

As a result of COVID the early part of the programme had to be abandoned, but with restrictions being lifted, the programme got back into full swing with great turnouts – and several new boats – including the Commodore for the first outing. Following are reports of the various events.

Walton 19th/20th September

Many of the crews of the ten yachts signed up for this cruise attended a Covid spaced dinner at the RHYC on the Friday evening. There had been a certain amount of banter on the WhatsApp group for this cruise



which set the tone for the weekend. The forecast was for wall to wall sunshine and that is what we got; wonderful and quite warm for September. The wind however might have put off some, us included, if we had not been on a CIC which often provides that little extra encouragement. The Inshore Waters Forecast of NE 4 to 5 occasionally 6 was spot on. We sailed off at 09:30ish and the first casualty, with an overheating engine, dropped out less than a mile from the Club. When eventually diagnosed as a faulty impeller, it was too late to make the gate at Walton Basin, a great shame.

Sunken Pye Channel was quite roily with the following F5 to 6 wind and swell; at least one puppy, on his first CIC, disgraced himself in his quarter berth at the “dog leg” but, showing great pluck for one so young, agreed to crew for the return trip. This return passage enjoyed slightly lower winds. However it was still from the NE and now on the nose, which caused rather violent pitching with high spray as we motored against tide, making slow progress out towards Pye End. Directly the depths allowed, we turned our bows towards Harwich and enjoyed a lovely sail across Dovercourt Bay and up the Orwell on the sunny Sunday afternoon. Our only motor boat wisely decided to avoid the waves in Pye Channel and returned home on the Monday in much more favourable conditions.

Hospitality at the W&FYC was as warm as usual and the food excellent. Most of us made our annual pilgrimage on foot or bicycle to the Naze Tower on Sunday morning. After a quick lunch, we left the Basin over the gate at about 13:30, with the green flag flying.

Orford 5th/6th September



Four boats left the club in a westerly F5, Portia and Bluefin meeting Madicken on her mooring just by Clamp House. Bluefin led the charge up to the the bar, kindly waiting for the others to catch up the 20 minutes that she had gained owing to skilled helmsmanship/waterline length. The Ore entrance left us lots of depth and we crossed both ways without mishap. Nushaba had to return to the Orwell with engine trouble on the Saturday morning, but we Joined Morning Star, who had come down from Aldeburgh.

COVID restrictions failed to dampen a lovely sunny evening: the crews went ashore in their 'jolly boats' (as Madicken's rubber dinghy is affectionately known) and met up in the Jolly Sailor for supper – a convivial get together enhanced by the arrival of the Bloor family, who carelessly forgot to bring Columbine with them.

Similiarly good conditions gave the fleet a good start to the sail home on the Sunday, Madicken getting a half hour head start to beat downriver against the flooding tide, only once testing the depth on the way. The wind dropped off after leaving the bar to head south and iron topsails were deployed by all to avoid being pushed backwards out to sea. Bluefin gained so much time she managed to perform a rescue on a disabled motorboat - Madicken got the memo late and was the last to return to her mooring at dusk.

Woodbridge (Not) 22/23rd August



A shoreside recce on Friday afternoon from Felixstowe ferry, combined with the forecast for Saturday, decided that the cruise to Woodbridge would be replaced by an impromptu BBQ in the vicinity of the Club in the evening to make the best of the weekend. Shifter did go out in the afternoon and decided that with “3 reefs in the main and a small genoa” she was still overpowered so probably a good decision.

Roughs Tower: 1st August



Coffee on the lawn and a departure reminiscent of an old style Le Mans grand prix start saw the fleet of 12 yachts heading down the river with a good following wind. Ability or otherwise at raising cruising chutes saw the fleet spread out going through the harbour before passing the Yacht beacon, when every-one hardened up to make the turn round the Roughs tower against the tide, with the fleet of foot heading home into the distance. Notwithstanding the “C19” restrictions in place, spreading out on the lawn we were able to enjoy a sociable supper and evening (32 people there) meeting up after weeks of isolation and meeting new members / CIC “novices”.