



# Up the Creek...

## Becalmed or Windswept? Tollesbury Cruisers Have Fun Whatever the Weather

Well what a start to the season! "Start as you mean to go on", say the optimists but I'm not counting my chickens just yet. The elements were so kind to us over the Easter weekend that sailors were complaining they had to motor! The Pursuit Race was becalmed off the Colne Bar and Ipswich shimmered in the balmy temperatures. Nick Noscoe (*Sardinade*) writes about his first racing experience on page 6.

Whilst parched gardens begged for a downpour, Tollesbury Cruising Club members (as ever) made the most of the lovely weather. Read Charlotte Perrin's account of the Easter weekend on page 5 and Martyn Reed gets up close and personal with a celebrity vessel in Suffolk Yacht Harbour. (page 2)

And then came the Whitsun weekend. What is it with the end of May? In 1999 the Morgan family made its

first Thames Estuary and Channel crossing on the Whitsun weekend. It was pretty hairy then too with wind over tide off the North Foreland and it had been blowing a 'hoolie' all week. We made several more attempts over the years that followed, all of which were abandoned either at Ramsgate or before even leaving Tollesbury! Oh the vagaries of the British weather! As I write, it's 30C in my back garden but more rain is



*Polo IV* tries to find some wind during the Easter Pursuit Race  
Photo Nigel Seary

forecast so who can possibly know what it's going to do from one day to the next? But you can be sure that, whatever the weather, TCC members will make the most of it in time-honoured style.

Have you ever considered an extended cruise to Brittany? Ian Robinson (our Rear Commodore - Racing) enters races of the other kind on page 9. Charlotte Perrin has been beaver-ing away at her laptop this season and in addition to her account of the Easter Cruise, read her reports of the Hamford Water Safari Supper (page 8) and the stupendous Buxey Ashes win for TCC!!! (page 11)

Please keep those articles and photos coming everyone!

**Hilary Morgan**  
Editor  
(*Quicksilver*)

### Contents

Becalmed or Windswept.....	p.1
Commodore's Corner.....	p.2
East Anglia Sailing Trust.....	p.2
Racing Round up.....	p.3
Cruising Update.....	p.4

Easter Cruise.....	p. 5
Pursuit Race to Harwich.....	p. 6
Forthcoming Deadlines.....	p. 7
Safari Supper.....	p. 8
Three Races and the Morbihan.....	p. 9
Ashes Return to Tollesbury.....	p.11
And Finally.....	p.12

Edited by:  
Hilary Morgan

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

# Commodore's Corner

Welcome to the summer edition of 'Up the Creek'. I hope your sailing season is going well and you are finding some summer amongst the rain. Enjoy reading cruise and race reports as well as other articles.

For *Nimrodel* it's been a slow start to the season with the early months taken up with a maintenance over-run. The dreaded headlining replacement and a commitment to take Rhys and Jess, my children, to compete in 'Eurocat' Carnac, Brittany over the Easter/Royal wedding/May Day bank holiday kept me on terra firma.

However, we finally managed our shakedown cruise in early May with a delightful trip to Hamford water, including a dinghy excursion up to Beaumont Quay. If you've not been up there, I'd highly recommend it.

So for the rest of the season... well I hope you can join in some of the events. I'm particularly looking forward to the summer cruise to Holland. Remember to keep an eye on the notice board in the clubhouse for the latest information and updates. I'm also 'experimenting' with Twitter so

if you're that way inclined please 'follow me' at @commodoreTCC. When I've got 10 or so followers at the club, I'll try to tweet more often. I promise only TCC or sailing related mutterings, and I promise, in particular, not to tell you what I had for breakfast.

Happy Sailing!

**Dave Cooke**  
Commodore  
*Nimrodel*

## East Anglia Sailing Trust Charity Auction - Martyn Reed Gets up Close and Personal with a Famous Lady

Suffolk Yacht Harbour held the opening of its new harbour office and facilities on Easter Saturday. Not much of a draw there you may think, but with Griff Rhys Jones as auctioneer for the evening, charity Buffet, *Undina* on display in the marina and a number of other classic yachts present - now, that was worth a visit!

After the official opening Griff spent the next couple of hours signing books. All but two copies of "To the Baltic with Bob" were sold. The remaining two made a decent price at the charity auction in the evening. I did not win the afternoon sail on *Undina* at the auction as this was quite sought after. Griff also auctioned a week's stay in one of his farm properties in Pembrokeshire.

Later, Griff's full time skipper showed us around *Undina*. She is extremely well kept but like the Forth Bridge, the varnishing never ceases. She is up for sale for only £230,000 as Griff has now bought one ten feet longer and ten years older to replace her. Griff said that in the ten years he has owned her,

she has cost him £500,000 so £230k seems very reasonable!

I did get my sit at the helm and although the wheel always looked awkward on 'Three Men in a Boat' it does actually come to hand well. The evening raised £3500 giving a total of £7000 for the day's activities, a good amount in difficult times.



Martyn at *Undina*'s helm

**Martyn Reed**  
*Ariel Spirit*

# Robinson's Racing Round-up



*Polo IV and Dionysus* battle it out in the Goldie Challenge  
Photo Nigel Seary

Since the start of the season we have held two of the planned races: the Pursuit Race and the Goldie Challenge. We have had to postpone the Howlett Cup until later in the year.

nice to think we could field ten plus yachts for the remaining races!! It is pleasing to report that we have two new boat names to add to the trophies. Nick and Trisha in their

The two races have been fully reported on the website and I will not repeat the details now. Both races were well supported with eleven and twelve yachts participating respectively. The Pursuit Race was challenging due to an absence of wind and the Goldie Challenge had almost too much wind! It would be

boat *Sardinade* took the Pursuit Race and Ray and Debbie in their new boat *Kahuna* claimed the Goldie Challenge. I have to thank Robin Kemp for organising the Goldie Challenge race in my absence.

By the time you read this, Carole and I will be away on our summer cruise for a couple of months. The Wallet Long Race is to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> July before *Ostara* returns to Tollesbury so and I am again looking for volunteers!

**Ian Robinson**  
**Rear Commodore (Cruising)**  
*Ostara*

## Forthcoming Races

To be reset later in the season

### Howlett Cup

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July

### Wallet Long Race and Brightlingsea Weekend

A traditional course from the Nass out into the Wallet and finishing off at Brightlingsea. The projected start time is 0900 hours.

The course will be determined on the day, but hopefully can go up to the Wallet No2.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July

### Kings Head Cup and Brightlingsea Weekend

The date has yet to be agreed by TSC. The projected start time is 1400 hours. The traditional race around Osea Island against TSC.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September

### Teapot Race and Brightlingsea Weekend

Our race for ladies at the helm. The projected start time is 1230 hours. It is a white sails only event. The course will be round to Brightlingsea from the Nass via the Bench Head (perhaps additional marks too).

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December

### Frostbite Race

Incorporated into the Christmas Cruise to Bradwell. The projected start time is 1230 hours. This will be a white sails only event. The course will be down to the Thirslet buoy from the Nass and finishing by turning the Barrier to port and across the line heading west between the committee boat and the Bradwell beacon.

# Cruising Update

## Warm Welcome

Ten boats made the first Club trip of the season to Bradwell. Nineteen people joined us aboard *CARTEL* for a boat warming followed by the first club meal of the year held at The Green Man. Thanks to all at The Green Man for making us feel so welcome.

## Easter—Some like it hot!

With eleven days holiday available away and only having to take three days off, it was irresistible for so many. It began with a short trip to Brightlingsea. I am pleased to report that we sunk the pontoon again with a fantastic pontoon party going on late into the evening. If it hadn't been for the fact that most had to be up early for the racing or cruising up to the Orwell I'm sure it would have gone on into the early hours!

This was followed by the trip up to Ipswich Haven where we all gathered in glorious weather. Plenty of socializing was to be had and having borrowed the marina restaurant's drum, we had a great turnout for the BBQ. The next day a very successful even-

ing meal was had at the Brewery Tap where we had almost 50 people attending.

It was then time for some to leave and return home while others stayed in the area for the following week where visits to many other parts of the East Coast took place.

## Let's go Continental

Very much of a mixed bag this one. The original intention of going to Calais ended up with smaller fleets going in different directions due to the unsettled weather. Some got to France making it a truly continental trip. Others visited Shotley, Woodbridge, Titchmarsh and Suffolk Yacht Harbour. We do spread our wings don't we?

## All Change

The Hamford Water Safari supper weekend was a great success again. There is a write up later in this edition. Huge thanks for all contributions to the marvelous cuisine.

## Forthcoming Cruising Events

So all in all a good start to the season I think with plenty more of the same to come. Don't miss the following and show your interest by enlisting early on the Forum.

## Summer Holiday

The Summer Cruise interest is hotting up for the trip to Holland and names of people interested in joining a sail across to the continent are being collated.

## Night Sail to Harwich

## Extended Late Summer Cruise

The Medway and London is a strong possibility.

## Colne Yacht Club / Fireworks Party

## Christmas Cruise

Enjoy the rest of your season. See you on the water soon.

**Rob Perrin**  
Rear Commodore Cruising  
*CARTEL*



TCC revelries sink Brightlingsea's pontoon yet again!

Photo Charlotte Perrin

# This Year's Easter Cruise Was Blessed with Unseasonably Good Weather. Charlotte Perrin Reports on the 'Eggstravaganza'! (Sorry! Ed)

**Factor 50...Check**  
**Shorts .... Check**  
**BBQ equipment.....Check**

My quartermaster's checklist for the Easter Cruise 2011 seemed unreal as Good Friday dawned in glorious sunshine. I had only just dried out the coats and the dog after last year's Easter cruise where hail and tempest hounded our every turn.

## **Pontoon Takes a Plunge (yet again!)**

The TCC rendezvoused at Brightlingsea that afternoon and before the words "Pontoon Party" were out of Rob's mouth, Robin and Jean had arrived with freshly baked sausage rolls, Heidi Seary with wonderfully iced fairy cakes and Trish Noscoe with a supply of canapés to die for. The tables soon groaned with food and drinks whilst the pontoon groaned with the weight of the TCC. We were gently lowered into the water as the pontoon sank in traditional style under the weight of a number of drunken sailors. The gentle hubbub of seafaring chat became a crescendo of murmuring as the handicaps for the Pursuit Race were handed out over garlic bread. Those racing hastily left their glasses of wine when they realised how early they would have to get up the next day. As everyone returned to their boats, the air was filled with the smell of brewing coffee and strategic race planning.

On Saturday, before the sun had risen, the TCC fleet had abandoned the alcohol and fairy cake strewn pontoons for the Pursuit race and for those not racing, some general cruising. *Quicksilver* and *Toodle Pip* had

headed straight for the delights of Ipswich earlier and were reporting balmy weather and a fantastic reception at the Haven Marina as usual.



TCC's antics sink Brightlingsea's pontoon for the umpteenth time!

## **In the Doldrums?**

The crew of *Cartel*, who were mere observers, listened spellbound to the race chat on the radio as the epic tale of "hunt the wind" was played out. Rumour had it that Peter and Glen on *Codan* got caught in the doldrums but later it was revealed that their alarm clock went off at 7.30am, missing their racing start time by over two hours! *Moonshine* and *Ostara* fought valiantly to find anything more than a breath of wind. Jean and Robin on *Polo IV* had resorted to playing "spot the seal" on the glassy surface of the sea. *Hoppetosse* decided to anchor on the Colne Bar to wait for some wind to arrive (as you do). *Wave Dancer* and *Edge Beyond* filled the morning counting how many wind turbines there are, whilst *Mimosa* had time to cook and eat a full cooked breakfast and wash up.

Boat by boat, over the course of the

next few hours, they called in to Joyce and Chris on *Calidris* (Committee Boat and Finish Line) to declare that they were dropping out of the race. However Nick Noscoe on *Sardinade*, (no doubt fuelled by yet more of Trisha's smoked salmon and cream cheese mini bruschetta) determinedly found the wind and were worthy winners. The fleet admitted defeat and switched their engines on to limp onwards to find *Calidris* standing sentry at the mouth of the Orwell where they had been anchored since the early hours.

*Cartel* had a little sail up the Orwell and made it to Ipswich in plenty of time for the girlie crew to head towards Primark and Starbucks. The TCC flotilla were soon moored up and heading for the bar to share stories of empty sails, handicaps and the poor state of alarm clock manufacture in China.

In the evening Rob had persuaded the Marina bar to release one of their large BBQs and it was fired up and ready for everyone to cook on by 7pm. The manly cooking of huge



Dinner at The Brewery Tap - well worth the walk

## Continued overleaf

steaks on hot coals became a spectator sport for the female crew members as they dashed around madly with salads, drinks, plates and cups whilst still finding time to praise their menfolk for the wonderful job they were doing cremating meat. The victorious Trisha yet again wowed the assembled hungry throng with her tapenade canapés. The rest of the evening blurred into a fabulous sunset through a haze of smoke and red wine.

### Eggstravaganza

Easter Sunday began with a manic Egg hunt with Robin and Jean giving the children a run for their money as they scampered around the marina dislodging plastic eggs from bollards, sun dials and trees. After last year's poor performance, Jean was victorious at last! After a leisurely day, Rob



Intrepid egg hunters with their 'spoils'

took the company on a route march to the Brewery Tap where a fantastic meal was scoffed by all. The brave walked home whilst the sensible took a taxi back to the marina. Those who walked marvelled at the cosmopolitan feel of the Haven Marina complete with riverside bars, music and revelers lying drunk by the harbour wall.

Sadly on Monday the *Cartel* crew and others headed home leaving many to

enjoy the delights of the Deben and beyond but they must tell their own story.

Tragically hopes of meeting the flotilla again the following weekend for more TCC fun were dashed as the winds raged in classic Bank Holiday style. Robin advised us not even to try to get up to Shotley as they were worried how they would get

themselves home in one piece. I tried to wipe away a crocodile tear as the girlie crew cracked open the bubbly and settled down to watch the Royal Wedding.

To every tragedy there is a fringe of happiness made up in this case of the lovely Wills & Kate and a good bottle of Bollie!

**Charlotte Perrin**  
*Cartel*

# The Pursuit Race to Harwich

## Anxieties of the First Time Racer by Nick Noscoe



*Sardinade* on a spinnaker run  
Photo Charlotte Perrin

This madcap idea started at the season's briefing when the commodore, David Cooke, extolled the virtues of pursuit racing and that a novice can be near the front at some stage of the race. The idea matured over the next few weeks until the announcement on the Forum that the Easter Cruise would include the Pursuit Race up the Wallet to Harwich. Why not, we decided as we were going there anyway, add a bit more challenge?

We provided Ian with the relevant details of our dear old Sadler in order to qualify for a handicap. The numbers were crunched and the answer came back. The final handicap allowed for our spinnaker, only used once and at that time I made a complete hash of gybing, so I wasn't confident in rushing off down wind at a great pace.

The then Easterlies persisted, so it wouldn't matter. With my lack of racing experience I felt at a disadvantage.



Winner *Sardinade*  
Photo Charlotte Perrin

I must have planned my route round the course 50 times; working out tactics, whether to leave the Knoll buoy to port or the North Eagle cardinal to starboard depending on conditions on the day, checking and double checking every weather forecast I could find. In the end it was all a load of rubbish!

The day of the briefing came on Good Friday, a brilliant day; beautiful and sunny, a little breeze coming out of the East. So a beat up to Brightlingsea, first stop on our Easter Cruise. This proved illuminating and encouraging. I found myself in a tacking duel with one of the larger, light displacement boats that I was convinced was going to tear past me on the following day. But my mind was more on the 0451 start the following morning.

Unfortunately things did not start well! The gas bottle decided to run out, to leave us with a tepid kettle of

water, just sufficient to wash. On leaving Brightlingsea all went well. We were a bit late starting (4 minutes), no matter in the scheme of things. After the engine went off we came to a gentle stop. On our way at last, with a certain amount of relief! I now had visions of the rest of the fleet lining up alongside us for the drift down The Wallet. Tea and toast were consumed at last while enjoying the magnificent sunrise over Clacton. What a marvellous morning! To my surprise, very few boats in sight. Turned the radio up, checked it was working. Had the race been cancelled and we had not heard? Soon the committee boat motored past, followed by *Cartel*, (or was it the other way round?) so it was all still on. I was still convinced that the wind would get up soon and all the other boats would be tearing past us, thus eliminating all our advantage of our unholy early start.

Should we carry on? If nothing happened in the next hour or so we would never get there on the tide. Soon the rest of the fleet would be on us! At last, The Colne Bar and I was sure there was a little more wind. We finally tacked away to the north to leave North Eagle to starboard - seemed the shorter way into The Wallet - the tide picked us up and according to GPS we shot through at 5 to 6 Knots before we had to tack again and beat up towards the wind farm. With the tide pushing us we managed nearly 4 knots. Looking behind for the umpteenth time for

the inevitable challenge, but nothing - checked radio again - we now had the continuous chatter of local fishermen to entertain us. So the radio's working then! We were very much on our own. The new concern was the visibility which seemed to be worsening - an extreme haze - not a lot we could do about that.

The transmissions soon started to come in from the others (between information on the available dogfish) of crews giving up. All seemed to be stuck in The Colne. My thoughts though were on who had got past us and how. We pledged to carry on - if *Polo IV* was still there, we weren't giving up. Soon we realised the nearest boat was about 7 miles away - over 2 hours behind at the speeds we were now doing. The time now was about 0930 and Ian decided then to abandon. We had won our first ever race! This news was received with a mixture of elation and embarrassment. We decided to carry on sailing as long as possible but there was no chance of getting round the Medusa Buoy before the tide turned. When we started going backwards on went the engine and we motored the hour or so to Harwich. We carried on to Levington, picked up a buoy, had some lunch, a rest and reflected on our glory before carrying on to Ipswich, feeling tired but good.

**Nick Noscoe**  
*Sardinade*

## Forthcoming Deadlines

Please send anything to me for inclusion in the Winter edition of Up the Creek by **Friday 11th November**. You can email me through the Committee page of the website [www.tollesburycc.co.uk](http://www.tollesburycc.co.uk) or by 'snail mail' via the marina office. If sending electronically, please could you ensure that your copy is **not formatted**. Plain text only, no extra spaces, borders or tables as it is often complicated to reformat during the editing process. Please send photos separately ie not embedded in the text.

Please keep your articles and photos coming. Without your contributions, we really would be "up the creek"!

**Hilary Morgan (Editor)**

# Hamford Wildlife Baffled as TCC does 'Come Dine with Me'

## Hamford Water Safari Supper - A Seal's eye view

As seals living on the banks of Hamford Water we have a fairly blissful life. Basking on the warm sands at low tide followed by a gentle swim and a bit of fishing as and when required. We are occasionally disturbed by the odd rumble of a horn sounding as the container ships are guided in and out of Felixstowe. Endless sand, fish and general slobbering about. Seal heaven!

Once a year, however, our peace is shattered by the arrival of the Tollesbury Cruising Club for their annual Safari Supper. This year was no exception and our afternoon snooze was disturbed by the arrival of *Quicksilver* and *Iceni II* (ex TCC and now at Titchmarsh) who effortlessly anchored and put on the kettle whilst they waited for the rest of the boats to arrive. The man on *Quicksilver* reminded us of Bernard our chief seal and he clearly commanded a great deal of respect from all who spoke to him.

We fell asleep for a little before we were rudely awakened by a boat called *Cartel* which had a lot of noisy people on it and they shouted a lot as they came alongside *Quicksilver* as they couldn't be bothered to lower their own anchor. The nice lady on *Quicksilver* didn't seem to mind which was lucky. There was also a brown four legged seal with ears and a wet nose sitting on the foredeck and we eyed each other suspiciously.

No sooner had the racket died down than a Welshman on a boat called *Weekend* anchored and proudly raised the *Welsh dragon flag* which immedi-

ately resulted in *Quicksilver* raising their *Scottish lion flag*. Finally *Scallywag*, *Dyonisus* and *Diana II* made up the party.

The tide began to turn and it was soon time for us to do a spot of swimming and fishing. We elegantly slithered into the water thinking that we could fish in peace but we soon heard the gentle throb of a dinghy engine coming towards us with a small girl and a man in it. Dinghy Man and Seal Watcher Girl spent a long time staring at our synchronised swimming through binoculars. We would have loved to have continued our performance all afternoon but we were getting hungry and had to head towards the fish.

Dinghy Man soon left us alone and headed towards *Scallywag* for a cup of tea. He was glad to see *Scallywag* as the skipper had almost joined the wrong cruising club who were heading towards Bradwell Beach! We gasped as Seal Watcher Girl climbed onto the ladder on the stern of *Scallywag* only to find that the ladder wasn't secured onto the boat and she gently headed towards the water as the ladder unfolded! Dinghy Man saved her in the nick of time and all was well.

We thought that all had gone quiet for an hour or two and the sound of snoring could be heard from most of the boats. But once again the peace was shattered by sudden frenetic activity with Dinghy Man and some other people in little boats taking people back and forth to other boats. It seemed a bizarre little dance they

were performing but it was fun to watch, especially when they got back into the dinghies to go to other boats as they seemed to have turned bright pink and were laughing a lot. They boarded other boats for what seemed like more food and drink and the noise coming from *Cartel* and *Quicksilver* almost drowned out the massive rumbles of thunder.

It was way past our bedtime by the time all the people went back to their own boats and the air was filled with the heady smells of Garlic Bread, Chorizo Salad, Hungarian Leche Stew, Greek Lamb and Ricotta and Asparagus Tart.

Very few awoke in time the next morning to see us trying to tell them that bad weather was on its way and they should get going to beat the strong winds approaching. They just took photos of us and said how cute we were. We later found out from our friend Barry the seal who swims near the Nass Beacon that the boats had a "lively" trip home but all arrived safely even if they did have to wait for the tide.

So here we are basking once again on the sand banks of Hamford Water trying to cope as best we can before our peace is shattered once again.

Charlotte Perrin  
*Cartel*



# THREE RACES AND THE MORBIHAN

## *Ostara's* Experience during its 2010 Summer Cruise to South Brittany

South Brittany has been a planned destination of ours having learned about its soft sailing, unspoilt towns and great food. However, to get there from Tollesbury one has to negotiate the tidal races at Alderney, the Chenal du Four and the Raz de Sein. Once south of the Raz, or rather, the Pointe Penmarc'h, some 30NM south of the Raz, you are in South Brittany. We turned Penmarc'h heading south on the 9<sup>th</sup> June and then again on the 24<sup>th</sup> July heading home. In between these dates South Brittany delivered everything we had hoped for and more.

### Bad Reputation

The Races have a "reputation". Of the Chenal du Four and the Raz one pilot recommends having washboards in and life lines on. This advice is not conditioned by weather, tide, or boat size. Reading the pilot books one can infer that to go against their advice one is, to quote Private Frazer from Dad's Army, "doomed". Indeed the only thing missing from the books are notations stating "here be dragons". And yet, the Races are rarely, if ever, in the news due to some yachting disaster or other. There is also the Golfe de Morbihan, a body of water not unlike an oversized Southwold, but with rocks and islands replacing mud and marsh. Again, the pilot books warn of many dangers. So what is going on and what are these passages really like in the context of a summer cruise?

*Ostara's* 2010 cruise to Brittany started in mid May and lasted 3 months. Our destination was the Morbihan

and the river Vilaine where we hoped to meet up with friends who have a cottage there. We also hoped to meet up with club boats *Rose Tyler* and *Hiawatha* in Brittany, and then *Nimrod* later in the Channel Islands.

Our cruise planning was based on daylight sailing and with no passage being longer than 90NM.

### The Alderney Race (part 1)

As mentioned, the first Race a Tollesbury boat will encounter is at Alderney. It is a Race that we have met before without harm befalling us. Cherbourg is the main departure point for Guernsey via the Alderney Race. *Ostara*, our Hanse 370, can be in Cherbourg in 3 days stopping overnight at Dover and Brighton. Alderney is an alternative, but we prefer Cherbourg.

In 2010 we first had to visit the Hanse agent on the Hamble before crossing The Channel, so it was on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May with a NE F2/3 wind that we departed Bembridge Ledge at 0745 hours bound for Cherbourg where we arrived at 1800 hours having logged



Peace in the Chenal du Four

82 NM. The crossing was gentle and Cherbourg was quiet, as expected so early in the season.

After a rest day we set out the next morning for Guernsey. We allowed 2 hours to make the turn of the tide at Cap de la Hague (pronounced "Ag" in French weather forecasts) to carry us through the Race with a wind with tide as the forecast was for a favourable NE F3/5. As we progressed westwards blown along by 8 knots of wind we were soon making 6, 7 and 8 knots over the ground as the tide kicked in and swept into the Race. The only hazards experienced were the many pot floats and a flock of French warships returning to port. As the wind remained light the 14 NM lift from the tide helped a lot. At 1500 hours we entered St Peter Port after a tranquil passage during which we averaged 4.8 knots boat speed and 6.9 knots over the ground.

### The Chenal du Four (part 1)

Next up would be the Chenal du Four at the north-western tip of Brittany. The traditional northern start point is L'Aber Wrac'h., which was within our day sail limit, but we decided to stop over at Morlaix, which is about half way along the North Brittany coast. We also decided to make Lézardrieux our first Brittany landfall. Next day we headed south.

The 48 NM passage from St Peter Port to Lézardrieux was the most miserable of the cruise. There is always a bad passage in any cruise and for 2010 this was to be it. There wasn't

enough wind to sail until the last hour or so, but it was cold and rained heavily all day. It took an interminable 6 hours to make the 40NM to the entrance to the River Trieux and then another hour to make the last 8 NM to the marina. After Lézardrieux we paused for a few days at Morlaix and reached L'Aber Wrac'h on the 31<sup>st</sup> May.



A 38 foot yacht on the other side of a wave

As you go west from the Channel Islands you meet the Atlantic swell. The swell arrived as we emerged from Morlaix and the shelter of the Isle de Baz. The French call the swell "la houle" and it is reported in their weather reports. There had been heavy weather whilst we were in Morlaix and a two metre swell had built up. It was hardly noticeable unless highlighted by a nearby boat disappearing in a trough.

The weather dictated a day's delay in L'Aber Wrac'h; a pretty enough place which has eateries in abundance, but no grocery store. Bread and newspapers can be found in the Café du Port. It is certainly interesting for the wide range of boats to be found there as, like Falmouth, it is a meeting point of ocean passage makers and holiday cruisers.

At 0830 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June we cleared the marina along with 7 other yachts and motored seawards bound, in our case, for Brest. The forecast was for a NE F2/3 wind and clear skies. The swell

was predicted as up to 3 metres. The plan was to follow the pilot book and be off the Four lighthouse as the tide began to ebb southwards. This meant pushing the last of the flood at first.

Motor-sailing in the quiet weather, we were at the lighthouse at 1115 hours, bang on time. At this point the Isle de Ouessant (Ushant) cuts off the swell. We were still experiencing 2 knots of fair tide. An hour and a half later we were at the southern end of the Chenal. There is confused water at Pointe de Saint Mathieu as you clear the Chenal, where the west-going ebb from the Rade du Brest meets the south-going Chenal ebb and the swell sweeping in from the west.

At Pointe de St Matieu the flotilla split up. Most pushed on to the Raz or Camaret, which is a wide shallow channel. Also, like The Wallet, yachts with reasonable engines or sail power can punch the adverse tide.

### The Raz de Sein (part1)

It was 7 days later after visiting Brest and Camaret that *Ostara* was ready to move on. The recommended strategy to traverse the Raz southwards is to be at La Platte WC at HW Brest – 1 hour to pick up the new ebb, which in our case was 1435 FST. La Platte is 18NM from Camaret. The forecast was for light SE F2 wind so we faced another day of motor-sailing. We planned after the Raz to round Pointe Penmarc'h and go to Loctudy giving a total passage of 56NM. There is an alternate destination south of the Raz at Audierne, but we had time to press on. The Raz is a much shorter passage than the Chenal. It is little more than a shallow shelf connecting off-lying islets to the mainland.

We left Camaret at 0930 and timed our run to be at La Platte an hour early. We punched the flooding tide and at noon we were on track to arrive at La Platte as planned. The flood was showing no sign of abating. The chart

plotter was still predicting 3 or more knots against us. We noted that instead of tapering off the flow of north bound boats was increasing. These yachts should, if following the pilot books, have passed by earlier. It looked as if they had carried the flood up and they were not concerned about overfalls. As we approached the 18m shelf the still strongly flooding tide swirled around as it dropped into the 47m deep water and created wavelets of about 0.2m.

Ahead of us was a flat expanse of water filled with these wavelets. An hour later and still punching a flooding tide, we were out the other side. No overfalls – nothing! We arrived off Loctudy at 2000 hours. We felt at home in the approach to the port as the LAT depth is down to 1m in places. Loctudy is a good place to be.

The roughest part of the passage was near Pointe Penmarc'h where the swell reached 3.5 metres as it hit the 20m contour line. It was also here that we were escorted for a while by a pod of dolphins, which apparently live off the headland.

We had arrived in South Brittany and time slowed down.

**Ian Robinson**  
*Ostara*



Loctudy's Channel Beacon

**Read the next part of Ian's travels in the winter edition of 'Up the Creek'.**

# ASHES RETURNED TO TOLLESBURY

## Tollesbury 44 runs

## Maldon Little Ships 28

The greatest team since Douglas Jardine's 11 arrived in *Diana 2*, *Kahuna*, *Cartel*, *Polo IV*, *Moonshine*, *Dionysus*, *Samara*, *Scallywag*, and *Wave Dancer*. They made the long sail from Tollesbury to Bradwell in treacherous weather. At the same time, Maldon Little Ships Club braved the journey from the mudflats to meet us there.

On Saturday evening both teams met over a heated BBQ with macho sausage burning, neither of which torrential cloudbursts could dampen. The hospitality of the BYC meant that, save for the brave, fabulous BBQ boys (Rob and Jose) the rest of us were able to eat in dry comfort.



The rain in Spain? BBQ hero Jose flips burgers as the skies open.

Cricketing tactics were discussed over bottles of Chardonnay, Chianti and Gin. Most of the TCC team wisely went back to their boats early to polish their balls and oil their bats. There was even talk of cricketing whites being pressed. The Maldon team however continued to limber up by increasing their alcohol intake with no signs of leaving. Thus the



Soldiering on in true Tollesbury tradition., dinner is served.

crew of *Cartel* and *Moonshine* felt they had to try and keep up with them so as to listen in on their pre-match strategy, which seemed to involve drinking until they bowled their maidens over. However by 11pm we gave, up realising that Maldon were intending to drink their way through till dawn and to come straight onto the match. They were rumoured to have left at 4am doing an impression of the barmy army, but this has yet to be confirmed.

After a windy night (probably due to underdone burgers) TCC assembled at 9am sharp only to find that Maldon were not present. Eager not to have a win by default (as Maldon had done in previous years), the opposition were roused from their slumbers and appeared eventually at 9.30 regaled in splendid matching sweat-shirts and bloodshot eyes. TCC did not let the side down with their sartorial elegance which was typified by Ray Apthorpe wearing sailing boots, shorts and his sailing jacket.

TCC went into bat first. Commenda-

tions indeed to Clara, Liz Perrin, Ryan Knight, and Nigel Seary for their fantastic innings and hearty shouting. Heidi Seary, with Archie her Basset hound, kept score although Archie fell asleep having fought off amorous advances from Rolo the Chocolate Labrador.

Somewhat unusually, there were about 30 fielders making the scoring of runs as rare as a BBQ sausage. To any onlooker, it seemed like a gathering of out of work (and out of shape) Musto catalogue models. After a grand total of 44 runs (give or take a bit of creative scoring by Archie, no



Cricket whites Musto style.  
TCC go in to bat.

**continued overleaf**



Young guns go for it! The next generation shows the way forward.

doubt), Maldon went into bat. With only 10 men and women they made a valiant effort. With stunning bowling from the youth division of TCC the runs were kept to a minimum. Great fielding by all but there was a notable catch from Rob Perrin, followed by a dramatic dive and lower back strain (his GP has been informed). Jean Kemp, the lady of the stop watch, soon called time and after only 28 runs victory was ours.

It was brilliant to see so many of our younger members willing to play so wonderfully for us. It was also worrying to see how many of our older members still believed they had the skills of Stuart Broad or Alistair Cooke.

A historic win, a fantastic BBQ and wonderful enthusiasm all round. Bring it on for next year Maldon!

**Charlotte Perrin**  
*Cartel*

The Commodore of Maldon had to have the trophy prized from his grasp and it was gently placed into the delighted hands of Robin Kemp on behalf of the club. We all agreed that TCC were destined to win just by attendance and enthusiasm alone.



Triumphant in victory! Robin Kemp lifts the trophy and carries it home to its rightful place behind the bar in the Tollesbury clubhouse.

## And Finally .....

As most members will already know, Alison King, Tollesbury's Harbour Master, retired at the end of June. She has been overwhelmed by the response from individual members and has asked me to convey her thanks to everyone who has sent her cards, letters and gifts for their kindness and best wishes. I am sure that you will join with me in wishing Alison well in her retirement and hope that we will still see her around the marina from time to time.

**Hilary Morgan**  
Editor