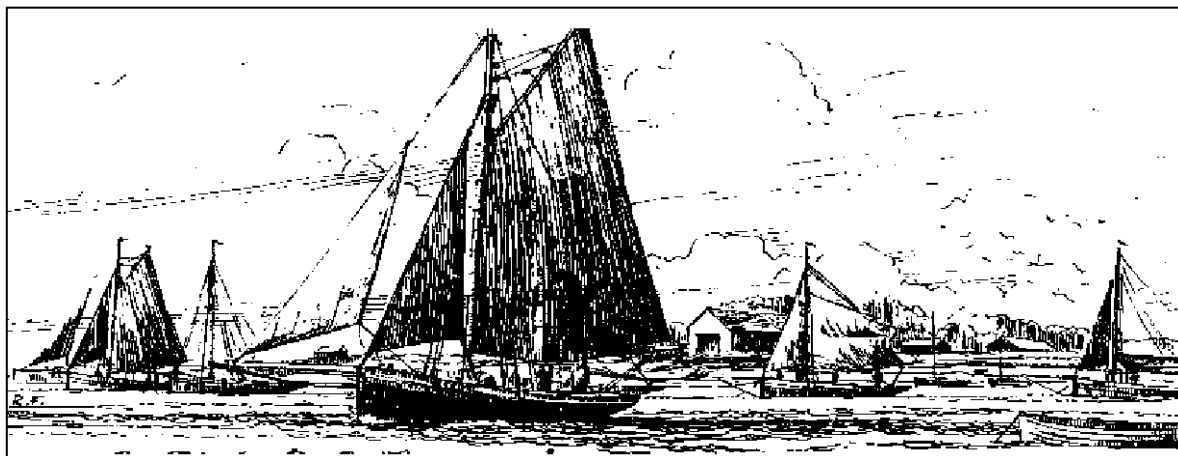


# Roach Sailing Association September Newsletter 2022

[www.roachriver.org.uk/rsa](http://www.roachriver.org.uk/rsa)



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## Chairman's Bit *by John Langrick*

Welcome to the RSA September 2022 newsletter and our new Editor Richard Bessey. Many thanks to Richard who was our Chairman for the last few years.



***Volunteers clearing the slip***

It is coming to the end of the 2022 sailing season and members will be thinking of last cruises and laying up plans. We also have our laying up supper and Steak and Oysters to look forward to. Many thanks to all members who helped with our events this year.

I was particularly impressed by all the volunteers who, at the last minute, turned up at Paglesham with shovels to help us clear mud on the slipway deposited by barge movements late this season. Well done all!

We missed out on a couple of races due to poor weather be it too strong winds or no wind at all but pleased by all who joined us on all the scheduled cruises this year.

The Fambridge rally was well attended and many thanks to our President Mike Green for arranging this. It was great to see our senior member John Martin who joined us in his yacht ZELIA

Our secretary for many years Jonathan Walmsley has stood down so he can start his major cruise to the Caribbean in CIEL BLEU and we all wish Jon and his crew bon voyage. As I write this they are off the coast of Portugal on their way to Madera. He has been replaced as Secretary by Shaun Hetherington. Many thanks to all the committee members for their help in 2022.

Could last year's cup winners please return the cups to me or any committee member for engraving ASAP?

Note we are always looking for additional committee members in particular to help in roles such as race officer, bosun or other roles. If you are interested in joining our committee, please let Shaun know and your name will be put forward at our committee meeting next year.

I would like to welcome Dr Ralph Kinmoth as a new member.

We still look forward to Steak and Oysters (2<sup>nd</sup> October, thanks to Nick Turner for organising) and I hope to see you at the Laying-up Supper.



**John Martin with ZELIA**

### **Laying Up Supper *Simon Joel***

This year's supper will be on Saturday 12th November 2022 at the Garons Golf Complex, Garons Park, Eastern Avenue SS2 4FA. We suggest arrival at 19:00 for seating at 19:30. The choice of menu will be as follows and please let us have your menu options when you make your booking:

<b>Starters</b>	<p><b>Prawn &amp; Crayfish Cocktail</b>- served on a bed of crisp salad leaf, with a Marie rose sauce and smoked paprika.</p> <p><b>Trio of Melon</b>- served with a Ruby port syrup</p> <p><b>Homemade chicken Pate</b>- Served with Brioche Toast.</p> <p><b>Carrot &amp; Coriander Soup</b></p>
<b>Main course</b>	<p><b>Garlic &amp; Herb stuffed Chicken</b>, wrapped in Palma Ham and served with a pomodoro sauce &amp; new Potatoes</p> <p><b>Roast Topside Beef &amp; Yorkshire Pudding</b>- Served with a rich gravy &amp; roast potato</p> <p><b>Poached Salmon</b> – served with New Potatoes and a creamy white wine, lemon &amp; dill sauce</p> <p><b>Vegetarian Shepherd Pie</b>- served with a sweet potato Mash</p> <p>All main courses accompanied with and fresh vegetable medley.</p>
<b>Desserts</b>	<p><b>Raspberry &amp; White Chocolate Brulee</b></p> <p><b>Cheese &amp; Biscuits</b></p> <p><b>Apple Strudel served with custard</b></p>

### **Followed by coffee & mints**

The price will be £30 per person. Please send your menu request and payment to Simon Joel who has kindly agreed to make the arrangements. The deadline for orders will be Saturday 21st October. Ideally please transfer your payment to the RSA account below, and email [spjoel8@gmail.com](mailto:spjoel8@gmail.com) with your menu choices.:

Roach Sailing Association  
Sort Code 20-79-73  
Acc 80751138

Alternatively please send your cheque by post, again with your menu options to:-Simon Joel, 28 Chapmans Walk,.Leigh on Sea Essex SS9 2XA.

## **Racing Update** *by Brian Browne*

Well it has been a slightly disjointed season for the racing with a number of races being delayed for either bad weather or the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.

On the cruiser side we managed to catch up a bit over the Farnbridge weekend and we are left with two races that have not yet been run. The Gracilda Cup through lack of Lady entrants and the Roach Plate which will be rescheduled on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> October.

On the dinghy side we've managed to run four races: the Potton Island Trophy, the Egret Cup, the Mudcatchers Cup and the Oyster Cup. Realistically that is the end of the season for the dinghies with Millie taking top honours and Merganser and Apple sharing second.

On the cruiser side the star performer this year, so far, is Barry and Momo 3 and he is 3 points ahead of John's Imothes. Barry has been there or thereabouts in every race so far. I think Quintilla in 3<sup>rd</sup> deserves a mention as she has been very well sailed with a deserved win in the RNLI race. It is just possible if we run the final race for John to pip Barry at the post, so all might change before the laying up supper.

Detailed results are on the web site as always, and the full race write ups will be in the February newsletter.

Could last year's cup winners please return the cups to John or any committee member for engraving ASAP?

## **Bosun's Corner** *John Langrick*

### *Sutton Wharf*

The storage rates for 2023 at Sutton Wharf remain the same as for 2022.

We do need to try and keep our shed area tidier this year. The bin should not be left overflowing and the undergrowth is getting very long. I will try and cut some of it back but members help would be appreciated if you use this facility. Please also keep the door shut when not in use and unplug the microwave.

I have booked days for potential haul out, but of course you can make your own arrangements directly with the yard if you wish but far better for members and staff if we haul out a few at a time.

The suggested hauling out days booked at the yard are:-

October 24 – 28

Nov 7 – 11

Nov 23 – 25

I can coordinate with other members for logistics if necessary and please give the staff at Sutton Wharf advance notice if they need to get your cradle out of the compound.

I plan to lay up Dally before end of November so note she will not be available at Paglesham until relaunch in the spring. Any volunteers for scrubbing and covering when laid up would be appreciated!

### *Paglesham*

Thanks to all the helpers in 2022 for both yard tidy and latterly helping clear the slipway of a muddy heap left when barges were shuffled around. The pontoon has now also been repaired and back in place.



**Mudarking?**



**Pontoon reinstated**

We will have a shed and dinghy park tidy in 2023 as usual and of course please keep our area tidy

For those remaining on the water this year, please keep an eye on each others' boats and report to members as you have in previous years and many thanks for this. Note that I am not as agile these days so will be relying on you all to sort your own boats should you have issues and I will not have my dinghy or outboard at Paglesham during the winter months.

### **Hmm, where's that oil coming from? *By Brian Browne***

This year was meant to include a week's cruise of the East Coast with Jenny on Presto our MGC 27. All was looking good for the off and indeed, the night before our anticipated start we took the boat over on a short hop from Essex Marina to Burnham marina. We often pop across for a curry at either the Polash, or the Curry Cottage. We glided past Imothes, moored there on the end for the last day of the RSA East Coast cruise, but couldn't see John or anyone else from the RSA.

When we got back to Essex Marina I checked the engine over and was horrified to see what looked like several litres of oil in the GRP sump of the saildrive moulding below the single cylinder Volvo MD 2001. That put paid to our planned cruise as I didn't want to set out until I knew what was going on with the engine.

I checked the oil in the engine and it was full up. The GRP sump underneath the engine was normally squeaky clean and never normally had even a drop of oil in it.



**Saildrive on a similar boat**

Was it coming from the engine breather pipe that finished in the sump? Was it coming from an engine leak? Why was the engine still full of oil? To me the oil smelt and tasted of engine oil not gearbox oil. (Mistake number 1 from me as I'm used to restoring cars but haven't really worked on my boat engines myself until now and didn't realise that Volvo saildrives use engine oil not gearbox oil. Car engine, gearbox and automatic fluids all smell different from each other)

I called that RSA encyclopedia of marine engine knowledge 'John the Bridge' to get some advice and he appeared at Essex Marina the next Morning. Pretty quickly he did something that I should have done, which was to scoop the

oil out with a glass. Straight away it showed that it was a smaller amount of oil floating on water. A good tip that I should have done. When I dipped my finger in it the whole finger came out black which was pretty misleading.

We went over the engine and the oil didn't seem to be leaking from the engine, the crankcase pressure didn't seem to be too high and nothing was being forced out of the dipstick or the breather. So we were pretty certain the oil wasn't coming from the engine, or it would have been the first engine to create oil from nothing.

So we cleaned up all the oil and the next day I went for a motor sail to test things out. When I got back another ½ litre of oil in the GRP sump. This time I checked the oil in the saildrive and that didn't register on the dipstick. I knew it was full when the boat was launched (we launched late this year). I had got a mechanic, nobody from the RSA pool of experts (mistake number 2), to service the engine and change the saildrive oil before launch.

Thinking something odd was happening with the saildrive and possibly the seals, and not knowing how much oil was in the saildrive, I got Essex Marina to lift Presto. They did it the same day. Top people at Essex Marina. I drained the saildrive and there was only about 1.5 litres of oil in it when there should be 2.6 litres. The oil was clean as a whistle so no need to change the propshaft seals. I previously thought that maybe water had been getting in through the propshaft forcing oil/water out at the top.

When I opened the oil filler cap for the saildrive (mistake number 3 for not doing that at the very first time) I noticed that only half the rubber O ring around the cap was actually there. So half the cap was actually unsealed and held fractionally off the mating surface by the half of the O ring that was still there. One o ring later and problem fixed and boat back in the water and on the pontoon a day later. I realised that the saildrive only leaked when motorsailing and the boat was heeled.

Why didn't the mechanic notice this when they refilled the oil? Maybe they pumped oil in through the dipstick which some people do and never undid the cap. But I found the missing half of the o ring in the bilge and it must have been torn when refitting the cap and the boat didn't leak last year.

Who knows but the lesson for me is to do your own spannering, or use people you know and trust like John the Bridge. If you do the work yourself, or use someone who actually cares, you naturally take more care and time.

Another moral of the story comes from a conversation I had with one of these Youtube sailing couples. You know the type, they live an idyllic existence on their boat in the med in the summer, usually on a small yacht, along with a bikini clad lady in each episode. Sipping a nice Pouilly-Fumé whilst snacking on a lobster they hand caught that Morning. He explained that the reality behind the scenes is very different and that they should really call their Youtube series "fixing boat things in nice locations whilst waiting for parts to arrive".

Well we don't have enough time for another cruise this summer but we have since had some fantastic day sails in the hot weather including a wonderful day spent at anchor at our own Yokesfleet which I think beats Pyefleet as the East Coast's most idyllic anchorage. Hopefully, I'll be retired next year and able to actually use Presto and maybe join the bikini gang on Youtube.

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## **RSA East Coast Cruise 2022** *John Langrick*

The morning of 16<sup>th</sup> July saw the start of the 2022 East Coast Cruise. High water would be 15:02pm and the plan was to push the tide about 11:00 and pass through the Ray Sand Channel about 2 hours before high water.

BRIAR ROSE with crew of Shaun and Graham, QUINTILA with Dave and Mike and IMOTHES, single handed, set off about 11:00 and were met by TRITON, CORINNE and Y-NOT who had spent the previous night in the Yolksfleet. We all met as we passed the Branklet Spit heading down the Crouch. John Walter was single handed o TRITON, Aleck single handed on CORINNE and Meg and Laz on Y-KNOT.

The wind was due Easterly, so we had both wind and tide against us as we punched slowly to the Ray Channel. I did not initially want to stress the engine on IMOTHES as I had recently changed an oil line that had corroded behind the engine but fitting the new, fingers crossed, seems to have completely cured any oil leak.



We arrived at the Ray Channel about 13:30 and took a northerly course just east of the Ray marker buoy. It is rumoured that taking the 1 degree line now gives the best water and in the case of IMOTHES (1.6m draft) I had minimum of 1m below the keel, As we turned Northerly, I unfurled the Genoa for a much quieter sail past the Bachelor spit. A much quieter sail brought the fleet to Pyefleet Creek where Briar Rose anchored first with IMOTHES rafting up. QUINTILLA Y-KNOT, CORRINE and TRITON, dropped anchor nearby.

On arrival, it appears Y-Not and Corinne had engine problems, but between them no dinghy. Shaun launched his inflatable and I picked up Alec and John to bring them back to Briar Rose for an evening meal that Shaun kindly cooked for us all. Spaghetti Bolognese was the menu and well done Shaun.

The wind and tide saw IMOTHES and BRIAR ROSE bouncing around in a raft

I became apparent that QUINTILLA, CORINNE and Y-KNOT were well aground that evening and certainly BRIAR ROSE and IMOTHES were touching the soft mud but sank slowly in the soft bottom, remaining upright but failing the swing (at first) to the early flood. At Shaun's suggestion, I inflated my dinghy and towed it back to TRITON so John could look at the engine on both Y-KNOT and CORINNE in the morning as both failed when they attempted to anchor in the creek. Aleck could not get to CORINNE as she was high and dry on the mud so he had to stay on board TRITON until midnight when the tide made.

It was an early start for QUINTILLA, BRIAR ROSE and IMOTHES as the three took the ebb down the Colne against a light Easterly and then we turned north as we passed the Eagle and were able to turn off engines. John managed to fix the engine on Y-KNOT which was simply a bad earth, but the engine on CORINNE was more terminal. On inspection the sump was full of diesel and one of the engine push- rods were disconnected. The engine will have to be removed for some serious work. John kindly offered to escort the Wakering contingency back home and hence his East Coast Cruise was cut short, but well done John for sacrificing his East Coast Cruise.

A gentle sail down the Wallet and into the Orwell for the rest, arriving at Wolverstone about 15:00. QUINTILLA tied up on the end of the 'G' linier pontoon while BRIAR ROSE and IMOTHES tied up on the other side of the same pontoon in finger berths. It was apparent that the linear pontoon we favoured in recent years had silted up badly this year. The Butt and Oyster were fully booked so we managed to book a meal at the Lock and Quay café in the marina where we were told we had to order before 18:00. It was a pleasant Sunday roast, but in the event, the café

continues serving until long after 20:00. I had an early night, (damn Arthritis), while the rest of the crews had an evening walk to Pin Mill, where it appears there were still plenty of tables to eat dinner.

I had a call from John on TRITON to say the Wakering boats all got back safely but it was a slow slog.

The same easterly wind was against us as we set off for Woodbridge in the Deben. We can cross the Deben Bar at 2 hrs of flood, but we had a later start which meant an easy sail to cross the Bar with more like four hours of flood. The wind was our favour as we sailed past Felixstowe and we met Richard and Justine in AMBITION II waiting by the Woodbridge offing buoy. We turned into to cross the bar and AMBITION II followed us unto the Deben.



***Wolverstone and the silted up 'G Pontoon'***

We mustered at Ramsholt about 13:30, but the tide mill explained that we should be able to enter at 15:00, we slowly made our way upriver.

AMBITION II had fuel problem, easily resolved, but decided to spend the night at anchor at Ramsholt. The day had progressively become warmer, as we wound our way up-river.

As I passed the Deben Yacht club, I put the engine in neutral so I could lay fenders and mooring warp, but underestimated the strength of the tide and IMOTHES came to a halt with a jolt. I had drifted into a Wayfarer sailing dinghy on her mooring and as I watched her mast slowly crumpled as the rigging wrapped around my pushpit. It all happened in slow motion and I drifted on past the mangled wreck. I motored over towards the yacht club where two people were launching dinghies but they just shrugged their shoulders. I continued on to a berth in the tide mill and reported the incident to the Deben Yacht club answerphone. I can just see the Bosun's Bell...

The Tide Mill was blistering hot as we freshened up and made out way to the Anchor for dinner and a cool drink that night.

We planned to stay at Woodbridge the following day and shared breakfast in the town before shopping. Fresh strawberries and cream, yummee. The crews set off for a walk upriver, while I just simply relaxed and was shortly met by Richard and Justine who had anchored AMBITION II at Waldringfield and motored their dinghy with the the tide to the Tidemill. So I shared my punnets of strawberries and cream in the blstering heat.

On the Wednesday we set off down the Deben where we were to meet AMBITION II as we crossed the bar. With a fickle South Westerly, we

crossed the bar about 2 hrs after HW and popped out into a bouncy ebb with wind on the nose.

A careful watch out for the numerous crab pots off Felixstowe brought us across the Shipping lane and turning to port past the Languard Cardinal allowed sheets to be eased and engine turned off for a much easier sail to Harwich Halfpenny pier where we hoped to stay for the night.

BRIAR ROSE arrived first confirming space on the inside of the pontoon where there was also room for both QUINTILLA and IMOTHES. Space on the outside of the pontoon was a bit short as they expected Sailing Barge CENTAUR to lay there overnight and early the following morning the whole of the outside of the pontoon was planned to be dredged ready for Tall Ships that weekend. AMBITION II tied up alongside the outside of the pontoon where we needed to leave room for Sailing Barge CENTAUR.



**All rafted up at Halfpenny Pier**

I had a call from Mike Craven in KANTARA explaining he was sailing direct from Paglesham with Aleck as crew and would arrive later in the afternoon. With some shifting of boats inside the pontoon we created space. Kantara arrived for a late lunch shortly followed by CENTAUR and with a bit of shuffling and squeezing managed both CENTAUR and AMBITION II on the outside of the pontoon. WE all shared an excellent meal at the Alma pub and my grandkids were delighted to see the fleet on the Harwich Harbour web cam.



On the Thursday we planned to sail to Bradwell but were awoken by quite a strong wind blowing oth AMBITION and CENTAUR onto the pontoon. This was causing concern as this part of the pontoon had to be clear for the arrival of the dredger. Luckily with a tow line from AMBITION, she was able to pull the bow of CENTAUR through the wind so they could make a more graceful departure.



***AMBITION II likes to tow a 'traditional tender' when cruising***

service. Lots of phone calls here... The outboard was left in the marina for repair. The marina had just received a delivery of fuel and the rest of us were delighted to fill tanks in the morning at just over £1.70 per litre.

KANTARA and AMBITION II crossed over to Pyefleet for a night, while the rest set off against the flood down the Blackwater to the Batchelor spit. BRIAR ROSE quickly took the lead as her new engine pushed her quickly over the tide. We all turned down the Ray channel but we were early, so initially took our time, The deepest water seems to be well east of the Ray buoy and MOTHES crossed with over two hours of tide to go. Briar Rose and IMOTHES shaped up the Crouch for a last night in Burnham Yacht Harbour while the rest of the fleet returned to Paglesham. Our last evening saw us in the Swallowtail restaurant for another good feed and back to IMOTHES for 'afters'.



***Approaches to Woodbridge***

On the last morning of the 2022 East Coast Cruise saw us back in the Swallowtail first thing where Graham treated us all to a grand breakfast. Many thanks to all the 2022 East Coast cruisers for an excellent week away which we all enjoyed apart from the collisions /breakdowns! But that's East Coast cruising for you.



## SWAMPED (or What Happens When you Lose Faith in Your Boat?)

By John Apps

Four boats set out from Plymouth on 8 May 2022 to sail to Newport Rhode Island in the US for the fifth Jester Challenge. All boats have retired and none have completed this years Jester Challenge yet.



**ARELIA**

I had entered with Arelia a 1966 Invicta Mk1, basically a plastic Folkboat with a masthead rig. Arelia was the first to retire. On 16 May at approximately 2200 hours UTC a 9 metre wave broke her swamping her cockpit, engine compartment and cabin. Even though the washboards were in place the water spurted under, around and between the washboards.

The wave was quite unusual for the middle of the Atlantic in my opinion. My various boats have been knocked down three times, twice in the North Atlantic and once in the Southern Ocean. What normally happens is that the wave breaks immediately above you striking the stern of the boat and because of the bubbles in the water the keel and rudder lose their grip on the water, the boat broaches and is tipped over by the wave and the

mast enters the water and in my three incidents acts as a brake and prevents the worse catastrophe of a 360° roll.

One never really knows what happens when something suddenly causes pandemonium. The picture here is what I believe was the type of wave that struck little Arelia. This is the sort of breaking wave that normally occurs with a shelving bottom. The mid Atlantic ridge consists of an underwater mountain range that perhaps could cause anomalies in wave formations. A Force 8 Southwesterly gale was blowing when it happened and I was subject to about a 1 knot westerly current from the Gulf Stream and this may have influenced a freak wave formation. And while scientists have good knowledge of surface currents thanks to satellite imagery the deep currents and different layers of water are perhaps not as well understood.



On Arelia the cockpit is about one inch above the sea height when she is not heavily loaded. She has one smallish cockpit drain at the rear of the cockpit. To be on the safe side I had stocked for 60 days with food and water, this meant that when heeled on either tack there was about 9 inches of water on the lee side of the cockpit. In the middle of the cockpit is an engine or more correctly a drive train access hatch. I had attempted to seal the access hatch as well as I could but I kept in mind that I might need to lift it for access to my CAV diesel filter, the stern gland or either the electric or manual bilge pump. Some leakage occurred through this hatch although it had a good 1" lip. My electric bilge pump prior to the freak wave breaking was able to keep up with water that found its way into the bilge.

After the wave hit it seemed to me that Arelia was headed for the bottom when my ears popped with the pressure. I immediately looked to my valise life raft that I keep in the main cabin over the keel mass. There was no way it would fit through the forward hatch and there was a lot of water trying to get from the cockpit to the cabin through the washboards and finding its way from the bilge into the cabin. There was a bit of an electric's gone wrong smell and I couldn't see if my batteries were under water, as they are located under the quarter berth where I had stored most of my plastic containers filled with tins of food, rice, flour and condiments. Fortunately despite my foreboding that Arelia was headed for the bottom 3000 meters below me she popped back up and lay sluggishly and deeply in the water.



**Cockpit drain**

The red light for my automatic bilge pump was showing it was on but I couldn't hear it. Perhaps the wind was too loud. My manual bilge pump is located in the cockpit and I couldn't get to it without removing the washboards and there was still water above the lower washboard in the cockpit. The water in the cabin was sloshing from side to side trying to get as much bedding and my clothes as wet as possible.

With a small food container and one of my many buckets I started to bail the cabin. I didn't want to empty the bucket into the cockpit as I was afraid it would either find its way under the bottom washboard or enter through the engine hatch. So taking out the top washboard and waiting for a good degree of heel I tried to toss as much water as possible over the side. Most of that night it seemed I spent bailing.

The next day on investigation I found my electric bilge pump was not working despite the little light telling me it was. The manual bilge pump was clogged and I did not want to raise the access hatch to get to it as waves were still breaking into the cockpit intermittently but with nowhere near the force of the one that had caused the initial catastrophe. On checking my domestic battery it was showing 12.3volts; for me that is too low. A few days before my 140 watt solar panel had stopped working and I had replaced it with my spare solar panel which was only 30

watts. Because of the gale that was still hanging around the cloud cover was such that after a day the domestic battery had not recovered its voltage. I decide to start my trusty Beta 10 to charge up my batteries. As soon as I turned it on the warning alarm came on and there was a red light on the panel. I turned the engine off immediately as I thought it was the oil pressure. By just turning the switch on I realised it was the water temp sensor that was glowing not the oil pressure. How could an engine that had not be run for over a week report itself as overheating? I decided not to take the risk of running the engine in case the constant warning alarm might cover up another problem. So by pulling off all the terminals I could find squirting them with



**After many hours with a bucket**

WD40 and pushing them hard back on, I left the engine and just hoped the 30 watt solar panel would slowly add to the domestic battery charge.

I had lost faith in Arelia's ability to survive an F8 gale. My worry was that a worse weather system could come along and really sink her. Previously in my UFO27 Glayva I had twice encountered Force10 once gusting 74 knots. So at my noon satphone report on 17 May I notified my wife to pass onto the Jester organisers that I was turning around and heading back to the UK.

A few days later I managed to get the engine to charge the batteries without a warning sounding so that I could run the fishing boat gauntlet crossing the continental shelf. It was at night and I proudly turned on my tricolour light and turned on my AIS receiver so I could attempt to work out what they were doing.

I had decided to sell Arelia and keep my Rival 34 'Raven'. But having just come back from 8 weeks getting to the Baltic and back on Raven, I have changed my mind and I will keep Arelia as being so much smaller she is a much easier boat to handle single handed. It is amazing how you can forget the terror one feels at times in trying situations on a boat.

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## **CIEL BLEU Cruising Upgrades** *Jon. Walmsley*

After Ten excellent sailing seasons with PAKLHAWA, my Wharram Tiki 28 catamaran, Dawn and I decided, with longer cruises in mind, to look for a slightly bigger boat that would be more comfortable for extended periods of time aboard.

We were pretty sure that the next boat would be a multihull, we had got used to the space and the lack of leaning, which made it easier to make and consume a cup of tea when sailing upwind. PAKLHAWA is also quite sprightly and I hoped that the next boat would be as dynamic and as much fun to sail.

Having sold PAKLHAWA, I quickly narrowed my search down to two main types: as possible replacements: A Farrier designed folding trimaran, (a boat which I would still love to own), or a Fountaine Pajot Maldives 32 catamaran. We went to Amsterdam to see a Farrier designed Corsair F28, but we were unable view it. If we had, then things may

have turned out quite differently. We also travelled to Cornwall to see John and Josephine's trimaran, JIFFY, to get an idea of what a larger Farrier had to offer. On the way back from Cornwall we stopped to see our second Maldives 32, (the first had been in very poor condition), at Langstone Yacht Club by Hayling Island. This example had been fully refurbished internally and externally to a standard that surpassed the original build. CIEL BLEU was too good an opportunity to miss.



***Maldives catamaran***

CIEL BLEU, as the model name suggests, is 32 feet long, (just falling into the less than Ten metre category when berthing in a marina), and seventeen and a half feet wide. She only weighs Three tonnes, roughly the same as a Shipman 28. Power is courtesy of an outboard. Fitting twin diesels to a catamaran of this size would increase the displacement considerably, add weight to where you don't want it, (i.e. the ends), and therefore downgrade the sailing performance. There are very few modern small production cruising catamarans as the market swiftly

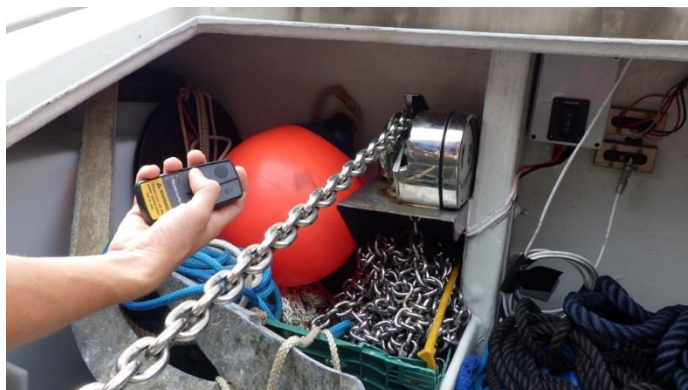
moved upwards in size as cruising catamarans became more popular. As a consequence, Fountaine Pajot stopped making the Maldives 32 in 1991 and CIEL BLEU dates from 1988.

Our first season with CIEL BLEU was 2020. After a delivery trip back to Paglesham, with the previous owners showing me the ropes, Dawn and I had a pleasant summer cruise to the Isle of Wight. CIEL BLEU proved to be a comfortable boat both at anchor and in harbour. She is a capable and fast passage maker. Having a small, solent style, jib, she is easy to tack short handed.



Over the 2020/21 Winter I made a few upgrades to improve comfort aboard and seaworthiness. I fitted 240 watts of solar panels, an inverter and battery system, as detailed in the February 2022 newsletter. This enabled the use of an electric kettle and induction hob while at sea, a safer and more convenient alternative to gas. The second major upgrade was the installation of a hot water system. Not having an inboard diesel, I was unable to fit a calorifier. Instead, I fitted a hot water tank with both a 12v and 240v immersion. The 240v element can be used when on shore power or at sea using the inverter for a 15 minute boost. A gizmo senses the battery voltage and switches solar power to the 12v element when the batteries are charged. With all this new-found hot water, I upgraded the heads shower arrangement and fitted a cockpit shower.

Another problem was that the anchor was kept in a large locker in front of the mast. To deploy you had to get it out, carry it across the trampoline whilst paying out the chain behind you. This was not very satisfactory for East Coast cruising where anchoring is the order of the day; sometimes in a hurry! I decided to fit a new anchor roller that lined up with the exit hole of the anchor locker and also fit an electric anchor winch inside the locker itself. This, coupled with a wireless remote control, made anchoring a lot easier. I upgraded the anchor from a 15Kg to a 21Kg version.



***Stainless steel chain is used as it does not form into humps in the shallow chain locker***



***Large new generation anchor gives peace of mind***

With all these upgrades our thoughts turned to going on a big trip. Fortunately, Dawn and I were able to be away from home for several months at a time. Such a voyage, or voyages, would inevitably involve multi day passages and possibly an Ocean crossing. CIEL BLEU is by no means a blue water cruiser and has several shortcomings in this regard. If a traditional heavy displacement blue water cruiser could be seen as a half full glass bottle bobbing in the water, then CIEL BLEU is more akin to an empty egg box floating upon it. What modifications could I make to CIEL BLEU to improve her deep water potential?

### ***Tankage***



***The large tanks can be easily filled from cans using a jiggle pump***

Although she has a lot of space inside, the light displacement and lack of a deep bilge, makes load carrying, in particular the fuel and water required for comfort and safety on long passages, difficult.

Firstly the fuel: CIEL BLEU, as stated earlier, is powered by a small 9.9HP outboard. The version fitted is for use on heavier vessels and has a larger propeller, of over eleven inches diameter, and a low three to one ratio gearbox to deliver more thrust at lower propeller RPM. This engine is mounted in a cockpit pod and fed by the supplied twelve litre tank. On long passages this tank needs regular topping up from cans, no easy task when there is a sea running. The engine is mounted on a

tray that is raised when sailing to give a good engine clearance above the sea. After a bit of googling I found two thirty six litre tanks that I could mount side on this tray. Each was fitted with a top mounted

pick up tube and an individual tap and filter. In addition there was room in this area to store four ten litre cans.

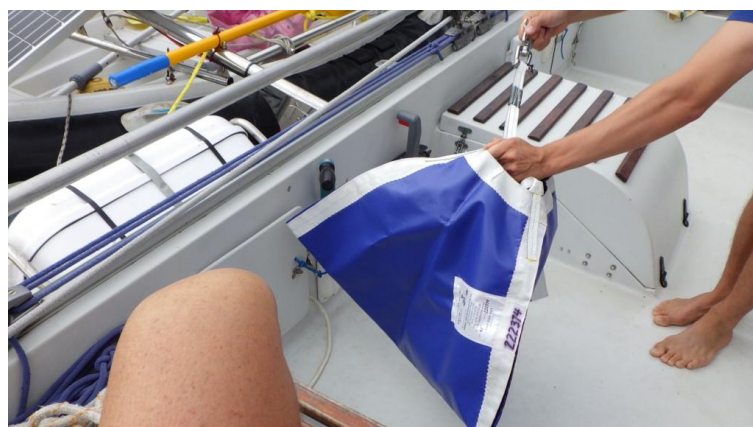
When cruising, the engine usually consumes one litre per hour which equates to at least four days of motoring or some five hundred miles at five knots. Typically CIEL BLEU tends to sail, when others are still motoring, so on balance I think that, although still nowhere near the range of a true blue water cruiser, this was acceptable.

Secondly the water: CIEL BLEU came fitted with a couple of flexible tanks under the saloon settee. These had a nominal capacity of eighty litres. In the first Winter refit I fitted an additional eighty litre tank in the large locker in front of the mast. Even with very modest consumption of ten litres per person per day, this was insufficient for a crew of three or four for more than a handful of days. It was also difficult to carry much extra bottled water due to space and weight considerations. The only solution, other than smelly and thirsty crew, was a watermaker. There are two main types of watermaker; the traditional which has a power-hungry high pressure pump or one of the newer breed that use energy recovery and can be run off a solar system. I opted for the latter which I fitted in my second Winter with Ciel Bleu. The watermaker which I bought is a distributed system which allowed me to tuck watermaker gubbins into unused spaces and voids. The plumbing is not for the faint hearted due to the need for flushing and pickling systems as well as the pipework for the watermaker itself. At the same time I fitted a new toilet and holding tank just to add to the plumbing mayhem. This system produces thirty litres an hour for a modest one hundred and ten watts of 12v DC. A large



***The compact energy recovery watermaker sits on a shelf in the foc'sle***

scoop on the watermaker sea water inlet, with a hole drilled in the top to let any trapped air escape, allows the unit to be run when underway. This has been tested at speeds up to eight knots. The watermaker is not just for passage making, but is also useful when anchored or moored, to keep the crew fresh and hydrated without the need to ferry large amounts of water in the dinghy.



***Four foot drogue slows the boat down in strong winds and heavy seas***

biggest concern for a catamaran in heavy weather is a capsize. This can happen when the boat accelerates down a wave too fast and trips over itself at the bottom. To mitigate against this I have a four foot drogue to stream behind the boat on a bridle and one hundred and fifty feet of warp.

By keeping one of the two tanks shut off on passage, storing bottled water and living on watermaker water, long passages could be undertaken without water rationing and with safety in the event of watermaker failure.

### ***Seaworthiness***

The major reason that many sailors would favour a traditional blue water cruiser for ocean passages, over a lightweight catamaran or monohull, is seaworthiness in bad conditions. It is most certainly true that in a storm most would prefer to be aboard the former, myself included. The

One good thing about CIEL BLEU is that she is lined with foam, has watertight compartments in each bow and large foam blocks in her sterns which, coupled with unballasted keels, or the weight of a diesel engine, renders her buoyant even if full of water or upside down. Even if it were necessary to take to the liferaft, you would stay with the boat and have access to provisions etc.

### ***Self Steering***

The vast majority of ocean going sailing yachts have wind vane steering which simply and elegantly steers them around the world's seas. This was not an option for CIEL BLEU. Although wind vane steering is fitted to some catamarans, Wharrams in particular, the congestion caused by the dinghy and solar panels at the stern of CIEL BLEU made this difficult. The only alternative, other than hand steering, was an electric autohelm, either an installed system or a tiller pilot. I have had mixed experiences with both types. On a long trip using a tiller pilot, both the main and spare ingested water which required them to be taken apart and hung over a Taylors oven hotplate on pieces of string alternately to dry them out. On another passage, a built in unit first sheared its drive cogs and then, once they were replaced, its fluxgate compass packed in. CIEL BLEU is tiller steered and I successfully broke a new tiller pilot in one season. The main culprit is water which travels past the ram seal and starts upsetting the electronics inside. The first sign of this is when the display starts steaming up. To try to stop this happening, I purchased a cover and made a waterproof sleeve to cover the ram and the seal.



***Plastic mac for a tiller pilot***

The jury on this 'fix' is still out. The good thing about a tiller pilot is that they can be swapped out easily, (not so the built in versions), and you can carry at least one spare. I believe that this is CIEL BLEU's greatest weakness and most likely cause of problems on a multi day passage.

### ***Conclusion***

Although CIEL BLEU is a far from ideal boat for ocean passages, I hope that the modifications that I have made will prove to be both useful and practical. The next thing to do is to put them to the test!

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### **Editors cuttings**

As well as the RSA East Coast Cruise week (see JL's article), members had some memorable local cruises to the rivers of Essex and Suffolk. Four boats made it to Bradwell for the Jubilee weekend (Bradwell was a popular destination this year), and Pyefleet made a good meeting place for the August bank holiday.



***Pyefleet (Matt Nichols)***





***The Anchor, Rowhedge***

From Pyefleet, two boat-loads took the tide to Rowhedge for an excellent lunch at the Anchor.

16 volunteers for Rochford Rivercare (spot the RSA members) collected 16 bags of rubbish, a chunk of polystyrene, lengths of wood and two syringes at this event in July.



***Rochford Rivercare***



***Hostellers at Battlesbridge (Mark Smith)***

Sister club the Hostellers SC had a trip to the upper reaches of the Crouch, as far as Battlesbridge

Winks having a go at the Bart's Bash race on the river Severn, and below, Patch, Apple and Millie at the start of the Oyster Cup



***On the start line for Bart's Bash***



***Patch, Apple and Millie start the Oyster Cup***

And finally...



*I can see your house from up here*

Matt remembers the thunderstorms, and says thanks to Graham who helped fix and was there when we broke the feeder for the main Halyard on Orissa.



*Matt, Jon and Graham aboard Orissa*