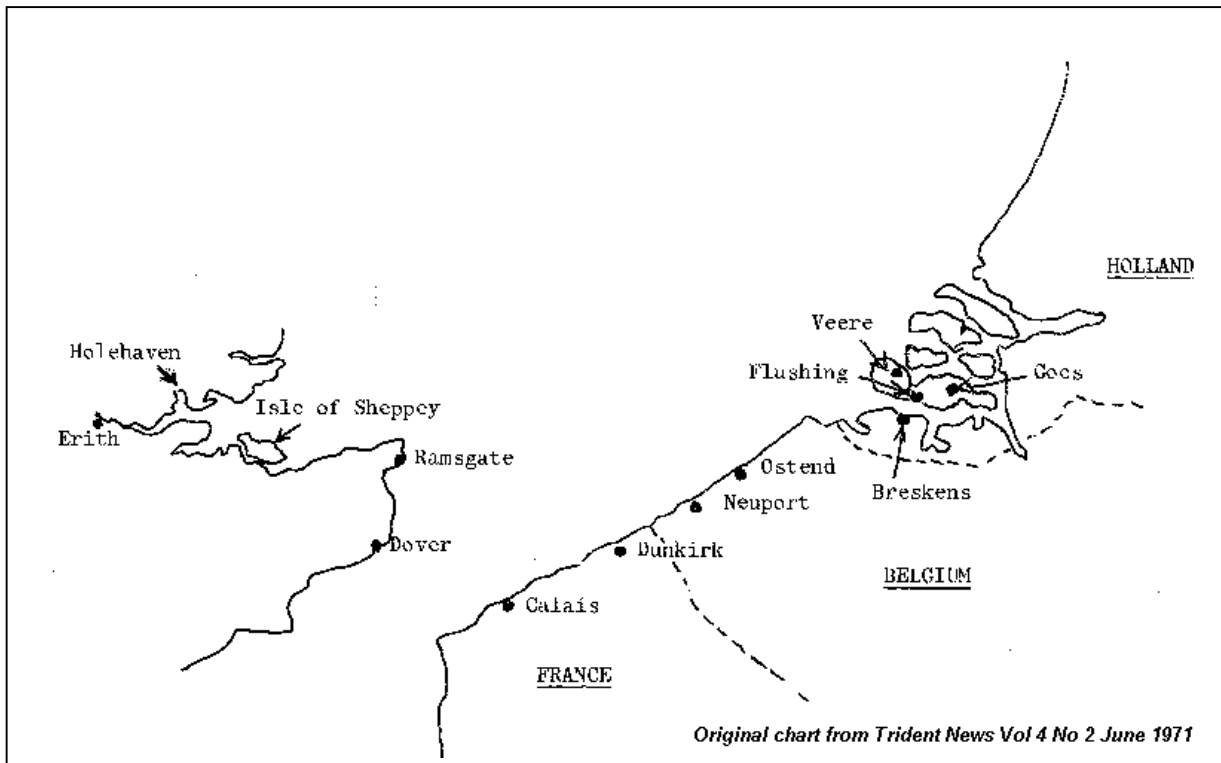


BERUNA CRUISES FROM ERITH TO HOLLAND



John Lambert's winning Marcon Trophy Log from 1970

NARRATIVE LOG OF THE TRIDENT CLASS YACHT *BERUNA*

Sail No 64

24 July to 15 August 1970



PART I

The big adventure this year was to take *Beruna* to Holland and to explore some of the inland pieces of water created by the reclamation schemes that are so dear to the hearts of the Dutch. The idea was to sail direct to Ostend from the Thames, having a colleague as crew, and for my wife Beryl, and children Geoffrey (aged 13) and David (aged 10) to travel by ferry and to live on board for a week in Ostend whilst I returned to England. At the end of the week I would return to Ostend and we would then commence our two weeks holiday from there (the best laid schemes of mice etc etc...).

When the trip to Ostend was proposed Bernard was very keen, and since his sailing experience is considerably greater than mine, this seemed a good omen. Next day he reported that his wife Margaret had given permission, but only if she could come as well. Being the perfect gentleman, I agreed, but stated that she must have the forward cabin, as I did not give up my berth in the saloon for anybody.

Friday 24th July 1970 was the start date, and the tone was set by the 1355 shipping forecast that predicted Southerly 5 or 6 increasing to 7 or 8. Bernard and I arrived home from the office at 1715 and having loaded the last minute bits and pieces into the car plus wife and youngest son, we started out for Erith which is about 80 minutes drive (normally). After driving for about 10 minutes I noticed that the engine oil pressure had vanished and investigation revealed a damaged oil filter gasket and no oil in the sump. Fortunately a garage was at hand and I was able to obtain fresh oil and to replace the faulty gasket.

We arrived at Erith at 19.15 and joined Margaret in the local where she had been waiting for us - funny how one always knows where to look for people! Margaret was looking a little sheepish, as she had left the freshly-cooked meat pie at home.

The dinghy was trundled down the Erith Yacht Club launching ramp and launched with small son on board who rowed it up to the Club Ship, from whence Bernard, Margaret and I transferred to *Beruna*, leaving my wife and son to take the car home and to wait for a phone call to let her know where we were.

The wind at this time was Westerly force 3 to 4, so we had a pleasant sail down the lower Thames to Holehaven, which we reached at 2300. During this sail we were passed by a glistening varnished magnificence flying the White Ensign, and which turned out to be [Sir Max Aitken's yacht] *Drumbeat*. One could not do anything but admire this beautiful craft as she passed us with her cockpit stiff with crew, who were all smiles and waves.

Holehaven is one of those places that one either likes or hates. We happen to like it in spite of the oil refinery, but my crew had other ideas. However, this did not stop us having a reasonable night, but it was odd that we all woke for the 0200 shipping forecast, and at 0430 when we should have sailed it was unanimously agreed that bed was the better place than the cockpit with a force 6/7 blowing: unanimous that is between Bernard and myself. Margaret was apparently awake and listening but did not let on that she was praying that we had some sense at least.



Holehaven Creek

At 0800 it was decided that we would sail as far as Harty Ferry which is tucked inside the Isle of Sheppey in the Eastern entrance to the Swale “and see how things are...” Having motored out of Holehaven we set the jib only and ran before the wind doing a good five knots and occasionally 7 knots on the dial (at which point it sticks and so draws attention to itself next time you look).

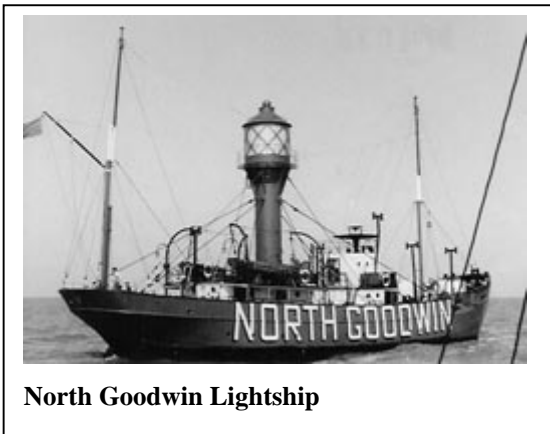
The boat behaved very well during this run with dry decks. The only snag was the dinghy which attempted to come on board due to the following sea. However careful adjustment of the painters (I always use two) settled its nonsense, but not until it had removed 18 inches of teak capping and one fairlead.

Having reached the Eastern end of Sheppey (which entailed threading ones way between many freighters at anchor due to the dock strike) we turned at the Columbine Buoy and were just able to lay our course into the Swale until we reached the Pollard Spit. Here we downed sails and relied

upon the iron topsail, which started in its usual easy manner and carried us to within 50 yards of Hollowshore in Oak Creek, where we ran out of water. So we lowered the anchor and had lunch.

After lunch it was up anchor and alongside at Hollowshore where Bernard and I cadged a lift into Faversham to collect Bernards car, thus enabling us all to have an evening meal ashore instead of raiding the tins stored below the saloon bunks.

High water was at 0700 next morning. We motored out of Oak Creek in a flat calm and no wind - the 0640 forecast said force 5/6, moderating to 4 later. As we motored out of the Swale a grey object was observed to be floating in the water and upon getting near it looked like a man's head - panic! But when we got even closer it turned out to be a seal who inspected each boat as it passed, and then dived only to reappear a little further upstream. So it was "Ramsgate here we come as the first stop. The weather was beautiful and (but for the complete absence of wind) perfect. We motored as far as North Foreland, which was as calm as I have ever seen it. At the Longnose Buoy it was agreed that Calais would be as good a place as any to go, so we set a course for the Elbow, and since a gentle breeze had sprung up we switched off the engine and hoisted the full main as well as the working jib (not that we have any other, but I am trying to convince Beryl that a storm jib and a genoa would be a good substitute to next summer's dress allowance).



North Goodwin Lightship

When the sails were up and set to our satisfaction, it was agreed that it might be worth putting out a mackerel spinner, so over the stern went one together with a 1.5 lb lead weight to keep it below the surface. Of course Lambert was his usual pessimistic self and said that he would laugh like a Chief Stoker if we caught one: the deck log records that off the North Goodwin Lightship laughter was heard!

At the Elbow we were doing 3 knots and at the North Goodwin Light Ship about 4 knots, but it was obvious that the wind was freshening, and it was not long before two rolls were put in the main. Then another

two, and another, and another. Eventually there were ten rolls in, and the boom was in the cockpit with us and the main sheet tackle was two blocks. Even so, we had 5 knots on the clock most of the time, with the occasional stuck 7, and the lee deck under. However, other than the occasional dollop when the helmsman was distracted ("one more like that and you can bloody well get out and walk home") the boat was remarkably dry.

At about 1500 the coast of France loomed in the murk and we altered course a trifle to compensate for the extra leeway it was obvious that we had made, but considering the conditions - force 6 measured on the ventimeter but gusting above that - the navigation was satisfyingly accurate. We saw two yachts during the crossing, both of which were running back towards the Thames and were, of course, having a quieter time than we, who were close hauled.

Calais Harbour was entered at 1700, but we had to wait three-quarters of an hour before the bridge opened to let us into the yacht basin. We got more water into the cabin during this wait as the heavens opened up, and since we were circling under power



Calais Harbour

waiting for the bridge to lift (having learned in the past from bitter experience that it opens just as you get your anchor down) the rain beat straight into the cabin if the hatch was opened, or if a washboard was removed at the wrong time.

Having made fast, it was up to the Yacht Club, a quick phone call to the Hoverport to book passages back to England, a call to my wife to let her know where we were, one (or two....) drinks, then Bernard prepared and cooked in butter the five mackerel caught during the passage – wonderful.

2130 found us back in England, fast becoming exasperated with a transport system which lands you at Pegwell Bay with 20 minutes to catch the last train to London from Ramsgate, with no bus, no taxi and very little hope. However the young lady at the information desk turned up trumps and phoned for a taxi which just got us to the station in time - but only just - and that is another story.

PART 2

The following Saturday found me travelling back to Calais on a British Rail ferry and the sea was so calm it was difficult to believe that it was the same English Channel that we had crossed the previous Sunday.

All was well on board *Beruna* and the family reported that they had spent a marvellous week with lots of sunshine and plenty of swimming from the sandy beaches of Calais. It had been decided to start for Holland the next day, but thick fog enveloped the yacht basin, and since visibility was down to 25 yards it would have been foolish to attempt the first leg to Dunkirk.

The boys were not sorry to have an extra day in Calais, as it made the opportunity to get Dad to the fair in the centre of the town, and to further sample the delights of the scenic railway and dodgems.

The fog did not lift until Tuesday when there was a mass exodus of the craft who had been trapped by the fog, and most of which were bound for England.

Included in the craft in Calais at this time were three boats from Richmond Yacht Club - one of my own clubs (*Hazel*, *White Perky* and *Frivole*), and two other Tridents, *Tarangini* and *Trilby*, neither of which are members of the Trident Owners' Association. *Trintella of Kent* belonging to Den and Irene Brown was also in Calais, and we spent some time discussing places of interest in Holland with them, as they had been there the previous year after leaving us in Dunkirk during last year's holiday.

Visibility was not very good and it was a case of sailing on compass courses and the watch until Dunkirk appeared out of the murk. Dunkirk is not the most inspiring of places, and the yacht harbour is adjacent to the fitting-out berths for a ship building yard. Three large freighters were in the fitting-out berths, one of which was being built for a French company, and unbeknown to me two of my colleagues were at that time on board her installing the radio equipment.

The other two ships were for Russia and had just been the victims of some sabotage - workmen on board were beating hell out of sheets of metal, and this combined with a pilot vessel that insisted on rushing up and down the harbour for no apparent reason, did not aid a peaceful night.

The programme for Wednesday was to sail from Dunkirk to Ostend and the shipping forecast predicted 4 to 5 South Eastern, so we set out. Having passed the buoy marking the wreck of the *Clan MacNeil*, we went through the *Passe de Zuydecoote*, and shortly afterwards met Trident No, 110 *Zangrno* going the other way.

The seas were getting up a little when just off Nieuwpoort a pilot vessel rushed out of the harbour and started to overtake us at a terrific rate. When he came close the Pilot asked us our destination

and then suggested that we enter Nieuwpoort as a gale warning was in force (B.B.C. still giving force 4). This should not be taken as a criticism of the B.B.C. shipping forecast as force 4 was a reasonable estimate for Thames/Dover generally at that time. The reason for the panic at Neuport was explained by the Commodore of the Neuport Yacht Club, who advised all yachtsmen to put on extra lines as a similar storm had done a lot of damage some two weeks previously. Apparently a vicious storm had burst upon France the day before, and although inland, it was circling round and looked as if it might hit the Belgium coastal area that evening. In fact we only got the edge of the storm - thunder, lightning and heavy rain - but the wind never got above 5 or 6. Even so, we considered it a very pleasant gesture for the pilot vessel to warn us.

Considering that it would be stark lunacy to ignore such advice, we turned for the harbour entrance, together with several other yachts of various nationalities, all of whom had been rounded up by the pilot vessel. I was surprised to see the size of the yacht harbour at Nieuwpoort. There must have been 1,000 boats



Nieuwpoort Yacht Harbour

moored there all alongside floating pontoons. Upon entering, the harbour master called out and asked if I spoke French, to which I foolishly replied "a little." This was a great mistake because I then received a barrage of instruction, the only part of which I understood was "large white boat" and as there was a large white motor cruiser some way into the yacht harbour we tied up alongside, and since we were left in peace we probably did the correct thing.

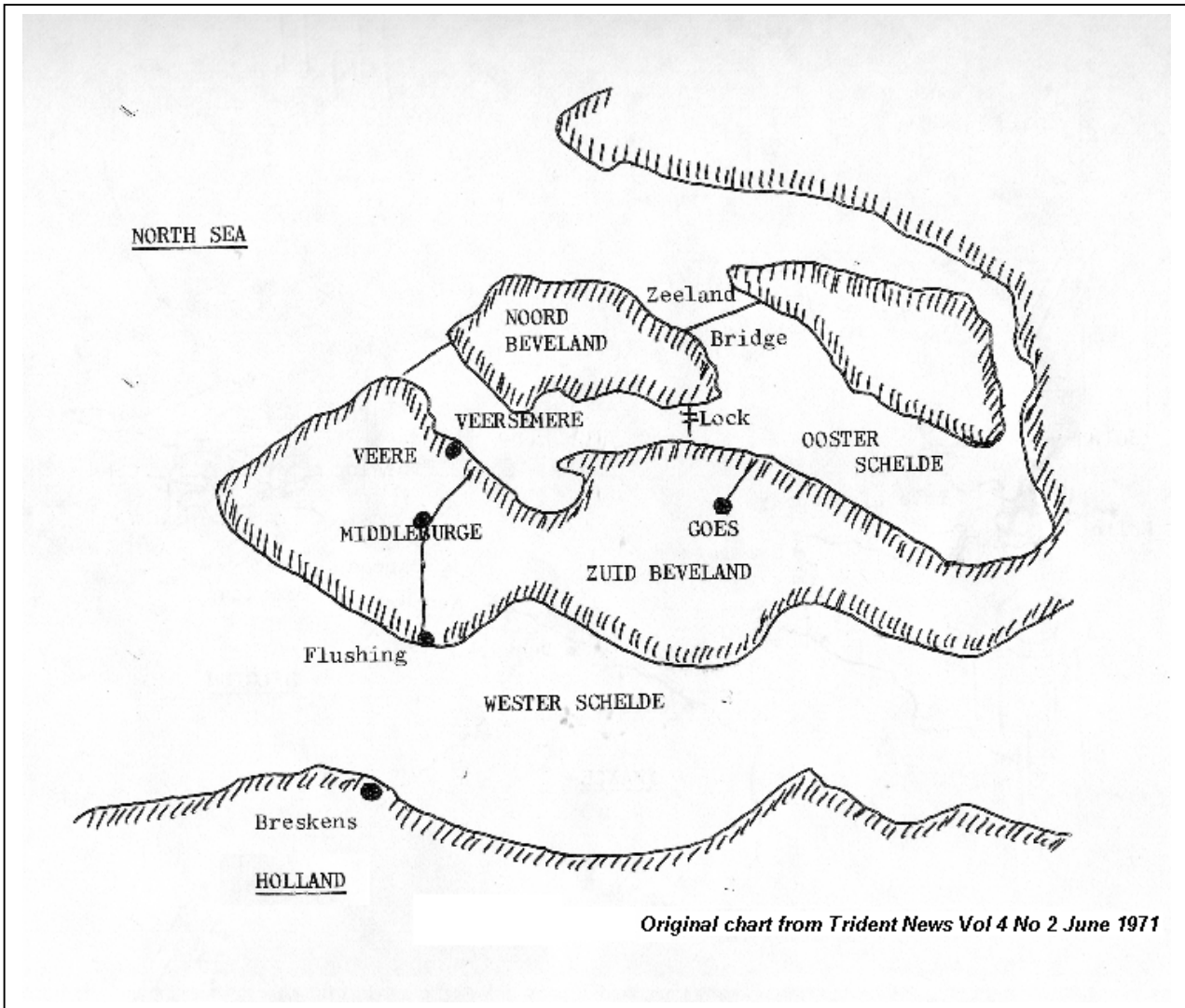
0500 next morning found us motoring out of Nieuwpoort, and it was interesting to note that hours after high water (springs) there was already 20 feet of water all the way to the pier heads. The sea was absolutely like glass and there being no wind we motored to Ostend, which we entered at 0730 much to the amazement of the boys who had slept most of the way, only surfacing when we were waiting outside the harbour for a ferry to leave.

We tied up in the North Sea Yacht Club moorings, and after breakfast and a visit to the Club to sign in it was all ashore for a short shopping spree, plus an hour a piece on the hired go-karts for the boys - they had been looking forward to them ever since last summer.

It was decided to leave Ostend at 1230 and to continue up the coast to Zeebrugge, but when we were off that port it was agreed that we should press on and make Breskens, as this would save a day. Since we had lost so much time, firstly due to starting from Calais instead of Ostend, and then being fog bound in Calais, this would be a valuable saving.

The sail as far as the Belgian/Dutch border was uneventful, and we were joined by a Belgian yacht who was also making for Breskens. The wind now veered 180° and freshened to about force 4 this being very much more favourable, we had a spanking sail.

It was just as well that we had another boat as company who had previously been to Breskens, because we arrived there after dark and somehow the lights did not tie up with the data available, and without our Belgian friend we would probably have entered the ferry port by mistake. We did, however, go in via the correct entrance and were delighted to be guided into an empty berth by another English yachtsman *Sea Troll of Weymouth*, who had arrived earlier that day from Flushing and who realised how difficult it is to find a berth at night in a strange harbour, and who took a lot of trouble making sure that we were in a comfortable berth.



The next morning was sunny and warm, and we decided to set foot on Dutch soil for the first time ever, and so we all trooped ashore to do some shopping (as usual), purchase cards to send home to impressed (we hope) relations and to have a look at whatever Breskens had to show us. We were very impressed at the cleanliness of the streets, but other than that there was not very much that remains to be said, and so after lunch we set sail for Flushing, which was just two hours delightfully sunny sail away.

It would be difficult to mistake the entrance to Flushing as there is a constant stream of ferry boats leaving and entering on the regular trip to Breskens, and these make a very good guide, although they have to be watched with some care at the actual entrance.

After one has entered the harbour it is hard round to Port into the Buitenhaven, and then into a lock to enable one to get into the Middelburg canal. We were fortunate to find the lock open for us - the last piece of luck we were to have on this canal as regards timing, as from here onwards we had to

wait nearly one hour at each bridge or lock we came to, and consequently it was 1930 before we locked out of the channel and into the Veerse Meer.

We had been advised not to use the marina at Veere but to enter the old harbour, and this we did and tied up alongside a Dutch motor cruiser, the owners of which made us very welcome and gave us a mass of useful information concerning the yacht club and the town. It was impossible to resist going ashore even though it was now dark, and it was very much worth it as this little town is like a fairy tale, and being floodlit was quite enchanting. The Stathous is the *piece de resistance* with most ornate carved stonework, and a golden ship as a wind vane. The only feature of this town which jars is the church or cathedral which is an absolute monstrosity and quite out of keeping with the exquisitely built town.



The inland saltwater Veerse Meer lake

We all went ashore again the next morning to take photographs, and I took the opportunity to purchase a chart of the Veerse Meer as I did not possess one giving this area in detail. It was interesting to note that the chart purchased was the Dutch equivalent to Stanfords, and had its information given in four languages.

Having topped up our fuel tanks (diesel) we sailed down the length of the Veerse Meer which is a delightful inland salt water lake, having been formed by the building of dams across the sea between islands. This stretch of water is very well marked with buoys and is a veritable playground for the Dutch yachtsmen with islands and creeks to explore and plenty of pleasant landing places and picnic spots.

There were plenty of Dutch, German, French and Belgian yachts but only a handful of English, so when one passed there was much waving. At the end of the Veerse Meer we entered the massive Schutsluis Zandkreek lock and into the Oosterschelde which is still tidal. A pleasant sail brought us to a small lock (Sas van Goes) which guards the entrance to a canal that leads to the town of Goes (pronounced Hoose) which we reached, after the inevitable wait at a lifting bridge, at tea time. We have since discovered that this bridge lifts on the hour every hour (except at 1300) from 0800 to 2100. The yacht harbour here is small but very pleasant, and the clubhouse is full of mementoes of the old Dutch ships and seamen. It is run on a do-it-yourself system: if you want a cup of tea or coffee you brew it up yourself. There is a large quantity of books in a variety of languages and very acceptable on a wet night, as this one turned out to be. Another pleasant touch was the log fire and the armchairs.

The next day was Sunday and a quick visit to the town revealed a complete absence of inhabitants except in the vicinity of the two large churches which face each other across a square. We decided to return to Veere during the afternoon and having left the yacht harbour arrived at the first lifting bridge, where we were amazed to find the Harbour Master who had just come to wave goodbye - what a pleasant gesture.

The trip back to Veere was made via the Oosterschelde where we sailed up to the Zeeland Bridge which gets larger and longer as you approach. This bridge is the largest in Europe and is a truly inspiring piece of engineering, and to my eye, not unsightly.



The Zeeland bridge

Monday morning was a stinker with high winds and heavy rain, and during our run back down the Middelburg canal we met *Trintella of Kent* coming from the direction of Flushing, Den advised us to stop at Flushing as the seas in the Schelde were very bad, and we decided to accept this advice,

The entrance to the yacht harbour at Flushing is very tricky in high winds, especially if it is full and one is looking for a suitable berth.

The Harbour Master, almost dolefully, said he only gets good business when the weather is bad. However after circling round like a dog on a mat a few times we went alongside and tied up, and were able to get in out of the rain. This was deemed to be a good opportunity to try out the cockpit tent we had made during the previous winter, and so it was out into the rain again to rig it, but it has to be admitted that it was well worth the effort, as it enabled the oilskins to be hung up to drip and it kept the heavy rain away from the cabin entrance, thus the hatch and washboards could remain open.

The rain died away by 1600 and enabled us to visit the town and the supermarket to replenish our stocks of meat, fruit and other necessities. In spite of being an industrial and dockyard town we were again impressed by the cleanliness of the streets. A lot of houses or flats are right up to the pavement and have no front gardens, and since the Dutch only use net curtain as ornaments it was possible to look right into the rooms which were always immaculate, even when the inhabitants, including children, were actually using the room - I know we could never leave our rooms open to view, there always seems to be a lot of bits and pieces about the place.

Monday brought fine weather and SE winds force 4 to 5, so a fine sail to Ostend was had in company with *Dopertwe* from Poole, who were alongside us in Flushing. We reached Ostend in time for the boys to have another ride on the go-carts. We treated ourselves to a slap-up meal that evening and then walked round the town in the dark to help our digestions. Perhaps the tern 'dark' is not exactly correct, as the town is lit up like a Christmas tree and is bursting at the seams with life.

We left Ostend next morning at 1000 when the tide was still running Eastwards, and punched the tide for two hours as we wished to make one long hop to Calais, and considered it preferable to punch the tide at the start rather than later when we would be tired and slow progress against the tide becomes more frustrating. The wind was from the East and force 2/3, so we were able to make a steady but not spectacular progress down the coast as far as Dunkirk.

As we were travelling through the Zuydecoote pass we were overtaken by one of the large Belgian ferry boats and the wash created had to be seen to be believed. We took it on the stern with no trouble at all as far as *Beruna* was concerned, but the dinghy gave us an almighty thump, and if it had not been for the extensive fendering on its bow I am sure that we should have suffered serious damage to the transom. As it was, only the lifebelt received a blow which cracked it across. Being wise after the event, it is obvious that I should have turned and taken it on the bow or else got well out of the way. The latter for preference, but in a narrow channel with wrecks drying at low water on each side, my courage failed me and I decided to ride the wash as best I could.

Here the wind backed and headed us so the engine was started and we pushed on at a steady five knots, but even so the tide beat us and it was slow progress from Gravelines to Calais which we reached after dark and too late to get into the yacht harbour, so we picked up a buoy in the outer harbour for the night. By this time we were all tired and hungry, so to save time and effort the boys rowed ashore and purchased chips, and by the time they returned the rest of the meal was ready. Everybody had an early night in preparation for an early start next morning back to Ramsgate,

Thursday morning was sunny and calm, but unfortunately very little wind and visibility about two miles. We set course for the South Goodwin lightship and motor-sailed all the way until the lightship came into view. I had been happy up to this point, but suddenly there seemed to be something amiss - and so there was. IT WAS THE EAST GOODWIN LIGHTSHIP.

I had allowed for the East-going tide as shown in the Admiralty tidal atlas for neap tides, but obviously the tide was running stronger than predicted, and we were being swept up channel more than I had estimated. This called for a slight change of plan so we set a new course to skirt the outside of the Goodwins and entered Ramsgate Harbour via the North. A new system of entry signals has just been introduced at Ramsgate:

Black flag	OK to enter	(day time)
Black Balls	Entry forbidden	(day time)
Flashing white light	OK to enter	(night)
Flashing red light	Entry forbidden	(night)

Since we were leaving again next morning we did not go into the inner harbour but tied up in the outer harbour, and were very quickly cleared by Customs who were friendly and helpful (I have never found them to be otherwise)



Ramsgate Harbour

In Ramsgate we found Dora Johncey on board *Maori* from Hurlingham YC. The Johncey's were just starting their holidays and were hoping to get to Holland so we lent them our charts of the Veerse Meer. We had a good natter session on board *Maori* that evening, and were joined by "Laurie" Lawrence who for many years was Rear Commodore of Hurlingham YC and, having retired, now lives in Ramsgate.

We had Intended to leave at about 10.00 on Friday, but upon a closer inspection of the tides we decided that it would be very late before we got into Holehaven which was to be our next night's stop, and so we crept

out of Ramsgate at 07.30 and sailed up to the North Foreland in a S.W. Force 5. Upon rounding the corner the wind was on the nose and we found it necessary to motor through the inside route past the Margate sands, and had reached Herne Bay when the tide turned against us. This was a very wet and bumpy ride, and we were glad to get into the shelter of the Isle of Sheppey and to anchor in the mouth of the Swale to have lunch and to wait for the tide to turn again in our favour. This it did at about 1645 and we had an uneventful trip up to Holehaven, passing the wreck of the Liberty ship

"Richard Montgomery" which was sunk during the war and is still full of ammunition. It is considered to be too dangerous to clear, as the contents are now probably unstable and liable to explode if moved. If it does explode, the town and dockyard of Sheerness will probably cease to exist .

We were now back in home waters, and Saturday gave us a morning's run up to Erith, and then the holiday could be considered to be at an end. Other than a spot of miscalculation over tides, the holiday had been without alarms, and the only damage was to the toe rail aft and one sail batten.

Maybe not a saga of the sea, but this is how we, as a family, like our holidays. We were amazed at the quantity of weed and barnacles that we collected during the three weeks that the boat was away from its home mooring, and the following weekend was spent with her up on the hard cleaning the bottom down to the gel coat and giving her two coats of anti-fouling.

John Lambert

Notes:

Distance covered 407 miles
Fuel used (diesel) 16 gallons

Admiralty Charts:

Thames Estuary	1607
Dover Straight	1895
Dunkirk to Flushing	1872
The Downs	1828
Wester Schelde	120

Extensive use was also made of the following documents:-

Reeds Almanac.

North Sea Harbours and Pilotage (Morgan)

Admiralty Pocket Tidal Atlas;

(a) Thames Estuary

(b) English Channel

(c) Southern North Sea

A deviation card for the steering compass had been prepared after much labour, and was always used - maximum deviation being 10 degrees; this was essential.

The Seafarer Echosounder and Seafix Direction Finder were also used as occasion demanded, although when our doubts concerning the South Goodwin Lightship arose, it never occurred to me to use DF: there is a moral there somewhere.

Beruna is fitted with H.F. Radio Telephone, but this was not used during the holiday except for receiving shipping weather forecasts.