

Marcon Trophy

The 2017 Marcon Trophy Award went to Peter and Christine Ives for their extended cruise up the East Coast

AN EAST COAST ADVENTURE

We started our summer holiday this year when the weather was ideal for sailing in mid June on our Trident No.164 'Mandurah' to visit the East Coast.

With an early morning start we sailed from the river Medway on the ebbing tide, reaching Bradwell Marina, on the river Blackwater, mostly motor sailing. We spent a couple of days here before crossing the river to Tollesbury Marina and as the weather was hot and humid stayed there a few weeks.

Proceeding further up the coast we next called in at Titchmarsh Marina, which is situated in the Walton Backwaters for several days and then moved for one week to the Walton Basin which is behind Walton-on-the-Naze seaside town. This resort has many delights e.g. fish and chip restaurants, which made us reluctant to move on!!

Our next move was to Fox's Marina on the river Orwell, on the outskirts of Ipswich, this being our most northerly destination on this trip. However, after a fortnight the weather was starting to deteriorate and we made plans to head back again, calling in at North Fambridge Marina on the river Crouch, which is about eighteen miles inland. We had a very relaxing time here but started to worry that we might become weather bound in such a rural location.

A window in the weather forecast appeared but unfortunately this would mean a night sail home due to the tides. Burnham-on-Crouch was our starting off point from a mooring buoy at 00.30 hrs on a Sunday morning, with a north west wind in our favour. Within half an hour of leaving the buoy mist and fog enveloped us. This was a great surprise as there had been no mention of this on the BBC local or inshore waters forecasts. Unfortunately this weather continued with us for the rest of the trip using our engine.

About two hours later than usual we reached the South Whittaker Buoy after having great difficulty in the dense fog using a spotlight on every

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Mandurah alongside

buoy to confirm our position with the GPS, at the same time periodically blowing our foghorn!

We now headed south and by 'luck' we navigated to every buoy in the Swin Channel. Looming ahead was the main Thames Shipping Channel - Sea Reach - which we had to cross without radar.

As dawn approached the visibility slightly improved. We became aware of ships nearby from the VHF radio and the AIS on the tablet confirmed their location. So we proceeded to cross the main Channel near the West Oaze Buoy. At that moment the aluminium radar deflector on our mast disintegrated, falling down to the cockpit and just missing our heads!



Mandurah drying the washing

At great speed we finally crossed the shipping lane as the dense fog descended upon us again. We suddenly came to a standstill. We were completely disorientated. Quickly looking at the compass we discovered we were in the wrong direction against the tide. For some reason the autopilot had done a complete turn around but we instantly correct this and returned to our original course.

very close nearby but we were not in their way and we continued to the Kent coast and after a few hours reached Garrison Point and the entrance to the river Medway. We had missed the tide for our home berth in Gillingham Marina so we moored on a visitors buoy at Queenborough. We crept into our bunks with haste to catch up on some very necessary sleep and we finally completed our journey back next day.

The fog started to clear again and we saw two ships

