

## **Bradwell and the delights of the Blackwater Estuary**

Sailing from Bradwell Quay is one of the delights of the East Coast. With easy access to the upper reaches of the river Blackwater as far as historic Maldon, there is ample choice of cruising destinations.

Tucked just inside the Blackwater Estuary the creek at Bradwell on Sea is easily located with its dominant landmarks of the now defunct Bradwell Power Station.

Bradwell Creek, with its historic Quay at waterside, offers safe moorings as well as access to a well appointed marina. This makes it the perfect location from which to explore the local cruising area.

The old Quay as the focus of the village of Waterside is now somewhat dilapidated, but there is an excellent slip for dinghy access. Bilge keeled boats can take the ground on the old Quay slip, which is set just upstream from the Bradwell Quay Yacht Club scrubbing posts. By arrangement with the club, deeper draft keel yachts and motor boats can make use of this facility.

This makes the site an ideal location for that mid season scrub or a bit of maintenance .

The BQYC Club house at the top of the slip is an excellent venue for club meets. Perhaps you would enjoy a BBQ from the Deck veranda overlooking the creek and estuary.

The local cruising area includes amongst other destinations West Mersea, Tollesbury and Brightlingsea, all natural harbours with communities who offer a warm welcome to visiting yachts. These ports of call, all offer moorings or marina berths with facilities for every need. As a result it's quite easy to spend a week or two in the safe haven of the estuary moving from place to place in gentle passages of two or three hours, leisurely taking in the atmosphere of the low lying panorama.

Extending this local cruising ground is quite easy as a short day sail brings Harwich and the Thames within comfortable reach.

Reversing the passage for visitors, the approach from Ramsgate and the south, crossing the Thames from North foreland is well marked and quite straightforward under most conditions. It's true, that you would not recommend every passage to a stranger in fresh conditions, as the short chop in a seaway with wind over tide is not to be underestimated. The currents can also run at quite a pace through the channels between the sands. However it's these very sand banks that give the East Coast its special charm. Completing a passage and sailing into the Blackwater via Foulger Gat and the Spitway is always tinged with a sense of achievement mixed with pleasure in reaching the safety and comfort of the Estuary. Coming round the Maplin sands from Southend or Gravesend is even simpler. Just get the tide working with you, doing any uphill work at the start of your passage and it's a pleasant day sail. Stay inside the well marked channel as it tends to shallow quite rapidly, sometime within a boats length out of the fairway. However it's a pleasant and safe passage offering the possibility to pilot from buoy to buoy. The new Wind Farm on the Gunfleet Sands and the redundant Bradwell Power Station offer clear if contrasting visual marks.

Cruising down from the north via Harwich is very straightforward. Allow adequate time

from Walton Pier (4 to 5 hours depending on boat) and make full use of the tide. Then the sail through the Wallet channel past Clacton is very straightforward. Sheltered from the north sea by the offshore sands of the Gunfleet, this wide channel follows the shoreline all the way into the Blackwater.

The Club House for Bradwell Quay Yacht Club is at the top of the slip on your port side once you enter the creek. Having negotiated the entrance and noticed the depth gauge for the marina on the creek marker post, you follow the well marked channel buoys and then traverse across the fairway on the leading marks until you pass the starboard hand buoy. Keep moving up the creek holding to the deep water on the port side of the central trot of moorings.

Ahead you will see the remains of the old Quay and the port hand marker post for the end of the slip. There are ample moorings further on past the marina entrance where you will usually find a vacancy. There are deep water berth at the far end of the creek suitable for overnight stays.

As you approach the Marina the deeper water moves across to the other side of the creek just to port of the mooring trot in the lee of the island.

Most boats are lured by the temptations of the Marina at this point, and a very nice place it is too.

However, having made yourselves comfortable don't forget to take the Wiggly Wobbly Walk along the old sea wall to Waterside and Bradwell Quay Yacht Club.

You assured of a warm welcome. The walk back can prove to be more of a challenge than the arrival. We have lost some very good crew on this trail. So much so that we now have a very nice handrail installed to help the weary Sailor back to his boat.

To prearrange your club visit - tel. Secretary- Roger Price **01621 890173**  
Alternatively e-mail [honsec.bqyc@virgin.net](mailto:honsec.bqyc@virgin.net)

Otherwise as independent crews just take a chance and call in.

**BOYC ALWAYS OFFERS A FRIENDLY WELCOME.**