

rhboa 92 - November 2000



NEWS



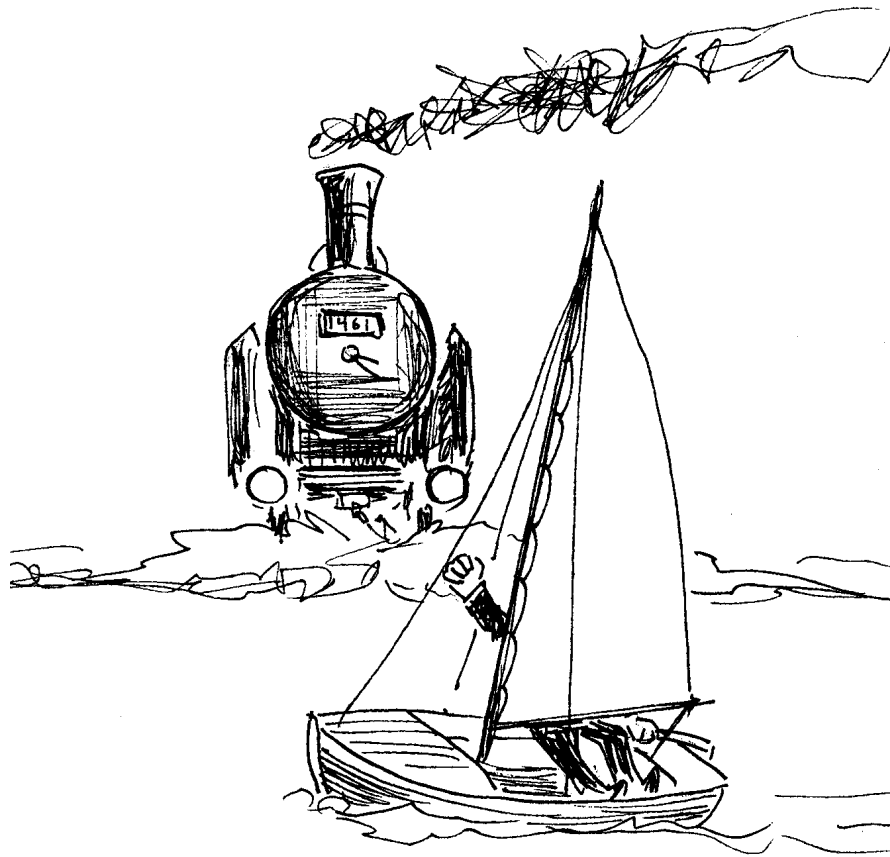
ASSOCIATION

Number 92

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NOVEMBER 2000

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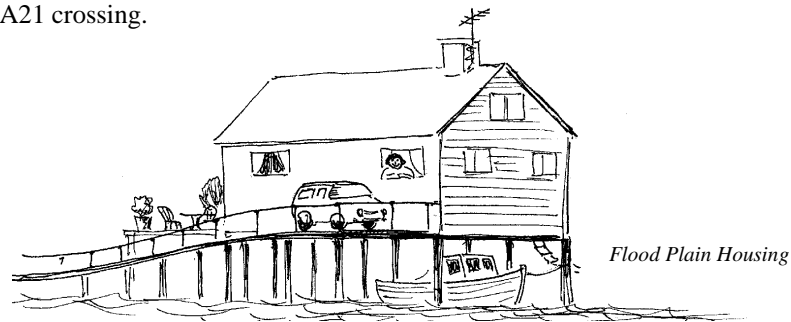
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Robertsbridge...or is it Robertsdam by Neil Tweedie

Bureaucratic complacency rather than the elements was being blamed for the flooding which has afflicted Robertsbridge in the last month. Residents say it is a classic example of what can happen when the natural workings of a flood plain are interfered with. They lay the responsibility for the increased flooding on a bypass built to take traffic using the busy A21 out of the village centre, arguing that it has effectively acted like a dam across the River Rother.

The Rother is normally a small river at Robertsbridge, but can easily break its banks in times of heavy rainfall. The bypass, completed a decade ago, crosses the river's flood plain just downstream from the village. It was originally intended that the bypass be built on steel supports so as not to obstruct the flow of the river. But the heavy cost led to a revised plan involving an embankment pierced by culverts, which were intended to let flood water pass through.

The 'Highways Agency' said it designed the bypass on the basis of advice from the 'Environment Agency'. The culverts were more than adequate for the job of channelling water at times of flooding, and were better than those provided at the original A21 crossing.



But villagers point to the large number of floods experienced since the bypass was built. They believe the design and size of the culverts are inadequate in times of heavy rainfall. Added to the problem was the decision in 1970 to allow houses to be built on the borders of the Rother's flood plain.

Rutley Close straddles the flood plain border. Residents in the part of the village most at risk had their request for flood defences turned down in 1998. The local flood defence committee rejected a £270,000 project to build an embankment, saying the small number of homes involved did not justify the expense. Their calculation was also based on an estimate of one major flood every 30 years - an underestimate, given the five floods that have hit Robertsbridge since Christmas.

This article first appeared in The Daily Telegraph at the height of the record Sussex Floods of 2000 on Tuesday 7th November 2000. A companion piece on one householder's experience of the past twelve months in Rutley Close, Robertsbridge is available on RHBOA's website at www.rhboa.co.uk.

Muddy Commons by William Shepherd

William Shepherd lives in Rye and is a contributing editor to the London-based political journal Fourth World Review

In Rye the incoming flood tides are much stronger than the outgoing ebb tides. At certain times and conditions of the tide these can differ by a factor of three. Were it the other way about, with the ebb stronger than the flood, then any silt stirred up by agitation dredging downstream of Strand Quay, along Rock Channel, up-river below 'Scott's Float' or at the 'ARC' and 'Alsford's' commercial wharves nearer Rye Harbour would be washed out into Rye Bay.

Rye's peculiar problem is that this is not what happens and according to Peter Davison, the Chairman of the 'Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association', the 'minus three factor' is the culprit. Not only does silt not clear the harbour mouth, but no sooner has it settled than it is promptly lifted up by the much stronger incoming flood tide and sent back up river again.

Some part of any of the mud shifted anywhere on the Brede and Tillingham or on the Rother downstream of 'Scott's Float' eventually ends up in Rock Channel or Strand Quay. What proportion of the incoming silt actually gets carried up-river past the Fishmarket and how much finds its way round Rock Channel Corner and upstream to the Tillingham and Brede Sluices is anybody's guess. Nobody knows. But it is certainly significant.

Now the problem here is that this is 'counter-intuitive'...perhaps even perverse. After all, when you blast mud away from under your boat at mid-tide on the ebb you can watch it disappear down-river. But wait around a few hours or a few days...again nobody knows much about this...and back it comes again.

Of course like every rule there are exceptions. In Rye this general rule is modified at times of excessive rainfall. The great 18th Century civil engineer, John Smeaton, always argued that herein lay the key to solving the dilemma. Old hands reminisce about the days when tidal water was allowed to raise the height of the Tillingham locally releasing it when the ebb kicked in. The trick was to open the sluices at the start of the ebb. This would start a mini-Niagara, effectively prolonging the duration of the ebb. Real scouring was the end result.



Unfortunately, according to John Sivier, this practice was eventually stopped because '...landowners put the mockers on it claiming it salinated the river.' Is this good enough? We come back again to democracy. *(continued on next page)*

Muddy Commons (continued)

The 'minus three factor' means that we are all in this together...the seamen, watermen and fishermen who work the Rother Estuary; the landowners who drain their fields into the Rother and its tributaries; and the farmers who graze their sheep on the banks of the Rother, the Brede and the Tillingham.

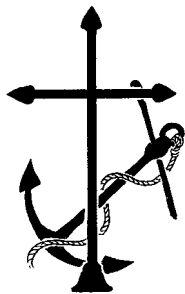
Yet these autumn floods provide us with an opportunity. A tide taken at the flood can perform mighty works. Instead of barricading ourselves behind our sandbags should we not instead seek to use nature's bounty? Why not use the power in these flood waters to scour out our river systems?

Thirty years ago in a famous article biologist Garrett Hardin posited *'The Tragedy of the Commons'*. Hardin assumed a group of pastoralists in which each 'rational herdsman' would try to take advantage of all the others by increasing his herd by one animal, then another, then another - until all the herdsmen were doing the same and the resource base - the pasture - collapsed.

But Hardin overlooked something that historians and anthropologists had been puzzling over for many years. Dozens of historical and contemporary examples...from medieval grazing lands to Maine lobster fisheries...demonstrate that common property is not over-exploited. *The key seems to be for group members to retain the power to define who is a member of the group and to manage their resources according to their own rules.* Hardin assumed that individualistic, self-maximising behaviour would always prevail in all societies at all times. In many places this is indeed the case...and the consequences are always resource depletion and confiscation of the commons.

But Rye-ers are made of sterner stuff. It was Goethe who wrote 'In boldness is genius'...Were not Rye-ers once renowned for their boldness? And have they not 'pulled together' over the centuries when their interests were threatened?

Tragedies of the commons are not facts of life or laws of Nature. They are created by a failure of leadership...and a failure of democracy. Collective action supported by a broadly-based consensus will always find a way.



Untimely Death of a Friend of Rye

I am saddened to report the tragic death of the President of Boulogne Yacht Club - Pierre Quien.

On Saturday evening the 18th November, Pierre apparently slipped on a pontoon at Boulogne Marina, fell into the water and drowned.

*Pierre was an active sailor and a keen competitive racer who visited Rye many times in his Beneteau 34 'La Goumel'.
He will be missed by so many. John Belsey*

Global Warning

Whatever the cause of our 'long rains', global warming is only one of several candidates. The records are confusing. With six days to go, the UK was only half an inch of rain short of the wettest autumn since records began in 1766. Yet October 2000 did not feature among the wettest ten octobers of the past two centuries.

However if you're worried about your property the Environment Agency can put your mind at ease. Its maps of the '100 year floodplains' are now on the internet at www.environment-agency.gov.uk. † All you have to do is to enter your postcode and out pops an instant answer.

Rising river levels are only one form of flood danger. Run-off from fields can without warning flood properties nowhere near a river or stream – and the risk can depend on whether the field is under cultivation at the time, or how it has been ploughed. In places, flooding has been blamed on 'direct drilling' of fields; the furrows which used to channel away the autumn rains are no longer there. In other places, wider tarmac roads have allowed water to run off into homes where a century ago unmade farm tracks would have soaked up the water. But where flood water's concerned there is no substitute for using your eyes and ears. How close is the river? How far would the water have to rise before it reaches your doorstep? Is there any other direction in which the water would go?



†Another site - www.homecheck.co.uk - puts a score of 1 to 6 on your risk of being flooded. This site also homes in on your postcode...but only the first four letters. 'TN31', for example, covers so many uphill and downhill that it's hard to see how this can be much help to individual householders.

Traditional Toasts at Sea

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Sunday: | Absent friends and those at sea. |
| Monday: | Our native land. |
| Tuesday: | Our mothers. |
| Wednesday: | The Queen. |
| Thursday: | Fair winds and good landfalls. |
| Friday: | For hunting and old port. |
| Saturday: | Wives and sweethearts. (May they never meet!) |

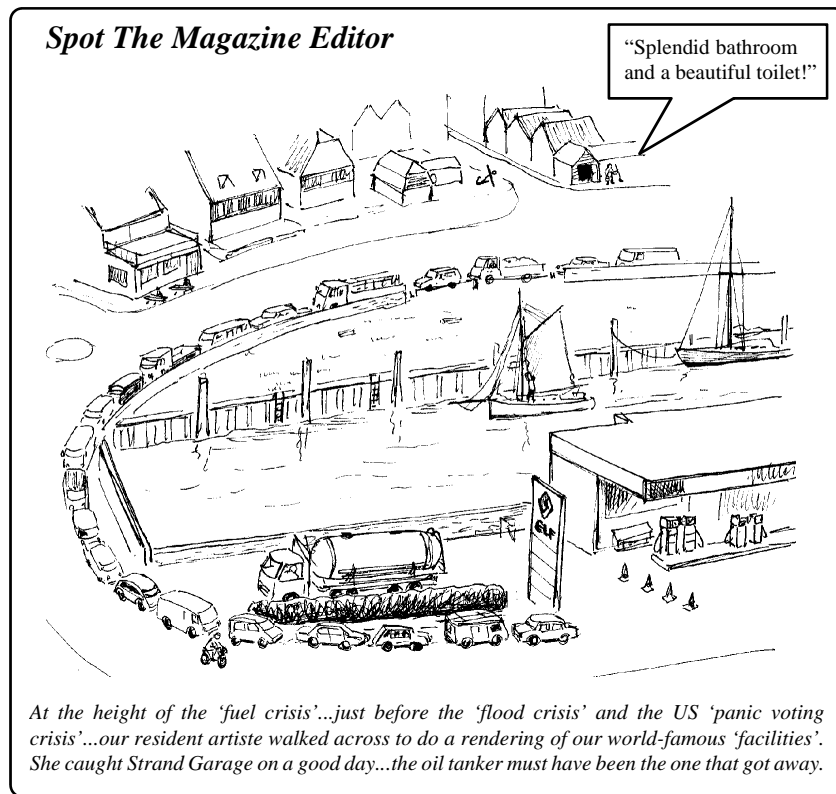
'Water does not like to be surprised'

Second law of marine design

Rye's Happy Visitors by Themselves

The prevailing view among RHBOA members is that the harbour fabric is deteriorating and that the harbour dues demanded of foreign boats are so exorbitant that yachtsmen from France, Belgium and Holland actively avoid bringing their boats into The Port of Rye.

Well, yes, everybody agrees that Strand Quay is rather shabby. And, yes, the prices UK marinas charge are high relative to Dutch prices...and Rye takes other prices along the English South Coast as reference.



But I joined Carl Bagwell one day to find out what visitors who made it into Rye actually thought of their 'Rye Experience'. It was quite an eye opener so I now think we may be guilty of selling our town short.

Anyway, don't take my word for it. Here are all the entries from the Strand Quay Visitor's Book. When I first read them, I wondered if one of John Thomson's jobs as Deputy Harbour Master...apart from rescuing sheep...was to write these entries. But after talking to visitors I know it is an accurate record.

Visitors Comments for 1999

- 14 May "Super! Very good...- Very well..." - *Oikia*
- 04 June "We've been weather bound for 3 days but if you are going to be stuck anywhere then this is the place to be. Special thanks to whoever it is that keeps this little facility clean and tidy. It is very much appreciated." - *Moonbeam*
- 26 June "Full marks. We'll be back" - *Lady P*
- 02 July "Best place in the whole of the South Coast" - *Hinano*
- 02 July "First class especially in such a small port. Many thanks.
Noteworthy that disabled people are so well looked after"- *EmilyRudkin*
- 05 July "What a nice place! No other words!" - *Tamino (Belgium)*
- 05 July "Excellent, we still find this the best between here & Great Yarmouth. - *Eronine*
- 09 July "Come back again. I like Rye" - Gerard
- 10 July "I'm welcome — Thank you!" - *Kappeen*
- 11 July "Excellent facility — made our day" - *Uncle Ronnie*
- 12 July "What a lovely place. An experience to stay here.
The bathroom is very good, many thanks" - *Emma Christina*
- 14 July "It's very good" - *Bidon V (Belgium)*
- 15 July "It's very good to be back! Many thanks to whoever keeps the facilities clean.
We always feel welcome here." - *Eronine*
- 24 July "The Harbour Master's friend is also a friend for the sailors.
Thanks for your welcome" - *Arka (Belgium)*
- 25 July "Thanks again for this special hospitality, so familiar for us.
Rye is simply a must for us! Till next time!" - *Alijo (Dutch)*
- 26 July "Everything is in order and fine. Also very clean." - *Paul (Toronto)*
- 01 Aug "Rye is a beautiful place to stay and has a 'touch of water-sports' that's different from the marina-world, better!" - *Jon Dehlen*
- 01 Aug "Sinking into the mud is really fascinating!Something we don't do in Holland.
Our boat 'Dream Time' really had a dream time in Rye" - *M and M (Amsterdam)*
- 02 Aug "Splendid bathroom and a beautiful toilet. I love the plants in the WC!
(Are they real?) A lovely town, we decided to stay here for an extra day!
Tomorrow we'll go to the fishmarket. Very quiet and peaceful.
Thanks, till next time" - *Gandalf*
- 03 Aug "Beautiful town, spotless showers - a credit to Rye." - *Creag Dubh*
- 07 Aug "What a surprise! Perfect showers are dying out. Lovely area.
Life is wonderful and we (sixties) are happy to be here" - *Pandion*
- 10 Aug "Absolutely delightful - both the town but most particularly the showers and the toilets. Not what we expected! Thank you very much." - *Jodi*
- 20 Aug "Thank-you — super facilities for the whole family" - *Saucy Minky*
- 28 Aug "Not easy to find by night, but the place is worth it. Very beautiful." - *Goodlife*
- 28 Aug "Great facilities, really appreciate them, scope and cleanliness" - *Victoria Rose*
- 28 Aug "We had a nice shower in this beautiful harbour. Nice to be here!" - *Baldyr*

So well done, Carl and John! If anybody deserves to be a Life Member of the Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association it's the person who looks after the visitors' showers on Rye's Strand Quay. Who does it?

Fishing News by Carl Bagwell

In towns so well situated for the fisheries of Rye Bay as Rye and Rye Harbour many of RHBOA's members should come from the fishing community. Once upon a time they did. But not any more. Nowadays the only trawlerman to be found in RHBOA's Members Register is Bloggsie's old first mate Bob Haste...they sailed together for years on 'Akela', now owned and worked by Mick Caister. Why no fishermen? Surely we have a broad range of shared interests?

As the first step in winning back the fishermen we are syndicating the fishing news in Carl Bagwell's Harbour of Rye Newsletter. With this issue of the magazine we have gone one stage further and devoted a supplement to fishing...to inform our own members. Included in the supplement are several pieces from the pen of Sebastian Junger...the original inspiration for this year's blockbuster film 'The Perfect Storm'.

Refurbishment of the fish market is progressing well. The fishermen's representatives...Ronny Simmons and Bob Fenton...have viewed the initial design drawings and suggested some minor adjustments to the staging. The final plan will be to have individual staging with larger mooring stage 'heads'. The whole area is to rise by about a metre to bring the entire market area above the highest expected tide levels, taking into account the 6mm rise per year due to natural sinking of the south-east, and the rise in ocean levels as a result of melting ice caps.

You may be led to believe that English fishermen are the worst for cheating quotas and fish sizes, but you would be wrong. The EU commission has stepped up moves against France for allowing its fishermen to land undersize fish. A formal complaint, known as a 'Reasoned Opinion' in Euro speak, has been sent to France identifying the non-compliance with control measures concerning landing small fish, mainly hake. France has two months to respond.

RHBOA Fishing Supplement



Local Anarchists
Boston Sprats
Fishermen Join Blockade
Fishing for Profit
Fishing Regulations in New England
Gunboats & Private Property
Rogues & Options
Breaching Rules
Paying The Price

A new vessel, the 'An Capell Ban', is to be engaged in long line fishing and I mean long line. The ship will trail a 43 kilometre, 9 mm rope, with 35,000 No. 12 hooks attached. This line is stored in 15 drums each 4 metres high. Automatic baiting is provided that will ensure every hook has a piece of squid screwed to it.

Fishing News (continued)

Those of you who showed an interest in the fish and chip statistics will enjoy more figures issued by 'Tesco's' and other bodies. In the Year to February 2000 a total of 335.8 million fish meals were served (370.6 million if you include workplace meals). Cod accounted for 42% of the total. Fish account for 16% of the number of main protein meals purchased. Shell fish account for 14% of all fish purchases from food service outlets with scampi and prawns dominating.



Rye's 'First Auction' Catch Values

1995 - £ 849,940; 1996 - £ 971,049; 1997 - £ 928,551; 1998- £1,000,711
early indications suggest the 1998 trend continued in 1999 and 2000

The general public account for the greatest purchase of shell fish while hotels purchase the greatest proportion of fresh fish. 47.4 million 'starters' including shellfish, and 11.4 million 'starters' including other fish, were eaten. Fish and Chip shops account for the greatest volume of fish in the food service market with a consistent share of around 30%.

*Going to sea has the advantages of suicide
without any of its inconvenience.*

William McFee

I was interested in the news item that well known local fisherman Jimper Sutton had caught a rare 'Bonito Tuna' Fish. The fish, caught in a keddle net, weighed 4lbs and was 20 inches long. (*Jimper is a regular columnist for 'Rye's Own'. Editor*)

This article first appeared in the Harbour of Rye Newsletter No.3 in November 2000

Running The French Blockade by Ron Warburton

For boat owners moored on the mud of Rye a trip to Boulogne is usually a straight forward voyage. It's about 36 nautical miles from mooring to mooring and if you time it about right you can sail on the rhumb line allowing the tides to push you East and then West, generally putting the boat right on the harbour entrance.



That is what we did on the day after the August bank holiday, a date purposely chosen with a view to missing the week-end rush. We arrived there in good time and sure enough visitors moorings were available to take my boat 'Wake'...a 1963 28' clinker Peregrine...and Bill Bridges' 1966 G.R.P. 26' Folk boat 'Suama'.

Our plan was for myself and my crew, another RHBOA member, Tom Collinson, to stay in Boulogne the following day, Wednesday, and set off back to Rye on Thursday early enough to allow for enough water to put us back on to our mud berths up in the town.

After a meal ashore on Tuesday evening and a trip round the shops on Wednesday we returned to the marina in a reasonably good relaxed mood, that is up to the time when we found that the port had been blockaded and we were imprisoned in the harbour.

We walked around the harbour to see what was going on. About ten or eleven trawlers were rafted out from the east side and a steel cable could be seen entering the water off the last vessel, emerging from the other side of the gap attached to the three or four fishing boats on the other side.

There were plenty of bemused onlookers and we learned that it was a protest over the cost of fuel. 'The cost of fuel?!' We looked at each other and almost laughed. We come over here in our cars because the petrol and diesel is so cheap. It's rare that anyone returns without a full tank.

There was little we could do except return to our boats and discuss what we could expect. In about three days time the tides would make it impossible to get on to our Rye moorings and worsening weather was expected so we really did not want to be delayed too long beyond our plans.

Thursday came and we were up and about reasonably early. There were still red lights showing, so the problem was still with us. We thought the best thing to do was to make the boats ready for sea in case there was an early change in the situation.

Blockade (continued)

Whilst we were carrying out these preparatory tasks a Dutchman named Anton came to tell us that there was to be a meeting of the visiting boat owners and crews and would we care to be included. Anton actually had left Rye at the same time as we did on his way back to Holland. His was one of about six Dutch vessels and there were another four Belgian boats wishing to leave that day. Our boats were the only two English in the marina but there were others at anchor in the outer harbour unable to gain entrance.

The contingent made their way up to the Yacht Club area and introduced themselves. We discussed the situation and decided that rather than confront the fishermen by sailing up to them it would be more civilised to organise a meeting with them on their trawlers. This was set up and we all, about twenty five of us, walked around the harbour as the four of us had done the day before.

Some of the Dutch and Belgian owners went aboard and crossed boat by boat until they reached the vessel where the skipper representing them was in radio contact with M. D'Arcy Court the gentleman negotiating with the French Government in Paris.

The point was put that we were no threat to them and we needed to leave now. Some of us had difficult voyages ahead and we would be sailing in the dark which we had not intended to do...there was also a deteriorating weather forecast. We did not get anywhere and came away disappointed. All we could do was sit tight and check over navigation alternatives.



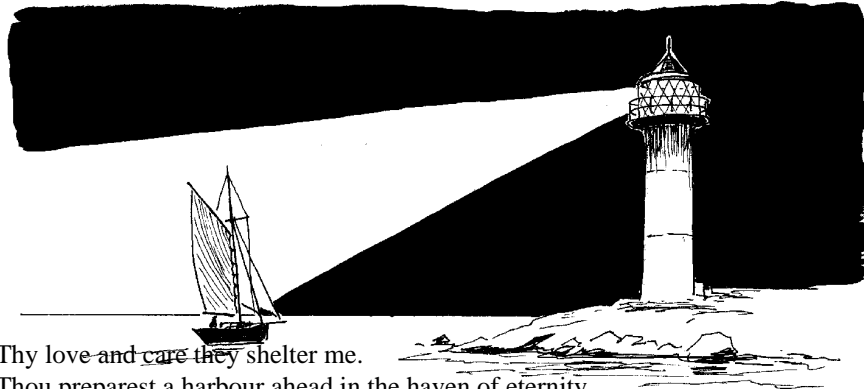
After about a couple of hours word got round that it was all over and sure enough the green lights were showing. Because we were all ready to go, in no time at all the boats were leaving the berths and making for the gap in the harbour entrance.

However it was not going to be that easy because as the quicker boats neared the trawlers they were faced with an irate skipper screaming and shouting and manouevring his boat to close the gap. He was waving his arms about signalling that we should go back and all the moored vessels were sounding their sirens.

We all circled round and approached in turn from different directions while the trawler moved back and forth to prevent our exit. One of the Belgian boats was a modern motor cruiser and she nosed right up to the trawler. It was twenty minutes of cat and mouse games as we stood still or manoeuvred. Eventually the trawler moved off station and we found later that he was picking up the end of the steel hawser.

Sailor's 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my Pilot, I shall not drift. He lighteth me across the darkest waters.
In the deepest channels He steereth me. He keepeth my log.
He guideth me by the Star of Holiness for His Name's sake.
Yea tho' I sail midst the thunders and tempests of life
I will fear no danger for Thou art with me.



Thy love and care they shelter me.
Thou preparest a harbour ahead in the haven of eternity.
Thou anointest the waves with oil. My boat rideth calmly.
Surely sunlight and starlight shall favour me
On all the voyages I take
And I will rest in the port of my God forever.

Amen

Monitored by Guy Willson

French Blockade by Ron Warburton (continued)

The motor cruiser leapt for the opening like a formula one racing car and we all followed before the trawler could move astern. My old boat got through and there were three behind me as I glanced astern to see the trawler pulling the cable across the gap. I remember thinking as I saw the motor cruiser well ahead of us that he would probably be off Ostende by the time I reached the end of the outer harbour.

It had certainly been an experience. We had not only witnessed the violation of centuries of maritime law with regard to putting vessels in danger but the burning of tyres in the streets causing black smoke and pollution was surely breaking modern E.C. regulations while the Police and Fire Crews stood by watching...as did the Harbour Authority.

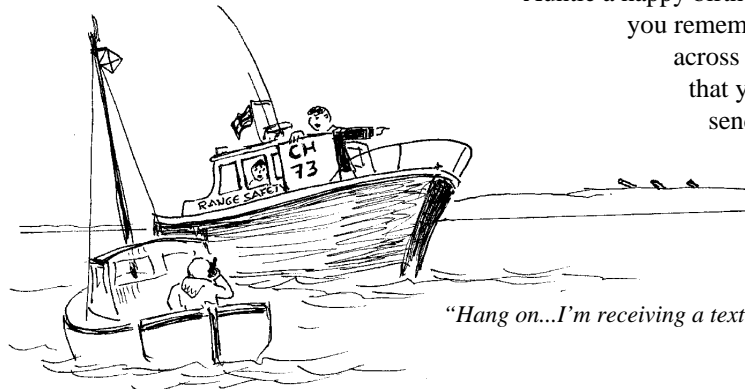
However we had a good passage back to Rye although the barometer dropped rapidly and we had to enter the river Rother in the early hours of the morning in uncomfortable seas. We were safe and the lesson we learned for future voyages was that the Fishermen rule the town of Boulogne.

Radio Mobility by John Sivier

I used to inveigh in the *'RHBOA Newsletter'* against a tendency which began to creep in some years ago of boat owners not bothering to get officially kitted up with VHF and relying on mobile phones instead. These days I'm not so sure I would be quite so dogmatic. Mobile phones have almost unlimited range. Contacts on shore can easily be kept advised of your progress – or any hitches that may occur - and could relay your position to the Search and Rescue agencies should the worst happen.

Satellite phones are also far more convenient than VHF for crews of vessels sailing in company and are more reliable in the event of separation in poor visibility when line-of-sight contact fails. And there's the added bonus of being able to wish

Auntie a happy birthday if
you remember halfway
across the Channel
that you forgot to
send her a card.



"Hang on...I'm receiving a text message"

However the *'Maritime and Coastguard Agency'* are wary. Here is 'current policy'.

'Cellular phones appear to offer a low cost alternative to marine VHF. However, in a distress situation they have several significant weaknesses:

- The cellular network may offer poor coverage at sea;
- Only one number can be dialled (e.g. Coastguard), so other vessels close by will be unaware of the situation and therefore unable to offer assistance;
- If you are on the fringe of a cell, contact can be lost very easily;
- Lifeboats and helicopters are not equipped to obtain a bearing off cellular signals.

The *'Maritime & Coastguard Agency'* therefore strongly advises the carriage of a type-approved marine VHF radio as opposed to a cellular phone.'

A final word on radio communication in Rye Harbour. We are exhorted, rightly, to maintain watch on Channel 14...to be strictly restricted to matters of 'Port Operation' as I have been reminded on occasion. But on more trivial matters could we not communicate using one of the Channel M's? Most equipment these days has a dual watch capability. After all it is Rye's 'marina function' that provided most of the income for the splendidly equipped harbour office, the harbour and pilot launches and all the other port control facilities.

Carl's Corner

Shipping continues to arrive at the Rye Wharf with imports of roadstone from North Wales and Falmouth. And for the first time in nearly ten years pink granite has arrived in Rye from Port Barrier in France. Before 1990 few ships carried more than 600 tons of cargo coming into Rye. But on one day this summer some 2600 tons of stone was discharged at the wharf from the 'Sea Kestrel' and 'Dowlais'. Bow thrusters means that modern vessels up to 82 metres in length can achieve fast turnarounds and avoid delays.

Our first lady captain arrived in Rye during the first week of May in command of the vessel 'Waterway'. She was pictured on the front page of the local paper alongside the Rye Harbour Pilot, Steve Kemp. Captain Esther Lagendijk delivered 1400 tons of stone to Rye with the help of four Polish seamen. Another 'first' for the fairer sex was across the Channel on the River Seine where Captain Catherine Cornu has become a pilot ten years after winning her master's ticket. How soon before we have a female seafarer applying for the pilot job in Rye?

There are 20 'tyre mountains' in the UK and recently I was asked whether we would like the 21st here in Rye on land adjacent to the river for storage prior to shipping abroad for use in the building trade. Car tyres do not biodegrade so each year in the UK 40 million of them...equivalent to 468 000 tons...have to be disposed of. Because of the cost involved, many end up being illegally dumped. And after 2006 (EU Directive) even the 10 million legally dumped tyres will no longer be allowed in landfill sites around the country. Unfortunately car tyres are very prone to catch fire and tyre fires are difficult to put out. In North Powys, for instance, a tyre fire started in 1989 is still burning!



The continuing saga on the River Orwell has come to a head recently. The courts have now told 'Ipswich Borough Council' that their levy on boat owners on swinging moorings in the river is illegal. The river authority is the 'Ipswich Port Authority' who correctly charge a mooring fee for a license to moor. Still to be determined is whether the council will refund the illegal charges to the 400 boat owners concerned...and whether the refund will be backdated nine years.

When the Pilot cutter 'Aries' was out of commission, the 'Environment Agency' borrowed the 'Sea Ranger' based in the Solent, powered by two water jets with a nozzle diameter of 0.2 metres. This compares with the largest waterjet engine in the world used to drive a transatlantic cargo ship at 40 knots. Her nozzle diameter is sixteen times this at 3.25 metres (nearly 10 feet!)

Carl's Corner (continued)

The September spring tides brought with them many reports of sheep stranded within the flood wall on the east salts middle channel. Usually sheep are moved out of these areas ahead of the high tides but on this occasion they were left stranded on the few remaining little islands of high ground. So it was Deputy Harbour Master to the rescue.

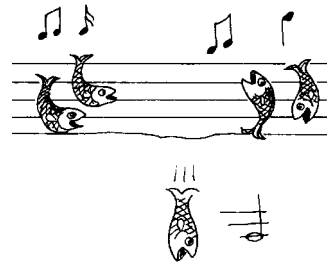


John Thomson boarded the harbour launch 'Rother III' and proceeded to round up the sheep as they floated free of their moorings. He managed to shepherd most of them to safety beyond the flood bank but four sheep stubbornly refused to be saved. These drifted down tide for a while until they ended up on the west bank opposite the pumping station none the worse for their ordeal. All in a day's work.

Laying- Up Supper

A good turn-out once again. Martin Carter did us proud with a fine selection of wine from the Boat Owners' wine cellar. Stuart catered effortlessly for the assembled company...or so it seemed.

Dennis Davies provided the entertainment with a fine performance of the art of modern dancing...previously known as 'the jive'. To have performed these to melodies made famous in the Kaiser War only went to reinforce the view that in Rye anything goes and all things are possible.



Our two young musicians...who may have seen action in that same war...ate well and gave our Youth Section a fine example of another ancient traditional art, known in Yiddish as 'chutzpah'. But everybody had a jolly good time. 'Gallant Maid' managed a clean sweep of the raffle prizes. And lo and behold Peter Davison and Carl Bagwell enjoyed a splendid evening in one another's company...and Stuart assures us we even made a small profit.

The Harbour of Fowey by Arthur Quiller-Couch *monitored by Alec Bradley*

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 The Harbour of Fowey Is a beautiful spot, And it 's there I enjoyey To sail in a yot; Or to race in a yacht Round a mark or a buoy - Such a beautiful spacht Is the Harbour of Fuoy! | 2 When her anchor is weighed And the water she ploughs, Upon neat lemoneighed O it's then I caroughs; And I take Watts's hymns And I sing them aloud When it 's homeward she skymns |
| 3 But the wave mountain-high, And the violent storm, Do I risk them? Not Igh! But prefer to sit worm With a book on my knees By the library fire, While I list to the breees | 4 And so, whether I weigh Up the anchor or not, I am happy each deigh In my home or my yot; Every care I resign, Every comfort enjoy, In this cottage of mign |
| 5 And my leisure 's addressed To composing of verse Which, if hardly the besseed, Might be easily werse. And, the spelling I use Should the critics condemn, Why, I have my own vuse | 6 Yes, I have my own views: But the teachers I follow Are the Lyrical Miewes And the Deiphic Apollow. Unto them I am debtor For spelling and rhyme, And I 'm doing it bebtor |

Extracted from 'Q Anthology'; a selection from the prose and verse of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (J.M.Dent, London, 1948)

Spellbound - microsoftly

monitored by Carl Bagwell

| | |
|---|--|
| Eye halve a spelling chequer It came with my pea sea It plainly marques four my revue Miss steaks eye kin knot sea Eye strike a key and type a word And weight four it too say Weather eye am wrong oar write It shows me strait a weigh | As soon as a mist ache is maid It nose bee fore two long And eye can put the error rite Its rare lea ever wrong Eye have run this poem threw it I am shore your pleased two no Its letter perfect awl the weigh My chequer tolled me sew. |
|---|--|

My spell checker rejected 'chequer' but approved all the rest...although the Deputy Magazine Editor (something of a Smart Alec) explained that this was because it was set for 'American English'...and that 'chequer' actually has 'an honourable English pedigree - cf Collins, Chambers, Shorter Oxford etc.' Well now you know. Editor.

Sivier's Soundings

What a good Olympics the Brits had. More medals than for many a year. We did particularly well in sailing and rowing which prompts the thought that these water-borne events probably represent a unique evolution...from trade and leisure activity to highly competitive international quest for glory; from tea-clippers and the America's Cup, through Jerome K. Jerome's *'Three Men in a Boat'* and Joshua Slocum to the Sydney 2000 trials of sailing skills and rowing endurance.

The media like to tell us that our boating success at the *'Sydney Olympics'* can be traced back to Steve Redgrave...and *'National Lottery'* funding. But I'm not so sure. Here's a †tale of a rowing competition more than half a century ago, when the *'Amateur Rowing Association of Great Britain'* ruled the roost. It's about an American bricklayer by the name of John B. Kelly.

John B. was mad keen on rowing and developed a burning ambition to compete in the Diamond Sculls at the 1920 *'Henley Regatta'*. His entry application was rejected and he was never told why, but one suspects that the *'A.R.A'* took a poor view of his profession of brick-laying feeling this must cast doubt upon his amateur status...all those muscles developed at, and paid for, on building sites! Perhaps worse, he was also a member of *'Vesper'*, an American rowing club which welcomed recruits from all walks of life but had been banned from Henley 15 years previously allegedly for making illegal payments. Needless to say Old John B got his own back...with a vengeance. In 1920 he beat the Henley Diamonds winner, Jack Beresford, in the *'Amsterdam Olympics'* later the same year. Then, with his cousin Paul Costello, he went on to win gold in the double sculls...retaining their title four years later in the 1924 *'French Olympics'*.

A quarter of a century later it was the turn of John B. Kelly's son, Jack Jnr. In 1947, like his father before him, he applied to enter the Henley Diamond Sculls. By this time the Kelly family were more acceptable to the powers of the rowing world. The Kellys had realised the American Dream and were the proud owners of a prosperous building firm high enough up the social ladder to send young Jack to the *'University of Pennsylvania'*. It was the *'PennU Rowing Club'* that had sponsored him in the prestigious event which he duly won. Incidentally Old John B's eldest daughter, Grace, did quite well for herself. She became famous on the silver screen...and ended up marrying Prince Rainier of Monaco.

Watch out for a TV programme about *'The Martello Towers'* on BBC's History Channel on Boxing Day. Featured is my old *'Customs & Excise'* friend, John Page, whose boss just happens to be Tom Collinson...see *page 10*. Otherwise more *'Sivier's Soundings'* on the web including what I had to say to last year's *'RYA Harbour of Rye Review'* and some more recent thoughts on harbour projects in general and the Admiralty Jetty in particular...www.rhboa.co.uk is the place to go.

†adapted from a piece by Nick Mason in *Guardian Sports* on Friday 29th October 2000

The Flourishing Port of Rye by John Seymour

Ship Building in Rye

Rye was a flourishing port in the nineteenth century. At the beginning of that century there were several fast forty-ton sloops sailing a regular packet service to London besides a small fleet of larger vessels. We know, for example, that the brig 'William', 108 tons, built Rye 1815, master Captain Samuel Vidler, crossed to New York with a load of emigrants in seventy-one days. This brig was eventually lost off Holy Island, Northumberland, in December, 1851.

In 1865 there were fifty-six merchant ships registered at Rye, although several of them were owned by people who lived at Hastings. Rye had become a considerable ship-building place. 'Hoad Brothers', 'Hessel and Holmes', 'Mills and Sons', 'G. and T. Smith', were all building ships or barges, and a traveller to Rye in 1855 saw seven ships a-building all between 200 and 300 tons.

Sailing Barges

The 'Smiths' built many sailing barges. For those who are not familiar with the East Coast, who might take this word 'barge' to mean a river barge, or confuse it with the 'narrow boat' or 'monkey boat' of the narrow canal system (the one with the roses and castles painted on it, which is not a barge at all but a boat), I may here explain that the East Coast sailing barge was one of the finest sea-going ships ever evolved.

Carrying from a hundred and thirty to over four hundred tons of cargo they traded all over the North Sea and English Channel and some of them even crossed the Atlantic under sail. They were only called 'barges' because they were flat-bottomed so they could get into shallow harbours such as Rye.

'Smiths' built the grand old boomie barge 'Martinet' that eventually foundered in Hollesley Bay in 1941 after having been shaken up by a German bomb. Captain 'Bob' Roberts wrote a fine description of her last hours in his book, 'The Last of the Sailormen'. He was her mate at the time. Rye was the most considerable barge port on the south coast. The spritty 'Olive May' was the last barge to be owned there.

Fruit Schooners

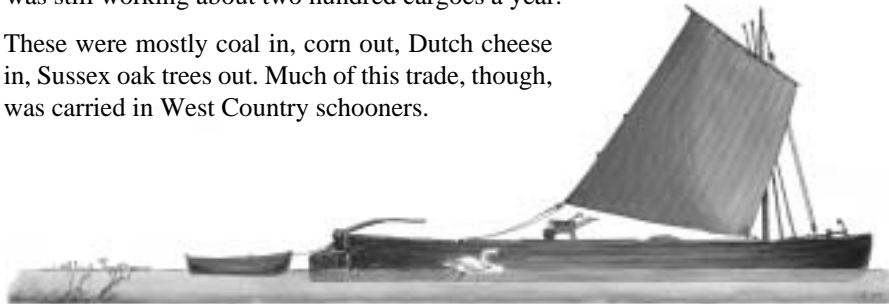
'Hessel and Holmes' built the 'Madeira Pet', a wine and fruit schooner of 83 tons, 97 feet long, 18 feet beam. She was launched by Don Miguel, Pretender to the throne of Portugal. In 1857, while in Guernsey ownership, she became the first ship ever to sail from Europe to Chicago. She sailed there from Liverpool, with 240 tons of cutlery, earthenware, paints, glassware and chinaware, and she loaded 4,000 cured cattle hides back, together with a barrel of cured whitefish as a present for Queen Victoria. Her arrival in Chicago, so far from the sea, caused great celebrations in that city. In the middle of the 19th century plenty of these fruiterers and wine carriers were owned in Rye. They were very fast schooners, driven hard by small crews of hard men.

The Flourishing Port of Rye - Fruit Schooners (continued)

Many a time a fruiterer has left London, reached the Downs at a time of south-west wind, sailed straight through the fleet of merchant shipping anchored there waiting for the wind to change, loaded in the Mediterranean, and sailed home to find the same ships still waiting in the Downs! These handy little schooners with their fore-and-aft rig, fine lines, and liveliness on the helm, could be driven against the wind like modern ocean-racing yachts. If steam had not come to knock them out - who knows how sailing ships might not have developed?

By the turn of the century, although far fewer ships were owned in Rye, the harbour was still working about two hundred cargoes a year.

These were mostly coal in, corn out, Dutch cheese in, Sussex oak trees out. Much of this trade, though, was carried in West Country schooners.



Rother Barges

Inland navigation from Rye was once important, and there was even a serious scheme, in about 1800, of joining with a canal the Rother and the Medway. This came to nothing, which was just as well, because experience has shown that canals joining two seaports, unless there is much traffic to be picked up on the way, could seldom compete with sea traffic.

But, as it was, Rye bargemen (we are talking about *river* bargemen now - not sea-going sailing vessels) could get up to Bodiam with twenty-seven tons. 'Vidler & Co.', the chief barge-owner, had a coal and ballast depot at Newenden. On the River Brede barges could get as far as Brede. On the 'Royal Military Canal' they could get as far as Hythe. And Appledore and Tenterden were both ports.

In living memory there were twenty barges working the Rye system of inland navigations. An important trade was going down to the mouth of the Rother and loading shingle (or '*beach*' as it was called) to take to places up-stream.

The Flourishing Port of Rye -Rother Barges (continued)

Two men could load twenty-five tons in the five hours of lowest tide. Some of this was put aboard sea-going ships or barges for places as far away as Scotland. Coal loaded from ships to take up-country was another important trade, much of it to go to fire the hop kilns.

The barges were about fifty feet long, and they set either a spritsail or a gunter-lug sail - the latter in local parlance called a *monk*. Like Norfolk wherries these barges could sail themselves off a lee bank. The mast was mounted in a tabernacle and could be dropped easily for shooting bridges. Horses were not used, but much bow-hauling was done by the men themselves, or the barges were poled along by thirty-foot quants.

In fine weather the Vidler barges would sometimes even venture out to sea (as the Broads wherries indeed sometimes did) and they would load sandstone at Fairlight. The Rye bargemen were a race apart. But as the years went on, and motor lorries became the curse they are to-day, the young men would not take to the barges.

Boulder Boats

Another local trade was carried out by what were known as the '*boulder boats*'. There were about forty of these, each perhaps 30 feet long, lug-rigged, and they all went herring drifting every autumn. But the rest of the year they sailed down to the 'main' (the open sea) and laid themselves alongside the open beaches to load 'blue boulders' or flints. These they sailed back to Rye Harbour and loaded into schooners or ketches that carried most of them to Runcorn, in Cheshire, for transhipment into narrow boats to be carried to the potteries on the Trent and Mersey Canal. There they were ground up as a constituent of pottery.

Mr Harry Phillips told me that they never used to clench the roves (rivets) of these boats. Unclenched the roves could 'draw' a little, allowing the planks to give a little when the boats were being bashed by the surf when heavily loaded with boulders. If they clenched them the roves would break or drag out of the wood and the boat would come to pieces.

Rye Navigations

As for the care of the Rye navigations in recent years, the authorities have done one half of their job well - to drain the marshes. But the other, equally important, part of their duties they have failed lamentably in: to keep open the navigations.

But public pressure is mounting to force them to do this part of their job and the day may come - why not? - when we shall see vessels sailing from Rye to Hythe again - and up to Bodiam.

For more information on the Rye River Barges visit the RHBOA website (www.rhboa.co.uk) and download a copy of 'The Rye River Barges' by Leopold A. Vidler. Rye Public Library also has a copy of this excellent 40-page pamphlet.



**RYE HARBOUR BOAT OWNERS
ASSOCIATION**

Membership Acknowledgement

*Information about RHBOA members is held in a computer database.
To review your personal details request a copy of your file from the address below.*

ASSOCIATION



ASSOCIATION

Dear

Thank you for joining the Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association. The RHBOA newsletter comes out four times a year in February, May, August and November. Enclosed is a copy of the most recent issue. Please do not hesitate to contact one of the committee is you have any questions.

RHBOA Officers

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| Acting Secretary | John Morgan | 01233 627594 |
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Peter Etherden
Magazine Editor

** Member of HORAC*

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you can also find us at
www.rhboa.co.uk



We are trying to smarten up our act. One of the ways is by acknowledging new members. And we also try to arrange for an existing member to pop in to say 'hello and welcome'. Little things, but they matter.

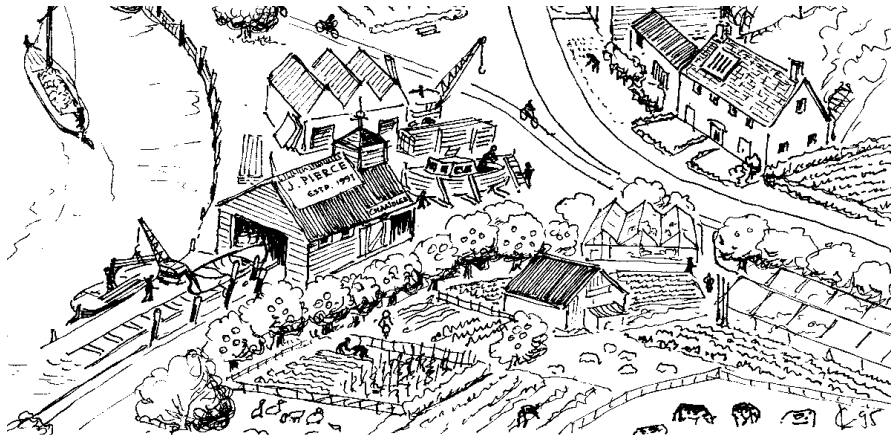


Traders Passage

*For a mention in Traders Passage, send details to
P.O. Box 36, Rye TN31 7ZE; Tel: 226397.
RHBOA endorsements are not given lightly.*

Six months ago, we were being approached by boat owners several times a month for information about reliable local tradesmen willing and able to carry out or supply maritime goods and services. The purpose of the 'RHBOA Traders Passage' column in the May 2000 Issue was to unearth these local traders as the first step towards compiling a 'Local Maritime Yellow Pages'...itself a step on the way to our own 'RHBOA Traders Charter Mark'.

Six months (and two issues of the magazine) later we seem as far away as ever from where we want to be...and meanwhile the problem seems to be getting worse. So we're changing tack. The plan now is to identify a specific boatowner problem...and enlist the help of RHBOA's members in finding a solution. In practice this will mean presenting a 'boat problem' in each issue and inviting members to respond with their answers to our three RHBOA questions.



Questions for RHBOA Members

- Do you have any recent personal experience (good or bad) of a similar problem.
- Can you recommend somebody willing and able to meet our members' needs.

Where there is a chronic lack of local competence to meet our membership needs a third question will be asked:

- Do you know any young (or old) person who would jump at the chance of setting themselves up in business?

Jobs from RHBOA's members with work to be done; training from RHBOA members with skills to pass on...We could go over to Holland or France or take our boats over to Dover. But wouldn't it be smarter to breed our own Rye Maritime Trading and Engineering Entrepreneurs?

New Kid on The Block

Introducing John Morgan

John Morgan is RHBOA's Acting Secretary. One of his jobs is to write the committee minutes...and Peter Davison is not an easy act to follow. Another is to get the committee to stick to the rules laid down 40 years ago.

John Morgan lives in Ashford and has his own business repairing garden machinery. Inland waters are his forte with many years of inland boating behind him. John holds a Boatmaster's Licence for the Rother and the Medway and has been working part time for Mike Berry's 'Bodiam Ferry Company'. He is also very much involved with the 'Kingfisher Project' which gives day trips for handicapped and disabled people on the Medway...see RHBOA Newsletter Number 91.

John is a Trustee of the 'Council For Voluntary Service' covering Ashford, Folkestone, Dover and Maidstone. For twenty five years John has been Secretary for the 'Kent and East Sussex Branch of the Inland Waterways Association' and is now a well-respected lecturer on our inland waterways.

John tells us he has been many things in his time...farm worker, RAF police dog handler, factory foreman, lorry driver, sergeant in the special constabulary, security officer, Home and Water Safety Officer for 'Ashford Borough Council' and undoubtedly a few more besides.

and re-introducing John Sivier

We are very pleased that John Sivier is joining RHBOA Magazine regularly both as a columnist with his 'Sivier's Soundings' and on our website with his own corner. John brings with him 25 years of Rye Boat Owners knowledge and experience.

John Sivier arrived in Rye in 1975 and has been a berth holder here for the past 25 years. In 1976 John joined the 'Royal Yachting Association' and soon got to know Dusty Miller, then Chairman of the 'Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association'. Before many a summer was out there were regular sightings of Dusty's 'Resolute' and John & Marian's 'Sandpiper' up and down both sides of the English Channel.

In 1978 John was appointed as a 'Deputy' for the three RYA members on the 'Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee (HORAC)', a post he held for 15 years. In 1980 John took on the job of Secretary of the 'Rye Harbour Boat Owners Association' and the following year combined this with the Magazine Editor job. John was responsible for issues number 20 to 76 of the newsletter. As this is Number 92 this means that well over half of RHBOA's newsletters have come off John's editorial desk. Quite an achievement...and quite an archive that we have our eye on.

From 1992 to 1995 John sat on HORAC in his own right as the RYA's South East region nominee. John went into a well-earned...hard-fought?...retreat from association business in 1995. It's good to have him back to liven up proceedings and bring a little dose of sanity into RHBOA's affairs.

The Fairlee Mutiny by J. Peter Jobling

So there can be no confusion, it should be pointed out that at the time of the mutiny the Association's President was not President and would not become so for a good many more years. Was the mutiny justified? I will let you be the judge for I was involved in the mutiny and can hardly be judge and jury at my own court martial.

Rye has, and has had, many lovely wooden boats in her time. The boat, upon which the mutiny took place, was one of these. 'Camper and Nicholson' had built her in Gosport, just after the Second World War. She had been built to race and was the epitome of the designers' art of attempting to overcome the elements, the technology and the racing rules of the time.

She had huge overhangs, both fore and aft. Her beam was almost a plank on edge. She was deep drafted and probably had more lead in her keel than most plumbers would normally see in a lifetime. And she was teak on oak. Her most revolutionary feature was her rig. She was fractional, Bermudan rigged. But the height of her wooden mast would not have discredited a Yankee Clipper.

Conversely, the length of her boom appeared to be only fractionally longer than that of any self-respecting toothpick. Her number one headsail came back well beyond the end of the boom and her number two was not far short. She had running backstays with 'Highfield' levers. To say that she had a 'high aspect rig' would be far from exaggerating the truth! But she had crossed the Atlantic twice in both directions.

The owner/skipper had an obsession with chafe and the preventing of it. So I spent many, many hours making up 'baggy-wrinkle' and serving it around various parts of the rigging...one yard of baggy-wrinkle serves one foot of rigging. With this in mind, I shall call the boat 'Baggy-Wrinkles' in order to protect the innocent.

The day of the mutiny had dawned fine and warm, with light easterly winds. The weather forecast predicted east to southeast winds, force 2 or 3...part of a settled period of weather. It was decided that today 'Baggy-Wrinkles' should go to sea.

One of the problems 'Baggy-Wrinkles' had with Rye was that, because of her deep draft, she could only 'get out' on spring tides and it was very difficult for her to 'get back in' on the same tide. The skipper's prudence, at the time, dictated that if she 'went out' she had to 'be out' for the twelve hours. It was not easy then to get the tide, the weather, and the crew all together at the same time. As a consequence 'Baggy-Wrinkles' put to sea less frequently than she might have liked.

On the day of the mutiny all these things had come together. The crew consisted of the skipper, a male relative of the skipper, a much younger than now Dennis Davies...but then we were all much younger than now! (Except my wife of course), myself, Liz, my wife and Steven, my elder son. 'Baggy-Wrinkles' made her way down the Rother under blue skies, warm sunshine, and a gentle easterly breeze.

The Fairlee Mutiny (continued)

Once clear of the entrance, the spinnaker was hoisted, the 'Walker's' patent log streamed, and we headed west, keeping close into the shore. I think the skipper wanted to show off his pride and joy to as many people as possible. She must have looked a brave sight under her huge spinnaker and sky-raking mainsail.

We kept close into Fairlight and very close to the rocks off Hastings. We almost kept too close to the end of Hastings pier. I am sure the fishermen who were fishing of the end of the pier had no doubt that we were far too close! It takes time to carry out the procedure needed to haul in a trailing log and I was a bit slow in recognizing the danger.



Christmas Quiz
Which three letters added to RHBOA give you eight bottles of champagne?

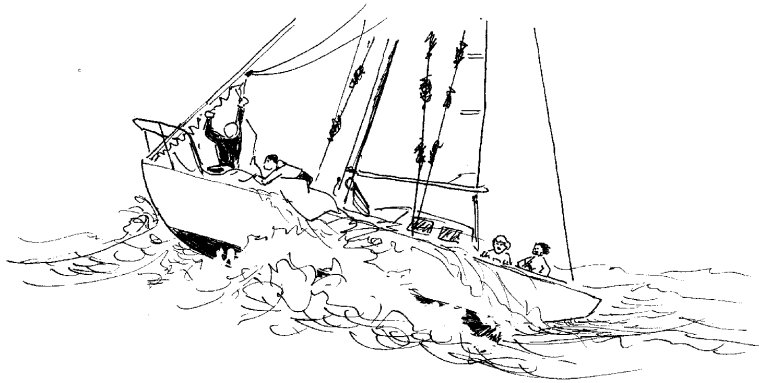


I suspect we caught more fishermen than those fishermen caught fish that day. Either that or there would be some unusual stories about the 'one that got away'. I don't think the reaction the skipper got from the end of the pier was quite the one that he had intended. We sailed on past St. Leonard's, Galley Hill, Bexhill, Cooden, and into Pevensey Bay. The sun shone, a following wind blew, the sea was calm, the tea, the beer and the food came up regularly; the spinnaker flew without attention. In short, it was a perfect sailing day.

However, I had been keeping the log and noted a sudden drop in the barometer of twelve millibars (about one third of an inch) in an hour. I was told that I had probably misread the original reading and that the barometer had fallen only two millibars. I was inclined to agree. It was decided that we should sail out to the 'Royal Sovereign Lighthouse' and use that as a turning point for home. We did so and were rewarded with a wave from the lighthouse keeper. At least I think it was a wave?

The Fairlee Mutiny (continued)

I am always taken unawares by the apparent increase in wind when one rounds up from a run to being close-hauled. Rounding the 'Sovereign' light was no exception. Our leisurely sail down would have to be paid for by a five or six hours beat back to Rye. With the number one Genoa set, 'Baggy-Wrinkles' put her shoulder to the task with a will. Even allowing for the boat being now close-hauled, I felt sure there was quite a bit more wind than when we started out. The wind strength I thought was about force four or five and 'Baggy-Wrinkles' was pretty well heeled over. It was at about this time that we all noticed that the weather was looking very black to the east...in my own dialect 'It looked black over our Bill's mother's'. 'Don't worry,' said the skipper, 'You don't need to reef this boat until it is blowing a good eight!'



The wind gradually increased, as we made a board towards Normans Bay and Cooden, and the lee rail went under more and more frequently. As the wind increased, not unnaturally, so did the sea. 'Baggy-Wrinkles' had an interesting way of dealing with steep seas. She did not lift over them but, with her weight, smashed her way straight through them. This 'lazy motion', as I have heard it called, may give a more comfortable ride below but on deck it makes for a very wet boat with water being thrown everywhere. Very soon indeed the windward scuppers were running with water as freely as the lee deck's. The crew sought what shelter they could.

On the next tack, a port tack out to sea, Liz decided that she would go and try and produce something hot to eat. By now the lee rail was spending more time below the water than above. Also the noise was increasing markedly. It was probably about this time that Dennis suggested, for the first time, that a reduction in sail might be judicious. The skipper dismissed the very idea. It had become quite dark due both to the threatening clouds and the setting sun. Dark enough for even Dennis to comment upon it. However, it was pointed out to him that he was still wearing his sunglasses. With the removal of these, I think the world took on a slightly brighter aspect for Dennis, if not for the rest of us.

The Fairlee Mutiny (continued)

The hot food arrived in due course. It consisted of reconstituted mashed potato, corned beef, and tinned peas. Not perhaps a banquet, even at sea, but it had the advantage that to eat it, all that was required was one fork and one plate each. Most people eat theirs...all except poor Steven. He had been helming and had therefore had to wait for his. He was just finding himself somewhere comfortable to sit and eat it when an extra large dollop of the wet stuff came aboard. It cleaned his plate as effectively as any of the best dishwashers. Even today, the fact that he lost his dinner that day still rankles with him.

On the next tack in, towards Hastings and Fairlight, Liz went below to do something in the galley. I don't know if he heard her calling or if there is something in the 'blood is thicker than water' stuff but Steven went below to find his mother. He found her pinned up against the cabin wall by a drawer, full of heavy tools. The boat was very well heeled over so that the drawer had broken free and trapped her by her legs. She had not been strong enough to push it back in order to escape. In fact mother and son together had difficulty effecting an eventual release.

On deck matters went from bad to worse. The wind continued to increase and the seas got still bigger. The boat was becoming difficult to handle. She was developing more and more lee helm and going nowhere. Still the skipper would not be prevailed upon to reef. Eventually the boat had full lee helm with the rudder hard up against its stops. The situation, in my opinion, was now most dangerous!

Dennis suddenly disappeared below and reappeared with a sail bag. 'Come with me,' he shouted above the noise of the wind. Somewhere off Fairlight the mutiny had begun. The skipper made not the slightest protest! Perhaps he was '*hors de combat*'?

Dennis and I dragged the sail, in its sail bag, on to the foredeck. Between us we hanked the new sail on. It was difficult to know where boat finished and sea began. Even timing your breathing was not easy unless you had your back to the sea. Eventually Dennis was able to lower the Genoa whilst I attempted to douse it and then we both struggled to fix it along the rail. The pair of us then hoisted and sheeted in what I think may have been the working jib.

The difference it made was something only those there could believe. The boat was more upright and docile. Only a little spray found its way onto the foredeck. Even the noise of the wind and the sea seemed less. The mutiny was over.

It needed two more tacks before we made the entrance tripod but these were relatively comfortable. We entered Rye in the dark and moored up at the top of the tide just as the clouds started to clear.

There was no clapping in irons, no keelhauling, no flogging round the fleet, and nobody was cast adrift in an open boat. In fact it was agreed by all, as we licked our wounds, that it had been a great day's sailing and that we should all do it again.

Resurrection by Guy Willson

Up and down the country lurking in the creeks and ditches are the forgotten dreams of would-be boaters. Often with children grown-up and priorities lapsed into house care, East Enders, lawn and roses, the little boat...once their prized possession ...fades into forgotten memory. Her mast and rig gather mildew and are thrown on the council tip as a final parting gesture to the obligations of her upkeep. All that remains are the memories of forgotten summers when friends popped round and the albums were opened. Crackling sails, laughing children and the musical lap of water under clinker lands.



Meanwhile a pretty clinker dinghy is left collecting leaves and rainwater, filling until her gunwales are level with the lake. Varnish peels and slowly timber darkens before becoming waterlogged. Passers-by perceive the beauty of the neglected little boat at first...‘What a shame!’ Some almost plan a restoration job in their minds but it all becomes too much of an effort. The little boat slowly returns to the earth which bore her and all evidence of the craftsmen’s work disappears until finally only the copper nails and fastenings settled in the mud and weeds are all that testifies that she existed.

Though such is the case for thousands of vessels, small and great on Britain’s coastlines and lakesides, my story is of a little vessel left in a gravel pit known once for training youngsters to sail... ‘*Castle Water*’ on the Rye Harbour Road. Laying forlornly submerged with her bow and transom breaking the surface, the 16’ Scandinavian dinghy was scrap awaiting clearance. Rusted rigging wires supported a flimsy mast, two dead gulls, partly decomposed, floating amid the moss and bio-flotsam. Her sheerline and shape showed that her timber was still strong and worth a further inspection...plus family consultation.

Annual General Meeting
Sunday 25th February 2001 at 10.30 am
at Rye Harbour Village Hall

(a buffet lunch will be served after the meeting)

The association's rules require that RHBOA's six officers...President, Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Magazine Editor & Social Secretary retire at the AGM...although they are eligible for re-election. Proposals for officers or rule changes should reach one of the committee no later than:

Friday 2nd February 2001

so there's time to make sure they comply with RHBOA's rules.

Dennis Davies is standing for re-election as President but Peter Davison has decided not to seek a further year as Chairman. Stuart Pope is seeking re-election as Social Secretary and Peter Etherden as Magazine Editor.

Visit our website at 'www.rhboa.co.uk' closer to the AGM for up-to-date news.

Resurrection (continued)

A family 'moot' was held to weigh the matter and with little reservation, we decided to commit ourselves to restore her if we could get her for a song. Enquiries were made to find the original owners but all claims had evaporated and there was only a memory of some old anglers many years ago. The consensus of the local authorities was that she was salvage and we could remove her with their blessing.



With great glee therefore we descended on her with bucket and balers finally bringing her to actually float. A foul stench arose from the bottom from decaying vegetation with the last resistance made by three toads lurking under the stern sheets who were finally made to walk the plank. A local joiner, Chris-the-Coop (Chris Cooper) had kindly allowed us to do the work on his land on the salts behind Jempson's Yard with the condition that we 'kept at it' *...to be continued*

This article first appeared in 1992...when River Brede Moorings were run by Clive & Anne Wall. It is being published in two parts. Look for the next exciting installment in RHBOA Number 93 to be published in February 2001.

Rye Spectator

A new 'Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee' is in place for the next three years. 'RHBOA's' final score was two committee members and three ordinary members in the inner sanctum of our harbour affairs. Perhaps it will now be only 13 to 5 against moving 'HORAC' meetings to Rye. 'RHBOA' still hasn't got its own seat at the high table but there is always the 'deputy' route. Back in the good old days, John Sivier was nominated as Dusty Miller's deputy, eventually acting as a sort of dogsbody for any absentee 'RYA' member. Perhaps he would like his old job back?

It will be interesting to see what 'HORAC's' attitude will be to recording its meetings. The last time this came up was seven years ago when the chairman Roger Breeds wielded the casting vote...against. Not a tape recorder in sight since. The minutes of the 'HORAC' meeting of 7th July 1993 make interesting reading. For the record John Collard, John Sivier, Dusty Miller and John Royle voted in favour of recording meetings. Voting against were four 'from the council' with the rest abstaining. It's a strange idea this...secret public meetings. The next test of the quality of our local democracy will be closer at home....at 'RHBOA's' own AGM. You may yet read the minutes of your committee's deliberations on-line.

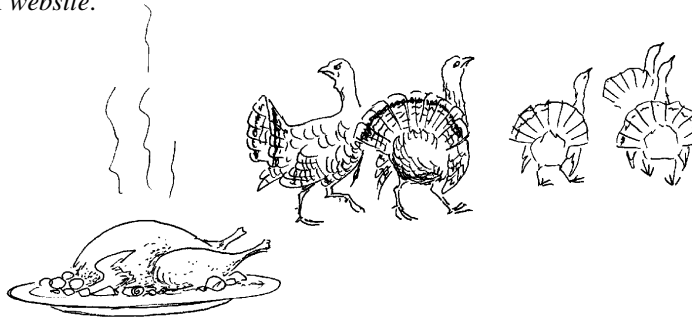
A recent 'Notice for Mariners' informed us that 'Westminster Dredging Company', fresh from their exploits off Felixstowe, are now operating off Sovereign Harbour with the hopper barges 'Frigg' and 'Rind' and the dredger 'Arco Bourne' in tow. Could this be the same 'Royal Boskalis Westminster Dredging Company' that featured prominently in 'Private Eye' at the beginning of September? ...*article on the RHBOA website*. And while on the subject of the wrong kind of dredging, who remembers ARC? The idea was to get a 70-metre dredger discharging its cargo and putting back out to sea over a tide. The end result? Next time you are down the Harbour Road treat yourself to a cheeseburger from outside the rusting yellow gates of 'Hanson's Wharf'.

The power of the press! No sooner has Carl raised the subject of mucky diapers in his 'Harbour of Rye Newsletter' than up pops the Swedish firm 'Naty' with the news that 'Sainsbury's' are stocking its 'Mother Nature says-Thank you' nappies. GM-free with twice as much 'renewableness' and half as much 'chemical and non-biodegradable super-absorbents'. Surely every flat-earthers dream? Not so. 'A disposable nappy whatever it's made of contributes to the world's waste problem.' Thus spoke the 'Women's Environmental Network' (www.wen.org.uk). Pity. I was hoping for free nappies as we sailed past the Harbour Master's Office.

Puzzled about the last sentence of the August Rye Spectator...about the Aral Sea and Paul Hilton? It gets worse before it gets better. It should have been junk-rigged. Anyway Rye expects great things from the new Editorial Director of the 'Daily Express'. Why not syndicate the Rye Spectator nationwide?

Rye Spectator (continued)

Gather together a few dozen turkeys and ask them what they want for Christmas dinner and low on the list will come...turkey. Pollsters are aware of this and take great care to get their samples right. This it seems is the real worry about 'The Environment Council' workshop at 'The George Hotel'. The key question for the orchestrators of the 'Five-Year Harbour of Rye Management Plan Development Strategy Process (FYHORMPDSP)' is who is representing what...and why. Mike Berry considers that leisure boat owners fought their corner pretty well and were fairly represented. John Sivier disagrees...and has spent some time trying to prove his case...*details on the RHBOA website.*



John Sivier has long argued that small leisure boat owners contribute three quarters of the harbour income and that grants in aid would never be needed if the commercial side didn't run at a heavy loss. He reckons that someone should come up with a 'Minimum Plan for Rye Harbour' that privatises these commercial losses and gets rid of them, along with all their associated salaries and pensions...spent everywhere except in Rye...There is no such thing as 'public money' or 'government money', only 'tax payer's money'. Do this, the argument goes, and harbour and berthing fees would rapidly fall to Dutch levels. This has always been the French approach in 'Baie de la Somme' where commercial ships are few and far between.

Patsy Richey worries that RHBOA hasn't got a clubhouse and thinks she's found the answer. 'If a dozen or you came up with £1000 I could send Steve to Holland to get you a 100-foot barge. Talk to Bourne's and moor it opposite Brede's Moorings. Meals. Bar. Parking. Just the job for RHBOA.' Well, there's a thought.

On more immediate matters, there are only a few weeks to the Boat Show (4-14 January 2001). Once again Patsy (Rye 224542) will be organising a coach for Rye boat enthusiasts. As a fully-fledged member of the 'Marine Industries Federation' Patsy gets tickets at a special trade price of £ 5.20 per head. Interest fluctuates from year to year, but if enough 'sign up' there will be a slap-up meal at the 'Cock Horse' in Peasmarsh on the way back. After this year's floods we are expecting lots of four door saloons with auxiliary sails to be on display at Earl's Court.

RHBOA Youth Section

An official complaint has come in from our Youth Section...current membership one, although we understand Dennis Davies may be invited to double the membership after his stirring dance performance at the Laying-Up Supper. In fact there were two complaints. The first objected to '*RHBOA News*' misreporting the barbecue. Apparently it was only 'a great success' for those over fifty.... And 'ditto' the Laying-Up Supper. The exact words were 'It's all lies. Only '*grapepip*' has the truth.' We pointed out that there were only two people under fifty at the barbecue...the Youth Section Leader and Edward Davison...but to no avail. That it seems was the point.



The other complaint was expressed in five points and one throw-away remark...or three points and three throw-away remarks. Here they are in no particular order:

1. Only old people there
2. Music - pants
3. Had to run home...although this was not necessarily the fault of the burgers
4. No room for email addresses on forms...*since remedied. We listen. Editor*
5. No adverts on the inside of the magazine covers...*also remedied. We act. Editor*
6. No beer...just 'poncy wine'.

We asked the Youth Section Leader to assure his no members that we were listening and that a special package of social events for the geriatrically unchallenged would be integral to our Social Secretary's next term of office. His priorities would be 'Yoof, Yoof and Yoof'.

Unfortunately the response from the Yoof Section was unprintable but emphasised the importance it attached to beer, music & messing in, off and around boats unsupervised. Not quite the 'sex & drugs & rock 'n roll' of the late lamented Ian Drury but not bad for starters. What? Who's Ian Drury?

Those wishing to join RHBOA Yoof should contact David Hutchings (Tel: 01797 229471)

Subscriptions 2000

RHBOA had 204 members at the end of 1999. 20 members have left during the year and 20 new members have joined so our membership has held steady at 204. Three of these are life members and Carl Bagwell as Harbour Master is 'ex-officio'. Of the remaining 200, 136 are Family Members and 64 Individual Members.

Unpaid Subscriptions

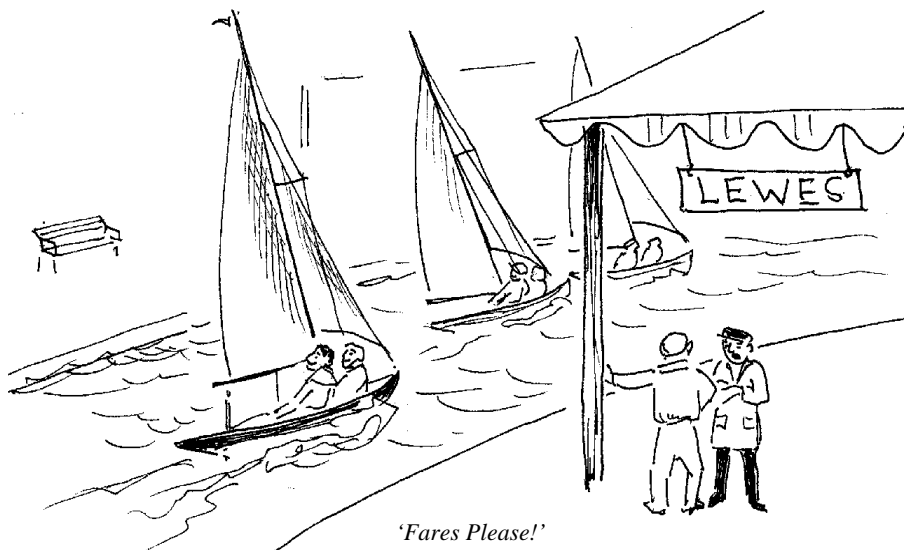
The subscription records for 2000 show that 42 subscriptions have yet to be collected...23 from Family Members and 19 from Individual Members. If you are shown as a non-payer...and are unjustly maligned...then get in touch and yell at us. We have recently computerised our records...and...well...hmm...

Arrangements have been made with HSBC to provide Standing Order facilities for members who prefer to pay their annual subscriptions this way. Forms enclosed with this magazine.

| RHBOA Stickers | Item | Stocks | Price | Going...going...gone |
|---|---------|--------|---------|---|
| RHBOA has 250 car stickers in stock. Plenty to go round and a bargain at only 25p each. | Badges | 24 | £ 2.50p | Stocks of burgees, badges & ties are getting low so place your orders now... while stocks last. |
| | Burgees | 15 | £ 5.50p | |
| | Ties | 12 | £ 7.00p | |

The Perfect Christmas Gift

Connie's Caption for the Front Cover is 'Sail Before Steam!'



RHBOA may not agree with opinions expressed in this newsletter but encourages publication as a matter of public interest. Nothing printed may be construed as official policy.

Illustrations © 2000 Connie Lindqvist

Design by rye3d - www.rye3d.co.uk

Printed by Neame Designs, 13A Tower Street, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7AT

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