

STOUR SAILING CLUB MAGAZINE  
*The* **BOWSPRIT**

The Stour Sailing Club is a friendly sailing place for small cruisers, leisure fishing boats, sailing dinghies, classic boats and punts, an ideal base to explore the Stour and Orwell estuaries, the East coast, or sail away further afield across to France, Belgium or Holland ...



**Find enclosed all practical information related to the Club, its activities, services and facilities, what happened in 2020 in spite of Covid, as well as our plans for 2021**

# Who is who at the Sailing Club

## **Officers**

President	Gerry Brown
Commodore	Sarah Howlett
Vice-Commodore	Russell Harvey
Rear Commodore	Caroline Cunningham
Treasurer	Colin Garnham



## **Other Members of the Management Committee**

Communications Manager and Bowsprit Editor	Alexis Girard
Compound Manager	Will Langton
Membership Secretary	Jenny Pavey
Moorings Master	Russell Harvey
Sailing Secretary	Will Harvey
Training Co-ordinator	Dave Perrott
Clubhouse Manager	David Warner

## **Non Committee Roles**

Rowing Secretary	Caroline Cunningham
Racing Secretary	Will Harvey
Club Clothing Contact	Kate Perrott & Caroline Cunningham
Webmaster	Caroline Cunningham
IT Administrator and Data Controller	David Waters

*All management committee members may be contacted through the club's website at <http://www.stoursailingclub.co.uk/contact/>*

THE BOWSPRIT is published once a year by the Stour Sailing Club, 10 Quay Street, Manningtree, Essex CO11 1AU.

Telephone: 01206 393 924 (*please be aware that the club is not always manned*).

PLEASE SEND US YOUR ARTICLES AND PICTURES, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOU AND YOUR ADVENTURES AT SEA!!

Contact the editor at [bowspriteditor@gmail.com](mailto:bowspriteditor@gmail.com)





## Commodore's Corner

What a year!

Covid-19 presented us with numerous unique challenges.

Right from the start we transferred our monthly Committee meetings to online – a real learning curve for some – however, it has proven to be invaluable as we have been able to continue with Club business throughout this very difficult time. The pandemic has, unfortunately, had an affect on the 3-year action plan, available on the Member's section of the Club's website, with some actions just unable to be completed.

I must thank David Warner for coping with the continual clubhouse changes throughout the year and going forward, particularly as far as the cleaning is concerned. Kiersty and Phil must also get a big thank you because their workload increased, slowed down, stopped and started again with such regularity it must have been difficult at times.

Hats off to Will Langton (Compound Manager) and Kelvin Howlett plus all helpers for the lift out which was on, then off and then on again – all went well, and it was a great relief when it was all completed



safely and securely – detailed report further in this publication.

The bar volunteers were absolute stars stepping up to man the bar, during the brief periods when we could actually open, whilst ensuring that the continually changing restrictions we had to put in place were adhered to.

The restrictions put a stop to most of the big events scheduled for 2020 but when it was possible to go out, we did! Rowing bubbles were formed which meant that specific groups could take the boats out. Ruben Manning and Alexis started youngsters sailing/racing evenings plus the Micro Worlds took place – albeit on a smaller scale – was successful nevertheless. Reports on these are detailed in this publication.



## Commodore's Corner

What the Committee has done is to focus on all areas of the Club, some identified here;

Obviously, the need to install hand sanitisers and other protective products was paramount for the clubhouse and the compound.

The long-awaited soakaway was constructed in the West Compound and it is working superbly – special thanks to Mark Bentall for designing and co-ordinating the construction.

The pontoon development – all legal, planning and environmental requirements were, at last, agreed and approved in November 2020 – a very trying and detailed administrative process undertaken by Colin Garnham. The construction programme will start and hopefully be completed prior to lift in, but activity will be reliant on Covid-19 requirements.

A second Harker's Yard Gig was purchased thanks to the tremendous efforts of Caroline Cunningham securing another grant from Sport England.

We have developed policies for Reporting and Dealing with Incidents on Club Premises

and also for the use of Social Media.

We are continuing with the project to upgrade and improve the clubhouse facilities for toilets/showers/changing boosted with the aid of a support grant from Sport England.

This has been a difficult time for us all so I would like to thank each and every one of you for standing by and supporting the Club during this testing time by continuing to renew your membership and by following all of the ever-changing COVID-19 restrictions that were necessary to put in place. We have kept the member rates as they are – in fact, they have not increased since 2019 and we look forward to being allowed out to play again in 2021 – see you there!

*Sarah Howlett*

## Club Cruising — By Alexis Girard

***The SSC is a great base for all sorts of cruising. The Stour estuary, a nature reserve, offers landscapes of stunning beauty; it is ideal for day boating and provides several anchoring spots just minutes away from Manningtree at Stutton, Holbrook, Bradfield or Wrabness.***



It is also ideal for practicing nautical skills, presenting all sort of “difficulties” such as tidal streams, shallow waters, or the odd cargo ship bound for Mistley, however in a relatively forgiving and benign environment being completely sheltered from the sea, with mud and sand shoals and banks, and still being a quiet waterway.

The local sea life includes a great variety of birds; the Stour is famous for its swan flocks uniquely living in a salty water environment, and you may catch a glimpse of the occasional seal swimming on the tide in pursuit of seabass.

It expands into the Orwell estuary, providing sheltered access to further destinations that can be reached on a tide, including marinas and picturesque sites such as the famous smuggler retreat Pin Mill. Even with very short sea pas-

sages, one can reach neighboring estuaries, such as the Walton Naze and its colonies of grey seals, the woody Deben and the Blackwater.

Manningtree is accessed by a well marked channel that dries up almost completely (save for the inch of water from the river) in its upper part, and it is just about one foot deep in its Eastern part at low tide. Mooring is therefore for low-draught crafts or bilge-keel cruisers.

The club leads several cruising events during the year for those who enjoy combining socializing and sailing, including the shakedown cruise in Spring, visits to nearby clubs, beach BBQ days in the Summer, the Curry cruise in Autumn, and various other events.

Owing to its quiet (and surprisingly warm in Summer) waters, any cruise can be peppered with extra activities such as paddles, windsurfing, rowing, as well as fishing.



Mooring facility at the quay makes onboarding easier than with a tender, and it is equipped with water and electricity supplies.



## 40 Years Sailing at Stour Sailing Club by Gerry Brown

***Having moved to the area in 1969, I was attracted to the river and decided to build a Mirror dinghy from a Bell kit and I was eventually encouraged to join the club in 1972. I have to admit that this was a real change of lifestyle for me and I have not looked back since.***

Having raced in the Mirror, a GP14 a Topper and a Fireball and then a Leisure17 cruiser I finally bought a Westerly Centaur named SOLAKS in 1983, which is a 26ft sloop built in 1977.



Following this with a few courses and then qualifying for RYA Yachtmaster, I was ready to tackle some serious sea crossings.

CRUISING WITH SOLAKS—Our first trip was to Breskins in Holland, accompanied by four friends in similar sized boats. I remember we all had several planning meetings before setting sail on our first sea adventure. Good navigation was essential as this was before GPS and even Decca were invented and it all had to be done with DR (dead reckoning) considering tidal flows and speeds, wind direction, leeway and crossing major shipping lanes at night. We had decided to head for the Ackaert buoys which mark a wreck off the Dutch coast, which we duly found dead ahead. From there it was

straight up the Scheldt to Breskins where we celebrated our arrival in due style!! This was followed by a cruise around the Middleburgh canal and the Verse Meer prior to heading back home. The following years we did several North Sea crossings visiting Ostend, Amsterdam and most of the inland waterways followed by trips to France - Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe and various harbours in between.

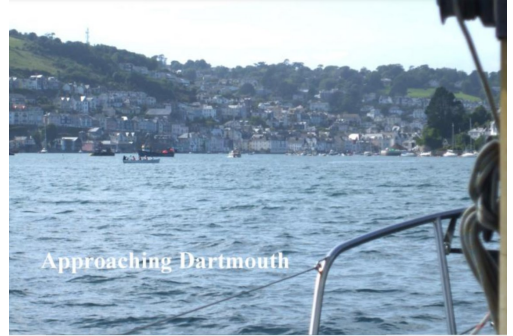
In May 1991, Martin Pavey and Steve Garnham decided to enter the Azores and back race in their 30ft boat KATLA. However, they couldn't find time to get Katla to Falmouth in Cornwall, so I offered to do a delivery job for them, got a crew together and duly completed the delivery via several ports of call along the way. I seem to remember that they came second in their class after a particularly hazardous crossing of the Bay of Biscay. That trip opened up a whole new cruising ground for me because I realised that if I could sail to Cornwall on Katla, I could do the same on Solaks. So, the following year, off we went on Solaks to Cornwall, mainly day-sailing, and visiting Ramsgate, which is a good place to start along the channel with plenty of good restaurants, Dover (where you need to enter via the West entrance for the Wellington dock and marina), Rye, and Brighton (where there is a friendly sailing club doing basic food at reasonable prices, and easy access to the city centre ), Cowes (worth avoiding the round the island race and Cowes week where marina spaces are fully booked), but we did get a good view of the Queen Mary leaving Southampton.

Next it was off to Weymouth where we moored alongside the outer harbour quay and where you can often view sail training ships and ancient tall ships.

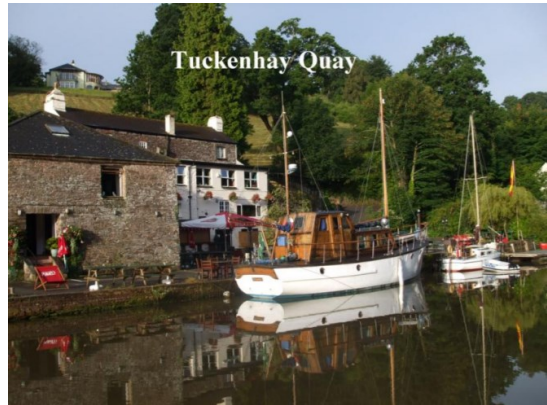


It's also the only point to ready yourself for rounding Portland Bill (there's also an excellent fish and chip restaurant right on the quay!!).

plenty to see at Dartmouth and it's worth staying a day or two to explore the river and its tributaries.

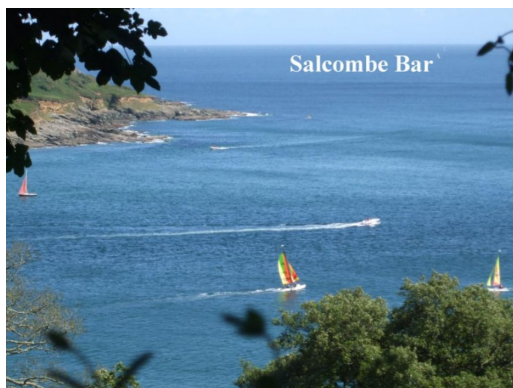


One of my favourite places is Tuckenhay Creek where you can moor on a small private quay by the local pub, which used to be owned by Keith Floyd (who we had a chat with) and of course - excellent food – at a price,- and you can stay the night on the quay.



After the Bill, it's straight across Lyme Bay to Brixham, which is a very busy fishing port and just a three hour sail from Dartmouth. There's

Salcombe was the next port of call, a beautiful natural harbour in the estuary. No marinas here, just visitors moorings and a few detached pontoons. The surroundings are just breathtaking and the small town has many lovely eating places and bars, it's worth trying the locally-caught scallops!



Next it's off to Plymouth, a very busy place if you like that sort of thing, and then Fowey which is another of my favourite places, similar to Salcombe but in my opinion, even better.

Finally we arrived at Falmouth and went into the town marina which is very convenient for the town centre and all the facilities. In between we explored many beautiful estuaries which we couldn't do on Katla due to her draught. Since then we have done some ten or so trips down the South coast to Cornwall visiting many of my favourite haunts and usually trying out some of the many waterside pubs and restaurants on the way.

One year we decided to do a sort of circular cruise around the English Channel. We set off along the south coast to Dartmouth and then set sail for Guernsey to St. Peter Port and

stayed a few nights. The next bit was rather exciting—tackling the Alderney Race and rounding up to Braye harbour. I seem to remember we were doing about twelve knots in the Race doing the length of the island in about forty minutes, most of the speed being down to the tide. The next part of the trip took in the coast of Normandy. After an overnight stay at Cherbourg we sailed past the Normandy Landing beaches and the remains of the Mulberry Harbour to Courselles-sur-mer for an overnight stop, the following day we proceeded to Ouistreham for a crew changeover, continuing on to Honfleur which is a beautiful ancient harbour surrounded by many cafes, bars and eating places with all kinds of live music emanating from them, to say the least, it was a very lively place! After a couple of nights stay, we sallied forth to Fecamp and started to plan the return trip home. Halfway between Fecamp and Boulogne is the Somme Estuary which is also a tidegate in the English Channel. If you can arrive there at high water on the flood tide it's possible then to take the ebb for six or seven hours towards Boulogne which gives you a good fourteen hours sailing with the tide under you. We managed to keep up a good speed and the tide finally turned on us when we were just a couple of miles from Boulogne and we motored into the marina. The next leg to Ramsgate was a bit rough on a south westerly force six, but we did manage to get to Ramsgate in record time and the rest of the trip to Manningtree the next day was very pleasant. Altogether we had sailed some 850 miles in just under 6 weeks visiting a whole host of interesting harbours.

**CRUISING ALONG THE SOUTH COAST—** When doing this it is very important to work the tides especially on spring tides and bearing in mind the tide gate at Dungeness.



If you can arrive there at high water you can pick up the ebb towards Brighton and enjoy about fourteen hours sailing with the tide, if you can't make Brighton, pop in to Eastbourne.



Rounding Portland Bill is much feared by many sailors. There are two options, the first, the safe way, is to leave Weymouth and sail about ten miles out into the channel to avoid the horrendous overfalls off Portland or, the second, bold way, to leave Weymouth at around high water and take the inshore passage around the Bill very close, - about twenty metres from the cliffs - you feel you can almost touch them, and it's calm all the way around. You can then head across Lyme Bay and take the ebb all the way to Brixham. It's very handy to have a tidal atlas on-board to do all the workings out.

**MAINTENANCE ON SOLAKS---** There's always something to do, and over the 29 years I have owned her the sails, toilet, headlinings, upholstery, the diesel engine and fuel tank, prop and shaft have all been replaced together with many other items, all necessary to keep the boat in excellent order.

**MEMORABLE MOMENTS---** There's obviously many of these after some 19,000 cruising miles but here's some of them;

After sailing past the Mulberry Harbour remains we were looking out for a "Cross of Lor-

raine", according to the Reeds almanac, marking the entrance to Courselles-sur-mer. Having sighted this landmark we slowly motored towards it when the water started to shallow but we couldn't see the entrance. Then somebody shouted "there's another one over there" and surely enough there was a second cross, which resulted in a rapid turnaround out into deeper water before we headed for "the other one" about a mile along the coast.

It was rather late when we arrived at Courselles so we found a berth and "hit the sack". The following morning I walked up to the Marina Reception and enquired, as you do, about the toilets and showers, the young lady receptionist then called me to her, with hooked finger, and whispered in my ear "Monsieur zair iss a sekret numbair". This immediately made me think of "Allo. Allo", the T.V. series. She gave me a codelock number and I departed with a grin on my face!!

On another occasion sailing from Cowes to Brighton the wind piped -up to a strong sou-westerly and it became too dangerous to reef the mainsail so we furled the Genoa to stabilize the boat. As we sailed along like a bat out of hell we saw huge waves crashing over the harbour mole at Brighton. Now the entrance to Brighton marina faces Eastwards so we had to pass the entrance, turning around to go in, on the turn I was planning to tack through 180 degrees and motor in head to wind when we suddenly gybed, screwing round and heading straight for the entrance. A huge wave crashed over the wall ahead of us, I shouted "give it some welly" to which the crew responded by giving the engine maximum throttle, the boat hurtled forward just as another wave crashed over the wall behind us-- were we pleased to get into Brighton marina unscarred !!

Four years ago, having sailed to Blankenburgh, I was returning home via Dunkirk with Muddy and David Warner. At Dunkirk, we were stormed in for a couple of days, then decided that a favourable French forecast of sou-westerly force 4 to 5 would be suitable for a cross channel trip to Ramsgate so we set sail with a reefed mainsail. After a couple of hours the sea became rather nasty and the British forecast on the VHF became north-westerly force 6 to 7. Things became much worse, we were motor sailing whilst steering with the autohelm, huge waves were crashing over the boat, David and I were crouched up under the

were really pleased when we arrived at Ramsgate and celebrated accordingly.

There are many more adventures,- too many to write about without writing a whole book, but with advancing years- I'll soon be 80 -I feel less inclined to take on the long-distant passages as in the past. And, of course, I haven't covered all these some 19,000 miles single handed, I've been very fortunate to have had excellent crews to assist me on the passages, including my wife Di. In particular I would like to thank Muddy Waters, a real stalwart who has I think accompanied me on all the cruises



sprayhood whilst Muddy was laying on his back in the cabin doing the navigation, giving compass bearing information to feed into the autohelm. Using the toilet was impossible so we had to make alternative arrangements!! We

over the last 30 years and also Pat Johnson, Mal Bezant, Brian Rogers, David Warner and many others, all of to whom I would like to say a very big "Thank-you".

## Wally Sage — By Beverley Sage

*Walter "Wally" Sage, my dad was a much-loved member and commodore of Stour Sailing Club for many years.*



A great deal of my childhood was spent with him doing what he loved the most, being down the river working or playing on his many boats. The Walls was the place for getting wet and muddy participating in some

great racing and social events the Club held, including passage races to Harwich, Tug of War in the Mud on Regatta days, weekends racing, social BBQ's at Wrabness and Stutton Foreshore. Wally had many boats but his favorite was Mary Lou an old wooden cruiser where there were many hours spent together with her on the foreshore scraping barnacles off, paint stripping and antifouling. He taught me so



many skills during her renovation. Dad went on a wood turning course where he learnt some new skills and was able to repair his beloved ships wheel by turning and replacing one of the handles himself, once completed this took pride of



place in his living room as it was a little too big for Mary Lou, he was very proud of it with his brass barometer in the middle which he tapped every morning. After his death in 2000 he was greatly missed and the ships wheel was pre-



sented to the club and hung in the clubhouse for a few years, I am very happy to say that it is now taking pride of place in my living room in Rowhedge.

## Makeda Goes North — By Jerry Garner

*In 2019, Makeda, an Iroquois catamaran skipped by Jerry and Margaret “turned left out of Harwich, heading towards the North”; in our last edition we reported their log for the first part of the journey, to the Hartlepool marina. Here is their story onwards ...*

Monday 17 June—In the morning we walked to Asda for some shopping, plenty far enough so decided not to lug petrol cans from there. In the afternoon we had an interesting visit to the Hartlepool museum (free, unlike the Naval museum!).

Tuesday 18 June—We cleared the marina lock at 0900 and were soon under reefed sail. Wind SW4+ but sunny. At 1015 we had just passed ahead of an anchored empty oil tanker (the last ship in this north Tees anchorage) when it gave 2 loud blasts on its horn. Perhaps it thought we were terrorists or pirates?

Soon the wind began to ease and we were under full sail until we entered the Tyne at 1221. We called up the Royal Quays marina and were able to lock straight in without waiting. Another spacious marina within a huge old dock. We were moored by 1325. In the evening our son Robert, who lives a few miles west of Newcastle, visited with one of his daughters.

Wednesday 19 June—We paid for our berth (£25-48 for a 30ft catamaran, not bad!) then locked out and stopped at the fuel berth outside to fill our petrol cans. Before leaving, we called Tyne VTS as instructed and were warned of a RoRo ship entering the Tyne. We motored down to the south of the main

channel, as the harbour regulations instruct. When we got to the entrance reach, a wide area enclosed by the two long pierheads, we could see the ship was still some way off. I wanted to nip across to the north side so that we could round the north pier without delay. However the pilot boat, returning to the river after putting a pilot on the RoRo, ordered us to remain on the south side. We therefore had to hang around while the ship dawdled into the river and it was not until 1115 we finally cleared the pierheads.

We hoisted the main but had to continue motoring as there was virtually no wind. We were level with Blyth at 1325. Later enough breeze appeared to fill the main and increase our speed by 0.2 knots. Soon we were able to stop the engine, set the jib and run north at 3 knots before a gentle SE breeze.

Mid-afternoon we had a lovely surprise when a school of dolphins came and splashed around us. There were puffins about too.

As we approached Amble it was difficult to pick out the landmarks on the mainland mentioned in the pilot book but Coquet Island was obvious enough. The shoal area off Hauxley Point, just to the south, nearly caught us out as we headed for Coquet, from where we could easily

identify the entrance buoy and the pier heads. We called the marina on the VHF and were told a berth number and which side to put the fenders. We were moored by 1700 but now the marina office was closed and we collected our “welcome pack” from the fuel pontoon as instructed.





Thursday 20 June—We decided to stay in Amble for a second night so went for a walk along a footpath by the river to Warkworth. We walked round the outside of the castle (£7 to go in seemed a bit steep!) then to a nice little café come art gallery for coffee. There were many birds on the river including mergansers and eider duck. On our return we had a useful conversation with the marina man about the Farne islands and Lindisfarne. In the evening we went for a super seafood meal at “The Fish Shack” on the quay.

Friday 21 June—A sunny but breezy morning. We left the marina at 0900 and once clear of the pierheads set reefed main and part-rolled jib. Wind WNW 5 gave us 7-8 knots at first before the wind headed us and became more variable. Craster was to port at 1035. At 1145 Seahouses was to port and Bamburgh Castle on the port bow.

We had to tack just south of the Inner Farne islands and the smell of bird pooh was noticeable. We rounded Inner Farne and anchored in “The Kettle” at 1250. This was a very sheltered anchorage, enclosed by islands, though a slight swell from the west did cause us to rock a bit when beam on.

During the afternoon there was a continuous procession of trip boats queueing up to land or pick up tourists. There were two mooring buoys near us where the boats waited while their passengers were ashore. The tourists have to pay a fee to land then have to follow a set path round the island before re-embarking. We got a good but more distant view of the birds without paying. The guillemots were packed together like pictures you see of penguin colonies. There were puffins and cormorants on the water all around us. Once the trip boats had finished for the day it was just us and the birds.

Saturday 22 June—After a quiet night, a sunny morning with a light wind. We motored out of the Kettle at 0840 through rafts of puffins. Under full sail we made about 2 knots so after a while we added the engine to boost it to 3. We were at the Bridge buoy at 1000 where we lowered sail and followed the leading marks into the Lindisfarne anchorage. We anchored off Steel End, the point on the west side of a drying bay called The Ouse.

After lunch we rowed the Avon dinghy ashore and carried it well up the stony beach in the NE corner of the ouse. We walked round the eastern half of the island. The meadows were full of flowers including purple orchids. From the northern point we could see Scotland, St Abbs Head but decided not to continue our voyage north as we had forgotten our passports!

We walked back down the eastern side of the island and past Lindisfarne Castle (we had been in the castle on a previous land-based visit some years ago so didn't go inside). There is a walled garden, designed by Gertrude Jekyll, near the castle, which was interesting. After carrying the dinghy further up above tide level we walked round the village but the only shops were to supply the tourists, nowhere to buy groceries. A tough row back to Makeda about 1600 due to the fresh and chilly SE breeze.

Sunday 23 June—We were under way by 0840 and motored out to the Bridge buoy where we set reefed sails. The wind SE4-5. Off Seahouses, about mid-day, we were able to shake the reefs out and at 1450 we were off Dunstanburgh Castle.

We could not raise Amble Marina on the VHF so we motored in to the fuel pontoon. The marina man was there helping a large motor-cruiser which had a length of discarded warp wrapped round one propeller.

Monday 24 June—We left Amble at 0910. The wind was a light NNW, dead behind us but there were some very big waves between Coquet island and Hauxley Head. As we passed in the lee of Coquet a large number of very annoying flies arrived aboard. An uncomfortable sail, goose-winged in a lumpy sea. Eventually we were able to gybe and reach towards Blyth. We berthed on the Royal Northumberland YC visitor pontoon at 1345.

During the early afternoon there was some heavy rain and thunder but we were snoozing down below. In the evening we went to the RNYC clubhouse which is a very old wooden lightship to pay for our berth (£22-75). Son Robert arrived for a brief visit. His firm has a facility here where they construct the weird equipment he designs for the offshore oil and telecoms etc.

Tuesday 25 June—A filthy, cold, windy morning with poor visibility. We decided to stay another night in Blyth. Late morning we put on hats and coats and walked the 3½ miles into town for some shopping. Noticed estate agent house prices about half those in Manningtree! Mid-afternoon it was raining and blowing harder than ever; glad we stayed here.

The James Cook sail training ketch arrived late afternoon. Later most of the young people from the crew were seen on the pontoon rinsing out small pink buckets; their personal "puke" receptacles!

Wednesday 26 June—By 0930 we had left Blyth and were under sail, doing 7 knots before a northerly wind, one reef in main.

Tynemouth was abeam at 1030. The big waves and northerly wind reminded us of a certain National Twelve open meeting at Tynemouth many years ago!

We had to bend our course round the ship anchorage off Hartlepool but we still got a loud

horn blast from one ship; presumably thought we were too close.

We called up the marina – who said “wait for the green light to lock in”. I thought this was on the outer pier then realised we had to enter the inner harbour in order to see a small light on the lock!

We were moored by 1525, on the linear pontoon in the marina. The tightest possible berth; 2ft astern of a 30ft yacht and with our stern line under the bow warp of James Cook which was rafted alongside Faramir, a similar large ketch. Did some shopping and filled water tanks etc.

Thursday 27 June—We locked out at 0820 the wind light SW so we were motor sailing. The Tees wind farm had less than half its windmills turning slowly. Although the wind filled in a bit by mid-morning we continued motoring in order to get to Whitby within 2 hours of HW or they won't open the bridge.

When we were off Whitby Rock buoy time was getting short as we motored towards the entrance, heeding a VHF warning of diver operations along the east pier. In the harbour we thought we had missed the 1300 bridge opening (they open on ½ hour and hour, 2 hours either side of HW). We were preparing for the waiting pontoon when the bridge VHF said “it's open if you hurry!” so we were moored in the marina by 1315.

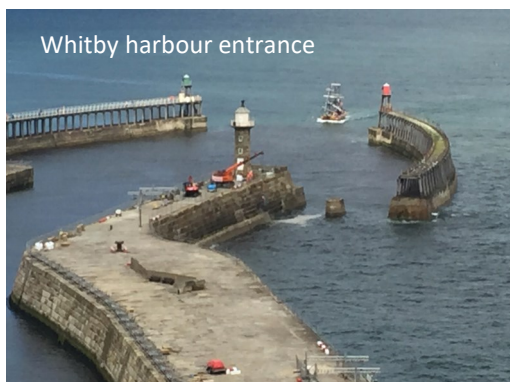
Later in the afternoon we bought 2 cans of petrol (a hard uphill walk to the petrol station). Then, after a rest, did a bit of exploring around the harbour area. In the evening we went for a super fish & chip meal at “Mr Chips”.

Friday 28 June—A dull chilly start to the day but by mid-morning it was brightening up. We put on walking boots and went across the lifting bridge and up the 199 steps to St Marys Church, overlooking the harbour. It still has very Victorian pews with doors and uncomfortable looking seats. Some box pews near the 3 decker pulpit were still labelled for “strangers”.

We went to the abbey ruins but they were closed for the day for some TV filming, the first time ever. We walked on to the cliff head



which was a bit like the Naze; earth rather than rock. Then back to the top end of the churchyard, overlooking the harbour entrance, where we ate our sandwich lunch. Returning through the town, we looked into a Jet workshop and



discussed this unique jewellery stone with the owner. We were back aboard soon after 1300.

In the afternoon we walked up the River Esk to the village of Ruswarp then back over some very steep hill paths. My smartphone recorded a total walking 4.8 miles today but 14461 steps and equivalent of 20 floors!

Saturday 29 June—A sunny morning. Quite calm first thing but by the time we returned from shopping at 0900 it was force 3 SSE. The forecast was for it to veer SW and increase.

This was the most expensive marina since Lowestoft. We were charged 25% extra for being a multihull, the first time this has ever happened and, since we were on a linear pontoon, we were not taking any more space than a monohull of same length. £61-95 for 2 nights!

Being a Saturday there were several yachts wanting passage through the bridge when it lifted at 1200. A bit of a scrum! We motored clear of the harbour and by 1240 were under sail with one reef in.

After keeping well clear of the castle rock at Scarborough we put the engine on to head up towards the harbour. By 1745 we were moored on the linear visitor pontoon in the old harbour. The charge of £24-02 was only 35p more than our mooring on the wall last time here.

Sunday 30 June—A sunny morning with moderate to fresh SW breeze. We discovered that the previous day there had been a large display outside the harbour for "Armed Forces Day" and no vessels were allowed in or out of harbour all afternoon. Just as well we did not arrive any earlier.

Mid morning we went for a walk, via footpath and many steps, to the castle and around its walls. On returning aboard my smartphone had recorded one mile but 22 floors!

We left the harbour just before noon and were soon under sail; one reef in main and half-rolled jib. From there to Flamborough Head we were doing 7½-8 knots with occasional bursts up to 10, the sea fairly smooth. After Filey the colour of the cliffs changed from brown to grey/white. There were large flocks of guillemots and gannets.

We luffed close round Flamborough Head at 1355 and left the North Smithic buoy to port. However, our course slightly west of south close-hauled was taking us over the edge of the Smithic shoal and we had a hard thrash on the other tack through breaking waves, though never less than 8m depth. Several tacks were needed to cover the 5 miles to Bridlington. Possibly the tide eddy south of Flamborough Head was against us.

Engine on and sails off, south of the harbour. We could not raise any response on the VHF except squawks so we motored in and moored in the first pontoon berth seen. The harbour man then showed us a more suitable pontoon berth opposite the wall where we moored last time.

Monday 1 July—A sunny, breezy morning after a good night's sleep. Went to the harbour office and paid for 2 nights (£34-44 cash - no card machines here!). Went shopping, passing 3 charity shops on the way where Margaret bought books. In the afternoon we explored the south beach. The wind WNW 4-5.

Tuesday 2 July—We were up at 0450, about high water. The fishing boats had mostly gone already, leaving us a clear path. It was fine, sunny and calm in the harbour. Left our berth 0655 and by 0710 were outside the harbour

under full sail; wind NW3. Birdie was steering, doing 5½-6 knots over ground. We passed the SW Smithic buoy at 0738 and bore off for our first waypoint off the Humber. The wind gradually veered to dead astern and fell light. The area of sea to the east of us is labelled on the chart as "california". So now we can say: "When we were sailing down the west of California....."!

At 0935 the wind was so light that we added the engine. Shortly afterwards we passed a large anchored bulk carrier; no visible black anchor ball.

1230 and the sea was glassy with a long swell from the north. Weather overcast. Gas platforms visible to port and Roughs wind farm to starboard, with most windmills stationary. Mate off watch. At 1405 I ran right over a lobster pot buoy! Luckily the twin rudders helped avoid it tangling in the propeller, thought the outboard did kick up slightly.

We carried on motor-sailing right through the night, passing the Dudgeon waypoint at 2212 and North Haisburgh waypoint at 0400 next day.

Wednesday 3 July—At 0535 the engine died, having emptied the main fuel tank. We switched tanks and carried on. Waypoints and course alterations more frequent now as we passed about 10 miles off the Norfolk coast. At 0815 there was at last a breath of wind so we turned the engine off to save petrol. Bore off on a broad reach towards the Holm Approach buoy, making 4-5 knots over the ground. It was finally becoming warm and sunny and there was a general peeling off of clothes, changing into shorts etc. We finally got into Lowestoft and moored at 1130. After lunching we went to bed for a couple of hours.



Late afternoon we took refuse ashore and went to Asda for a few groceries and 2 cans of petrol. During the evening I filled the water tanks. As usual, when the tank was full, I draped the hose over the side while I screwed the cap on. However, our cabin at the aft end of the port hull is the only one with a small opening porthole in the hull, rarely opened unless the weather is really hot. You've guessed it! We later found the hose had nicely soaked my bunk!

Thursday 4 July—We left the harbour at 0830 and by 0915 we were sailing close-hauled in a light SW breeze; making over 4 knots over ground but most of that was tide! We held starboard tack, taking us well offshore. The breeze a bit variable and we nearly got carried on to an anchored ship due to a wind shift and the tide. About 1030 we tacked towards Sizewell, the wind now increasing force 3 and later 4. We beat down the coast past Orford Ness and Aldeburgh and at 1530 were near the Orford Haven buoy.

Until Orford Haven it had been one of the nicest sails so far but now with the tide turning against us it became very frustrating. A friend of ours has a holiday bungalow at Shingle Street and every tack we still seemed to be in sight of Lydia's bungalow! It took us until 1728 to pass the Woodbridge Haven buoy but from here, on port tack, we could just lay our course for the designat-

ed yacht crossing to Inner Ridge. It was not to be! Just as we were approaching the crossing the wind started veering until eventually we were heading for Felixstowe beach! A short tack to clear the beach and then we nipped across the channel near the Beach End buoy at 1820. Anchored above Erwarton Post at 1950 and a seal came to welcome us home.

Friday 5 July—We spent the morning clearing up and packing. An amazing number of books/novels have been acquired on this trip! After lunch we motored up to Manningtree against the westerly breeze. We were amazed to discover two pontoons had appeared since we left. We offloaded our gear into the West Compound, collected our tender and motored back to our mooring.



# Rowing with the Stour Sailing Club

## by Caroline Cunningham

Where there is water there is rowing whether simply to get out to boats on moorings, or to row working boats to the shore, for enjoyment or to race. The Club offers a warm welcome to anyone who wants to get out on the water and peacefully enjoy our wonderful estuary through sailing, paddling, fishing, or rowing.

In 2008 individual members brought informal crew rowing back to Manningtree with the arrival of the Claydon Skiffs. Then in February 2016 we established the Club Rowing Section, and purchased our first Club Harker's Yard Gig with the help of a £10k Sport England Lottery Fund Grant for our 'Coastal Rowing Project' to enable more people to get active on the water. Club rowing has proved very popular, and 'the rowers' are very active both on and off the water. When we are not in a global pandemic rowers and the club boats are out on the water all year round both on home water and away.

The Rowing Sub-Committee are planning for the time when we can get back on the water in 2021, and we are looking forward to welcoming new rowers and already planning 'Have a Go' sessions and 'Learn to Row' activities as well as our usual events and activities on home water and maybe some new ones.

### Our Club Boats

The Club has two Club Harker's Yard Gigs: William Rose and Hunter both purchased with the aid of Sport England Lottery Funding as well as donations from the families of William Rose and Ian Hunter Edmond for whom the Gigs are named. William Rose joined the Club in October 2016 and Hunter in March 2020, on the day that the first national lock down was announced!

The Harker's Yard Gigs are built by the Pioneer Sailing Trust in Brightlingsea by marine apprentices. The first nineteen Gigs (including William

Rose which is number 17) were made of cold moulded mahogany ply. Our new Gig Hunter is the 22nd to be built and the 3rd to be made of 'plastic' fitted out with wood. Despite the different construction they are built to the same dimensions and weight and to be raced as a single class.



*William Rose's Launch  
October 2016*



*Hunter's launch August 2020 We will give  
her a formal launch when we can!*

The Gigs are twenty one feet long and are rowed by four rowers each with a single thirteen foot long wooden 'sweep' oar, and a Cox.

The Club also has a sliding seat single coastal scull Sarka donated by SSC member Hubert Ward, which provides more flexibility for individuals to learn a different technique and to row on their own in suitable conditions.

## Club Rowing

Both existing members and non-members are welcome to come and row. Non-members are asked to apply to join the Club after a few rows if they wish to continue rowing.

All adults are welcome, and there are no upper age limits although sweep (single oar) rowing is not recommended for those under sixteen as it is an asymmetric exercise.

We aim to have a mixture of long rows, short rows, social rows, training rows and for those with a competitive streak, crew training and racing.

We make it easy to try rowing, taking new rowers out as part of a crew with more experienced rowers. If you would like to have a go just email [rowing@stoursailingclub.co.uk](mailto:rowing@stoursailingclub.co.uk) and we will get you rowing as soon as we can.

We ask all Rowers to make a small contribution, currently £3 per person per row which goes towards replacement of equipment (including thole pins) and the maintenance of our beautiful Gigs. A single Gig Oar costs around £450 and they do break!

We aim to have organised 'open' rows twice a week all year round when tide, light and weather allow. Organised 'open' rows are in the diary both at the weekend and during the week and you will be able to book a place on a row once you have been out a few times.

As you gain more experience you will be expected to help with rows including launching, retrieving and laying up the Gigs, taking a turn at coxing and in due course taking out rows.

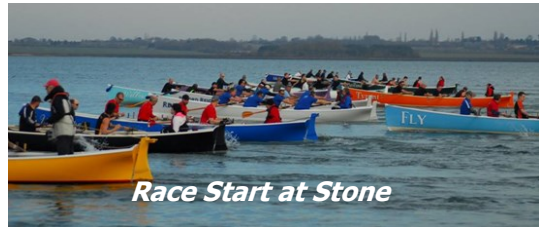
## Club Racing

Not everyone wants to race, but for those who do there are lots of opportunities, and many of our race crews include rowers in their sixties and seventies (although younger rowers are very welcome too!)

We are part of the Harker's Yard Gig Association which facilitates a winter race series each year

with events at different Clubs around the east coast, each with races for men's, women's and mixed crews. The races have become increasingly competitive in recent years with closely matched crews. Rounding a race mark takes on a whole different feel with fifteen or more Gigs that are each twenty five feet wide with oars out, all trying to get round at the same time. The starts are interesting too!

Further afield the Club has regularly taken part



in the Great River Race, which is a twenty two mile race on the Thames from Docklands to Richmond, and in 2018 a men's super vets (over 60's) crew from the Club raced Claydon Skiff Lt. Washington to victory in the super vets and Claydon skiff classes, taking second place in the veteran category along the way.

Even further afield rowers from the Club have taken part in events in Italy, in France, and beyond.

## Rowing in 2020

We started the year with great excitement on the 13 January 2020, hearing that our application for funding for our "Rowing on" project had been approved and we could order our second ...





*William Rose starting the Great River Race*



*Lt. Washington and crew at the finish!*

Harker's Yard Gig. Then Covid intervened and there followed months when we could not row at all with uncertainty about the future, followed by two months rowing, and a further month when we could not row again, then a few weeks rowing in December before we were locked down and off the water again!

However, we got on the water when we could (with covid mitigations in place) and enjoyed some lovely rows. Thanks to Will and the lift-out team we were able to row the Gigs on home water after lift-out for the first time ever, and we made the most of it while we could!

We will be back on the water when we can – and look forward to welcoming new rowers aboard in 2021.



**SSC Rowing Sub-Committee:**

Caroline Cunningham – Rear Commodore (and Rowing Secretary); Russell Harvey – Vice Commodore; Judy Wakeling; Keith Paxman.



## Racing by Will Harvey

This year was a different one than most, With lots of events scheduled and many being cancelled. However, when possible we were able to get some events up and running.

Early in the year the local yacht racing group ,Haven Combined Clubs, were able to put together a streamlined programme of short handed racing within household bubbles. Within the fleet there were multiple SSC members and boats. The Haven Combined Clubs intends to run again this year, they have a racing fleet and a cruising fleet. Please see the Haven Combined Clubs website for information.

During the summer, some dinghy races were put in place to get some sailing happening in 2020. This demonstrated the enthusiasm from our members to get out racing and sailing while remaining in the restrictions. I know that dinghy racing is something that we are looking to build upon in 2021 and beyond. So if you are interested in getting involved with dinghy racing in future. Please get in contact.

Micro racing had a late start with an impromptu windward leeward day in early September.

4 Micro Gems (Geminy Cricket, Pathogen, Anagram of Meg and Well Done!) turned out for this with one safety boat and Pebble on stand by for hot drinks and taking pictures. A Light wind day saw a passage race out to the racing area following the channel with a leeward



turning mark to an upwind finish. This was followed by two short windward leeward races and then a passage race back to the club line finished by Pebble. The Results of this were changeable in each race with Well Done winning the passage races overall and Anagram of Meg winning the windward leeward group of races. Following this we had the Micro Worlds 2020. Please see the article written by Jenny Pavey which outlines this fantastic annual event.

### Plans for 2021

Our main focuses for this year is to get as much up and running as possible, while staying within the rules and restrictions. We are putting together a current calendar which will outline the events in an ideal situation. However, these will be reviewed in accordance with the government guidelines at the time.

**Micro Racing** - It is my plan to keep the format very similar to normal years however, I am planning on having a spring regatta, the idea of this is to have more of the racing that we all thoroughly enjoy in the micro worlds. As well as getting more boats in for the beginning of the season. The details and the dates for this will come out with the calendar.

**Dinghy racing** - Due the interest from this year, we will be looking at hosting regular dinghy racing alongside the Micro's. If you are interested in dinghy racing please let us know so we can keep you informed.

**Try sailing and crewing opportunity** - There are many of our members who are looking to go sailing but are perhaps not using their boats because of needing a crew. We also have many members of the community who would love to try sailing and are not sure where to start or just want to try it. It's our plan to put these groups together to encourage as many people out on the water as possible. So please get in contact with me if you:

- Are a boat owner and are looking for crew to sail with
- Are a member who would like some crewing opportunities
- Know of any members of the local community who would like to try sailing

**RYA Discover Sailing-** The RYA are still plan-

ning on running their RYA discover sailing events across the country and Stour Sailing Club are intending on hosting an event this year as well. This event aims to support members and non-members to engage with sailing and the club activities. This year we will be following the guidance from both the RYA and the government to see if we can get this up and running.

Thank you all for your continued support over last year and we are all looking forward to the 2021 sailing season.

If you have any queries or are interested in crewing opportunities the please contact me on: [Sailingsec@stoursailingclub.co.uk](mailto:Sailingsec@stoursailingclub.co.uk)



## Micro Worlds 2020 by Jenny Pavey

***The sailing programme at Stour Sailing Club Manningtree, had been suspended due to Covid-19 but as some restrictions had been lifted by September and people were keen to race, it was decided that the annual two-day Micro Championships at Stour Sailing Club Manningtree, should go ahead as planned and could be run within Covid guidelines.*** As some owners hadn't launched their boat this year, a smaller-than-usual fleet of five boats took part in what has become known in the UK as the Manningtree Micro Worlds and Gem Nationals.

Micro tonners, the Micro 18 having been designed by Stephen Jones and the Gem by Rob Humphreys, are raced regularly at Manningtree throughout the summer and the club is proud of having what we think is the largest fleet in the country. With a lifting keel and substantial rig, these boats are widely sailed in other parts of Europe and usually raced with a crew of two or three who are often competitive dinghy sailors.

The format for racing on both days was, as usual, a passage race down the river Stour to Stutton followed by two 2 windward/leeward races and a passage race back up the river to Manningtree. Saturday's racing was held in a brisk north-easterly and the sailors felt the effect of having done limited sailing so far this year and not being at peak fitness. Results were largely influenced by boat handling, gear reliability and agility. On the Sunday the wind was from the same direction but considerably

lighter, producing some very close, exciting racing with tactics and speed dictating results.

The Micro Worlds result was taken from the four windward/leeward races with one discard and the winner by one point was Ed Roberts and Evie Clemance, with Ian Pavey and Ray Chittock second in Muscle and two points behind them Urchin, sailed by Will and Edd Harvey in third.

The Gem Nationals result included all the races over the two days with no discard and as it was decided that Ed and Evie's boat isn't strictly a Gem, having had modifications made to the keel and carrying a larger spinnaker than the others, the prize was awarded to Will and Edd Harvey with Ellie Bates and Holly Pavey second and Ian Bloomfield and Stef Goodwin third.

There was also a trophy for the winner of the passage race series, counting three of the four races, which can't be won by the winner of the Micro Worlds or Gem Nationals, and this was won by Ian Pavey and Ray Chittock in Muscle with Ed and Evie second.

Prizes were donated by Stef Goodwin from Dolphin sails. Full results can be found by clicking the link [Micro Worlds Results – 2020](#)

There are more photos and videos from the event on Stour Sailing Club's facebook page and more information about Micro racing at Manningtree on the club's website at <http://www.stoursailingclub.co.uk/micro-racing/>

## Fishing for eels – not as straight forward as you may think! *by Sarah Howlett and Tony Jiggins*

***Tony Jiggins is one of 8 eel fishermen in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. He took over from Long John Cronan in 2005 (due to ill health) although Tony has been eel fishing since 1980 on the River Stour.***



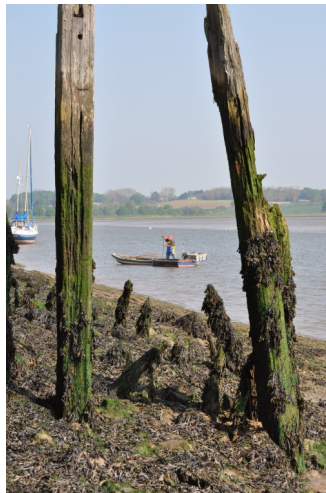
which has a Cod End on each end of the net. Each Cod End requires a licence, currently £6 per Cod End. Once purchased or renewed, Tony gets a tag with a number on it which he attaches to each Cod End.

The Fyke Net only stands about 1ft high. More than one Fyke Net can be laid but they cannot be closer than 30 metres to each other. By Law otter gates have to be put in the nets – not to stop the otters eating the eels BUT to stop the otter going into the net and then not being able to get out again.

Eels are a protected species and it is not possible to go and do what you like - you need a licence which came into existence in 2006 via the Environment Agency. The licence entitles Tony to fish for eels anywhere from the Thames to the Wash!

Catching eels, within the regulations, requires the use of a net (11 to 12 metres long) called Fyke Net

Tony can go anywhere in the river to lay the Fyke Net, except for the main channel, because they are so low boats/craft can go over them. Each end of the net has a marker which will float on top of the water called a Dann Buoy Flag used as a sign to passing boats of the position of the nets.





There are only certain times in the year from 1st April until 10th Dec when fishing can take place.

The Fisheries Enforcement Officer from the Environment Agency will make unannounced checks and Tony's annual licence is issued by them. The costs involved in fishing for eels without a licence can be fine of several thousands of pounds.



The nets are down for 24 hours unless the weather is bad when it can be left for another day.

There is a regulation size – the smallest eels cannot be less than 300mm but they can actually go up to 1.22 metres long! Although Tony will not bring anything in that is less than 400mm long. Tony is required to keep a log of

all of the eels caught by weight recording how many he has kept and how many he has put back into the water.

This log has to be sent into the Environment Agency at the end of each fishing year.

Once caught the eels are gutted and then frozen until Christmas when they are smoked in time for the festive season, plus the odd jellied eel! On an average there can be around 20kl caught annually.

Tony says that he has witnessed a decline in eel stocks over the past 20 years. However, just in this last 2 or 3 years there has been a large increase in small eels from 150mm to 200mm in length which is a good sign that numbers are on the increase.

Licences cannot be obtained any longer but they can be passed on to another person so that the licence can be retained. If that doesn't happen – ie if the licence holder dies/becomes ill and has not made preparations for a hand-over then that licence is gone forever.

Tony has already identified a suitable candidate for handing over his licence to in preparation for when he does hang up his nets.

Fishing for eels has always just been a hobby for Tony and something which he has thoroughly enjoyed over many years. Tony Baird, Fisheries Enforcement Officer for this area. from the Environment Agency said that eel fishing is a dying trade/hobby and that Tony is always spot on with his catch reports.

Tony wants to say a big thanks to his fishing pals; - Dennis Compton, Ted Brightley, Dave Perrott and the late Dusty Miller – happy days!

**Did you know ?**

Largest eel (Silver) caught – 1986 – 3.35 kilos – returned to the water at Wrabness

Largest eel caught – 2016 – Manningtree – 2.65 kilos and just under one metre long

Largest eel caught – 2015 – UK – 5.08 kilos

All Silver eels have to be returned to the water

Eels can live to up to 80 and 100 years!



## From the Compound *by Will Langton*

***Like every other aspect of our lives in 2020 the compound activities were unable to escape disruption caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.***

Lockdown delayed lift in for laid up cruisers in the West compound from 7th April until 4th June. Lift out at the end of the season was also disrupted and only achieved at the third attempt on 14th -16th Dec. The only saving grace being the “weather gods” who were very kind to us for the time of year.

With the arrival of a second Harkers Yard Gig and greater demand for all year round rowing it was decided to provide, within the winter layup plan, storage space for them in front of the flood gate for access to the slipway. Although cancelled this winter, there is usually a Harkers Yard winter series when the gigs would be

trailed to other locations. By storing easily moved boats on wheeled trailers between them and the road gate they can escape for away events. Last winter William Rose relocated to Brightlingsea to allow winter rowing to continue. Standing water in front of the flood gate and tender racks has been a long term problem



with much discussion about how to solve it. Mark Bentall, a member who has helped the club out with a previous ground work project, came to the rescue with a solution which he was confident would work. With the help of club

members a sump with submerged pump was installed and has been a huge success. Puddles inside the road gate are another problem.

As usual I have a few requests:

- Ensure that all items stored in the compound are marked with your membership number.

- Keep inflatable dinghies stored in racks fully pumped up as, when partially inflated, they tend to ‘flop’ in to their neighbours’ space.

- Be aware of compound security, do not leave anything out that could attract unwanted visitors, and keep the gates closed and locked when appropriate.

- Most importantly, use your boats and enjoy the beautiful River Stour.

Have a great season on the water in 2021.

## Vice Commodore's and Mooring Updates by Russell Harvey



*I hope this communication finds you well. It seems strange writing about moorings and boat upkeep during a lockdown but unfortunately Mother Nature does not stop doing her worst to our boats and moorings whilst we are in lockdown, and she doesn't stop just because we have to.*

We, as a Club, have been asked by Harwich Harbour Authority for whom the Club regulates the moorings, as to what we can do to improve the moorings and it is obvious that the first thing that comes to the mind is regularly inspect the moorings, and clearly mark the buoys with the appropriate number.

I would ask that all moorings licence holders to ensure that they inspect their moorings and that their

buoy is clearly marked as soon as possible after the lockdown ends. Unfortunately, Tony and Ted who regularly helped out with laying moorings and looking after them for some members, retired from their role at the end of last season. Their long-standing help with this has left a large gap that needs to be filled, however it is each individual member's responsibility to maintain their mooring and this should not be neglected. It would be a shame if the Club lost control of these moorings because a few members did not obey the rules. That said, when you do inspect your mooring please carry this out safely and always ensure that you have somebody ashore to keep an eye out for you in case of trouble.

At the time of writing, no-

body has come forward to replace Tony and Ted; If you are struggling to inspect or re-lay your mooring, please let me know so that we, as a Club are aware of the situation rather than keeping quiet and the possibility of having a boat going adrift. If anybody feels they can assist with laying moorings, please let me know.

Hoping to see you out on the water sometime in 2021 with all moorings buoys clearly marked and all mooring tackle in good condition.

## Moorings and Compounds



***We can offer boat owners 130 swinging moorings in one of the most sheltered areas of the estuary, with an easy (-ish) access to the boat and for a very low budget.***

Owing to our position at the western end of the estuary, we are not affected by the strongest chops of Westerly gales. Harwich Harbour Authorities delegate the mooring management to the Club and a Mooring Master is permanently appointed. The Stour dries up at low tide, and so mooring, which is limited to vessels under 9m (29ft) with under 1.5m (4.5 feet) draughts, will only be suitable for low-draught crafts, motor boats, bilge keel or lifting keel boats. The channel is not deeper than one foot of water at low tide, but a good 2 to 3 m at high tide, offering deep water during three hours on a tide, while low-draught boats will have free way from and to their mooring about double that time. Moorings are easily accessible by tenders. There are two slipways for easy launching in all seasons. Moorings are available so please feel free to enquire. Boats can be lifted out during the winter months, but with limitations in size and numbers. There are also 3 visitors

moorings for your friends' occasional meeting.

Along side the quay are a couple of docking berths with access to electricity (240V) and fresh water. Those are soon to be completed by a pontoon which will increase the facility and make them more convenient. Berths can be used for a short period of time to board crews and friends and victualing. Longer stays can occasionally be arranged with the Compound Manager for maintenance purposes.

Compound facilities offer storage for tenders, dinghies as well as canoes (summer only for those two last categories), but are much in demand so please ask us before confirming your plans. There is also a shed to store oars for the dinghies.

The compound area is fenced and the gate is permanently locked. It is also fitted with CCTV cameras for increased security and protected by a food gate.

Contact for all mooring enquiries and quay-side berthing:

07840 611490 or 07874 973173

[mooring@stoursailingclub.co.uk](mailto:mooring@stoursailingclub.co.uk)



# Events Report *by Sarah Howlett*

***This has been a year of no events for the Club which started off with the planned Fitting Out Dinner and Dance, scheduled for April 2020, being rescheduled for February 2021 – this was eventually cancelled and we got all of our deposit money back from the venue.***

The AGM 2020 was put on hold but that too was eventually cancelled – must be the first time ever this has happened for the Club?

By mid March the Club-house was in total lockdown – not an easy decision as the Committee were very much aware of the importance of the clubhouse for so many of the members from a social interaction perspective.

Since then we have kept a very close eye of Covid development and regulation changes and worked

with them to ensure not only that we complied with them but that we maintained a safe environment for our members.

The layout in the bar and parlour has changed a number of times to accommodate the changes in an effort to try to keep open when restrictions allowed.

At the time of writing this we are not out of the woods yet but there is a flicker of sunshine on the horizon and I am sure you will know that your Committee and all other volunteers at the Club remain dedicated and determined to put together a number of activities both on and off the water for everyone to enjoy as soon as we are able to.

This is now the perfect time for an enthusiastic and energetic person to join the Committee as Social Secretary! The page is

blank, the floor is yours, lets get out there!

Please get in touch with me – Sarah Howlett on 07701080738 or email [commodore@stoursailingclub.co.uk](mailto:commodore@stoursailingclub.co.uk) to chat over the Social Secretary role and any ideas you have for getting everyone back in the room!

## Obituaries

*We regret the passing away of fellow members of the club:*

**Thelma Miller**

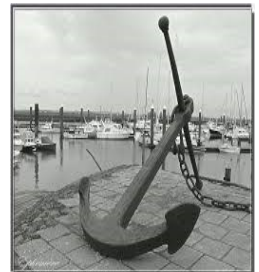
**Ray Wood**

**Graham Pontet**

**Jim Pittock**

**Ivan Carey**

**John Sage**



THE EDITORS PAGE

Dear Readers,

A huge thank you to those who have contributed to this edition of Bowsprit:

- Beverley Sage
- Caroline and Phil Cunningham
- Gerry Brown
- Jenny Pavey
- Jerry Garner
- Russel Harvey
- Sarah Howlett
- Sid Smith
- Will Harvey
- Will Langton



Fair winds to all this spring!

*Alexis Girard*

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# AWAY WITH THE BIRDS 2020

*by Sid Smith*

We shall all drift away on the evening ebb,  
All us old ones so it's said,  
Beneath the planets and steady stars,  
As the haunted moon hangs bright and far.  
Our wakes will cover as the gravel sings  
As the night birds take to muffled wing.

Our sails fill with dreams and light the breeze,  
As we close anchored bays at our lees,  
Again to take the waiting creeks  
Among the marshlands deeper fleets,  
To hear the curlew's cadence fall,  
Or will great peace lie overall?

Land at hand and sound of sea,  
Here our dreams will ever be.  
Gun flash of dunlin by sky wrack,  
Oystercatcher pibroch to cloud stack,  
Black seal in grey chop following,  
Redshank plaintively sorrowing.

A soldiery of turnstone parades our homeport decks,  
From the Hook across the moorings to the stranded capsized wreck,  
An elegance of avocet seeking,  
Ebb tide retreating, depleting.  
Distant sail glimmer discerned,  
Tide turn to seaward asserts our return!

