

Winter 2008/09

The Magazine of New Parks Cruising Association

Broad Reach





NPCA COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Commodore	John Green
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Committee	Bill Hudson Peter Thorne Editor – Broad Reach John Hackett

NEW PARKS CRUISING ASSOCIATION FULL PROPOSED PROGRAMME 2009 – All Events	
January 20th	Talk Cruising in the Baltic by Helen and Richard Blackmore*
February 17th	Talk at Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe *
March 1st, Sunday	Commodores Lunch: Organiser Commodore John Green
March 17th	Talk at Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe*
April 4th to 9th	Practical course Organiser Eric McDowall**
April 9th to 14th	Practical course Organiser Eric McDowall**
April 14th to 19th	Practical course Organiser Eric McDowall**
April 21st	Social Evening and Cheese buffet at Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe *
May 15th to 17th	Spring Rally: Organiser Richard Malthouse
May 26th to 31st	Practical course Eric McDowall**
June 16th	Evening Canal Boat Trip: Organiser Mick McQuade
July 14th	Evening BBQ: Organiser Peter Thorne
August 18	Bowls Evening: Organiser not yet arranged
September 15th	Talk at Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe*
October 20th	Talk at Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe*
October 23rd to 25th	Autumn Rally: Organiser Eric McDowall
November 6th to 8th	Broads Rally: Organiser Mick McQuade
November 17th	Talk & AGM at Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe*
December 4th to 6th	Christmas Rally: Organiser Mike Flint
December 15th	Social Evening at Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe*

* CLUB NIGHTS at The Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe, starts *sharp* at 7.30pm

** Details about Courses and booking forms are available From the NPCA website:

<http://www.sailnpca.org/>



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Notes from the Editor

It was my pleasure to accept the challenge of acting as editor and publisher for Broad Reach. It has been sometime since the last publication. It is never easy to encourage contributions but as time has gone on and I have asked for articles club members have come forward with some great articles which I hope you enjoy.

This year as with past years the club calendar has been very full. The Broads Rally in particular was a superb event attracting more members than in recent times thanks to Mick's excellent marketing and organisation.

The last 2 years Christmas Rallies were visited by exceptionally high winds so this year Mike Flint organised the dinner on the mainland making access much easier – you will be reading this after the event so I will include an article in the next edition.

I welcome any comments on this edition so please let me have them to the NPCA email address: sailnpca@yahoo.co.uk

Peter Thorne
Editor

Jottings from the Commode

Well it has been another busy and successful year for the club. Our well attended monthly meetings at the Royal Oak gave some interesting, educating and sometimes riveting evenings from the various guests. From the wonderful story given by Sally Kettle and her adventures rowing across the Atlantic once accompanied by her mother to our own Mike Gillingham with his wealth of information about the Solent and surrounding areas to David Moody with his history of Moody yachts and the development of their marina on the Hamble. None of this would have been possible without Mike Flint contacting arranging and organising all the speakers.

The commodores lunch held again at the Royal Oak was a success with about 30 members attending but for the next one we need all who can to make the effort and come and support your own association.

So to the rallies....We all battled in gale force winds of force 10 to make the Folly Inn...it was a good job that apart from Richard Malthouse and crew that we went via the Isle of Wight ferry. There were a couple of injuries on Richards's boat just bad luck rather than the bad weather. Anyway the usual dancing on the table took place. One bloke watching me said: 'Nice to see that the old 'uns can still do it'.....cheeky bugger! I was fine once someone had helped me up onto the table. This year the rally is on the mainland so that we can all drive there should the weather be against us again. Mike and Ann Hartshorn organised the Spring rally. About 6 boats took part in a pursuit race and we had a great meal in the wonderful surroundings of the Max Aitken museum in Cowes. Taking part in any racing is never an obligation and it was great to see a couple of boats who came along in support and for the meal and general camaraderie of these truly enjoyable events.

The Autumn rally was organised by Eric McDowall and a brisk days racing and sailing culminated in a lovely meal at the Royal Southampton Yacht club's premises on the Beaulieu river. Richard Malthouse won the trophy but special mention must be made of the crew of Solaris. Taught and trained at New Parks and finished second on their first charter on a rally.

Mick McQuade who has taken over from me as treasurer organised the Broads Rally. This gives a wonderful opportunity for many of the members who do not own boats to charter and have a chance to sail and race in 'sheltered?' waters and enjoy the togetherness of being on water whether sailing or in this case motoring also. Strong winds, great racing, folk songs, a talk by the Cox of the Yarmouth lifeboat gave a memorable weekend for all those who took part.

Several members are now sailing worldwide. Paul and Liz have come through the Panama Canal and have crossed the Atlantic on their final leg and Mike and Anne have set off on their long voyage. Helen and Richard have returned from the Baltic and will be giving a talk on their exploits at one of the forthcoming club nights.

And so the club continues to be a success BUT to the future.....The committees are all getting older and many have been organising matters for many years. Where would be without our secretary Yvonne Margerison? We need younger blood to come and help run the club and we need to attract younger members into the club. Our club needs to provide opportunity for people who love sailing to actually do so. Unfortunately due to restraints the Association can no longer give the depth of training it once did but still offers some degree of this including on water qualifications.

To end on a bright note...New Parks Cruising Association continues to be a success. I am proud to be commodore of a club that has and continues to give pleasure to its members both on and off the water.

Happy sailing to everyone.

John Green
Commodore

STOP PRESS!

New Parks Cruising Association

Advance Notice

NPCA Spring Rally 2009
(including the “Commodore’s Cup”
event)

16 – 17 May 2009

Outline Programme:

Saturday 16 May

**1030 First rally start – Coronation
buoy**

**1900 for 1930 Dinner in the River
Room,**

**Royal Lymington Yacht Club
Award presentation**

Sunday 17 May

1000 Coffee & croissants

**Further information will be available
shortly on
the NPCA website – www.sailnpca.org**

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A Country of Islands - John Hackett

Round the Island 2008 - Ian Brett

The West of Scotland – August 2008 - Peter Thorne

First Voyage – Contributed by Mark Russell

My Confession - Mike Flint

Christmas Rally Dinner 13 Dec. 2008 Limericks

A Chance Encounter - David & Jill Richardson

It was a pleasant sunny day in early October and Jill and I were almost at the end of a holiday / delivery trip with a difference. This time instead of being miles offshore, we were on the Grand Union Canal six days out from Snarestone. This is a distance of 60 miles, which we would normally have expected to cover in some 12 hrs in a sailing boat at sea. It is however a different matter in a 55ft Narrow Boat, meandering through the inland waterways at a very sedate and agreeable pace of 10 miles/day. We had just passed through the one mile long Braunston tunnel. This is, to say the least, an interesting exercise, especially in complete darkness with only the glow from the red and green navigation lights reflecting off the tunnel wall to guide us; our main headlight bulb having blown within five minutes of entering the black hole. Not only is the tunnel dark but it also has two bends and you can't see the end until you are at least half way through. We stopped for a welcome beer to calm our shattered nerves after our "perilous passage" and had just resumed our journey when a vaguely familiar figure came strolling down the towpath. On getting closer I finally recognised it with complete surprise as our worthy chairman Mike Flint. "What are you doing here? Says I " to which he replied "I live here what are you doing?" Mike joined us for another beer and a sandwich and explained that he was out for his daily constitutional, living only a short distance from the canal. He kindly invited us to join him and Yvonne at home for dinner that night, but I explained that we had to push on in order to get to Norton Junction before dark and it might be a good idea if they met us for dinner later at the New Inn at Buckby Wharf. Over dinner we were discussing the plans for the next day and suggested to Mike & Yvonne that they might like to join us. An extra pair of hands is always a welcome addition to a rookie crew and Jill was delighted when Mike accepted our offer. Yvonne unfortunately had a dental appointment and would not be able to meet up with us until later.

The next morning turned out to be another beautiful autumn day and Mike joined us bright and early as we struck off on the final leg of our journey up the Watford Flight and through the Crick Tunnel.

The Watford Flight consists of a group of seven locks, which includes four staircase locks and a holding pool where boats can pass. We had heard a lot of stories about the time it can take to get through the flight, but with the help of a friendly lock keeper and the support of an extra crewmember we breezed through them in no time. It did help that we were the first boat through that day and therefore no waiting was involved.



The Crick tunnel also turned out to be uneventful. Although it is almost a mile long, it is straight and you can at least see the light at the end of it. Even the dreaded waterfall at the northern end was being kind to us that day and we only got a short shower as we passed through. We emerged from the tunnel into bright sunshine and as we turned into Crick Marina there was Yvonne waiting to take our lines. We certainly appreciated Mikes help that day, without him it would have been a much longer and more tiring experience.



If you have never tried canal boating before, give it a go. Once you get used to the difference in the pace of life it really is a very relaxing form of transport. One we would both certainly recommend.

David & Jill Richardson

The Epic Adventure of Sea Fever - Mick McQuade

Monday 6 October 2008, up early out of bed, I had a sudden thought, 'Did I pack my razor?' Answer No, it was still in the bathroom. This does not bode well, what else have I missed. I must learn never to pack my bag the day after my son gets married, (one down two to go) I was finding it difficult to think straight having imbibed a little too much the night before.

Mick Day had promised to pick me up at about 10.00 for a leisurely drive to Luton to catch our 3 o'clock flight to Athens. 9.55 I remembered that I had not packed my shorts, panic have they been washed since my last trip with Alan Matts to sail on his boat Ladies First. Fortunately I found them miraculously washed and put neatly away with my sailing kit. I don't remember doing that, must have been the washing fairy!

Mick arrives bang on time with Alan in the back seat and Tony Ball riding shotgun and away we go. We should have been five but Roger was ill and had to cry off at the last minute. A nice easy drive to Luton, no hold ups, no road works and with few people in the car park saw us in the airport in plenty of time. Although we knew the answer before we asked the question, Sleazy Jet refused to give us a refund for the unused ticket! "How about a credit note then", asked Mick, "A transfer to a flight in November?" got a positive response, positively "No!". So we retired to the bar.

I thought that I would pass some time browsing the books at W H Smith and was delighted to find Ken Follett's World Without End, the sequel to his magnificent book Pillars of Earth. Having long pockets and short arms, imagine how delighted I was to see that instead of being priced at £8.99 it was on offer at £2.99 if I bought The Times. Armed therefore with the book under my arm I approach the counter and ask for The Times. It was duly produced and rung up in the till, I hand over my £20 note and get just £10.21 change.

I know it has been a long time since I went to school, but even my maths rang warning bells. I challenge the child (she looked about 10 years old and needed a box to stand on to reach the till), "Sorry my dear" says I, "You appear to have charged me full price for the book whereas it is on special offer". "No, that's right, the computer

in the till knows the correct price of every book on our shelves!" was the response.

Tolerance is not my middle name but she was only a little thing so I asked her if she could read the bloody big sign over the point of sale display cabinet that said £2.99.

"No, that's wrong" said she.

"It's on your floor offering a special price on condition that I buy The Times, well I have bought The Times and I would like the special offer!"

"I'll fetch the manager",

"Good I'll wait".

And wait I did. Eventually the bright young thing's twin sister arrives, equally vertically challenged and equally still at junior school. 10 minutes of ringing up my purchase in the till still had not resolved the problem so I suggested that she give me another £6.00 change and I would be on my way leaving her to wrestle with the conundrum in her own time. You would have thought that it was her own money but eventually £6.00 was mine. "Can I have a bag for the book and paper?" I asked.

"Bags are a penny each" blurted the baby manager.

At this point my tolerance ran out.....

The good news was that while I was teaching maths to junior school children the boys had got the beer in and we enjoyed a very pleasant liquid lunch, so much so that we missed the first call for our plane. The flight was uneventful and we arrived 3½ hours later in flight time, but 5½ hours later in watch time, in Athens. Our bags were on the conveyor as we approached the carousel and we were through border control in double quick time. Our luck continued as the bus to Piraeus was about to leave and at €3.20 per person offered excellent value for the 45 km trip.

Sadly the EasyJet flight gets in an hour too late for us to catch the last ferry to Poros so we book into the Best Western Hotel for the night. After an expensive meal and a couple of beers we retire to bed.

Next morning we make a bee line straight to the Hellenic Seaways office to ask if we can have a refund for Roger's ticket. "No refund, but we can make it an open ticket at no extra cost and you will be able to use it another time". How good is that? Why can't EasyJet and Ryanair adopt this focus on customer service?

The ferry has cut back on speed presumably to conserve fuel but 1 and ¼ hours later we arrive in Poros, 27°C, sunny and not a cloud in sight. There were a couple of jobs that needed doing on *Sea Fever* before we set sail so we enjoyed a quiet lunch before facing the challenge of the jobs and the victualling. Our lunch was anything but quiet, it was interrupted by Tom, an American tourist who collapsed, was helped up and collapsed again. The Greek waiters hauled him to his feet and sat him upright in a chair, hasn't anybody told them about ABC? We intervened and gently laid Tom back down again and rolled him into the recovery position and summoned help. Tom was breathing but spaced out. After about 5 minutes he rejoined the living world and gave us his name and that of his wife who we quickly found.

Fortunately Tom recovered well and was able to sit up, his wife arrived and promptly held his wrist like she had seen nurses do on TV. What exactly she was doing was not known but it kept her busy and not panicking. Tom regained his senses and realised that he had embarrassed himself; he never did get to the toilet and now needed to change. With the help of his wife he scurried off despite our imploring him to wait and get checked out by the medics who were on their way. We can only hope that he recovered and was able to continue to enjoy his holiday. Thank goodness we all hold RYA First Aid Certificates.

The rest of the day was largely uneventful except that we all failed our shore side navigation and got lost in the tangle of houses on the hillside after enjoying a very good meal at Dimitri's restaurant. Dimitri is the local butcher who also owns a restaurant next door.

Wednesday 8th October we set sail for Hydra stopping for lunch and dropping the hook in a beautiful bay, Nsis Gali. The water is pure turquoise and, according to the skipper, warm....ish! Skipper Mick Day was first over the side and claimed that the water was "just right". Mick is prone to a little exaggeration but when Tony plunged into the oggin I too took the plunge. It took my breath away, my bits shrunk and my voice went three octaves higher. Needless to say we didn't stay long in the water but what swimming we did certainly perked up the appetite.

The port of Hydra on the island of Hyra is one of the most charming little ports that I have ever sailed into, it is quite beautiful and has a

charm all of its own. If you happen to be 37°29'.1N and 023°28'.0E then its well worth spending time here. As its so beautiful it is also popular and the quayside quickly fills with boats stern to. Later arrivals form a second row dropping anchor over the chains of the first row and mooring stern between two bows. When row two is full row three is started. Getting ashore can be quite interesting.

We had just dropped the hook and moored when a two handed 32 foot charter boat came in. The skipper was having a hard time mooring and the one lady crew had no idea when to drop the hook. They came alongside *Sea Fever* and asked for help. We were only too pleased to oblige and as I was nearest I stepped aboard. André introduced himself as the skipper and Lurna his beautiful young 'mate'. They were a delightful couple; André was a cruise ship doctor while Lurna was a croupier on the same ship. André explained that he had crewed many times for other skippers but this was his first time chartering on his own and Lurna was inexperienced (at sailing). He commented that he was finding it more difficult than he had imagined, he did not have anyone to ask and had to make all the decisions himself.

Ashore in Hydra the only motorised vehicle is the dustcart, all other transport is by donkey. We found an Englishwoman who has owned a shop in Hydra for over 30 years and she kindly pointed us to a quayside restaurant that sold fresh homemade Greek food. It was delicious and very reasonably priced.

Thursday 9th October. Hydra – Leonidhion. We had been to Leonidhion before and knew that it was an ancient fishing port with literally one hotel, one church, two tavernas and a police station. Margareta met us at the end of the quay and invited us to have a beer in her taverna. We asked about the health of her elderly mother and father who we had met on a previous visit and were greeted like long lost friends. Mum and Dad were in the best of health and our asking about them produced a large carrier bag containing onions, tomatoes and cucumber sufficient to keep us in Greek salad for three days. We later found out that Mikael, father, and his father had helped a RAF pilot who had been shot down during the last war, they hid him from the Germans and help repatriate him. The pilot repaid the kindness by visiting the taverna many years with his own family.

During Wednesday and Thursday the winds had been freshening to reach speeds of up to 30 knots. We were stern to with a long anchor chain out and very well moored. It still did not stop the fetch on the water and we had quite a bouncy night. Washing machines came to mind. The uncomfortable swell was too much for the three German boats moored next to us, they decided to put to sea about 0100 making as much noise as was possible without any regard for our beauty sleep.

Friday 10th October. We had hoped to make Navplion that day but beating into the strong winds of 30 knots all day proved to be a little exhausting so we put into Astrous. Again, another quaint Greek port. Larger than Leonidhion but more expensive, €7.50 for a litre of Amstel beer as against €4.00 in Margareta's taverna. We did however find the oldest taverna in the village and the present owner, Vangalis, 3rd generation descendant from the founder, made his own wine which he sold cheaply with his food. We had a look in his cellar where he was in the process of making another 2,000 bottles of wine and building model aircraft with 12 foot wingspans that flew by radio control. Not only was Vangalis a very amiable fellow but he also served excellent food and wine. Being an amateur sailor himself he posts the current weather forecast on his notice board and provided a printed copy for all visiting yachtsmen. So if you are anywhere near 37°24'.76N and 022°46'.01E then drop in and find 'Batis' Restaurant where you are sure to receive a very warm welcome.

If you do visit Astrous, watch out for the little old man who miraculously appears immediately you have filled your water tanks and demands €4.00. We are not sure whether he is the authorised watchman or just a smart old man who recognised a quick scam of picking up €4 a time from all unsuspecting visiting yachts.

Saturday 11 October. Astrous – Navplion

On the way we dropped the hook in another beautiful bay, Ormos Karathonas. Not a lot of shelter from the wind but the hook held well, allowing us ample time for lunch and another swim, the water was definitely no warmer!

Navplion was the old capital of Greece. It is a charming old town with a promenade along the waterfront. It has a hilltop fort that is reached by 1,000 steps that Tony climbed before breakfast the next

morning. Navplion's streets and alleyways contain a wealth of treasures not least of all, the junk shop bar. An eccentric bar owner couples his love of junk with his electronic skills and sense of humour to produce a bar where things that ordinarily are not automated suddenly are. A table has a motor fitted so that it moves on its own, the overhead track carries saucepans and jelly moulds around the ceiling and the telephone squawks musically.

The downside to Navplion is that its waterfront is not well protected. There is a lagoon across which the wind blows and with the strong wind that we were enjoying there was a continual fetch that bounced the boat all night and none of us slept well.

Sunday 12 October Navplion – Porto Kheli

Another great sailing day 26 - 30 knots winds veering and backing, gunnels under water. We arrived in Porto Kheli to find little room on the quay. We had a choice of mooring down wind of a Gin Palace and risk breathing her fumes all night or immediately upwind of the said Gin Palace and squeeze into the limited gap. We chose the gap. We dropped the anchor way off the quay and laid plenty of chain but in the strong winds we had great difficulty in keeping the bows straight. Our concern grew as we took in over 10 meters of chain before it held, the Pilot said that the holding was firm! Anyway with some juggling of rope work we managed to secure ourselves safely to the quay.

An hour later the Gin Palace decided to put to sea and we watched in horror as it picked up our anchor and started to pull it away. We had fitted a snubbing line and there was no way to get it off, the chain was taut as were the mooring lines at the stern. Quick thinking Skipper Mick Day grabbed his pocket knife and slashed the snubbing line, we lost the hook but was able to let go 20 meters of chain before the Gin Palace realised what was happening. Another example why yachtsmen should carry multi-tool knives on their person at all times.

After the drama was over we headed ashore to find a beer. The bar saw us coming and charged us €8.70 a litre, remember Margareta only charged €4 for the same quantity. We decided that we definitely were not eating there! The restaurant that we found was excellent, beer at €3.80 per litre and the food plentiful, good and very, very cheap. The wine however was not compatible with our taste so we gave it away to a Greek on the next table. After a

couple of 'Yamas's' he gave it back, obviously he too did not like it, however an unsuspecting English couple from Essex polished it off. What more can be said of Essex?

Monday 13th October Porto Kheli – Poros

The last leg of our trip. The winds had not died down and we had the full 30 knots on the bow. Even though we spent the day tacking back and forth and going nowhere, it was probably the best day sailing. Teamwork was natural, going about slick and sail trimming instinctive. Skipper Mick Day lost the plot at one point, he wondered why he was not taking in the jib sheet even though he was winching furiously. It took the new boy Tony to point out that its easier if you first wind the jib sheet around the winch before turning the handle! Out of the mouths of babes!

While our trip was not really epic in any way, it was most enjoyable. The four of us on board gelled and thoroughly enjoyed each others company. We covered 155 miles, not too far but then we never put to sea before 9.00 am and were always moored up by 17.00. *Sea Fever* handled the weather very well and we had great sailing every day. We met crews of other boats that stayed in port each day because there was 'too much' wind, we chose to go and enjoy it and had a fabulous time. There was never a dull moment, we found plenty to laugh at, Mick Day has a wealth of jokes on his mobile phone, Alan Matts has a saying for each occasion and Tony Ball was working out what to say to his boss for coming back from holiday one day late!

For me, the pleasure was all mine, I was privileged to share this company of men, sail a comfortable boat and visit beautiful places, what more could I ask?

Poros 37°29'.61N 023°27'.74E

Hydra 37°29'.1N 023°28'.0E

Leonidhion 37°08'.7N 023°53'.6E

Astrous 37°24'.76N 022°46'.01E

Navplion 37°33'.76N 022°47'.34E

Porto Kheli 37°19'.07N 023°08'.56E

Datum WGS84

Mick McQuade 17 October 2008

Working in the Netherlands. - Eric McDowall

Assisting Dutch sailors to prepare for RYA Yachtmaster exams is hard work and a pleasant challenge. Generally their English is very good though when it comes to our nautical language, things get a bit difficult sometimes. They have a more than adequate sailing vocabulary of their own and it always struck me that there seemed little point in having to pass examinations in English. I remain to be convinced that RYA have got this right (at the moment) as there must remain a risk that non-English speaking countries will not be so keen to take on the RYA scheme.

Lelystad is at about the same Latitude as Leicester and at the South-east corner of the IJsselmeer (pronounced *Ice-el-meer*) which is one of two large areas of fresh water which are impounded with what we would call “dams” (Dutch = dijk, *dyke*). Sluices control water



levels and there are locks for the passage of vessels. The Afsluitdijk keeps the tide out of the IJsselmeer and there are tidal locks at each end of the dijk, some 13.5nM apart. The IJsselmeer is maintained (I believe) at about mean sea level, which means that sometimes you lock “up” out of the IJsselmeer and sometimes you lock “down”.

Lelystad is very close to the southern end of the Houtribdijk that separates the Markermeer from the IJsselmeer. Again there are locks for vessels to be able to travel from one level to the other. The Markermeer is maintained at a level higher than the IJsselmeer. At the northern end of the Houtribdijk, the dijk changes its name to the Markerwaarddijk and the N302 dual carriageway passes underneath a pair of locks. There are considerable amounts of commercial haulage traffic passing through the locks and crossing the IJsselmeer. Some local environmental groups are campaigning

for the restoration of tidal flow in the IJsselmeer. They claim that the now virtual loss of all of the eels that populated the shallow (and drying) area (pre 1932) have resulted in total loss of fishing and a massive nuisance of flies, that the eels helped to keep down as they ate the larvae.

The IJsselmeer is mostly between 3m and 7m deep (from memory) and it is possible to find parts that are not deep enough for a yacht! A lot of Lelystad is on reclaimed land, reclaimed that is, from what would have been shallow drying areas of the sea. Interestingly, in the reclaimed farmland east of Lelystad you sometimes see a white and blue striped post with a profile of a ship at the top, painted red. These posts mark old, charted wrecks. Slightly surreal when driving through the countryside!

When I go to Lelystad to instruct at the RYA school there, the train from Schiphol Airport (Amsterdam) takes about an hour. The bit of the town I have seen is modern and lacks character. This is not true of many of the older harbours that are dotted around the IJsselmeer.

Lelystad Marina is mostly “box” moorings. The box is made up of two piles that you have to steer between, and a pontoon that you either tie your bow or stern to. For most modern yachts, stern first between the piles is better so you can step off of the sugar scoop onto the pontoon. As you enter the box, you need your bowman to get your head ropes over the piles on both sides of the box (if he can) so you end up secured through both bow fairleads and off of both of your stern quarters. This is obviously easier if you have sufficient crew to have two people at the bow. Sometimes the space between the piles is so tight that there is no room for fenders as well as the yacht!

It is 29nM from Lelystad Marina to the lock at Den Oever (Oo-ver) to get out into the tidal Waddenzee. This is some disadvantage to an instructor on a five-day Day Skipper practical (tidal) course! On the IJsselmeer, local rules replace IRPCS and all leisure craft have to give way to commercial vessels. This changes as soon as you get below Den Oever lock but it is difficult for Dutch sailors who are

used to always giving way to powered commercial craft inland, to stand-on when they should.

Another difficulty for Dutch sailors working in English and the IRPCS, is that the Dutch translation of the steering rules for vessels under sail is worded differently to ours. This is because Dutch sailors describe which tack they are on by the position of the mainsail boom and not which side the wind is coming from. So if you are Dutch, you are the stand on vessel when your boom is on the port side because you are then on a “port tack”. Confusing or what!

The Waddenzee is a bit like Chichester Harbour or areas I am getting to know on our East Coast. Great drying areas of green (on the chart) are criss-crossed by shallow pathways through the mud marked with buoys or posts. The tide runs across the lot and because the area is large you can get a bit of a nasty sea state if the wind is up. The Islands of Texel, Vlieland, Terschelling and Ameland do give the Waddenzee some shelter from total exposure to the North Sea. Fishing boats drag their nets across the shallow banks when there is sufficient tide.

Tide, the RYA scheme and Reeds Almanac combined, create some bitter thoughts for Dutch sailors. For a start the Dutch Almanac is perfectly adequate. Their tide tables and flow charts work very well. RYA material is largely based on Reeds format and therefore a student is expected to be able to look up tides in Reeds. The problem for them (in Reeds) is that so many places on the Netherlands coast are described as secondary ports and the given standard port is Helgoland, which is not in the Netherlands! The school wanted me to ensure that their students can work with Reeds (and be able to demonstrate this to an examiner) but I suspect that the Dutch data in their publications yields more accurate results than Reeds might.

The weather forecast is amusing (to me). The Royal Netherlands Coast Guard issues the forecast on a working VHF channel (perhaps without an announcement on 16) on time, but from a machine. The machine “speaks” Dutch and English. It does the

whole forecast for the various inshore areas, first in Dutch and then repeats the whole thing in English. I guess that an operator “programmes” the machine by punching buttons that represent all the words you could want in a forecast. The result is that the words are all separated by short pauses and the whole thing sounds a bit disjointed.

For instance you might get something like: “Ijsselmeer and adjacent lakes” “Northwest” “Six” “or” “Seven” “showers” “later” “visibilty” “poor” with about a one-second gap between each word or phrase.

The Marinas use a card system for electricity and water supply. You buy a card and you can “top-up” the card at slot machines or the harbour master’s office with cash. The downside of this system appears to me, to be that that each marina has it’s own card (for which you pay a substantial number of Euros to purchase in the first place) and the cards will not work at a different marina. This does make it difficult for visitors to get plugged in or obtain drinking water.

Lock keepers vary, I guess, as much as they might in the UK, though more of them appear to ignore VHF calls than answer them. Getting a student to speak to the lock keeper in his own language (you might hope) was going to get you reliable information about whether you should enter or where in the huge space within he wants you to go. But no, you are lucky if he responds at all. If he does, he gives clear instructions. So often he does not answer and just changes the “traffic lights”. This would be OK (at night and in the dark) if you knew that he had seen you coming and was going to prepare the lock for you. Coming at Den Oever lock from seaward, he has to close off the dual carriageway (which is on top of the dijk) with drop down barriers before swinging off two huge parallel bridges. He’ll not come out of his cabin (that overlooks the lock), to take a line from you and you have to secure yourself. This is not so easy on a modern yacht, due to the boat shape. The bollards are fixed and the ones at the right height are in recesses in the wall. You need a boat hook handy to help drop the bight of the warp over the bollard in the recess. The lock gates are of the radial type with no sluices (or paddles). There is consequently some

surface disturbance if you are near the end of the chamber into which water is entering.

You pass through an air bubble “curtain” at the entrance to the lock chamber when the Waddenzee is higher than the IJsselmeer, (they tell me) to keep the salt water out.

Both the tidal and non-tidal areas have many traditional vessels plying with passengers. Many of these appear to be on “day trips” though I am sure you can also get them with accommodation. The size and style varies enormously. Many of these ships (*sheeps*) have two or three masts, all have lee boards and are a wonderful sight when you encounter them under sail. My students all treat these as commercial vessels and thus which tack they might be on, is immaterial.



All my eating experiences whilst working over there have been very positive and I have enjoyed everything from Dutch omelettes to the Chinese restaurant! Smoked Eels are very special and possibly a bit like smoked salmon.

I look forward to the next time I am invited to Zeilvaardigheidscentrum (Sail skill centre) in Lelystad.

Eric McDowall
YMI.Links:

RYA school: www.zeilvaardigheidscentrum.nl/

Map showing Lelystad and the IJsselmeer
<http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?f=q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Lelystad&sl=53.800651,->

[4.064941&sspn=12.009394,28.125&ie=UTF8&ll=52.794458,5.127869&spn=0.76729,1.757813&z=9](#)

Afsluitdijk 1935

<http://homepage.mac.com/rfwilmut/iblog/C14564315/E20060528082009/index.html>

Norfolk Broads Rally 2007 - By Hilary Holmes

This is the Holmes and Wilson's maiden voyage in anything bigger than a twelve foot dinghy. The rally for the Norfolk Broads falls at the end of October half term so, feeling brave, I asked Linda and Paul if they would like to come on a boat with me and my fourteen year old daughter Rebecca and her friend, Sophie. Linda said she would only come if she could have a shower every day. I assured her there was a shower on board and she could have a shower every hour if she wished. At this point the subject is moved on to discuss important matters regarding the amount of wine needed for the voyage; far more important than the showering issue- or so I thought. Linda and Paul have been friends for over two and a half decades and it was definitely a mistake on her part not to be more specific regarding the showering issue.

Friday 2nd November 07 saw the five of us set off to Horning for the weekend on "Camellia". Linda took one look at the shower and said "I'm not using that! You said there was a shower on board!" To which I gave the obvious retort "You never asked me if I recommended it. I don't understand your problem. All you have to do is hold one door shut with your left hand, the other door shut with your right leg and foot, your left big toe is placed on the tap to keep it open and this leaves your free hand to hold the shower head!. Anyway, we're booked into a hotel tomorrow night to use their showers".

As regards sailing abilities, Paul is a self taught dinghy sailor. Linda isn't quite so good, but it's fair to say she can go where she wants to as long as the wind and tide will let her. The girls have done a little and know which is the front and which is the back. And me, I hold day skipper which, in theory, meant I was the best. However, I describe myself as being "Special Needs", but with a bit of luck and some intensive tuition I hope to be promoted to remedial over the next five years.

I had already had a chat with the organiser, Derrick and said we would require help. Well to be honest...lots of help. Over the course of the rally people are helpful and friendly. There are eight boats on this rally involving thirty nine crew and John, the course organiser and his family. People pick up their boats from various boat yards and make their way to Acle Bridge for a pub meal and briefing re

the Saturday races. Naturally we're looking forward to starting and finishing a race, but our competitors seem more interested in something called "race tactics".

Having been shown how the boat works regarding important points like raising and lowering of sails and masts, (and it's fair to say not totally understanding the instructions) we set off. Fortunately, Paul who is well aware of my capabilities, listened intently to the instructions. We decide to motor to Acle Bridge as we're getting used to the boat and there is very little wind. Dave also picked his boat up from Horning so we follow him in his boat "Palace" most of the way. He and his crew decide to try and sail so as we overtake them he shouts out the directions "Follow to the T junction, turn right and stop before you hit the bridge"

Dave is a "Yacht Master Instructor" with whom I've sailed several times. He's a lovely guy, approaching the ancient, but not decrepit brigade and always gives helpful advice in a language I can understand. This is the thirtieth Norfolk Broads rally held by the New Parks Cruising Association and it is the first time I would have to raise and lower the mast. I decided not to inform my crew of this slightly important fact as the mutinous rumblings had only just calmed down. Besides, Derrick had said he would show us later.

We arrive at Acle Bridge and "park" perfectly. This is quite easy as we are the first boat to arrive and so, there is plenty of space. My crew insist on knowing the technical term for "parking". After only a little bit of thought I remember parking on water is called mooring. We decide to celebrate our safe arrival with a bottle of wine and possibly a whiskey, the water of life. The girls settle for blackcurrant juice, Robinson's of course. Over the next couple of hours the other boats arrive. However, it is now dark and as the Norfolk Broads boats do not have navigation lights, a crew member or two uses a pocket torch to light the way. Nobody crashes, nobody sinks, everyone arrives safely.

After the pub meal, John gives race instructions. Firstly we are in two teams: Camellia is in team B. Being the weakest link I feel sorry for my team mates. The morning race starts at 10am. We have to sail back the way we had come, turn right up the river Ant, take down the mast before hitting Ludham Bridge, punt under the bridge (not with the mast), put up the mast and moor by the bank. Easy

enough! The tide would be against us all the way and there would be little wind. No engines allowed. At this point Dave said "I haven't got a quant pole"...we told him to use the mast! I was glad he wasn't in team B – we needed all the help we could get.

Saturday morning dawned, we yawned. We're up early, have a full English breakfast and are ready to sort out that minor mast issue. Paul and I are just about to start when Eric arrives. Eric is another "Yacht Master Instructor" and he gives helpful instructions whilst Paul, Linda and I manage to both raise and lower the mast (the girls are still in bed). This is considered disgraceful activity for teenagers at 0730 on a Saturday morning! Eric called a meeting of the four boats in team B at 0830. At this meeting we agreed to work as a team with the more experienced boats helping the least experienced i.e. us.

Round about now I realise there are two boats competing for the Novice Trophy, uis and Lydia. Lydia is a small boat crewed by Rob and Bee. Th definition of a novice crew is one whose skipper has not won a race. Although Rob hadn't won a race, he is far more experienced than I am or probably ever will be.

Ten am is the start of the race. John has been tooting on his horn for the last twenty minutes. We have our race plan sorted out; Paul is steering, Linda is on main sail, the girls on the liitle sail and me doing anything I'd forgot to mention. We cross the starting line in our rightful position, eighth out of eight. We had achieved something; we had started a race!...All be it twenty minutes after everyone else...accompanied by our "minder", Eric.

Relatively soon, we fall behind the other boats, so we wait until we are out of sight, put the engine on, don't get too close to the boat in front of us, switch off the engine and carry on tacking up the river, until we fall too far behind and repeat the process ad nauseum.

At one point we catch up with another boat, "Lapwing". "Lapwing" is also on team B> Due to the lack of wind, "Lapwing" appears to stop in shallow water and a crew member has gone ashore for a walk. Closer examination shows they're stuck and the crew member is trying to punt off (sensibly they kept their mast up for this cunning process). We have almost overtaken "Lapwing"when she floats free. At this point it is fair to say "Lapwing" is not totally under control and decides to crash its cabin on our bowsprit. We didn't

suffer any damage, the same could not be said of “Lapwing”. No time to exchange details as we are now able to pick up their stranded crew member and their quant pole. The theme for this year is Pirates of the Caribbean so I thought we could sell our newly acquired indentured sailor to the highest bidder and sell the quant pole, at an inflated price, to Dave. Unfortunately our newly acquired slave isn't too sure of his newly acquired loyalties and promptly hands the quant pole back to “Lapwing”'s remaining crew.

Our immediate danger is not over. Having an extra crew member means the cockpit is rather crowded and Paul is struggling to see where he is going.

Paul:- “I can't see”

Me :- “Paul, we need to tack”

Paul:- “I can't see”

Me:- “Paul, we need to tack”

Paul:- “I can't see”

Me :- “TACK NOW!”

Paul:- “I can't see”

<CRASH>

At this point the land decides to make friends with us. We are well and truly stuck. Fortunately, the crew of “Lapwing” are watching this amusing episode and give “Camellia” a tow off the bank. Somewhere in amongst all this activity we lost our new slave and he returns to his own crew. I, and my crew are convinced this whole episode was a deliberate act of piracy.

After this exciting escapade we continue up the river. We put the mast down, punt under the bridge, put up the mast, have lunch and are ready for the afternoon race. This race starts at 2pm, so of course we arrive at Barton Broad just in time to hear John's hooter and not at all sure of the course. We decide to follow everyone else and trust to luck. This proves to be an extremely good plan as the course is a little tight for eight boats to be in the same place at the same time. A few boats bully each other jostling for space. The outcome being “America” and crew decide to stop in shallow water for the duration of the race. This is a typical situation for America which has often been known to b stuck in shallow water. We finished seventh! On the way to Sutton Staith for the evening meal we celebrate with yet another bottle of wine and blackcurrant juice.

In the evening, whilst enjoying a glass of mulled wine we ask the crew of "Lapwing" about the damage to their boat. Apparently, the only internal damage was a mirror which had fallen off and smashed! The grazes on the outside had been repaired with a couple of teabags being rubbed in. The gods are looking after us after all.

The Saturday evening meal is always used as an excuse to "fine" crews for misdemeanours throughout the day; the fines going to the RNLI. Obviously, we reported "Lapwing" for piracy; fine £5. To the best of my knowledge, John as course organiser had never been done, so we accused him of a public order offence; he had been playing on his hooter all day. We wondered if he was in breach of his ASBO. The case is proved and the fine is £5. Every boat and skipper is fined, there are some extremely and rather nit-picky misdemeanours. Our crime, we felt definitely fell into this category. We had taken down our mast and put it up before Derrick had arrived to help. Needless to say, the fine was £5.

John always has an auction for something which is either an absolutely useless piece of equipment or an ornament. This year he had obtained a 2'6" plastic lighthouse. This isn't a typical auction. John starts the fund off with £5 and people add £1 to the pot, fervently hoping someone else will add another £1 as no one actually to win! By the end of the evening we have raised over £250 for the RNLI.

Sunday morning dawned. We had a chat with our fellow competitors and are given helpful advice which we hope to put into practice. Unfortunately, the main race of the weekend, for the Montreal cup, is called off as there is no wind. Many years ago, one of the members went to the Montreal Olympics and brought back a typical touristy pot mug. This horrendous item had been glued to a beautiful mahogany base and this is what we race for. John decides the only way to judge the competition is to award the cup to the crew which had performed best over the Saturday races. We are not hopeful.

Whilst waiting for John to deliver his verdict, Eric and his crew provide the entertainment. Firstly, Eric swabs the decks in typical "man style" i.e. he uses mucky water, mops round movable objects and then treads with unerring accuracy, and dirty great boots, exactly where he'd just mopped. When Linda and I point this out to

him, he does not appreciate the help. We felt we were returning the helpful advice he had given us. After all, one good turn deserves another.

Once the boat had almost clean decks, a crew member notices one of the important bits of rope, had its free end at the top of the mast when this end should have been lying on the deck. Not wanting to put the mast down, the crew are trying and failing to climb the mast and retrieve it. They all fail with style. Someone takes pity on them and hands over a boat hook and the free end is returned to its rightful place.

By niw, John has worked out who deserves to find a home for the Montreal cup. He awards it to Rob, skipper of "Lydia". This meant Rob is no longer a novice and so, by default, we are awarded the Novice Trophy. This creates a great deal of hilarity. I did suggest he awards the Novice Trophy first to Rob and then he could award him the Montreal Cup, but John is adamant. I feel a bit guilty accepting the trophy as I'm still in special needs, but the bottle of wine is very pleasant. The two team races on Saturday are awarded, one to each team, and yes, another bottle of wine.

All that remains is to take the boas back under Ludham Bridge and to the boat yard. We have survived our first voyage, won two bottles of wine and a trophy.

Hilary Holmes

Norfolk Broads Rally November 2008 - Bill Hudson

I've been sailing on the Broads since the late 50's when I was invited to join a sailing camp for hard up children. My qualifications were nil and my training was – This is your yacht (Broads Half Deckers with bowsprit) and these are the six boys joining you and your wife. I think I have already told the story of my first day's sailing in a previous Broad Reach.

After that I ended up running a camp for boys and later girls who came from various city and county schools for over 20 years. I also ran a two-week holiday at Easter for over 15 years but this entailed living on large 6/7 berth yachts.

You could say that since then my ability to sail has improved, although over such a long time I have been involved in many incidents. Actually I've had my name on 3 sunken yachts, 2 dismasting incidents and several broken bow sprits but never been on any of these yachts in person – only the charterer.

This rally brought me down to earth with a bang with 4 separate incidents although I will only hold my hand up as being responsible for one of them.

INCIDENT 1

Saturday morning it was soon obvious we needed at least 2 reefs and I was a little concerned about 15 yachts gathering for the start at Thurn mouth. I decided to keep clear and start late. This we did and finally positioned ourselves in the widest part of the Acle leg. While there and controlling our speed a yacht was sailing at top speed on Port tack towards the bank near us so I moved away expecting him to pass astern and travel along the bank. Unfortunately he spun round at great speed turning towards us. I tried desperately to then turn towards the bank where he should have been but his bowsprit drove up and over our back cockpit where one of our crew was sitting. It passed very close to his legs. Fortunately little damage was done to boat or person but it was a

frightening incident, which with a little foresight need not have happened.

We put a further reef in and started the race last as arranged only for our jib sheets to part and the bow roller to jam.

INCIDENT 2

On arriving at Ant mouth we decided to get rid of the main and sail down the much narrower Ant to Ludham Bridge section by jib. I hope most of you did that because there is not much room to round up near the bridge and there are usually many moored cruisers.

We made good progress under jib and was about to round up to the windward bank when our helm was disturbed by one of our yachts taking off towards us intending to turn to go through the bridge. We did manage to persuade them to hold off and proceeded to turn in the correct manner. Unfortunately we luffed too soon and we ended a metre short and too great a distance for our aged crew to jump. From a position standing on the cabin roof not expecting any problems I told the crew to roll the jib in quickly but it was jammed, not for the first time. The wind caught the sail and blew us out and further away. As this was almost a training situation, I should have had the engine ticking over and all would have been well. The bow spun round into the middle of the river just as John was motoring by to the bridge. Our bowsprit passed straight through his galley window. Fortunately no one was in there at the time. John said it was 18 years since he had been in such an accident. I retorted I had never ever damaged a cruiser or broken a bowsprit. If I did but know. Someone did say things usually happen in 3's.

INCIDENT 3

We proceeded down the Ant and stopped for lunch just before Barton Broad, thinking at least we had slowed John up. No such luck. He pulled along side and said first race in 30 minutes. We complained and he changed that to 40 minutes.

We got to the line in time and decided to try and get away first and therefore keep clear of everyone. I thought we had managed to do that and made a reasonable start even though we had so much main sheet it took several minutes and great effort to pull it in. How wrong can you be? We were on our way several boat lengths over the line with no threatening yachts so we thought. Unfortunately one yacht was well over the line at the start and decided to spin round without looking, on to port tack to return to the start. After a serious bow to bow collision our very large bowsprit was pointing to starboard while our boat proceeded to port. End of race.

We made our way carefully for a sheltered spot as our mast was now unsupported having no forestay. We replaced it with the jib tackle and put the sails to bed taking all the reefs out. While doing this one of our older crew members fell with the boom crutches into the cockpit and across the engine throttle. We all nearly fell off the boat as the boat drove further into the bank. At this point we all fell about laughing.

INCIDENT 4

We couldn't get things repaired in time to join the start of the race so we joined the last lap without knowing it was the last lap. Again keeping out of the way we ran down to the number 1 buoy with a yacht on our outside. Not wanting to establish an overlap and claim water we slowed down to follow him round but for some reason he kept going for several boat lengths so we turned the buoy and as we hardened up the other yacht luffed up into wind and placed his bow sprit across our stern. He claimed we had taken his wind and was unable to manoeuvre although it was blowing 4/5 at the time. I did point out that if we did pinch his wind it's what boats try to do when racing.

Commentary

I still maintain that if you can sail on the Broads you can sail anywhere. Over the years there have been many competent yachtmasters who have struggled to master a Broads Gaff Rigger. It became obvious to me that some crews needed more guidance on rigging and handling boats on the Broads. You will have noticed

the banks are used more often to stop but only by the bow. Never moor fore and aft with your sails up. Reefing is important and done wrongly will result in a torn sail. Racing leads to more collisions. All my skippers were told never to stand on their rights, as there were many Broads charterers who do not know them, particularly cruisers and their relationship with yachts. My advice was when in doubt run into the reeds and keep out of trouble.

Being the stand-on vessel does not absolve you from avoiding a collision if you can. This means looking well ahead and deciding what other boats might do particularly if they are not very experienced.

I think at some point some of our more experienced skippers should make themselves available for advice as we have done in the past. Since racing is, of necessity, competitive in future years perhaps a pre-race briefing (especially when yacht numbers are great) would be a good idea.

There is no other place like the Broads. Boat handling is even more important than our normal sea venues. And Gaff rigged boats are often very powerful and need handling with great care. I hope my experiences have not put you off. It was I hope only one weekend in 50 years!! Even then I would not have missed it as it was a great weekend to remember and very well organised.

Bill Hudson

A Country of Islands - John Hackett

Well, the first week in May was my fifth trip to Croatia – a country of islands. While the number of trips may become a pleasant blur, the memories of a great sailing area and excellent local hospitality certainly don't.

The 9-day May trip of 36 'gin & tonic cruisers' included Go Sailing Association (GSA) members and friends from all over the country. It is an annual event that started, I understand, in the mid-80s when the worst of Scotland's weather became just too much and somewhere warmer and drier was needed. Many of the early trips were to Greece and, indeed, we were there again last year. As regulars, we get a good deal from Barry at Sailing Holidays - this means 9 or 10 days rather than 7, and a discount as well. In Greece, it is usually a one-way trip as well, taking the boats to their summer base – can't be bad.

Whilst this is a flotilla trip, the lead crew respect the level of skills and knowledge and it is fairly free sailing most of the time. Last year, for example, they started the first day out of Corfu by saying we'll see you in Gaios on Paxoi in 3 days – byeeee! In general, we start the day when we are ready and end the sailing when we get to the planned marina or local town quay. In between, we wander around, with the odd stop here and there for lunch or siesta. Oh the strain ...!

Over the last few years, we've been cruising in the south of Croatia, towards Dubrovnik, and in the Kornati National Park. The two areas are quite different, with the southern islands being quite wooded and with some degree of population. The Kornatis, on the other hand, are a patchwork of limestone islands that are virtually deserted. They come in all shapes and sizes and are amazing. Dropped into them blindfolded, you would take a while to work out where you are. But their shapes and contours are well-defined on the charts and that is the best way to work your way through the islands. There are only a few navigational hazards to watch out for, nothing of any great concern.

Croatia has a lot of good marinas (though prices have risen to £20 - £30 per night) and we use a lot of these together with some town



quays. Most of the time we park the boats stern-to and use lazy-lines. Some of the quays are a bit shallow at the edges and here it is bows-to. Come to think of it, we never had to use the bow or kedge anchors for overnight halts this year – much easier than finding the

next morning that your anchor has been overlaid by a latecomer. Best of all though, this time of the year it is quiet and there are few problems getting the boats in at 5 or 6pm, so we can leave at 10am and get in when we want, without even having to raft-up!

This is one of the most picturesque marinas:

This time of year it has to be accepted that the weather is not quite guaranteed, but the sun is hot, the air temperature quite pleasant and, apart from rain from a thunderstorm coming through the open hatch at about 4am one morning, the damp bits were easily manageable. We could go in June but the deal would not be anywhere near as good.



The crew of 'The Harem'

This year was, for me, a little different as I had an all-female crew, my wife Linda and I being joined by 2 friends. 'The Harem' as it was nicknamed, was a brand new Bavaria 33 with only about 25 engine hours that were the delivery

trip to Kremik. We had few snagging problems during the week but one unfortunate crew had a holding tank that would not 'unhold'!

Tough luck guys!

The Harem Boat was quite a good place to be. We'd not sailed much together before, but soon got into the swing of things with the main problem getting the crew moving in the mornings. Before the trip, I



thought endless morning cups of tea would be provided, but it was not to be! Perhaps Les Sutcliffe's bullwhip would have been useful! Les is, well, more than slightly eccentric and tells me he uses it to encourage his crew. Our sailing was very pleasant and steady but mainly uneventful. There were two highlights: We sailed right past Les in light winds – it doesn't happen often so it is worth putting it in print now! We'd rafted up for lunch and were about 30m behind. The gap closed

steadily until we were alongside and then the wind disappeared. After a few minutes it returned and we just sailed away, leaving Les in our wake. Excellent!

The other was as a German yacht closed on a collision course. We were stand-on vessel and there was no way I was going to give-way. As we got closer, Dawn started to get slightly concerned that we would collide, but I just decided to watch the situation carefully – if necessary we could bear away or go round the other boat's stern with a tweak of the wheel. As the gap closed and became 'interesting', the German crew, as one, leapt into action, tacked away and then did a 360 to get back to their original heading. They were nicely busy for a minute or so - excellent! I did wave my thanks though!

Overall, this was one of the best trips to date. Croatia is a great place to go sailing and you should try it sometime.

John Hackett

Round the Island 2008 (first published in MainSheet)

The world's largest and most famous yachting race - Round the Island Race - took place on

28 June 2008 in Cowes, Isle of Wight. Near Midsummer's day this is a huge race with

1875 boats racing. Sailing with Mike and Yvonne on the Southerly 100 'Gernee' we had

a great days' sail - so different from previous races. Others in the crew were Graham, Nick

and Linda. Nearly 200 boats did not complete the race! Starting at 5am from the top of Southampton water we headed for the start from the Island Sailing Club

in Cowes across to a cardinal mark - a line nearly the width of the Solent. Winds of 18 to 30 Knots were sustained during the day providing equipment and people with extreme challenges. There were several starts and we were the last fleet to start at 7.40am - a beat to the Needles,

heading west assisted with the tide. Sails

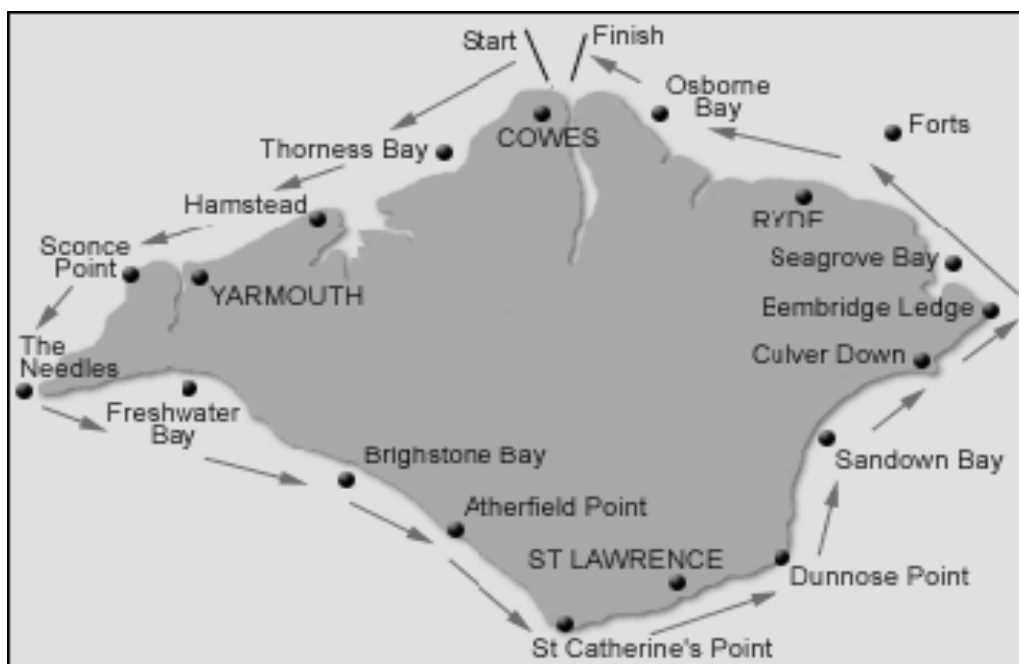
reefed (made smaller due to the wind), the boat was going well even with the jib furled. As normal I was on the bow shouting starboard or simply intimidating the other boats by being there. Approaching the Needles light house with the wind against tide the seas were tossing the boat about despite being a 32' heavy yacht. The rise and fall on the boat proved better than any fairground ride. (This is because I was on the bow of the boat). The rise and fall was 10 to 15 feet - well it felt like it anyway - the wave sometimes engulfing the bow and me.

The reach was interesting as the boat surged down rolling with the 10 foot waves and the bow pushed huge surges of water as the power from the sales powered us along. On the helm they were



working hard to keep the boat on the planned course. Rolling and surfing combined with the varying strength of the gusts, the wheel used to helm the boat was spinning in all directions to balance all the forces. Only when the wind really surged did the boat spin into wind losing direction and general control. On one occasion this caused another boat to come uncomfortably close, so we took the opportunity to reef the sails even more to help us manage with the increasing winds. Compared to others this only resulted in our embarrassed faces and the other crew changing course by bearing away from us, releasing their sails to enable them to turn and to avoid contact. On the reach entertainment was appreciated as two crews attempted to raise the spinnaker, one followed the other with the spinnaker looking like a wine glass, full of wind at the top and the bottom with a twist in the middle. As this popped out the sail powered up and the boat soon broached and the crew soon dropped the sail and resumed sailing in the same way as other boats in the area. Lifeboats were used to tow boats back along the Solent. We saw several without mast and sails - overall five boats lost their masts. We witnessed a lifeboat powering out to sea and later stopped to see an inverted boat reported 3/4 mile off St Catherine's lighthouse. The inverted boat was complete with keel, lead bulb and rudder in the air defying all odds.

The



sand

banks were also interesting. Five boats were observed high and dry on the sand while a lifeboat was trying to tow a boat clear as the tide was starting to rise. Others looked as

though they had been there a long time - sails all sheeted in, awaiting the opportunity to float again. Even though there are many boats about it is so important to look at the chart. Speaking with other crews, many reported the sight or involvement of accidents as boats collided during the race. This will not be so good for the insurance premiums for next year.

The results showed that there were nearly 200 boats retired and there was plenty of wind to complete the race. Overall we achieved 32 out of 60 in the class, 420 overall, however with so many fleets we have not yet been able to confirm this position. In the evening we headed up the Medina arriving on the pontoon about 7pm. A welcome shower and traditional glass of gin and tonic was most welcome. On the Sunday we moored at Shepard's Wharf for a walk into the centre of Cowes. The atmosphere was great with the town full of 'yachties'. The prize giving was quite an event with a steel band playing in the marquee. Retuning to the marina with Linda on the helm we were still seeing 30 Knots of wind at times. We all had great memories of an exciting days sailing in the IOW race 2008. Many thanks to Yvonne and Mike for a great weekend on Gernee.

Ian Brett

Hollowell Sailing Club

The West of Scotland – August 2008 - Peter Thorne

Kilin, famous for featuring in the 1959 version of *The 39 Steps* (Kenneth Moore), was our overnight stop between Edinburgh and Ardfern having just dropped off our daughter who is at university there.

Eric had arranged one of his many sailing holidays and we were all in anticipation of the scenery and what the weather held for us. The crew were to be Mark Saywell, Trevor and Carol Riley and my wife, Elise, and I. To help understand our route here it is, courtesy of Mark:

West Scotland Sailing 08-16 August 2008

Sat 09/08/2008: Ardfern, Loch Craignish, Sound of Luing, South Mull, Castle Duart, Sound of Mull, Calve Island, Tobermory; 45 miles

Sun 10/08/2008: Tobermory, Point of Ardnamurchan, Muck, Eigg, Rhum, Sanday, Canna Harbour; 35 miles

Mon 11/08/2008: Canna, North & East Coasts of Rhum, Point of Sleat, Sound of Sleat, Kyle Rhea, Loch Alsh, Kyle of Lochalsh, Skye Bridge, Loch Carron, Plockton; 49 miles

Tue 12/08/2008: Plockton, Skye Bridge, Loch Alsh, Kyle Rhea, Glenelg Bay, Sound of Sleat, Arisaig; 39 miles

Wed 13/08/2008: Arisaig, Muck, Eigg, Ardnamurchan, Mull, Coll, Arinagour; 31 miles

Thu 14/08/2008: Arinagour, Lunga [Treshnish], Staffa [Fingal's Cave], Iona, Tinker's Hole, Eilean a Chalmain; 31 miles

Fri 15/08/2008: Eilean a Chalmain, South Coast of Mull, Firth of Lorn, Sound of Luing, Loch Craignish, Ardfern; 37 miles

Total 267 miles

Our charter yacht was Clova a 46' Amel Maramu ketch is designed by: Naval Architects H. Amel and J. Carteau. This yacht has an enviable reputation as one of the most popular blue-water cruisers in the world. She is regarded as an extremely comfortable boat that allows you to cover the miles without really noticing. At one point I glanced at the wind speed to find it registering 35kn (F7); she was rock solid, OK the wind was behind us but her 15 tonnes was giving

us a very comfortable ride! Like all Amels, Clova has her quirks, but she is ideally suited to cruising on the west coast of Scotland and beyond. One of the many features that makes the Maramu so attractive to long distance cruisers is the fact they have an integral watertight main bulkhead. This allows her to be Coded to MCA Category Zero, which means that she can be bareboat chartered for trips to Iceland, the Faroes, Norway or northern Europe too far for us this time but maybe in the future.



The 'standard' layout for the Maramu consists of two large cabins for and aft, each with ensuite heads with shower. The saloon has a single berth to starboard and a double to port. The charter company are currently adding an eighth berth that will be located in the walk-through to the aft cabin on the starboard side since for her size accommodation is not as great as might be expected in a modern yacht. She has a well equipped galley with three burner cooker with oven and grill, as well as a standard domestic fridge with separate 12 and 220v compressors. Her central heating was not in operation at the time of our charter but that wasn't an issue in August. She has a serious amount of battery power on board: 270 Amp Hr. just to start the 75 hp engine and a further nearly 900 270 Amp Hr. for domestics driving a 300 amp 220v inverter. Fuel wise, her fuel tank

holds 325 litres and cruising at 7 knots (at 1400rpm) uses about 3-4 litres per hour. Other features were electric furling on the jib and a bow thruster for those of us who can't get close enough to the pontoon! One Feature not to be underestimated in value was the davit slung dinghy with outboard set beside on the stern; this meant that from picking up a mooring to being on our way ashore took only a few minutes.

Saturday 09/08/2008: Ardfern, Loch Craginish, Sound of Luing, South Mull, Castle Duart, Sound of Mull, Calve Island, Tobermory; 45 miles

The weather was foul, a southerly thankfully, blowing us towards Tobermory in constant drizzle and occasional rain. However, by the time we reached the Sound of Mull there were clear skies and our approach to Tobermory was in bright late afternoon sunshine making the best of the vibrantly painted harbour side houses and shops. We found a single long-side berth on the hammer head of the pontoon, at £30 for the night on a par with the Solent. The new amenities facilities recently opened required 20p to get in; £1 for a shower and more if you needed a hair dryer! All well worth it since it was to be the last pontoon we were to moor at for several days.

Sun 10/08/2008: Tobermory, Point of Ardnamurchan, Muck, Eigg, Rhum, Sanday, Canna Harbour; 35 miles

At 0700 hrs. it was raining persistently; not wanting to hold up our departure and looking forward to a shower I went ashore to find the showers did not open till 0800hrs. I went for a short walk and joined the growing cue some 30 minutes later. We departed after a good breakfast at about 0900hrs. The day was to be one of mist and rain with the various islands visible only by their shoreline. We did see a pair of basking sharks; the first of several. I find seeing wildlife in it's natural habitat a stark reminder that we share this planet with others not intent on using more than their fair share of natural resources. Again, we were able to sail for most of the day; winds were brisk providing an enjoyable sail. We saw no other vessels that I can recall. Canna is the most westerly of the four Small Isles and covers 3000 acres. Previously owned by John Lorne Campbell, it was given to the National Trust for Scotland in 1981. The island is farmed by the National Trust, has ten working crofts. Canna is an

island with a population of 29 souls (according the lady we spoke to walking her dog); 3 churches (one cathedral); a school; a phone box and a post office. The harbour afforded excellent shelter and a choice of anchorages. The shoreline was populated with seals which provided an eerie sound track in the hours of darkness; the call of the wild indeed. The bay was facilitated with a rather posh berthing point for the local ferry including a small waiting room and a slipway. The island beckoned us to go ashore to explore. Mark acted as ferry man. As we arrived at the slip 2 ribs with about 20 camera waving tourists of various nationalities were departing probably back to Iona. When all were ashore we walked from the slipway to the first church with round tower it was tiny inside and the tower little more than a metre radius at its base; the pews were polished with years of use and had the feel of a Christian place of some antiquity probably dating from the time of Saint Columba (ca. 521-597 AD). Further details can be readily found with aid of Mr. Google. We moved along the island's road past the shop post office and phone box in which was placed a card telling us that if wanted a meal to call a number before 5pm to book! On the outside of the shop was an antenna probably for digital communication; what would Saint Columba have made of broadband internet? Further along the road we came across several untaxed vehicles, no need, it's not the queens highway. The next church was of recent build and adjacent to a farm with a small public toilet and shower facility. Further along we found a couple holiday of cottages; one of the occupants was from Skipton and was finding the holiday somewhat quieter than she was used to on the main land. A bonus was the dog she was walking had appeared from one of the farms and accompanied them all day. After some more exploring we had come to the end of the road so to speak. We returned to Clova ate and departed next morning with fond memories of Canna.

Mon 11/08/2008: Canna, North & East Coasts of Rhum, Point of Sleat, Sound of Sleat, Kyle Rhea, Loch Alsh, Kyle of Lochalsh, Skye Bridge, Loch Carron, Plockton; 49 miles

The weather was fair as we made passage to Plockton through the Kyle of Lochalsh; an excellent days sailing. Due care was taken on our passage through the Sound of Sleat. As we approached the Kyle of Lochalsh Eric suddenly declared an urgent need to go

ashore – he didn't look unwell and there was nothing wrong with Clova as far as we could tell. All was revealed a few minutes later. He wanted to go to buy Haggis from the premier purveyor in the Western Isles so we could have a traditional Highlands and Islands evening meal with tatties and neeps. We moored briefly at the pontoon immediately in front of the Lochalsh Hotel and were on our way again in 40 minutes or so. Arriving at Plockton with overcast skies and some interesting pilotage we picked up a mooring and went ashore for an excellent meal that Eric had pre-booked – just as well since the pub was very busy. The German group before us reluctantly vacated their table due to the good offices of the staff. It was an excellent meal.

Tue 12/08/2008: Plockton, Skye Bridge, Loch Alsh, Kyle Rhea, Glenelg Bay, Sound of Sleat, Arisaig; 39 miles

Arisaig is the one of the main Wildlife Trusts' locations for basking shark research in the UK. This gentle giant is the largest fish to be found in the coastal waters of the British Isles. Measuring anything up to 12 metres long, and weighing up to 7 tonnes, it feeds on animal plankton, filtering 1,000 to 2,000 cubic metres of seawater per hour to extract its tiny prey. During the summer months, it favours Cornish, Devon, Manx, Irish and Scottish waters as its regular feeding grounds. The basking shark is an internationally recognised endangered species with legal protection. Its main attraction now lies in its highly valued enormous fins, which are a delicacy in the Far East, and hunting remains the single biggest threat to its future.

We anchored for lunch in Glenelg Bay; although the bed was rocky it was a pleasant anchorage with little wind, sunshine and more superb scenery. The passage south allowed us to fly the spinnaker for the first time. Pilotage into Arisaig suggests it is best entered when the tide is rising from half height or lower. Local pilotage instructions are essential so we consulted the books on board although locals later told us that the drying heights shown on the chart were somewhat pessimistic since they had never seen drying rocks even at the lowest springs. The weather was excellent with clear blue skies and mirror calm water. I was quite getting used to the dinghy and outboard so acted as ferryman and went to explore the anchorage. We went ashore and made good use of the Spar

shop the pub and other facilities; before leaving we cautiously went to the pontoon and re-filled our water tanks.

Wed 13/08/2008: Arisaig, Muck, Eigg, Ardnamurchan, Mull, Coll, Arinagour; 31 miles

Arinagour must be the perfect example of a western isle with its low relief and white painted cottages. Sailing in sun under spinnaker we arrived fairly late so didn't go ashore. The low sun brought out the pinkness of the granite rocks of the island. Having picked up a visitor buoy we needed to pay but no problem in the morning the local berthing master came to us in his little RIB, we paid and he took a bag of rubbish from us.

Thu 14/08/2008: Arinagour, Lunga [Treshnish], Staffa [Fingal's Cave], Iona, Tinker's Hole, Eilean a Chalmain; 31 miles

Another sunny morning and well and truly into our home ward leg we set off for Treshnish, a deserted island. The shore was rocky, made up of boulders, and not suitable to land the dinghy so again I acted as the ferry man; waiting off shore on a conveniently positioned steel pontoon. Laying on my front on the pontoon with my head over the water it was possible to see every grain of sand on the bottom some 4 metres below. The weather again was sunny and warm. Off to Staffa and Fingal's Cave. On approach I was suddenly taken with the idea of launching the dinghy and going inside the cave; so we did: Carol, Mark and I. It was one of the highlights of the trip for me. Moving on as we approached Iona we saw a large German cruise liner at anchor and nearer to us ripples on the surface of the water, realising it was a basking shark we kill the engine and steered towards it. Usually when they sense your presence they dive but not on this occasion and we were fortunate to have the shark pass within a few feet of the boat. Its mouth was wide open as the majestic beast passed us. Trevor took some stunning video footage. Iona was full of German, kaki shorted, sandal wearing tourists; it seemed to us that the locals had just shot up shop in time before this potential surge of business; we couldn't even buy a loaf of bread. A short stop to explore was followed by a passage to seek refuge for the night. Arriving at Tinkers Hole we found no room, it was early August after all. The anchor was dropped whilst we took stalk and eat dinner. The decision was

made to move on and find a bay to anchor which we did although the bottom seemed to be bedrock and it took many attempts before we had a confident hold. Anchor alarm set, the wind stayed low so the night had no drama for us.

Fri 15/08/2008: Eilean a Chalmain, South Coast of Mull, Firth of Lorn, Sound of Luing, Loch Craignish, Ardfern; 37 miles

The week was drawing to a close. The morning was grey as we made a late start heading for Corryvreckan and Ardfern beyond. There was no wind to speak of so we motored most of the way, as we approached our decision point we realised that we would not make the tidal window and decided to go north and down the Sound of Luing. The weather closed in and it began to rain. We were to arrive to find Ardfern as we left it, overcast. This was a pity because it is a pleasant place. None the less we phoned to have Tony who chartered Clova to meet us; he needed to be off as soon as we had re-fuelled her for the next charter.

Epilogue

This was a great week with no mishaps and interesting sailing and sights; a memorable first taste of the Western Isles for the crew. Indeed a first for Haggis too which was a really great experience. For anyone thinking of this cruising area – do it – you will not be disappointed. Thanks to Eric and the crew Carol, Trevor and Mark for good company, humour companionship and a memorable time. We have well in excess of 500 photographs of all manner of sights from our trip; if you want to see more do please ask.

Peter Thorne

First Voyage – Contributed by Mark Russell

Lindsay and I took Saracen out for her first voyage yesterday (Sat). It was a nice day, but a fairly strong wind. We decided not to sail, partly because it was too windy for our first try, and partly because we want to just take her out on the engine and get a "feel" for her.

We had only just cleared the mooring area and reached a position between Loe Beach and Trefusis Point, when the engine (5HP outboard) cut out. I had checked it in a tank a couple of days before and it had been fine. Despite numerous attempts to get her restarted she refused to start and as we had not rigged the sails it was our only means of making headway. The strong wind was rapidly blowing us onto the rocks that I knew were there (as it is our main canoe route to camp). I quickly deployed the anchor to stop us going any further (there was a berthed yacht nearby too which was an extra hazard).

Luckily, the large tourist Ferry, Enterprise, which was carrying a birthday party crowd, saw our predicament and swung back round to come to our aid (we don't mess around - when we want to be rescued we go for the best). Needless to say, it made the birthday party's day being involved in a rescue - small as it was. She towed us to a berth on the outskirts of the Loe Beach mooring area and then went on her way.

After a few more attempts at starting the engine - I was knackered by then, having hoisted in the anchor and pulled on the engine "n" times - we flagged down a boat and said we needed a tow back to our own berth. The boat we had stopped was too small to tow us but they went to Loe Beach to find someone bigger. The "rescue" yacht came back for us, but missed us and went on up the estuary. We flagged down another boat and they took us to our berth. Back at our berth I found that the engine was okay, but a connector at the fuel tank had fallen to pieces so that the ball bearing was not opening the valve in the fuel line. (Something I could have fixed temporarily and simply with a piece of string, had I spotted it at the time.)

It was a valuable exercise. We learned a lot.

I learned that, even though you have checked everything you cannot assume that something new will not occur. I learned that it is worth "rigging" the sails even though you don't intend using them - as I could have used the foresail and rudder to steer us out of trouble in the strong wind. I learned the importance of having your radio ready just in case you need it - even though you are not far from your berth. I learned how to deploy the anchor in an emergency.

Lindsay learned how to steer the boat through moored boats while being towed by a larger yacht (I had to recover the buoy). She learned how to stow away the anchor chain. She learned the importance of working as a team. She thought it was all great fun. The "captain" was not so happy though - I had been thinking ahead and knew what could have happened if we hadn't "nipped it in bud". Great fun though eh!

Ray

My Confession - Mike Flint

In a quiet way perhaps I was showing off. We had friends on board and there was no wind so I decided to demonstrate the advantages of our Southerly 100, a swing keel, boat. We were just approaching Osborne Bay. The plan was to follow the 2m contour till we came opposite the flat piece of shore then lift the keel and beach the boat on the sand. I told our guests this was to avoid trouble with wash and bouncing up and down while eating lunch and pouring wine.

The Southerly 100 is specially designed to be driven ashore. The bottom of the boat is flat and is made of cast steel. This provides ballast but more importantly when beaching it protects the fibreglass portion of the hull. The centre plate is steel and passes through a slot in the steel bottom plate. It swings round a massive pin bearing at its forward end and is raised by ropes called pennants on the aft end. If the keel hits an obstruction when moving forward it simply swings upward into the slot. Well that is the theory detailed in the Southerly booklet. Our boat is up market and the keel is raised by an electro- hydraulic system. All you have to do is press a button situated on the chart table.

It was low water and we were motoring from Cowes adjusting course to keep the depth gauge constantly reading a 2.1 m. I explained that allowing for the tide we were more or less following the 2m-depth contour, which was Ok because the Southerly draws 1.77 m with the keel down.

The day was warm and sunny. Our guests were taking turns to steer. Yvonne was down below cooking lunch and preparing drinks. We passed Old Castle Point and left the yellow racing mark to port. We could see Norris rocks on the shore and Osborne bay was opening up in front of us. Suddenly there was a gigantic BANG. I shouted to Yvonne 'Lift the keel...lift the Keel'

I flung the engine into reverse

BANG BANG RUMBLE RUMBLE

There is a transparent cover over the lifting mechanism and I could see the rope pennants jumping and twisting.

The boat shot backwards. There was one final Bang. The pennant pin snapped. The keel crashed down. The lifting mechanism refused to work.

In panic we dropped the anchor. We checked the bilges for water... all Ok.

Thank goodness, we were in no danger but we did have an expensive problem.

It was strange, like many yachtsmen I had anchored for lunch in Osborne bay thousands of times and never thought to consider that there might be any form of hazard.

What had gone wrong? Our guests, a select group of yachtmasters examined the broken pennant pin, checked my tide calculations and poured over the chart. The GPS did show a tiny dot marked obstruction. The consensus view was that we had hit an isolated rock and passed over it. By raising the keel we had hooked, the obstruction. As the boat was driven astern the partly raised keel was forced against the rock wrenching the pennants from the hydraulic system and snapping the pennant pin.

As I munched through steak pie potatoes and salad followed by raspberries and cream not to mention a glass or two of red wine I contemplated the situation. The logic seemed to be with a fixed keel yacht if you hit an obstruction the technique is to back off. The lesson I had just learnt was that if you hit an obstruction in a lifting keel boat the procedure is....

- (a) Stop but don't go astern
- (b) Lift the keel fully into the hull (stop lifting if there is resistance).
- (c) Go astern only when the keel is fully up
- (d) Realise the pennant pin may break. It is designed to be a mechanical fuse

The other lesson which I really should have known was check the chart even if you think you know the area... and of course don't show off.

Mike Flint

Christmas Rally Dinner Limericks 13 Dec. 2008

I am a keen racing skipper at my peak,
But scrape past all marks that I seek,
My crew feel so bitter,
'cause I touch more buoys than Garry Glitter,
And my case it comes up next week.

Attributed to J Green & Crew

There was a keen racing Skipper,
Whose tool became trapped in his zipper,
With help from a winch,
A scream and a pinch,
He'd no more Father a nipper.

Attributed to Eric and his crew Hilary and Jon

I am a keen racing skipper called Dave,
who's at home on the seas rolling wave,
But when it gets rough I get into a huff
and vow I'll never go sailing again.

I am a keen racing skipper, who led,
a fine manly crew it is said.
But with the wrong glasses, I mistook lads for lasses.
Should have gone to Spec Savers instead.

Attributed to Richard Malthouse and his crew



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WHAT D'Y RECKON THEN?



M. H. H. H. H.