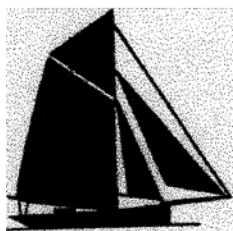


Volume 9, Issue 1, Spring 2004



# *Up The Creek...*

## New Season - New Team

The start of the 2004 sailing season sees a new committee for the Tollesbury Cruising Club. There have been greater changes in the makeup of the committee than for many years. The purpose of the new committee is, however, to build upon the sterling efforts of preceding committees over a number of years and develop the Club's programme of activities in an incremental manner.

I shall be particularly concerned to follow cautiously in the footsteps of Godfrey Brown, my predecessor as editor of *Up the Creek*. Minor developments in content include the

introduction of a free, 'small ads' section for members to advertise boating related items (including tenders and small boats) up to an asking price of £2,000. Readers will also notice the *Marina News*, which provides a further opportunity for the Marina management to provide up to date news about recent, and forthcoming, developments and to respond to any issues that have been raised with them by berth holders.

The development of off-shore wind farms continues to raise serious issues for local sailors. We are therefore reproducing an outline of

the most recent proposals for the second phase of wind farms, and a brief summary of related issues, so that TCC members can be aware of the prospects and possible problems.

*Up the Creek* benefits enormously from entries that report the adventures and experiences of Club members. Offers of entries will thus be most warmly welcomed and can be discussed with me on 01621 868554 or submitted directly via the marina office.

Barry Jones  
*Steorra of Tollesbury*

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# Commodore's New Season Message

From Betty McInnes, *Sutomi*

**It is quite daunting looking forward to the new season, to realise that this year, my first as Commodore. I, and the new committee, have a long and honourable tradition to uphold, to make sure that the sailing and racing programmes continue to be enjoyed by club members.**

In preparing the programme for the new season, we wanted to be sure that we had the right mix of events; retaining the old favourites, but trying to offer some variety. We have so many established fixtures in the calendar that are always well-attended and, knowing that people look forward to these, it would be impossible not to include them. At the same time, however, we thought that there are quite a few places within easy cruising range that we don't often visit as a club and so we endeavoured to include a few new events this year. I hope there is something for everyone in this year's cruising and social programme.

Our first club cruise this year is at **Easter, Friday 9 April** – Monday 12 April. The plan is to head for **Brightlingsea** on the Friday, and then we are booked into the lock at **Heybridge** basin for the Saturday evening, for dinner in the Ship. As some of the deeper draught boats may not be able to get over the sill on the Monday evening, there is some flexibility about whether people would like to stay up river or drop back down to **Bradwell** on the Sunday evening, for a quick return to Tollesbury on Monday morning.

**Race Captain Andy Hobden** has written elsewhere about the racing programme, but even if members prefer not to take part in races, they are always welcome to join in the social 'après race' events. On Saturday 1 May, following the **Pursuit Race**, we have arranged berths in **Titchmarsh** marina and booked a meal in the **Royal Frinton Yacht Club**. As it's a Bank Holiday weekend, and the tides are favourable, we propose taking the tide up to **Mistley**, at the head of the River Stour. It's possible to lie alongside the town quay at Mistley for a short time either side of HW, and there is certainly enough time for a stroll and a drink in the local hostelry. On Sunday evening, we hope to be able to drop our hooks in the peaceful anchorage at **Erwarton Ness**.

The late spring **Bank Holiday weekend** is, once again, the occasion of the annual **Calais Rally**, and we hope that there will be another fantastic turn-out for Tollesbury, when we meet up with many other clubs from the East coast in Calais. Some of us will have to get back to Tollesbury after the weekend, but weather permitting, many members often take the op-

portunity to enjoy a few days in France or Belgium before heading for home.

On Sunday 11 July, we have arranged our annual picnic on **Packing Shed Island in Mersea Quarters**. This is always one of our most popular events, and as numbers on the island are restricted in order to protect the nesting birds there, please do book early if you plan to attend.

We haven't yet taken a decision on where to head for our **summer cruise** this year, but as usual, we have earmarked the two-three weeks from Saturday 24 July. We would like to hear members' views on whether they would prefer Holland or France as their destination, but wherever we go, it is always fun to make passage in company and to enjoy the ambience, knowing we have got there under our own sail or even diesel power.

On the weekend of **13-15 August**, we propose a new event. It means leaving on the late-night tide on Friday evening, and possibly picking up a mooring in Mersea Quarters, but the idea is to venture a little further up the **River Colne** than we normally go, to **Rowhedge** on Saturday lunchtime, then drop back down the river on the ebb to **Mersea Stone**, where we will have a barbecue.

The following weekend, Sunday 22 August, we face our annual challenge against Maldon Little Ship Club, for the **Buxey Ashes**.

In recent years, we have had an excellent turn-out for the late sum-

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# Rolling Down (to Rio?)

Dave Morris (from the Woodrolfe Brokerage) is on sabbatical, sailing in the USA, and writes:

Well, we have struggled down to the Dominican Republic (it's a hard life!) and now sit in an internet cafe in Luperon (a magnet for all those hippy boaty types).

We started our little cruise in Charleston, South Carolina in late November (we bought the boat in June 2003 and I flew out in October to give it a make-over ready for Jo!).

We spent a month cruising down the Intercoastal Waterways through South Carolina, Georgia and Florida to Lake Worth (Palm Beach). We loved Georgia - so wild and

natural but it was there that our gearbox seized and a forced 2 weeks in harbour grated our nerves. I now know how to fit a transmission!

We then crossed the gulf stream to Grand Bahama, then sailed for 30 hours to get to Nassau. We loved Nassau - just the hustle and bustle of the place was infectious. Then we cruised down the Exuma islands to Georgetown. The Exumas are just breathtaking, sailing in 15 feet of clear emerald water on the banks with good anchorages all the way and fantastic snorkelling.

Georgetown is a place where all the sailing fraternity head. You love it or hate it. The Americans organise Softball, Volleyball, cocktail parties etc over the VHF and most boats stay for ever and never leave.

We left!

The Far Out Bahama islands further South were our favourite so far. A real struggle against head winds all the way; every inch is hard work. The rewards are great; the islands, mostly uninhabited, are superb.

Then we sailed overnight to the Turks and Caicos (a little built up and very expensive) and then another overnight last night. We ran into a rain squall this morning and I got soaked.

The boat is great, a Canadian built Bayfield 32, 35ft overall with cutter rig and long keel (4ft6 draft - good for the East Coast!). Might bring her back, might leave her in Trinidad - who knows where the wind will blow us (backwards probably!)

*(Continued from page 2)*

## From the Commodore (continued)

mer cruise in the week of the **August Bank Holiday**. This year we have decided to make the East Coast rivers our destination, starting with the River Orwell and dinner at the **Royal Harwich Yacht Club** on the evening of Saturday 29 August. From there, we plan to take in at least the **Deben** and **Ore**, and hopefully make it up to Lowestoft, before returning to **Shotley** by the following Saturday, 4 September, where we will meet up in the **Bristol Arms** with the follow-

ing weekend's cruising and racing members.

The yard is already bustling with activity, and it won't be long now till the fitting out supper. As usual, the morning after, Sunday 4 April, members of the committee will be on hand to greet old and new members alike, at the **New Members' morning**. This is always a good opportunity to chat about the forthcoming season, and I look forward to seeing many of you there and on the water.

*David Walkerdine (Idaho), who is organising the Frostbite Cruise, also writes:*

For those that have not been to either destination before, the following may be helpful:

**Brightlingsea** - we will be on the pontoon moorings but it is unlikely that the water taxi will be running so, if people need to take a trip ashore, dinghies will be required.

**Heybridge Basin** - access is from 1.5 before HW to just after HW. because there are quite a number of us people should be prepared to arrive in plenty of time and perhaps drop their anchor just off the entrance to make sure that the lock keeper has time to fit us all in. The lock is likely to be well packed so plenty of fenders is the order of the day!

# The Racing Season

**Andy Hobden**

*Rear Commodore Racing*

## TCC Racing 2004

**It is difficult to follow a great act like Robin Kemp as Rear Commodore Racing.**

How do you do it? Hopefully by building on his successes with, perhaps, a few tweaks around the edges.

I'm Andy Hobden. For those that do not know me I sail *Tongue Twister*. People seemed to think I know about racing so I got lumbered.

Racing with TCC should continue to be fun, with something for everyone, and with growing expertise, you can get to the bar earlier having won some nice trophies.

TCC races fall into three categories:

### 'Passage' Races

The Pursuit Race, The Goldie Challenge Race and The Steve Rix Trophy are excuses to race to or from the various club social events. They start at the Nass Beacon and are timed to run with the most effective tide for the destination. You all pass the Nass and you all cross the finish line. The courses follow a seamanlike route, so there is little excuse for not participating. If you lack confidence on the start line, stay back and cross a few minutes late and enjoy the cruise up to the finish line.

**The Pursuit Race** on the 1<sup>st</sup> May ends at the Pye End buoy this year to enable us to visit Titchmarsh Marina. The idea is for everyone to start at different times, depending on handicap, so that we all cross the finishing line together. Robin got it down to a fine art. This year could produce some interesting results.

**The Goldie Challenge Race to Burnham** is on June 12<sup>th</sup>. This year the tides favour us with a bit of a

lie in as high water is at 08:30, allowing a civilised breakfast in the Leavings or West Mersea and a midday start.

**The Steve Rix Trophy** is being raced back from Harwich on the 5<sup>th</sup> September to coincide with the completion of the late summer cruise. The old format for this race was to start at Harwich Breakwater, leave Essex to Starboard, and finish at the Nass. However, current thinking suggests that it is probably not a good idea to set a course which potentially crosses sandbanks and land.

### 'Round the Cans' Races

These are the Ladies races and the *Teddy Bear Trophy*. This year we are running the three races over the weekend of 22/23 May: 'Regatta Weekend'. The intention is to run the *Teapot Trophy* (Lady helm) to Brightlingsea on the Saturday and the *Boudica Trophy* (all female crew) back to Tollesbury on the Sunday.

It would be nice to see more entries for the *Boudica Trophy* this year to give Jill and Hilary a run for their money. One thought to boost entries is to invite Tollesbury Sailing Club to participate.

For this year at least, the *Teddy Bear Trophy* is renamed the *Teddy Boy Race* and gives all the boys displaced by the *Boudica* crews the chance to race back to Tollesbury and hopefully experience crewing on other vessels. The Two races will sail the same course but with starts 10 minutes apart. The requirement to hoist a Teddy Bear in the rigging to compete is dropped, as everyone seemed to have managed to get hold of the 35mm high aerodynamic racing Teddies.

There will be handicap advantages for anyone sailing in the event in full Teddy Boy outfits. The *Boudica* results will be included with the *Teddy Boy* for the award of the *Howlett Trophy* a glass decanter which I think is the correct title of the *Teddy Bear Trophy* and one of the nicer trophies to win.

### 'Open' events

These are the events where we race against other clubs.

**The Wallet Long Race** on the 10th July is organised by the TCC and we race against our friends from Tollesbury Sailing Club (TSC). The course is up the Wallet and back again on the tide.

**The Kings Head Cup** on the 18<sup>th</sup> September is the return match organised by TSC. We have done well in this in recent years and hope to continue the trend. For those who have not done it, it is a great excuse to see the back of Osea Island, which does not normally form part of our cruising area. The race is run on the top of a high spring tide and there is (usually) plenty of water.

**The Wallet Shield** on the 26<sup>th</sup> June is the big race of the year. A team event, we compete against five other local clubs for the trophy. This year Maldon Little Ship Club hosts the event. The best three results from each club count but we can enter as many boats as we like. Last year's event, organised by TSC, was excellent with thirty-five boats on the line, a good wind, and a cracking course.

**The Round Gunfleet Race.** The inaugural race was held last year. It was organised by Wivenhoe Sailing Club and we don't know if it

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

### **The Racing Year, continued**

will run again this year. If it does it is about 45 miles around the Gunfleet sands. Watch the notice board if interested.

#### **Personal handicaps**

The personal handicap system developed by Robin continues for the in-house races with normal Portsmouth yardsticks applying for the Open Events.

The personal handicaps have been posted on the notice board together with an 'additions' list for all those new goodies you have bolted on since last year. I have been spying on the feverish activity in the yard this winter and although I cannot handicap anyone for polishing the bottom, fitting new go fast blocks, stripping unwanted gear etc., I do need to know about new folding props, spinnakers, cruising chutes etc.

The handicaps are based on last year's results but, as several of the races suffered long drifting periods at the start, it has been felt that some of the adjustments may be harsh so personal handicaps will be reviewed after every race this year.

#### **Racing Rules**

Robin Kemps racing notes on the

Notice board by the Gents Loo provide details of most aspects of our racing. However, some general points might be helpful for those considering racing for the first time.

The course and any specific instructions plus entry list are posted on the Main Notice board a few weeks before each race.

For TCC races the TCC Committee boat will call up each boat on the list before the start to confirm they are racing and numbers of crew on board (for safety reasons). Any late entries need to make their presence known at this time.

For the Open events, all entries need to be notified in advance. The race/course instructions posted before the event will contain all the necessary information.

#### **Committee Boat**

*Calidris* has kindly offered to act as committee boat for the Pursuit race, The Teapot Races and The Steve Rix races. Volunteers will, however, be gratefully accepted for the other events. This is also a chance for any of the Clubs Motor boaters to join in the events. Full training is offered, normally involving waving a few flags, blowing horns, drinking tea, sunbathing and possibly chasing after the fleet to beat them to the finish line to take their times.

#### **Finishing Times.**

In case the Committee boat is not on station for any reason please get in the habit of logging your finish time, by GPS clock if possible and note the boats that finish ahead of and behind you.

**Use of engines:** Seasoned racers might also find these points about the use of engines after the start helpful. There has been some controversy in recent years regarding the use of engines after the 10-minute gun due to light drifting conditions pushing boats over the start line. Ideally, under such conditions yachts should place themselves upwind of the start line and drop an anchor, (preferably a light kedge). Failing this, **and for the Three TCC passage races only**, the use of engines will be allowed to re-cross the starting line. The penalty is that yachts must then motor up to the Mersea No.3 buoy (black with yellow flag), before rounding it, and sailing from there.

**A further reminder:** It is the sole responsibility of every skipper to decide whether to race and whether to continue racing and to ensure that their vessels are well found and suitably equipped for any event.

Good Racing

Andy Hobden, *Tongue Twister*

## Memories are Made of These

Up the Creek can be enriched by a variety of contributions from TCC members. Observations on the sailing scene, like those of David Knight in this edition, can do much to enliven the reading of members. So, too, can memories drawn from their past experiences: informative; alarming; amusing; or just down

right ridiculous. Members might have particular observations upon 'foreign' ports visited, cruising routes explored, techniques applied or equipment experienced. Observation on any, or all, will be most warmly welcomed, however short. Please send all such contributions to the editor via the Marina Office.

#### **Copy Dates for 2004:**

Monday 28 June

Monday 27 September

# Fitting Out

With Vice Commodore David Knight, *Dionysus*

## End of winter musings and start of season thoughts

So what does your winter refit consist of?

Yet again, this year's chores started as a short list of half a dozen items or so, and then it started to grow, and how did it grow. Every weekend it felt I was the only sad boat owner slavishly working on his boat as the January evening drew in at 3.00 o'clock. I then proceeded home doubled up with stiff joints from working in freezing conditions, in the most peculiar positions, that are the reserve of circus performers. The net result of such efforts is that you've spent half a day trying to undo four bolts, at arms reach, with a torch wedged in your mouth and the engine water pump in your right ear!

It is beyond comprehension how one simple job could actually take so long, and whilst being completed, spawn another dozen jobs. All are equally as simple on paper, but totally beyond human endurance and patience once attempted onboard. How many of you have thought it a good idea to touch up a chip in the Gel Coat repairs in these freezing conditions; only to find it is still soft a week later?

Knuckles seem to get a hard bashing; you only seem to notice that you've cut yourself when you suddenly see a trail of blood across the upholstery. Screw drivers, and knife blades slip more easily and have greater affinity with any exposed flesh.

### Winter Lay-offs

I can't believe how other boat owners, disappear in Mid October, only to return in April, spending a day polishing and painting (including a light lunch in the club house) before "plop" the boats back in the water; looking shiny and seductive. Please, please, if this is you then I am in need of some help. You have obviously found a more painless way of boat ownership.

Apart from the weekend forays at the boat, there are the items you bring home for care and attention – by the carload, until the garage and attic are completely full. These are then returned to the boat in spring, untouched apart from removing the saw dust, caused by rubbing down the wash boards at the other end of the garage.

At this point the Lady of the

House (She Who Must Be Obeyed) discloses a diary full of dinner and social dates, to catch up with all those old friends that you've missed whilst sailing during the summer.

'But please darling, I really have to get another 5 coats of varnish on those wash boards, before the weekend,' I cry.

It feels like a conspiracy, not to let you get the jobs done, but somehow strangely perverse, so I intend to invite them **all** out sailing this summer!

### The Call of Home

Family duties, home DIY jobs, and the like tend to get worked around until SWMBO notices that the job she asked you to do last autumn remains undone.

I feel that perhaps this escapism harks back to my child hood, when at the age of 8, my parents banished me to the garden shed or workshop as I called it. This was somewhere I could go and make my model aircraft and boats, without endangering the rest of the household. It was far safer than allowing me to store the highly inflammable ether based engine fuel under my bed!

David Knight

## Small Adverts for TCC Members

*Up the Creek* now invites free adverts from Tollesbury Cruising Club members for boating-related items up to £2,000 in value. Such items may include boat's tenders and small sailing dinghies, in addition to other nautical miscellany. Please send the text of your ad-

vertisement to the editor, via the Marina Office, remembering to provide your contact details and comprehensive information about the items that are for sale.

# Packing it In - Mersea Style

**The Packing Shed Seafood Lunch is being held on Sunday July 11<sup>th</sup> this year. As in past years, this event will take place in the packing shed on Packing Marsh Island. You can't miss the shed which is black with a red roof; it is quite a landmark when arriving from the south.**

## **Before the event**

A notice will be placed on the board in the clubhouse well before the weekend allowing you to indicate numbers of lunches required. The notice will also include timings for the day. The cost is usually around £10 per person but it depends exactly how many arrive on the day.

## **Arrival/Mooring**

As with all club events, individual skippers are responsible for their own navigation/pilotage. We will be arriving just before low water

and if you want to be sure of a buoy near the shed, it is best to be there early. It is sometimes necessary, or even preferable, to raft up with a 'friend', but it is usually possible to find an accommodating club member to share a buoy with. Do, however, take care that the mooring is of a suitable capacity.

Transport to the island is either by your own tender or the West Mersea Yacht Club launch 'YC One' (VHF Channel 37) or the boat yard launch CC One (VHF Channel ?) if they are available.

There is a landing stage and ramp

up to the shed but at low water there is a gap of mud so be equipped for a muddy beach landing. The island is a nesting site for many seabirds and although the season will be almost over in July we should all take care not to disturb any remaining young.

## **Lunch**

The food provided is good quality seafood, but bring your own plates, cutlery, salad, bread, wine and anything else you might need. The facilities in the shed are basic but fun. There is a toilet but you may prefer to wait! All rubbish must be taken away with us. The organiser will ensure there are black bin bags available and will take the bulk of rubbish away at the end of the day.

I look forward to seeing you there

David Cooke

*Clytie (formerly)*

## Marina News

### *News and Views from Tollesbury Yacht Harbour*

Julian Goldie reports that activity has been brisk as the new season approaches in the Marina. Extensive dredging has now been completed along 'D' pontoon and in the approaches to the Fuel Pontoon. Many TCC members will also have noted the new aluminium baggage trolleys which have been carefully sized to fit onto the bridges that link the pontoons to the shore.

Repairs and refurbishments are also underway. The Marina Sill has been re-levelled, providing an additional foot of water within the Ma-

rina at low tide, and will be given a new concrete skim during the summer months. The car parking area has been resurfaced and the 'spring tides' lane re-levelled. The Club garden areas have received an extensive makeover.

In the next few months it is hoped that the electricity boxes on pontoons B and D will be replaced by new outlets (with A and C following in subsequent years). The late summer and early autumn will also see more work on the internal harbour wall inside 'J' pontoon, as

'backpoling' is undertaken to strengthen the structure and increase its resistance to pressure deformation.

Julian is particularly pleased to be able to report that Tollesbury Marina has been shortlisted for a 'Gold Harbour' award by the Yacht Harbours Association and that he has also been elected to the governing council of the Association.

# Further Wind Farm Schemes

**A second phase of wind farm developments is now under active consideration. A chart of the new schemes that are being negotiated is being included so that TCC members can keep in touch with developments and consider their possible effects upon their sailing.**

TCC members may be aware of the intense debates that have been generated by the proposals for extensive wind farms. The Ministry of Defence is concerned about their effects upon Radar systems that monitor marine and aerial activity around the UK's coasts. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds is arguing that extensive wind farms will cause considerable inconvenience to, and possible loss of life by, the large numbers of birds that inhabit, or visit, our coastal regions. The Royal Yachting Association is also representing the many concerns of yachtsmen over the navigational limitations, and some maritime dangers, that may be created by widespread wind farm developments. To date, the RYA has secured agreement to an increase of the clearance height of wind generator arms to 22 meters. Chris Edwards (*Calidris*) is actively involved in many of these negotiations, through his membership of the RYA regional committee.

