# UP THE CREEK

## *Lower Halstow Yacht Club*

Summer 2021

### *Commodore's Ramblings*

I must start with the sad loss of two members. We did manage to add a short note in the last UTC that was ready to publish back in May when shockingly Ray Cracknell fell from his boat into the mud during the night and was unable to get back aboard. Very little more has come to light since then. We will never know the full story. It just goes to show how vulnerable we all are when we are on our boats. More recently we learnt of the passing of Peter Taylor. The very popular owner of Enliven. Both will be missed by the club and everyone that knew them. Our thoughts go out to the families of both.

I hope you have all had the chance to get some use from your boats. The weather hasn't been great this summer, but I can't blame the weather for my lack of sailing. I'm still hoping to get away for a few days before the winter arrives.

Talking of winter, John Knight has stood down as Assistant Yard Master after a number of years of ensuring the yard and boat lifts run smoothly. This year you will by now have seen the new system we are trying, using an appointment system on the website. You are able to look at available lift days and select and book your desired lift. We are then using an online storage form based on the old form to record the details and then email out to all the required parties.

Steve Simmons has volunteered to assist Lawrence manage the yard and lifts.

With the reduction in size of the committee, we put out feelers for new members to the committee. Among others, Mike Griffin, volunteered his services. Mike already keeps the hut clean and tidy, he cuts the grass and living locally is always around keeping an eye on things.

We have co-opted him on to the committee. Mike has volunteered to help Lawrence and Steve run the yard. So a big thanks to Mike.

Mike and Steve have already started tidying dinghies, particularly trailer dinghies that seem to have spread all over the yard. Please ensure any dinghies and any other equipment you have at the club are marked and identifiable, as you agreed on your membership renewal. If they are not stored on the dinghy racks, there is every possibility you may find it is not where you left it.

If you were one of the many members that attended the spring work party you will already know that we were preparing the site to be able to upgrade the CCTV. The installation is now complete, and after a few teething problems, we now have the whole site covered by cameras. There may be a few blind spots, but access to the blind spots is covered. You may notice when in the yard, a camera tracking your movement. The larger cameras have Smart Tracking active. It may seem a bit Big Brotherish, but it protects the site for us all. We will only be reviewing the recordings if there is a problem reported.

I guess many of you will have had a look at the weather station. The CCTV required a Broadband connection, so we took the opportunity to install a weather station, feeding data to the website. Combined with a static camera from the CCTV it provides live weather from the club and a current image of the creek. At this time, due to data constraints of the mobile broadband we are unable to steam live video. It would be possible, but would increase the running costs considerably. Maybe something to consider for the future.

Hopefully the last few weeks of the season will be kind to us and allow us to get out on the water.

*Dave Metcalfe*

## *Rudderless Meanderings from your Editor*

With the lift in form completed and the winter to do list continuing to a second sheet of A4, its time for one to look forward to those cosy evening in front of the fire with a fat finger or two of a suitable tincture and gazing into the glowing embers reflect on the season's triumphs. The Danish have a word for this type of simple reverie- hygge, roughly translated as a cosy feeling of contentment. A feeling of well-being found from simple pleasures.

*Beryl in Stangate on a quite afternoon.*

I always come back to my bit of hygge by over-nighting on the boat out in a quite creek, with a nice sunset and the birds. I'm always somehow amazed that we are allowed to do this; One day I'll wake up to discover it's all been banned, privatised or paved over with a luxury waterside development or some such. It feels we should be whistling quietly under our breath with our hands in our pockets, collars turned up and looking the other way hoping no one notices we're there.

I went to Snowdonia recently and found that the gate leading to a waterfall I have visited for years has now been replaced with a turnstile and costs £2 to enter.

Maybe in years to come Stangate will be taken over by Serco and an on line booking system set up where you have to create an account, think of another friggin password to forget, fill in details of god knows what and pay £15 per night. The whole set up managed by drones. Hope I'm in me box before then naturally.

On an active note, after two years of abandonment due to severe weather the Swale Smack and Barge match went ahead this summer.

There were high winds forecast for the night before so we got up very early and motored round under the bridge just in time to get the sails up and crash over the start line bang on schedule.

This year I was lucky to have Reg with me who has an experienced hand on the tiller, while I messed around with the sails. We went well down wind this year as we could play around with the genoa –which does require a crew. Across the wind was good- any semi competent twit can do this bit of course- bit mushy as usual towards the wind so room for improvement there.

We had fun at the do afterwards and to my amazement we were handed a trophy for coming third in gaffers over 25 feet and yes there were more than three boats on our group.(just).

*It was great to see Nick Donaldson pick up a cup with his boat Gloria for gaffers under 25 feet.*

*Lower Halstow Heritage Section flashing the silverware*

*Quaffing from the chalice back on board Beryl*

I have never won anything competitively in my entire life so I was chuffed not a little (probably all down to Reg  really but whatever!)

Nice to read John Knight's article this month about Faversham creek as I very nearly got stuck just past Iron Wharf recently trying to pick up a passenger. To top it off I nearly swiped off the bowsprit attempting an impromptu raft up. I was facing down the creek into the incoming flood but the current coming out of the creek caught the stern and swung the boat Suez style across the creek. Fortunately a good soul managed to push the bowsprit out as she swung so I avoided any damage to Beryl of any of the moored boats. All very embarrassing.

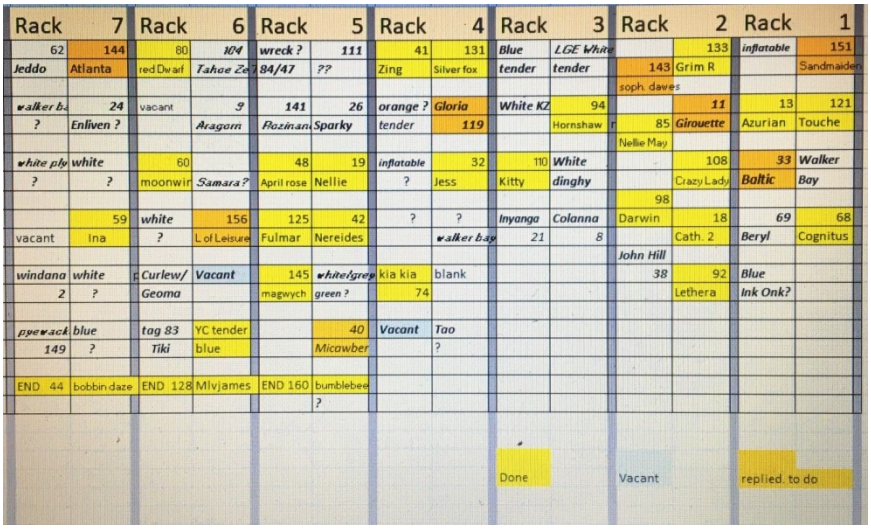
Thanks for all your contributions for this edition- makes all the difference I think you'll agree.

Pip Pip!

John Williams

## *From The Yard*

Hi all, below you will see the dinghy rack layout**.**



| Rack 7 | | Rack 6 | | Rack 5 | | Rack 4 | | Rack 3 | | Rack 2 | | Rack 1 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 62 | 144 | 80 | 104 | wreck ? | 111 | 41 | 131 | Blue | LGE White | | 133 | inflatable | 151 |
| Jeddo | Atlanta | red Dwarf | Tahoe Ze | 84/47 | ?? | Zing | Silver fox | tender | tender | 143 | Grim R | | Sandmaiden |
| | | | | | | | | | | soph. dawes | | | |
| walker b | 24 | vacant | 9 | 141 | 26 | orange ? | Gloria | White KZ | 94 | | 11 | 13 | 121 |
| ? | Enliven ? | | Aragorn | Pozinan | Sparky | tender | 119 | | Hornshaw | 85 | Girouette | Azurian | Touche |
| | | | | | | | | | | Nellie May | | | |
| white ply | white | 60 | | 48 | 19 | inflatable | 32 | 110 | White | | 108 | 33 | Walker |
| ? | ? | moonwin | Samara? | April rose | Nellie | ? | Jess | Kitty | dinghy | | Crazy Lady | Baltic | Bay |
| | | | | | | | | | | 98 | | | |
| | 59 | white | 156 | 125 | 42 | ? | ? | Inyanga | Colanna | Darwin | 18 | 69 | 68 |
| vacant | Ina | ? | L of Leisure | Fulmar | Nereides | | walker bay | 21 | 8 | | Cath. 2 | Beryl | Cognitus |
| | | | | | | | | | | John Hill | | | |
| windana | white | Curlew/ | Vacant | 145 | white/grey | kia kia | blank | | | 38 | 92 | Blue | |
| 2 | ? | Geoma | | magwych | green ? | 74 | | | | | Lethera | Ink Onk? | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| pipewack | blue | tag 83 | YC tender | | 40 | Vacant | Tao | | | | | | |
| 149 | ? | Tiki | blue | | Micawber | | ? | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| END 44 | bobbin daze | END 128 | Mlvjames | END 160 | bumblebee | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | ? | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | Done | | Vacant | | replied. to do | |

1 There are still a significant number that are not attributable to a member and a number that have communicated but dinghies still remain unmarked on the bottom. We have more tenders/dinghies on-site than we have recorded on the membership renewal forms.

2 This also applies to dinghies on trailers and boat trailers that should have the members number on the trailer frame near the ball hitch.

3 Road trailers not in use for winter storage and considered unfit for purpose will be cut up for scrap.

4 Trailers that are not going to be used for winter storage are to be removed from site as with increased membership ‘yard’ space is at a premium.

**For any member who has a problem in marking their tender/trailer frame let me know which one and I will stencil on your number at the next work party**

## Status in the Yard 06/09/21

Tread Softy TRACTOR ONLY TBA ( Lawrence dealing) **e-mail 4/9/21**

Crazy lady std. rate 3 monthly review DM dealing

Red Dwarf std rate 3 monthly reviewDM dealing

Enliven std rate 3 monthly review DM dealingUNDER REVIEW

Moksha from 1/74 times for 4 weeks then 10 times. **UNDER REVIEW**

Aspirations from 9/8 .. .. … **e-mail 4/9/21**

NIP 2 lifted out 30/7 **Paid to 29/8 e-mail 4/9/21**

Janet lifted out 27/8 for 9 weeks **paid to 31/10**

Wheatear 27/6 for 7 weeks plus 6 weeks **paidto 26/9**

Sunseeker paid 26 weeks from 29/5 **paid to28/11**

Baltic paid 26 weeks from 11th May **paid to 14/11**

Bobbin Daze paid 16 weeks from 27/6**paid to 17/10**

Antelope NON member, Anton Petkov. **Paid to 25/9**

Sanity NOW club owned motor boat. Not on sale yet

**Note from Editor**

**John Knight stood down at the end of August as assistant to the yard master Lawrence Newing. Mike Griffin and Steve Simmons are taking over the responsibilities to support the yardmaster role. Thanks for all the hard work John.**

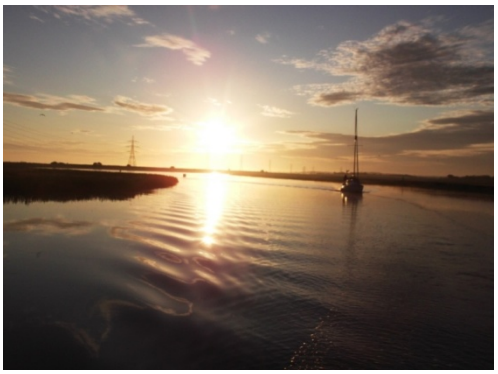
## News Flash

After a dog wins the last TOT race, a steward's enquiry was launched querying the Portsmouth yardstick for spaniels.

Unfortunately for Penny she was later disqualified anyway for passing the wrong side of the committee boat. Better luck next year Penny!

## *Swale Trip*

It started with an aim to sail solo round the outside of the island, up Faversham creek and spend overnight on the council mooring behind the Scouts building right up against the defunct swing bridge to return early Sunday morning via the Swale and Kingsferry bridge. I left the mooring on Friday to overnight in Stangate. Met up with Bill Strefford and his Suzie Q (fin keel) who was going the same way. He kindly towed a dinghy to slow him up so we kept roughly together! We left Saturday morning on the ebbing tide and lightish winds to hopefully get to the



Columbine Spit buoy for the turn of the tide. In the end a good steady F3/4 from the South West to the Spile, then across to the Columbine. However as we turned up the Swale we motored as it was on the nose to the North Cardinal buoy at the mouth of the creek. Bill moored off Hollow shore while I travelled the creek. Not a new thing for me being born in Faversham and many times with brothers Mawson and Chris we travelled the creek to the Horse sands for bait and fishing. All in a 9ft clinker dink with a seagull OB, no lifejackets and only a pair of oars if we needed. I rigged a sail and rudder for it but that's another story.

I try to visit at least twice a year for an overnight but mooring is hit and miss. I was lucky and tied up. Just as well as I had forgotten my pills and my wife duly delivered them with my daughter who was clutching two cold drinks from Morrisons. They departed then so I was pleasantly surprised on the top of the tide when Brooke and his party on Colanna arrived.

Brooke had run out of gas so I had a request for 4 teas/coffees for 5.30 Sunday morning as we left before high water. You really need to have a rising tide when you go round the bends of the creek especially by the barge houseboats past Iron Wharf, just in case.

A lovely calm morning when I left Brook at the North Cardinal with them dropping a hook at Hollow shore and I decided to sail back round the outside. Sensible until I got to Minster when the wind went west and rose to F5-6 again on the nose. Motoring all the way to Stangate to await the tide back into the creek. My only concerns was the absence of Bill and Brooke who I thought were in on that tide. Perhaps they are writing up their experience too.

*John Knight*

# It’s all about the Journey

I’d like to tell you a little bit about myself, and my story of small boat sailing. I started sailing quite late in life as a result of a compulsive eBay purchase. I happened to come across a Mk1

wooden Gull lying in a sad state at the bottom of the sellers garden. Having won the bid, I took on the task of replacing the rotten timber, re-varnishing, painting, and trailer repairs. The result was a wonderful little 12ft gunter rigged open dinghy, that took me on many adventures, from the tidal rivers of the east coast, Beaulieuand, Chichester harbour, to the freshwater of the Broads, Rutland and upper reaches of the Medway. One year, it even made it to the lakes of northern Italy; sailing in the sunny waters of Lake Maggiore surrounded by snow capped mountains is something I’ll never forget.

Not only did that little boat cover a lot of water, but along the way, it also acquainted me with likeminded people, many of whom were part of the Dinghy Cruising Association (DCA).

The DCA promotes ‘sailing in company’ and organises regular rallies in all parts of the country. My first Medway rally also became my introduction to camping from a small boat, at first with a land tent on the LHYC grassed area and eventually with onboard accommodation, generally comprising of a canvas over the boom, complete with an early morning view to appreciate!

The DCA rally format usually involves boats setting off from various locations and meeting up on the water or at a designated destination. With no safety boat support, each skipper is expected to assess the conditions against their own ability and make the right call. In addition to weather and chart information, a DCA passage plan usually includes an early morning/evening high water, an overnight destination to dry out relatively level, proximity to a pub and good company. Boats of all shapes and sizes take part, from sailing canoes to multihulls, production or homebuilt, solo or crewed and on gentle rivers such as the Alde and Deben, or the inshore waters around the tidal estuaries.

DCA member Frank Dye famously sailed from Scotland to Norway and Iceland in his Wayfarer dinghy - and along the east coast of North America. He described the latter voyage in his book *Sailing to the Edge of Fear.*But there are the hundreds of us who take out a small boat for a daysail with no more object than to reach around to the next-door cove for a picnic or make a minor voyage of exploration to the furthest creek of an estuary.

As much as I enjoyed exploring rivers and creeks in that little Gull, after 12 years, the next stage of my sailing journey beckoned. I like making things and had always wanted to build a boat, but never seemed to get the opportunity. Then a few years ago I approached the LHYC committee with a membership application which was gratefully approved..I subsequently made space, found time, purchased the plans and  material sand got to work. It seemed that circumstances, family, friends, finances, and support all came together when needed, and so out of the first lockdown emerged ‘Unity’, a John Welsford designed Navigator.

She is a 15ft standing lugsail yawl, that was launched at the club last year and has since taken me on cruises along the Crouch, Orwell, Stour and of course the Medway. The last weekend in July saw LHYC host the DCA again, with three boats making it out passed the SS Richard Montgomery and around Red Sands on the Saturday,ending with an overnight stop at Harty Ferry where we were joined by the Thames barges beating up the entrance to the Swale as they raced to the finish line.

Sundays plan was to take the last of the morning tide up the Swale, however with very little wind we had to return to Harty ferry and head around the top of the island, avoiding Shell Ness on the now falling tide. Although, as we headed toward Columbine spit, a pursuing barge in partial sail trim, made the turn north to cut across the shallows before us. Faith in the depth sounder or local knowledge I'm not sure, but with Unity only drawing 3ft (centreboard down) that was my signal to go too! It was a variable passage for the rest of the day, which went from drifting with the tide, to rowing, motoring and even at times close hauling with a reef in the main. Eventually, we made it back down Stangate on the evening tide, although at one point we were considering the possibility of holding up for the night in Sharfleet creek..Another memorable DCA rally and thank you to the LHYC committee for allowing us to use the facilities at the club once again.

*"It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end." – Ernest Hemingway*

I hope this brief account has given members a quick insight into my journey, Unity and typical exploits of the DCA.If anyone would like to find out more then please get in touch or come and say hello if you see me in the yard. I'd be very interested to hear about your sailing stories, and with such a wealth of experience in the club, advice will always be welcome.

Fair winds and great adventures

*Richard Wilde*

https://www.dinghycruising.org.uk/

http://www.jwboatdesigns.co.nz/plans/navigator/

https://smallboatsmonthly.com/article/navigator/

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