



molliette

The annual journal of the WEST MERSEA YACHT CLUB Founded 1899



December 2014

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Cover photo: GREAT Britain arriving in New York after a nail biting race from Jamaica, completing leg 13 of the Clipper Round the World Race 2013/14.
See also page 38

Editorial

As members of a very successful club we all share, to a greater or lesser extent, a love of the sea, albeit in many different ways and at many different levels: round the cans or round the world, cadet racing or club cruising. I hope this common interest is reflected in these pages and will encourage you to participate in our club's many and varied activities, both afloat and ashore.

Thanks again this year for all your reports, memories and experiences. Remember, the Molliette relies entirely on members' contributions, so please send yours via the Club Office or direct to campbellhome@aspects.net. Ideally send text in MS Word, either as an e-mail attachment or on a CD. Pictures, with suggested captions to identify persons/boats/places, are best as JPEG files, highest resolution possible but not embedded in Word files and, for large numbers, on a CD.

And the earlier the better!

COLIN CAMPBELL
Editor

From the Commodore



Welcome to the 8th edition of the *M o l l i e t t e* Annual, packed as always with news and articles from members of the West Mersea Yacht Club, all s k i l f u l l y compiled by our editor Colin Campbell.

There cannot be any doubt that the financial recession has affected yacht ownership and participation in our sport. Racing fleet numbers have declined nationally and that is reflected on the East coast and home waters generally. Social trends also play a part in why sailors don't want to be away from home for a day or more for numerous summer weekends. Our sister club, the Dabchicks, continues to muster good yacht fleet numbers for their Friday night series, possibly for the reasons that participants can pursue family interests and other sports over the remaining weekend.

Long may we continue to hold yacht races at Mersea and our close association with the Dabchicks is the key to that hope. Our own Sailing Committee have Dabchicks Committee members seconded to their meetings and the annual sailing programme, including cruises, is jointly co-ordinated. If only we could keep the younger sailors' interest going, to graduate to keel boats!

Talking of secondments, I must thank Brian and Wendy Bolton for their continuing Race Officer duties aboard *Blue Horizon*. Brian's work extends beyond our estuary and as Principal Race Officer for the EAORA fleet he has helped the continuing existence of the off-shore racing fleet.

As I look back on my three years as Commodore I realise I have just expressed my two goals: making younger people feel welcome in our Club and keeping close ties with the Dabchicks. One example was the joint-run RYA Zone Championships for cadets, held over the 27/28 September weekend. The RYA judged the event a great success and both Clubs' coffers have received a boost. Well done Roger Sydenham, Ed Allen, Paul Jackson and all of your team, for giving untold time and effort.

I wish every success to next year's Sailing Committee in exciting the enthusiasm of yacht racers at West Mersea. Knowing those who are standing for election, I am certain of an adrenalin boosting lead for next season.

As the cruising articles tell, the 'cruises in company' play a large part in our sailing events, and their plans grow more ambitious each year. Judy, Archie and I joined the cruise to Burnham in May and "what a good time was had by all". We will certainly join in again next year, although curry WILL NOT be on the dog's menu again (stolen and returned at the Knoll!).

Cadet Week, under the leadership of Will Crossley, and Mersea Week under that of Rachael Gozzett and Maggie Haddow, were both the successful events we have come to expect. Planning for both of these events in 2015 has already started and I cannot thank them enough for the hard work undertaken on behalf of us all by both Committees in both the Mersea Clubs.

As I write, the results of 'Bart's bash' are published. The event ran on 21st September and helped raise funds for the Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation. Well done Dabchicks Sailing Club for 5 places in the first 17, including Jack Grogan 4th and Janeck Payne 5th, out of 30,717 sailors worldwide.

Also well done to everyone who took part in the annual RNLi Pursuit Race: 27 starters were led home by *Spot Marley* and raised £632 for our Lifeboat Station.

To House matters. Under Jo, our General Manager's supervision, and the strategies of Committee we have seen good financial profits for both catering and bar. We were sorry to see Eddie leave the Club for a new venture and on behalf of the members I wish to say "thank you" for his six years of hard work. Hopefully we shall find a replacement Head Chef with similar culinary excellence.

We also had a change around with Launchmen this year when Doug Seaden returned to his sail-making craft. The Mooring and Boatyard Committee wisely secured replacements giving the flexibility of running two launches when peak demands need meeting.

It just remains for me to thank sincerely all of the past three years' Flag Officers, Officers and Committee Members who have made my 'time in office' mostly an enjoyable and rewarding experience. I must also give a special 'thank you' to our Honorary Treasurer, Ian Shay, who has guided me with his professional skills, wisdom, sound judgement and friendship.

Without our Staff we could not operate such a successful Yacht Club, so on behalf of our members, thank you all, past and present.

Wishing you fair winds in 2015

ALAN JONES
Commodore

Bastille or Bust

Cruising in company to the north French coast

The company: *Sea Breeze* (Gibsea 7.7) Kevin & Lesley Mullins; sailing in company with *Playpen* (Countess 33) Colin, Diane and Peter Campbell; *Odessa* (UFO 34) Malcolm Clark & Brigitte Texier-Pauton plus Tilly (ship's dog); *Clockwise* (Sadler 32) Jack & Sandy Davis.

This Summer Cruise was conceived when Brigitte let it be known she wished to experience Bastille Day in France, having been thwarted two years previously by bad weather. What a good idea we all thought, let the planning begin.

The start date was set for Friday 11th July giving us three days to get to the coast of France in time for the Bastille celebrations on the 14th. Our only problem was that the refurbishment of our new boat *Sea Breeze*, (formerly *Paul II*) was running behind schedule. We eventually launched on 16th June and two weeks later set sail for a four day shake-down cruise to the Orwell to iron out a few small problems but nothing major, thank goodness. One week to go before we set off for France.

This was the first time Kevin and I were planning to sail on a long distance cruise with just the two of us - in a 25 footer – a much smaller boat than previously. We had always sailed three or four up in our Gibsea 33. I'm afraid to say I was feeling rather nervous – the first time with just the two of us. What if something should happen to Kevin? Would I be able to cope? What if our little boat couldn't cope? ... and so on.

At a pre-cruise meeting at Diane and Colin's home all four crews discussed strategy for crossing the Thames Estuary. Having voted down one suggestion of departing at 0430hrs (the

general consensus being "Cruising is supposed to be fun") we all decided on a more gentlemanly 1100hrs and in particular referred to Roger Gaspar's book on the subject. When we consulted him in person he recommended his newly surveyed 'SW Sunk Swatchway' route with 6 to 8 metres minimum depth, although it was a bit disconcerting to find the latest chart still showed considerable drying heights! However we had faith in Roger and headed for his recommended waypoints. *Odessa* was first to get there and set off across - I held my breath! I needn't have worried as we all crossed safely with lots of water – thank you Roger. (See *Roger's article on page 30 Ed*)

The wind was fickle throughout the journey so we sailed and motored on and off, arriving in **Ramsgate** after a seven hour journey. *Odessa* was first in, so après-sail drinks were on her that evening. This set a trend for the rest of the holiday: first boat in hosted drinks. We were in first only once!! Another trend was set that day: because we were nearly always last into a port we always had a welcome committee to take our mooring lines. What a wonderful sight after a long sail.

Our first day across the Thames had gone well and helped to alleviate my fears. We all set off for our first great meal of the holiday, a lovely Italian restaurant 'The Magnolia' just above Ramsgate harbour.

Next morning we headed for Dover, across the Channel, down to Cap Griz Nez and then **Boulogne**. We flew past the Kent coast with a strong tide and crossed the first separation zone, no trouble but had to slow down for a tanker to pass in the second zone. By the time we came up to Cap Griz Nez the tide was against us and we made slow progress into Boulogne. We were pleased with ourselves and the boat but it had been a long 10 hour day. However another great evening drinks session followed, this time on *Clockwise* and then out to have the first moules of the holiday.



Playpen on passage

The new Boulogne Yacht Club and marina facilities are very good and only a short walk into town. After a lazy day exploring we all came together for drinks on *Sea Breeze* to discuss the inclement weather forecast for the next few days – thunder, lightning, heavy rain and winds in the wrong direction – ugh! We decided to stay put for another 24 hours and spend Bastille Day in Boulogne, so the next day we walked up the hill to explore the lovely old walled town. Outside the Hotel de Ville we came across a beautiful new



Brigitte and Malcolm in the Boulogne Alhambra

Islamic style garden, with elements taken from Yves St Laurent's garden in Marrakesh and the Alhambra gardens in Seville.

That evening we piled onto *Playpen* to watch the fireworks - a spectacular sight - although curiously on the 15th July.

The following morning we set off at 7.30am into a grey sea and lots of wind, F5-6 SW. It was very rough getting out of the harbour but eventually we could sail and set off for **St Valery sur Somme**.

Now here I must mention Brigitte. Before we left Mersea she phoned or emailed all the ports we intended to visit and let them know to expect four British boats. She then proceeded to print out all the harbour and marina layouts, VHF channel and notes on any hazards. Nowhere did we need this kind of information more than going into Saint Valery sur Somme where she had the very latest chart of the tortuous channel.

St Valery is tide sensitive and

you are advised to get there two hours before high water. The others had sailed to the horizon and were $\frac{3}{4}$ hour ahead of us so got there at the appointed time. We became concerned we were not going as fast as we had hoped because of the rough weather and might not get there in time. If we couldn't get in we would have to sail on to Dieppe - another four hours away. Then two things happened: *Clockwise* could not start her engine and *Playpen* went to give her a tow. Because of that Brigitte contacted the harbourmaster to let him know and also to say that *Sea Breeze* was at least $\frac{3}{4}$ hour behind and might not be able to get in. He told her "pas de problème": because of the spring tide there would be plenty of water up to 3pm - we arrived at 2.30. We had also caught up with the others - so in we went, four boats in convoy led by *Playpen* with *Clockwise* in tow. Now, to get to St Valery sur Somme you have to negotiate some 50 buoys through a very winding and narrow channel. It took us $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours but it was so worth it - such a pretty little town with a long promenade, a good marina and the sun came out just to make it perfect. That day I felt the boat and I had coped well with the rough weather and I started to relax and get into holiday mood.



Jack spent the next morning fixing the engine on *Clockwise*, Kevin fixing our main hatch while *Playpen's* crew went on the little steam train around the bay to Le Crotoy. Sandy and I explored St Valery. The afternoon was spent with the others replenishing exhausted wine stocks at the local supermarket, a little difficult with overloaded trollies.



Jack and Sandy taking the trolley for a walk



While others let the train take the strain

The next day we set off two hours before High Water for **Dieppe**, back through the winding channel (longer this time against the flooding tide) and off down the Normandy coast for a 4½ hour sail. This time we had a warm fresh wind but a quartering sea that threw us around a lot, so not so comfortable. We arrived just as the sun was setting and another great welcome from our sailing friends, including drinks and

tapas on *Clockwise* before we all fell into bed.

We had been away one week but it felt like more. Dieppe is a lovely bustling town with the marina right in the heart of it. We had a relaxing day exploring in warm sunshine, then back to the boat to go and get fuel. We started the engine but when we went into reverse it stopped dead. We got everyone on the bow, even a Dutchman who had just come in. Jack had a look at the propeller and found a huge chunk of rope and plastic around it. In the best sailing tradition Jack got Sandy's best kitchen knife (the sharpest available) into the dinghy and set to to cut it free. 40 minutes later all was off. On the way down to Dieppe we had sailed through patches of green with seaweed and cuttlefish bones in it and we think that is where we had picked up the debris. From then on we slalomed around every floating green island, and there were lots of them.

That evening we all ate at a small local restaurant overlooking the harbour and were treated to a spectacular thunderstorm and lightning show with torrential rain. It was

our last night with *Playpen* since she was starting for home the next day.

Some time after *Playpen* slipped her moorings the rain poured down but luckily stopped in time for the rest of us to explore the Saturday market, where we bought lots of fish, prawns and cheeses to eat on board that night, after drinks on *Odessa*. We had another huge thunderstorm.

Next day it rained all morning again but after lunch we went for a walk with Malcolm, Brigitte and Tilly along the beautiful wide promenade and up to the imposing castle high on the cliff. I had wanted to explore the castle museum and its art since we arrived - this is as near as I got!!

Next port of call was 5½ hours south to **Fécamp** - our first good sail in warm breezy conditions. We passed very imposing white cliffs and found Fécamp nestled in a dip. We motored the last few miles and managed to be first in Port – let the celebrations begin – followed by a lovely restaurant, more moules ... a la crème, a la poivre, a la camembert etc etc.



Tucked up in Dieppe



Benedictine distillery Fecamp

The following day we all met up for a galette (savory crêpe) and went on to explore the Palais Benedictine distillery, a magnificent edifice built by Alexandre Le Grand who rediscovered the recipe and became one of the first people to market and target his product - now sold all around the world. We could not refuse to taste it and needless to say a few bottles were purchased!!

We had decided that Fécamp was as far south as we were going and so the next day we started our return trip this time calling into **Saint Valery en Caux**, another little town nestling in a cleft in the high chalk cliffs. This was a 3½ hour trip which we sailed most of the way but with poor visibility. We negotiated the big swell at the narrow entrance and waited to lock-in to the little marina. We had the best welcome here. The marina boys brought down to the pontoon some useful 'goodie bags' with marina and town information plus floating key fob and pencil.

The sun came out in the afternoon and we all explored the lovely little town. We came across a modern church in the main square with beautiful



St Valery en Caux entrance

modern stained glass windows and a calm atmosphere. That night we ate in one of the restaurants around the main square. We had all eaten so much fish and shellfish so far that we went for meat – except Malcolm who would eat fish any time!

Because it was such an attractive place we decided to stay two days and just relaxed, walked and explored. There is one striking half-timbered house on the harbour side where Henry IV is reputed to have stayed. Then around the back there is a walk along the 'Penitents' Way' which takes you past the sandstone cloisters of the Convent of the Penitents, through narrow



How many bottles of Benedictine would it take to fill this?

cobbled streets and pathways and high up on to the south cliff with great views over the rooftops of the town and way along the high cliff coastline. We ate on our own boats one night and the second night found a tiny restaurant with just two





All together at St Valery en Caux

tables and the owner cooking and serving. Great, this looked like it could be a good cheap night – wrong. Somehow it cost just as much as bigger restaurants- but a great night was had by all.

Saturday 26 July we locked out of Saint Valery en Caux and set off for a fine sunny four hour sail to Dieppe.

Then off again the next day to **LeTréport** 15 miles away. Weather was predicted to be good and the tide in the right direction: a good prospect for an enjoyable short sail. As we left Dieppe Brigitte called the harbourmaster in Le Tréport and was told to call him when we were nearer since he wasn't sure whether he had room. If he was full we would have to carry on to Boulogne another seven hours away. So we were all on tenterhooks until Brigitte called us to say all was OK and we could go in.

We negotiated another narrow entrance with a big swell and waited to be locked in. As we waited we saw that the town was packed with holidaymakers. Apparently it was the last day of a week's festival. Once we had moored up we set off to explore the town. We fought our way

through the crowds to the seafront promenade where we listened to not very good Cuban music and then on to find the funicular to take us to the top of the cliffs. The view was spectacular if a little hazy, but a wonderful sight.



Le Treport town

The next morning after yet another huge thunderstorm the sun was out again by lunchtime so we set off to explore the small town on the north side of the harbour called Mer les Bains. Here was another long promenade, this time with unusual Victorian style houses looking out to sea. There were towers, balconies, fancy tiles, cut out woodwork and so many colours. They had been neglected but the town was in the process of rescuing them.

The next day after a relaxing morning we set off to catch a bus to the supermarket to stock up

for the next three days' big sails. We all decided to have a shared supper on *Odessa*. Malcolm and Brigitte invited two Belgians to join us, and they brought over a huge range of freshly made tapas, meatballs, salsa etc - quite a banquet. Then Malcolm served up his hot, hot chilli.

Wed 30 July 12.30: we set off for Boulogne with the sun shining, good breeze and a fine reach, we were ready to get into Boulogne after eight hours sailing.

Thursday 31 July: we left at noon with about 30 other yachts. We had a fine sunny sail up to Cap Griz Nez when our three boat flotilla headed across the traffic separation zone while all the others, mostly big Dutch yachts, kept on going north. As we set off to negotiate the Channel the wind freshened and we ended up on a rollercoaster of a ride dodging the shipping. Once safely across we flew up the coast to Ramsgate in record time - 6½ hours - and glad to be in. We returned to the same restaurant for the last meal of the holiday together.

Friday 1st August: set off at noon in a blustery wind that freshened and gave us another rollercoaster ride for the first 1½ hours. Then it almost died as we negotiated the passage through the Thames Estuary sandbanks. As we reached the Swin the wind freshened and we had a good sail all the way to Mersea. The only downside was the tide against us but we were on our mooring by 20.30.

Sat 2nd August: back on Mersea soil after a wonderful holiday, all my fears unfounded and the advantages of cruising in company re-affirmed. Since then all four crews have enjoyed at least two reunion suppers.

LESLEY MULLINS
Sea Breeze

Club Cruises

Shakedown Cruise to Burnham 3rd-5th May

When the dice fell with the revelation of the Cruiser programme, Mel asked me to organise the Shakedown Cruise to Burnham over the first May Bank Holiday weekend. I immediately got on the email to Burnham Yacht Harbour to see whether berths would be available. The good news was that they could accommodate us with ease. Due to the convenience we opted for The Swallowtail restaurant for the Saturday evening dinner. As an "alternative" for day 2, we proposed Fambridge for a lunchtime drink at the Ferry Boat.

Fitting Out was blessed with good weather, and a launch in mid-April gave us a shakedown beforehand. The forecast from about a fortnight out was settled weather, and northerlies, which came to fruition.

The final list included *Odessa*, *Stargazer*, *Kithros III*, *Tempus*, *Carmina*, *Matilda*, *Avalon*, *Symbol of Lley*, *Clockwise*, *Savannah*, *Raggerty* and *Gladys*.

Tides were friendly with a 0930-ish low at Mersea, so a reasonable departure was possible. Some overnighted aboard, and left about 0730-0830.

A slick start saw us off at 0930, in a 10 knot nor'easter, but as we neared the Spitway, it veered easterly and dropped, resulting in a motor up the Crouch.

Once moored, we kept watch for arrivals – *Matilda*, *Savannah* and *Tempus* were already there. I went off to D pontoon to catch *Stargazer*, *Clockwise* and *Odessa*.

Soon it was time to dress for dinner. There was a big birthday party on in the Swallowtail, which made me somewhat nervous, but I needn't have worried.

Dinner was first rate, with all served very much together. Conversation (and drink) flowed very freely. We eventually broke up around 2130, when the "singer" kicked off in the birthday party. A few splinter groups formed, but suffice it to say that, after a couple of drinks and a day out in the air, most of us departed to the arms of Morpheus before midnight.

Sunday dawned, brighter and warmer than Saturday, and the optional activity (*Carmina* and *Gladys* hosting the trip up to Fambridge with the crews of *Tempus*, *Savannah*, *Raggerty* and *Symbol* aboard)) kicked off about 1100. A gentle pootle eventually saw us raft together at Fambridge for the pub. The weather was so good we sat in the garden, and a very pleasant time was spent nattering in the sun.

About 1430, we set off back to Burnham. The rest of the day was pretty much spent doing our "own thing", and discussing departure times for Monday.

The return leg was a F3-4 SSE to take us home in brilliant sunshine. It dropped off a bit as we got to the Spitway but we were all able to waft back to Mersea.

A brilliant weekend, with an exceptional meal on Saturday evening. My thanks go to the Swallowtail and BYH for their excellent support, and to the crews of all 12 club boats that turned up to make it such a memorable event!

Relaxing on Raggerty



LARRY & LYNNE BOTHERAS
Gladys



Harwich Pursuit Race 24th May

This year the Harwich pursuit race was all set with 'Mouse' Haynes and Commodore Alan Jones aboard *Pelican* volunteering to be start boat. However the weather conspired to have different ideas, with a forecast of a southerly force 5 to 6 with gusts of force 7. Eleven larger boats decided to set sail at their allotted times for an interesting and exhilarating trip to Shotley while three decided to cruise.

Stargazer, with her 100% headsail and a reefed main, set off with the tide and wind towards the Bench Head. The fresh southerly meant there was no tacking up the Wallet and gusts were not as bad as predicted. As we shot past Walton Pier the wind came more astern until finally we came on a dead

run passing Stone Banks port hand buoy; very scary in these conditions, so we decided to tack down wind.

This trip was the fastest that *Stargazer* has ever done to Shotley, easily under four hours; she normally takes about five and a bit. The finish was close with all the boats crossing the line within 14 minutes of each other. Congratulations to Julian Lord and Richard Hayden in setting the handicaps. As hardened racing men they had difficulty with our five minute starting times whilst trying to get the boats to finish together. *Waterlily* just pipped *Hannahlore* by a few seconds to win the Dabchicks Harwich Pursuit Trophy.

MEL DANIELS
Stargazer

Lowestoft 25 – 30th May

After finishing the Harwich pursuit race on Saturday May 24th competitors locked into Shotley marina for the night. On Sunday Mel and Carol in *Stargazer*, Viv and Linda in *Tempus*, and Chris and myself in *Matilda* sailed up the coast to Lowestoft. It was the first time Chris and I had been there and the entrance to the harbour looked daunting with a large swell running. We let *Stargazer* go in first and then followed with the throttle wide open. Once through the entrance all was calm and we were helped and guided into our berths by the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club harbourmaster. Once everything was packed away and the boats tidied, it was time for a few drinks and reservation for dinner at the yacht club.

Since a large Dutch contingent was booked into the main restaurant we chose the small area overlooking the harbor and enjoyed a convivial evening with good food and wine flowing freely.



L to R: Viv, Carol, Mel, Linda, Julian, & Christine

Clearly Lowestoft was once a prosperous town, as reflected by the architecture along the seafront promenade. Many of the Victorian houses have four or five storeys and were built by the entrepreneur Samuel Peto who had made a fortune in the railway business. His construction company also built many London landmarks, including Nelson's column, and at one time he was the largest employer of labour in the world. Now, in different times, many of these once-grand buildings are either guest houses or converted into flats.

After our historical meanderings we repaired to the Flying Fifteen Tea Room (an eccentric proprietor but delicious cakes!) and later visited the town museum to learn the interesting history of Lowestoft as a busy and prosperous herring port. In its heyday you could walk from one side of the harbour to the other across the massed ranks of fishing craft including huge steam powered vessels. Now barely half a dozen remain.

Our plan was to leave Lowestoft for Southwold in the morning but upon awaking things didn't look too promising: the wind was force 7 and the harbour entrance looked very unappealing. I sought advice from the harbourmaster who said he would not venture out. Thus we stayed another night and were rewarded with a lovely meal on board *Tempus*. The next day we did set sail for Southwold, with Chris and I again grateful for local knowledge provided by Mel and Viv, enabling us to tie up successfully, in line, on the wooden stagings. The facilities at Southwold are minimal but there is a good pub on the quay where we all had lunch before walking in to the beautiful town for a bit of sightseeing and later that evening dinner aboard *Matilda*.

Leaving Lowestoft



Footloose in Southwold

Stargazer



Tempus



Tempus, Matilda and Stargazer (hidden) at Southwold

The next day our little flotilla re-grouped: *Tempus* sailed for Ipswich leaving *Matilda* and *Stargazer* to head for the Deben and pick up a swinging mooring where we were joined by Jack and Sandy in *Clockwise* who hosted dinner on board that evening.

Next destination Shotley, where the three boats tied up next to each other and more beer was drunk. The facilities in the marina are very good but there was little of interest within walking distance. However, we did take an interesting tour of the HMS Ganges museum. The old Ganges site of course is now closed and awaiting development: times change and as the Empire has shrunk we no longer need so many sailors. Our evening meal was taken at the Bristol Arms, a large pub that once would have been buzzing with trade from all the local shipping but is now much quieter. However the beer was good and the food enjoyable.

Matilda and *Stargazer* progressed the next day to Wolverstone and after tying up we made that charming trek through the woods to Pin Mill and the Butt & Oyster, which as usual was well patronised. Our evening meal was taken at the Royal Harwich YC, in their beautiful new building overlooking the river. From there we spotted *Tempus* heading back to Mersea, which is what we did the following day, arriving in the afternoon to a welcome drink on the yacht club lawn.

All in all a good cruise in good company.

JULIAN FRENCH
Matilda

Heybridge 11-13th July

Due to a gloomy weather forecast and an alternative cruise to France this year the numbers for the annual bash to Heybridge were somewhat down: 16 boats turned out, split more or less evenly between Friday and Saturday.

Following lock-in on Friday there were the usual drinks parties on various boats giving everyone the chance to meet new friends and catch up with old ones. This happy time always seems to slip effortlessly into the evening with dinner at the local pubs for more socialising.

Saturday morning started very dull with no wind but by the afternoon we were blessed with glorious sunshine. Since it was also the annual Heybridge Regatta the basin was alive with flags and bunting, whilst the band played rousing music including Rule Britannia, Hearts of Oak, Jerusalem etc. Part of the festivities included a local version of the greasy pole event involving a pole stretched across the lock (full of water of course!), with pillow fights to find the champion. Sadly "Mouse" from *Pelican* was beaten by the reigning champion – Martin the lock keeper.



Dura (Alan Mason and Shirley Swan) was the only boat that decided to race and could have come first (or last) but sadly retired due to lack of wind and motored in.

Weather for the BBQ on Saturday was perfect and afterwards owners, crew and guests gathered in a circle with Alan and his chums supplying the music. Then, as seems to happen so often at Heybridge, the heavens opened at about 9.30pm scattering everyone back to their boats or the pub.

At least by that time we had all cooked and eaten although I can't seem to recall whether it actually stopped raining by lock-out time on Sunday.

Personally I find it quite soothing (dare I say even romantic) when the rain is hammering stair rods on the cabin roof while I'm down below, snug as a bug in a rug, under a duvet. Hope to see you all next year on !9/20th June.

JOHN HAYNES
Pelican



Tollesbury 11 - 12th October

The late cruise of the season to Tollesbury is becoming 'de rigueur' for WMYC and DSC cruisers who wish to bathe in end-of-season sunshine. Seven yachts made passage and skippers and crews enjoyed the annual jolly. Prior to going into the marina on high water a pursuit race was hard fought around the cans in the estuary. The well sailed *Seahawk II* was guided home by Andrew and Jill Stebbing who thus qualified for the highly coveted and oddly named "Shakedown Shield".

After settling in the marina, refreshments were offered on *Odessa*, where due temperance, modesty and moderation was clearly shown and only two cases of "Chateau La Tour" 83 were consumed, leaving the crews gasping for more! It came in great quantity that evening at a truly

splendid supper at the Tollesbury Cruising Club, and later at the Tollesbury SC who happened to be holding a sea shanty evening. We joined in and I think and hope they appreciated this!! Sunday morning was a quieter affair.

A fitting end to the weekend, although rather surreal and unexpected, was the most magnificent rendition of Verdi's Triumphant March from *Aida*, played on the cornet by the lovely Persephone, whilst 'hove to' on their new yacht, *Moonstone*. Well done Persephone, you're a star!

MIKE BERRY
Rendezvous



Our Irish Adventure

Cork Week is a biannual regatta, which over the years has seen a fair amount of WMYC participation. In recent years the 300+ boat fleets have reduced to the low 100's but we decided to give it another go, this time with our 42ft Oystercatcher XXX. Founded in 1720 the Royal Cork Yacht Club claims to be the world's oldest.



Oystercatcher XXX off Cobh, Cork Harbour race

The first time we did the regatta in *Crusader* all we won was a competition run by the tequila bar for the crew with the highest rate of consumption – free tee shirts. We did better in *Oystercatcher XXIII* where we had the right boat for the conditions and won the event outright.

Our crew for 2014 included WMYC members Simon Clifton and Seamus Clifford and we were joined by Andy Green, fresh from his America's Cup TV coverage and Eddie English, our local expert, who runs a sailing school from Cobh in Cork

Harbour. Over the last 20 years Eddie has sailed every Cork Week with us and we have become firm friends.

As luck would have it *Twilight*, our 125ft cruising yacht, had just completed some warranty work in Southampton and before her return to the Med for what remained of the charter season we saw an opportunity for her to be our Cork Week mother ship. Eddie English knows the entrance into Crosshaven like the back of his hand and we were able to access an alongside berth at Salve Marina, adjacent to the Royal Cork, at high water.

The Irish, or at least those who live near Crosshaven, are amazingly hospitable. The morning after a drinks party aboard *Twilight* for local friends we had a steady stream of gifts, mostly in bottles, but there was even a large box of home made cakes for our planned cruise after the regatta.

Although the fleet was small we had top quality competition and after a windy first race where we had an adrenalin fuelled 20 knot reach inside Cork Harbour it became a light air series. We did our best and managed a few second places against some very



Twilight

competitive light weather yachts. To put our fourth place performance into context two of the boats that beat us went on the following month to finish first and third overall in the 27-boat Commodore's Cup fleet.

Having been to a lot of regattas around the world I still rate Cork Week as one of the very best, combining great sailing and a uniquely friendly atmosphere ashore. We will hope to return in 2016. *(After Cork we set about improving our own light air performance with a 700kg or 20% weight cut from our keel bulb, which helped us go on to win the East Coast IRC Championship)*

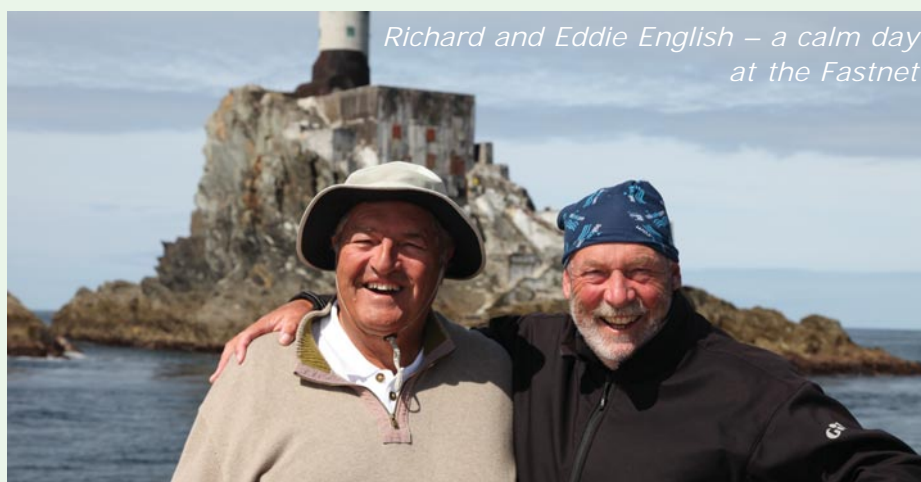
Southern Ireland offers some great cruising and the Sunday

after racing Eddie English joined us aboard *Twilight* with other friends for a cruise from Cork to Dingle. On 12th July we left Crosshaven on the tide and using Eddie's influence a local pilot vessel ferried the last of our crew aboard from Cobh. Cobh was the port of embarkation for thousands of Irish immigrants

leaving for the US so the waterfront has a lot of history.

On passage to Baltimore we passed the Old Head of Kinsale, one of Ireland's most striking peninsulas, with its world ranked golf course which we played the day before the regatta. We anchored in the lee of Clonakilty Bay for lunch then on to Baltimore, a classic Irish fishing village. Ashore at Bushes' pub our real Irish adventure began, when we met one of Eddie's cousins and almost everyone else in the place that he seemed to have known since childhood. This is a rugged coast and the pub walls are covered with shipwreck history. Stories abound and I met a crewman from the Baltimore lifeboat who, only two weeks before, had lost two scuba divers off his fishing boat.

From Baltimore we stopped to explore Clear Island, the nearest point of land to the Fastnet Rock, just 6 miles distant, where a memorial stands to those who lost their lives in the '79 Fastnet storm. Being so close, and having done 21 Fastnet races, often rounding the rock at night in appalling conditions, a trip around the Fastnet in daylight and fair weather was irresistible. From there to Crookhaven and O'Sullivan's pub where once again we met another of Eddie's cousins and drank more pints of pre-dinner Murphys.



Richard and Eddie English – a calm day at the Fastnet

In Ireland you can get three changes of weather in a single day: we left Crookhaven in sunshine and a 20 knot headwind; ten miles later we were rounding the tidal race off Mizzen Head under power with a 40-45 knot headwind, breaking seas and low scudding cloud. The conditions would be heavy duty in a thirty footer but while *Twilight* was burying her bows and we had a few green tidal waves coming down the deck she is 125 feet, so relatively speaking the conditions are a walk in the park. The wind soon dropped back to 20 knots, the sun came out and we enjoyed a cracking upwind sail to the Southern end of Bear Island where we anchored for lunch.

We were told that on one occasion during WW1 most of the British fleet sheltered behind Bear Island. It's a small world because I knew a guy, the late Bernie Cahill, whose parents ran the post office on this tiny island. Bernie did well because I built two yachts for him; he became a director of Grand Met

hotels and went on to become chairman of Aer Lingus.

From Bear Island we motored to an anchorage adjacent to Castletownbear, a small port with one of the largest deep-sea fishing fleets on the coast. For us the signature location in this village was MacCarthy's pub, about which books have been written. It's the classic Irish pub and within we yet again meet more friends of Eddie's, this time a recently retired Admiral of the Royal Cork who by chance I'd also met previously, with his crew about to sail for Portugal.

Our destination next day was the Kenmare River but with very little wind and good visibility we decided to route an extra 25 miles via the Skelligs, a pair of isolated historic rock islands, Skellig Michael and Little Skellig, which are now a designated world heritage site.

The larger island Skellig Michael was home to St. Fionan's monastery, one of the earliest monastic settlements in Ireland.

The monks led simple lives and lived in stone, beehive shaped huts, carefully built to remain watertight, and they are still in place and clearly visible from the water. The monks left the island in the thirteenth century and it became a place of pilgrimage. In calm weather local fishing boats land visitors on the island to tackle the 670 step climb to the top.

There is a fantastic wealth of birdlife on and around the Skelligs, especially puffins in late spring and gannets almost all of which were on Small Skellig. The island appears white in colour, coated with generations of puffin and guillemot poo. We passed within a few hundred feet of the island and the quantity, noise and smell of these birds was overpowering.

From the Skelligs we sailed to Parknasilla on the Kenmare River and next day anchored off Valentia Island for a lunch stop. Valentia, which like Mersea is connected to the mainland, was the eastern terminus of the first

Mizzen Head



*Michael Skellig showing
landing and steps*



commercially viable transatlantic telegraph cable. This vast endeavour resulted in transatlantic telegraph communications from Foilhommerum Bay to Heart's Content, Newfoundland in 1866. Transatlantic telegraph cables operated from Valentia Island for a hundred years.

Our final port of call was Dingle which, because of our size and draft, meant anchoring in the adjacent Ventry Bay. Jo English, Eddie's wife, joined us for our final night spent ashore at the Half Door restaurant which was absolutely superb and this time, surprise surprise, was owned by Jo's cousin. It seems that our friend from Cork has friends or relatives everywhere we went which was a joy. Southern Ireland is just a fabulous place to cruise and on the next occasion I hope to have more time to get as far as Galway which I gather is simply outstanding.

RICHARD MATTHEWS

Little Skellig



RACING – in search of the truth!

In the mid 1970's, I was racing trapeze dinghies out of Brightlingsea with Malcolm Goodwin. With a little help from his friends, Malcolm put together a piece for a club newsletter which I recently unearthed, most of which (tweaked a little to reflect yacht rather than dinghy racing) remains valid 40 years on:

In every sport, and especially sailing, there is a vast amount of knowledge to pick up. If you want to do well, the acquisition of this knowledge is essential and adds to the interest, but can also be confusing because nothing is as riddled with "ifs" and "buts" as a sailing race.

The variable effects of wind, waves, current, sail shape, helm and crew performance and pure luck frequently conspire to obscure the true facts. Indeed, some of the facts themselves are so depressingly brutal as to render them unpalatable after a really bad race when the bar beckons, after which they are suitably diluted or drowned altogether. So here are some of those facts, from the profound to the trivial, in no particular order.

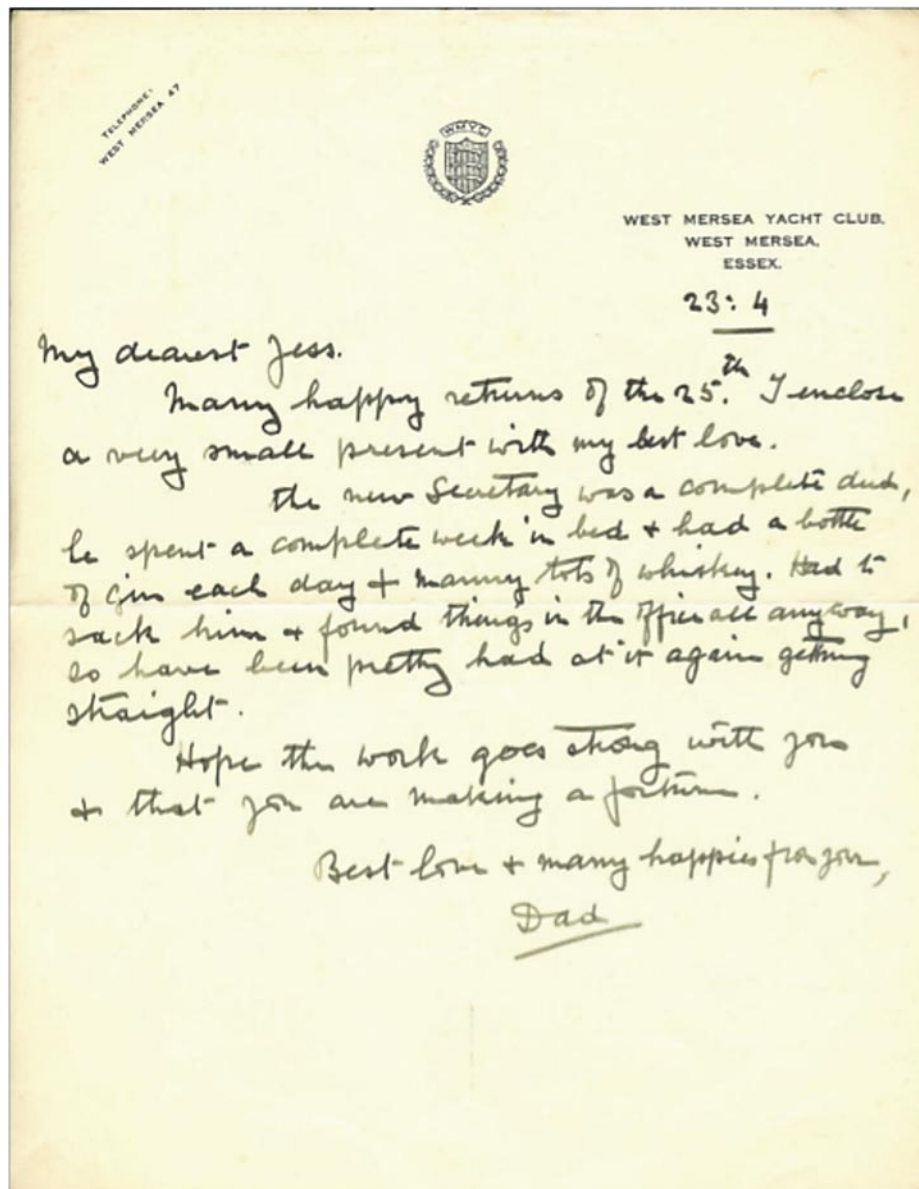
- Racing is about recognising priorities – if they didn't keep changing, it would be OK
- Sails probably make the biggest difference to boat speed, practice makes the biggest difference to skipper and crew speed
- The ultimate finish for everything underwater is a clean hull and foils rubbed down with 1000 grade wet'n'dry
- If you don't keep clear wind, you get passed back very quickly
- If racing in light airs is a lottery, how come the same people usually draw the winning tickets?
- Unless you work like mad, the racing fleet is the number of boats on moorings, divided by three (or four, or five)
- Everyone sails like a champion when the photographer's about
- The Blackwater Estuary is a great place to sail
- The stimulus of good competition at home is a major advantage when you race elsewhere
- Confidence is a fast boat
- The quickest way to get the same boat speed as the fastest boats is to copy them, and there's no law against it
- A fast boat makes you a great tactician
- A lifter is what you get before you tack, and a header's the one you get after you've tacked
- A crew wouldn't want to be on any other boat – even when you've blown it. Anyone else is a passenger
- There's quite a lot of luck in sailing, but the best sailed boats often get the most luck
- Races are often not so much won by skill as lost by mistakes – which is handy, as mistakes are easier to put right
- There's always something you can do to make yourself a better sailor – go out and practise, read a book, watch a race, talk to an expert

JULIAN LORD
Scallywag

One from the archives

An insight into yacht club management in the 1930s

When Brian Bolton stood down at the end of his term as Commodore at the Annual General Meeting in 2009, he reminded us that he had for a time combined this office with that of Hon. Secretary. This was not unique in the Club's history, as Major Harden was Commodore from 1930 to 1940 and had held both offices simultaneously for part of that time. The following letter to his daughter explains how that came about.



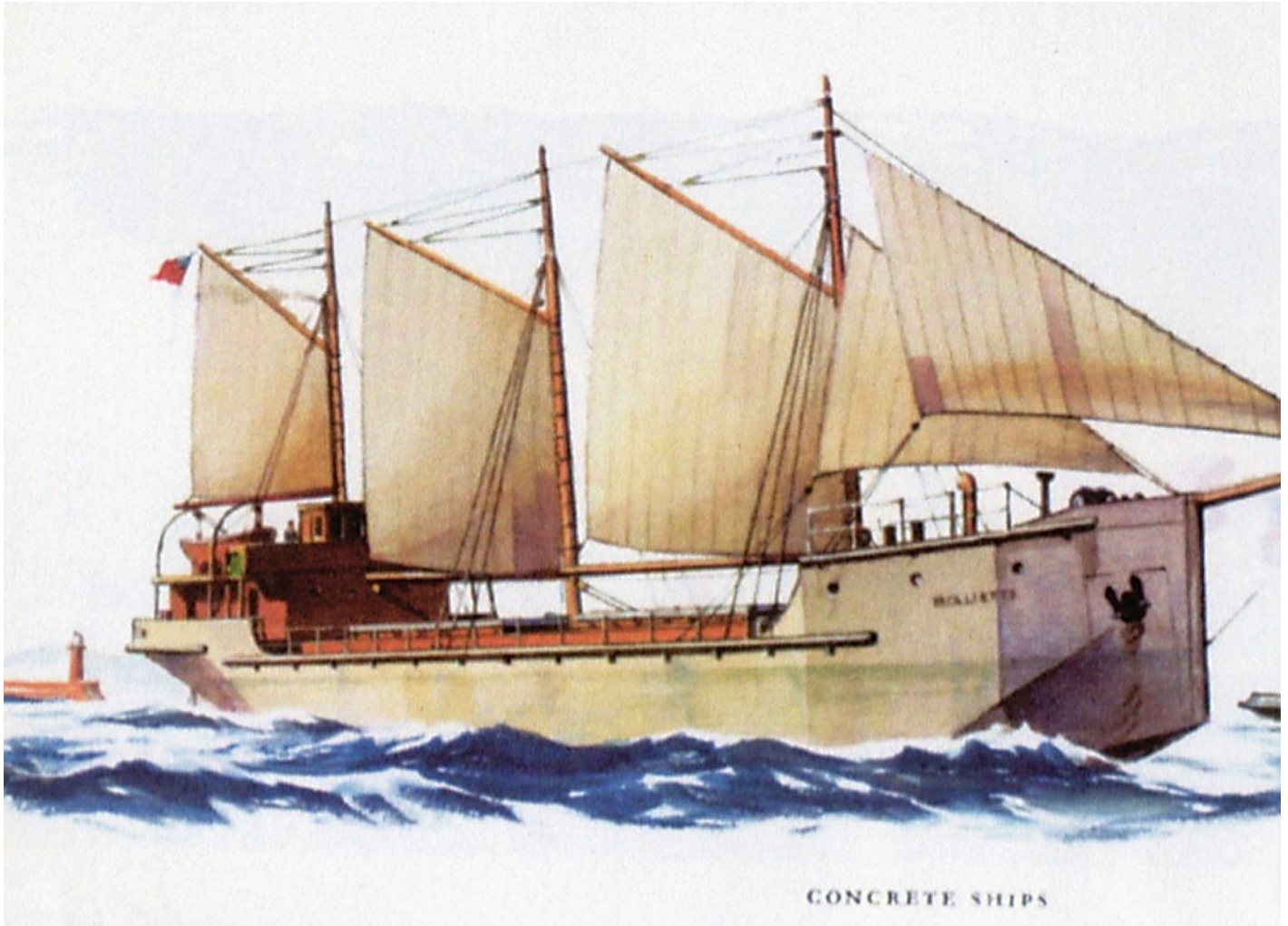
Commodores of those pre-war times enjoyed a refreshingly straightforward authority in matters of hiring and firing. Just compare the layers of law and procedure which surround dismissal in these days of Human Resources and Human Rights. In all fairness, it should be pointed out that the proximate sacking offence was neglect of duty rather than inebriation, even though it may be inferred that the latter would have been an aggravating factor.

Note the Club telephone number 47, the last two digits to this day.

DAVID MCMULLEN
Sardana

Molliette and Violette

After enjoying a very pleasant meal on a beautiful sunny afternoon in the yacht club, whilst looking at the breath-taking view of the rising tide, I began to think of the far-sighted members who founded our club and how it all happened. The complete history can be found in the excellent Centennial Chronicle written to celebrate the first one hundred years. What I would like to do is to take a very small part of this story, the history and the involvement of the *Molliette* itself.



The *Molliette* and her sister ship, the *Violette*, were designed and built by James Pollock of Faversham in Kent towards the end of the First World War. Steel was in very short supply and so the hulls were constructed of reinforced concrete. As curved shapes were not suitable for such construction, the hulls consisted of straight lines with the corners rounded off. They were 3 inches thick. The vessels were 125 feet long overall with a beam of 25 feet and a draft of 11 feet 9 inches.

Both ships were rigged as three-masted schooners. Not surprisingly both sisters were sluggish under sail and proved to be accident prone. *Molliette* ran aground off Calais in late 1919. She managed to extricate herself by running her 120hp two-cylinder Bolinder engine astern. This was harder than it sounds - to start such an engine took nearly half an hour and involved heating hot bulbs with a paraffin blow lamp. Not long after that she grounded herself on the Goodwins, fortunately on a rising tide. The accidents

concluded that year with her reputedly hitting Tower Bridge.

Not to be outdone, the *Violette* collided with Southend Pier in 1921. Anchoring above the pier, her exhausted crew failed to keep an anchor watch. The anchor dragged causing her to strike the pier, the ship was holed and ran aground. The pierhead keeper and his family lived in a bungalow at the end of the pier and for several days they were marooned there with food brought to them by boat.

After a short commercial career, the *Molliette* was laid up and stripped in 1924. She was sold in 1925, moved to West Mersea and moored opposite the Victory. She was fitted out as a houseboat, by all accounts very lavishly.

In 1931 West Mersea Yacht Club took over part of the *Molliette* as a clubhouse. One report states that she acquired a scandalous reputation during this period: one night there was a police raid and scantily clad members were seen to jump overboard in order to safeguard their reputations! Even though the club took over all the accommodation, it did not satisfy their needs and in 1931 they moved out.

During the Second World War the *Molliette* was towed to Cocum Hill just off East Mersea where she was used as a bombing target. Even bombing didn't destroy her completely and the remains can still be seen at low water marked by the Molliette Beacon.



It could be claimed that the *Molliette* contributed to the turning point of World War 2. The key to the allied invasion of Normandy was the 'Mulberry' harbour, which offered protection to the troops and their supply vessels. The 'Mulberry' consisted of several components, the most important being ferro-concrete caissons, which were towed across the Channel and sunk in a vast semi-circle around the landing beaches. The technology used to build these massive constructions was developed from early experiments with craft like the *Molliette*.

ARTHUR ASHENDEN

RNLI Pennant Race



Winners Steve and Debbie Johnson (*Spot Marley*) with crew Mark Betts were presented with the John Harrison Salver by Liz Harrison on Saturday 13th September. There were 27 entrants for this year's RNLI Pennant Race, raising £630 through racers' donations for the Mersea Lifeboat.

Palermo to Monaco

On Thursday the 24th August the 10th Annual 500 mile Palermo - Monaco race got underway at noon. A record 40 boats from six countries started the race which was organised by Circolo della Vela Sicillia in collaboration with the Yacht Club of Monaco. Paul Jackson, Mike Wallis, Malcolm Hearnden and myself had been invited to join the crew of the Warren family's yacht *Nimrod*, a Marten 80 which was built in New Zealand in 2001 and comprehensively refurbished in Malcolm's Hamble yard in 2012.



Nimrod moored outside the Monaco Yacht Club

The forecast was for very light winds across the course. Whilst most of the fleet spent the first two days taking weight out of their boats, removing everything from cushions to anchors to fridges, the crew's view on board *Nimrod* was that cushions and anchors each have their use, but a fridge in 35 degrees centigrade was a must!

After the start the fleet spread out across several miles as we headed for Sardinia and the first 36 hours were spent searching painstakingly for every fraction of a knot in light airs. There was a huge flat spot in the wind north west of Sicily so a

decision was taken to take pain early and move to the west to pick up the new breeze. Using the satellite linked tracking system issued to all competitors we could watch ourselves going backwards through the fleet, but we were confident things would change ... and they did, not all of it for the better.



On our way to Sardinia struggling for boat speed in light airs

Late into the second day we reached the new wind, ahead of many other boats. In two watches we went from 38th to 10th place on the track behind the Swan 60's and Transpac 52's (TP52) and we were still gaining. Despite making promising progress in the stronger winds our race was abruptly halted when Malcolm suffered a serious hand injury whilst we were gybing during the night. It was evident that emergency hospital treatment was urgently required so sails were lowered and we motored as fast as we could to Arbatax on the east coast of Sardinia. We persuaded the Italian Coastguard to meet with us 25 miles offshore so they could speed Malcolm to hospital whilst we made our own way into port. However, the next day we were surprised to see



The YC - note all the Oppies ready to launch on the ramp

him back aboard as we imagined he would have flown home, but instead the doctor said he was able to continue with us.

We set off again towards the infamous Bonifacio Straights between Corsica and Sardinia and in contrast to the calm weather we had previously experienced we found ourselves in the narrow straits heading directly into a full strength Mistral. The wind blew at 47 knots for some time and under engine power we were only making slow progress. Crossing the shipping lane we also needed to slip between cruise ships and two American naval vessels that were doing rather more than our two knots.

During that evening Malcolm's condition deteriorated seriously and urgent calls were made to get medical advice and some explanation as to the cause. After a bumpy wet night we arrived in Ajaccio in glorious sunshine where Malcom was taken to hospital, and the medical decision finally made to send him back to England, with thanks to Josh Warren for organising a complex trip via the satellite phone.

Our stops on the way meant that we were amongst the last boats to arrive in Monaco, six others also retired due to the conditions. Ironically when we were struggling against the Mistral many of the leading boats were trapped in nil wind within sight of the finish line.



On the Members' deck of the YC looking across the harbour to the waterfront (& GP circuit!)

In the light winds that typified much of the race the TP 52 B2 helmed by Pierre Casiraghi took an early lead which they were able to retain until they finished the 500 miles just 70 hours and 37 minutes later.

All the race boats were moored outside the splendid new Monaco Yacht Club whose officials kindly gave us a grand tour of the building which was only opened in June. A splendid prizegiving ceremony and dinner in the ballroom were made all the more enjoyable with the news that Malcolm was safely back in the UK and booked in to see a top surgeon.

BRIAN MORGAN

Pyefleet Sur Mer...

Pyefleet Sur Mer... Where? I hear you ask. Well, after our three weeks cruising the Normandy coast this summer, a simple "Pyefleet Creek" doesn't seem to conjure up much excitement. But how wrong I was.

My good friend and fellow Club Cruiser Colin Campbell always seems to be overnighing at that faraway place! Having never visited the back of the Island by yacht, Brigitte and I decided that we had better investigate.

So, one sunny afternoon in early September Brigitte and I, along with Tilly our dog climbed aboard *Odessa*, let go the mooring lines and set off for this mystery location. What a glorious afternoon! The temperature was about 25°... but sadly not a breath of wind, so on went the engine and motoring all the way was the order of the day.

It would appear that everyone knows of the charm and peacefulness of this enchanting channel tucked away at the back of East Mersea, except us! It was packed, all moorings taken and at least 8 other yachts lying at anchor. Having very little water under our keel I was reluctant to venture any further up the channel. Whilst contemplating exactly how far up the creek one could go before being stuck without a paddle a chap on a rather lovely looking motor launch had come out on deck and was beckoning us over.

"Would you like to raft up alongside us?" the very friendly skipper asked. After being told his boat drew 1.5m and that he hadn't seen anything less than 1m underneath at low tide, we thought: "Yes, please!... this will do us for the night, as *Odessa* draws 1.9m we should be okay", and promptly tied alongside.

For a moment Brigitte and the owner exchanged greetings in recognition of their respective home flags proudly flying the colours of Cornwall and Brittany. He actually thought we might have travelled all the way from France. "Oh no... Thornfleet, West Mersea, actually" we said, seeing the funny side of it!

What pleasant and friendly people you meet when boating, all like-minded and eager to talk and make new friends. After securing the boat, our new-found friends joined us on *Odessa* for a glass of *vin blanc* and some nibbles. The owners of *Telluda* live aboard their motor launch and had in fact travelled all the way from Falmouth (their home port) to winter in Ipswich before heading to the Baltic next year. After an hour socialising *Telluda's* crew retired for the evening leaving Brigitte and I to enjoy the tranquillity of Pyefleet.

The next morning we surfaced about 09.00 to find almost every other boat had left! We thanked our rafting hosts and bid farewell for the time being.

We picked up the mooring opposite, thinking that we would stay only for a few hours. We put the kettle on, cooked some scrambled eggs and smoked salmon for breakfast and sat in glorious sunshine eating. We both now realised why Colin and Diane came here so often, it is just so lovely and barely an hour from our mooring.

After breakfast we took Tilly for a trip ashore as I didn't think she could keep her paws crossed any longer! We had only been intending to stay one night but by now it was midday and the charms of the Pyefleet had



gripped us so we decided another one or two nights would be lovely.

Now, our thoughts (or my thoughts, I should say!) turned to lunch and our evening meal. As we had only brought fresh food for one night, we needed to restock. So, being next to Colchester Oyster Fisheries, surely it would be rude not to visit them for our food requirements?

On entering their premises we were greeted by friend Paul Harding who works there. Brigitte had noticed their sign on the river "Visiting yachtsmen welcome" and her opening sentence to Paul, with a big grin on her face, was, "Hi Paul, can you give us the code for the toilets and shower block please?" Needless to say the welcome didn't extend that far, since all they could offer was shellfish! So that was food taken care of: dressed crabs for lunch and scallops for evening meal.

On our way back to the boat we were asked to come aboard *Telluda* for an aperitif. Well, what a lovely offer and the chance to have a good look round this beautiful motor launch. The owners have been living aboard for 20 years now.

They told us they own a house down in Falmouth but have it rented and their tenants had now been living in their house longer than they had! We could see instantly the attraction of living on this fantastic old boat; it really was a gentleman's yacht. Full of charm and in pristine condition. I could get used to this type of boating!

After a couple of glasses of *vin blanc* and parting company with half our scallops (our box of 26 appealed to our hosts!) and half a lemon donated to us for our G & T's, we were happy to retreat to *Odessa*.

The dressed crabs really hit the spot for lunch and later on, what a fantastic night we had, sat in the cockpit watching the sun go down, G & T in hand. This was followed by an excellent scallop linguine in brandy and cream sauce; a lovely meal at best of times but for some strange reason whatever we cook on board always seems to taste so much better than at home? After dinner we went on deck to look at the moon rising so majestically. It was coincidentally the time of year when the Moon is at its closest (perigee) to the Earth, so it was almost as bright as the Sun.



The next day we decided we would have to return to Mersea as work beckoned. On the passage home we found a pretty little sailing tender floating out near Brightlingsea. We came alongside and grabbed the painter. So, with two dinghies now in tow, we resumed our journey. On picking up our mooring Stewart Clark on the yacht club launch came alongside. "Where did you get that?" he said, referring to the new-found dinghy. After explaining where we found it he said he knew who the owner was, and we are sure it was returned safely, although we haven't heard from the owner.

At the end of our little trip we had discovered a lovely place to go that was only an hour from our starting point yet, as far as we were concerned, we could have been the other side of the world! It had been a lovely couple of days in a very peaceful spot. Sorry *Playpen* but you may find us in one of your favourite local cruising spots more often next season!



MALCOLM CLARK
Odessa

Cruiser Racing Round-up

HOME WATERS IRC RACING

In contrast to last year, the weather in early April was ideal for fitting out, despite which the **Mersea Spring Points Series** saw rather disappointing turnouts, with eleven boats racing in the series, of which only seven were IRC rated. Julian Lord's *Impala Scallywag* took the **Cirdan Trophy** and **Peter Vince Trophy** races, as well as the series, in which *Reasons To Be Cheerful*, Alan Vince, Nick Glanvill and Hector Heathcote's *Smokey 25* and the Malbec 240 *Evita* of Paul Gosling and Rob Smith placed second and third respectively. Richard Matthews HH42 *Oystercatcher XXX* appeared for the final race, for the **Lewis Powell Cup**, winning this by 41 seconds.

As usual, late May was the weekend of the first **Sail East Regatta** of the season, hosted by Dabchicks SC. A decent entry of 21 boats, including 11 visitors, sailed three races in pretty windy conditions, which really suited *JB's80*, the J80 of John Bolingbroke. John managed two wins and a second in the full fleet to take clear Overall and Class Two victories. Next up was Class One winner *Oystercatcher XXX*, ahead of the Burnham based Humphreys 36 *Inn Spirit*. Second in Class Two was Rob Leggett's X332 *Apex*. *Reasons To Be Cheerful* won Class Three, a point ahead of *Scallywag*, so it was a successful weekend for local boats.

The **Centenary Regatta** in June followed a new format, with three short races run on one day. Race Officer Paul Jackson did an excellent job, with slick turn-rounds between races, the first two of which were

windward/leeward, and the last round the cans. *Scallywag* took the trophy from Ed Allan and Peter Rowe's Cork 1720 *Fizz* and Ray Apthorp's J80 *Jezebel*.

The **Autumn Points Series** began with a double race day in light airs, followed by the Ellis Cup race. This was sailed in gusty winds that helped *Jezebel* to a comfortable win, ahead of *Fizz*. With a programme rearrangement to accommodate the RYA Zone Championship and a day lost through a complete lack of wind, the series was rather fragmented, and concluded with a second double race day in early October, with *Scallywag* winning the series from *Evita* and *Jezebel*. The **Autumn Trophy** race then concluded the season, with Malcolm Struth's newly acquired J70 *Wild Chorus 2* taking the trophy on a windy morning, with *Jezebel* second and *Fizz* in third. The **Club IRC Championship** again went to *Scallywag*, with *Evita* second and *Reasons To Be Cheerful* third.

HOME WATERS LOCAL HANDICAP RACING

Perhaps the highlight of the season was the **Bart's Bash** fun race on 21st September, when Race Officer Paul Jackson expertly managed to start over thirty cruisers in one direction from a line to the south of the committee boat, whilst simultaneously starting over 50 dinghies in the other direction from a line to the north of the committee boat! The results were incidental to the occasion, which raised over £400 for the Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation and saw us contribute to the successful Guinness Book of Records

attempt on the world's biggest sailing race.

The **Ladies Regatta** in early August was again sponsored by Ambiance of Colchester; both the cruiser race and the **Ambiance Trophy** for the best



Adrienne Wood



Anna Gibson



Charlotte Lock and Lucy Milgate

combined result in the morning cruiser and afternoon dinghy race went to Sally-Anne Turnbull.

The fourth year of the **White Sail Series** saw this run on the RYA's NHC system for the first time, but with less support than was seen in previous years. With a win in the final race, Alan and Judy Jones Beneteau 29 *Raggerty* came out on top. Next up were the Bavaria 34 Hannelore of Dave Curtis and Jon French's Hanse 37 *Water Lily*.

The **Short Handed Series** saw a really close tussle between the top two, with *Bugsy* winning the four race series by a single point from *Evita*, and Peter and Alison Pangbourne's Northey 34 *Symbol of Llyn* placing third. The final race of the series doubled up as the **Wallet Cup**, and Jon French took this trophy sailing single handed with *Water Lily*, ahead of Steve Johnson with the Morrison Micro *Spot Marley* and *Raggerty*.

The **Coronation Cup** in June was run in tandem with the Centenary Cup, and a tie-break was needed to decide the result, *Bugsy* taking the trophy from Laurie Pearson's Isis 21 *Hex*, with Owen Wheatley's First Class 8 *Geronimo* in third.

The ever-popular **DSC Friday Series** was won by *Reasons To Be Cheerful* from *Spot Marley* and *JB's 80*. A terrific total of 36 boats sailed in the series.

A good turnout of eleven boats started the season ending with the **Finola Cup**. This went to Simon Farren's Sonata *Camel*, just 29 seconds ahead of *Spot Marley*, with *Aubie Too*, Tony Hawkes and Pat Hill's Sonata, in third.

Thanks again go to Brian and Wendy Bolton with *Blue Horizon*



Reasons To Be Cheerful Photo Duncan Abel, Anglia Afloat

for undertaking Race Officer duties for many of the Club's races, as well as for Mersea Week.

BLACKWATER & COLNE OPEN SERIES

Having been fantastically well supported in its first year, both locally and by boats from other clubs, West Mersea boats competing in the BCOS series were very few in number, and only *Bugsy* raced in all three events, placing an excellent second overall in the LH fleet.

AWAY FROM MERSEA

Geoff Payne's *Surf & Turf* sailed in the **J80 Nationals** at Poole in late May, finishing up 12th overall in the 17 boat fleet after ten very competitive short sharp races.

The annual **Levington Classics Regatta** was held in mid-June and, after three years of strong winds, light to moderate conditions finally prevailed. Richard and Sue Taylor's WSOD *Black Adder* was the best of the Mersea boats, placing 9th overall in the 33 strong handicap fleet and 6th in the Fast Handicap group, with Richard Matthews'

Fife design *Kismet* 17th overall and 7th in the fast group. Trevor Spero's *Stella Lyra*, Peter Haldene's *La Vie En Rose* and Greg Dunn's *Vreny* were amongst the 12 Stellas racing as a class, with *Stella Lyra* best placed at 8th overall.

On 21st June three West Mersea boats were amongst the mere 1506 starters in the Island SC's annual **Round the Island Race**, of which only 718 finished. Sailed on a hot day in generally very light winds, Richard Matthews sailing the Gunfleet 58 *Flightdeck* in the ISC Class retired at St Catherines. The two other Mersea boats fared better, with *Surf & Turf* finishing 11th out of 16 J80 starters and *Scallywag* placing 85th out of 376 IRC finishers from 487 entrants, after just over twelve hours of sailing.

In late June, a 21 boat fleet contested the **SB20 Nationals** at Torbay, with Club member Jerry Hill winning the title sailing *Sportsboatworld.com*, albeit entered as usual under Royal Southern YC.



Jezebel in action at Felixstowe Photo Duncan Abel, Anglia Afloat

Jezebel was the only WMYC boat racing at the **Felixstowe Regatta** in early July, Ray Apthorp and his crew enjoying a

successful weekend, placing fifth in the overall 26 boat fleet, and third of the ten boats sailing in Class Two.

Also in July, *Oystercatcher XXX* made the long journey to **Cork Week**, competing in the small but top quality five-boat IRC1

Class, with a poor final race leading to a drop from second to fourth place in the final standings.

Scallywag enjoyed some tight one design racing at the three day **Impala Nationals** at Weymouth in late July, finishing seventh in the twelve boat fleet, just three points off fourth place after a seven race series.

Cowes Week saw the Club's main three 2014 travellers in action again amongst a total entry of 710 yachts and keelboats. After five glorious days of racing, most of the classes lost the final two days when the breeze shut off in the central Solent. *Oystercatcher XXX* competed with the top-rated boats in the 18 strong IRC0, placing eighth overall. In IRC6, *Scallywag* raced with 21 other yachts, finishing fourth overall, two behind Olympic bronze medallist Jo Richards. The results for the six Impalas racing in IRC6 also featured separately, and here *Scallywag* took a clean sweep of firsts.

In the J80 class, *Surf & Turf* was in mid fleet, tenth of the 19 entrants. The SB20 class also had two boats with Mersea connections. *Sportsboatworld.com* blitzed the 35 strong fleet to win both the full series and the SB20 Grand Slam, whilst Jack Grogan on *Hyde Sails* finished sixth in the series and fourth in the Grand Slam.

Oystercatcher XXX was far more successful upon her return to the East Coast, cleaning up in **Ramsgate Week**, where she won the Round The Goodwins race by 14 minutes, dominated the 17 starters to win the IRC East Coast Championship which formed part of the week and also won the Monday-Friday series and the Gold Cup.

The first (bank holiday) weekend of **Burnham Week** also doubled up as the final Sail East event of the season, but the length and type of courses clearly had very limited appeal, even to Sail East diehards, with just eleven IRC boats racing. However, *Jezebel* made the trip and enjoyed a

very worthwhile three days, taking both the overall and class wins.

In the full **Sail East Series**, *Jezebel* became the fifth consecutive West Mersea based boat to win the overall title, following *Scallywag*, *Oystercatcher XXVIII*, *Holding Pattern* and *Oystercatcher XXX*. *Jezebel* also won Class Two.

Like Sail East, support both locally and regionally for the **EAORA Series** has continued to dwindle, with only five boats competing in at least seven of the year's thirteen races required for a series score. These included two WMYC entrants - Buckley Goblets winner *Oystercatcher XXX* and Stan Fenton's J120 *Blue-J*, which placed fourth and fifth respectively in the Overall results and second and third respectively in Class One.

JULIAN LORD
Hon Sailing Secretary



Scallywag approaching the RYS finish line. Photo Beken of Cowes

Lifeboat

The number of shouts so far this year, as I write this in mid October, is 39 - about the same as 2013. Our new Atlantic 85 lifeboat B-879 *Just George* is now on station and there will be a naming ceremony for her in spring 2015.

The station now has it's own website www.westmerseallifeboat.org where you can find out about the lifeboat and the latest shouts and events. Here are some details of notable events this year.

We don't like to find people in trouble, but the loss of a speedboat may be regarded by some as a good thing! The crew of this boat left Bradwell marina to go for a drink in Southend. After turning right at Sales Point and not finding much water, they headed out to the target beacon which they thought was a depth marker. The barge next to this beacon was just under water when they passed over it, hitting it with the outdrive and damaging their transom. The speedboat immediately started to take on water and they called for help on a mobile phone. Mersea lifeboat went to the scene and found the casualty almost flooded. The salvage pump was deployed but could not keep up with the inflow of water. The casualties, two men and a woman, were taken aboard the lifeboat and the speedboat was towed into shallower water and abandoned. As the female casualty, wearing a short skirt, was about to board the lifeboat she announced that she was not wearing any knickers and the lifeboat crew had to face the other way to preserve her modesty!



Sunken speedboat on St. Peters Flats

We occasionally receive visitors with a keen interest in visiting as many lifeboat stations as they can, but this man takes the gold award so far. After buying a huge Triumph Rocket III motorcycle and adorning it in RNLI colours and stickers, Matt Hawkes set off from Wells in Norfolk to visit every lifeboat station on mainland UK. He travelled anti-clockwise and visited 170 lifeboat stations in 34 days, so when he visited us he was nearly home. He had very little equipment with him, not even a tent, sleeping on beaches and in shelters. He raised several thousand pounds during his trip and intends to raise further funds for the RNLI by giving talks about his trip.



Round Britain visitor

Although the lifeboat station is open to visitors every weekend in the summer, we hold an 'official' Open Day when the lifeboat does demonstration launches and a large number of children were shown over the boat when it was moored on the hammerhead. Teas and cakes for visitors were served in the station by Guild members. During this year we had over 3600 visitors to the station.

Members of the WMYC continue to support the lifeboat with the annual Pursuit Race held towards the end of the season. This race was inaugurated by John Harrison and continued by Paul and Liz Harrison. This year your Commodore organised and ran the race. This type of event raises significant funds for the RNLI and proceeds go directly to West Mersea lifeboat.



Lifeboat Station Open Day

On the 20th October our new lifeboat, an Atlantic 85 *Just George* arrived. There followed a week of intensive training for the crew before the boat was placed on station, replacing our Atlantic 75 *Dignity*. The new boat gives us an increased search and rescue capability, with an integrated navigational suite including chartplotter, radar, VHF

direction finder and AIS. At 35 knots The Atlantic 85 is a little larger and a little faster than its predecessor, but fortunately fits into the boathouse with only a minor modification required.

MARTIN WADE
Lifeboat Operations Manager



Our Atlantic 85 Just George

Search for the Southwest Passage

Snark or Cuckoo?

Every spring for the last eight or nine years, the East Coast internet yachting forums have asked if anyone has been over the SW Sunk successfully; is this the hunt for the Snark or reports to the Times about hearing the first cuckoo? Let's hope it's a cuckoo as Lewis Carroll tells us, "...beware of the day, if your Snark be a Boojum! For then you will softly and suddenly vanish away, and never be met with again!"

The Knock John and Sunk Sands combine to form a barrier to the cross estuary route to North Foreland some 18nm long. To 'go round' either end adds significant mileage to a cross-estuary passage and brings more tide complications. But following the collapse of the three Admiralty survey beacons at the Little, Middle and South West Sunk and marked only by the lateral buoyage in the Barrow and Black Deep, we are left without any visible transit guides across the sands. Ignoring the 1920's swatchway at the Knock John, there have been three obvious crossing places in recent times, all unfortunately adjacent to those collapsed beacons, each of which is now a nasty pile of wreckage unmarked on the seabed.

The South West Sunk has always been the most convenient for leisure craft from or to the Essex Rivers; the Little Sunk is to the east and adds quite a few extra miles, the Middle Sunk is quite close to the collapsed beacon and a straight line across the sand is hindered by a shoal finger of sand at the northern end.

But where is the SW Sunk swatchway? For the last four years, before the winter of 2013/14, it was close to the Barrow No 6 port hand buoy, over half a mile from the old collapsed beacon. But each year, an encroachment of a shallow spur has gradually built from the direction of the old beacon.

Finding the Swatchway

Last winter seemed to have particular impact on the banks and coastline so it was no surprise in early June to see a line of breaking water directly across the old swatchway. No way through there then!

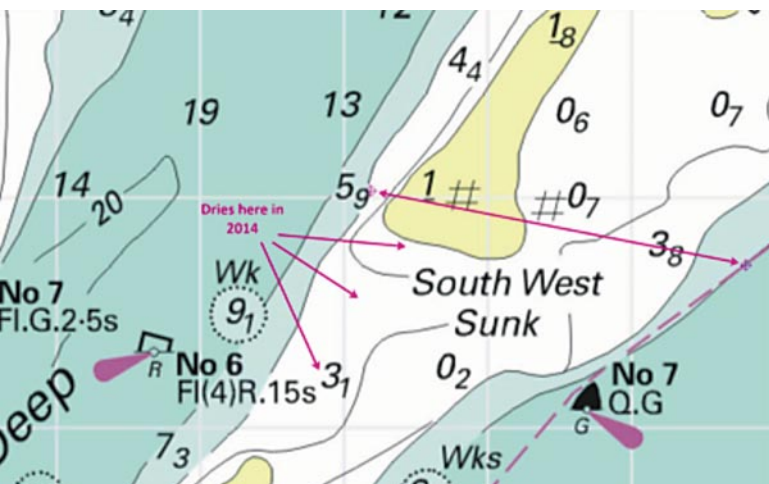
The way to find the swatchway is to do the illogical and arrive there at low water. Low water springs would be ideal but that would mean a very early start from the Quarters so generally it has been mid-range low water: this exposes the knolls which give a good idea of the shape of the hazards. Having found the old swatchway closed up, I followed the edge of the drying knoll which lies to the north east. Carefully watching the echo sounder and trying to stay an even distance from the drying edge, about a mile further to the north-east, it was possible to follow the edge round – the start of the 2014 swatchway - not without the occasional nervous twitch! Continuing this careful monitoring, it was possible to get right across the sand in good water, indeed better water than we have known for years, all the way to the Black Deep showing that there was a very usable



swathway. The great advantage of this one is that it brings you out right opposite Fisherman's Gat and so is as close as we have had in recent years to a direct route across the Estuary.

Collecting Data

I must confess the only time I have a chart plotter on board is when doing these surveys. Using the laptop I can see the track of where I have been, so as to 'quarter' the swathway, but the contours shown on the chart are irrelevant and no help. There has been no official survey of these sands for years and the 2014 swathway is straight over what is claimed to be drying!



Previous Admiralty chart showing new route

While the laptop is running, it is also collecting NMEA data from the echo sounder and GPS. Using a neat bit of software from Russia, all the NMEA data is logged and the strings separated and selected so that an Excel spreadsheet is populated with depth in feet/metres/fathoms, latitude and longitude, and time.

The aim is to find the edges of the swathway as well as the best water but obviously the precise edge of the drying sand would need a repeat at high water, something which would require a tedious passage against the flood from Mersea out to the Sunk and a similar repeat back against the ebb. Fortunately this year the swatch is nice and deep and a third of a nautical mile wide, so I assume most people will be happy to follow a simple rhumb line for the 1.65nm of the swathway between two recommended waypoints. The collection of data is also limited by the sea state. This year's survey started well with nice flat water but after half a dozen runs backwards and forwards, up sprung the breeze against the early flood and promoted a nasty roll-inducing joggle particularly on the Black Deep side. No good for accurate data.

Drawing a chartlet

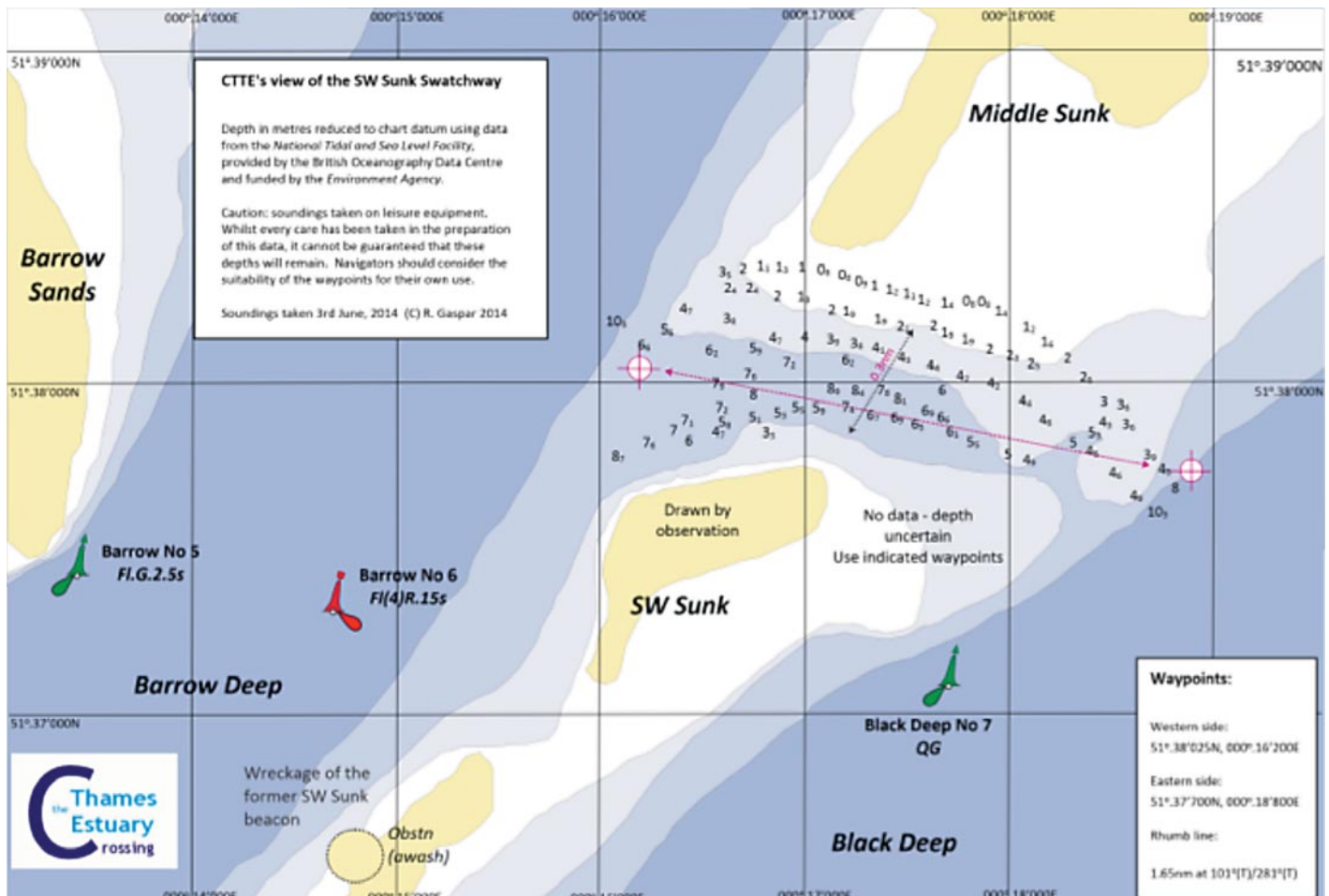
Back in Mersea work is necessary to produce a chart. Firstly the depth data needs to be reduced to LAT. This requires access to live tide data (which is available from Walton, Shivering Sands, Harwich and Sheerness), some co-tidal charts and a bit of patience. Typically a two hour survey will have produced over 7000 depth items and this can be fed into chart drawing software to give the shape of the area. Unfortunately this software only produces charts with decimal lat/long rather than minutes and seconds, so all my charts are hand drawn – although not nearly as difficult as it sounds.

Results

The result is a chartlet of the SW Sunk providing two recommended waypoints, soundings, and a guide to the contours in the area. This shows excellent water, up to 7 metres LAT from the Barrow Deep half way across the sand. As you near the Black Deep, depths do fall but not below 4.5 metres LAT on the Rhumb line. This year has been the first year when the chartlet has been doubted since it recommends passage over drying land! Note though that Admiralty charts are using data which is years out of date and that every chartlet is the result of taking *Tiller Girl* backwards and forwards over the area numerous times - and she floated! So the swathway is there.

Will it remain? So far, the answer is yes. Although the SW Sunk is the most volatile of the three Sunk crossing points, changes are more likely in the winter storms and it seems that swathways close quite slowly. Numerous people have used the recommended waypoints this year with success. If using the chartlet and keen to know the height of water, listen on VHF 69 to London VTS at 15 minutes before and after the hour. They will broadcast the live height of tide data at Walton, Margate, Shivering Sands and Southend. Note particularly the Margate height of tide as this is almost identical with that over the SW Sunk, so add it to charted depths for extra confidence. By the way don't worry about the two charted 'FOULS' in the swathway; although this was insignificant debris many years ago and at a safe depth, its existence now is doubtful.

GPS data is DGPS. Previously with other data, the UK Hydrographic Office have asked me to explain my methodology, including datum reduction, and have accepted the data. This year's data has gone to the UKHO but too late for inclusion in the revision of the Thames Estuary – North chart (1975) which was issued this September.



The SW Sunk chartlet can be found on the web site www.crossingthethamestuary.com on the 'Updates' page with others of the Little Sunk, Spitway, Rays'nd and others. The web site also delivers, under licence from the UKHO, an illustrated weekly Notices to Mariners service for the Estuary across to the Hook of Holland and down to Boulogne.

Next year

I am reasonably confident that this swatchway will be pretty much in the same position next year. Further Snark hunting in late May will show whether I am right and the results will be made available on the web site where they may be downloaded, for FREE!

ROGER GASPAR
Tiller Girl

Danger – Deer Crossing



On 26th September Mark Wells (skipper of *Saffire*) and I were about to leave on the morning tide headed for St Katherine's in London when we noticed something in the water ahead. At first we thought it was a seal but noticed it had a different shaped head. We watched for a while then realised it was a deer of some kind. It had swum from Packing Shed Island, apparently making its way across to Wigborough, and after getting to a shingle beach laid down for a rest. Having made sure it was safe we started our journey: the things we do for love, not only for humans but animals as well, it seems!

BRIAN LEWIS
Chalky

Trevor James

Long time WMYC member Trevor James passed away on 17th September. He was a lifelong sailor and a major figure in the UK marine industry.



As a young man Trevor enjoyed sailing and messing about in boats but by his own admission wasn't much of an academic. He discovered a talent for art and, more specifically, drawing and design. Friends encouraged him to think about a career as a yacht designer. One of Trevor's early calls was to the late Kim Holman, a prominent yacht designer and WMYC member.

Kim didn't have a job for Trevor but suggested he should approach the small shipyards on the river Colne to get some formal training, advice that had a profound affect on Trevor's career. In 1955 he was indentured as an apprentice ships draughtsman at the Rowhedge Ironworks.

Trevor learnt the skills of lofting lines and building moulds and from there progressed to work on a variety of traditional wooden craft. Initially he spent a day and three evenings each week at college, persevered with his studies and five years later became a fully qualified naval architect. By 1963 Trevor had become chief draughtsman at the shipyard with 20 design staff.

In 1964 Rowhedge Ironworks were approached by Windboats in Wroxham to tender for some wooden boats to go to Africa. A relationship developed resulting in Trevor leaving Rowhedge to take up employment at Windboats as manager of a new division building ferro cement vessels known as Seacrete.

Trevor did well and became a director of Windboats two years later. The Seacrete venture blossomed over a 20 year period with almost 1,000 vessels and structures delivered, including 100 yachts in the Endurance range from 35 to 55 feet.

Trevor came to sail at West Mersea where he met Yvonne Dands whom he married soon after her 20th birthday in 1966, very probably the best day's work of his life. In 1974 Trevor completed the purchase of Windboats from its former owner and became very much his own master.

With declining interest in Seacrete in 1983 Windboats starting fitting out for Oyster, the beginning of a successful 30 year relationship with some 270 yachts completed. Trevor expanded and continuously modernised the yard's facilities and under his leadership created a team of craftsmen who were respected throughout the marine industry.

In recent years the new owners of Oyster decided to take their building in-house, in reaction to which, in typical Trevor fashion, he promptly bought Hardy, the Norfolk based powerboat company. In the last year Windboats projects included the GT35 fast cruiser and three yachts for Gunfleet. Just two days before Trevor passed away he completed a deal to acquire

the complete Trusty powerboat range.

Trevor never stopped and in an open letter he wrote to Hardy owners earlier this year he said, "I'm still busy, and together with my wife Yvonne and son Oliver we will keep on doing what we know best". Never was a truer word spoken, although what he might also have said is that with son Oliver at the helm the business will be run with the same passion and enthusiasm.

For a number of years Trevor and Yvonne, with their long time friend and colleague Frank Berry, enjoyed spending time at their property on the Caribbean island of Montserrat, also joining the Tot Club of Antigua and Barbuda and supporting the West Mersea chapter. Trevor raced a 1720 keelboat from WMYC and Trevor and Yvonne ran their own cruising yachts. They also enjoyed cruising with their many friends for whom they had built yachts including several trips in the Caribbean and USA.

Looking back Trevor could never have guessed what a profound effect becoming a qualified naval architect and designer would have on his future. He was an absolute champion of innovation and doing things right.

Trevor was no stranger to health issues, having had a pacemaker fitted over ten years ago. Sitting at a boat show one day, gone the next. Maybe that's how Trevor might have wanted to go. But his surviving family - wife Yvonne, son Oliver, daughter Haley, their children and all those who knew him - would all have liked him to be around a while longer.

RICHARD MATTHEWS

House Notes

It has been a busy year in House and I would like to start this report by extending my sincere thanks to my House Committee who have been a tremendous support throughout. Without their willing assistance and advice my role and completed projects would have been difficult to fulfil.

A big 'thank you' must also go to Jo who has worked tirelessly both in front of house and behind the scenes to ensure that everything runs smoothly on a day to day basis and at Long Room events. I find that our bar, restaurant and kitchen staff, led by Eddie, are always a pleasure to work with and I have enjoyed chatting to each and every one when the opportunity arises. Sadly we have lost Vicky and are soon to lose Eddie, both moving on to pastures new. Vicky and Eddie have been important members of our team and will be sorely missed. We wish them both well in their new ventures. We are pleased to welcome Stuart as our new Bar Supervisor and wish him every success in his new position.

The maintenance and improvement of our club continues to take up time and money and, as with any older building, is ongoing. However, we are fortunate to have such a facility and in my view the expenditure of both the time and the well considered expense are not only worthwhile but are of paramount importance in protecting our main asset and improving facilities for Members. In this regard the extended and refurbished conservatory will hopefully prove to be a welcome benefit to members on cold, wet and windy winter nights with an entrance adjacent to the car park and greatly improved coat hanging facilities.

Other completed projects include replacing rotten fascia boards on the front of the clubhouse, repainting same and affixing club name signage and lighting. The main entrance lobby has been repainted and as I write this at the end of October a new carpet is due to be installed in the lobby in a few weeks time. An enlarged parking area for mobility scooters is currently being laid and new, improved drainage has been installed to prevent future flooding at the back of the conservatory. New teak garden furniture was purchased prior to Mersea Week for our ever popular lawn and the

Latitude and Longitude co-ordinates of the Club have been painted above the bar for the benefit of those who might have a temporary lapse of memory as to their location at the end of a good evening. Always therefore carry your hand held GPS in your pocket!



Victoria Tyndall, Commodore and friend

The Summer Ball was well attended and a great success with a Rio Carnival theme providing a refreshing change from the usual format.

The evening, as usual, extended into the small hours and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Congratulations to Jo for the organisation and theming of this event.

The Long Room has been put to good use throughout the year with many successful events including the usual scheduled dinners plus ballroom dancing, pilates, photography classes, corporate meetings, private functions, whisky tasting and a very successful gin tasting – shortly to be followed by a new rum tasting: exciting rums, dubiously sourced, acquired and shipped



All dressed up and ready to party



Photo Baz struth



Photo Baz struth

from the Caribbean by our very own Steve Johnson and Richard Mathews.

As we approach the end of the year and the end of my term as Rear Commodore House I would like to thank the Commodore, fellow Flag Officers, House Committee Members, General Manager, all staff and club members for their support during the past two years. There are still unfulfilled goals and projects on the House Committee's 'to do list' that I will pass on to my successor and hopefully will be able to assist him or her to achieve these and many more.

MICHAEL WHEELER
Rear Commodore House

Moorings and Boatyard

A poisoned chalice?

When I was elected Rear Commodore Moorings and Boatyard nearly two years ago a member said to me of my new role, "That's a poisoned chalice is that one".

The two years have flown by and it is now time to reflect on my term in office. The initial learning curve was steep having only had one year's experience on the M & B sub committee. Flag Officers like all committee members are appointed at the AGM usually held towards the end of January. Whilst this is well before the start of the sailing season and gives the new committee time to settle into their new roles, in the case of M & B it falls roughly half way through the period of winter maintenance so the new flag officer has to continue with the programme of work commenced by the previous Rear Commodore.

The work, of course, includes maintaining both launches, with the wooden one known as YC1 taking the lion's share simply because she is wooden. She is an old girl now but was very well built and has been excellently maintained throughout her lifetime. Both boats have done whatever mechanical and electrical work is necessary, with the emphasis on reliability. The key objective is to survive the sailing season with no breakdowns. In addition to maintenance we also carry out improvements to help achieve reliability. For example, a modification was made to the control console of the glass fibre boat to prevent water ingress to the electrics and improve the ergonomics for the driver. This year we introduced a new engine maintenance regime with a new contractor and I am pleased to say that we completed the season with no breakdowns.

Other work involves lifting every mooring we let out to members to assess condition and make repairs where necessary. The race marks are also M & B responsibility and these are repaired and made ready for the season. The work-afloat aspect of these tasks is carried out by sub contractors, including Alan Bird and Stuart Clarke. Moorings sometimes become available and we maintain a waiting list, so any member wishing to be included in this list should contact the office.

As we approach the start of the sailing season the focus of work switches to the launch service itself. This involves rostering sufficient staff to ensure an adequate service for members. In that respect it

was decided this year, in response to requests from members, to run an extended service on Saturday and Sunday evenings. The feedback I have is that there was a limited take up of this extended service. This is disappointing and it is quite possible that we will not be able to justify the extra cost involved next season. We would welcome input from members regarding the extended hours.

Another area of responsibility falling on M & B is car parking. This year some changes were made due to the increasing problems of unauthorised car parking and an arrangement was entered into with Legion Services whereby a penalty could be charged to people found not displaying a valid permit. This arrangement has worked very well and I believe has helped to improve availability of parking for members. Permits are sent out after subscriptions have been paid and members should always ensure that a valid permit is displayed.

Members of M & B represent the club in other organisations connected with the waterfront. These include:

- Mersea Moorings Association that holds the money collected by our launchmen from visiting yachts and spends it on improving facilities such as the channel markers between the Nass Beacon and the quarters.
- Mersea Haven Ltd that owns the rights to lay moorings on the seabed which are then leased to the club and other mooring providers.
- Mersea Harbour Protection Trust which has been formed this year to plan and manage a scheme to protect Cobmarsh Island.

As my two enjoyable years draw to a close I would like to thank all those whom I have worked with: Flag Officers, Committee Members, and staff. I have been proud to serve the club and I could not have done it without their support and also that of my wife.

A poisoned chalice?.....definitely not.

BOB THOMAS
Rear Commodore
Moorings and Boatyard

Graham Sapsford

13/12/1949 – 26/10/2014



Graham was a remarkable man who had endless patience and the ability to encourage and support students of all ages in a variety of situations.

We of course knew him best for his years supporting the Cadet sailors, helping them to meet their full potential. Even then he hadn't finished with them, helping many through the Yacht Club RYA courses, always willing to help, support and encourage.

Graham and Annette moved from London to Mersea having spent many caravanning holidays here sailing with his cousin David Child with whom he raced the Squib *Marmaduke*.

Later at WMYC he served on Committee as Sailing Secretary, Honorary Secretary and Race Officer always enjoying his involvement and commitment to the Club.

Over the years the Sapsford's yacht *Phoenix*, a Jouet 30, could be seen racing in the Blackwater,

where he won the WMYC Club Championship no less than four times, or joining in cruises in company, both locally and across the Channel. Annette rustled up the most amazing food, be it snacks with drinks or a three course meal on board miles from anywhere. On every trip with Graham you learnt more about sailing and he could teach and talk on so many subjects it was always a pleasure to be in his company. He was often sought after as crew on some of the more competitive yachts in prominent East Coast regattas.

Graham will be remembered by both members and the Club office as our 'computer technical support'. His IT knowledge was extraordinary and his patience in guiding others less able to digest new technology was so helpful. His lecture presentations were always of high quality and many of us enjoyed the recounting of his sail around Britain together with David Ewart-James, his co-owner on board *Colette*. Several of his local friends also joined for different legs of the voyage: we linked up in the shadow of Ben Nevis for the trip through the Caledonian canal, disembarking at Inverness. Graham was in his element, a well-organised skipper, a great cook and most of all, great fun.

Apart from sailing Graham enjoyed playing and watching many other sports, especially cricket, rugby and soccer, both live and on television. A pint of his favoured real ale tipple usually helped the games along accompanied by some of

his many friends and acquaintances.

Graham and Annette loved the theatre and went to musicals, plays and the opera whenever they were able, often organised as a treat by daughter Gemma. Graham had a good musical 'ear' and liked all styles. He could dabble on the guitar and recently joined the local choir Vocalise.

Graham was a committed Christian and very involved with the restoration of St Peter and St Pauls Church. He loved to see the church full for fundraising events, lending a hand helping on the technical side of sound and lighting to ensure the best possible evening was had by all.

Of all Graham's qualities we will remember that his greatest love was his family – Annette, his wife of more than 40 years, and David and Gemma. He was so proud of their achievements, David following him to Brighton University to study pharmacy and Gemma following her mother into nursing, joining the Stroke Unit team in Colchester. A true family man in every sense of the word.

The one thing people say they will miss more than anything was Graham's broad smile. He was always happy, positive and optimistic.

A born teacher, sadly missed but not forgotten.

**RICHARD AND PENNY
RUSSELL-GRANT**

Clipper Round the World



GREAT Britain, skippered by Club member (and former WMYC Flag Officer) Simon Talbot, is pictured above at the start of the Clipper Round the World Race on 1st September 2013, eventually finishing second overall in July 2014.

The Clipper Race was founded by Sir Robin Knox-Johnson, the first man to sail solo round the world in 1968/9, and he remains the Clipper Race Chairman. Now aged 75, he shows no sign of giving up competitive sailing! As Molliette goes to the printers, Sir

Robin is competing in the 3,500 mile single-handed Route de Rhum transatlantic race from St Malo to Guadeloupe in his aptly named Open 60 yacht *Grey Power*.

The first Clipper Race started from Plymouth in October 1996, with eight identical 60ft yachts skippered by professional sailors, but with fee-paying crew, some of whom had never been afloat before. Over its 18 year history, the basis for the race has remained unchanged although the yachts have been

updated twice; the 2013/4 race was sailed in 12 new identical Tony Castro-designed Clipper 70 ocean racers. Each has twin helms, twin rudders and a six-foot bowsprit, which allows large asymmetric spinnakers and Yankee headsails to be set. These boats are no slouches, as evidenced by the yacht *OneDLL* recording a speed of 35 knots on Leg 6 of the race!

Before the race begins, each skipper who applies must undergo a selection process involving tests and scenarios,



Leaving the Golden Gate at the start of the highly tactical leg to Panama

including rescuing a man overboard and dealing with casualties, damaged equipment and difficult crew.

The latest race began on 1st September 2013 and was broken down into 16 parts, with varying lengths of time ashore between legs. The course took them from London to Brest, Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, Albany in Western Australia, then to Sydney (for Christmas). Racing resumed on Boxing Day with the iconic Rolex Sydney-Hobart race, followed by Brisbane, Singapore, Qingdao (venue for the 2010 sailing Olympics), San Francisco and Panama. After motoring through the Panama Canal in convoy, the next legs were to Jamaica, New York and then across the Atlantic to Derry, before the final two legs to Den Helder and finally back to London.



Simon shows the flag after winning the final 250 mile dash to London by 11 minutes

The total distance covered during the 10½ months was around 40,000 miles and GREAT Britain became the most decorated boat in the fleet with a total of six race wins, one more than the overall winner and long-term race rivals, *Henri Lloyd*.

Remarking on his team's performance Simon said, "Coming first into our home port in the final race topped off a remarkable series of memories... the honour of leading the *GREAT Britain* team around the world is something I will be proud of for as long as I live."

JULIAN LORD
Sailing Secretary

Cruising the Azores

With great fear and trepidation, given the strong winds recorded in the Azores over the winter of 2013/14 (up to 210 km/hour), we flew back out to Terceira in May to re-commission *Resting Goose*. We knew from the yard's report that the cover we had shortened in the Caribbean had put too much pressure on the stanchions, causing water ingress. But, to our amazement and delight, the yard re-bedded all the stanchions in less than a day and a half, cleaning up as they went along, leaving her immaculate - and bone dry for the first time since our Atlantic crossing in 2011.

Once she was in the water, we wandered up to the market in Angra - a wonderful place, full of local produce and the most extraordinary white local flowers, known locally as 'Sugar Cubes'.



They lasted for weeks on the boat. We bumped into the yard manager's sister-in-law in the market and, immediately, Azorean hospitality started up again, with an invitation to dinner at the parental family home to celebrate David's forthcoming 65th birthday. What an amazing house - build for the head of the Jesuits in 1685 and lovingly restored after the earthquake in 1980. The walls are a metre thick!

We returned the hospitality with a trip out for the Parreira family to Ilheus Cabras (Goat Islands), some 6nm along the coast; it was good to feel the boat slip through the water again. We had instructed the yard to strip off the old TBT from the Caribbean (still in use there and amazingly effective - it had kept the boat free of weed and

barnacles for two seasons) and re-antifoul from scratch. A very smooth bottom! We anchored in the UNESCO-heritage bay of Angra and dreamed of the riches that might languish in the depths under our keel. The Spanish Armada would stop to victual up in Terceira on their way back from plundering the Americas but the Azorean regional government apparently has not yet sanctioned any removal of items from the wrecks. A delight to come?

The town of Angra was busy gearing up for the start of their big annual festival, Sao Joanninas. The whole of the old quarter takes pride in this event so decorators were out everywhere, refreshing the paintwork of houses, whitewashing the harbour walls while road workers were frantically setting-in cobbles on a new road. We thought they'd never do it in time but, come 20th June, everything was sparkling and nine days of partying began. Even David got in the mood, pulled in to join our friends as their troupe danced by - at 2am in the morning!



Apart from numerous festivals, Terceira is best known for its bulls. From May to September, you can hear rockets being let off to announce yet another village event: one rocket to warn the bulls are out, two rockets to reassure everyone that the bulls are back in their crate. There are three types of event: 5-6 bulls running loose in the streets; a bull on a rope (with 8 bull handlers hanging on); and bulls in an arena. Young men want to show their bravery by attempting to touch the bull's horns but it seemed to me that they spent a lot more time running away! In one village, we watched as one of the men got into a straw 'bottle'

in the middle of the arena. Could this be the origin of 'putting forth a straw man'?!



The fighting bulls are magnificent black creatures that are raised in the central 'wild lands' (Terra Brava) with selective breeding to enhance their mean streak!



On a somewhat related subject one thing puzzled us when shopping for food. The only island that seemed to sell fresh milk in the Azores was Terceira, despite the fact that in Sao Jorge in particular we were surrounded by cows (sometimes literally!). In frustration, in one supermarket David asked a shop assistant (the Brazilian wife of our lovely harbourmaster as it turned out) why. She responded as if it was completely obvious: "Well, there wouldn't be any demand for it, would there? Everyone here has their own cow!" We did start to wonder where we might stow a cow on Resting Goose, but Jeanneau didn't think about that when they designed the boat....



Terceira is beautifully positioned from a cruising point of view - 90nm from Sao Miguel in the Eastern Group and some 200nm from Flores in the Western Group - it is within a day's sail of the other five islands that comprise the Central Group. Depending on the wind, you can choose your destination and, with its two harbours - Angra do Heroismo and Praia da Vitoria - there is always a marina berth to be found or an anchorage outside in their respective bays.

And, even if the winds are too strong to make a comfortable passage (which was the case during our visit this Autumn with Jamie and Alexa) the island itself offers lots to explore: volcanic caves, sulphur fields, vineyards, natural swimming pools, forest picnic spots, coastal walking and, for the more adventurous, mountain hiking; all in the most glorious verdant and floral landscape.



David in caving mode

But our summer cruising this year took us on two round trips to Sao Jorge and Faial, first with the Coopers and then with the Dodgsons. Sao Jorge has become a real favourite, not least due to its charming harbourmaster Jose, who welcomes newcomers with 'Welcome to Paradise!' This time he proved a mine of useful information telling us that, during festival time, it was the custom to offer free food to all comers. We ended up in a little village situated at the bottom of one of the magnificent steep volcanic cliffs.



We joined a long queue, wondering whether it was worth waiting but, within minutes, we were handed a cup of wine, a chunk of sweet bread and a lump of delicious hard cheese as we were waiting. And these were replenished regularly by the lovely youngsters whose job it was to make sure everyone was happy. At the bottom of the hill stood a makeshift kitchen churning out huge platefuls of grilled tuna, tuna salad and lupine beans - delicious!

When we arrived in Horta, Faial, we took the Dodgsons to the world-famous Café Sport or 'Peter's Bar' as it is commonly known. Whilst Peter has now sadly died, his son José still runs the bar and welcomes all sailors warmly. We had decided

on our last visit that we needed to add a WMYC burgee to his collection, but when we returned we found that Alan Brook had beaten us to it!



The bay of Horta offers great shelter with two sections of harbour and a large sheltered bay inside the breakwater. We watched local whaling boats out racing - there has been a concerted effort to restore the old boats so that they are not lost for posterity following the cessation of whaling in the '80's.



Our return visit to Sao Jorge coincided with perfect weather. We were able to swim in the far end of the marina, normally a no-no in any marina, but here boat owners are fastidious about using the on-shore facilities and the water is crystal clear. So much so that the boat next to ours was harvesting the local delicacy - limpets - from the posts and cooking them for supper!

The harvest from the seas around the islands is amazing - we saw fishermen coming in late in the evening with enormous tuna and shark, all caught on small, open fishing boats. How on earth they managed to 'land' the fish without capsizing astounded us.



On the Sunday the bells were ringing as the locals gathered to celebrate the saint's day of the Fishermen and Whalers. After taking Nossa Senhora for a trip round the bay she was brought back, accompanied by the local brass band, along a route with petals carefully laid out in beautiful patterns on the streets. Once safely ensconced back in the church everyone gathered for yet another free lunch (Torill and David decided that boiled limpets were just too tough!). We could get used to this!

Driving round the islands has been a great delight. Each island is so different, both in terms of geology and atmosphere. Sao Jorge is over 50km long and only 7.5km wide but, with most of the surface area lying above the 300m contour line, we were often up in the clouds. There are very few natural sandy beaches in the Azores but they make the most of any sheltered area of rock to create natural swimming pools which are well used by the locals.

Our most memorable experience of the waters round the Azores though was the sight of four whales on our early morning sail across the channel between Terceira and Sao Jorge. They are magnificent beasts and seem to move so effortlessly as they feed on the krill along the surface of the water. We even got a tail display - a perfect memory for a perfect second season in the Azores.

ANN CHATTERTON

Resting Goose

Some useful reference sites

www.azores.com
www.destinazores.com
www.artazores.com
www.visitportugal.com
www.flytap.com
www.marinazores.com



Cadet Week

Once again another fantastic week of sailing for the cadets of West Mersea Yacht Club and Dabchicks Sailing Club. The weather was amazing for us, making it a stress free week of racing every day with warm evenings for the social activities.

We split the inside Optimist fleet into two this year, with those in their first year sailing small separate courses, often tucked right up one of the creeks out of wind and tide. This gave them maximum time on the water and all the confidence needed to go on to greater things next year.



Those in their second and third year of Optimist sailing were organised once again by Race Officer Simon Clifton from the Dabchicks' Committee Boat *Centenary* moored just out in the quarters.



Centenary

He was setting a variety of courses depending on wind and tide, and commented on how well the Ruby and Emerald sailors improved as the week progressed. They raced every day and the winners didn't have it all their own way, with deciders happening right up to the last event. Well done to Alice Marr (Diamond Fleet), Daisy Weston (Emerald Fleet) and Madison Allen (Ruby Fleet).



Madison Allen



Eleanor Jacobs



Dan Milgate

The Seamanship Trophy was run on the last afternoon, testing the children's knots and boat handling skills, a lack of wind testing their patience as well. Congratulations to them all for understanding that there is more to sailing than racing.



Charlie Allen



Theo Clifton



Harry Blackmore

Outside Fleet was as big as it has ever been with Roger Sydenham, our Principal Race Officer and his team kept busy every day with multiple boats crossing the finish line within seconds of each other. Something really great to see was the size of some fleets, giving one design racing, where the winner is the winner, with Lasers and the RS Feva dominating the numbers. I only hope their popularity continues as it makes great racing wherever you happen to be in the fleet. Well done to James Brosnan-Wren (Gold Optimist), Connor Wey and Beth Sharpe in a Feva in Slow Handicap, Hamish Eckstein in a Laser Radial in Medium Handicap and Matthew French in a Laser Fast Handicap.



The Viking Trophy was held in Sonatas, kindly lent to us by their owners, crewed by cadets from the fleet winners team. It was a windy race with a big right shift half way up the beat. Well sailed, Connor Wey - the adult on board said he communicated well with his team through the gusty conditions and sailed an impressive race.

Our thanks go to Micro Scooters, Royal Hospital School, Mersea Island Cookery School and Mersea Dentist for their financial support and the many others who assist in making the week such a success.

I very much enjoyed my time as Chairman of Mersea Cadet Week but have now handed over responsibilities to Richard Pink who I am sure will enjoy the experience. Cadet Week next year will take place commencing 3rd August. Long may the success of this event continue.

Photos by Anne-Marie Jacobs

WILL CROSSLEY
Chairman Cadet Week

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we have to report the following members died during the past year:

Brian & Valda Boone passed away a month apart between November and December 2013. Both Brian and Valda had been members since 1988.

Alan Maylen on Friday 20th December 2013.

Alan had been a member from January 1976.

Margaret Roberts on Sunday 12th January 2014.

Margaret was 92 and the widow of the late David Roberts, both long standing members of the Club.

Jack Sydenham on Saturday 10th May 2014.

Jack joined the Club with his wife Felicity in March 1999.

Jack Ward on Saturday 5th July 2014.

Jack had been a member from September 1993.

Richard Tyndall on Wednesday 6th August 2014.

Richard had been a member of the Club since 1972 and was Rear Commodore 1991-1992 and Vice Commodore 2000-2001.

Trevor James on Wednesday 17th September 2014.

Trevor had been a member since 1988.

Graham Sapsford on Sunday 26th October 2014. Graham was co-owner of *Colette* and a committee member since 1997, Hon Sailing Secretary in 1999 and Hon Secretary 2009 - 2011.

Roy Hakes on Friday 14th November 2014.

Roy had been a member since March 1991.

Dennis Snow on Sunday 23rd November 2014. Dennis had been a member since 1994.

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Full Members

Frank Collard
(*Twin Spirit*)
Brian Cumming
(*Believe*)
Linda Cumming
Reginald Dawson
(*Clearwater*)
Christine Dawson
Thomas Dutton
Stanley Fenton
(*Blue-J*)
Graham Frost
(*Seahound*)
David Francis
Mark Furber
(*Serenity*)
Amanda Furber
James Harrison
Stephen Jones
(*First Mate*)
Claire Jones
Frances McKay
Robin Moffat
(*Chittabob*)
Richard Robinson
(*Ptarmigan*)
Martin Seabrook
(*Vento Mara*)

Full Members (cont)

Roger Seabrook
(*Fearless*)
Kim Smith
James Sparks
Andrew Stebbing
(*Seahawk II*)
Jill Stebbing
(*Rumbo*)
Ian Watts
(*Rimfire*)

Crew Members

Trevor Child
Emily Crooks
Sam Lightfoot
Lucy Wragg

Cadet Members

Juliette Martin

Associate Members

Paul Ager
Stephen Baxter
Carol Baxter
Diane Bishop
Graham Brown
Gayna Charles
Ann Francis
Georgia Glover
Lorraine Harrison
Donna Hellen
Graham Jones
Martin Kapp
Tracy Kapp
Hilary Knapp
Marian Langley
Sara Louise Lee
David Love
Neti Love
Martin Matthey
(*Alls well II*)
Bry Mogridge
Maria Montgomery
John Patmore
Sarah Robinson
John Saleh
(*Ruby*)
Holly Vince
Melissa Wheeler

Committee Members

Commodore: Alan Jones

Sailing: Ed Allan (Vice-Commodore), Julian Lord (Hon Sailing Secretary),
Melvyn Daniels (Cruising representative), Hector Heathcote, Sally-Anne Turnbull,
Paul Jackson, Brian Bolton (Seconded Race Officer)
Greg Dunn (Seconded MW Chairman), Paul Gosling (Seconded DSC representative),
Jack Grogan (Seconded), Ben Heathcote (Seconded)

House: Michael Wheeler (Rear Commodore), Ian Brown, John Clifton, Cathy Roberts,
Andrew Williamson, Victoria Tyndall (Seconded)

Moorings & Boatyard: Bob Thomas (Rear Commodore),
Richard Taylor (Hon Bo'sun and BaCASA/Mersea Haven rep),
Stephen Dines, Dave Lewis, Fraser Haddow, Tim Wood (Mersea Haven Chairman)

Treasurer: Ian Shay

Hon Secretary: Tim Wood

Sailing Honours 2014

SCALLYWAG

Julian Lord

1st Taxi Lewis Salver
(IRC Club Championship)
1st Quest Trophy
(Spring Series)
1st Knight Hall Trophy
(Autumn Series)
1st Cirdan Trophy
1st Centenary Cup
1st Peter Vince Memorial Trophy
2nd Lewis Powell Cup
3rd Ellis Cup

RAGGERTY

Alan Jones

1st Blackwater Trophy
(White Sail Series)
3rd Wallet Cup

BUGSY

**Geoff Hunt &
Sally-Anne Turnbull**
1st Halcyon Cup
(Short Handed Series)
1st Coronation Cup

OYSTER CATCHER XXX

Richard Matthews

1st Lewis Powell Cup
1st Eaura Plaque
1st Buckley Goblets
1st 43rd Light Infantry Trophy
(Buckley Goblets)

JEZEBEL

Ray Apthorp

1st Ellis Cup
2nd Autumn Trophy
3rd Knight Hall Trophy
(Autumn Series)
3rd Centenary Cup

WATER LILY

Jon French

1st Wallet Cup
3rd Blackwater Trophy
(White Sail Series)

WILD CHORUS 2

Malcolm Struth

1st Autumn Trophy

EVITA

Paul Gosling & Rob Smith

2nd Taxi Lewis Salver
(IRC Club Championship)
2nd Halcyon Cup
(Short Handed Series)
2nd Knight Hall Trophy
(Autumn Series)
3rd Quest Trophy
(Spring Series)
3rd Cirdan Trophy
3rd Lewis Powell Cup
3rd Peter Vince Memorial Trophy

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

Nick Glanvill, Hector

Heathcote & Alan Vince

2nd Quest Trophy
(Spring Series)
2nd Cirdan Trophy
2nd Peter Vince Memorial Trophy
3rd Taxi Lewis Salver
(IRC Club Championship)

FIZZ

Ed Allen & Peter Rowe

2nd Centenary Cup
2nd Ellis Cup
3rd Autumn Trophy

SPOT MARLEY

Steve Johnson

2nd Finola Tankard
2nd Wallet Cup

HEX

Laurie Pearson

2nd Coronation Cup

HANNELORE

David Curtis

2nd Blackwater Trophy
(White Sail Series)

SYMBOL OF LLEYN

Peter & Alison Pangbourne

3rd Halcyon Cup
(Short Handed Series)

GERONIMO

Owen Wheatley

3rd Coronation Cup

LULOTTE

Ben Morris

1st RORC Salver

BLUE J

Stan Fenton

2nd 43rd Light Infantry Trophy
(Buckley Goblets)
2nd Buckley Goblets
2nd Eaura Plaque

DARK & STORMY

Richard Bailey

3rd Lawson Trophy
(Buckley Goblets)

Simon Talbot

Silver Tiller

*

Round the Island

Alice & Sarah Kent

1st Coconut Trophy

John Ready & Henry Seifert

1st Reg White Trophy

*

Ladies' Overall

Sally-Anne Turnbull

1st Ambiance Trophy

*

Reeve Tyler Trophy

For best cruising log
Brigitte Texier-Pauton

Smokers, bikes and kids



WMYC welcomes visiting yachtsmen but...

Smokers...



(Non smokers may use the seats provided)

Cyclists



(Just pile them up on the two bike stands)

Kids



(But please don't damage the fence)

With apologies to the House Committee, who do a grand job – Ed.



Dawn departure. *Scruffy Duck* leaves for Ramsgate.
Photo by Mel Daniels

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