

# Creeksea SC Newsletter

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## A Word From The Commodore

This year we intend to improve the appearance of the club premises, as it is important to our uniquely beautiful position at Creeksea that we don't resemble an overgrown scrap yard. We need to make sure that our facilities are in working order and that we are good in what we do and in what we offer to our members.

There needs to be better communication between the officers and the members. As part of this move we hope to release a twice-yearly newsletter, to have a notice board fixed to the starting hut and the creation of a web site ([www.creeksea.co.uk](http://www.creeksea.co.uk))

We would like to ask for help with our Phantom Open Meeting to be held on Sat/Sun 9/10<sup>th</sup> June to both help organize the event and to help with catering.

Help is needed to run our races as race starter/finishers and in the rescue boat. We are in the process of purchasing an Otter Spotter, 13ft rib to be used for rescue. This boat will be much easier to handle, with 25hp. electric starting than our current rescue boat and lighter to launch and recover. We need volunteers to help man the boat and perhaps receive training in rescue skills.

We have arranged for three

working parties to complete the program below. Please, if you can spare the time come and help.

### RACE HUT

Repair doorframe and door, paint outside, check the start line, install an automatic start system, repair roof and replace stolen solar panel.

### BOAT HOUSE

Paint, ensure toilets and showers are clean and working.

### DINGHY PARK

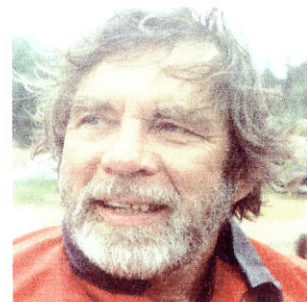
Tidy up and re-arrange the dinghy park, scrap abandoned boats and trailers, stone fill the potholes and foreshore.

Here's hoping for a good sailing year with lots of nice sunshine and fair winds.

**Brian Spurling (Commodore)**

## A.G.M.

At our annual general meeting held on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April, the following officers were elected to the committee:



Brian Spurling (Commodore) 01621 782630



Paul Whyte (Secretary) 01245 320578



Kelvin Fowler (Treasurer) 01621 783616



Colin Unsworth 01268 767871

[colinunsworth@hotmail.com](mailto:colinunsworth@hotmail.com)



Noel Sutcliffe (Social Secretary)

01245 324107

[noelsutcliffe@hotmail.com](mailto:noelsutcliffe@hotmail.com)

Graham Manning 01376 322005

[G.E.Manning@amservice.net](mailto:G.E.Manning@amservice.net)

## THE BIG "ACE"

This "All Cubs Event" for every yacht club member on the River Crouch is for dinghies, racing sailboats, cruising sailboats and motor cruisers.

Some will race; others will be able to take part in fun competitions. Details later but meanwhile do make a note in your diary.

"Ace" will start at Stowe Post at 12,30 on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> August and end at the Burnham Sailing Club finish line.

Afterwards there will be a big party in the Crouch Y.C.

(See your club notice board or ask your club officials for updates.)

## SECRET DESIGNS



This picture was taken recently in a top-secret location at a barn somewhere near Southminster. Your Newsletter can now reveal that the Voodoo crew have been Covertly engineering a carbon fibre pole to fly a frightening 600 square foot asymmetric spinnaker. The sail it is rumoured is to be used in extremely light winds to increase the speed of this heavy, 24 ft Yachting World Scow. When it was suggested that the asymmetric might be used in anything above a force 3



my guide turned white and promptly showed me off the premises.

## Ken King

We regret to announce the death of one of our members, Ken King, who died just before Christmas after a long battle with illness. Ken was a keen Osprey sailor for many years before joining the Phantom fleet. Ken was a tenacious sailor who succeeded in winning the autumn series last year. His last appearance amongst most of us was when he received the winner's cup at our laying up supper in November. Ken loved a good argument, especially about the rules and etiquette of racing. He was kind and helpful to less experienced sailors (except out on the water) and was an excellent companion. We will miss him terribly. Ken leaves a wife Sue and daughter Alicia.



## CLUB HISTORY

I spent a pleasant morning, in February, talking to Les Shaw who has been a member of the club since it was formed. Les was also commodore during the club's most active period in the late seventies and early eighties. He talked about the origins of the club and we thought it would be of interest to our newer members to try to set out the history of the club while it was still within people's memories.

The Ministry commandeered Creeksea Hall during World War II and the RAF's fast rescue boats and the Navy's Motor Torpedo Flotilla were installed. Two reinforced concrete slipways were built, one from the Creeksea side and the other from the Wallasea side of the Crouch. Some of the mooring weights can still be seen off the Creeksea slipway at low tide. With a little imagination it is possible to recall a scene of MTBs bobbing on the tide off our foreshore awaiting the call to go out to rescue airmen of each side who'd been shot down.



Enemy aircraft would seek out the Crouch on their return from bombing London because there were few anti-aircraft guns in the area. They could see the silvery ribbon of the river and knew that it led back to an occupied Europe. If they had any ammunition left they would strafe the MTBs as they passed overhead.

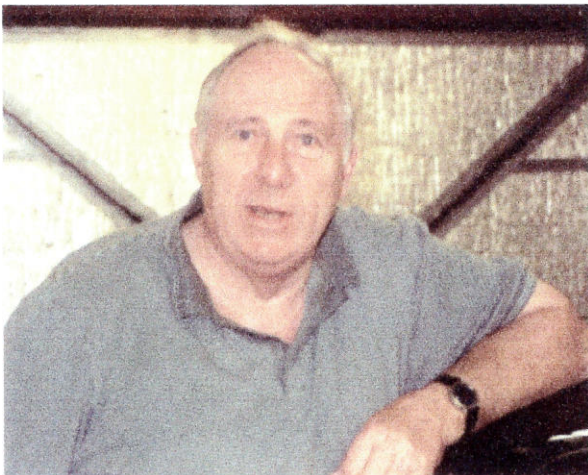
Tucker Browns boatyard serviced the motorboats from pontoons off Burnham waterfront between the Crouch YC and the basin.

After the war, the Admiralty abandoned the slipway. Creeksea Hall



became a caravan site much frequented by weekenders who used the slipway to launch their boats. With the invention of marine plywood it became popular for people to build their own boats. The GP 14, The Enterprise and the Mirror were devised in the 1950s, for a mass market of keen dinghy builders and sailors. Caravan owners who used the slipway for boating started Creeksea sailing club. Originally there were four or five clinker built boats and one or two Ospreys, one of which was Peter Juster's osprey, Sea Jay.

Les joined the club in 1957 with a speedboat because Ron Clare allowed up to five speedboats to join in any year provided that they were available for rescue for the dinghies. Sailing was a family affair in those days. Some of the wives and children started the races with flags and a foghorn from a starting line of an upright railway sleeper and a flagpole. They then retired to the cars to wait for the end of the race., particularly if it was raining.



By 1959 the club had purchased a caravan chassis with an 8ft by 6ft garden shed on top as a race officers hut. Due to the objections of one of the club's neighbours, it was not possible to place a permanent structure at the side of the river and so the end of a days racing was capped with the ceremony of towing the starting hut back up to its weekday site

just above the railway bridge in the British Rail Sailing Club yard where they stored their Enterprises. This system lasted for five years.

Les began crewing for Peter Juster and developed a passion for sailing to the extent that he lovingly built his first boat, a GP14, Little Lizzie, in 1964. Little Lizzie had a wooden mast because aluminium masts were considered too new for the class at the time. Despite his crewing activities, Les didn't feel he had the confidence to helm an Osprey but the GP14 gave him lots of practical experience and eighteen months later he bought, Tarpon, a second hand Osprey. After that, Les sold Tarpon to Colin Armstrong and bought a Westerley built Osprey. Brian Yallop used to crew for him. In order to increase the Osprey fleet, Les started combing the country for second hand Ospreys buying them up, checking them over, making them good and selling them on to club members. He remembers going as far as Blackpool and the Channel Islands to purchase boats. The club began to expand its Osprey fleet rivalling the Wayfarer Fleet with twelve to fifteen boats regularly turning out.

For about two years, Creeksea had combined fleet of about 30 boats turning out for Sunday races. Quite often, on a sunny afternoon it was everybody back to Les and Jean's place for a barbecue and a swim in their swimming pool. Around this time, in 1976, the club received a Sports Council grant to build the starting hut, overcoming the objections raised by one of our neighbours, Mr Goodman. Bishop and Harding, a local builder, built the hut.

During this, the hay day of our club, you had to book your place early for a place at the fish and chip supper during Burnham Week and our presentation dinners regularly hosted 140 to 160 people.

Despite our large Osprey fleet, we

never did really well in the Nationals. Robert Shaw managed 34<sup>th</sup> in 1976 and Dave Unsworth and Dave Unsworth managed 115. This is an indication of how strong the Osprey fleet used to be nationally.



The soundness of any sailing club is its membership and that needs hard work and dedication on the part of the Committee in order to build and maintain it. Also important is not to let the buildings get dilapidated as the effort required to put the infrastructure of the club in place took the hard work of many members over a number of years to put it in place. Once lost, it may never be replaced.

Les moved on from dinghy sailing, purchasing first a Squib, then a Sonata and finally a thirty five-foot Sea Hawk. Les has left the sea now, concentrating instead on his fleet of four vintage jaguars. A sobering thought from Les is that it is cheaper to keep and maintain the four cars than it was to maintain his Sea Hawk.

Les and Jean are honorary life members of the Club in recognition of the many years of work and friendship to the club, which for many years was a large part of their family life as their children grew up.

## Former Club Commodores

Ron Clare	1961 - 1962
Bill Hagger	1963 - 1964
Toni Farrat	1964 - 1965

## Formally Elected Commodores

Harry Duncan	1965 - 1968
Ron Clark	1968 - 1975
John Monk	1975 - 1978
Les Shaw	1978 - 1981
Peter Giles	1981 - 1984
Colin Armstrong	1984 - 1987
Dave Unsworth	1987 - 1990
Tom Porter	1990 - 1993
Graham Manning	1993 - 1997
Colin Unsworth	1997 - 2000
Brian Spurling	2000

## INTERNET SITE

Unfortunately, with our site half built we are in need of some technical assistance to finish it off and launch it on the web. If any of our members are able to help complete the site using "Dream weaver" please get in touch with Noel Sutcliffe at [www@hotmail.com](mailto:www@hotmail.com) or 01245 324107



# Autumn Series Results

Name	1	2	3	4	Points	Position
Ken King	7	3	2	4	16	1st
Brian	2	4	11	5	22	2nd
John T.	1	1	11	11	24	3rd
Paul N.	11	2	11	2	26	4th
Bruce	11	11	1	3	26	4th
Chris H.	5	6	11	6	28	6th
Chris R.	3	6	11	11	31	7th
Noel	4	7	11	11	33	8th
Paul W.	11	11	11	1	34	9th
Ray	11	5	11	11	37	10th

