

Volume 13, no. 1, Spring 2008



Up the Creek...

Last Chance for the Granary?

A renewed effort to secure £275,000 for the restoration of the Tollesbury Granary is now underway. A second application has been submitted to the Lottery Fund by the Mid Essex Historical Buildings' Trust. This may be the last chance

for the Granary which faces increasing danger of collapse in the face of severe weather. If successful, the restored Granary would provide a new visitors' centre, with information on local maritime history.

The photograph on page 3 serves to remind marina users of the relationship between high spring tides and the Granary.

Editor

Red Diesel 'Result'

The government's has been 'consulting' over the management of the phasing out of duty-free diesel for leisure sailors, in the light of the removal of the UK's concession by the European Union. The government has now opted for the retention of red diesel at marine outlets but for it to be charged at full (i.e., duty paid) price. This proposal will clearly ease the difficulties facing the sellers of marine diesel but will do nothing to resolve the problem that has, and will continue to

be, experienced by those entering the waters of other member states of the European Community, who encounter customs officials asserting that the use of red diesel by leisure boat users is illegal. Now that the alternatives to the retention of full-duty, red diesel have been rejected, it is to be hoped that the British Government will impress upon its European 'partners' that they should ensure that their own officials are fully up-to-date with British practices. Otherwise, UK

yachtsmen will have to carry receipts to prove that they have paid duty on any red diesel in their boats' tanks when they visit Continental waters. Receipts issued for duty-paid, red diesel from marine outlets will also have to be enhanced to demonstrate the duty and VAT elements that have been paid by leisure boaters.

Editor

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Commodore's Message

from David Walkerdine

Has anyone else noticed that the nights are drawing out? That can only mean one thing.... It's time to get the boat ready for the season. I have noticed over the last few weeks that many of you are actively polishing and antifouling ready for the season ahead.

Early Events

I do hope that you have all had a good winter and that you are now looking forward to the year ahead. Since the last *Up the Creek* we have now finalised the programme and I hope you have all now received a copy of it inside the marina tide table. I am really excited about this year's programme. Easter is early this year so our first cruise of the season will be the Easter cruise to explore the river Crouch. I hope that those of you who have been in the water all winter, or are particularly organised and managed to be launched in time, will join in.

Fitting-Out for the Season

The first social event of the season is the fitting out supper on Saturday 29th of March. By now you should have received the menu choices in the post. As always we will be raising money for the **RNLI** on the evening and I hope to see lots of you there so

that we can start the season in style.

Season's Briefing

Sunday 30th March is the new members morning/seasons briefing. This is a great chance to meet new members and old friends to hear all of the details of the cruises, races and social events for the year ahead and I would encourage all members both new and old to come along. It's also a great opportunity for us on the committee to meet you and to hear what sort of events you would like to see included in the programme in the future. As last year we will be backing up the new members morning with a 'New members and Old Friends' cruise to Bradwell, where we will have a BBQ at Bradwell Quay Yacht Club.

Racing Too

The racing season kicks off in May with the pursuit race to Harwich and the Wallet long race. The races are open to all and are usually a lot of fun. Remember you can join in even if you are not racing and treat it as another cruise. There is usually a meal in the pub afterwards!

Having a Ball

The highlight of the social calen-

dar this year will be the Midsummer Masque Ball. This will be held on Saturday 21st June and will be a great chance to dust off the Dinner Jacket or Ball Dress and enjoy some good food, good music and good company. Don't forget your mask!

Web Wonders

The details of all of these events and all of the events for 2008 can be found on the web site at:

www.tollesburycruisingclub.co.uk

and we have now added a discussion forum, so I hope that it will become even easier for us all to communicate.

Winning the Prize

Finally, in the last edition of *Up the Creek* I offered a prize for the best article submitted for publication. I hope to announce the winner on the web site shortly, but there will be another bottle of champagne up for grabs for the next edition as well, so keep those articles coming!

I hope that your fitting out goes well and I look forward to seeing you on the water soon. Lets hope this season brings fair winds and fine weather!

David Walkerdine

Ariel Spirit

Contributions Always Welcome

Contributions of all types are warmly welcomed for *Up the Creek*. Reports of interesting cruising experiences remain our 'bread and butter'. Reflections upon sailing techniques and/or equipment are also much appreciated. Contributions from some of our younger members would

provide some interesting variety. Improved photocopying facilities, and the availability of a full-colour version on the TCC's new website, also make the inclusion of members' interesting photographs an increasingly attractive option.

Any contributions can be sent to the editor – Barry Jones – at: barryatzevkim@waitrose.com, or, on CD ROMs, through the Marina Office. I should be happy to discuss any possible contributions over the telephone – on 01621 868554

Racing Pre-view—2008

After such a nice sunny February, it feels like spring is already upon us, spurring me on to get *Dionysus* ready for the season.

We are starting the 2008 Racing Season with the **Pursuit Race** on the 3rd of May. With a Pursuit Race, each entrant is given a specific Start Time from my handicap calculations. The idea is that all the fleet crosses the finishing line together. Needless to say this never happens, but, hopefully, all boats will finish within 20 minutes or so of one another, and this can make for an exciting finish, as the faster boats converge on the slower boats, which started that much earlier.

A date not included in the Tide/Events Calendar is that of the **Wallet Long Race**, on the 11th May. We were unable to agree a date with the Tollesbury Sailing Club, with whom we are competing, before we had to go to print. By definition it is a Long Race and is organised on the day following **The Commodore's Cocktail Party**. We can leave the Marina on the early Sunday morning tide,

then run the race, and be back in, on the evening tide. Being a spring tide, you can guarantee a trip all the way up the Wallet and back!

In June we have two Races planned. **The Wallet Shield Race** (14th June), which is a club 'team' event amongst Bradwell Quay Sailing Club, Maldon Little Ships, Colne Yacht Club, Wivenhoe Sailing Club, Tollesbury Sailing Club and us. This year the event is being organised by **Colne Yacht Club** and should be a great day. The shield is awarded to the club which has the 3 fastest boats on handicap. You can also be assured that the host club will put on a good party in the evening.

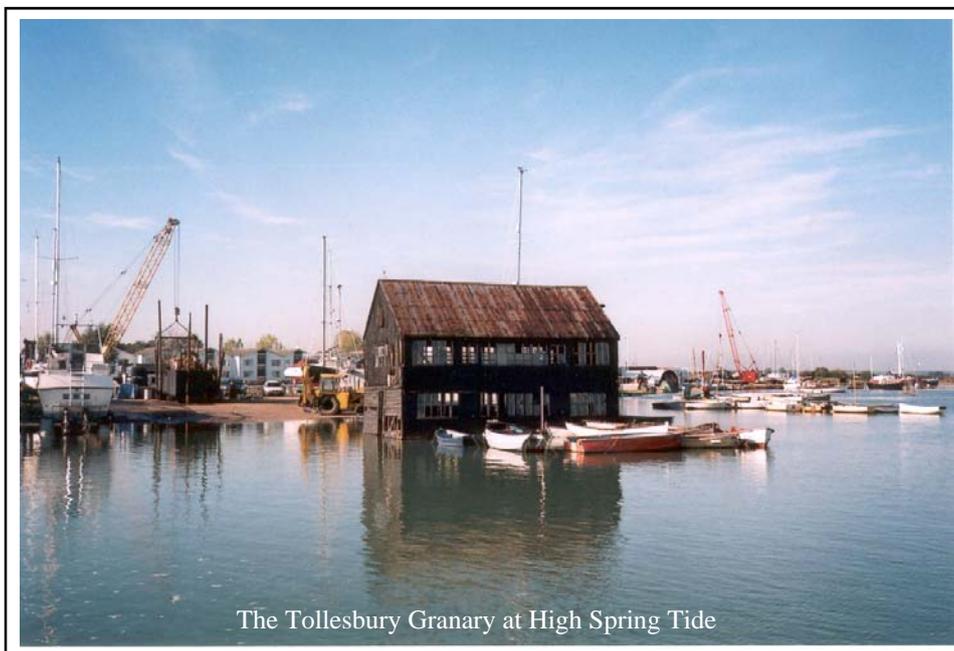
The Goldie Challenge on the 28th June is always an enjoyable race, from The Nass Beacon to Burnham. This year we are going to re-introduce the "formal dinner" at the **Royal Burnham Yacht Club**, where jackets and ties are the order of the day. Hopefully they will open their trophy room so we can marvel at the mount of silverware that is owned by the Club.

I am also making a plea for volunteers to act as **Committee Boat**. This is a great opportunity for either non-racing yachties or motor cruisers to get involved. In reality it is not very difficult and basically means organising the start (checking who's racing then doing the count-down), then, if it is a passage race, moving to set up the finish, whilst monitoring what is going on, and then timing every one as they finish. All the calculations for handicaps and any queries concerning the racing rules will all be looked afterwards, by yours truly. So, if you are interested, please contact me; your assistance would be gratefully received.

Also, if anyone is not interested in racing but just wishes to come along for a cruise, you will be made most welcome to join the evening's social event.

Dave Knight

Dionysus



The Tollesbury Granary at High Spring Tide

Early Days with Colin Shead

I'm an Addict; and its all Robin Kemp's fault !!

Robin Kemp is well known to many at the TCC, having been a member for more years than either of us probably cares to remember. In 1971 I moved next door to Robin and Jean, quite unsuspecting as to what lay in store. We soon became good friends and I learnt that Robin had a **Voyager** in his garage. This was a small 14' 6" sailing cruiser, on a trailer. Some time later I was invited for a day sail from Brightlingsea. The weather was terrible, drizzly rain most of the day, BUT I was already addicted, and have never looked back.



Soon after that Robin and I built and shared a Mirror dinghy, but Robin was already enamoured with the **Leisure 17**, and every London Boat Show we visited the **Cobramold** stand and ogled and wondered where the money could be found! Cobramold used to have arrangements with various sail



training organisations and I spent a few days in the West Country

learning how to sail on a Leisure 17. After that I needed no further convincing; the Leisure 17 was for me.

A second hand **Leisure 17**, *Pamink*, was advertised in the local paper and, on borrowed money, I bought my first real yacht for about £1000; quite a lot in those days. The previous owner wanted to keep the name, so I renamed her *Amink*, purely because I could not remove more than the 'P' of her sign written name. Robin soon followed suit, and we had a pair of Leisure 17's based in Brightlingsea. Lots of sailing in company followed; difficult as VHF was far too expensive for us and mobiles had yet to be invented. In fact when I bought my first dry battery powered Seafarer echo sounder it was the 'bees knees'. I had spent several years with only a compass for company.

Running aground was a frequent experience, which probably explains why I can cut corners around the river **Blackwater estuary** with some certainty these days, having gained the knowledge the hard way! The original rather dodgy Seabee 4hp air cooled outboard was rather easily swamped (as we discovered the hard way when aground off Brightlingsea entrance in a largish swell) and was replaced by a much more reliable, new Mariner 5.

We sailed the 17 from the **Deben** in the North of the **Thames Estuary**, down to **The Crouch** and in all sorts of weather.

After a few years, I sold the Leisure 17, and in 1981 bought a



new **Leisure 20** *Peace* at the Southampton Boat Show. Jan and I had a young family at the time, and my youngest daughter joined us at 3 months old, and had her picture published in **Practical Boat Owner** being bathed in the



Leisure 20 sink.

She spent many happy hours on the cabin sole in her carry cot whilst we 'bashed' around the estuary, whilst her elder sister became quite a good helmswomen.

Apart from being a super wife and mother, I am very fortunate that Jan is a real sailing enthusiast and can steer a much better course than myself. Jan likes nothing better than a stiff beat, with the lee rail under! In fact Jan would turn every point of sail into a beat

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early days (continued)

given half a chance! **Robin** also bought a **Leisure 20 Polo II**, so the double act continued around the Thames Estuary.

The second stage of my addiction began in 1982 when it was reported in the **PBO** that a Geoff Godfrey has started up a **Leisure Owners Association** on the South Coast. I rang Geoff, and arranged that he would visit us and address an inaugural meeting that we would organise for the East Coast. I advertised in the local paper, setting date and time in the Green Man at **Bradwell on Sea**. As I recall the bar was pretty well packed, and we had a real crowd of about 20 Leisure Owners turn up; most signed up right away.

Robin and I spent a lot of time over the next few years organising sailing and shore side events, and spent a lot of time encouraging other Leisure Owners to join up. In the days before the web, and VHF on most boats, this involved literally chasing other yachts we spotted and giving them information packs, phone numbers etc. The Association grew rapidly on both South and East Coasts; now to 400 members worldwide. Robin and I remain members, even though neither of us now owns a Leisure yacht.

By 1983 the **Leisure 20** was getting a little small for the growing family, so we bought *Sunrise*, our **Leisure 23SL**, first launched in

1984. I cannot begin to explain how much fun we had with *Sunrise* over the years. On *Sunrise* we enjoyed family holidays every year for a couple of weeks, plus sailing almost every summer weekend, almost all of it with the family (plus William the dog!). In later years my teenage daughters may not always have been the most willing sailors, but they certainly enjoyed the freedom, the yacht clubs etc. and the quality time with Mum and Dad.

Robin also acquired a Leisure 23SL called *Polo III* but after a few years was tempted by a new **Aphrodite 29**, which he named *Polo IV* (by the way, in case you don't know, all Robin's boats have been named Polo's (i.e. mint with the hole) after an unfortunate incident with his Leisure 17 and a road trailer, resulting in a big hole in the hull, with the tide flooding in at Brightlingsea!). Robin still has *Polo IV*; and a very fine (and fast!) yacht she is.

In 2005 the third and maybe the final stage of my addiction began when I decided we needed a bigger boat. As I had retired and was looking forward to an easier life I thought about a heavy displacement power boat. Jan was horrified, so we then considered motor sailers; none met with our expectations; then we began to look at **Moody 27's**, which was about the biggest boat I could get on my mooring at Brightlingsea.

Then guess what – the same **Robin Kemp** who had started my addiction all those years before - spotted a **Moody 28** for sale at Fox's in Ipswich. The following day

we went to see her, we both thought she was pretty good overall if a bit tatty. Robin enthused about the Parker and Kay sails and soon had me convinced (not that I needed much convincing!) that this was the boat for Jan and I; not that



Jan had seen the boat of course! My 'silly' offer was accepted the same day, so it was just as well that Jan gave *Toodle Pip* the 'thumbs up' the following day.

Mind you, Jan took a lot of convincing, and could not understand how I could bear to part with *Sunrise* after 20+ years. *Toodle Pip* became part of our life and we sold our beloved *Sunrise*, and she is now based in Littlehampton, West Sussex.

Lots of TLC was needed to bring *Toodle Pip* back to scratch. After 2 years of hard work, *Toodle Pip* has won her place in our affections, she sails superbly and has the space we need for extended living aboard.

On balance, I think **Robin** did me quite a favour all those years ago; not all addictions are unpleasant.

Colin Shead
Toodle Pip



The Summer Cruise

By Roger Clark

The annual summer cruise has been undertaken for the last 11 years by Roger the skipper and Ray, the willing and very welcome crew, in a Drascombe Longboat cruiser DOMARO and lately in a Drascombe Drifter GORDIUS.

This is *GORDIUS* without whom none of following would have been possible.



The original meeting of skipper and crew took place on the platform of Hungerford railway station. Not you might think the most appropriate place to meet and greet a crew when you had only had a brief telephone conversation with him, which from memory consisted of, you do realise how small this vessel is, and do you like Digestive biscuits with marmalade with your morning cup of tea in bed. My concern was that Ray had been a chief engineer for British India Line and was used to rather larger vessels. This meeting has forged a comradeship which has endured canal trips in England and Scotland, Festivals of the Sea at Bristol and Portsmouth, and various Old Gaffers and Drascombe rallies and meetings on the East Coast. No matter how bad the weather, 10 days on a small cruiser does nothing to dampen his spirits and now I don't really have to ask if he wants to

come down from Sunderland to sample some more of the delights of the Essex coast, or more realistically, a bumble about on the Essex rivers. This year - 2007 - has been no different.

Friday morning the rain and wind conspired to make leaving Tollesbury Marina less than inviting, so after breakfast and a listen to the forecast a trip out by car was organized to **Burnham on Crouch**. A walk along the front and mugs of tea with toasted tea cakes in the bikers' café in the High Street, whilst the wind howled outside, whiled away the afternoon. The evening was accounted for by an invitation to dinner from another sailing friend. A

fine meal and sufficient liquid refreshment rounded off a most enjoyable day. We slept well.

Saturday morning the forecast was still very poor but we decided to suffer whatever the weather had in store for us.

Sailing out into the river Blackwater under reduced rig of jib and jigger we quickly reached across to the **Bradwell shore** but it became obvious that progress up river against wind and tide would not be possible. The appearance of the sky and the strong south westerly wind suggested that we anchor close in under the Bradwell shore, have breakfast and review our options.

So the question was where had we not been before and, if we went there, would it be possible to get back if the weather did not improve?

Lawling Creek seemed a good option, and if necessary we could spend a night in the Blackwater

Marina. With wind and tide against us, the motor up river was not the most enjoyable but by the time we had reached the entrance to Lawling creek it was almost low water and we were able to relax, anchor, have some lunch and wait for the tide to make before entering the creek.

Often there are seals disporting themselves on the sandy point, but on this occasion they were much further in the creek, and we had the pleasure of seeing a dozen or so mothers and pups hauled out on the mud looking very relaxed but keeping a wary eye on this invader of their privacy.

Blackwater Marina seemed to be a sensible option for the night bearing in mind the still less than settled forecasts. Although the marina dries out, we found it to be welcoming and the facilities are very good. A goodly number of classic boats, smacks and barges in various states of repair and refurbishment gave us plenty to admire and drool over. A very excellent fish and chip shop, pub, and general store are all within a few minutes walking distance. A place with that indefinable East Coast flavour, it just feels right.

The forecast for Sunday was a bit ambiguous. However, by the time that the tide had made sufficiently, in early afternoon, the sun had also arrived, accompanied by a gentle breeze to give us a fine and most enjoyable sail out of the creek and up river to **Maldon**, where we spent a pleasant night alongside the visitors' pontoon.

The Monday 07.10 coastguard weather forecast gave wind forces of 7 to 8 gusting 9 later. Time to take up gardening again? Drascombe owners will, of course,

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Summer cruise (continued)

praise their craft at every turn, but there is a limit, usually the crew.

We decided that a visit to the **Blackwater and Chelmer Navigation**, which links the county town of Essex to the sea via a sea lock at Heybridge Basin would be a wise move. In there we would be sheltered and facilities for exploration of the area could continue on dry land if necessary. The Canal is suitable for vessels with a max draught of 2ft 6inches, an air draught of 6ft 5 inches, and a beam of 16 ft. It is 14miles in length with 13 locks, and was built between 1793 and 1797.

Foregoing breakfast again, we were soon off the entrance to the sea lock. With the usual cheery welcome from Colin the lock keeper, we were soon moored alongside in the canal.

When settling our dues for our expected stay, I enquired if it would be possible to use part of the canal. We were told that it is all usable now that the weed had been cleared through to **Chelmsford**.

As we considered lowering the masts and lashing the gear to the deck, the lock keeper suggested that we remove the rig and leave it ashore alongside the canal. This we did, making a tidy bundle of the gear wrapped in the cockpit cover. So now, having changed from a sailing vessel into a motor craft, we were ready to explore. The lock keeper at **Heybridge** provides a guide to using the lock gates and paddles and, although some of the gates required the flexing of muscle to get them moving, it was a good counterpoint to the fully relaxed mood that soon enveloped us.

Provisioning for food and fuel is always a problem in small vessels, but in this respect the canal is well provided for. Soon after leaving

the sea lock a mooring point is provided adjacent to a large Tesco store and at Sandford lock an Asda store is within a short walking distance. Both of these stores have petrol stations. Drinking water and toilet facilities are available at intervals along the canal, but it would be prudent to be self sufficient for at least 12hrs.

As with most canals, some parts are blighted with commercial buildings that have little architectural interest but these were soon left behind and we entered an idyllic world. At the time of our visit in July, the banks were clothed in a great variety of wild vegetation, some in full flower and some in the early stages of fruiting which, mixed with the rushes and reeds,



and motivated by the windy conditions, provided a constantly moving and changing close scenery.

Beyond the canal banks the water meadows gently rise up to higher ground with isolated farmsteads nestling in small groups of trees. This is rural Essex countryside at its very best.

The inevitable curse of the noise of a major trunk road cannot be escaped as you draw near to **Chelmsford**, but even this can be turned to advantage as one consid-



ers how lucky one is not to be on it.

Having provisioned, we set off full of expectation. We were not disappointed. Our first night stop-over would be at **Hoe Mill lock**. We had planned to have a celebratory barbecue and had purchased prawns, sardines and salmon steaks all to be cooked on the wonderful **COBB** barbecue. Those of you not aware of this

piece of equipment have a treat in store. It is an ideal item for use in the cockpit or on the deck of a small yacht, as the sides and base remain cool to the touch at all times and it cooks food superbly.

We proceeded at the appropriate speed along the canal towards our intended

destination and were rewarded for our gentle pace and quiet progression by the sight of a heron fishing, the wonderful blue flash as a kingfisher changed his perch, broods of ducklings and moorhens being carefully escorted by their caring parents only to disappear in a moment into the safety of the bank side vegetation. All the time our ears were aware that our progress was being monitored by the warning calls of green woodpeckers, pigeons, doves, and the

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summer cruise (continued)

occasional snort and bellow from the cattle and horses in the water meadows.

The inclement weather we had been promised did not disappoint and soon the dark clouds gave us what they had been threatening. The drizzle soon turned into a steady down pour and the barbecue seemed doomed.

Hoe Mill lock came into sight and our spirits were restored by the sight of a substantial road bridge adjacent to the lock.

Beneath the bridge it was dry and before long the Cobb was providing a first class meal cooked to perfection and accompanied by several glasses of Australian wine.



We slept well.

We awoke to find the rain had passed through but the wind was still blowing with considerable force. This did not concern us and we had soon passed through the lock and continued on our way. The scenery and wildlife was still absorbing, with the locks providing further interest as we considered what it must have been like

during the construction and the working life of the canal.

Meal times were dictated by the frequency of the locks, the fascination of the somewhat rustic but highly practical workmanship in their construction giving us plenty to ponder on.

Most of the locks are as rural in their setting as they always have been, but one or two provide facilities to cater for boats that moor permanently in the canal.

Our intended destination, in the centre of Chelmsford, was not achievable

on this occasion as some maintenance work was in hand and our progress was blocked by a boom. We spent our second night at **Sandford lock**. Here we were united with family and friends and a very pleasant evening was spent. The tow-path here, so near to Chelmsford, is in much use for recreation, and walkers and runners make good use of this facility.

Our return journey was in all ways as pleasant and interesting as the outward one, and with the weather improving, many groups of walkers, and cyclists were encountered adding another dimension to the undoubted charm of the canal.

We arrived back at **Heybridge**



sea lock on Friday afternoon, the weather still extremely unsettled, having thoroughly enjoyed our four day, inland waterway expedition.

As so often remarked, the smaller the boat the more fun you can have. It just means you have to make the best use of what you have available. The summer cruise this year ended earlier than usual as we could not make it home; that required another trip later the following week, which was equally enjoyable.

Crew and skipper are now back into the real world, the cries of send the snotty to the masthead via the lubber hole, load the bow chasers with grape shot or standby to repel boarders, just a vague memory until we are let out to play next year.

Roger Clarke (and Ray)

Gordius

For more information on the canal see:

www.chelmercanaltrust.co.uk



Whose Behind the Mask? Find Out at the Club's Masque Ball—June, 21st

Propeller Problems, with Robin and Jean Kemp

The troubles with our propeller originated in the yard during the winter lay up of 2006 / 7. The cutlass bearing on *Polo IV* was well worn and although I had been advised it would probably do another season, when **David Knight** offered to help me renew it, I jumped at the chance.

I did much of the preparation work myself, which included removing the blades of the folding propeller. The following weekend, David arrived with a large gear puller for removing the boss and a press, which he had made at his engineering works, to extract the bearing. The job went well and David soon had the old bearing out and a new one back in. He then left me with the easy bit to finish the job i.e. put the propeller back on.

When I had removed the propeller, the five grub screws, holding the various components together, had been reluctant to undo. As I reassembled the prop., I resolved to make the job easier for next time by coating the grub screws with grease and using Loktite only on the top few threads, which I hoped to keep clear of grease. Professional engineers reading this will be aghast by this method but to be fair, it worked. In fact it worked too well because the propeller fell off in Calais outer harbour.

We were **attending The Calais Rally 2007**. Anyone who has been to the rally will know that approaching the gates to the basin, in company with dozens of jostling boats on the first Friday lock of the rally, is the worst possible moment to experience propeller problems. We made it however, and joined on the end of a raft of Tollesbury boats to sort ourselves out.

The water quality at **Calais** is not

good and my first thought was that we had picked up some of the rubbish around our prop. So plan A was to go under with a dive mask and clear it. This idea was quickly abandoned when I took a closer look and got a good smell of the state of the water. So plan B was put into practice.

A foredeck party was required. As many people as possible (about a dozen in our case) were bribed with drinks to stand as far forward on our bows, which levered our stern out of the water like a seesaw. From our inflatable, I was then able to reach beneath the boat and feel the propeller without actually having to enter the water. It only took seconds to establish the fact that one blade of the propeller was missing and nothing could be done without a crane out.

The following morning Plan C was put into action. We limped *Polo* across to the small crane in the basin and arranged a lift. Unfortunately the maximum capacity of the crane was only 3 tonnes and we were only partly out of the water before alarms were ringing on the crane. The operator wanted to lower *Polo* straight back in but we persuaded him to swing the stern over the pontoon whilst I leaned under and scraped the paint off the propeller to reveal the dimensions stamped into the boss. *Polo* was then safely returned to the water to everyone's relief.

Plan D was then considered which was to order a new prop. from the dimensions taken and hire in a mobile crane. We made enquiries but a crane would take a few days to arrange and anyway there was no engineer on site to carry out the work if we found we couldn't do it ourselves.

The Gravelines Option

After much discussion with other Tollesbury members, we came up with plan E. Several boats were going on to **Gravelines** from Calais and we knew from previous visits that they had a large crane and a fully equipped engineering workshop. So a tow was organised. We were very grateful to the skippers of *Crescendo*, *Wai Loa* and others for their offers to help but accepted a tow from *Dionysus*. **Paul Noyland** jumped ship to join us as additional crew to assist with towlines. Our exit on bank holiday Monday was eventful because we were in company with scores of departing rally boats. Only one tried to cut between our tugboat and us but a few sharp words from our tug captain soon put a stop to that. The trip up the coast was swift. The engine on *Dionysus* was working overtime and we were soon off the entrance to the **River Aar**. The sea state was not encouraging with waves breaking on the bar but we went in anyway. It was a bit scary for a few minutes and the towrope was put under a tremendous strain as the waves snatched the boats apart one moment and threatened to ram *Polo* into the stern of *Dionysus* the next. It only lasted for a hundred yards or so before we were in the smooth shelter of the river.

Once we were secured to a hammerhead in **Gravelines** we lost no time in getting to the office to book the crane. Our luck was out again. The crane was broken and the engineering works had gone out of business.

It was time for plan F. In very broken English we understood that a new proprietor had taken over the

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prop probs (continued)

business and a mobile crane had already been booked for the following Thursday, to either launch or bring out a backlog of 9 boats requiring work. We hoped to become number 10.

Over the course of the next few days, all our Tollesbury friends left for home or other ports and it felt strange being on our own. We had received many offers of berths on boats returning to the U.K and even an offer of a tow all the way back but we preferred to stay with *Polo*.

Bright and early Thursday morning an enormous crane arrived on the quay with an accompanying escort and separate lorry carrying all the additional equipment required in setting the crane up. Within an hour, the crane was operational and the crew, supervised by **Louis** the new proprietor, started to whip boats in and out at a rapid rate. I watched proceedings anxiously hoping that there would be no hold ups but all went smoothly. Boat number 9 was launched and we were called over to the quayside. Minutes later *Polo* was ashore safely in a cradle with Louis taking notes of the propellers dimensions. He then sped off in his car to his suppliers in the hope of obtaining a replacement. He returned an hour later empty-handed. Nothing could be obtained from stock. It would take another 10 – 14 days to deliver a new one. Mobile phone calls to the UK got the same response. Nothing under 10 days. We needed a plan G.

When in **Calais** another yachtsman, on hearing of our predicament, offered to lend us his 'spare' propeller (he always carried one for emergencies)! We accepted

gratefully on the promise that we would return it when we got back home. Having run out of other options we examined his propeller more closely. It was a fixed 3 blade of the wrong diameter, wrong pitch and, most importantly, the wrong hand. The only dimension that we knew to be correct was the hole in the middle, but was it worth a try? We consulted the engine handbook and ships papers and found that *Polo* was fitted with a gearbox that had similar ratios on both forward and reverse gears. So we could run the engine in reverse gear and get a comparable forward performance from the opposite hand prop. That was the theory anyway. The diameter was only one inch out but the pitch was 8 inches and should have been 12. Would the extra blade compensate for the lack of pitch? We thought it was worth a try.

A solution of sorts

First, the old remains had to come off and **Louis** lent us a puller. Thanks to my greased up grub screws etc. everything came apart easily and in a few minutes we had a bare shaft. The keyway was of the correct size and so we offered up the new prop. and it slid home with a satisfying clunk. It fitted like a glove. The only remaining problem was securing it. The shaft was not drilled for a split pin and castle nut so we would need to reuse the salvaged hex nut from the old prop. To prevent this from working loose we would need a tab washer, which we didn't have. So we took another trip to the workshop and had a poke around the few items of stock Louis had inherited from the defunct company. Ten minutes of searching

turned up a few transparent envelopes, just one of which contained a tab washer for a 25-mm shaft. I couldn't believe my luck. Back at the boat we soon had the propeller permanently fitted and properly secured.

So that was it. We were ready for the water. **Louis** arranged another crane for the following Monday. A small one this time, as we were the only boat going back in. We spent the intervening time exploring the lovely town of **Gravelines**.

On Monday the crane arrived as promised and very soon *Polo* was back in her natural element. We were quickly on board and had the engine started. I carefully selected reverse gear and she gently moved ahead. Encouraged I gave the engine more revs and we motored around the marina with a performance not dissimilar to the old propeller. Finally we came alongside the hammerhead and took way off by giving the engine a touch of 'ahead'.

Apart from remembering that from now on forward meant reverse and visa-versa and that now *Polo* had a severe kick to port whereas it used to be to starboard, all was well. After a long discussion with **Jean** we decided not to abandon our remaining holiday plans and dash for home but continue up to **Holland**. The locks and canals over the next four weeks proved to be very interesting, all in reverse gear, before we then returned to Tollesbury to fit a shiny new folding prop. with spotlessly clean grub screws and plenty of Loktite.

Jean & Robin Kemp
Polo IV

Reminder—Members' Directory

The draft Members Directory has now been placed on the club notice board.

Please remember to check your entry before the final edition is published and indicated any corrections.

Sailing Home with ISIS by Keith Macey

It was that beautiful sunny Saturday morning in mid-February. We had travelled to France the previous day for a delivery trip. My son Oliver had located, fallen in love with, and subsequently purchased an **S & S 34** named *ISIS*. Rather tired, and 30 years old, she is exactly what he was looking for, (and at risk of his reading this article - just what he's used to). After previous long weekends preparing her for sea and a futile trip to France to bring her home two weeks earlier, everything now seemed right.

She was flying the largest Red Ensign I think it is possible to buy - sort of Dutch size. On the transom she was proudly displaying: **ISIS, NIEWPORT N.Y.C.N.**

We cast off at 9 am local time full of hope and aspirations: destination Ramsgate. It was to be a Father and Son bonding session; every sailing parent's dream. Offspring inherits love of sailing from parents - 'Oh this island race etc' (now I have two boats to maintain). Forecast: wind, southerly force 3-4; sunny; sea-state, calm; visibility, good; and temperature, 3-5 degrees. Brass - monkey weather. Everything seemed perfect. The pilot book instructed us to radio Dunkerque V.T.S. on departure. With no fixed VHF fitted we attempted to call in on the hand held: No reply. Not to worry - the harbour looked clear, apart from a rather imposing customs vessel moored to Port with a large RIB sitting on the stern. There were a few fishing boats but no ferry departures. (In hindsight, the VHF could have been on low power.)

Everything was going swimmingly. However there was no wind to speak of allowing us little choice but to motor down Channel towards **Gravelines**. Some half an hour later I noticed a black R.I.B.

approaching fast from astern. Oliver had decided to check our position and was below. As the R.I.B. got nearer, I could make out the three occupants. They looked to me like the French equivalent of the S.B.S. You know the sort of thing: hard, evil looking, young, dressed in black, tall, armed, designer shades - the job I always wanted but didn't know existed. I shouted to Oliver that I thought we had company. "Doubt it" says he, "probably just coming over to admire my boat."

"I can't see it mate."

They came alongside.

"Good morning Gentlemen", says I, "Bonjour Messieurs" says 'Chris Ryan', "we wish to board your Vessel!"

"Delighted", I replied, staring at his .44 snubbed nosed Magnum revolver in its open holster.

Two of France's finest sons then stepped aboard, and the R.I.B. dropped back, covering us.

The next forty- five minutes went something like this

"Bonjour-we are French Customs Officers. Who is the skipper please?"

"He is", we both replied simultaneously, pointing at each other.

"Oh OK -I guess I am" says Oliver

"I'm the skipper's dad."

"Shut up dad you're so embarrassing."

"Your destination?"

"England", says I, "Ramsgate first then on to Upnor tomorrow."

"You are taking a French registered boat to England?"

"We ain't pinched it guv - honestly, I've just bought it."

"You have the documentation?"

'Wee' (action - not reply)

"I certainly have."

Oliver then proceeded to produce all the ship's documentation

(always a good move to keep on board).

"Where did you buy the vessel?"

"In Dunkerque -at Bleu Marine."

"Aaahhh, from Valerie", chips in 'Chris Ryan'.

At last we had something in common- the tension evaporated. (It is worth pointing out that Valerie is the stunning 24 year old that runs the brokerage at **Bleu Marine in Dunkerque**).

"That's the lady", replies Oliver.

A quick call to 'Valerie' settled that one.

"Now I wish to see your passports please", requests the officer.

"No problem", replies Oliver passing a passport to 'Andy McNab'.

"This is you?" enquires 'Andy' gazing at the passport.

"Yes", says Oliver.

"It looks like him."

"Sorry -yes that's him- this is me", handing him the other one.

Having sorted that one out we now move on to the next phase.

"OK gentlemen - do you mind if we search the boat?"

"Delighted", says I, staring at his side arm.

One member of the French Special Forces then proceeded to lift every floor- board, every cover etc. inside the vessel, which was very handy as he discovered lockers we did not know existed.

His companion invited Oliver outside and checked the cockpit lockers, lazarette, anchor well etc., also coming up with lots of stuff we didn't know we'd bought.

I recalled in my mind the story of the delivery trip from Gibraltar to the Continent featured in *Yachting Monthly*, where the delivery skipper had no idea that the boat had a false keel crammed full of heroin. "Oh my God - what if?" I thought.

This was followed by much form

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All Seasons' Sailing

by Bill Lydiard

In my early years, I got the sailing bug by racing 12ft National dinghies on **Frensham Pond**, but I did not enjoy the competitive element, so took the dinghy down to **Lee on Solent** and cruised her with a companion to the Isle of Wight. That was probably the most dangerous sailing that I have ever done, since the boat could be readily capsized; not very advisable in such a busy area.

My first cruising boat was *Southwaters*, a **22ft Robert Tucker** round bilge twin keeler, which had the capacity to carry Liz, our three small boys and myself on the salary of an impecunious engineer, in the 1960s. It showed me how much effort is involved in fitting out an empty fibreglass hull; the pleasure of pottering around the Solent and Chichester Harbour; and the fact that a small boat could take us as far as Salcombe and Cherbourg in fair weather. However, it was dodgy in adverse conditions, such as when the outboard motor got swamped in the St. Alban's Race, or when trying to make progress to windward in winds above force 5. Fitting an inboard Vire engine, with a quarter-mounted propeller, improved matters, and I was pleased to hear from a subsequent owner 40 years later that boat and engine are still providing enjoyment.

In 1978, growth of the family, and our cruising ambitions, stimulated the purchase of a **Seal 8.50**, in the form of a more complex kit. However, this coincided with the need to extend the family home. *Sea Lady* was not, therefore, launched until 1982, after which she accommodated us admirably, although a few modifications did seem to be desirable.

It seemed that a hinged rudder blade would be vulnerable when raised, or if I forgot to lift it in shallow water, so a **skag mounted rudder**

was fitted, and this has proved to be robust and has lent itself to the fitment of a trim-tab/wind vane, self-steering system; a step for climbing out of the water or the dinghy; and a guard-line from the back of the keel to shield the propeller from floating ropes.

Off to sea at last

Our first lengthy trip in *Sea Lady* took us around the British Isles, including the Hebrides and Orkney, in three months, during which time the cockpit spray-hood was lowered for only three days. This folding spray-hood did not, however, provide a feeling of adequate support when going forward in exposed waters, spoiled the view forward, and got in the way when tying in the slab reefing. A fibreglass doghouse, with large windows, was therefore constructed. This has been found to be an improvement in all respects, while also providing a mounting for a solar panel, navigation instruments and an illuminated chartboard.

And further afield

After three years of summer cruising between Dingle Bay in Ireland and Maldon in Essex, and from the Channel Isles to Vlieland on the other side, together with inland waters as far as Paris and Amsterdam, retirement gave the opportunity to try further afield. In June 1985, we crossed Biscay and went around the coast of Spain and Portugal, into the Mediterranean via Gibraltar. This was much more fulfilling, despite having to cope with rough conditions, and turning back on occasions, and was the start of eight years of pleasurable summer sailing, which took us to Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey. The boat and its systems performed well. However, some further improvements were found to be desir-

able as we went along and these formed the basis of winter work programmes then, and after our return to the UK.

A boat transformed

1. Initially, use of the full 20 HP of the Bukh engine caused underwater **hammering** above 4 knots; the cause of which was found by towing an observer in the warm Mediterranean water. As the speed increased, propeller cavitation caused bubbles to stream away in a spiral from the propeller tips. Above 4 knots, these diverted in a column, to collapse on the adjacent hull. This problem was resolved by moving the propeller one inch aft, with a spacer in the shaft coupling and fairing in the rear of the deadwood to smooth the water flow. This eliminated the noise up to 6 knots, but could only be observed underwater up to 5 knots, when the observer started to lose goggles and trunks.

2. The firm support provided by the **doghouse** was appreciated on numerous occasions when going forward in lively conditions, and provided a good anchorage for inboard safety lines up the foredeck, at a reasonable level rather than the standard practice of deck mounting, which provides restraint only after falling overboard.

3. **Granny bars** near the mast added to this sense of security, particularly when reefing.

4. Moving the mast inner shroud anchor plates inboard about 2 inches has enabled closer jib sheeting without chafe and made it easier to pass the shrouds when going forward.

5. Moving the cap shroud anchorage to a strong, stainless frame at the height of the mast heel pin has allowed the mast to be fully supported when being lowered, e.g.,

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for winter storage in a boatyard with poor craning facilities, or to traverse the canals. Supports have been provided fore and aft and centrally, to hold the mast firmly while being lowered.

6. The popular berthing method in the Mediterranean is bows onto the quay, with a stern line to an off-lying buoy or own anchor. Going ashore then entails climbing over the pulpit and jumping down onto the quay, and was made much easier by **hinging the forward part of the pulpit** to form steps down. However, this facility has not been used much, subsequently, as we have not returned to the places where it was needed.

7. Of more value has been the **air separator** added to the fuel system, to ensure that air entrained in the fuel in rough seas is separated and taken back to the top of the fuel tank. The need for this became strongly apparent when we were motoring upwind in the channel from the tiny fishing harbour of Fourni, in the Dodecanese, with the swell rising to 2 meters in a F 5 wind in the narrows. The engine stopped due to air ingestion and the harbour could not be re-entered without it. Very hard tacking was needed to escape the rocky coast.

8. At that stage of the cruise, our confidence in the holding power of our **CQR main anchor** had been undermined. It would not penetrate, and, instead, dragged across the hard sand found in the Mediterranean. Confidence had also been undermined in the **Brittany** and **Danforth** anchors, which tended to pull out and fail to re-engage after a change in wind direction. These problems were observed on several boats, by regular diving in the clear, warm waters of various anchorages. This triggered the development of my own 37lb **double dagger anchor**, with very sharp Stellite tips and twisted blades, which ensured that, when one blade started to penetrate, it rotated the anchor to make the other blade penetrate as well. This

was brought out in my luggage to **Preveza** in 1990, argued through Greek Customs, and has been in use ever since.

9. Another major development was the provision of a **bulbous bow** to increase the top speed of the boat and reduce the speed loss caused by pitching in head seas, which seemed to get progressively worse when heading for a refuge to windward. Some guidance on this was obtained from NPL at Teddington, who have tank tested such developments, mainly for large commercial vessels and at least one racing yacht. Since their guidance was necessarily rather tentative and suggested protrusions that were larger than aesthetically pleasing, the bulbous bow was made up of a removable (bolt-on) shell, moulded to the front of the boat. The best one tried so far led to an increase of maximum speed of only 0.2knot in calm water, but appreciably reduced the pitching and loss of speed in head seas. The next stage would be to extend it forward by another foot. However, at 82, I now lack the energy to continue this development. As it is, it arouses a lot of interest amongst other yachtsmen. It could also act as a crumple zone to reduce damage to the hull in the event of a frontal collision when cruising, particularly at night.

Doodling with dinghies

10. Finally, there is the question of the **dinghy** which, in a small cruising yacht, is always a compromise between its carrying capacity and ease of on-board stowage. On the 22ft *Southwaters*, a small inflatable was carried in a cockpit locker and was inflated by an electric pump, since there was little space to accommodate it on deck and operate a foot pump. Its performance was poor under either oars or outboard, and it formed a poor liferaft. For *Sea Lady*, initially, we used an **8ft fibreglass dinghy** with a lug sail. It performed much better, but had to be towed and lacked buoyancy. The price of decent inflatables seemed to be exorbitant, so I made my own ten

foot one which was towed at most times so that it would be available as a lifeboat (even if it got in the way in the occasional, crowded marina that we visited). If towed from the top of the transom, it slowed the boat by about 0.2 knot, but hardly at all if the painter was run through a ring just above the water level. Being provided with a wooden keelson, floorboards and a transom, it motored, rowed and towed well and easily took four of us under all conditions, for five years. Unfortunately, we neglected to tie the second painter and it broke free in a sudden onset of the Meltemi off the coast of Turkey, while we were being belted along at some 6 or 7 knots and struggling to reef, so we never saw it go!

This situation led us to commission the construction of a **standard fibreglass dinghy** by a small firm on the Greek mainland. It was made in two days, sawn transversely in half and had two plywood bulkheads glassed in so that the two halves could be bolted together, but nested for carriage aboard. We were pleased with the feat, considering that we had very little common language with the Greek workers, who thought the whole episode hilarious and who turned out in force to witness our sea trial. This dinghy carried four adults in calm waters, and served us for two years until we returned to the UK. For some years, thereafter, it served as a fun boat for a small family. The quest for an **8ft stowable dinghy** was pursued as a winter project for about three years and culminated in a ply-floored, fabric sided unit, similar to those used by the Marines during the last war (WW2 presumably, ed.) that could readily be lifted on to the foredeck and then folded flat with no loose components, in less than a minute. This boat can carry four adults, and can be rowed or motored. It has been used successfully for five years.

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Beer and the Buxey Ashes

I enjoyed reading the article about the Buxey Ashes in our last edition of Up The Creek. But I wonder how many people recall the famous Buxey Beer that we enjoyed so much in 1997?

We were very keen to make this a special year for reasons that now elude me. One evening in the bar I was chatting with Harry Harrison, a past member who sailed the beautiful wooden sloop Leila. He was telling me about some potty (but persistent) friends who had for years been trying to recreate Victorian Porter. They eventually hit the jackpot by regenerating some yeast salvaged in a bottle of porter from an 1825 shipwreck. The result was, at the time, rated as one of the world's top ten beers.

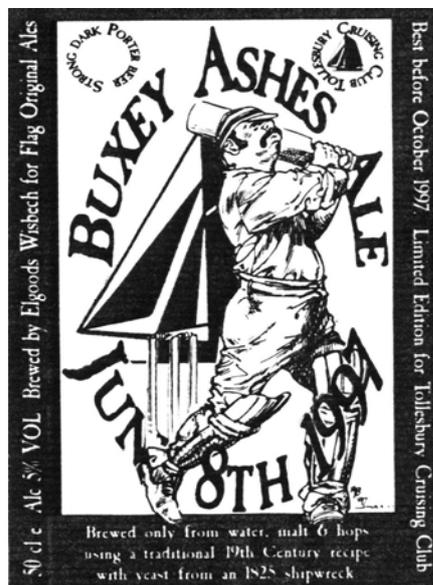
The discussion quickly led to an offer of a case of porter from the brewers and this was supported by the commodore buying another couple of cases. Another contact designed an outstanding unique label and so the Buxey Beer was born.

Everyone who turned up to play in the Buxey Ashes that year had a personal bottle and the winning team was to have a case. Surprisingly we had the best turn out ever – and Tollesbury won!

There may be a bottle left in the club somewhere, undrinkable of course.

Did it rank as one of the world's top ten beers? Absolutely.

Stewart Wallace
Mornarque



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All seasons' sailing (continued)

On our return to the UK, we noticed the chill and found it possible to fit an **Aladdin paraffin stove**. The fuel tank was accommodated below the floor, ahead of the centreboard casing. The double-walled flue emerges through the cabin roof just aft of the mast. The heater provides a cheery glow and, to spread the heat horizontally just above floor level, the flue gasses first pass through a boiler containing a small quantity of water (less

than half a pint), the steam from which is carried around the centreboard casing and through the main bulkhead to the toilet compartment, to warm both the main cabin and the toilet. This is a sealed system that does not need a pump, provided that there is a continuous fall from steam entry to its return to the boiler. This is similar to the area heating schemes near some power stations and in New York, and works quite well, although one has to be cautious not to rest one's hand on the radiator when sitting on the toilet (running the flue hori-

zontally around the centreboard casing at first did not work as well, and made the flame sluggish).

Unfortunately, age catches up with us and, not wishing to overstrain stiffening joints or to have to call out the RNLI (who I have supported for over 50 years), the time has come to say farewell to *Sea Lady* and hope that someone else with draw all-year round pleasure and inspiration from her in the years to come.

Bill Lydiard
Sea Lady

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Isis returns (continued)

filling and such loaded questions as:
"Do you have more than 50,000 euros on board?"
"No."
"Do you have any guns?"
"No."
"Explosives?"
"No."
"Drugs?"
"No."
"I don't suppose you have any terrorists on board either?"
"No."
"Any alcohol?"

"Yes – 6 dumpy French lagers." (We had drunk the other eighteen the previous week-end – always drink responsibly!)

"Would you like one?"

"Non – Merci."

Our two new friends now whistled up their RIB and went up on deck.

"OK we go now", says Andy "Thank you for being so co-operative and enjoy your trip home."

"It's been a pleasure", says Oliver, "Pop over any time."

"Au revoir Messieurs", says Oliver. "Bon Voyage."

"Shut up."

"Ah well- Just another day in the life

of being a Macey", remarks Oliver.

"Ere Dad, those frogs were both wearing the same cool shades-must be Government issue. Wonder if our lads get the same? Can't see it somehow!"
"Nah! Our lads don't even get guns."

"Ah well that's the first hurdle over-and the winds picked up. Let's see what's going down in the shipping lanes " - Get it!

"Pass me a beer."

Keith Macey

Rose Tyler