

# April - May

## 19th April

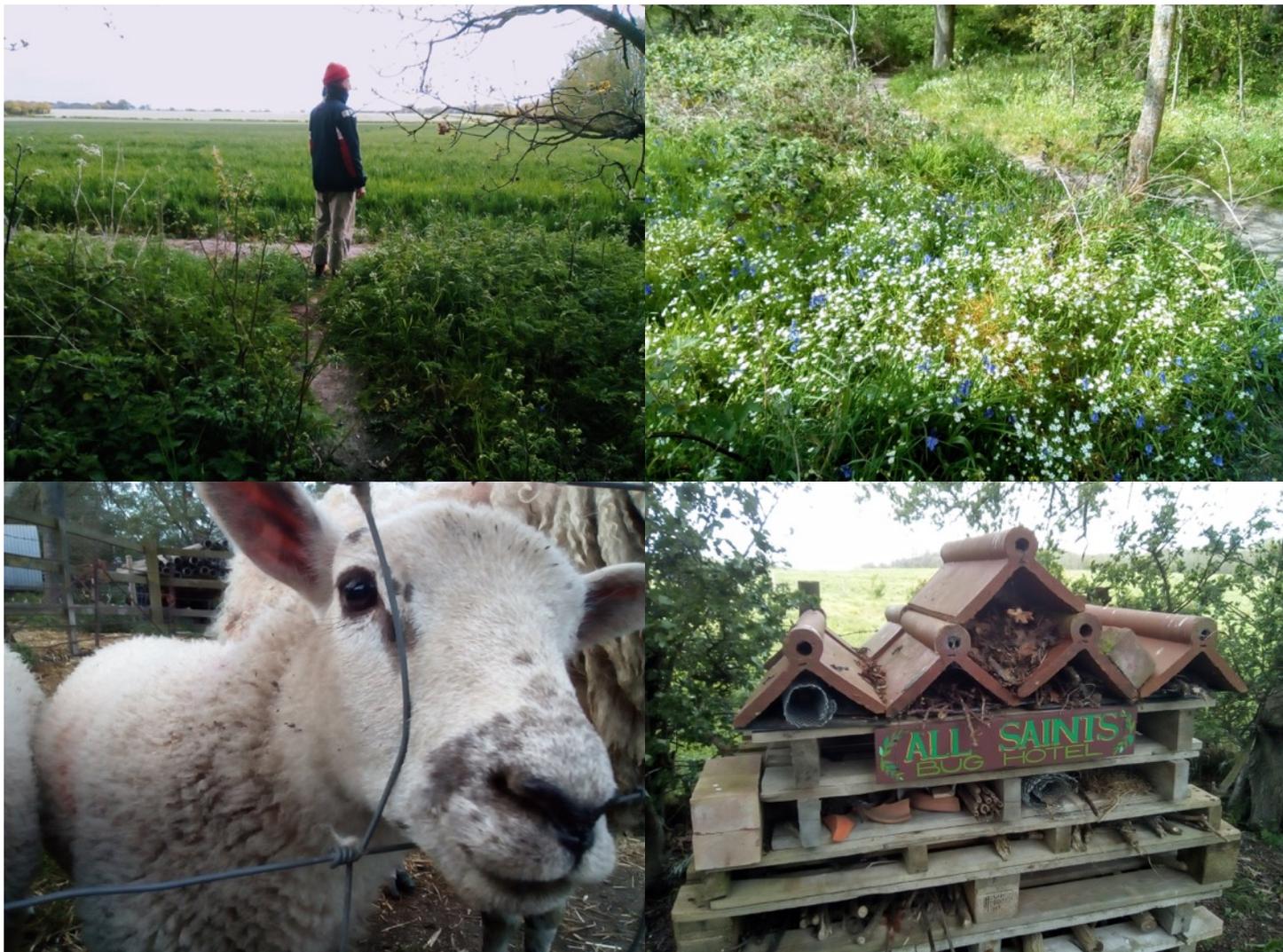
Moved Blue Mermaid into the dry dock on the tide last night, ready for antifouling, hull painting, and as a side note, some very very red deck paint.



## 27th April

After spending the last week or so working on Blue Mermaid in the dry dock, painting, antifouling, and finishing getting her ready for shakedown, I was invited to help with a different shakedown on

our neighbour Pioneer, but it was too windy and we wouldn't have been able to set many sails at all, so I had a more land-based weekend at Josephine's.



We went to Tiptree Heath, said hello to Jo's sheepish neighbours, and paid a visit to the All Saints' Bug Hotel in the graveyard of All Saints' Church in Brightlingsea. No sailing :( but still a very good weekend.

## 30th April

We finally did our shakedown trip! We had our compass swung as well so we now have two beautiful balls to balance out all that steel in the hull.

It was my first time sailing on a boat without an engine, if you're used to sailing with one it's a very odd feeling. You have no backup, your main tools for problem solving are sails and an anchor. I think I'm going to learn a lot here.



*Compass swing in progress.*

We had perfect conditions to set all the sails, so we got to see her in all her glory, and uncovered no major problems in the process of putting them all up.



*Photo courtesy of Steve Hunt.*



We sailed around to Brightlingsea and anchored off East Mersea. Excelsior was anchored there too! So we had to repel boarders in the form of their trainee Janice, their mate, Isaac, and bosun, Mette. Was so lovely to see them all again!

Overall, a great trip and very successful maiden voyage for Blue Mermaid.



*Photo courtesy of Steve Hunt.*

## 10th May

We had our first proper trip with a group this week, 4 days with some lovely young people from Lexden Springs School, a school for disabled children. This trip was on the Reminder rather than Blue Mermaid, and I'd forgotten how much I love sail training!

Just the amount of progress seen throughout the week was fantastic, in particular, one of the girls had issues with mobility and balance, and before the week was out she'd climbed halfway up the rigging (with full safety gear of course). And the confidence boost within the whole group was so clear to see.

I love sailing and I love all the hands on traditional maintenance skills, but moments like that are the cherry on the cake.



*The Lexden Springs group working together to pull up the barge boat.*