UP THE CREEK

Lower Halstow Yacht Club

Spring 2019

Commodores Ramblings

This is my first ramble for a quite a while, I just hope I can keep to the high standard of my predecessor. This spring seems to be much more benign than last year when "the beast from the east" delayed many of the earlier launches including my own. This year Marie Louise was launched on time with no delays, I even managed to get out for a day's sail on the first Saturday of good weather this year.

We have the usual program of races and club rallies available for those that like to take part listed on the web site and in the newsletter but if any of you would like to sail with other club members to destinations other than on the program, contact myself or any committee member and we can help publicise this for you.

For those of you that did not make the AGM Mick Smith was made an honorary member. Mick has been a member for many years and has always helped in the surveying of the club site, laying drains etc. You might see him at the club looking for a crew place as he no longer has his own boat.

The past winter was notable for the setting fire to our jetty by thieves abandoning a stolen RIB. The committee decided to repair the jetty before the lift ins started, this was easily achieved by a small group of members despite the very windy conditions. We also had one boat blown over in the recent strong gusty winds; the boat was quite badly damaged with a broken mast among other things. This does highlight that members that need supports for their boats

need to ensure that the supports are adequate for the task and to regularly inspect them. The security of a member's boat is the responsibility of that member.
We also have had a serious failure with an axle on the wet cradle; again the timely action of a few club members has resulted in the cradle being back in action for the next set of planned launches.
Whilst thinking of these not so good happenings over the winter this made me think of the many positive things a small club like ours can achieve. This year I have seen members helping each other to remove engines, re fit keels, recover lost halyards at the top of a mast and generally helping each other which is just what a club should be about in addition to the on the water activities.

I would like to thank John Knight for his work as yardmaster over the past few years; he has carried out a great job under sometimes difficult circumstances. John has decided to step down from the yardmaster position after the boats are all launched at the end of May. So if any of you would like to volunteer just let me or another committee member know.

So as I write these words the Easter weather looks to be improving, most of our boats will be launching over the holiday, let's hope it the start of a good sailing season.

Graham Osborne

Rudderless Meandering from your Editor

Gawd strike me pink it's nearly launch day!

Surely I'm not alone in struggling to finish – or to at least get half done- my jobs list for the winter. This year's hurricane season was not helping of course. Maybe it's something to do with this new wonder idea of giving these storms names- usually of people we used to hate at school- but I'm sure they are getting fiercer and more frequent.

It naturally crosses one's mind as the list of unfinished jobs grows rather than shrinks -is one running the boat or does she run you?

However I'm reassured in my work- some of it nasty and filthy indeed- that there must be something profound in this hobby of ours, which some describe as spending days sitting still and watching a blob on the horizon get bigger, in that we actually look forward year on year to the

opportunity of doing just that while eating tins of baked beans with those tiny squiggy sausages in. It's got to be primordial- some brain specialist should definitely look into it- maybe with the RYA sponsoring- as long as it doesn't conclude we're all bonkers in which case it should be quietly binned.

A yearly task that probably appears on every recreational boat owners list should ideally to be approached over a jovial dinner with a large glass of red in hand after spending the whole day being nice and helpful.. That is persuading "She Who Must be Obeyed" (or "He" of course) to join one on a cruise.

In my situation I usually hope to augment my persuasion by banging on about recent on-board improvements in creature comforts made since last season's disastrous trip together - where SWMBO couldn't get off the boat fast enough- focusing on the installation of any new luxury soft furnishings and better arrangements for keeping bottles of fizz cold. Details of new five star marina facilities just waiting to be sampled up the exotic Blackwater could also be used to advantage.

A yearly conversation that most recreational boat owners have I'm sure, probably in some way to assuage our guilt in planning to spend so much time on board in the first place and of course laying such an enormous slug of dishdosh doing up the tub each year.

SWMBO's last verdict on my perfect vessel – even after all the painting, cleaning and installation of anti boat -pong fresheners - is that my wonderful boat hasn't yet got a shower and "wobbles and stinks".

Absence makes the heart grow fonder they say.

I've noticed in the yard that we have some miscreant who cannot seem to resist climbing up a chap's mast for the fun of it.

In this second snap some boats owners seem to have caught him in the act of scaling another chap's mast and one is bravely going up after him. Not sure of the outcome here but hopefully he was ejected from the premises.....

A Big Thank You to members for articles and all the photos- keep them coming.

PiP Pip!

And Best Wishes for the Coming Season!

John Williams - Your Editor

Westerly Keel Bolt Leeks.

Back in April 2008 Nereides 3 was craned back into the water, I checked for leeks, none were found. Three days later a small amount of water was found in the bilge, I pumped it and left it dry.

Next time I boarded her, more water was found, pumped dry and went sailing. No water came in when I was sailing.

Dave Quigley had the same problem in the past and he had to get his keels re-seated round Rod Bryant's place at Otterham Creek Boatyard.

I arranged with Rod to lift the boat and as it was lifted we thought that the starboard keel looked loose. We could see no sign of damage to the hull, so we lowered the port side keel onto some jacks, and tilted the boat to starboard, thus making the keel as near upright as possible. Next we slackened the keel bolts slowly one at a time until the nut was level with the end of the studding. This has gave us about 1.5 inches to see if there was any damage. There was no sealant between No1 and 4 bolts, but the hull looked O.K.

Next we supported the boat and cleaned between the hull and keel, and filled the gap with Sikaflex 271, it took 5 tubes. Then we lifted her up, removed the supports and gently lowered the boat onto the keel. Working from the centre we did up the nuts firstly the one nearest the bow, next one nearest the stem and so on half a turn at a time until they registered 80ft.lbs on a torque wrench. Then we trimmed any surplus sealant off, and lowered the boat to the ground.

Two days later we were ready for lift in. We lifted her up and having a look round, we found a crack had appeared that ran from about No.1 bolt towards the centre of the hull.

I contacted the insurers with a list of the work that had been done, and a list from Rod that stating in his opinion the hull had been weakened by the leaks, and it needed strengthening.

The insurers said to go ahead and I agreed to help Rod with the work.

We lifted up the boat about a foot and rested it on blocks of wood, next we built a wooden frame around the Starboard keel, then undid the nuts inside the boat. Lifting the hull away from the keel, it was rested it on a pile of wooden blocks, keeping a large area around the starboard keel clear so that Rod could inspect it.

The next few days were a case of hunting any damage by cleaning off the anti-foul. In doing so Rod found a few more cracks and cleaning them out with a grinder, found some water

seeping out as he expected. He taped it over in such a way that the water could seep out, but not get in.

Next it was work on the inside. Rod sheeted around the work area to prevent dust escaping. Protective working gear on and it's all go, starting around the No.1 bolt area, we found a lot of damp G.R.P. running down as far as bolt No.4. We cut the damp patches out with an angle grinder, and over the next few days we roughed up the glass for about 12ins either side of the bolt holes in and around the bolt area. We also ruffed up areas where we thought we needed additional stiffing webs.

A few weeks had now passed and Rod patched up the damaged area outside leaving the inside to dry right out. I removed the studding from the keel and ordered some new. The new studding in the keel had to be cut about 4ins longer because of the extra thickness of glass and to allow for an extra lock nut, one of the old nuts having become lose.

We are now into August, I had fitted the new studding and made the first and last bolt a bit longer, it being easier to line up two bolts than all ten of them at the same time. The studding/bolt size was ¾ and 1in whit.

We then put a piece of pipe through the hole in the hull, Rod coating it so that the glass won't stick to it. We now started glassing up, a bit at a time, Rod was far better at it than I was. There is a lot to do and it took quite a bit of time. Umpteen days later and Rod had finished off the glass work with a coat of what looked like grey paint. We took the tubes out, we were left with clear holes for the bolts.

Next we lifted up the boat and gently lowered it onto the two longest keel bolts, we removed the wood that the port side keel had been standing on, the starboard had been on two trolley jacks so the keel could be moved in and out to help line up the bolts. When the bolts came through we put on the large plate washers, then the first of the nuts. Next Siklex291 was put on the keel, and as the bolts were tightened up the crane slowly lowered, we stopped when we got to 60 ft. lbs on the torque. We then lowered the boat onto the keels for the night.

Next day the nuts were torqued up to 80ft.lbs and any excess Siklex cleared away. We let it stand for a few days and then did an inspection, all found to be O.K.

Next I decided to do the port keel, this was easy, no cracks or dampness, and done in three weeks. Finally we put on the second nuts and locked them off.

In the water, no leaks- at last. The signing off date was the 21st.of November. Cost for the Starboard keel was £3149.00

If you have a Westerly and want to know more, join the Westerly Owners Club

Mawson Knight

Dave Metcalf's Westerley – hopefully with keel bolts nice and firm -overhauling your editor's character tub well and proper over the Cant last year. Ed.

Mudlarking with Jonathan Dodd

Which is yours then? An aerial photo I took with a drone a month or two ago.. John Knight had seen me with this toy the previous week and said he would be interested if I had any photos that showed the site so he could see if he could change the layout to advantage. I must say he seems to have done an excellent job and it would not be easy to get many more boats in for the winter. It was taken around 4.00 in the afternoon from about 50m up. Still got a lot of learning to do with it.

Which is yours then?

I thought you might like the picture of the seals aboard the Elmley buoy. How they got on there beats me - one at a time would tip it right over so I guess they both jump at once. This was taken on a warm August morning just before 9.00 am. I had been at Conyer and Harty for a couple of days and my morning slumbers were interrupted by a fearful racket from some fishermen starting up their boat . It was a lovely warm morning the sort we dream of in February but absolutely flat calm and no breeze in the forecast. No chance of sailing back

round the outside of Sheppey as I had hoped so nothing for it but to motor through the Swale. I passed the fishermen half a mile or so before Elmley they had run their boat in close to the mud on the north shore where it seemed to be a stony patch and were poking about I guess looking for bait - peeler crabs maybe. The seals did not seem in the least fazed by my boat, just gradually turned to watch as I went by. By this time the day was really warming up. I missed the 10.20 lift at Kingsferry but went through on the next with a ship astern. Still not a breath, though I thought for a moment I might be getting lucky through Queenborough, but a sweltering motor all the way to LHYC and the mooring for 1.00 p.m. Just shows what a an idyllic place the Swale can be if you are not downwind of the recycling plant on the wrong day and a lift keel was probably essential that morning as I saw least depth of 0.8 metres.

Lazy Days!

I too saw some seals on this buoy one evening last year- strange you'd think the mud would be more comfortable- Ed.

Jonathan Dodd

Catamaran Tread Softly

As we have only just started our first year of full membership I thought I'd give a quick bit of background. We bought Tread Softly in a dilapidated state on the hard at Rye. Having got her seaworthy (no small feat), we sailed her down to Sandwich marina where we had a mooring up the river. We spent 3 years there and made some more repairs both functional and cosmetic.
Eventually the marina decided it didn't really have enough room on the river for a catamaran, and so we took the easy decision to apply for membership and a mooring at LHYC.
On the 8th December we moved Tread Softly out of the water and on to the hard standing at LHYC for some overdue hull cleaning and a new anti foul application. We also needed to do some general repairs that were still outstanding since we bought her.
The day went well, helping with other boat lifts and also assisting when Sparky (Swale Pilot 16) slipped free of it's rope on the hammerhead before it was lifted out!
When it came to our turn, the wind was blowing a gale and we barely made it on to our new bespoke trailer that we had only assembled a few hours before. Thankfully we tied on OK and the tractor pulled us out. We were also glad at this point that our untested trailer took the weight!

You'll see us working on Tread Softly until we go back in the water in April; we'll be painting the deck, staining and repairing the rubbing strakes, lining the interior... so please say hello!

Andrew Morgan