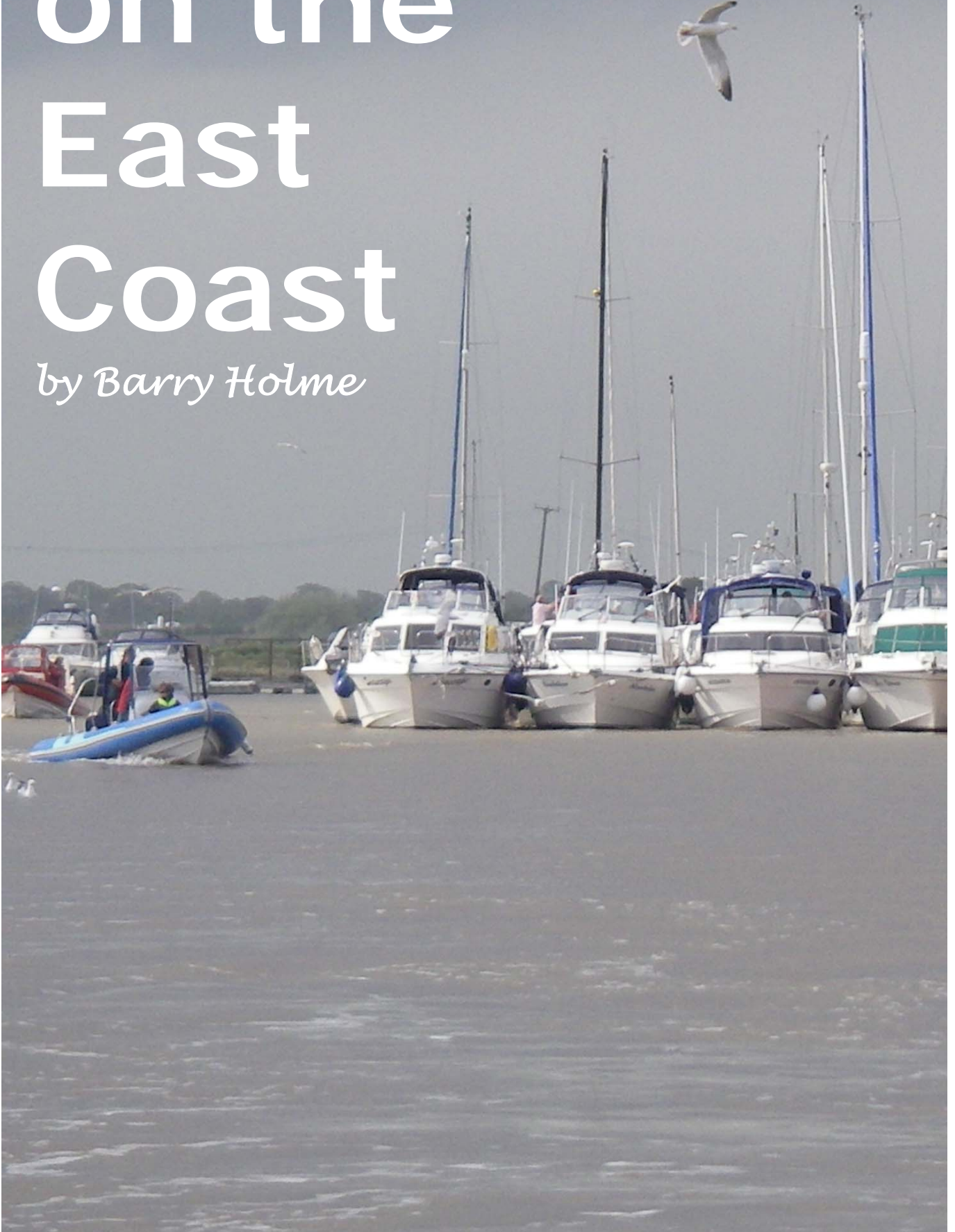


# River Roving on the East Coast

*by Barry Holme*



Photos courtesy of: Bernie Henreck/Jane Middleton/  
James Nott/Chris Hinson/Barry Holme

Once again the base marina was The Suffolk Yacht Harbour at Levington which is roughly half way between Ipswich and Felixstowe.

*Chris Hinson the organiser was expecting 3 RIBS to be involved and these were all launched and ready for the off by 0900hrs (BIBOA time) on Saturday morning:*

RIB	Skipper	Crew
<b>Blue Marlin</b> Solent RIB	Chris Hinson(Organiser)	Sam & Ben Hinson Mark Nott
<b>La Bamba</b> Ribcraft	Bernie Hanreck	Colin
<b>MOR DEN 2</b> Ocean RIB	Barry Holme	Penny Holme Roy & Irene Bundle

**Saturday** dawned bright and sunny and, with a fair tide and favourable wind, we cast off for a “run” up to Southwold, for lunch. A phone call to the harbourmaster, prepared him for our arrival. Yes, there would be enough water in the river and yes, there was mooring space for our 3 RIBs but could we leave before 1600hrs as he was expecting a large contingent of “Brooms”.

There is a 6 knot speed limit in the River Orwell, which seems awfully slow! Also a speed limit in Felixstowe/ Harwich Harbour, which of course we kept to. Once we reached Languard Point, at the mouth of the river, we increased to a suitable cruising speed for all ribs of 25 knots. Slow by Solent speed standards, however, much greener!!!! – and fuel goes a great deal further. Southwold Harbour is on the River Blyth, where the current can run at over 6 kts and the speed limit is 4 kts! We had departed Suffolk Yacht Harbour at 1020hrs and were safely moored in Southwold by 1230hrs.

A lunch of Adnams and compulsory cod and chips at the Harbour Inn, replenished famished ribsters. This pub is on the waterside, and above the door is marked the flood level in 1953 – you would have just about been okay sitting on the roof!

There followed a cultural tour of the town of Southwold, known for its Adnams Brewery ( the last to use heavy horses for the drays in the UK) and the very expensive beach huts along the front. The walk into town took its toll, and an ice cream break was called for. We returned to the harbour at 1600hrs to find it filling fast with the “Brooms” that the harbourmaster had talked about – these were mooring 4 – 5 deep across the river. Time to go.

The tide had turned and the wind was picking up, and sea conditions were typical East Coast – short, sharp chop for the return journey. The “Golf Ball” of Sizewell Nuclear Power Station was soon abreast and then we were dodging the fishing floats off Thorpeness – this year they were not as bad as in the past, when we have found our way with difficulty as the fishermen seem intent on blocking the course! Aldeburgh is just around the headland (east coast type), and here one can run close in shore up to Orfordness lighthouse. The mouths of the Rivers Ore and Deben were soon past followed by a slight stoppage off Felixstowe town when *La Bamba* became attached to a fishing float. Luckily no damage done and we were soon back into Harwich / Felixstowe Harbour and returned to the marina for a little “Skipperbitter” to finish the cruise.



Blue Marlin



La Bamba



MOR DEN 2





Dinner was booked at the Priory Park Restaurant, as all the local hostelrys declared that they were full, it being a bank holiday Saturday! Priory Park was once again very welcoming with excellent food.

**Sunday** was bright and sunny, however, the wind was blowing from the north west and forecast to strengthen during the day. We decided to cruise to Titchmarsh Marina (Walton Backwaters) for Sunday lunch and then return to Harwich Halfpenny Quay for afternoon tea: we know how to exert ourselves on the East Coast!

A telephone call to the Ramsholt Inn on the River Deben booked the group a table for an evening meal. Calculations suggested that we would arrive an hour before high tide at the small quay and that we would be able to leave before someone pulled the plug out and the water disappeared!

The entrances to the Rivers Deben and Ore are always interesting – the channel markers must be followed exactly as the entrance channels change regularly and the current can run in excess of 6 kts. A reasonable North Westerly was now blowing and with a rising tide was no problem for the RIBs, however, rounding a bend in the river we came upon a *Blue Lady* being blown on to the mud – this was one of those occasions when a yachting was relatively pleased to see a RIB (I think, although in Solent jargon we are Class 4, you know!). Much stirring of the black stuff and she became unstuck! Once released, very little thanks – next time

*Blue Lady* helps herself off!!

Finally, we arrived at the Ramsholt Inn Quay. A scramble on to the quayside was gallantly undertaken by the ladies when we arrived – a drink and dinner in the offing was sufficient to persuade them to partake of a little mountaineering and ascend some 2 metres from the RIBs to the quay. Dinner was excellent, albeit the pub was bursting at the seams.

On leaving, the RIBs were now at Quayside level but beginning to drop fast. We had a great evening cruise past Felixstowe, through Harwich Harbour back to the marina - Suffolk Yacht harbour.

**Monday** and a short river cruise to Ipswich for lunch and early return for recovering the RIBs and so home. Ipswich Dock/Marinas are entered through a lock into quite a large basin, often with a customs boat moored alongside and sizeable coasters. The marina is happy to allow one to come alongside if using the facilities – eating, drinking etc. Speak to the marina nicely and do not stay too long and charging is waived.

Many thanks to Chris Hinson for organising this weekend – the weather was much better than the last two years – and it was good to see everybody again. One of my guest was surprised how much excellent cruising waters there are on the East Coast. One day we will tempt a few RIBs away from the South Coast to this excellent cruising ground – the world does not end at the Dover Straits!



Felixstowe docks



MOR DEN 2 helps a 'Blue Lady'