailed to the Bench Head where we heard a mayday call from a vessel at the Eagle buoy.

On the Sunday Kay and everyone went to Rowhedge on PAKLJHAWA but Vince was sick and stayed behind on RV until their return

We left Pyfleet about lunch time and put all sails up with wind the beam on the way to the river Orwell. We sailed as far as the Knoll buoy and struggled to sail with wind on the nose and so put the motor on and dropped all sails. We had wind over tide beating straight up the Orwell in our little boat but we made it with Nigel in INDI keeping an eye on us. The oyster pots were terrible out near the stone banks but we went straight to Woolverstone marina where, although we were late, had a nice meal in Butt and Oyster.



We made the Orwell!

Monday morning: coming out of Woolverstone marina we had some outboard trouble but John Langrick soon fixed it and later in the day went to Ipswich Foxes marina for petrol.

We sailed all the way to Harwich harbour (Halfpenny pier), for lunch. We later went to the Walton Backwaters where the waves were higher than the boat and at some points we thought we were going to capsize. We motored it all but it was way to choppy for a 18 footer.

Once at the entrance to the Twizzle there were 3 boats aground; I scraped across the sand with only a inch of water under me, put jib up to lean over and motored full blast to get over the sand and slowly got in. I was 1 out of the 4 to get in; IMOTHES went to Shotley. DESTAYE went aground but got in the Stone in the end and we had a meal on INDI.

Tues morning we left the Twizzle with PAKLJHAWA following pretty much behind went to the river Swale. It was choppy from Walton to Felixstowe port then dead calm; switched the noisy motor off and had all sails up sailing down wind all the way to Wrabness to anchor. Kay swam from PAKLJHAWA to my boat a few moorings over.

In the afternoon we motored to Shotley marina against wind and tide, went through the lock and the posts that my Dad hit years ago but I got through fine; guess I'm the better captain (lol).



In the lock at Shotley

On Wednesday we came out of the lock before everyone else and motored round the Shotley spit and sailed all the way to Ipswich Haven marina, with the wind on the nose to Woolverstone. Then, turning to the beam, I thought I nearly went aground near the bank off Pin Mill but missed it by miles. Motored under the bridge to the dock of Ipswich haven. Later that night my dad, drove down to join the crews for a drink, he now lives in Suffolk. We then went for a meal at a bistro on the dock side.

On Thursday: we sailed down the Orwell and went back to Wrabness hoping to barbecue We motored from the dock and ran out of fuel in the middle of the channel so put the jib up straight away with wind up the stern trying to fill up fuel while going along like a train with wind over tide. Although it was completely choppy I managed to fill up losing lot of fuel in the process.

We got to Wrabness and IMOTHES and INDI could not find a suitable mooring so they went back to Shotley. I went right near the shore and was fine, During the evening we went aground (slightly) and got told off by Jonathan for leaving the centre board down while aground. We had a BBQ on the beach with Jonathan.

Friday: I was the first to leave, motoring to the Medusa buoy and then sailed down with a fading wind all the way to Clacton pier with PAKLJHAWA right next to me pretty much all the way After Clacton the wind left us completely and I got fed up with drifting so motored past IMOTHES. After a while I turned the motor off to drift towards Mersea. Eventually I tried to start outboard but the starter cord snapped; radioed IMOTHES and

John came and towed us in to Mersea. There, he fixed the motor, not the first time on the trip. We had a nice meal in the West Mersea Yacht Club in the evening and upon returning to the jetty found the local children had filled Jonathan's dinghy with baby crabs.

On Saturday: we went across the Ray Sands back to Paglesham. There was a mayday on the Dengie Flats. DESTAYE saved the people standing on the top of their motorboat which had hit one of the old range markers (marked by Cardinals). I was trying to head over but was not sure where the obstruction was so hovered around the Ray for a while to see if I could help anyone. I continued when I could see the sails of IMOTHES and motored to the Crouch buoy and then sailed the rest of the way back to Paglesham.

A very enjoyable week!

*Well done Kaye and Vince, your first cruise in your first boat!
Ed.*

PAKLJHAWA Goes West

Jon Walmsley- Sept 2013

This Summer was my third season with PAKLJHAWA. As some of you are aware I had a bit of work to do when I bought her in September 2010, but I managed to launch a very basic boat for the 2011 season. I had intended to make a longer voyage last year, but events and the weather conspired against me. The benefits of an additional two Winters' of fitting out certainly added to comfort on board.

After a few days of 'waiting for the weather', IMOTHES; with John and Peter on board, and PAKLJHAWA set off initially East out of the Crouch on 1st August 2013. Unsurprisingly the wind was South East, a pattern of being headed that would last for the outward leg of the trip. I soon lost sight of IMOTHES somewhere around the East Barrow. As my progress was being slowed by strong headwinds and a foul tide, I decided to turn back to Ramsgate for the night, finally tying up at Eight O'clock. As I circuited the harbour on a fish and chip mission, I came across a pontoon reserved for classic boats, which included BARBAROSSA which is normally berthed alongside the Dauntless Yard on Canvey. I was tempted to ask if I could join them in my wooden, gaff rigged, traditional; (if you're from Polynesia), yacht. I think they were all on the way to the Old Gaffers Meeting on the Isle of Wight.

The next day I set off into a pleasant SSE wind which did not help my course South. As I turned the corner and started to head West, the wind veered SW. Dover Coastguard were issuing a navigational warning about a cross channel swimming attempt. I kept my eyes peeled, but all I saw was lobster pots. Looking at my options for a harbour, I decided on Rye which I entered at half past Ten at night, two and a half hours after HW. This meant I could not get up to the town. The next day was noticeably windier, but I optimistically set off down the alley formed by the training walls. I could see the water boiling at the entrance and an incoming fisherman shook his head at me. I decided to return back to Rye and in the ensuing U turn, which was aggravated by the strong wind and tide, I clouted the training wall with my bow. It's a good thing I keep a spare! Having paid my dues, I went up to the town which was tricky as

the gap between one pair of port and starboard buoys was only as wide as PAKLJHAWA.



Plug pulled in Rye

After a day of R & R, I set off at HW, (10.00), in company with Jens, a single handed German, in his small steel yacht LOTTA. In Rye Bay I heard a yacht put in a distress call on behalf of a broken down speedboat whose crew had no life jackets or means of communication. The yacht agreed to stand by until the life boat arrived. As I tacked out of the bay I passed a speed boat fishing and the next moment I saw a lifeboat rushing towards me. Their mistake was soon rectified and they turned making a massive arc of spray towards their hapless prey. After passing Eastbourne the wind died and the tide started to run against me. I decided to turn back to Sovereign Harbour where I was joined by Jens. Both Jens and I had bikes on board, so we cycled into Eastbourne and had afternoon tea on the pier. Jens was frustrated in his search for fresh fish, but on our return to the marina he managed to blag a pair from a fishing boat which he gutted and cooked for our dinner.



Free Fish!

The next day we locked out together and headed West, Jens for Brighton and PAKLJHAWA perhaps a little bit further.



LOTTA leaving Eastbourne

Despite the light WSW winds, I soon left LOTTA and his fellow countrymen, in a Folkboat, behind. I was making reasonable progress until late afternoon when the wind died. I hit some bad overfalls off Selsey Bill and in the dark worryingly thought some crab pot buoys, submerged by the tide, were rocks. I eventually anchored in Chichester off East Head Spit just after ten.

I did not realise that it was Cowes week until I was well clear of the Solent. I just assumed that it was always this busy around the back of the Isle of Wight. Neither did I know that the Fastnet Race was due to start at the weekend. Massive multihulls flying a hull through the general melee of yachts, dinghies and power boats just confirmed my long held opinion that this was not the place to come for a quiet day out on the water. Unusually I had a free wind, NE, so at least I did not have to tack through the chaos. My head spinning like an owl's, I carefully made my way along the North coast of the island.



It's not the Walton Backwaters!

As I went past Cowes, a very large modern motor boat passed about one hundred feet in front of me. PAKLJHAWA literally fell into her wash burying her bows into a wall of breaking water. Unfortunately I had two hatches open and the spray hood was down to improve visibility. The chart table in the pod was

soaked; as was I, and a good few gallons of water were dumped in the port hull onto the galley. Even the starboard hull, which had its hatch shut, but the washboard out, ended up with a couple of inches of water on the floor. My flab was well and truly gasted! Luckily there was no permanent damage and once I was clear of any other potential miscreants, I set about drying all my books and papers in the sun. The tide was under me at the Hurst Channel and sucked me along westwards to Poole where I anchored off Goathorn Point with a nice view of Brownsea Island. My log reads “lovely sail into Poole”. A bit of a rough beat saw me in the very large man made Portland Harbour by Five O’clock the next day. I picked up a vacant mooring in Castle Cove which offered little shelter from the SW F5 wind. No wonder the moorings chains were so massive.

Portland Bill was next on the agenda. I timed my departure so that I would be rounding at slack water. It was still quite windy, gusting SW F6, but all was going to plan until the block holding my peak halyard came away when the plate shackle broke at the top of the mast. I made good progress back to Portland under jib, and this time went into the new marina that was built for the Olympics. The harbour is so large that they were holding a national Topper race in it which crossed my track into the marina. It’s a good thing that I took the Topper Avoidance Training Course on the Crouch earlier this year.

I cycled into Weymouth to the chandlers, five miles, and when I saw how crowded the harbour was, I was very glad I had gone into Portland. The streets around the waterfront were so full of grockles that I had to get off my bike. I eventually got a new shackle at the Portland Marina chandlery, paid a visit to the top of the mast and I was ready for Portland Bill: the sequel. I rounded the Bill one mile off at HW without any issues. The wind was much lighter than the day before with too much West in it. I had intended to make for Dartmouth, but I struggled to get to Exmouth some twenty miles north. There was a strong rip tide in the entrance and I was glad to pick up a spare mooring just after dark. I reasoned that the WSW wind of the day before would give me a very pleasant sail South to Dartmouth in the lee of the land. Of course, the wind went South! As I entered the very pretty harbour, a family on a large yacht started waving at me. I thought they must have recognised me from somewhere else, but then I noticed the porpoise/dolphin swimming around their boat. I tied up on a visitors pontoon marooned in the middle of the harbour. As it was a Sunday and after Six, I decided not to pay four pounds to go ashore by water taxi.

Another day of beating got me to Plymouth where I picked up a buoy in Cattewater next to VIRGIN ATLANTIC CHALLENGER II. Richard Branson used the massive craft in 1986 to cross the Atlantic in three days, eight hours and 31 minutes – two hours faster than the previous record. As usual I turned to the radio for dinner company only to find that Rolex Fastnet Radio was blotting out Radio 2. Oh, that’s why the Solent was so busy! The following day I saw the trimaran Edmonde De Rothschild’s - GIGANTA XV tacking inshore to fourth place in the Fastnet. Apart from seeing a very large trimaran, the final leg to Falmouth was uneventful. Light headwinds caused me to motor most of the way, I calculated that to sail would have taken forty eight hours in those conditions. As I approached the Falmouth Town Jetty I could

see that it was two to three boats deep. I turned to starboard and found myself in a narrow alleyway between densely packed moorings, I espied a vacant one that was very weedy and therefore not in use. The next morning I went up to Falmouth Marina to find a berth. They were full as, guess what?, it was Falmouth week! I ended up in Mylor, a very nice marina with good facilities and with access to a supermarket in Mylor Bridge; a short cycle ride away.

I had arranged to meet with James Wharram and Hanneke Boon the designers of Pakljhawa. According to Wikipedia: ‘James Wharram is considered the ‘father’ of multihulls in many countries, and has been referred to as a ‘Living legend’ ‘. Meeting James Wharram was the purpose of this trip to the West Country and I was very excited as I beached PAKLJHAWA next to AMATASI in Restronguet Creek. AMATESI is the Wharrams latest build and was Winner of the Classic Boat Design Competition in 2010.



PAKLJHAWA and AMATESI

I had visited Wharram Designs over twenty years earlier when I had thought to build a Wharram Catamaran myself. I was welcomed by Hanneke and James and we sat and chatted about all things catamaran in the design office, overlooking the creek, at one end of the building shed. We later retired to the house for tea and biscuits which turned into dinner before I set off back to PAKLJHAWA. In the morning James and Hanneke came to view the boat.



Hanneke Boon and James Wharram (in the pod)

They were very interested in PAKLJHAWA and I was absolutely delighted to have them on board. I left on the tide my mission complete and started to think about heading home. But that's another story.....

In the bumper February 2014 RSA Newsletter 'PAKLJHAWA Goes East' Will she round Portland Bill? Milk crisis on the Isle of Wight! Rough ride into Rye....

RAVENS Progress

An update on Jon Apps circumnavigation in his yacht RAVEN

John Apps and RAVEN set off in early June from towards Greenland, hoping to navigate the North West Passage to the Pacific. But somewhere S of Iceland RAVEN's satellite tracker turned back, and then headed South. In mid-July John emailed from the Azores:

"I am now at Praia. I turned around as I had salt water in my fuel that was coming into my breather when waves washed over me. I didn't want to try the icebergs without an engine. After a few smooth-ish days in the Variables was able to get the water out of my tank, strip and rebuild my fuel system and got the engine going. From here I would like to now go south of the Three Capes. Heather wanted me to come home but I have so much food on board I've got to get rid of it somehow."

As it turns out, despite another year of record ice retreat in the arctic, the NW passage was very late clearing this year, so heading South was a good move. RAVEN's daily tracker showed her touching at the Canaries and then across to Brazil. By September when John arrived in Salvador, the main water tank had gone bad, and to make matters worse there was no potable water available in the marina. Getting local currency was also a problem, that and the arduous check-in process persuaded John to continue his journey towards Cape Town, hoping to pick up some rain-water along the way! As we go to press, RAVEN is at 32 degrees South and roughly halfway to Cape Town.

2013 Cruises in IMOTHES

John Langrick

My cruises this year included the Pyefleet and East Coast Cruise with Simon as crew, a cruise to France Belgium and Holland with Peter as crew and the last Pyefleet weekend with Graham as crew. Lately I had another shorter cruise in company with SWIFTSURE and CONTESSA OF WESTON. Here is a brief summary of the first three.

Pyefleet and East Coast Cruise

Many boats joined us for the first Pyefleet weekend including Jonathan in PAKLJHAWA, Nigel in INDI, Peter Yerbury in PIQUITO, Vince and KAY in REMIS VERLESQUE (RV),

Richard and Justine in PHILOMELLE, Steve and Hillary in ULLABELLA, Shaun in DESTAYE, John (Bridge) in SWIFTSURE, Paul and Paula in GEM. I took Simon and Graham as crew.

We moored in two rafts at Pyefleet for an excellent communal meal based on Chilli and Rice lashed with a lot of lubrication. The weather remained calm and we remained in rafts for that night.

After an excellent breakfast, many boats left for home, with the rest remaining for the East Coast Cruise. This included IMOTHES with Simon and myself, Graham returned with SWIFTSURE to Pag. The crews of INDI, DESTAYE PAKLJHAWA, RV and IMOTHES joined Jonathan for a gentle cruise up to Rowhedge. Vince had a little too much lubrication so stayed on board RV to sleep it off. The rest of us had a great trip up the Colne for tea and cakes at the small café on the quay before returning to our boats to catch the ebb to the Orwell.



INDI and DESTAYE in Shotley lock

We arrived at the Orwell in the early evening and sailed to Woolverstone where, after all mooring, had a brisk walk along the saltings to Pin Mill for a meal at the Butt and Oyster.

Our plan for the week was to visit the Deben, but winds remained constantly in the NE so most took it easy cruising the Orwell and Stour with only Jonathan braving the Deben Bar with head winds most of the way there.



INDI cruising down the Stour

I had an unfortunate incident trying to enter the Twizzle in the Walton Backwaters about 2 hrs before low. I have taken IMOTHES into this anchorage many times without problems and we had planned a BBQ on the Stone. However, first a Southerley and then DESTAYE went aground in the approach channel after rounding Island Point and it became clear that I would too and hence I anchored in a 'hole' close to Stone Point with my anchor ashore and hopefully blowing off. However, the swirl in the ebb pushed IMOTHES so the front of the keel was constantly bumping on the sand and the anchor chain snubbing on the bow.

Suddenly the chain snapped with a bang after distorting the bow fitting and after retrieving the remains, motored out from the point to ground firmly in the channel and wait for the flood while re-fastening the anchor. After this experience and as night was approaching I thought better return to Shotley marina to lick my wounds. I will need a little surgery this winter to straighten the bow fitting.



DESTAYE- under sail!

Our last night was spent on the pile moorings at West Mersea where we had an excellent meal in the yacht club. On our journey back across the Ray channel, we were distracted by a Mayday call from a fishing boat that had struck one of the old steel barges marked by cardinals at the south end of the Ray channel. IMOTHES had to stand off and DESTAYE braved the shallower water to rescue the crew standing waving on the cabin top of the fishing boat which had, by now, settled in about six feet of water. Eventually the Clacton lifeboat crew took charge and we continued our journey back to Pag after a very pleasant and eventful cruise.

'Foreign' trip

Peter Edwards joined me for a cruise this year setting off from Pag with Jonathan in PAKLJHAWA. Jonathan was planning to sail down the South Coast to meet the Wharram designer James Wharram. We planned to sail to Ramsgate but on a quiet evening decided to continue to Dunkirk. We lost contact with PAKLJHAWA as we left the Fishermans Gat but later heard he went to Ramsgate with head winds all the way. We arrived in Dunkirk late evening and tied alongside a seemingly deserted British motor cruiser.

In the morning a very friendly crew explained they were on board that night but we did not disturb them... much. They were from Canvey! We booked in a box in the marina so we

could have a restful day and replenish wine stocks from an excellent supermarket along the dockside. We had one of Jean's excellent curry for the evening meal and had a very restful night.

The following day we set off with a continuing NE wind up the coast of France and Belgium to the excellent marina at Newport. The sea was very rough and although we had planned to sail to Blankenburg, just got fed up of bouncing through waves and the following day had a better forecast with winds turning South. The entrance to Newport was full of small sailing dinghies being towed like chicks by an inflatable 'mother hen'. We had arrived at the end of some European national; and were being filed by various TV crews.



Leaving Newport

In the morning we left Newport at the suggested 'best time' to sail to Breskens. Sailing up the coast we were nearly run down by a large Dutch yacht motor sailing behind us, The skipper was below with no-one at the helm but a frantic shout from Peter and myself brought him to the helm just in time.

After a long day we arrived at Breskens late evening and went to the yacht club for an excellent meal, mussels in my case. Upon returning to the boat we found that within a hundred yards from the boat on the side of the marina was a fun fair and rave party, which continued until 4:00 am with the hull throbbing to the music and some inane Dutchman DJ jabbering on a microphone.

Miraculously by 08:00am the following morning the whole lot had been dismantled and replaced by a summer fair of small stalls. Pete and I walked to the excellent supermarket to stock up on fresh supplies and Pete bought a 'very expensive designer' watch and sunglasses which he was delighted with.



Standing on the W sea wall of Veersmere looking back at the lake.

Late morning we crossed to Flushing and along the canal to Vere where we rafted alongside the Vere yacht club. The following day we sailed to the west of the lake for a walk over the sea wall and ice-cream at a small café before sailing back to our favourite anchorage at De Omloop, a small island set into the bank at the South of the lake. That evening I had a call from Paul and Paula on GEM who had spotted my mast over the trees and came to join us at this idyllic place. We had an excellent meal lubricated by copious French wine.



IMOTHES and GEM at De Omloop

In the morning GEM set off to try and get down the coast eventually to sail to Cowes for the Old Gaffers Association 50th anniversary rally. Pete and I stayed at our anchorage for a 'make and mend' day just taking it easy. Early on the next morning we sailed out of Veresmere into the Oosterschelde and a short trip to another favourite spot Goes and the small harbour of De Werf. Again a relaxing two days in the small 'garden marina'. There we met Walter and his partner who were cruising the same waters and just celebrating their first anniversary of meeting. Walter was a shipwright building traditional yachts and we sat around a table sharing yarns over various favourite 'libations' and letting Walter's son try some typical 'British' lager 'Fosters', a reputedly Australian drink which it appears is brewed by Heineken! Needless to say he left half a can.



The garden marina of De Werf

The following day we set off for Yerkese which we learnt from Walter is pronounced 'EESIKA' and Walter set off for Zierekzee. The marina at Yerkese was full of small Dutch boats (200+) all taking part in the annual 'Mussel race'. They were rafted three to four deep. We squeezed into a second marina, closer to the village centre and went for an excellent meal, again mussels for me.



Sailing down the Oosterscheld

In the morning we sailed again for Zierekzee a small and picturesque old fishing port to the North of the Oosterscheld and close to the large bridge that spans the Scheldt, Zeelandbrug. Again the place was very busy and a very friendly harbourmaster directed us to a waiting pontoon while yesterdays visitors were leaving, including our new friend Walter. The harbour master was a Dutchman but spoke English with a very strong Glasgow accent. It seems he had married a Scottish lassie many years earlier. He eventually directed us to an excellent berth at the far end of the harbour next to a Westerly Berwick with three Dutch children who all looked identical and peering at us laughing as we tied alongside. We spent the day looking around this pretty town and visiting the excellent local museum.



Bridge and castle at Zirekzee

It was time to plan our journey home and set off to Roompot marina, which is based at Camperland, a large campsite close to the Roompot lock. Luckily it has an excellent Supermarket. We had good wireless connections here and although we had strong winds for the previous week the forecast was for lighter winds late afternoon albeit on the nose. We would have to leave Roompot at 20:00 HW to take the strong ebb and so had a restful day chatting with skippers of two other, much larger yachts also planning to make the same journey, but to Shotley.

With the wind firmly in the West, but lighter, we motored down the Old Roompot channel as night fell and we bashed our way through wind over tide with the ebb.

And really that was about it for the night of head winds that seemed to constantly head us on our route passed many, many wind farms. We started to cross the shipping lanes as dawn broke, but had very little traffic. And the same winds headed us back over the North Sea to pick up the S Galloper at the south of yet another huge wind farm. It was only when we reached the Long Sand Head that we were able to turn to a favourable wind and quickly sped down the Gunfleet, losing both wind and tide at the Buxey 1 and 2 and then a motor back to Pag and ashore by 20:00.

Again an excellent and memorable trip. Peter took lots of film and has promised a show in the new year!

The Second Pyefleet Weekend

The forecast did not look promising when Graham joined me on IMOTHES on the Saturday. We were the only boat to sail up the Ray Channel with Philomelle joining Gem at Burnham. Graham and I had an excellent meal in the Green man followed by a beer and desert at the restaurant in Bradwell. The following day we were chatting with the owner of the yacht in the adjacent berth. She was a large wooden sloop that was for sail. She was built on Wallasea island in the 1930s, a very pretty double ender. I had a guided tour of her very traditional interior. We both had a very relaxing sail back to Paglesham via the Ray channel the following day.

A relaxing and enjoyable weekend.

From Wight to Ushant

Richard and Justine Bessey

23 July, English Channel. A strange thing was happening on the chartplotter. When its memory is full, it deletes old track to make way for new, and the track it was deleting was our old track across the Channel from 2012, just a mile ahead of us! After an early start from Yarmouth and a smooth crossing, we ran into thick fog off the French coast. A gaff-rigged boat appeared suddenly off Alderney to our mutual alarm, as we peered anxiously into the fog and parping our horn feebly. We could see nothing of Alderney until right inside Braye harbour, where we anchored. During the crossing the domestic battery drained (due to a short circuit in the inverter), so the autopilot, radar and depth sounder packed up. Fortunately the chart plotter seems to work on low voltage! We had Fish and Chips ashore via water taxi.



In the morning we went ashore again for showers, shop and a can of Diesel. Then up anchor and off for St Peter Port - but the Engine quickly overheated so we dived back into harbour. Back at anchor I changed the impeller (it was shredded), and we set off again. After clearing the Casquettes the engine overheated again, and there was clearly a blockage in the water system. After cleaning the heat exchanger (with wooden kebab skewers), it seemed better - but then the fuel line blocked up! Time to call the coast guard as the wind was light and were unlikely to make port on this tide. Luckily fellow Cruising Association members aboard "Flight of Time" heard our call, and offered assistance. We met at the East end of the Little Russell channel and were towed into St Peter Port. Dinner on us that night, and very good company.

25th July was spent in port for repairs. The back of the heat exchanger is full of shredded impellers and other debris. The fuel line is blocked and the filter needs changing. Extra isolating switches fitted to protect the battery from potential drains, and a new fan belt fitted. All seems well. We take the opportunity to stock up the fruit net and cool locker, and have fresh plaice for dinner. Next morning we had an early start to make some Westing before the tide is too strong near the island, our course to the North of Les Roches Douvres. The depth sounder became unreliable West of the Channel Isles and did not fully recover until we returned to the UK. We blame the famous Breton kelp beds for confusing it, but maybe it is just missing the mud! Although charging seemed OK the autopilot drained the battery again, so it was back to manual steering. After passing the delightful Sept Isles, we made Treburdan marina in the Bay de Moraix that evening. Although the

approach to this marina dries, it is accessible most of the tide, and access is controlled by an automatic sill gate.



Approaches to L' AberWrach

After filling up with diesel next morning, we set off for L'Aber-Wrach via the rocky channels off Roscoff, and the Canal de Isle de Batz (another furious tide race), which we negotiated in the rain. As forecast, the wind is getting up from the SW and we are glad to get past the Libenter buoy and into the L'Aber-Wrach river, and its marina which is a well-known staging post for the routes between the Channel and Biscay. Excellent fish soup and Moules-Frites at the local Creperie, with a carafe of red wine for two, all for 30 euros.

28 July. Gales, rain, Sunday so everything is closed. After the rain stopped we set off to walk around the peninsular, stopping at a beach cafe. Like many spots on this coast, the West-facing beach is a favourite with wind-surfers and kite-surfers. The blown sand was quite painful in the gale! We discussed timing for the journey ahead with the crew of a Brest-based ketch next to us, with 3 generations of the family on board. Next day we followed their recommendations of when to leave -but never saw them again after we cleared the estuary.



L'AberWrach

29 July. In some trepidation we set off for Brest via the Chenal de Four. After tacking round the corner, the wind decreased to a low F4 and the seas were quite tolerable. We were in the midst of some big yacht race which provided some Crouch-like entertainment, but in a totally different setting of rocky islands and hard shoals! The sea was lumpy at the south end of the channel, which stirred up the fuel tank again and the engine

stopped dead. But we were able to bear away for the Goulet de Brest while I cleared the blockage (another mouthful of diesel). The Goulet is maybe a mile wide passage through the cliffs, but inside is a vast area of water, a superb natural harbour. Brest developed around a river port back in pre-Napoleonic times and the modern naval harbour is vast. The Marina du Chateau, our destination, lies in one corner next to the old Vaubin fortress.

More gales next day, so we did the laundry and visited the Maritime museum and the supermarket in Rue de Admiral Linois. It turns out we had tied up alongside a Belgian boat that was in St Peter Port when we got towed in. They were awaiting crew and 3 consecutive days of calm weather to get to Galicia in one hit- we think they had a long wait! In the evening we visited an Italian restaurant including takeaway deserts (mmm).

After a visit to the fish dock for some mussels, we crossed the Rade de Brest and sailed up the River Aulne in bright sunshine. After tacking round the bends between steep wooded hills, and passing several laid-up warships, we anchored off the tide mill at Le Folgoat, and had a swim (being careful not to get cut feet on the oysters). In the evening we rowed ashore for a walk in the pinewoods, which unfortunately were plagued by midges and ringing with gunshots.

1 August. A cheery "good morning" from a nearby mooring, owned by an English couple who offered to get us some bread. They keep their wooden yacht here in the summer, and winter in Camaret. After breakfast we motored further upstream - the river winds for several tidal miles, then is navigable above a lock, but we anchored for another swim at high water then turned back as we have no inland chart. There are two suspension bridges, one old and apparently disused, and a modern, curving design. We spent the rest of the day working down river, seeking another anchorage in the Rade de Brest. Unfortunately the military have taken all the best protected places on the South and West sides, and placed exclusion zones around them. So we went back past Brest, and up the River Elorn to anchor, passing under two more suspension bridges.



After a walk ashore next morning, past a "Druids fountain", along the hill and back along the shore, we motored back to Brest in the teeth of a strong SW wind, checking into the Marina Moulin Blanc. We visited Oceanopolis, a large sea-life centre, then the waterside pub for Moules Frites again!

3 August: 8am start to Isle d'Ouessant (Ushant). Wind still SW but not blowing so hard as we tacked out through the Goulet and South about the rocky archipelago. With the strong NE going tide it is hard to stay clear of the numerous outcrops, but we made it to the Chanel de Fromveur at around slack water, and crossed to the Western entrance to the island's main port, Lampaul. Rounding La Jument light tower and the rock-strewn entrance, and running into a SW facing bay, it was hard to believe there would be any shelter at the end. In fact there are good moorings for visitors, though the swell made them rather uncomfortable on this occasion. We rowed ashore for a walk and some shopping.



Visitors buoys at Lampaul

In the night we got fed up with getting tossed about in the forepeak, and moved to centre berths. All the same we decided to stay on for a cycle tour of Ouessant. Bike hire is 10 euro, and we set off for Le Stiff lighthouse at the NE end of the island. The old lighthouse is under repair, and nearby is the new radar tower which controllers the Ushant TSS. Going South we came to a fine but little-used quay, with views over the *Chenal* to the Isle de Molene. Then West again to view the SW entrance from the headland. Back aboard for dinner, and another rocky night.

5 August. Engine check found water in the oil, so our departure was delayed for a full oil and filter change. Further checks notwithstanding, it overheated just as we came out of the bay, but Philomelle just make it round La Jument under sail. However it was necessary to heave-to and further reduce the main to about 30% and hoist the small jib before proceeding through the Chanel de Fromveur (which can run up to 9 knots though probably only 6 on this occasion). It was a bit lively running NE and as we passed the Finisterre (Brittany Ferries), the cast iron hob jumped bodily off the stove and crashes to the floor (luckily intact). After that it was a fine downwind sail of about 5 hours to L'Aber-Wrach, where we make a fine cock-up of picking up a mooring under sail, in the middle of fleets of sail training boats.



Chenal de Fromvier

The engine overheating seemed to be caused by pressure in the exhaust system, which stops the water flow. So I diverted the water from the heat exchanger through an old air bleed (left over from a previous engine), and this fixed the problem. After a 2 mile walk for shopping, we set off East for the Isle de Brehat, which we reached in the late afternoon, intending to anchor and explore. In the event, the anchorage is too far from land at high water to be practical for our rubber dubby, so we sailed on across the Bay of Moraix to the marina at Treburden. Here there are magnificent sunsets, West over the rocky islands.

Next morning we set off a 6 to catch the last of the tide round to Les Sept Isles, then plugged into a NE wind, very slowly towards Guernsey. Tacking N of Les Rochester Douvres, we then headed towards Jersey on the circulating tide before finally getting to point up to Guernsey, arriving as usual after dusk. We tied up on the waiting pontoon as there is nobody around.

8th August. Along with several other yachts, we set off in the early light to the Alderney Race, with very little wind. We motored on across the channel to the Needles and tie up on a buoy at Yarmouth in the evening. From there we visited Portsmouth for a day, then worked along the South Coast and home.

