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Up the Creek...

Dutch Treats

TCC members with their eyes turned to the east for their summer diversions will be concerned to hear that the Dutch authorities have introduced new rules governing the discharge of 'black water' from pleasure craft. It is now prohibited to discharge the contents of marine toilets overboard anywhere within the Dutch territorial waters. Not only does this mean that 'black water' cannot legally be discharged within the inland seas and canals of Holland, but that such discharge is also prohibited within 12 miles of the Dutch coast.

Holding on

The implication of these new regulations is that all boats entering Dutch territorial waters need to be fully equipped with a holding tank, which can be pumped out at suitable shore-side facilities. The installation of such tanks and their associated plumbing need not be excessively costly—a range of firms can supply reasonably priced components—but can be a real hassle. The biggest problem is usually locating a suitable space for the tank, itself. The plumbing can also add considerably to the cobweb of

pipings associated with marine toilets. The proliferation of valves and connections can also compound odoriferous tendencies.

This development comes on top of the news from the RYA that boats on Europe's inland waters may, in the future, have to conform to the new rules requiring an 'AITS' code for their DSC radios.

It will be interesting to hear reports of those who do brave Holland this summer. In the interim, good sailing!

Barry Jones
Zevkim

The Hunt Is On

I shall have completed five years in the post of editor of *Up the Creek* by this autumn and it has been an immensely rewarding experience. Changing circumstances, however, mean that I shall be passing on the

editorial baton at the October AGM. A keen search for a successor is thus underway and anyone who might be interested is more than welcome to review the technicalities of the post with me or dis-

cuss its general role within the Tollesbury Cruising Club with the current Commodore—David Walkerdine.

Barry Jones

Contents

Editorials.....p. 1	Marine Crime.....p. 8
Commodore's corner.....p. 2	Racing News.....p. 9
Strangers in the Night.....p. 3	Heater Blues.....p. 9
Photo competition.....p. 3	Incompetent crew.....p. 10
Ostara to the Baltic.....p. 4	

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Commodore's Corner -

David Walkerdine

Welcome to the first edition of *Up the Creek* for 2009!

The season has barely begun and there are still lots of boats ashore with their owners busy sanding, painting, antifouling and carrying out all of the other lovely jobs that have to be done ready for launch day. With *Ariel Spirit* staying ashore I have not had the pleasure of antifouling this year, but whenever I have antifouled in the past, it has always been the most perfect sunny spring day and I would watch enviously as the boats that had stayed in the water, or had been worked on in mid winter temperatures to secure an early season launch, would creep over the sill to enjoy the lovely conditions whilst I covered myself (and some of the boat) with paint.

Early Birds

On the other hand, there are plenty of boats that are in the water already and have enjoyed a busy start to the season. The shakedown cruise and the Easter cruise were both well attended. Anwen, Theo and I were able to join the Easter cruise with Viv and Geoff aboard *Sundancer* and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for bringing *Sundancer* to Tollesbury to allow us to keep sailing whilst I am Commodore and *Ariel Spirit* is out of the water. I am sure that others will write a report so I won't steal their thunder, but I was delighted to see a number of new faces joining us. It is particularly encouraging to see members who are relatively new to sailing venture up the **Wallett** and into the **Deben** for the first time. It

has always been my belief that the club should offer a friendly and supportive environment for those who consider themselves to be novices, as well as being welcoming and worthwhile for those with more experience. I have spoken to a couple of members that have joined cruises for the first time this year (I won't name names- but you know who you are!) and I am delighted to hear that we are getting the balance right, especially as some of them have been in the marina for a number of years.

So, if any of the cruises sound interesting, please be assured that you will be more than welcome to join us.

Socializing on-shore

There have also been plenty of shore based activities to enjoy. **Buckshea** were at their musical best for the Irish night, and Jane turned out a fantastic Irish themed buffet. The Fitting out supper was also a great success, with PBO columnist **Dave Selby** as our guest speaker. I am sure that we will benefit from Dave's gentle sense of fun in one of his future articles. The raffle also raised £260 for the RNLI.

Ever cautious

On a less happy note I am sure that the credit crunch has affected many of us in one way or another. It is a sad fact that during a recession the rates of certain types of crime go up; in particular opportunist crimes such as burglary. Hands up everyone who has a £500 outboard attached to the back of their boat with a £5 padlock? Yes, me too in the past!

The marina has already suffered some outboard thefts and I am pleased to say that **Essex Police Marine Watch** have stepped up their patrols of the marina. It is important that we don't let thieves spoil our fun. At the recent spring boat show, Essex Police were demonstrating their latest crime prevention innovation. It is a simple plastic outboard cover, and these are for sale in a range of sizes in the chandlery. The idea is that you remove the manufacturer's cover from your outboard when it is not in use and cover it with the Essex police one. This simple act should make the outboard unattractive to thieves as they would have to source a new cover before they could sell it. Let's not let thieves spoil our season.

Your Club Needs You! –

This will be my final year on the committee. Once my tenure as commodore comes to an end, I will be stepping down and I am not alone. **Barry Jones**, who has done an excellent job as editor of *Up the Creek*, is also planning to step down to enjoy more sailing in a warmer climate. Could you spare a little time to help with the running of the club? I have spoken to a couple of members who expressed an interest and I am hoping that they will join us at this year's AGM. The committee thrives on new blood and fresh ideas and we are always looking for new people to join. If you are interested please feel free to have a chat with me, or any of the other committee members.

(Continued on page 4)

Strangers in the Night - with Barry Jones

In late July, 1992, I was sailing my former Nicholson 31, *Misty Ord*, some 11 nautical miles off the north-western coast of Spain, on passage between the ports of La Corruna and Bayona, en route to Malta. The night was warm but moonless and the weather was relatively calm and the off-watch crew were sleeping soundly below.

Breaking the Silence

Suddenly, at around half past midnight, the still, quiet of the night was broken by an insistent engine throb from the east – the Spanish coast. Strenuous inspection of the dark revealed nothing; no shapes nor navigation lights of any description. The engine noise grew steadily louder as the vessel, of unknown description, came ever nearer. Alone in the cockpit, my level of attention rose rapidly

as did my level of anxiety.

Soon the noise of a powerful engine reached near-deafening levels. Still nothing could be seen in the pitch black. My mind was now racing across a landscape from drug smugglers to people traffickers to terrorists, any, or all of which, might be heavily armed. None promised to be particularly beneficial for an isolated yacht with a wholly unarmed crew. My anxiety was rapidly turning into alarm.

Saved by the Swerve

Just as it seemed that the approaching vessel was bound to collide with *Misty Ord* it veered away, passed by and continued on its rapid course out to sea. While they were running without lights, my navigation lights could clearly be seen by them. I began to relax but then, within moments, the re-

born quiet of the night was sun-dered by the sounds of a second high-powered engine again ap-proaching from the direction of the land. Anxiety returned and rose as the second vessel continued to speed towards *Misty Ord*. But again, the newcomer veered aside at what seemed to be the last mo-ment, skirted round our boat and sped off into the night.

Might Have Beens

With the eventual disappearance of all trace of the two power boats, a measure of calm returned. My crew continued to sleep soundly, below, but I was left to reflect on what had been and what might have been.

Barry Jones

Zevkim

Photo Competition

Once again, members are invited to start thinking about their best photographs of the season in anticipation of the Club's annual photographic competition.

By way of reminder: judging takes place a few weeks before the laying up supper and is a subjective judgement on the photos the best capture the spirit of our boating season.

There are two categories: Under 16's and over 16's with a fine trophy in each category.

The photographs can be pre-sented in any printed format and needn't be great works of art (although that would help!!!!). The key thing is that they remind us of the season; and that yes – this really sums it up nicely.

Variety is the Spice of Life

Previous winners have been dripping wet. Sometimes though it's a lovely sunset while for others it's been a fantastic beat to windward up the Wallet or a pleasant drink

on the pontoons at Brightlingsea.

All submissions will be on show at the laying up supper; including the dodgy and potentially embar-rassing.

More detail from **Stewart** or **Wendy** on *Mornaque*.

Stewart Wallace

Mornaque

Ostara's First Cruise to the Baltic - Ian Robinson

The Planning

2008 was the year Carole and I realised our plan to take summers off to go cruising in *Ostara* our Hanse 370. The Baltic was to be our first goal and the centre piece was to attend a **Cruising Association Centenary rally in Copenhagen** in July.

Preparing to leave home for 3 months we found more stressful than expected. We were actually only ready a day before leaving. Being self employed we had to deal with the VAT man and Tax man who were uninterested in our life plans and only wanted to know we would feed their insatiable appetites for our hard earned cash. So, whilst we had expected to ease up after Christmas, it did not quite work like that.

The Crossing

Finally, everything was ready about a week late and on the 15th May, after dinner with our sons in the clubhouse we eased *Ostara* out of Tollesbury to slip

round to **Salcott Creek** preparatory to an early departure to the **Roompot**. The forecast on our planned route, via Long Sand Head, was for a northerly wind not exceeding 16 knots, which proved to be broadly correct although the wind had more east in it than hoped for.

So 0300 on the 16th May we departed the Nass beacon and made our way up the Wallet before turning east around the top of the **Gunfleet**. Apart from having to motor-sail initially, we had an un-eventful crossing under sail. The route over to the Roompot is

some 105 nautical miles (NM) and 18 hours after setting out, *Ostara* nosed up to the Roompot's outer waiting pontoon for the night.

Heading North through the Netherlands

Our plan had been to work up the Dutch coast to be in Den Helder in 2 days. Unfortunately, the wind strengthened overnight and was a F6 from the north-east on Saturday morning. So we decided on the inshore route and entered the Roompot lock on to the Ooster Schelde and very nearly knocked off the top of the mast. The lock is spanned by a fixed bridge under which *Ostara* has safely passed before. On this occasion the skipper forgot to check the air draft until Carole queried as we entered the lock "**Ian are you really sure we can get under?**" Oops - hastily we motored out astern to the annoyance of a following yacht. When the tide had dropped sufficiently we re-entered bound

(Continued on page 5)



Noon—close reaching with 18k over the deck

(Continued from page 2)

(Commodore's Corner, continued)

A rewarding time

Finally I wanted to remind you about a couple of awards that will be presented at the laying up supper. Firstly the **photographic prize** is awarded for the photograph which best depicts the season, so remember to keep your cameras handy! Secondly is the much coveted **Rubber Duck trophy**. This is awarded for the most inventive mishap on a club cruise.

The competition is already hotting up for this award, so remember, if you want to win you are going to have to show considerable ingenuity. Lastly there are two new trophies which have kindly been donated by **Bernard Meggitt**. These will be awarded for the best cruising log, so I am very much looking forward to reading about the sailing you do this season and awarding these new prizes.

The numbers of those dining in the club house on any evening can

vary considerably. All members are thus urged to book dinners in advance, whenever feasible, to avoid potential disappointment and to ease the task of the kitchen staff.

Wishing you fair winds, fine weather and great company.

David Walkerdine

Ariel Spirit (and Sundancer)

(Continued from page 4)
(Ostara's Baltic Cruise, continued)

for **Zierikzee**.

Over the next few days the wind remained stubbornly in the north-east and too strong comfortably to go back outside. So via Numansdorp, Gouda, Sixhaven (Amsterdam), Hoorn (Markem Meer) we continued inland and after 5 days we found ourselves in the little town of Makkum at the north end of the Ijsselmeer ready to lock out on to the Waddenzee bound for the Dutch Friesen island of **Terschelling**.

Being early in the season the harbours were quiet except for Sixhaven, which was full as we arrived at dusk. One says Sixhaven was full and it was, but, as those who know the harbour know, it always has room for one more boat and that day we were it. Indeed, in the morning it was so tight that we had to reverse out.

As we left Sixhaven the skies cleared, the wind eased and it became warm. Our route was, firstly across the Markem Meer and then the Ijssel-

entered the **Kornwerderzand Sluis** on the morning of Friday 23rd May bound for the Friesen island of Terschelling. We thought in a couple of days we would reach the Kiel Kanal.

The passage to Terschelling was intricate with 6 legs totalling 25 miles and a watershed. One has to be aware of the strong and changing tides. There is also a lot of commercial traffic along the route coming to and from the mainland port of Harlingen, which includes lots of ferries, bidders and barges.

It was a fine day but, as we cleared the coast, the wind, initially a light south-easterly backed to the north-east and steadily increased to a F6. This produced a lumpy sea, strangely covered in very white foam.



Sailing on a sea of foam

West Terschelling under better circumstances would be great to visit, but trapped for 3 days, as we became, by north-easterly F7 winds its charms soon palled. The harbour was also full as the nearby island of Vlieland was closed to

yachts. Berthing fees at €22 were double inland rates and excluded water and electricity.

Heading eastwards to the Elbe

On the 3rd day with a forecast of strong adverse winds for another 3 days we decided to cut back to the mainland at Harlingen and work our way eastwards via the canals to **Lauwersoog** via Leeuwarden.

The passage back to the mainland was 16 nautical miles heading south-south-east. The forecast was north-east F5, but it backed easterly as we cleared the harbour and rose to a F7. As the tide was also flooding a very heavy chop developed and unusually for *Ostara* we had green water on deck and masses of spray lashing the wheel. Due to a momentary lack of attention our large scale chart was sucked out of the protection of the sprayhood and was over the side in a flash. Inconvenient, but not a problem. However, shortly thereafter, the wave pounding caused our chart-plotters to crash, and after being reset, to keep crashing. Now we had a problem. We were in unfamiliar waters and were conscious that ever since we had been in range of Den Helder Rescue it had been co-ordinating rescues every day. Were we going to add to the list? Happily we knew the shape of the track to follow and there was good visibility. So, paying close attention to the depth, we lurched from buoy to buoy until we found space successfully to reset the main chart-plotter. Although it seemed longer, in a little under 3 hours we were safely in Harlingen.

Inland

Our problem passage was, however, not quite over. We found the entrance to the Van Harinxma Kanaal at the back of the port and *Ostara* was admitted into an empty lock. Our standard lock

(Continued on page 6)



Beating out to Terschelling

meer to Makkum. We broke the passage into 2 legs dropping into **Hoorn**, a delightful town, in the hope of meeting our Dutch friend, but she was away. We even flew our new Code 0 light weather sail for the first time. So, with ultimately unfounded optimism, we



WWI British submarine conning towers dredged from the German Bight

(Continued from page 5)

(*Ostara's Baltic cruise, continued*)

practice is first to establish a short centre spring and then attach bow and stern lines. On this occasion, whether we were a little slow or not paying attention, I do not know, but we didn't hear the lock klaxon and suddenly there was a creak as tension built on the spring rope. The lock was emptying very quickly and the spring was jammed. Before the rope was cut, the boat was leaning at 30 degrees. There was no damage, but it was some time before hearts stopped racing.

The rest of the afternoon passed off peacefully and in late afternoon we arrived at **Leeuwarden** where we paid the grand sum of €14 for 2 nights. We opted to eat out that evening. Being away for so long we knew we could not eat out on the scale of a 2 or 3 week holiday. We would (Carole that is) be cooking on board more regularly. After a pleasant sojourn in a nice market town, it was time to complete the journey to the sea at **Lauwersoog**.



Typical 'medieval' style Friesen farmhouse

The next section of the canal was very rural. The houses along the canal were attractive and prosperous. The farm houses follow the medieval style of being a combined house and barn. It was very peaceful, given the engine was running, although the weather could have been kinder. Bridges came and went with no delay.

We had got into the practice of saying "Bedankt" over the radio in acknowledgement and this went down well.

We had to pay tolls twice using the "hanging clog" method at Birdaard and Dokkum. A total €6.5 on this leg to add to the €11 we paid earlier getting past Haarlem and Spaandam. These communities guard jealously their ancient rights to levy tolls on passers by.

At **Dokkum** we also topped up with diesel and paid the enormous price of €94 for 63 litres of fuel or £1.20/litre. The skipper was still spluttering over the cost as *Ostara* ran the final 12 miles or so to the Lauwersoog lock where we spent the night in the fish dock ready for an early morning departure.

The forecast for the 29th May was a north-easterly F4. On the nose yet again, but acceptable if we were ever to reach the Baltic. At 0600 hours we cast off to make our way

out past the island of Schiermonnikoog before turning eastwards toward Germany.

By 0900 hours we were close to the Westerems Iso buoy in safe water. Having picked up this fairway buoy we

now had a line of such buoys to follow, which would keep us between the shipping lane to the north and the shallow water to the south. Our target was to enter the channel leading to Norderney's harbour 2 hours after low water to enter on a rising tide.

Germany at last

By 1000 hours we were in German waters, north of Borkum. A new weather alert mentioned a wind increase to F6. We did not have too far to go and pressed on at best speed expecting to be in the shelter of Norderney before the sea built up. We reached Norderney's Schluchter channel an hour early, where it met the Dove Tief channel close inshore off the island's main beach. After a moment's hesitation, *Ostara* quickly reached the harbour with a strong tide under her and we entered at 1530 hours.



Ostara in Norderney

The harbour was busy with birds of passage like us and we had to berth stern to wind with sand loading on the quay opposite.

Norderney also was not a cheap harbour, but we were happy



Norderney's afternoon concert

to have made Germany at last and

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

(*Ostara's Baltic cruise, continued*)

the canal was now only one long-ish sail away. We decided to stay the next day and explore. After dinner on board we went up the local **Stube** (bar) for a couple of beers where the skipper contrived not to see a step and threw half a mug of beer over himself. Friday was a pleasant day in the sun exploring Norderney town (an old royal spa town) on our bikes.

After dinner and another visit to **the Stube** we settled down early to be rested for another long day in the morning. It was expected that we would have a soldier's wind from the north-west to help with the passage of some 80 nautical miles to the Kiel Kanal.



Elbe bound with a following wind

A week behind schedule on Saturday 31st May at 0600 we cast off to complete the final leg to Brunsbuttel and to enter the **Kiel Kanal**. Our passage plan was slightly compromised by our preference for day sailing and our understanding that yachts are not allowed to lock into the canal after nightfall. We expected to have to push against the ebb in the river, which is contrary to the pilot book's advice.

The forecast was unchanged in

the morning and at 0738 we set the cruising chute and made good progress toward the Westertill NC buoy that marks the start of the river Elbe.

We expected to be at the Westertill buoy earlier than low water Helgoland at 1549 hours when the flood would begin into the river. Good progress was made during the morning. A shower blew through and the wind went up to a F5 for a while, but then the sun came out and the wind dropped. We arrived at the buoy at 1330 with the river still strongly ebbing. As the wind eased, and the ebb weakened, our good rate of progress slowed.

The Elbe is a very busy river leading to Hamburg.

There was lots of traffic both in the big ship channel and without. Not all large ships stayed in the main channel and we were forced to dive for the shelter of the 2 metre depth contour when one Cypriot registered overtaking vessel seemed intent on running *Ostara* down.



Close encounter near the Scharhorn Bank

After the wayward Cypriot, we were beset by a plague of flies

whose carcasses took days to wash away. Next came by a flotilla of outward bound charter boats ploughing on at full speed and which had absolutely no idea of how to apply the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea. We were thankful when we eventually passed Cuxhaven and traffic eased.

The final scare came when we recognised that we would be pushing it to arrive at **Brunsbüttel** before dusk. With the engine running at 3600 rpm and the flood beneath us we arrived at 2130 hours as dusk was falling.



Carole in shock on seeing how low the pontoon was

After about 30 minutes we were allowed to enter behind a cargo boat. Not sure if there was to be another yacht entry that night, we made sure that *Ostara* was not pushed out of the queue in the rush into the lock. Although we knew that the yacht pontoons in the lock were low, Carole still got a shock when she saw exactly how low, but she coped admirably. We had arrived and successfully completed our journey to the Kiel Kanal. On the morrow we planned to traverse the canal and enter **the Baltic** for the first time in our own boat.

Ian Robinson

Ostara

(*More to follow? Ed.*)

Marine Related Crime:

How we can all help - Julian Goldie

As you may be aware, there has been a rise in the number and value of marine thefts over the past year.

The value of marine crime was some £264,000 in 2007/8 but more than double that value in 2008/9. Some of this criminal activity is internationally organised and involves stealing high value boats and engines to order. This kind of crime moves around the coast and is often limited on late tides. Essex Police, and other forces, have been running operations to deter and detect these large scale pre-meditated thefts.

However, much of the marine crime is opportunistic, with the thief taking whatever is easily accessible and available, often from boats that are afloat. Boats and belongings are often left unsecured. The nature of marina, boatyards and sailing clubs also makes it difficult to prevent public access.

There are a number of ways in which marine crime can be reduced. One, in particular, within the Blackwater river area is to purchase the special, heavily branded 'Essex Police Marine Watch' outboard engine covers. These waterproof covers replace the engine cover (Cowling) when the engine is not in use. This de-

ters would-be thieves by requiring them to obtain replacement Cowlings, probably from registered engine agents, before trying to sell stolen outboard engines. Engine agents will be encouraged to obtain the names and addresses of those requesting replacement Cowlings and, if possible, to obtain the serial number of the engine and pass these details onto the marine police for checking against a list of stolen items.



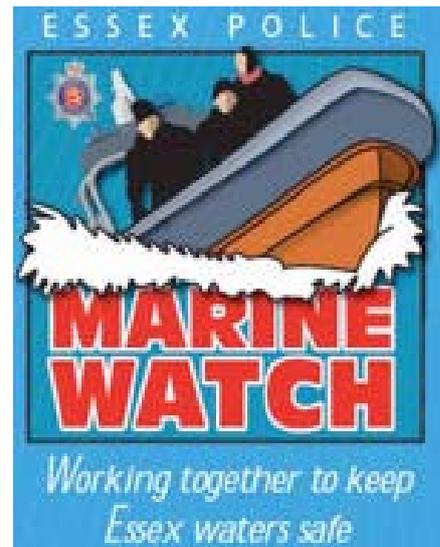
When reporting the theft of boating equipment to local police stations, owners are also encouraged to advise the local marine police and to copy any emails to all the neighbouring marina, boatyards and yacht clubs. The Marine Police will appreciate the speed with which direct reports can reach them and marinas, boatyards and clubs will be alerted to the increased danger of thefts.

Marina operators are being encouraged to take a lead in gaining the agreement, and email addresses of, neighbouring marinas, boatyards, chandlers and launching sites. The local Marine Police can also be consulted about such links.

Everyone should advise the local Marine Police if they see:

- Any suspicious person

around the marina/area, with a full description (if possible), and details of time, date and location of sighting;



- Any suspicious vehicles: full details (registration, if possible) with time, date and location of sighting;
 - CCTV footage of anything unusual;
 - Details of any unusual events, such as strange boats on the water after dark;
- Any marine items being offered for sale without paperwork or provenance (usually second-hand goods).

Julian Goldie
Tollesbury Marina



Race Report - David Knight

The first race for the 2009 season was **the Steve Rix Passage Race to Ramsgate**. When I planned this event I always felt that it had a less than 50/50 chance of running.

Sailing across the Thames Estuary can be hard enough, particularly early season. In the past few years, we have had only gales; and these would make it a non-starter.

Well can you imagine my surprise when we nearly had to cancel the event due to very light winds!

For Saturday 2nd May, most forecasts were predicting 2-3 knots of wind and clear skies. However the last Navtex message indicated F4-5s and I was sure that with the warm weather a sea breeze would probably kick in.

At 06:30 Saturday I took a look at the weather, and decided to start the race by the **NW Knoll**. Being a little later and further out, there might be more chance of wind and so it was to be - a light 6 knots from the West. That was until we reached **Foulgers Gat**, where we had to furl our down wind sails and tack across

the Estuary. My crew and I, being the 4th boat through this swatchway, found different conditions from the lead boats. As the sea breeze kicked in, we experienced a couple of 180 deg wind shifts, but then the wind steadied right on our bows! With the strong Estuary tide kicking in, we all experienced difficulty crossing towards **N. Foreland**. I took the decision to finish the race at the **N.E. Spit buoy**, allowing everyone to start their engines and motor the final 10 miles. The result was:

- 1st. *Polo IV* – Robin & Jean
- 2nd. *Hiawatha* – Paul & Jill
- 3rd. *Ostara* – Ian & Carole
- 4th. *Dualin* – Andy & Jo
- 5th. *Dionysus* - David , Emma & Rebecca

Stewarts Secret & Sans Souci did not finish

That evening we met up for a drink in the **Royal Temple Yacht club**, then split into two groups to seek out a restaurant for dinner.

I must mention Andy & Jo Abraham's valiant effort, which I think proved how determined they are. Long after all other boats had tied up, they appeared,

bedraggled, and very tired. But they had competed in their first race, and a long and difficult one at that! Well done to them. I am certain that most folk would have retired long before and motored across.

My plan for Sunday was to sail round to **Harty Ferry** in the **Swale**, but encountered little interest that morning. The forecasters were playing tricks with us again. So *Dionysus* left Ramsgate and after a slightly bumpy sail spent a glorious night on a buoy opposite the pub!

All of the cruising crowd did particularly well. We had every type of boat from 26 footers up, but I must take my hat off to those in the smaller boats. It was no mean feat to do that distance in the challenging conditions we experienced on the way home.

I think that all who came had a great time, in spite of the weather, and the somewhat tiring crossing back to Tollesbury on Bank Holiday Monday.

David Knight
Dionysus

Heater Blues - Barry Jones

Boat heaters can be a sublime joy on a cold and damp night in a remote anchorage. They can, however, also prove to be an expensive distraction.

Eberspacher heaters on my past and present boats have both failed whilst relatively new and after light usage. The culprit was the electronic control unit in

both cases. Ray Hum, from Colchester Fuel Injection, the service agent on both occasions, had some interesting thoughts on the matter. He has encountered this kind of failure only on boats (rather than lorries and caravans, to which they are also fitted) when they have been operated whilst the boat was linked into

shore-power. It is possible, therefore, that the electronic control units are sensitivity to fluctuations in the mains electricity supply in marinas and boat-yards. The experiences of others on this issue would be most welcome.

Barry Jones, Zevkim

The Incompetent Crew

by Charlotte Perrin

The cold wind whipped around us as we gazed up at *Grey Goose*. Rob wiped a tear of pride from his eye as he caressed her and announced what needed to be done whilst she was out of the water. The girls and I wiped tears from our eyes as we thought of all the lovely warm things we could have been doing that cold Saturday morning in February. The snow had barely defrosted from the mast and the seagulls were huddling together to share warmth.

We took a tour around the hull as Rob set out his proposals as to how to divide the hundreds of jobs that needed doing. It was then I realised that the girls had slipped back to the warmth of the car to listen to their Ipods and defrost their feet. With much pubescent moaning I dragged them from the car and forced them to put on white hooded overalls. Somewhat cruelly, I immediately took a photograph of them looking like two extras from a bad TV murder drama. They put them on thinking no one would see them looking so silly (thus the photograph for later use).

On with the Paint

With reverential deference Rob opened the majestically expensive tin of antifoul paint. We knelt around it and inhaled deeply. A magical moment for any boating family. "Right....antifouling girls" began Rob... "smooth strokes with the roller and don't go over what you have done as it will pull off...". The girls switched off from the detailed explanation of the principles of antifouling the moment they saw the deep blue smooth pot of heaven, the colour of the Mediter-

anean at night. With the enthusiasm of Michelangelo in the Sistine chapel they got to work whilst I "supervised". This involved removing huge dripping blobs of paint from the hull and the children's hair. Luckily Rob could not see the carnage that was unfolding as he carefully attended to the more delicate areas of the hull from which the female crew were forbidden. Fifteen minutes later, after the initial excitement had worn off and arms had begun to ache, the girls were bored and completely blue (in colour). They slipped away surreptitiously to paint stones in the boat yard whilst we finished off the first coat.

Next Things

"Next....cleaning and polishing " commanded Rob whipping out his electric buffer. "I've already cleaned it but it needs to look like glass". I could feel my arms aching already. Rob got to work and I was put in charge of buffing. I gazed at her old topside. Each scratch was a testament to a bad mooring experience in our first year with *Grey Goose*. Every dent, evidence of my failure to gain any understanding of the dynamics of how large objects move through the water towards a solid object such as a pontoon. I dread mooring and no matter how many times Rob leaves PBO open on the relevant page for me to read in the toilet, I just don't get it! I marvel at these wonderful people (usually ladies looking glam in the latest Musto collection) who gracefully hove into view and delicately moor their boats with effortless ease. So different from my approach of launching myself

off the bow in an ungainly manner and praying the pontoon won't move or break as I land. This is usually followed by a large amount of shouting as we try and work out where the ropes should go and whether there are any expensive boats near us (it's OK our insurance is up to date).

Almost Done

After two hours of careful polishing we had completed just one side and retired to the Club House for drinks and large roast beef sandwiches. Gin and tonic spilled onto my clothes as I raised my still trembling hand, vibration aftershocks from the electric buffer continuing to ripple through my arm muscles. Louise took pity on me and gave me a straw from the children's section of the bar. It was then we realised that we had left the kids painting each other in the boat yard! Once they were in, wiped down, fed and watered we discussed progress.

"Well girls" Rob reflected with satisfaction "we did well...although I might do it a bit more quickly if you lot find something else to do next weekend and I get Terry in to help instead....please don't feel insulted. I would just like to get the boat in before next June!!!...."

We tried to look suitably hurt as we punched the air with joy and made plans for next week's shopping trip to Lakeside.

Charlotte Perrin

Grey Goose