

Crow's Nest

London Calling Taking London by storm!



If he thinks it's
walkies in the middle
of the shipping lane
he's got another
think coming!



Operation the mad
Doctors game



Cutting my boat in half??

Editors Notes

We get some great feedback for the Crow's nest but it

only works if you contribute both write-ups and pictures.

We are not all William Shakespeare Keats or Browning but don't worry we will spell check everything and where necessary edit the grammar. I try not to cut out information but some times it is necessary for legal reasons or just space. For the most part it's your words, but you have to start by sending me something.

A cruise write up (whether with the club or on your own) a funny story like the 'Hold Tank' in this edition or a 'how to' write up, remember, you may know how, but someone else is struggling because they don't. So take an hour or so to write an article please include pictures if possible. Keep this great publication going.

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Commodores Corner

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Crow's Nest. It has been a busy and successful season for SPYC with a full programme of trips and events and it has been great reading about them in the magazine. My thanks to Mark Abbott for stepping up to help edit this and the Summer cruise edition while Sarah is up to her ears with work.

Can I also echo his call for more articles from you all? As well as the club events I have enjoyed reading about the DIY projects and boat maintenance problems, albeit sometimes at a safe distance! I know a lot of you do your own work on your boats and we would love to hear about your experiences, particularly if it goes wrong! Please don't feel that what you do is too straightforward to be of interest to others, you will be giving confidence to your fellow members to have a go. We look forward to hearing from you.

Plans for 2025 have progressed well and we can look forward to a great season. So my best wishes for the holidays and I look forward to sailing in good company next year.

Stuart

Don't forget the photo competition



Picture by David Brief

London 30th May– 2nd June

SPYC hits the smoke and learns some lessons

The trip from Shotley down to Queensborough (30 May 2024) and on to St. Katherine Dock Marina (31 May 2024) was an 'interesting' sail. Here are some observations from some of the skippers on the trip.

Paul Rowden in Porschia departed Shotley at a civilised 1000 hrs allowing the three of us on board to have a hearty cooked breakfast setting us up for the passage to Queensborough. We set off under full sail and it was also the first opportunity to give the new Featherstream prop a good test and it did seem to make a difference although hard to quantify as each day is different.

We had a smooth passage through Medusa Channel and down the Wallet to the Spitway. We arrived a bit earlier than I predicted, so we cautiously crossed the Spitway, then back on to our course south avoiding the ships that were heading up to the Thames.

The SS Richard Montgomery provided a Kodak moment for the crew and it always surprises me how close you get when using the Medway. As we passed the Richard Montgomery, we could see ominous black clouds approaching and started to get our foulies on. Unfortunately, I made the error of thinking we could get into the Medway and drop the sails before it arrived. I was wrong! I had misjudged how fast it was moving and the squall hit before we dropped the sails. A huge lesson learned and thankfully Porschia's deep fin keel meant we simply rounded up into the wind with the Genoa flogging. So, engine on, roll away the Genoa and drop the mainsail. Thankfully we emerged unscathed.

Queensborough was fun with three boats tied up to a buoy and each other. With spare food onboard we invited Kevin from Serenity to join us for dinner and he kindly arrived bearing gifts of an alcoholic kind.

As the wind picked up, it got really noisy as the boats were pulling at each other. Thankfully James from Fortuna suggested slackening the lines to allow the boats to move more independently. It was a great idea and we all got to sleep on a very windy night tied to a buoy.

James Moncrieff in Fortuna After sharing a lock with Kevin on Serenity, we got away smoothly on Fortuna, with my crew Alex and his father Bradley. Kevin sailed off ahead as we crossed Dovercourt Bay, and we were overtaken later by Porschia, both 34 ft-ers. In turn we passed Derek on Asgard, the LM 27, before sailing through the Swin Spitway almost without noticing.

With full main and genoa, it was a comfortable sail down Middle Deep, and Fortuna was loping along at a lazy gait. We made good time in pleasant conditions and eventually joined the main shipping channel coming down Black Deep. Off to port, we could see the rusted old WWII gun turrets on stilts, looking like clusters of 'creatures' from the War of the Worlds. As we neared the main east going Thames shipping channel, we noticed a large squall approaching from somewhere over Southend. We watched it for a while and thought we could get far enough south fast enough to be able to duck below it. As is often the case with sailing, our plan was scuppered by a cargo ship coming out of the Thames. We watched it for a short time and knew we couldn't cross in front of it so shaped to turn to starboard and go parallel and then behind it.

As we turned, we hardened the main and genoa, but as we completed our turn the wind hit us hard, well ahead of the rain. It came through around F9 and we suddenly found ourselves facing the sea to port and the sky to starboard. It took two of us to force the tiller to windward to overcome the heel. The rudder eventually bit but we were massively over canvased. We dumped the main and genoa but it took some time before the wind eased just enough for Fortuna to come upright. The crew quickly hauled in the sails as I took us through the wind to heave-to. Normally this takes the sting out of the wind and things settle down a bit . . . but not this time. The wind continued shrieking, and we were fore reaching at over four knots. We let the boom out, so it would be head to wind and we could drop the main without turning the whole boat head to wind. I hooked on and went forward to pull it down, as there would be more friction to overcome with the boom off to leeward. I was able to squeeze between the mast and the backed genoa, so felt quite secure as we got the main down and I clipped the halyard to prevent the wind lifting the front of the sail.



The crew tidied the loops of reefing line before we set about furling the genoa. With the sail backed to starboard, it had a clean curve around the foil; and while the pressure on the sail made it more difficult to furl, it did keep the tension on the sail so that it furlled tightly.

Phew! Time to start the engine.

We hadn't realised that it had started raining during all that and for a few moments, we just sat there like drowned rats looking at each other in a bemused state as the wind howled around us. It took us a few minutes to get our bearings and head towards the channel into the Medway. Along the way, we took heart from the fact that two jobs normally required shortly before berthing had been done, and then we held all our breath as we motored past the protruding pieces of the SS Montgomery.

As we entered the Medway and turned towards The Swale, we talked about getting ashore for a few beers and a hearty meal, only to find there were no SPYC boats on the pontoon for us to raft up to. After a call to the harbourmaster, we realised that the earlier arrivals were rafted up on mooring buoys. I called Paul and we agreed that Fortuna would raft with Porschia and Serenity. Cygnet and Spring Bolt were on the mooring behind.

We dropped below both mooring buoys and I brought Fortuna up into the tide so I could ferry glide in onto Porschia. I was keeping the revs low as I tested how much throttle I would need to stem the tide when suddenly the wind slammed into us again, forcing us toward Spring Bolt. Some hard shoving by Mike on Spring Bolt and my crewman Alex managed to keep us apart. I powered further upwind and drew alongside Porschia, realising that it was now more a case of stemming the wind than stemming the tide. With enough revs to do around 4 knots, we sat level with Porschia and with only movement of the tiller we slipped sideways and were alongside her. We came at her sideways faster than I would approach a pontoon, but we were both well fendered for a soft landing. The crew on Porschia and my crew got us secured while I continued to play the throttle to keep us in one place. Fortunately, the mooring buoy had three lines, so Porschia would not have to take our weight as well as her own.

No going ashore, no hearty meal in a pub, and no showers or onshore heads!

Fortunately, we had a few cold beers onboard to toast our arrival, and bottle of red wine to wash down the pasties and sausage rolls (the next day's lunch). Over dinner, I apologised to my crew for allowing myself to be so distracted by the thoughts of passing below the squall, and avoiding the cargo ship, that I did not drop three reefs in the main and genoa as soon as I saw the squall approaching. Lesson firmly learnt. Exhausted, we settled down to a night of rocking, rolling and yawing, to the howl of wind through the rigging and squeals of complaining fenders. Mercifully, it eased around 0300, allowing some sleep, before coming back around 0530.



[Nigel and Helen Baker in Sanguine](#) We set off with our crew of our son, Josh, and his partner, Niamh, along with trusty sea dog, Monty. We were hopeful that we would be able to fly our cruising chute. The sail came with the boat and we had been learning how to use it throughout May. YouTube and Tim have both been very helpful on that front. The weather gods were kind to us (at least for the first part of the day) and we were able to fly it as we sailed down Middle Deep. Eventually, the wind angle changed, and we had to drop it.

As we sailed down West Swin, we were watching the sky with some trepidation. There was an angry looking line of extremely dark cloud over the land. We were just thinking about putting in a reef when the wind squall hit. Much, much earlier than we had thought, given where the cloud line was. Sanguine heeled over and rounded up. Monty and Niamh were not impressed as they tried to cling on. We had no control, so put the engine on to try to give us some drive. (I'm not sure why we didn't try to hove-to. Probably because we hadn't yet tried it in this boat). This isn't a picture of the truly awful black cloud line although it shows what was starting. Strangely, everyone was too busy to record it!



Eventually, we managed to set to a sensible amount of sail, and we headed off towards Queenborough. We dropped sail as we entered the Medway and made our way to our station for the night. We were on a mooring buoy with Cygnet, Spring Bolt and Asgard. It turns out that you can only book the pontoon if you are longer than 15m and there was a large motorboat due in from Ramsgate later on in the evening. Needless to say, the motorboat never appeared, but I'm not surprised given the weather.

Being on a mooring buoy is not ideal when you have a dog that you need to get to shore twice a day. The trot boat took us over in the evening, and told us that we could moor against the pontoon for 15 minutes in the morning.

The night on the mooring buoy was not very pleasant. We felt like we were in the middle of a Newton's cradle. Fortunately, everyone was well-fendered up and there was no damage to any of the boats.

Once in London life gets better!

[Peter Cox in Hartford](#) On the first evening the marina kindly laid on a welcoming drinks reception on their floating events platform. There was a vast amount of booze that even the heroic efforts of SPYC were unable to finish but the marina had said that they didn't expect to find anything left in the morning, nudge nudge, wink wink, so rather than offend, SPYC members duly stocked their boats' bar lockers.



On the second evening, a couple who were resident berth holders kindly invited us to the husband's birthday party, again on the events platform. Whether this was because our boats were moored around the platform, and in one member's case actually moored against it, and this was pre-guilt over any possible noise, was left unexplored. However, the excellent and friendly party proved to be a good warm-up for the club meal at a good Turkish restaurant in the Dock complex. Kilikya's Gastro, which some members had been to on a non-SPYC visit the previous year and thus recommended it, remained true to form, good food, drink, and good value by inner London standards.



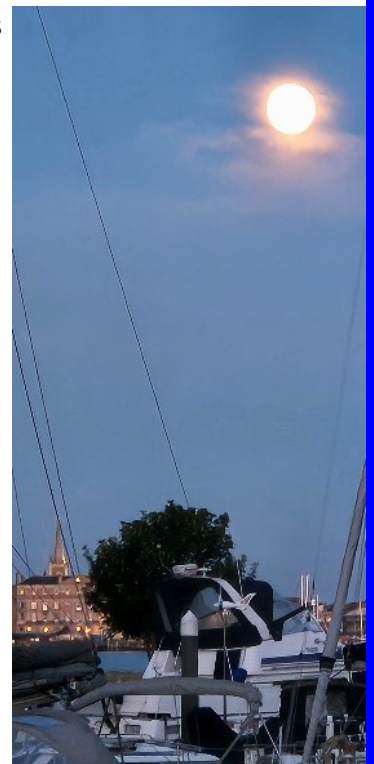
Breakfasts and lunches were not on the organised itinerary but there was a huge range of eateries and bars within the marina, let alone the tourist attractions and walks in the surrounding area.

[Back to Sanguine](#) Asgard and Spring Bolt decided that the weather was too horrible to sail up the Thames and decamped to Chatham.

Peter, having the luxury of a motor boat which can go much faster than the yachts, was able to avoid the squalls and motored up to St Kats in one day.

At 0800 Sanguine backed out of the raft and moored up on the pontoon to take Monty ashore. We were hoping that we could hang out there until we needed to set off later in the morning, but a huge fishing boat arrived. It was clear that we would have to move. We decided to set off and make our way up the Thames. It was very windy and the sea was quite rough. Some of the crew sensibly decided that it would be better below decks. Niamh spent the early part of the journey trying to sleep and Monty did his utmost best to stay really close to her. We motored out of the Medway and turned to go up the Thames. After about three hours the wind dropped and the sea calmed down, although it remained grey all day.

[James Moncrieff in Fortuna](#) We decided to leave early, as Predict Wind was suggesting an increasing circle of rain building up out where the Medway met the



Thames. The wind had eased a bit, and sitting head to wind on the buoy allowed us to raise the main before casting off. We chugged out into a confused, churned up sea as we left Queenborough behind, vowing never to return!

Out in the Thames we butted our way into the ebb tide and wind in the high 20s. After the events of the previous day, this felt uncomfortable but not difficult. Fortuna had showed what a tough little boat she is, for a 29 ft bilge keel-er, totally unperturbed throughout the whole experience, unlike us, and now she just dug her shoulder into the waves, relishing the challenge. We were the constraint, not her.

None of us could remember when the conditions changed as the wind dropped and the sea morphed into a relatively benign state. Unfortunately, the cloud didn't lift far off the water all day, and we passed along the Thames with very little scenery to look at beyond the shoreline. Things became clearer beyond the Tidal Barrier as the Canary Wharf buildings emerged into view, and later Tower Bridge suddenly appeared around a corner. Locked in with Porschia, Sanguine, Cygnet and Serenity, we were there.

St. Katherine Dock Marina As it was Shotley's first visit to St. Kats, they had allowed us to use their party pontoon and provided us with free drinks. (Actually, it wasn't, but they seemed to think that it was.) There was much discussion about the first day and we did our best to get through the freebies. Eventually, everyone went to their own boat to eat. The next day (1 June) was a rest day and the various crews went to do their own thing in London. We all met up at a Middle Eastern restaurant in the Marina for dinner in the evening. The food was good, and the restaurant was very organised. A pleasant time was had by all.



St. Kats to Shotley 2nd June We would have liked an earlier start as it's a long way from St. Kats to Shotley, but they don't run the lock before 8 am on a Sunday, so even though the tide was suitable, we weren't able to get out until about 0830. They like to fill the lock completely, much like the Dutch locks that we were to experience later in the year, so eventually there were 9 boats locking out. As Kevin (Serenity) said, Sunday was pure blue skies and a light breeze. What a way to see the London skyline and landmarks.



We set off down the Thames. Shortly after leaving St Kats, Cygnet started making a dreadful knocking noise. It didn't seem to be slowing her down, but Diana was very concerned. Sanguine stayed back with her. We tried to raise South Dock to see if Cygnet could put in there, but they were not answering any form of communication. A helpful Police launch came over, but their engineer wasn't working that day. Finally, Diana decided that as the engine wasn't vibrating and there didn't appear to be any loss of power, it was probably OK to carry on. There is a definite issue with the Thames, in as much as there aren't many bail out options. Eventually, the

knocking stopped. A haul out later at Shotley found that half the rope cutter had fallen off and that must have been what the noise was.

Predictably, the wind was in a direction which meant that motor sailing was the order of the day, although James was determined to sail. Consequently, he made much broader tacks than the rest of us and took correspondingly longer to get back. It was a fairly uneventful sail back although the tidal stream was much stronger than the Imray tidal atlas would suggest. We arrived back at Shotley at 23:30. Fortunately, it wasn't our first time back to Shotley in the dark, so we did not find it too difficult. James arrived much later (I think it was about 0200) but I guess that is the penalty for being a purist!

Lessons learned

If you see black clouds, get the canvas down or at least reef – a lot.

Queenborough is horrible in the wind and on a mooring buoy shared with others.

Don't believe the tidal stream data from Imray!

When planning a London trip leave on a weekday, so you can make use of the earlier locking time.

A Boat of 2 Halves Part 2

Mark Abbott, Ibis You might remember for the last issue I am building a nesting dinghy, i.e., a 11' dinghy which splits in two a 5' bow end that fits inside a 6' stern end. She will, I hope, be able to take an outboard, row and sail, but as this is my own design, she might be a large plant pot in the front garden?

Back to work then, as I wanted to sail her, I needed a daggerboard hole, (I'm sure you dinghy sailors out there have a special name for the 'hole'?) Obviously,



it's not just a hole, the boat would sink. It's actually a water-tight box, higher than the water line with a hole top and bottom allowing the dagger board to be

pushed through, hopefully without falling out the other side. This box has to be in the front (anything in the back would foul the nesting) this is good as the rowing seat can be built into it. I also added a back seat with a "V" cut into it, although quite low it does perform the extra task of holding the bow centred when nested.

So, to fiberglass. I have already had a play with fiberglass, as I have coated the inside of the boards when they were flat, before assembly this had reasonable but not perfect results, with small air bubbles and changes in colour depending on how thick the epoxy was. I had tried both epoxy then fiberglass and fiberglass then epoxy, both seem to be recommended equally on YouTube? In the end I went for both wet the wood with epoxy stick the fiberglass on, stretching and pulling it to get the creases out and then epoxy over the top with lashing of epoxy so that I had no dry spots! Easy-ish on a flat piece of wood not so on an upside-down boat hull! I can see you thinking, 'why didn't he do both sides before putting it together?' the answer is strength and cosmetics, basically it will add to the strength of the joints whilst hiding them. Folding stretching and cutting complete she looked.....shiny. While this is all drying, I turn my attention to the rudder and keel/daggerboard. Remember I said I want to sail her.

I started by making an angular daggerboard but then decided, because, my aim is to sail upright without getting wet (in a gentlemanly fashion) the daggerboard should be weighted. I cut a letter box into the middle piece of 3 identical bits of ply. Then gluing one side and the middle together I poured lead into the letterbox, sealing it in by gluing it to the other side. It's fair to say, I might have overegged it a bit, as the dagger board weighs more than the boat, but seeing as I am top heavy it seemed important to make the dinghy bottom heavy. The rudder I'm not so happy with, it works but is a bit cumbersome being made of wood, I might have another go at this with Stainless Steel?



Back to the boat, and the moment you have all been waiting for, cutting her in half! Remember, I had place washers between the bulk-



heads to allow me to pass a saw through, well it worked. She cut square and true, with no pinging of boards and what's more after separation she joined seamlessly back together. Nesting has worked, but in truth my design has given her a high bow, which makes her less nested, more perched, but I can live with that.



Next time I fall foul of the mistakes of my past, Gel-coat, Flowcoat, paint, remember those lashings of epoxy, help!!

Clacton Air Show (or not)

Brightlingsea 23-25th

Nigel Baker, Sanguine One look at the wind forecast for the second day of the Clacton Airshow was enough to know that some skippers would not want to leave Shotley, and no-one would want to be anchored in the Wallet to watch a much-reduced flying programme. In the end with 4 boats instead of the planned 6, we decided to write-off our Friday sail and head to Brightlingsea on Saturday morning.

The skippers and crew of Echoes (Sue, Paul, Mark and Veronica), Ibis (Mark and Sarah), Porschia (Paul, Stuart, Chris and John) and Sanguine (Nigel, Helen and Monty (the cockapoo)) met up on Friday evening on F pontoon for drinks, nibbles, tall tales and laughs (perhaps this should be what we do ahead of other Club cruises?). Mark and Sarah then led Nigel and Helen astray to the Sailing Club for a couple of rounds of drinks and fun chat about life, the universe and everything.

Saturday dawned with less wind than predicted but rain threatening. Echoes made an early start with Ibis following a little later. Sanguine got off to a slow start due to the need to make sure Monty's tanks were empty. Porschia left last after some debate about whether to sail or drive to Brightlingsea. They made the right choice and sailed.

The 5 hour trip around the Naze and up the Wallet was wet but relatively calm. Some skippers and crew braved the elements and tested their wet-weather gear while others were able to stay under cover and dry. The timing of the trip meant we were all able to cross the shallows close to shore and join the Colne channel at the Colne Point Number 1 buoy.

Sanguine, at least, had the luxury of tracking Ibis on AIS knowing their draught is deeper and the tide was rising. By 4pm we were all tied up safely: Echoes and



Porschia in the marina and Sanguine and Ibis on the visitor's pontoon.

Winkies was booked for 1830 and the 12 of us took our seats promptly for some of the best fish and chips in Essex and certainly some of the biggest portions. After eating our fill and more chat and laughter, we said our goodnights. Those on Echoes and Porschia opted to head back to their berths in the marina while Mark and Sarah again led Nigel and Helen



astray, this time to the University Rowing Club. After a long day bunks were calling and so after a couple of drinks we headed back to the pontoon in the trot boat.

So, as is common on SPYC cruises, the plan had to be adaptable and was adapted. But a lot of fun was had and sailing friendships were deepened. A long way to go for a fish and chip supper? Some crews would say yes, way too far. I disagree.



Bradwell 27-28th July

David Brief, Jester Stuart Robinson, Keith Lovering and I finished a short cruise by joining the weekend at

Bradwell. We had spent the previous days on the Crouch and Roach and spent Friday night on a bouy in Pyefleet Creek. We were treated to the first of two glorious sights. First, the most amazing sunset at Pyefleet Creek which as Keith pointed out included the green light that on rare occasions appears just as the sun disappears. The second was on Saturday morning. After breakfast, we took the last of the ebb out of the Colne and broad-reached to Bench Head. As we approached, we saw a line of about thirty old gaffers coming out of the Blackwater and running down to the mark. They were a magnificent sight and the leaders were setting as much canvas as they could carry with extra headsails and even sails set under the boom. We then tacked up to Bradwell in company with the fleet being polite and ducking sterns and tacking off to avoid inconveniencing



Sunset on the black water

The New Club Website

The Club website is being upgraded by Paul Armstrong and Nigel Baker the objective is to meet all the concerns of the old site while not changing the operations to much. (Realising that some of use old dogs don't like new tricks.)

New functions include -

Online annual renewal you will be able to renew your annual subscription to the Club via the website. This is in recognition that our membership list is at the moment separate to the various lists held on the system.

Much quicker to refresh-Speed is everything today and a site that doesn't crash or slow to a snails pace will keep members using it.

New register for club trips— This will mainly allow for a greater amount of data to be captured but will also allow Crewpool to register there interest in an event.

Learn more at the AGM

Titchmarsh 3-4th August



Mark Abbott, Ibis This was my first club cruise with not only my children but also grandchildren. I vaguely remember the amount of equipment that is required to overnight a 3 month old baby and a 2 year old. It turned out, I hadn't remembered at all and once it was stowed or not I started to question the whole idea. I even had to shed some Fray Ben-tos!

Anyway, with baby surrounded by pillows in the fore-peak and a 2 year old, life jacketed and harnessed to the boat we set off. We sailed out of Harwich but on turning SE to Hamford Water it was apparent we would be close hauled, not ideal with young kids on board. So we dropped the jib and motored up to Titchmarsh. Now a 2 year old tied to boat very quickly realises that everywhere they want to go to is beyond the reach of the harness and to show their disapproval they start stomping around and growling not unlike a caged tiger. So not the relaxing yachting experience I'd like. On berthing immediate exploration is required, so a trip with me to the Marina Office. Here



Penelope explains to the lady behind the counter how we got there. The lady behind the counter listens intently to the 2 year old yacht master. Back to the boat and a late lunch before an exploration or the marina wall, if you have never been up

there it's actually worth the short walk, nature at it's most abundant, running for cover from the shrill screams of a 2 year old finding another butterfly.

Back to the boat and we load up our BBQ food (which seems to be several animal carcasses larger than last year when it was just dad and I?

For those who have not been up there, the BBQ area is a big area full of fruit trees perfect for young children to run around and is far enough from the water too. We cook our steaks while Penny runs around and introduces herself to everyone and Atlas is laid on a coat to look up at the late afternoon sky. The weekend has proved to achieve exactly what I wanted for my daughter and son-in-law to experience that old saying that, 'a change is good as a rest' having the chance to talk to grownups is certainly a change for them.

We invite everyone back to Ibis so we can put the kids to bed but carry on the evening. Bill Wallace-King from Santana turned up with a bottle of red which I absent



minedly put to one side and poured him a glass of chateauf-du-bin-liner from a box. (a few weeks later I open it on the Burn-ham trip and wow, now I have to clear my conscience and buy him something of equal measure.)

Later that night with daughter and Penny in my cabin and Clem in with baby in forepeak. I found myself in the saloon and guess what no one woke up until 0800 in the morning, result! Late morning brought a bit of sailing but the highlight was the panic when the coastal steamer headed towards us on it's way up Hamford Water to the explosives factory.

Would I do it again? Titchmarsh is just far enough definitely no further. Yes, I was tired at the end of the weekend, but is it worth seeing yachting through the eyes of a 2 year old, with pirates, ducks that talk and butterflies a resounding yes.

If you think this is a trip for your grand children next year, let the committee know I'm sure they will look at ways to make it even more of an adventure.



Should I have dived into the shipping channel to free my prop?

[Nigel Barker, Sanguine](#) The passage to Ostend, at the beginning of the SPYC summer cruise to the Netherlands, started at 2am. Three boats locked out together: Echoes, Porschia and Sanguine. The moon was really full and bright and motorsailing out to Roughs Tower in the 5 knot northerly wind was almost like a daylight sail. By 4am the sun had risen making it a bit easier to avoid the large ships in the Inner and Outer Sunk. At 7.30am we felt confident to raise the cruising chute and use the 5 knots of wind but with less than 6 knots of boat speed over the ground the engine had to stay on. By 10am the wind had dropped further and the chute came down.



At around 1.15pm Porschia sent a message to Dover Coastguard informing them that they had become tangled in a long length of floating rope with buoys attached. They asked the Coastguard to issue a warning to ships in the southerly TSS to avoid them because they had had to shut down their engine and there was insufficient wind to make any progress across the lane.

We were quite close by and so motored closer to offer assistance. We thought we would be able to tow them out of the shipping channel. We got close enough to shout across to Porschia and that was our mistake. The floating line had somehow come away from Porschia and was now heading in our direction. Paul and Ivan shouted a warning but too late to prevent the line getting caught around our rudder. I cut about 10m away from the rudder and thought we were clear of it all. I was wrong. As Helen went into gear to move away we saw to our horror that the line was under us. We immediately went into neutral but the couple of seconds of prop spinning was all it took to tangle the line around our prop. Now what?

I am a BSAC Advanced Diver with many 100s of dives. I also do quite a lot of snorkelling. The sea was flat calm, the underwater visibility was excellent and the water was warmer than 16 degrees Celsius. I got my swimfins and snorkelling gear on, Helen tied a strong line around my chest and I lowered myself into the water off the back of the boat. I could clearly see around 20cm of the prop shaft was wrapped in the floating line. I asked Helen to pass down the serrated knife we keep in the cockpit for emergencies. I dived under the boat and began to unwind the rope from the shaft. That cleared about 5m of line that I cut and passed up to James. The remaining line had a riding turn that was so tight I could not unwind it. To free that I dived down several times and cut a bit off the shaft each time. After about 5 minutes of cutting all the rope was off the shaft.

James had hauled in the 2 buoys and around 150m of the floating rope that remained on the surface. After around 15 minutes I was back on board getting dry, the line had been pulled aboard and Helen had tested the engine would go into gear and there was no unusual vibration.

Was going into the water the right thing to do? On that day, in those conditions, with my skills, I would say yes. We were a long way off shore, in a shipping lane with no means of moving under power or sail. After 15 minutes our prop was clear and we were moving across the shipping lane under power. Would I always jump in? Absolutely not. If the sea had been rougher, the hull could have knocked me unconscious or I could have floated away. If the sea had been colder I could have experienced cold shock. If the visibility had been poorer I could have become entangled in the line and been in real danger.

Our lessons learnt: 1) Porschia did the right first thing and contacted Dover Coastguard to warn other shipping in the TSS that they could not move due to lack of wind. The other vessels acted swiftly to alter course and steer around us. 2) We have a duty to offer assistance to vessels that need it. You have to do that in a way that does not endanger your own vessel. We should have stood off Porschia a lot further until we knew they really needed our help. 3) If conditions, skills and equipment allow then getting in the water to free a prop can be the right thing to do.

Editors Notes

Did you Know?

The North Sea has a high concentration of marine debris, with a median of 19 items per square kilometer (km²). This is higher than the median concentration for other regional seas, which range from 9 to 13 items km².

Here are some other details about marine debris in the North Sea:

Plastic

Plastic makes up 91% of all floating debris in the North Sea. The most common types of plastic debris include bottles, bags, fishing-related items, packaging, and expanded polystyrene.

Microplastics

The Southern Bight of the North Sea has some of the highest concentrations of microplastics, with over 25,000 items per square kilometer.

Fishery-related debris

Up to 25% of floating macrolitter in the German North Sea is fishery-related.

Fulmar stomachs

In 2022, 50% of fulmar stomachs from the North Sea contained industrial plastic granules, and 91% contained user plastic particles.

Marine litter is a global problem that's increasing in quantity. The damage caused by marine litter to the global economy is estimated to be \$21.3 billion in 2020.

Ref: AI generated via Google

Quiz Time

This edition is all about Sir Frances Drake.

Name 2 of the 3 famous achievements he is credited with?

Which English Port was Drake brought up in and later became Mayor of?

What was the name of the ship Drake circumnavigated the Earth in (do you know both names)?



Lowestoft 6-7 September

The plan was to sail to Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Marina, Lowestoft on Friday, then go Southwold on Saturday, returning to Shotley on Sunday. As a club we have not had much

success in recent years getting into Southwold. Either the weather or the booking system at Southwold has defeated us. This time, the Harbour Master confirmed that we definitely had a booking for Southwold.

Kazarka set off early at 06:35, sailing off into the mist that was enveloping Felixstowe. The rest of us left at a slightly more civilized time with Echoes, Ibis and Serenity locking out at 08:30, followed by Porschia and Sanguine at 09:00. Hertford, being much faster than the rest of us, set off later. The trip up was uneventful for most of us. However, Serenity turned back a few hours into the trip as Kevin was unwell. Sanguine arrived last at the marina, as we had made the mistake of not getting our antifouling done at the beginning of the season and we were very slow. We berthed on the hammerhead, joined

soon by a large Dutch Yacht which rafted up to us. Better them, than a fishing boat we were told might arrive in the middle of the night! The others were rafted on the linear pontoon. The marina was a bit shallow and some of them (Echoes and maybe others) had to be dragged sideways until they could reach the raft. Not ideal. Hertford arrived after us, and we went round to take his lines.

The food in the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk is always very good and we spent a pleasant evening eating and chatting. The forecast for Saturday was not encouraging, and we agreed to convene at 08:30 to make a decision on the next day's sailing plan.

Saturday morning arrived with an Easterly/North Easterly wind, and although it was light enough for us to get into Southwold, the Sunday forecast suggested that we might find it very hard to get out. Not wanting to get stuck at Southwold, most of us decided to sail straight back to Shotley.

If the journey to Lowestoft had been uneventful, the return was anything but. Firstly, we had to contend with a Fugro survey vessel surveying off Sizewell. A significant course change was needed for Sanguine. Then Sanguine encountered a tug (Haven Seaway) towing the floating crane platform shown below. Then there was the unexploded ordnance which was going to be blown up of Woodbridge. There was the orange boat that we had to leave at least 1 mile clearance. Which orange boat? There were two. They gave their position in

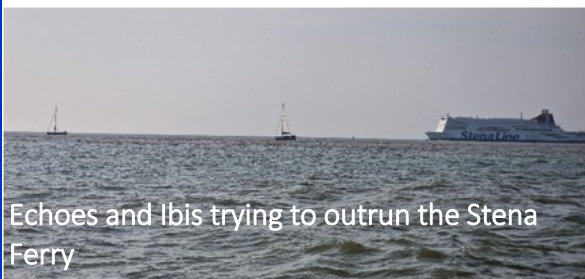
degrees, minutes and seconds and none of us could work out exactly where they were. Peter politely suggested to them, that they would have more success in getting us to stay out of the way, if they gave their position in degrees, minutes and decimal minutes. All became clear after that. Sadly, it meant yet more course changes for those of us who were near. Still, being relatively close, we were hoping for a dramatic explosion.

The appointed time arrived. And.....nothing. Apparently this is quite normal.

Finally, as we were approaching the shipping channel, we heard a distress call (can't remember if it was a Mayday or a PanPan). Yacht Windstalker had engine failure and was making very little progress under sail, as the wind was so light.

The Coastguard were unable to raise anyone to provide a commercial tow, but as Windstalker wasn't in any imminent danger, the lifeboat was not launched

and Last Orders had gone off shift. We went over to see if we could help, but after our experience in the TSS earlier in the year, we were only prepared to try to tow them if they had some floating line. They didn't. Neither did Border Force Rattlesnake who also came over. We left them to it and made our way back into Shotley, arriving back at 19:00. We spoke to Windstalker the next day when they were tied up on mooring buoy at Levington. They had managed to sail up the Orwell and pick up a buoy, late in the evening.



Echoes and Ibis trying to outrun the Stena Ferry



Sanguine and Porschia playing with downwind sails



Burnham on Crouch 23-24 Sep

Karl and Paula Pike on Ibis When we originally said yes to the trip to Burnham on Crouch it

was to travel down on the train & sail back with Mark & Sarah on Ibis (as Paula & I still have day jobs!) due to lack of holiday. We duly booked our train tickets for the Saturday & was looking forward to the weekend. On the Friday morning of the sail down I remember sitting in my office looking out of my window at the atrocious weather conditions thinking 'I'm glad we are travelling tomorrow on the train', only to then receive a call from Mark saying 'it was a bit windy & as we are all fair-weather sailors we are not sailing today, (or words to that effect) but now going on the Saturday, so you may as well cancel your train tickets & sail down with us'. After a few frantic phone calls, we were finally able to cancel our train tickets & plan for the sail down to Burnham.



Paula charming a rope, first try— Paula coiling a rope try 15. Lack of instruction from skipper who couldn't stop laughing!!

We arrived bright & early down at Shotley on the Saturday & after the essential safety checks, have we enough food, chocolate & alcohol, we set off in much better weather conditions. Once through the lock we put up the sails & made the journey down the coast to Burnham, taking in the sites of Walton on the Naze, Clacton, Jaywick with no problems, well it must have been problem free as Mark had not shouted at us once! The problems were to come on the journey home but that's for later. We finally made it to the River Crouch. Sailing up the Crouch where we encountered a few of the locals racing their small boats & after safely getting through we arrived in Burnham which was a first visit for Paula & myself taking in the Royal

Burnham Yacht Club, the rows of houses & the pubs that were behind the river wall with Sarah pointing out one particular house that had windows in the shape of sails we had arrived at the Burnham Yacht harbour & after mooring up at the first attempt which was unusual... I mean standard for us we secured the Ibis & sat back & relaxed with the customary alcohol & nibbles.

The evening meal would be at The Anchor Hotel along the edge of the Crouch which we were very much looking forward to. We got cleaned up & changed for the evening meal. It was the Burnham Carnival, with a fair set up on the field near to the rows of house boats in the river culminating in an illuminated procession in the evening through the main street, so as you can imagine Burnham was packed with people there to enjoy the carnival & make the most of the good weather. Walking past the various bars along the river all full of people enjoying themselves we arrived at the Anchor Hotel where after walking inside our 1st impression was 'oooh, not sure about this' but we persevered & ordered our drinks which arrived in lovely plastic cups & squeezed ourselves around our reserved tables. Our service for the evening was somewhat questionable with Sarah assisting in the cleaning up process by catching the spills of our waiter before they hit the floor on her clothes, although not voluntarily! The food to be fair was ok & the company as always enjoyable. The walking back to Ibis, we caught the illuminated procession & enjoyed the fireworks from Southend.

The next morning, we got up & after a full discussion with all the crew (Mark) we skipped breakfast & set off earlier than scheduled to beat the worsening weather conditions. The sail home was interesting to say the least, we put up the main sail & jib got about halfway down the Crouch before we had to soon drop the jib for the wind, we would reef the sails in and out for the rest of the trip, making the most of the strong Easterly! The VHF kept getting numerous messages from the coastguard in Dover of boats in trouble & warnings of GAILS IMMINENT! To Paula & myself this was a huge concern but Mark kept assuring us that in nautical terms IMMINENT meant in about six hours' time??? We kept hearing of this yacht that had experienced mast failure with reports of the lone skipper not on his boat, with the lifeboat & search & rescue all in attendance off the coast of Walton looking for the skipper.

We had finally arrived safely back at Shotley somewhat quicker than the journey to Burnham where we had to wait to gain entrance to the lock whilst the lifeboat had dropped off the damaged yacht from Walton on the pontoon outside the lock, luckily the skipper had been found & air lifted to hospital.

All in all, Paula & myself thoroughly enjoyed our first visit to Burnham, the sail down & yes, the sail back, the company & the Saturday evening were all great, there were as always on Ibis plenty of laughs & it just leaves me to thank the Shotley Point Yacht Club for another brilliant organised sailing event where we look forward to the next one with just one wish/guarantee, better weather conditions with no **IMMINENT GAIL WARNINGS!**



Imminent, what does he mean Imminent!!!!

Hold Tank £\$%*(!

Mark Abbott

Luckily, this article comes without pictures! You might remember the hold tank contents up the arm in the Summer cruise edition. Well there is more to the story. Thanks to Nigel (Brightlingsea page 8) the picture is already set. The brave crew of Ibis along with the other suitably satiated crews took the jolly boat back to their yacht. As is the case after a generous libation and cold weather a trip to the heads is required. This is where the infamy starts. Black water has forced it's way back past the Joker valve (no joke!!) and the pressure is so high that I cannot pump it away again. I take the cover off the hold tank and tapped it, it was as tight as a yak having triplets! I know exactly what the problem was (or thought I did?). The air vent had blocked, this had happened once before the fine mesh rusted in the outlet causing an air lock. I cured it with a needle re-punching each hole. No needle this time armed with my trusty compasses, I jumped onto the pontoon and started penetrating the mesh, without care for my own self-preservation. This was a mistake as a high pressure bead of liquid shot 3 feet across the pontoon narrowly missing my right ear. Unperturbed I began to puncture the other mesh which succumbed to a toothpaste consistency, unfortunately not 'whiter than white' which oozed down the side of the boat. I waited until the pressure had subsided and went back I to see if all was well. The toilet still did not pump. I undid the inspection hatch and with the last words of the Mayor of Hiroshima ringing in my ears. A large pop followed by splattering followed by an unfamiliar taste in my mouth. Second of stillness followed, and then came the giggling as Sarah, who was completely unscathed was confronted by the toilet monster. I was covered from head to foot and now spitting for all I was worth. My first thought was that I might have just caught hepatitis. Sarah still laughing explained that was impossible unless someone had used the heads who already had it. Then my head swam trying to think of all the other diseases I was about to drop dead from after eating raw sewage. At arms length she held a carrier bag open and I stripped of my Artexed clothing. I have to say that even I had to laugh at the man shaped print on the shower wall a white me surrounded

by you know what. Luckily it's a wet room so whilst showering myself I went about washing down the heads and disinfect it.

'Bucket and chuck it' was the routine order for the next day. Along with the discreet use of a hand pump from the inspection hole out of a window and over the side, sorry to any boats following us.

A few days later I drummed up the courage to unblock the outlet pipe. Armed with a pair of James Herriot's gloves and wire sink unblocker I began to have a fudge around. During this process my father rang me 6 times to explain how I was going to help him regain his wallet (which he had left on the bed [those who went on the Deben Cruise may remember another wallet and bed incident] but I digress) I would not have minded but each time he rang I had to remove the gloves. This process which for me was close to the procedure for decontaminating when leaving a nuclear reactor, or at least that is what it should have been, by the 6th call I was ripping of the gloves leaving brown lines up my forearm.

Back to work, I have up until now been a fan of German Engineering but who puts the inspection hatch in the top right corner and the outlet in the bottom left. My springy wire thing could not find the hole preferring to curl up in the bottom of the tank. After what seemed like an eternity and my arm going blue from the unusual angles it was going. I came up with a cunning plan! I used a 10mm stiff pipe to find penetrate the first part of the hose. Then with the methodical dexterity of Doctor House himself I threaded the Springy wire through the pipe and on to the blockage a few sharp thrusts and I was through and what was left in the tank gurgled out of the boat.

Did I say no pictures!!

(Before the action of course)



SPYC Laying Up Supper

In many ways the Laying up supper can be a sad event as it signals the official end of our sailing season. Even though some hardy souls do sail throughout the winter.

However, the event was any thing but sad as it was good to meet up with people we might not have seen during the season and talking about what we did and where we went in the summer. It's always good to talk about to others about where they have been over the year. In addition to talking about what we've all done this year, thoughts turned to 2025 and what we all might do then.

We also have many winter workshops to attend so hopefully we will not get too many withdrawal symptoms.

This year the Bristol Arms was chosen for our laying up supper. We were lucky that Stuart managed to book it as they were having a large birthday party the same night..

The Bristol Arms proved to be organised and friendly hosts. As we were a party of 18 we were split into three tables. Each boat name was marked on a table so we knew where to sit. This was good as we were mixed up. From a good menu we had all pre ordered our meals. This meant service on the night was efficient. I'm pleased to say it was easy to pay the bill at the end as they recorded things under our boat names. I'm sure this won't be the last time we use the Bristol Arms.

At the end of the meal, some decided to extend the evening at the Yacht Club next door. Sadly not all of us could do that.

Jokes to make you grown

- A boat carrying red paint crashed into a boat carrying blue paint and the crew were marooned.
- How much did it cost a pirate for the piercing of his ear? A buck an ear.
- A bartender sees a sailor with a ship's wheel down his trousers and says, "Hey, you've got a ship's wheel down your trousers!" To which the sailor replies "I do, and it's driving me nuts!"

Quiz time answers

This edition is all about Sir Frances Drake.

Name 2 of the 3 famous achievements he is credited with?

Circumnavigating the Earth (1577-80)

Raiding the Spanish harbour of Cadiz (1587)

Disrupting the Spanish Armada (1588)

Which English Port was Drake brought up in and later became Mayor of?

Plymouth

What was the name of the ship Drake circumnavigated the Earth in (do you know both names) ?

Pelican, later the Golden Hind (or Hinde)