



PotterShip



***The Royal Lymington
Yacht Club in 2006***

From the Commodore



It's all change at this time of year and the AGM saw more changes than most.

We said goodbye to John Bence as Commodore and to Rod Perry as Vice Commodore. John has been an outstanding Commodore and brought the experience of a successful business career, a long interest in racing and cruising as well as many years' experience in a range of voluntary posts, as Rear Commodore Sailing here, on the RYA Council and with the Lymington Harbour Commissioners. Rod was excellent as Vice Commodore steering the Club through the tricky waters of incorporation, developing the, easier to use new member process and masterminding the development of our new web site. With John's capable chairmanship and Rod's steady common sense approach, Flag Officers' and General Committee meetings have always been something to look forward to. I wish them both well in enjoying more time with their boats!

Also at the AGM, we said goodbye to General Committee Members Jeremy Austin, Alison Husband and David Sizer. I'd like to thank them on your behalf for first class contributions to the management of the Club during their three year tour. I look forward to working with our four new General Committee members and rest of the General Committee during my term of office as Commodore.

I particularly want to welcome two new Flag Officers to the team. Phil Batten becomes Vice Commodore; I have sailed quite a few thousand miles with Phil and we know how we both think. David Hayles joins as Rear Commodore House. He is currently the Scow National Champion - a first for a Flag Officer.



Finally, I welcome a Flag Officer who has already completed four years as an officer and has worked incredibly hard at what would have daunted many during the incorporation process, keeping our financial affairs on track and continuing the tradition of dependable management and formal accounting functions. I refer of course to Gill Barron, who now has the new title of Rear Commodore Finance recognising the changing role of the Club's Officer responsible for maintaining our growing financial success.

Last year was a great sailing season for the Club and its Members and wasn't the weather great, at least for those of us who spent most of the Summer at home? During the year, we ran something over 200 days of organised sailing events, we started over 400 races and ran a dozen or so open events which attracted more than 800 entrants. Our keel-boats competed at national level and Members were prize winners in individual classes at Cowes Week and in the Round the Island Race. Our burgee was flown round the world by Members cruising in South America, Australia, the Baltic, the North Sea coasts of Scotland and Scandinavia, Atlantic Spain and the Mediterranean as well as

the cruising grounds close to home.

Having completed three years as Rear Commodore House, I want to thank Mark Fishwick for the support he has given me and the House Committee. I can hardly overdo my congratulations to him, having taken on the role as House manager soon after my appointment. Mark has made a visit to the Club for lunch or supper an absolute delight for everyone. Our head chef Peter Lowe, ably assisted by Fergal, his second in command, has developed a cheerful atmosphere in the kitchen and has maintained and developed the Club's tradition for good food, cooked from fresh local ingredients. Working with the House Committee members over the last three years has been great fun and I'd like to thank all those who worked with me there during that time including John McPhee, our Steward, not least for his able assistance to the new Wine Sub-Committee.

The best thing about our Club is the fellowship we get from the activities we enjoy together whether in the Clubhouse, on the Lymington River or further afield on Meets and chance cruising encounters. It is particularly enjoyable to get involved with the teams of people throughout the Club who make things happen. Those of you who volunteer will know just how much fun it can be and when it gets difficult, as it sometimes will, we know that by combining our strengths, we can make good things happen. If you have not yet got involved, maybe now is the time to have a go. Speak to any of your friends who spend time here and they'll help you find a place in the Club's activities that suits you. You'll have a load of fun, I promise you, and it will give huge satisfaction, whatever job you take on.

Geoff Holmes

New flag officers and general committee members confirmed at AGM

The Club's Articles (which we used to call Rules) provide for Flag Officers and Committee Members to serve for three years, or if elected to a casual vacancy, to serve the balance of the three-year term. Over the last few years, this programmed succession had fallen out of alignment, which resulted in both the Commodore and Vice-Commodore changing at this year's AGM, which is not ideal. A similar problem had arisen with two of the places on the General Committee.

To resolve these points, the AGM on 3 February agreed that, exceptionally, Geoff Holmes will serve for only two years as Commodore, and that Judy Ruffell and Jim Venn will each serve for a fourth year on the Committee.

Commodore



Geoff Holmes has been a Member since 1981, and is retired from a career in software. He has been a cruising sailor for more than 30 years, in a Westerly Centaur then a Nicholson 31 followed in 1985 by *Mainframe*, a Nicholson 476. He sailed to St Lucia in ARC 1999, returning Antigua-Plymouth direct. In 2002, with his wife Marilyn, he took *Mainframe* to the Azores. He is awaiting delivery of a new *Mainframe* – a Dale Nelson 38. He served on the General Committee 1993-96, installing the Club card system, the Cruising Sub Committee 1996-99, organising the debate on 'Heavy or Light' cruising boats and again on the General Committee in 2003-04, project-managing the ground floor refurbishment. He served as Rear Commodore House 2004-2007.

Vice-Commodore



Philip Batten has been a Club Member since 1987, and is married to Ann who is a Family Member. Phil learned to sail in YW Cadets as a junior member of Christchurch SC and Parkstone YC. After service abroad he returned to live locally. He has owned, successively, Westerly, Sadler and Moody cruising yachts, and currently owns a small Westerly, moored in France. He has cruised extensively to Channel ports, with some crewing in the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic. After RAF pilot training Phil served for 30 years as a pilot with BOAC/British Airways and Virgin Atlantic on world-wide routes. He has served for three years on the Cruising Sub-Committee and for a total of seven years on the General Committee and Finance Sub-Committee.

Rear Commodore House

David Hayles has been a Member for 23 years, during which time he and Carole have enjoyed extensive racing and cruising with the Club. The racing varied from Sigma 41, Etchells, XODs to, more recently, Scows. They have cruised extensively from North and South Brittany to Croatia. In retirement they have benefited from the bar and restaurant and welcomed the



social activities and friendship of members. David's business experience in his company, Accenture, and with IBM, along with his sailing experience and 2 years on the General Committee, will enable him to contribute more directly to the ongoing

promotion and development of the Club, and the 'House' in particular.

General Committee

Bob Baker has been a Member since



1997 and has been sailing a succession of yachts from Lymington for the last 16 years. He shares his current X332 *Brightwork* with his brother Jon, and races her with great enthusiasm but, he

says, limited success! Bob lives in Brockenhurst and is married to Theresa, and have two teenage children. Since taking early retirement from Philips Semiconductors last year, Bob has been assisting with Wednesday Junior Sailing. He is the Southern Area coordinator for the UK X332 Association.



John Miller is married to Mary, and has two sons. He started sailing aged eight on the North Cornish Coast. He moved to the North East and qualified as a Chartered

Accountant with Price Waterhouse before joining Proctor & Gamble. John raced keel boats with Royal Northumberland YC, and dinghies at Tynemouth SC where he was Treasurer and subsequently Secretary. After moving South, he raced with Chichester Cruiser Racing Club and now cruises with Mary on their Sweden 370, *Northern Light*. He assists with Wednesday Junior Sailing, is an RYA Powerboat Instructor and has been a member of the Cruising Sub-Committee.

John Mills and his wife Jean live in Sandy Down. He retired in 2003, as Chairman and Senior Partner of Leslie Furness, Chartered



Surveyors, London, and is also a Chartered Arbitrator, having been responsible for major city centre, retail led, mixed use development schemes in a number

of major towns and cities. They keep Coral of Aqaba, a Nicholson 40ac ketch, which they have owned for the last 15 years, on the Beaulieu River, regularly cruising home waters. Both have held RYA Yachtmaster certificates since the mid-1980's and have cruised bareboat throughout the Eastern & Western Mediterranean, Greek Islands, Adriatic, Caribbean and Whitsunday Islands. John Mills plays golf at Brockenhurst Manor GC and he is a great supporter of Wednesday junior sailing.



Gordon Stredwick

is the Royal Yachting Association's Performance Manager, with responsibility for the Racing Department's planning/finance and race officials/racing rules programmes. He

is an ISAF International Judge and Umpire – events judged and/or umpired include the last 3 Louis Vuitton Cups (challenger races for the America's Cup) and 7 World Championships – but he likes nothing more than racing his Scow with wife Jane or cruising the Solent in their Cornish Shrimper. Gordon has been a member of the Club's Sailing Committee and Royal Lyngington Cup Organising Committee, and is a past Chairman of the Lyngington River Scow Class Association.



Commodore's Trophy

Presented annually for the most outstanding achievements and help to the Club by any Member, this was awarded to Robin Markes for his tireless support of almost every event run by the Club over many years.



Jack in the Basket Trophy

Awarded to a Club Member under 30 years of age who is considered to be the outstanding yachtsman of the year, this was awarded to Philip Sparks for the second year running. Phil entered nineteen Optimist events last year and won thirteen of them, racing in Uruguay, Bermuda, Holland, Spain, France and Italy as well as in the UK.

RYA Community Award

Geoff Stock

Since the introduction of the RYA Community Award Scheme in 2002, a member, or in one year two Members of our Club have received the Award. We are very proud of them all, because they represent the hundreds of volunteers who support our Club.

This year Geoff Stock was the recipient of the Lifetime Commitment. He is mainly involved with coaching our Optimist sailors and with IOCA (UK).

IOCA is the Class Association responsible for the development and promotion of Optimist sailing in the UK. Working closely with a network of volunteer representatives nationwide, IOCA ensures there are development paths in place for Optimist sailors from 8 to 15 years of age, from first sail through to World Championships. This is



Geoff was presented with his award at our annual dinner by the RYA chief executive, Rod Carr

achieved through training grants and schemes, squad development programmes and support for local, national and international racing events. IOCA is affiliated and works in conjunction with the RYA and the International Optimist governing body (IODA). Volvo Car UK and Musto have jointly sponsored the Inland Championships, the National Championships and the End of Seasons for the past five years.

Jubilee Challenge Trophy

This is awarded annually to the Member who has achieved the most outstanding off-shore performance. Mary Falk was the recipient for her courageous achievements in the single handed Petit Bateau Race. full report of which is included on page 51



Joe and Nick Win Gold

Athens Olympic silver medallists, Joe Glanfield and Nick Rogers, have won gold at the Miami Olympic Class Regatta (22nd – 27th Jan) the first major International event of the 2007 Olympic sailing season, competing against the World's best 470 sailors (double-handed Olympic dinghy).

Rogers and Glanfield suffered a set back last year in their campaign for the 2008 Olympics in China, when Rogers fell from his mountain bike and broke his wrist before the start of the summer season. It took the pair until August to get back into training, but proved they have incredible talent by winning gold at their first event back, the Olympic Test Event in Qingdao, China. Last week saw the pair carry on their rise back to form, when they led won the regatta by a large margin, 21 points from the second placed Australian team

Next on Rogers and Glanfield's calendar is the Princess Sofia Regatta in Palma at the end of April but the team's mind is focused on the next two years, as they campaign for a gold in the 2008 Games.



From the Captain of Racing 2006

What a fantastic year's racing we've had and I'd better say thank you to the Racing Sub-Committee all our Race Teams, Coordinators and the Staff for making our sailing programme run so well and producing such good events. The Racing sub-committee under the new leadership of Chris Baldwick have some great new ideas and some fantastic events for 2007.

Highlights of 2006 for me was Thursday Evening racing with my family, sailing with Eric Williams his X in the Pottership and being given the opportunity of steering John Corden and Annie Merryweather's *Fresh Herring* for the Contessa 32 Nationals, we had great sailing both in the Solent and in Christchurch Bay. I also heard great reports of the Summer Dinghy Regatta including a chocolate fountain in the Club, superb!

Our events this year kick off with the Spring Series with sponsorship from Henri Lloyd looks very promising with video coaching and some fantastic prizes on offer. Help your team go faster by getting out early this year.

For the dinghy sailors we start with a revamped Easter Regatta we're arranging coaching, tea and doughnuts when you sign off, daily as well as series prizes (so if you can't do the whole regatta just come along for a day) and a pursuit race. Now that the showers have been sorted and appear to go on you and not the passing public there really is no excuse to miss this one!

Later in the year we'll be running Monday and Thursday evening races and a new and improved Summer Regatta Week involving the Dinghies and the Keelboats and culminating in a great party. Apart from



Photo: onEdition

Yngling Team heading for the Olympics

The front cover picture shows the new Yngling team of Sarah Ayton, Sarah Webb and Pippa Wilson competing in the North American Championships which they won.

The girls are training intensively in the hope of becoming the Yngling GB selection for the Beijing Olympics.

running regattas for the Contessa32s, Folkboats, 6ms, Fireflies, Larks Scorpions IRC to name but a few we're also running National Championships for the RS500s, Wayfarers and Tasars. If you don't have a Tasar and want try one contact Tim Knight 01590-682182 he should be able to help.

If you want to go sailing and don't have a crew or even a boat please go to our website and use the Crew Register. We'll get you racing somehow!

As I mentioned before, we depend on our volunteers to run such good events. It's a lot of fun being involved and I've certainly enjoyed my three years of Captain of Racing thanks to the broad spectrum of the Club's programme. If you're interested in being part of the team please return a helpers form or better still contact the office on 672677 or by email and ask for our new sailing supervisor. I'm off to make sure my boat is going to be ready in time for the beginning of the season and to call Tim to find a Tasar to try.

Rory Paton

Captain of Racing for 2007



Chris Baldwick has been sailing most of his life, having initially learnt on a Flying Dutchman with a cut down rig crewing for his father at the age of seven.

Before leaving the UK to live overseas, Chris enjoyed offshore racing in Contessa 32s based out of Lymington. During his time abroad Chris continued to sail offshore, and has owned and raced Lasers, 505s and a J24 in the Far East, Africa and Australia.

Chris and his wife Gill moved to the Lymington area three years ago, and can be seen on the water most weeks in the summer learning to race their Nordic Folkboat **Bonnie**. Chris says he "also vainly tries to keep his stomach under control sailing a Laser on Monday evenings".

DOUBLE WORLD CHAMPIONS Sophie Weguelin & Sophie Ainsworth

British youth sailors Sophie Weguelin and Sophie Ainsworth scooped a double honour at the 2007 29er World Championship, becoming Ladies World Champions and Under-19 World Champions on the same day.

Only six months after swapping their 420 for a new 29er, Sophie Weguelin and Sophie Ainsworth, both members of the RYA Youth Squad, earned a top honour twice over, and bring two gold medals from the Argentinean-hosted Worlds held from 21-27 January.

The 2007 29er World Championship marked the first international competitive event this newly paired-up crew have sailed together and with only a winter's worth of training behind them they have proven they can already hold their own among the World's best.

A member of the 2006 Volvo RYA GBR Youth Worlds team, the Royal Lymington's Sophie Weguelin has changed class in anticipation of the 2007 Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championship due to be held in Kingston, Canada in July which will see the 29er replace the 420 as the double handed class.

Seventeen year old Sophie has combined forces with former rival Sophie Ainsworth, also 17, from Ashford and the duo are now campaigning for the 2007 ISAF Youth Worlds together.

A home advantage seemed to pay on the Buenos Aires waters, with seven Senior Argentinean teams taking the top seven places. Weguelin and Ainsworth finished the event in eighth place overall becoming the highest placed non-Argentinean boat and the highest placed British boat in addition to World Champions in two categories.

RYA Youth Racing Manager, Simon Wergan, was thrilled to hear of the girls' success. "I am delighted that Sophie and Sophie have done well here, proving that their winter training has really paid off. They have only been sailing together for a short time and the boat is still relatively new to them so this result is a true testament to their hard work, perseverance and talent. I think this pairing have plenty more in the tank and I look forward to working with them in the future."



THE HENRI-LLOYD SPRING SERIES

Specialist marine clothing brand Henri Lloyd will sponsor the Henri Lloyd – Royal Lymington Yacht Club Spring Series until 2009

The sponsorship package includes a 10% discount on all clothing and footwear ranges at the Henri Lloyd Lymington Sailing Store for all Club Members (upon production of Club membership card), further to this discount, Henri Lloyd will be extending the discount to 20% on certain ranges during certain months.

- Henri Lloyd Offshore Range – March
- Henri Lloyd Fast Dri Range– May
- Henri Lloyd Dinghy Range – July
- Henri Lloyd Footwear Range - January

Henri Lloyd are also offering a preferential discount rate of 35% to crew kit sales, when over 6 sets (jacket and salopette) are ordered through the Henri Lloyd Crew Sales department

Henri-Lloyd's Lymington Sailing Store is situated at 1 High Street, and is fully stocked with all Henri-Lloyd's technical and lifestyle ranges.

NORDIC FOLKBOAT FLEET - CAPTAIN'S REPORT 2006

Nordic Folkboats now a Club class

I am delighted that 2006 was the year that the Royal Lymington Yacht Club agreed to recognise the Nordic Folkboat as a class at the club. With some thirty Club Members registered as owners of Nordic Folkboats we have enjoyed a summer of amazing weather and competitive one design racing and I look forward to the future with optimism.

Thursday evening racing has proved particularly popular with up to fourteen boats on the water in a single race. The boat to beat was *Tak*, which was successful in both series, crewed by Jeremy, Ado and Bill.

The Saturday Early and Late series were won by *Crackerjack*, crewed by Stuart Caroline and Mathew who were also victorious at the Nationals. This year the Nationals moved from the western Solent to Cowes, where they were hosted by the Royal London Yacht Club. Two days of close racing were followed by winds of thirty knots on the Sunday, and while several keelboat classes cancelled their racing half the Nordic fleet ventured out for an exciting couple of hours racing in the comparative shelter of Osborne Bay. Excellent racing was supported by a warm and friendly social programme including dinner for seventy folkboat crew and friends on the Saturday.

Members of the Nordic fleet now have a dedicated table at both the Club fitting out supper, and the laying up supper, and I hope that this will continue to be a regular event. Many thanks to Chris and Gill Baldwick who very kindly hosted our summer barbecue.

Following the Lymington fleet AGM I wrote to the class secretary reference carrying engines. His advice is that the Nordic International Folkboat association will not support a proposal that engines must be carried, and the committee therefore agreed to withdraw this suggestion. Owners may still wish to carry an engine as a function of safe



navigation, or because they are required to do so by a local marina or harbour authority or another club's sailing instructions.

The prospects for 2007 are very encouraging with several new boats set to join the Lymington fleet. News of Folkboat events and race results can be seen on the

RLymYC web site. The committee are looking at a number of ideas for the future, but at the end of the day it is what the members of the class will support that really makes the difference. Constructive comments welcome!

Richard Webb

Folkboat results 2006

EARLY SERIES

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Crackerjack</i> | Stuart Watson & Mathew Jones |
| 2 | <i>Milly</i> | Richard Webb |
| 3 | <i>Bonnie</i> | Chris Baldwick |

LATE SERIES

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Crackerjack</i> | Stuart Watson & Mathew Jones |
| 2 | <i>Milly</i> | Richard Webb |
| 3 | <i>Padfoot</i> | Chris Hills |

CHRISTCHURCH LEDGE

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Madelaine</i> | Ed Donald |
| 2 | <i>Milly</i> | Richard Webb |
| 3 | <i>Crackerjack</i> | Stuart Watson & Mathew Jones |

NATIONALS Cowes

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Crackerjack</i> | Stuart Watson & Mathew Jones |
| 2 | <i>Svenja</i> | Mike Stoner |
| 3 | <i>Madelaine</i> | Ed Donald |

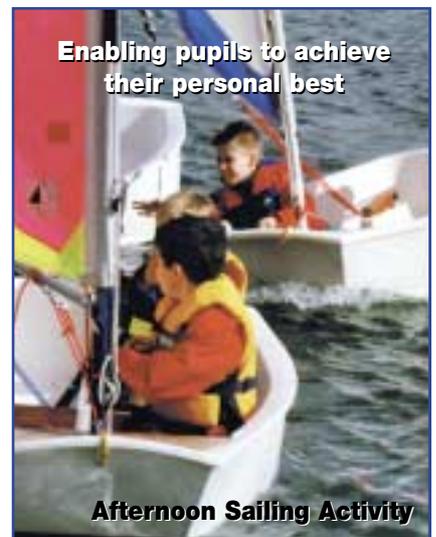
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LYMINGTON XOD

Given that we had just about the best summer for some years, I think it's fair to say that the XOD racing season was pretty good. The early part of the season was a bit all or nothing but since July we enjoyed a good mixture of winds.

Cowes Week was outstanding with quite the best conditions and exciting racing I can remember for many years. The Committee boat starts were generally popular, not least because the fleet got away on time and were spared all those hours hanging around waiting to start caused either by lack of wind, too much tide or other classes' general recalls.

Our results at Cowes were disappointing with our best placed boats being William Norris in 8th place, David da Cunha in 12th, Rory Paton 13th, Stuart Jardine 14th and Robin Balme 16th. Sadly only five boats in the top twenty was not good enough for the Division to retain the Phillipson Challenge Shield for the top Division which was narrowly won by Parkstone.

The strong winds and anno domini sadly proved too much for the Jardine Challenge to repeat their first Captains Cup win in 1956. This was a shame as Stuart has been sailing as well as ever this year. Look out for him in 2007 though as rumour has it he will have Christian Brewer and a top Kiwi crew back for a serious campaign!

Our Team racing was very successful this year, the Division winning all its matches (v) Yarmouth (a), Itchenor (h), and Parkstone (a). These were highly creditable results especially the match away to Parkstone. All the socials following these matches were the greatest fun.

The Division, led by Rory Paton and comprising Stuart and Ado Jardine and Bill Dunsdon, went on to win the Team Race Shield at Cowes. This year the racing was on a round robin basis. The key match was versus Itchenor who appeared to have the race sewn up, but Rory Paton succeeded masterfully to luff up Alastair Ashford who was leading, sail him to the back of the fleet in so doing allowing the Lymington boats

through to win the race. Glad someone understands team racing!

Our Club racing has seen our numbers fall slightly with only 29 boats compared with 32 in 2005 qualifying to race. Happily there are several boats returning to race in 2007 and we are hopeful that our racing numbers will be back to around 35. We seek constantly to attract younger members and anyone wanting to try helming an XOD will be made very welcome. XOD racing is very competitive

and not expensive.

Robin Balme took over as Divisional Captain at the end of October supported by Fenella Lees as Vice Captain while I return to the ranks having had a thoroughly enjoyable two years at the helm. My grateful thanks to Robin, Ado Jardine, the immediate past captain, and all our XOD committee for their help and support and making it all such fun.

David da Cunha

Lymington XOD Division Captain 2005 - 6





CONTESSA 32's come home

2006 saw the Contessa 32's make a welcome return to the Royal Lympington Yacht Club for their National Championships in September – back to their spiritual home in Lympington where many of them were built and only a few miles from where the latest Jeremy Rogers boat, *Lunacy*, was about to be launched before shipping out to Australia!

September gave us the whole spectrum of conditions and out of 7 races, 4 different winners!

Friday started wet and windy and for those boats coming from the east of the Solent (the majority) it was an uncomfortable start to the championships. Racing started to the east of the Lympington River in the vicinity of Tanners with Ken Kershaw as our Race Officer with his highly efficient Race Team and the Commodore, John Bence, kindly providing the committee boat. Numbers were slightly down on last year's championships - a dismasting (our Class Captain), a JOG weekend race to Poole, start of university for some crews and brand new babies getting in the way! Not only were there some old familiar Contessa 32 faces – Rory and Stuart Paton of *South Haze* fame were sailing *Fresh Herring* in John Corden's absence – but also newcomers to the fleet – *Firefly* (Simon Pritchard) who has just moved to Lympington and from far afield, *Drumbeat* (Eldred Himsworth) who came over from Colorado to race his Contessa!

Two races were scheduled for the Friday and with the freshening breeze from the north many boats changed down to their No 2 for the beats which saw difficult wind shifts. Race 1 was won by *English Rose* – Ray Mitchell and Race 2 by *Blanco* – Ray Rouse with a crew who have been together for many years and still showing the younger members how to win! *Connie* had a disagreement with a wandering cruiser who did not understand the rules of the road and then tried to disappear without exchanging details!

We all arrived back in Lympington by late afternoon, tired

with all the short legs across the Solent, lots of spinnaker packing but a great day. Contessas were berthed alongside the Club pontoon, three deep, with the excess being moored alongside the Dan Bran – great idea from the Harbour Master and much appreciated! In the evening Jeremy and Fiona Rogers joined us for a BBQ excellently run by the catering staff, a few drinks, and then off to our various berths, and for some, a night asleep on the pontoon!

Saturday was spent out in Christchurch Bay with another three races – long windward/leeward courses in difficult light conditions. The day ended up with another two wins for *Blanco* and one for *Drumbeat* followed by motoring back to Lympington with our drinks party – hosted by *Contessa Catherine* and aptly on Rob's birthday! Mark, Peter and his team once again pulled out all the stops for just over 100 of us sitting down to a delicious meal.

By Sunday, after two full days of racing, partying and burning the candle at both ends, most crews were very pleased that there were only two races

left. We went out to Christchurch Bay for Race 6 which was once again a windward/leeward course. To the resounding cheers from all the fleet, *Contessa Catherine* (the original Contessa) helmed by Rob Milledge won the race. Race 7, the last race, involved us racing back into the Solent ending up to the east of Lympington to assist the boats going home. By the time we got back into the Solent the wind was dying and the tide was not in our favour. The course was eventually shortened, giving *Drumbeat* their second win – worth the trip back from the USA! With crews transferring to various boats, home the Contessa's went for another year!

The overall winner was *Blanco*, 2nd *Fresh Herring*, 3rd *Drumbeat*, 4th *English Rose*.

As a member of the Club, I had been asked to help organise the event, and though I have helped at Junior Regatta running the race office for many years and Social Secretary of the Contessa 32 Association for three years, I was astonished by the amount of work involved in organising an event like this! Everyone involved did a magnificent job which helped create a thoroughly enjoyable National Championship for the Contessa 32's. May I take this opportunity of sincerely thanking all those who helped make the event such a success

Zoe McKee





SCOWS IN 2006

Our winter/spring of 2006 kicked off with some lively walks organised by Una Flanagan. Determined to keep the Scow fleet fit and young, she set a good pace with some interesting walks followed by jolly lunches.

Our programme of winter lectures was equally popular. We started off with an informal 'get-together' with the Beaulieu and Keyhaven Scows. It was a great opportunity to get to know our neighbours who we see occasionally on the water during the summer. The prizegiving for the Keyhaven v. Lymington regatta took place.

Peter Cutmore entertained us with a lively talk on 'Ships and Sailors' For those of us who were a bit shaky on our navigation, it was a fascinating lecture on how it all started. Every time I go from Lymington to Yarmouth I think of Peter's man in a dug out canoe rowing at an angle against the tide!

Peter Barton kindly offered to explain the basics of racing rules to those of us who are not quite sure what to do rounding a mark with lots of other boats at the same time! This was aimed at scow sailors new to racing and was extremely helpful. Not too many collisions during the summer and no protests, so it obviously helped!

Although Monday night racing started off slowly, due to bad weather, it went from strength to strength. With 28 boats entered and an average of about 16 boats each week, this offers very competitive racing in one-design boats. A huge thank you to the race officers and their terrific team of helpers,

without whom we wouldn't have such excellent racing.

Jane Wilford has reported that the Scow Potters on Thursday mornings have continued to be popular for those sailors wishing to cruise in company. This is an ideal place to start if you are new to Scowing or if you prefer not to race. You can get to know your boat in your own time without the hullabaloo of racing. Potters start at 10.30 on Thursday mornings and are a short cruise for an hour or so with the support of safety boats. Lunch afterwards is always a winner.

Scows feature very highly during Youth Week. This year there were nearly 30 Scows with 3 children in each. With very mixed abilities - some children had never been past the wave barrier - they had tremendous fun and superb racing. This would not have been possible without the support of the Scow Division members as nearly all the Scows were kindly lent for the week. Thank you very much.

The programmed Alexina Trophy had to be cancelled - no wind - but luckily the reserve day gave us exciting racing with strong winds. Vince set us excellent courses and Joan Hampton was able to watch the racing from the spectator boat. Our safety team were kept on their toes handling an up-side-down Scow drifting across the entrance of the river. Racing was followed by the prize giving, drinks in the bar and dinner.

Due to bad weather, we were only able to fit in one of the short series planned for this summer. The evening was very action packed with 4 races back to back with a hearty supper back at the Club afterwards..

The Figure of Eight Race is a very special event. We sail anti-clockwise around Pylewell Lake and clockwise around Oxey Lake. This year Rachel Nuding, our Race Officer sent us around Oxey first and Pylewell second - this foxed a few of us! We had superb sailing conditions and were quite a sight. A wonderful turn out and a great time was had by all.

The rally to Beaulieu with the cruisers was a huge success. A good number of Scows left Lymington during the afternoon, had a fantastic sail up to Gins, where we were greeted by the Cruising Division. Lots of help getting the boats ashore, then a quick change and cocktails on the lawn. The Royal Southampton Yacht Club give us a delicious dinner and it was great to get to meet some of the cruising division. Cars were arranged to ship the Scow sailors back home for the night and back again in the morning. Despite warnings of fog, the scows had a wonderful sail back to Lymington in time for lunch.

We are very fortunate in the Scow division to have such wonderful helpers. For every event that takes place, there is a team of people who gladly give up their time to help make events happen. I would like to thank our drivers and crew in the support boats, mark layers, event co-ordinators, race officers, officers of the day, cake-makers and at the Club, the office staff, kitchen staff and the boatmen.

I have enjoyed my 3-year term as Captain of Scows and warmly welcome Tony Miles as our new Class Captain.

THE 2006 CRUISING YEAR

2006 turned out to be a most enjoyable year in which the weather was, mostly, very kind. Eighty-two yachts took part in one or more of the seven meets and the Needles Relief. Meets generally took place at monthly intervals and the full account of each is recorded on the web site



in the Cruising Section. I have included photographs where possible but regret that there are very few of yachts actually sailing but lots of happy Members relaxing after a hard day at sea. Perhaps wisely, we don't have any records of the quantities of wine

and food necessary to sustain such enterprises, best left untold I think!

Winter was slow to let go but by the time we arrived at the Spring Cowes Meet in April it had relented. A pontoon party was held off the Ferry Inn in warm evening sunshine. Next day there was fog in the river as boats arrived down at the new Harbour Master's pontoons and filled every inch of space available. In the evening we dined in the Max Aitken museum and I expect all those who were there will remember the very friendly seating when 78 members sat on school benches long enough for 45! The meal was superb however and the evening was great fun.

In May we held the Chichester Anchor Meet, which was actually held in Poole because of the tides. Good weather and 17 yachts with 39 people anchored near Goathorn and after many parties on various boats we rafted together for Alice Macnamara's fish pie, very good it was too.

The Long Distance meet was in June. Wonderful weather if perhaps not enough wind for some of you but 18 yachts sailed into Salcombe and moored up in the Bag for



Lunch at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club, Falmouth and below a ducks eye view of the Fal



assembled in Falmouth, a town full of pubs, restaurants and antique shops. In the evening in lovely warm weather we enjoyed dinner at the Royal Cornwall Yacht club. A most enjoyable meet.

The Family Meet in August was well attended and will be remembered for a very exciting Treasure Hunt and a violent thunderstorm, which failed to dampen spirits.

Then over to St Vaast in August. The weather let us down being dull, wet and windy, but as the French had abandoned their holidays and gone home the harbour was empty and all 11 yachts were able to find berths easily. Yachts dressed overall and there were many pontoon parties in improving weather followed by a reception at the Yacht Club of St Vaast. For the second year running we had dinner in La Marina Restaurant with Madam Flourie. They did us proud and the meet was a great success. Next day a westerly F6 made for a rolly voyage back home.

Gin's Farm in Sept was attended by 14 yachts + 2 who moor in the river, 2 cars full of crew and then 9 Scows sailed in from Lymington. Well done to them. We had a very good party, which filled the Gin's clubhouse to capacity, and with good weather again was a most successful meet.



Spring meet at Cowes



A sunny lunch at Salcombe

pontoon drinks to mark our successful arrival. Next day most gathered for lunch in the Salcombe Yacht Club overlooking the racing in the river and were treated by the Salcombe Festival in full swing complete with brass bands and floats as entertainment. That evening 47 members dined on Egremont, the lovely old ex-Mersey ferry which is the flagship of our hosts, The Island Cruising Club.

Next on west to Falmouth. Many gatherings of RLymYC boats were reported in various ports on the way west before we



Dinner at the Max Aitkin museum



Autumn meet at Gins Farm

Our thanks to Robert the club Steward.

Autumn Anchor in Chichester in Oct. Actually as the forecast was SW 7 we all went to Newtown. I don't know what we would do without our friendly bolt hole. Anyway 10 yachts braved the conditions and we had a good party eating Alice's Steak and Kidney pies on three rafts of boats. On Sunday the wind got up to 40kn to give us something to remember on the way home.

We didn't go anywhere in November but the Needles Relief was on 16 Dec. After some dreadful weather the day dawned clear and warm. There was just enough wind for good racing and with 15 cruising boats the total number of yachts taking part was 48, a record we think. The lifeboats and coastguard helicopter gave a very good demonstration and the Royal Solent was full to bursting. We showed our appreciation to the SAR crews and all had a very good day out on the water.

As I said at the beginning we have had a very good year and I hope and expect 2007 to be even better. In the November issue of

Potter News I outlined the programme for this summer. You can also find details on the website and of course on the Club notice boards. However there is one change that I will mention which is instead of going back to St Vaast again we plan to visit Carentan. This interesting city up the canal, (and over a motorway!) is just a bit further than St Vaast and will be a nice alternative we think.

I am still disappointed that the 82 yachts and 116 members who joined in the meets and all those other yachts who have been away sailing have apparently not been cooking on board at all. I refer of course to the RLYMJC Cruising Cookery Book and the fact that after a year I have only received 13

recipes. What do you all eat on your boats? Perhaps we really do need a recipe book!! Please share your culinary expertise with the rest of us.

Finally to all of you who have not joined a meet yet, you are missing a lot of fun with fellow members enjoying sailing their boats to a variety of places and meeting lots of people in convivial surroundings. At only one meet a month there is plenty of time to race or potter or ocean sail in between so come and see what it is like. I'm sure you will come again if you do.

Happy Sailing to you all in 2007.

Duncan MacAlister

Captain of Cruising.



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PHOTOGRAPH LIBRARY, ARCHIVE & PHOTO COMPETITION

This year the Club is setting up a photographic library and archive for use by Members, producers of magazines/articles and the website.

We need your best photographs of sailing and Club related subjects, preferably on CD or DVD and sent to the office. We need quality and quantity!

Don't delay, please contribute your pictures work to the library **now!**

During the long hot summer please take out your cameras and enter the new annual Grand Photographic Competition



We will be judging contributions from these categories:-

Racing (XODs, Scows, Folkboats, Dinghies, Cruiser/Racers), **Junior** (Cadets, Optimists, 420s, Lasers), **Social, Cruising**

Any kind of sailing related photograph is eligible, e.g. action sailing, character shots, seascapes, tranquil anchorages etc. All photographs must be taken by a Member or Junior Member.

Entries must be submitted by September 20th 2007

Another Successful Year

Another Successful Year for our Junior & Youth Sailors with over 100 children a week learning with Wednesday sailing and our status as a Champion Club maintained & enhanced. Twelve Lymington sailors were selected for the RYA National Youth Squad.



Nine of our sailors won selection in the 420 2006 World Team. Our Optimist fleet is one of the strongest in the UK taking a quarter of RYA Squad places. We have sailors in all levels of the RYA Cadet Squads. Too many individual successes to list, but the highlights include: Phil Sparks is Optimist National Champion for second year running & won GBR selectors. Richard Mason is 420 National Champion & won GBR selectors Richard Mason & Sophie Weguelin won the RYA National Youth Championships & represented GBR at ISAF Youth Worlds. Jasmine Husband won a Silver Medal at 420 Junior Europeans.

Phil Lawrence

Captain Junior & Youth Sailing



Lymington Optimist Flotilla Celebrates even Bigger Record Year

It would have been hard to imagine after last year's dinner that all the superlatives of 2005 could be surpassed, but in the event 2006 was an even bigger record breaking year for the Flotilla.

Athens Olympic 470 Silver Medallist Nick Rogers, himself National Optimist Champion in 1991, was this year's entertaining and motivating guest speaker at the Annual Dinner.

MC for the evening was Ros Urwin who took over earlier in the year as Head of Optimists for the Royal Lymington Yacht Club.

Royal Lymington Head of Junior Sailing Phil Lawrence received from Ros on behalf of the Club: the Carentec Club Cup for the best overseas combined club result which was won by the Lymington Flotilla at Carentec in July, and the Talbot Fleet Trophy for the best club result in the Senior Fleet at the Nationals.

Phil presented RLYMJC's own Jack in the Basket Trophy for the 'Best Sailor of the Year under 30 years old' for the second successive year to Phil Sparks aged just 14, who is now double National Optimist Champion, has been successful in numerous national and international events through the year, and travelled to Montevideo, Uruguay to represent GBR in the Optimist World Championships.

A year previously Flotilla Leader for the past 3 years Giles Lloyd Williams had set some challenging Flotilla aims for 2006: to win the IOCA National Team Racing Championships and send the GBR team to the Grand Optical Team Racing Championships at Ledro, Italy, and to dominate the IOCA Selection Trials in April and May to ensure Lymington was well represented in all the GBR teams going to the Worlds and Europeans, plus French and Irish Nationals. In fact all these targets were met.

Phil was congratulated for reaching the



Worlds Team and wished much success whilst Adrian Clay was applauded for representing GBR at the European Championships in July, and Calum Murdock and Olly Porter at the French Nationals (also July). Charlie Cox was congratulated for achieving a place in the GBR Junior Team at the Optimist Irish Nationals at Kinsale in August. After a great winter's training on the river Lymington teams took the top 3 places at the National Team Racing Championships held at Burghfield in April and a team of 5 (Adrian Clay, Henry Lloyd Williams, Olly Porter, Phil Sparks and Robbie Urwin) went on to represent GBR at Ledro in August. Lymington had put in 4 teams at the recent Feva Team Racing and 3 Lymington sailors (Tom Britz, Calum Murdock and Olly Porter) represented GBR at the European Opti Team Cup 4 boat team racing at Berlin in October.

Meanwhile still on International Events Henry Lloyd Williams represented GBR at the Dubai Junior Regatta; Robbie Urwin, Adrian Clay and Phil Sparks (who missed being Champion at the finish of the last race only on a technicality) all did well at the Braassemmermeer Easter Regatta in Holland; and Charlie Esse, Liam Garrison, Henry Lloyd Williams and Olly Porter likewise at the Easter Regatta at Lake Garda in Italy. Elaine Bell, Tom Britz, Misha and Sasha Bruml, Liam Garrison, Calum Murdock, Phil (who won of course!) and Josh Sparks, and Robbie and Kirstie Urwin all competed to a high standard in strong winds at Carentec in July and Lymington achieved the accolade of best overseas combined club.



The Lymington Optimist Flotilla won the coveted Talbot Fleet Trophy for the best result in the Senior Fleet at the IOCA National Championships held at Pwllheli in August, for the combined results of Phil Sparks, Calum Murdock and Henry Lloyd Williams, who enjoyed a storming Nationals, coming fourth overall and beaten only by three of the undisputed top sailors in the country and members (including Phil of course!) of this year's Worlds Team.

Harken Royal Lymington Optimist Open – Regatta Fleet

The Harken Royal Lymington Optimist Open Regatta Fleet Event, which took place

on a perfect sunny, breezy day on Friday 2 June, provided a perfect opportunity for novice Optimist sailors to build confidence racing in open sea and tidal conditions.

This was the first time the Lymington Open had ever been “split” into two separate events for this increasingly popular event.

A total of 41 sailors aged between 8 and 12 years took part in a well planned and highly enjoyable “coached” race day organised by the Lymington Optimist Flotilla; particular thanks to Event Organiser Ros Urwin. Prizes were generously given to all competitors by Harken. Sammy Bonella aged 12 from

Papercourt was the deserving overall winner after three competitive races in which she achieved a sixth, a first and a third.

Ros went on to illustrate further the fantastic strength in depth of the current flotilla: everyone who had transferred to the main fleet in the IOCA Championships by the time of the End of Seasons in October, achieved a place in winter training squads. Lymington now has a real record breaking total of 23 sailors in squads this year:

Jane Porter

International Optimist Class Association

Team Racing Champions Cup-Lake Ledro, Italy

Our Optimist sailors won the UK National 4 boat Team Racing Championships and went on to represent Great Britain at the Grand Optical Optimist Team Racing Champions Cup on Lake Ledro. In light and shifting airs GBR (Adrian Clay, Henry Lloyd Williams, Oly Porter, Phil Sparks, Robbie Urwin) put up a creditable performance against 13 European nations. and their strong team racing skills, were singled out for compliment by the international jury. Results: 1. C.V. Bracciano (ITA) 2. Mos Ilawa (POL) 3. Kullavik KKK (SWE) 10. RLmYC (GBR)





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Reflections on Wednesday Junior Sailing

It was shortly after my 8th birthday when my older sister took me to the R.LymYC for Wednesday Junior Sailing. We joined about 40 other children milling around outside what I subsequently learnt was the Old Sail Loft.



At 2 o'clock the doors opened and we all piled in. Under the direction of a kindly lady, our stampede became an orderly queue and after my sister had handed over a signed consent form, I was given a yellow card with my name on it and a numbered disc, both of which had to be hung around my neck. I was then passed to two ladies who took enormous trouble to find a life jacket that fitted me (which I later learnt was called a

buoyancy aid) and I felt fitted out like a real sailor.

The real sailor in me took quite a long time to materialise, but that very day the buoyancy aid proved handy as I managed to fall in off the pontoon! "Don't worry" said one of the instructors as he hauled me out of the water, "we all get wet from time to time". My rather inauspicious start was made up for my being given hot tea and a large doughnut.

I soon learnt that the cards were not a neck decoration, mine had 20 tasks printed on it which I had to master, each to be signed off by an instructor. There were four different coloured cards with ever more demanding skills to be learnt, but it would be a very long time before I graduated from my first yellow card.

New recruits are shown the Oppies, and after land drill they can gain confidence by starting their sailing on a leading rein. They're also encouraged to take a trip in a Scow with an instructor to get the feel of being on the river under sail.

On my first Scow sail I was encouraged to take the tiller going down the river and I felt like a real sea captain, however, as a ferry approached the wave barrier I was gently demoted to look-out whilst the instructor went about and tacked back behind the safety of the X-boat trots.

I must confess to being a very slow learner and despite the most patient instruction and much time on the water, it was well over a

year before it all began to fall into place and I could confidently go about, pick up a tow, capsize and right the boat, tie knots and many other things.

Despite my initial lack of progress, I was never made to feel a failure and there were always encouraging comments on my managing this or that a little better than the previous week. For me, come sunshine or rain, Wednesday afternoons became a permanent, enjoyable fixture.

Whenever we got into a Scow (put your bottom on the pontoon please, get in aft of the shrouds and put your feet on the bottom of the boat, not on the seats), the first thing the instructor would ask was "where's the wind coming from?" Despite being told about how to find the wind direction, its importance only became clear to me when I discovered after weeks of reaching up and down the river with the usual westerly wind, I found that my regular course down river had become a no go zone on account of the wind coming from the south for a change! Well, I did say that I was a slow learner.

Over the years, I did manage to complete all the tasks on the cards and the day came when it was decided that I was good enough to become a Junior Instructor (whoopee). It was a proud moment and a great privilege when I was given a coloured disc to wear signifying my junior instructor status.

I fancy that for a while a sharp eye was discreetly kept on me, but I very much enjoyed instructing, particularly the beginners with whom I could easily empathise.

With the encouragement of the senior instructors who had become my friends as well as my mentors, I subsequently undertook an RYA course to become a fully qualified RYA dinghy instructor.

As I am now at university, my regular Wednesday Junior Sailing days are over, but I always look forward to returning in the vacs to contribute a little to a scheme which taught me valuable sailing, seamanship and people skills and importantly, helped to give me confidence in my self in preparation for the wider world beyond sailing.

Wednesday Junior Sailing

Wednesday Junior Sailing has been operating for some 20 years. It is regarded by the RYA as the finest Club teaching establishment in the UK and five Club members have received RYA awards for their contribution to training youngsters.

Each session has to be run by an RYA Senior Instructor and some 40 Club and non-Club helpers are needed, on and off the water, to run it successfully. To put this number into play there are nearly 100 volunteers on the register. If more Club Members wish to take part they will receive a very warm welcome.

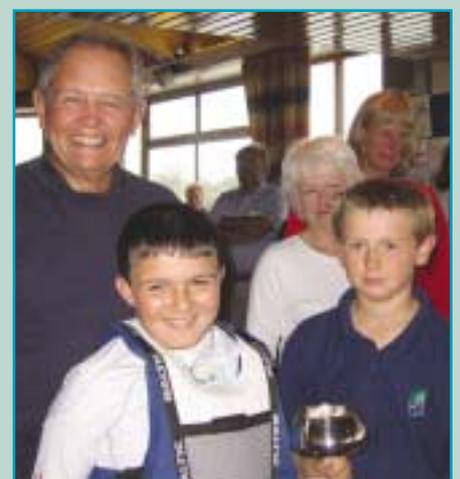
Over 100 children benefit each Wednesday and some have passed on to be world class sailors.



Sally Potter presenting the Seamanship Trophy (awarded to the best seaman) to Charlie Davis



Luke Reading with the Jolly Rogers Trophy (best all rounder; a good sailer, always cheerful and prepared to help others)



X One Design challenge trophy (top racing trophy) presented by David de Cuhha to Andrew Smith and James Dodds

Season of success for our 420 Sailors

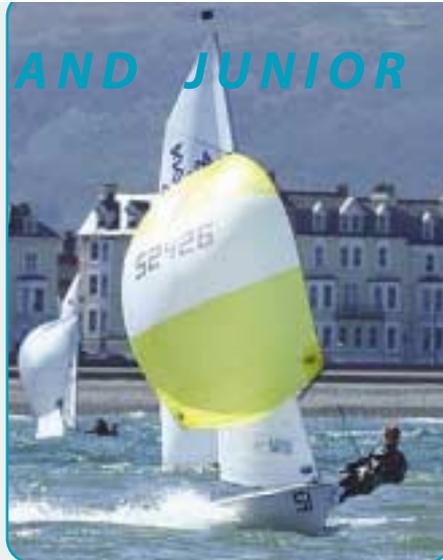
Our 420 sailors have enjoyed another extremely long and successful season:

The competitive season started in March & April with a series of 3 selection regattas, in Weymouth, Sunderland & Hayling Island to select the teams to represent Great Britain at the 2006 World Championships in Gran Canaria and Junior European Championships in Portugal. Richard Mason dominated the series, winning all 3 regattas and the selection trials overall. All our youth sailors performed very well in the trials, with a total of 9 of our young members winning selection to the GBR World team and 5 to the Junior European team



At the end of April the RYA National Youth championships were held in Weymouth and Richard Mason continued his good form to win overall, with Sophie Weguelin winning the ladies fleet. Sophie and Richard were selected as the Great Britain 420 representatives to compete at the ISAF World Youth Championships in Weymouth. This was a major honour and they both performed well at the event in July to finish in the top twelve against some of the best youth sailors in the world.

Our sailors were very competitive at the 420 World Championships in August, where they all qualified for the Gold fleets, with



Richard Mason 5th Overall and James & Will Rusden 8th. In the Ladies Championship Sophie Weguelin was a creditable 8th.

Sophie Ainsworth & Jasmine Husband won the ladies silver medal at the Junior Europeans in Tavira, Portugal.

The summer ended with the National Championships in Llandudno where Richard Mason finished his terrific season in the best possible way by winning the National Championship. Sophie Ainsworth & Jasmine Husband were placed 5th overall.

Into the autumn and another series of selection trials to pick the team for the 2007 World Championships in Auckland at Christmas. With many of our established sailors off to University, it was a chance for our younger sailors to take over and they did not disappoint:

Oren Richards won the series with James & Will Rusden 2nd and Ben Muskett 8th.

Although Oren could not take his place due to exam commitments, 6 of our young sailors made the long trip to New Zealand at Christmas, where Ben Muskett made the gold fleet and was a creditable 25th, whilst Will & James won the Silver fleet.

Phil Lawrence

ROYAL LYMINGTON 420 FLEET 2006 ROLL OF HONOUR

GBR 420 World Championship Team -Gran Canaria - August 2006

Richard Mason

James Rusden

Will Rusden

Sophie Weguelin

Charlotte Lawrence

Poppy Husband

Sophie Ainsworth

Jasmine Husband

Katie Sparks

GBR 420 Junior European Championship Team - Tavira August 2006

Sophie Ainsworth (Ladies Silver Medal)

Jasmine Husband (Ladies Silver Medal)

Oren Richards

James Rusden

Will Rusden

GBR 420 World Championship Team - Auckland January 2007

Ben Muskett

James Rusden

Will Rusden

Sophia Parkinson

Emma Parkinson

Jenny Lennon

RYA National Youth Championships

Open:

1st Richard Mason

3rd Oren Richards

5th James Rusden & Will Rusden

Ladies:

1st Sophie Weguelin

3rd Sophie Ainsworth & Jasmine Husband

420 National Championships

1st Richard Mason

5th Sophie Ainsworth & Jasmine Husband

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Youth Regatta 2006

Many of Hampshire's finest descended upon Lymington to participate in the 23rd Youth Regatta Week. The week comprised three days of back-to-back racing followed, on Thursday, by passage races to and from



Thorns Beach and, on Friday, a morning of Superheroes challenges. Each day's sailing was followed by active social events and, on Friday, a disco for the Youth and a supper for the helpers.

The 192 sailors aged 18 and under competed in 100 boats with Optimist and Scow fleets sailing close to the river or the salt lakes, whilst Lasers, Laser Picos, 420s, Cadets, Wayfarers and a variety of other boats sailed further out in the Solent fleet. The weather was brisk throughout, being mainly force three or four but occasionally gusting higher. The Spring tides made for some strong currents creating further challenges and at times allowed those sailors who considered their course carefully to grasp impressive leads, as was evidenced by Charlie Davis in Scow *Snowgoose* racing back to the Club one lunchtime.

Optimist

The Optimist fleet under the supervision of Stuart Jardine, and a fleet of support boats, sailed just outside the River. The skills of these younger members varied widely with some fairly experienced, while for many others it was an achievement to stay the course in winds and sea states often stretching both their sailing skills and their bravery to new levels. For each of these

children the week was as much about personal development as it was about sailing and they are each applauded for their achievement. At the end of the week the overall winner of the club Optimists was Cameron Kavanagh, with Guy Wilkinson in second place and Will Davis in third.

Scow

The Scow fleets, under the supervision of Jenny Wilson, sailed in Oxe Lake and in the Solent nearby. Whilst many in the under 14 fleet demonstrated their singing skills, many in the 14 and over fleet showed many advanced sailing skills. All were challenged in a series of 14 back-to-back races and by the end of the three days, the line-ups on the start lines were impressive and the mark-roundings were not for the faint-hearted! At the end of the week the overall winner of the A fleet was Charlie Davis, with Oly Wells in second place and Maria Claridge in third.

Solent

The Solent Fleet under Gary Barnet sailed near Pylewell Point in often choppy conditions and with larger courses. This fleet had most of the older sailors and a variety of dinghies from Picos and Wayfarers to Cadets and 420s.

Thursday morning saw a pursuit race setting out in choppy conditions with many Optimists and other boats taking on water and some capsizing. Despite difficult sailing conditions, the remaining Optimist sailors showed remarkable guts and determination to make it to the finish. The winning boat was a Laser Radial sailed by Robbie Claridge. After a great picnic at Thorns Beach, the sailors had fleet races home.

Overall responsibility for the event was taken by Amanda Dingwall who coordinated over 130 helpers to ensure both challenging and safe sailing combined with a good variety of social events and loads of fun both on and off the water. Safety Control was manned by Bob Burney who, with the help of Vince Sutherland, Peter Phillips, 10 Ribs and 8 Motherships, ensured that every sailor was covered at all times whilst out on the



water. With BBQs four nights, swimming three nights, circus games one night and a wild disco at the end of the week, there was fun for all and opportunities for any youthful excess energies to be burnt off. Friday morning was superheroes day with much fun for most in the Salterns whilst the Solent Fleet completed a figure of eight course around Pylewell Island and Oxe Island in gusty force four conditions, Jason Sivyer gaining a well deserved first place.

Yet again the Youth Week was an outstanding success demonstrating how 130 volunteer helpers aged from eighteen to eighty can help today's youth towards success both on and off the water.

Jenny Wilson



The New East German Coast

AN EXTRACT FROM NICKY AND STUART DUFFIN'S BALTIC CRUISE LOG 2006

In 1984 I was part of the crew onboard the British Kiel Yacht Club 100 square metre yacht in the Tall Ships Race which started in Travemunde on the old border between East and West Germany. The incongruous block of flats remain as a monument to the Cold War as the top five stories were used to listen, look and spy across the river into the East. I remember the two extremes of the affluent West Germans with their strange beach chairs on one side of the estuary and the barbed wire and watch towers on the other. As we left we were escorted by Russian built helicopter gun ships which followed a line of buoys marking the border out to sea. All this has changed and now the building is a hotel and holiday apartments and except for a few disused watchtowers, little remains of the old regime. I have always wanted to explore this coastline and this year I took my Dehler 39, *Flying Boat*, to the Baltic with my wife Nicky, to fulfil my ambition.

Surprisingly, the Baltic was refreshingly warm considering it would have been frozen only months earlier.

Having departed the RLymYC pontoon on the evening of 2 June 2006, I arrived at Travemunde on 8 June via the North Sea and Kiel Canal having sailed 700nM with my delivery crew. Travemunde is a good crew change port as Ryanair use Lubeck, which is close by, as their Hamburg terminal. This was the start of both the World Cup in Germany and the glorious summer which was experienced throughout Europe. Nicky flew out and we explored both the old town of Lubeck and Travemunde which is an upmarket holiday resort with several good marinas.

On 12 June we left Travemunde on a hot summer day with a S F2/3 which carried us to Wisma, 28nM east. The entrance to Wismar Bucht is well marked albeit quite tight. We moored in the Alten Hafen which is the old port in the centre of town. The fuse in my engine cooling fan circuit had blown, probably because of the heat, with temperatures in the mid 30's C. I asked the harbour master where I might get another as I did not have the correct rating on board.



Nicky with harbour master at Wismar

Within an hour I had three fuses from different sources, all free. They could not do enough to help us or maybe Nicky! Additionally, the harbour master gave me a copy of the free guide to the German marinas which proved very useful. It is printed annually and gives the latest information including photographs and a chartlet with depths annotated.

Wismar has the largest town square in Germany and is a fine example of the very dramatic architecture found along the East German Baltic coast. The buildings have impressive frontages which are false and bear no resemblance to the building behind.

The next day was again hot with light SE F2/3 and provided a mixture of sailing with the spinnaker, swimming off the stern and motoring. Surprisingly, the Baltic was refreshingly warm considering it would have been frozen only months earlier. We were checked by a Customs launch looking at our passports but did little to search the boat. As the wind died we decided to enter the new marina at Kuhlunborn instead of continuing to Warnemunde. We had logged 30nM and like most of the Baltic marinas, the facilities



German deckchairs at Travemunde

were fantastic, getting a gold star for their showers from Nicky. The berths could not have been more than half full. The town is an old spa and reminded Nicky of 'The Prisoner' as a man was playing a grand piano on the promenade.

On 14 June we completed the short sail to Warnemunde, at the entrance to Rostock, which was only 13 nm. Following the pilot book we moored in the Alter Strom ignoring the large marina on the East of the entrance which was not even mentioned in the Baltic

...There must be a place on the web which is reserved for Nicky and her e-mails because no one else ever receives them

Sea pilot. The Alta Strom gets very busy with pleasure boats and finding a mooring after mid-afternoon would have been difficult. We went alongside a Dutch barge called *Tea Pot* with a very helpful couple onboard. It was the first berth that required a 2-pin plug which our neighbours supplied from a box of spares. Germany was playing in the World Cup and the streets were largely deserted. As we walked to the lighthouse the sky darkened and it started to rain. It was the first rain since leaving Lymington.

The following day we motored the 6nM up river to Rostock which is the largest town in the region. It is supplied with many marinas most of which are largely empty. I feel sure some of our EU funds are finding their way into these marinas. We entered a new marina close to the centre of town which only had a handful of boats moored alongside. It was unique in that the harbour master was electronic and all communication was via a computer terminal. It issued you with a security card which also paid for electricity having put credit on to the card. The only problem was that on leaving, you had to insert the card back into the terminal which was the other side of the security barrier! Luckily Nicky held the barrier open, but not a place to stop single handed. There is a wine wholesaler next to the marina and a 10 litre wine box of both red and white were purchased for less than 60 Euros. Not only was it incredibly cheap but also they opened



Ex West German spy centre

several wine boxes for us to taste and the two we selected were provided new from stock, not the opened ones. Maybe the staff have a good deal on opened wine boxes! One tip if you plan a trip to Sweden is to stock up in Germany with alcohol.

The weather had broken and we were woken with rain. We motored back down the river to Warnemunde. Out to sea visibility was very poor so we entered the new marina on the east bank of the river. The marina must

have been capable of taking 1000 boats but not more than 50 were moored. The marina complex had the feeling of a time-share with several plush restaurants and an expensive hotel and conference centre. However, it lacked people. From the boat to the facilities was a good five minute walk but they did have an internet terminal which allowed Nicky to practice her computer skills and for me to sort out the ensuing problems. There must be a place on the web which is reserved for Nicky and her e-mails because no one else ever receives them. The poor weather did allow Nicky to use the laundry facilities. Unfortunately, Nicky's understanding of German meant five hours in the tumble drier as the German for cool is not the same as for hot! Never have clothes been so dizzy.

The sun returned and we left by 0800 the next day with a F4 from the W. The spinnaker was hoisted and we ran along the coast in glorious weather. The approach to Stralsund is very shallow as you pass between the mainland and the island of Rugen. Rugen is where the first outbreak of bird flu had been found in Europe. We were intercepted by the German border police who sent a rib from their patrol boat. The policeman took our

GO
→

Cathedral at Stralsund





Nicky in the largest square in Germany

passports and disappeared back to the patrol boat. We realised we might have difficulty without them but he soon returned and we headed on. Speaking to local Germans I got the feeling that, because of the high unemployment in the former East Germany, the civil sector was over staffed. I had bought a detailed German chart of Rugen in Warnemunde which proved invaluable. Having negotiated the difficult channel we entered the wide entrance to Stralsund and I relaxed. Suddenly the echo sounder alarm activated and the depth went down to 0.1 metres under the keel before rising again. We had passed very close to a charted rock at 1.9 metres which I had missed. This taught me a lesson on sailing in the Baltic to never relax and always know exactly where you are, I had no excuse with a chart plotter onboard. By 1830 we were alongside the town harbour having completed 56 nm from Warnemunde. We stayed in Stralsund the next day exploring the large churches that were being renovated following decades of neglect.

Departing Stralsund is controlled by the lifting of the railway bridge which only happens two or three times a day. The new bridge is nearly built and this will alleviate the problem in future. The course to Peenemunde takes you between Rugen and the mainland along a shallow channel. Rugen must be at least as large as the Isle of Wight and could be explored with a shallow draft vessel. Peenemunde is situated on a

small island and we moored opposite in the marina at Kroslin from where a ferry crossed to Peenemunde.

For those younger readers, Peenemunde is the airfield where the Nazis developed the V1 and V2 rockets which were fired against England in the later stages of the 2nd World War. The V1 was called "the doodle bug" because of the strange noise its engine made and, as my mother told me, provided you could hear the engine you were safe. When the engine stopped, that was the time to worry as it would explode on hitting the

...Rugen must be at least as large as the Isle of Wight and could be explored with a shallow draft vessel

ground. The V2 was the first ballistic missile and you never knew what hit you if you were unfortunate enough to be too close to the impact point. The RAF bombed Peenemunde with over 1000 bombers and production of the V2 was moved south to central Germany. The weapons were made by forced labour and when the allies liberated the factory only 400 of the workforce were alive from the total of 4000. V1 & V2's killed less than 1000 in England. That's the end of the history lesson. We spent a very interesting day in the museum at Peenemunde before leaving on 22 June for Bornholm and on into Sweden.

Our 10 days exploring the old East German Coast had been fascinating. A lot of time and money is being expended renovating the buildings and facilities much of which has yet to be discovered by tourists. The yacht facilities are excellent and marinas very cheap averaging less than 15 euros per night including electricity. Most of all the people are very friendly and helpful and having had to make do for many years under the communist regime, are resourceful. They are keen to welcome the British and with global warming the Baltic Coast is likely to be a far more attractive proposition than the Mediterranean and besides, is much closer.

Flying Boat alongside Teapot at Warnemunde



Ascend the Nile

Egypt was where it all began on 19 September 2005 – to ascend the world's longest river, from the sea to the source, up stream, in small motorised boats something that had never been achieved before. The team consisted of George Heathcott and his wife, Kate (née Rogers) as medic, myself and two New Zealanders, Cam McLeay and Garth McIntyre. After months of planning and with Fortnum and Mason on board as lead sponsor we entered the Mediterranean at Rashid beginning the longest river journey in the world. It was then a real rush to make it back to Cairo where the British Ambassador, Sir Derek Plumbly, who once resided in Lymington, had kindly lent us his lawn for a packed press conference. When the team got to the press conference we were shocked by the sheer numbers of press and the three of us were actually quite pleased to get it all over with and set off up the wide, wide river out of Cairo

From the mouth to the Aswan High Dam there were 9 barrages or dams to negotiate. All but the two dams at Aswan had locks. Some of these had not been opened in a very long time and it took some willing local help to get us on our way again. We knew we would have to get help with the two Aswan dams and had pre-arranged a truck to move us around these. Held back by the dam was Lake Nasser, the largest man-made lake at 350km long. It took us the whole way to Sudan and its cataracts or rapids.

Once we were underway in Sudan I began to anticipate the next real challenge - the Sudd, the world's largest swamp. Using images previously only available to the military, Google Earth was to offer us a fantastic mapping tool. As it happened

nature also provided a wonderful guide in the shape of the Water Hyacinth. One of the Captains of the huge barges which lumber fully laden through the Sudd let on that the secret to making it through the Sudd in the right channel was to follow the water hyacinth, we did and found a relatively easy passage.

The one major concern was, of course, fuel for one of our longest passages. We carefully calculated the amount we would need for the estimated 950km, loading on to a barge three full 44 gallon drums of petrol we sent on ahead of us. Three days later we meet up with our moving fuel dump when we reckoned that we could carry the balance of fuel needed and still get up on the plane. At this point each boat was carrying 315 litres of fuel. The maximum weight recommended by the manufacturers was 250kg all up, we easily had double that.

...The maximum weight recommended by the manufacturers was 250kg all up we easily had double that.

After the Sudd, the river is known to be un-navigable above Juba to Lake Albert due to the increasing ferocity of the rapids. These culminate in the famous Fola Rapids. The pre Fola rapids took its toll on our equipment when Cam, who was leading got washed down a rapid, smashing his engine gearbox and ripping a 4 foot hole in the side. We all got injured in various ways. I broke my sternum when the whole boat



flicked into the air with such force that I was compressed into my drybox. Three days later with terrible foot rot we crossed into Uganda and into Lake Albert.

If we thought the rapids had been challenging I was to get a rude awakening as we unveiled the Flying RIB. This was going to be used to transport all our equipment, boats and engines firstly over the Muchison Falls themselves and secondly over the huge rapids within the National Park. It was at this point George Heathcot from Lymington joined us. It was his huge experience and help that we needed now. His wife, Kate our team medic had already been enormously helpful and more was to come!

Flying conditions were good but only for the first two hours after dawn, thereafter the land generated thermals kicked in making the experience very unpleasant. It took sixteen flights to get all our equipment over the falls themselves and the conditions got worse. The biggest crocodiles in the world must live here and they were clearly hungry as we had charge after charge. At one point one popped up so close the only safe way out for Cam was to run it over! Eventually one of the rapids got the better of Cam's boat and they were left descending a rapid upside down with the engine tiller arm smashed and wild

animals waiting in the pool below. I returned in the FIB to try and help and in the confusion added the plane to the debris! Yes I crashed her into the northern bank of the Nile adding a broken leg to the list of injuries.

Whilst we had been very aware of our own security as we crossed from Southern Sudan to Uganda we were not aware of any immediate problems in the region where the FIB crashed. So it came as an absolute shock when we were then shot at by rebels.

Much has been reported and said about the attack, our rescue and the awful death of Cam's friend, Steve Willis. I still look back in a kind of wonderment that it happened when it did and that the incident resulted in such a tragic consequence. In hindsight, and after talking with officials and locals, I think there was little we could have done to predict the attack and almost nothing more we could have done once it occurred.

None of the team escaped without injury and we were then faced with a huge dilemma. Do we continue or just leave Africa and the Expedition behind? We returned to our own countries for Christmas although Cam and his family joined us over in the UK for the festive period. During that time it became clear that we all wanted to go on.

Leg mended, a date was set, and on 3 March 2006 we set out again in Uganda and back on the river in the Zap Cats but we now didn't have the Flying boat and there were still some serious rapids to go. The pause in the Expedition had allowed me to experiment with a replacement. I decided we would try heli-lifting over each of the huge rapids in the lead up to Lake Victoria.

I devised a four point lifting harness for the boats, found a willing pilot and the Heli lift was on. This was going to be dangerous and again never done before in such conditions.

The first try ended in disaster. The boat



Muddy Kagera River

flipped and in trying to re-start the waterlogged engine she caught fire!. The enthusiastic locals threw handfuls of river mud to try and smother the flames, with the result that the engine resembled a termite hill.

Perseverance and ingenuity paid. With a twenty foot strop dangling below a moving helicopter we clipped on and were lifting high into the air only cutting the engines once clear of the water.

Thousands of people had gathered to watch and cheer though their voices were swept away on a tide of emotion and rotor noise.

The team was pretty shattered after the Heli-lifting and the remaining rapids but we still had the goal to reach and a schedule to keep to. Our next challenge

was crossing Lake Victoria, the second largest fresh water lake in the world. Zap Cats are fantastic for making incredibly fast progress up rivers but they are not built for the open sea where in places we would be out of sight of land. All three of us felt the crossing was going to be at some risk to ourselves and the boats. It turned out we were right to be cautious.

350km of the second largest lake in the world and it was rainy season produced some spectacular thunderstorms which had to be dodged for the three days it took us to cross. The last leg was done at night to avoid one particular storm with no navigation lights and my head torch facing backwards for the others to follow. The only way I could see them was their silhouette in the lightening flashes behind as a storm chased us to the mouth of the Kagera river, the longest tributary leading

...The boat flipped and in trying to re-start the waterlogged engine she caught fire!



into Lake Victoria. The equator was crossed as we moved into the southern hemisphere, something the two New Zealanders were pleased about!

The river was a chocolate brown and was in full flood with the water hyacinth trail we were following pouring down through Tanzania from the mountains we were climbing.

But we just had the little matter of a few rapids on the Tanzania border to get through. These proved very different from our expectations. The

map we were using was an Anglo German one from 1904 showing 50 miles of rapids, shutes and falls. These took us three days to circumvent with four portages.

Once we had tackled and overcome the real difficulties on the border we were elated to enter Rwanda. But elation soon turned to shivers, real shivers – it was cold. No-one had expected it to be cold in spring in Africa but the nights were definitely chilly and the rainy season had begun to kick in with a vengeance.

The passages on the river in Rwanda were not always easy. By now the river was starting to dwindle and we spent much of the day going ahead on foot at the side of the river to see if we could find a way through the shallowing and narrowing river. Much of the river was now bounded with steep ravines and it was a very physical part of the journey for us all.

Finally the moment came when the river was just running out. Once again we enlisted the help of very willing local people to extract the Zap Cats and load them safely on to a truck. Local people had played a really important role in the Expedition right along the length of the Nile. Whenever we needed to move the boats around obstacles such as dams or rapids there was always someone willing to help, with, of course, the obligatory bargaining for suitable reward!

...Our food was running dry and utter exhaustion was setting in. Luckily progress was so slow my ankle I had broken 4 months earlier held up.

Once we had abandoned our familiar Zap Cats it felt strange to strike out on foot. We were joined by guides from ORTPN, the Rwandan Tourism Authority who look after the Nyungwe National Park where the source of the Nile lies. I had thought that this last stage of the journey would take a few days and would be relatively easy. I was so wrong! Parts of the jungle were so thick our

progress was reduced in places to 200 metres per hour as we hacked, crawled and climbed over vines as large as houses on our way to find the source. I am sure that the porters who were carrying our equipment, had they not been so frightened and lost, would have run away. Our food was running dry and utter exhaustion was setting in. Luckily progress was so slow my ankle I had broken 4 months earlier held up. Cam and Garth were reduced to bare feet at one point from a cocktail of blisters and foot rot. Not a pretty sight.



I devised a four point lifting harness for the boats, found a willing pilot and the Heli lift was on. This was going to be dangerous and again never done before in such condition.

And so we made it! And before too long the whole world knew that we had re-measured the Nile and found it to be longer than anyone had thought; 66 miles longer at 4,198 miles.

Neil McGrigor

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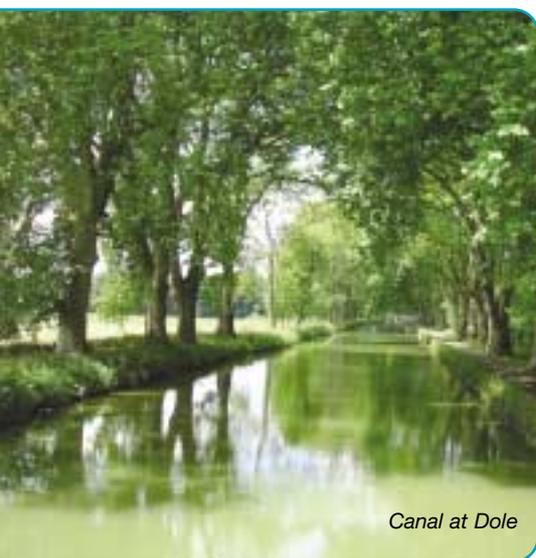
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JUBILANT Summer 2006

Jubilant continued her slow and stately cruise in Europe punctuated by moments of drama during the 2006 summer season.

Jubilant is a Motor Spitz cargo vessel built in Belgium to Dutch design in 1937; she was carrying 350 tons of gravel when we bought her. She was specifically bought because at 38.5m x 5.05m she is also known as a Freycinet barge. Charles Freycinet reconstructed the locks in France in the late 1800's to a standard size 40m x 5.2m and as France was our premier destination and cruising ground we fitted like a glove. We fit rather too well when there is a cross current and wind; we can have a certain amount of difficulty entering the locks! We converted her in Holland in Roermond over three years and set off on our first summer cruise in 2004, joining up with the Club's Cruising Rally in Amsterdam. The summer of 2005 was spent in France in the Burgundy area on the River Saone and Canal du Centre. The



Canal at Dole



Dole Cathedral

winter of 05/06 we laid up in Holland so that was our starting point in May 2006.

Juliet and I delivered *Jubilant* back to St Jean de Losne taking three weeks about it, arriving at our mooring alongside the bank under the trees at St Jean; we'd had to get a move on as friends were joining us two days later. Half an hour after getting comfortably settled I took a phone call, friends weren't going to make it due to pressure of work. Could have cruised down gently!

It was on our delivery the disaster occurred that shaped our year. Going on to a quay in northern France I turned in the river Meuse with the flow and under almost full power struck something, possibly a rock, on the bottom a mighty blow. Future investigation revealed that I had unshipped the bottom rudder bearing and bent the stock. *Jubilant* is nothing if not robust and thus built like a brick chicken house so we were able to continue but now had to recycle the hydraulic fluid we caught in jugs as it dripped out of the broken seals of the steering system, which incidentally came from an American Army crane circa 1950. Another job undertaken by the ever tolerant Juliet.

Once we arrived at our notional cruising base of St Jean I set about arranging a dry-docking. My insurance company asked, not unreasonably, for a quote. Philippe

arrived in full diving gear; I was somewhat surprised when an hour later he, his men and his tug went off down river with my rudder. Now we could not go anywhere even if we wanted too. Still no quote. The next day, hot in paradise, the tug took us to the dry dock and with much pushing and pulling parked outside the dry dock. Still no quote. Into the dry-dock the next day, now no rudder and no water and still no quote. From here on everything went like clockwork, engineering was brutal and magnificent and the quote arrived stapled to the invoice. The insurance company was as good as gold and paid up. I took the opportunity to have a bottom survey, plate thickness still in excess of 5mm, and had the bottom painted with a tar mixture. This shows up one of the small advantages over my seagoing cousins: as I'm in fresh water the next will be in four years time. Three cruising days later all the oil fell out of the steering system necessitating a complete rebuild of all the seals. To tell this part of the saga would make me cry.

Each summer we take paying charter guests on the basis of bed, breakfast, lunch and two evening meals in a week. The troubles referred to did not interfere in any way with our charter programme, thank goodness. We always enjoy the company of our guests and try to lay on an interesting programme for them. We

welcome them to take part in ship's activities but *Jubilant* at 150 tons, Juliet has to supervise carefully the ropework, as at 0.1 of a knot the 28mm rope and a bollard can administer a nasty bite. This year we had a group of six of whom I only knew the organiser of the party, because he and I work in the same IFA in London. I wanted to put on a good show. To this end we arranged an outing to a farm to see the traditional making of the local Compté cheese. We had been previously to check it out, the dairyman made 11 wheels of Compté daily, 365 days a year selling them to a co-operative after 36 days, you can tell I found it interesting. My mate, the group leader, approached and said rather than visit the farm they would sit on deck and have another glass of wine or three or thirteen. Turned out to be the easiest guests of the year. We had picked them up in Dole a beautiful city; the birthplace of Louis Pasteur so there was plenty to see just sitting on deck at the quay below the Cathedral. We visited Dole three times in 2006, adding three hours to our arrival time as we had to go on up the canal until we reached the River Doubs for an hour and a half in order to turn round. We might be big and very comfortable but we have to find a 'winding hole' in the canal or river to turn our length.

All our guests were dispatched for the day for a lunch and wine tasting to Olivier Leflaive in Puligny Montrachet. Pascal Wagner and Patrick Leflaive give a passionate talk, and answer questions leaving you in no doubt as to their opinion regarding the position of French wine in the world. Woebetide anyone asking or even mentioning the New World wines. 18 wines are tasted over luncheon from a list price of 11 Euros for the Villages to 60 Euros for the Gran Cru. There were basins on the table to pour away any undrunk wine, you only had three glasses, when it came to the last wine Pascal left us in no doubt that this wine was to be drunk and given to your neighbour if you did not want any more. Our last party of guests also undertook a vineyard workshop, this involved a lecture around the fields and

then working on three lines of vines. Muriel instructed everyone, the men paid attention and when she talked about her legs and the way they felt when treading grapes in the traditional method I could see tears in their eyes.

Summer 2007 is going to take us to the Ile de France area south of Paris on the canals Loing, Briare, Nivernais and river Yonne with a visit to Paris at the end of June for the Dutch Barge Association 15th Rally in the Bassin Villette. We are looking forward to it.



.. lunch and wine tasting at Olivier Leflaive in Puligny Montrachet..

David Webb



A snug fit in the lock at Dole

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Sailing with a dog

Sailing with a dog as crew on the Long Distance Cruising Meet to Salcombe and Falmouth in June 2006

“There’s a dog wearing a lifejacket” shouts a child from the

ferry as it leaves the Lymington River, Jo-Jo (9) stands on the foredeck with her head between the pulpit looking at the water as we motor out of the river. Her long black ears blowing in the wind and tail wagging, unaware of the interest in her. She is half border collie, quarter German Shepherd and quarter Springer Spaniel.

It was Saturday 3rd July as we set sail aboard *Sulali*, a Contessa 26. Before long we were out into a crowded Solent as the yachts took part in the Round the Island Race. After rounding Hurst we were bound for Poole in a stiff SW wind. On entering harbour I look at Jo-Jo and say, upstairs, she hops out of the cockpit and up on deck wagging her tail, pacing up and down as she is excited to be going into port again.

A night at Poole Quay marina saved inflating the dinghy for woofy walks. The next poop stop was Weymouth and walking Jo-Jo at 4am, before catching the tide to Brixham, which took about 12 hours. If only she would use the deck but it is too late to try and train her now!

From Brixham we sailed for Dartmouth, then onto Salcombe where we moored in the Bag on the pontoon and joined some

of the other Royal Lym.YC boats which had already gathered. It was then a quick pump to get the dinghy afloat and find a patch of sand ashore amongst all the mud.

The following evening I bundled Jo-Jo below with her supper, then put the washboards in before joining the other club members for an evening aboard The Island Cruising Clubs Egremont.

The next day we set sail for Fowey leaving some yachts to head back East.

Some of us headed West and found departing Salcombe rather more

on in the cockpit, it was already too late to bundle her below. I had to hold on tight and keep the boat moving forward.

By 6pm we had finally reached Fowey, our first visit ever, and moored alongside OESTRA with Richard and Celia Lassen. Fortunately I had towed the dinghy so was able to paddle ashore before the clouds burst.

The next day we set off for Falmouth where we joined a number of other Club boats. It was a case of engine on again due to light winds. We gathered for dinner at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club.



Photo by David Harding Sailing Scenes

uncomfortable and wetter than we expected. (It was prior to our departure that I forgot to check the hatches were securely shut on my invisible check list.)

So far on this cruise the winds were light so we tended to motor, which pleased Jo-Jo and she was able to stand upright and not get thrown around the cockpit or bundled below.

This exit was unbelievable as we were ploughing through short steep seas near the bar. The waves were breaking over the deck and cascading below through the gap on the aft hatch behind the mast saturating the cooker, chart table, bunk cushions and floor. There was nothing I could do but to continue heading out to sea. Jo-Jo was tied

The most exhilarating sailing days were from Weymouth to Poole in SW 6+ with one reef in the main and No. 3 jib, then following day from Poole to Lymington W 6+, surfing back at 10 knots with just the genoa unfurled.

This cruise was quite a challenge on my own with Jo-Jo, with 380 miles and 19 days later we were back in Lymington after our longest sailing venture West. She was so patient.

Sulali was the smallest boat (25'6") to attend the Meet and the only one with a dog as crew !

GOLDEN RULES

The ship was just over ten thousand tons, a general cargo liner bound through Suez to Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. It was 1961 and the third officer who had not been to the Far East before was alive with excitement.

He had enjoyed a brief period of watch keeping experience and with the frightening confidence of youth felt he was already capable of more important duties. It was therefore only with mild apprehension that he learned that the Captain was a particularly demanding man, known throughout the fleet as the Fuehrer.

Within a very short space of time he felt the full force of the Master's personality. Very little ever seemed to be right. The chart pencil wasn't sharp. The windward door of the wheelhouse, closed to prevent hypothermia, must be open. The log book was not written up satisfactorily. To describe the Master as a martinet was an understatement. William Bligh would probably have appeared friendly in comparison.

It soon became clear that two obsessions reigned supreme. Firstly, the officer of the watch had to be outside ensuring that a good lookout was being kept at all times. Secondly, the ship had to be on the course line ruled on the chart. These objectives clearly provided a serious conflict, since entering the chart room to position the ship on the chart necessitated neglect of the lookout. However the system provided ample opportunity for the Master to flay any junior officer who was not on the bridge wing whenever he appeared and this developed a sense of habitual caution that would last a lifetime. Men trained in this way, even after forty years, when on the bridge of a ship, cannot even briefly avert their eyes from the horizon without feeling a frisson of anxiety.

They had already reached the Malacca Straits and the Third Officer, while scanning an otherwise empty horizon, noticed a dark smudge. Nerve ends tingling in case the Captain had already spotted it from his deck immediately below the bridge, he nipped into the chartroom to put on the radar. Sure enough it was a rain squall, still some thirty miles away but if it crossed their course, visibility would be impaired.

Plotting confirmed it was extensive, very heavy and moving fast towards them on a collision course. There was no avoiding the issue, standing orders required the advice, it would be necessary to call the Captain – but first get ready – attempt to mitigate the onslaught. Chartroom tidy, squall plotted, clear view screen on, lookout posted, engine room warned of likelihood of restricted visibility – “Third Officer Sir, heavy rain squall approaching fast – will reduce our visibility” – “I’ll be up” more a growl than an acknowledgement. One last quick look round – Heaven help us, the covers are off the bridge wing gyro repeaters. The Cadet goes for one the Third for the other, just as the rain begins to fall – and it’s torrential. As the two young men come back into the wheelhouse, soaked to the skin, the Captain emerges from the Chartroom. Astonishingly he is quite affable, a growl or two and he makes his way back to his cabin.

Suddenly the Third Officer realises what he has done right. When it rains you should get wet. They laughed about it later but had there been a Sampan making her way up to the Bay of Bengal in the middle of that squall they might just have seen it in time to alter course.

Just a few weeks ago in August three bright, competent young men were tragically lost in the busy waters just to the east of the Isle of Weight.

We don't know what happened. At first glance comparisons with methods of practice of forty-five years ago don't appear relevant but perhaps they help us to identify certain things that may keep us safe.

Bridge design is much better now with vastly improved visibility but there are comfortable seats in the wheelhouse, it will be well heated and draught free – much more easy to doze off if you are tired. Radars are even better designed and have extraordinarily sophisticated features that display your true motion over the ground (a truly wonderful innovation in a tidal waterway). However, in only a moderate sea the clutter will obscure a small boat, especially if it is not fitted with a radar reflector.

Working practices are very different. Forty-five years ago a ship would spend a week in port and the crew would go to sea rested. Most commercial ships sailing from a port in our waters now, will be commanded by a man who almost certainly has not even relaxed in the last twenty four hours, let alone slept. His officer of the watch will be just as tired.

In order to minimise the overtime bill the ship will be in automatic steering most of the time.

So for a yachtsman planning a passage, particularly a night passage, the golden rules are: Fit a radar reflector: Keep a rigorous lookout especially astern:: Assume you have not been seen: Whatever the circumstances GET OUT OF HIS WAY.

One thing is for certain. We should rue the day they broke the mould from which those tough, determined and uncompromising Masters were cast forty-five years ago. We will not see their like again.

To Fray Bentos & Beyond

Yes it is the Fray Bentos of corned beef fame. How do you get there? First sail down the North Atlantic across the equator and on down the South Atlantic to the River Plate. Then sail up the River Plate for 200 miles and then a further 150 miles up the River Uruguay and Fray Bentos is on the starboard side of the river.

Angie and I had a head start as we were already in Buenos Aires in Argentina. As we were leaving Argentina and going to Uruguay we had to go through the formalities of clearing out. This is one of the drawbacks of South America as all the countries love paperwork and we have to usually clear with the Police, Customs and Port Control. However once that was done we left and set sail across the River Plate towards the Uruguay side of the river. At this point the river is only 35 miles wide as we were 180 miles inland but as with the entire river it is very shallow, 3 to 4 metres deep apart from the dredged channels. There are also numerous wrecks such as the Graf Spee to make life interesting.

Not long after setting off we were sailing very fast in a thunderstorm with lots of wind, luckily from astern. We sailed most of the day in quite fresh conditions and made good progress sailing from buoy to buoy as we followed the channel. Once we were well into the River Uruguay the buoyage became more interesting as they were widely spaced and poorly painted, so it was difficult to determine port from starboard, It was also complicated as South America uses IALA

B which reverses the system we are used to in the UK. Also the top marks were often missing or badly bent from contact with passing ships.

As it was too far to reach Fray Bentos in one day, we anchored out of the channel for the night. Not long after we had anchored a small tanker passed and gave



us a wave and hoot, very friendly; it also proved that we were well out of the channel and would get a peaceful night. We were off early in the morning, motoring, as the wind was very light. The river was gradually getting narrower but was still over a mile wide, the depth

...In its peak it employed 2000 staff and processed 4000 animals per day

varied from 4 to 10 metres as long as we kept in the channel. By mid afternoon we rounded a bend and there was Fray Bentos on the starboard side of the river. The town was dominated by the building as large as a power station that had been the meat-processing factory. It has a large jetty all of which is in a very dilapidated

state. We anchored off the Yacht Club and the next day we visited the factory.

The factory is now a museum but only the office is available to view as the rest of the buildings are unsafe to enter. The office was incredible as all the records and equipment were there just as they had been left when the factory closed 25 years ago. The factory was started by a German chemist in the 1880's to manufacture meat extracts like Oxo, Bovril and tinned meat. It became the Anglo Uruguay Meat Company and expanded into all sorts of meat products and fresh meat much of which was exported to the UK either frozen or tinned. In its peak it employed 2000 staff and processed 4000 animals per day. Our guide showed us round the outside of the factory and we saw where

the animals had entered the factory on their way to becoming corned beef or other meat products. It would have been very interesting to have been allowed to see the inside but no money had been spent on the upkeep of the buildings and they are now falling down and are unsafe.

As we had enjoyed the trip so far we decided to continue and try to reach Paysandu, which was about another 90 miles up the River Uruguay. There, a hydroelectric dam would stop us from going any further. The wind was again light so we motored all day, there were plenty of birds to watch and as the depth was reducing it was not dull.

We stopped for the night in a small creek at the river side, very peaceful with no mosquitoes. The next morning we

motored on and apart from a very shallow patch, which we had to sound our way through there were no problems and we reached Paysandu in the afternoon. Even though we were now over 400 miles from the sea, there was a very active yacht club who made us most welcome. As we were somewhat larger than the club boats we had to moor alongside their quay. The Club Secretary told us that we were the first English boat to visit their club, so we presented them

...Even though we were now over 400 miles from the sea, there was a very active yacht club who made us most welcome

returned to the boat to find that the river level had dropped and that we were hard aground. As the river drains a huge area of South America the level can be affected by rainfall hundreds of miles away. However we were told that the level would rise on Monday morning when electricity demand would be high and there would be a high water flow from the dam. This was correct so we duly left on "high electricity" and not high tide!

As the level was much higher than when we had come up river we had an uneventful trip back to Buenos Aires.

For the technically minded we used an Argentine chart portfolio for the River Plate and the River Uruguay backed up with C Map electronic charts. Once inland the electronic charts were more detailed than the paper. As long as the datum was adjusted the electronic charts were very accurate.

Chris Coham



with a Royal Lym. burgee. This is now proudly displayed in their clubhouse.

Whilst we were at Paysandu we wanted to hire a car. As Uruguay is a very poor country, cars were not freely available. We got a taxi to take us to the only car hire company to find that their one car was already on hire. After much very fast Spanish between the taxi driver and his base we were taken to his office where the meter was removed and we were given the taxi to self drive. It was very interesting to drive a yellow and black taxi and we were only flagged down twice. The roads in Uruguay are very empty which makes for easy driving and we saw a lots of interesting sights such as Gauchos on horseback and roadrunners (beep beep) running by the side of the road.

After two days touring in the car we

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History of the Val Powell Cup

The Val Powell Cup awarded annually to the winner of the Club Invitation Race (sailed in XODs) was presented by Mrs Powell in 1975. This article, written by Val's daughter Lyn Law, sets out the history behind the cup.



Rare shot of Kathleen out for a sail with Val. This was in August 1956

My parents, Val and Kathleen Powell, returned to this country in 1947. Because of a long career overseas with the Burma Railways, they had no particular ties with any part of the country and chose Lymington almost by sticking a pin in the map.



The river in 1948

They had a few overseas contacts who lived in and around Lymington, and I believe it was in 1948 that the family joined the Yacht Club. The first boat Val bought was not a success. It was a Sharpie called *Sea Saga* and was a little tender. *Sea Saga* was traded in for a 14 ft Ariès from Christchurch which we called *Tha-tha-mi*, meaning 'Family' in Burmese.

Many of my friends had their first experience of sailing in this boat but often my father would sail single-handed, gaining the knowledge of the winds, tides and currents of the Solent that was to stand him in good stead as a Race Officer

My father had little time for standard Olympic courses, and was more in tune with the sailors of keel boats than the dinghy classes. He felt that setting an interesting course that would give the greatest enjoyment to the competitors was a battle of wits with the elements and the Race Officer as well as other skippers. Often he would correctly anticipate a little late flurry of wind that would bring the wise boats over the finishing line.

The XODs in



1969 Regatta platform party Val, Robin Angrave, Leslie Ash, 'Fiery' Lock

particular relished the challenges that he posed them. They in turn were good friends and trusted him enough to present him with a pair of binoculars. He and my mother were very happy to be part of the



Picking up the mooring in *Tha-tha-mi* in 1966



1966 Regatta - the Race Officer decides on a further 15 minutes postponement for lack of wind

social life of the Club and the Honorary Life Membership conferred on him and, later, on my mother reflect the contribution he had made to the Club.



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ROSINA of Beaulieu

Overall Winner of the Round-The-Island Race for the third time

We said we'd either be back late or we'd be back for lunch that day, because the race start time gave us only two hours to round the Needles. However the winning decision was made three days beforehand, when we ordered a lightweight, floater spinnaker from Peter Sanders. Peter rose to this very short notice challenge and had the sail ready for us by Friday night. Without it we'd never have made the tidal gate at the Needles on Saturday morning.

Having rounded the Needles within inches of Goose Rock, inside a mêlée of large yachts, mostly all going nowhere and linked together with boat hooks, fenders and deckshoes, we lost track of all our immediate competition. *Madelaine*, the Folkboat that we fear most, had slipped ahead of us. What we didn't know was that she also had a new spinnaker from Peter Sanders, but in so doing she had increased her IRC rating, and this helped us in the end when the computer calculated the corrected times.

As we went round the Needles under spinnaker, the tide changed and swept most of the fleet back the wrong side of this westward turning mark, but we were fortunate and headed off towards St Catherine's Point at the very southernmost part of the Isle of Wight. Knowing that *Madelaine* was ahead of us, although we couldn't see how far, we were beginning to think that we probably weren't doing too well. It's difficult to keep up the effort, when you think your main rival is beating you, but fortified by our local butcher's pork pies and the sea breeze filling our lovely new floater spinnaker, we cut the corner bravely at



photos by David Harding Sailing Scenes

the engine to go home. Thank goodness we didn't!

The wind finally filled in from the northeast and the tide turned in our favour, which gave us the chance to romp home to the finish line and save our time on everyone else.

What we hadn't realised was that the bigger boats – and *Madelaine* – had been parked up in Cowes Roads just short of the finish line without any wind either. Imagine our surprise as we went into the Island Sailing Club for a beer to console ourselves at the end of the race: people came up to us to congratulate *Rosina* on her unprecedented third win overall! We thought they were joking! So the moral of this tale is 'never give up'.



Hattie, Kit Simon and Jeremy

Ventnor and then pushed on to Bembridge full of enthusiasm for the homeward leg. Then we lost the wind completely. At this point we sat despondently for over an hour, while we watched a group of sails disappearing over the western horizon ahead of us. We were sure that *Madelaine* was amongst them, and we very nearly turned on

A spare week on Lake Malaren



Gripsholm Castle

Il health and the August security scare had disrupted our crews so that towards the end of an exceptional summer in the Baltic we found ourselves in Stockholm with a week to spare. After only three seriously wet days in 14 weeks it was unfortunate that the weather chose late August to break. Most of the heaviest rain was at night but we decided to visit Drottningholm Palace by land.

In less than an hour from the Wasahamnen by bus, subway and bus we reached this UNESCO World Heritage site. The home of the Swedish Royal family includes the baroque seventeenth century palace, enormous formal gardens, a Chinese pavilion and an original wooden Court Theatre. A very interesting day but we regretted not having come by boat and anchoring just in front of the palace.

Dafony, our standard Westerly Oceanranger 11.6m sloop, remained well stocked but although by now Liz and I were in finish-up mode we could not resist picking up some final goodies from the

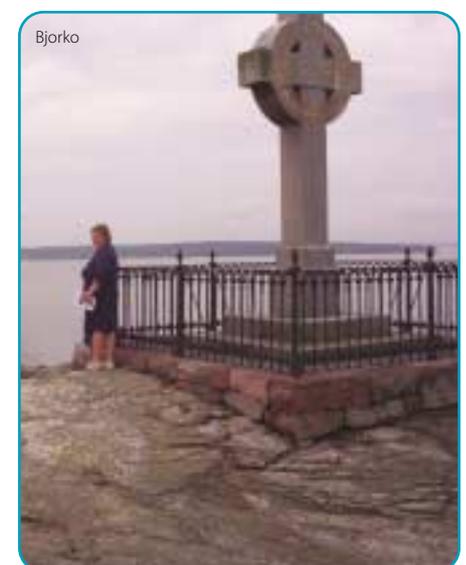
excellent covered market in Stockholm before we moved on.

One enters Lake Malaren from the east via the Hammarbyleden along which the Swedes have built an amazing number of apartments with a “view over water”! Four bridges and a single lock of less than one metre were easily negotiated apart from finding the north side of the Arstabron was closed off. We motored on for a lunch stop by the beautiful eighteenth century manor house of Sturehov, just east of the island of Helgo. The latter had been the original seventh century Viking trading site for the Malor valley until it was outgrown and the centre moved a few miles north west to Birka.

We enjoyed a short sail up to Bjorko, on which Birka was situated and found ourselves the only boat in the gasthamn which was surprising as this UNESCO World Heritage site receives 60,000 visitors per annum, mostly by pleasure steamers from Stockholm and other surrounding towns. In its heyday as many as seven

hundred inhabitants traded on the 2 x 1nm island but by the tenth century water levels had dropped and the whole site was abandoned. A multitude of Viking traces remain including over three thousand graves.

Our first ospreys were seen while motoring south to Mariefred. This sleepy town is home to over 4000 people and also the Royal renaissance castle of Gripsholm, an impressive fortress with three imposing towers. It has 65 rooms open to the public and houses the Swedish State Portrait Collection. The town is dominated by the castle but thrived on its patronage so boasts several prosperous buildings as well as typical wooden homesteads surrounded by their own gardens, courtyards and facilities. Just across the water in full view of the castle is a striking Italiante mansion, Gripsnas, built by one of the King’s friends. Having taken advantage of the King’s support for a hunting lodge to win the equivalent of planning permission he built himself a very fine house but was banished from court!



Bjorko

Shortly after leaving Mariefred we were startled to see a young sea eagle crash land into a fir tree less than 150 metres from the boat. Almost immediately it was under attack from an osprey trying to guard its territory. While seeing more ospreys on our way to a likely looking anchorage on the north of Ramso none obliged that evening or the following morning. After so long earlier in the summer surrounded by pine trees and ash we welcomed the much more lush tree cover of oaks right down to the water's edge, somewhat reminiscent of Cornwall or Brittany.

We had learnt that the Tosterobron at Strangnas had been closed for repairs all season, which was fortunate as we needed fuel from beyond the bridge so were able to stop at Stallarholmen en route. More ospreys and then three on a small island just east of Strangnas.

The temporary gasthamn east of the bridge was right below the very imposing fourteenth century red brick cathedral whose single handed clock struck once each quarter hour and with a double strike for each hour, but restfully not at night.

A gentle sail east before we met head winds and the shallow, 2.5m channels north east round the top of Seloan which is the largest island in the lake. Right on cue at the very narrowest point two ospreys flew low over the water hunting for fish. Then a faster sail but with fluky



winds to anchor for lunch in the western bay of Groneborg. This is an ancient thirteenth century refuge citadel where the local populace would

retreat in times of strife. Sheets of lily of the valley along the western edge and a sharp climb to the top for what would have been panoramic views all around over the surrounding islands and waterways, but the trees have now grown except to the south. All that survives now is the substantial lower wall of stones about 12 metres square as any other remains have been overgrown or destroyed.

While ashore the wind had increased and veered to the east so we had an energetic beat down the sound to the southeast. Saw more ospreys on our way to a carefully selected anchorage where we might see them fishing but again they failed to cooperate. Little wind the next morning so we motored round to Malasker, another impressive eighteenth century mansion said to house to a military exhibition. There appeared to be major repairs under way and no sign of visitors so we did not stop. Later passed south of Koltholmen where we saw a family of four ospreys and their vast nest on top of a pine tree. Ended that day anchored between Karlholmen and Ekensberg where there are extensive reed beds. A great number of duck, geese and

crested grebes all around. Then we watched fascinated as a marsh harrier continually searched the reeds and eventually dived for what must have been a satisfactory kill as we did not see it reappear for ages. Later it flew past very close to the boat in brilliant sunshine showing all its colours. More ospreys seen in the distance and finally the next morning we saw a young one stoop for a fish, folding its wings as it dived – but unsuccessfully that time.

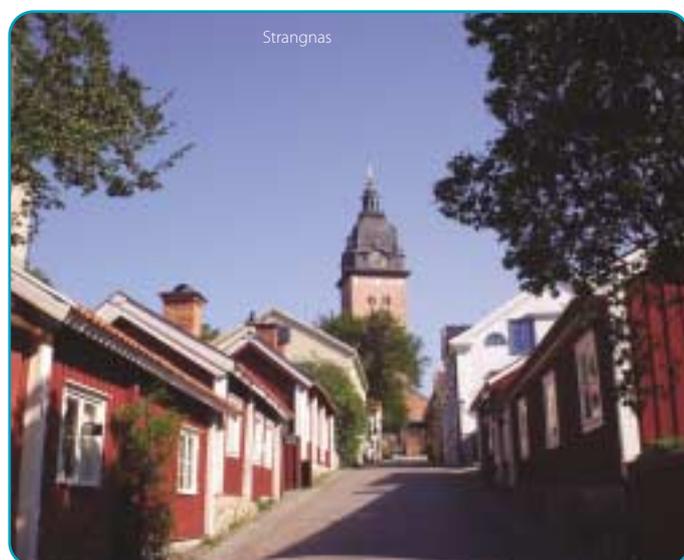
When motoring into the narrowing channel which becomes the Sodertalje canal and only 300 metres from several houses we heard and then spotted two young ospreys sitting together in a tree near their enormous nest. Further south there are much higher bridges when leaving Lake Malaren but there is one of 15 metres and a one metre lock before reaching sea level again at Soldertalje. Transit is free as a charge is made only when exiting to the north through the Hammarbyleden. As a finale we spotted 14 buzzards circling a couple of hundred feet above the Halls-fjarden and a sea eagle hunting near the boat.

We had rather wondered how we would fill our spare week but were delighted with the peace and variety of interest which we found in what was less than half the eastern end of Sweden's largest freshwater lake.

Mike Redfern



Drottningholm Palace



Strangnas

Newtown Family Meet 2006 21st, 22nd & 23rd July

Attendees

Unrivaled – Perry Letcher, Sarah-Jane, Eleanor & James

Crossbow – Sarah Fraser, Fiona Austin, Alec, James, Kate & Poppy

Talisman – Tony & Kate Miles

Tinkerbelle – Dick Thorn & Jane Pitt-Pitts

Saturday

Isabella – Pippa and Jack Newland & Katie

Highbanks – George & Carol Tinley

RIB – John Woodman and family

RIB – Philip Gossage and family

RIB – Mark Keeping

In addition were tenders, a couple of canoes and a scow

A somewhat lyrical account of the weekend.....

There is always something magical about waking up on a boat in the quiet of Newtown, broken only by the honk of a goose and the cry of a curlew. Even better then when accompanied by family and like minded people from the Club. The 2006 meet will not go down in Club history for breaking records – either for age range (2005 – 2 to 80) or numbers, but I hope it will be as happily remembered by all those who took part, as it is by me.

Mid summer and the first weekend of the school holidays is always a busy time and this year we not only clashed with the Cadet Nationals but also with the Contessa 32 and other numerous events (including our Captain of Cruising son's wedding). For all that we still had some of the old 'hardcore' and welcomed some new faces. The Miles arrived first in Clanarkin and anchored. The wonders of modern technology – they were able to text me to let me know that all four buoys were taken. This a reflection of the wonderful summer we have been having and how badly kept a secret Newtown has become – I still recollect fondly the years when we got up to Clanarkin to find it

deserted.

Commitments elsewhere meant that I would have to leave my boat unattended for 4 or 5 hours whilst I returned to Lymington so I was not mad about anchoring.

A polite enquiry of a small motor cruiser on one of the buoys as to whether they were there for the weekend resulted in the response that they were departing after lunch. They kindly let me tie up alongside and move the mooring from their boat to mine.

This had the added advantage of enabling us to raft later with *Crossbow* and provide a large platform for the meet.

It wasn't long before rubber dinghies were inflated, the scow rigged and everyone in the holiday mood. A greater awareness than ever before of keeping swimmers and engines apart – many remembering that as recently as 10 days before someone lost a leg in Hythe by trying to board the stern of a motor boat from the water with the engine running.

Seeing the confidence children gain from hopping in and out of each others boat's and learning from each other is one of the few constants of the meet and a constant source of pleasure to everyone watching.



Eleanor Letcher



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We had taken lasagne from the club (thanks to Mark and Peter – excellent!) and all had a convivial supper on *Crossbow*.

In true cruising fashion the evening ran its course; amusing anecdotes, sailing tips and a jury rigged oil lamp on the aft deck made for a happy bridge four – did they really manage to play 2 hands with 48 cards without noticing?!

Saturday morning and a beautiful dawn was missed by many – fantastic light and whispers of mist across the land.

None of the children was up hugely early – we cooked breakfast on our less than tidy boat and all gathered at about 10am for coffee and a briefing from Tony Miles who set us off for the Treasure Hunt. Tony and Kate did a first class job – if 2006 is remembered for nothing else it will go down as the best Treasure Hunt so far. 5 teams took part – my excuse for my team's failure to win being that on an almost wind free morning, 3 adults and 2 children did not make my Scow the fastest vessel – we sailed/rowed and were even once towed! Everyone else used tenders with outboards perhaps demonstrating a greater degree of common sense! Congratulation to team 'Katie' – the Newland family – and to James and Alec who jointly shared the honours – I have no doubt that next time the boys will check how much fuel is in their outboard before they start – it was kind of everyone to help them round.

By about midday we gathered on

Crossbow for the prize giving – we got the timing about right as at 1230 is started to rain with a vengeance, the wind got up and we had a massive thunder storm. Looking at the 6's and 12's on the Solent I was not that envious– in fact quite happy to be warm and dry in comfortable surroundings. That afternoon we had a lot of rain but it did gradually clear up – a little gentle fishing was enjoyed (nothing caught – come back George!) and we were joined by the Woodmans in their large RIB. During the course of the afternoon a number of Club Members pitched up in a variety of craft.

As the weather cleared up the prospects of the beach BBQ began to look more likely and

we ended up in glorious sunshine on the beach with a good gathering. All in all an enjoyable and busy day and we even succeeded (courtesy of the Woodman RIB) to get Fi Austin up to Shalfleet to get a taxi to enable her to be back in Lymington that night.

We woke up on Sunday to a damp morning. Sarah and co had survived with 11 on *Crossbow*– it made us feel we had a lot of space on my boat!

In normal fashion, a lazy morning with people drifting back home. The boys tried in vain to catch a fish and there was the usual putting away of tenders and tidying up – I enjoyed taking apart the fender raft made the previous afternoon which successfully took two people and showed a degree of ingenuity that I hadn't expected. John kindly took most of the kids out in the RIB and doughnut which they enjoyed – the only problem being that I seemed to be under increasing pressure from my family to get a RIB. And so, about midday, back on the ebb to Lymington after an enjoyable social and friendly weekend – we may not go far for the family meet but we seem to be able to cater for all ages and have a lot of fun – why not join us at the next one?

Perry Letcher



MORE experiences from NORDLYS

Christmas and New Year's Eve 2005 were celebrated in Sydney.

Sailing past the Opera House, watching the Sydney Hobart race start, New Year's Eve firework display on 'the bridge' are memories we will never forget. Early January however found us heading south. Making the most of weather windows we made it non stop to the very South East corner of the continent and anchored behind Gabo Island for a night of calm. Next day as we ran in a south westerly direction into the Bass Strait moral was high. Stuart and Annabelle Ingram had left their beloved *Troubadour* and joined us for the trip to Hobart. By midday we were double reefed and the genoa was poled out with many rolls. The anemometer was broken but the surface of the sea was smoking and conversation required shouting. The seas shortened as we met the continental shelf and one very steep wave blanked the wind causing us to almost stop. The result was our first ever pooping. I was helming and the others were all battened down below listening to the weather forecast which had only talked about 25/30 knots when we set out. Ha ha. By the following morning it was all over and we motored in near calm into the Kent Group of islands. Deal Island was our destination. This group is only accessible by yacht although we did meet one man who had canoed there! Suffice to say it is a magical place and we were warmly entertained by the warden and his wife who as volunteers do a three month spell maintaining the lighthouse and the small museum in one of the old keeper's cottages. It was here some years after Darwin had finished with her that the HMS *Beagle* was nearly lost in a gale. We



were now just into the roaring forties and nature was not going to let us forget it.

Flinders Island and several anchorages on the Eastern side of Tasmania plus another fifty something knot gale followed before we tied up in the Royal Tasmanian Yacht Club in Hobart. I could go on and on about Tasmania and particularly Hobart. Suffice to say that it is one of the few places we have visited in our travels where we would be happy to live. A two week car trip around this amazing Island followed and then it was time to head on south.

One coastal village we passed was called Lymington so a small diversion was made



and a night spent at anchor there. The journey round the awe inspiring cliffs and coastline of southern Tasmania was mostly undertaken in lightish winds but huge swells told their tale of gales further to the south of us.

Port Davey, a twelve mile inland sea on the south west of Tasmania was our next destination. To get there either a sail, a six day hard hike or a light aircraft trip to a gravel strip is necessary. All ones own food and equipment has to be carried. A walker's hut is the only accommodation. The nearest 4WD track is over sixty miles away. After nearly a week of differing anchorages and much hill walking in stunning scenery of this wilderness area we wanted to get on. Nature decreed otherwise. Maatsuyker Island met station on the southern coast and just 24 miles as the sea eagle, there are no crows, flies was recording 43 gusting 60 knots with 4 meter seas on top of 5 meter swells. Two days later we escaped and four hundred miles and one gale later we were in Portland in the state of Victoria. Tasmania had been one of the great experiences of our cruise so far and I can only recommend anyone in the region to consider it. Nevertheless, Annette, myself and I think *Nordlys* were happy to be north of the forty south parallel.

Port Lincoln and the crossing of the Great Australian Bight followed and at dawn on the morning of my 60th birthday we sighted the outer of the 150 islands that make up the Recherche Archipelago off Esperance in Western Australia. The latest chart says these islands are 'partially surveyed only'. I think that they are unfair on the indomitable Flinders who surveyed this area well over a century ago as we found the charts accurate. A few days in Esperance during which we were invited to dinner with the Port Captain and his charming wife and we were off on the final leg. Using a good forecast we kept going and rounded Cape Leeuwin with a pleasant twenty five knots from astern. Another two days and Nordlys was tied up in the Fremantle Sailing Club. 8000nm had passed under our keel since we left New Zealand ten months earlier. It was now mid March.

A trip home was followed by a journey around the parts of Australia that a yacht cannot take you to. Blue sea was replaced by red dust. Our old Landcruiser had another 15000km added to her 320,000 and our tent did great work. 2006 was for us very much a year of 'surf and turf'. With the Indian Ocean to cross 2007 will I think be just 'surf'.

Another side of cruising life Annette Ridout Clothes Washing experiences

I am sitting in the launderette in Fremantle, Western Australia. My washing is doing the rounds in the machines. The place is being done up by Cheryl, the cheerful owner and we have just had a coffee and a chat. She has now returned to her paint brush and I to my reflections on the many and varied places our laundry has gone from dirty to clean since we left the UK in late 2000.

The most colourful would have to be Daffodil, a small yellow boat that did the rounds of the anchorage in Bequia in the Caribbean. She collected the washing and for a fairly hefty fee returned it clean and folded. En route for Maine in the USA we stopped in Bermuda and to our surprise found a launderette amongst the white roofed, pastel coloured pretty houses of this affluent enclave.

America was where our folding bikes really proved invaluable as we rarely went to a marina, hence had quite long journeys to find a 'Laundromat'. For a variety of reasons we spent quite a bit of time in Rockland, Maine (not least because they had a very good restaurant!) clothes had to be washed and this meant



a cycle ride of 2 miles up hill to the nearest facility. We both went, cycle baskets and back packs loaded, and while I waited for the machines to do their work David cycled off to find some special pipe to connect up our black tank. It was a sight, not dissimilar to the Michelin man that half an hour later whizzed past the window as he came past with the pipe wound round him several times.

But back to washing. In Martha's Vineyard where we were lent a mooring near Edgartown for a month, washing was more of a problem as we failed to locate a launderette in this very smart resort. However, friends who had lent us the mooring helped out again. They





themselves lived at the other end of the island but had a small place by the airport with washing facilities we could use, so we had a 10 mile round trip to get clean clothes and bedding on that occasion.

The most unusual and entertaining 'laundry facility' was in the San Blas Islands, shortly before we popped through the Panama Canal. Friends were due to fly into a tiny airstrip on a small island by the Kuna village of Nargana to join us for the second half of our cruise of this magical spot so clean bedding was needed. We followed the locals from the island off which we were anchored. They paddled their dugouts 3 miles across to

the mainland then 2 miles up the river to do their washing and also to collect drinking water so they were always heavily laden. We set off in our dinghy and 15 hp outboard but soon felt guilty and offered tows which were gratefully and smilingly accepted. I had 'marinated' the washing so it was just a matter of rinsing out but it was no hardship standing in lovely water in the middle of tropical jungle with cheerful locals around, toucans flying overhead and howler monkeys providing the background 'music'.

The longest stretch of sailing we have done so far is from the Galapagos to the Marquesas and Christabel Gwyn-Evans had joined us in Panama so now there were 3 of us onboard. Needless to say, getting some washing done became a matter of some urgency. With Fatu Hiva our first stop, the only facility they had to offer was a plentiful supply of water on the quayside. To our absolute delight there were two brand new wheelbarrows also on the quay and they made excellent washing/rinsing tubs. Other cruisers soon joined us and local kids kept us entertained as they dived into the waters in front of us, adding fun to the splendour of this spectacular spot. One local lady asked us if we would swap a bra for some

fresh fruit – looking at her we did not think ours would fit!!!

From here on till we reached New Zealand we nearly always had to time our washing with tropical downpours which were fairly frequent and Nordlys regularly looked like a Chinese laundry.

On arrival in Opuia, New Zealand which is the most favoured port of entry in that country, there was a near stampede for the wonderful facilities. It was even fun ironing for once and it was a great social melting pot where passages were compared.

The following season we went back up to Tonga, onto Samoa, Fiji and then Vanuatu before returning to New Zealand. A lot of the time we spent in company with great Norwegian friends on Embla. They had a washing machine onboard and once did 2 loads of washing for us, true friends indeed.

One more episode deserves mentioning. On our second trip North from New Zealand we at some point arrived back in Tanna, Vanuatu, this time with David's nephew, Patrick onboard. This fabulous island has an active volcano which apart from offering a great spectacle day and night also provides hot water in one area of the Port Resolution anchorage. Some pools give very warm water, ideal for washing and Patrick was pressed into washing duty with the locals chatting to us in a mixture of hilarious pidgin English and French. Had we thought about it we could have boiled eggs in adjacent pools!

Hair cuts

Having one's hair cut did at times also prove amusing, especially the result. In Bequia there was a delightful French lady who cut your hair in her sitting room, looking into a mirror balanced between two windows overlooking the anchorage. Excellent hair cut here. Encouraged by that at some later date I went and had my hair cut in Guadeloupe (French chique!) – not so lucky this time, a seriously short cut which I called my economy-cut. At least no cutting was needed for a very long time.



In the Pacific we were largely on our own with a few exceptions. I bought a set of electric clippers and cut David's hair with a mixture of scissors and the clippers. Usually successful but on one occasion when we had our son Jago and his wife Claire with us I made rather a hash of cutting so Jago had a go at correcting things with Claire putting the final touches to what in the end turned out to be a crew cut in every sense of the word! David liked it but nobody else did.



We had met a delightful Swiss /American couple, also sailing and Jacqui was a superb hair dresser. For a bottle of wine she happily cut your hair but not on her boat! One of the loveliest places where I had hair cut by her was on a beach on one of the islands in the Lau Group, Fiji. Another was on an island in the northern part of Vanuatu where she had quite a long line of customers.

From the above I hope I have managed to convey a sense of enjoyment one can get from very ordinary events. I could go on and describe food shopping and cooking but that is a whole other chapter so not for now.

David and Annette Ridout



An advertisement for Sanders Sails. At the top is a logo consisting of two overlapping shapes, one orange and one purple, with the name 'SANDERS' in blue capital letters below them. Below the logo is a cartoon illustration of a young boy with spiky brown hair, wearing a yellow polo shirt with a red and blue logo on the chest. He is pointing his right index finger towards the viewer. The background is a faded image of several yachts on the water. At the bottom, the text 'YACHTS NEED SANDERS' is written in large, bold letters, with 'SANDERS' in blue and 'YACHTS NEED' in red. Below that, 'SAILS COVERS CUSHIONS' is written in red, and 'www.sanders-sails.co.uk' is in blue. At the very bottom, in a dark blue bar, the contact information is listed in white: 'SANDERS SAILS BATH ROAD LYMINGTON HAMPSHIRE SO41 3RU', 'Tel: 01590 673981 Fax: 01590 676026', and 'email: peter@sanders-sails.co.uk'.

London Monte Carlo Record Attempt

July 20th to 22nd 2006



In 2005 team *Seahound* consisting of skipper Chris Strickland, Jan Falkowski, Gordon Compton and myself set a new world record for the fastest circumnavigation of the British Isles, completing the 1800 nautical miles in some 72 hours. My abiding memory of our return was one of exhaustion mixed with exhilaration and an overwhelming wish to get off the boat. I also clearly remember that Chris when asked by the press “what next” replied that under no circumstances would he do that again and that the furthest any of us wanted to go ever again was a bar in Yarmouth or Newtown River for a bottle of wine. So how some 11 months later did we find ourselves in the middle of the Bay of Biscay some 150 miles off shore, pitch dark and hell-bent on breaking another record?

I remember sitting in the bar at the BIBOA awards ceremony with Messer’s Strickland, Compton and Falkowski, always a dangerous situation at the best of times, and of course as the beer flowed so did the memories of Round British Isles and before we knew it we were half way

to Monte Carlo in the planning of yet another record breaking adventure. So much for we will never do it again, once was enough and cruising sedately to Yarmouth but I suppose that’s ribbing BIBOA style.

We all first met to discuss the project at Chris’s house some time in early February joined by Mike Deacon who had agreed to act as our shore support for the challenge. I guess when you have gone around Britain as many times as Mike you know when to say no and he could see the attraction of a warm office as opposed to hanging on to a Sat phone in the middle of a dark cold ocean. Chris had prepared the outline of the attempt and with the benefit of experience gained from the previous year had determined that we would make four fuel stops, the total journey distance was 2080 nautical miles and we would be carrying just over 1500 litres of fuel per leg. *Seahound* is a 10 meter Scorpion cabin RIB powered by twin 320hp turbo charged diesels. In 2005 the team averaged 29 mph over the 1800 miles round the British Isles but London

Monte Carlo was something else. To beat the existing record we would have to average over 37 mph and the total distance was some 500 miles longer. The previous record was set in 2001 by Fabbio Buzzi, he used an 80 foot Buzzi mono hull powered by four 1500hp engines developing a massive 6000hp. The 600hp of *Seahound* seemed insignificant by comparison but the team believed implicitly that the record was achievable; the key to success would rest on two crucial factors, reliability and good weather, not to mention a large helping of good luck.

Following this initial meeting the team members were tasked with various jobs, and by the beginning of June all was in place. We were now at the mercy of the weather and for better or worse the team had nominated me to make the final weather call to go or not to go, so no pressure for the next few months!!

Every day I would check different web sites in an effort to establish a pattern to the weather, I kept a full spread sheet on

the daily statistics so as to be able to compare the daily readings. The main problem was that we were dealing with three major weather systems, the Atlantic depressions that sweep across the country were fairly predictable as were the trade winds that set in down the Spanish and Portuguese coasts but the unpredictability of the weather conditions in the Mediterranean was much more difficult to judge. For the attempt to succeed it was vital that all three systems were favourable, for those interested in the technical side I used four principal web sites to help in predicting the optimum conditions:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/shipping/> an excellent site for weather predictions in UK and continental waters, <http://www.ecmwf.int/> predicts up to 120 hours ahead and uses a different computer model to the BBC so gives a slightly different overview to what is happening. <http://www.mediterraneanweather.com/marine.htm> This is an excellent site for the Mediterranean which gives detailed predictions on wave heights and local weather in the region and finally for Atlantic wave heights and trends I used <http://www.lajollasurf.org/images/euranim.gif>

The whole of June passed with no chance of a weather window and bearing in mind that the Trade winds set in during early August which blow from the NW5/6 winds every day it was imperative that the team started before that date. Many days passed with either excellent conditions in the English Channel and SW approaches and storms in Biscay or flat calms in the Mediterranean and gales in the Channel. The days and weeks passed with little or no sign of change, at this point it is difficult to believe that a window would ever appear or indeed that it was possible for the weather to be settled in all regions at once finally however I called Chris on Sunday 15th July a weather window appeared to be developing and I said that we should leave on the following Wednesday, after he had caught his breath and realised that I was serious the phone lines were alive with activity as the final calls and arrangements were made.

Mike had warned us that if the attempt were to take place in Mid July he would be in the Far East, Mel Wilby had kindly volunteered to step in so one of the first calls was to Mel. We had established a number of contacts throughout Europe at fuel stations, marinas and had also made arrangements for the attempt to be officially timed by a representative of the UIM (Union Internationale Motonautique) the international governing body for all world record attempts, all of these important contacts now had to be called and advised of our planned start time and anticipated arrival at their location.

The start line in London is a line drawn between the Royal Pier Gravesend and the Tilbury Fort so the first challenge is to get the boat to London, on the face of it that sounds simple until you realise that Chris actually didn't want his boat in a dock in London for the whole of the summer whilst we waited for a weather window. The solution was simple, tow the boat to London and launch in the docks immediately prior to the attempt. This was done but not without its problems, a blow out on one of the trailer tyres, massive congestion in the Blackwell tunnel which when towing a rig the size of Seahound is

a minimum of four litres per day equates to over sixty litres of drinking water. Food was pre prepared and was packed into sealed plastic containers; this consisted of sandwiches, fruit, chocolate and snacks. By 1900 hours on the Wednesday evening the night before the off the boat was ready the team assembled.

Thursday the 20th dawned and a beautiful day was in prospect. We departed the lock and slowly made our way down river passing the Dome and the Thames Barrage, as soon as we were clear of the barrier we increased speed in order to meet with Anne our official timekeeper at Gravesend. We had only been underway for a matter of moments before we abruptly came to a shuddering stop, with nerves on edge and adrenaline pumping we discovered we had picked up some plastic sheeting round the port propeller, this we quickly cleared.

Contact was made with Anne as we swept into Gravesend Reach and before we could turn around we had crossed the line and the attempt was under way. Our first stop was St Peters Port Guernsey, we had taken a light fuel load in London to ensure a fast time on this all important first leg, once underway the nerves began



a major headache and difficulties in launching on an unfamiliar slipway with restricted access. Finally the boat was in the water and the daunting task of loading all of the provisions begins, carrying sufficient water alone is a massive undertaking, a four man crew consuming

to subside and we settled down into a comfortable routine. We had decided to use the same watch keeping procedure as had been adopted the previous year, this involved two hours driving, two hours sleeping, two hours resting and two hours navigating before going back to driving,

thus avoiding going from sleep to driving or navigating. Southend flashed passed as we cruised at a steady 45 knots, the Medway came and went and conditions were ideal. As we approached the Red Sand Towers old anti air craft gun emplacements left over from the second world war the wind started to increase and what had been a calm a delightful run rapidly deteriorated into a force 4/5 off the starboard bow. Chris was driving and the boat was leaping from wave to wave landing heavily and without a single word being spoken we were all thinking how on earth are we going to take 60 plus hours of this. We rounded Northforland, rapidly passed Dover and headed out down the English Channel. I called Dover Coastguard to log our passage plan and when I advised them that we were bound for Monte Carlo in a RIB there was a pause for laughter whilst they took in what I had just said, then a very efficient have a good trip and

good luck, was the reply from the authorities. Dover is always an uncomfortable area and today was no exception I had warned Chris that we may have some unsettled weather at the beginning of the attempt but also that

it should improve the further west we went. By the time we passed the Isle of Wight the conditions had indeed started to improve, the sun was shining and the world looked good. Some five hours after crossing the start line at Tilbury we turned into St Peters Port for the first of our re-fueling stops After 30 minutes we were off after having been interviewed by the local press, the next leg was the first of the big ones, Guernsey to Ushant, and then 350 miles of open sea across Biscay in the dark to La Corunna. The conditions could not have been better, the sea was flat calm and we were back to cruising at a steady 45/48 knots we were already on target to set a new record but we all knew that a

vast amount of ocean lay ahead.

We passed along the North Brittany coast in near perfect conditions and crossed the Chenel du Four as the sun was slowly going down in the West, the Islands of Ushant appeared in hazy conditions and we turned south into the channel, a course that we would now follow until rounding Cape St Vincent off Portugal. The waters between these islands was confused with sloppy and large seas heaped up in all directions and we were forced to slow to 20 plus knots, these conditions were to prevail for the next couple of hours until we passed over the continental shelf and into two thousand plus meters of water. We stopped briefly at this point in order to don full survival dry suits and extra layers of Gortex for the cold night ahead, by now darkness had descended and the first of our night legs had begun. This is never an enjoyable experience and it is essential to maintain

Record Statistics:

Total distance 2392 statute miles
Average speed 39.07mph
(including all stops)
Time taken 61 hours 12 minutes
48 seconds.

Team

Chris Strickland (Skipper), John Puddifoot, Jan Falkowski, Gordon Compton

an extremely vigilant watch at all times. From past experience I knew that it was extremely likely that we would encounter many fishing boats on route and that the dangers associated with nets was very real. There was little or no moon so just pitch black as we

continued on our way, at this point you have to drive the boat by feel as you cannot see any of the wave patterns, most of the time we got it right but we caught one wave very badly, took off into the blackness of the night and landed with a shuddering, boat breaking crash with all of us on top of each other. We rapidly checked the boat, all was well but this was a reminder of how exposed we were and how quickly disaster could strike. The watch system worked well and by 0200hours we were off the approach to La Corunna having covered the 700 miles from London in under 18 hours, we had made arrangements to re fuel in a marina

at Sada, a small new development some 15 miles inland from La Corunna, this being the only fuel outlet that was open (by special arrangement) at this time of night. A number of small open fishing boats were surprised to see us flash past and as we rounded the entrance to the marina the fuel man was laying out the hoses, the engine hatches open and we were all set for a quick turn around, service indeed. The boat was re fuelled in less than twenty minutes and after a short comfort stop we were again on our way, things were going well and we were still on target but now with Biscay behind us. Sleeping on Seahound is a challenge in itself, the extra fuel tank is positioned immediately in front of the aft seat and the only place in which to lie down is on the seat next to the tank, the problem is that if the boat takes off over a wave as it lands you get body slammed into the seat so consequently not much sleep is possible.

The run down the Spanish and Portuguese coast was uneventful, conditions were good and we maintained an excellent average speed. In the planning stage I knew that the weather was likely to deteriorate as we closed Cape St Vincent, this is a notorious headland and the sea conditions here can be desperately awful, as predicted the further south we travelled so the wind increased. The seas increased and by the time we were within 80 miles of the headland we were in a full force five possibly six with large braking seas all around us. This was the time for care, definitely no heroics, our time benefit was rapidly eroded and for the first time we fell behind and were now outside of the existing record time. We rounded the headland in a cloud of spray and rough water, winds were now in excess of 40 knots and a degree of apprehension was evident on board. Our next fuel stop was in Lagos, we entered the harbour to be enthusiastically greeted by Helens sister, family and supporters, fresh sandwiches, a can of cold beer and a chance to relax for a few minutes was a welcome relief. We had by now been on the go for some 30 hours and this short



break was very welcome.

On leaving the harbour the wind was still howling so much for calmer conditions, the sea was really uncomfortable, confused and from all directions, we tried everything to ease the ride even running almost on the beach all to no avail so no choice but to bite the bullet and drive through it. This was one of the worst parts of the journey, as we closed the Straights of Gibraltar so darkness fell for the second night and we were tired and battling very difficult conditions. Chris took a rest or rather four hours of body slamming on the aft seat, I took the helm and Jan navigated, the conditions could not have been worse pitch dark, shipping everywhere and the last straw our trusty shore support Mel called us and advised us that fog was likely in the Straits. Sure enough about an hour later we hit the fog bank, full attention now on radar as we passed in and out of extensive fog banks. Slowly however the seas eased and as we approached Europa Point so Chris surfaced to enquire where we were and if his boat was still in one piece. We arrived of Europa Point at 0012 hrs were timed in by our friends in Gibraltar and the first good news of the day was that we had set a new world record for the fastest time from London to Gibraltar.

After a short stop we continued, Chris took the helm and I had a sleep, seas now flat calm but misty so back up to good

speed, hopefully we could now make up the time lost earlier. Dawn broke to an idyllic Mediterranean flat calm with the promise of a great day ahead, we were once again making close to 48 knots and on a mission to make up lost time. We stopped of Cartagena to transfer fuel from the deck tank to the main tanks, this was a process that we had been using throughout the attempt and it had worked faultlessly. Fresh from a short sleep I took the helm and accelerated away only to loose power on one of the engines almost immediately. This was a concern but when coupled with a battery problem we had experienced during the night we realised that if we lost the other engine we might not be able to re- start, desperate measures were now required to solve the problem with the down engine, the fuel system was bled and we restarted only to lose the same engine almost immediately. We had come so far and could not accept failure at this point, the engine was again bled and once again we got it going, this time all was well air had been introduced into the fuel system during the fuel transfer probably due to us being so tired. The battery problem was a worry so we called Mel and arranged for a new battery to be on the quay when we arrived at our next stop in Ibiza. Conditions were fantastic, hot sunny weather, no wind, dolphins and whales joining us and flying fish leaping out of the water and showing us the way, this more than made up for the terrible night.

Ibiza appeared in a haze and in no time we were mooring up on the fuel quay for our last fuel stop of the challenge but where was our battery, a quick call to Mel confirmed the battery was on the quay but which quay. In all of the confusion the battery had been sent to another marina on the other side of the Island, no time to wait now as we were still very tight on time so nothing for it but to push on and hope for the best.

The coast of Ibiza rapidly disappeared behind and in no time we were chasing along the north coast of Majorca, I asked Chris how much further we had to go, no problem he said just 400 miles, Oh that's all right should be in Monte Carlo in 8 hours. The sense of impending success slowly enveloped all of the crew no one dared to speak let alone even half suggest that we might get the record, as the hours passed so the tension grew the conditions also worsened and that was not in the plan. The French coast was now less than three hours away and for the third night it started to get dark, conditions were less than ideal a large following sea and 20 plus knots of wind don't break anything now was the only comment from all on board. Finally after some 61 hours at sea we crossed the finishing line indicated by a flare from the Monaco Yacht Club. It is difficult to describe the feelings on board we had beaten the previous record by over two hours and had established a new outright world record for the epic voyage from London to Monte Carlo.

As we tied up in Monte Carlo surrounded by superyachts of the world elite a waiter from the Monaco Yacht Club arrived carrying a silver tray down the jetty with four glasses and a bottle of champagne, we had arrived in style and were on top of the world.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking all of those who helped us achieve this dream without your help and encouragement it would not have been possible.

The Guggenheim by sea



Flower cat outside Guggenheim museum

For the past two years we have cruised *Arabesque* our Mike Pocock designed 42ft yacht, in South Western Brittany. We have a river mooring on the Vilaine River at La Roche Bernard and are well positioned to enjoy the pleasures of cruising in Southern Brittany without the long trip back and forth to the UK every year.

Having slightly more time on our hands Sally and I decided that it was time to stretch our sea legs and to take *Arabesque* further south. We were intrigued by the possibility of sailing to Bilbao and visiting the world famous Guggenheim Museum followed by a gentle cruise eastwards and northwards back to La Roche.

A quick look at the chart revealed that the first part of the trip to Bilbao even from Ile d'Yeu would involve a 200 mile leg across the Bay of Biscay. This was the leg that gave us the most concern. We paid a lot of attention to the weather forecasts but in the event need not have worried

because in common with most of Europe in 2006 a massive high had settled over Biscay and instead of the 4s and 5s we had expected at this time of year we had balmy smooth seas for the greater part of the trip

We left La Roche Bernard in early July and made for Port Joinville on Ile d'Yeu as our first port of call. Ile d'Yeu is a gem – a secret the French keep well hidden. With a warm Mediterranean feel about it, beautiful beaches, excellent restaurants and shops in Port Joinville and an extremely well run Marina, Ile d'Yeu has almost everything you might need. We potted about for a couple of days and when we were comfortable with the weather set out early one Friday morning. We rounded the North Western tip of Yeu and in a brisk force 4 on the beam were quickly on our way.

It wasn't very long before the notorious Biscay swell was having its effect on me! Sally with a cast iron stomach was fine but the relatively short swell coming from the

starboard quarter was causing a most unpleasant motion. I slept a lot! We managed to sail for about 8 hours before the wind dropped and the sea smoothed out (except that was for the swell which was never far away).

By Saturday evening we sighted the giant wind turbines at the entrance to Bilbao and made our entrance into the harbour (which is extremely large). We had a choice of two Marinas - Getxo (pronounced Getcho) and the Yacht Club which was a little further into the harbour. We opted for the former and at about 8.00pm tied up alongside an empty 30 metre pontoon. There were very few visiting yachts. The problem was not so much getting ashore but getting back on to the pontoons. As late arrivals we did not have a code for the security gates or a key. We ate in a very typical but overpriced Spanish restaurant and when we at last persuaded the security guard that we did indeed have a boat on the pontoons went to bed for a very serious sleep.

The following morning we paid our mooring fees at the Harbour Office (a staggering 44 Euros). Interestingly no one could speak English or French and sadly there was no welcome pack, no map of local points of interest and surprisingly no recent Met reports. Getxo Marina is not geared up for visiting yachts crews.

After a short walk from the Marina we caught a very modern Metro through the industrial hinterland that is Bilbao into the centre and visited the Guggenheim. This is an absolute 'must do' Even if you do not go inside it is worth just seeing the outside. We were fortunate to see a most impressive collection of late 19th and 20th century Russian paintings, which made it doubly good value. After an inexpensive lunch we wandered through a very quiet Bilbao (it was Sunday) before returning to *Arabesque*. Still no up-to-date Met!

The following day we left Bilbao and in dull cloudy damp conditions headed east along the coast towards Hondarribia and Hendaye. At last we had some wind - F3 - plus a heavy swell. Before going to Hondarribia we thought we would try to visit the small port of Guetaria.

We were quickly but politely shooed away from the reception pontoon (the space had been reserved and no, there was no where else we could moor) Fortunately an English speaking local loitering on the pontoon advised us that the fishing fleet were 'out' could not find any fish and were not due back for a few days so suggested that we tie up fore and aft between two of their extremely large buoys just fifty yards away. This needless to say was easier to contemplate than to achieve. But we stayed there undisturbed overnight and free of charge!

Guetaria is an up market Spanish holiday resort. It has a very old town, beautiful clean beaches, numerous restaurants and a small supermarket. Whilst the Marina looks quite new there are few facilities for visiting yachts. They did however have an up-to-date Met report!

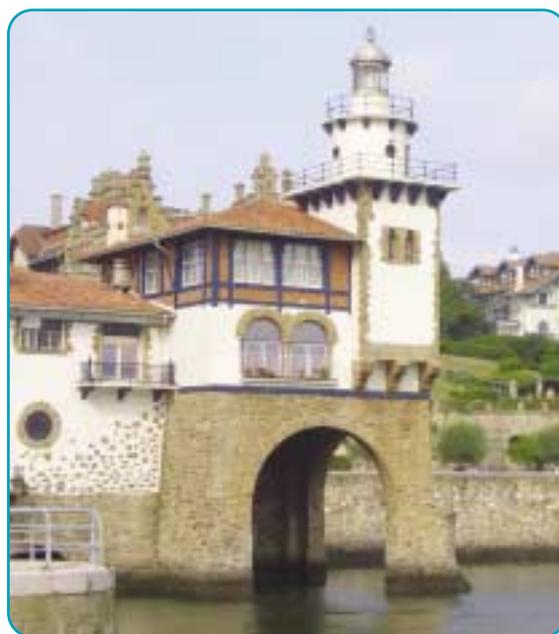
We ate that evening in charming tratoria overlooking the harbour and sampled some of the local Basque cuisine - grilled sardines and sea bass - both cooked outside on an open air barbecue, just superb but as with the restaurant in Bilbao we thought it expensive compared to similar cuisine in France.

The following day found us on our way to Hondarribia.

A word of explanation.

Hondarribia is on the west side of the Rio (river) Bidasoa and in Spain. Hendaye is on the East side of the river and in France. Both towns are in the Basque region. Connecting the two towns is a very efficient but small ferry running every half hour on to which you can take your bicycles and it appears almost anything else

There are marinas in both towns but on the Hondarribia side it is new. So new in fact it was not mentioned in the South Biscay Pilot. Fortunately we carry the French pilot BLOC which is updated annually. We arrived unannounced on the visitors pontoon only to be told (again) that we couldn't stay, that we should have phoned ahead, that they were expecting to be full with a local regatta by the weekend (it was a Tuesday); that they could maybe find somewhere to go if we went to the



Bilbao harbour

office. All this in Spanish of which we have none.

In the event we stayed for three delightful nights. The office assistant spoke good English and was very helpful. She explained that the loos worked on a type of credit card system but you had to pay a deposit of 25 Euros for one of these. As an alternative the loos in the office were open from 0800 - 1200hrs and from 1400 - 1800hrs but if we had a 'requirement' after those hours then we could try to contact one of the marina staff who may be (only may be) able to open the loos!!

I explained that we had our own heads and a holding tank.

Hondarribia is a delightful Basque town, very very clean, many restaurants and old buildings. Quite Spanish. Cross the water to Hendaye however and it is absolutely French.

We did not take *Arabesque* to Hendaye but just walking around the marina we felt strangely relaxed and pleased to be back into the French yachting culture once again.

It is curious that things could be so different just 100 metres away.

Whilst we only visited three Spanish ports we realised quickly that they were not relying on the passing yachtsman for their economy. In the event we enjoyed visiting all three ports in their different ways but felt slightly as though we were gate crashing a private party.

From Hondarribia we travelled north a short distance to St Jean de Luz. We managed to wedge ourselves into pole position in the tiny marina in the inner harbour and once again got the distinct feeling that it would have been more convenient if we hadn't arrived. Maybe it's the standard Basque greeting!! After two nights however they were getting used to us and then presented me with a 'Marina St Jean de Luz' polo shirt. They could afford to with the mooring fees they charged!!

St Jean is another French gem. A seriously up market holiday resort, bested only by its neighbour next door Biarritz. Immaculately clean, great atmosphere, fantastic market square, beach and restaurants. From St Jean we visited Biarritz by bus (not to be missed) where we had a very serious lunch by the fishing harbour and on another day cycled along the river to Ascin behind St Jean in the foothills of the Pyrenees. After three days we were sorry to leave but knew we would certainly return but perhaps by car next time.

Working our way northwards the next port of call was to be Cap Breton. We scheduled our arrival by the book at high tide and travelled up the 'canal' into the purpose built marina. The pilot books advise that there can be some nasty cross currents at the entrance of the canal and whilst we arrived in fairly calm summery conditions we were easily persuaded that

this could be the case.

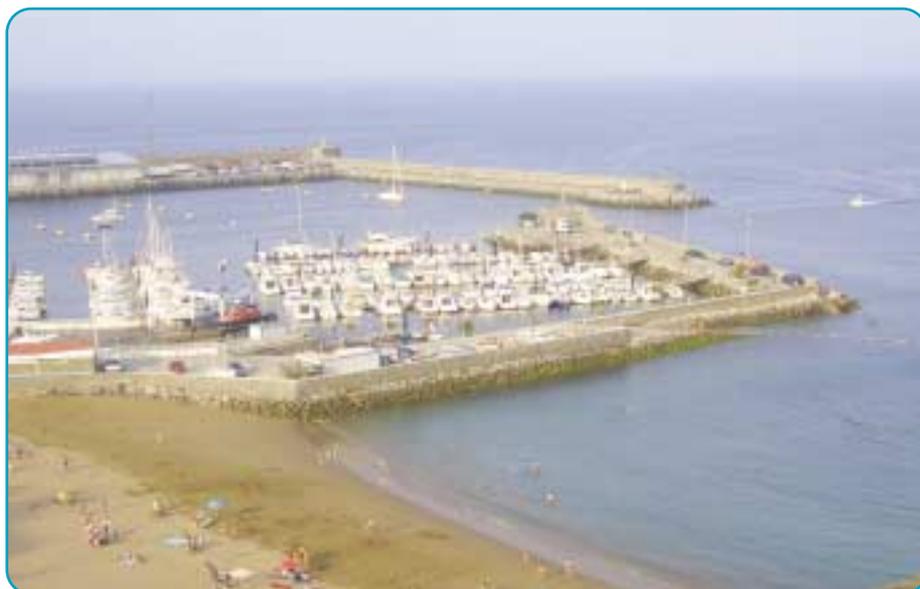
We tied up on an available hammer head and sought out the Capitannerie where we were politely told by the duty manager that we would have to move *Arabesque* due to the depth of water but “would we like some help” not once but twice. On paying the mooring fees (a more reasonable 25 Euros) we were duly presented with a comprehensive information pack plus a bottle of local wine!!

Whilst Cap Breton is an ever so slightly down market version of St Jean we thought it charming. We found a wonderful lunchtime restaurant used the bikes extensively and much enjoyed our visit.

From Cap Breton we were to sail north again heading for Royan on the north side of the Gironde. We were tempted to go into Arcachon which is the only port on this long stretch of coastline but time was getting on and we wanted to be in Rochefort within the week.

It’s worth mentioning at this point that there is a very large military range situated offshore virtually the whole length of the coast from St Jean to the entrance to the Gironde. There is a 3 mile wide channel between the start of the range and shore in which transiting vessels must stay. We hoped for a beam wind to take us north but it wasn’t to be in fact there was no wind at all until at 3.00 in the morning when Sally woke me to say “I think we

St Jean de Luz, view from inner harbour



Guetaria Harbour with Arabesque in the distance

have some wind at last”. For an hour and a half or so we had an easterly F 3 beam wind – a classic land breeze. Clear starlit sky, moon, flat sea and F3 – it doesn’t get better. In fact we were by now sailing so well I was concerned we might arrive at the entrance of the Gironde before daylight which as the southern entrance buoyage is unlit was not part of my passage plan

By 10pm we were tied up on the visitors mooring in Royan Marina.

Royan like Cap Breton is a delightful place with all amenities for visiting yachts. The town is friendly, clean, bustling with holiday makers and a fun place to be. We had just missed the Tour de France de Voile which had taken over the town the previous week.

From Royan we sailed to Isle D’aix at

the entrance to the Charente river and then up the river for 20km or so to Rochefort where we locked in for a couple of days.

Rochefort is an extremely interesting town with very friendly marina staff and all the amenities that one could need. There is much to see and do. In Rochefort we were met by Mike and Gill Barron who were originally scheduled to sail in company with us in *Stella* their Bowman 40. Following an unfortunate accident they had to remain in England but were later able to catch a train to Rochefort and then cruise back with us via Isle D’Yeu , Normoutier to La Roche Bernard

In total we spent 23 nights on the boat and sailed about 600 miles. We had a wonderful holiday. We sampled a small part of Spain and parts of France we had not seen before. We had disappointingly less wind than we would have liked. We felt we had pushed ourselves and *Arabesque* a little and achieved something worthwhile. Would we go again? Perhaps, but not for a few years, we have the Rias in the north western corner of Spain to discover first!

Finally, if you are considering a similar journey there were three things we felt were indispensable. A strong and reliable engine, bicycles and most important of all a sun awning. A holding tank can be pretty convenient too!!

Metre Racing with Cream GBR100

I first became interested in 6 Metre racing when Don Woods invited me to do main on his newly acquired 12m *Italia*, which cumulated in the Jubilee Regatta in Cowes. To me the grace, elegance and power of all the metre classes is breathtaking. We continually sail around the race track admiring our competitor's boats. I am very lucky to have on board extremely natural sailors, who have a great feel and much knowledge, and have been the key to getting *Cream* in the groove

Team Cream crew quotes;

Guy Manners Spencer - Tactician / Trimmer. "Racing a 6 combines both elegance and technical ability like no other class. They look fantastic in and out of the water, there is nothing like seeing a metre boat fully pressed trucking up wind and pointing like a witch. For the crew, all five are fully engaged all the time, the boats respond to trim adjustment, of which there are many, quickly and noticeably. Tactically, they are like racing much larger boats."

Ben Porteous - Trimmer "I especially enjoy racing on the 6, because it requires a massive amount of concentration and skill and most of all good team work. The ability to up the game and improve boat speeds by fractions of a knot is critical and when a crew manoeuvres go without a hitch it is very satisfying. The 6 is an incredibly tweaky boat that is very easy to knock out of the groove, and difficult to get in the groove in the first place. The Regattas are always very close racing, with constant place changing and the Regatta venues make for enjoyable competitive racing'

Salvador (Andy Hall) - Main Trimmer "It is exciting to compete on the water in a sophisticated open decked keel boat which curiously can be modern and wonderfully traditional; just five crew members work as a team, racing to a high standard against good and strong opposition on an International basis, and refreshingly, find beautiful yachts, fine racing conducted with gentlemanly sportsmanship and bohémie.

Dunk (Simon Corner) - Bowman
"Fantastic yachts, highly tuneable, with loads of gears to play with. Great opportunities on sail shapes and mast set ups, still to explore. The class is on a high with boats being put together for next years World Championship in Cowes, rumoured 65 INT 6 entries!

It is only when you start to write something like this that you realise what incredible sailing talent you are surrounded by. When I asked Team *Cream* for their sailing resumé's, I quickly realised there was not enough room to print, suffice to say from Youth Squads to one designs, from tonners

to Swans, even an Ultra 30 thrown in (literally!) We quickly realised that the 6 required many skills to get her to perform in harmony, which is the key to our performance in these races:
1st Spring Series • 1st overall - Six Thirsty Series
• 1st National Championships • 2nd Southern Six • 2nd overall - Voile Classique La Trinite • 1st overall - Regate Royale 'Round Island Race'
• 1st overall - Regate Royale INT 6 Class.

We are hearing great rumours of 6's being done up all over the place, and top flight yachties looking to get a piece of the action, the Worlds next year

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Motor cruising from La Rochelle to Camaret

Our boat is a Broom 50. The two of us have a formula, namely **Compromise Cruising**.

That is 1). The Captain gets to go. 2). The Wife goes too, but chooses where.

We set off provided it's blowing no more than a 4, comfort being essential to a relaxed holiday. So we allow time to sit out windy periods.

Since half of Lymington seem to be cruising up or down the west coast of France in the summer we found our one month there to be peppered with both



chance and organised meetings, and to be far more sociable than staying at home.

Choosing places to go was limited to marinas with visitor space for us, and adequate depth (1.75metres). Also fuel availability. We found it essential to call ahead on the mobile phone to request a berth. Marina staff rarely answer their radio telephone channels listed in cruising almanacs, as they are out and about so

much. Without exception all were helpful and would either advise us that there should be no problem, suggest the best time to arrive, or reserve us a slot. Speaking French helps, but they all have some understanding of English.

Our cruising revolves around lunch. So our passage planning involves selecting the restaurant we want to go to in the port we fancy next. The advantage of motor boating is that you beat all the yachties into port for déjeuner.

Lots of detailed research was necessitated in The French Hotels and Restaurants Guide du Routard - the guide the French use'.

Also indispensable for ashore information was the personable Neville Featherstone's West France Cruising Companion (Yachting Monthly). For navigational matters we augmented Reeds with the Royal Cruising Club Pilotage North Biscay 7th edition (Imray), which has very clear and helpful advice with waypoints when entering strange harbours. Authors Mike and Gill Barron

(RLymYC), thank you for this Bible! Generally we did a couple of hours at sea between ports and would stay a couple of nights, with exceptions for weather or if going to rendezvous with friends.

Refuelling on arrival, whether or not we needed much, showed commitment and usually resulted in a great berth allocation. Whilst Captain grumbling at cost of French gazole (1.26 Euros) wife gets a Plan

de Ville from the Bureau de Port, to check out market, launderette, supermarket and shore based attractions. Then we moor, tackle the vagaries of the French electrics, wash the boat down where no hosepipe ban, fill up with water and crack open the Rose (2.50 Euros)

Before plugging in to the shore power, as much of the French system is not as powerful ours in the U.K we found it worth switching off the battery charger and immersion heater, as batteries are full after a run and water hot from the engine system. This can avoid tripping the pontoon supply. Should it blow it is often possible to re-set it by gaining access to the box This can save contacting the Capitainerie.

Our policy is 'one meal on, one meal off' the boat each day. The Formule or menu du jour at restaurants at midday represents great value. The wonderful fresh fish, seafood, bread, cheese, fruit and vegetables from the markets make for superb suppers or picnics en route. Each departement has a unique cuisine, and traditions, and it is fascinating to see the pride they take in their individuality, eg. The Charente Maritime is almost Mediterranean, Northern Brittany almost Celtic.

Other motor boaters are few and far between compared to the number in the Solent, probably because of fuel costs. Still, we reckoned all expenses for four weeks for the two of us compared very favourably with the cost of one week's Club Med holiday with five offspring in days past!

OUR LOG

We cruised as a couple from south to north and home, the Captain and two

friends having taken the boat from Lymington to La Rochelle in three 6/7 hour hops; Lymington to Trebeurden, then Lorient and on to La Rochelle. They returned flying from La Rochelle with Flybe, to Southampton. No 1 Mate flew there, the other way round, for the crew changeover. The flight is only one hour's duration. Normally we motored between 19 and 23 knots depending on conditions. Those we met who were retired, or had longer, hurried less and used less diesel.

Thus our first base for a few days was:

La Rochelle, Charente Maritime Departement

The Capitainerie had advised strongly to use the Marina Chalutieres. It is quiet, next to the aquarium, and a twenty minute walk to the wonderful old town. When France won the World Cup quarter final while we were there, the Vieux Port erupted until the early hours, we were glad of his insistence. Marina Minimes is too far removed and has less character. High spots: The architecture, history and amazing daily covered market at Place du Marche. Restaurants: A Cote de Chez Fred, Les Flots and roof top one above the aquarium.

The men did an advance recce party to the Ile de Re, meeting for lunch there with holidaying relatives, and decided it would be madness to move the boat there as it was packed. No sardine tin rafting seemed worthwhile, so we cheated and went by taxi, over the vast bridge. The bus would be cheaper.

We took two hours to reach:

Les Sables D'Olonne, Port Olona. The Vendee Departement.

We were allocated the best mooring possible on A (first) pontoon hammerhead, nearest to the old village of La Chaume, and to the bac (little ferry) which goes to and fro the fishing port across the River Vertonne. We found the working port interesting, but Les Sables a bit like Eastbourne. Les Sables D'Olonne is home to the Vendee globe race and a mass of sailing schools.



We took two hours, in a bit of a swell, to reach::

The Ile d'Yeu, Port Joinville. The Vendee Departement.

We had been going to meet sailing friends on *Rumpus of Lymington*, at L'Herbaudiere on Ile de Noirmoutier but persuaded them to see us in Ile d'Yeu as we thought it had more to offer. This proved to be true. They arrived to find an expanded and hospitable marina, and much fun was to be had experiencing the festivities when the French won the semi final of the World Cup

High spot: Yeu is a totally unspoilt island, less twee than Re, and off the tourist trail. We all enjoyed great seafood, straight off the local fishing fleet trawlers.

We had spotted a Trader 55 at every place so far, and had waved to them en route to Yeu. Then we saw them again in a café reading the Sport page (English papers are now available daily in France, and printed there by 9am-ish), so could not resist saying, "See you in Pornic!" They asked "How do you know that's where we're going?" "Only because we're going there next!," we replied. Total coincidence.

We took two hours to reach:

Pornic, S.E. Brittany Departement.

What a welcome we received here by the harbour staff. No-one even had to get

off the boat to moor. There is a lovely picturesque village and it is totally Brit free, bar us and the Trader, which came in, and the owners of which kindly asked us for drinks, prior to the World Cup football final. There are a few very pleasant bars there, along the marina front, the crazy noises of support suddenly went totally silent after the final shoot out. Thank heavens. There is the most amazing market, twenty minutes walk away, past Bluebeard's castle. This was our favourite stopping place High spot: the adjacent sandy beach for a delicious swim.

We took five hours, in a big swell, to reach:

Concarneau, Benodet Bay.

(Having cruised The Morbihan and Haliguen before, we skipped them this time)

Concarneau was a bit like a mini St Malo with an historic walled "Ville Close". There were masses of tourists, and the Trader owners had warned us that it was worth seeing for a one night only stop. They were correct. High spot: Lobster stew at Chez Armande restaurant on the front.

We took three quarters of an hour to arrive at:

Benodet, West Brittany Departement

Sainte Marine, west bank of the Odet River. (The Vieux Port).

This was a delightful situation, but overrun by everyone from England! Including us. High spot: As with each place we have been, it is great to see the French young sail training all around. Huge tidal currents, but was able to enjoy a cooling dip in the life ring attached to lots of rope from the boat.

We intended staying here to explore the east coast and Benodet for longer, but had to change plans as our friends on their Broom, our neighbours in Lymington Yacht Haven, called to tell us they would not be making it to meet us there as they had spent all night at Brest hospital. The lady of the boat had sustained a broken arm and dislocated shoulder after a fall down a slippery crowded ramp in Camaret. Thus we took three hours, through the Raz de Sein with a 'belle mer', and the tide and wind in our favour, to reach our friends in Camaret, West Brittany .

We enjoyed their company, and a one handed dinner ashore, and thanked our lucky stars that it was not us. Last year we had to put off our cruise to this year, after a leg injury to her indoors.

The Crozon Peninsula is very handsome, but so different from further south. The weather turned very blustery so we stayed put and hired a car to see Morgat and Douarnenez by land instead of by boat. Both were stunning. Still delayed by strong winds we took advantage of nearby Brest airport, and Flybe again, to fly to Southampton and back, over 24 hours, for a family party in Hampshire (1 hour's flight again).

Then we took four hours and forty-five minutes to reach:

Trebeurden, North Brittany.

Not strictly West France after this .We came through the Chenal du Four unscathed, with tide and wind allowed for, and watched the procession of yachts going south taking advantage of the same. Reaching Trebeurden , we found it has lovely beaches and surprising pink granite rocks. High spots: swimming at the nearest two beaches and in the evening posh nosh at The Manoir de Lan Kerellic



for dinner, recommended by another Lymington motor-boater there. They collect you from the port!

The last hop to Cherbourg took five hours and twenty minutes.

We passed through the Alderney Race with a slightly confused sea, later fog could have been a worry, but was not, with all the navigation equipment - radar and GPS.

The home run from Cherbourg to Lymington took four hours and twenty minutes.

There was thick wraparound white fog, but a very calm sea. This gave time to clean the boat inside as outside looked scary .We were back in time to book a slightly late lunch at Egan's. Here we go again!

We are already planning next year's cruise, going from north to south, and trying to get to all the places we could not fit in this time.

Ro and Adrian Otten

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QII Challenge



At 0800 on 20 August 2006 I crossed the start line for the first race in the Petit Bateau Singlehanded Channel Race Week. This was a momentous occasion for me. I had been diagnosed with breast cancer the previous September. Shortly after my surgery and just as the lengthy process of chemotherapy and radiotherapy was starting I had realised that I was well placed to raise funds for The Institute of Cancer Research. *QII*, my Michael Pocock designed 35 footer, was sitting in the Yacht Haven raring to go and race, and so I had decided to do a demanding singlehanded race in her soon after the end of my treatment to raise funds for the ICR.

The obvious race to enter was the Petit Bateau Race Week – a week of entirely singlehanded racing. There were 6 races - Weymouth to Alderney, Alderney to Guernsey, Guernsey to Treguier, an overnight race from Treguier to Fowey, Fowey to Falmouth and a day's racing in the Falmouth area, altogether about 300 miles.

By the start of the Race Week I had recovered a lot of my strength but I knew that I wasn't fully back to form. The Race Week was going to be a stamina test for

the young and fit and I had reached the age of 60 and had completed my treatment only a few months earlier. Clearly I could not expect to do well in the races but I was confident that *QII* would look after me and take me round the course safely as long as I was careful to pace myself and didn't do anything too stupid!

I had been looking forward to the Race Week for 10 months and so it was tremendously exciting when at last the start gun for the first race fired. The wind was W5 and *QII* with one reef in the mainsail and full water ballast went like a train. She was up with the fastest in the Class, took the lead at the Shambles and led her Class all the way from there to the finish at Alderney.

I was thrilled at this result and could scarcely believe it. But at the same time I realised that it had been an easy race. I hadn't had to tack or change sails and had simply been able to rely on *QII*'s speed. I reminded myself that there would be much

more difficult times to come.

These more difficult times started the next day. The wind for the race from Alderney to Guernsey was SW5. It involved reefing and unreefing and what seemed like innumerable tacks. Tacking *QII* with her water ballast and runners is no simple matter and I was greatly relieved to cross the finish line tied 3rd in Class. I was very tired but it had been a fast race so that I had the afternoon and following night in Guernsey to rest.

The next morning the wind had died almost to nothing and we raced to Treguier with wind that was mainly tide generated. A large number of competitors retired from that race and motored to Treguier to reach it in time for dinner. Since my aim



was to complete the course retirement was not something which I could contemplate. Instead I reached Treguier late in the evening without dinner but happy to be 4th in class and one of only seven competitors to complete that race.

The lull in the wind was short lived. The 4th race started the next afternoon from Treguier in a WSW4 and the course for Fowey put us near close hauled. Soon after the start the wind increased and I had to put in first one, and then two, reefs and furl some headsail. There was torrential rain. Then the wind died right down and I had to shake out both reefs and unfurl the headsail. Then the wind turned a circle before heading and rising again to F6. As darkness fell we had thunder and lightening and the wind increased to F7 for our crossing of the shipping lanes. I was desperately tired but there was far too much traffic around to contemplate even a catnap. By dawn the next morning the wind was moderating and I summoned up the energy to shake out one reef but decided that that would have to do. A few tacks at the end used up my remaining energy but when I finally crossed the line, it was to learn to my amazement that I was 2nd in the whole fleet.

The next race to Fowey, was rather a disappointment. The wind was light and I thought that I had done quite well only to learn when I reached harbour that a number of boats who I thought I had beaten at the other end of the finish line had in fact beaten me.

The final race, around the buoys at Falmouth, was the one to which I was least looking forward. It takes too long to get *QII*'s water ballast in and out and across for this type of racing. She was designed for the Transatlantic, not for this. Unfortunately the wind was back to F5 and so *QII* needed her water ballast. Somehow, and I still find it hard to understand how, I managed to finish that Race 2nd in Class. This was fantastic as it meant that I finished the Week 2nd in Class and also 2nd in the whole fleet – a

result which was unimaginable before the start.

Even better than the Race Week result was the fact that I raised £41,500 for the ICR!

This race week was to have been my swansong in *QII* but, spurred on by the success in 2006 *QII* and I, in the hope of raising more for the ICR, are going to take part in the 2007 Petit Bateau Race which will be a more demanding 12 day event, racing to Ireland, around the SW Irish coast and back to England.

I am enormously grateful to all those Club Members who have already donated so generously to the ICR through my *QII* Challenge. If any others would like to donate they can do so by visiting www.justgiving.com/maryfalk or by sending a cheque payable to 'The Institute of Cancer Research', 123 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 3RP quoting ref Mary Falk – *QII*. I pay all *QII*'s expenses myself and so 100% of all donations go to the ICR

Mary Falk

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Offshore Blog

RBIR 2006

History

The 1760 mile Sevenstar Round Britain and Ireland Race 2006 is open to IRC, IRM, Open 60s and multihulls and is designated as a Category 1 race under ISAF Special Regulations

Starting from Cowes, we will sail clockwise, non-stop around the Scilly Islands, Ireland, the Western Isles (excluding Rockall), the Shetlands and down the East Coast of England to the finish in Cowes. Approximately 1760 miles.

Crew

Tom Hayhoe, Neal Brewer, Bob Clitherow, Mark Gentili, Sarah Fawcus, Helen Kennedy, Ralph Mason, David Bright, Chris Beeson, Kerri Whitehouse.

Mostly Harmless is a Prima 38 (38ft) racing in Class IRC1. Our ambition is to finish in the top quartile both in class and overall. First Prima would be nice as well! The start scheduled for 1800 on Monday 7th August from the RYS, Cowes, to the east.

26/7/06

Setting up a new (well another aged Dell) computer for the trip. Seatrack was playing up. A quick phone call to Scho and it emerged I was using an old .DLL file. 10 minutes later, despite that he was at sea on *Zarafa* off the coast of South Brittany, an e-mail arrived with the right file. What service!

27/7/06

Crew dinner at RORC to discuss practicalities. My spreadsheet of various route scenarios was criticised for stating the bleedin' obvious. If we have an average of 16kn SW, we will get around in 9 days 23 hours, 10kn SW would take 11 days 8 hours and 7.5kn SW would take 13 days 2 hours. Well, at least my calculations

made sense!

Other conversations were on weather, food, water (>250 litres!), safety, etc. A very useful evening. But, the enormity of what we are undertaking is beginning to sink in.

6/7/06

Two fantastically busy days preparing the boat. The nice RORC inspector passed us fit to race. The water was put on board. Some food, although Helen was still off shopping for England. The high is moving south with a complex series of fronts off Ireland. So, it is looking like 20kn plus on the nose to the Scillies, and to Bull Rock and up the West side of the Emerald Isle. Nice

07/08/06 19:40pm

We are off! Good start up at the S Bramble end of the line in 10kn NE. *Puma Logic* ahead, and *Magnum* behind. First right call was to go north of Ryde Bank for better wind and tide. Next call was to go inside Nomansland Fort. Very few boats did and we gained masses on those that didn't as we could just hold a kite down to Bembridge.

The watch system kicked in a while ago and the cabin is gently reverberating to Neal, Chris and Mark's slumbering. Someone is talking about supper. Chicken slices. Hmm, maybe I should have had a bigger lunch!

8/08/06 03.30am

15m south of Portland making very good progress. Wind is 12kn from 110 degrees, which wasn't predicted in any forecast, grib or fisherman's tale that I saw. Still, why complain? We have been doing 10kn SOG.

8/08/06 23.00pm

We eventually passed Start Point at

1415 about 3.25nM off and Prawle half an hour later. The light SWly pushed us in towards Rame Head. It then became apparent that we were going to get a pretty good look at the Eddystone lighthouse. This is not normally something that we would worry about. But, as Amendment 1 to the Sailing Instructions for the race refers to all outlying rocks around Great Britain & Ireland being marks of the course except St Kilda, Rockall, Mona and Sula Segir, we had to take the view that Eddystone Rock must also be a mark.

Our tack out to clear the lighthouse was around 4nM and meant that *Jeu d'Esprit*, *Magnum* and the girls on *Predator* slipped away. We felt obliged to notify the committee by text that it is our intention to protest these yachts unless they add a time penalty to any yacht that has not sailed the right course.

9/08/06 00.05 hours

Just passing due south of Kuggar above Kennack Sands, where I was born 40 something years ago!

26/08/06

Some time after rounding Bishop Rock, water got into the chart table which hit my laptop and mobile phone. Also, the reserve PC got soaked sitting in a bag in a supposedly dry cupboard. So, no blog, no navigation software, no music, no weather data. It was just as well that we had taken the precaution to pack a full set of passage charts.

30/8/06

Somewhere in St George's Channel, as we came through a tack and the weight came on the starboard sheet, there was a bang. The car carrying the block had parted company from the track. This was a disaster, as we had no way to repair it at sea. For a start, the ball bearings that hold it together were all gone over the side. We tacked back to have a closer look. But, we all knew that this might mean we had to retire. But, the ever resourceful Ralph rigged up a cat's cradle of spectra ropes from the D rings on the deck. With a little more tweaking, we even had a working

in-hauler. Perfect, and the bodge lasted without further adjustment until the end of the race.

The leg from Bishop Rock to the SW corner of Ireland started as a close fetch in 20-25kn. We eventually opted to tack in towards the Irish Coast, taking a quick hitch out to round the Fastnet to starboard (first time I have been past that way).

The tide turned foul after rounding Bull Rock (an impressive chunk of granite!) and we tacked in towards Bantry Bay. The wind, and you will begin to recognise a pattern here, veered to head us yet again. Still, we were lifted on starboard for the out tack out to Great Skelling. We then tacked back in towards Dingle Bay, which looked fabulous, and headed out to Inishteara, or the Irish 'Land's End'.

We took a bit of a risk and went out 70M on starboard. This seemed to pay, as we were able to settle on a course of 036 for the Flannan Islands at 7.5kn with a 20kn wind from 350. But, where were the NW'lies promised by the weathermen?

At some point on this leg the bilges filled to a point that water got under the engine and the diesel fuel caught there was liberally spread over the rest of the boat. The cabin sole quickly became a skating rink and anyone who attempted to move around ended up on their back end after doing a very good impression of Wiley Coyote and Road Runner with their legs spinning but no forward motion. It was a great relief when the mother watch managed to clean up and wash all the floorboards. Apparently, we were not the only boat afflicted with this problem.

20M short of Flannan, the wind went right again to 080 and settled on 050 - right on the nose for the next leg to the most northerly point, Muckle Flugga on the Shetlands. We eventually passed Flannan at 2319 on Sunday 13th. Still, we were looking forward to the inevitable run down the North Sea and steeled ourselves for a long beat North East. We took

another long 35M tack north, in the hope of getting into more stable N wind. Our tack back was delayed a little by the last call to use the loo. It is definitely easier to hold on when the boat is on starboard, and the pump was not working on port! Picture a queue of increasingly desperate, wet and smelly crew, and you wouldn't be far from the truth. After the tack, the wind did go back to the north and we were on track on a fast fetch.

We passed our halfway point with 189M still to run to Muckle Flugga. This was marked with a tot of scotch from the navigator's secret supply and spirits were raised literally and figuratively.

After a couple of hours, we were back to the #2 genoa. The mist also came down and as we passed Out Stack, the rock north of Muckle Flugga at 1653 on Tuesday 15th, all we could see were waves breaking over something 100yds away in the murk. Arriving in the mist on an unfamiliar coast is always a bit nerve wracking for the navigator. It was not the only time during the race that I was grateful for the late evenings I had spent creating waypoints in my GPS to keep us in safe water.

At last! We bore away and put up the running kite. This must be the reward for all the agony of beating almost the whole way so far. A huge sense of relief settled on the boat.

With the Navtex u/s, as it connected to the PC, we had been relying on the Coastguard for weather information. But, as we passed Lerwick, we were able to use mobiles. Time to read supportive messages from family and friends, find out where everyone else was. Tom and I poured over what we could find about the weather on his PDA.

We now knew that *Magnum* was a good few hours ahead. *Puma* was behind and close enough to be a worry. One of the other Primas, *Night Owl*, was out and *Talisman* was far enough back to not be a worry. *Puma's* sister ship, *Jaguar*, was also

struggling a way back. So, we were still very much in the race. But, the real concern was the weather. The high off the west of Ireland that had provided all the northerlies so far was receding south. Worse, the low that had generated storms in the Shetlands before we got there had been forecast to move over Germany and give us northerlies down the North Sea. But, the whole pattern was changing and the low was now due to spread out and settle over the UK. Any hope of northerlies had evaporated and we were left looking at a slack weather system that was only ever going to give us weak SE or S winds.

Sure enough, within 20M, the spinnaker pole was on the forestay and the wind was dropping. It was only a matter of time until we were hard on the wind again. The wind got progressively lighter and progress became agonisingly slow over the next day.

The low impeding our progress was due to cross our path. But, we didn't have enough weather information to see if we could take advantage. As it turned out, *Puma* had taken a more easterly route than us from the Shetlands. This paid for them and allowed them to catch up and pass us a few miles to the east.

The further south we got, the further the wind went from east, to southeast and south. This, and the tide, caused us to take a leg in towards the Wash. The tack out would take us along the NE coast of Norfolk and out to our next waypoint, Cross Sands buoy off Great Yarmouth. Here, the disadvantage of not having the laptop with detailed charts was sharply demonstrated. The passage chart said 20M to 10M, but at around 0830, the boat grounded heavily enough to cause more than a little consternation. We were 8M off the coast and there was shipping to our west. The course was reversed and, after plotting our position, it looked as if we might have hit a gas pipe. So, I called a course NE until we found deeper water. After one aborted dive south again, we

were happy to see the depth stay at 6m and allow us past the obstacle. It subsequently turned out we had 'found' the only drying part of Haisborough Sand, due east of Cromer, the only obstacle for miles around! All a bit unlucky, really!

Progress tacking down the Norfolk coast continued slowly. The wind went around to the SW to give us a nice lift down to the Goodwins. A tack on the edge of the shipping lanes gave us a perfect lay line into the Eastern entrance of Dover Harbour at around 0800 on Sunday. We had decided to drop off Helen and Ralph.

By now, the wind had, predictably, gone round to the West and we were beating into a steep chop built up by a steady F6. This was probably the worst weather we saw and, while not bad in itself, any pretence at keeping the boat dry down below had long gone.

As dawn broke on Monday morning, the wind dropped as the last of the ebb took us round Owers cardinal and towards Nomansland Fort. The last leg had all the feeling of the end of a Round the Island Race, but without any competition.

How did I feel? Very mixed emotions, in reality. Tired, but elated. Very pleased we had finished, as we were prepared to admit we had run out of time. Frustrated that we hadn't done a bit better, but satisfied that we deserved our finishing position. *Magnum* had sailed well and would have been hard to beat. *Puma* had done very well and deserved 2nd in class. Pleased that we had got round in one piece. Frustrated that we could have done it better with a PC running and more navigation input.

Overall, an amazing couple of weeks.

As for our protest, we did submit one against *Magnum*, *Predator* and *Jeu d'Esprit* for going inside the Eddystone. From the tracks on the official website, we also knew that *Puma* had gone inside. The substance of our claim was that the course

had been amended to include Great Britain and Ireland and all off-lying rocks with the exception of Rockall, Mona, St Kilda and Sula Segir. So, this must include Eddystone. But RORC pointed out that the rock covers at HAT (Highest Annual Tide) and therefore is a drying rock, not qualifying as a mark.

Highs? Passing Muckle Flugga was an extraordinary feeling. Lows? Soon after the Flannan Islands, when it became apparent how long it was all going to take. Sense of humour was adjusted by the navigator's bottle of scotch. That, and the last night at sea. We had changed down from the #3 to #4 genoa and Sarah and I had both got very wet on the

foredeck as the #4 refused to stay in the groove of the tuffluff. I was soaked through and down to my last pair of dry socks and last pair of trolleys. As I came off watch, I changed, slipped over, sat on a wet cushion and slipped into a puddle. I was as wet as before I started! It was the only time I felt seasick the whole trip and I retreated to a bunk to recover.

Mostly Harmless finished the race at Cowes at 0715 on Monday 21st April after 13 days, 13 hours and 15 minutes at sea. We had covered our course of 1,800.1M at an average speed of 5.53 knots - a lot slower than we had hoped for. Eight tired and smelly crew members staggered on to the new Trinity Pontoon in Cowes to be 



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met by Tom and Neal's respective wives and daughters and Janet and Anne from RORC swapped our tracking beacon for a very welcome bottle of champagne.

Would I do it again? Yes, probably. But a little more time needs to pass before I



forget some of the less pleasant periods. These are better summed up by Chris Beeson who 'knocked up a little 12-bar whimsy' while sitting on the rail:

'Let's race around the country'
Said Tom to one and all
'It's a reaching, running sleigh ride
Let's have an offwind ball
Meet you Monday on the dock
Don't forget a change of smalls'

The reaching, running sleigh ride
Got steeper everyday
Only problem, it's not downwind
It's uphill all the way
In direct contradiction
To what the brochure had to say

By the time we got to Ireland
We were right up in the race
Between Magnum and Puma
Looking good in second place
But like the winds, fortunes change
Here's some of the problems that we faced

The hatches all need patches
The water's pouring in
I was dry when I came down here
Now I'm soaked right to the skin
I'm reversing evolution
Growing back my gills and fins

The heads have blown a gasket

How did it come to this?
The finest engineers on the case
Still I'm ankle deep in p***
Now I'm bailing with a bucket and sponge
Give me more of that progress

Tomorrow's navigator died today
When both Bob's laptops drowned
They went out foraging for GRIB files
Files they never found
Still the diesel that we saved
Kept global oil prices down

Once the laptops kicked the bucket
The bucket followed too
On a mission for water
Only the handle came through
Thank the Lord for his successor
Clean Water No.2

There's diesel in my bilges
Slip-sliding on the floor
Bob just tried a triple Lutz and fell
A fact reflected in his score
And the bottled water down there
It's good to drink or run your car

There's a jib car on the left side
Nothing on the right
We used to have a matching pair
Blew the right one off last night
Patent pending Mason hauler
Got to get us to the line

After 13 days we made it
Eyes aglow with burnt out pride
And the lesson to be learned
Make sure you're home in bed EVERY
night
Good luck *Mostly Harmless*
Sayonara RBI

If you have read this far, you may be amused by the photos on the *Mostly Harmless website* www.mostly-harmless.co.uk/RBIR.htm . But, please don't think for a moment that the navigator is always holding a bottle of champagne!

Bob Clitheroe



Your Pottership Magazine

Firstly thank you very much to all contributors, photographers, advisors and proof readers and especially to Andrew Salanson for helping me to achieve what I hope is a true representation of everything that goes on in our Club.

This is your magazine and we do want lots of articles and pictures for the next edition. You don't have to write a saga - we really do need short articles and photo-stories, as well as the longer accounts of cruises and racing events; ideally articles should not exceed three pages which, by the time we have put in a heading and a few pictures, is about 2500 words.

And a word about pictures; please set your camera to medium or high resolution, we need files sizes of at least 5 meg to support a quarter page picture and twice that for a half page picture. Please send pictures with your articles. We try to make the magazine a lively, easy read, and to do this and keep within our budget very long articles may have to be edited and it is proposed that if this is the case the full version will be posted on the website.

Club's Centenary in 2022, We will celebrate the Clubs' Centenary in 2022, and it is never too early to start thinking about an event such as this. The General Committee have approved, in principle, that the Club produce a Centenary Book to commemorate the occasion. To this end we would appreciate having sight of any old photographs, memorabilia etc. Anything that might be of interest can be left in the office for my attention.

Judy Ruffell Editor



PotterShip

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