



# UP THE CREEK



## *Lower Halstow Yacht Club*

*Spring 2017*

### *Commodores Rambling*

Welcome to the first Up the Creek of 2017, and a big thank you to John Williams for stepping in to the role of editor. Of course, I must also thank Steve Simmons for his previous work on this.

For those of you that missed the AGM in January, the committee remains largely unchanged, except following the sad loss of Pat Buckle last year; Dave Quigley has stepped in to the role of Rear Commodore. I would also like to welcome Myles Stewart on to the committee; it's always good to see new blood and hopefully new ideas joining.

With the new season rapidly approaching I would like to emphasise the importance of checking your mooring. We had two failed moorings during last year and another, although not a club mooring, failed during the period of the Storm Surge with the boat hard ashore just North of the club. At the time of writing this, the boat is now off the concrete, but a small hole in the bow is preventing it being floated off and is being repaired by the owner.

If you are unable to check your mooring yourself through age or health, please contact Graham Leighton, our Mooring Master. We should then be able to organise a check for you. Graham is planning to organise some mooring checks using the raft. Joining one of these group checks is normally a lot easier and safer than struggling on your own.

Graham Osborne has been busy putting together a programme of events. This includes the normal programme of races with some rally / cruise events. Cruising in company is a great way to go a bit further afield if you haven't done it before and they usually turn in to very enjoyable social events. Over the last couple of years there has been a number of additional trips organised by members to places such as Ramsgate, Gravelines or the East Coast. On most of the trips some boats have gone shorthanded with spare berths and would welcome additional crew. If you don't fancy taking your own boat or wish to gain a bit of experience crewing, get in touch.

We are considering holding an open day or weekend in June, with invitations going out to the local and wider community offering trips out on boats to hopefully raise a bit more interest in the club. We will be asking for the support of the members to make this a success. We will be discussing this further at the March Committee meeting and will publicise our plans as soon as possible.

You will all by now be aware that I have rebuilt the club website over the winter. If you haven't looked recently, I urge you to have a look. It's completely different to the old site, with a lot less behind the password, to make the club more visible to non-members. I have made lots of changes since I started it back in November, but I think it's now more or less complete. Please let me know if you find any errors, or can think of anything that could be added to make it more useful to the club. The tool I used to build the site makes it very easy to add to or alter.

Hopefully all your jobs on your boat are progressing well.

Hopefully we are going to get a perfect summer with lots of sailing and boating for us all.

*Dave Metcalfe*



*From The Editor*

*“C.V.....club member for about six or seven years, owner of Beryl 28foot Morecambe Bay Prawner. Generally enthusiastic about woodwork, muddy creeks, saltings, ouzes, oyster catchers and all their pals, getting my hands dirty and of course mucking about in boats.....”*

I was introduced to the club by a veteran who was giving me a course in VHF radio fumbling somewhere in Docklands. I told him I had a Devon Yawl on a trailer and was looking to keep her at Conyer between trips to Cornwall as was my plan. He said why not try Lower Halstow- lovely place and better sailing..... He gave me directions and so it was that I bowled up to the yard one day and got chatting to a particularly nice chap called Pat Buckle who kindly agreed to second my application.

As I spent more time at the club I was impressed and grateful indeed by helpful experienced members were to a complete twit such as I. Frank Knight will remember I'm sure helping me with a jammed centre plate on my yawl. He then kindly securing and sorting out my boat as I rushed to hospital to have a finger stitched back on (well almost...) after the centreboard came off its pin after my inept handling and guillotined me. I think the can do, no frills feel of the club with everyone getting involved to keep costs down is worth a great deal.

I also came to love the creeks and saltings and the wildlife which has led me to forget about the West Country. Night stopovers in lonely creeks are the real jewel for me, giving an opportunity for solitude and closeness to nature that must be unobtainable within 500 miles of London I should think. To be honest I think if Boris had got his friggin island I might have topped meself guv'ner.....

*John Williams*

## *Notes from the Mooring Master*

Those of you at the AGM, will know of my plans to change the way that I ask you to report maintenance on moorings. In the past I've just asked for details of work done. I would now like all to report back to me the condition of their moorings, after you have performed your annual check.

Please include; date of check, how far down from the surface the mooring has been checked, the worst amount of wear on chain (a brief fraction will suffice bearing in mind that chain, that is 1/3 worn should be replaced.) conditions of swivel and shackles. Please ensure shackles are securely moused.

I have decided to ask for this change because over last 3 years 6 moorings have been permanently lost. I would like to put a stop to loss of moorings and hope that this plan will assist.

*Graham Leighton*

## *Notes from the Yard Master*

Please stack any scrap metal near to the sleepers as we receive a small amount for charity. Scrap batteries are worth £5 each so if you can't get a fiver off for returning your old one leave it by the scrap metal.

When the old hut ceases to exist old habits should cease also. The new hut area for canteen use is far more restricted. Please leave the area clean for the next person.

Members are being thoughtful and leaving all sorts of items in either hut/bosuns locker for general use, mostly without referring to anyone. Whilst the club appreciates the gestures it leaves us with a problem if it's electrical as we now have existing electrical items PAT tested. Other items such as instruments, sails, nuts and bolts, sail ties, felt off cuts while very welcome need to be agreed with a member of the committee.

During the transition from the old green hut to the 'new hut' there will be storage issues and it is intended to temporarily store in the new hut right hand room while the new container gets placed and set up as well as the change of use of the current bosons' locker.

Advertising/display space will be greatly reduced in the new hut so please pass items you want displayed to a member of the committee. A start and mutually acceptable expiry date will be recorded to keep things under control.

*John Knight*

## *Rudderless Ruminations from the Editor*

### *Our Patch in the News*



The BBC had a feature on Deadman's Island on its website recently. Apparently due to erosion, assorted bonery, teeth, coffins etc are being exposed in the mud. These of course are from plague victims dumped over the side from the 17<sup>th</sup> century prison hulks, and perhaps not supernatural devil dogs, a theory put forward by a chap interviewed drinking in a Queenborough pub. This area

is out of bounds to the public so no trophy hunters please.

### *Soft shackles*

Being a cheapskate, I'm always staggered by the prices asked for boat hardware, so I was interested to see on the web that some like-minded chaps are using the newish wonder rope dyneema to make shackles that could be used instead of splashing out on snap shackles. They also better than the steel variety when you get whacked round the head with one from a stray line. The information for those interested is a website, *animatedknots.com*. I shall be experimenting this season. You will need the hollow cored dyneema they say.

### *Club Mast Ladder Anyone?*

*Kinlevenmarine.com* is suggesting that clubs might like to spend £400 on a mast ladder to be used by members when the halyard shoots up to the top when one's attention is elsewhere. I know there has been talk about cherry pickers and such like, but this might be an idea. It seems to be made of webbing with plastic rungs and is stored in a bag. Have a look at the website for full details.

### *Old dinghy sailors never give up trying to keep young!*

Always nice to see a Mirror dinghy. Designed by Jack Holt and TV DIY expert Barry Bucknell in 1962, sponsored by the Daily Mirror newspaper of course to make sailing accessible to the hoi polloi.

The nautical equivalent to the flying flea but not as dangerous, over 70000 (!!!) have been built. A classic if ever there was one and apparently unsinkable. A member told me he tried to sink one and failed. Only after she was holed with extreme prejudice did she finally succumb but even then was subsequently rescued and repaired for the next season by persons unknown with not much ado.

Club member John Knight joined the movement and built one in 1975 and here he is on the left with a very pleased looking son- who obviously hasn't fallen in yet. I understand son now aged 49 is still sailing Mirrors to this day so the day must have gone well.

John's still got one and takes part in club races. Here he on the right about to cut inside one of the big Westerlys and snatch victory in Stangate.



I bought one a few years ago from a club member.

The first time I sailed her I made complete idiot of myself by getting tangled up in the sheets, pulled the wrong string and dropped the gaff overboard and then fell in bodily just by the old quay. Obviously there were lots of people about to witness my discomfiture.

Here she is sailed by Mick the previous owner, and another big smile. Mike said he sailed her round the island ("our island" as in Sheppey not Wight- I assume) which must have been quite exciting. Reminds me of a chap I met in Cornwall who said he'd sailed one to Longships Landsend., only when the waves were "like pyramids" did he turn back. Mmmmmmm.....not sure about that tale.

I use mine mostly as a tender, and am thinking of towing it around. It seemed Maurice Griffiths, our east coast hero, towed a dinghy as often as not on his excursions.

He was in the habit of attaching a long painter to the stern of the dinghy which could be cast overboard to steady the tender in a lively sea. I might try this idea.





## *My Boat*

*– an occasional series where members throw in a spiel on their pride and joy-  
Me first but please send me yours for inclusion.*

### Beryl 28ft Morecambe Bay Prawner

Members will know Bill Strefford's old boat Drifter, a Morecambe Bay Prawner at the club.

She had long been winking and calling “psst- over here!! ” to me from her mooring, obviously unused. To cut a long story short I bought the old girl a few years ago and have been doing a bit of a refit ever since.

As you may know Bob built the boat from a GRP mould some years back and had rather a lark sailing her ( and being stopped by the customs a few times-say no more) for sometime before being bitten hard by the caravan club bug. Over the last few years of disuse she had sprung a large leak in the coach roof among other iniquities and was in need of a serious lick of paint, all the electrics and plumbing had been removed in preparation for a refit that had never started but she did benefit from a very low hours engine and most of the bits to make her whole.

I'm a hopeless romantic when it comes to old boats – anything old really, aeroplanes, cars but, particularly old work boats. There is that essential of functional grace. Built solidly, often on a beach somewhere using passed down skills. Built for a hard day's work, but always beautiful with it. You just can't ignore it (or at least I can't).

Now the Essex Smack as we all know, is workboat porn of the highest quality- but Drifter too had a way with her -the flow of the counterstern, the lines of the deck curving down fore and aft and crowning side to side and as I got to know when designing the cabin, not a straight line on her, well maybe the mast.



Now I've had a couple of very near misses with wooden boats. The warning bells start clanging when words in the ads include such prosaic phrases as "custodian sought" or "once in a life time opportunity" not forgetting the old big fat one "easy project , much work done", and have told myself over and over again that I am not NOT under any circumstances to buy one.

But with the fudge of a very realistic "woody" GRP hull (apparently Bill inadvertently won a wooden boat competition once) I took her on with a gulp, a leap of faith and a great bound of enthusiasm.

Work started by removing the old cabin after which, primed by a conversation with Nick Birch on the aesthetics of gaffers with flush decks, I stood in the cockpit well, grasped the tiller and looked forward over an essentially open boat. There could be not denying it, the prospect was just right. I even went so far as to toy with the idea of having her actually as an open boat- I would still have the fore peak cabin to cower in after all, perhaps I could try her for a season open and see if I liked it, saving a fortune to boot.

But realising I was in fact wading in a hairy-chested fantasy featuring a salty alter ego who didn't exit, I decided as a compromise to build the cabin as low as possible. To hell with the headroom but at least I would have some creature comforts and a good view forward from the cockpit.

I built the cabin sides from mahogany lapped planks with laminated beams supporting a gently arching coach roof of marine ply covered with deck canvas laid in waterproof PVA. The sides are painted with "wood skin", some new wonder coating and the roof painted with four coats of marine enamel.

The sides are in fact so low that I could only fit two of the original six portlights but let into the roof are two large antique deck prisms bought on Ebay. These are excellent and light up the interior no end.

Because of the curvature of the deck, which rises from the stern to a peak at the tabernacle, the coach roof which slopes forward gives four foot six headroom more or less fore and aft. To mitigate the low headroom which really isn't too much of a problem anyway I have made the hatch as large as possible, lifting and sliding forward on double combed partners. These will naturally be open most of the time on those endless sunny days that always accompany my sailing. One can stand in the cabin looking out over the coach roof and upwards to a cloud of billowing canvas whilst frying sausages and not get your head swiped off by the boom as a bonus.

The cabin sides are so low that washboards are not necessary (I think) but could be added later if required.

I've added a small mahogany upstanding to the cockpit perimeter which is very small on these boats more of a foot well, really, added some extra support to the tabernacle partners below deck, plumbed in the karzie and painted everything in sight.

The rudder hinges and tiller post have been replaced, and the stern prop shaft bearing. Nathan at Adweld in Otterham Creek doing a sterling job here on the welding.

I fitted a simple electric system using LEDs where ever possible. Its easy to get carried away here as evenings are spent dreamily browsing on -line catalogues –“ohh I better get one of those” etc. I'm sure you are all aware of the dangers here.

I picked up a handy tip on the radio for bringing impulsive late night on-line shopping behaviour under control. . Save all your proposed purchases in a basket for review in the morning with your sensible head on, and the whiskey bottle back in the cupboard before pressing the buy button.

Work this year which was to include the much looked forward to task of fitting out the galley and chart table but has been put on hold as the stem head fitting was found to be badly corroded. So it was off to Nathan at Otterham creek again to have a new fitting made, who again has done a great job. I'm in the process of fitting the new item and its quite a task as the rail each side at the bow had to be cut back to remove the old fitting, anyway at least woodwork is my favourite type of work.

I've also had new standing rigging made by Medway Slings which was painful but necessary, and will give me comfortable feeling when the wind gets up.

What's left to do? Mainly wait for nice weather to sand down and varnish all those lovely spars- oh and do all those things I've a list of somewhere but lost. They say that the last 10% of these projects takes 90% of the time after all.

Next year I will build a new galley to include a sink draining to a jerry can stored below- keep it simple, a spirit stove and removable chart table on top and of course repair the fore hatch which is falling apart. I'm saying that in hard print as a hostage to fortune, hopefully to make sure I actually do it.

Oh and my Lancashire girl has been renamed “Beryl” after another lovely girl from that part of the world I knew sometime back-my Mum!

*John Williams*

## *Club Events from Graham Osborne*

*Some dates for your Diary*

*(There will probably be more details on the club website in due course- Ed)*

Date	time	height	Event
08.04.17	11.44	5.6	Remove services from old hut
14.04.17	15.26	5.7	Easter east coast long weekend
23.04.17	11.00	5.3	T.O.T. 10.00 start
29.04.17	15.32	6.0	Ramsgate or East coast long weekend
06.05.17	10.16	5.3	Work party
07.05.17	11.18	5.5	Work party
13.05.17	14.59	5.7	T.O.T. 13.45 start
14.05.17	15.29	5.6	T.O.T. 14.15 start
26.05.17			Fresian Island cruise contact Ken Milburnl
27.05.17	14.31	6.1	Ramsgate Weekend
11.06.17	14.38	5.6	Charity Race 13.30 start
18.06.17	07.21	5.1	Red Sands Race 07.30 start
24.06.17	13.29	6.0	Club Open Weekend
25.06.17	14.17	6.0	Club Open Weekend
02.07.17	07.46	5.2	Round the Island Race 07.30 start
09.07.17	13.46	5.6	TOT 12.30 start
22.07.17	12.23	5.7	Harty Ferry Weekend
23.07.17	13.16	5.9	TOT 12.00 Start
30.07.17	06.09	5.4	Pursuit Race Start Various
05.08.17	12.03	5.3	TOT 11.00 Start
20.08.17	12.12	5.6	TOT 11.00 Start
26.08.17	16.28	5.8	Ramsgate Weekend

03.09.17	11.30	5.1	TOT	10.45 Start
09.09.17	15.23	5.9	Leigh visit	LMBC
23.09.17	15.23	5.9	Queenborough Rally	
24.09.17	15.57	5.8	River Race	
07.10.17	14.22	6.0	TOT	13.00 Start
08.10.17	15.00	6.1	TOT	13.30 Start
14.10.17	07.56	4.9	Work Party	
15.10.17	09.21	5.0	Work Party	

(TOT means Top of the Tide Race by the way)

### *Site Improvement Details from Graham Osborne*

The old club hut has now deteriorated to the point that it needs replacement and we intend to dismantle it in the next few months. As you will have noticed the club has purchased a larger container to become the new bosun's store. The plan is to site the new container where the old hut is and to make the existing bosun's store into an outdoor toilet and oar store. We would like to achieve this by holding smaller work parties as we did when building the slipway.

The benchmark dates we have set is for the water and electricity to be disconnected from the old hut on the weekend 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> April and to construct the foundations for the container at the work party on 6<sup>th</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> May. The container will be lifted into place shortly afterwards. Toilet facilities, tea making and oar storage will be available in the new clubhouse. Any member who does not have a key to the new clubhouse should contact Dave Quigley.

These small work parties can take place whenever members are available and not just at weekends. Graham Osborne will coordinate these work parties starting from the 25<sup>th</sup> March. If you would like to volunteer please call him on 01634 324517.

#### **Work List** (this may change as the project progresses)

Move oar store to the smaller room in the new clubhouse.

Remove furniture. (may be temporarily stored in new container)

Disconnect services. (water, electricity, sewage)

Remove windows.

Dismantle old hut.

Dig, shutter and concrete container foundations.

Install container.

Fit out bosun's store.

Empty old bosun's store.

Remove old bosun's store doors, fit new front door and window in front of old container. Line interior, install lighting, oar store and toilet.

### *Appeal !*

Please can members send in material for inclusion in the next edition?

Write a piece about your boat- or some other boat you admire. Pictures or stuff about interesting experiences etc.

I know there are lots of old salts in the club who must have a few yarns to share and the not so experienced who have had interesting learning experiences. I promise to keep your submission anonymous if required and not to pass on details to the authorities. Don't be bashful, let's all enjoy them.

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