

The Hillyarder

The newsletter of the Hillyard Owners Association
www.hillyardyachts.com



Issue 62, April 2010

COMMODORIAL

By Michael Walden

Ahoy there HILLYARDERS ALL!

We are indeed fortunate to sail some of the most iconic of British small traditional yachts, widely admired and respected as such.

Those of us who are Members enjoy an Association which embraces everyone from all walks of life, regardless of whether we own a Hillyard, united by a shared enthusiasm.

I know from 27 years experience that meeting and getting to know other Hillyard sailors through chance encounters when cruising is always rewarding, but the pleasure is immensely enhanced by attending HOA rallies or reading of others exploits in our newsletters and now on our website.

In my view, there was never a time in the 33 years since our inspired foundation, when the existence and health of an Association such as the HOA was more important. I affirm this because in relation to the sheer number of vessels afloat we are 'the few' and risk being swamped by the armada. As such we should not fail always to fly the Association flag which deserves to be seen and recognised everywhere we sail.

At our AGM on May 22nd at the Royal Lymington YC we expect to confirm the appointment by election of our Committee and incoming Commodore Steve Tiffin to whom we will entrust the running of the HOA. They will need and deserve the support of members, and also I believe all owners not so far enrolled, in the Association's aim and objective to raise the profile and value of Hillyard yachts, better to protect part of a great British maritime tradition.

I wish you all 'FAIR WINDS' and the Good Fellowship which I have enjoyed throughout my term of ten years as Commodore.

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Hillyard Owners Meet Newton Ferrers Yacht Club

By Mark Swabey
Pangchi

Saturday, 6th June – persistent heavy rain and lack of wind up until about 5pm. Well, that was our first excuse for not sailing round from Plymouth to tie up in Newton Ferrers on the visitor pontoon. I had also been told firmly by my better half that no way was she being transported from the visitor pontoon to Newton Ferrers on our dinghy either – in evening dress! That's my excuse No. 2.



However, I fully expected to be ridiculed by all the other experienced sailors attending the event, who take these things in their stride. So when Jane and Arthur Moss also admitted that they were driving round and very kindly offered us a lift, I felt that at least I had some allies. Mind you, they had a better excuse – manoeuvring a 28 tonner in the confined waters of Newton Ferrers would be difficult, with the amount of moored boats lining the narrow main channel!

So we arrived at the delightful Newton Ferrers Yacht club – by car - to witness a calm cool sunny evening from the seashore balcony. The party included Dave Hubbard (Events), Pauline Anthony with Mike & Marion Gray, Keith (Treasurer) and Lynne Tullett, David (Chaplain) and Carol Stickland, Arthur & Jane Moss (Aguilla) and ourselves Mark & Ann Swabey (Pangchi). And

not a yacht between us!

Introductions and drinks triggered the discussions with much relief that no-one had shown us all up by battling through the elements. Somehow this led, later in the evening, to discussion of leaks in Hillyards (all above the waterline and due to rain, I hasten to add). This appears to be a feature of some Hillyard coachroofs and cockpits, and the full and varied methods of dealing with them were aired. Ann and I appeared to be in the doghouse for admitting that Panchi's coachroof and cockpit were reasonably watertight – due, I hasten to add, to the extensive work commissioned by the previous owners.

The restaurant on the first floor of the yacht club has superb views across to Noss Mayo and down the River Yealm, which looked magical in the setting sun. The initial proposed menu had been abandoned as the enthusiastic chef described the delights of his menu – short, but every dish sounding mouth-watering. As the starters appeared, our chaplain gave a suitably nautical grace.

The meals were excellent – I remember a fillet mignon in a wild mushroom sauce that just melted in the mouth, and every other dish was met with appreciation.

Pictures were duly taken – Dave and I subsequently discovered that photographic skills are inversely proportional to alcohol level, and the wine was good.

We all agreed to meet there again, but the details seem to be a little vague – nothing to do with the wine, of course!



All change for lanthe and her crew - Steve Tiffen

August 2009, and the end of the sailing season was approaching and I was making my usual plans to put lanthe in the shed at Hayling Yacht Company for the cold winter months. We had had a good summer with the highlight being a trip to the Paimpol festival where we met fellow Hillyarders on Dawn Lady and Vivona to enjoy the music, food, socialising and the whole unique atmosphere of the event.

On returning to work a whole sequence of events began that have had a dramatic impact for both lanthe and her crew! Having always been told that early retirement was only "pie in the sky" I learnt that my fairy god mother had been in action whilst I had been away and that she had organised my dream and that I would be able to retire at the end of 2009. With Liz, wife and First Mate, already geared up to retire in early 2010, we had an opportunity to bring forward some of our long held plans to make more use of lanthe in future years.

September, Southampton Boat Show, and a long list of people to see to initiate phase one of our plans. lanthe, a 13 ton hillyard, still had her original BMC Commodore 3.8 litre, 62hp diesel (the London boat show exhibit from 1973), that whilst very reliable was starting to show its age. The idea was to replace this and the electrics (everything on the boat was +ve earth!) to make longer cruising trips a more practical proposition.

At the end of the day there are not that many options when you look to replace an engine. I quickly narrowed it down to 3 potential suppliers being Beta, Nanni and Sole diesels, and began a shuffle between the stands to negotiate the best possible deal. Both the Beta and Nanni are based on the Kubota range of engines and are well proven and rugged installations. Choice was finally determined by the support and interest shown by Nanni and the price they were prepared to offer! Next stop was for the electrics and for this I revisited the Merlin stand that I had investigated a couple of years previously when I was originally looking to replace the installation. They offer an "off the shelf" option that provides a solution for all charging and power needs with simple instructions for installation – something that was a big selling point for me!

So with these options decided upon, my final stop was at my boatyard stand to get a price for installing a new engine, based on me doing the disconnection of the old one plus all the electrics and exhaust.

It is now March and everything is well under way, but as usual with a project of this nature one thing has tended to lead to another! The new engine is in situ and linked up to a new prop shaft – propeller options are being considered and we won't be going anywhere until that is sorted. The electrics are all on board but still being connected, with the added challenge for me of a new distribution panel at the chart table, a replacement instrument panel for electrics/ engine in the cockpit and the need to accommodate an additional services battery within new battery boxes in the engine compartment.

We have decided this year to base ourselves in Chichester Harbour so we can ensure that we get the engine installation right before venturing further. Phase 2 next winter is to attempt to finally get to grips with the deterioration of the decks by re-sheaving them in totality – but more on this in the future!

With more time on my hands I have also offered to help more with the HOA through the new committee set up and hopefully take some of the pressures off Michael Walden. We are hoping to bring lanthe to the May meet in Lymington when the new installations should look a little more complete than these progress photos.



PETER WHITFIELD

An obituary by Michael Walden

The following was kindly sent to us by his widow Maureen from her home in Suffolk to whom, and the family, we send our condolences at the sad loss of her husband Peter.



Peter Whitfield died aged 82 in Sept 2009. His love of sailing began in Singapore in 1945 when in the RAF, he and a friend built and sailed a dinghy. Back in the UK, Peter owned a Wayfarer.

In 1964 he bought his first Hillyard. She was COLUMBINE 9tons built in 1962. This was followed in 1969 by WINDSONG 13 tons built in 1931 a Dunkirk Little Ship, believed to be the only Hillyard and sailing yacht present at the evacuation. Peter attended several anniversary rallies in her at Dunkirk. Cruised to Norway, Spain, all around the UK. They stayed together for fifteen years.

In 1984 Peter was tempted by INCOGNITO a Peter Duck Ketch by Maurice Griffiths, returning to his real love, the Hillyard, in 1991 when he bought JENZARA 12 tons built 1970. Peter & Maureen passaged through the French Canals and cruised in the Med for 18 months. Many happy, comfortable memories. Only ill health forced Peter to give up sailing when he was 80 years of age.

Maureen relates that Peter was a founder Member of the HOA, but sometimes forgot to pay his Subscription, a common failing. As a popular lecturer, he taught Navigation for the RYA syllabus for over 30 years. Altogether an impressive record by a traditional yachtsman, who many Hillyarders were very glad to have known and now regret his passing.

Slop Chest

Hillyard Flag, tie, caps: Steve Tiffen
Sweats, Polo shirts with HOA logo:
Cowes
Book: David Hillyard
Story by John Balchin: Out of print

Where is she now?

President Michael Joyce wishes to contact present owner of **LINA ARNI** 11tons, 1972 name changed to **CHICAGO**.
Tel 02082 699 492

Welcome Aboard

Bevan & Jean Spence
Shoreham moving to North Wales
MOONSTONE OF MARLOW
12 tons 1968

Wanted

Manual windlass and chain. Would anybody who is changing over to an electric windlass consider selling me your old manual one? Will collect and pay cash! Roger Aps: 01989 770987, email: symaffick@aol.com

For Sale

Please see www.hillyardyachts.com

HOA TREASURER'S REPORT

The Association's accounts for the year to 31 March 2010 are, as last year, printed in the front of the handbook. The deficit arising from an excess of expenditure over income this year is almost entirely attributable to the very much lower level of subscriptions received from members. We took steps to contain the costs of producing the newsletters and handbook, which is our major cost, which were successful and resulted in much improved presentation.

The subscription of £10.00 per year is extremely modest and it has not increased for some years. If we are to avoid an increase it is vital that all members pay their subscriptions on time and without the need to be chased.

I would ask you to check whether you paid your subscription last year and if you find that you didn't to send me a cheque (payable to Hillyard Owners Association) for £20.00 to cover the 2009 and 2010 subscription. Even better would be to complete a standing order form so that you don't forget in future. Finally, a thank you to those members who pay their subscriptions either by standing order or who always remember to post me a cheque in April.

Keith Tullett, Treasurer

To buy or not to buy this is the question?

By Amanda Fulton – prospective
Hillyard owner.

Here we are sitting in the comfort of our own home searching the Internet for that ideal boat to escape on. We are excited and love the idea of owning a boat but it is, all new to me, I need more understanding of the implications. Dave, on the other hand, being a keen boat builder and sailor, has helped me. Although we have dreamt of owning our own boat we were very practical with sorting our needs, ideals and of course the expenses. Everything had to add up. Also, Lorenzo our six year old is blind, my thoughts were, how's he going to manage? You can imagine lots of horrible images going through my head: "Not that way Lorenzo," as he plunges into the deep again!

Guard rails and stanchions were a must and the cockpit had to be deep and safe. Accommodation and comfort were also of prime importance. Speed and sailing close to the wind wasn't in the equation.

So when we found the Hillyard, a boat that started to 'tick all the boxes', with classic charm we were more than excited and hooked.

Qualities of the Hillyard

We liked the Hillyard because of their great sea keeping qualities and heavy displacement. We wanted a boat that would look after us if the weather turned nasty not visa versa!! Also wood as a construction material for boat building is still far superior to anything else on the market - in Dave's view anyway!

The centre cockpit is deep and safe and hopefully the boat we buy will be self-draining. Aft cabins are a new one for Dave as all the boats that he has sailed have had aft cockpits and ranged in size from Bosun dinghies to a class one C and C racing yacht (fast but not comfy).

An aft cabin sounds luxurious, we can stow the kids in the forepeak and have a nice quiet night listening to our music while they work away at untying the bitter end on the anchor cable!!!

I believed the kids to be young enough to adapt and learn a great deal from the experience, but there were many things to consider, my concerns were how easy could a blind boy get on and off the boat? Is it safe enough for the boys not to be easily climbing over the edge and falling in? Dave had told us a story of a blind sailor he once knew who had an amazing ability to sense and guide the boat from

the feel of the wind, a skill we were hoping that Lorenzo would attain, enjoy and which would also expand his sensory awareness.

Arthur, our four year old has a fascination and great love of fishing, takes after his Dad on that I'm afraid. I must be the only person I know who, while fishing, is hoping not to catch one (I'm not keen on the preparing, cook or eating of it!).

So we are hoping no one buys the boats on our short list before we even get to look at them. Our options are open with Dave's skill for restoration, and to hopefully get that bargain.

So far our search took us to Spain and a neglected vessel. We looked into plans of spending our summer in Spain camping while Dave looked into working on her but she needed more work than we could afford with our time or money. It was sad to think we were going to leave her there, hoping that someone else would have what it takes to take her on and restore her.

We have looked far and wide now at so many, not just Hillyards. But I must say I have grown a soft spot for that old classic cottage look of the Hillyard. Don't get me wrong, I know I'm a romantic, but I have thought hard about this, the problems and challenges we may have, 'Does the porthole leak? Of course!'

Dave has sailed and skippered many vessels but never a Hillyard, so why have we decided on this adventure with the beautiful classic Hillyard? We can't think of a better boat for our family for the way it is set up and arranged inside plus we feel it would be more comfortable sailing with the long keel.

We have our hopes on one in Turkey, but it is starting to become a chore just to get there to view it. April is our time to be buying so we can spend our summer on the boat sailing the Greek Islands!

May have to keep you posted, and let you know when we have our dream, after the exhausting day on the beach, the fish supper Artie caught, and then drinking our glass of wine watching the sunset while the kids sleep. Anyone with any ideas, views or Hillyards for sale let us know.

If you have a Hillyard for Amanda and Dave, they can be contacted on:
Amanda and Dave Fulton
Casali 6, Italy
Tel: 0039 3338430990
Email: itdave5@yahoo.co.uk

MHW footnote: Long experience by owners has found that the small area centre cockpit Hillyard with their deep coaming, coupled with the yacht's relatively high freeboard have proved adequate to prevent dangerous swamping without self draining provision, assuming that manual fixed and portable Bilge pumps are to hand, together with an electric pump installed.

Historic Ships Register – it's only for 'old birds'

By Chris McKeon

I read the article in the November 2009 issue of The Hillyarder regarding registering Hillyard yachts with Historic Ships at the Maritime Museum.

The article was accurate in every respect regarding the intention of recording and therefore planning for the preservation of what would be considered significant design or construction in the production of yachts and ships within the United Kingdom. I encountered a small snag however!

As a result of this article I contacted the Maritime Museum, historic vessels department and after filling out an extensive form to register my own vessel (the ketch Roane, built 1969, 36ft by David Hillyard), received an initial email declining my registration as the vessel was less than 50 years old. I persisted a little pointing out that the Historic Vessels Association had another boat of less than 50 on their book. However, on 15th January Ron Ellis of the National Historic Ships eventually sent me an email confirming that Roane would be entered on their archive subject to the following |:

"We have entered Roane on our archive as of historical interest and as such she can be reviewed on our website. She will be earmarked for promotion to the National Historic Registry when she reaches 50 years old."

So I guess all I have to do is get Roane back into the water, after another couple of months of grinding, deck and plank replacement, new rigging, engine overhaul, rewire, re-caulk, paint, and a few other minor bits'n pieces, sail her about until 2019 without foundering and 'Bobs yer uncle!!

Happy registration.

Updated HOA Website

The HOA website, at www.hillyardyachts.com - has had a facelift. This was needed to:

- Give a more professional look
- Make it easier to navigate
- Make it easier to maintain
- Improve the page load speed
- Handle a wide range of browsers and screen shapes and sizes
- Form a sound basis for further expansion in future.

The result is a site that should be easier to access and that tries hard to format itself to whatever window size you have selected. The main menu is just under the title, but can be moved to the side for those who prefer widescreen views. The main menu stays visible at all times. On large pages, like the Pictures page, a subsidiary menu is shown at the top of the page.

Selecting an item on this menu e.g. 11-ton, takes you straight to pictures of 11 tonners. To get back, press the Home key.

The site also caters for the zoom facilities now available on the latest browsers, reformatting itself where appropriate and showing photos in greater detail when available.

Pictures now load a lot faster. But a lot of the changes are under the surface, simplifying the pages and providing a more unified framework for additions. We hope that you like the results. Do feel free to suggest further ideas, provide further information or advertise your boat if you are selling.

Mark Swabey, Pangchi owner, website architect

Guy Smith, website content



Plans for 2010

Tashana, like many boats at this time of the year, is looking sad. All her deck gear is stripped off and stowed below. Tomorrow I will be motoring her the short distance from her permanent berth in Haslar Marina to Gosport Marina ready to be lifted out on Monday morning. This year the mast will be unstepped - I tend to do this in alternate years. The plan is that she will be out of the water for just two weeks for antifouling, anodes and the other bits below the waterline. While the mast is laid alongside, we plan to install lazy jacks to a Steve Tiffin design which will work with round the boom reefing. We shall see.

In anticipation and readiness for a longer

cruising season following my second 'retirement' on 30th June, she has already received the gift of a DSC VHF - a very impressive piece of technology. I shall need to go on a course to upgrade my Short Range Certificate. Because we seem to have acquired so much more in the way of electronics we are also planning to double our domestic battery power - the use of a physically smaller cranking battery means that we can fit three batteries in the space previously occupied by two.

So, come 1st July the plan is to point Tashana's bows West and enjoy some extended cruising to those ports which we have enjoyed so much in the past, often in company with Lady Ailsa and Trimley Maid. With Portland Bill and

Lyme Bay behind us we look forward to renewing our acquaintance with Brixham, Dartmouth and Dittisham, Salcombe, Newton Ferrers, Fowey, Falmouth and perhaps even Penzance and the Isles of Scilly.

That's the plan - we'll let you know how much of it comes together and actually happens.

In addition to my role as your honorary chaplain, it's also my privilege to have taken over the role of honorary secretary from Vincent van Walt - I hope I can do as well as he has done. If you wish to contact me in either of these capacities, please feel free to do so.

Carol and Dave Stickland

HILLYARD RALLIES and contacts for your diary.

Events Co-ordinator, David Hubbard. hubbard@talktalk.net

Date	Event	Location	Contact
22nd & 23rd May 2010	Rally , Walk ashore, Dinner & AGM	Royal Lymington Yacht Club South Lymington	Tony Swain anthonyjswain@btinternet.com
5th & 6th June 2010	Rally & Dinner	South West Fowey	David Hubbard hubbard@talktalk.net
28th August 2010	Rally & Supper	East Coast Royal Harwich Yacht Club	Ted Evans e.f.evans@keele.ac.uk

When I first saw Petmar

By Abigail Makiello

When I first saw Petmar, my heart sank. I had been looking for a boat as a restoration project for some time online and I had found what I thought was looking for when I saw her picture on a classified ads site. We drove down from Northern France to Normandy on a sunny January day, hoping for the best, but with very little information, as the broker who advertised her wasn't that interested and the owner couldn't be contacted. She was the first boat I was going to see and as my budget was minute, I didn't want to waste any precious earnings going up and down the country looking at boats too far gone for reasonable restoration.

When I stepped onboard and into the main cabin, the smell I encountered can only be compared to that musty autumnal smell, mushrooms and decay, damp and mould, which in a forest is pleasant, but in a boat, not a good sign. I turned to the shipwright who is helping me with the project and asked if there was any point carrying out the survey we had planned, I didn't think it would be possible for a boat in that condition to be sound. We carried on despite my misgivings and the water that sloshed over the floorboards. He was keen, the overall structure seemed good, the interior fittings were in reasonable order, apart from the galley, and the engine ran, so she wasn't as bad as she could have been. I agreed to have her lifted out for a survey below the waterline and a couple of weeks later we were eating pizza on the foredeck, having had a morning's scrape and sound in the lukewarm February sunshine.

Once the 8 inches of underwater forest, complete with eels had been removed, the hull seemed basically sound, with some areas of dodgy planking but nothing too dramatic. I had not yet heard of problems relating to the horn timber and galvanised rubber tube, and there were no obvious signs of it on the outside. After the lunch, we pumped out gallons and gallons from the bilge, removed the "for sale sign" and started thinking about the future.

A year later, Petmar is not yet ready for sea, but she floats, and provides me with a comfortable home afloat. After this seemingly never-ending winter, all involved are looking forwards to the spring and summer to pursue work on the cabin sides, deck and mast. To be continued...

Tales from an 'experienced old hand!'

By David Hubbard

A brief resume of some of my sailing lowlights – I did send an article to Yachting Monthly when we were living on our 16 tonner in the Med. but they returned it as it was deemed to gloomy to print – 'Llandoger Trow' was a 42 ft. wooden cutter built at Looe in '61 and had had an 'unlucky' career, we had some opinions to add but the brew was too strong for the readership! These anecdotes start in 1947.....

I lived near the banks of the River Stour in Dorset – I was forbidden to mix with the local lads in case I learnt 'bad language', needless to say the attraction of fishing with them near the Water Bailiff's house and playing in his leaky old punt was too great, so when my Father took me to visit a friend on the Solent who had a small dinghy pulled up on the beach – I – full of small boat experience (aged 8) ignored the fogbank that was rolling in and launched myself on the tide and rowed out – I heard the adults calling but the tide must have taken me out. I remember a powerful siren and a sudden wash that pushed me onto a shingle bank – to a sound spanking ..

My (soon to be) fiancée and I invited her friend plus boyfriend for a week in a Norfolk Broads traditional (engineless) gaff sloop – they had no experience, so happily running fast with the boom right out and close to the marker posts on Hickling Broad, they made no comment when the mainsheet looped it self over a post - eventually let them helm after a sail repair, running again they gibed, but I was standing on the quarter and flew out over the water on the boom-end

I 'skipped a 'Tankard' b/keeler on the East Coast for a friend of my Fathers' – made a lot of mistakes on someone else's boat! First voyage out of the Deben for Pin Mill saw us in heavy rain and mist, I mistake some buildings in Felixstowe for the High/Low lights in Harwich – headed for the beach in a strong S/W straight between jagged steel plates of a World War 2 wreck exposed at half tide, rapid about turn and found Landguard Spit - dried ourselves in front of the fire in the 'Butt & Oyster' and told our 'exciting' story to a quiet old couple nearby, found out later that they were the famous Pye's

– still, I was only 19.

On the way back to Waldringfield we ran the engine for hours and found that not having checked the prop shaft alignment on launching meant the shaft ran red hot getting over the Deben Bar, it seized off Felixstowe Ferry and we ran full tilt onto the 'Horse' shoal, put an anchor over and got it fouled on a mooring – a lot learned in a short time.

A friend and I built a 16 ½ ft. Y.M. 'Senior'/'Wavecrest' (bit of each) ply 2 berth sloop in my garden, a combined design because we couldn't afford the full plans for either but used magazine articles to produce a little boat that went well and ended up in Holland. She was rather tender and when laying an illegal mooring in Bradwell Creek my crew thought she was going to capsize so he took a header over the side – he was a slim 6 footer – the water was only 5ft. deep and a thick black mud bottom – I can still see his crepe soled boots waving in the air

Off Stone, running under jib, another crew member slipped on the foredeck as I was looking the other way – didn't make a sound as he went in as his pipe was drawing well. I didn't realise he had gone until we were 100 yards apart and I saw his wave with pipe in mouth – no way could I beat back – then found the 'Seagull' tank was empty – poured fuel all over it – but it started – and got back to find he had been picked up by another boat – still with pipe alight!

I bought a 24 ft. ply 'Debutante' – ballast keel & b/keels – with a large 'Seagull' outboard, the mooring was above the hard in Bradwell Creek, a large tyre filled with concrete and dug in at low water. We were able to splash through thin mud/gravel at low water to get aboard – my Wife carrying our 3 year old. I neglected to tell her that a mooring had been lifted nearby and the hole had filled with mud – I don't remember which of them screamed the loudest.... One advantage of a self draining cockpit was the ability to plug the drains, fill the cockpit with water and wash treacly mud off.

Whilst close hauled on a Force 5 South

Wester off Osea Island I suddenly fell over as the tiller went slack – Debs. have an inboard rudder – scrambled into the aft locker as she nearly broached, family hurled onto lee bunks, got the outboard running and steered with that. When dried out we found the s/steel shaft looked like a piece of a well sucked stick of rock, luckily the break was inside the rudder tube (and therefore not checked) otherwise the rudder would have been lost. Eldest son said “can we do that again as the window was under water and I saw a fish”

We then had a 24ft. ‘Seaking’ clinker centreboard cutter, built at Leigh on Sea in ’50 with a transom hung rudder – sailing alone off the entrance to the River Blackwater the rudder suddenly floated up – the lower pintle had sheared, sails down and jury-rigged the rudder with lashings, motored gently back

Memories of my late wife and the imminence of a new relationship meant a change to Tupperware – a Mk.1 ‘Cornish Crabber’ only sailed for 6 hours from new by her 1st. owner so we picked her up (together with the previous owner who assured us ‘everything is checked’) from a mooring by the pontoon at the Blackwater Sailing Club – the Club launch was tied up on the pontoon with the Club Steward aboard, engine ok., slipped, helm over to turn past the pontoon – boat carried straight on – helm hard over and full throttle – just roared past the launch with 6 inches to spare, Steward also roaring – luckily couldn’t hear what over the noise of the engine and the ex. owner swearing loudly. Found the tiller at 45 degrees and rudder amidships, there was no countersink on the shaft for the locking bolt to fit into...

Tupperware and no headroom quickly lost favour with us, after 2 seasons we found – yes folks – a ‘Hillyard’ 8 ton aft cockpit sloop (see previous Newsletter article on her ghost etc.) We sailed many miles in her, she was a lovely boat with the typical Hillyard rudder carried on ‘C’ shaped straps welded to the rudder post and all seemed ok until she was lifted out after our final sail of the season – a long run before a North East Force 5-6, with an awkward ‘wind over tide’ breaking sea needing large movements of the tiller - from Great Yarmouth to the Blackwater Club at Heybridge Basin, I found the odd sloppiness in steering was due to the ‘C’ straps having corroded to a few thou. and the rudderblade with nearly 15 degrees of slack - I can only

think ‘Marjory –Gaws’ ghost was helping yet again, when the tiller was held firm I broke the rudderblade away easily

The decision to retire early and ‘sell up and sail away’ was made, regretfully Marjory Gaws was sold and we set about fitting out a 42 ft. Alan Pape cutter for the Med. – huge barn-door of a rudder with hydraulic wheel steering – no problems this time!!, that is until we were manoeuvring backwards into a marina berth with our 72.HP. Perkins at 1000 rpm. (a strong beam wind blowing of course) when the tremendous load on the rudderblade with 45 degrees of helm overwhelmed the hydraulics and threw my wife across the wheelhouse – it took 5 of us to sort the mess out

We – wife and an old chum – were on the Canal du Nord heading for the Med. and in the process of negotiating a flight of locks, a local Eclusier in his white van was ‘seeing’ us thro’ when the crew smelt burning – looked aft and saw black smoke pouring out of the engine room ventilator – “FIRE BELOW,” he yelled, I cut the engine and dived below to find charred pvc. wiring, we drifted onto a dolphin, called the VNF. on VHF. – he carefully hid in his van behind some trees until we sorted it out and rumbled on

I could go on but remembering the Yachting Monthly editor’s comments.....

Now ‘Dawn’, a 2 ½ Ton Hillyard, entitles me to be back in the fold – maybe age and experience has meant that I don’t YET have any howlers to report, apart from torn sails, engine failures, odd leaks sorry, I forgot – reminded by an old chum who was crew for the Fal Classics, he had given ‘Dawn’ a new mainsheet of imitation manilla, I had fitted a new jamming cleat/block for it – hard on the wind to shove past the Vilt buoy, our turning mark to port, faced aft to free the sheet – it was jammed tight, crew shouted: “helm up QUICK” I turned to see this large green cage towering over the bow, helm jammed upwind – no response – crunch!! Time stood still, the buoy reeled away to port, ‘Dawn’, with sheet freed staggered downwind while I peered forward expecting to see a jagged hole and oggin pouring in – nothing!

Crept forward on deck and peered over – cracked planks, a deep score covered in Trinity House green and a big dent in the stem timber just enough to port to deflect the buoy, so we finished the race with weak knees but thankful for the strength of her hull.

A massive THANK YOU TO MICHAEL

Vincent van Walt

Some 10 years ago Michael Joyce relinquished his role as Commodore of the Association and we were very fortunate that Michael Walden slipped seamlessly into his place. Here was a man who had all the attributes to fill the position: Young, with time on his hands, owner of the beautiful Trimley Maid, an enthusiasm for boats and a vast experience in sailing to many corners of the world; from the Barrier Reef, Caribbean and to far northern latitudes. Above all, he has a great love of wooden boats and particularly Hillyards.

I was fortunate to assist him in the role of treasurer for a big portion of his time as Commodore and got to know him very well and he has become a good friend. He is adventurous, leading us to havens where we otherwise might have thought twice about sailing to (and once almost got us neaped). His impetuosity can sometimes lead him in, shall we say, tricky situations. But above all he is generous and his love of all matters Hillyard is infectious and during his time as Commodore he has given the Association a huge amount of time, energy and has shown qualities of leadership which has steered the HOA in such a fine direction.

Behind each successful man there is of course an influential woman and the HOA also needs to thank Gillian for her amazing support to the Association. From answering the phone from fellow Hillyarders and keeping Michael on track during his after dinner speeches she has been unstinting in her support for her man and the HOA. Thank you Gill!

I know you’re not swallowing your anchor yet Michael and therefore look forward to sailing in company with Trimley Maid on some new adventures for many more years but in the meanwhile THANK YOU and I hope that despite your retirement as Commodore you will continue to keep a fatherly eye on the Association to make sure it stays on track.



Update from CORSARO

It has been a while since my last update to the Association. When I last wrote, my custodian had just completed a re-build of my engine, and was about to go into Southdown Marina, near Millbrook, to restore my ailing mast. My custodian had earlier noticed rot by the gooseneck, where fresh water had run down the electric cabling running down the mast, also, the mast required a complete rub down and re varnish - it was in a very sorry looking state from the years of neglect. Access to Millbrook is a bit of a game, with only a meter or so of water under the keel at high water. The marina is essentially a series of mud berths with pontoons.

At high water, on the 30th April, I tied up in a temporary berth, and my custodian started preparing the mast and rigging for the lift off the following morning. This is a heart stopping moment for any owner, but with a rotten mast, combined with never having lowered a large mast before, it was terrifying! However, I needn't have worried, the marina staff were excellent and the mast came down without a hitch! From the lift berth I was then placed a suitable berth for the duration of my stay. I certainly looked odd without my mast! My custodian then started work.

The first job was to strip the mast of all its rigging, fixtures and fittings. This is a lot easier to say than to do, it took two days! It was whilst doing this that the full extent of the problem became clear. A previous owner had run the electric wires inside a plastic ducting, more commonly used inside houses. This ducting had been screwed to the mast alongside the mainsail track. Silicon sealant had then been applied to the outside edge of the ducting, thus trapping any rain water in against the wood of the mast. Rot had been inevitable.

The next job was to strip what remained of the old varnish, and bring the colour back into the wood. For this job, my custodian used an angle grinder fitted with a coarse cleaning fleece. This is fantastic for doing the job, as if used correctly, does not bite into the timber, but cleans off any varnish, and sands the wood back to its original colour. It makes the job a lot easier. My custodian had previously restored the mast of a 25ft boat entirely by hand, and the sanding had taken two weeks of hard elbow grease. The sanding of my mast took two days!

This accomplished, The full extent of the rot on the surface could be easily seen. As

well as the area around the gooseneck, there were three other sections running down the mast alongside the track, two of which were four or five foot in length, and one of about a foot. It was now time to dig this out, and the depth that the rot had penetrated would be seen. This is the point at which we would know if it was possible to save the mast; too deep a penetration, and the mast would be beyond repair. Out came the chisel.

I was so lucky! The deepest the rot had penetrated was about half an inch! This was great news. It meant that repairs would not be as extensive as my custodian had feared. Using a router, the timber was brought back to a more or less level clean and good surface, and then a combination



of chisel and sandpaper, cleaned up and prepared for scarphing in new wood. The new timber was then cut and shaped, and using west epoxy with micro fibres, glued in place, secured with F clamps every 6 inches. The new timber was left a few mm proud to facilitate subsequent planing and shaping. By the end of the second week, this was accomplished!

A lot of thought had been put into what type of varnish to apply, as my custodian did not want to have to drop the mast every other year to re-do it! A company called Sikkens has a product called Novatech, which together with its partner, Novatop provide a good uv protection and fine finish. Having read various reports on this finish, my custodian settled on using it. This was not an easy decision as my custodian views woodstain with distain, however, the photos of another mast done with Novatech, combined with articles written in various yachting magazines finally swayed him. The first coat was applied. My custodian was blown away, the finish of this coating is excellent, it brings out the colour of the spruce beautifully, with no trace of that awful woodstain brown! A

fine golden hue to the wood resulted and none of the grain was hidden! If it lasts as well as it is supposed to, then it really does represent the best possible coating for a wooden mast!

I had not forgotten the spreaders and other mast fittings whilst waiting for glues and coatings to dry! My custodian had intended to silver the fittings and varnish the mahogany spreaders, however he had noticed the profusion of wooden masts at the marina with white spreaders. Thus another decision was reached and white weather shield was purchased together with metal paint. The spreaders were hung from the arch at my stern and the undercoat and then paint applied. My tabernacle was also stripped and repainted white. I wondered what this would look like when finished and the mast put back! The day dawned that all painting was finished and dried. It was now time to re rig the mast and fit it out! For the electric cables, a new method of fitting had to be worked out. My custodian settled on cable clips screwed on every six inches. To do this properly about eighty clips were needed for each cable, about 240 in all! Each of these has to have its nail removed and a stainless steel screw inserted. The cables in turn then had to be screwed to the mast. Because of their small size, an electric screwdriver was out of the question, so all this was done by hand - two days work!! Finally the mast was ready to be lifted back into place. The next heart stopping moment arrived

on the 2nd June at 3pm. Again thanks to the staff, it went up without a hitch!

The mast looked fantastic!

My custodian now has the confidence in my rig to put the sails up and actually go sailing! Typically the British summer was abysmal and only two trips were undertaken this year! The first, a shakedown trip to Fowey, was great fun in early August (My custodian having been away in July), and a more extensive second trip to Falmouth in September. On both occasions we sailed well and had a thoroughly enjoyable time! A few more jobs have been completed, including the rubdown of all exterior bright work (finishing with Sikkens again - it works as well on mahogany!), a wood burning stove has also been fitted ready for this winter.

Of course much work still needs doing, however, the basics are in place. The electrics all work, the plumbing is in good order with hot and cold running water, the engine is reliable, I am warm, and of course, my mast is not going to collapse in a force 2!

Nancy Blackett: A typical Hillyard?

By Peter Willis (Chairman, the Nancy Blackett Trust)

I like to think of Nancy as a Hillyard among Hillyards - in some ways she's just that, a well-looked-after example of a 7-tonner from the firm's 1930s heyday. In other ways, of course she's not. Fame is not something familiar to most Hillyards - they're about quiet enjoyment, family ownership, simple (though sometimes quite ambitious) cruising, but Nancy is inevitably famous, as the boat owned, and so named, by Arthur Ransome, and the inspiration and chief 'character' (as the Goblin) of his book 'We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea'.

She's owned by a trust, sailed by a rota of skippers, and has an annual programme designed to let the general public visit her at festivals and events while providing sailing opportunities for her many co-owners. Nancy probably gets sailed more than the average privately-owned boat, though I suspect less than some of the more enthusiastically-owned Hillyards.

A typical Nancy season might include a long voyage - Holland, perhaps, in honour of the Goblin's voyage in 'We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea', or Falmouth - plus the odd festival (Woodbridge Maritime has become a firm favourite, on again this year) and a mix of free sailing and participation in rallies and suchlike. These often depend on juggling commitments - we've joined in several HOA East Coast events, but also, it has to be admitted, missed quite a few.



Nancy's been a proud member of the HOA since we first acquired her, back in 1997 - our first HOA flag was donated to us by a member (I only wish I could remember his or his boat's name) whom we met on our first trip to Falmouth in '98. And whatever her literary notoriety, or the interest she attracts as a fictional heroine, she's always been proud to fly the flag of, and for, Hillyards. In some ways she can be regarded as an uber-Hillyard - not better than the rest, there are many finer, and of course, larger, examples, but a representative of the species. This seems to be what Country Life magazine had in mind last year when it included Nancy in a Top Ten of the "most important boats" from Britain's seafaring heritage. It was partly to do with Arthur Ransome's legacy in inspiring people to sail, but also because, "Nancy Blackett is typical of a number of small cruisers built in the 1920s and 1930s, creating a flotilla sailed by (mostly) men who learned boat handling and navigation for recreation. It was a new trend and proved a valuable resource to the Royal Navy when war broke out in 1939." That too sums up the Hillyard legacy.

This year Nancy's itinerary takes her down to the Solent with plans to take part in Yogaff and the Round The Island Race. There's a chance she may be able to make the HOA AGM at Lymington in May. HOA members are certainly welcome to join us at the Nancy Blackett Trust's AGM, 12 June at the Royal Southern YC, Hamble - for more details check our website, www.nancyblackett.org, email me at peterwillis@sylvan57.freemove.co.uk or phone 07979 721901. Likewise if you'd like to sail or skipper Nancy.....



MARGO Hillyard 11 ton built in 1970

Construction: Carvel Hard chine Iroko planks on oak frames

**Doctor Sod and his infamous law strikes again
By Brian Smith (Marine Surveyor)**

We are now in our 11th year of ownership of our 11 ton Hillyard and had another extended cruise to Holland in the summer of 2008 which was very enjoyable despite the poor weather. After we had arrived back in mid September and settled back to our usual routine it was suddenly November and Margo was due to be lifted out in preparation for her two yearly inspection; we know only too well that proactive maintenance is the only way to keep a wooden vessel in good order. I had also planned to paint the decks with a two pack industrial epoxy paint, which was to be the only major job for that year (winter 08-09) but unbeknown to me Doctor Sod had a nice surprise waiting that would keep us off the water for most of the summer months.

Preparation of the decks started in late January and within a couple of days the decks were soon made ready for the new paint job but weather conditions were not suitable so meanwhile some minor jobs were carried out until the weather conditions improved sufficiently that would allow me to undertake my two yearly visual inspection of the hull below the waterline. This was carried out with the usual surveyor's tools, a Tramex moisture meter, a probe and my trusty hammer for sounding the boards.

The inspection went well with no serious problems found. However, I had noticed that one of the tangles over the engine bearer bolt heads was oozing rusty water and a similar symptom of trouble was also noticed around the starboard bilge plate flange close to the forward securing bolts. To my knowledge all the securing bolts on the starboard bilge keel and engine bearers, port & starboard, were the original fitments so I decided that it was time to remove a sample for inspection to ascertain their condition.

A week later work commenced and good progress was made and the outer forward engine bearer bolt was removed. It was found to have some minor wastage close to the head otherwise it was in remarkable good condition considering it was nearly 40 years old.

This was good news as I was not looking forward to removing the engine just to replace the remaining bolts. So with this cheering news I proceeded to remove one of the forward bilge keel bolts in the starboard bilge plate by grinding off the head and then attempting to punch the bolt through the bilge plate flange with a drift and club hammer. This proved to be a difficult job as the bolt had corroded jamming itself into the hole in the steel flange. My hefty 14lb sledge hammer and with the help from a brave volunteer to hold the drift, this combination proved to be no match for a stubborn bolt. Once the bolt had moved, loosening the corrosion, the hydraulic jack was put in place which slowly pushed the bolt through with the aid of a long drift. I retrieved the bolt from inside and found it to be in fair condition with some wastage just below the head but not enough to induce serious weakness, so replacement of all the bolts was thought not to be urgent, and could wait for a couple of years when the keel bolts are done at the next lift out.

Another day was now drawing to a close so I decided to clear-up the mess around the boat and drive the 98 miles home. I picked up the tools and moved the ground sheet only to notice a small amount of wood dust on the sheet, which was strange as I had done nothing in the way of carpentry during the day. The wood dust was directly beneath the hole in the keel flange so I proceeded to investigate with the use of a probe, which encouraged a lot more wood dust to fall out indicating some serious trouble, with the implications of a major job.

Two weeks later I returned with a plan of work, a car load of tools and lifting gear to remove the diesel tank as six of the bolts were situated beneath. I had decided to grind off all of the bolt heads first and then jack the bolts through and reduce the length of the bolts that fouled the internal woodwork by cutting the bolts back as required with an angle grinder.

It took a day and a half before the starboard keel finally gave in to my efforts and fell away from the hull revealing large holes in the external

backing pad causing me to have grave concerns of what was beneath the pad.

The backing pad was then cautiously removed to reveal extensive damage to the under lying plank (see picture) around the keel securing bolts which had been caused by chemical decay of the woodwork.

Two of the holes around the forward bolts in the planking were big enough to get four fingers in and were very close to extending past the edge of the external backing pad which would have led to a catastrophic leak if the boat had remained in the water for the winter of 2008/9.

Further inspection found many of the frames had serious localised damage and eight had fractured across the bolt holes. Three of the main frames had localised decay that fortunately could be rectified with insertions.

As the damage was so bad on the starboard side I decided that the port side keel should also be removed for inspection for the possibility of similarly damage.

I returned a week later to remove the port side keel but fortunately this one came off relatively easily as it had been removed in the past before our ownership and had the steel bolts replaced with titanium, which indicated this side had suffered with a similar problem in the past. Once this keel had been dropped off I was shocked at the bodge that was revealed with the use of oak as planking, broken frames, butt ends and securing of the plank by stainless steel self tapping wood screws, which had poor fixture to soft and broken frames.

With so much structural damage found on both sides removal of the diesel and water tanks was inevitable as both aft plank joints would be beneath the tanks not to mention securing bolts removal and damaged frames that required replacement.

I concluded that some of the damage to the frames was either done or induced during the fitting of the bilge plates by randomly drilling through the frames. This had removed approximately 35% of the wood leaving weak spots and with chemical decay exacerbating the damage; this had resulted in breakage across the bolt holes on a total of 14 frames out of twenty four.

The chemical decay had also attacked some of the main frames and on the port side many of the frames had been caught by a skill saw which had partially severed the remaining good frames. I can only assume this damage had occurred by using a

skill saw to remove wood to loosen the old plank for removal. To avoid similar damage I used a router with a straight cutter which I steered down the centre of the damaged planks which allowed the plank to fall out without any damage to the edges of the remaining good planks.

Once all the damage had been evaluated and damaged wood removed it was time to take measurements and go home to make up blank frames and purchase some good quality Oroko to replace the two planks. We also had to decide whether we would refit the bilge plates.

During the time spent in the workshop my wife investigated the log to see how many times we have taken the ground over the past 10 years of ownership. We have cruised Margo quite extensively during our ownership, which includes a cruise around Gt Britain in 2001. After some interesting reading we found we have only taken the ground three times in 10 years so we (wife & I) decided as both keels were now removed, and with the damage that had been caused by their fitment their permanent removal might be a good idea.

Work continued over most weekends through the summer, fuel and water tanks were removed and as they were nearly 40 years old they were taken home for a full visual inspection and a check with my ultra sound thickness gauge. This proved to be a prudent decision as the bottom of the diesel tank was in very poor condition and would have undoubtedly gone into leak mode in the near future. The water tank was still in good structural condition but the galvanising was getting very thin inside so replacement of both tanks would be a good move and to hell with the expense.

The next job was to remove the internal timber backing pads and two 8hr days had both backing pads out nicely sectioned up for the wood burning stove at home.

Well Dr Sod and the wife kept me working on Margo for most of the weekends this summer to replace or repair the damaged frames, fit new planks which were secured by copper nails and roves and install the new diesel and water tanks, beautifully made by the engineering works in our village. I also replaced the floor frames in the main cabin as the original ones were damaged during the removal of the internal backing pad.

Margo had been out of the water for nine months but had remained

reasonable tight with the exception of the seams close to the chine amidships which were beginning to show signs of opening-up. However, all went well at the launch with only a few dribbles and within 24hrs she was as tight as a drum and back in her mud berth looking a bit shabby, as I still had to paint the decks. (Is there no end to wooden boat maintenance)? Well August came and went and with the aid of good weather the decks got painted the masts were re-stepped and rigging was adjusted, sails bent on and diesel and water tanks were filled. At last perhaps we could go for a sail in what was left of a reasonable summer.

On Friday 18th September we left our mud berth for a shake down before a trip down to the Black Water Estuary. It was a lovely sunny day with a nice steady 8-13k SW wind which helped us along as we motored down the Twizzle to Hamford Water where we put the sails up and headed off down the channel towards Harwich. Well we could not believe the difference in sailing performance, we were cracking along at 6 knots through the water in 12 knots of wind, the helm was beautifully balanced and I was grinning like the proverbial Cheshire cat. My wife said with an elated tone, "This is born again Hillyard sailing I cannot believe it".

We put Margo through all points of sail including the raising of the mizzen, which we have not used much in the past because of the severe induced weather helm. With the main down and sailing under Genoa and mizzen was a treat we had not enjoyed in the past. This will make heavy weather sailing a bit safer as we will be able to control all sails from the cockpit once the main is down. (I think that was one of the main reasons we purchased a ketch).

I had expected some improved performance with the reduction of drag by removal of the

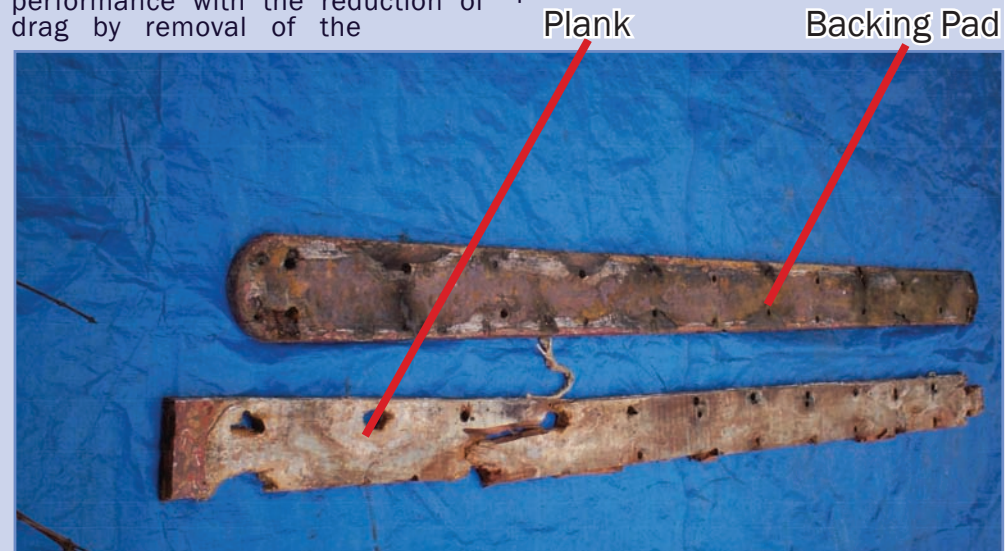
bilge plates, but I did not expect the improvement we experienced during our first trip out this year. I can only assume the 11ton Hillyard was not designed for bilge plates and their fitment unbalanced the boat putting the centre of effort aft of the mast. I also suspect the plates had not been fitted without any thought to the correct alignment to the hull which is now understood by modern GRP boat manufactures.

This had been a major project with the cause only too common in wooden boats which can have catastrophic results if not discovered. Margo is now in tip top condition and we are now in our eleventh year of ownership and have enjoyed her steady motion at sea and the many adventures of creek crawling which the shallow draft allows.

We are now in the process of planning a few extended trips for 2011 to the Baltic with another trip to Holland this year. A cruising chute is on order to improve down wind performance. Hopefully we can give the 12 tonners a run for their money. We look forward to seeing other Hillyards on the water in 2010 and hope other owners enjoy their vessels as much as we do.

For those who do not understand the cause of chemical decay the following is a brief explanation:

Chemical decay in wood is the result of localised alkalinity on galvanic protected metal components, which produces an alkaline film on the metal surface. This alkalinity spreads into the wood turning the naturally acidic conditions alkaline, which destroys the lignin that binds the fibres together. The correct name for this condition is delignification and is often found around galvanic protected skin fittings where the indication of trouble will be the production of white crystals on the inside of the hull around the protected item.



PART 3 OF WINFRITHS EPIC VOYAGE

- En Francais!

by Jan & John Ridgeway



You may remember in the last issue of the Hillyarder Winfrith had made it to Milford Haven and at the end of the festival won the award for "The boat most determined to get to the festival"!

After more work on the engine and being told by another radio mechanic that there was nothing wrong with the radio we set off to Dale to wait for the right tide and weather to take us back across the Bristol Channel. Lots of wind and high waves kept us in Dale for three days but on the Monday we decided to chance it – big mistake!

We were hit by another storm, blown 30 miles off course, bruised black and blue, soaked in salt water, wet, cold and miserable – but still we chugged on. Eventually the weather improved and sea slackened so 24 hours into our journey we approached the Long Ships and eventually rounded Lands End but once again Winfrith decided our destination. Yes, gentle reader, the engine stopped again!

The Sennen Cove lifeboat boys were lovely, as they pulled us away from the rocks at Runnet and we were towed into Newlyn Harbour, much to the delight of the Harbour Master and fishermen. We took a great deal of ribbing over the next few days!

I noted a memo in the log: 'Do not sail in the Falmouth Coast Guard Area again unless the engine is working perfectly. We are getting like Captain Calamity – disaster every trip!'

Three days of new parts, head scratching, mechanics sucking their teeth and we were off again for Falmouth, running before a gale (how unusual), in rain and foul seas but made it to anchor to await better weather and the arrival of Heather – our extra crew member for the trip across the channel.

On Tuesday 8th July we set off for the fuel dock along, it would seem, with every other boat in the harbour. While circling the harbour a gust of wind spun our bowsprit into the rails of another boat! It ripped his pushpit off, needless to say insurance details were exchanged, fuel finally purchased and we set off for L'aberwrach.

With the Hydro vane set up we had a glorious sail towards France and with each of us taking an hour or so's sleep through the night we were on course to reach port by daylight. However, not long after midnight the wind and waves increased, we were veering further off course so we reefed the main and jib and tried to tack. Heather was feeling very ill by

now, slumped over her 'cuddle bucket' which John had to empty regularly. When daylight broke we were almost at Roscoff – miles too far east and with a force 8 now blowing the engine was started and we headed south west. In the next 6 hours we made 1 mile!

By this time Heather was not only sick but terrified. We wedged her and her bucket in the saloon and battled on through the storm. By mid afternoon the weather had deteriorated once more and three times in 10 minutes we were turned completely around. When one wave broke halfway up the mast both John and I thought we were done for! Amazingly, although we were soaked, none of the water went into the saloon, just straight down into the bilges – I soon warmed up with a stint on the pump! By the time dusk arrived the force 8 had dropped to a 6, then a 4 and Winfrith pattered on into the night.

I managed one hour's sleep (collapsed more like) and Heather finally stopped being sick, but by then the GPS gave up, claiming it couldn't find any satellites – damned technology! Thank goodness we always keep paper charts and do a plot every hour but by now John was beginning to hallucinate with tiredness so I persuaded him to have a nap. Brave Heather and her bucket came on deck to keep me awake with chocolate and 'go faster pop'. She looked out for lighthouses and other vessels while a steered our SW course through the 'Lovely Willow Groves' which of course about 20 miles off the coast of France when you have been sailing 40 hours with only two hours sleep.

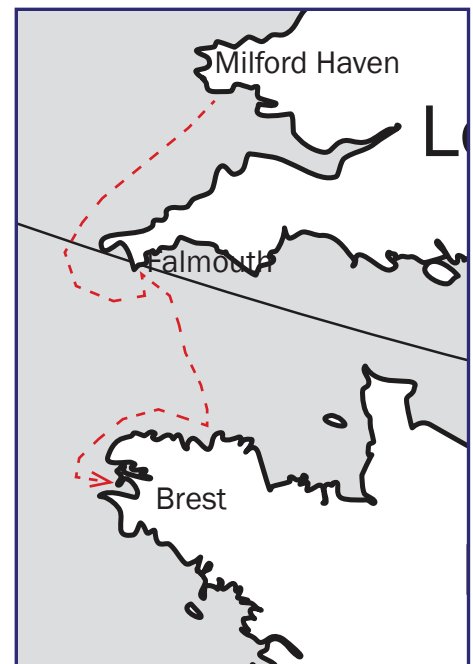
When daylight finally came we all felt better as we could see the coastline now and despite heated discussions about which lighthouse was which and a quick change of impeller we carried on but then the inevitable happened – the engine had been running for 36 hours or more by then. At least this time it wasn't stormy and it was daylight so we pulled up the floorboards, changed filters etc and away we went – for 20 minutes. Four times we repeated this and all the while the breeze was totally in the wrong direction to get us round the corner to the Rade de Brest. An old wooden French boat came alongside and we asked if they had a mechanic onboard, inevitably they didn't but tried to help by calling the French coastguard. Ten minutes later we were boarded by six burly men in big boots and with guns!

The 'les dirigeants de douane' (Customs officers) had come in their rib. One was a mechanic and proceeded to set fire to our

engine with about half a can of sure start! Heather and I huddled down in the saloon while the testosterone fuelled 'new crew' got us going again but at full revs it was only 10 minutes before the engine gave up again. It was decided we were a danger to shipping and so would be towed into Le Conquest, a fishing port near to the Rade de Brest – at a cost of 300 Euro (which Heather offered to pay for as long as she could get ashore to have a shower!) We arrived at the quayside at 20.00 hours – 56 hours after leaving Falmouth!

John had to sign papers saying that in France he now had a criminal record as a beggar! They had taken our money (in cash) and we were classed as beggars!! We were also informed that we were not to leave port until a 'proper French mechanic' had sorted out our engine. Luckily a wonderful Harbour Mistress (who didn't like the Douane any more than we did) organised a tractor mechanic who agreed to do the job when he found out we had all the spares.

The mechanic got the engine going and when asked 'how long would it last' he replied: "a lifetime monsieur!" Ho, ho ho – 20 minutes is a damn short life time but at least it got us to the lighthouse and the breeze was enough to round the corner under full sail and have one of the best afternoon's sailing – all the way to Brest!



CONTACTS:

HOA Commodore: Michael Walden, michael@mwalden.demon.co.uk
Editor – The Hillyarder: Tracey Daley, russetts@7sun.com

Treasurer: Keith Tullet kjatullet@rya-online.net

HOA Website Coordinator: Guy Smith guysmith@ntlworld.com
Designer - The Hillyarder: Tom Stone blue_highs@hotmail.com

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