



# Duton Hill Yacht Club Newsletter Issue No 12 MUD Glorious MUD “Quis Exsecutio Ut”



**MUD, mud, glorious MUD nothing quite like it for holding the Stud.**

**So Stud we did follow into the shallows and there we left Gracey in glorious MUD.**

The first annual DHYC BBQ on the Beach was meant to be one of the highlights of the year for the avid club members, and it did not disappoint, albeit for completely the wrong reasons.

Stud (Cip) had planned the event down to the last detail, provisions, crewing, kites and games for the beach, guitar for camp fire sing song, Commodore Al to play the guitar, the accommodation spread across two yachts, wind break and mallet, ground sheet, chairs, gas bottle, new burner for paella pan, BBQ equipment and tide timings.....or so he thought?

Let's not jump the gun but go back to the beginning of what turned out to be yet another escapade in the annals of what is rapidly becoming a highly unique sailing club.

Talk about never a dull moment, membership should be available on the NHS for those in need of lifting from a depressed state.

Mr. & Mrs. Pugwash drove to Titchmarsh Marina Saturday afternoon to jump aboard Grace Jones, she had been motored around from Tollesbury on a five hour passage by a slightly hung over crew who had spent far too much of the previous evening in the club house.

To be fair to Cip, and to embarrass Commodore, he had in fact brought Grace round the coast single handedly as Alan did his usual trick of disappearing below to put on a brew only to reappear some hours

later after a kip enquiring as to their whereabouts, and who'd like a brew then?

They had met en-route Stirling and Anne onboard Procyon, Procyon found a suitable anchorage just off the beach area at Stone Point in the Twizzle channel, whilst Cip took Grace to the marina to collect the remaining merry mariners coming by land.

Once parked up Mr & Mrs P. came across Jerry and Yvonne parked up on the hard busily assembling and inflating a not insignificant dinghy, with 15hp motor (Pugwash made mental note, methinks we are going to have some fun with this later).

**J**erry's inflatable rib had a neat attachment of rising wheels that enables him to single handedly wheel the rib into the water, raise the wheels, lower the motor and whiz off a la Bond style, which is an apt description for the way Jerry handles his equipment, only to reverse the procedure when landing the craft.

Suitably impressed with this spectacle, Commodore Al, who had joined the arrivee's on the hard from Grace, was soon sketching the phase two upgrade for our man of action's craft. It was going to be a toss up between drive attachment from outboard to large fan assembly or a wheel drive gear box to provide forward propulsion, thus allowing 006 to bring his rubber scudder all the way to the car park!

Basildon and Yvonne were soon afloat; maniacally motoring between the incoming yachts, the Pugwashes jumped onboard Grace, all motored back down the channel to find where Procyon had actually dropped her anchor.

The much vaunted, momentous BBQ on the Beach was about to become a reality. The anticipation was proving too much for certain members of the party, ultimately being forced to the unthinkable.....consuming alcohol whilst underway..... Cip was horrified; mainly because he didn't get offered one, well he was driving what did he expect.

Once at the Point it became evident that a fair old drop of wind was on the blow, skies bright but overcast, no rain, well none right now.

The place was soon a hive of activity, at least it was for two crew members, Commodore and Pugwash, having been ordered forward on anchor duties. To avoid a repeat of some previous, long forgiven (but not forgotten) episode wherein some dunder-heads only went and dropped the anchor without first attaching it to the boat, producing a choice barrage of abuse from the helm prompting Comm and Pug to desperately dance about the foredeck attempting to jump on the rapidly deploying anchor line before the end flicked over the bowsprit of Grace and waved adios, this time Cip had already tied the anchor line to the cleat so that all our boys had to do was open the locker and on Cip's instruction deploy the anchor.

Simple really, made even simpler for simple folk.

Cip had *even* gone as far as to consult his tide charts to ascertain just how much anchor chain he needed out and thus tie off the anchor rope at the pre-requisite length, what could go wrong?

**T**he beach was more or less deserted, no doubt something to do with the approaching weather, Grace could not drop anchor



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beside Procyon, some other family had nicked that spot with their yacht, although give him his due Pugwash did point out to Cip that it looked as though the family in question were loading up their dinghy and readying to leave the beach to get back onboard the yacht, and thus may be about to depart. But then he's never listened to (he's not known as Hog-Wash for nothing amongst his fellow shipmates) so his astute observations were once again lost.

*[One day, one day, you'll see, that boy's perky processor will save the day, meanwhile it stands in for the animators as stunt double for Homer's]*

The two lackys heaved on the miles of anchor chain to remove it from the forward locker whilst Cip did the easy bit of twiddling on his rudder and fiddling with the throttle.

Cip circled Grace trying to find a suitable spot to anchor whilst dodging the incoming and outgoing vessels, he needed to nose Grace further out into the centre of the channel and away from the beach before he let the anchor go. Eventually the boys up the sharp end got the instruction they were waiting for, “Drop that ef\*\*\*g anchor now!”

“Hold it, hold it, waaaaaiittt, no you did not drop it correctly we are drifting, pull the thing back up we are going to have to try again”.

Incredulous looks between Pug and Comm, “*How the hell did we do anything wrong this time?*”, so they pulled and pulled on the anchor chain until the lot was back on the deck and smart-arse Cip allowed a second attempt.

“Right, let her go”

“Hold it, hold it, waaaaaiittt.....no you have done it again we are still drifting!”

*“Now hang on a minute, how on earth is this our fault, you're on the blunt end doing the striking in”*

The crew were becoming a bit agitated, up the blooming chain comes for the second time.

“Drop it NOW”.....Nooo, what are you doing up there, we are still drifting, pull that thing up again and get it right this time!!!”

*“Tell you what Comm you grab his legs and I'll go for his arms and we'll have Cip overboard in no time flat”*

*“Ah, skip, forgive the intrusion but me and shipmate Commodore here, up at the sharp end, are wondering which tide tables you have been using to make these calculations, not that we are doubting your navigational skills, no sirree, far from it, it's just out of character for you to get something so basic, seemingly in error?”*

“Look, who's skippering this yacht, put some rope out if it makes you feel happier and make it snappy”

**T**he reader will have guessed that third time lucky proved fortunate for the crew as eventually Grace bit on her anchor, as she did so the family anchored between Grace and Procyon motored off, wouldn't you know it?

With sore hands, covered in mud, Comm and Pug trudge back aft to help start loading the dinghy for the trip ashore.

But wait Cip is having second thoughts, the weather don't look so

great after all, maybe we should hang on for ten minutes and see how it develops.

OK, so hang fire, radio Procyon, lasso Basildon who is by now hot footing in ever decreasing circles in his rubber-thingy frantically trying to come alongside one of the yachts, but with little success.

**T**ime elapsed, clouds parted, yep BBQ was definitely on, load up three support vessels, Stirling ties his coracle to a line from the rear of Procyon so that he can drift ashore and when necessary simply pull himself back onboard Procyon,

Basildon's rib is loaded with victuals and staff, Cip loads up his dinghy with the balance, all head to shore, the heavens open.

Very quickly a make shift M.A.S.H. tent is set up on the beach utilizing the wind break, groundsheet and rope, with rocks and calor gas bottle acting as tent pegs, people turn their backs to the wind and rain to sit (or in this instance stand) it out.

This was not BBQing weather.

Recognising they were already soaked on the outside there was nothing for it but to pop some corks and at least brighten the insides with some amber nectar.

Meanwhile, not to dampen the spirit of the thing, Miss Cip, namely Charlie decides it is ideal kiting weather, so she orders Pugwash to launch the kite whilst she ran about like someone demented in a vain attempt to keep the thing aloft.

It was around this point that someone from the beach party pointed out that two of the intrepid BBQers were in



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fact still sat, snug in the dry aboard Procyon and were watching these events from under the cockpit spray-hood of Procyon, none other than Mad Max himself and Anne.

That was not the Dunkirk spirit.

**S**tanding resolutely in the pouring rain, the rain filling the glasses quicker than they could down them, the more sensible members of our party, well not as sensible as Stirling and Anne you understand, decided this had got to be abandoned, but OH NO.

Cip was in defiant mood, we had come all this way for a BBQ and BBQ it was going to be, anyway this rain cloud will soon pass over then cooking could commence phh!

There was a glimmer of hope in the skies as they lightened and the rain left off, momentarily.

Cip sent up the shout, BBQ was on, start to unpack makeshift tent, no sooner was the gas being connected when the heavens had another go, provisions back under tent, getting wet either way, remove some more crown tops, pull another cork.

Eventually sense prevailed and the event called off, but was it in time you should ask?

Read on, boy you should read on, shame we don't have video clips for the following 12 hours of events.

**D**e-camped, loaded all of the store into Stirling's coracle, Mr & Mrs 006 and Amanda jumped in the whiz-rib with Basildon on the rudder, Mr & Mrs Cip, Charlie and Pugwash headed towards Grace.

Dear old Charlie innocently happened to mention to Dad that

Grace's sugar scoop was sitting higher out of the water than usual, hhhmmmm.

Ordinarily such a comment would wash over Pugwash's head, what with him not even knowing what a sugar scoop actually was, but a worried tone in young Charlie's voice made him alert, some feat I can tell you. You could see the cogs whirring, *sugar scoop eh, probably not serious if it sounds that scrummy?*

The rain was persistent, soaking all in her way.

As the dinghy motored closer to Grace alarm bells started to sound in Cip's head, so much so that the rest of the passengers could hear the clang of the bell!!

For Grace was indeed sitting pretty high out of the water and that was not right and it certainly weren't good.

As they clambered onboard it became evident that quick action was called for, Grace was in just 1.8 Metres of water and was fast running firmly aground. Basildon was first on the scene with whiz-rib and passengers, by now Grace has a serious lean on and is in fast retreating water. They threw 006 a line whilst Cip fired up Grace's motor, with the crew frantically trying to rock Grace further over to free her deep fin keel, sadly all to no avail.

**B**y this time Procyon could see what was going on and was soon on the scene, Stirling quickly lashed up a bridle connecting rope so as to bridge both his rear cleats and make for a centre pull on Grace, Basildon meanwhile whizzes about, at one point attempting to tow Grace further

inland, that boy has got to swing his compass???

As Procyon heaved on the bridle line whilst Basildon zoomed over Grace's anchor chain with an almighty clang on his prop, the strain proved too much and Stirling found himself fouling his own prop with his coracle painter, now he's in trouble.

006 makes for the shore again no doubt attempting some pincer movement learnt in the Marines.

Despite her best efforts Procyon did not have the weight and or guts to make much of an impact on Grace's position, fouling her own prop was the last straw for her, she now had her own problems to contend with.

Little did Stirling know then but he was soon to make much closer contact with his prop than originally intended that weekend.

**T**he third vessel about to become embroiled in this fiasco was also at anchor in the same spot off Stone Point, a much heavier motor sailor. Seeing the trouble these two yachts were now in, and likewise pondering the antics of the rib, the skipper of this vessel charged to the rescue, well almost.

With line attached and Grace now at a serious 30 degrees of heel the motor sailor gunned his engine, with smoke belching, water spewing and boiling from his prop he heaved at Grace managing to move her a few feet, unfortunately in the ensuing melee he managed to swamp and capsize his own tender.

Suddenly, with an almighty bang, his line snapped under the strain. It was time to abandon ship.



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The remainder of the anchor line was deployed, Cip radioed the Coastguard to inform them of his predicament and the hazard to other vessels Grace now presented. With the yacht stuck fast it was time to secure her as best as possible and arrange to abandon ship.



Meanwhile it was obvious to Stirling that his yacht, Procyon, had a real problem with the rope wrapped around his prop, although the motor could still turn the prop the alarming sound coming from the rear end pointed to an unhappy state of affairs, as he later found out. As you will learn this became a source of much mirth for his accompanying cruisers.

Stirling slowly motored Procyon back down the Twizzle channel towards Titchmarsh marina to find a suitable buoy for the remainder of the evening, Whiz-rib 006 picked up the coracle loaded with the provisions, bags and beach party gear to tow that behind him and motored up the channel to find Procyon, unloaded his passengers and returned to Grace to collect Mrs. Cip and Miss Cip. Paul and Ian followed on once they had secured Grace, with Cip constantly muttering under his breath.

Cip could not fathom (get it fathom, depth, oh I don't know why I bother at times) how on earth the tide managed to ebb so much earlier than it should have done, it is not possible, against the laws of nature. Pug pointed out that maybe, just maybe you understand, the incorrect tide tables had been applied to the curve and that it was in fact not a freak of nature that got it wrong (although that depends on which level of the food chain we are talking about) but human error, and with that comment he quickly disappeared under the dinghy's splash-deck.

Yep, it is sad to admit in print but it was pointing towards an error in calculations, or an incorrect source of tidal information.

In Cip's defence, his choice of local tide times to base his calculations on was logical, however, with hindsight those timings are maybe suspect when applied to this point of the channel?

**B**y the time the ten cruisers had made it back to a point of safety, all aboard Procyon, they were drenched through. At best Procyon could accommodate six or seven at a push, exhausted and wet Amanda, Jerry and Yvonne elected to head ashore to the marina and seek a night's kip at a local B&B. As it turned out Walton is far more popular than given credit as there was no room at the Inn for our damp squibs.

Amanda drove the hour back home where a hot shower, hot food and a warm, fluffy, empty bed beckoned, whilst Jazzzer and Von ended up in Ipswich for the night.

Time for that BBQ, albeit slimmed down.

Anne and Commodore Al set to cooking the bangers in the galley, Pugwash buttered the rolls, someone managed the bar, poor old Cip had to remain compost-mentist as later in the wee small hours he and Pug were heading back to Grace to stay with her as the tide turned.

It is surprising how many people will sleep in the most uncompromising places when tired enough, with berths, cots and floor full of slumberers, the early morning wake up call set, these shipmates called it a day.

*“Pug, pug, pug wake up it's 1 a.m. time to head back to Grace”*, Cip shook him awake, flipping inconsiderate if you ask me, well it was me he was awakening after all!!

Clear starry skies joined them as they motored the dinghy back towards the marina, odd that as they should have been heading out, Cip soon corrected his heading pointing out that he needed to take a swing at it, yeah right, anyway they were soon headed in the right direction, down the channel towards Stone Point where Grace, hopefully, still awaited the returning tide.

In the dark of the night the occasional flash of the spotlight picked out another yacht that had been similarly caught out by the tide and mud, as it sat at an angle surrounded by shallow water. If this was anything to go by our boys were at least going to be able to motor up to Grace and clamber aboard, well that was the theory.

Imagine their consternation as they approached the spot where they thought Grace had been left only to find what seemed like the anchor chain, but as their eyes followed the chain ashore and up onto the expanse



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of mud there in all her glory, on her beam like some enormous beached whale, was dear old Grace, HIGH AND VERY DRY, with her hull, keel and propeller in full view.

Pug commented to Cip that the hull looked in good nick for not being lifted last season, Cip shot him one of his menacing, empty looks.

Grabbing the anchor chain the boys hauled the dinghy out of the water and onto the mud as far as possible, a quick check on the order of command saw Pug ordered over the side to test if it was firm enough to carry his weight and thus possible to get onboard Grace.

As it happened she lay on her side on a reasonably solid mix of mud and shingle, her rear end lay in thick mud, too dangerous to attempt walking on. Pugwash headed back to the shore and around the front end where the previous evening, before abandoning ship, he and Cip had tied the fenders into a long line and fixed them to the starboard beam to act as some form of buffer / cushion as she went over.

A bit of a mountaineering task confronted the lads to get onboard and into the cabin.

She seemed stuck fast on her side and made no attempt to move as they climbed aboard, the inclinometer showed them at plus 45 degrees, getting below was going to be fun!

All that was on the Port side of the galley and berths when they abandoned Grace was now firmly lodged on the Starboard side, high tide was not due in until 6 a.m., they were in for an uncomfortable night of cat napping with one eye on the water level and

one ear on the groaning as the water shoved Grace out of the way.

The crew would like to add in kind recognition of the good Samaritan that had come to their aid the previous evening, this neighbouring vessel flashed his spot light over to signal that he was likewise on watch and had been keeping an eye on Grace since the crew left.

What a great bunch of human beings Yachties truly are.

The hours ticked by, Ian stretched across the saloon seating jamming his head against the Port side seating and his feet against the Starboard side, literally standing up laying down, if you see what I mean. Cip wedged himself in between the Port salon seating and the engine cowling under the saloon table.

As the night ticked away the temperature dropped, with one eye open Pug spied in the gloom what he took to be his fleece at his feet so he donned some warmth, half an hour later Cip could be heard complaining about the cold certain that he had left his fleece onboard. Cip flipped on the torch and set about hunting for his fleece, in so doing waking Pugwash and forcing him to set about the search, all to no avail. It'll turn up in the morning light.

As the hours ticked by the tide did eventually turn, water soon lapped around the bow, up the starboard gunnels laying in the mud and around her stern. The big fear was that she was stuck so fast that instead of lifting with the incoming tide her cockpit would remain below water level and flood the cabin.

Thankfully she slowly, imperceptibly righted herself, by 5 a.m. she was upright and

soon ready for motoring off the mud bank.

Cip flipped his double sided coin to decide who was on the anchor; he fired up betsy whilst Pug once AGAIN went forward on anchor chain heaving duties. With a bit of a struggle as the Essex mud reluctantly gave up her catch, Grace floated out of her hold and into deeper water.

It transpired that if the crew had originally anchored no more than 10 feet further out into the channel this episode in Grace's history would remain unwritten.

Paul and Ian soon had Grace safely on a buoy opposite Procyon around 05.30, once secure Cip put the kettle on for a welcome brew, the duo sat on deck sipping tea and watched a glorious sunrise.

They then set about cleaning her up, scrubbing clean the muddy decks and returning items to their rightful cubby-holes down below. Other than the mud and a slightly stiff rudder for a few minutes on first righting herself Grace seemed none the worse for her ordeal.

It's not clear at what point in the morning Cip recognised that Ian was in fact wearing HIS fleece and not his own, it being two sizes too large for him, but it cost Pugwash yet another round.

The first of the motley mob across the narrow channel surfaced somewhat later around 09.30. Spied sipping a brew under the cockpit canopy, faces glinting in the sunlight.

Somewhat rashly Cip enthusiastically comments to Pug that with such great weather today could be the day for



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the BBQ after all, his suggestion was greeted with an audible moan from a hung head.

He never gives up!

With Grace sparkling and clean the two rescuers dinghy across to Procyon for a much welcome bacon buttie washed down with a hot mug of tea, in fact that member of the superior species, Anne, even cooked our lads a sausage buttie too, Porkers!

Good old Amanda rose early from under her snug duck-down quilt and motored the hour back to the marina to rejoin the cruisers, catching a lift in the rib with Jerry and Yvonne as they three met on the pontoon.

The weather did make a dive for the worse, although it stayed mainly dry, few spots here and there, but certainly nobody was tempting fate by returning to the spot for a repeat attempt of the beach BBQ.

Instead Stirling and Ian took the rib for a short blast to blow the cobwebs out of its motor and to see what it could do when forced onto the plane, boy did it tramp on.

## BAGGY TROUSERS

**A**h, almost forgot, yes, Stirling, needs to fill out before wearing Cip's clobber.

The prop, rope encrusted prop of Procyon needed freeing up before she ventured any further.

By design the propellers on most vessels sit below the water line, some further below that line than others,

and Procyon is no different. The knife attached the pole idea sounded great but soon proved useless.

Somebody was going to have to go in, and worse under the murky looking water to cut off the entangled rope. Well when I say somebody there was only ever going to be one somebody and that was Stirling, it was his boat after all, not only that he enjoys a challenge, I think that's why as soon as he got wind of the DHYC he tracked them down and insisted on becoming a member.

Luckily Cip had onboard his newly acquired wetsuit, you never know when one is going to come in handy, according to Mrs. Cip he can be seen waltzing about in it on a Sunday afternoon preparing the lunch, goggles and all.

Well it takes all sorts and I suppose providing he isn't doing any harm, and he is amongst consenting adults, it's OK. It's young Charlie I feel for.

Time for the fashion parade, Stirling dons the rubber, with knife between his teeth he resembles one of those wrinkly hounds who's skin is too big for their body. It is a dangerous manoeuvre for Stirling as he risked the excess wetsuit filling with water and sinking him to the bottom!

He removed bundles of rope from around the prop, in fact most of his tender's painter plus a few meaty extras. On testing his motor it sounded altogether happier running free.

The main reason for Mrs. Pugwash returning to the yacht was not to collect her beloved but to go for a sail, she felt she had missed out on

any sailing during the Trafalgar weekend, as they didn't do any to talk about, so insisted on having a tootle around the bay.

Unfortunately Charlie was feeling under the weather and wanted her own cabin back onboard Grace, so mum and daughter were ferried across from Procyon by Dad, Jerry and Yvonne took the rib back to the marina and pulled out the plug, while Stirling and Anne took Ian and Amanda for a pleasant, albeit blowy, sail across to Harwich docks, with Amanda at the helm for most of the journey, which she thoroughly enjoyed.

It was common knowledge that Cip intended a visit to Ipswich during the week to take a look at his upgrade, a rather tasty Oyster 43. In repayment for the weekend's cock up Stirling and Ian concocted a plan to up the ante for this particular purchase by making a counter bid with the Broker, that'll make him pay for it.

**C**odicil:- The Author has it on best authority that the beleaguered Mr. Pugwash is now in receipt of fierce instruction to get one of these boats with these bits of flapping cloth for her to play with in the Med!

The day ends as they always start, reminiscing and laughter, with the only obligatory difference being the strength of the G&T's

Amanda and Ian say their sad farewells, leaving our two vessels and crew side by side, relaxing with drinks in hand planning the rest of the week's cruising as these lucky beggers were on holiday.