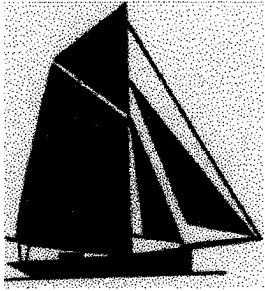


Volume 11, number 2, Summer 2006



# Up The Creek...

## Old Friends and New Ventures

### The Granary to star on TV

The Tollesbury Granary is to appear in the new *Restoration* series being hosted by Gryf Rhys Jones. The Granary programme will be screened on BBC2 at 9.00 pm on Friday the 28th of July. Phone-in voting will determine whether the Granary project goes forward to the later stages of the competition for funding, so all Tollesbury regulars are urged to 'vote early and vote often'.

### TCC Programme Changes

This year's programme of activities for the Tollesbury Cruising Club proved unusually difficult to confirm in good time for the publication of the annual programme. Boat yard newsletters have noted a num-

ber of the more significant changes to the programme but two changes are worthy of particular mention. The first is the sad news that there will be no 'fish shed' lunch this year, as a result of complications with the Packing Shed's schedule. The second is that Burnham will now be the destination for the Goldie Race (on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September) and the start of the Pursuit Race (on the 17<sup>th</sup>). Dinner on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> will be at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club in Burnham.

### Old Friends

Many old 'friends' were encountered during our recent cruise to the Orwell and Deben rivers. We saw *Clytie*, the Cook's former West-

erly, afloat near the Deben entrance, and *Anahita*, former commodore Nigel Cowell's previous boat, berthed in the Tidemill Yacht Harbour, Woodbridge. In close proximity to one another within Ipswich Haven Marina were *Stargazer*, the McCoombe's recently sold Moody 31 and *Silver Dawn*. The sighting of *Silver Dawn* proved to be particularly poignant in the light of the sad news about Arthur Mullin that awaited us in the latest edition of the Tollesbury Parish Magazine on our return home.

### Barry Jones

*Steorra of Tollesbury*

## Arthur Mullin

Many members of the Tollesbury Cruising Club will be saddened to hear of the death of Arthur Mullin in May of this year. Arthur, his wife Yvonne and daughter Laura sailed their Moody 31, *Silver Dawn* from the marina (A Pontoon) for a number of years. Arthur also made a major contribution to life in

Tollesbury and the success of the Tollesbury Activity Centre (formerly the Baden Powell HQ on Woodrolfe Green) owed much to his enthusiasm and efforts. Arthur's daughter Laura remains a keen sailor and will represent Tollesbury Sailing Club at this summer's West Mersea Cadet Week.

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# Quicksilver Comes Home Hilary Morgan

Jim and I were looking forward to the prospect of sailing our newly acquired Maxi 1100 *Quicksilver* from Hamble Point Marina back to Tollesbury. I was going to give it a go, weather permitting. I had done the crossing to and from Holland several times in *Lionheart*, our now departed (to the Medway) but much loved Moody 31, with varying degrees of success. It was time to lay some demons to rest. But time proved to be a catalyst in this story.

The boatyard fitting our new shoal-draft keel decided they needed an extra week to let various bits of work cure and the launch date of 10<sup>th</sup> May was put back a week. This gave us a chance to give the prospective buyer for *Lionheart* a run in the boat which seemed to clinch the deal. (She'd only been on the market for a few days and the buyer in question had actually sent an email to various brokerages seeking a Moody 31. David had jumped on the bandwagon straight away! Job done as they say.) We had lined up crew: Keith and Betty from *Sutomi* who would show us how to sail a Maxi properly and Andy Oliver (ex of *Jem of Avon*) with whom Jim had sailed in the Atlantic when crewing for Chris and Carol (*Lhasa*). Jim and I would travel down to the Hamble on the evening of the launch in a hire car, to be left down there. My car had already been left at Tollesbury for the home journey. We would spend a couple of days fitting out and taking the boat out a couple of times to get used to her and 'learn the ropes' quite literally.

Oh "...the best laid plans of mice and men....." to quote Robbie Burns. Speaking of whom, various complicated arrangements had been made for our son Robbie who was to be doing his Duke of Edinburgh's bronze award in the New Forest, a stone's throw away, that same weekend. I monitored all the usual websites for weather forecasts and an ever increasing feeling of gloom and doom began to take me over. Deep depression after deep depression was making

its way across the North Atlantic. Their destination? The South Coast of England. Jim, refusing to be outdone and fearing the MDL marina charges (it would have cost over £300 to delay a week!), insisted we continue and we left St Albans in the pouring rain and joined the car park that is the M25 in rush hour. We arrived at Hamble Point at dusk and saw our new *baby* in the water for the first time.

It wasn't a quiet night. There was a lot of crashing and banging as the wind, even in our sheltered corner of the marina, topped 25 knots and the fenders and ropes squeaked and strained. The lashing rain beat against the coachroof. Betty called to see if we were still going to sail. On the Thursday we were shown an inshore forecast by a neighbouring charter boat crew showing 8's and even 9's in the Thames Estuary. I had already made up my mind before leaving St Albans that I would be chickening out. Betty was obviously not happy but 'Mr Atlantic' (Jim) was still willing to go and only finally backed down on the Thursday afternoon when faced with the undeniable evidence of the weatherfax. Reluctantly, he called the trip off and postponed until the following weekend.

We all know that it is not good seamanship to leave a safe harbour when you have such a forecast. It's too bad if you get caught out once you are committed but you don't go knowingly into a blow. It was not right to risk the boat, the crew, or the crew of the lifeboat that may have had to come and rescue you. I won't leave now if I know its going to be 6. I just become a liability. I believe it is also good seamanship to know your own limitations and act accordingly.

We planned to continue fitting out and leave on Saturday having put in a brief appearance at a Maxi Owners' reception to launch their new 42 footer. Jim rigged the main as best he could in the wind and Mike Moore from SD Marine who had helped us through the purchase and commissioning came to make sure he had all the lines in the right place. In fact they were both standing at the mast and I

was below fiddling with locker space when it happened!

## A smashing time

I heard yet another boat being launched from the adjacent crane, some shouting and then a huge bang and crunching as I looked up to see a bow rise up on our boarding platform, "swallowing" up our stern! *Quicksilver* shuddered under the impact as the offending J Boat's red and green navigation lights shattered against our pushpit. Jim remained amazingly and uncharacteristically calm. Mike recognized the J Boat dealer standing on the pontoon. Apparently it was being launched for the first time and the young Hooray Henry on the helm swore that the boat would not go into astern. Of course, when the dealer went on board and rammed the gear lever into reverse, she churned up loads of grey marina water! "We'll get this repaired for you," he said to Jim. "Just let me make a couple of calls". There was quite a gash in the GRP on *Quicksilver's* stern not to mention a Navtex aerial that had been dislodged from the rail.

Well, I've never seen anything like it! It was like being in the pits at a Formula One race track. Within ten minutes our boat was crawling with technicians. An electronics person mended the aerial and checked that all the systems were working and a mobile GRP repair person arrived with his trolley and kit in tow. It all happened in the blink of an eye. We were a bit worried because we didn't have a chance to take stock of the situation – it was out of our hands. We couldn't check for further damage – crazing etc. We Decided to leave the GRP chap to electrocute himself on his own. He was doing a waterline repair plugged into the mains, and it was beginning to rain, so we watched him from *The Ketch Rigger* where we had a late lunch. Having tripped the meter, he decided to leave it and so the boat had to be left there for the week. We managed to get 'Mr J Boats' to agree to pay for our marina charges as well as the repair. Every cloud has a silver

(Continued on page 3)

# Commodore's Corner

The weather so far this year has been testing, to say the least. We already seem to have done more sailing in fog this year than in the past ten years put together (but thanks to our new Automatic Information System (AIS) with few problems). We also seem to have done more sailing double reefed in force sevens than in the last few years. Summer seemed to be a long time coming and then what happened: no wind!

## Racing On

The Pursuit Race also fizzled out with no wind. The Goldie Challenge to Burnham was cancelled due to too much wind. The Calais Rally was testing, but a great time was had by those that went. The combined Wallet Shield and Wallet Long Race was a great success with over 20 boats racing and everyone, whatever their results, said what a smashing day. The sun certainly helped here.

## Can You Canard ?

As a reminder, we are always looking for entrants for the Ca-

**nard Trophy**; please let me know of any amusing mishaps, with photos if possible. With the season barely started our front and only runner, so far, for this prestigious award is David Knight on *Dionysus*. He may well tell you all about it elsewhere in this issue. I must point out that the rules for this prize states that, as the judge in this event, the Commodore's cock-ups obviously cannot be considered. (Phew, that was close!)

## Email

Another reminder, I have now got about twenty five members e-mail addresses. Pending the arrival of our planned website we will keep sending out bits and pieces of information as appropriate. If any one else wants to be included (or is not yet getting anything) then please let me know ([andy.hobden@rya-online.net](mailto:andy.hobden@rya-online.net)).

## Sail Away with Us?

If you haven't joined in any events yet then it's still not too late. If nothing on our list appeals

then tell us and we will see what we can do. Do you have a motorboat? We are not all sailing snobs so do join us. Want a fishing competition? Then lets organise one.

The positive feedback from those that have joined in this year makes all the hard work put in by the Committee worthwhile.

Finally, and although it's a long way off, its not too soon to start planning ahead. Where do we want to go for our summer cruise next year? Yes I mean 2007. After two years crewing on *Lhasa* it will be time for *Tongue Twister* to put in some sea miles. The Veersemeer in Holland? Been there, seen it, etc. My thoughts turn between the Channel Islands and the Ijslemeer, even the mythical Helgoland that the club reached some years ago. Think about it. Later this year we will put up a poster with tick boxes to gauge interest.

Enjoy the rest of the season.

**Andy Hobden** - Commodore  
*Tongue Twister*

(Continued from page 2)

## Quicksilver's delivery (continued)

lining. And to cap it all, he turned up on Saturday morning with a bottle of quality champagne as a peace offering.

After a night listening to the wind build to over 35 knots and worrying about Robbie under canvas in the New Forest, we returned home and did house things.

Robbie was fine. Ever the sailor, he had pitched his tent in the lee of some trees with the entrance facing away from the wind. His friends accused him of being antisocial but he was the one who slept in the dry! Good on you – Robbie!

## Off, at last!

There was more rescheduling of work commitments during the week and we returned again to the Hamble on the following Thursday before the Bank Holiday weekend. Once again, we loaded supplies and got the boat ready for departure. Once again we hoped to take her out, but once again, it was blowing a 7! So once again, we had lunch in the *Ketch Rigger*. The weather forecast was not brilliant and I decided to opt out a second time. There would be 7 of us on board. Anna, Andy's girlfriend, was joining us and Robbie really wanted to come too. He trav-

elled cross country by train from Rye in Sussex where he was doing work experience in his uncle's photographic studio. I didn't want to be worried about him while I was feeling ill and getting in the way and was reluctant to let him join the crew.

Once Keith and Betty had arrived and we had picked Robbie, Anna and Andy up from various stations, we had a slap up Chinese meal at a huge, ornate restaurant in Fareham. *Quicksilver* accommodated 7 with no problem at all. In the morning, Robbie and I saw them off and returned in the hire car to St Albans. I

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# Better than Radar?

There is an interesting article in July's *Yachting Monthly* about the latest developments in AIS (Automatic Information System). For those that are not familiar with AIS, it is a system whereby all ships transmit details of their course, speed, position, etc. on VHF. Various 'engines' are available to receive this information and plot it into appropriate formats. Initially the system was for ships over 300 tonnes but it is likely to spread to all commercial vessels and eventually to yachts. The pilot cutters out of Ramsgate are already fitted, as are some of the Harwich tugs.

On *Tongue Twister* we have set up the *NASA* AIS engine with our *Seapro* PC based Chart plotter and a *Garmin* USB GPS unit. The system receives the information and plots the position of each ship as a moving icon on the screen. Each ship on the screen is also shown with an adjacent text box which can give a large amount of information.

Alarm zones can be set round the boat and the closest point of approach can also be shown.

## AIS in action

This year it has already proved itself twice in bad visibility.

In the first instance we were coming down **The Wallet** on a miserable damp drizzly day with visibility down to less than half a mile. Wendy was in the cabin playing solitaire on the computer and I was sitting in the cockpit

scrubbing the teak. "Oh" said Wendy as she flipped screens from Cards to Chart plotter "There's a ship coming up the Wallet". "Rubbish" I said "you don't get ships in the Wallet".

Sure enough the Chart Plotter was showing a ship. It wasn't even out in the buoyed Channel. AIS said it would pass about a quarter mile to port in 17 minutes. 17 minutes later she appeared out of the mist, as predicted, and carried on up The Wallet.

The second time was in the **Fisherman's Gat** on the way to Calais. With visibility again right down to less than half a mile the AIS showed a ship heading down The Gat towards us. We had time to scramble out of the channel before a huge ship appeared out of the murk.

Obviously, the main benefit for a yacht is crossing The Channel and the shipping lanes. With a suitable scale chosen (mainly to stop the screen becoming inundated with too much data) we recently had one of the most relaxing crossings I can remember. The need for taking bearings was still there to identify which ship was being looked at but, as each ship was identified, the decision to pass ahead or astern was virtually made. (One of my photos on the notice board is of the PC screen in mid channel).

## Ideal Configurations

Ideally, one would have the AIS

imposed onto the radar screen or better still AIS and RADAR onto the chart plotter but given an either or choice AIS appears to have several advantages: cost; windage; weight aloft; power consumption; and range. The AIS engine is around £100 while a stand-alone unit is around £200. You only need a VHF aerial so no radar dome, and so less weight and windage aloft. The power requirements of AIS, especially the stand-alone units like the *NASA*, are miniscule. The potential range of AIS is greater than any radar that could usefully be carried by a small yacht. Sitting in the marina we can pick up ships coming out of the Thames Estuary, but then, do we need to know that? The information provided by AIS is intuitive and needs little practice to understand.

## AIS a winner

All in all, AIS appears to be yet another useful advance in navigation and safety aids which will soon become essential, if not compulsory, equipment.

As a footnote, the AIS needs its own dedicated VHF aerial. *Yachting Monthly* was recommending several products at well over £100, while missing out on the more obvious solution of a second VHF aerial (about £35) mounted on the pushpit. Ours is on a pole on the pushpit and is wired so that it can be easily swapped with the main VHF masthead one in an emergency.

**Andy Hobden**

*Tongue Twister*

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**Remember - Vote for The Granary -  
Restoration at 9.00 pm on BBC 2 on Friday the 28th of July**

# The Calais Rally—2006

*Tongue Twister's* 'Plan A' this year was to leave Friday night directly for Calais, as the tides were not particularly friendly. Plan A was cancelled due to crew problems.

'Plan B' was to leave for Ramsgate on Friday lunchtime and cross The Channel on Saturday. Plan B was cancelled due to the forecast. We went to Brightlingsea and were happy to get there as the winds gusted up to force 8. Others had a cracking sail up to Shotley

So on Friday night *Tongue Twister* is in Brightlingsea with several other Tollesbury boats, some were in Shotley and one boat turned back to Tollesbury with engine problems. *Dionysus* left Tollesbury and sailed overnight to Calais as per plan A.

'Plan C' was hatched in Brightlingsea on Friday evening. We would go to Shotley on Saturday.

Saturday morning and 'Plan C' was cancelled. Shotley was the wrong way for Calais. So with a promised 'weather window' 'Plan D' was created; *Tongue Twister*, *Navicula Star* and *Carpe Diem* headed for Ramsgate, whilst *Clearwater* and *Crescendo* left Shotley also heading for Ramsgate. We met up with *Clearwater* at The Sunk.

## On to Ramsgate

After an interesting trip where I had my first ever conversation with Thames Coastguard, encounters with huge ships in narrow channels in thick fog and the relief that the wind only reached force seven for the last two hours, we made Ramsgate.

We had a very friendly welcome in the Royal Temple Yacht Club from their Commodore and others and, after a pleasant couple of hours there, we enjoyed a kebab on the quayside whilst watching the nightlife.

## Cross Channel at last

With Sunday morning's forecast promising a force 3 to 4 from the east, we managed a couple of hours sailing in beautiful sunshine before the wind faded away and we motored across The Channel. Of course we then missed the last bridge opening at Calais by ten minutes. We rowed ashore and joined the other crews for a meal before getting into the marina just after midnight, which saved us a night's mooring fees.

The Calais Rally has prizes for the most number of boats from visiting clubs who arrive by the Saturday. For the last two years the joint Tollesbury entry has won second prize. This year we scored only *un point*.

Congratulations must go to David Knight from *Dionysus* for collecting his momento. *Dulcibella* would have made it *deux* but they left a day ahead of us, made Ramsgate, in fog, then bypassed Calais for Boulogne as they weren't sure any other TCC boats would actually get to Calais.

## Mixed Fortunes

Monday saw *Dionysus* and *Navicula Star* heading home while the rest of us, (*Crescendo*, *Tongue Twister*, *Clearwater* and *Carpe Diem*.) enjoyed the delights of Calais. Monday night the gales

came in.

Tuesday we went to Boulogne, by train! We had a great day out.

Wednesday. We went to Gravelines, by bus!

We met up with the crew of *Herald* who had gone the Shotley - Ramsgate - Gravelines route. We had a pleasant afternoon in the new yacht club, which I can highly recommend for a visit.

Thursday. We went to Dunkirk, by boat.

With the gales gone, we had a great sail up to Dunkirk where we took advantage of the Transmarche Marina rates. We met up with *Herald* and her crew again and spent Friday exploring the delights of Dunkirk. With such great company I must say that it was my best visit to Dunkirk so far.

On Friday night our 'end of cruise' meal was provided by Pete and Francis on *Carpe Diem* who cooked us a great BBQ and, with an early start, most crews sensibly opted for an early night.

And then we sailed home. Well we would have done but after an 04:00 start *Tongue Twister* actually motored nearly all the way across again. Luckily the new engine seems to work OK and we made Tollesbury at the top of the tide after a 14 hour passage.

So that was the Calais Rally and the Spring Cruise. Not what we expected but what a great week.

**Andy Hobden**

*Tongue Twister*

# Quicksilver's New Keel

Having decided that we could not afford the superb OVNI 395 we saw being produced in the factory in France, our thoughts turned to spending a few more seasons in *Lionheart*, our much-loved Moody 31. That is, until my wayward cousin Pamela decided to get married in the New Forest on a windy Friday afternoon in late March. "We might as well stay over and go and look at boats," was the way to get Jim to agree to 12 hours cooped up in close quarters with my family.

We were hoping to look for another lift-keel boat so suitable for our shallow muddy waters and noticed that the Maxi dealer at Hamble Point had a Southerly on its books. When we got there it had been sold so we thought we would look at a Maxi 1100. "From the sublime to the ridiculous", one might have remarked. After all – it was April 1<sup>st</sup>!

## Love at first sight

You know what its like. You know the minute you set foot on board that it's perfect for you. As we boarded the stern from the raised boatyard platform (she was ashore), we fell in love! She had everything on the "next boat must have" shopping list. Standing headroom for Jim throughout, hot water, shower, opening hatches in the galley and heads, electric windlass and much, much more. Most of all, she still felt like a real boat. Imagine our dismay when we came back to ground level and found that the standing headroom for Jim also applied beneath the hull! There was a humungous deep fin keel! Our hearts sank. How could we buy a dream boat that would only get over the Tollesbury sill at High Water Springs? We would forever have our head in the almanac

and our eyes on the depth sounder! The draught was given at 6ft 6ins and on the Maxi website was quoted at 6ft 7ins!

## Size matters !

Despondent, we continued viewing boats all day but nothing came up to scratch. We took to the motorway and returned home. The tide tables revealed that our use of such a boat would, as we had suspected, severely curtail our sailing possibilities. We wondered whether we should confine ourselves to dinghy sailing or even (God forbid) the back garden on neap weekends. Non-sailing friends and family (do they really exist between April and October?) would be pleased to have us around.

Meanwhile, besotted by his new-found 'love', Jim browsed the Maxi Owner's website. That's when the 'Eureka moment' hit. Maxi had started to offer a shoal draft keel option on their new boats a few years ago. *Hiawatha* is one. Last year a sailor based at Woolverstone had ordered a Maxi 1100 exactly like the one we had seen but with a shoal draught. However, when the boat was delivered to S D Marine at Hamble Point it had a deep fin on it. The owner was devastated as he was going away on holiday in his new boat as soon as she was commissioned. No problem. It being the factory's mistake, S D Marine told him to go away on holiday with the deep fin. They'd have a shoal draught keel shipped out and swap it on his return. Could this be the answer to our prayers? Wouldn't the sailing performance be affected?

In his website article the owner of *Vouvray* writes of how he had enjoyed the performance of his

new boat on holiday and was concerned that the change of keel would bring about a deterioration in performance. The article concludes that a very small increase in leeway was the only change. The boat still pointed well to windward and did everything she had done before with the deep fin.

We assumed that S D Marine would think we were mad to think of changing the keel on *Quicksilver*. But on the contrary, they were their usual extremely helpful selves and informed us that a new Maxi 1100 would soon be being shipped from Sweden in a lorry and that a keel could be slipped in too! It would take a week or so to do the work and the boat could be ours by mid-May! What is a "star cross'd lover" to do? Our offer was accepted and we put *Lionheart* on the market. The rest, as they say, is history.

## A little surgery helps

Everything then happened very quickly. We visited *Quicksilver* again to have another really good look. You don't take everything in first time round do you? Our visit coincided with the arrival of the lorry from Gothenburg and its precious cargo. We were still besotted and agreed an early May launch date. S D Marine advised us to take the boat away as soon as possible as the MDL charges at Hamble Point were excessive. The yard doing the keel 'swap' wanted a week longer to ensure that various bits of GRP etc could cure properly before launch and so our departure was postponed and the boat remained ashore. Our abortive attempts to have a go in the new boat and leave the Hamble warrant another story themselves.

# DULCIBELLA DOES FRANCE

After rapid hull repairs by the Woodrolfe Boatyard staff, *Dulcibella* was ready to sail on the Calais Rally by the 25<sup>th</sup> of May. We had 2 weeks leave for the cruise. The following is an account of that cruise.

## THURSDAY 25 MAY 06 - TOLLESBURY TO RAMSGATE

We slipped Tollesbury for the first leg to Ramsgate at 1140 hrs. The westerly wind was light but we were able to push 5 knots out of the Blackwater on the ebbing tide. After about 2 hours the wind died and on went the engine. The wind continued throughout the passage to veer south and by the time we left Fisherman's Gat the wind was a full on southerly. A plot to bypass Ramsgate and maybe continue on to Calais was forming in my mind. Before I could test the plan on my trusty crew (Lindsey), the idea was scuppered by the weather, not the crew's lack of enthusiasm for an extended passage. When we were level with Margate, a bank of thick fog rolled over us, forcing us to make immediately for the safety of **Ramsgate**. A Channel crossing was definitely out of the question. We entered the port with visibility less than 100 metres. Just after 2000hrs we were safely tucked up in Royal Harbour, Ramsgate.

## FRIDAY 26 MAY 06

The weather was against us again with F7-8 forecast for the Dover Straits. Over a few drinks in the Temple Yacht Club we discussed our plans in view of the weather which seemed not too favourable for the coming weekend and the Calais Rally. We decided that Calais was a likely washout and to move instead to Boulogne for a kick off to Normandy (should the weather ever become favourable).

## SATURDAY 27 MAY 06 - RAMSGATE TO BOULOGNE

At 0400 hrs we slipped Ramsgate to take advantage of a very small and dubious weather window. Westerly winds of F 4-5 were forecast but accompanied by poor visibility later. A crossing of The Channel was a bit of a calculated risk but we had Dover as a diversion port if we were not comfortable with conditions. Out of Ramsgate, we turned south on a course inside the Goodwin Sands and with such a favourable wind, *Dulcibella* was comfortably pushing over 7 knots. At about 0700 hrs, just off South Foreland, I telephoned Andy Hobden for news on the Cruising Club. They were still in Tollesbury and Brightlingsea with no prospect of

making the passage to Calais. It appeared that the rally was a washout. So with 3 hours of south westerly flow left we shaped a course across The Channel from South Goodwin to South of the Cap Gris Nez on the French side. As we approached mid Channel the wind rose to constant Force 6, the sea built quickly and the low cloud and mist (which was forecast for later) reduced visibility to less than a mile. Although a little uncomfortable, *Dulcibella* was pushing 8 knots with the wind over the beam. For the first time ever we encountered no ships in the Traffic Separation Scheme. We exited the separation scheme and turned south west on a course for Boulogne inside the Banque de Bassure. For the last 6 miles we motor sailed against the tide and the west south west wind as visibility continued to drop to less than 200 metres. At 1200 hrs we berthed at the Quay Gambon in **Boulogne**, celebrating our first crossing of the year with a bottle of Champagne. We were tired but satisfied and very relieved after a challenging crossing. Our spirits lifted by the bubbly, we set off to town to stock up on fromage et vin.

We were in a good position now to kick off south to Normandy with north

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 6)

## Keel matters (continued) Strong wind torpedo

I (Hilary) know my limitations as a fair weather sailor and chickened out of the delivery trip, so as I write, have only had a couple of weekends on *Quicksilver*. We are both delighted with her in every way. We both enjoy the more spacious and luxurious accommodation and Jim is getting used to manoeuvring in our tightly packed marina. I am still wary of her power and speed – that is if we are not racing in very light winds as anyone involved in the Wallet

Long/Wallet Shield race may have noticed! She does require some wind to get going, especially with 2.8 tons of torpedo keel under her! The main is very big and needs a little bit of breeze to drive it, but gives us 10 knots and a cruising speed of six. The 5ft draught is still scary to me (I'm constantly watching the depth gauge) but it is much more suited to the East Coast and there is that great lump of lead beneath our feet which the winter haul out will reveal in all its splendour.

We know we have a faster boat than *Lionheart* and that now we

have a 5ft draught instead of 4ft we will have to do some hanging around on the Leavings. But we can sail on all but neapest of neaps and have the perfect boat for us.

We'll keep the beer cold! See you out there?

**Hilary Morgan**  
*Quicksilver*

(Continued from page 7)

***Dulcibella's cruise (continued)***

west winds forecast for the next few days.

**SUNDAY 28 MAY 06**

The weather on Sunday was perfect. We spent the day resting. In the shelter of the marina it was sunny and warm, so we sunbathed from early morning and only ventured out in the early evening for a promenade with the French and a few glasses at one of the many cafes. The next day we would sail south.

**MONDAY 29 MAY 06 - BOULOGNE TO LE TREPORT**

I awoke very early and full of enthusiasm to press on. At 0500 we slipped Boulogne to head south and take advantage of the south westerly tidal flow. The weather forecast was reasonable west 3-4, veering north west 5 occasionally 6 later. *Dulcibella* had a good push south from the tide until 1100 hrs. My plan was to reach Le Treport (50 miles) or maybe even Dieppe (70 miles). By mid morning we had made excellent progress and after studying the pilot I decided to make a detour into the tiny port of **St Valery-sur-Somme**. It is 10 miles north of Le Treport and by any standard a difficult bay to navigate with the sands and channel continually shifting. However, the weather was good (at that time), so we attempted the entry. We hove-to at the clear water mark (AT-SO Buoy) at the edge of the drying bay and waited until 2 hours before high water to navigate the **Chenal Balise**. The bay dries for 6 miles out to sea and the buoys are moved every season with the shifting sand banks. I made a course for the two nearest buoys which was correct, buoys S1 and S2. It was simple, so I thought, to pick out the rest of the buoys, numbered in sequence to S50 and then safely follow the channel and training wall into **St Valery**. It was not simple! The next two markers we made for were S5 and S6. I had somehow missed completely S3 and S4. The next buoy I made for was numbered S8. By that time I was completely confused by the layout of the markers and I aborted the entry. We reversed our route out to the safe water marker to continue our passage South.

By that time (1400 hrs) the wind was starting to strengthen with ominous dark clouds gathering in the west. We put 2 reefs in the main and bore away to **Le Treport** some 10 miles south, but now against 2 knots of tide. The wind continued to strengthen to a full force 7 and the seas quickly built to nasty cresting waves. The big black cloud headed our way and clearly showed on the radar as some 10 miles away. We quickly hove-to, dropped in the 3<sup>rd</sup> reef in the main and continued to Le Treport. The problem we now had was that the conditions (strong on-shore wind) might put our entry into Le Treport into question. The entrance is narrow between granite breakwaters and we had only entered before in perfect conditions. The other option was to make for **Dieppe** some 23 miles further south but 30 degrees west and harder onto the wind. We rolled in the genoa to handkerchief size, hardened up and made for Dieppe. Crashing through the waves became too much and we only maintained the heading for 30 minutes. We bore away and headed for Le Treport. If entry was too dangerous, then we would have no option but to make for Dieppe. As *Dulcibella* came off the wind, she was pushing 10 knots. Some 3 miles off the entrance, the wind began to ease as the big black cloud skirted past us to the north. We stood off the breakwaters about half a mile to watch two trawlers enter. They didn't appear to be thrown about too much. Two cables off, we dropped the sails, put the engine on and went for it.

Another problem loomed. A dredger and barge were moored in the middle of the entrance. There was no reply on the radio from the Capitainerie to our request for permission to enter, so we took the same route as the two trawlers and surfed between the north breakwater and the barge with a couple of boat lengths clearance either side. The water flattened between the massive breakwaters. All we had to contend with now was the particularly difficult lock.

Surprisingly we tackled the lock without a problem and were tucked up on pontoon H by 1700hrs. We were exhausted. We dined on board with lots of alcohol and by 2000 hrs were in our bunk and, I think, fast

asleep.

The very good news was that the weather would improve. The forecast said that high pressure was taking over, and with it the prospect of some sun and easy sailing. My trusty crew was beginning to question my interpretation of the weather forecasts and there was even some mutinous talk of package holidays.

**TUESDAY 30 MAY- WEDNESDAY 31 MAY 06**

Dodgy prawns laid me out on Tuesday. On Wednesday we found two big supermarkets to victual the boat. They were on the edge of town, a 20 minute bike ride away but two trips saw us fully stocked up for the next week at least.

Monday had seen us defeated by the Baie de Somme and its difficult channel. I thought it time to put this right. With the assistance of the tourist information office, we obtained, by fax from the Harbour Master at St Valery, a plan of the buoyage for the bay. Armed with this plan, we would tackle the bay and spend some time in the ports of St Valery-Sur-Somme and to the north side of the bay, Le Crotoy.

The remainder of Wednesday was spent touring Le Treport on bike and foot which does not take long. The town, although still attractive, was a little sad with few visitors and many of the cafes and restaurants were not yet open for the season. On our previous visits in the height of summer the place had been buzzing with activity.

**THURSDAY 1 JUN 06 - LE TREPORT TO DIEPPE**

It was our intention, armed with our buoyage plan, to tackle the **Baie de Somme**. However, due to tidal constraints we had to leave Le Treport on the first available lock out (HW-4), and then sail 10 miles north to the AT-SO buoy to begin an entry into the bay at HW-2. Timings were a bit tight.

At 1300 hrs we slipped our berth but were delayed in the lock and held up by the dredger, again moored between the breakwaters. It took ages to obtain permission to leave the harbour. We were now too late to make St Valery-Sur-Somme. Instead we turned south and headed for **Dieppe**.

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### ***Dulcibella's Cruise continues***

The north-west flow we would have used to sail north was now against us and the 13 miles to Dieppe took us nearly 4 hours doing a total of 22 miles through the water. By 1730 we were moored in Dieppe.

### **FRIDAY 2 JUNE 06 - DIEPPE TO St VALERY-SUR-SOMME**

At 1045 hrs, after some early shopping, we slipped Dieppe and by 1100hrs had cleared the breakwaters and on a course for the AT-SO Buoy (clear water mark) at the Baie de Somme. The wind was against us but we were content to motor in these novel light conditions with a smooth sea. The autohelm and radar alarm were set and we relaxed in the morning sun. By 1400 hrs an onshore breeze had developed, enabling us to sail the last 12 miles to our first waypoint at a fair pace.

At 1540 hrs we made our waypoint and began the approach to navigate the channel. We picked up Buoys S1 and S2 as before and then the channel took a sharp turn to the south west, practically a dogleg. As we progressed, it was easy to understand why I had been confused on our first attempt. The channel twisted and turned for 3 miles until we passed **Point du Hourdel**. Even with the buoyage plan it was not easy. It appeared that some buoys had been moved since the plan was produced in April.

We reached a split in the channel marked by a westerly cardinal – to the north-east Le Crotoy, and to the south east St Valery-Sur-Somme, our destination.

There is nothing quite like entering a new port and this was no exception. It was even more satisfying after the effort taken to get there. The bay is massive and spectacular and the conditions were perfect. Even though we were just before high water (Neaps), at places we only had 6 feet of water. In a boat with a deep draft, it would be advisable to enter nearer Springs. As we progressed we clung to the well marked training wall to our starboard, and then hugged the shoreline and promenade. We motored slowly towards the marina, taking in the scene - the cafes, restaurants and shops on the

waterfront and the promenade filled with families and couples enjoying this public holiday weekend.

Earlier, I had radioed the marina for a berth and as we approached, the harbourmaster came out to meet us on his launch. He guided us to our berth and assisted us to tie up. He spoke perfect English, and, with berths at only 14 euros for our 10 meters, everything was just too good to be true: overall, simply one of the nicest places we have ever visited.

### **SATURDAY 3 JUNE 06**

Saturday was sunny and hot and exploration was the order of the day. Firstly, we rode out towards the Point Du Hourdel to survey the bay at low tide. We wandered around the picturesque 'Quartier des Marins', with its cottages and superb panorama of the bay. The medieval walled town and church of St Martin are charming. In 1066 Duke William embarked at St Valery to put the breeze up the Saxons. St Joan of Arc was brought to St Valery from Le Crotoy by the English who ruled here until 1473. This is, in my opinion, one of the best locations on the coast.

### **SUNDAY 4 JUNE 06**

The next day we took the steam train from St Valery to Le Crotoy (on the opposite side of the bay) via Noyelles, a journey of about an hour. As well as the pleasure of a ride on a steam train there was a practical reason for this journey. The next day we intended to move to Le Crotoy and a rece from shore side was necessary to check out the drying harbour and to see if a berth was available.

The trip was a success. We checked out the berths at the sailing club pontoons at low water. It was apparent that *Dulcibella* would dry out but the bottom was soft and even. In my best French I arranged a berth for the following day with *the gardien* at the club. It appeared that we were a bit of novelty. You will see why later. The pilot book said that a vessel able to take the ground could anchor and dry out on the beach just outside the harbour. This looked possible as an attractive and free alternative.

### **MONDAY 5 JUNE 06 - St VA-**

### **LERY-SUR-SOMME TO LE CROTOY**

We set off at 0645 in the light early morning mist to motor the 6 miles to **Le Crotoy**. The bay was completely flat and still. We followed the channel out to the W cardinal buoy and then followed in the buoys prefixed C. and numbered 1 to10 to the harbour wall. Keeping close to the wall on our port hand, to avoid the shoal to starboard, we entered the marina. The entry was made on a tide of coefficient 80. The pilot book recommends an entry at coefficient 90. That is probably why we had less than 3 feet of water in places on our approach.

Le Crotoy is certainly a contrast to St Valery. It is a little down market but no less attractive. The beautiful bathing beach (the only S facing beach in N France) is of clean golden sand. The waterfront is pretty and filled with bars and bistros. There are numerous fish stalls selling the cheapest mussels I have yet found. With mooring fees of only 10 Euros a night we stayed until Thursday.

### **THURSDAY 8 JUNE 06 - LE CROTOY TO BOULOGNE**

Thursday, in light to moderate E to SE winds, we left Le Crotoy at 1000 hrs and at 1945 hrs were moored in **Boulogne** after a pleasant, uneventful passage.

### **SATURDAY 10 JUNE 06 - BOULOGNE TO PYEFLEET**

Saturday was the long haul home, 90 miles in one hop to the **Pyefleet**, where we would anchor overnight. The conditions were perfect, a moderate to fresh E to SE wind. We left Boulogne at 0700 hrs and managed to sail all the way to Pyefleet in 15 hours averaging 6 knots in the hour. It was wonderful to be home in the safe and familiar waters of the Blackwater.

This summer between the last week in July and second week in August, *Dulcibella* will be off in the same direction. If anyone would like to come along to cruise in company and safety - they would be very welcome.

**Graham and Lindsey**  
*Dulcibella*

# Racing Report

The first race of the 2006 season was on the 13<sup>th</sup> May. This was **The Pursuit Race** to Harwich Breakwater, and had to be re-organised for the overnight stop to be at Woolverstone Marina with a meal at the Butt and Oyster at Pin Mill. Then after a long and challenging day, we did not have a winner.

The day of the race started well enough but the conditions were light. *Inka*, (Paul Kemp), in his 19ft Prelude, was the first away, followed by a fleet of 12 boats, with the last being *Polo IV*, almost an hour later. During the race the conditions were incredibly changeable and on *Dionysus* we experienced two occasions where the wind spun round 180 degrees in just a few moments.

Because the conditions were so light, some boats missed some of the marks as they were drifting faster than they were sailing! The race had to be foreshortened to the **Medusa Buoy**, and all was looking good for a stunning finish with at least 10 boats all within 1.5 miles off the line, when suddenly the wind dropped completely and visibility deteriorated. An attempt was made to finalise the race as it was getting late.

Under much pressure I decided the best and only solution was to

nullify the race. It was a great pity that the weather did not hold for 15 minutes longer as it had proved to be a very challenging race.

The 20<sup>th</sup> May should have been **The Goldie Challenge** to Burnham but I again had to cancel this, as the weather was now so bad that we had gales most of the preceding week. What a change from the week before!

Being the host club for **The Wallet Shield** it was a great pleasure to organise the race and we decided to run this along side **The Wallet Long Race**, on the 17<sup>th</sup> June. We had an entry of 25 boats, but only 4 clubs from the 6 of the Wallet Association were represented: Tollesbury Sailing Club, Wivenhoe Sailing Club, Tollesbury Cruising Club and one boat from Colne Yacht Club. With such a large entry from our club, it might have been thought that "we had it in the bag", but we were honourably beaten by Wivenhoe by some very slick sailing.

I missed out a mark and had to turn back to round it, thus adding at least 30 minutes to our time. (That's it! I've admitted it and it's all done; all over. We certainly don't want to talk about that again, thank you).

Andy Holden on *Tongue Twister* sailed to his usual high standard and managed to be the fastest boat over the course and collected **The Wallet Long Race Trophy** for his efforts. That evening we had a meal, and live music from *Buck Shee* which I am told was an excellent event, but poorly attended as none of the other competing clubs came back to Tollesbury Cruising Club.

With two races from the beginning of the year still to be run, we have arranged to have a 'Race Weekend' on the 16/17<sup>th</sup> September where we will run **The Goldie Challenge** to Burnham, and have a celebration dinner at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club. **The Pursuit Race** will then take place on the following Sunday, so please put this in your diaries. Posters will be placed on the clubs notice board nearer the time.

The next race that is organised is the Ladies Weekend with **The Teapot Challenge** on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July and **The Boudica Trophy** on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. We hope that it will be well supported by all our ladies this year.

**David Knight** - Rear Commodore Racing  
*Dionysus*

(Continued from page 3)

**Quicksilver's delivery (concluded)** had rung the hire company the previous day to say that the car was coming back but they had still sent a driver to Hamble Point!

In St Albans it poured with rain all day and my thoughts were very much with *Quicksilver* and her crew. Without Anna's excellent texting skills, I would have had an anxious 24 hours. I bestowed the title of "communications officer" on her and she kept me in touch with progress every few hours and even in the mid-

dle of the night! Many of her offerings were prefaced with the words – "you made the right decision!" As I said before, I know my limitations.

They missed the Sunday lunchtime tide by a couple of hours, took a Leavings buoy in the creek and cracked open the well-deserved beer. The plan was to rest up and go in to Tollesbury on the night tide. Jim had woken early and was busying himself on deck, the boat lit up like a Christmas tree, when another boat loomed out of the night and hit *Quicksilver* still tied up on her buoy! I don't

think he was quite so calm this time!

Robbie and I drove down the following morning and we all drank 'Mr J Boat's' champagne before drawing a line under our eventful delivery trip.

We did not get our half term week away in our new boat but did manage four days which included Pyefleet and the Deben in beautiful, if somewhat chilly, sunshine. Who could ask for more?

**Hilary Morgan**  
*Quicksilver*