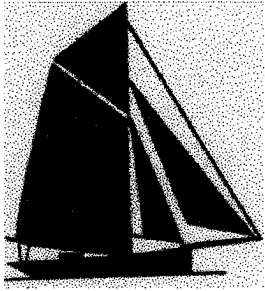


Volume 9, Issue 3, Autumn 2004



Up The Creek...

Centenary of The Glory Days

As Tollesbury residents and regulars will have noticed, the weekend of 2nd/3rd of October marked a singular anniversary for the village and a testament to its prosperity at the start of the 20th Century. The lost, and affectionately entitled, *Crab and Winkle* railway line was opened 100 years ago – providing a railway link from Tollesbury to the main line at Kelvedon, via halts at Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Tolleshunt Knights, Tiptree, Inworth and Feering. In 1907 the railway was extended to the new 1779 ft long pier into the Blackwater (near the mouth of Mill/Mell Creek) - the UK's last privately financed rail-sea link - which had been built, ambitiously, to establish a ferry harbour to rival Harwich but ac-

tually found more success as a 'walk on and off the train' yacht station. Yacht crewing was a boom 'industry' in those years, as around 300 Tollesbury men found berths (and often the skipper's cap) on the great racing yachts of the era, up to, and including, *Britannia*, the 'J' class *Shamrocks* and *Endeavours* (even the Kaiser's pre-First World War *Meteor*); combining summer racing with winter fishing. Further evidence of Tollesbury's predominant place in yachting is provided by the iconic Yacht Stores (commonly misnamed 'sail lofts') by the waterfront and which were also built in 1904. Tollesbury Sailing Club is a direct product of those great days of maritime Tolles-

bury. Members of Tollesbury Cruising Club might find it difficult to emulate the achievements of their fore-runners unless they can mount a credible challenge for the America's Cup, but they can pay them some honour in the conduct of their cruises and races.

Note: The material for this editorial comment was gleaned from the outstanding history of Tollesbury: *Tollesbury to the year 2000: The Story of a Village and its People*, which is now in its third printing and is available from The Lighthouse, coffee room in East Street.

Barry Jones
Steorra of Tollesbury

Contents

Glory Days.....page 1	Late Summer Cruise.....page 5
Racing Round Up.....page 2	Sally's Cruise.....page 6
Commodore's End of Season	Flag Etiquette.....page 7
Message.....page 3	Dinghy to Tesco.....page 10
Packing Shed Lunch.....page 3	Marina News.....page 10
Frostbite Cruise.....page 4	For Sale.....page 10

Published by Tollesbury
Cruising Club, Tollesbury
Marina, Tollesbury, Essex,
CM9 8ST

Racing Round Up

Andy Hobden
Rear Commodore - Racing
Tongue Twister

Wallet Long Race

The Running of the Wallet Long Race for the Gunfleet plate hung in the balance until the night before the race. The Forecast was not cheerful, entries from the Cruising club were disappointing, there were none from the sailing club and we had not managed to organise a committee boat.

In the end the race was run and six boats crossed the start line. The weather was much kinder than expected, favouring the smaller boats in the fleet. We managed the dogleg into the Colne this year but turned the boats back at Wallet no.4 buoy so that the slower boats could avoid the foul tide.

Polo IV took line honours and timed the rest of the fleet in but could not save their handicap against *Tongue Twister* with their new spinnaker. *Zephyr* narrowly beat *Mimosa* into third place on handicap.

The Steve Rix Trophy

The Steve Rix Trophy on the 4th September was sailed in light winds. With only five boats the entry was disappointing. The hoped for windward race to give the non-spinnaker boats a good chance in our prevailing South Westerlies let us down and we enjoyed a reach and spinnaker run all the way home.

Dionysus took line honours and held the result on handicap. Once again *Tongue Twister's* new spinnaker paid dividends for second place and *Nimrodel* beat *Cobweb* into third place.

The Kings Head Cup

The final race of the season was the Kings Head Cup on the 18th September organised by Tolles-

bury Sailing Club. The course was round Osea Island and the boats needed to leave the Marina on the previous tide to be sure of reaching the start in time. Once again the weather was unkind with winds of force 5 to 7 forecast. Most cruising club boats stayed in the Marina overnight and were unable to make the start. Three boats from the sailing club plus *Tongue Twister* started the race from Mersea No.3 buoy and enjoyed a stiff beat up the Blackwater and an exhilarating run back from Osea. *Tongue Twister* had a fully reefed main and a scrap of jib and the gunwales under the water most of the way up the beat and touched 8 knots on the way home.

The Sigma 33 *Excelle* from the sailing club took line honours but *Tongue Twister* won the race on corrected time for the Cruising Club.

RIP

Ian Sinclair, rear commodore of Tollesbury Sailing Club died suddenly on the 9th September. Ian was organising the Kings Head Cup race and was in our thoughts during the race. As the committee boat commented before the start, it was his sort of weather and he would have loved to have been out there with us. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to his young son Matt and the rest of his family.

Christmas Cruise Frostbite Race

The Christmas Cruise is on the 27th/28th November this year. Although a lot of boats attending this trip seem to be content to motor across to Bradwell, a short race is proposed for this year, lasting no

more than an hour or so; white sails only. Try out your new 2005 personal handicap. From the Nass to the Bradwell Beacon via a buoy or two and/or the baffle wall. White Sails? A Gentleman's race – no spinnakers or cruising chutes. Personal handicaps adjusted by plus 20 or 40 for those boats normally declaring spinnakers or cruising chutes. For anyone interested, the details will go on the notice board in good time. Any volunteers to act as a committee boat gratefully received; otherwise we will time ourselves in.

A total of sixteen different cruising club boats started races this year. A disappointing number considering that there are over 200 boats in the marina.

Tongue Twister did far better than I expected mainly thanks to the new spinnaker helping to counteract the drop in personal handicap, so you know whom to blame; many thanks to Mike and Christine from *Corkscrew* for selling it to me. Next year my personal handicap looks set to drop to from 1050 to 1039, so a new mainsail is urgently needed!

Paul on *Cobweb* performed consistently well, especially in the pursuit race which he seems to have made his own in recent years. Stuart on *Tsunami* survived the Goldie Challenge Race better than the rest of us to win it, and then promptly sold the boat so I could not have the satisfaction of slashing his handicap. David is getting *Dionysus* sorted out and is improving all the time culminating with his win in the Steve Rix Trophy race and Maggs on *Mimosa*

(Continued on page 4)

Commodore's End of Season Message - from Betty McInnes - *Sutomi*

As I write, I'm contemplating the end of season cruise, 2nd to 3rd of October, and wondering whether or not to get the thermal gear out of hibernation. It's hardly credible to think we are almost into October and another season has gone by. The weather has stayed so mild, this end of the year and there has been some fine sailing.

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone on the **Sailing Committee**. They have all worked extremely hard this year, sharing our responsibilities for organising the various events and making sure that the club continues to enjoy a good mix of cruising, racing, and, last but not least, socialising. Thanks also to all of you who took part: it was pleasing to see quite a few new faces this year, as well as many of the old ones. What's that saying about not putting old wine

in new bottles? In Tollesbury, it seems that you can put old faces in new boats!

Needless to say, the season will not be fully over until we have celebrated at the **Laying Up Supper**, on Saturday 23 October. I'd like to put down a marker now, however, for the Laying Up Supper in October 2005. The date is not certain yet, but we are hoping to hold it on 22 October 2005 – which happens to be the day after the **Bi-Centennial of the Battle of Trafalgar**. That seems to the Committee to be a very good opportunity for celebrating in style, with a naval theme. One former Committee member and retired naval officer has even hinted at donning his uniform for the occasion.

We'd like to hear from club members whether they would welcome a special **Trafalgar Day**

Supper, and what ideas you might have to make it a memorable occasion. Do please contact us with your suggestions over the next few months, so that we can start planning. In any case, I'm always happy to hear from members with feedback, and can be contacted either by phone (0777 565 3042) or by email: (mcmacey@btinternet.com).

In the meantime, don't forget this year's Supper and **AGM**, on 23 and 24 October respectively. And, of course, the **Nearly Christmas Cruise**, which marks the end of sailing for all but the most hardy; this year it takes place on 27/28 November.

Betty McInnes

Mersea Packing Shed Lunch

Dave Cooke - *Nimrodel*

The ever popular seafood lunch took place again in the Packing Shed on Sunday 11 July this year. The event was very well attended with some 50 club members and friends in the shed on Packing Marsh island, off West Mersea. As usual we all brought along bread, salad and of course wine to go along with the delicious seafood supplied by the 'Company Shed'. This year low water was around lunchtime making landing on the

island a little difficult in the mud, but the Packing Shed Trust launch, with its drop down ramp in the bow and ably driven by Eric, made it easier.

I would like to say a thanks to all of you who attended making it such a enjoyable event, and to those who stayed behind to help clear up and help drag the 'mobile' jetty up the beach. A special thanks also to Chris and Pam and their friends Donald and Maureen from

Nonie who, following damage to our own boat, took our whole family onboard and ferried me to West Mersea to collect the Food. Donald also saved the day by producing a large quantity of cash to pay for the food after I realised that the 'Company Shed' did not accept credit cards!

Dave Cooke
Nimrodel

Frostbite Cruise

David Walkerdine - *Ariel Spirit*

This year the traditional 'frostbite' rally and the Easter cruise were combined over the Easter Weekend, with a shakedown cruise to Brightlingsea on Good Friday, followed by a trip up the Blackwater to Heybridge Basin for Saturday night, then a night in Bradwell on Easter Sunday and just a short hop

back to base on Easter Monday.

As this was the first cruise I had organised I was delighted that there was an excellent turn out. With several new faces joining us for the briefing on Friday morning, it seemed like an armada headed out of the leavings destined for the fleshpots of Brightlingsea. The idea was that, on arrival, there would be drinks on

committee member's boats and so we had stocked the drinks cabinet, packed the crisps and nibbles and off we went.

As this was the 'shakedown cruise' I should have known that something would not go quite to plan and, predictably, the gremlins took over somewhere near the Nass beacon when the engine (in Idaho, our then boat) began to overheat. A quick

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 2)

racing round up (continued)

made her mark in the ladies races and given us a new name to put on the trophies.

Next Year?

How do we encourage more entries next year? Several thoughts spring to mind, for which feedback and any other suggestions would be gratefully received:

1. A White Sail Race, probably the Steve Rix Trophy. No spinnakers or cruising chutes! Everyone on an even footing no matter how big their spinnakers. I sort of tried to do it this year by running it back down the Wallet but our prevailing south westerlies did not oblige.
2. An Oostende race. (OK I fancy this one!) Hopefully in conjunction with Colne YC and Wivenhoe SC if they will let us join them. The race runs on a Friday, either the 22nd or 29th July 2005. Race across, or cruise, and enjoy a banquet in the Royal Ostende Yacht Club, if they have not knocked it down by then. This would be an ideal feeder for the start of a summer cruise to Holland
3. Ladies Race. As the Pursuit

race always seems popular the Teapot Trophy could also be run as a pursuit race. To give sensible results a pursuit race needs to be at least two hours long so we may need to add a buoy or two to the normal course. Would the Boudica Trophy benefit in entries from being declared a white sail race?

4. A variable start time race. Each skipper works out his passage plan and chooses his optimum time to start the race, within given limits, probably an hour. Elapsed time is worked out from the actual start and finish times. The advantages are that there will not be a bunched fleet at the start line and both slower and faster boats can make best use of the tides. Disadvantages are that two very patient committee boats will be needed.
5. For 2005 we shall try to avoid races in late June, July and August as far as possible while people are away on their summer cruises.

So sixteen different boats started one or more races. Twelve different boats won one or more prizes. Tollesbury Cruising Club prizes

are second to none with the first three boats getting a personalised engraved trophy to keep.

So perhaps for next year follow 'Tongue Twisters' simplified rules for racing and your name could be proudly displayed on a club trophy:

1. Enter the race; you cannot win unless you do.
2. Be on the right side of the start line at the right time.
3. Sail the course, avoiding other boats, in handicap races they are a nuisance and slow you down
4. Never give up, especially in light winds when everyone else does.
5. Finish the race, you cannot win unless you do.

Perhaps it's not quite that easy but it is a good base from which to start. Racing helps you learn your boat and sail it faster. Start with the Pursuit Race, try the 'white sail races' and then do as Dave did on *Nimrodel* and come out and enjoy the experience of the Wallet Shield against the five other clubs and help us win back the Team Trophy.

Andy Hobden

Tongue Twister

Rear Commodore Racing

Late Summer Cruise

Dave McCombe
Rear Commodore - Cruising
Stargazer

The late summer cruise has to be seen as a resounding success with good weather overall, a great turn out of boats and people with many faces, new to club cruising, joining in.

The week started with a gentle cruise to the Royal Harwich Yacht Club on the Orwell where we had 25 boats and 51 club members. Not quite the club record but certainly a 'personal best'! Here, we had the opportunity to say *au revoir* to Kath and Albert from *Goodtimin* who are starting a new venture with a property in Spain and giving up cruising. We wish them good luck and hope to see them at the club, during the summer next year, where I know they have invitations to cruise with old friends, *Stargazer* included.

The weather got a touch lively, to say the least, over the Bank Holiday weekend with several boats staying at Ipswich Haven and the others scattering around the local area. Monday dawned with very fresh winds and I gather the trip back to Tollesbury was not to be relished.

As for the rest of us, we called back into Shotley to avoid the worst of the winds and then called at Titchmarsh Marina the next day where we could visit Woodbridge on the River Deben or return to Tollesbury, depending on the forecast. By now the weather was calming down and after a 2 night stopover in the Walton Backwaters we left on Thursday for a lovely trip up to the Tide Mill Marina, Woodbridge.

We returned to Shotley to await the crews that were racing on Sunday and 16 of us dined at the Bristol Arms that night.

Sunday was a lovely day with light winds ideal for the racers with spinnakers, for a run back to Tollesbury. On *Stargazer* we unfurled our new cruising chute (it's three years old really, but we only bring it out for an airing once a year – it doesn't pay to overdo these things!) and had a peaceful and pleasant trip back.

Thanks to all who attended the event, it is your support that makes the club the success it is. We made several new friends on the trip and hope that they continue to join us for future cruises.

(Continued from page 4)

frosty sailing (continued)

change of impeller failed to solve the problem, so with not enough wind to sail, it was a swift about turn and back to the scrubbing grids. We crept into the marina in order to check the fresh water intake. Thanks must go to Chris aboard *Calidris* for stepping in and making sure that everyone was looked after in Brightlingsea. I am informed that a pleasant evening was had by all.

In and Out

So for us it was a quick bottom scrub and cleaning of the water inlet (have you ever seen how big Essex Sea Squirts can grow?!), whilst for everyone else there was a gentle trip from Brightlingsea up the Blackwater to Heybridge lock. We managed to creep over the sill and out of Tollesbury as soon as there was enough water and just managed to catch up as *Mykanos* was entering the lock. Unfortunately the lock was full, so we had to wait outside. Fortunately, Colin the lock keeper was accommodating as ever

and, after finding berths for everyone else, we were locked in, and after turning round in the Basin we actually spent the night in the lock itself along with the crews of *Wai Loa*, *Diana* and *Mykanos*. We all agreed that the lock was the best place to be as it was a shorter walk to the pub!

Dinner had been booked at the **Jolly Sailor** and we were joined by several crews who arrived by car. Fortunately we were all able to fit in (just!) and in total more than 30 people sat down to dinner.

After a lazy morning in Heybridge with coffee courtesy of *Polo IV*, we locked out on the afternoon tide with Bradwell as our destination. We had not been able to book berths in advance, but a quick call in the morning confirmed that we would all be able to fit in and we had even been allocated our berth numbers before we left Heybridge. There was little wind so we decided to motor on ahead (determined to invite people over for drinks and nibbles!) whilst some of the other boats enjoyed a very gentle

sail down the Blackwater and in to Bradwell as the sun was setting. After a couple of drinks, several people headed off to the **Green Man** for some dinner whilst some opted for a relatively early night as the neap tides meant that the deeper draft boats had to get back in on the morning tide, meaning a very early start. We opted for a mid afternoon departure and enjoyed a couple of hours' gentle sailing in no particular direction whilst *Hiawatha* streaked off in to the distance, leaving us bobbing in her wake. Later we were joined by *Wai Loa* and we both took the opportunity to snap a few photographs of each other under way, before heading back in to Tollesbury.

All in all, it was a very pleasant start to the season, with superb weather and a fantastic turn out of members with some new faces as well as plenty of the old guard joining in.

David Walkerdine

Solo Sailing in Sally: Tollesbury to Levington

by W. Eric Faber

Sally was built in 1935 by Elkins of Christchurch and designed by Laurent Giles. She is 8 mtrs overall including the bumpkin. Eric Faber has owned her for the last 20 years and had her totally renovated over a 5-year period to 2002 by the International Boatbuilding Training College in Lowestoft and a private master shipwright. She has a new keel, transom, stem, laid deck and some strakes and a new Yanmar GM1 engine. The interior and cockpit have been totally rebuilt. Eric's planned trip to Oudeshild, on Texel island, and beyond was complicated by inclement weather, crew problems and concerns about the possible dezincification of his stern gland. However, *Sally* was finally able to set sail on Saturday the 4th of July. Eric's vivid account of the first part of his trip follows. Ed.

Starting out

I completed the last loading Saturday morning and planned to leave at 1400 hrs when the rising spring tide would be on the turn and help me on my way out of the river Blackwater and down the Wallet to Felixstowe. It was blowing Force 7 with trees being dismembered and the rigging in Tollesbury marina screaming, but I reasoned that the wind and tide would be with me and that the waves would be passing underneath and that if I did not go now I would not go at all. One yachtsman returning to the car-park remarked to his wife that they would write off the day. Whilst in the berth in the marina, I rolled a heavy reef in the main sail and

bent on the working jib. I was a little anxious about my daring, but the sun was out in between the white and black clouds and that gave me reassurance. I had not experienced any showers yet despite the forecast and hoped that they would be spent over the land rather than over the sea. I was ready by 14.15hrs. I started the engine and cast off. A chap helped me steady the boat. I felt a bit of a fool setting off in a 23.5ft wooden boat from 1935 whilst everybody else in the marina with much larger boats made of GRP had decided to stay put and wait for better sailing conditions. I motored out slowly. As soon as I was out of the Marina, I checked the stern gland. There was no sign of any deterioration or any greater leak. I opened up the throttle and the stern gland did not appear to be suffering. I decided not to worry about it any more until I reached Holland and put down the cockpit-sole boards. I got the fenders in and wondered what the sea conditions would look like once out of the protection from the mud flats. The engine performed well and in no time were we in the Fleet, where several boats were moored. I spotted several unoccupied buoys and decided that it would be a good idea to moor up to one of them and take my time hoisting the sails. The wind blew hard across the water and it took several attempts to get the boat in a position that allowed me to hook up to the mooring. Each time the boat's heading was thrown off course. Once the hook was on, I could barely hold on to the mooring line such was the weight of the wind. I instantly regretted having

moored up because I realized that I would have a hell of a job pulling *Sally* up to the mooring again to unhook her, which is a physically strenuous affair. One has to crouch on the foredeck and lean out to the mooring buoy once sufficiently close to it. One is also likely to get very wet. I hoisted the reefed mainsail first and then the working jib. I had not expected *Sally* to yaw on the mooring, but she appeared keen to lean over on one tack first and then the other, trying to sail past the buoy. I had not unhooked the running backstays in the expectation that she would have enough room to find her own heading hooked up to the buoy. But no, she yawed uncontrollably, using the running backstays as props to steady her boom. It did not do the rolled-up mainsail any good being forced on to the backstays in that way and I worried whether such punishment would cause the sail to tear. I decided to get out of this mess as quickly as possible by gibing round. It took all my strength to pull *Sally* up to the buoy and unhook the mooring hook. What had seemed such a good idea proved a frightful bother, a handicap and an almost fatal start to the first sail of the year and to the season's sailing activities.

Sailing at last

The boat turned easily and despite the heavy wind, the controlled gibe was effortless. She was now on her course leaping to some 6 knots on the relatively smooth and protected water in the Fleet leading into the Blackwater river. There were no other boats in sight.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

As *Sally's sail* (continued)

soon as I reached the river, the waves grew in size, but having the tide and wind with me, I experienced no difficulties. Being at the top of the tide I went straight over the mudflats. I put the boat on course for the end of the river and adjusted the sails. We were almost dead before the wind. The jib did not do much as the mainsail took all its wind and I decided that the working jib would have to be boomed out on its whisker pole to the opposite side of the mainsail. But before I could undertake this exercise, I would have to attach the preventer to the main boom to stop *Sally* from gibing involuntarily. I managed this operation without incident and could now concentrate on booming out the jib. Knowing that the tiller-pilot would be utterly useless in these seas, I tested *Sally's* ability to steer herself with the aid of tiller-lines and wondered how long I could leave her to look after herself while I dived below and retrieved the whisker pole from its tied-up position under the foredeck. I dreaded the prospect of having to launch myself forward from the main cabin to reach the half hitch that tied the pole to the starboard side of the forecastle. I fiddled with the tiller lines for about 5 minutes until I was satisfied that I could risk leaving *Sally* to look after herself for a minute. I watched the waves coming up behind me and chose a moment when I thought there was not a large one rushing up to throw her off her course. I now left the tiller and launched myself down below. The half hitch was easily undone and the end of the spars that were held by it, fell in a clatter and a jumble onto the bunk. I now pulled out the shorter whisker pole and wiggled my way backwards through the cabin door into the cockpit. I was surprised to find that *Sally* had not luffed too much

and that she behaved admirably on her own. I sat in the cockpit for a bit recovering from the exercise and watched how *Sally* dealt with the waves and wind. But a sudden increase in the wind caused her to luff and I had to bring her back on course. I waited till she was stable and for a moment that allowed me to leap on deck to poke the end of whisker pole into the clew of the jib and hook the other end into the ring on the mast. It is a hazardous business venturing out on the foredeck at the best of times when running with the wind, but when the seas are likely to throw her sideways or cause her to luff, the chances of success in holding on to the jib, poking the end of the pole through the clew and hooking it up to the mast, are severely reduced. I needed three attempts to complete the operation successfully and bring back the sheet taut from the end of the whisker pole. What a difference that made: *Sally's* speed increased instantly and she became much better balanced. I sat down in the lee side of the cockpit feeling greatly exhausted, uncomfortably hot but pleased. The sun was out and sailing was a joy.

The 'Open Sea'

Once fully out into the river, the waves were larger and longer and probably helped me improve my speed. I admired *Sally's* seaworthiness and estimated that I might be able to do the 25 mile journey on the one tide in 6 hours. I began to calculate mentally the time of arrival. The increase in speed made it appear as though the wind had lost much of its force and I estimated the Southwesterly at no more than F5, when in reality it was F6. There were some distant black clouds over the land, but they tracked into a different direction and were no cause for concern. It was not long before we were off Brightlingsea, where I spotted a small two-masted Drascombe with

3 people on board under a scrap of mainsail and the tiniest foresail. I wondered whether they were testing the boat, themselves or just out for the hell of it, because they did not seem to venture out very far before tacking back to Brightlingsea. They had their oil-skins on and must have found it a pretty wet experience. *Sally* just cruised along going straight over the shallows off Brightlingsea. A few venturous seas came on board, but the water gurgled away happily through the scuppers in the toerail. It became apparent that I would not be able to adjust her course more northerly once past the end of the river without having to gibe and boom the jib out to the other side. To ease the management of this operation, I decided to continue on a slightly more easterly course, so that I could gibe firmly on to the other tack in due course, without having to worry about the danger of an involuntary gibe when on a more direct course towards Felixstowe. The waves in the Wallet did not appear any higher than in the Blackwater and I began to think that, if the wind held, I might make Levington in time for dinner. I was already visualising a lovely meal set down for me in the Levington Yacht club.

Storming along

I carried on for a mile into the Wallet and listed mentally the order of actions that a controlled gibe required. The sky had become cloudier and the sun now appeared only intermittently. Felixstowe hove in sight and the time for a gibe had come. I went through the list of actions again analysing each movement and calculating the risks. Every action seemed fraught with danger and I postponed the operation for another few minutes while I gathered my resolve to commence the first action. I pulled the tiller over gently and sheeted in

(Continued on page 8)

'Flying the Flag' Flag etiquette with Jill Davies, *Dark Star*

Whilst fortunate enough to be a guest at the Royal Yacht Squadron's pontoon in Cowes this Summer, I was reminded of the need to adhere to strict flag etiquette: 'The ensign must be struck by sundown and must be flying by 0800'. This prompted me to look around our own marina boats, which fly the usual combination of Club burgees, country flags, a couple of Jolly Rogers and some odd socks in their rigging. So why do we fly anything at all? Well there's a lot more to it than you might have thought!

Of course the ensign is a legal requirement and denotes national

identity. From 1606, James I ordered the combined flag of St. George and St. Andrew to be flown by ships at sea – the Scots were not keen as you can imagine, but had to concede after 1707 when the legal union of the two countries made it mandatory. There seemed to be little point in flying a flag in the dark, hence the tradition of lowering the flag at sunset.

During the 17th century all British ships were flying the same flag, sailors could not tell one ship from another and were failing to dip their ensign in honour of the King's ships, hence the 'Ensign Red' was introduced in 1674 and

adopted as the official flag of the merchant navy. It was not until 1801 when St Patrick's cross was added to those of St. George and St Andrew that it took on the form we recognise today, with the Union Flag in the canton.

The full British Union Flag only becomes the 'Union Jack' once it is flown aboard a ship, from a 'jackstaff' (originally a jackstay). If you fly the white-bordered Union Jack from a jackstaff on your bow, you are in effect requesting a pilot and according to the Pilotage Act of 1913, could incur a fine of £20 for misuse! The Union Flag should never be used as a courtesy

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 7)

Sally's cruise (continued)

the mainsail at the same time. Once the boom was nearly over the cockpit, I changed the preventer from port to starboard and then carried on pulling over the tiller. The wind suddenly caught the other side of the mainsail and I could ease her boom to port. I hauled the preventer taut. The mainsail was set. The sky had become cloudier in the meantime and a very black cloud appeared to move in my direction from over the land. I thought my luck was about to run its course and donned my wet weather gear. The first drops of rain sent a warning. The sun was now blotted out and the rain became more intense. Suddenly, the wind increased. *Sally* surged and all the running rigging proved to have more slack than theoretically possible. It was whipped against my beautifully varnished mast unremittingly. The rain came pelting down subduing the waves. I held my course and worried that the cloud might be bigger than comfortably possible, but the sky cracked at the

furthest edge over the land and blue appeared. Soon the cloud was past and took with it the heavy rain. The wind fell back. *Sally* raced on and made Felixstowe in no more than 4 hours from when we had set off just after 2 o'clock.

Orwell at last

The tide was still racing out of the Orwell and the Stour and I considered whether I should put into Shotley Marina rather than Levington Marina. But I could not be certain of the early morning opening times of the Shotley lock and the *Macmillan* nautical almanac could not help me. So I decided to carry on to Levington close-hauled and into the tide. The waves were small in the sheltered waters of the Orwell and *Sally* probably made about 4 knots herself with 1 knot of adverse tidal stream. It took nearly an hour before we were at a point past the Marina where I could take the sails down and be allowed to drift back on the tide towards the Levington approach. The engine started at once and I was soon looking for a

space that would allow me to get out quickly in the morning. I spotted a place not far from the entrance and slowing down the engine, attempted to manoeuvre *Sally* into it, but I had not counted on the strong wind blowing *Sally* uncontrollably sideways. There was nothing for it but to bump into the boat next door. Luckily, it had four fenders out and no damage was done to either boat, but I had great difficulty hauling her off and tying her to the weather side of the parking slot, jumping from one boat to the next and pulling various lines simultaneously. As soon as *Sally* was tied up, I inspected the stern gland again. It now leaked profusely, but I considered that the flow could be reduced by tightening the gland a little. With some loo-paper I cleaned around the shaft and the gland before tightening the nuts. The flow became a drip. I left it like that not wanting to put too much pressure on the gland. I would inspect it again once I reached Holland.

W. Eric Faber - *Sally*

(Continued from page 8)

flag etiquette (continued)

flag by overseas yachts or as an ensign by any of us.

Private yachts that wish to show respect in mourning can fly their ensign and club burgee at 'half-mast', (actually about a third of the way down is correct). You may recall the tabloid fuss when Buckingham Palace apparently refused to lower the "Union Jack" to half-mast when Princess Diana died? In fact it was the Royal Standard that was flying and this is never half-masted, even upon the death of a King or Queen, since there is always an heir to the throne and the country is never without a Sovereign.

Red, Blue and White

Most Tollesbury Cruising Club members fly the usual 'red duster', unless they are retired navy (or a few other categories), when it is permissible to fly the blue ensign; clubs with an Admiralty warrant (not necessarily 'Royal') are entitled to fly a defaced blue, or a defaced red, but it is only the Royal Yacht Squadron that can fly the white. Also, size matters! Often our ego is bigger than our yacht and a boat of 27-34 feet LOA should only be flying a one-yard ensign – it is not until you can afford the 43-footer that you should fly a yard and a half!

The forerunner of the Royal Thames Yacht Club started creating racing rules as early as 1775 – I know it's hard to believe, but Andy (Hobden), our own beloved Race Captain, isn't the first! Hence it is common practise that no ensign should be flown after the five-minute gun, though it is tradition to leave one's mooring with your colours visible. The large 'battle flag' that Chris (Edwards) introduced for

the Committee boat (thanks to the local car showroom in our case) is a recent tradition and has no maritime meaning, but it's incredibly helpful for those of us who like to start a race a little further from the start line than is the norm (note: a certain Ladies' Race in 2003?).

Burgees and Pennants

Club burgees and pennants should be flown at the masthead, especially if you are a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron or Royal Cruising Club who insist on this position. An alternative for the rest of us is to fly it at the crosstree on the starboard halyard. When visiting another country, it is a matter of courtesy to fly the local national flag above this. If you are worried about offending those around you with your flag etiquette: outer halyards are senior to inner, starboard halyards are senior to port, closer to the cross-trees is senior to those below – the ensign outranks all others. Having just been upgraded to a stitched ensign ourselves, and noticing the stock in the chandlers, I was amused to read recently in *Reed's Maritime Flags* 'printed flags look cheap and are cheap and they have no place at sea or on shore flagstaff. All flags should be sewn'.

Bunting the bunt

When we're partying on board our boats and flying bunting from the rigging, it's worth remembering that bunting refers to the original woollen material from which flags were made (possibly derived from the German 'bunt', to mean varying colours) but is not the same as being 'dressed overall'. For most of us, we just need to make a colourful display, but spare a thought for the Royal Navy which has to observe a strict sequence: 'E, Q,

p3, G, p8, Z, p4, W, p6, P, p1, I, answering pennant, T, Y, B, X, 1st, H, 3rd' (by which time you should have reached the masthead from the bows), then: 'D, F, 2nd, U, A, O, M, R, p2, J, p0, N, p9, K, p7, V, p5, L, C, S', but don't ask me in the bar what on earth all that means – this vexillology (study of flags) is beyond me!

'England Expects'

I could hardly write something on flags without making reference to the most famous flag signal of all time: Nelson's 'England expects that every man will do his duty' – in reality he originally wanted to say 'England confides ...' but it would have taken so long to spell out the word 'confides' ('expects' was in the signalling vocabulary) that the French probably would have won the Battle of Trafalgar.

Finally, in 1948, Capt. Thorne of the R.N.R. wrote: 'Flags correctly displayed, hoisted close up and with taut halyards, are to the seaman a visible indication of the smart ship. Dirty and torn bunting hanging just anyhow or anywhere tells a very different story'.... What would he make of the socks in Tollesbury?

P.S. **The Jolly Roger** should never be flown at all, unless you intend to board your fellow yachtsmen, though sometimes a good club cruise with a round of wine and beer should carry the precursor of the Jolly Roger, which really was flown by Pirates and Privateers as a signal to 'surrender' or there would be 'no mercy'...

Jill Davies

Dark Star

By dinghy to Tesco

**Dave McCombe—Rear
Commodore, Cruising
*Stargazer***

Tuesday 1st June saw *Stargazer* safely moored alongside the quay at Heybridge basin where we met our son and grandchildren who were to stay with us until the following Sunday. Cydney, our granddaughter is only 6 so we thought it best to stay moored up for 4 nights and give her a gentle introduction to boating, although she had been to Mersea Packing Shed Island for the Fish Shed picnic last year and bawled her eyes out when riding in the dinghy!

This was our first visit to Heybridge and is worth the visit for anyone who has not yet done so. It reminds me of Holland: peaceful, friendly and in a pretty location with various old craft and liveaboards (some as old as their craft!).

Heybridge Basin is a good location at the lower (river end) of the canal, furthest from Chelmsford. There is a residential lock keeper who, with his helpers and wife Margaret, does everything possible to make you welcome, taking lines and helping you on and off your mooring. There are around 100 moorings in total and always a few empty ones. Moorings for

larger yachts, barges, motor boats and cruisers up to around 100 feet long are available. There are good facilities, including laundry, toilets, showers and electric hook ups. Two pubs, café and gift shop are on the canal side. For further details contact the lock keeper, Colin Edmond on 01621 853506. Arrival and departure is usually just before high water and it is essential that you ring in advance – a. for a space & b. for the lock-in time. Colin also works in the pub opposite the lock so try and ring out of hours! Fees are around £15 a night depending on length.

There are lovely walks into Maldon either by way of the Chelmer canal or the path along the river Blackwater.

The highlight of our stay was the trip to Tesco which has a mooring alongside its car park. The weather was fair and, with Terry & Lorraine from *Nightjar*, we loaded ourselves into two dinghies for the 30 minute trip to the supermarket. I was with my grandson, Callum who, by now a competent dinghy handler, was managing well on the tiller on our return journey when we met a family – two swans and a clutch

of cygnets. Then all hell let loose – the rest of the story goes like this:

Callum – ‘it’s coming to get us’

Dave – ‘just keep going!’

Callum – ‘no, it’s going to get us!’

Dave – don’t put us into the weed!’

Dave - ***** hell!

You’ve put us in the weed!

Swan – rears up and hits Dave

Dave ‘I’ve got to clear the weed off the prop’

(engine re-starts and off we go)

Callum – ‘it’s still coming for us!’

Dave – ‘just keep going!’

Swan – rears up and hits Dave again!

(this time we drive at the swan who eventually loses interest – thank goodness!)

The rest of the journey and the stay was uneventful and very enjoyable. The swan, thankfully, did no damage and the children want to come for another visit but perhaps next time I’ll stick to travelling to Tesco by car!

Marina News

Regulars at the Marina will have been pleased to see that Dave Morris has now returned from his voyaging across ‘the pond’. He is now back in the brokerage and

probably keen to sell your boat. Ron Fry, however, is reportedly contemplating retirement. He is due to depart for a three month holiday in New Zealand and our

best wishes will go with him. Whether he can really tear himself away from the brokerage, only time will tell.

For Sale

‘Goldeneye’ battery monitor - two batteries - unused (tested only). £15.00

Contact Barry Jones on 01621 868554