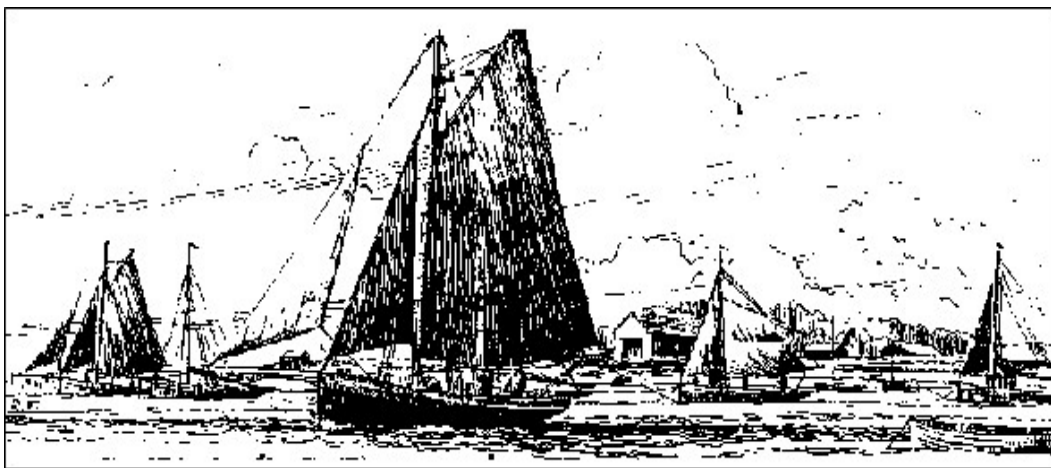


Roach Sailing Association Newsletter – September 2026

www.roachsailingassociation.org



In this issue

- Upcoming Events and Racing update
- Calais Cruise *by Barry Lewis*
- Halloween deck restoration *by John Langrick*
- Briar Rose crossing to Norway *by Shaun Hetherington*

Chairman's Report *by Shaun Hetherington*

As a long hot summer starts to draw to a close, it's time once again to reflect on the season. A season for many which has seen extra warm and prolonged periods of dry weather, whilst this can have welcome benefits, it also appears to have significantly increased the growth of weed on the boats in and around the River Roach. I, on the other hand, have been sailing in Scotland, before heading across to Scandinavia, and have completely missed the warm / dry weather! I was joined two occasions by fellow members Jon & Dawn, and we enjoyed firstly a few days on the West Coast of Scotland, then a further week in Norway. A day or two in Scotland saw a rare glimpse of the sun, but our week together in Norway commenced with biblical rainfall which only slightly eased for the rest of the week. Nevertheless, with spectacular scenery, a good time was had by all. Like the geese which will soon be arriving at Wallasea, I to have been heading south from Norway and hope to reach Sonderborg in Denmark where Briar Rose will be staying for the winter.



The work on Halloween has been taking up a lot of John Langrick's time aided by Jon Walmsley and others on occasions. Work on replacing the Toe-rail, repairs to the rubbing strake and a work on the pulpit are all taking shape. She will stay in the current berth alongside at Sutton Wharf during the winter months.

One of our existing members, Matt Nicholas has purchased a new boat 'Goshawk', and Brian Bown's boat which he has been working on throughout the season 'Potentilla' is finally ready for launch – I am sure you will see plenty of them around our waters.

The uncertainty around the yard at Paglesham is no clearer at this stage – suffice to say that the Roach sailing Association continue to look for a long term solution, and stand ready to work with the administrator. Any further information will be provided when it is known.

Lastly, I hope to see as many of our members and their partners at the laying up supper which will be at the Thorpe Bay Yacht Club this year. Details shown below.

--oOo--

Steak and Oysters Afloat

Our next social event is on Sunday 12th October. Bring your own steak, gather local oysters, raft up together in the Roach for lunch. Look out for details on Slipway Chat.

Laying up Supper 21st November 2026

The Laying up Supper 2026 has a new Venue. Many members have suggested we use a local Yacht Club rather than a Golf Club and hence the change. Our new location for 2026 will be the Thorpe Bay Yacht Club - 115 THORPE Bay Gardens SS1 3NW. In a year of uncertainty regarding our Association's future we really look forward to seeing you there.

Our menu has been selected by a number of our members and although pretty 'Traditional' is usually a popular choice at many of our gatherings. We suggest arrival at 19:00 for seating at 19:30. The choice of menu is as follows

Starters

- Prawn Cocktail
- Soup Tomato and Red Pepper
- Pate – Chicken Liver

Mains

- Fish and Chips
- Chicken with Mushroom Sauce, wilted spinach and Mashed Potato
- Vegetarian Option – Vegetable Lasagne

Deserts with Tea or Coffee

- Cheesecake
- Crumble with Custard
- Cheese and Biscuits

Tickets are £33. Please send your menu request upon payment to Mick Robinson who has kindly agreed to make the arrangements again this year. The deadline for orders is 7th November. Please transfer your payment to the RSA account below, Roach Sailing Association Sort Code 20-79-73 Account 80751138. Please email mickwr55@gmail.com with your menu choices. Please include your surname and "laying up" as the reference.

--oOo--

Racing update

Nine cruising yachts have taken part in the RSA 2026 series, with five races won and two yet to go. At the time of going to press, the boats have the following point scores...

Boat Name	Points in series
Momo 3	15
Igean	14
Eole	12
Goshawk	4
Coromandel	2
Martinique	2
Lotus Bavaria	1
Indi	0.5
Margo	0.5

There are two races yet to run, the Lifeboat Cup on 20th Sept and the coveted Roach Plate on 4th Oct.



Contesting the Blue Shoal Trophy

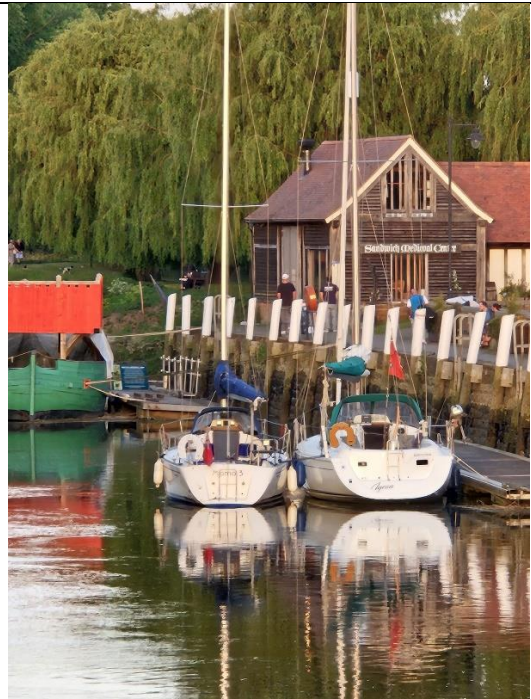
----oOo----

Calais Rally *by Barry Lewis*

Friday started early, Dave on Igean, with Matt and Alan, started off first from Wallasea before 7oclock. Peter and John on Eole went off just after 7 from Pag, and Momo 3 left around 7.30 with Barry and Harrison on board. Weather was warm but no wind at all. We all motored our separate routes to go round the Whittaker buoy at low tide ish, although running at over 6 knots we couldn't locate the others, we didn't know at the time but Peter and john had gone out to the windfarm, spotted some bouncing fish and decided to get the fishing rods out and see if they could catch lunch, as they thought they had a lot of time! Dave went out to the windfarm as well, I think following the Navionics automatic route, Harrison and I had set our route as short as possible and only skirted the Whittaker and headed through the Fishermans Gat on towards Ramsgate. Still no wind, so we motored on trying to catch the others, cursing getting in on a late flight the Thursday evening, thinking I should have got up earlier than 5.30, pressing on, scanning everywhere for the others.



Igean in the Channel



Momo 3 and Igean at Sandwich

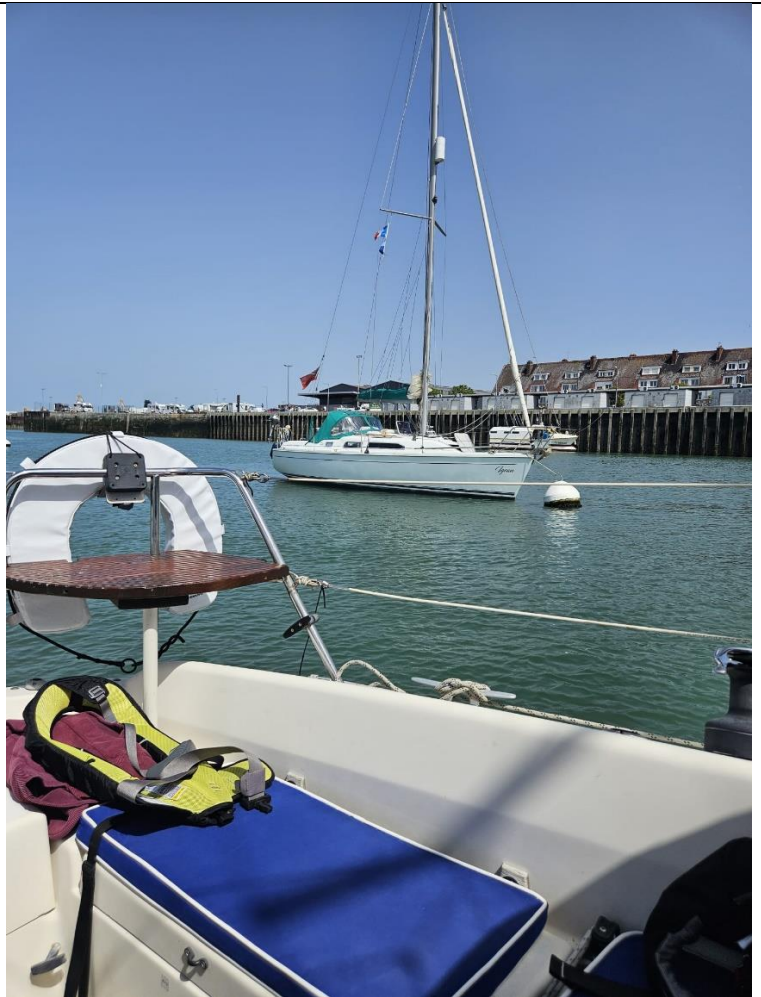
Getting near North Foreland, radioing both Dave and Peter, we eventually got a reply from Dave to say he was sailing, Peter replied he was still a couple of hours from us as they had carried on fishing, as they had lots of time, or so they thought! Previously we had been phoning Ramsgate, for berths but we were told there were no spare berths as it was a 4 day Event for Dunkirk Little Ships Rally, so Matt had contacted Sandwich marina who kindly arranged 3 berths for us on the town Quay So we had a back up overnight mooring for the 3 boats, but we had to be there 2 hours before high tide. Momo 3 arrived at the bay after motoring all the way to try and catch the others up thinking they where in front, Dave on Igean, had decided to sail on the last leg and was tacking long tacks so we never saw him till he arrived by Sandwich bay , no sign of Peter on Eole, so Harrison rang ,no answer, radioed eventually got a reply, they where at least 2 and a half hours away, i informed that it was imperative that he get to the River Stour for Sandwich at high tide as it would take 2 hrs to get up to the mooring and he would be fighting the tide and also a falling tide , on a river 6 miles long ,very winding that we hadn't negotiated before, Peter duly managed to arrive at high tide, by then Momo3 and Igean where safely moored up on the town Quay. It was quite an unsettling journey for us with the depth guage flashing zero many times, Peter rang us "we've run aground".

The Harbour master sent a little rib down but they were stuck fast at 45 degrees, where they eventually ended up getting off the boat and sleeping in a field, a definite slant on sailing. The remaining boats decided to get something to eat in Sandwich, a short walk, we ended up not in a pub but in a little restaurant come cafe, come bar , come burgher bar come music venue, not quite what we had in mind ,but we had sat down, trapped, no one there but 2 local women, only sold burgers, no draft beer, quite, all of a sudden, a man in an ice cream printed shirt started singing Frank Sinatra, then 14 people came in in tuxedo and long sparkling dresses, Sandwhich was certainly a little bit different, we had our assorted slightly burnt burgers and bottled beers and exited for the pub , a quiet drink and back to the boats for a well earned sleep.

The next morning, another early start, 5-ish to make the 2 hour trot to the mouth of the river picking up Eole on the way down, now upright. Exiting the river into the bay, we discussed routes and headed off to Calais, another day motoring all the way to Calais dodging the ships and tankers, pretty hot and uneventful until we got about just over half way where we picked up a bit of wind in the sails, great little sail for a while till we got close to Calais. We all went separate directions, Momo3 had an interesting time going across some rocky shallows that acted as overfalls, quite unusual, but didn't cause a problem, we all headed into the basin and found a mooring and a nice cold beer and a quick dose to refresh ourselves for the oncoming dinner.



Eole



Calais

I arranged to meet my friend Brian Jones on the jetty as it was a free for all with many people rafting up but Brian had found me a lovely little spot on a jetty all to myself, thanks Brian! Facilities were great, nice showers. We met Brian and his fellow Westerly owners group in a bar before dinner meeting some lovely people. The evening dinner was fantastic, lots of like minded people, good conversation, great food and drink, I think Dave really enjoyed it!! Early start the next day as we had decided to go back to Ramsgate or Sandwich for the night, another day motoring as no wind, the only excitement was a rope catching round the prop on Momo 3 but I managed to lose it with a bit of backwards and forwards, so no damage done, onwards to Ramsgate as we had managed to reserve 3 berths, another long motoring spell all the way back. We arrived in Ramsgate, promptly booked an Italian restaurant for the evening which proved to be a great choice. Great food, cold beer and great company, once finished we strolled down to the Little Ships Rally where we inhaled the atmosphere of the evening finishing with a Gin and Tonic with my brother, listening to a fantastic saxophone player, nice way to finish an evening, then back to the boat for some shut-eye before getting up early ish to depart for home under engine again. We took the shortest route back but it was still quite an onerous journey under engine again, arriving back in Pag to go home to a welcoming bed.

----oOo----

Halloween restoration update *By John Langrick*

Some of our members have taken on the task of trying to maintain a yacht well known within y=the RSA, Halloween. She was built and owned by the Choppin family and launched In 1959 from the old black shed at Paglesham. Sady we have now lost the black shed, the new ownership of the Paglesham yard in question, the future of Halloween was also unclear. She was latterly owned by Simon Joel who was gradually restoring her with the help of other members. Sady Simon passed in 2025 leaving Halloween dried out in the yard at Sutton Wharf, Rochford. She was at risk of being broken up. A small group of Halloween Heros thought that tis would be a tragedy for the RSA and so took the y=task of trying to get her back into the water.

She now sits in a mud berth at Sutton Wharf. Getting her launched was a feat in itself but maintenance remains an ongoing task.



Stripping the teak deck



Sikaflex in seams



Fitting ply

Most recently attention has been on the bow, where the deck has been leaking very badly for a number of years. This was teak laid over pitch pine tongued and grooved planks. Just these planks are 1 ¼" thick. Yes, Halloween is very heavily built. This task included stripping the toe rail, rubbing strake, stantions, pulpit, hawse pipe, deck porthole and then removal of all the teak laying. Over the years this had been sanded so much that it was no longer fully covering the pine planking and hence water running through this and down the cracks in the pine planks underneath.

The remedy after stripping the deck was to put sikaflex on all the seams in the pine planks. This was then sanded and two layers of 5MM marine ply was glued over with PVA glue and then fastened down with silicon bronze gripfast nails. The final seams further sealed with Sikaflex before having 2 layers of fibreglass matting.



Covering with 2 coats of fibreglass



Refitting deck



Job done!

Luckily the weather has been fair, in fact a bit too hot to make a neat job with the fibreglass which dried within seconds of laying on the deck. Three members helped with this as I am highly allergic to the resin. Dave Edmunds, John Greenwood and Jon Walmsley made a sterling effort to get the decks fared. It was a delight to look in the fore peak after some eventual torrential rain to find it dry after all these years.

And finally refitting the deck pothole, teak king plank, cabin trim, toe rails rubbing strake, stations and pulpit. This all sounds very easy to relate, but has taken literally weeks of effort. Litres of sikaflex and a lot of scrubbing on hands and knees. I have just to paint the deck and varnish the brightwork and she should be sailing to the Steak and Oysters in October. You will be welcome to come along.

Her short term future is that we will leave her in her berth this winter with a cover over her and mast up. I start and

run the engine every couple of weeks as her solar panel will be covered. We look forward to some RSA cruises in 2027!

----oOo----

Briar Rose crossing to Norway *By Shaun Hetherington*

I began the season on the west coast of Scotland and after exploring the Highlands & Islands, set sail for Shetland. Having topped up with supplies in Lerwick, I headed north stopping at Mid Yell and then on to Haroldswick on the island of Unst. Haroldswick seemed an appropriate place to be heading to the land of the Vikings from, as it celebrates much of its history with the Norse invaders who frequented these parts over a thousand years ago.



Iron age Broch at Mousa, Shetland



Replica viking longboat, Haroldswick, Unst

At 3:45am with the sky already light, I hauled up the anchor and in a light drizzle set a course to take me out of the bay and begin the journey across the Norwegian Sea. The wind was a light south westerly so with the jib set and engine on, I cleared the bay into the open sea – 177 nm to destination. By 9:45am I had covered 35 miles, the wind remained steady at 8 knots, and only birds on the wing to keep me company. The weather had brightened and I was making good progress.



Briar Rose at anchor, Haroldswick



Oil platforms

I find on longer passages, the key is establishing a routine. I set an alarm on my phone to remind me to update the log every hour. This is normally followed by a cup of tea and a routine inspection to make sure everything looks okay. Interspersed with these hourly tasks, I tend to read, or do a puzzle whilst keeping a watch on around me.

After lunch, the wind picked up a little and my speed increased to over 6 knots. By the log entry at 18:45 I had passed 90 miles. Sticking to the routine, the day soon seemed to slip into the evening and after a good dinner I had soon passed the 100 mile mark. This far north (61 deg) in the summer, it doesn't really get dark as such, just a few

hours of twilight. Around midnight, I was passing a few large oil / gas platforms but keeping a safe distance away. The tiredness creeps up on you and I find that if I stick to the routine and have a 10 minute doze in the cockpit, the log alarm ensures that I only doze in short naps. Having the AIS transmitter helps, being able to see any ships, along with information about their course & speed – also with the reassurance that I am visible to them.

By 03:45 I had covered 143 miles in 24 hours and just had 34 miles to go. I told myself 'just a day sail left' and on I plodded. After breakfast, I had my first sight of land and this quickly increased as more of the mountains began to show. As I got nearer I saw a few local fishing boats and began to make out the features of the coastline.

By 10:45 I was on my final approach to Florø. I had chosen this as my port of arrival as it looked like an easy harbour to approach and as it turned out was a very welcoming small marina with immaculate facilities. Once I had tied up I went off to the customs office where a very friendly lady took my finger prints and a pictures and entered them in to the new EU computer system – I hate to think that that picture of me having been sailing all night is my picture on the EU's records going forward!



Approaching the Fjord coast



Arriving at Florø

Briar Rose has since explored some of Norway's longest fjords and the SW coast. Shaun plans to overwinter in Denmark. (Ed)

---oOo---

Finally some more photos from members...



Sailing au naturelle?



Blackberry season



Extra growth in warm waters of the Roach



Anode eaten away in 6 months!



Young codgers?



Whoops!

----oOo----

Letter from the Bosun *by Barry Lewis*

Hi All,

What a lovely warm year, great for sunbathing, but not so great for the sailing community, we get all the ingredients for sailing but not at the same time, lovely and warm, no wind, then too much wind! When it was a good day, your boat had fouled up in a matter of weeks because the river had got so warm, and you couldn't sail anyway, then you had to take your boat out again and restart the cycle. On that note, I would like to let people know that I have been in touch with a few antifoul manufacturers and agreed with Flag antifoul in Burnham to manufacture an antifoul for the river Rouch. I have supplied them with 3 different types of fouling growth from my boat and samples of our river water and they are currently working on an antifoul which I hope to get by the end of the year, I will update as I get to know anything.

The dreaded Barges, I had been told they were being moved soon as I had spoken to the welders working on them. They were trying to get an agreement with the CHA to upgrade from needing to move the barges in nothing more than a force 4 wind to a force 5 which gives them more scope but no confirmation as yet,

The Slipway: I took it on myself to try and clear the slipway, I did the top from the gates down to the bow of the first barge then from low tide up to the scrubbing posts just to uncover the start of the big slab for drying out, I'm away at the moment when I get back I may ask for volunteers to help me clear the middle section and also the large slab for drying out, I have plans enable us to possibly dry out without cost, but I think this would be better once the barges are gone.

Calais Rally: What a cracking weekend definitely something for next year, hopefully with more wind and more boats.

Racing: What a lovely turn out on the last race. 6 boats, all quite evenly matched. Let's try and keep that going, when I get back I will set the remains races and also put together a cruise of one description or another, again I will update you, sorry it's a bit short but I've got to go up to Santorini for a cold beer!

----oOo----