



Up the Creek...

New Faces for a New Year Season's End Heralds a Committee Reshuffle

Most publications pull out all the stops at Christmas. So welcome to a bumper edition of *Up the Creek!* I have been positively deluged with articles this time, for which much thanks. Please keep them coming – it's the only way to ensure a good read!

All the usual reports are here together with some interesting offerings on antifouling (page 14), learning new things about your boat (page 6), a spectacular win for TCC in the Wallet Shield (page 5) and Andy Hobden tells us about his recent sailing experiences in Ireland (page 8)

Well, the freezing cold June finally gave way to a blazing July and Tollesbury boats big and small took to the water to enjoy the balmy evenings with some truly spectacular sunsets. The warm weather continued well into October before the St Jude storm brought things crashing back to normality.

In the meantime, we have a new Committee at Tollesbury Cruising

Club with some familiar faces returning to take up some of the positions made vacant by retiring members. Newly appointed Commodore Ian Robinson introduces us to them on page 2 and I am sure he would join me in thanking those who are retiring from the Committee for their hard work and dedication over the past years.

Did you know we have our own Facebook page now? (page 7) This should complement the website Forum and help members contact each other easily.

As we slip into winter mode and sit warming ourselves by the fire, newly appointed Cruising Commodore Robin Kemp has already been hard at work booking us in to various venues up and down the coast (p 3). So before you drift off to sleep, have a think about joining in - there

will be plenty of opportunity to participate in events taking place close to home in the Blackwater/Colne area as well as further afield.

So I hope to see you all out on the water in 2014! In the meantime – Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to one and all!

Hilary Morgan
Quicksilver
Editor



One of the joys of late season cruising - an October evening sky is reflected in the still waters of Pyefleet Creek

Photo : Jose Zalabardo

Contents

New Faces for a New Year.....	p.1
Commodore's Corner.....	p.2
Racing Round up.....	p.3
Cruising Update.....	p.4

Wallet Shield Conquered!.....	p.5
It's Never too Late to Learn Something	
New About Your Boat.....	p.6
Forum and Facebook News.....	p.7
The Gathering Cruise.....	p.8
How to Stop Your Prop Fouling?.....	p.14

Edited by:
Hilary Morgan

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

Commodore's Corner

I am writing my first contribution as your new Commodore in the aftermath of St Jude's Storm. Our part of Essex appears to have been let off lightly this time. I believe our boats came through virtually unscathed and we should thank the marina team for their vigilance. Taking my usual walk along the bank of the River Crouch this morning all of the boats I usually see were bobbing happily at their moorings in the bright autumnal sunshine.

I am finding it as hard to write this piece as I am sure all other commodores have. We are at the end of the season. Only a couple of programmed events remain before we "closedown" for the winter. I hope to welcome a good turnout at the Christmas Cruise to Bradwell on the 7th December for our last official event.

Attendance at the club's sailing and social events has been down this year. Even the glorious weather starting in July did not cause you to rush to join in the programmed events. Those that did enjoyed themselves. It is no consolation that our neighbouring clubs are having similar difficulties. No doubt there are several reasons for the drop in numbers, but it is a cause for concern as we draft next year's programme.

On a happy note, the Club's team won the Wallet Shield Race this year against strong competition in testing conditions. (see Paul Noyland's write up on page 5) It is a matter of some debate whether the win was the first or second in the Club's history. All I can say is that the trophy does not record another

win. So, well done to Paul Noyland and his team. The win rounded off a very good Wallet year for the Club. We can now sit back until 2019 when it will be our turn again!

In late October we held the Laying Up Supper in the clubhouse. Jane, Emma and their staff are to be complimented on an excellent meal and clockwork service. The Club's guests were Judith Grimwade, who is the Chair of Council of the Cruising Association (CA), and Mark her husband. Judith told us of the scope of the CA including the role of the Honourary Local Representatives. These friendly individuals act a little like consular staff to help CA members when they have sailing or procedural problems in foreign ports. A service *Ostara* has been grateful for in the past.

On the following morning we held the AGM. Peter Philpot completed his term as Commodore. After many years on the committee Peter stepped down and perhaps now he can find time to get his boat back in the water. Dave Cooke also stepped down after a long time on the committee, including being Commodore. Heidi and Nigel Seary have found it a struggle to juggle their international lifestyle with the demands of Rear Commodore (Cruising) and Hon. Treasurer respectively and so regrettably they had to step back too. Our thanks go to all of them. We have able replacements: David Knight is Vice Commodore, Robin

Kemp has become our new Rear Commodore (Cruising) and my wife, Carole, volunteered to become the Hon. Treasurer. Stewart Wallace kindly agreed to act as our Hon. Auditor and our representative on BaCASA (Blackwater and Colne Area Sailing Association).

A new initiative we are testing is a Facebook Group under the name **Tollesbury Cruising Group**. (see also page 7) It is a closed group open to all berth-holders and their crews. Colin Shead, our Webmaster, is currently the administrator and initially he will admit new members to the group. Andy Hobden is the moderator. The aim is to facilitate easy communication between us all. The Club forum will remain the place for discussion on the official sailing programme.

I look forward to being with you at the marina and on the water over the next year.

Ian Robinson
Ostara
Commodore



New Commodore Ian Robinson is presented with the Howlett Trophy at October's Laying Up Supper

Racing Round-up

After the worst weather at the start of a season I can remember summer finally arrived and we were able to make a real start on the racing calendar.

The Goldie Challenge on the 29th June was the only race to take place on its original date. With a moderate force 3/4 breeze from the NW it was a pleasant, stress-free sail to Burnham culminating in a win for *Dionysus* with *Mimosa* second and *Polo IV* third. The cruise participants enjoyed an excellent meal in the Oyster Smack washed down with a beer or two and the occasional glass of wine. A superb end to the day. The weekend really spoiled itself for once and provided conditions for another memorable sail back to Tollesbury on the Sunday.

The Howlett Trophy had been planned to head up to the Orwell but a forecast strong south-westerly for the Sunday return trip brought about a change of plan and Brightlingsea became the destination. A force 4/5 from the SW made for a fast race around the course and even the slowest boat had finished in less than 1 hour 20 minutes. *Ostara* claimed first place with *Moonshine* second and *Polo IV* third. An impromptu trip to the Brewers Arms produced another excellent meal in good company.

Due to some doubt as to whether or not the Kings Head Cup was going to take place on the 21st September, I hastily organised a re-run of the Steve Rix which had been postponed earlier in the year. In the event, with some last minute assistance from Andy Hobden and Paul

Atkins, the Kings Head did take place but it was decided to run the Steve Rix as well. Therefore the race produced two results; The Kings Head was won by *Contessa*, a Dehler 31 from Tollesbury Sailing Club, congratulations to them, they sailed an excellent race. The Steve Rix was won by *Mimosa* with *Moonshine* second and *Polo IV* third.

Finally, the most coveted award, the Teapot Trophy was contested on the 19th October. With a benign southerly wind *Hoppetosse* romped away leaving the rest of us well in its wake. A resounding victory for Philippa Hobden (*Hoppetosse*), Mag Timmins (*Mimosa*) second and Penny Abbott (*Scallywag*) third. A word of thanks to Ian Robinson for some nifty footwork to get the awards and trophy engraved for the Laying-Up Supper just one week later!



Dionysus and *Mimosa* in the Goldie Challenge

Paul Noyland
Moonshine
Rear Commodore-Cruising



Hoppetosse and *Mimosa* in the Teapot Trophy

Cruising Update

After the disappointing attendances at several of last season's events, the new committee has already been discussing what is going wrong and how we can reverse the decline. It seems we are not alone in experiencing diminishing numbers in both cruising and racing events with the result that 9 clubs within the Blackwater and Colne have had a meeting and agreed the possibility of running coordinated collaborative events in 2014. Former commodore Peter Philpot attended on our behalf and noted that the benefit to all clubs would be shared organisation, increased fleet numbers, greater publicity and opportunities to meet like-minded members from other clubs. Some of the clubs have tried out the idea this past season with great success, so I have included a couple of their cruises in our forthcoming programme to see how it goes.

In general discussion with members, it has been said that many perceive the majority of our events purely as races and, as they are not interested in racing, naturally are not inclined to take part. So let's be clear that first and foremost we are a cruising club and most of our events are primarily cruises. Some of our more competitive members like to race among themselves on the way to the cruise destination but that is no reason for the remainder of the fleet not to have a leisurely cruise in their own time and for all to meet up at the same pontoon party/dinner/what have you, having done "their own thing" and had an enjoyable day. However, next year I would like more emphasis on the cruise.

It has also been noted that few, if any, sub 26ft boats are attending, no motor

launches and, with one notable exception, no heavy displacement motor sailor types. Again, this is probably down to the racing perception and again I repeat our cruises are for all to enjoy. It is our intention to plan a programme for 2014 to include a good mix of destinations both local and further afield and I trust there will be something for all classes of boat. Please back our efforts and give at least one of our events a trial next season.

As I write this report next year's schedule is still very much at the planning stage but because of the need to book early for bank holidays and popular destinations, I can already confirm a few dates for your diary. Heybridge Basin is booked for the Saturday of the Easter weekend. Shotley is booked for the Saturday of the Whitsun weekend, which is one of the events we are joining in collaboration with West Mersea Y.C. with a B.B.Q. in the evening. Our club will remain in the area for the remainder of the week visiting the Deben and Walton Backwaters. St Katherine's in London is booked for the Late Summer Cruise departing Saturday 23rd August.

Another collaborative cruise that may appeal to some is The Ostend Rally starting at Batemans Tower, Brightlingsea and cruising direct to The Royal Belgium Y.C. This event is being organised by Bernie Hetherington (formerly Harbour Master, Brightlingsea) and the Wivenhoe Y.C. starting out at 0400 on Friday 15th August.

The full programme, when finalised, will appear first on the club forum site before being mailed to all members as usual.

Finally, a last word on our diminishing attendances. We are aware that there is a feeling by some that a clique of a dozen or so members with "larger" yachts dominate the club's activities with the result that new members or those with smaller boats feel excluded. Being personally part of this small circle I am saddened to think we have given the impression of being unwelcoming. Nothing could be further from the truth. We positively wish for as many as possible to join in with club events but could it be that our lack of success in this is down to that very British of characteristics - reserve and a reluctance to make the first acquaintance? If this is the case, forgive us, come again, make yourselves known, join in, enjoy yourselves and let's make that small circle a large circle.

Have a good laying up season.

Robin Kemp
Polo IV

Rear Commodore - Cruising



Find Robin and Polo IV (pictured above) on Pontoon A

Wallet Shield Conquered!

Cruising Club Boats Battle it out in Blustery Conditions

Earlier this year TCC was host club for the Wallet Ball and had set the bar high by organising a superbly run event and providing a very entertaining cabaret. Having attended personally, my only complaint was that the evening wasn't long enough; we all truly had a ball! The downside for me was that, as Rear Commodore Racing, it was down to me to organise the co-event of the Wallet Shield race and with less than a week to the closing date for entries I had

four entries! Looking on the bright side they were all TCC boats so we were winning by default.

True to form, the entries poured in over the final weekend and on the 17th August twenty boats jostled for position on the start line! I should point out that the weather conditions were less than ideal with a south-westerly 5/6 forecast, increasing 6/7 later.

From ten minutes before the start it all became a bit of a blur as jostling for position became quite intense in the windy conditions. With Sandra on the helm and seconds to go we managed to become windward boat but about mid pack. From Mersea Stone it must have been quite a spectacle as twenty boats streamed past

trying to fit into a space only half a dozen boats should have occupied. Our position as windward boat soon began to tell and by Inner Bench Head we were second with just *Pinocchio*, a Colne Yacht Club boat, ahead of us.

As we battled around the course we could see *Ostara* and *Amy Louise* also making progress. It soon became apparent that recognised "racing" boats were trying to carry

which normally would beat us by quite a distance. There were heroic performances by the other TCC entries: *Ostara*, *Amy Louise* and *Polo IV*, each with only two crew on board in what had been very testing conditions. The met office was issuing an imminent gale warning as we stowed sails and headed for Brightlingsea.

A post-race party at Colne Yacht Club was attended by over seventy competitors with that number increasing to about a hundred by those arriving just for the evening. I had the pleasant task of sitting back and watching as our table erupted with the announcement that TCC had pipped CYC to the post by one point to win the Wallet Shield. A very memorable day!

Congratulations to the winning crews:

Team *Moonshine* – Paul Noyland, Sandra Lerpiniere (Chief Helm), Wendy Gooch(Chief Grinder), Chris Sweeney

Amy Louise – Barney Bannington

Ostara – Ian and Carole Robinson

Polo IV – Robin and Jean Kemp

My thanks also to Graham Chasney and Robin Impey, amongst others, of CYC who assisted in the successful running of the race.

Paul Noyland
Moonshine
Rear Commodore - Racing



Winning Smiles from the winning crews!

full sail in the worsening conditions and they were struggling. This resulted in us very slowly being able to catch *Pinocchio* until, as we rounded Bench Head and began the run to Bateman's Tower, we actually headed the fleet!

In the final run to Batemans we were upstaged by *Jazz*, a J80, surfing past us in a semi-controlled manner doing 16 knots, truly spectacular! We finally came second over the line just inches ahead of *Pinocchio*, a boat

It's Never Too Late to Learn Something New About Your Boat A Steep Learning Curve in The Wallet Shield

Racing really helps you to know your boat.

Ostara was in the club team that recently won the Wallet Shield Race. Race day was testing weather wise with a south to south-west wind that was forecast to rise to Force 7. Had we not promised to participate we may have stayed in the marina. None the less, 19 boats started and 19 finished.

I am not writing about the race itself, but rather what it taught Carole and I about *Ostara* and our ability to sail her safely in strong winds and tight situations. You may say – hang on – the Robinsons are an experienced crew and should know how their boat sails. We are and we do – or rather we thought we did.

At the start of this season we changed our 95% self-tacking headsail to a 120% Genoa. During our cruise to South Brittany earlier this year we learned how to tack the new sail and considered that we had got the hang of it and its impact on main sail handling. The race proved otherwise.

The race placed us in situations, that in cruising mode we would always plan to avoid. We are actually quite pleased that we have identified some changes in kit and practices to make our sailing even more safe and hassle free.

Our problems began at the start. It was less than a minute to kick off and *Ostara* was positioned well. We were going to cross the line with the leading pack, but we were accelerat-

ing into a space that did not exist. Quick - ease off the mainsheet. Nothing is happening!! The boom is NOT MOVING. Quick cast off the headsail sheet whilst we sort out what is wrong!! Well – for the first time ever - the topping lift had snagged the bifurcating yoke on the back stay. Ok – easily sorted. Power up the Genoa – NO STOP – something is wrong up front. Whilst no one was looking, the port headsail sheet had snagged the flag halyard cleat, which is attached to the shroud. Run forward cast it off. Power up the Genoa - NO STOP – the 9” of the tail of the flag halyard had executed a perfect Rolling Hitch around the sheet. We limped across the line last or very close to being so.

Eventually, we were back under control and set off down course. The conditions suited *Ostara* and once she had regained her confidence in the crew she charged off and by the time we neared the Knoll we had recovered a lot of the gap to the leading pack including *Moonshine*. It seemed likely that we could join the back of this group.

The Knoll was a jibe turn as were the next 4 marks. The wind was by now gusting heavily and to our surprise Carole did not have the strength to wind in the mainsheet quickly enough to execute a controlled jibe given our winch/sheeting arrangement. The next turns were no better. If one was being generous one could say the final turn had an element of control in it somewhere. We certainly made no more progress toward the leaders other than on corrected

time. We beat one of the boats ahead by 0.2%, which earned *Ostara* 10th place and the vital extra position over the Colne Yacht Club.

The shroud mounted halyard cleats were consigned to the dustbin immediately after the race. They were fine whilst we had the self-tacking headsail, but are clearly dangerous when you have Genoa sheets flogging around – as must happen from time to time.

Our inability to execute a controlled jibe in stronger winds using the coach roof mounted winch was quite a shock. When we had the self tacking headsail the main sheet ran to a winch at the helm and I could easily control it, especially as the headsail managed itself. With a Genoa, and being 2 up, I had to deal with the headsail whilst Carole dealt with the mainsheet using a coach roof winch that is too near the spray-hood frame to allow 360° rotation of the handle. Something would have to be done. Feeding Carole steroids and signing her up for a weightlifting course didn't appear to be a viable option. If changing Carole is not an option then a way to improve the mechanical advantage must be found. I have some ideas, but suggestions are welcome.

Ian Robinson
Ostara
Commodore

PS – So far I have increased mainsheet pulley system from 4:1 to 5:1 and moved the sheet to the other coach roof winch which does have 360° handle rotation.

Get More Information About the Club - Stay Connected

Are you receiving our occasional Club and Marina e-mails?

Have you registered to use the Discussion Forum?

Join the many other members who have signed up and benefit from up to date news about events and developments in the club and marina.

Go to our web site at www.tollesburycruisingclub.co.uk where you can sign up to the e-mail list and Forum.

To subscribe to our e-mail list, click on the "SUBSCRIBE BY E-MAIL" link at the top of the page, and complete the simple on-line form.

To join the Discussion Forum, click on the "FORUM" link, then on the "REGISTER" link by the Login boxes. The forum administrator will check that the form is correctly completed before activating the account.

If you are unsure, or have any questions please contact our webmaster Colin Shead at webmaster@tollesburycc.co.uk

Colin Shead
Toodle Pip
Webmaster

Tollesbury Cruising Club Creates Facebook Group

Yes Tollesbury joins the Facebook age by creating a "group" on the social networking site. Those of us who like to keep in touch in this way can now communicate with like-minded club members. The page is administered by Webmaster Colin Shead and applications are regulated by Andy Hobden. This group may prove to be a useful tool for posting photos, keeping in touch whilst on the move (internet connection permitting!), organising ad-hoc events and making general comments (but please keep these on a positive note). The Club's Forum (together with notices in the clubhouse) will still be the place to find out about programmed events and sign your boat and crew up for cruises, races and activities. It is hoped that the Facebook Group (Tollesbury Cruising Group) will attract younger members as well as those of us who are regularly online.

Follow the link on the website homepage www.tollesburycc.co.uk if you are already on Facebook. If you are not, you will need to create your own page by going to www.facebook.com to proceed.

Take a look and log in!

Hilary Morgan
Quicksilver
Editor

Ten Degrees West!

Andy Hobden Reports on *Hoppetosse's* Participation in The Gathering Cruise

As I write this I am sitting in *Hoppetosse* with the wind howling and the rain coming down. It's the 15th August 2013 and *Hoppetosse* is berthed at the Royal Cork Yacht Club, Ireland while waiting for a passage crew to arrive for the trip back to England. It had seemed like a good idea. We wanted to visit Ireland as part of our Circumnavigation of Britain and the Gathering Cruise, part of 'The Gathering 2103', presented a good opportunity for a cruise in company, one of the things we have missed, being away from Tollesbury. The following paragraphs briefly describe our passages towards 'The Gathering Cruise' but obviously to detail each section could almost be a story in itself.

Hoppetosse's voyage round the UK continued after fitting out and re-launching at Ardoran Marine on the 1st of April 2013. A short shake-down cruise to Oban Marina included an encounter with a Sperm Whale in Kerrera Sound before Philippa had to leave to do her course in Leeds and then return home. Joined by Sandra (*Moonshine*) and with very strong winds forecast in the coming days, we headed south via Croabh and Ardfern to the Crinan Canal where we rode out the 45 knot winds and then on to Kip Marina on the Firth of Clyde where I left *Hoppetosse* for nearly six weeks to return home as Philippa's mother was poorly and sadly passed away in May.

Back on the boat at the beginning of June, Philippa and I sailed back north via the Crinan Canal again and through the various frightening sounds and races to the Sound of

Mull and Tobermory, then round Ardnamurchan Point and into the true Western Isles stopping at Canna in the Small Isles (a beautiful island) before crossing to the Outer Hebrides and visiting Barra and Eriskay.

On a stunningly beautiful day we revisited Canna before going across to Mallaig on the mainland where Philippa headed south to continue her course. Mallaig Marina is exposed to the North and expensive (by our standards then!) at £28.50 plus £3.60 for electricity. After a week on buoys and anchors our first question was 'Where are the showers?' No Showers! Toilets? Smelly public ones on the quayside. Laundry? No Laundry anywhere in Mallaig.

Sandra re-joined the ship for a cruise up the east coast of Skye to Portree, on to the Island of Rona and further north still to the beautiful Badachro in Loch Gairloch before retracing our steps and heading back to Canna and Rum in the Small Isles and returning to Mallaig to swap crews again.

South to Dublin

Sadly our explorations of Scotland had to be curtailed to get to the Gathering Cruise on time. So much to see, so little time. Philippa and I headed south. All the forecasts seemed to be predicting 5 to 7 on the nose and the weather was pretty miserable. We went back round Ardnamurchan Point with a force seven (on the nose), the first time I had ever pulled down the third reef. *Hoppetosse* handled the big seas very well. We had a lazy day in Tobermory as we had not seen much of Mull, and then back to Oban Marina for a night,

through Cuan Sound, a very narrow channel with up to 8 knot tides and an unmarked rock and on to Croabh Marina for two nights to ride out another gale. Then a long day (47Nm) down to Port Ellen on Islay pronounced 'eyela') where we spent three nights, mainly due to the weather but it gave us a good excuse to hire a car and visit several of the eight or nine distilleries on the Island. A lovely interesting island and well worth a visit.

With an improved forecast we headed across the North Channel to Rathlin Island. Big swells were still coming in from the North West but there was not much wind so we motored, which became the norm as the stunning summer we have all enjoyed, approached. 'Big Swells'? They seemed big to us at about 3m but were probably normal for this stretch of water. We didn't see a 'big swell' warning in the forecasts all the time we were in Ireland.

There is a traffic separation scheme in the North Channel complete with separation zone. We expected it to be a bit like crossing the English Channel. We did not see one ship either by eye or on our AIS



Rathlin Harbour on a damp, grey evening

(and our masthead aerial lets us receive from up to 40 miles away).

The Crossing to Rathlin Island was only 26 miles and is about the shortest crossing you can do. It also avoids some of the races found round the Mull of Kintyre. We arrived at Rathlin Island at 19:00hrs. In their wisdom the powers that be had decided to dredge the harbour at the height of the sailing season so there was only a short length of deepwater pontoon available. We were rafted four out but only charged £7.00 for the night (half price for half a pontoon?) and that included electricity and free showers and I think he said free washing machines as well. Rathlin Harbour can suffer from swell but our first night's sleep in Northern Ireland was surprisingly good.

On the 7th July with only 10 days to the start of 'Gathering Cruise' we woke to thick fog with visibility less than 300m. It would have been nice to have seen more of the Island but we had to press on. The tides round Rathlin Island reach 6 knots and Rathlin Sound has its own named whirlpool (Slough-na-mor) so we had to leave by 10:00. With the fog persisting we were running with our AIS, Radar and SeaMe booster all fired up.



I liked this picture; it shows the sea, the fog, the hill, and the low cloud

No real problems in the fog, which was patchy, but persisted all day. One idiot screamed out of the fog at 20 knots and gave us a wave. I think

he had seen us on AIS, was feeling lonely, and just came over to say hello. I had seen him on Radar but his curving course gave me no idea which way to run. I felt sorry for the three small yachts nervously sailing in company ahead of him who had no Radar or AIS transponders. I say nervously, they had crews on lookout up in the bows and sensibly were keeping close together.

We motored all the way to Glenarm, a lovely little harbour with free washing machines (apparently it was cheaper to give the electricity away free than pay for coin meters to be fitted.)

Next day summer was here. No fog, no clouds, no wind. We motored all the way to Bangor where we spent two nights, taking the opportunity to catch the train into Belfast for some sightseeing. Luckily we left before Belfast riots started a couple of days later.

Next Stop was at Ardglass, another nice little marina but a bit run down. With very few permanent berth holders they seem to rely on visitors. The passage from Ardglass to Dublin has few stops. Luckily the whole coast is sheltered in the prevailing south west winds. The passage from Ardglass to Dublin is about 70 miles. We elected to break our journey in Carlingford Lough, timing our arrival so as not to experience the 5 knot tides that can occur at the entrance. Reeds also says 'Beware sudden Squalls and waterspouts' but we didn't see any.

We moored in Carlingford Marina. This marina is in need of a large investment and is probably also an example of a Marina being in the wrong place as it would have been better built in Carlingford Harbour itself. The pontoons are old and arguably dangerous in places. The marina needs dredging. The access on and off the original concrete service barge is a flight of steps which are sometimes over the Pontoon but



Carlingford Marina access stairs. They actually ended up over the water!

more often seem to be over the water. And it was very expensive at nearly £40 for the night. They were offering the second night at half price but we didn't stay.

Howth Marina (pronounced Hoath) is run by the yacht club and was much better. Howth is a touristy suburb of Dublin and has lots of expensive restaurants. We spent two nights there, while Philippa worked on her essay.

I took the train into Dublin for a hobble around the town centre as my knee was playing up. As we were going to be spending some time in Ireland I also took the opportunity to buy an Irish 'O2' broadband dongle for the computer, which at 20 Euros for 7.5Gb was much cheaper than the 'T Mobile' roaming rate of £10 for 25 Mb! Our mobile phones are all unlocked so I also got an Irish Tesco Mobile SIM Card (free with 10 euro's of top up) which saved on expensive call charges.

The Bi Annual Volvo Dun Laoghaire (pronounced Dun Leery) Regatta was just finishing as we made the short crossing across Dublin Bay to await the start of the 'Gathering Cruise'. From launch on 1st April in Scotland we had covered 920 sea miles getting to Dun Laoghaire for the 'Gathering Cruise'.

We spent three nights in Dun Laoghaire. I had to visit to the local hospital as my knee was still sore and had swollen up and become very inflamed making it very painful to walk. The final diagnosis was Gout for which I was given a support bandage and lots of painkillers.

The Gathering Cruise

Organised by ISA (The Irish Sailing Association) and supported by the Irish Cruising Club and The Cruising Association of Ireland they had originally hoped to get a hundred boats signed up for the cruise. The final total was around fifty. The welcome reception held at the Royal Irish Yacht Club on the 17th July gave us an opportunity to meet some of our cruising companions for the first time and, in glorious weather, was followed by the first of many BBQ's.

After the reception I got chatting to Hal Sisk, a yachting Historian, about his Water Wag Dinghy. He explained that it is probably the oldest one-design class in the world. He didn't have a crew for the evening's race so I volunteered my Gouty knee notwithstanding. An interesting experience and we didn't come last. As a thank you he presented me with a copy of his very interesting book 'Dublin Bay 'The Cradle of Yachting'



The Water Wag in Dun Laoghaire Marina



Dolphins, with another Gathering Boat just ahead of us

When we signed up for the Cruise clever old me hadn't bothered looking at the Chart and the distances involved. My normal passage planning for the next leg is not done in detail till we are at the departure port. It's a long way to Dingle! Ports for deep draft fin keel yachts are few and far between. An Ovni or Southerly has a lot more options. But the weather was kind, the winds were light and we motored most of the way down the East Coast.

After Dun Laoghaire came Arklow (36 miles,) a nice harbour with a linear pontoon, a small marina and a lot of sewage in the river. We had a great night in the local Yacht Club which opened specially for us and provided BBQ facilities. The club was right by Aldi so it was into Aldi, buy some meat and put it straight on the BBQ. Some of our talented fellow cruisers provided the live music.

Arklow to Kilmore Quay 51 Miles

More motoring. We did get the cruising chute up for a while but with light winds it kept wrapping itself so we put it away and motored sailed some more. We were probably being too lazy on a glorious day. Kilmore Quay has a small marina. We were rafted up on the inside of three. One of the boats on the trip was 'Celtic Mist' a heavy 56ft steel ketch that used to be owned by Charles Haughey, a former Taoiseach of Ireland and

was presented to the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group in 2011. They tried to raft up outside the Rustler 43 next to us but managed to ram it with their anchor instead. We politely asked them to go somewhere else.

One of the very noticeable things about the Irish Coast is the number of fishing pot markers we saw in depths up to 100m. One of our boats snagged a pot just outside Kilmore Quay and was towed in by the lifeboat. The first of five rescues of 'Gathering' boats that I am aware of. There is a surprisingly good yacht chandler come hardware store at Kilmore Quay.

A short passage from Kilmore Quay to Dunmore East (19NM) and we were able to sail most of it (as we could most of the south coast legs of the trip. Dunmore East is mainly a fishing harbour and used to be anti yachts but the new harbourmaster has turned things round and there is a new yacht pontoon. We were three out on a five boat raft. The number of Gathering boats in company was growing as more joined us. The Waterford Harbour Sailing Club laid on an excellent BBQ for us.

It's a long leg from Dunmore East to Crosshaven, in Cork Harbour. We were held up by a boat outside us on the raft deciding that (a) they needed to change crews and (b) then go off and get some last minute stores so we didn't get away until 10:30 for the 60 mile passage.

We had 60 miles of stunning downwind sailing in winds up to 20 knots. Sailing a bit high to keep *Hoppetosse* on a broad reach to keep the jib filling and boat speed up, we clocked a steady 6 plus knots, reaching 9.6 knots when surfing down the 2m swells. The Autopilot steered us for the whole trip as normal. The 60 miles took 10 hours door to door. One boat had the lifeboat out when a crew member was injured by their



The View from Waterford Harbour Sailing Club's Balcony

spinnaker pole. He was taken to Hospital but was later discharged.

We arrived at the Royal Cork Yacht Club pontoons in time for a BBQ dinner. The Royal Cork is, of course, reputed to be the oldest yacht club in the world dating from 1720. We had a second night in Crosshaven, catching the bus into Cork itself for some sightseeing.

The Pilot says that Oysterhaven is an anchorage with indifferent holding and is affected by swells in onshore winds. Another BBQ had been arranged here. Many boats did go in and anchor, but with strong onshore winds forecast we went direct to Kinsale where we berthed at Castlepark Marina as we had been promised a finger berth there rather than rafting at the Kinsale YC Marina. Castlepark Marina suffers from an

intricate pontoon layout with tides running through it. Berthing was scary, having to make a U turn across the tide then let the tide drop us back into the berth. (Leaving was almost as bad even though we left at slack water. We nearly had to bounce off a couple of RIB's to make the turn!) Castlepark is a struggling marina as the private owners cannot compete with the Yacht Club Marina's prices. Reeds said they charged 5 euros a metre for overnight berthing but they have reduced it to 3.6 euros with electricity on a card like Titchmarsh. (We did get a 20% discount as a Gathering Cruise boat.) We caught a Taxi round to the Oysterhaven BBQ. It cost us 25 euros so we were glad of a free lift back to the boat.

The main event for the Gathering Cruise was to be a reception dinner and dance in Kinsale on the 24th July. We were already in safely in Kinsale but you will remember the news of the loss of the 'ASTRID', a Dutch sail training ship which was also part of the Gathering Cruise. They had spent the night anchored in Oysterhaven and were due to come round to Castlepark Marina. They were wrecked when the engine failed while leaving Oysterhaven and were driven onto the lee shore. Thankfully no one was hurt but it did put a bit of a dampener on the evening's festivities.

Next day we received a text saying that we should take part on a parade of sail leaving Kinsale. We hung around for the parade but it didn't happen, it just made us late rounding the Old Head of Kinsale. We found ourselves pushing a 3 knot tide, against the wind.

Courtmacsherry is only 20 miles from Kinsale and is a nice little sheltered inlet, a bit like Tollesbury but with a shallow bar and the added bonus of 6knot ebb tides, especially after heavy rain. 19 boats were moored up; a record for them as there



The wrecked 'Astrid' taken a few weeks later

is only a 40m long pontoon plus a dock wall and a couple of buoys. One boat misjudged the tide on the turn and managed to stove in his hull window when he hit a RIB. We had a great welcome from the village which had laid on a street BBQ for us with live music and we were pleased to meet some of the Lifeboat crew who had gone out to help the 'Astrid'. The next morning they even laid on a free cooked breakfast for all the boats and presented us with certificates.

With Dingle still a long way off some of the boats decided that they would not go all the way and the fleet started to break up. We decided to push on for Dingle as I wanted to get at least as far as the Shannon to meet up with an old friend. We motored and sailed to Baltimore, mooring on the 'pontoon' there. A mistake as this is only an old concrete barge and gave us the worst night of the trip so far due to passing traffic and swell and they charged us 25 euros for the privilege! We should have anchored. Another Gathering boat was towed in by the lifeboat, this time with an overheating engine.

We didn't hang around in Baltimore and set sail for Mizzen Head and beyond passing close to port of Mizzen Head we also had a heavy rain squall. We had seen it coming and I tried to steer away from it. Philippa said we should reef but of course I knew better. Luckily the 25 knot winds only lasted a few minutes, the torrential



The Fastnet Rock—of course!

rain a bit longer.

We moored up in Lawrence Cove, Bere Island after 37 miles. A nice friendly little marina and the last one before Dingle. There were a lot of impressive looking Compass Jellyfish in the marina; apparently their tentacles can leave a nasty weal.

Another day dawned without wind so we motored and motor sailed all the way to Dingle. We went via Dursey Sound, a 'shortcut' saving us about



Compass Jellyfish, and yes, the picture is the right way up and they move quite quickly

three miles, but with tides up to 6 knots (of course), and an unmarked rock in the middle of the channel (of course) and a cable car operating over it, we timed our passage correctly so didn't have any nasty surprises. Dursey Island is reached by a cable car over the sound rather than a ferry. The 21m clearance was well over *Hoppetosse's* 18m air draft. We were met on the other side of the sound by another group of Dolphins who gave us another brilliant display.

It was 56 miles to Dingle but once there we had achieved the final destination of the Cruise. We spent a full week in Dingle enjoying the traditional live music in many of the bars every night, attended an evening folk concert in an old Church and Philippa even went to the local film club to see a French film with the ladies from '*Kalamar*' who had made the trip in their First 31.7.

In the end seven boats made Dingle. The final reception on a blustery 1st of August was very pleasant. There was a welcome from the Mayor, canapés and a large supply of 'Tom Crean' lager, followed by a superb fish dinner in the Marina restaurant. Tom Crean was one of the unsung heroes of Polar exploration going with both Scott on his last voyage and Shackleton on his epic small boat trip.

It was sad to be the last 'Gathering' boat to leave Dingle but new adventures awaited. Our next target was Kilrush Marina on the Shannon Estuary. We went there over two days going via Blasket Sound to Fenit Marina then round Kerry Head and into the Shannon. Blasket Sound is another sound with strong tides and unmarked rocks but it saves a lot of sea miles. We saw our first Sunfish here. Strange looking fish with no tails, swimming with their shark like fin wobbling along the surface. Blasket Sound was also our 'furthest West' at 10° 29' West. The most noticeable thing about being this far west is that sunset was nearly an hour later than in Essex (so was sunrise). The downside is that heading back East the nights will draw in very quickly.

Fenit Marina is a nice modern marina in Tralee Bay. It was built onto the original commercial pier which was itself built onto a small Island that now contains a memorial to Brendan, the man credited with discovering Newfoundland. The mainland is reached across a bridge. Tralee Sailing Club overlooks the bay and has a stunning clubhouse high on the cliffs with panoramic views across the bay. The trip round to Kilrush started with a miserable force 4 to 5 on the nose. Once round Kerry Head we had a nice reach all the way. Kilrush has a locked basin but we arrived while it was on free flow. We were met on the Pontoon by Liam and his family. I met Liam at work many years ago

and he used to sail on the Twister with me. I had not seen him since he returned to Ireland about 20 years ago.

Kilrush is another marina in need of investment, which it is probably going to get. Of the 120 berths only about 40 were occupied and mostly by small boats. There were only two visiting yachts, the reason probably being that the Shannon is such a difficult place to get in to and even harder to get out of (as we were to find out). We stayed there for four nights.

I had had hopes of going right round Ireland but Philippa needed to go home. Liam had a week off work and offered to come sailing for a few days. I looked at passage plans to go north. With no marinas past Galway until Portrush and long passages between anchorages including at least one overnigher it was not to be. The decision was made to sail back to Cork then cross to the UK via the Scillies.

Philippa flew home and Liam arrived on board. I had thought to drop down to pick up a mooring at Carrigaholt Bay for the night but as the winds picked up to the forecast force 6 we stayed in Kilrush and went to



The Old Head of Kinsale

the Pub and probably had a little too much to drink.

Next morning the wind had dropped. A little the worse for wear, we locked out and headed down the Shannon. There wasn't much wind but there

was a largish swell rolling into the River. At Kilcredaun Head the tides run at up to 5 knots. We were going down on the ebb, making 10 knots over the ground, to be met by a wall of white water where standing waves were breaking nearly the whole way across the estuary. We kept to the North shore and missed the worst of it but the seas stayed very lumpy. The only good bit about the day was the Bottlenose Dolphin which cruised past; most of the other Dolphins we had seen were the Smaller Common Dolphins.

Liam was sick and he also fainted several times. I had hoped to make Dingle or Valentia but it was going to be a long slow motor straight into the wind and waves so it wasn't to be and we bore away and sailed to Fenit. After a steak dinner and a good night's sleep we woke to find the wind still south westerly, on the nose, but the seas had dropped leaving an easy swell so we motored out to Blasket Sound then sailed to Knightstown on Valentia Island. Liam was much better and had no further problems.

They were going to build a Marina at Knightstown in a public private partnership. A large floating breakwater was constructed then the private partners went bust so it was never finished. The breakwater is available for free moorings with free electricity but obviously a lot of locals like, and are very possessive of this free facility so space was limited and we moored on the outside of the breakwater. Not a particularly enjoyable experience.

With a forecast of 'freshening winds' we thought we might be stuck in Valentia for an extra day but careful study of WindGuru and other online forecasts suggested that the most we would get was about 20 knots. We left heading for Mizzen Head and Crookhaven. It was pretty miserable to start with and we had one rain

squall where the wind touched 25 knots but once past the end of the Island we bore away, the sun came out and the wind dropped to less than 10 knots from behind so it was engine on and power assisted sailing to cover the 58Nm.

Crookhaven is a lovely sheltered inlet with visitor's moorings. It was a bit spoilt by an open air Karaoke session at the local pub but they stopped quite early. We couldn't be bothered to pump up the dinghy and go ashore so ate on board and had an early night. A water taxi service here would be good. Someone said there is one but we saw no sign of it. We left Crookhaven intending to go to Kinsale.

What a stunning sail! We sailed all the way to the 'Old Head of Kinsale'. Once past the head the wind would have been on the nose for the last five or six miles into Kinsale. With the entrance to Cork Harbour only 13 miles away we carried on, mooring

up at the Royal Cork Yacht Club after covering 67 miles in eleven and a half hours. Strangely the instruments suggested that we had a small adverse current the whole way. We saw several pods of dolphins and even a turtle!

So now *Hoppetosse* was back in Crosshaven waiting to go home. We went into Cork where Liam caught an express bus back to Limerick. I hope it is not another twenty years until we meet up again. A great friend and crew.

We logged 338Nm over the 14 days of the gathering Cruise and our total for the year now stood at 1537NM. An amazing trip, meeting fantastic people in stunning locations, an adventure which continues as (as I write) we are not home yet!

Andy Hobden

Hoppetosse



For further reading on the Gathering Cruise and with much more information on the sinking of the 'Astrid' have a look at http://cruising.ie/images/easyblog_images/571/The-Gathering-Cruise-v2.pdf

How to Stop Propeller Fouling ?

Colin Shead Shares a Useful Tip

Nearly every yachtsman or power boater will have a favourite way of preventing the growth of barnacles etc. on the propeller. There are any number of solutions around to solve this problem, which can cause dramatic loss of thrust during a season. For example many sailing folk I know use Lanolin based compounds on their props, some very expensive, some very cheap (e.g. Baby Cream !). From the stories I hear, none seem to work very well.

Some folk polish their bronze props so that they actually gleam with a mirror finish, in the hope that the little horrors won't be able to stick to it; not true, at least in my experience.

I have antifouled my propeller for many years with varying degrees of success; in particular I have found that the hard antifouling especially designed for propellers are useless in the Blackwater. However thanks to a chance conversation with a canal boat enthusiast, I now have a solution that works well for me in Tollesbury.

Propeller experts will be shaking their heads as it is a fact that if you antifoul a propeller, you will take the edge off of its performance; that's the downside. The upside is that if you can stop the barnacle growth, then

you will not suffer the much more severe performance loss later in the season.

The main problem with antifouling a propeller, is to get it to adhere well to polished bronze, or alloy. You also have to be a little careful about the choice of antifoul paint, especially if you have an alloy prop, don't ever use copper based antifouls anywhere near alloy, otherwise your propeller will be likely to corrode badly due to galvanic activity.

Here is my personal method:

Clean off the prop really well, back to the metal, and degrease well with Acetone or similar.

Apply one coat of Hammerite Special Metals primer (available in B & Q). It is water based, but does hang on like the proverbial

When dry use 2 or 3 thin coats of your chosen antifouling, use a decent brush, and aim to get as smooth a finish as possible. I use Flag Performance, which is harder than the really soft, fully eroding antifouling and is suitable for use on power boats. I also use Flag Performance around the waterline, but just the regular Cruising variety on the bulk of the hull.



After a season the antifouling will have largely washed off (as it is essentially self eroding), but the primer should still be intact, and I get hardly any barnacles at all.

In the winter I carefully clean the propeller off using wet and dry (wet) to remove any residual antifouling, and get back to the primer, then degrease, and apply another coat of primer, before antifouling again. Every few years I take the propeller back to bare metal and start again.

This method has worked well for me for the last 6 seasons; I hope it might be of benefit to others in Tollesbury.

Colin Shead
Toodle Pip

A Message from the Editor

Just a quick thank you to all those who have written articles over the past year. There really could not be a newsletter at all without your contributions. So please do keep them coming and if you feel the urge to put pen to paper, please do go ahead over the winter season don't wait until the last minute. Perhaps you have a useful tip you would like to share or have been on a memorable trip? Don't wait until the copy deadline, send your articles through to me at any time. You can do this via

the Committee page on the website. If you are transmitting something to me electronically, **please do leave your text and photos unformatted**. This makes producing *Up the Creek* much more straightforward and preserves my sanity!!!!

Hilary Morgan,
Quicksilver,
Editor