

Spring 2010

The Magazine of New Parks Cruising Association

# Broad Reach



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## NPCA FLAG OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Commodore	Yvonne Margerison
Vice Commodore	David Richardson
Rear Commodore	John Green
Chairman	Mike Flint
Vice Chairman	Dennis Belton
Honorary Secretary & Membership Secretary	Yvonne Margerison
Honorary Treasurer	Mike McQuade
Committee & Principal of Sailing School	Eric McDowall
Committee	Pauline Green (Assistant Secretary) Bill Hudson – Founding Member Peter Thorne – Editor, Broad Reach

## **NPCA PROGRAMME 2010**

### **CLUB NIGHT TALKS\***

19 January: (Helen and Richard "Cruising in the Baltic")  
16 February: (Tom Hailstone "Medicine in Nelson's Day")  
16 March: (Eric McDowall "Canals and Narrow Boats")  
20 April: (Michael Hartshorn)  
Summer Break  
21 September: (Chris Tarratt)  
19 October: (Talk)  
16 November: (Talk + AGM)  
21 December: (Talk)

### **EVENTS\*\***

28 February: Commodore's Lunch  
1-6 April: Practical Sailing Course (Eric McDowall)  
14-16 May: Spring Rally (John Green)  
25-30 May: Practical Sailing Course (Eric McDowall)  
19 June: Round I.O.W. Race (Island Sailing Club)  
22 June: Canal Boat Trip (Mick McQuade)  
18,19 September: Windermere Rally (Bill Hudson)  
8-10 October: Autumn Rally  
6-8 November: Broads Rally (Nick Taylor)  
3-5 December: Christmas Rally (Polly Green)

### **Useful Telephone Numbers**

NPCA Secretary 01327 879284

Royal Oak 0116 2393166 Club night 3rd Tuesday in winter months

NPCA email address [sailnpca@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sailnpca@yahoo.co.uk)

Web page NPCA <http://www.sailnpca.org/>

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

\*\* Details about courses and booking forms are available from the NPCA website: <http://www.sailnpca.org/>



"IS THAT YOU, BILL?"

This illustration depicting an incident on the Norfolk Broads by kind permission of **Mrs. M Matterson.**

Front cover depicting the yacht "Clova" anchored off Lunga in the Treshnish Isles by kind permission of **Mrs. Elise Thorne.**

## **Notes from the Editor**

It was my pleasure to produce my first Broad Reach for Winter 2008/09; how time flies. This edition is a bumper one with a wide variety of articles many from new contributors so thanks very much to everyone who made the effort to make our publication a great one.

This time the committee have decided to make this primarily an electronic version published in Portable Document Format or pdf which is commonly how many manuals and other documents are supplied today. If you have seen this then you probably know how to do that but you need Adobe Reader® software which can be downloaded free and is free to use from: <http://www.adobe.com/products/reader/> . This software is also found on most PC magazine cover discs if you do not know how to download or simply do not wish to do so. It may be of interest to know that Adobe Reader® can read the whole document out loud; the voice is somewhat robotic and does lack expression.

On special request I will provide a copy of the magazine on Compact Disc as an Adobe Reader® file or copy it to your pen or flash drive free of charge at a club night. From there you can ask a friend or family member to print it out for you.

I welcome any comments on this edition so please let me have them or send to the NPCA email address: [sailnpca@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sailnpca@yahoo.co.uk)

**Peter Thorne**  
**Editor**

## Jottings from the Commodore

Dear fellow members of New Parks Cruising Association,

You will be reading this edition of Broad Reach just as the sunshine and better weather are within reach. So here's hoping that we get a really good sailing summer. We do deserve one after a bout of recent windy and wet summers.

Well what is there to jot about? At the present moment we have 175 current members. This is not bad when you consider that we do not have any evening classes from New College feeding members into the Association. However that does not mean we should rest on our laurels, we still need to attract new members and we now have fewer opportunities and venues where this can be done. So we need you, our members, to recruit others to join the Association.

We have had a very successful year of Tuesday Club Nights at the Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe: Started off by our own Mike Gillingham; followed in October by Mike and Cathy Sullivan's talk "We sailed Around the World" which was very well attended, with standing room only for a few latecomers. It was particularly welcome to know that they had gone through the New Parks Training system before setting off on their epic voyage.

The next meeting "Storm Chasing" proved exciting just watching. As did "London Ports and River Pilots" when we saw the amount of damage caused by a ship that got its navigation and tides wrong, and ploughed into the side of the built up river Thames with dire consequences. But the talk was very informative historically and practically.

There is also a good season of Spring Talks planned so do join us if you can.

During 2009 we tried to extend our activities. So besides our usual rallies, we also experimented with summer events. A Canal boat evening that was very well attended, a BBQ evening and later in the year a weekend on Lake Windermere, enjoyed by all those who took part.

Our Spring Rally organised by Richard Malthouse, was bedevilled by the weather. Ten boats arrived on the start line, but due to winds of force 7 rising to 8 then 9 the race was cancelled. Several boats managed to sail on to Lymington, but the remainder travelled to the Royal Lymington Yacht Club by car, where an excellent meal was had and later a slide show was held showing photographs taken during the event. The winning slide was taken by the crew of the yacht "Buggsy Two".

Unfortunately the new "Commodores Cup", given by John Green, for the Spring Rally was not awarded because of the race cancellation. However we look forward to awarding it at the next Spring Rally that is being organised by John Green, where will be present to award his cup.

Our Autumn Rally, organised by John Green, enjoyed better weather. Four boats took part in the race starting at Coronation buoy and then racing up the West Solent. The afternoon event was a race up Southampton Water to Ocean Village. The winner was Richard Malthouse. The evening dinner was held in the Admiral's room at the Royal Southampton Yacht Club, the venue was impressive and the food, wine, and company good.

Our Christmas Rally organised by Mike Flint was held on the mainland this year as we have had 2/3 years of atrocious weather in December that has made crossing to the Isle of Wight difficult if not impossible.

The dinner on Saturday was held at the "Taps Restaurant" at Shamrock Quay; a new venue for NPCA. The Marina staff were very helpful, as were the staff at the restaurant. Good food and company were enjoyed by all.

The weather forecast for Sunday was not good! We had issued invitations for coffee and rum on board our yacht "Gernee" before departing for home. But owing to the weather report we slunk off early as did many others. Having reached home base, which is just around the corner from Shamrock Quay, we issued invitations to join us as there was quite a lot of space on the jetties owing to boats being out of the water. The crew of Sea Chris came by car and Eric and crew sailed round, so coffee and rum was had after all.

Mick McQuade once again organised the Broads Rally, this year we were allowed to pick the boats up early on Friday and return on Monday lunchtime. For the first time we had a number of motor boats on the rally. The advantages are warmth in winter as they all have good heaters, they are much cheaper for the weekend hire, and they appeal to members and wives who think it is too cold to sail in November, but love the ambience of the Broads in Autumn and the lack of other boats and yachts to get in your way. If you want to race for a cup, this is the one to attend; it currently has 3 cups which you can endeavour to win.

Two NPCA boats (New Parks) raced in the Round the Island Race, Bill Hudson's "Seachris" and Mike Flint's "Gernee". Richard Malthouse crewed on a Starlight 39. "Gernee" was the NPCA winner, a result of 135 overall which was very good considering 1550 boats finished.

Our last event of the season was the Commodore's Lunch at Lingdale Golf course; again an excellent event, with good food, good company, and lovely views. This event was well attended by 66 members. Our Trophies for the year's events were presented, and Mick McQuade our Treasurer did an excellent job of



photographing those who attended, and those receiving the trophies. It is well worth looking at them through the email he sent out to everyone. You might find yourself on one of them.

We have four intrepid sailors continuing long distance voyages. Helen and Richard are still sailing in the Baltic and give us very interesting talks about their exploits when they return to their home base in winter. Mike and Anne will set off across the Atlantic on their World cruise this year having had to return last November because of illness in the family.

We wish all our sailors well in their cruises long or short.

Yvonne Margerison (Commodore)

## **Mike Flint recognised for his contribution to sailing**

We are pleased to tell you that our Chairman Mike Flint has received the RYA gold community award for long time service to yachting. He went down to London in November to be presented with the award by the Princess Royal.

It was given to him in recognition of the selfless time, devotion and enthusiasm he has given to sailing for more than 30 years. He has taught and given sailing experience to many hundreds of people both young and old. He ran the New Parks Yachtmaster Club for 20 years, continues to be on the committee and is Chairman of the New Parks Cruising Association. He has organised many rallies and has also been Commodore of the cruising club. Mike also organises the monthly club meetings at Kirby Muxloe.

At Rutland Sailing Club he has been captain of the Fireball Fleet, Commodore, Sailing Secretary, is a Committee Member and Social Secretary.

Mike is still actively sailing, helming in the Formula 1 fleet at Rutland, cruises his yacht on the South Coast and successfully helms his boat in the Round the Island Race every year.

Rarely is such an award so well earned and deserved.

John Green

Note from the editor:

Find out more at the [RYA Awards 2009](#) website. This is what they said:

*"Mike is a wonderful selfless personality; always gently guiding, without forcing his views. He has taught and introduced many young people to the joys of sailing and although nearly 80 years old his enthusiasm remains undiminished. Mike's contribution to sailing does not end with the New Parks Cruising Association.*

*He was Commodore at Rutland Sailing Club for 2 years, a committee member, Sailing Secretary for three years, fleet Captain of Fireballs and is still entertainments and Social Secretary there."*

# STOP PRESS.

**Please support the RNLI**

Places for this event are limited.

## *Enjoy an Evening Cruising on Rutland Water*



*on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2010*

*Followed by Supper at Rutland Sailing Club*

*Boarding from 18.45hrs. at RSC to sail at 19.00hrs.*

*Raffle*

*Music by  
"Swing Fellows"*

***Donation £26.00***

*For further details ring  
Chris or Derrick Young*

***Tel. 0116 2716166***



## **Forward-Looking Sonar**

By Richard Blackmore

Sailors have always taken a keen interest in the depth of water under their keel – it becomes embarrassing or expensive if this tends to zero.

In days of old, depth was established by lowering a line with a heavy sinker into the sea until it touched bottom, and noting the mark on the line at the water surface. The line was marked at intervals with various recognisable items such as a piece of leather with a hole punched in it or a piece of red cloth. Getting an accurate depth measurement from a moving ship was tricky.

In this electronic age we are accustomed to reading off the depth of water under us from an instrument. This used to be a fairly substantial box, often kept at the navigator's desk, involving a rotating arm and a flashing neon light. Nowadays we have the ubiquitous Liquid Crystal Display, mounted in the cockpit and readily visible to the helmsman. This displays depth to decimals of a metre. In Hornpipe's case the instrument, which involves a transducer mounted through the hull just ahead of the keel, can measure depth down to about 160 metres. If we are in water deeper than this, it can have the disconcerting habit of randomly displaying a much shallower depth.

All this is very well, but it only shows us the depth of water under the boat now (or to be precise a fraction of a second ago). What we really want to know is - what is happening ahead? Is the bottom getting steadily shallower? Are we about to hit a submerged but shallow rock? You cannot get this information from a conventional depth indicator.

As we tend to take Hornpipe into shallow harbours, amongst rocky islands, and through narrow passages liberally scattered with rocks, we decided to fit a new breed of echo sounder called a Forward Looking Sonar (FLS)

Forward-looking, or side-scanning sonar devices are nothing new, but have until recently been the prerogative of naval vessels or survey ships, with rather large budgets.

Our FLS is made by Echopilot Marine Electronics Ltd at Ringwood, and is of a new generation of miniaturised kit that is affordable to people like us.

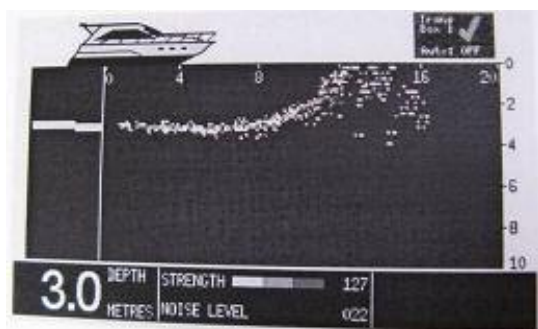
## Description of EchoPilot FLS

The sensor consists of a wedge-shaped transducer which has to be mounted below the hull so that its sloped flat face faces forwards. A power supply and transmitter box is fitted within the hull, not more than 2m from the transducer. A display, which in our case is mounted above the cockpit table where the helmsman can see it at all times, shows the picture.



The transducer is able to 'see' a vertical arc from vertically below to forward of the vessel, and by a miracle of miniaturised electronics scan continually through this arc and analyse the multitude of returns.

The rectangular colour display shows a pictorial profile of the seabed ahead of the boat. The left quarter of the display shows the profile of the seabed the boat



has passed over in the last fifteen seconds. The precise depth under the boat is shown in large figures bottom left. Along the top of the display is a scale of metres distant horizontally from the transducer, and up the right hand edge of the display is the depth in metres. There are 6 forward range settings (20m, 40m, 60m, 80m, 150m, 200m) that can be selected by pressing

buttons to the right of the screen. Each forward range is associated with an appropriate range of depth; for instance, if 20m forward is selected, the depths shown will be from 0 to 10 metres. An seventh setting, Auto, allows the instrument automatically to select the most appropriate range depending on the present depth.

The profile of the seabed is shown as a series of little rectangles, each representing an individual return from the transducer. Red rectangles are very strong returns, green rectangles less certain, and yellow ones are maybes, and blues very faint. A hard bottom seems to generate more reds, a muddy one more yellows and blues.

A little boat is shown top left, with its bow an appropriate distance ahead of the transducer. The size of the boat varies according to the scale set, so that its length is correctly displayed on the horizontal scale. You can choose a sailing yacht or a motor cruiser from the menu according to taste.

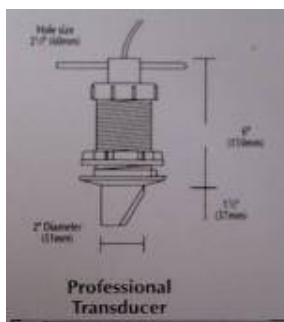
There are menus for setting many other parameters, such as colour of display, strength of backlighting, bow offset, boat length, alarm depth, etc. There are also settings for gain and noise filter.

The display is capable of accepting NMEA data and showing (at the press of a button) information on GPS position, distance and bearing to waypoints, etc. We do not use this function as this information is available to the helmsman from other sources.

We like the depth offset set so that the display always shows the actual depth of water from the surface. We know that Hornpipe draws 1.7m and are happy to accept that we touch bottom in 1.7m of water. Some people like their depth gauge to show the depth under the keel, so they touch when the instrument reads zero.

### Installation of the FLS

You have to cut a hole through the hull of your boat below the waterline to fit the transducer. This is a little scary, and needs thought and care. In Hornpipe's case the position chosen is about 400mm behind the leading edge of the keel, and about 300mm to starboard of the keel. In this position the transducer is somewhat protected by the keel from being struck by semi-submerged objects, but can 'see' the necessary arc below and forwards. It also makes the transducer easily accessible by lifting an access panel in the heads.



It is worth mentioning that (unlike the flush transducers for normal depth sounders) the FLS transducer has a plastic element that projects about 50mm below the hull. If struck hard, this is designed to shear off, leaving the water-tight integrity of the hull secure.

At the chosen position away from the centreline, Hornpipe's hull slopes up sideways about 30 degrees from the horizontal. It is necessary for the transducer to be mounted vertically, so considerable fairing is needed. I made two solid glass fibre fairing pieces by laying up into the plastic bowl our Christmas pudding came in, then grinding them off to the appropriate angle and gluing them with epoxy inside and outside the hull. I bored through the fairing pieces and the hull with a hole saw about 6mm larger on diameter than the transducer's mounting tube. Then, using a piece of plastic waste pipe as a mould, I laid up a tube, using woven glass cloth and epoxy, with the correct bore for the transducer mounting tube. I glassed this tube into the hull, and finished by laying up two layers of woven cloth over the fairing outside the hull, bonded to the hull and to the glass fibre tube. I then set the transducer's threaded brass mounting tube into the hole using Sikkaflex marine sealant-adhesive and tightened the back nut on the inside of the hull.

The transducer itself slides into its mounting tube and is sealed by two 'O' rings. It is held in place by a cap-nut. Echo Pilot says it can be withdrawn for cleaning while the boat is in the water. I suppose you push in a plug or dummy transducer

to stop the inrush of sea-water through the 50mm diameter hole, but I have not dared to do this yet.

The installation of the electronics is fairly straightforward. I had some trouble with mounting the display, as although the face and programming buttons are waterproof, the rear of the instrument is not, and we want the display out in the open in the cockpit.

I have resolved this by mounting the instrument into the top of a waterproof switchgear box from Maplin, which in turn is screwed to a 'temporary' mount on the cockpit table, where the helmsman can see the display and press the buttons. The intention is to make a new stainless steel grab-bar over the compass, which will carry the Echo Pilot in specially made, superbly stylish, waterproof fibreglass housing and will also accommodate the autopilot control/display and the wind strength/direction indicator. (OK, OK, pigs might fly and all that! It will make a grand winter project in the garage at home.)

One wrinkle is that, since the FLS transmits pulses through the water at the same frequency (200kHz) as the existing depth sounder, we can't have them both in use at the same time: They would confuse each other. I have therefore fitted a change-over switch to select one or the other. At present this is in the aft cabin, but one day will be mounted in the superbly stylish waterproof housing mentioned above.

### **The FLS in use**

Very gratifyingly, the instrument produced an excellent indication of the bottom ahead the moment it was first switched on in the basin above the sea-lock at Inverness. We spent a few days after that experimenting with various settings, but became confused about what we were achieving. We have settled on settings of gain and noise filter that seem to work pretty well in most conditions. Setting bow offset, boat type and length and transducer depth offset were all easy.

We use the colour screen setting during the day, which "colour encodes" the echo strength but is less readily visible in strong sunlight than the alternative black and white display. At night we find that the control for the amount of backlight is very inadequate – we cannot dim the display enough and have to turn it off to avoid losing our night vision.

We have found that usually it is best to leave the FLS display in Auto Range. We have got used to interpreting what we see in this mode, and normally if the depth is shallow and obstructions might be around we slow down so that we might be able to stop or turn within the displayed range. The exception is where we know we have to take some action, for instance make a turn, a certain distance from, say, a rock. Then we set a range of say 80 metres, and watch as the obstruction

gets closer. The instrument gives a very good return from a vertical wall at say 60 metres range, even with depth only say 10 metres.

If the bottom ahead is level, we expect to see a pretty firm indication of depth close to the boat, with the scatter or returns increasing further away. This may seem to indicate a bottom sloping upwards, but we have learned to interpret whether this is in fact the case or not.

If the water ahead is turbulent (say in heavy waves or in the wake of another vessel) we see a lot of spurious returns from near the surface. This is not usually a problem, but if we actually did get a return from an unexpected waterlogged container floating in the water ahead, we think we might mistakenly interpret it as turbulence.

The FLS is really good for deciding when to tack in shallowing water. It is excellent for assessing an anchorage. It is most reassuring when sounding into an area where the charted depths are questionable. It is accepted wisdom that both Swedish and Finnish charts are incomplete. (A Finnish sailor just cautioned us not to believe all that is shown on Finnish charts – the surveys were made by drunken Russians!)

The FLS field of view forwards does spread out a little sideways from the vertical plane, so when passing through a narrow channel it may 'see' both sides and indicate a bottom that is more shallow than reality. We sometimes find ourselves in channels that are only twice the width of the boat and only just deep enough. Here the FLS shows a solid wall ahead: we must ignore it and believe the chart, the pilot book, and our eyes. In this circumstance, the FLS does show the depth under the boat accurately on its numerical display.

We do think that the display can be too fascinating – there is a real risk of an FLS-induced collision with another vessel as the helmsman peers at the moving picture of the bottom on the screen in front of him instead of looking around....

## **Conclusion**

We think that the FLS is a real advance over the conventional downward-only echo sounder. It does take some time to learn to interpret it. It is relatively expensive (around £1500) and trickier to install. For the sort of sailing that we do, it is most useful to have and we think it is worth the investment.



## **A Cruise to the End of the World**

With

Mike and Cathy Sullivan sailing Tacks

With our first ever Ocean crossing, and subsequent 6 month cruise down the Brazilian coast now just a sun filled, samba dancing memory, the forthcoming season was to be the most challenging and rewarding we had ever undertaken. Our plan was to sail "Tacks" our Beneteau Evasion 34 from the River Plate, cruising down the South Atlantic coast of Argentina to Ushuaia (Ush-why-ah) at 54 deg.47mins south, the most southern city in the world.

The date was 28<sup>th</sup> Oct 2003. It was a cold damp morning as we slipped our lines at the yacht club on the outskirts of central Buenos Aires that had been our home for the duration of our stay, and we sailed east out of the River Plate at the start of the relatively easy 350 mile passage south to the holiday resort of Mar del Plata. Tacks was clipping along at a steady 6kts as we cleared the calm waters of the Plate, and by dusk we could feel the Ocean swell beneath the keel. Helped by the north/south flow of the Falklands current, fair winds and a moderate South Atlantic swell, Tacks with full sail out seemed to be relishing her new found freedom slightly better than us, as we both felt a little seasick. By dawn the following morning we were well clear of land, the wind was from the north and we had now been joined by what was to become the familiar sight of an albatross quartering the seas around us. Nausia stayed with us through out the day, as we tried to get our sea legs and when night approached put a reef in the main as the wind increased slightly, however this was to be short lived, by midnight the wind had gone and we motor sailed until early morning. Closing land we could see the high-rise buildings of the resort ahead and we were beating into a fresh s/e wind and finally made the breakwater at 2350hrs in 40Kts, almost 18 hours to do the last 25 miles, welcome to the South Atlantic!!!

Two weeks of gales prolonged our stay in this busy resort, however the frustration of waiting was soon washed away by the five days of westerlies that gave us a wonderful almost continued broad reach south to Peninsular Valdes. Once through the narrow entrance that leads into Gulf of Nuevo we made our way to Puerto Madryn. The small friendly yacht club here provides the rare international yachts that call with free mooring buoys for the duration of their stay, asking only that you sign their visitors book.

We spent some time in search of the killer whales that are known to frequent these waters, patrolling the beaches before darting ashore to snatch the basking seals. Unfortunately we did not see any killer whales as it was too early in the season, but we were rewarded with colonies, of sea lions, elephant seals, and scattered colonies of Magellan penguins; also Southern White Whales some with young, that came right into the anchorage swimming under and around Tacks oblivious to the noise we were making as we ran around the deck trying to get a

better view. It was an unforgettable and wonderful experience that left us wanting more.

Whilst waiting for yet another gale to pass through, we heard of a headland to the south called Punta Tomba, with the largest breeding colony of Penguins in South America. The temptation was too great. As soon as weather permitted we were on our way, an overnight sail and there they were. The magnificent sight of half a million Magellan Penguins combined with the incredible eye watering smell was overwhelming, closing all hatches and the companion way door. Wrapping scarf's around our nose and mouths we snapped away with the digital camera until the card was full and beat a hasty retreat. Later in the day whilst still trying to rid ourselves of the clinging smell of the penguin colony the VHF burst into life. It was the crew of Wild Life, a 50-foot Cantana catamaran that we had briefly met in Mar del Plata. They were on the horizon behind us and heading for the same anchorage. We informed them that as they were the larger yacht we would stand off so they could anchor first!! Calleto Hornos is a short narrow canyon cut into a headland with good protection from all winds and is one of the very few safe anchorages to be found on the inhospitable coastline of Patagonia. The imposing 150m vertical blood red cliffs with a depth of 6 metres and a bed of solid rock, requires a very different form of anchoring. The catamaran with Freddy and Kate on the helm dropped their CQR and 30m of chain to hold them steady, while Florian and Danny dumped the dingy from the davits and rowed ashore to make fast the four lines to both sides of the jagged cliff face, once set and much to the amusement of the crew on the cat we slowly came alongside, passed them our spring lines saying we were exhausted from all this hard work and in desperate need of a beer. An evening of animated conversation followed discussing some of the other equally interesting anchoring techniques that would be required further south in Tierra del Fuego.

Early next morning, wishing to make the most of the good winds, we bid farewell and continued our way south. Crossing the Golf of San Jorge, in yet another good westerly, before briefly stopping in Puerto Deseado to top up our fuel tank, then making a quick 150 mile dash down the coast to Puerto San Julian, we anchored in front of the desolate little town to ride out yet another gale.

It was in 1520 that Fernao De Magellan suppressed a mutiny by his crew as they wintered here. On a spit of land some 60m behind us called Banco Justicia, Sir Frances Drake had one of his Captains executed for mutiny. Looking around us now it was easy to visualise the Pelican, later to be renamed the "Golden Hind", at anchor in this very spot as very little could have changed since those days long gone, the feeling of sailing in the footsteps of such historic giants was inspiring.

It was now Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>. We were 49 deg south, the gale had blown through and Tacks was easing her way down river with an escort of ten beautiful snow white Commersons dolphins, a flash of black on the nose, dorsal fin, and tails, adding to their ghostly appearance, darting around us in the early morning dawn. This

was the big push for Ushuaia, but first we had the not so little problem of the passage through the Straits of La Maire. This 15 mile wide stretch of water separating Staten Island from Tierra del Fuego at the very Eastern tip of South America is also the point where the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans meet. With its huge over falls and vicious rip tides, it truly deserves its reputation as one of the most dangerous stretches of water in the world. Armed with a good day forecast, we were determined to make the most of it, so with our cruising chute flying we set our course southeast. Later in the day the winds increased enough for us to put away the chute and hoist full main and genoa by nightfall we had a steady 25knts from the west that over the next three days brought us to within fifty miles of the straits before dying away completely. Starting the engine we motored on, as the early morning sun gradually grew stronger burning away the mist and fog, visibility improved and we got our first glimpse of Staten Island the infamous Straits. Having missed the tidal gate we had just decided to anchor on the island for the night, when suddenly we heard a familiar crackling voice calling the yacht to the north of Le Maire Straits, going below I took the VHF from its holder, "Hi Flow this is Tacks !!!". "Wild life" was at anchor in a small cove on the Island or should I say tied to trees on the shore in 150m of water, and would we care to join them. It was just after 10 o'clock in the evening that we entered the small bay and tied alongside what Cathy now called Tacks private travelling pontoon. Clambering onto the decks of the cat, we were hugging and congratulating each other on the achievement of safely getting this far south, when Kate's voice rang out, "come on you guys dinner is ready".

Early the following morning we slipped our lines and stood off ready to assist the cat's crew as they untied lines from the trees ashore coiling them into large canvas bags. Then giving us the thumbs up, Tacks led the way out of the small cove and we had just 3 hours to be in position for slack water and the south going tide through the Straits. It was a glorious sunny morning, not a breath of wind, the sea was calm with a slight swell, with the main up and the engine at 2000 rpm Tacks turned south into the pass. We could see the swirling whirlpools and breaking overfalls awaiting us. Using the bearing recommended in the Admiralty pilot we forged ahead, it was anything but calm in here!! We pitched and slammed into the confused waters, sometimes turning 360 deg. We were in the grip of yet another whirlpool, one minute almost stationary the next hurtling ahead at 10 or 12 knots. Our lifelines (two each attached to both sides of the cockpit) were the only things preventing us from going overboard as we were lifted off our feet and thrown around the cockpit like rag dolls. Clinging doggedly to the helm as Cathy ticked off our waypoint every few miles on the hand held GPS we were swept forward for three hours until at last the waters gradually calmed. Switching the auto helm on I stood in the cockpit looking back at the scene behind, phew I whispered to myself, that is one evil stretch of water, "that's a bloody understatement" came the booming reply from my nearest and dearest. At 55 deg. South we were now in the Southern Ocean, Cape Horn was little more than a hundred miles away, we unfurled the Genoa heading west in a brisk easterly, our friends on the cat disappeared into the distance and we settled into

our watch pattern for the night. The next morning we entered the Beagle Channel with a falling barometer, the wind soon backed to the west and Tacks charged forward in the rapidly increasing wind. Leaving Isla Picton to port the Beagle started to narrow offering good protection from the gale, and despite the fetch we maintained good speed. Threading our way around the isolated rocks and islands we pushed on sensing the closeness of our goal. As dusk fell we could see the lights of the Chilean Navy base at Puerto Williams up ahead in the distance. The full force of the wind and a very steep fetch was now on the nose. Settling down to another night Cathy took the helm but after a few hours was exhausted. Sending her below I put on my safety harness, took the wheel and beat our way forward the final 25 miles. It was December 18<sup>th</sup> and in the first light of dawn I called down to Cathy "Come up here Quickly". Stumbling up the companionway steps she stood beside me rubbing the sleep from her eyes and looking at the beautiful snow capped mountains with the city of Ushuaia nestling at their base, "wow babe you made it" . "No" I said, "We both made it!"

**Footnote**

We sailed over 2000 miles in just under two months, choosing our weather windows carefully, and enjoying the fantastic cruising and incredible wildlife this desolate part of the world had to offer. It was no more difficult than sailing our home waters of the South of England and Brittany. We hope our story will inspire others to consider a cruise to the end of the world.

## Oporto and back – 30 years ago

By  
Hugh Butler

“MIN” Moody 36 - 24<sup>th</sup> April to 17<sup>th</sup> May 1979

**Crew:** Dennis Belton, Peter Robinson, John Earl, Archer Haskew and Brian Coleman.

The purpose of the cruise was to provide an opportunity for crew members to submit papers for the Ocean Yachtmaster Practical Examination. The plan was to sail as far as possible in 8 days, allowing, because of the prevailing northerly winds, 2 weeks for the return trip. Charts and Pilot books were purchased and many winter evenings spent on passage planning.

On 21<sup>st</sup>. and 22<sup>nd</sup>. April, crew members joined MIN, with ship's stores, and a new Tri-Radial spinnaker. Next morning the bonded stores arrived, to be checked, and sealed in the duty free locker, by the local customs officer. The prices were unbelievable, even for 1979, from Gin at £1.20, Bells at £1.46 and Courvoisier VSOP at £4.15, all per LITRE, a total of 48 assorted litres for £89.32. However, the best laid plans of etc., etc.....

By midday on 23<sup>rd</sup>. the barometer was reading 986, and the forecast for Portland / Plymouth / Biscay was SW 5/6 becoming NW 7/9. We stayed put, and Chef Peter produced roast beef for dinner on board.

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>. April. Barometer 987, and gale warnings still in force, so we waited until noon, when a promise from Southampton weather centre of a developing high over Biscay persuaded us to make an afternoon start. The wind was NW6 most of the night over a very disturbed sea. All except Dennis (Photo opposite) were sick, so although we were well on the way to Portland, we decided to return to Poole for a night's rest.



Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>. The promised high pressure had arrived, barometer 1026, and NE 5/6 forecast. Starting point for our Yachtmaster cruise was now Poole so we had to aim beyond La Coruna to complete our 500 mile qualifying distance. After a comfortable sail under full main and working jib, we were passing Start Point at midnight.

Friday 27<sup>th</sup>. A perfect morning, wind NNW4, was spent taking sun sights, and by afternoon we were picking up Creach D'Ouessant (Ushant) and Ile Vierge (off L'Abervrach) radio beacons. It is now difficult to imagine that our Homer-Heron

Radio Direction Finder was our only piece of “High Tec” navigational equipment. By evening we were in the separation zone around Ushant (and presumably in the correct lane as French Protection Vessel H623 passed us without comment) and at 2030 set course for La Coruna.

28<sup>th</sup> / 29<sup>th</sup> Cloudy, NW 4/5, so no sun sights, but we were making nearly 7 knots, and by mid day on Sunday were picking up signals from radio beacons on the Spanish coast. By 1600 we could see the coast (a long way off) and just before midnight identified Cabo Prior light just north of La Coruna.

Monday 30<sup>th</sup>. Slow progress in a light northerly breeze. Passed Cabo Villano (SW of Coruna) and hoisted the new spinnaker for the first time, but had to take it down off Cape Finisterre as the wind increased. The 1 1/2 knot southerly current which we had noticed in Biscay was continuing down the coast.

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup>. May. We sighted Leixoes, the commercial port of Oporto about 0600, had a problem with a sunken coaster in the middle of the entrance and counted not one conspicuous chimney (as per pilot book) but twelve. Perhaps we had drunk too much gin. The harbourmaster's office was in an old fort, complete with moat and drawbridge, which he closed behind us until we had paid. The yacht club was closed but opened specially to provide cold lagers, cold showers and a good fish dinner in the evening. Log 755.7 from Hamble, 624.5 from Poole.

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup>. May Filled up with fuel, only 10 gallons and water, this being charged per ton, i.e. tonnage of boat rather than weight of water supplied. Both very cheap. Caught a bus for lunch and shopping in Oporto. Peter's bottle of tonic exploded, nearly decapitating him. He then paid for his oranges with a kiss but after one look at the Nell Gwynne, we all paid with Escudos. Peter also tried to indicate to the girl his desire for strong cheese, clenching his fist, and exclaiming “FORTE”. This apparently means something quite different in Portuguese. Dinner on board, where we did justice to a 25 litre “football” of Douro red wine.

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup>. 1000 departure for Vigo Wind NNW 4. By 1230 we had 3 rolls in the main, and by 1600 were tacking against a northerly 7. We saw the same lighthouse in the same position 6 times as we tacked backwards and forwards during the night. On the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>. the wind moderated and we motored in to Vigo, mooring up at 2000 in the basin of the Real Club Nautico. There was a big swell in the basin. Our German neighbours lent us a long warp which they insisted we should secure to a mooring buoy some distance away, so Brian donned his wet suit and obliged.

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>. Over drinks in the yacht club, we met Fernando Pastrano , a local journalist, and organiser of the Bayona / USA transatlantic race, who escorted us to Bayona during the afternoon, and welcomed us to his club, the Monte Real

Club Internacional de Yates, which is in the grounds of an old fort, and is where Pinzon landed in his caravel Pinta in 1493 on his return from America.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>. Fernando took us on a tour of the district, marvellous views from Cabo Silleiro and Monte Ferro overlooking Bayona, and afterwards his wife Jenny joined us for dinner at the club.

7<sup>th</sup>. and 8<sup>th</sup>. Leaving Bayona at 0415 we had light NE winds, some sailing and some motoring, arriving at La Coruna at 0830 on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Visited the Real Club Nautico, which, as in many Spanish ports, is the social centre of the city, to find Fernando Pastrano waiting to act as our host for the day.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup>. 0850: left Coruna for Lorient. Uneventful passage, more motoring than sailing. At dawn one morning we had the reflections of sun and moon on the mirror smooth sea on opposite sides of the boat. Arrived Lorient 0400 Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>. Very busy, so drinks and showers at the Club Nautique, and left for Camaret at 2000.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>. After an interesting passage through the Raz de Sein, with some quick course changes needed even just after slack water, arrived Camaret 1500 on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup>. Carried fuel in drums from nearby garage. Left 1100 for Lezardrieux. Visibility not too bad in Chenal du Four, but closed to ½ mile for the rest of the trip. Running radio fix showed us 4 1/2 miles off Ile de Batz---we never did see it----- and we found Lezardrieux fairway buoy by taking a back radio bearing off Roches Douvres lighthouse. From there we aimed off 60 degrees to stem the cross tide, and saw the next mark just as just as the fairway buoy disappeared in the mist, arriving at the marina 0900. Hot showers, shopping and a walk to Paimpol completed the day.

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup>. Cast off 0900 with a forecast of SW7/8 later. Entered Little Russel channel off Guernsey at 1900. Wind only force 4, freshening to force 6 during the night. We were on our Mooring in the Hamble River at 1030 on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>. Log reading for the voyage 1670.4

There is one person without whom this article would not have been written, and who deserves the thanks of many hundreds of people .....Bill Hudson. Bill's involvement with sailing started with his appointment as head of the new New Parks Adult Education Centre in 1964. After setting up in Leicestershire one of the largest dinghy sailing centres in the UK, his navigation classes at New Parks started in 1969, grew to be the largest RYA training school in the country. Bill York and I first skippered on the Easter and Whitsun practical cruises on chartered boats in the early 1970s, on our jointly owned Moody 33 (the first MIN), in 1975, and then on my Moody 36, and Bill's Contessa 32 (HAPPY GIRLS) from

1978. On the first trips we were joint skippers as we had not sufficient confidence to do it alone. My first channel crossing as a solo skipper was only my second ever trip across. However, Bill Hudson and I and some others, under the eagle eye of John Buckingham, passed our Yachtmaster practicals in 1975, and steered our ambitions towards the YM Ocean qualification. I remember my theory teacher, Tony Berridge, a mathematics genius, who spent most of the course trying to explain to us the theory of Astro Navigation, and the last 4 weeks showing us how to do it using pre-printed sheets.

#### EPILOGUE

Dennis Belton you will all know. Peter Robinson and John Earl , sadly no longer with us, did another Biscay cruise with me in 1980, when John's medical expertise came in handy when I broke my arm at the mast head and had a two inch gash in my thumb at the top of the mast in the Bay of Biscay, but I no longer have any contact with the others.



*Opposite:  
Hugh  
during  
and after  
the  
incident.*



## **First Leg: Kirkwall to Inverness**

By  
Bob Hammersley

At last, a spring tide! There would be enough water to get from the boatyard slipway to the marina. The mobile crane and low loader arrived on time and my newly acquired Moody 34.6 had been craned onto the low loader, driven 50 meters to the end of the slipway and was about to be craned into the water. We were too early. According to Reeds we were a meter short of tide. I voiced my concern to the crane driver who was also the boat yard owner. He replied without hesitation telling me, "High tide yesterday was at ten past nine and it is the second day after the full moon. We have enough water". He had not even done a secondary port calculation. I felt anxious. Would there be enough water. What if the wind changed direction and pushed her onto the concrete slipway. I need not have worried, all went like clockwork, local knowledge is a wondrous thing. Shortly afterwards the mast was craned into position – wind instruments intact. Relief, then realisation of just how cold the Orkney weather was.

Time to get acquainted while waiting for a weather window. The previous owner kindly agreed to accompany me on my first leg south to Inverness. There I would pick up crew to return to England. Meanwhile I started a list of 'Things needing attention'. My apologies to the Shetland Coastguard for cutting him short during a VHF Radio Check. Did I really say 'Over and Out', when I only meant 'Over'? A momentary lapse as I had just discovered diesel in the bilges and was still thinking about the possible implications.

I steadily work my way through 'the list'. My sister arrives from the Highlands hoping for a first taste of sailing. The next morning a trial run is aborted due to gearbox stuck in neutral so I get my sister to clean the boat, which lasts well into the night. I gave her some supper to take to bed but all she did was complain about the condensation on the cabin roof dripping into the bag of Mini Cheddars... Oh and something about breaking a nail. Some people are only happy when they're whinging.

The following morning we take the boat out in a Force 6. She's at the helm and looking worried as the sails skip over the waves. I start singing to reassure her and quietly curse myself for not having another reef in the main sail. I prise her fingers from the helm and hand her a coffee. Unfortunately I had not secured the lid, which came off as she started to drink. It brought the colour back to her cheeks as it spilled down her neck. I asked if she was all right. She did not answer but gestured with two fingers. Hell! I guess that's another nail gone.

OK, so it was the bottom end of a Force 6 and the sails weren't quite catching the waves but it makes my sis feel better if I exaggerate a bit.

My sister left that afternoon, earlier than expected. I was sorry to see her go. She was a damn good cleaner.

Seven days later my prayers for a weather window are answered and I get the thumbs up from the previous owner. We have an exhilarating sail to Wick and stay overnight. The promise of Marina and pontoons was in fact optimistic and still in the early stages of construction. We moored up against the wall amongst the fishing boats with sizeable dues for the privilege. I was beginning to understand why this yacht had her own fender-board. The next morning we set off, tight to the wind, just managing to keep our course without engine or tacking. Heeled well over 'swushing' through the waves with the occasional a blast of spray in the face now and again. Fantastic! On approaching Inverness we are greeted by dolphins. What a great trip! The previous owner couldn't have been more helpful, very much appreciated, and that goes for you too, Sis. Next stop Caledonian Canal.



Norlantic Moody 346 at anchor in the Orkneys

## Hornpipe Sets Sail – Part 1: continued exploration of the Baltic

By  
Richard & Helen Blackmore

We returned to Germany late on 8<sup>th</sup> April, having arranged an apartment to stay in for the first week. All was fine, once we found where our landlady had hidden the key for us!

To Hornpipe next morning – after making our number at the Weilandt shop and having the obligatory cup of coffee with members of the family, we found Hornpipe just poking her nose out of the shed. Her condition was unbelievable – SOoo dry inside, and not covered in boatyard dirt. Helen’s first thought on climbing on deck was “Wow, how on earth do the two of us manage to take something this big and awkward into all these little Baltic harbours?” The bow seemed an awful long way off!



After 8 days of hard work cleaning, polishing, antifouling etc, we launched and masted on the 16<sup>th</sup>. From the moment we arrived, the weather had been brilliant blue sky and sunshine every day, although with a cold wind. We borrowed bicycles from the yard to cycle into town and enjoyed it so much that we bought two fold-up bikes from the local supermarket. Super design, (fit under the saloon table underway), but poor German quality control – Richard is forever fixing loose bits! They are giving us lots of pleasure tho’ and greatly increasing our range of sightseeing in the places we visit.

We finally tore ourselves away from Burgstaaken on 24<sup>th</sup> April, having decided we like it so much we shall probably return this autumn to winter Hornpipe there again.

A shakedown cruise sailing round the bay in brilliant sunshine took us to the mainland at Heiligenhafen. Once we got Hornpipe sailing, she felt much smaller and manageable again, although our first mooring was quite exciting being stern posts of a rather dubious width (about 1 inch wider than Hornpipe, thank heavens for the rubbing strake)! Heiligenhafen has a large nature reserve of wetland so we cycled out through the reserve to watch all the ducks and swans. The town is apparently very lively in the season, but as usual, we are finding everywhere very quiet this early in the year.



We then headed for the island of Lolland in Denmark. It was a lovely warm day but no wind, so we gave the engine a good workout. Our Rough Guide to Denmark informed us that anything of interest was still closed, so we relaxed in the sunshine with a glass of white wine, dozed over our books, and watched the martins swooping around the harbour!

The next day took us to Klintholm on the island of Møn. It was a perfect day – warm and sunny with sufficient wind to sail. Møn has some spectacular white chalk cliffs, with a forest full of fragrant spring flowers on top. The whole area is a nature reserve, and we were very grateful for the bikes as they allowed us to get there, it being rather too far to walk.



From Møn, we had a cracking sail to Ystad in Sweden. We spent 2 days there last year, and it is a lovely medieval town, a favourite of ours. The tourist office can provide you with a 300 year old map which still allows you to get around the town centre!



For those of you who watched Kenneth Brannagh in the Wallander series last winter, Ystad is the town where the stories are based. It is so picturesque that many films are made here and the locals are quite used to tripping over film crews!



After 3 days in the sunshine enjoying Ystad, and completing various chores, we moved on to Skillinge. The coast along this area is all fine white sand beaches backed by dunes and forest.

In Skillinge we had arranged to meet up with a couple we met last year, now firm friends. They took us on a drive throughout the area, showing us the highlights we couldn't see from the coast. This area of Sweden, to the north and east of Ystad, is a mecca for artists from all over Sweden and other countries. Many barns have been converted to galleries, and we visited a number of them. We also visited the famous standing stones, Ales Stenar, which is a henge of 56 stones aligned to the summer solstice. This very much brought to mind Callanish in the Hebrides, with a similar location overlooking the sea.



What surprised us most was that this area of Skåne is not at all flat as other Swedes would tell you – it is lovely contoured rolling countryside with trees

interspersed with the prime agricultural land. It is easy to see why it is a magnet for artists.

It also has a lot of history and has been settled since the stone ages because of its fine land, and its central position in the Baltic. It was fought over frequently between the Swedes and Danes, and the medieval buildings and churches show a strong Danish influence. The fortress to the left is called Glimmingehus which was built at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and was virtually impregnable at the time.



*Right: Gardens in Simrishamn*

From Skillinge, we pushed on north with a good southwesterly wind, and found ourselves in Sölvesborg. This is a friendly little town, and our location on the town jetty is a popular walking spot, so many people stopped to chat about Hornpipe.



We were taken on a drive around the town, and to the local boat club harbour to the west. This had undergone a huge infestation of small moths, which brought an infestation of spiders; both being cleared up by numerous swallows attracted by the easy meal. All the hulls and decks of the boats were covered in these small insects and spiders webs! We were rather pleased not to have taken Hornpipe there.

We then set sail for the beautiful island of Hanö, which we visited last year. However it was a blustery day, no fun for walking, and we were rolling along at 7.5-8 knots whilst reefed, so we continued on to Karlskrona. On our arrival we fell into good hands being invited onto the adjacent South African flagged motor boat for a glass of white wine. This developed into red wine and dinner! Return match on Hornpipe tonight.... An interesting couple who had swapped their sailing boat for a motor boat on inland waters. However they felt that river and canals had got a bit boring, so decided to try their river boat in the Baltic. Not surprisingly, they are constrained to only going out in very light winds!

From here we shall be quickly moving on north and east to reach Kalmar, where we need to collect some mail. After enjoying more than 3 weeks of dry weather, when the sun was out from dawn to dusk, and we had only 15 min of rain, we are now being hit by the series of depressions crossing the North Sea. We actually sailed through a hailstorm! Brrr!

Our great improvement to Hornpipe this year is a thermostatically controlled shower. Gosh, is it good! It had become impossible to get anything other than scalding hot or freezing cold water before Richard fitted it, so it is a real luxury. And probably saves water, as one used to pour loads down the drain trying to get the temperature right....

Still to be fitted is the AIS receiver (an electronic gadget which tells us what the big ships are doing – would be nice), and an upgrade to the autopilot so that George will agree to take the helm when the sea gets a bit rough. We have already had seas where he shrugs his circuits and says – you take it!

In Sweden at present we have good email access so we look forward to hearing your news. It is hard to believe we have been away for a month already.

Richard and Helen  
Karlskrona  
8 May 2009

PS Hornpipe is properly  
provisioned from  
Germany!



*Note from the editor: this is part 1 of 3 which will be published in later editions of Broad Reach*

## Time for a change of boat

By  
John Green

Let's face it in these hard times it is hard to justify owning a boat let alone getting a bigger one. After all, they are toys for adults to play with during our leisure time. But, and, it's a big but, is there anyone at New Parks who can think of a better toy to own (?) something to indulge yourself in what is likely to be your favourite hobby and, in theory. the bigger and more comfortable the better it is.

It was along these lines that Polly and, I given that we would be sailing for several weeks at a time over the next few years, decided after a great deal of thought that we would sell our boat and buy something larger, affordable and exactly in keeping as to what ,for us, we considered the ideal boat.



Thalata....Ancient Greek for the sea

We knew the boat we wanted...we had had a Legend 290 with bilge keels, a Legend 33 single keel with in mast furling and now we wanted a Legend 36 with bilge keels and in mast furling. We were looking for one about three to four years old. So off to the broker who assured us that despite the recession and new boat sales 40% down the second hand market was strong...well he would say that



wouldn't he? However it appeared that due to the weak pound against the Euro buyers were coming from abroad and taking the boats overseas. This proved to be the case with ours as it turned out.

Anyway on the market it went and we set about looking for a suitable replacement. This did not take long. We were contacted by someone through the Legend website who were selling their boat and by coincidence kept it on the next pontoon to ours at Gosport. Off we went to view. I think that boats are like houses...within a few minutes you know if its right for you and we knew pretty well straight away that this was the one we wanted but there was one problem.....we had to sell our own. Meanwhile three people had viewed ours, one out of curiosity, one decided to go for something bigger and the other wanted it but had a smaller Legend to sell in Spain.

After about a month the broker phoned that an offer had been made on my boat, a very good one, and that he had been given a letter of intent to buy. "So he liked what he saw?" I asked the broker. "Oh he hasn't actually seen it", he replied. A great confidence booster to an eventual sale....I don't think. The buyer lived in the south of France, flew over and we met. I took him for a sail fed him beer and sandwiches and to all intents and purposes the sale was completed.

It all seemed too straight forward, he wasn't going to bother with a survey, was having a bow thrusters, windlass, new propeller, microwave and coffee machine fitted within the next three weeks and would transfer the payment the following week and true to his word this is exactly what he did.

This enabled us to put in a solid offer on the 36 we wanted and 4 weeks after selling our 33 we were able to take our new 36 on the New Parks Christmas rally last December.



The previous owner of our new boat wanted to retain the name, so we had to have a renaming ceremony according to the rules of Neptune which is another story.

Although our purchase and sale could not have been smoother there are several matters which should be born in mind:-

1. Watch the percentage charged by the brokerage. They will almost always agree to a reduction with a bit of haggling.
2. If a broker is not used the forms needed etc. can be downloaded from the RYA website.
3. The bigger the boat the greater the depreciation. A £40000 difference between a Legend 33 and 36 came down to an £18000 difference after 4 years.
4. Although my purchaser did not have a survey I had one on the boat I purchased on the grounds that if the surveyor missed something that causes a problem later he could be liable to have the fault rectified.
5. Make sure that any deposit paid to the broker goes into a client account. If the broker does not do this and goes bust the deposit can be lost.
6. A bankers draft is no guarantee until it is in your account and cleared.
7. Beware of the added expense of a bigger boat. Three feet in length can put 20% on your mooring fee, increase visitor berthing fees, cost more in anti-fouling and costs more in insurance among other extra costs.
8. I don't know whether it applies to all classes or to Legend owners in particular but we are on our third Legend, the person we bought from was buying another and our buyer's previous boat was a Legend. This makes it easy to contact would be purchasers and sellers through the various class association web sites.

**John & Polly Green**

## Hell & High Water - What a Day and Night!

By  
*John Hackett*

Over the year, we do 3 or 4 regattas in the National Grid series, these all taking place out of Port Solent now that Sunsail have left Largs. Last year, the Hell & High Water regatta was held on the first weekend in October – and what a day that was ...

The format of the regatta was 3 races on the Saturday and 2 on the Sunday, with 4 to count. The Saturday forecast did not bode particularly well, being for a 6 gusting 7. However, we are at our best when it is windy so were looking forward to the day.

It didn't start well when one of our crew didn't arrive but, with 7 on board, this wouldn't be a problem should we get the spinnaker out (on the Sunday when the wind was forecast to fall away!). With one reef set, our boat (29) did not make the best of starts but we were soon into our stride and made up 4 places, to 4<sup>th</sup>, on the long beat to the first can. We then lost a place but took different water to our nearest competitor (Sunsail 53) and were overhauling him again. Coming in towards the next can on a starboard tack we saw that our different water had paid dividends as we were up to 4<sup>th</sup> again - just - and that 53 was on port and would have to take action to give us water. With plenty of free water around and an experienced skipper on 53's helm, no problem we thought. As he got closer



there was plenty of crew activity on deck as they prepared for a tack, however it did look as though they were a bit slow off the mark! With a fixed stare, the helm made no attempt to tack, to heave to or to avoid us – he just ploughed straight on and into our port hull, with a big thump. We juddered sideways; 53 rode up onto us and then slid astern. 'We're sinking!' shouted our skipper.

This is not good I thought, but we did appear to be more or less upright, so how did he know this? I figured that this needed to be confirmed so stuck my head over the side to find out. There I saw quite a large hole in line with the port locker but at least it was above the waterline and we were not taking in water. We quickly decided

that was the end of racing (!) and should get back to Port Solent. This meant downwind sailing with the F6 on the port aft quarter, so that at least looked promising. We started the engine for some extra speed, informed the committee boat and headed for home. It all went well, although the swell over the sand banks approaching Portsmouth was interesting, and we tied up inside the Port Solent lock at 2pm, shaken but not stirred! When we examined the hull we found that we could see the life raft through the hole – I wonder if we could have got it out if necessary ...? We also found 53's anti-fouling on the midship's cleat and along the toe rail. How could we know the day could only get worse.....

A long debate with Sunsail then took place as they said we could only have another boat if we paid a second £2500 security deposit. No chance! We finally managed to contact the other skipper and he admitted liability so a second boat was ours – hurrah! Racing was off for us but there was a 19:30 barbecue at the Folly to enjoy. At 4pm, we slipped the lines and set off again.....

The wind was just as bad, if not worse, and the tide was running against us as well. The sails were up as soon as we got through the twisty channel out of Port Solent and we passed Portsmouth eager to turn to starboard at the War Memorial / tower block transit. It was still a bit lumpy over the sand banks but we appeared to be making good speed, if not progress against the tide and wind. The tide was running quite hard and so tacking westwards towards Cowes was not as quick as we would have liked. After we'd made a few tacks we decided that some help from the iron donkey would be useful. While it did help a little, it was nowhere near as much as it should and then, after a few minutes contemplating this, we got the overheating alarm. After turning the engine off we continued to work our way upwind. As 19:00 approached, we realised that the barbecue was fading into the distance. Still, we were getting there! On with the nav lights, however after a while we noticed that the bow lights were intermittent; the Solent is not the best place to have dodgy lights! There was little we could do about them as, after some fiddling, we concluded that the problem was at the light-end of the circuit, it was dark and it was heavy going through the wind and swell. Thinking ahead, I checked the 'mother of all lights' thinking that we could at least get some charge in it for our arrival. Another bit of kit that didn't work! Ah well, we'll get there eventually! We then started considering some alternatives for the night – just in case!

At about 21:30, we could see the lights of Cowes and were watching out for both the big yellow buoys to the East of Cowes and the channel markers. After a couple of close scrapes with the buoys (they might be big but are still very hard to see in the pitch black), we spotted the markers. Given the possibility of more engine overheating, we decided we would get to the markers, drop the main and go the short distance up the channel on the genny. We'd then spot a place to tie up and start the engine fairly late; giving us time to turn round if the overheating became a problem. So, down came the main and, in the lights from Cowes, we now saw that the leech of the genny was well shredded and flying lots of leech

'flags'. We also saw that Cowes was much busier than usual but, spotting a boat on the channel side of the marina, we decided it looked good for rafting up. And so it was. On came the engine, the genny was furled and we arrived. Thank goodness!!

After all that, for some strange reason the skipper decided he would rather be in the marina!! He sorted out a berth and off we went again. Without the big light it was tricky seeing the entrance and where the berth was. A recce sorted out the marina entrance and the immediate starboard turn and we went for it. On the bow and looking for the berth I realised that we were too far to port for some reason, but my warning came too late as we clipped the bow of a moored yacht. The evening's problems had taken their toll on the skipper and helm. We made the starboard turn and decided to raft up on the first yacht we could. All tied up, the skipper and helm went to see the skipper of the other yacht who moaned and groaned about the damage and then burst into laughter – he was winding us up, the boat already had bow damage and we'd taken a little more paint off.

Finally, at 22:30 we were finished for the night and set off for food. At 00:45 we left the curry house feeling full but ready for our bunks. By the time we had a new genny and had sorted out the engine it was too late to race so we had a nice wander around the Solent, with spinnaker practice thrown in for good measure.

What a weekend to remember!!

Lessons:

1. Ask the National Grid Sailing Committee to review the accident. It turned out that a crew member on 53 (the port tack boat) had slipped down the companionway steps and this had distracted the crew as they were preparing to tack. However, the skipper/helm was experienced and should still have been able to avoid the collision. All skippers and helms have to be race trained and examined, and this system may require modification.
2. We were in a rush to get away and trusted the charterer's opinion on how sound the replacement boat was. Check it over as much as possible before setting sail and get it fixed if something is not right.
3. Do some passage planning – although only a short hop to Cowes, a little bit of work would have told us that we would not be at the barbecue by 19:30.
4. There was no reason to move the boat inside the marina, we should have realised everybody was tired and stayed outside rafted up for the night.

John Hackett

## **The Further Adventures of Sea Fever**

By

Mick McQuade

***Friday 2 October – Saturday 10 October 2009 in the Cyclades – Greek Islands.***

### ***Friday 2 October 2009***

There's that all too familiar tension around the kitchen as I reach for the kettle, I am trying to be inconspicuous as the wife is getting ready to go to work, my sailing kit is discreetly hidden away in my study so as not to rub in the fact that I'm off sailing while she is off working. For some unknown reason "Her Indoors" is never over enthusiastic about my going off to the Med for blue water sailing while she carries on at work! My good lady works in a school and does a super job working with children with learning difficulties and special needs, not something that I could do, but then she cannot sail either. I try to compromise by not sailing in school holidays but still there was this certain tension in the air. "It used to be just a weekend on the Broads or on the Solent now it's weeks in the Mediterranean!"

Silence, no response.

"Do you know that you have been away 18 days more than me this year, how fair is that?" Fortunately the telephone rang, if ever there was a God.....

Mick Day picked me up about 9.00 am having collected Tony Ball and we set off for Luton Airport. A nice and easy journey now that the M1 has been widened at the bottom end. We parked up at the long stay and caught the bus in with plenty of time. Having checked in our bags, we agreed to have a coffee while we waited for Merion Thomas and Roger Goodman to join us and I was duly despatched to the café counter.

There were two women behind the counter that I could describe in three ways, little and large, cheerful and grumpy, pretty and ugly. I directed my order toward the pretty, little cheerful lady by asking for two café Americano and one Cappuccino. My choice paid dividends by the return of a big smile and a "Certainly Sir, anything else?" to which I replied "No thanks that will be all". Now not to be left out Miss Grumpy got in on the act and in a deep mono tone voice said "one Americano and one Cappuccino that will be £4.44".

"Sorry," said I, "Its two Americanos and one Cappuccino" and I turned back to the pretty cheerful assistant to thank her for being so helpful only to have my right ear assaulted by a loud demand for, "that will be £3.98 for two Americanos then!" I handed over four pounds to Miss Grumpy leaving her the 2p tip and walked

away with my three drinks thanking Miss Cheerful yet again for her kind service. Luton Airport is such a nice place to shop. (Remember my experience buying a book last year?)

With less than an hour to go to boarding time Mick Day received a text which said 'Arrived Heathrow, which terminal are you at? Roger' to which we replied 'Luton'. It turned out to be a joke and with half an hour to go we all met up in the bar. Roger Goodman and Merion Thomas had arrived at Luton under their own steam. Someone suggested a drink, which was a good idea, and someone else suggested a kitty, not a bad idea until we got carried away and all put £20 each into the pot. We only had time for one drink and would immediately split up and go our separate ways upon our return, yet we had £100 sterling in the kitty, bonkers or what?

The SleasyJet flight was uneventful, none of us had paid extra for 'Speedy Boarding' and so we grabbed seats where we could regrouping at Athens, the baggage handler must have been on a promise because our bags beat us to the carousel. I am told that both the rail and the tramline now link the airport to Athens and Piraeus but we are creatures of habit and the bus beckoned. A quick check into the hotel and out again down to the Piraeus marina to feed the inner man. It's amazing, we would not give a thank you for Amstel lager at home but sitting on the waterfront it seems so different.

### ***Saturday 3 October 2009***

As Michael Fish would say, "Precipitation in sight"! In sight, on head, down neck, in shoes, through trousers, every bl\*\*dy where! It was tipping it down! We had to get up very early to catch the ferry to Paros, so early that we missed breakfast. Luckily there was a bakery on the corner of the street where we bought freshly baked pastries to eat on board.

Our trip almost ended in Piraeus harbour, Mick Day had gone ahead to get the tickets and we followed behind. All my previous visits to Sea Fever had seen us leave from the first harbour wall, not this time, we were deep into the harbour. For those who have never been, Piraeus Harbour covers an area that could easily swallow the whole village of Kirby Muxloe without leaving any bits showing at the sides! Its enormous, it even has its own bus service! Fortunately the gods were smiling on us and we found the right boat with minutes to spare.

On our previous ferry crossings we had used the fast cats and there we had been assigned seats. This time we were on a big slow ferry and Mick had been advised to upgrade our tickets to Business Class. It cost about £2.50 each to upgrade and worth every penny, we had plenty of room, ample seating away from the crowds and waiter service from the bar, definitely worth repeating.

We arrived in Paros in the early afternoon; the rain had cleared away leaving bright sunshine and blue skies. Having walked along the seafront to the little

harbour where *Sea Fever* was berthed, I am sure that most sailors will concur when I say that walking two hundred yards in the sun carrying personal kit is exhausting. So when invited by Fiona to stop for a beer at the Paros Marina Yacht Club bar, it would have been rude not to have accepted. One ran to two ran to three and lunch then someone suggested that perhaps we ought to put our kit on board and check the boat was OK. But we knew it would ship shape and ready because Trevor Riley had left it earlier that day and would have texted us had there been a problem, no text, no problem, time for another!

About this time Roger decided he had to check in and like ET, phone home. He delved into his voluminous travel bag and produced his communication device clearly labelled "Home". Naturally among we normal folk, prompted and encouraged to inquisitiveness by the Amstel, questions were asked why a phone clearly marked "Home" should be taken on holiday. There were only two credible answers that emerged from the half hour discussion that followed, firstly that all things deserve a holiday at least once per year and secondly that Roger is a living example to support the cause for euthanasia.

The visit to the supermarket is always interesting, you never quite know what you are going to buy, this year the tub with olives on the outside stacked amid the yoghurt and butter was not the anticipated healthy olive oil spread but quite the opposite - lard! Roger volunteered to push the trolley but that was just an excuse to ensure that copious supplies of gin and tonic replaced the planned Metaxa (when in Rome....). When I victual a boat I like to offer the crew a choice so I stopped at the beer counter and offered Roger the choice, Mythos or Amstel. From the response you might have thought that I had offered the choice between instant death or life eternal, Mythos was the demon, the cause of every sickness known to man whereas Amstel was nectar produced by Aphrodite herself! Apparently Roger dislikes Mythos with a vengeance!

### ***Sunday 4 October 2009***

We are in the Cyclades, the boat is moored at Paros, position 37°05'.258N 025°09'.153E – Paros Marina, our original plan was to visit the islands of Sifnos, Serifos, Kithnos, Syros and Tinos virtually in a clockwise direction. But the day before departure the weather changed and the Meltemi winds that ought to have blown themselves out were back with a vengeance from the South on Sunday then from the North for the rest of the week. It made sense to change our plans and visit the islands in an anticlockwise direction. So Sunday our destination became Tinos 37°32'.25N 025°09'.4E.

The day started well but it didn't last. I was despatched early to the bakers to fetch the bread and pastries for breakfast. I didn't mind, the sun was shining and Tony had got the kettle on and was setting the table in the cockpit, cereal bowls laid out, everything as it should be for the Englishman abroad. My visit to the bakers was a most pleasant experience, the young lady serving had clearly got up late and had forgotten to put on most of her clothes and those that she did



wear belonged to her much bigger sister, they were baggy particularly at the top! I remembered the bread but could not remember the croissants; I kept thinking about two cherry tarts! I was glad to get back to the boat!

Having survived the continental liberalism we sat down for breakfast, coffee was poured and milk was on the cereals when Stavros the Stupid, skipper of the island ferry brought his RoRo in far too fast and did the equivalent of a handbrake turn. With engines in full reverse he created a tsunami tidal wave that swept all of the yachts moored on the harbour wall. If ever there was a need to learn Voodoo! Everything went flying, what do you save first, the full teapot? The milk?, the full mugs? the bowls of cereal? It was a mess. There was absolutely no way that Stavros the Stupid did not know the effect that his inconsiderate behaviour would have on the boats moored in the harbour, other ferries came and went without a tidal wave, I suppose every organisation has one, shame we had to meet him.

Anyway we cleared up and set off at 0945 heading due north. Wind SE F4 but gusting quite a bit stronger. The sea had a nice big swell that kept everybody on deck. Two from five began to regret having breakfast!

1114 – PAN PAN on channel 16 – The only bit we could understand was the Pan Pan, the rest of the message was garbled and unintelligible, I wish these people would speak English! Nothing we could do.

1330 – Another emergency transmission, again unintelligible. Out came the binoculars we scanned the horizons, saw nothing to give rise to concern, nothing we could do, no vessels in sight.

1415 – Dropped anchor for lunch at Ormos Miso on Nisos Rinia 037°24'.069N 025°13'.75E. Two from five had not enjoyed the rising swells and the strengthening winds, they were just a shade green and passed the opportunity of munching hard boiled eggs and anchovies! Still at least the beer lasted longer!

1845 Arrived at Tinos. It is a good job that we take seriously Rule No 5 – “Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means....” Otherwise we might have had a serious mishap entering Tinos harbour. Tinos is a commercial port and its main entrance, from the West is marked by a broken stone and concrete wall with large gaps between. It was dusk as we entered, from the South, and we headed for a gap in the wall. Had it not been for an eagle eyed crew spotting that there was a chain at sea level connecting the concrete wall sections we might have sailed into serious damage and had we arrived at night I shudder to think what might have happened. To find the real entrance, head straight for the wall at the eastern end and a gap opens in the wall as the breaks are turned out of line.

So we cruise the harbour front, there is the best place to moor, the not so good and the grotty place. The best place has restrictions that we cannot understand so we go for second best. After two attempts we get our anchor dropped and stern lines ashore when up roared an aging hippie on a quad motor bike. The hippie is a cross between a 60's flower power person sporting a full beard with is silk scarf in his hair and tattoos up his bare arms and lower legs showing below his cut offs, and a Hells Angel with his leather vest and black tee shirt and boots. "Ima da harba masta, whoa da skippa?" "How longa you staya?" "You go there", he pointed to the super mooring, "its a betta". We pay him the mooring fee and he explains in broken English that he will have his breakfast at a particular café next morning if we need to see him.

The log revealed that we had sailed 37 miles.

We had earned our evening beer but four of us had to be quick because Roger very kindly helped us by finishing what was left in our bottles after we had poured our first glassful, "Seemed a shame to let it get warm" said he in a most helpful tone. We started to plot over dinner!

### ***Monday 5 October 2009***

Destination Finikas on Nisos Siros 37°23'.804N 024°52'.562E

We had planned to start early because we feared that the weather might get a little windy. The Harbour Master had told us that he started work at 0800 and that we could find him at a café. Well that proved to be true, he was at the café, but he was having breakfast between 0800 and 1000 limbering up to start his day. All we wanted was a weather forecast and at 1000 it arrived in the hands of the now psyched up harbour master. He explained that he would be very busy until 1200 at which time he would begin his wind down toward the end of day! We got away at 1015 heading 270° wondering where we went wrong. Is it any wonder Greece is in debt?

The morning saw Merion trying to avoid seasickness by sleeping on the coach roof. He had his obligatory pint of diluted orange juice ready to drink so that when he was sea sick he would have something to throw up over the side. We watched as Merion, lying flat out and being rocked from side to side in the sun, wind a gentle NW F3 but freshening and gradually dropped off to sleep with his pint of orange juice balanced on his stomach. Now we all knew the inevitable outcome so being mates we dived below to find our cameras! Sure enough bit of a swell and over goes the beaker, orange juice down the shorts, Merion wakes with a start and spills even more just before he accuses us of dastardly acts. Of course we cannot speak we are falling about laughing, oh for the joys of friendship!

1300 wind has now reached NW F4 still heading 270° for the northern tip of the island of Syros. We are heading for Finikas which is on the South West end of the Island so we have to sail down the western coast of Syros to reach our destination.

1415 At 37°30'.697N 024°052'.104 we turn South and begin to run South. Wind is a nice NW F4 with a few gusts just to remind us who is boss. A quick check of the chart shows that Ormos Grammata, a sandy bay is but a couple of miles away and offers excellent protection from northerly winds. Lunch declares skipper Mick Day and so Ormos Grammata it was.

1440 We arrived to find that we were not alone at Ormos Grammata, on the beach were a couple of poor people who could not afford any clothes. Naturally, Tony, Merion and I swam ashore to offer them ours but they were shy and disappeared from sight. Again we obeyed Rule No 5 while enjoying our lunch and marked the Pilot book as a good place to return for a lunchtime anchor and swim.

The afternoon passed without incident and we arrived at Finikas 37°23'.804N 024°52'.562E with 28 miles showing on the log.

### ***Tuesday 6 October 2009***

Destination Loutra on Nisos Kythnos 37°26'.6N 024°25'.7E

Not a very early start again today. Victualing the boat takes some doing when the harbour is about 2 miles from the shops, it's a long walk. It's even further with a headache. There is not room in these pages to comment upon the evening meals ashore except to mention that everywhere we went Amstel seemed to appear as if by magic!

1020 Finikas was a reciprocal to our course of 270°, my head hurt else I would have known that it was disappearing East. Fortunately Loutra is on the North East corner of Kythnos and if you point in the right direction it is quite difficult to miss.

1030 Head's beginning to clear, (mine not the one below). The N F5 is sorting out the cobwebs, suddenly I am only person who can stomach going below, I am sailing with wimps and whusses! The seas begin to climb, its great to sit with your back to the coach roof looking at the helmsman and seeing the swell behind as high as his head. Tends to make the boat wobble a bit but Merion and Tony never saw that they were too busy calling the Great Almighty though I did not know that He lived in the deep!

There was nowhere to put in for lunch and I saw no point in going below to prepare any for my ungrateful crewmates who declined my offer of tuna fish sandwiches and fizzy pop! A day of fasting would prove good for my soul! And to add more fun to the day the wind freshened to N F8 with regular gusts of F9, 42 knots of wind and more! Now we knew we were alive, well I don't know about Merion and Tony they were not really talking to anybody! But we were zipping along quite nicely.

1445 We arrive in Loutra having travelled just 25 miles according to the log. Mick Day and I had been to Loutra before and we vaguely knew our way about. We dropped anchor roughly where we thought we ought to drop and reversed to the quay. The first person we met was this arrogant young lad who was clearly looking forward to the day when he would start shaving. "You no go there, you go here" he said pointing to a different bit of the quay. "I am Harbour Master, you do what I say". So after protracted negotiation in Greek and English, the boy in Greek and Mick in English we move the boat. Out we go, raising our anchor, turning around and coming back in again. "OK drop anchor" shouts Mick and down goes 60m of chain. On shore the boy jumps up and down, "Hey Hey Kapitan, I've been Harbour Master for 5 years why you no listen to me? Listen to me Kapitan what I say you do" and so we were warmly welcomed to Kythnos. To celebrate we wandered along the sea shore to a beach bar and drank an Amstel while the boy ranted at someone else.

### ***Wednesday 7 October 2009***

Destination Serifos, originally Ormos Livadakia where the village is built up and over the mountainside. However our eventual destination was Mega Livadhi 37°08'.5N 024°25'.8E.

We decided that it would be best to make an early start, not just to avoid another international incident with the harbour boy with the charisma bypass who uses officialdom to overcome his lack of personality, but also to try to beat the weather. Our previous experience had been that the winds got stronger in the afternoon so the sooner we reached our destination the sooner we would be out of strong winds. We were thinking of Tony and Merion, it was proving no fun for them to know that as soon as we poked our nose into open water they would be Hughie and Ralph until we reached our destination. Their shoulders are broad and we laugh now but it really was not fun at the time however they both stood up to their ordeal extremely well.

True to form we set off at 0900 heading 160 winds a gentle N F7 but by 1000 we were in a steady N F8 with gusts over 50 knots. The only good thing that can be said about these winds is that you get to where you are going in double quick time but you do have to hang on tight! The log is a bit sparse in detail on that day, not simply because I was still the only person who could stomach going below but simply because the very act of going below presented unnecessary dangers. In a F8 Gale in the English Channel visibility would be poor, it would be as black as could be, torrential rain and mountainous seas. Out in the Cyclades, the visibility was good, the seas were huge but without large breaking white caps (there was some spray but nothing compared to UK gales) and the sun was shining. Notwithstanding the significant differences, we were being bounced about and any unnecessary movement risked falling and injury so I stayed on deck unless it was absolutely necessary to check the chart and confirm our position.

1405 We reached the bay of Ormos Livadakia and we attempted to moor at the quay at Livadakia but this proved impossible. The bay offered no shelter to winds from the North and there was a fetch of at least two feet blowing across the bay which made it impossible to anchor and moor safely stern to the mooring. We had to find an alternative mooring but there is no other port of harbour on the southern end of Nisos Serifos.

Roger and Mick both remember a little anchorage that they had found one lunchtime some years previously, perhaps that would be a safe harbour for the night. Big breath of air and down below I go. Out come the Pilot book and after a few minutes I find an entry that reads, "Mega Livadhi 37°08'.5N 024°25'.8E An inlet NE of Ak Kiklops. It is reported to offer good shelter from the *Meltemi*" and did we need good shelter from the *Meltemi*!

The problem to reach Mega Livadhi was that it was on the West side of the island and we were on the South side of the Island with a Northerly wind blowing F8-9. We now have to round the point and beat up into the wind to find the inlet. It goes without saying that Merion and Tony are not in the best of spirits, Merion has turned ghostly white while Tony had defaced our Ensign!

1600 We find the inlet, its entrance is SW/NE and it turns N/S, almost perfect. The anchorage has steep sides so there is no chance of winds from East or West but its valley opens gently to the North. We close the shore and drop anchor in 5m of water 350 meters from shore and drop back. The anchor bites and we sit tight 400 meters from shore with 28 knots of wind over the masthead holding a transit for 10 minutes without moving. Steady as a rock! While the anchor was definitely holding Mick and I had a conversation, we were unhappy to rely upon the anchor in this unknown anchorage in 28 knots of wind and go to bed. Extra protection was required. A rope ashore. Fortunately there was a convenient tree so out came the duck, on went the engine and in went an assortment of lines. Half an hour later and we had a line ashore. Now if the anchor slips we would still be held head to wind by the line, we could sleep safely. The log showed we had sailed 38 miles.

Our original plan was to visit Sifnos the next day then return to Paros on Friday but the weather forecast predicted strengthening winds from the North that were estimated to reach force 10 on Thursday and Friday. Paros was due East from the Island of Serifos and therefore a beam reach if we returned the next day. Alternatively, if we returned to Paros from Sifnos we would need to go close hauled and beat our way North East into wind and sea. Though the direct route would be a longer passage we decided that it offered the best of the alternatives. An early start was again planned to try to beat the high winds which tended to build later in the day.

### **Thursday 8 October 2009**

Destination Paros 37°05'.258N 025°09'.153E.

0400 Still dark, we expected to look through the dogleg out to sea and see the sea state calm and the winds light (usual overnight calm); we were wrong, the entrance was boiling, there was no advantage to leave in the dark so it was back to bed.

0630 Mick and myself were in the dinghy getting ready to go ashore to retrieve the shore line. The engine pull cord snapped as we tried to start the engine. It was too dangerous to use the dinghy on oars alone because the northerly wind might blow the craft out toward the entrance and out to sea. The only option was to swim ashore, who was going to go? It was only 400 yards. One crew member has fingers on his hands, another had a bone in his leg, another had just done his hair while the fourth breaks wind when in water which left yours truly to go over the side. Fortunately, I carry a pair of 'American Diver' mini fins, which I can recommend to all sailors as a useful bit of kit. The water was cold but I only had to swim one way as I had arranged with Tony that he would haul me back on the end of the line. I returned on board welcomed like a hero, one person had my towel ready, another a hot drink, a third had the hot shower ready. Soon I was warm and dry and we were ready to weigh anchor.

0800 "OK Mick up anchor" called Skipper Mick. Whirr Whirr grunt! The winch would not lift the anchor. We dropped a bit of chain, motored forwards and backwards and tried again but to no avail. The anchor was well and truly stuck in 16 feet of water. We had three options (1) Cut the chain and leave the anchor, (2) Call for a diver or (3) Go over the side, swim down and free it ourselves.

Option 1 found no favour because we needed the anchor to moor in other harbours and 60 meters of chain is expensive. Option 2 equally found no favour, we were miles from nowhere, there probably was not a diver on the island so we would have to wait for one to arrive by ferry and that would take time and be very expensive so option 3 needed investigation. Who could go over the side? One crew member has fingers on his hands, another had a bone in his leg..... we had already been there and I had only just got warm! Not only that but my shorts were soggy and cold! Out came the mini-fins and divers mask on went the cold soggy shorts and over the side I went.

What the Pilot book failed to warn us was that at some time in the past a ship has abandoned 500 meters of its anchor chain on the sea bed. As we had glided forward the previous day our anchor had hooked this chain and as we had fallen back our hook had curled underneath the chain hence our transit held good, it never was going to move and our line ashore was superfluous! The problem now was how to get the anchor out, the ships chain was too heavy to lift. I would not have sufficient lung capacity to allow me to swim down 16 feet and dig a hole under the anchor. This called for a Weetabix moment.

Back onboard I took a lifeline with a karabiner on each end and tied the lightest line we had to one end then with the anchor chain taut I pulled myself down the chain to the seabed and hooked the Karabiner into the back of the anchor. With skipper Mick on the helm and Roger on the winch, carefully motored forward keeping the anchor chain taught but playing out chain so that the anchor fell forward on top of the ships chain. Then Sea Fever was put into reverse and she motored back still playing out chain until she was 20 meters behind the anchor. The thin line that was attached to the anchor was held by Tony and Merion at the stern and, on my signal, with a short sharp tug the anchor came free. What a feeling of exhilaration, such teamwork, fantastic!

0930 We eventually set off in 23 knots of wind N F6 on a course roughly 180°. As soon as we rounded the southern tip of the island we turned onto our course for Paros 090°. Initially we were on engine simply because being in the lee of the island left the wind dirty and inconsistent but as soon as we cleared the eastern tip of the island we decided that a little sail well reefed would be the order of the day. Unfortunately whether it was the wind or some other barrier to good communication but when the skipper called for “a little bit of the Jib Sheet” and for the jib sheet reefing line to be released what we did not expect was the whole bl\*\*dy lot flying loose in 25 knots of wind! There were a few expletives but we soon had the sheet under control and good order was restored. Again I was the only person able to go below as we roller coasted over the gigantic swells and pitched about buffeted by winds that peaked that day at 40 knots.

It was a long day, most uncomfortable for our two friends with the tender tummies, tedious for the rest of us as we had to hang on as best we could. Nobody fancied eating much and so we survived the day on ginger nut biscuits and bottled water. This really must be sailing at its worst, course due East for seven hours, sails set in one position hardly needing much trimming, hanging on for dear life, nothing to do because you cannot let go, life jackets on and safety lines always clipped on – mind numbingly boring!

1700 Arrived in Paros one day early having sailed 48 miles in the day, but there was no room in the harbour so we picked up a bouy, had a beer and waited until someone left. Our agent in Paros told us that a boat was leaving at 1800 and that we could have that berth. The boat left at 1900 but who's counting? We were home, safe and sound, Merion and Tony were back with us having recovered from their sea sickness and we were ready for another night on the town. But first a beer. Now you might remember that I mentioned earlier that Roger had swept up the half finished bottles of beer before we had had time to finish them ourselves well our plotting came to a head! Remember too how he vehemently rejected Mythos beer as being horrendously foul, well....

We had a few bottles of Mythos on board, so we opened 4 bottles of Amstel and 1 bottle of Mythos then found one of our empty Amstel bottles. We poured a glass of Mythos and decanted the remainder of the Mythos into the Amstel bottle

and passed it, with the glass, up to Roger while the rest of us had our Amstel. We all sat on deck commenting on how good the beer was after the rotten day at sea. Roger too enjoyed his beer joining in the pleasantries but knowing something was wrong. I have to say he was not very happy when he found out that he had been drinking Mythos but he lived to tell the tale.

### ***Friday 9 October 2009***

I was looking forward to Friday morning and another trip to the bakers. The young lady was pleased to see me and I have to report that she was more modestly dressed, today it was more like two boys fighting under a blanket! There were a number of maintenance jobs that needed to be done on Sea Fever but there was no point in us all staying on board to do them. Roger, Merion and Tony agreed that if they went off sight seeing in the morning that they would clean out the boat in the afternoon, meanwhile Mick and I would do the jobs in the morning and go sightseeing (or find a bar) in the afternoon.

### ***Saturday 10 October 2009***

Mick Day had arranged the ferry tickets and had booked us on the Vodaphone fast cat from Paros to Piraeus leaving Paros at 12.00 noon. In plenty of time we sat in our favourite bar having a beer when a big RoRo came in at 11.50 am. "That's not ours" said Mick, "We want the Vodaphone". Fortunately the bar owner casually said, "That's your ferry, it's the only one that comes in today!" We downed the beer and ran like stink just getting on board before they raised the ramp. Apparently Hellenic Seaways had taken off the Vodaphone fast cat for maintenance and replaced it with the RoRo but not told us when we picked up the tickets the day before.

Anyway, apart from getting lost in Piraeus Port the remainder of our trip was uneventful and we arrived home unscathed and none the worse for our experiences. We had sailed a total of 176 miles and had a couple of adventures on the way. Tony kindly came around a few days later with a CD of photos as a permanent reminder of the trip, as old men we will be able to sit around a fire and say "do you remember when....."

Mick McQuade  
October 2009



## Christmas Rally Dinner Limericks 13 Dec. 2009

### **Disclaimer**

The Limericks are reproduced from the drunken scrawls collected on a variety of formats (beer mats) on the evening; the editor accepts no liability for any of the content.

There was a young lady from Daventry  
Who thought yachting quite elementary  
She hanked on her sail  
But hit a blue wail  
And what Mike said was very inflamitory.

*We now have a new lady commodore  
Huh? – Never had one of those before!  
Yet she'll steer a good course  
And have none of your sauce  
've you a Rum when you've come ashore.*

*Sam & Monica*

### **Armadek**

*We now have a lady commodore  
Whom some thought was a bit of a bore  
But by being fleet with end of a sheet  
She soon became part of folk lore.*

*Anon*

We now have a lass commodore  
But girls cope with two jobs and more  
Like all of her gender  
She's soft as a fender  
And still does Hon. Sec. as before.

*Chris Geere  
Providence poet in residence*

We now have a lady commodore who to the  
right of the chairman now sits  
When the commodore's flag up she hauls  
Perhaps she should put up two . . . . .!

*John Green & Crew*



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