

Slaughden Sails



The Newsletter of Slaughden Sailing Club

Spring 2006

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A NOTE FROM ED.

Already the end of March and the weather is still not looking too favourable for sailing, not for those fair weather sailors amongst us and I include myself in that group. However, these bitter easterlies cannot last forever and soon even a wimp like me will be messing about on the river. Sadly our first article in this edition is on a very serious note regarding theft and I do not need to point out to you all the necessity of vigilance and security these days. We are a relatively easy target. I am extremely pleased that this edition includes quite articles solely submitted by members. For once I haven't had to trawl the net for additional interesting reads. A big thank you to all those that have spent time writing their contributions. Anyone can do this. It does not matter if the piece is five lines long or five pages long (although the latter may have to be serialised) and you can send your contribution by e-mail or by the old fashioned method. Maurice Brown has done that. His article was hand written and posted to me. So come on, get writing.

COMMODORE'S MESSAGE THEFT AT SSC

As most of you now know sadly the club's containers were recently broken into and our newest 40HP outboard was stolen. The value of this unit is around £4000.00. Fortunately nothing else has been reported as missing. At the Management Committee meeting held on the 24th Feb we discussed the incident in depth and our response to it. Following our review we have all agreed that this was most likely a targeted robbery, i.e. "Stolen to order". Determined thefts of this type are almost impossible to deter. We

went on to debate what our countermeasures should be; we needed to decide what was "reasonable" in the circumstances and the following will be carried:

Both containers will be fitted with high security KEY operated locks. These will be secure against picking and cropping and be resistant to the environment they have to operate in.

The containers will be modified to accept these locks. This decision means control of keys again, because of this and expense issues a minimum number of keys will be available and controlled from the OD's Office within the clubhouse.

Details of these arrangements will be notified to those members who have legitimate access to the containers. Lighting improvements are also being investigated to ensure the area in front of them is well lit whilst there is activity going on.

Along with these physically measures members can be equally effective in preventing re-occurrence by:
Not leaving container doors wide open when not in attendance and then only for the minimum amount of time.
Returning keys to the security of the clubhouse immediately and checking they are not about to take them home.
Take your own security measures on your property within the container.
Finally being careful in your discussions with non-members about all the above arrangements.

Graham Silsbury
Commodore

VICE COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

At last the winter has been turned and we will soon be out on the water. A full and comprehensive program has been arranged with something to suit most tastes. Please check through this program carefully, especially the duty rotas. For some of you it is likely that somewhere your name has been included. If you cannot meet the

requested date please try and swap with another member and let me know the outcome.

We are fortunate in having a very attractive river upon which to sail. Let us keep it that way by showing consideration for others. In particular I would like to draw your attention to the foreshores. Iken and Little Japan are privately owned, and Orford Spit belongs to the National Trust.

At Little Japan both the foreshore and the Riverbed belong to Sir Michael Hopkins. He has indicated that he is content for us to continue to enjoy this beach so long as his privacy and the environment are respected.

The National Trust has, in the near past, expressed their concern at boaters using the foreshore of the Spit. It would seem that as land owners they have the right to prevent people from landing, let alone having picnics and BBQs. They have indicated they are monitoring the situation and it is likely that so long as there are no problems the Trust will not enforce their rights over this site. They are particularly concerned about disruption to wildlife, especially the birds, which nest on the Spit. At the moment landing on the shingle beach is acceptable but wandering across the Spit, especially during the nesting period, is not. Let us not be responsible for provoking the Trust into taking action.

See you on the water

Barrie.

NEW YEARS DAY by Nick Sinclair

Our new boat, Jenny the Tideway, arrived mid-December and we were determined to sail her as soon as we could. As it turned out our maiden voyage was on New Year's Eve. We had nice quiet conditions and a high tide, not a soul around and a textbook test run. A little cold mark you, so we limited ourselves to a round trip to Stanney,

through the creek and back to the club, getting back just before the frost bite set in.

On New Year's day, conditions were much the same, except that now of course there was an audience - why does that make such a big difference? We don't race as such, so our mission was to sail around selected areas of the course and not get shouted at. We took off well, but with the main not quite set right, returning to the quay was then enlivened by getting caught in an eddy and sailing some of the way backwards. The centreboard on this boat is operated by the helm, which I of course, forgot and so I rounded off a pretty undignified display, by scraping the centreboard and to a lesser extent rudder, on the jetty. Even over the scraping noise, I think I could actually hear the previous owner crying. Okay, so we sailed backwards and scrunched the centreboard, but I think we got away with it, as most of the (large) potential audience were busy eating mince pies. We then had a nice, uneventful little potter around and decided to get back to the clubhouse ahead of the racing fleet (and in time to bag any remaining pies). Needless to say, I scrunched the centreboard again, but this time I had a good excuse. I was distracted by Helen falling out of the boat. People later said that it looked like I had pushed her, but as I said in my defence if you are going to push someone out of a boat; the trick is to make it look like an accident and not the other way around.

This was our second New Year's Day sail. I think it is a great club event. If you are sailing there are no moored boats and river is all ours. For non-sailors it is a busy and fun social get together, with great mince pies and soup. For racers and non-racers alike I recommend it as a great way to dip your toe in the water and start a new year of sailing.

Photo supplied by Pauline Garlick



INSPIRATION

by
David Quilter

Single-handed. The very word is enough to rattle the bones and shiver the timbers. Nevertheless, this was the way I meant to go. After all, if a tiny little woman from a landlocked county could do it, I certainly could. Although my voyage would be a somewhat more complex venture. The minute Dame simply circumnavigated the globe. Easy-peasy! We now know that the Earth is round. Therefore, setting sail on a straight course will obviously bring you back to your starting point eventually. Although my passage would be shorter it would involve a few corners. My intention, in fact, my long-held ambition was to sail single-handed from Aldeburgh all the way to Southwold. And back.

Let me hasten to put the record straight. I am a huge admirer of Ellen MacArthur. To spend seventy-two days in what, to all intents and purposes, is a small container attached to a massive bedstead requires a certain degree of patience to say the least. But bouncing around on the springs whilst drifting aimlessly in the Doldrums looked like great fun and something that was not going to be available to me. My entire package would fit easily inside Ellen's cuddy if you get my drift. The only full standing headroom I have is on deck in the teeth of the elements. Having said that, I planned to pick a very nice day.

What would Ellen do? Should anything untoward crop up, this would be the

question I would ask myself. No point in being too proud to call on the experience of others, whatever their size. My first decision concerned the tricky and somewhat controversial matter of sponsorship. I decided to do without. I don't like begging and, besides, any mention I made of my proposed adventure was met either with yawns or hopelessly ill-concealed sniggers.

My victual ling requirements would be modest, although I was rather hoping Sharon might give my lunchbox a little treat. But a sandwich and a bottle of water would probably have to suffice. I'd get a portion of chips at the pub on arrival. If they were still open.

And so to the voyage itself. I slipped my mooring at 1030 hrs about two hours before high water and motor-sailed down to the mouth of the river on the slackening flood. My careful planning and a lot of good luck made my timing perfect. By the time I reached the mouth, the first twelfth of the ebb flushed me out to sea in a trice. Next, the hairpin.

Most of you will know that the Alde and Ore between Slaughden and Shingle Street run approximately southwest. And some of you will know that Southwold lies to the north. How inconvenient is that? However, one must accept the status quo. Shoot out of the river and turn sharp left. As I mentioned before, I will be picking a very nice day so the sun will be high in a cloudless sky and a light westerly, combined with the favourable tidal stream, will push me effortlessly towards my destination.

Like Ellen, my boat is equipped with a tiller pilot that will relieve me of some of the tedium of sitting in one position for about eight hours. I got it at the Boat Show and am quite hopeful that it will work. If it doesn't, I'll have to. Anyway, whoever's steering, I will still have to keep my eyes peeled for pot markers, overfalls and all those ghastly yachties, most of whom are out there simply to enjoy themselves. I'd stood on the sea wall at Slaughden in order to assess the wind strength and

direction. Quite a brisk westerly, so I put in a couple of reefs in the mainsail and pulled the jib out about two thirds. Conditions at the mouth of the river turned out to be quite different. Having rounded the Orford Haven buoy, I found myself almost becalmed. What would Ellen do? I suppose, being the little daredevil she is, she'd go bouncing over her trampoline and shake the reefs out. She might even hoist an asymmetric, whatever that may be. For me, safety was paramount and I made the difficult and brave decision to do nothing. A wise choice, as it turned out. We were soon coasting along on the tidal stream, sails flogging attractively, and generally enjoying a few moments of blissful solitude. I say we because, apparently the boat counts as a person in these circumstances. Ellen always finds it difficult to leave her boat at the end of a long voyage. I have the same problem, but with me it's the torture of unfolding myself in order to squeeze out through the companionway. But I digress. We'd be in Southwold before we knew it.

Visitors to Southwold Harbour usually have to raft up and, as I'm almost certain to be the smallest boat for miles around, I fully expected to be greeted by my fellow raftees with a lot of admiration and deep respect. Not for me the teeming welcoming hoards, press and television, buzzing helicopters and a huge fleet of naval and pleasure craft. I feel uncomfortable in front of large groups of people, which is just as well this evening, and, extraordinary as my accomplishment may be, I much prefer to keep a low profile. No, I'll celebrate as I sailed, single-handed. Perhaps a small glass of wine from my excellent wine box (a hint of baked beans with a raspberry after burn). My calm sojourn was rudely interrupted, as we drifted past Orford Ness, by my ill-chosen Nokia ring-tone. I was required in London the following morning for a job interview. What would Ellen do? My guess is she wouldn't take the call. She's certainly never responded to any of my e-mails inviting her to the Open Day. But, alas, too late. Pathetically desperate for human contact, I'd answered the call. This led to a succession of further calls to Sharon,

Southwold Harbour, back to my agent and resulted in my leaving the boat at Southwold, taking the train to London and rejoining my ship the following night for the return trip on the Saturday. But I'm jumping the gun. And killing the suspense. Did I make it all the way to Southwold? Was the boat in one piece? Had my health suffered? Would my legs go all wobbly on reaching terra firma?

Yes, yes, no and no. So that was alright then. To cut a long story short, the harbour master/mistress/person graciously allowed me to abandon ship. Sharon met me at the pub where I enjoyed the best fish and chips ever in the entire world and I reluctantly spent the night in my own bed before travelling to London, getting the job and hastening back to Southwold to prepare for the following day. I know, I know, Ellen's little outings pale into insignificance by comparison but I've never been one to shirk a challenge.

At 0700 on Saturday, we motored out of the Blyth helped by a welcome shove from the lively westerly breeze. I engaged the tiller-pilot and set about hoisting the mainsail. Lesson number one: when, out of consideration for one's fellow matelots, one applies a judicious bungee to the halyards to stop that annoying tinkling on the mast, try and remember to remove it before setting off again. The sail went up as far as the spreaders and I have to admit to resorting to that four-letter F word as an impetuous reaction. Fool! I yelled. Are you talking to me? I looked round to see another boat a few yards away and waved meekly, pointing to my stupidly trapped sail. They laughed in what I took to be a slightly embarrassed way, tinged with a slightly nauseating hero-worship. What would Ellen do? Cry probably. Me? I just got on with the job. Up on the coachroof, armed with the boathook, Bungee down, sail up and we were off. No fuss, just thoroughly admirable seamanship. Apart from the six fenders hanging over the side.

The return trip, under full sail was thrilling and fast. We made eight knots over the

ground and came alongside Slaughden Quay six hours later. Unloaded the gear and returned Silent Mover to her mooring, picking up the buoy at only the fifth attempt. Ellen seems to fill whole books with her exploits. I've done it in three pages.

15-YEAR-OLD SAILOR, MELISSA, GOES FOR GOLD.

By June Walker

Melissa Addy has her sights firmly fixed on the London Olympics and is the youngest female member of the under 19 Great Britain National Youth Squad. Melissa is currently ranked 26th in Britain, which is not bad for a 15-year-old.

Her love of sailing started at the tender age of nine when she joined the Pennine Sailing Club and was taught to sail a single-handed junior class dinghy. Not long after this, Melissa was competing in the Yorkshire and Humber Youth Sailing Circuit.

By the age of 12 she was part of the Northeast Topper Zone Squad and then selected for the Under 16 Junior Topper National Squad. She then progressed into the female single-handed Olympic Class dinghy, the Laser Radial. Just a year after making this transition she was selected for her current place in the Great Britain Squad and is the youngest of five females.

Melissa clearly has the passion and desire to train hard and continue her success and, in a recent interview, she said: "I love my sport because it is a challenge sailing against the elements of the wind, waves and tide. These are always changing and you never sail in the same conditions twice. The tactical side of sailing and the adrenaline rush I get from surfing down waves in 20 knots of breeze, pushing myself and the boat to go faster, is addictive".

"Obviously an Olympic medal is my ultimate dream. London winning the bid

to host the 2012 Olympics is particularly special for sailors because of how successful Britain is as a sailing nation. Local knowledge of the competition venue will be a big advantage for us and with the sailing in 2012 being held in Weymouth, my training there is even more important and exciting”.

We wish Melissa every success in the London Olympics!

ELLEN MACARTHUR

By June Walker

Were you, like me, disappointed that Dame Ellen MacArthur was not voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year? Ellen herself looked quite dejected at the award ceremony but she doesn't crave the limelight like other sports personalities and is a very private person. I guess I am rather biased towards her; she is a sailor and she hails from my home county of Derbyshire, what more could there be in her favour? I know that winning the Ashes last year was a boost for national pride, but I can't help thinking that the achievement of professional cricketers, supported by their team mates and an adoring crowd, pales into insignificance alongside Dame Ellen's feat of endurance. I kept track of her progress on her excellent website and I must admit that it was almost an obsession to check up on her each day. When she reached her journey's end, having beaten the existing record for sailing solo around the world, I just wept with joy. I guess sailing will always be runner-up to football, cricket and athletics but this is a great shame for a so-called maritime nation.

Well-done Ellen – I voted for you!

Keep track of Ellen's current sailing exploits on her excellent website:

www.teamellen.com



Derbyshire Well dressing in honour of Dame Ellen MacArthur

YOTAS

If there are any youngsters from 10+ out there who are interested in junior sail training that takes place on Thursdays between 1600 and 1830 May through to September, could you please contact Pam Durham (contact details in yearbook). The training follows the RYA Youth Training Scheme syllabus along with good river craft skill for using our river.

Principal

FUNDRAISING

Along with our regular fundraising activities another source of income currently going largely untapped is grant monies. There are numerous trusts and organisations, which have funds that could help us further the development of the club and improve our capability to offer quality sailing. Is there any member(s) who would be prepared to work towards securing some of this possible income of the club? Please let me know.

Thanks in anticipation.

Commodore.

POWERBOAT ADMINISTRATOR

Following the AGM we agreed to a re-organisation of the Management Committee. Part of this change was the appointment of a "Powerboat Administrator". The position remains vacant and I'm keen that we fill it as soon as possible. The position would suit a person who is interested in power boating and the boats the club operates (currently three a Dory and 2 off RIBs). The primary role is to ensure the boats are maintained in a safe reliable condition and that the boats are allocated and correctly manned by suitable people to the needs of the sailing programme.

RYA QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS NEEDED

Are any members interested in getting qualified to help the dedicated group of current instructors? Although we are secure at the moment the time is right to start getting strength in depth for our future. The clubs health rests on getting new members year on year through the door, there is an overwhelming demand for sailing and in today's world there is an expectation of some competence being gained before simply launching ourselves onto the water with a "self teach" attitude. We need sailing instructors at Senior Instructor, Dinghy Instructor and Assistant Instructor levels. We also need Powerboat Instructors. Although there is a cost associated with these qualifications the clubs has made it a policy to help with normally a 50% grant towards the costs. If there are members who either now or in the future would be interested in taking up this challenge please let me know. It's great fun and you'd be surprised what you'll get out of it. I shall be running an Assistant Instructors Course at SSC in the very near future so please give this plea some early attention.
Principal

EVENTS

FITTING OUT SUPPER

The Fitting Out Supper is to be held on Sat. 15th April. Please EMail me to reserve your

meals or put your names on the list in the Clubhouse. We need to know numbers for catering purposes/ Cost £5. per person.

V al TB.

CRUISING

05/04/06 1915hrs Clubhouse Meeting - Come Cruising

A warm welcome to all members to discuss the forthcoming seasons cruising. Whatever their boat we hope to encourage them to explore our rivers and beyond.

Aspects covered will include:

1. Report on RYA Eastern Region, Cruising Seminar: Cruising the Future. 18/02/06
2. A chance to talk through the 2006 Cruising Program.
3. Ted Draper will give some of his Cruising Reminiscences.

Early Season Cruising Dates are:

17/04/06 Dinghy Shakeout Sail Up River.

29/04/06 Butley Cruise.

27/05/06 Club Open Day.

Please support this important event in the clubs calendar.

Paul Eaton V.C. Cruising.

FIRST AID COURSE

We are running a RYA tailored course on the 8th April. All previous participants report what a valuable course this is. Those of us with instructors' certificates must maintain our First Aid qualification. I cannot recommend too strongly that any responsible sailors who sail unsupported by suitable qualified people to get this qualification. You will not find the course offered as well focussed anywhere else and all you need to do, BUT QUICKLY, is to add your name to the list on the clubhouse notice board adjacent to the galley. The cost is just £35.00.
Commodore

IF AT FIRST....

By Maurice Brown

Spring '74 or was it '73? Children getting independent. Time for a new pastime (cycling was getting harder). Brother-in-law, keen on sailing, has a dinghy called an Enterprise and is some sort of National Champion.

A work colleague, John Orron, suggested we try sailing and introduced us to the club at the '73 laying up supper.

Next big decision: this was likely to cost money, a bad vibe for a Lancastrian.

Spring '74 and I was introduced to a Gull, wooden and quite heavy. Betty disappeared whilst I negotiated a price with the selling AYC member.

The club gave introductory sailing instruction, which work prevented me attending. Betty went and came away with the impression that sailing was extremely perilous.

We eventually got afloat having been shown how to rig and an early adventure was with our 14-year-old son, Colin. As instructed we asked Jumbo (Brian/Russell Upson's predecessor) if it was OK to go out. He advised us that the AYC were running an Open for Fireballs (the RS400 of '74) and we should go afloat when they went up river. Without our own slip we were launching off the Quay slip, which obstructs the view up river. The Fireballs whizzed past. We rigged (probably ten minutes), pushed off and like a lot of beginners do, sheeted in and shot out past the end of the quay and into the path of at least fifty (well a lot anyway) Fireballs. They called out to us (must have been a foreign language). There was a lot of water everywhere, but no collision (due to my expert helming??). When the turmoil was past we found ourselves capsized. Betty, watching on the quay, asked a fellow Club member what she should do. Get a camera was the response!

Confidence was slightly dented. Son refused to crew for me until I knew what I was doing and he still hasn't crewed for me. During the summer we had a visit from Betty's younger sister, husband Terry and son David. Keen to show off my new skills I persuaded Terry and David, about a

combined 26 stone, to accompany me for a short sail even though they were keen to return to High Wycombe before dark.

No problem! Off up the river (the prettiest way). Turn at Stanney – oh dear, we have to beat – easy boat sailing! After half an hour Terry enquired why we were still level with the same pole on the bank! A flood tide! The only solution? Head to the north bank so Terry and David can leg it back to the clubhouse and I stand holding the painter like someone on the riverbank taking their dog for a walk. I started back towards the Club to be met by my eldest son, Malcolm, coming to give me support. He persuaded me back into the Gull and surprise, surprise, we sailed back, no problem. It was a long time before I realised I had walked around the bend.

Consequently the tide was less fierce and the wind direction was now a close reach. One Wednesday evening after a quiet potter about, we returned to the slip to be met by Club members launching for the evening race. We were asked why we didn't join the 'B' handicap race. Our reply? We didn't think we would be eligible being ignorant of the rules. The answer? Unless you join in you will stay that way!

The following Wednesday we were there. The course was rather frightening. Halfway, Brick Dock and a flood tide. Great! At Brick Dock we were ahead of one Mirror until that b***** corner at Stanney where it made us look as if we were standing still (we probably were). They left the Clubhouse gaslights on to guide us back.

1976 and the Gull had to go. We bought a GP, beautifully made and unsailed, with a wooden mast.

We proudly turned up at the dinghy park, not intending to sail it – no chance. Frank Pegg (David's Dad) helped us change trolleys and launched it. With some trepidation we went afloat, but fortunately there was a friendly southerly.

Our first impression? It sailed against the tide. Our second? You had to react to wind changes.

I (not we) capsized twice. The first time trying to pinch around Brick Dock. The second time it was blowing a bit, Betty stayed ashore, and Alf Fuller (a 14 stone

Wayfarer helm) crewed. The GP was quite nifty to tack compared with a Wayfarer. The first tack downriver to Halfway – ready about – lee ho – splash! Alf was a mite slow getting across.

One of our first forays downriver was a solo cruise to Orford. Colin agreed to accompany Mum and Dad. Again we asked Jumbo if it was OK to sail to Orford. "Yes, you'll be fine. No worries."

A very nice broad reach/run – picnic and ice cream then start back. That friendly breeze had somehow become very angry and right on the nose. With three sitting out and probably sailing very badly, we made Slaughden and found Jumbo. A rather irate Maurice challenged him.

"I thought you said it would be OK to sail to Orford. We had a very hard time coming back."

The reply: "It was OK going. You never asked about coming back."

Another lesson, practically learned, racing with a southeasterly wind necessitating a gybe around Elbow. A fast approach on a broad reach from Halfway, heeling and trying unsuccessfully to gybe at Elbow, but careering towards the bank (fewer moorings in those days fortunately). Eventually, putting great force on the rudder and with a distinct rudder we were round.

After that race one of our top helms, Terry Fellows, chastised me for not keeping the boat flat. "Spill wind rather than heel. If there is pressure on the rudder you are sailing badly."

One other incident in Kittiwake, which introduced Betty to helming, was in the 3 Rivers race. Returning to Barbers Point, rounding Ferry hard, right opposite the Clubhouse and onto a close reach, feet under the toe straps, stretch out and BANG! The toe straps pulled out of the floor planks and I did a near perfect backward somersault into the briny, fortunately letting go of the main sheet. The boat and Betty sailed away on their own heading for the cruiser Gadfly whose skipper luckily heard Betty's cries that she had lost her helm. With instruction from all quarters Betty went about, sailed directly back to me and helped me aboard.

We kept Kittiwake until 1983 when we succumbed to the Wayfarer fleet and bought Bartalenkadomat, renaming her Aldegold, for which she was very grateful. That, in a nutshell, is amateur sailing. Not very interesting then!