

# HBSC NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF HARLOW BLACKWATER SAILING CLUB AUTUMN 2013

## BRING ON THE WINTER!

Summer is almost over – and what a summer it was, with the best weather for six years. That meant good-sized fleets enjoying a mixture of breezes and lots of lovely sunshine.

Don't despair, because the Winter Series starts on November 3 down at road at MBSC (*note: not Nov 17 as stated in the programme. The other dates should be OK*). So if you've been bitten by the bug this year, there's no need to stop.

Another excellent Regatta Week was held in August, with a St Trinians theme. The serious and

fun sailing was appreciated by all, along with great socials and plenty of real ale drunk. Thanks to all who helped organise the week – a lot of work goes into this.

It has been good to see so many boats on the water, with the Laser fleet particularly strong and the Fireballs still holding their own, albeit with a bit of crew-swapping. The format seems to be working well, with the mixture of cup races and a long and short race on those days when we have two events.

There's quite a wide mix of ability in these races and some



**Winter series beckons**

sailors have made rapid improvements in the past year or two. So if you want to give racing a go for the first time, why not make next year the one in which you start?

And remember, new ideas from dinghy and cruiser members are always welcome.

## Tide 2 Tide Challenge raises £500



**Participants in the Tide 2 Tide Challenge to Brightlingsea**

On August 31, I organised a charity sail called the Tide 2 Tide Challenge to help raise money for Broomfield Hospital Children's Rheumatology Department. The day was a great success, we had great weather, the wind was perfect and our hosts (at Brightlingsea SC) were magnificent.

I would like to thank everybody who sponsored the challenge. I would especially like to thank those who took part and a special thank you to everyone who helped me organise the event. We managed to raise a massive £500 for the charity. Thank you again. (Also see Vicki's report, page 4).

**RAY REVELL**

# ALL THE HOT NEWS

Well what can we say, it has been a windy year so far (apart from the past couple of outings). The sun has been hotter than hot and now it seems colder than cold!

The Family Days were well supported with on average more than 20 people turning up to help out and also to learn more about the safety boat and some general sailing advice.

It has also been great to give advice to members who didn't know how to do even the simple things we all take for granted, such as how to turn on the washdown water or the men's shower boiler. As a club it has been noted that long-standing members need to spread our knowledge of HBSC to newer members.

The Laser Open was well supported this year. It was run over two days – some liked this, others did not. Please let Jim Batt or Keith Gilmore have your views

## Sailing Secretary's Report by Mark Batt

on how you would like it run next year. Open Day went well with the wind gods blowing hard again. Not many sailors made the finish of the first race. Thanks to Marcus and Abbie Wallace giving us a great nosedive and cartwheel in front of the clubhouse.

The Hell's Bells was run a few

weeks ago on another windy day. A few didn't make it out of the creek. After the race it was decided it was the lucky ones who crashed and burned before they left the creek. If they had got round the back of Osea it would have been much worse and put pressure on the safety cover.

Marcus and Dave had a good battle – Jim Batt went for an ice-cream in Maldon!

Winter is almost here and now sailing will need a few more layers. MBSC will be running the Winter Series. The starts will be from down there, so please allow enough time to get to their start line as they will not wait.

If you have any trophies, please bring them to the club to be engraved for the main prize-giving at the Laying-Up Supper. If you have any preferences for your duty choices next year, please contact me by email or phone.



## Social Corner

After a very good and hectic summer, I went away to France to recover from Regatta Week. What a brilliant week! The best yet I think.

Just a reminder that on November 16 we are having a Spanish Night – and why not wear fancy dress? So why not come and join in the fun with some Spanish food. On Saturday Dec 7 there will be our Turkey & Tinsel Supper with prizegiving. Please let me know if you wish to come.



**SYLVIE BATT**

Also in November, it's getting near the time when things go bump and bang in the night so get yourselves down to the Fireworks and New

Members' Night at the clubhouse on Saturday November 2, 7pm for 7.30pm. There will be hot food and local real ale for sale and it's a great chance to meet and welcome our newer members and their families. NOTE:

If you want to bring a firework, please bring only one – make it as spectacular as you like.

## CRUISER CALL-UP

A meeting of the club's cruiser members is to be held on **Sunday, November 24 at 1pm** at the clubhouse. Most cruiser members do their own thing, so do not often meet for a chat. Before the 2014 Sailing Calendar is finished, it would be good to know what the Cruiser section would like to do – and discuss what you would like done or not done at the club. I look forward to seeing you for a pint and a chat

**ROD MARTIN**



# Mike & Keith's

# BIG ● ADVENTURE

2013 Fireball  
Nationals  
Looe, Cornwall

After six years of sailing at HBSC, Keith and I figured it was time to test ourselves at the Fireball Nationals. Actually, many will be aware that we came to that decision (arguably too soon) after four years' sailing, only to suffer a vehicle write-off in Exeter which led to us spending a week pondering what might have been.

So, this year I decided to let Keith do the towing. Who would have thought his car would break down before even making it to Chelmsford?! Luckily Keith was leaving a day early so we still made it to Cornwall in time!

Day 1 presented us with the strongest winds of the week, with constant Force 5/6 and gusts of F7. We had our boat set up for the conditions and went into the week aiming to finish every race.

Looe is on the south coast and not a location associated with surfing, however with the southerly wind it created large waves, something we hadn't ever sailed in before.

Having made our way out with plenty of time to spare and a practice race to start the championship, we were able to get used to the conditions. While a book tells you to tack on top of a wave, it doesn't tell you how hard it is to stay in the boat as you're moving across and you suddenly drop 15ft!

Some of the fleet didn't make the start, preferring not to risk damaging their boat for the rest of the week! Others were dropping out at regular intervals.

The courses were all the usual triangle/sausage which we enjoyed sailing. It became clear that you couldn't afford to miss a wave when reaching/running. If you took the wave

right, you flew along surfing from one to the next. If you missed it, you watched 20 boats leave you for dead!

We didn't risk our spinnaker on day one, which left us feeling a little embarrassed and out of our league – however, seeing some Fireballs retiring damaged having capsized on the reaches we knew we had made the right call.

A fantastic opening day and a real baptism of fire!



We may have been slow and steady, but we did better than 20 other Fireballs and had beaming smiles.

Day 2 had winds of F5 and was far more manageable, with the swell still pretty large from the previous day. We were able to use our spinnaker now and really enjoy surfing the reaches.

We had a fantastic day and had now worked out the group of boats we were racing. In race 1 we were getting the hang of surfing, and with the final reach to the finish line, we had the excitement of chasing down a Fireball about 100 metres ahead, pipping them as we crossed the line. Smiles and high fives! The other boat blanked us. Welcome to the Nationals.

The great thing about the Fireball Nationals is their buddy system. They take the results after day one, draw a line in the middle of the results and pair you up (1st with 26th, 2nd with 27th etc). As luck would have it, we had raced against our buddies at the Blackwater Open this year so we had at least met previously.

I was initially apprehensive about the idea and thought we would get an elitist pair not interested. However,

*Turn to next page*



# Club's pit-stop



HBSC hosted 100 runners for a refreshment stop on the Saltmarsh 75 Mile Race, the route of which passed our club. The event started on Saturday, October 5 in Woodham Ferrers, then continued along the coastal path to Burnham around the Dengie Peninsula to Bradwell. There was then an overnight stop at Steeple before passing our club on the way to Maldon. The runners then went along the north side of the Blackwater through Tollesbury, finishing at Salcott late on October 6. Next year they envisage 500 runners after this year's successful launch.

## Charity capers

It's 8am on a cold, windy Saturday morning and through chattering teeth I think to myself, "Why are we here?". Well, such is the persuasive power of Ray Revell. It all started with a promise to his daughter Shannon; that he would match whatever she raised for a sponsored silence in support of the Children's Rheumatology Department at Broomfield. When Shannon went on to raise a staggering £350, Ray knew he had to do something drastic.

So, on Saturday, August 31, a group of us got together to sail from HBSC to Brightlingsea in aid of the charity. The wind was a perfect north-easterly and at force three, we knew we had a chance of making it there and back.

With Ray and myself in the Lasers, Paul Church, Flo Church and Shannon Revell in the Tasar, Mark Batt and John Aldous in the Stratos and Kenny Batt and Roger Mander in 'Pen', the famous Drascombe, we set off.

Following a quick pit-stop at Tollesbury spit, we arrived at Brightlingsea Sailing Club just in time to catch the last of the water. We were greeted by Barrie Winship, who had not only arranged lunch for us but also (more importantly) the use of the bar.

After a few hours of chatting, relaxing and strolling through the town, it was time to head back.

Fortunately, the wind didn't drop quite as much as expected and we made it back in excellent time – in fact, with so much to spare that we had to wade through the mud to get back up to the jetty.

In total, we raised nearly £500 which we hope Shannon and Flo will do the honour of presenting to the hospital. A huge thank you to Ray for organising the day, to Keith Revell and Jackie Everitt on the safety boat, Les Kiss for transporting the trolleys and I must also mention our tour guide Paul Church for sharing his excellent local knowledge with us.

In all, a brilliant day and one that we hope to repeat next year on a larger scale – watch this space!

VIKI SHARMAN

## BIG ADVENTURE

*From previous page*

Rick and James were fantastic. They gave advice freely and took the time to look over our boat and launch with us so we could do some training on the water before racing. We also had a week of supportive emails from our fellow HBSC Fireballers, which were very much appreciated.

The rest of the week flew by, with Keith and I taking in as much as possible and enjoying the breathtaking scenery out on the water.

We absolutely loved the racing! It was unfortunate that I left it until the night before the last day's racing to get some advice on starting techniques.

What worked for us was; position your boat in the middle of the fleet so the committee boat can't see your sail number (don't want to be black flagged). Push your nose out the front and let the crew look along the line. The minute the top boats pull the trigger to go, you do the same – even if you think its too early.

Following this rule on the final day with three races made a big difference. Most of the week I had been too conservative and was in the second line of boats. However, on the final day we were with the lead boats and having to call starboard on various boats crossing our path. Much more fun! We even had a picture of us sailing published by the local tourism board on their website and Twitter account!

Our final position was 44th out of 49. While this may not be particularly high up, we had a great experience and hopefully picked up a few tips along the way. We achieved our aim of finishing every race too – one of the few who did.

At the very least, we can sit in the club now, beer in hand, joining in with the "I remember at the Nationals" stories.

I'd also like to express my gratitude, and I'm sure Keith feels the same, for all the support, help, training and advice we have received since joining the club. We've come a long way since driving in the gates with a Wayfarer and not having a clue what we're doing.

MIKE BRYANT  
Fireball fleet captain

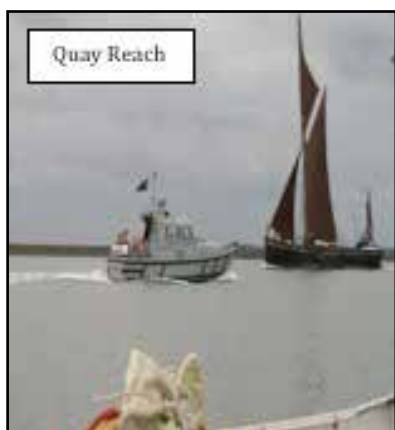
# Our Summer Cruise

It's been an ambition of Steve's to take our Achilles 24 "Dulcie" (and me) into the Crouch but either time, tide or wind has conspired against him. This year, however, all seemed set reasonably fair.

We loaded the boat with food, drinks, water and gear, put in a single reef and left the Club on a Saturday to spend the night anchored in Pyefleet Creek. The wind shifted and we spent the night in Bradwell marina instead, making our way to Pyefleet the next day wearing lots of clothes and sailing gear as it was so cold.

On Monday (wind NE 2-3) we rose very early to make and cross the Spitway at low water and go into the Crouch on the flood. We made our way into the Crouch without incident in company with a porpoise some of the way.

We anchored in Quay Reach in the Roach for the night and I was thrilled to be able to watch a porpoise from my bed! We had seen a number of seals during our sail and there were others in the Roach.



The forecast was for increasing wind so on Tuesday we made our way under working jib up the Crouch bound for Fambridge Marina, six miles upriver. We sailed in company with a barge

## The Adventures of Steve & Di Swift June 2013

which left the Roach as we did. As we neared the marina, the river looked full of moorings bank to bank. Fambridge Marina is very well maintained with friendly people. Unfortunately The Ferry Boat Tender, an eating place in the marina, was only open between 10 and 4, sometimes! The Ferry Boat Inn is a walk away and did not appeal on a wet evening.

Due to the high wind (strong on Wednesday and gales on Thursday) we explored the local area on foot, staying for three nights

The forecast was very unsettled so on Friday we sailed back to Burnham Marina. We walked into Burnham on Saturday (SW up to 7) and bought ice creams

(a must when we are on holiday) and then had to manage them while struggling into waterproofs as it was pouring. Hope there was no hidden camera! We would have liked to explore the Crouch

and Roach further but the weather forecast was such that we decided to return across the slipway on Sunday in quiet weather.

Another early start on Sunday to use the ebb tide to the Spitway, then the flood to take us back to Pyefleet (SW 3-4). We nearly ran aground on Buxey sands but apart from that all went according to plan and we spent the night in our favourite anchorage, Pyefleet.

On Monday (NE 3-5) with a double reefed main and working jib we left Pyefleet, sailing to Colne Bar then the Bench head and on to Bradwell marina for another night. An excellent sail.

Apart from going up the Crouch, Steve also wanted to try the spinnaker. (In the interest of married harmony, I have always believed the best place for a spinnaker is in the loft at home.)

Tuesday there was no wind and we left Bradwell and anchored off shell beach to play at hoisting the spinnaker. We sailed using the spinnaker up river then anchored off Osea for the night.

On Wednesday there was very little wind. A poor forecast for Thursday and Friday brought us back to our mooring on the evening tide.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday Nov 2 – Fireworks & New Members' Evening**

**Sunday Nov 3 – MBSG Winter Series starts**

**Saturday Nov 16 – Spanish Night**

**Saturday Dec 7 – Turkey & Tinsel Supper and Prizegiving**

**Tuesday, Dec 31 – New Year's Eve Party (bring a plate of food)**