



UP THE CREEK



Lower Halstow Yacht Club

Winter 2018

Happy New Year to all members and your families.

Commodores' Ramblings

I write this shortly after we learnt that the club's storage containers have been broken into. Unfortunately, we have lost 2 strimmers, the cordless angle grinder, 2 Outboards (one was a non-runner, that will teach them) and the blue 4 wheel trolley. The Bosuns Store lock guard was damaged as they couldn't cut the padlock. Myles Stewart has made an excellent job of reconstructing the lock guard and new padlocks have been sourced. I would like to thank all that have been involved sorting out the damage and re securing the site. With so much of this going on, not only at the club, please be vigilant and note the details of any suspicious vehicles or people around the club. Please ensure if you are last to leave site that everything is locked up on your departure.

We have held an emergency committee meeting to discuss what we can do to try to prevent a repeat.

Ironically, after arriving home from the meeting I got a phone call from Natural England wanting to arrange a site visit to do with the Coast Path that they are establishing around England. Not a good time to phone and ask for access to the club! We have been in discussion for some time with NE as the original plan would have brought the path along the Seawall from the village and straight through the yard. We objected strongly on security grounds and public safety. We said the security of our boats stored in the yard through the winter would be compromised, and we said it would be unsafe with members of the public

walking through the yard with boats being moved around. They listened on Public Safety, but weren't really concerned about our security.

Various options have been considered, but it seems their preferred option is to come along the seawall behind the hut, across our track and along the rough ground between our dinghy racks and the farm field. The path goes out alongside the creek a short way and then turns back in land through the farm to the road. They can't go out further on the headland due to nesting birds. We asked why they couldn't follow the Saxon Shore way, but this comes out on the road for a short way, and it would be unsafe around the bend. There seems to be some reason why they can't continue the Saxon Shore path away from the road the short distance to the point where the current proposal emerges from Great Barksore Farm. Someone must have a bit more influence that side of the road.

At some point the plans will go out for consultation. We will obviously let you all know when this happens, and I encourage you all to object to the planned route on the grounds of the security of all of our property.

Still on security, this time all the boats were left untouched. There are a number of ladders laying under or alongside boats. Please ensure if you have a ladder on site it is locked to prevent it being used by unwelcome visitors.

Hopefully the bad start to 2018 will soon be left behind us and we can look forward to the coming season and get some better weather to get stuck in to get our boats ready for the season. My boat is scheduled to go back in at the beginning of April, that's just over 2 months' time from when I'm sitting here writing this. I have managed to get some of the inside jobs done, but I suspect it is going to be the last-minute rush again to get the boat ready and antifouled.

Graham Osborne will once again produce a full and varied programme of sailing events for weekends through the season. On top of this, in the past, there have been other additional cruises organised by members, often during the week. Both the "official" club events and member organised events are always enjoyable and give lesser experienced skippers the opportunity to sail in company and gain experience. There is often space on other boats if you are not confident to go on your own or would just prefer to sail with someone else. If you would be interested in joining any of the trips let a member of the committee know and we will attempt to put you in touch with someone with a spare berth. If there is enough interest we could start a Crewing List.

I for one am hoping to get out on the water more than I did last year. I had a number of personal commitments that kept me away, but when I did get the opportunity there seemed to be either too much wind or not enough. Hopefully 2018 will give us some great weather to get out there and make the most of our boats.

Rudderless Meanderings from the Editor



Something caught my eye earlier in the year on the Beeb, where Jeremy Paxman, now retired from publically dismembering politicians at the Beeb, was exploring some of our lovely English rivers.

The episode which would have interested anyone contemplating mooring checks this year was on the River Avon where in the estuary an ancient type of fishing is carried out using contraptions known as mud horses.

I know we have a number of contraptions dreamed up and constructed by bright sparks at the club for skimming effortlessly over the fetid ooze we have in the creek, but these mud horses seem to be the Rolls Royce of sludge negotiation conveyances.

Looking at the photo we can see they are bristling with features obviously proved by generations of use, such as an adjustable front spoiler, similar to be seen on the latest Porches – but in reverse, captain style arm rests for comfort, and a useful looking centrally placed caddy for chucking your sweet papers in en route – winter project anyone?- if the idea takes off we could have a Mudskippers Derby across the creek – ill put in a bottle of fizzywizzy for the winner.

Watching a rather hilarious film Wonder Woman with my daughter the other day I was startled to see our breast plated heroine bestriding the old quay at Lower Halstow.

Eschewing a tea and a cake onboard the Edith May she swiftly embarked for Flanders Field to trounce the Gerries and scotch the God of War (who happened to be the English prime minister by the way) in combination. Great stuff, loved it.

I wonder if the magnificent creature who played her would mind opening the next club open day as a star celebrity....maybe an approach by our Commodore would do the trick.



Interesting to note that the Wonder Woman character was originally dreamed up in the 1940s by American psychologist William Moulton.

Moulton lived in an unconventional domestic arrangement for the time with his wife and live-in girlfriend who all got on enormously well. In fact very well indeed I understand. The women of the household provided the inspiration for the Wonder Woman character. Bet there was no arguing about whose turn on the TV remote in that house!



Big thanks to club member Peter Taylor who sent me some lovely pictures of a steam tug Peter worked on as lad in 1950. Working for Whitehairs Lighterage, duties included shovelling coal on coaling days and pulling the funnel down to pass under the Thames bridges

The internet tells me that Whitehairs worked out of Butlers Wharf up until the 70s. Once the site of the largest tea warehouse in the world but now of course

housing luxury flats and swanky eateries. You can probably still get a nice cuppa there though- nice to see a link with the past.

If you told Peter and his mates back then they'd have never believed it.

Peter also work on motor barges taking fuel oil to Southend.

I do love these snippets from recent history, please keep them coming.

Thanks for the contributions. I've kept a few up my sleeve for the next issue, but do keep them coming.

On a serious note, I see that the East Coast Pilot website has a link to a petition aimed at ensuring the proper marking of lobster pots and other fishing gear. I very nearly didn't spot a fishing net over the Cant some years back. It was suspended by a line of black floats about ten inches long, which I just managed to see in perfect conditions and have time to throw the donkey in reverse.

Incidentally I saw a boat putting down pots in Stangate last year, though the pot man did mark them well enough.



Please sign, they need another 4000ish signatures I understand before parliament will react.

John Williams

A Narrow Squeak

The *Mooring Master's* reminder about checking our moorings annually seemed only a formality to me because I had inspected mine only last September and replaced a long length of chain from the buoy down. Still, a rule is a rule, and the muddy hulk onshore north of the club is a reminder of what can happen. So when a family event, planned for August 5th was postponed, I thought this was my opportunity: high water would be at noon and the forecast for the morning was for only light north-westerlies.

I arrived at the club before the water had reached the slip and loaded ropes, tools and chain onto the raft. Next, *Gloria* had to be moved from her mooring and this gave me the chance to test the outboard which had not been out of the garage since last year - I motored out, moved *Gloria* to an adjacent buoy then motored back to the slip, arriving just as the raft floated. Not having a long-shaft outboard, I tow the raft behind my dinghy, a tricky job, not to be attempted except in calm conditions because, when towed, the raft has its own ideas about direction and also needs a great deal of pulling from a 3.5 h.p. outboard. But all was well, it was nearly a flat calm. Someone was trying to sail but his sails were limp.

Reaching the mooring, I pushed the buoy under the front plank of the raft, then let the dinghy out on a long painter. The first step of the job was to inspect the chain where it passes through the buoy, and as little can be seen from above, that meant getting hold of the chain underneath and pulling up until the buoy could be up-ended on the raft, a heavy job despite the tackle. Even upside-down, I could not see all I wanted because the chain was jammed in the buoy and I did not have a heavy hammer with me to shift it. However, it seemed to be OK and I contended myself with the thought that next time I would not forget that even new chain may need more than a wrench for persuasion.

So on to the next step – looking along the chain – slow work as only about one meter could be seen for each lift. For every meter, the hook was lowered into the sea and connected to a link in the chain, then the tackle used to raise that link up to the differential pulley, a rope taken through the link and tied up to the top of the A-frame, then the tackle reversed and the hook lowered back down. Given the enormous mechanical advantage of the tackle, this was hot work making the loop of drive chain race first forwards and then backwards. But the mooring chain was a pleasing sight, the chain replaced last year was still shiny and, remembering that corrosion occurs fastest near the surface, after four meters was hanging up in front of me, I began to think that I was nearly finished. I reached a swivel.

But then older chain started to appear and that was very different. This looked like chain that might mostly lie buried in the mud, it was caked with a hard black material liked baked clay that needed serious assault with the back of the wrench to shift. This deposit covered most of the chain links with thick layer which hid the extent of corrosion. However, where the links met, the layer was rubbed away and I began to see substantial loss of metal. How bad was this and how far did it extend? I had to go on down the chain.

It was nearly noon, near high water, and a light air had set in. The chain was coming tight and getting harder to raise but at last I reached the larger sinker chain: the medium-sized chain had been shackled to it and the shackle was a much smaller and horribly emaciated. I would have to replace it and many of the links above it. Fortunately I had brought a 36-link length from the chain store as well as two shackles, so I joined this in parallel with the old length and then started sawing through the end links to remove the old chain. This was awkward because the old chain could not easily be pulled round and down into the jaws of the vice, and even when that was accomplished, the hacksaw had to be used low down and the blade was not as sharp as it once was. Sawing was hot work and time was passing.

By the time all four cuts were done, the water had clearly dropped, large clouds were starting to cover the sun, and a gusty wind was blowing. But the worst was over, I could slip the hitches that were holding the chain one by one until the buoy dropped back into the water and I kicked it out from under the raft. The dinghy was pulled in, its tow rope restored, and I climbed back into the tug. The outboard started and with the wind now distinctly astern, the passage back to the slip was quicker. All the same, I was none too soon because there was little water left at the raft's moorings. I made it fast and set off immediately, rain was clearly imminent. Back at *Gloria*, I moved her back to her mooring and had just dropped the eyes of the pennants over the sampson post when the heavens opened.

What better moment for some refreshment below? The rain was a passing shower which lost some of its intensity after two biscuits so I thought I should get back to avoid having to wade over the mud. So I made the sixth passage across the harbour, arriving in sunshine just before



the water left the slip, and dragged the dinghy ashore. Next I fetched the tools and unused chain from the raft in a wheelbarrow.

I was just dropping this chain back into the bin when I noticed a sudden whistling all around. I looked up and just had time to think that the tree by the jetty should have taken in a reef when a wall of rain arrived and the wind

screamed round the clubhouse. It was a very violent squall with all the boats lying back on their moorings. I could only wonder whether the emaciated shackle that I had as a trophy in front of me would have parted. It felt like a *narrow squeak*.

Nick Donaldson

Salvage!

It was 1983, the year after we moved into the village. Brother Mawson already a member of the club with his fishing boat told me of a wreck on the beach near to Basser point. Our family went to investigate, my daughter ignoring 'elf and safety' clambering over the concrete lamp posts, pipes and general rubbish to get a view.



It had a clear plaque set in the stern which stated it was a Norwegian Namsen about 18ft and on investigation found to be made of Sitka Spruce..

She was badly holed amidships starboard side and although it looked bad with at least 20ft of boards requiring replacement and at least 6 ribs.

We decided to get her home on the drive.

To make it legal I had to report the wreck to Medway Ports (who were not aware) and leave it with them to investigate. They came back to me and gave me a certificate to remove and renovate but made it clear if someone then approached them within 6 months and could prove ownership my work would have been wasted and boat returned.

Mawson brought his boat round just offshore to tow her off once we had made her float. As can be

seen between the lamp posts and hole in the side- not an easy task.

We tied an old piece of canvas round the outside over the hole and packed the inside with rags to stem the flow. One small panic when my wife asked why we had a fountain of water coming up through a drain hole, where is there a bung when you need one.. Safely to the slip and loaded onto a trailer and so to home. Not the most attractive item to have on the drive but so far it was free. No complaints at this stage. She was sound! Varnished inside so damage was visible and at one time someone's pride and joy.



First things first, read up on clinker repairs, rivets, roves and how to bend wooden ribs and planks! But first where to buy sitka spruce. A setback, if they had any it was very expensive and some often reclaimed. I finished up with a 'mahogany' style flexible plank and cut to size oak ribs. Lucky I decided to paint inside and out. I removed the cabin and damaged wood. Surprising how many 'friends' visited and just shook their heads! If you haven't tried to steam

wood to shape then have a try, you won't necessarily get it right first time but results are gratifying.

Done at last, a custom adapted seaworthy fishing boat with the latest (then) reverse facing bucket seats. It wasn't a lasting affair though as the next year I was 40, seen the sailing boats in the club and having been a dinghy man for many years I packed up smoking and bought my first cruising yacht, a 23ft Snapdragon called Pejara.

John Knight

A Note from the Mooring Master

Please can I remind everyone of the importance of checking moorings. Last year 26 of 60 with club moorings did not provide me with a mooring report.

The mooring report should include, date of check any work carried out and if no work carried out the degree of wear of components and how far down the mooring was inspected. All equipment is available; ask me or Miles for advice or assistance if needed.

Graham, Leighton

A Note from the Yard Master

'Hi all, a reminder to use your new calendar to record the 'agreed' date for your respective boats back to water.

The move dates and placement in the yard mean boats can be moved individually in order. Drivers will be added later.

I will send reminders about a week before so any query please contact me'.

John Knight

Mar-18	4					Boss (WET)			O/T own trailer
	18								
	19	Mon	13.54	5.8	Lethera	Red Dwarf(WET)	Marie Louise	John Hill	Daydream
	20	Tues	14.29	5.8	KT2	Samara	Catherine 2	Micawber (WET)	
Easter	31	Sat	13.35	6	Molly C.(WET)	Touche	Nereides 3	Cetus	
Apr-18	1	Sun	14.15	6	Tikki Bird (WET)				
Easter	2	Mon	14.53	6	Jeddo	Hannah (WET)	April rose		
	3	Tues	15.29	5.9	Kia Kia	Kitty (WET)	Nandina		
	16	Mon	13.53	5.9	Bumblebee	Crazy lady	Azurian WET	Moksha	Tao Darwin
	17	Tues	14.3	5.9	La Poubelle	Shearwater	Enliven	Gloria WET/DRY	Nyanga
	18	Wed	15.06	5.9	Trident WET	Pyewacket			
	19	Thur	15.45	5.8	Ina WET	Raven o/t			
May-18	2	Wed	15.02	5.8	Rhiannon	BERYL wet	Harlequin	Girouette	
	5	Sat			Sandpiper o/t				

