



A bunch of flowers for the lady readers and why not?

Pictures of boats at this time of the year are never so appealing and we all need something bright, full of the promise of the summer to come, to brighten up our spirits after such a dismal, cold winter.

Thus will be the last '*Mainsheet*' to come from the Cobbold household, at least for the time being. It has been great fun to do and I feel that the issue has come on a long way since the early editions, way back in the late 1970's and early eighties, when Andy Diggens, Ray Portlock, Brian Sinclair and others produced a small pocket-sized edition, some with very quaint digitalised pictures on the front and back covers to offset the typed text within. Today's '*Mainsheet*' is a smarter, more appealing communication and many thanks go out to all our contributors over the years.

This, the last from me, will be the first to appear in glorious colour on the club's website by kind permission of Graham Hill, our webmaster. See it on: <http://www.wivenhoesailing.org.uk> If you fancy a go at it, ring me, 824570P.C.

Tim Denham's Nature Walk.

Tim does this every year and this year was just as much fun as ever. An overcast quiet day this year, a nice change from the usual breezy chilly ones of the past.

Sunday, 5th February. Would we see even more species to exceed the record of forty-four? At 09.50 just five members were assembled in anticipation but come 10.05, almost fifty were milling around outside the Clubhouse waiting for the off, and excellent turnout for this event.

The usual route was decided upon with no deviations allowed – all the birds have to be identified by at least two members for the all important score of 'number of species seen'. As we walked, so the cries of sightings of Greylag geese, Redshank, Shelduck, Pheasant, Moorhen and more were heard, each witnessed in the usual fashion and the score gradually mounted. Two and a half hours later, all the walkers and observers were back in the Clubhouse, tucking into beer and a fine lasagne, followed by a lovely pud, thanks to Nikki and her galley crew. Blessings be upon them!

After checking all the sightings with the diners, a grand total of forty-six sighted species were noted beating the previous record by just two! The new species to the Club's "List of Species" were the Stock Dove and the Skylark and the list now numbers sixty-seven types! Seen on this expedition were;

*Mute Swan. Little Egret. Curlew Dunnock Canada Goose Grey Heron
Redshank Robin Brent Goose Kestrel Turnstone Stonechat Shelduck
Moorhen Black-headed Gull Blackbird Teal Oystercatcher Fieldfare
Lesser Black-back Gull, Mallard Avocet Herring Gull Blue Tit Jay
Red-legged Partridge Grey Plover Stock Dove Great Tit Pheasant Lapwing
Woodpigeon Little Grebe Dunlin Green Woodpecker Magpie Cormorant
Black-tailed Godwit Skylark Rook Carrion Crow House Sparrow Chaffinch
Goldfinch Yellowhammer Reed Bunting.....Thank you Tim, well done!*



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The Stock Dove.....*Illustrated and written by Gill.*

“You will often be able to spot a Stock Dove feeding amongst a group of woodpigeons. Look out for them in wooded farmland, or perched high on the cliffs or on farm buildings.

The Stock Dove resembles a small woodpigeon, with a shorter tail and small rounded head; it is also distinguished by its bluish-grey plumage, short thin black wing-bars and the lack of any white markings. The woodpigeon by contrast, has a large white patch on its neck and on the bend in its wing. The Stock Dove has an iridescent green and purple patch on its neck and a pink blush to its breast. Its plain grey wings and tail have dark trailing edges, most clearly seen in flight. Resident in Britain, (*we have fifty per cent of the European population here*) and it will breed in most parts of the country, except in the far north. It nests mainly in holes in trees in parkland, forest edges and wooded farmland and sometimes in a niche of a church, farm building or even a cliff face. Feeding birds will take seeds, buds, shoots, roots as well as berries from the ground – but not in gardens!

Large flocks of Stock Doves tend to move towards the coast during the winter months and show a partiality for marshland. A typical flock will number fifty birds or more.

It has adapted well to the aspects of modern farming practises and numbers continue to increase; however the loss of nesting sites due to Dutch Elm disease, severe weather and the tidying up of woodland, the grubbing up of hedgerows and the removal of old farm buildings still pose a threat to this lovely bird of the countryside, where sadly, it regarded as a pest species on farmland.

Next time you are out and about in the countryside, listen for its rhythmic booming coo – more owl-like than the pigeon coo, ‘ooo-woo-ooo-woo, repeated with increasing emphasis.”.....*Gill.*

Commodore’s Notes

After 3 years as Commodore it is with very mixed feelings that I rung the bell for the last time the other Friday night. I am looking forward to a bit of a break but it has been a privilege and great fun being Commodore. I have had tremendous support from club officers, General Committee and the whole membership and I would like to thank everyone.

Highlights of the last 3 years have been our success in the Wallet Shield races (*apart from last year when many of our keenest competitors were off sailing elsewhere,*) a spectacular Wallet Ball, some great dinghy sailing, a wonderful Old Time Music Hall, a very active Cadet section helped by the investment in the new Topaz dinghies, refurbishing the galley, acquiring the new tractor and so many more. (I suppose I should mention Annual dinners as well! The speech as I intended to give it is elsewhere in *Mainsheet!*)

There is nothing quite like being at the club when it is really buzzing with lots of people joining in with what ever is going on - Hard working parties, Regatta or Open Day, after a race or at a social event. It has been particular encouraging that we see people of all ages here and particularly that there are more younger single people, couples and families with kids around that there were a few years ago. That is where the future of the club is and where I believe we need to focus our efforts. In a funny

way the current economic situation may help us as younger households have less money to spend they may be looking to do things and socialise more locally and somewhere reasonably priced. We need to bury any grumpy old men and women urges that any of us may have and find ways of encouraging people to get involved. Thanks you again for your support and I hope that you will support Tony, Brian and Nikki in the same way.....*Pauline Hart.*

Cadet News

The Cadets will soon be starting up again following the winter break. They will be taking part in the Safety Boat Training before starting their own programme. The new Racing Spec Topaz, which has already seen action in the Winter Series, will join the Topaz and Topper fleet. As well as their own activities we will be encouraging the Cadets to take part in club races and other events including the Hard Working Party.

As part of the club's support of sailing on the River Colne we will be working with Rowhedge Sea Scouts who are lead by club member Richard Barrett. They will be storing their boats at the club and sailing from here, sometimes in company with our cadets. We also hope to run some theory sessions taking advantage of their RYA instructors.

On most cadet sessions we use both safety boats and Viking so we always need plenty of help. If you feel you would like to help this great bunch of kids, who are the future of the club please get in touch with me.

Steve Hart, Tel: 01473 826316

Email: hartcraft@hotmail.com.uk



"The Commodore and 'Rear' Commodore get down to a nifty bit of bottom polishing at the recent Music Hall evening!"

House & Wines Nibbly Bits!

It's nearly time to get back on the water and all committees have been working hard to plan the next year ahead. Wherever we can support sailing events and cadets we will and I have shown these items on the calendar.

We have had some great events over the winter months with the Row & Ramble back in December packing out the *Anchor* at Rowhedge on a glorious sunny day. Burns' Night and the Nature Walk were very well attended as always. Our thanks to Stuart Bannerman and Lyn Button for giving us a traditional Scottish evening and to Tim Denham for talking us through the birds along our riverbank. A Sunday lunch in January was also a busy affair but just what we needed after Christmas so we'll be doing a few more of those.

Our Old Time Music Hall on 28th Feb raised £300 for Colchester Night Shelter and was attended by just over 100 of you, there are a few photo's going around and a few that you'll never see.

Well done, and thank you to Richard Barnard for his patter and seamless presentation and all our performers, particularly those who trod the boards for the first time. We also need to thank Jacque and Peter Collyer-Smith who arranged for us to borrow staging for the evening from Brightlingsea Seaview Players. This was the finishing touch along with our luxury, start studded dressing room that we all managed to share. I am a little concerned about the old lady from Alresford who was so cross with 'Tommy' for telling everyone about her splinter, I do hope she gets that seen to! Pauline and I managed to scrub our way through a song, the like of which you'll never see again – I think it's time to quit before we are arrested. The order of appearance was:

Peter Cobbold opening, and then the WSC Chorus line, 'It ain't half hot mum'

Peter North and his 'Galloping Major.'

Joan Gifford, on seasoned guitar with her own brand of humorous songs.

Mary Williamson – Nobody loves a forty year old fairy. (Who says?...Ed)

Beccy Hart and her flute recital and Oom-pa-pa!

Hilary Cook. Alice blue gown.

Jacquie and Peter Smith, with a medley of nautical ditties.

Hannah and Sophie Robinson with 'Sisters' accompanied by two 'ladies'!

Lynn Button and traditional Scottish singing which got us all feet tapping.

'The Raven Maidens', Commodore and Rear (page preceding, say no more!)

Interval;

Peter North again with 'Henry the Eight'

Ted and Tommy, Ted Reddish and Chris Mullins, ventriloquist act and introducing the little Old Lady from Arlesford – who then led community singing (Peter Cobbold)

Steve Hart and his 'Hoily Rig' by Bob Roberts

The lovely Hilary Cook sang again for us. And sat on someone's lap!!

Brian Sinclair and Nicky Robinson entertained with songs and guitar music.

Lynn Button returned with more flavour than a single malt.

Mary Williamson, bemoaning her perpetual status as bridesmaid, never the bride.

And then it was everyone's turn with the final chorus!

If you were not there, you missed it – it was both hilarious and slick, funny and heart-warming! Music by the maestro of the piano Jan Sinclair, stage managed by Nickki Robinson and expertly compared by Richard Barnard, it was a night to remember.

Finally, a reminder that we are here for you and if there's something you'd like to see happen at the club or you'd like to get involved with House & Wines, then please get in touch. Our next social event is: **Fitting Out Supper - Saturday 28th March, 19.30** Please sign up.

Nikki Robinson.....Rear Commodore – 01206 305043

**Maldon.....a cautionary tale of one man's battle
with our common denominator as yachties.....Mud!**



Riverside, Maldon, January 2009. A great gathering of spectators line the muddy banks to witness an annual event, set in stone in the local history of the town, the annual mud-race. “T’is across the mud banks and back,” they say, while mentioning nothing of the in between! *Linda Morgan* writes;

“This is not exactly a sailing story, more a tale of the river-mud, which we have all come into contact with some time or other. Ken had always spoken of wanting to take part in the mud-race but had never got around to entering, so as a surprise, I entered him for it. When he received the entry form, the surprise was complete and there was no going back now.....

Ken had had some experience of mud before, in digging out and checking moorings at Wivenhoe and surely, the race would be a doddle after that?

Despite the bitter weather on the day, around 250 competitors turned out and apart from the serious contenders, most others seemed to be in some fancy costume, ranging from fairies to pirates, Father Christmases, even a bride and groom, while Ken could be recognised, dressed in a nurses’ uniform and sporting long black hair.

At the start of the race Ken had a cunning plan – or so he thought and as the event was started and the mad dash began for the greasy, black mud which lends its name to the very river Blackwater, the plan faded with reality. Lying flat on your face in the mud and icy water with one leg wedged firmly in the glutinous blackness and a female competitor lying across your other, soon put paid to any strategies! And by the way, should anybody come across a shiny black wig afloat in the Maldon area, do feel free to keep it. It is amazing how quickly energy is sapped by the wet and cold. Locked in the embrace of a combination of mud and young lady and making little progress

through the mire, Ken was grateful to accept a helping lasso thrown over his shivering carcass by the team of volunteer divers monitoring the course. He little expected to be so quickly flipped over onto his back and hauled in a most undignified manner from the mud but at least he was on the move again and hauled himself across the finishing line with a smile of relief on his face.

Well done to Ken, and indeed all of the other contenders. A great amount of money was raised by them all for very worthwhile charities in the area. Thanks to all our friends and family who turned up on a very chilly day to support Ken and the other sports who undertook the race, it was a good laugh and something quintessentially English. If you don't quite recognise Ken, he now looks twenty years younger than before the race – there is a lot to be said for the quality of the Maldon mud. I'm thinking of trying it myself!

So that was our experience of the Maldon mud-race, dubbed the 'best hangover cure known to man'; it has been a firm fixture on the Blackwater since 1970, raising thousands of pounds for charity. Organised by the Maldon Lions Club and the Rotary Club, with the backing of Maldon District Council it is a great local event – and long may it continue!

Linda Morgan.



“ Cold? Never, not me mate, just a walk in the park!”



Norsemen, I see no Norsemen! Pray let me arise from this place and see it no more!"

From Cold to Hot in Vanuatu.....*Brian and Jan Sinclair.*

About forty members mustered on the upper deck late in February to hear of young Brian and Jan's expedition into the southern Pacific Ocean in 2007 aboard the Sail Training Association ship, *Soren Larsen*. They heard of the cruise through their involvement in the STA project and decided to join the ship and see what it was all about. A flight to New Zealand led to another island-hopping skip to join the ship at Malo and begin a journey of great interest among the people and places of this far away part of the world, in the chain of islands, from the north and the Torres Islands and the larger Banks Islands and on down, about 1200 miles to the south point of Espiritu Santo. This is indeed a rather remote part of the world, where the people maintain a simple, if deprived sort of life. Their reception to the visitors and their tall ship was warm and welcoming and all they had to offer they did.

Brian spoke about the venture, while Jan controlled the slide projector and we sat enthralled to hear about life in the tropics, where all you get is rotten day after day of sunshine! I could not help but marvel at how far the members of this relatively small club manage to scatter themselves on this planet of ours!! Well done..... *Ed*

The Naked Truth.....Anon.

Found in my pigeon hole at the Club, (commonly known as the ash-tray).....

“One busy Thursday morning in November, the boat-lifters had just reached a stage in the planned schedule where they could enjoy a well earned break for a hot drink.

The joking and animated banter, which always accompanies a lifting session begun and continued as we finished our break and moved out toward the front door, where we began climbing back into our waterproofs and wellies. A new member of the Club had recently joined up with the lifting group activities. Let’s call him Alfred. He had popped into the gents and then joined us outside, looking a little perplexed.

“I’ve just been into the loo,” he said, “A chap’s just come in there, wearing only a dressing gown: he’s stark naked underneath – not a stitch on!”

This was too good an opportunity to miss! “Ah,” we explained, “He’s also anew member of the lifting group, it’s all to do with the initiation ceremony. We hope you have bought your dressing gown?”

Alfred may have been new to the Club and would have not known about the Thursday morning Adult Life Drawing class being held on the upper deck and its nude models but he was by no means gullible. “Pull the other one,” he said, “It’s got bells on!”



Vacancies and Personal column.....P.C.

Wanted; An editor for the *Mainsheet* magazine! Current editor wants a sabbatical this year to get his teeth into other projects. Any assistance needed will be freely given to any volunteer for this exciting job. Now’s your chance to hone your journalistic skills; ensures a place on the Committee, the hub of it all.....ring **824570**.

Wanted; Volunteers for the annual spring working parties! There are jobs both inside and out, none too arduous; from stacking chairs to painting the gable ends with a fresh coat of black paint and clearing out the boatshed. This is a project which does wonders for the brightness of the facade and launches the Club into the new summer with a bang. Working day is scheduled for 23rd March, commencing 09.00
Contact the Club secretary, Alan Tyne, 822001.for details.

JD Lifting Ltd, have moved to a different area of Ipswich!
For more information, ring 01473 655554, e-mail: info@jdlifting.com.

Beware – A serial thief has invaded the boats stored in the car-park belonging to members; much valuable gear has been swiped. The Police have been advised. Check your boat and make it as secure as you can and take all of your valuables home with you, including tools and working equipment.

And finally, enjoy a good season on the water – its going to be a good one!



And now, the AGM. The Eighty-Third!

The retiring President Bill Kippen opened the meeting and the commodore, Pauline Hart read her report on the year's activities. Pauline's approach to her address was a series of 'F's': fantastic, fun, food, far, fast, frost, frolics and faux pas – (*her annual dinner speech see elsewhere in this edition, Ed*)

She spoke on those who had sailed far away and then referred to those who had not got too far but had enjoyed it none the less. She thanked her flag officers, particularly Nikki Robinson the Rear Commodore for her efforts and the excellent backing given to the social events by the House and Wines and the Bar staff; she made comment on the selfless time and energy spent in the refurbishment of the galley, by Dave Barnett and his volunteer crew on a long awaited project which will have benefits for the future of catering events. Pauline then thanked the treasurer, secretary and general members of the committee and all those willing clubmen and women, who do so much to keep our club alive and flourishing. The recent Music Hall and the Burn's Night came in for comment and the attendances of younger families was appreciated.

Treasurers report; copies were circulated and adopted as proposed by Ian Hunter. Guy Ward presented the annual accounts and spoke of the increase in the cost of living and the power charges, which had rocketed over this winter. Andy Diggins commented on the age of our heating units and ideas for future replacement, which will come to the committee. Lettings and maintenance costs came in for discussion and the need for a frugal approach to our finances was a theme understood and accepted by the members

Election of Officers; Commodore – **Tony Higbee**, Vice, **Brian Sinclair**, Rear, **Nikki Robinson**. Treasurer, **Guy Ward**, Secretary, **Alan Tyne**, Membership Sec., **Mike Mitchell**, Sailing Secretary, nine General Committee members were elected.

AOB; Dave Reynolds asked for a progress report on the construction of the tractor shed and learned that it was one of those projects which would need to take a back burner for the time being. John Ashworth remarked on the state of the approach road to the club and of the effect that it must have on our income and attendances and there was some discussion on this aspect and he was assured that something will be done in the near future to resolve the matter with the powers that be. Brian Sinclair spoke of the dredging at the fishermen's dock and that they should be moving off shortly.

Pauline Hart was thanked for her three years service as Commodore and then presented by Bill Kippen, with a glass tankard from the Club and flowers from the H&W staff. She then handed over her rather worn Commodore's Pennant, which somehow had made it as far as Denmark, in spite of the weather in 2008 to the new Commodore, Tony Higbee. He reminded members that it would not be appreciated should he be greeted with a kiss, as was the previous encumberant!

The meeting then closed and a supper of hot pies, vegetables and trimmings, followed by a pudding, was served by a valiant band of Cadets.

And a great job they made of it too!.....P.C.

Stop press!

For Sale; Yamaha 2hp outboard, 100/1 mix. Excellent-and I mean, excellent condition! Serviced and ready to go, can be bought to the club for inspection £165.

Two Gul Wetsuits, size small/medium. New and unused at £20. each

Ring; Peter/Jacque Collyer-Smith; 01206 302854

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