

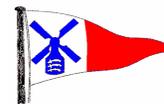
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**December**



**2007**

# IYC Newsletter



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# COMMODORES QUARTER DECK

I am very proud to be the new Commodore of this great club and I will do all in my power along with your General Committee to keep moving the club forward and make it even greater. There have been many before me who have worked so very hard and have succeeded in moving the club forward. I hope I can achieve just a fraction of what some of our Commodores have accomplished in the past.

While I sincerely believe we must never sit on our laurels and that it is essential to continue the progress we have made over so many years, we must also never forget our history and the riches it has provided and the lessons too.

The Club now has a new General Committee and would ask you all to give them your support and along with me, welcome the newly elected committee members and while showing our thanks to those who have left committee. Those of you who have served on Committee know how much work goes on behind the scenes to make this club function. All your committee members put in a great deal of time and hard work for all our benefit. There is no little fairy with a magic wand making it all happen it's your General Committee.

Your new committee is

Commodore	Bill French
Vice Commodore	Valerie Deane
Rear Commodore Sail	Kevin Turner
Rear Commodore Motor	Martin Dobbs
Honourable Club Secretary	Beverly Clegg
Treasurer	Ken Bills (Pat Harper till Jan 2008)
Assistant Secretary	Roy Overland
Assistant Treasurer	Malcolm Hockett
Sailing Secretary	Mike Edwards
Assistant Sailing Secretary	John Metson
Social Secretary	Elaine Chuter
Assistant Social Secretary	Jim Parker
General Committee	Alex Ardley
General Committee	Ray Chuter
General Committee	Chris Coombes
General Committee	Sue Lucas
General Committee	Paul Soderberg
General Committee	Dave Warmer

With the new General Committee we also have to organise the various sub committees which help run the club and while we are almost there we still have a few things to sort out but when their final make up is known we will inform you all via the notice boards, the web and the next news letter.

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The AGM was very well attended and I would like to thank all those who made the effort to be present.

All the General Committee proposals were passed by the members including the proposal to increase all the fees for Year 2008 / 2009 above the RPI as per the figures sent to you all.

The one members' proposal to be put forward consisting of 3 parts was withdrawn subject to the contents being discussed and resolved at General Committee.

I believe the meeting was a very good one with some lively but thoughtful debate. There were some contentious issues raised from the floor with strong feelings being shown from some quarters but I can assure those who raised these issues that they too will be discussed and resolved at General Committee. I would ask those who raised issues at the AGM to be patient though as all these matters will take time to deliberate over and come to a decision. These will be important decisions and so I would like calculated consideration if need be over several meetings rather than instant, knee jerk reactions after just a short debate.

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The sailing season is, for most, at an end for this year and I cannot remember a worse year in respect to the weather. It has been awful and has really put a dampener on all our cruising plans. For those of you with their boats still in the water I plan to have a small cruise to Queenborough in December or early January and then of course there will be the annual event of a winter cruise to the Medway Yacht Club in February. The winter cruise two years ago was certainly varied. We were sitting outside drinking beer on the Saturday, admittedly with our jackets on, but it was very pleasant and this was followed by a very pleasant meal and just a few beers on Saturday evening. Then on Sunday morning we awoke to 3 inches of snow on the deck and our passage back took us through 3 blizzards. It was a great weekend though and the one in February cannot fail but to be another good one.

This year we managed to revive the Gentleman's Cruise to St Katherine's. There were 4 vessels that made the trip. I left on my boat MAX on Thursday night with Gary Terry, my brother in law as crew along with Bob Hough on his boat OCEAN SPIRIT with Dave Warner as crew. Barry Bonner joined them on the Friday.

On the Friday 2 fishing boats came up on the morning tide to join us at St Kats. There was Roy Thompson on his boat Marlin and Peter Kimber on his boat Sheikharra with Ryan Lynch as crew. They just made the last lock in because they were busy taking on fuel at the fuel barge just down river from St. Kats. We all got moored up close to each other in the corner of the Centre basin close to The Dickens Pub which we all found very acceptable.

Having had a hearty breakfast earlier and then lunch on the way it was only left to go and have a beer. As is the norm we ventured into several public houses through the afternoon and evening seeking therapeutic relaxation after our long journey and I am pleased to say at the end of the Friday we were all very relaxed.

Saturday morning started a little late for us on the sail boats but our fishing colleagues had started early with rods over the side of Peter Kimbers boat. All of a sudden there was slight commotion coming from Peter Kimbers boat with a few tourists looking down with fascination. We went along to see what was happening and were confronted by Peter landing a 15½ pound Common Carp and Ryan helping him land it, wearing only his jockey shorts, completely oblivious to any one else or any thing else except landing this fish. Evidently Ryan was still in his bunk when Peter got the bite and shouted for Ryan's help. Instinctively Ryan just went to help with no thought for him self. Now that's what I call a real friend.

After another excellent breakfast in the Riverside Café the day was beginning to look brighter. Our fishing colleagues continued to fish and we were trying to decide where we should go for some sightseeing in the afternoon. Someone suggested we should go in the Dickens for a pint while we decided where to go but as we were having a great deal of trouble deciding we had another pint but we still could not decide and I think you can all probably guess the rest. However, during our lengthy decision making process I received a phone call from Roy Thompson informing me they had another big fish about to be landed. We all rushed out of the Dickens to see a huge crowd looking down on Peter's boat, watching him now land a 25½ pound Mirror Carp with all the onlookers applauding.

Having spent the whole afternoon coming to a decision to do nothing while the fishermen fished we all agreed to go for an Indian together in the evening but this got a little mixed up and we ended up eating in separate places. However, we all reassembled later on Bob Hough's boat for a short night cap which turned into a morning cap as well. Roy, Peter and Ryan were absolutely amazed at the magic wine bottle store Bob has in the centre of his saloon table. It was just like Mary Poppins bag as it seemed whenever another bottle of wine was needed there was always one in there. Amazing!

It goes with out saying Sunday morning was rather subdued. A bit due to the night before and a bit due to the prospect of the trip home with strong winds and heavy rain forecast. The trip back was, as usual, dreadful and as we came around Mucking Flats I just thought if there was a model for the edge of the world then this would be the place.

The fishing boats planned to get back for the night tide into our creek while the sailboats plan was to go into Queenborough, tie up on the hammerhead, and go ashore for a meal and some more "relaxation". However, as usual we could not get on the hammerhead so we rafted up on one of the visitors buoys, had dinner and assembled on my boat for after dinner drinks. It turned out to be another very good evening and it was a shame Roy, Peter and Ryan were not there to share it. All in all it was a great weekend, very entertaining with great company all round.

The Gentlemen's Cruise to St Kats is alive and kicking again.

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We are beginning to build a good relationship with our new neighbours, the management team Mick Cerson and Anton Weekes now running Smallgains Marina (formerly Halcons). At our request they have purchased 4 lit red buoys and 3 lit green buoys to provide safe navigation through the creek entrance at all times. They also paid the PLA license application fee which was required to lay the buoys. I hope we continue to build this relationship to share equal responsibility for our creek.

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One of our previous Commodores, Barry Hiscutt, has achieved a certain amount of fame by having an article published in the Macwesters Owners Journal describing his project to fit a bow thruster into his Macwester. The Macwesters Owners Journal is read worldwide and so not only Barry but our club is getting some global recognition, Thanks Barry and well done.

Many of you know that a big work boat Lily Rapkin II has been out of the water for quite a few weeks. The original reason was a serious problem with the port engine. One of the cylinder liners was dragged down into the sump and smashed to pieces. On inspection it was decided that a new liner was required, 4 new pistons with new rings and small ends, new big end bearing caps and all the relevant gaskets. The engine had to be removed which was an extremely difficult as the top of the boat had been built around the engines and the whole process took 2 days. With engine out for repair it was decided that the whole boat was to have a major overhaul and refit. The whole of the old aft deck was cut out and replaced. The old redundant fuel tanks were stripped out and the new ones, which were above decks are now located below decks. A large accessible space has been created below decks from amidships to the stern which will eventually take the diesel engine and pump we will use up and down the creek. The whole of below decks has been cleaned and repainted. The engines were cooled by raw / fresh water system involving heat exchangers but we have changed the whole system to fresh water keel cooling, making it simpler and enabling her to work in very shallow waters. This has also meant we have had to install a dry exhaust system. We have also modified the deck area above the engines so that they are much easier to remove and put back. With this in mind and having learnt all the lessons from removing the port engine we have decided to remove the starboard engine for overhauling and cleaning.

It was agreed by the General Committee that the cost of parts and expertise to carry out the major engine repair was to be paid for outside of the workboat running cost annual budget but all the other work has been carried out by our members with only the material cost coming from the workboat running cost annual budget. I hope that Lily Rapkin II will be back in commission early in January 2008 and being fully utilised each day up and down the creek.

I would like to thank John Cliff for the very reasonable charge he made for the engine repairs and the free time he has spent with us giving advice on the modifications we have been making and I would especially like to thank Len Dow, Keith Gordon and Dave Lane for the huge amount of time they have given freely to make all these changes and to Roy Thompson, Peter Kimber and Guy Hayes for all their time they have given freely getting the engine out, completing the engine rebuild, cleaning and painting it, getting running and eventually putting it back. Again, my sincere thanks to you all.

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I would like you all to consider that while your Flag Officers and General Committee are elected to run the Club on your behalf, all of us as members bear individual responsibilities to ensure the well being of the club and how the club is judged both at home and when we are away visiting. We are all representatives of this club wherever we are and should all act in a proper manner accordingly.

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Finally on a light note, for the first time in many years, you are very lucky to be informed the club is putting on a pantomime. It is Aladdin and will be performed on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> December and with the curtain going up at 8.00pm you should all be seated by 7.45pm for a great show. Come along and have a laugh at the expense of some of your Flag Officers and General Committee members and show some sympathy for some of our Ordinary Members who have been willingly press ganged into it. I am in it and I haven't stop laughing yet so I think I can promise you all an evening full of laughter.

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**May I wish you all a very Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy and Healthy New Year**

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**This is a great Club! The envy of most! Be part of it!**

*Good luck, good sailing, good motoring and good fishing  
and whatever you are doing on the water, be safe.*

*Bill French*  
**Commodore**

# IYC Social Section

## EVENTS FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

- 15th Christmas Dinner  
 16th Children's Christmas Party  
 22nd Christmas Dance  
 29th Pantomime  
 "Aladdin"



- 31st New Years Eve

### ISLAND YACHT CLUB GALLEY

Opening times:

Friday 13.00 - 21.00hrs. Saturday 0900 - 15.00hrs. Sunday 0900 - 16.00hrs

Sunday Roast or Bar menu Please book in advance Tel: 01268 510360

BAR MENU	BAR SNACKS
SCAMPI AND CHIPS £4.00	NACHOS WITH CREAM & SALSA DIP £2.00
JUMBO SAUSAGE AND CHIPS £2.50	CHICKEN GOUJONS WITH DIPS £2.00
GAMMON & CHIPS £4.00	PRAWNS IN FILO WITH THAI CHILLI DIP £2.50
BURGER & CHIPS £3.00	SPICY CHICKEN WINGS WITH BARBEQUE DIP £2.50
ALL DAY BREAKFAST £4.40	WEDGES AND DIPS £1.50
CHILLI & RICE £3.50	CHIPS £1.00
CURRY & RICE £3.50	COFFEE: LATTE, CAPPACHINO & FILTER £1.50
VEGETABLE CURRY & RICE £3.50	
<b>JACKET POTATO FILLINGS: CHEESE, TUNA, BAKED BEANS, COLESLAW, CHICKEN CURRY, CHILLI, VEGETABLE CURRY £3.00</b>	

# Cruisers Section

The CCS Prizegiving and Supper is on 16 February 2008, arrive 19:00 for 19:30 start.

This year to be held at Essex Yacht Club on board The Wilton.  
 Price and menu to follow nearer the date.



In 2004 the Wilton replaced the Bembridge as the HQ ship for the Essex Yacht Club and has undergone massive renovation work, which is still ongoing, to make this ship the excellent club it is today. The Wilton started service life as a minehunter of the Second Mine Counter measures

squadron at HMS Vernon in Portsmouth. HMS Wilton was deployed in the UK, Europe and the Middle East and in 1974 assisted in the successful clearance of mines from the Suez canal. She also took part in search and rescue operations for lost aircraft, missiles and ships, coastal patrol work, and numerous exercises.

### Starting signals used in IYC & CCCS Cruiser Racing

	5 minute Preparatory	1 sound *  or  or Class flag (No 1) Raised
	4 minute Warning	1 sound *  or  or Code flag (P) Raised
	1 minute Warning	1 sound *  or  or Code flag (P) Lowered
	Start	1 sound *  or  or Class flag Lowered

## **AGM 2007 Cruiser Sailing Report**

### ***Races in general***

This year 11 cruising boats took part in cruiser racing. Compare this to the 26 dinghies which took part in the organised dinghy racing.

### ***CCS Races***

Out of those 11 cruisers, 8 boats represented the IYC and took part in the 5 CCS and the Interclub race. However only 5 boats took part in more than 2 races. Despite the low number of participants the IYC did extremely well, with 3 out of the 5 races being won overall by IYC boats. Congratulations should go to Mike Edwards "Aztec", Mike Carrick "Mescalito", & Bill Mahon "Triaz", who won 1<sup>st</sup> overall places for Blackwater race, Queenborough race, & Harty Ferry race respectively.

### ***IYC Races***

6 boats took part in the 4 IYC cruiser races this year. The average number of entrants was less than three boats per race. One race had only one entrant.

It takes time and effort to organise the Cruiser races and committee boats, and if the decline in interest amongst members continues, well I don't have to point out the outcome.

All except one of the IYC Cruiser races are short and are an ideal opportunity to practice handling your boat under sail alone and maybe preparing yourself for the longer CCS races.

### ***Nore Race***

5 IYC cruising boats took part in the Nore race. This is way down on the average number of boats taking part, which over the last 6 years was 10 boats.

Where were you ?

This is a short, fun, race and it is a real spectacle to see the hundred or so boats gathered at the start. This year the conditions were near perfect and probably the best they had been for 5 years, certainly for this season. Out of the cruisers, congratulations go to Bill Mahon on "Triaz" who won a 2<sup>nd</sup> place prize in the multihull group.

### ***Cruises***

There were 9 events planned for the Motor and Sailing section this year.

The two most popular cruises were the regular Commodores and Vice Commodores cruises, to Chatham and Gravelines.

Two boats took part in the Ramsgate cruise, which due to F7 SW winds was diverted to Limehouse at the last minute. Two boats cruised to Bradwell to join the three IYC boats that had raced there. These were not entered on the list, and as a result the Quiz that had been devised for the Backwater cruise did not take place. Maybe the quiz can be done another year. One boat made it to the Faversham cruise on the intended date. Well done Nick. However an unofficial cruise to Faversham seemed to take place a week earlier than the planned one. One boat made it to Harty Ferry for the evening, although two more joined in with the race, but dispersed to different locations after the race.

### ***Summary***

There is no doubt the reason this year for the poor attendance to some of the cruising events will be blamed on the exceptionally poor weather and low tides. Let's hope the weather improves and more sailors (and motor boats) find the enthusiasm to join in next year and enjoy sailing, racing, cruising, and socialising on cruises with their fellow club members.

Thank you to the Sailing Committee, Kevin, Mike, John, Brian & Adrian who have given up their time to organise these events for you, and special thanks to all the others who have helped on events, from race officers to safety boat crew.

Thank you to all those who have taken part in the events.

Mike Edwards, Sailing Secretary

### ***CADETS***

Plans are in hand once again for Cadet RIB training. They have been at a disadvantage the past few years as the competition has been held early and on inland lakes. The IYC being very exposed this has meant they have had to train sometimes in quite rough sea's and the training has not been possible until the worst of the winter was over. This year we hope to change that and we are looking at a few "away days" to a local lake in the winter (provided they aren't frozen over !!). Also the RYA organizer (unbeknown to me) visited the IYC last year and saw the Cadets training in very rough conditions, he was so impressed he is considering the IYC for the regional challenge in 2009. Now that will be something to look forward to; a few waves to sort the real cadets from the inland variety !!!

Peter Powell

## Dinghy Sailing Section.

The dinghy section wish all the members of the Island Yacht Club a very merry Christmas and all the best for the coming year.

So we have come to the end of a busy and successful year, I would like to thank the race officer's and the support boat driver's for all their help during the season without them the racing could not go ahead.

In the catamaran racing no one helm has dominated the year, Lloyd Turner being helmsman of the year along with his crew Luke Bullock

Once again this year we have represented the club at many venues, miles clocked up on the water and road, with a few good result's. apart from Grafham, it was a no wind situation and we spent the weekend just relaxing ,those that chose to camp had two very cold evenings, freezing temperatures and ice greeting them in the morning, over to the clubhouse for hot tea and breakfast soon had them back up to working temperature,

Saturday evening there was a discussion on the RYA about the dropping of the youth training in the catamaran discipline, I have shown my disappointment to the RYA and if there is no change in their attitude I will cease to be a member of this organization, it is there to protect and further all types of water sports.

2008 our numbers are set to increase, we now have cadets being converted to two hulls, Martin along with his wife you are doing a great job many thanks to both of you

The cadet Canvey Supply trophy, this was the most interesting and hardest race that I have been involved in as a support boat driver, Garry Marshall was my crew in this race, we carried out many running repairs on the water, downhauls and mainsheets being the most common.

We laid a fairly short course with a true windward mark, we had some of the fleet on starboard tack and others on a port tack trying to make the windward mark, we first went to the port tack, told them to aim for the tall chimney on the Kent shore, once we had them sailing for a fixed mark on the shore we returned to the starboard tack, we told them to aim for the three blocks of flats on the Southend shore, we told them that we will be back, as we had to return to the dinghies on port, when we could

see that they could lay the windward mark we left them and returned to the starboard tack ,we then told them to tack and lay the mark ,all in all not to bad, we then reminded the port tack dinghies to be aware of the starboard tack dinghies, no mishaps but quite good entertainment for us on support.

A most satisfactory day, it was most entertaining getting them to sail close hauled,

Well done to all of you that entered this event, better racing in 2008

The cadet sailing has progressed far beyond expectations, and the rivalry between them is fantastic ,they have taken part in race's, the one to Benfleet yacht club was rather windy, some of our cruiser's would have thought twice about going out, next season I imagine there will be more racing than playing,

The club hosted the Hurricane open, this is our third year, the event was very well organized and was a success, many thanks to all the RIB drivers that gave their time and craft to this event, also thanks to the race officers that have to sit on the committee boat for the duration of the race.

Once again I make this request to the dinghy owner's in the compound, in the clubhouse garden.

Rule 1 no dinghy trailer's unless your dinghy is placed upon it, please take it home.

2 some of you are prone to leaving your gear and bits laying around, will you please tidy up and keep the dinghy area looking nice.

3 now that the sailing season has finished why not come down as if you were going sailing and help with the work parties, there is much to be done before the 2008 season starts.

Finally to all those member's who think that the floating pontoon was a lot of money, take a long look at our sailing cadet's, that's what this club is all about !

Brian Turner

## ***MEMBERS LETTERS***

Nick Ardley has asked that a couple of valid points were made about things flapping of our masts.

"1. The proliferation of club burgees flying from our boats - that do not have their owners aboard or near by... etiquette at the club is grim!"(Ed: *Ex Merchant Navy myself I am very much with him on this one. We were very strict on the lowering/raising of flags at Dusk/Dawn. I have been to countries where they would arrest you at gunpoint if you didn't – a bit extreme, but it is international flag etiquette*).

"2. Boats flying plastic bags... to attempt at keeping birds at bay – this amounts to a criminal offence. If one was actually caught disposing of plastics (or any gash for that matter) in the sea, it would lead to a prosecution"...(Ed: *Not sure that flying a plastic bag is a criminal offence, but dumping plastic bags is and being reckless to that possibility could be; but it certainly is morally wrong, The Point is a SSSI site, and as the owners of it we should set an example. Perhaps a little bit of thought about what you tie to your mast, and your neighbors who have to put up with the racket*).

Dear Members and Committee

The club now has some engineering machinery very kindly given to us by Bob Hammond, it consists of a large Colchester lathe, a pillar drill, a Murex welder, a milling machine, a reciprocating metal saw and tools ect. to numerous to include here. I would like to thank Bob most sincerely for his generosity as I am sure would most of the members. We now have the capability to make repair or whatever on site for the benefit of the club, although I don't envisage a lot of work for the plant it will be of immense value when needed. I would also like to thank those members who turned up at Bobs house to help move the plant and in particular thanks to Derek Durrant who kindly used his van and trailer on a number of journeys to transport the plant to the club. Thanks also to Mrs Hammond for the tea coffee and biscuits.

A word of warning:- THIS MACHINERY DOES NOT TAKE PRISONERS, so it will be behind lock and key for safety and if they can be obtained lockable stops will be fitted so that only key holders will be able to turn the machinery on.

Once again thanks to all of you.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

This year projects that were in the pipeline have been put on hold except for the dredging of the creek. So I hope you can understand why the General Committee put forward a proposal to increase the fees. I am pleased to report that the majority of members present at the AGM voted yes to this proposal and this should increase our income next year. The 'yes' vote to increase the entrance fees should also bring in more if we have as many new members join in 2008 as we had in 2007.

I am pleased to report that the Financial Accounts for the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 were approved at the Annual General Meeting and it was agreed that we would continue to use our Accountants.

As I told you some 6 months ago, I intended to stand down as Treasurer at the AGM. I was most disappointed that no-one came forward to take the position. Fortunately, one of our relatively new members, Mr Ken Bills, has offered to take on the job when he retires early next year so I have agreed to stay on Committee until then. He has already shown an active interest in the Club and has the experience of being treasurer of another club in the past so I am sure that he will prove to be a great asset.

Pat Harper  
Treasurer



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## Whimbrel Wandered to Faversham

This was the one that a number of club members had wanted to do...

Whimbrel had been taken up to Saint Katharine Dock for a stay, that was, originally, to be no more than five nights. We'd arrived on a sunny afternoon on Thursday 9th of August, after a short sail from one of the numerous vacant buoys belonging to the Greenwich YC. Tacking up from Greenwich, towards Limehouse, hundreds of river passengers looked in disbelief as we raced back and forth between the hard Thames river banks. The craft they were, on the whole, during the passage passing cleanly round our stern... leaving us dancing and curtseying. Passing the Prospect of Whitby, still the quintessence of its type, I had caught a glimpse of our destination... sails were stowed, warps and fenders got ready.

The previous day we had sailed from the foot of Stangate Creek. It had been gorgeous, starting in grand fashion from near the shell bar to the west of Slaughterhouse Point. The wind, then, had been a convenient east south-easterly. Later, after a short period of fitful light airs when going up the Nore it was a case of – no hesitation – on engine – the mate stood agog! In all, we motor sailed for only eight of the thirty three miles (Nautical ones, of course) that day.

By the time the Island YC had drawn abeam, a breeze filled in from a north-north westerly quarter, the diesel was soon silenced and Whimbrel picked up her skirts and sailed nicely against a sluggish ebb tide at nearly three knots over the ground. The boat's speed, made good, was soon bobbling around five knots but, let's not meander into the boredom of such information, suffice to say, progress was good. The engine was only used again when tacking past the entrance to Tilbury Docks (To get clear), on the approach to the barrier at Woolwich and finally to moor up at Greenwich. Here we moored, under the shadow of the Dome, after a ten hour passage. A beer was enjoyed as the sun set over London, casting long shadows, edged with colour from the sun that danced in the wash of river traffic, incessantly passing to and fro.

The stay in London was well used, with an evening at the Globe that had been pre-booked earlier in the year, visits to various galleries and, of course, 'our town house' at the top of the Mall – fortunately, the tenant was conveniently away! The Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green, which was a pure delight, was visited via Brick Lane, with its interesting ethnic mix. We trekked to Camden Lock, Highgate Cemetery and one superb find, an exhibition about the War Graves Commission at Canada House – which we found simply awesome - one walked - looking - in silence. We went to the church beside the Tower. It was interesting, after the service we were allowed below, in the crypt, where Roman road surfaces and pavements exist. The church was, in the past, the resting place of those unfortunate enough to lose their heads close by! More recently it has been the spiritual home of the mercantile marine, whose memorial for the thousands killed during conflicts, lies across the road.

Many pubs were visited too: beer needs to be sampled... we also found some good eating places in the locale of the marina too.

Our departure was delayed by two days due to high winds. We finally departed late on the Thursday before the IYC programmed Faversham Cruise, the wind had moderated and... It was from the northwest too. We locked out just after four in the afternoon and soon had the sails up and pulling sweetly – they'd not been covered for so long since the end of June and enjoyed the stretch – I'm sure! We had a spanking sail down to Erith of three hours duration.

I did start the engine for the barrier, but as we were on virtually a run, it had receded astern when Christobel, lifting her eyes away from the fast moving shore, had given me a long quizzical look. It was one of those looks, a look known only to people that have been together for eons, 'Shall I stop the engine – don't know why you bothered to start it!'

I just grinned back... and with a sigh, casually said, 'Just in case...'

Next morning, we departed from Erith at a quarter to six... Later, Christobel made a plate of bacon sandwiches as we sailed serenely down Mucking Reach, here the sea, proper, can be smelt, it felt like we were

home. The West Nore Sand was passed as the compound boys would have been having a second cup of coffee and by eleven, after a passage of twenty eight miles; we'd picked our spot and were soon moored immediately down stream of the floating pontoon. We confidently expected to see an Island YC boat or two and had, after that disappointment, expected to see some over on the late afternoon tide too.

Island YC boats: none were seen and none came. We saw none all summer. The cruise had been cancelled! I didn't log when we'd found out, (after a message from your new mooring chairman) except Whimbrel had other ideas...

Saturday broke with bright sunshine. The forecast on BBC Radio Essex: Some bright spells, 19 deg, cloud and some out breaks of rain, cloud during eve and overnight, the coastal was S-SW 3-4 bec SW4-5. Departing, around eleven, with a single reef in the mains'l, as a precaution, we had a fast tack round to the bridge. On the way we had monitored the bridge VHF channel, but missed an opening by mere minutes – the engine would not have got us there any quicker: we'd been doing nearly 6 knots! A one hour wait ensued... (The new bridge has made the passage through The Swale longer according to records in my log book – funny old world!)

We motored down to the Lillies, off the entrance to Milton Creek. It was just before one, the mainsail only was set and Whimbrel picked up her skirts, the wash gurgling away from us across the flat waters of the Swale. The dinghy was up on the plane. It was a glorious sail, in bright sunshine, through the banks of the Channel. A family of seals were observed sunning them selves as they luxuriated in the knowledge that the fresh flood would effortlessly bring them their lunch. It was exhilarating stuff.

Baffled and bemused vessels, coming in the opposite direction, were passed, a nonchalant wave from who ever was watching aboard our vessel acknowledged the looks beamed our way, jaws open, lips not moving. I have to report that two local boats from our other island club failed to acknowledge us though!

Faversham spit was passed just after two o'clock and on the approach to Oare Creek, the mains' was stowed and our trusty (when needed) diesel, at the touch of the button, was started. On the way up we'd passed a big French yacht that had for some inexplicable reason cut well inside a run of green cone buoys... they got off the next day! The scents coming of the marshes mingled with soft summery wafts from the land. Along one reach, behind the seawall, out of site, a combine could be heard roaring away. Chaff too flew up in a cloud, scattering the deck with tiny pieces of plant stalk. On the final approach, with the tall wedding cake spire of the abbey church and thin lines of spritsail barge spars becoming more obvious, against a backdrop of fluffy clouds and a blue sky, both of us had thought, Ah!: it was so enchanting: it was a sight the crew of Whimbrel enjoy so much.

We were welcomed by the Iron Bridge Wharf on our arrival at around three. A BIG open area had been prepared for the flotilla of island craft... so we had our pick. It had been a lovely passage. The sunshine, blue sky with those typical fluffy clouds we'd had, combined to colour the landscape we had sailed through.

No sooner than we were tied up, the kettle was singing its welcome song, tea. I purred to myself: a pot of tea and hunk of cake were soon laid out on the cockpit table. Drinking my tea I eyed the creek and the direction of the gentle warm breeze that gently tweaked at the burgee. I soon had the dinghy rigged, then, as Christobel settled back with her book; I went off to tack lazily on the last of the flood, up the creek, to look at the ever changing waterfront. Later I'd had a mooch round the boatyard, where an eclectic array of craft sit, some more wild garden than boat, others proud little ships, being lovingly readied for the water. It is a grand place for children, as we found out years ago, to explore and for this some adult supervision is needed: after all it is a boatyard!

As the sun began to set some bits and pieces, purchased, from a Waitrose conveniently sited near St Katharine, for the expected cruise in company, were dug out of the locker and a drink or two was enjoyed: we were firmly tied up and in port. After a shower, we ambled ashore for an excellent supper at the Anchor public house just up from Standard

Quay. For those that don't know, the food and beer at this establishment is superb.

On Sunday, after a late start, we had a walk up into the town for breakfast. Initially the plan was to sit outside, but the blackest patch of cloud that we'd seen all summer drifted over and it seemed to stop overhead. Yes - it dumped its load. Breakfast was enjoyed inside instead! It dried up again later and we spent a lazy day looking around. A visit to the Fleur de Lis centre, a heritage building and local tourist office, housing a museum and a book shop with many local interest books too, is a must do. We'd thought about the old gun powder mill, but there's always another time.

Then we had a walk round to Brent's, a quaint, now almost up-market area, opposite the brewery towards the top end of the creek and across The Pent Bridge, where we found that the convivial pub had become a taverna... selling Euro fizz and such! The Pent was a tide pool, where small coasters could stay afloat. The water too, was used, in days gone by, to flush the creek – the Victorians new and accepted a thing or too... The afternoon was almost balmy. The forecast that evening spoke of cyclonic winds of 3-4 inc 5 or 6... I had to be back for an appointment, mid week with BBC Radio Essex, so the decision was made to head for home on the morrow, providing conditions were satisfactory. In the event it was a NW 3-4 occ 5 which didn't cause any concern, but the outlook was not good!

That evening we found a natty little restaurant down a little lane that lead through a maze of apartments converted from old mill and malting buildings. Another excellent, but lighter, meal was enjoyed, before heading back for an early night.

A pleasant north north-westerly was blowing and to the east the new day was coming up looking a little grey! We put on our 'oilies': it was damp but not raining. This was only the fourth time that I'd had to put the complete set on since setting sail from Pinmill (where the boat had been left a couple of weeks earlier) on the 13th of July... As we motored away we both surreptitiously cast a look astern. 'Until next year' I heard Christobel quietly say. The day, soon, got progressively better and quite

quickly too: the cloud broke and typical sunny spells were enjoyed and jackets were soon discarded.

The tide was sluggish. It had reached the level where the mud flats were covered and the rills were water filled. Drifting off the marshes, heady scents of a rich saline nature pervaded the atmosphere. Wild life abounded. Egrets kept lifting off as we advanced towards them, then had alighted further on, repeating this until some instinct in them said, 'Let's go behind them!' Over on a sea wall some sheep lazily grazing had lifted their heads, constantly chewing, to gaze across at us and then with heads lowered again they continued to graze.

Rounding the reach on the approach to the Shipwrights Arms, at the juncture with Oare Creek, the sails were set and pulling. Off Harty, the ebb had set well in and we motor sailed towards the Fowley Spit buoy. From there we tacked through a narrowing and increasingly shallower stretch of water until near the number 10 buoy, where we fetched through to Elmley. For the sheer hell of it: a decent breeze blew, we tacked up to the bridge. The wait this time was for only half an hour – we sailed back and forth - watching the long gaps between the infrequent trains.

Clearing the bridge we tacked, with the tide, towards the north, upon rounding Long Point we fairly scooted to Queenborough. The quaint river side town was soon left far behind. A glorious sail ensued, across the Thames, and we sailed up to the entrance to Smallgains Creek, arriving shortly after low water.

The mate beamed: a thoroughly enjoyable weekend and, most of all, a scintillating sail had, it was acclaimed, punctuated our summer season.

*Nick Ardley*  
*Whimbrel*

# **IYC Boats for sale**

Listed on the IYC Web site where you can find more details.

SNAPDRAGON	KABUKI	26	£8,000
Ex RN (FISHING)	CHARTEL	22	£7,000
EUGETHENE		24	£3,000
SNAPDRAGON	SEA LAIKA	27	£8,500
SNAPDRAGON	KEIRA	26	£5,500
TRAPPER 300	FLYING FOX	26	£9,950
FLETCHER ARROW	FLIGHT	14	£3,195
BROOM FLYBRIDGE			
CRUISER 1982	Twin 150HP Perkins	35	£58,500
SNAPDRAGON 24	WARATAH	24	P.O.A.
WESTERLY CENTAUR	LITTLE GOOSE	26	P.O.A.
McGREGOR	EMILY	26	£10,500
NEWBRIDGE	TAO	23	P.O.A.
WESTERLY CENTAUR	SARATOGA	26	£11,500
HALMATIC	ANGLER	30	£4,000
FAIREY FISHERMAN		26	£13,000
ARISTO CAT	WESTERN ENTERPRIZE	33	P.O.A.
SEA ROVER	INCH	28	£10,000
WOODEN CAT	TWEEDEL DEE	30	£1,500
MACWESTER ROWAN	MOUNTAIN ASH	22	P.O.A.
SEAL 22	NO NAME	30	£3,995
WESTERLY PAGENT	LAROTAUIA	23	P.O.A.
VIVACITY		20	£1,750
CYGNUS CYFISH	BLUE FIN	10M	£65,000