



molliette

The annual journal of the WEST MERSEA YACHT CLUB Founded 1899

December 2025



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From the Commodore

By John Munns

Welcome to the 2025 edition of West Mersea Yacht Club annual journal, the *Molliette*. I'm coming to the end of my three years as Commodore, and would like to say how much I have enjoyed this time. It has been a great honour and a privilege to serve the club and all its members. Many thanks to my fellow Flag Officers, committee members and management team for their unwavering support.

Last year was a very good year, and we thought it would be hard to better. But I am pleased to say 2025 has well exceeded our expectations.

As a yacht club, our main objective is to promote sailing, both cruising racing, and life on the water. I must not forget our increasing number of motorboats and chuggers, owned by some of those who have given up the love of beating up the Waller in a good so' westerly gale and an uncomfortable chop! You are never in the right size of boat for the conditions.

Cruising is becoming more popular. The appetite to race around the cans appears to be dwindling, due to some of the larger boats being sold and racing tending to be concentrated on the smaller boats requiring fewer crew. The smack fleet has grown in strength, along with an increase in the MFOB fleet. Both these attract many of the younger members.

At the end of last year, the club bought a Sonata called *Scherzo*. She has not been raced much, but has been used to take out many new members who do not yet have a boat, but who have completed some of the RYA courses. Thanks to the help of some very active volunteer skippers, *Schertzo* has regularly been seen out three times a week. If this continues in popularity, the club may invest in a couple of smaller racing boats next year.



The Sailing and House committees have worked hard to make this a successful year, both on and off the water. Again we have seen an increase of new and old members attending the club, and in particular the younger generation.

In conjunction with Dabchicks Sailing Club we had a very successful 'Under The Sea' themed Cadet Week. Some 145 boat entries makes this the largest cadet regatta on the east coast. The recipe for its success is a great committee, volunteers, sunshine and five days of excellent sailing.

Two weeks later we had Mersea Week, when we welcomed around 145 yachts, smacks and the ever-growing fleet of MFOB's. Again, we were blessed with good winds and sun-shine for the week. On the Wednesday, with favourable tides, we were able to run the Round the Island Race for dinghies, rowing gigs, wind-surfers - and even a swimmer.

Moorings and boatyards have had a good year under the leadership of Alan Jones and his team. A special thank you to Brian Warwick for his

hard work keeping the launches running seven days a week, with efficient service from our three hard working launch-men.

The House team have worked hard to keep the club in good running order. Solar panels have been installed, new boilers fitted and full decoration inside and out, including new windows. The social calendar has been full, along with many private functions for members.

Managing the club is a big team effort and I am very grateful to all the Flag Officers and members of the numerous committees for their continual support. The club would not run without the hard work and support of all the staff. Most importantly, a special 'thank you' to all our members for their support.

I hope you all enjoy this year's *Molliette*. My thanks go to John Davison for his endless patience and hard work producing this edition.

Wishing you and your families a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Let's have a good 2026.

Mersea Week 2025

By Julian Lord



Zak Clarke and crew in Gipsy off Mersea shore

Running from 10-15 August, the 51st annual Mersea Week was blessed with superb sunny weather and good breezes until the final day, when the wind shut off completely all morning. With an early cut-off time, this forced the cancellation of all the final day's racing. The small organising committee, under the leadership of Fran French, began planning in January and worked hard to deliver a successful event. This year it attracted an excellent entry of 125 boats - ranging from IRC-rated race boats, smacks, locally handicapped and white sail yachts, Sonata ODs, classic yachts and gaffers, MFOBs and four classes of dinghy.

Overall sponsorship came from Marinestore Chandlery and Adnams Brewery, with day sponsorships from Mersea Homes, Dolphin Sails, Oakheart, City & Country and Fenn Wright and additional sponsorship from Allen, West Property Management, Fiducia Wealth Management, Loftzone Storefloor, One Sails, Fox's Yacht Sales and the



James Sparks' Cork 1720, Mexican Train, leading a LH cruiser pack

White Hart Inn. This again enabled entry fees to be kept very low. With free moorings for visiting yachts and racing on the superb waters of the Blackwater estuary, what's not to like about Mersea Week?

A good entry of 13 Smacks made their usual spectacular sight. Visitor Dan Tester from Kent, with CK469 *Yet*, was clear overall and fast group winner, with three race wins. Reuben Frost's CK213 *Boadicea* dominated the slow group, also with three firsts.

Last year's top Smack, MN69 *Martha* (Phil Plumtree), took second in the fast group on tie-break from CK52 *Kate* (Richard Haynes). In the slow group, Nick Purdie's CK46 *Gracie* took second, also on tie-break, from Russell Clarke's MN52 *Skylark*.

The IRC class saw the Clifton family's Archambault 30 *Aztec* coming out on top, ahead of the only other race winner, Ed Harrison's Corby 29 *Entropy* from Royal Harwich YC. Toby Ramsay's self-designed and built



Photos by Chrissie Westgate

IRC winner: Aztec, the Clifton family Archambault 30

Ramsay 6.7 *Mojito* took third. The 13-strong Local Handicap cruiser entry was split into two groups, with Dabchicks commodore Mike Banks' Hustler 32 *Tramp* a clear winner in the A Group, with three race wins, ahead of Max Davenport's Beneteau First 30JK *Marionette* and James Sparks' Cork 1720 *Mexican Train*. The B Group was dominated by Stuart Howell's Dehler 29 *Dynamic* from Harwich Town SC, with Richard Holroyd and James Sanderson's MGC27 *Tearaway* taking second on tie break from Ben Simpson's beautiful Tofinou 8 *Three Little Birds*. On the principle of 'if you can't beat them, join them', Richard has now bought *Dynamic*!

With no visitors this year, the Sonata class was only five strong but still

enjoyed some good close one-design racing. Steve Phillips' *Obsession* was the class winner, scoring three race wins, with the all-girl jointly owned *Wet Endeavour* in second, ahead of *Parody* (Tim Crossley).

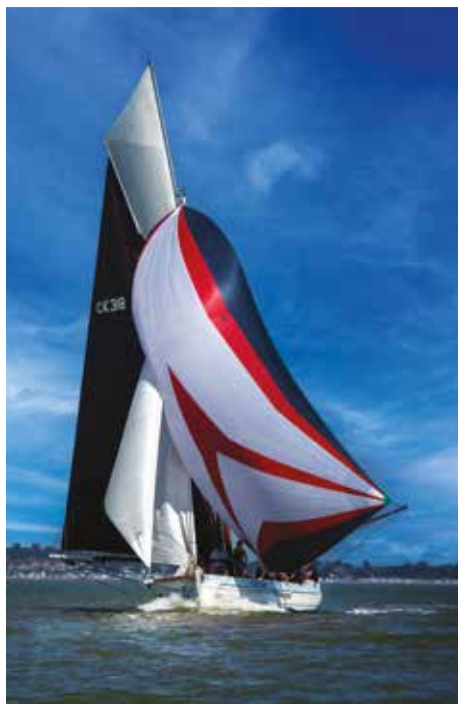
The biggest range of entries in a single class was in the Classics & Gaffers fleet, the 15 boats going from visitor Dino Heeps' little Cornish Shrimper 19 *Lapwing*, to Richard Matthews' Fife Gaff Cutter, *Kismet*, 48ft LOA! In the A Group, *Kismet* regularly sailed off into the distance and won the class with a perfect score. The other eight boats in the group had some good close competition, with the three Nordic Folkboats enjoying some close tussles and taking the next three places. Julian Lord and Mike Allpress' *Gremlin*, *Strider* (Robin Dutton) and

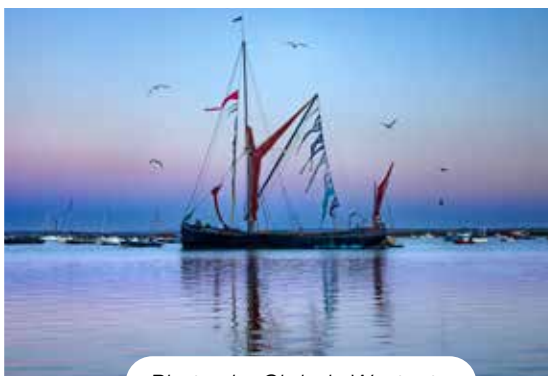
WMYC commodore John Munns with *Pip* coming second, third and fourth respectively. The small B Group was dominated by Nancy Harrison's gaff cutter *Nesta*, ahead of Joe Kershaw's little Buchanan *Patica* and Richard Bailey's Cornish Crabber 26, *Lahloo*.

The 15-strong White Sail class had a single start, but were divided into two groups for prizes. Sigma 33s were to the fore, with Jack Trollope's *Starfall II* and Philip Woods' *Jazz* placing first and third in the fast and overall results, split by Rob Smith's Beneteau Oceanis 323, *Tamarisk*. Winning the slow group was the Sadler 32 *Clockwise* of Jack Davis - ex-Fireball World Champion (a very long time ago!). Next up were Bob Mercer's Hustler 25.5 *UFO* and Alan Mason and Shirley Swann's Sigma 292 *Dura*.



Photos by Chrissie Westgate





The 40-strong dinghy entry was divided into four classes – slow, medium, fast and performance, and over seven races enjoyed some close competition. In the slow class, ILCA4s took the top two positions, with the second tie-break needed to give the win to Libbie Watkins ahead of Sam Cook. The Mirror dinghy of Sam Caslin, sailing with his little daughter Helena, perhaps embodied the spirit of Mersea Week and took third place, ahead of Mersea Week treasurer Rosie Brown's Comet Duo. The medium dinghy class was won by the GP14 of Oscar Coates and George Rogers, just ahead of regular Mersea Week competitors Brian and Linda Cummings with their Enterprise. Two single-handers were next up, with Bryan Sargeant's ILCA6 and the Solo of David Royce in third and fourth. The fast dinghies saw a close tussle between two Wayfarers, Tim Wood and Conor Redfern taking the top slot by a single point from Brian Lamb and Paul Berry. Will Powell's RS300 and Jon and Eliza Gay's Laser 3000 finished third and fourth. Six of the nine performance dinghies were RS700s, and two of these came out



on top - Jack Grogan winning from Will Head. Recently back from the 29er Europeans, Scarlett MacLennan and Joel Simpson were in third, with Ollie Gozzett in another RS700 placing fourth.

Finally, to the MFOBs, which this year had an entry of 21 boats of varying sizes and speeds. While all started together, they were divided into two groups for prizes. Over the seven-race series, there were six different individual race winners. But consistency paid off, with Alan Jones Eden the overall and slow winner counting all seconds and thirds. First in the fast group and second overall was *Prince* (Kyan Jowers), followed by Mark Farthing's *Lilian* and Zak Clarke with *Gipsy*. Second and third in the



slow group were *Ally Lump* (William Baker) and Robert Crossley's *Joy*. The best performance trophies for Cruisers and Dinghies were awarded to Mike Banks with *Tramp* and the GP14 of Oscar Coates and George Rogers, with both also receiving vouchers to use at the White Hart Inn.

The dates for next year's Mersea Week have already been set: 9-14 August 2026.

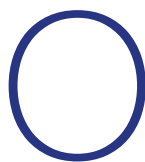


Blue Horizon bye, bye blues

By Adrienne Wood

‘Without the Officer of the Day there can be no properly conducted races. Perhaps this is some consolation to him as he puts on his smartly creased trousers and peaked yachting cap – a permissible form of dress on these occasions.’

(Extract from **How to Sail** by John Fisher, published 1959)



n *Blue Horizon* during a typical Mersea Week, there are no smartly creased trousers or peaked yachting caps.

But we flatter ourselves that we still provide properly conducted races.

For those of you who think that we just sit there chatting, eating and drinking all day, this might just change your opinion.

Most cruiser racing competitors are greeted by the voice of the Race Officer, Brian Bolton, over their VHF radios saying, 'Mersea Week racers, Mersea Week racers- this is Molliette, Molliette. Welcome to Mersea Week, today it is Dabchicks Regatta, and the day's sponsor is XXX'. The Race Officer is supported by a team of well-trained crew who have been out on *Blue Horizon* for many years. Each has their own specific role, which hopefully ensures that the day's racing runs smoothly.

Prior to this, *Blue Horizon* has been prepped for the week – with flag halyards, flag roll, hooter, clip boards, paper, pens, those vital clocks and all the necessary paperwork prepared, and everything checked and ready for action. Wendy Bolton has also sourced sufficient victuals to keep the crew well fed and watered.

A typical race day commences with all the relevant flags being carefully tucked into Anne Cook's bucket, ready for deployment at the right time, and woe betide anyone who inadvertently knocks said bucket. This year, for the first time, we did have a flag that went AWOL and went for a quick swim. 'Flag Overboard' drill, with the deployment of a bucket and boathook failed. But smack *Puritan* saved the day, and a slightly soggy Blue Peter was returned in time for the race starting sequence.

Meanwhile the Spotters team are ticking off, on the relevant class sheets, all the competing boats as they are coming out to the starting area. A good pair of binoculars is required, as this can be difficult at times with some 70-75 vessels on

the water. By the end of the week, we 'know' all the boats.

Then comes the serious part, the starts for each class. The starting sequence takes over an hour and competitors hear Wendy's mellifluous voice, doing the countdown for each starting signal over their radios. 'Ten, Nine, Eight.....Three, Two, One. Class Flag up'. One minute later, 'Blue Peter up', then, 'Blue Peter down', and finally Class Flag Down'. All accompanied by the sound signal. The Race Officer is keenly watching the start line, with Peter Pangbourne ready on the X Flag for an individual recall, or occasionally a general recall.



Photos by Chrissie Westgate

There is a temptation among the crew to chat during the starting sequence. But Wendy is a dab hand at shouting 'Quiet!' when we are too loud and distracting her from her mesmeric concentration on the clock.

Start lines can be a joy to watch, but sometimes *Blue Horizon* comes under attack from over-eager starters. Matilda, the inflatable unicorn, is deployed as the inner distance mark and over the years her well-being has become a concern. Fortunately, she has remained unscathed to date, but occasionally expresses her displeasure by inverting to escape the pressure of boats charging up on her.

Smack bowsprits can increase the heart rates of those aboard *Blue Horizon*. Somehow they just miss spearing us, amidst much shouting from the helms and crews. This year we had what could have been a rather serious 'Eeek!' incident, when two smacks managed to entangle their bowsprits and booms and were being forced onto the bow of *Blue*

Horizon. John Cook was ready to drop the mooring quickly, as booms and sails were flailing around on the smacks. Miraculously, no damage was sustained by any vessel, and our heart rates dropped ready to focus on the next class start.

'Phew!' they've all started. Time for a brief drawing of breath, and a quick bite to eat if we're lucky, before the first boats are approaching the finish line. Spotters become time keepers, eyes glued to strategically positioned clocks, awaiting the call from the Race Officer of the sail number of the boat(s) coming to finish and writing down that all important finish time.

If only the competitors would finish in a nice orderly manner, instead of crowding in together and crossing the line in a bunch, larger boats sometimes hiding a smaller one. Identification can sometimes be challenging, but sanity is maintained by close liaison with the bow and stern finish teams.

Wendy then has the task of inputting all the finishing times into the computer. All entries are double checked, then the results are scrutinised for

anomalies. Back to the mooring, time to tidy up and have the satisfaction that a day's racing has gone well. Here's to tomorrow - and the rest of the week.

The weather, of course, plays an important part; too much wind, not enough wind; too much sun, not enough sun. We all hate it when it rains. Try keeping paperwork dry when it's chucking it down and blowing a hooley, and looking at a clock when it's smothered with rain. So, do you now think we spend our time just sitting there chatting, eating and drinking? One heck of a lot of work and effort is being put in as well, to give the racing fleet a competitive day out on the water.

The race team have had a really great time aboard *Blue Horizon* over the years, and it is sad that she is now moving to pastures new. The end of an era, but we look forward to an equally exciting Mersea Week next year.



My first Fastnet, in my early teens, was with WMYC member David Powell, aboard his Carter 44-footer, *Mersea Oyster*. In 1973, John Harrison loaned me his Hustler 30 *Ricochet*, as he had committed to sail on another yacht. So that was my first as skipper. Crew included WMYC members Tubby

Brook, Richard English and past Commodore, Peter Clements.

Ricochet had an RCA Dolphin engine, which had the major shortcoming of only running in gear, so no neutral for battery charging. We were young and didn't think to get hold of a battery charger, so instead agreed to only use the battery for the compass light. Fortunately, the saloon had a

traditional gimballed oil lamp, giving an illusion of warmth and a little light throughout the race. After a long, tough beat across the Celtic Sea, with more than a dozen sail changes and a lot of water over the boat, we spotted the Irish Coast. We hadn't appreciated the mountain range was visible for 100 miles, and it took us another 24 hours to round the Fastnet rock. As an example of our lack of experience, we

The Fastnet Race

Recollections from some of my 26 Fastnets

By **Richard Matthews**

Oystercatcher XXXV approaching the Rock in the 2025 Fastnet Race

assumed that the slack in the leeward standing rigging was stretching, when in fact it was the start of a failing mast step and it was inching towards the bottom of the hull. Fortunately, a row of cleats exactly in the right place stopped the mast slipping any further; ignorance was bliss!

We had an exciting finish in foul weather and poor visibility. With

no electronic aids, we missed the entrance to Plymouth. Knowing we should be there, Peter spotted a hut onshore that, according to the chart, could only mean we needed an about turn. We arrived in Plymouth about 40 minutes later. Several of our rivals had done the same in the rain and low cloud, but didn't have Peter as a lookout. Some landed up in Salcombe, aiding us to a very

respectable 4th in class and an introduction to more than 50 years of Fastnet racing in my own yachts.

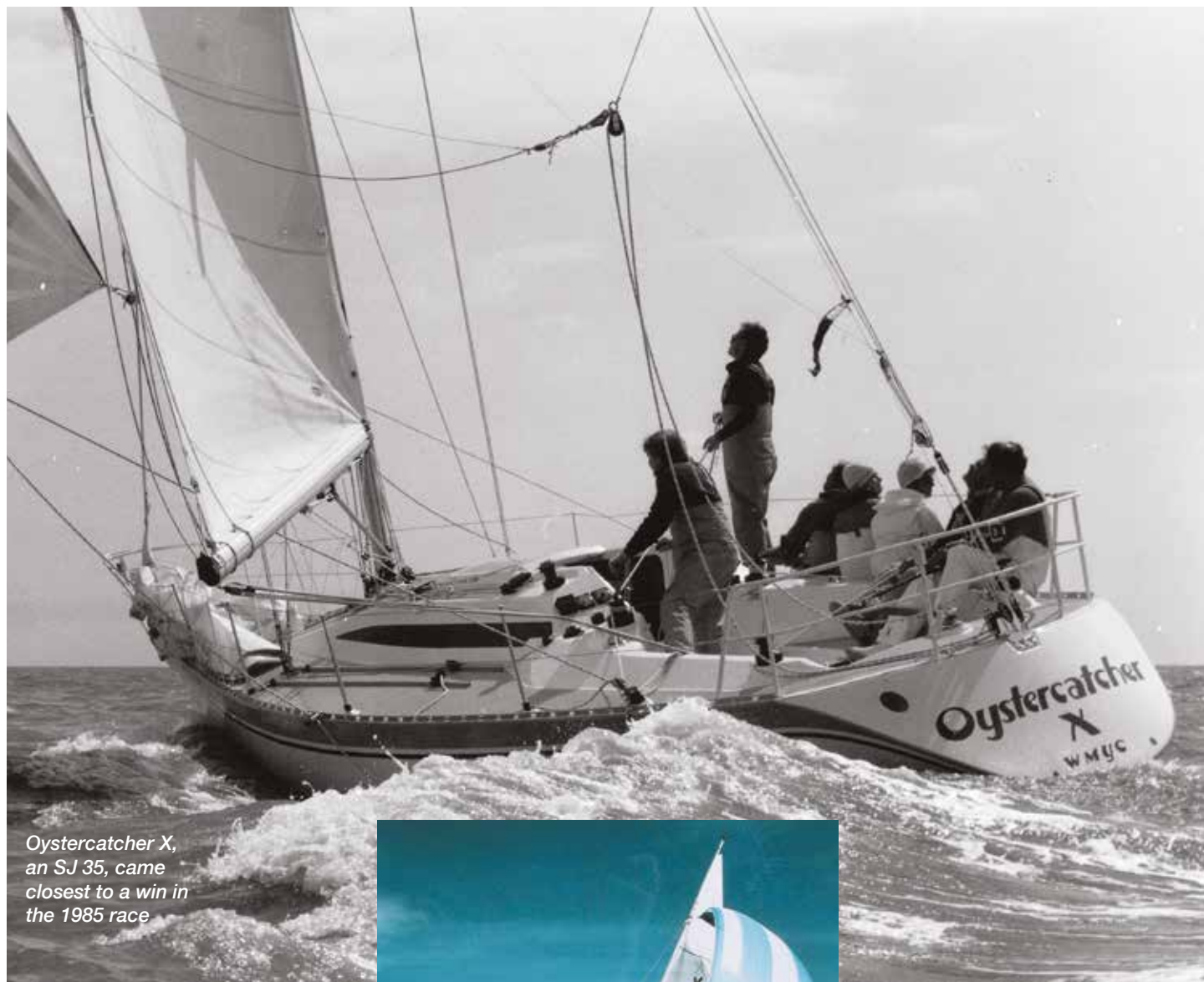
The 1979 Fastnet is well enough documented, but it will be remembered that 17 people lost their lives in a ferocious unexpected storm in the Irish Sea. We were sailing my Stephen Jones designed one off one-toner, *Oystercatcher 79*, built by Geoff Hunt. Highly competitive; that year we were overall winners in the Channel Race, an Admirals Cup event and all five Class One races at Cowes Week. We were one of six or eight boats that were tipped as potential overall Fastnet winners, but it wasn't to be.



Richard Matthews receiving the Dennis Doyle Memorial Salver for the skipper with the most Fastnet races - 26, a record

We got within 20 miles of the rock when we got flattened in a fast rising, unexpected storm. We had the mast head in the water with nothing more than a storm jib and reckoned it was blowing 60kts-plus, at which point we decided enough was enough and we lay a-hull for the night and felt relatively safe. We were shipping the boat to Newport RI for the World Championship, so we had a dilemma: we either retire from the race and get back to Plymouth for the waiting truck, or keep going and abandon our US programme. We were deflated after a wild night, so were happy to head home. There was a lot of talk about the Fastnet race that year and various changes to make offshore racing safer. But I continue to take the view that the real problem was a complete lack of predicting the storm. Today's forecasts are much more accurate, making offshore sailing safer.

One year we decided it would be nice to try a big yacht, so with friends I chartered *Nirvana*, a Pedrick designed



Oystercatcher X, an SJ 35, came closest to a win in the 1985 race

86-footer, which was at that time the current elapsed time Fastnet record holder. We were careful to add a clause to the charter agreement, giving a wind range for each sail with an understanding that there was any sail damage within the agreed range it would be down to the charterer. In the event, we blew out three headsails on the way to the rock and one Spinnaker on the way home, so that condition was a very good plan. It became obvious that, although we had an outstanding bowman in Billy Heffernan, who had just completed the Whitbread Around The World Race, the rest of the professional crew really didn't know how to race the boat, any more than we did. We found *Nirvana* quite tender and eventually settled on a blade jib with full main for getting up to the rock. We rounded in sight of the American Maxi, *Congaree*, about five or six miles ahead of us. On the boisterous spinnaker run home, with



Oystercatcher 79, tipped as a possible winner

Fine Young Cannibals playing full blast on the on-deck stereo, we sailed the boat hard, pumping the main sail and trimming continuously. We ran through *Congaree's* lee and went on to win our class and an armful of trophies. Alan Brook was with me again and I'm sure he'll also have fond memories.

Another memorable race, for different reasons, was the 1985 event sailing

SJ 35 *Oystercatcher X*, which was highly competitive. We arrived in Cowes, having already won six EAORA events overall with an unassailable lead in the championship. We won the Channel Race, which was an excellent result considering we were a small boat in an Admiral's Cup fleet, and picked up five firsts in Cowes Week. The little boat had real pace, especially in light airs. Unusually, we had exactly those conditions from the start all the way to the rock. By the time we got to St Albans head, the rest of our class were literally hull down astern, and by Lands End we were in company with some of the smaller Admirals Cup yachts, amazing for a 35-footer. In those days, the Fastnet rock was manned by a race team, each yacht required to call its rounding on VHF, which we did. Their reply was: 'Oystercatcher X, your position at the rock is first in class and first in fleet, good luck!'

We knew we were doing well, but with that news, watches were cancelled and we had the whole crew on the rail for the two-sail reach back to the Bishop Rock. We had a fantastic crew, including Donald Pye and John Harrison, and we knew we were in with a chance. To our surprise, during a long day, we saw a small yacht coming up astern and it turned out to be the French *Arlecone* about the same size as *Oystercatcher*. These guys were frighteningly fast on the reach, and simply sailed through our lee and were the best part of a mile ahead of us by the time we approached the Bishop. They were steering a much lower course than us and our longtime trusty navigator Erik Ellis asked when *Arlecone* went through did anyone happen to see an antenna on her stern? This was the first year of the AP Navigator using the Decca system, we had one and *Alecone* didn't. They disappeared hull down to leeward, never to be seen again and the Bishop came up on the nose as expected.

On our way towards the finish in Plymouth, Bob Bell's maxi *Condor* was the predicted overall winner and were about to start celebrating. A friend and yachting journalist, Bob Fisher, was with them and told Bell that the only other yacht that could beat them was *Oystercatcher*, she had four hours to do so and was predicted to the finish in two hours; hold the party! We had a light breeze from astern which was failing and within sight of the finishing line at Plymouth, the tide turned and we had no alternative but to kedge. There followed one of the most frustrating



Oystercatcher XXXV, at the start of the 2021 race



Sunset finish for Richard and Sarah, 2025

periods of my sailing life. After two hours, we caught sight of a row of lights astern of us as the new breeze filled in. We got the kedge up, still managing to stay ahead of our class and finished alongside one of the Admirals Cup yachts. The chance of an overall win was gone. We were never closer to winning the race.

More recently, with our Tom Humphreys designed 39-footer and

a crew, including Saskia Clark, we rounded the rock 110th corrected time in fleet. We had a freshening breeze from astern. This *Oystercatcher* was an absolute rocket ship off the wind; the conditions were perfect for the 90-mile leg to the Bishop under asymmetric. We were constantly hitting 20-23kts and passing several much larger yachts. Geoff Hunt took the speed record steering down the back of a wave touching 27kts. At the finish we had overtaken 100 Yachts to finish 10th in fleet.

I should mention the four Fastnet races we did with *Crusader*, the first two without mainsail reefing. An eclipse of the sun, setting a trysail and water rationing are just a few recollections of many stories that will have to wait for another time.

To the present: a very quick review of this year's 2025 Fastnet with the 52ft *Oystercatcher XXXV*, my 26th Fastnet and Sarah's first. We were doing well coming out of the Solent, but got caught in some bumpy water off St Alban's Head. With the light conditions, it turned out to be a small boat race. We finished up about a third of the way down the fleet overall along with all the larger boats, including the Admiral's Cuppers, all beaten by smaller competitors. We set a J2 medium jib at the start, replaced by an A2 symmetric spinnaker at the rock which we carried to the finish, so that's one sail change in 700 miles. Some kind of record, but not much to do for some of our 14 loyal crew, nine of which are WMYC members.

Will I do a 27th Fastnet in 2027? That's a maybe; we have a planned world circumnavigation to do first.



Oystercatcher XXXIII, rounding the Rock in the 2019 race

Denis taking a break
on the side deck

My first Fastnet

By Denis Richardson

I thought I'd done quite a lot of sailing. Starting on Oppies from the age of eight, I competed in many Cadet Weeks (winning the Topper class in 2021) and also sailed on the family Sonata Scherzo during a number of Mersea Weeks.

But it's fair to say that none of that really prepared me for my first experiences of offshore racing and competing in the Fastnet Race, aboard the Household Division yacht *Gladeye*.

After leaving St Benedict's College, Colchester, I spent a year at Harrogate Army Foundation College - passing out in August 2024. I joined the Irish Guards after phase two training at Catterick Garrison at the beginning of February 2025, and I have since been engaged in further training and ceremonial duties. These have included the Tower of London - Ceremony of the Keys; Buckingham Palace - Changing of the Guard; The King's Birthday Parade (Trooping the Colour) and the State Visits of presidents Macron and Trump to Windsor.



Homeward bound. Distinctive Gladeye kite on the downwind leg



Beating along the south coast of England

As soon as I joined the regiment, I made enquiries about the prospect of sailing in the army. I was signed up to join the yacht *Gladeye*, which is owned and operated by the Household Division Sailing Association. The original *Gladeye* was one of the 'Windfall' yachts brought back from Kiel after the Second World War. The current boat - *Gladeye 4* - is a Swan 391 and she is used to train soldiers all year round to RYA level courses.

I was surprised at how quickly I got onto the crew and, after some preliminary sailing, was soon competing in two RORC qualifying races – the Cervantes Trophy to Le Havre and the Myth of Malham Race, to Eddystone Lighthouse (outside Plymouth) and back. The latter race was tough - involving beating to windward for two days in winds gusting to 35kts, so fairly character-building!

I was selected as crew for the 2025 Fastnet, and joined *Gladeye* and the rest of the eight crew members on 25th July to prepare for the race. We sailed from our home port of Gosport to Cowes and had an entertaining evening before race day. We saw other Mersea sailors in Cowes



Showing his colours



Denis alert on the side deck

and we all prepared in the normal manner for a challenging few days at sea!

It was fairly windy on race day and we needed to concentrate to get a good start, amongst the 90-plus others in our class. We watched from the sea wall as all the big boats, trimarans and Class Ones, started first. Then it was our turn. It was a windward start and we beat out of West Solent and along the south coast of England. When we approached Land's End, we heard on the radio that the fast trimarans were just finishing! As we rounded Land's End, the wind veered northerly and headed us again so we beat all the way to Fastnet Rock.

There were moments of sickness. At one time I had to drag an officer, who was part of the crew, from the heads so that I could take a turn. You are all the same rank on a sailing crew!

We rounded the rock in the middle of the night and we waited until we were properly on the downwind leg, the weather had cleared up, and the kite was up before



Bringing back the bottles

a celebratory bottle of fizz was opened. It was much appreciated. We saw loads of dolphins and porpoises on the way to Cherbourg. It was a great change to be going downwind after several days going to windward.

We got to the finish line at 03.32 on Friday 1st August. The boat had performed really well with no breakages and the crew were all good too. When we got off the boat our legs turned to jelly, so walking to the all-night crew's bar was a bit of a challenge – never mind walking back! During the day we saw the Patrouille de France flypast over Cherbourg, which was fabulous. We stayed the next night and went out in Cherbourg, which was great fun.

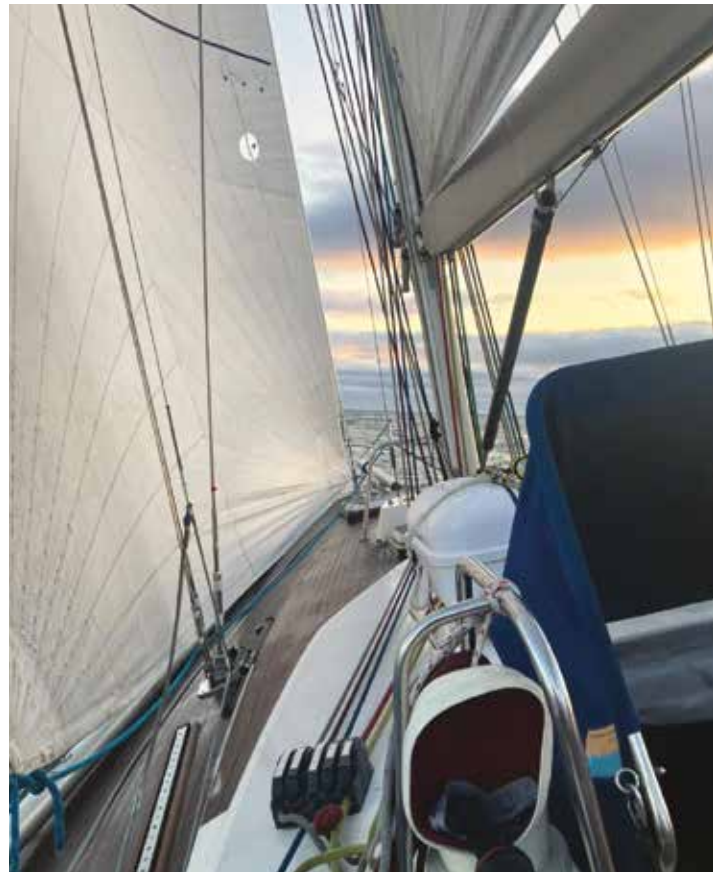
On Saturday morning we returned to Cowes, with a boat full of wine and cheese, just in time for the start of Cowes Week. All you could hear was clinking bottles on that crossing. Another army crew came on board to compete in the regatta after we left (with wine and cheese)!

It was a great experience to have completed my first Fastnet. We had a great crew, the weather and wind were

kind to us and the boat performed well. To any budding young sailors who would like to experience this type of adventure, then the British Army provides plenty of opportunity. My next ambition is to try to get on one of the service boats for a trans-Atlantic crossing - even further away from sailing on the Blackwater!



Watching the big boats start in Cowes



Finish Place	Division	Class	Finish Time	Elapsed	Corrected
323rd	IRC	IRC Overall	01/08/2025 03:32:43	05:14:12:43	05:13:00:15
81st	IRC	IRC 4	01/08/2025 03:32:43	05:14:12:43	05:13:00:15
63rd	IRC	IRC 4A	01/08/2025 03:32:43	05:14:12:43	05:13:00:15
Monohull Line Honors					
Finish Place			Finish Time	Elapsed	
367			01/08/2025 03:32:43	05:14:12:43	

A Summer of Sailing on Scherzo

By Bryan Gasson,
Vice Commodore Sailing



As many of you will be aware the Club purchased a *Sonata*, *Scherzo*, with the aim of promoting keelboat sailing to those without regular, easy access to a boat.

The 2024 season proved the concept had some merit and this season the project has expanded, with a significant rise in the number of people sailing regularly. Thanks principally to the efforts of Ian Low and Richard Bailey, who between them skippered most of the sessions and maintained the boat throughout the season, we are now offering the service that was envisaged at the outset. There is a functioning booking

process, based around WhatsApp, that enables skippers to book a sailing slot and subsequently seek volunteers to crew. Moreover, this process will evolve further for next season, so look out for details in the new year, when we would hope to further increase the numbers of skippers and crew using the boat.

Scherzo must be skippered by a club member and to take the project forward, (and spread the workload) we need additional skippers to come forward to assist. To volunteer as crew, there is no minimum level of knowledge required to get involved, and the skipper running the session will ensure the crew has

the correct balance of experience to maintain safety. The sessions have been particularly valuable to those sailors would have recently completed theory courses and are looking to consolidate their new-found knowledge in preparation for Day Skipper Practical courses. Furthermore, in 2026 we are intending to race the boat, therefore providing an opportunity for anyone wishing to further expand their skills.

In summary, the *Scherzo* project has had a very successful year, so congratulations to all those involved. For a very modest outlay the club is now offering a service to its members that can be built on for the future.

A Bridge Too Far

By Liz Harrison



Enjoying the view while changing the courtesy flag atop the superstructure

I should have guessed the theme of our upcoming boating adventure when I spotted Antony Beevor's book *Arnhem, The Battle for the Bridges, 1944* sitting on Paul's bedside table. Phrases like 'Battle of the Bulge' and 'Operation Market Garden' started creeping into planning conversations; circuitous canal routes including Nijmegen and Arnhem were researched; and guidebooks began landing on the doormat.

The plan was to take our Haines 340 Offshore motorboat *Merganser* across to Ostend and lock into the Belgian canal system - Brugge and Ghent being the first ports of call. Then south to Charleroi, east to Maastricht and pretty much north through the Netherlands to Delfzijl. From there around the outside of the German Friesland Islands to the Keil Canal and into Denmark where we had a berth booked for the winter.

It was all going swimmingly - we loved Brugge and Ghent and were getting to grips with the trading routes of old and the lengths the merchants would go to protect them. Then we came a little unstuck halfway down the scenic River Dender, when we learned our proposed 'pretty' route was blocked. It's so worth getting to



Skûtsje, traditional Dutch sailing boats use us as a turning mark while racing in the Pikmar near Gru

grips with the Waterkartern App and VisuRIS.com before leaving home! A little too late, we learned to plot a route inputting our length, width, height and draft, to find out if it was possible. There was the added advantage of registering a daily route so that the bridge and lock keepers knew to expect us.

So, backtracking we followed the heavily industrial route via the Brussels-Charleroi Canal to Namur on the Meuse River, riding the amazing Ronquiers Inclined Plane along the way. This feat of engineering lifts canal traffic 68 metres in a tank of water on wheels - a bit like a funicular. At Namur we turned right to explore the Lower Meuse towards France - what a treat.



Approaching Dinant where a cliff top citadel looks over the town and cruising boats line up along the promenade



Our route through Belgium. We had hoped to go south from Dendermonde to Ath, Blaton and Mons but a collapsed bridge was blocking the route near the junction with the Brussels-Charleroi canal

Tall limestone cliffs and wooded river banks led us to Dinant, where colourful buildings stand tall alongside a Gothic cathedral with its prominent pear-shaped bell tower which, in turn, reaches skyward to the medieval citadel atop the cliffs. In 1914, Dinant was subjected to a brutal battle with



John Cockerill's original iron and steel complex towers above a barge dock piled high with scrap metal



Fellow WMYC travellers, Linda and John Kent visiting us in Dokkum



Commercial shipping on the canals is fascinating. This container barge had a telescopic bridge!



Exploring the limestone caves at Maastricht

the Germans in one of the Battles of the Frontiers. A young lieutenant, Charles de Gaulle, was one of the French defenders wounded in the conflict.

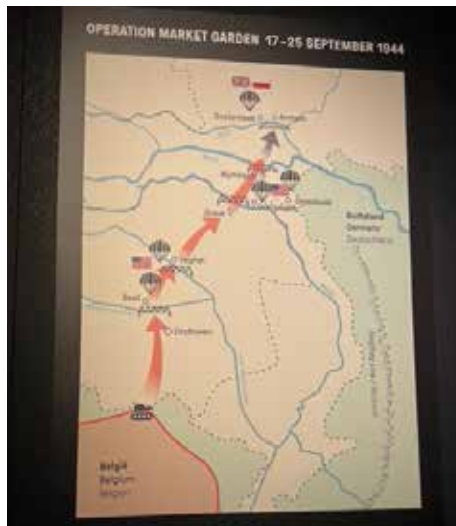
Some 30 years later, the area east of Dinant was where a German counter offensive broke through the allies Western Front, in what became known as the Battle of the Bulge. Amazing what you learn when you immerse yourself into the history of a place. Incidentally, it was also in Dinant that Adolphe Sax invented the saxophone and there are saxes everywhere!

With a greater understanding of 1945 Belgium and the Allied advances, we headed back to Namur and on past Liege, marvelling at the amount of scrap metal being moved by commercial barges. The British born industrialist John Cockerill is credited with taking the industrial revolution to Europe. He built an iron ore smelting plant at Seraing where giant rusty structures, now in varying stages of deconstruction, are all that is now left.

We locked into the Netherlands at Maastricht where the River Meuse becomes known as the Maas. Limestone is in abundance here: south of the city is an old quarry so vast you can't see the end of it. But the real story lies underground, where some 20,000 passages were dug over hundreds of years. Farmers cut out blocks of limestone for the building of grand houses, monasteries, castles, and churches.

Jump forward a few hundred years and these tunnels had a vital role to play in WWII. Thousands would shelter here. They proved a perfect hiding place for resistance fighters, great for smuggling operations and one of the two places the Dutch

stored their most precious artworks. Another example of Dutch earth works are vast lakes created by gravel excavation. These have evolved into water sports and recreation centres, wilderness and wildlife reserves.



The displays at the Freedom Museum, Groesbeek gave a clear insight into Operation Market Garden

It was from one of these lakes at Mook that we began our trip back in time to September 1944 and Operation Market Garden, the Allies push to control the bridges over the Waal and the Rhine, and the story of 'the bridge too far'.

In a nutshell, the Allied operation aimed to bypass the Siegfried Line by capturing bridges and opening a route into the industrial heartland of northern Germany. Ahead of advancing tanks and infantry (Garden), two American and one British airborne divisions (Market) dropped deep behind enemy lines to secure vital bridges at Nijmegen, Grave and Arnhem.

Unfolding our bikes we peddled off across the Mookerheide to Groesbeek, the landing spot of the US 82nd Airborne Division tasked with taking the bridge at Nijmegen. Here the excellent Museum of Freedom not only gives a clear picture of the operation, but also considers the causes of conflict. In a nearby field is a life size skeleton of a WACO glider – a memorial to the pilots and troops they carried. These amazing craft, made of a tubular steel framework covered with fabric over wood, were crewed by two pilots and could carry troops, a jeep or a 75mm howitzer with its crew. We learned that these single-use craft were prized by the locals - the raw materials used for everything from house repairs to clothing.



The WACO glider near Groesbeek - a memorial to all those airborne pilots and troops who landed them behind enemy lines in Operation Market Garden



There's a 'Liberation Route' that can be followed around Groesbeek, Nijmegen and Arnhem with handy informational boards

It was easy to sit there and imagine a sky full of paratroopers landing in sight of the enemy, the mayhem of gliders crash-landing on the undulating terrain, and the attempts to salvage their precious cargoes.

Next stop Arnhem, and in anticipation we streamed the movie *A Bridge Too Far* and did some serious googling. With the temperatures in the high 30s we set off early, cycling to Oosterbeek and the Airborne Museum which is based in the old Hartenstein Hotel, General Urquhart's field headquarters. The museum tells the harrowing story of the nine-day long Battle of Arnhem from the landing of the British 1st Airborne Division to their surrender, and delves into the stories of individuals on all sides.

One of the most telling things we saw that day was the memorial placed outside the museum by the British and Polish airborne soldiers who fought to bring the war to an early end. A gift to the people of Gelderland: '... we brought death and destruction for which you have never blamed us In the long winter that

followed your families risked death by hiding Allied soldiers and airmen, while members of the resistance helped many to safety'.

Exploring the countryside between Oosterbeek and Arnhem puts into perspective the immensity of the task faced by the Allies. It's 6.5 km from the bridge to the Hartenstein Hotel, the area is wooded and undulating, and during those nine days the weather was grim. Enemy forces soon surrounded the Brits leaving the Rhine the only means of escape. The Independent Polish Parachute Brigade bravely crossed the river to aid the trapped troops, using a white ribbon to mark the trail through dense woodland in torrential rain. You can walk this trail today, passing the Old Church at Oosterbeek, the last bastion of the escaping Allied troops.

We then began navigating our way up the IJssel and back in time a few hundred years to the golden age of trading monopolies, tolls, taxes and protection. The Hanseatic League was an association (hansa) founded in the late medieval period by northern German towns and merchant communities to protect their trading interests.

The League dominated commercial activity in Northern Europe from the 13th to the 15th centuries. It fought pirates and brigands, built lighthouses and laid buoys, controlling trade by establishing monopolies and trading bases overseas. More than 150 towns were at some point associated with the League - from Cologne to Bergen, from London to Tallin.

Our first encounter with the legacy of this wealthy trading monopoly was Zutphen, where a walking tour map took us past grand merchants' houses, along cobbled streets and over stone bridges, told wonderful stories and brought this golden age to life. To top it all off, the tiny yacht harbour is delightful. It was the first we'd visited that was run by volunteers. Berthing, electricity and water is often paid for using a handful of Apps. Once you get the hang of them it does make paying so much easier than finding a harbour master at his desk!

There are numerous Hanseatic towns across Friesland, most with a star shaped belt of ramparts and bastions surrounded by a moat. They usually have a canal running from one side to the other with an old port (most are now concreted over) and toll house in the middle. We had a lovely couple of nights in star-shaped Zwolle, moored in the moat, and cycling distance to a great golf course!



Cycling to play golf in Zwolle

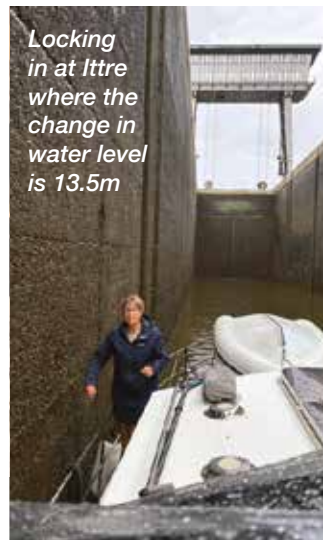
Our intention had been to head north from Zwolle past Meppel and Assen to Groningen and Delfzijl on the River Ems. But the joy of boating is meeting fellow travellers, talking to those in the know and changing plans. Many texts were exchanged with fellow WMYC members: the Jarvis's who, keep a motorboat in north Friesland, and the Kent's who have navigated the standing mast routes to and from the Baltic. So, we left the beaten track to explore the towns and canals of the turf lands: fairytale Giethoorn, with its maze of hand-dug canals and 18th century thatched houses accessible only by dinghy, bicycle or on foot; lovely Blokzijl, where everything is just a five minute walk from its pretty centre-village harbour; and tiny Sloten, which is a Hanseatic town in miniature and where community pride is evident everywhere you turn.



Airborne Museum, Oosterbeek - The British and Polish airborne soldiers memorial to the people of Gelderland



A highlight was the working sawmill De Rat at IJlst near Sneek



Wild mooring in the Sneekermeer where wild flowers bring an explosion of colour to protected wildlife havens



Narrow passages and numerous dials on a WWII U-Boat at the Maritime Museum, Wilhelmshaven

By this point we'd learned that it's always worth poking your head into a museum, big or small, and so we found ourselves in the fully operational wind-powered sawmill De Rat, between IJlst and Sneek. You can literally go anywhere in the mill which is a total assault on the senses. From the whooshing of the sails and the creaking of the wooden axles and spindles to the pounding of the up and down sawing frames and the rasping of blades.

We got to know Leeuwarden by following a trail in search of Little People – thumbnail-sized carved people hidden in cracks and crevices all over town. Often, they pertained to an adjacent local landmark thereby inspiring more research. Patience was the key! The berthing at Leeuwarden is alongside the botanical gardens and very pretty but we preferred smaller Dokkum, where we moored in the shadow of a windmill and took the dinghy to the supermarket.

We met John and Linda Kent on their way south after a summer in the Baltic and ahead of a change in the weather. Forecasters were promising strong winds in the German Bight - not ideal for our passage north. The Motor Boat Club at Groniingen was perfect to glean local knowledge about a route we'd heard might provide an alternative to the 120nm around the outside of the Friesland Islands.

The motorboaters agreed that the Ems-Jade canal from Emden to Wilhelmshaven would be a good shortcut, leaving only a brief sojourn around the sands to the Elbe and the entrance to the Keil Canal. It was a real delight to motor along this

small, raised canal with views over the German countryside where dairy herds grazed around high roofed thatched barns and farmhouses.

We weren't particularly well read on the unification of Germany back in the 1800s, when the Austrians and Prussians were flexing their muscles. But a trip to the German Naval Museum in Wilhelmshaven soon put it all into perspective. Jumping to the 1900s it then gave a very fair account of the role of the German navy in the world wars, particularly the formidable U-boats in WWII.

It was horrifying to read of the massive, hidden losses these 'terrors of the sea' inflicted on merchant ships and warships. The number of lives lost, and the stories of individual survivors were chilling. The whole scenario then took another turn when, outside, we could crawl all over a U-boat and appreciate the conditions the submariners endured. There are other craft to explore, including a guided missile warship which last saw service as a NATO peacekeeper.

One exhibition at the museum addressed the future and whether the lessons of the great wars were being applied. Two different doctrines had emerged: NATO's approach which is more of a deterrent model, and the Soviet/Russian doctrine which is more active defence. Visiting battle grounds and delving into the whys and wherefores of war has certainly been an education and extremely thought provoking. However, leaving Wilhelmshaven with our own armed RIB escort - a protection detail from the naval base - brought the realities of today abruptly into focus.

Our trip to Wilhelmshaven had certainly been an adventure. The heavily industrial Belgian canals plied by a variety of commercial barges were both dramatic and fascinating, but they led to beautiful rivers edged with wildflowers and grazing Belgian Blues. We only scratched the surface of the Dutch canal network, loving the narrow canals through the turf lands, the pretty yacht havens and mooring places and the quiet anchorages in the lakes, surrounded by wildlife.

It will be interesting to see what we find next summer when we set off to explore the Baltic. Merganser is now laid up after an admirable performance in the seaway from the Jade to the Elbe, through the Keil Canal and across the Keiler Forde into Denmark.

Stats:

Mersea to Wilhelmshaven: about 760 nautical miles in 7 weeks

Locks: 80

Lifting or swing bridges: 119

Inclined Plane: 1

Deepest lock: 15.5m

Lowest fixed bridge 3.2m

Yacht harbours visited: 29

Wild (free) pontoons: 6

Anchored: 6 times plus a couple more for lunch

First boat – where is she now?

By Beryl Chalmers



Benjamin sailing through Harwich Harbour six years after starting the build

My boyfriend and I were just 22 and decided we wanted to buy a boat we could live on and explore the world. Reality hit when we realised our sole combined savings came to less than £4,000. That was in 1979.

Then we spoke to a friend's uncle, who was instrumental in building Brighton marina, and he told us we needed a boat of at least 40ft. We sold our cars, record players – in fact anything we thought might add to the pot – but still had just £5,000. Think again.

We then heard about ferro cement and visited Heybridge Basin, where a few had been built. By chance, we then found an advert in Practical Boat Owner for a ferro hull, professionally plastered, but not fitted out. The price was £4,100 and the hull was in Bournemouth. Well, why not? We were young, fit and enthusiastic. You can do anything when you are 22.

To cut a long story shorter, we had the hull transported by lorry to Fox's marina in Ipswich where we began our six-year project, initially building a temporary rudder so we could steer as the hull was towed to a mud berth opposite the Walton and Frinton Yacht Club. That was my first sailing trip! As we went through Harwich Harbour, the tide turned and the hull galloped, reared up, crashed down and I fell



The original advert in Practical Boat Owner for the ferro hull

asleep. My boyfriend, Tim, opened one of the seacocks to let gallons in to give better stability and I woke up as we approached Stone Point at Walton. But I wasn't seasick – that came later.



Ready to move from Weymouth to Fox's boatyard in Ipswich

I had never done any woodworking but Tim's father was a carpenter/joiner and I began by learning how to use power tools, saws, planes and

chisels. I still use them today and built a hardwood table for my current boat last year. Having sold everything we owned, we needed to earn extra money apart from our full-time jobs. Second hand cars needing a little TLC proved to be the answer, so our weekday evenings found us in the garage.

We went to every boat jumble and closing-down sale and scoured the Loot adverts for everything we needed. There was a lot more to this boat-building lark than I could have ever imagined! The Stanway MFI closing down sale was a real bonus. They sold a pile of about 40 hardwood louvre doors of all shapes and sizes for £1 each. I bought the lot, so all our lockers and doors were then built to the door sizes.



The original Benjamin, the cat who the boat was named after



Beaulieu boat jumble was the main source of parts

The first upright post took three weeks to work out – you can't use a spirit level on a boat, especially when the tide moves the datum of everything twice a day. I am not the most patient person, so I could not imagine ever finishing Benjamin - named after the cat who came to the boatyard every weekend with us and had a cat flap hatch in the cockpit well. But I am determined, so every weekend and holiday were spent working on the



Building the wheelhouse after sheathing the deck with woven rovings GRP cloth

boat. We built everything ourselves - including stern gear, rudder, framing, engine bay and cabins. I have to say, I loved the work. It was a real escape from a fairly stressful job.

Another bonus was finding a main mast with stainless steel rigging in the shed at Walton, just 50m from our mud berth, after having traipsed around the country looking at derelict boats and masts. The owner had changed the rig on his boat from three-spreaders to two. Our stanchions came from a skip outside a boat building company closing down in Brightlingsea. The stainless steel hoop by the helm came from Prout catamarans' skip. While taking sailing courses at the Nottage at Wivenhoe, someone mentioned there was a suit of sails which had been bought and paid for at Gowens at Mersea, but never collected. I phoned Paddy Hare at Gowens who sold me the main and genoa - brand new, made in 1957 with terylene cloth and leather hand-stitched cringles - for the princely sum of £400. They lasted 10 years, until we had a new suit built at Dolphin Sails at Harwich.

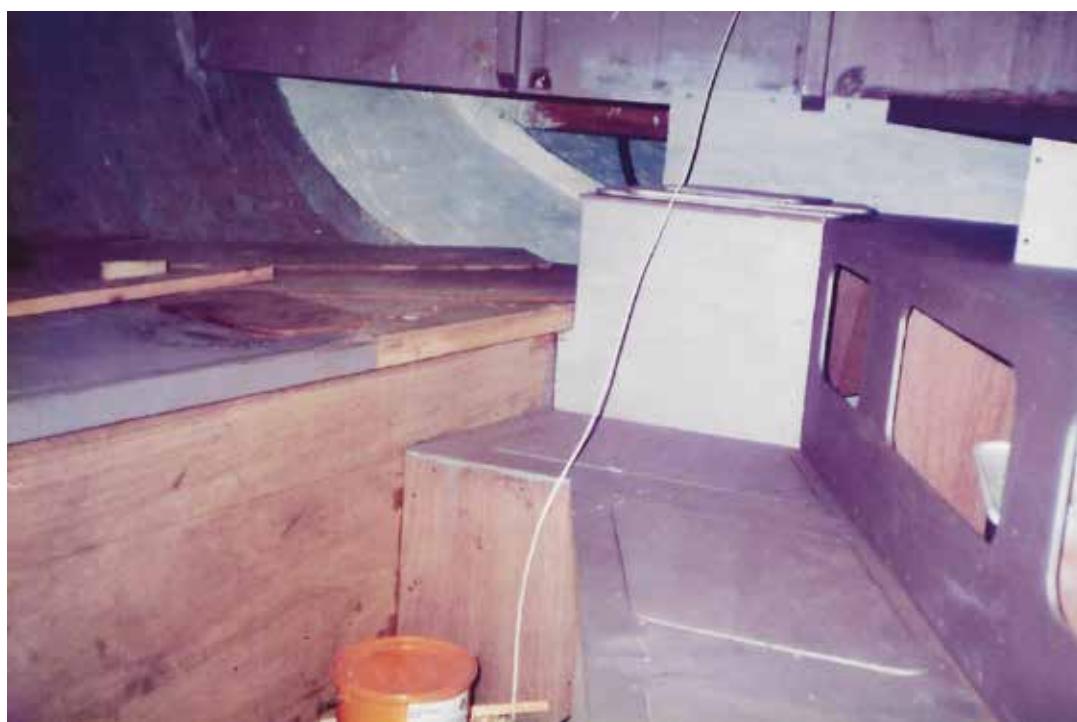
Our first sea trials were in October 1986 - a terrifying day for me, who didn't know how to sail, what to do if the engine conked out, or if our home built steering gear worked. At that time, I thought if Tim fell overboard, I would jump in too. That didn't go down too well!

But that was the start of 13 years of us getting married, having a daughter, cruising both here, to St Katharine Docks and Holland every year and me learning to sail. Sadly, we went

our separate ways, and the boat was eventually sold, but I didn't know who had bought her or where she went. That was more than 20 years ago. I later bought a boat in Greece and sailed her back to the south of France, from where she came home on a lorry. I spent many happy years on Chipper (re-named from Pollux for perhaps obvious reasons). But I always wondered what had happened to Benjamin.

Last year, I decided I would try to find her. I vaguely remembered she had gone to the Netherlands or the Baltic, so I emailed lots of marinas on the east coast of Denmark. Within 24 hours I had a reply from one near Copenhagen telling me the boat had been at his marina for many years, but had become derelict as the owner had been very ill. He then gave me the email address of the person who had bought her.

I had a reply straight away, with a photograph of the boat looking pristine. He had replaced the deck and filled skip after skip with all the hull lining panels I had made, which had soaked up the water pouring in. He invited me to go to Nyborg where she is now, so my daughter and I planned our trip in March of this year. In February I got another photograph



Pink primer by the gallon in the stern cabin



The cockpit taking shape in 1984

of the boat, with her on fire! An electrical fault. I couldn't believe it after all the years of wondering where she was. But the new owner assured me he would do everything he could to get her sailing again in the summer.

In August my daughter Stef, now 33, and I went to Nyborg in Denmark. When she was little, I used to hide tiny presents on the boat when we left each Sunday evening to come home. I was scared she would not like the boat, but the bribery worked, because she was always keen to go to the boat for our weekly treasure hunt. The new owner, Jens, had found a very small

eraser with a child's TV show logo on it. Stef recognised it immediately and sang the show's song!

There were many funny incidents. There was a beautiful hardwood ladder on the transom. I asked Jens if it was on the boat when he bought her. Turned out it was my 'pregnant steps' made by my father-in-law when I was pregnant and couldn't get on the boat easily. He asked if the 'T' and 'B' above hooks on either side of the companionway steps were a different language for port and starboard. No, just standing for 'Tim' and 'Beryl' so we didn't mix our oilies up!

A week later Jens emailed to say he was in the middle of nowhere in the Baltic when another boat arrived. The owner, who had an Endurance yacht, asked what boat Jens was on, as he knew of one called Benjamin sailing through Harwich Harbour about 30 years ago. We had copied the wheelhouse design of the Endurance, and the original owner of the company building them in Norfolk now lives 50m from me!

Stef and I spent a very pleasurable few hours with Jens and I am sure we will visit him, and Benjamin, again.



Looking pristine in Nyborg, Denmark

Mersea Yachts Win at Classic Regatta

Michael and Jason Wheeler



Jason and Michael Wheeler, proud recipients of the Fast Fleet Class cup



Photos by Toby Essex

Golden Fleece

We have always enjoyed participating in the Suffolk Yacht Harbour Classic Regatta. First held in 2002, it's a friendly, relaxed and very enjoyable event, usually held over the weekend closest to the summer solstice of June 21st with a decent chance of good weather. It attracts beautiful classic yachts from around the east coast and further afield.

Mersea is usually well represented and Mersea boats have had considerable success over the years. As beautiful as the boats are, they are nonetheless competitive – after all,

everyone likes to win! We have been competing with *Golden Fleece* for about 15 years, and while we have frequently been on the podium we have never actually won the event. This year, with the boat having less participation in EAORA offshore races, we decided that we would 'have another go'.

On arrival in Levington prior to the regatta, we were delighted to see another Mersea classic, Ross Wey's

beautifully restored 1920s Alfred Mylne yawl *Gudgeon*, moored in pride of place outside the lightship ready for action in the first race on Saturday. *Gudgeon* was previously owned by another Mersea classic yacht enthusiast, Scot Yeates, who won this regatta several years ago with the Kim Holman designed day racer *Stiletto*.



This year there were 33 yachts entered with two races scheduled for Saturday and one on Sunday. After breakfast in the Harbour Room, and with a civilised start time of 1040 for the first race off the Harwich Dovercourt breakwater, we set off in a light breeze. Our hope was that the wind would pick up, as a 'light breeze' is not ideal for *Golden Fleece*, although with a very clean bottom after a haul out and power wash the previous day, she was sliding through the water quite nicely. The weather was glorious and sun cream was in abundance, with crews enjoying friendly banter between boats as we approached each mark. At the end of the race, we finished second on corrected time in the Fast Bermudan Class - behind *Lady Elena*, a Spirit 30, and ahead of *Illiria*, another S&S 41.

Gudgeon suffered from the lack of a decent breeze in the morning but still finished a very respectable fourth in the Slow Bermudan Class out of a fleet of 10 boats.

The afternoon race started in even lighter airs against a strong flood tide, and it was a struggle to get across the start line. We did eventually get going, with the smaller and lighter boats having the advantage, but it wasn't long before the race officer came on the radio to announce that the wind was not going to build for the rest of the day and so the race was abandoned. Down came the sails, on went the engine and we headed back to the marina in Levington for free beers and live entertainment courtesy of the regatta organisers – towing those boats that did not have engines.

Sunday morning brought with it a good breeze, promising some enjoyable champagne sailing that would hopefully make up for the lack of wind the day before – which it did. A course was set up and down the River Stour in a westerly force 3-4 breeze with tacking and cross tacking all the way up to the Ramsey buoy. This required concentration and attention to navigation to take advantage of the 'lifts', keeping out of the tide and off the mud. Then a more relaxing spinnaker run in the sunshine all the way back to Shotley Point buoy – and then back up the Stour to do it all over again!



Gudgeon



Ross Wey with the award for Slow Fleet Class presented by Johnathan Dyke of SYH

On corrected time we finished third behind *Sunstone*, an S&S 39, and *Nini*, an S&S 32 – it was a good result for Sparkman & Stephens boats! The stronger breeze also suited *Gudgeon*, and she more than made up for Saturday by finishing first by almost 12 minutes on corrected time ahead of *Malwen*, a Mersea boat in days gone by.

At the prizegiving on Sunday afternoon we were delighted to learn that in the overall results for the regatta *Golden Fleece* had won the Fast Fleet Class and *Gudgeon* had won the Slow Fleet Class – for the second year running! A great result for Mersea boats.

The wind continued to build on Sunday afternoon and so we stayed in Levington. But Ross and Conor needed to get back to Mersea, and so they set off in *Gudgeon* down the Wallet into strong headwinds and a foul tide. At times they were only making about 1.5 kts under engine and arrived in Mersea in the early hours of Monday morning. When I asked Ross the next day what his return trip was like, he just had one word for it – 'horrible'! That's the Wallet for you on a bad day!

But we had all enjoyed a great weekend and were pleased to bring back some trophies for Mersea.

Kismet

Faster than ever in the Med

By Richard Matthews



Photo by Gilles Martin-Raget

Winning ways. Kismet at the Régates Royales at Cannes

After our incredible season with *Crusader* 12-metre fleet racing in the Med last year, we set our sights on trying to repeat the performance this season in the vintage classic classes with *Kismet*.

Traditional gaff-rigged classic yacht racing in the Mediterranean is a celebration of sailing and enjoying these classic yachts, many of which have been beautifully restored. They are raced competitively by enthusiastic crews, but the standards of camaraderie and friendship make these events very different from most others.

Racing is under the French CIM rating, evolved over many years and regularly updated, which is specifically designed to provide fair racing amongst these classics. We flew a French measurer to *Kismet* in Ipswich to check her measurements, recalculate and update her rating and make sure that it was fully optimised and accurate.

Many of the key rig measurements take account of spar length, rig and halyard length rather than measuring



Enjoying the hospitality at Monaco Yacht Club

the sails. We made a special effort to make sure that our sails were of maximum size within our rating and this led to ordering a new asymmetric spinnaker, made by Dolphin of West Mersea, which added about 60 square feet of usable area with no rating change. Another important part of our preparation was the bottom finish. We spent about eight man-weeks removing all the bottom paint, which weighed an extraordinary 57kg! It was then refinished to racing boat standard, faring in things like rudder fittings and seacocks.

Apart from being one of the most

enjoyable events of the home sailing season, we used Mersea Week as an opportunity to optimise our sail plan and make some other minor changes to our deck gear and running rigging. One example was our topsail, which had never really fitted the boat. By measuring aloft, then having Dolphin cut a small fillet off the sail (between races), it really fitted and we benefitted from the additional power. I was also delighted with our new asymmetric spinnaker.

This year the Mediterranean offered us three regattas: Monaco, followed by the Cannes Royale Regatta 10

days later, and then a feeder race to St Tropez for the famous Voiles Regatta. We had not raced in Monaco before and we were looking forward to enjoying the hospitality of the Monaco Yacht Club, albeit a little anxious about their rules including dress codes. Their hospitality was simply overwhelming; drinks parties and unlimited running buffets all courtesy of the club. This is a club rich in history, vintage Riva motor yachts and classic sailing vessels. They could not have done more to make everybody feel welcome. It is also a club with some serious sailing members, evidenced by the Monaco Yacht Club team winning the recent Admiral's cup in the UK.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said of the actual racing. Through no fault of the organisers, there simply wasn't enough wind off the Monaco coast and an unhelpful rolling swell prevails. The event had four days of planned racing, but in the end this was reduced to just two. On the first day there was reasonable breeze, but racing was abandoned because of lightning on the course. The second day was miserable for us, since the wind never got to more than 5-6kts and we really struggled to get the boat moving, as did most of the other competitors. On the third it was much the same, and having waited three hours for wind we set off on a 1.5-mile windward leg, which took exactly one and half hours of frustration. The final fourth day was abandoned after a no-wind delay.



Calling the shots, Mersea man Jamie Bolingbroke



Photo by Gilles Martin-Raget

We knew the sailing conditions and places to go in Cannes and started the regatta with one of our best races of all time. It was an easy win with *Kismet* at her best and with great tactical calls by Andy Green, our friend and regular Med tactician, who had flown in from Newport, RI USA. The second race was tougher and one of our main rivals, Herreshoff-designed *Oriole*, had the better of us right up to the last half of the last leg when we managed to roll over her using our new spinnaker to good advantage - and won by seven seconds on corrected time.

Upwind leg during the Voiles de St Tropez

One of our other main rivals is *Viola*, a 1908 gaff-rigged Fife. As with *Oriole*, the owner and crew have become our good friends. Sadly, one of *Viola*'s elder crew succumbed to a medical issue and passed away just after Monaco, which understandably put a cloak of sadness over the Cannes event. There was a very touching sail-past outside the harbour, with over 100 classic yachts slowly passing close to *Viola* to pay their respects to a much liked, lost crew man.

As with a lot of Med racing, this season we had to wait an hour or two for the wind to fill in, but at least in Cannes the sea was flat and we were able to get moving. We were consistently in control of our class and never lost a race. On the Thursday in Cannes, we decided that our staysail, which was also been used as a heavy weather sail, was undersized, tired and not at its best in the lighter breeze. We called Dolphin with a



Photo by Gilles Martin-Raget

Reaching ahead at Les Voiles, St Tropez

ridiculous question: if we ordered a new light staysail, optimised for maximum size, could they make and deliver it by the weekend? This was relevant because Sarah would then be at home and returning to the yacht on Monday. They rose to the challenge and Sarah arrived back with our new light staysail, for which we were able to rig a simple transverse sheeting system to give it the best shape, both upwind and reaching.

In St Tropez the courses must get the fleet out of the estuary regardless of wind direction, and as it happened we had a great deal of reaching during the Voiles Regatta - absolutely Kismet's favourite point of sailing. With a super fair-bottom finish and our rig and sail optimised, we really were faster than our competitors and had a tiny edge as soon as we could ease sheets. We enjoyed fantastic sailing, winning every race and having time to enjoy the amazing spectacle of so many beautiful large yachts at close quarters.



Beautiful historical yachts on the start line

The fleet is berthed stern-to in St Tropez and there's a great camaraderie between crews. We had the opportunity to socialise with Griff Rhys Jones, whose yacht, *Argyll*, was

berthed alongside *Kismet*. He lives near Harkstead, Suffolk. Sarah and I also had the opportunity to go aboard the beautiful 62ft ketch, *Manitou*, which was owned by John F Kennedy during his term as US president. Rumour has it that the bill of sale of the yacht was signed by JFK in the Oval office. Small world, as the current owner's father, Alastair Easton, was the gentleman who challenged for the 1987 America's Cup with *Crusader*.

One of the week's high spots was a crew party with our friends from *Oriole*, consistently being one of Kismet's toughest competitors. This same crew from Madrid hosted us to dinner during the Barcelona Regatta last year. There is no doubt that whenever *Kismet* and *Oriole* meet, there will be

parties and camaraderie. Birthdays and families are celebrated, as well as the love of sailing and the preservation of these beautiful historical yachts.

Northward bound again to the beautiful Baltic

By Ann Chatterton

Our 2024 season was spent in Danish and east German waters, followed by a winter refit in the capable hands of 'our man' at Egaa, (our Danish home port, just north of Aarhus, Jutland). *Resting Goose* was then all set for this year's adventure - traversing the Swedish canals to reach the beautiful sailing ground of the Stockholm archipelago. The trans-Atlantic wind vane (efficient but noisy for those sleeping in the aft cabins) has now gone, with the bonus that the lower half of the support tube functions perfectly as a boat hook holder. A new Victron inverter provides much better battery management and, most exciting of all, a sparkling new stern anchoring system resides on the transom. We just needed to work out how to use it!

Frances McKay and Tony Merewether had elected to come with us for this part of our cruising summer and, from what we had read, we knew that the canal section was going to need good crewing. Its nickname for sailing couples is 'the divorce channel', and we didn't want to go down that route! We arrived in Egaa in mid-May to beautiful warm weather, so set off for the lovely sandy Danish holiday island of Anholt in high spirits. Situated mid-way from Aarhus to Gothenburg, it made for a great stop to stretch our legs and to say goodbye to Denmark.

The wind was fair to sail the next leg, but definitely getting colder as we headed north towards the west coast of Sweden. So much for agreeing with Tony that he wouldn't need to bring any long trousers as the rest of us kitted up!



David, Frances and Tony

We celebrated David's birthday under way, and 14 hours later we were tied up on the outer pontoon at Lilla Bommens harbour in the centre of Gothenburg. The next day, with the sails furled, we set off under engine for the first opening of the Hisingsbron and the start of our canal adventure.



David alongside *Resting Goose*

The Trollhättan Canal (part river, part canal) is used by commercial shipping but we were still surprised to see, at the first major set of locks, the size of the ship being raised up, seemingly in the air as we waited for our turn!



We knew we had to pay a fee of £95 for the canal at some point in the journey but were very amused to find that the lock gates at Trollhättan town (the mid-point of this stretch of water) would not open until we had found the office and paid our dues!

After 48nm and six locks, we were out into open water and could get the sails up. What a relief. We had been advised that we could negotiate a passage through the islands to an anchorage half way across Lake Vänern. None of us expected the narrow gap at Strömsundet, with less than 9ft either side and bordered by four big concrete blocks, but we kept our nerve. We certainly needed our cocktails that night!



The deal with traversing the Göta Canal in pre-season is that you have to pay £615 up front and give five days' notice so that the officials can organise the boats into groups of four or five (depending on size). This meant that we couldn't explore the 90nm lake, but we were keen to get to the open waters of the east coast. So, 25th May saw us lined up with two sailing boats - one Canadian and one Swede - and a little motor boat in the first lock. With 58 locks ahead of us, we were going to get plenty of practice - Tony at the front, me at the back, David on the helm and Frances on land, running fore and aft to tie or loosen the lines as needed. We eventually got into the swing of it but it was certainly stressful at the start, despite the lock staff that accompanied the 'flotilla' being very helpful with their advice. All the locks bar one are electronically operated, so it was fun to see Tony putting his back into the only manual lock gate at Tåtorp!



Tony and lock gate

After another good sail across Lake Vättern, we arrived at Motala for the final stretch of the canal. The organisers were able to give us time to explore the town, so we found ourselves in the Motala Motor Museum - a wonderful collection of old cars including a boat built on the chassis of an Austin 7 by an English man! It apparently ended up in Colchester before being donated to the museum - what a small world!



Austin 7 boat



The force of the water coming through the locks on the downward journey was a sight to behold. We were very glad that, given our size, we were always at the front. We did wonder how the little motorboat behind us didn't get swamped!

By the time we got to Mem, the last lock of the journey, we finally managed to put

our cold weather gear away and enjoyed a beer in the sun to celebrate. But, while it was an adventure to traverse Sweden by the canal route, we all decided that this was going to be a one-way journey. We'd rather sail round the bottom of Sweden to reach the Baltic islands than motor!

Once out of the canal, we headed north to Nynäshamn to check out a possible mooring for mid-June, when we intended to return home for three weeks to see family and grandchildren. Then it was off to the islands towards Stockholm to say goodbye to Tony. We spent the last week, wending our way back down through the archipelago, visiting some magical anchorages en route, to Nynäshamn, where we bumped into Tom Cunliffe (of Yachting World fame) and his wife who told us they had taken nearly a month to sail up from Germany due to strong north winds. Maybe we did make the right choice to go through the canals after all.

With its handy railway station, right next to the marina, Nynäshamn was a great stop and, three weeks later, saw us back on the boat with our friends Phil and Liz Vesey for a couple of weeks. After stocking up with food and visiting the Systembolaget (the state run off-licence) for essential wine supplies, we set off for one of our favourite anchorages on the island of Rånö. Simon and Camilla Talbot were on their way up from Nyköping in their boat *Miss Sophie* at the start of their summer cruise and we were keen to get the benefit of their knowledge and support as we executed our first 'rock' anchoring. With great trepidation we dropped the stern anchor, nudged up to the shoreline and got our lines ashore - our shiny new stainless steel stern anchor, with its weighted anchor line was duly christened!



RG rock anchoring

Happy that we could cover all anchoring eventualities, we turned the bow northwards again. As it was now mid-July, the anchorages were busier but the little island shops were also now open as the magic Midsummer Day had passed. And, more importantly, the weather had really warmed up - 28°C - so swimming as well as kayaking became the order of the day. Our favourite anchorage amongst the 25,000 islands in the Stockholm archipelago has to be Säck -



completely sheltered from all winds, weekend deliveries of the best cinnamon buns in Sweden, ice cream rib sellers and wonderful walks through the woods. You just have to negotiate the entrance - less than 0.3m under the keel does make you concentrate!

The wildlife in the islands is breathtaking - sea eagles and hawks hovering in the sky, grebes swimming with such pride with their brood in the reeds, otters streaking across the water and evidence of beavers having nibbled their way through trees leaving the tell-tale stumps. Plus, the daily aerial display of terns diving for their supper, low flying herons and the rare sound of a nuthatch in the woods. I was in paradise (literally as one of the anchorages we like is called Paradiset!).

The Talbots decided we needed to experience another Swedish tradition: boiled crayfish or 'kräftor' and schnapps. Accompanied by the Swedish drinking song, Helan Går, by the time we were finished we had forgotten how silly we looked with hats and bibs on!



Crayfish party

Our next stop was the lovely island of Arholma - a good jumping off point for the Åland Islands. But with the wind continually in the wrong direction, we decided we would part company with the Talbots, who were then returning south, and head up to Öregrund, a traditional fishing village at the top of the island archipelago, just above Latitude 60 degrees (the same latitude as the Shetland Isles).

One of the joys of sailing in the Baltic is how inexpensive this sort of cruising is. Apart from the three weeks when we left the boat in Nynäshamn (for only £240 at pre-season rates), in the two months following the canal trip we spent only four nights in a marina. The rest were spent at anchor in some of the most peaceful and beautiful settings.

There is of course a downside, and that is that the season is a short one.



RG tied to the rocks

By the middle of August we could feel that the days were getting shorter, cooler and a little windier and many of the little island shops had closed. But we still had some lovely sailing on our way back south, including one last rock anchoring (just to prove to 'our man in Egaa' that the new gear was going to be used more than once) moored up next to *Miss Sophie* on the remote outer skerry of Sadelöga.

David and I have both agreed, though, that we are not Swedish and prefer lounging in our cockpit rather than lying on hard rocks to enjoy the Swedish summer!

By the third week of August, it was time to thread our way through the Landsort peninsula and turn westward to visit the wonderful island anchorage of Ringsö for a couple of days. This is an amazing snail-like maze of interlocking islands that offer great weather protection, as well as hiking ashore. We then made our way up 8nm of reed-clad river to the Nyköping boat yard, where we have left *Resting Goose*, tucked up in a heated shed, in front of the Canadian boat we had met going through the canals. After 20 years and 45,000 nm on the log, she will be safe there until our next adventure.



RG in the shed

West Mersea Lifeboat

by Martin Wade, Chairman

2025 so far has been a fairly busy year. Up to the end of November, the West Mersea Lifeboat has been called out 70 times. Several callouts were to the Crouch and Clacton at times when their boats were off service.

Engine failure in both power and sailing boats was again one of the main causes. Although callouts to persons not on a boat was the highest figure, with four to vulnerable people.

Here is a breakdown of the main causes:

Engine failure, power and sail – 13

Sailing Yacht – 10

Sailing Dinghy – three

Windsurfer, Kite surfer & Kayak – 10

Jet Ski – five

Medical Evacuation, Mersea & Osea – seven

Persons not on a boat – 17 (two deceased)

Calls to the Strood at high tide – two

Flares, EPIRB & DSC Alerts – five (all false alarms)

Here are a some of our 2025 incidents:

Just George has a re-fit

Earlier this year Just George went back to the RNLI Inshore Lifeboat Centre in East Cowes for a major re-fit. As well as servicing the hull and sponsons she also had some equipment updated including a new radar. While she was away, we had a replacement boat Spirit of Cooperation from the relief fleet. The photo shows Spirit of Cooperation being returned to RNLI Poole and Just George being re-housed.



Dinghy with broken boom

Two crew on this dinghy were seen struggling to get back to Marconi Sailing Club from near Goldhanger after their boom had broken. They were quickly found and returned to Stansgate.

Wakeboarding boat with engine failure

This wakeboarding boat with two adults and two children on board had broken down in the middle of the river and the lifeboat towed it back to Bradwell Marina. The sound from those speakers would certainly be louder than the sound from its engine!





Kayak unable to make the shore

Two people on this inflatable kayak were seen not making any headway back to Mersea beach from the middle of the river. They were taken on board the lifeboat and returned with their kayak to the beach, both safe and well.

Yacht aground on Foulness

We were tasked to this yacht due to Burnham lifeboat being delayed in launching. The yacht from Burnham with one person aboard was bouncing on the Foulness sand with an engine that would not start. One of our crew went aboard and succeeded in starting the engine and motored to the deep water of the Whittaker Channel. Our lifeboat then escorted the yacht into the Crouch where we were met by the Burnham lifeboat, who took over the escort.



Seasick crew and engine failure

On a particularly windy day, one of the two crew on this yacht was seasick and unable to do much. The other crew member was sailing the boat to windward in the Blackwater trying to make Brightlingsea. But with a failed engine he was unlikely to get into the harbour, so he called the Coastguard. When our lifeboat arrived, one crew member went aboard and lowered the sails. The lifeboat then took the yacht in tow and into Brightlingsea.

Long Service Awards

Our area RNLI manager is seen here presenting a 40-year Long Service Award to Senior Helmsman Matthew Haward and a 30-year award to Simon Clarke. I also received a 20-year award, so I have some way to go to catch up with the others!



Five women in a boat

By Pauline Aspinall

This article first appeared in the November 1970 edition (the very first) of Seahorse, the magazine of the Royal Ocean Racing Club. Some of the language and sentiments reflect those of the time!

The idea in the first instance not intended to be taken that seriously, but when Nick Greville found himself the owner of two ocean racers someone casually suggested that perhaps his wife Shirley should form an all-girl crew and challenge him in the Mersea/Ostend race.

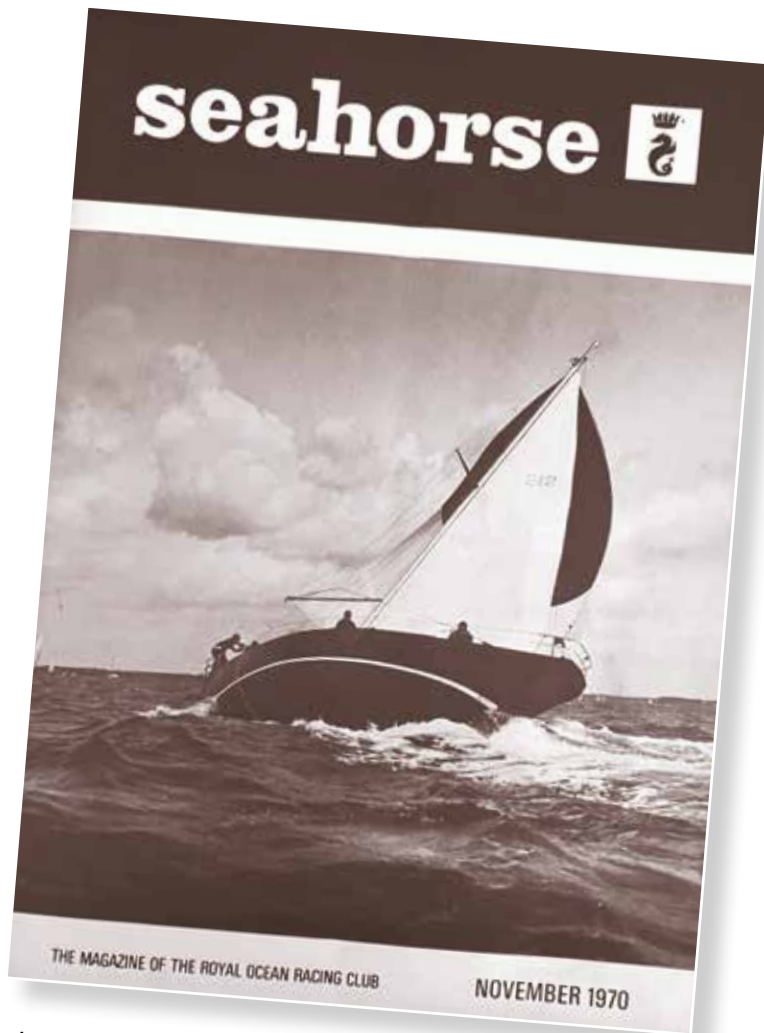
The suggestion received the usual titters at the time and was forgotten. It was Jeannie Carter-Jonas, that ebullient lady helmswoman/navigator stalwart of the East Coast, who revived the idea and with encouragement from David Edwards, Shirley found herself rustling up a crew. *Scalpel* is a 30ft Rustler, and it was generally agreed that we had better have six. Jane Kimber, a very keen and experienced member of Nick's crew, was poached from *Trocar*, Belinda Hamilton, Bob Stewart's ardent supporter ex-*Dauber*, was invited and accepted; Elizabeth de Manbey, a student nurse and youngest member of the party, was recruited and Pauline Aspinall, another West Mersea member made up the number. It should be mentioned that the last two had not actually ocean raced before, but did have a number of East Anglian events to their credit. Jeannie was the obvious choice for skipper, ably seconded by Shirley. The six had not sailed together before the race and, apart from

a couple of hours the evening before to acquaint themselves with the boat, had no practice runs. It should also be admitted that the more feeble members of the crew listened with baited breath to every weather forecast during the week preceding, but this did not daunt the exercise. Friday morning, bright and early found the sextet, now reduced to a quintet, on board *Scalpel* with rather self-conscious expressions. Belinda, who it was agreed was the most likely candidate for going up the mast in an emergency, had fallen by the wayside two days beforehand. Nonetheless, the 'Pussy Galores', as they had been christened by the West Mersea Club

member, found themselves on board and this was it.

The reporter from the local paper appeared in a launch and recorded the fact that we actually left West Mersea, and, with last minute fixtures to the compass, which was literally purchased on the way to the race - Uncle Nick had whipped most of the navigational equipment for *Trocar* but did leave behind his home-assembled American Heathkit RD set - as a favour so he thought. To our advantage, as it turned out, he also overlooked removing the hand bearing compass. We set off.

Jeannie took the helm, issued orders and somehow the spinnaker went up for a fairly good start about the middle of the fleet. Interesting run down the Wallet jockeying with *Lancet* most of the way, and to our immense satisfaction leaving *Trocar* way behind. It was then we found that our brand new compass was 10° out on certain readings and this necessitated one of the crew, normally Jane,



Pussies Galore!

by The Crew

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Winds were mostly light and, reaching the North-East Gullfleet at 13.05, we had a beam wind to the Goeree with spinnaker set. We lost sight of *Trocar* altogether and, as the boats began to fan out, *Lancet* was seen suddenly, in the middle of a slight challenge from *Scalpel*, to turn tail and head for Harwich. Marvelous! We wondered if we could intimidate any more of our rivals like that. With two on and two off, the 4-hourly watches passed without incident. To be truthful the

CREWSAVER

balancing herself on the push-pit with hand-bearing compass lining up with the mast through to the centre of the bows. We subsequently found that the compass was up to 30° out on bearings 085° and 268°. Interesting!

Winds were mostly light and, reaching the North-East Gunfleet at 13.05, we had a beam wind to the Goeree with spinnaker set. We lost sight of *Trocar* altogether and, as the boats began to fan out, Lancer was seen suddenly, in the middle of a slight challenge from *Scalpel*, to turn tail and head for Harwich. Marvellous! We wondered if we could intimidate any more of our rivals like that. With two on and two off, the four-hourly watches passed without incident.

To be truthful the female Aspinall had already had doubts as to her personal qualifications for this adventure, which were more than reinforced when her watch companion invited her to drink a beer. Pauline watched incredulously as Jane opened her can, drank the contents in a single draught and, crushing the tin in one hand, throw it over the side.

With the approach of night, some running repairs were necessary to a reluctant starboard light. Shirley, by dint of hanging upside down over the pulpit, put this to rights. It was shortly after this, as supper time approached, that we discovered that our stew was still reclining on the Greville kitchen table. It's all very well being an all-female crew, but this did not necessarily mean that one's domestic scene would automatically take care of itself. After organising the households left behind, it had been necessary to victual two boats and the departing husbands as well, and at the precise moment *Trocar's* crew were enjoying their half of the four-gallon stew, we had to be content with part of Saturday's lunch. Towards morning in the murk we rounded the second mark, the Goeree, at 07.42. On the approach we picked up the northern marker buoy and out of the sea mist, to our delight, we came upon *Goblet*.

There was an uneventful beat back to the Galloper, but once rounded at 21.40 hours we were more than relieved to discover that our improvised compass calculations



THE ONLY all-woman crew to sail in the West Mersea to Ostend race on Friday on board their boat *Scalpel*. Left to right, they are Miss Jane Kimber, Mrs Jeanie Carter-Jones, Mrs Pauline Aspinall, Miss Elizabeth de Manby, and Mrs Shirley Greville.

had proved correct and there was whisky all round. Thus fortified we headed for the Hinder. As midnight approached so did the shipping lanes and we found ourselves in the midst of a slight skirmish - which did liven up the proceedings somewhat - with a freighter which came very close, did not alter course and put us about. It seemed to us that there was no-one on the bridge and even Jeannie's command of 'Go away, you nasty man' went unheeded. After leaving the shipping lanes and seeing no other boat for hours, suddenly there were four or so boats around. The wind then went slightly lighter and the sleeping watch were roused to spinnaker hauling at 03.20. Aspinall at this stage, whilst hanging over the pulpit clipping on things, did wonder what the hell she was doing in the middle of the night in the middle of the North Sea. By daybreak she knew. Four o'clock found us rounding the West Hinder and witnessing a splendid dawn.

With spinnaker still set the channel buoys flashed by rapidly and there was Ostend and we had found the Binnen Stroonbank buoy. Suddenly, to be truthful, there was a cluster of hens, recently fled the Women's Institute and, quite apart from the interest in making the last mark, the main preoccupation was 'What are you wearing ashore, darling?'. It was perhaps, at this point, for the first time since leaving Mersea, we thought of our husbands and boyfriends. We then compared what we imagined their current conversation would be and came to the conclusion that the bar opening time would take precedence over their garb.

Then we had done it. There was the stinking Ostend harbour looking absolutely beautiful. Unfortunately, *Trocar* was there to greet us with - would you believe it - 'Is there any breakfast going on *Scalpel*?' and, of course, there was.

Viking at
LillaBommen
at night

Scandi-Meanders

Two North Sea crossings and a series of short passages in southern Scandinavia

by Christopher Hamblin

‘What are your sailing plans for the summer?’

people asked, assuming that I already had a reasonably detailed idea. But this is what the plan actually looked like.

- 1) Sail from Walton-on-the-Naze directly to Kristiansand in Southern Norway
- 2) Sail in the general direction of Oslo Fjord
- 3) Sail south along the west coast of Sweden
- 4) Work out what to do next.

My nephew Angus and his Swedish colleague Eric, were to be my crew for the first 12 days. We left under sail on 28th June. Light airs persisted for the next four days, during which we were grateful for the appearance of any items of interest, such as an oil rig or a ship. We saw very few. More interesting, but not in a good way, were the engine overheating, an unexplained temporary failure of all our instruments, and a complete

failure of the Simrad tiller pilot.

We arrived in Kristiansand on the morning of 2nd July. On the way, we witnessed an exciting aerial duel between two Greater Blackbacked Gulls. It was not obvious what they were fighting about. In harbour, the young staff went out of their way to be helpful. I asked whether Customs and Immigration would be coming to see us or whether we had to go to their office. ‘We’ll find out’ they said and asked us for crew numbers and whether we had anything to declare.



Bridge in archipelago NE of Kristiansand



Speedwell in the Pollen, Arendal

(We hadn't.) They soon came back and told us that it was all sorted. We could take down our Q flag and were free to go whenever we wanted. I should have recognised at that point, that something was missing. We spent some time in the Kunstsilo Art museum, a splendid collection of Nordic Modernist Art housed in a huge and airy concrete building – a converted silo. And we had some good meals ashore.

We left harbour on 4th July and did not close the land again until we had reached the latitude of 58°11' North. There we went to look at a possible anchorage I had spotted on the chart. (58° 11.1'N, 08° 18.3'E). It shoaled rapidly towards the head of the bay and we touched bottom. Suitably chastened, we retreated to anchor in greater depths.

Next day we headed for Arendal. We moored alongside in the Pollen, a rectangular basin in the town centre. It was very noisy. When we left Arendal we turned northeast again, taking the inner passage of Tromøysund. We turned inshore as night approached and entered Larviksfjord. There is a branch off to starboard, called Viksfjord. We found a sheltered anchorage in a bay called Furubukta, just off the northeast corner of the island of Malmøya. (59° 01'N, 09° 06.2'E). It was a bit crowded and there were shallows, so we needed to carry out a thorough recce before dropping the hook. When we awoke next morning, most of the other yachts had left.

This was my crew's last sailing day. We were bound for Fredrikstad, a



Strömstad

short train ride from Oslo. Eric had done a Google search and found a small boat harbour called Nokledypet Båttforening, on the northeast corner of the island of Kråkerøy. (59° 12.03'N, 10° 56.63'E). He phoned to reserve a berth for the night. The harbourmaster told him that the entry was narrow and that the river flowed across it quite fast. When we arrived, the water was racing southwards. Rather foolishly I opted for a speedy entry. The immediate result was that we overshot our designated berth, which turned out to be just inside the entrance. I then had to engage in the kind of reversing and close-quarter manoeuvring that Speedwell really does not like. It was seriously embarrassing.

Angus and Eric left me next morning to fly to Göteborg, where Eric lives. My next crew, Finn and Bill, joined me that afternoon. We left the harbour

next morning, tracking south and east to pass down the east side of the island of Kirkøy. Halfway down is an intriguing inlet called Holtekilen. (59°2.51'N, 11° 2.434'E). We anchored there briefly before moving on to Strömstad, which was very crowded. Eventually we found a berth, close to the road. There was a constant stream of slow-moving cars going past, engines revving, windows open and music blaring. When I observed that the drivers were mainly young men wearing baseball caps back to front, Bill said that I was just displaying an old man's prejudices.

Our next destination, again picked from the chart as a likely sheltered anchorage, was Södra Dyvikin, a bay at 58° 39.6'N, 11°14.7'E, on the southeast side of the island of Otterön. It was a happy choice and Bill and Finn celebrated by going over the side for a swim. There followed



Strömstad by night



A place to stop for lunch



A shingle bar between two islands



A magical light show



Bill after a swim

another day of brilliant sunshine. We motored in a flat calm through a cluster of islets to reach the forked head of a little fjord at Örn (N58° 23.12', E11° 18.68') where we found a convenient mooring buoy for the night.

Fresh winds arrived in the morning, and we enjoyed a sunny sail down to the pretty village of Gullholmen. We had to take a berth on the outside pontoon and, for the rest of our stay, Speedwell was noisily squashing her fenders against the pontoon. The now stronger onshore wind was still with us next morning and we were grateful for the help a fellow yachtsman gave us in springing off.

Then we began a leisurely clockwise circumnavigation of the island of Orust - a succession of beautiful anchorages and moorings in little bays between wooded and rocky shores. Our favourite was the rocky island of Kålderön, which is a nature reserve. We had seen on the chart a deep inlet on its east side (58° 4.42'N, 11° 34.32'E). It was a wonderful find, a terrain of great, rounded boulders, with heather and other hardy plants growing between them. Some of the shoreline rocks had iron mooring rings bolted into them and a short distance out there were mooring buoys for stern lines. Three or four other yachts were there, moored bows to the rocks so closely that their crews could just step ashore. Happy children were

jumping from the rocks into the water and swimming around their yachts.

Next day we sailed to Marstrand, but only stayed for one night. We left for Göteborg next day via the delightful little Albrektssund Kanal. On the long



Gullholmen

haul upriver to the city we passed several well-preserved sailing ships. The immaculate square rigger Viking, now a restaurant, is moored next to the Lilla Bommen Marina, where we had booked a berth.

I now had to go to London for a couple of days. My flights there and back were not hassle-free. I had been

warned by Angus, after his journey from Göteborg back to London, that failure to get our passports stamped in Kristiansand meant that we were travelling in the Schengen area illegally. The Swedish immigration officers at the airport took a very dim view of this. If I could not prove when I had arrived in Norway, it was clearly possible that I had actually been in the Schengen area for more than 90 days. I might be fined several thousand pounds. Luckily, I had a receipt for a diesel purchase in England, made the day before we left England and another one from Kristiansand harbour on the day of our arrival. When I asked what

I should now do about clearance for Speedwell, the officers simply said that they did not get involved with boats. When I rejoined the boat in Göteborg we stayed an extra day so that I could look around.

Our next destination was the island of Anholt, about 60nm away. The afternoon was very hot and lots of hoverflies were landing on the boat. A few dolphins passed nearby and a buzzard-sized raptor settled on deck for a few seconds before hurriedly taking off again. It had the long tail of a falcon. As we approached Anholt we were subjected to two torrential rainstorms. The harbour was crowded but the harbourmaster, buzzing about in his dinghy, was very much in charge, like a sheepdog. After we had positioned the boat to his satisfaction he rewarded us with a couple of cans of beer.



Bill and me waiting to be fed

Next morning we went for a walk and saw that preparations were being made for a music festival. Finn and Bill set off to attend the concert. They enjoyed it but came back to the boat soaked to the skin. The following day was dry, but we had not thought to zip up the mainsail stack pack and it had collected rainwater overnight. Under way, the motion of the boat was enough to propel the stored water out through every available opening, drenching the cockpit and splashing down onto the chart table.

Our 25nm passage to Grenå was uneventful until we were very close to the harbour entrance, when a German yacht cut straight across our bow, forcing us to take rapid avoiding action. As soon as his yacht was in the entrance, the helmsman looked back at us, laughing and saluting. That evening, Finn received some bad news; his mother was seriously ill and he needed to go to her as soon as possible. He left us next morning.

Bill and I then had a sunny, breezy passage to the island of Samsö, arriving mid-afternoon. We anchored just northeast of Langor (55°54.6'N, 10°38.5'E) and after a session of make and mend, spent the evening drinking whisky (in moderation) and listening to blues. Next morning we took up a harbour berth and caught a bus to the unspoiled village of Nordby. We made it back to the harbour in time to put up the cockpit canopy; heavy rain had just started. A small trimaran had moored close ahead of us and we could see that it might complicate our departure on the morrow. The owner was an elderly Dutchman, a single-hander. He came aboard for drinks and a yarn that evening and he insisted on getting up early next morning to see us off.



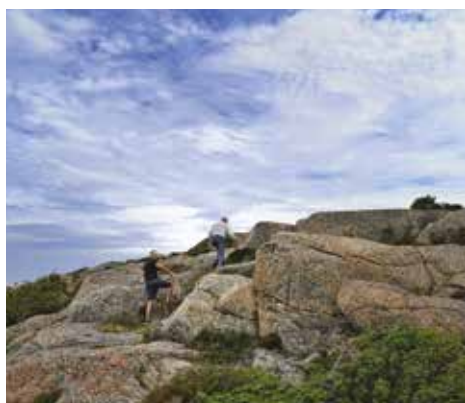
Rock mooring at Kalkeron

We were away by 06.45, bound for Kerteminde on the northeast coast of Fyn, a passage of approximately 30nm. We met a pod of harbour porpoises but, unlike dolphins, they did not seem inclined to socialise with us. There is a big marina in Kerteminde but I chose an alongside mooring in the commercial harbour, in preference to a box berth. However, there can be strong currents in and out of this harbour and as we found, entering or leaving a tight berth there can be less than straightforward.

Next morning we set off along the east coast of Fyn and sailed under the western end of the Storbælt bridge. There is 18m vertical clearance in the marked channels, but the illusion that collision is imminent is very powerful. We arrived in Svendborg that afternoon and eventually found a berth in the north harbour. The boat museum is well worth a visit and there are several distinguished old sailing vessels along the quay.

From Svendborg to Søby on the island of Æro. On entering our berth, we failed at first pass to lasso one of the stern posts. However, once the bow was secured, Bill immediately swam to the unattached post, ran the second stern line round it and passed it back to me. Fellow yachtsmen looked on in mild amazement. We travelled by bus to Marstal and Ærøskøbing. It was raining heavily, but we enjoyed time in Marstal's fascinating little maritime museum. Then we happily followed an amateur marching band until all its members suddenly disappeared into a pub. We had already spotted another pub offering food and there we had a good chicken curry.

On leaving Æro we sailed and motor-sailed southward through rain showers to the Kieler fjord. Together with several other yachts, we spent what felt like hours circling the waiting area outside the Kiel Canal entrance. At least one yacht gave up and headed off to the berths on the Holtenau shore. Eventually we saw that we had been kept waiting for three large ships. Once in the canal we headed for the shelter of Flemhuder See. It used to be an anchorage but now yachts are required to moor within a tight configuration of posts. There was



Kalkeron ascent



Leaving Marstrand via Albrektsunds Kana



Sunset east of Orust



Mooring posts Flemhuder See

torrential rain that night and foolishly we had neglected to zip up the windows of the cockpit canopy. The cockpit had more or less dried out by the time we reached the junction of the Kiel Canal with the Gieselau Canal.

A short distance up the tree-lined Gieselau Canal, just before a lock, there are mooring places for perhaps a score of yachts. There is a toilet in the lock house but no other facilities. It is a quiet and beautiful place.

On rejoining the Kiel Canal next morning, I decided to engage the autopilot. While I was doing this our course became a bit erratic and we were hooted. We were about to be overtaken by what looked like a large garden shed. It was a surreal moment.

In Brunsbüttel that afternoon we found an alongside berth in the mooring basin just north of the locks. Now began a period of sustained adverse weather. with frequent rain and strong westerly winds; not what you want if you are intending to sail westward along the Frisian coast. The basin became very full, with yachts rafted up to five abreast.

We got away five days later, with the wind varying between 10 and 20 knots from west of south. The forecast was for reasonable weather

and we had some good sailing. The following evening, we turned south into the River Ems and entered the second and larger of the two Borkum harbours, Burkana-Hafn. Two tired Dutchmen came alongside us in a small yacht which they were delivering to Cuxhaven. It turned out that the yacht was leaky and in poor condition, with many faults they had not been warned about. We invited them to join us for a meal and had an enjoyable evening talking about boats and the sea. Borkum town, a bus ride away from the harbours, is a very popular holiday destination. We spent an hour or two there next day. It has beautiful beaches and a slightly unreal atmosphere, like a film set. There is little motor traffic but lots of bicycles, many with box-like trailers occupied by dogs or children.

We left harbour next day in windless conditions and motored all the way to Den Helder. The harbour master called Immigration on my behalf, and two officers came to see us. I explained how it came about that Speedwell had not officially entered the Schengen area and asked what I should do about it. They were completely unconcerned about Speedwell and simply stamped our passports. After



The judgement of Paris, sort of..

a few hours rest we walked into town and found a pedestrianised street with outside tables and sunshades, just right for a leisurely beer and lunch.

Next morning, in the slightest of easterly breezes, we left Den Helder and motor-sailed all the way back to England, arriving at Titchmarsh Marina at 19.00 on 13th August. It had been a cruise of wonderful sunshine, occasional heavy rain and remarkably little wind.



Sodra Dyvikin



Typically elegant Swedish light house

Island Boat Sales

— a piece of Mersea racing history

By Paul Harrison

The notes below are a short journey through a period in the life of my father John Harrison, the story of Island Boat Sales and Hustler boats and the impact he had on some WMYC members, ‘back in the day’.



Gunsmoke, a Hustler 36 designed by Stephen Jones, racing in 1979

In September 1963, my father decided he had had enough of living in Chislehurst, SE London and running the family building business, based in Camberwell.

Instead, he decided to ‘retire’ to his beloved Mersea. His father had owned a holiday house in Seaview Avenue since before WW2 and, born in 1922, John had experienced many trips to Mersea for boating, shooting, exploring and all-around relaxation.

After a while, though, the lure of ‘doing-not-much-at-all’ faded. One evening, huddled around a table in WMYC with Messrs Holman (Kim), Pye (Don) and Hare (Paddy), a discussion was had: ‘John, if we design the boat (Holman and Pye) and make the sails (Gowan Sails) all you need to do is use your construction skills to get it built, and do a bit of marketing’. In those days, an advert in the yachting magazines, supplemented by racing and winning, did the trick as far as marketing was concerned!



John Harrison and Don Pye aboard Barry Pearson's Midas tidying up after the Cowes-Cork offshore race

So, the seed was sown. The company ‘Island Boat Sales’ was formed, and the brand name ‘Hustler’ was selected. Probably, I later assumed,

because of the ‘hustle’ on that dark evening in WMYC! The company was based on Mersea, at the family home on Seaview Avenue.

To start with, the early boats (the North Sea 24) were built in Barcelona by an eccentric called Nick Kenyeres, a naturalised Spaniard from Eastern Europe who had flown Spitfires in the Battle of Britain. They were beautiful, heavy, long-keel boats hand-built in wood. Wages in post-Franco Spain were extremely low, and the business model worked.

But a theme was developing already, as the administrators of the yacht racing rules decided to keep changing things. This, and the ever-improving designs and technologies available, resulted in an ‘arms race’ that made it very difficult to do series production and turn a profit. Despite this, my father pushed ahead.

The first Holman and Pye fin-and-skeg boat was the Hustler 28, a plywood-built chined light-weight

racing machine. As a nine-year-old, I recall doing the Harwich to Ostend race (via the Outer Gabbard that year) with Don Pye trapezing (yes, you read that right!).

And then came the vintage years: dozens of Hustler 30s and then Hustler 35s were built, some as completed boats finished at Landamores (about 130), and some as mouldings, to be finished in garages and barns in an era when real practical and engineering skills were endemic. Many Hustlers were owned by folk and families who are reading this article (you know who you are!). Some Hustler 30s are still at moorings locally (as is Tramp, a Hustler 32, of which more below).

The Hustler 25.5 then joined the stable. She was called *UFO* and is still seen locally (featured in *Molliette 2021*). Richard Matthews raced the prototype in the EAORA season in the days when entries of 60 and 70 were common - and, yes, he won the championship! My father also won races and EAORA in *Gunsmoke*, *Seasmoke*, *Ricochet*, *Smokehaze* (are you getting the theme here?) and others. It was no coincidence that when Richard started in the boat business with the 'UFO' range, his business model was very similar to Island Boat Sales. Richard, of course, went on to found the famous Oyster Marine, and the rest is history.

There followed the last of the Holman and Pye boats, *Crazy Wolf*, a Hustler high seas 39, a very solid Swan-



Voodoo, Ron Wigley's Hustler 32

like boat. Then the rules changed again and my father parted ways with Holman and Pye (by then it was actually Pye and Cooper) and spotted a scruffy genius called Stephen Jones,

just out of Southampton University.

The new Hustler range started with prototype *Xaviera*, a bullet-fast 32-footer that was quicker in all directions than the previous *Tumblehome* (some readers may recall this weird-looking boat with the dreadnought bow and planing ability). This was an era when east coast sailors used to go down to the south coast to take on all-comers - and win! *Xaviera*, crewed by some 'handy' sailors like Peter Blake and Ron Wigley, won the prestigious RORC channel race on corrected time by 45 minutes, which was completely unprecedented.

Using *Xaviera* as a template, production of the Hustler 32 followed. Four of the British 10-boat team in 1978 for the Half Ton Cup world championships were Hustler 32s. A huge tribute to both the designer and to the man in the centre of it all. That



Peter Clements Hustler 30 Seasmoke, pictured in Ostend harbour

1978 regatta is often referred to as the pinnacle of 'IOR' racing, and the Hustler name was right in the thick of it.

Next up was the three-quarter-ton Hustler 36, *Gunsmoke 2*. A rocket ship in which we won early season RORC races in 1979 and then sailed to Denmark for the Three-Quarter-Ton Cup. We were the fastest boat there and halfway through the regatta had a handsome lead. But it wasn't to be, as the 'Fastnet storm' swept through the fleet on our long offshore race. Of 70 well-found racing boats, only low single digits finished this race. We buckled our mast and retired. The sensible few anchored in the lee of Anholt for 24 hours and survived to tell the tale.

My father deserved that win; he really did. Looking back, he was a significant influence on WMYC sailing and on EAORA. He sailed and raced with a long list of members and encouraged many more. In a period when WMYC was known and feared on the start lines on the south coast, he was in the thick of it. He brought Peter Blake to West Mersea and gave him a 'leg-up' in introducing him to Lesley Williams, of Burton Cutter fame and the Whitbread Race. Our house was like a 'freeport' for passing (very good) Kiwi sailors. Ted Heath came to Mersea for a trial sail on a Hustler 35.

In addition to his part in putting WMYC sailing on the map, Island Boat Sales helped generate jobs and expertise. Richard Matthews is the first to acknowledge that my father's business proved to be, in part, a precursor to the mighty Oyster Marine.

My father got people out on the water, his happy place. Not just fully-lead yacht racing. He was WMYC sailing secretary for many years, and his 30-year promotion of the RNLI pursuit race (which he started) was not just about raising money; it was his personal ambition to empty the moorings of boats of all kinds to come out and 'have a go'.

Sadly, yet more rule changes at the end of the 1980s made the latest generation of Stephen Jones' boats obsolete. The need to invest in tooling and marketing and go around the



Hustler 25.5 Mooi Mesai pictured circa 1976, designed by Don Pye



EAORA Champion Ricochet, in this instance sailed by Paul and John Harrison and photographed by one Peter Clements, perched on the Nass Beacon, in suitable PPE of course!!

hamster wheel yet again proved too much, and the doors were closed on Island Boat Sales for good.



The launch party for Stephen Jones designed Hustler 32s, Tramp (Frank Reid), Gunsmoke II (John Harrison) and Voodoo (Ron Wigley) in early 1978



Xaviera. This was a rocket ship prototype Hustler 33 that was victorious in The RORC Channel Race, a young Sir Peter Blake as crew

House News

By John Munns, Commodore

2025 has been quite a year for the club. The House committee has been working hard to promote a wide range of functions - from parties, themed suppers, quiz nights, lecture suppers and entertainment for the children.

We had record crowds for Mersea Week and Cadet Week. Financially the 'House' continues to provide a large contribution to the club's finances.

On the maintenance side, work has continued to keep the club up to scratch. The club is like the Forth Bridge, needing continuous maintenance and repairs. Over the past year these have included:

- The installation of Solar panels, which have proved a great success reducing the energy costs by a good 40%.
- Full external decoration and 25 new double-glazed windows to the side and rear of the club have been fitted.
- Complete redecoration to the inside of the clubhouse, with refurbished curtains downstairs.
- New televisions have been purchased for showing sailing and rugby events, and are also being well used by the RYA training centre and for seminars.
- The new boilers have now given us a warmer club at reduced cost.
- Repairs to the bar have continued, with the surrounding floors needing to be lifted for dry rot.
- On-going kitchen maintenance continues, with equipment being replaced as needed.



Cadet Week prize giving



Foam fight on the lawn

This year I am pleased to say that we saw the club being used by more and more younger members and their families. It was bursting with a record number of cadets and parents during Cadet Week, an excellent week in fine weather and with great sailing. The club so enjoys being part of this event.

Good weather and sailing also led to a great Mersea Week, with the club benefitting with record receipts from its success. The outside BBQ's and street food worked well, with the addition of having our new outside bar and a programme of live music.

The success of House is due to our very pro-active House committee, led by Karen Lavender. She recently left the position as Rear Commodore House to pursue other commitments. We are so lucky with all our loyal staff.

Happy Christmas to you all from the House team.



The Grinch on bar duty

Moorings and Boatyards

By Alan Jones, Rear Commodore M&B

The past year has seen a consolidation of the M&B Committee's work to make the club's facilities accessible and more 'user friendly' for our members.



YC1 ready for the season

The Launch Service remains a vital part of the yacht club's facilities, and we now run a two-launch operation during the weekends of our busy season. The club employs three launch operators, which gives greater flexibility during the working week for both members and the operators.

We were very pleased during this year to receive favourable comments about the launch service. These were passed to our team of: Head Launchman, Jack Dawson with Launchmen Harry Clarke and Paul Jones.



Jack with First Mate Nellie

Perhaps an unseen part of the launchmen's duties is the mooring allocation for visiting yachts. This has been



Racing over 2025

made easier by attaching 'visitor warps' on to some of the unused buoys during the busy summer months. The visitor mooring charges go to the Mersea Mooring Association, although we retain a percentage as administrators of the system.

The previous YC1 has moved into private ownership (Mike Dawson) who has kindly offered his Launch for the Club's use when needed, for instance, during the Mersea Week Regatta.

A vital part of the smooth running of the launches has been the mechanical expertise of our Honorary Bosun, Brian Warwick. He carries out any operational snags as well as the winterisation and servicing of our two boats. Do not be surprised to see him as 'stand-in' driver when we are short-handed. He was very well-deserved recipient of the Carrington Cup 2024.

As the sailing season comes to an end and boats come ashore, for most of us City Road changes from overflow car park to boat park. There do, however, remain some spaces for cars - only a short walk!

My time as Rear Commodore is ending, and I thank the M&B Team of Brian, Fraser, Graham and John (not forgetting Julia, in the Office) on behalf of the members, for your time and efforts on the Committee. And for putting up with me!



More time for this?

Too much - or not enough!

By Chris Dawson

It all started with such enthusiasm and promise, when some 45 Cruising in Company (CIC) yacht club members and guests met for dinner at The Harbour View in Tollesbury at the end of April. Granted, for a shakedown cruise it wasn't exactly well populated - with only five boats. But it was early in the season and everyone was looking forward to the planned 2025 cruising programme.

It didn't take long for things to go pear-shaped, though. Our first proper cruise was to Burnham on Crouch and Fambridge for the May Bank Holiday, five boats joined and all looked good. We should have known better, it being a bank holiday and the British weather being what it is. Burnham was great and we all enjoyed a fabulous evening at The Oyster Smack on the Saturday, where we were joined by some other cruisers who came by car. The weather was building, however, and so the Sunday jaunt upriver to Fambridge was abandoned and all boats returned to West Mersea. The return was not without



Burnham sunset

drama. We all got home safely, but with tales of strong gusts (42kts and still in the Crouch!) and high seas to tell our friends about back home.

It was early days yet, so our enthusiasm for the season would not be dimmed and the next cruise to Bradwell (commonly known as Shakedown II) went ahead as planned. Finally, there was some lovely weather and perfect winds for sailing before going into the marina. Once there, a lovely afternoon was spent in the hot sunshine. For some, the spectator sport of watching one of our number swinging precariously from a bosun's chair, while unsuccessfully attempting to fit a new wind indicator atop their mast, made it all the more fun. It was certainly entertaining! The Bradwell Waterside restaurant was our destination for dinner and it didn't disappoint. All told, a lovely weekend.

Another bank holiday came around and plans had been made for a trip to Titchmarsh Marina and Levington. It sounded great in the planning, but unfortunately mother





Heybridge



nature had different ideas and the weekend sailing was abandoned due to unfavourable winds forecast for our return journey on the Monday. It wasn't a complete disaster. Some members' boats were already in Titchmarsh and were not time-constrained for their return, so a dozen folk gathered at Sel's fabulous restaurant for an evening meal on the Saturday.

Still undaunted and keen to 'get out there' after this disappointment, the very next weekend saw us gathering at Brightlingsea for an impromptu pontoon party. It wasn't planned; perhaps that was why because once again the weather was kind and six boats enjoyed the evening. Due homage was paid to the newly acquired sailing vessel, *Kittiwake* - our Hon Bosun Brian and Gill having returned from 'the Dark Side' of motorboats!

Time marched on and our June rally at Heybridge was eagerly anticipated. A total of 11 boats planned to make the trip for what is always a great weekend. Not this year, though. Thunderstorms on the Saturday scuppered our trip. Some found solace in dinner at the YC, but it just wasn't the same.

The Summer Cruise this year was planned to coincide with our Cruising Captain's 70th birthday, with a trip up the Deben with stops at various well-known hostleries along the way to celebrate the occasion. It started off well - West Mersea to Wolverstone on Day One and Wolverstone to Shotley on Day Two. Unfortunately, Day Three dawned with an offshore south-westerly and fog. Getting into the Deben was considered too dangerous, so we holed up in Shotley for a second night to sit it out. Sadly, the wind didn't lessen and it was decided that we should instead take in the alternative delights of the Orwell. Suffolk Yacht Harbour was unable to accommodate us, so two nights were booked at the Royal Harwich with a lunch one day and a dinner the following evening at the Butt and Oyster (always excellent

so no-one minded!). There was an incident with the Dutch tourists taking photos and a dog from our party deciding that, following a swim, a good shake in their vicinity was appropriate. Fortunately, they took it in good humour, and no European relations were harmed!

Our last leg, before returning to West Mersea was a stop off in Titchmarsh. Not everyone in our party left Royal Harwich in time to get there, however, and instead made the tough journey against wind and tide back to West Mersea a day early. It was a slog, but these are hardened Mersea men and they made it back safely - even if their rations were depleted and their usual good-humour was in tatters!

July came, and we had planned an official pontoon party in Brightlingsea. It was not to be; strong south westerly winds of force 5-6 in the Blackwater threatened a safe and comfortable return home on the Sunday, so we just went across to Bradwell instead. We had a great pontoon party anyway, just not where we had planned!!

Our next event was not on the water. It had been decided that the CIC group should support our club instead of always heading off, and so a cream tea was arranged at the YC. The weather, as had become the norm, tried to spoil our fun so we ate indoors. But it was a great tea with fabulous scones!

The weather had so far attempted to spoil our sailing and planned events. Nevertheless, we persisted against the odds and plans for the annual Osea

Island BBQ went ahead. The forecast (rain) put a lot of people off. But the (fool?) hardy few (three boats) rafted together and enjoyed an on-boat BBQ, avoiding a short shower by taking shelter on *Karma*. The following day we awoke to splendid sunshine and calm seas. So, before breakfast everyone enjoyed refreshing a swim in the warm water followed by a (for once) great sail home with following winds.



The season continued and next up was our planned cruise to Ramsgate. Sadly, only two boats made the trip but we enjoyed some fabulous weather and three nights in the marina watching the comings and goings of the many international visitors who regularly make the trip across the North Sea to visit the very pretty and historical harbour. Our return to West Mersea was interesting; an early start with a keen eye on the building weather meant that we wanted to be safely back in the Blackwater before the conditions really took hold. *Grapevine* had never before sailed with a following wind of over 45kts, a reefed genoa and still maintained a steady six-seven knots (we were in the Blackwater by then). Such fun!

The next cruising in company event was foolishly planned for the bank holiday at the end of August. A trip up the Wallet and into the Orwell for Sunday lunch at The Butt and Oyster. For once, however, the weather allowed us to proceed as planned, and seven boats made the trip. Initially departing under cloudy skies with little wind, the weather soon improved and some actually sailed part of their journey. Hurrah! The lunch did not disappoint; we had the upstairs room to ourselves and a lovely time was had by all. After a leisurely stroll back in the sunshine, we were treated to tea and cakes on board *Kittiwake*. Fabulous cakes, Gill, thanks!

Clockwise, Moonstone 1X, Topaz, Brinestar, Escapade and Helios sailed (most of us) or motored up to the lock at Heybridge for the second visit to Heybridge on the first weekend in September. The weather was fairly windy with a very pleasant sail on the Saturday. I am constantly impressed by the huge numbers of dinghies racing at the Blackwater Sailing Club, and this weekend was no exception. The WMYC cruisers took great care not to interfere with the determined youngsters (and oldsters) fighting their ways to the next mark. Paul Hindley, the Heybridge lockkeeper, was his usual calm and very helpful self and had us safely into the basin in good order. The sun shone and the rain stayed away. The usual selection of aperitives, sausage rolls and meringues took place on Clockwise, followed by BBQs on the lawn.



Ramsgate

Aqua Sula was at the repair shop but in compensation, Rob White arrived by van along with Roy and an enormous gas BBQ with a huge propane cylinder. Those of us trying to light our slightly damp instant efforts gratefully made good use of Rob's.

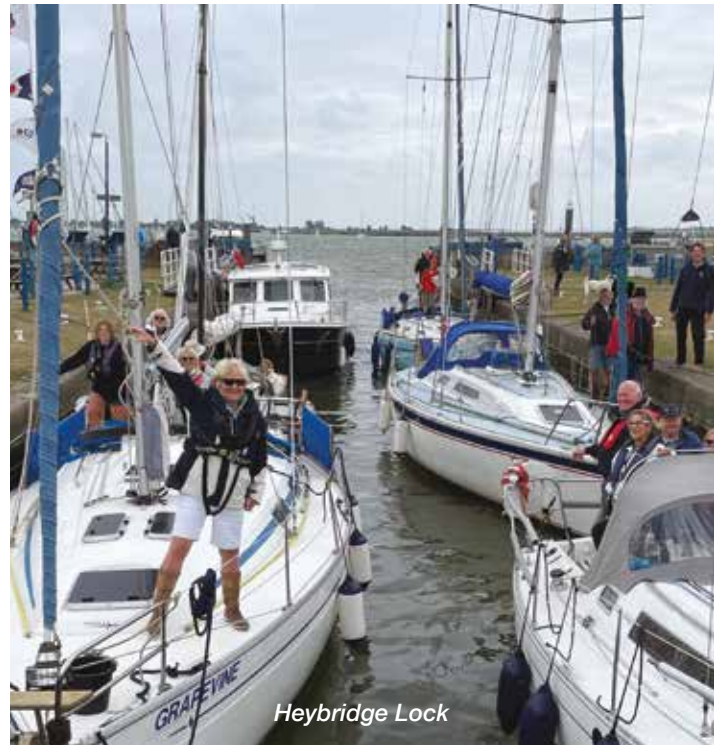




Sunday was a lovely sunny day with a stiff breeze coming up the river. We entered the lock at 11.30 after a nice lazy morning and navigated through the dinghies and barges to sail home under genoa all the way from Osea Island. Altogether, an excellent weekend with good company and reasonable weather. What more could you ask? Jack Davis

As the season came to a close, some of us took the opportunity to join *Ruby of Mersea*

for her Thames trip. Never have we seen the Thames Estuary, or the river itself, so calm! Barely a breath of wind – great for the motor cruisers, not so great for *Grapevine*. But we did manage to sail under the Queen Elizabeth bridge at Dartford (with a little help from our engine). A wonderful few days were spent at St Katharine Docks, before the rest of the group continued their journey up river; only possible if one's vessel doesn't have a mast! You can read all about the upper Thames adventures of *Ruby* and others elsewhere in this fine magazine. *Grapevine* (with her mast intact) returned to West Mersea via Queenborough. Once more, flat seas meant we couldn't sail. But it was lovely to be out in the warm autumn sunshine reflecting on our London adventure.



Heybridge Lock

Early October saw another trip planned to Bradwell. But this time Storm Amy descended on us, and the trip was rescheduled for the following weekend. Unfortunately, the event was subsequently cancelled due to a lack of boats wishing to go. It was a shame really because for once the weather was pretty good, and some members did make the trip independently and spent the afternoon spotting WMYC burgees and exclaiming 'didn't know you were planning to come!'.

Finally, the end of season rally was upon us and we had arranged a trip to Tollesbury. Even this event didn't quite

go as planned; there was a mutiny amongst the diners and so alternative plans were made to go to Brightlingsea, where The Yachtsman's Arms accommodated our number magnificently. It worked well, those who chose to sail around stayed in the marina and enjoyed a lovely return sail home (we won't mention the sail there; 'a gentleman never sails to windward' and all that!).



Orwell



Waldringfield



Tollesbury Rally

And so there it is; the Cruising in Company log for 2025. Some cancellations and disappointments due to poor weather. Some great fun and (even occasionally) sailing for the few who came along. Lots of great meals and meet-ups with friends, which is basically what CIC is all about anyway. What's not to love? The weather is just part of the fun and the challenge. See you on the water next year.



Cruising the Thames in Company

By Viv Fox

The end of September is the ideal time to head for the Thames. The east is blessed with some marvellous rivers for the sailor, a great cruising ground at any time of the year. But by the end of September, the crowds have gone from the Thames, the erratic boat helms have returned to their jobs and the motor boater can enjoy the evolving autumn colours that adorn the trees while slowly gliding along the river.

I say motor boaters. Of course, the Thames is accessible to yachtsmen as far as Tower Bridge, but beyond that they are hampered by their masts. We were delighted to be accompanied by our Cruise in Company (CIC) leads on *Grapevine* (the only sailing boat on the trip) as far as St Katharine Docks, surely the most exclusive marina in the UK. The trip to St Kats is very much dictated by the tides. Realistically, the 75 miles needs to be undertaken over two tides with a break at Queenborough. We chose an itinerary that took advantage of a mid-afternoon high tide, leading to departures from Mersea and Queenborough at civilised times in the morning. There is little to recommend Queenborough, apart from its utility as a stop-over location and its helpful staff, but the second leg to St Kats is amazing. It's a history lesson of the rise and fall of our great nation.

Through the incredible engineering achievement of the



Thames Barrier, past our maritime history witnessed by the buildings at Greenwich, the hope for the 21st century represented by the Millenium Dome, our still leading financial centre on the Isle of Dogs and, finally, to the iconic Tower Bridge. Then there is all the amazing architecture forming London's skyline, from Christopher Wren's churches, most notably St Pauls Cathedral, to the now largely middle eastern and Chinese owned skyscrapers. There can be no better way to approach London and we never tire of it!

Access to St Kats is possible only an hour or two either side of HW through the lock. And it was here that we had booked a pontoon for the exclusive use of our yacht club! There are so many possibilities of things to be visited in London, but we enjoyed Sunday morning at Colombia Road flower market, the Cartier exhibition at the V&A, and the 'Secrets of the Thames' display at London Docklands.



The fleet at St Kats

This really brings alive the history of the waterfront through the ages from mud larkers' finds. There was time to enjoy one another's company, as we each took it in turns to host pre-dinner drinks aboard our vessels. Food was to become a major highlight of the trip. We chose Smiths of Wapping and Tower Tandoori. The former easily accessible on foot, the latter requiring a taxi ride.

By the Tuesday morning, we moved on. Even on a 'three nights for the price of two' deal, St Kats is very expensive! At 06.30, we were in the lock with *Grapevine* heading home, whilst the rest of us turned right as the sun illuminated the city. The Uber boats, which normally creep up on you at high speed and create a lot of wash, were largely absent as we headed, with the tide, for Teddington lock - marking the start of the non-tidal Thames. Richmond half tide barrier is an intriguing device, where gates descend from a footbridge around two hours after HW, and raise again two hours before HW. This maintains a depth of water between there and Teddington, but it does mean that when the gates are in situ, the use of the adjacent lock is necessary. On the other hand, it is important to ensure adequate air height under the bridges which may not be possible for some boats near HW. The lowest bridge along the tidal Thames is Hammersmith Bridge, but the height of tide on that day was not a concern for any of us. What was of concern, however, was Teddington Lock.

Our travels along the river over recent years have made us realise that there is little planned maintenance along the Thames. Locks and bridges just break and it seems that these breakages could often have been anticipated and



At Teddington Lock



Grapevine leaving St Kats

avoided. One of the locks was broken at Teddington and, so that repairs could be undertaken, the functioning lock required closure – only opening for an hour or so on one or two days in the week, and all weekend. We squeezed through on the day and time that it was scheduled to open that week! There is plenty of mooring space upstream of the lock, although much of this has been occupied by long term residents, some of whom sadly live in squalor. Ham House and Strawberry House are great places to visit. In what was unfolding as a gastronomic tour, we can thoroughly recommend lunch at Petersham Nurseries!

The upper Thames is simply glorious. There are marinas for topping up with fuel or recharging the batteries, but the real joy is to moor up along the bank and enjoy river life. One of the best, we think, is by the rear gates of Hampton Court, although on this occasion the mooring rings had been removed and 'no mooring' notices erected. In the absence of alternative locations, we ignored the notices and attached mooring lines to railings. The mooring not only gives access to Hampton Court, but also, just across the bridge, to East Molesley, with its antique shops and cafes. Bath Island in Windsor is also delightfully situated



In Molesley Lock on a foggy morning



Wave of Maldon prepare to leave at Windsor



Nimrod at Cookham under a Harvest Moon

by a park and just a short walk from Windsor Castle. Our grandchildren visited us here, and Legoland is not so far away! Traversing locks is a simple skill, rapidly acquired as you make progress up the river. On average, they are three to four miles apart and, with a speed limit of 4kts, there is usually sufficient time to recover from one lock, have a cup of tea, and prepare for the next. Most are self-service, some have a lock keeper, but the process is straightforward and foolproof. Normally it is simply a matter of pressing buttons. By and large, the lock grounds are attractively planted with pride by the keepers and the waiting area for the locks can be used for overnight mooring too, if needed.



Cliveden House from the Thames

The passage through the wooded grounds of Cliveden House boasts an abundance of birdlife, often with a view of the house on the hill above. It was at Cliveden that we

spoiled ourselves by visiting the house, famous for its association with the Astor family and the Profumo affair, and dined. It was the most expensive meal we have ever had, but the food, company and ambience will never be forgotten! Cookham is a lovely village on the edge of the Chilterns with the Stanley Spencer gallery on the high street, and then there is Marlow, where the mooring is alongside another park. Marlow was as far as we could go because of a bridge issue, but we enjoyed an evening at the Sonning Theatre. Our return through Teddington was again dictated by ongoing repairs, but it did give us the opportunity of staying at Dove Pier by Hammersmith Bridge before heading home. Dove Pier is not elaborate but there is a lovely pub close by and Fulham Palace a couple of miles walk down river.

No trip would be complete without mechanical problems. There was a faulty generator, heating issues on *Ruby*, and the pulley and alternator belt fell off one of *Sulana's* engines leaving them to return to Titchmarsh on one engine. But the support and camaraderie of the group either solved the issues or made them easier, as in the case of *Wave* following *Sulana* up the Essex coast until they were safe. Just another example of what makes our cruising in company so amazing!

Our group comprised of five yachts. There was us on *Ruby of Mersea*, Robin and Rachel Gozzett on *Nimrod*, Alan and Sue Brook on *Sulana*, Reg and Chris Dawson on *Grapevine* and our guests from Heybridge Basin, John and Ann Sadd on *Wave of Maldon*. There was a further contingent of six who just didn't want to miss out on the fun and they stayed at Cruising Association House. They were Simon and Beryl Palmer, Paul and Pauline Fuller, and Steve and Cathy Dines. Fraser Haddow joined us at Bray for Sunday lunch at the Hind Head, one of Heston Blumenthal's restaurants.



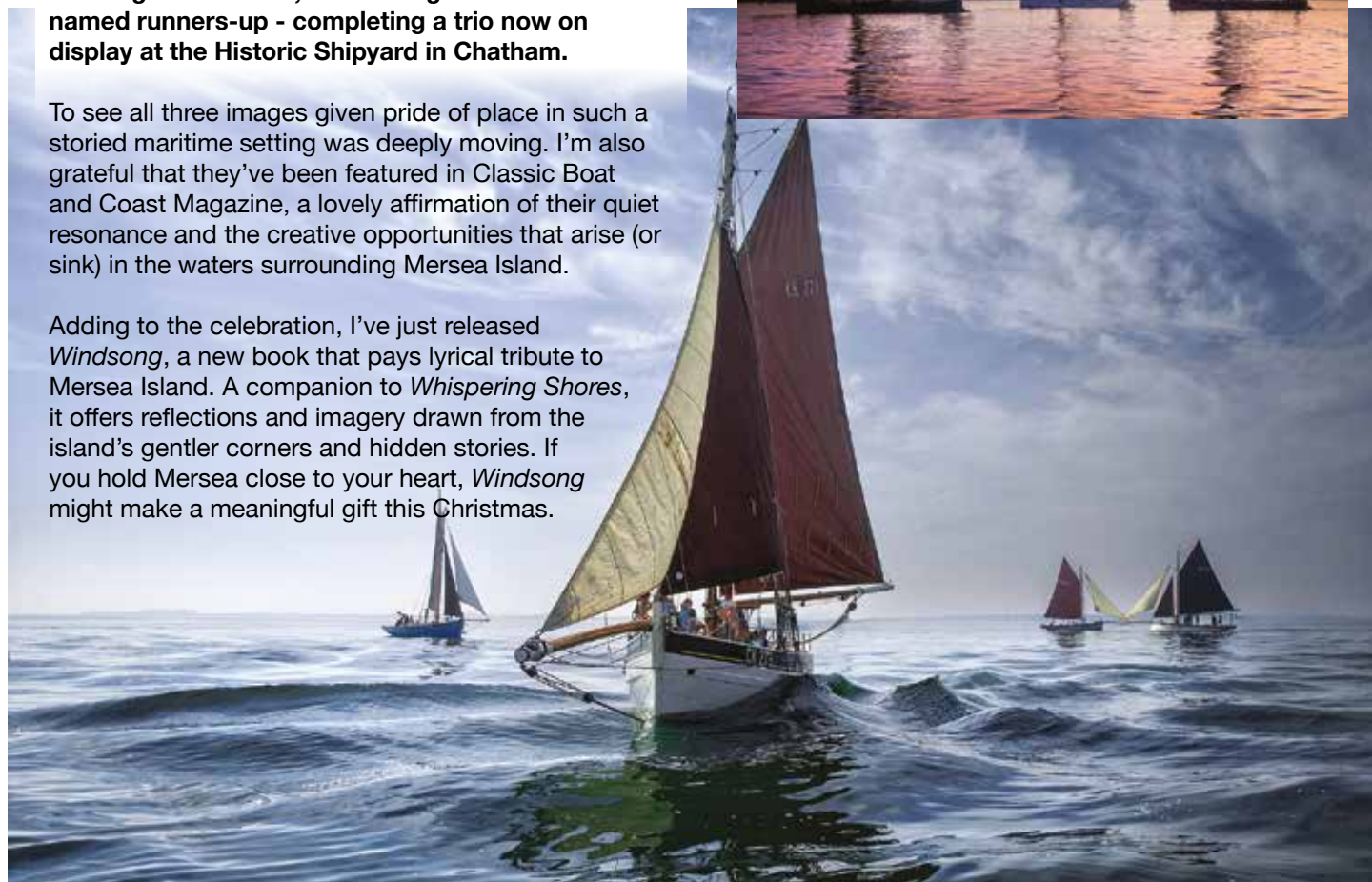
A Trio of Triumphs

By Chrissie Westgate

I'm delighted to share that my image, *A Sinking Feeling*, was recently awarded first prize in the Historic Ships Photography Competition, an honour that still leaves me smiling. Alongside it, two of my other photographs, *A Blue, Blackwater Morning* and *Sunrise, Colne Barge Match* were named runners-up - completing a trio now on display at the Historic Shipyard in Chatham.

To see all three images given pride of place in such a storied maritime setting was deeply moving. I'm also grateful that they've been featured in *Classic Boat* and *Coast Magazine*, a lovely affirmation of their quiet resonance and the creative opportunities that arise (or sink) in the waters surrounding Mersea Island.

Adding to the celebration, I've just released *Windsong*, a new book that pays lyrical tribute to Mersea Island. A companion to *Whispering Shores*, it offers reflections and imagery drawn from the island's gentler corners and hidden stories. If you hold Mersea close to your heart, *Windsong* might make a meaningful gift this Christmas.



Cadet Week 2025 – Monsteriffic fun!

By Ifor Bielecki



As I am sure many readers may agree, the theme for Cadet Week as 'Mersea Monsters' was really quite appropriate!

We were very fortunately blessed with some excellent conditions for our various cadet fleets, with enough wind to make it exciting, but not too much to scare those who may be less gung-ho than others.

Overall, there were 120 children racing, with 78 in the Optimist fleets and 42 in Outside fleet. We had huge variety of boats in Outside too, from a 29'er racing around through to the ever-dependable Toppers.

We're fortunate to have some high-class Optimist sailors in Gold fleet, so the decision was made to incorporate them with Outside fleet and give them the challenge of some longer and more challenging racing. All of which was ably managed by our stalwart Outside PRO Richard Hayden and his willing band of volunteers. They set themselves up on the generously donated Oyster Powerline committee boat, which we must thank Richard and Sarah Matthews for, as well as our Commodore John Munns who ably Skipped her.

Outside Fleet – Fast handicap was won by Sonny Simpson in his ILCA 6,

followed by Morty Mastin in his ILCA 6. The two of them were inseparable throughout the week and it came down to a single point on countback. In third place were Scarlet MacLennan and Joel Simpson in their 29'er.

Outside Fleet – Slow Handicap was won by Kyan Jowers in his ILCA 4, followed by Sam Cook in second in his ILCA 4. Oscar Coates was third in another ILCA 4.

Optimist Gold Fleet was won in emphatic style by Thomas Child, with a clean sweep of 1st places in all 12 races. Quite a feat! Lucas Day was 2nd overall and Rory Woods 3rd.



Inside fleet racing was managed by Martin Blackmore (Lurch to most of us) on Centenary. As Inside Safety Officer, I have to say that the race management was flawless, with perfectly set up triangular courses and great comms between fleet leads and the committee boat. It was an absolute pleasure and certainly made the safety side a piece of cake for me! We managed to get 15 races in for Ruby fleet and 13 races for Emerald in just four days. That only happens when things run smoothly.

Optimist Ruby Fleet is usually a combination of two separate fleets of Silver and Bronze, so we have children of different ages competing against each other head-to-head.

Overall first was Harry Daniels, who sailed like a demon in the last couple of days and won four races in a row. Max Hurst was 2nd overall, after getting three victories during the week, and Sammy Addinalm was 3rd overall. Of our Ruby (Bronze) fleet, then Lilly French led the way with 9th



overall, with Laiton Berryman in 11th and Woody Gill in 13th.

Emerald fleet are our second youngest fleet, with most just in their 2nd year of sailing. At eight to nine-years-old sometimes, they make even an Oppie look big. But there they all were, out in the river in some decent breeze and going for it.

Henry Sydenham led the way overall with 11 wins, but he was closely followed by Fraser Graham in 2nd place and Poppy Birkin in 3rd.

Last, but definitely not least, we get to Diamond fleet. Our newcomers. Just 12 weeks before, the majority of them had never sailed a boat before and yet here they were, racing. All 26 of them!

Diamond is always a joy to watch and provides a lesson to us all, that kids are a lot more capable and resilient than many people may assume. While we take results for the races, the main prize for all of them is that they went out and raced. Every single one of them is a winner in my eyes, as are all of those who coach and manage this fleet. However, results are results!

In 1st place was Mathilda Child, 2nd



Photo by Shaun Mills



was Lottie Maguire and 3rd Hector Langley.

On Friday, as we had got so much sailing completed and there was absolutely zero wind, an absolutely joyous and ridiculous 'race' was held sans sails! The rule was simple, the kids were organised into their four teams, assigned to a boat and launched. Their job was to head down Ray channel and back again utilising any mode of propulsion possible. We had the sight of Oppie Vs and a RS700 loaded down with seven children, and even a winkle brig made an appearance. It was chaos in its finest sense. Water pistols and



Photo by Shaun Mills

buckets were the order of the day and most on safety boats came off the water just as wet as the children did. I am sure someone won it, but I'm not sure that was really the point!

The final 'racing' was the Parent's Race and the Viking Trophy, both of which were run using Duck Punts. This proved more a challenge to the parents than the kids, to be honest. But it was great seeing these boats used and people having to work out how to make them go. Sonny Simpson won the Viking Trophy and Tom Bowman won the Parent's Race.

But racing is only 50 per cent of Cadet Week. The most 'serious' part is having fun, both on and off the water, and this is where the Social Committee, lead brilliantly by Jade Haynes, performed their masterful work. Bowling, Laser Tag, a foam party, fireworks, an epic water fight and, of course, the magnificent final party held at the yacht club.

Cadet Week 2025 was my favourite so far. It just worked. That only happens when a huge number of people put in a massive amount of effort. So, thank you to Simon Cook, who ably herds all of us cats on the committee and to the vast numbers of people who make this happen. Were I to name you all, I would need three editions of the Molliette, but I shall make special mention of the Beach and Tally teams who do an astonishing job, Pheobe, Claire, Darcy, Alison and all of the team. Our Mothership providers and crews, Freedom with Jake Bowyers and David Haynes on Hakuna Matata. All of the safety boats (even if changing the Rota for the 300th time by Day Three nearly ended me!). All of you, stand up and take a bow. It was truly epic.

'Cadet Week 2025. Overall Safety. OUT.'



Photo by Shaun Mills

WMYC Instructors remember Jim McNaughton

Introduction by Ian Low

Jim started teaching at West Mersea Yacht Club in the 1970's, a key time in the establishment of local Royal Yachting Association (RYA) training centres.

The Yachtmaster scheme had been established by the Board of Trade at the request of the Admiralty in the late 1930's, extremely fortuitously as the war and Dunkirk came round the corner at us. In the 1970's the scheme was entrusted to the RYA to run and Commander Bill Anderson, recently discharged from the Navy, was appointed to run it. Again, the force was with us. Anderson knew Roy Aspinall, a Mersea legend, and so a Yachtmaster course/exam was set up and attended by Roy, Jim and other notables such as John Clifton.

All candidates passed with flying colours and WMYC became the first RYA Training Centre on the east coast,

and one of the first in the country.

As principal Jim took responsibility for the teaching and, working along with his many colleagues, helped to create 50 years of history - with thousands of students trained at the centre and a great reputation established, which we strive to preserve. During this time Jim was also instructing and examining Yachtmaster students elsewhere on the east coast and throughout the British Isles, with even the odd trip to the Mediterranean. It was, he used to say, the best job of his life.

In 2021, he received a prestigious RYA Volunteer Award (signed by the Princess Royal) in recognition of his long service. The official citation said:

Jim with prestigious RYA Volunteer Award



'seize the moment, don't sit at home and vegetate'.

'His enthusiasm and experience is inspirational to many, and his relaxed, informative, anecdotal style has benefited generations of sailors – drawing on his many experiences!'

Jim McNaughton died in April 2025.

I moved to live on Mersea Island in November 2003, bringing my Sadler 29 bilge keel boat from Medway Yacht Club, and joined WMYC in the summer of 2004. I had no RYA qualifications, so in October 2004 joined Jim's RYA Yachtmaster course and that was my introduction this extraordinary man.

And what a class it was, with Jim's ever positive, fun, wide awake, not politically correct, approach to teaching on dark winter nights. I managed to pass, and then typical Jim, he pushed me forward to attend as a WMYC candidate for the RYA instructor's course. So, by 2005 I was helping out with teaching the Yachtmaster course.



Jim with instructors (L to R) Ian Low, Mel Daniels, Ian Draper & Larry Botheras

Having signed me up as an instructor, Jim quickly learnt that I had never sailed to the Netherlands, extolled how delightful that area was and after his positive selling job I set off there, using just paper charts. That was in May 2005, and I kept pottering northwards through Germany, Denmark, Sweden and into Norway, and never returned back home to sail.

This was Jim, forever encouraging the people he met to look forward, take the opportunities available – ‘seize the moment, don’t sit at home and vegetate’. It is thanks to Jim, that my life changed so much, and I am just one of many over the years.

Ian Draper

We joined the Yacht Club in the mid 90’s and in 1998 signed up for the RYA evening classes. Pauline and my son James did Day Skipper with a lovely, patient instructor Graham Sapsford. While I did Yachtmaster theory with this extraordinary, eccentric chap called McNaughton – who frankly terrified me. You can imagine the conversations in the car driving back to Chelmsford late on Monday evenings!



Jim presenting his daughter Rebecca with Day Skipper certificate

Roll forward 12 years, I had retired and started as a practical instructor at East Anglian Sea School; this wasn’t missed by Jim who quickly invited me to join the team and start teaching in our winter evening classes. There followed 15 years of working closely with Jim as the evening classes developed, new instructors joined and a huge number of students went through our hands. His astro courses were legendary – spherical trigonometry and payment in malt whisky one from each student. Some



Meeting the Princess Royal

years there were very few students but one memorable year there were 12!

‘When you are teaching you are performing, you have to hold the audience,’; ‘don’t send them to sleep, excite them, captivate them,’ – so went my lessons in teaching from the Master, whose second love was Mersea Island Drama. I think after 15 years I knew most of his stories pretty much off by heart. We did countless radio courses together, I hope some of you reading this have good memories of them. And always we were being urged to keep the Training Centre going after he was gone. We’ll do our best, Jim.

Ian Low

Having joined the Yacht Club in 2006 after a lifetime of dinghy sailing, I decided to do a practical course to check my skill levels. As is common with such courses, one student was a Yachtmaster practical candidate who was to be examined towards the end of the week. I really enjoyed the course and had formed a very different opinion of the RYA Cruising Scheme compared with the Dinghy scheme.

So, on the penultimate day, this RYA examiner turned up – one Jim McNaughton. Somehow, he passed the candidate and during the day we talked and he discovered that I was a WMYC member and suggested I should consider taking my YM shorebased course the following winter. Perhaps I should have considered more carefully, because that was when Jim’s claws became embedded! From shorebased course,

I was told I should do my Practical Exam and come along and ‘help out’. One thing led to another, and I became part of Jim’s magnificent legacy of the WMYC Training Centre.

The impact Jim had spread far and wide, and I can only surmise the number of students that have been trained over the last 50 years, let alone the very valuable single malt education from all the Burns Night suppers!

Jim’s jokes were, shall we say, a bit repetitive and less than politically correct. But I can honestly say it is an honour to be only the second Principal of WMYC Training and to continue Jim’s work. This year we have 30 students spread across the Navigation courses, none of which would have been possible without Jim’s drive and determination in the first place.

Larry Botheras



Committee Members 2025

Commodore:	John Munns
Vice Commodore Sailing:	Bryan Gasson
Rear Commodore House:	Karen Lavender
Rear Commodore M&B:	Alan Jones
Honorary Secretary:	Tim Wood
Honorary Treasurer:	Ian Shay
Honorary Bo'sun:	Brian Warwick
General Committee Member:	Graham Larkin
General Committee Member:	Ian Low
General Committee Member:	Sophie Preston-Hall
General Committee Member:	Jim Shaw
General Committee Member:	John Davison
General Committee Member:	Fraser Haddow
General Committee Member:	Chris Baker
General Committee Member:	Kevin Mullins

In Memoriam 2025

Brian Lewis passed away in January 2025.
Brian was a member of the club since 2003.

John Payton passed away in February 2025.
John was a member of the club since 1991.

Rosalind Fairchild passed away in February 2025.
Rosalind was a member of the club since 1992.

Robin Moffat passed away in March 2025.
Robin was a member of the club since 2014.

Anthony Johnson passed away in April 2025.
Anthony was a member of the club since 2015.

David L Starling passed away in April 2025.
David was a member of the club since 2024.

Jim McNaughton passed away in April 2025.
Jim was a member of the club since 1970.

James Crane passed away in April 2025.
James was a member of the club since 2005.

Faith Tippet passed away in May 2025.
Faith was a member of the club since 1955.

Martyn Pickles passed away in May 2025.
Martyn was a member of the club since 2005.

John Grey passed away in July 2025.
John was a member of the club since 1987.

Frederic Antony Mallett passed away in August 2025.
Tony was a member of the club since 1984.

New Members 2025

Full Members

David Blackmore
Conny Calvert
Heather Collard
Michael Davis
David Gibney
Gary Graver
John James
Peter Mackinnon
Alan Mason
Helen McCartney-Smith
Beverley Perkins
Eric Petrie
Paul Rimmer
Stuart Robinson
Peter Rowlinson
Chris Savage
Andrew Skinner
Leighton Snook
Shirley Swan
Lennie Wilson

Associate Members

Elizabeth Brace
Amanda Bueno-de-Mesquita
Michael Calvert
Michael Cameron
Ben Crittenden
Sophie Crittenden
Andrew Gill
Rachel Gill
Felicity Gothard
Kim Hawkins
Robert Hawkins
Heather Holmes
Janis James
Hettie Long
Toby Long
Jennifer McCree
Nicola Murley
Alan Murley
Jennifer O'Donnell
Lorna Petrie
Hayley Powling
Carl Powling
Elizabeth Rimmer
Craig Sestak
Helen Snook
Samantha Taylor
Teresa Thomas
Alison Vico
Robert Ward
Mary Ward

Crew Members

Jay Gilbey
Alison Grogan
Lucy Newman
Charlton Timms

Cadet Members

Molly Long
Charley Long

Young Adults

Rufus Cock

Sailing Honours 2025

GOLDEN FLEECE

Michael & Jason Wheeler

Ralph Herring Trophy

FRENCH MISTRESS

David Amiss

3rd Lewis Powell Cup
(Spring Regatta)

**Other Notable Results
away from Mersea**

Jack Grogan

Squib National Championship

4th Place Overall

OYSTERCATCHER XXXV

Richard Mathews

Pattinson Cup

David Brook Trophy

GREMLIN

Julian Lord

1st Peter Vince Trophy
(Spring Regatta)

1st Autumn Trophy

2nd Ancient mariners Salver

Richard Mathews

KISMET

Régates Royales Cannes

1st Overall

Voiles de St Tropez

1st Overall

PIP

John Munns

2nd Autumn Trophy

TAMARISK

Robert Smith

1st Finola Cup

VANDAL

Richard Holroyd

3rd Ancient Mariners Salver

SEAHAWK II

Andrew & Jill Stebbing

1st Ancient Mariners Salver

2nd Lewis Powell Cup

(Spring Regatta)

2nd Finola Cup

2nd Wallet Cup

CLOCKWISE

Jack Davis

1st Lewis Powell Cup

(Spring Regatta)

Rowland Bradfort Hill

Coconut Trophy

(winner)

Simon Liston

Reg White Trophy

(Multi Hull)

Alan Jones

John Litton Memorial Trophy

(MFOB)

STRIDER

Robin Dutton

2nd Peter Vince Trophy

(Spring Regatta)

3rd Autumn Trophy

1st Wallet Cup

Carrington Cup

Ian Low

MOJITO

Toby Ramsey

3rd Peter Vince Trophy

(Spring Regatta)



Cover: Rob Smith's Beneteau *Tamarisk* during Mersea Week

Inside front cover: Kyan Jowers in *Prince* with the MFOB's

Inside back cover: Crossing the Strood during Round the Island Race

Back cover: William Baker in *Ally Lump*; Lou Cowen in *Samphire* and 'Team Blackmore' in *Froggie*

All photos by Chrissie Westgate



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