

## Roach Sailing Association

[www.roachriver.org.uk/rsa/](http://www.roachriver.org.uk/rsa/)

### September 2016 Newsletter

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#### Chairman's Report

*Mike Green*

The end of the 2016 season is fast approaching with the recent sunny days becoming shorter and the nights colder. The last cruiser race of this year took place on Sunday and what a day it was! A cold gusty North Westerly wind made the course up to the Horse Shoal cardinal buoy in the Crouch and return quite lively with 10 starting and only 6 finishing, VERLOCITY was second last but Stewart and I enjoyed it!

We still have the Steak and Oysters afloat day to look forward to on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October, a raft up event I always enjoy, in past years we have been blessed with reasonable weather, I hope for the same this year.

The Laying Up Supper takes place on Saturday evening the 19<sup>th</sup> November at Ballards Gore Golf Club where our various Racing Cups and trophies will be presented. Which reminds me to say would you please return all cups and trophies to a committee member as soon as possible for engraving.

Unfortunately, this season the racing form of VERLOCITY has not been too good, probably because she has not been scrubbed off and we have not competed in as many cruiser races. The situation with BUTTERCUP is much more negative, she is still on a

pontoon at the back of the Carter and Ward yard and is unlikely to make it to Pag this year. She is beginning to feel her 66 years but comes up well when painted and varnished.



*The RSA stand at the Paglesham Fair August 2016*

The situation at the Pag. Yard is still somewhat fluid in that at the time of writing despite all the monies spent on fencing etc no barges have arrived for fitting out. Management at the yard is in the hands of Kevin and there is no sign of any full time office or workshop employees. We, via the RMHA continue to pay on time the invoices presented by the yard for the 23 moorings we rent downstream of the jetty and life goes on in the Roach river.

My thanks on your behalf to Ken Wickham for all the work he does on the various committees and particularly in liaising with the yard owners, the Crown and the Kent and Essex Fisheries on the various yard and mooring issues. The relocation of the 23 downstream moorings has not been without problems, not least the overlong risers and the uneven bottom resulting in several moorings needing to be re-laid. John Langrick has spent a lot of time dealing with these issues with our mooring contractor. We trust that next season we will not have the same problems having learnt a number of lessons along the way

A very warm welcome to the following new members:

Peter Evans	WHITE FOX
Douglas MacCraig	RIFF RAFF
Steven Gibbs	CONNIE
Derek Page	SHOAL WATERS
Tony Smith	
<b>--oo--</b>	

## Laying up Supper

The laying up supper will be at the Ballard's Gore Golf Club on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016

### Starter

Home made Leek and Potato Soup  
Brussels Pate with Onion Chutney

### Main

Slow cooked Tender Beef in Mushroom sauce  
Fillet of Scotch Salmon, Lemon Butter and Herb sauce

### Dessert

Apple Pie and Ice Cream

New York Cheesecake

Vegetarian options on request

Tea/Coffee and mint included

Clem Freeman has again 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. The price is £28 per head. 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 Clem

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.

*Clem Freeman  
Hunters Lodge, Larkhill Rd  
Canewdon  
ESSEX SS4 3RZ*

Roach Sailing Association  
Sort Code 20-79-73  
Acc 80751138  
[clem.freeman@btinternet.com](mailto:clem.freeman@btinternet.com)  
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## Racing Update

*Richard Bessey*

The RSA 2016 dinghy and cruiser racing series are both won, with no less than 36 boats taking part. Sadly we lost a couple of events to bad weather (Mudcatchers Cup and Don McDowell Trophy) but we made up for it in other ways. In particular the Gracilda Cup had the best turn-out for many years, let's build on that next season! Here are the final point scores for the dinghy series:

MAKEDO	10.5
PATCH	10
TT WATERWYCH	8
BLUEBOTTLE	6
STELLA MARIE	4
WINKS	4
NANI DRAGON	3.5
IANJO	3
MERGANSER	3
SARAH EDITH	3
TRINGA	2.5
LITTLE LINDA	2
ELG	1
Peter Y's mirror	1
TT ROAMER	1
PUGWASH II	0.5

and for the cruiser series:

IMOTHES	14
MARTINIQUE	10
WATERWYCH	8.5
PAKLJHAWA	7.5
EOLE	7
VERLOCITY	5
GINGER LEI	4.5
LOTUS	4.5
BELUGA	3
RIFFRAFF	3
SCHERTZO	3
AMBITION II	2
ULABELLA	2.5
JOUET	2
DESTAYE	1.5
CATERAN	1
SEA JAY	1
AMARIS	0.5
ROAMER	0.5
SEVERN	0.5

Please can last year's RSA cup winners return the trophies to Jon Walmsley or another committee member ASAP so they can be engraved for presentation at the Laying Up Supper

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## Bosun (and Editor's) Corner

John Langrick

### Sutton Wharf

The dates I have currently booked for haul out are as follows:  
Oct 14<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>  
Oct 31<sup>st</sup> – Nov 4<sup>th</sup>.  
Monday 14<sup>th</sup> Nov – 18<sup>th</sup>  
The rates remain the same as last year.

The travel hoists await, please let me know what dates you would like to haul out, of course you can make your own arrangements, but far better to coordinate a few boats together so we can all help. Our tea hut awaits in the same place, so all is ready!

Briar Rose cradle will be available this winter if any yacht would like to use it, please make arrangement with Shaun or myself.  
BRIAR ROSE is laid up at Leucat, France.

### Paglesham

All is well at Paglesham and I suggest a shed and dinghy park tidy in the new year.

## Sambucca Cup – Sailing Log

Dave Pierce

### Race 1, Paglesham Pot, 15<sup>th</sup> May, Light wind, IMOTHESES, MarkCrow, position 1<sup>st</sup>

John L was on holiday in Greece and very kindly let Jon and I sail IMOTHESES. We had light winds from all quarters but did not stop us from a good start, 2<sup>nd</sup> over the start line. Running down to the crow MARTINIQUE took an early lead but we were hot on her tails. Having rounded the turn we were in danger of getting dragged backwards or on the bank but after a few minutes the wind picked up and we were off again chasing the leading boat MARTINIQUE who had found some favorable wind and was off. A good close haul tack by Jon found us making the Quay reach bend and then we were able to lay off the wind and reach to the line. We were 2nd over the finish line and came 1<sup>st</sup> on handicap. Many thanks to John L for the loan of IMOTHESES

### Race 2, Blue Shoal Trophy, 5<sup>th</sup> June, Light wind, SCHERZO, Mark Redward, Position 2<sup>nd</sup>.

I was crewing on board SCHERZO for this race with Keith. Again light winds for this race and we were 4<sup>th</sup> over the start line behind EOLE, IMOTHESES and VERLOCITY. A good close haul saw us overtake two boats and chasing EOLE who was leaving us with her new set of sails which were setting beautifully. Tacking down the river to the turn we were now guessing which buoy was the Redwood as no charts were on board and being a Blackwater man in my youth, it was a guess between two yellow ones. EOLE rounded both Redward and Coleward so I cut the corner and went for the last buoy only to find out it was the wrong one so had to tack back up to Redward and round to port. By this time EOLE

was off and on her way back running down Quay reach never to be caught. We followed her home and were 2<sup>nd</sup> over the finish line, and came 2<sup>nd</sup> on handicap. Thanks to Keith for letting me crew.

### Race 3, Shuttlewood Cup, 12<sup>th</sup> June, Fresh wind, VERLOCITY, Mark, Holliwell, Position 3rd

Mike kindly invited me on board Velocity to crew for this race. With medium winds we calculated the run to the starting line. Unfortunately the wind seemed to die at the time we turned for the start which saw most of the fleet to start ahead of us. A good run down the river to Holliwell saw us to the turn in 4<sup>th</sup> place. Once around we were closing on Imothes on a close haul so tacked over to the south bank across the tide to avoid her. This would either be a bad tactic or good, we would have to wait and see. Scraping along by the Clarks buoy with limited water we made a favourable tack to get ahead and enter the Roach. Tacking back down Quay reach was hard work but paid off and we turned into Devils reach and adjusted to sail just off the wind. We crossed over the finish line in 3<sup>rd</sup> place and came 3<sup>rd</sup> on handicap. Many thanks to Mike for the invite.

### East Coast Cruise, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, Fresh wind, SCHERZO, Passage to Pyefleet

I was crewing on board SCHERZO with Keith for the East coast cruise for the first time and was looking forward to it. We set off at 11:00 from Paglesham heading for the first stop Pyefleet. Winds were a good 4 so we just had the jib up at it a good run up the coast through the spitway and once through, a close haul to Pyefleet arriving at 16:30. We tied up alongside IMOTHESES who was anchored and had something to eat on board before we were ferry across to AMBITION 11 for drinks. Back on board later. Keith produced a fine bottle of 1919 rum which turned out to be the talk of the holiday as it was so nice. I must try to obtain a bottle when I get home.

### East Coast Cruise, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Fresh wind, SCHERZO' Passage to Woolverstone Marina



East Coast Cruisers lunching at Pin Mill

We set off just after 10:00 from Pyefleet for our journey up to the river Orwell to Woolverstone marina. Again a good wind from behind blew us up the coast and into the river Orwell on a reach right to the marina. A very exciting sail reaching at 7.5 knots in the Orwell. We were the first to reach the marina at 16:20 but unfortunately were the last to dock as we ran

aground whilst taking the sails down. No time to shower as we decided to eat in the clubhouse so we quickly made our way for drinks and eats. When back on board the 1919 rum again surfaced.



*SCHERZO in the Orwell*

#### **East Coast Cruise      4<sup>th</sup> July, Fresh wind, SCHERZO, Passage to Harwich**

A casual morning was had and we decided to walk to Pin Mill for lunch. It has been some 30 years since I was last there but it was still the same I was pleased to see. After lunch and back on board we made our way to Halfpenny pier at Harwich where we were meeting up with Jon and Barry. We motored most of the way as the wind was again fresh but on the nose. Arriving in the afternoon moored up inside the Pier. In the evening Avery nice meal was had in the local pub, The Alma. When we got back the wind was freshening and I was glad to be on the inside of the pier as the boats on the outside were in for a rocky night. Not that it worried me as we finished off the 1919 rum and I was out like a light.

#### **East Coast Cruise, 5<sup>th</sup> July,      Fresh wind, SCHERZO, Passage to Waldringfield**

I was pleased to hear this morning that we were making our way to the River Deben, one of my favorite rivers. Although time would not let us get up to Woodbridge, we were making our way to Waldringfield. Again a good run up the coast under jib and a motor up to our destination where we picked up a visitors mooring. We were taxied by John with a dinghy left on one of the moorings for us to use. We had a table booked for another good meal and drinks. I retired to spend the rest of the holiday now on Carl's boat, FAHYDA as Keith had to return home early.

#### **East Coast Cruise, 6<sup>th</sup> July,      Fresh wind, FAHYDA, Passage to Shotley**

I was looking forward to sailing FAHYDA as she is a wooden boat. She was immaculate and great credit to the hours of work and detail Carl has put into this splendid yacht. We dropped the mooring early in the morning to drop down to Felixstow ferry, ready for the tide to make over the bar. After breakfast we set off out of the river Deben to Shotley marina, opposite Harwich. We had a good sail and said goodbye to Keith, Vince and John the bridge who were making their way home. This was my first time in Shotley and I was impressed by the facilities. Drinks we had in the afternoon followed by more with a meal in the evening where some watched the football.



*FAHEDA in Shotley Lock*

#### **East Coast Cruise      7<sup>th</sup> July, Fresh wind, FAHEDA, Passage to Bradwell**

It was sadly time to make our way back nearer home as stronger winds were forecast for the weekend and our next leg of the journey was to Bradwell. We left early in the morning with fresh winds from the SW so it was long tacks along the coast and short ones out to sea. We made good time reaching max speeds of 8 kts with an average of 4 kts. It was a familiar coast line approaching the Blackwater as this is where I learnt my sailing as a boy and did a lot of sailing with my parents. We moored up in Bradwell only to help Jon change berths I think it was six times as the harbour master was having trouble working out the beam of PAKLJHAWA. I was trying to catch a lift on one of the moves to log for the Sambucca cup but was not quick enough. We walked later on in the evening to the Green Man where we had good eats and drinks. I did however arrange to sleep in the other hull of PAKLJHAWA to give Carl a rest as I kept him up most of the night before with my snoring.

#### **East Coast Cruise, 8<sup>th</sup> July, Fresh wind, Fahyda, Passage back home to Paglesham**

Our last day and the journey back home to Paglesham. We left as soon as we could get out of Bradwell on the flood which was 2 hrs after low water. This meant we could hug the coast down to the Raysand. It was again a good fresh breeze and we reached/close hauled down the coast just under the jib. Once over the Raysand and on entering the River Crouch, it was a bit lumpy as it was wind over tide. John L called us up on the radio and said to go to the south side of the river which was smoother and still plenty of water. We made our way over which was far more comfortable and we made good way against a strong wind on the nose. A good tip to remember. With the tide under us we quickly made our way back to the moorings with a quick last sail reaching down Quay reach. Many miles covered on several boats with different members of the RSA. Thanks to all for having and putting up with me.

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#### **AMBITION II Log–Scotland '16, Part 1. Richard and Justine Bessey**

*Mon 12th: Rochford.*

Having scrubbed off over the weekend, painted on 2 coats of antifoul, and got stores aboard, AMBITION II departed on the 16:00 tide and, with a following wind, set off to the North.

We made good time and were able to anchor off the Naze before dark.

#### *Tue 13th: The Naze.*

Weighed anchor at 05:00 and took the tide up to Lowestoft where we anchored again, in Pakefield Road, to wait for the next ebb. Rain set in, and as we headed up Towards Yarmouth Roads, the wind went round to the NW. We motored on, but then the fan belt broke and J stemmed the tide with the staysail set while R fitted a spare belt (not a simple operation taking about an hour). Then we were off again, following the Norfolk coast then out to the NW with the sun low in the West.

#### *Wed 14th: at sea.*

Our course took us south of the Sheringham Shoal wind farm and tacking through the Dudgeon shoals. We were making very slow progress against the flood tide, and then the fan belt gave out! It turned out that there were two types of belt on the spares locker, both the same length but the one R had fitted was the wrong type. So back in the engine room for R. Shortly after starting the engine, however, it faltered and died as if starved of fuel. Whilst bleeding the supply line, R found a pinhole air leak in a plastic hose. This was remedied using electric insulation tape bound over with whipping twine, and eventually we were under way again. With the tide on our side once again, we tacked North, crossing the Silver Pit and the Humber approaches, circumventing two more vast wind farms and finally anchoring for the night off the beach some 15 miles South of Bridlington.

#### *Thu 15<sup>th</sup>: Humber coast*

Set off 07:00 to round Flamborough Head. With the wind still in the NW we did big tacks past the Head, round Filey brig, off Robin Hood's Bay and off Whitby Abbey. There was not much water in the entrance to Whitby harbour, and the current swirls, but we managed to tie up next to a large Dutch boat. J was not happy about scaling the long ladder up to the quay, but we got ashore and walked round town to find the well-known fish and chips. Then it was up to the Abbey, 199 very small steps. R had to climb on the wall to take some atmospheric photos. Back across the river we walked to the end of the pier - big gaps between the planks. An English boat tied up next to AMBITION temporarily waiting for the bridge to open. They had been based in Scotland for 2 years and were heading south in search of sun!

#### *Fri 15th: Whitby*

We cast off at 6am to leave port before the tide was too low for safety. As soon as we revved the engine to head out, it struggled and lost power, so we were drifting towards the harbour mouth. We quickly anchored in the pool while R investigated the evident fuel starvation. By switching to the fullest tank, and bleeding fuel with the hand primer, the problem was solved and we set off again. We just got out before we ran out of water!

It was a good run up the coast. We considered going on to Amble, but it was a little too far and a half tide entrance, so stopped at Blyth, hoping to be able to source a spare pipe for the fuel bodge. We charged round town on the Bromptons, to no avail. But R met an interesting team running tall ship Apprenticeship programme

and we all went to the pub. Later we had an evening drink in the yacht club light ship, serenaded by a veteran band, and topped this off with night walk on the beach.



*AMBITION II at Whitby*

#### *Sat 16th: Blyth*

Another early start, and off north in brisk W wind. Every time you come out of a harbour around here, it says NORTH SEA in big letters on the chart plotter. This is in case you got confused and thought you were in the Med. It grew gustier and R had to reef when blowing over 28 knots off Coquet island. We bowled on past the Farne Islands, tourists on the main island and fishers in boats peering at us. Decided Holy Island was too soon to stop, and Berwick too shallow, so soldiered on to Eyemouth, which is tight to get in but very sheltered inside. Nice bit of reverse parking on arrival. It was the Eyemouth Festival weekend, with live music playing right alongside (a mixed blessing), and a few Saturday drunks, but generally it is a pleasant town.

#### *Sun 17th - Eyemouth.*

Although it was Sunday, the HM helped us top up both fuel tanks (327 l), and we set off about 10:00 across the Firths of Forth and the Tay. Wind in the SW (on the beam) generally around 18 knots but up to 30 in sustained gusts, and a blather of rain. But we had a fast crossing of 45 miles to Lunan Bay where we anchored at the south end at 20:00. As we prepared dinner, Dolphins hunted around the boat.

#### *Mon 18th - Lunan Bay*

Woke a little late to a lovely morning, and weighed anchor at 7:30, only to have a fan belt break straight away, so down anchor again. Replaced the belt, then set off again. Rain set in and we made slow progress. Just before passing seaward of the Aberdeen VSS, J found the steering locked up. R disconnected the autopilot drive from the quadrant, and the steering was OK. The Raymarine linear drive had stuck so the ram would only go one way when in standby (hand steering) mode. We proceeded through the anchored ships and on to Peterhead, arriving at 20:00 and taking a berth in the marina. As we were too late for the HM, we could not get a key to exit the marina or use the facilities until morning, but the sun came out and we sat in the cockpit watching the local cadets sailing and rowing in the huge protected harbour.

### *Tue 19th - Peterhead*

Set off on bikes in search of fan belts, fuel pipe and autohelm parts. Bill Mackie, a big marine engineering firm in the town, were most helpful but could not supply what we needed. In fact we were unable to find matching fan belts, though an out of town Lorry garage found us some spare fuel pipe (at no charge). There were several marine electrical firms, but none supplied Raymarine parts.

We planned to sail after lunch, but on casting off, yet another fan belt broke! So we tied up again, and called Bill Mackie again, who promised to come out in the morning. Meanwhile R removed the batteries and the battery box, to get access to the back of the engine. It turns out that the crankshaft pulley has two belt grooves, which was hard to see from above.

So we cycled out to the NW of the town along the sea wall to the river estuary, in brilliant sunshine, and picked up a curry on the way back (excellent value meal-for-two for £16).

### *Wed 20th*

Bill himself came out mid-morning and confirmed the correct belt configuration. We were honoured to have such a prominent local figure help us out (and he refused any payment). But another belt broke and it was afternoon before all was in order. The weather closed in so we had 3rd night in Peterhead.

In the evening between showers we looked for a path past the docks to the SE, and found ourselves walking beneath the walls of the local prison, under the watch of cameras that swivelled as we passed. It was rough and boggy terrain, though with lots of flowers and a good view over the harbour, but clearly not much frequented. Swivel swivel.

### *Thu 21st Peterhead to Macduff*

Weather still not encouraging (NW wind, rain), but we set off about 8:30 and tacked NNE until well north of Rattery Head. The wind veered gradually so our next tack took us West and parallel to the coast. We aimed to go to Whitehills harbour, but diverted to Macduff, a commercial harbour with high stone quays, as there is a chandlery (Buccaneer) there that does Raymarine gear. We were met on the quayside and handed over our linear drive for investigation. R had already checked the motor, clutch and planet gears seemed OK, so we thought the bearings were suspect. More fish and chips (good) from local chippy. Walked up to church and monument, narrowly missing the shop. Another scary ladder descent to the boat at low water!

### *Fri 22nd - Macduff to Wick.*

Waited for Buccaneers to work on linear drive. R dubious about the logic of what they proposed. Sadly, it didn't work so they and we had wasted most of the morning getting our drive nice and clean but non functional. Bought some bits in the chandlery though, including another drive unit to scavenge for parts. Wind S at first, then NW then NE. Impressive hills behind us in S and beside in W. With help from the engine, made it to Wick before dark. Our lines were taken by a friendly couple in a motor boat, which I will call Lady X as I've forgotten her actual name, which

we later saw much of. We walked around the lower town, including the shortest street in UK / world (it is basically one doorway). Walked up Thomas Telford street in honour of his exercise in town planning in Poultneytown. The owner of a small wooden yacht regaled us with tales of Sniffy the dog and his dramatic rescue by Fraserborough RNLI (google it for the full story).



*Macduff*

### *Sat 23rd - Wick*

After a bit of shopping and tidying, we set off as advised by the HM - about 12.30 pm - to take a route east about the Pentland Skerries and S Ronaldsay. It became foggy straight after leaving harbour. Wind weak so had to motor. Down to below 2 knots as we chugged towards the Sandy Riddle, Mid Pentland firth, where we were passed at great speed by Lady X. The Riddle has a fearsome reputation, but at this time it was merely a bit swirly. Fought tide most of way to Copinsay and then the fog closed in. We decided a cosy anchorage was the thing, and felt our way into Deer Sound with chart plotter, radar and eyes (when we could see anything). We worked our way into the pool at 9 pm. Light, calm and smelling faintly of livestock through the murk (navigation by midden).

### *Sun 24th - Deer Sound*

Our anchorage was well tucked in to a little pool, seemingly landlocked. After breakfast we assembled the dinghy on the foredeck, launched her over the side and set up the sailing rig. In the gentle rain and light wind, we sailed ashore round a shingle spit, packed with nesting terns, landing in front of a derelict (but largely intact) cottage, which turned out to be the remains of an old herring station. The track took us up to a farm, then we had a circular walk over hayfields, beach and lanes. There were a few horse-flies from the cattle, but none of the midges we had feared. In fact we saw no midges at all in the islands this year (too cold we reckon). In the wetter places there are dense stands of Yellow Flag, which were over now but must look spectacular earlier in the season. Passing back through the farm yard, we had a friendly chat with the old farmer.

Returning to AMBITION II, we weighed anchor and, with the boat in tow, threaded our way out of Deerness Sound, and through Shapinsay Sound to a rainy Kirkwall.

Mon 25th – Kirkwall



*Neolithic village at Scarabae*

A day of archaeology. After the daily porridge we pedalled to the bus station and caught the bus to Scarabae. After looking round the incredible Neolithic village, exposed by erosion of the sand dunes, we looked around nearby Skaill House, had a cup of tea, then went back for a second look. Another bus took us to the Ring of Brodgar stone circle, where we had a guided (if rather rambling) tour from an enthusiast, which included a lot of information about the wild plants along the way, and their medicinal properties, plus much speculation about the Stones and the people who placed them over 4,000 years ago.



*Stones at Stenness*

We then cycled down to the Ness of Brodgar where a huge archaeological dig is in progress. There is huge excitement here about the large and unique Neolithic buildings, supposed to be ceremonial, that are being exposed. We had another guided talk, equally enthusiastic but more professional and instructive. It rained heavily from time to time. Cycling on, we came to the huge Stones of Stenness and yet another Neolithic settlement.

On the bikes again, to Maeshowe, but we were too late for the last tour of the day. So we waited by the road for the next bus. This took us back to Kirkwall, but we stayed on to the SE and alighted

near the Italian Chapel, built from a Nissan hut by Italian POWs during the 1940s. This was still open, so we paid it a visit (popular with Italians). Then we cycled over one of the Churchill Barriers before catching the (same) bus back to Kirkwall.

The bus drivers in Orkney and Shetland are great. Ask the way and they volunteer all sorts of extra information, and watch out for you later on the road.

Tue 26th - Kirkwall

In case we needed to moor against piles or a rough concrete quay, and since the next bus to Maeshowe was not until 11:00, we decided to look for a plank. We were directed to a builders merchant, which turned out to be a mile and a half out of town, where we purchased a 3m scaffold board. Walking this home in blustery conditions had its comedy moments! It was duly lashed to the rail for later modification.

Caught the bus at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, and joined the Maeshowe tour. This Neolithic tomb was reused by later cultures, and features Viking graffiti such as "these runes were carved using Gauk's Axe". Despite the vaulted roof having fallen in (replaced by a botched Victorian repair) most of the massive stonework has not moved over thousands of years and it is an impressive monument.



*Voles at Wedtray*

We sailed after lunch, north through the island to Westray. The tides were on our side and we had a smooth and interesting passage, passing close to Shapinsay, Gairsay, Egilsay and Eday, plus numerous smaller islands. Arriving in a squall of rain, AMBITION II stood by to help a local 'yole' that dismasted as we came in, but a rib came to their assistance. We were fortunate to find a pontoon berth in Pierowall harbour. Both this and the yacht pontoon in Kirkwall are run by Orkney marinas. The agent here is Tommy who is a great character and most helpful to any visitors. As dinner was cooking, a Norwegian boat came

alongside with a bump. The crew were a bunch of guys who have sailed together over many years, to the Faeroes, Ireland, Greenland and Newfoundland, following, as their skipper put it, the voyages of their ancestors. They had been visiting Westray for 20 years, and Tommy always gets them some crabs. Later he came aboard with a huge sack! They had way too many, and gave us a couple of huge ready-cooked crabs, which we stashed in the fridge.

#### *Wed 27th - Pierowall, Westray*

We walked damply into the village, bought some stores and left our bag with the shop while we went for a walk to the Links, and Grobust Bay, where there is a NW facing beach with dunes behind, containing remains of a Viking settlement currently being excavated. Above the beach was a 'Viking sauna' reconstructed for a BBC archaeology programme. Very cosy. The route back to the village passed the castle. Like many Scottish Heritage sites, it was open to explore for free, including access to the upper parts of the ruin.

Back in the village, we picked up our stores and returned to the boat. R spent some time on the pontoon, fashioning the scaffold board into a pair of fender planks with holes for ropes. Our neighbour was amused when the plane came out to round off the rough edges!

The rain and wind continued unabated into the evening. As was often the case, getting even a 3G signal proved impossible at the harbour. We did manage to borrow Tommy's home wifi signal, but even this was very slow, and downloading the Guardian newspaper took several attempts. *To be continued in Feb 2017 newsletter.....*

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## Two Cruises 2016

*John Langrick*

I was pleased to join members on two cruises this year, the first to Greece and the second along the Mediterranean coast from Spain to France.

#### *Greek Cruise*

Fed up of a cold start to 2016, we arranged that four members would hire a yacht from Athens and cruise that area of Greece for a week. The crew were Graham Pelling, Aleck Pool, Simon Joel and myself. The boat was a Hanse 415, ANDROS.

We flew to Athens and stayed overnight at a local hotel to the marina where we were invited to a meal at a friend of Simon's who has a holiday home next to Simon on the Greek Island. He also had a flat in Athens where we shared an excellent meal and company with Maria and Nicos.

We all assembled on ANDROS in late afternoon for a briefing from the charter company and after we stored our bags and provisions. We set off about 19:00 with a stiff breeze to the island of Aegina, a short distance of some 15 miles. We had our first experience at stern too mooring in a very busy harbour, but we squeezed in eventually and had our first meal on the quay.



*Problem with two wheels!*

It was then we discovered one of the fore hatches had been left open and the bunks in the forepeak were damp. (Who did that?)

A bit of rearrangement had Graham sleeping in the main salon and Simon covering the mattress with the waterproof sail cover. Later the mattresses soon dried out in the sun.

Sunday, we set off for a Ephidavros, a harbour on the mainland famous for its archeology, a fast sail and an opportunity to see how ANDROS sailed. At our destination, the 'parking places' on the quay were all taken so we spent our first night on a buoy close offshore. Graham went to try a bit of Geocaching, but wished he hadn't as he somehow lost his camera.

Monday we planned to sail to a small harbour Vahti, on the Khersonisos peninsular. I had visited the same harbour with my family in 2002. It remained as delightful as ever Vahti is a pretty, but small harbour where we moored stern too next to a taverna. Isn't it great when you have just 10 paces from boat to your dinner table. Lots of ale and good food, but the wind picked up in the night and I became worried that our stern might drag closer to the concrete harbour wall. There was really no need to worry as the anchor held well.



*Our dinner table at Vahti*



*And the crew*

Tuesday we set sail for Methana. This is a small harbour renowned for its sulphur springs below the sandy bottom. Anchoring was not allowed and Aleck took the wheel and we used the laid moorings again laying stern too against the harbour wall. In the afternoon I went to swim in a delightful Sulphur spar pool where I discussed Brexit with a polish couple. That evening the Souvlaki was excellent

Wednesday we set sail to Poros, a very busy and cosmopolitan port. The wind increased and the harbour was busy so we anchored in a bay to the west of the main town.

Simon and I took the dinghy ashore for a swim on a very stony beach and then back for a meal Aleck cooked on board



*Simon takes the helm mast Poros.*

Thursday, the wind had dropped and we motored past Poros, taking lots of picture of the moored yachts and then turned North towards our home port and the island of Agkistri. We caught a strong draft as we went round an island on our approach. Unfortunately our lunch which Aleck was cooking went to lubricate the cabin sole... much to all our consternation. In the harbour, we struggled to moor stern too in a very strong cross wind. We had an excellent meal at an elderly couple's taverna, a

few minutes walk from the marina, followed by a very sticky pudding in another taverna overlooking the bay. Earlier that afternoon a charter fleet came in with loads of youngsters, but we swerved the toga party and back to ANDROS.



*Greek road sign on Agkistri*

Friday, we had a short sail back to our home port of Alimos. The wind was scheduled to increase that afternoon with heavy rain forecasted. We secured a berth in the Marina about 14:00 so that the charter company could inspect the boat

That night Maria and Nicos joined us on board for supper and drinks while the wind howled in the rigging and the rain poured down.

A great holiday was had by all and thanks to all the crew, Graham, Simon and Aleck.

#### *Mediterranean Cruise*

I was delighted to be invited to cruise with Shaun on BRIAR ROSE. We took the Monarch Airlines flight to Almira in Spain, and then a short bus ride to Almiramar where we found Briar Rose. We didn't think much of it at the time but the covers were in disarray.

I had planned to repair the broken fore hatch, so we bought a small pack of epoxy at a local chandlers and settled down for an early start.

In the morning we had just left the harbour and hanging fenders on the stern when Shaun noticed the outboard was missing. We returned to the marina where the staff could not care less, a very disappointing response. We were told we could report it at the police station but that would have been an hour drive there and back. I guess we know better next time.

The wind was heading us on the direction we needed to go, which was in general North, but a long leg out to sea and back brought us to the delightful port of San Jose.



*Typical mooring, this time at San Jose*

Mooring seemed to be by inching in bows first and collecting laid lines at the jetty to tie on the stern. We adjusted the bow ropes so we could just step ashore. We ate Tapas and drank Sangria, delightful.



*This huge hotel stands on the coast unfinished and waiting for demolition. Built without the correct planning permissions it is locally known as the Hotel Illegal*

And we continued hopping up the coast, averaging 45 miles per day in temperatures of around 34 degrees. I busied myself with small maintenance jobs on board while Shaun cooked breakfast and lunch. On an evening we ate in some great little restaurants in very picturesque harbours.

We would set off at first light, about 0800. In general, the wind started on the nose in the morning, but would slowly veer to the East and South East in the afternoon. So we started off slowly, but our speed picked up in the afternoon until we were making 7 knots some afternoons. The marina offices close about 18:00 as we were at the end of season, so we always tried to make port by then.

One afternoon we could see a very heavy cloud approaching and by mid afternoon, the heavens opened for a massive thunder and lightning storm. The wind was off the stern so we made good progress into our harbour, but after dark. Luckily we were able to raise the Marineros on channel 9 and we secured next to the fuel berth but with our stern into the wind and rain.

It was quite late and a Sunday evening (when Spain closes) but, after a trudge in the rain, found a pleasant Italian restaurant with excellent salad and even better pizza. The wine was good too. In

the morning we found that the Autohelm display was erratic and the unit failed to operate, I opened up the head unit and stood it in the sun. It eventually started to work fine, but wired in a Simrad autohelm as spare just in case.

We continued North passing Benidorm and stopping at ports such as Valencia but we went past Barcelona as marinas would be very expensive.

Our eventual destination was the Port of Leucat which has a reputation of being an excellent port for laying up. Before that we had to round the Cap de Creus and the area beyond was notorious for strong winds off the Pyrenees. We set off to round this cape in a pretty easy F3 headwind, however as we approached the cape, the wind increased to F7 and with large waves knocking us back, decided to head for the port of Roses, one of the last Spanish ports before France.

In the morning the forecast (Wind Guru) was set to moderate, so we set off again, but again the wind was far too strong so we sheltered in a bay closer to the cape and had breakfast.

We again set off again later in the morning in a strong head wind that was forecasted to veer east, which would give us a much better wind when we rounded the cape.

We had a very worrying time as we rounded the cape as Shaun slipped on the wet deck while hoisting the main and landed awkwardly on the anchor winch. The autohelm had again packed in, as did our standby so all I could do was to furl the jib and helm to the nearest port, some 25 miles off.

Shaun was in agony, but managed to crawl along the pitching deck to the cockpit and drag himself under the spray hood where he passed out. There followed a good four hours of motoring through some very heavy wind and sea which eventually calmed down enabling the Simrad autohelm to hold some sort of course. But we would be late arriving and help would be needed to dock.

One of the harbours said they were now closed and would not help, but the harbourmaster at St Cypren said we could come alongside their new pontoon and would wait for us.

It was a very welcome sight as we tied up alongside and one of the marina staff took our lines. I went to the office and requested they called an ambulance which arrived within 10 mins. We then had a drive (blue lights and siren), of about 30km to Perpignon hospital. Why do they put speed bumps on the slip road to accident and emergency?

Shaun was seen very quickly and after examination and xrays, diagnosed with soft tissue trauma. He was prescribed pain killers and anti-inflammatory drugs and we took a taxi back to the marina. Shaun could no longer wriggle into his quarterberth, but a cabin berth was perfectly fine. Our first meal in France was a frayed bentos pie!



*The morning after against the very welcome jetty at St Cypren*

In the morning, we had just a short 20 mile trip to Leucat with no wind at all and calm seas. We arrived shortly after lunch and Shaun felt well enough to walk around the many small yards looking for the best rates for laying up. We selected the best and went back to the Captinerie to book haul out in the morning (Friday). We had the rest of the Friday to remove sails and lay BRIAR ROSE up



*Now that's a travel hoist!*

By 10:00 BRAR ROSE was out of the water and in her spot for the winter. Shaun scrubbed the hull with a loo brush (all we could find) and I removed sails etc. I changed fuel filters and flushed the engine. The filter was very badly blocked and water trap half full of water.



*Laying up BRIAR ROSE*

The wind picked up in the afternoon and we had a struggle to put the covers on but by 19:00 Briar Rose was safely tucked up and we went to the bar next door and arranged a taxi to Perpignon. A night in the economy Ibis, we had a short taxi drive to Perpignan airport and home to Stansted...

We covered over 600 miles on a great trip. Thank you again Shaun.

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## **The Ad on the Internet!**

*Steve Noble*

The Ad on the internet jumped out at me: a centre cockpit Ketch, with a large Aft Cabin. MYSTICAL is a Nicholson 39 and was located just where I wanted it to be in Antigua.



An email for further details and photos from the agent revealed that she had been in the nearby mangroves for around two years and desperately needed some shine and polish. More worrying, however was that a whole new gear box and batteries were needed for her. But the price was very good, so I flew out to view her. I also had details of a Moody 42 C. C. at St Martin that I could look at, as well as three other potential vessels.

MYATICAL, as I have mentioned, was in need of a clean and an airing out as the previous owner had just left her with food, drink, and a large amount of personal possessions (including his 'mucky drawer' that required much eye scrubbing.) Apparently, his boyfriend had left him and he had walked away from the boat.

The agent without haggling, knocked \$15,000 off the price, but the gearbox and batteries were my responsibility. We towed her to the nearby slipway where we hauled her out to conduct a survey, an Ex-Pat engineer making the survey for me.

The survey was good with just a few recommendations. The engineer said that it'd be probably in my best interest to sail her first and then get things done at the end of the season.



The gearbox was ordered from the UK, I tried to give as much details as I could, including ID No. The gearbox was shipped out at the beginning of December. We booked flights for January 6<sup>th</sup> but as January 2<sup>nd</sup> came around, an email from the engineer said the gearbox did not fit!

The original was an offset model, so the engine was not on the centre line. The UK supplier said that there was not a replacement for it; the only way was to move the engine 3.5" up and 3.5" sideways. And so, we booked an apartment for a week in Antigua.

A fabricator was called in and he tried to move the engine with blocks of wood and a car jack...He could not do it. He walked away, leaving his jack stuck under the engine. Another guy was called in and he was not happy that people were just walking away from the job.

By this point, I had extended our stay at the apartment to three weeks as well as the car rental which was already eating up money. It was then estimated that the work would take three to four weeks and so we decided to fly home and return when the work was nearly done.

Ever heard of the phrase: while the cat's away the mice will play?

It took three months (not weeks) to complete. As this was the Caribbean, the ½ inch steel plate they needed had to be shipped from Miami. It was then lost in transit. Furthermore it was discovered that the measurements to move the engine were wrong by five inches sideways (and not needing an upward move.) So this took more work and money, especially as work was \$30-£95 and hour.

We returned at the end of May to help drop the engine down onto the engine bed brakers, connect everything up and replace the steering pedestal. Finally, the engine started and Mystical was ready to launch!

On the launch I found that the engine control was reversed, putting the throttle back into reverse was now forwards and there was no reverse at all. The steering cables were also crossed...so that made steering extra fun.

Thankfully, these issues were soon sorted. I just had to clear the new rib through Customs as the three inflatables that came with the boat were no good. Typically, the paperwork for the rib was incorrect and that would then take several more days delay.

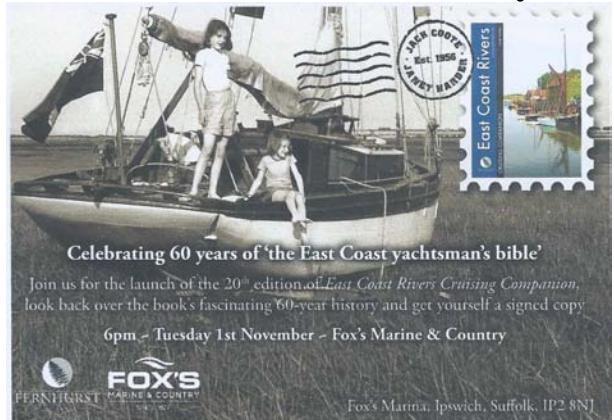


Finally we were off to Guadeloupe as we had to check out of Antigua with the rib. It was my first sail with the girl, and she did not disappoint....until I started the engine. It ran for ten minutes and then stopped. The main fuel tank was contaminated, blocking filters and damaging the injectors. So we returned to Antigua and discovered that Ford Injectors were not available on the island. And so we flew back one week early.

We are now planning to fly back either at the end of this year or the start of the next to continue our dream of six months in the Caribbean and six months in the UK.

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## East Coast Rivers 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Celebrating 60 years of 'the East Coast yachtsman's bible'

Join us for the launch of the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of *East Coast Rivers Cruising Companion*, look back over the book's fascinating 60-year history and get yourself a signed copy

6pm - Tuesday 1st November - Fox's Marine & Country



Fox's Marina, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 8NJ

I have always had a copy of East Coast Rivers and my current and latest publication is very threadbare. It gives invaluable information of the RSA's favourite cruising area.

This book was first published by the RSA former president Jack Coote and when he passed away, by his daughter Jan Harber who is also an RSA member. Jack sailed from Paglesham with wife Ellen and daughters Jan and Judy. All sailed these waters extensively as both Jan and Judy still do,

Many of our members will have at least one of the last 19 publication either on board or in their library at home.

I am delighted there is to be a 20<sup>th</sup> edition, published by Fernhurst Books, released on 1<sup>st</sup> of November at 6:00 PM at Fox's Marine and County in Ipswich. RSA members have been invited and I will certainly be there.

You may also purchase the new copy of East Coast Rivers and have it signed. I plan to take my car and will have spare seats so let me know if you would like to join me.

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